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Ireland: an emerging eurosceptic or an exemplary EU member state?

An examination of Irish attitudes toward the EU and European integration

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Abstract

En undersøgelse af irske holdninger til EU og europæisk integration

Irland: på vej til euroskepticisme eller en eksemplarisk EU-medlemsstat?

Den offentlige menings rolle i forhold til den europæiske integration har vundet betydning igennem de seneste år. I betragtning af denne stigende fokus på den offentlige menings betydning for udviklingen af det europæiske projekt, skal denne faktor undersøges på baggrund af et valgt eksempel, nemlig offentlige holdninger til EU og europæisk integration i Irland. Irland er velegnet til at studere offentlige holdninger til EU, da befolkningen aktivt kan få indflydelse på den europæiske integrationsprocess ved at afgive deres stemme i referendum, som holdes i forbindelse med ratifikationen af alle EU-traktater. Irland betragtes typisk som et pro-EU land, dvs. et land hvori den offentlige mening er overvejende positiv over for EU og europæisk integration. På det seneste har det irske nej til Nice-traktaten og især sidste års nej til Lissabon-traktaten derimod sat spørgsmålstegn ved denne generelt accepterede forestilling af Irland som en eksemplarisk EU-medlemsstat. Dette speciale tager derfor udgangspunkt i denne problematik og undersøger *om irske holdninger til EU kan betragtes som euroskeptiske og om en kategorisering af disse holdninger kan give indsigt i deres underliggende motivation og udvikling.*

Undersøgelsen af irske holdninger har inddraget teorier vedrørende faktorer, som bestemmer offentlig tilslutning til EU og europæisk integration, og har derudover lagt særlig vægt på teorier og undersøgelser, som udelukkende beskæftiger sig med negative holdninger til EU, eller med andre ord euroskepticisme. Ved at kombinere de to teoretiske retninger i én analysemodel, kunne irske holdninger, som omfatter den offentlige mening og partilinjer, kategoriseres i forskellige typer. Lignende type-baserede kategoriseringer er blevet foretaget, for udelukkende at undersøge euroskepticisme på nationalt niveau, se for eksempel Sørensen (2008). Tager man imidlertid i betragtning at Irland typisk anses for at være pro-EU, så antages det at graden af euroskepticisme sandsynligvis må være relativt lav, mens størstedelen af irenes holdninger må være positive. Som følge anvendes denne type-baserede kategorisering for at beskrive både negative og positive

holdninger. Empirisk data fra Eurobarometer rapporter, som spænder over Irlands optagelse i EU frem til i dag, dannede grundlaget for undersøgelsen. Modellen som bruges til at analysere data skelner mellem fire typer af holdninger; *graden* eller intensiteten, *utilitaristisk-baserede*, *suverænitets-baserede* og *institutionel præstations-baserede* holdninger. Den type-baserede kategorisering af den empiriske data viste, at i forhold til *graden* er niveauet af hård euroskepticisme forholdsvis lav, mens opbakning til EU generelt er høj. Når de resterende tre typer og deres retning betragtes, viser det sig at holdninger baseret på *utilitaristiske* overvejelser fører til den største grad af tilslutning, mens *suverænitets og identitets* spørgsmål derimod ofte fører til opposition eller formindsket opbakning til EU. Holdninger til *institutionel præstation* udvirker sig positivt på holdninger til EU og har derfor overvejende opbakning til følge, men ikke i så stor udstrækning som utilitaristisk-baserede. Disse generelle resultater kunne, til en vis grad, også forklare de to negative udfald ved Nice I og Lissabon folkeafstemningen. Endelig har undersøgelsen vist, at den nationale kontekst har en stor betydning for holdninger til EU og europæisk integration.

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1. Introduction

In popular discourse, EU member states are often categorised as either good or bad Europeans in terms of their attitudes towards European integration. In the British Isles, received wisdom holds that among the larger nations, England is the stereotypical awkward and highly eurosceptic partner, whereas Ireland¹ is commonly perceived as an exemplary EU member regarding its overwhelmingly positive record of public opinion and elite support towards the EU and European integration.

Lately however, Ireland's image as a traditionally pro-EU country has been tarnished by negative outcomes in referendums. The Irish No to the Nice Treaty in 2001 and more recently the failure to convince the Irish public to ratify the Lisbon Treaty have led some to deduce that Ireland has joined the ranks of eurosceptics alongside member-states such as Denmark and the UK.

However, one might question the relevance of public opinion in the context of European integration. Whereas the importance of attitudes professed by political elites, e.g. parties has always been acknowledged, public attitudes, at least in the early stages of European integration, were not regarded as a determining factor and therefore not deemed worth studying as such.

Scholars assumed that there was a so-called *permissive consensus* (Lindberg & Scheingold 1970:41) in favour of integration, i.e. high levels of support or a certain amount of goodwill in the population if you will. Yet, as European integration came to affect more and more areas apart from the economic sphere, support could no longer be taken for granted and the study of public attitudes to the EU and European integration became a much more salient issue as a result.

Public opinion can constrain and shape European integration in different ways. Public attitudes can exert a direct influence on the course of European integration via public referendums. Ireland provides a good example here, since it is one of the few EU member countries that requires a public referendum before changes to the constitution can be made (Coakley 2005:95). In addition, the public can exert indirect influence on EU-matters by shaping preferences of their elected representatives (Carrubba 2001).

1.1 Research question

Given the importance of public attitudes for the success of European integration, the aim of this thesis is to investigate Irish attitudes to the EU and European integration with a special focus on

¹ In the text, Ireland refers to the Republic of Ireland consisting of 26 counties, minus the 6 counties of Northern Ireland.

the nature of Irish public attitudes and the levels and kind of euroscepticism, as it is manifested in public opinion and to a certain extent at the level of political parties. Accordingly, the research question is as follows:

To what extent can Irish attitudes to the EU and European integration be termed eurosceptic and can a categorisation of public attitudes provide feasible explanations for the direction public opinion takes in Ireland?

Essentially, this question entails investigating both theories concerned with public attitudes and support for the EU and European integration as well as the growing literature devoted to opposition to the EU, or in other words euroscepticism.

This two-fold approach is necessary for two reasons. First, as received wisdom holds positive attitudes towards the EU and European integration are wide-spread in Ireland. Focusing solely on examining manifestations of euroscepticism would therefore neglect a large portion of public attitudes. Second, as research on euroscepticism forms an intricate part of the research available on public attitudes and is beginning to be applied to the Irish context, it should naturally also be included in a study on Irish attitudes towards the EU and European integration.

As stated in the research question, the thesis will examine levels of support and opposition (euroscepticism) and attempt to categorise public attitudes by developing a type-based model. The model designed for the purpose of this thesis combines elements of general theories on public support for the EU with categorisations used in euroscepticism theory. Drawing on both areas of research, the model provides a categorisation of attitudes according to types coupled with their directional quality i.e. a continuum ranging from support to euroscepticism that the types can show in the Irish public.

Furthermore, the analysis of public attitudes towards the EU and European integration is based on the assumption that attitudes to the EU are largely shaped by national factors. This is supported by research into determinants of support for the EU which often links support or opposition to domestic factors (Anderson 1998; Kritzinger 2003). Similarly, recent approaches to euroscepticism have found that the phenomenon is multidimensional and varies greatly between

different national contexts (Sørensen 2008). Accordingly, considerable attention will be devoted to national factors in an effort to reveal what factors determine Irish attitudes to the EU and European integration.

2. Structure

In keeping with the aim of this paper, models and theories concerned with determinants of support of the EU and euroscepticism will be used to gauge the state of public attitudes in Ireland. However, before these theories are presented in more detail, the following paragraphs will provide an overview of the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 3: Introduction to the theoretical field

As there is no unified theory regarding either general attitudes toward the EU and European integration or the concept of euroscepticism, this chapter will attempt to provide an overview of and introduction to the most prominent and widely cited approaches. For reasons of clarity, the field has been divided into general theories and studies concerned with determinants of support and studies and theories dealing with the phenomenon of euroscepticism specifically. Such an introduction to the field is deemed necessary as studies into public opinion towards the EU employ various theoretical and methodological approaches and as a result arrive at different conclusions. Due to the large number of studies available on the subject, only a sample of approaches has been selected for presentation. Similarly, as a theoretical foundation, euroscepticism is a problematic concept. The term is used both in popular discourse as well as in academic research. Consequently, it is laden with multiple and often overlapping or outright contradictory meanings. Naturally, if the term euroscepticism is to be applied in academic settings, its scope and content need to be defined clearly. This chapter will therefore also provide a selection of theories concerned with defining and categorising euroscepticism as a concept.

Chapter 4: Evaluation of theoretical approaches

Due to the vast amount of small empirical studies on the subject of euroscepticism and public attitudes toward the EU and European integration, an initial introduction to the literature available on the subject is necessary as mentioned above. However, after an initial presentation of the state of research in the relevant field, this chapter is concerned with discussing these different approaches and finally presenting the approaches utilised for the purpose of this study. The first part of the chapter will present the main factors that shape attitudes toward the EU as well as the ways in which these factors can either strengthen or constrain support. In the second part, a short discussion of the merit and applicability of the various theories and models

regarding euroscepticism will be followed by a presentation of what, in the context of this paper, is understood by euroscepticism which entails a working definition and a detailed description of the nature and scope of the concepts as they will be used in this paper.

Chapter 5: Method and framework for analysis

After accounting for the theoretical basis of the thesis, this chapter will introduce the methodological approach which also serves as the framework for analysis. As Irish attitudes are the main subject for analysis, this chapter will begin with defining what is understood by attitudes and which actors' attitudes will be analysed. In a second step, the empirical Eurobarometer data that forms the basis for the analysis will be described and possible limitations arising from the choice of data material will be discussed. The third and final section develops the model for analysis of the empirical data. The model will analyse the data in terms of the different types chosen as well as the directional quality they take i.e. whether the types manifest themselves in support or opposition. As the model embraces a type-based approach, the types used in the analysis will also be presented and defined clearly.

Chapter 6: Historical perspective on Irish attitudes toward the EU

To begin with, this chapter will trace Ireland's history in the EU. As the national context is paramount in investigating public attitudes to the EU, this chapter adds important information to that effect. The aim of the first part is to support the claim stated in the introduction that Ireland is, or is at least perceived to be, pro-EU. Relevant literature on the subject as well as data derived from opinion polls and referendum results will serve to illustrate the veracity of this underlying assumption.

In the second part, the focus will be shifted towards occasions when sentiments popularly termed eurosceptic, seemed to emerge. To this end, negative results that surfaced in connection with referendums will provide a framework or context for an evaluation of the findings from the analysis of empirical data presented in chapter 7.

Chapter 7: Types of attitudes

Chapter 7 will conduct the analysis and categorisation of Irish attitudes by examining empirical data taken from Eurobarometer surveys. The analysis will reflect the structure inherent in the model for analysis and analyse data in connection with the different types of attitudes defined

earlier. Furthermore, the data analysis will be further refined and supplemented by incorporating relevant hypotheses derived from general theories regarding determinants of support for the EU and European integration.

Chapter 8: Evaluation of findings

After conducting the type-based analysis of the Eurobarometer data, the findings will be gathered and discussed in terms of the model. In this respect, special attention will be devoted to which direction i.e. support or opposition, the different types have been shown to take. In addition, the instances of emerging euroscepticism identified in chapter 6 will serve as test cases for the applicability of the model and the resulting findings. In other words, the underlying reasons for the emergence of euroscepticism as shown in chapter 6 are expected to be reflected in the results from the type-based analysis of attitudes. The last section will address possible consequences resulting from the nature of Irish support and opposition for Ireland's relationship with the EU.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Finally, the conclusion will be concerned with three main issues. First, the question derived from the problem statement i.e. whether Ireland can be termed eurosceptic will be evaluated. Second, the type-based categorisation of attitudes proposed in the problem statement will be discussed in terms of its ability to provide feasible explanations for the direction of Irish attitudes toward the EU and European integration. Finally, the chapter will end by discussing the implications of the findings for future developments in regard to Ireland's membership of the EU, as well as for future research regarding public attitudes toward the EU and European integration.

3. Introduction to the theoretical field

3.1 *Determinants of support towards the EU and European integration*

The following section adds an overview of approaches that are concerned with identifying factors that influence support towards European integration and the European Union. Due to the limited scope of this thesis, this overview introduces only some of the most commonly cited factors in research concerning attitudes to the EU and European integration and can therefore not be taken as an exhaustive account of the studies available on the subject.

3.1.1 The cost-benefit school

Public attitudes towards European integration have fluctuated over time and a variety of factors have been suggested that determine or at least influence attitudes.

Initially, research into the phenomenon of attitudes toward the EU centered on economic utilitarian or cost/benefit considerations. Support for European integration in this context is believed to be primarily linked to *economic conditions and economic benefits associated with membership in the EU* (Anderson 1998:572).

One of the most prolific supporters of the economic/utilitarian approach is Gabel (1998).

Gabel (1998:10) argues that citizens' support for European integration depend on the welfare they receive as a result of the integration process. In addition, citizens' utilitarian evaluations of integration are based on self-interest e.g. the personal benefits they stand to gain from European integration.

Along similar lines, studies conducted by Anderson & Kalthenthaler (1996) found that support for European integration correlates with domestic economic circumstances e.g. when domestic economic conditions are favourable, support increases. Furthermore, the public may evaluate economic circumstances objectively and subjectively, as well as from both a collective and an individual standpoint (Hooghe & Marks 2005:422). On an objective and collective level, fiscal transfer plays a significant role in shaping public opinion. If a country is a net recipient of EU spending, support can be expected to be higher than in countries that are net contributors (Brinegar et al. 2004:63). In addition, preferences regarding types of capitalism can also impact public opinion, in that support for European integration tends to be higher in countries whose economic set up deviates less from EU average and is therefore are not as prone to interference

by EU legislation. Conversely, citizens favouring a liberal or social democratic system which is farther removed from EU average, might exhibit stronger signs of euroscepticism (Hooghe & Marks 2004:417)

Finally, on a subjective or individual level, citizens who feel positive about their economic situation and their economic prospects will tend to be more pro-EU.

3.1.2 Individual-level attributes

Another approach that investigates support at the individual level is the so-called Cognitive Mobilisation theory put forward by Ronald Inglehart (1970.) The theory posits that a direct link exists between people's cognitive skills and their support for European integration. Essentially, the higher the level of political awareness and political communication skills in an individual, the better equipped it will be to understand the workings of the EU, be less frightened by European integration and ultimately develop higher levels of support for the EU.

Apart from cognitive skills, research into the salience of individual-level attributes has also focused on the socio-economic status as a determinant of support for the EU. Gabel and Palmer (1995) for instance found that a person's occupational skills and income level impacts its attitudes, because better educated and wealthier people tend to occupy better positions and as a result show higher levels of support for European integration, as they can more easily adapt to the liberalisation of the labour market for example.

Finally, the effects of age and gender on support for the EU and European integration have also been investigated, leading one study to conclude that for instance women are slightly less enthusiastic about EU integration than men (Nelson & Guth 2000).

3.1.3 National vs. European context

So far, most approaches presented have treated attitudes toward the EU as shaped to some extent by the national context. In the following, approaches, stemming from national context theory, (Kritzinger 2003:222) that emphasise the importance of national-level factors will therefore be presented.

To return to evaluations of the cost-benefit approach, reducing factors determining public support for European integration to predominantly economic, cost-benefit considerations has been criticised by Anderson among others. Anderson (1998) argues that utilitarian approaches to

public opinion assume that citizens form their attitudes towards the EU in a rational manner, objectively analysing the costs and benefits of membership. Naturally, such approaches presuppose that citizens generally have a good understanding of the underlying factors determining their and their country's economic conditions and are able to evaluate the EU's role in these matters. In addition, in order for citizens to evaluate the costs and benefits of being an EU-member also requires a high level of understanding and knowledge about the EU's institutions and policies. However, research conducted EU-wide, has repeatedly uncovered a relatively low level of knowledge on EU institutions and policies. Not surprisingly, this fact to a certain extent discredits the notion that citizens can objectively evaluate the economic implications of EU-membership, while at the same time being remarkably ill-informed about the EU's workings. More generally, Janssen (1991:467) goes on to suggest that the concept of integration might be too difficult or abstract for an average citizen to grasp and form a well-considered opinion. Accordingly, Anderson (1998) argues that citizens use experiences and political beliefs developed in the context of domestic politics as a means of making sense of such an abstract concept as European integration.

Proxies

According to Anderson (1998), public attitudes about the advantages/disadvantages of EU-membership are therefore a reflection of political beliefs acquired at the level of domestic politics. As a result, citizens use proxies related to domestic politics in order to form an opinion about European integration. Anderson's model combines economic with political considerations and investigates three main proxies that citizens use to evaluate European integration; system support, support for the politicians i.e. the government in office, and partisanship. System support relates to citizens' views regarding political institutions in general. According to Anderson's hypothesis, citizens who display a high level of satisfaction with their national political institutions and democratic set-up, will also be favourably disposed towards European integration. Similarly, Government support and public opinion about European integration are linked as well. Support for the incumbent government influences citizens' attitudes towards the EU, because citizens frequently see their governments as the primary actors in the EU, for example in the framework of meetings of the Council of Ministers. Therefore, Anderson assumes that support for European integration rises and falls with support for the national government. Even though political parties do not play a significant role at EU-level, they can shape

preferences of the electorate at the national level. Frequently, parties use the EU as an ideological divider and, especially in the case of small and newer parties, as a means of differentiating themselves from established parties. Anderson's assumptions regarding party support posit that supporters of anti-Europe and antiestablishment parties show lower levels of support for European integration. Regarding the viability of Anderson's proxies, he found that the system support hypothesis was the most powerful in influencing public opinion, while government support showed the weakest connection between domestic politics and public attitudes towards the EU. In other words, whether a government is popular or the opposite does not seem to significantly affect attitudes to the EU. Finally, Anderson's research concludes that "domestic politics of the member states need to be considered separately when examining public support for integration" (Anderson 1998:588).

Direction of support

In addition to investigating the relative importance of the national vs. the European context, considerable attention has also been paid to whether support at the national level and support for the EU follow the same direction or rather diverge.

There are two main arguments regarding the direction of support; the equal assessments and the different assessments argument (Kritzinger 2003:225). According to the first line of thought, the public evaluates the national and the EU level from the same perspective which entails that levels of support or opposition are equal for the national and the EU level. This relationship has been examined by Rohrschneider (2002) who found that for instance levels of trust in institutions tend to be the same for both domestic and EU institutions. Conversely, the different assessments argument posits that citizens' attitudes toward the EU are distinct from their attitudes toward the nation-state. In this context, support for the EU would be a consequence of dissatisfaction with for instance institutions at the national level and vice versa (Sanchez-Cuenca 2000).

Elites vs. the public

Finally, the last branch of research dealing with the importance of the domestic context, investigates the relationship between political elites i.e. parties and the public.

Carrubba (2001) examines this connection between domestic political elites and public preferences regarding the EU by testing the validity of three theories of representation; permissive consensus, cue-taking and an approach labelled policy mood.

Essentially, Carrubba's study is concerned with proving that an electoral connection in EU politics exists. This electoral connection could be paraphrased as the ability of the electorate to influence its representatives e.g. political parties, the government or vice versa.

According to the permissive consensus theory, it has been assumed that the public has been largely supportive of European integration and therefore given political elites free reigns in questions of European integration. Also, the high level of disinterest and lack of knowledge frequently displayed by EU-citizens has been regarded as confirmation that a permissive consensus exists (Carrubba 2001:141). In short, according to the permissive consensus argument, political elites were able to act largely independently on EU issues which would suggest that there is no connection between the public's and the elite's preferences. However, recent developments in public opinion e.g. dwindling support as shown in opinion polls suggest that the basis for a permissive consensus, namely a general amount of goodwill towards European integration in the general public has disappeared.

Both cue-taking and the policy mood approach on the other hand, acknowledge the existence of an electoral connection, yet with causal direction reversed. Cue-taking implies that political elites cue or shape the public's preferences, which in the context of parties (party cue) means that citizens follow their party's stance on European integration (Hooghe & Marks 2005:425). Policy-mood regards this relationship as reversed in that political elites' positions on the EU are seen as a response to the preferences of the electorate.

Carrubba's findings after testing these three theories point to the existence of an electoral connection and provide support for the policy mood theory in that "the more pro-EU the electorate is, the more pro-EU parties tend to be." (Carrubba 2001:153). Most importantly, these findings once again emphasise the significance of public opinion for the success of European integration.

3.1.3 National identity

Apart from economic considerations and building on the idea that domestic national contexts influence public opinion, Hooghe & Marks (2005) expand the number of factors influencing public opinion by adding identity, more precisely national identity, to the equation.

Hooghe and Marks' study presents identity theory as a complement or alternative to approaches centering on economic utilitarian approaches. Their aim is to establish which approach is the more influential factor in shaping public opinion.

In determining the extent to which identity plays a role in shaping public opinion, Hooghe and Marks draw on social identity theory which stipulates that identity "depends on which group one identifies with" (Hooghe & Marks 2005:422). Furthermore, the process of identification with a given group also produces a certain degree of loyalty towards that group, which can impact a person's views on political issues as well. The predominant influence on a person's identity is territorial which makes national identity an essential factor as well as an element that has the power to shape preferences regarding EU-related issues. As to the kind of role that national identity plays vis-à-vis European integration, i.e. a positive impact that strengthens support for the EU or a negative influence that diminishes and limits approval of the European integration process, different studies result in different findings. On the one hand, *citizens who strongly identify with their national community and who support exclusionary norms tend to perceive European integration as a threat.*" (Hooghe & Marks 2005:423). Often a strong identification with one's national community and a high level of national pride can express themselves negatively as rejection of or antipathy towards other cultures. A study into the influence of national identity conducted by Carey (2002) supports this and has found that strong feelings of national identity can lead to lower levels of support for the EU and European. Furthermore, McLaren (2002) investigates the impact of hostility to other cultures on public attitudes to European integration. In her study, she finds that *the degree of antipathy toward other cultures stemming from nationalistic attachments* (McLaren 2002:552), indeed shapes citizens' attitudes toward the EU and even poses a more significant constraint than economic cost/benefit considerations. Furthermore, she suggests that constraints resulting from more diffuse sentiments of hostility towards other cultures are a more likely source of negative public reactions to European integration than utilitarian fact-based appraisals of membership.

Conversely, other studies have presented evidence that national and European identity can coexist without threatening each other. Haesly (2001) for example finds that in the case of Scotland, there exists a positive link between Scottish and European identity.

Given these conflicting evaluations of the role of national identity, Hooghe & Marks (2005) attempt to explain under what circumstances national identity breeds support or rejection of

European integration. Leaning on previous studies, Hooghe & Marks emphasise the importance of including national histories or the national context for the evaluation of the effects of national identity. Moreover, the distinction between a person's conception of their identity as either exclusive or inclusive is crucial. Their study has shown that citizens who conceive of their identity as exclusively national, are significantly more likely to be eurosceptic. Finally, the strength of the exclusive/inclusive identity variable grows proportional to the degree of division prevalent among the nation's elite on the subject of European integration.

3.2 Euroscepticism as a concept

Whereas the previous section dealt with general theories regarding determinants of public attitudes toward the EU, the following section will provide an insight into negative manifestations of public opinion towards the EU and European integration i.e. what is commonly referred to as euroscepticism.

According to Harmsen & Spiering (2005:15), euroscepticism as a term was first recorded in the 80's in an article published in a British newspaper. When the term was first coined it was synonymous with 'anti-marketeer' and was associated with the political and historical context of Britain at the time. Consequently, it was used to refer to an essentially British opposition towards membership in the EU (or EC at the time). Although the term originated in a British context, it has since taken on a broader definition and been applied to various national contexts within the European Union.

Euroscepticism has become a popular term in the media as well as academic research and as a result has become rather fuzzy and difficult to define as a concept. Put somewhat broadly, the term is used to define *a negative point of view towards the European Union* (Forster 2002:2). However, this definition is problematic due to its simplicity. It classifies every person displaying negative attitudes to the EU as eurosceptic and it lacks definition as to what is understood by the European Union. In order to qualify the nature of such a negative point of view towards the European Union, Sørensen (2008:6) defines euroscepticism

as a sentiment of disapproval – reaching a certain degree and durability – directed towards the EU in its entirety or towards particular policy areas or developments.

Most importantly, this definition qualifies the above mentioned negative point of view or sentiment of disapproval in terms of intensity, as well as its object the EU, referring either to the EU as a whole or merely particular aspects of it.

Apart from a basic definition of the term, there have also been attempts at establishing different categorisations of euroscepticism. However, it is necessary to point out that many of the categorisations of euroscepticism presented below were developed for the analysis of party positions and not public opinion as such.

Flood (2002:73) for instance provides such a party-based conceptualisation of euroscepticism as distrust or doubt towards European integration and characterises different degrees of such distrust ranging from a fairly moderate attitude, European integration has gone as far as it should go, to outright rejection of membership in the EU. Similarly, Taggart and Szczesbiak (2003:7) distinguish between *hard and soft euroscepticism*. In their typology of party-based attitudes to the EU, *hard euroscepticism* involves a principled opposition to the project of European integration as a whole, resulting in a demand of effective withdrawal from membership. *Soft euroscepticism* on the other hand, is characterised by a qualified opposition to the EU regarding only certain policy areas and not membership as such.

A categorisation of euroscepticism developed for public attitudes can be found in Sørensen's (2004; 2007; 2008) research. Sørensen proposes a number of ideal types of public euroscepticism that capture different motivations for negative attitudes towards the EU and she uses Eurobarometer data as a basis for her analysis of euroscepticism types. One such typology identifies four types incorporating variants of euroscepticism that are *economic in nature, sovereignty-based, democratic or political*. However, this typology appears in a slightly more expanded version in another publication, which operates with 6 types including *national sovereignty, ideology, political performance, economic utility, affective pull* (or rather lack thereof) and *principled opposition*.

Another broad categorisation suggests differentiating between *instrumental and political euroscepticism* (Lubbers & Scheepers 2005:224), where *instrumental euroscepticism* pertains to a (negative) evaluation of the benefits received from EU membership, the cost-benefit relationship, whereas *political euroscepticism* is concerned with the allocation of national policies to the Union.

Finally, Haesly (2001) adds an important element to categorisations of euroscepticism. When studying public opinion towards the EU and euroscepticism in particular, there is always a risk to look at the area through a narrow lens that focuses exclusively on negative sentiments and neglects to incorporate positive views. Haesly's research identifies and describes different types

of *European attachment* in Scotland and Wales. Although, his research is geographically specific, his categorisation concerning Scotland might also be applied to other national contexts. Haesly differentiates broadly between two types of European attachment: *Euroscepticism* at one end of the spectrum and more positive attitudes at the other. The subjects of his study who express positive views on the EU can be further divided into two groups. *Europhiles* who are supportive of all aspects pertaining to the European Union, and the second group, labelled *Instrumental Europeans*, who are not universally supportive, but only agree with certain aspects regarding the EU (Haesly 2001: 82). In short, Haesly complements conceptualisations of euroscepticism with categorisations of positive attitudes towards the EU.

4. Evaluation of theoretical approaches

The previous chapter was primarily aimed at providing a selective presentation of some of the main conceptualisations and theories on the subject of public opinion and euroscepticism towards the EU. As was shown, there is no widespread agreement within the academic community regarding either the nature of the term euroscepticism or the most likely factors shaping attitudes towards the EU and European integration. However, there are commonalities between the different approaches, which suggests that by examining occurrences of converging interpretations or areas of interest, an accurate picture of the state of current research on public opinion and euroscepticism can be achieved. The following two sections will therefore evaluate and endeavour to link the factors deemed most relevant in shaping public opinion on the EU with a categorisation of euroscepticism in order to create the parameters for the analysis of Irish attitudes towards the EU and European integration.

4.1 Factors shaping attitudes to the EU

Starting from the overview of determinants of public opinion in 3.1, the areas that seem to attract most attention are utilitarian/economic factors, national identity and factors relating to the domestic political context.

These factors have been chosen not only because they appear frequently in leading research, but also because they lend themselves well for the empirical analysis conducted in this paper. As a result of restrictions imposed by the empirical data and model for analysis, factors that pertain to individual-level attributes such as age, gender, socio-economic status, cognitive skills etc could not be included in the analysis.

4.1.1 Utilitarian/economic factors

As mentioned in 3.1.1, research into attitudes to EU membership has initially focused on economic cost-benefit considerations and a variety of factors e.g. net transfers, growth rates and individual perceptions of economic well-being have been proposed as determinants of support for the EU.

Broadly speaking, economic factors can be divided into *objective indicators* including growth rates and fiscal transfers and *subjective evaluations* i.e. perceptions of personal economic well-being. Both have been found to affect support for the EU, though not equally strongly.

However, as there appears to be evidence that domestic economic developments affect attitudes towards the EU, information regarding these factors will be gathered and discussed for Ireland.

4.1.2 National identity

A number of studies suggest that a connection between citizens' conception of their national identity, as either *inclusive* or *exclusive*, affects their level of support/opposition to the EU. However, the role of *national identity* and of the level of *attachment* to one's country in regard to shaping support often leads to diametrically opposed conclusions. As outlined in 3.1.3, a strong sense of national identity and belonging to one's country can affect support for the EU and European integration negatively (Carey 2002). Yet, a strong bond to country and national identity does not necessarily preclude the adoption of a European dimension to one's conception of identity. Nevertheless, national identity and attachment can impact support for the EU, be it negatively or positively, and are therefore valid factors to include in the analysis of Irish attitudes toward the EU and European integration.

4.1.3 Domestic political context

One final conclusion drawn from the overview of determinants of public opinion in 3.1 pertains to the importance of *proxies*, especially regarding institutions and the incumbent government (Anderson 1998). In other words, there is a connection between evaluations of domestic political institutions and institutions at the supranational level. Regarding this relationship there are two main strands of argument. If citizens are satisfied with the workings of domestic institutions and their government, they will be less likely to be supportive of European integration as they feel that nothing can be gained from adding a supranational layer (Anderson 1998; Sanchez-Cuenca 2000). Conversely, Rohrschneider (2002) argues that if levels of trust in domestic as well as EU institutions are examined the relationship is reversed. High levels of trust in domestic institutions often increase trust in EU institutions as well, presumably because when trust is linked to positive evaluations of the political elite at the domestic level the same trust will also be extended to the EU level. To conclude, evaluations of institutions at the domestic and the EU level appear to provide important clues to the direction of support and will therefore be applied to the analysis of Irish attitudes as well. Finally, the level of support toward the EU exhibited by political parties and the degree of division among parties regarding positions on European

integration can impact support of the general public as well (Hooghe & Marks 2005).

Accordingly, an examination of the main Irish parties' positions on the EU is worth including in the analysis as well.

4.2 Categorisation of euroscepticism

This section builds on the general overview of theories on euroscepticism presented in 3.2. In the following sections, the working definition of euroscepticism as it is utilised in this thesis will be developed and discussed. Furthermore, the various typologies of euroscepticism will be summarised and compared in order to provide the framework for the type-based model presented in 5.2.

4.2.1 Defining euroscepticism

As mentioned previously, the fact that the term euroscepticism is used in both popular discourse and academic research renders its exact meaning difficult to pinpoint and gives rise to multiple interpretations of the concept. Clearly defining and limiting the understanding of euroscepticism in the context of this thesis is therefore paramount. To start with Forster's (2002:2) definition: *a negative point of view towards the European Union*, it is apparent that this definition, while introducing the two essential components; a certain negative attitude and its object the EU, is far too broad and would not provide any nuanced insight into what euroscepticism denotes.

A more specific definition can be found in the Oxford English Dictionary which describes euroscepticism as *a tendency to have doubts or reservations regarding the supposed benefits of increasing cooperation between the member states of the European Union (and formerly the European Economic Community); opposition to greater political or economic integration in Europe* (Oxford Reference Online).

While this definition contains a more detailed description of what the objects of such negative sentiments or reservations are i.e. the benefits and depth of integration, it lacks clarification as to the -scepticism part i.e. what is meant by reservations and doubts. If one were to define euroscepticism merely as having reservations regarding the EU, the derived label Eurosceptic would probably apply to every EU-citizen at one point in his/her life. In order for the concept to be used to analyse attitudes to the EU, it must further refine what is understood by negative sentiments, reservations etc. Specifically, it should allow for a distinction between negative attitudes that are fleeting and are no more than a product of momentary dissatisfaction with some

aspect of the EU and attitudes that reflect deep-seated opposition and perhaps even a wish for withdrawal from the EU.

The definition proposed by Sørensen, which conceptualises euroscepticism as *a sentiment of disapproval – reaching a certain degree and durability – directed towards the EU in its entirety or towards particular policy areas or developments*, therefore seems to capture best the general nature of euroscepticism as it will be used in this thesis, since it qualifies negative sentiments also in terms of intensity and durability. However, while a general definition of euroscepticism is a necessary methodological precondition for analysis, it is essential to embed the concept in the national context in which it is used, in this case Ireland, in order to fully comprehend its underlying connotations. According to Daddow (2006), paying attention to the local and national context when analysing euroscepticism is paramount, considering that euroscepticism can have very different associations in different countries. In Britain for instance, euroscepticism is associated with rather extreme positions and has become almost synonymous with the wish for a complete withdrawal from membership of the European Union, whereas the same term is associated with weaker opposition in other national contexts (Spiering 2004:128).

4.2.1 Typologies

Categorising euroscepticism in terms of different types is one approach that might serve to shed more light on the nature of euroscepticism as it is used in the Irish national context.

In order to identify the most prominent and widely used types and for reasons of clarification, the table below provides an overview of the different typologies and categorisations presented in chapter 3.1.

Table 1: Overview of euroscepticism types

Author	Types					
Taggart & Szczerbiak	Hard euroscepticism			Soft euroscepticism		
Flood	Rejectionist	Revisionist	Minimalist	Gradualist	Reformist	Maximalist
Haesly	Euroskeptics		Instrumental Europeans		Europhiles	
Sørensen	Principled opposition	National sovereignty	Political performance	Ideology	Affective pull	Economic utility
	Sovereignty-based Euroscepticism	Democratic euroscepticism	Social Euroscepticism		Economic euroscepticism	
	Principled Euroscepticism	Sovereignty-based Euroscepticism	Ideological Euroscepticism		Utilitarian Euroscepticism	
Lubbers and Scheepers	Instrumental	Political				

As there is considerable overlap between some of these different typologies as well as differences in terms of what aspects the types are based on, the following paragraphs will identify the common element in these types as well as present the typology that will be used for the purpose of this thesis.

In general, a basic distinction can be made between approaches that categorise euroscepticism on the basis of degree or intensity of opposition as opposed to the nature of the underlying motivations behind negative sentiments towards the EU.

Degree

The foremost example of an approach that operates with degrees of intensity is Taggart & Szczerbiak's (2002:7) distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' euroscepticism, where hard euroscepticism refers to advocates of complete withdrawal from the EU, whereas the 'soft' variant denotes qualified opposition that is directed at specific policy areas and not withdrawal from the EU as such.

Flood (2002:5) suggests another categorisation that distributes sentiments of disapproval towards the EU along a continuum consisting of six positions ranging from a 'rejectionist' stance, which is synonymous with opposition to membership, to a 'maximalist' stance, which is associated with support for further integration, at the other end of the spectrum. Finally, Haesly (2001) also

incorporates differing levels of opposition spanning from what he terms Euroskeptics to Instrumental Europeans. Similar to Flood's (2002) continuum of attitudes to the EU and unlike Taggart & Szczerbiak (2003), Haesly (2001) also covers positive positions (Europhiles) regarding the desirability of further integration in the EU.

However, Haesly's (2001) study, which investigates attitudes to the EU in Scotland and Wales, goes one step further in denoting attitudes to the EU as different types of European attachment, rather than different variants of euroscepticism. In his study, he differentiates broadly between positive attitudes and eurosceptic ones. Interestingly, he divides the group of positive attitudes further into Europhiles, who exhibit unqualified support for all aspects of integration, and Instrumental Europeans who endorse only specific aspects of integration. This distinction between indiscriminate support (Europhiles) and qualified support (Instrumental Europeans) can be seen as 'the reverse side of the same coin' in regard to Taggart & Szczerbiak's (2003) 'hard' and 'soft' categories.

Nevertheless, it seems important to include positive sentiments as well, since apart from the arguably rare type of a genuine Europhile, positive attitudes like negative ones can be further dissected to reveal the underlying motives for support. Especially as this thesis deals with a proclaimed pro-EU nation which by definition should exhibit a high level of positive attitudes, it seems advisable to employ a typology of varying positive sentiments in order to analyse motives behind positive attitudes as well, instead of lumping them all together into one broad category.

Types

The remaining categorisations cited in Table 1, are mainly concerned with a description or analysis of the motives behind different types of euroscepticism. While they do not exclude differing degrees of intensity, they do not specifically refer to or employ the taxonomy of outright rejection to moderate skepticism in their typologies.

Accordingly, the remaining task is to identify the similarities between the different types. After comparing the various typologies, mainly referring to the categorisations proposed by Sørensen and Lubbers and Scheepers, there appear to be a number of frequently occurring types. The first type that surfaces in different approaches is concerned with the economic benefits associated with the EU. This aspect appears in Sørensen's research under varying names such as *economic utility*, *utilitarian Euroscepticism* and *economic Euroscepticism* and corresponds to Lubbers and Scheeper's category called *Instrumental Euroscepticism*.

A second type concerns scepticism rooted in fears of loss of national sovereignty, which again appears repeatedly in Sørensen's publications, i.e. *national sovereignty, sovereignty-based Euroscepticism*. To a certain extent, this type is implicitly reflected in Lubbers and Scheepers' category of *Political Euroscepticism* which refers to the extent of the EU's political power in several policy domains or, in other words, the level of tolerance towards shifting political power in different policy areas from the nation state to the supra-national level which is naturally linked with concerns regarding national sovereignty. Furthermore, Sørensen's (2004:3) type *political performance* which concerns the transfer of new competencies to the EU in order to enhance efficiency, could be subsumed under the same heading of concerns regarding national sovereignty, similar to Lubbers and Scheepers' *Political Euroscepticism*.

Finally, Sørensen proposes a broad type labelled *Ideological Euroscepticism*, which in essence contains attitudes regarding political and value-based considerations. In different publications this type resurfaces as *Ideology* (the values of the EU) and to a certain extent the *democratic euroscepticism* (democratic deficit) and *social euroscepticism* (socialist vs. liberal ideology) types used in a third publication.

Summary

To conclude, it appears that the most comprehensive way to categorise euroscepticism should combine a category referring to degree, as well as categories comprising different types of euroscepticism based on the underlying motivations for opposition. In this regard, Sørensen's work provides the most suitable categories. After reviewing and comparing the different categories, the main thematic areas can be subsumed under three broad headings; economic or utilitarian, sovereignty and political/democratic euroscepticism. In the following section these three main types of euroscepticism will be combined with the main factors determining support identified in 4.1, in order to develop a model to analyse Irish attitudes toward the EU and European integration.

5. Method/ Framework for Analysis

After introducing relevant literature and research and thereafter presenting the main factors determining attitudes towards the EU and European integration, as well as the main categorisations of euroscepticism, this chapter accounts for the analytical approach and model used in this thesis. As the aim of this thesis is to investigate the nature and development of Irish public attitudes, this section will begin with presenting the actors, i.e. public opinion and political parties, which form two sources from which Irish attitudes towards the EU originate. As a next step, the data that provides the basis for analysing Irish attitudes will be introduced and discussed. Last, the model used to analyse and categorise Irish attitudes toward European integration will be described in detail.

5.1 Actors

To begin with it is necessary to delimit and define what is understood by *Irish attitudes* and most importantly, where these attitudes originate and what actors or groups of actors' attitudes are included in the analysis.

In the context of this thesis, attitudes are defined as: *A relatively stable favorable or unfavorable feeling or belief about a concept, person, or object* or more generally as *the way in which a person views and evaluates something or someone* (Oxford Reference Online). Furthermore, the attitudes analysed in the following sections originate from two sources; public opinion and elite/party stances.

Public opinion

Public opinion in the context of politics can be defined as *the aggregate of the individual views, attitudes, and beliefs on issues of political relevance that can influence individual and group behavior and the actions of leaders and governments* (Oxford Reference Online).

Public opinion is meant to provide clues as to what attitudes towards the EU are prevalent in the Irish public and public opinion surveys will serve as the primary means of establishing what attitudes are present in both nations. However, public opinion within the context of politics and supported by opinion surveys shall not be equated with a uniform attitude of an entire nation.

Rather, when public opinion is used in this thesis it will denote the views held by a sample of the population as defined in the individual opinion survey consulted, which naturally constrains the ability to refer to polling results as signifying a unified public opinion. While opinion surveys do

not reflect the Irish population's attitudes in their entirety, they do however provide an adequate means of gauging the state of public opinion.

Moreover, the importance of public opinion in the context of European integration has steadily attracted more attention and interest in terms of its ability to influence governments and policy outcomes. In the case of Ireland, the importance of public opinion is naturally indisputable, given the necessity to hold popular referendums whenever questions regarding European integration are concerned.

Parties

A related issue concerns the relationship between elites (parties, the government) and the public. Scholars subscribe to the view that there is some degree of interrelatedness, what Carrubba (2001) terms an electoral connection, between the public's attitudes and elite/party stances. However, views differ as to whether parties influence the public via providing cues or whether parties in fact respond to the public's mood or preferences.

While it is not the object of this paper to investigate the veracity of one model opposite the other, including both the public and elites into an analysis of attitudes seems valid since an electoral connection appears to exist. Disregarding the input provided by elites e.g. parties could skew the picture of prevalent attitudes. An analysis of party lines and positions on the EU is therefore a relevant element in establishing the general state of attitudes (support or opposition) towards the EU in Ireland. Due to the limited scope of this thesis and the primary focus on public opinion, an analysis of Irish party positions on European integration will be limited to an examination of party stances regarding the individual EU-related referendums held in Ireland. To determine a party's position on European integration, an overview will be presented indicating whether the party in question campaigned for a Yes or a No vote in EU-referendums. Furthermore, the analysis will draw on existing research on euroscepticism in political parties conducted by Taggart & Szczerbiak (2003).

5.2 Data

In order to examine Irish attitudes toward the EU and European integration, empirical data extracted from public opinion surveys and relevant literature will be gathered and examined according to the type of attitude it represents.

5.2.1 Source

The main source of data to analyse Irish public opinion will consist of public opinion surveys and surveys derived from the Eurobarometer series. Eurobarometer surveys are conducted on behalf of the European Commission and made available to the public on the European Commission's public opinion homepage. The EB series consists of Standard, Flash and Special Eurobarometers as well as Qualitative Studies.

Standard Eurobarometers were first published in 1973. Data is gathered by conducting approximately 1000 face-to-face interviews in the individual member states and results are published twice a year. Over the years, Standard EB's were supplemented by Flash EB's, ad-hoc telephone interviews to obtain data quickly, and Special EB's, in-depth thematic studies, which are integrated in Standard EB's (European Commission, Public Opinion 2009). Mainly, the data material that will be extracted from individual EB surveys consists of so-called *indicators* i.e. EB questions dealing with a specific thematic area.

In addition to empirical data derived from EB surveys, the analysis, specifically Chapter 6, will also include an evaluation of findings provided by existing research, to supplement EB data and to contribute additional information primarily on political parties and relevant domestic developments.

5.2.2 Approach

The empirical data extracted from the Eurobarometer series will be used to provide evidence for the frequency with which different indicators occur and consequently to establish their significance in terms of characterising Irish attitudes. The EB series operates with a catalogue of questions, so-called indicators, which are put to respondents to follow trends in the development of public opinion. A number of these indicators will be chosen to account for the development of Irish attitudes toward the EU and European integration and to categorise the nature of attitudes prevalent in the Irish public. Graphs will be generated to visually present the trends or shifts observable in percentages connected to the different indicators.

Furthermore, whenever sufficient data is available a longitudinal approach to the data will be employed in order to uncover trends and shifts in public attitudes. However, when limitations arise due to the unavailability of data, the analysis will focus on significant events or periods i.e. referendums, the introduction of new EU treaties etc.

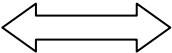
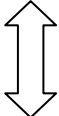
After having established the frequency and significance of the chosen indicators, the results will be discussed and evaluated by incorporating relevant theories and domestic factors as described in the model for analysis below.

5.2.3 Limitations

However, before the model for analysis will be introduced, a number of limitations connected to using Eurobarometer data have to be discussed. Difficulties arise chiefly in connection with continuity. Eurobarometers are continuous surveys and aim at revealing trends in public opinion. However, determining whether a pattern observed in the data corresponds to real-world changes can prove difficult. Schmitt (2003:246) pinpoints that some data changes from one survey to the next, may be due to instrument changes such as different question wordings etc, rather than a result of a real trend. In order to avoid such misinterpretations, particular attention has been paid to instances where gaps in data occur or where the questions have been altered.

5.3 Attitudes model

The model devised for the purpose of this study is illustrated below. The illustration outlines the different components of the model which constitute the main parameters of the analysis presented in Chapter 7. In the following, the model's features and characteristics will be described in more detail.

Type of attitude	Directional quality
Degree	Support  Hard euroscepticism
Utilitarian-based	Positive  Negative
Sovereignty-based	
Institutional performance-based	

First, the types of attitudes that will be operationalised in this thesis i.e. **Degree, Utilitarian-based, Sovereignty-based, Institutional performance-based**, are in essence based on Sørensen's (2004; 2007; 2008) typologies and approach to categorisations of euroscepticism as presented in 4.2.1. While the individual types do not exactly correspond to her selection of types, the main distinction between degree or intensity and different types has been borrowed from her research. However, while this distinction and the division of attitudes into types are as such deemed relevant, the focus solely on eurosceptic attitudes will not be followed. Rather, the typology and categories described above will be applied to '**attitudes**' towards the EU and European integration, as opposed to just opposition i.e. euroscepticism. Unlike Sørensen, the types used to categorise Irish attitudes towards the EU and its policies incorporate therefore both a negative and a positive orientation or **directional quality** e.g. attitudes based on a particular type might lead to euroscepticism (factor triggers negative evaluations) or support (factor is evaluated positively). Therefore, the types listed in the model are not termed types of euroscepticism, but rather types of attitudes, a more inclusive term than euroscepticism. The reason for including both positive and negative variants within the individual types relates to Ireland's image as a pro-EU country. As mentioned earlier, as positive evaluations are expected to dominate Irish attitudes, incorporating the nature of support in an analysis of Irish attitudes seems the best way to capture all aspects of Irish attitudes toward the EU. Furthermore, a comparison of the frequency of positive opposite negative evaluations of the chosen indicators provides more information to interpret. Including only one direction might result in a slightly skewed view of attitudes as a whole. Supposing only negative evaluations were examined and levels of these negative responses were low, the conclusion would naturally follow that this type does not trigger opposition. It would be equally interesting, however, to establish whether support i.e. positive evaluations for this type are correspondingly high or if in fact decided support for this type is low as well. This scenario is possible since the majority of questions asked in an EB survey operate with a fixed set of possible answers, among them a 'don't know' or 'indifferent' category. Accordingly, low levels of both negative and positive evaluations could point to a general lack of interest in the issue and reveal whether the public regards the issue in question as salient or not.

Second, among the four types selected for analysing attitudes, **Degree** pertains to the intensity of support/opposition to the EU and European integration, whereas the other three; **Utilitarian-**

based, Sovereignty-based, Institutional performance-based, categorise attitudes according to the nature of the underlying motives that shape public opinion toward the EU. Naturally, the first type gauges general levels of support or opposition to the EU without providing an explanation for the intensity of opposition or support it uncovers. Therefore, the results for this type could be caused by one, any or all of the remaining three types.

Third, the theories on determinants of public opinion presented in 4.1 will be incorporated into the analysis whenever possible and will be used to account for or at least provide explanations for the underlying reasons behind the results provided by the type-based analysis of Irish public attitudes.

Fourth, as mentioned in 5.1 attitudes are derived from both public opinion and party positions. However, for reasons of scope, party positions could only be analysed for the category degree and not for the other three types of attitudes.

Finally, as the analysis will be conducted on the basis of a type-based approach, it is necessary to describe the types chosen in detail as well as the indicators used to examine them.

- **Degree**

This type is used to evaluate attitudes according to degree or intensity of public opinion on the European Union. Mainly, it is intended to reveal both levels of support as well as extreme positions of opposition to the EU and European integration. The analysis of Irish public opinion includes two EB indicators; a *membership* and *dissolution indicator*, which allow for positive and negative evaluations of membership as such. Accordingly, this type will uncover both general levels of support for the EU as well as the level of outright rejection of EU membership or ‘hard’ euroscepticism i.e. percentages of individuals wishing complete withdrawal from the EU. Furthermore, this type will be applied to an analysis of political parties. To establish levels of hard euroscepticism among parties, the number of parties campaigning actively for withdrawal will be established. For general support levels, the number of parties that support the pro-EU camp in EU-referendums will be taken as an indicator.

- **Utilitarian-based**

Essentially, this type focuses on cost-benefit considerations i.e. whether or not the public perceives membership of the EU as beneficial in economic terms. The Eurobarometer series

provides a so-called *benefits indicator* which reveals levels of favourable and negative evaluations of the perceived benefits connected to membership in the EU.

As a second step, the analysis will incorporate an indicator regarding the *meaning of the EU*, in order to support the initial claim that the public connects evaluations regarding the benefits of membership mainly with economic aspects.

As mentioned previously, studies focusing on economic factors as determinants of public support for the EU arrive at different and often contradictory conclusions. However, to uncover the role that utilitarian evaluations play in shaping public attitudes, economic factors e.g. net benefits and subjective perceptions of economic well-being, that are proposed by research of the cost-benefit school will also be evaluated. In other words, the findings from the type-based approach will be linked to these factors in order to probe their viability as explanations for the occurrence of utilitarian-based attitudes.

- **Sovereignty-based**

This type evaluates attitudes according to the desirability of transferring power from the national to the supranational (EU) level. To determine the levels of support for or opposition to giving up national sovereignty in favour of European integration within Irish public opinion, an EB indicator related to the formation of a *European Government* will be used.

In addition, sovereignty-based attitudes also comprise more symbolic national sovereignty issues such as *language, culture and identity* among others. These factors could trigger fears regarding the loss of national sovereignty opposite the EU and consequently lead to lower levels of support for European integration.

As research on determinants of support for the EU has shown, national identity constitutes an important element in the public's attitudes toward European integration.

In this respect, *national attachment, pride* and people's conception of their national identity as *inclusive versus exclusive* have been shown to be significant factors and will therefore be incorporated in sovereignty-based attitudes. Also, these factors will be examined for the national Irish context as well as in relation to the supranational level (EU), since research findings suggest that a strong bond to national identity can affect support for European integration.

- **Institutional performance-based**

This type is concerned with evaluations of democracy and trust in political institutions both at the national and the supranational (EU) level. Regarding institutional performance, satisfaction with democracy is a central concern and reflected in the EB *democracy indicator*. Evaluations of institutional performance also influence levels of trust or distrust in institutions. Therefore, EB indicators accounting for *trust* in both European and national institutions have been added to the analysis. The reason for adding the national context to the European level pertains to research that provides evidence for the assumption that evaluations of the national context influence attitudes toward the EU and vice versa and in turn can lead to higher or lower levels of support for the EU and European integration.

5.3.1 Limitations

By incorporating a number of relevant categories or types that influence attitudes as well allowing for an investigation of a continuum of attitudes ranging from support to euroscepticism, the design of the model should enable a comprehensive analysis of the main areas that have a bearing on Irish attitudes towards the EU. However, such a type-based approach naturally leads to a number of limitations. First of all, the types chosen together with the specific EB indicators will naturally constrict the findings by excluding factors that are not incorporated into the individual types. Accordingly, it is possible that a choice of alternative types and corresponding indicators would result in slightly different findings as well. Furthermore, it remains to be seen whether these admittedly ideal and rather rigidly defined types can be extracted from the data in their pure form, or in other words, if the attitudes prevalent in the Irish case can be neatly categorised and clear distinctions made between attitudes based on e.g. either sovereignty or utilitarian factors.

However, as the choice of the types and indicators is based on extensive study of their occurrence in relevant research and to a certain extent based on Sørensen's (2004; 2007; 2008) operationalisation of EB indicators, the selection of indicators can be regarded as justified.

6. Historical perspective on Irish attitudes toward the EU

Before applying the model to an analysis of types of Irish attitudes, the following section will provide a short overview of Ireland's relationship with the EU. This will add valuable information regarding the national context, which has been shown to shape attitudes toward the EU and European integration (Kritzinger 2003; Anderson 1998; Hooghe & Marks 2005), and thereby supplement the framework for the analysis.

First, the chapter will introduce and give examples of the common perception that Ireland belongs to the pro-EU fraction within the European Union. Second, the next section will examine events and developments that are commonly interpreted as signifying the emergence of euroscepticism in Ireland.

6.1 Ireland: The Good Europeans

The Republic of Ireland's existence as a sovereign state began in 1922 after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, when it became independent from the United Kingdom, resulting however, in the partition of the island into the Irish Free State consisting of 26 counties and the 6 remaining counties which formed Northern Ireland (Laffan & O'Mahony 2008:9). After gaining independence, the Republic of Ireland would try to define itself as a sovereign state, yet remain dependent in many ways on the United Kingdom. Especially its economic dependence on the UK influenced and to a certain degree curtailed Ireland's freedom and ability to decide its own policies. Naturally, the persistence of this dependent relationship affected Ireland's position on joining the European Union as well. Initially, enthusiasm for membership in the ECSC (the European Coal and Steel Community) was largely non-existent, partly because Ireland had no significant coal or steel industry and as the UK was not about to join either, Ireland was not willing to distance itself too far from the course pursued by the UK. However, by the 1960's Ireland's economic situation was dire and its population diminishing because of emigration which led to a fundamental shift in the country's attitude toward economic policy in favour of economic liberalisation and free trade (Laffan & O'Mahony 2008:13). Membership of the EU therefore became more attractive economically and when the UK first applied for membership in 1961, Ireland followed suit. However, as the then president of France Charles De Gaulle opposed UK membership and effectively vetoed this first application as well as the consecutive two, Ireland was first able to join the EU in 1973 together with the UK and Denmark.

Since its entry, Ireland has established itself as one of the most pro-EU countries within the Union. Its enthusiasm for membership of the EU was apparent both at the level of public opinion as well as regarding party stances and government position.

Throughout Ireland's early membership, it has consistently exhibited high levels of public support for European integration. The Eurobarometer series provides compelling evidence of the high levels of support exhibited by the Irish public. Since the 1970's, the beginning of the Eurobarometer polling series, Irish levels of support for membership compared to other EU member countries, were extraordinarily high and would by the 1990's match levels found in the original member states (Coakley 2005:97). Another source that adds clout to Ireland's status as a pro-EU country, are the results from popular referendums.

As a direct result of Ireland's strong nationalist political culture (Coakley 2005:95), and the inclusion of a declaration of state sovereignty in the Constitution, amendments to the Constitution require a popular referendum. Therefore, any transfer of powers from the national to the EU-level dictates that the issue be put before the electorate in a popular referendum. As Table 3 shows, the outcomes of the various referendums related to the EU contribute to the image of Ireland as a pro-EU country. The referendum held in 1972 revealed that the majority of the Irish electorate, 83% to be precise, was in favour of accession to the Union. Furthermore, the Irish public remained supportive of European integration, voting in favour of the Single European Act and the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties.

Table 3: Referendum overview 1972-1998

Referendum	Year	Yes %	No %	Voter Turnout %
Accession	1972	83	17	70.9
SEA	1987	70	30	44.1
Maastricht Treaty	1992	69	31	57.3
Amsterdam Treaty	1998	62	38	56.2

Source: Sinnott 2002 (Cleavages, parties and referendums p813)

However, the percentages also reveal a decline in both the support for the individual treaties and in voter turnout. Looking at the Yes/No distribution in isolation would seem to indicate a growing level of opposition to European integration in the Irish electorate. According to Sinnott

(2002), the development in voter turnout is a highly significant factor in evaluating whether opposition in the public has grown. He argues that when the Yes/No distribution and the abstention percentages are regarded as proportions of the electorate, the number of No votes cast measured as a proportion of the electorate has not grown as much as might be assumed.

Opposition has only grown from 11.9 % in the 1972 Accession referendum to 21 % in the 1998 referendum on the Amsterdam Treaty (Sinnott 2002:823). Abstention on the other hand grew significantly during the same period, from 29.7 % in 1972 to 45 % in 1998 and culminating in an abstention rate of 65.7 at the time of the 2001 ratification of the Nice Treaty. Nevertheless, until the ‘disastrous’ outcome of the Nice Treaty referendum, Ireland was still mostly perceived as an exemplary EU-country.

Regarding attitudes at party level for the same period, from accession to the Amsterdam Treaty, party stances mirrored the level of support of the general public.

Irish party politics constitute a special case in many respects. According to Gilland (2001:24) the traditional left-right cleavage of most party systems does not apply to the Irish case. Ireland’s party politics have traditionally been dominated by two major parties Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. Fianna Fail was founded in 1926 by Eamon De Valera and opponents of the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty. Since its foundation, Fianna Fail has developed into Ireland’s largest party and dominated Irish politics ever since. The other side, the supporters of the Anglo-Irish Treaty founded Fine Gael in 1933. Together, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael managed to obtain over 70% of all votes in elections between 1961 and 1989, at times even reaching 80% or more (Gilland 2001:25). Since Ireland’s entry to the European Union, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael have supported all European treaties from the initial Accession to the Amsterdam Treaty. While this period was characterised by a pro-European Irish policy, opposition did occur at party level during this period. Ireland’s oldest party, the Labour Party opposed Irish membership in the EU (EEC at the time). However, the parties influence on the political landscape was limited, as it was not in government at the time. After Ireland’s entry into the European Union, Labour changed its position on European integration and gradually espoused a more pro-European stance, which as a result led to the party campaigning for the Yes camp in subsequent EU-related referendums. While opposition to European integration has been limited among the major parties in Ireland, smaller parties, notably Sinn Fein and the Green Party, have traditionally held rather more sceptical positions. Ever since the ban on Sinn Fein as a political party was removed, the party

has consistently opposed European integration and campaigned for a No vote in every referendum since 1972. The same applies to the Green Party, which has established itself firmly as an anti-EU party. Despite a high level of opposition to European integration among some of the smaller Irish parties, the Irish political mainstream remained overwhelmingly pro-EU until 2001 (Gilland 2004:176). This is mainly due to the fact that opposition was largely confined to small, peripheral parties and that the major parties have never entered into coalitions with these parties, thereby marginalising anti-EU views and minimising their impact on mainstream politics.

6.2 Ireland: Emerging euroscepticism

After the first 25 years of membership, it is commonly argued that the relationship between Ireland and the EU was beginning to undergo subtle changes (Gilland 2004; Laffan & O'Mahony 2008). It is the aim of this section to examine what factors or events have contributed to this reversal of popular perceptions of Ireland as a staunch supporter of the EU.

Laffan & O'Mahony (2008) point to the late 1990's as the beginning of a more strained relationship between Ireland and the EU. From that point onwards the pro-European consensus present in the public and at the level of political parties was weakened noticeably. Mainly they refer to changes regarding Ireland's economic status within the Union as the main reason for the dwindling levels of enthusiasm for European integration. Ireland has transformed itself from one of the poorest member states to one of the richest, not least because of the financial aid that membership in the EU provided. Until the Eastern Enlargement of 2004, Ireland received the highest per capita transfers out of all the member states (Laffan & O'Mahony 2008:138). However, after the accession of mostly poorer states to the EU, Ireland is set to become a net contributor to the EU budget after decades of being a net beneficiary. Furthermore, it is likely that the confidence that stems from such singular economic success might also have made Ireland less tolerant toward the EU trying to influence Irish matters. Gilland (2004:180) describes how the so-called 'budget row' was triggered by Ireland's unwillingness to accept EU interference in domestic economic matters. In 2000, Ireland was advised by the European Commission to rewrite its budget. However, the Irish had no intention of following the Commission's advice. Rather, this led to indignation on the Irish side over the perceived insult that such a reprimand seemed to represent. It was felt that the EU had no right to criticise and

interfere in Irish matters and subsequently this episode turned into a heated debate further fuelled by media coverage.

As a result of these developments and changes in Ireland's economic status within the EU, it is argued that criticism among the public and political elites has grown or perhaps merely become more visible. One of the major manifestations of this critical attitude could be observed during the Nice I referendum. Not only did episodes such as the 'budget row' suggest an already strained Irish-EU relationship, "*the rejection of the Nice Treaty seemed to reinforce the sense of an increasing hostility, or at least scepticism, on the part of the public to the EU*" (Laffan & O'Mahony 2008:49). The Irish No to the Nice Treaty is often interpreted as a direct response of the electorate to the 'threat' posed by the Eastern Enlargement to Ireland's favourable economic conditions within the Union. In the wake of the Irish No, critical voices across the EU consequently accused Ireland of opposing the Treaty for selfish and monetary reasons (Coakley 2005:104). Yet, as the Irish public was called to the ballot again a year later to vote on Nice II, the revised Treaty was accepted with a comfortable majority, which also to a certain extent quieted the waves of criticism rolling over Ireland before. However, just as Ireland had recovered from the sudden flare-up of hostility directed at it, the Irish electorate rejected the successor of the failed EU Constitution, the Lisbon Treaty of 2008, giving rise to another round of censure. Once again the Irish had effectively stopped further EU integration, as the Lisbon Treaty will not enter into force unless it has been ratified by all EU member states. Not surprisingly, leaders across the EU, such as German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Nicolas Sarkozy, expressed their dismay at the Irish referendum result, while at the same time urging the other member states to continue the ratification process. Prolific Lisbon opponents on the other hand, such as Libertas² spearhead Declan Ganley, rejoiced at the Irish NO to the Treaty. Naturally, finding explanations for the referendum result became a main concern both nationally and across the other EU-states. Specifically Irish concerns regarding the retention of power over the ban on abortion and Ireland's neutrality as well as fears of losing a permanent Irish

² According to their homepage: www.libertas.org, the Libertas Institute was founded by the businessman Declan Ganley. Since campaigning actively against the Lisbon Treaty, the group has expanded into a pan-European movement and recently formed a party that attempts to be elected to the European Parliament. However, questions have been raised regarding the legality of Libertas' campaign financing and the motives of its leader and president Declan Ganley (Colm Keena 2008, On the mysterious trail of 'Mr No', 31 May).

Commissioner were frequently stated as influential facilitators of the No vote. Furthermore, the fact that the involvement of the Libertas group provided the no-campaign with substantial financial funds also seemed to have had an impact on the referendum result (Qvortrup 2009:59). Given these two negative outcomes in Irish referendums, an examination of the referendums in terms of percentages of the YES, NO sides and voter turnout is presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Referendum overview 2001-2008

Referendum	Year	Yes %	No %	Voter Turnout %
Nice I	2001	46.1	53.9	34.8
Nice II	2002	62.9	37.1	48.5
Lisbon Treaty	2008	46.6	53.4	53.1

Source: Gilland (2004); Laffan & O'Mahony (2008)

Regarding voter turnout, statistics reveal that in the case of the Nice I referendum percentages calculated constituted the lowest turnout ever recorded for an EU referendum. Turnout for Nice II on the other hand was already 14 percentage points higher, yet not as high as turnout for the Lisbon Treaty which at 53.1% comes closer to corresponding levels for the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties (cf. Table 3).

The significance of voter turnout for the outcome of referendums has attracted significant attention. In Nice I, low voter turnout was regarded as a contributing factor to the No vote, as the majority of potential Yes voters did not vote in the referendum (Gilland 2004:189). However, while this explanation can be applied to the Nice I referendum it does not seem that the same can be done for the Lisbon Treaty, as turnout in 2008 was the highest since the referendum on the Amsterdam Treaty in 1998.

As mentioned earlier a wide array of different reasons for the two instances of No votes in EU referendums has been suggested. Likewise, interpretations of the significance of these two events for the general relationship between Ireland and the EU also differ greatly. Whether these two events can be regarded as manifestations of Irish euroscepticism and in a similar vein if they are symbolic of Ireland's changing from a declared supporter of the EU and European integration to a more eurosceptic member of the Union, are questions that have emerged as a result. In order to shed light on this, the following chapter will examine, among other things, whether evidence of a

change in Irish attitudes toward the EU and European integration is reflected in empirical data or conversely, if such a shift in attitudes does not exist at all.

7. Types of Attitudes

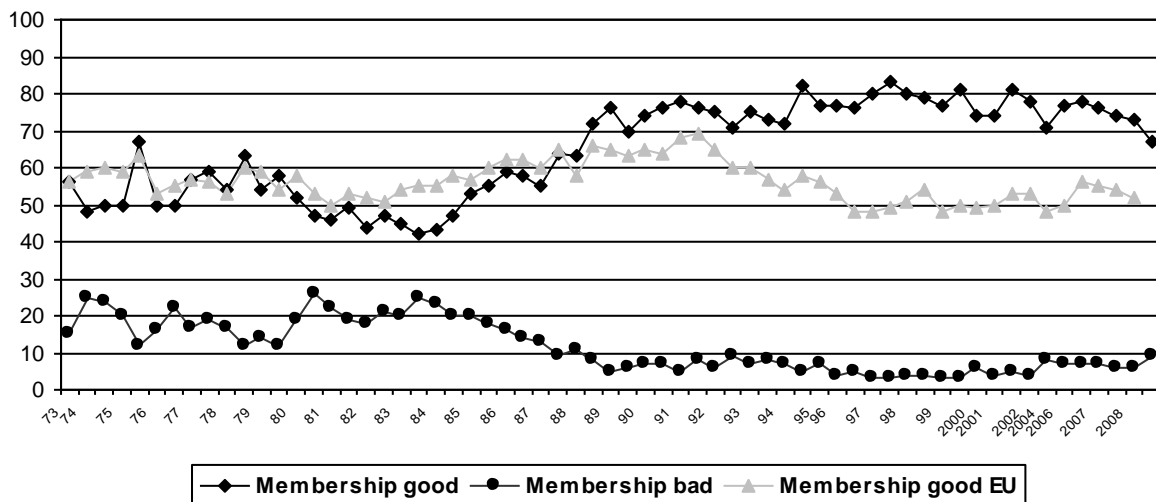
7.1 Degree

7.1.1 Public opinion

As far as public opinion is concerned, the Eurobarometer series provides answers that indicate the level of hard euroscepticism i.e. opposition to membership of the EU as such, as well as general levels of public support.

The graph below shows percentages of people answering that membership is a good or a bad thing, as well as the corresponding EU average.

Question³: *Generally, do you think that your country's membership of the European Union is a good thing, a bad thing, neither good nor bad or do not know (omitted)?*



Graph 1: Membership indicator

The graph above accounts for the development of public opinion towards membership from the time of accession to the present day. It is evident from the numbers that support for membership has never fallen below the 40% mark. After a period of a slight downward trend in public

³ See Appendix: Graph 1 for EB sources.

opinion beginning in the early 80's, there has been a steady rise in percentages from the mid-80's onwards. Since the early 90's, positive evaluations of membership have remained constant with only minor fluctuations between the 70-80% mark. But figures obtained from the last three surveys conducted in 2008 point to a slight drop in support levels. Whether this development will result in a significant downward trend remains to be seen however, as this cannot be determined on the basis of only three data sets.

While the previous indicator accounted for general levels of support in the Irish population, the following indicator 'membership a bad thing' provides insight into the prevalence of hard euroscepticism⁴.

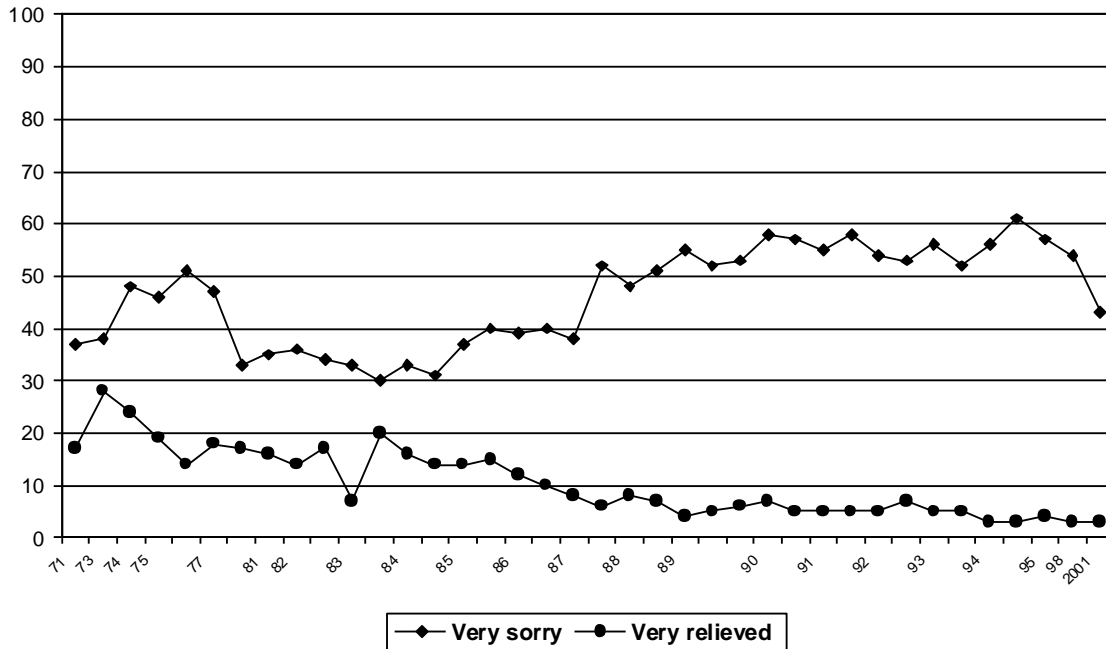
Looking at the percentages for people who consider membership a bad thing reveals that not only is support for membership widespread but levels of outright rejection of membership are also very low. After an initial period of fluctuating between 10-20%, negative evaluations of membership have been declining and never risen above the 10% mark since the late 80's. These results seem to confirm that the level of hard euroscepticism prevalent in Ireland appears to be extremely low. In addition, if compared with the EU-average, Irish public opinion has been largely consistent with EU-average until the late 80's, after which Irish levels of support have been consistently and significantly above European average.

A last observation concerns the two instances of negative outcomes in referendums; Nice I of 2001 and the Lisbon Treaty of 2008. Interestingly, there was no drop in support for either event with percentages of the population considering membership a good thing at 74 % and 81% in 2001 and 73/67% in 2008. Also, neither was there a significant increase in rejection levels during both referendums with percentages of people who consider membership a bad thing remaining below 10%.

⁴ The feasibility of using evaluations of membership a bad thing as an indicator for hard euroscepticism or as synonymous with support for withdrawal from the EU could naturally be disputed. However, it is assumed that respondents who consider membership as such a bad thing would most likely be in favour of leaving the European Union. In addition, Sørensen (2004) used this indicator for her dimension of principled opposition in her publications.

Another indicator that reveals levels of hard euroscepticism is connected to the EB question below.

Question⁵: *If you were told tomorrow that the European Union had been scrapped would you be very sorry about it, indifferent (omitted) or very relieved?*



Graph 2: Dissolution indicator

The first set of data contains the percentages of people who would be very sorry if the EU were to be dissolved. Similar to the development in positive evaluations of membership shown above, percentages were lowest in the 80's, have risen steadily since the mid-80's, only to remain more or less constant between 50-60%. In 2001, however, the percentage of people feeling sorry faced with the dissolution of the EU dropped from over 50% to just above 40%.

While following roughly the same development in directional trends, the levels for people feeling sorry if the EU were to be dissolved are rather lower than the ones associated with evaluations of membership as a good thing. The reason that levels for this indicator are lower than for the membership indicator might be connected to the fact that the wording of the dissolution question evokes emotional attachment to the EU, whereas membership as a 'good thing' is more likely to be associated with rational, fact-based evaluations of membership.

⁵ See Appendix: Graph 2 for EB sources.

Levels of attachment to the EU will be analysed separately in 7.3 to provide support for this claim.

The second set comprises percentages for people expressing relief about dissolving the EU and one would expect these numbers to correspond to the levels of negative evaluations of membership as both questions reveal levels of outright rejection of the EU i.e. hard euroscepticism. As expected, the percentage of people feeling relief at the prospect of scrapping the EU has remained below the 10% mark since the late 80's which mirrors 'membership as a bad thing' percentages presented above.

7.1.2 Parties

Apart from public opinion, another actor that influences attitudes to the EU and European integration are political parties. Outright rejection of EU membership at the level of parties is represented by party positions that call for withdrawal from the EU. Such a position could manifest itself in campaigning for a NO vote in referendums dealing with the EU. Accordingly, the table below illustrates party positions for all the EU-related referendums from accession to the Lisbon Treaty.

Table 5: Referendum overview 1972-2008, Parties

Referendum	Year	FF	FG	L	PD	GP	WP	SF
Accession	1972	✓	✓	×	-	×	×	×
SEA	1987	✓	✓	d	✓	×	×	×
Maastricht	1992	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
Amsterdam	1998	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
Nice I	2001	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
Nice II	2002	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
Lisbon	2008	✓	✓	✓	✓	d	×	×

Source: Gilland 2004; Qvortrup 2009

✓; in favour, ×; opposed, d; divided, -; did not exist

FF; Fianna Fail, FG; Fine Gael, L; Labour, PD; Progressive Democrats, GP;

Green Party, WP; Workers' Party, SF; Sinn Fein

As is evident from the table, the parties dominating Irish politics i.e. Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour, with the exception of the party's initial rejection of membership in 1972, are supportive of European integration. As mentioned previously, the minor parties on the other hand, notably

Sinn Fein, the Workers' Party and the Green Party, have campaigned for a NO vote in almost every referendum. However, According to Taggart and Szczerbiak's (2003) categorisation of political parties, none of the parties currently represented in the Irish party system qualifies as hard eurosceptics. Sinn Fein and the Workers' Party are commonly perceived as eurosceptic parties, but as they do not actively campaign for withdrawal from the EU, they only qualify as soft eurosceptic parties. The same applies to the Green Party with its history of opposition to the EU. However, as indicated in Table 5, the Green Party did not follow its usual position and join the 'No to Lisbon campaign'. In fact, the majority of party members, 63%, voted in favour of supporting the Treaty at a special party convention (Majority of Greens back Lisbon Treaty, 2008, 19 Jan). With this result the party almost reached the two thirds majority required to adopt a position in favour of the Treaty. While the party could not adopt an official position, party leader John Gormley spoke of this as a *historic day for the Green Party*, which reflects an *updated approach to Europe* (Majority of Greens back Lisbon Treaty, 2008, 19 Jan). This reversal of opinion towards the EU might be interpreted in the light of the EU's growing efforts combating environmental issues and climate change, which naturally form one of the party's primary concerns. Furthermore, the European Greens, the European Federation of Green Parties, also advised its members to vote in favour of the Treaty which could have influenced members of the Irish Green Party to support the Treaty as well (European Greens 2007, 13 Dec).

7.1.3 Preliminary summary

The analysis of attitudes based on degree has shown that levels of support are exceptionally high and coupled with very low levels of outright rejection.

The only prolonged slump in support levels can be observed during the early 80's. A possible explanation for this slackening of support could be connected to a feeling of disappointment felt in Ireland regarding the speed of its economic development. Ireland's expectations when joining the EU had been high and when the economic situation did not improve as quickly as expected, a certain disillusionment with membership set in (Laffan & O'Mahony 2008:34).

However, there does not appear to be either a significant decline in positive evaluations or a rise in negative attitudes from 2001 to date which coincides with the period of 'emerging euroscepticism' (cf. Chapter 6.2).

Regarding party politics, it appears that eurosceptic positions are limited to smaller parties. Among the major Irish parties a pro-EU consensus seems to exist. According to Hooghe &

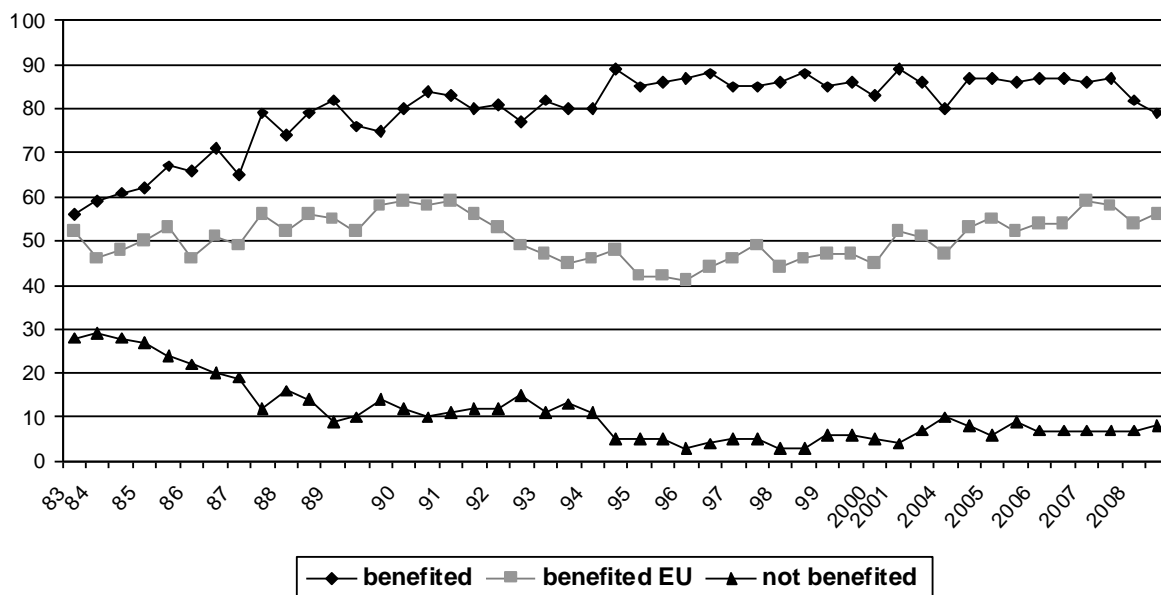
Marks (2005), this low level of division among Irish parties on the subject of the EU and European integration might have had a positive effect on levels of public support for the EU, as party division has been shown to affect support adversely.

As this type only states the general intensity or degree of support or opposition to the EU, it remains to characterise the nature of these levels i.e. what factors determine levels of support or rejection of the EU and European integration.

7.2 Utilitarian-based attitudes

After accounting for the general levels of support and opposition to the EU, this section analyses public opinion on the basis of perceived benefits (or lack thereof) of EU membership. A classic method of gauging this type of attitude involves the EB question below.

Question⁶: *Taking everything into consideration, would you say that (your country) has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the European Community (Common Market)?*



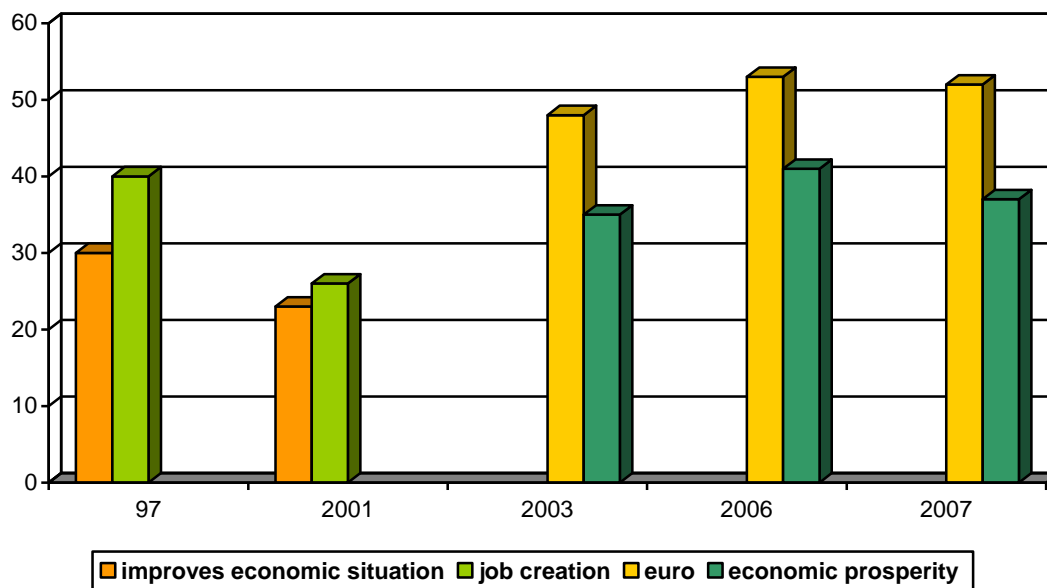
Graph 3: Benefits indicator

A first observation regarding the data sets above indicates that positive evaluations of the benefits of membership have risen almost continuously and remained consistently high since the early 90's. Also, Irish levels have been consistently above the EU average since the question was first posed in the Eurobarometer series in the early 80's. In addition, the percentage of the Irish

⁶ See Appendix: Graph 3 for EB sources.

population who felt they had not benefited from membership has declined over time and remained relatively constant since the mid-90's after which levels never rose beyond the 10% mark. Before examining these results further and in more detail, it is necessary to account for the role of economic factors in people's perception of benefits. As mentioned earlier, attitudes based on utilitarian or cost-benefit considerations typically posit that such considerations are based on economic factors. Likewise, the EB question above, the so-called "benefits" indicator, operates on the assumption that people's conception of benefits associated with membership relate mainly to economic factors. In order to verify this assumption, a second set of EB questions has been chosen to support the view that economic evaluations play a considerable role in the Irish public's evaluation of the benefits tied to membership of the EU.

Question⁷: *Which of the following statements best describe(s) what the European Union means to you personally?*



Graph 4: Meaning of the EU

This question gives a selection of possible answers. However, in each case the answers relating to economic issues are either most frequent, second or the third most frequent answers given out of a total of 10 or more possible answers⁸. What this question shows is that people associate the

⁷ See Appendix: Graph 4 for EB sources.

⁸ See Appendix: Graph 4 for an overview of the choice of answers.

EU mainly with economic factors, which supports the view that economic considerations play a significant role in people's evaluations of the EU and European integration.

To return to the issue of direction regarding utilitarian-based attitudes, it is evident that this type of attitude is associated with support rather than opposition or euroscepticism. This is not altogether surprising if theories connecting favourable economic factors with increased support are taken into account. One such theory connects fiscal transfers and a country's status as a net recipient of the EU budget with increased support (Anderson & Reichert 1996; Hooghe & Marks 2004).

Ireland's membership in the EU has provided the country with substantial economic advantages. The country's participation in the EU opened up new possibilities of benefiting from a tariff-free and non-tariff barrier-free market. In addition, Ireland's poor level of development made it eligible for substantial structural funds, on top of the financial transfers it received via the CAP. At their highest, net receipts from the EU averaged 5,9 %⁹ of Ireland's GDP in 1979. Although net receipts have diminished over time, Ireland still received €0.5 billion in 2007 and will have received over €41 billion until it will become a net contributor to the EU budget in 2013¹⁰. While according to Laffan (2005), financial aid from the EU cannot alone account for Ireland's Celtic Tiger phenomenon of rapid economic growth which started in the 1990's, it nevertheless had a profound impact on the country's development. Also, Ireland's approach to European integration has always been rather practical, considering the benefits opposite the costs, or even downright mercenary (Holmes 2005:2). Holmes (2005) suggests that the Irish rationale for joining the EU (EC at the time), resulted from a calculated assessment of its economic interests and the desire to escape its dependence on UK markets.

As mentioned earlier positive economic factors such as the status as a net recipient of the EU budget are claimed to increase support for integration. A natural consequence following from the hypothesis that positive domestic economic developments lead to increased support would be that economic downturns should result in diminished support. Two periods in which Ireland experienced an economic downturn are the period from 2001-2003 as well as the current financial crisis.

⁹ Finfacts (2008): Ireland's 40-year bonanza of foreign aid from the European Union will amount to €41 billion by the time we become a net contributor in 2013. 22 February 2008.

¹⁰ Ibid.

During the first period, 9/11 and its impact on tourism, outbreaks of foot and mouth disease as well as a global economic slowdown all had negative effects on Irish growth. Furthermore, with the planned Eastern Enlargement of 2004 looming, one would be tempted to expect a drop in approval ratings. Yet, people's positive evaluations of membership benefits remained above the 80% mark for the entire period, including the time leading up to the enlargement as well as the period after its conclusion. However, the No to the Nice Treaty of 2001, could on the face of it be interpreted as a reflection of fears of a worsening economic situation and receiving less financial EU aid as a result of the Eastern enlargement. But most analyses of voting behaviour do not support this view. Rather than with economic considerations, the No to Nice can be explained by a number of issues that were more salient to the public such as maintaining control over military neutrality and abortion laws. In addition, the NO to Nice is often ascribed to the public's indifference, which resulted in low voter turnout (cf. Table 4), and a general lack of understanding of the Treaty which led many to reject it (Sinnott 2008; Gilland 2004; Coakley 2005).

The second period pertains to recent economic developments i.e. the financial crisis and its devastating effects on the Irish economy. Ireland's GDP is expected to drop from 6% in 2007 to -2.8% in 2009, coupled with lower export rates and growing unemployment¹¹ which again could be expected to diminish support. While the period of 2001-2003 did not impact the benefits indicator negatively, percentages of people feeling they have benefited recorded for 2008 (87%; 82%; 79%) point to a downward trend in public opinion. However, given the severity of Ireland's economic situation, the loss of 5 and 3 percentage points does seem relatively minor. To explain this apparent contradiction one could include another factor i.e. personal perceptions of economic well-being. According to Gabel and Whitten (1997), such subjective evaluations of one's economic situation often have a greater influence on support/opposition than objective economic factors. While the Irish have become more pessimistic regarding the state and prospects of their economy, they have remained more optimistic concerning their own economic situation including their job situation and the financial situation of their own household (EB69.2:10). This level of optimism might be a mediating factor which has prevented a more significant drop in positive evaluations of membership benefits.

¹¹ O'Toole (2008). Irish Economic Outlook: Winter 2008. Danske Bank, 5.

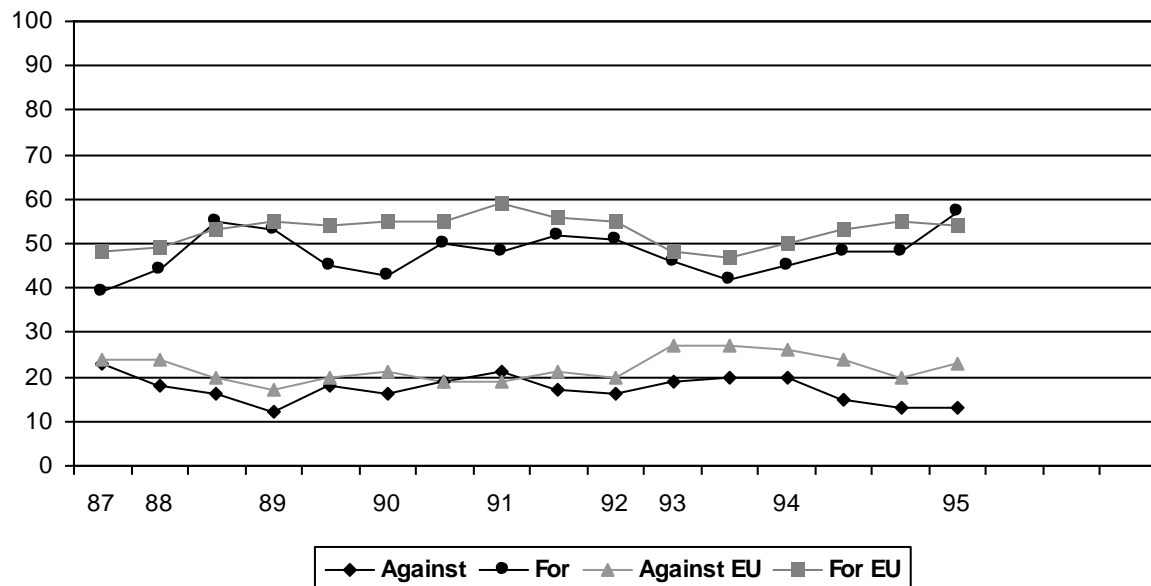
7.2.1 Preliminary summary

The analysis of attitudes based on utilitarian, economic considerations has shown that this type manifests itself in high levels of support and that utilitarian-based scepticism appears to be very low. However, if support proves to be tied mainly to positive domestic economic developments as well as positive subjective evaluations of economic well-being, a decline in support could be expected as prospects for the Irish economy are dire and economic forecasts point to a prolonged period of economic downturn. Furthermore, according to the Department of the Taoiseach (2006) Ireland is set to become a net contributor to the EU budget by the year 2013 which could also be a factor that affects utilitarian support in the future.

7.3 Sovereignty-based attitudes

This type examines attitudes that are based on the perceived desirability of transferring power from the nation-state to the EU, as well as the effect of national identity on public support or opposition to the EU and European integration. The first indicator dealing with the question of establishing a European government reveals whether the Irish public is essentially opposed to or supportive of endowing the EU with considerable power at the expense of the nation-state.

Question¹²: *Are you for or against the formation of a European Union with a European government responsible to the European Parliament?*



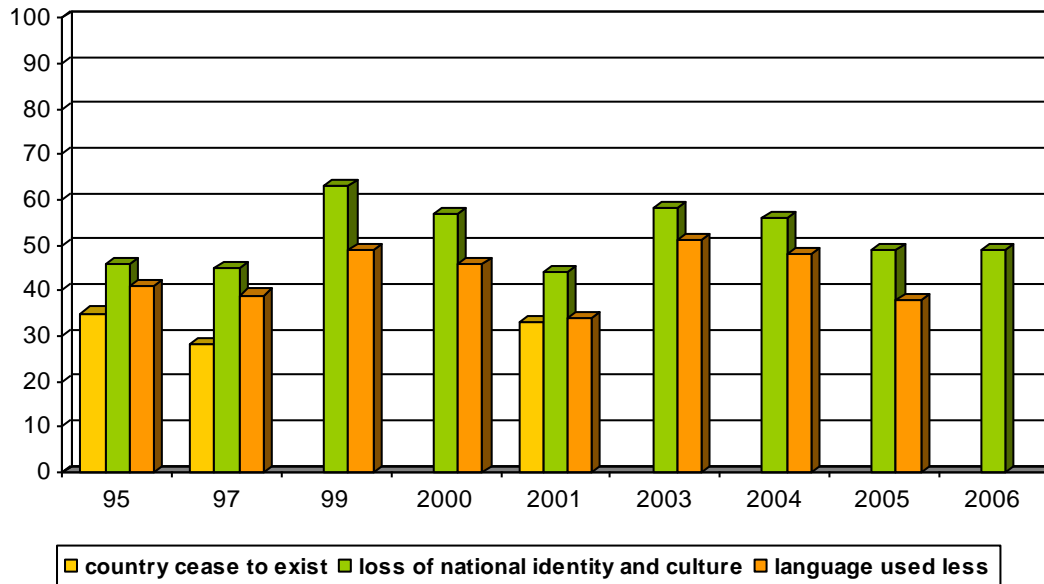
Graph 5: European Government indicator

¹² See Appendix: Graph 5 for EB sources.

Unfortunately, this question was only posed in the Eurobarometer series until the mid-90's and can therefore not account for recent developments. However, the data gathered for this time span suggests that the Irish are overall supportive of a European government, but Irish levels of support are almost consistently below the EU-average. Looking at percentages of people opposed to a European government reveals that levels are generally rather low, mostly below 20%, and also since the early 90's below the EU-average, which suggests that while support is lower in Ireland than across the EU, this is somewhat counteracted by the fact that opposition is less widespread in Ireland than the EU-average.

According to this data, the Irish do seem to a certain extent willing to surrender national sovereignty to the EU. However, if newer data derived from post-referendum surveys, in this case Nice I of 2001 and the Lisbon Treaty of 2008, is included, the public seems less favourably disposed to accept the transfer of sovereignty to the supranational level. For both treaties, post-referendum surveys show that loss of sovereignty/independence is the second most common reason given for voting NO among the Irish public (Sinnott 2008). Also, the third most common reason (12%) for voting no in the Lisbon referendum was "to protect Irish identity" (Flash EB 245:19). Apparently, there are groups within the Irish public who feel that European integration threatens Irish identity which constitutes a symbolic threat to the sovereignty of the Irish state. Accordingly, the next indicator to be included accounts for fears regarding possible developments resulting from European integration. The three sub-indicators chosen below provide an insight into the salience of symbolic threats to national sovereignty in Irish public opinion.

Question¹³: *Regarding the building of Europe, the European Union, some people may have fears. Here is a list of things which some people say they are afraid of. For each one, please tell me if you – personally – are currently afraid of it, or not? (not afraid omitted)*



Graph 6: Fears regarding Europe, EU

The graph above shows the percentage of people who expressed fears regarding their country's continued existence, the loss of Irish national identity and culture and the disappearance of their language. The offered selection of possible answers to this EB question changed throughout the years, which explains the apparent gaps in the data series. Among the three indicators, the loss of national identity and culture, appears most frequently. For every time this answer was included, at least 44% and at most 63% included this indicator among the things they feared. The language factor, which can be interpreted as an inherent part of national identity as well, also triggers fear, albeit at a lower level. Finally, the country factor exhibits the lowest percentages. However, the fact that in 2001 around 30% of the respondents feared that their country would cease to exist, supports the findings from the Nice-referendum survey (Sinnott 2008; Flash EB 245). Although not widespread, European integration is at times interpreted as a threat to Irish sovereignty and identity.

This is perhaps not altogether surprising given the strong nationalist culture prevalent in Ireland. As Coakley (2005) argues elements such as the struggle for Irish independence which spurred nationalist sentiments and made national sovereignty the foremost goal to be achieved, as well as

¹³ See Appendix: Graph 6 for EB sources.

the history of Irish dependence on the UK, have shaped a unique and strong sense of identity in Ireland which does not necessarily emphasise a European dimension.

Apart from utilitarian factors, increased importance has been ascribed to identity as a determinant of public opinion on the EU and European integration (Hooghe & Marks 2004).

As it is assumed that sovereignty and identity concerns are interrelated, the latter constituting an integral part of the former, the following paragraphs are devoted to an analysis of the nature of Irish national identity in regard to European integration.

First, the influence of Irish national identity on support or opposition to European integration will be analysed. In this context, it is often assumed that a strong sense of a national identity leads to diminished levels of support for the EU (Carey 2002).

Carey (2002) has studied the effects of national identity on support for the EU and found that the stronger the bond to one's own nation, the lower support for European integration tends to be.

To examine the intensity of the bond felt by Irish people with their country, indicators have been chosen that relate to levels of attachment to and pride in their country.

Question¹⁴: *People may feel different levels of attachment to their village, town or city, to their country or to the European Union. Please tell me how attached you feel to...*

- *Own country*

- *The European Union*

Table 6: Net attachment levels: Country vs. Europe/EU

	2002		2003		2004		2005		2006		2007		
	IE	E	IE	E	IE	E	IE	E	IE	E	EU	IE	EU
Net attached	96	58	96	59	98	72	96	66	95	65	54	93	48
Net not attached	3	37	2	38	2	25	3	31	4	31	42	6	46

IE: Ireland; E: Europe; EU: European Union

¹⁴ See Appendix: Table 6 for EB sources.

Question¹⁵: And would you say you are very proud, fairly proud, not very proud, not at all proud to be (Nationality) / European?

Table 7: Net levels Pride Nationality vs. European

	2002		2003		2004		2005		2006	
	I	E	I	E	I	E	I	E	I	E
Net proud	95	71	96	75	98	82	93	75	96	63
Net not proud	2	11	3	11	1	10	1	12	2	7

I: Irish ; E: European

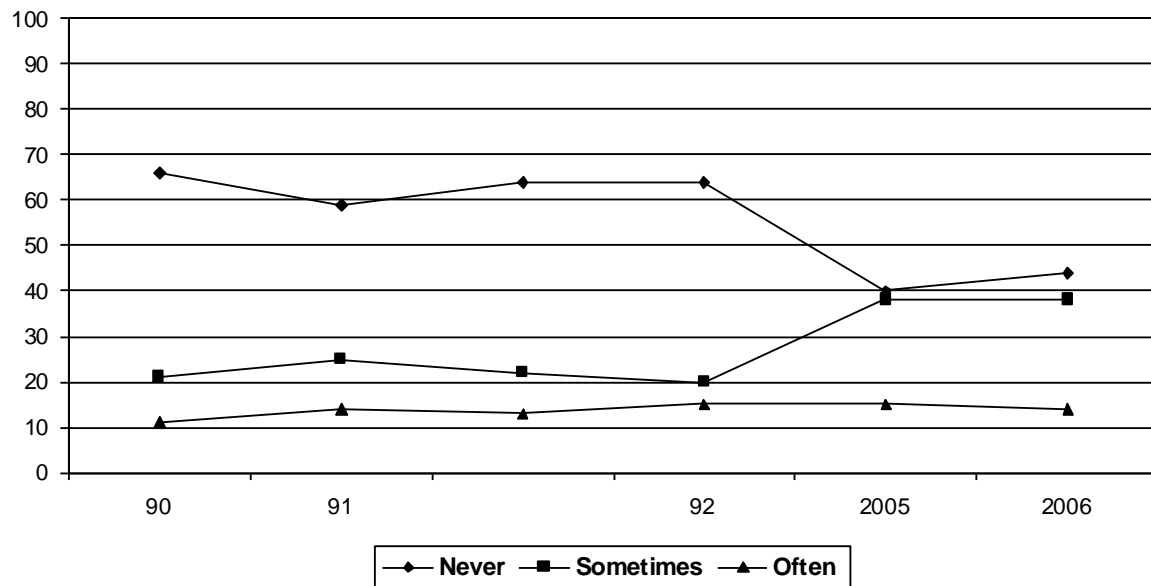
As Table 6 above shows, over 90% of the Irish feel attached, includes very and fairly attached, to their country, while the percentages for people who feel not very attached or not at all attached remain below the 10% mark for the entire time span. A similar picture emerges for levels of pride in their own nationality. As indicated in Table 7, respondents who feel very or fairly proud to be Irish consistently constitute more than 90% of the samples, whereas low levels of pride, not very proud and not proud at all, are even lower for this indicator and never exceed the 3% mark. While the Irish exhibit very high levels of attachment to Ireland and pride in being Irish, the corresponding numbers for Europe and a European identity are considerably lower and levels of attachment and pride have been dropping, especially regarding attachment from 72% to 48%, since 2004. At the same time the percentages of people feeling little or no attachment to the EU and no pride in being European have grown as well culminating in 46% in 2007 and 7% in 2006 respectively.

However, this is not to say that attachment to Ireland necessarily precludes attachment to the EU. As the respondents are not forced to choose between Ireland on the one hand and Europe on the other, dual attachments are possible. Recent Eurobarometer data even pinpoints that high levels of attachment to Ireland are often connected with a positive image of the EU (EB68:27). While attachment to Ireland does not necessarily prove to be an obstacle to support for the EU, which seems to contradict Carey's (2002) findings to a certain extent, low levels of attachment to Europe and the EU do seem to be strongly correlated with low levels of support for the EU. A final indicator relates to the way the Irish conceive of their national identity opposite a European identity. As with attachment to Europe and the EU, the existence of a sense of a

¹⁵ See Appendix: Table 7 for EB sources.

European identity has also been deemed an important factor regarding support for European integration (Suleiman 1995:83). Furthermore, rather than taking identity at face value it is important to distinguish between exclusive vs. inclusive national identity. According to Hooghe & Marks (2004), people who see their identity as exclusive i.e. Irish only in this case, show lower level of support than people who attest to dual identities. The following two related questions will therefore provide data regarding the layering of Irish people's identity, i.e. how many respondents embrace some form of a European identity and how many reject it altogether.

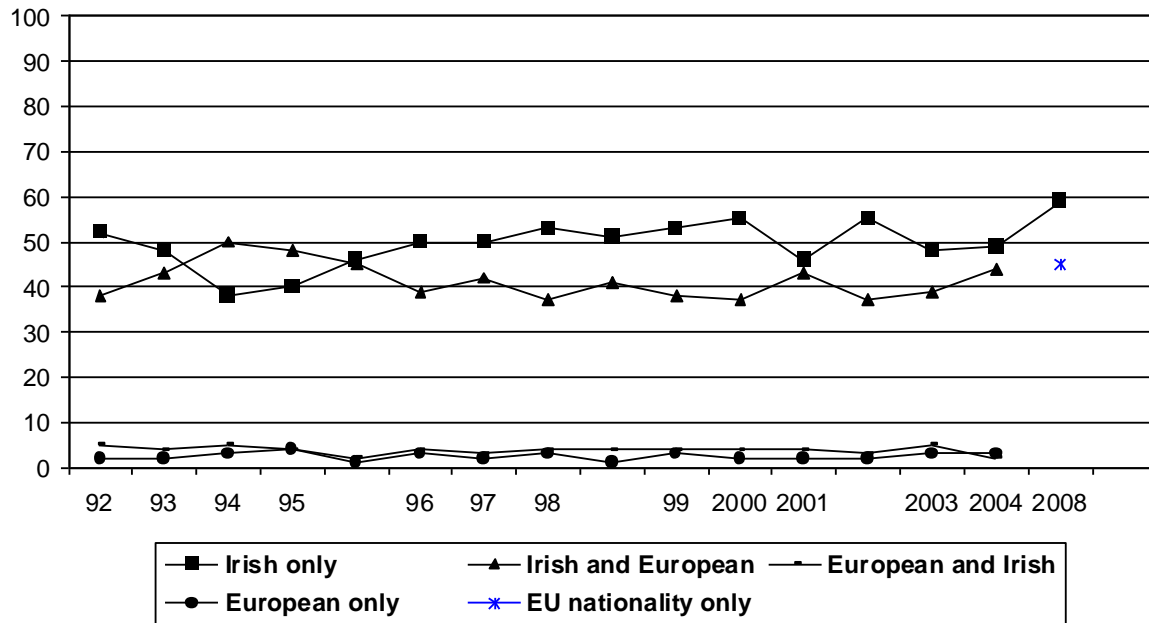
Question¹⁶: *Do you ever think of yourself as not only (nationality), but also European? Does this happen often, sometimes or never?*



Graph 7: National and European identity

¹⁶ See Appendix: Graph 7 for EB sources.

Question¹⁷: *In the near future do you see yourself as...?*



Graph 8: Exclusive vs. dual identities

As the two graphs illustrate, the EB series operated with two different yet closely related questions regarding this indicator, which is why both sets have been included in this study. As is apparent in the first graph most respondents never conceive of their identity as national and European which in essence is the same as the Irish only indicator used in the second graph. In the second graph, percentages for respondents who have an exclusive national identity, Irish only, constitute the largest group and levels of this type have been growing in recent years. Also, the most recent data for 2008 shows that the percentage of Irish respondents who attest to an exclusive national identity is well above the EU-average for exclusive national identities in 2008.

7.3.1 Preliminary summary

A strong sense of a national identity and high levels of attachment to Ireland have been found. Yet, the analysis has also shown that a strong bond to own's country does not necessarily diminish support for European integration. Coakley (2005:108) too supports this notion in that she found that high levels of support for the EU can coexist with strong nationalist sentiments. In the case of Ireland she argues that Irish nationalism has acquired a more civic i.e. non-ethnic nature, which makes identification with Europe easier.

¹⁷ See Appendix: Graph 8 for EB sources.

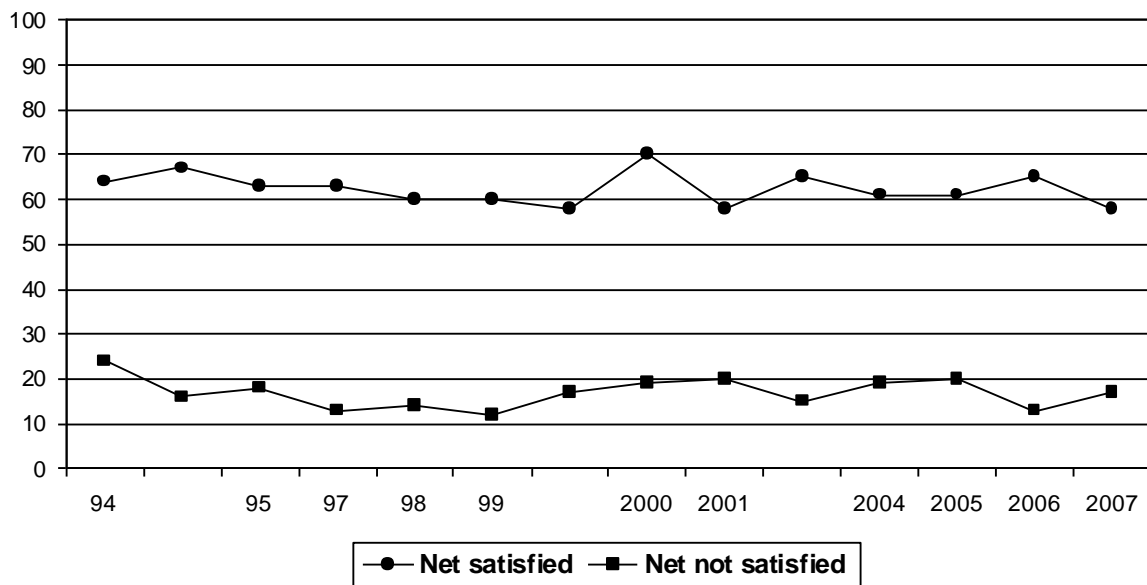
As mentioned before, overall levels of support for the EU are high in Ireland and have not noticeably diminished, yet and perhaps more importantly, levels of attachment to the EU and a sense of a European identity are rather low in Ireland and appear to be declining further. In the absence of an emotional attachment to the EU and coupled with high levels of exclusive identities, these aspects of Irish identity could well fuel sovereignty concerns and thereby diminish support for concrete developments in European integration, such as the Lisbon Treaty. Sinnott's (2008) analysis of the Lisbon referendum for example, has shown that the percentage of No votes is highest for respondents who conceive of their identity as exclusive i.e. Irish only, which emphasises the negative consequences of exclusive identities for support of European integration.

7.4 Institutional performance-based attitudes

As evaluations of institutional performance can impact support for the EU and European integration, the final type of attitude pertains to the institutional quality of European institutions and the level of (dis)trust towards European and national institutions exhibited by the Irish public, as there appears to be a connection between domestic circumstances and evaluations of the EU (Carrubba 2001). More specifically, attitudes towards institutional performance at the national level have been shown to influence levels of support for the EU and European integration (Rohrschneider 2002; Sanchez-Cuenca 2000) which is why the national level will be analysed as well.

To begin with, levels of satisfaction with democracy at the EU and national level will be analysed by using Eurobarometer data. The relevant EB question for this indicator at EU level was first included in the survey series in 1993. Not surprisingly the inclusion of this democracy indicator was a result of the emerging focus on the democratic deficit thesis (Sørensen 2004).

Question¹⁸: *On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in (the European Union)?*

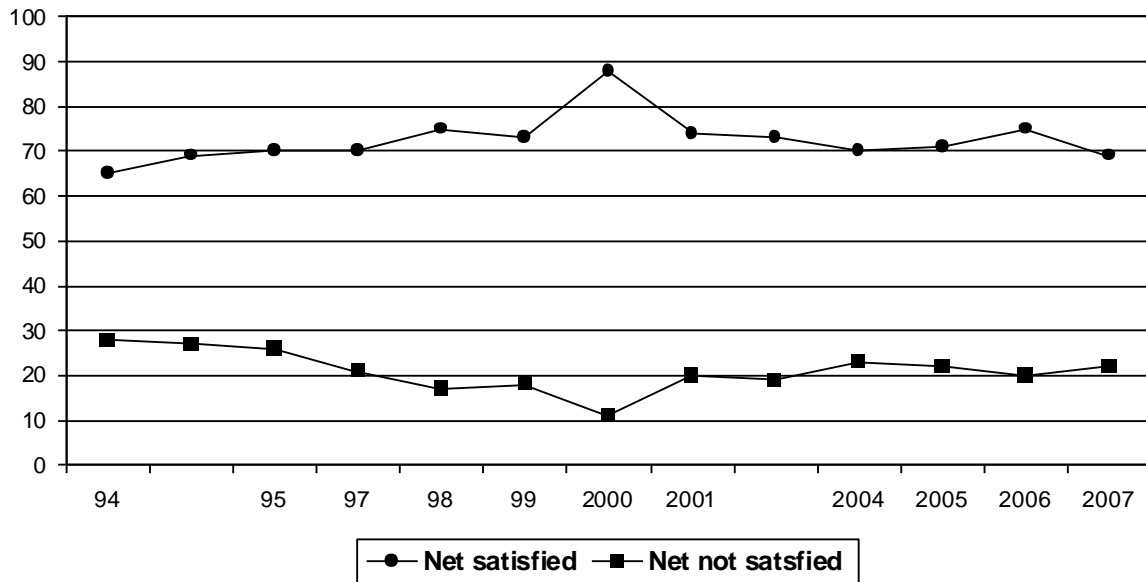


Graph 9: Satisfaction with democracy EU-level

The analysis of satisfaction with EU democracy shows that overall Irish respondents are satisfied with the way democracy works in the EU. Apart from minor fluctuations, levels of satisfaction remain constant between 60-70% for the entire time span. The same applies to levels of dissatisfaction which remain mostly below the 20% mark. Moving on to evaluations of democracy at the national level, a similar pattern emerges.

¹⁸ See Appendix: Graph 9 for EB sources.

Question¹⁹: *On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in (your country)?*



Graph 10: Satisfaction with democracy Ireland

The democracy indicator at the national level has also remained relatively constant over the years, apart from a surge in satisfaction levels and a drop in dissatisfaction around the year 2000. However, levels of satisfaction with the functioning of national democracy are on average ten percentage points higher than corresponding numbers at EU level. In general this discrepancy between evaluations of national and supranational democracy does not necessarily point to an overall less favourable opinion of democracy in the EU opposite national democracy. Rather, this slight difference could also be attributed to a stronger sense of familiarity with the workings of national institutions and most surveys confirm that knowledge of the workings of the EU tends to be rather low. This is to a certain extent confirmed by the number of people giving 'don't know' answers when confronted with questions about EU institutions. The number of 'don't knows' for supranational institutions is significantly higher for questions regarding the EU level than the national level (EB69.2:13).

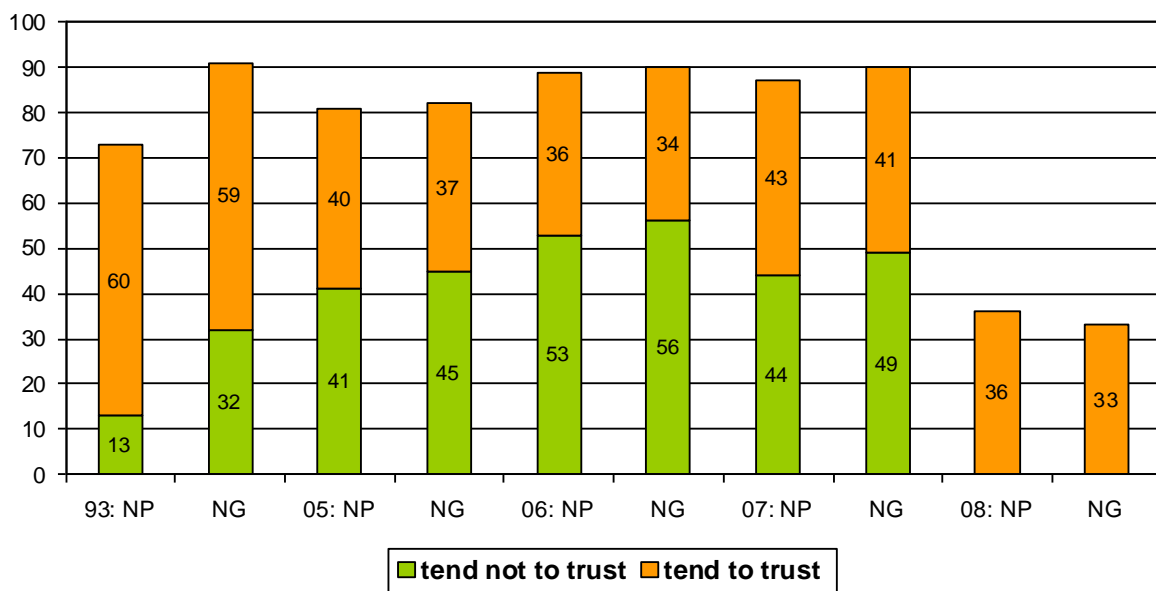
A further indicator measures trust in supranational and national institutions. At the EU- level, the analysis only takes into account attitudes towards the European Parliament. Naturally, this omission of the executive branch of the EU i.e. the Commission and the Council could be

¹⁹ See Appendix: Graph 10 for EB sources.

questioned. However, research conducted within the framework of the Eurobarometer series has found that Irish respondents are not very familiar with either the Commission or the Council. Questions regarding trust in these two institutions generate a large percentage of 'don't know' answers which makes any viable comparison difficult. Therefore and for reasons of space, the analysis of trust towards institutions at the EU level will focus on the European Parliament only.

Question²⁰: *Trust in European institutions: And for each of them, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it?*

- The European Parliament



Graph 11: Trust in European Parliament

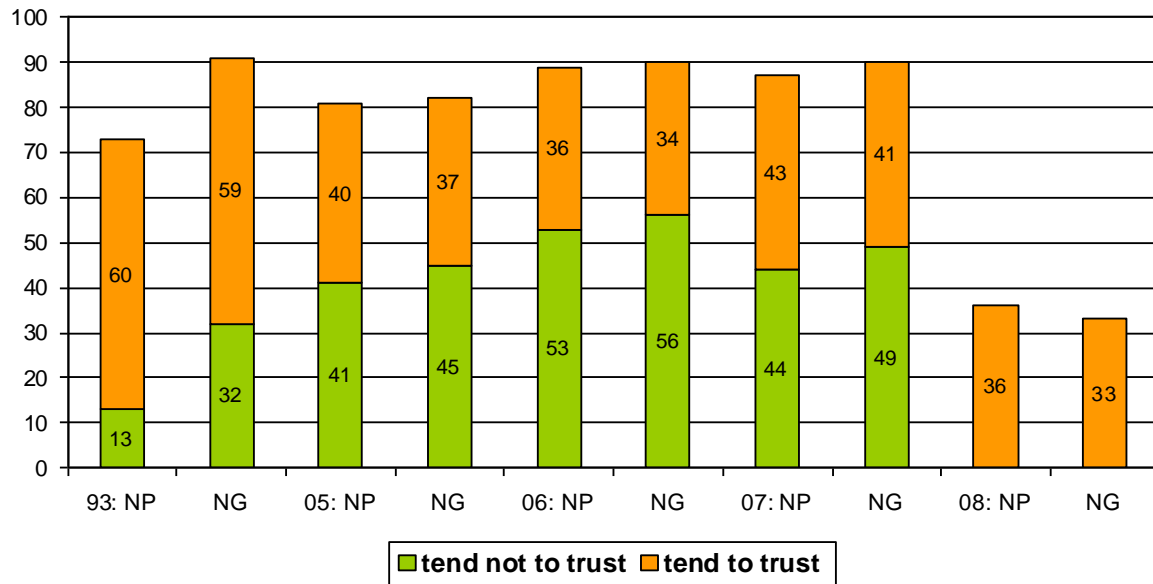
As the graph above indicates, trust in the European Parliament (EP) is generally high, over 60%, while levels of distrust are comparatively low and stay below 20%. The results for the last three surveys suggest, however, that trust is declining. In addition, distrust has risen quite sharply in the last survey included in this analysis. A comparison with EU-wide percentages suggests that this development mirrors a trend that affects all member countries as the average of trust levels has fallen across the EU as well. Moreover, compared to the EU-average of 55%; 52%; 51% (EB68; EB69.2; EB70), levels of trust exhibited by Irish respondents are still higher with 64%; 62%; 54% for the last three surveys.

²⁰ See Appendix: Graph 11 for EB sources.

To examine trust in national institutions, both the national parliament, the Dail, and the Government have been included as indicators in the analysis because both institutions are often synonymous in respondents' minds (EB68:15).

Question²¹: *And for each of them, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it?*

- The National Parliament
- The National Government



Graph 12: Trust in National Parliament and Government

Unfortunately, data for the national indicators was not available for the period 94-2004.

Therefore, the analysis will focus on the period after 2005. A first observation of the data reveals that levels of trust in the Dail are considerably lower than trust in the European Parliament. The same applies to trust in the national government where trust levels also tend to be marginally lower. Looking at the most recent data also reveals a decline in trust in both the Dail and the Government. Given the turmoil as a result of the financial crisis and the ensuing economic crisis, dropping levels of trust in national institutions are perhaps not altogether surprising.

Furthermore, the decline in trust coincides with the introduction of a tough new budget by the Irish government which was both widely criticised and very unpopular (EB70.1:9).

²¹ See Appendix: Graph 12 for EB sources.

These developments at the national level and the resulting growth in distrust in national institutions might have influenced the Lisbon Treaty referendum as well. Institutional distrust has been shown to affect support for the EU adversely and this negative effect might also apply to this referendum process. Qvortrup (2009) conducted a post-referendum analysis and his findings support this argument. He suggests that one factor that affected the outcome negatively was related to the scandal surrounding the former Prime Minister Bertie Ahern. The extensive media coverage of the alleged criminal dealings of a politician during the time of the Lisbon campaign could well have contributed to lower levels of trust in the Government, and by association the Dail, and in turn led the public to distrust the government-backed Treaty as well.

7.4.1 Preliminary summary

The analysis of attitudes based on institutional performance has shown that overall satisfaction with democracy is high both at the EU- and the national level, yet slightly higher at the national level.

Concerns regarding a democratic deficit at the EU-level, seem therefore not to be wide-spread in Ireland. Regarding trust in institutions, supranational institutions seem to generate higher levels of trust than national institutions. The fact that trust levels are higher for EU-institutions appears to confirm the different assessments hypothesis which posits that dissatisfaction with national institutions can increase support for supranational ones as hopes are projected to the EU-level (Sanchez-Cuenca 2000). However, there appears to be a negative development, meaning falling levels of trust in both national and supranational institutions. This development might prove problematic for overall levels of support for the EU and European integration, taking into consideration that institutional distrust tends to lower support (Hooghe 2007:121).

8. Evaluation of findings

Concluding the analysis of empirical data presented in the preceding sections, the aim of this chapter is to evaluate and discuss the results. First, the findings will be summarised and related back to the model for analysis with a special emphasis on the directional quality of the individual types. Second, the findings are discussed in terms of their explanatory quality regarding the rejection of the Nice I and the Lisbon Treaty which are commonly perceived as obvious manifestations of Irish opposition to the EU and European integration. Finally, the findings will be evaluated in terms of the consequences that follow from the categorisations of Irish attitudes regarding the relationship between Ireland and the EU.

8.1 Summary of findings

The results of the analysis have been gathered and the different types of attitudes have been assigned different levels regarding their directional quality, as is illustrated in the table below.

Table 8: Analysis results

Level:	Support	Hard euroscepticism
Degree	High	Low
Direction:	positive	negative
Utilitarian-based	High	Low
Sovereignty-based	Mixed	
Institutional performance-based	High	Low

The analysis has shown that in terms of **Degree**, Irish attitudes comprising public opinion and party positions manifest themselves in high levels of support and comparatively low levels of outright rejection i.e. hard euroscepticism of the EU and European integration. Regarding recent observable trends or shifts in support or opposition, the analysis did not reveal a clear indication of either a significant decline in support or a major rise in levels of opposition. Taking into consideration the most recent data available, it is not possible to determine conclusively whether the slight downward trend in support levels is indicative of a negative shift in public opinion or merely constitutes a minor fluctuation. Three consecutive minor drops in support levels are deemed not substantial enough to constitute a decided trend.

As far as **utilitarian-based** attitudes are concerned, the analysis revealed that attitudes based on economic considerations lead to overwhelmingly positive evaluations of the EU and European integration. Opposition to the EU based on this type on the other hand can be regarded as low and not wide-spread within the Irish public. Similar to trends evident regarding Degree, most recent data shows falling levels of support as illustrated with the 'benefits indicator'. However, it is too early to tell if this drop constitutes a long-term trend in public opinion toward the EU. Results for the direction **sovereignty-based** attitudes take are mixed, which is partly due to the different elements comprised in this type i.e. political and more symbolic sovereignty concerns. Sovereignty concerns that are political in nature, such as the transfer of power to the supranational level illustrated by the formation of a European government indicator, show higher levels of positive attitudes than negative ones. However, while levels of negative evaluations remain rather low, positive evaluations of this type are below the EU-average. It appears that attitudes based on considerations of political sovereignty issues lead to only weak support²². Another area of national sovereignty that could be termed symbolic rather than political includes national identity issues. For this sub-type the analysis combined the EU- with the national level. The analysis showed that the European component in Irish identity as well as attachment to the EU and Europe are rather weak. As a result, the nature of Irish identity, while it does not preclude positive evaluations, does not appear to strengthen support for the EU and European integration and could to a certain extent be regarded as a constraining factor. The final type of **institutional performance-based** attitudes, investigated levels of satisfaction with democracy and trust in institutions. Attitudes based on democracy and trust at EU-level seem to generate mainly positive evaluations, coupled with low levels of negative assessments or opposition of this type. As far as trends in public opinion are concerned, it is evident from most recent data available that levels of trust in both EU and national institutions appear to be falling. However, as mentioned previously the fact that this downward development is very recent does not allow one to interpret this as a genuine shift in Irish public opinion. To conclude, it appears that overall levels of support and positive manifestations of the individual types outweigh levels of opposition and negative evaluations. Furthermore, support

²² An important constraint on these findings is connected to the short time span ('87-'95) in which this question was included in EB surveys. Consequently, the ability to provide valid conclusions as to the present state of Irish attitudes regarding this type is naturally very limited.

for the EU and European integration seems to be strongest in terms of utilitarian-based attitudes, whereas attitudes based on sovereignty issues lead to the weakest manifestation of support.

8.2 The Nice I and Lisbon referendums

This section will examine whether the findings from the type-based analysis of EB data can provide some insight into why the first Nice Treaty and the Lisbon Treaty were rejected by the Irish public. Some references to both referendums were already made in the preceding chapter. Based on the findings from the type-based analysis of empirical data, issues related to Irish national sovereignty and identity appear to act as the most constraining influence on positive attitudes toward the EU and European integration. It is therefore assumed that whenever the public perceives EU treaties to infringe upon Irish national sovereignty and Irish identity, support for these treaties might be more difficult to obtain which in turn could influence the outcome of popular referendums negatively. Post-referendum analyses of voter behaviour support this hypothesis to some extent. In case of both the Nice I and the Lisbon Treaty, the second most frequent reason for voting No in the referendum has been 'loss of sovereignty/independence' (Sinnott 2008; Flash EB 245), followed by a desire 'to protect Irish identity' for the Furthermore, taking into account the findings from the analysis of empirical data, it is expected that support for the Treaties is mainly based on utilitarian-based attitudes, or in other words that the public names economic benefits as the main reason for supporting the treaties. For the Nice I Treaty, the main reasons for voting Yes included 'the desirability of enlargement' (Sinnott 2003:5), which could be interpreted as an economic incentive as the accession of Eastern European countries to the EU would provide more opportunities for export etc. On the other hand, enlargement might also have triggered fears based on utilitarian considerations in the public. Admitting poorer states to the EU might channel funds away from Ireland and competition resulting from cheap labour could ensue as well. This alternative reasoning is to a certain extent corroborated by the fact that around the time of the Nice I referendum, levels of support based on utilitarian considerations fell quite drastically.

Moving on, the connection between support and utilitarian motivations is much stronger regarding the Lisbon Treaty. The most frequently stated reasons for supporting the Treaty included; *it is in Ireland's best interest, Ireland gets a lot of benefit from the EU and it will help the Irish economy* (Flash EB 245:18), which appears to support the hypothesis that support is mainly tied to utilitarian-based attitudes.

Finally, a comparison of the findings provided by the analysis of EB data with post-referendum analyses, has also shown that the utilisation of a type-based model leads to some limitations. Not surprisingly, employing a type-based approach will only capture data that is consistent with one or more of the types comprised in the model. Out of the three most salient reasons for opposing both the Nice I and the Lisbon Treaty, the model could only capture the one connected with sovereignty. The by far most frequent reason for voting No to both treaties was however 'lack of knowledge' of the content of the treaties (Sinnott 2008; Flash EB 245; EB 69.2). In addition, concerns regarding the country's neutrality and its abortion laws also featured in both campaigns leading up to the referendums and were not included in any of the types chosen for the analysis either. Yet, while these issues were rather prominent features of the No campaigns, in the end only small percentages of voters seemed to have based their No vote on these factors. Furthermore, although these factors could not be captured as a result of the choice of indicators, the strong emphasis on neutrality which dates back to WWII, could be regarded as an inherent element of Irish identity, as after the war it ceased to function as a decided security policy issue and became associated more with identity (Laffan & O'Mahony 2008:12). Similarly, the ban on abortion can be interpreted as a legacy of the strong Catholic culture and identity prevalent in Ireland. Judging these two factors from that perspective would reinforce the claim that aspects of Irish identity can weaken support for the EU and European integration.

8.3 Implications regarding the nature of support and opposition

This last section will account for possible consequences of the findings for European integration and Ireland's relationship with the EU.

To start with, levels of opposition or euroscepticism have been shown to be relatively low in Ireland, especially when compared to the corresponding EU-average. In terms of the nature of opposition, levels of principled opposition or hard euroscepticism are comparatively low as well. The same can be observed when party positions are considered. It appears that the Irish public as well as Irish political parties do not regard withdrawal from the EU as a viable option and accept membership of the European Union as a given and as such, these levels of opposition do not constitute an immediate threat to Ireland's continued membership of the EU.

As the model did not limit itself to an analysis of opposition or euroscepticism, the nature of Irish support for the EU and European integration can be characterised as well.

First and foremost, the analysis has shown that support based on utilitarian/economic considerations is high, while emotional attachment to Europe and the EU as well as support based on identity is low. This could have implications for European integration. Supposing that Irish support is tied largely to the benefits resulting from membership, support could be highly volatile if economic circumstances were to be affected adversely. Also, if the domestic economic situation as a result of the financial crisis continues to deteriorate and this coincides with more negative subjective evaluations of economic well-being as well, support might drop and in the absence of a sense of a European identity and emotional attachment to the EU, a decline in support would potentially not be mediated by these factors.

9. Conclusion

Initially, an interest in the role and nature of public attitudes toward the EU and European integration was the driving force behind the design of this thesis. The role of public attitudes in shaping the course of European integration has come to be regarded as an increasingly important factor and consequently attracted considerable attention in the academic community. The same applies to the patterns of support or opposition toward the EU, which has sparked numerous studies examining the nature of public attachment and public or party-based euroscepticism toward the European Union.

Within the European Union, Ireland provides a suitable case for studying public attitudes toward the EU since the public can take direct influence over the course of European integration via popular referendums. In order to investigate Irish attitudes toward the EU and European integration a problem statement was formulated consisting of two sub-questions. Accordingly, this final chapter will evaluate *to what extent Irish attitudes toward the EU and European integration can be termed eurosceptic* and *whether the type-based categorisation of attitudes could provide feasible explanations for the direction that Irish attitudes take*. Furthermore, the chapter will conclude with a discussion of the implications that the findings of this thesis pose for future developments in Ireland as well as for future research on the subject of public attitudes toward the EU and European integration.

To evaluate the first question posed at the onset of this thesis, it is necessary to revert back to the definition of euroscepticism employed for the purpose of this thesis. The working definition used defines euroscepticism *as a sentiment of disapproval – reaching a certain degree and durability – directed towards the EU in its entirety or towards particular policy areas or developments* (Sørensen 2008:6).

The analysis of EB data has shown that levels of euroscepticism reaching such a degree that withdrawal from the EU as such becomes desirable are very low in Ireland.

However, as the definition states, euroscepticism can also be observed in levels of disapproval directed at specific aspects of European integration which do not necessarily entail outright rejection of EU-membership. The highest levels of opposition toward or disapproval of certain aspects regarding the EU and European integration have mainly been found in connection with

issues of sovereignty and national vs. European identity. Consequently, what could be termed sovereignty-based euroscepticism appears to be most prevalent in Ireland.

Naturally, a definition of euroscepticism as broad as the one used in the context of this thesis will undoubtedly reveal some levels of such sentiments of disapproval, as the percentage of EU-citizens exhibiting unequivocal support for the EU and all its policies and developments must be rather small. Consequently, the perhaps most useful utilisation of the concept of euroscepticism relates to what factors seem to cause euroscepticism i.e. the type of euroscepticism observed in public attitudes, rather than an exclusive focus on the degree of euroscepticism.

Having established that the type-based approach proves useful in evaluating euroscepticism, the second question relates to the usefulness of this approach regarding categorisations of Irish attitudes combining euroscepticism or negative attitudes with support or positive ones.

The model designed to analyse empirical Eurobarometer data employed a type-based approach that could incorporate both negative and positive attitudes toward the EU and European integration. As negative manifestations of the different types have been discussed in the preceding paragraph, this section focuses on whether valuable information could be gained from including the positive direction in the model for analysis. Given the findings obtained from the analysis it is safe to say that a categorisation of support or positive attitudes according to types adds important insight into the nature of Irish attitudes toward the EU and European integration. Results for positive Irish attitudes have been most telling regarding the utilitarian-based type. Utilitarian-based attitudes lead to high levels of support, as shown in the analysis. In addition, this has also been confirmed by conclusions drawn from the historical analysis of Irish attitudes presented in Chapter 6 in which the economic nature of Irish support for the EU was highlighted. Furthermore, institutional performance-based attitudes also appear to lead to support rather than euroscepticism in the Irish public. However, had the positive direction been omitted from the analysis, this information could not have been obtained. An examination of negative manifestations of Irish attitudes would have revealed low levels of utilitarian and institutional performance-based euroscepticism, yet it would not have been possible to conclude whether the corresponding manifestations of support for this type would have been high or as low as levels of euroscepticism and thereby not really significant at all.

A final observation regarding the usefulness of the model for analysis pertains to the inclusion of data regarding the national Irish context. Adding data for the national context to allow a comparison with EU-level data has also enriched the quality of the findings especially regarding sovereignty-based and institutional performance-based attitudes.

For sovereignty-based attitudes, the comparison between the nature of identity and levels of attachment to Ireland vs. the EU or Europe has highlighted the fact that both identity and national attachment reveal a lack of support for the European dimension. Conversely, the examination of evaluations of democracy and trust levels in national opposite European institutions has shown that European institutions, at least in regard to levels of trust, seem to perform better than the national equivalent.

Moreover, the findings that were obtained by using the type-based model incorporating positive and negative attitudes can also be used to make some predictions regarding the development of Irish attitudes toward the EU and European integration. Generally speaking, the factors that determine support or opposition and constitute the different types of attitudes can be affected if changes at the national level were to occur. This is especially relevant for the level of support of the EU in Ireland, as it is mainly tied to the perception of the benefits received by virtue of being an EU-member as well as the individual-level assessment of personal economic well-being. It is possible to imagine that if Ireland's economic situation deteriorates and unemployment levels continue to grow, thereby impacting evaluations of personal economic well-being, support for the EU could be weakened considerably. However, the direction that utilitarian-based attitudes would take in this respect also depends on whether membership of the EU is perceived as a factor that contributes to people's economic hardship or whether it is in fact seen as a stabilising influence on the economy. While it is difficult to predict exactly how severely the economic crisis will affect Ireland and how the public will react to a prolonged recession for instance, another event that could be emblematic of changes in Irish attitudes regarding the EU is the second referendum on the Lisbon Treaty which will be held in the not so distant future.

As part of the analysis, the findings have also been applied to interpretations of the referendum results of the Nice I and the Lisbon Treaty especially. The analysis of the Lisbon Treaty referendum consequently found that as in the case of general attitudes toward the EU, sovereignty and identity-based concerns could have contributed to the rejection of the Lisbon

Treaty by the Irish electorate. Support for the treaty also confirmed the general findings regarding support, namely the fact that it was mainly tied to economic and benefit considerations. Given the fact that the Lisbon Treaty will be put to the vote again, it might be advisable for the Yes campaign to focus on alleviating fears of the public that are connected to sovereignty and identity issues, such as the rotating seats in the Commission, the ban on abortion etc. However, these factors should not be overemphasised either as post-referendum analyses have also shown that lack of knowledge or understanding of the Treaty was the most frequent reason for voting no to Lisbon. As was the case in the second Nice referendum, a public that is better informed about the implications of the Treaty might also be more favourably disposed towards supporting it. Already now, opinion polls, though not representative, conducted by Irish newspapers suggest that 51% of respondents would now vote in favour of Lisbon (Seeing sense on Lisbon 2009, 28 Feb). Perhaps the extensive media focus and discussion of the Treaty that resulted from the negative referendum outcome might have contributed to a higher level of understanding of the issues involved and perhaps also awakened more interest in the public.

Apart from implications for the development of Irish attitudes toward the EU and European integration, the thesis will conclude by discussing if and what the findings of this thesis could contribute to further research in the field of euroscepticism and public attitudes toward the EU. One aspect that the thesis' discussion of theoretical approaches in this field has shown is how fragmented approaches and numerous small empirical studies contribute to contradictory and not easily transferable results regarding what factors affect support positively or negatively. In addition, the concept of euroscepticism is equally problematic. It is highly context-specific and denotes everything from outright rejection of EU-membership to dissatisfaction with certain aspects of European integration. Therefore it is necessary to either clearly define its nature or reject the concept altogether and seek alternative categorisations for negative attitudes toward the EU and European integration. Type-based categorisations of attitudes could to a certain extent circumvent this problem. However, the transferability of the type-based model to other national contexts could prove difficult due to the strong focus on specific national contexts. Also, as the analysis has illustrated the findings could be improved if more types were added to the model which could constitute an aspect worth investigating further.

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Appendix

Tables

Table 6	EB57.1		EB60.1		EB62.0		EB63.2		EB66			EB67	
	IE	E	IE	E	IE	E	IE	E	IE	E	EU	IE	EU
Net attached	96	58	96	59	98	72	96	66	95	65	54	93	48
Net not attached	3	37	2	38	2	25	3	31	4	31	42	6	46

Table 7	EB57.1		EB60.1		EB62.0		EB64		EB66	
	I	E	I	E	I	E	I	E	I	E
Net proud	95	71	96	75	98	82	93	75	96	63
Net not proud	2	11	3	11	1	10	1	12	2	7

Graphs

Graph 13	EB1	EB1.1	EB2	EB3	EB4	EB5	EB6	EB7	EB8	EB9	EB10	EB11
Membership good	56	48	50	50	67	50	50	57	59	54	63	54
Membership bad	15	25	24	20	12	16	22	17	19	17	12	14
Membership good EU	56	59	60	59	63	53	55	57	56	53	60	59

	EB12	EB13	EB14	EB15	EB16	EB17	EB18	EB19	EB20	EB21	EB22
Membership good	58	52	47	46	49	44	47	45	42	43	47
Membership bad	12	19	26	22	19	18	21	20	25	23	20
Membership good EU	54	58	53	50	53	52	51	54	55	55	58

	EB23	EB24	EB25	EB26	EB27	EB28	EB29	EB30	EB31	EB31.1	EB32
Membership good	53	55	59	58	55	64	63	59	58	55	64
Membership bad	20	18	16	14	13	9	11	16	14	13	9
Membership good EU	57	60	62	62	60	65	58	62	62	60	65

	EB44.1	EB44.2	EB45.1	EB46	EB47.1	EB46	EB47.1	EB48.0	EB49	EB50.0
Membership good	77	77	76	80	83	80	83	80	79	77
Membership bad	7	4	5	3	3	3	3	4	4	3
Membership good EU	56	53	48	48	49	48	49	51	54	48

	EB51.0	EB52.0	EB53	EB55.1	EB57.1	EB61	EB65	EB66	EB67	EB68
Membership good	81	74	74	81	78	71	77	78	76	74
Membership bad	3	6	4	5	4	8	7	7	7	6
Membership good EU	50	49	50		53	48	50	56	55	54

	EB69	EB70
Membership good	73	67
Membership bad	6	9
Membership good EU	52	

Graph 14	EB00	EB1	EB2	EB3	EB4	EB8	EB15	EB16	EB17	EB18	EB19
Very sorry	37	38	48	46	51	47	33	35	36	34	33
Very relieved	17	28	24	19	14	18	17	16	14	17	7

	EB20	EB21	EB22	EB23	EB24	EB25	EB26	EB27	EB28	EB29
Very sorry	30	33	31	37	40	39	40	38	52	48
Very relieved	20	16	14	14	15	12	10	8	6	8

	EB30	EB31	EB31.1	EB32	EB33	EB34.0	EB35.0	EB36	EB37.0
Very sorry	51	55	52	53	58	57	55	58	54
Very relieved	7				7	5	5	5	5

	EB38.0	EB39.0	EB40	EB41.1	EB42	EB43.1	EB50.0	EB55.1
Very sorry	53	56	52	56	61	57	54	43
Very relieved	7	5	5	3	3	4	3	3

Graph 15	EB19	EB20	EB21	EB22	EB23	EB24	EB25	EB26	EB27	EB28	EB29	EB30
benefited	56	59	61	62	67	66	71	58	65	79	74	79
benefited EU	52	46	48	50	53	46	51	53	49	56	52	56
not benefited	28	29	28	27	24	22	20	28	19	12	16	14

	EB31	EB31.1	EB32	EB33	EB34.0	EB35.0	EB36	EB37.0	EB38.0	EB39.0
benefited	82	76	75	80	84	83	80	81	77	82
benefited EU	55	52	58	59	58	59	56	53	49	47
not benefited	9	10	14	12	10	11	12	12	15	11

	EB40	EB41.0	EB42	EB44.2	EB46.0	EB47.1	EB48.0	EB49	EB50.0	EB51.0
benefited	80	80	89	85	86	87	88	85	85	86
benefited EU	45	46	48	42	42	41	44	46	49	44
not benefited	13	11	5	5	5	3	4	5	5	3

	EB52.0	EB53	EB54.1	EB55.1	EB56.2	EB57.1	EB61	EB62.0	EB63	EB64
benefited	88	85	86	83	89	86	80	87	87	86
benefited EU	46	47	47	45	52	51	47	53	55	52
not benefited	3	6	6	5	4	7	10	8	6	9

	EB65	EB66	EB67	EB68	EB69.2	EB70.1
benefited	87	87	86	87	82	79
benefited EU	54	54	59	58	54	56
not benefited	7	7	7	7	7	8

Graph 16	EB47.2	EB55.1	EB60.1	EB66	EB67.2
improves economic situation	30	23			
job creation	40	26			
euro			48	53	52
economic prosperity			35	41	37

Choice of Answers EB47.2; EB55.1
A way to create jobs
A means of improving the economic situation in Europe
A way to create a better future for young people
The ability to go wherever I want in Europe
A way to protect the rights of the citizens
Guaranteed lasting peace in Europe
A European government
A lot of bureaucracy, a waste of time and money
Just a dream, a utopian idea
The risk of losing our cultural diversity
Other
DK

Choice of Answers EB60.1; EB66; EB67.2
Euro
Freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the EU
Economic prosperity
Peace
Cultural diversity
Democracy
Bureaucracy
Waste of money
Not enough control at external frontiers
More crime
Stronger say in the world
Unemployment
Loss of our cultural identity
Social protection
Other
DK

Graph 17	EB28	EB29	EB30	EB31	EB32	EB33	EB34.0	EB35.0	EB36	EB37.0
Against	23	18	16	12	18	16	19	21	17	16
For	39	44	55	53	45	43	50	48	52	51

	EB39.0	EB40	EB41.0	EB41.1	EB42	EB43.1
Against	19	20	20	15	13	13
For	46	42	45	48	48	57

Graph 18	EB44.1	EB47.2	EB51.0	EB54.0	EB60	EB55	EB61	EB64	EB66
country cease to exist	35	28			33				
loss of national identity and culture	46	45	63	57	44	58	56	49	49
language used less	41	39	49	46	34	51	48	38	

Graph 19	EB33	EB35.0	EB36	EB37.0	EB64	EB65
Never	66	59	64	64	40	44
Sometimes	21	25	22	20	38	38
Often	11	14	13	15	15	14

Graph 20	EB37.0	EB40	EB42	EB43.1	EB44.1	EB46.0	EB47.1	EB49
Irish only	52	48	38	40	46	50	50	53
Irish and European	38	43	50	48	45	39	42	37
European and Irish	5	4	5	4	2	4	3	4
European only	2	2	3	4	1	3	2	3
EU nationality only								

	EB50.0	EB52.0	EB53	EB54.1	EB56	EB56.2	EB61	EB70
Irish only	51	53	55	46	55	48	49	59
Irish and European	41	38	37	43	37	39	44	
European and Irish	4	4	4	4	3	5	2	
European only	1	3	2	2	2	3	3	
EU nationality only								45

Graph 21	EB41.1	EB42	EB43.1	EB48.0	EB49	EB51.0	EB52.0	EB53	EB54.1
Net satisfied	64	67	63	63	60	60	58	70	58

Net not satisfied	24	16	18	13	14	12	17	19	20
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	EB56.2	EB61	EB63	EB66	EB68
Net satisfied	65	61	61	65	58
Net not satisfied	15	19	20	13	17

Graph 22	EB41.0	EB41.1	EB42	EB43.1	EB48.0	EB49	EB51.0	EB52.0	EB53
Net satisfied	65	61	69	70	70	75	73	63	88
Net not satisfied	28	32	27	26	21	17	18	30	11

	EB63	EB54.1	EB56.2	EB61	EB66	EB68
Net satisfied	71	74	73	70	75	69
Net not satisfied	22	20	19	23	20	22

Graph 23	EB39.0	EB51.0	EB52.0	EB53	EB54.1	EB55.1	EB57.1	EB61	EB63
tend to trust	58	55	66	68	66	70	63	64	60
tend not to trust	20	16	11	12	12	9	11	13	14

	EB65	EB66	EB68	EB69.2	EB70
tend to trust	62	66	63	62	54
tend not to trust	15	12	13	13	23

Graph 24	EB39.0	EB39.0	EB63	EB66	EB68	EB69.2				
tend not to trust	13	32	41	45	53	56	44	49		
tend to trust	60	59	40	37	36	34	43	41	36	33