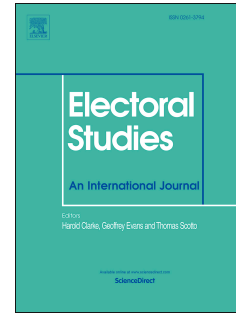


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**Title Page**

**New Members as Party Modernisers: the Case of the Democratic Unionist Party in Northern Ireland**

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## New Members as Party Modernisers: the Case of the Democratic Unionist Party in Northern Ireland

### Abstract

Amid the literature on members of political parties, surprisingly little has been written on the potential or actual impacts that can be made upon party strategy or policies of a rapid influx of new members. New members may have different outlooks and desires than long-standing members. Although already sympathetic to the party they are joining, new arrivals, if arriving in large numbers, may hold sufficiently revisionist views to be able to re-orientate a political party in a direction not previously taken. Using data from the first-ever membership survey of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) in Northern Ireland, the largest party in the Northern Ireland Assembly since 2003 and the fourth largest UK parliamentary party since 2005, this article analyses whether more recent joiners of the Party have brought greater pragmatism and moderation to an organisation previously dominated by hardline political, religious and ethnic attitudes. Modernisation from outsiders who become insiders can be a key aspect of party development. The DUP offers one of the stiffest tests of modernisation, given its history of opposition to moderation. This article shows that newer members have tempered beliefs in one of the most robustly ethno-religious parties in Europe.

**Keywords:** parties, members; political change; religion; Democratic Unionist Party

### 1. Introduction

The extent to which an influx of members can change political parties is a surprisingly under-researched subject, given the importance of the interplay between voters, party members and political leaders. New members provide parties with the possibility of renewal, fresh ideas, ideological adaptation and policy modernisation. They may reinvigorate a party, increase its organisational professionalization and force a rethink of dated existing orthodoxies (e.g. Panebianco 1988; Katz and Mair 1994). New arrivals may possess the capacity to challenge party leaderships, shift ideas and restructure the relationship between party leaders and followers, as well as changing a party's relationships with its political opponents.

Given key roles of sustainability and renewal, a political party's membership and the capacity to attract new recruits are vital to its survival and prospering. In particular, a party's membership – and changes to that membership – may significantly alter the political direction undertaken by its leadership. If new members bring particular aspirations to a party, it may be

difficult for its leadership to cling to previous verities. Equally, new influxes of members may threaten the internal cohesion associated with long-standing, loyal party memberships. Much depends upon whether joiners seek group solidarity and strong ideological compatibility, or wish to reshape the party through the use of internal voting powers, including, increasingly, the choice of party leader (Whiteley and Seyd 2002). Rohlfing's (2015: 1) cross-national study, covering 61 parties across 11 western democracies, suggested a weak but nonetheless significant policy effect from membership change. As Rohlfing contends, 'only a few quantitative studies have focused on the influence of members' and, he insists that general research on party membership change 'should be complemented with in-depth case studies' (ibid: 18-25).

This article thus offers one such case study, assessing whether the arrival of new members in a party historically seen as an uncompromising ethno-religious entity – the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) in Northern Ireland – has helped bring a new relative moderation. The piece draws upon the first-ever membership survey of the DUP to examine whether a different type of member has joined the DUP since the 1998 'peace deal', the Good Friday Agreement. This newer member may have helped change the Party from a bastion of protest into a more mainstream political actor, one readily participating in political structures and leaving behind its earlier religious and political ferocity. More recent joiners may facilitate actual and potential policy change via divergence of views from longer standing members. Given the DUP's distinctive history of a robust ethno-religious outlook, barriers to moderation and pragmatism were considerable. As such, the DUP offers a useful test of the importance of new members in allowing change and adaptation, in this case towards new political realities of power-sharing with 'enemies' and movement of the party from religious vehicle.

## **2. New party members as potential agents of change**

Various studies have indicated how political parties, as holistic entities, respond to the priorities and concerns of voters and have demonstrated how electoral contexts affect the level of

responsiveness (e.g. Stimson et al. 1995; Hobolt and Klemmensen 2008; Spoon and Kluver 2014). We also know that there are considerable tendencies towards party convergence in respect of social and economic cleavages, diminished class identity and shared voter preferences (e.g. Mair et al. 1999; Evans 2000; Elff 2009).

What though of changes in the outlook of political parties as they attract new recruits? Party members may be important in shaping the attitudes and policies of political parties, notwithstanding considerable variation between parties in the amount of internal democracy and membership influence granted by leaders (Strom 1990; Scarrow 1994). There are three dimensions in which members can shape parties: organisation; policy and inclusivity of outlook (Gunther and Diamond 2003: 171). Crucially for our study, the second and third aspects of membership include 'the strategy and behavioural norms of the party, specifically, whether, the party is *tolerant* and *pluralistic* or *proto-hegemonic* in its objectives and behavioural style' (ibid, italics in original). As meso-level actors, party members may offer important mediation between the concerns of ordinary electors and elite-level party leaderships. Yet new members may bring problems, with differences evident between the 'arrivistes' and the 'old guard' and the risk of damaging internal factionalism.

Whilst there is a reasonable assumption that members of a political party at least share its basic ideological outlook (Katz 1990) even the most ostensibly united and uniform parties will contain some divergence of opinion. Internal debates over the appropriateness of ideological or policy change may be shaped by a number of factors, including the strength of party leadership; the degree of internal democracy; the background and perceptions of members; prospects for internal advancement up the party hierarchy; future recruitment; electoral constituencies; and the nature of party competition. The extent of division around these variables has led scholars to debate whether parties see their members as assets, helping drive and replenish their organisation, or liabilities, ideological brakes, isolating their party from the realities of electoral competition. This debate over the influence of members needs to be accompanied by a more specific focus upon the impact of

new joiners of a party. In an era when memberships of political parties have, with significant exceptions, generally waned in Western Europe (van Biezen et al. 2012) what can new members do to reinvigorate a party and steer it in a fresh direction, recasting appeals to voters? A further important question to be asked of new members is whether they are 're-treads', previously members of an alternative, rival political party? Will they bring at least some of the values and ideas of their former party with them, reshaping the outlook of their new party? Large numbers of defections from one party to another may recalibrate party positions. We now apply some of these questions to a party which has been subject to sizeable intakes of a) new members and b) former members of a rival party – the DUP in Northern Ireland.

### **3. Case Study: From oppositional religious cult to party of government: the Democratic Unionist Party in Northern Ireland**

The question of how political parties change is particularly important in the Northern Ireland case, a party system still beset by acute ethno-national and ethno-religious faultlines. In an era of assumed western secularism and movement away from religiously-oriented political parties, the DUP, historically one of the most fundamentalist Protestant parties in Europe, has markedly improved its position. It has been the largest party in the Northern Ireland Assembly since 2003 and the fourth largest in the UK parliament since 2005, currently jointly with the Liberal Democrats.

Motivation for substantial party adaptation can appear slight in Northern Ireland, where, effectively, two separate elections take place, one within the Protestant-Unionist-British bloc and the other within the Catholic-Nationalist-Irish bloc. Electoral appeals within the Unionist bloc have historically focused predominantly on the need to maintain Northern Ireland's position within the United Kingdom. The formation of the DUP in 1971 was in response to the onset of armed conflict amid challenge from Irish nationalists to that position. The DUP created intra-bloc electoral rivalry with the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), the dominant Unionist party from 1920 until supplanted by the DUP from 2003, amid Unionist anger over aspects of Northern Ireland's 'peace deal', the Good

Friday Agreement. The DUP's more working-class base introduced an element of social cleavage into unionist bloc politics, but the contest within unionism was principally over which party best defended the union of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

However, the DUP also heightened the religious component of unionism. The Party was led from its creation until 2008 by the Reverend Ian Paisley, who had also founded his own hardline Protestant Free Presbyterian Church in 1951 (see Bruce 1986; 2007). Often, the divisions between Church and Party were blurred, as the DUP offered politicised Protestantism. The legacy of that era remains. The largest single denominational category within the party, at almost one-third of the membership, is Free Presbyterian, even though that Church accounts for merely one per cent of Protestants in Northern Ireland (Tonge et al. 2014). The DUP was long seen as a vehicle for assertions of Protestant fundamentalism. Free Presbyterian strictures on alcohol, smoking and even line dancing were also accompanied by controversial DUP-backed campaigns to prohibit Sunday opening of amenities and to 'Save Ulster from Sodomy', with Northern Ireland the last region of the UK to legalise homosexuality, in 1982.

Based upon Paisleyite religious strictures, DUP ideology was akin to theocracy: the Protestants of Ulster were a 'chosen people', to be saved from being trundled into a Roman Catholic Ireland. The Party opposed any compromise with the Irish republican 'enemy'. Thus, in consideration of the Gunther and Diamond (2003) typology outlined above, the strategy and behavioural norms of the DUP were largely intolerant and non-pluralistic, instead favouring unionist hegemony and the supremacy of a particularistic regional Protestant British loyalism. The Party operated as a top-down, organisationally limited, cadre, distinguished by religious exclusivity, social conservatism and a fusion of moral and political strictures. The rarity of an anti-modernist, religiously-dominated western European party, whose leader drew upon Biblical inspiration to devise party policy, made the DUP difficult to conceptualise within existing party typologies. Kirchheimer's (1966) denominational mass party came closest, although the DUP was a more close-

knit, tiny organisation than his conceptualisation might suggest. The DUP did attempt to broaden its appeal beyond its very small and narrow membership, operating as a 'catch-us' party within a single ethnic bloc, appealing, on a cross-class basis, to Protestants who were religiously conservative, politically wary of the dilution of Northern Ireland's Britishness, or economically insecure, the latter explaining working-class DUP support (see Evans and Duffy 1997).

Given all the above, the potential for substantial DUP change may have appeared limited. Niche parties tend to have stronger ideological commitment than those in the political mainstream. The arrival of a large cluster of new members within the DUP at the start of the twenty-first century was unexpected. The party was long seen as one of the most anti-modernist, leader-dominated, religious parties anywhere in Western Europe, its political obituary prematurely offered at the time of the Good Friday Agreement. The party appeared to some to be a relic of a fading era of religious zealotry and political obduracy.

Scarrow and Gezgor's (2010) analysis of European party memberships found that whilst they had once been characterised by greater religious observance than the rest of the populations, processes of secularism had been apparent within parties to a significant degree, to the extent that there was little difference between them and the wider population - although religiosity retained significance, at a declining level, in respect of membership of right-wing parties, a category into which the DUP falls. It should be acknowledged that 'right-wing' in Northern Ireland tends to conflate hardline constitutional positions – vehement support for Northern Ireland's place within the UK – with economic or moral views and left-right tests can be unsatisfactory. However, it is worth noting that on a zero (left-wing) to ten (right-wing) scale, DUP members score their party at a mean 7.8 and themselves at 7.7, sizeably to the right of the UUP, scored by DUP members at 5.9.

The DUP membership retains a very high level of religious observance with 78 per cent claiming to attend church at least once per month and 82 per cent describing themselves as very or fairly religious (Tonge et al. 2014). This contrasts with an average 20 per cent of party members in



Great Britain identifying as religiously observant (Scarrow and Gezgor 2010: 835). The religious zeal of DUP members bonded the party and had some electoral appeal to a socially conservative, religiously-minded Protestant population. As Raymond (2011: 127) notes, 'religious values ... continue to form an important base of electoral support for parties of the right ... those who remain faithful continue to comprise a highly salient political cleavage' (see also Elff 2007; Norris and Inglehart 2004).

In Northern Ireland, the 1998 Good Friday Agreement created institutional change and opportunities for regional governance. A governing Executive and Assembly were established on consociational principles, with mandatory cross-community power-sharing between (British) Unionists and (Irish) Nationalists/Republicans. Initially the DUP strongly opposed this new dispensation, as it had the ill-fated, short-lived previous experiment in devolved power-sharing a quarter of a century earlier. This opposition derived partly from the party's belief in majoritarianism; but more significantly because of antipathy towards sharing government with republicans, at a time when they (in Sinn Fein) still declined to support the police in Northern Ireland and remained linked to the IRA, whose prisoners were released following the Good Friday Agreement.

In opposing the Agreement, the DUP attracted significant recruitment from the UUP. Indeed ex-UUP members make up a strikingly high one-quarter of the DUP membership. The UUP defectors opposed their former party's willingness to conclude a deal with republicans in advance of IRA decommissioning and disbandment. However, they supported the idea of devolved power-sharing and did not want to see Northern Ireland consigned to a further indefinite period of direct rule from the Westminster Parliament, as had been the case since May 1974. They entered a DUP which, five years after the Good Friday Agreement, became the largest party in Northern Ireland and, three years later, in 2006, having continued to attract new members (political novices and ex-UUP members) concluded its own deal with republicans, the St Andrews Agreement. This deal was very similar to the 1998 deal in constitutional terms. The main difference lay in Sinn Fein's decision to

support the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the changed context: the Provisional IRA abandoned its campaign and decommissioned its weapons in 2005.

The DUP had been successful in its ethnic outbidding strategy, becoming the largest Unionist party on the basis of robust opposition to political compromises with Irish republicans which concerned many within the Protestant-Unionist-British ethnic bloc. The party attracted a large influx of new members - more than one-third of DUP members joined in the decade after the Good Friday Agreement – who shared the attributes of earlier joiners of high levels of activism. With the chance to represent the bulk of Unionist voters in the new devolved political institutions, would these new members eschew majoritarianism and back the mandatory cross-community power sharing which underpinned the 1998 Good Friday and 2006 St Andrews agreements? Moreover, would an influx of less religiously-devoted members to the DUP, either political novices or refugees from a rival unionist party, dilute the DUP's religious outlook? The changing members of the DUP were now located in a party which had moved from the status of oppositional religious cult, an organisation of perma-protest, to the largest governing party within the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly, institutions headed by a DUP First Minister.

This new scenario yielded significant challenges, as Unionist electors could conceivably make electoral choices on rationale beyond sabre-rattling for the preservation of Northern Ireland's place in the UK. 'Valence without consensus' may be evident. The valence models offered by, as examples, Green (2007); Green and Hobolt (2008) and Vegetti (2014) are only partially applicable to Northern Ireland, in that, palpably, ideology – unionist or nationalist – continues to dominate voter choice. However, intra-bloc electoral choice may now be based upon, firstly, perceptions of governing competence by Unionist Party A compared to Unionist Party B and secondly and relatedly, similar comparisons on which party better delivers on issues (e.g. welfare) for the Unionist community. Both of these determinants of voter choice may be shaped by the quality of party memberships, given that they are low in size and consequently a very high percentage of party members – approximately

20 per cent - are also elected representatives, either in the UK parliament, the Northern Ireland Assembly or on local councils. Changes in DUP membership are thus likely to be significant. But *how* has the party changed? In the section below we examine the qualitative evidence offered via a sample of the 107 interviews conducted with party members, from the leader downwards (mainly comprising senior elected representatives) in terms of the influence of newer members upon the party, drawing upon material from those supportive of - and opposed to - the moderation of the DUP. Following this section, we move to test a series of hypotheses assessing the quantitative evidence as to whether the post-Good Friday Agreement intake of new DUP members has helped tame the 'DUP beast'.

#### **4. How has the influx of moderates changed the DUP? Evidence from within the party**

The DUP is still not an organisation associated with moderation. Nonetheless the party came to accept the vast bulk of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement it so bitterly opposed. Only one major change was evident in the successor St Andrews Agreement: the major 'victory' of Sinn Fein being obliged to support the Police Service of Northern Ireland. The remainder of what was rejected in 1998 was accepted in 2006, albeit within the improved context of the exit of the Provisional IRA: devolved power-sharing with republicans in a formal grand coalition, with mutual vetoes; North-South bodies, a British-Irish Council and an Intergovernmental Conference. By 2010, the DUP had moderated sufficiently to accept sharing devolved responsibilities for policing and justice with republicans. By 2015 the DUP was sufficiently content with the institutional apparatus it had once rejected that it volunteered to re-enter government with Sinn Fein even after an intelligence report suggested that Provisional IRA structures remained in place (Northern Ireland Office 2015).

Proving that party policy changes occurred directly as a consequence of new arrivals is a difficult task, particularly given the DUP's prior reputation as a top-down party. Policy formulation is not such a straightforward linear process that the arrival of new cohort X leads to the emergence of

policy Y. The embedding within policy-making structures of new arrivals made a significant difference nonetheless. Although policy-making within the DUP is formally ratified by a 150-strong Central Executive Committee which includes the party grassroots, it is Northern Ireland Assembly members (MLAs) and MPs within the party's Policy Unit, which also comprises ministerial Special Advisors, who are the dominant policy-makers (Matthews 2015). A very sizeable proportion, 39 per cent, of DUP MLAs joined the party after 1998 and all Special Advisors did likewise. The assumption at the time that these were merely 'refusenik hardliners' (some defecting from the UUP) is not upheld. Most were pro-devolution pragmatists who wanted a better-organised, less religious party which could resolve outstanding issues. These moderates wished to reshape an organisation which, as a DUP former Minister put it, 'wasn't a Christian party, it was a Protestant party. That was reflected in the terminology, in the policies, in a whole range of things, how policies were framed' (interview with Nelson McCausland MLA, 9 January 2013). Arlene Foster, who defected from the UUP and became a DUP minister, recalls being asked: 'Are you going to become Free Presbyterian? ... There was that perception and that mindset even back in the early 2000s about DUP equals Free Presbyterianism' (interview 24 January 2013).

The onset of devolution shifted the focus of decision-making away from the Westminster Parliament towards the Northern Ireland Assembly, with MLAs playing a key role, whilst the party opened up internal democratic forums, including on policy development and introduce a policy conference, as well as the broader Autumn party conference. Private polling and internal focus groups showing strong support for devolved power-sharing reflected the desires of newer members for regional governance rather than direct British rule. The newer intake of elected representatives recognised the need for pragmatism and re-negotiation, which meant the DUP had to drop its insistence on Unionist majority rule within devolved structures. As one defector from the UUP, the MP Jeffrey Donaldson put it, he joined the DUP when it was 'at the bottom of the curve of change' but could see the potential to alter things: 'Emotionally I understood why the DUP left the talks [on the Good Friday Agreement] but I thought it was a mistake ... it wasn't possible to discard everything

[in the GFA] ... given the opportunity they [the DUP] could deliver the kind of changes that were necessary ... if you want to be the leading voice in Unionism you have to lead with pragmatism' (interview 8 March 2013).

Richard Bullick, Special Advisor to Peter Robinson, the First Minister of Northern Ireland from 2008, was also cognisant of the need for change:

'By 2001 there was a clear view from ourselves that whilst the present arrangement was very unpopular, devolution wasn't unpopular and we didn't want to be seen to be running a policy which said we want to bring devolution down and replace it with nothing else - that wasn't going to do the job ... subtly we introduced into the language, we talked about renegotiation of the agreement as opposed to its complete removal' (interview, 8 February 2013).

The Special Advisor was explicit in the need to confine decision-making to a small party grouping to achieve further progress. After talks at Leeds Castle in 2004 talks, Jonathan Powell, Special Advisor to the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, had met a large group of DUP representatives, including many of the 'old guard' opposed to compromise, in an ill-tempered meeting. Bullick recalls 'reconvening the next morning in a much more private meeting with Powell ... where it was agreed that this was not a solution that could be brought about and we would have to reconvene in London with much more limited people' (interview 8 February 2013). These 'much more limited people' comprised mainly new members of the party, working with the party leader, his advisors and the deputy leader. This marginalisation of non-moderates is confirmed by a leading opponent of the new moderation, Jim Allister, who quit the DUP in protest to form the rival Traditional Unionist Voice party: 'Powell apparently objected to other DUP that he wouldn't be talking to the DUP again if I was in the group. The way that was met with the party, it came pretty clear to me that there was a lot more going on than I realised behind the scenes, a considerable orchestration of effort to get to the point of getting in to government with Sinn Fein' (interview 18 April 2013).

The change in direction was backed by many of the new influx. As one woman DUP MLA, later to become a minister, put it, the DUP 'has changed for the better. This party was founded on

opposition. We opposed the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the Good Friday Agreement. To move from opposition to government requires a certain cultural change in the mind-set ... We have to accept the fact that we have to share this place' (interview, 10 January 2013). A 2002 defector from the UUP, Peter Weir, declared that the Party could no longer be about trying to 'wreck assemblies or boycott things ... something that doesn't involve unionists and nationalists is pie-in-the-sky stuff' (interview, 9 November 2012). Newer MLAs offered support for all-island bodies (once seen as Trojan horses for a united Ireland), remarking variously that 'there's a lot of good work being done' (interview, 20 September 2012) and that 'we could learn a lot from the North-South bodies' (interview, 19 November 2012) whilst the First Minister's Special Advisor claimed: 'We have managed to take the issue of North-South relations almost entirely off the political agenda ... we made it clear we would be more than happy to play our part in sensible North-South cooperation' (interview 8 February 2013).

In terms of policing changes, the DUP, having initially rejected wholesale the changes wrought to policing by the Patten Commission (1999) switched its position. Again newer members argued internally that nationalist endorsement of the police, encouraged by Patten, was something the party needed to foster. One former member of a Policing Board, a 2003 DUP joiner, insisted that 'it is a positive that nationalists are now engaging with the police and engaging with police structures. I think it is a good thing for society and for police structures as well' (interview with Alistair Ross, 5 November 2012). Another post-1998 joiner and elected representative accepted that 'every organisation needs to consider reform ... the Patten report [which changed policing in Northern Ireland] was to fill a political vacuum (interview, 30 November 2012). The MLA Peter Weir argued in respect of policing reform that 'things have not worked out too badly' (interview, 9 November 2012) and that in respect of 50-50 Catholic- Non-Catholic police recruitment 'everyone can understand the reason why it was done'.

Even in areas where moderation has yet to be revealed, change may follow in the Party. A woman DUP MLA (interview, 20 September 2012) argued, in supporting change on abortion law, 'Women should be able to make their own decisions in life. It shouldn't be a man in a suit telling them what to do'. A DUP minister and former DUP policy officer, who joined the Party in the early 2000s, accepted that in respect of Protestant Orange Order parades, 'you need some form of regulation. Those from an Orange tradition need to recognise that as much as anyone else ... You need to protect everyone in some form of framework' (interview, 6 November 2012). Indeed the DUP brought forward proposals for parade regulation in 2013 but these were rejected by other Unionist groups. The same minister claimed that new moderation had produced productive relationships with Sinn Fein, the traditional republican 'enemy': 'I felt I had to have a relationship with them individually and collectively. The chamber is just pantomime, that's for show. Canteens, corridors, committee rooms, right across the board, actually relationships are pretty good.'

Thus a combination of the arrival of members with greater pragmatism and moderation, the isolation of some of the 'old guard' and the changed political context contributed to a markedly revised political approach from the DUP. Having initially rejected virtually all aspects of the agreement accepted by its political rival, the UUP, the DUP came to endorse so much that, one senior DUP minister commented that he 'couldn't name a single policy area in which there is a significant difference between us and them' (interview, 6 November 2012). The DUP negotiated only slight modifications to the institutional arrangements in the 2006 St Andrews Agreement. The new moderates within the Party reflected the desires of the support base for devolved government. Indeed DUP supporters are second only to Sinn Fein's in terms of enthusiasm for the power-sharing dispensation (Evans and Tonge 2014).

## 5. Hypotheses

We have highlighted via qualitative material above how newer members of the DUP helped reshape party policy to effectively accept most of what had previously been rejected in the Good Friday Agreement. We now wish to use the data collected between 2012 and 2013 from our survey of DUP members to test various hypotheses regarding the differences in views between pre- and post-1998 DUP joiners. 408 members responded to a detailed questionnaire, a response rate of 52 per cent of the members surveyed (75 per cent of the entire membership).

We test three hypotheses in order to ascertain whether those who joined the DUP from 1998 onwards (i.e. the year of the Good Friday Agreement) hold significantly different attitudes from those who joined in the 1971-97 era, when the conflict paradigm pertained, regional political opportunity structures were minimal (the Northern Ireland parliament was suspended from 1972 onwards) and the Party was often seen as a religious vehicle.

H1. That those who joined the DUP from 1998 onward are significantly more likely to support the cross-community power-sharing and bi-national all-island political arrangements established under the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement compared to those holding longer membership of the Party.

H2. That more recent DUP joiners are more receptive to the internal reforms within Northern Ireland which followed the Good Friday Agreement, such as changes to the police service, compared to those who joined earlier and are less likely to view the Protestant community as disadvantaged as a consequence of such changes.

H3. That those who joined the DUP from 1998 onward are significantly less likely to favour faith and church holding influence over the party compared to earlier joiners.

In respect of each hypothesis, we also wish to test whether former membership of the UUP, the more moderate of the two main unionist parties, acts as a significant variable, with ex-UUP members seen as potentially more likely to support power-sharing, all-island bodies and a



diminution of religious influence within the DUP. For this reason, we present two models for each dependent variable: one where post-1998 members are compared with older members; and a second one in which we also look into the differences between ex-UUP members and other members joining after 1998. This will help us understand whether the changes come from all new members or whether they are due to an influx of members coming from the UUP. We expect members coming from the more secular UUP to be significantly less religious in outlook than other new members and as such their political positions are less likely to have been determined by religious and moral opposition to the Good Friday Agreement and more likely to be grounded in pragmatism. Descriptive statistics of dependent and independent variables can be found in the Appendix.

## 6. Findings

*Hypothesis 1: Newer DUP members are happier with the power-sharing and all-island institutional architecture of the Good Friday Agreement than older members*

Our first hypothesis tests the extent of contentment with the mandatory cross-community power sharing required under the consociational arrangements of Strand One of the Good Friday Agreement and restated in the St Andrews Agreement. Executive ministries are shared between unionists and nationalists according to party strengths in the Assembly, under the D'Hondt formula and the Executive collapses if it is not cross-community. Legislation requires weighted majority consent across the sectarian divide in the Northern Ireland Assembly, in which members designate as 'Unionist', 'Nationalist' or 'Other'. Strand Two of the Good Friday Agreement established a North-South Ministerial Council to develop consultation, cooperation and action in 12 areas of mutual interest across the entire island of Ireland.

In testing whether newer members of the DUP (i.e. those who joined in 1998 or after) are more supportive of these arrangements, once reviled but now accepted by their party, we put the proposition that 'Ministries should be shared between unionist and nationalist parties'. A slight

majority of members agreed, but support was not overwhelming; 10 per cent 'strongly support' the principle with a further 41.2 per cent offering 'support'. 20.3 per cent 'disagree' and a further 8.7 per cent 'strongly disagree'.

Of those supportive of power sharing, it is indeed newer members who agree more strongly, as the ordered logistic regression in Table 1 indicates (column 1).<sup>1</sup> On average, new members are 13 per cent more likely than older members to agree or strongly agree with power sharing. Moreover, as can be seen in Table 1, column 2, the effect is very similar for both ex-UUP members and members without a previous party membership (differences between both groups are not significant at  $p < 0.1$ ). It is being a more recent joiner *per se* that is of greater import than whether a member is a political 'novice' or a former member of the DUP's more moderate rival. Age does not have a significant effect, which indicates this is not a generational issue but a matter of when members joined the party. Female and more educated party members, however, are significantly more supportive of power sharing.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In all models we control for gender, social class, age and education. New and old members are similar regarding gender and social class composition, but new members are younger (and therefore also somewhat better educated) than older members. The controls ensure that differences in outlook are not due to young Protestants being more liberal and better educated but to a process whereby the DUP has attracted relatively more moderate members since 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Note that we are more concerned with the effect of particular variables than with the overall amount of variance explained by the models. As a general note, based on the Pseudo-R<sup>2</sup>s, our models explain between 1% and 15% of the variance of the dependent variables analyzed. Clearly, demographic variables are not enough to fully explain certain attitudes, particularly those analyzed in Table 3.

**Table 1 Support for the sharing of ministries between unionist and nationalist parties among 'new' and 'old' DUP members (1 = strongly oppose, 5 = strongly support)**

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)
Joined DUP 1998 onward	0.537** (0.245)	
Non-ex UUP new joiner		0.520** (0.259)
Ex UUP new joiner		0.585* (0.343)
Age	0.005 (0.008)	0.004 (0.008)
Male	-0.501** (0.250)	-0.508** (0.252)
Working Class	-0.241 (0.220)	-0.239 (0.220)
Education	0.103* (0.0551)	0.103* (0.0552)
Cut1	-1.940*** (0.694)	-1.953*** (0.697)
Cut2	-0.325 (0.677)	-0.339 (0.680)
Cut3	0.510 (0.677)	0.496 (0.681)
Cut4	2.887*** (0.701)	2.874*** (0.704)
n	331	
Pseudo R squared	0.02	0.02

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p&lt;0.01, \*\* p&lt;0.05, \* p&lt;0.1

Very similar findings can be found for a second test on the principles of power-sharing, that of cross-community consent for legislation. This asked of DUP members whether 'legislation should require the consent of a majority of Unionist AND Nationalist Assembly members before it can be passed'. 13.6 per cent of DUP members 'strongly support' this requirement and 34.3 per cent 'support' the idea. 10.8 per cent 'strongly disagree' and 23.8 per cent 'disagree. Again, as Table 2 shows (first column), newer members are somewhat more supportive of the need for cross-

community backing, but the effect is not statistically significant. However, once we divide between political novices and ex UUP members (second column), we find a stronger effect among the former (although it is only significant at  $p < 0.1$ ) than among the latter when controls are added, and there is also a clear gender effect – males are more hostile to the idea of cross-community consent.

**Table 2 Support for the requirement for cross-community consent for Northern Ireland Assembly legislation among ‘new’ and ‘old’ DUP members (1 = strongly oppose, 5 = strongly support).**

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)
Joined DUP 1998 onward	0.375 (0.243)	
Non-ex UUP new joiner		0.463* (0.258)
Ex UUP new joiner		0.153 (0.330)
Age	0.009 (0.008)	0.0104 (0.008)
Male	-0.589** (0.252)	-0.555** (0.254)
Working Class	-0.150 (0.218)	-0.156 (0.218)
Education	0.0860 (0.0539)	0.0832 (0.0540)
cut1	-1.598** (0.682)	-1.522** (0.688)
cut2	-0.106 (0.671)	-0.0259 (0.677)
cut3	0.623 (0.670)	0.706 (0.676)
cut4	2.561*** (0.685)	2.647*** (0.692)
n 287		
Pseudo R squared	0.02	0.02

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

We now examine whether all-island political arrangements established under Strand Two of the Good Friday Agreement, the cross-border executive bodies covering areas such as food safety, inland waterways and some European Union programmes, find greater favour among more recent DUP joiners. Here, opposition to the 'North-South' island-of-Ireland dimension (Table 3; first column) is significantly stronger among older members, who are 13 per cent more likely to oppose or strongly oppose all-island institutions. Moreover, ex-UUP members and new members with no previous party membership appear to have very similar opinions (second column), as effects are not significantly different across those two groups.<sup>3</sup> That said, it is worth mentioning that only a minority of DUP members favour cross-border bodies, with 8.4 per cent offering 'strong support' and 15 per cent giving 'support', whilst 29.7 per cent 'strongly oppose' and 24 per cent 'oppose'. Again, there is a gender effect, with males more opposed to the all-island dimension. Less educated members are also significantly more likely to oppose all-island institutions.

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<sup>3</sup> Note that although only political novices appear to have significantly distinct opinions to those of older members ( $p < 0.1$ ), this is probably a consequence of splitting up the sample of new members.

**Table 3 Attitudes to all-Ireland bodies among 'new' and 'old' DUP members (1= strongly oppose, 5 = strongly support).**

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)
Joined DUP 1998 onward	0.512** (0.244)	
Non-ex UUP new joiner		0.511* (0.261)
Ex UUP new joiner		0.514 (0.325)
Age	0.015* (0.008)	0.015* (0.008)
Male	-0.027 (0.238)	-0.027 (0.242)
Working class	-0.205 (0.216)	-0.205 (0.216)
Education	0.099* (0.055)	0.099* (0.055)
cut1	0.525*** (0.661)	0.524*** (0.664)
cut2	1.546 (0.662)	1.545*** (0.667)
cut3	2.610. (0.676)	2.609** (0.679)
cut4	3.934*** (0.707)	3.935 (0.712)
n 329		
Pseudo R squared	0.01	0.01

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

*Re Hypothesis 2: Newer DUP members are more comfortable with internal reforms in Northern Ireland*

In terms of the second hypothesis, on internal reforms within Northern Ireland, we test attitudes in respect of two of the most sensitive issues for the Protestant Unionist community: policing and Orange Order parades. Both have been subject to significant transformation or regulation. The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) replaced the overwhelmingly Protestant, Royal Ulster Constabulary, in 2001, following demands for substantial changes in the composition,

culture and ethos of policing in the Patten Commission (1999) report on policing. For the first decade of its existence the PSNI recruited on a 50-50 Catholic to non-Catholic religious basis, to the chagrin of many within the DUP. Only six per cent of party members backed this religious quota basis of recruitment, with 81 per cent opposed. More broadly, policing reforms remain difficult for many DUP members. Sixty per cent believe they have 'gone too far' with only 34.6 per cent thinking they are 'about right' and a 5.4 per cent believing they 'need to go further'. The basic figures indicate that pre-1998 DUP members are particularly hostile, with 67.2 per cent believing reforms have gone too far, compared to a bare majority, 55.8 per cent of joiners from 1998 onward.

The multinomial models in Table 4 confirm that the dislike of change is stronger amongst the 'old guard', with newer members relatively more sanguine. Compared with older party stalwarts, newer members are more likely to say that policing reforms are 'about right' than to say they have gone too far (model 1; first column), although the coefficient is only significant at  $p < 0.1$ . When the sample is split between different types of new members, differences are only weakly significant for ex UUP members but not for new members with no previous affiliation.

**Table 4 Attitudes to Policing Reforms among old and new DUP members**

VARIABLES	(1) Reforms to Policing		(2) Reforms to Policing	
	About right vs Gone too far	Need to go further vs Gone too far	About right vs Gone too far	Need to go further vs Gone too far
Joined DUP 1998 onward	0.503* (0.294)	0.361 (0.597)		
Non-ex UUP new joiner			0.444 (0.313)	0.523 (0.614)
Ex UUP new joiner			0.647* (0.387)	-0.465 (1.133)
Age	-0.011 (0.009)	-0.011 (0.019)	-0.0117 (0.009)	-0.009 (0.019)
Male	-0.0442 (0.294)	-0.971* (0.527)	-0.0652 (0.296)	-0.900* (0.530)
Working Class	0.0488 (0.259)	0.153 (0.520)	0.0465 (0.259)	0.154 (0.521)
Education	0.068 (0.065)	0.052 (0.139)	0.0708 (0.0649)	0.0452 (0.138)
Constant	-0.699 (0.777)	-1.724 (1.623)	-0.647 (0.783)	-1.865 (1.609)
n	301			
Pseudo R squared	0.03		0.04	

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

The second, equally controversial, area tested is in respect of attitudes to Orange Order marches. Where these Protestant marches run adjacent to Catholic nationalist areas, they are a source of continuing controversy even in a much more peaceful Northern Ireland. The Parades Commission was established in 1998 as a quasi-legal body adjudicating on contentious parade routes. Its decisions to reroute a number of parades have attracted opprobrium from the Orange Order and the DUP. In testing DUP members' attitudes, three options were presented; the first, that the Orange Order should be able to march wherever it wants, is supported by 58.5 per cent of members, with 31.4 per cent agreeing the compromise option that the Order should only march following permission from nationalist residents – effectively the consensus position promoted by the



Parades Commission - and 5.4 per cent believing that the Order should not parade through nationalist areas.

Differences between newer and older members are highly significant. As Table 5 indicates (first column), newer DUP joiners - those who have joined since the formation of the Parades Commission - are more likely to agree to the compromise option of Orange parades taking place only where is prior agreement from nationalist residents and the effect is significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Longer-standing DUP members are much more desirous of an (unlikely) return to a long-gone era of largely unfettered parading rights. As shown in the second column of Table 5, former UUP members who joined the DUP from 1998 onward are somewhat more likely to agree with the compromise option, however not only is this effect weak but also it is not statistically significant. The lack of effect might be primarily due to the historic relationship between the UUP and Orange Order, with a formal association spanning a century until its severance in 2005 amid widespread Orange defections to the DUP. In contrast, there are sharp, highly significant differences between older members and newer members with no previous affiliation (but also between ex-UUP members and new members with no previous affiliation;  $p < 0.05$ ). Part of this effect can be explained by Orange Order membership, which is controlled for in the third column, although differences between newer and older members remain significant even after adding that variable. Naturally, Orange Order members (model 3) are also strongly and significantly less likely to agree to the compromise option. In addition, age and education also seem to play a role. Older people in the party are more likely to agree to compromise, as are more highly educated members.

**Table 5 Attitudes toward Orange Order parades among old and new DUP members (1 = Orange Order to march without restrictions; 2 = to march past nationalist areas only after local agreement; 3 = to not be allowed to march past nationalist areas).**

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)
Joined DUP 1998 onward	0.723** (0.288)		
Non-ex UUP new joiner		0.927*** (0.305)	0.732** (0.322)
Ex UUP new joiner		0.178 (0.401)	0.126 (0.423)
Age	0.029*** (0.009)	0.0315*** (0.00912)	0.029*** (0.009)
Male	-0.191 (0.272)	-0.110 (0.276)	0.595* (0.311)
Working Class	-0.336 (0.252)	-0.335 (0.253)	-0.245 (0.266)
Education	0.276*** (0.065)	0.269*** (0.0649)	0.248*** (0.068)
Orange Order member			- 1.633*** (0.322)
Cut1	3.277*** (0.765)	3.465*** (0.774)	3.162*** (0.804)
Cut2	5.864*** (0.835)	6.078*** (0.848)	5.901*** (0.885)
n	333		
Pseudo R squared	0.07	0.08	0.14

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Overall, newer DUP members are more sanguine over some of the changes that have beset Northern Ireland. They are less likely to believe that reforms are 'anti-Protestant'. Almost half of DUP members (49.4 per cent) believe there is 'a lot' of prejudice against Protestants, but those who joined from 1998 onward are significantly less likely to say this, controlling for the usual variables (p<0.1).

*Hypothesis 3: Newer members are less concerned with the DUP being a Protestant Faith and Church-driven party.*

Regarding our third hypothesis, we wish to test whether the DUP remains a staunchly Protestant party, heavily influenced by the fundamentalist Free Presbyterianism of its long-time former leader, Ian Paisley. Given the hardline stances of the Free Presbyterian Church, which regards other Protestant denominations as far too liberal, an indicator of moderation might be a diminished percentage of Free Presbyterians joining the DUP from 1998 onward. This is indeed the case, but is particularly significant in respect of those who joined the DUP from the UUP ( $p < 0.001$ ). Part of the basis of antipathy between the DUP and the UUP lay in the hostility of members of the latter party towards what they regarded as the Free Presbyterian cabal running the DUP. Whilst disenchantment with the leadership and politics of the UUP provided sufficient push factors for these members to quit and join the DUP, at a time of much internal disquiet over the initial terms of the Good Friday Agreement, they brought a more moderate brand of Protestantism, drawn from the Church of Ireland, or Presbyterian Church, rather than the doctrinaire Free Presbyterian version.

Changes in the type of Protestant recruited are thus contributing to the diminution of Protestant militancy within the DUP. What is also needed however is a recasting of the vision of what the Party ought to represent. To test this, we ask members' views of 'how much Faith and Church should influence the DUP?' Members were asked to scale their view on a zero (no influence) to ten (maximum influence scale). At a mean score of seven, it is evident that many members remain desirous of a strong religious influence within the DUP. Nonetheless, as the linear regressions in Table 6 show, those joining after 1997 would like Faith and Church to have less influence (first column). The effect is significant for all new joiners, although it is even stronger for ex-UUP members.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Coefficients for both groups are significantly different from each other ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 6 Old and New DUP Members' extent of desire for the influence of Faith and Church upon the Party (0 = minimum influence; 10 = maximum influence)**

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)
Joined DUP 1998 onward	-1.385*** (0.394)	
Non-ex UUP new joiner		-1.080** (0.420)
Ex UUP new joiner		-2.130*** (0.536)
Age	0.001 (0.013)	0.004 (0.013)
Male	0.056 (0.400)	0.163 (0.401)
Working Class	-0.161 (0.357)	-0.140 (0.355)
Education	-0.076 (0.089)	-0.087 (0.088)
Constant	8.048*** (1.075)	7.802*** (1.076)
n 303		
R-squared	0.055	0.068

Standard errors in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

In terms of motivations for joining, 17 per cent of DUP members overall state the primary reason they joined the Party was because it 'suited their Protestant values', the third largest category of explanation. However, former UUP members who have joined since 1998 are less likely than any other type of member to say they joined because of their Protestant values (p<0.1). Only six per cent of ex-UUP members cite this religious reason as a basis for their DUP membership.

The diminution of fundamentalist Protestantism within the DUP among joiners in the last two decades has implications in terms of outlooks towards other religions and, possibly, in respect of social liberalism. More than half (54.6 per cent) of DUP members state that they would 'mind a lot' if a close relative were to marry someone from a different religion and a further 20.9 per cent would 'mind a little'. As the ordered logistic regression in Table 6 demonstrates, however, new joiners are

significantly less likely to mind if a relative marries beyond their own religion (first column). The effect is similar for outright new joiners and those who joined the DUP after previously belonging to the UUP (second column), and it is statistically significant for both groups ( $p < 0.01$ ). It is also worth noting that newer DUP members are similarly more sanguine regarding their children attending mixed religion schools ( $p < 0.01$ ). Three-quarters of pre-1998 joiners would prefer children to be taught in single religion schools but post-1998 joiners are nearly evenly split.

**Table 7 Old and New DUP Members' views on 'Mixed' Marriages (1 = would not mind a relative marrying outside own religion, 2 = would mind a little, 3 = would mind a lot)**

	(1)	(2)
<b>VARIABLES</b>		
Joined DUP 1998 onward	-0.937*** (0.279)	
Non-ex UUP new joiner		-0.915*** (0.295)
Ex UUP new joiner		-0.986*** (0.356)
Age	0.013 (0.008)	0.0129 (0.008)
Male	-0.0003 (0.270)	0.008 (0.273)
Working Class	0.208 (0.237)	0.210 (0.237)
Education	-0.107* (0.060)	-0.107* (0.0601)
Cut1	-1.782** (0.732)	-1.764** (0.737)
Cut2	-0.628 (0.727)	-0.610 (0.731)
n 336		
Pseudo R squared	0.06	0.06

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

Clear differences between old and new joiners can also be found in their attitudes towards moral issues. Abortion is illegal in Northern Ireland unless the life of the mother is at risk and DUP members have very strong views in this regard, with 59 per cent of their members strongly opposing its legalisation. The party also holds very conservative views regarding other issues, with 53 per cent of members strongly agreeing homosexuality is simply wrong. However, in spite of the role that religion still plays for the majority of party members, there are also important differences between new and old joiners in this regard (Table 7). New joiners have significantly more liberal attitudes towards the legalisation of abortion (columns 1 and 2) than other party members. Similarly, they are also much more liberal towards homosexuality (columns 3 and 4). Regarding the differences between different types of new members, at first sight ex-UUP members seem to have more liberal views on this issue judging from the coefficients in columns 2 and 4. However, when marginal effects are computed it turns out the only significant difference is between newer and older members, and not between ex UUP members and new members with no previous party affiliation.

**Table 8 Old and New DUP Members' views on legalisation of abortion and "homosexuality is wrong" (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)**

VARIABLES	(1) Abortion should be legalised	(2) Abortion should be legalised	(3) Homosexuali ty is wrong	(4) Homosexual ity is wrong
Joined DUP 1998 onward	0.833*** (0.271)		-0.531** (0.257)	
Non-ex UUP new joiner		0.702** (0.287)		-0.351 (0.275)
Ex UUP new joiner		1.149*** (0.347)		-0.964*** (0.338)
Age	0.000980 (0.008)	-0.000 (0.008)	0.00721 (0.008)	0.009 (0.008)
Male	0.0483 (0.268)	-0.022 (0.272)	0.381 (0.253)	0.471* (0.258)
Working Class	0.0392 (0.234)	0.042 (0.235)	0.00311 (0.226)	-0.000 (0.227)
Education	0.0708 (0.0581)	0.072 (0.058)	-0.0520 (0.0579)	-0.056 (0.058)
Cut 1	1.344* (0.718)	1.200* (0.726)	-1.628** (0.707)	-1.446** (0.715)
Cut 2	1.931*** (0.723)	1.793** (0.730)	-1.170* (0.704)	-0.988 (0.712)
Cut 3	2.608*** (0.730)	2.472*** (0.737)	-0.664 (0.702)	-0.482 (0.710)
Cut 4	3.578*** (0.748)	3.441*** (0.755)	-0.0877 (0.701)	0.101 (0.710)
n 349				
Pseudo R squared	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.02

Std errors in parentheses\*\*\* p&lt;0.01 \*\* p&lt;0.05 \* p&lt;0.1

## 7. Discussion

Even in an era of significant thawing in Northern Ireland politics, the most popular party, the DUP, still tends to be seen as a fossilised entity, rooted more in defence of the past and struggling to embrace change. Headline rows have tended to emphasise this, such as the party's continued refusal of an Irish Language Act, bans on gay blood donations and the blocking of same-sex marriage. The DUP retains a highly conservative early cohort. The party still has a considerable distance to travel before it can be seen as a 'normal' liberal democratic, largely secular, organisation.

What our tests above have shown however is that the DUP is not a static party either, but instead contains an important coterie of newer members with more moderate views than their predecessors. Unless those joining after the Good Friday Agreement were to be marginalised by the party leadership – and the converse was true, with several from that cohort, such as Arlene Foster, Simon Hamilton and Jeffrey Donaldson, assuming very senior roles - then the direction of travel was towards change. More recent joiners were also very important in non-elected positions: Robinson's Special Advisor, Richard Bullick, offered detailed thinking as to how to modernise the party. As our power sharing test showed, it is the newer DUP members who are most likely to eschew impossible majoritarian dreams in favour of ready acceptance of power-sharing. Our internal reforms tests again showed newer members most readily acknowledging the need for policing reforms and thus a police service acceptable to both the unionist and nationalist communities, whilst again it was more recent DUP joiners who were more willing to accept the need for negotiation with nationalists on Protestant parade routes. In terms of religiosity, the differences are stark. Newer members were clearly less in favour of a strongly religious steer to the DUP. Moreover, although new members have very similar attitudes regardless of their previous political affiliation, the latter does make a difference when it comes to the role religion is expected to play in the party. What our tests showed is that it is the sizeable ex-UUP contingent, very few of whom belonged to the fundamentalist Free Presbyterian Church, which most clearly rejects the previous calibration of the DUP as a religious



party and desires diminished overt religious influence. In terms of political change, though, it is newer members more broadly rather than specifically UUP members (several tests did not reach significance) that matter.

Significant caveats must be acknowledged. There is still extensive opposition, among older and newer DUP members, to all-island bodies, to the re-rerouting of Protestant parades and to same-sex marriage. What our tests have shown is the increasing tendency – we put it no stronger – towards moderation – among the newer intake. This is also shown in the self-placement of members on a Left-Right scale. We noted earlier that, at a self-placement mean of nearly eight on an axis where zero is the further Left placement and ten the furthest Right, DUP members are far distant from the political centre. Again however, those who joined from 1998 onward are significantly more moderate ( $p < 0.01$ ).

## **8 Conclusion**

Even the most ostensibly hardline parties might be changed in outlook by an influx of members with different outlooks from those held by traditionalist members. New members may invigorate a party and steer it in new directions, rather than be hidebound by its past. This case study has shown how the influx of relative moderates to the DUP - we use the term 'relative' cautiously as the new intake is still constitutionally robust and religiously observant - since the 1998 Good Friday Agreement has helped smooth the party's transition towards a more participatory politics, embracing power-sharing with the old Irish republican 'enemy'. The article has shown how newer DUP members are more moderate across a range of quantitative tests and indicated, via qualitative materials, how this moderation has reshaped the DUP. Some of the new intake were very quickly promoted to ministerial positions or appointed as special advisors and soon came to dominate the Policy Unit which rewrote DUP policy. Of course, impetus for change, in a top-down party, came from the surprising willingness of the then leader, the Reverend Ian Paisley, to clinch a deal with Sinn Fein, but support from a new wave of party members for change was crucial in

shaping the detail and facilitating rapid adaptation to the new political dispensation. Moderation has been seen to significant effect since, in for example, the willingness of the DUP to re-enter government with Irish republicans even after intelligence assessments suggested that the Provisional IRA remained in existence and was still linked Sinn Fein, a transformation of the DUP unthinkable half a generation earlier.

Much of the value of political science ought to lie in predictive as well as analytical capacity. From the above findings, we suggest that the taming of the 'DUP beast' will continue as the party becomes a more normal entity bound by liberal democratic rules of party competition, insofar as they exist in a consociational political system. For critics of the DUP, change is barely discernible, given the party's sometimes tetchy relationship with Sinn Fein at the head of government and the continuing religious-moral agendas of opposition to gay marriage and abortion. However, if party change is conditioned by membership change, we suggest some softening of these positions is possible in future years. As one of Northern Ireland's more perceptive commentators suggests: 'it might not look like it but the DUP is changing' (McBride 2015). We concur and suggest that the wider implications may be significant. The social and religious cleavages which once pertained to unionism, based on the middle-class, relatively moderate Unionism of the UUP being pitted against the more working-class fusion of cultural Loyalism and overt Protestantism of the DUP, may soon no longer be viewable. At least part of the moderation of the ferocity of Unionism within the DUP can be attributed to the arrival of new, more pragmatic, members; the taming by the shrewd.

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## APPENDIX

Table A1. Descriptive statistics for items tested, DUP membership survey

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<i>Dependent variables</i>					
Support for sharing Ministers	335	3.24	1.15	1	5
Support for cross-community consent	332	3.15	1.23	1	5
Support for All-Ireland institutions	333	2.48	1.28	1	5
Police reform gone too far	356	0.60	0.49	0	1
Police reform about right	356	0.34	0.47	0	1
Police reform needs to go further	356	0.05	0.22	0	1
Orange Order parades	337	1.44	0.60	1	3
Faith and Church desired influence	357	6.79	3.10	0	10
Relative marrying outside own religion	340	2.33	0.82	1	3
Abortion should be legal (disagree-agree)	353	1.90	1.28	1	5
Homosexuality is wrong (disagree-agree)	352	3.79	1.54	1	5
<i>Independent variables</i>					
Age	347	51.14	16.92	17	91
Gender (1 = male)	352	0.73	0.44	0	1
Working class	335	0.42	0.49	0	1
Education (1 = no formal qualification, 7 = degree or higher)	325	4.40	2.36	1	7
Orange Order member	347	0.39	0.48	0	1

## Highlights

- Indicates the importance of new party members in eliciting internal change
- Show how an influx of new members can marginalise hardline elements
- Demonstrates how even a robustly ethno-religious party can be modernised
- Highlights the value of the entrance of new members into policy-making structures
- Draws upon new data from a case study, a full membership survey of a political party long resistant to change