

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF IRELAND AND HOW THEY EFFECT VOTING PATTERNS

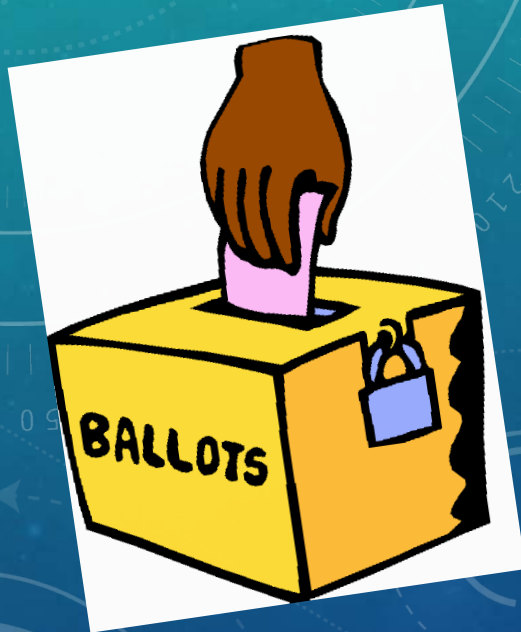
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UROP FINAL PROJECT

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA – TWIN CITIES

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK



INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT

- This past semester I was studying abroad in Ireland at the University of Limerick
- While there I set out to conduct a research study of the 2016 general Irish election
- This project was completed as part of my international UROP as awarded by the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities
- While working in Ireland we worked in conjunction with Limerick be Heard and instructors from the politics department of the University of Limerick



IRISH POLITICAL SYSTEM

- Ireland is a parliamentary, representative democratic republic and a member state of the European Union.
- While the head of state is the popularly elected President of Ireland, this is a largely ceremonial position with real political power being vested in the indirectly elected Taoiseach (prime minister) who is the head of the government.
- While there are a number of political parties in the state, the political landscape has been dominated for decades by Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, historically opposed and competing entities, which both occupy the traditional center ground.
- The National Parliament (Oireachtas) consists of the President and two Houses: Dáil Éireann (House of Representatives) and Seanad Éireann (the Senate) whose functions and powers come from the Constitution of Ireland.
 - The Members of Dáil Éireann (called Teachta Dála or TDs) are directly elected by the people at least once every five years. It currently has 166 members.

IRISH POLITICAL PARTIES

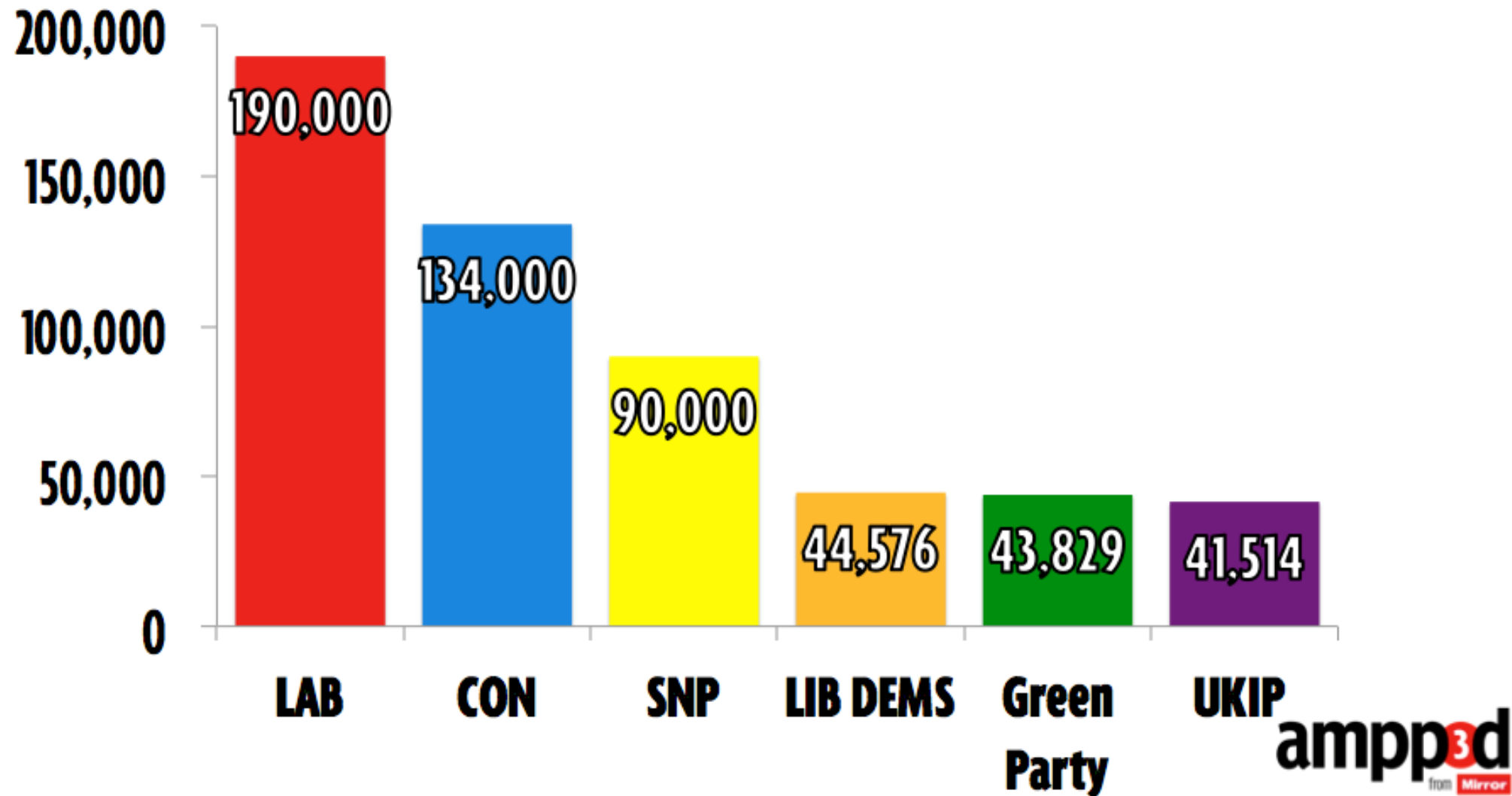


- Fianna Fail
- Fine Gael
- Labor
- Sinn Fein
- Green
- Socialist
- Independent
- Other



PARTY MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS

As of 15 January 2015





FURTHER READING

- For more on Irish Politics
 - <http://www.movetoireland.com/movepag/miscpoli.htm>
 - <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Europe/Ireland-POLITICAL-PARTIES.html>
 - https://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/staff/michael_gallagher/PolPartiesIreland85.pdf
 - <http://www.ireland-information.com/reference/congov.htm>
 - <https://sulis.ul.ie/access/content/group/558b031a-d584-4d64-95f5-935b6a1b5396/Irish%20Electoral%20System/adshead-tonge%20CHAPTER%206%20ELECTORAL%20BEHAVIOUR%20FINAL.pdf>
 - https://sulis.ul.ie/access/content/group/558b031a-d584-4d64-95f5-935b6a1b5396/Irish%20Political%20Parties/9781403_989697_07_cha05.pdf

METHODS



- In order to obtain data about the Irish general election we created a pre-election and post-election survey
- Limerick be Heard in conjunction with the research team has created two surveys that will provide the necessary data for this research project
- The surveys were then used to come demographics with voting patterns

PRE-ELECTION SURVEY



- The pre-election survey consisted of 24 questions
 - 19 of these questions are about the interviewees political views
 - 5 of these questions are about the interviewees demographic information
- In order to collect data we went door to door asking people if they would like to participated in our survey
- Through our efforts we collected 194 surveys which were used of data analysis that will be shown later on in this PowerPoint

POST-ELECTION SURVEY

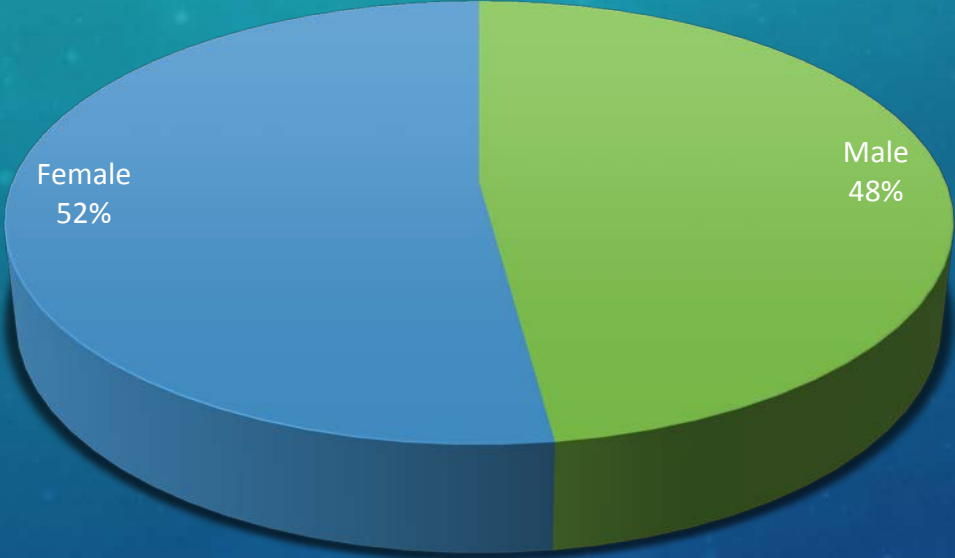
- The post-election survey was also created
 - The survey contained all of the demographic questions that the pre-election survey had
 - The survey contained questions about the interviewees political preferences
- Unfortunately, we were not able to conduct the post-election due to time constraints
 - We ran out of time as the semester came to a end
 - Limerick be Heard and those who are apart of the project from the University of Limerick will be collecting the post-election survey data this summer

RESULTS

- The collected pre-election data was entered and processed using excel
- In the following slides there is a selection of the data that we collected



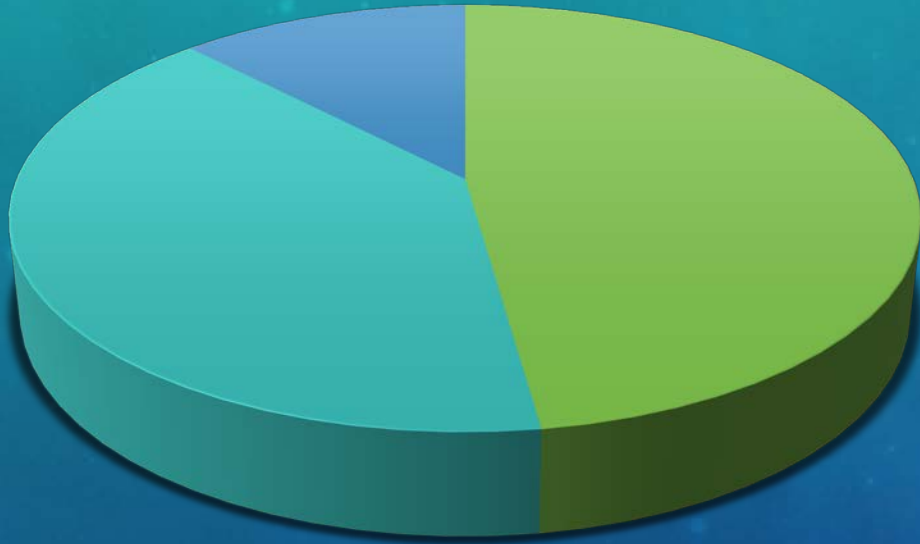
RESULTS – GENDER SPREAD



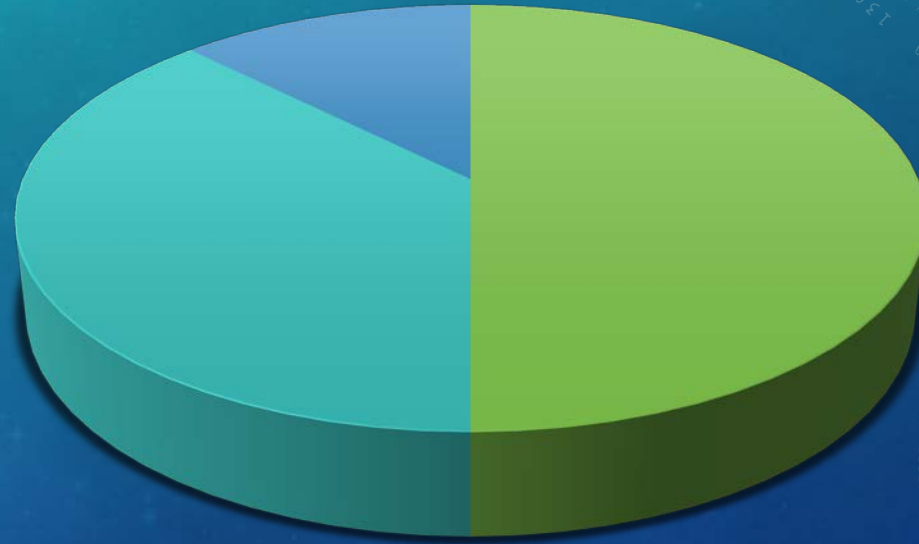
■ Male ■ Female

RESULTS – MARITAL STATUS

Male Data



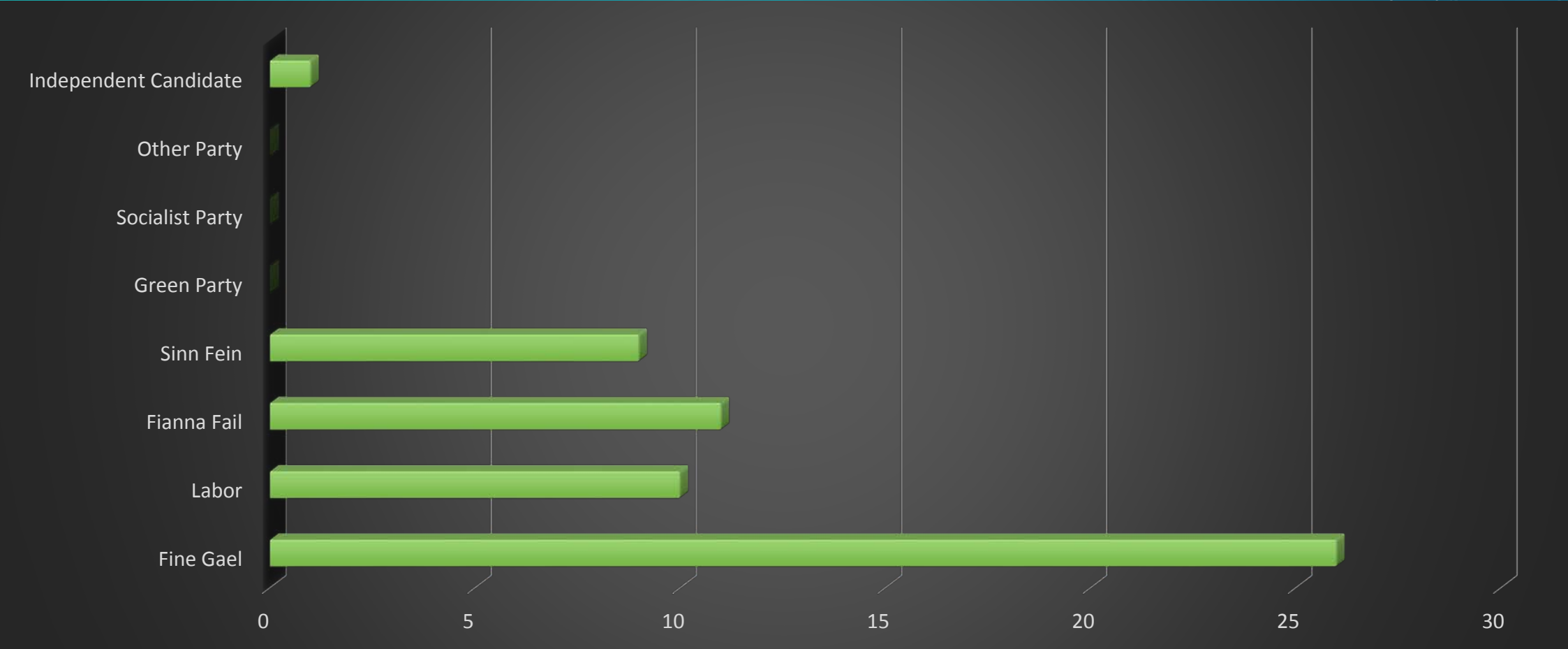
Female Data



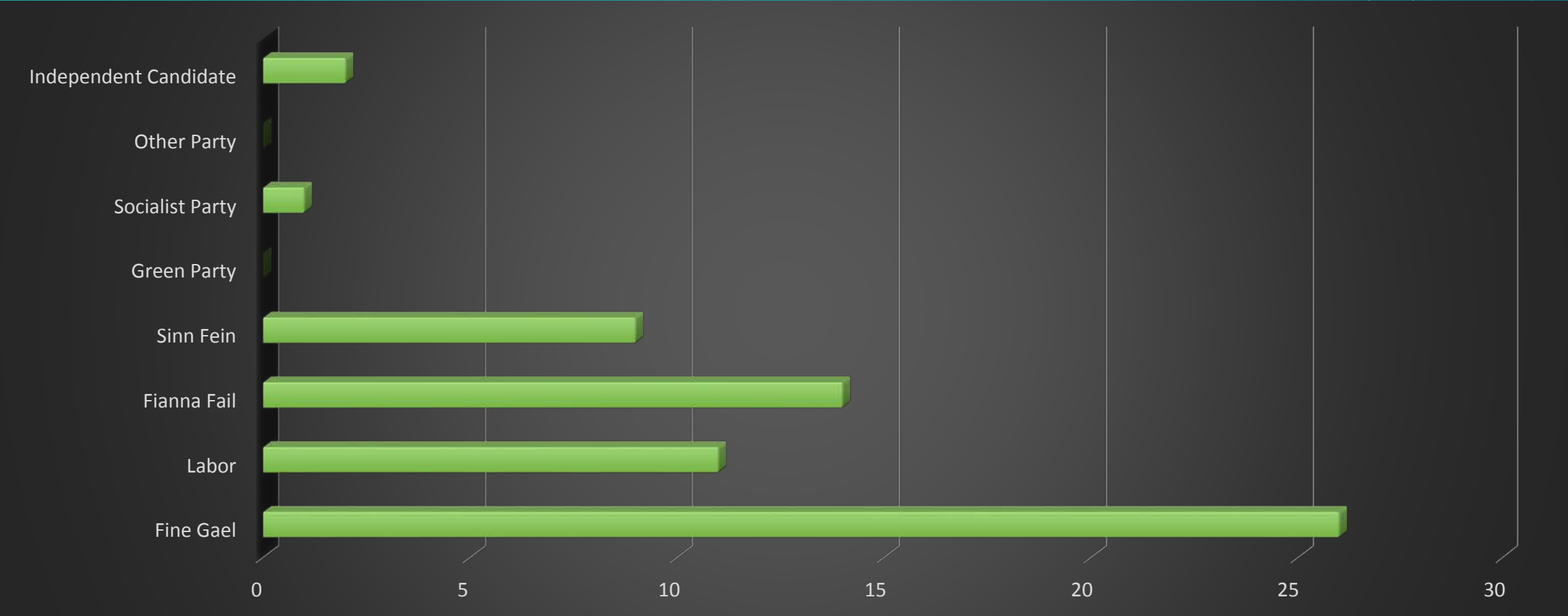
■ Married/Civil Partnership ■ Single ■ Widowed/Divorced/Separated

■ Married/Civil Partnership ■ Single ■ Widowed/Divorced/Separated

GENDER – POLITICAL PARTY MALE DATA



GENDER – POLITICAL PARTY FEMALE DATA



RESULTS – VOTING IN 2011 GENERAL ELECTION

Male Data



■ Yes ■ No ■ Can't Remember ■ Not Eligible

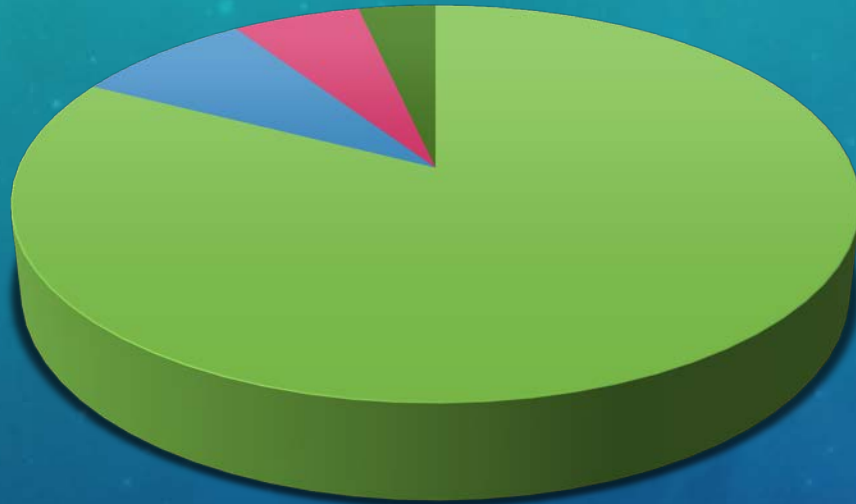
Female Data



■ Yes ■ No ■ Can't Remember ■ Not Eligible

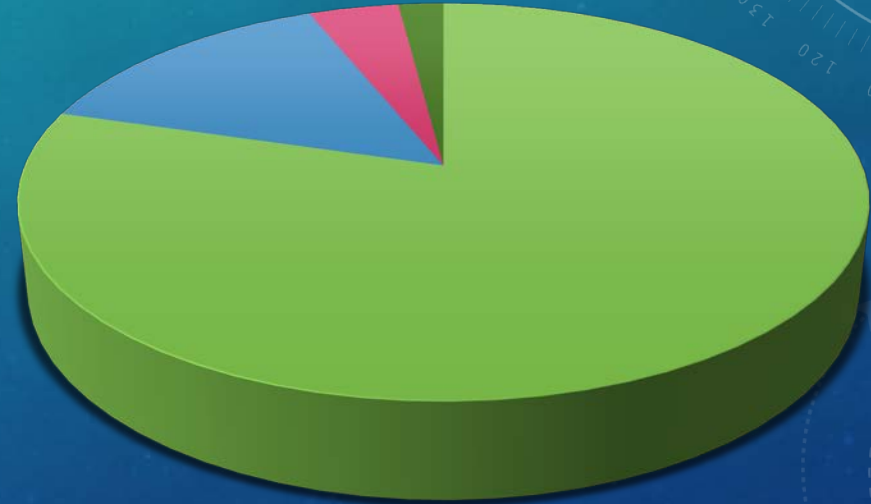
RESULTS – GENDER AND ABILITY TO VOTE

Male Data



■ Will Vote ■ Unsure ■ Won't Vote ■ Can't Vote

Female Data



■ Will Vote ■ Unsure ■ Won't Vote ■ Can't Vote

RESULTS – MORE INFORMATION

- We collected more female data than male data. We tried to keep the male and female numbers the same but we were limited by those who wished to participate in our study.
- We found that there was similar data when comparing the marital status of both men and women.
- The trends for political party were also similar between the two genders. This is seen by the fact that the party with the most data points for both male and female was Fine Gael. However, there are some differences. When looking at the male graph there are no data points in the other, Socialist, and Green parties. Whereas the female graph has one data point in the Socialist party.
- It was found that men were more likely to vote than women which is interesting as more women took our survey. Thus, leading us to believe that women are more involved in politics.

LIMITATIONS

- Our biggest limitation in this project was time.
 - The election took place very early in the semester so we had to work fast to get all of the pre-election surveys done before the election.
 - After the election was completed we tried to conduct the post-election survey but we were unsuccessful due to the amount of time we had to spend on compiling and processing the pre-election data.
- We also had a bit of a communication problem throughout the semester.
 - This was largely due to the fact that we were all full time students and employees as we were trying to complete this project.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

- I would suggest that if a similar project were to be done again that the pre-election data collection should be done much further before the actual election.
 - We had to push the data collection that close because of how close the election was to the beginning of the semester.
 - Thus, in the future a similar project would need more time to complete. Perhaps a two semester UROP instead of one.
- Another thing that I would change would be to make sure that there is more communication between the researcher.
- Finally, when we input the data into excel it was hard to do any data processing due to its format. Thus, in the future we would input the data in a different way.

CONCLUSIONS

- For this project we explored the Irish political system and the Irish political parties.
- In order to collect demographic and political opinion data we created a pre and post-election survey
 - We were able to complete the pre-election survey collection but not the post-election survey due to lack of time.
- This data was processed in order to see if there are any trends in the collected data.
- The limitations and rooms for improvement were also discussed.
- Further readings were also provided on the Irish political system as needed.

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