



European
University
Institute

Department of Political and Social Sciences

EUI Working Papers

SPS 2007/12

The Puzzle of Non-Party Actors in Party Democracy:
Independents in Ireland

Nicole Bolleyer & Liam Weeks

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

*The Puzzle of Non-Party Actors in Party Democracy:
Independents in Ireland*

NICOLE BOLLEYER & LIAM WEEKS

This text may be downloaded for personal research purposes only. Any additional reproduction for other purposes, whether in hard copy or electronically, requires the consent of the author(s), editor(s). If cited or quoted, reference should be made to the full name of the author(s), editor(s), the title, the working paper or other series, the year, and the publisher.

The author(s)/editor(s) should inform the Political and Social Sciences Department of the EUI if the paper is to be published elsewhere, and should also assume responsibility for any consequent obligation(s).

ISSN 1725-6755

© 2007 Nicole Bolleyer & Liam Weeks

Printed in Italy
European University Institute
Badia Fiesolana
I – 50014 San Domenico di Fiesole (FI)
Italy

<http://www.eui.eu/>
<http://cadmus.eui.eu/>

Abstract

It is an accepted truth that parties are the central political actors in liberal democracy. This dominance of parties is often considered the logical outcome of rational politicians' attempts to maximize their utility in terms of votes and policy influence. However, the last twenty years have seen a number of significant Independent (i.e. non-party) actors emerge in more than a few political systems. From an actor-centred point of view, party affiliation can, depending on the particular environment, be rather a liability than an advantage which has significant implications for the role of non-party actors in face of weakening party democracies.

To demonstrate this point, we deliver an account of the rise of Independents in the Irish political system, opposed to the dominant scholarly perspective that tends to consider Independents as an idiosyncrasy. We show that the choice of organizational independence over party affiliation represents a reaction to incentives inherent in the electoral, parliamentary and governmental stages that can disfavour party as the most efficient vehicle for individual goal attainment. This becomes evident when avoiding the misleading comparison between parties as collective bodies with that of Independents as individuals, instead focussing on the respective strategic positions of the individual MPs.

Keywords

Candidates; non-party actors, party decline; Ireland; STV; clientelism

Many thanks to Peter Mair and the anonymous reviewer for their helpful comments on earlier versions of the paper.

Authors:

Nicole Bolleyer (EUI/University of Exeter) N.Bolleyer@exeter.ac.uk

&

Liam Weeks (University College Cork) weeksl@tcd.ie

Introduction

Politicians have two options when they desire to contest elections:ⁱ they can run for a party, or as an Independent.ⁱⁱ From a rationalist perspective it is usually argued that politicians choose the option that increases first, their chances of electoral success and second, their ability to influence national policy (Moser 1999: 150). As a consequence, the dominance of parties in modern political life has led to the rarely questioned belief that parties as organizational vehicles represent the best means for individual actors to pursue these goals. This belief has increasingly become the subject of critique since both the decline of the party identification model and the rise of anti-party sentiment leaves established parties increasingly unpopular amongst electorates (Owen and Dennis 1996). The rise of Independents can be read as one reaction to this development that questions the superiority of parties' organizational capacity to ensure citizen representation.

Both the media and academics have dismissed the re-emergence of Independents as an example of irrational behaviour by both voters and candidates alike, implying that these developments are an aberration, and of little consequence for political theory. We counter such assumptions, arguing that the phenomenon of Independents provides a challenge for widely accepted truths in party research, and more specifically, the theory of party democracy. In particular systems, the increasing number running as Independents,ⁱⁱⁱ and the increasing number elected as Independents, raises questions about parties' status as 'naturally' superior organizational forms from the candidates' as well as from the voters' perspective. This observation creates an important awareness that also gains more and more ground in current scholarly research—that parties have doubtlessly been the dominant vehicles for representation in the past, but that they might not be capable of fulfilling this task in the future, which creates an organizational vacuum as well as a vacuum in terms of legitimacy (Andeweg 2003; Mair 1998; 2005). The tendency towards candidate-centred elections and issue voting are clear symptoms of this development (for more on the increased importance of candidates see Wattenberg 1996; Marsh 2007; on the related area of the personal vote see Cain et al 1987; Carey and Shugart 1995). This puts the search for, and the analysis of, alternatives to party representation, and with it party democracy, high on the research agenda.^{iv}

This paper contributes to this discussion by analyzing the incentive structures that favour the strong presence of Independents in Ireland. This political system was chosen because it provides a context in which parties do not always unambiguously maximize candidates' utility. Hence, it represents the paradigmatic case of a parliamentary democracy in which party dominance becomes threatened, and is therefore a crucial example of how incentive structures can undermine the organizational supremacy of political parties.

Without doubt, all the aspects pointed to in the literature—the personality factor in voting, the impact of the electoral system, the particular character of Independent candidates, and localism (Chubb 1957; Carty 1981: 58–61; Anckar 2000: 262–263)—can help to account for the phenomenon of Independents in general. Consequently, they need to be integrated in any explanatory effort. At the same time, however, the way these features are presented as peculiar aspects contributing to a 'deviant phenomenon' sidetracks those systematic insights that the phenomenon can offer for comparative research on party democracy and on political parties.

To circumvent this problem, the paper develops a rationalist approach to an independent status as an organisational alternative to party membership. The paper starts out with a definition of Independents and discusses the literature on party formation and organisation to indicate the merits and perils of party membership in the abstract. On this basis, we develop the conceptual tools to analyze the structural incentives to run as, and remain, an Independent instead of running as a party member. In a second empirical part, we apply these tools to the Irish context which provides for a crucial case study to examine ‘independence’ as a general phenomenon as will be laid out later. More particularly, we assess the incentives in favour of and against running as an Independent in the electoral, the parliamentary and the governmental arena of the Irish political system as compared to the position of the individual party MP. In the conclusion we discuss the general implications of our findings for the debate on the decline of party democracy.

1. Changing Perspective on Independents: The Merits and Perils of Party Membership

Usually, the term ‘Independent’ refers to someone who is neither a member of, nor affiliated with, a political party. The term is sometimes broadened to include members of minor parties, especially MPs who are their parties’ sole parliamentary representatives (see Mitchell 2001: 193). Examples like George Galloway of the Respect Party in the UK and Joe Higgins of the Socialist Party in Ireland spring to mind. Independence can also be thought of as a qualitative term that assesses the extent to which individual MPs follow the directives of an affiliate organisation, be it a political party or an interest group. For example, there are many cases in the US of party mavericks with their own personal machine, who do and say what they want, largely independent of their party executive. Michael Bloomberg, the Republican candidate elected Mayor of New York in 2001 is one such example (he ultimately left the party to become an official Independent in 2007). In the ideological sense, independence need not imply the holding of either a centrist or neutralist position; it simply means that an individual’s political stance stemmed from their own original thought, and was not forced on them by an external group, like a political party.

In light of the many potential difficulties that arise when attempting to undertake a qualitative analysis of the independence of politicians, the working definition used throughout this paper is King-Hall’s minimalist version: “a person independent of the party machines” (1952: 54).^v Hence, we understand Independents as non-party actors who are not subject to a party whip and ‘independence’ as an organisational alternative to party candidacy. Members of minor parties do not fall into this category.

To identify the conditions under which independence becomes a rational alternative to party candidacy, as a first step, the merits and perils of the latter, widely considered as a ‘natural choice’ of any political entrepreneur, are assessed.

While the cooperation between politicians with similar preferences tends to be taken as naturally given (Laver 1999: 25), the literature on party formation tries to identify the incentives for partisan activity among politicians who do not share preferences very closely (Aldrich 1995: 30). Assuming that politicians thrive for a long and successful career, hence for the continuous gain of office (Schlesinger 1966), joining parties has several obvious advantages. First, parties can provide for a 'brand name' (Key 1966). Given that voters link certain programmatic aspects to a party label, any candidate profits from this reputation (if it is positive), because it makes both advertising for the politician and the decision for the voter less costly. Second, parties have the resources to provide selective benefits for the activists who support the campaign of single candidates, hence, supporting the mobilization of party members. Third, parties can deliver a core support of voters that are loyal to the party and consequently elect its candidate (Aldrich 1995: 49). It is important to stress that these arguments refer to the electoral stage only.

In parliament, where decisions are taken by majority rule, being part of the majority party assures the winning of any bill given that its members are disciplined. In this sense, entering a parliamentary party means to win more than a politician could win on his own, thus overcoming the problem of collective action (Aldrich 1995: 35; Cox and McCubbins 1993). In addition, party MPs can use the threat of the party whip to beat off pressure from interest groups. With these organizational advantages in mind, parties are formed to further the interests of their component parts, the individual political actors. Consequently, so long as the benefits of party membership continue to outweigh the costs, parties are the rational goal for all ambitious politicians (Moser 1999: 150).

This line of reasoning brings in the policy goals of politicians for which they might strive – be it due to intrinsic motivation or for voter-maximizing purposes. While the argument referring to the politicians' superior resources during the electoral stage are convincing, we argue that the arguments in favour of belonging to a party in parliament are overstated.^{vi} Any approach that tries to explain why politicians with distinct preferences join a party and make themselves subject to party discipline need to face the question of whether a single politician can be sure that his preferences will be incorporated in the party program, especially if they are a backbencher, who have very limited access to policy formulation (compared to party leaders) (Panebianco 1988; Maor 1998).

If an MP's party is in government, then, quite naturally, his preferences are closer to his own party's program than to the others. Hence, the contribution to his party's victory is already a basic achievement in terms of policy. What we question, however, is that this advantage can compensate for individual impact, in particular with reference to the profile of Independents who are interested in the solution of local problems and the acquiring of benefits for a locally defined electorate to ensure re-election. For a politician to join a party in a context in which party discipline is very high and the policy influence of private members is low carries the burden of losing the freedom to highlight issues they perceive important, and being forced to defend party policies they do not agree with. Such politicians are confronted with a trade-off between being affiliated with the bundle of policies implemented by their leaders (potentially agreeing with most of it) and the capacity to freely push for those demands particularly important for their respective voters. Making themselves subject to party discipline, MPs are restricted in their ability to exploit windows of opportunities that arise whenever a government lacks sufficient parliamentary support and puts Independent actors in a particularly strong position.

This brings us to two core problems in the discussion about Independents as a potential organisational alternative to parties:

First, instead of Independents and party candidates, it is usually Independents and parties that are the analytical categories used to evaluate party strategies. Scholars tend to treat parties as ‘strategically unitary’ actors, which is useful as long as they compare different parties and the benefits of the strategies available to them respectively, hence, as long as the nature of the actor is kept constant. Problems arise when comparing parties as collective bodies to Independents as individuals; the observation that parties as collective entities are more influential than single Independents is like pointing out that ten Independents together are more powerful than one alone. To get an insight into the advantages and disadvantages of party structure and resources, we take the position of an ordinary MP embedded in a party as standard and compare it to the position of an Independent without such an affiliation. Only such an actor-centred perspective allows for an unbiased and more multi-faceted evaluation of the choice for (or against) independence than the literature usually depicts.

Notwithstanding our reference to the limited freedom to push for one’s own policy preferences as a disadvantage of party membership, whenever government participation is a necessary precondition for political actors to gain influence in parliamentary systems, the explanation of independence as something other than an idiosyncratic choice remains challenging. Hence, even if the electoral arena opens a window of opportunity for Independents to run successfully, this in itself does not explain why actors might use this window when anticipating powerlessness in the parliamentary arena that is shaped by different factors than is the electoral sphere. Often it is argued that Independents, as well as their voters, are solely interested in the expression of preferences without seriously attempting to also realise these preferences. Yet this is a claim that needs to be examined empirically. Further, to capture potentially countervailing incentives, one needs – in the first place - to assess the electoral, legislative and governmental advantages and disadvantages separately from each other.

The latter leads us to a second conceptual problem. The two major accounts of party unity, and more fundamentally party emergence, either look exclusively at the incentives created in parliament (see Aldrich 1995, Laver and Shepsle 1998) or assume the electoral incentives to organize and behave in a disciplined manner spill over into the legislature (Bowler 2000: 156). These theoretical approaches do not account for the possibility of countervailing incentives generated by the two contexts, and therefore easily overlook the following: if Independents give up advantages in the electoral stage by joining a party, the gains of party membership at the parliamentary and or/governmental stage need to compensate for such losses. If, in addition, ad hoc coordination in the legislature among Independents functions as equivalent of intra-party coordination, while allowing them to stick with their particular preferences, Independents have an advantageous position that party membership would heavily restrict. Then, remaining Independent (or even leaving a party to become an Independent in particular circumstances) becomes a reasonable option.

In a nutshell, to adequately assess demands and pay-offs across different phases, the survival of Independents need to be systematically traced back to the incentive structures that, first, the electoral stage, second, the parliamentary stage and, third, the

governmental stage provide. Although they are related to each other, the separate examination of stages is necessary because each stage is related to specific opportunities and risks from the respective perspectives of an Independent or a party MP. Therefore, we assess the structural advantages and disadvantages to become and to remain an independent entrepreneur compared to the status of an individual party member stage by stage.

II. The Irish Puzzle: Case Selection and Methods

The Irish system provides one of the few test cases for the examination of an independent status as an alternative to party candidacy. While the goals of office, policy and votes can conflict in Ireland as in any other democratic system, more importantly, different stages in the process set countervailing incentives for which organizational form – independence or party affiliation – is preferable from an individual actor’s point of view. Following the theoretical discussion above, this ambivalence in the overall incentive profile of the Irish system provides a systematic puzzle for rational choice theory: the electoral stage opens a window of opportunity for Independents to run successfully, but in itself, it does not explain why actors might use this window when anticipating powerlessness in the parliamentary arena that heavily disfavours private member influence.

Due to the differences between the three aforementioned stages, we use different empirical methods to assess the respective incentive structures in favour of, or against, an independent status present in each of them. To understand why Independents decide to run, i.e. analysing the electoral stage, a survey of 845 Independent and party candidates was conducted immediately after the 2004 local elections (the response rate was 60 percent). Such a survey has not been conducted before, and hence offers crucial and valuable insights into Independents’ motivations compared with those of party candidates, differences which so far have been the subject of speculation, yet not of proper empirical analysis. While some may question the applicability of a survey from a local election to the wider national scene, there is a number of reasons why the data is applicable. The same party system operates at both local and national level (other than, for instance, in the UK), and many of those elected at local level go on to contest, or at least aspire to contest, a general election. Consequently, the local level represents a lower tier of the national level, rather than as a different system. In addition, the same electoral system is in operation for both systems, and there is not as great a difference between the votes achieved by Independents at local and national level. The latter point is especially important, because Independents tend to fare well at local elections across many systems, but not at national elections. Since there is a clear link between the local and national level in Ireland, the focus on the former does not introduce a structural bias, and we expect the following results to be applicable to the national scene. In terms of logistics, it was also better to focus on local elections where there is a far larger pool of Independent candidates, which increases the sample size for such a study.

Because the number of Independents entering parliamentary and, moreover, gaining governmental relevance is very restricted, survey analysis is not a feasible strategy for analysis of the parliamentary and governmental stages. Instead, the incentive

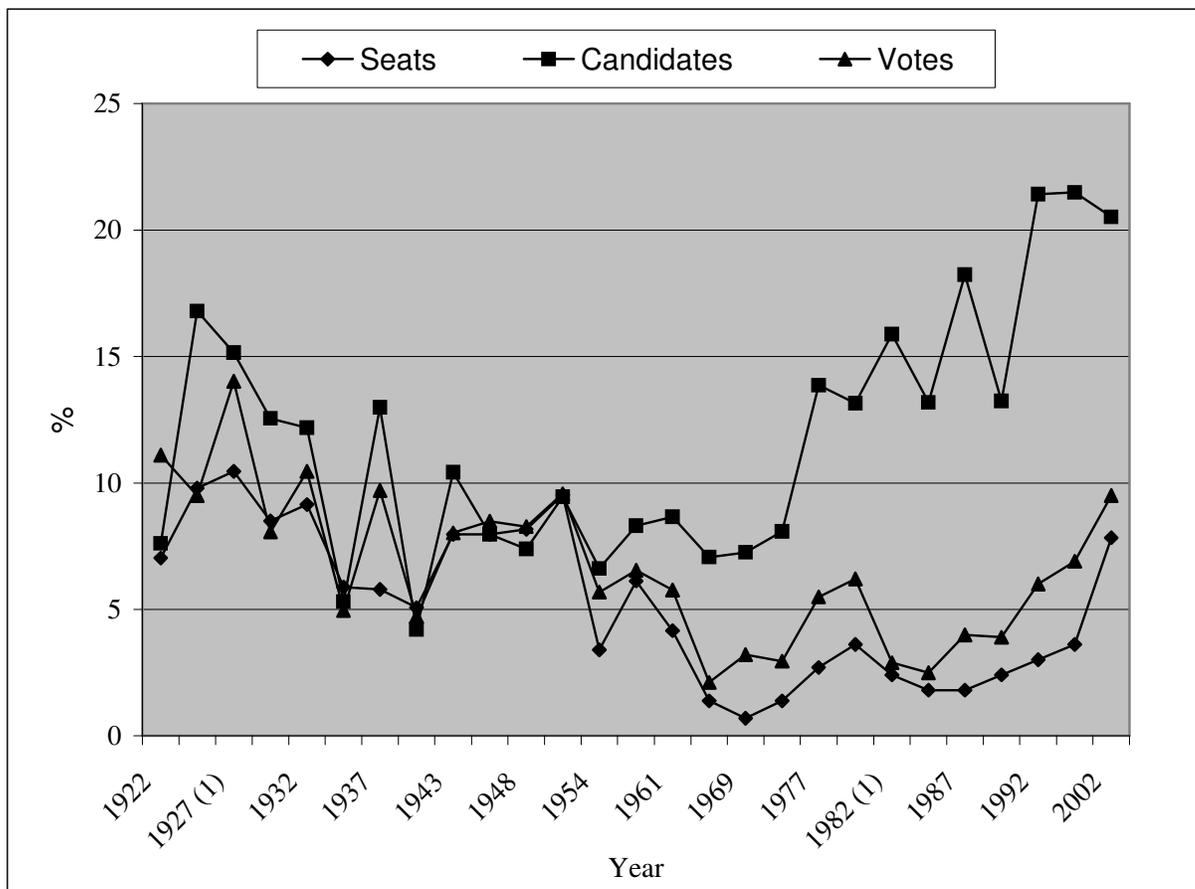
structures facing Independents in these two stages are analysed in a qualitative manner. In this section, structural analysis is complemented by the analysis of core examples which – based on interview material and extensive document analysis - allows us to illustrate how in the *Dáil* an independent status can, and does, open more windows of opportunities than party membership for private member influence (see for details Weeks 2007).

III. Independents in Ireland

The following analysis proceeds in two steps: first, we demonstrate the empirical relevance of Independents in Ireland in both electoral terms and during government formation. Then, in the actual analysis, we assess the structural advantages and disadvantages to become and remain as an Independent compared to the status of a party member during the electoral, the parliamentary and the governmental stage as interdependent yet separate contexts.

To provide some basic information before entering the actual analysis, figure 1 presents details of Independents' vote, seat, and candidate share, indicating the significant presence that they have occupied in Irish political life. Independents' seat tally has entered double figures nine times in twenty-seven general elections, a considerable achievement given the relatively small size of the *Dáil* (166 seats since 1977). While they have also received a substantial number of votes, the national mean masks the even more significant local presence Independents have had at constituency level, often winning over fifteen percent of the vote, as occurred in eleven of the forty-two electoral constituencies in 2002, when they won thirteen seats. This result continued a trend of rising support for Independents since the 1980s, which can be accounted for by a number of factors. The first may be related to a rising level of disaffection with the parties, as evidenced by the declining numbers expressing an attachment to a party (Weeks 2004). Another reason is the prominent positions held by Independents in parliament during the 1980s and 1990s, when they managed to extract policy concessions from minority governments dependent upon their support (see below). A final factor is the increased willingness of dissident politicians falling out with their party to run for office, as twenty-five percent of votes cast for Independents over the last three general elections went to such candidates (source: authors' own analysis).

FIGURE 1. % CANDIDATES RUNNING INDEPENDENT, & % VOTES AND SEATS WON BY INDEPENDENTS AT IRISH GENERAL ELECTIONS 1922-2002



The winning of a seat has not marked the zenith of Independents' political careers. Rather than being ostracised in the no-man's land of non-partisanship in parliament, they have had a considerable impact on the Irish political system, chiefly by their participation in the government formation process. In most cases, the participating TDs received significant rewards for their external support status. For example, a delegation of Independents got a cabinet ministry in 1948, while the most common type of reward has been increased levels of patronage for the deputies' home constituency. In 1982 this amounted to the infamous 'Gregory Deal', when Tony Gregory, an Independent TD, was promised 150-250 million pounds in pork-barrel projects by the government in return for his support. As table 1 shows, this dependence of governments on Independents has been a regular occurrence,^{vii} with only four *Taoisigh* (prime minister) refraining from seeking their support over a time period of eighty years.

TABLE 1. GOVERNMENTS DEPENDENT ON INDEPENDENTS, 1922-2002

Government (<i>Taoiseach</i>)	Parties in government	Years in office
Cosgrave	Cumann na nGaedheal	1927-30
Cosgrave	Cumann na nGaedheal	1930-32
Costello	Fine Gael/Labour/National Labour/ Clann na Poblachta/Clann na Talmhan	1948-51
De Valera	Fianna Fáil	1951-54
Costello	Fine Gael/Labour	1954-57
Lemass	Fianna Fáil	1961-65
Fitzgerald	Fine Gael/Labour	1981-82
Haughey	Fianna Fáil	1982
Haughey	Fianna Fáil	1987-89
Ahern	Fianna Fáil/Progressive Democrats	1997-2002

This real-world presence of Independents has not been matched by an equivalent amount of scholarly attention, largely because they have been evaluated as an idiosyncrasy of the Irish political system (see Chubb 1957; Carty 1981: 58-61; Sinnott 1995: 64-5). Usually scholars refer to the traditionally strong personality factor in Irish voting behaviour and the importance of localism (Gallagher 1976: 58). The equally idiosyncratic electoral system, PR-STV, has also been expounded as a significant factor for a number of reasons (see Strøm 1990: 103, Carty 1981: 121, Chubb 1957: 132; Weeks 2004), which are expanded on in a later section. In contrast to the dominant strategy to treat Independents as idiosyncrasy, the following analysis will point to structural incentives inviting candidates to run and to remain independent across three major stages of the political process.

III.1 Why run Independent? The Electoral Stage

As stated above, politicians run on party tickets for a number of reasons, including the advantages of a party brand name or of party resources for campaigning. In light of these incentives, why then would ambitious candidates choose to run as an Independent? The first explanation one needs to refer to is evidently that they failed to procure a party nomination. If this were the sole reason, there would be little point in studying the ambitions of Independents, since this category is ambitious for a party, not an Independent candidacy. However, on average only nine percent of Independent candidates seek a party nomination, and these are excluded from our analysis.^{viii} Of course, there may also be Independents who desired a nomination, but did not bother to canvass for one because of their limited chances of attaining it. Still, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of Independents adopted this status in preference to a party candidacy.

An important institutional factor to consider at this stage is the electoral system. PR-List, which is the predominant type of voting system within the EU, does not permit Independent candidacies,^{ix} so one basic advantage of PR-STV is that firstly, it allows individuals to run Independent. Indeed, one of the arguments used in defence of STV during a referendum on its proposed introduction in British Columbia, Canada in 2005 is that it encourages Independent candidacies. Second, voters rank candidates, not parties, and unlike under the variant of PR-STV used in Malta,^x and to elect the Australian Senate, candidates are not grouped by party, but only alphabetically by surname.^{xi} The nature of the ballot encourages candidate-centred competition (see Katz 1980: 34), which is reinforced by the method of transferring lower preferences to fill seats when not enough candidates have reached the electoral quota, as this encourages candidates to cultivate a personal following to attract lower preferences. This candidate-centred nature lessens the disadvantage of lacking a party label, since any candidate who works hard for his/her constituency has a good chance of winning a seat; “he does not *have* to be a party man to do this” (Chubb 1957: 132).

Besides the above, PR-STV encourages Independent candidacies for a number of other reasons: first, those who fail to secure a party nomination can run as an Independent, and still have a reasonable chance of success as a party dissident^{xii} (Mair 1987: 67-69). Second, multi-member constituencies mean that Independents do not need a plurality of votes as in SMP, and in five-seat constituencies, they require only sixteen percent of first preferences to win a seat. Third, the system of transfers favours non-partisan candidates, as party voters prefer to cast their lower preferences for non-party than rival party candidates. Correspondingly, research has shown that Independents have attracted proportionally more lower preferences than party candidates (Weeks 2004). Finally, it helps to reinforce the personalism and localism prevalent in Irish political culture that are conducive to the success of Independents at elections (Chubb 1957: 132; Gallagher 1976: 62; Carty 1981: 121). A prominent individual with a mobilized organization does not need to join a party if they wish to enter parliament, unlike under list systems or even other candidate-centred systems like SMP.

Looking at the benefits of an Independent candidacy, the advantages are: the ability to focus the entire campaign on any issue, or even one single issue; not having to toe the party policy line; the flexibility to adopt any position on any policy; and the freedom to canvass across the whole constituency, not being restricted to a local bailiwick like candidates of the major parties^{xiii}. Basically, Independents can do and say what they want on the campaign trail, adopting all sorts of populist doctrines without having to preach responsible politics. In addition, the costs of running for a party are: increased levels of anti-party sentiment amongst the electorate; the undermining of one’s credibility as an independent voice; having to defend unpopular party policies (especially those counter to one’s own policy ideals); and the increasing centralisation of political parties.

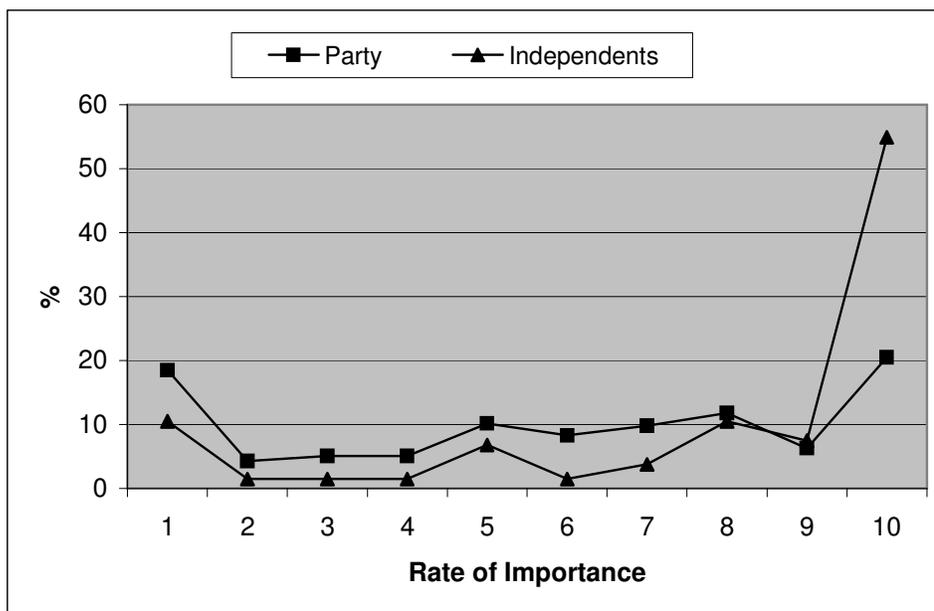
Another advantage of an independent status has been the transformation of parties, which have been evolving from a mass-membership-based organization to a narrow political elite tightly controlled by central headquarters (see Katz and Mair 1995; Mair 1992). Party policy now tends to be decided by focus groups and opinion poll research, rather than by the ordinary members. This change has undermined the role of the ordinary party MP, who has little input into the running, or policy-making decisions, of the party, but is still bound to accept the decisions of the hierarchy. This can result in a

distancing of such MPs from the party, and in such an environment, an Independent candidacy can appear tempting as a liberalising move (Sharman 2002: 65).

The ability to highlight any issue is an extremely valuable asset to Independents. In an era of growing disaffection with, and alienation from, politics, often the only time the public are politically engaged is over an issue that affects them personally. Since such issues are ideal means of mobilizing supporters, ambitious candidates can be tempted to veer clear of parties if they must adhere to a central policy that is either opposed to the local electorate’s concerns, or prevents the candidate from getting heavily involved in the campaign. The clash between local residents and the Shell Oil Corporation that began in 2005 over the location of a proposed gas terminal off the west coast of Ireland has highlighted the advantages of an independent status. All the party TDs from the constituency (apart from one maverick) kept very quiet on the issue, and the politician who profited most from the issue was the local Independent TD, who rallied behind the cause of the local residents, helping to enhance his local and national profile.^{xiv}

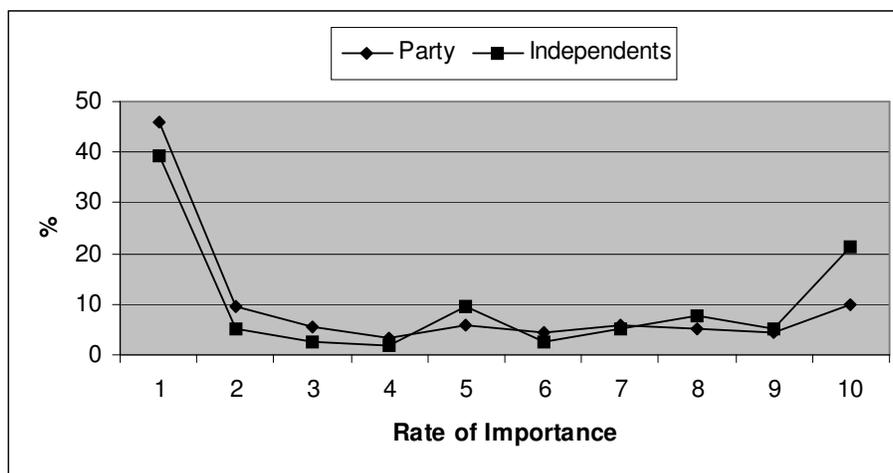
The significance of supporting an issue for Independents is further indicated by evidence from the aforementioned survey of local election candidates. The latter were asked to state on a scale of 1-10 how important ‘to highlight an important issue’ was in motivating their decision to run for election. As can be seen in figure 2 below, 55 percent of Independents gave this incentive a score of maximum importance, in contrast to just 21 percent of party candidates who did so (a difference significant at a $p < 0.001$ level). In other words, those most concerned with highlighting an issue were more likely to run as an Independent (58 percent) than as a party candidate (42 percent) ($n=130$), a quite significant finding in itself (at a $p < 0.01$ level).

FIGURE 2. % CANDIDATES RATING THE IMPORTANCE OF ‘TO HIGHLIGHT AN IMPORTANT ISSUE’ AS AN INCENTIVE TO RUN FOR ELECTION



A similar motivation is being asked to run by a group or organization campaigning for specific issues. Again, when asked in the 2004 survey to state the importance of this factor as an incentive in their decision to run, significantly more Independents than party candidates rated this important (at a $p < 0.001$ level). Once again, of those giving this incentive the rating of utmost importance, a majority were Independents (52%) ($n=48$).^{xv}

Figure 3. % CANDIDATES ASKED TO RUN BY A GROUP/ORGANIZATION



In summary, compared to party candidates, Independents are more strongly motivated by substantial policy objectives. For such policy-oriented actors, the incentives parties can, and want to, offer to their backbench MPs are only of limited attractiveness since the power of policy-formulation is monopolized by the national leadership, and organizational loyalty in the parliamentary and governmental stage is primarily paid-off by career advancements, not by policy influence (Bolleyer 2006; O'Malley 2006).

Besides joining a party, another option at the electoral stage is for Independents to form a new party, but this is not necessarily the rational decision for a number of reasons.^{xvi} First, candidates who have a record of campaigning as Independents might have their support undermined if they choose to reject their independent status and don party colours. Second, they might find it much more difficult to operate as part of a national team and be subject to the decisions of a party executive, where previously they were their own person as an Independent. Third, they might find it harder to attract votes as a new party, since the electorate find it easier to switch to non-partisans than new parties, as it is less of a leap of volatility.^{xvii} Finally, the lives of a new party's politicians are usually tied to the life of the party, which can be a problem as so many new parties are flash parties that do not survive and tend to disappear (Pedersen 1982).

As a final option, to counter the negative consequences of a new party label, and yet receive the benefits of pooling one's resources, Independents can form alliances at election time. For example, eight Independent candidates concerned about the state of the Irish health service at the 2002 election (the most important issue at that election (Garry et al 2003)) decided to run under the umbrella title of 'Independent Health Alliance'. This provided some of the benefits procured from forming parties, such as the provision of brand recognition, generating additional turnout in support of all the alliances'

candidates, and the establishment of a credible candidacy. In addition, some of the Independent TDs elected in 2002 have been publicly lobbying for the formation of a similar type alliance at the 2007 election. Evidently, Independents engage in co-operation that generates equivalent gains to party organization but does not undermine their individual flexibility. To conclude this section, considering the interplay between institutional incentives and motivational factors prevalent at the electoral stage, ambitious politicians can reasonably expect to maximise their utility by running Independent.

III.2 Why Independents Don't Join Parties - the Parliamentary Stage

Once elected, the main concern for MPs at the parliamentary stage is that of collective action, i.e. having been elected, how do they go about achieving their desired policy preferences? Thinking again of the cost-benefit model, the only benefit Independents can hope to gain by forming or joining a party is achieving some of their policy objectives. This was one of the main reasons why parties formed in parliament in the first place, as the individual members realised they could only get their proposed legislation enacted if other members backed them, and they would only do so if their own proposals were supported (see Aldrich 1995; Laver and Shepsle 1998). To overcome this conundrum, deputies agreed to come together in loose coalitions and vote in unison for each other's policies.

In light of such rationale, one needs to ask then why Independents don't join parties after election to achieve their desired legislation. The first reason is that under majority governments backbench MPs like Independents have little to no influence over a dominant executive, so they would not stand to gain anything from such a move. An Independent TD echoed this hypothesis in 2006, stating that he enjoyed the same influence as any party backbench TD. 'The only ones in the *Dáil* that have those extra bits of privilege are those sitting on the government benches', he said. 'Other than that we're all equal.'^{xviii} In fact, Independents may stand to lose by joining a party, since their supporters may feel aggrieved that (a) they betrayed an Independent platform on which they were elected, and (b) if it was sacrificed for an un-influential role on the party backbenches.^{xix}

The situation is different under minority administrations where parties often seek the support of Independent TDs rather than bringing an additional coalition partner into cabinet. For Independents, the incentive is there to support the party/parties just falling short of a majority in return for some type of benefit. However, if they have been elected on a stance of opposition to these parties, such a manoeuvre can pose difficulties. Instead, Independents can achieve the best of both worlds by supporting a minority administration outside of government in return for policy benefits for their constituency, while at the same time retaining their independent status. For example, every time the two government options of Fianna Fáil (which latterly includes the Progressive Democrats) or the Fine Gael/Labour coalition falls a couple of seats short of a majority (e.g. 1948, 1951, 1954, 1961, 1965, 1981, 1982, 1987, 1997, 2002) they usually try and attract Independent TDs into their party fold. The latter always reject such manoeuvres, but instead they normally offer to support the government option if the latter promise to satisfy the Independents' shopping list of demands, clearly a recognition of 'independence' being more rewarding than party affiliation. This situation was neatly

highlighted in 1997 when a former Fianna Fáil activist won a seat as an Independent. In return for his agreeing to support the minority Fianna Fáil-Progressive Democrat administration, he claimed to have got over 250 million pounds of funding for his rural constituency. If he had been elected as a Fianna Fáil backbench TD or joined the party in parliament, he would not have achieved a penny of this funding. In such a situation, life as an Independent was clearly the rational choice.

Another important question is why Independents do not form a ‘party of Independents’ amongst themselves in parliament. The major reason is because of the lack of influence private members outside government have on the policy-making process. While a new party might bring Independents a higher profile, a more strategic decision is to form an alliance within parliament, which helps to preserve their Independent identity, while concurrently reaping the minor benefits of their ‘technical alliance’ status. To qualify as a ‘technical group’ in the *Dáil* requires seven members; the main resources accruing from such a status includes additional speaking time in the parliamentary arena, as well as an official office space for the group to meet. This does not entitle them to additional positions on committees or such like, which remain the prerogative of the government. This quasi-party status could be favourable to Independents, because they would not have to compromise on policies favourable to their local constituency, which might be the case if they joined a full party. An example of this is the ‘technical group’ of eleven Independents in the 29th *Dáil* (which makes them larger than one of the government parties) who meet once a week to discuss common policy grounds, support each other’s policies, and even have appointed a whip to ensure they generally act in unison.

III.3 Why Independents Don’t Join Parties - the Governmental Stage

Unlike most other parliaments to which Independents are elected, they do have a role to play at the governmental stage in Ireland. Despite having a Westminster-style parliamentary model, majority government is not always the norm in the Irish political system, as forty per cent of administrations have been dependent on the support of Independents (see table 1).

When a majority government cannot be formed amongst the parties, again one might imagine that the rational step for Independents is to form a new party and enter government. However, for the same reasons outlined in the previous sections, they would not be in favour of such a strategy, because it would result in accusations of unscrupulous behaviour to get into power. In addition, as a new party they would have to devise a policy programme in a short space of time, which would be a difficult task for as diverse a group as Independents. Also, intra-coalitional dynamics tend to be unfavourable since junior parties (which would be the most likely status of a new and therefore rather small party) can face excessive pressure in the Irish context. The case of the Irish Labour Party proves just such a point, as they have experienced severe electoral punishment several times after periods of participation in government.

Thus, the rational step for Independents is to negotiate a deal with a minority government to receive certain policy benefits in return for their support. There have been

numerous examples of such deals between Independents and governments, ranging from the aforementioned ‘Gregory Deal’ of 1982 to the separate deals negotiated by each of four Independent TDs with the 1997-2002 Fianna Fáil-Progressive Democrat government. The latter is a classic example of the incentive structures facing Independents at the government level.^{xx}

The initial three Independents who voted Bertie Ahern into power in 1997 all had a common link of previous associations with Fianna Fáil, and were christened the Fianna Fáil ‘gene pool’ Independents. Having been elected as Independents in defiance of the party’s strategy, they recognised that joining the party was not a rational option. Because they were localised Independents, in constituencies as far apart from each other as possible,^{xxi} and because they had some disparate policy objectives, forming a new party amongst themselves was also not feasible. The Independents therefore perceived the only rational choice for them was to negotiate individual agreements with the government, each of which delivered considerable largesse for their constituencies. They also exerted an influence on policy, as the government chief whip met the Independents once a week to gain their support on proposed legislation. This was not a token gesture of solidarity, as two major policies Independents did not agree with were dropped, one of which was legislation to prevent politicians holding more than one electoral office. In hindsight, one of the Independents regretted not having asked for more, when he said, ‘I remember that there was nothing that we asked for that they didn’t say was ok’ (*The Irish Times*, August 8 2000). The success of Independents’ rational strategies was emphasised when Fianna Fáil backbenchers complained about the excessive influence these Independents had on both local and national policy.

From this example, it is obvious why Independents do not shed their non-partisan clothes at the government level. The weakness of backbench MPs within a party means there are no benefits to be gained from joining a party, unless promised a cabinet post, which would be highly unlikely, as it would unsettle morale within the party, and encourage backbenchers to run as Independents at the next election. All the incentives point towards their remaining Independent to secure policy objectives. In addition, joining a party also brings costs as they would be accused of selling out for political gain. Supporting a government from the outside does not taint Independents, as they can portray themselves as an independent watchdog on government actions. In addition, should the government become embroiled in a scandal, the Independents are free from blame, since their position outside the administration means they cannot be tarred with the brush of scandal, but rather can freely criticize the government, while continuing to keep it in power.^{xxii}

IV. Conclusions, Theoretical Implications & Future Research on Non-Party Actors

It is rather unlikely that Independents will ever represent an equivalent alternative to parties as the main organizational form in parliamentary life. Nevertheless, the widely criticized accumulation of power by political parties, mirrored by the decreasing power of backbenchers and ordinary members that has been observed during the last decades (Katz and Mair 1995) has increased the demands for alternative vehicles and forms of

representation. This might be particularly the case with reference to local issues that are closer to the ordinary citizens. In this sense, the relationship between parties and Independents – despite their obvious competitiveness – can be understood as mutually supplementary, since Independents answer to a demand that arises in party democracies dominated by nationalised parties. Moreover, Independents' chance of success seems to be supported from two directions; first, by the relative decline of electoral parties (in contrast to parliamentary ones) (Mair 1994), as well as by the increased electoral volatility in the Irish context (Mair and Weeks 2005: 156). These phenomena widely transcend Irish borders, capturing western democracies as a whole (Mair 1997), one major reason why the study of non-party actors is likely to develop into a crucial field of comparative research.^{xxiii}

In this context, the Irish case can be taken as a blueprint of the deficiencies symptomatic in modern party democracy and therefore offers important substantial insights. To begin with, Independents protect their capacity to have an immediate, individual impact on single policy issues that party members widely give up by conforming to a party program and complying with party discipline in parliament. This interpretation found support in our analysis of the legislative organization and the position of ordinary party TDs in the *Dáil*. Regarding the intra-organizational tendency of modern parties to concentrate the power of policy-formulation in the national headquarters (Mair 1992; 1997), parties provide less and less of a home for strongly policy-motivated candidates. While career-oriented TDs have a fair chance of being paid off for their organizational support once they enter parliament, the kind of pay-off that party offers overall does not imply individual influence over policies. Simultaneously, parties' policy profiles blur, a process 'anticipated' by the two main Irish parties, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, which have been commonly considered as lacking significant policy differences (Gallagher 1988: 128). In this sense, independence can be seen as an organizational response to competition, in which policy plays less and less a role, and to party organization, which more and more relies on material incentives to generate organizational support, instead of providing activists the chance to realise their policy preferences.

Further, our findings lead to theoretical insights regarding the analytical tools commonly used for, and the assumptions commonly underlying, party research: comparing parliamentarians' independent status with party membership from an actor-centred perspective pushes us to refine our understanding of policy influence and policy preferences, which are usually defined in terms of 'government policy' or 'party policy' only. This implicit restriction makes us unable to capture the locally-oriented conception of policy that Independents predominantly exhibit. A greater awareness of this often implicit understanding of policy as party policy becomes all the more important in the face of party decline and the rise of issue-based voting (Dalton and Weldon 2005). The analysis also highlights the pressures party MPs are confronted with being integrated in a collective body. These pressures are easily overlooked when parties are conceptualised as unitary actors that shape parliamentary life. It moreover leads to a biased evaluation when automatically comparing Independents' impact with the impact of whole parties as if they were equivalent actors. The comparison between party MPs and Independents shows that to enter parliament does not already ensure direct policy influence for the single MP even if he is part of a governing party - in particular when the government monopolises agenda-setting to a high degree as is the case in Ireland.

In view of future research, the analysis of the Irish case presented in this paper provides a first step towards understanding the phenomenon of non-party actors in Western party democracy. Most importantly, it sheds light on the motivational differences between Independent and partisan candidates, making their respective 'organizational choices' comprehensible. To arrive at a broader picture, future research needs to apply the presented tools cross-nationally, comparing Independent actors in different systemic contexts to understand the impact of the varying incentive structures in the electoral, parliamentary and governmental stages constituting the political process. Then we can move from the systematic exploration of crucial cases towards an explanatory account of non-party actors. More specifically, a more encompassing analysis of the Irish case demands not only an assessment of the motives to run as Independent as we have done using survey data, but also a systematic exploration of how Independents use channels of influence in the parliamentary and the governmental stages. Although the structural analysis provided in this paper and the detailed narratives give valuable insights, they need to be substantiated further in future research, i.e. through in-depth interviews with Independents in national parliament.

Becoming, or indeed, remaining Independent, is not an irrational act. Implying the logic of Black's calculus of candidacy (1972), the costs of joining a party can be higher than the benefits.^{xxiv} While explaining the continued presence of Independents in the Irish political system, it has general consequences for systems in which it becomes increasingly difficult to form a majority government. Australia and Canada are two prime examples, where narrow election results have resulted in the main parties looking to Independents for support. Once Independents have success, the incentives are introduced to maintain this status, and for backbenchers to rebel and run Independent. With executives increasingly dominant and legislatures increasingly irrelevant, the futility of life of as a backbench TD may lead more and more to consider independent status as a rational option. Ironically, were everyone in parliament to think so, Independents would regain power, and inevitably the wheel of party formation would turn again, as coalitions would form to secure policy objectives.

References

- Aldrich, John (1995) *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Anckar, Dag (2000) 'Party systems and voter alignments in small island states.' In Lauri Karvonen and Stein Kuhnle (eds.). *Party Systems and Voter Alignments Revisited*. London: Routledge, pp. 261–283.
- Andeweg, Rudy B (2003) 'Beyond Representativeness? Trends in Political Representation'. *European Review* 11(2): 147-61.
- Biezen, Ingrid van (2003) *Political Parties in New Democracies: Party Organization in Southern and East-Central Europe*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Black, Gordon (1972) 'A Theory Of Political Ambition: Career Choices and Structural Incentives'. *American Political Science Review* 66(1): 144-159.
- Bolleyer, Nicole (2004) Kleine Parteien zwischen Stimmenmaximierung, Politikgestaltung und Regierungsübernahme am Beispiel Irlands und Dänemarks. *Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen* 1: 132-48.

- Bolleyer, Nicole (2006) 'How to Reward and How to Control: Fianna Fáil, Patronage and Party Organization as Network', presented at the Annual Conference of the Political Studies Association of Ireland in Cork, Ireland, October 20st-22rd.
- Bowler, Shaun (2000) 'Parties in Legislature: Two Competing Explanations', in Russell J Dalton and Martin P. Wattenberg (eds). *Parties without Partisans, Political Change in Advanced Industrial Societies*, pp. 157-179. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- Cain, Bruce, John Ferejohn, and Morris Fiorina. (1987). *The Personal Vote. Constituency Service and Electoral Independence*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Carey, John M. and Matthew Soberg Shugart (1995) 'Incentives to cultivate a personal vote: a rank ordering of electoral formulas.' *Electoral Studies* 14(4): 417-39.
- Carty, R.K. (1981) *Electoral Politics in Ireland: Party and Parish Pump*. Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Chubb, Basil. (1957) 'The Independent member in Ireland'. *Political Studies* V: 131-41.
- Collet, Christian (1999) 'Can they be serious?: The Rise of Minor Parties and Independent candidates in the 1990s.' Ph.D. diss. University of California, Irvine, USA.
- Costar, Brian, and Jennifer Curtin (2004) *Rebels with a Cause: Independents in Australian Politics*. Sydney: UNSW Press.
- Cox, Gary W. and Mathew G. Mc Cubbins (1993) *Legislative Leviathan: Party Government in the House*. California: California UP.
- Dalton, Russell J. and Martin P. Wattenberg (2000) *Parties without Partisans, Political Change in Advanced Industrial Societies*. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- Dalton, Russell J. and Stephen A. Weldon (2005) 'Public Images of Parties: A Necessary Evil?', *West European Politics* 28 (5): 931-51.
- Gallagher, Michael (1976) *Electoral Support for Irish Political Parties 1927-1973*. London: Sage.
- Gallagher, Michael (1988) 'Ireland: The Increasing Role of the Center', in Michael Gallagher (ed.) *Candidate Selection in Comparative Perspective, the Secret Garden of Politics*, pp. 119-44. London: Sage.
- Garry, John, Fiachra Kennedy, Michael Marsh, and Richard Sinnott (2003) 'What decided the election?', in Michael Gallagher, Michael Marsh, Paul Mitchell (eds.). *How Ireland Voted 2002*, pp. 119-143. London: Palgrave.
- Katz, Richard (1980) *A Theory of Parties and Electoral Systems*. Baltimore, MD and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Katz, Richard (1994) 'Party Organizations as Empty Vessels: Parties in American Politics', in Richard Katz and Peter Mair (eds.). *How Parties Organize, Change and Adaptation in Party Organizations in Western Democracies*, pp. 23-50. London: Sage.
- Katz, Richard and Peter Mair (1995) 'Changing Models of Party Organization and Party Democracy: the Emergence of the Cartel Party'. *Party Politics* 1(1): 5-28.
- Key, V.O. (1966) *The Responsible Electorate, Rationality in Presidential Voting, 1936-60*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard UP.
- Laver, Michael and Kenneth A. Shepsle (1999) 'How Political Parties Emerged from the Primeval Slime: Party Cohesion, Party Discipline, and the Formation of Governments', in Shaun Bowler, David M. Farrell and Richard Katz (eds.). *Party Discipline and Parliamentary Government*, pp. 23-48. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.
- Mair, Peter (1987) *The Changing Irish Party System*. London: Pinter.

- Mair, Peter (1992) 'Party Organizations: From Civil Society to the State', in Richard Katz and Peter Mair (eds.). *How Parties Organize, Change and Adaptation in Party Organizations in Western Democracies*, pp. 1-22. London: Sage.
- Mair, Peter (1997) *Party System Change: Approaches and Interpretations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Mair, Peter (1998) 'Representation and Participation in the Changing World of Party Politics', *European Review* 6 (2): 161-74.
- Mair, Peter (2005) *Democracy beyond Parties*. Center for the Study of Democracy, University of California, Irvine.
- Mair, Peter and Gordon Smith (1990) *Understanding Party System Change in Western Europe*. London: Frank Cass.
- Mair, Peter and Liam Weeks (2005) 'The Party System', in John Coakley and Michael Gallagher (eds.). *Politics in the Republic of Ireland* (4th ed.), pp. 135-160. London: Routledge.
- Mershon, Carol and Olga Shvetsova (2007) 'Parliamentary Cycles and Party Switching in Legislatures', *Comparative Political Studies* 20 (10): 1-29.
- Maor, Moshe (1998) *Parties, Conflicts and Coalitions in Western Europe, Organizational Determinants of Coalition Bargaining*. London: Routledge.
- Marsh, Michael (2007) 'Candidates or parties? Objects of electoral choice.' *Party Politics* (forthcoming).
- Marsh, Michael, Richard Sinnott, John Garry, Fiachra Kennedy (2008). *The Irish Voter*. Manchester: Manchester University Press (forthcoming).
- Mitchell, Paul (2001) 'Divided government in Ireland'. In Robert Elgie (ed.). *Divided government in comparative perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 182-208.
- Moser, Robert G (1989) 'Independents and Party Formation: Elite Partisanship as an Intervening Variable in Russian Politics.' *Comparative Politics* 36(2): 147-163.
- O'Malley, Eoin (2006) 'Ministerial Selection in Ireland: Limited Choice in a Political Village', *Irish Political Studies* 21(3): 319-336.
- Owen, Diana and Jack Dennis (1996) 'Anti-partyism in the USA and support for Ross Perot'. *European Journal of Political Research* 29(3): 383-401.
- Panebianco, Angelo (1988) *Political Parties: Organizations and Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Pedersen, Mogens (1982) 'Towards a New Typology of Party Lifespans and Minor Parties.' *Scandinavian Political Studies* 5(1): 1-16.
- Reed, Steven R. (2003) 'Nominees and Independents in Japan's Liberal Democratic Party: A Case of Functional Irrationality.' Chuo University. Typescript
- Reid, Liam. 'Most TDs' Parliamentary Assistants not based in Dáil'. *The Irish Times*, 21st August 2006.
- Sartori, Giovanni (1976) *Parties and Party Systems. A Framework for Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Schlesinger, Joseph A (1966) *Ambition and Politics: Political Careers in the United States*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Sharman, Campbell (2002) 'Politics at the Margin: Independents and the Australian Political System'. Presented at the Department of the Senate Occasional Lecture Series at Parliament House, Sydney, Australia, May 17th.
- Sinnott, Richard (1995) *Irish Voters Decide*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Strøm, Kaare (1990) *Minority Government and Majority Rule*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

- Strøm, Kaare (2000) 'Parties at the Core of Government', in Russell J. Dalton and Martin P. Wattenberg. *Parties without Partisans, Political Change in Advanced Industrial Societies*, pp. 180-207. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- Tsebelis, George (1990) *Nested Games, Rational Choice in Comparative Politics*. California: California UP.
- Wattenberg, Martin P. (1991) *The rise of candidate-centred politics: presidential elections of the 1980s*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Weeks, Liam (2004) 'Explaining voting for Independents under STV elections: the Irish case'. Presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, September 1-4.
- Weeks, Liam. 'A fine line to walk between independence and power'. *The Sunday Tribune*. January 23, 2005.
- Weeks, Liam (2005) 'Campaigning at the 2004 local elections', presented at the Annual Conference of the Political Studies Association of Ireland, Belfast, October 21-23 2005.
- Weeks, Liam (2006) 'When parties are not the only party in town: Independent actors in Ireland', presented at Joint Sessions of the European Consortium for Political Research, Nicosia, Cyprus, April 25-30.
- Weeks, Liam (2007) *We Don't Like (to) Party. Explaining the Significance of Independents in Irish Political Life*. Unpublished Manuscript.

ⁱ Provided of course that non-party candidacies are permitted, which is predominantly the case in countries using candidate-centred electoral systems, examples being single-member plurality (SMP), proportional representation by the single transferable vote (PR-STV), the double-ballot, and the alternative vote (AV).

ⁱⁱ The term 'Independent' is capitalized in this paper when referring to Independent candidates. This is done to distinguish between the use of this word as a general adjective and as a noun signifying a particular political status. The term 'independence' that refers to the non-party status of such candidates is not capitalized.

ⁱⁱⁱ Examples being: the US, where Independents have in recent years been elected as Senators, Governors, and members of the House of Representatives (Collet 1999); Japan, where dissidents from the Liberal Democratic Party are frequently elected as Independents (Reed 2003); both Canada and Australia, where Independents have supported minority governments at federal level (and in the Australian case, also at state level) (Costar and Curtin 2004); Ireland, where forty percent of governments have been dependent on the support of Independent parliamentarians; and many of the post-communist polities, including Russia, and the Ukraine.

^{iv} The debate of party decline and on the role of independents as one of its indications necessarily focuses on Western Europe, the United States and the Westminster democracies Canada and Australia. The predominance of parties is much less pronounced in new democracies such as the post-communist polities where party organization is ex ante much weaker, party-switching and independence of candidates are much more frequently observed (van Biezen 2003; Mershon and Shvetsova 2007). Thus, our arguments refer to party democracy in the long-lived Western democracies.

^v Marsh et al use a similar typology, as they define Independents as "simply electoral candidates who are not associated with any particular party" (2008: 49).

^{vi} This would explain why candidates running for election in the US campaign on a party label (where it is a valued asset), but when elected act far more independently in office.

^{vii} Dependence is defined here as a situation where the formation of a government depends on the votes of Independent TDs in parliament to secure a majority.

^{viii} This proportion is calculated from the aforementioned survey of local election candidates in 2004 (Weeks 2006).

^{ix} This comes with a slight caveat. Provided they gain a required number of signatures, individuals can form their own personalized list with other candidates; the List Pym Fortuyn, formed by Pym Fortuyn in the Netherlands, is such an example.

^x Malta is the only other country outside Ireland using PR-STV to elect its lower house of parliament.

-
- ^{xi} Indeed, neither party labels nor symbols were included on the ballot sheet in Ireland until 1963.
- ^{xii} 45 percent of the 45 party TDs who ran Independent at a succeeding election retained their seat (from 1923 to 2002), a level of success for dissidents unmatched in any other liberal democracy.
- ^{xiii} ‘Bailiwick’ refers to a localised portion of a constituency that a candidate is restricted to campaigning in by his/her party, usually done to ensure an even spread of votes amongst the party’s candidates to maximize their seat return.
- ^{xiv} Indeed, he was joined in this campaign by four other Independent TDs from different constituencies.
- ^{xv} Although such a small difference is not significant at a $p < 0.05$ level, the very fact that it is approximately equal to the proportion of party candidates is a practically significant result.
- ^{xvi} There is no restriction on any individual declaring the formation of a party. However, to form a party that is officially recognized by the authorities, there is a number of criteria to meet. The organization must have either one TD or three local representatives; three hundred paid-up members; a party constitution; and the organization must hold an annual general meeting.
- ^{xvii} This is indicated by the proportionally higher levels of lower preferences Independents receive after voters have chosen their favoured party candidates (Weeks 2004).
- ^{xviii} Interview with Independent TD Michael Lowry on ‘The Constituency’, RTÉ Radio 1, December 16 2006.
- ^{xix} Only 6 of the 16 Independent TDs who have joined established political parties within parliament since the 1920s have held their seat as a party TD at the succeeding election. This explains why only three Independents have crossed over to the party benches in the *Dáil* since 1961 (Weeks 2005).
- ^{xx} From a large party’s point of view (such as Fianna Fáil), it is more beneficial to gather the support of Independents, rather than of a small party, since the former do not occupy government ministries and, moreover, usually have less weight than a small party and therefore are likely to demand fewer policy concessions.
- ^{xxi} Ranging from the extreme North-West (Donegal), to the south-west (Kerry), to the East coast (Wicklow).
- ^{xxii} Evidence of this was seen in November 2001, when an Independent TD refused to bow to government pressure to apologise for his claims that the Minister for Justice in the 1994-1997 government should be investigated for an abuse of power (*The Irish Times*, November 27th 2001).
- ^{xxiii} It has already been the subject of a workshop at the Joint Sessions of the European Consortium of Political Research in 2006.
- ^{xxiv} Where the calculus= $pB-C$ (where p =probability of victory, B =benefits of running, C =costs of running), and rational individuals should only run when $pB > C$.