

**Political marketing in Ireland:
smoke and mirrors or real substance?**

**An exploration of the potential use of marketing
techniques on the voting intentions
of first time voters in the forthcoming General Election**

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Declaration

The following is a declaration that all research undertaken for this project was conducted entirely by me without the help of any outside partners. All the sources of information are referenced clearly in the bibliography section of this thesis.

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Abstract

This thesis provides an investigation of the phenomena political marketing and seeks to uncover its utilisation among political parties in Ireland. The research question is “Political marketing in Ireland: smoke and mirrors or real substance? An exploration of the potential use of marketing techniques on the voting intentions of first time voters in the forthcoming General Election in Ireland”. The research is aimed at determining whether or not political marketing can influence first time voter’s intentions in the forthcoming General Election in Ireland. This study focuses on the Irish political and electoral system. A combination of primary and secondary research approaches are deployed. Secondary research approaches incorporated a global exploration of marketing *per se* while primary research strategies focus on political parties, campaigning groups and first time General Election voters in Ireland. Although marketing has received some criticism for its validity in the political domain, it is very clear from this study that its potential is very much recognised by the main political actors in Ireland. Furthermore, primary research took place in the form of in-depth interviews with the key personnel of the Irish political parties including the Green party, Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and the Labour party. Further primary research included an in-depth interview with local Roscommon county councillor Orla Leyden to establish whether there is a differentiation between political marketing at a national and local level. The author also interviewed two local Roscommon TDs Denis Naughten and Frank Feighan.

Also, for the purposes of generating an appropriately constructed questionnaire, two focus groups comprised of first time General Election voters were held in the youth development centre in Roscommon.

The second part of the research involved the study of the *political consumer* in this case first time voters. This aspect of the research process involved compiling a questionnaire and distributing this among a variety of samples of voters. Questionnaires were initially (as a pilot study) distributed to young people at the local youth club in Roscommon town. Following this, a second round of questionnaires was administered to youth development centres in Roscommon and Sligo. Additionally, use was made of online survey techniques wherein questionnaires completed electronically were evaluated. The final samples were administered to Young Fine Gael and Young Fianna Fail. The author felt that the five samples chosen would incorporate a holistic view of voter’s perceptions in the “first time voter’s category”. The reason for targeting these organisations was because members were of the age 16-21. The five samples chosen incorporated young people of 16-21 therefore first time voters in any future General Election due to be held on or before May 2012.

It is interesting to note that the apparent rise in political marketing techniques through social media outlets is frowned upon by the youth of today. The main findings originating from the study are that the question of young people’s apathy is overstated. The author also noted that social media effectiveness as a marketing tool is unclear, it was also noted that there is no significant differentiation between the main political parties interviewed Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour party, however the Green party in particular are noted as representing the environment. In general the main political parties in Ireland use the same marketing techniques to generate the desired votes.

The researcher concluded that local representatives target first time voters in the same way as the political party dictate.

List of tables

Table 1.1	Interest in politics	82
Table 1.2	Knowledge of politics	83
Table 1.3	Issues in politics for first time voters	84
Table 1.4	Lack of charisma in politics	85
Table 1.5	Gender	86
Table 1.6	Social Media	87
Table 1.7	Characteristics desired of politicians	88
Table 1.8	Party policy V personality	89
Table 1.9	Will young people vote in next election?	90

Table of Contents

1.0 Chapter One: Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction	2
1.2 Research Topic:.....	2
1.3 Research objectives:	2
1.4 Chapterization summary	3
2.0 Chapter Two: Emergence and Evolution of Political marketing	5
2.1 Introduction	5
2.2 Evolution of marketing.....	6
2.3 Political marketing background	6
2.4 Political advertising and the demonstration of market orientation	7
2.4.1 Has political marketing been over marketed?	8
2.4.2 A comparative analysis of political and commercial marketing	8
2.4.3 Arguments for and against political marketing	9
2.5 Conclusion	9
3.0 Chapter Three: Issues in politics today	10
3.1 Introduction	10
3.2 Political issues in Ireland today.....	11
3.3 Society in Ireland	11
3.3.1 Political Parties and Irish society.....	13
3.4. Party leaders	13
3.4.1 Candidates versus parties.....	13
3.4.2 Determinants of party support	14
3.5 Conclusion.....	15
4.0 Chapter Four: Political marketing defined	16
4.1 Introduction	16
4.2 Political marketing: the evidence	17
4.3 Importance of web in political marketing	17
4.3.1 US political party's use of web in elections	18

4.4 Current issues facing modern politics	18
4.4.1 Conclusion	19
5.0 Chapter Five: Research methodology	20
5.1 Introduction	20
5.1.1 Research question:.....	21
5.1.2 Research defined	21
5.1.3 Methodology defined.....	21
5.2 Research Methodology.....	21
5.2.1 Exploratory research.....	22
5.2.2 Descriptive research	22
5.3 Research design.....	22
5.3.1 Research instrument: personal interview.....	22
5.3.2 Secondary research	23
5.3.3 Primary research	23
5.3.4 Phase one	23
5.3.5 Research design of phase one.....	23
5.3.6 Research instrument: semi structured interview.....	23
5.3.7 Sampling.....	24
5.3.8 Format.....	24
5.4 Choice of research	25
5.4.2 Strengths of qualitative research methods:.....	26
5.4.3 Weaknesses of qualitative research methods:	26
5.4.3 Advantages of using the interview method	26
5.4.4 Limitations of interviews.....	26
5.4.5 Types of interviews	27
5.4.6 Structured interviews.....	27
5.4.7 Unstructured interviews.....	27
5.4.8 Developing questions	27
5.4.9 Research instrument: questionnaire.....	28
5.4.10 Limitations of research	28
5.4.11 Conclusion.....	29
6.0 Chapter Six: Political marketing in action in Ireland	30

6.1 Introduction	30
6.2 The Green party.....	31
6.2.1 Marketing defined.....	31
6.2.2 Marketing techniques	31
6.2.3 Values of political marketing	31
6.2.4 Memorable political marketing campaigns	32
6.2.5 Voters.....	32
6.2.6 Youth vote declining:	33
6.2.7 Innovations Introduced	33
6.2.8 Attracting new active members	34
6.2.8 Internal marketing.....	34
6.2.9 Issues in modern day politics.....	35
6.2.10 The Internet.....	35
6.2.11 Concluding remarks.....	36
6.2.12 Social media	36
6.3 Fine Gael	36
6.3.1 The Marketing defined	36
6.3.2 Marketing techniques	37
6.3.3 Values of political marketing	37
6.3.4 Memorable political marketing campaigns	38
6.3.5 Voters.....	38
6.3.6 Youth voters	38
6.3.7 Attracting the youth	39
6.3.8 Internal marketing.....	39
6.3.9 Issues in modern politics	39
6.3.10 The Internet.....	40
6.3.11 Concluding remarks.....	40
6.4 Fianna Fail.....	40
6.4.1 Marketing defined.....	40
6.4.2 The Marketing of the Party.....	40
6.4.3 Marketing techniques	41
6.4.4 Memorable political marketing campaigns	41
6.4.5 Voters.....	41

6.4.6 Targeting the youth.....	42
6.4.7 Innovations introduced by Fianna Fail	43
6.4.8 Attracting new active members	43
6.4.9 Internal marketing.....	43
6.4.10 Issues in modern politics	43
6.4.11 The Internet.....	44
6.4.12 Concluding remarks.....	44
6.5 Labour party	44
6.5.1 Marketing defined.....	44
6.5.2 Marketing techniques	44
6.5.3 Values of political Marketing	45
6.5.4 Memorable political marketing campaigns	45
6.5.5 Voters.....	45
6.5.8 Internal marketing.....	46
6.5.10 The Internet.....	47
6.5.11 Concluding remarks.....	47
6.6 Interviews with local representatives	48
Fianna Fail councillor Orla Leyden	48
6.6.1 Targeting voters	48
6.6.2 Capturing the youth market	48
6.6.3 Loyalty to parties among the youth	48
6.6.4 Innovations introduced in order to reach the youth	48
6.6.5 Policies V Personality.....	49
6.6.6 Key issues for first time voters	49
6.6.7 Social media and its effectiveness	49
Interview with Fine Gael TD Denis Naughten Roscommon North Leitrim	49
6.6.8 Targeting voters	49
6.6.9 Youth Vote declining.....	49
6.6.10 Policies V Personality.....	50
6.6.11 Key issues for first time voters	50
6.6.12 Social media and its effectiveness	50
Interview with Frank Feighan Fine Gael spokesperson	50
6.6.13 Targeting voters	50

6.6.14 Youth vote	50
6.6.15 Innovations to be introduced	50
6.6.16 Policy's v personalities	51
6.6.17 Issues in politics.....	51
6.6.18 Conclusions	52

Chapter Seven: First time voters research53

7.1 Introduction	53
7.2 Young people's apathy.....	53
7.2.1 Engaging with young people's conceptions of the political.....	55
7.2.2 Viewing young people as distinct.....	55
7.2.3 Young people and voting behaviour.....	55
7.3 Results and discussion on primary research.....	56
7.3.1 First time voters knowledge and understanding of the political process of Ireland	57
7.3.2 What would make political parties more attractive to first voters.....	57
7.3.3 What Irish parties represent	57
7.3.4 Involvement in politics	58
7.3.5 Issues in politics.....	58
7.3.6 Employment issues	58
7.3.7 Issues in modern politics	58
7.3.8 Charisma.....	59
7.3.9 Policy V Personality	59
7.3.10 Characteristics of politicians	59
7.3.11 Political marketing.....	59
7.3.12 Memorable political marketing campaigns	60
7.3.13 Social media	60
7.3.14 Conclusion.....	60

8.0 Chapter Eight: Discussion and analysis60

8.1 Introduction	60
8.2 Discussion	61
8.2.1 Future of political marketing	63
8.2.2 Future research:	63
8.3 Conclusions and Recommendations.....	63
8.3.1 Recommendations for political parties to target this generation	64

8.3.2 Conclusion	64
9.0 List of appendices.....	66
9.1 Appendices table	66
9.2 Appendix 1	67
9.3 Appendix 2	68
9.4 Appendix 3	69
9.5 Appendix 4	72
9.6 Appendix 5	74
9.7 Appendix 6	80
9.7.1 Fig 1.1	80
9.7.2 Fig 1.2.....	81
9.7.3 Fig 1.3.....	82
9.7.4 Fig: 1.4	83
9.7.5 Fig: 1.5	84
9.7.6 Fig: 1.6	85
9.7.7 Fig: 1.7	86
9.7.8 Fig:1.8	87
9.7.9 Fig 1.9.....	88
10.0 Bibliography	89

Chapter one: Introduction

This introductory chapter sets out the road map for the research carried out. Initially section 1.1 gives a brief introduction into the research carried out. Furthermore section 1.1 outlines the aims of this research. Following on from this section 1.2 outlines the research topic and section 1.3 outlines the research objectives of this research. Finally, section 1.4 provides a succinct chapterization summary.

1.1 Introduction

Political marketing is a global phenomenon and will continue to grow in importance as parties actively seek to differentiate themselves from their rival political parties. There has been much written and discussed about the theory of political marketing. However, there has been minor research involving the whole area of the youth and their relationship with politics today.

Accordingly, the researcher felt this provided a research opportunity to ascertain whether a wave of political marketing would influence first time voter intentions. Therefore, this research will be exploring political marketing from its evolution to where it is at today. The questions that needs to be answered is can political parties use better marketing techniques to attract the youth vote and boost voting numbers in this category at the next General Election? Can an effective political marketing reach out to the youth of today? Is the notion of young people's apathy towards politics over estimated? The object of this research is to determine the effectiveness of political marketing in general and in particular towards the youth of today. Another aim of this research is to analyse the key values and qualities the youth of today expect from their politicians for the upcoming 2012 General Election. Ireland will be the main country examined throughout this research however comparisons will be drawn with other countries where applicable to make relevant links.

This study is being undertaken in the hope that it will be worthwhile research effort and an addition to the research to date in this particular area.

The next section outlines the research topic and the research objectives also clearly defined. Following on from this an outline of each chapter is briefly unpacked.

1.2 Research Topic:

“Political marketing in Ireland: smoke and mirrors or real substance? An exploration of the potential use of marketing techniques on the voting intentions of first time voters in the forthcoming General Election”

1.3 Research objectives:

The twin priorities of this study is to distinguish the role of marketing both internally and externally to a political party and to assess the extent to which first time General Election voters are amenable to political marketing techniques. More explicitly, this research seeks to:

1. Identify the main characteristics first time voters expect from their politicians.
2. Analyse the current marketing techniques utilised by political parties.
3. Role of leadership and personality in determining the youths vote.
4. Establish the key issues in politics for first time voters.
5. Establish whether there is political apathy amongst first time voters.

1.4 Chapterization summary

Chapter one gives an outline of the design of the listed research questions and explains the rational for the study as well as introducing the research topic.

Chapter two contains the secondary research i.e. a critical literature review is examined in relation to the research topic. This chapter incorporates a discussion on the evolution of marketing in politics to what we now know as political marketing. The author also aims to stress the arguments for and against this concept in an attempt to examine its relevance and effectiveness.

Chapter three continues the review of relevant literature impacting on the subject matter under investigation and provides a broader exploration of the historical and current constructions of Irish societal structures always seeking to gain an understanding of the current context to politics in Ireland. This chapter also provides an exploration of political leadership and its importance to the fortunes of Irish political parties and whether-or not- first time voters are more likely to be attracted to political parties on the basis of personality or policy.

Chapter four addresses political marketing from its evolution to present.

The internet is explored for the purpose of the primary research on social media and its effectiveness.

Chapter five gives outlines a detailed account of the research design process and key methodological considerations geared towards the operationalisation of the key research question. This chapter also contains reflections on the limitations of this small scale study.

Chapter six moves on to unpack of a number of in-depth interviews conducted with the general secretaries of the Green party, Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and the Labour party in order to draw comparisons.

All four parties were chosen to provide a holistic overview of politics in Ireland today. Interviews were also conducted with local representatives to assess whether consistency exists between the party and candidates when it comes to issues of political campaigning and all the necessary electoral strategising. A copy of the questions can be seen in the appendix 3 and the name and addresses of all the key personnel interviewed can also be seen in the appendix 1.

Chapter seven sets out to indentify whether Irish society has accommodated the notion of the *political consumer*. In particular, this chapter seeks to trace the extent to which first time voters within the age of 16-21 years of age have begun to either experience or exercise politics as a commodity. To achieve this task, relevant academic literature will be reviewed in particular young people's apathy towards politics. The concluding element of this chapter will address the primary research undertaken in this area conducted in the form of focus groups and questionnaires which were distributed through a broad spectrum i.e. by email or just randomly selected youth organisations in the North West region.

As outlined in chapter one, a set of objectives were identified so as to structure and chronologize the research process. Accordingly, the following chapter eight will discuss in detail each of the stated objectives and analysis of the main findings and results will be discussed.

This chapter will also provide conclusions and recommendation. Having set out the main contents of this thesis, chapter two now moves on to provide an overview of the emergence and evolution of marketing and also provides a discussion on the onset of political marketing as a distinct sub-discipline of marketing.

2.0 Chapter Two: Emergence and Evolution of political marketing

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is structured as follows. Initially section 2.1 introduces the main issues to be explored in this chapter. Section 2.2 provides a short overview on the evolution of marketing *per se*. Following on from this section 2.3 defines what in fact actually constitutes 'marketing'. A number of definitions of this concept are outlined.

Additionally section 2.4 provides a succinct review of the emergence of marketing for political parties and political marketing as a distinct sub-discipline of marketing.

Section 2.4 also includes a discussion on the appropriateness, or otherwise, of political and commercial marketing techniques and strategies. Finally 2.4 critically explores the extent to which contemporary Western societies have over marketised politics and seeks to outline whether politics and, in particular, the electoral process has been unduly commodified. Section 2.5 provides a summary to the findings in this chapter.

2.2 Evolution of marketing

When analysing the materialization of the marketing metaphor in relation to politics, Wring (1999) suggests the development came from a connection of theoretical developments. The first development is due to the fickleness of voters which emerged as a result of an increase in control and the neglect of previous allegiances. Wring (1999) suggests the second development comes from widespread social economics and cultural changes which together with commercialism began to settle many aspects of civic life. To provide a holistic view on the study of political marketing it is first essential to trace it back to its origin. Trustrum (1989) suggests throughout his literature that there are several examples of what marketing is and what it is not, further to this Trustrum (1989) suggests marketing as a concept is hard to define. Brownlie and Saden (1991) trace the roots of marketing back to the twentieth century. They authors suggest that when companies began to recognise that it was essential to understand consumers and the dynamics behind consumer preferences; this gave rise to the birth of marketing. Brownlie and Saden (1991) define marketing in more recent literature as acting like an ideological resource and a heavy tool kit consisting of an array of analytical techniques. This definition was built on cited revisions of earlier definitions of marketing, such as that provided by Baker (1988). Kotler and Armstrong (1991) broadened the view of marketing. Their twenty first century definition attempts to capture the wider role of marketing in the society. Kotler and Armstrong (1991) define marketing as a social and managerial process whereby individuals and groups obtain what the need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others. Kotler (2006) states marketing can now be defined as a mechanism of establishing relationships, demand and interest in a brand. Further to this Kotler (2006) remarks marketing is about utilizing and segmenting audiences and analysing patterns throughout the marketing process. More recently Armstrong, Harker, Kotler and Brennan (2009) state marketing is managerial and social process whereby people and organisation garner what they require through exchanging value with others.

2.3 Political marketing background

What is political marketing? Scammell (1999) says that there is no agreement about the definition of political marketing noting that up to recent years political marketing was a phrase seldom found outside academic journals.

Wyner and Lees Marshment (2006) note that political marketing is an area of growing interest and importance, marketing is now used by a wide range of institutions without the political areas including not just parties but presidents, individual politicians and parliament.

Wyner and Lees Marshment (2006) go on to say politics would seem to be in period of transition from a leadership run system to that dictated by public desires and demands. Wyner and Lees Marshment (2006) also suggest marketing has penetrated all political institutions as people get increasingly like consumers in the market place.

Harrop (1990) perceives political marketing as not only about political advertising, party political broadcasts and electoral speeches, but it also incorporates the whole area of party positioning in the electoral market. Kavanagh (1995) appears to see political marketing as electioneering, which means a set of strategies and tools to trace and study public opinion before and during an election campaign, to develop campaign communications and to assess their impact.

Additionally Nimmo (1970) states politics is largely concerned with the processing of ideas. Further to this Nimmo (1970) states elections are one method whereby some people's ideas come to succeed over those of others. It is unusual, however, for substantive debates on policy to be the main focus of political marketing.

Furthermore Nimmo (1970) remarks that the marketing implication of this increasing only emphasises that style is key to a successful political campaign.

Finally Lock (2010) observes that political marketing has become ever more prevalent in the last 20 years, stating it has moved from been a relatively unknown concern of small group of marketers who were in fact interested in politics, to become a more prevalent area of international research in contemporary marketing.

2.4 Political advertising and the demonstration of market orientation

Lees Marshment (2001) remarks despite the assertion that to win elections parties need to become market-oriented, it appears there has is no evidence that a link between political market orientation and electoral success is evident.

Lilleker, Jackson, and Scullion (2006) appears to suggest that this weakens the value of political marketing explanations in relation to the more traditional voter and media-generated explanations, for which there appears to be considerable evidence connecting theory to outcome.

Additionally Johnson (2006) states that in an attempt to outline the effects of advertising on voter behaviour, researchers have quantified, categorised, described, or speculatively employed advertisements to clarify particular electoral outcomes.

Further to this Johnson (2006) states that despite this, it has not been possible to arrive at a general theory of political advertising and to discern the extent to which such approaches have been influential on electorate behaviour, particularly in Ireland.

Finally Johnson (2006) suggests political advertising has been found to have some effect on some voters, in some circumstances on others there has been no effect.

Robinson (2010) suggests one of the main negatives of political advertising is that it is not underpinned by a style that connects forms of political communication with electoral outcomes.

2.4.1 Has political marketing been over marketed?

Kotler (1999) perceives the political and commercial contexts as essentially parallel.

Further to this Kotler (1999) also suggests “Marketing is a business discipline whose relevance in the main lies in business. Additionally Kotler (1999) states people should not presume that political contexts are always comparable to business to the extent that methods can be imported and used with the same effect. However, “political marketing” may be seen to function at numerous levels, since it is both descriptive and prescriptive. Kotler (1999) suggests, that political marketing analysis provides us with a platform for business derived labels to clarify, the dynamics of an election campaign; offering the possibility of new ways for analysing elections. Further to this Kotler (1999) states many academics have noted that this is something parties and candidates should engage in this if they hope to win elections.

Kotler (1999) remarks, it now appears political marketing may be an accepted sub-discipline, and also a recommendation.

2.4.2 A comparative analysis of political and commercial marketing

In order to gain an understanding of the political marketing concept it is important to draw comparisons of both commercial and political marketing.

Butler and Collins (2001) state commercial and political marketing have the following comparisons. Firstly both markets contain a set of organisations competing for loyalty in the target market. Consumers are the decision makers and their choice will imply some degree of commitment. Secondly the channels of communication and persuasion are almost identical, as are their reasoning behind them. Butler and Collins (2001) conclude in other words in both markets consumers desire some kind of reassurance that they are making the right decision and this is where marketing steps in.

2.4.3 Arguments for and against political marketing

There have been numerous arguments raised by Baines and Egan (2001) on the effectiveness of political marketing. Baines and Egan (2001) firstly state marketing is unsuited to political campaigning. They go on to say political campaigning is not a free market and as a result less influenced by marketing. Thirdly political campaigning practitioners are applying marketing concepts inappropriately.

In addition to this Baines and Egan (2001) argue the notion that marketing is unsuited to political campaigning would appear to be unjustified. Baines and Egan (2001) also suggest that marketing and campaigning have been synonymous for centuries.

The notion that differences are perceived to exist has some value but not as much as is often suggested. The final argument Baines and Egan (2001) note may have more justification. They suggest that a primary saying of marketing is that voters buy benefits and not products or services. Thus the candidate may actually be less important than the benefits emanating from the purchase voting.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has established critical points of debate surrounding the political marketing concept. Furthermore this chapter also outlined the advantages and disadvantages of the concept. Finally this chapter also provides a roadmap for the forthcoming literature review covering areas such as the background to political marketing. In the subsequent chapter there will be a discussion on the issues in Irish society today, there will also be an exploration of problems in the Irish political system from a historical perspective.

3.0 Chapter Three: Issues in politics today

3.1 Introduction

Section 3.1 introduces the main issues in this chapter. Section 3.2 sets out to undertake the key components of the sociological, political and economic structure on modern Ireland. Section 3.3 reviews the historical moulding forces that shaped and continues to shape contemporary societal structures in Ireland, or government systems and the electoral process in Ireland. Section 3.4 explores the importance of leadership in politics today. Section 3.5 provides a conclusion.

3.2 Political issues in Ireland today

In order to define the need for marketing techniques in politics, the problems it currently faces must first be identified. One of the main problems facing modern day political parties is the lack of clarity in what they stand for. If you consider the leading political parties such as Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, the public are unable to differentiate from the two. Lock and Harris (1996) state this has a detrimental effect on the political consumer and there is an increased feeling that political brands are vague and unclear. Lock and Harris (1996) also suggest without a clear understanding for what they are voting for, how are people supposed to know who to vote for?

Lock and Harris (1996) in addition to this, state previous to the implementation of marketing globally there was an over reliance on the traditional voter and a lack of segmentation of the electorate. Butler and Collins (1994) note this has began to cause major problems for politicians because there has been a trend in the electorate casting their vote based upon social affirmations and without segmenting the different social issues. Butler and Collins (1994) conclude these problems only highlight some of the major issues at hand, which are causing a major threat to lawful politics globally.

Collins (1999) feels there are numerous problems in Irish political life down through the years. The most glaring issues identified by Collins (1995) revolved around the issue of political corruption which he notes was becoming increasingly common in free-thinking democracies. Collins (1999) states Ireland is not alone when it comes to crisis such as ministerial resignations, tribunals and government crisis or ethical wrongdoing by politicians or public officials.

Collins (1999) remarks there are suggestions that the standard of political behaviour has been questioned as far back as the late 1960,s. Additionally Collins (1999) notes that financial links with business people and leading politicians which has come to the attention of the public in recent years has drawn attention to events of previous years. Nevertheless corruption has only become prominent in recent years as society has become more knowledgeable. Collins (1999) outlines examples of the scandals which range from the Irish sugar scandal to the beef crisis, all of which do highlight some areas of concern about the ways politicians and private companies relate to each other.

3.3 Society in Ireland

In relation to the political issues in Ireland today, there has been a major breakthrough in the past twenty years relating to women in Irish society. Collins (1996) observes, that it was not until the 1990s that Irish women were treated as equals in society. Collins (1996) remarks there were a time when a woman at work was unheard of. Further to this Collins (1996) states in the 1990s in particular, some of the most newsworthy issues in politics centred on women's issues and what they have come to represent. Collins (1996) states the election of Mary Robinson as the first Irish woman President as the marker of the open divide between, old, and modern Ireland.

At the time Mary Robinson's election generated a lot of interest from the media.

There was also the success of the women's coalition in 1996 which Collins (1996) states brought the role of women in politics in the north to prominence. Further to this there was the election of Mary McAleese a northern nationalist with strong religious views. Collins (1996) notes this attracted more media attention. One of the most surprising aspects of politics in Ireland is the under representation of women in politics, which Collins (1996) feels merely reflects the absence of women in critical decision making sites such as business and economic affairs.

Additionally Collins (1996) notes the questions that should be asked, is why it is that women cannot gain a foothold in national politics?

Despite the success of high profile women in politics Collins (1996) suggests that there are numerous obstacles inhibiting the political participation of a great number of women. Collins (1996) states that practical constraints imposed by family commitments, the lack of individual sources of finance and the general social expectation that women should carry the main responsibilities for home duties combine to keep women out of politics. The more recent issues in Ireland revolve around the area of secularisation of the church.

Martin (2006) the archbishop of Dublin stated Ireland was facing an invasion of secularisation which may dominate Irish Culture and eventually eliminate religion from Ireland.

This statement gained more credence in recent years as mass attendances in Ireland have certainly declined. A survey carried out by Radio Telefis Eireann (2006) suggests that Mass attendances weekly at that time was in the region of 48% compared to the 1990 figure of 81%. This would also suggest that there may be a link

between secularisation of the church and loyalty among parties declining. Another issue in Ireland is the issue of Ireland moving from Fordism to a Post Fordism society. Van Beek, Buwalda and Stoop (2003) suggest Fordism has a major influence on urban space. Van Beek et al. (2003) define Post Fordism as society changing such as people travelling abroad and secularisation, these are all evidence of Post Fordism society. Diversity is also a variable of Post Fordism and Ireland has certainly entered this period with thousands of Eastern Europeans integrated in our society. This would appear to suggest that Ireland has entered a Post Fordism societal structure whereby the “catch all” tendencies of Fianna Fail have tended to unravel: Hence their inability to form a single party government for two decades.

3.3.1 Political Parties and Irish society

Marsh (1997) suggests that parties are the center of political life and further notes that they provide the teams that contest elections, and the party label is usually decisive in turning an aspiring politician into a serious candidate. Marsh (1997) also states that candidates when approaching an election draw from a network of active supporters who will promote their cause and campaign on their behalf. Marsh (1997) observes elections in Ireland are regulated by legislation and by the constitution, so the level of political marketing one party can use at any particular time is curtailed.

3.4. Party leaders

Further to this Marsh (1997) notes that it is arguable that the choice of leader is the most important decision a party can make. Marsh (1997) observes as elections are as much about who governs as to what is done by the governments, so it is clear that the role of party leader is pivotal. In Fianna Fail and Fine Gael it is ever more important as the party leader is the potential Taoiseach, however now we are led believe that the Labour party has a very strong chance of providing the next Taoiseach. Worchester et.al (2005) suggest that in election time the reputation of the leader is just as important as that of the party itself, in influencing how people vote in elections. Vivadver-Cohen, (2004) have similar views suggesting the leader is a significant symbol of any organisation and his actions and words can be more important than symbolically than operationally. Vivadver-Cohen, (2004) also suggests that at the time of crisis the way the leader responds can have a major influence on his or hers reputation.

3.4.1 Candidates versus parties

A major aspect the voting public must decide when voting in elections, is the question of the candidate versus the party and what it stands for.

Coakley (2005) notes it is common to describe politics in Ireland as rather personalised, a product in part of a localised political culture, reinforced by the proportional representation single transferable vote electoral system. Coakley (2005) alludes to research conducted by the Irish national election study which asks whether in fact the party was more important than the candidate in deciding how to cast your first preference vote in the General Election, which would appear to settle the matter once and for all. Coakley (2005) argues this research is too simplistic as things are rather more complicated than that given the fact that the larger parties run more than one political candidate in each individual constituency. Therefore Coakley (2005) suggests that supporters of those Irish political parties are forced to choose between different candidates of the same party when allocating first preference, therefore their vote is in a sense a vote on an individual political candidate rather than a party.

Coakley (2005) observes this leads to the question, would the voter have given a first preference to vote to him/her. Coakley (2005) outlines research carried out after the 2002 General Election which indicates that 62% of respondents noted they were choosing a candidate, whilst 38% said they were choosing a party Coakley (2005) concludes this appears to suggest that Ireland are in fact a candidate focused system.

3.4.2 Determinants of party support

Coakley (2005) also elaborates on the reasoning of party support and he alludes to the fact that parents are a key factor in influencing their voting patterns and social background is also a key determinant. Coakley (2005) also suggests that Irish voting behaviour is effected not only by family background, social demographics also plays a part in deciding party support in Ireland as strong patterns appear to have emerged. Provisional results indicated as slight working class bias in Fianna Fail support and a middle- class bias in the support base of Labour, the former Progressive democrats and the Green party. Research carried out by Coakley (2005) also suggests that the Green party are the richest supporters on average. Furthermore Coakley (2005) states age plays a part in the support of the different groups of parties.

Coakley (2005) suggests that the party's with the oldest demographic of supporters in 2002 General Election was in fact the Fine Gael on average Fine Gael supporters were

of the age of 48 years of age which is quite amazing. Coakley (2005) concludes the Green party had the youngest recorded voting pattern with an average age of 35 years of age amongst their supporters.

3.5 Conclusion

The aim of the proceeding chapter has been to examine the Irish electorate and the reasoning behind their choice of candidates. This chapter also aimed to assess the role of leadership in attracting voters. Furthermore this chapter also provides an insight into Irish society from a historical perspective. The author also gained an insight into society in Ireland to which provided a historical context to the research. Finally this chapter also explores the importance of leadership in politics today. The following chapter explores political marketing, outlining evidence of political marketing in action in countries like the US and the UK.

4.0 Chapter Four: Political marketing defined

4.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out to analyse the role of political marketing in politics. Initially section 4.2 addresses political marketing in action namely the US and the UK. Furthermore section 4.3 moves on to review the use of web in the UK and US respectively for the purpose of the primary research on social media and its effectiveness. Section 4.4 provides a succinct analysis of the current issues in modern politics both from recent and past history in Ireland. This chapter will conclude with a brief analysis of the chapter findings.

4.2 Political marketing in evidence

The decade of the 1980s is generally considered to have been pivotal in the development of political marketing in Britain. The Conservative Party are the most notable example of this.

Scammell (1995) states Margaret Thatcher proved to be a watershed in the development of political marketing in Britain. Scammell (1995) refers to 1975 when the elected Thatcher set out to reinvigorate a party which was demoralised by defeat in the two General Elections of 1974. Further to this Scammell (1995) notes four years after her appointment a revitalised organisation had established a close working relationship with advertising agency gurus Saatchi and Saatchi. Scammell (1995) suggests the party underwent a major re-orientation: There is evidence to suggest that the marketing concept helped shaped the manifesto and electoral strategy in all three elections under Thatcher's leadership. Scammell (1995) remarks that Thatcher's revolution of the Conservative strategy due to the nature of the party's internal structures. Further to this Scammell (1995) observes Thatcher fundamentally modernized Central Office even though she was unable to initiate similar immediate surgery on her parliamentary frontbench team. Additionally Scammell (1995) observes that given Conservative leaders also drew up the party manifesto, keen polling analyst Thatcher was in a good position to begin using the marketing concept to aid with policy development. Such a reading of recent history sits uncomfortably with the popular perception of Thatcher. However, as Scammell (1995) appear to suggest, the new electoral approach understood the importance of the political environment and power of public opinion.

4.3 Importance of web in political marketing

Evans (2008) suggests targeting the youth vote is the key to winning elections and refers to the last American Presidential Election and states Barrack Obama recognised this. Evans (2008) observes Mr Obama targeted the youth vote through a variety of social media sectors such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. Further to this Evans (2008) notes that some political pundits found this hard to believe that Obama was attracting the youth vote in the democratic presidential campaign more so than Hilary Clinton. Evans (2008) believes the rational for this was the rise in prominence of online marketing which Obama embraced. Evans (2008) also states Obama

recognised that the TV advertise or radio no longer sufficed, it was in fact social media that was having the greatest impact on energizing the youth vote.

Evans (2008) concludes today social media is becoming more and more important for political parties globally. Evans (2008) cites the democratic campaign in America whereby Obama closed a 15% point gap in the polls purely through social media outlets.

4.3.1 US political party's use of web in elections

In recent years there has been growing awareness of the significance of the internet on engaging a politically confused electorate. Crabtree (2001) remarks, that despite the heavy investment of resources in party websites, it appeared that a majority of the electorate hardly noticed. Crabtree (2001) observes it was not until the Clinton/Gore presidential campaign of 1992 that web presence was established as a marketing tool. However like all additional tools of marketing, it was difficult to measure. Bowers (2001) refers to the 2000 American presidential campaign as evidence that there had been considerable strategic and technologic advances to certain candidate's web sites. According to Sedberry (2000) the Bush online campaign received considerable plaudits which enabled him to develop an advantage over that of the rival candidate Al Gore website. Sedberry (2000) observes Bush was the first to produce a political advertisement dedicated to promoting an election website, which therefore produced a 522% increase on "unique visitors" to the web site. Abrahamson (2000) notes in terms of "locatability", both the Gore and Bush web teams generated a variety of methods to make discovery of their sites easier, with pop- up windows appearing on the sites, online advertising and the use of direct e-mail.

Finally Abrahamson (2000) notes the Gore campaign appeared to have an enhanced ease of access to online campaign by concentrating on state- based web sites that were more locally customised than Bush's.

4.4 Current issues facing modern politics

In relation to the problems faced in Irish politics today it is first important to provide an academic background to the whole issue.

Before the author defines the need for marketing techniques in politics to be utilized to greater effect, the problems being faced currently must be identified initially. It is common knowledge that they main problems facing modern day political parties is the confusion regarding what they represent. The voting public are unable to

distinguish between the main political parties particularly Fianna Fail and Fine Gael as they are both either centre or left of centre. Lock and Harris (1996) state this has a negative impact on the political consumer and there is an increased perception that political brands are undefined and very unclear in what they represent. Bowers-Brown and Gunter (2002) remark, without a clear understanding for what they are voting for, the numbers of people showing up to vote have begun to dwindle at an alarming pace. Since the 1990s White (2003) suggests there has been a significant decline in voter attendance numbers on Election Day and this decline has been causing some concern. However, White (2003) notes what some consider even more alarming is the fact that youth participation in politics is on a steadily decreasing slope in comparison to other generations. This lack of definition adds to the overall problem while other issues may also be seen to contribute. White (2003) also alludes that there is now also a problem in attracting and retaining members, and these members are the vital backbone of parties. Lock and Harris (1996) in addition to this, state prior to the implementation of marketing there was an over reliance on traditional voter and a lack of segmentation of the electorate. Lock and Harris (1996) note this has begun to cause major problems for politicians because there has been a trend in the electorate casting their vote based upon social affirmations and without segmenting the different social issues aren't realised. Butler and Collins (1994) conclude these problems only highlight some of the major issues at hand, which are causing a major threat to lawful politics globally.

4.4.1 Conclusion

The aim of this proceeding chapter has been to examine the academic literature and to analyse the evolution of marketing. This chapter has also helped establish the issues in politics and to provide an insight into Irish society down through the years.

Furthermore this chapter also explored political marketing in action citing examples from the UK and the US.

Following on from this the next section deals with the methodology used in order to operationalise the research question.

5.0 Chapter Five: Research methodology

5.1 Introduction

This objective of this chapter is to set out the road map for this particular study. Initially section 5.1 outlines the objectives of this research study. Following on from this section 5.2 deals with the methodology used in order to disseminate the marketing of political parties and its influence on the youth vote in particular. In section 5.3 the discussion revolves around the research design. Section 5.4 provides a short overview of the limitations encountered throughout the research process and how they were then addressed and finally section 5.5 provides a succinct conclusion.

5.1.1 Research question:

Political marketing in Ireland: smoke and mirrors or real substance? “An exploration of the potential use of marketing techniques on the voting intentions of first time voters in the forthcoming General Election”

5.1.2 Research defined

There are many different definitions of research available which lead to research been a collection of information which is gathered with the objective of creating superior data about a subject and thus allow recommendations to be made.

Elias (1986) defined research as a method of making something known which was previously unknown to the general public. It also aims to advance human knowledge, to make it more certain or better fitting the aim is discovery.

Walliman (2002) states research has many characteristics firstly it is generated by a specific hypothesis and research questions.

Secondly it must follow a process, thirdly it leads to the interpretation of facts to reach a conclusion and finally it aims to advance previous knowledge.

5.1.3 Methodology defined

The methodology sections of a research project are the area which guides the researcher in methods which can be used to gain the required information to answer the research questions.

Sarantakos (1998) defined methodology as: “as a method which entails theoretical principals as well as a framework that provides guidelines about how research is done in the context of a particular paradigm. Further to this Sarantakos methods refer to the tools or instruments in use by researchers to gather practical evidence or to analysis. (Sarantakos, 1998, p.32)

5.2 Research Methodology

In order to gain an in-depth insight into the research topic discussed numerous research strategies were used. The reasoning behind the methods used and the design will be discussed. There was a descriptive and exploratory nature involved to the research proposed. The literature review was the initial secondary research carried out it was exploratory in nature and layed the foundations for the research. The questionnaires and interview are deemed descriptive in nature.

5.2.1 Exploratory research

Initially the research was carried out in the area of political marketing which required the analysis of existing academic data in marketing, political marketing and related areas which are defined in this study. The desk research carried out provided a solid basis from which to carry out the primary research, as a thorough literature review took place to with the objective to prevent duplication of existing material. This exploratory phase allowed the author to gain an understanding into the research topic; it also helped to indentify gaps in existing research, which therefore helped establish the authors own objectives.

5.2.2 Descriptive research

Descriptive research involves questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The author's research is based on the marketing of political parties in Ireland as political parties are central to the democracies of most countries. The author selected the: Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, the Green party and the Labour party.

The four parties were chosen because they are the largest parties within the Irish political environment. The author felt the parties chosen could provide a good comparative study. To further enhance the research the author interviewed local politicians to assess how the target first time voters.

5.3 Research design

The descriptive study used survey based methodoligal routes, in the form of in-depth interviews and a questionnaire. Denscombe (2004) describes the word survey as to view thoroughly and in detail, while through another perceptive it is also indicative towards gathering data for research purposes.

5.3.1 Research instrument: personal interview

Frey and Oishi (1995) state a survey interview is a conversation whereby the researcher asks set questions and the respondents answer them accordingly. Frey and Oishi (1995) also remark it is directed conversation, the objective of which is to gather information by distributing the same set of questions in a constant way to all selected interviewees.

In-depth interviews were used by the author to guide the questioning and probe further if necessary. These interviews were conducted in person as telephone interview were considered to be time constraining and personal interview have a

higher response rate and allow the interviewer to interact better, it is also helpful to establish the body language of the interviewee.

According to Denscombe (2002) the benefit of semi structured interviews is the interviewer will have a clear list of issues which helps the interviewee to develop issues and topics which are essential to a certain extent. The researcher felt this approach was important as it was then plausible to identify the key issues important to each party and the informant's priorities for the party.

5.3.2 Secondary research

To begin the research into political marketing it first involved the analysis and interpretation of the existing data available in the area of political marketing.

The author then carried out desk research which identified gaps in existing research and involved developing objectives based on filling the gaps.

5.3.3 Primary research

The primary research was gathered over three phases. The first phase involved a semi structured in-depth interview. The second phase involved the compilation of a questionnaire which were distributed to a variety of Youth development centres in Sligo and Roscommon. The third phase involved the moderation of a focus group which was carried out to gain a more holistic approach to the subject matter involved.

5.3.4 Phase one

This research is based on the marketing of the main political parties in Irish democracy. The parties selected for this process are as follows, Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, Labour party and the Green party. Fianna Fail and Fine Gael were chosen because they currently are the largest political parties in Ireland however to have a more holistic approach it was decided that Labour and the Green party should be used also. The parties selected allow a varied discussion on the current political marketing within a wider spectrum of Irish political parties.

5.3.5 Research design of phase one

The descriptive aspect of the research involves two phases. Both methods used were survey based methodological routes. As previously alluded to the first phase was an in-depth interview. Therefore the process of interviews will be discussed below.

5.3.6 Research instrument: semi structured interview

Bryman and Bell (2007) state this is a term that covers a wide variety range of instances. It normally refers to a context in which an interviewer has a series of

questions that are in a general form of an interview schedule but the interviewer is able to vary sequence of questions.

For the purpose of carrying out the research to best possible standard, in-depth interviews was chosen as it would enable the researcher to guide the questioning and to insure clarification on issues and also to enable further probing where necessary. The interviews were conducted in person as person telephone interviews were considered to be time constraining.

5.3.7 Sampling

Probability

Emory and Cooper (1991) state that probability sampling is based on the concept of random selection- a controlled procedure that assures that each population element is given an equal chance of selection.

Non probability

Emory and Cooper (1991) note each member does not have a known nonzero chance of being included which allows the interviewers to choose sample members at random.

Following on from the initial determination of the parties to be studied, the key officials of the political parties was identified as the purposive sample. Firstly the general secretary's of each political party were identified as the most suitable to provide the relevant data required, so the author contacted with these key officials and interview were then arranged. Secondly the researcher contacted key local representatives and a interview was arranged also.

5.3.8 Format

Each of the general secretary's were informed of what the research involved and what would be required prior to the interview, which ensured they interviewee felt at ease during the interviewing process. The researcher then travelled to Dublin to meet the respective interviewees at each parties head quarters. (See appendix 1). In relation to the local representatives interviewed the researcher travelled to their constituency offices. The duration of the interviews ranged from thirty to forty minutes and each of the interviews were audio taped and later notes were then transcribed to allow for analysis of the interview. This also freed up the researcher to observe the body language and non verbal communication of the interviewee. Following on from the

determining which parties were needed to be researched, the key officials of each parties were then identified as the purposive sample for this research. So contact was made to all the various parties and interviews were conducted.

The researcher then travelled to each political headquarters to conduct the interviews. See attached the list of interviewees and, dates of interviews and contact details. The researcher travelled to Roscommon town to meet the respective local representatives at their constituency offices.

5.4 Choice of research

The research process that was chosen was qualitative research method because the fact that it is designed to go beyond statistics and gain a greater knowledge of people's opinions and emotions. The research was carried out by using four personal interviews with the general secretaries of the main political parties Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, Green party, Labour party. The researcher also carried out three further interviews with Orla Leyden a local Roscommon county councillor, Denis Naughten and Frank Feighan two very respected local TDs.

This gave the author knowledge of the marketing of political parties and in particular how the target first time voters. Interviewing individual candidate allowed the author to assess, if there was a differentiation between a political parties marketing strategy versus that of a local candidate.

There are two types of methods to choose from in relation to the data collection method. They are known as qualitative and quantitative research. Creswell (2004) notes Qualitative research helps establish the attitudes, emotions and feelings of product users. Further to this Creswell (2004) states the aim of qualitative research is to identify a problem, and produce hypothesis. Additionally Creswell (2003) observes quantitative research can be used at early stages of the study.

Bryman (2004) remarks quantitative research is a collection of numerical and statistical data and the process is more controlled with the researcher acting as the main driver. Further to this Bryman (2004) states qualitative research involves the researcher's values and beliefs which are he states are a major part in the creation and scrutiny of qualitative data. Finally Bryman (2004) states, with qualitative research the researchers should be able to develop a non- bias view of their own personal opinions and judgements throughout the research process.

5.4.2 Strengths of qualitative research methods:

Firstly it allows flexibility secondly it ensures people are researched in natural surroundings, further to this Daymon and Holloway (2002) state it achieves a deeper understanding of the respondents view on the topic. In addition Daymon and Holloway (2002) suggest it gives greater emphasis on analysis and meanings, finally it presents a rational view of reality

5.4.3 Weaknesses of qualitative research methods:

Many weaknesses of qualitative research exist. Firstly Marschan, Piekkari and Sulmasy (2001) suggest there is greater risk of collecting meaningless and useless information, secondly it is time consuming, thirdly there are problems of objectivity and a lack of involvement. Fourthly there may be problem of ethics and finally Marshan, Piekkari and Sulmassy (2001) state there is problems of objectivity and lack of involvement.

The strength of qualitative research and the reasoning this method was chosen as the most appropriate was based on the fact that it is designed to go beyond the statistics and gain a greater knowledge into people's opinions emotions and attitudes. It is extremely flexible and allows the interviewee to probe further and is highly focused. Qualitative research allows researchers to gain a firsthand experiences but data analysis is usually restricted.

5.4.3 Advantages of using the interview method

Berger and Williams (1989) summarize the advantages and disadvantages associated with interviews. Firstly flexibility as interviews can be adapted to suit the various situations that may occur within a interview. Secondly there is a high response rate: Interview has a high rate of participation by the respondent. Thirdly there is a degree of control; interviews give the interviewer control over the environment under which the questions are being answered. Fourthly the give the researcher the opportunity to record spontaneous answers: interviews can demonstrate information that cannot be collected from other data forms. In addition time constraints are common in questionnaires so therefore the interviews are the only data collection method that can receive these types of answers. Finally Berger and Williams (1989) state in relation to complex questions the interviewer can probe and elaborate on misunderstandings and also to uncover some more information.

5.4.4 Limitations of interviews

Berger et al, (1989) outlines the limitation of interviews as follows:

Firstly interviews can be expensive and physically demanding than a focus group method for example. Secondly there may be bias due to the fact the researcher is controlling the information hence the data may have discrepancies. Thirdly there is a perception that interviews maybe more problematic in comparison to questionnaires because of the time constraints of the interviewees.

Finally Berger et.al (1989) the information gathered from interviews can be problematic to interpret and analyse and the researcher must do so in an objective manner.

5.4.5 Types of interviews

Interviews can be defined as structured, unstructured and or semi structured:

5.4.6 Structured interviews

Montana and Charnov (2000) state structured interviews can also be known as the patterned interview and are pre planned interviews which are designed in a logical order. Further to this Montana and Charnov (2000) observes structured interviews are in the form of quantitative research and are used mainly in survey research. The data is collected by an interviewer rather than a questionnaire. Each interview is in the same format to ensure consistency throughout. Finally Montana and Charnov (2000) state the questions are in a standardized format which prohibits flexibility due fixed questions. The type of questions is usually close ended rather than open ended answers.

5.4.7 Unstructured interviews

Montana and Charnov (2000) state unstructured interview uses open-ended questions and there remarks it generates greater freedom. Further to this Montana and Charnov (2000) notes there are no restrictions as regards how to word the questions or the order of the questions.

5.4.8 Developing questions

The construction of questions for the interview process was backed up by the information used in the literature review and other reading materials used. Open ended questions were used as this allows freedom for probing deeper into a person's responses. Domegan and Fleming (2007) state open ended questions are easy to prepare and also to obtain a wide range of responses and information. The sequence of

questions was based on the apparent development of political marketing in Irish politics and was also linked closely to the research objectives. Many of the questions used were probing to ensure the required information was gathered. To avoid bias throughout the interviewing process the researcher was careful not to use leading type of questions. Open ended questions were used throughout the interview as this allowed the researcher to gather further information required. Bryman (2004) notes it allows the respondent to answer at their own leisure and there is no right or wrong answer. Further to this Bryman (2004) remarks open ended questions are helpful for investigating issues that the researcher is not aware of.

5.4.9 Research instrument: questionnaire

A questionnaire was distributed to capture the attitude and behaviours of the first time voters. Denscombe (2004) points to a number of instances where the use of a questionnaire is deemed most appropriate. Denscombe (2004) note some of these include, when large numbers are required in various locations; secondly when a social climate is open enough to allow honest answers and when respondents are expected to be able to read, understand and respond to questions.

A large number of respondents were needed for this research; as a result surveying questionnaire was selected to take into consideration how the youth may vote in upcoming elections and their understanding of how effective Irish political parties marketing activities are at targeting the first time voters.

5.4.10 Limitations of research

As the researcher had to interview the main political parties general secretaries, time constraint was a limitation.

The researcher strategically selected options upon which they believed could gain a insight into the youth votes behaviour, however due to the limited research timeline it was not feasible to undertake a wide enough primary research to incorporate the entire population of Ireland. There is also a lot of organisation involved in trying to arrange a times which is mutually beneficial for all parties involved. From the initial phases of the research it became apparent that there is limited academic material on Irish political marketing and also the research on young people in Ireland is nonexistent. The majority of the material is also generated from a narrow number of authors. The author questions the effectiveness of questionnaires versus focus group research. The author believes that focus group research is far more effective at establishing the real

views of respondents. The researcher outlined research to be conducted in the UK however they main political parties were not forthcoming in arranging an interview as they are in recess time. The author also hoped to garner some data from Mori advertising in the UK after initially promising the author an interview they then rejected my advances.

5.4.11 Conclusion

This chapter has laid the foundation for understanding the premise for this study. The research methods have been clearly outlined and the research methods discussed and justified. This chapter has also clearly outlined the limitations of the research. The following chapter explores the marketing of the main political parties interviewed, Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, Labour party and the Green party, furthermore the following chapter assesses how first time voters are targeted.

Chapter Six: Political marketing in action in Ireland

6.0 Introduction

This chapter has been written following in-depth interviews with the general secretaries of the Green party, Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and the Labour party to draw comparison from. All four parties were chosen to provide a holistic view of politics in Ireland today. The author also interviewed local representatives to assess whether consistency exists between the party and candidates. A copy of the questions can be seen in appendix 3 and the name and addresses of all the key personnel interviewed can also be seen in appendix 1.

Section 6.2-6.5 includes the results from the in-depth interview with the general secretary's of The Green party, Fine Gael, Fianna Fail, Labour party. Section 6.6 reviews the interviews with the local representatives. Finally a conclusion incorporates the key findings of the interviews.

6.2 The Green party

6.2.1 Marketing defined

Colm O Caomhanaigh the Green party general secretary alludes to the marketing of the party as essential to the success of the party to date. This usually involves getting the message across through a variety of ways such as door to door canvassing, online marketing and also through social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter. The reasoning behind these marketing techniques in simple terms is to persuade people to vote for the Green party.

O Caomhanaigh observes it is critical with General Elections on the horizon that people know where you stand on certain policy issues. O Caomhanaigh notes political parties are measured by votes they get and as the elections draw closer if people do not know what you stand for you will not gain the desired results in the election.

O Caomhanaigh also stresses that it is critical people understand what they are doing in government and what their principals and beliefs are as there is a tendency for the media to convey negative messages to the public as that what sells papers.

6.2.2 Marketing techniques

The Green party use a variety of marketing techniques however direct communication O Caomhanaigh suggests is the most important as with this technique you can determine what the message is. This is followed by newsletters leaflets and canvassing. In terms of the media, newspapers play a vital role in distilling the desired message. Further to this, interviews carried out by the Green party members are very important in getting across the message. He also suggests that online media is in third place when it comes to marketing the party but can see it being more prominent in years to come. He concludes by suggesting in our political system, direct contact is more important to the voters.

6.2.3 Values of political marketing

O Caomhanaigh notes the important thing for the Green party is to show people that they are working hard and intent on making a difference as there is a cynical feeling that whoever is in power the same thing will happen. O Caomhanaigh feels the whole idea of political marketing is to convince people that you are making a difference.

This may take the form of new legislation such as the civil partnership bill, or the ban on stag hunting which they Green party take most of the credit for. O Caomhanaigh

suggests that the aforementioned legislation would not have happened if they Greens were not part of government.

6.2.4 Memorable political marketing campaigns

O Caomhanaigh alludes to the 2002 General Election as the most effective of Green party campaigns. In this election they went from two TDs to six which was historical for the party.

The slogan for the campaign was “Green politics clean politics “it worked very well for them at the time. O Caomhanaigh also alludes to the party political broadcast of 2007 as been well received. In this campaign they had an advertisement with ordinary people of various ages expressing their views which showed the country that this was a party open to all demographics. Although they did not gain any seats in the election most of the other parties lost seats so it was deemed a successful campaign.

6.2.5 Voters

In relation to whether there is confusion among the voting public as to what the party stands for. O Caomhanaigh disagrees with this statement fundamentally. The interviewee suggests that in the current economic climate they government parties are taking hammering due to the fact that the hard decisions are been taken, such as cut backs in social welfare and increased taxes which are no doubt going to incense the public. O Caomhanaigh hopes that people can see that the Green party were not in power when the problems were created.

Further to this the interviewee noted they have a difficulty in convincing people of what they have achieved as they are held responsible for keeping the Fianna Fail party in power which is a major dilemma for the Green party.

Further to this O Caomhanaigh states there is no confusion amongst the voting public in general. They are however having problems getting a positive message across to the media.

In relation to the question whether the party gives the public an input into the creation of party policies? O Caomhanaigh suggests that the party implement policies they feel are for the good of the country irrespective of public opinion. This he feels is in contrast to the parties such as Fianna Fail and Fine Gael who take very much a populist role and basically go with what the people want. The Green party do not see it that way and they have coherent principals which they abide by however they are sensitive to public opinion. Further to this the Green party put their argument out there

and when people argue against them they do not make changes just because they may not be popular. They tend to tailor their messages to accommodate the public.

6.2.6 Youth vote declining:

O Caomhanaigh was in agreement with the notion of the youth vote declining. However he did note that the Green party do in fact have a higher voting rate in the age group 16-35 than all the other respective parties. This has been retained despite the fact they have come into government. The interviewee blames the larger parties for the decline in youth vote, as in the large parts of the country the bigger parties have a monopoly and smaller parties struggle to make any impact. O Caomhanaigh also feels this must be very demoralising for the young people in those areas as their vote is wasted. O Caomhanaigh notes that the main areas where Sinn Fein, Labour and the Green party get their votes are in fact in urban areas. The interviewee suggests that older people have more of an appreciation of the compromises you have to make to get things done. The Green party are encouraged that despite being in government the youth vote has held out. It was also noted that the policies they have implemented in government appear to resonate with the youth vote more so than older people such as the environment. O Caomhanaigh credits this to the Young Greens they have in place which attract more young people to the party. When probed on the reason behind the decline in youth vote in politics. O Caomhanaigh takes the view that the youth are quite idealistic and can be turned off by the pragmatism of politics and may not have decided where they stand on the political spectrum.

6.2.7 Innovations Introduced

O Caomhanaigh feels that the Green party is ahead of rival parties in the area of innovations introduced. O Caomhanaigh refers to the last General Election whereby they had an online mechanism known as “Live Online” where John Gormley the Green party leader made some interviews for any online viewers, on the eve of the election.

However this did have some difficulties as there were some problems with its transmission. The Green party also have a mechanism whereby a Green party member has an online webcam where members can express their views on certain issues. The Green party hope to introduce more innovations in the upcoming years to create more of a connection with their potential voters. It is a good efficient way of giving people one to one contact which is important in politics O Caomhanaigh feels.

6.2.8 Attracting new active members

The Green party do this by attending colleges throughout academic calendar such as Fresher's week in an attempt to attract members. O Caomhanaigh notes that the problem with this is you are only getting at a certain sector as there is lots of youths who are not fortunate enough to get to college. The Green party are also very conscious of visiting schools in order to get their message across. O Caomhanaigh feels when they young people are old enough to vote their visits to schools will be remembered in a favourable manner. O Caomhanaigh also stated that in an attempt to attract the youth vote the party currently have one full time employee whose role is to create a green presence in college such as fresher's week alluded to previously.

O Caomhanaigh also stated that in an attempt to attract the youth's attention to politics, there has been a generation of "Green Flag" awards, where local politician are encouraged to attend for presentation ceremony and interact with the children and their families. They also insure that a Green party TD visits local schools which gives them an opportunity to talk to the younger people in the hope that they will get their vote in upcoming elections.

The Green party also have an online forum whereby anyone interested in joining the party can do so online. Although they do feel it is difficult for people to go direct to an individual party website. They have developed a number of websites to counteract this such as the "bike scheme" which O Caomhanaigh notes are not immediately branded as a Green party website. The interviewee notes as you browse through the website you will acknowledge this as a Green party initiative.

The Green party feel this is the most effective way of getting young people's attention by associating themselves with something which resonates with them.

The Green party also use door to door canvassing as a method of attracting new members. This usually takes the form of distribution of membership form which you return at your own will.

6.2.9 Internal marketing

The Green party do also engage in internal marketing among their members this takes the form of the traditional methods such as updates by email or the weekly newsletter, which is distributed to their members. The greatest reaction they Green party get is from traditional media. O Caomhanaigh noted the debate on stag hunting, civil

partnership bill and the new programme for government which brought a wave of awareness to their party and attracted new members.

The Green party also engage internal marketing within the party to motivate members. O Caomhanaigh states that the main problem with the internal marketing of the party is the ability of getting people involved. The main way in which members are recruited is through candidates bringing family and friends with them when they join the party. Some of the ways to attract membership include the Green party encouraging membership through collection and storage of email addresses collected door-to-door by candidates. These emails are stored and the data is issued on a local level for the issuing of e-bulletin updates that alert voters on how they have tackled the voters concerns. Internal marketing is again perceived in a communications role with the party representative stating what the party has achieved via their newsletter “the Green voice”. Members receive monthly lists relating to what they have achieved in government. O Caomhanaigh believes that these publications motivate party members. There are also some national initiatives used by the party like the establishment of recruitment stalls but most internal activities happen at a local level and this is where people get most involved.

6.2.10 Issues in modern day politics

O Caomhanaigh noted that job creation is one of the government’s main priorities, to ensure young people are provided with the opportunity to work in this country.

They Green Party also hope to provide a high quality education service for our children. O Caomhanaigh alluded to the fact that the Green party prevented the re-introduction of fees as one of their successes in government to date. In relation to the main issues in modern politics, O Caomhanaigh sees that as job creation, creating capital for new businesses, and political reform including financial sector which they see as a huge issue.

It is also a Green party priority to stabilize the banking system as this is the cornerstone to creating job creation. O Caomhanaigh feels that National Assets Management Agency is the best course of action at this moment of time although he does acknowledge there may need to be adjustments made in the coming years to this framework. Providing domestic based business is also a priority of the Green party in the life time of the government. They hope to introduce a ban on corporate donations

which will be introduced in the six months. Finally they hope to provide energy insulation and introduce legislation on noise pollution.

6.2.11 The Internet

The internet has impacted on the Green party in recent years with the introduction of the live online forum alluded to earlier. O Caomhanaigh states even the email has played a major part in the communication between members. Emails are sent to Green Party members to give them an update of what they Green party TD, s and Senators are doing.

6.2.12 Concluding remarks

When asked if politics is becoming more like any other product in that we are expected to or can consume. O Caomhanaigh was in no doubt that the answer to this question was yes he likened politics to TV entertainment. The interviewee again cited the cynical media who he believes do not give people a fair hearing he was quoted as saying that “you get your sentence now and the hearing is later”. O Caomhanaigh states that this development is only really benefiting papers as it is there job to sell more papers and negative media will increase audiences.

6.2.13 Social media

O Caomhanaigh remarks the use of social media as a political marketing technique is beneficial, however he noted that it may be used more frequently in the run up to elections as candidates strive to get elected. O Caomhanaigh also notes that the use of the internet is important in capturing the youth vote in particular with the party concentrating on the use of popular sites such as YouTube. The Green party realises that they must think outside the box to attract the youth vote, but the party is predominantly reliant on the expertise of volunteers to leverage their efforts in the market place. The interviewee states that niches are becoming more important in the Irish political marketplace, especially for the Green party who is finding the use of niche marketing quite effective for the growth of the party. They Green party currently experiencing some problems with voter's perception, as O Caomhanaigh remarked on several occasion the influence of the cynical media.

They do however wish to overcome these problems and hope voters will see the positives rather than the negatives they have achieved in government.

6.3 Fine Gael

6.3.1 The Marketing defined

Mr Tom Curran (general secretary) was selected for an in-depth interview on Fine Gael. When asked to define marketing, Mr. Curran described it as a sale of a product or service. He also noted that it is about devising strategies to inform the public about the product and try and get them to therefore purchase the product prescribed to an organisation.

6.3.2 Marketing techniques

First of all Curran suggests it is essential to distil the party's message down to simple things that the public understand. Secondly they try to sell policies such as the health care system at present and aim to get it across to people in the desired manner.

Fine Gael normally tests their propositions with focus groups with the aim of establishing whether a new policy is in fact feasible or will resonate with the public.

Whichever policies resonate with the public is therefore chosen as policies for future elections. Curran contributes door-to-door canvassing as the best and most important marketing technique used by Fine Gael. Despite the fact that this is the most traditional form of marketing employed by parties,

Curran still firmly believes this is the most effective form of marketing available. Fine Gael usually encourages candidates to canvass all year round and when asked if this happens Curran suggested it does not.

Although door to door is the most effective marketing technique it was suggested that the internet is becoming more prominent in recent years especially at targeting the youth vote. In recent internet incentives the party posted informational videos of all their female representatives on YouTube. Curran was keen to suggest that the party will be devoting a greater proportion of resources to researching the effective use of the internet for the party. When asked to compare political marketing versus commercial marketing, Curran suggested that both are quite similar in that the aim to distil things down to a simple message. However, Curran did suggest that political marketing was more complex in that you have to convey trust to your customers. He also noted that with political marketing you are trying to sell concepts and ensuring voters can trust you to do the job. In contrast when advertising a product it is much easier and less time consuming.

6.3.3 Values of political marketing

Curran noted the objective of marketing within Fine Gael is about the communication and getting the message across. The example cited by Curran are new policy ideas such as “Fair Care” a policy around the health care they therefore devise communication strategies to sell the idea to the public domain. The interviewee is adamant in stressing the importance of packaging the message before its delivery to the voting public. Fine Gael feel marketing is a way of advertising the message of new policy decisions and devising new communication strategies.

In relation to non election time they have a communication department with two to three employees. In terms of election time they hire a bigger election team in marketing or communications.

6.3.4 Memorable political marketing campaigns

When probed on which political marketing campaign. Curran alluded to the John Burton administration where there was a strategy around government progress. This strategy was seen as a marketing failure as it did not resonate with the voting public. In the last General Election Curran noted that they party developed a notion whereby they promoted the idea they were going to do a fair deal with a slogan “sign up to the Fine Gael being in government” this was adopted from their American counterparts. He also noted that political marketing is all about adopting defensive strategies against rival parties whereby you have to pre-empt what other parties are going to do or say.

6.3.5 Voters

When asked whether there is any confusion with the voting public as to what the party stands for and beliefs and policies are. Curran suggested that the public were quite elusive until recently however, people have become more interested in recent times as the economy has declined and their pockets have been hit. Some people Curran suggests feel that all parties are the same and there are no policy differences. Curran suggests that there is no apparent difference in the three main parties in Ireland Labour party, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. They are all in the centre right of centre or left of centre Curran noted. There are no radical parties at either end of the spectrum. In relation, to the question whether voters play a major role in the development of creation of policies. Curran suggested that the statement is true and noted that it comes about by the development of policy. Fine Gael do what is known as survey

canvassing to establish the voting public's needs and wants. They also carry out focus groups to help research and test propositions. When there is a demand for a certain proposition the policy is therefore implemented.

6.3.6 Youth voters

When probed on the apparent decline in the youth vote globally, Curran noted that Fine Gael in fact increased their youth vote in the last General Election. However, Fine Gael are not sure why this happened, this maybe because they offer younger candidates which may attract younger voters. In terms of attracting the youth vote they have a very active young Fine Gael that is separate from the party they do however fund it. This can lead to a degree of risk as Fine Gael has no control over what young Fine Gaels message is. The interviewee also noted that although indentifying the youth vote is important, attracting the grey vote is just as important because there is a greater tendency for older people to vote. Therefore Curran suggests that with limited resources the grey vote is the best to target. Curran notes that if you "target everybody you target nobody". Fine Gael feel the best way of getting to the young people is through the internet.

6.3.7 Attracting the youth

When asked what Fine Gael are doing to capture the youth market, Curran noted that the website is used to capture the youth vote the party leader also sends out a weekly address through the internet to every member of the party.

Curran also suggested that loyalty is changing amongst the youth vote in particular. Further to this he notes the core vote for any political party is shrinking all the time. When asked how the party attract new members to the party, Curran noted numerous ways in which the party does this. A variety of TDs and senators sometimes drop around literature to their local constituents. The internet is also very prominent in that they have 5-10 applicants on the internet per week. Curran states that since the youth spend a great deal of time on the web this a good forum to attain members. Fine Gael also attracts new members through Young Fine Gael, Curran notes this is key to attract new members to the party.

6.3.8 Internal marketing

Fine Gael is organised into 1,200 branches around the country with over 35,000 members. The most effective form of recruitment for the party is whereby new candidates bring in new people with them. There is also a recruitment drives whereby

the party go and drop leaflets in doors to people, telling voters what they party actually stands for. In relation to active members Fine Gael sends out text messages and emails as a means of alerting members to party activities. Party member are also invited to any constituency meetings throughout the year. Fine Gael also communicates to their members through newsletters two times per year.

6.3.9 Issues in modern politics

Curran proceeded to discuss the issues in modern politics as rebuilding the economy, implementing the correct policies and trying to build an economy or a society.

Fine Gael also hopes to build fairness and aim to ensure society is more equal.

6.3.10 The Internet

The internet has played a key role for the party however, Curran noted that a British economist suggested the internet did not have the impact they felt it would have in the recent election. Fine Gael is heavily influenced by the internet as the party leader is on Facebook. They intend to be brand leaders in the area of technology by the next election. Fine Gaels main aims of the internet campaign are to ensure it will be the new way of communication and they hope journalists will write about it which will create positive publicity for the party. However, Curran suggests the negatives of the internet as a marketing technique are the fact it is time consuming and also the fact it is very hard to measure whether it is effective or not.

6.3.11 Concluding remarks

In concluding remarks Curran stresses that the marketing of the party predominantly rests with the candidates themselves as they have the most influence at a local level. Curran feels politics is like any product or service in that you are expected to or can consume he notes that the media are behind this as it is in their interest to sell papers essentially. Curran also hopes that the use of social media will have an impact with the use of Facebook, twitter.

6.4 Fianna Fail

6.4.1 Marketing defined

In order to ensure consistency in the research, the general secretary of Fianna Fail Mr. Sean Dorgan was interviewed. In discussion of the term marketing Dorgan noted that it is his view that there is a practical and theoretical definition of marketing. It is Fianna Fails view that marketing is about insuring the needs and wants of voters are at the forefront of the party's core principals. Dorgan did acknowledged that there are

some similarities between political marketing and commercial marketing he notes the main difference in the political marketplace is that it is not a consumer lead market; which in turn means the traditional marketing mix in its traditional form is not applicable. Dorgan also noted that the text book approach to marketing does not apply to political marketing context.

Dorgan notes politics is more complex than selling a service or a product.

6.4.2 The Marketing of the Party

Dorgan suggests that internally within the organisation they communicate through post, email and text alerts to all party members. The interviewee also noted that Fianna Fail have 65,000 members which is a staggering statistic. Fianna Fail managed to keep up its retention rates of members despite the fact they are in government through this bleak economic period.

Fianna Fail adopts similar techniques to the other three parties interviewed which are detailed in the proceeding research and it appears to have worked effectively for the party. Dorgan notes that externally Fianna Fail use direct marketing through person to person contact stating this is a major element of communication between the party and the electorate.

6.4.3 Marketing techniques

Dorgan cites door to door canvassing as the most crucial way of marketing the party. Additionally Dorgan remarks it is traditional techniques which the electorate resonate with most. When asked to compare political marketing to commercial marketing.

Dorgan stressed there are similarities from business to business model where the same concept applies just because it fits the two previous models he suggests it does not mean it will fit the next strategy. Further to this Dorgan notes that political marketing is essentially where candidates try to get elected by throwing money in to get elected whether that is through leaflets or updating their individual website. This does not necessarily mean they get elected Dorgan cited a senator who did not get elected despite conducting all the key variables.

6.4.4 Memorable political marketing campaigns

When questioned on the party's most memorable political marketing campaigns, Dorgan cited numerous cases. Firstly the 1997 General Election where Bertie Ahern was first elected Taoiseach the slogan was "people before politics" which seemed to capture the imagination of the voting public. In 2002 there slogan was a "lot done

more to do” which was simple but quite effective he felt. The final campaign he noted was the 2007 election which he deemed the most memorable campaign as the lead up to the election they party were behind in all opinion polls. The campaign theme for this election was ”taking the next steps”.

Dorgan noted there are a number of levels to a campaign you have both a national and local aspect. The most important aspect he feels is what your party’s policies are and who your candidates are. He feels good candidates are essential as people vote for candidates not the party you have to have quality candidates he notes.

6.4.5 Voters

When asked whether the voting public are confused as to what they party stands for. Dorgan disagreed with this statement, when probed he suggested that the Irish electorate are quite sophisticated. Dorgan feels that the electorate know what they are looking for and are more attuned to public affairs with the growing use of online and social media creating awareness for them. When asked whether the public have much of an influence on the creation of policies of the party. Dorgan noted that the public have an opportunity every 5 years to make their grievances known. Fianna Fail he noted has a very open democracy where all the representatives have the opportunity to express their opinion every day. The interviewee feels ultimately it is the government’s job to lead it is easy to be in opposition and disagree with every policy introduced. Dorgan cited the Labour party as an example of this where he deems the "sit on the fence" and has no views on any issues. The final way they keep in touch with voters is parliamentary meetings where the voting public have ample opportunity to express concerns.

6.4.6 Targeting the youth

In relation to the youth vote declining in Ireland, Dorgan was unsure of this statement he noted that young people tend to be more interested especially now with the state of the economy. Dorgan cited the Lisbon treaty as evidence of the young people getting out there and voting. He also alluded to the fact that the timing of the election is a key factor in the youth vote been low. He noted most elections may be conducted during the week when students are away from their constituency. Fianna Fail do not appear to be doing as much to capture this market as the Green party for example who goes around to the schools on numerous visits. They are however on Facebook and Twitter the more youth directed sites which aim to capture a degree of this market.

In relation to the whole area of loyalty amongst the voting public Dorgan agrees that there is a change in loyalty amongst voters in comparison to the 1970,s and 80, where the electorate was extremely loyal. Dorgan noted people now make their own minds up and are not influenced by their parents as were once the case. Further to this Dorgan suggests people are also influenced by the local constituency more in terms of local candidates. The core vote for all the parties has declined in recent opinion polls Dorgan suggested that there is an increasing number of what is known as the floating voters and it is all parties aim to tap into that area of the electorate.

6.4.7 Innovations introduced by Fianna Fail

When asked about new innovations Dorgan noted that they are not interested in ploys such as those used by Fine Gael. Fianna Fail have introduced new innovations such as Facebook, Twitter; leafleting and they have more frequent texts alerts to insure their members have more information. Dorgan noted that politics is not really about these entities it is ultimately about doing the right thing in relation to policies.

6.4.8 Attracting new active members

The party attracts new active members through a variety of forums such as voters joining through local TDs. Dorgan also noted that 1000 people contacted the party in the last year with the view of joining the party. The interviewee noted people join the Greens through various campaigns such as the Lisbon campaign which created awareness of the party. Fianna Fail also actively goes out and tries to recruit people through Ogra Colleges. They attract in the region of 5,000 members every year and they have the largest youth wing in the country. Dorgan does acknowledge they could be more proactive with the possibility of distributing more leaflets and emails. Dorgan also feels they should have younger candidates which may attract younger people to the party.

6.4.9 Internal marketing

When asked whether the party engages in any internal marketing to motivate members. Dorgan noted that they provide a weekly newsletter at both a national and local level. They also send weekly emails to members to inform them of any meetings in the upcoming weeks. In addition Fianna Fail distributes a quarterly newsletter which is provided to their 65,000 thousand members. The aim of this is to make members aware of where they stand on policy issues. This may also include regional meetings which is a new innovation Dorgan noted where the invite all the members of

the party to a private meeting to talk about the economy the tourism and banking sector.

6.4.10 Issues in modern politics

Dorgan reply was no different to the three other parties. The main issues Dorgan feels is the future of our economy everybody has an interest in that he feels in terms of their own life's and their own homes. The banking sector is also a major priority for the government unsurprisingly. Dorgan noted that the banking sector is very important not only from an Irish perspective but also to provide confidence from the international markets which will therefore encourage foreign direct investment.

6.4.11 The Internet

When questioned on the impact of the internet on the party Dorgan suggested everyone in politics was fascinated with the Barack Obama phenomenon. He noted all the political parties were in Denver for the primary, to assess this phenomenon.

Fianna Fail have since retained president Obamas web consultants however, Dorgan noted when analysing the British elections there was major hype that it was going to be the first internet election, it was Fianna Fails view it was not. Mr Brown he felt, saved 50 to 60 seats in the lead up to the election through door-door canvassing leafleting in Dorgan's view. Dorgan feels Ireland is a long way from America in that it is a different culture. Although he does feel that the intent is important he does not feel it will you an election.

6.4.12 Concluding remarks

When asked whether politics is becoming more like any other product in that you are expected or can consume Dorgan does not agree with this statement.

Dorgan feels that social media is a great way to communicate with consumers as it allows the party to distribute their message.

6.5 Labour party

6.5.1 Marketing defined

In order to provide a holistic approach to the authors research Ita McAuliffe the general secretary of the Labour party was selected. In relation to the Labour party McAuliffe deems the term marketing in the political sphere to the process by which organisations generate interest in their views or policy's. The most important roles in the party are around organisation and policy development. Marketing is merely the process used to highlight the work in those areas. The objective of marketing within the party is to generate the maximum public attention for the work been done on organisation and policy. McAuliffe notes that the Labour party have a specific press office responsible for public relations. In addition to this, several senior members of staff have responsibility for various aspects of marketing.

6.5.2 Marketing techniques

In relation to the marketing techniques used by Labour party McAuliffe noted that this information is particularly sensitive in the run-up to the next General Election, so she responded in generalities. McAuliffe did however note that, it is clear that social networking is rising in importance within online marketing, and that the focus for online advertising is shifting considerably. The marketing techniques used by the party are varied McAuliffe notes that it would be extremely difficult to identify one technique which could be considered the most important in marketing the party.

Direct mail, email blasting, posters, billboards, online advertising, newspaper advertising, performance in broadcast and print media and use of social networks all present very different ways of communicating with the public, and any successful political party must use all of these in order to maximise their communication.

In relation to political marketing or commercial marketing, it is the Labour party's view that they are informed by many of the same strategies, but the difference in values makes them very different techniques. While the Labour party seek to convince people that positive change is possible in Irish society, commercial marketing is focussed on a very different space.

6.5.3 Values of political Marketing

In relation to what the Labour party feel are the values of political marketing?

It would be their assessment that the values of the party must inform the values of all of their activities, including any marketing activity.

6.5.4 Memorable political marketing campaigns

McAuliffe responded based on what the most memorable campaign was for her. She noted it was, the 'Ethics in Government, Justice in the Economy' marketing campaign run by the Labour party in the run-up to the 1992 General Election. This she notes stands out as the most successful campaign they have run to date.

6.5.5 Voters

McAuliffe feels that there is a lot of confusion amongst voters when they try to define a difference in values or policy between Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil, but that is to be expected when comparing two parties of the centre-right. McAuliffe views that the values and policies of the Labour party stand in clear opposition to those of the two larger parties, and that voters are clearly aware of that. When probed on the claim that voters have a significant input into the creation of policies of their party. McAuliffe noted that it would be more accurate to state that members have a significant input into the creation of policies within political parties. Further to this McAuliffe noted voters can influence the policy by becoming active within political parties.

The Labour party holds an annual conference each year, at which any member of the party can submit motions. These motions are binding party policy, and must be respected by all spokespeople. McAuliffe does not feel that because the Labour party are offering a service that it makes it harder to market your party. The interviewee notes at present there is enormous political interest in Ireland, which if anything has made the marketing of politics easier at this time.

6.5.6 Youth Vote

In relation to the suggestion that there has been a global trend where the youth vote is declining. McAuliffe agreed with this statement and went on to say that the youth vote has declined in many countries, but there was a reversal of that trend in the last US Presidential election. McAuliffe suggests that this gives Irish political parties a clear roadmap about how the declining youth vote can be reversed. The Labour party has been very active in attracting youth to their party. McAuliffe eludes to Labour Youth who are the youth section of the Labour party, and are open to anyone aged 15-25. Over the last 12 months alone, they have doubled their membership, and continue to be an extremely active campaigning organisation, which certainly helps them target younger voters. In addition to this, their attention to the online space is continuing to grow, reflecting the fact that many young voters are difficult to contact using more

traditional methods. Finally, the adoption of youth-friendly policies, and the selection of young candidates they hope will provide an additional boost to the Labour party in this area. It was interesting to note that McAuliffe feels that it appears that the politics of Ireland are about to change irrevocably. The Labour party has seen a diminishing of family loyalties to Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil over the last 20 years, and expects to see that process accelerate considerably in the run up to the next election.

6.5.7 Innovations by the party

In relation to any new innovations introduced by the Labour party. McAuliffe notes that one of the biggest changes in the Labour party in recent years has been a considerable expansion in the number of organisers employed by the party.

This is a reflection of the campaigning focus of the Labour party, which seeks to empower people in communities all across Ireland to advocate on behalf of the party in their communities.

6.5.8 Internal marketing

The Labour party run regular recruitment campaigns both at local and national levels. It was also noted that they have seen a huge upsurge in membership over the last 12 months. The Labour party publishes an e-newsletter about 6 times a year, called Left Field. This is a magazine-type format which seeks to inform the membership, as well as call them to action. In addition to this, there would be regular communications, both local and national, with party members both to motivate them and empower them to campaign, but also to inform them so they can advocate better on behalf of the party.

6.5.9 Main issues in modern politics

It was interesting to note that the Labour party believe in "Creating a just economy "where everyone has the opportunity to work. They also believe in reforming our country so that all of the institutions of the state are fit for purpose. McAuliffe states uppermost in their priorities is building a fairer society, where everyone has access to high-quality and affordable public services. These are the three pillars which they are currently focused upon.

6.5.10 The Internet

Surprisingly the internet has provided amazing new possibilities and challenges for all political parties McAuliffe notes. Further to this she observes finding successful

marketing strategies for use in the online space has taken all political parties some time, but it is certainly an area that the Labour party now spend a great deal of effort. McAuliffe noted that they use Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, blogging and many other online tools within, and have found them to be both cost-effective and extremely successful. Unfortunately, McAuliffe was unable to expand as; this is a sensitive area as they approach the next General Election.

6.5.11 Concluding remarks

When probed whether the Labour party feel that politics is becoming more like any other product that we are expected to or can consume.

McAuliffe disagreed with this statement fundamentally suggesting that politics is about changing our country for the better and using our economy for the benefit of all our people which will never be a consumable product in Labour party's view.

McAuliffe notes that branding has always been an important tool in political marketing. The simplest example is the Labour rose, which means people clearly identify with the Labour party. While several iterations of the rose have existed over the years, the importance of this logo remains central to the Labour parties branding. In relation to the UK election and any comparisons which could be drawn between the two countries. McAuliffe noted that members of the Labour staff were in the UK to observe the General Election. The broad conclusion was that British elections are remarkably similar to Irish elections, except on a larger scale. The obvious difference was the impact of the 24 hour news cycle on the UK election a challenge that is lessened in an Irish context.

6.6 Interviews with local representatives

Fianna Fail councillor Orla Leyden

6.6.1 Targeting voters

Leyden noted that she does not consciously target specific groups during election time. The interviewee also noted the need to be visual, hence the use of billboards at her local offices. Leyden feels this brings some much needed attention to the candidate. Leyden feels it is important to be very active on local issues such as opposing local developments regardless of the perception this will give to your image. The interviewee also engages in the distribution of newsletters to create awareness of any issues in the locality which she is representing, such as the campaign to bring a cinema to Roscommon town.

6.6.2 Capturing the youth market

The interviewee has an online presence on Facebook because she feels most young people are active online and it is important to gain attention. Leyden also notes that she actively engages in local campaigns in the locality which has been very successful at capturing the youth market thus far.

6.6.3 Loyalty to parties among the youth

The interviewee feels loyalties have been changing for years noting the traditional parties are now losing out to candidates such as Independent representatives. Leyden remarks that voters are more concerned about policies rather than personalities.

Leyden adds it is all about what the candidate stands for and how effective they are at developing issues. The interviewee notes that people do see what you are doing and your track record will back that up.

6.6.4 Innovations introduced in order to reach the youth

The interviewee feels that there should be new voting legalisation whereby the voting age should be reduced to sixteen this would make the youth more active in politics at a early age. There should also be more youth clubs in the local region to reach out to the younger generation. Leyden cited the local Comhairles such as Dail Na Nog as positive innovations which help the youth become more interested in politics.

6.6.5 Policies V Personality

The interviewee feels what the political candidate stands for is more important than their individual personality and how the stand for local issues as suggested previously. Leyden notes that it is ineffective to have a good personality when your policies are efficient.

6.6.6 Key issues for first time voters

The interviewee feels that the main issue for first time voters are employment. She also believes that immigration will increase due to lack of employment. There is also an issue around the introduction of fees in education this she states is a major issue for first time voters.

Leyden states that the possibility of the abolishment of college grants is another major concern for youths.

6.6.7 Social media and its effectiveness

Leyden feels that the most effective way to succeed in elections is having an all round effective campaign. The interviewee observes social media is not effective if you

“bombard” people with press releases. The interviewee notes social media must be used in the correct manner to generate positive results.

Interview with Fine Gael TD Denis Naughten Roscommon North Leitrim

6.6.8 Targeting voters

Naughten targets each category of voters in different ways. Naughten states he targets local radio as a means of attracting the youth. Naughten has set up a Facebook page aimed at targeting the youth vote. Naughten attends numerous seminars to keep in touch with local youths. In terms of the older generation the constituency office is used as a platform to attract their vote.

Naughten distributes letters to constituent’s houses which is mainly aimed at generating the older vote.

6.6.9 Youth Vote declining

Naughten was in agreement with the notion of youth vote declining it is the interviewee’s opinion that previously to the economic downturn the youth were not interested in politics, however in the last year or so the youth are more interested due to lack of employment.

It is Naughtens view that the youth of today are also far more educated which bodes well for the future of our economy.

6.6.10 Policies V Personality

The interviewee was in agreement that policies are far more important than personalities echoing the views of general secretary Curran. The interviewee also feels not only is policy important, its needs to be directed at the youth for it to resonate with them.

6.6.11 Key issues for first time voters

Naughten like all the other previous interviewees feels employment is the number one issue for not only the youth but Irish society. The interviewee notes that the education system needs reform in particular the points system which Naughten feels is very unfair.

6.6.12 Social media and its effectiveness

Naughten feels that social media can be quite effective however he believes it will not win you elections. The interviewee feels that in the coming years it may be more prominent, this would very much be in line with the Fine Gaels general secretary Curran’s views.

Interview with Frank Feighan Fine Gael spokesperson

Spokesperson for Community, Equality & Gaeltacht Affairs

6.6.13 Targeting voters

Feighan feels that distributing letters to constituents is effective at generating votes; however it is the interviewee's belief that door to door canvassing is still the most effective marketing technique. Feighan notes this as the best way of connecting with voters of all ages.

6.6.14 Youth vote

It is Feighan's view that in the "boom time" the youth did not think politics was necessary however in the current economic climate the youth are more conscious of politics.

6.6.15 Innovations to be introduced

Feighan feels that the age for voting should be reduced to 16 a point Leyden alluded to earlier. The interviewee also feels the introduction of online voting in General Elections would increase the voting turnout at elections. Another innovation Feighan feels would be effective is voting over two days this would insure everyone had a voice. Feighan is also active on the internet with his very own website which was updated recently.

6.6.16 Policy's v personalities

Feighan feels that policy is more important than personality. It is his view in the boom time people were more concerned with people's personalities citing Bertie Ahern. Feighan referred to this as "Hello Magazine politics". Now people are more interested in the issues you stand for which would suggest that personality is not that important.

6.6.17 Issues in politics

Feighan's views are very much in line with all the other interviewees citing employment as the single most important issue facing the youth of today. The interviewee also views the points system as an area which needs reform. These views are very much in line with his colleague Naughten who also agrees with this statement.

6.6.18 Conclusions

While it must be noted that there has been a few new innovations in how parties market towards the public and in particular the youth, traditional direct marketing conduct such as door to door canvassing is still one of the major marketing techniques evident in the marketplace. In relation to all the interviews carried out there is no apparent differentiation in the ways the youth are targeted. The author noted that all interviewees are conscious of internet marketing but they only see it as part of the variable. It is the author's belief that there is scope for a big wave of political marketing directed at the youth. The author also noted from the research that the youth are becoming more educated and interested in politics however most respondents believe this is due to the recession. The following chapter provides an in-depth study on first time voters initially an academic background is provided to provide the road map for the primary research carried out.

Chapter Seven: First time voters research

7.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to gain an understanding into the consumer in the political environment in this case first time voters of the age 16-21 years of age. To review this, relevant academic literature will be reviewed in particular the whole area of young people's apathy towards politics will be researched in detail. Section 7.2 explores the reasoning behind the decline in youth vote in the UK. Further to this 7.2 explores the whole area of young people's apathy. Section 7.2 provides a succinct analysis on the primary research carried out with first time voter.

7.2 Young people's apathy

Authors such as White (2003) remark that political parties are in danger of alienating themselves from the voting public if they do not tailor their offerings, Whites research specifically focuses on the area of youth vote and her findings were rather interesting and are as follows. White (2003) states young people are not unique in their response to politics, and remarks much of the electorate seems have similar views. Further to this White (2003) notes politicians need to give more consideration to establishing forums that help facilitate a dialogue between them and young people. White (2003) outlines three key areas which political parties need to focus on in order to attract the youth vote. Firstly politics need to be made more interesting and explained to the market in terms the electorate can identify with. Secondly the political candidates need to be representative of the electorate so the market believes they will adequately address represent their needs. Further to this politicians need to provide more opportunities to the young people to become involved in politics in order to stimulate interest. White, Bruce and Richie (2000) note the way that the youth of today viewed politics was a key factor in their apparent apathy towards it. White et al. (2000) notes through research carried out politicians were seen as been trustworthy and self serving essentially. White et al. (2000) also notes that the young people interviewed were extremely negative. White et al. (2000) states despite this, it was noted that young people engaged in political activates relating to issues associated with themselves in local communities. Some notable example of the cases which resonate with us would be closure of hospitals. White et al. (2000) also appears to suggest that young people who were interested in politics felt powerless. White et al. (2000) finally suggests that there is too much emphasis on the apparent apathy amongst the youth without the acknowledgement that young people are in fact involved in a variety of political activities. According to Marsh (2004) young people want and do not take their views for granted. Marsh (2000) further notes that young people feel that politics is something that is forces on them and not something they feel part of. Marsh (2000) remarks this shows that there is in fact an alienation rather than apathy. Further to this Marsh (2000) appears to suggest that if governments want young people to vote for them they must first listen. Marsh (2004) research also reveals that despite young people's alienation they are highly articulate and aware of political implications of

some issues. Marsh (2004) concluded his study by suggesting young people are not concerned with politics in the way that governments would resonate with.

7.2.1 Engaging with young people's conceptions of the political

O'Toole (2003) states that there is widespread concern in relation to the deterioration of voting numbers worldwide. O'Toole (2003) goes on to suggest that to understand why young people are withdrawing from conventional forms of political participation, it is essential to examine how young people themselves conceive of and experience the political, using methods which avoid imposing a definition on the respondents.

O'Toole (2003) also notes that in the UK in particular there was consternation in 2001 election due to the poor turnout amongst the age 18-24. The voting turnout was 39% against the European average of 59%. O,Toole (2003) suggests these turnouts reflect a continuing downward trend in youth participation in the UK in particular. A study from White, Bruce & Ritchie, (2000) notes that young people are indeed turning away from formal, mainstream politics. White et, al.(2000) also state that this does not mean they youth are politically apathetic, rather that the youth of today are reasonably interested in politics and political issues, but are in fact cynical about politicians and formal mechanisms for political participation.

O,Toole (2003) also argues that non- participation by youth is seen as been politically apathetic yet it is far more complex phenomenon: O Toole suggests that it is not clear why people do not participate whether this is due to political apathy, alienation, or plainly because people choose to participate in ways which research has not identified. Henn, Weinstein, and Wring (1999) research concluded that young people are disengaged from formal, mainstream politics and are more likely to participate in informal politics.

7.2.2 Viewing young people as distinct

Parry, Moyser, and Day (1992) observe with regard to the problem of lack of explanations for declining political engagement among young people that most of the literature does not take acknowledge the circumstances and issues that affect young people in comparison with adults.

A major area O Toole (2003) alludes to which has been overlooked is generation effect. Generation's effect arises from the fact that successive generations face new challenges of which the previous generation has not experienced.

7.2.3 Young people and voting behaviour

Dermody and Hanmer Lyold (2005) found that young people are the most disengaged of all the electorate in Britain, with a trend evolving whereby they are increasingly not voting when they become eligible. Dermody and Hanmer Lyold (2005) also revealed that non-voting is the norm for 18-24 year olds as 43% did not vote in the 1997 election. Dermody and Hanmer Lyold (2005) observe the evidence pertaining to youth politically negative attitudes indicates, very strongly that their appraisals are not positive. Dermody and Hanmer Lyold (2005) also state young people are sceptical of the intentions of governments and political parties.

The overriding feeling Dermody and Hanmer Lyold (2005) note is that many young people claim that they are slightly confused about the electoral process and party, manifestos. Dermody and Hanmer Lyold (2005) feel there is a risk that their cynicisms verges on paranoia concerning the intentions of governments. The research is quite limited in the area of youth political consumer behaviour, especially from a marketing perspective. In order to further the author's knowledge in this particular area the next element of the study is aimed at getting a more rounded view of the political consumer in this case first time voters of the age 16-21. The required marketing intelligence was retrieved via questionnaires and two focus groups and the results are now presented and discussed below.

7.3 Results and discussion on primary research

Research conducted on the Youth as political consumer focus group findings and questionnaire data

A copy of the focus group questions and survey questionnaires can be found in appendices 5.

The main themes of the focus group and questionnaires will now be discussed in detail to provide an in-depth knowledge of the youth of today.

The aim of this study was to gain a firsthand experience of the actual issues in modern politics as viewed by the youth of today. It was also hoped that this research would provide some solutions as to what areas the author needed to research in more detail.

The themes are now listed as they appeared in the research.

7.3.1 First time voters knowledge and understanding of the political process of Ireland

The interest in politics amongst the sample of youths was surprisingly high among the purposive sample. The author noted that 66% of respondents felt politics mattered to people of their age whilst 34 % state it does not resonate with them. The researcher also noted that 76% stated they would vote in the next election, with 24% declining to vote this would appear to add weight to the argument. In relation to knowledge of Irish politics 44% of respondents stated they had very little knowledge followed by 41% stating a moderate knowledge with only 17% having a strong knowledge. The author can see this rising as the youth become more conscious of employment and education policies.

7.3.2 What would make political parties more attractive to first voters

The majority of respondents replied that if the policies were more welcoming towards younger people they would vote. Respondents felt at election time the advertising was more aimed at older people so they could understand it rather than the youth.

The author noted that young people would appreciate local politicians visiting Comhairles more regularly. A certain degree of the respondents would be in favour of a reduction in the age limit for voting. In relation to the question of the effectiveness of social media as a political marketing tool a slight majority of 58% responded it is effective, however 42% of respondents note it may in fact be a deterrent to potential voters. The author noted that respondents would be in favour of a party specifically directed at young people.

7.3.3 What Irish parties represent

When asked about what Irish parties represented most of the candidates associated the Green party with the environment. They respondents also felt that Fianna Fail represented the middle class of society whilst Fine Gael represented the upper class and finally Labour represented the working class this was the view held by all respondents. Most respondents felt that there is no specific party that deals with young people or old they are all rather generalized. They respondents feel this is an area which may need to be looked into.

7.3.4 Involvement in politics

The majority were involved in tidy towns and also save our hospital campaigns was rather prominent. The majority of respondents were also not aware these campaigns were actually classed a form of politics which was quite striking. The author noted that all, candidates from the focus group replied they will vote in the upcoming election as it they feel the need to insure that the youth of today express the voice.

7.3.5 Issues in politics

Of the respondents a staggering 81% stated employment as the key issue for the youth of today. Respondents view health care and political charisma as second and third most important issues to them. Among the respondents some noted the issues for them were the fear of not gaining the desired College place. The researcher also noted the rise in the points in the aftermath of the leaving cert has led to certain degree of apathy among the youth category. Surprisingly there was also disquiet regarding medical cards among the youth vote. It was noted that despite the fact that a person under 18 has a medical card they cannot use it unless a parent is with them.

7.3.6 Employment issues

This like all other voting categories is an obvious concern among the youth vote. The lack of employment is a deterrent to their budding careers as they youth have no part time jobs which would allow them they privilege of going to college. They respondents feel that in the case of actually going to college that the course the studied in will not provide any work these are all major concerns among the youth of today and there does not appear to be any quick fix solution to this issues. All respondents would like more college places and a restructuring of the points system.

7.3.7 Issues in modern politics

In relation to the issues in modern politics the respondents viewed environmental issues as being to the forefront of political issues. The respondents also noted that financial issues was a major factor in politics today as all the major countries in the world are currently in financial difficulty. It was also noted by the respondents that Ireland have too much of a reliance on other countries such as America stating this as a detriment as any difficulties they Ireland suffers two fold.

7.3.8 Charisma

The author noted that 81. % of respondents feel there is a lack of charisma in politics today with 19% stating there is not a lack of charisma in politics. The respondents viewed this as complex issues most respondents noted that someone with charisma normally has a good personality but this can be lost in political parties as they have to tow the party line so to speak. Confidence is also a key variable they respondents noted it is pointless choosing a politician with personality because they lose this when they are affiliated with a political party. Respondents also cited Bertie Ahern as been evidence of a charismatic leader of our generation. In the worldwide domain Mr Barack Obama was an obvious candidate chosen by everyone.

7.3.9 Policy V Personality

The next topic was in relation to whether policies were more important to the youth vote or personalities. Party policy was deemed most important amongst the purposive sample with 41 % versus candidate's personality with 30.5%. However it was interesting to note that 29% would favour a combination of the two. Party policies and beliefs were listed as the main influence on respondent's decision making. It was also noted that the youth of today are not fooled by someone with pure personality characteristic they have to be strong on policy issues also. It was also noted that personality will not run the country policy's will.

7.3.10 Characteristics of politicians

The author noted that although 81% of respondents felt there was a lack of charisma in this generation. Only 12% state this as their number one characteristic they strive for. Honesty and integrity garnered 63% whilst leadership qualities 19% rated it as their most important characteristic. This would suggest that the discussion on charisma is overstated and respondents are more policy driven. The respondents rated

organisation skills and communications as the lowest in priority 5% and 2% rating it as their favoured characteristic.

7.3.11 Political marketing

When asked about the term marketing in general respondents noted that it is the presentation of products or goods and services with the view of increasing demand. In relation to political marketing respondents suggested that it involves the whole area of a political candidate selling themselves and their party. It is also pivotal that the candidate has a good canvassing team that embodies the candidate's values and beliefs that is the view of the respondents. Some however were slightly sceptical as they feel they candidates only visit your house if they are looking for your vote.

7.3.12 Memorable political marketing campaigns

Respondents noted that that the most memorable campaigns in Ireland have been Bertie Aherns 2007 election where Fianna Fail were down in the polls and turned it around to win comprehensively. From an international perspective Barack Obama was again cited by all the respondents as been the most notable political marketing campaign.

7.3.13 Social media

In relation to whether social media is an effective marketing tool they respective respondents were in slightly sceptical about this. A proportion of the youth vote viewed this as been a deterrent rather than a benefit to the candidate's chance of being elected. However 48% of the purposive sample viewed social media as effective with 42% questioning its effectiveness.

7.3.14 Conclusion

This chapter was designed to gain an insight into mind of first time voters in Ireland. The primary research allowed for in-depth analysis to take place on view of first time voters in relation to a number of issues outline above, tying in with the objectives laid out in chapter one. In relation to what would make political parties more attractive to the young people of today respondents noted that the use of more young candidates would is an attraction for young people. Social media appears to be effective however political parties need to be more imaginative in attracting younger people's votes.

8.0 Chapter Eight: Discussion and analysis

8.1 Introduction

As outlined in chapter three of this study a number of objectives was selected to create structure to the process the research. Due to this the following chapter will discuss in detail each of the stated objectives and analysis of the results will be discussed.

Section 8.2 provides a discussion on the aforementioned researched objectives also outlining any issues arising from the study. Section 8.3 will explore the future of political marketing. Further to this 8.4 outlines areas where future research is required. 8.5 will explore possible conclusions and recommendation.

8.2 Discussion

The initial objective of this research was to identify the main characteristics first time voters expect from politicians today. This was achieved through the distribution of the questionnaires. As stated previously honesty and integrity was viewed as the most important characteristic among respondents. The second element of the author's research involved assessing the area of political marketing. The author decided that to provide a holistic approach to the study, UK and the US would be researched. As stated in the initial objectives there was a need to understand and analyse the current marketing techniques utilised by political parties and this was examined through the in-depth interviews with the general secretaries of Fianna Fail, Labour party, Green party and Fine Gael. To support this analysis the author carried out primary research which assesses which marketing techniques were effective to them.

The key findings the originating from this analysis were namely that direct communications with voters from a door to door perspective is most effective. The research found that social media as a marketing technique has yet to capture the imagination of the youth vote, additionally political parties are unsure of its effectiveness. Therefore there is clearly scope for further research into this particular topic area. The primary research also served to open up a discussion on the key issues in modern politics for the youth of today and this was thus compared with what the general secretaries of the main political parties.

The research also suggests that the political candidates are very much in tune with the key issues affecting younger voters. Additionally the primary research suggested that the apparent apathy towards politics was quite overstated with 66% of respondents stating they have an interest in politics and 76% stating they would vote in the next election. Additionally it is very clear from the research that the single most important issue is employment. In analysing the data collected throughout the in-depth interviews it is evident that the four main political parties are reliant on the same marketing techniques such as newsletters and door to door canvassing. Some of the political parties feel that the use of social media is an effective marketing technique such as Fine Gael, Green party and the Labour party, however it was noted that Fianna Fail feel it will not win you elections. This would very much support the primary research questionnaires whereby first time voters do not feel social media is an effective marketing technique.

The final objective the research aimed to establish was whether or not there was a degree of political apathy among first time voters. The primary research appears to dismiss this notion with a resounding majority of first time voters questioned stating they have an interest in politics. The main political parties were also dismissive of this notion stating the surge in numbers of applications for membership of their parties from young people.

The research also suggests that the Green party and Fine Gael are quite similar in trying to reach out to the public in innovative ways. Fianna Fail and Labour party maintain the traditional ways of doing things is the best option. The author noted a certain degree of cynicism towards the media particularly from the government parties such as Fianna Fail and the Green party. Additionally there does appear to be a differentiation between political parties on the relevance of studying international elections. Fianna Fail and Fine Gael in particular note that Irelands culture and historical background makes any comparisons irrelevant, however the Labour party feel that there are many similarities between the UK elections and Irish ones. In relation to the local politicians interviewed their views are very much in line with the respective general secretary's. To conclude, it is apparent that all the parties were very forthcoming with information. It is apparent that there will be changes to the way first time voters are targeted for example through social media. However each party maintain that the traditional approaches to marketing are best to reach the target market at this juncture.

8.2.1 Future of political marketing

It is clear that all the political party utilise political marketing to the best of their ability's. There is no doubt that the marketing techniques deemed as most effective is door to door canvassing. However areas such as internet marketing can be the future, the author believes. The internet is a strategic opportunity which can be utilised in some areas of political marketing. In some countries such as the US online efforts are more advanced but as the web continues to grow in significance online political marketing will grow accordingly.

There is no doubt political marketing is a global phenomenon with parties from all over the globe developing political marketing manifestos based on results from qualitative to quantitative market research. The author noted that voters now choose

parties as consumers choose products; the global rise in political marketing provides a challenge for all political systems.

8.2.2 Future research:

It is clear that there needs to be further research into the whole area of social media and its effectiveness. The full potential of social networking sites has not been recognised and there is scope for further research into how they are affecting the marketplace.

8.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

This dissertation has been constructed around the analysis of marketing in the political domain. The main focus of this study was first time voters. It is clear from the research that there a problem been encountered between politicians and conveying the correct message to youth. It is however clear that the notion of political apathy is overstated. It is also clear from the research that loyalty amongst the traditional larger parties such as Fianna Fail and Fine Gael is in decline which gives rise to the importance of political marketing for those parties. As election time is on the horizon, political parties should take note of the issues of the youth of today and they will no doubt reap the benefits. It is also very clear that the notion of social media been effective in the political domain in Ireland is overstated. In fact there appears to be a certain degree of cynicism about the use of social media to the benefit of politicians. With a large number of floating voters in the market, political parties should do the simple things right to connect with first time voters such as seminars and visits to schools. Political parties should be more strategic in their thinking, it is clear that the strategy of forwarding youth candidates resonates with younger voters.

8.3.1 Recommendations for political parties to target first time voters

Political parties in Ireland need to recognise that policy is far more important than an extraverted type of politician among respondents. Making the correct policy decisions is a more important quality to have compared to a candidates personality.

Policy and legislation need to be collective, thinking and decision making among party members need to be researched among social agencies and economic institutions to give intelligence which will create economic and social change in our nation.

Political parties in Ireland need to be more active in reaching out to first time voters for example visits to local Comhairles or local schools. The government parties should take note of possible reform to our electoral system such as those Mr Feighan

alluded to previously. This would involve voting over two days in elections which would insure everyone had a voice. Another innovation numerous interviewees noted as a way of attracting youths to politics would be a reduction in the age of voting to 16. Additionally online voting in General Elections would increase the voting turnout at elections a view shared by numerous interviewees.

8.3.2 Conclusion

In conclusion the political parties in Ireland across the spectrum need to be aware that employment is the main issue at present. It is clear that employment is the most important issue at this moment in time for first time voters in Ireland.

Political parties need to invest in areas such as employment and training and third level education as these are all essential for our knowledge based economy.

Additionally as election time is drawing closer, political parties and candidates must note that strong and effective leadership is a valuable asset to possess.

The real test of a democracy is to ensure people are looked after in terms of social needs. Instead of been re-active, parties should be pro-active and this can be achieved by seeking out political marketing strategies from elsewhere and learning from them.

In critiquing the information gathered from the four main political parties, each party appears to recognise the growing need for reform in education and the need to establish employment in the country. To conclude it is very evident that the political parties are becoming more conscious of the youth vote with more of an emphasis on youth directed policies.

Fine Gael in particular are the party who are most youth directed as they actively try to generate the younger candidates to attract the youth vote. The author also noted the difference between the Green party and the remainder of the parties. The Green party do not make policy decisions just receive votes unlike Fianna Fail and Fine Gael for example who are very populist and sensitive to public opinion. Each party recognise the key issues in modern day politics the Labour party in particular are very much in favour of building a fairer more equal economy.

9.0 List of appendices

9.1 Appendices table

1. List of general secretary interviewees
2. List of local representatives interviewees
3. Interview questions for general secretaries
4. Interview questions for local politicians
5. Questionnaires
6. Analysis of the research on first time voters

9.2 Appendix 1

List of General Secretary Interviewees

Mr. Colm O Caomhanaigh

General Secretary

Green party Headquarters

16-17 Suffolk Street

Dublin 2

Mr. Tom Curran

General Secretary

Fine Gael Headquarters

51 Upper Mount Street

Dublin 2

Mr. Sean Dorgan

General Secretary

Fianna Fail Headquarters

65-66 Lower Mount Street

Dublin 2

Miss. ITA McAuliffe

General Secretary

Labour party Headquarters

17 Ely Place

Dublin 2

9.3 Appendix 2

List of local representatives interviewees

Mr Denis Naughten

Fine Gael TD Roscommon South Leitrim

Abbey Street

Roscommon

Frank Feighan

Fine Gael spokesperson for Gaeltacht Affairs Roscommon South Leitrim

Boyle

Roscommon

Orla Leyden

Roscommon South Leitrim County Councillor

Main Street Roscommon

9.4 Appendix 3

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

FOR GENERAL SECRETARIES

Marketing

1. What do you understand by the term marketing?

2. How important is marketing in your party?

3. What are the objectives of marketing in your party?

4. What marketing techniques do you consider the most important in communicating with the public?

5. How would you compare political marketing to commercial marketing?

6. What do you feel are the values of political marketing?

7. Can you establish your party's most memorable political marketing campaigns?

Voters

8. Do you think generally there is some confusion among the voting public as to what party stands for what beliefs values and policies?

9. There has been a global trend where the youth vote is declining, why do you think this is? What are you doing to capture this market?

10. Many political parties claim that voters have a significant input into the creation of policies of their political party, -what is your view of this statement?

11. Do you think loyalty to parties is changing among voters?

12. What innovations have your party introduced in order to reach the public?

The party

13. How does your party go about attracting new active members in the party?

14. What do you feel are the main issues in modern politics?

The Internet

15. How has the internet impacted on your party? What internet marketing techniques do you use?

Recommendations

16. Do you think that politics is becoming more like any other product that we are expected to or can consume?

17. How is this consumption of politics happening? Who is behind this and why?

18. Do you feel that the use of social media as a political marketing tool is effective?

-Twitter

-Facebook

-etc

9.5 Appendix 4

Interview questions

For local Representatives

1. What do you do to cater to the different categories of voters?

2. There has been a global trend where the youth vote is declining, why do you think this is?

3. What are you doing to capture this market?

4. Do you think loyalty to parties is changing among the youth vote?

5. What innovations do you think should be introduced in order to reach the youth?

6. Do you think policies are more important to the youth rather than the candidate's personality?

7. What do you feel are the key issues for first time voters in upcoming elections?

8. Do you feel the use of social media is effective marketing technique to target the youth vote?

9. Any additional comments?

9.6 Appendix 5 Survey Questionnaire



Hi my name is David Mullen I am currently studying an M.Sc in Marketing in IT Sligo. The research obtained from this questionnaire will be used to complete a dissertation research project based on " *first time voters assessing the potential impact of political marketing*" If you need to contact me my email address is s00057454@itsligo.ie. My supervisor is Dr John Pender lecturer of EU social policy and politics contact details penderjohn@itsligo.ie. I would be extremely grateful for your help. **The questionnaire is designed to take between 2-5 minutes.**

Political Marketing Survey

1. Does politics matter to people of your age?

Yes

No

2. How would you describe your knowledge of Irish political parties?

Very little

Moderate

Strong

3. What are the main issues people of your age are most concerned about?

Please rate in order of importance (1-5) 1 been the most important.

Employment

Banking sector

Political leadership

Health care policies

Lack of charismatic politicians

4. Please explain below the issue you indicated as most important?

5. Do you think you will vote in the next General Election?

Yes

No

6. Do you think there is a lack of charisma in today's generation of politicians?

Yes

No



7. What characteristics would you like your politicians to possess?

Please rate in order of importance (1-5) as you perceive them. 1 been the most important.

Honesty & integrity

Charisma

Leadership qualities

Communications skills

Good organisation skills

8. Do you feel political party policies are more important to you than a political candidates personality? Please specify below:

9. Do you feel the use of social media creates awareness of politics? Exp twitter, Facebook etc

Yes

No

10. Personal information: (Optional)

Gender

Male

Female

Age

16-25

25-34

Occupation:

Sincere thanks for all your time and co- operation!!

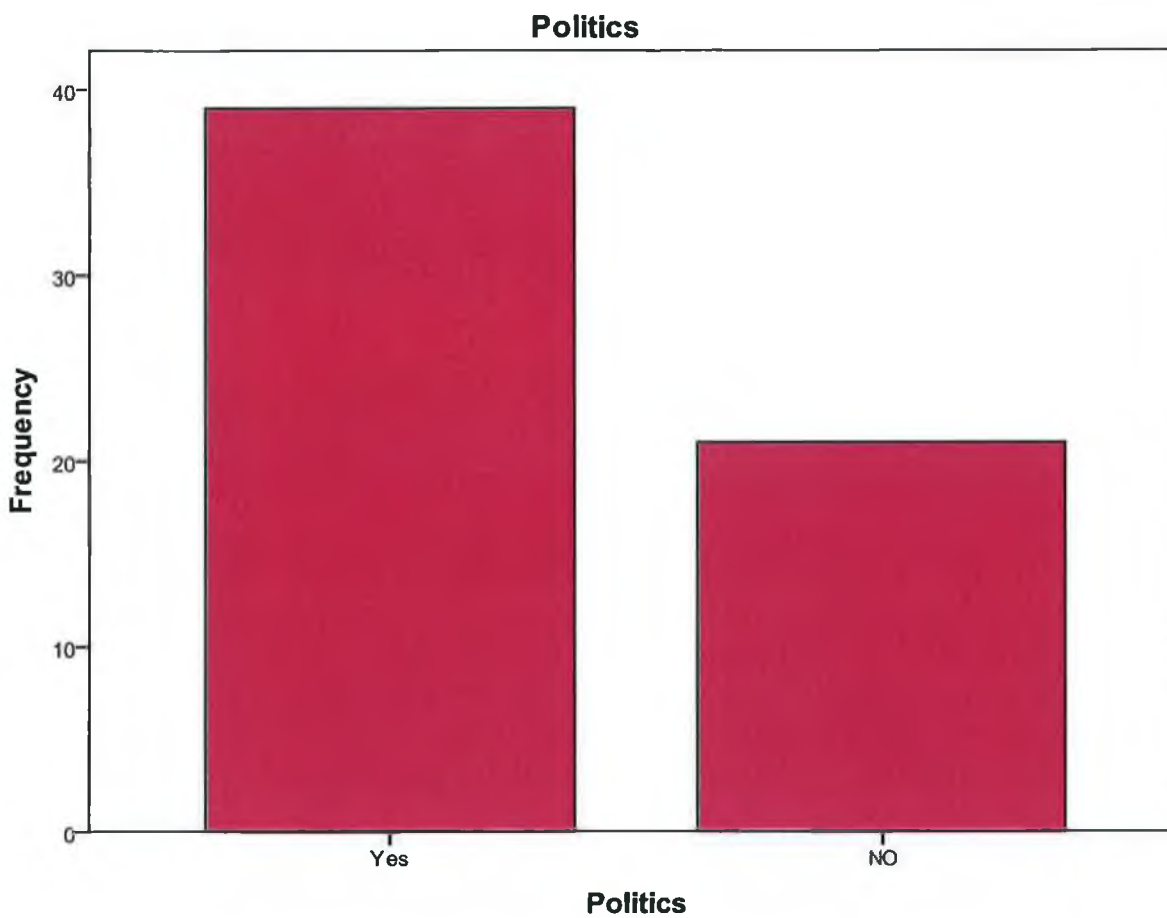


9.7 Appendix 6

Analysis of the survey research on first time voters

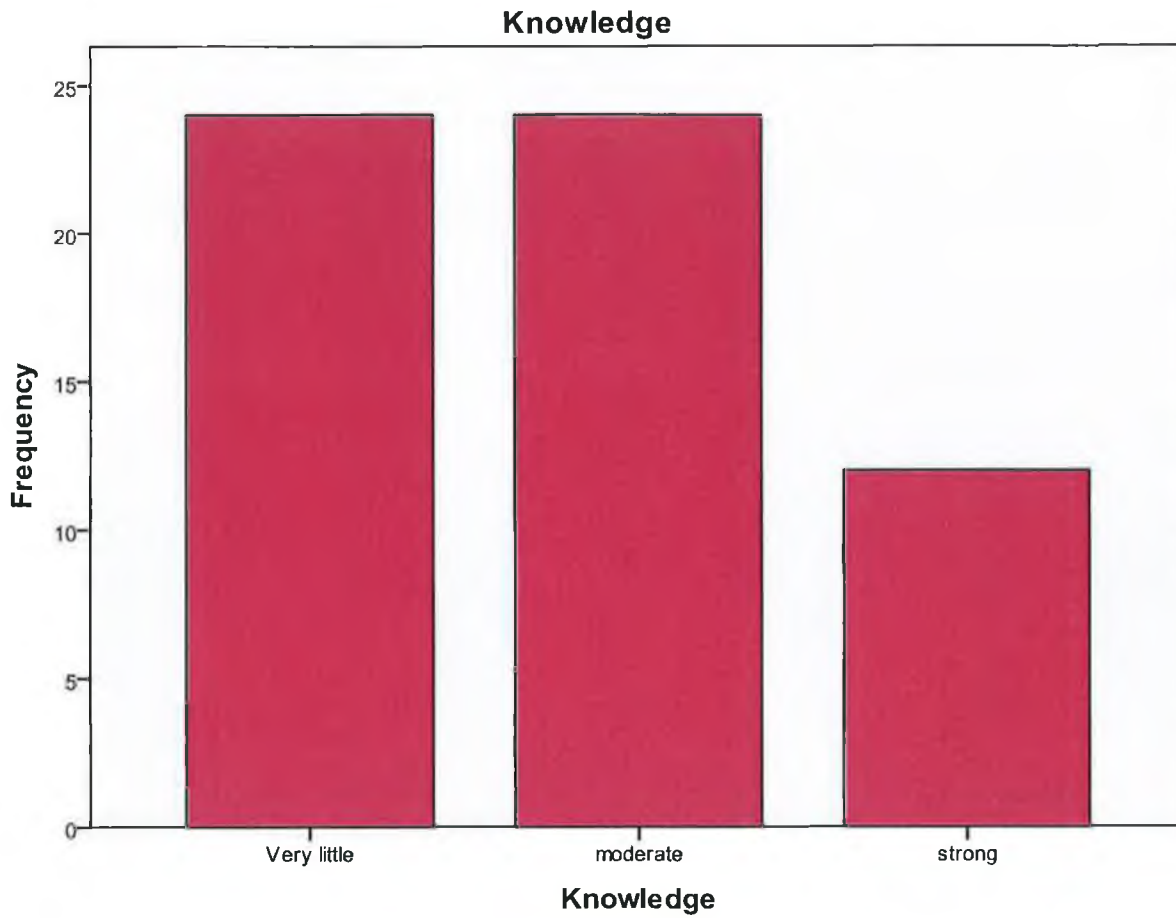
1. Does politics matter to people of your age?

9.7.1 Fig 1.1



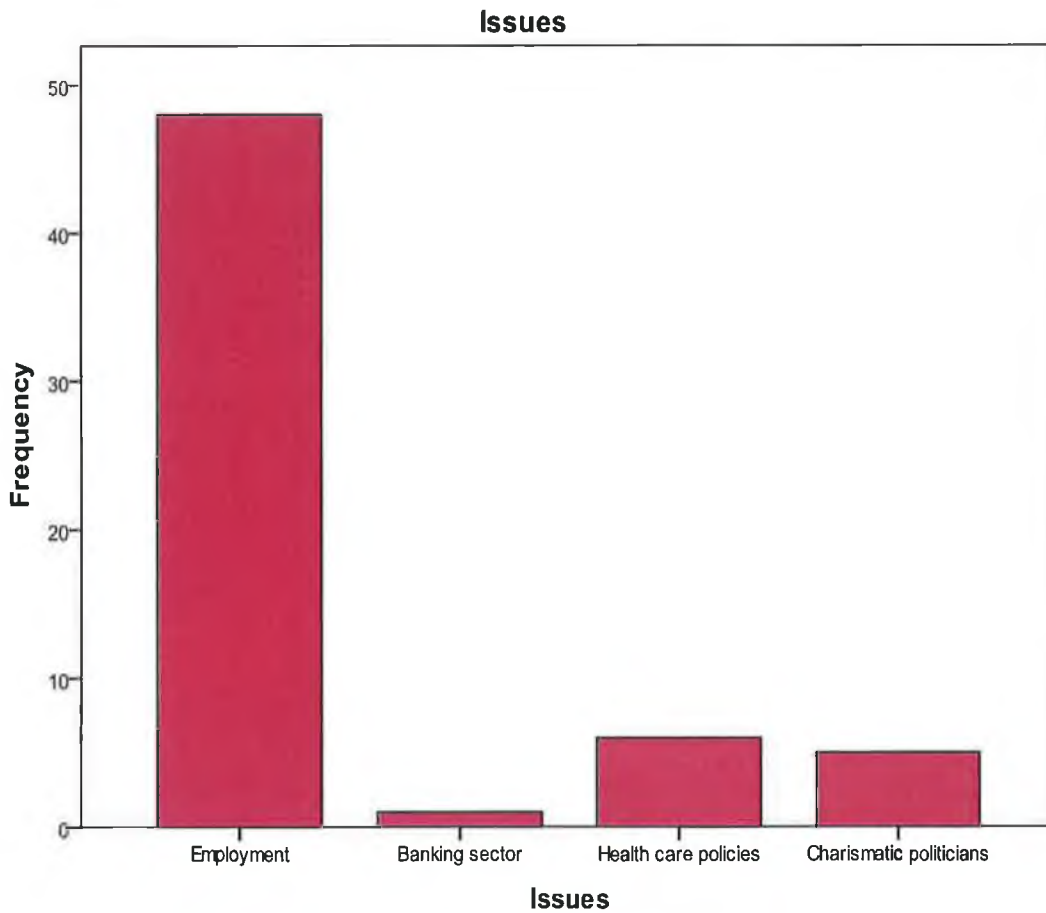
2. How would you describe your knowledge of politics?

9.7.2 Fig 1.2



3. What are the main issues in politics?

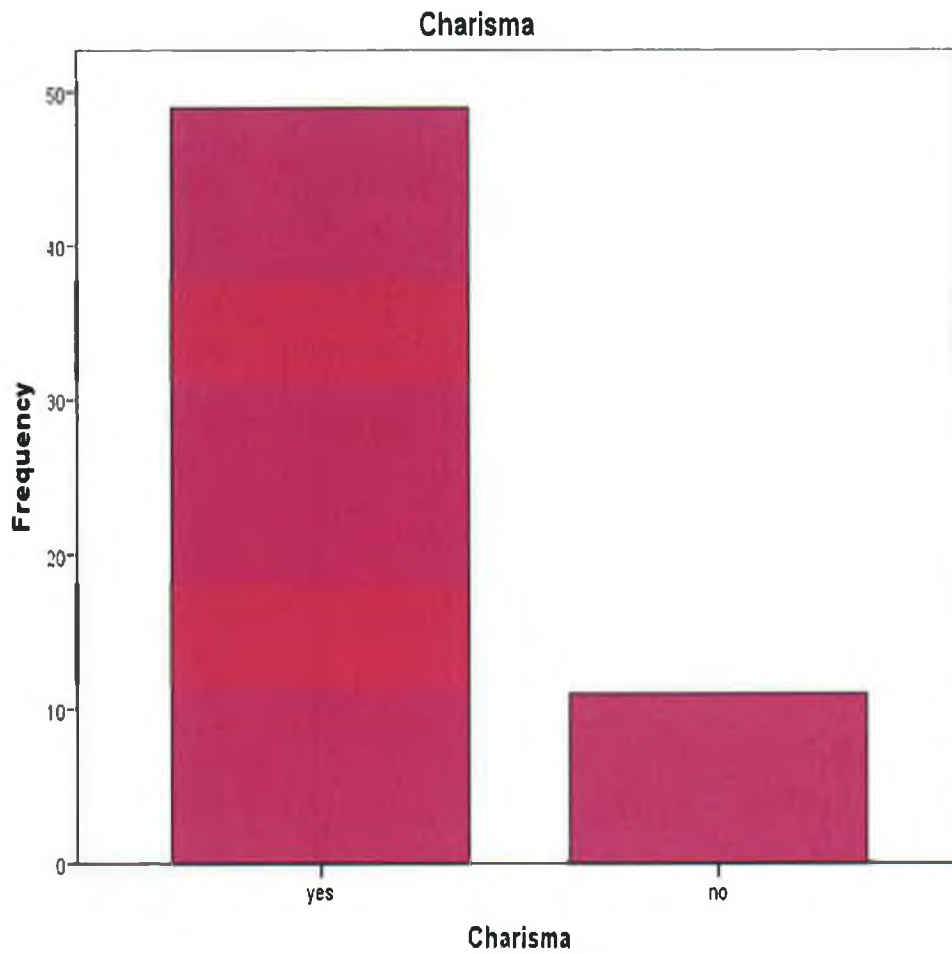
9.7.3 Fig 1.3



ITSligo
An Institiúid Teicneolaíochta, Sligeach

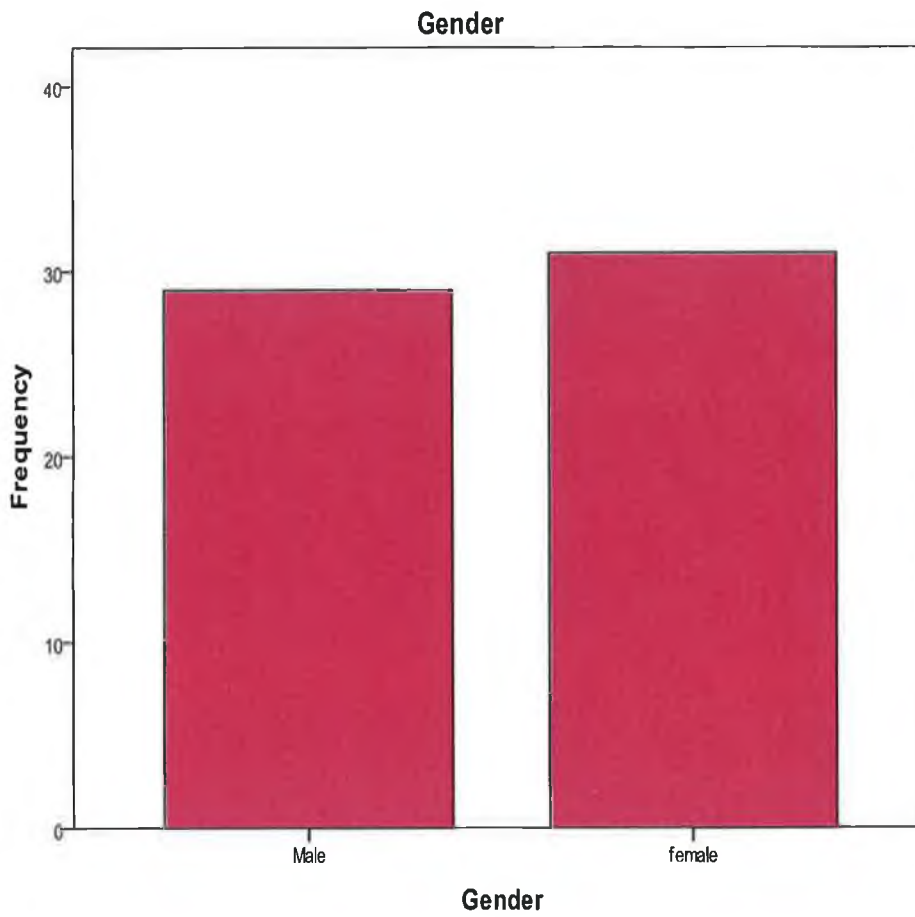
4. Do you think there is a lack of charisma in politics?

9.7.4 Fig: 1.4



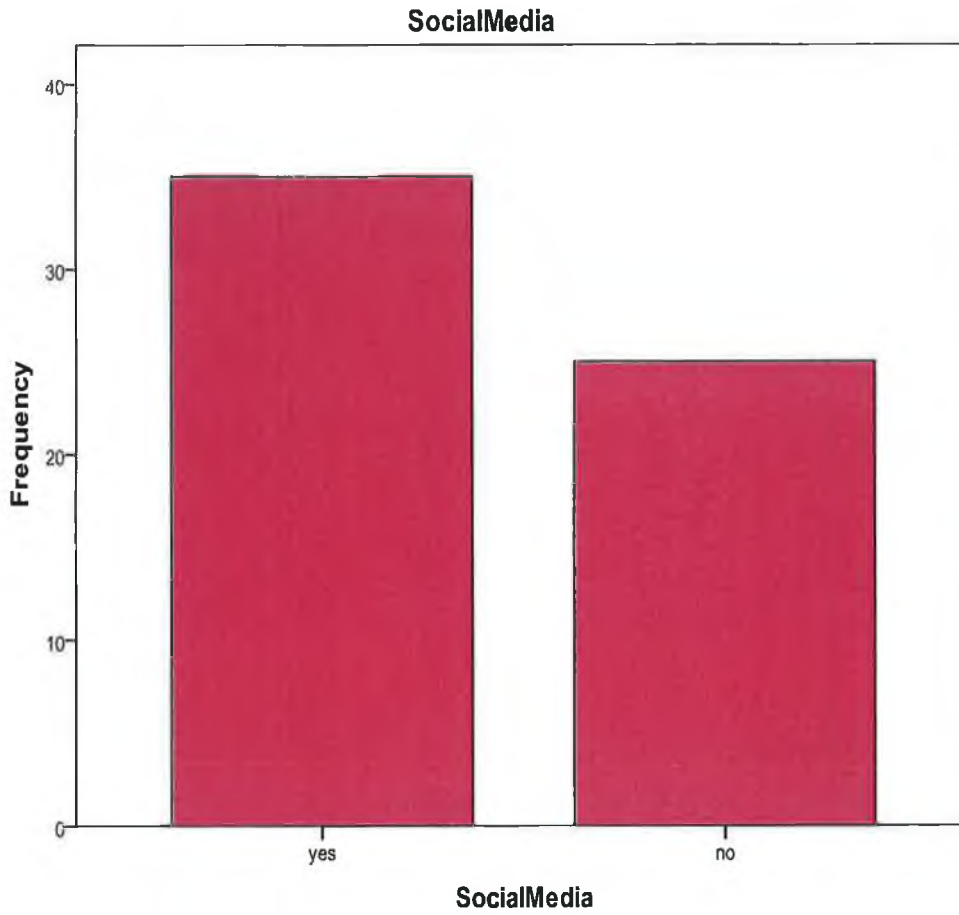
5. Are you male or female?

9.7.5 Fig: 1.5



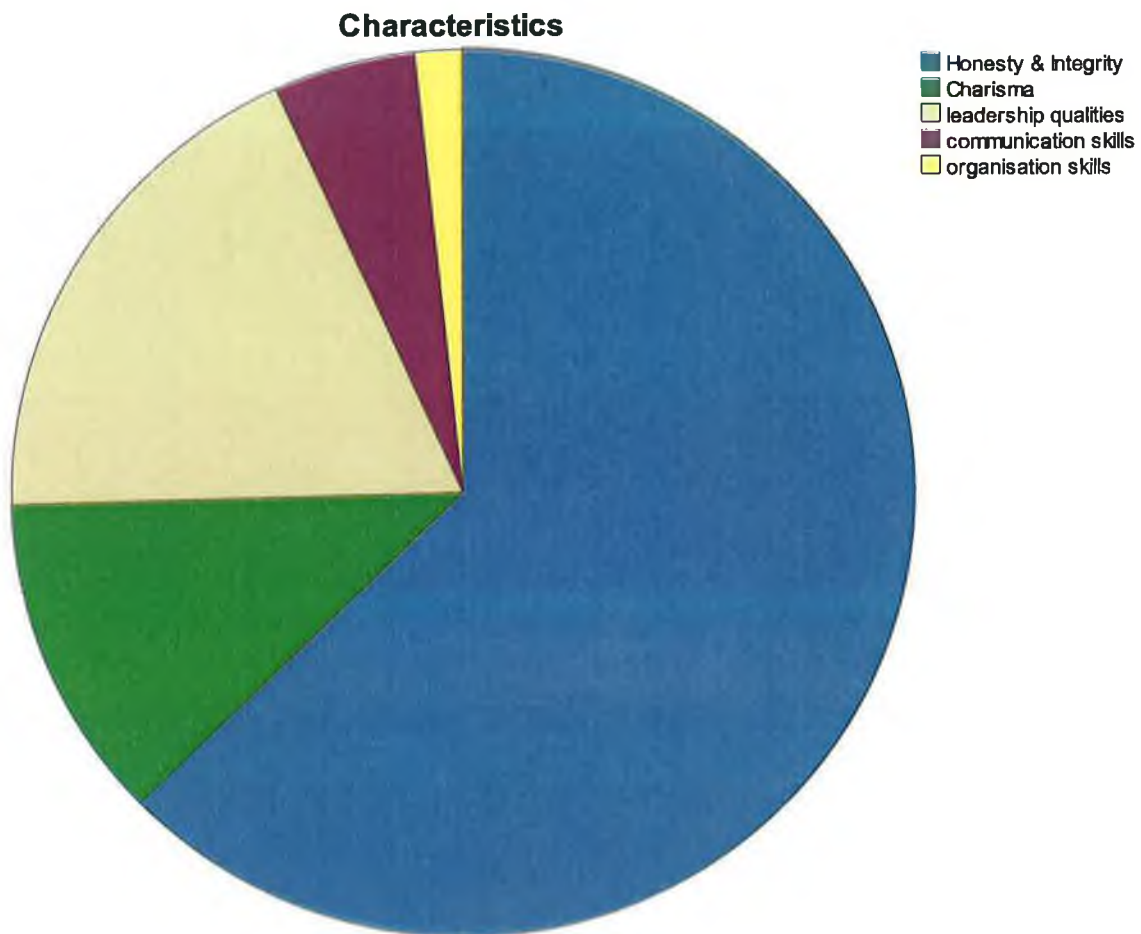
6. Do you feel the social media creates awareness of politics?

9.7.6 Fig: 1.6



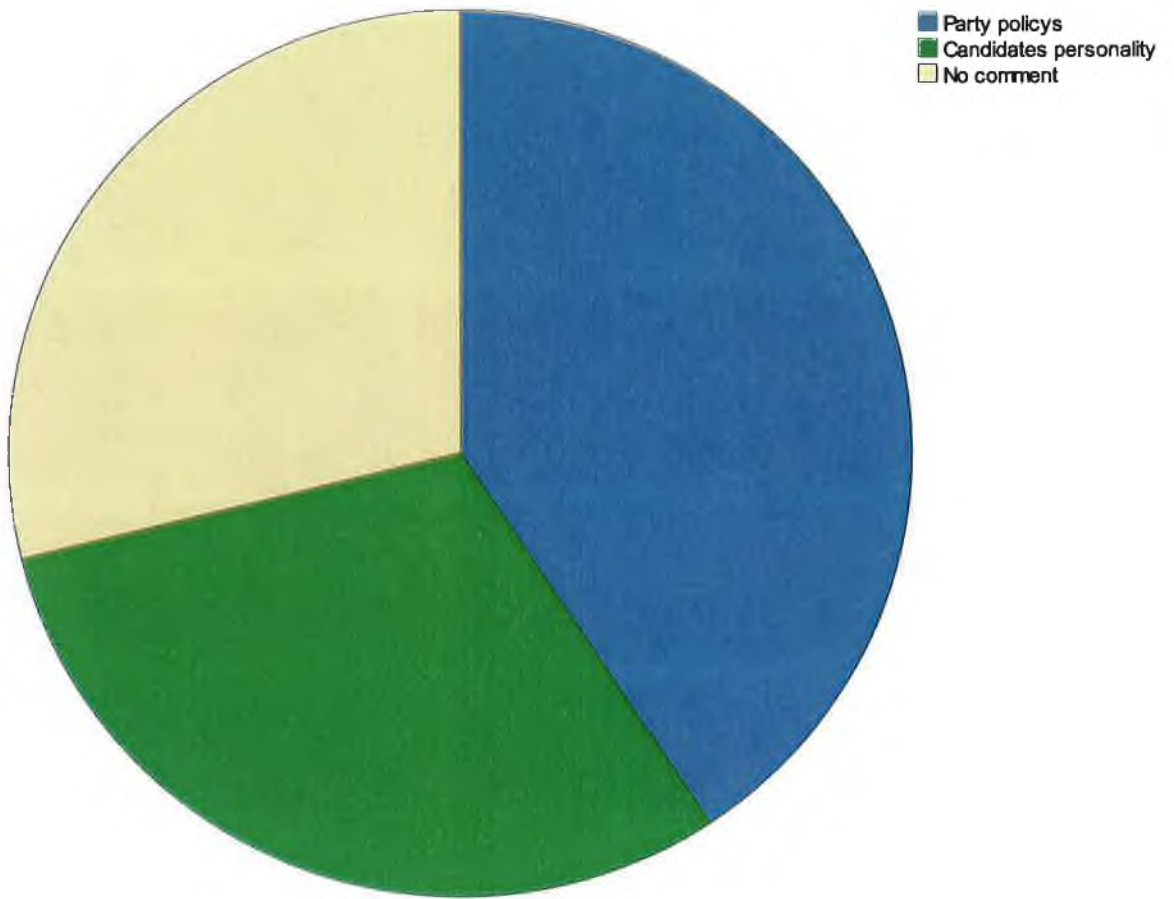
7. What characteristics would you like politicians to possess?

9.7.7 Fig 1.7



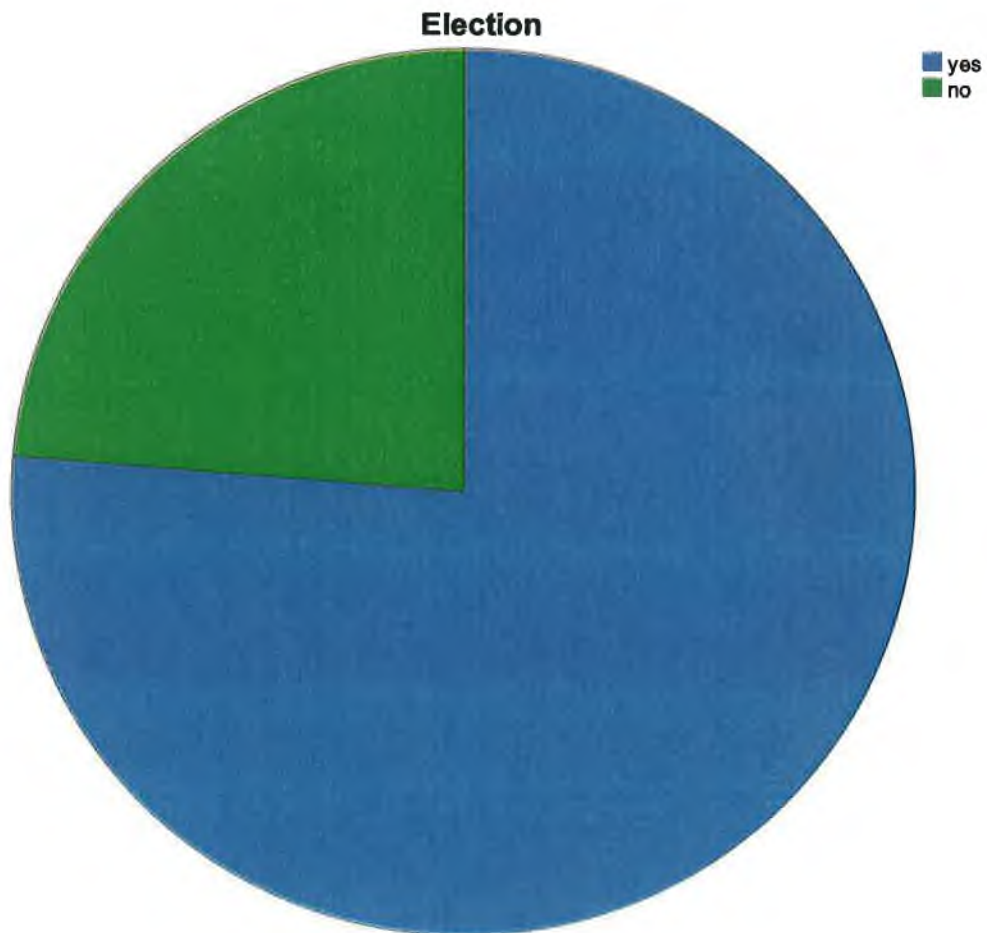
8. Would you view party policies as more important than candidate's personality?

9.7.7 Fig 1.8



9. Are you going to vote in the next General Election?

9.7.9: Fig 1.9



10.0 Bibliography

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