

GENERAL SECRETARIES

OF

IRISH POLITICAL PARTIES

Professionalisation of the position since the 1960's.

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General Secretaries of Irish Political Parties: The Professionalisation of the Position since the 1960's.

Summary

This dissertation is intended to contribute modestly to a literature on political personnel, and particularly on the Irish general secretaries and the professionalisation of the position since the 1960's.

This dissertation surveys the political and the socio-economic changes in order to understand the context in which the process of professionalisation took place.

It is on this basis that one may understand the process of professionalisation that Irish political party organisations have undergone since the end of the 1960's. In fact, the political context and the socio-economic context pressurise party organisations to adapt. Political parties had to respond by re-organising themselves, and particularly by recruiting a new sort of person for the position of general secretary.

The phenomenon of professionalisation is evident in the examination of the recruitment of the general secretaries, and the profile of the people recruited. The recruitment of the general secretaries implies the study of where the general secretaries are recruited from, but also the process of recruitment itself. Turning to the profile of the general secretaries, it involves studying their occupational and educational backgrounds.

Finally, the professionalisation of the general secretaryship can be located by looking at the role of the general secretaries. It has evolved from a purely clerical role to a more managerial and political-interventionist role.