

The Orange Effect

The Orange Order's Relationship to Rangers FC in Interwar Glasgow

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Abstract

This thesis explores the interrelationship between the Protestant fraternity, the Orange Order, and Rangers Football Club in Glasgow Scotland during the Interwar era. Glasgow has long had a problem with sectarianism, specifically between the Protestant majority and Catholic minority. Alongside these religious issues is the problem of Irish immigration, and the social classes between these two religious' groups. Glasgow had an abundance of Irish immigration due to the great famine, both Catholic and Protestant, which has then brought many of the political issues of Ireland to Glasgow. Scotland being a strongly Protestant society then had to adapt to Catholic immigration, and many did not take kindly to this, and through this 'fear of the other,' Glasgow's sectarian issues were born.

Football, and sport in general, has long since been a release of tensions and escape from reality for many people across the world, but Glasgow does it differently. With the Catholic community needing representation and acceptance in greater Scottish society, Celtic FC was started in 1888 as a football club to help serve the Catholic youth in Glasgow. As a response, Rangers FC (originally started in 1872) started to adopt the titled as a Protestant sporting club. This thesis will uncover how during the interwar period this Protestant identity at Rangers was strengthened, alongside the help from the Ulster Protestant fraternity, the Orange Order. The Orange Order was brought to Glasgow by Irish Ulster immigrants and became extremely popular in the city during the interwar period due to the fraternity's hardline anti-Catholic viewpoints.

With many Orangemen being important members of Glaswegian society at the time their influence was seen everywhere, but due to the Protestant identity growing at Rangers, Orangemen became highly involved in the everyday workings of Rangers. Whether they were the chairman, board members, players, etc., the Order became involved in Rangers to fight their Catholic enemy on multiple fronts- whether that be through politics or football. This thesis will explore how the relationship came to be, how it affected Glaswegian society, and how the nexus between sports and politics has always been closer than we originally think.

Acknowledgments

I am so thankful to have been able to experience this process, and have learned an immeasurable amount about Rangers FC, the Orange Order, the Old Firm footballing rivalry, sectarianism in Glasgow, but mainly, myself. As someone who has been football obsessed their whole life, being able to extensively study one of football's most intense rivalries and its political overlapping is incredible.

This journey brought me to Glasgow for a week, and I was able to see the things I researched firsthand. I stayed in an Airbnb across the street from Rangers' Ibrox Stadium, and there is a special glow and allure to such a classic football ground. The towering brick stadium gave me a mixed emotion. Knowing the amount of league titles, European trophies, and legendary figures who played and managed the club made Ibrox seem so magical. Though through this success, the banners down the street were orange and purple, and the club's third kit this past year was also orange, alongside a shrine to the recently passed Queen. All of this gave a display of Rangers' long-time affiliation with Unionism, and the Orange Order. This dichotomy is exactly what I wanted to study.

I want to extend a massive thank you to my supervisor throughout this process, Daniel Maul. Your help throughout this process has been invaluable, I'm grateful for your support, and encouraging me to continue to look deeper into every crevasse of detail. I give you my utmost gratitude, Daniel.

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Glossary

- Old Firm: The name given to the football rivalry between Glasgow based football clubs, Rangers FC, and Celtic FC.
- Rangers: Glasgow based football club, founded in 1872, and known for its Old Firm rivalry with Celtic and known for its Protestant identity.
- Celtic: Glasgow based football club, founded in 1888, known for Old Firm rivalry with Rangers.
- Ulster: Irish province and the 9 traditional counties in Northern Ireland, 6 of which make up modern-day Northern Ireland. Different from the rest of the island due to its high number of Protestants.
- Harland & Wolff: Belfast based shipping company, most famous for the construction of the Titanic. Opened a shipyard in Glasgow and was known for their Protestant only hiring practices.
- Sectarian(ism): Excessive attachment to a particular sect or party, especially in religion. In the Glaswegian context, between Protestants and Catholics.
- Irish Home Rule: a movement that campaigned for self-government for Ireland within the UK. It was the principal political movement of Irish nationalism from 1870's until after the first World War.
- Loyal Orange Lodge: The name for the Orange Order's private lodges where members meet and convene.
- Orangeman: A member of the Orange Order.

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

When Mo Johnston signed for Rangers FC in the summer of 1989 on face value it seemed like a nondescript signing. Johnston was a football player with a good career but by no means was he a household name, but his signing is seen as one of the most impactful in Rangers FC history and had massive ramifications in the city of Glasgow. Johnston was the first Catholic player to sign for the Scottish football giants since before the first World War. How did it get to this point, where Rangers were so staunchly anti-Catholic where the club refused to sign a player of Catholic faith for nearly 80 years? While the city of Glasgow has always had sectarian roots, nothing displays this divide more prominently than the hostile rivalry between Rangers FC (Protestant) and Celtic FC (Catholic). The rivalry known as the ‘Old Firm’ has been seen as an affair steeped in controversy and violence, but the roots of the modern-day Old Firm can be traced to the Interwar period.

With Rangers being the club that upholds protestant and Unionist values in Scotland, they looked to ‘protect’ the Protestant people of Glasgow from their Irish Catholic neighboring club, founded by Irish immigrants.¹ And while this identity has followed Rangers most of its history throughout the 20th century and beyond, in the interwar years Rangers sharpened this image thanks to the help and involvement of the Orange Order. The Orange Order is a protestant fraternal order, which is deeply unionist and Ulster loyalist.² Unionist being loyal to the British Crown, and Ulster

¹ McKillop, Alasdair. “Sectarianism and Scottish Football: A Rangers Perspective.” In *Bigotry, Football and Scotland*, by John Flint and John Kelly, 203–12. Edinburgh University Press, 2013. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780748670383-017>, 205.

² Bruce, Steve. “Scotland Orange and Protestant.” In *Scottish Gods: Religion in Modern Scotland 1900-2012*, 80–99. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014, 80.

loyalist denoting allegiance to the Crown from Northern Ireland. The Orange Order started in modern day Northern Ireland in 1795 and was largely an Irish organization until the turn of the 20th century, when it began to greatly expand its numbers.³ So, what was an Irish protestant fraternal order doing involving itself in Scotland's biggest football club? Well, that is what this thesis will seek to answer. Specifically, this thesis will answer the question; **What role did the Orange Order play in fostering the Protestant & Unionist identity at Rangers during the interwar period?** This question will help give a deep dive into the sectarian issues in Glasgow, Irish immigration, the history of Rangers FC, and the reasons an Irish fraternal order began to have influence within Scotland's biggest football club.

1.2 State of the Art

While the history of Rangers FC and the Orange Order as separate organizations have been kept in great detail, there has not been as much literature written regarding the relationship between the two. The field of football history has been very well documented, especially in the British Isles, as the sport was conceived there and has the longest history in this area. While this thesis will have some elements of football history, it is mainly going to be concerned with the relationship of Rangers FC and the Orange Oder, not the on-field success Rangers enjoyed during this time, though that was plentiful in the interwar period.

When looking at the few pieces that have been written on this subject, there have been two different approaches taken. Bill Murray's 1984 book, *The Old Firm: Sectarianism, Sport, and Society in Scotland* was one of the first pieces of literature to mention Rangers association with

³ Ibid, 81.

the Orange Order.⁴ With that being said, Murray was not overly critical of their involvement, and rather felt the Order, Rangers, and the Old Firm rivalry was rather a “release for sectarian hatreds in the relatively harmless atmosphere of a football match.”⁵ Murray as well seemed inclined to believe that a football club at this time was a ‘tension release valve,’ and that Rangers and Celtic fans, even though they had religious associations, were not overly involved in the sectarian tensions and violence that surrounded Glasgow or the many religious groups around the city.⁶ While it can be understood that sport helps to relieve tension, it cannot be ignored that the ramifications such a hostile rivalry has on the city, the clubs themselves, and the people in which the clubs represent. The intersection of football and politics cannot be ignored; they have often been one and the same. Murray’s view that the football was separate to the religious organizations, the gang violence and sectarian hostilities during this time has been fading away in academic circles in recent times.

Andrew Davies has been the historian who has contributed the most to this niche field in recent years. Davies has had multiple texts looking at the relationship between sectarianism in Glasgow and the two major football clubs which inhabit the city. Davies takes a very opposite approach to Murray and feels that the sectarian hate within the football clubs and their fans had a negative impact, and they inflamed sectarian hostilities in the interwar period, with help from outside organizations as well, namely the Orange Order.⁷ In a separate text, Davies also notes how Rangers fans marches to the matches had similar songs and overall feel to Orange walks, and noted

⁴Murray, Bill. *The Old Firm: Sectarianism, Sport And Society In Scotland*. John Donald, 1984.

⁵ Ibid (1984).

⁶ Ibid (1984).

⁷ Davies, Andrew. “Football and Sectarianism in Glasgow During the 1920s and 1930s.” *Irish Historical Studies* 35, no. 138 (November 2006): 200–219. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021121400004892>, 201.

the relationship and similarities between the Rangers fans and Orangemen during this period.⁸ Davies' view that the relationship between these football clubs and other religious organizations was overall detrimental is a similar view to what will be shared throughout this thesis.

1.3 Cultural/Historical Relevance

While this is a fascinating issue, seeing an ethno-religious fraternity involve itself in a football club, it cannot be seen as completely unique. The intersection of sports and other realms of society, whether it be religion, politics, or both, is plentiful. Whilst it seems as if sports are a common day escape from the other things in this planet, and to many they are, but the crossover between politics and sport has always been there. In their 2017 work, Thomas Gift and Andrew Miner described it succinctly, “sports, deeply human as they are, cannot elude the unmistakable pull of politics.”⁹ Whether it be American football star Colin Kaepernick protesting against police brutality and racial inequality by taking a knee during the national anthem, or Tommie Smith and John Carlos in the 1968 Olympics holding up the black power fist in the medal ceremony, or the sectarian divide and footballing rivalry between Celtic and Rangers. The study of this relationship is important, as sports teams and figures give people a way to align and identify themselves and can help us dive deeper in to the innerworkings of individual people or overarching movements.

The importance of the crossover between sports and politics can be seen throughout the globe. In his 2015 book, *Sports Politics: An Introduction*, Jonathan Grix outlines that politics and sports seem to intermingle well due to the amount of power which lies within sports.¹⁰ When there

⁸ Davies, Andrew. “‘They Sing That Song’: Football and Sectarianism in Glasgow during the 1920s and 1930s.” In *Bigotry, Football and Scotland: Perspectives and Debates*, 50–64. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014, 51.

⁹ Gift, Thomas, and Andrew Miner. “‘Dropping the Ball’: The Understudied Nexus of Sports and Politics.” *World Affairs* 180, no. 1 (March 1, 2017): 127–61. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0043820017715569>, 153.

¹⁰ Grix, Jonathan. *Sport Politics: An Introduction*. 1st ed. 2015 edition. London ; New York, NY: Springer, 2015, 3.

is a balance of power relations between two people, whether individuals or groups, politics will be intertwined. Grix also notes that sports are inherently rulebound with clear winners and losers, which also points to why people would use sports to answer their political questions.¹¹ For example, we could look at international sporting events, which nations can derive a sense of national pride, identity, and legitimization to their country. A specific example could be the 1995 Rugby World Cup, whereas South Africa lifted their first major sporting title after the end of Apartheid. The image of Nelson Mandela in a team shirt with captain Francois Pienaar (Pienaar was Afrikaner) celebrating the victory was a symbol of unity. This sporting success created national pride, and helped South Africa gain international legitimization as a newly democratic nation. Sports can help create an identity and legitimization to political causes outside of a national context as well, which is where the religious issues of Glasgow, Rangers, and Celtic can come in.

Looking at this specific of the Orange Order and Rangers, it is visible that the Order helped to garner this protestant identity at Rangers, using it as a vehicle. The Orange Order itself helped its members thrive off social capital or creating networks of like-minded people in order to help spread and uphold their ideals.¹² Whether that was during July 12th walks or other events throughout the year through the order or the Church. Adding important Orangemen in the higher ups at Rangers, namely John Ure Primrose, Rangers chairman from 1912-1923, helped cultivate another form of social capital, a football club. Giving their platform an environment such as sports to be able to express themselves and grow the Order's base and influence. Rangers' fans would sing protestant songs, whether they fully identified with the sentiment or not, whilst giving the

¹¹ Ibid, 5.

¹² Gift, Thomas, and Andrew Miner. "Dropping the Ball': The Understudied Nexus of Sports and Politics." *World Affairs* 180, no. 1 (March 1, 2017): 127–61, 130.

Orangemen and Unionists a vocal theatre to voice their opinions on political issues in a sporting arena.

Within this interwar period, we would see the Fourth Home Rule Act and eventually the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922, which helped put a strain on Protestant and Catholic relations in Glasgow as well. With a large influx of Irish immigrants in the interwar period, and the creation of the Irish Free State, anti-Catholic sentiments were high, and the Order and Rangers gave another avenue to vent frustrations or help uphold the ‘traditional British Protestant Unionist’ values.

Just in this short section, the importance of this topic can be easily seen. This is a clear intersection of sports and politics, in a very political charged time in the UK and Ireland, and this specific Scottish sporting rivalry grew past the lines of simply being labelled ‘sporting.’ In this period, both teams were larger than just their names, Rangers were seen to uphold Protestant, British, and Orange ideology, whilst Celtic were the beacon of hope for Irish immigrants and the Catholic Church. The on-field successes were viewed as a direct representation of the communities that supported these teams. The political side of this derby is undeniable, and so is the involvement of the Orange Order in Rangers.

1.4 Theory and Methods

Looking at theoretical approaches, this thesis will mainly be engaging in sociology and cultural history. Both these fields can give an insight into the behavior and thought processes of Rangers and the Orange Order, and to help answer why they seemed to become intertwined.

With regards to Cultural History, this is in essence the “complex of signifying practices and symbolic processes in a particular society.”¹³ Which fits this thesis’ subject matter quite well, as I want to look at the interrelations between these two transnational organizations (Rangers FC and Orange Order) and how their practices and processes effect one another in Scottish society. What makes Rangers and the Order transnational is down to the fact membership and support is not drawn to national borders, and the basic fact neither of which are derived from governmental organizations. Ranger’s support comes from all corners of the globe, and the Orange Order operates in a plethora of countries across the world.

On top of this, according to Eley, culture is a fundamental aspect in the distributions of resources, and more importantly, power in a society.¹⁴ This angle of using cultural history to unravel power distribution will help aid my thesis greatly. Eley also describes how cultural studies have looked at ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture, which is a way to make culture grounds for politics in unconventional political spaces.¹⁵ With this in mind, this ties perfectly back to Rangers and the Orange Order. The Order, in essence a religious fraternity, but in practice it became a very political vehicle for British Conservative politics. Thus, using Rangers Protestant identity, they bound themselves together to spread the word of “good Protestant, Unionist values” (high culture), whilst pitting themselves against who they perceived to be the invasive and negative Irish Catholic immigrants in Scotland (low culture).¹⁶ Lastly, cultural history has always given the impression that in certain contexts, the promotion of leisure and sport could further aggravate rather than help

¹³ Eley, Geoffrey. “What Is Cultural History?” *New German Critique*, no. 65 (1995): 19–36. <https://doi.org/10.2307/488530>, 24.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 24-25.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 26.

¹⁶ Walker, Graham. “The Orange Order in Scotland Between the Wars.” *International Review of Social History* 37, no. 2 (August 1992): 177–206. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859000111125>, 177.

resolve social inequalities.¹⁷ This is again useful for my thesis, as Rangers FC and their fans have historically been seen to perpetuate the issue of sectarianism.¹⁸

Alongside cultural history, sociology is important when looking at the content of this thesis. Specifically, using sociology to look at sectarianism and how groups of people use religion to define themselves in spheres outside of the traditional religious settings.¹⁹ Peter Berger, while the piece is a bit outdated, did give a nice insight on the differences between churches and sects, which is beneficial when looking at the thesis and the two organizations in it. To Berger, a church in theory has compulsory membership, but that membership doesn't prove member quality, and on the flip side, a sect is voluntary, and theoretically restricted to those who are religiously and ethically qualified.²⁰ This perfectly fits the description of the Orange Order, as a sect: this fraternity is for members only, and only members with similar views religiously and politically are allowed to join. This helps give insight on to how members think, and how they associate themselves with Protestantism, Anti-Irish, Anti-Catholic, and pro-Union values.

The sociological frame, though different from historical lenses, can help distinguish motives and means of identity for these two organizations and how they grew to have shared values. Lastly, sociology in this thesis can be used to see how sectarianism differences are constructed, and how these differences can be analyzed and described by the scholar.²¹ Sectarianism is rooted in the belief people think they're inherently different from others, and in this case, the Order and Rangers believe their Protestant differences have given them a status of

¹⁷Mitchell, Pablo. "Western History Forum: Social and Cultural History." *Western Historical Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (August 1, 2011): 338–43. <https://doi.org/10.2307/westhistquar.42.3.0338>, 340-341.

¹⁸ McKillop, Alasdair. "Sectarianism and Scottish Football: A Rangers Perspective." In *Bigotry, Football and Scotland*, by John Flint and John Kelly, 203–12. Edinburgh University Press, 2013, 204.

¹⁹ Berger, Peter L. "The Sociological Study of Sectarianism." *Social Research* 51, no. 1/2 (1984): 367–85, 367.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 369.

²¹ Joseph, Suad. "Sectarianism as Imagined Sociological Concept and as Imagined Social Formation." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no. 4 (2008): 553–54, 553.

‘high’ culture, as noted earlier. This thesis will use cultural history and sociology to be able to analyze how this Ulster based fraternity was able to use Rangers FC to further their own agenda whilst creating the anti-Irish immigrant and catholic sentiment we can still see today, with its roots in the interwar era.

When looking at method, this thesis will primarily be a case study focused on the interrelationship between the Orange Order and Rangers FC. This case study is focused on the interwar period of 1918-1939. While there will be aspects where I specifically examine one of these organizations at a time, as their individual histories before and during this time period have serious ramifications on their actions as a whole. While on their own, Rangers and the Order give us great insight into the sectarianism in Scotland, they also give us a good look into the Irish conflict in this time period and how it affected these two groups. So, while it will be important to use these two organizations as separate studies, putting them together in a cross-case research will be vital to fully unlock the connections between the two of them.

The chosen time period, the interwar years, was very deliberate. This was a time where the Orange Order had massive growth outside of Ireland, and many Irish immigrants (Protestant and Catholic) came to Glasgow. Alongside this, the Irish home rule movement was growing, and the creation of the Republic of Ireland in 1922 created large anti-Irish and catholic sentiment in the British Empire.²² In the wake of all these events, created a perfect storm for the rise in extreme Protestantism and the “necessity” for Rangers to help grow these anti-Catholic or Irish sentiments.²³

²² Walker, Graham. “The Orange Order in Scotland Between the Wars.” *International Review of Social History* 37, no. 2 (August 1992): 177–206, 178.

²³ Davies, Andrew. “Football and Sectarianism in Glasgow During the 1920s and 1930s.” *Irish Historical Studies* 35, no. 138 (November 2006): 200–219, 202-203.

1.5 Sources:

My thesis will be mainly comprised of secondary sources, with the help of primary sources as well. Throughout my research thus far I have been able to easily locate a plethora of secondary sources, whether that be direct relation to my topic, or by a loose affiliation that is able to aid me in research or theoretical approach. I have been very successful in finding books related to Rangers FC and the Orange Order in the inter war period, not as often together, but at least an entire book dedicated to one of the organizations. Within these sources, there is usually a mention made to the other organization, for example in a Rangers text, former chairman and Orangeman John Ure Primrose is often mentioned. I will need to be able to use evidence from each text to be able to put together a holistic body of work that can help to accomplish what I have set out for in my research question.

In terms of primary sources, I have been able to find and utilize a few for this thesis, but by and large it has been more difficult to find primary accounts. An interview with ex-Rangers player Adam Little was very insightful as to the day-to-day routines as a player. Little did not mention anything of the Orange Order, but his accounts of manager Bill Struth and memories of the club's identity helped paint the picture. I have also used a newspaper article from the Irish Independent right after the Irish free state was established. This piece helped gather information on the Orange Order's views on the Irish free state. By and large I did find primary sources harder to come by, and this thesis will primarily include secondary source material.

Section 2: Historical Context: Background on Rangers FC, the Orange Order, and Glasgow in the Interwar Period

In order to fully understand the breadth of this complex relationship between two separate organizations, a historical context of each, and their environment, is necessary to set the scene. Glasgow has long since had a complex social and political scene, and the city itself has been ripe with sectarian issues, ever since the Scottish reformation, and through the Irish famine which saw a plethora of Immigrants, both Catholic and Protestant, come to the banks of the Clyde River.²⁴ This set the stage for the Glasgow we see in interwar times, and even to some extent, today. Throughout this first section, there will be a basic introduction and context set for both groups in question, Rangers Football Club, and the Orange Order, as well as a quick overview of Glasgow as a city, as the environment these two organizations resided in was vital to their identities.

Firstly, the portrait of Glasgow will be painted, which should give a better picture as to the background of sectarianism in the city and how this bled into one of Europe's biggest footballing rivalries. Rangers will then be overviewed from their inception as a brainchild from a handful of teenage boys in park, to a powerful, European conquering club that is one of the biggest clubs in Europe and holds a fiercely religious and political undertone. Lastly, the Orange Order will be dissected to understand the reasons for their ultra-Protestant ideology, and why this Ulster based fraternity was so popular across the North Channel in Glasgow. This historical context will then

²⁴ Booker Jr, Ronnie Michael. "Orange Alba: The Civil Religion of Loyalism in the Southwestern Lowlands of Scotland since 1798." University of Tennessee Knoxville, 2010, 3-4.

make way for analysis of the Order's involvement in Rangers and how their interconnectivity was almost inevitable during this period.

2.1 Glasgow: The Unique City Which Gives us the Setting for our Story

After looking into the Orange Order and Ranger FC, we need to quickly dissect the city in which these two groups reside, as best we can. The environment in which this takes place is vital for its inception and I argue there are not many cities on earth where this sort of interaction could take place. Glasgow was a city which already had a sectarian history, then you put the added elements of more Catholic Irish immigrants to fuel the flames, then on top of that, you add Protestant immigrants from Ulster which bring the Orange Order along with them, and you create the unique ecosystem of interwar Glasgow. Alongside this, you have the identity politics of people in Glasgow, whether this is Irish immigrant families using a tricolor Irish flag, or the Scottish identity issues whether to think of themselves as distinctly Scottish, or to fly the Union Jack flag and identify as British. This sense of national identity can bleed into the religious affiliations, the groups and organizations people aligned to (Orange Order), and even the football club people supported (Celtic or Rangers).

Glasgow had a fairly extensive history of sectarianism before the interwar period, and even before Rangers or Celtic kicked their first football. Before advancing further, it is necessary to define sectarianism, as this term is vital to get a better understanding of Glasgow. According to Michael Rosie, "sectarianism denotes a social setting in which systematic discrimination affects the life chances of religious groups, and within which religious affiliation stands for much more

than theological belief.”²⁵ This offers a good explanation for Scottish sectarianism, in which social discrimination occurs (anti-Catholicism, though it can be anti-Protestant as well), and in Scottish sectarianism the affiliation stands for so much more than the theology. Technically speaking these are two groups of Christians who share a vast majority of theological beliefs, but they have chosen to focus on the few differences, displaying the affiliation means more than the actual theology of it. On the surface these groups belong to the same religion, but some members look to align themselves differently based off a few differentiations. Another definition by Suad Joseph is much simpler, he simply states that, “sectarianism is about how ‘differences’ are constructed... the job of the scholar is to explain these differences, how they emerged, and why people believe they are different.”²⁶ Which again can be used in the context of Glasgow, the Old Firm, and the Orange Order, as each side believes there are innate differences that separate these two groups of people (Protestant & Catholic) and that this implicitly implies something about them (class, football club, job, etc...).

Three quarters of Glasgow was Protestant by 1914, which helped to harbor more sectarian hostilities towards their minority 25% Catholic population.²⁷ To help build this ¾ majority many Protestant immigrants from Ulster arrived in Glasgow in the early 1800’s which helped to forge cultural, political, and social ties to Ulster loyalism.²⁸ Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, due to their presence in the shipyards, many Ulster immigrants settled in Glasgow’s working class westside, close to the ports. These neighborhoods, specifically Partick, Govan, and Ibrox, are all

²⁵ Rosie, M. *The Sectarian Myth in Scotland: Of Bitter Memory and Bigotry*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 3.

²⁶ Joseph, Suad. “Sectarianism as Imagined Sociological Concept and as Imagined Social Formation.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no. 4 (2008): 553–54, 553.

²⁷ Davies, Andrew. “Football and Sectarianism in Glasgow During the 1920s and 1930s.” *Irish Historical Studies* 35, no. 138 (November 2006): 200–219, 202.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 203.

extremely protestant and are a hot bed for Orange lodges and even are home to Rangers.²⁹ Though there was also large Protestant settlement in the east end, specifically Bridgeton and also Shettleston, and these areas were notorious for sectarian violence with their proximity to the lower class Irish Catholic neighborhoods.³⁰ So though a vast majority of Glasgow was Protestant, a big number of their makeup were immigrants from across the North Channel and with them they brought their own culture, social events, and issues. So naturally, in a city where there was already a Protestant/Catholic divide, it seems very natural for the Orange Order to sprout in Glasgow at this time, and for a football club with Protestant values to be curated. Much of this growth of the Order and Rangers radical Protestantism can be seen as a reactionary move against the other 25% of Glasgow's population, who come from Ireland, south of the 6 counties of Ulster.

To contrast this Protestant majority, most of Glasgow's catholic population while originating from Ireland, by the turn of the century in 1900, were mostly Scottish born.³¹ Most of the Irish Catholic immigration was due to the Great Famine in the 1840's, and this steady flow of Irish immigrations away from the island continued until the 1920's.³² This gave 1-2 generations of immigration from Ireland before the turn of the century, which explains why many of the Catholic were Scottish born. Though most of the Catholics by this time are Scottish and Scottish born, they still firmly identified as Irish and had strong feelings towards Irish nationalism.³³ Though they were Scottish born, they were seen as different from their Protestant neighbors, and many Catholics were victims of systematic discrimination, especially in the job market.³⁴ This

²⁹ Ibid, 203.

³⁰ Ibid, 203-204.

³¹ Ibid, 203.

³² John Gray Centre. "A Brief History of Emigration & Immigration in Scotland: Research Guide 2." Accessed May 24, 2023. <http://www.johngraycentre.org/index.php?>, 2.

³³ Davies, Andrew. "Football and Sectarianism in Glasgow During the 1920s and 1930s." *Irish Historical Studies* 35, no. 138 (November 2006): 200–219, 204.

³⁴ Ibid, 203.

displays a unique sense of ‘otherness’ in Glasgow, though someone could be Scottish born, their religion was the automatic differentiator between what was perceived as Scottish and foreign.

Glasgow had a keen interest on the Irish politics and the situation in Ulster, as many of its inhabitants had skin in the game, and this added another complexity into the Glaswegian political landscape. The desire to define the difference between Scottish and British, the Ulsterman vs the supporters of Irish free state, and the Protestants vs the Catholics- Glasgow had it all. It was all through this sectarian desire to define differences, and then engage in systematic discrimination of the opposite group(s) in order to keep them down, in this specific Glasgow case, at the core, it’s Protestant vs Catholic, and whatever comes along with this assertion.

2.2 Rangers Football Club: The Foundation and Creation of a Scottish Super Club

On a spring day in March of 1872, four teenage boys, brothers Moses and Peter McNeil, William McBeath, and Peter Campbell decided to start their own football club in order to compete with local teams on weekend matches at the Glasgow Green, this marks the inception of Rangers Football Club.³⁵ While the early sides were made up of the four boys and their friends, by 1877 the club that was formed as an idea in Kelvingrove Park had made it to the Scottish cup final, but ultimately lost.³⁶ With the early years being made up entirely of friendly games and the only official matches being cup matches, the Scottish League first began in 1890-1891 season, and Rangers were co-champions alongside a strong Dumbarton side.³⁷

Through these infant stages of the club, Rangers had not yet garnered their Protestant identity. Rangers was born out of a purely sporting interest, but this would soon have an inevitable

³⁵ O’Donnell, Stephen. *Tangled Up in Blue: The Rise and Fall of Rangers FC*. None edition. Pitch Publishing, 2019, 9.

³⁶ Ibid, 10.

³⁷ Ibid, 12.

political cross-section. It was not until 1888 that Celtic FC, a club started by Catholic Priest, Brother Walfrid, in order to help the underprivileged youth in the Irish community of Glasgow, that we see the early signs of a sectarian football rivalry. And even though the Catholic club was there, the two Old Firm clubs did not have animosity in those first few years, before the 1900s.³⁸ As Stephen O'Donnell explains, "if Celtic were formed to support and represent an immigrant community, Rangers would go on to become the reactionary club, the sporting arm of a wider social movement to keep the Irish population in Scotland firmly in its place."³⁹ So we can already see in Rangers early years, that though they were formed by 4 protestant teenagers, there was no religious affiliation until closer to 1900, and with the help of Celtic and their rise to the top as a Catholic Irish club in Scotland, Rangers began to establish themselves as the Protestant club we see in the interwar period.

In the early years of Rangers, they played and trained at the Glasgow Green, as many clubs did, before moving in 1876 to West End Glasgow in Kinning Park, and after a few years there the club began to outgrow this area and started their own facility in the Ibrox neighborhood, where the club still plays to this day, at the present day Ibrox Park.⁴⁰ This movement of location and timing of the move are integral in the change of their identity. Whilst Rangers Protestant identity was solidified in the interwar era, it started to shift around the turn of the century. Ibrox and Govan areas of Glasgow were home to many Irish Protestant immigrants, who came either for work in the shipyards, or through the Great Famine, originally from Ulster and have been known as a strongly Protestant neighborhood for a long time.⁴¹ Ibrox and Govan are also tactically placed

³⁸ Ibid, 13.

³⁹ Ibid, 29.

⁴⁰ Booker Jr, Ronnie Michael. "Orange Alba: The Civil Religion of Loyalism in the Southwestern Lowlands of Scotland since 1798." University of Tennessee Knoxville, 2010, 112.

⁴¹ Ibid, 113.

along the south bank of the Clyde and Govan specifically is home to many traditional shipyards and engineering industries. Both were considered skilled or semi-skilled jobs and were mostly reserved for Protestants at this time.⁴² Through this we can start to begin to see the melding of ultra-Protestantism and Orangeism into the club identity at Rangers.

After the move to Ibrox, Ranger's success on pitch started to grow their profile as one of Scotland's biggest clubs, but the other club starting to accrue similar amounts of support and success was their Catholic neighbors and rivals, Celtic. It was due to this rise in success from the Irish Catholic club that Rangers began to adopt the 'de facto' title of the Protestant Loyalism football club. This was due to their location in Glasgow, the demographic of fans who attended matches, and Celtic's quick rise to the top.⁴³ In essence, the rise of Rangers as a Protestant club can be seen as a response, a complete sporting and social, defense mechanism to the rise of an Irish Catholic club from across town.⁴⁴ Before the first world war Rangers' on field response to Celtic's rise was positive, as the Ibrox club captured league titles in 1900-02, and then again from 1911-13, alongside a Scottish Cup win in 1903.

The last pieces of the puzzle which pushed along Ranger's transition to a Protestant Football Club was in 1912, where two significant events occurred. First of which was the appointment of John Ure Primrose as club chairman, and Primrose was a known Unionist, Loyalist, and Orange sympathizer and had links to the Freemasons.⁴⁵ Primrose will be talked about later as well, as his reign as chairman was influential in this process of fostering Protestant identity, and he was chairman until 1923.

⁴² Ibid, 113.

⁴³ Ibid, 115.

⁴⁴ Skeide, Jon Magnus Løfgren. "Sashes and Rosaries Scottish Sectarianism and the Old Firm." University of Bergen, 2010, 59.

⁴⁵ O'Donnell, Stephen. *Tangled Up in Blue: The Rise and Fall of Rangers FC*. None edition. Pitch Publishing, 2019, 46.

Alongside the entrance of Primrose, the Belfast based ship building company Harland & Wolff, most known for constructing the Titanic, started a branch in the Govan shipyards.⁴⁶ Harland & Wolff were known for being strong Protestant company, and with their arrival in the strongly Protestant neighborhood of Govan, the ties to Rangers were immediate. Harland & Wolff then offered to give Rangers £90,000 in 1912 as to help with Ibrox re-construction as the club still struggled after a stadium disaster a decade earlier.⁴⁷ This is a sizable amount of money in 2023, let alone in 1912, but Harland & Wolff were only willing to give this sum with a *minor* stipulation. As H&W were publicly known as a “No Catholics” company, which was a common hiring practice at the time, which primarily Protestant companies would openly not hire any employees of the Catholic faith.⁴⁸ It is allegedly true that the company insisted to Primrose that Rangers follow suit in this hiring practice to be able to receive the amount.⁴⁹ This begins to paint the picture for us to see the full introduction of the Orange Order during the interwar era, and displays how Rangers were started as a purely sporting club, and before World War I had started to become the Protestant club of Glasgow.

2.3 The Orange Order: Background on the Belfast Fraternal Order in Glasgow

When King William of Orange and his army won the battle of the Boyne in 1690 it marked a Protestant victory in Ireland and was a very important event in British history. A hundred years later, in 1795 in County Armagh, Ireland a Protestant fraternity started to commemorate this specific victory and to uphold proper British Protestant ideals, and was even named after king

⁴⁶ Ibid, 45.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 45.

⁴⁸Skeide, Jon Magnus Løfgren. “Sashes and Rosaries Scottish Sectarianism and the Old Firm.” University of Bergen, 2010, 42-43.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 46

William of Orange, this organization was the Orange Order.⁵⁰ Known for their bowler hats, sashes, and ‘Orange Walks,’ which are yearly marches on July 12th to remember the 1690 victory at the Boyne, the Order is very recognizable in their traditions and symbolism.⁵¹ Beyond their symbolic traditions, the Orange Order is also known for being extremely Loyalist, Unionist, and in many cases, seen as anti-Catholic in their pursuit to ‘uphold Protestant British values in Ireland.’⁵² Through this short section we will briefly overview the origins of the Orange Order, and why it was able to become popular in Glasgow, and start to see how this organization could creep into Rangers Football Club.

Religious differences in Ireland have long been a cause of issues, between Protestants and Catholics, those who identify with the crown against those who believed in the Irish free state, the religious differences were in the core of it all. From the Glorious Revolution and King William in the 1680’s and 90’s, all the way through to the Troubles in a more contemporary setting, these issues have plagued the island for centuries. When the Orange Order was founded in 1795, a hundred years after the battle of the Boyne, they were created to try and appeal and defend Orange Protestant ideals and further the overall growth of Protestantism in the British Isles, specifically in Ireland.⁵³ Through its devout belief in Protestantism, it has become extremely loyal to the British Crown due to the Crown support for Protestantism.⁵⁴ The group has grown over time, whether that

⁵⁰ Walker, Graham. “The Orange Order in Scotland Between the Wars.” *International Review of Social History* 37, no. 2 (August 1992): 177–206, 177.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 178.

⁵² Booker Jr, Ronnie Michael. “Orange Alba: The Civil Religion of Loyalism in the Southwestern Lowlands of Scotland since 1798.” University of Tennessee Knoxville, 2010, 31-32.

⁵³ Kaufmann, Eric P. *The Orange Order: A Contemporary Northern Irish History*. Illustrated edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, 1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 1.

be through religious affiliation, or most commonly, passed down by family from generation to generation which has helped to prolong the existence and power of the Order.⁵⁵

Whilst the Order is generally seen as a religious organization, it is truly multi-faceted, being “religious, cultural, convivial, and even political.”⁵⁶ Orange lodges have long been a place for safe meeting between Ulster Protestants and been a source of communal social events, but these have not been without their issues. July 12th marches have often been seen as controversial events, often sparking sectarian tensions, particularly in Belfast and Glasgow, as these ‘triumphant Protestant parades’ can be seen as degrading towards Catholics, and thus have caused riots and violence. This anti-Catholic streak has long been a part of the Orange reputation. It is not without warrant, as keeping Catholics away from certain parts of the work place and reaching any place of power is common practice for the Order, especially in the interwar period.⁵⁷ Whilst the Order doesn’t consider itself anti-Catholic, it can be seen on their own website, that in the makings of an Orangeman, “he should strenuously oppose the fatal errors and doctrines of the Church of Rome, and scrupulously avoid countenancing (by his presence or otherwise) any act or ceremony of Popish Worship.”⁵⁸ So, whilst the organization might not consider themselves to be anti-Catholic, it could be proven otherwise through the actions of Orangeman (will be discussed in detail later) traditionally which claim every ‘good’ Orangeman should ‘strenuously oppose’ Catholicism.

Whilst the Orange Order originally started in Ulster it has since seen its growth far beyond the six counties and now there are Orange lodges in Northern Ireland, Scotland, the Netherlands, United States, Republic of Ireland, and Canada. How can this Protestant order go from Northern

⁵⁵ Ibid, 6.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 2.

⁵⁷ Walker, Graham. “The Orange Order in Scotland Between the Wars.” *International Review of Social History* 37, no. 2 (August 1992): 177–206, 181-182.

⁵⁸ Royal York L.O.L. 145. “Qualifications of an Orangeman,” January 20, 2007. <https://www.royalyork.org.uk/2007/01/qualifications-of-orangeman.html>.

Ireland, to reaching all across the globe? Whilst fascinating, this thesis will mostly cover the reasons the Order came to Glasgow and Scotland, but that can be seen as a microcosm for the growth of the entire organization.

The Orange Order's growth in Scotland can be specifically isolated to Glasgow and its surrounding areas, and this massive growth was seen in the 19th and 20th centuries.⁵⁹ This quick growth from the order in Glasgow was not necessarily due to the fact Scotland was a Protestant majority country, but mostly because of the high volume of Irish immigrants that came to the area, whether that be protestant Irish from Ulster, or, the even higher number of Irish Catholic immigrants.⁶⁰ This isolation of the Orange Order is due to the high number of Catholics in Glasgow, which is not as prevalent in other areas of Scotland. Outside of the Glasgow area there was significantly less membership per capita, though these other areas of Scotland were still highly Protestant.⁶¹ Orange membership in Scotland doubled from 1900-1913, and we can see this is due to the high number of Irish immigrants in Glasgow both Protestant and Catholic.⁶² This was due to ongoing political issues in Ireland which forced people away from the island.⁶³ This displays two things, one, that the Orange Order is an Ulster fraternity, and the presence of Protestants from Ulster are required to spread the organization. Secondly, that the Order's growth in Scotland was a direct reflection of the growth of Catholic immigrant populations in Glasgow and looked to 'keep' Glasgow Protestant. The Order's growth was not based on the presence of a Protestant majority, but rather the opposite, and seems to hinge on the fact there was a high number of

⁵⁹Walker, Graham. "The Orange Order in Scotland Between the Wars." *International Review of Social History* 37, no. 2 (August 1992): 177–206, 177-178.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 178.

⁶¹Kaufmann, Eric P. "The Orange Order in Scotland since 1860: A Social Analysis." edited by M. J. Mitchell. Edinburgh, UK: Birlinn, 2009. <http://www.birlinn.co.uk/book/details/New-Perspectives-on-the-Irish-in-Scotland-9781904607830/>, 6-7.

⁶² Ibid, 11.

⁶³ Ibid, 11 & 13.

Catholics in this area, which spurred local Protestantism to feel as if they needed to ‘protect’ their way of life.

This gives us a basic overview of the Orange Order, their basic history and formation in Ulster, and the very start of their journey over to Glasgow, and how they became so popular seemingly overnight. The presence of Irish immigrants in the city, growing sectarian tensions, all sitting alongside the blossoming football derby between Rangers and Celtic. Now you add along this highly Protestant fraternity known for being staunchly anti-Catholic which creates a petri dish ready for a reaction. This petri dish is Glasgow, which has one of the most unique social landscapes on earth, especially during this time period, which gives us a special environment to see this unique intersection between sports and politics/religion.

So, we start to see how Glasgow, a Scottish city in a country that has long since had identity issues that come with being aligned with the English in the United Kingdom, now aligning itself with the politics and social identity crisis from the Irish island. This storm of different identities and an involvement with Ulster gives a background for a deep sectarian divide. The volatile religious environment in Glasgow is important in understanding the Orange Order, and how a football rivalry became a microcosm of Ulster religious politics on Scottish soil. The differences seen between the majority Protestant working class, who saw themselves as ‘high’ culture, pitted against the Catholic Irish immigrant ‘low’ culture, and the Protestants tried to protect their religion, identity, and social status against a ‘foreign’ group. This then bled into a footballing rivalry, a successful Catholic club needed a religious counterpart, then look no further to the Rangers, who reside in a Protestant neighborhood and are equally as successful on the field, to take that role as the beacon of Protestant sporting hope. Glasgow as a city is extremely unique, and there are few

cities on earth where this sort of social makeup could take place, and at a very volatile time in British history it created a vacuum to stoke the sectarian fire.

Section 3: Political & Social Analysis of the Orange Order's influence on Rangers

Throughout the previous section, we outlined the organizations at play within this story, namely the Orange Order and Rangers FC, and set the scene for how these two organizations became one in the same during the interwar period in Glasgow. Glasgow offered an extremely dynamic environment, a Scottish city which struggled with their own identity, whether loyal to Scotland first, or to the crown, and on top of that you add the religious sectarian issues that sparked between Protestants and Catholics which was born out of the mass Irish immigration to various parts of the City. Within a city that struggled for identity, finding likeminded people or 'protecting' one's own ideas were seemingly very important, which is how we see the start of the Orange Order's growth or the rise in support for Rangers and Celtic.

We now will dive in to *why* and *how* the Orange Order involved themselves in a football club and how this cross section between sports and politics helped to spark sectarian issues, and elongated the overall issue itself. This section is broken up into three smaller segments outlining a specific area of the Order's influence. Firstly, we will dive into the political aspects of the Order and how the Order used Rangers as a political vehicle, as well as looking at other political ventures from the Orange Order in Glasgow. After is the social aspect, looking from a view outside the club structure, and more from the fans and public. Here we will see the appeal of both groups to the middle-class Protestant Glaswegian in the inter war era and the crossover between Orangemen and Rangers fans. Lastly, we will take a small look inside the dressing room, looking at the team's

attitude at this time, the way the players or staff might have adopted this Orange influence. For this final section it will mostly look at the club culture created by then Rangers' manager, Bill Struth, and how Struth helped foster in a specific 'Rangers' attitude in this period.

Through this section we will begin to see that the Orange Order had a mixture in its arenas of influence. In some areas, specifically Rangers board room, it is a more direct influence. With some boardman being Orangemen or others being allies of the Order is a direct method of influencing the day-to-day operations and business decisions of this football club. The difference between an Orange ally and an Orangemen themselves, is simply membership, as many in this era were not formal members but still participated in marches and agreed with the ideology. Socially, and even through the team, we see a bit more of an indirect influence. Whether this is through the attitude of fans or staff, or the intermixing of Orangemen and Rangers fans; at many points in the interwar period those two things were one in the same. The type of extreme Protestantism we see from Rangers and the Order was common in Glasgow in the interwar era, this was due to multiple factors, but namely the sectarian tensions between Protestant and Catholics in Glasgow. Whilst it is difficult to gauge the overall degree of influence from the Orange Order placed on Rangers, one can still begin to see the influence was felt from multiple fronts.

3.1: Political Scene in Interwar Glasgow

The major political happenings in Glasgow during the interwar period give us another huge indication as to why the Orange Order increased their profile and why they would involve themselves in Rangers FC. This section will revolve around two specific events: The 1918 Education Act, and the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922. Both these events created huge resentment in the British Protestant communities, especially Glasgow, and they both greatly concerned the Orange Order. Looking at these events, it is another display of the reactionary nature

of the anti-Catholic sentiments in interwar Glasgow. In any account where it seemed as if Catholics could gain social mobility, it was met with large scale outcry from the Protestant community. Whether it was on the football pitch, in the classroom, or throughout the streets of Glasgow, this sectarian battle was not just the undertone, but rather the force behind many decisions. The outcry towards the Irish Free State from the Orange Order mirror similar decisions Rangers made, for example, the 'No Catholics' signing policy.

Straight after the end of the First World War, the Orange Order adopted a much larger political weight (as described earlier) and a huge part of this was their staunch opposition to the 1918 Education Act in Glasgow.⁶⁴ The Scottish state had created a public school system in 1872, and this was effectively Presbyterian, until the big change in 1918.⁶⁵ In these interim years before 1918, the Catholics in Glasgow had to create their own private schools which were for the most part vastly underfunded and lacked many of the necessary elements of a functioning school.⁶⁶ In the 1918 under section 18 of the Education Act, Catholics schools were now given state funding to help aid their growth- under the pretense it would help better educate Catholic kids and help them assimilate better into Scottish society.⁶⁷ This was led with wide spread anger in the Protestant community, and many were upset it had essentially “rubbed salt in the wound of their loss of educational influence in Scotland.”⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Graham Walker, “The Orange Order in Scotland Between the Wars,” *International Review of Social History* 37, no. 2 (August 1992): 177–206, 182.

⁶⁵ Booker Jr, Ronnie Michael. “Orange Alba: The Civil Religion of Loyalism in the Southwestern Lowlands of Scotland since 1798.” University of Tennessee Knoxville, 2010, 76.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 76.

⁶⁷ Graham Walker, “The Orange Order in Scotland Between the Wars,” *International Review of Social History* 37, no. 2 (August 1992): 177–206, 182.

⁶⁸ Booker Jr, Ronnie Michael. “Orange Alba: The Civil Religion of Loyalism in the Southwestern Lowlands of Scotland since 1798.” University of Tennessee Knoxville, 2010, 77.

Due to this Act, the Orange Order, a group who relied on this anti-Catholic sentiment, gained an unprecedented boom in membership and relevancy based on their extremely anti stance on this act which funded Catholic schools.⁶⁹ It was seen on a social study of Order Membership by Eric Kaufmann that the largest one year spike in Order membership was in 1919, which directly relates to the magnitude of this event in Glasgow.⁷⁰ This desire to keep Catholics down and to separate the two groups is mirrored perfectly in this event, as it is the same sentiment shown by Rangers in their ‘No Catholics’ signing policy. The Orange Order is seen here amongst multiple anti-Catholic decisions, whether it be by Orangemen in the Rangers boardroom, or a public distain from the Order for a more integrated school system.

The other big political event seen in Glasgow during the interwar period, was one that was long since important, the creation of the Irish Free State. Whilst this was an Irish issue, with so many Irish immigrants in Glasgow, the politics of Ireland and Ulster held deep meaning in the city. As the Irish Free State was founded in 1922, this also resulted in the creation of Northern Ireland, which includes the six counties of Ulster and are a Protestant majority, with the remainder of the Island being Catholic, and this split left a big mark in Glasgow. During the interwar period the Irish Home Rule Crisis was of the utmost importance to the Orange Order.⁷¹ The partition of Ireland was almost a microcosm of what was happening in Glasgow and with the Orange Order; religious differences between Catholic and Irish and the fight for representation was of vital

⁶⁹Graham Walker, “The Orange Order in Scotland Between the Wars,” *International Review of Social History* 37, no. 2 (August 1992): 177–206, 182–183.

⁷⁰ Kaufmann, Eric. “The Dynamics of Orangeism in Scotland: Social Sources of Political Influence in a Mass-Member Organization, 1860-2001.” *Social Science History* 30, no. 2 (June 1, 2006): 263–92. <https://doi.org/10.1215/01455532-30-2-263>, 270-271.

⁷¹ Marshall, William S. “The Historical Development of the Orange Order in Scotland.” Glasgow, March 1989, no page numbers, Chapter 16.

importance. And on a smaller scale even yet, the Old Firm was a microcosm of Glasgow, which was then automatically absorbed into the greater Irish political problem.

The Orange Order itself campaigned very hard against the Irish Home Rule, as the Order's lodge masters felt a completely free Irish Catholic controlled state would be highly threatening to Britain in general, and the Protestant majority in Ulster.⁷² Throughout the Irish Home Rule Crisis, the Orange Order held rallies against the formation of a free Irish state, and they tried to steer Orangemen's attention towards this issue.⁷³ In the end, with the creation of the Irish Free State in 1921, and official creation in 1922, the Order was left outraged.⁷⁴ Although left outraged, the Order had to then accept it, and eventually felt the creation of Northern Ireland was the only way to salvage as much of the Union as possible.⁷⁵ Again, this staunch opposition of Catholicism and anti-Irish sentiment was consistent through all the Order's decision at this time, and even in their ventures outside of Rangers we get a glimpse as to the consistency of their ideas. This is also a display of the way the Order was able to achieve political influence in a myriad of sector, whether it be through sports, politics, or education. This influence could be as direct as creating their own political party, or as indirect as having Orange sympathizers run Rangers FC and aid in politicizing their agenda as a club.

3.2 Orange Order's Other Political Ventures

⁷² Ibid, chapter 16.

⁷³ Bruce, Steve. "Scotland Orange and Protestant." In *Scottish Gods: Religion in Modern Scotland 1900-2012*, 80–99. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014, 83.

⁷⁴ The Irish Independent, Wednesday December 7, 1921, pages 4-5.

⁷⁵ Marshall, William S. "The Historical Development of the Orange Order in Scotland." Glasgow, March 1989, no page numbers, Chapter 16.

During the interwar period the Orange Order looked to strengthen their political stronghold in Glasgow, in order to protect the Church of Scotland and Protestantism from the growing Catholic in their city. Whilst this included aiding in politicizing Rangers with Orangemen in the board room, the Order used other methods as well to gain political control- to varying degrees of success. Even for a short period of time they created their own party, the Orange & Protestant Party.⁷⁶ After this party fizzled out, the Order then opted to be more of a lobbying and secondary support group to the Unionists. So, whilst the Order involved themselves in Rangers, it was apparent they tried to use their position to make political change in multiple areas of Scottish society.

The Orange Order has long since had a motto of “Protestantism over Politics,” which in theory separates the organization from the political sphere, but of course, it is never that simple. Especially in Glasgow in a period of high Catholic immigration, growing political force from Irish Catholics, and a rise in Celtic FC’s success, the Order felt the political barrier needed to be crossed. In 1922, the Order started their own political party, after feeling the Conservatives could not lobby enough support to their Protestant cause.⁷⁷ They took matters into their own hands, especially after the 1918 Education act in Glasgow, which integrated the private Catholic Schools into the Glasgow school system, which deeply angered the Order.⁷⁸

During the OPP’s short lived existence, it never won any major elections themselves with their only notable victory being in the 1923 Motherwell elections, with candidate Hugh Ferguson

⁷⁶ Bruce, Steve, Tony Glendinning, and Michael Rosie. *Sectarianism in Scotland*. 1st edition. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004, 40.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 39-40.

⁷⁸ Marshall, William S. “The Historical Development of the Orange Order in Scotland.” Glasgow, March 1989), chap 13, no page numbers.

winning the seat in parliament.⁷⁹ Ferguson won by a small margin, as there was no official Unionist candidate in his race, so whilst he was a member of the OPP, he ran as the de facto Unionist candidate, which helped to bolster his vote.⁸⁰ Ferguson only held his seat for a single year, and eventually faded away from the Scottish political scene as he held a “too radical” Protestant viewpoint.⁸¹ Alongside Ferguson, there had knowingly been five other Orange MP’s in the interwar years, but all belonged to the Unionist party politically.⁸² It is important to note that even though the Orange order looked for political gain, their extremely Protestant ideology was too much for the average Scottish voter, and they only found moderate direct success.⁸³

After the failed OPP, the Orange Order went back to their indirect political influence, acting mostly as a lobby group for the Unionists.⁸⁴ Through the rest of the 1920’ and 30’s, the Order tried to shy away from politics as best they could, only urging members to vote Tory in big elections.⁸⁵ This shift to lobbying and being ‘unpolitical’ was fascinating, as it seemed almost natural for Orangemen to be Unionist & Tory that in doing so they were acting ‘unpolitical.’⁸⁶ So through this short section, we outline the other ways the Orange Order sought after political control, not just through Rangers, but in the more traditional sense as well. While they had very small successes in the traditional political sphere, this displays the Orange Order needed a more

⁷⁹ Bruce, Steve, Tony Glendinning, and Michael Rosie. *Sectarianism in Scotland*. 1st edition. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004, 40-41.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 41.

⁸¹ Ibid, 42.

⁸² Rosie, M. *The Sectarian Myth in Scotland: Of Bitter Memory and Bigotry*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 98.

⁸³ Ibid, 99.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 99.

⁸⁵ Booker Jr, Ronnie Michael. “Orange Alba: The Civil Religion of Loyalism in the Southwestern Lowlands of Scotland since 1798.” University of Tennessee Knoxville, 2010, 78.

⁸⁶ Marshall, William S. “The Historical Development of the Orange Order in Scotland.” Glasgow, March 1989),no page numbers, chap 17.

atypical route to spreading their message which is why, in my opinion, Rangers was a perfect vehicle for them.

3.3 The “Secret” Policy: Rangers Transformation to a Political Vehicle & Orange Political Ventures

By the 1920’s, Rangers had fully developed into an openly Protestant football club and allied themselves with the Orange Order, conservative politicians, and the Church of Scotland, but how could it be that from its inception in 1872 to then 50 years later, the club has turned into a political sporting arm? While a difficult answer to give in short, it could be summarized best by the rise in anti-Catholicism due to the increase in Catholic Irish immigration to Glasgow. Rangers, and to an extent Glasgow’s, Protestant image was fostered in response to the rise in Catholic presence in the city, if Celtic were started to support the immigrant community, then Rangers rise to Protestantism was reactionary and part of an overall movement to keep Catholics down.⁸⁷ As a mechanism to try and keep Catholics down, a revamp of the Rangers boardroom would forever change the club and its public image.

We will see that through Irish immigration, rise in anti-Catholicism also meant the rise in pro-Protestantism, and using any means to protect their ideology and Protestant political stronghold in Glasgow, and Rangers went to the extreme to prove this. By 1920 they had fully developed into the club that would not sign a Catholic player, or even hire a Catholic member for staff.⁸⁸ Alongside the immigration from Ireland to Glasgow, a shift in Rangers boardroom can start

⁸⁷ O’Donnell, Stephen. *Tangled Up in Blue: The Rise and Fall of Rangers FC*. None edition. Pitch Publishing, 2019, 29.

⁸⁸ Booker Jr, Ronnie Michael. “Orange Alba: The Civil Religion of Loyalism in the Southwestern Lowlands of Scotland since 1798.” University of Tennessee Knoxville, 2010, 120.

to underline Orange influence, as many board members and the chairman by 1920 were either Orangemen, or strong allies to the Orange Order.⁸⁹ Through the rise in Orange presence in the boardroom and the arrival of Harland & Wolff shipping company, Rangers influence from Protestant organizations is seen and thus the ‘No Catholics’ policy comes to life. This unofficial policy was seen as the pinnacle of their protestant identity and was upheld until Mo Johnston’s signing in 1989.⁹⁰

As earlier stated, Rangers were not originally a Protestant club, this was an identity that was developed over time. The only thing Protestant about Rangers in the beginning was the fact all their players were, but this was not due to a hidden agenda, but more because it was the make-up of many clubs in the early stages of Scottish football.⁹¹ It wasn’t until Celtic were founded in 1888 and shortly after the club found on field success and huge support from the Catholic community that Rangers fans and board felt like they needed to respond.⁹² Alongside this rise in Celtic FC, couple with more Irish immigration, and an increasingly volatile political situation over the rule of Ireland, and we see the root for the rise in anti-Catholicism.⁹³ So as stated before, this shows Rangers rise in their Protestant identity was as part of a response to the rise in anti-Catholicism in Glasgow and the rise of Celtic FC inside the football pitch; Rangers needed to strengthen their club identity to ensure they could compete on pitch and be relevant outside it.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Ibid, 120-121.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 139.

⁹¹ Skeide, Jon Magnus Løfgren. “Sashes and Rosaries Scottish Sectarianism and the Old Firm.” University of Bergen, 2010, 58.

⁹² Ibid, 59.

⁹³ Davies, Andrew. “Football and Sectarianism in Glasgow During the 1920s and 1930s.” *Irish Historical Studies* 35, no. 138 (November 2006): 200–219, 202-203.

⁹⁴ O’Donnell, Stephen. *Tangled Up in Blue: The Rise and Fall of Rangers FC*. None edition. Pitch Publishing, 2019, 29.

On pitch success could merit a legitimization of their identity off it, but the paramount importance was to create a defined club culture.

Celtic, on the other hand, had a much more political birth than Rangers, being started by Brother Walfrid as means to help the Catholic Irish community in Glasgow.⁹⁵ This club was born with a Catholic identity, but this was a method to “participate in and contribute to Scottish society.”⁹⁶ Not born as a response, but conversely as a solution to help an underprivileged community find representation and participation in Scotland, a solution which Rangers felt the need to respond to. Though we mainly focus on Rangers and their involvement, it needs to be made clear Celtic as a club and their fans were also involved in violence and sectarian behavior during this period.⁹⁷ Though a large difference being Celtic was not a ‘Catholics only’ club, and they signed mainly local players, regardless of their religious affiliation, both Catholic and Protestant.⁹⁸

Once the shipping company Harland & Wolff entered the fray, they offered £90,000 to help Rangers, but of course, they mentioned the stipulation that supposedly they would only lend the money if Rangers followed suit with their anti-Catholic hiring practices.⁹⁹ With Rangers obliging, their “No Catholics” signing policy was born, but the specific date of when this started in earnest is up for debate, as this was never a publicly stated rule, but more universally understood by all parties involved. Rangers felt this was what the club needed to do in order to preserve their

⁹⁵ Skeide, Jon Magnus Løfgren. “Sashes and Rosaries Scottish Sectarianism and the Old Firm.” University of Bergen, 2010, 51.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 58.

⁹⁷ Davies, Andrew. “Football and Sectarianism in Glasgow During the 1920s and 1930s.” *Irish Historical Studies* 35, no. 138 (November 2006): 200–219, 209.

⁹⁸ O’Donnell, Stephen. *Tangled Up in Blue: The Rise and Fall of Rangers FC*. None edition. Pitch Publishing, 2019, 29.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 46.

status as the club who stood up for what they described as “the native Scottish/British interests.”¹⁰⁰ As Stephan O’Donnell himself describes, “Rangers role in this anti-Catholic process, with an openly anti-Catholic employment practice, cannot be understated... they (Rangers) reveled in their self-appointed status as the foremost Protestant sporting institution.”¹⁰¹ So with this influence of outside organizations like Harland & Wolff, coupled with the intense rise in anti-Catholic behavior in Glasgow, we see the basis of the logic behind the most controversial signing policy in world football.

Whilst this signing policy can be outlined as extremely anti-Catholic, it is missing one element: the Orange Order. So, if the Orange Order are missing from the origins of this agreement, then what does it have to do with them? The answer lies in the general principles of what each organization started to stand for. For one to say the Orange Order was strictly religious and Rangers were strictly sporting would be telling themselves a callous lie. These two organizations are inherently political, and by Rangers becoming an openly anti-Catholic club through this employment policy gave them a direct alignment to the Orange Order. By definition, the Orange Order is a Protestant fraternity, so their membership is only limited to Protestants.¹⁰² This then politicizes them by only wanting to align themselves with a certain belief system or group of people, and for Rangers to then abide by a similar code of only wanting Protestant staff and players, the connection is drawn.

Even though the Orange Order was not involved in the direct decision to not sign Catholic players, this helped to bridge the already small gap between these two organizations. As stated earlier, this signing policy politicized Rangers to new extremes, going from a football club started

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 50.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 54.

¹⁰² Kaufmann, Eric P. *The Orange Order: A Contemporary Northern Irish History*. Illustrated edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, 1-2.

by four teenagers to a club with a politicized signing policy. This offered a very early nexus between sport and politics. As explained by Jonathan Grix, “sports is no longer a frivolous past time, if it ever was, it is a key resource by governments and groups for a variety of reasons, most of them little to do with the actual sport.”¹⁰³ As Grix tells us in his research of Sports in a political sense, many times interest groups want a stake in sports, and none of it may deal with the sport itself; this is true with the direction of Rangers signing policy in the 1920’s. The exclusion of Catholics at Rangers had nothing to do with the sport, in fact it offered them a distinct sporting disadvantage, but they chose this path as a way to ensure it politically and systematically was more difficult for Catholic players or staff in Glasgow.¹⁰⁴ This sort of blatant anti-Catholicism was even admired by some in the Scottish Football Association, as Sir George Graham, the then chairman of the SFA, was a proponent of the signing policy and tried to do the same the best he could within the SFA.¹⁰⁵ To reiterate, whilst this specific decision did not directly involve the Order, it can be seen as a policy which helped link the two together, as it bonded them together by their political agenda to uphold Protestantism as key part Glasgow’s (and Scotland’s) main identity.

3.4 The Orange Table: The board room behind Rangers’ Decisions

Continuing with this dive into the politicization of Rangers, it is important to quickly highlight the men who were behind this change in attitude and policy in the club. One in particular is important to mention, Sir John Ure Primrose, the chairman of Rangers from 1912-1923 and

¹⁰³ Grix, Jonathan. *Sport Politics: An Introduction*. 1st ed. 2015 edition. London ; New York, NY: Springer, 2015, 17.

¹⁰⁴ McKillop, Alasdair, and Alan Bissett, eds. *Born Under a Union Flag: Rangers, the Union & Scottish Independence*. Edinburgh: Luath Press Ltd, 2016, 24.

¹⁰⁵ O’Donnell, Stephen. *Tangled Up in Blue: The Rise and Fall of Rangers FC*. None edition. Pitch Publishing, 2019, 63.

helped to foster in this idea of anti-Catholicism and Orangeism in Rangers. The men behind the scenes at Rangers in the interwar era are vital for examining the connection between the club and the Orange Order, as these politically charged (and arguably destructive) decisions had a major impact on the club, the Order, and Glasgow in general. This section will outline Primrose and his time as chairman, looking back at an older president of Rangers who had an ‘Orange’ outlook, and the general amount of board members who aligned with the Order.

It was under Chairman Sir John Ure Primrose that Rangers were noted to have begun their no Catholics signing policy, so his stance towards Catholic immigration and the Orange Order could already be reasonably assumed.¹⁰⁶ Primrose has been someone who is seen as a man with close ties and relationships to the Freemasons and the Orange Order, and he heavily sympathized and aligned with both groups.¹⁰⁷ In another account of Primrose, he was noted as being “aligned with the most virulent anti-Catholic and anti-Irish sentiments, and openly aligned with the Orange Order.”¹⁰⁸ Here the standard is set for Primrose and his belief in the direction of Rangers FC. Primrose was fervent in his dislike for Catholics, specifically Irish Catholics he viewed Irish Protestants as fellow Brits. He displayed this in the way he set the club up as a “team to stand up for the native Scottish interests and meet the challenge posed by the foreign Irish, and the foreign Irish club.”¹⁰⁹ Alongside this, many middle class Rangers fans and Ulster immigrants shared similar sentiments that Primrose did, and they felt their football club was a ‘proper and prestigious’ organization to help them against the ‘Irish menace.’

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 46.

¹⁰⁷ Booker Jr, Ronnie Michael. “Orange Alba: The Civil Religion of Loyalism in the Southwestern Lowlands of Scotland since 1798.” University of Tennessee Knoxville, 2010, 120.

¹⁰⁸ Skeide, Jon Magnus Løfgren. “Sashes and Rosaries Scottish Sectarianism and the Old Firm.” University of Bergen, 2010, 61.

¹⁰⁹ O’Donnell, Stephen. *Tangled Up in Blue: The Rise and Fall of Rangers FC*. None edition. Pitch Publishing, 2019, 50.

Whilst Primrose was a vital figure, he was not the only Orange figure in the boardroom. In the 1920s and 30s, Rangers' president was a man named James Cargill, a prominent Unionist politician, who himself also openly agreed and aligned with the Order, though he was not a member.¹¹⁰ Another was board chairman James Bowie, who was known to publicly praise the Orange Order's traditions, and often went as a club representative to Orange events.¹¹¹ Bowie was a former Rangers player and Scotland international, and his roots in the club were deep, figures like him show the deep lineage of Rangers protestant identity from players, to fans, to board members. With the Rangers board filled with Unionist politicians, big Protestant businessmen, and Orangemen, the club's public identity and culture seemed quite obvious. These two board members are quick examples, but there were countless others during the interwar period who joined the club and shared ideals to people like Primrose.

In 1924 Primrose passed away, but his legacy and vision for the direction of the club remained for many years after his passing. In 1923, the year which the club celebrated its 50th anniversary, a celebration book was published by Rangers supporter John Allan, which he gave the contemporary fans thoughts on the chairman. Allan quotes, "Primrose is a man of many interests, and possessing that wide and generous outlook which is foe of bigotry and crusted hatred, Sir John brought into football an influence that was cleansing and elevating."¹¹² This has the appearance of quite a biased view, as with hindsight we are aware of the damaging effect of Primrose's views on Catholics, to label him as 'anti-bigotry, cleansing, and elevating,' might not tell the whole story. But, seeing the Protestant and Orange viewpoints of the time, ridding the club

¹¹⁰ Booker Jr, Ronnie Michael. "Orange Alba: The Civil Religion of Loyalism in the Southwestern Lowlands of Scotland since 1798." University of Tennessee Knoxville, 2010, 126.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 126.

¹¹² Allan, John. *The Story of the Rangers: Fifty Years of Football, 1873-1923*. Desert Island Books, 1923, 253.

of Catholics was cleansing to them. Allan even continues on to say Rangers were “fortunate on having a man of the culture and high ideals of Sir John to assist in carrying the traditions.”¹¹³

Again, we could use these views from Allan as a perfect example of the mindset of Rangers FC in this interwar period, anti-Catholic, and beholden of these viewpoints of Protestantism as the high point of culture in Glasgow at the time. This displays another crossover in viewpoints from the Orange Order to Rangers, as the Order had also viewed themselves as an organization who believed they were protecting Scotland and upheld this idea of high culture.¹¹⁴ And alongside this shared ideals, the Orange influence was direct and immediate, as Primrose himself aligned with the order, and many of his fellow board members in this period either aligned with the Order, or were Orangemen themselves.¹¹⁵ This is the direct impact of Orange ideals, which were anti-Catholic and Irish, on to a football clubs and its operations, creating this political undertone that still exists to this day.

Section 4: Social Influence Analysis

¹¹³ Ibid, 254.

¹¹⁴ Marshall, William S. “The Historical Development of the Orange Order in Scotland.” Glasgow, March 1989, chap 17, no page numbers.

¹¹⁵ Skeide, Jon Magnus Løfgren. “Sashes and Rosaries Scottish Sectarianism and the Old Firm.” University of Bergen, 2010, 62.

4.1 Rangers Public Perception in Interwar Glasgow, and Orange Order's effect

Political influence displayed from the Orange Order is vital, whether that was in their placement of Orangemen on the board at Rangers or dipping into local Glasgow politics, the influence is easy to see. In order to see the full picture, we cannot simply look at political influence and think it is the sole mode of influence, as though politics help to govern our day to day lives, society is more multifaceted than this. We must look one level further and study the social influence the Order placed on Rangers and the fans and supporters of the club. A football club's political angle is nothing if the supporters don't follow this and reflect the values placed forward by their club. In this instance with Rangers, it is apparent that during a turbulent political and religious period of the 1920's and 30's, that their fans mirrored the beliefs of the board room.

Most football clubs in Britain at this time gathered fans on proximity, supporters seemed to support whoever their local club was. Rangers were different, as many of their fans followed due to their religious identity, political stance, or cultural values that encapsulated the club's whole aura.¹¹⁶ Many Rangers fans at this time were Orangemen, Orange sympathizers, or supporters involved in Protestant street gangs that often mirrored Orange sentiments and attended Rangers matches.¹¹⁷ This created a triangular connection between the Orange Order, Rangers, and the general public, and many of these identities overlapped. For example, a man could be a member of the Protestant church, a hardcore fan of Rangers, and whilst he wouldn't be directly aligned to the Orange Order, he could sing anti-Catholic songs in the terraces of Ibrox Stadium that are also sang on July 12th Orange marches. This displays the overlapping influence from one group to the

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 151.

¹¹⁷ Bruce, Steve, Tony Glendinning, and Michael Rosie. *Sectarianism in Scotland*. 1st edition. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004, 128.

other at that time. It needs to be noted, that of course not every Rangers fan was (or is) an Orangeman who sings hateful songs and marches to celebrate the Battle of the Boyne every July 12th, but it is to be understood that this identity was very prominent in the interwar years. This section will specifically highlight Rangers fans behavior in the interwar era, and how their fandom tiptoed along the tightrope with hooliganism, often spilling over into violence. It is interesting to note, that a club who wanted to perceive themselves as the “high culture” of a city had fans from similar working-class neighborhoods to their rivals, often resorted to street gang violence.

In the interwar period, Rangers was a protestant club. They did not sign any Catholic players or staff, and the vast majority of their fans were Protestant. Protestantism at the time was an important current within their fan culture, and for many, it was seen as central rather than peripheral.¹¹⁸ The tensions between Protestants and Catholics in Glasgow in daily life also spilled into the fandom of the football clubs. It was at this time that “games between Celtic and Rangers became overlain with quasi-religious overtones and supercharged with politics of Ulster.”¹¹⁹ The fans mirrored the extreme Protestantism in the board room, and their games with Celtic reflected the sectarian tensions. The matches stepped out of being a sporting event and due to the fan perspectives, violence, and club identities, the Old Firm became a political event played out in a sporting arena.

Through the Rangers boardrooms commitment to maintaining a Protestant club this reflected into its devotees celebrating its loyalist and Protestant traditions.¹²⁰ Thousands of faithful Rangers fans flooded Ibrox every Saturday, sharing their values of Loyalism, Orangeism, and anti-

¹¹⁸ McKillop, Alasdair. “Sectarianism and Scottish Football: A Rangers Perspective.” In *Bigotry, Football and Scotland*, by John Flint and John Kelly, 203–12. Edinburgh University Press, 2013, 205.

¹¹⁹ Skeide, Jon Magnus Løfgren. “Sashes and Rosaries Scottish Sectarianism and the Old Firm.” University of Bergen, 2010, 54.

¹²⁰ Booker Jr, Ronnie Michael. “Orange Alba: The Civil Religion of Loyalism in the Southwestern Lowlands of Scotland since 1798.” University of Tennessee Knoxville, 2010, 151.

Catholicism in the sanctity of their stadium. And whilst this was a common viewpoint at the time, it must be known that not every single Rangers fan is a Unionist who marches on July 12th, but in the interwar era, this was a commonplace at Ibrox and in general, Glasgow. On the contrary, Michael Rosie has stated that whilst Rangers do indeed represent a Protestant version of Scotland, if investigated closely, sports should be seen as an interesting but subsidiary arena of study and that negative fandom is left in the stadium.¹²¹ I cannot stress how far this sentiment is from the truth, as the sectarian hatreds sang in stadiums in the interwar era, often spilled on to the streets, and the Orange streaks can be seen throughout.

In the 1920's and 30's, street gangs were a common thing in Glasgow, and these gangs often had a religious affiliation. Meaning most members were of the same religion, whether that be Catholic or Protestant. Bridgeton in the east end of Glasgow was home to the most notable of these groups, the Bridgeton Billy Boys. Bridgeton was known for being strongly Orange and Protestant, and this specific gang helped reflect that. The Billy Boys name comes from King William of Orange, the man who also helped inspire the creation of the Orange Order.¹²² The Billy Boys were also fervent Rangers supporters, completing this connection between their extreme Protestantism, love for Rangers, and an allegiance to the Orange Order. The Billy Boys were often at the center of Rangers fan violence at this time, and they were not well received by the general public.¹²³

The Billy Boys were a direct descendant of the violent rhetoric placed by Orange Order and Rangers themselves. When a religious organization tells you to defend Protestantism valiantly,

¹²¹ Rosie, Michael. *The Sectarian Myth in Scotland: Of Bitter Memory and Bigotry*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 3-4.

¹²² Skeide, Jon Magnus Løfgren. "Sashes and Rosaries Scottish Sectarianism and the Old Firm." University of Bergen, 2010, 54.

¹²³ Davies, Andrew. "'They Sing That Song': Football and Sectarianism in Glasgow during the 1920s and 1930s." In *Bigotry, Football and Scotland: Perspectives and Debates*, 50-64. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014, 57.

and your favorite football club vows to not sign any Catholics, this then bleeds directly into the fans and their ideals. One specific instance of this violence, though there are many others, is the Glasgow Cup final between Celtic and Rangers in October 1927. A general stampede was created and stones and missiles were thrown, and it was noted the Billy Boys were at the very center of this fray.¹²⁴ Another example from September 1934 is Celtic supporter James Boyle was stabbed in the leg by Billy Boys, as he walked on his way to Celtic Park to watch a match that was not even an Old Firm.¹²⁵ Though it occurred on both sides, it was more common to see assaults by Rangers fans and Billy Boys against Celtic supporters.¹²⁶

It must be mentioned that Celtic also had Catholic affiliated gangs, for example the Sally Boys from Parkhead, near Celtic Park Stadium.¹²⁷ And whilst these gangs or “break clubs” were notable, Gangs in the South of Glasgow were a bit less religious in nature. The biggest at that time were the South Side Stickers and the Beehive Boys.¹²⁸ The Stickers and Beehive boys had members of Catholic, Protestant, or even Jewish faiths, and was more territorial than religiously charged than the East/West side gangs that affiliated closely with Rangers or the Orange Order.¹²⁹ So whilst Celtic had their own gangs, in the surrounding areas to Celtic Park the gangs were much more territorial, rather than the Billy Boys whose identity was more religious and affiliated solely with Rangers. Former Beehive Boys Larry Rankin even noted that he grew up a Protestant, but grew up in South Side, so he became a Beehive Boy.¹³⁰ During Old Firm match days he said he

¹²⁴ Davies, Andrew. “Football and Sectarianism in Glasgow During the 1920s and 1930s.” *Irish Historical Studies* 35, no. 138 (November 2006): 200–219, 210.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 211.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 211.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 208.

¹²⁸ Davies, Andrew. “‘They Sing That Song’: Football and Sectarianism in Glasgow during the 1920s and 1930s.” In *Bigotry, Football and Scotland: Perspectives and Debates*, 50–64. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014, 54.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 54.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 54.

would “join the Billy Boys for the day” to support Rangers (his club), knowing full well on the opposite side his Catholic members of the Beehive boys were joining the Celtic/Catholic gangs.¹³¹ Though a small detail, this displays the clannish nature to Rangers, the Order, and the overall Protestant identity in Glasgow at the time, and it is worth noting the slight difference in fandom between the two clubs supporters.

This football hooliganism with religious undertone was described as, “means by which fans could actively participate in defending the honor and symbolic meaning of their particular club’s name against the unbearable harassment of their rival fans.”¹³² It was the living embodiment of the values spread by Rangers and the Orange Order. The fans of a football club are similar to the members of a religious fraternity, they seem to adopt the ideals and thoughts of the organization in which they support. In the example we see here, the Orange Order had a direct influence on the Billy Boys, even getting their namesake from the same man. Then from this, the Billy Boys are supporters of Rangers who were influenced by the Orange Order which creates a bridge from the religious, to the political, to the sporting, and now the social aspects of society; all formed through this idea of protecting Protestantism and keeping Catholicism down.

4.2 Orange Order’s Public Image & Usage of Rangers in Interwar Glasgow

The ties between the Order and Rangers are evident, but the public image offered between the average Rangers fan and Orangeman was vastly different. As discussed in the above section, many Rangers fans were working class people, and some were even caught up in street violence

¹³¹ Ibid, 55.

¹³² Booker Jr, Ronnie Michael. “Orange Alba: The Civil Religion of Loyalism in the Southwestern Lowlands of Scotland since 1798.” University of Tennessee Knoxville, 2010, 151.

in order to ‘defend’ their religion and football club. The Orange Order is a very intelligently calculated organization, and they use their own self-image to indirectly push their ideals on to their members, supporters, and even detractors. The Order places itself in an upper echelon of high culture, bowler hats, suits, sashes, and decorated parades all as means to display themselves as such. In addition to their calculated image, they were able to even use Rangers as a way to support their image, involving the club in some of their events even.

The Orange Order is mostly known for their easily recognizable look; bowler hats, clean suits, and orange sashes draped across their chests.¹³³ This look gives the outward appearance of a clean-cut proper gentleman, which is exactly the look they want to give off. Giving the perception of intelligence and high society indirectly tells their members that their group is *the* epitome of Glaswegian Protestantism. With this image the Order looked to integrate itself within business and professional sectors, and whilst only successful to varying degrees, they stuck around due to their vocal anti-Catholic rhetoric.¹³⁴ It has also been noted that through their public look, the Orange Order is trying to convey a certain symbolism to their cause. They look to convey that “in a religious conflict ‘between good and evil,’ with Protestants having access to the truth and able to be saved, while Catholics were in the darkness: Protestants were free and Catholics were not.”¹³⁵ It is through the way they dressed and conveyed themselves, that the Orange Order put up a cultural border, and this technique was only done by Rangers and will be explored in detail later.

Alongside their signature look is the most important celebration for the order, the July 12th marches. This march and parade are to celebrate the Victory of William of Orange at the battle of

¹³³ Forker, Martin. “The Role of Symbolism, Ritual, and Metaphor in the Orange Order.” *Journal of Irish Studies* 28 (2013): 68–77, 68-69.

¹³⁴ Walker, Graham. “The Orange Order in Scotland Between the Wars.” *International Review of Social History* 37, no. 2 (August 1992): 177–206, 180.

¹³⁵ Forker, Martin. “The Role of Symbolism, Ritual, and Metaphor in the Orange Order.” *Journal of Irish Studies* 28 (2013): 68–77, 70.

the Boyne.¹³⁶ These marches during this era had thousands of participants and it was very often violence followed suit, due to the very nature of the celebrated incident being Protestant vs Catholic.¹³⁷ Though this could be considered ironic here, as a group who wanted to outwardly display their place in high culture through their own self-image, was also at the center of gang and street violence surrounding their event and holiday. These marches helped to function as an outlet for sectarian aggressions, and as a place where the Orange Order looked to ‘maintain the traditions of the church of Scotland.’¹³⁸ The marches were seen as a public meeting space, and within their ‘safe’ confines Orangemen could express themselves and their philosophies, though this wasn’t always the case.

These Orange traditions were not well received by all. Douglas Gageby, who grew up in the interwar era, wrote about this, “the Orange Order has definite traditions... but these ballads and parades are not lighthearted at all... the Orange Order does not strike a single favorable response in my Protestant breast.”¹³⁹ This account, by a Protestant, displays the Order’s anti-Catholic rhetoric and inflated public image was not attractive to all. In a much more pointed account of the interwar Order image, Columbanus Macnee likens the Orange Order and their philosophy to the KKK and Afrikaner Broederband; expanding on this saying, “although amusing, silly, and pitiful, it is also ugly and very dangerous at the same time.”¹⁴⁰ Macnee also closes with an interesting thought, explaining he feels the Order’s image preached a life of liberty and equality,

¹³⁶ Rosie, Michael. *The Sectarian Myth in Scotland: Of Bitter Memory and Bigotry*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 81.

¹³⁷ Walker, Graham. “The Orange Order in Scotland Between the Wars.” *International Review of Social History* 37, no. 2 (August 1992): 177–206, 204.

¹³⁸ Marshall, William S. “The Historical Development of the Orange Order in Scotland.” Glasgow, March 1989, chap 17, no pages numbers.

¹³⁹ Gageby, Douglas. “Stuck with the Orange Order.” *Fortnight*, no. 206 (August 1984): 9, 9.

¹⁴⁰ Macnee, Columbanus. “An Open Letter to the Head of the Orange Order.” *Fortnight* 224 (September 9, 1985): 2, 2.

but deny all such rights to Catholics, and in essence, they were a big reason for the legitimization of anti-Catholicism in Britain.¹⁴¹

Though the Order had its detractors, of which there was many, they still used their massive influence to gain multiple modes of capital. We discussed their political capital earlier, but another vital source was social capital. Using a football club such as Rangers, with an aligned religious identity as them, is a brilliant source of social capital. During Primrose's tenure as Rangers chairman, in collaboration with the Grand lodge, they used Rangers as a vehicle for fundraisers for the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland.¹⁴² During matches at Ibrox you could see small fundraising kiosks for the Order, and their advertisements were seen in match day programs given to every supporter entering the ground.¹⁴³ This bonded the two together through social capital, as both Orange Lodges and Ibrox were seen as meeting places which were safe for Orangeman and Protestants alike, to separate themselves from Catholics.

Alongside fundraising, Ibrox was often used for Orange Order events, such as the annual Divine Service.¹⁴⁴ This completes the social connection, with a gesture like this it is now suggested that Ibrox is paralleled as a Protestant religious meeting place for the Order. It is often said by football fans that their team's stadium is that of a religious temple, but in this case, Ibrox often quite literally was. Looking at the Order and their public perception suggest they were not everyone's cup of tea, which is true, and often their approach led to violence and a sense of entitlement. Even with July 12th marches coupled with their style and traditions that agitate their opposition, the Orange Order was able to endear many in Glasgow during the interwar era. But

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 2.

¹⁴² Booker Jr, Ronnie Michael. "Orange Alba: The Civil Religion of Loyalism in the Southwestern Lowlands of Scotland since 1798." University of Tennessee Knoxville, 2010, 122.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 122.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 122.

they were clever and used other avenues to create new inroads in different places in society. In this specific instance we can see the Order using Rangers as a form of social capital. This in turn rubbed off on Rangers, and the next section will overview the similarity between the club, players, and staff behavior to that of Orangemen.

4.3 Rangers FC: the Sporting Arm of the Order

Through Primrose's tenure as chairman until the start of WWII Rangers enjoyed a plethora of on field success and their stature began to grow even more, and with this growth comes more attention and sets of eyes to the club. So, if an outside eye looked into Ibrox at this time, what would they see? Their findings might be an Orange dominated board room, a fully Protestant squad and a long-standing manager, Bill Struth, who helped create a certain attitude in the dressing room that often mirrored Orangemen and the typical image of prosperous Protestant life, the 'high' culture. The specific actions from Struth's players could be very indirect, to much more directly involved. Anywhere from simply how they dressed on their way to training and matches, or to the much more obvious methods of attending Orange Order functions.

In the interwar era, the Old Firm, and both its clubs both seemed to transcend the pitch, and their matches became quasi-religious events, and the same could be said for the clubs themselves.¹⁴⁵ Rangers role in this process is evident, and the club seemed to completely revel in their role as the sporting arm of Protestantism in Glasgow.¹⁴⁶ This was seen even down to the manager and his players, as manager Bill Struth looked to carefully cultivate an attitude within the

¹⁴⁵ Skeide, Jon Magnus Løfgren. "Sashes and Rosaries Scottish Sectarianism and the Old Firm." University of Bergen, 2010, 54.

¹⁴⁶ O'Donnell, Stephen. *Tangled Up in Blue: The Rise and Fall of Rangers FC*. None edition. Pitch Publishing, 2019, 54.

players. Struth not only wanted to create a winning formula on the field but also a certain carefully crafted attitude off the field. Struth kept track of everything the players did, especially how they dressed and their public appearance. Rangers players under Struth were expected to wear a suit and tie to every training, and add a bowler hat on match days.¹⁴⁷ In an interview with ex-Rangers player Adam Little, who played for Rangers from 1936-1951, he had this to say about Struth's dress code; "Struth's obsession with how we dressed and behaved ourselves was a deliberate strategy to improve as players... and to never do with 2nd class on and off the pitch."¹⁴⁸ Little even noted that he found himself in Struth's office for knotting his cravat the wrong way, he also added, "you could be combing your hair in the mirror, and he'd ask, 'is 6 pence too much?' (for a haircut)- wee tough boys put up their collar, Rangers players wore their clothes properly."¹⁴⁹

This 'Rangers' look was strikingly similar to that of a marching Orangeman on July 12th. Full suit and bowler hat, collars down, with an extremely 'proper' public image. Whilst it is to be noted that was a common formal style at the time, the connection is still very obvious. A boardroom filled with Orange sympathizers and a strict Protestant manager with a fully Protestant playing squad- they wanted to cultivate a similar look to the Order, in order to align themselves with the 'high' culture associated with Protestantism. Struth used the physical image of his players to construct a superiority complex in the squad at a time when Rangers were becoming as important to upholding Protestantism as the church of Scotland was.¹⁵⁰ This is a much more subtle form of influence, but for a young Protestant boy in Glasgow, to see Orangeman marching down the streets

¹⁴⁷ "Bill Struth and the Rangers Rituals That Prove He Was Ahead of His Time | Glasgow Times." Accessed May 24, 2023. <https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/sport/20068667.bill-struth-rangers-rituals-provehe-ahead-time/>.

¹⁴⁸ Unknown. "Dr. Adam Little - Rangers FC - Interview," September 24, 2006.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20080828121803/http://www.followfollow.com/news/loadfeat.asp?cid=ED31&id=300264>.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ O'Donnell, Stephen. *Tangled Up in Blue: The Rise and Fall of Rangers FC*. None edition. Pitch Publishing, 2019, 59.

of Glasgow and their footballing heroes of Rangers marching into Ibrox in the same outfit- that is a subconscious form of influence and creates a relation between the two groups. That young child will then associate the ‘Orange’ look with the ‘Rangers Way’.

In a much more upfront manner, Struth always looked to involve his players in and around the Order and important Protestant figures in Glasgow. Struth like to associate Rangers with the most high-profile and successful Protestant/Presbyterian people of the day- whether that be religious figures, politicians, or even involved in the Grand Orange Lodge.¹⁵¹ It was even known that some Rangers players in this era were Orange Order members, and other who were not were more than happy to be sent as guests of honor at Orange gatherings.¹⁵² During Struth’s tenure at the club the team had played multiple charity games to raise money for either the Royal Lodge of Glasgow and Belfast.¹⁵³ And lastly, Struth and the other administrators routinely volunteered players to perform service projects at local Orange Halls, in order to ‘keep a good rapport’ between the two groups.¹⁵⁴

This method of Struth and Rangers administration was more upfront and direct influence. The relationship between the Orange Order and Rangers was strong at this time, and yet another example of the gap between sports and politics being completely bridged, and they had become one and the same. It was not simply a friendly relation between two likeminded organizations, but rather a complete sharing of ideology, public image, and personnel. All of this was cultivated by a

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 63.

¹⁵² Walker, Graham. “The Orange Order in Scotland Between the Wars.” *International Review of Social History* 37, no. 2 (August 1992): 177–206, 205.

¹⁵³ Booker Jr, Ronnie Michael. “Orange Alba: The Civil Religion of Loyalism in the Southwestern Lowlands of Scotland since 1798.” University of Tennessee Knoxville, 2010, 121.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 121.

volatile time in Glaswegian history, and Rangers ultra-protestant and Orange identity can be seen as a response to the ongoing anti-Catholic sectarian sentiments.¹⁵⁵

Section 5: Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion/Synthesis

This thesis has demonstrated that throughout the interwar era the Orange Order had a very distinct influence on Rangers FC, and the influence could be seen through multiple angles. It is difficult to measure as to what degree Rangers was exactly influenced, but through this research process that the crossover was heavy between the two organizations. Therefore, Rangers was heavily influenced by the Orange Order, as a means to ‘react’ to the “Catholic menace” in Glasgow that the native Scottish/Ulster Protestants so feared of.¹⁵⁶ The modes of influence were multiple, both in a political (club and outside) and social (fans and squad) aspects. Earlier sections outlined both parties, Rangers and the Order, and their relationship to Glasgow, which acts as a unique Petri dish to house this issue. It is through this unique setting divided by two religious groups that bred an intense sectarian divide, and a fear of the ‘other,’ which spilled over to the biggest sporting rivalry in the city.

Glasgow as a city offers one of the most unique social landscapes in the world, which gives us the special situation we see in the interwar era, and even to an extent, today. Glasgow has had the identity crisis of whether to be a British or Scottish city, then add on the issues of Ireland and Ulster, and we get an extremely politically charged city. The problems in Ireland were adopted in

¹⁵⁵ Skeide, Jon Magnus Løfgren. “Sashes and Rosaries Scottish Sectarianism and the Old Firm.” University of Bergen, 2010, 59.

¹⁵⁶ Find “catholic menace”

Glasgow, due to the high number of Irish immigrants, both Protestant and mainly Catholic. Along with the political issues, mainly revolving around religion, was the specific social clubs or groups. In a native Protestant country like Scotland, having a large influx of Catholic Irish immigrants was not universally well received, and this gives us the basis for the Orange Order's growth. The Order needs Catholic presence to thrive and Glasgow, unlike many other areas in Scotland, had a large Catholic community.¹⁵⁷

In order to 'protect' Scotland from the Catholic 'invasion' many Protestant groups like the Order became popular, to try and systematically keep Catholics out of important areas of society. Many companies practiced no Catholic hiring practices, especially in the dock yards near Ibrox and Govan areas. The specific company we explored in the thesis, Harland & Wolff, was particularly notorious for their staunch no Catholic policy and are supposedly one of the catalysts for helping Rangers bring in their similar policy.¹⁵⁸ Beyond hiring practices, the Orange Order used their large support base to influence political proceedings around Glasgow, by lobbying in the Unionist party, or by even starting their own party for a brief period. The Order looked to put their fingerprints in multiple areas of society, and with football being the most popular sport in Glasgow, and with Celtic FC gaining traction in the Catholic community, it seemed natural to invest in their biggest rival, Rangers FC.

Rangers and Celtic are nothing without the other, arch nemesis' but in the same vein, deeply interconnected. Rangers needed Celtic as a way to fire up their fan base and prop up their religious identity, which was only introduced as a solution to the growing success from the

¹⁵⁷ Kaufmann, E. "The Dynamics of Orangeism in Scotland: Social Sources of Political Influence in a Mass-Member Organization, 1860-2001." *Social Science History* 30, no. 2 (June 1, 2006): 263–92, 279.

¹⁵⁸ O'Donnell, Stephen. *Tangled Up in Blue: The Rise and Fall of Rangers FC*. None edition. Pitch Publishing, 2019, 45-46.

Catholic footballing club.¹⁵⁹ With Celtic's roots as a Catholic club and an outlet for underprivileged Catholic youth in Glasgow to become 'included,' Rangers Protestant identity was born out of a necessity to compete with this.¹⁶⁰ Whilst Rangers started to gain traction as a Protestant club before the first World War, it was after the war that we see a cemented Protestant club, with full support from many Protestant organizations.

Naturally, with the Orange Order being one of the largest and most influential Protestant groups, their influence on Rangers seemed to be extensive. With many Orangemen being politicians, influential business owners and people of importance in Glasgow, they were often in charge of Glasgow's associations, and in this case, football clubs.¹⁶¹ Ranger's boardroom and chairmen were often Orangemen, Unionist politicians, or Orange sympathizers- this ensured a direct influence between the Order and Rangers.¹⁶² Club policies reflected this influence, resulting in a no catholic signing policy by Rangers which mirrored the Order's Protestant only structure. These are systematic methods of excluding Catholics in Glasgow, which was not the same of Celtic, who often fielded Protestant or even Jewish players.¹⁶³ The no Catholics signing policy was also a direct mirror of many other companies in Glasgow, who practiced a similar policy. By knowingly excluding Catholics from Rangers, this is a direct politicization of the football club, and adding to the already existing sectarian issues in the city.

¹⁵⁹ Booker Jr, Ronnie Michael. "Orange Alba: The Civil Religion of Loyalism in the Southwestern Lowlands of Scotland since 1798." University of Tennessee Knoxville, 2010, 115.

¹⁶⁰ Skeide, Jon Magnus Løfgren. "Sashes and Rosaries Scottish Sectarianism and the Old Firm." University of Bergen, 2010, 59.

¹⁶¹ McCracken, Gordon A. *Bygone Days of Yore: The Story of Orangeism in Glasgow*. Orange Heritage for the County Grand Orange Lodge of Glasgow, 1990, 42.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, 42-43.

¹⁶³ O'Donnell, Stephen. *Tangled Up in Blue: The Rise and Fall of Rangers FC*. None edition. Pitch Publishing, 2019, 29.

Football in general, its fandom, and its stadium culture is a rich form of social capital, providing people an arena to socialize and be distracted from the outside influences of everyday life. Whilst this is somewhat true, football still offers a social valve for political or religious tensions to be released, and this crossover is very evident when looking at the Orange Order's influence on Rangers. When fans are invested in their club for whatever reason, they can become attached to that club's culture, which was obvious in the case of Rangers. In the interwar era, as football was not yet globalized and professionalized as we see now, fans typically supported whichever club was closest to where they lived. Rangers, on the other hand, were different as they offered a religious identity and "safe haven" for their fans to coexist. With Rangers being now being deemed a Protestant club, regardless of their location in Glasgow, many fans became attached to the club based off their religious affiliation, which then naturally push them to hating their Catholic rivals, Celtic. To me, it seems as if Rangers fans in this time period are acutely aware of their clubs place in society, and used it as a 'beacon of hope' to react against Celtic.

The Order's influence on Rangers couldn't just be seen in the fans, but also within the squad of players and its manager during this era, Bill Struth. The training and match day arrival outfits of Rangers players were eerily similar to that of an Orangemen marching on July 12th; bowler hats, suits, and ties (though instead of orange and purple, Rangers wore red, white, and blue ties). A young fan wanting to be like his/her footballing hero would see their Rangers players wearing the same outfit as a marching Orangemen. Struth himself was a staunch Protestant, and actively look to put his players in and around the Protestant elite in the city.¹⁶⁴ With a board room full of Unionists, Freemasons, and Orangemen who implemented a no Catholics signing policy, Struth himself was also a fan of this policy and made sure of its adherence when signing or scouting

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 63.

new players. So, the influence from Order to Rangers here is also quite obvious, from board room, to fans, even to the playing and coach staff.

To judge a degree of influence is difficult, and I cannot fully say how much the Orange Order did influence Rangers to an exact figure, but it is certain there was a large degree of influence and crossover between the two. They shared common people, ideals, and possibly most importantly, a common enemy. Interwar Glasgow was a turbulent landscape consumed with political unrest in Ireland, immigration, the end of WWI, a booming football rivalry, which then all added together can help explain (briefly) the sectarian issues which plagued the city. Organizations like the Orange Order gained traction due to their ability to strike fear in the ‘unknown other’ of Catholics in Glasgow, which sparked a lot of sectarian issues. Alongside the fear of the other, Rangers initial spark to gain their Protestant identity came as a response to Celtic’s rise as the Catholic club. Coupling together Rangers supposed need to respond against the Catholic club, and the Order’s desire to keep Protestantism firmly in control in Glasgow and we see the influence explained. At its very basic root, this was a response, from both the Orange Order and Rangers, in order to collaborate to fight against what they felt was the Catholic enemy in their city.

This is a very distinct and unique intersection between sports and their politicization. Like earlier stated, Glasgow is a unique landscape to provide us with such a sectarian city and a uniquely political footballing rivalry. The Old Firm in itself is a political event, with meetings between the two clubs have sectarian issues even to this day. Even further, Rangers third kit this season is orange and purple- the exact colors of the Orange Order, showing their connection is still there today. The connection started between Rangers and the Order in the interwar era helped ring in a uniquely political era in the club, and Glasgow’s, history. Once Rangers started their no Catholics

signing policy, it wasn't until 1989 with Mo Johnston's signing that they signed another Catholic player. The bond between sports and politics has always been there, even in the interwar era. Even though these two arenas, sports, and politics, are supposed to exist separately, throughout this thesis I have realized that has never been the case, and nor will it ever be.

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