

**The (Relatively) Victorious Incumbent
under PR-STV: Legislative Turnover
in Ireland and Malta**

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Many criteria may be used to evaluate electoral systems, from the familiar traditional yardsticks such as accuracy of representation and government stability to social choice criteria such as consistency or monotonicity. In this chapter we shall look at one relatively neglected output, namely, turnover and rates of reelection of incumbents, and examine the record of PR-STV on this criterion in the two countries that employ it to elect their national parliament.

As with several other criteria used to judge electoral systems, turnover is usually seen as neither a goal to be maximized nor an evil to be avoided. Turnover is a commodity of which one can have too much or too little; excessive rates of turnover will mean a loss of experience and expertise in the legislature, maybe weakening the institution, whereas too little may lead to frustration, ossification, and an unresponsive legislature. We are concerned here not with a normative evaluation of PR-STV but with an examination of how it performs on this dimension.

Of course, turnover is not determined solely by the electoral system. Other factors, most obviously electoral volatility, can also be expected to have a major impact on the reelection chances of incumbents, and to a limited extent the data will allow us to test the impact of some of these factors for the cases we cover. But whatever other factors play a role, there are many reasons to expect electoral systems to have a strong impact on the extent of turnover.

In this chapter we shall examine the significance of the various threats to an incumbent's position. How vulnerable to defeat are incumbents in the first

place, and when defeat comes, is it more likely to result from interparty or intraparty competition? What are the main sources of turnover among members of a parliament? Conversely, is a nonincumbent wanting to enter a parliament best advised to target a fellow party incumbent or an opposing party incumbent for defeat or just wait around until an incumbent calls it a day or dies?

Turnover and Reelection Rates

Before looking in more detail at the likely impact of electoral systems on turnover, we should clarify what is meant by the term *turnover*. Turnover could be construed as relating to (in practice, it is the obverse of) a number of different phenomena:

1. The proportion of deputies¹ who, having been elected at one election, are reelected at the next election
2. The proportion of deputies who, having been incumbents at the end of the lifetime of a parliament, are reelected at the ensuing election
3. The proportion of outgoing deputies who, having been incumbents at the end of the lifetime of a parliament and having contested the ensuing election, are reelected
4. Unity minus the proportion of deputies who are first-term members

These four options conceptualize turnover in different ways and produce different figures for exactly the same set of data (see Table 1). No doubt a case could be made for any of the four as the best way of measuring reelection rates; the view taken in this chapter, as argued later, will be that the third measure is the most appropriate for our purposes. But what should be beyond dispute is that these four interpretations of turnover are measuring quite different things and that comparisons between countries are meaningless unless the same measure is used in each case.

Of the three main comparative studies of turnover, two (Katz 1986, 97; Matland and Studlar 1995, 5) use the first measure. The other, despite its aspirations as a comparative volume, appears to have allowed individual contributors to use whichever of the second or third measures they preferred, thus ruling out any possibility of making systematic comparisons across countries (Somit 1994, 18n. 2).² The fourth option seems to have been used only in some U.S. research (see Polsby 1968, 146, where turnover is understood in terms of the number of first-term members elected). Measuring turnover in terms not of rates per election but rates per year (the approach of Hibbing

TABLE 1. Reelection Rate, According to Four Different Measures, for Hypothetical Data

Elected at election E	100	
Died or resigned between election E and E+1 and were replaced by new deputies	10	
Incumbents at end of lifetime of parliament E	100	(Comprising 90 elected at election E plus 10 who replaced the deceased or retiring deputies during lifetime of parliament)
Contested election E+1	85	(Comprising 78 elected at election E and 7 who replaced the deceased or retiring deputies during lifetime of parliament)
Re-elected at election E+1	70	(Comprising 64 elected at election E and 6 who replaced the deceased or retiring deputies during lifetime of parliament)
Elected at election E+1 but were not elected at election E	30	(Comprising 21 first-term deputies and 9 former deputies who are making a comeback after a period of absence from parliament)
Reelection rate % (1)	64.0	(64 ÷ 100)
Reelection rate % (2)	70.0	(70 ÷ 100)
Reelection rate % (3)	82.4	(70 ÷ 85)
Reelection rate % (4)	79.0	(100 - 21)

Note: As explained in the text, the four ways of measuring reelection rates refer to the following:

1. The percentage of deputies who, having been elected at one election, are reelected at the next election
2. The percentage of deputies who, having been incumbents at the end of the lifetime of a parliament, are reelected at the ensuing election
3. The percentage of outgoing deputies who, having been incumbents at the end of the lifetime of a parliament and having contested the ensuing election, are reelected
4. One hundred minus the percentage of deputies who are first-term members

1988) does not solve the problem: apart from the fact that this will reflect the frequency of elections as much as what happens at individual elections, it merely raises the question of which of the four measures outlined previously should be used as the basis for this calculation.

The view taken in this chapter is that the third measure is the most useful, certainly in the context of a discussion of the effects of electoral systems. It is the only measure that reports accurately the rate at which those incumbents who seek reelection succeed or fail in that aim. It does not conflate the three completely different reasons why those elected at election E may not be reelected at election E + 1:

1. Death or resignation during the lifetime of parliament E, resulting in replacement by another MP (member of parliament)
2. Not contesting election E + 1 (owing to voluntary retirement, failure to secure reselection as a party candidate, party term limits to ensure rotation of parliamentarians, or legal term limits)
3. Defeat at election E + 1

If our interest were in the functioning or "institutionalization" of legislatures, then this conflation might not matter; we might be concerned only with the actual rate of change in the personnel in parliament, no matter what the cause. But given that our interest here is in the impact of electoral systems, we should not confuse the different reasons for turnover. A deputy who dies three months after election E will not be reelected at election E + 1, but this is not a consequence of the electoral system employed at election E + 1.

Turnover and Electoral Systems

Electoral systems will probably have an impact on turnover rates, but what kind of impact? Will PR systems lead to more or to less turnover? And among PR systems, will those allowing voters to express preferences for individual candidates lead to more or to less turnover than those based on nonpreferential lists?

The fullest comparative study of turnover tests the hypothesis that turnover will be lowest when individual candidates play the greatest role and highest when the role of the party is greatest (Matland and Studlar 1995, 7–8). The rationale for this is that when voters can express preferences for individual candidates, candidates build up a "personal vote," as it were, and this protects incumbents when their party's fortunes take a downturn and also makes parties reluctant to deselect them as candidates. Thus, the authors' hypothesis is that turnover will be highest in nonpreferential list PR systems, followed in descending order by preferential list PR systems, PR-STV, SNTV (single nontransferable vote), and finally SMP (single-member plurality) systems. The conclusion drawn (15) from testing this model on the data is that the electoral system does not have a statistically significant effect on turnover.

However, if the model is plausible, its operationalization is questionable. In particular, it is hard to see why preferential list PR systems and PR-STV are placed nearer to the party-dominated end of the spectrum and SMP is placed at the candidate-dominated end. Arguably, SMP and nonpreferential list PR systems should be grouped together, because in each, party and can-

didate(s) are inseparable as far as the voter is concerned: a voter who wants to vote for the party must accept the candidate(s) put forward by the party, in the order in which the party presents them, whereas a voter who wishes to reject a (or the) specific candidate presented by the party cannot do so without also rejecting the party (Carey and Shugart 1995). Under the other three systems (preferential list PR systems, PR-STV, and SNTV), in contrast, voters can make a choice within parties or without regard to parties. They can remain loyal to their party and yet vote against its incumbents (by giving their preferential vote to a nonincumbent). Incumbents, under such systems, are doubly vulnerable; they are at risk of being unseated both by a candidate from another party and by one of their own running mates (a *running mate* is another candidate of the same party, standing on the same ticket). In contrast, under SMP and nonpreferential list PR systems, *only* a swing against the party can lead to the electoral defeat of an incumbent. Thus, an equally plausible hypothesis would be one that envisages turnover being highest in preferential list PR, STV, and SNTV and lowest under nonpreferential list PR and SMP.

We shall not try to test the impact of district magnitude, one of the factors suggested by Matland and Studlar (1995, 8), who hypothesize that increasing district magnitude is associated with more seat changes because even small changes in votes will lead to changes in seats. District magnitude in Ireland has varied from three to nine over the period, but the periodic changes in constituency configurations make it hard to construct a realistic test of the hypothesis. In Malta, there is even less variance; of the 85 constituencies used in elections over the period, the great majority have returned five members, and the rest have returned six members.

In fact, the terms of the hypothesis relating to turnover could be questioned: although it is no doubt true that the chances of at least one seat changing hands are greater in a 20-seat constituency than in a single-seat constituency, it may not be true that the number of seats changing hands in a 20-seat constituency is likely to be more than in 20 single-seat constituencies considered together, because under an SMP electoral system, especially with a multiparty system, small changes in votes can lead to large and unpredictable changes in seats. We might thus expect *more* overall turnover in small constituencies; indeed, turnover in Canada (with single-member constituencies) is relatively high, and at the first 10 French elections of the Fifth Republic, the number of defeated incumbents was lowest at the only election in which multimember constituencies were employed, in 1986 (Ysmal 1994, 206).

Two Political Systems: Ireland and Malta

A few basic details of the two political systems under discussion will help set the context. Ireland, like almost all other European countries, has a parliamentary rather than a presidential system; its president, though directly elected, has very few powers (fuller details of the political system can be found in the various chapters of Coakley and Gallagher 1999). Its lower house of Parliament, Dáil Éireann, is elected for five-year terms, though the timing of elections is at the discretion of the prime minister (the Taoiseach), and on average elections have occurred at intervals of about three years since the independent Irish state was founded in 1922. The Dáil currently has 166 members (TDs).

Since 1932, three political parties have dominated Irish politics in a reasonably stable pattern (see Table 2 for the picture over the period covered in this chapter). The largest party since that date has been Fianna Fáil, which usually wins around 40 to 45 percent of the votes at elections; in the European Parliament (EP), it was allied with the French RPR (the Rassemblement pour la République, the Gaullists) until the RPR split in 1999, since when Fianna Fáil has been part of a group including the more Eurosceptic wing of the RPR and the Alleanza Nazionale of Italy. The second-largest party at every election since 1932 has been Fine Gael, allied in the EP with the Christian Democratic group; its average electoral strength is around 30 percent. The other durable party has been Labour, a member of the Socialist group in the EP, whose average strength is around 11 percent. Up until 1989 all governments were either single-party Fianna Fáil administrations or coalitions containing Fine Gael

TABLE 2. Electoral Fortunes of Irish Political Parties, 1927-97

	Average Votes at Elections 1927-97 (%)	Votes 1997 (%)	Seats 1997	Seats 1997 (%)
Fianna Fáil (European Democratic Alliance)	44.2	39.3	77	46.4
Fine Gael (Christian Democrats)	30.6	27.9	54	32.5
Labour (Socialist)	11.0	10.4	17	10.2
Others	14.1	22.4	18	10.8
Total	100.0	100.0	166	100.0

Note: Names in brackets are those of the party groups to which the parties belong in the European Parliament.

and Labour (and sometimes one or more of the smaller, transient parties). In 1989, Fianna Fáil took part in a coalition government for the first time, with the Progressive Democrats (members of the Liberal group in the EP). After the 1992 election, when Fianna Fáil support dropped to less than 40 percent for the first time since 1927, Fianna Fáil joined a coalition with Labour, and the increasingly unpredictable nature of Irish government formation was shown two years later, in November 1994, when for the first time ever a change of government took place *without* an election. Labour withdrew from its coalition with Fianna Fáil and took part in a new three-party government along with Fine Gael and Democratic Left, a small left-wing party. At the June 1997 general election, this government was defeated and replaced by a fresh coalition between Fianna Fáil and the Progressive Democrats.

Malta is in effect a two-party system, one of the purest in the world. Virtually all the votes at every election are won by the Maltese Labour Party (MLP) or the Partit Nazzjonalista/Nationalist Party (PN); no other party has won a seat since independence in 1964. The MLP corresponds to the European Socialist or Social Democratic tradition; the PN, to the Christian Democratic. Like Ireland, Malta has a parliamentary system, with its Parliament elected for five-year terms. Elections tend to be well spaced out, with only eight in the first 35 years after independence. Its lower house is much smaller than Ireland's, reflecting its smaller population (around three hundred and fifty thousand, compared with Ireland's 3.7 million).

STV in Ireland and Malta

In Ireland, PR-STV has been used for all parliamentary and other public elections since 1922 (Sinnott 1999). It is constitutionally prescribed (Article 16.2) and thus cannot be changed without a referendum. Two attempts have been made to replace it by the system of single-member plurality, or first-past-the-post, in 1959 and 1968. On each occasion the proposal was defeated by direct vote of the people in a referendum: in 1959 by 52 to 48 percent and in 1968 by 61 to 39 percent.

Since 1948, all constituencies (districts) have returned either 3, 4, or 5 members, and average district magnitude has been about 4; at the 1997 election, for example, there were 41 constituencies from which 166 TDs were returned. In earlier years there were larger constituencies; constituencies of 7, 8, and 9 members from 1923 to 1933 and of 7 members from 1937 to 1944. Proportionality is high,³ and there does not seem to be much concern, or reason for concern, about the degree of government stability. When PR-STV is criti-

cized in Irish political debate, it is mainly on the grounds that it exposes incumbents to an excessive risk of defeat, especially to running mates, and therefore imposes an unhealthy mode of behavior on TDs—unhealthy both for them personally and for the political system as a whole. Some of the arguments lying behind this criticism will be tackled in this chapter.

PR-STV has been employed for every election in Malta since 1921 (Hirzy de Miño and Lane 1996). Since 1976, the Maltese Parliament has contained 65 regularly elected members, who are elected from 13 5-member constituencies: this marks an increase from 55 in 1971 and from 50 at the first postindependence election in 1966. Only in 1971, when 5 of the constituencies returned 6 members, have anything other than 5-member constituencies been employed—although owing to the use of adjustment seats (discussed later), at the 1987 and 1996 elections, 4 5-seat constituencies were in effect turned into 6-seaters. On these two occasions, the size of Parliament increased to 69 members.

Differences between Ireland and Malta

Three features of STV—two institutional, one party systemic—in Malta distinguish it from STV in Ireland (see Farrell, Mackerras, and McAllister 1996 and Farrell 1997, ch. 6, for discussion of the different versions of STV). The first, the provision of adjustment seats in certain circumstances, came about as a result of the outcome of the 1981 election, when the PN won an overall majority of votes (50.9 percent) yet the MLP won a majority of the seats (34 out of 65). This was due to the way the constituency boundaries had been drawn by the MLP government, an arrangement the PN alleged had been a gerrymander. The PN boycotted Parliament in consequence. A new rule was then introduced, according to which if a party won a majority of votes but only a minority of seats, it would receive additional seats so as to give it an overall majority. This provision had to be invoked at the next election, in 1987, when the PN again won 50.9 percent of the votes but again lost 34 to 31 in seats to the MLP. Accordingly, its four “best losers” were awarded seats to give it a 35–34 majority, and the size of Parliament grew to 69. The same provision was activated in 1996, when the MLP won a majority of the votes but a minority of the seats.

A second feature that distinguishes STV in Malta and Ireland concerns the procedures for filling vacancies that arise between elections. In Ireland, vacancies are filled in the same way as in Britain, through by-elections—indeed, this is one of the many ways in which British practices were virtually

automatically adopted in the independent Irish state after 1922. Although the use of by-elections in a PR electoral system could lead to anomalies, in practice by-elections have not produced particularly anomalous outcomes (Gallagher 1996). In Malta, in contrast, vacancies are filled through “casual elections” (*elezzjoni kawwali*), though confusingly these are usually referred to in English as by-elections. At these “casual elections,” no fresh vote takes place; the count is based on the ballot papers of the resigning or deceased MP.⁴ The procedure is the same as that employed in Tasmania, where it is referred to as the “countback” or “count-on” method (Newman 1992, 132–38; O’Connell 1983, 45).

This means that in Malta candidates can stand in two constituencies; if elected in both, they resign one seat as required by law. Knowing that in the resultant casual election another candidate of their own party will be elected. Consequently, many Maltese candidates stand in two constituencies, either as a sign of status (it seems to have become de rigueur for party leaders to secure election in two constituencies) or as a kind of insurance policy or, in the case of lesser-known candidates, to boost their chances of picking up the crumbs when a vacancy arises or simply because redistricting has split their base between two constituencies. Quite apart from these, it is not unknown for a leading candidate to switch to another constituency and thereby in effect displace one of his own party’s incumbents in that constituency. In 1987 the 173 candidates were responsible for 242 candidacies, and in 1992 most candidates stood in more than one constituency: the 162 candidates were responsible for 246 candidacies (Schiavone 1992, 615).

When candidates are doubly elected, they immediately resign one seat, and another candidate of their party is elected at the casual election. In this chapter, we shall treat these cases as if the doubly elected candidate had never stood in the constituency from which he⁵ immediately resigns; that is, the candidate who wins the seat through the casual election is treated as if he or she had been elected at the general election, as is in effect the case. In Ireland, in contrast, this complication does not arise; in the period covered, only one candidate was doubly elected, in September 1927.

The third difference between Malta and Ireland was described earlier as being party systemic. It refers to the willingness of voters in Ireland, and the complete unwillingness of their Maltese counterparts, to vote on other than a strict party basis. Maltese voters express preferences for the candidates of their favored party, and then stop (see chapter 9). Irish voters, however, are more likely to give lower preferences to another party’s candidates after voting for their own or, indeed, not to vote on a party basis in the first place; for

example, some vote on the basis of locality, so they might give their first preference to a Fianna Fáil candidate from their area and their second to a Fine Gael candidate from the same area. At the 1997 Irish election, Fianna Fáil's internal transfer solidarity was only 68 percent, and Fine Gael's was 64 percent (Gallagher 1999, 138–39).

The relevance of this for turnover is that for Irish parties the concept of overnomination is meaningful; in some circumstances, too complex to be discussed here, running too many candidates might cost a seat. Very often, a party organization comes to the conclusion that if it is aiming to win n seats in a constituency, n is the optimal number of candidates to run, and it rarely runs more than $n + 1$. In Malta, in contrast, there is no such thing as too many candidates; no matter how fragmented the party vote is, the party can be confident that when vote transfers are made, virtually all of the votes will remain within the party fold. Hence, whereas even the largest Irish parties rarely run as many candidates in a constituency as there are seats at stake, the Maltese parties usually run many more than this—the record was 19 by the MLP in the 5-member district 2 in 1998. Therefore, we should expect the risk of intra-party defeat to be higher for Maltese incumbents than for their Irish counterparts, because the former are always accompanied on the ticket by a host of rivals for the party's seats, whereas Irish incumbents might not be. At the 1997 election in Ireland, 7 percent of the Fianna Fáil incumbents who contested the election, 26 percent of Fine Gael incumbents, and 90 percent of Labour incumbents were on a party ticket that did not contain any nonincumbents.

Scope and Sources

In Ireland, the 24 elections of the period from 1927 to 1997 are covered. This omits the first two postindependence elections, which were held in 1922 and 1923. The 1922 election, held shortly before the outbreak of civil war, was marked by highly constrained competition: there were only 176 candidates for 128 seats, and 38 of the 128 TDs were returned without a contest. The 1923 election saw a large increase in the size of the Dáil, to 153 seats (an increase of almost 20 percent, which is the level at which Lijphart [1994, 13] suggests that a change in assembly size should be regarded as bringing about a new electoral system), and this, coupled with extensive redistricting, makes it relatively hard to establish causes of exit from and entry to the legislature. For the record, it may be stated that 36 of the 128 TDs elected in 1922 did not contest the 1923 election, a further 18 were defeated, and 74 were reelected. The

source for the period from 1948 onward is officially published results, which contain details of interelection by-elections. For the 1923–44 period, for which there are no official figures, Gallagher 1993b has been used.

In Malta, the first eight postindependence elections (1966–98) are included in the study. The data set for Malta involves only about a seventh as many outgoing deputies as in Ireland. The main printed source for Maltese elections is Schiavone's (1992) comprehensive study of the period from 1849 to 1992, which contains not only the outcome in every constituency at every election but also full details of changes between elections caused by the deaths and resignations of members, details that are needed to identify the incumbents at the time when an election is called.⁶ In addition, John Lane has created an invaluable data bank on Maltese elections, including a complete list of the 5,564 election candidacies of the period from 1921 to 1998, as well as detailed results from every constituency.⁷

Turnover in Multimember Constituencies

Incumbent deputies may suffer one of three basic fates at an election: reelection, retirement, or defeat. Two of these may in turn be sub-subdivided as follows:

1. Reelection
2. Retirement
 - Retirement and replacement by another deputy of the same party
 - Retirement and replacement by a deputy of a different party
 - Retirement and disappearance of the seat owing to redistricting
3. Defeat
 - Defeat to another candidate of the same party
 - Defeat to a candidate of a different party
 - Defeat owing to redistricting

In theory it should be a simple matter to assign each outcome to one or another of these categories. However, although it is clear enough whether a deputy was reelected, retired, or was defeated, it is not always so clear to which of the subcategories of retirement or defeat an outcome should be assigned.

Clear outcomes occur where a constituency (district) remains unchanged from one election to the next and at least $n - 1$ of the n incumbents are reelected. If one incumbent does not contest the election, or contests and is de-

feated, then it is obvious that that incumbent has been replaced, either through defeat or retirement, by whoever is the new deputy.

Matters become slightly more complicated when two (or more) incumbents are replaced by newcomers, which creates the problem of determining which newcomer replaced which incumbent. The approach taken here is to assume that if an incumbent of party A disappears (i.e., retires or is defeated) and a newcomer of party A is elected, then the incumbent was replaced by the newcomer in question. In Scenario 2 below, for example, the turnover is treated as two cases of intraparty defeat rather than two cases of interparty defeat, with newcomer B unseating incumbent A and newcomer A unseating incumbent B, which would be an implausible interpretation of events given the reasonable stability in party support in Ireland and the very high stability in Malta. When the strengths of the parties remain unaltered and the only change is within parties, turnover is best seen as intraparty.

Scenario 1

Party A	Incumbent defeated	
Party B	Incumbent defeated	
Party C		Newcomer elected
Party D		Newcomer elected

Categorization: Two interparty defeats (whether A to C and B to D or A to D and B to C may be judged in particular cases but is irrelevant for present purposes).

Scenario 2

Party A	Incumbent defeated	Newcomer elected
Party B	Incumbent defeated	Newcomer elected

Categorization: Two intraparty defeats (A and B).

Scenario 3

Party A	Incumbent defeated	Newcomer elected
Party B	Incumbent defeated	
Party C		Newcomer elected

Categorization: One intraparty defeat (A) and one interparty defeat (B to C).

Scenario 4

Party A	Incumbent defeated	Newcomer elected
	Incumbent defeated	
Party B		Newcomer elected

Categorization: One intraparty defeat (A) and one interparty defeat (A to B). Which incumbent sustained the intraparty defeat and which the interparty defeat may be judged in particular cases but is irrelevant for present purposes.

Scenario 4, in which two incumbents of party A lose (one to a newcomer of party A and the other to a candidate of party B), is treated as one intraparty defeat and one interparty defeat, as indicated. It should be noted that this differs from the approach of Katz (1986), who, in his analysis of turnover, says: "If at least one nonincumbent was elected in a constituency, then all defeats of incumbents of the same party were regarded as 'intrapartisan defeats'" (99). This seems to mean that he treats the defeats of *both* incumbents of party A in scenario 4 as intraparty defeats, even though only one incumbent was ousted by a newcomer of party A, an approach that exaggerates the extent of intraparty defeats.

Redistricting poses a problem, especially (though not exclusively) when it comes to retirements, in that there is sometimes room for dispute as to by whom retiring deputies have been replaced when the configuration of constituencies changes. In Ireland, during the time period covered in this chapter, significant redistrictings took place before the elections of 1948, 1961, 1969, 1977, and 1981, and the map covering the greater Dublin area, which accounts for about a quarter of Dáil seats, was extensively redrawn on some of these occasions. Best efforts have been made, by comparing maps of the constituency configurations, to estimate the replacement of a retiring deputy in these circumstances. On occasions, the size of the Dáil was increased—by 12 percent in 1981—so a number of seat gains are attributable to the creation of new seats. Even when the overall number of seats does not change, the number in particular regions of the country may change (for example, between 1973 and 1977 the greater Dublin region gained five seats, while the rest of the country lost a seat), so specific seat gains and losses may still be attributable to the effects of redistricting. In Malta some degree of redistricting took place before every election, and the size of Parliament increased by 10 percent in 1971 and by a further 18 percent in 1976, so a significant number of newcomers were able to gain election without ousting incumbents. In addition, the expansion (in 1987 and 1996) and contraction (in 1992 and 1998) of four constituencies owing to the adjustment seats is treated here as a functional equivalent of redistricting.

Unfortunately, there are still some cases that are impossible to categorize and for which the cause of defeat, or the destiny of the seat of a retiring

deputy, is best treated as uncertain. This is much more common in Malta than in Ireland.

The Fates of Incumbents

Table 3 shows the fates of incumbents for Irish elections over the period from 1927 to 1997, and table 4 presents the Maltese data. Although reelection rates are a little higher in Ireland and defeat is a little more common in Malta, the similarities between the two are striking. Perhaps the two most important

TABLE 3. Fate of TDs at Elections in Ireland, 1927–97

	TDs at Previous Election	Retiring (%)	Contesting (%)	Reelected as % of Those in Parliament at Dissolution	Defeated as % of Those in Parliament at Dissolution	Reelected as % of Those Contesting Current Election
FF	1,670	8.1	91.9	79.3	12.6	86.3
FG	1,200	8.1	91.9	74.7	17.2	81.2
Labour	361	6.9	93.1	73.7	19.4	79.2
Others	394	12.7	87.3	58.4	28.9	66.9
Total	100.0	8.5	91.5	75.0	16.6	81.9
N	3,625	307	3,318	2,717	601	2,717

Note: "Retiring (%)" includes those TDs who had resigned their seats or died some time before the election and whose seats remained vacant at the time of the election.

TABLE 4. Fates of MPs at Elections in Malta, 1966–98

	MPs at Previous Election	Retiring (%)	Contesting (%)	Reelected as % of Those in Parliament at Dissolution	Defeated as % of Those in Parliament at Dissolution	Reelected as % of Those Contesting Current Election
MLP	234	8.5	91.5	77.8	18.8	79.4
PN	245	6.1	93.9	74.3	19.6	79.1
Others	9	11.1	88.9	0	88.9	0
Total	100.0	7.4	92.6	72.1	20.5	77.9
N	488	36	452	352	100	252

points established are first, that by far the most common fate for an incumbent in both countries is reelection and second, that defeat is a more common source of turnover than retirement.

To take the first of these, around three-quarters of outgoing deputies and around four-fifths of those deputies who actually stand for reelection are reelected. Clearly, most incumbents in both countries are well able to fend off most of the threats to their position. Although systematic comparative figures are hard to come by, this figure seems to be at the higher end of the scale of reelection rates, judging by what data are available. Matland and Studlar use the first of the four measures we outlined earlier (the percentage of deputies who, having been elected at one election, are also returned at the next), and their figures rank Ireland fifth and Malta eleventh of the 25 cases they cover. The incumbency return rates for the elections covered are 77.2 percent in Ireland and 70.7 percent in Malta, compared with an average of 68.9 percent for all the countries covered (Matland and Studlar 1995, 36; cf. the figures in Katz 1986, 98, and Somit 1994, 12).

Variation among the main parties is not great, as tables 3 and 4 show, but TDs of smaller parties (classed along with independents as Others) are clearly less likely to be reelected.⁸ And neither do the figures vary hugely from election to election. In both countries, the reelection rate at the first election in the period covered is the lowest of any, and the rates of both defeat and retirement are the highest. This can be seen as part of the process of the "institutionalization" of the legislatures (cf. Polsby 1968), as those whose commitment to a political career is half-hearted are weeded out. Once this had happened, and it happened early, both parliaments were peopled by deputies whose priority was staying there.

The average figures for the main parties in each country vary somewhat more than the aggregate figures, but not greatly, and there is no linear trend over time. The range for Fianna Fáil during this period covers a trough of 77 percent in 1992, when the party fell to a 65-year low of support, and a peak of 95 percent in 1969,⁹ when a partisan redistricting of constituencies (no longer possible because the task of redistricting was handed to an independent commission in the late 1970s) ensured that only 3 of the party's 60 contesting TDs lost their seats. For Fine Gael, the lowest reelection rate (63 percent) came in 1977, when the party slipped heavily in popular support, and the peak was in 1981, when a major gain in votes combined with a large increase in the number of seats in the Dáil to generate a reelection rate of 97 percent.

In Malta the MLP's range is from 72 percent in 1987 to 95 percent in 1971; the PN's, from 68 percent in 1987 to 88 percent in 1976. The high fig-

ure for the MLP in 1971 is due to a large increase in its vote (nearly 8 percent, the largest change for any party since independence) coupled with an increase in the size of Parliament, and the PN's peak in 1976 can also be attributed to a major increase in the size of Parliament. The low figures for both parties in 1987 can be explained only in terms of an upsurge in intraparty defeats, as we shall see.

Causes of Defeat: Interparty or Intraparty?

Incumbents, then, are usually reelected despite the multiple threats to their position. When they do lose, why do they lose, and which of those threats proves the most potent? In particular, are incumbents more likely to lose to running mates or candidates of another party?

The view that intraparty competition looms large as a source of incumbent defeat features in the arguments of critics of PR-STV in the Irish context, whose view is that the degree of competition within parties compels parliamentarians, for fear of losing their seats otherwise, to concentrate unduly on "home-style" activities, that is, serving the needs of their constituents so as to retain their personal popularity, to the neglect of their national parliamentary responsibilities (see, for example, Boland 1991 and FitzGerald 1991). Exactly the same has been suggested for the United States, where King (1997) argues that precisely because incumbents are so vulnerable, at least in their own minds, they "go to prodigious lengths to protect themselves," resulting in hyperresponsiveness, nonstop electioneering, and malfunctioning of the political system (49, 179).

The other side of the case is that the PR-STV system has little to do with the high volume of demands on TDs to undertake constituency work, which would most probably continue to exist whatever the electoral system. Carey (1996), observing that Costa Rican legislators engage extensively in constituency work even though they are barred from seeking reelection, queries the causal link between particularistic activities and personal electioneering (198). In addition, a group established to review the Irish constitution observed that there will inevitably be "a conflict of interest between incumbent legislators who want as much security and as little turnover as possible, and voters who want legislators to be as responsive as possible, and have only the threat of unseating them to ensure this" (Constitution Review Group 1996, 57). If TDs did not feel vulnerable to defeat, some degree of accountability and answerability would be lost.

Carty (1981) concluded that for Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael candidates in the period from 1948 to 1973, "fellow partisans constitute the single most important source of competition" (115). However, the word *single* in this phrase is significant; Carty's point is that more seats are lost to running mates than to the nominees of any other specific party. When one groups all other parties together, a different picture emerges: Carty's tables (115–16) show that for every party, more seats are lost to other parties' nominees than to running mates.

Looking at the sources of defeat over the 1927–97 period, table 5 shows that most defeated TDs are the victims of challengers of other parties rather than a running mate. Sixty-one percent of defeats have been interparty ones compared with 34 percent resulting from intraparty competition.¹⁰ Variations from election to election over the 70-year time span are pronounced, with especially high rates of intraparty defeat in 1933, February 1982, and 1938 and of interparty defeat in 1973, 1943, and 1957, but there is no consistent pattern over time; one cannot say that intraparty competition is becoming more salient, or less salient, as a source of defeat.

Interparty variation is more significant. It is clear from table 5 that defeat by a running mate is not a possibility that need keep Labour or minor-party incumbents awake at night.¹¹ For Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, though, the threat is real; considering these parties together, the proportion of defeats at the hands of running mates (46.6 percent) is almost as high as the proportion inflicted by opposing party candidates (47.1 percent). In Fianna Fáil, running mates are clearly the main source of danger to an incumbent, and they pose a significant, if secondary, threat to Fine Gael incumbents.

TABLE 5. Defeated TDs at Elections in Ireland, 1927–97

	Total TDs Defeated (N)	Lost to Candidate of Own Party (%)	Lost to Candidate of Other Party (%)	Lost Seat Owing to Redistricting (%)	Uncertain (%)
FF	210	55.7	38.1	6.2	
FG	207	37.2	56.0	6.3	0.5
Labour	70	2.9	92.9	2.9	1.4
Others	114	5.3	91.2	3.5	
Total N	601	202	365	32	2
Total %	100.0	33.6	60.7	5.3	0.3

Even for the main parties, though, the extent of the threat constituted by running mates should not be exaggerated. On average over the last 24 elections, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael together have had 120 outgoing TDs when the election is called, and of these 10 have retired, 93 have been reelected, and 17 have been defeated. Of those defeated, 8 have been defeated by a candidate of another party, 8 have been defeated by a running mate, and 1 has lost his or her seat owing to redistricting. Viewed objectively, most TDs seem to have little to worry about—although, of course, most of them do worry.

Summing up this discussion of the threats to incumbents in Ireland, it is apparent that the direction of the threat varies according to party. In Fianna Fáil the main threat is from one's running mates, though other parties' candidates are capable of causing more than a little damage; a Fine Gael TD also needs to keep his or her eyes peeled in all directions, with other parties posing the greater threat; and TDs of the smaller parties can concentrate on fighting the enemy without, as none of any significance lurks within the party fold.

The Irish and Maltese patterns have hitherto been very similar, but in this area they differ greatly. As table 6 shows, for a Maltese MP, running mates constitute by far the greatest threat. What is most striking about Maltese turnover, in fact, is the extreme rarity of defeats of MPs by a candidate of the other party. Of the 12 MPs who suffered this fate in the 1966–92 period, 7 lost in the 1966 election; 6 of these were MPs of smaller parties that disappeared after independence. Since then, there are only five cases, at seven general elections, where one can safely conclude that a MP lost his or her seat to a candidate of another party, and even two of these were special cases.¹²

Finally, it may be noted that the pattern in Tasmania, the other small island that uses PR-STV to elect its Parliament, is midway between those of

Ireland and Malta. On average, between two and three times as many defeats of Tasmanian members of the House of Assembly are sustained to running mates as to candidates of other parties (Newman 1992, 255; Hughes, ch. 8 in this volume).

Explaining Turnover Rates

Merely to measure turnover is not straightforward, so explaining it will not be easy either. We have identified three features of the Irish-Maltese pattern: (1) a similar rate of defeat for incumbents in both countries, (2) a much higher rate of interparty defeat in Ireland, and (3) a much higher rate of intraparty defeat in Malta.

The only systematic attempt to explain turnover rates cross-nationally is that made by Matland and Studlar (1995), who suggest eight factors as being likely to influence turnover: electoral system, district magnitude, fixed-term parliaments, redistricting, prestige of legislature, competitiveness of elections, socioeconomic development, and the country's religion. Because overall turnover rates, as opposed to the reasons for turnover, differ little between Malta and Ireland, there is not much between-country variance to explain.

Four explanations could be suggested for the different causes of turnover in the two countries studied. First, voting behavior seems to be much more stable in Malta than in Ireland (Zanella 1989). Volatility, as measured by Pedersen's index, averages only 4.6 percent at the 8 Maltese elections we are considering, compared with 10.2 percent at the 24 Irish elections covered.¹³ Average volatility measured at the constituency level was 16.3 percent at the 1997 Irish election compared with only 3.9 percent at the 1998 Maltese election. Thus, it is not surprising that interparty turnover is much lower in Malta. Second, and relatedly, Malta has a two-party system, whereas Ireland has a multiparty system; in Ireland more parties stand to gain or lose seats in each constituency. Third, the explanation for the higher rate of intraparty turnover in Malta might also be related to the two-party system: if a desire for change in representation cannot be, or is not, reflected in a switch of voting support to another party, it must express itself by voting for another candidate within the chosen party. Fourth, as we have mentioned, Maltese MPs are always accompanied on the ballot paper by many nonincumbent running mates, unlike Irish TDs, who usually have few or no nonincumbent running mates.

The run of elections in Malta is too small to permit refined analysis, but the 24 Irish elections in our data set allow for some hypotheses to be tested. Six plausible hypotheses would be the following:

TABLE 6. Defeated MPs at Elections in Malta, 1966–98

	Total MPs Defeated (N)	Lost to Candidate of Own Party (%)	Lost to Candidate of Other Party (%)	Lost Seat Owing to Redistricting (%)	Uncertain (%)
MLP	44	70.5	4.5	6.8	18.2
PN	48	75.0	6.2	6.2	12.5
Others	8	0	87.5	0	12.5
Total	100	67.0	12.0	6.0	15.0
N	100	67	12	6	15

1. The longer the amount of time that has elapsed since the **previous** election, the higher will be the number of retirements. The **rationale** for this is obvious.
2. The longer the amount of time that has elapsed since the **previous** election, the higher will be the number of defeats. The **rationale is that** as time passes, the composition of the electorate changes ever **more**, and the number of continuing voters inclined to vote differently **can be** expected to increase.
3. The greater the amount of volatility at an election, the higher **will be** the number of deputies defeated. Again, the rationale is obvious.
4. The larger the party, the more likely it is that defeats of its **incumbents** will be due to intraparty turnover. The rationale is that if a **party has** several incumbents in a constituency, it is more likely that one **of them** will become electorally vulnerable, whereas for a small **party with** only one incumbent, the personal support of the incumbent is **likely to** be a significant factor, making less likely the prospect of the **incumbent** being ousted by a running mate.
5. Turnover will be related to a party's gains or losses of votes at **an election**; as a party's performance worsens, a higher proportion of **its incumbents** will be defeated, and a higher proportion of the defeats of **its incumbents** will be interparty. Clearly, we expect a party losing **votes** to lose seats and to lose them to other parties;
6. Likewise, the better a party fares, not only will a lower **proportion of** its incumbents will be defeated, as hypothesis 5 states, but in **addition** a higher proportion of the defeats of its incumbents will be **intraparty**. We expect a party gaining seats to suffer few incumbent defeats, **with** the probability that many of these defeats are to running mates **rather** than to other parties' candidates.

We shall test these hypotheses through simple correlation analysis (**multiple regressions** were tried, but because of the small *N*—only 24 elections—there was no equation in which more than one independent variable **was significant**). The results are presented in table 7.

1. This hypothesis was confirmed. The longer the life of a **parliament**, the greater the number of incumbents who retire at the end of that **parliament**. The Pearson correlation coefficient (*r*) between months since the **previous** election and the percentage of incumbents retiring is 0.57 (significant at **.01** level—see part I of table 7).

TABLE 7. Correlations between Independent Variables and Aspects of Turnover, **Irish Elections**

I. Cases: Overall figures for each of 24 elections, 1927–97 (cf. Table 3)

Independent Variable	TDs Retiring as % of Those in Parliament at Dissolution	TDs Defeated as % of Those Contesting Election
Months since previous election	.5697 (<i>N</i> = 24) sig = .004	.3462 (<i>N</i> = 24) sig = .097
Volatility at election		.4930 (<i>N</i> = 24) sig = .014

II. Cases: Each of four groupings (Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, Labour, and collected "Others") for each of 24 elections, 1927–97

Independent Variable	TDs Defeated as % of Those Contesting Election	TDs Defeated by Own Party Candidate as % of All TDs Defeated	TDs Defeated by Other Party Candidate as % of All TDs Defeated
Party % vote at election		.7189 (<i>N</i> = 96) sig = .000	
Change in vote	-.3463 (<i>N</i> = 96) sig = .001	.2126 (<i>N</i> = 96) sig = .038	-.2497 (<i>N</i> = 96) sig = .014

III. Cases: Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael at each of 24 elections, 1927–97

Independent Variable	TDs Defeated as % of Those Contesting Election	TDs Defeated by Own Party Candidate as % of All TDs Defeated	TDs Defeated by Other Party Candidate as % of All TDs Defeated
Change in vote	-.6785 (<i>N</i> = 48) sig = .001	.5421 (<i>N</i> = 48) sig = .001	-.4417 (<i>N</i> = 48) sig = .002

Note: All coefficients refer to Pearson's *r*.

2. This hypothesis was only weakly confirmed. The longer the life of a parliament, the greater the number of contesting incumbents who are defeated. The r between months since previous election and the percentage of contesting incumbents who were defeated is 0.35 (not statistically significant—see part I of table 7). One of the assumptions on which this hypothesis was based is false: there is little relation between the degree of volatility at an election and months elapsed since the previous election ($r = 0.11$, not statistically significant).

3. This hypothesis was confirmed. When there is a lot of change in voting behavior, a lot of incumbents are defeated. The r between volatility at an election and the percentage of contesting incumbents who were defeated is 0.49 (significant at .05 level—see part I of table 7).

4. This hypothesis is strongly confirmed. Intraparty defeat is a much greater danger for incumbents of large parties than for incumbents of small parties. The r between the vote received by a party and the proportion of its defeats that are intraparty is 0.72 (significant at .001 level—see part II of table 7). The relationship is almost certainly even stronger than this, given that the many small parties have been grouped into collected "Others."

5. The first part of the hypothesis is confirmed. As a party's vote goes up, its proportion of incumbents who are defeated goes down ($r = -0.35$ —see part II of table 7). The second part of the hypothesis is only weakly confirmed. Increase in a party's vote is related to the proportion of its defeats that are interparty ($r = -0.25$ —see part II of table 7), but the relationship is not strong.

Given the extreme infrequency of intraparty defeats among the smaller parties, it makes sense to examine this also for just the largest two parties, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael (see part III of table 7). Both aspects of the hypothesis are now strongly confirmed. The r between change in the vote and the percentage of contesting incumbents who were defeated is -0.68 (significant at .001 level). Likewise, the r between change in the vote and the proportion of defeated incumbents whose defeat was interparty is -0.44 (significant at .01 level).

6. This hypothesis is weakly confirmed. When a party does well, a higher proportion of its incumbent defeats are intraparty rather than interparty. The r between change in the vote and the proportion of defeated incumbents whose defeat was intraparty is only 0.21 (see part II of table 7).

Again, we should examine this also for just the largest two parties. The hypothesis is now strongly confirmed. The r between change in the vote and the proportion of defeated incumbents whose defeat was intraparty is 0.54 (significant at .001 level—see part III of table 7).

Retiring TDs

Having looked at the fate of defeated TDs, we will consider briefly what happens to those seats vacated by TDs who do not contest. The number of retiring TDs in Malta over the period is too small (only 36) to make analysis worthwhile, so we will consider only the Irish figures (see table 8). As indicated earlier, the retirement category can be broken down as follows:

- Retirement and replacement by another TD of the same party
- Retirement and replacement by a TD of a different party
- Retirement and disappearance of the seat due to redistricting

The contrast with table 5 is apparent. Whereas most defeated TDs are supplanted by opponents, most retiring TDs are replaced by someone else of their own party. About two-thirds of seats held by retiring TDs of the two main parties are retained by the party, indicating that these are, if not quite party seats, at least seats that reflect a stable body of support for the party. For the smaller parties the picture is quite different, reflecting their general lack of a durable and sizable base of support that can be relied on to produce a seat for the party almost regardless of its candidate. It would be an exaggeration to see these smaller parties' seats as being fiefdoms, as it were, of individual TDs whose support is mainly personal, but clearly the support base of minor-party TDs combines a significant personal element along with the purely party

TABLE 8. Retiring TDs at Elections in Ireland, 1927–97

	Total Retiring (N)	Retired: Replaced by Own Party TD (%)	Retired: Replaced by Other Party TD (%)	Retired: Seat Lost Owing to Redistricting (%)	Uncertain (%)
FF	144	72.9	20.8	4.2	2.1
FG	97	62.9	26.8	3.1	7.2
Labour	25	24.0	72.0	0	4.0
Others	41	4.9	75.6	14.6	4.9
Total %	100.0	56.7	34.2	4.9	4.2
N	307	174	105	15	13.0

Note: Retiring percentages include those TDs who had resigned their seats or died some time before the election, and whose seats remained vacant at the time of the election.

vote, which helps explain why these TDs are in so little danger of being ousted by a running mate.

Incoming Members of Parliament

Having considered political life from the perspective of incumbents, we might now ask how things look from the viewpoint of a nonincumbent who wants to be elected to a parliament. Do newcomers become deputies mainly by ousting incumbents of their own party, by winning a seat from another party, or by filling the shoes of a retiring deputy of their own party?

We can identify five ways in which one might become a deputy at a general election:¹⁴

1. Replacing a retiring deputy of one's own party
2. Ousting an incumbent deputy of one's own party
3. Ousting a deputy of another party
4. Taking a seat from another party without ousting a deputy, that is, replacing a retiring incumbent of another party
5. Gaining a seat owing to redistricting

As with defeated and retiring deputies, there can be room for argument about how to classify particular instances of nonincumbents being elected. Matters become particularly complicated when incumbents do not actually retire but simply move constituencies, change parties, or both. Rather than double-count all the changes that take place when incumbents shift rather than actually bow out of politics altogether, most of these cases are treated as uncertain.¹⁵

Table 9 demonstrates that no one route to Parliament dominates in Ireland. A plurality of victorious nonincumbents¹⁶ win a seat by ousting a deputy of another party, but over a fifth oust a deputy of their own party, and nearly as many step into the shoes of a retiring deputy of their own party. Around a ninth replace a retiring deputy of another party, and a smaller number pick up a seat owing to redistricting, which was an especially significant factor in 1981, given the increase in the total number of seats from 148 to 166, and in 1948, when the increase was from 138 to 147.

There is a certain amount of interparty variation. For the smaller parties, as we would expect from our discussion earlier, it's not common to replace a retiring deputy of one's own party, and it is virtually impossible to oust an incumbent running mate. Success for a candidate of Labour or one of the

TABLE 9. Incoming TDs at Elections in Ireland, 1927-97

	Replaced		Took Seat		Total (N)
	Ousted TD of Own Party (%)	Ousted TD of Other Party (%)	from Other Party but Did Not Oust TD (%)	Gained Seat Owing to Redistricting (%)	
FF	26.2	29.2	6.0	3.5	401
FG	22.0	27.4	10.1	9.4	277
Labour	5.6	1.9	19.6	8.4	107
Others	1.5	4.4	23.7	8.1	135
Total %	18.9	21.8	11.4	6.5	100.0
N	174	201	105	60	920

Note: The total number of incoming TDs for the period (920) exceeds the number going out (908—601 defeated, 307 retiring) because the Dáil in 1997 had 13 more members than the Dáil in 1927, and because in September 1927 the number of incoming TDs was reduced because 1 TD was doubly elected.

smaller parties almost invariably comes by taking a seat from another party: either ousting an opponent (the more common method) or filling the vacuum when a rival-party TD retires.

For candidates of the two main parties, there are richer pickings to be had by targeting a seat already held by the party than by eyeing a seat held by another party. In both cases, candidates are slightly more likely to succeed by ousting a running mate who is an incumbent than to replace a retiring party TD. Looking at the four party groupings in the table, it is apparent that the likelihood of entering the Dáil by replacing or ousting a deputy of one's own party is strongly related to party size. Obviously, when a party holds more seats, there are more retiring or contesting incumbents to replace or oust. Major-party hopefuls operate in a relatively target-rich environment compared with smaller-party hopefuls, who have only seats currently held by other parties to aim at.

This does not necessarily mean that candidates of large and small parties can adopt different campaigning styles. It might seem that small-party candidates would be best advised to fight their campaigns on the basis of policy, seeking to attract voters away from rival parties, whereas candidates of larger parties should compete on the basis of a personalistic or localistic appeal, because their best bet is to oust a running mate or inherit a seat from a fellow party TD who is standing down. However, in reality nearly all candidates, whether of large or small parties, need to attract a certain personal vote and to make themselves sufficiently appealing to attract lower preferences from supporters of other candidates in the form of vote transfers, so in practice all candidates could be expected to campaign in much the same way, mixing a policy-based and a personal approach, though it does not appear that any research into this specific area has yet been conducted.

In Malta, again as we would expect from the earlier discussion, the most common route to Parliament consists in ousting an incumbent of one's own party (see table 10). Taking a seat from an opponent was a significant means of entering Parliament only in 1966. Redistricting—in practice the expansion of Parliament—was also important in 1971 and 1976.

A Problem of Incumbency?

A number of contributors to a comparative study of turnover discuss the "problem of incumbency" (Somit et al. 1994). Unfortunately, a lack of clarity as to what is meant by turnover, and a lack of rigorous comparisons between

TABLE 10. Incoming MPs at Elections in Malta, 1966–98

	Replaced Retiring		Ousted		Ousted		Redistricting		Uncertain		Total (N)
	Own Party MP (%)	Other Party MP (%)	Own Party MP (%)	Other Party MP (%)	Own Party MP (%)	Other Party MP (%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	
MLP	18.2	39.0	9.1	1.3	18.2	14.3	77				
PN	17.1	51.4	7.1	2.9	8.6	12.9	70				
Total %	17.7	44.9	8.2	2.0	13.6	13.6	100.0				
N	26	66	12	3	20	20	147				

chapters, make it hard to tell whether there is a problem. In Canada, the **high** level of turnover is seen as a problem for the political system (Laponce 1994, 138), though the reader has difficulty in ascertaining just what that **level is**. The Japanese reelection rate of 85 percent is described as “relatively **low**” (Reed 1994, 283), yet the lower German rate of reelection (presumably around 75 percent, given that there is 25 percent turnover at each election **on** average) is seen as a problem because it is too high (Boll 1994, 181; **Somit** 1994, 15). Indeed, incumbency per se is described at one point as “a **problem** or even a threat to democracy as a whole” because “men and women **are** always reluctant to relinquish power,” and there is a warning about “**Caesarism**” (Boll and Römmele 1994, 20).

Much of this concern seems to be misplaced. High or low rates of **incumbent** reelection may be identified as a problem as a means of avoiding **having** to grapple with larger problems (this point is made by Boll 1994, 182–83). In Ireland, where, as we have seen, incumbent reelection rates are above **average**, the concern is not about too much incumbency but too little **incumbent** security, the argument being that the very real fear of losing one’s seat, **especially** to a running mate, adversely affects the behavior of deputies, **turning** their attention from national to local issues (see “Causes of Defeat” **earlier** in this chapter). The average Irish TD or Maltese MP engaged in constituency work to retain his or her seat, sorting out defective street lights in **Maam** Cross or a social welfare problem in Marsaxlokk, would be surprised to **find** him- or herself accused of Caesarism. The argument that it is too **difficult** to unseat incumbents and that not enough incumbents are defeated at **elections** for the good of the political system, has never, to this writer’s **knowledge**, been aired in Ireland.

Intraparty Competition and Party Cohesion

Finally, we might ask whether the incidence of turnover, and **especially the** constant presence of intraparty electoral competition in the larger **parties**, has an adverse impact on party cohesion. A priori, we might expect **intraparty** competition to have a negative effect on party unity. In theory at least, **candidates** can establish their own electoral base and can defy party policy and **instructions** with impunity, and members of a parliament may be inclined to **attach** more importance to constituency pressures than to the party whip when deciding how to vote in the legislature. Yet when the evidence is examined, a

clear causal link between preferential voting and party disunity proves hard to **find** (Katz 1980, 31–34; Marsh 1985b, 375).

PR-STV, of course, allows not just a choice among candidates within a **party** list but a choice among candidates without regard to party. This might **weaken** party unity still further, with party labels becoming less meaningful **than in** preferential list systems. Some have argued exactly this. Katz (1980) **studied** the impact of the electoral system on parties and the party system in **Ireland**, Italy, and the United Kingdom—though in the Irish case many of his **conclusions** were based on responses from just 28 political actors, including **TDs** and constituency officials of the parties (125). He argues (107–8) that in **Ireland**, PR-STV has produced parties that are not internally cohesive. In a **similar** vein, and seemingly basing his claims largely on Katz, Blais (1991) **speaks** of “strong evidence that the single transferable vote leads to a weaker **party** system” and maintains that PR-STV “is detrimental to the development of a responsible party system” (248–49). Taagepera and Shugart (1989) say that “if strength of party organization is desired, STV is inappropriate, **because** ... list PR (even with preference voting) ... gives far more leeway to **party** elites in deciding who the party’s representatives may be” (28). Just why **list** PR with preferential voting (as in Denmark, Finland, or Switzerland) can **be** expected to give more power to party elites than does PR-STV is not made **clear**. The implication, although it is not spelled out, is that in many open-list **systems** there is at least some default ordering that the voters are unlikely to **disrupt**—though in practice, elites in some of these cases, such as Finland and Switzerland, do not seem to exercise any more control than they would **under** PR-STV (Marsh 1985b).

One obvious difficulty for those who maintain that the Irish parties are **not** cohesive is the fact that in legislative votes, party deputies almost invariably vote en bloc. Deviations from party solidarity are very rare and are met **with** a draconian response, typically expulsion from the parliamentary party. **Fianna Fáil**, indeed, has a rule that any of its TDs who even abstain on a **measure**, never mind vote against the party line, automatically incur expulsion **from** the parliamentary party.¹⁷ In Malta, too, MPs of the two parties are not **known** for their readiness to cross party lines in parliamentary voting. Both **Katz** and Blais argue that solidarity of party voting in parliament, although **conventionally** seen as a standard test of party cohesion, is not appropriate for **the** Irish case. Katz maintains that policy matters simply aren’t important to **TDs**, who for the most part are perfectly happy to vote on specific issues in whatever way the party leadership demands. TDs’ priorities lie elsewhere:

The apparent unity of Irish parties is born of lack of interest in **policy**, lack of substantial differences in the policy orientations of the **parties**, and the realization that parliamentary cohesion is necessary to the **survival** of cabinet government.... the matters of real importance to the deputies are constituency services, and on these matters deputies **who** must electioneer independently continue to act independently. (Katz 1980, 108)

Similarly, Blais (1991) says that PR-STV's adverse effect on party **unity** and cohesion "is mitigated by the greater importance attached to **constituency** service over policy, so that parties remain superficially united" (249).

However, this rather savors of special pleading in the face of an **inconvenient** finding. When parliamentary party discipline in a number of **European** countries appears to be weakening (Gallagher, Laver, and Mair 1995, 52), it is difficult to justify dismissing the exceptionally high rates of **solidarity** to be found in Ireland and Malta as evidence of only "superficial **unity**." It may, of course, be true that not all members of the parliamentary **parties** have exactly identical views on every issue, but the same is true of any **parliamentary** caucus in any country. An army that marches forward in a phalanx **rather** than scattering in all directions is more sensibly described as united **than** divided, even—or perhaps especially—if some members of the phalanx **feel** privately that they would prefer different tactics. If party solidarity in **parliamentary** voting in Ireland and Malta were significantly lower than the **European** average, we might plausibly attribute this to the effect of PR-STV. **When** the evidence does not run in this direction, we are forced to the **conclusion** that PR-STV does not lead to incohesive parties.¹⁸

Conclusion

Incumbents at elections in Ireland and Malta under PR-STV do not suffer a particularly high rate of defeat. Incumbents are not always victorious, **but** they usually are, though not to the extent that any call for term limits has **yet** been heard. Reelection, despite the variety of threats from running mates as well as opposing party candidates, is the norm, with only about a fifth of those deputies who contest an election being defeated. Of Irish deputies who lose their seats, about the same proportion lose to a party running mate as to a **candidate** of another party; not surprisingly, defeat to a running mate is a **serious** risk only for major-party deputies. For incumbents of Ireland's largest party, Fianna Fáil, the main threat comes from within party ranks; for other **incum-**

bents, the main danger lies without. Incoming deputies, on the other side of **the coin**, have a variety of targets at which to aim, and about as many enter **the Dáil** by succeeding or ousting a TD of their own party as by taking a seat **from another** party. In Malta the balance is quite different. Defeats to **opponents** are rare, and by far the most common cause of defeat is at the hands of a **running mate**. The differences between the Irish and Maltese patterns shows that PR-STV per se does not necessarily lead to specific outcomes.

The consequences of this for the broader political system have been **much** debated, in Ireland particularly. Critics of PR-STV point to the constant **internecine** warfare within parties and to the large volume of constituency **work** undertaken by deputies in an attempt to remain ahead in popularity of **running mates**. It is also alleged that the intraparty competition that is **inevitable** under PR-STV leads to incohesive and disunited parties. Others **believe** that the demand for constituency work in Ireland, and the need to **respond** to it to some degree, would be much the same under any electoral **system**, and they see no signs of lack of cohesiveness in the Irish parties. **What** is certainly the case is that PR-STV is not associated, in either Ireland **or** Malta, with an above-average rate of defeat of incumbents.

NOTES

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1. The terms *deputies*, *parliamentarians*, *MPs*, and *legislators* will be used interchangeably. In Ireland the lower house of Parliament is Dáil Éireann, and its members are known as TDs. In Malta, members of Parliament (the House of Representatives, or Kamra tad-Deputati) are generally known as MPs.

2. The relevant footnote is not very clear, and it is possible that contributors' options lay between the first and third measures.

3. In other words, there is a close relationship between the share of first-preference votes won by parties and the share of seats they receive (the 1997 result, shown in table 2, was exceptionally disproportional). As is often pointed out, comparing these two variables does not fully capture the concept of proportionality under PR-STV given that the allocation of seats is (quite validly) affected by the transfer of lower preference votes as well as by first preferences.

4. Details are given in Part 3 of the Thirteenth Schedule of the General Elections Act, 1991.

5. No woman has ever been doubly elected, and, indeed, Malta is **notable for** the very low number of women MPs elected at all (see Lane 1995).

6. Although this book is entirely in Maltese, it is accessible to **those non-Maltese** speakers (such as the present writer) who arm themselves with a **Maltese-English** dictionary.

7. This can be found at <<http://www.maltadata.com>>.

8. Despite their complete lack of success, those classed as Others in Malta **have** supplied nine outgoing MPs. Of these, eight were elected for other parties **at the last** preindependence election in 1962 and were outgoing in 1966; the ninth was **elected for** the MLP in 1987 but left the party in 1989 and formed a new party, *Alternattiva Demokratika*, under whose label he stood and lost in 1992.

9. These figures refer to reelected deputies as a percentage of those **contesting** the current election, that is, the last column in tables 3 and 4.

10. All these figures are calculated by the author. The figures for the **comparable** cases are very similar, though not always absolutely identical, to those **presented by** Katz (1980, 75) and Carty (1981, 115).

11. Only two Labour TDs have been ousted by a running mate (in 1943 and 1954), and only six TDs of other parties, the most recent in 1951, have **suffered the** same fate.

12. Given their rarity value, these five cases could be listed. In 1971 in **district** 10, Carmelo Refalo (PN) lost to Anglu Camilleri (MLP). This is in fact the **only case in** the whole data set where the five incumbents stood, under the same label, **in the same** district and where four were reelected, with the defeated incumbent being **replaced by** a newcomer of another party. In 1976 in district 7, two MLP incumbents, **Paul Carachi** and Joseph P Sciberras, were defeated, and they were replaced by an MLP **newcomer** and a PN newcomer, Antoine Mifsud Bonnici (PN); in other words, there **was one in-**traparty change and one interparty change. Also in 1976 in district 8, **Alfred Bal-**dacchino (MLP) was defeated, and two PN newcomers were elected. **Although an** MLP newcomer was also elected, this is probably best seen as a special case **of an in-**terparty change in that Baldacchino had been elected as a PN MP in 1971 **but switched** to the MLP in 1974, so the PN was merely regaining its seat, as it were. **In 1981**, Mario Felice (PN) lost his seat in district 9 to Leo Brincat (MLP). The **fifth, and the** second special case, was referred to earlier (note 8). It concerned Wenzu **Mintoff**, elected in 1987 in district 2 for the MLP, who left the party and formed the *Alternattiva Demokratika*. In 1992 he contested district 2 under that label and lost his **seat to the** MLP.

13. Pedersen's index is calculated simply by adding the gains of the **parties that** gained seats and the losses of the parties that lost seats and dividing the **result by 2** (see Pedersen 1979). The Maltese average is distorted by the high volatility (**15.2 percent**) at the first postindependence election; over the next seven elections it **averaged only** 3.6 percent.

14. In addition, one can become a deputy by winning a by-election in **Ireland or a** casual election in Malta. We will not consider this further here because **the focus is on** the outputs of PR-STV.

15. These difficult cases are few in number, especially in Ireland, **so even a dif-**ferent classification would not significantly change the overall pattern.

16. Victorious nonincumbents are not all new TDs; a minority are former TDs **re-**gaining a seat held previously.

17. Of course, it might be argued that such a rule could be evidence of an **under-**lying lack of cohesion in that if the party was really united, it wouldn't need such a **rule to keep** its TDs in line. However, it should be borne in mind that the rules of the **parliamentary** party are made by party parliamentarians themselves, and this rule **rep-**resents a discipline by which they have chosen to be bound. It is difficult to imagine **members** of a genuinely disunited party imposing this rule upon themselves. Besides, **virtually every** European party's parliamentary caucus has rules outlining sanctions to **be imposed** upon maverick members.

18. For a slightly different argument that arrives at a similar conclusion, namely, **that PR-STV can go hand in hand with a stable party system**, see Bowler and Farrell (1991b).