

NOTES AND COMMENTS

A Note Upon Localism and Party Solidarity:
The Transfer of Votes in the Udaras na
Gaeltachta Election of 1979

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I INTRODUCTION

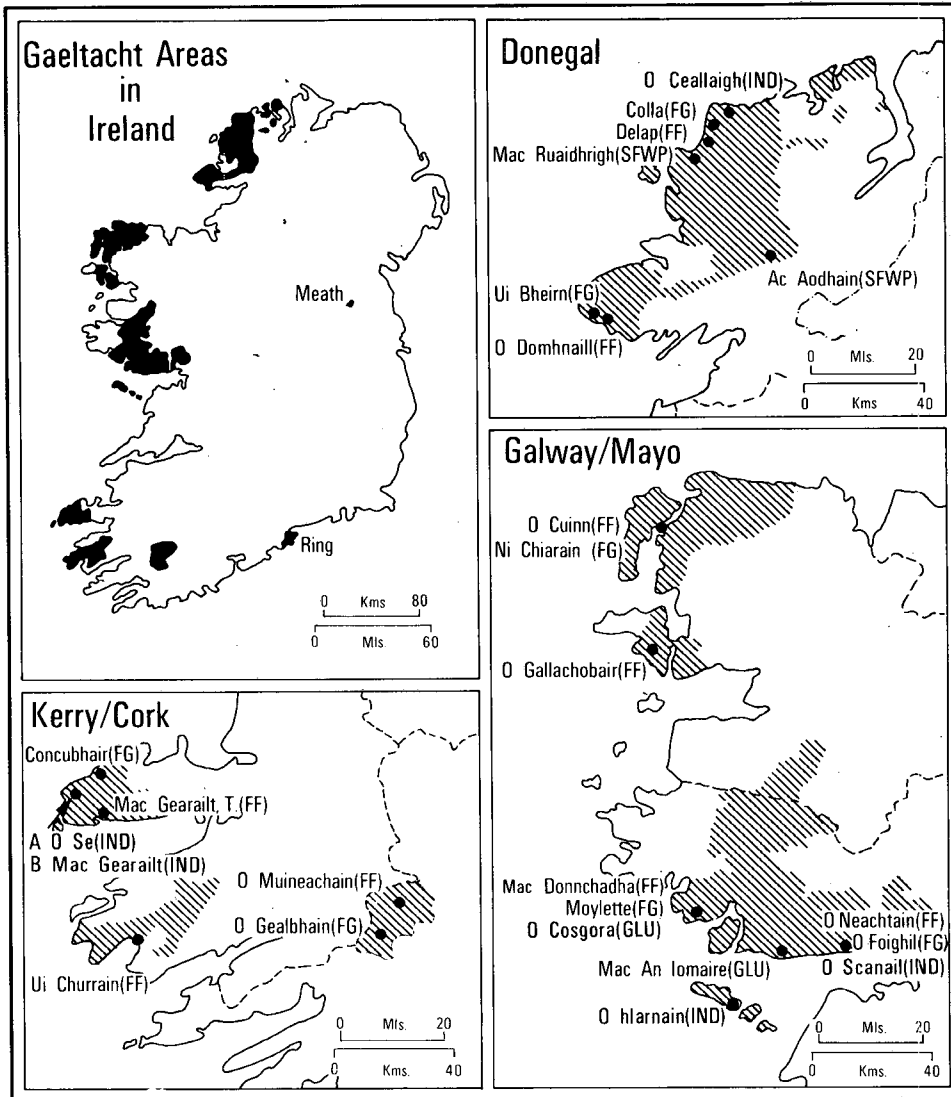
Two important features of the Irish electoral system are localism and party solidarity. The electorate, particularly in rural areas, expect their representatives to look after their specific *local* interests and are therefore attracted more to voting for a person from "their" area. Whilst there is a basic level of bedrock support for the major political parties in the country, parties recognise the danger of not providing most electors with a candidate with whom they can identify. Without such a candidate, irrespective of his chances of winning a seat, there is always the likelihood that party supporters in an area may turn to a rival party's local candidate. The need for a geographical spread of candidates in constituencies is reinforced by the fact that, in general, party solidarity in terms of transfers is high. Once a vote is captured for a particular party it is more likely to subsequently transfer to party colleagues from other parts of the constituency than to leak to other parties' candidates or become non-transferable, the latter being wasted votes from a party viewpoint.

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An instance where the combination of localism and party solidarity broke down, though, occurs in the election to the Udaras na Gaeltachta of 1979 and this forms the subject of this paper. The Gaeltacht areas, which are Irish speaking, largely lie along the western seaboard as Figure 1 illustrates. They represent some of the most economically, socially and physically disadvantaged parts of the country, being areas in which Gaeltarra Eireann encouraged infrastructural development between 1957 and 1980. Udaras na Gaeltachta took over the responsibilities of Gaeltarra in January 1980 including the management of various industries, the encouragement of new industries and the power to acquire land, premises and plant. As the body responsible for development in Irish speaking areas though, the Udaras also has a wider cultural role, the Minister for the Gaeltacht speaking during the debate on the Udaras na Gaeltachta Bill in 1978 indicating that it was being established to "encourage the preservation and extension of the use of Irish in the Gaeltachta and to promote the economic, social, cultural, linguistic and physical development of the Gaeltacht".¹ The Udaras legislation could therefore be interpreted as giving it "development agency status with a mission to preserve and extend Irish as a spoken language" (Flynn, 1983, p. 25). The powers given to the Udaras in part distinguish it from its forerunner, Gaeltarra Eireann, but a further major distinction is that a majority of the Board of the Udaras are elected by residents of the Gaeltachta. Flynn (1983, p. 24) has suggested that this could be seen as indicating "Government acceptance of the need to formalise the pre-eminence of local input into the affairs of the Udaras". Certainly it meant that the Gaeltacht populations not only saw that the Udaras affected them personally, bringing localised benefits, but it also allowed them an opportunity of electing a local representative to ensure their area obtained such benefits. The basis was therefore created for party solidarity to break down in the face of prevailing localism in the first Udaras na Gaeltachta election held in December 1979. Before detailing the extent to which localism dominated party solidarity through an analysis of the transfer patterns in the election though, it is worthwhile putting the Udaras election in a wider context by briefly reviewing the roles of localism and party solidarity in the Irish electoral system. These two aspects are considered in the next two sections, with the subsequent section detailing the Udaras na Gaeltachta election.

1 Translation of a statement made by Denis Gallagher, TD Minister of the Gaeltacht, during the Udaras na Gaeltachta Bill, 1978, debate.

Figure 1: *Gaeltacht areas, Udaras na Gaeltachta constituencies and home location of candidates involved in the transfer analyses.*



II LOCALISM

Localism is a very broad topic and one that has been dealt with extensively in the literature. Texts such as that by Chubb (1970) detail this aspect as well as specific papers. For example, Sacks (1976) has analysed politics within a specific constituency, as has Carty (1980). The latter has indicated the local effect in the title of his text on Irish elections: *Party and Parish Pump: Electoral Politics in Ireland* (Carty, 1981), whilst the importance of localism upon candidate selection by political parties has been analysed by Gallagher (1980) and Marsh (1981).

The Irish electorate has come to expect personal service from its elected representatives who have turned their role into that of "a hawk of local interests" (Chubb, 1963, p. 285) or as Farrell (1971, p. 324) has put it, "a local spokesman, ombudsman and influence peddler". Certainly politicians of all parties and at both national and local scales have emphasised their role as an intermediary between the electorate and the bureaucracy of the state. Most politicians, particularly outside the large cities, are local people, often born and certainly living in their constituency. They nurture their local electorate by high public profiles at local events, emphasising local areas in their election literature, and being readily accessible through their constituency clinics. As such they develop well defined bailiwicks (Sacks, 1970; Parker, 1983) which they can use as power bases for electoral purposes, for the reward for good constituency service is a large number of first preference votes in the next election. The multi-member nature of the electorate system encourages such localism, for a candidate not only has to compete with candidates from opposition parties for votes, but he also has to defeat party colleagues to gain election. Collins (1980, p. 93) has suggested that "given the stability of party allegiance in Ireland, the contest between members of the same party . . . is more important", and certainly if a candidate fails to offer a good service to his constituents there are generally alternative politicians of both rival and the candidate's own party, who are ready and willing to help the constituent. There are a variety of reasons why people vote for a local candidate and these have been reviewed elsewhere (for example, Parker, 1982 and 1983) but the overall effect is frequently of a "friends and neighbours" voting pattern with support for a candidate declining with distance from his home base, particularly in rural constituencies.

The effects of localism influence candidate selection by the political parties. Carty (1980) has detailed how powerful local politicians manipulated nomination strategies in the Kildare constituency over the years to protect themselves from party colleagues who might take their seat. Marsh (1981) has indicated the role of geographical balance in candidate selection by political parties and the extent to which localism, candidate selection

and electoral preferences interrelate, whilst Gallagher (1980) has pointed out that in the absence of an outstanding local party candidate, a political party may well draft in a potential candidate from outside party ranks rather than field a non-local candidate who is a party member. Local party branches are usually the main nominators at party conventions and as such reflect not only the distribution of party support throughout a constituency but also wish to see that their area is represented amongst the party's candidates. The ability of party headquarters to intervene in nomination strategies or impose additional candidates can create friction between local branches and parties head offices as both Gallagher (1980) and Marsh (1981) have detailed. Certainly parties generally get a wide geographical spread of candidates, Marsh (1981, p. 274) confirming this in his analysis of the 1977 General Election when he states that "it was relatively rare to find a party nominating more than one candidate from the same locality"; locality in this instance being defined as the County Electoral Area in which the candidate resided. In many instances, prospective Dáil deputies have served their "apprenticeship" on local councils, their Electoral Areas serving as their power bases for a general election. In rural Ireland, as many as 82 per cent of candidates at the 1977 general election were either current or past members of their local Council, and whilst the figure declined in Dublin and Cork, it was still in excess of 50 per cent (Marsh, 1981, Table 1).

III PARTY SOLIDARITY

The reason why political parties seek to accommodate the local effect is that they know that in general elections in particular, but also local council elections, the Irish voter usually votes for one party. Once a vote is secured it is likely to pass to party colleagues, and in situations where it does transfer to other parties' candidates this is often because there are no remaining members of the voter's preferred party remaining in contention.

Certainly there is overwhelming evidence of party solidarity through the analysis of transfers in Dáil elections. Gallagher (1978) examining transfer patterns in elections from 1922 to 1977 indicates that party solidarity for Fine Gael averaged almost 74 per cent, whilst that for Fianna Fail was some 8 per cent higher. An average of less than 64 per cent for Labour may be indicative of a greater personality (rather than party) vote or that its role in Inter-Party and Coalition governments meant its supporters transferred to other "coalition" parties. Mair and Maguire (1978) offer some evidence for this suggestion when they indicate that inter-Coalition transfers in the 1973 and 1977 elections were in excess of 81 per cent for Labour transfers and over 87 per cent for Fine Gael transfers. More recent elections, analysed by Sinnott and Whelan (1981) confirm the solid nature of within-

party transfers for the Dáil elections of 1977 and 1981. The degree of solidarity in local elections is not as strong as Coakley and Wolohan's (1982) analysis of the 1979 elections indicates. Even so, Fianna Fail solidarity is in the order of 67 per cent, and Fine Gael's about 58 per cent.

The effect of localism on transfers has been analysed by Marsh (1981) for the 1977 general election. He states that "relatively few voters are attracted away from a party for reasons of locality or any other reason" (Marsh, 1981, p. 281), but that a significant proportion of those who do transfer their support away from a party are influenced by locality. There is evidence, therefore, of a local effect operating in transfer patterns, but given the high degree of party solidarity in elections, particularly to Dáil Éireann, it is a quite weak effect. Similarly, the extent to which a party loses votes through non-transferability is also low; whilst a party candidate is in contention very few party voters fail to include him in their list of preferences. Sinnott and Whelan (1981) indicate that for the major parties in the 1977 and 1981 general elections, non-transferability did not exceed 7 per cent, with the exception of the situation for Fianna Fail in 1977, when the rate was less than 15 per cent. Such an upper limit is in general accord with the situation for the three major parties in the 1979 local election too (Coakley and Wolohan, 1982, Table 5). Overall then both recent Dáil Éireann and local elections indicate patterns of strong party solidarity and low non-transferability.

Yet these are national trends, and the areas where the Udaras na Gaeltachta elections were held are relatively small parts of the country. To identify whether these national level trends held in the Gaeltachta, the constituencies of Donegal, Galway West, Mayo West, Kerry South and Cork South West were examined for the 1977 General Election. Table 1 summarises the proportion of votes that passed to party colleagues and the proportion that were non-transferable when a major party candidate was eliminated. Party solidarity ranged between 74 per cent and 90 per cent for Fianna Fail and between 57 per cent and 81 per cent for Fine Gael. Inter-Coalition transfer solidarity from Fine Gael candidates was consistently in excess of 80 per cent. The generally strong pattern of party solidarity is reflected in a low degree of non-transferability. With one exception, non-transferable votes did not exceed 9 per cent, and in one instance was less than 1.5 per cent.

However, whilst the constituencies containing Gaeltacht areas had high degrees of party solidarity and low non-transferability in the 1977 general election, there is evidence that more localised areas within these constituencies do not uphold these trends, certainly for the Udaras election and also for the 1979 local elections. The analysis of transfer patterns in the Glenties, Connemara, Tralee and Bandon Local Electoral Areas (Table

Table 1: *Party solidarity and non-transferable votes in selected constituencies for the 1977 General Election*

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Donor party</i>	<i>Percentage of votes to party colleagues*</i>	<i>Percentage of votes that were non-transferable</i>
Donegal	Fine Gael	81.4 (81.4)	5.8
Galway West	Fianna Fail	90.6	1.4
	Fine Gael	66.1 (86.7)	8.7
Mayo West	Fianna Fail	78.6	14.4
Kerry South	Fine Gael	62.7 (86.8)	6.2
Cork South West	Fianna Fail	74.9	3.2
	Fine Gael	57.9 (82.9)	3.4

*Percentage of votes transferable to a Coalition candidate in parentheses

2) for the 1979 local council elections indicate that party solidarity for Fine Gael ranged between 36 per cent and 59 per cent, whilst that for Fianna Fail was between 58 and 61 per cent. Non-transferability of votes for both parties could exceed 30 per cent and was never less than 18 per cent. These figures are a strong contrast to the nationwide local election data presented by Coakley and Wolohan (1982) and to the information from the Gaeltacht constituencies presented in Table 1. Clearly within these districts there was a strong degree of local feeling, something that became even more apparent in the Udaras na Gaeltachta election where the "constituencies" were composed of highly fragmented and geographically distant areas.

Table 2: *Party solidarity and non-transferable votes in selected Local Electoral Areas for the 1979 local elections*

<i>LEA</i>	<i>Donor party</i>	<i>Percentage of votes to party colleagues</i>	<i>Percentage of votes that were non-transferable</i>
Glenties	Fine Gael	59.2	38.0
	Fine Gael	36.7	28.0
Connemara	Fine Gael	50.1	19.9
	Fianna Fail	61.3	31.3
Tralee	Fine Gael	57.0	23.8
	Fine Gael	49.5	18.6
Bandon	Fianna Fail	58.8	22.0

IV THE UDARAS NA GAELTACHTA ELECTION

The Udaras na Gaeltachta election was held to elect seven members to the thirteen-person board of the authority (the other six being appointed by the Minister for the Gaeltacht). The election was held in mid-December 1979 with three multi-member constituencies using the single transferable vote method of election. The Donegal constituency was to elect two members, as also was the Munster constituency which included the Cork and Kerry Gaeltachta, as well as the small Gaeltacht area of Ring in Co. Waterford. Three members were to be elected by residents of the Galway and Mayo Gaeltachta, the electorate of the small Co. Meath Gaeltacht also voting in this constituency. Unlike either Dáil Éireann or County Council constituencies the Udaras constituencies are widely scattered with, for example, a substantial area of English-speaking Co. Mayo separating the Mayo and Galway Gaeltacht areas, which formed the bulk of one of the constituencies. Maps of the major areas in each constituency are included in Figure 1 and indicate the relatively vast distances between different parts of what was intended as a constituency with a common local interest. At the outset, the degree of local feeling shared by residents in the Coolea area of Cork and the Dingle area of Kerry, for example, were not likely to be that great, nor even between residents in the Dingle and Waterville areas of Co. Kerry.

The election was not intended as a party political contest, but inevitably the Fianna Fail and Fine Gael parties nominated candidates to contest the election, turning it at least in part into a replica of many other elections. In keeping with other elections, both major parties sought to offer voters a local party candidate, fully recognising the importance of localism to electors in constituencies that not only included widely scattered localities within a given county, but in two constituencies included areas from three different counties. Whilst the parties therefore covered the localism aspect they failed to anticipate the extent to which local feelings would override partisan loyalties. Furthermore, localism was also enhanced by the fact that a number of candidates stood as independents or representatives of other more minor, often locally based, parties. Eight candidates contested the Donegal constituency, including two as representatives of Sinn Féin the Workers Party (SWP) and one as Independent Fianna Fail, and eleven candidates competed for the two Munster seats, including one independent from the Ring Gaeltacht. In the Connacht constituency, fifteen candidates appeared on the ballot paper but two independents had withdrawn prior to the election. Of the remaining thirteen only two were true independents, one other candidate represented the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (ITGWU) and three others represented the civil rights organisation, Gluaiseacht na Gaeltachta (GLU), including the only candidate from Co.

Meath Gaeltacht. Table 3 lists the candidates in each constituency together with their home location and their political affiliation. It is immediately evident that candidates were widely spread throughout the constituency and that, excluding the minor political parties and civil rights groups, there were very few "true" independents contesting the election. The exception is the Munster constituency where six of the eleven candidates stood as independents, however, even here at least two of the independents were known to have strong affiliations to one or other of the political parties. Table 3 also gives the results of the first preference vote in each of the three constituencies, indicating the relative magnitude of each candidate's vote.

Given the strong party presence in the election, political parties might well have expected that a similar transfer pattern to other partisan elections would emerge, with party solidarity largely being maintained and a low rate of non-transferable votes occurring when a party colleague was still in contention. In the event, such a pattern did not occur. Transfers frequently crossed party lines and a substantial proportion of votes were often found to be non-transferable. Table 4 indicates the destination of transfers when a party colleague was still in contention, for those counts where a candidate of either Fianna Fail or Fine Gael was eliminated. In the Donegal constituency, SFWP candidates are also considered, whilst in the Connacht constituency, Gluaiseacht candidates are also included. The home location of candidates referred to in the transfer analyses are shown in Figure 1.

In Donegal, Fianna Fail took a larger number of transfers from the eliminated SFWP candidate than did the other SFWP candidate, whilst the elimination of Ui Bheirn of Fine Gael resulted in as many as one-third of her votes going to O Domhnaill of Fianna Fail, although 44 per cent did pass to her Fine Gael party colleague. O Domhnaill's success in this instance must be due to the fact that he lived close by Ui Bheirn, whilst Colla, the other Fine Gael candidate, came from the far end of the constituency some 30 miles away, as Figure 1 illustrates. This would seem to indicate that party solidarity breaks down in the face of localism, for in the context of the Udaras na Gaeltachta many of the electorate appeared to want a local representative irrespective of party affiliation. This is perhaps further evidenced by the fact that when O Domhnaill was eliminated over half of his votes became non-transferable. The three remaining candidates each lived at least 28 miles away, and although one was a party colleague and some 29 per cent of votes remained within the party, almost certainly the lack of a local candidate meant that a vast number were wasted.

The situation in the Connacht constituency shows similar parallels. The first "party" candidate to be eliminated was Mac Craith, the Co. Meath Gluaiseacht candidate. The majority of his transfers went to other Gluaiseacht candidates, but even so the percentage was only 58.54. When Cosgora, a

Table 3: *Party affiliation, home location and first preference votes of candidates in the Udaras na Gaeltachta election*

<i>Donegal Constituency</i>	
O Ceallaigh (Independent Fianna Fail) Falcarragh	2756
Delap (Fianna Fail) Bunbeg	2702
Mac Ruaidhrigh (SFWP) Annagaru	1534
O Domhnaill (Fianna Fail) Kilcar	1224
Colla (Fine Gael) Derrybeg	1032
Ui Bheirn (Fine Gael) Teileann	992
Ac Aodhain (SFWP) Cloghan	844
Mac Phaidin (Independent) Carrigart	328
<i>Galway–Mayo–Meath Constituency</i>	
O Cuinn (Fianna Fail) Belmullet	2292
O Neachtain (Fianna Fail) Spiddal	1817
O Foighil (Fine Gael) Spiddal	1733
Ni Chiarain (Fine Gael) Belmullét	1145
O Gallachobair (Fianna Fail) Achill	1127
Mac An Iomaire (Gluaiseacht) Cois Fhairrge	1060
O hIarnain (Independent) Aran	796
Mac Donnchadha (Fianna Fail) Carna	675
Moylette (Fine Gael) Carna	550
O Cosgora (Gluaiseacht) Carna	507
O Scanaill (Independent) Spiddal	336
Mac Craith (Gluaiseacht) Meath Gaeltacht	312
O Ceidigh (ITGWU) Galway	131
O Conghaile (Independent) Carraroe	35*
Mac Gloinn (Independent) Carna	24*
<i>Cork–Kerry–Ring Constituency</i>	
O Muineachain (Fianna Fail) Coolea	1024
Concubhair (Fine Gael) Ballydavid	998
Mac Gearailt, Breannan (Independent) Ballyferriter	928
Mac Gearailt, Tomas (Fianna Fail) Dingle	768
O Se, Antaine (Independent) Ballyferriter	515
O Gealbhain (Fine Gael) Ballingearry	508
Ui Churraín (Fianna Fail) Waterville	497
Mac Craith (Independent) Ring Gaeltacht	480
Cardhun (Independent) Waterville	454
O Riada (Independent) Coolea	254
O Se, Miceal (Independent) Mastergeehy	182

*Candidate withdrew before the election but name appeared on the ballot paper

Table 4: *Transfers from party candidates when at least one candidate of the same party is still in contention*

<i>Donor</i>	<i>Percentage of Transfers to:</i>	
	<i>Fianna Fail</i>	<i>Fine Gael</i>
<i>Donegal Constituency</i>		
Ac Aodhain (SFWP)	28.66 (Delap 9.79) (O Domhnaill 18.87)	9.55 (Colla 4.48) (Ui Bheirn 5.07)
Ui Bheirn (Fine Gael)	35.25 (Delap 2.20) (O Domhnaill 33.05)	44.70 (Colla)
O Domhnaill (Fianna Fail)	28.89 (Delap)	+
<i>Galway-Mayo-Meath Constituency</i>		
Mac Craith (Gluaiseacht)	25.68 (Mac Donnchadha 6.65) (O Cuinn 9.49) (O Gallachobair 2.53) (O Neachtain 6.01)	6.96 (Moylette 1.58) (Ni Chiarain 2.22) (O Foighil 3.16)
O Cosgora (Gluaiseacht)	22.16 (Mac Donnchadha 13.26) (O Cuinn 1.75) (O Gallachobair 2.79) (O Neachtain 4.36)	11.35 (Moylette 2.62) (Ni Chiarain 1.57) (O Foighil 7.16)
Moylette (Fine Gael)	21.13 (Mac Donnachadha 15.47) (O Cuinn 0.83) (O Gallachobair 1.24) (O Neachtain 3.59)	48.06 (Ni Chiarain 15.19) (O Foighil 32.87)
Mac Donnachadha (Fianna Fail)	49.59 (O Cuinn 6.79) (O Gallachobair 4.22) (O Neachtain 38.58)	7.51 (Ni Chiarain 2.16) (O Foighil 5.35)
O Gallachobair (Fianna Fail)	63.58 (O Cuinn 56.12) (O Neachtain 7.46)	11.43 (Ni Chiarain 9.73) (O Foighil 1.70)
Ni Chiarain (Fine Gael)	26.98 (O Cuinn 24.71) (O Neachtain 2.27)	30.54 (O Foighil)
<i>Cork-Kerry-Ring Constituency</i>		
O Gealbhain (Fine Gael)	38.67 (T. MacGearailt 1.90) (O Muineachain 35.82) (Ui Churrair 0.95)	28.37 (Concubhair)
Ui Churrair (Fianna Fail)	18.89 (T. MacGearailt 9.09) (O Muineachain 9.80)	8.85 (Concubhair)
T. MacGearailt	8.29 (O Muineachain)	32.53 (Concubhair)

Table 4 (Continued)

<i>Donor Other Parties*</i>	<i>Percentage of Transfers to: Independents**</i>	<i>Non-Transferable</i>
27.36 (Mac Ruaidhrigh)	16.04 (O Ceallaigh)	18.40
5.83 (Mac Ruaidhrigh)	4.20 (O Ceallaigh)	10.03
6.96 (Mac Ruaidhrigh)	13.98 (O Ceallaigh)	50.16
58.54 (Mac An Iomaire 48.10) (O Cosgora 10.44)	2.55 (O hIarnain 1.59) (O Scanaill 0.96)	7.27
12.22 (Mac An Iomaire)	3.33 (O hIarnain)	50.96
7.73 (Mac An Iomaire)	2.90 (O hIarnain)	20.17
7.72 (Mac An Iomaire)	+	35.19
1.95 (Mac An Iomaire)	+	23.03
2.82 (Mac An Iomaire)	+	39.85
—	9.03 (B. MacGearailt 3.33) (A. O Se 4.75)	24.88
—	6.14 (B. MacGearailt)	66.12
—	33.64 (B. MacGearailt)	25.53

*SFWP in Donegal; Gluaiseacht na Gaeltachta in Galway-Mayo-Meath; no parties in Munster

**Independent Fianna Fail candidate in Donegal

+No candidates left to contest this count.

second Gluaiseacht candidate, resident in Carna, was eliminated only 12.22 per cent of his transfers passed to the remaining Gluaiseacht candidate, and 13.26 per cent passed to Mac Donnchadha, a Fianna Fail candidate who also came from Carna. Almost 51 per cent of the votes were not transferable. Mac Donnchadha also received 15.47 per cent of the Fine Gael Carna-based candidate's transfers when Moylette was eliminated, although party solidarity was better maintained in this instance with over 48 per cent of the transfers remaining within Fine Gael. Even so more than one in five of Moylette's votes were not transferable and the proportion exceeded one vote in three when Mac Donnchadha, the last candidate from Carna, was eliminated.

Although a majority of Mac Donnchadha's transfers stayed within Fianna Fail, the total was less than 50.0 per cent.

In the penultimate count, O Gallachobair, a Fianna Fail candidate from Achill in Co. Mayo, was eliminated and 63.58 per cent of his vote transferred to remaining party colleagues. Of these 56.12 per cent went to O Cuinn from nearby Belmullet, whilst just over 7.00 per cent went to the Co. Galway Fianna Fail candidate, clearly indicating a within-party geographical effect. Almost a quarter of O Gallachobair's total vote was not transferable. When Ni Chiarain, a Fine Gael candidate from Belmullet, was eliminated on the last count, almost 40 per cent of her votes were not transferable and her party colleague only received just over 30 per cent. Almost 25 per cent of her transfers went to O Cuinn, a Fianna Fail candidate who came from Ni Chiarain's home area of Belmullet, whereas O Foighil, her Fine Gael colleague, came from the Galway Gaeltacht.

In the Munster constituency, localism is again a key factor in accounting for the destination of transfers and the proportion of non-transferable votes. The elimination of O Gaelbhain, a Cork-based Fine Gael candidate, resulted in only 28.37 per cent of his transfers going to his party colleague from the northern part of the Kerry Gaeltacht whereas 35.82 per cent went to O Muineachain, an opposition Fianna Fail candidate, who lived just five miles away from the eliminated candidate. Almost a quarter of the votes were not transferable. The elimination of Ui Churrain of Fianna Fail, from Waterville in the South Kerry Gaeltacht, resulted in a massive 66.12 per cent of her votes being non-transferable probably because the other Waterville candidate, the independent Cardun, had been eliminated previously. Her party colleagues collected less than one in every five of her transfers.

Although only 25.53 per cent of Tomas Mac Gearailt's transfers were non-transferable on the final count, some 66 per cent of his transfers crossed party lines going in almost equal proportions to Fine Gael and independent candidates both of whom came from the same district as the eliminated candidate. The remaining Fianna Fail colleague received only 8.29 per cent of Mac Gearailt's transfers, almost certainly because he came from the Cork Gaeltacht and was not expected to sufficiently represent local interests. Collectively, or even singly, the two eliminated Fianna Fail candidates' transfers could have ensured the election of a party colleague, since O Muineachain was within 183 votes of obtaining the second seat in the constituency at the end of the count. However, localism predominated over party solidarity.

Overall, levels of party solidarity in the Udaras na Gaeltachta election were very poor and the proportion of non-transferable votes was extremely high. Throughout the three constituencies, the percentage intra-party transfer for Fianna Fail was as low as 33.59 whilst the figure for Fine Gael,

of 37.33 per cent, was but little better. In terms of non-transferable votes, there were a larger proportion of Fianna Fail transfers that became non-transferable (38.21 per cent) than actually passed to party colleagues. Fine Gael candidates had a somewhat lower level of non-transferable votes (25.63 per cent), but even so one vote in four failed to transfer when a party colleague was available. Considering the constituencies individually and combining the "parties", the greatest degree of solidarity was in the Connacht constituency where 43.10 per cent of votes passed to a party colleague and just less than 30 per cent were not transferable, and the worst situation was in the Munster constituency, where only 16.74 per cent of transfers remained within party and almost 39 per cent of votes became non-transferable. In Donegal, party solidarity averaged about 33 per cent, but non-transfers accounted for a further 31.62 per cent.

These figures are in strong contrast to those for general elections at either the national level or for the constituencies considered earlier in this paper. They also contrast with the nationwide levels of solidarity and degree of non-transfers reported for the 1979 local elections by Coakley and Wolohan (1982). However, they do accord with the patterns of transfers within the local electoral areas reported in Table 2. In both elections, these western Gaeltacht areas produced low levels of party solidarity compared to the national norm for Dáil and county council elections, and they also produced much higher degrees of non-transferability. There would seem to be strong evidence for an on-going degree of localism being present amongst the electorate, overriding their partisan preferences in any election that is primarily local in character.

To amplify these findings, for eleven of the twelve counts² Table 4, a correlation analysis was undertaken relating vote transfers and distance between the donor and recipients' homes. In each case of the eleven counts the proportion of all transferable votes that were transferable to each of the other candidates remaining in the election was correlated with the straight-line mileage between the home of the eliminated candidate and the homes of each of the remaining candidates. In six instances the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient exceeded -0.5 and in only one instance was it lower than -0.3 . This indicates the importance of geographical proximity between candidates in accounting for vote transfers, distance explaining at least a quarter of the variation in the percentage transfers in the case of six of the eliminated candidates. Overall the poorer showing of Fianna Fail in terms of party solidarity is confirmed when a coefficient of -0.48 results for the correlation of distance and percentage transfers for the five

² Because of the distortions the much greater distances would introduce into the statistical computations, the transfers of the Gluaiseacht candidate from Co. Meath were not included in the correlation analyses.

Fianna Fail eliminations combined. By comparison the correlation coefficient for Fine Gael (based on four eliminated candidates) is -0.36 , indicating that almost 13 per cent of the variation in Fine Gael transfers can be explained by distance to other candidates' home areas. Even so this is considerably less than the 23 per cent "explanation" for Fianna Fail and reflects Fine Gael's greater party solidarity in transfer patterns. The inter-constituency variations in combined party solidarity indicated previously are confirmed by correlation analyses for the relationship between transfers and distance in each constituency. Connacht, the constituency with the greatest degree of overall party solidarity, has the lowest coefficient (-0.29), whilst Munster, the constituency with the lowest degree of transfer solidarity, has a coefficient of -0.59 . As would be expected the coefficient for the Donegal constituency (-0.30) is between those of the other two constituencies.

V CONCLUDING REMARKS

Localism has been seen in national-scale elections to be subservient to partisan loyalties and has been harnessed by the political parties to strengthen partisan voting trends. In the Udaras na Gaeltachta election, party loyalties broke down to a considerable extent in the face of localism. The intention that the election should be a non-party affair was upheld by the electorate in their pattern of transfers, with leakage from candidates of the country's two main parties occurring at a substantial rate both to other parties' candidates and also in the form of non-transferable votes. In many instances a quite large number of voters indicated a preference for another local candidate or even failed to express a further preference rather than transfer to another party candidate from a different part of the constituency, in complete contrast to Dáil Éireann elections. The fact that Donegal elected a Fianna Fail candidate and an Independent Fianna Fail candidate, Connacht elected two Fianna Fail and one Fine Gael candidates and Munster elected a Fine Gael and an Independent candidate should not be seen primarily as a victory for the major parties. Rather it is an expression primarily of localism and only secondarily of party political support, for the evidence of the transfers is that other local candidates were often more acceptable than party colleagues.

The trends evidenced in the Udaras election also occurred in the local elections held five months previously, and this would seem to suggest that these western Gaeltacht areas have a much greater affinity for local representatives, irrespective of party, in localised elections, than other parts of the country. It could be suggested that the way of life in such communities is much more locally based and therefore it may be that the traditional concern of Irish rural voters to have a local representative elected to look after their

interests is much more strongly felt in these communities. Certainly the isolation and geographical separation of parts of an Udaras constituency from other parts will have contributed to such a highly localised viewpoint, which, as the transfers indicate, was translated in the election into preferences for local representatives almost irrespective of party affiliation. The high proportion of non-transferable votes that often occurred while a party colleague from another part of the constituency was still in contention is indicative that in many areas people felt that in the absence of a local candidate they did not care who was elected. In any case, the fact that the function of the Udaras was to act as a local development agency dispensing local benefits makes such patterns of electoral behaviour understandable, and as such it is not that surprising that the local effect predominated over the party effect in the election.

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