At present the study of patronage is very much in vogue. The word is used in many contexts, with different meanings, and for a host of social situations. But when a concept, like patronage, gradually widens to such a point that one can classify nearly anything under it, it is time, for analytical purposes, to make it more specific and differentiated from other, related concepts. Mayer (1966, 1967), and more recently Boissevain (1969), have made suggestions to make it more useful as an analytical concept, by distinguishing patronage from brokerage. Boissevain (1969: 379-80) observes: 'Patronage is the use of resources by a person — the patron — to assist or protect some other person — his client — who does not control such resources. The resources which a patron controls are of two types. The first are those such as land, work, scholarship funds, which he controls directly. The second are strategic contacts with other people who control such resources. The former I call first order resources; the latter second order resources'. He calls the dispensing of first order resources 'patronage', those of second order resources 'brokerage'. This distinction is valuable and I shall use it in this paper. However, it is important to realise that patrons and brokers are no actual persons, but roles. A politician can, in principle, operate these two roles at the same time, or each of them in different contexts. Also, he may behave vis-à-vis the people as if he were a patron, and try to make the latter believe he is.

In this article I will argue and explain that the Irish politicians' main task is brokerage, and what of them try to do is to convert a lower order role of broker into a higher one. My task consists of three parts: first, I explain why the Irish politicians are brokers; second, how they operate their roles; and third, what the structural frailty is of a political system based on brokerage.

1 Why brokers?

From past to present — Unlike their present-day colleagues the Irish politicians of the past were mainly patrons. This was primarily due to the island's social and economic structure. Ireland was until the beginning of this century a part of the British Empire. The land was owned by big English and Anglo-Irish (mainly

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* Field work on which this paper is based was carried out in a rural community of the Southern part of the Irish Republic during 1968-1969. The project was supported by a grant from the Netherlands Organization for the Advancement of Pure Research (Z.W.O.) I am indebted for comment to professor J. F. Boissevain and his Mediterranean Seminar, University of Amsterdam, and to a seminar on field work techniques of the Free University of Amsterdam. All names of persons and places in this article are pseudonyms.

** c.f. e.g. the November/December 1969 issue of this periodical which was dedicated to this subject.

1 C.f. e.g. Whyte, 1965; McDowell. 1952: 44-6.
Protestant) landlords, often absentee, and the mass of the people (Catholic) were in fact slaves; each renting a small plot of land. The 'ascendancy', as these landlords are still popularly called, were the operating politicians. Practically all people were forced to eke a living from the soil. The development of industry and commerce was suppressed by England. This meant that the towns could not develop as industrial centres, and provide an alternative way of making a living for the explosively expanding population.8

By the end of the 19th century the landlords' economic and political power came to an end. Various factors have contributed to this; organized nationalism, a diminishing demand for Irish agricultural products, British Liberal governments' interferences, are the main causes. The largest part of Ireland (26 counties) became politically independent in 1922 as a Free State, as a result of many sorts of pressures.

The Irish politicians of today are not any more patrons. Most of them do not have 'direct control' of 'first order resources'; they are brokers. The change from patronage to brokerage is due mainly to a change of the country's social and economic structure. The present-day Irish Republic has changed from what one might generally call a 'feudal' to a more 'egalitarian' society. Most of the former tenants are now the proprietors of their farms.

Despite the fact of a structural change the country has still many social and economic problems, many of which can, under certain circumstances, give rise to brokerage. Ireland, once heavily overpopulated, is sparsely covered with people. It is a country 3 to 4 times as big as Holland, and has a population of about three million. The picture of the country's emptiness is made extremer if one considers that in Dublin alone circa 750,000 people are living. This is the only city, and apart from a couple of somewhat bigger towns the bulk of the people live in small towns and villages and in the open country. Thus, roughly two-thirds of the population live in the non-urban sector. Emigration, which reached its peak in the middle of the last century, still continues. The country-side is becoming more and more empty, and the same holds for most of the towns and villages. It is still a rather poor country; almost two-thirds of the farms are in the small farm bracket, hardly able to exist without government aid.9 Apart from some small areas with industry there is a lack of full-time and secure employment. The government departments and their various sub-offices, State Bodies and Semi-State Bodies are a valued source of employment, as they have steady and pensionable jobs. The various social welfare services are poorly developed; the most elementary things like water, sewerage, electricity, good roads, are lacking in many parts of this empty country. All in all, the Republic is among the poorest countries of Europe, with a low standard of living.

Two types of government and their tasks; two types of politicians — From the beginning of its existence the Irish State adopted the political institutions and procedures of Great Britain. It has two types of government, Central and Local. The Central Government consists of the President, the Seanad (1st Chamber),

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8 In 1800 the population was about 5 million, in 1820 6 million, and round 1850 circa 8 million.
9 43,000 farms between 5-15 acres; 130,000 between 15-50 acres.
and the Dáil (2nd Chamber). The President and the Dáil are elected directly by the voters, the Seanad by a host of other groupings, including the Taoiseach (prime minister). Their tasks are, generally speaking, to make laws for the country. The Dáil is the most important and spectacular national arena. At present there are 144 seats, filled by T.D.s. The administrative system consists of a number of Departments of State, headed by a minister. The members of the administrative units are selected by competitive examinations.

The other type of government is Local Government. This term is somewhat misleading: Local Government has never been based, as it was in England, on the parish. This country was too thinly populated to do so. In the 19th century a host of local authorities was created, each with its own tasks and a great measure of autonomy. In 1889 England concentrated all these local authorities in one type of local government, the County Council. This is at present the main type of local government. Ireland is at present divided into 27 administrative counties; the number of seats per county ranges from 21 to 46. These seats are filled by M.C.C.s. (Members of County Council). Their tasks lie mainly in the provision of basic environmental services; roads, public health and sanitary services, personal health services, housing, public assistance. On the fringe of the County Councils are other authorities on County basis: Vocational Education Committees and Committees of Agriculture. County Councils appoint members to them and they exhibit many of the essentials of the former. 'These services', as Chubb (1964: 261) observes, 'provide citizens with most of the essential help which they are likely to need, literally, 'from the womb to the tomb'.

The administrative part of the local government has per county one head office and a number of regional offices. Its higher personnel is recruited by competitive examinations. Despite the fact that from the foundation of the State a (central) Department of Local Government was created to organize and supervise them, the County Councils had a considerable amount of autonomy. Each county had its own problems and specific peculiarities, and it was hard to give general, centrally conducted rules. Up till the early 'forties there did not exist a rigid division between policy making and administration. The council dealt with nearly all administration itself. Of course, this gave rise to abuses, nepotism, bribery, patronage et cetera.

In 1942 this 'public scandal' was done away with in principle, by introducing the Managerial Act. Since then the MCC's powers have been curbed; government and administration are officially separated, and the influence of the Central Government's Department of Local Government is increasing. But in many respects local government still has a certain measure of autonomy, and this has to be so, due to its very nature and purposes. The nature of the central-local relationships continues to be problematic and gives rise to many conflicts.

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4 T.D. is an abbreviation of the Irish word Tcahta Dála, Member of Parliament; term of address is Deputy, term of reference T.D.
5 A number of towns have Urban District Councils, but these have limited powers and are in many respects dependent upon the county council.
6 Turpin, 1954, gives vivid accounts and examples.
7 Viz. e.g. Garvin, 1963; Meghen, 1965; Robins, 1961.
The political parties — At present there are three main parties, Fianna Fáil (F.F.), Fine Gael (F.G.), and Labour Party. The origin of F.F. and F.G. are to be traced back to a split in the nationalistic movement during the first and second decade of this century. After the famous Easter Rising in 1916 and a sort of a guerilla war against England, a suggestion was made by this country to settle the matter. A Treaty was proposed, but a split developed in the movement; there were pro- and anti-Treaty elements. The former was inclined to accept the Treaty, the latter not. A complete breach with England was for many of the better-class people unacceptable, among others for economic reasons. The other element would push forward and reach the goal of a Republic. However, the majority accepted the Treaty and Ireland became a Free State. A short civil war was the result, a bitter hatred divided the country and still exists in many parts. Two political parties emerged. One was the present F.G. (pro-Treaty), then (and still often) associated with the better-off people, the other, F.F. (anti-Treaty), for the rank and file. F.G. took power, but since 1932, apart from about 6 years of unstable coalition government, F.F. has dominated the political scene. It had developed a programme attractive to the smaller farmers, the labourers, and the small businessmen. This party has been able to govern with either an absolute majority or something quite near to it up till now. With it the 'freedom fighters' came in; people who, as a rule, did not belong to the better-off classes, but who had fighting and organizing experience.

This cleavage between the pro- and anti-Treaty parties and its policies and ideologies has dominated political life for a long time. In fact, there was, and still is, a complete polarization: Labour attracted hardly any attention.

Now that the old issue and cleavage dies out there is in fact no longer a difference in policies between the two parties, and other than pure 'moral' commitment may be the electorate's motivation for voting for particular parties and candidates.

The formal organization of the three parties is about the same, so I shall confine my description to one, namely F.F. The parties are hierarchically organized. At the bottom of this pyramid are the local clubs, based on the parish. The clubs have the duty to promote the interests of the party in its areas, to increase its membership and to secure public support for its programme. All the clubs of a County Electoral Area send three delegates each (including the secretary) to the Regional Organization. This body must supervise, direct and advise the local clubs, arrange public meetings, conduct propaganda, collect funds, arrange conventions for the selection of candidates for local government elections. Above this body is the Constituency Organization. It consists of the secretary and two other delegates from each regional organization in its area. This body has the same sort of powers and duties as the regional bodies, be it in this case relative to the Dáil and the selection of its candidates in a convention. It is noteworthy that at such conventions each local club is entitled to send (and actually does so) three delegates, who have the power to vote. The National Executive is the top-organization of the party, whose members are elected at the annual convention. It will be clear from this picture that local influence is very strong in this system, especially relative to the selection of both candidates for local government elections and Dáil elections.

Public representation; the electoral system — With a universal suffrage an elec-
toral system is used in Ireland, known as proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote. It is used for Dáil, County Council, and Seanad elections. It is generally known as P.R. For election purposes the country is divided into multi-member constituencies for the Dáil (liable to revision once in 12 years, so that the ratio between the number of members and the population stays roughly the same). For local government elections the counties are divided into County Electoral Areas (C.E.A.), also multi-member units. Thus, T.D.s. are elected from the constituencies and M.C.C.s. from the far smaller C.E.A.s.

In this system not only first, but second and sometimes third preference votes are very important as well. At present there is a 'rat race' for second 'prefs' in Ireland. It is often maintained that P.R. militates against strong government and favours the development of small parties, instability and patronage. But due to specific historical circumstances (mentioned in section three) it did not create many parties in Ireland. The cleavage between the pro- and anti-Treaty elements made most people toe the line of the two parties. However, it does favour the development of factionalism, rivalry, infighting and so on, within the parties. Fellow party candidates cannot fight each other on policy, they have to do this in other ways. And as Chubb (1963: 284) has pointed out: The... vote system gives to the voters the opportunity to place candidates in the order of their choice. The parties do not, and cannot, dictate that order.

Conclusions A — politician has to attract voters in order to be elected. In the past Irish politicians were able to do this, owing to the country's social and economic structure, by means of patronage. As we have seen, this structure has changed and patronage is no longer the key resource of a politician. A vital national issue then arose, which made it possible for politicians to be elected on the basis of their attitude towards this issue. Now that this issue is dying out and new ones are lacking, it is difficult for them to attract a following on a 'moral' basis. Under the present circumstances in Ireland the electoral system not only provides new opportunities for politicians, it also forces them to play another role to attract voters, namely the role of broker. This system gives the voters the opportunity of 'cross-voting' and 'backing two horses'. Strong local influence in the selection of candidates, a strong and general tendency of personalization of social relationships, lack of employment, among others, all promote brokerage. As Mayer (1967:186) has pointed out, even the very existence or introduction of local government with many powers stimulates particularism and brokerage.

Cf. e.g. Hogan, 1945; Boissevain, 1965, observes similar consequences for Malta.

I do not want to suggest there are no (new) issues, indeed there are many, but they are not connected with differences in party-ideologies. The nature of the many issues are local or regional.
2 How the broker operates his role

As broker, a politician has to create networks for communication in his area. Those networks must contain two types of persons: First people who are able and inclined to provide him with 'first order resources'; second persons able and willing to bring the electorate, directly or indirectly, in touch with him. I shall deal with those two aspects consecutively.

The two types of politicians in Ireland, the T.D. and the M.C.C. have as their official task legislation. However, their work consists mainly, if not exclusively, of looking after the personal and local interests of their voters. They are, as Chubb (1963:285) observes, 'consumer representatives', 'contact men', 'hawkers of local interests'. The professional politician is a broker mainly between his voters and the various administrative units of local and central government. He himself looks upon this as his main task and so do the people. He is obliged to do this 'homework', as it is popularly called, whether he wants it or not. If he doesn't he might lose his support, and this in fact has happened various times. Even ministers (also T.D.s.) have made it their habit to go to their home areas regularly. Their tasks, the questions of the people, include seeking information, grants, benefits or rights, expediting a case, granting favours, jobs, licences, renting a county council cottage, and so forth, and he has to write a great many letters. Most of these questions lie within the sphere of local government administration.

The popular word for asking for help is 'pulling strings'; the people pull the string, that is the politician, and he will try to get what has been asked for. (Local jokers told me, to show the nation-wide nature of this phenomenon, 'It is not for nothing that our national emblem is the harp'.) Many politicians use in this respect the word 'hearing confessions', and some of them keep what they call a 'prayerbook' in which they write down all these 'confessions'. If the politician fails to get what has been asked for he begs for a letter from the office concerned, sends it to his client and shows that he did his best, but could no get it; therewith putting the 'responsibility' on the shoulders of the 'reluctant' office. People have a keen idea of the amount of 'pull' the various politicians in their area have. T.D.s. are generally looked on as having the biggest 'pull', they are the 'number-one-men' in the area; M.C.C.s. have less 'pull'.

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10 Cf. Whyte, 1966: 14. During the '69 general elections I was able to trace in 5 constituencies that one of the main causes of a T.D. losing his seat was due to neglect of this work.

11 Through interviews and a general questionnaire I found out the numbers of questions received, range from 50 to well over 200 weekly.

12 Through interviews and questionnaires I found that questions relative to the local government administration were ranging from circa 50% to about 85%.
As most of the questions are related to the administrative parts of the governments (particularly local government) one might ask at this point, why should the members of local and central government administrative bodies help? What do they gain? The general answer is that they need the intervention of politicians too, or might need it in the future for themselves, friends or relatives.\textsuperscript{13}

If politicians work mainly through networks, the problem of communication with the electorate, and more generally speaking 'management' is pending all the time. For the M.C.C. it is a relative small problem; he has only to look after his small part of the C.E.A. For the rural T.D. with his very large Dáil-area this problem is big. It is twofold: 1, how to keep in touch with all his electorate (for people in Ireland don't like to give their vote to a person whom they don't know), and 2, how to keep sufficient influence in the various local clubs, for the clubs have the actual power in the nomination process at conventions. His problem is bigger if one realizes that the bulk of the people's questions lie within the realm of the local government (the MCC's) domain). It is here too that the main solutions can be made and the biggest 'pull' reached. He is also for some days of the week away from home, attending the Dáil-meetings in Dublin, and thus not at the disposal of his clients.

A partial solution for this problem is to be an M.C.C. as well, which in fact most of the T.D.'s are.\textsuperscript{14} Apart from the fact that the most of the present T.D.s. got their positions after first having reached the lower step of M.C.C., they keep this function, protect it carefully, and fight for it if necessary. But this does not give the T.D. an opportunity to hear all the problems in his big Dáil-area. He cannot openly infiltrate into a fellow party M.C.C.'s territory. Another solution is to make regular rounds along all the clubs in his Dáil-area. He will hear the local news, check the situation himself, hear about all the local problems which have to be solved, and 'hear confessions'.\textsuperscript{15} He will go to all places where many people are gathered, sport meetings and the like, show himself and have close contact with the people, who at the same time can 'confess' him their problems. (As I was in my area doing the same and made often notes in my small pocket book, some people gave me the

\textsuperscript{13} In two regional offices I was lucky to be able to investigate that 80% and 65\% respectively of the members had asked a politician's help for getting their jobs or for (internal) promotion.

\textsuperscript{14} Chubb (1963: 275) observes that 70\% of the ordinary T.D.s. is also a member of a local authority. And this percentage is increasing.

\textsuperscript{15} Regularly one sees in the regional newspapers announcements like this: Con Doherty, T.D., MCC will attend at... on Saturday, February 1. Everybody welcome.
nickname of 'our local T.D.'.)
But the best way to tackle this management problem is to establish a strong but small core of helpers, scattered over the area. They can form the backbone of his organization during election times too. This is exactly what many T.D.s. do. One might presume the M.C.C.s. in the T.D.'s area to belong to this circle of helpers; officially they do, but in fact they often don't. They are the T.D.'s potential rivals and successors. In many cases there exists a covert hostility and an atmosphere of mutual distrust between them.16 T.D.s. are afraid of M.C.C.s. double dealing with fellow party T.D.s. in the constituency.
In principle and in fact a host of persons are considered for this core of helpers. It is very hard to say which person will join, and it is equally hard to state from which side the initiative will be taken. As Bailey (1963:151) says for similar circumstances: ..., 'the situation is there and the man with the right sense of opportunity must come along'. There are various names for these persons in Ireland; the general word is henchman, 'tout' is another one,17 but there is a particular person with a typical name. I shall use the term 'broker's broker' for him. He is the man, as one informant explained to me, who has to keep the paths to the grass roots open for the T.D. He has to watch the steps and manoeuvres of all politicians, irrespective of party affiliation, in the area; he must try to short-circuit the process of communication and bring as many personal and other problems straight to the T.D., his boss. In short, he must have politics in his blood and be fond of 'messing around' and intermeddling. They are the men often with political ambitions themselves, and they are the most valuable persons for the T.D. I call him the broker's broker, as he is the intermediary between the broker (T.D.) and the local people, the person who is a more or less a professional man in this sphere, and makes profit out of his position. He is indispensable for the T.D. By organizing such a circle of broker's brokers the T.D. is able to infiltrate in the entire area, and keep the position of the M.C.C.s. weak.

3 The structural frailty of the system
As we have seen in the preceding section, broker's brokers are indispensable persons for the T.D.s. In this section I shall argue and illustrate that they are a potential threat as well.

16 In the biggest county I was able to trace that during the last 15 years more than 60% of the MCCs had tried to have a go at a Dáil-convention, and there might have been more.
17 Several informants told me that probably this term, tout, is borrowed from the bookmakers helpers, who try to sell as many tickets at the horse races as possible.
In many respects a broker's broker does the same sort of work as the operating politicians. He is a broker between the population and the politician. The only difference, initially anyway, is that the broker's broker is completely dependent upon the communication channels of his 'boss', the T.D., for 'first order resources'. Without this relationship the broker's broker is powerless. In his own area, however, he has many advantages over the T.D. He knows more about all the local problems, cleavages and small issues than his boss. He is more familiar with local influential persons, and in many respects he has closer contacts with them. By sending local 'confessions' to his boss he builds up credit for his superior, but at the same time for himself. Above all — and the people realize this — he has the power to select which person or local problem will get priority on the T.D.'s list; he can and does manipulate his role in his own advantage and makes his 'pull' stronger. Also in another way he can improve his position. As most of the broker's brokers are active members of their local clubs (secretaries or other officers), they are also delegates to the party meetings at regional, county, and national level. At such meetings they can bring particular local problems directly to the notice of a minister, secretary of a department, and the like, and ask for their help. In this way the broker's broker short-circuits his superior, the T.D., and claims credit for himself.

At a certain point in his career the broker's broker will shift his aims; he will try to become nominated and elected as an M.C.C. In other words, he tries to convert a lower order role of broker into a higher one. At this point he may become a direct threat for the T.D., but by organizing a circle of broker's brokers the latter is often able to play a divide and rule policy; broker's brokers will compete with each other for the 'prize' (M.C.C.-ship) and at the same time undermine the M.C.C.s' positions.

In order to give the reader a better insight into the relationship between the broker (T.D.) and the broker's broker, and to illustrate the structural frailty of a political system based on brokerage, I shall describe a concrete example. It seems to me better to show it in vivo than in rather general and abstract terms and categories. The following case, however, is not an exceptional one.\footnote{I detected many broker's brokers in the county with broadly the same career pattern and functions. Moreover, over the last 15 years I traced 34 MCCs in one county who once had been a broker's broker, and, of course, there might have been more of them. This might give a partial explanation for the regular change of personnel in the county council as well.}

The broker's broker; a concrete example — As with the main broke, the T.D., the key asset of the broker's broker is credit; building it up and making it stronger.
Contrary to the former the latter does not have such a well calculated policy, he digs in wherever possible and in what is turning up.

Tadgh O'Sullivan is a shoemaker and electricity meter-reader, living in Patricksville, a small town of about 900 inhabitants. The boy had joined the local political club, and because of his education and inclination to work hard, he got the office of secretary. As secretary he has to deal with all the correspondence; he has to sort out both the general, local problems and the personal ones, and send them to the politicians concerned. He was approached by an M.C.C. from another area to ‘funnel’ questions through to him. In return the M.C.C. helped him to get a job as local reporter for a regional newspaper. As secretary he was a delegate to the regional and constituency meetings. It was here that he met many politicians and he could watch manoeuvring. He widened his network of personal contacts in the party sphere, and at present he is also one of the secretaries of the constituency organization.

Tadgh has for years been, and still is, a very active member of the local GAA. From local secretary he worked his way up to secretary of the regional board, and for some years he occupies the same function in the county board. He still keeps these three GAA-functions. It is through these very positions that he is able to 'patronize' the town: he is one of the few persons entitled to decide which type of match will be played in which town's pitch. Shopkeepers and publicans make good profit during and after those matches. Thus, he has widened his network of personal contacts, he is rather well known in many GAA-circles in the area. It is already at this point that he can make profit: from the various shops and pubs he gets either longer credit or commodities at reduced prices. It is also here that he learned to speak for a general public.

When a competition between the local GAA and a newly introduced community development organization was in full gear, a F.F. T.D. cum M.C.C., Seán Dwane, from a nearby bigger town entered the Patricksville scene. This rather young T.D. had reached his position with the help of an older one, who worked and lived in another part of the constituency, but was threatened by a very enthusiastic newcomer, an M.C.C. who would reach the top and become a T.D. himself. Dwane was 'wedged' in between two standing T.D.s. at the convention, he had a very small area in which he could try to collect votes, but he got the seat by many second preference votes of the earlier mentioned old T.D. Dwane had to extend his area to be safe for the next general election; he found his man here in Patricksville. O'Sullivan was most suitable: ambitious, a leader of many people, and because of his two jobs he covered a vast territory, saw many people and in fact could 'hear confessions' in all secrecy, and send them to his boss. In order to oblige O'Sullivan, Dwane helped him to become a regional journalist for the newspaper mentioned before, which implied a steady, pensionable job. The advantage for the T.D. on the other hand was that O'Sullivan now could travel (on the newspapers expenses) in a far bigger area, and do more work for him.

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19 Gaelic Athletic Association; a national organization for gaelic sports, with a structure similar to that of the political parties. The GAA is the oldest national organization and played in many respects an active role in the national movement and the fight for freedom. At present and in the past many aspiring politicians made use of this organization to collect votes.
It became clear, through various sorts of help, that Dwane was the man for the area, and that O'Sullivan was his main broker. From then on people came to him for ‘confessions’. O'Sullivan had gained not only local leadership and influence but political credit as well. The basis of his power vis-a-vis the local people in this respect was that he could select and decide who would be helped and what matter should be given priority. The people realized this and he made use of it. In other words, he developed ‘pull’ himself, but it was in fact completely based on his communication channel to Dwane.

At the next local elections O'Sullivan decided to stand for the county council. He had gained a solid basis of backing from his own local club, and various delegates from other clubs in the area had promised to support him at the convention. As regards the local electorate, he knew he would have their support. But when Dwane heard about O'Sullivan's plans he was afraid, because O'Sullivan might take a lot of his votes, as the latter was well known in this area, due to his political activities and his position in the regional GAA. Dwane went along many members of clubs in the C.E.A. and persuaded them by means of promises, small bribes, drinks, and so on, not to vote for O'Sullivan at the convention. Moreover, as Dwane was well known in other corners of the area, which O'Sullivan knew but hardly, he could obtain what he wanted. Of course, other M.C.C.s. and Dwane's other main brokers were only too glad to support Dwane in this respect. The result was that O'Sullivan was not nominated. As reaction he started canvassing for another man, and not for Dwane. The result was a breach in the relationship, but as each knew he needed the other and as there was no man better for the job than O'Sullivan in the area, the two got on again.

After this our broker's broker started to work in a slightly different way. He had paid for his whistle. It was through Dwane's network the be began to nurse particular people in the area; influential men in the various local clubs; promising them help and giving them all sorts of small favours and priorities on his list. Thus he began to build up a circle of tiny helpers for himself. He scored his first big 'political' victory by providing a small row of houses at the fringe of the town with sewerage connections. He had been pestering the officers in charge to press the matter and give it priority, which, at last, seems to have occurred. (The inhabitants were delighted; a delegation came to his home to show their gratitude, and left £ 25 at the mantlepiece). O'Sullivan, of course, did not make a secret of his own, independent activities and results. He made speeches at regional party meetings against Dwane's policies. At one meeting for instance he attacked the farmers; the prices of milk were too high for the consumers, which, of course aroused animosity with the farmers (a substantial backbone of Dwane's area, but by showing and explaining his detailed calculations he gained sympathy with the non-farmers, the majority of the delegates.

In another way he strengthened his position as broker by laying his hands on a most vital channel. One might say, as a broker, he converted part of his secondary resources of a lower grade into secondary resources of a higher grade. He got a position as a sort of a liaison officer between the party's National Executive and the constituency. It is his duty to inform the N.E. about every fortnight on the situation at the grass roots; the proper functioning of all the clubs, M.C.C.s. and T.D.s. He gets travelling-allowance and some pocket money for meals. Through this 'backdoor' organization he is now able to meet the top-men of the party. This position, created for other purposes, is a unique channel for O'Sulli-
van: he is short-circuiting the T.D. When 'Tadgh goes up to Dublin', as this is called, he can contact these top-men; ask them for help, advice, favours, interventions in various local government matters. The ministers and others know that he is a valuable person as he is active and familiar with the constituency set-up, and they are inclined to help him. At home, he now is the 'big fella'; he tells people about his contacting the party's 'brass', what they told him about various opportunities and plans for the area, and so on. In this way, and many others, he has both increased the 'quality' of his credit and is able to make more direct profit too.

Here I must stop my case, for it is at this point in the broker's brokers career that I had to leave the scene. This whole process was described to me once in a very vivid metaphor: 'This whole thing ('pulling strings', its implications and consequences, B.) is like ivy in a tree; it is a parasitic, collateral growth. It is not off the tree, not off the system, it is just attached to it, it is sponged to it, and spawned out of it. At the same time it is too dangerous a thing to shed. It is too deeply embedded in the edges. You can't cut it off, of you might injure at the same time the main trunk of the tree'.

Summary and conclusions
I have argued that in Ireland a political system based on patronage has given way to a system founded on brokerage. A structural change of the Irish society is the main reason for the disappearance of patronage. The peculiarities of the newly introduced electoral system are the main causes of the development of political brokerage; other factors described are to be considered as social catalysts which give such intensity to the phenomenon. As a broker the politician operates his role as an intermediary between the electorate and the various administrative units of the government. Due to the specific Irish combination of Central and Local Government, in which the latter is more important for both the politicians (as brokers) and the electorate, the central Government representative (T.D.) in particular is faced with management problems. He solves them by building a circle of small, local brokers. Each of these may try to convert this role into an office, that of Local Government representative. At this point he becomes a threat to his superior, the T.D.; and since at present the normal road to national leadership is via and on the basis of a position in Local Government, he might even replace his former superior in his role as a T.D. as well. Thus, these broker's brokers are both indispensable persons and potential threats for the Irish politician as a broker.

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