

# Bailiwicks, Locality, and Religion: Three Elements in an Irish Dáil Constituency Election

PAUL M. SACKS

---

THIS article is essentially a case study of voting patterns in an Irish Dáil Constituency. But in this analysis we also deal with a larger question: how a stable party system exists in a constituency characterized by feelings of religious separatism and where elections are conducted under a system of Proportional Representation (PR) and multi-member constituencies. It is usually argued that PR, by encouraging the representation of minorities, facilitates the development of a weak multi-party system. Following the institutional argument, the system of multi-member constituencies should, by diffusing power, add structural incentive to intra-party factionalism at the constituency level. Yet the constituency we look at contains one of the strongest local party systems in the Republic. Our evidence suggests that the operation of electoral systems is played upon by historical circumstance and the ingenuity of politicians. Strong sociological forces, such as partisan feeling and parochial loyalties, were harnessed by the political parties to a system of party bailiwicks which mitigated much of the structural conflict inherent in the system of multi-member constituencies. As events developed, by the time of the General Election of 1969 the religious cleavage in the constituency came to serve the ends of a competitive two-party system.

## *The Data*

The evidence for this analysis comes from a series of booth-by-booth election returns in the Dáil Constituency of Donegal North-East. The analysis of Irish voting patterns has been impeded hitherto by the lack of official records of local-level election results. Statistics for all Irish elections, from Urban District Councils to Presidential Elections, are not recorded on a local basis, but are aggregated into constituency totals. This method of record-keeping, retaining only first preference totals and amounts subsequently transferred, has made analysis of the internal anatomy of constituency elections almost impossible.

For their own purposes many constituency political parties have devised a way of overcoming this difficulty, at least in part. During the first phase of a

count, when the numbers of ballots in each box are checked against the Presiding Officers' report of number of votes cast (an operation to prevent "stuffing"), party officials, through arrangement with local returning officers, are able to make unofficial "snap" tallies of the number of first preference votes cast for each candidate in each booth. Instead of counting the ballots face downwards, the counting clerks do just the reverse, fleetingly exposing to the local politicians the way each ballot is marked. Usually there is time only to record the first preference marked on each ballot.

During the course of 19 months fieldwork in Donegal North-East, the author was able to obtain records of these unofficial booth-by-booth totals for the following elections: (i) 1966 Presidential Election; (ii) 1968 Referendum, and (iii) 1969 General Election.<sup>1</sup> Three other items obtained by the author are used in this article: (a) a calculation of the distance by main road of each booth from each of the major candidate's ('69) home booth, (b) a listing of the number of Protestants and Catholics in each booth,<sup>2</sup> and (c) complete ballot replicas of four booths for the 1969 General Election.<sup>3</sup> While the voting data range over a three-year period, the author has focussed the analysis on a case study of what happened in the constituency during the General Election of June, 1969.

### *The Constituency*

The polling booth is the basic political unit in Irish elections. These booths in larger aggregates make up the different constituencies for the Urban District Council, County Council, and Dáil Elections. The Dáil Constituency of Donegal North-East contains two Urban District Councils, (Letterkenny and Buncrana), and four County Electoral Areas (CEA's)—Buncrana, Glenties, Letterkenny, and Milford—these last being constituencies for County Council Elections.<sup>4</sup> Because much of the subsequent analysis will be done in terms of these CEA's our description of the constituency will centre upon them.

The constituency can be divided into two main geographic regions: North and East. The northern part of the constituency is largely peninsular, the population

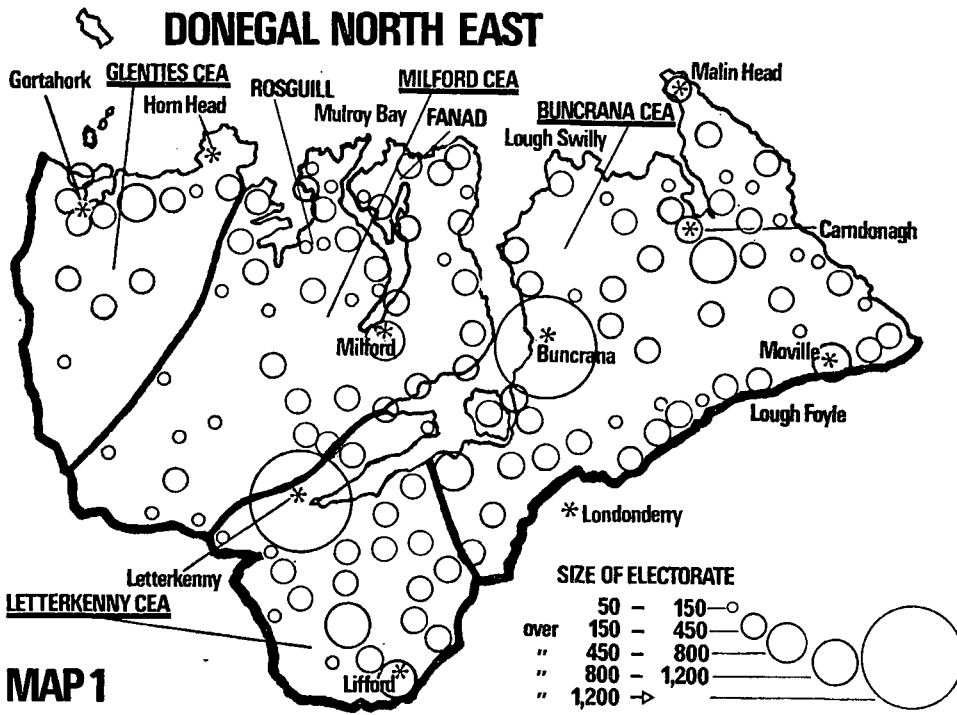
1. These figures were generously supplied to the author by both the Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael parties in Donegal North-East. However, the figures supplied by Fine Gael were more complete for the Presidential Election and the Referendum. Therefore, for purposes of consistency the author has used those figures supplied by Fine Gael throughout the subsequent analysis. Comparison of the two sets of figures reveals very little overall difference between them, or between their first preference totals and the official count. The Referendum figures used here relate only to the proposition to abolish the PR/multi-member system and replace it with a single vote/single member system.

2. This information was obtained by the author in a survey of the party apparatus. Using the 1969 Register of Electors, party men living within each neighbourhood were asked to mark the register according to whether a person was Protestant (all sects) or Catholic. Because Donegal society is so close-knit, people (especially local party men) virtually know everyone in their neighbourhood. Cross checks of these data revealed them to be highly reliable.

3. Obtained during the first phase of the 1969 count.

4. Portions of the Glenties and Letterkenny CEA's are in the Donegal-Leitrim Constituency, (South-West).

densely clustered along the relatively more fertile coastal lowlands and hillslopes.<sup>5</sup> The mountain and bogland of the peninsular interior is only sparsely inhabited. The Buncrana CEA is largely coextensive with the most easterly of these northern peninsulas—Inishowen. Inishowen is by far the largest single unit in the constituency, containing 40.1 per cent of the whole electorate (and 61 of the constituency's 154 polling booths). It is surrounded on the East by Lough Foyle, on the North by the Atlantic Ocean, and on the West by Lough Swilly. South Inishowen, where about a third of the peninsula's population is located, is continuous with the eastern lowlands of the Letterkenny CEA. The peninsula's three main towns, Buncrana (3,115), Moville (1,059), and Carndonagh (1,058) are characteristically located along the peninsular perimeter.<sup>6</sup>



West of Inishowen are the Fanad and Rosguill peninsulas (Milford CEA), separated by the long and winding Mulroy Bay. At the head of Mulroy Bay lies the town of Milford (603), south of which stretch reaches of lowland until one arrives in Letterkenny, at the head of Lough Swilly. North and West of Milford

5. Much of this description is derived from T. W. Freeman, *Ireland: A General and Regional Geography*, London, 1965, Chap. 21.

6. All population figures are taken from *Census of Population of Ireland 1966*, Vol. I, Table 8.

to the western edge of the constituency at Gortahork (Glenties CEA) the population is largely confined to the coastal areas. South of this Milford to Gortahork strip of coastline one encounters the mountainous cord of the county, relieved only as one moves easterly into the Letterkenny CEA. The lowlands of East Donegal stretch from Milford to Letterkenny and on to the River Foyle. This area, between Letterkenny and the Foyle Basin, is sometimes referred to as The Lagan, and is roughly coextensive with the Letterkenny CEA. The southern part of the Buncrana CEA, immediately across the border from Londonderry, is also part of these eastern lowlands. Lowland farms are generally larger and more fertile than those found along the peninsular perimeters. The constituency is predominantly rural, with no large towns. Letterkenny (4,527) and Buncrana (3,115) are the two largest towns, the county town, Lifford, having a population of only 925. The polling booths on which this analysis is based are quite small (averaging 242.3), a fact which reflects the constituency's scattered population.

#### *Protestant and Catholic*

As part of the natural hinterland of Londonderry, East Donegal was a plantation area in the 17th century. Protestants were settled throughout the more fertile lowland areas of the county. At present the pattern of their settlement remains largely coextensive with these lowland regions. Of a total of 5,765 Protestants eligible to vote in Dáil Elections, 2,653 (46 per cent) are found in that portion of the Letterkenny CEA remaining in the North-East Constituency (Map 7). The remainder are found mostly along the borders of the Letterkenny CEA in south Buncrana CEA and south Milford CEA.

TABLE I: *Religious Adherence of Dáil Electorate (1969-1970) by County Electoral Area (CEA)*

<i>County Electoral Area</i>	<i>Protestant</i>		<i>Catholic</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>
Buncrana	1,581	27.42	13,466	42.38
Glenties†	198	3.43	3,127	9.84
Letterkenny†	2,653	46.02	7,645	24.06
Milford	1,333	23.12	7,538	23.72
Total:	5,765	100.00	31,776	100.00

†Portions in North-East Dáil Constituency.

Source: County Registrar's Office, Co. Donegal, and a survey conducted in 1969 by the author.

The outlines of the present constituency have evolved slowly. Prior to 1935, TD's<sup>7</sup> were elected on a county-at-large basis, county boundaries then being coextensive with the parliamentary constituency. In 1935, something like the present-day constituency took shape when, concurrent with the State-wide constituency revisions, the county was divided in two: Donegal East and Donegal West. At this time Donegal East (in 1961 renamed Donegal North-East) contained only the Buncrana, Letterkenny, and Milford CEA's. In 1961, again concurrent with Republic-wide constituency revisions, the (heavily Protestant) Letterkenny CEA was halved between the South-West and North-East, and a portion of the (heavily Catholic) Glenties CEA was added to the North-East, substantially reducing the overall proportion of Protestants in the constituency. Further portions of the Glenties CEA were added to the North-East as part of the 1969 constituency revisions.

Donegal's history is similar to that of other parts of Ulster, in that it was dominated until comparatively modern times by a caste-like system of Protestant hegemony.<sup>8</sup> Control over land (as the main source of wealth) and local political power were the main elements in this dominance. Ineluctably, the outcome of such a system of social control is sectarian bitterness, of which the county has a fair-sized legacy.

Unlike some parts of Ulster, Donegal has always had a Catholic majority, despite a sizable Protestant tenantry. Donegal also lies at the perimeter of Ulster. These facts proved decisive in the county's political evolution. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, gradual Catholic enfranchisement and governmental reform gave the majority its proper share of power in local political affairs. In the same period, the county's Protestant aristocracy all but disappeared, as did its control over land, though substantial inequalities of wealth remained, between the remnant community of Protestants and the new class of Catholic peasant proprietors. Politically unsafe to the cause of Unionism, Donegal was left by Partition a part of the Irish Free State.

Although the caste system in Donegal was disintegrating, religious separatism and enmity remained. The Civil War established the factional basis for Donegal's modern parties, parties largely internal to the Catholic electorate. Donegal Protestants adapted to inclusion in the Free State by maintaining a discreet but separate political existence. Proportional Representation and the system of multi-member constituencies facilitated this effort.

Prior to 1961 there were sufficient Protestants in Donegal to return "one of their own" to the Dáil. Major Myles (from the West of the County) sat when Donegal was one constituency; Willie Sheldon (from The Lagan) sat for Donegal East after the county had been split in two. But after 1961 the situation changed substantially. The 1961 constituency revisions reduced the number of Protestants

7. *Teachtaí Dála*, or parliamentary representatives.

8. The suggestion for the caste analogy came from an article by Conor Cruise O'Brien, "Holy War in Ireland", *New York Review of Books*, XIII, No. 8, 1969, pp. 9-16.

in the North-East to less than a Dáil quota.<sup>9</sup> Protestant candidates, *per se*, could no longer be elected to parliament.<sup>10</sup>

The "Unionist" vote had long been coveted by the major Republican parties. Before 1961, Catholic candidates received some Protestant support from their friends and neighbours who preferred to see a local man as their representative. Greater opportunity presented itself once the Protestant community had been removed (as a direct actor) from the scene of parliamentary elections. After 1961, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael made considerable progress in absorbing the "Unionist" vote, a process facilitated by co-opting Protestant candidates into their ranks. Sheldon won a seat in the 1961 Seanad Election, his success due primarily to support from Fianna Fail. In the 1967 Local Government Elections, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael each ran a Protestant candidate under their party label. McNutt (FF, Milford CEA) and Boggs (FG, Bunrana CEA) were elected, increasing Protestant support for their parties. It was generally estimated in early 1969 that the Protestant vote was effectively divided between Fianna Fail and Fine Gael at a ratio of two to one. Despite the fractionation of the "Unionist" vote, by 1969 no Donegal politician doubted the basic solidarity of that vote, nor the capability of a Republican party of mobilizing it behind the party banner.

### *The Politicians*

The candidates in the 1969 General Election were well spaced throughout the constituency. Moving from west to east, they were: (i) Neil Blaney, FF, Rosnakill, Milford CEA, then Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries; (ii) Colm O'Donnell, Labour, Letterkenny, Letterkenny CEA; (iii) Paddy Harte, FG, Raphoe, Letterkenny CEA, then Fine Gael Shadow Minister for Health; (iv) Liam Cunningham, FF, Bridgend, Bunrana CEA, and (v) Bertie Boggs, FG, Malin Town, Bunrana CEA.

The Fianna Fail ticket was well known to the Donegal electorate, Blaney having entered the Dail in 1948, Cunningham in 1951. Blaney's tenure of successive cabinet posts since 1957, and his position as a figure of national prominence, gave his party a decided advantage at the polls. Since his election following the death of his father, Blaney had evolved a political machine generally thought to be among the most effective in the Republic. While the security of his seat was not in doubt

9. The quota system, as used in Irish elections, has been described by Basil Chubb as follows: "It is the smallest number of votes that suffices to elect enough candidates to fill all the seats being contested while being just big enough to prevent any more being elected. It is expressed in the following formula:

$$\text{Quota} = \frac{\text{No. of valid votes}}{\text{No. of seats} + 1} + 1."$$

Basil Chubb, *The Government and Politics of Ireland*, Stanford, 1970, p. 147. The quota is determined on the basis of first preference votes.

10. Protestant candidates, *per se*, did continue to stand and be elected to local bodies. However, of the three Protestants in the Donegal County Council in 1969, two were members of the major Republican parties.

in this election, as a national figure it was important for him to have an impressive showing at the polls. As his running mate, Cunningham gave territorial balance to the ticket; but coming second in the poll, as he had in the last election, his position was more vulnerable.

Fine Gael's candidates were more recent entrants into politics. Paddy Harte, head of the constituency party, was first elected to the Dail in 1961. Recently he had achieved some success in revitalizing the local party apparatus. His own position apparently secure, he hoped to capture a second seat for Fine Gael in this three-seat constituency. As his running mate in this election, Bertie Boggs had come a long way since having been elected to the County Council two years before. A Protestant, his position on Fine Gael's Dail ticket established a precedent for the county.

Labour's hopes were certainly more limited, in this election, than those of either of the two major parties. Despite the presence of a sizable agricultural work force in East Donegal (Labour's natural constituency in rural Ireland),<sup>11</sup> the party had never obtained a strong foothold in the Republican soil of Donegal.<sup>12</sup> Colm O'Donnell was thus entering this Dail contest (his first) with little likelihood of winning.

### *Party Strategy and The Campaign*

It seemed all but certain, as the campaign commenced, that Fianna Fail would run Blaney and Cunningham as its candidates. Thus it was left to Fine Gael to make any innovations. The strategy championed by Paddy Harte, and what eventually became local Fine Gael strategy, was based on several considerations. The Fine Gael District Executive in Inishowen was insistent on having a local man in the race. This strategy, it was argued, has merits beyond parochial considerations, since Cunningham, Fianna Fail's incumbent Inishowen T.D., stood the risk of being defeated.

In the past this strategy had not been successful. Twice before, in 1961 and 1965, Fine Gael had run a Buncrana publican, Sean McLaughlin, to capture the local Inishowen vote. McLaughlin, a Catholic like Harte, had been defeated both times. Its support based primarily on the larger farmers and middle class, it appeared that the greatest probability of increasing the party vote lay in adding a new element to this coalition. So Harte urged the party to run Boggs, an Inishowen Protestant, as its candidate. Boggs, it was argued, could draw, not only on the local Inishowen vote, but also on the dispersed "Unionist" vote. At party meetings and caucuses alternative strategies were hotly debated; but finally, at its constituency convention, Fine Gael overwhelmingly endorsed Harte's strategy.

11. Basil Chubb, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

12. The author has not included the Labour Party in most of the subsequent analysis. The Labour Party in Donegal has never had substantial support nor a party organization comparable to either Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael. Its voting strength in the last two general elections ('65, '60) has centred largely on the constituency's two main towns: Letterkenny and Buncrana. Despite the national stature of the Labour Party, no one would call it a "major" party in Donegal. But mainly owing to the very small size of the party's poll the author has not included the Labour vote in most of the tables and calculations below.

Several assumptions lay behind this strategy. First, it was assumed that Fianna Fail had absorbed about two thirds of the Protestant vote. Second, owing to Blaney's reputation as a militant on the "Border Issue" and the essential solidity of the Protestant vote, Boggs, as the sole Protestant candidate, could bring into the party almost all the Protestant vote it had not so far received. Third, the movement of this vote from Fianna Fail to Fine Gael would leave the two parties with equal portions of the first preference poll, giving Fine Gael an even chance of obtaining two quotas.

While Fianna Fail put up the expected slate of candidates, they did make several tactical adaptations to the Fine Gael strategy. Admittedly, they started the campaign in a preferred position. Since the county was divided in 1935, Fianna Fail had had a continuous plurality in General Elections. The county's electorate was heavily weighted towards those for whom Fianna Fail had its greatest appeal: small farmers and older people. In addition, the party was organizationally superior to its rivals. In fact it was its organizational capability that facilitated one key movement of the campaign. Anticipating the loss of their Protestant support, Fianna Fail moved into the newly appended portion of the constituency and outstripped their rivals in the extent and depth of their campaign effort. To counteract the increased threat to Cunningham, several key Inishowen party men who had previously worked more for Blaney than for Cunningham threw their support more heavily behind the latter. Lastly, to counteract the strong Fine Gael bid for Protestant votes, elements within the Fianna Fail party sought to outflank Fine Gael and recapture some of the latter's Catholic vote by linking Boggs with Protestant extremists across the Border.

### *The Results*

On election day the official listing of first preferences was as follows:

Blaney	..	..	..	8,706
Cunningham	..	..	..	6,903
Harte	..	..	..	6,057
Boggs	..	..	..	5,962
O'Donnell	..	..	..	1,037
				—
Total	..	..	..	28,665

The quota was set at 7,167, and Blaney was declared elected. On the second count the distribution of Blaney's surplus resulted as follows:

Cunningham	..	..	+ 1,422	=	8,325
Harte	..	..	+ 47	=	6,104
Boggs	..	..	+ 50	=	6,012
O'Donnell	..	..	+ 20	=	1,057



Cunningham was declared elected, having reached the quota, and O'Donnell was eliminated. On the third count the distribution of O'Donnell's surplus resulted as follows:

Harte .. .. .	+	441	=	6,545
Boggs .. .. .	+	160	=	6,172

The distribution of Cunningham's surplus resulted as follows:

Harte .. .. .	+	31	=	6,576
Boggs .. .. .	+	8	=	6,172

There being no further votes to distribute, Harte was elected without reaching the quota.<sup>13</sup>

As can be seen, Blaney was easily elected on the first count. Cunningham, far from faltering, held his position, as second in the poll, with little trouble. As planned, both Fine Gael candidates ran about even; but not according to plan, they both ran behind Cunningham. Thus the last hours of the count were spent wondering which of the two would put the other out. The Labour candidate, predictably, finished a poor fifth.

Though Fine Gael had failed in its objective of gaining an extra seat, it had succeeded in increasing the party's poll by 30.9 per cent over its 1965 first preference total.<sup>14</sup> As will be demonstrated, most of this increase was due, as they hoped, to the movement of a sizable block of Protestant voters away from Fianna Fáil.<sup>15</sup> However, before we analyse the nature of this Protestant shift, it is useful to look at some other characteristics of this election.

#### *Use of the Ballot by Voters*

During the first phase of the count, the author was able to make full copies of the ballots for four booths, representing 1,133 valid votes, or 3.95 per cent of the total valid poll of 28,665. The official record of any count gives only a partial insight into how voters have used the PR system. For while a full record is kept

13. *The Irish Times*, June 21, 1969.

14. The comparison is with figures for the 1965 General Election, obtained from the Co. Registrar's Office, Lifford, Co. Donegal.

15. Though Fianna Fáil did lose a substantial number of Protestant supporters in this election, it maintained its poll at about the same level as in 1965. Seemingly, the party recouped its losses in the newly-added portion of the constituency. Politicians familiar with this new area have satisfied the author that there were in fact substantial Fianna Fáil gains there. Unfortunately, since comparative figures for previous elections were not available for this new part of the constituency, these booths have had to be deleted from the subsequent analysis. So, in effect, most of the analysis below is based on the constituency boundaries as they were in 1961, including (i.e., the author's sample) 142 booths out of a present total of 154. As can be seen, the deletions the author had to make are not considerable, and should not substantially affect the accuracy of the analysis.

of each candidate's total of first preference votes, how far beyond this one can see is totally dependent upon circumstances such as whose votes were transferred first, whose are never transferred, etc. Moreover, because the rule of proportionate distribution is not the same for every transfer, the value of different transfers to the researcher is not uniform. Collection of full ballot replicas partially overcomes this problem, and while this sample is not a random one, its size and representativeness are some compensation.<sup>16</sup>

In the '69 Election, Donegal voters had a choice of five candidates, (two Fianna Fáil, two Fine Gael, one Labour), to whom they could give a single transferable vote, in order of their preference. Looking at how many people actually availed themselves of the full range of options is indicative of the strength of party loyalty among the electorate.

TABLE 2: *Sample of Ballots Graded by Number of Preferences Voters Indicated†*

<i>Number of Preferences</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Per Cent</i>
1	54	4.8
2	837	73.9
3	174	15.3
4	13	1.1
5	55	4.9
<b>TOTAL;</b>	<b>1,133</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source:* Ballot replicas collected by author on polling day.

An even more pertinent picture emerges when we look at the actual numbers voting full party tickets only.

16. Three of the four booths are located in small rural towns, ranging in population from 181 to 235 (*Census of Population of Ireland*, I, Table 8). The other booth is one of the Letterkenny Urban booths. Thus the sample reflects the generally rural nature of the constituency. There are marginally more Protestants in the sample than in the constituency, (18.9 per cent in the sample compared with 15.4 per cent in the electorate at large). The four booths are located in three out of the four CEA's in the constituency, two in Milford, one in Letterkenny, and one in Buncrana CEA. The Letterkenny booth is the Labour candidate's home booth, and thus the sample contains a disproportionate number of Labour votes. However, given the available knowledge of the composition of the electorate, the sample booths are not an unsatisfactory representation of it.

TABLE 3: *Voters in the Sample Who Cast a Full Party Ticket Only*

<i>Fianna Fáil Party Ticket Only</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Sample</i>	
1—Blaney, 2—Cunningham	(303)	
1—Cunningham, 2—Blaney	(92)	
Sub-total:	395	34.9
<i>Fine Gael Party Ticket Only</i>		
1—Harte, 2—Boggs	(174)	
1—Boggs, 2—Harte	(164)	
Sub-total:	338	29.8
<i>Labour Candidate Only</i> †		
1—O'Donnell	(20)	1.8
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>753</b>	<b>66.5</b>

†In this and subsequent calculations the author has considered a first preference vote cast for the sole Labour candidate as a "full party ticket". Since the total Labour vote in both this sample and the returns is so small, even if the Labour vote is removed from consideration altogether the above percentage of "full party ticket" voting is substantially the same.

By any measure the number of people voting a full party ticket is substantial (66.5 per cent of the total sample, 88 per cent of those voting twice only). If one adds to their number those who first voted a full party ticket and later went on to list additional preferences, the total is 1,007, or 88.9 per cent of the total sample. Only 54 people voted for one candidate only, or 34 if those voting for the Labour candidate only are removed. That is, the majority of our sample used the ballot simply to vote for their party, while an additional 21.5 per cent, after first voting a full party ticket, later went on to list additional preferences. Thus it would seem that party loyalty is quite strong among Donegal voters. Moreover, given the fact that the majority of voters in the sample voted party only—giving no votes of even lower preferences to the "opposition"—we can infer a proportionate degree of partisan polarization among the Donegal electorate as a whole.

#### *Localism and Party Bailiwicks*

In addition to the strong partisan feelings among the Donegal electorate, the immediate context of locality and personal acquaintance played a decisive role in the way the voters acted in the 1969 Election. North-East Donegal, like most other parts of rural Ireland, is characterized by strong feelings of local pride. In this context the geographic fragmentation of the constituency has had a profound effect. None of the northern peninsulas are linked by ferry, making travel between them possible only by long and twisting roads. This separation exists not only

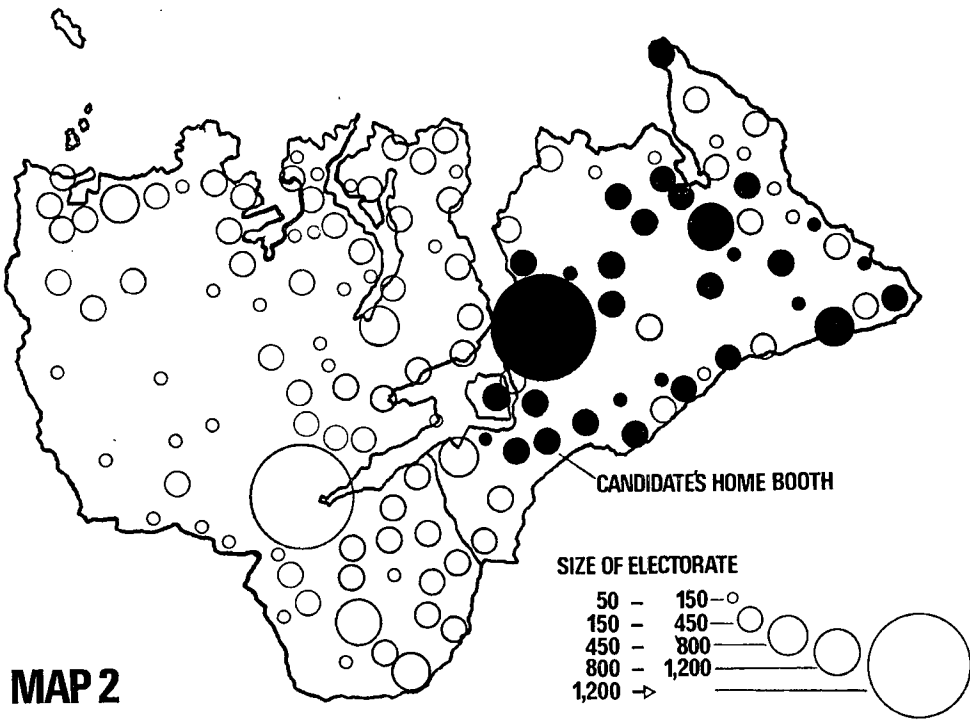
between the peninsulas, but extends also between them and the lowland areas. Such geographic fragmentation encourages a pattern of strong and persistent parochial loyalties: loyalties which cut across and often conflict with religious and partisan cleavages. A local man running for office thus has a strong claim on a voter's allegiance, regardless of his party or religion. Who is, and who is not a local man is liable to be defined within the context of conflict and opposition. The local man may thus be a man from one's village, general area, or County Electoral Area—depending on how close to the voter his opponent is. The character of parochial allegiances is thus contextually defined, though not necessarily paramount among other types of attractions.

A part of the character of localism in Donegal is the high value placed on personal contact in politics. "Knowing" a candidate (i.e., being personally acquainted with him) is an important consideration in deciding who to give one's vote to. Moreover, given the importance conferred on personal contact in obtaining what one wants from government, "knowing" a politician is that much more important. Assuming that a local candidate is subject to the same parochial allegiances as oneself (i.e., a reciprocal pattern), that he is more readily accessible than more distant politicians, and that one "knows" him better than others, giving him your vote is an investment against the day when you may need him. The local candidate can thus count on a certain amount of automatic support.

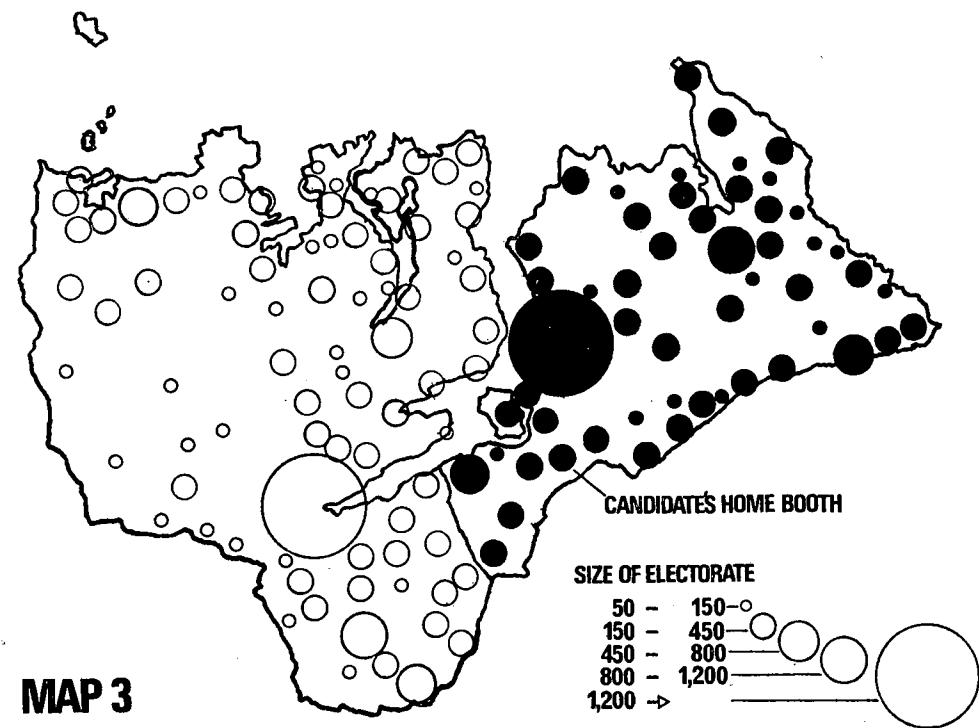
What the parties do to enhance the size of the local vote (and to mitigate competition within their own ranks) is to arrive at bargains settling the exact boundaries within which each candidate will canvass most heavily, and where the local party apparatus will urge its clientele to give a man first preference, i.e., a system of individual bailiwicks. Such bailiwicks function not only at election time, but in the interim between elections as well. Elected representatives thus have distinct areas which they service, the constituency being parcelled up among members of the same party. Since many members represent each Dail constituency, and each party usually has several candidates in the field at election time such arrangements are essential if intra-party competition is to be avoided and party efficiency facilitated. This at least is the ideal.

If one looks at Map 2, the local effect in the 1969 Election is quite evident. The areas where Cunningham has 50 per cent or more of the poll are entirely within his home peninsula of Inishowen. Comparing Map 2 with Map 3 the bolstering effect of party territorial arrangements are clear. That is, the booths in which Cunningham got more than 50 per cent of the party vote are more numerous and extensive than those in which he got a simple majority.<sup>17</sup> Map 4 shows the

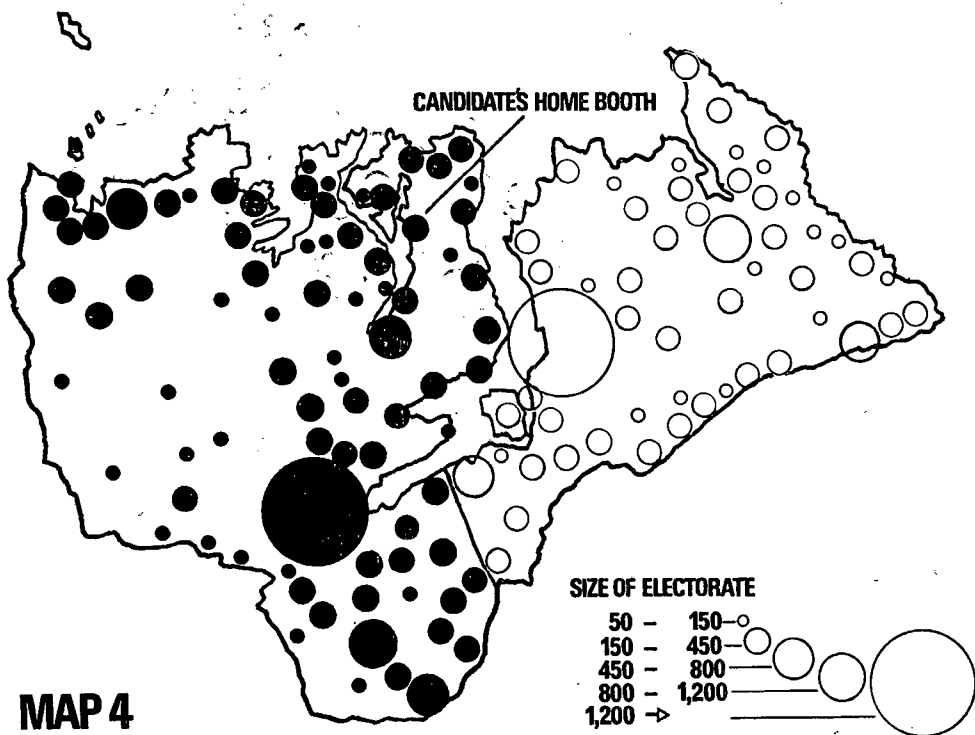
17. Some mention should be made of the effect of party bailiwicks on a candidate's vote. Where a candidate's "home region", is smaller than his party bailiwick, the existence of the latter tends to artificially inflate his poll by delivering the party vote outside the perimeter of his neighbourhood. To a degree, this happened in the case of Cunningham, as Maps 2 and 3 indicate. Conversely, where a man's "home region" is larger than or overlaps his bailiwick, his poll in those areas external to his bailiwick will be deflated. The main evidence for this latter assertion comes from Local Government Elections, which are not discussed in this article.



● Booths where Cunningham got 50% or more of total Valid Poll.



● Booths where Cunningham got 50% or more of total Party Vote.



● Booths where Blaney got 50% or more of total Party Vote.

booths in which Blaney got 50 per cent or more of the party vote. It should be noted that none of these booths is inside Cunningham's bailiwick, the two areas being perfectly exclusive.<sup>18</sup> Intra-party competition has been minimized, and the party apparatus in each area appropriately instructed how to urge the voters to cast their first preferences. These maps indicate that, within the Fianna Fail party, the 1969 campaign was organized as if each man were running within a single-member constituency. The greater size of Blaney's bailiwick is indicative of his rank within the party, as well as his greater popularity among the electorate. We will deal with the pattern of the Fiine Gael vote shortly.

Differences in the parties' arrangements notwithstanding, the combined influences of the local effect and the bailiwick system were quite noticeable in the voting results. Table 4 indicates that for all candidates there is an inverse relationship (negative correlation) between the candidates' percentage of the first

18. Part of the reason for this extremely neat Fianna Fáil pattern is that the few Inishowen (FF) politicians who had previously backed Blaney threw their weight behind Cunningham to be sure that Boggs would not defeat him. Thus Blaney's poll went down in '69 and Cunningham's went up—the party total remaining about the same.

reference poll and distance from their homes. That is, as one gets further away from a candidate's home his poll drops off.

TABLE 4: *Correlation of Distance from Candidate with Candidate's Percentage Poll*

Blaney	—·77754
Boggs	—·43268
Cunningham	—·43336
Harte	—·56028

Table 5 also shows this pattern, but another as well. (These percentages were derived from the ballot replicas of the four booths discussed above). The booths fall along a rough continuum between Blaney's home and Cunningham's home. Three of the four booths are in Blaney's bailiwick, one in Cunningham's. Both candidates' percentage of first preference votes drops off sharply once outside their bailiwick. Conversely, there is a sharp rise in each candidate's percentage of second preferences once outside his bailiwick. Given that most of the votes in this sample were cast along party lines, (see above), it is a reasonable inference that what we are seeing here is the outcome of a party alliance whereby a candidate promises his "seconds" to his running mate. This system of alliances is important to a party if it is to maintain cohesion under a PR/multi-member constituency system. As a corollary to the bailiwick system such alliances minimize conflict by guaranteeing one's running mate either a surplus when one is elected, or transfer votes if one is eliminated.

TABLE 5: *First and second preference polls related to Candidates' home*

	Blaney's Home		Cunningham's Home
	←		→
	<i>Percentage First Preference Poll</i>		
	<i>Blaney's Bailiwick</i>		<i>Cunningham's Bailiwick</i>
Blaney	47·9	49·6	10·6
Cunningham	0·8	1·5	28·9
	<i>Percentage Second Preference Poll</i>		
Blaney	1·3	3·1	31·3
Cunningham	42·9	46·6	11·7

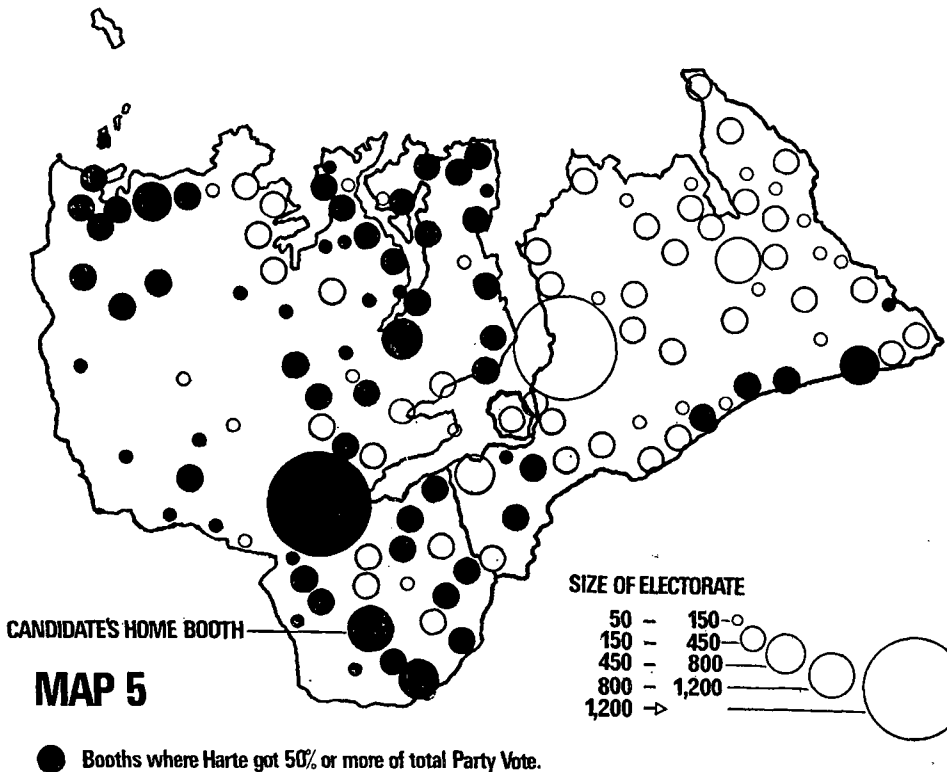
N.B.—Each box in the Table represents one booth. Figures for second preferences come from the same booth as above.

Having looked at these general features of constituency politics and voting behaviour, we can return to the earlier question of how the Fine Gael vote increased

### *Boggs's Vote and the Sectarian Shift*

Fine Gael's reliance on a mixed ticket strategy had necessitated some adaptation to the bailiwick system during the preceding campaign. Because the Protestant voters were scattered throughout the constituency, it was agreed that Boggs should canvass in the areas outside Inishowen where "Unionist" voters were located. Beyond this, however, there was an attempt to organize the campaign along territorial lines. This attempt was not entirely successful, for agreement on this point was less than uniform within the party. The resultant distribution of Fine Gael's vote indicates a more haphazard pattern than that evidenced by Fianna Fail.

Map 5 indicates that while most of Harte's portion of the party vote is in the western part of the constituency, there is a scattering of booths in Inishowen where he got 50 per cent or more of the Fine Gael vote. Map 6 suggests an equally (but only apparently) haphazard distribution of Boggs's majorities of the party vote. However, a comparison of Map 6 and Map 7 suggests that Boggs's vote outside his home area was a largely Protestant one.





In most respects Boggs's vote turned out to be precisely what Fine Gael strategists had hoped: a combination of an Inishowen (bi-denominational) local vote and a largely Protestant vote outside his home area. Table 6 indicates this pattern. Outside the Buncrana CEA there is a close relationship between Boggs's percentage of the Fine Gael vote and a booth's percentage of Protestant voters; inside the

TABLE 6: *Correlation of Fine Gael Candidate's Percentage Party Vote with Percentage Protestant and Catholic, by County Electoral Area*

Candidate	Buncrana CEA (cases = 60)		Other CEA's* (cases = 82)		Letterkenny CEA (cases = 34)		Total Constituency (cases = 142)	
	Prot.	Cath.	Prot.	Cath.	Prot.	Cath.	Prot.	Cath.
Boggs	-0.01311†	0.01311†	0.86078	-0.86078	0.83973	-0.83973	0.27455	-0.23229
Harte	0.04627†	-0.04627†	-0.86218	0.86218	-0.83973	0.83973	-0.26531	0.22244

†F Level too low for significance.

\*Including Letterkenny, Milford, and Glenties.

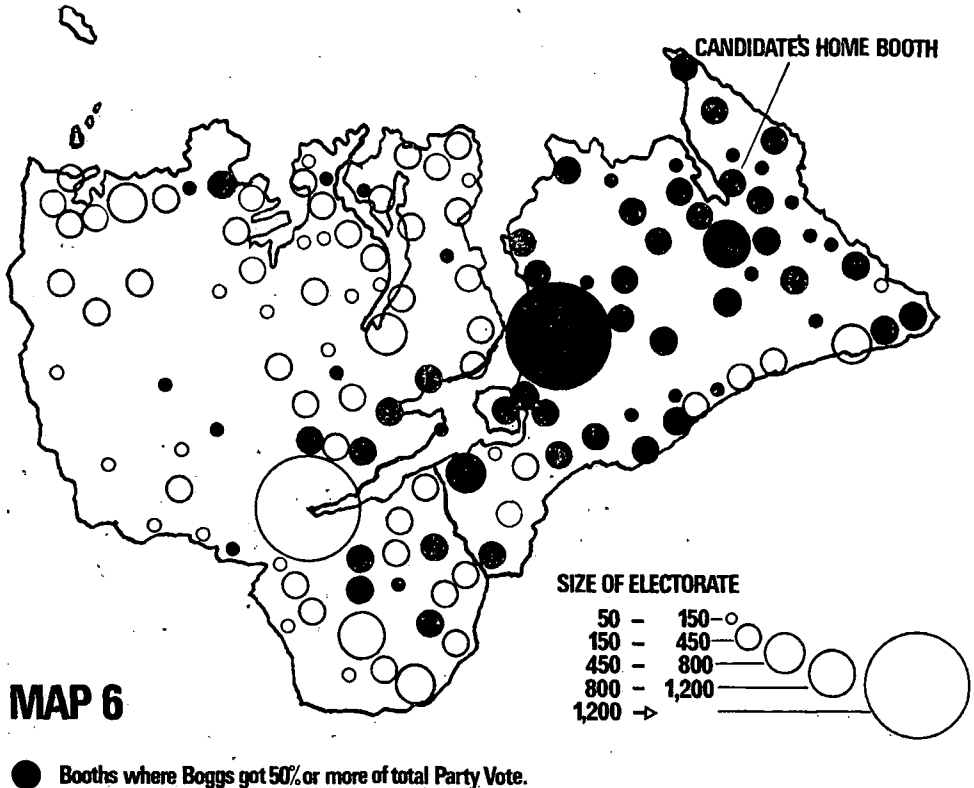
Buncrana CEA, the degree of association is apparently insignificant. Harte's vote appears the reverse of this pattern. Outside the Buncrana CEA, there is a high degree of association between Harte's percentage of the Fine Gael vote and a booth's percentage of Catholics. In Inishowen the two variables are apparently unrelated. Thus in most of the constituency (i.e., the area outside Inishowen), the vote divided between Boggs and Harte along religious lines.

However, inferences drawn from Table 6 about the nature of the Buncrana CEA vote might be misleading. It would seem from Table 6 that neither Fine Gael candidate's vote was related to the denominational content of the Inishowen booths. That is, by inference both Boggs's and Harte's vote were bi-denominational in Inishowen. Table 7 suggests that this inference is incorrect. Within the Buncrana CEA, as one moves away from Boggs's (and towards Harte's) home Boggs's percentage of the vote becomes associated with a booth's percentage of

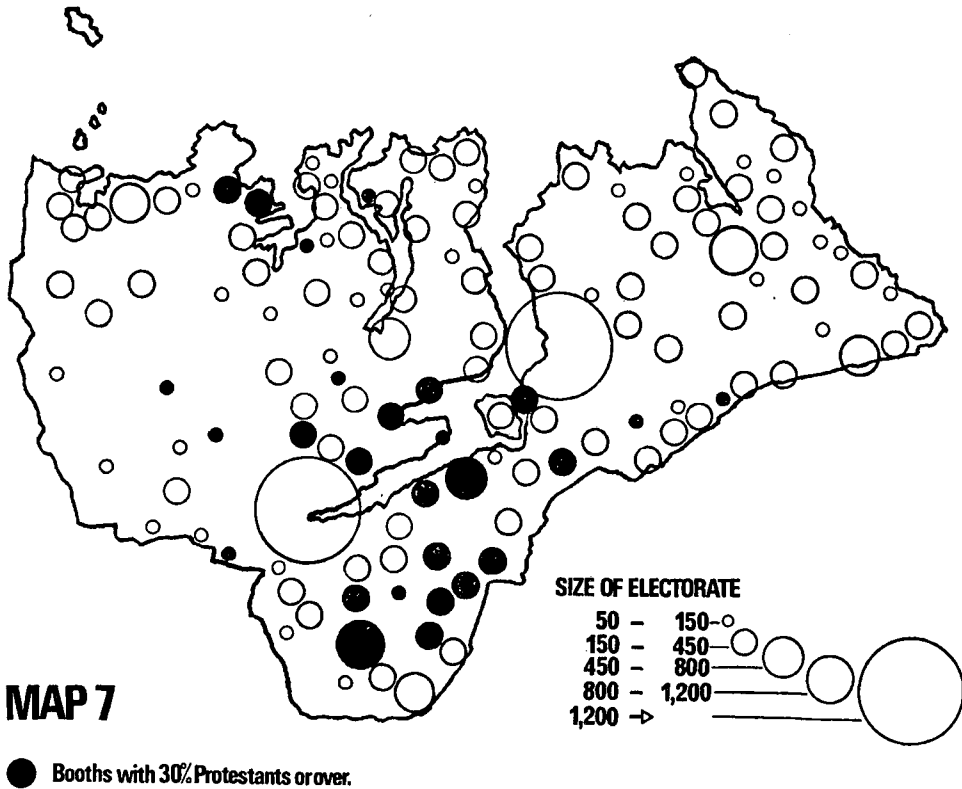
TABLE 7: *Correlation of Boggs's Percentage Poll with Percentage Protestant per booth within an increasing area of Buncrana CEA*

Distance less than	Correlation	Cases	F level
10 miles	0.25491	24	1.529
15 miles	0.36308	48	6.985
20 miles	0.33578	55	6.735

his own religion. Even in Inishowen, as one moves away from Boggs's home the vote seems to polarize along religious lines. This argument is supported if we now compare Maps 5 and 7. The booths where Harte got 50 per cent or more of the party vote in Inishowen are all 70 per cent, or more, Catholic. It appears that not only did the electorate in general polarize in Inishowen as one moved away from Boggs's home, but also the Fine Gael party vote.



Despite the increasing religious polarization as one moves away from Boggs's home, it is clear that he received a large number of Catholic votes in Inishowen. The low correlation (in Buncrana CEA) between Boggs's percentage of the party vote and the percentage Protestant per booth would indicate this, (Table 6), as would the fact that the size of his vote in Inishowen is almost double that CEA's number of Protestant voters, (Tables 1, 9). However, there appears to be a much higher degree of polarization of the Fine Gael vote in Harte's home area (Letterkenny CEA, Table 6), than in Boggs's home area. So it would seem that while Boggs got a fair proportion of the Catholic vote in Buncrana CEA, Harte did not receive the Protestant vote in Letterkenny CEA.



Fine Gael complicated the usual intra-party system of more or less exclusive territorial bailiwicks by using a mixed religious ticket. Both Fine Gael candidates relied on their local vote, but both also received a "sectarian vote" inside their running mate's CEA. (By contrast, the intra-party division of the vote between the two Catholic Fianna Fáil candidates fell almost exclusively along territorial lines.) The fact that polarization did not occur to the same degree inside Boggs's home area as it did outside it indicates that many Inishowen Fine Gael Catholics supported the local party man even though he was not of their religion. Conversely, the high degree of polarization of the Fine Gael vote in Harte's area suggests that Protestants did not support the local Fine Gael candidate, but voted for Boggs. So it seems that supporting the local man was more important to Catholic Fine Gael voters than to Protestants. However, that this did not hold true as one moved further away from Boggs's home suggests why Fine Gael's attempt at an adapted bailiwick system met with only limited success. It seems probable that, for Catholic Fine Gael supporters in Inishowen, voting for Boggs was as much an indication of their party loyalty as it was support for the local candidate. But religious polarization proved stronger than even Catholics' sense of party loyalty

once beyond a Protestant candidate's immediate locality, making the bolstering effect of a bailiwick system impossible fully to implement.<sup>19</sup>

Besides the degree of association between Boggs's vote and the percentage of Protestants per booth, there is other evidence to suggest that his entry into the race had the result Fine Gael strategists had planned. Table 8 indicates that there is a marked increase, over the 1966-1969 period, in the degree of association of the

TABLE 8: *Degree of Association between Fine Gael percentage poll and percentage Protestant*

	<i>Constituency Percentage Protestant</i>	<i>Buncrana CEA Percentage Protestant</i>	<i>Other CEA's Percentage Protestant</i>
FG Pres. Candidate ('66)	·33851	·17779†	·38221
FG Ref. Position ('68)	·16937	—·09476†	·22316
FG Candidates ('69)	·61048	·35025	·73585

†F level too low for significance.

party's percentage poll with percentage of Protestants per booth.<sup>20</sup> Thus Boggs's entry into the 1969 race had not polarized an already bi-denominational Fine Gael vote (as might have been argued), but had brought Protestant voters into the party. There was a clear shift of Protestant voters over the 1966-1969 period.

Table 9 shows, however, that Fine Gael's increase over the 1966-1969 period was not only due to a Protestant shift. Between the Buncrana and Letterkenny CEA's (where the mean percentage increase in the Fine Gael vote was largest) there is a substantial difference in the relation of the percentage change of the

19. Another important factor in this situation, which should not be belittled, was Harte's position as the incumbent since 1961. Harte was well known in Inishowen and would have got some support there no matter who his running mate was.

20. Owing to the absence of booth-by-booth figures for the 1965 General Election, the author has used figures for the last Presidential Election for purposes of comparison. While it might be argued, quite rightly, that there are differences between a Presidential and a Dáil Election, it is also true that Donegal's strong party system makes all electoral contests eminently partisan affairs. Given this, it is not unreasonable to assume for purposes of comparison that these figures reflect the strength of both major parties based on the Spring, 1969, *Register of Electors*. Because no earlier figures of this type exist, the author has had to use them for the correlations with the 1966 booth-by-booth returns. There has probably been very little change in the number or distribution of the Protestant Dáil Electorate, judging by the extremely low mean change (—·085 per cent) in the electorate sample (142 cases) over this three-year period.

It is useful to note in passing the extremely small relationship between the percentage for Fine Gael's Referendum position and the percentage Protestant given the many arguments at the time that the abolition of PR would be injurious to the position of minorities in the Republic.

party vote to the percentage of Protestants. In the Buncrana CEA there is no significant relationship between these two variables. Over the whole constituency the mean percentage change in the Fine Gael vote over the 1966–1969 period was 2.96. However, this figure is 6.78 for all booths within a ten mile radius of

TABLE 9: *Percentage change in party vote related to percentage Protestant*

CEA	Boggs's Vote		Percentage FG 1969—Percentage FG 1966		
	Numbers	Percentage poll related to percentage Protestant	Mean Percentage Change	Correlation with Percentage Protestant	Cases
Buncrana	3,308	.28199	4.5	.20628†	60
Glenties	218	.87406†	−3.3	.77413†	3
Letterkenny	1,503	.93470	5.1	.58767	34
Milford	943	.96116	2.9	.55792	44

†F too low for significance; but note that this does not materially affect the argument in the text.

Boggs's home (24 cases), and 2.11 for all booths outside this perimeter (118 cases).<sup>21</sup> The mean percentage increase is approximately three times greater in Boggs's locality than outside it. Since the correlation of Boggs's percentage of the party vote and percentage Protestant is only .03143 within this ten-mile radius, it is clear that the increase in the party's fortunes inside this area is not due simply to Protestant voters. Rather, it probably represents the relationship between localism and party voting strength.

Here it is useful to try to assess the relative importance of localism and religion on a candidate's vote within the constituency as a whole.

Table 10 suggests that for the Catholic candidates the distance from their homes is more relevant to where they got their votes than the percentage of Catholics per booth. (For this argument the Beta values are most relevant.) In Boggs's case, distance and religion are of approximately equal relevance to where he got his vote, with religion being perhaps slightly more important. For the supporters of Boggs, religion was more important relative to distance than it was to

21. The use of a 10 mile radius was arbitrary, but this radius does delimit an area distinct from McLaughlin's immediate locality. McLaughlin was Harte's running mate in the '61 and '65 General Elections.

TABLE 10: *Multiple Regression with Candidate's Percentage Poll as Dependent Variable and Distance from Candidate and Percentage of Candidate's own Religion as Independent Variables*

Variables*	Simple R	Beta	B	Std. Error B	Multiple R	Constant
Blaney's % Poll w/distance and % Catholic	-.77754 .03592	-.87912 .31734	-.63016 .39701	.03545 .06186	.77754 .83363	32.30566
Boggs % Poll w/ distance and % Prot.	.55074 -.43268	.70057 -.60592	.58851 -.34662	.04363 .02971	.55074 .80499	26.13858
Cunningham's % Poll w/ distance and % Catholic	-.43336 .28391	-.55109 .43354	-1.05024 .54460	.13416 .08843	.43336 .60159	8.69903
Harte's % Poll w/ distance and % Catholic	-.56028 .04881	-.69062 .27661	.49540 .17265	.05460 .04751	.56028 .61009	20.52925

\*It should be noted that a candidate's percentage poll has been used as the dependent variable in these calculations because it gives a truer representation of the local effect than a candidate's percentage of the party vote, owing to the more marked influence of party arrangements on the latter variable. The low simple R between Harte's poll and percentage Catholic is not a true indication of the polarization of the party vote. Alternatively, with both Fianna Fáil candidates being Catholic, where they got their poll (and their party vote) is less related to religion than to distance. But the Fianna Fáil vote is related to religion when seen as a whole. The Simple R between percentage FF in 1969 is .50 over the whole constituency, and .65 in those booths other than Boggs's home area.

supporters of the Catholic candidates.<sup>22</sup> Given the mixed character of Boggs's support, it is hazardous to draw any further inferences from this table.

#### *A One-Way or Two-Way Shift?*

Having looked at the shift of Protestant voters over the 1966-1969 period, the question remains as to whether or not those elements within Fianna Fáil who

22. This point raises an important issue about the nature of our explanatory model. The two variables we are using to explain a candidate's percentage poll are not logically related to the dependent variable in such a way that when one increases in importance the other necessarily decreases. (Such a model is usually called a "zero-sum" relationship.) Nor, in all but one case, are the two independent variables significantly related to each other. This is Harte's case, where distance from Harte and percentage Catholic have a simple correlation of .47. Harte lives in the heart of the heavily Protestant Lagan area, so as one moves away from him the booths are more heavily Catholic. Still, as we have seen above, Harte's vote is primarily a local one. Thus, religion and distance can be significantly related to a candidate's percentage poll at the same time.

sought to dislodge the Catholic Fine Gael vote from that party were successful. That is, at the same time that Protestant voters were moving towards Fine Gael, did Catholic voters move the other way?

A scatter diagram of percentage Fianna Fáil change plotted against percentage Catholic per booth was helpful in answering this question. Up to about 70 per cent Catholic the pattern was fairly volatile, Fianna Fáil change averaging about —15 per cent. Above 70 per cent Catholic the booths averaged about —5 per cent change, and were much more closely clustered. That is, in the booths with a lower percentage of Catholics (and hence a higher percentage of Protestants) the decrease in the Fianna Fáil vote was greatest, while in the more heavily Catholic booths the change was more marginal and closer to zero change. The heavily Catholic booths were thus decidedly more stable over this period. This would indicate that most of the change in the Fianna Fáil vote was due to Protestants leaving the party rather than Catholics moving to it. So the answer to our earlier question is that there was primarily a one-way shift.

### *Conclusion*

Our analysis of the mechanisms of party structure evidenced by the 1969 voting results should give a clue as to how the local party system is kept stable. Working out of a political culture of strong partisan sentiments, Donegal politicians have evolved mechanisms to mitigate some of the structural conflict arising from the electoral system. In the bailiwick system they have found a way of making strong localism less of a threat to party solidarity. As a corollary to this system, party bargains over "seconds" also decrease conflict. By defining informal constituencies, rules are at least laid down governing the relationships between several representatives of the same party. The dynamic of localism is thus harnessed to serve party needs. However, Fine Gael's unsuccessful experiment with an adapted bailiwick system suggests that localism becomes an unruly force, difficult to harness, as one crosses religious lines. The bailiwick system is only a small part of a more elaborate system of rules concerning intra-party behaviour in constituency politics. In this analysis we have dealt only with such aspects of this system as are amenable to analysis through the optic of voting patterns.

Though a measurable Protestant shift occurred in the 1969 election, it is hard to argue that this represented a weakening in the Donegal party system. If anything, the situation was just the reverse. Through successive alterations of constituency boundaries and the co-option of Protestant candidates by the major Republican parties, the Protestant vote had been gradually brought within the system of predominantly Catholic parties. Once the Protestant community had been removed from its role as an independent actor on the Donegal parliamentary political scene, the Republican parties successfully set about the task of harnessing the element of Protestant solidarity as a dynamic of Republican party politics. Despite the internal polarization of the Fine Gael vote along religious lines, the Catholic electorate as a whole remained relatively stable. Fine Gael, by mobilizing

the solid Protestant vote, was able to put itself in a much stronger competitive position with Fianna Fáil. In this way, at least, Protestant solidarity, nurtured and preserved over time, came to serve the ends of a competitive two-party system within the predominantly Catholic County of Donegal.