



FAIR
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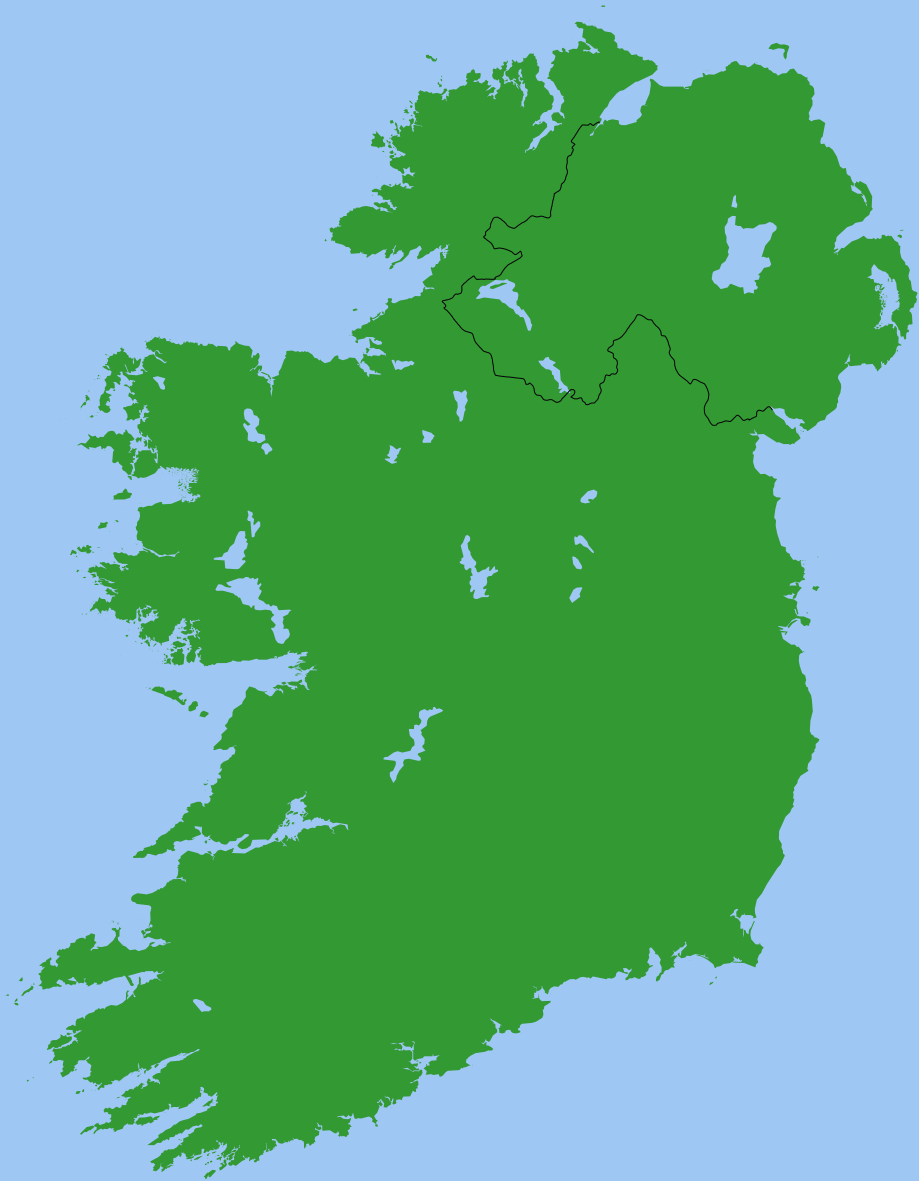
Electoral
 Reform
 Society



THE 2016 IRISH GENERAL ELECTION

PR and the Local Link

CHRIS TERRY



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P. R.
IS THE
FAIREST
AND THE
MOST
DEMOCRATIC
ELECTORAL SYSTEM
KEEP IT BY VOTING

X	NO
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ON REFERENDUM DAY
ISSUED BY CLANN NA POBLACHTA

Irish First Past the Post referendum poster

INTRODUCTION

The Electoral Reform Society has had a long relationship with electoral reformers in Ireland – for decades the ERS covered ‘Great Britain and Ireland’. Indeed, when two unsuccessful referendums were held in Ireland, to change the system to First Past the Post in 1959 and 1968, the ERS assisted the successful campaigns to keep PR.

Ireland’s use of STV, the ERS’s preferred system, gives an insight into the system’s advantages and disadvantages. While there are obvious cultural, party system and wider differences, the Irish experience provides valuable lessons as to the operation of alternatives to First Past the Post in practice, and much that is transferable to local and national levels of government in the UK.

This report sets out the context of the election and key features of the Irish political and electoral system. It analyses the results, and the impact of the voting system – before looking at the operation of the constituency link, campaign materials and finally, at gender diversity and the new quotas in operation. All these elements offer telling insights into Irish politics – and some lessons for the UK.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Alan Kinsella who was very helpful in providing examples of leaflets for the constituency link section. His website (irishelectionliterature.com) is an excellent resource on Irish election literature.



“First Sitting of the 32nd Dáil” by Houses of the Oireachtas is licensed under CC BY 2.0

1 LAY OF THE LAND

The Republic of Ireland’s political system is sometimes described as a variant of the Westminster system. Several features are similar to Westminster - for instance Ireland’s quasi-corporatist Senate resembles the Lords in both form and function. Yet it also differs from the British system, notably in the form of an entrenched codified constitution, an activist court system and Ireland’s use of STV (a working example of which is in the appendix) rather than a majoritarian system such as Britain’s First Past the Post (FPTP).

Ireland’s party system’s roots lie in the Civil War of 1919 to 1921, with Fianna Fáil descending from those who opposed the Anglo-Irish treaty and Fine Gael descending from those who supported it. Ireland’s traditional third party is the Labour Party, much weaker than its European Labour and Social Democratic cousins.

Ireland has frequently seen the election of relatively large numbers of independents, and at times parties beyond these three have also made their mark on Irish elections.

Before 2011 Irish politics was dominated by Fianna Fáil, the largest party in every election from 1932 onwards. Despite Ireland’s STV system, Fianna Fáil have formed majority governments on six occasions since independence, and have frequently formed minority governments. After a period of relative difficulty forming governments in the 1980s, due to the international phenomenon of party fragmentation, Fianna Fáil began to form coalitions from 1989 to the present day.

The 2008 international financial crisis hit Ireland heavily, and resulted in massive anger against the dominant party, widely perceived as guilty of both creating the conditions for the crisis and having handled it badly. The 2011 election was, hence, a defining election in Irish history as the governing Fianna Fáil slipped to third place, and Fine Gael and Labour both gained a huge number of seats. Opponents of proportional systems sometimes claim

Proportional Representation (PR) does not allow voters to readily kick out an unpopular government, as first past the post supposedly does. But here was an example under a PR system of a party truly being 'fired' by voters - to devastating effect, as the party lost almost three quarters of its seats.

The resulting Fine Gael/Labour coalition pursued a policy of fiscal consolidation in response to the Eurozone crisis. Ireland was often seen as a poster child for austerity - however, such fiscal measures have often been unpopular, including the introduction of water charges (tap water was historically free in the Republic of Ireland) and an unpopular flat income tax known as the Universal Social Charge, introduced by the predecessor government but kept by the new one.

This unpopularity particularly affected Labour as the junior party, and as the parliamentary term went on Labour lost large amounts of public support, particularly from left-wing voters disappointed by the party's perceived embrace of austerity. The primary beneficiaries were the left-wing republican Sinn Féin, who led polls at several points, and a series of minor parties and independents (at times Irish polls indicated that as many as one in three wished to vote for an 'other' party or candidate).

Notable forces included the Anti-Austerity Alliance – People Before Profit (AAA-PBP), a left-wing anti-austerity electoral alliance, Renua Ireland, a right-of-centre party founded by ejected Fine Gael supporters and the Social Democrats, formed by three independent TDs - two of whom had previously been Labour TDs. The Independent Alliance, a grouping of independents who promised to take no whip except on issues of confidence and supply were also strong.

Having suffered from traditionally low levels of women's representation, the Irish government reacted by introducing gender quotas, which were supported by the main opposition Fianna Fáil as well. The election would be the first to see the use of gender quotas in Ireland and was a subject of some controversy in the run-up to the election campaign, as several parties struggled to reach the 30% quota.

The election was called for February 26th, slightly earlier than necessary, in what many assumed was to avoid clashing with the one hundredth anniversary of the Easter Rising.

The Irish Political and Electoral System

Ireland's system of government is broadly modelled on that of the UK. While Ireland has an elected President, the position is mainly ceremonial in nature. A strongly codified constitution, which can only be changed by referendums, and an activist judiciary combine to tie the hands of the government more than in the UK, however.

The Oireachtas (parliament) is made up of two houses. The Seanad and the Dáil. The upper house, the Seanad (senate) is loosely modelled on the Lords with 43 Senators elected from five special panels of nominees, such as the Labour panel (supposed to represent organised labour), or the Agriculture panel (farmers and fisherman) by the Teachta Dála (TDs, members of the Dáil), senators and local councillors. A further six are elected by graduates of the University of Dublin and the National University of Ireland. Eleven are appointed by the Taoiseach (Prime Minister).

Senate reform has been a pressing issue in Ireland. A 2013 referendum on outright abolition failed by less than 2%. However, the Senate is much weaker than the lower house, the Dáil, and is only able to delay legislation.

How it all works

The Dáil, the lower house, is directly elected using the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system.

There are 40 constituencies with between 3 and 5 members. Voters are presented with a ballot paper in which they are asked to rank candidates for election by placing a 1 next to their most preferred candidate, 2 next to their second most preferred candidate, 3 next to their third and so on.

A quota – the number of votes needed to win a seat - is calculated using the following formula:

$$Quota = \text{Votes} / (\text{Seats} + 1) + 1$$

This broadly means that a three member constituency will have a quota equivalent to 25% of the vote plus one, a four member constituency will have a quota equivalent to 20% of the vote plus one and a five member constituency will have a quota equivalent to 16.67% of the vote plus one.

If a candidate wins more of the first preference votes than the quota then they are elected. Votes over the quota are redistributed

to other candidates on the basis of those voters' second preferences (or further - as more candidates are eliminated, the next 'set' of preferences are used).

If no candidate reaches the quota then the lowest performing candidate is eliminated from the count. Their votes are then redistributed in their entirety on the basis of preferences. This process continues in a series of rounds until all seats are filled.

Due to this process it is possible for voters to vote for individual candidates while still delivering a proportional outcome. The system also means voters can transfer votes to independents, and within and between parties however they choose.

OVERALL RESULT¹

Party	1st Pref %	Change	Seats	Change	Seats %
Fine Gael	25.5%	-10.6%	50	-27	31.6%
Fianna Fáil	24.3%	+6.9%	44	+25	27.8%
Sinn Féin	13.8%	+3.9%	23	+9	14.6%
Labour Party	6.6%	-12.8%	7	-30	4.4%
Anti-Austerity Alliance / People Before Profit	3.9%	New	6	+2	3.8%
Social Democrats	3.0%	New	3	New	1.9%
Green Party	2.7%	+0.9%	2	+2	1.3%
Renua	2.2%	New	0	New	
Independents	17.2%	+4.7%	23	+8	14.6%
Other Parties	0.7%	-2.0%	0		

¹ Independents include slates of independents who cooperated but did not formally establish parties. The most notable is the Independent Alliance which won 4.2% of first preferences and 6 seats, but also noteworthy is 'Independents 4 Change' who won 1.5% of first preferences and saw 4 TDs elected.

A political earthquake?

The election saw the most fragmented result in Irish history. For the first time, the major two parties, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, failed to win more than 50% of the vote between them. In contrast, the last pre-crash election in 2007 had seen them win 68.9% of the vote together. Ireland's traditional third party, Labour, also collapsed, only just securing official party status in the Dáil (7 seats) and only beating the Anti-Austerity Alliance by one seat.

In the place of these parties was a series of winners. Many countries have seen the rise of various anti-establishment parties and movements in recent years, along many different parts of the political spectrum (e.g. Podemos in Spain, the Five Star Movement in Italy and the Sweden Democrats). While Ireland saw the left-wing, anti-austerity and Eurosceptic Sinn Féin gain votes and seats, improving on its record haul in 2011 and becoming the third party of Irish politics, its performance was a disappointment in some regards. The anti-establishment vote instead seems to have spread to a series of smaller parties and independents.

The performance of the far-left AAA-PBP, the centre-left Social Democrats and the return of Ireland's Green Party are notable, but perhaps most notable of all is the success of independents. The Dáil has often featured large numbers of independents when compared to other Western European legislatures, but this year 23 were elected in a Dáil of just 158, almost 15% of the chamber. This represents a peculiarly Irish rebellion against political elites and political parties and also reflects the ability of voters under STV to freely choose from among independents as well as candidates with a party badge.

The election produced a notably more proportionate election outcome than in the UK. Using a measure called DV (deviation from voting) score we can measure the proportionality of election outcomes. DV Score gives us a figure equivalent to the percentage of seats given to parties that was 'unearned' in an election. In the UK general election of 2015 this figure was 24.0, in the Irish general election of 2016 it was 10.4, a figure roughly half that of the UK. But in some respects this may understate the true proportionality of the election as this figure only includes first preference votes and many more voters will have seen their second or third preference elected.

VOTE HEALY-RAE

IN ORDER TO PROVIDE AN EVEN BETTER SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE OF KERRY

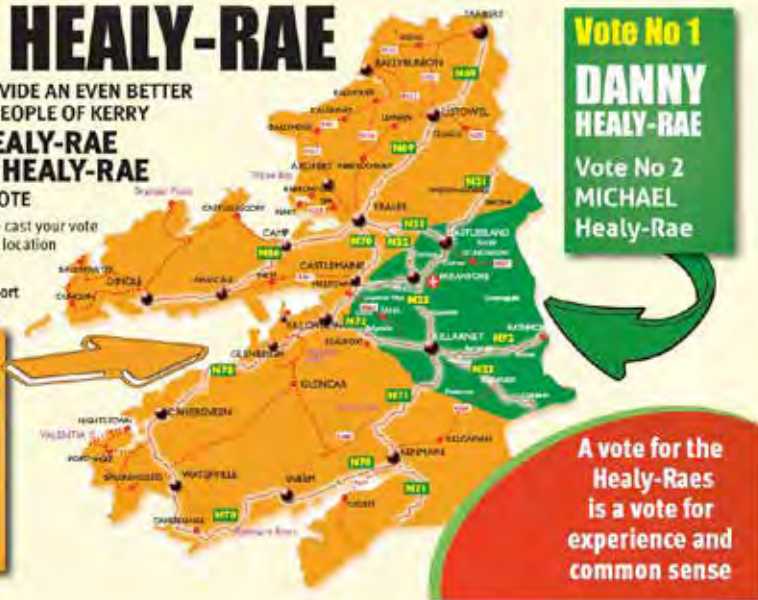
MICHAEL HEALY-RAE and DANNY HEALY-RAE

REQUEST YOUR VOTE

If you support us please cast your vote in accordance with your location as shown on this map.

It is only with your support that we can get elected.

Vote No 1
MICHAEL HEALY-RAE
Vote No 2
DANNY Healy-Rae



2 KEEPING IT LOCAL

In Britain it is often the case that opponents of proportional representation cite the constituency link of FPTP as a reason for its support. Having a constituency link is indeed important to the democratic culture of Britain, giving MPs an insight into the lives of ordinary citizens, allowing for the championing of local issues on the national stage and giving people a sense of connection to their MP.

Yet Ireland's political system demonstrates that PR and a constituency link can go hand in hand.

As Ireland has 40 constituencies of between three and five seats it is still possible for constituencies to fit local boundaries fairly well, covering a city, (as, for instance, the four seat constituency of Limerick City does) or a county (as the five seat Kerry constituency does).

But campaigning in Ireland can often be even more local than this. When deploying multiple candidates in a constituency it is advantageous for a party to 'balance' their vote. This is done by strategically encouraging supporters to put different candidates as their 1st preference in different areas of a constituency, in order to make sure that candidates have relatively sizeable numbers of votes, so that none are eliminated early on by accident.

One of the easiest ways to achieve such balance is to divide a constituency up into areas and ask voters in one part of the constituency to 'first preference' one candidate, and to use further preferences for other candidates. This is clearly aided by having candidates from those different parts of the constituency, especially if they have a locally-established base of support.

Perhaps one of the most notable examples of vote balancing in the election was by the Healy-Rae brothers, two independents whose father Jackie Healy-Rae was the long-standing TD for Kerry. Jackie's son Michael Healy-Rae followed in his footsteps in 2011,

VOTE 1

Michael 'Malty' McDonagh

Clare

FIANNA FAÍL
THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

Delivering on **Local Issues** with a **National Impact**

About Malty	Priorities	Contact Me
<p>Michael has served two terms as chairman of the GAA county board (2003-2007 & 2012-2015). He is married to Mary Ineé McCarthy of Lahinch and they have two sons, Eoin and Darragh. He is a retired member of An Garda Síochána and a former immigration officer at Shannon Airport.</p> <p>As your TD, I can guarantee that balanced regional development will be a priority of mine. This government has concentrated their efforts on ensuring that the recovery is only in the greater Dublin area however. The west coast have been left to fend for ourselves and largely ignored. It's time that Clare had a representative who will strive for real investment in the county. It's time to get Clare working again.</p> <p><i>Malty</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shannon Airport: Tackling Aer Lingus/ IAG's favouritism for DAA airports. Moneypoint: Ensuring its continued development into the future. Health: Keeping the health service publicly funded and establishing a new mental health authority. Crime: Tackling the increase in burglaries/anti-social behaviour with more Gardai on the beat. Education: Creating a Student Loan Scheme to break down the financial barrier to higher education Taxation: Altering the system to reward people's hard work. 	<p>087 124 0546</p> <p>mcdonagh4clare@gmail.com</p> <p>/mcdonagh4clare</p> <p>@mcdonagh4clare</p>
		Working With
		<p>Air-Clare Colloran Molloy</p> <p>Tommy Dooley TD</p>



and Michael's brother Danny ran alongside him in this election. The siblings went as far as to distribute a map (previous page) of the constituency marked with where supporters should support each brother. The Healy-Rae brothers were subsequently both elected; in fact they were the first and second TDs returned in Kerry, with Michael being the top first preference winner in Ireland.

Similarly you can see local campaigning in action in the leaflet of Sligo-Leitrim's John Perry who claims to be "delivering for Sligo" (thus missing the County Leitrim part of his constituency) and listing the amount of investment secured for his constituents in his leaflet.

Meanwhile Renua's Michael Farrington unsuccessfully attempted to win re-election by focusing on his origins in the Eastern part of his Mayo constituency.

Martin Heydon, a Fine Gael TD for Kildare South focused strongly on Newbridge, his constituency's largest town. Heydon's Back to the Future inspired campaign also featured an election video in which Doc Brown warns of the consequences if Heydon is not re-elected focusing on such issues as a local ring-road².

Running with a slogan of 'delivering on local issues with a national impact' Michael McDonagh's leaflet is a demonstration of the way candidates often campaign (previous page). His 'About Malty' section mentions his local links and prioritises local issues.

2 See <http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/election-2016/parish-pump/watch-marty-heydon-has-got-his-flux-capacitor-out-to-solve-the-problem-in-the-latest-downright-bonkers-election-video-34443484.html>

His number one priority is stated as the local airport.

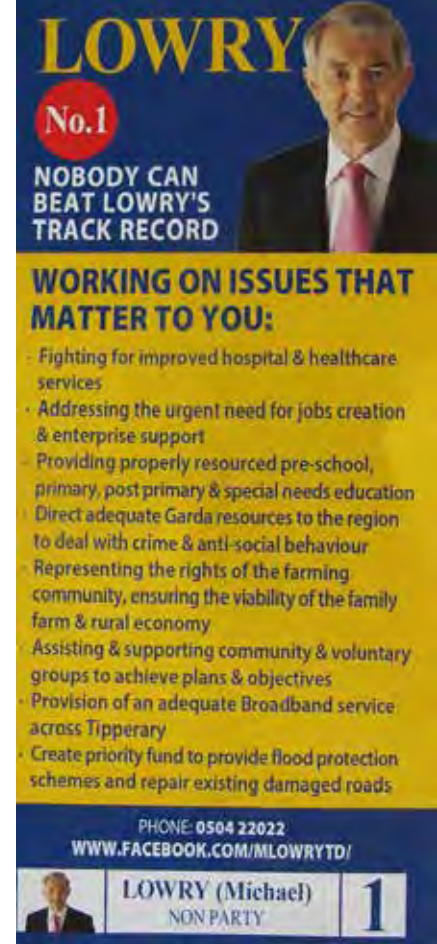
Independent candidates have perhaps more reason than party ones to campaign on the basis of local issues, as it is arguably easier for party candidates to make promises that are deliverable nationally. To the right is a leaflet from long-running (since 1987) Independent candidate Michael Lowry, from Tipperary North. The language and priorities are clearly locally-focused.

This is not a scientific study of Irish election leaflets and we do not claim that they are representative of all Irish election campaigning. Electioneering in Dublin, in particular, tends to be slightly less constituency focused, given voters' tendency to identify more with the city as a whole (which accounts for 10 of Ireland's 40 constituencies). Nevertheless, these leaflets demonstrate a key aspect of Irish politics – its localism within a framework that provides for proportionality.

Irish elections produce broadly proportional outcomes, but the system also encourages local representation. Indeed, a 1997 study comparing constituency activity by junior legislators in Britain and Ireland found that Irish TDs were significantly more active in their constituencies than British MPs³, undermining some FPTP supporters' claims that you cannot have proportionality without breaking the constituency link.

Some of the campaigning may not look unusual to a British audience – and indeed this is the point. STV produces fair outcomes, but it also incentivises local campaigning and constituency service. Voters who want a candidate even more local than their wider constituency can get one if they choose to vote that way, and candidates will respond to that.

3 See http://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/undergraduate/module-outlines/js/irish-politics/IrishPols/WoodYoungLSQ97.pdf





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3 DIVERSIFYING THE DÁIL

Irish political life has traditionally suffered from poor representation of women. While the outgoing Tanaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) was a woman, and Ireland has had two female Presidents, the Dáil has been slower than other chambers to achieve a critical mass of gender representation. Just 25 of the TDs elected in 2011 were women, 15.0% of the Dáil. This accounted for a new record for women's representation in the Dáil, albeit a rise of just 3% since 1992 - incredibly slow progress.

In response to the disappointing representation of women in the Dáil, gender quotas were introduced for this election. The gender quota law stated that a party failing to have at least 30% of its candidates from either gender would have its public funding halved. From 2019 the law also provides that parties must have lists of candidates who are made up of at least 40% of both genders.

SUMMARY OF THE NUMBER OF MALE AND FEMALE CANDIDATES BY PARTY⁴

Party	Male Candidates	Female Candidates	% Female Candidates
Fine Gael	61	27	31%
Fianna Fáil	49	22	31%
Sinn Féin	32	18	36%
Labour Party	23	13	36%
Social Democrats	8	6	43%
Anti-Austerity Alliance –People Before Profit	18	13	42%
Green Party	26	14	35%
Renua	18	8	31%
Direct Democracy Ireland	16	3	20%
Fis Nua	0	2	100%
Workers' Party	3	2	40%
Catholic Democrats	1	2	67%
Independents	132	33	20%
Overall	387	163	30%

All parties standing in the election exceeded the 30% threshold for women, except for the minor right-wing party Direct Democracy Ireland which failed to win a single seat. Fis Nua, a breakaway from the Green Party did not run any men for election, but given that it ran only two candidates this is perhaps more understandable.

Perhaps the most notable figures are amongst larger parties, who made great efforts to reach the quota, with one Fianna Fáil activist taking the law to court to challenge its constitutionality, claiming he had been excluded from selection on gender grounds⁵.

⁴ Candidate gender data taken from this Northern Ireland Assembly briefing: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2016/general/2616.pdf>

⁵ See <http://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/courts/high-court/finna-fail-activist-loses-challenge-to-gender-quotas-law-1.2519326>

Fianna Fáil had failed to elect any women in 2011, part of the fallout of its rout that year. That the two largest parties only just passed the threshold suggests that gender quotas did indeed increase women's representation amongst candidates.

In only one constituency, Limerick County, were there no female candidates and in only one, Kildare South, were women a majority of candidates. Nevertheless, voters across Ireland had the option to give their vote to a variety of women candidates.

Overall the number of women candidates almost doubled from the prior election when only 86 women stood.

FEMALE AND MALE TDs

Party	Male TDs	Female TDs	%Women TDs
Fine Gael	39	11	22%
Fianna Fáil	38	6	14%
Sinn Féin	17	6	26%
Labour	5	2	29%
Anti-Austerity Alliance - People Before Profit	4	2	33%
Social Democrats	1	2	67%
Green Party	1	1	50%
Independents	18	5	22%
Overall	123	35	22%

The Dáil now has 35 women TDs, a rise of 10 compared to 2011 (when the Dáil was eight 8 TDs larger). This places the percentage of female TDs in the Dáil at 22%. This is a mixed performance.

On the one hand, this is an increase of 7 percentage points since 2011, when, to compare, the percentage of women in the Dáil grew by just 3 percentage points between 1992 and 2011. On the other hand, Ireland continues to lag severely behind similar countries in terms of women's representation. It now ranks 75th in the world in terms of gender representation⁶ making it the worst performing EU

⁶ Based on <http://ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

nation in Western Europe.

Clearly then, the increase in women TDs has lagged behind the increase in candidates. In 2011 women made up 15% of both candidates and TDs elected. Women candidates won, on average, 1,000 fewer first preference votes than their male counterparts⁷.

Yet it is worth remembering the large role played by incumbency in elections. A 2013 study found that an incumbent is 18% more likely to be elected⁸.

This is, in part, because all candidate-centred electoral systems, such as Ireland's STV, provide incentives for candidates to build up their public profile and awareness among voters. New candidates have to build personal support in a much shorter period of time, and without the advantages of constituency service available to incumbents.

This incumbency bonus can be seen in the results of certain parties. Fianna Fáil's punishing rout in 2011 left it with no women TDs, hence electing more women was particularly difficult and Fianna Fáil has the poorest representation of women in its ranks. Notably, Sinn Féin, having elected 12 men and 2 women in 2011, was this year able to elect the largest number of women of those parties who received 10 or more seats.

Overall this pattern of incumbency suggests that the large increase in women TDs at this election is likely to be replicated at future elections, as new women TDs gain an incumbency bonus and as women candidates from prior elections become more known to the public. When the gender quota goes up to 40% in 2019 that will likely also have positive benefits to women's representation. Hence, gender quotas in Ireland are likely to quickly ratchet up Ireland's previously poor representation of women to a figure much closer to parity.

7 See <http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/election-2016/women-are-second-choice-in-general-election-2016-34493382.html>

8 <http://eprints.maynoothuniversity.ie/4583/1/N241-13.pdf>





“Leinster_House,_Dublin,” by Ardfern is licensed under CC BY 3.0

4 LESSONS FOR THE UK

The 2016 Irish general election marked an important moment in Irish political history. As in many other countries, Irish politics has seen a significant fragmentation in recent years, and this election continues that trend. Anger at establishment politics saw strong performances for a variety of smaller parties and independents. At the time of writing cooperation between Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil seems likely, either through a grand coalition or one party supporting a minority government of the other from outside. This would be unprecedented, but potentially healthy, and would arguably be a fair reflection of public will enabled by a proportional voting system.

Ireland’s politics stand in contrast to the UK. Some of those differences are negative - Ireland lags behind the rest of Western Europe on gender representation, for instance, but the introduction of gender quotas is likely to markedly increase gender diversity in time.

As we have seen, however, Ireland’s election campaigns and politics are locally focused, a feature facilitated by use of the STV system. STV allows for, even encourages, local campaigning, sometimes even more local than the constituency itself, with candidates appealing to geographic locales within their constituency such as individual towns.

This is laudable. While some complain that politics can be too local in Ireland – at times victim to ‘pork-barrel politics’, it should be said that if STV was introduced in the UK politics would not behave exactly the same. Just as many other countries with the same electoral systems can have very differing party politics. The wider political system, democratic culture and other aspects of a country shape its politics, often more than its voting system. Nevertheless, the Irish political system and this election demonstrate how proportionality and a local constituency link can happily co-exist.



Photo: Gus Palmer

5

CONCLUSION

The elections of 2016 in Ireland were an earthquake in Irish politics. Presenting a shift to a more multi-party system, the results were a reflection of the rapidly changing party loyalties and the individualisation of politics that is happening across much of Europe. With voters supporting an ever wider range of parties – as well as independents, it’s fascinating to examine the results – and the campaign – in detail.

While there are significant differences, Irish politics can still offer lessons for the UK. Party loyalties are breaking down in Britain, as in Ireland. The last General Election saw the highest result for parties outside the Conservatives, Labour and the Liberal Democrats ever. Yet Westminster’s archaic voting system stops these views being translated into representation – with, for example, the Greens and UKIP getting five million votes between them but just two seats.

There is an alternative. Ireland’s voting system shows you can have a proportional voting system while retaining a local link, with candidates in multi-seat constituencies focusing on their local areas. We can genuinely have the best of both worlds – a constituency link and a voting system that fairly reflects voters’ choices. Moreover, it offers a chance to experiment with ways of diversifying politics away from the ‘usual suspects’ – whether that’s through gender quotas or simply utilising the multi-seat nature of the system to put up a range of candidates, as opposed to First Past the Post’s safe seats culture that prioritises, ‘safe’ seeming candidates.

No one can predict where Irish politics goes from here. But its voting system has allowed for significant change, and for voters to express their changing loyalties. It’s a lesson we can certainly learn from in the UK.

Katie Ghose, Chief Executive of the Electoral Reform Society

Party	Fine Gael	Labour Party	Sinn Féin	Fianna Fáil	Labour Party	New Vision	Independent	Socialist Party	Green Party	Independent	Independent
Candidate	Terence Flanagan	Tommy Broughan	Larry O'Toole	Averil Power	Seán Kenny	Eamonn Blaney	Jimmy Guerin	Brian Greene	David Healy	Raymond Sexton	Robert Eastwood
% 1st	29.50%	23.90%	12.00%	11.50%	10.40%	4.20%	3.10%	2.10%	1.90%	0.80%	0.60%
Count 1	12,332	10,006	5,032	4,794	4,365	1,773	1,285	869	792	351	242
Count 2		10,738	5,120	5,013	4,728	1,894	1,419	893	919	391	264
Count 3			5,143	5,036	4,885	1,913	1,447	897	934	397	267
Count 4			5,179	5,109	4,985	2,099	1,572	935	987		
Count 5			5,477	5,134	5,216	2,233	1,685		1,049		
Count 6			5,554	5,314	5,580	2,401	1,799				
Count 7			5,754	5,579	6,000	2,955					
Count 8			6,262	6,041	7,013						
Count 9			6,923		9,369						

Appendix - A Working STV Example

The count from Dublin North East in 2011 is an excellent demonstration of the functioning of STV. The quota in this three member seat was 10,460. The votes distributed as follows.

To work through this table, Terence Flanagan of Fine Gael won 12,322 votes of first preferences in the first round and was thus deemed elected. His vote was 1,872 over the quota and hence 1,872 votes were redistributed to other candidates. Of these 732 votes had second preferred Labour's Tommy Broughan, and another 363 had supported Labour's Sean Kenny. This was unsurprising as there were no other Fine Gael candidates and Labour was perceived as the likeliest coalition partner. This moved Broughan above the quota as well, though only just, and his excess 278 votes were redistributed, with the majority of this relatively small figure going to his running mate, Kenny. At this point in the count no new candidates had passed quota and so two independents, Raymond Sexton and Robert Eastwood were eliminated as neither could mathematically win. On round 4 the far-left Socialist Party's Brian Greene was eliminated, with his preferences principally flowing to the other left-wing candidates of Kenny and Sinn Féin's

Larry O'Toole. At this point Kenny moved ahead of Fianna Fáil's Averil Power who had received poor preferences from Greene. The Green Party's David Healy was eliminated next, with votes tending to benefit Sean Kenny, who now moved into first place amongst remaining candidates, albeit well shy of a quota. Eliminations followed for Independent Jimmy Guerin, New Vision's Eamonn Blaney, and Fianna Fáil's Averil Power, leaving Sinn Féin's Larry O'Toole and the Labour Party's Sean Kenny the only two remaining candidates. Neither candidate had reached the quota, but as O'Toole had fewer votes than Kenny and would be eliminated next Kenny was deemed elected.

The system therefore produced three candidates who closely represented the mix of opinions of the Dublin North East constituency. 34.3% had voted for Labour candidates, with many votes in parties to Labour's left, hence it is only natural that while Kenny came fifth on first preferences he was eventually elected as transfers flowed to him and away from Fianna Fáil and Sinn Féin, two parties who were either deeply unpopular or controversial.

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