Loyalism is a form of group identity based on the idea of loyalty to the political status quo. The status quo is typically an imperial order like the Spanish or British empires or the French *ancien regime*. Sometimes, as in the Spanish case, the term 'royalist' is used, while at other times 'counter-revolutionary' may be applied. What is significant from the point of view of nationalism and ethnic studies is that in some cases entire ethnic groups may define themselves through their loyalty to a monarch. In colonial situations, numerous ethnic groups like the Ambonese in Indonesia or Karen of Burma favoured retention of the colonial tie and were 'loyal' in this way. However, these groups did not rely on loyalty to the Empire as a prop of identity. In historical terms, use of the word 'loyalist' has therefore principally focused on those 'British' peoples who defined themselves through their loyalty to the British Empire in North America and Ireland.

In the United States in the mid-eighteenth century, there was no movement for independence. The settlers, 98 percent of them Protestant and 80 percent deriving from the British Isles, were content to remain in the empire. They defined themselves as English-speaking Protestants who had won a victory for Britain in the Seven Years' War of 1756-63 against the Catholic French and their Indian allies in North America. The sphere of battle covered present-day Canada (Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia) as well as the United States (New York, Pennsylvania) in one undifferentiated whole. George Washington played an important role on the British side.

Prior to about 1774-5, the identity of the American loyalists could well be described as dualistic. On the one hand, they saw themselves as 'Americans' with a distinct geographical and cultural particularity. On the other hand, they identified with the

British flag, language and (Protestant) religion against the Spanish and French, as well as the British Empire and its mission. (Colley 1992) Independence altered this calculus for roughly two-thirds of the colonists, but one-third remained loyal to the British Crown. Persecution – extending to tarring and feathering and land seizures – led most to downplay their allegiance or flee. 19,000 fled to present-day Canada, forming the United Empire Loyalists. These loyalists were the first major British Protestant settlers in Canada and largely laid down the dialect, ideology and institutions of English-speaking Canada. In 1812, key loyalists like Sir Isaac Brock and the Mohawk leader Joseph Brant played a role in rebuffing the American invasion of Canada. This became part of the mythology of the United Empire Loyalists which was celebrated a century later by British Canadians, most of whom were not descendants of the American loyalists, but of subsequent waves of American economic migrants and British immigrants. (Kaufmann 1997)

At the time of Canadian confederation in 1867, roughly half the English-speaking population of Canada was of Scottish or Irish-Protestant extraction. The large-scale movement of Irish-Protestant settlers to Canada brought the other major 'loyalist' ethnic group together with its Canadian soulmate. Protestants in Ireland were mainly the descendants of English and Scottish settlers from the early 1600s. The Anglo-Irish elite derived from a longstanding high-church Anglican population whose cultural life was centred upon Dublin. However, the bulk of the Protestant population was 'planted' by the British Crown from Elizabethan (post-1600) times, mainly in the nine northern counties comprising Ulster.

Irish loyalism was initially divided because Presbyterians and other dissenting sects experienced discrimination (such as the non-recognition of marriages) from the Anglican authorities. Fired by Whig ideas, Presbyterians were in the forefront of both the American Revolution and the uprising of the United Irishmen in Ireland in 1798. Both movements sought independence from Britain and were inspired by liberalism rather than anti-Catholicism. However, popular conflict at the everyday level between Protestants and Catholics was a reality upon which political entrepreneurs could draw. After all, there was a history of sectarian strife and bloodshed, especially around the English Civil War in the 1640s. As the United Irishmen began to seek support from the Catholic Defender movement, with its Catholic-rights agenda, a counter movement sprang up among the Protestants. This movement coalesced into the Loyal Orange Order, formed in 1795 near Portadown in Co. Armagh after a series of local sectarian skirmishes. Based on the structures of freemasonry, Orangeism rapidly spread throughout Ireland, where it espoused an ideology of loyalty to Protestantism and to the Crown which served as the political defender of Protestantism in the British empire. (Haddick-Flynn 1999)

Orangeism was soon exported to Scotland and England (by 1810) and Canada (by 1820) with returning British soldiers and through Irish-Protestant emigration. In Canada, it was so successful that it surpassed the Irish organisation in numbers soon after 1900. The late nineteenth century saw the emergence of a full-blown Britannic nationalism, an expression of pride in British ethnic origins and political achievements which spanned Britain, Ireland, Canada, Australasia and South Africa. (Cole 1970) This imperial sentiment coloured loyalism in Canada and Ireland. But it

never displaced the metropole-settler dualism which is the hallmark of loyalist identity.

The decline of the British empire drove home the local (or settler) side of loyalist identity for Canadians (as well as Australians, Scots and Newfoundlanders), leading to new expressions of local nationalism in these places. In Canada, loyalism died hard, as witnessed in the 1965 debate over whether to retain the Union Jack or adopt a new Maple Leaf flag. (Buckner 2004) In Ireland, the Home Rule crisis of 1884-6 proved the last time that the Irish Protestants could count on Unionist support from mainland Britain. After the second Home Rule Crisis of 1912-14, Irish Protestants began to militarily organise and mentally prepare themselves to go it alone in the six Protestant-majority counties in the northeast of Ulster. The Northern Ireland Act of 1922 recognised the Protestant-dominated Northern Ireland state, restoring the British loyalty of the Ulster-Protestants. However, this loyalism was tested again in the 1960s when agitation by the 35 percent Catholic minority led the British government to press loyalists to reform their system of local government and housing, and share power with Catholics. When such reforms were not forthcoming, the British stepped in to directly rule the province, but by then the IRA military and terror campaign was in full swing. Twenty-five years of bombing and violence ensued, as the British army and its loyalist auxiliaries (local police and defence regiments) tried to subdue the IRA. With the IRA ceasefire in 1995 and 1997, and the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, some saw a new dawn for Northern Ireland. Catholics made gains toward economic and political parity with Protestants, but power-sharing, premised on the inclusion of Sinn Fein/IRA in government, proved a non-starter for most Protestants. Decommissioning of IRA weapons remains the main obstacle to peace today, but

changes within loyalism are also important. Loyalists have increasingly turned inward, shifting from being 'loyal' to 'rebel' Unionists. (Kaufmann 2007) Skeptical of Britain for 'selling us out', they have begun to celebrate their Scottish roots, their Ulster-Scots dialect, and their role in anti-British episodes like the American Revolution and even the United Irish uprising. Though most identify as 'British', this label does not connote civic attachments to the British state, but rather an ethnic attachment to the Ulster-Protestants and their six-county homeland of 'Ulster'.

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