

Dail Deputies: "The 1969 Generation".

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As the Eighteenth Dáil's life drew to a close, a major change in Irish political life was anticipated. The expectations were not confined to the national mass media, although the subsequent results tempted some politicians to suggest that the closed world of television, radio and national press had misread the mood of the nation. At the local level too, throughout the campaign, newspapers spoke of the "Strong Desire for Change"¹ and saw the contest as the promise of "one of the great watersheds in Irish political history".² The same term was used in a fairly typical comment on the decline of governmental vigour and support in the *Western People's* editorial at the end of the campaign:

We believe the people desire a change, as much for the sake of democracy as for the humanisation of a once great party which can find itself again and its roots afresh in the cause of the little man. This is why quality control at the ballot box is the greatest need of an election that is a watershed in Irish politics.³

The sense of change was commonly related to the impact and side effects of the vigorous campaign by the Labour Party with its assertive slogan "the seventies will be socialist". *The Kerryman* commented editorially:

It is a new growth for the Irish political scene where a pragmatic centrism has always ruled and where ideological straightjackets of one kind or another have never quite fitted. With this election Labour faces the public for the first time in doctrinaire dress.⁴

However, perhaps the most frequent comments and most persistent news coverage related to the apparent generational change in Irish politics marked both by the disappearance of so many senior sitting members and by the appearance of new "prestige" candidates in all parties. The considerable increase of competition both within and between parties was marked from the beginning. In early April *The Irish Times* political columnist "Backbencher" devoted a full article to

1. Editorial in *Sligo Champion*, 30th May.
2. Editorial in *Kilkenny People*, 13th June.
3. *Western People*, 14th June.
4. *The Kerryman*, 31st May.

"Fine Gael's Carpetbaggers".⁵ Labour, which had already announced the adherence of Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien with a large public meeting the previous December⁶ followed up by nominating a Trinity College Dublin don and well-known television personality, Justin Keating, in North County Dublin during April.⁷ During April and May a constant series of stories brought news that sitting deputies would not be offering themselves for re-election; at the same time these withdrawals were linked with news of the new men in all parties (Rickard Deasy and David Thornley in Labour, John Bruton, Michael Sweetman and John Kelly in Fine Gael, Dermot Ryan, Ruairi Brugha in Fianna Fáil).⁸

Many welcomed this injection of new blood. An editorial in the *Westmeath Examiner* echoed a general view:

It is time to have a more mature approach to the actual work of our Deputies. The traditional pattern of work that is expected from them by the public is outmoded. Let's face it, the task of the Deputy is a never-ending round of letter-writing about mundane subjects, introducing deputations and looking after so many causes that are lost beforehand. Deputies are often expected to have more influence as regards hopeless causes than many of the saints and the old tradition of knowing the right people and having a bit of political pull is still a great power in modern Ireland.⁹

Commenting on "The Changing Political Scene" the *Limerick Leader* editorialised:

The electorate is now much more mature and it will certainly be a very stupid party that will expect to have second-rate or self-seeking candidates elected. People are becoming more conscious of the qualities they require in their representatives, too.¹⁰

And the *Kilkenny People* argued:

A most important factor in deciding the outcome of this election in marginal constituencies will be the quality of the candidate nominated. An outstanding national personality or a respected local figure could substantially change the normal voting pattern and such a candidate could well succeed in winning an extra seat for his party.¹¹

5. *The Irish Times*, 4-5th April.

6. For a full report see *The Irish Times*, 20th December, 1968.

7. *The Irish Times*, 12th April.

8. Stories included retirements of sitting deputies, John A. Costello, Lionel Booth, Patrick Byrne (10th, 26th April); P. A. Callery, Eugene Gilbride, Sean MacEntee, Patrick Crotty (9th, 13th, 28th, 30th May) and Martin Corry (5th June) and e.g. an *The Irish Times* series on "The Contenders".

9. *Westmeath Examiner*, 17th May.

10. *Limerick Leader*, 31st May.

11. *Kilkenny People*, 30th May.

As nominations closed, Maurice Hickey summed-up the prospects for the Nineteenth Dáil in the *Evening Herald* under a headline "Half Present Dáil likely to Vanish":

At the latest count, 21 outgoing Deputies are not standing again and a few more many announce their retirement before Tuesday.

The "drop-out" from the present Dáil, from whatever cause, may mean that half of its present membership will vanish in this election.

Some deputies have stood down voluntarily, others have been asked to retire and one or two actually "forced out". A sizable number of the outgoing members will be defeated. The election will be between the Parties but there will be an election within an election to decide how many of the older generation and how many of the younger generation survive. The betting is on the young men.

The new Dáil should be full of young members on all sides of the House and whatever Party takes over government it should really be possible to make the claim that the new Cabinet will be "the youngest in Europe".¹²

The same theme of generational change and increased competition was a main news lead in the *Irish Press* which reported:

It looks as if the new Dáil will be without at least 26 of its outgoing deputies. Practically all of the group have retired on the grounds of age, but two, Mr. Patrick Clohessy and Mr. Patrick Norton, of Fianna Fáil, failed to get the nomination at their convention.

Fianna Fáil has the biggest number of retirements. Fifteen of the party's outgoing members will not be back. Going also are six from Fine Gael, four from Labour and one Independent.¹³

There were, then, three related expectations regarding the outcome of the General Election in terms of Dáil personnel:

- (i) that there would be a greater Labour presence;
- (ii) that there would be a marked generational change in the House;
- (iii) that there would be a different quality of representation.

The immediate electoral results showed the first to be wrong; but superficial observation of some of the younger, and more vigorous new deputies might suggest that the other two expectations were realised. This paper reports on a survey-census giving relevant comparative data on these points. It is based on a mail questionnaire by RTE's major current affairs programme, *7 Days*, details of which are given in the Appendix. Both in gathering the information and structuring the following analysis, an attempt has been made to establish some degree of useful comparability by adopting categories already established in the

12. *Evening Herald*, 29th May.

13. *Irish Press*, 30th May.

earlier work on Dáil personnel by McCracken and Whyte,¹⁴ i.e., age, birth and residence, education, occupation and routes of entry. Unless indicated to the contrary, all data for 1969 are given for the full Dáil of 144 Deputies as elected, or, in the case of political parties, for the full 75 Fianna Fáil, 50 Fine Gael, and 18 Labour Deputies.

AGE

The trend towards a lowering of the age-range of the Dáil, already evident between 1961 and 1965, continued in 1969, as can be seen from Table 1:

TABLE 1: *Percentage of Deputies aged 45 and over, 1961-1969*

1961	1965	1969
61	60	52.5

However the change in the new House was attributable to a flattening-out of the middle-aged groupings rather than to any major increase in the number of very young deputies. The data indicate that the relative durability of elected representatives which has been such a constant feature of the Irish political system continues to determine the age-structure of the Dáil. Despite the appearance of 43 new deputies¹⁵ in the Dáil, the voters in their twenties continued to be substantially under-represented. Comparative data, showing the relatively even aging-and-replacement pattern of deputies, are given in Table 2.

TABLE 2: *Percentage of Deputies by Age-Group in 5 Dala, 1919-1969*

Age-Group	1919	1932	1944	1965	1969
20-29	21	1	2	6	6
30-39	37	27	12	20	25
40-49	25	39	31	31	27
50-59	13	26	37	24	27
60-69	3	5	17	14	12
70-79	—	2	1	5	3

An analysis of the age-structure of the Nineteenth Dáil by political parties (Table 3) shows no significant difference between Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, but generational change is evident in the case of Labour. Expressed in percentage

14. J. L. McCracken, *Representative Government in Ireland*, Oxford 1958, chapter VII, "The Composition of the Dáil"; John Whyte, *Dail Deputies*, Tuairim pamphlet No. 15, Dublin 1966. In subsequent tables comparative data are derived from these sources.

15. Some of these had been members of the Dáil prior to the 1965 General Election.

terms the figures for Labour may be misleading since the numbers in the individual cells are so small. Unlike the two larger parties, which show a fairly even spread between the 30-, 40-, and 50-year old age groups (although favouring the 40-year old group), Labour has seven deputies in their thirties, three in their forties (bunched at the lower end of the scale) and seven in their fifties. Only one Labour deputy elected in the 1969 General Election admitted to being over 60.

TABLE 3: *Percentage of deputies by age-group and political party*

Political Party	Age Group						N
	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	
Fianna Fáil	7	23	28	25	13	4	75
Fine Gael	8	24	30	24	12	2	50
Labour	0	39	17	39	5	0	18

It is clear, on the basis of this simple age grouping, that there was no major change in the composition of the Dáil between 1965 and 1969; this seems to imply that no generational change took place. Similarly, an examination of the continuing strength of localism in the selection of successful candidates, suggests that there was little difference in the quality of representation.

LOCALISM

One of the most obvious and most persistent characteristics of Irish representation has been its strongly local emphasis and flavour. "Candidates", as Professor Chubb has pointed out, "are predominantly local men in the sense that they live and belong in their constituencies".¹⁶ Unfortunately, the re-drawing of constituency boundaries prior to the last election has made it extremely difficult to establish accurately whether deputies were actually born and reside in the precise constituencies they now represent, and there is some considerable ambiguity involved in the term "adjacent Constituency". In the case of residence, ministers have been excluded from the data since they must spend most of the working year in Dublin; this gives a population of 129 for the second part of Table 4. Although a considerable effort has been made to achieve accuracy, the percentages given in the following table should be treated as close approximations.

It might be noted in the matter of those born "Elsewhere" that five deputies were born outside Ireland altogether—four in Britain and one in the United States.

There can be no doubt that these data again emphasise a continuing strong tradition of localism in Irish national representation. Taken together, the factors

16. B. Chubb, *The Government and Politics of Ireland*, Stanford 1970, p. 152. See also his Table 8.2, p. 207.

TABLE 4: *Percentages of deputies by birthplace, residence and constituency*

<i>Birthplace</i>	<i>In constituency</i>	<i>Adjacent constituency/ same county</i>	<i>Elsewhere</i>
1969	61	14	25
1965	60	21	19
<i>Residence:</i>			
1969	84	12	4
1965	78	14	8

of age and localism appear to reveal a totally unchanged political elite group, and to negate the expectations current before the 1969 election. However, the idea of a political generation involves more than simply a biological or time phenomenon; the transition from one generation to another is a continuous process, not a single, once and forever, transmission of culture and influence. For an elite group, other indicators will be more relevant than age in ascertaining generational change. One of the key indicators, implied for instance in Mannheim's definition of political generation,¹⁷ is education.

EDUCATION

The change in the level of education among Dáil deputies, already noticed by Whyte in 1965, was even more pronounced in 1969. The proportion of deputies with a university or professional education has risen further, while the handful of deputies who completed their full-time education at national school level is largely limited to those in the older age-groups, reflecting a period when educational opportunity was much more stringently limited. It might also be noted that a number of the deputies in the "primary only" category have completed university

TABLE 5: *Percentage of deputies attaining different levels of education in various Dala 1922—1969*

	1922	1932	1944	1948	1961	1965	1969
Primary only	40	44	48	38	22	20	10
Post-primary only	34	32	29	39	51	50	49
University or professional	26	24	22	22	28	30	41

or other extended adult education courses. In a very small number of cases I have not been able to establish conclusively the level of full-time education attained;

17. See K. Mannheim, *Essays in the Sociology of Knowledge*, London 1964, pp. 276 ff. Cf. B. M. Berger, "How long is a generation", *British Journal of Sociology*, March 1960.

but these cases could not invalidate the general pattern of results. When in doubt I have placed deputies in a lower rather than a higher category.

The same pattern of higher educational levels occurs in all the parties during the 1960's. The gap between the proportion of university/professional deputies in Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, which was evident in the 1965 figures, has disappeared. The most marked change in educational levels is shown in the Labour Party which now has a higher percentage of university/professional deputies and a lower percentage of national school leavers than either of the other parties. The educational pattern of the parliamentary Labour party has been transposed within the decade. The details are shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6: Percentages of deputies attaining different levels of education by party, 1969

	Fianna Fail			Fine Gael			Labour		
	1961	1965	1969	1961	1965	1969	1961	1965	1969
Primary	17	15	13	15	19	8	50	32	5
Sec./Voc.	54	56	47	49	40	50	44	55	50
Univ./Prof.	29	29	40	36	40	42	6	14	45

These data appear to confirm the expectation that the quality of Irish representation would change in the Nineteenth Dáil, and relate that change to personnel changes in the Labour Party. It might further be argued that levels of education are a better indicator of real generational change than the mere age categories already discussed: it marks not merely a change in the educational level of the Dáil but in the politicisation of the intellectuals. The point was made long before the election by Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien, and during the campaign by the political correspondent of the *Irish Independent*.¹⁸ The support given to "intellectuals" might be taken as reflecting a positive desire for better-equipped deputies on the part of the electorate—underlined by the fact that four of the five academics elected in 1969 were standing for the first time. However, this interpretation is considerably weakened by the recognition that all four were well-established public personalities whose campaigns were undoubtedly enhanced by their earlier frequent exposure on television and in the press. Although this "personality" aspect makes any simple explanation of their success unacceptable, it does seem reasonable to suggest that these academics were not accorded a deference vote (in terms of their perceived class status) but rather gained support on the basis of a popular understanding of their instrumental capacities within the political structure. A similar demand for better-qualified deputies emerges from an examination of the occupational background of deputies.

18. See O'Brien's speech reported in *Irish Times*, 20th December, 1968, final sections under sub-headings, "Intellectuals" and "1913 Struggles". Arthur Noonan's column *Report Stage* under heading "The challenge of the intellectuals", *Irish Independent*, 31st May. Cf. news item headed, "Labour Welcomes the Intellectuals: Union help for candidates", *Irish Times*, 12th June.

OCCUPATION

This is one of the most difficult categories to analyse accurately. A surprising spread of working background is represented in the Dáil, and it is often difficult to distinguish between a general merchant, a shopkeeper, a company director, a publican, a large-scale business executive. There is also the difficulty that many deputies follow more than one vocation, e.g., the farmer/publican/auctioneer. As far as possible the present analysis follows the line of earlier studies, though without the Tuairim attempt to record secondary occupations. The "engaged in politics" group is limited to those without any other form of activity before their elections; in practice this means ministers, parliamentary secretaries, party leaders and the Ceann Comhairle. Including the politicians as professional, this establishes the largest occupational category. Comparative data are given in Tables 7 and 8.

TABLE 7: *Percentage of deputies by occupational grouping.*

	1961	1965	1969
Professional	24	19	24
Politicians	13	14	15
Commercial etc.	27	25	30
Agricultural	22	24	17
Miscellaneous	15	18	14

TABLE 8: *Percentage of deputies by occupational grouping and by party.*

	FF			FG			LAB		
	1961	1965	1969	1961	1965	1969	1961	1965	1969
Professional	20	12	17	36	36	30	—	9	39
Politicians	23	22	24	4	4	4	12	9	5.5
Commercial etc.	23	26	32	40	32	36	12	9	5.5
Agricultural	24	25	13	17	23	26	12	9	5.5
Miscellaneous	10	11	13	2	4	4	63	64	44

The actual occupational breakdown of the 1969 Dáil deputies is listed in Table 9. The two most striking features are the relatively small number of deputies who are primarily farmers (and most of these are, in effect, larger farmers) and the extremely small number of deputies who could be regarded as manual workers.

TABLE 9: *Deputies by occupation*

<i>Professional</i>	
Politician	21
Teachers	16
Lawyers	12
Medical doctors	6
Journalist	1
	—
	56
<i>Commercial</i>	
Company directors	12
Shopkeepers, merchants	11
Publicans	7
Auctioneers	4
Garage proprietors	4
General commercial (chemist, commercial traveller, insurance agent, estate manager and former rate- collector)	5
	—
	occupations) 43
<i>Farming</i>	
	25
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	
Trade union officials	6
Local Government officials	3
Printers	2
Technicians	2
Other miscellaneous (a housewife, clerk, shoe operative, association secretary, turf accountant, contractor, Gas Co. employee)	7
	—
	20

A number of other findings may be noted:

- (a) the decline in the number of barristers in the House and the much more even representation of barristers between Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael. This is coupled with an increase in the number of solicitors in both parties. It might be hypothesised that with an increasing emphasis on politics as a profession and a continuing demand that representatives

provide a range of services for their constituents, solicitors are better able to cope with both their parliamentary and constituency work since they have access to organised secretarial help, telephone and office facilities.

- (b) the more even representation of the three levels of the teaching profession—national, post-primary and university. It is significant that four of the five university teachers sit on the Labour benches and represent there almost as large a group as the traditional clustering of trade-union officials.
- (c) the doubling in the number of medical doctors from three in 1965 to six in 1969.¹⁹ They distribute neatly in pairs across the three parties. Again, one might hypothesise that doctors (like solicitors) are better placed than other categories of professional people to assist large numbers of constituents. It might also be noted that since 1932 there has been a medical doctor in every Irish Cabinet, with the exception of the second period of inter-party government.

However, the main finding in regard to occupation is the growth in the number of professional men in the Dáil, especially noticeable in Labour. This reinforces the educational findings and suggests that a perceptible difference in the quality of representation, amounting to a generational change, is evident. At the same time, it is evident that older patterns persist and this is shown in the following examination of routes of entry.

ROUTES OF ENTRY

The Tuairim survey indicated four major routes of entry into Dáil Éireann and the same four are examined in the present study.

(i) *through participation in the national liberation movement*

Time has made this a channel of diminishing significance. The new political elite that emerged in the foundation years of the State remained dominant until after the Second World War. In 1948, 43 per cent of Dáil deputies could still claim active participation in the national struggle. Successive Dála have seen the percentage diminish, through deaths and retirements. In the present Dáil only a handful of veterans persist. Comparative data are given in Table 10.

TABLE 10: *Percentage of deputies participating in independence movement*

	1961	1965	1969
N	19	10	4
	27	15	6

19. For purpose of this enumeration, P. J. Hillery is recorded as "professional politician" rather than "medical doctor".

(ii) through relationship with former or sitting representatives

Many of the prominent names of the first generation linger on. Family succession, or at least close family relationship, with former ministers, deputies and senators has been a marked feature of Irish National politics. Professor McCracken, for instance, noted:

Of the twelve women who sat in the Dáil between 1922 and 1948, three were widows and three sisters of prominent leaders in the revolutionary period and five were widows of former members. Among the male members there were twelve near relatives of leaders and eight sons of members, six of whom sat with their fathers.²⁰

As the ranks of the first generation were depleted this tendency towards the family relationship route of entry increased. In the Tuairim survey Dr Whyte reported:

The general election of 1961 resulted in the return of no fewer than 33 deputies who were connected with former or already sitting representatives of their own or other constituencies. In the general election of 1965 the total rose to the remarkable figure of 41, or 28% of the Dáil. (The figures include two T.D.'s in 1961 and one in 1965 who were sons, not of Dáil deputies, but of M.P.'s in the old Redmondite party). Of the 41 relatives returned in 1965, four were widows of former T.D.'s, 27 were sons, and one a daughter; six were nephews, one a brother, and one a son-in-law. The remaining one, Mr. P. Lenihan of Longford-Westmeath, created an interesting precedent by being probably the first father to follow his son into the Dáil.²¹

In the 1969 election a number of notable family connections were missing, including the two Costello's, Patrick Byrne (last of the three sons of the legendary "Alfie" Byrne to serve) and Dennis Larkin (last of "Big Jim" Larkin's sons). But family relationship remains a strong feature of the Nineteenth Dáil. Forty of the deputies elected (28 per cent as in 1965) were able to claim close family ties with sitting or former members of the Oireachtas—sometimes, indeed, multiple relationships. The list includes:

- 30 sons
- 1 daughter
- 1 (late P. J. Lenehan) father of a sitting deputy
- 2 widows of T.D.'s
- 4 nephews
- 2 sons-in-law.

20. McCracken, *op cit.*, p. 90.

21. Whyte, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

If these findings reinforce the general impression of a small tightly-knit political elite, the point is further emphasised in the fact that so many of these "heirs" are related to former ministers of state. Three former heads of Government are each represented by a son in the Dáil; one, in addition, has a son-in-law; three of these four deputies hold, or have held, governmental office. Four sitting deputies are closely related to members of the first Cosgrave Government in 1922; four others close relatives of the first de Valera Government of 1932.

(iii) *through local government experiences*

The data here are not sufficiently accurate to detail in tabular form. In particular it has not been possible in all cases to establish whether deputies have been elected or co-opted to a local authority before or only after their first election to the Dáil. In 1965 the Tuairim survey reported:

Professor McCracken found that 67% of the deputies elected in 1944, and 56% of those elected in 1948, were serving, or had served, on local authorities of one kind or another. We find that in recent years the proportion is even higher. Of deputies elected in 1961, 113 (or 78%) had experience of local government, and of those elected in 1965, 101 (or 70%) had such experience... the number of deputies who had served, or were serving, on a local authority previous to their first election to the Dáil was 81 (56%) in 1961, and 79 (55%) in 1965.²²

On the basis of the present enumeration it appears that at least 95 deputies, (66 per cent) of the Nineteenth Dáil are or have been members of local authorities. Approximately a quarter of these, however, only gained a place in local politics after they had won their Dáil seat. In many cases, these are relatives succeeding to "family" seats in Dáil bye-elections and subsequently assuming the local authority role vacated at the same time. Clearly, then, deputies see membership of the local authority as a route of entry to the Dáil but also as a useful (necessary) means of maintaining the strong local connections and constituency service that Irish politics demand. At the very least, by retaining a place on the local authority a sitting deputy is reducing the opportunity for potential rivals to build up a local power base.

(iv) *through prominence in sport*

This channel of entry was not even noted by Professor McCracken; but in the sixties it has become of significance in replacing the first generation of political leaders. The Tuairim survey noted:

Nineteen of the deputies elected in 1961 (13% of the Dáil), and twenty one of those elected in 1965 (15% of the Dáil) could be described in this way i.e. prominent in

22. Whyte, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

sport. The twenty one elected in 1969 included thirteen prominent in Gaelic football, four in hurling, three in rugby, and one each in swimming, association football, and long distance running. We do not suppose that all these sports are equal in electoral drawing power, but, to put it at its mildest, it seems to do a candidate no harm to be a star in football or hurling.²³

By 1969 this characteristic of Irish politics was sufficiently established to be a subject of press comment. The emphasis on the drawing power of Gaelic sports was emphasised in a feature article by a sports columnist in the *Sunday Press* on 8 June 1969. Under the heading "The G.A.A.—Line-up for Dáil", Donall O'Connell wrote:

All going well the G.A.A. could have in the region of thirty members in the new Dáil.

Among the prominent G.A.A. officials who are candidates are two recent Provincial Chairmen, Bob Aylward and Denis Gallagher, while three current County Chairmen are in the field: Jack Fitzgerald (Meath); Sean Browne (Wexford) and Rory Kiely (Limerick).

Other county G.A.A. officials who are standing are Tody Byrne (Galway); Michael Begley (Kerry); Bernard Markey (Louth) and Willie Ryan (Tipperary).

Among the current or very recent G.A.A. intercounty stars listed are medal laden John Doyle of Tipperary, Dubliners Des Foley and Mark Wilson and Galway's John Donnellan.

The list of former stars is almost endless. It ranges from An Taoiseach to his namesake Jack Lynch in Clare and includes Sean Flanagan (Mayo), Dan Spring (Kerry), Dr. Bill Loughnane (Clare), Sean Brosnan (Kerry), Mick Herbert (Limerick), Henry Kenny (Mayo), Dr. Hugh Gibbons (Roscommon), Pa Browne (Waterford), Paddy Lalor (Laois) and Brendan Corish (Wexford).

If the ball hops right on Wednesday week, there could be no less than 36 senior All-Ireland medals in the new Dáil. Provided all of the medalists are elected, Fianna Fáil will have 27 medals to six for Fine Gael and three for Labour.

On a serious note, it can only be seen as an indication of the significance and status which the G.A.A. enjoys throughout the country that so many public figures should first come to prominence in its ranks. No other non-political body has remotely contributed anything as much to Irish Public life.

On the basis of the present enumeration, it has been established that the 1969 deputies included four G.A.A. County officials, fifteen football and hurling stars and another twenty-five deputies who have been or are active in G.A.A. activities

23. Whyte, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

either as players or officials. At the same time this prominence in sports is not of itself a guarantee of either selection or election. In Sligo-Leitrim, for example, the *Western People* reported on May 24:

That great half-forward for Sligo and Connacht, Michael Kearins of Dromard played many a wily game but none as good as the one he played at the beginning of last week when he came from the ranks of shy young men in Fianna Fáil to announce that he is seeking the party's nomination as a candidate for the next General Election.

Until Mr. Gilbride announced his retirement none of the not so small band waiting to jump into his shoes could make a move and while it seems certain that the Kearins announcement was precipitated by the heightening rumours of a June election and by his own scheduled departure for America for a two-weeks stint with the Connacht team, the public declaration of intention must certainly have caught all the others wrong footed.

In the event, Mr. Kearins did not gain the nomination in a highly competitive convention (see *Sligo Champion*, 30 May). Similarly two recent Provisional Chairmen and two current County Chairmen failed to win seats in 1969.

It must also be noted that the sporting prominence of deputies is not limited to Gaelic games but it is certainly significant that of 39 respondents to the questionnaire who mentioned sporting membership, 31 identified their involvement in G.A.A. activities. By comparison, in answer to the same question only 30 deputies identified themselves as trade-union members.

However, while these relatively traditional routes of entry persist, in the 1969 campaign a new emphasis on the choice of "prestige" candidates, new men with an already established public reputation or personality, was also evident. Not all of these were successful. The poor showing of Rickard Deasy, former and much-publicised President of the National Farmers Association, for example, indicated that national prominence and reputation could not automatically be transferred into electoral votes. Nevertheless the intervention of so many well-established men indicates a breaking-up of established patterns of recruitment in Ireland. In some measure, this could also be associated with the increase in deputies' salaries—a topic of comment in the newspapers before the campaign started.²⁴

The attempt to draw candidates from a broader base was particularly marked in the Labour Party. In a recent research note, the authors commented on the comparison of Labour's candidates in 1965 and 1969:

The most notable increase came in the proportion of candidates drawn from Social Class 3 (skilled occupations), and the most significant decrease was in the proportion of trade-union officials. This suggests that power within the Irish Labour Party is

²⁴ E.g. Basil Chubb's column *Political Issues* under the heading "Deputies Salaries", *Irish Press*, 29th March 1969; Arthur Noonan's *Report Stage* under heading "Pay increases a sore subject with Deputies", *Irish Independent*, 29th March also his *Election Report Stage* under the heading "Commitment to politics costly", *Irish Independent*, 26th May.

being diffused beyond the traditional groups to include members of the newer trades and professions, which have shown a notable increase in recent census reports.²⁵

Even more important than candidate selection is the difference in personnel elected as noted above. The effect has been to make Labour symbolically less representative of its traditional supporters—it might even be suggested that the Irish parliamentary Labour Party is going a step further than its British counterpart and becoming symbolically representative not merely of the new university graduate group in society but of the university teacher.²⁶

This change in Labour dramatises the paradox implicit in the generational change shown in these 1969 General Election results. The marked improvement in the instrumental quality of deputies (as measured by the large increase in the percentage of those with third-level education and professional occupations) has made the Nineteenth Dáil symbolically less representative of the community as a whole. It is ironic that an increasing ideological emphasis on class and privilege in Irish society should occur as the public representatives as a group become a less accurate cross-section of that society.

Dáil deputies 1969 are seen to be largely middle-class, considerably longer and better educated, wealthier and with a much higher proportion of professionally occupied members than the adult Irish population as a whole. The incongruity is further reflected in the simple demographic indicators of sex and marital status: no cross-section of the national population would show such a small number of women (3 of 144 deputies) nor such a small proportion of bachelors.²⁷ However, it is necessary to place these findings in a larger comparative context. The changes apparent in the composition of the Nineteenth Dáil do not serve to differentiate it from the general pattern of modern assemblies; on the contrary they bring the Dáil more in line with legislatures elsewhere. Professor Jean Blondel has argued persuasively that:

Members of assemblies do not constitute a cross-section of the population. Men, well-educated persons, party officials, civil servants, business men and relatively

25. M. A. Busted and Hugh Mason, "Irish Labour in the 1969 Election", in *Political Studies*, vol. xviii, No. 3, September 1970, p. 375.

26. Cf. R. Rose, "Class and Party Divisions: Britain as a test case", *Sociology*, vol. 2, No. 2, May 1968, p. 153: "The Parliamentary Labour Party is becoming representative of university graduates".

27. Marital status of 1969 deputies, as elected, by party:

	Married	Single	Widowed
Fianna Fáil	66	6	3
Fine Gael	39	10	1
Labour	16	2	—
Independent	1	—	—

prosperous farmers typically have a more than average chance of becoming members of assemblies. The reasons are well-known impressionistically, though they have not been studied systematically. It is difficult for persons coming from other groups to be nominated by political parties where they exist, or to be sufficiently prominent to 'emerge' as natural candidates where independents prevail. A high level of interest in politics is related to middle-class occupations and discussion of political problems occurs more often, at least on average, in middle-class families. The connexions necessary to acquire a reasonable chance of election also place members of the middle-class at an advantage; it has been noticed that 'families' of politicians tend to develop in all parties whatever the ideological standpoint of the party: families of 'democratic' politicians in the United States, of Labour politicians in England, of Communist politicians in France or the Soviet Union, emerged after two generations and sometimes after the first generation during which the party had been in existence.²⁸

It seems reasonable to suggest, then, that the generational and qualitative changes that are discernable in the Nineteenth Dáil, and the corresponding differences in socio-economic and educational status between members of the assembly and the community as a whole, indicate no more than that Ireland, while retaining some traditional patterns and relationships in the recruitment of its political elite, is moving closer to the general norms of stable and mature political systems. Some loosening in the intensity of familial, regional and other bonds of partisan loyalty may be perceived among deputies, as among the general population, but the move from the so-called "revolutionary generation" of original Irish political leaders to a more professional political elite does not appear likely to lead to any substantial adjustments in the structure, whatever about the style, of Irish politics in the seventies.

In the face of entrenched and increasing executive power, the real legislative influence of deputies is marginal. Although senior politicians in Ireland, as elsewhere, complain that academic critics understate the importance of backbench resistance within party meetings and opposition pressure on the direction and formulation of policy, it can scarcely be denied that much of our decision-making involves approving and accepting schemes already largely shaped within and between government departments and outside interests. It has become difficult for the public representative outside government to penetrate the secrets of the bureaucracy, almost impossible for him to play a creative role in the formulation of legislation or policy at the seminal stages. Although the generational and qualitative changes in Dáil personnel may reflect some new perception of the deputy's role, the continuing strong local emphasis and the highly competitive character of the electoral system will still force him to devote time and effort to his more traditional role as local spokesman, ombudsman and influence peddler. Deputies in the future as in the past, are likely to be so intent on making the

28. J. Blondel, *An Introduction to Comparative Government*, London 1969, p. 365.

system function with some degree of acceptance and satisfaction to their own constituents that they will be unable to play an effective role as critics, creators and controllers of executive power and policy.

University College, Dublin.

APPENDIX

In summer 1969, immediately following the General Election, the editor of RTE's major current affairs programme *7 Days*, Muiris MacConghail, initiated a survey of Dáil deputies. The main purpose was to gather basic information for all members of the House. The questionnaire, which was influenced by the earlier Tuairim survey, was designed by the programme's political reporter, Ted Nealon, and a research assistant, with the help of RTE's audience research service. The questionnaire and accompanying letter (reproduced below) was circulated to 123 deputies on 22 July, 1969. The 21 excluded deputies were: the Ceann Comhairle, Government Ministers (14), Opposition Party leaders (2), recently retired ministers (3—Deputies Aiken, Hilliard and Smith), and Deputy Sean Dunne who died between polling day and the first meeting of the 19th Dáil. By early autumn a total of 73 deputies had returned questionnaires; this 60% response rate compared favourably with the 52% rate achieved by the Tuairim survey.

At this stage, an initial examination of the data by the present author suggested that the questions on attitudes and motives were unlikely to yield any substantial data and that the value of the classification data would be enhanced by a more complete response. Accordingly a second copy of the questionnaire and accompanying letter was sent to non-responding deputies on 22 October, 1969. In addition individual deputies and party officials were approached in order to secure a better response. The result was a total response of 84% of all deputies circulated as shown below:

Response by party affiliation

	FF	FG	Lab.
Deputies circulated	57	49	16
Deputies responded	47	42	14

These data were supplemented by attempting a complete enumeration of all deputies (including ministers and party leaders). Data was obtained from pre-election biographies issued by the parties, and sketches published in the press; brief ministerial biographies prepared and issued by the Government Information Bureau; and, in the case of older deputies, such standard reference works as Flynn's *Parliamentary Handbook* and Thom's *Directory*. In cases of particular deputies, additional or confirmatory information was obtained with the assistance of Senator T. Ó Maoláin, Mrs Ita McCoy, Mr Brendan Halligan. As far as possible, all information was cross-checked and additions were made to incompleting or inaccurate questionnaires (largely on questions of age and education).

7 Days' Office
RTE
Donnybrook
Dublin 4

22nd July, 1969.

Dear Deputy,

We are at present assembling biographical details of members of the 19th Dáil, and would be extremely grateful if you could assist us.

Naturally, we have a certain amount of details already collected from election literature, party headquarters, and the national and local newspapers. The information which we now seek from you will serve to augment our records.

You will find a list of questions enclosed. Please treat this as a general guide to the kind of material we are looking for. There are some questions that you may prefer not to answer, or that are not, in fact, applicable. On the other hand there may be some important aspect of your career not covered by the general list. If so, please see question 6.

We are extremely anxious to get the biographical data completed before the programme summer break, and would appreciate if you could let us have your reply towards the end of the week. There is a stamped addressed envelope enclosed for your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Muiris MacConghail
Producer, "7 Days"

A "SEVEN DAYS ENQUIRY"

1. Please give details of the elected bodies (including Dáil and Senate) of which you have been a member (giving dates where possible).

.....	from 19	to 19
.....	19	19
.....	19	19
.....	19	19
.....	19	19

2. Which, if any, other organisations (trade unions, sports groups etc.) are you a member of? (Please give details of any office held or other achievements.)

3. As a T.D. have you ever been called on for Dáil committee work or other special tasks?

- 4. Has there been any one facet or event of your public career which attracted great attention?
- 5. What would you say were the main reasons you had for entering public life?
- 6. Are there any aspects of your career not covered by these questions that you think might be of particular interest?
- 7. Some personal details:

Name in full:

Home Address:

Age: Married/Single Birthplace:

Business Address:

Phone Nos.:

Details of your education (please name schools):

Occupation(s):

Father's Occupation:

Your Wife's Maiden Name:

Her Former Address:

Family: Boys Girls

Their Occupations:

Their Educational Achievements:

July 1969