Is There a `Revolving Door' to the Private Sector in Irish Politics?

Alexander Baturo and Jonathan Arlow

Both authors:
School of Law and Government
Dublin City University
Dublin 9
Ireland
alex.baturo@dcu.ie (+353 (0)1 7006475) – corresponding author

Abstract: The connections between Irish politicians and the private sector are the subject of constant speculation, particularly in the post Celtic Tiger period. However, there is little systematic evidence whether publicised cases of such ties represent the exception to the rule, or if they are symptomatic of a larger problem. In this paper we focus on one aspect of the public-private nexus and investigate whether a revolving door – the movement of individuals between private and public sectors – exists in Ireland. Using evidence from originally collected data on former TDs from 1989-2016, we find that almost one third of ex-politicians are in the private sector; however, many merely return to their previous occupations as solicitors or small business owners. Still, eleven per cent turn to consulting, lobbying or corporate board membership. We find that former cabinet ministers, the representatives of *FF* and *FG* parties, as well as TDs who do not run and lose are more likely to join the corporate sector. We additionally compare former TDs with ex-officials in the civil service. Finally, placing Ireland in a comparative context, we find that the extent of the revolving door problem here is lower than in other democracies.

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1 Introduction

Given the revelations of the Moriarty and the Mahon (Flood) tribunals about financial affairs of former and current politicians in Ireland, it is not surprising that many citizens have developed a rather cynical view about their public representatives. Furthermore, the public investigation into the collapse of the Celtic Tiger economy has revealed an astonishing breakdown of regulation and an apparent existence of close ties between regulators, politicians and private bankers in the lead up to the crisis. An argument therefore can be made for raising concerns if not over state capture, then perhaps about the problem of the so-called `revolving door', in Ireland. As we know, in many democracies politicians and civil servants tasked with regulation were often reluctant to do so because of possible concerns over their future careers in the private sector, so that in office they had to `behave like future employees of the rich' (Kuper, 2014).

In this paper we investigate whether there exists the revolving door --- the movement of individuals between public and private sectors -- in Irish politics. The examples of high-profile politicians and civil servants in Ireland leaving the public sector for lucrative private employment opportunities exist, of which Peter Sutherland, a former Attorney General who served in various roles in the private sector in Ireland, such as in the *AIB* bank, and also internationally, in Goldman Sachs and *BP*, among others, is an example *par excellence*. Also, the former deputy governor of the Central Bank, Matthew Elderfield, recently left for a position in Lloyds Bank; and Fiona Muldoon, the head of its banking supervision became the CEO of *FBD* Insurance (Taylor, 2017). Former elected politicians also find themselves in various corporate roles. For example, the former taoiseach John Bruton

joined the *Europa Strategic Partners* private company.[1] In other words, anecdotal evidence exists that there are cases of the revolving door in Irish politics. At the same time, given what we know about the farming or teaching background of many Irish TDs, as well as occasional stories (possibly apocryphal) of former TDs frantically seeking employment following the 2011 election – it is also possible that high-profile cases are just that – anecdotal exceptions to the rule.

While we know a lot about electoral fortunes in Ireland and why TDs lose their seats (e.g., Marsh *et al.* 2017; Martin, 2014); short of O'Malley (2012)'s study of former taoisigh, we know surprisingly little about what happens to Irish politicians after office. We do not know whether there is a revolving door in Ireland and if there is, whether it is a recent phenomenon and whether ex-TDs from specific parties are more likely to turn to the corporate sector, *inter alia*. Therefore, a study of the post-office careers of TDs and cabinet ministers is long overdue. We address this gap by collecting systematic evidence on all TDs who left the *Dáil* from 1989-2016 after their term in office was terminated, a total of 333 former TDs. We find that close to 20 per cent are primarily retired. Over one quarter remains in politics (i.e., in *Seanad Éireann* and local councils); many of these individuals are in a holding pattern, bidding their time to return to the *Dáil* again. Five per cent are elected or appointed at the EU level. There are also those who are active in the media, non-profit sector, and academia.

We find that close to one third turn to the private sector overall. However, many of such ex-TDs merely return to their previous occupations as solicitors or small business owners. Still, there are eleven per cent who turn to the corporate sector, i.e., engage in consulting, lobbying or board membership. In other words,

[1] See http://www.europasp.com/our-team/john-bruton/, accessed 1 May 2017.

every one in ten of the former TDs is subject to the revolving door phenomenon. We find that the representatives of the two major parties, *Fianna Fáil* and *Fine Gael*, as well as of the Progressive Democrats, former cabinet ministers, and those with prior experience in business are more likely to have private sector jobs. For robustness, we compare the careers of former TDs with those of the top civil servants in government departments. We also find that the extent of the revolving door problem in Ireland is lower than in other democracies; we outline possible reasons behind the relative unattractiveness of private sector employment to former politicians.

In the next section we briefly discuss the politics of the revolving door in democracies. Next, we introduce the data and report our findings. Then we fit a statistical model and discuss results and implications.

2 The revolving door in politics

The ties between firms and politicians take many forms. Corporations seek to influence policy through political donations (e.g., McMenamin, 2012) and lobbying (e.g., Vaubel *et al*. 2011), among other things. Firms with connections to politicians tend to have higher stock valuations than otherwise (Faccio, 2006). Firms are not the only beneficiaries, as politicians can also receive tangible benefits. Studies exist that show how politicians gain monetary rewards from outside employment while in office, from so-called moonlighting (Gagliarducci *et al.* 2010). For instance, Geys and Mause (2013) report that 39 per cent of Irish TDs register outside income, often from the rental property sector. More generally, studies exist on the rewards of public office (Eggers and Hainmueller, 2009) and the incentive structures in both public and private sectors (e.g., Diermeier *et al.* 2005). Eggers and Hainmueller (2009) find that politicians benefit not only from outside interests but also after office, when they

move to the private sector. Likewise, firms gain in stock value when their previous employees assume governmental posts (Acemoglu *et al.,* 2013).

The revolving door, broadly defined, is the migration of individuals between government and business (Etzion and Davis, 2008, 157). In a more narrow sense, the revolving door pertains to situations where former public officials continue to work in sectors where they previously influenced policy (e.g., *Transparency International*, 2017, 4). In the Irish context, a former Minister of Justice taking a hypothetical position in a bio-tech firm, would be an example of the revolving door, broadly defined. While a former Minister of Finance joining the board of a major Irish bank, would constitute the revolving door, in a narrow sense.

While seeking private employment following politics is a common practice in many democracies, we lack knowledge about the extent of this practice in Ireland. As explained in the introduction, we therefore aim to contribute to this knowledge by mapping the post-office careers of former Irish TDs and ministers. We intend to examine the revolving door in the broader sense, as the movement of former politicians to the private sector in general, while also discussing several examples that may suggest evidence of a narrowly defined revolving door. In comparative literature, studies exist that explain the back and forth movement between government and business. In this paper, we particularly focus on the migration *from* politics. Similarly, studies exist that document and explain private sector careers of politicians in different countries, from various branches and levels of government: former legislators (Bertrand *et al.* 2014; Blanes i Vidal *et al.* 2012; Claessen and Bailer, 2016; Diermeier *et al.* 2005; Eggers and Hainmueller, 2009; Palmer and Schneer, 2016), former heads of state and government (Baturo and Mikhaylov, 2016; Schweizer, 2015), governmental staffers (Blanes i Vidal *et al.* 2012), cabinet

ministers (Etzion and Davis, 2008), governmental regulators (Cohen, 1986), MEPs (*Transparency International*, 2017), and EU commissioners (Vaubel *et al.* 2011). We contribute to this literature by explaining the phenomenon in Ireland.

We also contribute to the literature on lobbying and political connections in Ireland (e.g., McGrath, 2009; Murphy *et al.* 2011) and political corruption more generally (Murphy, 2006). On face value, private sector employment is not necessarily illegal, morally wrong or suspicious: provided former officials comply with the requirements on conflict of interest and cooling-off periods, there is nothing wrong with the practice *per se*. However, under certain circumstance it does raise legitimate questions over democratic accountability. It is entirely possible that the majority of democratic politicians, Irish TDs included, are generally public-spirited. But, if they believe that their tenure in office will be terminated, politicians may focus on skills and networks required for success in the private sector (Parker, 2008). Facing the so-called last-period problem, many politicians shirk the public interest and may change their behaviour with their future careers in mind (Parker *et al.* 2012). Even while in office, `they're looking ahead, and so every meeting with a rich person is a semi-conscious job interview' (Kuper, 2014). While shirking is a serious problem, the agency loss, when politicians turn to serve another principal apart from the electorate, is more serious still. In political after-life, former politicians may be rewarded with corporate board membership and lucrative employment opportunities for the services they rendered while in office. Even if politicians do not deviate from the public interest while in office, once hired by outside interests in retirement, such former politicians are particularly attractive to the firms bidding for procurement contracts (Goldman *et al.* 2009) or looking for access in general, particularly if former politicians' parties are still in government (Bertrand *et al.* 2014; Cohen, 1986).

In Ireland, McMenamin (2013) argues that there has been considerable potential for `reciprocal exchange', of both money and goods in return for brokerage services, between the business class and Irish politicians (*ibid.*, 35-36). These arrangements are aided by the easy accessibility of Irish TDs (O'Leary, 2011). Does this potential and the presence of such informal exchanges lead to strong business networks and private sector careers among former TDs, or not? The lack of studies about the revolving door in Ireland could arguably be explained by the relatively low rates of attrition at elections, until recently, and the stability of political careers in Ireland as a result. Irish politicians are fortunate to have a comparatively high incumbency return rate of 76.1 per cent (Matland and Studlar, 2004, 93). O'Malley (2006) highlights the professionalised nature of the Irish political elite with politics being the sole profession of many TDs. Also, the lack of prestigious political posts available outside of cabinet means that membership of government becomes the overriding goal of career politicians, to the detriment of other pursuits (O'Malley, 2006, 320). Former politicians therefore almost certainly would have preferred to remain current politicians: their private employment in retirement to a large extent is a by-product of losing the favours of the electorate.

Despite the historical incumbency advantage and political professionalization, the number of former TDs has increased dramatically due to the electoral collapse of *FF* in 2011; who went from 77 to 20 seats. Even in `normal' times however, as we explain in the data section below, Irish politics has always released its servants, either at their own volition when TDs did not run or at the will of the people, when they lost their seats. What happens to them in retirement? Because the collected sample of former civil servants is much smaller than that of the former TDs, the latter are the focus of our analyses. In the last, discussion section we turn to former Secretaries

Generals and Assistant Secretaries however.

3 The data: What the former TDs do?

The study into the revolving door entails the examination of what public officials do prior to their public service, and what they do following such service. From the literature we know a lot about prior careers of Irish TDs. Irish politicians embark on careers that prioritise large amounts of local council and community work (such as the GAA) over other forms of experience, before gaining entry into national politics (Cohen, 1973, 223-224). This need for a strong local presence as a form of political apprenticeship helps to explain the prevalence of farmers, teachers and self-employed among the TDs, as their relatively flexible working hours become an advantage when building their required local political profile.

In contrast to the information on prior careers and background that we could easily source from the *Oireachtas* directory and the *Irish Times* Guides to the *Dáil* and Seanad, there are fewer sources on what former TDs do once they are out of office. To assemble the data, we first counted the number of former TDs. We began from the full list of all Irish TDs from the 25th to 31st *Dáileanna*, those elected between 1987 and 2011; 1,661 TDs in total (Martin, 2014). We then accounted for TDs who served repeated *Dáil* terms, 449 unique individuals. We excluded those who died in office, or shortly after leaving office, and those who were returned to the 32nd *Dáil* in the 2016 election. Altogether, there are 333 former TDs who left the *Dáil* from 1989 to 2016. They are 57 years old on average, with a standard deviation of ten years. TDs who left in 1989 are the youngest, at 51 years old on average, and those who left in 2002 are the oldest, at an average of 60 years old. 14 per cent are women, 41 and 29 per cent are members of *FF* and *FG*, respectively. The number `released'

after each election ranges between 30 and 50 for all *Dáil* terms except, for 30th and 31st *Dáil* after which we count 83 and 72 former TDs (Marsh *et al.* 2017).

Equipped with the list of former TDs, we did a search for their occupations and careers after leaving office. We consulted the *Oireachtas* directory and whenever former TDs were appointed into the *Seanad* after leaving the *Dáil*, or elected to the European Parliament, we entered such occupations. We searched the *BoardEx* database that included details about corporate board members and senior executives across the world, and noted details about corporate board memberships of the former Irish politicians. We additionally consulted the former TDs' own profiles published on an online business-related social network, *LinkedIn*. We also searched the *Irish Times* and *Independent* archives by name, and consulted other national and regional media. We additionally recorded whether former TDs lost the election or if they did not run. For 21 individuals we lack the data on whether they retired pursued private or public career pursuits and we exclude them from the discussion below.

Figure 1 about here

Altogether, 56 individuals (18 per cent) are reportedly retired and are not active in other occupations. On average, these persons are also past the retirement age, at 66 years old. For the remainder we attempted to ascertain their predominant occupations following departure from the *Dáil*. 41 individuals (13 per cent), are appointed to the *Seanad*. They are relatively young, at 49 years old on average, and all but one of them ran and lost an election. In contrast, 39 per cent in the whole sample did not run in the first place. This suggests that members of the Seanad continue their political careers and given the chance, will return to the *Dáil*. In turn, 44 (14 per cent) are elected to local councils. We also include into this category few who take roles in party organisations.

We find that 15 individuals move to the European level as MEPs, but there were also a few were nominated to the EU Commission (e.g., Padraig Flynn) or the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (e.g., Des O'Malley). Four were appointed to the bench, such as Henry Abbott. 36 former TDs (12 per cent) are in the non-profit sector, in *quangos*, academia or active as media commentators.

The remainder are in different private sector occupations. There are 14 individuals who become barristers or solicitors, and 13 who turn to other professions, e.g., medicine. In turn, 36 (12 per cent) are in farming and small business, such as pharmacists or local shop owners, while 52 (17 per cent) are primarily associated with other private sector pursuits that we discuss in more detail below.

While the majority of former TDs engage in one predominant occupation, 15 per cent of individuals in the data had to be entered in two categories. We decided to avoid arbitrary assignment into one category when the former TDs clearly engaged in two pursuits at the same time, as for instance in the case of ex-TDs who are local council members and who are small business owners at the same time.

Figures 2 and 3 about here

Our primary interest is in the private sector and corporate employment. Figure 2 reveals what former TDs do in the private sector. In contrast to Figure 1, here we also add categories from their second career, if any. Therefore there are more observations included in various categories of the private sector in Figure 2 than in Figure 1. Altogether, 119 individuals have some kind of private sector connection. However, 27 of them are in farming, which in the context of the Irish economy should not raise any alarms over the revolving door. In turn, 36 former TDs remain the owners of small and medium businesses in retirement from politics. The majority of such individuals are also hardly examples of the revolving door, such as Peter Barry (exited in 1997),

the tea merchant, or Michael Moynihan (1992), the petrol station owner. However, many are recorded as having business interests and investments connected with property. Murphy *et al.* (2011) point out that the main Irish parties, and Fianna Fáil in particular, always had very close ties with the construction industry and property developers. In general, political ties and lobbying have long featured in Irish politics, with prominent public servants working in the lobbying industry in retirement (McGrath, 2009). We therefore include the category of small and medium business owners into general private sector category for future analyses.[2]

We also consider legal practice as one of the post-political careers. Government work is one of the most lucrative practices among legal professionals in Ireland. For example, the government and its various departments have been the main source of income for the top Irish law firm, Arthur Cox; which paradoxically advised both the Department of Finance and the major Irish bank that the department was investigating[3] (Phelan*, 2015*). This political access may be very important as not all services are subject to tender; for instance, the Revenue Commissioners routinely award lucrative legal services without competitive tenders (Cullen, 2012). In 2014 the Irish media reported that the legal firm where the Justice Minister at the time had previously been a partner, was one of the major recipients of government fees (Degan,

[2] The category of `CEO, chairman or company director' can also be aggregated together with `business owner'; we treat them separately due to an arguably more significant type of business the former are involved in, such as Ray MacSharry, the non executive director of *Irish Life and Permanent* or Dick Spring, director of several communications and finance companies.

[3] Similarly, many firms that audited Irish banks before the crash were later recruited to consult the government on restructuring the very banks they arguably had failed to audit earlier (Phelan, 2015). On the contract amounts, see Parliamentary Question No. 194 of 4 October 2011, Dáil Éireann Debate, *Vol. 755 No. 1, p. 198.*

2014). It is unknown if political access played a role, but it obviously cannot be excluded.

While a board membership is not always very lucrative in terms of compensation, it can be enormously rewarding indirectly, through access (Webb, 2014). Ten per cent of ex-TDs in the private sector sit on corporate boards of various companies in our data. The percentage can be under-estimated since former politicians are not required to register their interests. From the *BoardEx* data we know that the former Health Minister, Mary Harney, joined the boards of health technology firms, *Cara Health* and *Ward Biotech*. One of the Irish dailies further reported that she also joined the board of *Euro Insurances* company, and that `while in office, Ms Harney led the setting up of the Personal Injuries Assessment Board that cuts insurance companies' costs.' (Burke, 2012). Other former politicians are listed as corporate board members including John Bruton, Charlie McCreevy, Alan Dukes and Albert Reynolds, among others. Finally, 13 individuals are in consulting or lobbying business, such as Lucinda Creighton or Noel Dempsey. As we know from the literature, lobbying in Ireland is important and many former public servants pursue careers in that area (e.g., McGrath, 2009).

While we are confident that selected individuals designated into the private sector category have pursued business activities of various kinds, the lines between the subtypes of business careers may be arbitrary. Several can be categorized as either a corporate board member, or in consulting business. For instance, the abovementioned Mary Harney has also been known to work in consulting.[4] Conor Lenihan, Vice President of *Skolkovo Innovation Centre*, was also on corporate boards,

[4] http://www.hanovercomms.com/our-people/senior-advisers/mary-harney/ (accessed 3 May 2017).

according to our data. Therefore, in the analyses that follow, we rely on the overall private sector, or corporate employment.

How many former Irish TDs end up in the private sector employment or pursuing significant business interests in retirement? Based on the data, we now know that altogether 119 former TDs, or 36 per cent of all, have some kind of private sector occupation or significant ties. Before we raise any alarms over the magnitude of the revolving door in Ireland we need to underline that the definition of private sector occupation above includes not only CEOs, chairpersons, company directors, corporate board members, individuals working in consulting or even lobbying. It also includes small and medium-size business owners, as well as the private legal professions. Therefore it is unlikely that farmers or small business owners, such as the owners of petrol stations or garages, will be able to trade their political connections for personal benefit.

Instead, we turn to primarily corporate employment by limiting to those who sit on corporate boards, work as CEOs or company directors, engaged in lobbying and consulting business. There are eleven per cent or 38 individuals who are in corporate employment. Excluding primarily retired, the percentage of such `corporate' former TDs is 15 per cent. In other words, we estimate that about one in ten of all ex-TDs, or one in every seven excluding fully retired, turn to a corporate career.

Figure 3 plots the number of former TDs and the types of their occupations over time. It excludes those who returned to farming from the private sector category. After all elections, except 2011, a higher number of former TDs remained in politics than turned to the private sector; 15 versus 11 on average. Only following 2011 election when the largest party in Ireland, *FF*, suffered its largest defeat and the *Seanad* could not accommodate the number of losing TDs, did the number in the

private sector exceeds those in the *Seanad* or that are elected to local councils by more than twice.

4 Empirical analyses

What factors explain the likelihood of post-office business or corporate careers? In this section we examine the revolving door while accounting for covariates. From the literature we know that right-of-centre politicians are generally more likely to pursue business careers while left-leaning actors are generally more reluctant whether because they are more committed to public service or because they lack skills that the private sector seeks. For example, in the UK politics, Eggers and Hainmueller (2009) found that parliamentary careers increased the total personal wealth when former Conservative politicians --- but not Labour --- were recruited by the private sector (ibid., 514). Figure 4 displays the details of post-office employment of former TDs from the four largest parties: 136 of FF, 96 of FG, 52 Labour and 20 PDs. Altogether, 50 or 37 per cent of former FF TDs turn to all kinds of private sector pursuits including farming. Only three per cent are in the legal profession. In turn, 20 or 21 per cent of former FG TDs are in the private sector, and 5 per cent in legal profession. Almost no former Labour TDs turn to the private sector, with only three employed as barristers or solicitors.[5] Ten former PD politicians, or half among ex-TDs from this party, appear to engage in some sort of private sector activity but there are only 20 individuals from which to draw significant conclusions.

Figure 4 about here

[5] We were unable to categorize 25 per cent of the former Labour TDs, mainly due to the lack of data on those who exited in 2016.

The state of individual health is an obvious factor behind retirement. Because we do not have reliable data on the health of former TDs, we include their age at the time of leaving office. The assumption is that all things being equal, older individuals will have less stamina to take the stress of yet another job after the *Dáil*, and are more likely to retire from public and private activities as a result. Also, if an individual is already a career politician and/or intends to remain in politics for life, such politicians may regard the seat loss as temporary setback. Such individuals will be more likely to remain in politics as opposed to looking for a change in career. Therefore, to account for career politicians, we include *Years in the Dáil* in the estimations that follow. In contrast, unpopular politicians who expect electoral loss and those who decide to retire from politics in advance may have more time to look for alternative occupations while still in office and to land on their feet when they leave. We therefore include *Did not run* taking the value of one when an individual did not run. We also include *Vote share* in previous election as a proxy for electoral popularity. Our expectation is that *Years in the Dáil* and *Vote share* will be associated with a lower likelihood of private sector career, while *Did not run* – with a higher likelihood.

Because former politicians may capitalise on the ability to leverage their continuing political access (e.g., Bertrand *et al.* 2014), we include the variable that takes the value of one if the party of a former TD remains in government during the term following the departure of that TD.[6] We also include an indicator for whether a former TD was a cabinet minister in the past. To account for prior background and experience we include prior *Legal career*, as well as prior *Business career*. The

[6] Because in the 27th Dáil the first FF-Labour coalition preceded the second, `Rainbow' coalition, we account for FF and Labour for ex-TDs who exited in 1992.

explanatory variables are collected by the authors from the *Oireachtas* directory[7] and the *Irish Times Guides to the Dáil and Seanad* (various years) while *Vote share* is sourced from Martin (2014). We also include dummy variables for four parties as discussed earlier. The omitted party category encompasses Independents and smaller parties such as the Greens, *Sein Féin*, IFF, WP, and others. We expect that the representatives of two major right-of-centre parties, as well as the economically liberal PDs, will be more likely to pursue private sector occupations.

Because the dependent variable is binary --- whether ex-TDs are engaged in private sector, we fit the probit regression model, with cluster-robust standard errors to account for possible intragroup (the *Dáil* term) correlation. While we cannot fit the fixed-effects specification because of the time-invariant variables, we can however include additional time period dummy variables to account for the likelihood of private careers affected by specific elections, such as the watershed election of 2011.

Table 1 includes the results of probit regression estimation. In columns 1--3 we fit the model where the dependent variable takes the value of one when a former TD pursued any kind of private sector career, including that of solicitors and barristers but excluding that of farming. In columns 4-6 the dependent variable is based on a narrow definition of private sector employment and takes the value of when individuals are known to sit on corporate boards, work as CEOs or company directors, in lobbying and consulting business.

All model specifications compare private sector or corporate employment with other active pursuits and therefore exclude those who are primarily retired. The only exception is model 1 that contrasts business careers with all former TDs, even if they

[7] Historical TDs, http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/tdssenators/tds/ (accessed 31 July 2016).

retire, for robustness. In other words, the first specification is fitted on the largest sample of all former TDs; where business pursuits are compared versus everything else. Not surprisingly, because the sample in the first model includes those who are fully retired, the negative coefficient on *Age at exit* is statistically significant. Former *FF* TDs, cabinet ministers, as well as those with *Legal* and *Business* background are more likely to pursue private sector careers in retirement. The results displayed in columns 2 and 3 --- both excluding fully retired and with the addition of time period dummies in 3 --- are very similar to those in column 1.

Models 4—6 explain corporate occupations. Because additional background and career traits may be relevant for corporate employment, here we include three additional variables: whether a former TD has served as *Tánaiste* or minister of finance in the past, whether they came from greater Dublin constituencies, and their college education. Dublin-based individuals may have connections and find it easier to locate employment in a corporate sector in the capital city, in contrast to TDs from other regions. We also hypothesize that prestigious college may bestow individuals not with better education as such but instead it may provide them with an important network that will enable such individuals to succeed in public and private sectors alike. Top college education is coded 1 if an individual graduated from the Trinity College (25 TDs), UCD (69), Queens (2), as well as from Oxford (e.g., Martin Mansergh) or Harvard (e.g., Michael Woods).[8]

Table 1 about here

Figure 5 about here

[8] It is possible that necessary connections are acquired prior to the university, in elite private schools. See Lynch (2014) on the dominance of privately educated men and women in Irish public life. Future studies may investigate the value of private education and networks.

As we see from Table 1, while all three additional variables have the correct direction of effects, only the coefficient on *Tánaiste* or Finance is borderline significant at the 0.1 level. Former *FF* and cabinet ministers, and former TDs with business backgrounds are more likely to turn to the corporate sector, as in earlier specifications. In contrast to previous specification about private sector in general, it appears that alongside *FF*, also *FG* and *PD* members are equally attracted to corporate careers. Admittedly, the observed effect may be driven by the fact that FF and FG are the parties of government, so it is their experience in government and not their partisanship that can play the role. Still, both partisan and cabinet coefficients are independently statistically significant. Former TDs who decide to depart from politics are more likely to turn to the corporate employment than those who run for office and lose. This result may indicate that former TDs who run and lose intend to remain in politics. Finally, for robustness, model 6 excludes former TDs who exited after February 2016 election. It is conceivable that at the moment of writing we lack reliable data as former politicians have not settled yet and observations that are categorised as `primarily, retired' for 2016 are not correct. The additional test for robustness does not alter the results, however.

The probit specifications are nonlinear and are difficult to interpret in substantive terms. Therefore, Figure 5 visualises the marginal effects on the probability of observing former legislators in the corporate sector, based on Model 5. The horizontal axis displays the change in the probability of the dependent variable when the independent variable increases by one unit, holding other variables at their means. The predicted probability of a corporate career for former TDs from PD, FF and FG parties respectively is 28, 18 and 16 per cent higher than that for independents or smaller parties' TDs. The individuals who decide to step down and do not run for

their seats have a 12 per cent higher likelihood of private sector employment while the former cabinet ministers have 15 per cent higher probability. Overall, the results confirm those from the descriptive statistics discussed earlier.

5 Comparisons with Irish Civil Servants and Politicians from Other Countries

Are the reported percentages on post-office corporate employment in Ireland large or small in a comparative context? In this section we compare Irish politicians with top civil servants, as well as with their peers in other democracies, and briefly discuss the findings.

The literature suggests that revolving door is likely to be present not only among elected officials but also among former public servants (McGrath, 2009). While a detailed study is beyond the scope of this paper, for validation we examined the top echelon of the civil service. Under the Freedom of Information act we requested information about all former Secretaries Generals and Assistant Secretaries from all government departments. Similar to other state bureaucracies, the Irish civil service has a hierarchy among both its workers and its departments (Horton 2006, 40). In broad terms, at the top of the managerial scale are Secretary Generals and Assistant Secretaries.[9] The senior managers (known as Principal Officers) report to them and they then manage the Executive Officers, who represent the layer of middle management. Figure 6 displays the data from the departments that complied with our request.[10]

[9]The pay and pension benefits for senior secretaries are comparable to that of ministers, with the gross pay from €122,313--190,233 annually as of April 2017 (*IMPACT*, 2017).

[10]The data were supplied through each department's HR office. Unsuccessful requests resulted from low staffing levels within HR or, as in the case of the Department of

Figure 6 about here

Altogether, we assembled the data on 130 former officials. Excluding 45 officials for whom we lack data and those who appear to be primarily retired, we find that 33 individuals (25 per cent) move to work in other departments, i.e., they remain in the civil service. Similarly to the elected officials, former public servants can be found at the European level, such as Kevin Cardiff of the department of Finance who moved to the European Court of Auditors. Nine individuals are engaged in non-profit or academic roles, such as Joseph Robins (Health) who pursued research as a social historian. In turn, 11 per cent are retired but they are also appointed to governmental boards or government-organized NGOs (GONGOs), such as Pascal Scanlan (OPW) who became the chairman of the National Parks and Monuments board. Finally, 24, or 18 per cent --- or 29 per cent if we exclude fully retired --- are in business. For example, John Dennehy who left the department of Education to become the director at a building contractor company, *Sammon Group*, known for bidding for school construction while Julie O'Neill of Transport joined the board of Ryanair, among other things. Also, a Secretary General of an established and powerful department like Finance is arguably regarded as more influential than that of a new department with a

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Arts, frequent structural/name changes resulting in poor access to archived information and a lack of institutional memory within the newly created department. The data cover Departments of Public Expenditure and Reform (from 2011), Health (1990), Finance (1987), Transport (including Transport and Tourism, Tourism and Sport) (1990), Public Enterprise (2009), Defence (1987), Taoiseach (1993), Justice (1987), Education (1989), Social Protection (2016), Office of the Attorney General (2006), Office of President (1990). The data are not complete as Departments of Arts, Gaeltacht and Hertitage, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, Revenue and Communications did not provide the information.

smaller budget, such as the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (Dooney 1976, 39-40). The extra responsibility makes senior managers from bigger departments more attractive to the private sector; so that their Secretaries General, such as Pádraig Ó hÚiginn, can seamlessly move from a 13 year-career in the Department of Taoiseach to directorship of *ESAT Telecom*.

In summary, our interpretation is that the revolving door clearly exists at the level of the Irish civil service leadership. We obviously cannot extrapolate to lower ranks and further research is required. However, it appears that almost every third former Secretary General and Assistant Secretary, excluding those who retire fully, pursues some kind of private employment. Furthermore, the profile of firms that employ ex-civil servants is higher than those that employ former politicians. None of the former elected officials appears to be attractive enough to become director of a major bank such as *Citybank Europe* where the former official in Finance and CBI governor, Maurice Doyle, found employment.

How different are former TDs in comparative context, for example, is 11 per cent in the corporate sector, or every seventh excluding fully retired, `normal'? Claessen and Bailer (2016) report that 18 per cent of former MPs in Germany and 24 per cent of those in the Netherlands find attractive private sector after their parliamentary careers.[11] The private employment of ex-politicians in the USA is more widespread: Palmer and Schneer (2016) estimate that from 1992 almost 20 per cent of former senators have worked in lobbying industry while 47 per cent were known to sit on at least one company board, earning around USD 0.5 million on average per year in 2011. Similarly, among House members, 24 per cent are in legal practice and 20

[11] Their reported percentages are apparently to those in the private sector (59 per cent of all), making into 11 and 14 per cent in the corporate sector to total, much closer to the Irish figures herein.

per cent are in business (Herrick and Nixon, 1996, 491). Indeed, in the US, public service for many elected and appointed officials is an important steppingstone to join the corporate elite (Etzion and Davis, 2008). What about the UK? Because former MPs are not subject to disclosure requirements, Eggers and Hainmüller (2009) only look at outside employment of British MPs while in office and find that around half of Conservative MPs sit on corporate boards (*ibid.,* 517). In the EU, 30 per cent of former MEPs and over 50 per cent of former Commissioners become lobbyists in retirement (*Transparency International*, 2017).

In summary therefore, when we place Irish TDs in context, 11 per cent in the corporate sector is rather low. It is somewhat lower than the figures for Germany and the Netherlands, and four or five times lower than in the United States and probably in the UK.[12] While the aim of this paper was to map the phenomenon of the revolving door, further research is required to fully understand the factors behind it, possibly employing the survey of the public, firms, or parliamentarians themselves. Therefore, here we only suggest a few likely factors that may explain the relative unattractiveness of private sector employment to ex-politicians in Ireland.

First, we cannot exclude that the profile, skills and experience of many Irish TDs are not attractive enough for firms competing for talent. O'Leary has found that TDs have a heavy constituency caseload, with voter expectations pushing TDs to act as `middle men' for expediting access to state services and social media creating the

[12] Still, while percentage estimates may suggest that the Irish political system is less connected to the corporate sector than in larger countries, it is possible that the Irish corporate sector is more connected to politics than in bigger countries. To see this, the back-of-the-envelop calculation produces the ratio of 1.2 ex-TD in corporate sector per election per million of population in contrast to only 0.2 ex-politicians per election per million in Germany, based on figures from Claessen and Bailer (2016).

expectation of near immediate response times to constituent queries (O'Leary, 2011, 341-342). Once in the *Dáil*, this large constituency workload may act as a barrier to TDs' ability to develop the networks and policy expertise required by firms, in contrast to their peers in other countries.

Second, given the dominance of construction and property-developing sector in Ireland, political connections may be particularly important at the local rather than national level. Indeed, local planning authorities have significant autonomy in implementing the national Development Plan. The Flood/Mahon Tribunal into such planning decisions revealed how rezoning in Dublin could have been influenced through payments to local officials (Murphy, 2000, 193; Murphy, 2006, 312-13). These revelations have led to a reduction, but not elimination, of the planning discretion enjoyed by local officials (*Mahon* 2012, 2517-19). This suggests it is conceivable that firms are likely to find a more enthusiastic and receptive hearing at the more informal, local level.

Third, the paramount role of FDI in the Irish open economy may reduce demand for revolving door from the corporate sector. Indeed, several large U.S. companies that dominate the Irish corporate sector are apparently so venerated by the political elite, that such firms may take political access as axiomatic so there is no need to employ former politicians. Furthermore, because such firms are all foreign, they may want to avoid appearing to reward former politicians through employment.[13]

However, another, simpler reason may be present as well. In the study of business careers of former political leaders, Baturo and Mikhaylov (2016) argued that the private sector was more attractive when there was a high salary differential between public and private sectors. Likewise, in the UK MPs may be much more

[13] We would like to thank [anonymised for review] for this argument.

motivated to seek private employment because `MPs earn salaries that are considered modest relative to their counterparts in other countries and in comparable professions' (Eggers and Hainmüller, 2009, 515). The generous pay of TDs, currently set at a basic rate of €89,965 that excludes various extras (*Oireachtas*, 2017); and their considerable pension provision may arguably reduce both the motivation and inclination for private sector careers among former parliamentarians, in comparison to their `poorer' peers in other countries.

However, all TDs elected after April 2004 are not to receive a state pension until they reach the retirement age of 67. A recent interview with two Labour TDs, Joanna Tuffy and Michael McNamara, who both lost their seats in 2016, has highlighted the financial pressures of their job loss and the damage done to the progress of their previous law careers caused by fulltime politics (Devine, 2016). It is entirely conceivable that these new financial incentives may push former TDs in the future to leverage their political experience into a more business orientated career path after office, making Irish ex-politicians more like their private sector-oriented peers in the EU.

6 Conclusions

Is there a revolving door problem in Irish politics? Yes and no. We examined the revolving door in a broad sense, as a general migration of individuals from public to private sector. We conclude that eleven per cent of ex-TDs move to corporate employment, however, the figure is much lower than those observed in other democracies. The majority of former Irish TDs typically do not pursue corporate employment and either retire or return to their previous occupations in farming, small business or the professions. Not so former cabinet ministers. Almost one third sit on

corporate boards or get employment in consulting industry. We also find that former top officials in key government departments exhibit similar patterns of behaviour as their political masters, former cabinet ministers. If there are grounds for concern about the revolving door problem, further research is required about the employment of former ministers and civil servants. Admittedly, our simple research design tasked with uncovering the general pattern is unable to answer more probing questions. We cannot answer whether former politicians do capitalise on their political connections and are rewarded with jobs in firms that had benefited from policies implemented by these politicians while in office. In other words, an investigation of the revolving door in a narrow sense, as the movement of personnel into business sectors previously regulated by these politicians, is required. Scholars may investigate whether individuals connected to deregulation or privatization of particular enterprises are associated with firms that benefited from such policies and may conduct network analyses of ties between individuals in governmental departments, private companies, and elected officials.

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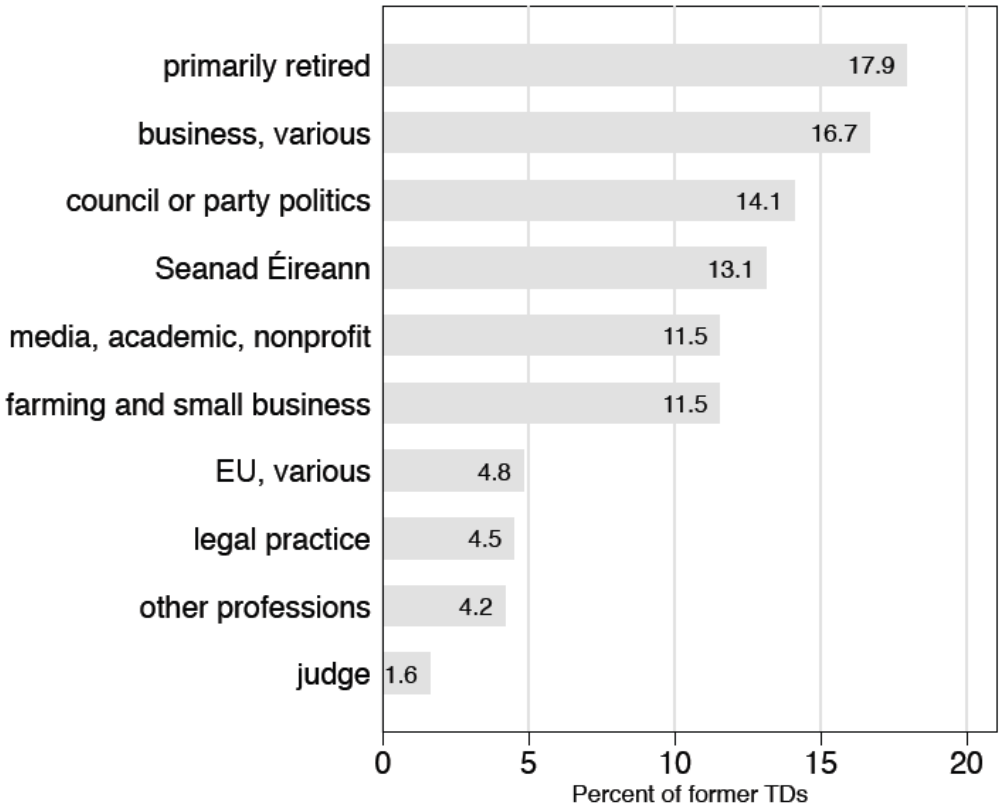
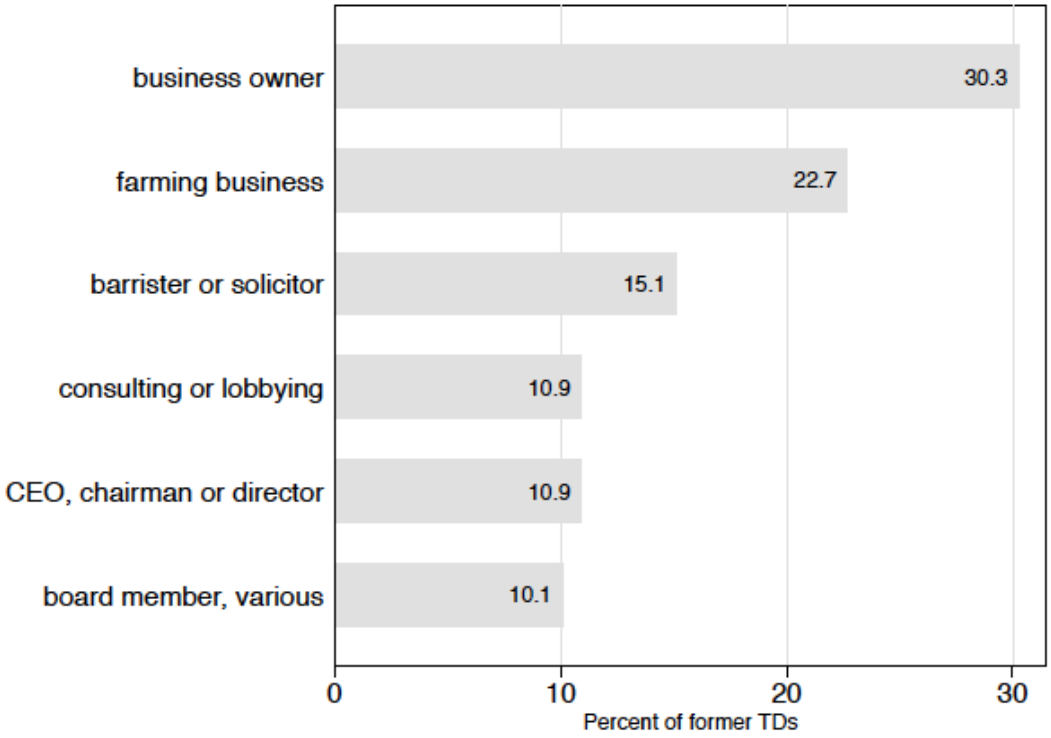
Figure 1: What Former TDs Do After Leaving the *Dáil*?



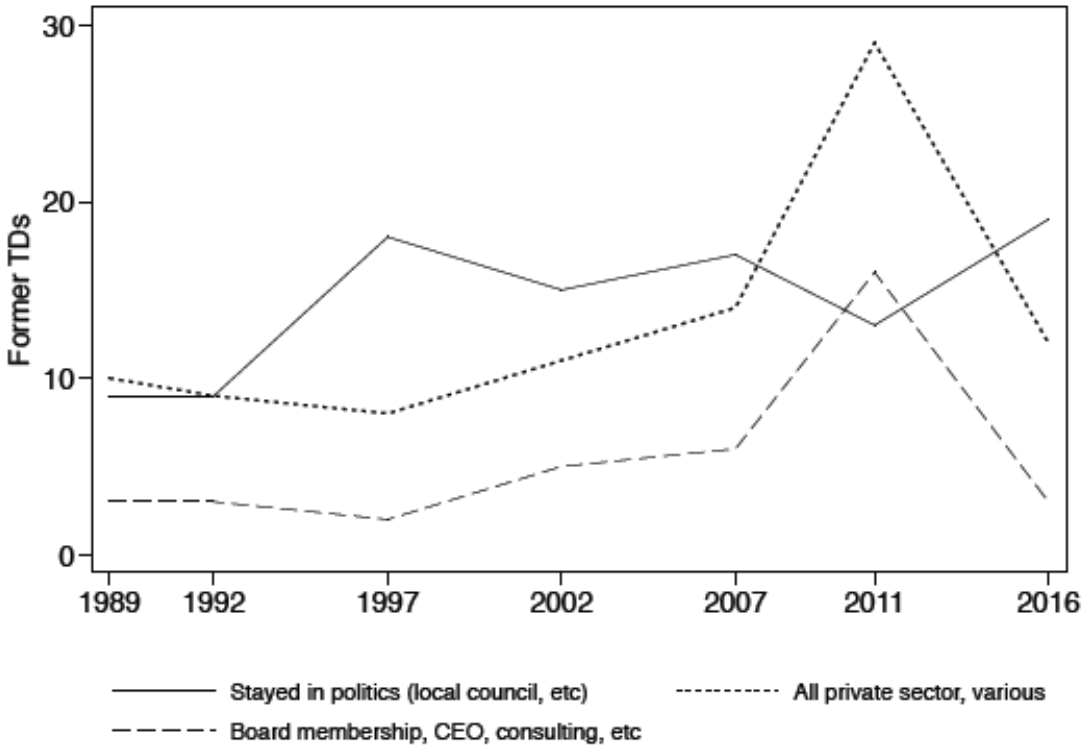
Note: The data include former TDs from 1989-2016. Percentages reported are to the total number of former TDs excluding missing observations.

Figure 2: Business and Other Private Sector Occupations of former TDs



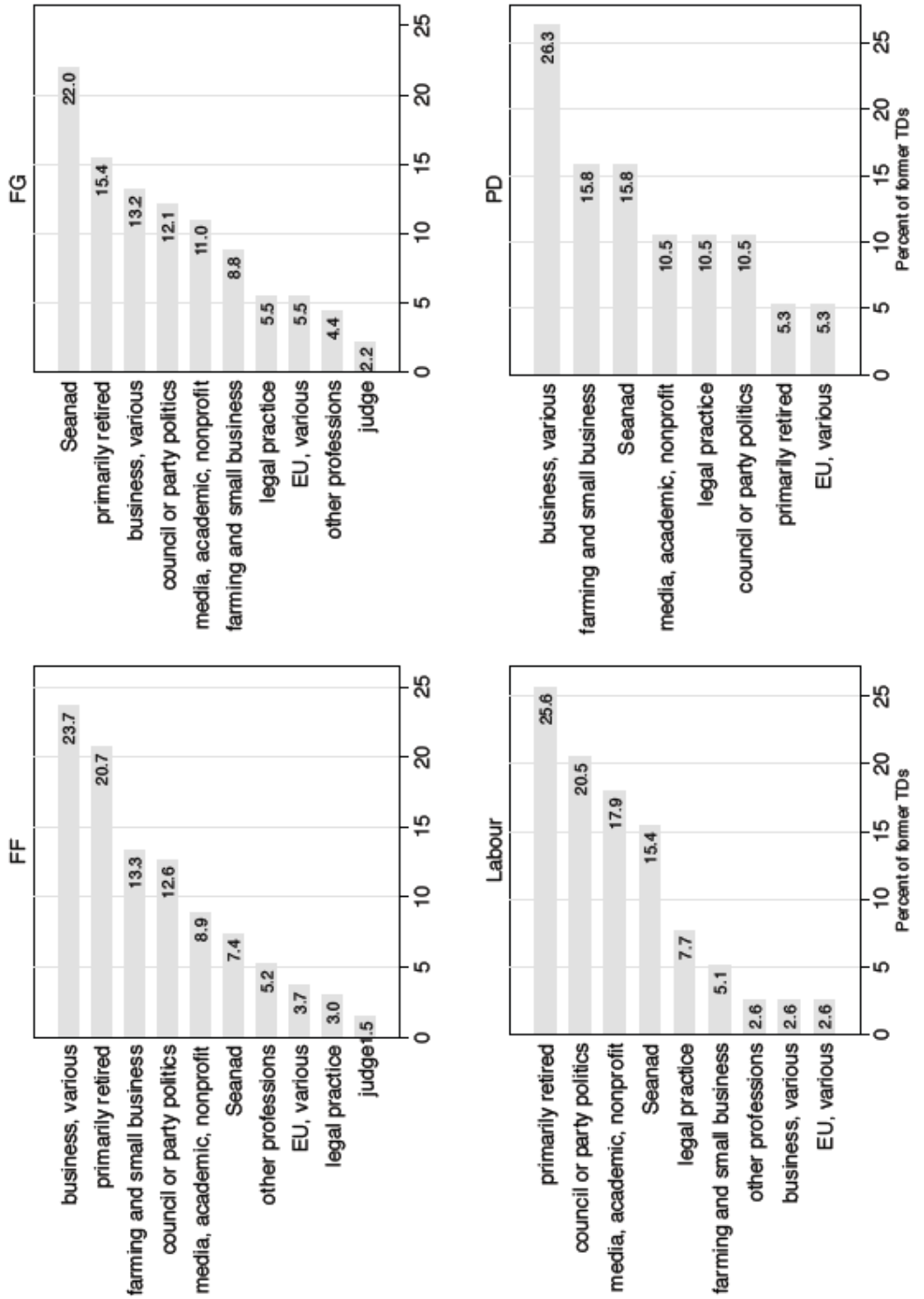
Note: Percentages in each category are to the total number of former TDs in the private sector, as explained in text.

Figure 3: Business and Political Careers of former TDs, 1989--2016



Note: The number of former TDs is reported. `Board membership, CEO, consulting' is a sub-category of `all private sector, various' category, as explained in text.

Figure 4: Former TDs by Political Party



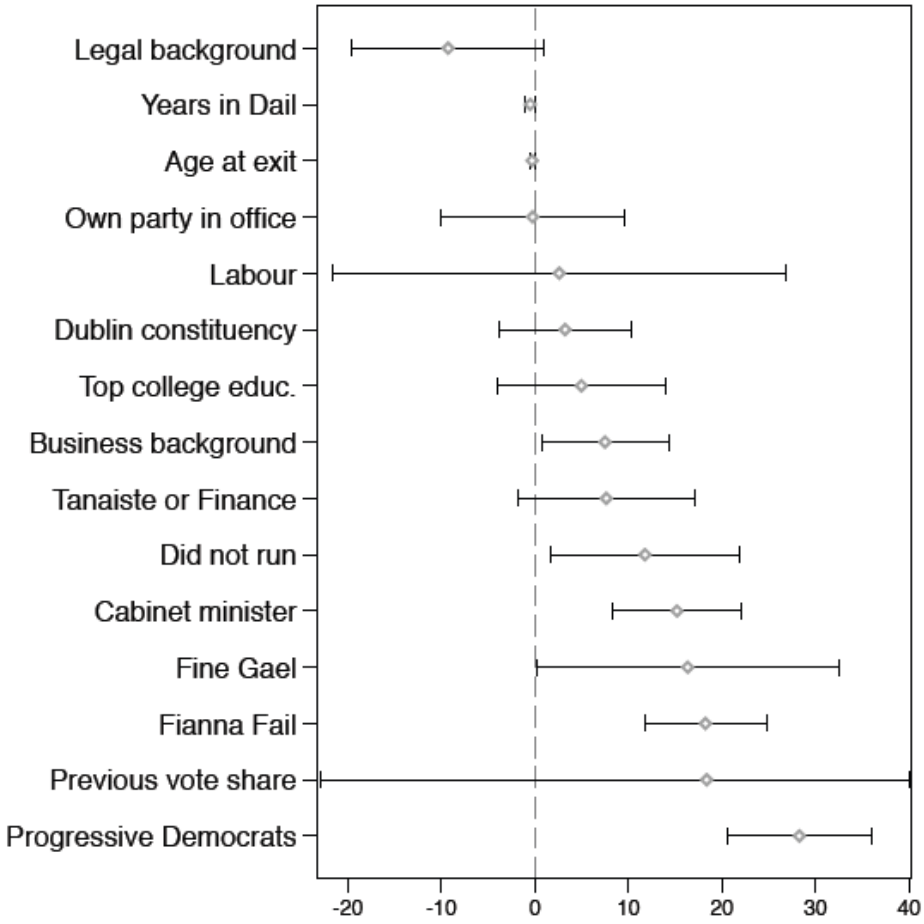
Note: Percentages in each category are to the total number of former TDs per party, excluding observations with missing data.

Table 1: Business Careers of former TDs

	All private sector			*Corporate sector*		
	1:	**2:**	**3:**	**4:**	**5:**	**6:**
Age at exit	-0.023**	-0.013	-0.013+	-0.019**	-0.021**	-0.022**
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.010)
Fianna Fáil	0.345**	0.629**	0.671**	1.332***	1.293***	1.340***
	(0.149)	(0.206)	(0.224)	(0.219)	(0.169)	(0.219)
Fine Gael	-0.047	0.110	0.094	1.026**	1.158**	1.004+
	(0.205)	(0.272)	(0.345)	(0.463)	(0.526)	(0.593)
Labour	-0.606	-0.338	-0.324	-0.067	0.184	0.691
	(0.378)	(0.433)	(0.521)	(0.676)	(0.867)	(0.893)
Progressive Democrats	0.311+	0.513+	0.563**	1.657***	2.004***	2.126***
	(0.186)	(0.274)	(0.252)	(0.207)	(0.286)	(0.430)
Previous vote share	1.103	0.613	0.501	1.324	1.301	0.198
	(1.439)	(1.488)	(1.652)	(2.396)	(2.817)	(2.665)
Did not run	0.091	0.425+	0.458+	0.755**	0.835**	1.102**
	(0.183)	(0.242)	(0.267)	(0.302)	(0.342)	(0.386)
Years in the *Dáil*	-0.018	-0.026	-0.024	-0.033**	-0.035+	-0.035+
	(0.015)	(0.018)	(0.019)	(0.017)	(0.019)	(0.021)
Own party in office	-0.200	-0.290	-0.343	-0.335	-0.018	-0.248
	(0.162)	(0.200)	(0.289)	(0.206)	(0.356)	(0.338)
Cabinet minister	0.738***	0.762***	0.748***	0.965***	1.076***	1.042***
	(0.216)	(0.179)	(0.182)	(0.275)	(0.266)	(0.282)
Business background	0.741***	1.061***	1.055***	0.598**	0.531**	0.378
	(0.207)	(0.189)	(0.193)	(0.257)	(0.256)	(0.269)
Legal background	1.043**	0.940**	0.920**	-0.541+	-0.658+	-1.103**
	(0.374)	(0.370)	(0.379)	(0.317)	(0.373)	(0.371)
Tanaiste or Finance	-	-	-	0.613+	0.541	0.728+
				(0.368)	(0.340)	(0.388)
Dublin constituency	-	-	-	0.221	0.229	0.128
				(0.217)	(0.249)	(0.259)
Top college educ.	-	-	-	0.366	0.352	0.332
				(0.295)	(0.332)	(0.390)
Constant	0.218	-0.293	-0.216	-1.606**	-1.786**	-1.138
	(0.470)	(0.530)	(0.643)	(0.509)	(0.667)	(0.718)
Time period dummies	-	-	yes	-	yes	yes
N	328	255	255	255	255	215
Log-likelihood	-162.021	-137.039	-136.347	-80.226	-77.332	-66.251
r^2	0.17	0.18	0.18	0.24	0.27	0.29

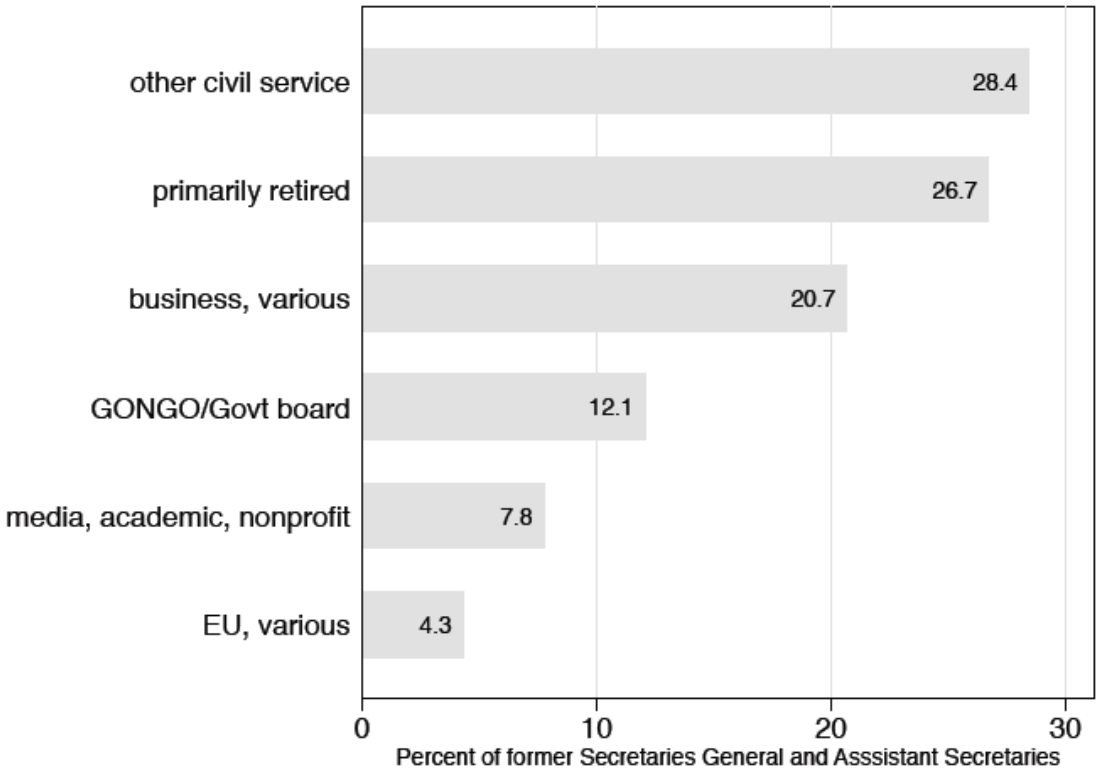
Note: Probit regression models with cluster-robust (*Dáil* term) errors. Model 1 includes all former TDs, 2-6 exclude those who are primarily retired. Model 6 excluded those who exited in 2016. The Greens, Independents and several smaller parties are the omitted party category.

Figure 5: The Substantive Effects of Predictors on Business Careers



Note: Estimated following Model 5, Table 1. Time period dummies are estimated but omitted from the figure. The confidence interval for *Previous vote share* extends beyond the horizontal scale and it is truncated for the ease of presentation. Predictors with CIs not crossing the zero-line are statistically significant at 0.05 level.

Figure 6: What Former Top Public Servants Do?



Note: Percentages are to total number of public servants in the sample excluding those still in office in 2017 and missing observations.