HISTORY, HERITAGE AND HATE:

THE HISTORIOGRAPHY AND IDENTITY OF LOYALISM

UVF

FOR GOD AND ULSTER
NO SURRENDER

JONATHAN BARRY

Lest we forget.

Research Master Thesis

Heritage and Identity in Loyalist Ulster: A Historical Analysis

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Contents

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Ethics Statement

I will adhere to the standards of academic integrity and ethics that the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen upholds. I will not undertake acts of plagiarism or self-plagiarism or other bad academic practices. I will also maintain critical reflectivity throughout the composition of this thesis that reflects upon my own origins as a researcher and scholar. I will attempt to maintain a balanced approach that takes no sides other than to express opinions on certain issues. Unless quoted, referenced or said otherwise, the entirety of this thesis is my own original work.

Abstract

Key Words: Loyalism, Northern Ireland, Victimhood, Ireland, History, Heritage, Identity, Destiny.

Northern Ireland is a land that is haunted by its own history and the spectre of sectarianism is often looming over it. Northern Irish loyalism is an often ignored and forgotten identity with its heritage and history being overlooked by the more attractive and straightforward Irish republican narratives taking centre stage. This thesis is a historiographical overview of how Irish loyalism emerged as an identity group, examining and analysing the historical events that have shaped its birth and the abuse it feels it has suffered during its existence. History to many people appears to be a series of isolated events with no apparent connection and is often thought of in abstract ways. This thesis demonstrates how historical events are interlinked, leading us to the present day and the real-world problems we are confronted with. It also examines how history is not simply a means of how identities make sense and understand who they are but also who they someday may become in the future. It is also one of my main objectives to gain insight into how competitive victimhood emerges and analyse how it impacts an identities behaviour and attitudes towards daunting ideas such as the future. This is not simply a historical narration of victimhood as the events occurred but providing analysis as to how identity groups have shaped their collective responses and informed them of their past heritage. The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate how an identity is formed out of history and how a community gains a collective consciousness about their heritage and future group destiny.

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Introduction: Faded Glory

A. Loyalism in Northern Ireland

'The illusion of destiny, particularly about some singular identity or other (and their alleged implications, nurtures violence in the world through omissions as well as commissions' (Sens, 2006: 12).

The story of Northern Ireland and Irish history is by no means a simple task to understand, and the roots of this contemporary conflict are born from a deep and complicated series of events that endure in its memory and heritage. Observation of Northern Ireland's celebrations such as the Battle of the Boyne and listening to its inhabitants' perspectives and experiences can mislead one into the belief that the Northern Irish conflict can be simplified and reduced to a series of essentialist causes and terms. Such examples include the belief that it is a religious conflict of Catholics versus Protestants, or an ethnic conflict of Irish against the British (Tonge, 1998: 6). While breaking a conflict down into its components is useful for understanding its dimensions and characteristics, it brings with it the danger that such an approach can mislead an observer into formulating assumptions about its roots, it ignores the footsteps that were taken to get to the conflict in contemporary times. Northern Irish identity has been forged through battle and the spilling of blood throughout the centuries. Without a comprehension of this violent legacy, there can be no way of recognising what ideas of religion, heritage or victimhood mean to the insiders of that conflict. Expressions of what these issues mean to the people of Northern Ireland are expressed in artistic murals, war commemorations, and national flags. Some are more militant, expressing paramilitary territorial claims, whereas others are more benign, remembering important events such as the construction of the Titanic. All these expressions, however, can be viewed as important events that have helped people struggling to find meaning and security. This accumulated identity has resulted in these works of art or memorials and defined them as rallying points during the conflict. As Brown and Grant acknowledge, "where identity is a major organising force in terms of politics and social segmentation, commemoration and memorialisation abound" (2016: 141).

This thesis will investigate how Loyalism in Northern Ireland has formulated its identity. It will use historical analysis from its emergence to the present to ask how Loyalists have used history to help express their identity. Furthermore, it will identify how the memory of their historical legacy has contributed to their developing sense of competitive victimhood with their Republican counterparts. Using stereotypes, religion, and cultural heritage to define themselves and their victimhood mentality to legitimise violence and strengthen their identity and self-esteem (McCauley, 2016: 124).

A key means of expression of this Loyalist identity is through their connection with its religious dimension, which is often heard expressed when they are describing themselves, as a Protestant people. Indeed, when the Parliament of Northern Ireland was first opened, marking the beginning of itself as a new state, it was proclaimed as a 'Protestant Parliament for a Protestant people'. Rather than mirroring the distancing from religion that Republicanism has taken, Loyalists have stubbornly held onto religion as one of the main components at the core of their overarching identity. Though the history of Northern Ireland is nuanced, the Nationalistic sentiments that emerged from the nineteenth to the twentieth century have become increasingly polarised, creating a black-and-white perspective of a Protestant versus Catholic conflict. Regardless of the degree to which religion is a causal factor of

the conflict, it is an integral aspect of understanding the Loyalist narrative that they portray of themselves.

Where popular perception of the conflict is concerned, most outsiders will have heard of the Republican point of view, with the IRA's (Irish Republican Army) armed campaign against the British Army or the civil rights movement that culminated in the Bloody Sunday massacre of 1972. The capturing of Bloody Sunday on film shocked the outside world and brought home the nature of the conflict which the UK and its security services had so far been able to suppress. Even British citizens on the mainland were unaware of the extent of the conflict due to its censored news reports that existed well into the 1990s. From then on, the Republican perspective has been portrayed in every media imaginable, from songs such as the 'Bloody Sunday' song by U2 to films portraying the sufferings and struggles of the IRA like 'Maze' and 'Fifty Dead Men Walking'. In almost every major city worldwide, one can find an Irish pub, from Kathmandu to Groningen, that displays portraits of executed IRA figureheads or proud symbols of Irish heritage and Nationalistic displays (Burleigh, 2006: 373-375). This cemented romantic myth of the IRA's struggle for freedom has even ensured that the organisation has been funded by sympathetic Americans or people of Irish descent, even Colonel Gaddafi from Libya supplying arms and explosives in the 1980s (BBC, a, 2017).

The Loyalist perspectives of its struggles do not receive the same kind of global awareness, a fact of which the Loyalist community is acutely aware. Its lack of a unified narrative of its identity past, present, and future affects its support within Northern Ireland itself, feeling that 'Northern Ireland has reached a level of almost inherent biases against Loyalism' (Ganiel, 2007: 310). The feelings emanating from mainland Britain are that Loyalists share an affinity with them that ranges from indifference to anger. For many British, Northern Ireland has brought a feeling of shame and embarrassment with its violation of human rights and substantial financial loss, to bitterness caused by the loss of life from the soldiers sent to serve there in the IRA bombing campaigns of England (Burleigh, 2006: 382). As a person of British descent myself who grew up during the IRA's bombing campaign, I have vivid memories of the fear that was caused when that conflict went from a perceived backyard conflict to one situated firmly on the English doorstep. Many of my friends and relatives from that time harboured bitter resentment of the Irish, regardless of whether they were Loyalist, Republican, Catholic or Protestant. As a result, I was left with a strong impression by my music teacher who was the sole survivor of his Royal Marine unit that was destroyed by an IED that exploded in Deal Barracks in 1989. As a friend of mine once said who also served as an Army Sergeant in Belfast, "They sent us there as boys and we returned as monsters". The decades of violence during the notorious 'troubles era' in the UK have ensured that Loyalists receive minimal support from communities such as my own in England, leaving a feeling of abandonment amongst Loyalist communities in Northern Ireland.

Since the peace ushered in by the Good Friday or Belfast Agreement, Loyalists have over time come to feel that the peace process has been about what its community has lost, formulating a perception that while they may not have won the war, they are certainly losing the peace (Ganiel, 2007: 311). With such a perception, a general sense that they are losing their heritage has fractured an already divided community. Having such resentful feelings towards the process of peace has meant that engagement with that process has been stagnant, choosing instead to retreat into their communities with limited interaction with political and civic initiatives (Graham, 2004: 490). Even with the disarmament of the paramilitaries such as the UDA (Ulster Defence Association) and UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force), they receive popular support from Loyalist communities with many parts of Belfast and other areas still

being controlled by them where the PSNI (Police Service Northern Ireland) have tenuous control (Burleigh, 2006: 413). This disparity in public awareness of the Loyalist narrative leads outsiders to view the Republicans as the sole victim and currently progressive and engaging with the peace process, whilst the Loyalists retreat into its past, as a reactionary element. Any perception that there were faults and victims on both sides is seen as a PR success for Loyalists (Ganiel, 2007: 304). With Loyalism's siege mentality, divided communities, and insecurity about its public perception, it is difficult for scholars to discuss and analyse. Northern Ireland has attracted a disproportionate amount of scholarly attention over the years, and as such with research fatigue taking effect, many within Loyalist communities who had previously engaged in interviews and discussions have become weary of engagement with academics who make vague notions of contributing to the peace process. Farrington laments that 'Northern Ireland has become an area of immense interest for researchers over the past decade or so, and there is an almost embarrassing number of talented academics studying the conflict and the society of such a small place' (2003: 251).

The intention of this thesis is not to define Loyalism or deliberately aim to contribute ideas of how to engage with Loyalists, but rather through historical analysis gain a measure of understanding behind its competitive victimhood mentality and how Loyalism has emerged. Loyalism has relied heavily on narrative storytelling to construct its own identity and attempt to formulate a sense of collective identity and memory (McCauley, 2016: 125). It is by historical means that Loyalism formulates its understanding of its identity and the values and beliefs that unify its' dispersed factions and communities. (McCauley, 2016: 125). The art, monuments, and public displays expressed by these Loyalist communities are filled with nostalgic symbolism of Loyalism's narrative storytelling reflecting their shared identity (Smithey, 2011: 37). Their relationship with history is so essential to that identity construction that Loyalists have a resistance to historical revisionism. Graham points out that Loyalists have a 'firm belief in the reality and objectivity of history and memory' (2004, 488). Since this history is so important to Loyalists it is logical to deduce that analysing that history is a pertinent method of understanding the shared identity of its past, behaviour, and attitudes of the present and its aspirations for the future.

B. Competitive Victimhood

The term victimhood has been a key theme in Loyalist and Unionist discourses about the conflict as well as their memory of the causes of it (Garderner, 2015: 10). As remarked on previously, Loyalists have a strong perception that attention and sympathy are given to the Republican narrative rather than their own. Since Loyalists have been viewed as an oppressor group in the conflict, there is a common opinion that Republicans have a 'monopoly' on victimhood by default (Burleigh, 2006: 485). The decades of the "Troubles Era" produced the victimhood discussions that have been expressed ever since in art, song and story. Many of the songs of Loyalism follow a theme of sacrifice and martyrdom for their country, such as 'Billy McFadzean' who died at the battle of the Somme. From this expression, outsiders listen to how Loyalists view their own identity and leave visitors to Northern Ireland with a strong impression of what it is (Brown & Grant, 2016: 140). The theme of victimhood also communicates to the outside the feelings and fears of their culture's imminent extinction, narrating an

almost 'lost cause' concept that they as a people have died for in the past and will continue to do so under the motto 'no surrender (Garderner, 2015: 14).

Competitive victimhood has been a term that has gained momentum in the field of conflict resolution in recent years. Where victimhood is ordinarily considered a negative identity, it does provide a strong sense of identity, particularly when shared as a group experience. Noor, for example, describes the competition for victimhood as "a symbolic resource that groups compete over as they claim to be the only legitimate victim or that they have suffered the most" (2017: 167). Where Republicans have framed themselves as freedom fighters who employed violence in their struggle for self-determination, Loyalists have legitimised their acts of violence as self-defence in the face of cultural extermination. In some regards, where the physical violence ended after 1998, the battle for the memory of the conflict began with both sides competing to become recognised by outsiders as the ultimate victims. On an individual level, the term victim is often rejected preferring terms such as 'survivor', it empowers Loyalists who feel ignored by the outside world, the British public, and the peace process (Young & Sullivan, 2016: 31). It furthermore legitimises not just the actions taken during the conflict but also any acts that they feel they should take in the future for the Loyalist cause. An example of this was the Flag Protest in 2011 (BBC, b, 2014), while the community professes a commitment to the peace process, it is clear they are not afraid to fall back on violence in the face of an attack on symbols of their heritage. Whilst to an outsider it might seem peculiar to protest and riot over the removal of a flag from a public building, to Loyalists it is all part of a living history of victimhood from aggressive Republicans seeking to destroy Ulster and Loyalist culture as well as indifferent British authorities who do not act in their defence.

While analysing history can aid in the understanding of Loyalist identity, pointing to the root causes of certain attitudes and expressions, it is acknowledging the role of competitive victimhood that illuminates the behaviour and actions undertaken by Loyalists. No identity is a static monolithic entity, they evolve and change with the passage of time, events, and changes in social attitudes. Northern Ireland however has a love affair with its history, particularly with its memory of persecutions and conflict. Whilst this thesis will examine the beginnings of this Ulster culture in its early history, it will pivot around key moments that contributed to the emergence of Loyalist identity, such as the Ulster plantations, the 'Glorious Revolution', the Irish War of Independence and the Troubles era. While there is much to be said about the differences between the province of Ulster and the rest of Ireland in its ancient past, it is more to provide context to when Protestantism becomes a dynamic that further complicates the power struggle between Gaelic Ireland and a hegemonic England. The memory of English incursions into Ireland is often blurred into one, but I would take the position that it is when religion becomes a main factor that the conflict starts the transformation from a power struggle common to the medieval world to the conflict of polarised communities that persecute and victimise one another. It is from that history that this Loyalist heritage is constructed. For Loyalists this heritage and history interact with one another into one seamless narrative that is separate from time, the events of the present are all part of a larger picture that has been going on far back into its bloody history and informs their group feelings about the changes and developments of the future (McCauley, 2016: 128). In conjunction with one another, the research contribution of this thesis will look at how competitive victimhood connects with history to gain an enriched perception of Loyalist identity and heritage.

Chapter 1: Foundations of Ulster Heritage

A. Ancient Ulster and Mythology

"It was understandable for a new state, finding its way among the community of nations in the troubled early years of this century, to wish to emphasise its own unique cultural identity free from the impact of later invaders and colonisers' (Barry, 1988: 1).

Pre-History and the Mythic Past

Exploring identity through myths, spiritual beliefs, and historical events can be problematic, as contemporary biases often influence our understanding of history. History can also be used to create the sense of an unbroken narrative which legitimises a community's existence. This chapter doesn't seek evidence of an 'Ulster heritage' but examines the narrative Loyalist identity aims to project, highlighting their struggles with identity and internal conflict.

Historically, Ulster was a single province in Ireland until 1921 when Ulster was divided, and Northern Ireland was created. Past historical views have influenced contemporary Loyalist identity, shaping their perception of themselves and the Gaelic other. Irish historiography typically emphasises a unique cultural identity free from external influences, whereas Loyalist narratives concentrate on those external influences to underscore religious conflict and cultural differences. It is this distinction between the Ulster experience and the rest of Ireland that Loyalists use to highlight their unique and different culture. McGarry and O'Leary note that 'historical narratives and myths are used by the principal parties both to explain their situation and to justify their cause' (1996: 54).

Ireland was not isolated. The sea enabled overseas trade even though inland travel was difficult. Trade allowed geographically isolated communities like Ulster to stay informed about developments abroad. Besides trade, Gaelic tribes raided Roman and post-Roman Britain for booty and slaves including the young Romano-British slave who would later become Saint Patrick. Patrick is widely acknowledged for his significant role in converting Ireland from druidic paganism to Christianity (O'Leary, 2013: 16-17).

Christianity in Ireland, unlike in Britain, lacked urban centres for dioceses, more resembling the early North African Coptic monastic communities. Irish monasteries integrated Celtic beliefs into their culture while also recording past oral traditions, and preserving pre-Christian beliefs and genealogies (Lydon, 1998: 3)

One notable myth is that of the Ulster hero Cúchulainn, who defended his land from Connacht. This myth inspired Irish Republicans and Nationalists, symbolising a heroic defence of Ireland. Interestingly, Loyalists also adopted Cúchulainn as a symbol of resistance against Irish aggression, with his image featured in murals in Loyalist Belfast (Rolston, 2004). Thus, Cúchulainn serves as a shared but contested symbol in Irish identity. Accordingly, fabled heroes such as Cúchulainn have become vital to the identity of Irishness. (Hollis, 2001: 16).

Hibernia and Early Identity

Geographical difficulties restricted warfare to limited small-scale skirmishes and feuds. Construction of a large series of earthworks closed off access to Ulster from neighbouring would-be raiders, further consolidating their defensive isolation (Bardon, 2008: 45-53). Roman observers called this land 'Hibernia,' noting the fierce tribes of Ulster as the most warlike of all the Irish kingdoms.

In later centuries, despite Viking and Norman invasions, the tribes in Ulster managed to preserve their independence. Schlegel notes that the Cruithni, distinct in language and culture, were akin to the Picts of Alba (2002, 691). Loyalists continue to emphasize this link to Scotland.

Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities' suggests that during the medieval age, national identity was expressed through religious ties and loyalty to one's dynastic realm (1983: 12). Although Irish natives would identify with their clan and lord, shared religion could unite them against outsiders. Irish Nationalism has a habit of presenting a unified homogenous Gaelic culture existing before English interference, it is more likely that rather than being united, Irish clan culture was characterised by complex networks of familial relationships.

This section examines how Loyalists reference their early historical heritage to highlight their independence and distinctiveness. It is essential, however, to consider that while possessing a sense of history contributes to identity formation, it may not always align with contemporary interpretations of that history. As McGarry & O'Leary remark, 'the key ideas of Nationalism and Unionism, the central political doctrines which polarise the communities in contemporary Northern Ireland, were not present, and make no sense, in the twelfth or seventeenth centuries' (1996: 55). Historians frequently encounter the challenge of distinguishing between contemporary perceptions of a population and the evidence available from historical records. It is not uncommon to project our contemporary beliefs, whether nationalistic or spiritual, onto ancient peoples who left no written record. The situation in Northern Ireland exemplifies this tendency.

B. The Age of Vikings and Norse Towns

'Instead of a sudden, cataclysmic invasion, the arrival of the Vikings in Ireland and Britain began, rather, with small-scale settlements and trade links that connected Ireland with northern European commerce for the first time' (Atwood, 2015: 46).

The First Viking Raids and Early Norse Settlers

The age of the Norse in Ireland is crucial for understanding changes in Ireland's social landscape. Viking imagery often evokes that of violent raiders, yet they were also a formidable mercantile force with complex social structures (Etchingham, 2001: 145). In the 800s CE, growing Scandinavian populations resulted in increased overseas raids, and improved boat construction propelled them to seek fertile lands for colonisation (Atwood, 2003: 47). Ireland's tribal structure, rural characteristics, and subsistence economy shaped its reaction to the Norse presence. Despite the traditional view of a purely tribal Irish society, Doherty notes that by the time of the Norse incursions, Ireland had

numerous petty kingdoms and high chiefdoms, with powerful families like the Uí Néill in Ulster concentrating wealth around the monasteries and developing sophisticated agricultural hubs. This wealth and land attracted the Norse (2014: 16-17).

Historians note that early Viking encounters were highly destructive, greatly impacting the social structure of Irish society. Attacks on wealthy, poorly defended monasteries caused significant disruption, leaving the native populations, especially in Christian Ireland, distressed by the saints' perceived powerlessness against such violence. The raids significantly influenced the Gaelic psyche, with Anderson highlighting the importance of religion in shaping identity and community bonds. Gaelic studies also support this, showing that ethnicity, kinship, and religion are key to self-identity and group belonging (2003: 116).

Irish colonisation was distinct from that in Britain, Wales and Scotland, shaped by Irish identity rooted in language, culture, and mythology (Mytum, 2003: 115). With their strong religious life, Irish monastic communities, were central to the assimilation of Scandinavian settlers, leading to their conversion and adoption of Gaelic customs and language. Language differences between Celtic Gaelic and Scandinavian Norse encouraged settlers to learn a new language, aiding cultural assimilation.

Norse Towns and King Brian Boru

The Scandinavian colonisation of Ireland was the first by ethnic and religious outsiders and it significantly impacted Ireland's socio-economic landscape. Before the Viking raids, Gaelic society relied on bartering and subsistence farming. Scandinavian settlers established urban planning which formed the basis for future medieval towns. Settlements such as Dublin and Wexford evolved into key economic centres, linking to a broader network across the British Isles and the North Sea (Hayward & Hall, 2001: 62). From 840 CE onwards, coastal settlements like Dublin developed into permanent places of habitation. During the 10th and 11th centuries, Ireland's political landscape further changed as local kings adjusted to the Viking presence. Before this period, up to 150 petty kings governed territories, evolving from the ancient clan structures. Although Ireland remained divided into various competitive kingdoms and was highly decentralized, a few powerful families, such as the Uí Néill, began to exert greater control, turning smaller kingdoms into tributaries. These 'overkings' began to create a power structure like the feudal structures emerging in the rest of Europe. The title of ard-rí (High-King), once religiously symbolic, gained greater political authority (Middleston, 2015: 440-442) The Dál Cais dynasty from Munster challenged the Uí Néill dominance over Irish kingdoms, resulting in a significant shift in political dynamics. Their leader was Brian Bórama, known as King Brian Boru.

King Brian Boru is a near-mythical figure in Irish Nationalism, representing Gaelic resistance and patriotism (Hayward & Hall, 2001: 70). He challenged the Uí Néill's High Kingship, aiming to dominate Ireland and control Norse maritime trade. A coalition of Norse rulers and Irish warlords thwarted his plans, culminating in the 1014 CE Battle of Clontarf, where Brian's forces defeated the Vikings near Dublin. Although Brian Boru's victory is celebrated in Irish history and mythology, he was killed during the chaos of battle. Brian Boru's legacy endures as a symbol of a once-united Ireland under a single king (Maier, 2018: 161) Despite the Romanticisation of the event, with the battle still re-enacted annually in Dublin, it was more about securing economic hubs than uniting the Irish people.

Analysis reveals the myth, but it arguably marked the first stirrings of an Irish national consciousness. Norse power was broken, ending the Viking age in Ireland.

C. The Norman Conquests and English Settlements

'When the Anglo-Normans began the conquest of Ireland, they introduced feudalism into the new lands, just as their ancestors had done in South Wales and England. Henry II's visit to Ireland in 1171 ensured that the barons would rule their Irish lands, not as Irish kings but as tenants-in-chief or vassal' (Maple, 1989: 85).

The Norman Threat

To understand the emergence of Loyalism, it's essential to explore key cultural changes in Irish history. The Norman invasion marked the first significant English incursion into Ireland, characterized by extensive conquest and the subjugation of Irish kingdoms to an English overlord. After the brutal conquest of England in 1066 CE, the Normans motivated by their quest for land, soon turned their attention to Ireland, which was still fragmented after the Battle of Clontarf (Freeman, 1876: 108).

Henry II gained papal approval to oversee Ireland, aiming to align the Irish church with Roman practices, like the earlier Romanization of Anglo-Saxon Christians in England. Henry II felt empowered to lead the expedition, landing in Ireland and quickly establishing Anglo-Norman control. His main objectives were the economically valuable urban areas previously colonised by Norse settlers, like Dublin, Waterford, and Wexford. By 1175 CE, after significant conquest, High-King Rory O'Connor submitted to Henry II, acknowledging him as 'Paramount Lord of all Ireland'. This was soon followed by other Irish kings. It is important to note that Henry II did not go to Ireland intent on colonisation, rather he conquered territory so that the autonomous lords and dukes, did not fragment and create rival Norman Kingdoms. He also sought more direct control over his vassals (O'Doherty, 1938: 157). The conquest established direct English rule in Ireland, and although the actual occupation was limited, the Normans' intense projection of power created the illusion of total English governance (McNeill, 1997: 17} The castle at Carrickfergus, built by John de Courcy in the 1170s CE, was crucial in Ulster, despite resistance from the Uí Néill. De Courcy cooperated with local Irish churches and monasteries to facilitate colonisation and establish support in Ulster (Flanagan, 1999: 156). For Loyalists today, Carrickfergus holds significant historical value, reflecting their effort to establish historical legitimacy and roots.

From Norman Invaders to English Colonisers

Despite limited success the Irish kingdoms and chiefs fiercely resisted Anglo-Norman rule, demonstrating their resentment and cultural awareness (Duffy, 1998: 110). The presence of foreign overseers heightened the Irish sense of victimhood. Over time, just as the Norse invaders did

previously, the Norman elites assimilated culturally with many families adopting the dress, speech, and way of life of the native population (Maier, 2018: 173). Many Anglo-Norman families operated as near independent kingdoms often pursuing their own agendas. This led to suspicion and mistrust of these Lordships by successive English kings. The invasion created ethnic and political tensions, with distinct Anglo-Norman and Gaelic areas. This led to a cultural divide post-invasion with Anglo-Norman colonisers suppressing Gaelic and Norse cultures. Unlike the Norse, the Normans reserved skilled professions for their own people a trend which influenced both their and later Loyalist identities. By the early 14th century large English-speaking communities had replaced many Gaelic ones. The Anglo-Norman and Gaelic elites sometimes coexisted peacefully while at other times engaged in bitter feuds, with both groups recognizing their own distinct identities and differences. The Normans viewed the Indigenous Irish as primitive and superstitious—a perception that persisted into modern times.

As England's focus on Ireland waned and the Black Death took its toll, so English control diminished to the 'English Pale' around Dublin, and by 1500 CE, it had shrunk to within 30 miles of Dublin. The Irish parliament declared independence from all English laws not passed locally. The Black Death had a profound impact on the English nobility in Ireland resulting in over 14,000 deaths in the city alone. While the Irish were not spared, the epidemic disproportionately affected the English elite. Weakened English control allowed Gaelic inhabitants to regain influence over the church, while in Ulster, the last de Burgh ruler was killed, effectively ending English rule there (Orpren, 1914: 248-249).

This chapter explores the origins of Nationalist and Loyalist identities, particularly through the impact of the ethnic tensions caused by Norse and Norman colonisation.

However, by the early 16th century, with the Reformation throughout Europe, and the reign of the Tudors in England, religious elements would begin to emerge and gain dominance, influencing both Loyalist and Irish narratives. With the rise of the Ulster plantations, the culturally adapted Anglo-Irish elites would become referred to as 'old English' to distinguish them from the newer Anglo-Scottish Protestants (Hegarty, 2012: 134).

Chapter 2: Quest for Legitimacy

A. Tyranny of the Tudors

'Too often we fail to recognise that for the English imperialism began not in the Americas or India, but in Ireland' (Hendrix, 2012: 40).

The Reconquest of Ireland & The Protestant Reformation

The evolution of Irish identity during the Renaissance mirrored broader European changes, particularly during the Tudor era, which was marked by rebellions and religious reforms. Henry VII strengthened English control over the Anglo-Irish nobility, Henry VIII focused on religious reform, and Elizabeth I introduced plantation policies that led to future conflicts between Nationalists and Loyalists. English employed terror tactics against civilians, reflecting a dominating colonial mentality. Despite this, Ulster resisted English authority and maintained its Gaelic culture, although later it became the stronghold of Loyalism (Morgan, 1988: 8).

Despite his victory at Bosworth (1485 CE), Henry VII's claim to the English throne was shaky, and Yorkist supporters maintained a stronghold in Ireland. They remained a significant challenge with their history of resisting English control. Henry appointed Sir Edward Poynings to enforce obedience in Ireland. Though English control over Ireland initially remained weak, Henry's reign marked the beginning of a more centralised approach to Irish governance, including policies of ethnic segregation (Bagwell, 1885: 103). With Henry VII English interest in Ireland was rekindled, setting the stage for future conflicts between Irish and English Loyalist communities.

Upon ascending the throne, Henry VIII was initially an open-minded and devoutly Catholic ruler, overseeing a country that had regained economic stability under Henry VII's policies. Feudalism in Europe, including in Ireland, was giving way to centralised states (Hegarty, 2012: 52).

With the loss of French lands and revenue, England sought to stabilise its economy by focusing on Ireland. Henry VIII used his power to make Ireland a profitable part of the English economy and integrate it into the expanding British realm (Hendrix, 2012: 43). Much like the political theory surrounding Northern Ireland today, this increase in economic prosperity led to a decrease in violence and was part of Tudor policy. Henry directly managed Irish affairs, unlike previous kings who relied upon Anglo-Irish nobility (Quinn, 1961: 322). England lacked the financial resources for a professional army, relying instead on levies. Henry recognised these problems in Ireland, where popular uprisings and ambitious nobles threatened control. However, Ireland remained a secondary concern to France. The Tudor era's resource scarcity led to increasingly brutal military campaigns, especially in Ulster, where mass killings were sanctioned (Murphy, 2016: 13). Scholars of post-colonialism like Said have viewed the level of violence and scorched earth policies of the Tudors as being justified by the existing/developing attitudes that the Irish were racially inferior (Murphy, 2016: 17). However, these

tactics were not new, as England had used similar methods in its wars with France. The armies of the era, often unpaid, resorted to looting and violence, which affected both Irish and Loyalist communities.

The Reformation significantly altered the conflict between the Irish and Loyalists. England's shift in state religion was driven by Pope Clement VII's refusal to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Declaring himself "Supreme Head of the Church in England," Henry initiated the religious transformation from Catholicism to Protestantism. This break led to secular control over the church and the suppression of wealthy religious institutions, particularly monasteries. The Irish, deeply tied to Catholicism, struggled with these changes. Following Henry VIII's break with Rome in 1534 CE, England faced the threat of a Catholic invasion, spurring heavy investment in defence and naval power, and borrowing from Parliament. This empowered Parliament and led to increased military activity in Ireland, where native Catholics were viewed with suspicion. Henry's claim to be head of the Church challenged Irish Catholic identity, marking the start of Irish Nationalism and turning their conflict with the English into an international issue (White, 2010: 3) In 1541 CE, Henry VIII declared himself 'King of Ireland,' replacing the Pope's title of 'Lord Paramount,' which set a new political policy and integrated Irish nobility under English rule (Maginn & Ellis, 2015: 157-158). It is also important to remember that the objective of the Tudor administration in Ireland was not to implement reformist policies as in England but to follow through on completing the conquest of Ireland which they felt was incomplete.

The Question of Ireland & The Spanish Armada

Under Elizabeth I, who never visited Ireland, Irish Catholicism became a key expression of Irish identity and dissent and her reign would have far-reaching consequences for the future of Irish Nationalism and Loyalist identity (Morgan, 2019: 209) Unlike in England, where the suppression of church lands led to rebellion, the Irish nobility, under both Henry VIII and Elizabeth, acquired church properties for themselves. Elizabeth inherited a divided Ireland with much still beyond English control and managed by Anglo-Irish nobility supported by Scottish mercenaries (Williams, 1993: 265).

Despite logistical reforms that enhanced government policy enforcement, the military presence in Ireland still lacked the capacity to effectively garrison the region. The "Old English" resisted converting to Protestantism and felt increasingly marginalised and financially burdened by military expansion. Their hesitation to convert and their perceived Gallicisation led to them being viewed with suspicion, emphasizing the increasing religious divide. As a result, religion—not ethnicity—was becoming a more significant and divisive factor in the conflict between Irish and Loyalist communities (Gibney, 2017: 32-34).

The 1588 Spanish Armada crisis aimed to restore Catholicism to England and counter the Dutch revolt. Pope Pius V denounced Elizabeth as a heretic, releasing Catholics from their loyalty to her, which allowed them to kill her without spiritual consequences (Gibney, 2017: 25).

Initially, Elizabeth treated Catholics and Protestants equally, but the Armada's events hardened attitudes towards Catholics leading to stricter measures in Ireland (Leah, 2014: 44). The Spanish fleet sought to invade England after meeting the Duke of Parma in the Netherlands. However, English sailors, aided by Dutch allies, achieved victory at the Battle of Gravelines. The Anglo-Dutch fleet's

superior artillery and a fire-ship attack disrupted the Armada, forcing it to navigate around Scotland and Ireland, resulting in wrecked ships. The mixed treatment of survivors by the Irish, fuelled English suspicions of Irish loyalty.

The Tudors also initiated the plantation of English and Scottish settlers in Ireland. Based on Henry VIII's "surrender and regrant" policy it was designed to establish permanent English control amid concerns about foreign invasions (Powers, 2012: 21). These plantations, like the one in Derry/Londonderry, were exclusively Protestant and excluded the Catholic Irish (Gibney, 2017: 35). The policy aimed to create self-sufficient Protestant communities, deepening divisions in Irish society (Curtis, 1936: 197).

B. Stuarts, Civil War and the English Commonwealth

'This was a world turned on its head, violently and traumatically' (Hegarty, 2012: 129).

The Reign of the Stuarts and the Ulster Plantations

Though the term 'Loyalist' wouldn't be used until the 19th century, the foundational divisions were already established. Ethnic and religious differences were stark: the Irish and Old English families retained Catholicism, while new Protestant settlers were loyal to England. These differences set the stage for future conflicts, increasingly linked to political allegiance and emerging Irish Nationalism (White, 2010: 4). However, the clear connection between ethnicity and religion wasn't yet established, and identities were still evolving. It took 200 more years for contemporary ideas of Nationalism and Loyalism to take shape in Northern Ireland (Horning, 2021: 456). During the Stuart reign and heightened plantation efforts, the bloody history defining Irish Nationalism and Loyalist identity emerged. The era saw the rise of 'pike and shot' warfare, blending medieval pikes with matchlock handguns, revolutionising combat.

King James I inherited a tense peace across his realms and faced the challenge of addressing religious divisions in England, Scotland, and Ireland (Lathbury, 2010: 18). Known for his tolerance, he faced pressure from increasing paranoia and violence. Despite his inclination towards tolerance, his Calvinist beliefs conflicted with Anglican traditions (Trevelyan, 1904: 79). England was divided into three religious factions: Catholics seeking either tolerance or a return to the Catholic Church, Anglicans representing the mainstream Protestant faith, and Reformists demanding stricter measures against Catholics. Any compromise by the King or government was likely to displease one of these factions, often leading to violence.

One of the first incidents that occurred, only two years after his coronation in 1605, was the Gunpowder Plot. The policies pursued by the government still called for the suppression of Catholics including the persecution of Priests (Lathbury, 2010: 21-22). A notable recusant Catholic was Robert Catesby, who was suffering under anti-Catholic laws and who was dissatisfied with King James I's lack of action towards changing the toleration laws. He and a conspiratorial ring of other Catholics plotted regicide and regime change by destroying Parliament whilst the King presided over its opening. The Gunpowder Plot is regarded by some historians as the first example of religious-based terrorism in

English history, whilst assassination attempts had occurred during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, this was the first organised attempt that planned to decapitate the head of English government in its entirety (Hamoutziadou & Jackson, 2018: 91). Guy Fawkes, a soldier of fortune, renowned as an expert in gunpowder and explosives was chosen to carry out the conspiracy. Discovered at the last moment, the plot failed, and the other conspirators were tracked down and taken in chains to London for trial. All the conspirators, including Fawkes, were brutally executed by being hung, drawn, quartered and beheaded (Trevelyan, 1904: 1). Anti-Catholic fever swept across England following the foiling of this plot, and although James I had a desire for more tolerant policies, it was next to impossible to realise given the threat that Catholics posed to his realm. Not only did the persecution of Catholics persist, but they increased in intensity, particularly in Ireland, where English paranoia of their untrustworthy Catholic neighbours grew (Curtis, 1936: 194). Every year since then in England, November 5th has celebrated the failure of this attempt to overthrow the government and restore Catholic rule across the Kingdoms. Though much later, some English Protestants imported the tradition to Ireland. During rising Nationalist tensions in the 1800s Loyalists would use Guy Fawkes night as 'reassuring evidence of the continuing importance of anti-Catholicism within English society', and later 'Orange' movements would celebrate it to remind themselves of their identity as loyal British Protestants in the face of disloyal Irish Catholics (McConnel, 2011: 866)

The Ulster Plantations officially began in 1609 CE under the Stuarts, continuing the Tudor policy of replacing native Gaelic peoples with English and Scottish settlers (Farrall, 2017: 1). The end of the Tudor reign saw numerous Irish uprisings, which led to the confiscation of lands and a focus on Ulster. Unlike the Tudors, James I included Scottish settlers in his attempts to unify his Kingdom (Wormald, 2012: 20). This shift was significant and revealed that the Tudor approach had been flawed. For James I the policy of plantation was more than about replacing disloyal Irish with trustworthy Protestants, it was about establishing beacons of civilisation that the Irish would wish to emulate, abandoning their superstitious inclinations and adopting more refined ways (Horning, 2021: 446). James I was more lenient whilst dealing with any rebels, hoping to use them to further the plantation process. Ulster, resistant to English rule and culturally Gaelic, was seen as a prime area for plantation. The plan to have the O'Neill's become English landlords had failed as they fled in what became known as 'the flight of the Earls'. Thus, a power vacuum appeared in Ulster so large-scale plantation was utilised to fill this vacuum by asserting direct English control (Gillespie, 1993: 45). The Ulster plantations would shape the Irish social and political landscape up to the present day. It would create the necessary conditions for the sectarian violence we see today (Ó Ciardha and Ó Siochrú, 2012: 2).

The plantation project in Ulster progressed slowly, hampered by challenges in attracting new settlers who often preferred opportunities in the New World, like Jamestown with its greater religious freedom (Honing, 2021: 447). Scots found Ulster appealing due to overpopulation in Scotland and its proximity making it more Scottish than other southern projects (Hegarty, 2012: 119). Catholics owned 90% of Ulster's land in 1603, but by 1641, after decades of plantation, this had decreased to 60%, showing significant demographic changes (Ó Ciardha and Ó Siochrú, 2012: 2-3). Plantations included markets, churches, and jails, and though settlers relied on Gaelic interpreters, the countryside remained Gaelic in culture, with Irish labour being essential (Horning, 2020: 46).

Cultural ties between Loyalists and Scots are strong, reflecting historical interactions and myths like the Giants Causeway. During the Middle Ages, Scottish mercenaries like the Gallowglass were recruited by Irish chiefs, demonstrating Scots' influence (Perceval-Maxwell, 1973: 2). The Tudor regime saw Scots

as a threat, but the union of crowns under James I shifted this view to opportunity (Perceval-Maxwell, 1973: 10-11).

The establishment of the American colonies and Scottish interest in Ulster meant that while English settlers were redirected, Ulster became a predominantly Scottish project (Perceval-Maxwell, 1973: 14). Irish resistance to plantations involved significant violence, targeting settlers and leading to periodic outbursts of violence against settlements. This violence, which included mutilations and attacks on Protestant churches, fostered a siege mentality among settlers, shaping the identity of future Ulster Loyalists (McConnel, 2016: 208, 213).

Civil War, Commonwealth and Restoration

During King Charles I's reign (1625 - 1649 CE), tensions in Ireland escalated significantly. Although not entirely inept, Charles was notably unfortunate and a staunch believer in the 'Divine Right of Kings,' asserting that any challenge to his authority must be resisted (Lowe, 1964: 5). Problems began when he tried to assert control over the bishops and impose the Anglican book of common prayer on the Scottish Presbyterian Church. The Scots, committed to Presbyterianism, signed the 'National Covenant' to protect their faith. Unprepared for war, the English army was defeated, forcing Charles to seek additional funds and summon Parliament, leading to the 'Bishops Wars' that drained resources from English garrisons in Ireland and nearly bankrupted the nation (Ohlmeyer, 1995: 24).

Charles's failure to honour his promises of religious freedom to Catholics and Old English families, in exchange for financial support for his Scottish war, led to widespread resentment (Waureghen, 2009: 65). This discontent contributed to the 1641 Irish rebellion in Ulster, where Catholic 'Old English' families and Irish rebels seized towns and fortifications spreading the rebellion across Ireland. This uprising marked a convergence of ethnicity and religion.

The rebellion was partly a reaction against the plantation policies of the Stuart regime. While some viewed the violence as senseless, others saw it as a response to long-standing social grievances. The majority of Irish Catholics, despite grievances, remained loyal subjects of the crown, seeking reconciliation with the King rather than independence (Harris, 2015: 634). The rebellion, fuelled by frustration with plantation policies and government weaknesses, led to a decade of conflict in Ireland.

The English Civil War was one of England's bloodiest conflicts, with 3.6% of the populations of England, Scotland, and Ireland killed. Although termed the English Civil War, it involved all three Kingdoms and heavy foreign mercenary use, complicating the notion of it as a purely civil conflict. The period challenges the idea that Nationalism only emerged in the 19th century; the English Civil War demonstrated early forms of proto-nationalism (Stoyle, 2000: 1113). The Irish 1641 rebellion demonstrated an emerging national awareness, and in England, fear of outside invasion fostered a sense of national consciousness (Stoyle, 2000: 1115).

This period helped consolidate English identity, despite the war's devastation, with English Nationalism strengthening post-war (Fukuyama, 2018: 16). People supported sides based on perceived national interests rather than personal loyalties to the King or Parliament. Religion also played a contentious role, with anti-Catholic sentiments influencing political and military alignments (Vallance, 2002: 397). Protestant loyalty to England contrasted with Catholicism, which was considered disloyal (Weil, 2006:

183-184). The Irish rebellion and Scottish Covenant were reactions to Protestant and Anglican policies, respectively, aligning with English sentiments against Catholics (Woolrych, 2002: 29). Ethnic tensions, Nationalism, and religious fervour were pivotal in reshaping the British Isles.

Oliver Cromwell in English history has been remembered as a devout man of God and a hero for his success in reforming the New Model army and leading it to victory against the tyranny of King Charles I. However, In Irish history, it is fair to say he is considered the devil incarnate. In terms of memory, there is a division between Irish and British memory of the legacy of Oliver Cromwell (Ó Siochrú, 2008: 14). What is certain is his devotion to Protestant Puritan ideals. Cromwell was a simple country squire from Cambridgeshire who sat as a member of Parliament during the Short Parliament and the Long Parliament, and who as a Puritan was outraged at the perceived inaction of the King during the Irish rebellion. He became head of the Army during the first and second stages of the Civil War, following the king's attempts to restart the Civil War. Failed negotiations with Parliament and a switch of allegiance by the Scottish Covenanters to the Royalist cause led Cromwell to push for the execution of Charles I on the grounds of treason (Bromme, 2006: 6, 7). Power in England now lay with the largely puritanical Parliamentary army. Although the idea of executing their King was horrific to many the religious zeal within the army demanded no less a fate for a King that would wage war with Catholic allies at the expense of his people (Holmes, 2010: 305).Republic's stability Charles I was tried for the crimes of being a tyrant, murderer, and traitor and was executed outside the palace of Whitehall in 1649 CE (Kelsey, 2002: 745).

Cromwell turned his attention to Ireland in 1649, where Royalist holdouts supported the exiled King, Charles II and resisted the new English Commonwealth. This resistance threatened the stability of the republic (Covington, 2013: 149). Cromwell also needed to address the unpaid army, which was prone to sedition. Conquering Ireland allowed him to pay his soldiers with land and seek revenge for the 1641 rebellion (Gentles, 2022: 176). He mistakenly blamed all Irish Catholics for the massacre of Protestant settlers and sought to punish them (Curtis, 1936: 215). Cromwell landed in Dublin with 10,000 soldiers, enforcing strict rules to win over Protestants in the Pale (Gentles, 2022: 178). His harsh tactics and selective leniency contributed to his controversial legacy.

One of his most notorious actions was the siege of Drogheda, where his troops massacred civilians, leaving a lasting scar on Irish identity (Ó Siochrú, 2007: 55). Cromwell's New Model Army, experienced in siege warfare, found Drogheda difficult to starve out, and their storming of the city was violent (Burke, 1990: 10). Cromwell's campaign, from 1649-1653, affected over half a million Irish, leading to widespread land confiscation and redistribution under the Cromwellian Settlement (Darcy, 2021: 216). This settlement gave 2,500,000 acres to veterans and Protestant settlers, decimating the Catholic aristocracy (Barnard, 2015: 380).

The Protestant Ascendancy dominated Ireland for the next 270 years, transforming the land ownership dynamics and shaping modern identities. The significant land transfers from Catholics to Protestants created a new colonial overseer dynamic (McCormack, 2016: 1). There is considerable debate amongst scholars as to how the 'Old English' identified themselves. Clarke rejects that they saw themselves as Irish, but rather simply as English Catholics. However, this is strongly rejected by Ó Siochrú who sees them subscribing to a form of 'confessional Nationalism', that whatever their ethnic identities they made common cause with the Irish during this period. Despite the increase in group politics, Irish identity was still evolving (McCormack, 2016: 11).

Cromwell died in 1658 CE, having effectively ruled as King under the title 'Lord Protector'. His son, Richard, struggled with state responsibilities, prompting calls for the Stuart restoration (Edie, 1976: 343). Charles II, living in exile in the Netherlands, considered returning to England with support from France and Spain. However, his refusal to convert to Catholicism and lead a foreign army left him largely irrelevant until the Restoration in 1660 CE Post-Cromwellian fatigue led to a quiet period in Ireland, but competing narratives were emerging. Protestants used propaganda to legitimise their rule over Catholics, who claimed to have suffered the most during the conflict (McCormack, 2016: 2). Charles II's reign was marked by the Anglo-Dutch wars and religious tensions. His brother, James, converted to Catholicism in 1668, sparking fears of a Catholic monarchy and a return to pre-Reformation England (Barth, 2021: 223). Despite efforts to exclude James from the succession and allow his illegitimate Protestant son, the Duke of Monmouth, to sit on the throne, Charles II's confidence in his financial stability led him to abolish Parliament. On his death in 1685 CE, James II ascended the throne and a Catholic sat once more upon the throne of England.

C. Orange and the Green in the Glorious Revolution

'William was a king "of Glorious Memory" for many of these preachers, and to some, the Revolution was, among other things, "amazing," "surprising," and "happy." (Herlzler, 1987: 583)

The Coup d'état and the Glorious Revolution

The year 1690 remains etched in the minds of Loyalists. Following Charles II's closure of Parliament, and death in 1685, he was succeeded by his brother James II who introduced an absolutist rule modelled on that in France (Marshall, 2013: 57). James II, inheriting a strong royal authority, criticized his brother's deference to Parliament and advanced his pro-Catholic agenda by appointing loyal judges and by using his prerogative to overturn parliamentary laws restricting the appointment of Catholics to positions of authority. (Marshall, 2013: 58). Despite the bloody history between Protestants and Catholics, James II's reign did not immediately spark revolt, partly due to the Protestant ascendancy's strong position in Ireland. By James II's time, Catholics controlled only 14% of land in Ireland, with Protestant landholding increasing (Hempton, 1996: 93). Although there was some opposition and unease, the Protestant community, bolstered by their newfound power, showed a degree of complacency (Gillespie, 1992: 129). The factionalism among Protestants, including Presbyterians and Anglicans, also diluted the response (Holland, 2014: 21-22).

Although the exiled Duke of Monmouth led a failed rebellion in 1685, hoping to capitalise on anti-Catholic sentiment, James II's reign is often seen as relatively bloodless compared to the Civil War. Monmouth's rebellion was crushed at the Battle of Sedgemoor and Monmouth was executed after a failed plea for mercy. The rebellion only had minor impact in Ireland, where the Protestant population remained largely indifferent (Gillespie, 1992: 126). The rebellion's failure did not deter James II, who, instead of learning from it, intensified his absolutism and imposed more favourable legislation for Catholics. In doing so James II misjudged Irish Protestants' reluctance to oppose him, thinking their

celebration of his coronation meant unconditional loyalty. After the defeat of the Catholic Confederacy, Protestants had welcomed their newly gained privileges seeing it as liberation from what they viewed as barbaric adversaries (Kelly, 1994: 27, 28). Protestants felt their power threatened and that James II's policies would unravel the 'progress' made by Protestants in the last 100 years of settlement and colonisation. Fearing anarchy and recalling the 1641 rising, Protestants were alarmed by pamphlets predicting a Catholic massacre, leading some to flee and others to resist (Simms, 1979: 155). Anglicans and Presbyterians united to oppose the Catholic resurgence and James II's removal of over 7,000 Protestant soldiers and appointment of Catholic officials, including Richard Talbot as Lord Deputy, intensified Protestant opposition, particularly in Protestant-dominated Ulster (Childs, 2007: 3).

In England, the birth of a Catholic heir to James II alarmed Protestants, as it threatened to reverse the Protestant Reformation. To counter this, they turned to William of Orange, Stadtholder of the Dutch Republic and husband of James II's daughter Mary (Stadtholder was the highest executive officer within an early Dutch Republic province). The Dutch Protestant Stadtholder was invited to take the English throne, uniting England, Scotland, and Ireland under Protestant rule (Sandal, 2017: 28). Willam saw an opportunity to check French power and believed that England's naval strength would bolster his position (Bruijn, 1989: 118). William's manifesto emphasised protecting Protestant liberties and restoring a free parliament, positioning his invasion as a religious and political necessity (Harris, 2013: 114). Despite preparations, including Catholic troops, William's invasion force of 20,000 soldiers and naval support proved overwhelming. Impressive given that William was not a Monarch, but a Stadtholder of the Netherlands. Accordingly, he had to seek approval from the States-Generals for this venture, not to mention find the 6 million guilders required to assemble his forces. The Netherlands was at war with France, making any diversion of forces risky. However, the threat of an Anglo-French alliance convinced the Dutch to support William's invasion (Haley, 1992: 22, 26). Upon landing near Torquay, William's army was met with enthusiasm, leading to James II's forces defecting or fleeing. The Glorious Revolution was notably bloodless, with minimal combat and subsequent anti-Catholic riots in London led him to flee to France (Vallance, 2009: 853).

The Return of the King and the Williamite War

With James II abandoning his throne in 1689 Parliament declared William and his wife King and Queen, viewing William as a deliverer from popery and superstition (Fleck, 2024: 319). With the Glorious Revolution the constitutional monarchy we have today was established.

James II, having fled to France, still hoped to regain his throne and with French aid, he returned to Ireland with arms and advisors to rally his Catholic supporters. Gathering forces in Dublin he laid siege to Derry/Londonderry. Richard Talbot appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland by James II remained loyal, but Protestants in Ulster, remembering the 1641 massacre resisted. With William, busy consolidating power in England and Scotland, Ulster Protestants were left to defend themselves.

Resistance to James II's Catholic rule focused on Ulster, particularly Derry/Londonderry and Enniskillen (Simms, 1979: 136, 155). The siege of Derry/Londonderry has become a symbol of Loyalist solidarity and sacrifice, representing the Protestants' historical struggle in Ireland and their fear of annihilation (McGovern, 1997: 6). The siege was a traumatic event, with the city's military leadership initially planning to surrender, but led by the apprentice boys they took decisive action to hold the city

(Holland, 2014: 21). Had the city surrendered on seeing James II's host, the history of Ireland and possibly the United Kingdom may have been very different. The apprentice boys' act of closing the gates became a defining moment for Loyalists, embodying their 'no surrender' mentality (Sandal, 2017: 128). Doherty suggests that the siege's psychological impact persists due to Loyalists' sense of isolation and the historical memory's relevance (2008: 1). Gillespie, however, argues that the siege was more a reaction to the panic among Protestants in Ireland rather than a unified stand against Catholic rule (1992: 128). Despite support for William III, many Protestants were conflicted about overthrowing a monarch who was their ruler by divine-right. While Loyalist narratives are not always unified, the narrative of this part of their history has been clearly emphasised to express unity in the face of Catholic oppression. Ironically for an identity so closely linked with their Protestant religion, Loyalists are also quick to emphasise that this war was not fought on religious grounds. Their main example of this was the Pope's support for William III, although this was motivated by political rivalry with France, not religious alignment (Simms, 1974: 231).

Many aspects of Loyalist identity can be traced back to the events of the 17th-century. Contemporary Loyalists view the Siege of Derry/Londonderry as a fight against monarchical power and Catholic imposition. If seen as a story, the 1641 Irish Catholic rebellion is the hero's low point, betrayed by Catholics. The Siege of Derry in 1689 is their stand, marked by "no surrender," and the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 is their triumph over James II. Seen in the 19th/20th centuries as a victory over monarchy, this narrative shifted to a Protestant victory, reflecting contemporary anxieties (Walker, 1992: 56, 58). Today, Derry/Londonderry symbolises Loyalist identity, like Jerusalem for Christians, embodying values of self-reliance and religious freedom (Cohen, 2007: 956).

During the Jacobite siege, soldiers endured harsh conditions due to the constant attacks. The siege lasted 105 days, causing over 10,000 deaths among defenders and attackers. Relief came when HMS Dartmouth and other ships broke the river Foyle's boom, allowing resupply and leading to the Jacobite retreat. As Doherty surmises on the defeated Jacobite forces:

> 'There was no alternative but for the Jacobite army to quit Derry. It had failed in its objective with every plan adopted seemingly doomed' (2008, 317).

The defeat at Derry/Londonderry was a major setback for James II as otherwise he would have joined with his forces in Scotland. William III took advantage of this by sending Marshal Frederick Schomberg with 10,000 troops to capture Carrickfergus Castle, held by a 500-strong Jacobite garrison. Schomberg, rejected the garrison's attempts to delay and after days of bombardment, the defenders surrendered. Carrickfergus remains a symbol of Protestant loyalty, marked by a statue of William III and is symbolic of Loyalist attachments to this Monarch.

William III saw the campaign in Ireland as a distraction from the main war in Europe, but for Loyalists the 1st of July 1690 CE is a defining moment in Irish/British history. With James II defeated it ended his ambitions to reclaim the throne. Another symbolic reason why this battle became so important in the history of the war in Ireland was the presence of both James II and William III on the same battlefield. Though this is an important date for Loyalists and their memory of Identity, the reality is much more convoluted. The symbolism of this battle has been a vital aspect of Loyalist identity ever since. Murals of William III on his white horse leading into battle are seen in places such as Derry/Londonderry and Belfast and are not just signs of Loyalist memorialisation but also symbols of sectarian violence. It was

not the decisive battle that modern Loyalist memory recalls, French observers remarked upon it as a 'skirmish' rather than a battle. Jacobite losses were moderate, and the army was able to withdraw in good order and live to fight another day. It is perhaps the fact that following the battle James II fled into exile, leaving his forces to fend for themselves that makes this battle stand out in Loyalist memory. The fact that he deserted his Irish supporters and abandoned the campaign meant that the Battle of the Boyne became a de facto victory for the Williamite army. This is in stark contrast to William III who is depicted as leading the heroic charge into the maelstrom of battle. It is this symbolism and association with the year 1690 CE that is seared into collective memory and has been a cornerstone of Loyalist identity (Simms, 1974:231-234). The battle and the resulting withdrawal of the Jacobite army allowed the Williamite army to advance and to lay siege to Athlone, but with the siege stalling and stout resistance from the Jacobite garrison, an exacerbated William left Ireland for England leaving the remainder of the war to his commanders. The long-standing legacy of the Battle of the Boyne for Loyalists has been the remembrance of the battle every year in July, commemorated with marches that celebrate the Protestant victory over Catholics and holds a special place in Ulster Protestant tradition (Sandal, 2017: 30). James II, demoralised and dismayed at his failures in Ireland, reportedly attempted to blame his Irish supporters, which earned him the nickname of 'James the Shit'.

Post-war, Ireland was dominated by a Protestant Ascendancy, although the Jacobite cause would continue into the 18th century. Ironically, Presbyterian dissenters who defended Protestantism were later excluded by the Test Act of 1704, which barred them from high office. Ironic for a people who had devoted so much to the defence of Protestantism and religious liberty in Ireland, that they now found themselves being treated as a disloyal minority the same as the Catholics who they had fought against. The war marked the end of major Catholic resistance with many Catholics emigrating to France. Their citizenship was revoked, and their lands and property forfeited. Approximately 12,000 emigrated following the war, and many of those who went to France to live as émigrés would form the French army's Irish regiment known as the 'Wild Geese' (Hegarty, 2012: 150-151).

The 17th century had a huge psychological impact, shaping the mindset of Protestants with their siege mentality. This would develop into the Loyalist identity of the future. Yet, despite benefiting from the plantations under the Tudors and Stuarts, surviving the rebellion of 1641 CE, benefiting from the Cromwellian settlement of Ireland and being victorious in the Williamite war, the paranoia of Catholic plots and intrigues persisted. The Penal Laws of 1695 CE were more impactful upon Gaelic culture than the Test Acts for It forbade Catholics from marrying Protestants, adopting children, owning a house valued over £5, outlawed the education of Catholics in the Gaelic language and made Gaelic music illegal. These laws were not just an assault upon the Catholic faith but on all Gaelic culture. Designed to appease Protestant fear of Catholic rebellion, the laws put in place would enshrine the bigotry and disdain Protestant settlers held for Catholics into legislation.

Whilst the Penal Laws subjugated the Irish and marginalised Gaelic culture to near extinction over the following century, it served only to kick the proverbial can down the road. As we shall observe, over time, Nationalism would take root in Irish minds and impact not only on their religious freedoms and cultural liberty, but also lead to their liberation as an independent state free from the dominion of England (Hegarty, 2012: 152).

Chapter 3: Battle for Historical Narration

A. Nations & Nationalism

'All narrative history contains elements of the imaginative, and history is continually rewritten in the context of an ever-changing present. The line between history and fiction is not as clear-cut as some historians might wish' (Shanahan, 2011: 151).

Irish Jacobitism and Early Nationalism

Anderson has mentioned that the concepts of nation, nationality and Nationalism are difficult to define. More so, in trying to identify its emergence as an ideology. This leaves us with a challenging task in analysing its complexity (1983: 3). Unlike other forms of political ideology, Nationalism lacks great philosophers penning treaties and manifestos. Some point to philosophers such as Herder and Nietzsche and have been highlighted as contributing to Nationalist thought, but neither intended to be champions of a Nationalist cause (Fukuyama, 2018: 60). This philosophical bankruptcy when compared to other political ideologies should put it at a distinct disadvantage, and yet it has endured in the socio-political culture of society globally through to the 21st century. The main reason for employing historical analysis to study the heritage and identity of Loyalists is to examine how it was constructed, and why certain historical events have shaped the emotional heritage of Loyalists in their contemporary struggles (Anderson, 1983: 4-5. It is important to remember, that history and memory are two very different methods of viewing the past. The concept of approaching Loyalist identity from a historical perspective is to scrutinise events that have formed Loyalist identity. Whilst history has a collective ownership, Memory is exclusively owned by one community or another. We can historically critique its inaccuracies, but memory shapes the character of a people, and its emotional attachments and logical deductions often conflict with one another. Whilst the creation of a collective memory is prone to being sanitised, it is also susceptible to selective remembrance and revels in the conflict of historical narratives. As we examine how identity has been constructed and the origins of a group's heritage, we find it is filled with conflicts in its narratives and filled with groups eager to forget the inconvenient nature of history (Beiner, 2013: 35-36). Although historical analysis is meant to examine historical sources and be free of mythology, this comes into conflict when analysing the emergence of Nationalist thought (Berger, 2009: 490). I would argue that Nationalism is a hybrid of historical reflection and memory integration, it attempts to answer the questions of 'Who are we?' and 'How are we different?'. As such it is not enough to simply look at historical dates and details and reflect on how Loyalist identity was constructed, but to also analyse why it has emerged. I would further suggest that the emergence of Loyalist identity has been a counter to the birth of Irish Nationalism and Republicanism, and by examining both we can come to an understanding as to how and why Loyalist heritage and identity was formed. Revolutionary Nationalism in Ireland compacted the historical events that I have so far examined into a few short years to realise their own identity. Loyalism emerged in contrast to this movement, a Protestant people who had a different vision of their collective destiny for Ireland's future compared to the Catholic Irish who dreamed of suffrage, liberty and reclaiming their cultural legacy (McCaffery, 1973: 525).

The defeat of James II and his exile nearly ended Catholic resistance and solidified Protestant dominance. Tensions shifted from Catholics to divisions between Anglicans and Presbyterians in Ulster (Doyle, 1997: 41). Jacobitism itself remained influential among Irish Catholics until the French Revolution, with Jacobite exiles continuing to seek support for invasions of Ireland. Although Scottish Jacobites, wary of alienating Protestant allies, saw limited support for restoration (Szechi, 1998: 359). While the Act of Union (1707 CE) and subsequent Hanoverian dynasty changes fuelled Jacobite dissatisfaction, William III's suppression of Highland clans exacerbated tensions, fostering Jacobite insurrection (Hayward & Hall, 2001: 148).

Although Ireland was largely passive during Jacobite events in Britain and Europe, it was not entirely disengaged. Irish Jacobites participated in various activities. The most significant involvement was enlisting in the Jacobite cause, a capital offence that led to severe punishments. Jacobite themes were also prevalent in Irish poetry of the time, influencing later Irish Nationalism (Ó Buachalla, 1992: 40). This poetry, deeply embedded in Gaelic culture, helped preserve Irish traditions despite penal laws and Protestant oppression. A steady stream of Irish support for Scottish rebellions throughout the 18th century remained. However, this aspect of Irish history is often overlooked by historians, possibly because Jacobitism aimed to restore a British king, conflicting with the dominant Irish Nationalist narrative (Ó Buachalla, 1993: 129).

Irish Jacobitism did not lead to open rebellion, but its language and symbolism contributed to later 18th-century unrest (Ó Buachalla, 1992: 48). Scottish Jacobitism, particularly the 1745-6 CE rebellion led by Charles Edward Stuart consisting mainly of Highland clansmen, reached as far as Derby but failed to gain significant English support, ultimately retreating to Scotland. The ensuing defeat at the battle of Culloden Moor was a decisive victory for Government forces under the Duke of Cumberland, with the Highland charge proving disastrous. This defeat is remembered vividly in Irish and Scottish Nationalist traditions (Hayes, 1949: 102). The battle's outcome and subsequent Highland clearances marked the end of the Highland Clan system, serving as a harsh warning against rebellion and cultural preservation (Hayward & Hall, 2001: 150-151).

The decline of Jacobitism, exacerbated by Charles Edward Stuart's alcoholism and political irrelevance, marked the end of the Stuart dynasty's influence in European politics (Hayward & Hall, 2001: 151). As Jacobitism waned, new Nationalist ideas began to form in Ireland by the late 18th century. Hagarty describes the emerging rebellious ideology of Irish Nationalism:

> 'They tiled their soil, for alien masters, they worked at various things for alien masters, but they lived, and they increased, and they waited. The Spirit of Ireland was deep in them and needed not to spur them. And, as the eighteenth century crept on, they began to come somewhat into the open' (1952: 3).

United Irishman Revolt of 1798

The United Irish movement, seeking Irish independence from Great Britain, would replace Jacobitism. By the end of the 18th century Jacobitism had waned, evolving into Republican Nationalism, which dominates Irish politics today (Hayward & Hall, 2001: 151). The penal laws and land confiscations fostered Catholic resentment, leading to intense conflict and rebellion in 1798. Although some Penal

Laws had been repealed by 1778, prejudice persisted, with new discriminatory practices replacing the old laws (Cullen, 1996: 24).

The 18th century marked a shift from focusing on dynasties and kings to examining political circumstances and governance. The old orders of feudal society had long given way, and intellectual society began to question ideas of governance.

In the Americas, British colonies evolved from mere settlements into significant entities. Post the Seven Years' War, Britain expected the colonies to cover the costs through taxes, sparking debates on law, liberty, and constitutional power (Berg, 1986: 185). The American Revolution of 1776 reflected Enlightenment ideals. The Belfast Newsletter's publication of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 stirred patriotic fervour in Ireland, leading to the formation of militias and political clubs, such as the United Irishmen in 1791 (Curtin, 1985: 464).

The French Revolution inspired the United Irishmen, who sought to unite all Irish people beyond sectarian divides (Beiner, 2013: 13). However, the 1798 Rebellion led to a polarised historical narrative with Protestants and Catholics alike struggling with this shared history. For Catholics, the association with a predominantly Protestant-led rebellion created discomfort, so that by the 19th century attempts were made to downplay or forget the rebellion's significance. Even unionist figures urging its remembrance to be suppressed (Beiner, 2013: 9-10). After Ireland's partition in 1921, commemoration of the United Irishmen was curtailed, reflecting the new Northern Irish state's reluctance to acknowledge this complex history (Beiner, 2013: 33).

The United Irishmen's leadership largely came from the dissenting Presbyterian community, highlighting an irony as they sought to remove the barriers of sectarianism while being part of the sectarian culture themselves. The group, aiming to sever Ireland's ties with England, consisted mostly of Protestant English-speaking upper-class members who had previously marginalised Catholics and suppressed Irish culture (Boydell, 1998: 45). Despite their dissatisfaction with British government policies and a desire for reform, many members still showed loyalty to King George III and hesitated to embrace Republicanism (Howe, 1999: 222). This sentiment mirrors today's Loyalist community, which, despite strong allegiance to the British Crown, often opposes British government policies. Examples include the 2012 flag protests and the formation of the UVF in 1913 CE (Bowman, 2013: 28).

Theobald Wolfe Tone, a key leader of the United Irishmen and often seen as the founder of modern Irish Republicanism, was a Protestant Presbyterian from Dublin. Despite his elite status, he was excluded from the Protestant Ascendancy due to his dissenting background (Elliott, 1989: 1, 2). Tone was critical of the corrupt Irish parliament and inspired by Enlightenment ideas of liberty and tolerance (Elliott, 1989: 9, 20). His pamphlet 'An Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland' advocated for inclusive reform (Geoghegan, 2014: 497). Although he sought French aid to support the rebellion, the expedition failed due to severe weather (McGary, 2018: 25, 27). Tone saw this as a missed opportunity and lamented the close call with a potential invasion (Geoghegan, 2014: 503).

The rebellion's characterisation—whether as a popular uprising, a civil war, or a Nationalist revolt—reflects differing interpretations of Irish history and politics (Bartlett, 2000: 181). Despite the United Irishmen's vision of overcoming sectarianism, internal divisions and sectarian violence undermined their efforts (Howe, 1999: 223). The British exploited these divisions and succeeded in suppressing the rebellion through military might and propaganda (Beiner, 2018: 13).

The rebellion's failure was compounded by British intelligence and military responses, leading to severe consequences for the rebels. Tone, the leader of the rebellion would be captured, he requested that he be allowed to die as a soldier by firing squad as he had served as an officer in the French army during the war. This however was declined, deciding that his treason and birth as an Irishman outweighed his status as an officer in the French army. However, before he was hanged, Tone committed suicide in his cell.

Post-rebellion, the British sought to integrate Ireland more fully into the Union through the Act of Union passed in 1801, hoping to diminish religious divisions but instead deepening them (Hill, 2001: 51). The act solidified British control and made Ireland an integral part of the United Kingdom (Evans, 2015,46). For Nationalist historians the failings of the union did not require much analysis to understand, the reason why a new political identity did not emerge from old political/religious divisions was that it was incompatible with the new power of emerging Irish Nationalism (Hull, 2001: 52) While failing to resolve sectarian issues, it helped Loyalists distance themselves from the rebellion and further embrace Unionism (O'Hagerty, 1952: 1).

B. Rise of Loyalism & Home Rule

'What is most important to note is how decisive, at certain moments, religion has proved in shaping Irish Nationalism and its associated battles' (English, 2011: 448).

The Potato Famine & Irish Nationalism

The differences between Unionism and Loyalism can be subtle due to their historical overlap, especially in the 19th century. Unionism is generally seen as a respectable political movement supporting the Union with Great Britain, Loyalism is often linked to sectarianism and paramilitary groups, emphasising loyalty to the British crown over political governance (Blackstock, 2007: 1). At the century's start, the Act of Union tied Ireland to the UK, but Ireland was treated as a special case, with direct British rule due to unrest and uprisings. By the 19th century, Irish Home Rule had become an important focal point. Evolving from a call for Catholic emancipation it had majority Catholic support but was fiercely opposed by Unionists in Ulster. By 1861, the British government was less concerned with Home Rule, viewing Ireland as a hopeful part of the Union (Kinealy, 2009:1). Queen Victoria's visit in 1849 had masked growing tensions, and the conflict between Irish Nationalism and Loyalist Unionism remained intense, although some, like Isaac Butt, tried to reconcile the two (Kelly, 2013: 583).

Despite a significant population increase during the late 18th and early 19th centuries Ireland remained a largely rural economy (Solar, 2015:66). This made it vulnerable to famine. The blight of 1845, which spread throughout Ireland and destroyed the potato crop, led to widespread starvation, killing over a million and prompting mass emigration (Cunningham, 2016:76). The Famine galvanised many into becoming Nationalists/Republicans due to the perception of inaction by the British government. Nationalists successfully crafted a narrative of suffering and of a sorrowful band of

Catholic emigrants. However, Catholics and Protestants both experienced hardship and many modern-day Loyalists also proudly remember their overseas ancestors.

The Irish Catholics who migrated to the United States held the British government responsible for their sufferings and harboured bitter memories of their exodus. While they contributed substantially to the United States, especially during the American Civil War, they always remembered the mother country and would play an important role in the future events of Ireland (Bardon, 2008: 588). However, what is often overlooked is the large number who emigrated to England, particularly cities like Liverpool, which still has a sizeable Irish population. Many Irish migrants remained in insular communities facing discrimination and struggling to integrate into British and American cultures (Evans, 2015:67).

Debate continues over whether the British Government's handling of the Irish famine can be classified as genocide. Some argue the British deliberately exacerbated the famine to target the Catholic Irish, while others suggest they were merely indifferent. Early on, Robert Peel's government tried to alleviate the suffering by importing maize from the U.S, but the government's laissez-faire attitude and lack of urgency meant their efforts were insufficient (McGowan, 2017:87-89). British anti-Irish sentiment and general fatigue over Irish issues likely influenced their response to the famine, leading to minimal sympathy for the Irish plight (Evans, 2015:55). Revisionism is common among historians when it comes to absolving the British government of the guilt of the famine, but it is unmistakable that the combination of racism and dedication to lasses-faire economics led to death and suffering amongst the Irish people (Allen, 2016:6).

The Industrial Revolution and Emergence of Unionism

With migration the Irish population declined significantly and never reached pre-famine levels again (Cunningham, 2016: 76). As Irish Nationalism grew, Protestant Loyalism also strengthened, particularly after the failure of the United Irishmen rebellion. The Orange Order, formed in 1795, emerged as a militant Protestant group opposing Catholic organisations. Initially limited in scope, by the 19th century it had become a major religious-political institution in Northern Ireland and Dublin (Roberts, 1971: 269). The Order's leaders sought to emphasise its religious aspect, intertwining Protestantism with Loyalism. While Catholicism played a significant role in Nationalist ideology, Loyalism often merged religious and political identities, with organisations like the Orange Order promoting anti-Catholic sentiments (Roberts, 1971: 275).

In contemporary Northern Ireland, organizations like the Orange Order contribute to polarization and challenges to the peace process. Its commemorative marches shape Loyalist identity and fuel sectarian conflict, both in Ireland and in places like Canada (Roberts, 1971: 278). The Order's masonic influences resonate with both elites and working classes, embedding Loyalist symbolism in Protestant society (Forker, 2013: 68). Loyalism, distinct from unionism, emphasizes loyalty to the Crown and is particularly prominent in working-class areas, reflecting a siege mentality and a desire for dominance (Kuusisto, 2001: 62).

In the 19th century, Ulster Protestants developed a strong sense of exceptionalism, believing in their unique role within the British Empire. This was reinforced by Unionism, which connected Ulster's future to British industrial power and fostered a shared identity with England and Scotland. As the

Catholic population leaned towards home rule, the Protestant community, driven by Orangeism, heightened its anti-Catholic stance through political Unionism to oppose calls for an independent Irish state (Roberts, 1971: 278).

By the late 19th century, the issue of Irish home rule had divided British politics. The Liberal Party, led by Gladstone, introduced several home rule bills, but all were defeated, strengthening the Unionist cause. Frustrated with politics, Irish Nationalists increasingly resorted to violent revolution, while British politics outside liberal circles remained conservative and resistant to home rule (de Nie, 2005: 43).

In the 1880s, Ulster Unionism strengthened as Northern Protestants became more vocal and organized than Southern Loyalists. Key factors included support from British politicians like Winston Churchill, strong local leadership, and economic stability from industrialization (Loughlin, 1985: 203).

Belfast benefited from the Industrial Revolution that had taken place during the 19th century, becoming one of the largest centres in the United Kingdom for linen exports and shipbuilding. This was different to the agrarian South and another reason why Ulster faired better during the famine years. Accordingly, it did not feel the same level of resentment toward the British colonial administration having benefited from the investment of British industrialisation (Buckland, 1975: 212). Belfast, a hub of shipbuilding, including the ill-fated RMS Titanic, epitomised Protestant industriousness and Unionist pride. The shipwrights adopted a more cosmopolitan view of the changing political landscape, as the skilled nature of their work required them to visit many of the industrial centres of the United Kingdom.

Having expanded massively during the 19th century the shipbuilding industry was part of the British experience of the Empire, this was truly the age of coal and steel, and the skilled Protestant labourers from Ulster were at the forefront of the Industrial Revolution (Buckland, 1975: 213). The largely Protestant workforce took on herculean efforts to lay the keels of ships of monumental proportions. Nowhere is this more self-evident than the efforts of companies such as Harland & Wolfe to build ships such as the RMS Titanic. However, the Titanic's sinking in 1912, though initially a symbol of Protestant success, eventually led to a more nuanced reflection on Ulster's industrial past and is in stark contrast to today, where once the sound of industry rang out, the dockyards are a bleak sight to behold and are now a shadowy relic of this age of industrial might (Brearton, 1997: 98).

With the split between Northern and Southern Loyalists, the Protestant community in Ulster began to develop a form of Ethno-Nationalism. From this point onwards the term 'Ulster-Scots' appears with increasing frequency to describe their identity, no longer simply relying on history and religion for their heritage but now also on ethnicity (Dunn, 2010: 204). By 1912, after decades of bitter debate, fear of losing their privileged position in the face of home rule had peaked in the minds of Loyalists. Loyalists lived with the belief and slogan that 'home rule meant Rome rule', the consensus amongst both Northern and Southern Loyalists was that they were on the precipice of not only losing their status and position but most importantly, their identity (Foy, 1996: 50). The gunrunning operation in Larne in April 1914 serves as a notable example of the illegal arms shipment network established by Loyalist paramilitaries. During this operation, 25,000 rifles, along with munitions and small arms, were supplied by the German Empire. The supplies were successfully landed by the ship 'Mountjoy II', a name reflecting the Siege of Derry and the ship that broke the boom in 1689. This event had become enshrined in the heritage and myth of Loyalism (Bowman, 2002: 43). This served as a major success

both politically and militarily for Loyalists and the UVF, the weapons were immediately distributed and put into hiding, so well hidden were these supplies that the British Army continued to uncover stockpiles from the Larne gunrunning until 1969 (Jackson, 1993: 35).

Despite the ease of obtaining rifles from the German Empire, the UVF was not well-organised or prepared for open conflict. The arms that the UVF held were of mixed quality and backgrounds. Often, UVF brigades would find themselves training with dummy rifles to present the appearance of uniformity and cohesion. Additionally, many of the experienced Officers who were part of the Militia were long past their prime and incompetence was common. Brigades were also unwilling to serve in different regions, making it difficult to coordinate an effective campaign to suppress the growing Nationalist Irish Volunteers and link up with Loyalist brigades in the South of Ireland. In the event of open hostilities, the main bastion of resistance to home rule would come from Ulster. Despite these struggles, the British Army and RIC (Royal Irish Constabulary) considered the threat posed by the UVF to be significant and the prospect of war a very tangible reality (Bowman, 2002: 46-47). By summer 1914, with two opposing visions of the future of Ireland, a clash between the UVF and the Irish Volunteers seemed inevitable. The UVF had become a formidable force, and the Ulster Loyalists had become convinced that home rule would be a devastating policy that would destroy their collective identity. The domination of Ulster in British politics would be the apex of the influence of Loyalists on the decisions made by the British government. The UVF, despite its many flaws, was considered a very real threat by the British and Irish Nationalists. The dangerous precedent set by importing arms from foreign nations served as an example to the Irish volunteers. The gun was introduced into Irish politics as a means of political change, setting the way for a confrontation of these two competing visions of the Irish question (Boyce, 1970: 93). In 1914 another issue would disrupt this seemingly inevitable clash, the eruption of the First World War.

C. First World War & The Easter Rising

'It is now widely admitted that the Great War was also Ireland's war, with profound consequences for every element of Irish life after 1914' (Fitzpatrick, 2015: 643).

The Great War and the Battle of the Somme

"Blood Sacrifice" captures the Irish experience of the First World War with two distinct defining moments in 1916 for Nationalists and Loyalists. For Loyalists, it was the sacrifice made on the bloody fields of France during the Battle of the Somme, an event that defined their British identity (Fitzpatrick, 2015: 51). For Irish Nationalists, it was the Easter Rising which became central to their identity, symbolising a unified vision for their future (Buckley, 1956: 55).

Before 1914 Irish Nationalism was diverse, with varying ideologies, but the Easter Rising of 1916 shifted Nationalism onto a revolutionary path (English, 2011: 451, 526). Similarly, post-1916 Loyalism evolved, with the Battle of the Somme unifying Loyalists, who felt their loyalty had been validated by their sacrifice (Boyce, 1994: 51).

The First World War erupted quickly and Britain, traditionally relying on a professional army and large navy, faced an unprecedented global conflict involving 65 million soldiers and around 20 million casualties. The British Army, unprepared for the scale of war initially relied upon enlistment but shifted towards conscription in 1916.

Ireland's unique situation saw both unionists and Nationalists raising paramilitary forces. The Loyalist UVF, under Carson, had plans to resist any measures that imposed home rule on Ulster, but ultimately the call to do their duty to the King and Country outweighed this. (Grayson, 2015: 120). In exchange for Carson's unequivocal support, the British state forgave Carson's threats of possible secession and outright rebellion. Members of the UVF joined the army and formed the 36th Ulster Division which was deployed to the Western Front in 1915 (Fitzpatrick, 2015: 650). In exchange for promises regarding home rule, Redmond also committed the Irish volunteers to support the British war effort. Nationalists aimed to prove their worthiness for self-governance within the Empire, exemplified by Redmond's call for unity in its defence (Boyce, 1994: 50).

Redmond's decision to pledge Irish Nationalists to fight in the British Army was a risky move, reflecting the belief among moderate home rulers that their sacrifice would be rewarded post-war (McGreevy, 1994: 408). While supporting the war effort, Redmond pressured the British government to honour home rule, ensuring promises were kept (McGreevy, 1994: 409). Most Irish volunteers backed Redmond, with 175,000 forming the 'National Volunteers' and only 13,500 remaining as Irish Volunteers, indicating strong support for home rule (McGreevy, 1994: 411). The Irish Catholic sentiment in supporting neutral Belgium, a fellow Catholic nation, was significant, driven by moral anger over the German invasion (McGreevy, 1994: 411-412). The Catholic Church's initial support for the war is often overlooked (McGreevy, 1994: 411). The reasons for enlisting were varied, from the promise of home rule to defending a Catholic nation and social pressures, leading many to fight in what would later be seen as an unworthy cause. Despite both Nationalist and Loyalist contributions to the war, myths persist in Britain that the Irish avoided commitment. Loyalists felt pride in their sacrifice, but the war is often seen as a background event in Irish history (Gallagher, 2023: 135). The war's toll, such as the Munster Division's 11,000 casualties in one day, and the impact of U-boat attacks on the economy, led to declining support (McGreevy, 1994: 413-414). Conscription in 1916 caused a labour shortage, affecting the economy and public opinion (Fitzpatrick, 2015: 646).

The Battle of the Somme was a defining moment for the 36th Ulster Division, part of Lord Kitchener's 'New Army' (Norman, 2003: 6). The battle was planned as a joint British-French operation that would achieve a much-needed breakthrough to the stalemate that had arisen all along the Western Front (Graham & Shirlow, 2002: 882). On the first day alone over 5,000 Ulstermen were killed, wounded or went missing. The effect was profound on Ulster communities, with most families suffering some form of loss. This helped consolidate the view amongst Loyalists that they were unique in their contribution to the war effort (Gallagher, 2023: 134). Despite heavy losses and limited gains, the Ulster Division earned a reputation for courage, breaking through heavily fortified German defences (Joye, 2016: 46). The Somme's significance quickly became part of Loyalist identity, with the losses compared to those at the Battle of the Boyne and reinforcing their role as defenders of Ulster. The battle's legacy is still commemorated today, legitimising the UVF's historical origins and their role as Ulster's guardians (Graham & Shirlow, 2002: 893). In 1921, the Ulster Tower was constructed at Thiepval, where the Ulster Division was most heavily engaged during the battle and was one of the first permanent battlefield memorials to be established. It continues to be maintained, with Irishmen working there to this day. It

importantly became a feature that legitimised the future UVF paramilitary and became symbolic of their representation as defenders of Ulster and of their connection as an integral part of the Union (Evershed, 2018: 248).

Recently, the Great War and the Battle of the Somme have been reconsidered as potential bridges for reconciliation between Catholic and Protestant communities. The contributions of Catholic soldiers at the Somme have been largely erased from Ireland's national memory, and British remembrance of Irish contributions remains scant (Bowman, 2013: 604).

From the Loyalist perspective, with its deep memory of the First World War, narratives have emerged that emphasise the shared suffering of Catholics and Protestants in France (Lyle, 2021). Although the Republic of Ireland has generally experienced a collective amnesia concerning the First World War, the UK and Ireland have made important strides towards reconciliation by jointly commemorating the losses of both communities. Even during the war, the Catholic and Protestant soldiers who fought side by side discovered a humanity not realised during peace that could only be found in the fires of war (Evershed, 2018: 241)

For Nationalists who fought in the British Army for home rule, the Battle of the Somme was pivotal, akin to the Australian and New Zealand experience at Gallipoli and ANZAC Day honours those who died in the failed Gallipoli invasion. Despite Redmond's efforts, the Nationalist narrative has not embraced a singular First World War moment like the Loyalists have with the Battle of the Somme. As early as 1917, the Orange Order began commemorating the battle, and by the war's end, it had a near-cult status within Loyalism (Fitzpatrick, 2016: 85).

Northern Loyalists in Ulster strongly opposed home rule and defended their Protestant identity, while Southern Loyalists, like those in Dublin, faced a different experience. They resisted anti-recruitment propaganda and felt abandoned by their northern counterparts. Southern Unionists believed that if Ulster rejected home rule, Ireland couldn't achieve it. Ulster's separate agreement excluding them from home rule left Southern Loyalists feeling isolated (McDowell, 1997).

The Easter Rising in Dublin profoundly impacted Loyalists, who felt alienated from Ulster and betrayed by their Irish neighbours. As their sons fought in the trenches, they perceived the Rising as a stab in the back during the Empire's hour of need. For Nationalists, however, the Easter Rising, rather than the trenches of France, would redefine Irish identity (Boyce, 1997: 51). The Irish Volunteers and Citizen Army, though a minority, gained support abroad and prepared for armed insurrection (Buckley, 1956: 52).

The Easter Rising

When viewing the Easter Rising, it's crucial to note that Nationalism fostered a belief in martyrdom beyond Catholic traditions. The 19th century witnessed many independence movements where victory was achieved through sacrifice. For example, the Texas War of Independence is remembered more for the Alamo's last stand than for the decisive Battle of San Jacinto (Graham, 1985: 37). The idea of the 'lost cause' was powerful, as seen in the Confederate States' defeat in 1865, where they reframed their narrative as a righteous struggle against impossible odds, ignoring slavery (Simpson, 1975: 350). For the Easter Rising rebels, a successful uprising wasn't the only goal; history showed that

defeat could strengthen Nationalist resolve. This idea had roots in the defeat of James II and was solidified by the United Irishmen rebellion, where overwhelming British power made the rebels appear courageous (Beiner, 2007: 374-376).

Historians debate whether the Easter Rising in April 1916 aimed to overthrow British rule or serve as a symbolic sacrifice for nationhood (McGarry, 2016: 120). The National Volunteers, led by Redmond, supported an 'Imperial Ireland' within the British Empire, while other Nationalist groups, like the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) and the Citizen Army, had different visions (Allen, 2016: 21). The Citizen Army, led by socialist James Connolly, sought a secular, socialist Ireland free from British control (Newsinger, 1983: 154). The IRB, a secretive Nationalist organisation founded in 1858, was instrumental in planning the uprising, seeing World War I as an opportunity to challenge British power (Townshend, 2006: 40). Despite their differences, these groups united for the 1916 uprising, although not all rebel leaders were in favour of aggressive action. When the rebels took to the streets of Dublin, around 1,600 militia members participated, focusing on the General Post Office (GPO) in Dublin, where Patrick Pearse proclaimed the Irish Republic's independence (Allen, 2016: 32-33).

Following the proclamation, shots were fired as rebels attempted to storm Dublin Castle, the administrative centre of British Ireland. Capturing the castle would have been a significant moral victory, akin to the Bastille for the French. Initially, 20 volunteers, seeing the castle poorly defended, attempted to take it (McKenna, 2011: 19). Confronting the Irish Catholic policeman on duty, they shot him when he refused entry. However, the rebels were repulsed in a shootout and retreated to the GPO. The rebellion began to falter, largely due to the amateur leadership of non-professional soldiers. The rebels expected Irish soldiers in the British Army to defect, but instead, Irish troops, some on leave from the Western Front, were called in to fight them. This demonstrated that not all Nationalists let alone all Irishmen supported armed insurrection against the British (Karsten, 1983: 42). With the GPO still in rebel hands, the British, eager to end the rebellion quickly, brought in artillery, causing civilian casualties. The battle raged for six days, and with the GPO on fire, Pearse ordered a surrender (Townshend, 2006: 43).

The response to the rising is perhaps more critical to Irish identity than the event itself, what followed was outrage, executions and mass detentions of thousands (Jackson, 2014: 138). Irish soldiers in the British Army felt betrayed and showed no sympathy for the rebels. The public perceived the rebellion as a pro-German revolt, and the rebels were jeered as they were led away. The rising's failure was also seen as a failure of British Military Intelligence, inspiring a strong response to cover the embarrassment (Sloan, 2013: 331).

The reaction from the Loyalist element in Dublin would strongly influence the British reaction in the wake of the rebellion. As Beiner states 'Triumph, for Anglo-Irish Protestants, was predicated on fear'. With its history of being massacred by the Irish in popular uprisings, such as the rebellion of 1641, this provoked a deep memory of trauma within Loyalists (2007: 371). As such they put pressure on the British establishment to deal with the rebels with an iron fist, starting with the execution of the rebellion's leaders. Over 90 were sentenced to death, but most sentences were commuted. However, the British hardline response backfired, turning public opinion against them and radicalising those imprisoned. Stories like Connolly's execution further fuelled Nationalist sentiment. The British strategy, seen as cruel, led to a widespread conversion to the Nationalist cause. The experience of WWI was a decisive turning point, fundamentally reshaping Irish and Loyalist identities.

The final push towards rebellion came in 1918 when the British government extended conscription to Ireland to support the war effort. Sinn Féin and the Catholic Church opposed this, leading to increased Nationalist sentiment. Even some Irish Unionists opposed the conscription extension. The conscription crisis illustrated the complexity of the conflict, with Protestants outside Ulster also resisting. By the war's end in November 1918, the damage had been done, paving the way for the Irish War of Independence. and further sectarian violence between Catholics and Protestants (Stubbs, 1990: 892).

Chapter 4: War and Peace

A. War for Independence & Civil War

'Popular Nationalism and unionism were so constructed that each perceived the other as a permanent threat or obstacle, antithetical not only to collective goals but also the maintenance of ethnic identity' (Hart, 2003: 107).

The Irish War of Independence, 1919-1921

The stage was now set for a confrontation between Loyalists and Nationalists over their collective destiny. Unionists found their identity as British subjects under assault from the renewed Irish Nationalists now fighting for their right to self-determination. The British Empire and the Irish volunteers under Sinn Féin were in open conflict. At the Treaty of Versailles, the victors discussed peace with the Central Powers and Wilson's vision of self-determination for smaller nations. New nations like Czechoslovakia and Poland emerged, but Ireland, despite Sinn Féin's delegation, was excluded to avoid offending the British. This exclusion confirmed Nationalist fears that the peace process was imperialist-controlled, isolating Ireland in its quest for nationhood. Following Sinn Féin's 1918 electoral victory, they formed the Dáil Éireann and declared the Irish Republic. The Irish volunteers from the Easter Rising became the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the Republic's military wing (Kline, 1993: 38). The British regarded the Dáil's actions as treason and the resulting deaths as murder.

The Easter Rising significantly harmed British prestige weakening British rule in Ireland, inspired by cultural and nationalist revivalism, Ireland pursued independence. Despite British confidence in quelling the resistance, the Irish underground reorganised effectively (Bowden, 1973: 14).

Hostilities began in 1919 with the ambush of two RIC constables in Tipperary, marking a shift in tactics, with RIC policemen targeted regardless of religion. The aim was to undermine British control and force a choice of sides. (Bardon, 2008: 694). The modern-day narrative of the Irish War of Independence centres on the guerrilla army being heroic under-dogs, and courageous in their struggle against the might of the British Empire. Those who perished died in the name of freedom and were martyrs. Like all revolutions, however, both sides committed morally ambiguous acts. The Irish guerrillas were victims of centuries of English oppression and the Protestant Ascendancy, and as such justified acts that would normally be considered terror and murder (Ryan, 2000: 74). The difficulty in attempting to

discern what constitutes a legitimate act in a war of liberation, and what is murder is an issue that scholars grapple with when looking at all revolutions and conflicts (Costigan, 1989: 68). The RIC, many of whom were Catholics, found themselves transformed from pillars of their communities to living in a constant state of anxiety and fear. At any moment any one of them could receive a bullet whilst doing their duties. Ordinary people were ordered to ostracise them socially or they would face retribution from the Irish rebels (Bardon, 2008: 694). De Valera labelled the RIC police officers as 'England's janissaries' considering them collaborators and enforcers of British authority in Ireland. By 1920 plummeting RIC morale had caused it to disintegrate as an effective organisation (Costigan, 1989: 76).

Unable to defeat the British in open battle, the IRA turned to guerrilla warfare, forming 'flying columns' of about 35 men for ambushes, assassinations, and assaults. The IRA's tactics kept the British off balance, unable to counter their mobile attacks effectively (Bowden, 1973: 16). The success of the IRA demonstrated that the revolutionary spirit of the 1916 Easter Rising had emerged like a phoenix rising from the ashes of its defeat at the GPO. The casualties inflicted by the IRA equalled 71% of all the casualties sustained in the conflict, a testament to their revolutionary spirit and the tactics that they employed (Hart, 1997: 143).

Micheal Collins stands out among Republican leaders for his legacy in Irish heritage (Regan, 1995: 17). Surviving the Easter Rising due to his lesser-known status, Collins returned to lead the fight against the British in the War of Independence. As a government minister, Collins rapidly lost patience with others in the cabinet who opposed the escalation of violence. Having survived the Easter Rising, Collins learnt that the main thing the British responded to was violence, and the only way to achieve true independence was by using the tactics of the British on themselves (Bardon, 2008: 694) As finance minister, he secured crucial funds for the war and helped de Valera escape from prison. While de Valera focused on gaining U.S. support, Collins managed the war effort. Collins, who believed violence was essential for independence, also served as director of intelligence, effectively targeting British officials and informers (Hegarty, 2012: 278-279). Loyalists and Ulster Unionists were shocked when Collins ordered the killing of Sir Henry Wilson, a Unionist M.P and Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Sir Henry was widely blamed for the increase in sectarian violence in Belfast and the 'pogrom' of Irish Nationalists there. Britain was preparing to establish a Northern Irish state designed as a new homeland for Protestants. The Catholic population in the north was seen as an inconvenience, and many encouraged the anxious Loyalists to take care of them. The execution of such a prominent unionist angered Loyalists and shook the government (Hart, 1992: 151). Understanding that British intelligence was key to their control, Collins mirrored this approach to undermine British efforts (Costigan, 1989: 77). With RIC forces struggling and the economy in decline the British faced mounting pressure, increasingly relying on the Black & Tans and Auxiliaries, who had a notorious reputation for violence, including against women (Connell Jr, 2020: 70). The Black & Tans were officially part of the RIC, but their behaviour contrasted sharply with the disciplined local police. The Auxiliaries, known for their brutality, were feared even more than the RIC (Connell Jr, 2020: 70) The Auxiliaries were involved in one of the most decisive events of the war when they were embroiled in the violent events of 1920 which became known as 'Bloody Sunday'. The event was in response to Collin's assassination of the 'Cairo Gang', the leading British intelligence agents, who were assassinated in their own homes in Dublin, effectively taking down the entirety of British intelligence in Ireland (Carey & de Búrca, 2003: 10). With an armoured car, the Auxiliaries marched into Croke Park opening fire on the football match taking place there, killing 12 and injuring a further 60. Later that day they would also execute three captured prisoners, two of whom were directly involved in the planning, but one person who was

simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. The execution of an innocent and the opening fire on a defenceless football match would be enshrined into the victim narrative of Nationalist identity. The cruelty of the British government was now on full display and international opinion turned against them (Dolan, 2006: 791)

Loyalists throughout the war had largely been silent, watching and waiting with anxiety the events unfolding across the country, and nervous about the outcome of the conflict. Southern Loyalists were uncertain about how to express their loyalty to the crown or what their role would be in an Irish Republic dominated by Catholics. Already feeling abandoned by the Protestants of Ulster, their anxiety was heightened by violent British attempts to suppress the conflict, and by their fatalistic attitude that the war in Ireland was already lost. As a result, Protestants and Loyalists began to flee from the Catholic-dominated south in large numbers, leaving them with a sense of bitterness and resentment at the British betrayal which would consign them to oblivion (Hughes, 2016: 1076-1077).

Not all Loyalists were Protestant, and many were descendants of the Old English community who had lived in Ireland for nearly 1000 years. They were forced to abandon their ancestral home in the face of aggressive Nationalism. The British Government, to ease the conflict and push through their plans of a divided Ireland, introduced the 'Government of Ireland Act leaving the Home Rule Bill of 1914 effectively dead (Murphy, 1986: 83,90). The concept of a separate parliament and a divided Ireland was never something Loyalists had truly desired, so they seized upon the opportunity to secure their future within the United Kingdom. The mood of the British Parliament was fickle, and many Loyalists were equally fearful of being abandoned altogether and therefore accepted the agreement to have two separate Parliaments, one in Dublin for an Irish Free State, and one in Belfast for Northern Ireland. Having a separate Parliament also enabled unionists to veto any move made in Westminster to attempt a unification of Northern and Southern Ireland (Hayward & Hall, 2001: 234). Most crucially for Loyalists, the parliament would be separate from the one in Westminster. However, it would remain subordinate to the British state and therefore still within the Union, only having control over Northern Ireland's domestic affairs (Gillespie, 2009: 2).

In Ulster, the response was marked by increased paranoia about the war's direction and the potential consequences for the province if abandoned by the British. Trouble began in Derry/Londonderry as Loyalists feared losing their position and believed the British government was abandoning them. The reactivated Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) led to riots, during which Protestants burned Catholic homes (Bardon, 2008: 700). From 1920 to 1922, Belfast endured severe sectarian violence, with 80 percent of casualties being civilians, unlike other areas of Ireland during the War of Independence where most casualties were military. The violence started in the shipyards, the protestant industrial heart of the city, with thousands of Irish Catholic workers being violently evicted from their places of work. Violence increased as British forces were spread too thin, focusing mainly on the intense fighting with the IRA in southern Ireland. In Ulster, Protestant attacks on Catholics often occurred during times of tension, orchestrated by Loyalists seeking to reassert their authority amid Ireland's rapid decline. Members of the Orange Order organized mobs to attack Catholics in the streets and homes, with the Auxiliaries joining in rather than maintaining peace (Lynch, 2008: 375, 377). The absence of the RIC left the Loyalists of Ulster feeling vulnerable and exposed to attack with only ill-disciplined Auxiliaries and Black & Tans for protection. As stated before, Loyalist victimhood and triumphalism had been built on a bedrock of fear, and with British resources spread thin, their fear heightened. According to the narrative of Nationalists, and later founding mythology of the IRA, in response to these assaults on

Catholics, the IRA came to defend the leaderless victims of this 'pogrom'. Being welcomed in to defend themselves from Protestant assault, the IRA became a feature of life in Belfast, and were there to stay. It became clear that despite the IRA describing itself as a defensive force that defended Nationalists, it did try to provoke extreme reactions from Loyalists, perpetuating the cycle of victimhood. The assassination of high-profile policemen provoked the Loyalists into action, tensions rose high during the funerals of these targets and often led to rioting across the entirety of the province, with reprisals targeting Catholic-owned businesses (Magill, 2020: 44).

Catholics in the south responded to the violence by boycotting Loyalist-owned businesses and Ulster-based banks. The Catholic refugees that were fleeing the ongoing violence in Belfast were supported by being billeted in the homes of wealthy Unionists in Dublin, whether they agreed to assist or not (McDowell, 1997: 154). Amid the violence erupting all over Ulster, the government moved forward with its plans to divide Ireland. At first, as drafted by Walter Long, the former secretary for Ireland, the idea was to have all 9 counties of Ulster form the new Northern Irish state. Ulster Protestants rejected this due to the Catholic majority in the counties of Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan, and feared including them in a state that was constructed for Protestants (Magill, 2020: 20). Loyalists in Northern Ireland were publicly dissatisfied and angered by the division of the province. In private, however, they were more than satisfied to know that their Protestant majority would be kept intact, and the position of privilege secure from Catholic usurpation (Bardon, 2008: 703)

The British Government having initially supported Ulster Loyalists, soon cooled as the violence in Ulster and the conflict in the South led to a decline in enthusiasm for Loyalism. This shift prompted Loyalists to view the British government with growing suspicion. Meanwhile, in the North, the Government of Ireland Act was enforced creating the political entity of Northern Ireland that we see today. In the South, however, it would not come into force due to the ongoing conflict and eventually it was superseded by the peace treaty of 1921.

After a year assembling a new administration, the Northern Irish Assembly was opened by King George V in June 1921. There could be no illusion about who Northern Ireland was created for when it was declared on its opening as a "Protestant Parliament for a Protestant people". Celebrations of loyalty to the Crown by unionists were seen in poor tastes by Catholic Nationalists in the wake of the violence that had just swept through Belfast (Hegarty, 2012: 281-282). Many Loyalists from Southern Ireland who had long felt disconnected from their Northern cousins wearily crossed the border into the new state feeling bitter about the loss of property, and in some cases lives. Whilst many Loyalists in Ulster had felt like they had secured the best deal possible given the circumstances, this new influx of southern Loyalist refugees brought another dimension of victimhood to the landscape of Northern Ireland (Laffan, 2004: 43).

By 1921 the British Government had secured a controversial peace agreement with Irish Nationalists. The terms of the treaty stated that King George V would remain as head of state, with the Irish parliament in Dublin swearing oaths of allegiance to him. Furthermore, the British retained exclusive rights to various military bases, including most importantly the Naval ports used by the Royal Navy in counties such as Donegal (Hegarty, 2012: 282) While violence didn't completely end after the truce, attacks on the RIC significantly decreased and eventually stopped. This victory for the Nationalists caused deep divisions among them, and their paramilitary groups remained active even after the treaty (Burke, 2024: 4).

The displacement of Loyalist Protestants from Ireland was not unique in the post-1918 world, violence committed towards minority groups could be witnessed across Europe. The unionist political party that had now taken control of the Northern Irish state looked on with alarm, seeing themselves as surrounded, and under siege from an unstable belligerent Irish state (Allen, 2016: 193). Although the paranoia experienced by Protestant Loyalists led to major overreactions, it was not entirely unjustified. After the treaty, Southern Loyalists found themselves surrounded by hostile IRA fighters, disgruntled by the treaty, feeling that they were still under British occupation due to the presence of British soldiers and their loyalty to a foreign king. President de Valera declined to attend the Peace Conference and sent Collins in his stead, then rejected the terms Collins returned with. This resulted in them taking their frustrations out on the Protestant minority and the mass exodus of Loyalists that had started during the war intensified with many moving either to Great Britain or Ulster (Brennan, 1997: 406). By 1922 the British government had established the Irish Grants Committee to investigate and provide compensation to arriving Protestants and to bring relief to the Loyalists who had suffered during the war (Dillion, 2023: 94). Initially, the committee did not have the power to compensate most of the refugees and its most notable decision was to make provision for the ex-servicemen who had fought for Britain and remained loyal, as well as to the RIC which was now in the process of being disbanded and who were now outcasts in the new 'Irish Free State'. The British government expected the Irish Free State to reimburse them for compensation costs outlined in the 1921 ceasefire treaty. However, the Free State kept over half of these funds to compensate Catholics fleeing Northern Ireland (Dillion, 2023: 102, 124). The Free State, with its tactics of intimidation of any who did not fit into their definition of 'Irishness', saw a 33% drop in the number of Protestants after 1911.

The Irish Civil War, 1922-23

The peace treaty of 1921 did not end the violence; it merely marked the end of one phase and the beginning of another, as conflict merged into the Irish Civil War. The highest levels of animosity were on the borders of the new Northern Irish state, where relations between the Irish Free State and British Northern Ireland were cold. The Ulster provinces that had been conceded to the Irish Free State, like Donegal, still had sizable Protestant populations who became targets of Nationalist resentment towards Ireland's partition (Burke, 2024: 2). These counties also had active Loyalist communities that did not fit into the majority identity, and perpetuating the violence. Ireland was in the grips of a Nationalist revolution, with Nationalism often defining itself not just through unity, but also by exclusion. Loyalist Protestants faced persecution, but so also did homosexuals, vagrants, and immigrants, who did not fit neatly into the narrow vision of 'Irishness'. Historian Peter Hart identified the mass displacement of Protestants in Ireland as:

> 'The only example of the mass displacement of a native ethnic group within the British Isles since the seventeenth century'.

In a reversal of the 1600s plantations, Protestants in Ireland lost their lands to Catholics and faced persecution. This perpetuated the cycle of violence and victimhood that had been entrenched in Ireland for centuries (Bielenberg, 2013: 200). Loyalists, though long part of Irish society, became outsiders in what they considered their homeland. The British government showed little compassion for fleeing elite landowners, who were viewed with scepticism, but displayed sympathy for poorer Loyalists. As the conflict shifted from the Independence War to a Civil War, the number of destitute ex-servicemen increased, with people from both Nationalist and Loyalist backgrounds ostracised for their

roles in the First World War. The Irish made no distinction between later settlers and the older English community integrated into Irish society since the Norman conquests (Crawford, 2011: 55). Hart argues that the treatment of Protestants could be seen as 'ethnic cleansing,' though this view is controversial. For many Irish Nationalists, Catholicism was central to the new Irish Free State, making Protestants an alien element in the new society.

For pro-Treaty supporters, the 1921 Treaty was an honourable step towards full independence. Although Anti-Treaty advocates felt they had lost in peace what they had gained in war, distrusting Britain's commitment to the agreement. IRA fighters, weary from the bitter guerrilla war, found it difficult to transition to peace (McDowell, 1997: 152). The Dáil narrowly ratified the treaty, and De Valera, a leading opponent, was ousted and went into political exile. The British began withdrawing, symbolised by the handover of Dublin Castle, marking the end of British colonial power in the South (Gibney, 2022: 6-7). De Valera's opposition had deepened divisions, and Collins led the Free State forces against the anti-Treaty IRA. The Irish parliament, controlled by the anti-Treaty faction, debated a planned attack on Northern Ireland. To them the creation of Northern Ireland was contrary to the concept of a United Ireland, and the hope was to continue to pressure the British to withdraw entirely. This was something Collins could not allow. Collins ordered the Free State Army to attack the IRA in the Four Courts, winning decisively but leading to a broader conflict to restore unity. Just months after uniting against the British, the Irish were fighting each other. Surprised by the civil strife, the British redeployed their Navy to intercept supplies for the anti-Treaty forces (Linge, 1998: 60-61). The brief but brutal Civil War saw horrific acts, particularly in County Kerry, which became a recruitment ground for future IRA conflicts in Northern Ireland (Coogan, 1970: 61-62).

Collins' role in the treaty's narrow acceptance is still debated. Regardless. Collins became the most powerful leader of the Irish Free State. He centralised power despite the civil war, leading to perceptions of a military dictatorship which alienated many. Churchill warned Collins that an anti-Treaty faction takeover would mean renewed conflict with Britain, which Collins wanted to avoid, thus stalling reconciliation (Regan, 2007: 321-322).

Collins' death in an ambush at Béal na mBláth, where he was shot by a sniper, left the Free State leaderless. Surprisingly, his death invigorated the pro-Treaty cause and led to a more conciliatory stance towards Northern Ireland, accepting its existence as a political reality (Kissane, 2007: 82). Collins had resisted recognising Northern Ireland and feared for the Catholic minority there. With his death, efforts to protect these rights diminished, and by 1925, Nationalists had to settle for a cash settlement from Britain instead of territorial claims (Jones, 1960: 97).

By 1923, anti-Treaty forces sought a ceasefire, recognising the impracticality of victory. Many had been captured or killed, and peace talks began (Hopkinson, 2004: 467). While Republicans never abandoned their goal of a unified Ireland, they largely stayed out of politics until the 1930s when they founded Fianna Fáil under de Valera (Hopkinson, 2004: 496).

The Inter-war years of the 1930s saw the rise of Fascist organisations in Europe, and Loyalist Ulster was not immune to this changing political landscape. Former UVF members as well as displaced Loyalists who had fled to Northern Ireland, began to shift towards extreme right-wing ideologies (Loughlin, 1995: 540). However, perhaps a more accurate definition when examining the political shift in Ulster is 'anti-socialist'. Most of Europe became littered with small fascist movements, reacting to monumental post-war changes to the social order of Europe.

Throughout the Irish War of Independence and the Civil War, socialist movements within Irish Nationalism remained strong. A trend that developed during the 20th century was for Ulster Loyalists to automatically support causes which were the opposite of those Irish Nationalists embodied. With the Free State having fought for independence and having secured its future through victory in the civil war, Ireland had transformed and consolidated its Irish identity. Simultaneously Ulster was also going through the same process. Ireland also saw the rise of the fascist movement embodied in the Blueshirts under Eoin O'Duffy, though it only existed for a mere four years, it merged to establish the Fine Gael political party. Fascist elements would live on in this party and influence Irish politics and its subsequent support to unite Ireland (Cronin, 1995: 313). These fascist elements within Irish politics stirred the victimised imaginations of the Protestants in Northern Ireland, as war with Nazi Germany approached in 1939. These imaginings lead to paranoia and suspicion of their Southern nemesis. The influence of fascism taking root in both the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland would play a role in the future decades of violence that was to come. The treaty of 1921 was designed as a stop-gap measure, and the British government expected the issue of Irish Unification to be dealt with after this agreement. This did not occur with Ulster Loyalists steadfastly resolute in their union with the United Kingdom. Catholic Irish Nationalists in the North likewise felt increasing marginalisation in a Protestant-dominated society, and tensions were once again simmering for future violence and victimisation to occur.

B. The Beginning of the Troubles

'The Troubles were a tragedy that unfolded over three long decades of violence and destruction. More than 3,500 people were murdered and a further 100,000 were injured. Countless others suffered emotional trauma and post-traumatic stress (Ganiel & Yohanis, 2019: 241).

Post-War Loyalism & Civil Rights, 1939-1969

The 20th century was a turbulent time for Ulster, marked by the end of the British Empire in Ireland and the establishment of a state controlled by Protestants. Post-Irish War of Independence and Civil War issues plagued this state. Although the IRA remained organised, its influence waned, and many in Ireland sought peace over a United Ireland. Sinn Féin did not officially support the IRA, leading to their isolation in the Republic and limited sympathy in Northern Ireland, where Nationalists were focused on achieving equal rights rather than pursuing unity (Coogan, 1970: 75). The period of 1939-1969 lacks extensive research, despite Northern Ireland's historical focus. It is essential to examine this era as it consolidates Northern Ireland's status within the UK and the Loyalists' adjustment to their new identity (Bryson, 2007: 45). Most Protestants resided in Northern Ireland, with Southern Loyalists either assimilating into the Irish Republic or integrating with Ulster Loyalists. The Old English communities dwindled, driven out by violence, creating a toxic environment for sectarianism.

Post-partition Ulster saw the rise of territorial threat and Catholic encroachment concerns among Loyalists. The absence of a British Ireland forced Loyalists to redefine their perceived boundaries. The Republic's unification rhetoric and expanding Catholic population heightened those fears, feeding into

a siege mentality from long-standing trauma. Loyalists' primary concern was religious difference, not racial, with their Protestant heritage central to their identity and territorial claims. Although conflict in Northern Ireland cannot be reduced to mere politics or religion, it became tribal, with the belief that Catholics sought to completely erase Protestant identity. In the 1930s and 1940s, Ulster Protestants continued their Ascendancy over Catholics with feelings of superiority and privilege akin to those they had enjoyed during the heydays of the 18th and 19th centuries. The most privileged jobs in industry, government and the military were reserved for Protestants, relegating Catholics to low-skilled or unskilled labour, forming a disenfranchised underclass throughout Northern Ireland. Despite this, the experiences of the War of Independence and the collapse of the British Empire in Ireland led to Protestants feeling insecure and harbouring resentment. They believed their superior status over the Catholic Irish was a deserved reward for their sacrifices in the First World War and the dissolution of the Union in the South (Brewer & Higgins, 1999, 237-239).

The 1940s and 1950s brought economic challenges to Northern Ireland as its industrial economy declined. The once-thriving shipyards suffered severe downturns due to the global depression and a shrinking British Merchant Fleet (Geary & Johnson, 1989: 54). Thompson analyses the political violence that increased in Northern Ireland through the lens of Deprivation Theory. This theory holds that economic stresses and poverty lead to feelings of frustration and aggression towards others. Their once-valuable industries, which had made them essential to the British Empire during the Industrial Revolution, were now in decline, increasing their frustration. Although the Second World War temporarily boosted employment, this recovery was short-lived. (1989: 677).

By the 1940s, segregation between Catholics and Protestants was entrenched in Northern Ireland, with housing and social welfare divided along religious lines. Loyalists also resented Ireland's neutrality during the war and the British government's decision not to conscript Northern Ireland, heightening tensions (O'Halpin, 1999: 254).

History evolves continuously, with past events shaping the present. Nowhere is this more evident than in Northern Ireland, as McAuley et al. observe:

> 'People are not inactive in constructing their sense of identity, which is formulated and reinforced through the continuous reformatting of biographical, autobiographical and group experiences' (McAuley, et al, 2022: 8).

During the Second World War, Loyalists were coming to terms with their new reality. The tensions and the realisation of the enormity of the recent changes would significantly influence the Troubles. Bryson noted that Catholics and Protestants had differing memories of the war. Protestants who experienced the Blitz emphasised the positive aspects and inter-community cooperation, mirroring the narratives of Londoners. Catholics, however, recalled stereotypes of Protestant Ascendancy, seeing Protestants as reinforcing their privilege over Catholics (2007: 51). These differing accounts highlight how collective memory shapes identity and counters rival histories.

Loyalists emerging from the war wanted to share their British allies' triumph, focusing on cooperation and resistance. Catholics had a more nuanced memory due to their divided loyalties between the belligerent war and Irish neutrality. This territorialisation of memory reflects how people remember their past and construct their identity. This competitiveness in victimhood and history led to a return to sectarianism (McBride, 2017: 13-14).

By the 1960s, IRA attacks intensified, targeting police in the Royal Ulster Constabulary. However, the IRA lacked the public support it had during the War of Independence and Civil War. By the 1960s, Northern Ireland had become an economic burden on Britain, making the Republican claim that Britain stayed for economic control unconvincing (Cox, 2018: 75).

Post-war the British Empire fell into decline, with colonial authority unravelling and global independence movements increasing (Robbins, 1980: 87). India gained independence in 1947, partitioned similarly to Ireland, resulting in sectarian violence. Britain's decline as a world power led Loyalists to rethink their identity in light of their mother country's declining influence and prestige.

Many Loyalists sought to strengthen ties with Great Britain rather than pursue more autonomy. Despite having a devolved parliament, they looked to Britain for guidance. The British government, however, hoped for a solution to Northern Ireland's issues through assistance from the Republic and delayed addressing the problem. Loyalists began to frame Ulster Nationalism from an ethno-nationalist perspective, differentiating themselves from Nationalist Irish Catholics. Unlike English, Welsh, and Scottish Nationalism based on ethnicity, Ulster Nationalism was rooted in Protestant heritage, a product of colonial projects. This connection with Britain remained strong throughout the 20th century Although scholars debate the significance of race, religion, and culture in Loyalist identity, most agree that all these elements play a role (Kearney, 1997: 17-18). Kane views the conflict as cultural, with organisations like the Orange Order blending religious identity with culture (Kane, 1971: 55). Ganiel and others argue that religion is crucial to understanding the conflict and peacebuilding, recognising that while ethnicity influenced later stages, religion initially shaped allegiance and identity. This religious dynamic, merged with collective memory, influenced Loyalist heritage.

Townshend has noted attempts to secularise the conflict.

> 'Scholarly analysis of the Northern Ireland conflict has, over the last generation, shown a marked reluctance to identify it as a clash of religions or even to isolate the religious element in the collective identities of the embattled "traditions" or "communities" (2004: 882).

During decolonisation, ethnicity became a significant issue for Loyalists, who sought to redefine their identities amid the British Empire's decline. By the 1960s, Irish Catholics in Northern Ireland faced severe discrimination in housing, employment, and elections, reunification with the Republic was seen as less pressing than addressing this discrimination. Many Catholics valued British welfare benefits and Irish politicians were reluctant to address Northern Irish Loyalists' concerns or the financial burden of reintegration. Loyalist actions, including Orange Order marches, served as constant reminders of their control, relegating Catholics to a marginalised status (Kane, 1971: 54-56). Unionists maintained power through gerrymandering, particularly in areas like Derry/Londonderry, where despite a Catholic majority, unionists manipulated electoral boundaries to secure representation (McInally, 2020: 25). This practice contributed to public disorder and limited Catholic representation.

The decline in Northern Ireland's prosperity came with widespread unemployment affecting both Protestants and Catholics, but discriminatory hiring practices favouring Protestants left many Catholics in poverty. This fuelled extremists like the IRA, who, despite their limited popularity remained present. Loyalists viewed Catholic demands for equality as a threat, their collective memory reminded them, that when Catholics seized power in the South it meant the persecution of Ireland's Southern Loyalists and the virtual destruction of their culture and way of life. Southern Loyalists, now part of the Ulster Loyalist community, framed Catholicism as oppressive. Post-WW2 increases in the Catholic middle

class further heightened Loyalist anxieties about challenges to Protestant power. The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) emerged in 1967, advocating for equality and representation for Catholics through peaceful means. This movement sought recognition of Catholic identity and received international support, contrasting with the Loyalists' lack of global recognition and resulting identity crisis (Byrne, 2015: 468-469). Loyalists felt threatened by this growing Catholic mobilisation and non-violent protest. Enhanced communication technology in the 1960s allowed widespread viewership of these events, including Loyalist violence against peaceful demonstrators, often supported by Protestant RUC officers (Maney, 2000: 154). This repression led to increased interest in extremist groups like the IRA, marking the beginning of the Troubles—a period of intense violence and failure by the British government, the international community, and both communities to engage in peaceful dialogue (Ganiel & Yohanis, 2019: 241).

Paramilitaries, the British Army and Bloody Sunday, 1969-1972

Nationalists view the civil rights movement as the result of long-standing social inequality, leading Catholics to rebel against a system that limited their social mobility. Loyalists, however, see the movement as manipulated by Northern Ireland's enemies to benefit radical Republicans. They viewed their role as preventing any challenge to the Protestant power base, promoting symbols of unionism while banning Nationalist symbols like the Easter Lily (Munck, 1992: 211-212). Although Northern Ireland seemed dedicated to remaining part of the UK, its identity was more defined by anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sentiments than a genuine pro-British stance (Morrow, 2012: 8).

In 1968, a report from the Republic's Department of Foreign Affairs highlighted Catholic disenfranchisement in Northern Ireland, with laws restricting their political representation (McInally, 2020: 17). The IRA's 1956 Border Campaign (Operation Harvest) to unify Ireland failed disastrously, leaving the dream of a unified Ireland as a fringe ideal compared to the more popular Civil Rights Movement (Prince, 2011: 941). By 1969, violence between Protestants and Catholics had intensified, leading to the collapse of the provincial government and the imposition in 1972 of direct British rule.

Initially, the British Army was deployed in response to requests from the Northern Ireland Government to restore order and reintroduce an element of impartiality, since the RUC had such a divisive reputation. The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), seen as repressive and sectarian, was replaced by the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) intended to be non-sectarian and incorporate both communities. Unlike many European states, the United Kingdom has tried to maintain the separation of the military and the police into two distinct disciplines. A good soldier does not necessarily make a good police officer. Northern Ireland became the exception to this general rule when the Ulster Special Constabulary was created as a quasi-military police force. Created during the War of Independence, It was designed to suppress protests. Nicknamed the 'B Specials', by 1969 it had become an overstretched organisation with a tattered reputation for brutal repression and was disbanded on the deployment of the British Army. The Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) would take its place, and unlike the B Specials, would be drawn from both Catholic and Protestant communities, and it would not be deployed for riot control. It would be a regiment incorporated into the British Army. Initially, the UDR had a significant number of Catholics, but by 1972 an overwhelming 95% of the UDR would be Protestant, and it would be perceived to suffer from the same sectarian failings as the RUC previously.

Being a military regiment and one that attracted local Ulster Protestants, it would become a major target of later IRA operations. (van der Bijl, 2009: 31).

Initially welcomed as neutral peacekeepers, the British Army's reputation declined as they adopted similar tactics to the RUC, supporting Loyalist militants while suppressing Nationalist groups (Bennett, 2023: 39). Loyalists, still haunted by the IRA's past campaigns, engaged in extreme pro-state terror policies, seeing the threat of Irish Republicanism and Catholic insurrection as a persistent reality (Taylor, 2009: 1).

By 1965, Loyalists had revived the UVF with the motto 'For God and For Ulster' out of fear that the NICRA and Irish Civil Rights movements were covers for radical Republicanism (Wood, 2009: 20) Protestantism is key to Loyalism, and Ian Paisley used the long-embedded fears of having this identity destroyed to frame the conflict in black and white terms, them versus us. He is one of the key culprits behind the move for Loyalists to take up arms again to defend their heritage and identity. Paisley publicly opposed Irish Civil Rights, which, while not directly supporting Loyalist paramilitarism, inflamed Loyalist fears and contributed to militant Loyalism. In 1969, Loyalists and B-Special officers clashed with Civil Rights marchers at Burntollet near Derry/Londonderry. Paisley was arrested for incitement but was not involved in the attack (Southern, 2010: 140-141). To undermine the IRA and the moderate O'Neill government, Loyalists, including the UVF, bombed their utilities and blamed the IRA. This violence was driven more by paranoia than by a direct response to Republican activity.

The IRA sought to build support among Catholics for a United Ireland by democratic means, rather than repeating the Border campaign of the 1950s. However, in 1969, extremist Republicans in Derry/Londonderry began gathering weapons, although they did not represent most Nationalist attitudes (O'Dochartaigh, 1997:3). The British Army aimed for a minimal presence in Derry/Londonderry, but IRA ambushes forced a reassessment.

In 1971, 'Internment without Trial' was introduced to counter the perceived rise in paramilitaries, but it mainly targeted Nationalists. In 1972 the protest known as 'Bloody Sunday' became a turning point in the Troubles. Despite a ban, 20,000 marched against internment, with the IRA staying out to avoid civilian casualties. The 1st Parachute Regiment's brutal response led to 13 civilian deaths, creating deep divisions. Loyalists rallied behind the soldiers, while Nationalists used Bloody Sunday as a propaganda tool, drawing international attention (McNulty, 2004: 14). Loyalists adopted the official conclusions of the Inquiry (Widgery Report), exonerating the officers and paratroopers involved, and casting doubt on the innocence of those who had been killed. The loyalty felt towards Britain, combined with their paranoia that Catholics were always up to some Machiavellian scheme, meant that few doubted these findings. The British media, steeped in the myths of the brave British soldier, also endorsed this narrative, instead choosing to focus on the abuse the soldiers received during their tour of duty and the 'fuselage of fire' they received. Even to the present, many media outlets such as The Daily Mail refuse to comprehend that British soldiers could be capable of such horrendous acts, maintaining the myth of 'the honest Tommy' (McLaughlin & Baker, 2017: 185-187).

The aftermath of Bloody Sunday saw a surge in IRA recruitment and the emergence of new threats like the INLA and UDA. The UDA grew larger than the UVF and became more focused on Ulster identity, while the UVF retained a British Loyalist stance (Goalwin, 2013: 190). This period saw the rise of two forms of Loyalism: British Loyalism and Ulster Loyalism, each shaping the conflict differently (Sanders & Moore, 2002: 9-11). A frequent argument made by many Nationalists is that Loyalists are a people

without culture, in some ways this is true to the extent that their identity is often constructed on emulating or identifying as British in culture. However, despite its relatively small size in the political context of Northern Ireland, I would argue that Loyalist identity is a culture that is still developing, attempting to find its unique past and consequently, what its future might be.

C. The Stagnant Conflict & The Progressive Peace

'The "peace process" of the 1990s was an acknowledgement by Republicans that their long war of attrition against unionists and the British state had been a failure. In other words, the use of force outside the democratic process to end partition had been a tragic dead-end' (Aughey, 2000: 21).

The Shadow of War, 1974-1994

When Northern Ireland was established, Loyalists felt uncertain about self-governance, having no prior experience of autonomy. However, by 1972 Loyalists enjoyed dominance in their perceived Protestant state. The chaos following Bloody Sunday and sustained attacks on the British Army ended this autonomy, leading to direct rule from London. For Nationalists, this meant increased suppression, while Loyalists also felt betrayed, their local control replaced by a distant, oppressive power that disregarded their traditions, heritage and their future. This marked a period of uncertainty about their identity and future within the UK (Arthur, 2011: 395).

One of the reasons why Loyalist identity is hard for outsiders to understand is our moral repugnance towards the cycle of horrific violence and biblical prophecy. Following the brutal events of Bloody Sunday Northern Ireland had become a national embarrassment, and impossible to conceal from international scrutiny. For most of the British public, the confusing mess that Northern Ireland had become was a sad state of affairs. They had resigned themselves to the situation and made no attempts to apply an understanding of historical context to the insecurities that fuelled the dark side of Loyalist identity. The British moral repugnance of what they perceived as an irrelevant backward people, mixed with this lack of care for their historical context, is what led to decades of failed strategies in bringing peace to the sectarian violence (Taylor, 1980/1981: 44-45). During the Troubles, divisions between Loyalists and unionists became clearer, with Loyalists often associated with the working class and violence, unionists were linked to the middle class and political processes. Unionism is influenced firmly by its Presbyterian roots, and while it shares some Royalist inclinations, it is mostly a political culture of the middle class (Delanty, 1995: 258). Crawford notes that while Catholic paramilitaries showed greater cohesion, Loyalist paramilitaries were divided, reflecting broader identity conflicts (2003: 6-7). Bruce describes Loyalist identity as split between 'gunmen' and 'evangelicals,' with patriotism and piety reinforcing each other. Loyalist violence is fuelled by apocalyptic rhetoric, which, in turn, intensifies their sense of existential struggle (Bruce in Spencer, 2008: 29-30). In 1970s Belfast, the apocalyptic vision of war felt intensely real.

After direct rule was imposed the IRA had so many volunteers that they had to turn people away. Earlier alliances between Catholics and Protestants in the United Irishmen's movement were now

viewed as a bygone time. Instead, a stark binary conflict emerged, defining contemporary Republican and Loyalist identities. Catholics saw their struggle as a fight against British oppression, while Protestants viewed it as essential to preserving their identity (McBride, 1997: 63-64). Protestants had once collaborated with Catholics to pass the home rule bill, but the Irish Civil War had devastated Protestant culture in the South, leaving behind only a radical Ulster Loyalism fearing a similar fate (Loughlin, 1985: 342). While Loyalists were initially wary of Catholic loyalties post-1921, by the 1970s their demands and needs had evolved. Most Catholics had accepted Northern Ireland's legitimacy, seeking equal participation rather than independence. Before the Troubles, Loyalists and unionists were often seen as the same, but during the Troubles, Loyalism became associated with pro-state terror and paramilitary groups, despite only a small proportion being active members (Hennessey, 2011: 8). Loyalism grew isolated as unionists needed to present a respectable face, unlike Nationalists and Republicans who maintained coordination. Unionism was built in the aftermath of the Wolfe Tone Rebellion and the Act of Union when loyalty passed to the British crown. Organisations such as the Orange Order promoted the pro-British identity, but Loyalists and Unionists were now divided on whether they were to remain loyal to an Ulster heritage, or a British identity (Hennessy, 2011: 12).

During the Troubles, Loyalist identity was characterised by a sense of drifting through time, clinging to past glory without a grand vision for the future, unlike Republicans who desired a unified Ireland. Loyalism's legacy is characterised by anger and insecurity, misremembering the past to compete with Nationalists for victimhood status while ignoring their previous dominance. Their narrative portrayed themselves as besieged, on the brink of extinction, akin to the Israeli victimhood narrative used to justify violence (Edwards, 2023: 81). Violence, a last resort when other methods fail, was a significant aspect of the Troubles. Loyalists, Republicans, and the British Army were trapped in a cycle of violence, with no resolution in sight. Despite violence not being an effective change method, it played a key role in both identities. The loss of 3,500 lives between 1969-1999 deeply affected Northern Ireland's small population. It led to widespread psychological disorders and impacted children who grew up amid constant violence, often later joining paramilitary groups for community and survival (McAlister, et al., 2013: 2-3).

The conflict's definition—whether religious, cultural, or ethnic—is debated, but for Loyalists, religious identity is crucial. Initially, Loyalist paramilitaries included the small UVF, but the UDA's growth led to diverse political and ideological factions, resulting in often unsanctioned, random violence. The UVF, with more professional leadership, adopted a military model and labelled itself an 'anti-terrorist' organisation but still targeted Republican locations, escalating the conflict and reinforcing victim narratives. Economic decline and loss of political power fuelled the sense of loss among Protestants, exacerbating their grievances. The 1974 Sunningdale Agreement sought to break the violence cycle by introducing a power-sharing government. Although supported by British and Irish governments, it was derailed by unionist strikes and violence, driven once again by fears of a united Ireland and the destruction of Protestantism. Loyalists' unwillingness to compromise became a barrier to peace.

By the 1980s, the internment of political prisoners was drawing significant attention. Initially treated as political prisoners, new inmates were downgraded to ordinary criminals, leading to the infamous hunger strikes, notably by Bobby Sands. These became a key part of the Irish Nationalist narrative. Loyalist experiences with internment, while less noted, also contributed to Loyalist identity, with imprisoned paramilitaries seen as community protectors, highlighting the complex interplay between political protest and identity (Rolston, 2013: 154).

The Dawn of Peace, 1994-1998

In Northern Ireland, Loyalists used 'whataboutism' to justify their violence by pointing to IRA atrocities. Whataboutism is a rhetorical tactic often used to deflect criticism by highlighting the faults of others (Aikin & Casey, 2024: 1-2). This rhetoric risks legitimising horrific acts by groups like the UVF, UDA, and others against British forces, the IRA, and Catholic civilians (Shirlow & Murtagh, 2006: 10).

Republicans have also engaged with this style of victimhood, particularly when discussing British collusion with Loyalists in the late 1980s. Collusion was not limited to targeting Republicans, but anyone that proved an inconvenience to Loyalists and the British State. Pat Finucane, a human rights lawyer, who was executed in front of his family by the UFF is one such example. However, despite a public inquiry concluding that the assassination was carried out with assistance from the RUC and British Military Intelligence, the British government has resisted efforts to investigate collusion between the British Army and Loyalist paramilitaries. This has complicated relations between Republicans and Loyalists due to a lack of transitional justice for those affected by British policy in Northern Ireland. The Good Friday Agreement sought to address these issues and acknowledge victims, but the lack of transparency regarding British collusion has intensified feelings of victimhood on both sides (Lundy & McGovern, 2008: 285).

By the 1990s, exhaustion among combatants and the shifting political climate—marked by the end of the Cold War and increased American and EU involvement—made peace talks more feasible. Despite Loyalist Euroscepticism, EU (European Union) involvement and investment in Northern Ireland played a key role in fostering dialogue (Smyth, 2005: 82). John Hume praised the EU as a model for conflict resolution, and its influence, alongside a more optimistic global mood, helped set the stage for the Good Friday Agreement. Irish-British relations were transformed in the 1990s, helped by EU membership and changes in US foreign policy. Unsurprisingly, resistance to the Good Friday agreement came from Republicans, who feared losing the goal of a united Ireland, and Loyalists, who felt their status threatened. The negotiation process involved various political parties, with notable exceptions like the DUP, which opposed the Agreement. Over time, the DUP's rise reflected Loyalist discontent with the peace process and its impact on their identity (O'Connell et al., 2024: 6). Aughey, quite rightly in my opinion, identifies unionism as the problematic factor when approaching a viable peace agreement. As he observes:

> 'It was impossible for unionists to concede equality of recognition. To do so would mean the collapse of the whole fabric of Northern Ireland which, according to the Nationalist reading of partition, was designed to ensure Protestant supremacy. Agreement about a new dispensation, a historic compromise, with unionists would be, by definition, impossible' (2000: 17).

By the 1990s, religious-ethnic Nationalism appeared increasingly outdated due to the decline of global communism and the rise of Western liberalism, which viewed religious and ethnic Nationalism as obsolete. The US's success with free-market capitalism and the focus on secular conflict resolution methods led scholars to prioritise economic factors over religious dimensions. The idea was that financial incentives would encourage conflict parties like those in Ulster to seek peaceful solutions (Bonnett, 2004: 131).

With the difficulties faced in the 21st century, it is perhaps increasingly difficult to understand the triumphalism of liberalism in the 1990s. Western societies had a profound confidence in their economic systems and the transition from the fear of nuclear conflict to becoming the dominant global powers. Naturally, both economic and political liberalism have come under attack from left and right-wing inclinations, and in recent years have seen a resurgence in ethnic Nationalism and renewed interest in the dimension that religion plays in conflicts and their resolutions (Bonnett, 2004: 138-139). However, it does not erase the fact that the optimism expressed at the time was contagious and created the right conditions for a peace settlement. A feat that probably could not be replicated today. Although dismissive of the impact of religion on the conflict, the humanitarian ideals of those working towards a peaceful resolution enabled outsiders to extend recognition of the individual identities, a face that had often been overlooked by peace negotiations in the past. While many Loyalists felt uncomfortable about the future, they felt at the very least, like their status as victims was treated with dignity and their grievances were acknowledged. Despite their reservations, this factor would play a key role in winning over the support of many Loyalists for a peace agreement (Fukuyama, 2014: 186-187).

The Downing Street Declaration of 1993 was a crucial step toward the Good Friday Agreement. It allowed the Irish and Northern Irish people to decide Northern Ireland's future while maintaining its status as part of the UK until an agreement was reached. A significant concession by Republicans. This declaration facilitated dialogue, as Loyalists saw their Protestant identity protected (Aughey, 2000: 19-20). By 1995, cross-party talks began, focusing on ensuring both Republican and Loyalist identities were respected. The Good Friday Agreement, signed in 1998, established a legislative assembly at Stormont and symbolised hope for peace with the collaboration of former adversaries like Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness (Wolff, 2001: 168). The Agreement addressed issues from the Troubles era, such as the disbandment of the sectarian RUC and the formation of the PSNI, (Police Service Northern Ireland), as well as recommending integrated schools and the removal of notorious peace walls.

Despite its successes, the Good Friday Agreement faced setbacks, including the dissolution of the Northern Ireland parliament in 2000 due to mistrust over disarmament. The disarmament process, crucial to the Agreement, was slow and contentious, affecting the sustainability of peace. The continuation of British counterinsurgency operations until 2007 and the reluctance of Loyalist paramilitaries to disarm threatened the peace process. Nonetheless, the re-establishment of the parliament and ongoing peace efforts demonstrate the complexities and challenges in maintaining stability (White, 2013: 95).

For Loyalists, a major success of the Good Friday Agreement was the release of all paramilitary prisoners from Long Kesh. While Republicans also viewed this as a success, it was a long-standing grievance for Loyalists, dating back to the 1970s, and had become central to their identity. The issue was that the government did not disclose the violent acts these prisoners had committed, leading to mistrust in the reconciliation process. Loyalists felt that the British government aimed to resolve issues quickly without addressing their concerns fully.

The designation of these prisoners as political rather than criminal created confusion for many outsiders, as they had committed severe acts of violence. Despite their crimes, these prisoners were seen as symbols of resistance by their communities (Crawford, 1999: 14). The release process was lengthy, and many Loyalists doubted the government's commitment. The issue of prisoner release,

often seen as favouring Republican prisoners over Loyalist ones, added to the resentment among Loyalists, who felt they were losing the peace (Dwyer, 2007: 780).

Moreover, unionist political representatives did not always reflect the interests of Loyalists, particularly regarding prisoner releases. Unlike the coordination between Sinn Féin and Republican IRA paramilitaries, there was a disconnect between Loyalists and unionist parties, leaving Loyalists without effective representation. This strained relationship, which also affected Republicans and Nationalist politicians, had roots in the Troubles and continued after the Agreement. Despite this, the inclusion of extremists in political life offered new opportunities for Loyalists to express their views (Aughey, 2005: 39).

After decades of feeling ignored, and centuries of mistrust and paranoia, one of the primary questions which remains unanswered is whether Loyalists honestly feel that their identity can reconcile with an era of peace. Can an independent Loyalist identity survive with faith in a new collective future destiny?

Conclusion: A Way Forward Together?

A. Loyalism Today

'While there has been a reduction in conflict in Northern Ireland since the GFA, violence has not disappeared. Indeed, three years without a functioning legislative assembly from January 2017 is testimony to lingering divisions (Flack & Ferguson, 2020: 1).

The Good Friday Agreement marked a seismic change in Northern Ireland's socio-political landscape. However, the optimism of the 1990s and the 'post-history' world as declared by Fukuyama has given way to a much more cynical worldview, putting new pressures on the peace agreement. Loyalist identity has also shifted with political and international developments, some positively and others negatively. The 2001 attack on the World Trade Centre (9/11) fundamentally altered Western attitudes toward religious extremism, influencing how the British government dealt with domestic terrorism. Throughout the 2000s, the British government rated the threat from militant Republicans higher than from Islamic extremism. Following 9/11, the US introduced the 'Patriot Act,' allowing the internment and torture of suspected terrorists. The UK enacted similar measures like the 'Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act,' which extended to include UK nationals and suspects of any form of extremism, echoing the strategies of the government in the 1970s with internment without trial (Siegler, 2006: 18).

As Western focus shifted to Islamic extremism, the Northern Ireland conflict was assumed resolved. However, maintaining peace requires ongoing effort. The Good Friday Agreement, while securing an immediate ceasefire, required work on issues such as transitional justice and desegregation. For Loyalists, power-sharing and the threat of Irish unification felt like losing the peace, reinforcing their victim mentality (McAuley, 2004: 189). This victim mentality has fuelled the rise of evangelism among Loyalists, emphasising tradition and connecting to conservative values. Ulster Protestants, resonating with their Calvinistic roots, have become vocal against abortion and gay marriage, despite these being legal in the Republic of Ireland. The evangelical strain, represented by figures like Ian Paisley, has continued to push against progressive changes. Although Protestant churches have generally supported the decriminalisation of homosexuality, evangelicals view themselves as victims for adhering to their traditional values.

Loyalist paramilitaries were confronted with a new challenge to their identity, what were these self-anointed guardians of the Loyalist communities supposed to do in an age of peace? Perhaps ironically, the Loyalist paramilitaries recognised the opportunities that peace would bring and adapted quickly to a more 'civilian life'. New political movements would emerge from these paramilitary groups, the PUP (Progressive Unionist Party) would spring from the rank and file of the UVF and the UDP (Ulster Democratic Party) would likewise rise from the UDA. These political parties would not just support the peace agreement but also come to question many of the established values that had defined unionist politics for generations (McAuley, 2004: 197).

How paramilitaries would adapt to peacetime was a major question posed by both Republicans and Loyalists. The answer was relatively simple for Loyalists, they embedded themselves into their communities and took on 'policing' roles. That policing would involve Loyalist paramilitaries keeping tighter control over their communities and dispensing justice where they saw fit, rather than relying on the newly reformed PSNI. This demonstrated a fundamental mistrust of their government. The rise in 'punishment violence' has risen since the peace agreement, rather than lessened, due to the active role that Loyalist paramilitaries have taken in peacetime. Punishment often involved 'kneecapping' rather than outright execution. This would involve the individual being shot in the knee. As a side effect, Belfast is now one of the best places in the world to receive care for knee surgery.

The extent to which Loyalists have moved away from politically motivated violence to being treated as criminal organisations can be seen in how the PSNI treat these violent acts. Any violence committed by dissident Republican organisations is first viewed as having some political motivation behind it. Loyalists on the other hand are automatically assumed to have their origins in crime, whether that is the Loyalist control of the drugs trade, human trafficking or territorial disputes. The organisations that proudly emphasise their ancestry to the 1914 UVF of Carson, an organisation that was prepared to fight and die for their Protestant rights and belief in the Union, have now become involved with managing monopolies on drugs. Drugs have also become a means to recruit young members, giving cannabis and cocaine to 16-year-olds who are unable to earn enough to cover their debt. They are offered the choice of joining or receiving a punishment beating.

The transition from political paramilitaries to criminal syndicates benefited the Loyalist paramilitaries, unlike the Republican PIRA and OIRA, who disbanded without having a purpose. Loyalist paramilitaries that had operated throughout the Troubles have remained intact, with reasonable amounts of new members joining, giving young Loyalists purpose and a belief that they are guarding their communities (Steenkamp, 2008: 159-160). The disbandment of PIRA and OIRA does not mean that Republican paramilitarism died with the Good Friday Agreement, for there were many Republicans who had been against the agreement and had decided to continue the Republican cause on their own. Organisations such as the Real IRA and the Continuity IRA have continued their campaigns, such as the Omagh bombing of 1998. These Republican groups, however, have not enjoyed the privileged position of being at the centre of their communities, unlike the popularity of PIRA and OIRA in the Troubles. What popularity they do have from Republican communities, has been the violence they have inflicted upon drug dealers, a clear juxtaposition to the modus operandi that Loyalist paramilitaries have claimed as part of their new post-Agreement identity (Rekawek,2009: 6).

Despite Loyalist paramilitaries honouring the terms of the Good Friday Agreement and disarming, their transition from wartime to peacetime organisations has not eliminated their need to use violence as a key tool of political influence. While it can be argued that Loyalist paramilitaries have adjusted to their new reality quickly, it does not break the illusion that Loyalists are a people unable to deal with the future. Instead of disbanding like their Republican counterparts, they simply adjusted to perpetuating violence in new ways. Their continued existence signals a fundamental mistrust of the peace process, and at any moment with changing political circumstances, they could be called upon to arm and fight once again. This mistrust is shared amongst Loyalist communities, despite the peace having been held for nearly 25 years, there is a perception that it is a peace that will inevitably unravel. This belief is perpetuated by Loyalist paramilitaries, the question of whether these groups are necessary to Loyalist security is not approached because the fear of living without them is much greater (Gallaher, 2007: 3).

It is to such an extent that Loyalist paramilitaries still operate, that many question how much has changed since the peace agreement. The Troubles may have been devastating for Loyalists, but there was a clarity amid carnage that many long for and they continue to live in that mentality. While the peace agreement has fundamentally changed Northern Ireland from an active war zone, Loyalists are still so anxious about what the future can bring that it empowers the continued existence of the paramilitaries. To the present, Loyalist communities for the most part support paramilitary groups, despite their criminal involvement and the punishments that they distribute. For many Loyalists, these punishments, which seem barbaric and unlawful to outsiders, keep their communities safe and secure. Relying on their ability to police their own rather than on the powers of the state to dispense justice.

The demilitarisation of Northern Ireland has been problematic from the outset. Initially, the British government would only enter peace talks if the different wings of the IRA agreed to begin the process of disarmament, one they felt was unreasonable given that a peace agreement was not a guaranteed outcome. Loyalists in equal measures were unwilling to disarm until Republicans agreed. It was only after the peace agreement was signed that disarmament began. Both sides found reasons to delay disarmament and even in the present, it is impossible to know to what extent either side is prepared to go to war once again. This in many ways has been the greatest stumbling block to peace, without Loyalists seeing trust in the process from the paramilitaries, there will always be some measure of reluctance to fully commit to a peaceful Northern Ireland (Gallaher, 2007: 6).

B. The Future

For outsiders, including those from the Republic of Ireland or the UK, tracking the evolving political landscape of Northern Ireland is challenging. The UK's 2016 Brexit referendum has notably threatened the Good Friday Agreement, which was supported by the EU's involvement. Since 2004, the EU has actively engaged in counterterrorism and invested significantly in Northern Ireland's state-building (Schmidt, 2010: 10). Critics, often pro-Brexit, argue that the EU misunderstood Northern Irish politics. This claim is partly valid, given that the provincial power-sharing model differs from the Westminster system that ultimately shaped Northern Ireland's policies. However, British politicians also struggle with Northern Ireland's complexities, reminiscent of post-1921 attitudes that contributed to the Troubles. Brexit stalled the peace process, overshadowed by issues like the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the 2008 economic crash, leaving Northern Ireland a lower British priority (De Rynck, 2023: 182-183). Although substantial progress was made, the Loyalist identity was largely ignored. The EU's role in Northern Ireland has been contentious, with many Loyalists viewing it as biased against them and voting to leave. When Theresa May became Prime Minister, her coalition with the DUP, a pro-Leave party, led to the rejection of the EU's proposed 'backstop,' which aimed to keep Northern Ireland in the single market to avoid a hard border (Phinnemore & Whitten, 2021: 170). The hard border issue remains unresolved, with the British government reluctant to enforce it due to its provocative nature and complexity. Boris Johnson's proposed technological solutions have failed to address the problem adequately. Boris Johnson, the Prime Minister between 2019 – 2022 has suggested ideas using technology that does not exist, with many British politicians failing to grasp the complexity, comparing different parts of the UK to Northern Ireland, ignoring the centuries of conflict that have defined the province. Despite these challenges, peace in Northern Ireland has held, though it remains fragile. Loyalists, while employing bellicose rhetoric, generally do not desire a return to the

Troubles. The historical context of English colonialism has shaped Northern Ireland's current conflict, with Protestant Loyalists historically feeling besieged and resistant to compromise. The identity of Loyalists, rooted in centuries of conflict, is complex and evolving. From the early clan-based loyalties to the emergence of a national consciousness, identity in Ireland has continually transformed, influenced by historical events and changing contexts.

Throughout this paper, I have attempted to demonstrate the emergence of Loyalism as a collective identity through historical analysis. The purpose of this is to display how the emergence of an identity is rarely an event in isolation, it is a process of continual development and evolution, shaped by events both triumphal and traumatic. For Loyalists, they have experienced both, with its triumphal apex in the 17th century of the Protestant ascendancy to the Traumatic years of the Irish Civil War and the violent Troubles of the 20th century. Loyalism has been the product of centuries of English/British colonial administration, with ethnic/religious groups being planted to secure the western flank of Great Britian from foreign, religious and ideological enemies. Loyalists could once be found across the entirety of Ireland, but after partition and the dismantling of southern Loyalists, Northern Ireland's Ulster Protestants became the last group of Loyalists in existence. The collapse of the British Empire and the loss of Northern Ireland's economic relevance have left them the bastard children of a dead empire. Even in the post-Good Friday agreement world, Northern Ireland's Loyalist's remain paranoid of their final destruction at the hands of their Catholic Irish nemesis. Their continuous engagement in competitive victim narratives is a natural response for a people that do not envision a collective future and have only their blood-soaked histories to perceive the shape of things to come. Many identities, particularly national ones, emerge from conflict, but this is more relevant in the case of Northern Ireland. The most significant failing of the Good Friday agreement was to create a meaningful future for Loyalism. The outcome has instead been many promises that have not been kept and postponing the insecurities Loyalists feel for future generations. With the UK's withdrawal from the EU, new problems have now emerged and significant economic funds have been withdrawn, potentially turning the insecurities that come with poverty into a future time bomb.

The British legacy has contributed to the sectarianism seen in Northern Ireland, with Protestant Loyalists historically maintaining their ascendancy to ensure security. The Troubles ended, but Loyalists still grapple with their identity in a post-conflict era. They face a choice between exploring new Northern Irish identities, clinging to a Protestant identity, or committing to political unionism. Republicans may envision a unified Ireland, but Loyalists often focus on preserving their current status and identity. Loyalists need a unifying narrative to overcome perceptions of being trapped in the past. While their history is marked by conflict, it includes trade, migration, and cohabitation. A collective vision of a group's destiny might seem like an empty dream and serve no tangible benefit. Still, I would argue it is essential to put a group's heritage and identity into perspective. History after all has a habit of making the unexpected possible.

Appendix A – English Monarchs and Irish History

Monarch	House	Reign	Notable Events in Irish History
William I	du Normandie	1066 - 1087	1014 - Viking rule begins to decline in Ireland
William II	du Normandie	1087 - 1100	
Henry I	du Normandie	1100 - 1135	
Stephen	du Normandie	1135 - 1154	
Matilda	du Normandie	1141	

Monarch	House	Arms	Reign	Events
Henry II	Angevins		1154 - 1189	1167 - Dermot MacMurrough petitions Henry II for support to reclaim Irish Throne. 1171 - Henry II Lands at Waterford and declares himself Lord of Ireland 1175 - Treaty of Windsor - Consolidation of Norman influence in Ireland
Richard I	Angevins		1189 - 1199	
John	Angevins		1199 - 1216	1210 - Visit of King John - submission of the Irish Kings
Henry III	Plantagenets		1216 - 1272	1216 - Great Charter of Ireland
Edward I	Plantagenets		1272 - 1307	1297 - First Irish Parliament (of the Lordship of Ireland) meets in Dublin
Edward II	Plantagenets		1307 - 1327	1315 - Edward Bruce in Ireland to rally Irish Lords against Anglo-Norman control. Proclaimed King of Ireland but later killed in battle at Faughart
Edward III	Plantagenets		1327 - 1377	1366 - Statutes of Kilkenny passed to curb decline of Hiberno-Norman Lordship of Ireland

Richard II	Plantagenets	1377 - 1399
Henry IV	Lancaster	1399 - 1413
Henry V	Lancaster	1413 - 1422
Henry VI	Lancaster	1422 - 1416 1470 - 1471
Edward IV	York	1461 - 1470 And 1471 - 1483
Edward V	York	1483
Richard III	York	1483 - 1485

Henry VII	Tudor	1485 - 1509	1494 - Edward Poyning (Lord Deputy) passes Ponying's Law. Irish Parliament forbidden to pass laws without prior consent of English Parliament
Henry VIII	Tudor	1509 - 1547	1534 - Thomas FitzGerald publicly renounces allegiance to Henry VIII 1537 - Thomas FitzGerald executed at Tyburn 1542 - Crown of Ireland Act - Irish Parliament establishes the Kingdom of Ireland to be ruled by Henry VIII and his successors
Edward VI	Tudor	1547 - 1553	
Jane	Tudor	1553	
Mary I	Tudor	1553 - 1558	
Elizabeth I	Tudor	1558 - 1603	1570 - Pope Pius V issues Papal Bull declaring Elizabeth I a heretic and releasing her subjects from loyalty to her. 1579 - Second Desmond Rebellion (Munster) 1580 - Rebels in Munster Defeated and in November force of Italians and Spaniards

				1594 - Nine Years War in Ulster massacred in county Kerry
James I	Stuart		1603 - 1625	1603 - Tudor Conquest of Ireland completed - English Law enforced throughout Ireland 1607 - Flight of the Earls - Hugh O'Neil and Rory O'Donnell 1606 -1609 - Plantation of Ulster - Scottish Presbyterians begin large scale plantations
Charles I	Stuart		1625 - 1649	1642 - Catholic Confederation at Kilkenny 1641 - 1649 - Catholic-Gaelic Rebellion - attempt to regain lands confiscated by Protestants. Approx 12,000 Protestants killed until rebellion crushed in 1649
Interregnum	English Commonwealth		1649 - 1660	1649 - Cromwellian Army Invades Ireland - captures Drogheda, Wexford and other Irish cities 1650 - Catholic Landowners exiled to Connaught - Cromwellian Army leaves Ireland 1654 - Cromwellian Plantation
Charles II	Stuart		1660 - 1685	
James II	Stuart		1685 - 1688	

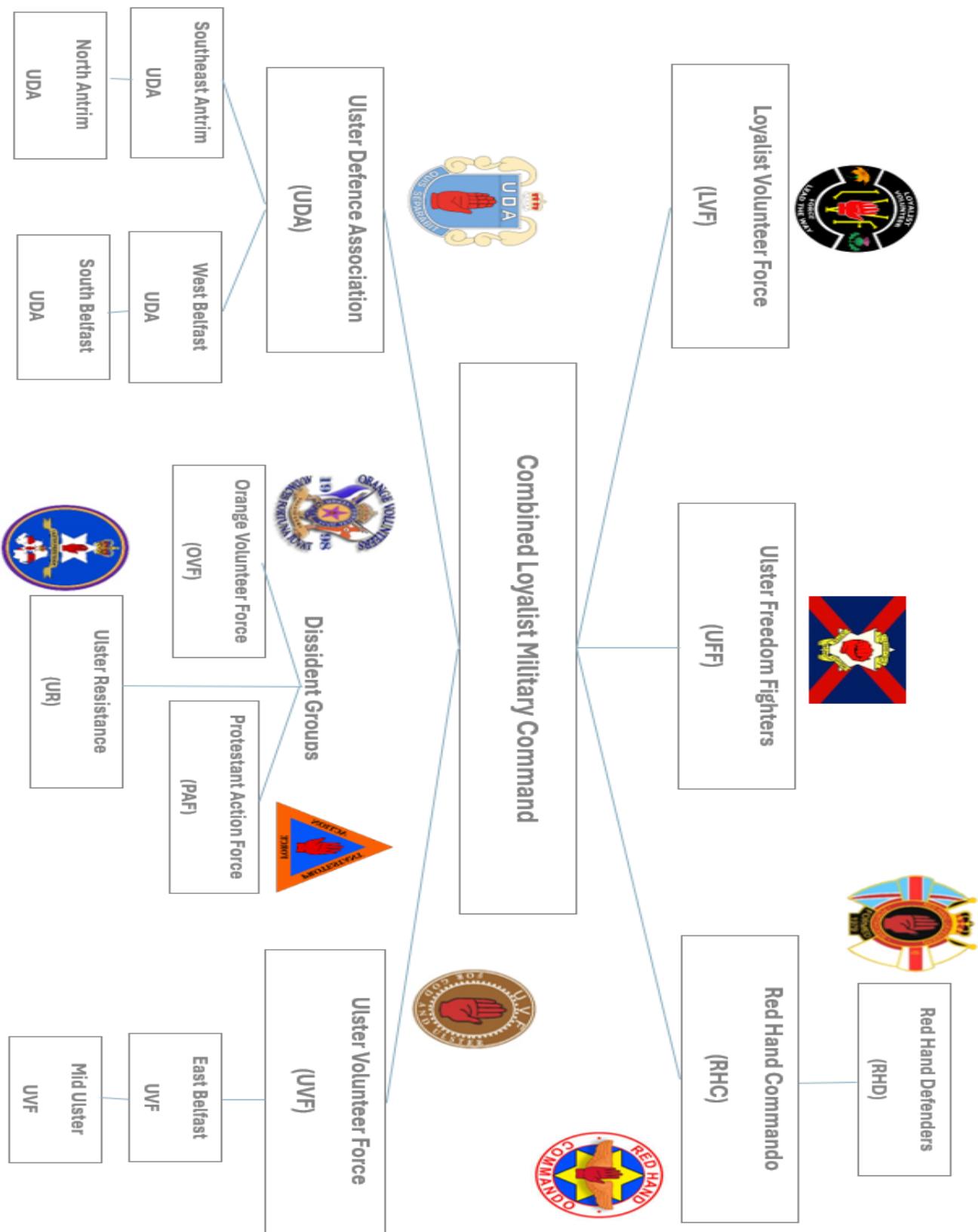| Monarch	Dynasty	Years	Events
Mary II & William III	Orange-Nassau	1689 - 1694	1689 - Siege of Derry Ends - James II lands at Kinsale with French help 1690 - Battle of the Boyne 1691 - Catholic forces defeated at Battle of Aughrim - Limerick surrenders
William III	Orange-Nassau	1694 - 1702	1695 - Penal Laws (Education Act) Prohibits Catholics from educating their children abroad
Anne	Stuart	1702 - 1714	
George I	Hannover	1714 - 1727	1720 - Declaratory Act gives Westminster power to legislate for Ireland
George II	Hannover	1727 - 1760	1740 - Large Scale Famine resulting in deaths of between 300-400,000

George III	Hannover	1760 - 1820	1760 - Battle of Carrickfergus - Invasion by French 1782 - Irish Volunteers agitation leads to Constitution of 1782 1791 - Society of the United Irishmen formed in Belfast 1793 - Catholic Relief Act 1795 - Formation of the Orange Order in County Armagh (first parade to commemorate Battle of the Boyne in 1796) 1796 - Attempted French Invasion of Ireland (Wolftone) 1798 - Irish Rebellion - 1,000 French Troops land at Kilcummin to support the rebellion 1798 - Republic of Connacht declared in first United Irishmen rebellion 1801 - Acts of Union - Unites Kingdom of Ireland with Great Britain to form the United Kingdom 1813 - Battle of Garvaghy between Catholic "Ribbonmen" and Orangemen 1814 - Apprentice Boys Of Derry formed
George IV	Hannover	1820 - 1830	1823 - O'Connell's Catholic Association formed 1825 - Unlawful Societies Act
William IV	Hannover	1830 - 1837	1831 - Tithe War 1832 - 1844 - Party Procession Acts enforced to control public demonstrations1836 - Tithe Commutation Act
Victoria	Hannover	1837 - 1901	1845 - 1849 - Great Irish Famine - Estimated 1 million deaths and further 1 million emigrations 1867 - Fenian Rising 1879 - 1882 - The Land War - period of rural agitation for fair rents and free sale of land to relieve Irish Peasants from generations of debt and tenancy. 1886 - Government of Ireland Bill (1st Home Rule Bill) 1893 - Government of Ireland Bill (2nd Home Rule Bill)

Monarch	House / Arms	Reign	Events
Edward VII	Saxe - Coburg – Gotha	1901 - 1910	
George V	Windsor	1910 - 1936	1913 - Dublin Lockout - UVF Formed (Arms supplied from Germany) - Irish Citizens Army/Irish National Volunteers formed. 1914 - Government of Ireland Act - Provides for Irish Home Rule but immediately postponed due to outbreak of WWI 1916 - Easter Uprising 1918 - General Election returns majority Sinn Fein government 1919 - First Dail of the Irish Republic issues Declaration of Independence from the UK 1919 - 1921 - Irish War of Independence (First of "The Troubles") 1920 - Bloody Sunday 1921 - Northern Ireland Established - Treaty of Peace between Great Britain and Ireland 1922 - Irish Civil War
Edward VIII	Windsor	1936	
George VI	Windsor	1936 - 1952	1937 - Constitution of Ireland replaces Irish Free State with new state of Eire (Ireland) 1949 - Republic of Ireland Act - Abolishes function of British Monarch in Ireland and confers them upon the President of Ireland

Elizabeth II	Windsor	1952 - 2022	1955 - Ireland joins United Nations 1969 - The Troubles - Deployment of British troops to Northern Ireland (Operation Banner) 1985 - Anglo-Irish Agreement 1998 - Belfast Agreement 2016 - Referendum Vote which leads to Brexit
Charles III	Windsor	2022 - Present	

Appendix B – Loyalist Paramilitaries and Organisational Structure

Combined Loyalist Military Command

Ulster Defence Association (UDA)
- Southeast Antrim UDA
  - North Antrim UDA
- West Belfast UDA
  - South Belfast UDA

Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF)

Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF)

Dissident Groups
- Orange Volunteer Force (OVF)
- Protestant Action Force (PAF)
- Ulster Resistance (UR)

Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF)
- East Belfast UVF
  - Mid Ulster UVF

Red Hand Commando (RHC)
- Red Hand Defenders (RHD)

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