2020 : Is Ireland no longer a politically classless society?

A study of Tally and Census Data

What are Tallies?

Tally Data is the recording of the number of votes received by each candidate in every Ballot Box as they are opened at Count Centres the morning after an election.

They are compiled by Party Volunteers and are used by Strategists to decipher the results at a micro-level and to better inform future decisions

In most places, it is well organised and is reasonably accurate.

District Electoral Divisions

Each Ballot Box consists of votes in prescribed District Electoral Divisions (DEDs). There can be several DEDs in the one box (perhaps a sparsely populated rural area); there can also be multiple boxes (and polling stations) in the one DED.

Importantly, DEDs are also used as a standard aggregate unit in the reporting of official data – most particularly Census Data.

This would allow for direct evaluation between tally results at a DED level and the corresponding census and other statistical data that is available. This could be particularly useful in metropolitan areas.

Programming

I plan to program in Python and R.

Pre-Existing Literature

Surprisingly – there doesn't appear to be a huge amount of work done in this field . Perhaps it's too geographic for Political Scientists and too political for geographers.
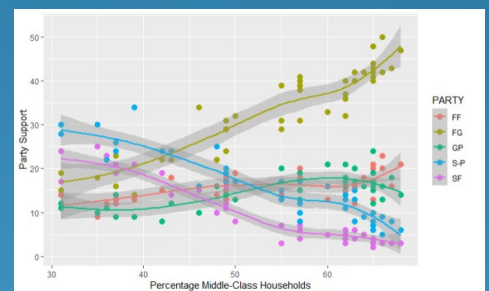
One of the main contributors to this field is Dr Adrian Kavanagh of NUI Maynooth who is probably one of the pioneers of tally study and mapping in Ireland. His Doctoral paper in the early 2000s looked at the relationship between turnout in different types of elections in Dublin compared against census data.

Historically, there was also an interesting analysis by Paul M Sacks of the 1969 tallies in the Donegal Nth-East constituency, looking at the influence of religion and other factors.

Methodology

The plan – which is open to refinement - is to use the statistical and analytical methods and tools taught in this course to come to a more indepth understanding of the relationships between (mass) voting behaviour and socio-economic factors.

An example shown below displays the relationship between party support and the proportion of middle-class households per DED for parties in the Dun Laoghaire constituency in 2020.

A tally map showing Fianna Fail support in Cork South Central in 2020 by DED