POLITICAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES:
Transport Policy Making and Implementation in Manchester

Keith George McKoy

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Abstract

The research examines the nature of political communication and assesses how marketing strategies are used by transport policy practitioners, and their perceptions of the role played by communications and marketing methods in the policy making process. The research also evaluates the phenomena of the increased use of 'political marketing and communications strategies' within national and local transport policy frameworks, and evaluates whether these have become more widespread and sophisticated in order to better signal policy intentions, as well as to market and promote controversial policies to both the media and public.

An area that remains under-researched is the extent to which public relations mechanisms are being developed within local government. And how these mechanisms are being used in order to strategically influence the media in order to shape or manipulate public opinion in pursuit of their policy goals. It is therefore necessary, to analyse media and transport planning discourse, in particular the increasing use of public relations strategies by transport policy practitioners as a system for communicating messages and symbols to a wider public through more sophisticated mechanisms in order to contest transport issues within the media. The Manchester Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) was used as the main case study because it provided an opportunity to look at a high profile and highly contested transport policy initiative.

Transport geography, fiscal transport policies, traffic congestion, media, political actors, political communications.

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I would finally like to dedicate this thesis to my late friend and colleague Graham Drake, who was instrumental in encouraging me to begin this journey in the first instance, and who sadly passed away before managing to complete his own thesis.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABD	Association of British Drivers
AGMA	Association of Greater Manchester Authorities
ASA	Advertising Standards Agency
CoC	Chamber of Commerce
DETR	Department of Environment Transport & the Regions
DfT	Department for Transport
EC	Economic Commission
ECMT	European Commission for Ministers of Transport
EU-15	15 Member States of the European Union as of 31 December 2003
GCN	Government Communications Network
GM	Greater Manchester
GMFT	Greater Manchester Future Transport
GMITS	Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Strategy
GMMG	Greater Manchester Momentum Group
GMPTA	Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority
GMPTE	Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive
GNTP	Greater Nottingham Transport Partnership
GVA	Gross Value Added
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
LTP	Local Transport Plan
LTPS	Local Transport Plan Strategy
MART	Manchester Against Road Tolls
MEN	Manchester Evening News
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation of Economic Co-operation & Development
PRP	Public Relations Practioner
RCEP	Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution
SDP	Social Democractic Party
TfGM	Transport for Greater Manchester
TIF	Transport Innovation Fund

CHAPTER I

Political Communication Strategies: A case study of transport policy making and implementation.

> *"The government's policies are like cornflakes, if they are not marketed they will not sell"*
>
> Lord Young (1988)

1.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the growing interest in the role of political communications within the public policy making process and, in particular, the increased use of political marketing and communications strategies within national and local transport policy frameworks. It also provides an introduction to the current transport policy debates and in particular the challenges facing policy makers in their attempts to implement controversial sustainable transport policies, in the face of increasing travel demand and rising congestion in urban areas.

This thesis explores how political communications and marketing in public policy have developed over recent decades and explains the growing interest in this area of study particularly in urban planning and geography. The work is located within the wider literature on urban policy and the representation of planning and environment in the media, and questions why the study of media representation and ultimately political communications and marketing should be an important point of inquiry for geographers and planners. It goes on to look at the sustainable transport agenda and the need for transport policy makers to build legitimacy for radical transport policies, such as congestion charging, and as such provides some background to the difficulties faced in the political marketing and communication of controversial transport policies. A central issue is the impact of managerialist and market ideology on transport policy making, in particular the view that transport users are consumers and thus, the need to develop political marketing strategies in order to 'sell' transport policies to them. This thesis contributes to these debates by exploring the perceptions of transport policy makers of the value of political communications strategies in communicating with the public.

Gelders *et al.* (2007) point to a growing interest in the role of communication in the public policy making process in general, but more specifically in communication at the developmental stage of policy making. They argue that through all stages of the policy development process the analysis and management of communications should be present and not just in the period when new policies are being announced. In other words communication needs to be carefully managed in the preparation stage of the policy making process. By this they mean that it ought to be steered towards particular ends and out-comes. However, they point out that the theoretical framework regarding communication management is still very much in its infancy. Therefore, existing approaches still work within the concept of communication as information transfer or as a sender who attempts to persuade the receiver, Van Ruler & Vercic (2005). Current theoretical understanding of the role of political communication strategies is an underdeveloped area with a relatively weak empirical base, and so this research seeks to strengthen and develop a more sophisticated understanding. Vigar *et al.* (2011) argue that a key barrier to implementing the sustainable mobility paradigm lies in the shaping of public opinion and travel behaviour. Transport policy-makers themselves identify public attitudes as the single biggest challenge to implementing policies and schemes, and note its increasing significance (e.g. Hull, 2009). Vigar *et al.* suggest that despite this emphasis there is comparatively little focus on the importance of dialogue and deliberation in transport policymaking and very little empirical work on the reporting of transport issues in the media, a crucial arena for shaping attitudes. However, they point out that in recent years work has begun to mention the likely importance of the press in influencing public opinion, especially in debates on pricing (Schlag & Teubel,1997). As such a number of studies have examined the ways that congestion charging has been presented in the media. These studies are important as they consider the provision of information and the perceived effectiveness and efficiency of the scheme in dealing with transport problems that they argue, partly reflects media reporting, Schlag & Teubel (1997); Thorpe *et al.,* (2000); Ryley & Gjersoe (2006). Vigar *et al.* (2011) state the importance of the provision of information as a 'cornerstone' of acceptability for pricing proposals and transport demand measures more widely, suggesting that a lack of public understanding leads to a lack of acceptance (Schlag & Teubel, 1997). They suggest that it is therefore vital that transport policy makers seek to understand how the media operate.

Vigar *et al.* (2011) suggest that transport policy makers have become increasingly concerned with ways of shaping travel demand. They cite Banister's (2002) use of the term "the sustainable travel paradigm" which requires that successful cities and successful transport policies address travel demand through both technological and behavioural change. Vigar *et al.* argue that reference to behavioural change highlights the need to shape public opinion through specific 'soft measures', public participation processes or through more general information-giving campaigns. They point out that the media plays a key role within such efforts in terms of communicating the possibilities for policy makers, as well as through selecting what to publish and how it is presented, which can be highly significant in shaping public opinion. They suggest that public opinion in turn influences public discourse and determines what is possible in political arenas, providing a feedback loop in determining future policy.

Studies carried out on media relations and political communications within transport policy and implementation have suggested that policy makers need to understand the political nature of media coverage and the likely split of arguments presented by the media to the general public. Such studies also point out that there should be an emphasis on the 'carrots' rather than the 'sticks' associated with such projects (Ryley & Gjersoe, 2006). Others have argued that much work relating to transport and the media has focused on congestion charging applications and communications messages and have suggested that further research should address the audience for transport communications messages, and their impact (Katz & Lazarsfield, 1995).

There is considerable evidence to suggest that many policy makers within local and national government organisations are now aware of the merits of using marketing techniques to convey their messages to a wider public, for example, 'The Greater Nottingham Transport Partnership' (GNTP 2011) in outlining their key aspirations and objectives for promoting sustainable transport with the region highlighted communication and marketing strategies as key functions within the development of the local transport plan. As such they developed a major marketing strategy aimed at promoting sustainable transport policies called the 'Big Wheel'. Policy makers clearly promote this marketing strategy as a key part of the transport policy-making framework within the Local Transport Plan Strategy (LTPS).

> "*The Big Wheel is an award winning transport marketing campaign for Greater Nottingham. Since 2001 the Big Wheel team has delivered an extensive programme of engagement and marketing for sustainable transport with business, partners and the public on behalf of the City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council aimed at promoting the integrated and sustainable transport system. This has been achieved through making people aware of the benefits of using sustainable transport and the choices they have available and understanding how to use those services effectively through the use of tools such as media campaigns*", GNTP LTP (2011-2026:53)

As such the use of marketing and communications methods, appears to now play a central role in the transport policy-making process.

1.1 Criticism of Media Reporting of Transport Policy

Cairns *et al.* (2001) conducted research into the media's coverage of plans to reallocate road space from general traffic to improve conditions for pedestrians, cyclists, or public transport. The media predicted major traffic problems on neighbouring streets, but Cairns *et al.* suggested that the media's predictions of traffic problems were often unnecessarily alarmist and that given appropriate local circumstances significant reductions in overall traffic levels could occur with people making a far wider range of behavioural responses than has traditionally been assumed. Their report highlighted that follow-up work should focus on assessing how schemes are perceived by the public and reported in the media, with various lessons for avoiding future problems. The key point made was that media coverage of any proposal that seeks to change the status quo (with its reliance on private vehicles) often proves to be very controversial and contested.

Further criticism of the media's reporting of transport policy, was highlighted by Gaber (2004:172), who reviewed coverage of the London congestion charge: "in the matter of reporting of the introduction of congestion charging in London, the majority of the British media failed in their duty to their audiences. This analysis indicates the varying shortcomings of the coverage and, in particular, has identified the failing, particularly of much of the tabloid press to give anything like a balanced view". Gaber notes that when he first considered carrying out a study of media coverage of the introduction of the congestion charge, he found it hard to believe that it might be of general or academic interest. This he concluded had been the wrong assumption and that a valuable contribution had been made to the national debate on the media, confirming the suspicions of many consumers, and the evidence of a small number of scholars, that much of the media is cavalier in its obligation to report matters of public importance in a fair and responsible matter.

However, it is important to note that the Office of the Mayor of London commissioned the latter report into media coverage of the congestion charge, in the summer of 2002. Gaber suggests that this was at a time when hostility to the charge by sections of the press, such as the *Evening Standard*, appeared to be gaining pace. There was concern within the Mayor's Office that the coverage might adversely affect public acceptance of the charge when it came into force in February 2003. This highlights the importance that politicians place on positive media visibility in ensuring that political or environmental problems make the transition from general issues to serious policy concerns within the policymaking arena, but, more importantly, it also shows the concern held amongst policy makers and other key actors with regard to negative media visibility and it's potential to influence public acceptance of specific policy initiatives (Hannigan, 1995).

It is clear that there is growing awareness amongst politicians responsible for the transport portfolio in local or national government that media scrutiny is part of the job. The transport brief has been viewed as a poisoned chalice over recent years, and this is perhaps evidenced in terms of the number of Ministerial changes within the Department for Transport over recent years. As reported by the BBC in 2002 when Transport Secretary Alastair Darling took office:

> *"It's easy to imagine this morning's conversation with the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street. (Morning, Darling, I'd like you to do transport. Good luck, you're going to need it)*
>
> *A grimacing Alistair Darling: (Thanks, Tony.... thanks a LOT)*
>
> *The new transport secretary has inherited the most poisoned chalice in government. The in tray on his desk is piled high with issues requiring difficult decisions. And all of them are marked urgent* ".

Of more specific importance and interest to this thesis is the need to understand the strategies employed by politicians to manipulate public opinion towards a specific policy direction or objective. Given that most transport policy makers are only too aware of the media's power and importance when bringing important policy issues into the public domain particularly for the first time, it could be argued that policy makers are dependant on the media in setting the agenda and they strategically pre-empt the process and in fact find ways of using the media to influence or shape public opinion in pursuit of their own policy agendas (McCombs, 2005).

Thrift (2000) highlights a lack of direct work on the media within geography. While the work linking environment and the media e.g. Burgess (1990) and work linking urban areas, place and fear of crime e.g. Lees & Demeritt (1998) may be of interest to planners and even related to planning discourse, there is still a dearth of research directly addressing how planning and planners are represented in the media.

1.2 The Political Role of Planners

Forester (1989) points out that if planners ignore those in power, they assure their own powerlessness. Alternatively, if planners understand how relations of power shape the planning process, they can improve the quality of their analyses and empower citizen and community action. Forester argues that whether or not power corrupts, the lack of power frustrates. He argues that planners are well aware of this notion and often feel overwhelmed by the exercise of private economic power, or by politics, or by both.

A key objective of this thesis is to examine the impact of media reporting on decision-making processes within planning, it is important to examine not just the planning context but also the political context of the decision-making process in order to understand how press reporting affects the political choices of planners and politicians and the role of political decision-makers in the process. This acknowledges that politics plays a major role within planning and that planners themselves have a highly political role and as such their political decisions can often be mediated in the press in ways that can often lead to changes in policy direction.

Albrechts (2003b) observes that the structure of the planning process illustrates that planners are an active force in enabling change and that political decision-making is a process of its own with its own actors. Albrechts (2003b) argues that in planning literature there many examples of well-documented cases of 'plan-making' and formal decision-making (e.g. Altshuler, 1965; Benveniste, 1989; Flyvberg, 1998; Meyerson & Banfield, 1955) and substantive literature on implementation also exists (Gualini, 2001; Majone & Wildavsky, 1979; Mastop & Faludi, 1997; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973; Wildavsky, 1979). However, he also points out that there are hardly any examples of cases analysed from the perspective of the political class.

Therefore political decision-making often seems like a black box to planners. He argues that planning needs a fine-grained analysis of what actually takes place in formal decision-making and implementation, in the transition from plan to formal adoption of the plan and its actual implementation, as opposed to what they would normatively like to see happen. Research by Flyvbjerg (1998) showed that critical analysis of cases is needed to discover the 'whys and wherefores' of how elected members or preferential actors change the plan and why and how executive officers depart from a formally approved plan.

Albrechts (2003b) argues that planning has moved away from the concept of government as the sole organiser of the public sector in providing solutions to problems. Planning has now embraced the idea of governance as the capacity to substantiate the search for creative and territorially differentiated solutions to problems/challenges and for a more desirable future situation through the mobilisation of a plurality of actors with different and even competing, interests, goals, and strategies. Albrecht points out, that planners should be aware that systems of governance are closely intermingled with power.

Albrechts (2003a) suggests that power is not an abstract analytical concept but a concrete set of relations, that are inextricably part of social, cultural, economic and political reality. As such, spatial planning practice is not just a contingent response to wider forces, but is a force that is active in enabling change. He argues that planners must be more than navigators keeping their ship on course but they are necessarily involved with formulating that course. Albrechts suggests that in order to avoid planning being more concerned with how to plan rather than with the content of planning, substantive rationality (Mannheim, 1949) or value rationality (Webber, 1978) must become an intrinsic part of the planning process (De Jouvenel, 1964; Ozbekhan, 1969). Speaking of values is a way of describing the sort of environment in which we want to live, or think we should live. The values and images of what a society wants to achieve are defined in the planning process. Such values and images he argues are not generated in isolation but are created, given meaning and validated by traditions of belief and practice, they are reviewed, reconstructed and invented through collective experience. Just as there are many traditions and collective practices, there are many images of what communities want to achieve. The opportunities for implementing these images are not equal as some individuals and groups have more resources and more power, which allow them to pursue their images. To give power to the range of images in a planning process requires the capacity to listen, not just for an expression of material interest, but for what people care about, including the rage felt by many who have grown up in a world of prejudice and exclusion, of being outside, being 'the other', (Forester, 1989; Healey, 1997). Albrechts (2003b) argues that the core is a democratic struggle for inclusiveness in democratic procedures, for transparency in government transactions, for accountability of the state and planners to the citizens for whom they work.

Forester (1989) argues that by choosing to address or ignore the exercise of political power in the planning process, planners can make that process more democratic or less, more technocratic or less, still more dominated by the established wielders of power or less so. For example, planners shape not only documents but also participation: who is contacted, who participates in informal design-review meetings, who persuades whom of which options for project development. Forester suggests that there is a dearth of substantive research within the area, linking planning with communications or media research. What does exist relates to how planners are represented within the media and literature that suggests that the public's perception of planning and planners are likely to be shaped and amplified by press representation. However, we have to turn to the more extensive and comprehensive media studies literature, (see Chapter 2) if we are to gain an understanding of the relationship between the mass media's coverage of the development and elaboration of environmental issues and public opinion on such issues.

Castells (2000) theory of flows and in particular his discussion of media flows is also of interest in that he emphasises the decisive role played by the media not as a source of changes, but as a vehicle of transmission of ideas that connect to people. He argues that people receive most of their information through the media and from that perspective the media to a large extent had become the space of politics, the space of social struggles, the space of political change. What doesn't go through the media usually becomes marginal, because it doesn't reach people. Without media it becomes difficult to make people aware of anything.

The use of political marketing techniques by policy makers in order to convey specific messages to the public through the media is important. This is because as Hannigan (1995) suggests, most citizens depend upon the media to help make sense of the bewildering daily deluge of information about the role of transport within urban areas in particular, the environmental problems and subsequent costs to the environment if adequate solutions are not found. He points out that most citizens look to the media to explain the new technologies and sustainable transport initiatives currently being pursued in urban areas.

This thesis focuses on the complex relationships that exist between transport policy makers the media, transport journalists and opinion formers and assesses the factors that drive some stories and campaigns to the exclusion of others. The general context lies within the area of sustainable transportation policies, and technologies that aims for the efficient transit of goods and services, and sustainable freight and delivery systems.

As discussed further in Chapter 2, the implementation of innovative and controversial initiatives throughout the UK has often proved difficult in the face of negative public and media opinion, as in the debates surrounding the implementation of congestion charging schemes for example. Therefore there is now some interest, which goes beyond how transport is represented within the media but more specifically the role and influence of policy makers in the contestation of such messages within the politics of transport. This is an under-researched area within transport policy and draws very heavily on other academic fields such as political communications and marketing, public opinion research, and public relations. As such the thesis contributes to our understanding of this area by applying concepts and theories more familiar to the fields of political science, political communications research and geographies of transport.

1.3 The Sustainable Transport Problem

The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (RCEP) has for over quarter of a decade stated their concern that:

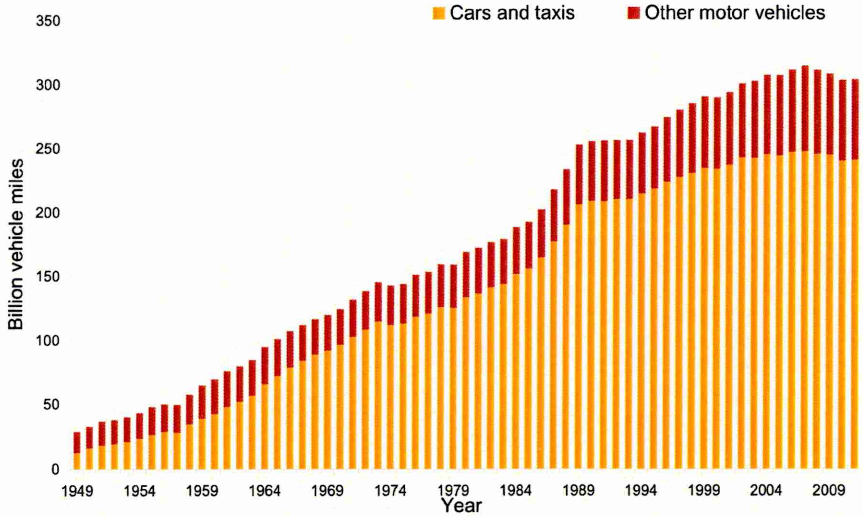
> *"The unrelenting growth of transport had become possibly the greatest environmental threat facing the UK and one of the greatest obstacles to achieving sustainable development" (*RCEP, 1994:1).

Urban traffic levels continue to rise and there is a consensus at local and national levels of government that a 'do nothing' approach to the situation is no longer an option, (Cheese & Klein, 1999). Across the developed world transport systems face increasing demand. Since the 1950s, nearly all developed countries have witnessed what has been termed a 'mobility explosion' by transport policy makers. For example, between 1991 and 2001, car and taxi traffic levels increased by 12% in the United States, 44% in Japan, 8% in Germany, and 14% in the UK. In Portugal usage almost doubled (85%) and in Spain it more than doubled (107%) (DfT, 2003). This phenomenon was the result of increases in road capacity but income and population growth are viewed as the main drivers behind increasing vehicle ownership and use (Marshall *et al.*, 1997; Marshall & Banister, 2000). In the EU-15, there was a 34% increase in the number of vehicles owned between 1985 and 1995, with the number of cars on EU-15 roads growing from 60.77 to 165.54 million, an average growth rate of approximately 4% per annum. Thus, by 1996, there were 444 cars per 1000 EU-15 inhabitants (EC, 2002). In Great Britain there has been a long-term trend in the volume of road traffic growth according to DfT figures. Overall motor vehicle traffic volume in 2011 was 303.8 billion estimated to be 3.4% higher then 10 years ago, and over 10 times higher that in 1949 (28.9 billion vehicle miles) see table 1.3.

A report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 1995) predicted that this would increase by a further 50% by 2020, resulting in vehicle ownership levels of more than 600 per 1000 people in many EU-15 countries.

Table 1.3

Road traffic in Great Britain, 1949-2011



Source: DfT 2012

Thus the scale of the problem that transport policy makers face is clear. Enoch *et al.*, (2004) argue that while many plans and solutions to addressing the transport problems of the 21st Century have been mooted, very few have led to significant advances in improving the situation within Europe. They argue that many transport schemes face problems at the project implementation stage due mainly to adverse public and/or political reaction.

The issue is highlighted in a seminal study of urban transport policy formulation carried out by the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT, 2002) that concluded, while most of the 168 cities they surveyed knew how to specify a sustainable urban transport strategy, implementing such strategies had often been proved difficult. They identified as the principal barriers poor policy integration and coordination, counterproductive institutional roles, unsupportive regulatory frameworks, weaknesses in pricing, poor data, limited public support and lack of political resolve.

1.4 Recent Developments In UK Transport Policy

An overview of recent UK transport policy developments indicates why radical policies such as the congestion charge have gained political salience in contemporary transport debates. Following their election victory in 1997 New Labour published the consultation document 'Developing An Integrated Transport Policy' (2001) which commentators now acknowledge to have had minor impact as it merely reiterated the policy aims of the previous Conservative administration (Glaister, 2002).

In 1998 they produced the first transport White Paper for 20 years (DETR, 1998a). This was a significant document as it not only emphasised the need for a more integrated transport system within the UK but it significantly influenced policy and research to move in that direction, particularly, with regards to the reduction in car use and the increased use of alternative modes including public transport, walking and cycling, Hine & Preston (2003). It proposed new powers for local authorities that would allow them to improve public transport services and encourage more sustainable travel.

The Greater London Authority Act (HMG, 1999) and Transport Act (2000) enacted the proposals of the White Paper, this included provision for road user charging and work place levy initiatives. The view taken by policy makers was that road user charging could play a major role in reducing travel demand if implemented by local authorities Glaister (2001), a similar conclusion to that of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution in 1994, that they later restated in 1997 (RCEP, 1994;1997).

The fundamental shift in transport policy pledged in the pre-election campaign of 1997 did not materialise. Several authors highlighted the propensity of the New Labour government to renege on its promises (e.g. Docherty, 2003; Goodwin, 2003; Potter, 2001), and how it had fallen short of the integrated transport aspirations expressed in the 1998 White Paper even by the time the 10 year Plan was issued in 2000. Then, after the publication of the Transport Act 2000, fuel protests in September (substantially highlighted in the media) caused the removal of the fuel duty escalator, an important part of transport policy until then. "All attempts to rebalance the cost of car use and public transport - a policy of successive Conservative and Labour governments for ten years - ceased from that point on" (Potter & Pankhurst, 2005:7).

The first installment of 'Transport 2010: the 10-Year Plan for Transport', started the shift of the policy back to road construction, with around £60 billion allocated to roads over 10 years. In 2002 the government published a progress report on the 10 Year Transport Plan, that admitted that the congestion cutting targets set out in the first plan were not going to be reached. Unforeseen economic growth and an unwillingness of local governments to implement congestion charging schemes were blamed for the failure to stay on target. Furthermore, whilst many sustainable transport plans, policies and solutions were debated over the years, few have yet succeeded in significantly improving the transport situation within Europe including road user charging which has been consistently put forward by academics and transport planners as the ideal policy mechanism for traffic reduction since the early 1960s (Wolmar, 2004).

A particular focus of this thesis is the problems experienced by policy makers when trying to introduce transport schemes and the difficulties faced due to public and/or political opposition at the project implementation stage. A number of additional barriers – most notably resource, institutional and policy barriers, social, cultural, legal, and physical barriers - have also precluded such actions (Banister, 2002).

The most difficult barriers to overcome are the social and cultural barriers, which can also be described as public and/or political opposition. This is a perception that was supported by Gunn (1978) in a seminal paper on 'perfect implementation' that has particular relevance in the transport sector (Ison & Rye, 2002). Gunn states that 'the circumstances external to the implementing agency should not impose crippling constraints'. In other words, for implementation to occur, one needs to ensure that the policy is acceptable to all parties that have the power to veto it (Enoch *et al.* 2004:34-40).

This thesis examines the communication of transport policy intentions specific the UK, using the Greater Manchester Authorities bid for Transport Innovation Funding (TIF) in 2008, in order to understand the strategies used by policy makers to communicate their policy messages. The primary purpose is to gain an understanding of their perceptions of political marketing, public relations and communications strategies. This is done by evaluating the political communications processes within Greater Manchester during the time of the Greater Manchester Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) bid in order to highlight the communications difficulties faced by those responsible for implementing transport projects.

Transport policy-making is seen as a multi-faceted discipline, which encompasses a number of fields, including economics, environmental sciences, engineering, traffic modeling, town and country planning, geography and sociology (Begg & Gray, 2004). However, in examining the recent history of transport policymaking in the UK (particularly, progress since the publication of the Integrated Transport White Paper in 1998) it is perhaps more revealing to consider the political economy. All Government policy is a trade-off between adhering to philosophical ideals and delivering policies that do not alienate the electorate. Whereas the Labour Government of 1945 was able to introduce several radical reforms in the UK, the electorate of the early 21st Century is arguably more cynical and less supportive of social reform (Macleavy, 2011). This is particularly true of transport policy making, which is increasingly a compromise between sustainability and political practicality.

In improving the UK's transport infrastructure, policy makers at local and national level must reconcile a number of influential lobbies. These include environmentalists, the motoring lobby, transport operators, the media and other opinion formers (Begg & Gray, 2004). Leromonachou *et al.* (2004) point out that transport is a large component of our economy and society. Historically, transport schemes were substantially focused on developing basic infrastructure networks. The current emphasis is on the active management and operation of transport systems to maximum advantage whilst we face continued growth in travel demand and increasing capacity limitations. Major developments in technology and the world economy have accelerated social and political change to unpredictable levels.

The development of new vehicle technologies, proposals for radical policies and of course the relentless growth in demand for the use of private and commercial vehicles has radically shaped the transport landscape. Leromonachou *et al.* suggest that one of the main changes is in the form of sustainable transport management – managing the demand of existing infrastructure networks, through radical policies such as road pricing. However, they highlight the fact that such policies are often abandoned or delayed due to controversy, disagreements, unanticipated problems and a need for cooperation between networks, stakeholders and different authorities.

What is most useful to the study of the role of political communication within transport policy is the suggestion made by Leromonachou *et al.* that single measures which focus on 'sustainable transport' usually address a limited set of objectives and are not usually combined with other policy measures. And that when combined, it is sometimes unclear whether the multiple interactions between policy tools and implementation networks have been considered. This is an important point, so this thesis examines the role of political communications in developing and implementation networks in order to support radical transport policies.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

The main aim of this research is to determine the perception, by transport policy makers, and other key actors, of the importance of political communication and marketing techniques with regard to winning public approval for transport policies.

This is investigated by the following means:

- Case study methodology is used to evaluate the perceptions of transport policy makers, and other key actors, of the role of political marketing and communications strategies when communicating transport policy intentions;

- Content analysis is used to examine the role of press releases, publicity and campaign material, transport policy papers and other documentary evidence from the Greater Manchester Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) bid;

- Evidence from the press, online media sources, archived local government documentation, semi structured interviews and press releases from organizations who were involved in the Manchester TIF campaign is examined to assess whether transport policy practitioners make use of specific communications strategies in policy development and implementation in order to influence public opinion of transport issues.

The thesis examines the nature of political communication and assess how marketing strategies are used by transport policy makers; and their perceptions of the role played by communications and marketing methods in the policy making process. The thesis also examines the use of 'political marketing and communications strategies' within national and local transport policy frameworks, and evaluates whether these have become more widespread and sophisticated in order to better signal policy intentions, as well as to sell controversial policies to both the media and public.

The thesis is divided into a further four chapters. Chapter 2 provides a literature review of the development of political communications and political marketing and its importance as a growing area of research emerging from the disciplines of marketing and political science. It examines definitions of political marketing and political marketing strategies, as well as evaluating the link between marketing and politics, and also the components of campaign communication. This chapter also discusses theories of public opinion and agenda setting within media discourse, and also examines the links between planning, environment and the media and in particular the representation of planning in the media as well as discussing the relationship between planning and politics. The chapter provides a contextual base from which to explore the key developments within the political communication process and its impact on the transport policy-making process within the UK.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology and epistemology adopted, and provides an overview of the case study (the Greater Manchester TIF bid), and a review of the methods of case study and triangulation and justificaties the choice of these methods. The chapter discusses specific qualitative approaches and explains the research methods used within the case study and explains the systematic process of data collection and multiple techniques employed (triangulation). It demonstrates that the strength of combining techniques for extracting data in case study research can actually make the methodology more robust.

Chapter 4 analyses the fieldwork that was carried out with transport policy makers journalists and politicians within Greater Manchester that had had some involvement with the Transport Innovation Fund bid. It evaluates the perceptions of policy makers gained from the interviews with regard to the use of political marketing communications methods within the transport policymaking framework. It also examines the variety of communications and marketing methods that were used by policy makers at the time of the TIF bid and how such methods impacted on the TIF process, drawing on evidence gained from secondary and primary data sources.

Chapter 5 concludes the thesis and brings together the key issues to emerge from it, drawing on the findings from chapter 4 and relating these back to the literature discussed in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER II

Theories of Political Communication, Marketing & Politics

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a contextual framework for the thesis by exploring the issues facing policy makers when seeking support for radical transport schemes, and also examining the growth of political communications methods and their use by transport policy makers to publicise or market their policies. The literature reviewed in this chapter draws on theories of political communications and marketing but more specifically also explores the marriage of marketing and politics, and examines the reasons why political organizations have found it necessary to adopt business-marketing concepts in order to achieve their goals. Other aspects of political communications considered important to this study are also explored including communications theory, public relations theory and the advent of marketing into the political sphere as well as theories of public opinion, agenda setting and media influence. An examination of Habermas's (2006) work on the 'Public Sphere' is central to this thesis and helps in understanding the changing conceptualizations of the 'public' and the question of the contemporary 'public sphere'.

The discussion in this chapter provides some understanding of the nature of adverse reaction from the public to transport issues often highlighted in the national and local press as well as the policy initiatives proposed by policy makers to address such issues. It also explores why communications strategies within national and local government have become more sophisticated in order to sell potentially unpopular policies to both the media and public.

Franklin (2004) argues that politicians' preoccupation with using the media to win approval for their policies is not a new feature of the British political landscape: it is as old as politicians' love of kissing babies. Franklin points out that in the Labour Party, the first Press and Publicity Department was established in 1917, while debates within the party about whether election campaigns should be 'image' or 'issue' driven, began in the 1920s. As part of that continuing debate, Tony Benn criticised Aneurin Bevan for what Benn saw as his 'absurd idea that all publicity is unimportant and that all you need is the right policy' (Benn, 1994:190). Throughout the 1960s, Harold Wilson, who exploited his media image to great political effect, was said to remark with tongue-in-cheek, but a growing accuracy, that 'most politics is presentation and what isn't, is timing' (quoted in Mitchell, 1982:207). Franklin (2004) argues, however, that what is undoubtedly new in contemporary political communications is the belief that the presentation of policy, whether by government, political party or interest group, is at least as significant as any substantive policy content. "What they can't seem to grasp", a Labour Spin Doctor announced after the 1997 election, "is that communications is not an after thought to our policy but it's central to the whole mission of New Labour" (Gaber, 1998:13).

Franklin (2004) points out that it was the election of the first Thatcher administration during the late 1970s, which marked a radical shift in both the extent, and nature of politicians' enthusiasm for targeting media to present themselves and their policies to the public. In fact he argues that during the 1980s and 1990s, enthusiasm became obsession as politicians tried to influence and regulate the flow of political information and messages via mass media to an unprecedented degree. In this process, politicians and policies have become 'packaged' for media presentation and public consumption. What follows is a discussion of the growth of public relations within the state and in particular how and why public relations departments appeared to take on greater importance within both the local and national state in the 1980s and 1990s as well as an examination of the symbiotic relationship that developed between public relations specialists and policy makers and how this related to the media in particular news production.

The following review of the literature starts by exploring the move of the media from a propaganda machine to that of crafting public opinion to promote policies. This is an historical overview of the emergence of public relations within the state, discussing its evolution from the early stages as a crude instrument for disseminating political propaganda to the professionalisation of public relations and the development and use of political marketing techniques. It is followed by a discussion of what is meant by the term 'political communication' and the growth of the phenomena within the state and particularly within the public policy arena. The chapter goes on to discuss the impact of political campaigns and later examines political marketing strategies used within such campaigns showing that these have become increasingly sophisticated in trying to influence public opinion. The concept of 'new public sector managerialism' is also examined, as an understanding of this is fundamental in aiding our understanding of how and why political marketing has taken a central role of 21st century policy making. The chapter also discusses Habermas's (1989) thesis on the structural transformation of the public sphere because it offers a useful a very useful narrative of the rise and fall of democratic institutions across the industrialised west in the modern era. The press and mass media are central to his account, suggesting key lines of inquiry for political sociology, political geography and communication studies. The chapter concludes by providing a discussion on the impact of the market on transport policy making and why policy makers have had to adapt to new managerialist ideology, which treat 'transport users' as consumers and to ideas which have demanded the subjection of transport policy makers to new logics of appropriateness requiring them to reinvent themselves as 'entrepreneurs' competing for consumer's business (Du Gay & Salman, 1992).

2.1 The Emergence of the Public Relations Profession within the State

L'Etang (1998) points out that during the early 20th Century, interest in public relations at a political or diplomatic level came about as a result of several historical developments: the rise of totalitarian regimes in Germany, the Soviet Union and Italy; increasing tensions in international politics; reaction to the increased democratisation of society; technological developments in communications which contributed to the massification of society and methodological developments in understanding public opinion. She highlights the fact that the success of totalitarian politics abroad, and the growing interest in similar political movements in Britain, stimulated an ongoing policy debate about the British response to such developments and the necessity for a propaganda policy to respond to the perceived threat. Furthermore, L'Etang points out that workers began to feel increasingly alienated due to economic depression and industrial mechanization, and opportunities for political action clearly presented threats to the established order. Whilst British war-time propaganda was deemed to have been a success, there was a strong feeling that such activities were not entirely appropriate for a democratic state. In fact as late as 1939 *The Times* argued that the creation of opinion by a government was 'one of the inescapable necessities of totalitarianism'. Wilcox *(*1983:98*)* comments that,

> *"Such public reactions reflected an unease existing within the Civil Service that an excessive attention to propaganda was questionable as a satisfactory preparation for the war with Germany, Italy, Russia, or Japan. The fundamental issue was whether the British government should build up a propaganda machine with the purpose of competing with totalitarian states or whether this activity should be organised in a way more appropriate to a 'democratic' state or 'open society."*

L'Etang (1998) points out the opposing view which argued that propaganda was a necessary appendage of diplomacy, or even economics, and thus it had a part to play in assisting an effective democracy by facilitating feedback to civil servants from citizens; educating and informing citizens about political and legislative developments as well as winning their cooperation to ensure that services were properly and effectively utilised. L'Etang also points out that, by the end of World War Two, the state had invested substantially in a diverse range of propaganda activities to support its political, economic and diplomatic priorities, and as such civil servants had placed increasing importance on the benefits of propaganda. According to Wring (1996) however, prior to the Second World War, commentators and political organisers regularly referred to the business of political communications work as "propaganda". He argues that even though the term is now outdated in electoral terms, it usefully describes a one-directional communication process in which passive audiences found themselves subjected to the sometimes manipulative appeals of political elites. As such he suggests that as a tool of persuasion, propaganda can be compared with the production orientation stage in the development of conventional marketing, both approaches being primarily concerned with accommodating their own organizational needs rather than those of their public's. This lack of concern with voter's wants manifested itself in an electoral strategy (described as "candidate orientation") based around the principle that "...increased awareness would increase voter preference. The inputs to the promotion campaign to achieve increased awareness were designed on the basis of guess and intuition, (Shama, 1976) cited in Wring (1996:94).

Pieczka & L'Etang (2006) point out that 1945 Labour government brought about increased expenditure on social welfare, housing and health. They argue that this created the opportunities for public relations to become an established part of the socio-economic framework in that there was a large amount of new social legislation that needed to be explained to the public. Furthermore, goods had to be promoted, initially to export markets and consumer durables, to the home market. The new Labour administration had the task therefore of explaining their interventionist economic policies and this triggered opposition from business in rhetorical campaigns that often appealed directly to the public. They also point out that the wartime experience forced local government into a much closer relationship with the communities for which it was responsible. Following the war the Labour government implemented the 1942 Beveridge Report, which laid out the vision of the welfare state. As Pieczka & L'Etang (2006) point out, this era produced a plethora of new legislation that had to be explained to citizens, as did the reorganisation and repairs to the infrastructure of many urban areas throughout the country which had been damaged by bombing. As a consequence, local government began to appoint officials into newly created public relations posts, and from 1947 onwards public relations became defined as the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain, by conveying information and by all other suitable means, mutual understanding and good relations between a firm, statutory authority, government, department, professional, or other body or group and the community at large.

The growth of the public relations profession in the United Kingdom had two clear trends, which became discernable after 1979. The first was its sudden growth and the second its wide scale adoption by various organisations. The Conservative Party initiated a new era in which the main political parties increasingly prioritised political communication. In 1978 the Conservatives opened their first full-time account with a professional advertising agency – Saatchi and Saatchi, and they were advised by the heads of several top ten Public Relations companies for the majority of their time in office (Davis, 2002). As Kavanagh (1995:56) observed, 'Mrs Thatcher supplied a set of beliefs but used the latest public relations techniques to a greater degree than any of her predecessors'. Kavanagh points out that throughout the 1980s other parties began to adopt similar approaches. And 1981 witnessed the launch of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) with massive public relations support from Dewe-Rogerson which was one of the top ten PR companies at that time. However, Kavanagh points out that the Labour Party had no PR industry support at the time but nevertheless, they started a revamp of their internal communications operations following the 1983 defeat.

Davis (2002) highlights several studies of British politics that have documented how all-main political parties have now increased their spending on promotional matters and allocated greater control to their professional communicators. The influence of PR has therefore become apparent in policy development, party and personality brand management and, most of all, during election campaigns. One indication of this growth of promotional work is the increasing levels of election campaign expenditure by the main parties. According to Neill's (1998) report, in 1983 the Labour Party spent £4million (at 1997 prices) and the Conservatives just over £6.2 million. By 1997 those figures had risen to £26 and £28.3 million respectively. In effect, communications expenditure for the two main parties had increased by roughly two-thirds with each general election. Franklin (2004) points to the growing preoccupation with presentation and packaging of politics in local government. The growth rate for public relations in local councils and other state institutions appeared to match that in central government. By 1994, according to Franklin (1994) 90% of metropolitan local authorities had established PR departments. Alongside other institutions such as schools and universities (Wernick,

1991) and health authorities (Miller & Williams, 1993), local authorities were encouraged to adopt public relations for three obvious reason: (a) the need to communicate with the public, (b) the introduction of 'market reforms' and business practices in the running of public institutions, (c) rising competition for dwindling government resources as the state attempted to decrease its public spending (Pollard, 1992; Lowe 1993).

Media campaigns have traditionally been a means by which pressure groups, charities and trade unions raised interest and support. The main change during the 1990s was the influx of PR professionals into these sectors. Deacon's (1996) survey of the voluntary sector found that 31% of all organisations had press and publicity officers, 43% used external PR agencies, and 56% monitored the media. These figures increased to 57%, 81% and 78% for organisations with annual budgets above £250,000. Deacon also found that two thirds of unions had at least one part-time press officer, 25% used PR consultancies and 57.4% used other agencies to monitor the media and provide other services which was significantly more than that observed in earlier studies (Glasgow University Media Group, 1976; 1980; Manning, 1998).

2.2 Defining 'Political Communication'

This thesis sets out to understand the role of political communications with transport policy development and implementation. It is necessary therefore, to understand the evolution and development of political communications systems within democratic societies. Stanyer (2007) argues that political communication systems of mature representative democracies are continually evolving and as such there has been a paradigm within these systems over the last twenty years which, he suggests has been well documented (e.g. Blumler & Gurevitch 2000; Dalgren, 2004). In Stanyer's opinion, this is due to the global process of modernisation that has impacted on each of the components of national communications systems. He argues that although stable systems characterized much of the twentieth century these are increasingly experiencing a state of instability and are thus less predictable or less structured. Stanyer (2007) suggests that as a result of this, the relationship between political advocates and media professionals have been changed, as institutions and actors have sought to acclimatize to the new realities of political communications.

Killingsworth (2009) suggests that, despite an abundance of literature that focuses on the nature of organisational communications and government communications at the local level, investigating to what extent local government values and uses public relations or political communications strategies to build relationships with their constituents is important to the advancement and scholarship in the field. Norris *et al.* (1999) discuss how the magnitude of the New Labour landslide victory in 1997 was quickly attributed to the techniques of professional political communications. They argue that conventional accounts of the election campaign seemed to stress that Tony Blair's victory was a result of re-branding the image of the Labour party. Most of the credit for the New Labour victory being attributed to Peter Mandelson who was the chief Labour strategist and consisted of three major components: the modernization of the party organization which bypassed activists enabling the internal power to flow upwards towards the party's central leadership and downwards towards ordinary party members; the revision of traditional party policies with the abandonment of socialist nostrums and the adoption of the 'third way' straddling the middle ground of British politics. But more importantly for this study, Norris *et al.* (2009) point to the deployment of strategic communications to convey the image of New Labour. They argue that the techniques of professional political communications were used effectively to keep New Labour 'on message' throughout the period of the long campaign in the year prior to the election and the six-week official campaign. From this perspective they suggest that New Labour's tireless courting of the press was instrumental in reversing their historic disadvantage and returning them to power.

Norris *et al.* (1999) argue that one of the most striking developments in recent years is the widespread adoption of the techniques of strategic communications by political parties. In this respect they suggest that strategic communications involves a coordinated plan that sets out party objectives, identifies target voters, establishes the battleground issues, orchestrates consistent key themes and images, prioritises organisational and financial resources as well as laying out the framework within which the campaign communications can operate. They suggest that this development within the state is part of the 'professionalisation' or 'modernisation' of campaigning, which provides a greater role for technical experts in public relations, news management, advertising, speech-writing and market research. They suggest that observers assume that the use of such techniques has become a critical component of modern elections and campaigns in many countries. Thus, in this thesis, the term "political communications" is used as an umbrella term to summarise all these aspects of political campaigning.

Crozier's (2007) summary of the transformation of the modes of political communication in Western democracies over the last few decades, argues that post World War Two, it is assumed that more or less homogenous and passive political information was delivered to the publics. He contrasts this with contemporary society in which he suggests that the streams of political communication continue to multiply and are targeted at a multiplicity of audiences that are seen as diverse, active and complex. As he states:

> *"The new modes and means of communication have hailed, among other things, a rapid acceleration in the news cycle along with a corresponding contraction of political and journalistic time frames In addition, the developments in information and communication technologies have created a global reach that recasts the character and dynamics of political and journalistic time frames" (Crozier, 2007:1)*

For Crozier this is a fundamental shift in political communication and as such the political impacts emanating from it are quite profound. The most important of these is what he sees as the rearrangement of power relations amongst key message providers and receivers, the transformation of the cultures of political journalism, the problematisation of conventional understandings of democracy and citizenship, and politics. Crozier goes on to make a very important point that concerns the growing professionalisation of political advocacy and advice, which is a key part of the new terrain, as governments, political parties, and political actors become more absorbed by the necessity of professional communication. Thus whilst informing and persuading the public was the former focus, currently the prime emphasis is on media management, the cultivation of media image, and the continuing monitoring of diverse audience opinion.

Blumler & Kavanagh (1999) frame their debate in similar terms in suggesting that fundamental changes in society and the media are leading to a new structure of political communication that they believe is qualitatively different from its forerunner. In their view, society is in a process that is more diverse, fragmented and complex and as such the avenues of political communication are multiplying, but at a deeper level they assert that power relations amongst key message providers and receivers are being re-arranged. In other words the culture of political journalism is being transformed and conventional meanings of "democracy" and "citizenship" are being questioned and rethought. In their opinion, such changes mean that the research community is challenged to avoid over-commitment to outdated paradigms and to keep abreast of evolving trends.

2.3 The Political Campaign

Coffman (2002:2) provides a useful definition of public campaigns:

> *"Public communication campaigns use the media, messaging, and an organized set of communication activities to generate specific outcomes in a large number of individuals and in a specified period of time. They are an attempt to shape behaviour toward desirable social outcomes. To maximise their chances of success, campaigns usually coordinate media efforts with a mix of other interpersonal and community based communication channels"*

Coffman states that there are two main types of campaigns: a) individual behaviour change campaigns – that attempt to change in individuals, the behaviours that lead to social problems or promote behaviours that lead to improved individual or social well being; b) public will campaigns – these attempt to mobilize public action for policy change (see Table 2.1). She suggests that whilst this type of campaign is less understood, they are increasing in number. Coffman points out that public communication campaigns are growing more sophisticated and strategic and that campaign designers have begun to diversify their strategies and abandon the notion that information alone is sufficient to cure the problems society faces. Coffman suggests that as a result, campaigns are being run less on the flawed notion that people will improve or change their behaviour if they just know better. Such campaigns are increasingly paying attention to context and linking traditional media and behaviour change strategies with community action to make social and policy environment more supportive of the desired campaign results.

Choi *et al.* (2008) in discussing the impact of campaigns in political elections, point out that, political campaigns can have important social and political consequences beyond the selection of who is to govern. Political campaigns are seen as periods of high intensity information flows that reach broad cross-sections of the public, including individuals normally inattentive to politics. They suggest that this level of intensive campaign communication has advantages in that it might encourage citizens to renew their political interests, effects that might carry over to non-campaign periods, to less political forms of engagement and to subsequent campaigns. Stanyer (2007) points out how in Britain, in addition to the general election for the Westminster parliament, there are elections for national assemblies in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, elections for the European parliament, local elections for councils and mayoral elections in certain municipalities. He argues that all elections are accompanied by a campaign, which is a finite period of intense candidate communication, after which citizens have an opportunity to decide who should represent them.

Stanyer (2007) suggests that campaign communication is increasingly exclusive, particularly, in first order national elections. He argues that this type of targeted campaign communication had become reliant on expensive market research, which has to be funded, and increasingly employs a growing number of campaign professionals.

Table 2.1 Two Types of Media Campaign

Campaign Type/Goal	Individual Behavior Change	Public Will
Objectives	▪ Influence beliefs and knowledge about a behavior and its consequences ▪ Affect attitudes in support of behavior and persuade ▪ Affect perceived social norms about the acceptability of a behavior among one's peers ▪ Affect intentions to perform the behavior ▪ Produce behavior change (if accompanied by supportive program components)	▪ Increase visibility of an issue and its importance ▪ Affect perceptions of social issues and who is seen as responsible ▪ Increase knowledge about solutions based on who is seen as responsible ▪ Affect criteria used to judge policies and policymakers ▪ Help determine what is possible for service introduction and public funding ▪ Engage and mobilize constituencies to action
Target Audience	Segments of the population whose behavior needs to change	Segments of the general public to be mobilized and policymakers
Strategies	Social marketing	Media advocacy, community organizing, and mobilization
Media Vehicles	Public service/affairs programming: print, television, radio, electronic advertising	News media: print, television, radio, electronic advertising
Examples	Anti-smoking, condom usage, drunk driving, seat belt usage, parenting	Support for quality child care, after school programming, health care policy

Source: Coffman (2002)

From this perspective, Stanyer (2007) argues that campaign communication is increasingly capital-intensive, often costing millions of pounds. As such only the contestants who manage to raise huge funds can sustain their communication efforts. In Stanyer's (2007) opinion, the rise of exclusive campaign communication has to be taken in the context of the transformation of the electorate that has taken place over the last fifty years. He concedes that there are differences in the extent to which trends have developed but states that it has been acknowledged on both sides of the Atlantic that voters have become less attached to political parties than at any other time previously. He also argues that there has been a decline in voter loyalty and as such a rise in 'floating' voters or 'independents' which is part of a wider process of 'mass- de-identification' with common institutions, symbols and authorities. Citizens' political identity is less likely to be expressed in party terms that in any previous generation.

Young people, in particular, are less likely than older generations to identify themselves as supporters of a political party.

2.4 The Evolution of Communications & Media Policy in the State

Cuilenburg & McQuail (2003:189-197) discuss how communications policies originated from interaction between the pursuit of national interests by states and the operations of commercial and industrial enterprises. They argue that government and industry have sought mutual advantage by way of privileges, restrictions and regulation. They point out how policies in general refer to deliberate public projects aimed at accomplishing a specific objective, together with the proposed method and timetable to attain them. They suggest that the specific content of government policies reflect the deal made in a particular place and time as well as the balance of power and advantage between government and industry, and they highlight three phases of communications policy making:

(I) A phase of emerging communications industry policy (pre WW2), in which media policy is pursued in the public interest that is very narrowly defined as efficient public service by way of the communication system, under state control or close supervision, accompanied by technological and economic development of the infrastructure and distribution networks. The main criteria for media policy are the public interest as defined by the state and the financial benefit of corporations as defined by themselves, such criteria are therefore judged in terms of control and economic welfare on the one hand, and by competition and profitability on the other. They suggest that these are typically debated in public by the public or relevant interest groups.

(II) From World War Two until about 1980 new media was developing on the basis of improved means of distribution and computerization. It is typically characterised by normative and political rather than technological deliberations, and by the search for national coherence and stability. Irrespective of the climate of the Cold War, a spirit of democracy and the wish for international solidarity were able to influence media policy. As such, neither the lessons of misuse of mass media for propaganda or the dangers of monopoly control of the mass press were forgotten. The post war phase of media policy was therefore dominated by sociopolitical rather than economic or national strategic concerns. The focus being a more self-conscious kind of media policy, which reflected a more collectivist spirit and the maturation of the politics of full democracy. This 'maturation' process involved an evaluation of the significance of mass media for political and social life in 'mass democracy'.

In Europe, the traditional political bias of newspapers whether left or right, coupled with growing tendencies towards economic concentration in the postwar period provided the incentive for scrutinizing the press, for example the Royal Commission on the Press, 1947-9 in Britain or the Swedish Press Commissions of the 1960s. In some countries pressure was brought to bear, to promote diversity of ownership and content, limiting monopoly and dealing more effectively with complaints against the press. In Britain and the US, the press by mid century appeared less of a healthy component of democratic life and more an instrument of political power unfairly balanced against labour and progressive reform. For much of the post-WW2 period, this phase two media policy was largely coexistent with policy for public broadcasting. The character of this policy started to change from the mid-1970s and became increasingly concerned with the financing and viability of public broadcasting, with preserving or removing its monopoly status and with the problems of the incorporation of new media developments into existing systems of broadcast regulation post 1980.

(III) The phase of a new communications policy paradigm that represented a value change in communications policy. The philosophy of European communications policy is attuned to the idea that a large and dynamic market, with open frontiers, should, within a clear and agreed framework, be able to provide for the current and expanding communications needs of society. The implication here is that the field of communication is no longer primarily viewed as an appropriate area for collective welfare policies. The predominant values guiding policy in most European countries during the phase II era, were derived from ideas of freedom, equality and solidarity, and policy was expected to create institutional expression of these ideals. However, they argue that since 1980 policy has increasingly followed the logic of the marketplace and the technology as well as the wishes of consumers and citizens, rather than impose its goals. Along with the redirection of policy there are also changes in priorities attaching to underlying values, and some older values are losing their force. The main area where this is occurring is in respect of social responsibility requirements, public service and altruism or no profit goals. The 'public interest' is being redefined to encapsulate wider economic and consumerist values. There is now, far less policy emphasis on equality despite the rhetoric from politicians. Policy formation in this and other fields, is generally guided by a notion of the 'public interest', that democratic states are expected to pursue on behalf of their respective societies. In general, a matter of public interest is defined as one that impacts the whole of society or specific sections of it as opposed just the individuals directly affected. Despite the liberalising and individualising trends, which have become characteristic of capitalist societies, there are an increasing number of issues where material development gives rise to wider concerns and demands regulation. Such concerns can relate to threats on the grounds of a number of things for example, health, environment, security and economic welfare, but also potential shared benefits to be expected from economic, social and technological developments.

Blumler & Kavanagh (1999) also divide the evolution of political communication systems into three successive phases. The first phase (Age one) covers the first two decades following World War One, a period in which the political system was regarded as a prime source of initiatives and debates for social reform. The party system was articulated to deep-rooted cleavages of social structure and many voters related to politics through more or less firm and enduring party ideals. Consensus was accompanied by a high degree of confidence in political institutions and much political communication was secondary to relatively strong and stable political institutions and beliefs.

The second phase (Age two) began in the 1960s a time when limited nationwide television became the central source of political communication, at the same time the control of party loyalty was beginning to be challenged. Out of this came four major changes: Firstly a reduction in the frequency of selective patterns of exposure to party propaganda, this was due to a medium of even-handed news, several-sided discussion, and free slots for the majority of parties which afforded decreasing opportunities for viewers consistently to tune into their own side of the argument. Secondly, there was a decline in newspapers, clubs and other organizations affiliated to parties. Thirdly, the audience of political communication was increased by the advent of television as it reached more marginal sectors of the electorate who had previously been less heavily exposed to message flows. The paradox was although this period hosted substantive debate about alternative political directions and policies, few citizens appeared to sift the arguments concerned, tending to vote instead on group based loyalties. The fourth aspect is that television news became an important channel of short-term influence, with its values and formats having an increasingly far-reaching impact on the scheduling of political events, (coordinated with news bulletin timings) the language of politics (crafting of sound-bites) and the personalisation of its presentations (sharper focus on top leaders). They conclude that, as with the first phase, the second phase political communication system also pivoted on a paradox: at a time when most citizens had become more open-minded and flexible and were prepared to entertain varying approaches to the problems of the day, they were served an emptier and less nourishing communications diet.

The third phase (Age three), which is still emerging is marked by the explosion of the main means of communication, media its profusion, its pervasiveness, scope and speed. Television specifically is an entity that was once a concentrated communications outlet of relatively few channels for politicians to use, but is now an elaborate journalistic medium, hosting news flashes and inserts, formed bulletins, a wide range of public affairs formats and twenty four hour news services.

Communication abundance goes beyond embracing the multiplication of television channels and radio stations facilitated by satellite technology, but also reflects the expansion of communication equipment in people's homes, such as multiple television and radio sets, video records, and video games. Beyond mass media political news, information and ideas can be circulated via computer. In summary, all this change in the third age affects how people receive politics in ways that are yet to be observed through research. They point out that:

> *"To politicians, the third age media system looms like a hydra headed beast, the many mouths of which are continually clamouring to be fed. When something happens, they are expecting to tell the media what they are going to do about it well before they can be fully informed themselves" (Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999:213).*

Conversely for journalists, the news cycle has accelerated as a result of the increase in outlets and increased competition bringing pressure on the whole profession, meaning time for political and journalistic reflection and judgment is squeezed. This they argue is the most complex age characterized more by conflicting crosscurrents than by a dominant tendency towards a particular affiliation to a specific political party.

Since the mid-1990s the dominance of mass communications has been challenged by three interrelated developments. First, the introduction of the permanent campaign Blumenthal (1980), has blurred the difference between campaigning and governing, Ornstein & Mann (2000), so that politicians seek to dominate the agenda every single day (Heclo, 2000). Secondly there has been an increased professionalization of communication, with public relations and marketing professionals transferring their skills to the political arena, (Farrell, 1996; Plasser, 2002; Negrine *et al.* 2007). Thirdly, the growing importance of new communications technology, especially the internet that encourages political actors to use a much wider range of public relations tools. These developments can be grouped together under the concept of post-modern communications, whereby political communicators do not rely on one dominant channel to reach target audiences (Norris *et al.* 1999; Norris, 2000).

Blumler & Kavanagh (1999) in their examination of recent trends in the societal environment for political communication argue that the relations of social change to media change are complex and reciprocal. They suggest that over the post war period, political communication has been responsive (as well as contributory) to a number of socio-economic trends:

1. "Modernisation": increased social differentiation and specialization, fragmenting social organization, interests, and identities; proliferating diverse lifestyles and moral stances; and fueling identity politics. They argue that this complicates tasks of political aggregation and communication, supports markets for minority media, and may explain the appeal of talk-show explorations of divergent personal and sexual behaviourrs, conflicts, and aberrations.

2. "Individualisation": society embracing the elevation of personal aspirations, consumerism, and reduced conformity to the traditions and demands of established institutions, notably political parties, the nuclear family, mainstream religion, the workplace, and neighbourhood and social-class groupings. In approaches to politics, citizens have become more like consumers (instrumental, oriented to immediate gratifications, and potentially fickle) than believers. Politicians must work harder to retain their interest and support.

3. "Secularization": the loss of institutional avenues to the sacred and the reduced status of official politics, reflected initially in weaker party identifications but spreading subsequently to most other facets of political authority. The diminished parties face increased competition for media and public attention from the rise of hard-lobbying interest and cause groups. Relations of elites to masses are transformed by the evaporation of deference and increased skepticism about the credentials, claims, and credibility of authority holders in many walks of life. This they show supports political and media populism.

4. "Economisation": the increasing influence of economic factors and values on the political agenda and other areas of society, including culture, arts, and sports. The subordination of formerly more autonomous spheres (e.g., higher education, publishing and journalism) to economic criteria of performance is encouraged.

5. "Aestheticisation": the sense of people's increased preoccupation with stylishness, image, presentation, and appropriate tastes, especially in fashion and music. They point out that this encourages closer associations of politics with popular culture. They also point to "increasing rationalisation of all facets of purposive organization and administration" (1999:210). This favours arguments backed by systematically gathered evidence in forums of relatively sustained policy debate (conferences, quality press, signed columns, specialist political programs, analytical journalism, weekly magazines of news and comment). Policymakers, think tanks, and pressure groups are encouraged to commission pragmatically oriented research, strengthening the hands of experts whose claims to be able to conduct and interpret it are widely accepted. But it also supports the emergence of "the instrumental rationalization of persuasion," based on the techniques, values, and personnel of (a) advertising, (b) market research, and (c) public relations (Mayhew, 1997).

6. "Mediatisation" in which they show the media moving toward the centre of the social process. This promotes the concept and practices of a "media-constructed public sphere" elevating the communication function and the role of communication experts into a wide range of institutions. They suggest that "Modernisation of these types of institutions is often equated with tooling them up for sophisticated public relations (as latterly in Britain with the Monarchy and even the Church of England!" (Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999:210)

Blumler & Kavanagh point out that problems faced by government have been intensified by the trends highlighted, coupled with higher social expectations placed upon authorities crippled with diminishing resources. Fragmenting societal consensus has also led to more disparate constituencies for politicians to operate within and thus the political arena has become chaotic, less structured, less predictable and more difficult to control.

Wring (1996) points out how analysts carefully observed the work of party strategists during the 1992 general election. He highlights a particular ITN lunchtime news item in which the presenter John Suchet and the Westminster-based journalists Julia Langdon and Michael White ended a discussion on the imminent campaign alluding to the supposed ability of the “marketing men” to dictate the possible direction of the campaign. Wring (1996) argues that this was no isolated event, and that interchanges such as these underline the way in which some of the most informed political commentators have come to view the modern electoral process. However, he stresses that this view is not necessarily shared by the candidates and cites work by Kavanagh (1995) who noted that leading politicians are reluctant to admit the importance of marketing and the strategic role it plays as this could undermine their own status as well as upset influential elements in their own party. Thus he suggests that for these reasons the history of political marketing in Britain cannot be found in official party sources. Wring (1996) points out that, in looking at the study of election campaigning in Britain it becomes clear that the major parties have, since the last century been actively involved in marketing related activities, although he suggests that few of the officials involved, would have specifically described their work in such a way.

According to Wring it was during the 1950s that party organizers developed greater awareness of the techniques and methods of mass marketing being pioneered by the commercial sector at the time. However, the term marketing became a more acceptable organizational concept during the leaderships of Thatcher and Kinnock but mainly among the narrow but powerful elites in the party hierarchies.

Wring (1994) suggests that the explicit use of techniques in politics currently described as marketing in the British context, actually date back to the 1920s. Lock & Harris (1996) point out that since the Saatchi poster “Labour isn’t working” the term political marketing has become commonplace and as such many marketers have developed the belief that there exists a direct transference of their concepts to the political arena. They suggest that to some extent this is correct, but point out a number of key differences between conventional products, service marketing settings and the political choice process and how it may be influenced. In their opinion, these had received little, if any, attention in the literature. Additionally, while the subject is beginning to develop some taxonomic frameworks, there is a dearth of published work measuring and predicting the effects of political advertising and other communication tools.

2.5 Public Relations Strategies Within Political Communication

Another dimension that should be considered is the development of public relations as an aspect of the development of political communications within the state apparatus. Stromback *et al.* (2010) have asserted that the use of public relations strategies and tactics are ubiquitous in many areas of political communication. However, they point out that despite the growing influence of public relations, little application of public relations theory and research has been integrated into the study of political campaigning and marketing processes. This is particularly the case in debates of “political marketing,” an area of study that forms a union between marketing and politics in that it is concerned with the use of marketing strategies, methods and concepts to politics on a wide basis. Stromback (2007a) argues that to see political marketing as an offshoot of the professionalisation of campaigning is misleading but in order to develop a clearer or more in-depth understanding of political marketing theories they need to be aligned to public relations as well as political communication. As Xifra (2010) explains ‘public relations’ as an idea originated in theories regarding American business. This is backed up by Cutlip *et al.* (2000) who point out, that early works on American politics and political campaigns paid scant attention to the role of political publicity. However, this was to change in politics, as it did in business, at the turn of the twentieth century, when political campaign commentaries noted the increasing number of journalists being recruited as press agents to political candidates.

This discussion reviewed the evolution of political communications within the state from the early days of propaganda communications through to the professionalisation of public relations within the state and the use of public relations strategies designed to influence and direct public opinion towards specific state policies. The subsequent section discusses how this evolution continued with the rise of 'New Managerialist' thinking as part of the broader neoliberal discourse during the 1980s and 1990s, and how this eventually led to concept of political marketing communications ideas being practiced within the state.

> *"Politics, as both elite-level activity and the dissemination of this to the public, has predominantly become a process of marketing" (*Savigny, 2008:1)

2.6 New Public Sector Managerialism

According to Walsh (1994) the public sector underwent a radical management revolution involving total reorganization of its constituent parts during the Thatcherite period of the 1980s, based on the application of market principles. This involved the separation of purchasers from providers, e.g. Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) through the introduction of contracts and development of internal trading accounts (Patterson & Pinch, 1995). Business planning, commercialism and competition became key terms used within the public sector domain, and as such it came as no surprise that in this environment marketing, both as a concept and metaphor subsequently attracted increasing attention from politicians and public sector managers. However, Walsh suggests that limited elements of the marketing approach have always existed, even if they were not thought of as in such terms, in the areas of local tourism or economic development for example. He points out that in the public sector the increasing interest in marketing, as it was considered in relation to core public services, such as education, health and transport, came out of the growth of managerialism. He therefore argues that the nature of public sector marketing should be considered in terms of three key headings; the growth in consumerism; the adoption of strategic marketing and the use of promotion. As such, in his view, consumerism has been at the centre of the management changes that public services have faced in recent decades. The political right which saw the public sector as inefficient, unresponsive, unaccountable to those it serves and favouring instead the interests of bureaucrats, argued that there was a need to recognize public sector users as customers who had rights to higher levels of services which, in their minds, only private sector management strategies and principles could provide. Walsh shows how the introduction of consumerism into the public sector took a number of forms such as decentralization, customer-consciousness, improved communication, notions of increased choice and systems of redress. Clarke & Newman (1997) point out how the attack on the welfare state carried out by the new right embodied a fundamentally hostile view to institutional forms in which social democratic representations of the public were formulated and developed. Thus, the consequent reforms that took place can be viewed in terms of an attempt to reconstruct the relationship between the public and the state around the individualized and familiarized figure of the consumer. They suggest that such neo-liberal concepts were embodied in public choice critiques of producer monopolies, in the Thatcher claim that 'there is no such thing as society', and in her governments' efforts to make such a claim become a reality. Clarke & Newman (1997:123) suggest that,

> *"Consumerism addressed the notion of private interests through the rhetoric of choice, counter-posed individual freedoms to collectivist social provision, and framed social differentiation within a language of the diversity of individual needs and wants".*

They describe how reconstructions of the state structure towards more minimalist direct provision and dispersal of welfare services to other agencies was undertaken as a result of the concept of the public. Institutional representations of a social democratic public were broken up by such processes of dispersal, the role of local government and other elected bodies diminished whilst at the same time market relations in health, housing and transport were promoted. Clarke & Newman (1997) point out that the extent of these reforms was not just targeted at breaking up old institutional attachments but also creating new forms of articulation between the citizen as consumer and the state itself. According to Walsh (1994) one important aspect of the introduction of consumerism in the public services was that of customer consciousness and improved communication.

Customer consciousness and customer care training became widespread in many public service organizations from the former British Rail to the Inland Revenue. Communications, for example letters and forms were reviewed and more explicit systems for public consultation were developed for example in the National Health Service (NHS), alongside the development of purchasing and commissioning roles. Attempts were made to increase the level of choice to users, for example, choice of decoration of council houses, or choice of school or residential home or providing choice between public transport services. Walsh points out that government also began to make more extensive use of promotional techniques with central government becoming a major purchaser of advertising. There was more direct promotion to citizens, as with the Patient's and Parent's Charters and documents on the national curriculum. Major advertising campaigns became increasingly common in the promotion of government initiatives for example in the NHS reforms. The use of such promotional techniques also became widespread in local government although under strict legal guidance in order to prevent political bias in the information provided. Walsh argues, that the way policy was presented was seen as central to effective implementation and as such politics itself had become a focus of marketing alongside sophisticated use of opinion analysis, image creation and management.

2.7 Communications & Information

Xifra (2010) points out that political communication can be described as a comprehensive communication in the sense that it encompasses a variety of strategies, techniques, tactics taken from a number of disciplines that constitute social communication and marketing. Political marketing implies the use of marketing methods and techniques within the political process. As an activity and method it represents and reflects the penetration of the political space by marketing. Lees-Marshment (2004:10) suggests:

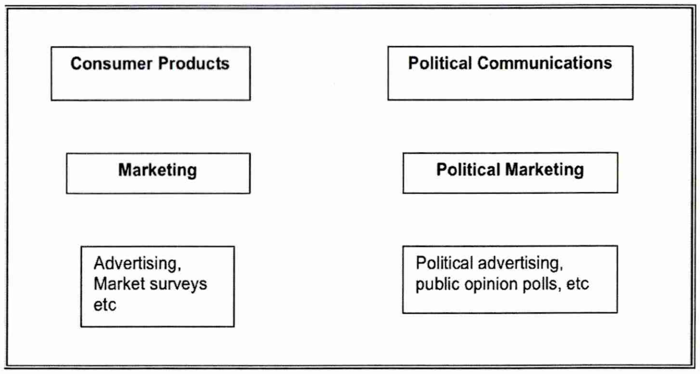
> *"Political marketing is about political organizations adapting techniques and concepts originally used in the business world to help them achieve their goals. It studies the relationship between a political organization or individual and its market, its use of marketing activities (market intelligence, product design,*

communication and delivery), its product, and its overall attitude (product, sales or market – orientation) such political organizations include parliaments, political parties, charities, bureaucracies and television channels; their product legislation, policies or meetings; their market is the public, electorate, members, financial donors, tax payers, benefit receivers or viewers, their goals are passing legislation, winning elections, campaigning for better rights for a section of society, and providing entertainment".

Lees-Marshment (2004) points out that there is a conventional view held by the wider population, and some academics, that political marketing is about 'spin doctoring and sound bites'. She argues that this is not political marketing, and suggests that a party or any political organisation can engage in political marketing without the need to spin or produce sound bites. Conversely, because a party adopts effective media management does not mean it becomes market oriented. The central point for Lees-Marshment is that, political marketing goes beyond spin-doctors or election campaigns and represents the application of marketing to a wide range of political arenas. It's about political organizations adapting techniques (such as market research) and concepts (such as market orientation to satisfy user demands) originally used by business to help organizations achieve their goals.

Political marketing has been conceptualised by Maarek (1995:2) as a "complex process, the outcome of a more global effort implicating all the factors of the politician's political communication" and emphasizes that 'political marketing' is the general method of 'political communication', one of its means (1995:28). The introduction of marketing into politics he argues is considered to be an outcome of "the elaboration of a policy of political communication…a global strategy of design, rationalization and conveyance of modern political communication" (1995:2). Figure 2.1 describes Maarek's views and shows the relationship between commercial and political marketing.

Figure 2.1 Commercial and political marketing: two parallel strategies



Source: Kolovos and Harris 2005:28 (adapted from Maarek 1995)

Other commentators (e.g. Butler & Collins, 1994; 1995) argue that it is not possible to draw such a parallel, given that a party's "product" does not consist of its political communications but of:

a) its ideological platform and its set of policy proposals, b) the party, leader, the candidates and party officials and c) party members in general. Nevertheless, in Maarek's (1995:28) opinion, political marketing has become an integral and vital component of political communication: "Political communication…encompasses the entire marketing process, from preliminary market study to testing and targeting". For Maarek the key areas for the application of political marketing are image-making campaigns and election campaigns.

2.8 The Spread of Political Marketing into Other Policy Arenas

Lees-Marshment (2004) posits a view of political marketing that is useful in providing some understanding of why it has become so popular within politics. She argues that political marketing is about the relationship between the political elite and the people. Marketing can be attached to politics due to the fact that they share common tenets: the aim to understand how political organisations act in relation to their market and vice versa. However, marketing is more prescriptive and, therefore, provides ideas regarding how organisations could behave in relation to their market in order to achieve their goals. Lees-Marshment (2004) cites the work of Jones & Moran (1994:17) who point out that the idea of a political system that meets the needs and demands of people link back to traditional politics, and argue that British democracy 'means that the people can decide the government and exercise influence over the decisions governments take. Political marketing they argue is simply a way of doing this in the 21st century with a critical, well informed and consumerist mass franchise. Lees-Marshment (2004) argues that political marketing encompasses a wide range of political organizations, including political parties, the NHS, universities and schools, Parliaments – e.g. Westminster and the Scottish Parliament, local governments/councils, newspapers and television, the Monarchy, police, civil service and charities/interest-groups/pressure groups.

Lees-Marshment is careful to point out that this broader definition will no doubt reach a few sceptical audiences and like her previous attempts to stretch the concept of political marketing to include influence on the political party product, rather than just the sale, she concedes that it may take some time to be accepted and in fact may never be accepted by all. However, she points to one fundamental argument in its favour; and that it's something that is happening in the real world. Political marketing is in practice an increasingly exciting and integrated phenomenon that the majority of significant public figures and political staff are vividly aware of.

However, Reid (1988) suggests that in western terms, although seldom recognized by politicians, getting elected is essentially about marketing. Political parties must determine the scope and nature of the product and then find the most effective way of communicating its benefits to a target audience. Yet he argues that examination of political campaigning practices suggest that political product, policy and promotion are determined without reference to the existing body of knowledge on consumer behaviour. He goes to on to suggest that although attempts have been made by academics and other researchers to address aspects of the marketing problem, there appears to be a dearth of published research, which treats it in a holistic way. He outlines how decision making in many political systems was a process in which the only feasible changes were those that altered socio-political or economic states by relatively small steps. The implication for political marketers therefore would be that they ought to pitch their communications to operate within fairly narrow latitude of acceptance. Reid (1988) goes on to suggest that research could be concentrated on tracing the development of important issues with a political framework. However, his conclusion is that past efforts to analyse the forces which influence all kinds of marketing activities, have generally looked at the behaviour of isolated political actors such as consumer groups not the activities of the political marketers.

2.9 The Public Sphere

An understanding of the debates concerning the public sphere is useful as it can help explain widely used terms such as 'public opinion' or the 'transport publics'. Goodnight (1992) suggests that there are few terms in the vocabulary of political democracy that are more important than the term 'public'. Yet, a precise definition remains elusive. He argues that controversy over how a public represents it own intentions and appraises alternatives is long standing. This is a debate about whether civic communication should be understood as a matter of timely and appropriate improvisation, as a rational discourse of elites, or as a systematic practice among educated citizens. Goodnight (1992) concludes that contemporary debates that attempt to conceptualise public opinion and the practices of public communication are a reflection of the cultural legacy of the classical public sphere.

Louw (2010) discusses the idea that liberal democracy has become 'public relations-ised' and suggests that it provides an opportunity for a discussion on what democracy is, what it should be, and also what the relationship between democracy and media is, and should be. He points out, that over the past two decades those who were interested in engaging in this type of debate have done so by using Jurgen Habermas' (1989) notion of the public sphere, a term that has its origins in the Frankfurt School's critique of mass society.

Louw (2010) explores Habermas' argument that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the emergent West European middle classes (i.e. the bourgeoisie/burghers of England, France, Germany and Holland) created a communicative 'space' where rational critical debate could take place. Louw explains that for Habermas the creation of such a space led to something unique in human history, in other words, for a brief period, political action was driven by 'authentic' public opinion, Habermas (1989:1060), as opposed to manufactured, steered and manipulated public opinion. In other words

Habermas was positing the suggestion that a type of 'ideal communication' emerged, for a short time, in the form of dialogue where the best argument could win.

Habermas (1989:247) asserts that 'the communicative network of a public made up of rationally debating private citizens has collapsed' (Habermas, 1989:247). Habermas explains how public opinion once originating from the public sphere, has partly collapsed into the informal opinions of private citizens without a public, and partly become concentrated into formal opinions of what Habermas called, 'publistically' effective institutions.

> "*Caught in the vortex of publicity that is staged for show or manipulation, the public of non-organized private people is laid claim to, not by public communication, but by the communication of publicly manifested opinions*" (Habermas, 1989: 247-8).

Goodnight (1992) points out that the work of Habermas demonstrates how the bourgeois public sphere emerged, issued a robust social and political discourse of rights and interests, but then became weakened by virtue of its success, and now currently survives in the form of a remaindered requirement for legitimating government policy in times of crises and during the election of state officials.

In a more recent paper, Habermas (2006) discusses the structure of mass communication and the formation of considered public opinions. He puts forward the view that the centre of the political system consists of certain familiar institutions namely: parliaments, courts, administrative agencies and government. Habermas (2006) argues that each branch could be described as a specialized deliberative arena, where the corresponding outputs (i.e. legislative decisions, political programmes, rulings, administrative measures, guidelines and policies), come about as a result of varying types of institutionalized deliberation and negotiation processes. At the extremities of the political system, the 'public sphere' is embedded in networks for wild flows of messages, these include news, reports, commentaries, talks, scenes and images, as well as shows and movies with an informative, polemical, educational or entertaining content. For

Habermas, the origins of published opinions of this type come from a variety of actors, such as politicians, political parties, lobbyists, pressure groups and actors of civil society. These published opinions are selected and shaped by mass media professionals and received by broad and overlapping audiences. He argues that from this spectrum of published political opinions, the measured aggregate of positive or negative attitudes to controversial public issues can be distinguished as polled opinion as they tacitly take shape within weak publics. Such attitudes are influenced by everyday talk in the informal settings of civil society as long as they are paying much attention to print or electronic media.

Habermas (2006) points out that two particular actors are important to his paradigm of the public sphere. These are journalists, who edit news, reports and commentaries, and politicians, who are at the centre of the political system and who are both the co-authors and addressees of public opinions. He suggests that, mediated political communication is therefore, conducted by an elite. He adds five more types of actors who contribute to what he calls the 'virtual stage of an established public sphere':

- lobbyists that represent special interest groups;
- advocates, who either represent general interest groups or substitute for a lack of representation of marginalized groups, unable to effectively voice their own interests;
- experts credited with professional or scientific knowledge in specialised areas, who are invited to give advice;
- moral entrepreneurs who generate public attention for supposedly neglected issues, and
- intellectuals who have gained, a perceived personal reputation in some field and who engage spontaneously in public discourse with declared intention of promoting general interests (writers or academics).

Habermas (2006: 416) suggests:

> *"Only across the system as a whole can deliberation be expected to operate as a cleansing mechanism that filters out the "muddy" elements from a discursively structured legitimation process"*

Deliberation fulfils three functions as an essential element of the democratic process:

- mobilize and pool relevant issues and required information, and specify interpretations;
- process such contributions discursively in the way of proper arguments for and against; and
- generate rationally motivated yes and no attitudes that are expected to determine the outcome of procedurally correct decisions.

Looking at the legitimating process as a whole, the facilitating role played by the political public sphere is concerned mainly with fulfilling the first of these functions, that of preparing the agendas for political institutions. In other words the deliberative paradigm expects the political public sphere to ensure the formation of a plurality of considered public opinions. Habermas conceded that this remained a demanding expectation, but argues that, in communications research, a realistic scheme of necessary conditions for the generation of considered public opinions can yield non-arbitrary standards for the identification of the causes of communication pathologies.

Habermas (2006) goes on to develop a communication model for democratic legitimation, arguing that the state faces demands from two sides. It has to provide public goods and services for civil society in addition to rules and regulations, as well as subsidies and infrastructure for various functional systems, such as commerce or the labour market, health, social security, transport, energy, research and development, and education. Therefore he argues that, by using lobbies and neo-corporatist negotiations, representatives of the functional systems confront the administrative with what they present as 'functional imperatives'. Such representatives of particular systems can threaten imminent failures, such as growing inflation, flight of capital, traffic collapse or a shortage of housing or energy supplies. As such he suggests that the disturbing impact of such strains or crises on citizens in their role as clients of the corresponding subsystems gets filtered through the distributional patterns of class structures. Thus, networks of civil society and special interest groups translate the strain of pending social problems and conflicting demands for social justice into political issues. Actors of civil society articulate political interests and confront the state with demands arising from the life worlds of various groups. With the legal backing of voting rights, these demands, can be strengthened by threatening to withdraw legitimation. Habermas (2006:417) provides a particularly useful theoretical perspective when he suggests that voters do not 'naturally grow out of the soil of civil society'. He explains that before they pass what he terms the 'formal threshold of campaigns and general elections, they are shaped by the confused noise of voices rising from both everyday talk and mediated communication. Depending on democratic legitimation, at its periphery, the political system possesses an open flank in comparison with the public sphere. He describes how, organizations for public opinion research continuously monitor and register the attitudes of private citizens, whilst media professionals produce an elite discourse, which is fed by actors struggling for access to and influence on the media.

Habermas suggests that such actors enter the stage from three points: politicians and political parties start from the centre of the political system; lobbyists and special interest groups come from the vantage point of the functional systems and status groups they represent; advocates, public interest groups, churches, intellectuals, and moral entrepreneurs come from backgrounds in civil society. Together with journalists, all of these actors join in the construction of what is called 'public opinion' although he points out that this singular phrase only refers to the prevailing one among several public opinions. Habermas points out the difficulty of pinning down 'public opinions', arguing that they are jointly constructed by political elites and diffuse audiences from the perceived differences between published opinions and the statistical records of polled opinions. He explains, that 'public opinions' can exert what he alludes to as a 'kind of soft pressure' on the malleable shape of minds. He suggests that this kind of 'political influence' must be distinguished from 'political power,' which is attached to offices and authorizes collectively binding decisions, and as such the influence of public opinion spreads in opposite directions, turning equally toward a government busy watching it and backward toward the reflecting audiences from where it first originated.

2.10 Understanding "Public Opinion"

An understanding of the debates on the link between public opinion and policy making and implementation is important (see Chapter 4), policy makers as well as the press and media continually make reference to 'public opinion' with regard to the TIF initiative specifically but to transport policy more generally. Rounce (2004) points out that understanding public opinion and its relationship with public policy has become central to discussions regarding democracy in the current times. Rounce (2004) argues that 'public opinion' (whether it is understood as the results of polls and focus groups, letters to editors of news outlets, letters to elected officials, interest group communications, or media communications), has become part of the public policy making process in various ways. Furthermore it has become difficult to open a newspaper or watch television news without hearing about the results of the latest poll. She points out that technological innovation has increased the ability to measure opinion and as such has led to the increased visibility of the public opinion industry.

Althaus (2003:1) argues that there are only three questions of any lasting importance to the study of what has, since the 18th century, been called public opinion:

- *What is public opinion, or in what form ought the concept of public opinion be recognised?*
- *What is the nature, or what characteristics should public opinion possess?*
- *What kind of political power does it have, or what kind of power should it be given?*

He concludes that it is a testimony to the knottiness of these questions that definitive answers to them seem as elusive today as they were to the contemporaries of Socrates and Protagoras. For this research the first question remains important for strategic decision-making in transport policy, but the second point is of greater interest in terms of understanding the kind of power key political elites give to public opinion and how this power is used strategically to determine the shape of transport policy.

Rounce (2004) found it necessary to break the term down by looking first at what is meant by "public" and then to look at "opinion" separately. Rounce argues that the word 'public' is by its very nature heterogeneous and that although the term "public opinion" is often used to imply a unanimous viewpoint, members of the public clearly hold very different views on any one issue. She draws on a discussion by Splichal (1999:16) who suggested that the "public" as a subject of research, is not always the same and that in fact there are a number of different publics that could be discussed: ...there is a "voting public" (i.e. a body of actual voters), an "attentative public" (characterised by the interest in politics and at least occasional participation in debates on political issues), an "active public" (representing the elite of the "attentative public"), and "sectoral" or "special publics", which merely by their size (the number of members) differ greatly from each other.

Manza & Cook (2002) point out, that at the centre of scholarly interest in public opinion is its impact on public policy. There are several debates regarding the opinion – policy link in what is seen as a rapidly growing body of research on public opinion polls and policy making in contemporary politics. Existing literature on the opinion policy link focuses on three distinct approaches: Those that view the effects as:

- Large
- Small
- Or emphasise historical of institutional contingency

Analysts that argue that there are 'large' effects view the opinion-policy link in policy making as strong, and possibly getting stronger over time. Historical studies have found strong links between public opinion and public policy, using both quantitative and qualitative methods (e.g. Miller & Stokes 1963; Achen, 1975, 1978; Gronke &

Rosenberg, 1984). Other analysts have used case studies within specific policy domains, which demonstrate that public opinion has shaped the perceptions of key actors when making key decisions, (e.g. Ericson Wright, & McIver 1989,1993). Analysts point out that the effects are 'small', express skepticism regarding the capacity of public opinion in impacting policy outcomes (e.g. Aldrich 1995; Cohen 1997; Jacobs & Shapiro 2000). For some the very concept of a coherent or consistent 'public opinion' capable of influencing policy elites is doubtful. Nevertheless others argue that while 'public opinion' can be constructed through polls, such opinions are only weakly held by the public at large, and are easily subject to manipulation by elites be they in government, the mass media, business or lobby groups (Manza & Cook, 2002).

Jacobs & Shapiro (2000) argue that polls themselves may be used strategically by politicians and policy makers not as devices to grasp popular opinion but rather as the means to craft legislation or policy rhetoric that will better appeal to the public. A number of analysts have proposed that a 'contingent' concept of responsiveness is most appropriate, one which takes as a point of departure evidence of the variation in how opinion impacts policy outcomes over time and space (Manza & Cook, 2002).

A few advocates of the contingency view have identified differences in how public opinion operates in particular policy domains (Cook & Barrett, 1992). Different domains have varying levels of responsiveness, either because of the nature of public opinion within that domain, or because of institutional or political factors that mediate the opinion policy link. For some analysts, the relationship between citizens' opinions and the policy outputs of governments is strong. Manza & Cook (2002) suggest that global studies of the opinion-policy link, as well as case studies that have included public as an explanatory variable, usually report significant effects.

2.11 Influencing Public Opinion – Weapons of Mass Manipulation

Opinion polls, focus groups, opinion surveys and referendums are now ubiquitous political tools that have increasingly been used by the policy elites and the media, to justify or promote specific issues or policy initiatives. Traugott & Powers (2000) point out that poll results are increasingly being used as the main topic of news stories, rather than as supporting information, because the rise of media polling operations means that news organisations often have direct control over content and have a direct financial stake in the production of the information. Jacobs & Shapiro (2000) suggest that political actors of all kinds from candidates in election contests to political parties and interest groups invest millions into focus groups and polls and this wide-scale use of polls has fuelled the nearly unquestioned assumption among some observers of politics that elected officials "pander" to public opinion. They argue that politicians tailor their significant policy decisions to polls and other indicators of public opinion.

Marlin (2002) observes that in modern times, sound policy making must often come to grips with numbers. He argues that since the western world presupposes that democracy is a superior system, arguments for a given policy or measure generally gain strength if it can be shown that the proposals have the support of the people; hence the importance in today's world of opinion polls. However he does point out that it is easy to be misled by opinion polls, arguing that even pollsters themselves or even those commissioning the polls, can be misled. They may misjudge the latent strength of feeling on an issue that has not been widely discussed. When something becomes an issue and various interest groups speak out, the reaction may produce opinion different, or more intensely felt, than what existed before the controversy. Other commentators such as Schoenbach & Becker (1995) argue however that whilst there is some evidence to suggest that politicians and key actors do pay attention to public opinion, and that they do invest substantial time and resources in gaining access to assessments of that opinion. A distinction can be made between polls used to guide strategic action and those released for wider public consumption. Polls released through the press to the public can force key actors to act where private polls might not.

Jacobs & Shapiro (2000) examine the varying responsiveness of USA presidents and legislators in the White House and examined the wider impacts of this responsiveness on the strategies of politicians, the media's coverage of politics and public opinion. The research studies the behaviour and strategy of politicians and discusses the changing institutional and political dynamics over the past two decades that have elevated the perceived benefits of pursuing policy goals and the expected utility of changing public opinion through carefully crafted presentations. They also discuss the impact of politicians' behaviour and strategies on media coverage and public opinion. Senior officials studied polls to find the language, arguments, and symbols that would win public support and unify Washington elites behind the President's proposals for health care reforms.

According to Jacobs & Shapiro (2000), the White House treated public opinion as a political resource to pressure policymakers. Their motivation for monitoring public opinion was neither to follow it in making decisions, nor to accept it as it existed, but the administration tracked public opinion after already deciding on their preferred course of action. Jacobs & Shapiro suggest politicians were attempting to exert leadership skills in order to shape public opinion and educate voters. Thus, using public opinion research to change (and not follow) public opinion was considered absolutely normal by the Clinton administration. The suggestion was that public opinion should be led and not followed. Polls and focus groups were an aid to leadership, identifying how best to sell a health care reform plan. They conclude that, like Clinton and his aides, politicians attempt to manipulate public opinion by continually monitoring it.

Jacobs & Shapiro (2000) also discuss the way that politicians can sometimes pursue a strategy of "crafted talk" to change public opinion in order to offset the potential political costs of not following the preferences of average voters. From this perspective public opinion is not tracked by policy makers and politicians to make policy, as often assumed, but to determine how to craft their public presentations and win public support for the specific policies of most importance to them. Policy makers and politicians attempt to change public opinion, not by directly persuading the public of the merits of their policy choices but by "priming" public opinion they "stay on message" to highlight standards or considerations for the public to use in evaluating policy proposals.

Jacobs & Shapiro (2000) argue that policy makers also respond to public opinion through the use of public opinion research to pinpoint the most alluring words, symbols, and arguments in an attempt to move public opinion to support their desired policies. Public opinion research is used to manipulate public opinion, that is, to move the populace to hold opinions that they would not necessarily hold if they were aware of all the available information and analysis. In this case the objective of policy makers is to stimulate responsiveness and so their words and presentations are crafted to change the appearance of responsiveness as they pursue their specific policy goals. They also argue that politicians' muted responsiveness to public opinion, and the crafting of their words and actions, has a profound impact on the mass media and public opinion itself.

2.12 Influence & Power of Mass Media

Marlin (2002) suggests that the advancement and multiplication of media technologies extends the world of images and sounds into every sphere of modern society. This enhances the power of the media who are increasingly able to use this to influence public opinion. If communicators use this power intentionally the resulting message can be referred to as propaganda or persuasion. Marlin points out that this mediated manufacture of public consent, usually regarding government or corporate agendas, has emerged as the most powerful political force in the 21st Century. Such arguments are supported by Newton (2001) who examines claims put forward by other commentators suggesting that the mass media have in fact been instrumental in the transformation of modern government. Newton (2001) suggests that the mass media have changed the role and nature of government institutions, and thus they have undermined democracy itself. From this viewpoint modern media can no longer be seen as the 'fourth estate' informing the public and playing the role of 'watch dog for the constitution', but they are now more of a fifth column with more political power and little or no accountability. However, there are those that are more concerned with powers conferred by the mass media on politicians and political elites. This view is one that argues that politicians use the technical capacities of the mass media for their own advantage; surrounding themselves with public relations consultants, spin doctors, media managers, opinion pollsters, and publicity directors.

Politicians are now armed with the means to control the language of political discussion, controlling the flow of news and information and manipulating political opinion. Propaganda theory may help shed light on the way that political actors manipulate statistics and polls to influence public opinion. Ellul (1982) goes beyond the purveyors of propaganda, to the willingness of the general public to accept it. He views the modern individual as hungry for a sense of meaning for his or her existence. These theorists argue that the decline of church, village, and family influences has tended to atomise human existence, cutting people off from the bonds that automatically provided a sense of identity. Under such circumstances, with individuals thrown together in a mass, there is a fertile field for propaganda. This is because, lacking the determination and energy required to make sense of the world, the modern individual is all too willing to have meanings supplied to him or her through the mass media.

2.13 The Media - Agenda Setting

It is important to explore debates and perceptions on how the political agenda within Greater Manchester was set during the time of the TIF initiative and the key players involved. As argued by Norris *et al.* (1999), the function of the campaign for agenda-setting has been a long-standing concern in the literature on political communications. They point out that theories of agenda setting suggest that the news drives the public's priorities, telling people not 'what to think' but 'what to think about'. The theory of agenda-setting therefore, implies that stories that get most attention in the news become the problems that the public regards as the nation's most important.

McCombs (2005) argues that there are few who would argue against the widely held view that without media coverage many of the problems social, political or otherwise would never have entered the political arena or be contested within the political process. The media is also considered to be instrumental in bringing a basic level understanding and illumination to the public about issues that have traditionally been the preserve of technical, scientific or political elites. Thus commentators have also suggested that the news media plays a complex role as an agent of environmental education as well as in agenda setting (e.g. Hannigan, 1995). Therefore the issue of how media organisations decide which stories are of most importance, and how they should be covered, becomes a matter of some importance. Parenti (1993) suggests that for many people an issue does not exist until it appears in the news media. Indeed, what people even define as an issue or event, and what they see and hear, are greatly determined by those who control the communications world. Be it peace protesters, uprisings in Latin America, crime, poverty, or defence spending, few of us know of things except as they are depicted in the news.

Parenti's (1993) argument is that even when people don't believe what the media say, they are still hearing or reading their viewpoints rather some other. In other words they are still setting the agenda, and are therefore exerting a persistent influence in defining the scope of respectable political discourse. Burgess & Gold (1985a) point out, that the media "are an integral part of popular culture and, as such, are an essential element in moulding individual and social experiences of the world and in shaping the relationship between people and place".

McCombs (2005) highlights the fact that newspapers are able to communicate a host of clues about the relative salience of the topics on their daily agenda. He argues that the lead story on page one, front page versus inside page, the size of the headline, and the length of a story all communicate the salience of topics on the news agenda. Members of the public use these salience cues to organise their own agendas and to subsequently make decisions as to which issues are most important. In this way, to some degree, the agenda of the news media becomes the agenda of the public. McCombs adds that any discussion of public opinion usually centres on the distribution of opinions, how many are for, the number of those against or undecided. This, in his opinion, explains the reason that journalists in the news media and their audiences show such interest in public opinion polls and this is particularly the case during political campaigns. However prior to considering the distribution of opinions, he argues that we need to know which topics are at the centre of public opinion. In other words people have opinions on a variety of things, but only a few are of real importance to them. Thus the agenda-setting role of the news media is really the influence it has on the salience of an issue, and the extent to which a significant amount of people really regard it as worthwhile to hold an opinion about the issue.

The previous sections provide a review of current debates with regard to understanding and influencing public opinion. However, McCombs (2005:xiv) points out that even within the original domain of public opinion, there is much more to consider than just the descriptions and explanations of how the mass media influence our views of public affairs. He argues that the phenomenon known as the 'agenda setting' role of the news media sets an overarching ethical question about what agenda the media are advancing. The mass media's agenda setting role, links journalism and its tradition of storytelling to the arena of public opinion, and this he argues is a relationship that carries considerable consequences for society. The following section explores various definitions and theories of political communication and marketing further, in order to develop an understanding of what these concepts mean, how they are applied within the state, and their impact on democratic processes.

2.14 Political Motivation & Responsiveness

Although public opinion has been discussed in some detail previously, what also needs to be considered is the 'responsiveness' of policy makers to public opinion and what motivates transport policy makers to respond to public opinion as it is constructed in the various parts of the public sphere. Rounce (2004) points out that in trying to understand the links between public policy and public opinion, most researchers rely on democratic responsiveness theories to claim that strong public opinion in a specific direction will be reflected in the policies and procedures of a representative government. In other words when public opinion shifts, or when it strongly supports or opposes particular policies, public policy will also move.

Rounce argues that such theories are often tested quantitatively by analyzing the relationship between public opinion and public policies. However, she points out that although come conclusions can be drawn about the links between public opinion and public policy in this way, there is still a limited understanding of how policy makers are affected by and utilise public opinion. Furthermore, it is unclear what factors affect whether or not, when, and how public opinion becomes part of the policy making process. The relevance of political motivation and responsiveness theories to the Manchester TIF case study is that such theories may help to establish a framework for attempting to understand policy makers perceptions of public opinion in the first instance, and more importantly to examine the possible actions taken by transport policy makers in relation to public opinion (for example the development of political communication and marketing strategies) as well as the relationship between public opinion and transport policy decisions that were taken during the TIF initiative.

Rounce (2004) suggests that there are many theoretical approaches that examine the role of public opinion in the policy making process that can be placed on a continuum, ranging from public policy as *not responsive* to public opinion (known as non responsiveness theories) at one end of the spectrum, and public policy as responsive to public opinion (responsiveness theories) at the other. Theoretical and empirical studies that focus on political motivation are important as they attempt to explain why political actors pursue specific policies or goals rather than others. Such theories underpin and provide a contextual basis for better understanding why some analysts argue that politicians' pursuits of policy goals have created a reinforcing spiral or cycle that encompasses media coverage and public opinion.

Theoretical and empirical research of the motivations of politicians carried out by analysts in US studies led some commentators (e.g. Smith & Deering, 1990); Fenno (1973) to conclude that politicians value two goals the most: enacting their desired policies and securing their re-election (or that of their party) by responding to centrist public opinion when making policy. Media analysts Jacobs & Shapiro (2000) argue that most politicians prefer to deal with issues that allow them to improve their opportunities for re-election while also pursuing their policy goals, and in fact many find that their re-election and policy goals overlap on some issues; their preferred policies are also favoured by those who elect them. Furthermore, political leaders attempt to avoid public decisions that force them into uncomfortable tradeoffs by attempting to control the agenda of decision-making. The tactical adjustments that politicians make between advancing their electoral ambitions and their desired policies reflect in large part their perceptions of the costs and benefits associated with each goal, or what Jacobs & Shapiro (2000:45-46) call the 'mediated manufacture of public consent' and view as 'crafted talk'.

Marlin (2002) observes that as media technologies multiply, extending the world of images and sounds into the nooks and crannies of our society, the power of the media to attempt to engineer our behaviour expands correspondingly. When communicators use this power intentionally the resulting message is seen as either persuasion or propaganda. This 'mediated manufacture of public consent', usually regarding government or corporate agendas, has emerged as the most powerful political force of the 21st Century (Marlin, 2002). To better understand why the state saw the need for increased and more effective means of political communication and marketing the next section reviews early developments in public relations in Britain following the First World War.

2.15 The Concept of Political Marketing & Communication

Buurma (2001) points out that the public sector in a number of European countries has come to consider citizens as consumers (as discussed in Section 2.6). Managerialist ideology meant that the consumer became a central reference point in the drive for public sector reform throughout the 1980s (Clarke & Newman, 1997), and public sector policy makers began to apply marketing tools and strategic marketing planning to 'sell' their policies to citizens. Buurma focuses on four types of marketing models particular to public organizations:

(1). he outlines the concept of 'marketisation', which is an attempt to explain public sector activities in terms of private sector marketing by subjecting products and services to the competitive forces of the commercial marketplace. This is with a view to bringing down the price level and to bring the standard of quality in line with customer demands.

(2). he argues that both public organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may primarily use marketing for promoting their self-interest such as making a living or securing a future. He cites an example from Burton (1999) who suggests that public organizations use stakeholder marketing, to secure their continued existence by support from the market and society.

(3). marketing may be helpful in promoting the area under the responsibility of the public organization, such as city marketing.

(4). the application of marketing instruments for a key political objective, i.e. the realization of social effects, which the concept of public policy marketing likewise seeks to realise.

However, he goes on to argue that for a marketing concept to be suitable for public policy, it has to be based on an exchange between government and citizens, meeting both the criteria for a marketing exchange and the features of political governance. In this respect he argues that this deviates from the usual competition based commercial marketing. He continues to argue that the exchange between government and citizens makes sense if it contributes to the government's organization objectives and the individual objectives set by citizens. The government's main objective is based around realising social effects in particular policy domains, such as security and reducing traffic jams. As such most effects are realized by concerted action with citizens. The government supplies public facilities, rules of the game and other policy instruments that help influence the social behaviour of citizens. An example in this respect in relation to traffic would be the road system, all its corresponding services and the traffic rules. Here he points out that it is the social behaviour of citizens that actually causes the social effects. Thus a key aspect is the social behaviour itself, in this respect a deviating social behaviour will cause deviating social effects, traffic safety is one example cited which requires a safe and disciplined road user behaviour.

2.16 Public Policy Marketing Tools

Buurma (2001) outlines a number of generic marketing tools and suggests that they are useful when separated from their commercial characteristics, which arise from the supplier's self interest, and adjusted to the administrative and political requirements of government action in society. He suggests that the most important tools are:

1. Clear differentiation of stakeholders involved in the marketing process, and their interests, e.g. suppliers, co-producers, customers, third parties having an interest in social effects, commissioners and other stakeholders;

2. The marketing mix as a means to match and manage the quality levels of supply and reciprocation;

3. Need and demand patterns of citizens in their capacity of customers as basis for the matching process;

4. Market segmentation as a way of anticipating different need patterns;

5. Market information systems including market surveys to determine the characteristics of different market segments;

6. Relations between marketing and de-marketing methods;

7. Demanding citizens to display social behaviour in return for public services, comparable to price collection in commercial marketing. (If commercial price collection is flawed, the number of dubious debtors increases. This he points out is no different to the public sector as insufficient enforcement of compliance results in more offences);

8. Finally, marketing organization and strategic marketing planning.

McNair (1999:2-4) proposes that we can define communication as 'political' when it is apparent that the sender's purpose is to 'influence the political environment' and that it is a 'purposeful communication about politics and overt political discourse' conducted by politicians and other political actors and those who seek to influence them. It therefore includes 'communication about these actors and their activities as contained in news reports, editorials and other forms of media discussion politics'. McNair further suggests the purpose of political communication, in what he terms 'ideal type' democracies, is to inform and educate the public on various issues by interpreting facts and events, thereby providing a meaningful two-way platform between the public and governments. He points out that this firstly facilitates public participation in political discourse as well as generating public opinion but secondly, it provides a platform for publicising the activities of governmental and political institutions. The intent is to provide the means for well-informed voting, or other public participation in democratic processes (McNair 1999:21-22).

Chalaby (1998) argues that the advent of political journalism in Westminster systems began with the development of 'critical expertise and followed a 'pre-journalism' phase of publicists in the first half of the 19th Century, when a class-based press was 'inseparable' from political action itself and there was no expectation of an 'active understanding' from the audience, and so news values were based on measuring the contribution to party struggle.

This suggests that modern political journalism was born when newsworthiness became 'the ability of the news to make sense to a large audience' and 'journalists were no longer the messengers of a political party' (Neveu, 2001:26-28). Ester (2007) argues that the journalistic process of applying critical expertise is now described pejoratively as 'gate keeping' and in the politics news round it often reflects the love-hate relationship between politicians and journalists and their eternal contest over control of the content and style of information flows. For example politicians may rail at the journalistic practice of putting information through a 'series of discriminating filters or editorial gates' although this process is part and parcel of any news round, it has an added edge in the political arena where political communication is inseparable from how governments operate.

Henneberg (2002) argues that at the core of any attempt to understand the phenomena of political marketing are definitional exercises. At the same time he suggests, herein lies one of the main shortcomings in research in political marketing because definitions of political marketing are still rare to find even in seminal texts on the subject. Henneberg suggests that a definition of political marketing is bound to definitions of marketing in general, due to its link with marketing theory. He argues that definitional attempts can be distinguished broadly along two dimensions: first, on the exchange concept underlying the political activity and second, on the political marketing activities themselves. He therefore highlights the fact that differentiations along these two dimensions allow for a classification of different definitions.

Henneberg (2002) points out that these two dimensions are used as illustrations of different definitions of political marketing in four studies judged influential for the development of the discipline. Even though definitions of political marketing appear to be difficult to find Henneberg (2002) makes the point that political marketing is now a ubiquitous part of political life. He suggests that this was shown to be evident when Tony Blair created "New Labour" (i.e. repositioned the party), when Bill Clinton used new information-dissemination channels (cable-TV shows) in order to communicate directly with target voters, and when the German Neo-Communists used sarcasm as their main political "ideology" in order to transform the political competition. Therefore Henneberg (2002) suggests that all such activities can be understood as comprising political marketing elements such as product/image management, channel and targeting strategy, and communication strategy respectively). He argues that there is sufficient scholarly consensus (e.g. Franklin 1994; Jamieson 1992a, 1992b; Kavanagh 1995b; O'Shaughnessy 1990a; Scammell 1999), to suggest that political marketing has changed the political sphere, without a clear understanding of the essence and mechanism of that change.

He points to several detailed studies that have highlighted the influence of the marketing perspective on campaigning in different countries and times (e.g. Scammel 1991, 1994 for the British Tories, during the Thatcher era; Kavanagh 1995b; Rallings, 1995; Wring, 1994 for British Labour; Arnold, 1995 for the Liberals; Newman 1994, 1995; Popkin, 1995; Wattenberg, 1995 for the US Democrats under Bill Clinton). Synonyms like "media democracy" (Franklin 1994) or Americanisation of politics" (Field 1994) were commonly used in order to describe these phenomena. Henneberg suggests that further to this, it has been equated with an expression of the postmodern characteristics of our times (Axford & Higgins 2001; Axford *et al.* 1996). However Henneberg, also points out that, others have argued that what is now called political marketing has always existed (e.g. Lock & Harris 1996). Similar instruments to marketing have always been engaged in every historic political struggle. Therefore, these scholars argue, political marketing is merely a new name for an established way of political competition.

Henneberg points out how striking it is to notice many "modern" aspects of political competition in descriptions of historic political campaigns (Jamieson 1992; Kavanagh 1995; O' Shaughnessy 1990, 1996; Scammel 1999; Wring, 1996). Nevertheless, he suggests that this view must be qualified and highlights that the overlap between the use of propaganda or crude communication instruments on the one hand and the concept of political marketing on the other is a superficial one (O'Shaughnessy 1996; Scammell 1999). He further agues that even today, not every new communication gimmick demonstrates the employment of political marketing instruments. He cites O'Shaughnessy (1990:17) who stated that "for the term 'political marketing' to have any descriptive value it must replicate most of the processes involved in consumer marketing – research, advertising, personal selling, product management etc, and this would make it an almost exclusively post-Second World War phenomena". Commentators suggest other elements that must be added to the list such as strategic management intent and the use of the perspective of a consumer/voter-orientation as constituent elements of political marketing (Scammell, 1999).

The suggestion is that these are new elements that have been added to the tool kit of political management and so as Harrop (1990:286) suggests "political marketing as a concept, represents a qualitative change in the nature of the 'state of the art' campaigns" thus the new methodology is not so much the introduction of marketing methods into politics but an increased sophistication and acceleration of their use.

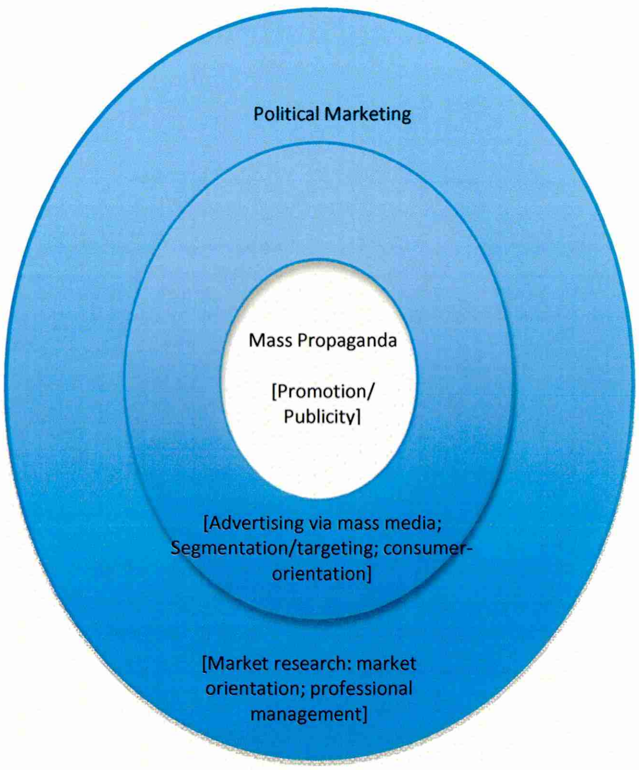
Henneberg (2002) cites the work of Farrel & Wortmann (1987:298) who in a comparative study of party strategies defined political marketing as follows:

> *"The political market is a system of exchange in which two or more actors each possess "something of value" which can be traded. The 'sellers' offer representation to their 'customers' in return for support. The exchange occurs at election time when, to ensure maximum revenue, the sellers market themselves through an application of directed promotional activities. They market their particular styles of representation and specific intentions for government as a 'product', which comprises party image, leader image, and manifesto proposals or selected issues"*
>
> *"The marketing exercise consists of a strategy in which a product is designed with close attention to market demands. Market research surveys the market, allows it to be segmented into homogenous groupings of customers; and indicates potential targets. The seller has four types of instruments at his disposal with which to influence these targets: product policy, communication, policies distribution, and pricing. The marketing strategy aims to apply, with aid of marketing research, the optimum 'mix' of these instruments"*

Figure 2.2 and 2.3 are models of the development of political campaigning as proposed by Wring (1995); Newman (1994) respectively that mirrors commercial strategy developments in consumer goods markets: Fig. 2.2 shows that in the first phase of electioneering, what is termed a "mass propaganda" approach prevails.

This involves the use of intensive promotion and publicity approaches as the main instruments. The conception – orientation is towards the candidate. Availability of opinion research and mass media in particular television and the web, introduces a second phase, which Henneberg (2002) points out, is that of “media campaigns” with a sales orientation. The emphasis is now on market segmentation and targeting via sophisticated advertising, following a consumer orientation.

Figure 2.2 Phase Model of Political Marketing A



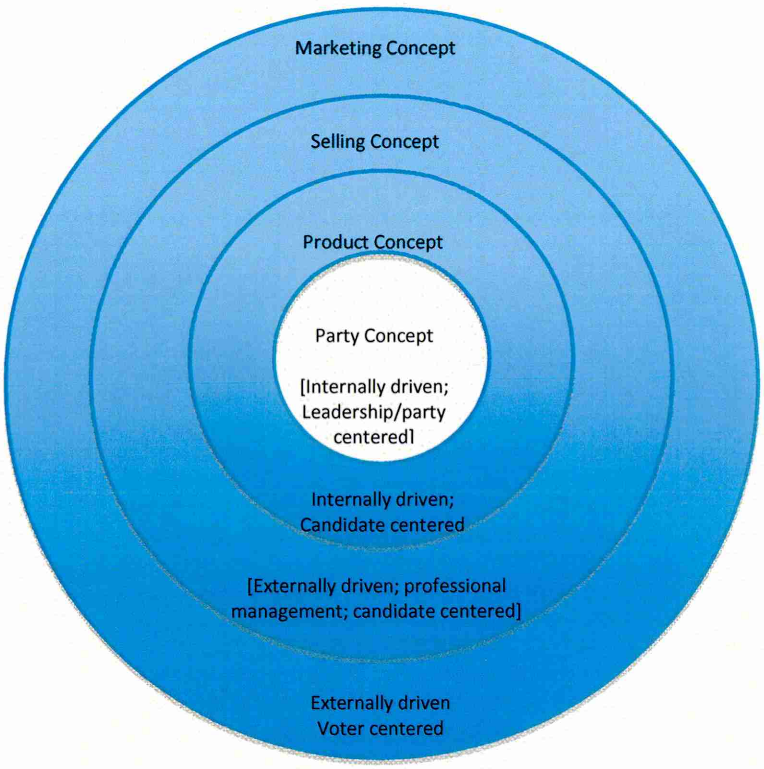
Source: Wring 1995a

The final phase that of “political marketing” is based on marketing research to an even greater degree and also a total management of the whole political offer i.e. a strategic and managerial understanding of the marketing of politics in a market orientation (Wring 1995a, 1995b). Henneberg (2002) points out that this concept shows considerable overlap with the phase model by Newman (1994a) figure 2.3 that also shows the development of marketing.

Collins & Butler (2002) highlight a growing interest in political marketing, not least because serious questions arise about the impact of the concept on democracy itself. They point out that the triumph of Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi’s party *Forza Italia* suggested to many that an elite-driven exercise in marketing could succeed in capturing governmental power.

However, they point out that the tendency in much of the discourse on such events is to focus on what they term the tactical dimensions of marketing. In other words, most of the coverage addresses issues at the level of political advertising, the impact of television on politicians, parties standing for office and of course spin doctoring.

Figure 2.3 - Phase Model of Political Marketing B



Source: Newman 1994a

They argue that this kind of attention is often superficial, anecdotal, and tends to focus on tactics and techniques to the exclusion of wider campaign strategies. They argue that making a distinction between the strategic and tactical is to apply a broader strategic analysis to the political market, that draws attention to the elements of preparation and planning and of organization and control.

In other words they recognize that electoral marketing often starts well in advance of campaign themes and images. Therefore they conclude that a market analysis of the political/electoral competitive arena, employing a marketing technique, can prove insightful in strategic development.

2.17 Contesting the Relationship between Journalists, Sources & Public Relations Practitioners

Xifra (2010) points out that when discussing developments in political communications a public relations perspective is useful because the main tactics and processes used are often those of public relations. Xifra suggests that this should not be surprising when we consider that the current role and profession of the 'political advisor' was developed within the public relations sector.

Davis (2002) argues that the expansion of professional public relations offers a number of potential research questions. The first concerns the impact of public relations on news production. The PR industry may have expanded considerably, but is there any evidence that it is actually affecting the way news is produced, and if so, how? He suggests two common approaches to answering this question appear to have emerged in studies of sources (policy makers), public relations practitioners (PRPs) and journalists. The first seeks to determine how much news content is primarily PR information and how much is the result of proactive journalism. The second approach puts the emphasis on 'conscious control' forcussing on: who is in charge and who is setting the media agenda – journalists or sources and their PRPs. Davis points out that both these approaches have tended to deliver inconclusive results, mainly because the evidence collected was vague, subjective and confused with too many variables; furthermore it was based on ad hoc collections of anecdotal evidence. Davis (2002) highlights other problems facing researchers in this area in that journalists and Public Relations Practitioners (PRPs) have attempted to determine what proportions of news content is PR instigated and what is simply a result of straightforward journalism. He points to polls and estimates produced to date, which in addition to being weak methodologically show very little agreement. A Gallup (1991) surveyed 100 heads of in-house PR departments and twenty-six editors of national media and found that PRPs believed that 40% of output was based on PR. In direct contrast editors estimated it to be an average of 25% with national newspapers the lowest at 10% and the trade press the highest at 53%. Those in radio and television said it was 30%. He argues that the reason for the variety of responses is that it is almost impossible to break down and determine empirically the difference between what is PR and what is journalism. One particular problem is caused by the difficulty of distinguishing PRPs from their source ties. Many practitioners avoid the PR label, preferring titles such as 'communications strategist' 'image consultant' 'information officer' or 'researcher'. Additionally, Davis points out that it is now standard practice for politicians, chief executives and pressure group leaders to be media trained and used to presenting material to journalists in press releases and interviews regardless of who manufactured the statements.

2.18 Communicating Policy Intentions

Gelders *et al.* (2006) argue that public communication about policy intentions is important but is also a delicate issue, because government officials are confronted with four main constraints that are typical of the public sector when compared to the private sector. These are (a) an increasingly unstable and complicated environment, (b) additional formal and legislative restrictions, (c) more rigid procedures, and (d) more diverse policy products and objectives. Such constraints mean that politicians communicating about policy intentions face specific problems such as more concentrated political and media interferences as well as the need for democratic communication and more rigid timing and budgetary restrictions.

Although they concede that there is a dearth of empirical research to suggest a more complicated environment, they suggest that there are indications from commentators (e.g. Boyne, 2002) that suggest that this may be the case. They suggest that such turbulent environments are made up of complicated networks of societal actors who decide by means of political policymaking processes about the legitimacy of the organisations and their objectives. Thus difficult and complex problems are passed to the government and public organisations implement what they call 'interactive policy making' in order to achieve their policy objectives.

Gelders *et al.* argue that both public and private organizations increasingly have to pass what they term as the 'societal test'. In other words in both spheres the public and media have become more critical towards the organizational products, services and underlying processes. Although public as well as private organizations are held more accountable on many policy aspects, despite the myth regarding the public fish bowl versus the enterprise's closed boardroom, the manner in which the accountability is institutionalized and can be enforced widely differs. They suggest that whilst in the private sector there is a detailed outline with regards to the dissemination of information (with respect to financial-economic policy for example), the private sector is not constrained by the Freedom of Information Act or any comparable accountability framework. They point out that sellers in commercial markets do not discuss their plans for new products or future discounts, as this would affect the price. However, whilst there may be more transparency demanded of the public sector in this way, they concede that many aspects are still discussed within the inner circles of government and political parties. Added to this there are a number of statutory constraints and exceptions within the public sector. The public sector is subject to more rigid procedures than the private sector because, as studies by Boyne (2002) found, they are by their very nature more bureaucratic. Aspects of management such as the timing and budgeting of public information provisions many be one complicating factor that can influence the final outcome in a marked way.

Gelders *et al.* (2006) suggest that communication studies have not sufficiently taken into consideration the specific organizational context. The timing and budgeting of mass communication of public information are located in a comparatively inflexible structure. Policies are often subject to years of consideration and therefore when a government eventually makes a decision it may be completely different to the original intention. As a consequence of the necessary preparation regarding the production and distribution of public information materials, the information provision must anticipate the probable outcome of the political decision making process. However, this can often lead to impossible situations, including the necessity to destroy already produced information material as suggested by De Roon (1993). They suggest that unpredictability of changes during the development and production stages can have an impact on deadlines and costs, which can make the budgeting process much more precarious.

Gelders *et al.* make a further point: that the 'political product', in clear contrast to consumer markets, is more complicated and intangible in that customers have more notable standardized perceptions of product characteristics. They state that the objectives within the private sector are often developed internally with an expected market in mind whilst, in the public sector objectives are often arrived at externally via the political process. Thus public organizations strive for societal effects in an economic context, compare to the private sector where companies tend to maximize profits taking into account societal constraints. Thus the smaller range of objectives in the private sector is often easier to communicate to stakeholders than the broader range of objectives in the public sector.

2.19 Planning, Politics & the Media

The relationship between urban transport planning system and politics needs to be examined in particular the acknowledgement that politics plays a major role within planning and that planners themselves have a highly political role and as such their political decisions may be mediated in the press in ways, which can lead to changes in policy direction.

Clifford (2004) suggests that planning has a wide remit and a very real impact on people's lives and often involves mediation between conflicting interests. He points out that the UK planning establishment over recent years has had to endure criticism and calls for modernisation and reform from a number of sectors such as businesses claiming the system stifles economic development, environmentalists claiming it is too pro-development, and local communities who, faced with development proposals, claim that their voices have not been adequately heard. Clifford explains that such wide-ranging impact and pressure for reform means that there is currently a heightened level of public interest in the planning system and planners are likely to be shaped and amplified by press representation.

Clifford argues that an important consideration in the current environment must be how planning and planners are represented in the press, and if there is a mismatch between these media conceptions and those of the profession itself. He suggests that representation of planning and planners should be of interest to those keen to promote more public participation in planning since useful participation relies to some extent on the public knowing what planning is and what planners do. He cites Sutcliffe (1981:2):

> *"Town planning is now so firmly rooted in British public administration that it has generated a myth of super-competence. 'Planners' are popularly blamed for a range of urban shortcomings that extends far beyond their actual sphere of activity. To arraign the town planner for un-emptied dustbins or poor television reception is doubtless a disguised tribute, but such misconceptions make it all the more important to clarify what town planning really means".*

Over 20 years later Clifford (2004) argues that it is still important to clarify what planning really means today. He suggests that at the root of this, there is a need to investigate media representations of planning and planners simply because of the "undoubted power of the media in the modern world", (Thrift, 2000:493). Burgess (1985) suggests that news does not exist, it is created. At its simplest therefore the power of the media comes through its ability to shape public awareness through the selection of which news and events to report. Furthermore, "through the selection, reproduction and interpretation of 'news', the media construct preferred readings which give meanings to events", (Burgess, 1985:192). Arguably, this idea can be developed to suggest that the media is intimately linked to the projection and production of 'imagined worlds', and that the media are "critical and influential agents in the contemporary construction of knowledge" (Hay & Israel, 2001:108). In other words:

> "The mass media play a significant role in the appropriation and interpretation of the meanings of social reality. They have the capability to shape conceptions of our physical, economic, political and social environments" (Burgess, 1985:194)

Allen (1999) points out that critical researchers have long argued that news accounts encourage us to accept as natural, obvious or commonsensical certain preferred ways of classifying reality, and that these classifications have far-reaching implications for the cultural reproduction of power relations across society. A newspaper account, far from simply reflecting the reality of a news event, is actually working to construct a codified definition of what should count as the reality of the event. Burgess (1990) suggests therefore that media communications may be theorised as a circuit of cultural forms through which meanings are encoded by specialist groups of producers and decoded in many different ways by groups who constitute the audiences for those products. The media is therefore seen as an integral part of a complex cultural process through which environmental meanings are produced and consumed. Clifford (2004) suggests that even if we do not accept this argument about the role of the media in shaping our conception of the world, the media should still be of interest with relation to planning simply because of the number of people consuming media products everyday.

Clifford (2004) suggests that it may be easy to dismiss negative coverage as misrepresentative but he points out that such representation is important. It extends beyond merely how planning is framed in the public mind, because the policy process is increasingly driven by what is perceived to be important to the public. Politicians read newspapers so therefore media coverage of planning reform for example, may not just be about reporting it, but may also be driving it. He argues that of course, planners may have good reason to be wary of the press as relations between journalists and planning departments can sometimes fraught with difficulty. Kitchen (1997:164) provides an interesting story of a difficult situation involving the Manchester planning department, the council leader and the local press over the handling of a planning application in which he stated:

> *"What the press coverage undoubtedly did do…was to make what would in any event have been very difficult, several times more so"*

Hay & Israel (2001:118) also point out that:

> *"....urban planners and geographers need to find out how journalists and the media actually operate. Not only might that deepen our understandings of the ways in which the media fabricate or constitute the worlds in which we live, but application of that knowledge should also help embed geographical understanding within the media worlds"*

However, whilst it is necessary to understand the role of the media and its impact on planning it should be remembered that this view is media centred and focuses mainly on the independent impact of the media on politics. This perspective fails to give full weight to the original political impetus for media coverage that is, the actual political and policy developments that drive press reporting (Jacobs & Shapiro, 2000). This view acknowledges that planners and other key actors within the policy process are an active force in enabling change and that they are able to use a variety of strategies in order to manipulate the media with a view to influencing public opinion. Central to planning today is the concept of sustainable development and the preservation of environment. The next section examines how people receive environmental messages from the media and subsequently relate to the environment. It further looks at how such issues are contested within the news media.

2.20 Media, Public Opinion & Environmental Issues

Aidoo (2001) points out that media studies literature is replete with studies on the relationship between the mass media's coverage of the development and elaboration of environmental issues and public opinion on these issues. He argues that the bulk of the literature deals mainly with media coverage of the environment and possible agenda setting effects that coverage creates. Agenda setting provides one of the foremost theoretical frameworks for studying the relationship between the media, public opinion and the environment.

Gooch (1996:110) suggests that the mass media 'can influence which issues people think about, although they may not be able to instigate changes into how people think'.

This view maintains that by focusing on certain issues the media can lead people to see these issues as important. Hansen (1991:445) indicates that 'several studies have found agenda-setting effects in the relation between media coverage and public opinion on environmental issues'. Atwater et al. (1985), for instance, found positive correlation between the prominence given to six environmental issues by the media and the salience assigned to those issues by the public. However, people may not necessarily accept the media's suggested or preferred way of looking at or thinking about those issues.

After a study on the relationship between the Finnish press and public opinion about environmental issues Suhonen (1993:106) concluded: "For most of the fifteen year period under examination the proportion of those expressing concern for the environment varied in keeping with the amount of press coverage devoted to it". Lowe & Morrison (1984) also posited that the media have broadened environmental awareness and transformed many discrete problems into major issues. On the other hand, some commentators have raised questions as to whether it is possible and even credible to make such inferences about the impact of media coverage on public opinion, based on statistical correlations. Hansen (1991:445) for example, argues that:

> *...the match may simply be an indication that everybody engages in 'indirect content analysis', and that the 'concern' measured by opinion polls is not more than an indication of people's general awareness of what the media define as issues for public concern*

Hutchins & Lester (2006) in looking at the relationship between environmental protest and news media representation argue that environmental issues are a key focus of localised political experiences and action. Companies dumping toxic waste, airports extending runways and developers encroaching on wilderness are resisted by people and groups who cherish and demand environmental justice: 'an all-encompassing notion that affirms the use value of life, of all forms of life, against the interests of wealth, power, and technology' (Castells, 2004:190). They suggest that a contest between the valuing of life, environment and cosmological time, and the market, capital and instrumental time takes place within the news media where large audiences are exposed to battles over the right to determine the uses of public space and environments. Hutchins & Lester (2004) refer to an observation by Manuel Castells (2004) who argued that the constant presence of environmental issues and stories in the media lends legitimacy to green values and politics. Through interaction with media organisations, the environmental movement attempts to dig a trench of resistance against a-historical and abstracted global 'flows', constructs alternative identities, and insists that places and un-built environments are defined by more than their potential economic use value.

Castells (2000, 2004) puts environmentalism at the centre of contemporary politics and attempts to understand what happens when the market economy and capital meet actual people, places and environmental experiences. He argues that the power and influence of news outlets are in fact critically important in this meeting, because such news outlets provide an avenue through which the majority of the public are made aware of impending environmental threats and economic developments. Castells suggests that the two groups are mutually related in that environmentalists attempt to use the media to relay their message to a wider audience and thus promote green issues. Journalists on the other hand acknowledge the saliency of environmental issues to readers and audiences because of the threats posed to natural environments. Castells (2004:186) describes the relationship between the media and environmentalists as tap-dancing: the two groups caught in an ongoing dance that changes tempo quickly and involves improvisation from both partners.

2.21 Space of Flows Theory

Castell's (2009) theory of the ' space of flows' is of particular value in that it may provide a way of looking at how the media can serve as a communicative interface in which various agencies and actors compete for public awareness and approval of their particular interests. The space of flows is a spatial logic, one that Castells asserts is new and that determines the expression of society:

> *The space of flows is the material organisation of time-sharing social practices that work through flows [without geographical contiguity]. By flows I understand purposeful, repetitive, programmable sequences of exchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions held by social actors in the economic, political, symbolic structures of society* (Castell, 2009: 442)

The space of flows is a privileged formation where most socially and culturally dominant activities occur and global elites exist. Castells (2000) emphasises, however, that no single entity within the space of flows is able to determine the outcome of power relations, although highly resourced parties are less likely to be disadvantaged by these relations. The point here is that the power of flows takes precedence over any flow of power. The outcomes of social, cultural and economic processes are the result of complex interaction across time and space, and these outcomes can differ from whatever News Corporation or Greenpeace want because of multiple chains of linkages and power valences operating within the network. He suggests that environmentalists attempt to circumvent the space of flows by assigning value to place. The historically rooted and spatially grounded 'space of places' is where people live, share experiences and construct their identities:

> *...most people live, work, and construct their meaning around places. I define a place as the locale whose form, function, and meaning are self-contained within the boundaries of territorial contiguity. People tend to construct their life in reference to places, such as their home, neighbourhood, city, region, or country (Castells, 1999:296).*

Castells suggests that environmentalism represents a unique conception of place in the network society, valuing the physical environment for its symbolic and physical qualities, not for its potential economic use of value. Organisations such as green political parties, the Sierra Club and Friends of the Earth are evidence that the 'grassroots of societies', Castells (1991:297) – those people and organisations with their feet, hands, minds and hearts firmly in and on the ground, continue to exist and announce themselves openly in the information age. Castells (2004:181-2) specifies the challenge posed by environmentalists to the space of flows:

> *What is distinctive of the new social structure, the network society, is that most dominant processes, concentrating power, wealth, and information, are organised in the space of flows. Most human experience and meaning are still locally based. The disjunction between the two spatial logics is a fundamental mechanism of domination in our societies, because it shifts the core economic, symbolic, and political processes away from the realm where social meaning can be constructed and political control can be exercised. Thus, the emphasis of ecologists on locality, and on the control by people of their living spaces, is a challenge to a basic lever of the new power system.*

The significance here is that, in seeking to protect place, many environmental organisations operate and organise themselves in networked formations, helping to create widespread awareness of issues, disseminate information and coordinate actions. In other words, to generate knowledge of grassroots politics, a concerted effort has to be made to engage with and move within the space of flows and, more specifically, what can be termed the space of media flows. The environmental movement has little choice but to engage with major news outlets. Castells (2004) suggests that democratic politics is framed by the inherent logic of the media system. The news media is the key structuring intermediary in the conduct of public affairs, and political communication and information are transmitted in the space of media flows. The choice to stay out outside this space may offer the comfort of ideological purity, but the companion of this condition is marginality. Without widespread awareness generated by news coverage, environmental action and values lose both legitimacy and effect, failing to appear on mainstream political and cultural agendas and register in the collective mind (Castells, 2000). Therefore, to achieve their aims environmentalists must deal with media outlets and their workers whose interests are more closely aligned with dominant powers existing with the space of flows – media conglomerates, managerial elites, ideological affinity groups – than they are with grassroots social movements concerned with the preservation and/or conservation of place.

Several commentators argue that in understanding the expression of power in the information age, the critical issue is not what happens in either the space of flows or the space of places, but what happens when they meet (e.g. Castells & Ince 2003; (Hutchins 2004). It is the media that serves as the primary and hotly contested communicative interface – the structuring intermediary – between environmentalists and developers as they compete for public awareness and approval. But the media is more than a site for environmental action: it plays a significant role in shaping debate and influencing outcomes; it is here that representatives are determined; images softened or distorted, and power granted or denied (Hutchins & Leicester, 2006).

2.22 Transport Policy and the Market – Return of Ideology

Bayliss-Smith & Owens (1990) point out that in much of the early to mid 20th century in Britain, transport policy issues were relatively uncontroversial within the political arena. It remained a technical exercise carried out by engineers according to a set of standards that had been evolved with experience. The growth in car ownership brought with it problems of congestion and initially it was thought that the solution to the transport problem was to build more roads; the maxim was 'predict and provide'. In 1963 the Buchanan Report changed the way the transport planning profession thought about traffic, and a realization dawned that a choice had to be made in that either the city would have to adapt to the car or the car would have to adapt to the city. If the first alternative was chosen, wholesale redevelopment would have to take place similar to those taken in the 'auto-cities' of the USA. Alternatively, the car would have to be restrained in urban areas so that many of the historical centres could be preserved.

Bayliss-Smith & Owens (1990) suggest that having accepted the second alternative, other non-engineering issues became important. Evaluation of transport schemes became essential as increasingly public concern grew over social and environmental issues. Thinking became crystallized in the 1968 Transport Act that made a strong commitment to public transport with the return to deficit financing for the railways, and a new system of planning and financing bus services in the metropolitan and non-metropolitan counties. They argue, that it was during the 1970s that the effects of the rise in energy costs were felt, alongside the impacts of the recession and increased unemployment. Inflation rose to double figures and thus public expenditure was cut back. The concern in transport was to make the best use of available resources; which was interpreted through extensive traffic management schemes and priority for public transport. In many cities planners introduced one-way systems, pedestrianisation, urban traffic control systems and bus lanes. The 1978 Transport Act had a requirement to meet the transport needs of the people who did not have access to the private car. Bayliss-Smith & Owens point out that the change of government in 1979 led to a higher political profile for transport, they argue that whatever else might be written about the ten years of Conservative Government there is little doubt that it revolutionized many traditional views within transport policy during the 20th century. They point out that whilst previous governments had been content to introduce one major piece of transport legislation each decade. In the first half of the 1980s, the Conservative Government introduced six major pieces of transport legislation, one for each year from 1980 to 1985. They state that, "this unprecedented activity is almost biblical in its proportions, particularly as the Government took a rest in 1986, the seventh year". They point out that at the centre of this revolution were three primary aims:

- To transfer industries from the public sector to the private sector – privatization or denationalisation
- To introduce competition into public sector transport services and reduce levels of public expenditure – deregulation
- To encourage more private capital in major transport investment projects,

BaylissSmith & Owens (1990:170).

Headicar (2009) summarises changes from 1979 to 1997 when the Conservative government undertook the task of transforming transport industries and public transport services. Headicar points out that the motivation for these reforms had little to do with transport itself, but was part of a larger political agenda that was driven through with ideological enthusiasm similar to the programme of the post-1945 Labour Government in establishing the Welfare State but this time it went in the opposite political direction. Headicar argues that between 1952 and 1979 a stable consensus had existed between the two main political parties with regard to transport, and apart from occasional disagreement over the road haulage industry there had been notable continuity between administrations regardless of political colour. The parties had long been in agreement over quite key issues such as the development of the inter-urban roads programme, establishment of arrangements for integrated urban land use - transport planning and the gradual relaxation of controls to permit competition between the main transport industries.

Headicar (2009) suggests that the economic upheaval of the mid 1970s created the conditions for radical political change. This was due to the failure of the Labour Governments of 1974-79 to implement the necessary changes which the changing economic conditions of the time required, mainly because the policies necessary ran against the ethos on which the party's ideology was founded: that efficient and equitable development of the utilities and other socially important industries depended fundamentally on planned action by the State. Headicar (2009:98) points out how this was soon to be contradicted by advocates of liberalism but 'in a new and more extreme form; as they believed that excessive interference from the State was the real barrier to progress. Further to this the level of taxation needed to fund State activities was seen as a drag on the economy fuelling ever-higher inflation, and therefore the answer was to do away with regulatory controls and introduce transport as well as other industries to the free market. State owned monopolies were to be broken up, sold or restructured to operate commercially.

2.23 The Role of the State

Headicar (2009:146) argues that in a democratic society, the upholding of the rule of law and the protection of its citizens is the fundamental justification for State activity, and suggests that:

"More extensive involvement in economic and social matters derives from arguments that the conditions which would otherwise result from the workings of civil society the interactions of households, businesses and other organizations which would come about spontaneously are insufficient in some way".

Headicar (2009:146) points out that State involvement in transport in the UK has been on a scale sufficient to warrant a separate Government department for the greater part of a century, and argues that, given that tradition, it requires a degree of intellectual detachment to pose the question, 'why is the State involved in transport at all?' He suggests that the answer to such a question determines the areas of activity the Government and its agencies are engaged in and sets the parameters for discussion of policy in each of these areas. He points out that the fact the question can be posed in the first place comes from our liberal political tradition, in that it upholds the freedom of the individual citizen to the extent that actions by agencies of the State are only legitimate to the extent that they use powers granted by Parliament. Headicar suggests that, to speak of 'State action' backed by 'coercive force' bring into play, images of third world dictators, and civil riots, which is anomalous to something as comparatively ordinary as transport. But in fact one of the defining characteristics of a free society is the ability of people to move as and when they please, and as such he argues that because it is so fundamental to our way of life it is not in the forefront of our minds on a day-to-day basis. Nevertheless, he suggests that any attempt to change the status quo would quickly bring the issue to the surface. He points out that:

"*the sense of basic freedoms being threatened gives some explanation why seemingly minor transport proposals such as the introduction of parking restrictions on a particular road or a traffic management scheme which restricts movements in a specific area, often brings into play vociferous opposition apparently out of all proportion to the actual inconvenience which people will incur*" (*Headicar, 2009:146).*

He suggests that in broader discussion about transport the rhetoric of 'freedom' is also frequently used, especially from those on the right of the political spectrum. He suggests that debates about the scale and nature of State involvement in transport invoke the same principles as in other policy areas, and the dominant principle, consistent with our liberal political tradition is that individuals are the best judges of their own welfare. As such he suggests that this underpins our general use of markets to determine allocation of investment and consumption of goods and services. However, Headicar notes that although reference to market principles has become the dominant paradigm in contemporary public policy making, it is not universally accepted. The economic concept of welfare is based on the idea that individuals are essentially self-seeking and as such in competition with one another. This view he points out, conflicts with notions of 'community' or 'mutuality', which they should have a much greater effect in the mechanisms of society. He points out that much of the campaigning by social or environmental groups cannot be explained in terms of the benefits which the individuals involved can ever expect to gain for themselves. As such the 'co-operative' spirit also finds expression in community transport organizations and social enterprises more generally.

2.24 Building Consent for Radical Transport Policies

According to Clarke & Newman (1997:34):

> "*The reconstruction of the state has been shaped by the intersection of two ideologies: those of the New Right and of managerialism. Both have constructed definitions of problems of the old regime and provided visions of the new".*

Clarke & Newman point out that the articulation of these two ideologies created a discourse about change that announced its necessity and its direction with regard to ideas of 'transformation' 'revolution', 'reinvention' and 'cultural change'. They suggest that these themes have become commonplace in the political rhetoric of successive governments since Thatcherism signaled the displacement of the political left by the political right as the source of radicalism. As such they point out that from that period onwards, old assumptions were to be challenged; old alliances dissolved; old power bases weakened. Its accomplishment would necessitate enforced change driven forward by government and by winning consent to the idea that change itself was critical if Britain was to survive in an emerging global economy. For transport policy, this ideology was interpreted in the ways described by Headicar above with the wholesale deregulation and privatization of major transport infrastructure mainly affecting the provinces outside of London. Clarke & Newman (1997:51) point out that where new managerialism has been successful is in 'winning consent' to one kind of change agenda and in silencing others. This involved the development of a discourse favouring the private sector led provision of transport services over the public sector alongside notions about providing the transport consumer with greater choice. Clarke & Newman suggest that new managerialism introduced a whole new set of ideas not just about how change was to be implemented, but about the appropriate targets of change (organisations, services and employees) as well as issues of what are appropriate (community power, responsiveness to feminist and other perspectives). Clarke & Newman (1997) argue the 'radical' came from the New Right's transformational discourse of change and is aligned with concepts of cultural change, business process re-engineering as well as other strands of the managerial toolkit of change. In other words they suggest that alternative views of what could or should be changed, has been excluded by this managerial conception of change. Thus the discursive space within which change is conceived was filled and the terrain and direction of change defined. The limits of the possible, the imaginable and say-able were established. Thus, others wishing to engage in the debate needed to find ways of accommodating themselves to the discursive terms of reference or they risked being left out on the margins.

As Isaksson & Richardson (2009) point out the controversial nature of congestion charging policies makes them politically risky. Urban planners, policy makers and politicians are forced to consider how they can legitimately introduce a policy that the public may not want. Thus implementation in London, and failure in Edinburgh and Manchester raise questions regarding whether decision makers should seek full citizen support, or work strategically towards implementation in the face of adverse or negative public opinion. Isaksson & Richardson (2009) argue that one of the central challenges in urban planning is the place of the car. They suggest that there is now enough evidence to show that congestion charging can immediately transform urban traffic levels as well as bring about changes in attitudes and behaviour. However, they concede that it is an unpopular policy that a significant proportion of the public do not want, and therefore transport policy makers find themselves in the difficult position of deciding whether they should seek to introduce such unpopular policies, and if so how should they communicate this to the public. They also point out that congestion charging policies are subject to international scrutiny. Policy makers and politicians in many cities are therefore evaluating each experience in order to assess whether this is something they should attempt. Isaksson & Richardson attempt to draw attention to the strategies through which radical policies such as the congestion charge are being introduced to reluctant citizens.

Ryley & Gjersoe (2006) study the rejection of the Edinburgh congestion-charging scheme and note that, of those voting in 2005 referendum, 74% voted against the proposals. The turn out was particularly high given that 69% of residents registered on the Electoral Register voted. They show that many other urban road-pricing proposals have stalled at the implementation stage, and argue that there is an increasing need to overcome low public and political acceptability of road pricing strategies. They point out that motorists tend to perceive congestion charging as a tax, both unfair that they have to pay for something that previously they had for free and coercive as they have few, if any, practical alternatives.

They suggest that the acceptability of road pricing varies over time from the initial proposals through to the introduction of a scheme. It is acknowledged that acceptability falls before scheme introduction (usually when the public realise that they have to pay and do not like the design) but then rises after introduction as in London when the public can see the benefits scheme. Ryley & Gjersoe highlight the fact that public acceptability towards the congestion charging proposals declined in Edinburgh over the four public consultation phases. In 1999, there was approximately 60% support and 30% opposition for the charging scheme that had been identified in Consultation Phase I 'Edinburgh's transport choices'. However, by 2002, the level of support had fallen, at the time of Consultation Phase IV 'Have Your Say'. Thus the option for a single, central cordon had marginal opposition amongst Edinburgh residents (43% in favour, 47% against), whereas the option for two cordons (the option presented to the public in the referendum) had stronger opposition amongst residents (34% in favour, 56% against).

As was shown by the referendum result, support for congestion charging in the City declined further after Consultation Phase IV. Ryley & Gjersoe (2006) suggest that media (they highlight mainly newspapers, TV and radio) influences acceptability and is a key player in the development of larger transport planning projects such as congestion charging schemes. They highlight the increasing perception of transport policy makers with regard to the increasing importance of political communications and in particular the use of political marketing techniques in order to overcome the more negative press that often surrounds transport schemes. This is because key stakeholders can be proactively engaged at all stages of the scheme design and implementation process. It also encourages a culture change within the initiating organization and can clarify and agree the role of elected members (local politicians) in the process of scheme design, selection and implementation. Ryley & Gjersoe highlight three approaches for decision-makers as advocated by Lyons (2003) which suggested that decision makers and politicians can change the focus from the 'pain' to the 'gain' associated with transport project representations within the media. One such approach is to educate the public so that they can see through the media hype, to work with the media and to ride the media storm. However, they point out that riding the media storm has proved particularly difficult, but the example of the London congestion charging scheme shows that in certain circumstances what appears to be a controversial transport project can be successfully implemented despite hostile press coverage.

As Isaksson & Richardson (2009) point out the political riskiness of a fiscal intervention such as congestion charging means that as a policy issue it has to be taken very seriously. They suggest that transport policy makers are required to think about how to legitimately introduce a policy that the public may not want. They have to consider whether to seek the full support of the public or work strategically with key stakeholders towards implementation despite public opposition to the policy. They point out that the analytical question then, becomes one of how to design and apply particular strategies for building legitimacy in specific settings. How engagement with citizens and stakeholders is conceived and justified and whether such engagement is an attempt to create a wave of citizen support. It is to create strategic agreements with stakeholders or an attempt to persuade them things will be all right in the long run, or basically to plough ahead despite public opposition. They argue that they see attempts to introduce congestion charging as critical cases for reflection on how policy makers are seeking to create legitimacy for controversial policies in diverse urban settings.

2.25 Conclusions

This literature review tracks the development of political marketing and shows that its emergence is linked to evolution of the relationship between citizens and their political institutions in advanced postindustrial democracies. Lazarsfeld (1965:94) concluded "The first thing to say is that some people were converted by campaign propaganda but they were few indeed." Stromback *et al.* (2010) emphasise that this was at a time, when stronger party identification, electoral volatility and distrust was much less than current times, and a time when media coverage was characterized by compliance rather than sceptical questioning. There are a number of key themes to emerge from the literature, these include the assertion that conditions have changed and the body politic now have to work much harder than their forebears in order to win the support and confidence of the public. As Stromback *et al.* (2010) suggest much more is at stake and as such political institutions need to develop strategies in order to respond to a political environment which is in a constant state flux, particularly if they are to build and maintain sustainable relationship with target groups and stakeholders.

Stromback *et al.* further suggest, that one strategy is to become market oriented, focusing on the importance of market intelligence and the needs of target groups and stakeholders internally and externally. These, they suggest, can be found within the internal, media, electoral and parliamentary arenas. The theme of the use of market intelligence and the targeting of specific groups and stakeholders is also examined within the analysis of the Greater Manchester case study.

The debates over the opinion–policy link (See Sect. 2.10), particularly in the growing body of research on polls, public opinion and policymaking are of particular relevance to this research. This is because they provide distinct images or paradigms of the opinion-policy link which attempt to categorise the varying effects of public opinion on policy that is the extent to which policy moves or changes directions when faced with changes in public opinion or in other words the degree of policy responsiveness. A particularly relevant aspect of this being a set of arguments which highlight the importance of the polls and other sources of information in influencing the behaviour of policy makers, politicians and the output of the political system. This is linked to the discussion of responsiveness and motivation theories that examines the responsiveness of politicians, policy makers or political system as a whole to public opinion which ultimately rests on the argument that political or policy elites derive benefit from pursuing policies that are in agreement with the wishes of citizens. The issue of the responsiveness of policy makers to public opinion within the Greater Manchester TIF campaign is explored further in Chapter 4.

Section 2.14 highlights media coverage of public opinion polls, which is also an important component of the process through which public policies are determined. It is argued that news media play an important role in the formulation of public policy agendas that often goes unacknowledged (Leff *et al.*,1986). In turn the Government is politically in a very strong position to affect the supply of politically sensitive information. In some circumstances it can impose legal controls over who may be interviewed on television, or what information in its own right can or cannot be released. It is the key source for data on major issues such as the economy, unemployment, public spending and health. In current times each Whitehall department has its own press and public relations personnel and these collectively form the Government Information Service.

Government leaders also supply information to the media through the lobby system. This is a system of un-attributable briefings given to selected correspondents in the House of Commons. This has been criticised exactly because the source of this type of information often cannot be disclosed (Leff *et al.*,1986). This is relevant to this research because an understanding of the use of public opinion data in the hands of the press is as important as the use of such data by politicians and other key policy makers. More significant however, is the idea that previous analysis of the effects of media coverage and its emphasis on political conflict and strategy has had a tendency to focus mainly on the media and their impact on politics. A few commentators (e.g. Jacobs & Shapiro, 2000) have rightly argued that this media centred analysis is incomplete in that it fails to give full weight to the original political impetus for media coverage. That is, the actual political and policy developments that drive press reporting. It is within the parameters of the latter point that the links to this research become clearer in that within the broad parameters established within public opinion, media and policy research, politicians and policy makers often have substantial room to manoeuvre policy in detailed and strategic ways that are not visible to the public (and this is pursued further in Chapt.4).

Whilst public opinion clearly sets important parameters on policy making, the combination of contradictory public views on key policy issues and the capacity of the political elites to shape or direct citizens' views, significantly reduce the independent causal impact of public opinion. A view that is particularly important to this research argues that critical approaches in media studies must begin by looking beyond the mass media paradigm, as the concept of mass media is no longer adequate enough to explain the utility of communications in sustaining unequal power relations in society.

The review has also highlighted a number of limitations in media research. Firstly, most commentators appear to suggest that there is a tendency to exaggerate the propensity of public opinion to change in the wake of political developments and media coverage despite a history of research that until recently emphasised the limited effects of the media. Secondly there are limitations that stem from gaps in the investigations of political and institutional developments. In other words there is a gap in media research with regard to how much politicians and their advisers design policy reform proposals by following public opinion or by discounting public opinion in order to follow their own goals. As discussed earlier, Jacobs & Shapiro's (2000) case study of the Clinton administration's health reforms for example showed that whilst the next presidential or congressional elections were some distance away the President and his advisers could discount centrist opinion in full knowledge of the fact that their favoured approach for health reforms had little public support. In this case they chose to pursue policy goals preferred by party activists, interest groups as well as the President's personal policy preferences. More importantly, Jacobs & Shapiro (2000) demonstrated that the actions of politicians and political activists sparked a cycle of actions and counteractions which subsequently fuelled media coverage and public debate and stimulated more determined and strategic policy efforts by policy advocates to craft their presentations more effectively.

Jacobs & Shapiro (2000) point out that it remains unclear whether the political content of the media originates from journalists, politicians, or a combination of both. Therefore they argue that accounting for politicians' motivations and strategies is essential to connecting political and institutional dynamics to changes in public opinion and thus to pinpoint certain public considerations. They argue that the specific content of the information reaching the public today is at least partly the result of a calculation by policy oriented politicians to use public opinion research to change public opinion. Therefore studying how variations in elite discourse affect both the direction and organisation of mass opinion is important but remains one important step removed from political and institutional dynamics. They therefore suggest that what is needed is an understanding of the political source and content of this influence. It is precisely the dynamics and processes involved which will be the focus of this research through the use of case studies from the transport policy domain.

The review makes clear that the application of 'marketing tools' and methods in politics is not a new phenomena. Nevertheless, there is an argument that political marketing management has increased significantly over recent decades. As suggested by Lees-Marshment (2004:1):

> *"Political marketing is sweeping through the British political system. Not only is it influencing how the political parties behave, but the parties themselves in government are then applying pressure to the health service, education, parliament and even local councils to become more responsive to citizens these political institutions were created to serve. No longer deferential, the British people have demanded these changes, with increasing critical voices ready to offer opinions of their own.... Political organisations are therefore responding with political marketing.... Every organization needs to understand the people it is trying to serve, to design a service they will want, if it wishes to succeed, even if it is not in the business of making a profit".*

Political marketing applications have changed from a communication instrument to a coherent way of managing politics, whether it is policy making, canvassing for elections or policy implementation. It is not clear the extent to which the majority of political actors (particularly in the arena of transport policy making) have an integrated and sophisticated understanding of marketing applications for their political exchange situations. Nevertheless, political marketing manifests itself in such diverse activities as focusing a campaign on the salient political issues of swing voters, through the application of sophisticated segmentation techniques a consequent voter-'customer' orientation, and the application of celebrity endorsement strategies as part of an integrated marketing communication of powerful directors of communication (Henneberg, 2004). These occurrences of marketing practice in politics means that the use of marketing theory as a mean of explaining these phenomena should be helpful.

Finally, the chapter examined the notion that the main gaps within planning research with respect to media revolve around finding the origins of significant and large changes to planning policy (Forester, 1989). Trying to gain an understanding of whether such changes come from democratic processes such as political parties, interest groups or emerge from inside political bureaucracies or arise in the media. From this other factors emerge such as the role of politics within planning as well as the political role of the planner in strategically shaping political decisions and the way that such policy decisions are mediated in the press. Agenda and policy change through the emergence of new ideas is another area. Other debates are explored about how policy entrepreneurs are able to sell an idea to political leaders, experts and communicators as well as how propagators of specific policy persuasions may gain the attention of executives, which then seek to influence the media and public opinion, depending on the policy issue at stake. The alternative is where policy entrepreneurs promote the idea to the media, where it takes hold and in turn influences the policy agenda, on the one hand, and public opinion, on the other. Here the media is seen to act as gatekeeper between mass public and executive leaders, which may reflect the selective pressures of particular interest groups. The latter is a central theme of this research and is explored through the analysis of the Greater Manchester TIF case study.

This review explains why it is of great importance to understand the perceptions of, and roles played by, those tasked with marketing sustainable transport policy products. The research therefore attempts to take account of the role of political marketing and communications within the politics of transport. In particular, it provides more specific research approaches in the light of technologically driven structural changes within the local media in the United Kingdom that have significantly altered the game plan in the highly contested arena of the politics of transport. The perspectives of transport practitioners with regard to their understanding of political communications and the marketing of transport policies would add value to the discourse and the body of knowledge within the area of political communications and the marketing of policies and its interface with transport policy and implementation. These considerations influence the choice of methods used to pursue the research and this is taken up in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

A Philosophical & Methodological Approach to Political Communication & Marketing

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explains and justifies the research methodology, epistemology and ontology used and sets out the systematic process of data collection and multiple techniques employed. The research evaluates case study material about Manchester's Transport Innovation Fund bid in 2008.

The research draws upon secondary sources such as archived press releases and articles from local papers reporting on the Manchester Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) debate. Qualitative primary research has also been collected in the form of nine semi-structured interviews from senior politicians, officers and journalists from Greater Manchester Town Councils and Press newspapers; and individuals who were key actors in the TIF debate at the time. This was purposefully designed to better understand the communications strategies used by decision makers in the development and implementation of the bid.

This chapter discusses the use of primary and secondary data used within the thesis, as well as justifying the use of the case study method and more specifically unstructured interviews as the main source of data collection. It also discusses the use of data triangulation to coroborate the interview data, and concludes with a section on the ethical issues that informed the research. The research (Section 3.2) draws on constructivism and constructionism as a theory of knowledge that is useful in understanding the process of mediatised communication. Particularly in developing an understanding of how professional communicators are now used regularly within party politics, for the purpose of constructing and personalising messages by attaching them to policy makers and politicians. The use of case study research (Section 3.3) to examine the rapidly evolving role of political communication in the state is discussed. In particular the strengths of the case study approach in examining a phenomenon in its natural setting, employing multiple methods of data collection to gather information from one or a few entities (people, groups, or organisations) (Benbasat *et al.*, 1987). Section 3.4 - 3.6 discuss, specific methods of data collection such as the use of 'unstructured interviews' to 'interview preparation' to how the data was triangulated and the various forms of evidence collected. Section 3.7 - 3.12 discusses the data analysis process used to make sense of the data collected, how the research gained access to participants, and the ethical issues that had to be considered throughout the research, and finally Section 3.13 provides a summary of the chapter.

3.1 Purpose of the study

This research examines the nature of political communication and assesses how marketing strategies are used by transport policy practitioners, and their perceptions of the role played by communications and marketing methods in the policy making process. The research also evaluates the phenomena of the increased use of 'political marketing and communications strategies' within national and local transport policy frameworks, and evaluates whether these have become more widespread and sophisticated in order to better signal policy intentions, as well as to market and promote controversial policies to both the media and public.

An area that remains under-researched is the extent to which public relations mechanisms are being developed within local government and how these mechanisms are being used in order to strategically influence the media in order to shape or manipulate public opinion in pursuit of their policy goals. It is therefore necessary to analyse media and transport planning discourse, in particular the increasing use of public relations strategies by transport policy practitioners as a system for communicating messages and symbols to a wider public through more sophisticated mechanisms in order to contest transport issues within the media. It was decided to use the Manchester Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) as the main case study was because it provided an opportunity to look at a high profile and highly contested transport policy initiative. There were other pragmatic issues such as the fact that Manchester was relatively easy to travel to, and more importantly I had access to several former colleagues and key stakeholders within key organisations such as Manchester City Council and Transport for Greater Manchester (formerly Greater Manchester Passenger Executive). The TIF involved a wide range of practitioners and politicians and the issues were widely debated and contested in a number of arenas throughout Greater Manchester. It therefore provided an opportunity to highlight the key actors' perceptions of the importance of political communication methods to advance their specific messages with the specific intent of influencing public opinion.

3.2 A Critical Constructivist Approach To Political Communication

A constructivist approach has been adopted within this research to examine the impact of communications and marketing techniques on the political process. As Louw (2010:6) points out:

> "*The media and political process proposes that we increasingly inhabit a world of second hand tele-visual images that increasingly naturalise the way things are*".

This can be extended to other images increasingly being created and used by a number of institutions both from political as well as commercial sphere, in marketing their policies and products. An understanding of the constructivism as a theory of knowledge is important in examining the increasing role of communications professionals and political marketing within policy making in the 21st Century. As Louw suggests, managing political communication involves more that building 'faces', scripting individual political performances or constructing celebrities. It also involves scripting and disseminating principles, ideas, sentiments and beliefs; and encouraging the emergence of supporters or followers for the mythologies and political identities thereby constructed. Such identities and mythologies serve as lighthouses or touchstones for the masses, Louw (2010:20) - refers to these as political outsiders, helping them to navigate and orientate themselves in relation to the various political players. He suggests that skilful impression managers then personalise messages, by attaching them to politicians. He goes on to further suggest, that professional communicators also construct the followers, because followers effectively build 'political identities' from meanings supplied by the texts, images and performances crafted by impression managers. He points out that this process is known as 'political socialisation'. The consequence of this is that the act of 'making political followers' is an exercise in second hand construction, in which, the beliefs and identities of political outsiders are acquired by internalisation of media messages produced by impression managers (insiders) and journalists (semi insiders).

This research examines how the political reporting of transport issues has been influenced by policy makers, who have become increasingly media savvy, in that they are able to employ professional communicators to steer the portrayal of issues in the mainstream media. It examines the extent to which a symbiotic relationship has developed between transport policy-making elites (politicians, policy advisers and journalists) and how these key actors have learned to use the practices of political communication and marketing strategies to help them construct the view of the world they are trying to portray to the transport publics through the media. The methodology is therefore designed to examine the messages and images produced and the people and organisations that made them, and to ask critical questions with regard to who constructed particular messages and images, as well as to examine the interests, biases, worldviews and agendas of those behind their creation also to ask whether the work practices of all those involved in making these images in anyway skews the pictures we receive.

Louw (2010) discusses the importance of examining the processes of political communication with a sceptical eye. Particularly when focusing on media practices within liberal democratic political systems. He points out that this focus should not be taken to mean that liberal democracy is viewed as a form of governance especially deserving of criticism. The critical approach of the media and political process can just as easily be applied to other forms of governance. Nevertheless, liberal democracy is focused on because it has arguably become the most important form of contemporary governance. Louw argues that scepticism demands that we pay serious attention to how images are constructed so that we 'de-naturalise' them. This research adopts a critical approach, not one that attempts to construct 'a truth', but the methodology used attempts to provoke discussion through an exposition on transport policy making and implementation grounded in critical theory and constructivist thinking. Howell (2013:30) suggests that:

> *"Philosophy, grand, meso (or middle range theory) and substantive theory are closely interrelated because reality, truth/knowledge and theory develop through interactions between historical environments, institutions and individuals (practical situtations)"*

As a consequence he suggests that social actors in a changing historical and social context construct reality truth/knowledge and theory. According to Howell, researchers are therefore not objective impassive analysts; they themselves become part of the construction process and as social values change theory is re-assessed in relation to these changes. Howell (2013:30) argues that prediction in the social sciences is difficult if not impossible to formulate, consequently grand theory should be seen as a means of 'organising concepts', 'selecting relevant facts' and determining how the narrative should be constructed. However, she concedes that social research is about a mix of ontological and epistemological positions through a synthesis of methodological approaches and methods of data collection. She further suggests that such deliberations have had some resonance for philosophers during the 20th century and researchers today identify these distinctions in terms of paradigms of inquiry in relation to different methodological approaches used on diverse research programmes (See Table 3.1).

Louw (2010) argues that although constructivism is a theory of knowledge, and its usefulness to understanding the processes of media-ised communication is clear to (see Table 3.2). He argues that constructivism provides a way of seeing and understanding the world based on the premise that as human beings we experience the world mentally, in other words: we relate to the world through our minds.

Table 3.1 Paradigms of Inquiry

Items	Postivism	Post-postivism	Critical theory	Constructivist and participatory
Ontology The form of reality. What can be known about reality?	Reality can be totally understood. Reality exists and it can be discovered (Naïve Realism)	Reality may only be understood imperfectly and probabilistically. Reality exists but humanity unable to totally understand it (Critical Realism)	Reality shaped by history. Formed by values that re crystallised over time. (Historical Realism) Breakdown of a clear distinction between ontology and epistemology.	Reality is locally constructed. Based on experience although shared by many. Dependent on person/group changeable. Participatory: co-created through mind and world. (Relative Realism) Breakdown of a clear distinction between ontology and epistemology.
Epistemology The relationship between the investigator and what can be discovered	The investigator and the investigation are totally separate. Values are overcome through scientific procedure. Truth is a possibility	Abandonment of total separation of investigator and investigation. Objectivity still pursed.	The investigator and investigation linked. Accepted that historical values influence the inquiry. Results subjective.	As critical theory. However, the findings are created as the investigation proceeds. Participatory: Paradigm findings are developed between the researcher and cosmos.
Methodology How does the investigator go about finding out what he/she believes can be discovered.	Scientific experiments based on hypothesis, these are usually quantitative. Conditions that confound are manipulated.	Multiple modified scientific experiment. Pursues falsification of hypotheses; may include qualitative methods.	Needs dialogue between investigator and the subject of investigation. Structures may be changeable. Actions effect change.	Create a consensus through individual constructions including the construction of the investigator. Participatory: Similar methodologies can be employed (primarily action research)

Source: Howell (2013:29)

Thus, 'knowing' becomes an 'internal' (cognitive) process, therefore to the constructivist, it is our minds that structure the world for us by actively engaging in a process of 'construction' (Louw, 2010:6-7).

Table 3.2 A constructivist view of the World

- Humans cannot passively receive inputs from the world 'out there' in the way the cameras record images, because all incoming sense-data is processed by humans as thinking beings;

- All observation of the world is subjectively guided. Existing ideas (e.g. theory) knowledge and experience (coded in our language-systems) structure the way we receive and interpret incoming data-inputs;

- Paradigms already in our head guide how we look at the world (e.g. the questions we ask and what we focus our senses upon) and how we process and interpret incoming sensory inputs. Hence people using different paradigms are effectively living in different worlds;

- Knowledge is the result of an internal (subjective) cognitive process- i.e. what we choose to think about; and how we choose to think about it; (i.e. knowledge is guided by theories, ideas and experience already in our heads);

- So knowledge comes from where we choose to point the camera rather than a mechanical process of recording and it is our existing thoughts that guide what we choose to focus on. A significant determinant of our 'existing thinking' is how we have been socialised, and what we have already been exposed to via education and previously received media images.

Source: Louw (2010:3-4)

Howell (2013:88) argues that constructivism understands reality as being locally constructed and based on shared experiences and, because groups and individuals are changeable, identifies it as 'relativist realism' or 'relative ontology'. She points out that epistemologically, constructivism is similar to critical theory, however research results are created through consensus and individual constructions, including the constructions of the investigator. Theory in this paradigm is relative and changeable, reliability and prediction almost impossible and cause and effect difficult to identify. Howell cites Navon (2001:624) who argues that "for a rationalist, the mind unveils the reality; for post-modernists, the mind invents reality, whereas for the constructivist the mind creates reality and claims that facts are produced by human consciousness". Howell points out that a general assumption for constructivism is that knowledge is based in politics and interests; it is ideological and culture is based upon and determined through value. Here Howell makes a distinction between weak and strong constructivism, suggesting that both involve the idea that knowledge is not abstract but socially bound and value laden, and attempt to understand how the real world can constrain knowledge construction. Observations and experiential data are based on notions relating to hypothesis testing and validation and incorporate difficult elements to be challenged and dismissed.

Howell points out that weak constructivism has links with critical theory in that it attempt to unveil the ideological perspectives of knowledge discovery, generation and accumulation. She cites Longino (1993a) who argues that methods used to organize and analyse data and identify cause and effect are not epistemologically free from interference; they are 'contextual' and inter-subjective in terms of assumptions, beliefs and culture. Longino (1993a:263) suggests that these are 'the vehicles by which social values and ideology are expressed in inquiry and become subtly inscribed in theories hypotheses and models defining research programmes'. As a result, as long as we think that knowledge is produced through individual cognition, it will not be possible to take these variables into consideration. If research programmes accept contextual and inter-subjectivity they can begin to deal with and critique background assumptions. Longino (1993b) outlines a set of criteria that would allow a transformation of critical discourse. These include:

- Shared standards of evaluation;
- Community response criticism;
- Equality of intellectual authority.

Longino also considered that experimentation and observation were not totally under the control of the autonomous objective researcher; all is contextual, inter-subjective and incorporates background assumptions. Longino suggests that background assumptions require criticism that requires an understanding that objectivity involves social interaction and knowledge construction is a social activity. Only when these premises are activated and numerous alternative points of view deployed can background assumptions be critically evaluated. Such an approach enables the researcher to identify and challenge values and interests that can otherwise seem the norm and seen as necessary aspects of research programmes and processes. In terms of critical theory, Longino (1993b) argued that situations should be organized and structured that facilitated critique, and that this critique should concentrate on the following issues:

- How communities react to criticism;
- The extent communities tolerate criticism;
- Levels of shared evaluative standards;
- Who has intellectual authority.

Longino points out that for weak constructivism, practical issues are interwoven with naturalistic scientific inquiry; that is, science is part of the process and objectivity an element with knowledge production. When certain scientific procedures are accepted and objectivity endorsed, any explanation or interpretation can be challenged and negated.

On the other hand strong constructivism developed through the recognition that language is part of social existence and that evaluation of beliefs depend on the language games from which said beliefs emanate. In this context Howell (2013:93) argues that the “meanings of different language games or different forms of life are incommensurable”. When this is linked with the idea of many continually changing realities we are led to epistemological relativism: all knowledge is produced through social structures, and the different communities of interpreters that inhabit them form truth or reality. So as a result, all statements relating to values are *community based* so should be treated with suspicion and continually doubted. Longino points out that for certain thinkers this does not curtail knowledge development but leads towards greater democracy in thought and discussion and the enhancement of critique and reflection of the human condition (Gergen, 1994). Longino states that, in a similar way, commentators such as Denzin (1997) reject epistemological relativism when they argue that through experience the world can be accurately depicted. Through the individual's socio-historical position the world of experience may be studied and experienced. However, Denzin also agrees that "ethnographic practices given to writing moral and allegorical tales are a method of empowerment for readers and a means to discover moral truths about themselves" (Schwandt, 2000:200).

Noor (2008) points out that making a choice with regard to the correct research method to employ is dependent upon the nature of the research problem. He argues that the method's appropriateness draws from the character of the social phenomena to be studied. He focuses on two basic methodological traditions of research in social science, positivism and post-positivism (phenomenology). Noor (2008) explains that positivism is a method that focuses on the creation of knowledge through research that places emphasis on the model of natural science. That is to say the scientist takes on the position of objective researcher, collecting facts about the social world and arranging them into a chain of causality in order to develop an explanation of social life. He goes on to explain that post-positivism deals with a socially constructed reality as opposed to an objectively determined reality. The social scientist's mission therefore is not merely about collecting facts and measuring frequency of occurrences, but more about discovering the diverse constructions and meanings that people place on their experience. In this study the researcher clearly identifies with his post-positivist stance.

Lee (2012:405) argues that constructivism is a confusing term and often used interchangeably, with 'constructionism' and that it is important to make a distinction between the two. Lee points out that social constructionism differs from radical constructivism in that the former focuses on collective generation of meaning while the latter suggests that the individual mind is active exclusively in the mean making activity. In addition Lee argues that constructionism is still a generic term and consists of more nuanced subsets. For example there are social and psychological forms of constructionism (Gergen, 1994; Philips, 1995). Even within social constructionism a weak version is further distinguished from as strong one, depending on the stance they take on 'the role that social factors play in what constitutes legitimate knowledge'

(Schwandt, 2003:308). Specifically, both the weak and strong form of constructionism share the assumption that knowledge is not disinterested and apolitical. However, the weak form attempts to preserve some way of distinguishing better or worse interpretations while the strong form tilts toward a more radically skeptical and even nihilistic stance on interpretations.

Lee (2012) cites Lincoln & Guba (2003:227) who argue that "realities are social constructions, selected, built and embellished by social actors (individuals) ...". In that sense, constructions are intensely personal and idiosyncratic and, consequently, as plentiful and diverse as the people who hold them. Lee argues that from this perspective their paradigm seems to slide between radical constructivism and social constructionism, or it is intended to be blend of both. He argues that whichever case it is, clarification is necessary because radical constructivism and social constructionism each have a distinct epistemological agenda, which in turn has an impact on their respective methodological practices.

Young & Collins (2004) argue that constructivism and social constructionism separately, and subsumed under an apparently generic or undifferentiated "constructivism", have gained a substantial presence in social science. Young & Collins explain, that constructivism is a perspective that arose in developmental and cognitive psychology, and its central figures include (Bruner, 1990; Kelly, 1955; Piaget, 1969; Von Glaserfeld, 1993; Vygotsky, 1978). Constructivism puts forward the view that individuals mentally construct their world of experience through cognitive processes. This differs from the scientific orthodoxy of logical positivism in its argument that the world cannot be known directly, but rather by the construction imposed on it by the mind. However, Young & Collins point out that, logical possitivism is generally considered to share positivism's commitment to a dualist epistemology and ontology. Consequently, logical positivism represents an epistemological perspective, concerned with how we know, and by implication how we develop meaning. They argue that these processes are internal to the individual, integrating knowledge (or meaning) into pre-existing schemes (assimilation) or changing the schemes to fit the environment (accommodation). They cite Mahoney (2002:747-749) who states that the self is "a complex system of active and interactive self organizing processes" directed towards self organisation and order, "embedded in social and symbolic contexts" and seeking to achieve "balance between ordering and dis-ordering processes". Young & Collins (2004) suggest that within the overall constructivist family, there are several differing positions, but three are frequently mentioned. Radical constructivists such as Von Glaserfeld (1993) argue that it is the individual mind that constructs reality. More moderate constructivists, such as Kelly (1955) and Piaget (1969) acknowledge that individual constructions take place within systematic relationship to the external world. Finally, social constructivists, such as Bruner (1990) and Vygotsky (1978), recognise that influences on individual construction are derived from and preceded by social relationships. Young & Collins, point out that although this last position has some similarity to that of social constructionism, it differs because of its dualist assumptions. However these dualist assumptions are not as central to scientists in other disciplines who take on constructivism's mantle. They quote commentators such as Damasio (1999) who argued against the traditional separation of mind and body, which reflected an increasingly common case against dualism.

They point to commentators such as Martin & Sugarman (1999:9) who contend that the failure of constructivism lay in its reliance on an "individually sovereign process of cognitive construction to explain how human beings are able to share so much socially, to interpret, understand, influence, and coordinate their activities with one another". Fundamentally, they take the stance that constructivism posits an extremely individualistic approach without reference to social interaction, contexts, and discourses that make self-reflection, mean-making possible. However, Young & Collins, suggest that to some extent, this failure is being addressed as social constructivists, Bruner (1990); Vygotsky (1978) move to more social explanations and the dualist assumptions of constructivism are challenged. Young & Collins, explain that social constructionism is like the constructivist family in recognizing Kant (1781/1998) as its intellectual progenitor, but the contrast is that constructionism has a social rather than an individual focus. The view it takes is that "knowledge in some area is the product of our social practices and institutions, or of the interactions and negotiations between relevant social groups" (Gasper, 1999:855). In more general terms their view of social constructionism is that social processes sustain knowledge, and that knowledge and social action go together. As such it is less interested in the cognitive processes that accompany knowledge.

It is clear from the arguments above that apart from a consensus that constructivism and social constructionism differ on whether construction is an individual or a social process, there appears to be less agreement on what else defines and distinguishes them. Young & Collins (2004) point to continuing debates on their relative epistemologies and ontologies, arguing that some use 'constructivism' in a generic, or undifferentiated sense, apparently ignoring ontological and epistemological issues. Whilst others generate new sub-varieties of the perspective, such as social constructivism, yet others have used the two terms interchangeably (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1994). Young & Collins (2004) argue that this leads to considerable vagueness, and point out that such ambiguities exist because both perspectives have emerged relatively recently and are still evolving. They argue that this appears to be specifically the case with social constructionism, or it may be as a result of theorists bending conceptual frameworks to their own ends, just as practioners struggle to apply theory, nevertheless they suggest that it should not be assumed that greater clarity could necessarily be achieved in the longer term. Young & Collins (2004:378) argue that just as there is a 'family resemblance' or 'fuzzy sets' between the differing views within social constructionism, so also there may be to some extent between the two perspectives. In effect, the two families of constructivism and social constructionism may yet prove to belong to the same extended family. Nevertheless, some features of constructivism can be identified as particularly salient in contributing to the construction of transport policy messages, as a construct in theory, research, and practice and policy making. These features are that meaning is constructed in a social, historical, and cultural context, through action and discourse in which policy practitioners and other actors form relationships and policy communities.

3.3 Case Study Research

Case study research examines a phenomenon in its natural setting, employing multiple methods of data collection to gather information from one of a number of entities (people, groups or organizations, Benbasat *et al.*, (1987) - see table 3.3. The quality of the case study is dependent on the sensitivity and integrity of the researcher. The case study researcher's primary data collection method is said to be interviews, according to Winegardner (1999). Yin (1994) points to typically three methods in the case study process, namely interpretational, structural, and reflective analysis. A case study can be either a single or multiple and a typical case study would typically generate three types of data: interview transcripts, observer notes, and field documents, Winegardner (1999). For this research the case study method is employed as it enables a comprehensive and in-depth examination of the Greater Manchester TIF scheme and, as pointed out by Burns (2000), in this way the case study is used to gain in-depth understanding replete with meaning for the subject, focusing on the processes rather than outcome and on discovery rather than confirmation. Marshall & Rossman (1989) highlighted the power of case study research in that it can be used to render, depict or characterise, to instruct and chronicle events. Case studies will therefore reveal things that are not obvious on a wider scale. Additionally, they will produce evidence, which, while, not unequivocal, will tend to refute or support a set of hypotheses. Therefore Marshall & Rossman argue that the case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristic of real life events. As indicated above a case study was undertaken of the 2008 Greater Manchester TIF initiative as this was seen as a highly controversial and contested issue both locally and nationally during the period.

The case study method has been criticized as lacking scientific rigour, and, as Yin (1994) suggests, all too often, case study researchers have been sloppy by allowing equivocal evidence and biased views to influence the direction of their findings and conclusions (see Table 3.4). He points out further concerns about case studies such as the fact that they provide little basis for scientific generalizations, or the problem of generalizing from a single case. Yin admits that the answer to the problem is not an easy one, but points out that case studies like experiments are generalisable to theoretical propositions, and not to populations or universes. In this interpretation, the case study, like the experiment, does not represent a "sample," and as such the researcher's goal is to expand and generalise theories as opposed to enumerating frequencies (statistical generalisation). A further complaint is that case studies take up a lot of time and can generate very large and unreadable documentation. Yin (1994) argues that often this complaint relates to incorrectly confusing the case study strategy to a specific method of data collection, such as ethnography or participant observation. But Yin argues that case studies are a form of inquiry that do not depend entirely on such methods, and a researcher could do a valid case study without leaving the library, depending on the topic under investigation. Yin suggests that despite the fact that many of these common concerns regarding case studies can be allayed, a major lesson is that good case studies are difficult to do.

Table 3.3 A Summary of the Key Characteristics of Case Study Process

Phenomenon is examined in a natural setting
Data are collected by multiple means
One or few entities (person, group or organisation) are examined
The complexity of the unit is studied intensively
Case studies are more suitable for exploration, classification and hypothesis development stages of the knowledge building process; the investigator should have receptive attitude towards exploration.
No experimental controls or manipulation
The investigator may not specify the set of independent and dependent Variable in advance
The results derived depend heavily on the integrate powers of the investigator
Changes in the site selection and data collection methods could take place as the investigator develops new hypotheses
Case research is useful in the study of 'why' and 'how' questions because these deal with operational links to be traced over time rather than with frequency or incidence
The focus on contemporary events

Source: Benbasat *et al.* (1987:371)

Table 3.4 Elements of a Comprehensive Case Study

Element	Description
1) The study's question,	Which of the questions 'who', 'what', 'where', 'how' and 'why' are to be answered? The 'how' and 'why' questions are most appropriate for the case study strategy.
2) its propositions, if any,	What are the possible outcomes of the research? Which outcomes does the investigator expect?
3) its unit(s) of analysis,	Which is the object/phenomenon under investigation?
4) the logic linking the data to the propositions, and	Which techniques will be employed to analyze collected evidence and compare it to the study's propositions?
5) criteria for interpreting the findings.	Which measures help considering if the findings support the propositions made?

Source: Yin (1994:20)

The case study can enable the researcher to gain a more holistic view of a specific phenomena or a chain of events. Yin suggests that case studies have a distinctive place in research and as such as there are at least five different applications:

- The first, and most important, is to explain the causal links in real life interventions that are too complex for survey or experimental strategies.
- A second application is to describe an intervention and the real life context in which it occurred,
- A third is where case studies are used to illustrate certain topics within an evaluation, again in a descriptive mode even from a journalistic perspective.
- A fourth application is where a case study is used to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes.
- A fifth is where a case study is used as a "meta-evaluation" or a study of an evaluation study.

3.4 Methods

The range of data collection methods employed in this research include unstructured interviews using topic sheets, where questions were not specified in advance but the interviewer was free to probe around and beyond the responses. The interviewer recorded each interview seeking clarification and elaboration on the answers given where necessary (May, 1997). Documentary evidence from the 2008 Greater Manchester TIF period was used from a wide variety sources such as national and local government policy documents; articles from the press and wider media including posters and billboard images were analyzed. May (1997) argues that, documents as the sedimentations of social practices, have the potential to inform and structure the decisions that people make on a daily and longer-term basis, but they also constitute particular readings of social events. Documents can tell us much about the aspirations and intentions of the period to which they refer and describe place and social relationships at a time when we were not present. The methods of data collection are discussed more comprehensively in the following sections below.

3.4.1 Collecting the Primary Evidence

The primary evidence for this case study came from three main sources (see table 3.5 below). The key focus of this thesis is to understand how and to what extent transport policy makers and other key actors value and use political communications methods. Face to face interviews were conducted with three groups of Policy Practitioners; local Politicians, Senior Local Authority officers/policy Advisors and local Journalists involved in the GM TIF bid in 2008. Based on the information gained from reviewing archived press material, a number of individuals were identified, who were intimately involved in the Manchester TIF debate and therefore stood out as good sources for qualitative data. These were from organizations such as Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) formerly GMPTE, The Chamber of Commerce, and Manchester Evening News (MEN). According to Yin (1994:92), "interviews are an essential source of case study evidence because most case studies are about human affairs." Interpreting how and to what extent the municipality values and practices excellent public relations is a sociological exercise that entails gathering data on the role and function of public relations within the organization. Open-ended unstructured interviews are considered an effective way of eliciting key facts, opinions, and insights from individuals during a case study.

Table 3.5 Respondents Interviewed

Respondent	Role	Organisation	Interview Date
Pilot Interview 1	Transport Policy Advisor	Sheffield City Council	15/07/10
Pilot Interview 2	Senior Corporate Communications Officer	Sheffield City Council	16/12/10
1	Senior Politician – Conservative	Trafford Council	05/07/11
2	Policy Officer –Transport, Environment & Planning	Chamber of Commerce	07/07/11
3	Senior Journalist	Salford Advertiser	05/08/11
4	Senior Politician (Labour) Leader of the GMPTE	GMPTA/GMPTE	24/05/11
5	Senior Journalist	Manchester Evening News	01/08/11
6	Politician (Labour) Leader of the Council	Manchester City Council	01/08/11
7	Politician (Labour MP)	Denton & Reddish	29/09/11
8	Chair of the Yes Campaign	GMPTA	30/06/11
9	Transport Policy Officer	GMPTE	20/05/11
10	Senior Transport Policy Officer	GMPTE	07/11/11

3.4.2 Secondary Research

The secondary data used in this study draws upon papers and studies conducted by others that are relevant to this research. These data sets provided background to the subject being investigated as well as providing a starting point for the formulation of questions for the primary research. Veal (1992) points out that in undertaking research an important aspect is how to use existing information prior to embarking on expensive and time-consuming new information collection exercises. He argues that in searching the literature researchers may come across references to statistical or other data that may not have been fully analysed or exploited by the original collectors of the data, because of their particular interests, or limitations on time and money. Or data may be available which are open to alternative analyses and interpretations. Secondary data can play a variety of roles in a research project, from being the whole basis of the research to being a vital or incidental point of comparison. Secondary data provided evidence through press articles, central and local government policy papers that dated back to the Greater Manchester TIF bid in 2008 and as such provided a rich source of information about the key issues and debates of the period. It also provided the researcher with specific figures on TIF funding and in particular, details with regard to budgets that were allocated to the communications strategy and the spending decisions of both central and local government officials.

3.4.3 Sampling

The main sampling strategy used was based on the combination of two sampling methods, convenience sampling and snowball sampling. Convenience sampling as the name suggests builds a sample on the basis of finding convenient and available individuals (Ruane, 2005). The selected individuals are those who are close at hand, obviously the shortcomings to this approach are that some key individuals may not be close at hand and as Ruane argues the omission of all but the most conveniently accessed elements in a population greatly undermines the representativeness of a convenience sample. This method allowed the use of individual judgment as to the selection of participants, and meant that those who were chosen were felt to be in the best position or have the right experiences to be able to answer the research questions It was also found to be useful when working with small samples or when it is necessary to select participants who are particularly informative. The sampling process was initiated by contacting key individuals from various political organizations within Greater Manchester who had been identified as playing a significant role in the TIF bid in 2008. A snowball sampling strategy was also used which is essentially built around referrals. Each individual interviewed was asked for names of additional people who might be willing to participate in the research project. This process was then repeated until a satisfactory sample size was achieved. Ruane points out that the weakness of this approach is that individual who are “loners,” or not “networked” with others in the research population, are most likely to be excluded from the snowball samples. Secondary data was also used to identify possible interviewers.

3.4.4 Interviews

A total of ten unstructured interviews (see Table 3.5) were conducted with policy advisers, politicians and journalists from Greater Manchester who had been involved with the TIF Bid during the period. A clear research agenda was established based upon background reading of secondary data (archived press releases, articles, policy documents and publicity). This material provided a clear outline of the key issues to be included in the topic sheet and covered during the interview process and a checklist was drawn up to steer the conversation. This helped to ensure that the research objectives were met within each interview and that there was some balance and consistency across them, as well as to ensure that interviewees were given the chance to raise their own issues within the conversation (Crang & Cook, 2007). Anonymity was also discussed and agreed where necessary with the interviewees.

3.4.5 Unstructured Topic Guides & Interviews

A topic guide for each unstructured interview was designed (see Appendix I), as it was seen as the best way to get to grips with the political, social and economic contexts and contents of the lives of the different actors during the period. A semi-structured format was chosen to maintain consistency, facilitate cross-case analysis, permit subsequent comparative analyses, provide latitude for further probing, and thus enter into a dialogue with the interviewee. Major questions were developed accompanied by a sequence of sub-questions in order to facilitate further probing where necessary. The topic guide was then piloted in Sheffield City Council, using two respondents, one from transport policy and the other from the central communication department in order to identify any ambiguities or obvious weaknesses in the design and to help with clarification of the way questions were worded in order to discover and remedy and errors necessary. Ruane (2005) suggests that the researcher pre-tests the questionnaire by administering it to a small group of people who closely resemble the research population. However she points out that those involved in a pre-test are then no longer eligible for inclusion in the final sample. She suggests that an effective pre-test technique is to ask respondents to talk about their reactions to each item on the survey, how they understand the questions and the response options. Ruane argues that this is the most effective way of seeing whether both respondents and the researcher understand each other. This "think aloud" technique provides feedback for assessing the validity and reliability of a question. Pre-testing allows the researcher to evaluate the impact of word selection, question sequencing, and various formatting and layout issues. In the case of this research, for example, pre-testing enabled respondents to suggest that the researcher should be investigating wider issues regarding Greater Manchester's Transport Innovation Fund bid rather than focusing narrowly on the congestion charge debate.

In-depth unstructured interviews with key stakeholders from transport policy makers, local government communications officers and local newspapers (transport correspondents from the local press) were conducted in an attempt to understand the communications strategies used by transport decision makers and communications practitioners in order to contest transport issues and convey their messages to the public and the media. Interviews were conducted and case study notes written around the areas explored in the topic guide. The same topic guide was used to maintain a degree of objectivity and produce a larger range and breadth of perspectives on each of the issues surrounding both the schemes under investigation and political communication and marketing in general. In total 10 individuals were interviewed from a range of organizations including the local press and further interviews were carried out with individuals who were linked to the documentation used in the final analysis. Documentary evidence was derived from a review of the communications strategies, print and electronic communications products, press releases and communications policies and procedures. This was useful in corroborating the information gathered during the interviews.

3.4.6 Interview Preparation

Schoenberger (1991) emphasizes the need for careful preparation when interviewing busy executives with limited time to speak to researchers. She points to corporate interviews, where it is necessary to know about a firm's business strategies, relationships to its markets, production technologies and methods as well as labour relations and the behaviour of its competitors. She argues that in the earlier stages of a research project, it is not unusual to for researchers to have picked up an issue that has gained salience in the financial press or national or local media and which is directly related to their academic interests. She suggests that such issues can be further traced through annual reports, market surveys, various types of corporate literature and articles in the trade press. This approach was used in this research and aspects of the TIF campaign were traced back through archived material such as press articles, market surveys and reports and other literature produced by the Greater Manchester Authorities and corporate organisations such as Peel Holdings. Such background preparation gives the researcher the potential to ask knowledgeable questions and to have an understanding of the technical terms used by the specific organisation.

In this way researchers can reassure their interviewees that they understand the issues and thus encourage more open and detailed answers. It also allows them to invite responses as they would usually be worded in the office, rather than asking questions in such a way that interviewees have to translate their responses to approximate the researcher's language and frame of reference. Furthermore, it allows the interviewer to spot and question any issues that the interviewees may either have glossed over or contradicted themselves over. And to build the kind of detailed problem-solving questions into the interview which executives may be accustomed to dealing with in their daily work and use this form of power to address, at least partially, the usual imbalance which favours an interviewee who either is, or likes to appear, accustomed to being in control and exerting power over others. She also argues that in some other scenarios, (particularly when interviewees may feel inferior when faced with a middle class, university educated, researcher) this background knowledge needs to be used in a much more subtle manner in order to redress power balances which could be slanted in the other direction.

An unstructured interview style was chosen because it is an effective strategy for countering memory failure or respondent resistance. Shoenberger (1991) argues that giving the respondent greater control over the pace and direction of the interview can also allow them to arrive at the topics on their own terms, pace and comfort levels. Following their own pace also helped respondents to recall memories that may otherwise have been difficult to retrieve under a more direct questioning approach. This was an advantage given that the researcher was asking respondents to refer back to events that took place in 2008. Crang & Cook (2007) point out that the interviewer should first ask questions of a non-threatening kind, and to employ what they call 'grand tour' question, which ask the interviewee to outline the general characteristics of the place and social networks they are involved with, and in which the interviewer wishes to focus their study. They suggest that, by asking very simple 'what', 'who', 'where' and 'how' questions about the area of study, the basic grounds for the conversation can be established. They argue that the main aim of the interview in ethnographic research is to allow people to reveal a version of events in their own words, and as such the focus is to get respondents to recall what they know of events and activities. Follow up questions can then be asked in a way which then encourages, as well as critically questions, these recollections, in order to get at the 'whys' and 'wherefores'. Crang & Cook (2007) point out that the aim with most interviewing is to get at the 'long stories' of events, decisions and to bypass the short, snappy conventional, rehearsed versions that may normally be given when interviewees are asked about events.

In other words when interviewees are answering questions, it has to be remembered that the stories they are telling are often not simply made up on the spur of the moment. Many of these stories may have been told and retold in a number of places to a number of different audiences and as such refined over time. This was certainly the case in getting people to recall events and tell stories going back to the time of the Manchester TIF bid, and therefore the questions were designed to encourage further elaboration instead of taking each story at face value. For example, in order to establish how an interviewee had become involved in a particular situation under discussion, the questions were phrased to refer to something the interviewee had previously stated such as, 'What do you mean when refer to…?' 'Why did you take that approach and not the other…?' 'What did you think about the critical coverage of..' 'Do you recall the article about…?' In order to get beyond blanket statements interviewees were asked for examples particularly where such examples directly related to the interviewee. Even when the respondent offered elaborate explanations it was still necessary to check for clarity within their answers, so as part of the conversation the interviewer would try to put what they had just said into his own words and ask if his understanding of their answer was correct. If they said 'yes' then the researcher knew that he could cross the particular issue of his list. Crang & Cook (2007) suggest that interviewing involves moving back and forth constantly between carrying out a conversation and note taking on a list. However, interviews also have to allow for unexpected issues and elaborations to come into the conversations. This requires great concentration on the part of the interviewer and there were moments when interviewees within the Manchester case study, tended to stray from the original question and the researcher found some difficulty in trying to pull them back to the issue. However, Crang & Cook (2007) point out that, when interviewees go off at an apparent tangent, it might not always be a good idea to attempt to stop them, as it is in these moments that unexpected perspectives and insights can become part of the conversation. Equally pauses, if allowed to continue for a short while, provide thinking time when respondents are reflecting on what they have just been asked, perhaps after a first attempt to answer it.

Ruane (2005) suggests that the interview refers to a personal exchange of information between an interviewer and an interviewee. Good interviews strive to make the exchange a comfortable, conversational one. She points out that as in everyday conversations, participants should experience the interview as a pleasant social encounter, but she stresses that to a large extent this depends on the researcher's ability to establish "social harmony" or a good rapport with the respondent. The interviewer needs to be an "active listener". Ruane argues that the idea may appear to be an oxymoron as listening seems to suggest a silent, passive role for the researcher. However, good listening requires the researcher to actively engage with what the respondent is saying, providing a verbal mirror, para-phrasing in a clear, concise and non-evaluative way exactly what the interviewee has communicated. The verbal mirror provides a respondent with an opening to say more and continue the dialogue delving deeper into the topic. She suggests that the interviewer must have the ability to put respondents at ease, express interest in and be able to listen actively to respondents and assure them that they will be supported throughout the entire process. For this to happen then the interviewer must have sharp social skills and this suggests that not all social researchers are good at the interview process. However, whilst the interview strives to achieve a conversational exchange of information, Ruane cautions against equating interviews with everyday conversations, as ordinary conversations can be a series of meandering "talking points" that are meant to entertain more than inform. The interview is a purposeful conversation wherein the interviewer has a set research agenda with key points or questions that must be addressed. In order to accomplish this research goal, interviewers employ either an interview guide or interview schedule. For this research guides were used, as relatively unstructured tools that listed the general topics or issues to be covered during the interview. Ruane (2005) argues that guides can give respondents considerable latitude in determining the actual content. She suggests that whilst the unstructured guide may seem like an easy tool to develop, it requires careful thought and work. In the first instance a researcher carries out what Ruane (2005) calls the puzzlement phase. To design the interview guide for the research, as many things as could be regarded as puzzling were articulated. For example: "the function of the media in local political campaigns" "How local politicians view the press," "the function of the press in local transport policy making". The issues were also discussed with colleagues and others with knowledge of some of the topics, as well as looking at relevant articles or literature sources on the subject. This process took some time but led to a fairly comprehensive list of ideas and questions.

3.5 Data Triangulation

Sands & Strier (2006) point out that the term triangulation has been used by surveyors, radio broadcasters, military strategists, and navigators to describe a trigonometric operation through which one can determine an object's location or position by computing its bearings from two or three known points. They argue that this term as been adopted by qualitative researchers metaphorically to describe the use of multiple strategies in order to study the same phenomenon, the idea being that looking at something from a variety of different points provides a more accurate view of it, or that combining research approaches produces a 'many sided kaleidoscope and a picture of the subject being studied. Denzin (1989) describes four kinds of triangulation – methodological triangulation, which encompasses the use of a variety of qualitative methods to collect data such as in-depth interviews, participant observation and focus groups, but can also contain a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Data triangulation can use different data sources, within the above or other methods. For example, triangulation of transcriptions of different interviewees about the same topics, as in this study, or field-notes on observations of the same site during different time periods or from different locations, or a newspaper report and participant observation notes on the same event. Investigator triangulation involves two or more researchers observing and/or analyse the same phenomenon. Finally theoretical triangulation refers to the use of different theoretical perspectives. Denzin (1989) argues that in qualitative research, triangulation provides a means of using the strengths of one method to offset the weaknesses of another. Yin (2003:92) validates this but makes the argument that using multiple sources of evidence in case studies allows the researcher to address a wider range of historical, attitudinal and behavioural issues. However, he also makes the point that the key advantage to using multiple sources of evidence is the development of what he terms "converging lines of enquiry," or the process of triangulation as previously discussed above. With triangulation, the potential problems of 'construct validity' (the establishment of correct operational measures for the concepts being studied) can be addressed, because the multiple sources of evidence essentially provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon (Yin, 2003:33). Nevertheless, Yin (2003) points to the fact that the use of multiple sources of evidence can impose a burden on researchers. Firstly, collection of data from multiple sources can be expensive compared to collection from a single source. Secondly, a researcher needs to know how to carry out a wide variety of data collection methods. Yin suggests that the data collection process for case studies can be complex. The researcher must therefore be methodologically versatile and must clearly follow certain formal procedures if quality is to be ensured.

Yin (2003) argues that the way that a researcher collects and documents data collected is also of some importance although he suggests that this has been made much easier since the arrival of computer files. Yin argues that case study strategy has had much to learn from methods used in other strategies where documentation mostly consists of two separate collections; (a) the data or evidentiary base, (b) the report of the investigator, whether article, report, or book form. For this study a separate data base was used to collect archive data, such as web based media articles, press releases and bulletins as well as relevant policy documents which related to the Manchester Innovation Fund and congestion charge debate. Unstructured interviews were also stored as anonymised electronic voice files along with the transcripts. Case study notes resulting from the interviews were also collected although these were mainly handwritten. Yin (1994) suggests that regardless of their form or content, case study notes should be stored in a manner that allows other investigators as well as the original researcher to be able to retrieve them at a later date. However, Veal (1997) suggests that when data are confidential, measures must be taken to protect that confidentiality through ensuring the security of raw data, such as interview tapes, transcripts or questionnaires.

3.6 The Chain of Evidence

Yin (1994) points out the importance of maintaining a chain of evidence in order to increase validity of the case study information. This is to allow an external observer to follow the derivation of any evidence from the initial research questions to the final conclusions of the case study. He suggests that the external observer should be able to trace the steps in both directions: from conclusions back to the earlier questions, and from questions to conclusions. He suggests that this could be compared to evidence that is being collected for court. He suggested that on achieving these objectives then the methodological problem of addressing construct validity should have been achieved ensuring the overall quality of the case study.

3.7 Data Analysis

Yin (1994) argues that one of the least developed areas and often the most difficult in the case study process is the analysis of case study data, suggesting that researchers often start case studies giving little thought to how evidence collected is to be analysed. Darke *et al.* (1998) state that, having collected a great amount and variety of data, researchers sometimes get stuck not knowing how to proceed with the analysis because adequate strategies and techniques are missing. As a result, investigations often become stalled at the analytic stage.

Yin (1994:103) noted that there are few determined formulas to guide the inexperienced researcher, and thus much depends on the researchers' personal style. Therefore he suggests that a possible approach would be to combine various analytical methods such as:

- *Providing a matrix of categories and placing the evidence within these categories*
- *Creating data displays, such as flowcharts in order to examine the data*
- *Putting information in chronological order or using some other temporal scheme*
- *Tabulating the frequency of different events*
- *Examining the complexity of the tabulations and their relationships by calculating second order numbers as means and variances*

However, Yin (1994) argues that, whilst these methods are useful, a more important factor is to develop a general analytical approach in the first instance, the idea being to treat the evidence fairly with the goal of producing compelling analytic conclusions ruling out alternative interpretations. He maps out two general approaches for conducting case study analysis. The first one relies on following a theoretical proposition that led to the case study. Yin argues that the original objectives and design of the case study were presumably based on propositions, which in turn reflected a set of research questions, reviews of the literature, and subsequently new in-sights. These propositions he suggests would therefore shape the data collection methods and thus give rise to priorities to the relevant analytical strategies. Another general analytical strategy is developing a descriptive framework in which to organize the case study. The descriptive framework may not only organize the case, but also help to identify an overall pattern of complexity and mark out the causal links to be analyzed. The structure of the case study is then an implicit clue to the analytic approach. Applying the pattern-matching technique enabled the researcher to show links between the data collected and the principles of political communication strategies. Pattern-matching strengthens a case study's internal viability when the results coincide with the expected patterns (Yin, 2003). The dependent variable being investigated in this case study is the degree to which political communications are valued and the independent variable is the extent to which the principles for political communications methods were applied during the Transport Innovation Fund Campaign in Greater Manchester. Data gathered from the review documentation and archival material was used to corroborate the interview evidence.

3.8 Checklist &Topic Guide Questions

The questions were designed to be mainly open-ended questions although there were a few basic closed questions at the start mainly designed to establish the current status of individuals and how this differed to their previous roles at the time of the Manchester TIF debate in 2008. Ruane (2005) argues that the clearest advantage of open-ended questions is that they don't put words in respondents' mouths. Open-ended questions also allow researchers to find out something unanticipated. The freedom offered with open ended questions means that respondents may report something the interviewer would never have thought of including in a closed ended set of responses. Sequencing of questions was another issue that had to be considered carefully as it was soon apparent that earlier questions could influence the respondent's answers to later questions.

3.9 Recording data

The interviews were recorded on a digital recorder and voice files were then labelled and downloaded straight to computer, but notes were taken as back up. A blank template containing the questions was made so that note taking would be made easier during the interview. This made it a lot easier to refer back to a specific question when analysing the data. Once data was presented, the results were then used to produce a summary of findings for each question. This was then used as a basis for discussion by relating back to the relevant sections of the literature.

3.10 Initiating Access

Gaining access to respondents in Greater Manchester was a slow process because some of them were also Parliamentary Members and obviously shared their time between Westminster and their constituencies. Transport for Greater Manchester (formerly Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority) was also undertaking a restructure due to local government cuts and this was clearly affecting staff morale which in itself created difficulties in gaining access to some areas as staff were either waiting to be made redundant or had recently left. Many who had previously been involved in the TIF debate had moved to take up new roles within the restructured organisation.

Rossman & Rallis (1998) point out that negotiating access is a process that seldom happens quickly and smoothly. They suggest that the process is one of allocating time for negotiating the terms of the introduction or invitation and for securing written permission. Qualitative researchers learn to anticipate the time involved in gaining access. They suggest that the process of negotiating access is often as insightful regarding the people or settings as subsequent observations and interviews themselves. Crang & Cook (2007) point out the importance of thinking about issues of access to interviewees early on in the research process. They argue that the stereotype of research is that it had to be 'all new' or an area that has not been done before. The reality for many researchers, they suggest, is that projects can often develop out pre-existing memberships of social groups and access to particular spaces.

Rossman & Rallis (1998) point out that phenomenological studies are open ended, searching for themes of meaning in participants' lives. In this study the researcher developed broad themes that were then broken down into sub-themes in order to negotiate through the meanings behind the thoughts and comments of the respondents.

The researcher attempted to approach the text with an open mind, attempting to decipher the meanings and structures hidden within the responses. The initial step in reducing the text was to read the transcripts and the related observation and field notes, marking the pages that stood out as most interesting. Ross & Rallis (1998) argue as a researchers understanding of the phenomena grows they develop an intuitive sense of what is 'interesting'. They point out that a key part of the process is to examine those passages to detect and identify what prompted this initial interest. The researcher could then check with the participant if they agree with the emerging analytical theme, this process was carried out with participants in the TIF study, and led to the incremental adjustments to the topic sheet from time to time. Ross and Rallis argue that through this process, each transcript becomes unique in that the meaning of the experience of interest will emerge from the transcript. So, for example, one respondent (the Chair of GMPTE during the TIF campaign) was able to relate how his experience differed from that of other politicians due to the fact that he lost his seat over the congestion charge issue. The identified important passages of interest were then assigned codes to represent the themes. These words were then used to organise the data, from which the researcher then generated a profile and narrative that depicted the meaning of the phenomena for the respective respondents

3.11 Ethical Issues

Rossman & Rallis (1998) point out that, professional groups and social science disciplines have established formal codes of ethics to guide their fields of research activity. These codes serve as standards for the ethical practice of research and are based on moral principles such as utilitarianism, theories of individual rights and theories of justice. Ethical codes are intended to serve as guidelines for research practitioners ensuring that participants in research projects are protected from harm and are not deceived. They further argue that each researcher must develop their own standards for ethical practice as they encounter novel situations that demand complex moral reasoning.

Ethical issues in relation to interviews relate to the privacy, confidentiality and secrecy of respondents and data. Ruane (2005) argues that the principle of informed consent is related to an individual's right to determine whether or not they want to be part of a research project. Added to this, informed consent refers to the research participants right to be comprehensively informed about the research project so that they can make the decision as to whether they would like to participate. In this respect, it can be seen that at the centre of the informed consent principle is freedom of choice and self-determination. Ruane points out that no one should ever be tricked or forced into taking part in a research project. He argues that the use of informed consent forms is a way of reminding respondents that they have a right to withdraw consent at any point in a study. For this study an information sheet was designed which provided all participants with basic information about the nature of the research, the aims and objectives, and requested permission from the participants to use the data collected for the research, and also whether they wished to remain anonymous. None of the participants objected to their identities being revealed, however the researcher has only published the roles of the participants at the time of the TIF initiative and not named them. All participants were notified of these ethical issues prior to the interviews taking place and were asked to sign a consent form agreeing these terms (see Appendix I).

3.12 Researcher Positionality

The researcher had links to some of the key actors, which had been developed over a long period of time and over many years, mainly from previous roles working within local government. He also has first and second hand knowledge and experience of the issues being covered both out there in the 'real world' and in the university as an academic (e.g. congestion charging, the Transport Innovation Fund and political communication). As such this provided the impetus for this particular study linking political communications with transport policy-making processes.

Crang & Cook (2007) suggest that the processes through which specific people and/or positions are found has a bearing on the quality of the data that will eventually be collected, due to the fact that they are likely to involve 'gatekeepers' who will be assessing aspects of the researchers identity. They argue that much can depend on how the researcher can be positioned by these early contacts, especially if they are government officials who will assess the proposals of the study and have the power to grant or deny access to the study area. They argue that it is therefore necessary for researchers to consider how they represent both themselves and their research to these and every other gatekeeper. Although initially I portrayed myself as a PhD student, My supervisors later advised that identifying myself as a Senior Lecturer from Sheffield Hallam University might prove more useful in gaining access to senior politicians. In gaining access to policymaking communities with the study area of Greater Manchester, it wasn't just who was contacted that was of importance but also how the details of the research project were explained. The various aspects of the research project and how it was presented played a key role in gaining access to the right people. The TIF debate was highly controversial and as such was still a sensitive subject to officers and politicians even four years after it had taken place.

3.13 Reflections on Methodology & Methods

This final section provides some reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of key aspects of the overall methodological approach highlighted within this chapter. A social constructivist view of policy problems (see Section 3.2) has been taken with respect to this research. This view suggests that our understanding of real situations is always mediated by ideas, which are in turn changed and fought over in politics. In this case, the idea that to tackle a perceived problem such as traffic congestion, an unpopular fiscal policy such as 'congestion charging' could be packaged alongside more moderate and popular transport schemes (the promise of funding to improve public transport) in order for it to gain public acceptance. The social constructivist approach was useful in trying to understand how transport policy practitioners and other actors within the Greater Manchester case study, used political communication and marketing techniques to construct and use narrative story lines and symbolic devices to manipulate so-called issue characteristics, whilst at the same time giving the impression that they were simply describing facts (Stone, 1989). The aim of the research is to demonstrate, with a variety of examples and storylines taken from the period, that there was in fact a systematic process with fairly clear rules by which the key actors involved in the TIF initiative struggled to control interpretations and images of difficulties. However, Louw (2010:7) points out that, "…a particular problem inherent in constructivist thinking is that it can lapse into pure relativism, and as such there is a need to correct for this by ensuring that each paradigm develops a coherent set of criteria in terms of which it can 'justify' the world view it constructs". Each paradigm needs to be able to justify its approach. Louw argues that this necessitates developing a self-reflexivity, an internal coherence, as well as a consensus about the linguistic rules that apply within that paradigm. He suggests that this provides some basis for selecting between different world views as constructions, i.e. not all constructions are equally good, as some have more coherence and explanatory value than others.

A case study approach is the preferred research method when the investigator has little control over the events and when focusing on a contemporary phenomenon within a real life context (Yin, 1994). This is precisely what this research has undertaken in exploring the impact of political communications and marketing on transport policy decision-making. The case study approach was chosen because it provided a way of asking 'how' and 'why' questions about a specific fiscal policy approach such as the 'congestion charge'. For example 'how' congestion charging came to be the most dominant issue on Greater Manchester's local political agenda 'why' politicians took the political risk in going ahead with the TIF proposal in the face of increasingly negative public opinion. Yin (1994) argues that 'how' and 'why' questions are explanatory and likely to lead to the use of case studies, histories, and experiments as the preferred research strategies. This is because such questions deal with operational links needing to be traced over time, as opposed to mere frequencies and incidence. Therefore, for the case study a key issue was to know how protagonists of the Greater Manchester TIF bid failed to gauge the mood of the public during the 2008 referendum or why the anti-congestion charge lobby appeared to successfully thwart the progress of the TIF initiative. However, Yin (1994) found examples of poor research results with case studies and that they can take a long time to complete and can result in massive, unreadable case study reports. In order to avoid this the researcher began to compose the report during the data collection and analysis process rather than leaving the task until the very end and this allowed more time to think about the design and content of the case (Yin, 1994).

The study uses data triangulation of three groups of interviewees, journalists, politicians and senior council officers about the TIF bid and observations of the congestion charge debate. Secondly, archived policy papers, statistical data and other documents. And thirdly, analysis of actual media coverage in the form of press and media articles, press releases, billboard images as well as online news coverage of the period. Triangulation was specifically chosen as one way in which the researcher could strengthen the research for the thesis. As argued above (Section 3.5) triangulation, provides a way of combining a variety of data sources in the study of the phenomena of political communications and marketing strategies with transport policy making. Used within a case study framework, multiple sources of evidence drawn from primary and secondary sources (archival and media) the investigator was able to address a broad range of historical, attitudinal and behavioural issues within the Greater Manchester (GM) TIF case study. The clearest advantage being that using multiple sources of evidence helped to develop converging lines of inquiry. This also helped to ensure that the findings and conclusions drawn from the TIF case study are likely to be more accurate as they are drawn from differing sources of information, following a corroboratory mode (Yin, 1994).

CHAPTER IV

The Publicity & Marketing of the Transport Innovation Fund in the Greater Manchester Region

4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a background to the case study and explains why Greater Manchester was chosen. It first describes the Greater Manchester City Region and it's contribution to the region in Gross Value Added (GVA). It then discusses the Greater Manchester Integrated Strategy (GMIT) and explains how the various agencies including the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authorities (GMPTA) and the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE) became involved in the bid for Transport Innovation Funding (TIF).

4.1 Background to the Case Study – Greater Manchester TIF Bid

This study examines how key actors involved in major transport scheme viewed the importance of political communications methods when communicating policy intentions to the public. Various case studies were initially considered including congestion charging proposals in Edinburgh and Greater Manchester, and the successfully implemented scheme in London. It was possible to gain access to archive material and to gain access to key politicians, policy makers and journalists and opposition campaigners involved in the TIF initiative, even though a few had since moved into other roles.

4.2 Greater Manchester City Region

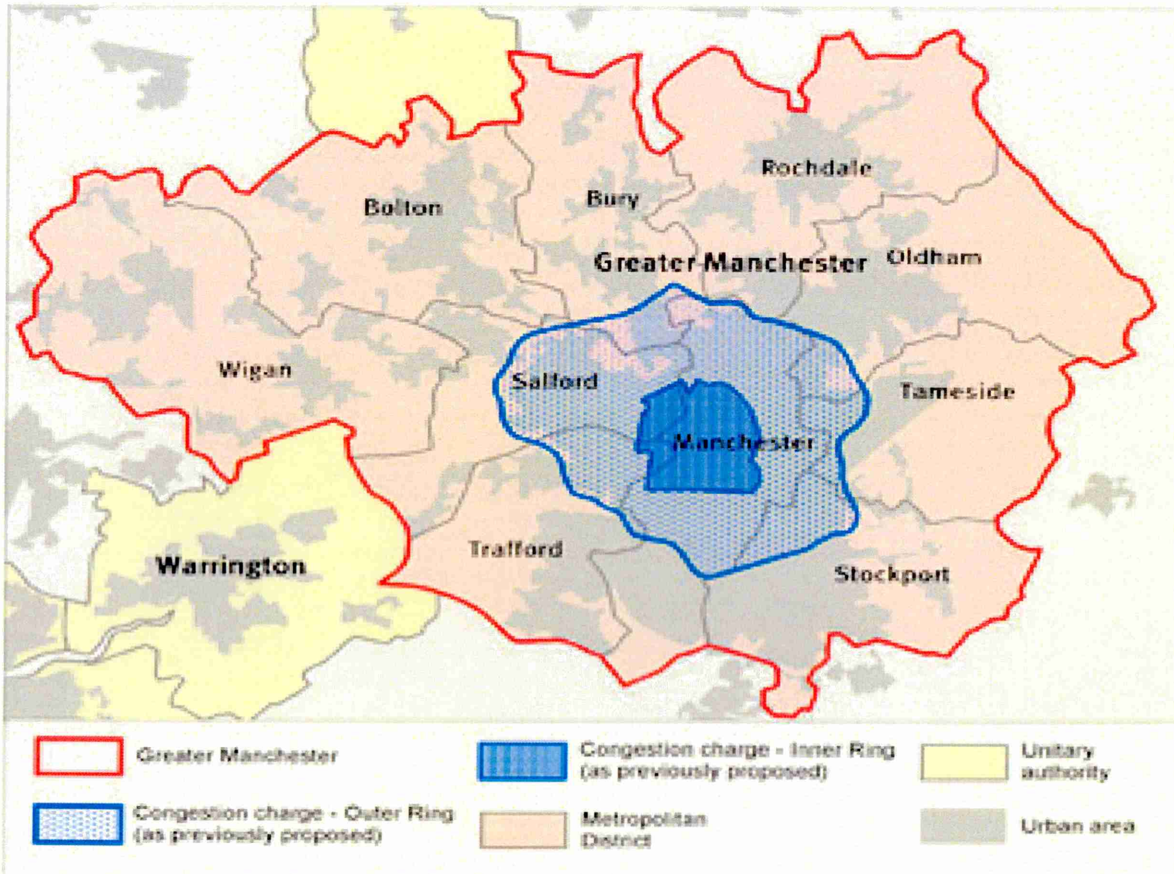
Manchester City Region has a population of over three million people and covers the wider travel to work area of Greater Manchester (GM) see Figure 4.1. The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) is a partnership of the ten local authorities within Greater Manchester and provides a way for all ten Authorities to speak with one voice, particularly on issues such as the Region's transport needs. According to a report by the AGMA (2007), the City Region generated £47 billion of GVA in 2002, representing 50% of the regional total. Outside of London and the South East the City Region is the largest single contributor in the UK equalling the combined outputs of Leeds, Liverpool and Sheffield. Manchester was also one of only two cities outside London and the South East to have achieved an economic growth rate of more that 10% above the English average. This underlined the importance of the Region to the fortunes of the North of England's economy (AGMA, 2007). The Authorities therefore saw the importance of an efficient and effective transport network as critical if the City region was to achieve its economic vision. This vision included the delivery of 210,000 new jobs by 2021, tackling concentrations of deprivation, workless-ness, and poor-health, low educational attainment. Improving transport networks across the City Region would clearly be key in improving access to employment and addressing issues of social exclusion, through connecting communities to services and jobs (AGMA, 2007).

The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities, published their Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Strategy (GMITS) in 2003 which unveiled a long term fifteen to twenty year view of the transport challenges the City Region faced in trying to achieve its sustainable and inclusive growth agenda as highlighted in the City Regional Development Plan. The GMITS was essentially a plan to develop an integrated policy approach, integrating land use planning and economic development strategies, which it was argued would provide the best means of using transport infrastructure to stimulate economic growth whilst addressing social exclusion and tackling environmental problems. A number of 'Corridor Partnerships' were developed bringing together the local authorities, Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority (GMPTA), Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE - now known as Transport for Greater Manchester -TfGM), as well as regeneration agencies and other major public and private sector stakeholders within the region.

These partnerships were responsible for developing a series of integrated corridor plans which linked land use planning, economic development and transport objectives and would provide the foundations for TIF investment (Manchester City Council, 2007).

This underlined the view by a number of policy makers within the Greater Manchester that perhaps the time had come for a harder edged demand management approach to tackling congestion within the area (AGMA, 2007:4).

Figure 4.1 Greater Manchester City Region



Source: AGMA, 2007

4.3 Background to the Transport Innovation Fund

In 2004 the Transport White Paper announced the introduction of the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF), designed to target resources towards achieving two important government goals: tackling congestion and improving productivity (DfT, 2004a). The Department for Transport (DfT) saw this as a way of incentivising local and regional transport bodies to “develop and deploy coherent, innovative, local and regional transport strategies" which would include road pricing, modal shift approaches and improved public transport measures (DfT, 2004:18).

The Labour Government published a feasibility study in July 2004 that examined the prospect of a future national road-pricing scheme. The study identified targeted local congestion charging schemes as the first important steps towards making future decisions regarding a national road pricing policy. This led to the announcement in the middle of 2005 that a limited number of local authorities would be offered financial assistance to be used for 'pump priming' for the development of schemes, in advance of decisions on more substantive TIF funding (DfT, 2005). The process for allocation of pump priming funding was a separate process to that of the allocation of substantive TIF funding. The government was not, at the stage, looking for firm commitments from local authorities to implement particular schemes. In its consideration of the authorities that would be allocated funding, the DfT issued criteria, which set out what proposals should demonstrate. For example: the potential to tackle congestion as well as increase patronage on public transport, and eventually become self-financing were some of the key areas.

In July 2005 the then Secretary of State for Transport, Alastair Darling announced details of the fund:

> *" Today, I am publishing further information on how we expect to deploy the transport innovation fund, which will come on stream from 2008–09 and is set to increase over time, reaching some £2.5 billion by 2014–15. We are also today asking local authorities to bid for development funding, which will be made available over the next three years to support planning for local demand management schemes in which pricing is a major element" (HC Deb, 2005).*

The Secretary of the State announced that they had set aside £18 million between 2005–06 and 2007–08 to support preliminary scheme development by local transport authorities. These schemes would ultimately be funded from the transport innovation fund. Within the fund, therefore, they were prepared to make that up to £200 million a year available to support local pilots. The Government promised that should more good schemes emerge, then further funding would be made available (HC Deb, 2005).

The Department for Transport was to publish further guidance in May 2006 that would provide more detailed clarification of the process with regard to how the TIF resource was to be managed. This set out criteria by which the Department would assess bids for the second round of pump priming (HC Deb, 2006). In 2006 local authorities in England were invited to bid for funds from the newly created TIF to support innovative solutions for improving public transport and tackling congestion problems (AGMA Report, 2007). The successful bids, sharing £7.5 million, were announced by the then Secretary of State, Douglas Alexander, in November 2006. In November 2006 the government published further guidance for those authorities wishing to secure full Congestion TIF Partnership (DfT, 2006).

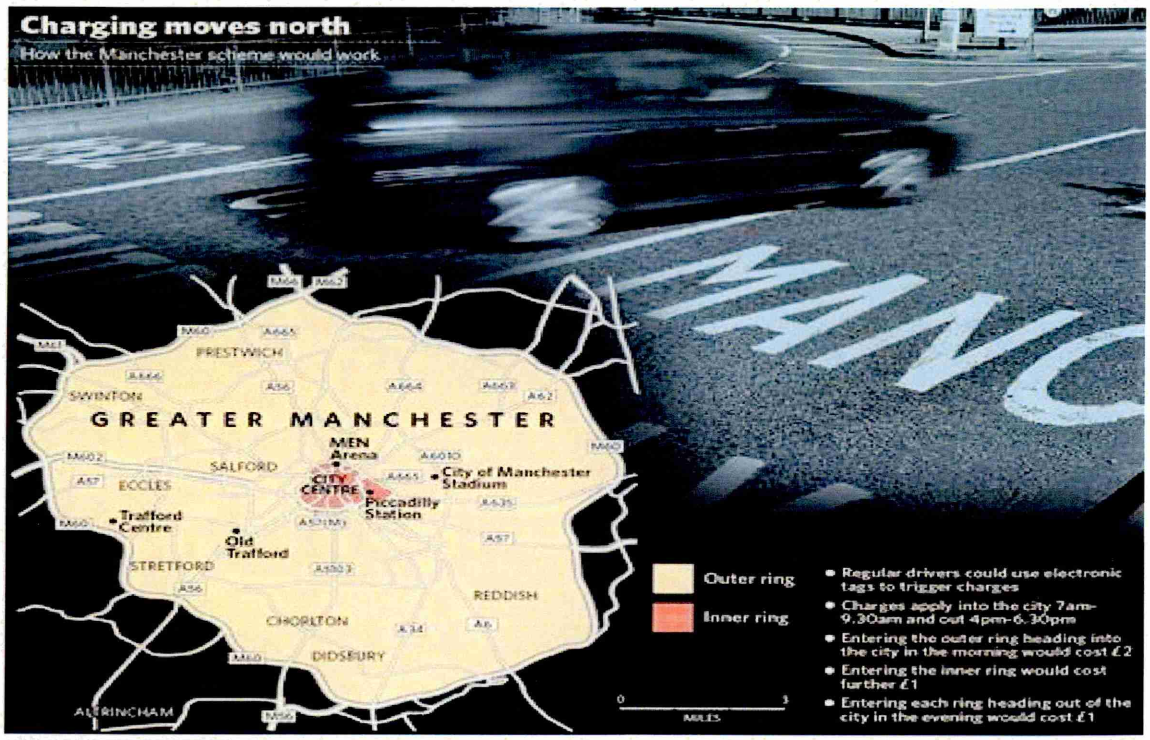
In December 2007 the Department published a further paper, which outlined additional funds available for 2007/08 (DfT, 2007). In January 2008 the then Transport Minister Rosie Winterton, announced that the Department had allotted £1million to Cambridgeshire; up to £1.5 million to Greater Manchester; and up to £675,000 to the West of England Partnership (which covered Bristol City Council, Bath and North East Somerset Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council (HC Deb, 2008). This was an optional stage of the overall TIF process and was designed to facilitate a tighter partnership arrangement between the Department and local authorities in order to develop demand management proposals with a view to applying for Congestion TIF.

The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) and the Greater Manchester Passenge Transport Authority (GMPTA) submitted a joint bid for TIF funding in July 2007, and were subsequently granted program entry status by the DfT in 2008. This effectively gave the joint authorities the green light to begin development of detailed proposals with the intention of obtaining conditional approval, from the DfT by March of

2009 (AGMA, 2007). Local Authorities were encouraged to submit clearly developed proposals that merged demand management measures (congestion charging - for example), with modal shift interventions, such as initiative to improve public transport.

In June 2008 the Secretary of State announced that Greater Manchester's TIF bid had been granted 'programme entry' (which essentially meant they had gained government support and as such the DfT would work with applicant authorities in order to deliver the proposals) and would be funded by almost £2.8 billion in order to support public transport improvements but more critically provide the means to set up a congestion charging scheme in central Manchester (DfT, 2008). Figure 4.2 shows the boundaries of the proposed charging zone.

Figure 4.2 Charging Moves North



Source: The Independent (Riley, 2008)

"Showing the plan for two rings to be established around the city. At a cost of £2 to cross the outer motorway ring-road, the M60, and then £1 to cross the inner ring road, between 7am and 9.30am. The evenings would have cost £1 each to cross the two roads between 4pm and 6.30pm. Charges were to be levied by electronic scanning of tags attached to windscreens"

Greater Manchester's TIF bid proposal amounted to £2.8 billion package of transport improvements. This would have been funded by £1.5 billion of TIF grant funding, £1.2 billion borrowing which would be paid back over thirty years from congestion charge revenues, and £0.1 billion of third party contributions. This funding would have been in addition to £0.6 billion for the Metrolink Phase 3A extension and £0.2 billion of DfT funding for additional railway rolling stock (Cheshire East Council, 2008b).

4.4 General Research Themes - The Controversial Nature of TIF Policy

Since its inception TIF policy has not only been controversial but has drawn substantial criticisms from a wide range of areas, including prominent Conservatives such as Stephen Hammond who during House of Common Debates on what was to become the *Local Transport Act 2008*, indicated that he did not approve of the link between Congestion TIF funds and road charging schemes. In a speech in the House of Commons in March 2007 Hammond referred to the lack of accountability to TIF funding (HC Deb, 2007). Equally the Transport Committee in an August 2007 report on the TIF programme argued that it welcomed the extra funding available to local authorities but was critical of what they saw as too much of a strong link to road charging schemes:

> *"Transport Innovation Fund money is entirely dependent on those authorities being prepared to introduce charging schemes. Since the fund now represents the only significant additional money that is available outside the regional allocation process, the pressure on local government to bring forward proposals for charging schemes is now very powerful. In the face of severe funding pressure we do not accept that Congestion TIF guidance should, in effect, restrict the availability of funds for much needed improvements in transport infrastructure to only those authorities that will consider local road pricing schemes. This risks blackmailing local authorities to conduct road-pricing trials on behalf of Government in advance of a possible national scheme" (Transport Committee, 2006-2007:162-168)*

In July 2009, the Committee published a report on taxes and charges, which concluded that the whole approach to TIF needed to be revisited:

"It seems unlikely that more than a handful of local authorities will pursue congestion charge proposals in the near future. The Government therefore needs to reconsider its approach to the Transport Innovation Fund. Monies that were earmarked by HM Treasury for transport should not be lost to transport for want of a charging element in otherwise sound proposals" (Transport Committee, 2008-2009, para 121).

There was also clear opposition to the way TIF was administered from other organisations such as the Centre for Cities think tank who published a report urging the government to:

... abandon its local road pricing push for now, if no cities opt for congestion charging this year. Instead, the £1bn remaining funding should be safeguarded for other, more badly needed public transport projects - like new commuter rail links, better city buses and tram extensions (...) By the end of 2009, transport ministers should liberate the £1bn funding earmarked for congestion charging and seek cross party consensus to safeguard the money for city transport improvements (Centre for Cities, 2009:1)

To quote Dermot Finch, Director of the Centre for Cities:

> *"Cities like Manchester and Edinburgh have found congestion charging a tough sell. Other cities considering a charge - like Cambridge, Reading and Bristol - are undecided. If there are no takers by the end of the year, the Government should call it a day on its current road user charging push.*
>
> *"A tough post-recession fiscal climate means central government transport grants are likely to dwindle post 2011. The next Government should use the congestion charging pot to start up a new fund for transport projects, together with councils and the private sector. This fund would keep UK cities' moving and help shift the national economy towards recovery", Centre for Cities (2009:2).*

4.4.1 TIF Campaign Communications Strategy

The AGMA argued that due to the scale of change that was envisaged to achieve social environmental and economic outcomes, the proposals outlined in TIF had to be acceptable to both the business community and wider public. They therefore intended to tackle this in through a "major awareness and acceptability exercise" (GMPTA, 2008:18).

A substantial public consultation exercise was agreed and proposals drawn up by the GMPTA and the AGMA to publicise the TIF package in June 2008. The GMPTA approved the necessary expenditure to be allocated to the consultation programme on the recommendation of AGMA, as well as agreeing arrangements for delegation of its implementation to transport policy officers in the GMPTE. In August 2008, the AGMA Executive agreed the key principles and operational arrangements of the TIF referendum. The legal context to the referendum was a local poll called under Section 116 of the Local Government Act 2003, Section 170 of the Transport Act 2000, and Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to ascertain the views of the public on the TIF proposals.

This was not a statutory referendum, which the Local Authorities were obliged to carry out, and there was, therefore, no special legal requirements placed on the need for publicity prior to the referendum. Nevertheless, there were general rules which direct that Local Authorities must not publish material which in whole or part appears to affect public support for a political party (Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986); and must have regard to the provisions of the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity (Section 4 of the Local Government Act 1986).

The AGMA and GMPTA understood this to mean that any additional information must be factual and balanced with regard to the proposals to address levels of awareness about TIF. Additional publicity should be designed in such a way as to communicate the final proposals (including any changes made by the AGMA Executive and GMPTA to the proposals in the light of the outcome of public consultation) in a balanced and factual manner. Most critically, publicity must be designed to inform, rather than to persuade the public to hold a particular view on a policy question. The publicity must avoid oversimplification of facts, issues or arguments (particular caution must be taken in this respect in the use of advertisements) (GMPTA, 2008). The Government Code of Practice on Consultation also required a minimum of 12 weeks for consultation, and stipulated that, should consultation take place throughout the summer, members of the public should not miss out on the opportunity to respond due to summer holidays etc, therefore, it is considered good practice to extend this minimum time. The result was that the TIF public consultation exercise started on the 7th July and ran for 14 weeks to the 10th October.

4.4.2 The Communications Budget and Methods used During the Campaign

The AGMA and GMPTA set out their initial strategy and plan for public consultation on the TIF package in a report by the AGMA Chief Executives Group in June 2008. The Greater Manchester Authorities used a wide variety of communications methods in the public consultation exercise that had a number of elements. These were quite comprehensive and ambitious and included:

- *Providing information and opportunities for people to respond via a consultation brochure, and information pack and a website, as well proving a telephone helpline;*
- *Providing information and receiving direct responses from the public, businesses and other stakeholders via exhibitions;*
- *Opinion research to inform the decision making process on TIF via polling and deliberative events;*
- *Communications and publicity activity to promote awareness of the information available as well as promoting participation in consultation.*

The approximate budget required in order to deliver such as comprehensive publicity campaign was estimated at approximately £3,000,000 as indicated in Table 4.1. The most expensive element within the budget was advertising followed by the engagement of the specialist independent market research agency Ipsos MORI, to carry out opinion research for the public consultation. It should be emphasised that the AGMA referred to this as a 'public consultation budget' (AGMA 2008:9) as opposed to a 'core communications plan (see Fig 4.4) This was apparently done on the advice of independent experts who argued that opinion research, conducted by a specialist independent agency provides the most reliable gauge of business and public opinion (GMPTA, 2008:8).

Table 4.1 Public Consultation Budget

Activity	Cost
Public relations and media support	£55,000
Advertising	£810,000
Website	£78,000
Design work for publications etc.	£70,000
Opinion Research	£675,000
Exhibitions	£186,000
Consultation Brochure printing & distribution	£627,000
Stakeholder Engagement	£50,000
Additional Fixed term staffing	£400,000
Total	£2,951,000

Source: GMPTA (2008:9)

4.4.3 Analysis of the strategies employed by the pro and anti-congestion charge campaigns

At the time of drawing up their proposals the AGMA and GMPTA pointed out that over 78,000 had already participated in the consultation exercise, but they expected the figure to reach 100,000 by the conclusion of the programme. However, officers argued that whilst the scale of participation was high and related to the volume of information produced and the level of engagement with stakeholders that had been achieved, their measures showed that key outcomes on the level of understanding of the proposals details amongst participants needed to be addressed (AGMA, 2008).

This was also highlighted by a MORI survey that demonstrated that whilst 95% of the 5,000 respondents had been aware of the Congestion Charge; 80% were aware of the public transport package; 45% were aware of the directional charging regime; but only 35% were aware that no charge was proposed for driving on the M60; and, most crucially for policy makers, only 45% had been aware that 80% of the total transport investment would precede the introduction of the Congestion Charge (AGMA, 2008).

The MORI survey also highlighted clear differences in the terms of level of awareness amongst different social groups. What officers drew from this was that the proposals required additional explanation due to their complexity and as such consideration had to be given to additional public awareness measures.

Transport officers from the GMPTE worked jointly with Greater Manchester's retained the communications agency to develop an additional public awareness programme. The core components of this additional publicity drive are outlined in Figure 4.4 and at the time estimated at a total maximum cost of £950,000, which was additional to the £3,000,000 previously discussed. Officers had previously discussed the possibility of this additional communications plan with the DfT arguing that at the time the initial budget for the first public awareness and public consultation communications strategy had been implemented a referendum had not been anticipated. The DfT recognized that the late decision taken by the Greater Manchester Authorities to hold a referendum constituted special circumstances in this case, and agreed to the additional communications plan and budget. The funding agreement with the DfT allowed up to £950,000 to be spent on the cost of providing additional information to the public. However, the rules forbade the GM Authorities to use any funds from their own departmental budgets for political campaigning of any nature in connection with referendum. Nevertheless, a GMPTA report stated:

> *The Department does agree to Departmental funds being used to provide neutral, factual information to the public to ensure that accurate, up to date information is available to all stakeholders; to give feedback regarding responses received during the consultation process; and to inform stakeholders how the consultation process influenced the policy so that*

stakeholders are informed of any changes to the package as a result of the consultation process (GMPTA, 2008: para. 18).

It was an extensive programme that included the cost of TV advertising including media, production, staff support. The AGMA report pointed out that policy makers were exploring the advantages of TV advertising on the advice provided by the communications agency who saw it as the most effective means of achieving awareness generation and reaching the majority of residents in Greater Manchester. They point out that:

> *TV is the only platform guaranteed to reach people at their leisure when they are most receptive and appeals to more senses both visual and audio therefore is more capable of education and has high levels of penetration in relation to C2 and D&E's (See fig 4.3) Which have comparatively low levels of awareness about detailed proposals. It is also a proven platform for maximising cost effectiveness (GMPTA, 2008:6)*

Figure 4.3 Socio-Economic Group Definitions (SEG)

SEG is broken down into 5 groups, A, B, C1, C2, D and E. Often the top two and bottom two are grouped together - AB, C1, C2, DE in analysis.
Broadly, ABs cover managerial and professional occupations, C1 and C2 are intermediate occupations, small employers, lower supervisory and technical, and DEs are semi-routine, routine / manual work or those who have never worked or are long-term unemployed.

Source: GMPTA (2008)

Although, transport planning officers were adamant that the communications strategy was based purely on informing and consulting with the public it is clear that from the size of the budget allocated to communications, and the sophistication of the methods employed that policy makers were unconvinced that information provision alone would suffice in getting their message across to the public.

Figure 4.4 Proposed Core Communication Plan

Channel	Reach	Target Audience	Estimated Cost
Radio (8 Radio stations across GM)	Opportunity to reach 22 million adult listeners based on the 8 radio stations across Greater Manchester. The amount of adverts aired will have an opportunity for people to hear the advert on average 5 times.	Drivers C1, C2, DE	£50,000 - £70,000 As recommended by the Code on Local Authority Publicity section 28, 'local radio is the most cost-effective means of publicising activities'
Online Advertising	Expect to reach 10m people via web activity.	Younger AB, C1, C2	£40,000 - £60,000 Helps engage a large and more youthful audience with factual information with low media costs.
PR	Reach of 10m people in Greater Manchester with an editorial equivalent value of £1m	All media channels & all demographics	£40,000 - £60,000 PR support to provide factual and balanced information to the GM media.
Wrap around advertisement around 12 newspaper **(4 pages)** (plus 1 full page in titles that don't do wraps)	A Readership opportunity of 2.4m people with, 85% coverage across Greater Manchester and an opportunity to see of 1.2 times	A-E	£135,000 - £200,000 Newspaper wraps around local papers providing factual information about the final package. This medium is a cost effective way to deliver local penetration at a cost of 56p per person.
Leafleting and Posters - Train stations - 10 Shopping Centres across GM	Posters sites available at train stations in GM Opportunity to reach 2.4m shoppers	Train commuters AB Female bias C2, DE	£70,000 - £90,000 Only opportunity for face-to-face communication to take factual information to people as they commute and shop. Based upon cost and opportunity to reach this medium is cost effective.
Direct Mail – brochure - 10 district specific brochures - Brochure tailored to businesses	All Greater Manchester adults (1.2m households) and every business (130k) with an expectation that at least 65% will read the brochure.	A-E	£360,000The only medium that guarantees factual information reaches every household and business with clarification of the final package.
Fees- advertising account handling & creative			£30,000 Based on negotiated fees.

Source: GMPTA (2008)

In fact although the initial budget allocation was substantial, it was clear that on deciding to call a referendum policy makers saw the necessity of increasing the budget even more as well as setting up an arms length campaign strategy, employing communications professionals.

Coffman (2002) suggests that public communication campaigns are becoming increasingly sophisticated and strategic, and campaign designers have begun to diversify their strategies, abandoning the notion that information on its own is a sufficient cure all for the behavioural problems of society. She argues that as a result of this campaigns are decreasingly based purely on the flawed notion that people will improve if they know better.

As a result campaign managers are increasingly focusing more on the context and thus linking traditional media and behaviour change strategies with grass roots community action to make the social and policy environment more supportive of the desired campaign results. However, Coffman (2002) points out that, there is a lack of evaluation of campaign strategies.

Evaluators are still in the early stages of understanding the theories and strategies that guide campaigns for example, the right outcomes to measure and appropriate methodologies to use in an increasingly sophisticated media and information age. Whilst at the same time campaign funders have become more focused on campaign results.

4.4.4 The Opposition Campaign Strategy

In 2012 one the leading global public relations and communications firms Burson-Marsteller posted a case study on their web site stating how their subsidiary public relations company 'Communiqué PR' was hired by property developer Peel Holdings in 2007 to challenge charging proposals and explain how this would harm Manchester's long-term economy. They point out that Communiqué PR commissioned research into public and business opinion, which they claim showed the strength of opposition to the congestion charge proposal. They also suggested that Media polls also highlighted that residents felt they should be able to vote on proposals (Burson-Marsteller, 2012).

Communiqué PR proposed a three-step strategy:

I. create a business alliance - the Greater Manchester Momentum Group (GMMG) - to demonstrate collective opposition and speak with one voice;

II. build local political support to demand a public referendum, whilst ensuring Westminster audiences understood the nature of GMMG's concerns;

III. secure a "No" vote to embrace local politicians as campaign ambassadors to engage with their constituents about local impacts of the scheme.

Burson-Marsteller (2012) outlined that the campaign involved the complete marketing mix with political outreach playing a lead role in securing the referendum and ultimate rejection of the scheme. The campaign included the launch of the public-facing Stop the Charge brand, with a website and viral videos, enabling it to collect 9,000 signatures petitioning for a referendum in three weeks. They also pointed out that initial political outreach briefings ensured that councillors, MPs and the public understood charge proposals and called for a referendum. They claimed that their campaign secured the first public referendum in Greater Manchester in 30 years and that GMMG's referendum petition helped council leaders who opposed charge proposals to argue for a public vote and as such all ten local authorities eventually agreed to a referendum. This clearly demonstrates the sophistication of the political communication strategy of the 'No' vote campaigners, and how they had managed to create a unique cross party coalition - GMMG brought politicians of all parties together with 210 local councillors (from 645 in Greater Manchester), seven MPs and two MEPs, making powerful local, regional and national argument for a "No" vote.

In this sense, it was clear that the press and media agencies were being fed large volumes of information from both the 'No' and 'Yes' camps and as such they were involved in a sifting and selection process that set the agenda and enabled the congestion charge element to become the main focus of the debate. Parenti (1993) highlights how, in the United States, by the 1970s, for the first time since the Great Depression, the legitimacy of big business was called into question by large sectors of the public. The American people became increasingly sceptical regarding the benefits of the corporate economy, due to unemployment, enduring inflation and a decline in real wages. Parenti (1993:74) argues that as a result, corporations intensified their efforts at what he termed 'advocacy advertising' which was designed to sell the entire capitalist system rather than just its products. The spending on 'non-product related' advertisements increased from $230 to $474 million, which showed a far greater growth rate than advertising expenditures as a whole. Parenti's point was that by the early 1990s one third of all corporate advertising had been directed at influencing the public on political and ideological issues as opposed to pushing consumer goods. For example, Parenti (1993) cites Mobil Oil, who was a forerunner in this respect, and who ran advertising campaigns with an annual budget of $5 million, in order to inform readers that Mobil provided employment for thousands of people, contributed to charities and brought prosperity to local communities. Parenti (1993:74-75) notes that, more significantly, some of the Mobil advertisements remind people that business firms across the USA do their part to create prosperity for all. A particular Mobil 'Observations' column in the Washington Post stated that:

> *Business, generally, is a good neighbor, and most communities recognize this fact. From time to time, out of political motivations or for reasons of radical chic, individuals may try to chill the business climate. On such occasions we try to set the record straight.... So when it comes to the business climate we are glad that most people recognize there's little need to tinker with the American system (Parenti, 1993:74).*

4.4.5 Summary

The approach taken by the AGMA and GMPTA is indicative of the 'professionalisation' of campaign communications as previously discussed (see Sect. 2.1). The Greater Manchester Authorities' and DfT clearly saw the importance of campaign communication as demonstrated, not just by the comprehensiveness of the original consultation plan, but by the willingness of the DfT to fund an even wider marketing and communications strategy. Policy makers both at the national and local level were clear in their decision about the need to promote the TIF scheme widely to the public following their decision to go to referendum, and the strategy underlined the need to recruit technical experts from the public relations and media advertising industries to assist with the campaign publicity, advertising and opinion polling. A 'Yes' vote campaigner underlined this when she was asked about the recruitment and involvement of communications professionals at the time:

> *The yes campaign: yes we had a couple of secondments, so they were free from local agencies, who worked in the office and obviously when you are producing campaign materials you've got a design agency involved. From the point of view of, (there were two parts to this campaign, the yes campaign was not the transport organisation), they were putting out factual material on it. The yes campaign was in fact the campaigning element. I think that's important actually because I don't think anyone has explained that to you, because the GMPTA and Executive, which is the (Transport Authority of GM), they were responsible for submitting and publicising (consulting on) the bid.*
>
> *They did not campaign because it's a cross party organisation (AGMA), although it was run by Labour at that time. A decision was made although I'm not quite sure how, they would not do the aggressive campaigning, that's why the yes campaign was set up – at arms length. Although I was on platforms (debating the issues) with Sir Richard Leese (Leader of Manchester City Council) at events such as the MEN public debate so in that sense they did campaign, but the people who did the bid did not run the campaign…(reference to GMPTE)*
>
> *Interview with the former Chair of the 'Yes' campaign (June, 2011)*

These quotes demonstrate that whilst politicians involved in the TIF bid were not directly involved in the production and dissemination of publicity, there was cross party consensus on the use of campaign experts and the recruitment of professional communications experts to carry out the work on their behalf. This is clearly a common feature in contemporary political campaigns both at the national and local level. As Franklin (2004) points out, the packaging of politics is evident in the operation of many political institutions and processes. He argues that parties have recruited small armies of media advisers to develop strategies for promoting electorally favourable media images of their leaders and key policies. Franklin points out that this has also taken place at the constituency level, where local parties have also adopted similar media based strategies as their national counterparts. Franklin argues that this can be seen particularly in the run up to local, European, but especially general, elections where local parties establish a communications team with a brief to devise a media strategy combining both news management and advertising elements. He points out that locally, parties target the local and regional press, whilst nationally television is the preferred medium for campaigning. Furthermore, at the constituency level, He suggests that parties believe that packaging political messages for media dissemination is considerably more effective in winning electoral support than direct 'face to face' meetings with voters. Politicians can draw on the advertising, marketing and campaigning skills of the specialist press and information officers working in communications departments to promote their policies. As the former Chair of the 'Yes' campaign put it:

> *My role literally was as the formal 'Yes' Campaign Chair, (this is some while ago now so mostly from memory). A Campaign Manager Dan Hodges staffed the campaign team and a full time PR person and several other seconded members of staff. As Chair, I was the public face, a non-political public face and unpaid, which is very important. I was asked (if I wanted to be paid) but I volunteered (Interview-June 2011)*

An ethos of professionalism was evident in the approach taken by the AGMA, and DfT in that they clearly emphasised the need for coordination, orchestration and discipline in their communications (see Sect 2.1). Blumler & Gurevitch (1995) point to another part of the professional model that concerns the up-rating of publicity priorities in campaigning, where political actors devote more of their resources and energy to media strategy and tactics. For example, in a general election politicians may orchestrate things such as the time of their walkabouts or focus on the leader the organisation at press conferences and events suitable for soundbites, photo opportunities or film.

The GMPTE and AGMA developed a comprehensive and wide ranging consultation strategy during the TIF campaign and this strategy was extended at a later date when politicians decided to call a referendum on the TIF scheme. What transport policy officers from GMPTE initially had designed as a standard consultation exercise to inform the public was deemed insufficient as it became clear that a far more complex and sophisticated political marketing exercise was needed in order to engage the public after it had been decided to go to referendum. This was beyond the remit of the council's transport policy officers, and therefore decision makers handed this task over to professional marketers and set up the 'Yes' vote campaign group who would develop the overall campaign strategy. However, at the same time, similar tactics were clearly being employed by the 'No' campaign. Lees-Marshment (2009:162) points out that marketing communications are used for several reasons (see Figure 4.5).

The AGMA strategy quite clearly falls into the last seven categories somewhere between persuading voters to a point of view to increasing support for referendum proposition whilst, the opposing GMMG members appear to fall into five of these categories. As already indicated (see Sect 4.3.1) a range of techniques were used throughout the campaign and market intelligence was a key element that was used by the Greater Manchester Authorities to inform communication. Authorities were particularly keen to gauge the level of awareness of the public to the policy options being debated, but crucially to assess what percentage of the public were aware that the charging element of the package would not be implemented until 4-5 years after critical public transport improvements had been made, and so the Authorities employed agencies such as MORI (see Sect 4.3.3).

Figure 4.5 Reasons for Marketing Communications

Reasons for marketing communications	'Yes'	'No'
Improve a candidate's or political leader's image		
Represent what the party or politician is about		
Persuade voters to a point of view	√	√
Make something clearer	√	√
Counter negative attacks from/or attack the opposition position	√	
Educate and inform voters	√	√
Gain or increase support for/or against a particular piece of legislation	√	
Place an issue on the agenda	√	√
Increase support for referendum proposition.	√	√

Source: Lees Marshment (2009:162)

Maarek (2011) points out that designing a political communication campaign cannot be done abstractly, and that information is needed on the state of the recipients, as well as on the campaign ground. Maarek (2011:73) argues that the days are long gone where information sources were readily and directly, available to politicians, who once could take stock of the state 'by going down the Greek agora or the Main Street bar'. He suggests that the immense increase in the number of political communication recipients had radically transformed its modes of information gathering and thus surveys, public opinion polling and other such tools have become numerous.

CHAPTER V

Political Communications, Marketing Strategies & the Politics of Transport

5.0 Introduction

This chapter analyses a variety of field data gathered from interviews with the key actors mentioned and archive material from the period in order to shed light on the communications methods and strategies used by campaigners on both sides of the debate during the TIF campaign.

5.1 Why Greater Manchester Authorities pursued the Transport Innovation Fund

In February 2007 a Manchester City Council report outlined work being undertaken by officers within Greater Manchester supporting the development of the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) bid. The report highlighted the close relationship between the quality and capacity of the City Region's transport networks, economic growth and the potentially adverse impact that traffic congestion could have on the growth of the region. Officers concluded that an 'in principle case' had clearly been made for road user charging to be included as a critical component of any further analysis (Manchester City Council, 2007:3). This conclusion was based on the understanding that it was necessary that the combined authorities develop the strongest possible bid for TIF resources, whilst having regard to Government policy (Manchester City Council, 2007).

Furthermore there was the need to actively promote the economic, environmental and social objectives of the City Region and so the need to secure access to substantial further investment in order to develop Greater Manchester Transport infrastructure was seen as critical (Manchester City Council, 2007). Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE) officers also determined that an isolated congestion charging scheme would not work and as such would be better integrated into a wider package of measures. The report advocated an approach which was badged "Smart approach" to transport policy and investment. The measures within this approach focused on the role of congestion charging in delivering sustained economic growth; managing carbon footprint and air quality in Greater Manchester as well as supporting regeneration, economic growth and social improvement objectives (Manchester City Council, 2007).

The report outlined the rationale for 'Smart Charging', in particular the potential for this type of policy intervention to address negative external costs that road users in congested areas impose on other road users and subsequently the wider Greater Manchester economy. They pointed out that the policy would address the issue in several ways: it would ensure all road users were faced with the costs they imposed on others, but, further to this, decision making by potential road users would be better informed as a result. Smart Charging in Greater Manchester would therefore have to be focused on delivering the best balance of economic, social and environmental improvements. The report's authors established a number of principles to ensure they could achieve this balance. The key principle was that the London congestion-charging scheme would not provide a suitable template on which to model the Manchester scheme. This was because of work officers had undertaken that demonstrated that the London approach lacked the sophistication needed when you take into account the complex nature of congestion and the economy of Greater Manchester.

When asked why Greater Manchester pursued the congestion charge, a former politician within the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE) (now Transport for Greater Manchester), pointed out that the decision was taken based on the promise of a substantial financial windfall that would go to the funding of significant transport improvements within the region, such as initial funding for the Manchester Metro-link, some £1.5 billion.

> *...it was to bring in a congestion charge if the Government made it worth our while. And of course when we got talking to the Government and the Civil Servants they accepted it could be an unpopular move etc. But they said that if you was successful, we would give you £1.5 billion pounds. But when you are a Chairman of Transport and all you can see is pound notes*

before your eyes, we thought, or I thought at the time, oh well it's a gamble, a gamble worth taking. If you can persuade the public to go along with it, we will get £1.5 billion for public transport. And we will also on top get the proceeds of the congestion charge because part of the deal with Government is that, that money, take away the cost of setting it up, that money would all come to local transport (May, 2011).

The former Chair of GMPTE emphasised the fact that over twenty years Greater Manchester would have received around £3 billion pounds to spend, which would have given Manchester a standard of public transport that equalled London and been twice as good as any other major city in UK, as a result he pointed out that this was the real carrot which enticed policy makers to go for the TIF scheme. As for his views on the congestion charging policy element of the scheme he clearly points out:

...it wasn't because any of us were in love with congestion charge, none of us. We didn't get up in the morning and say we must have a congestion charge, it was a way of getting a load of money for Manchester for public transport that was what it was about. But of course we all accepted congestion was getting worse all over the show and we all felt that sooner or later we had to tackle it. So this bribe or carrot or whatever you want to call it from Government, we thought it was a risk worth taking. At the time, this is couple of years before, going back to the 2004/5 period, so what do you do to get more money for Manchester? You have to pick up the Government policies and run with it, whatever that policy is. And in this case it was dealing with congestion and our roads...(May, 2011)

This was a particularly important decision for local politicians as the previous Labour administration, had reneged on an earlier promise to extend the Metro-Link when former Transport Secretary Alastair Darling had announced the cancellation of the Manchester scheme arguing that light rail schemes were too expensive. This decision was highly contentious within Greater Manchester (Manchester Evening News, 2005) and as such the Greater Manchester authorities began a campaign supported by the media. The former Chair of GMPTE, described the reaction of local politicians to the Ministers decision to cancel the Metro-Link scheme and argued that this previously led to a powerful consensus amongst the Greater Manchester Authorities as well as the media and general public who it appears had been in favour of former plans for a Metro-Link extension, but he also alluded to the way the subject of congestion charging was subsequently introduced in the TIF bid which eventually destroyed the consensus.

> *We were very angry and so we set up a campaign, which was supported by everybody including the press and TV. So every minister who came to Manchester over this 12 month period got it in the neck, Tony Blair etc, it didn't matter who it was. We asked why have you cancelled the Manchester Metro, when you know how very successful it was? And their answer each time was, well it was not our wish to cancel it but we are not happy about the escalating costs etc. But because every minister (who visited Greater Manchester) got it in the neck for the next twelve months, what it showed you was the power when you have got everybody behind you (May, 2011).*

He went on to point out the level of anger and betrayal felt by politicians within the area and the subsequent apparent nervousness of Transport Ministers visiting Greater Manchester who appeared to have been caught out by the depth of public outrage at the cancellation of the former Metro-link scheme:

> *Where the congestion charge showed you the futility when it's divided, when you have got a lot of people against you (public opinion), but when you have got everybody with you, you can't lose, because not Blair or anybody could come into GM to have lunch without a minister being set upon, in fact they must have all have been briefed by civil servants that, as soon as you get into Manchester, you'd be asked, where's this bloody tram? [Metro-Link extension] cause you've cancelled and it's very popular and it needs extending (May, 2011).*

The Government was to eventually reinstate the Metro-link extension and the former Chair of GMPTE appeared keen to point out the role of the media in helping to achieve this, not least by keeping the issue high on the political agenda and within the public sphere, which clearly proved useful to local politicians. His perception was that the media somehow helped to shape and give a powerful voice to public opinion and that this had influenced the decision by the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and Transport Secretary Alastair Darling to make a U-turn on their original decision, and admit that they had made the wrong decision:

> *....we would have the most extensive light rail system in the country bar none, by a mile, by many miles, and it's all because of that fight with the Labour government, with Alistair Darling and Tony Blair, without saying winners and losers they won by cancelling it and 12-18 months later we got it reinstated. But we had everybody behind us, there were no dissenters, it was 100%. I realised then, what happens when you've got the media behind you, so every time the ministers came, not only did the public say to them, where's our bloody tram? But the media, it was the first question that got asked by everybody, so during the general election...Blair knew very well what was coming because he had been briefed and he said oh: 'it's all in hand you know we were a bit worried about the cost but I understand its very popular and he just said to Darling: 'get it sorted Alistair, we don't want this bloody row hanging over us', and even Darling years later begrudgingly said it was probably a mistake cancelling it, he should have consulted us first you see, so that was the power thing...(Former Chair GMPTE, May 2011))*

It is clear from the discussions with policy makers within GMPTE that the decision to bid for TIF and as a consequence accept the necessity of the implementation of congestion charging policy, was based on what policy makers perceived to be a one off opportunity to gain substantial funding for the improvement of urban transport within the Greater Manchester conurbation. They had decided that this was a clear priority, following a long period of underinvestment in urban transport within the region, which, had led to a growing number of problems. Greater Manchester was, as one Senior GMPTE Transport Policy Officer stated:

> *We were suffering from lack of transport accessibility in parts of the conurbation and that was bringing with it year on year social exclusion problems (November, 2011).*

Such problems within parts of the conurbation were becoming starker even though at the mid-point of the previous decade the Greater Manchester economy had been vibrant, some parts of the conurbation were simply not benefiting to the degree that they should have been, and therefore the officer concluded that the trickle down effect was not happening. Policy makers perceived this problem as being just part of a wide range of issues that needed to be addressed such as skills mismatch and the need for employment training. However, far more importantly for transport policy makers it was the importance of reducing the physical reach to areas of employment for deprived communities that was the key issue. Many of these communities resided on Greater Manchester's old traditional housing estates that had been built in locations, which had once served industries that had since declined. Locations such as Hattersley and Partington on the East side of the conurbation, that were left isolated from where most commercial activity was now situated. Whilst policy makers cited issues such as social exclusion, they also emphasized concerns about growing traffic congestion problems, as increased prosperity had brought about much higher levels of car ownership and the realization that car use in the conurbation had grown significantly to the detriment of public transport use. As a Senior GMPTE Transport Policy Officer pointed out:

> *That was basically bringing two problems: an economic problem, because we had a network that was becoming inefficient, and an environmental problem, a local environmental problem (November, 2011).*

Policy makers also based their decision to pursue the TIF bid on a debate that had been taking place at the time regarding the future direction of transport investment, led by the Department for Transport (DfT). As with other Local Authorities at the time (see Sect

4.2) Greater Manchester policy makers became involved with a national debate led by the DfT, which was about the capacity of transport networks, the demand being placed on these networks, and the best way to tackle this. The TIF was developed as a result of that and announced in the 2005 Transport White Paper. As pointed out earlier (Sect 4.2) the intention of the TIF was to provide funding to areas such as Greater Manchester with the expectation that they would at a later date, implement a congestion-charging scheme. As seen in this section, it was clear that initially, Greater Manchester's transport policy makers saw this as an opportunity to get major investment into the transport system that could not be missed despite the clear political dangers associated with the congestion charging element.

5.1.1 The Political Risks of Pursuing TIF

Pursuing TIF meant that at some point policy makers would inevitably come up against the prickly issue of congestion charging policy, which remains a highly contentious and politically risky intervention for any government to take. Isaksson & Richardson (2009) note the risk associated with the introduction and implementation of controversial urban congestion charging policies. Politicians and policy makers are compelled to think carefully before introducing policies that the public is fiercely resistant to. They argue that implementation in London and failure in Edinburgh raised important questions regarding whether policy makers should seek full citizen support, or work strategically towards implementation in the face of public opposition. An exploration of the perceived political risks for policy makers in Greater Manchester's TIF scheme and the need therefore to gain public support for the scheme, are therefore of interest and importance.

A number of the officers and politicians interviewed perceived that the pursuance of the TIF bid carried political risks. This was mainly to do with public acceptability of the charging element of the bid, even though policy makers had attempted to assure the public that the charge would not be introduced until at least four years later, and after other transport alternatives had been put in place. As stated by the Leader of Manchester City Council:

... I think that ultimately there are political risks. For example do you lose seats, I guess. In Manchester I was up for election that year as was the Chair of the PTA who lost his seat but this was as much to do with local factors in his ward as it was to do with the fact that in Manchester we were actively supporting the 'Yes' vote but it had minimal impact on our local election results (Interview, August 2011)

Officers argued that a way to minimize the political risk was to ensure that their information provisions fully informed the public debate thereby steering a steady course between the divergent political opinions and as one Senior GMPTE Officer emphasised 'ensuring that their communications materials stay out of specific political camps'. In other words, officers had to be seen to be neutral in whatever they communicated:

In terms of political risks, yes, we were all alive to the fact that there were, political risks associated with it. Really it was our job to try and look to ensure that there was an informed public debate-taking place in the middle of what was inevitably going to be a charged political arena at any point. So our efforts went very much into making sure that the materials that we produced stay out of political camps and the material was very clearly pitched to stay out of political camps and that our guys out in road shows or giving presentations or getting involved in media interviews, wherever they were, that the absolute watchword was always to stay in that neutral territory to be public officials looking to provide information to explain what it was we were putting forward and to stay out of those more subjective elements of the debate. That just felt like the only logical way for us to deal with it" (Interview, November 2011).

The then Chair of GMPTE, when asked about what he saw as the potential political risks at the time, suggested that whilst there appeared to be some cross party consensus in the very early stages of the negotiations with the Department of Transport, in the main the Conservative members were against it from the start. However, he pointed out that whilst there was some optimism amongst policy makers who supported the scheme that they could convince the public if they managed to get together enough of a consensus within the ten boroughs, it was clear very early on that the congestion charge element within the TIF policy would prove to be highly unpopular and difficult for a number of policy makers to accept.

> *There was a few alternatives but the main one was the congestion charge sort of thing. At the time it wasn't whether we thought we could win but we thought we had a fair chance of persuading the public if we got everybody together. But of course, then failing number one was the political support you was hoping for was fragmented, because when politicians local or national are faced with something unpopular, they all run a mile and for cover (Interview - Former Chair of GMPTE, May 2011)).*

The unpopularity of the congestion charge component within the TIF bid was clearly evidenced by the fact that even though some members had voted in favour of it, they were subsequently unwilling to publicise the fact too widely. As such it appears that it was always going to be a difficult task to gain the type of consensus amongst AGMA members they had previously taken for granted when faced with the development and implementation of previous transport policies. The congestion charge was clearly an element that frightened many members and in particular it was seen as a clear threat to their seats. As the then Chair of the GMPTE stated:

> *So the Tories were always against it right from day one, the Liberals were in favour but wouldn't tell anyone they were in favour because they did not want to lose votes. And if locally quite a lot of them opposed it because they wanted to be popular, if you are the third party you are entitled to jump about a bit and they jumped quite a bit. And when it came to Labour, you had a kind of, probably a 70% to 30% split, 70% in favour and 30% against. But of the 70% in favour the majority of those kept a low profile because they didn't want to get tarred with the unpopular. Although they accepted it was a good idea in principal, there were lots of problems (May, 2011).*

As a number of respondents pointed out, the reasons for the unpopularity of the charge was that whilst most policymakers understood the need to tackle congestion and thus the usefulness of this type of fiscal intervention. Charging schemes are still viewed as quite radical policies by members of the public and as such politicians had to weigh up the costs and benefits of pursuing such a radical policy against that of the views of the residents within their constituencies, and indeed the costs to them personally in terms of their future electoral success. Added to this Greater Manchester's policy makers were being asked to consider a controversial policy just as the economy was about to go into a downturn.

> *Obviously people regarded it as an extra tax, people regarded it as the economy was starting to go a bit downhill, it wasn't that yet, but it was moving that way. And of course, every motorist thinks they pay too much anyway. So when you added all these negative bits, then it became obvious, what might have happened, so the actual vote (the referendum result) wasn't a surprise to anyone within weeks of the vote taking place. But 2yrs before we were hopeful that we could try and persuade 50% of those who voted, to vote for something to grab all this money (Interview - Chair of GMPTE, May 2011).*

> *But I think you have got to say that introducing any proposals of which one element is a new tax, or charge is always going to be difficult thing to do (Interview - Chair of the YES Campaign, June 2011).*

To summarise the discussion so far, Greater Manchester's transport policy makers were clearly aware of the political risks associated with trying to implement charging policy from the outset. GMPTE transport planning officers had studied the issues and proposals for the introduction of other schemes namely in (London and Edinburgh). But at the outset, policy officers had dismissed the idea of merely copying what had happened in London or Edinburgh arguing that Greater Manchester presented a more challenging and complex picture with regard to the implementation of a charging scheme.

GMPTE transport planning officers had to identify how such a scheme would fit with the problems that were articulated in the region and particularly the Regional Economic Strategy and the Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Strategy (GMITS). Several officers interviewed pointed out that they would need a more sophisticated balance than say London or Edinburgh. So, for example, it was not enough to look at congestion charging in Greater Manchester simply because they did not have a good alternative, and a debate took place between officers and members with regard to the scale of the alternative options for improved public transport that would be needed if they were to go ahead. In other words how could they best improve public transport infrastructure effectively before imposing charging on the public?

> *Our scheme was very different because what Edinburgh was talking about was, one of the big problems that a number of debates around charging had faced and other potential TIF proposals from Government was potentially going to face as well, was that people set up CC schemes and said down the line, we would use this to invest, so we will use this and build up a war chest and then we will invest People have to have a sense that we have given them an alternative before we charge them to travel on what is their current option (Interview - Senior GMPTE Transport Policy Officer, November 2011).*

Policy makers clearly believed that they could deliver this, but the debate had to be had with the DfT about getting substantial investment upfront before they imposed charging. They were convinced that this was the most secure way to be able to sell the concept of charging to the Greater Manchester public. This was seen to be different from Edinburgh's plans to impose congestion charging first with the intention of using the proceeds from the charge to improve public transport as Manchester intended to give the public a clear alternative long before the charge was implemented. This was clearly seen as a better way to persuade the public and reduce the unpopularity of the congestion charge element within the TIF bid.

5.1.2 Against the Bid

Key political players campaigning against the TIF bid ranged from the Liberal Democrats in Stockport, Conservatives in Bury and Trafford, the BNP, and the Greater Manchester Momentum Group (GMMG). The GMMG included companies such as Bestway, Hydes and United Biscuits, but the key companies seem to have been Kelloggs and Trafford Centre owners Peel Holdings who had paid for Manchester Against Road Tolls (MART) advertising billboards. The 'Trafford Centre' had for some time been considered to be a major contributor to the traffic congestion on the Greater Manchester road network, and whose business model is based on easy and cheap car access and free parking in its 10,000 car parking spaces.

The 'NO' campaigners had been accused by their opponents, of running an advertising campaign that had broadly ignored the issues of public transport investment benefits and of frequent use of misleading figures and arguments. A Senior Transport Planning Officer explained that the debate did not follow the traditional party political lines, in that all parties were split over the issue with long standing members from the Labour Party for example taking up positions on both sides of the issue.

> *We had commentators like Gregg Stringer MP who is not only a very long standing and recognised political figure in Manchester, but also a very experience transport commentator. He has been a member of the transport select committee for a long time and very clearly positioning himself in the group that was gathering in the 'NO' camp but then other very prominent figures like Richard Leese as leader of MCC took a very prominent 'YES' position and also of course there was Roger Jones who at the time was the Chair of Passenger Transport Authority who also stood for a very pro stance and then suffered personally in the local election (Interview - Senior Transport Policy Officer GMPTE, November 2011).*

The then Leader of the City Council explained: there were key players in the business community and they ranged from city property developers such as 'Dandara' (residential property developers) who were very much in favour, and saw the congestion charging proposals as a boost and not a hindrance to the city centre. However, he also pointed out the major opponents of the scheme at the time, such as Peel Holdings. Peel held major investments in out of town retail centres such as the 'Trafford Centre' and were against public transport as their business model was car based. When interviewed, the then Leader of Manchester City Council stated:

> *...this is my interpretation, my belief is that their objections were that they saw good public transport as a threat to their business. Their businesses are car borne businesses... it's a threat to their business. I'm convinced that the opposition was motivated primarily by an anti-public transport attitude...*

> *What was also interesting was that there was some big business interest that became political players, so we had a bunch of people on the 'No' [No Campaign] side of the debate, particularly Peel Holdings who of course are an enormous company in whole of the North West and also, I guess probably some of the groups that you might naturally expect to corner the haulage community tended to be quite vocal and active in the 'No' camp (Interview - Senior Transport Policy Officer GMPTE, November 2011).*

> *Peel have a lot of land holdings which are much more dependent on the highway links, so you could see maybe they just weren't so keen to see those kind of policies coming into the broader highway debate as whole, (Interview - Senior Transport Policy Officer GMPTE, November 2011).*

A feature in the Manchester Evening News in November 2008, reported how visitors to the Trafford Centre could hardly fail to see the huge billboard posters featuring giant sharks and warning that 'congestion charging will take a huge bite out of their wallets'. In fact the 'No' campaign also used activists dressed in shark costumes to visit gymnasia, shopping outlets and other venues in order to get their message across to the public - see figure 5.1. The article pointed out that what was not clear to shoppers was, who the people behind the campaign to vote 'No' at the referendum were. However the article stated that:

> *there were two groups campaigning against the charge and they're not the kind of individuals who would normally swim together. One is the Greater Manchester Momentum Group, representing the views of 250 companies large and small, including the Trafford Centre's owners, Peel Holdings. Then there's Manchester Against Road Tolls, led by Sean Corker, a guitar teacher from Urmston, who started his "people power" campaign after reading about congestion charging in the M.E.N. The Momentum Group's steering committee comprises representatives from 10 businesses and trade bodies, including Peel, Hydes brewery, Kellogg's, Makro and the Federation of Small Businesses (Ottewell, 2008).*

The article suggests that the 'NO' campaigners wanted a thorough investigation of alternative schemes and were giving out the message that businesses and employees would pay dearly for the Transport Innovation Fund

Figure 5.1 'No' Campaign Activists dressed in Shark Costumes

Source: Meta Filter Community Weblog (2008)

Their budget at the time was undisclosed but members had been asked to make a donation in line with a percentage of the expense that would be incurred if congestion charging had been introduced. The article also pointed out that members of the group gave up their time to lobby in their particular sphere of influence.

They also appointed 'Communique', a public relations consultancy based in Manchester, to carry out work for the Momentum Group and who were originally hired during their campaign for a referendum (Ottewell, 2008). Figure 5.2 shows a press release produced by the Trafford Labour Group in 2007 as a counter to the Peel Holdings campaign against the congestion charge.

Figure 5.2 Press release from the Trafford Labour Group

TRAFFORD LABOUR GROUP Labour

PRESS RELEASE

Trafford Councillor attacks Peel's "Toll Tax"

Trafford and Partington Councillor John Smith has hit out at the double standards of Peel Holdings, owners of the Trafford Centre and Manchester Ship Canal.

Cllr. Smith says:

"Over recent weeks Peel Holdings have been running a prominent public campaign against the possibility of a Congestion Charge. People in Partington, whatever their own views about the Congestion Charge, find this a bit hypocritical of Peel Holdings. Peel are already operating their own toll tax on every driver who wants to enter or leave the Borough via their Toll Bridge at Warburton. This charge hits the pockets of Partington people particularly hard as this is one of the major access routes to the area. It's time Peel Holdings stood by their own principles and stopped imposing their private Toll Tax on local people."

Contact: Cllr. John Smith Tel: 0161 777 9438 (Daytime)
Tel: 0161 777 6871 (Evening)
Tel: 0161 912 5407

27 July 2007

www.traffordlabour.org.uk

Source: Trafford Labour Group (2007)

5.1.3 Summary of the Political Risks and Complexity of the Political Landscape

The complicated nature of the political landscape within Greater Manchester at the time of the TIF referendum can be seen by the plethora of different interests and stakeholders involved during the TIF campaign. Policy makers were faced with trying to get their message across to a multiplicity of different publics and constituents within a short period of time and a constantly evolving, social, economic and political environment. In fact even before the submission of the TIF bid a vociferous anti-congestion charge coalition Manchester Against Road Tolls (MART) had started a campaign against the proposals. M.A.R.T included major businesses such as Peel Holdings and were also part of the Association of British Drivers (ABD), which were a small lobby of car drivers who were particularly effective at using online media sources to get their message across. All respondents made reference to the impact of the big businesses within the locality that were specifically vocal on the issue of congestion charging. In particular very large and powerful business interests such as Peel Holdings who have major investments in out of town shopping centres and who were seen to be anti-public transport, which they saw as a threat to their business. A senior politician emphasized the fact that most of the staff at 'Trafford Park' (owned by Peel Holdings) arrive by car and therefore public transport to Trafford is very poor. He argued that Trafford have to pay a premium for their staff as the lack of public transport makes it hard for staff to get to work and as such it has been difficult for them to recruit. The TIF scheme would greatly enhance public transport to Trafford which, he argued, would have reduced the company's labour costs and consequently its high staff turnover in the mid-to-long term, but they remained resistant to the idea and proactively campaigned against it. However, it was also clear that Peel also had a number of land holdings which were more dependent on highway links and owned the Trafford Centre which had a business model based on easy and cheap car access providing shoppers with parking space for up to 10,000 cars and as such did not want to see these kinds of policies coming into the broader highway debate.

However, one politician pointed out that the development industry was generally in favour of congestion charging, and viewed it as a boost to Manchester city centre. The congestion charge issue also caused some division within Greater Manchester's political parties not least the ruling Labour Party, with some senior members in favour and others not. Figures like Gregg Stringer MP who at the time was a long standing political figure in Manchester, but also an experienced transport commentator who had been a member of the Transport Select Committee, and who had clearly positioned himself with those opposing the congestion charge proposal. Whilst, very prominent figures like Sir Richard Leese, Leader of Manchester City Council positioned himself in favour of the scheme. The Chair of the Passenger Transport Authority at the time Roger Jones, took a pro-stance and suffered personally in the local election and his defeat in the local election was said to be directly attributable to his pro- stance on the congestion charge. This underlines the main issue faced by policy makers at the time, which was one of how to communicate a very contentious policy intention to the public given the lack of a consensus amongst amongst members of the public and politicians and the level of opposition to the congestion charge from big business interests and a highly vociferous and organized lobby opposed to the TIF bid.

5.2 Moving From a Consultation to a Marketing Strategy

The initial consultation strategy was a very ambitious and comprehensive exercise. The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities had already taken into account results from a series of consultations before making a bid for programme entry as part of the initial consultation strategy (Cheshire East Council, 2008). These elicited the views of an independent panel of local business representatives as well as economists. This was part of an exercise to satisfy politicians that TIF proposals were acceptable and the bid could therefore proceed. A wide-ranging public engagement initiative was also undertaken with local business and the local community, involving polls carried out by GfK NOP who evaluated the views of 5000 residents and a 1,000 local businesses within the Greater Manchester area (Cheshire East Council, 2008). Results indicated that a slim majority of residents supported the proposal for a congestion charge. The results also suggested that there was less support for the idea from businesses but nevertheless, the results of those initial polls seemed to indicate that there was a majority from both camps in favour of the bid being submitted. Having got approval for programme entry status AGMA decided that not only should there be a further round of public consultation but if the scheme was to succeed it would need support from at least seven of the ten authorities within AGMA (Cheshire East Council, 2008).

The decision to call a referendum on the TIF bid within each of the Greater Manchester Boroughs was taken in August 2008 sometime after the initial public consultation strategy had been developed and implemented (AGMA, 2007). As the then leader of Manchester City Council pointed out:

> *It was quickly realised that in order to be able submit the TIF proposal then all ten of the Greater Manchester Local Authorities would need to be signatories to the scheme (Interview, August 2011).*

The Greater Manchester Authorities had existed on a voluntary working arrangement that had served them well over many years where they had taken a number of major strategic decisions arriving at a cross party consensus on many of those, particularly in shaping Greater Manchester as an economic entity. However, the TIF bid proposals presented a real challenge to the AGMA structure and as one Senior Transport Policy Officer put it:

> *The politics at the time, between the three parties at the table was such that they were not able to decide as one on this issue and AGMA over the years had not really worked on the basis of any formal majority voting rules but rather on a consensus basis. And so the view was taken that on this occasion [the TIF bid] the consensus was not going to be reached. There was a real threat to the AGMA structure from this and therefore the only logical way of dealing with that was to place the decision more directly in the public domain, and it was on that basis that they took the decision to go forward and hold a referendum (Transport Policy Officer GMPTE, May 2011).*

Officers found that one of the challenges posed in the Greater Manchester scheme was that the decision to hold a referendum was taken much later in the process than in the Edinburgh charging scheme. A Senior Transport Officer pointed out that they had arrived at a position in 2007 where they had secured an agreement in principle with the

Department for Transport (following the submission of a joint bid proposal for TIF funding in July 2007) to try to work with the TIF concept and draw up more substantial proposals which would be then reported back to AGMA for politicians to decide upon. Officers later presented more advanced proposals to AGMA, which then instructed GMPTE Officers to set up a public consultation process. Officers therefore set about developing a large public consultation programme designed to run through the summer of 2008. This was to be a large-scale public consultation highlighting the key issues and details of the TIF package. A Senior Transport Policy Officer pointed out the rationale for this:

> *This was designed partly to get a sense of the public mood, the politicians were inevitably going to use it for that, but also so that we could make iterative changes to the proposals, and then the politicians could take a decision on the final proposal informed by a very robust three months consultation exercise (Senior Transport Policy Officer – GMPTE, November 2011).*

However two weeks into the consultation exercise politicians decided to take the issue to the public by referendum, which officers felt signaled a turning point in the nature of the debate. This was to prove problematic to officers who had already worked up substantial proposals for a relatively straightforward strategy of information provision to the general public, as one Senior Transport Officer stated:

> *….so the nature of the debate changed. But we were out in consultation, and we had to continue to go forward in consultation because the referendum was ultimately going to be taken on any revised proposition developed through consultation (Senior GMPTE Transport Policy Officer, November 2011).*

Commentators have noted differences between public and private organisations that mean aspects of management such as the time and budgeting of public information resources are often an added complication that significantly influences the final outcome of the communications process. As such the dissemination of public information in political policy making contains an element of uncertainty. They point out that this is due to the fact that the timing of the budgeting of mass communication of public information is situated in a comparatively inflexible framework whilst at the same time the policy making framework is unpredictable (Boyne, 2002; Gelders, *et al.,* 2007). De Roon (1993) argues that policies can sometimes be under consideration for years, added to this earlier decisions are often completely different and at odds with the original intentions.

Furthermore, on making a policy decision the public information material has to be provided without delay. The problem for Transport Policy Officers was the original transport consultation strategy was designed specifically to provide public information and the initiative had been directed in a very specific way (using standard information provision and consultation techniques) but the later decision to have a referendum brought added communications complications. For example, using sophisticated communications methods in order to inform residents in preparation for the vote whilst steering a very careful and neutral course between sharply contrasting ideological and political opinions on the issue. It also meant that they would need to work much harder to ensure that the entire benefits of the TIF package were considered and that the debate did not focus entirely on congestion charging. This all needed to be done within a shorter timescale and additional funding would be needed from the DfT as discussed above (see Sect 4.5). As a Senior Transport Officer pointed out:

> *The debate was already out there, it was a much more political debate because the decision had been taken that right at the end of year there would be a referendum and so inevitably as the case with any referendum, there was a 'YES' campaign that grew up and there was a 'NO' campaign that grew up. And we [GMPTE] were neither we were the public body putting forward a proposition through a formal public consultation and in any case, as a public body we cannot join neither the YES nor NO camps, because that is not our job, there are other political worlds that live around*

us that do that sort of thing (Senior Transport Policy Officer GMPTE, November 2011).

Officers clearly felt that such a decision made the communications and public debate process more challenging in that the environment had changed around them. What they initially saw as a formal consultative process became more of a political game in which they were clearly key players, but could not be seen to take sides.

> *We are public officials running public bodies. We are designed to run formal consultative processes. UK institutions aren't really designed to live around referenda because we don't really do them very often in the UK so that was quite difficult really (Transport Policy Officer GMPTE, May 2011).*

Gelders *et al.* (2007a) suggest that public communication regarding policy intentions is an important but delicate matter. This is because government officials face a number of constraints that are more characteristic of the public than the private sector. These create a more complicated and unstable environment, additional legal and formal restrictions, more rigid procedures, and more diverse products and objectives. They point to the implications of such constraints, in that, officials and politicians can often face specific issues when required to communicate about policy intentions, such as: intensive political and media interferences, the need for democratic communication, and more rigid timing and budget constraints.

Gelders & Ihlen (2010:60) define government public relations as 'communication efforts in which the government/administration tries to be non partisan, balanced and concise'. In this sense government efforts are not concerned with putting a political party or politician in the picture, but focused on the interest of the citizen who needs to be informed. Gelders & Ihlen (2010:61) point out that, this is different to 'political communication' that they define as 'persuasive communication' and which is used by politicians implicitly or explicitly striving for political, image or electoral points. Gelders & Ihlen (2010:60) argue that government public relations is just as likely to be persuasive in that it attempts to influence knowledge, attitude or the behaviour of citizens as in a campaign against drink driving. Furthermore, they argue that there is a plethora of definitions and guidelines produced by government, concerning public relations and propaganda that recognize the right of ministers to score political points in what they term 'secondary order' by using public relations as long as this is not the main goal of the communication act. The example given is the British government communication guidelines, which state: "The publicly funded government communications machine cannot be used primarily or solely to meet party-political ends, though it is recognized that the governing party may derive benefit incidentally from activities carried out by the Government" (cited by: Turpin & Tomkins, 2006:159).

5.2.1 Summary

One of the key issues facing transport policy officers was that, whilst they were clearly concerned about remaining neutral on the issue, this clearly proved difficult as the issue was taken to the referendum stage. Gelders & Ihlen (2010) argue that government bodies in Western style democracies are required to build relationships with their constituencies in order to survive. Nevertheless, they point out that communication is a device that is on a par with other management mechanisms that governments may choose to use. Gelders & Ihlen (2010:60) suggest that in the literature there is a propensity to focus on public communication from the 'efficiency' angle that is to see public information as inherently 'good' as a policy tool that is useful for promoting core values as well as increase the ability of citizens to participate in public life. However they emphasis that public communication is also clearly a form of ideology production that should be discussed carefully, as it can be misused and may also become unethical, for example when it 'undercuts the citizens' powers of conscious choice making'. They point out that a dialogical view of ethical communication would build on conditions of mutual respect, sincerity and honesty and a 'willingness to admit error and allow persuasion. This they suggest, 'would also put it at odds with black propaganda', but they concede that there would also be need to look at context, level of transparency, and at the ends of the communicator when discussing the ethics of communication activity in general. In this instance transport policy officers clearly had the perception that the public information they produced was inherently good in that they intended to portray the core values of their organisation, informing citizens so that they were able to participate in the wider policy debates. However, officers and politicians clearly became embroiled in wider ideological debates about fiscal interventions and in particular the charging element of the TIF. In fact it was clear that despite all their efforts to remain neutral with regard to their information production strategies they were unable to steer clear of accusations of propaganda.

5.3 The problems of separating the wider TIF debate from the narrower concerns of congestion charging

The issue of separating the wider issues regarding the Transport Innovation Fund bid from a focus on the congestion charge was an aspect policy makers found particularly difficult. When interviewed Transport Policy Officers and politicians argued that overall they found the media coverage to be quite balanced, particularly reporting from papers such as the Manchester Evening News (MEN). One Transport Policy Officer from GMPTE stated that he knew of one journalist from the (MEN) who had actually taken the time to travel to Edinburgh to interview various people who had previously been involved with the proposed Edinburgh charging scheme:

> *One senior reporter from the MEN spent a lot of time trying to understand the issues on both side of the debate, he spent time going up to Edinburgh and looking into what happened up there. And I thought they really tried hard to promote a debate and they always took an editorial line throughout that said, that they thought that there was a reasonable proposition that they had put forward. But it was critical that the debate happened and that there was as much press input as possible to allow the debate to happen (Senior Transport Officer GMPTE, November 2011)*

However, when interviewed officers and politicians also complained of what they termed 'lazy journalism' from other parts of the press who found it easier to simply badge the whole thing as 'congestion charging' rather than discuss the wider TIF package:

Other parts of the local press, mainly the free press... didn't quite do such a good job of reporting the issues and there was some political bias, and there was some lazy journalism that just got used to labelling the thing as the congestion charge as opposed to it being a transport package, which was about charging for investment. And that was where the Evening News was so creditable in always taking time when introducing any article on TIF, to kind of remind people that this was a debate about a package that had different sides, different angles to it, which was very good (Senior Transport Policy Officer GMPTE, November 2011)

The leader of the Manchester City Council at the time stated that a great part of the media coverage had been based around the congestion charge aspect of the TIF and the aspects of the policy proposal that had promised large-scaled investment had clearly not been given the same priority within the media.

In the terms of the publicity the TIF bid received in terms of media attention, it was largely around congestion charging. Most of it was pretty misinformed in that most coverage suggests that we were effectively bringing a London sort of scheme to Manchester and we weren't. And despite our best attempts to say no this is much more like the sort of scheme they've got in Stockholm and a number of other European cities, it was still seen that this was going to be a zonal scheme, that there is going to be a congestion parking zone in the way that there is in London (former Leader of Manchester City Council, May 2011).

Several respondents emphasised the fact that a large part of the problem of communicating the wider benefits of the TIF scheme was in part due to the complexity of the issues being debated but more importantly policy makers in the 'Yes' camp had suddenly found themselves focused on responding to an increasingly vociferous 'No campaign' and had to respond to the anti-congestion charge publicity, rather than concentrating on promoting the transport benefits of the wider TIF bid. As one respondent who was the Chair of the YES campaign at the time argued:

> *I felt, that the campaign got it wrong because I think they tried to respond to the anti congestion charge bit instead of focusing on the transport benefits. The sad thing of course is the main organisations that were driving it (the anti congestion charge campaign), those behind the Trafford Centre have got loud voices, but the people who value the bus services and need to rely on them aren't very vocal, and so for the thousands, millions probably that it would have assisted by improving transport, they didn't get to them, (Chair of the YES Campaign, June 2011)*

5.3.1 Summary

The Greater Manchester Authorities were faced with communicating the facts of a very large and complex set of proposals, such as how the charging scheme would be applied to individuals, how it would affect businesses, who would pay and who, due to exemptions, would not. This was going to be particularly difficult given the ideological and political problems associated with any contentious policy such as the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) which includes a congestion charging element, in a climate of increasing fuel costs and economic austerity. The irony was that the congestion charge was not due to be implemented until four years later, by which time the authorities were convinced alternatives such as better public transport would be firmly in place. This was the message that they had to communicate to the public, steering clear of taking a specific stance on the issue whilst at the same time trying to avoid getting entrenched in a debate about smart charging, to the detriment of a discussion regarding the wider benefits of the TIF package. This is an example of the public sector having to operate within a more complicated and unstable environment, which has been highlighted in the literature review by specific commentators (e.g. Gelders, 2006; Boyne, 2002). Particularly when communicating about policy intentions, public officials find that the crumbling of "pillarization" the "de-ideologisation" and increasing "volatility" of the electorate adds to the complication and instability of the political environment. Therefore, it has become increasingly difficult for policy makers to define whether a majority of the population is in favour of any policy issue. Therefore, as opposed to the private sector, the public sector must pay very close attention to the issue of democratic involvement in the public policy making process.

5.4 The Relationship between Journalists and Policy Makers during the TIF Campaign and How Stories got to the Press

Louw (2010) argues that the notion that journalists serve the public by acting as watchdogs is central to liberal journalism's professional ideology. Louw cites Nimmo & Combs (1990) who note that such notions developed into a package of fantasies regarding the way that political journalists view themselves. That is, journalists have a self image of themselves as tough, rugged individuals fighting for truth and justice; or what Nimmo & Combs (1990:171-3) refer to as the 'inside dopester fantasy' where journalists award themselves both special knowledge concerning the political system and special skills in accessing the 'truth' about what is really taking place. They argue that such myths tend to justify political journalists interviewing other journalists about politics, turning their colleagues into expert political analysts. They also point out that they position themselves as 'insiders'. The example being how political journalists in the USA position themselves as part of the power elite in Washington. And the same phenomena can be observed in London and elsewhere. They argue that such fantasies fit into what they call 'the Fourth Estate self image' where journalists consider themselves to be a key part of the political process with a right to intervene and influence decision making and public opinion. Nimmo & Combs (1990) also suggest that these types of fantasies create a feeling amongst political journalists of being an elite group. As such it has the unintentional consequence of encoding an air of superiority into their stories, and even a professional 'scorn' towards politicians and their audience.

A senior reporter for the Stockport Express, who reported on the TIF bid during the campaign, was asked:

How do you think politicians view the role of the press, in situations when they have got controversial policies (such as the Manchester Congestion charge) they want to push through? Do you think journalists are seen as useful as adversaries? (Author, August 2011)

He replied:

Politicians see us as a one of the most important conduits in terms of getting the message out there. They may not like us and they may not agree with us but they will almost give anything to ensure that we are on board basically with the message that they're trying to get out there, whether its pro or anti, their point of view is promoted (Chief Reporter Stockport Express, August 2011).

Louw (2010) points out that political players have learned that to be popular they must play a game of impression management, shaping their messages in a way that ensures that they fit into a the comfortable ritualized story lines the mass media believes attracts audiences. He suggest that this is why politics is a mass mediated game which has become formulaic, and built on a symbiotic relationship between journalists and politicians. Central to this symbiotic relationship with policy makers is a journalist's need for sources as the basic raw material for producing their stories.

Louw suggests that a central characteristic of the professional ideology of liberal journalism is the notion of being objective. This is where journalists try to achieve 'objectivity', by quoting sources external to the newsroom. This ensures that journalists write stories drawn from external sources rather than their own views. He argues that from this, liberal journalism has arrived at a dichotomy between objective reporting or quoting expert sources, and subjective editorializing, where journalists express their own views. Objective journalism promotes the idea of quoting two sources as a way of achieving balance, fairness and neutrality. However Louw (2010) cites an argument by Roshco (1984) who noted that source driven journalism can often create the potential for liberal journalists to disguise that they have biases because all any journalist needs to do is find sources that confirm the views they wish to promote. In other words, facts don't always speak for themselves and thus quoting sources is not a guarantee of objectivity. But what it can create, is a self-affirming myth for liberal journalists. Louw (2010) suggests that it also creates opportunities for public relations and communications professionals, not least because liberal journalists must find quotable sources, and so public relations set themselves up as professional sources, which are readily available to provide a continual stream of 'quotes on demand' to journalists (Louw, 2010:63).

When asked whether politicians were becoming more sophisticated in their approach to the press he said:

> *That is a difficult question because you would have to go back through the history of media, the way the media operates to promote things on the behalf of politicians and on the behalf of parties...Well, if you're talking generally, about the media, then no the politicians are keen to almost appear to be ultra modern, so they embrace all kinds of new media, whether it be twitter or whether it be email, not email in that sense, I meant face book, just the populous kind of things (Chief Reporter Stockport Express, August 2011).*

Louw (2010) describes news as a product of a set of institutionalized work practices, and such practices have become generic across newspaper, television and radio newsrooms globally. He argues that journalists are socialized into practices enmeshed in discourses about the profession of journalism (self image) and audience. Louw (2010) points out that large volumes of information, and other phenomena that could qualify as news, often confront journalists. This means that, for journalists, creating news involves a sifting and selection process in which they decide what is allowed to reach audiences. So news making involves a process of selection, emphasis and de-emphasis. Louw (2010:58) argues that this process is referred to as 'knowing what is newsworthy'. This effectively, casts journalists in the role of gatekeepers, who have the power to decide what information to let through the gate and what to block. This also allows journalists to set the agenda or the parameters for what society discusses. One respondent underlined the fact that experienced senior politicians on the side of the 'Yes' campaign were very aware of the influence of the press and media and that in the case of the TIF bid they had perhaps misjudged the situation with regard to the timing of their publicity or how they sold the benefits of the scheme to the media and public. The opposing 'No' campaign had been more effective in that their campaign to discredit the arguments for acceptance of the TIF and to effectively push the agenda from away from discussions on the wider benefits of the scheme had been going on much longer. They were therefore able to keep the focus of their campaign on the congestion-charging element, and as such it became the main feature in the press and media at national, regional and local levels. The same question regarding the approach of politicians when responding to the press the then Chair of the 'Yes' campaign stated:

> *I think Politicians vary but in most cases there is a scepticism based usually on their experience, (with the press) but in the case of transport, GM have had very good experience of the MEN in typically being supportive when they were bidding for Metro Link and Metro Link extensions. The MEN had taken it on board. I think currently key Politicians, not rank and file, but politicians who are running multi-billion pound organisations and the key policy makers, know very much how influential the press and media are. Whether or not there was a mis-judgement on this one, with regards to the timing or that perhaps not quite enough was said about the transport benefits prior to Peel jumping in on a CC I don't know, (Chair of the 'Yes' campaign, June 2011).*

5.4.1 Summary

Franklin (1994:16) points out that, political news is a mutual construction based on politicians and journalists using each other. He metaphorically refers to politicians and journalists 'sleeping together' suggesting that they keep shifting positions, so no one partner constantly dominates. Louw (2010) suggests that for journalists an on-going relationship with politicians is what is required on the political beat. These relationships work only because both politicians and journalists have a vested interest in sustaining, creating and maintaining a set of rules and practices which facilitate the smooth operation of their interaction. However, Louw (2010) fails to discuss or acknowledge the role that big business can play in the construction of political news and that journalists also have to maintain on-going relationships with major corporations. The increased use of marketing communications within the state is evident (as discussed in Sect 2.4) but it's clear that the concept of marketing came out of private business corporations which are probably even more adept at selling themselves and their ideologies (Parenti, 1993). It is clear that in the case of the Greater Manchester TIF case study, the business grouping GMMG with the inclusion of Peel Holdings and a number of politicians from the 'No' vote, were able to mount a very effective campaign using the press and media that clearly moved the debate away from wider issues such as public transport.

5.5 Political Advertising

One definition of political advertising is the 'paid placement of organizational messages in the media' (Bolland, 1989:10). In this sense it is argued that political advertising refers to the purchase and use of advertising space, paid for at commercial rates, in order to transmit political messages to a mass audience. This includes media such as cinema, billboards, the press, radio and television. The transportation policy sector is not new to the area of trying to engage the public and promote behaviour change by the use of communicating political messages through media outlets, as can be evidenced by attempts to change the seat belt law, reducing drink driving, or getting the public to observe speed cameras by government television advertisements (See Figures 5.3 & 5.4).

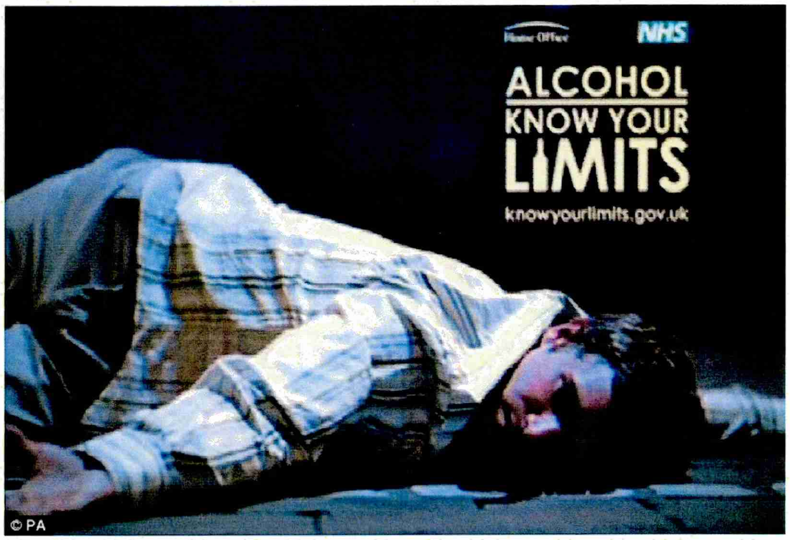
Figure 5.3 An original 1959 poster shows people how to use their seatbelt safely

Source: Ray Massey (2012)

Kavanagh (1995) suggests that uncertainty among party managers about the legality of press advertising during a campaign meant that it was not used on large scale until 1979.

However, he points out that now most press advertising is concentrated in the campaign period and more money is spent on it than any other item.

Figure 5.4 An image from the governments 'Know Your Limits' campaign (2006)



Source: Emily Allen (2012)

McNair (1995:11) points out that advertising has traditionally been associated with the business community, but over time politicians have have sought new ways of promoting themselves and their policies as the vote reached further across society.

The increasing expansion of the media in recent times created an opportunity for the development of political communication. McNair suggests that any group with a political agenda does well to note the importance of the media. He argues that not everybody embraces the application of advertising techniques in politics. McNair (1995:7) argues that politicians can approach the creation of a public image or product in two ways: one is 'proactive', their action is designed to create a positive media response; and the second is 'reactive', where they are seeking methods of damage limitation. Both sides within the TIF campaign adopted wide-scale use of political advertising methods including the use of billboards and television commercials. However, in applying advertising techniques to politics, there is always a danger that rationality may be removed. In other words there were clear cases where image became the product as both campaign groups appeared to be caught up in producing a plethora of slick advertisements rather than generating a debate of any real substance. The whole policy debate appeared at times to become trivialised and commercialised and these appeared to heighten public concerns about the amount of money spent on communications and marketing by both sides. McNair suggests that the fear of trivialisation is based on the perception that the methods used to sell commercial products are the same as those used to sell politics. He cites a quote by the director of the advertising agency Boase Massimi Pollitt (BMP) who commented on how the process for advertising politics and commercial products are similar:

> *...find out what can reasonably be achieved, who has to be persuaded, then research the best way to go about persuading them. (McNair, 1995:118)*

McNair (1995) suggests that politicians sell realities and ask the public to trust them. As with commercial advertisers, the audience is asked to place trust in the advertiser before the results are attained. Kavanagh (1995) points out the difficulty for print journalism to compete with the broadcasters in carrying the latest campaign news. This is due to the lengthening of the campaign day; the campaign managers' interest in gaining television coverage, and their desire to provide new stories for broadcasting outlets has all increased the pressures upon print journalists. He argues that one press response to the dominance of television has been to try and create a distinctive role by commissioning and interpreting opinion polls, inviting independent experts to audit the parties spending plans (in a general election), analysing issues, parties' campaign strategies and media coverage of the campaign. The MEN clearly demonstrated this in an article it ran in 2007:

> **'C-charge must bring benefits'**
> *Drivers can be persuaded to back congestion charging if the money raised is used to benefit them, according to one of Britain's top pollsters. Support rises to six in 10 if the cash is invested in improving public transport - and just under half say they would back road charging if the revenues raised were returned to motorists through cheaper petrol.*
>
> *Just over half say the same if they were returned to drivers through lower road tax, according to Ipsos MORI. This is in stark contrast to how the*

public feel in principle on the issue. More people currently oppose than support the idea of road charging in principle. Nearly half are opposed, with 29% strongly opposed. A third say they support road charging. The findings reflect the results of the M.E.N.'s own independent survey earlier this year that discovered that 64% of people thought charging is a bad idea. But 59% thought that the drive was a price worth paying if it paid for improvements to tram, train and buses.

Rebecca Klahr, head of transport research at Ipsos MORI, said:
In the past few days there has been speculation about government policy on road pricing. Our survey reveals a softer underbelly of public opposition than is often portrayed (Ipsos Mori, 2007).

Kavanagh (1995:195-6) points to a distinction between reporting and observing an election campaign, on the one hand, and participating, on the other. He suggests that politicians frequently complain that the press is moving more and more from the first to the latter. For their part, the more investigative and thoughtful reporters and commentators are irritated by the constraints of managed campaigns. Therefore, they may adopt a posture of 'disdaining the news' by calling the readers' attention to the ways in which politicians use photo opportunities and image making. The thinly veiled message in such background articles is that politicians and their communications advisers are trying to manipulate the voters and that presentation is often done at the cost of substance. In the TIF campaign journalists quite often focused on the negative images produced by campaigners in both camps that clearly appeared to move the voters attention from the key issues of the TIF debate (see Sect 4.9).

5.6 Accusations of Propaganda and Misinformation

The use of specific communication and marketing methods such as press advertising, online media and other sources such as billboard advertising was clearly widespread during the TIF campaign and used by both opponents and proponents of the congestion charge. In fact prior to the TIF bid being submitted, a vociferous coalition had been formed to campaign against the introduction of a congestion charge. This coalition, was spearheaded, by Manchester Against Road Tolls (MART) who, with assistance from Trafford Centre owners Peel Holdings had apparently run a series of billboard posters some of which were subsequently banned by the Advertising Standards Authority on the basis that they lacked "truthfulness" (Manchester Mule, 2008). In fact both sides were subsequently challenged with regard to their use of specific methods of advertising.

The capacity for policy makers to be accused of propaganda and misinforming the public is demonstrated very clearly by an article which appeared in the Manchester Evening News (MEN) in September 2008. It featured the launch of a poster campaign produced by the pro-congestion charge group apparently featuring three Manchester commuters promoting the YES campaign however, as the MEN reported, the pro-congestion charge campaigners had selected people who did not drive into the city centre. As the paper reported:

> *We revealed last year how pro-charge transport chiefs created four fake case studies of apparently local people to promote the scheme - including someone called `Terry from Rochdale' who turned out to be a 22-year-old American model called Erich Dalke. The fictional names and quotations accompanied images of other smiling American models (MEN, 2008)*

This article refers to 'Greater Manchester Future Transport' (GMFT) a pro-congestion charge organization set up by AGMA to publicise the TIF programme. A year earlier GMFT had been accused of apparently misleading motorists by sending leaflets showing the fake case studies to 2.5 million homes in Greater Manchester. However the paper also reported that the new adverts from the 'Yes' Campaign show real Manchester people and explain the reasons they will not have to pay the congestion charge. They also quoted a spokesman for the 'YES' Campaign Chris Palmer who stated that:

> *Ours are real people who live locally and are members of the campaign.*
> *The key issue for us is that there is a lot of mis-information and we are keen to get over the message that 9-out-of-10 will not have to pay the charge but*

10-out-of-10 will be affected by the £3bn which will improve transport and clear congestion (MEN, 2008)

In November 2008 an MEN article reported on a controversy that (*See figure 5.5 & 5.6)* developed concerning two campaign adverts and the fact that the issue was threatening to overshadow the start of Greater Manchester's crunch congestion charge referendum.

Figure 5.5 Congestion Charge Creates Stars Advert

THEY are Manchester's newest familiar faces. Now the stars of the larger-than-life posters for the congestion charge Yes Campaign are discovering the advantages of their celebrity status. One woman who features in the adverts has been asked for her autograph and offered free taxi rides".

Source: *Manchester Evening News – September 27th, 2008*

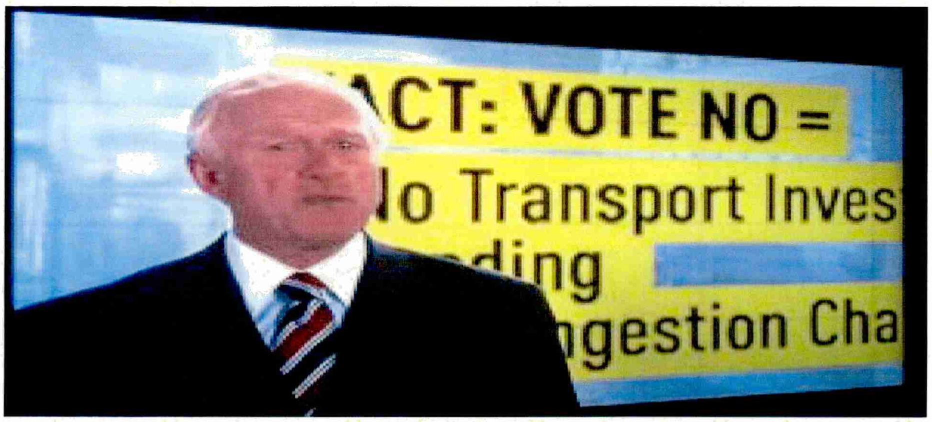
Figure 5.6 Billboard posters side by side, reflecting the views of both the 'No' & 'Yes' campaigns

Source: MEN (2008)

The billboard on the left features a construction worker stating 'I can't risk being late on site. That's why I'm voting Yes. The one on the right states 'Council tax, road tax, fuel tax, Up to £1200 a year Congestion Charge? One cost you do have a say on Vote No!

The MEN reported how Granada Television had pulled a £230,000, prime-time advertisement about the charging scheme following complaints, (presumably from the opposition) about alleged bias. The advertisement was taken off air after broadcasting watchdog Ofcom launched an investigation into its contents. It appeared that Ofcom had taken action following complaints questioning the impartiality of the advert that had been aired earlier and featured former BBC presenter Martin Henfield (See figure 5.7 & 5.8). The advertisement had been initially funded by a grant from the Department for Transport. The MEN reported that the GMPTE had at the time attempted to claim the funding for the loss of the advert back from the DfT (See figure 5.9).

Figure 5.7 Pro-charge Advertisement



Source: MEN Online (2008) 'Pro-charge' advert featuring Martin Henfield

The MEN also ran another article at the same time highlighting the suspension of an advertising company from the anti-charge Greater Manchester Momentum Group (GMMG) after it posted a film on the Internet that had depicted a young girl apparently being assaulted because her father was unable to pay the charge. The movie was apparently shot as a spoof of the hit American drama 24, but was billed `repugnant' and `beyond belief' by critics. The short publicity film was supposedly shot at the Trafford Centre and showed a young girl ringing her dad after being followed by a menacing figure in a hood. The father refuses to come to pick her up, claiming he `can't afford' the charge, and instead urges her to make for the motorway, outside the proposed charging zone. The footage ends with the sound of the girl screaming as the screen fades to black with the message “Stop this madness! Vote no” (MEN, 2008b).

The company that posted it on YouTube, Manchester-based Sonassi Media, was immediately expelled from the anti-charge GMMG when the film came to light. The MEN reported that a spokeswoman for GMMG later claimed they had no knowledge of the film being made and found it deplorable, MEN (2008b).

The MEN quoted the chair of the `yes' campaign, as commenting that:

> *For members of the `no' campaign to use images of violence against women to promote their campaign is beyond belief (MEN, 2008b)*

The MEN also quoted the Director of Operations at Sonassi, as stating that the video was entirely the work of himself and a friend operating under the banner 'Free Manchester' and was intended to be humorous. At the time the incident worried officials that the postal referendum which some saw as the important decision facing the region in decades - would descend into political ‘mud-slinging’, undermining the key issues within the debate (MEN, 2008a).

In February 2008 the Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) responded to a letter from a member of the public that objected to four posters produced by the Association of British Drivers (ABD) and Manchester Against Road Tolls (MART) (see figure 5.8) who were opposed to the proposed introduction of a congestion charge (ASA Letter, 2007).

The letter to the ASA described how the ABD and MART had issued a press release announcing the launch of a billboard poster campaign. Entitled “Manchester's £3 Billion Con” the billboard poster campaign also claimed to be against motorists being “Tagged, Tracked and Taxed”.

Figure 5.8 Ofcom Ruling Against GMFT in November 2008

Ofcom Broadcast Bulletin, Issue 123 8 December 2008
In Breach

Greater Manchester transport plan – local poll advertisement
ITV1 (Granada), 6-13 November 2008, various times

This finding was originally published on 28 November 2008.
Introduction
Ofcom received seven complaints about an advertisement broadcast on ITV1 (Granada) publicising a local poll being held in the Greater Manchester area. The poll seeks to gauge opinion on a proposed transport plan for the area, to be financed by funding from a central government Transport Innovation Fund ("TIF"). This transport plan includes the introduction of a congestion charging scheme.

The advertisement featured a presenter in a studio referring to the poll and summarising the consequences of 'yes' and 'no' outcomes. During the advertisement a call to action to vote, the name and logo: Greater Manchester Future Transport ("GMFT"), and GMFT's website address were all prominently displayed.

GMFT is a brand set up to provide information on the transport proposals. It was established jointly by the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities ("AGMA"), a grouping of the area's local authorities, and the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority ("GMPTA"), the body responsible for the county's public transport provision. The GMPTA has an executive arm, the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive ("GMPTE"). Small logos of AGMA and GMPTA were shown briefly in the advertisement's closing sequence.

The advertisement had been cleared by Clearcast. This body examines and advises on advertising scripts and films before production and transmission, on behalf of broadcasters, with the aim of ensuring compliance.

The complainants alleged variously that the advertisement was biased towards the 'yes' choice in the poll (i.e. the outcome in favour of the imposition of a congestion charging scheme) and constituted propaganda.

Political broadcast advertising is prohibited under the terms of section 321 of the Communications Act 2003 ("the Act") and, for television, by Section 4 of the Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice (BCAP) Television Advertising Standards Code ("the TV Advertising Code"). *The relevant extracts from the Act and the TV Advertising Code are given in full at the end of this adjudication.*

The TV Advertising Code, formerly Ofcom's Advertising Standards Code, is now administered by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) and BCAP. Ofcom, however, remains responsible under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding, between Ofcom and the ASA, for enforcing the rules on Political Advertising, namely Section 4 of the TV Advertising Code.
Ofcom sought ITV's comments on whether:

a) the advertisement, by prominently featuring the GMFT website, was "directed towards a political end", as proscribed by section 321(2)(b) of the Act and Section 4(b) of the TV Advertising Code; and

7

Source: Ofcom Broadcast Bulletin issue 123 (8th December 2008)

The poster campaign was reported to be using 35 billboards around Manchester. The ASA had also been sent photographs that had been taken of 4 of the billboard poster designs that were being displayed on Peel Advertising billboards at the Trafford Centre, Greater Manchester.

The complainant was seeking adjudication from the Advertising Standards Authority on whether these billboard posters were in breach of the British Code of Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing (CAP Code, 2010:17), in particular with reference to the following sections:

1. All marketing communications should be legal, decent, honest and truthful.
2. All marketing communications should be prepared with a sense of responsibility to consumers and to society.
3. Before distributing or submitting a marketing communication for publication, marketers must hold documentary evidence to prove all claims, whether direct or implied, that are capable of objective substantiation.
4. If there is a significant division of informed opinion about any claims made in a marketing communication they should not be portrayed as generally agreed.
5. Marketers should not exploit the credulity, lack of knowledge or inexperience of consumers.
6. No marketing communication should mislead, or be likely to mislead, by inaccuracy, ambiguity, exaggeration, omission or otherwise.
7. Marketers may give a view about any matter, including the qualities or desirability of their products, provided it is clear that they are expressing their own opinion rather than stating a fact.

The specific details of the complaint related to various aspects of the information portrayed on a number of billboards (e.g. see figure 5.9) – 'Just pay up and keep quiet. We know best' (Billboard 1) This statement gives the impression that those wishing to introduce the Congestion Charging scheme have no interest in consulting the people of Greater Manchester. Despite the fact that the proposed scheme had seen one of the largest consultation exercises undertaken in Greater Manchester.

The complainant asked the ASA to consider their objections on each of the posters on the following grounds, ASA Letter (July 2007):

Bilboard 2 (fig 5.9) - Manchester Motorists: “Tagged, Tracked and Taxed”

Figure 5.9 ‘No’ vote campaign posters

(1) Just pay up and keep quiet. We know best

(2) Manchester Motorists: Tagged, Tracked and Taxed

(3) and (4) Stop Moaning What's £5 a day. The Toll Tax: Keeps the roads free for the rich.

Source: theNewspaper.com (Feb 2008)

The complainant to the ASA pointed out that according to an article in the Times (11th January 2007) members of the Association of British Drivers had circulated emails containing inaccuracies relating to the extent of tracking that congestion charging schemes would entail. It contains several inaccuracies and paints an alarming picture of the impact of national road tolls on families and claiming that the Government was planning to force drivers to spend up to £200 on a tracking device that will monitor all their movements and charge them £89 a month in road tolls and catch them every time that they exceed the speed limit.

In billboard 3 (fig 5.9) the complainant pointed out that this statement ignored the fact that across Greater Manchester 33% of households (often low income households) do not own a car and are very likely to use public transport and will therefore not be subject to any “congestion charges”. But they will still suffer from the pollution caused by traffic in Greater Manchester and would therefore benefit from any reductions in traffic pollution. Whilst billboard 4 (fig 5.9) appears to suggest that the charge is aimed at the poorest sections of society in order to keep the roads free for the more affluent car driving public.

5.6.1 Summary

Gelders & Brans (2007) point to the difficulties faced by public authorities when communicating about policy intentions by paid publicity, in that those with opposing views, such as pressure groups and media can communicate details of intended policies incorrectly or one-sidedly. Therefore, public officials or policy officers, find it necessary to communicate by paid publicity if they want to be heard. Furthermore, countering misleading or inaccurate communication would be much more difficult if they were limited to mere press interviews and press conferences. Gelders & Brans (2007) points out, that there is a very thin line between what is meant by ‘neutral’ public information and what is meant by ‘political propaganda’. They argue that the political position of a minister may have an influence over the exact aim of the message, and if this happens then they question whether this constitutes propaganda and therefore can be seen as a misuse of public money, or, whether this is just a case of supplying transparent information in a democratic state with the intention of informing and involving the public and organizations within society about policy intentions and developments.

The issue of the use of public finances for communicating policy intentions is a contentious one. In the Manchester Transport Innovation Fund campaign this issue was contested quite vociferously within the local press and media and as such transport policy officers found themselves faced with accusations of wasting tax payer's money on propaganda. The following article appeared in the Manchester Evening News in November 2008:

> *The political charged debate inevitably focused on public money spent on publicity, it was played with by the those people who stood to gain a bit of*

capital out of it, you shouldn't really expect otherwise. In a political debate, you do what you can to try and win your side of the debate. The downside to it was that it made it slightly harder as a public body to try and encourage people to read the material as consultation material (MEN, 2008).

What was interesting about the discussion regarding the cost of the publicity and how the money was spent, was the way in which the public and press focussed on the 'money spent and wasted on the congestion charge campaign' But officials emphatically referred to it as money that was used to achieve their aim of providing non-partisan, accurate information of the facts. However, sections of the public and media saw the commitment of such a large communication budget and strategy as a deliberate attempt to sell the congestion charge propaganda to the public. When asked about the debate regarding the amount of money spent on publicity for the TIF campaign a respondent stated:

There was quite a debate around the amount of money that was spent on publicity. The interesting thing is the way that you have worded your question, which is yes, some of the lazier reporting had made some of the more strident noises if you like around that particular issue. Most talked about money spent on publicity for the CC campaign, actually the money that we spent was on the public consultation (Senior Transport Policy Officer GMPTE, November 2011).

The primary focus was on what the public sector spent on the campaign. There was very little debate with regard to the corresponding amount of money that was spent on the 'No' vote, which was primarily funded by Peel Holdings and other private sector businesses such as Kelloggs. This was summed up by the then MP for Denton & Redditch:

The thing is that, the 'No' campaign was primarily funded by the private sector, so in terms of public funding, received very little other than the statutory stuff, which was sent out with the ballot papers. In terms of the 'yes' campaign it was primarily funded by the public sector and that did *rankle a bit because they really did throw a lot of money at it. Part of you did think well actually if you spent even a fraction of this in improving public transport in GM, we might not need this blasted CC anyway (MP for Denton & Redditch and Shadow Transport Minister, September 2011).*

The MEN also commented on the amount of money used in the campaign and in particular the advertisment featuring Martin Henfield (see fig 5.7 & 5.10).

Figure 5.10

Manchester Evening News

C-CHARGE DEBATE HITS X FACTOR

David Ottewell November 12, 2008

"An advert about the crunch congestion charge vote has been shown during The X Factor as part of a £1m information campaign.
The ad, featuring BBC presenter Martin Henfield, was transmitted in the north- west.

It is part of a package of ads being shown on Granada and the M.E.N's sister station, Channel M, costing £230,000 in all. A further £330,000 has been spent on direct-mail brochures to all Greater Manchester's 1.2m households, £125,000 on newspaper `wraps' and £75,000 on press advertising.

Another £40,000 is going on online advertising, £60,000 on leaflets in shops and £40,000 on public relations ahead of the all-postal referendum. The money is coming from the Department for Transport."

Source: MEN (2008)

Volmer (2000) points out that the use of public finances by government in the communication of policy intentions can be a dangerous practice unless it can be shown that communication is clearly intended to stimulate participation in interactive policy making processes. The inference here is that opponents of a specific policy would be at the mercy of a more powerful governmental communications mechanism. This debate over the size of the communication budgets assumes that much of the material has an impact on the readers of recipients of the messages. Commentators (e.g. Reddy 1979, Chandler 2002) argue that the process of decoding a message is individual and whilst it may be influenced by broad social and cultural factors, there are no certainties. Hall (1980 in McNair 1995:31) points out that, the reader of a text could assume one of three positions. (1) a 'preferred reading', (2) a 'negotiated reading' or (3) an, 'oppositional reading'. He suggests that the preferred reading is the reading intended by the author.

For example in the case of image 1 (Figure 5.9), the preferred reading means accepting the view of the 'No' campaign that the protagonists of the congestion charging scheme had no interest in consulting the people of Greater Manchester, but had taken a paternalistic attitude towards the GM residents, expecting the people to just pay up and not question the policy as the policy makers knew best. Hall argues that this type of reading involves understanding and accepting the message in its totality. An oppositional reading would also involve understanding the message but rejecting it. The openness of authorship of most political communication leads to problems of predetermined bias. The advertisement may be cleverly constructed with informed points to make, but its integral openness of authorship could cause readers to form oppositional readings regardless. In fact research carried out on the impact of politicians' speeches suggests that audiences "will hear what they want to hear, regardless of what the favoured candidate says" Diamond & Bates (1992), in McNair (1995:36). A negotiated reading involves broad acceptance of the preferred reading, but involves personal modifications. In the case of the examples given in figure 5.9 above, such a reading could involve acceptance of the messages given by the 'No' vote campaigners in the billboard posters, but a dislike of the negative techniques used to achieve to get the message across.

The adverts make no reference to the failings of congestion charging as a policy but simply try to reinforce the image that the policy is bad. This is, of course, communicated through the use of techniques borrowed from the world of commercial advertising, and as such may be viewed as an example of the democratization of politics, but the problem is that the message is not substantiated and thus leads to the assertion by commentators that political advertising is debasing politics, eradicating rationality from the process of choice (Savigny, 2008:116).

5.7 Impact on Local Democracy

The discussion so far shows that politicians and policy makers during the TIF campaign were not just aware of the use of political marketing techniques in the policy process, but saw such methods as critically important when trying get their message across to the public. In fact terms such as 'selling a scheme' or 'selling a set of policies' were used in a number of cases. As one senior politician stated:

> *"Yes, as politicians we are certainly aware because its what we do as part of our jobs to get re-elected every 4-5yrs and the slight difference here they were selling a scheme rather than selling a set of policies or an individual personality. But they are all the same techniques, a referendum is no different to any other election and so all those tried and tested techniques that we use in general and local elections we were using in the referendums. So we were knocking on doors, we were holding street stalls, there were petitions, there were billboards, there were glossy leaflets, there were flyers on both sides. It was just like any other election in that respect", (MP for Denton & Redditch and Shadow Transport Minister, September 2011).*

As Franklin (2004:11) points out, "the trend towards packaging politics has attracted both advocates and critics". Franklin states that many politicians, broadcasters and academic observers believe this to be an unavoidable consequence of developments in media technology, and as such that there is what he terms a 'discernible whiff of technological determinism' in the claim 'you can't de-invent television'. He suggests that advocates see the packaging of politics as enhancing the process of a democracy, becaus political communication via press, radio and television is seen to ensure that much more information about political issues, events and personalities can be transmitted to the electorate in an accessible and comprehensible form. According to Franklin (2004), advocates view the systematic use of media-based communication strategies as a way to expand the public's information base which they can draw upon as voters to make informed choices. In other words, packaging politics in this way increases public knowledge, citizen participation and government accountability. This view bears similarities to the views of a number of respondents interviewed. Many pointed out the need for the use of media technology in providing comprehensive information to the public.

> *...Politicians are keen to almost appear to be ultra modern, so they embrace the kind of new media whether it be twitter or whether it be, email, not email in that sense I meant face book, just the populous kind of things. They seem keen to be involved in that..they were always keen to have as much information out there as possible to promote their particular argument whether they be for or against congestion charging...(Chief Reporter, Stockport Express, August 2011)*

At the same time Franklin, points to criticism which suggests that the political process is being diminished by growing media involvement, which corrupts as well as communicates political messages. As such he outlines that from this perspective, the process of packaging politics attempts to manipulate as well as informing the public. He suggests that in British media democracy the presentational form of political communications has become more significant than the substantive policy content, in that image has become far more important than substance. Franklin (2004:11) argues that the manicuring of policies has taken centre stage. He quotes Peter Mandelson, who in his time as coordinator of communications for the Labour government stated:

> *"There are some who still denigrate the presentation of policy as a diversion from its substance, as a superficial and unnecessary coating to the main product. I take the opposite view in that, if a government policy cannot be presented in a simple and attractive way, it is more likely than not to contain fundamental flaws and prove to be the wrong policy".*

Franklin (2004) poses the argument that the ambition to market politics poses a challenge to democracy in that the relationship between media and government can be collusive yet also asymmetrical. He suggests that in this case the media can often become little more than conduits for government policy messages, drafted by press officers and special advisers only to be mistakenly taken as the work of independent journalists by readers.

5.7.1 Summary

A key issue to emerge from the findings is that transport policy makers within Greater Manchester were aware of the political risks associated with pursuing the Transport Innovation Fund initiative. In fact for proponents of the bid, the amount of funding that had been on offer from central government at the time justified the potential risks. However, the protagonists underestimated the weight of dissent that was brought by opponents of the scheme who were quite vociferous and included a number of senior politicians, key business leaders and pro-car lobbyists who formed a very effective coalition against the TIF bid and in particular the congestion charging element of the proposal. It was also clear that the AGMA, who had traditionally experienced and enjoyed cross party consensus on a number of high profile transport issues within Greater Manchester was deeply divided on the issue, and political division and disagreement over the proposals ranged from impacts on businesses to the effects it would have on lower income families living and working within the charging zone.

The lack of consensus amongst AGMA members led to a call for a referendum, the issue being that if the politicians couldn't agree then it was time to let the people decide, although for a number of policy advisers tasked with providing the required amount of information to the public, the decision to go for a referendum was felt to be very late in the day. Policy advisors argued that the scheme was highly complex and much more time was needed in order to fully prepare the public for the coming referendum. However, even before the application for TIF status was submitted, opposition was mounting in the form of a very powerful coalition which included a number of key businesses, who started a campaign against the TIF bid and in particular voiced their concerns regarding the implementation of congestion charging within Greater Manchester.

As the battle lines were drawn it was clear that the advocates of the TIF bid had accepted the charging element simply as a means to an end. They argued that the amounts of funding being offered by the DfT through the TIF process, was an opportunity Greater Manchester could not afford to pass up if it was going to be able to tackle the transport issues of growing traffic congestion within the conurbation and to address wider economic issues. Whilst for the opposition the implementation of congestion charging would be an unmitigated disaster, an additional tax on motorists and business while some also argued that traffic congestion was not yet anywhere near the levels being suggested by those in favour of the TIF scheme. What is of interest here is how each side has problematised or defined the issue, as this didn't just have implications with regard to how the issue was reported in the media, but how the congestion charge element came to dominate the political agenda crowding out debates regarding the wider benefits such as improved public transport services and links.

The analysis also highlights the fact that once the issue of congestion charging became the key issue within the public domain, both sides wasted very little time in mobilizing political communications professionals and devising strategies to win over public opinion to their cause. The stakes were high and it was clear that at the national level the Labour Government still held out hope that if Manchester were to be successful in the implementation of the TIF proposals then other cities would also follow suit and they were prepared to make available a substantially increased communications budget to help proponents of the TIF bid advertise the key benefits of the TIF proposals prior to the referendum. It also underlines the key strategies used by communications practitioners throughout the campaign and how a number of billboard and television advertisements fell foul of Ofcom, for their unfair, misguided and overly negative portrayal of the issues. What was clear is that the media were often engaged more in the reporting of negative campaigning and the tactics of negative advertising being used by the various sides than on the issues themselves. Kavanagh (1995) in his evaluations of negative campaining in the USA and UK suggests that campaign leaders in Britain seem to believe that a 'positive' approach, e.g. reporting a list of a party's achievements or a proposal for some future policy, receives negligible media coverage. In other words, the media influence the style of campaining. Kavanagh (1995:157) cites former Conservative MP Chris Patten who stated:

> *In 1992 we started off with training and education and then the next day the manifesto and got no coverage. When we attacked Labour we got coverage and were criticised for being negative… (interview).*

Kavanagh points out that some of the criticism of negative campaigning misses the point. In any campaign, whether it is politics or commerce, the job of the communicator is to strike an effective balance between the attack and defence. Therefore, an important aspect of any communications exercise for a political party is to put a negative gloss on the policies of its rivals and to point out their past mistakes and incompetence, he adds, this tactic has not been allowed in commercial advertising until recently.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusions – Transport Policy Making & the Adoption of New Tools of Persuasion

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the general conclusions to the thesis by drawing out and summarising some of the main issues to come out of the study and linking these to some of the key debates discussed in chapters II and III in order to highlight a number of methodological and theoretical issues, before going on to give consideration to the research findings presented in chapter V. The thesis explores the perceptions of policy makers with regard to the increasing use of political marketing and communications methods within transport policy making, and in particular in selling policy intentions to the public. The Greater Manchester Transport Innovation Fund Bid was chosen for a number of reasons that are set out in Chapter IV and it provided a clear example of how political communications and marketing has become a key function within the transport policy framework.

6.1 Summary of Key findings

The use of political communication methods in the area of transport politics has been a central theme in this thesis as it examines the use of public relations marketing and advertising techniques by the transport policy-making elite but also underlines the corporate political communications strategy of big business when their interests are threatened by public policy decisions. This includes an investigation into the role of media and journalists as political reporters, interpreters, commentators and agenda setters when operating within the transport policy domain, observing how their relationship of interdependence with transport policy makers has shaped the behaviours and professional practices of both groups. Finally the thesis assesses the impact of political communication on the democratic process as a whole.

An examination of the campaign strategies and methods used by the various organizations that were either for or against the TIF bid, provides some insight into the range of methods employed and the extent to which they were used. This research also explains the perceptions of the politicians, transport planning officials, journalists and campaign organizers involved with the various campaigns. Archive documents and material both in print and online, including central and local government reports from organizations within Greater Manchester, provide a solid contextual basis on which to study the key debates at local, regional and national level. In the early years of this study there was very little in the literature with regard to political communications and its links to transport policy making or selling transport policy intentions to the public but, over the six years since the study began, a number of papers and conferences have made significant reference to this area of study (see Sect 2.24).

6.2 Promoting Contentious Transport Issues

In recent decades the UK has seen both increasing car ownership and a decrease in the average car occupancy (see Sect 1.3). In 2004 the former Labour Government announced the Transport Innovation Fund and as a result local authorities were encouraged to access the funds based on the agreement that they introduce measures to reduce traffic such as congestion charging or a working place parking levy (see Sect 4.2). A report for Manchester City Council noted that whilst rising congestion was a feature of a thriving economy it would inevitably impact on the economy's growth path for the future. The report also concluded that solutions which relied exclusively on additional road capacity were neither economically or environmentally sustainable. The report therefore suggested that congestion charging should be considered as it could have a role in delivering economic growth whilst managing the carbon footprint and air quality of the Greater Manchester area in the longer term.

Greater Manchester authorities made a bid to the TIF fund for just under £3 billion. This was made up of £1.5 billion from government funds, £1.2 billion from a peak-time-only congestion charge, and £0.1 billion from other contributions. The congestion charge would only be introduced when at least 80% of the transport improvements were in place i.e. 2013 at the earliest. The proponents of the TIF bid argue that Manchester had no option but to revolutionise its transport systems and funding regimes to support a significant shift away from private car use and towards more sustainable alternatives, whilst the opponents which included a vociferous coalition headed by big business such as Peel Holdings, who were concerned about the charging element of the TIF scheme. The controversial nature of this policy was evident from the very early stages of its conception and as indicated previously in the thesis (see Sect 4.3), it was strongly opposed by a number of politicians as well as sections of the public. The literature points to various studies looking at pricing measures for transport that have tended to show low levels of public acceptability for such interventions. Commentators (e.g. Schade & Schlag 2000; Jones 1998) have pointed to a number of factors that contribute to low acceptability, arguing that such factors are of importance in the design of interventions that are attempting to enhance the public's acceptability of pricing or restrictive transport policies. These are: (a) problem perception, (b) mobility related social norms, (c) knowledge/information about options, (d) perceived effectiveness of the proposed measures, (e) equity/fairness of, system characteristics like charge level, (f) method of charging and revenue allocation.

'Problem perception' is an area in which it is suggested that understanding the publics perception of traffic related problems is a necessary precondition for regarding problem solving measures, in other words high problem awareness leads to increased willingness to accept solutions for the perceived problem, (Steg & Vlek, 1997). Studies have also indicated that the public perceive mobility related problems as more serious in more densely populated regions in particular (Jones, 1991a). However, although a few studies have established some correlation between problem perception and acceptability of a number of pricing measures (Rienstra *et al.* 1999; Bamberg & Rolle 2003) there remains an inconsistency in terms of empirical findings on the influence of problem perception and its links to public acceptability. 'Social norms and pressure', relates to the issue that the more social pressure to accept a pricing strategy is perceived, then the higher will be the individual's acceptability of the particular strategy. Schlag & Schade (2000) suggest that social pressure and social norms are the most influential determinant of acceptability, however this again presents an area that has been under-investigated.

'Knowledge/information about policy alternatives', the influence of knowledge and the awareness of policy alternatives and their purpose on acceptability is particularly vague. However, this research did find that policy makers' perception regarding the significance and importance of knowledge was apparent, even if its exact function remains uncertain, and emphasises that the important role of knowledge regarding the ways in which to increase acceptability of controversial policies such as pricing should not be underestimated. Thus appropriate and early information remains critical in gaining acceptance of these types of innovations. However, results from the study underline the impact that the systemic trend on political communications within the transport policy process has had upon on the activities of policy makers and organizations within the UK. Transport policy makers are increasingly having to operate within an uncertain, divided and unequal political age, and communications are clearly now perceived by transport policy makers as part of the strategic policy making process.

As pointed out by Gelders *et al.* (2007:64-66) public communication about policy intentions has become a more complex and unstable issue for public bodies. This combined with other issues such as the crumbling "pillarisation", "de-ideologisation", and the increasing "volatility" of the electorate means that it has become more difficult for policy makers to define which proportion /section the population is in favour of a specific policy issue. Attempting to communicate contentious policy issues complicates and adds even more instability to the policy making process. As Garnett (1992:15-19) points out:

> *The policy-making processes are made more complicated in the public sector by interference from politics and the mass media. This is illustrated by the 'negotiation process' between politicians and the media; politicians often float trial balloons to gain insight into the support for the policy intention.*

The Labour Government's announcement of the Transport Innovation Fund in the Transport White Paper in (DfT, 2004:4) was indeed aimed at floating several trial balloons in order to test the public's appetite for such radical policies. The issue of congestion charging continues to be highly contentious and (as previously discussed Chapter 2) whilst many politicians pay lip service to the need for effective solutions to tackle increasing traffic congestion in cities, and the role that fiscal interventions such as smart charging could play, convincing the public to accept such policies in the UK still proves difficult.

6.3 Marketing Ideology & Transport Politics

The political context within which transport policy makers have to operate has gone through a transformation both ideologically and politically and transport policy-making organizations have had to adapt their behaviour in response to such changes. A key part of this transformation has been the rise of the political consumer, and marketing as an ideology emerged with New Right thinking on managerialism permeating the political sphere and in particular the transport policy and decision making arena (see Sect 2.6). Marketing as an ideology became increasingly prominent during the 1980s in a period of deregulation and privatisation of public transport services. The ideology at the time being that the private sector was better able to provide public transport service efficiently and give the user a wider choice. The use of the term 'transport consumer' was also soon to become part of the vocabulary of transport policy makers.

These changes also affected transport lobbyists from within the sector, as environmental, public transport user groups, and the road lobby became increasingly vocal. At the same time transport policymakers were faced with increasing concerns about the decreasing use of public transport and the issue of growing congestion within UK and European cities, and the need to consider new solutions to the problem rather than increased road building. Some of these solutions would potentially be seen as far too radical for the tastes of transport publics and would need a more strategic approach to how such policies would be sold to the general public in order to gain public acceptance. Policy makers turned to marketing ideology to address this problem, and in particular, political marketing techniques, which clearly provided ways in which they could package their political messages, and attempt to have some influence in the way these messages, are delivered to the media and public. The prevalence of new media in modern society has lead political organisations to attempt to utilise its reach. As McNair (1995:6) observes, "in an age of universal suffrage and a *mass* electorate parties must use *mass* media (author's emphasis). In so doing, parties and organizations hire media advisors and advertising companies to assist, leading to the use of commercial techniques to create the political "product". McNair points out that this does not inherently lead to the downfall of rational political discourse, as image based adverts have often proved unsuccessful.

As Savigny (2008) points out, the implementation of marketing principles is not simply about changes in technology, strategies or techniques. Marketing has to be adopted as a mindset, a guiding philosophy and an ideology. In order to emphasise the extent to which this pervaded the public sphere, she quotes Harris & Wring (2001:909) who observe, that there is now a perception that "managerialism has to some extent replaced traditional forms of ideology as the driving force within modern politics". The techniques of marketing discussed in this thesis emphasise the role managerialism now plays within transport policy making and the importance policy makers attach to marketing and New Right managerialist thinking which drives the policy making process and political campaigning. It could be argued that these form the visible elements of much deeper ideological commitments to the primacy of the market (Savigny, 2008). There is a dearth in terms of political marketing literature discussing the ideological content of politics. As Savigny (2008:64) points out, "any reference to it, suggests that it can provide a 'package' in which politics is presented and is fluid, implying that ideology can be adapted to fit electoral strategy".

6.4 Reasons Greater Manchester Pursued the TIF Bid

It was clear from the evidence that the perceived political risks associated with introducing such a contentious and high profile scheme and in particular the congestion-charge element of the scheme were evident to GM's policy makers. Nevertheless as the evidence suggests GM politicians had been wrestling with years of underfunding and a growing problem of traffic congestion within the region, they felt this had to be addressed. The amount of funding being offered at the time by the Government through the TIF scheme clearly offered an opportunity to tackle issues such as upgrading the Manchester metro-link and funding improvements to public transport, and in the view of a number of policy makers the large amounts of funding on offer from the Government justified the political risks.

6.5 Reasons for Calling a Referendum

The evidence from the analysis shows that a consensus had long existed between the 10 local authorities with regard to the direction of transport provision within the GM area. However it became clear from very early on in the process that the TIF Bid was going to threaten the very nature of this longstanding consensus and become the cause of major divisions between the authorities as well as within the political parties. The decision to go to a referendum was clearly a difficult one for the GMAs to make given the differences in opinion between many policy makers at the time. As Laisney (2012:11) points out:

> *"When analyzing the causes of this referendum, it should be remembered that, unlike the Edinburgh referendum, the decision to hold a referendum was taken belatedly in the development of the transport plan".*

In fact Laisney corroborated the findings within this thesis that the decision to organize a referendum was made officially in July 2008, a year after the finalisation and submission of the TIF bid to the Government for selection in July 2007. The then Minister for Transport, Ruth Kelly, announced the Government's intention to support GM's bid for a £1.3 billion grant from the Department for Transport in June 2008. But a key part of the deal was that GM would introduce a congestion charge scheme to pay for the remaining costs incurred by the investment. As Laisney (2012:11) quite rightly argues, AGMA and GMPTA had carefully avoided the idea of a referendum for a long time, the then Leader of Manchester City Council arguing that the issue's complexity was such that it could not be addressed in a simple 'Yes/No' question. The radical opposition of specific boroughs within GM to the idea of congestion charging was evident and well reported in areas of the local press such as the MEN in April 2007 suggesting that the boroughs of Stockport and Trafford had concerns regarding plans to introduce the scheme (Devine, 2007). The thesis findings corroborate this and also found that a key issue for a number of politicians was that the Manchester scheme was far too ambitious, being far larger than the London charging zone. Opponents to the scheme argued that it had quickly become apparent in the proposals that this was bound to be hugely unpopular with the public and so ultimately the response of local politicians was to give local people the choice as to whether or not they wanted congestion charging to be introduced. Several respondents argued that policy makers had badly misjudged the public mood, and the argument that a lengthy campaign would buy time in which to persuade voters of the merits of the scheme was not borne out. In fact the referendum campaign merely allowed the opposition to voice their concerns and fears.

Laisney (2012:2) points to the increasing use of referenda in the United Kingdom since the 1990s and suggests that this is true at both national and local government levels. He argues that after New Labour won the 1997 general election they quickly began to develop a modernization plan for local government that included the referendum as an 'important tool with which to give local residents a bigger say' (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 1998). As such the local referendum was seen as having a key role to play in raising interest in local issues. Laisney suggests that UK local authorities were given the discretion to initiate and organise referenda as and when they pleased. This led to referenda covering a range of issues from congestion charging and council tax levels, to the creation of directly elected mayors and regional government.

6.6 Media Coverage of the TIF Bid

Several key respondents believed that media coverage of the scheme was reasonably balanced and had tried to explain in considerable detail the benefits of the TIF initiative in particular the MEN and regional television, radio and online media outlets. However whilst reporting on the proposals by the MEN itself appeared to be balanced, a few respondents noted that other papers in the MEN group (for example, the Tyneside Advertiser and Stockport Express) appeared to take a particular position and in many cases came out against the congestion charge. As one respondent suggested, this may well have been repeated throughout the 10 boroughs with other local papers taking a particular stance and expressing local views. Overall there was a feeling amongst respondents that the press had helped to facilitate the debate although there had been some concern that in a few instances there was evidence of 'lazy reporting' on the part some journalists, who mainly reported what they had heard or gleaned from other outlets rather than clarifying the original source of the information. The press also devoted a lot of time to reporting on the heated debates that took place between the proponents and opponents to the TIF scheme in particular accusations of misinformation and negative advertising from both sides.

6.7 Communications & Consultation in Complex Policy Making Environments

This thesis demonstrates that transport policy makers are required to operate within an uncertain, divided and unequal age, when communication has clearly become a key part of the strategic policy making process. The transport policy-making arena has become more complex and the public sphere has become more accessible to oppositional voices than in the past as pointed out by Stanyer (2007). At the same time transport policy makers are faced with the problem of how best to put forward complex information with regard to future policy intentions in often continually fluctuating political environments. In the Manchester case study, officers were instructed to begin the process of constructing a consultation and information strategy which conformed to government consultation and communication guidelines, and which would inform public opinion and educate the public on the issues involved in the TIF bid. However policy makers were clearly unaware that at the very early stages of the bid process a very vociferous lobby of powerful businesses aligned with a pro-car lobby were planning a substantial and high profile campaign to oppose the Transport Innovation Fund bid and it appears that this was not purely an opposition to the congestion charge element which (policy makers had been keen to stress) would have not been implemented until 2013, sometime after major improvements to public transport would have been made.

Nevertheless, in the case of a number of key companies there appears to have also been opposition to improvements to public transport, certainly on the part of businesses such as Peel Holdings who had a business model based on easy access to their sites by private car.

Whilst the findings of the thesis are not entirely consistent with the view that an active citizenry exists in which all interest groups are equally active in promotion of their respective position (Louw, 2007). It was clear that smaller less powerful 'NO' campaign interest groups were able to join a larger alliance and share the resources of the more powerful groups. McNair (2003) argued that marginal political actors, operating outside established political institutions often stand at a disadvantage with respect to government and official bodies. He suggests this is due to a lack of resources that puts them at a disadvantage when it comes to making news or setting public agendas. However, It was clear that smaller less powerful groups who were firmly opposed to the TIF were able to join a broader more powerful coalition and thus pool resources that enabled these groups to collectively design and launch a much broader, strategic communication campaign against the TIF policy. As a result smaller and weaker groups within the GMMG coalition had access to sources of finance and thus to a wider range of components of effective political communication such as qualified professional communications experts and advertising and public relations materials.

The research also demonstrates the extent to which public communication campaigns have become much more sophisticated and suggests that there is a tension between that of government legislation and the guidance about communicating policy intentions, and also that such legislation fails to take into account the increasing ability of groups and publics opposed to a policy initiative to also organize and develop and fund seemingly effective counter campaign methods, in their own right. Also worth noting was the perception of political figures on the nature of how much power and influence specific businesses such as Peel Holdings, had in influencing sections of the public.

The study also reveals that organizations on both sides were quite willing to consider and use a wide variety of different media, including the use of expensive TV advertising in order to get their message across and that there were occasions where both campaign camps voiced accusations of bias against each other. As demonstrated in Chapter 5 this often involved high profile BBC presenters or even soap actors. Ofcom following quite vociferous complaints questioning its impartiality took one such advert (funded by the Department for Transport) off air. The use of negative advertising was evidenced by the suspension of an advertising company who had been employed by Greater Manchester Momentum Group (GMMG). This company produced a controversial short film showing a young girl being assaulted (see sect 4.9) and illustrates how far many organizations were prepared to go in the use of negative campaign methods.

As shown in Chapter 5 Peel Holdings was part of a larger umbrella campaign group 'Manchester Against Road Tolls (MART) that included the Association of British Drivers (ABD). Opposition to the scheme also came from other businesses and key companies in the area, such as Kelloggs, Bestway, Hydes, and United Biscuits, who came together under another umbrella organisation called the Greater Manchester Momentum Group (GMMG), as well as the Liberal Democrats in Stockport, and the Conservatives in Bury and Trafford. One striking feature throughout the study was the effectiveness with which many of the these groups organised and ran their campaigns. Whilst it was not possible to gain information on exactly how much was spent by companies such as Peel Holdings its clear that their campaign was costly, and included the funding of billboards persuading the public to vote against the scheme (see Sect 4.9) and the use of online television advertisements, as used by GMMG.

Policy makers on the other hand, and in particular transport officers involved with consulting and providing information about the scheme, were clearly constrained by government guidelines, and were expected to impart as much detail about the scheme which educated and assisted the public to make an informed decision, whilst at the same time maintaining an impartial and non-partisan line throughout the campaign.

Officers were working to general rules which direct that local authorities must not publish material which in whole or part appears to affect public support for a political party (Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986); and must have regard to the provisions of the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity (Section 4 of the Local Government Act 1986). Officers had to design publicity to inform, rather than to persuade the public to hold a particular view on the policy question. Publicity must avoid oversimplification of facts, issues or arguments and particular caution must be taken in this respect to the use of advertisements (GMPTA, 2008). Nevertheless, Officers then had to contend with a rapid change of political direction when AGMA politicians decided to call a referendum, as a result of not being able to gain a consensus on the issue.

This was problematic for officers as can be seen in comments made (see Sect 5) as this clearly meant going beyond information provision to the public, to that of a full blown campaign which would involve counteracting what many saw as inaccurate and misleading information which was being put forward by the opposing camp. What appeared to be even more problematic was that the decision to call a referendum at such a late stage had meant that the anti-TIF lobby had already had a very loud and high profile campaign underway for sometime and as such the 'YES' campaign was seen by some to be playing 'catch up' all the way to the referendum. The analysis shows that another problem for the organizers of the 'YES' campaign was that the issues were complex and as such they had little time to be able to develop a coherent message for referendum voters. Added to this the debate focused heavily on the congetion charging element of the TIF bid rather than the whole package.

6.8 Impact on the Democratic Process

The research showed that policy makers acknowledged that political marketing had a role to play in the policy making process. However, in a number of cases both politicians and officers expressed some uneasiness with the concept of marketing, complaining that there was the potential for it to cause damage to the political process (Egan, 1999). One of the main concerns was that marketing specifically focused on images rather than the key issues and that marketing reduces important messaged to glib phrases or sound bites and, potentially, removes the rationality from the electorates' decision making. For example, in October 2008 the MEN reported on anti-congestion charge campaigners use of a giant screen in Manchester's Piccadilly square, near to the headquarters of the GMPTE which featured the 'No' campaign's shark mascot *(*see fig 4.7) claiming that motorists would pay up to £1200 a year unless they voted No and stopped the charge. This prompted protest from the 'Yes' campaign, who argued that such advertising trivialised very important issues and patronised voters within Greater Manchester, and as one commentator put it:

> *I don't believe that information about important proposals for the future of Greater Manchester is best conveyed by a man dressed as a fish (MEN, 2008)*

6.9 Communications Methods in the TIF Campaign

The thesis described the growing use of political communication in the state generally, but the case study focused specifically on its use in the transport policy arena. The campaign strategies and methods used by all sides in the TIF debate demonstrated that transport politicians, policy practitioners and other key actors use of the full range of media, including advertisements in the press, radio, TV and online media was clearly strategic. Whilst transport policy makers argued that this was part of a more unbiased information provision agenda in the early stages of the TIF process, it was clearly not the case once the authorities had decided to hold a referendum on the issue. From that point onwards the communications agenda clearly moved to one of persuasion through the use of wider political marketing and communications methods. However, policy makers in favour of the TIF package were faced with opposition from a strong coalition (GMMG) that included high profile and powerful business interests such as Peel Holdings, Kelloggs, and many smaller but equally vociferous pro-car lobby groups, as well as high profile politicians who were opposed to the congestion charge element of the proposals. This coalition also launched a well-funded and comprehensive marketing and communications strategy using a wide range of methods and communications professionals in order to promote their views.

The importance of communications methods to both the pro-and anti-TIF campaigns was emphasized by the size of the campaign strategy and the diversity of the communications methods employed. The size of the campaign budget, and the subsequent further increase, in the light of the decision to call a referendum, points to the importance that politicians at both the national and local level placed on the successful development and implementation of the TIF bid. However, whilst initial publicity provided by the authorities emphasized impartiality and factual information provision about the TIF package on the part of officers and politicians, when the campaign was eventually extended as a result of the decision to go to referendum, the reality was that they then faced accusations of 'mis-information' and 'propaganda' prompting the intervention of OfCom which threatened to undermine the debate further. Of course, the anti-TIF campaign also faced similar accusations.

The increasing engagement and use of professional political communications experts within the transport policy arena was a strategic response by policy makers within the transport policy making process, who were increasingly being forced to operate within a rapidly fluctuating socio-political environment. Transport policy makers have become increasingly purposive and reflexive in the way they act: continually reviewing and analyzing the political/policy environment and responding to problems that may adversely affect their chances of achieving their aims, monitoring and responding to growing uncertainties of the transport policy making environment, as well as having to develop and continually revise the means to realize their intentions (Stanyer, 2007). This uncertainty within the policy-making environment was the key driver behind the wide and varied communication responses policy makers perceive necessary to ensure that specific policy goals were achieved. A specific source of uncertainty for policy makers and the media was in the changes that reordered their relations with their publics, partly explained by the process of partisan de-alignment which has caused political parties to reconsider their relationship with voters. As Stanyer (2007) points out, traditional partisan identity no longer provides a reliable device for mobilization due to falling party membership and declining party support. Political actors have had to find new ways of reaching political audiences and building and maintaining their support, and the citizen has become the subject of intense investigation. More importantly, the findings support the view that policy makers increasingly view citizens as consumers from which personal information needs to be gathered if messages are to be carefully targeted (Stanyer, 2007). As suggested by Buurma (2001) public sector in a number of European countries has come to label citizens as customers and as such are now applying marketing tools and strategic marketing planning in order to 'sell' their policies to its citizens.

Policy makers clearly worked closely to government guidelines, to provide accurate, factual and unbiased information to the public. However, the wider strategy, and specifically the methods used by the key communications professionals employed by both sides within the campaign, was clearly aimed at influencing the wider public, but also showed, in some cases, aspects of negative campaigning tactics. This was particularly the case in respect of some of the advertising from the 'No' campaigners. It is also clear that, given the contentious and vociferous nature of the Manchester TIF campaign, that it became clear to pro-TIF campaigners that it was highly unlikely that a standard information provision strategy would have been sufficient, particularly given the nature of the opposition's campaign strategy. This demonstrates the increasingly difficult issues facing policy makers with respect to how they "market" policy intentions to their transport publics, whilst at the same time trying to avoid accusations of misuse of public funds for propaganda purposes.

The results also demonstrate that the wider use of data driven campaigning, polling and marketing techniques and advertising as in the case of the Manchester TIF bid, show that the cost of communication in an uncertain political environment is increasing. Political parties in general have increasingly ratcheted up their communications budgets for general elections and referendums over a number of decades (see Sect 2.1) but more specifically this study shows the scale of the budget that was needed to communicate the TIF bid proposals. Due to the fact that political audiences are increasingly treated as consumers, in this case media, consumers and are subsequently the subject of investigation due to less predictable media consumption habits, organisations are being forced to reconsider their relationship with audiences and so greater resources are being devoted to market research. In the case of the TIF bid the employment of market research specialists such as MORI to carry out work for AGMA and GMPTA was a key feature of the campaign.

6.10 Final Thoughts

The thesis has discussed in some detail the growth and transformation in the modes of political communication in Western democracies in recent decades. Crozier (2007:2) discusses how in the post World War II era, the media, and especially television, delivered political information to publics that were assumed to be more or less homogeneous and passive. He contrasts this with contemporary society in which, he suggests, the avenues of political communication are multiplying and are aimed at audiences that are cast as diverse, complex, and active. He also highlights the radical escalation in politician's enthusiasm for media crafting of themselves and their policies. Crozier points to the burgeoning critical literature both academic and popular, discussing the manipulative potential of this phenomenon and how this has generated widespread sensitivity to political 'spin'. He argues that this is accompanied by a kind of celebrity for some practitioners alongside a lingering suspicion of more covert spin doctoring. He suggests that despite grandiose claims of mastery and 'evil genius' status made by some practitioners and analysts, the actual effectiveness of communications experts and political consultants is variable. On the other hand, a number of 'PR scandals' and official reviews concerned with governmental public relations practices can themselves become a public relations problem for governments, but he suggests that these also offer an insight into the ubiquity of public relations in contemporary governmental practice. Crozier points out that the discipline of political marketing is one of the emerging fields of inquiry that attempts to offer systematic analysis of these trends. Informed by both political science and marketing studies, he argues that this approach maintains that consideration of the role of communications and marketing expertise is essential to the analysis of contemporary politics. From a different perspective, he points to other commentators (e.g. Ward, 2003; Gaber, 2004:368) who have pushed the analysis of governmental political communication beyond the preoccupation with political ‘packaging’ and media spin, urging serious attention be given to the institutionalisation of public relations within government. This is part of a growing realisation of the importance of effective public relations and communications strategies in securing public support for policy and of the integration of these strategies across the various sectors and agencies of government. It is within this category that this thesis fits, offering analysis of contemporary transport policy development, mapping the extent and reach of political communications and marketing, and observing the extent to which information and communication have become indispensable tools in the formation and execution of transport policy.

6.11 The Role of the Media in Transport Policy Formulation

Louw (2010) points out that for most Westerners, politics has become a second-hand reality, i.e. received by passive audiences via the media rather than through a direct or firsthand encounter or active participation. Louw argues, therefore, that those responsible for formulating and implementing policies can generally assume that their mass citizenries will be almost completely reliant on the media for information about the successes, failures or effects of their policies. Robinson (2002:31) suggests that the extent to which the media have any impact upon policy formulation depends on three variables, namely how united the governing elite are; the extent of controversies within the policy elite; and the extent to which the executive has a firm policy. Robinson argues that:

- If elites are united, the media tend simply to help them to ‘manufacture consent’ for their policies. The media will have no influence on policy formulation
- If there are controversies within the elite, the media will reflect these, but if policy makers and the executive can still formulate a policy, the media have no influence on policy formulation (Robinson, 2002:31).

Robinson suggests that when those conditions apply the media tend, on balance, to simply affirm government policy directions, and this happens largely because there exists a policy direction that the government promotes through its publicity machines. It was clear from that outset that the ruling elite in Greater Manchester were clearly not united in their decision to pursue the TIF bid and that the congestion charge element had engendered deep divisions across all parties. Therefore, manufacturing consent for the policy was always going to be difficult to take forward for the pro-TIF campaign. The media appeared to mainly focus on the campaign process itself and in particular highlighted the communication strategies used by both campaigns ('Yes' and 'No'). In particular they steered the debate towards aspects of the campaign such as the controversies over billboard and television advertising and the interventions by OfCom. Kavanagh (1995) points out that politicians turn to modern communication techniques because they want to communicate more effectively with the mass public, despite their reservations and the criticisms of its impact on the democratic process. As with many other areas of political campaigning, the transport policy domain has adopted and adapted the latest tools of persuasion. Using polls, television, advertising and public relations is just the latest stage. And this thesis has demonstrated that transport policy makers now plan their campaigns in a more orchestrated manner – restating the line of the day with carefully chosen phrases and specific themes. Policy makers have a clearer idea of their target audiences and now rely on pollsters, consultants and media advisers. Journalists and producers covering referendums and elections for the mass media are professionals: they now confront politicians who are assisted by professionals, but the politicians themselves are also confronted by big business and other campaign groups who are also often assisted by communications professionals.

6.12 Contribution to Knowledge

The main contribution to knowledge that the thesis has made can be seen in several - complementary - levels. From the broadest perspective an original synthesis between the literatures on political marketing and communications has been developed with reference to the wider urban policy context. Within this, the research findings provide new evidence to demonstrate why the study of media representation of the politics of transport and environment (and ultimately political communications and marketing more generally) is an important point of inquiry for both geographers and planners.

One of the key conclusions of the study reflects on how politics is ultimately bound up with the process of communicating. This, it is argued, is because policy making is an intensely social (communicative) function, engaged in by politicians and policy makers who organise and regulate existing social power relationships, as well as making new ones. This is undertaken in addition to making decisions, which govern allocation and distribution of scarce resources, such as critical funding sources for transport provision and innovation (Louw, 2010). It is clear from the study that policy makers will always need to communicate about choices to be able to fulfil or carry out these social roles. The study also indicates that such communication will involve either face-to-face discussions or may well be mediated through professional communicators or journalists. It also demonstrates the multi-dimensional nature of political communication through functions such as speech, memoranda, media releases, online news releases and billboard advertising. More specifically the study highlights how increasingly complex, divided, unequal and uncertain the transport policy arena has become. Policy makers are tasked with putting more complex information across to the public in order to win public support for policies. Consequently, a symbiotic relationship can be seen to have developed between policy makers, communication professionals and the media. At the same time, similar, influential relationships have also been developed between larger corporate campaign groups, professional communicators and the media. Therefore the study highlights a process of co-option of media professionals into the political process.

Focusing on government policies, and the significant impacts they had on the competitive environment of firms, the research shows that corporate interests such as Peel Holdings and Kellogs expand their efforts in order to affect public policy. Political institutions, large national and multi-national corporate business interests and media organisations are adapting to the realities of political communications and marketing. New managerialist idealism has ensured that transport publics are now treated as consumers of news and media products, and this has led to the wrapping of policy products within media packaging. This has also resulted in the transformation of the relationship between media professionals, political advocates and their audiences.

Elsewhere, the thesis also highlights that marketing has become infused within organisational culture and not just confined to the marketing department (Savigny, 2008). In this sense, ideas about the activity of marketing become routine and subsequently institutionalised within organisations, and such ideas are internalised and accepted as common sense. The study highlights the fact that the import of marketing models into politics also entails importing the ideas and assumptions associated with marketing philosophy. From this perspective, the study is concerned with ideas about the utility of marketing. Thus if transport policy makers want to achieve their goal, they have to become the driving force in the political process. However, this in itself presents a difficult issue. Politics is about argument, persuasion and rational debate. Yet it is normative and value laden, concerned primarily with distribution and the exercise of power. While politics also involves the regulation of markets, these markets are exogenous to policy makers and the political process. Future research in this area will consider the impact of political communications and marketing from the perspective of community groups and smaller transport pressure groups as these groups were not included in this study. Further research will also consider political communications and marketing issues as applied to much larger scale projects such as HS2 involving policy makers at the national and European level.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Sheffield Hallam University

POLITICAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES:

Transport Policy Making and Implementation in Manchester

Interview Consent Form

Please confirm your agreement to participate by circling your responses to the following questions.

Have you read and understood the information sheet about this study?	*YES*	*NO*
Have you been able to ask questions about this study?	*YES*	*NO*
Have you received enough information about this study?	*YES*	*NO*
Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study?		
• At any time?	*YES*	*NO*
• Without giving a reason for your withdrawal?	*YES*	*NO*
Would you like your identity and responses to be anonymised before they are analysed.	*YES*	*NO*
Do you give permission for the research team to have access to your (anonymised) responses?	*YES*	*NO*
Do you agree to take part in this study?	*YES*	*NO*

Your signature will certify that you have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study having read and understood the information in the sheet for participants. It will also certify that you have had adequate opportunity to discuss the study with an investigator and that all questions have been answered to your satisfaction.

Signature of participant:.. Date:.............................

Name (block letters):..

Signature of investigator:... Date:.............................

Please keep your copy of the consent form and the information sheet together.

(Name, university address, and contact number of investigator will be added here.)

APPENDIX II

Sheffield Hallam University

Political Communication Strategies: Transport Policy Making and Implementation in Manchester

I am a PhD research student working on a study exploring how policy makers win support for controversial transport schemes, in particular the strategies used by policy makers to publicise and market their policies. The study examines the complex relationships that exist between transport policy makers the media, transport journalists and opinion formers and assess the factors that drive some stories and campaigns to the exclusion of others.

WHY AM I DOING THIS RESEARCH?

The implementation of innovative and controversial initiatives throughout the UK has often proved difficult in the face of negative public and media opinion as in the debates surrounding implementation of congestion charging schemes for example. Therefore there is now some interest, which goes beyond how transport is represented within the media but more specifically the role and influence of policy makers in the contestation of such messages within the politics of transport Isaksson & Richardson (2009). This is an under-researched area of study within transport policy and draws very heavily on other academic fields such as political communications and marketing, public opinion research, public relations etc. The study therefore attempts to provide some understanding of the nature of how political communication and marketing strategies are perceived and used by local authority practitioners as a the way to influence how transport issues or messages are mediated in the local press.

WHAT DO I HOPE TO FIND OUT?

The main aim of the study is as follows:

To examine the importance political communication and marketing techniques to transport policy makers seeking to win public approval for transport policies?

Objectives:

- To explore the perceptions of transport policy makers, communications professionals and local journalists with regard to the role of political marketing and communications strategies in transport policy-making.

- To examine whether transport policy practitioners use specific communications strategies in policy development and implementation in order to influence public opinion of transport issues.

- To use content analysis to examine the use of press releases, transport policy papers and other documentary evidence from the Manchester Congestion Charge campaign as a case study.

WHAT WILL TAKING PART IN THE RESEARCH INVOLVE?

I will arrange the time and place of the interview to suit your convenience. The interview will be very informal. I would like you to raise issues and discuss with me what seems important to you. I would like to make a voice recording so that I don't miss out things that you are telling me; but if at any point you aren't comfortable with your words being recorded, I can turn off the recorder.

I would like to ask permission to make use of some of what you tell me in my publications from this study, including quoting some of your words. When I do this, I will 'anonymise' research participants (disguise their names and identities) and the geographical location of the case study site, if participants deem this necessary. However as a result of local professional networks and local knowledge I recognise that research participants may be able to identify other participants in this study. This issue will be fully discussed with you prior to commencement of the interview and if you would prefer I will not use any direct quotations from our discussions with you.

If at anytime prior to, during, or after the interview, for whatever reason, you wish to withdraw from the study you are free to do so without giving any reason for your withdrawal.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE STUDY?

Enquiries about the research are most welcome and should be directed to:

Keith Mckoy

Faculty of Development and
Society,

Sheffield Hallam University,

City Campus,

Howard St., Sheffield S1 1WB

Phone: 0114 225 4556

email: k.g.mckoy@shu.ac.uk

APPENDIX III

Topic Guide

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to support my PhD research into the impact of political communication strategies within transport policy making. The questions have been designed to be very open and hopefully this will allow you to express your views in the best way you feel.

Through the topic guide I hope to collect the personal views of policy makers and implementers who were involved in the Manchester congestion charge campaign, therefore, I am interested in your personal reflections and views rather than that of the organisation you were involved with at the time.

Publishing your opinions

I'm aware that you may consider some or all of your answers to be sensitive (to your colleagues or employer) and you may not wish them to be identifiable to you when published. If this is the case please let me know - I will not publish any identifiable opinions unless I have your prior permission.

About you

Please provide a few details about yourself.

Name:

Organisation:

Position:

Brief description of responsibilities/duties:

Email:

Telephone:

Q1. The Manchester congestion charge campaign received a great deal of media coverage both at the local and national level. From your perspective why did the local authority and GMPTE decide to pursue the congestion charging policy?

Q2. Why do you think policy makers decided to hold a referendum on CC in Manchester?

Q3. On reflection do you think the media coverage on the Manchester congestion charge campaign reflected what you understood to be happening on the ground? (Probe for perceptions of bias etc)

Q4. What were the perceived political risks or benefits of pursuing a controversial policy such as the congestion charge?

Q5. Who were the main political players in the campaign, and what roles did they take?

Q6. What was your perception of the role played by the local media throughout the CC campaign?

Q7. It appears that considerable debate took place regarding the amount of money spent on publicity for the congestion charge campaign. Could you tell me more about this debate, what did you think about it at the time - have your views changed at all over time?

Q8. In what ways did you get your message out to the public (press agencies, other organizations)?

Q9. Were communications professionals involved at any stage of the campaign and if so what was their level of involvement? (Probe for examples)

Q10. What was your perception of the need for communications strategies in order to influence public opinion?

Q11. Would you say that communication strategies (such as those used in the CC campaign) are a recent addition to the transport policy-making process or have always existed albeit in a less sophisticated form? Do you think such strategies are now key part of the transport policy-making process?

Q12. Do you think there is more of a perception within local government currently that more controversial transport policies need to be marketed politically?

Q13. If so what impact, do you think the marketing of messages has had, e.g. does it change the way local government communicates with the wider publics? Do you think it has any impact of public confidence? e.g. does it increase or decrease public confidence in local government?

APPENDIX IV

Analysis of Data Sources

Data triangulation was used to validate the data collected by cross verifying the same information. This triangulation of data strengthened the thesis because giving the research increased credibility and validity. Data source triangulation was used to gather evidence from different types of data sources, such as primary and secondary research or interviews, documents, public records and reports, letters, images and press releases from public bodies such as the GMPTE as well as articles from the press and online media. This was combined with methodological triangulation using multiple methods to gather data, such as documents, interviews, observations, and conducting primary research, at different times and in different places.

Benefits of data triangulation

The triangulation of data strengthened the research and increased validity of data in the following key ways:

- Multiple sources provide verification and validity while complementing similar data
- Data and information is supported in multiple places/types of research, which makes it easier to analyze data to draw conclusions and outcomes
- Additional sources of information often give more insight into a topic
- Inadequacies found in one-source data is minimized when multiple sources confirm the same data
- More comprehensive data is obtained
- Inconsistencies in data sets are more easily recognized

Data sources used in triangulation:

Utilizing information and data obtained through secondary research and finding data sets that complement one another is accomplished by using multiple types of sources. Increasing the credibility of the research is done, for example, by complementing an issue in a written document such as the Greater Manchester Transport Innovation Bid Reports to the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities which mentions the consultation strategy to be undertaken (See Appendix V) with relevant statistics from public records or visual confirmation by looking at historical press releases and media articles form the period. This was then triangulated by conducting unstructured interviews with key respondents (Journalists, politicians and policy officers who were known to be involved in the TIF Bid process) in order to verify the key issues at the time and as well as to give more insight into a topic.

APPENDIX V

Greater Manchester Transport Innovation Fund Research – Summary of the Triangulation of Research Data

	Politician	Practitioner	Journalist	
General Themes				Evidence
1 Reasons why Greater Manchester Authorities pursued the TIF bid and the perceived political risks	Amount of funding offered by Government justify risk	Prompted by years of underfunding and social exclusion, economic issues	Failure of politicians to read public opinion	Interview Archived GMPTE Reports/Press and Media Articles
2 Reasons GMPTA's called a referendum - the main political players involved at the time, the problems of gaining a consensus about the TIF	Lack of Consensus amongst AGMA politicians	Political parties Prominent business interests	Political division/disagreement over proposal	Archive reports Interviews
3 Initial media coverage and interest in the TIF bid that eventually gave way to a more sustained focus on the congestion charge (as opposed to the wider TIF package) The problems of separating the wider TIF debate from the narrower concerns of the congestion charge	High level of media coverage Mixed views on the balance of media reporting- too much emphasis on charge element, biased reporting – led mainly by 'No vote camp'	Referendum called late, officers – already providing information - not geared up for referendum campaigning "not what officers do!"	Journalists failed to really challenge politicians over issues, too deferential	Media and Press Articles + interviews
4 The development and implementation of the communications strategy and budget to publicise the TIF	Substantial budget needed issues were complex Additional funding needed for Referendum	Seen as critical to the process – need to get the message across and counter misleading oppositional voices	Surprised at how extensive it became, and the level of involvement of media management professionals	Interview Archived GMPTE Reports/Press and Media Articles

Key sub themes	Politician	Practitioner	Journalist	Evidence
5 The intentions behind the development of the communications strategy	Initially developed to inform public, Later developed campaign strategy	Get the message across to the public/counter misleading information	Clearly intended to influence public opinion on the charge	Interviews
6 Communications methods employed by the GMPTA	Wide ranging, Comm. Professionals employed, now seen as necessary to the process	Wide ranging, extended beyond standard consultation methods – to campaign methods	Politically necessary to counter opposition Voices, concerns re-impact on democratic process	Interview Archived GMPTE Reports/Press and Media Articles
7 Consequences of the communications strategies employed (intended and unintended)	Opposition strategies unforeseen, negative	Difficult to negotiate a neutral path on CC issue, officers not geared up for referendum campaigns	Accusations of bias from both camps! Interventions by Ofcom, dubious practises both camps	Interviews/Press and Media Articles
8 √ Reaction of the public to the use of public money in promoting and marketing transport policy intentions	Need to ensure a very complex message was communicated clearly, use of public funds critical	Over reaction by opposition and public to the amount spent – amount seen as small in relation to the total TIF budget	Public accusations of waste of public monies to fund propaganda, opposition gained ground on this issue Press tried to steer a neutral path	Interviews/Press media Articles
9 √ Journalistic perspectives of how policy makers communicate policy intentions:	Generally positive with the MEN – Important to maintain a positive relationship	Generally positive	Politicians view journalists as important conduits – symbiotic relationship	Interview Archived GMPTE Reports/Press and Media Articles

a. relationship between journalists and officers b. how stories get to the press c. role of the local press during the campaign d. media reporting in general	Politicians approached directly in most instances Attempted role of mediator in early stages Some bias towards pro-TIF camp during campaign	Messages directed through press officers rather than directly Tried to promote a balanced discussion Balanced reporting – smaller local papers some bias towards pro	Some messages fed directly to journalists from politicians, other sources via press officers Tried to report fairly from all perspectives but should perhaps have been more critical of the process	
10 √ Perceptions of the influence of communications strategies for communicating potential transport policies	Very influential and will remain a necessary part of the policy making process for the foreseeable future, particularly when communicating complicated policies to the public.	A necessary part of the process, but issues of impartiality and neutrality of officers critical	Politicians keen to embrace media in order to promote their message, particularly controversial transport policies	
11 √ Impact of communications strategies on the transport policy making process local democracy	Worry about the long term impact on the democratic process Image over policy	Issues regarding the impact on the democratic process, difficulty in steering a clear debate over the key policy issues	Worry about the impact on the democratic process, politicians disengaged from public, and misread public opinion.	

APPENDIX VI

Summary of the Interviewees in Greater Manchester

Interviewee	Date of Interview	Description of Interviewee
Matthew College (Conservative)	**5th July 2011**	Leader of Trafford Council Altrincham Ward and who replaced Roger Jones as Chair of GMPTE when Councillor Jones lost his seat in 2008.
Richard Critchley Policy Officer for Transport & Environment Planning	**7th July 2011**	Chamber of Commerce – representing members and giving them a voice and lobbying on their behalf. Ensuring that they are aware of the coming changes in transport policy and with the TIF Bid ensuring they understand the issues that was debated.
Peter Devine Journalist	**1st August 2011**	Peter has worked on the Stockport Express, which belonged to the MEN Group since 2002. Reported on the TIF debate in 2008
Andrew Gwynne (Labour)	**29th November 2011**	Member of Parliament for Denton & Redditch a was a Labour fron bencher and the Shadow Transport Minister covering passenger transport between Octoer 2010 and October 2011.
Sarah Hartley Journalist	**5th August 2011**	Head of online editorial for MEN Media in Manchester in 2008. Reported on the TIF debate in 2008
Roger Jones (Labour)	**24th May 2011**	In the United Kingdom local elections, 2008 Roger Jones, the Labour chairman of the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive, was pushed into third place in Irlam, Salford. His seat was won by the Community Action Party, which ran a campaign based on opposition to the £5 daily peak period congestion charge that was proposed by Jones.
Sir Richard Leese (Labour)	**1st August 2011**	Leader of Manchester City Council from 1984 to current (2014). Richard Leese was one of the main advocates of Congestion Charging in Greater Manchester, as part of a bid to the Government's Transport Innovation Fund (TIF)

		for a £2.7 billion package of transport funding for Greater Manchester. Congestion charging was ultimately rejected by the local population in a referendum.
Lis Phelan Chair of the Yes Campaign	**30th June 2011**	Former manager of Manchester's Commonwealth Games bid appointed chairman of the campaign for yes vote in the TIF referendum. Lis Phelan, who retired as Director of Libraries and Theatres with Manchester City Council in 2003, also worked as deputy chief executive of Marketing Manchester, tasked with promoting Greater Manchester across the world for four years.
Tony Short Transport Policy Officer	**20th May 2011**	Transport Policy Officer – with GMPTE. He was responsible for arranging public consultation on the TIF Bid
Simon Wharburton Senior Transport Policy Officer	**7th November 2011**	Responsible for development of the TIF Bid prior to submission to DfT and the public consultation process during 2006-2008

APPENDIX VII

Summary of Secondary Data

TIF Bid documents

GM TIF Bid - Glossary, Exec Summary and Background - Chapter 1&2 (PDF)
GM TIF Bid - Approach to Package Design - Chapter 3 (PDF)
GM TIF Bid - Package Outline - Chapter 4 (PDF)
GM TIF Bid - Governance and Programme Delivery - Chapter 5&6 (PDF)
GM TIF Bid - The AGMA Tests - Chapter 7 (PDF)
GM TIF Bid - Appraisal, VfM and Financials - Chapter 8&9 (PDF)
GM TIF Bid - The Next Steps - Chapter 10 (PDF)
Greater Manchester's Future Transport: Information Pack Document no.3 (July 2008)

APPENDIX VIII

News Reports

2008-11-14 <u>Manchester should vote yes to the congestion charge</u> "This is not a question of "holding Manchester to ransom" as some suggest, but a matter of political realism. Let me explain why..." *Guardian*
2008-08-26 <u>Calls for Business Referendum</u> with CAN's reaction *Crains*
2008-08-26 <u>The Squirrel</u> ...the squirrel is unveiled.
2008-08-18 <u>53% Support for TIF</u> Poll reveals 53% in support of TIF and only 40% against with 7% undecided. Interesting news for those who like to claim that everyone is against the plans. *Manchester Evening News*
2008-08-11 <u>Only 10% will Pay the Congestion Charge</u> A study predicts that only 10% of peak-time drivers would pay the congestion charge. *Manchester Evening News*
2008-08-04 <u>Congestion Charge Good For Us...</u> ... says city design expert. *Manchester Evening News*
2008-07-31 <u>Traffic Figures Support TIF Bid</u> Study shows reductions in traffic speeds. *Crains*
2008-06-09 <u>More TIF Money Than we Expected</u> Announcement that Government will give TIF money to Greater Manchester - Hurray! And they're giving 1.5bn instead of the 1.2bn the city asked for... *Manchester Evening News*

2008-06-07 Announcement Due Monday
It looks likely that we'll know on Monday whether Greater Manchester will get a transport revolution... *Manchester Evening News*

2008-06-05 Businesses Support TIF Bid
A new coalition of businesses has put its weight behind the TIF bid, arguing that Greater Manchester needs a transport revolution to retain jobs and keep its position in the global market place.

2008-05-18 Ruth Kelly Backs TIF Bid
Transport Secretary and Bolton MP backs TIF bid, saying it is what is needed to make Greater Manchester a world-class city. *Manchester Evening News*

2008-04-22 Manchester Fourth Most Congested City in Europe
A study reveals Manchester's position in the congestion league, hardly an enviable one. And the UK has 6 cities in the top ten! *Forbes*

2008-04-14 Gridlock will Make Congestion Charge Inevitable Says Tony Juniper
Director of Friends of the Earth emphasises need for action on congestion. *Manchester Evening News*

2008-04-08 Transport Revolution to be an Election Issue?
Report on where the parties and candidates stand on bringing a transport revolution to our streets. *Manchester Evening News*

2008-03-27 Hauliers Consultation
Hauliers and distribution and logistics firms will be able raise their concerns about, and show their support for, future transport plans and the proposed congestion charge for Greater Manchester at a breakfast briefing organised by Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce on April 9 at Quay West in Trafford Park. *Crains*

2008-03-18 Better Commuter Links Needed, Argue Researchers *Manchester Evening News*
2008-03-12 Budget Paves Way for Road Pricing Update on the budget and implications for Road Pricing. *Manchester Evening News*
2008-03-11 Bolton Waits On C-Charge Vote Bolton council has decided not to have its TIF vote on 1st May. *Manchester Evening News*
2008-03-04 Ambitious Plans for Green Oxford Road The M.E.N. takes a rather negative stance on what is one of the first examples of the kind of improvements we can expect with TIF funding. *Manchester Evening News*
2008-02-28 Health Benefits of London Congestion Charge An unexpected outcome of London's scheme. *BBC*

APPENDIX IX

Summary of the Political Situation During the TIF Bid

The Transport Innovation Fund proposals were voted on at a meeting of the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) on 27 July 2007 in Dukinfield, Tameside.

AGMA took only 45 minutes to vote to proceed with the TIF proposals by eight votes to two, with Stockport and Trafford borough councils the only opponents. Before the meeting, Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council and Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council had held their own consultations to gauge public support. After the Stockport survey found that 67% of residents and 78% of businesses in the borough did not support the proposed road charges it announced on 26 July 2007 that it would be voting no at the meeting of AGMA the following day. Trafford announced on 23 July 2007 that it would vote against the congestion charging proposals. On 12 December 2007, Bury Metropolitan Borough Council voted to withdraw its support for the congestion charge, bringing the numbers to seven for, three against. In January 2008 seven of the local authorities in Greater Manchester supported the scheme.

Labour was strongly in favour of the congestion charge, having proposed the idea through the Labour controlled GMPTE. It faced a mixed reaction from the Liberal Democrats with Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (which is controlled by the Liberal Democrats) rejecting the Manchester Congestion Charge, yet many Manchester City Liberal Democrats spoke out in favour of the congestion charge, and Liberal Democrat controlled Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council voted in favour. The only party to reject the congestion charge was the Conservatives, who controlled Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council.

APPENDIX X

Regional ballot results

In a public referendum the results were split down through each of the 10 local councils involved. The referendum needed to gain the support of 8 council areas to be passed. In the end, each of the local areas rejected the proposals by large majorities.

Votes in response to the Manchester Congestion Charge Referendum

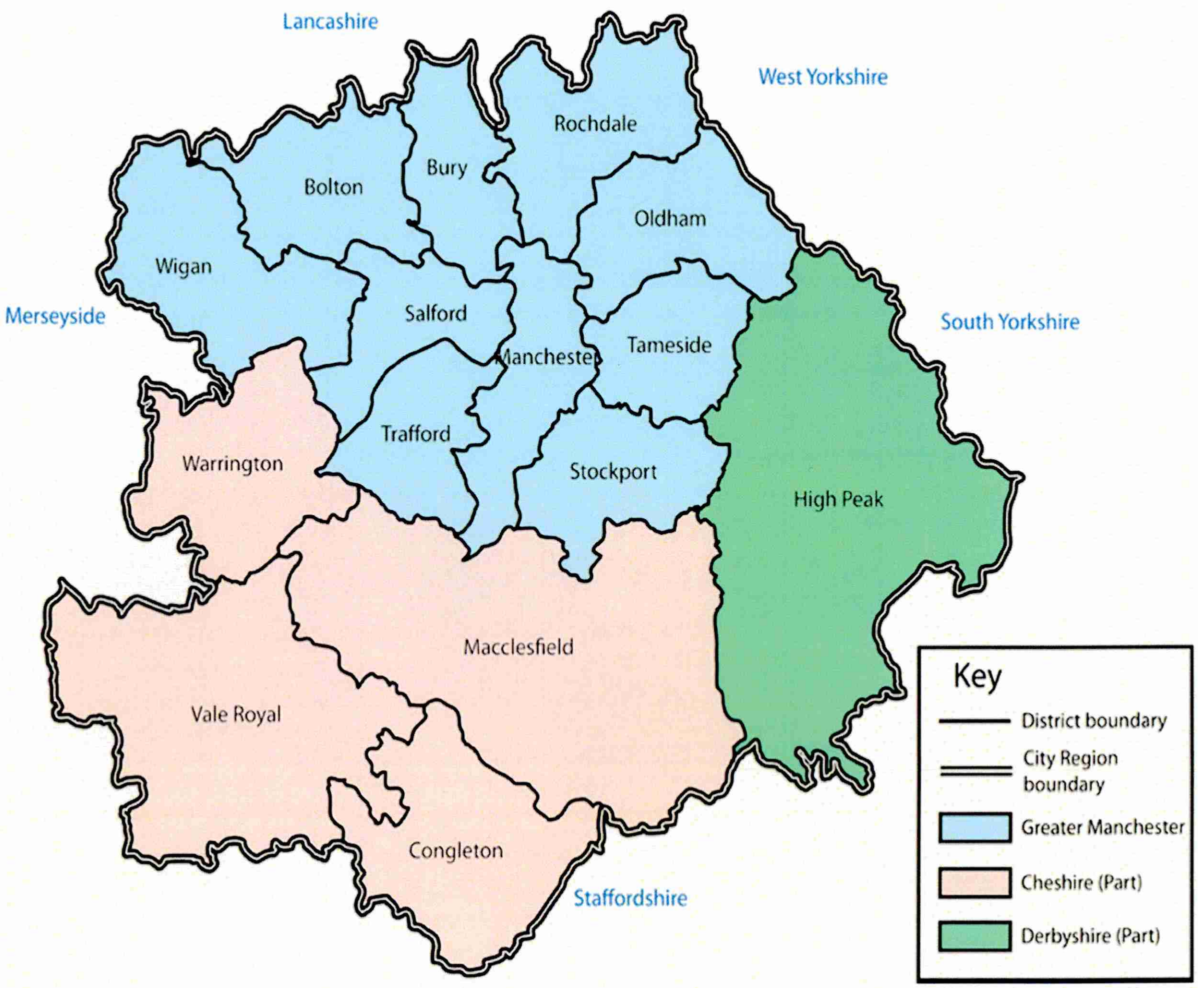
Region	Turnout (%)	Yes	No	Yes (%)	No (%)
Bolton	48.8	20,529	79,910	21	79
Bury	57.4	16,563	64,001	21	79
Rochdale	50.8	17,333	68,884	20	80
Oldham	54.4	17,571	68,884	20	80
Wigan	45.3	27,810	78,565	26	74
Salford	57.0	14,603	79,326	16	84
Manchester	46.1	43,593	113,064	28	72
Tameside	60.7	16,323	83,105	17	83
Trafford	63.6	20,445	83,568	20	80
Stockport	59.0	24,090	103,706	19	81
TOTAL	**53.2**	**218,860**	**812,815**	**21.2**	**78.8**

As a result of this public response, the Congestion Charge proposal for Manchester was dropped.

Source: Manchester Evening News C-Charge Results 19th April 2010

APPENDIX XI

Map of the Greater Manchester City Region



Source: [http://www.manchestersalfordhmr.co.uk/cityregionmap-popup.aspx this map

APPENDIX XII

Public Response to the Proposals

A group of over 160 Manchester-based businesses calling themselves United City fully supported the Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) bid. A group of over 279 businesses, the Greater Manchester Momentum Group, opposed the plans.

On 24 October the Stop the Charge Coalition was formed, comprising a cross party alliance of seven local MPs and the leaders of the three councils opposed to the plans.

Congestion Charge Survey

The Manchester Evening News newspaper conducted a telephone survey to gauge public support for a congestion charging scheme. The survey posed several questions, two of which directly asked if respondents were in favour of congestion charging. The results were mixed, with around two thirds of respondents thinking that congestion charging was not "a good idea" but a slim majority in favour of congestion charging in Manchester as part of the proposed public transport improvement scheme in Manchester's Transport Innovation Fund bid.

- "Do you think congestion charging is a good idea": Yes – 36%; No – 64%
- "Is congestion charging a price worth paying to get £3bn Government cash to improve public transport in the region – including the expansion of the Metro-link to Ashton-under-Lyne, Oldham and Rochdale, as well as South Manchester and Manchester Airport?": Yes – 55%; No – 44%

A "Green Survey" conducted by the same news paper month later shows that two thirds of the region back the congestion charge.

One side is headed by a coalition of campaign groups known as Clean Air Now (CAN), while the other side is headed by campaign group known as Manchester Against Road Tolls (MART).

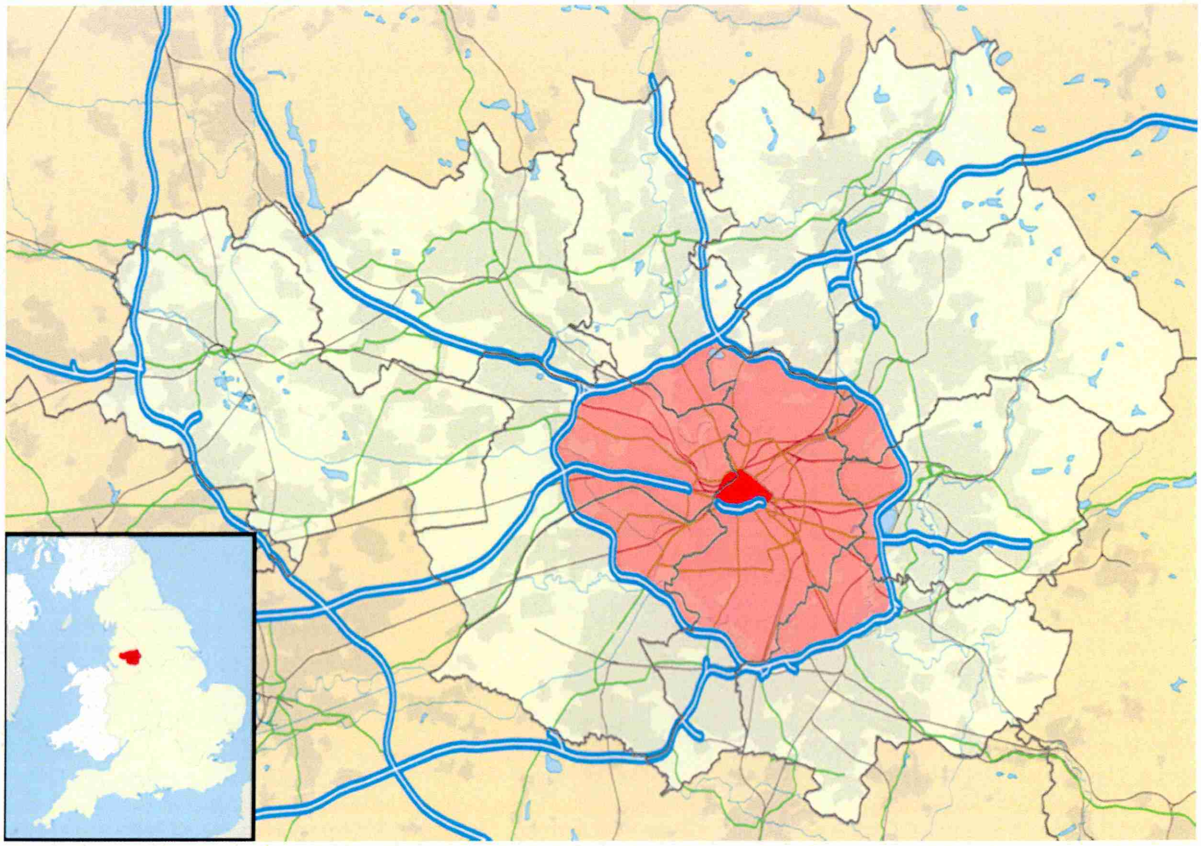
MART stated that it did not believe the public was consulted properly and that the information provided by supporters of the charge was biased and insufficient. MART started a legal petition calling for a referendum on a directly elected mayor who would lead Bury council and be able to withdraw Bury's support from the scheme. This required 7,099 people or 5% of the Bury electorate to sign the petition. Some councillors for Bury have called for a referendum directly on the congestion charge. MART launched similar petitions in the other seven districts of Greater Manchester that support the TiF bid, and established a branch in Tameside after gauging the level of opposition to the scheme in the area through the online petition.

In July 2008, the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities agreed unanimously to the proposed Transport Improvements, in conjunction with a Congestion Charge, to be submitted to a referendum of the residents of Greater Manchester; the vote itself to be managed by the Electoral Reform Society. Only if there is a majority in favour of the proposals in seven out of the ten boroughs, would the proposals go forwards.

Source: Manchester Evening News 2007

APPENDIX XIII

A Map of Greater Manchester highlighting the two cordons in red.



The M60 Manchester orbital motorway was proposed as the "greater" cordon, and the Manchester Inner Ring Road would have had additional "inner" cordon.

Source: Ordinance Survey Open Data