

Confessional Secularism:

*Ireland under Charles II and
James II*

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Introduction

With any change in government comes an inevitable period of political instability. Having just endured several long, hard years under the Cromwellian Conquest, the inhabitants of Ireland were no doubt eager for new leadership by the mid-17th century. However, the Restoration of the Stuart monarchy did not bring about the age of peace and reform that many people hoped for; rather, it sparked thirty more years of discontent, violence, and uncertainty. Scholars disagree over whether the grievances of the Irish people under King Charles II and King James II were secular or religious. This report seeks to examine the viewpoints of the various stakeholders in Ireland between the Restoration in 1660 and the end of the Revolution in 1690. Over this thirty year period, a distinct shift in the grievances of the Irish occurred as rule transitioned from Charles to James. By dividing the complaints of these Irishmen firstly along confessional lines—or their religious affiliations—and secondly along class divisions, it becomes clearer how each individual faction reacted to the religious, social, and political machinations developing around them at the time. Whether Catholic or Protestant, gentry, clergy, or nobility, the factions of Ireland all fought for economic and political influence, the rights and privileges to control their own lives, and the security to live without fear. Although it is true that Irish struggles were predominantly faith-based, they were “inherently tied to political faction and national identity” more so than any confessional loyalty.¹ To this end, it is evident that the people of Ireland, while divided

¹ McCormack, Danielle. *The Stuart Restoration and the English in Ireland* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2016), pg. 1

along religious lines, ultimately raised grievances that were more about secular power than anything else: political power over the King in England, factional power over their neighbors in Ireland, and the constitutional power to maintain their own ascendancy.

I

In order to fully understand this complex historical time period, it is first necessary to analyze both the events leading up to the reigns of the two kings and the historiographic debates surrounding the issue. Modern scholarship on the Stuart Restoration predominantly centers around two main questions: how do religion and politics interact among Irish grievances, and to what extent can the period be seen as a reflection of past and future events? Beginning with the latter, historians have not come to a consensus on the degree to which the Restoration should be considered independent of the Cromwellian and Williamite Eras. The conservative approach, espoused by Gibney, Scott, and Dennehy, locates the influences of the Restoration conflict firmly in the preceding decades. Gibney traces the “visceral English anti-Catholicism” as far back as the 1530s, while Scott refers to the crisis as “an echo” of the 1640s and calls the events of the 1680s “a replication.”² On the opposite end of the spectrum, Bernard argues that the Restoration period is not as similar to the ‘40s as every other author seems to think.³ By citing the vastly

² Dennehy, Coleman, ed., *Restoration Ireland: Always Settling and Never Settled* (Ashgate, 2008), pg. 8; Gibney, John. “Ireland’s Restoration Crisis,” in Tim Harris and Stephen Taylor, eds., *The Final Crisis of the Stuart Monarchy: The Revolutions of 1688–91 in their British, Atlantic, and European Contexts* (Woodbridge, 2013), pg. 136

³ Bernard, Toby. “Ireland, 1688–91,” in Tim Harris and Stephen Taylor, eds., *The Final Crisis of the Stuart Monarchy: The Revolutions of 1688–91 in their British, Atlantic, and European Contexts* (Woodbridge,

different conditions that prompted religious conflict in several different decades, he states that “the years between 1660 and 1688 helped to set some of the patterns that defined... distinct and rival Catholic and Protestant interests.”⁴ Lastly, a third group of moderates, including Harris, Beckett, and McKenny, treat the Restoration as a transitional and reactionary period, a framework that is able to address both the influence of Cromwell and the unique conditions in Ireland during the Restoration. They each highlight the obvious long-term effects that the Cromwellian Conquest had on the Restoration period, while still acknowledging the “major structural problems in Ireland” that were revealed under the Stuart kings.⁵ It would be wrong to ignore the influences of the past, as Bernard largely does, but it would be equally unjust to deprive the Restoration period of its own importance as the more conservative historians do. Through a more moderate approach, we can understand how the ‘60s react to the ‘40s and influence the ‘90s, as well as account for the unique upheaval that swept through Ireland during this key transitional period.

The second area in which modern scholarship disagrees relates more closely to the topic of this paper: the extent of religious and political influences on Irish opinion from 1660 to 1690. This debate can be split into two main groups, with authors like McCormack, McHugh, Hynes, and Miller arguing that religious ideology played the dominant role in shaping the whims and wishes of the Irish people. They acknowledge the role of the Catholic clergy in “bringing attention to the plight of the Irish Catholics” and place emphasis on ideology and

principle over patronage and faction.⁶ Miller goes even further in accusing King James II himself of governing based on motivations which were “emotional and religious rather than rational and political.”⁷ On the other hand, Harris, Simms, Ohlmeyer, and Dennehy, among other scholars, also generally recognize the political game beneath the confessional devotions. However, these authors differ in how concretely they view the confessional divide and the degree in which they emphasize the role of factionalism in 17th century Anglo-Irish politics. Harris and Simms astutely point out the presence of divisions existing within both Catholic and Protestant groupings that emphasize the political agendas of individual stakeholders.⁸ In taking a moderate approach once again, it is important to recognize the role that religious ideology played in shaping political allegiances and motivations, but also acknowledge that secular factionalism could and did supersede confessional loyalties throughout the Restoration period.

Finally, it is impossible to analyze Irish grievances under the Stuart kings without first comprehending the series of events throughout the ‘40s and ‘50s that resulted in a large population of bitterly resentful Irish men and women. The confessional divide in Ireland had existed for many generations, but it was the Irish Rebellion of October 1641 that widened this rift. Immediately followed by the English Civil War of 1642–51, the conflict only grew; the majority of Catholics supported the king, while the majority of Protestants supported Parliament. That

2013), pgs. 159–160

⁴ Dennehy. *Restoration Ireland*, pg. 193

⁵ Harris, Tim. “Ch. 2: Popery and Arbitrary Government: The Restoration in Ireland,” from his *Restoration: Charles II and His Kingdoms* (2005), pg. 86; Dennehy. *Restoration Ireland*, pg. 52

⁶ Dennehy. *Restoration Ireland*, pg. 100; McCormack. *The Stuart Restoration*

⁷ Miller, J. “The Earl of Tyrconnell and James II’s Irish Policy, 1685–1688,” *Historical Journal* (1977), pg. 823

⁸ Harris, Tim. “Ch. 3: That Unhappy Island of Ireland,” from his *Revolution: The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy, 1685–1720* (2006), pg. 104; Bottigheimer, Karl S. “Simms, J. G., ‘Jacobite Ireland, 1685–91’ (1969).” *Church History*. American Society of Church History, 1970, pg. 411

is not to say these two groups never worked together; in 1649, an alliance of Catholic and Protestant royalists banded together under the Earl of Ormonde, but were indiscriminately crushed by the forces of Oliver Cromwell.⁹ The Cromwellian Conquest was a three-pronged initiative: secure the island and establish political control, pay off the debts accrued in the Civil War, and punish the Catholics for their brutality in 1641.¹⁰ Despite Cromwell's Protectorate only lasting six years, the ensuing religious, political, and economic persecution would have long-lasting impacts that influenced Irish grievances throughout Stuart rule. The Act of Settlement in 1652 stated that those who had fought in the Irish Rebellion, killed Protestants, or had yet to surrender their arms would have their lands stripped away. Catholic landowners were further disenfranchised with the Act of Satisfaction in 1653, which regulated their transplantation across the River Shannon to County Connacht.¹¹ A recent statistical study by Kevin McKenny uses figures from the Books of Survey and Distribution to project confessional landholding in 1641 and 1670, finding that the Catholic share of land in Ireland dropped from 66 percent to 29 percent during the confiscation period.¹² Thus, Gaelic Irish and Catholic Old English suffered tremendous losses under the Cromwellian regime, while Protestant soldiers and speculators reaped the benefit of their war-effort investments, further widening the divide between the two religious interests.¹³

The Land Settlement was not the only way in which Cromwell repressed the Catholic grip on Ireland. Having shattered their economic

hold on the land, Cromwell then attacked their political power, dissolving Parliament and allowing a delegation of only 30 members to sit at Westminster.¹⁴ More importantly, however, were Cromwell's actions against Catholic religious power. Throughout the 1650s, the Book of Common Prayer was banned, Protestant preachers were sent to Ireland to encourage conversions, and Catholic clergy were hunted down, imprisoned, exiled, or executed in the hope that annihilating religious leaders would destroy the religion itself.¹⁵ Nevertheless, as is the case with most forms of religious persecution, Cromwell's policies simply steeled the Catholics' resolve against their Protestant oppressors and further embittered the Irish along confessional lines. With Cromwell's death in 1658 the Protectorate collapsed under the pressure of factionalism. The radical Edmund Ludlow took control of the army and seized power in October 1659, while Sir Theophilus Jones commanded a regiment of Protestant officers and gentry to take Dublin Castle on December 13th.¹⁶ Ultimately, it was Sir Charles Coote and Lord Broghill, two ex-royalists, who secured the garrisons in Connacht and Munster, purged the radical faction, called an Irish Convention on February 27th, 1660, and persuaded the Protestant military officers and ex-Cromwellians that only a return to the Stuart monarchy could end the factional struggle and secure their interests.¹⁷ The Stuart Restoration "was made in Ireland," as it was the Protestants in Ireland who "made the Earliest advances towards his Majesties Restoration when the

9 Harris. "Ch. 2: Popery," pg. 86

10 Gibney. "Ireland's Restoration Crisis," pg. 137

11 Harris. "Ch. 2: Popery," pg. 87

12 McKenny, Kevin. 'The Restoration Land Settlement in Ireland: A Statistical Interpretation' in Coleman A. Dennehy (ed.), *Restoration Ireland: Always Settling and Never Settled* (Aldershot, Hampshire, and Burlington, VT, 2008), pgs. 35–52

13 Harris. "Ch. 2: Popery," pg. 87

14 *Ibid.*, pg. 87

15 *Ibid.*, pg. 88

16 Steele, II, no. 605a. Cited in Harris. "Ch. 2: Popery," pg. 88

17 J.I. McGuire, 'The Dublin Convention, the Protestant Community and the Emergence of an Ecclesiastical Settlement in 1660,' in Art Cosgrove and J.I. McGuire, eds., *Parliament and Community* (Belfast, 1983), pgs. 121–46; Godfrey Davies, *The Restoration of Charles II, 1658–60* (San Marino, Cal., 1955) ch. 13; Clarke, *Prelude to Restoration*. Cited in Harris. "Ch. 2: Popery," pg. 88

three Kingdoms were Governed by Usurpers” according to the second Earl of Clarendon.¹⁸ The events of the ‘40s and ‘50s had extraordinary implications for the future of Ireland after the Restoration of Charles II. As with any period of political instability and regime change, the people of Ireland were wracked with uncertainty over their place in the new order; Cromwell’s conquest had upended the status quo, and both Protestant and Catholic alike were unsure whether Charles II intended to leave things the way they were or radically alter policy once again.

II

With religious tensions exceedingly high after years of persecution and conflict, the restoration of Charles II as King of England and by extension, Ireland, raised a multitude of grievances that were mostly divided along confessional lines, but firmly political and economic in nature. However, at the outset of Charles’ reign, the monarch was significantly more popular in Ireland than he soon would be. Upon the announcement of the King’s restoration in Dublin on May 14, 1660, a contemporary writer described upper and lower classes alike celebrating until “the streets ran with Wine” and there was “almost a Bonfire at every house.”¹⁹ This was a transitional period and a return to the status quo, and anyone with a vested interest wanted to protect themselves from the changes they knew were coming. The Protestants, united by the Irish Convention of 1660, sought to maintain the gains they had made under Cromwell while pleading for

forgiveness from the Stuart monarch whose father they had deposed just ten years earlier. Those Protestant royalists who had remained loyal hoped for a restoration of the estates which had been taken from them by the conquest.²⁰ Similarly, the Catholics no doubt prayed for justice and an end to their suffering. As the Catholic Bishop of Ferns Nicholas French would later write, “it cannot be denied, but that the Roman Catholics of Ireland have infinitely suffered, during the late Usurped Governments; But they have done it cheerfully... having had all that time, as Companions in Suffering, not only some of the Nobility and Gentry of England and Scotland, but the King himself, and all the Royal Family.”²¹ Other religious minorities who had suffered under Cromwell, such as the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Protestant nonconformists, all equally hoped for a reversal of their fortunes. With the Declaration of Breda in April of 1660, each faction was assured that the new King would protect their interests.²² Although divided along confessional lines, the desires of these groups were predominantly irreligious; they would soon find out, however, that not everyone could be a winner under the new regime.

Despite Charles II’s assertions in the Declaration of Breda, the King quickly realized that the question of religion was inherently tied to the political factions that pulled him in every direction. After all, it was the ex-Cromwellian, Protestant army officers under General George Monck that invited Charles II back into England, and in order to consolidate his tenuous hold on the crown he would need to appease the Protestants first. The Irish Convention continued to give full priority to the question of

¹⁸ BL, Add. MSS 28,085, fol. 217. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 2: Popery,” pg. 88

¹⁹ Cambridge University Library, Add. MS I, fol. 2; *Parliamentary Intelligencer*, no. 22 (21–8 May 1660), 337–40; Cal. Anc. Rec. Dub., IV, 185–6. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 2: Popery,” pg. 89

²⁰ McCormack. *The Stuart Restoration*, pg. 164

²¹ Nicholas French, *A Narrative of the Settlement and Sale of Ireland* (1668), pg. 1

²² Harris. “Ch. 2: Popery,” pgs. 89–90

the land settlement, but in the context of the ecclesiastical settlement they agreed that the Church needed to be “resettled in Doctrine, Discipline and Worship.”²³ On January 22nd, 1661 the King declared all meetings by any non-Protestant groups illegal and forbade them from making ordinations. This was immediately followed by a parliamentary proclamation in May of the same year ordering “all persons whatsoever” to conform to the Church of Ireland and to publicly renounce the Solemn League and the Covenant, two ecclesiastical movements opposing the King’s religion.²⁴ Moreover, in 1666 Irish parliament passed an Act of Uniformity, which required the Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance for office-holders, military leaders, and the prelacy.²⁵ The fact that many clergy members refused to follow these orders and were subsequently run out of Ireland was of no consequence to Charles II, as these acts were more about renouncing resistance to the King than announcing religious allegiances. The King’s disdain for the clerical faction, especially the Catholics in the Confederation of Kilkenny, was well recorded in his *Declaration for the Settlement of his Kingdome of Ireland*, but for concerns of questionable loyalty to the crown, not confessional commitment.²⁶ In December of 1661 the Earl of Fingall and 97 other Catholic gentry petitioned the King for religious toleration in return for pledges of loyalty.²⁷ While Charles II continued to maintain the Protestant ascendancy, he did bring an end to the Cromwellian persecution and anti-

Catholic legislation, ultimately leading to a de-facto sense of religious toleration due to lax law enforcement.²⁸ The ecclesiastical settlement clearly represented where Charles II’s priorities lay. Appearing as religious favoritism, the early years of Restoration policy actually centered around consolidating the King’s tenuous political power, and in order to do that, he needed to keep his Protestant supporters happy and confirm their social and economic ascendancy.

The Restoration of the monarchy also sparked a contentious debate over the future of the land settlement between three prominent vested stakeholders: the Catholics, the Protestants, and the King himself. Given the impossible task of trying to appease two extraordinarily competing interests, the King issued the Act of Settlement of 1662 promising land for Catholics innocent of involvement in the Rebellion of 1641 and compensation for Protestant adventurers losing their investments to the repatriations.²⁹ Of course, as modern historians have pointed out, Ireland “would need to be two or three times its size to satisfy all the competing interests.”³⁰ The Catholic faction expected the restoration of the monarchy to go hand in hand with the full restoration of their estates and were sorely disappointed with the reality of having to plead their cases to the Protestant-dominated courts. They regarded this land as having been illegally stolen from them by the Cromwellian Conquest in the first place, and thus considered the new land settlement “the greatest injustice” ever done unto “an innocent nation... condemned before

23 TCD, MS 808, fol. 156; McGuire, “Dublin Convention”; Clarke, *Prelude to Restoration*, chs. 7, 8; *Cal. Anc. Rec. Dub.*, IV, 185–6. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 2: Popery,” pg. 90

24 Steele, II, nos. 628, 644, 646a. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 2: Popery,” pg. 91

25 Harris. “Ch. 2: Popery,” pg. 91

26 McCormack. *The Stuart Restoration*, pg. 111

27 Luke Plunkett, Earl of Fingall, *To the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, The Faithful Protestation and Humble Remonstrance of the Roman Catholic Nobility and Gentry of Ireland [1662?]*

28 Harris. “Ch. 2: Popery,” pg. 91

29 McCormack. *The Stuart Restoration*; J.G. Simms, “The Restoration, 1660–85,” in Moody et al., eds., *New History of Ireland*, pg. 423; *Statutes at Large*, II, 239–348. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 2: Popery,” pg. 93

30 Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, *Continuation of His Life* (Oxford, 1759), pg. 123–4; NLI, MS 1453. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 2: Popery,” pg. 93

they were heard.”³¹ The Gaelic Irish bardman David Ó Bruadair wrote in one of his poems how the Act of Settlement “hath broken [the Catholics] banks, And left them all cloakless and shirtless in poverty.”³² Ultimately, these words best demonstrate the true nature of the Catholic land grievance. Control over the land was tied to the political and economic power that was inherently attached to it; without gaining back the land they had lost in the ‘40s and ‘50s, the Catholics could not hope to recover from the secular injustices they faced under Cromwell.

On the other hand, the Protestant faction had similar reasons for wanting to maintain control over the land in Ireland. The adventurers and speculators had invested a great deal in Cromwell’s conquest and considered their purchases to be legally acquired. Moreover, Broghill and Coote petitioned the King and his advisors that “the English interest in Ireland” had to be preserved, lest the whole island be lost.³³ There were many other complaints from the Protestant group, who felt that the courts were too lenient towards Catholic claimants, approved faked claims of innocence, and failed to provide fair compensation to those stripped of their newly acquired land. After several years of conflict and complaints, the King issued the 1665 Act of Explanation closing the courts to claims of land restoration and commanding the soldiers and adventurers who had profited under Cromwell to give up one third of their land, which the King would do with as he pleased.³⁴ Although the new restoration land

settlement benefitted Protestants more so than anyone else, the loss of such large portions of land put them at risk of losing their power and influence in the same way it cost the Catholics after Cromwell’s invasion. However, it is clear that King Charles II had other plans for the land he stripped from the Protestants and kept from the Catholics.

The third major stakeholder in the land settlement of 1662 was none other than the King himself, who used the land to resolve political grievances and consolidate his own power. Taking a page from his Stuart ancestors, Charles II exploited Irish land in the interest of rewarding his favorites with vast handouts.³⁵ The English Lord Chancellor Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, assured King Charles II that “the surest way to preserve that Kingdome [of Ireland]” was to restore handpicked Catholics—both Gaelic Irish and Old English—in a system of patronage that would reward those who had supported the monarchy in the past and would continue to support the monarchy in the future.³⁶ The importance of this patronage can also be used to explain the restoration of so many Catholic lords, some of whom survived through corruption, bribery, or personal connections with powerful men in London and Dublin. Patronage did not just come from the King, however, as lords used their influence to protect and save their subjects—regardless of religion—who demonstrated exceptional loyalty or economic success.³⁷ Through these handpicked restorations, Charles II increased the land controlled by the peerage by almost 50 percent and crafted a powerful new aristocracy that was entirely dependent on and loyal to him, all while weakening the power base of

31 “A Jacobite Narrative of the War in Ireland, 1688–91.” John T. Gilbert (ed.), Dublin, 1892. Reprinted, with an Introduction by J.G. Simms. Shannon: Irish University Press. 1971. Pg. 35

32 Buckroyd, *Church and State*, pgs. 41–5. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 2: Popery,” pg. 92

33 *Jacobite Narrative*, pg. 4, 9; French, *Settlement and Sale*, pgs. 2–4; French, *The Unkinde Deserter* (1676), pgs. 421–2. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 2: Popery,” pg. 92

34 Harris. “Ch. 2: Popery,” pg. 93

35 Ohlmeyer, Jane. “The Restoration Land Settlement,” from her *Making Ireland English* (New Haven, 2012), ch. 11, pg. 301

36 Bodl., Carte MS 32, f. 719. Cited in Ohlmeyer. “The Restoration,” pg. 310

37 Ohlmeyer. “The Restoration,” pg. 309, 344

the Protestants who had benefited from the usurper who had executed his father.³⁸

In this way, the King's interest had very little to do with the religion of his subjects and much more to do with their political loyalty to himself and his regime. When the Earl of Tyrconnell was found "nocent" or guilty of rebellion by the Court of Claims, King Charles II promptly overturned the verdict, stating that the Earl's "endeavours in our dear father's service do in our opinion overbalance anything that can be objected against him," and fully restoring him to his estates in Counties Dublin, Meath, and Wicklow.³⁹ Charles again displayed his indifference to the religious divide with the pardon of Lord Antrim, angering many of his Protestant subjects. Samuel Pepys recorded in his diary that "the king hath done himself all imaginable wrong in that business of my Lord Antrim in Ireland" and a 1663 pamphlet published by dispossessed landholders which reads, "Antrim, a rebel upon record, and so lately and clearly proved one, should have no other colour for his actions but the king's own letter, which takes all imputations from Antrim, and lays them totally upon his own father."⁴⁰ The blatant corruption evident in the court of Charles II also elicited several other disgruntled reactions from his subject. In his *Sale and Settlement of Ireland*, Nicholas French venomously criticized the King for giving lands that never rightfully belonged to him to his brother, James II, the Duke of York.⁴¹ Further, another contemporary Protestant wrote that through Charles'

favoritism, the Duke of Ormond "hath added as much to his own ancient estate by the new Act of Settlement in Ireland as would have satisfied all the claims of the just adventurers."⁴² Of all the grievances of the Irish, the land settlement of 1662 was by far the most contentious. It was not a question of spreading religion to the land, but rather obtaining the political and economic power that was tied to that land. However, both Catholic and Protestant alike found themselves at the mercy of the King as he strove to build an Ireland that would be loyal to his crown, proving without doubt that he had deeper concerns than confessional divisions.

As the reign of King Charles II progressed, an aura of fear began to spread across the island: a fear of losing security, constitutional rights, and material advantage. On the land settlement, the Earl of Essex wrote, "yet have I allwaies found that the generalitie of the English who enjoy their estates upon these new titles could not shake off their apprehensions of loosing them again," and that "the Irish doe almost universally dicours that they will have their lands agen."⁴³ While this fear certainly evolved from the confessional divide, it created an underlying economic problem for the Protestant ascendancy; if prospectors feared for the security of their land, they would be hesitant to invest money in improvements, or even come to Ireland in the first place. In 1672, the economist Sir William Petty estimated the population of the island at roughly 800 thousand Catholics, 200 thousand Protestants, and 100 thousand Presbyterians.⁴⁴ Deeply outnumbered as they were, the Protestant ascendancy

38 McCormack. *The Stuart Restoration*, pgs. 112, 132-133

39 Talon (ed.), *Court of Claims*, pg. 14; BL, Egerton MS 2,618, ff. 106-7; CSPI, 1663-1665, pg. 194, 257; CSPI, 1669-1670, pgs. 508-9, 553, 673, 688; *Statutes*, III, pgs. 45-7. Cited in Ohlmeyer. "The Restoration," pg. 325

40 Robert Latham and William Matthews (eds.), *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* (11 vols., Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1983), V, pg. 57; *Murder will out*, pg. 5. Cited in Ohlmeyer. "The Restoration," pg. 325

41 French, *Settlement and Sale*, pg. 18, 24; French, *Unkinde Deserter* (1676); *Jacobite Narrative*, pgs. 19-21, 25-8. Cited in Harris. "Ch. 2: Popery," pg. 94

42 CSPI, 1666-1669, pg. 545. Cited in Ohlmeyer. "The Restoration," pg. 313

43 Essex Papers, I, pg. 50, 52. Cited in Gibney. "Ireland's Restoration Crisis," pg. 147

44 William Petty, "The Political Anatomy of Ireland," in *The Economic Writings of Sir William Petty*, ed. C.H. Hull (2 vols, 1899) II, pg. 141

depended on their continued economic and material domination over the Catholics, and the growing fear of losing that power wasn't helping. Thus, Protestants hated Catholics for the threat they inherently posed to their material well-being, and the perceived leniency given to the religious majority by Charles II was doing nothing to allay their fears throughout the late '60s and '70s.⁴⁵ With Charles II showing no sign of correcting the lax enforcement of the religious penal codes, Parliament took matters into its own hands. On March 10th, 1671, Protestants issued formal complaints of "the great Insolencies of the Papists in Ireland" and "the open Exercise of Mass."⁴⁶ Two years later, parliament again acted with "the recalling of the commission of inquiry, the removal of Catholic judges, JPs, sheriffs and magistrates, the banishment of all Roman Catholic clergy out of Ireland, and the exclusion of Catholics from the corporations."⁴⁷ The Catholic majority had been practicing relatively unpunished for many years, demonstrating that the underlying issue at this time was not religion. However, as fear took hold across Ireland and the economic power of the Protestants was threatened, it became necessary to legally diminish the influence of the Catholics by removing their clergy and civil officials from power.

The Protestants were further aggrieved by the secondary status their own economic interests took to those of the English. The Irish Cattle Bill of 1667 had many peers, including Earls Aglesey and Burlington, informing the King of "the growing evils that Act must inevitably bring," and the Navigation Act of 1671 was a similar blow to Irish economic prosperity.⁴⁸

45 McCormack. *The Stuart Restoration*, pg. 31, 110

46 LJ, XII, 451; *Parl. Hist.*, IV, 579-81. Cited in Harris. "Ch. 2: Popery," pg. 102

47 Harris. "Ch. 2: Popery," pg. 102

48 BL., Add. MSS 21,135, fol. 37; Beckett, *Making*, pg. 128-9, 131; Simms, "The Restoration," pg. 443-4. Cited in Harris. "Ch. 2: Popery," pg. 96

Protestant frustrations with the King were further spelled out in the Letter from a Gentleman in Ireland, which in 1677 stated, "you prohibit our Cattel, you restrain our Wool; our Manufacture is intolerable; you forbid our Trading with any Forreign Commodities in your own Plantations... We are in all things, indeed, treated by you like, or worse than Aliens."⁴⁹ Ultimately, these Protestant grievances lay along confessional divisions, but were defined by the threat to Protestant economic influence, material power, and influence over the King. Class distinction in Ireland is also evident in the spread of this fear, as different factions had different things to lose. The upper classes, like the nobility, gentry, and clergy, feared the loss of their power and land, but the lower classes no doubt feared that their security and constitutional rights would be taken from them by those above them.

However great the Protestant fear of material loss was, their fear of Catholic violence was far greater and more consistent over the Restoration period. Thinking back to 1641, the atrocities of the Catholic rebellion—whether they occurred as described or not—were etched into the minds of the Protestant settlers.⁵⁰ This fear began to manifest itself in the chaotic early years of the Restoration, forcing the King himself to issue A Proclamation Against the Rebels in Ireland, stating that "there are yet many of the Natives of that Our Kingdom, deeply guilty of that Rebellion, who have of late broke out into new Acts of force and Violence, some Murthering, Robbing and Despoiling several of Our English Protestant Subjects there planted."⁵¹ There is no doubt that there was some degree of violence occurring between the two religious sects, but

49 *A Letter from a Gentleman in Ireland To his Brother in England, Relating to the Concerns of Ireland in Matter of Trade* (1677), pg. 8, 21

50 Gibney, John. *Ireland and the Popish Plot* (2009), pgs. 1-165

51 *A Proclamation Against the Rebels in Ireland* (London and Dublin, 1660)

it is also true that this violence was primarily intended to take back Catholic land and power, rather than to exterminate Protestants for their religious beliefs. In 1661, the Earl of Orrery wrote to the Duke of Albemarle that the Irish Catholics were “as much embittered against the Protestants, as when the Rebellion broke forth” and later informed him of rumors of rebellion spreading across the country.⁵² Fear of violence quickly evolved into fear of invasion, spiking again in 1666 during the Anglo-Dutch War and Covenanter Rebellion as English Protestants began to feel the threat of Catholic alliance from the continent.⁵³ It didn’t help that the very next year John Temple’s Irish Rebellion was reprinted with visceral accounts of the supposed atrocities heaped upon Protestants in 1641; “scenes of hanging, burning, burial alive, mutilation, starvation, exposure to the elements, disembowelment, most especially of pregnant women... Children were fed to dogs and had their skulls smashed in, families forced to kill one another. Wives and daughters were raped in front of their husbands and fathers.”⁵⁴ In spreading pamphlets like these around Ireland, stories of the rebellion were used as part of a Protestant propaganda campaign that “sought to keep the public aware of the dangers of catholicism.”⁵⁵ The Protestant political faction kept the memory of the rebellion alive as a means of securing and maintaining their ascendancy; as long as there was still fear of the brutish Catholics, then the King surely couldn’t trust them with power over the civilized Englishmen.

The Protestant propaganda campaign

52 Declaration, pgs. 2-4, 21-7; J.G. Simms, “The Restoration, 1660-85,” NHL, iii, pg. 423. Cited in McCormack. *The Stuart Restoration*
 53 Greaves, “That’s No Good Religion,” pg. 125-6; Greaves, *Enemies*, pgs. 24-31. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 2: Popery,” pg. 97
 54 *An Account of the Bloody Massacre in Ireland: Acted by the Instigation of the Jesuits, Priests, and Friars* (London, 1679)
 55 Gibney. *Ireland and the Popish Plot*, pg. 117

came to a head in 1678 with the implication of a “Popish Plot,” in which the anti-Catholic faction attempted to exclude the Duke of York from the royal succession by spreading rumors of the dangers of a Catholic monarch.⁵⁶ It began with Titus Oates’ allegations to the House of Lords on October 31st, 1678 that James Lynch, Archbishop of Tuam, intended to “procure some persons to dispatch the King” and arrange for “the French King’s landing in Ireland,” and that “the Irish Catholics were ready to rise.” Oates also insisted that Peter Talbot, Archbishop of Dublin, had stated that “the fathers of society in Ireland were very vigilant to prepare the people to arise, for the defense of their liberty and religion, and to recover their estates.”⁵⁷ All at once Protestant fears had been realized: an organized rebellion from above, led by the Catholic church’s highest leaders, intending to take back Protestant land, allied with a powerful foreign nation, and of course planning to kill the King. The dominant peers like Ormond, Orrery, and Clarendon were quick to use the panic to their own advantage, breaking the power of the Catholic church in Ireland by executing their political opponents and sending “all popish prelates... to say their masses in France and Spain, and never to return again.”⁵⁸ Although the allegations were falsified, they achieved their goal of further weakening the Catholic base of power and spreading the rampant fear and mistrust of the religious majority, especially when faced with the most daunting threat of all: the rise of a Catholic monarch.

The reign of Charles II can be defined by factionalism and fear stimulated by the

56 Ibid., pg. 50
 57 Papers read before Lord’s Committee, 24, 30 Oct. 1678 (*HMC Rep. 11, app 2, pg. 17*); *Lords jn. Xiii*, pg. 303-4. Cited in Gibney. *Ireland and the Popish Plot*, pg. 28
 58 Luke Wadding, *A Small Garland of Pious and Godly Songs, Composed by a Devout Man* (Ghent, 1684), pg. 303-4. Cited in Gibney. *Ireland and the Popish Plot*, pg. 34

threatened loss of political, economic, and material power. Although the Restoration was welcomed at first, disillusionment and dissatisfaction quickly settled in when factions found their interests not being upheld. In a vicious cycle, innocent Catholics attempted to demonstrate their loyalty to the King and regain that which they had lost, who in turn could do nothing to help them without angering his Protestant subjects, both at home and abroad, who feared for the loss of their security and standing. Eventually, “an uneasy equilibrium prevailed,” and lesser questions of religious toleration and penalization were ignored in order to focus on more serious and extreme threats that challenged the crown.⁵⁹ In the context of Charles II’s reign, the Catholics, especially the native Gaelic Irish, suffered the most from religious, economic, and political policy. As a result of their second-class position, there are significantly fewer Catholic voices present in the recorded scholarship during the majority of the Restoration period. However, it is likely that they felt quite similar to how the Protestants did after their once-dominant faction fell from grace under the new Catholic King, James II.

III

The ascension of James II and transition to a Catholic monarchy threw into question the loyalties and expectations of every Irish subject, leading to a mixed reaction and a whole new set of secular grievances. The Protestant factions reacted the most violently to the succession, since, due to their minority position as colonial occupiers in Ireland, they were by far the most vulnerable to any loss of political favor. Opinion

in Ireland ranged from strong dissent in the Scottish north, to passionate loyalty for the Stuart regime, to calls for another Cromwellian Conquest.⁶⁰ Those who were out of favor with Charles II and his ministers in the first place welcomed the new opportunity, while the most adamant pro-Parliament Whig exclusionists actively considered rebellion. According to the allegations of men like Isaiah Amos and Robert Clarke, numerous Protestants in Ireland were rumored to have considered joining with the Monmouth rebels in England or the Argyll fighters in Scotland, leading to “a great deal of ill blood... between the English and Irish.”⁶¹ The Catholics, so long reviled as disloyal rebels, were keen to flip the narrative on their Protestant oppressors when the tables finally turned.

Nonetheless, the Catholic factions were by no means a united front during the succession of the new king. Those who had achieved full or partial restoration to their land under Charles II, namely the Old English and Palesmen, remained moderate, while their Gaelic Irish neighbors, entirely displaced by the restoration settlement, were significantly more aggressive and impatient with the political process.⁶² On Catholic expectations, the Jacobite landowner Charles O’Kelly wrote how he hoped the King “would forthwith restore to the heavenly powers their temples and altars, and also to the natives their properties and estates, of which they had been, for so many years, so unjustly despoiled.”⁶³ In July of 1686, Sir

⁶⁰ Bernard. “Ireland, 1688-91,” pg. 160

⁶¹ T.C. Bernard, “Sir William Petty, Irish Landowner,” in *History and Imagination: Essays in Honour of H.R. Trevor-Roper*, ed. H. Lloyd-Jones, V. Pearl and A.B. Worden (1981), pgs. 201-17. Cited in Bernard. “Ireland, 1688-91,” pg. 160; *HMC, Ormonde*, N.S. VII, 343, 345, 356, 377, 380, 390, 399, 401-2; Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana ... Second Part*, ‘Letter’, pp. 16-17; Bodl., MS Clarendon 88, fol. 186; *Clar. Corr.* I, 222-3; *HMC, Egmont*, II, 158f. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 3: That Unhappy Island,” pg. 6

⁶² Bernard. “Ireland, 1688-91,” pg. 159

⁶³ Gibney. “Ireland’s Restoration Crisis,” pg. 134; Charles O’Kelly, *Macariae Excidium; Or, The Destruction of Cyprus* (1850), pg. 15

⁵⁹ Harris. “Ch. 2: Popery,” pg. 99

Paul Rycout stated that “the Irish talk of nothing now but recovering their lands and bringing the English under their subjection” and Dr. William King retrospectively claimed that the Catholics “affirmed, both publicly and privately” that they would make the English “as poor devils as when they came first to Ireland.”⁶⁴ Moreover, the Leinster Catholics petitioned the King for equality “by rendering them and their posterity capable of employments, civil and military, and freedom of corporations” in the hope that “animosities will be forgot” and “discord and division removed.”⁶⁵ These recorded accounts from Irish Catholics of several different factions point to the economic and political primacy of their complaints; they were perfectly willing to settle for religious equality, but in secular matters they demanded supremacy.

Just as was the case under Charles II, the land settlement continued to be a contentious issue under James II. In the minds of the Catholics, it was inconceivable that the rise of the new King did not equate to the immediate restoration of their land. Nicholas French wrote in his *Twelve Quaeries Relating to the Interest of Ireland* that “no people upon the Face of the Earth” had been treated so “unchristianly and inhumanely” as the Irish.⁶⁶ In October of 1686, the Earl of Sunderland suggested that King James II issue a proclamation informing the Catholics that the land settlement would stand. In response, Sir Richard Nagle published his famous Coventry Letter as public propaganda, exposing Sunderland’s suggestion and arguing

that the issue of said proclamation would “tend to the dispeopling of the country, to the discouragement of trade, and to the disheartening of the Catholics of [Ireland]” and likely incite mass rioting as well.⁶⁷ However, not every Catholic was equally aggrieved; one report stated that “the natives” whose land had been restored “by the present settlement” would write a petition “to his Majesty not to alter it.”⁶⁸ Especially since King James II himself had received a massive estate from his brother King Charles II he was equally reluctant to undo the previous settlement and risk his material power, despite his religious ties to the Irishmen who had been robbed. On the other hand, the English who benefitted by the settlement saw it as a buttress against “an ocean of barbarism and poverty” which had transformed the island into “a fruitful, populous, and pleasant country.”⁶⁹ Regardless of confessional divisions, those who retained estates in Ireland had no desire to alter the land settlement, often at the expense of their own religious brethren.

With the change in monarchs also came a monumental shift in power. Under new royal policies, Catholics recovered civil offices, control of the army, and church properties and revenues, much to the offense of the Protestants who lost their ascendancy. Before Catholics could begin to fill government positions, the Duke of Ormond, enforcer of the high Protestant interest, had to go. In his place as Lord Lieutenant stepped the Earl of Clarendon, a man who Protestants could get behind as a buffer against “the intended total discarding of the Whigs in Ireland,” but ultimately one

64 “Sir Paul Rycout’s Memoranda and Letters from Ireland, 1686–1687,” ed. Patrick Melvin, *Analecta Hibernica*, XXVII (1972), pg. 157; William King, *The State of the Protestants of Ireland under the Late King James’s Government* (1691), p. 18; Harris. “Ch. 3: That Unhappy Island,” pg. 6

65 *Clar. Corr.*, I, pgs. 233–7. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 3: That Unhappy Island,” pg. 7

66 *HMC, Ormonde*, N.S. VII, 398; *Petty-Southwell Corr.*, pp. 149–50; *HMC, Egmont*, II, 161–2; *CClarSP*, V, 657. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 3: That Unhappy Island,” pg. 8

67 *HMC, Ormonde*, N.S. VII, 464–70; *Jacobite Narrative*, pgs. 193–201. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 3: That Unhappy Island,” pg. 29

68 *Clar. Corr.*, I, 188, 197, 211, 224, 231–2, 233–7, 239, 266–7, 272; *BL, MS Lansdowne 1152A*, fol. 393. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 3: That Unhappy Island,” pg. 8

69 *Bodl.*, *MS Clarendon 88*, fols. 131, 133v, 135v. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 3: That Unhappy Island,” pg. 8

who had nowhere near as much power as his predecessor did in controlling royal policy.⁷⁰ However, Clarendon was soon replaced by the Catholic Earl of Tyrconnel, at which point the Catholicization of Ireland began to accelerate rapidly. With nothing in his way, Tyrconnel enacted “a flurry of Catholic ennoblement and elevations” designed to establish “a vibrant Catholic peerage.”⁷¹ The rule of James II also ushered in a new era of legal justice for Catholics... and injustice for Protestants. The sheriffs were replaced by Catholic officers, the juries were filled with Catholic citizens, and the courts were stacked with Catholic judges.⁷² The clergy began to forbid their members to pay tithes to Protestant churches as was previously required; when the ministers complained, the courts would simply rule against them, or the sheriffs would refuse to execute the writs they obtained.⁷³ Landlords began experiencing similar transgressions when a confessional difference was present, such as between a Protestant lessor and a Catholic lessee, with William King writing that “for Two Years before the Revolution in England, very few [Protestants] received any profit out of their estates.”⁷⁴

One of the most prominent methods by which the King and his Catholic Commander-in-Chief, Richard Talbot, Earl of Tyrconnell, consolidated their power after the succession was through a vast military purge. Starting slow in the summer of 1686 and gradually accelerating from there, Tyrconnell replaced 90 percent of the armed forces with Catholic

soldiers.⁷⁵ Certain Protestant allies, like Henry Boyle, were spared from the purge in order to use their political influence to quell fears, but Tyrconnell was explicit in his insistence that officers be replaced only by “natives and those too of the Romish religion.”⁷⁶ As much as this Catholicization may appear to be religiously motivated, it is also true that the removed officers were mostly ex-Cromwellians who had already betrayed the Stuarts once. The Catholic soldiers on the other hand owed their positions to King James II, and their loyalty was absolute. At one point, Tyrconnell assured Clarendon that he “did not distinguish between Catholics and Protestants, but commissioned those who were loyal servants of the King,” although in this case it’s safe to assume he really only meant Catholics.⁷⁷ More controversial, however, was the disarming of all Protestant soldiers after rumors of their questionable loyalty drove doubt into the heart of the King. Despite being drawn along religious lines, this was a matter of political security, although the Protestants vehemently rejected the allegation that they were “not fit to be trusted with arms.”⁷⁸ Michael Boyle, Archbishop of Armagh, stated that the disarmament also left Protestants “vulnerable to attack from Irish Tories,” and William King adds on that the new troops stole “vast Sums of Mony” from “Protestant innkeepers” by refusing to pay for food, drink, and shelter.⁷⁹ Interestingly, the presence of “Tory” and “Whigg” in accounts of the conflicts between Catholic troops and Protestant civilians point toward the political

70 “Eight Anonymous and Confidential Letters to James II,” V, 361; VI, 3; Cited in Bernard, “Ireland, 1688-91,” pg. 163

71 Ohlmeyer, Jane. “The Peerage in Politics,” from her *Making Ireland English* (New Haven, 2012), ch. 12, pg. 355

72 Harris. “Ch. 3: That Unhappy Island,” pg. 25

73 *HMC, Ormonde*, N.S. VII, 491; Bodl., MS Clarendon 89, fol. 104; *Short View of the Methods*, p. 6; *Full and Impartial Accounts of all the Secret Consults*, pp. 130-2; King, *State of the Protestants of Ireland*, pgs. 197-8, 204. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 3: That Unhappy Island,” pg. 27

74 King, *State of the Protestants of Ireland*, pg. 118

75 Harris. “Ch. 3: That Unhappy Island,” pg. 25

76 Bernard. “Ireland, 1688-91,” pg. 164

77 Patrick Melvin, ‘Sir Paul Rycault’s Memoranda and Letters from Ireland 1686-1687’, *Analecta Hibernica*, 27 (1972), p. 149

78 *HMC, Egmont*, II, 157; T. C. Barnard, ‘Athlone, 1685; Limerick, 1710: Religious Riots or Charivaris’, *Studia Hibernica*, 27 (1993), pg. 66-7. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 3: That Unhappy Island,” pg. 12

79 *HMC, Ormonde*, NS, VII, 349, 391; King, *State of the Protestants of Ireland*, pg. 121. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 3: That Unhappy Island,” pg. 13, 21

nature of the disagreement; Catholic and Protestant were less so religious denominations and more likely associated as political parties. Just as the Catholics experienced under Charles II, the Protestants found themselves unable to hold office, find justice in the legal system, or serve in the military, and although this transition was defined along religious lines, there is no doubt that their grievances related more to the loss of power and influence than anything else.

Catholicization also severely impacted the Church of Ireland, but for secular reasons more so than any religious agenda. Firstly, Protestant clergy were slowly replaced by Catholic officials, often those whose ancestors had filled the seats several decades earlier.⁸⁰ This change in the episcopacy was enacted because James II needed officials that were loyal to him, not ministers that would actively preach against his interest. For example, Protestant clerics coming out of Trinity College Dublin, namely Edward Wetenhall, used the pulpit to speak against the King with God backing their words. Archdeacon Synge, lecturing after the succession, reminded his congregation that “God sometimes [allows] enemies to triumph in order to... test... the faithful.”⁸¹ Evidently, the King could not have preachers inflaming his subjects and calling his Majesty an “enemy,” so the power of the episcopacy had to be broken in order to ensure his political security. Moreover, Catholic clerics aimed for the return of the church property that had been taken from them during the Conquest: sacred spaces with ancestral burial grounds.⁸² Protestant clerics like John Vesey, Archbishop of Tuam, feared that the new King would hand the sacred

ground back, saying “We are taking care of our churches. God knows how long we may keep them.”⁸³ Just like the land settlement, the King refused to act in favor of one sect or the other, fearing the chaos such favoritism would incite. Nevertheless, after 1688 violence began to break out across the island as Catholics took matters into their own hands, knowing they would be protected by the courts, and the result was a rise in confessional tension not seen since the Exclusion Crisis a few years earlier.

With tensions between Protestants and Catholics reaching a boiling point, an “us versus them” mentality developed to a level that would eventually plunge the Kingdoms back into war and lose James II his crown. Protestants were certainly intimidated to an extent, but nothing close to 1641 occurred without the provocation of Protestant propaganda. Pamphlets were circulated that reignited the fear of violence to heights akin to the Popish Plot. Tyrconnell was alleged to have freedom from “the Slavery of their Conquerors,” Athlone was rumored to have been put to the sword, and word of Catholic massacres to the extent of 1641 created mass panic and a Protestant exodus from the island in late 1688 and 1689.⁸⁴ The abundance and extremity of propaganda at this time had etched 1641 into the minds of every Protestant in Ireland over the last 30 years: “the burnt child dreads the fire, and have not forgot.”⁸⁵ The intensity of the otherization is best brought out in 1688’s *A Vindication of Tyrconnell’s Government of Ireland*, which

83 J. Vesey, *A Sermon Preached at Clonmell, on Sunday the Sixteenth of September, 1683. At the Assizes held for the County Palatine of Tipperary* (Dublin, 1683)

84 *An Account of a Late Horrid and Bloody Massacre in Ireland* (1689), pgs. 1-2; *Great News from Athlone and Waterford* (1690); H. Murtagh, *Athlone: History and Settlement to 1800* (Athlone, 2000), pg. 149. Cited in Harris, Tim. “Ch. 10: ‘This Wofull Revolution’ in Ireland,” from his *Revolution: The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy, 1685-1720* (2006), pgs. 422-76; Bernard. “Ireland, 1688-91,” pg. 179

85 Surrey R.O., MS 1248/1, fo. 227. Cited in Bernard. “Ireland, 1688-91,” pg. 179

80 Bernard. “Ireland, 1688-91,” pg. 162

81 Private Collection, Greenwich: R. Synge, sermons on Matthew, 6, v. 34 (2 Dec. 1683). Cited in Bernard. “Ireland, 1688-91,” pg. 172

82 Bernard. “Ireland, 1688-91,” pg. 176

argues that Ireland thrived more “under the Influence of a Native-Governour, than under any Stranger to us and our Country.” The tract continues to say that, “Former Governours” had “brought over as many Strangers to us, as lick’d up all the Employments in Church and State... to the Grief of the whole Nation.”⁸⁶ The Catholic grievances described in the text are not religious at heart, for they argue for rule not by a Catholic, but by an Irishman who will put their own interest before England’s. In response, Protestant writers asserted that the Irish should be grateful for English government, and “beholding to us for reducing them from a state of Barbarity... and taught them to Live... like humane Creatures.”⁸⁷ It was this Irish prejudice, combined with an intense fear of violence, that created such a deep fissure between the two nations. By supporting the Catholics so publicly, James II drove his Protestant subjects into the waiting arms of his enemy, William of Orange.

IV

With the invasion of the Dutch King and the flight of James II from the throne, the religious divide in Ireland appeared wider than ever. However, what has naturally been considered a religious war due to the demographics of its combatants could not be further from one. The two kings themselves fought for the power of becoming an absolute monarch. The Catholics—and some royalist Protestants—fought out of loyalty to James II, realizing that he could no longer refuse to repeal the land settlement, as anything less

would cause “the whole nation [to] abandon him.”⁸⁸ The Protestants—and some Catholics who retained their land—supported William as their deliverer from “Catholic tyranny,” and to see the maintenance of the land settlement and the restoration of their positions in church and state.⁸⁹ It is apparent that this war was merely fought, for the most part, along religious lines, but for the true secular purposes of controlling the land, offices, and crown of Ireland and the other two kingdoms. After William’s decisive victory at the Battle of the Boyne in July of 1690, he reacted in much the same way as Cromwell, Charles II, or James II had acted before him. The ascendancy of the victor’s Protestant faction was once again confirmed, the penal codes were again enforced more strictly against the Catholics, and forfeited Irish acreage was conferred as royal largesse to the new King’s favorites and allies, dropping Catholic holdings down to 14 percent.⁹⁰

In 1692, Sir Richard Cox, writing in *Hibernica Anglicana* stated that “this great concern” had “so silenced all the rest, that at this Day we know no difference of Nation but what is expressed by Papist and Protestant.”⁹¹ With the benefit of hindsight, however, it is safe to say that there was much more at stake in Ireland throughout the Restoration period than which denomination maintained religious control. Rather, Catholic and Protestant acted more so as political parties, with each sect—and the factions within them—battling for possession and control over political and economic power. King Charles II chose not to upend the status quo after the fall of Cromwell, and he ruled for

86 *A Vindication of the Present Government of Ireland, under His Excellency Richard Earl of Tirconnell* (1688), pgs. 1-12

87 *A Letter From a Gentleman In Ireland to His Friend In London: Upon Occasion of a Pamphlet Entituled a Vindication of the Present Government of Ireland Under His Excellency Richard Earl of Tyrconnel.* Dublin: [s.n.], 1688, pgs. 2-4

88 *Life of James II*, II, 360. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 10: ‘This Wofull Revolution,’” pgs. 14, 20

89 Harris. “Ch. 10: ‘This Wofull Revolution,’” pg. 28

90 Ohlmeyer. “The Restoration,” pg. 335; J.G. Simms, *The Williamite Conflsaction in Ireland, 1690-1703* (1956). Cited in Bernard. “Ireland, 1688-91,” pg. 161

91 Cox, *Hibernica Anglicana*, sig. c2. Cited in Harris. “Ch. 10: ‘This Wofull Revolution,’” pg. 51

25 long years of relative equilibrium. On the other hand, his brother King James II chose to revolutionize Ireland and build a new system according to his own wishes... and was ousted after just 5 years. Evidently, there was a distinct shift in Irish grievances that occurred during the succession in 1685 after James II changed the status quo. While many of these grievances remained the same, the people making them were not—the balance of power had shifted. Ultimately, Irish issues were divided along confessional lines, but not defined by them. They were more so about factional control and national identity, rather than religious belief and ideology. Class divisions revealed the depths of Irish grievance, since the upper class nobility, clergy, and gentry had much more to lose than the lower classes. The people of Ireland fought for the constitutional rights and security to live their lives and make their own choices. In the end, while the long struggle that occurred from 1660 to 1690 was fought between rival religions, the grievances they raised were first and foremost about gaining and maintaining political and economic power over those who sought to take it from them.