The Orange Order in Scotland since 1860: a social analysis

Book chapter (Author’s draft)

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The Orange Order in Ontario, Newfoundland, Scotland and Northern Ireland: A Macro-Social Analysis

The key concept when examining Orangeism is dominant ethnicity. By dominant ethnicity, I refer to the ethnic community within a nation - whether state or sub-state - that believes the nation to be 'its' nation, and is politically hegemonic. Often this group is also economically and culturally advantaged, and demographically dominant.1 In the case of English Canada, Northern Ireland, the west coast of Scotland and northwest England, the dominant ethnic group was 'British-Protestant'. This was frequently an amalgam of Scottish, Irish, English, and - in the case of Liverpool - some Welsh Protestant ancestry. To the extent that the dominant group was truly mixed-Britannic, it could freely express a powerful 'Britannic nationalism' through the symbolism of Empire.2 Where there was a strong indigenous Protestant ethnic group with its own pre-British history, as in the north or northeast of Scotland and in much of England, Orangeism did less well. There, people thought of their Britishness in civic terms as sitting on top of their Scottishness or Englishness. On the other hand, in the Britannic melting-pots of Northern Ireland, Canada, and, to a slightly lesser degree, Liverpool and west-central Scotland, Orangeism thrived.

Membership Trends Over Space

The place to begin is by looking at Orangeism internationally. What is strikingly clear is that by the year 1900, Orangeism, like the British Empire, was a worldwide movement in which a minority of members resided in Northern Ireland - or in Ireland as a whole. In that year, the Imperial Grand Council of the World reported that there were over 5000 Orange lodges worldwide, including some 1700 in Canada and Newfoundland, 1600 in Ireland and 800 in the United States. The key figure, however, is not the number of lodges reported, but the dues paid - which reflects total membership. Here we find that Ireland and British North America account for at least 90 percent of the total.3 Yet the irregularity of dues payments makes it difficult to pinpoint the accurate figures beyond rough proportions. Taking data for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Canada from elsewhere and deducing English numbers on a dues basis, we find that the membership is dominated by Canada, Newfoundland and Northern Ireland in the twentieth century.4
Canadian and Newfoundland membership exceeded that in Ireland by the turn of the century, despite having a similar sized Protestant population. Canadian and Newfoundland membership peaked in 1920, at which time these two locations accounted for almost sixty percent of international membership. If we exclude the smaller jurisdictions of the United States, Australasia and the Irish Free State, this rises to 61.6 percent. The Canadian and Newfoundland lodges also had twice the membership of their Northern Irish counterparts at this point. Sharp membership decline in much of Canada in the 1920-38 period reduced the Canadian advantage so that by the end of the Second World War, Northern Ireland had edged ahead of Canada. The 'Ulsterization' of the Order continues to this day, with over 60 percent of members now based in Northern Ireland. The Canadian organization has experienced
such heavy decline that there is now little difference in size among the Scottish, English and Canadian branches of the organization.

In British North American terms, Ontario, New Brunswick and Newfoundland have been the leading Orange provinces. Yet New Brunswick's prominence belongs more to the nineteenth than the twentieth century. Its 11 percent share of Canadian and Newfoundland membership in 1901 had declined to 6 percent by 1918. In the 1918-25 period, New Brunswick's membership was again cut in half, and it never recovered. On the other hand, Ontario and Newfoundland generally comprised around three-quarters of British North American membership in the twentieth century, although Newfoundland became increasingly important after World War II and now makes up half the Canadian membership.  

Figure 2.
In making sense of these trends, one must always be mindful of the target population of British-origin Protestants. On this basis, we can calculate the per capita strength, or 'density', of Orangeism among the Protestant male adults of each of the major jurisdictions. Taking 1920 - the period of greatest Orange strength - as a baseline, we find that the most Orange spot in the world was Newfoundland. In 1920, over a third of its adult male Protestants were Orange members - a staggering statistic when we bear in mind that many more would have been initiated into the organization but may not have been current members. Membership density in Northern Ireland was considerably lower, at one in five of the target population. Ontario membership
density was just half of Northern Ireland, with west-central Scotland well behind at under 2 percent.6

Figure 3.

Orange Membership per Adult Male Protestant Population, International, 1920

Source: See note 25.

Regional Variations

In regional terms, membership density also varied a great deal. For instance, within Northern Ireland during much of the twentieth century, roughly a third of Ulster Protestants from west of the Bann River were Orangemen while only one in ten east of the Bann (i.e. Antrim, Down, Belfast) were members. The origins of this difference are various. Arguably most important is the religious makeup of the respective parts of the province. Catholics are far more numerous west of the Bann, and this area has generally had only a slim Protestant majority throughout the twentieth century (now a Catholic majority). In addition, the established Church of Ireland and its associated traditions are strongest in Fermanagh, and weakest east of the Bann. Far more Protestants live in the East, so most lodges are there, but in per capita terms, Orange strength is weaker. Presbyterianism is much stronger East of the Bann (especially in Antrim), and Methodism has a firm base in Belfast. These churches were linked with tenants-rights and workers-rights campaigns against the established Ulster 'squirearchy', Belfast bourgeoisie and the established Church of Ireland since the late eighteenth century.
Outside Northern Ireland, we find other striking patterns. In Scotland, as can be seen in figure 5, there are virtually no lodges outside the central belt (i.e. in regions like the Highlands and Borders), and there is a marked concentration of lodges on the west coast around Glasgow and greater Clydeside. This is no accident: virtually all Irish settlement from the famine period onward came to the west-central area, although Dundee, in the east, forms a partial exception. Counties like West Lothian and Ayrshire received relatively large numbers of Irish-Protestants and fewer Irish Catholics and became among the strongest Orange counties. In Ontario (see figure 6), Dufferin County, north of Toronto, had the highest Orange density, and for good reason. The 1931 census found that 51 percent of Dufferin's British-Protestant residents were of Irish ancestry, the highest of any Ontario county. This predominance is less starkly evident in the heavily Orange Grey, Bruce and Peel counties early in the twentieth century, suggesting that other factors (which will be explored shortly) were also important.
Orange Lodges, Scotland, 2001, Weighted by Size

Figure 6. Orange Lodges, Ontario, c.1975

Source: Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland returns. Digital boundaries courtesy of EDINA/UK Borders.
This brings us to Newfoundland, where there has been virtually no Irish-Protestant settlement. Here a different dynamic from other locales appears to operate. Orange lodges are clustered throughout Newfoundland except for the Catholic St. Mary's Bay on the southern shore of the Avalon peninsula. A closer look at Orange density, though, shows that the Order's strength is greatest outside the more densely-populated Avalon along the south and east coasts of 'mainland' Newfoundland. In the long right-angle sweeping from Fortune and Placentia to Trinity and Bonavista bays, over a third of adult male Protestants would have been Orangemen in 1945, rising to half in the Burin peninsula. On the other hand, little more than 5 percent of St. Johns' Protestants were Orangemen, and Orange strength was not much greater in Labrador, Humber and Grand Falls.

Figure 7. Orange Lodges, Newfoundland, 1961 (Weighted by Size)
A multiple regression analysis of membership density on the 1945 Newfoundland census finds that the only reliable predictor of Orange strength is the close-knit nature of the population (measured by proportion of migrants from other census divisions), and, marginally, the sex ratio of men to women. Religious denomination does not enter the picture and the proportion of Catholics is strikingly insignificant. Transience, defined as the proportion of residents from another district, is greatest in St. Johns and more outlying districts like Labrador or the paper-producing community of Grand Falls. Can we find a similar pattern elsewhere?

Interestingly, a map of Orange density in Northern Ireland (see figure 8) today shows precisely the same pattern: Belfast, Londonderry and smaller urban centres are extremely weak Orange areas as indicated by light colours. Even in the Orange heartland, larger towns like Dungannon, Lurgan and Cookstown form light patches of weak Orangeism within the fiercely Orange rural hinterland. Thus towns (which tend to have a greater proportion of in-migrants than rural areas) tend to be less fertile ground for Orangeism.

Figure 8. Orange Density by District Electoral Area, Northern Ireland, 1991 (no data from Co. Antrim)
Comparative Geographical and Historical Trends

A geographical analysis is useful for highlighting membership trends over space - but the factors that cause Orange membership to be stronger in one area than another are often not the same factors that explain membership fluctuations over time. For example, Orangeism may be stronger in counties of Ontario or Scotland first settled by Irish-Protestants. But once this initial pattern has been established, membership fluctuation may have more to do with other forces. A multiple-regression analysis that looks at a wide range of different variables will be useful in teasing out the leading causes of shifts in membership density.

One way to test this is to look at changes in the geographic patterns over time. We begin with tests for the period 1891-1961 for Ontario counties and 1861-1991 in Scotland (counties) using census data. We need to bear in mind, though, that censuses are taken only every 10-20 years so any time-series cross-sectional (pooled) analysis will be dominated by the differences across county rather than over time. Our analysis in figure 9 bears this out. In Ontario, the Irish proportion of the British-Protestant population of a county (defined on the basis of 1931 census data) predicted Orange density almost three times better than the next most prominent factor which was the French-Catholic proportion in the total population. Also significant, albeit somewhat less important, was the proportion of Protestants who were members of the Presbyterian and Methodist churches that did not join the United Church of Canada in 1925. This more conservative Protestant factor, along with measures of rural residence, predicted higher Orange membership. Finally, the higher the Scottish proportion of the British-Protestant population, the lower the Orange participation.
Turning next to Scotland (see figure 10), we find that the by far the strongest predictor is also the Irish-Protestant percentage (z-score of 17), with the proportion of Catholics weaker than various events at explaining membership, but still significant. On the other hand, the agricultural proportion was found to be negatively associated with Orange participation at a z-score of around 3. Recall that this contrasts with the findings in Ontario, Northern Ireland and Newfoundland where rural populations were more close-knit and more Orange. This discrepancy is probably explained by the fact that Irish-Protestant immigrants came to Scotland to work in the industrial cities and towns while Orangeism remained a foreign import among the native Scots population, even in the agricultural areas of west-central Scotland.
In both Ontario and Scotland, Irish-Protestant immigration was the most important factor in explaining the strength of Orangeism among Protestants. In Northern Ireland, the size of the local Catholic population in the county was key for the 1901-1971 period. This factor also looms large in Ontario and Scotland, where the proportion of local Catholics in a county was significantly related to the strength of Orangeism. An extreme case of this can be seen in Northern Ireland in South Down and South-west Armagh (around Keady-Newtownhamilton). These areas are sometimes viewed as 'bandit' (i.e. IRA) country by local Protestants, but the minority status of the local Protestant population has caused them to band together strongly in Orange lodges. As a result, while Orangeism has declined in more Protestant North Down and North Armagh over the past few decades, it has retained its strength in the southern border zones - even as the Protestant population has been migrating away from these areas to the north.

Does Catholic population always stimulate Orangeism? Clearly not. Newfoundland stands as the great exception to the rule of Catholic competition, which we will come to later on. In the meantime, notice that the rural inflection of Newfoundland Orangeism's strength has echoes in Ontario and Northern Ireland, where rural areas are also more strongly Orange. We see this in the relative weakness of Orangeism among Protestants in the 'capitals' of St Johns, Toronto, Glasgow and
Belfast. In 1951, the 5000 Orangemen of Toronto represented just under 2 percent of the city's British-Protestant male adult population, down from its 1921 peak of about 7 percent. Also in 1951, the 4000 Orangemen of Glasgow represented about 2 percent of that city's target population, while in St. Johns, the 500 local Orangemen formed just 4 percent of the city's adult male Protestant population. In Belfast, by contrast, the city's Orangemen were at the peak of their strength in 1951: roughly 15,000, or about 15 percent of the target population of 110,000 male non-Catholic adults. Yet, historically, the Belfast Order enrolled only about ten percent of eligible Protestants in the twentieth century and today, the 3000 Orangemen in the city number not more than 5 percent of the adult male Protestant population.

All told, the magnitude of the rural effect is strongest in Newfoundland and weakest in Scotland. In Northern Ireland, the magnitude of the urban-rural trend is a comparatively recent development. In other words, the rural-urban divide within Ulster Orangeism has widened as urban areas have lost large proportions of their membership in response to post-1960 trends. Let us consider this recent development more closely because it turns out to be important in all of our cases.

The Coming of Post-Industrial Society

Daniel Bell's classic work, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973), foretold of major occupational shifts from industrial sectors to 'tertiary' sectors like services and the professions. Bell is also known among sociologists for highlighting the change in the cultural ethos of modern western societies toward 'antinomian' individualism, de-traditionalization and cultural relativism. In a different vein, Robert Putnam points out that from his sample of more than a hundred American chapter-based associations, the general trend was growth until 1929 (punctuated by World War I), followed by decline during the Great Depression, strong recovery after World War II, growth until the early 1960s, and steady decline thereafter. The latter phenomenon Putnam refers to as reflecting a decline in 'social capital' or associational connectedness.

Examining the occasionally fragmentary record of membership across Northern Ireland, Scotland, Ontario West and Newfoundland during 1901-2004 in figure 11, we find some similarities in historical membership trends. The period from 1900 until 1914 was one of rising fortunes for all branches of the Order. This was particularly the case for Newfoundland, where membership quadrupled inside twenty years. In Ontario West, membership doubled in the period 1900 to 1920, and in Scotland, membership had doubled between 1900 and 1913. Gains were more modest in Northern Ireland, as indicated by County Down figures, but even here, membership in 1920 was up by 50 percent over its 1900 level.

World War I itself, which featured such gruesome campaigns as the Battle of the Somme, claimed a disproportionate death toll among the Ulster 36th and Newfoundland Regiments. Its impact on membership was not, however, uniform. Even taking into account variations in record-keeping, it is startling to see how the Great War led to membership decline in Scotland and County Down (and probably the rest of Northern Ireland), but had no effect on the rising trajectory of Ontario and Newfoundland Orangeism. After 1918, Ontario West membership reached its peak and began to decline. Newfoundland membership and County Down membership also peaked in the 1918-20 period and entered a period of decline. Scotland, however, rebounded strongly after 1918 – one possible explanation being the explosive sectarian controversy generated by the 1918 Education Act which introduced state
funding for Catholic schools.\textsuperscript{11} Ontario West membership patterns began to diverge at this point. Whereas Newfoundland, Scotland and County Down (Northern Ireland) had their ups and downs, Ontario West’s decline appears steadier and more protracted. All jurisdictions declined during the Great Depression (1929-33) and recovered during 1941-2, but by 1942, Ontario West was the only jurisdiction to have fewer members than it did at the start of the century.

Figure 11.

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Figure 12 shows how things developed in the post-1945 period. Here we include figures from the Canadian and Newfoundland Ladies Orange Benevolent Association (LOBA) and we have a better record of Northern Ireland-wide data. In County Down and Ontario West, the postwar membership peak was attained in 1949-50. Northern Ireland membership as a whole peaked around 1960 (this balances mid-50s peaks for the East Bann counties with mid-60s peaks for West Bann counties).\textsuperscript{12} The number of Canadian Orangewomen peaked in the mid-50s, but their Newfoundland sisters continued growing strongly until 1963. It appears as though Newfoundland Orangeism (men and women) held its strength for 5-10 years longer than in Ontario.\textsuperscript{13} Recall Robert Putnam’s work which showed that chapter-based organizations peaked in the US around 1960 and declined thereafter. This ‘Putnam effect,’ linked to generational changes in attitudes toward ‘joining’ and social connectedness, shows up strongly in the Canadian jurisdictions, whose numbers were in free fall by the early 60s.

In Northern Ireland, decline was delayed by the violence of the Troubles which led to a membership ‘bounce’ between 1969-72, but thereafter, the rate of decline has been similar to that of the Canadians. Scotland appears to buck the trend, and membership remained buoyant until 1987, when it began to decline in line with the other jurisdictions. The exact source of Scottish exceptionalism is somewhat mysterious, although 1987 was the date of the Pope’s first visit to Scotland – a major setback for Orange political aspirations and an event that may explain subsequent decline. Scottish Orangeism’s membership persistence may owe something to the way
Rangers-Celtic matches 'translated' sectarianism into the postmodern age. Thus even as religion declined, the ubiquity of Premiership football may have endowed Orangeism with relevance for many young Protestant Scots. But the general trend remains, and it is vital to note that the Scottish case is really only exceptional for males. Scottish female membership, which exceeded male membership during 1930-50, peaked in the early 1950s and junior membership reached its peak in the late 1960s.

Figure 12.


The Role of Events

We explained much of the geographical membership variation in terms of three key cultural factors (in descending order of importance): Irish-Protestant ethnicity, the proportion of local Catholics and the Protestant denomination. Economic factors like occupation, houses, mortality and class were insignificant predictors of Orange density in all areas, though the rural/urban divide (linked to the divide between close-knit *gemeinschaft* and looser *gesellschaft* societies) seems to matter in all jurisdictions apart from Scotland. On the other hand, the tone of the discussion above explaining membership fluctuations over time suggests that events like the world wars, depression or episodes of political violence are key. But are they? One way to find out is to interpolate decennial census data to bridge census years and compare this annual estimated data with annual membership figures, major historical events and population data. This is an extensive exercise which I have only completed for Scotland (1861-2001), but the results suggest that cultural factors (notably Irish-Protestant ethnicity and the proportion of Catholics) remain the strongest predictors of
membership variation. Economic factors are the weakest predictors, and events lay in between. This confirms Cecil Houston and William Smyth's observation in Ontario that geographical spread and local factors played more of a role in Orange expansion than wider political events.  

During the mature phase of Orangeism in the twentieth century, when most lodges were established, wider events also appear to bear little relationship to the long run trend of membership decline. They can have an impact on membership in the short run, but there are not enough key events to account for the overall trend of membership unless we adopt a highly implausible explanation based on the sequestration and graduated delayed impact of events. In addition, event-driven effects are strongly mediated by locale. This can be gauged by examining the impact of the 'Troubles' peak of violence in Northern Ireland during 1969-72. Membership in this period rose 3 percent in Northern Ireland, but jumped 15 percent in Belfast and 23 percent in Portadown. In Portadown, the Drumcree conflict of 1995-8 sent membership up 15 percent. Marches stopped in 1998 and during 1999-2004, Portadown membership plummeted by 35 percent. In the province as a whole, though, membership hardly budged from trend.

Individual Data: Class, Religion, Ethnicity

Much of the analysis we have presented is based on county-level aggregate data which compares census data and membership. But individual-level records largely confirm our findings. For instance, an analysis of all lodge masters and secretaries (256 in sample) from the Scottish Orange directory of 1881 against the nominal census of Scotland in that year paints a clearer picture: fully 72 percent were Irish-born. The average age was 39, almost all were working-class (just 4.8% were nonmanual), with a slight majority in skilled as opposed to unskilled trades. Given the occupational background of most inhabitants of central Scotland at the time (which was not vastly dissimilar to this), the birthplace of Scottish Orangemen stands out far more dramatically than their occupational profile, which confirms our thesis regarding the relative importance of religio-ethnic over structural factors. It also confirms the ethnic Irishness of Scottish Orangeism.

No ethnic data are freely available for years after 1881 (1891 and 1901 data are available for a fee), but we can still track occupational data through valuation rolls. Examining the valuation rolls of 1911 for Glasgow shows a much higher representation of petit-bourgeois occupations like shopkeeper and clerk than in Scotland as a whole in 1881. Fully 27 percent of our sample of 99 masters and secretaries from the city were in this category in 1911. This has less to do with changes between 1881 and 1911 than it does with the geographical fact that Glasgow had a higher proportion of nonmanual occupations than surrounding west-central belt towns. As with the 1881 Scottish lodge officers, the 1911 Glasgow Orangemen reflected the occupational structure of their city and this should dispel any notion that Orangeism was a unique product of class, as opposed to ethno-religious, relationships. That said, the class profile of Scottish Orangemen did increasingly stand out after the 1950s because it was essentially the same as it was in 1881 while the country as a whole had shifted in a far more post-industrial and professional direction.

A similar exercise was conducted for Ontario (East and West) in 1901. Here we were able to find 345 masters and secretaries. There was very strong representation from farmers, but a fair sprinkling of both petit-bourgeois (clerks and
hardware store owners, for example) and some professionals. Again, what stands out is not class but ethnicity: while 29% of Ontario’s Protestant population was of Irish ancestry, 61% of Ontario’s Orangemen were of Irish ethnicity. On the other hand, Scots and English were both underrepresented within the Order in 1901. In terms of religion, the largest overrepresentation was Anglican (32% in the Orange Order vs. 17% in the Ontario Protestant population), but it is worth noting that Methodists were also overrepresented by nine percentage points. Indeed, the largest ethno-religious group in the Ontario Order was Irish Methodist (23.5%) followed closely by Irish Anglican (22.3%) with Irish Presbyterianism a distant third at 13.9 percent. One major difference from Scotland concerns birthplace – over 85 percent of the Ontario sample were born in Ontario and just 6.7 percent hailed from Ireland. Though twenty years might have made some difference to the nativity of Scots Orangemen, this provides pretty strong evidence that the Order assimilated much better in largely rural Ontario than it did in industrial west-central Scotland. The conversion of the Irish to North American Methodism is further proof of their adaptability, for few brought it from the Old Country. In no county in Ulster did Methodists account for more than eight percent of the Protestant total. Host receptivity was also important: much of the literature on Scottish Orangeism emphasizes the suspicion and aloofness of the native Scots population to what was seen as a foreign import.

Yet another factor may have been the source regions and adaptability of the original Irish settlers. Akenson notes that most Irish-Protestants in Canada hailed from the northern half of Ireland but few from Presbyterian East Ulster. We also know from the 1871 census that a minority of Irish-Protestant Canadians were Presbyterian. Many of the Irish counties with the highest rates of out-migration were conservative agricultural counties settled by English planters and Church of Ireland in religion. The strongest Orange counties in the nineteenth century were Church of Ireland-dominated Ulster border counties like Cavan, Monaghan, Tyrone and Fermanagh. By contrast, Brenda Collins proffers that between a quarter and a third of Irish immigrants to Scotland in the 1880-1910 period were from strongly Presbyterian Antrim alone while Hutchison estimates that roughly 60 percent of Irish immigrants to Scotland in the 1876-81 period came from the four most Protestant counties (Antrim, Down, Armagh, Londonderry). Thus - in contrast to the prevailing wisdom - it seems that Scotland's Irish-Protestant immigrants were generally drawn from the least Orange sections of Ulster while Canadian Irish-Protestants may have originated from more Orange regions.

A similar exercise for Northern Ireland on a smaller scale using 1901 textual nominal census data showed that half of the 93 Belfast lodge masters and secretaries sampled were Church of Ireland in religion, as opposed to 39 percent among the general Protestant population in the city. In terms of class, 81 percent were manual workers, with a 50-30 tilt toward skilled operatives, and 18 percent were petit-bourgeois. Among district officers, the Church of Ireland factor was even more important: 53 percent of our sample of 39 Belfast officers and 63 percent of our Tyrone sample of 33 hailed from this denomination – the latter in a county where only 50 percent of Protestants were Church of Ireland. In terms of age, district officers were 47 in both counties, but just 34 among local lodge masters and secretaries. Both the Tyrone and Belfast class profiles show that Orange district officers were part of the middle or elite classes: in Belfast, 46 percent were petit-bourgeois and 8 percent professional. In Tyrone, 23 percent of district officers were professionals or ministers. However, in terms of the wider swath of membership – as illustrated by the local
lodge sample for Belfast – neither class nor denomination jumps out as strikingly significant in 1901 though the Church of Ireland is somewhat overrepresented.  

As in Scotland, though, these dynamics changed over time. Looking at a healthy sample of over 4000 recruits into the Belfast Order in 1961, 1965, 1971, 1981, and 1986, the denominational factor had completely disappeared by 1961 and the Belfast Order perfectly reflected the city’s denominational mix. In terms of class, however, the background of Belfast Orange recruits is probably very similar to what it was at the turn of the century. As in Scotland, the Order’s class position has ‘slipped’ vis à vis the wider society in the twentieth century and there is little representation from the new tertiary and service sectors. Even so, the paucity of petit-bourgeois and professional occupations among these young (early 20s) Belfast initiates is interesting - nonmanual occupations never make up more than 10 percent of the sample. Moreover, the decline of apprentices, from 20 percent in 1961 to under 3 percent in 1986 and the concomitant rise of unemployed recruits from nil in 1971 to almost 15 percent in 1986 reflects the deindustrialization of the city’s proletariat in these years.

Political Influence

We have tracked the sociology of Orangeism as an association representing the dominant Protestant ethnic group, but what can we say about its political activity? Let us begin by noting that the Orange Order has been a political animal in virtually every jurisdiction it has inhabited, at the local, provincial and national levels. Part of this activism is abetted by the training in public speaking, networking and running for office which ambitious Orangemen acquire as they ascend the Orange hierarchy from the local through to the Grand Lodge. These activities help to equip its members with vital civic skills, something Putnam has remarked upon as a hallmark of many chapter-based associations.

More important, however, is the Order’s curious position as part pressure group, part association. Pressure groups are known for their short life-cycle, while established associations with deep communal roots like churches are far more enduring, though often less politically active. The Order combines both, which allows it to withstand the vagaries of politics without disappearing, but also creates tension between its political and religious goals. Such a fissure is continually reflected in debates within the Order between those who want it to have a more active political role and those who feel that its principles and constitution stipulate it to be a religious association. Those who opposed the Order taking a political stand have tended to be supporters of parties other than the Official or Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), hence their wish for it not to be associated with ‘politics’, i.e. the UUP.

This controversy flares up regularly in the Northern Ireland Order, where the Grand Lodge’s links to the Official or Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) which governed Northern Ireland continuously from 1922 until 2003 have been bitterly criticized by both right-leaning Independent/Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) voters and leftist Northern Ireland Labour voters since the early 1950s. In 1953, for instance, the Grand Lodge’s inner sanctum, the Central Committee, felt confident enough in its position to ‘call upon every member of the Orange Institution to vote for and support…the Official Unionist [i.e. UUP] candidates, and thus to ensure a successful return of a Unionist Government with a triumphant majority.’ This blatant assertion of UUP-Orange unanimity did not meet with unanimous approval, however. Speaking for the Belfast County Grand Lodge, Sam Campbell, supported by several Belfast Central Committee members, later opined that many 'Labour men were good enough Unionists.' Here we see that the Central Committee, led by Grand Master John
Andrews, a former (UUP) Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, was encountering stiff resistance from the strong Belfast-based Labourite minority. In Antrim, the opposition came from the Paisleyite/Independentist right. As Antrim Central Committee representative Rev. A.J. Finch argued after the Dungiven Parade controversy of 1953-4, when the UUP banned a local Orange parade in a 90 percent Catholic town, ‘The Orange Order exists to defend the cause of Protestantism and not to defend a particular Political Party.’ Finch’s argument was reiterated by the same county fifty years later, when Antrim lodges were in the forefront of pushing for a severance of the link to the UUP, and the County lodge refused to pay its dues to the party.

The Orange-UUP link highlights the connection between civil society and politics, between social divisions and the party-political boundaries which form on top of them. The literature on electoral cleavages recognizes the cardinal role of associations such as churches, unions or pressure groups in maintaining political differences. Mass social organizations may engage in lobbying, voter mobilization and propaganda efforts, and attempt to influence or control parties' constituency-associations - in the process helping to furnish parties with political candidates. In certain cases, these associations have organic links to major parties which may be explicitly formulated in party constitutions. The link between trade unions and the Labour Party in Britain may be usefully compared with the connection between the Orange Order and Ulster Unionist Party in Northern Ireland. Similar links exist in other societies. For instance, the Hindu nationalist Hindu Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) fraternity is linked to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) party in India, and the Afrikaner Broederbond was connected to the National Party in apartheid South Africa. At a local level, the Orange Order has maintained links with conservative municipal politicians in Liverpool, the west of Scotland, and in Ontario – especially in Toronto. In Newfoundland, the Order has been associated with the Liberal Party since Confederation in 1949 and in Northern Ireland it was linked to the Ulster Unionist Party until 2005. Members of the Order have also been involved with militant Protestant parties led by charismatic figures, but – and this is crucial – the Order itself has generally not endorsed these militant ventures because of its mistrust of street politics and its desire to tack to the centre of its constituency.

The nature of the political system in which the Order operates is also important. In Scotland, Newfoundland and Ontario (as in Canada at the federal level), there is a Westminster system with pragmatic ‘catchall’ parties like Liberal, Conservative or Labour/New Democratic Party based on class ideology. The system makes it tough for sectarian parties to emerge and encourages parties to reach to the centre for votes beyond their ethnoreligious base. Lines of class and region cross-cut the ethnoreligious cleavage thereby making it much harder to mobilize voters along ethnoreligious lines. Residential segregation is also much less pervasive (except in pre-1960s central Liverpool and to a lesser degree in Glasgow), which undercuts ethnic appeals at ward and constituency level.

In Northern Ireland, by contrast, the political system has been based on the ethnoreligious cleavage between Ulster-Protestants and Catholic-Nationalists since partition. Competition between parties occurs within ethnic blocs and is aimed at ‘outbidding’ mainstream parties by appealing to the sectarian extremes. This ‘outbidding’ dynamic has been noted in numerous other divided societies and arises because it is futile for parties to appeal across the communal divide since this strategy will gain few votes from the other ethnic group while losing many from a party’s own group. Unsurprisingly, the link between Orangeism and politics is strongest in Northern Ireland. During the Stormont period (1922-72) when the Unionist Party
ruled the province, all Prime Ministers of Northern Ireland and all but three cabinet ministers were Orangemen. In a year 2000 study, roughly half the Ulster Unionist Party’s 900-member governing body (the Ulster Unionist Council) were shown to be Orangemen or women, and most UUP MPs and MLAs were as well.

At the elite level, Orangeism has also wielded influence in other jurisdictions, but has never dominated to the same extent as in Northern Ireland, except perhaps at the local level. Toronto has clearly been the epicentre of political Orangeism outside Ulster. For example, the ‘Belfast of Canada’ has had thirty Orange mayors in its history, and few non-Orangemen could win the job until the 1960s. The Ontario legislature was one-third Orange in 1920. No fewer than four Ontario premiers -- Howard Ferguson (1923-1930), George Henry (1930-34), Thomas Kennedy (1948-49) and Leslie Frost (1949-61) -- have been Orangemen. At the national level, four Canadian Tory prime ministers were Orange: Sir John A. Macdonald (1867-1873, 1878-1891), John Abbott (1891-2), Mackenzie Bowell (1894-6) and John Diefenbaker (1957-1963). In Newfoundland, the Order’s representation in high politics has arguably been even stronger. For instance, the House of Assembly in 1885 was two-thirds Protestant, and half the Protestant MLAs were Orangemen. Four Orangemen have served as Prime Ministers of Newfoundland: William Whiteway (1889-94, 1895-7), James Winter (1897-1900), Robert Bond (1900-09) and Richard Squires (1917-23, 1928-32). In addition, the long-serving Joey Smallwood, premier of Newfoundland from confederation in 1949 until 1972, was an Orangeman.

In Scotland, the smaller size of the Order is reflected in its more limited electoral clout. Nonetheless, the Scottish Order was very important in establishing a working-class Tory base in the 1880s through Working Men’s Conservative Associations in the west of Scotland. In Glasgow, the Order played an important part in municipal politics until the 1930s, though it never dominated city politics to the same extent as in Toronto. Nationally, in the 1880s and 90s, James Bain, Archibald Campbell and William Whitelaw were the first Scottish Orange MPs. The surge in Orangeism and Protestant politics more generally in the 1920s and 30s following the 1918 Education Act brought at least six new Orange M.P.s to Parliament. These included Sir John Gilmour, who served as Secretary of State for Scotland (1924-29), Col. A.D. McInnes Shaw (also Grand Master), General Hunter Weston, Lt. Col. T.E.R. Moore, William Templeton and Sir John Baird. Overall, however, it is clear that the Order in Scotland only furnished a fraction of the number of politicians it did in Canada and Northern Ireland. We may thus surmise that political influence seems to be linked to the numerical strength of Orange membership, with the caveat that, as we will see for Newfoundland, cross-cutting cleavages tend to weaken Orange influence even if membership is high.

A major question that arises from this discussion of high politics is whether the Orange representatives acted in the Protestant interest or were only ‘nominal’ Orangemen who toed their party line. Here the difference in the political environment between Northern Ireland and the other locales is reflected in the relative power of the Orange Order. In Northern Ireland, for example, the Order’s leaders generally conspired to maintain the system of inequality in the allocation of housing and employment in favour of Protestants during the Stormont period. However, Northern Ireland falls under British jurisdiction and the post-1945 British governments were determined to implement a universal welfare state in Northern Ireland. This led to growing pressure on Northern Ireland’s Unionist Party leaders to keep their sectarian grassroots in check. In its first forty years, Northern Ireland had just three prime
ministers, James Craig, John Andrews and Basil Brooke. All were staunchly Orange, and Andrews served as Grand Master (1948-55) while Basil Brooke was active in the Grand Lodge. After 1963, however, Prime Ministers Terence O’Neill (1963-69), James Chichester-Clark (1969-71) and Brian Faulkner (1972-74) tried to implement reforms. In all three cases, pressure from the Orange grassroots was immense, and these leaders were forced to back away from controversial measures like parade bans or power-sharing which they had promised to the British government. Thus the Order was able to compel their resignation. O’Neill, Chichester-Clark and Faulkner had all earned their spurs as hardline Orangemen before becoming elected as Unionist leaders, but their Orange commitments had always been more nominal than real, and their appearance at the Grand Lodge typically only began in the year or two before they made their Unionist leadership bid. The same could be said for David Trimble (1995-2004) and his hardline performance at Drumcree 1995, whereas the other UUP leaders, Harry West (1975-78) and James Molyneaux (1979-94), had longer histories of genuine Orange activism and as a result did not accede to British-driven reforms.44

In Canada, some see party politics as having historically developed as a ‘franchise’ model, whereby local constituency associations have a great deal of autonomy but little national policy input.45 In addition, the liberal/conservative divide between reformers and the Tory elite cut across religious lines in the nineteenth century. This cross-cutting cleavage and the dynamics of the Canadian political system prevented the emergence of an ethnoreligious cleavage. We can see this in the way Tory and Liberal-Conservative party leaders periodically assembled complex coalitions like the ‘Orange-Green-Bleu’ post-1836 alliance which united Irish and French Catholics with Ontario Orange Protestants.46 In Ontario, many Catholics voted for the Tories during the nineteenth century. In addition, there were strong differences between the reformist inclinations of Protestants of American and Scottish origin (notably in southwestern Ontario) and the conservative instincts of the more Orange eastern part of the province in the triangle between Toronto, Collingwood and Kingston. After 1890 (some view the 1876 Grand Orange Lodge of Canada sessions as the decisive turning point), Ontario politics began to change and became more polarized along sectarian lines.47 Whatever the relationship in the nineteenth century, it is certainly true that Orangeism helped the Ontario Tories in the twentieth. We can see this statistically by examining Don Blake’s electoral-census county data for the period 1908-1968. Counties with higher Orange densities voted significantly more Tory than those where Protestants were less Orange.48

This does not mean the Order’s politicians always remained true to their principles, however. Prominent Orange policy successes driven by Orange politicians were few. They included John A. Macdonald’s leaving the Royal Tour of 1860 in support of Kingston Orangemen, despite his official duty to accompany the anti-Orange Duke of Newcastle. Another of the rare examples is Ontario MPP George Henry’s successful motion to repeal Mitch Hepburn’s 1936 Separate School Funding bill.49 On the other hand, in most cases, elected Orangemen defied the grassroots in search of the electorally more lucrative centre ground. For instance, Orangeman Leslie Frost – in response to Catholic pressure - was the Ontario premier who brought in state funding for separate schools a quarter century after Hepburn.50 Earlier in the century, Orange Prime Minister Mackenzie Bowell, courting Catholic support, had tried to force Manitoba to reintroduce funding for Catholic schools in 1896. Those Orange MPs who rebelled against him he later labeled a ‘nest of traitors’. Likewise, many Orange MPs voted with their party in support of the pro-Catholic Jesuit Estates...
Act of 1889, though many paid an electoral price in the 1891 election.\textsuperscript{51} As Toronto Orangeman and historian Alex Rough observes, the Order could get the vote out and get people elected, but once in power, ‘we toed the [Tory] party line nearly every time.’\textsuperscript{52}

Similar examples of this behaviour can be found in Newfoundland. For example, in 1885, memories of the deaths of several Orangemen in the ‘Harbour Grace Affray’ of 1883 at the hands of a Catholic mob were still fresh. These men had been acquitted and this prompted the unprecedented rise of a Protestants-only Reform Party in contravention of the longstanding power-sharing tradition represented by the existing administration of Orangeman William Whiteway whose deputy was the Catholic Ambrose Shea. Though the Reform party was elected on a promise of ‘no amalgamation with Catholics’, it broke this promise within months of attaining office when it welcomed a section of Liberal-Catholic MLAs into its fold. The time-honoured pattern of trans-sectarian electoral alliances had re-established itself as the government sought support from Catholics to make up for divisions within its own ranks. Not only that, but Orange House Speaker Robert Bond spoke out against the Reform Party’s Orange Incorporation Bill and Grand Master James Winter was rumoured to have conspired against its passing.\textsuperscript{53} As Elinor Senior remarks, ‘The amalgamation indicated that the sectarian animosity aroused by politicians for election purposes was easily dispensed with…even though it had a tendency to linger among the less sophisticated of the population.’\textsuperscript{54}

Once again, much of this can be traced to cross-cutting cleavages such as the issue of Newfoundland’s confederation with Canada. This issue cut across the Protestant-Catholic divide, even though most Catholics were anti-confederate and a small majority of Protestants were pro-Confederate. Nonetheless, Confederates tried to mobilize the Protestant vote to their cause. Just prior to Confederation, in 1948, an ‘Orange Letter’ was sent by Grand Lodge to all lodges warning of a Catholic conspiracy to vote en bloc against Confederation. This may have swayed some Orangemen to vote for the Confederates, but it angered just as many. For example, after the vote, L.O.L.# 26 in Cupids (Conception Bay) fumed: ‘We protest against use of Grand Lodge funds for printing unnecessary circulars’.\textsuperscript{55} Statistical analysis of the 1948 confederation vote shows that while the proportion of Catholic voters in a district was a significant predictor of an anti-Confederation vote, the strength of Orangeism among Protestants had no significant impact at all.\textsuperscript{56}

In Scotland, as in Canada and Newfoundland, Orange MPs had little influence over the course of Tory/Unionist policy owing to the power of cross-cutting cleavages of class and the fact that sectarian issues had little resonance outside specific working-class locales in west-central Scotland. In the main, the Scottish Unionists welcomed the Orange element as a way of mobilizing a working-class vote, but kept the Order at arm’s length when it came to the party’s policies and image.\textsuperscript{57} The Scottish Orange MP Sir John Gilmour, for example, as Secretary of State for Scotland, rebuffed the Church of Scotland’s appeal to regulate Irish immigration to Scotland which the Kirk feared was a ‘menace’ to the Scottish ‘race’. Meanwhile, the Orange Unionist councillor Sir Charles Cleland defended the 1918 Education Act against Protestant grassroots accusations of ‘Rome on the Rates’.\textsuperscript{58} In electoral terms, I could find no significant Orange effect on the Scottish national vote at either the county level (1861-1961) or in Glasgow at the ward level (1922-47).\textsuperscript{59} In both cases, class and the proportion of Catholics were highly significant factors, suggesting that trade unions and Catholics were more highly mobilized (as Labour or Liberal supporters) than were Orange men and women.
Conclusion

This overview of the Orange Order seeks to sketch the broad outlines of Orange social and political power. It shows that the Protestants of Newfoundland were the most Orange in the world in the early to mid-twentieth century. A third of Newfoundland Protestant males in 1920 were Orangemen, which was considerably higher than the corresponding rate in Northern Ireland (20%), Ontario (10%) or west-central Scotland (2%). Participation in the Order appears to have been strongest in close-knit rural areas like Newfoundland outports and Northern Ireland’s border hamlets. It has been generally strengthened by the presence of a large Catholic population (except in Newfoundland) and, in Scotland and Ontario, by Irish-Protestant immigrants and their descendants. What is clear, though, is that no single factor explains cross-county Orange membership variation across all jurisdictions – thereby underlining the importance of local, contextual factors in shaping the more general forces acting on membership. The Orange Order served as the associational nexus of the Protestant dominant ethnic group in each area, but this was less true in Scotland. While Protestants in Ontario, Newfoundland and Ulster were composite groups who identified their ethnicity as irreducibly ‘British’, the dominant group in Scotland was Scottish first, and their Britishness was a civic layer which sat on top of their Scottish ethnicity. This meant that Orangeism would always be more ‘foreign’ in Scotland than elsewhere and had greater difficulty achieving acceptance and mass penetration as the associational backbone of the dominant group. Overall, cultural variables best explain Orange membership differences between Protestants in different places, with economic factors - especially class and occupation - being less important.

Looking at membership trends over time, on the other hand, events are more important, but less so than broader social factors. We can spot certain similarities across all Orange jurisdictions. Membership rose everywhere between 1900 and 1914. The Depression caused membership decline in all cases, while global membership received a boost from the mobilization of World War II. Likewise, all jurisdictions of Orangeism were experiencing decline by the mid-1960s, though Scottish males bucked the trend until 1987. These patterns are similar to those observed by Robert Putnam for chapter-based associations in the United States, and are likely linked to declines in ‘social capital’ among the Baby Boom and subsequent generations. In terms of class, the Order’s occupational makeup tended to match that of the wider Protestant population in 1900, but had ‘slipped’ considerably by the late twentieth century as Orange recruits remained largely rural or working-class in the face of the expansion of the professions and other tertiary occupations.

Moving on to politics, the Order has played a political role in every location and has never been content to sit on the sidelines as a mere religious fraternity. It has tended to function as a lobby group and an organizational cog in the local Tory/Unionist machine. Its influence has varied depending on the nature of the local political system, and the numerical strength of Orangeism. Its force has been felt most keenly in Northern Ireland because the political system is strictly governed by the sectarian cleavage and few vote outside their ethno-religious bloc. This has allowed the Order to develop official ties to the governing Ulster Unionist Party and to discipline successive leaders who have strayed too far in the direction of pro-Catholic reform. In all other jurisdictions, by contrast, political cleavages are cross-cutting, so ethno-religious allegiances are bisected by class and ideology. Significant elements of
the Protestant population in the non-Ulster cases are primarily loyal to other identities: in Scotland, class-voting was key; in Ontario, there was a blend of ideology, region and class; and in Newfoundland, the Confederate/anti-Confederate divide was central. In Northern Ireland, there are very few Catholics who would vote for a non-Catholic party and so few incentives for Protestant politicians to risk losing core support to chase them. But this is not true elsewhere. As a result, parties are organized as ‘catchall’ parties and tack to the centre, careful to steer a middle course between Catholic and Orange extremes. This limits Orange power. Orange success has been greatest when it comes to getting Orange candidates elected and helping Tories/Unionists to win elections. However, outside Ulster, elected Orange politicians rarely did their supporters’ bidding and thus the Order’s success in fielding politicians rarely translated into concrete policy success.
The Republic of Ireland contained just 2500 members by 1938, compared to almost 58000 in the North. Figures were much higher in 1901 and 1918, but are not available. Data for Scotland from Grand Lodge of Scotland (GLS) reports of proceedings (dues); Data for Ontario West from Grand Lodge of Ontario West (GLOW) reports of proceedings (dues); Data from Newfoundland from Grand Lodge of Newfoundland (GLNF) reports of proceedings (members); Canadian totals for 1918 and 1925 provided in Grand Lodge of Ontario West report for 1944, pp. 65-66, otherwise calculated on the basis that Ontario West and Newfoundland comprise 75 percent of the total membership.

IGCW report, 1903. New Brunswick membership totals for 1918 and 1925 provided in GLOW report for 1944, pp. 65-66. Membership: GLOW return sheet from True Blue and Orange Home, Richmond Hill, Ont; GLS reports (dues); GLNF report, 1921; Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland (GOLI) return chart (adapted pro-rata from chart, courtesy of Grand Secretary Denis Watson); Census: Census of Canada, 1921; 1921 reports of the Registrar-General of Scotland; Census of Newfoundland, 1921; Census of Northern Ireland, 1926 in Database of Irish Historical Statistics: Census Material, 1901-1971, digital version compiled by M.W. Dowling et al. (UK Data Archive study SN 3542 http://www.data-archive.ac.uk). Note that Orange strength outside the west-central belt of Scotland was considerably lower.

Z-score is a measure of statistical significance (derived from comparing the coefficient of a variable with its standard error). TSCS refers to time-series cross sectional pooling, R sq (R-squared) is a measure of how well the independent variables predict the dependent variable (in this case Orange density).


Co. Down, Northern Ireland has been added owing to our good run of membership there and because its membership is a pretty good barometer of provincial membership.


Northern Ireland county returns, 1966-2004; Northern Ireland county reports, 1945-1966

Ontario East LOBA trends parallel those of Canada as a whole, and we may be fairly confident that Ontario trends match the Canadian ones as well. (Ontario E LOBA reports of proceedings)


Glasgow Valuation Rolls 1911; GLS report, 1911.


1901 Census of Ontario; 1901 Nominal Census of Ontario online: http://www.collectionscanada.ca/02/02012202_e.html; 1901 GLOW report, 1901 Grand Lodge of Ontario East report.

Census of Ireland 1901 in Database of Irish Historical Statistics.


Akenson, Donald Harman, The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History (Kingston-Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984). In 1885-1886, surviving county reports show over 2000 Orangemen in County Monaghan, representing approximately a third of the Protestant adult male population. (County Monaghan reports of proceedings 1885, 1886) Cavan undoubtedly had more Orangemen than Monaghan. In 1938, even after partition, there were 1100 Orangemen in Cavan as compared with 800 in Monaghan. Ten years later the figures were 1300 and 900. (adapted pro-rata from Grand Lodge of Ireland chart, courtesy of Grand Secretary Denis Watson)


1901 Nominal Census of Ireland at PRONI; 1901 GOLI report.
29 GOLI Central Committee (CC) minutes, 13 October 1953.
30 GOLI CC Minutes 4 December 1953.
31 GOLI CC Minutes 16 March 1954.
33 Senior, Hereward. 1972. Orangeism, the Canadian Phase (Toronto; New York: McGraw-Hill Ryerson), p. 96. These have included the Orange and Protestant party (Scotland), Scottish Protestant League (Glasgow), Protestant Action (Edinburgh), Protestant Party (Liverpool), Democratic Unionist/Independent Unionist parties (Northern Ireland), Protestant Protective Association (Canada) and Equal Rights Association (Canada).
39 Rough, Directory of Prominent Orangemen.
40 McFarland, Protestants First; Walker, Graham. 1992. 'The Orange Order in Scotland Between the Wars,' International Review of Social History, vol. XXXVII, no. 2, pp. 177-206
44 Kaufmann, Eric, From Deference to Defiance: The Orange Order in Northern Ireland since 1950 (unpublished manuscript under review with Oxford University Press)
46 Senior 1972, pp. 29-54.
47 Evans, Margaret. Sir Oliver Mowat (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 77, 124.
48 Blake, Don. Canadian Census and Election Data 1908-1968 (ICPSR # 0039, 1999)
52 Interview with Alex Rough, Toronto Orange Centre, Scarborough, 28 September 2004
53 Senior 1959, pp. 204-10
54 Ibid., pp. 204-5
55 Minute Book of L.O.L.# 26, Cupids, Newfoundland, 1949
56 1945 Census of Newfoundland; 'The 1948 Referendums' at: http://www.heritage.nf.ca/confederation/referendums.html; Accessed 20 October 2005
57 Walker 1992, p. 187