Why was Lisbon rejected when Nice was eventually ratified?

Hvorfor blev Lissabon forkastet, når Nice endte med at blive ratificeret?

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Den Europæiske Unions (EU) seneste traktat, Lissabon-Traktaten, blev den 12. juni 2008 forkastet af de irske vælgere. 53,4 procent af vælgerne stemte nej til traktaten, hvorimod 46,6 procent stemte ja til traktaten. Det var anden gang, at irerne stemte nej til en EU-traktat. Irerne havde været igennem to folkeafstemninger i forbindelse med ratificeringen af Nice-Traktaten i 2001, hvor de stemte nej (53,9 mod, 46,1 for), og i 2002, hvor de stemte ja (62,9 for, 37,1 mod). Det essentielle spørgsmål i Irland var:

Hvorfor blev Lissabon forkastet, når Nice endte med at blive ratificeret?


Irske politikere står over for en udfordring, som folkeafstemningen i 2008 har cementeret. De skal forholde sig til den voksende euroskepsis i Irland og definere Irlands nuværendes forhold til EU.
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5.0 Change in attitude to European integration

5.1 Support and enthusiasm

5.1.1 Support

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6.0 Conclusion

Bibliography
1.0 Introduction
Ireland was the only Member State in the European Union (EU) to hold a referendum in connection with the ratification of the Nice Treaty. The Nice Treaty was rejected in the first referendum 7 June 2001 (53.9 against, 46.1 for) and later ratified in the second referendum 10 October 2002 (62.9, for 37.1 against) (Coakley, 2005, p.471). When the Lisbon Treaty had to be ratified, Ireland decided, once again as the only Member State, to hold a referendum. The referendum was set for 12 June 2008 (Timeline of how campaign unfolded, 2008. p.3). On this date, the Irish electorate rejected the Lisbon Treaty. 46.6 percent (752,451) of the electorate voted for ratification while 53.4 percent (862,415) of the electorate voted against ratification (De Bréadún, 2008, p.6; 28th amendment Lisbon Treaty, 2008).

1.1 Referenda in Ireland
The Lisbon Treaty was the treaty to end years of reflection following the ratification of the institutional unfit Nice Treaty for an EU of more than 25 Member States and following the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005 (Twenty-eight amendment of the Constitution Bill 2008, 2008). Why had the Irish Government, as the only EU government, deemed it necessary to hold a referendum in connection with ratification of the Lisbon Treaty and run the risk of a second rejection? In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to take a brief look at the concept of sovereignty, legal traditions and political circumstances in Ireland.

1.1.1 Sovereignty, legal traditions and political circumstances
The Constitution of Ireland enacted by the people on 1 July 1937 is called the Bunreacht na hÉireann, and this Constitution is the true authorising instrument for Irish membership of the Union and for ratifying treaties, as it remains the supreme legal document in Ireland (Regan, 2005). Sovereignty is strongly protected in the Irish Constitution from 1937 and all amendments to the Bunreacht na hÉireann require consent from the Irish people. Referenda are the norm rather than the exception when ratifying treaties in Ireland (Costello, 2005, p.359).

1 Ireland has held a referendum on every single European treaty proposed since the country joined the European Community (EC) 1 January 1973 (Laffan & Tonra, 2006, p.430). Article 46 states that a proposal to amend the Constitution must be put to a referendum after a referendum bill has passed both houses of the Oireachtas. Seven of the 28 amendments proposed since the signing of the Constitution in 1937 have dealt with European relations, and five of the proposals have been accepted as amendments to the Constitution (Regan, 2005; Coakley, 2005, p.471):

- 3rd amendment signed on 8 June 1972 allowed the State to become a member of the European Communities
- 10th amendment signed on 22 June 1987 allowed the State to ratify the Single European Act
- 11th amendment signed on 16 July 1992 allowed the State to ratify the Maastricht Treaty and thereby become a member of the European Union
- 18th amendment signed on 3 June 1998 allowed the State to ratify the Amsterdam Treaty
- 24th proposal of amendment rejected the State to ratify the Nice Treaty
- 26th amendment signed on 7 November 2002 allowed the State to ratify the Nice Treaty
- 28th proposal of amendment rejected the State to ratify the Lisbon Treaty.
Sovereignty is strongly protected in the Constitution due to the political history of the modern Irish State. The Irish fight for independence from the United Kingdom is well documented and understood. Joining the European Community (EC) undoubtedly meant changing the Constitution as it handed over national sovereignty on certain areas to the supranational bodies of the EC. Accession to the EC gave the European Commission the right to initiate legislation on areas moved to the EC, and initiating legislation was a national prerogative granted to the Oireachtas, the Irish parliament, in the Constitution (Costello, 2005, pp.359-360). It has, however, been less clear in the following proposed EU treaties whether Ireland would hand over additional sovereignty or simply extend cooperation on areas where sovereignty had already been handed over to the European Union.

The Irish Government decides whether or not a referendum is necessary based on the recommendations of the Attorney General, the legal advisor to the Government. In the case of the Nice Treaty, the decision to hold a referendum was not as controversial as with the Lisbon Treaty, because the Nice Treaty included changes on foreign political areas and paved the way for enlargement (Gilland, 2002, pp.527-535). The main aim of the Lisbon Treaty was a revamping of institutional cooperation (Twenty-eight amendment of the Constitution Bill 2008, 2008).

The Irish Government has still not made it clear where a further pooling of sovereignty is present in the Treaty according to the General Attorney (Barrington, 2008, p.13). Other Member State judged that the Lisbon Treaty merely widened integration and did not find a pooling of sovereignty present in the Lisbon Treaty.

When analysing legal traditions one will find a second explanation to why a referendum was deemed necessary in connection with the Nice Treaty and the

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1 Ireland was granted home rule in 1921 when the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed by the Irish delegation led by Michael Collins and the British Government. In 1931, Ireland became a dominion of the United Kingdom under the Statute of Westminster, but sovereignty as a dominion under the British crown was not deemed satisfactory by many Irish nationalists, including Eamon de Valera, founder of Fianna Fáil, who had been against the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in which Ireland was partitioned. Eamon de Valera presented the Irish with the current Constitution in which sovereignty to the Irish people was underlined by for instance removing references to the Crown (FitzGerald, 2005, pp.72-76). In 1949, Ireland exercised the sovereign right to leave the Commonwealth declaring Ireland a republic (Coakley, 2005, p.412).

2 A necessary referendum on membership was held in which the Irish electorate showed an overwhelming acceptance of the accession treaty and send a clear signal in favour of European integration (83.1 percent for 16.9 against) (Coakley, 2005, p.471; Gallagher, 2005, p.82). The constitutional amendment from 1972 ensures that 'no provision of this Constitution invalidates laws enacted, acts done or measures adopted by the State necessitated by the obligations of membership of the Communities or prevent laws enacted, acts done or measures adopted by the Communities, or institutions thereof, from having the force of law in the State' (Gallagher, 2005, p.82) The supremacy of EC law was hence established by this amendment in 1972.

3 It is political tradition not to make the recommendation from the Attorney General public in Ireland (Miller, 2008, 30 July).
Lisbon Treaty. Ireland has a strong, nearly unquestionable, tradition of holding a referendum on proposed EU treaties (Miller, 2008, 30 July). The legal tradition to hold a referendum in connection with EU treaties to resolve constitutional issues was established in the 1980’s. In 1987, the Irish Government decided that a referendum was not necessary in order to ratify the proposed Single European Act (SEA). The Government’s decision was challenged in 1987 in the Crotty vs. the Irish State case (Laffan & Tonra, 2005, p.446-447; Costello, 2005, pp.360-361).

Sovereignty and national identity was implicitly being questioned as Raymond Crotty, a political activist and economic historian, believed that Irish neutrality policy came under possible future pressure due to Title III in the Single European Act (Maher, 1994, pp.33-35). Title III regarded to establishment of a possible future political union including defence cooperation which Crotty believed was not necessitated by membership (Laffan & Tonra, 2005, p.446) The policy of neutrality had by Eamon de Valera, the main composer of the Irish Constitution, and Irish nationalists been regarded as the ultimate test of sovereignty (FitzGerald, 2005, pp.76-77). The Supreme Court judged that a referendum would be necessary as sovereignty was handed over to the EU in the SEA, but it also declined to find that several shifts from unanimous voting procedures to qualified majority voting procedures would have required a referendum, and that was the core of the issue in holding a referendum in 2008. Loss of sovereignty was not as obvious as a mere shift in voting procedures in the Lisbon Treaty (Gallagher, 2005, p.87; Barrett, 2008, p.15; Miller, 2008, 30 July).

The third, but less important, element that played a part in the decision to hold a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty was the promise to hold a referendum on the Constitutional Treaty which was extended to the Lisbon Treaty (Miller, 2008, 30 July). It would have been difficult to renge on that promise in a Member State where referendum as a tool to ratify European treaties is a strong legal tradition connected to sovereignty of the Irish people.

1.2 Change in voting behaviour
The referendum was finally held on 12 June. 13 June, the result of the Lisbon Treaty referendum was unquestionably clear. The Irish electorate had once again rejected a proposed EU treaty. The fundamental problem for the yes side following the result was that the no side grew by 300,000 votes. The rejection of the Lisbon Treaty was cemented and not debatable due to a stronger no vote than seen in any previous referenda. In Nice I and Nice II, as the referenda are also termed in Ireland, the no voters were close to half a million votes, 529,478 and 534,887, respectively (24th Amendment Treaty of Nice I, 2001, June;
26th Amendment Treaty of Nice II, 2002, October). In the Lisbon Treaty referendum the no side votes grew to 862,415 which was a substantial increase.

In 2002, Jean Monnet Professor from University College Dublin and pro-treaty campaigner, Brigid Laffan, observed that the no side would have difficulty expanding its group of voters, drawing on the experience from all previous referenda at the time (Laffan & Langan, 2005, 26 April).

The main lesson learned in the Nice Treaty referenda was that no side voters were small in size while they were loyal and committed. The yes side voters were potentially a larger group than the no voters, but soft voters. Hence, the yes side believed that their main task was to ensure a high turnout in the Lisbon Treaty referendum, as this was indeed the case with respect to the Nice Treaty referenda (Collins, 2008, p.6). However, a high turnout did not secure ratification of the Lisbon Treaty referendum, because the no side grew dramatically. Not only did the no side attract its core voters as expected, it also successfully attracted a high percentage of the group of undecided voters - a group that had increased considerably from the Nice Treaty referenda to the Lisbon Treaty referendum - and a small percentage of the yes voters.

The group of undecided voters was larger in the Lisbon Treaty referendum than in any of the Nice Treaty referenda and indicated a confused electorate. The group of undecided voters started at 64 percent (Collins, 2008, 17 May), ended up at 35 percent and had swung the no side’s favour in total together with some yes votes. In 2008, the no side increased in the last poll from 18 percent to 35 whereas the yes side declined from 35 percent to 30 percent. The no side was for the first time larger in the last poll prior to a referendum on a proposed EU treaty (Collins, 2008, 6 June).

The rejection of the Nice Treaty was a puzzling result due to the overall favourable attitude to European integration in Ireland. A mere 34.8 percent of the electorate turned out to vote. The no side fell from 21 percent to 19 percent in 2001, but the yes side fell from 34 percent to 16 percent which secured the no side a victory (Sinnott, 2008, p.16). The result in 2001 indicated a failed yes side campaign and a massive unrealised potential on the yes side more than it reflected public opinion in Ireland. Richard Sinnott, a leading survey researcher in voting behaviour in Ireland, stated in the report commissioned by and for the European Commission Representation in Ireland following the result that the main question to ask post rejection was not why Ireland had turned its back on European integration, but why the Irish electorate had abstained from voting (Sinnott, 2001, October). The overall and accepted answer was a disenfranchised and failed yes side campaign (Qvortrup, 2002, January). The yes side voters showed greater turnout support in the second referendum on the Nice Treaty. 48.1 percent of the electorate turned out to vote in the second referendum. 62.9 percent of the electorate favoured ratification while 37.1 percent were against. The increase in the yes vote was seen as a result of a more informative and organised yes side campaign (Laffan & Langan, 2005, 26 April).

Following the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign, Richard Sinnott indicated that the key to predicting the result of the Lisbon Treaty referendum was to look at the undecided voters, and the unusual high number of undecided voters overwhelmingly swung to the no side in polls in 2008 (Sinnott, 2008, p.17). From January to May, the undecided voters fell by 17 percent. 9 percent went to the yes side, and 8 percent went to the no side (Collins, 2008, p.6). The yes side still found reason to be optimistic at this time as the polls showed a two to one lead for the yes side, but the optimism was overshadowed by the issue of undecided voters. Nearly half of the voters had still not made up their mind by May and undecided voters tend to follow the slogan ‘If you don’t know, vote No’. From May to June none of the undecided voters went to the yes side (Collins, 2008, 17 May). In the poll carried out in mid-May, the undecided voters had fallen by 12 percent from 47 percent to 35 percent. The undecided voters moved to the no side which nearly
Turn out in the Lisbon Treaty referendum was higher than in any of the two Nice Treaty referenda. 53 percent of the electorate (1.6 million) turned out to vote, and yet the Irish electorate rejected the Lisbon Treaty by a 53.4 to 46.6 percent margin. This indicated a change in the lesson learned regarding voting behaviour in the Lisbon Treaty referendum compared to the Nice Treaty referenda (Molony, 2008, p.7).

The 2008 no vote was due to the decent turnout and most of all the increased no vote block more decisive for Ireland’s future relations with the EU than the no vote in 2001 (Laffan, 2008, p.13). The yes side was therefore left with one overall question to reflect on after the result of the Lisbon Treaty referendum: Why had the Irish electorate decided to reject the Lisbon Treaty. The overall question of the yes side will also be the problem statement in this dissertation. In order to answer the problem statement below, the first two chapters in the dissertation will discuss the no and the yes side and examine their performances in the campaign. Chapters four and five will hereafter deal with the issues of the campaign and the Irish attitude to European integration.

1.3 Problem Statement

Why was the Lisbon Treaty rejected when the Nice Treaty was eventually ratified?

1.4 Method and delimitation

The situation following the rejection has not yet been solved in Ireland or in the EU. The reflections often made over time have not been made yet, but the experience with referenda in Ireland, especially the Nice Treaty referenda, ensures that the immediate reflections will most likely not be very different to future reflections, however less extensive.

There were many reasons why the Lisbon Treaty referendum was rejected and many starting points for a dissertation. This dissertation will examine the main reasons as judged by the research made in connection with writing the dissertation. To back up the arguments, the following surveys and theory will be referred to.

doubled in size from May to June climbing from 18 to 35 percent in the Irish Times/TNS mrbi polls. The 18 percent of already decided no voters plus the 12 percent from the undecided voters equalled 30 percent. What underlines the success of the no side in this aspect is that 5 percent of the yes side voters also moved to the no side in the last Irish Times/TNS mrbi poll leaving the yes side with 30 percent of voters in the week of the referendum (European Commission, 2008b, July).
Ireland does not have a longstanding tradition for surveys. The most consistent survey measuring the Irish-European relations is the Eurobarometer. A weakness in the Eurobarometer can sometimes be the phrasing of the questions, particularly when measuring enthusiasm which they stopped doing in 2004. However, the Eurobarometer still remains the best available source for examining the attitude to European. The Irish Government also measured Irish-European relations and the referendum result in 2008. This post-referendum report will be linked to the findings in the Eurobarometers.

Two polls will be discussed in the dissertation. The Irish Times/TNS mrbi polls mentioned in the dissertation are the most consistent polls when it comes to measuring voting intentions in Ireland over time. The Irish Times/TNS mrbi measured voting intentions in all three referenda and proved to be accurate when predicting the outcome of the Lisbon Treaty referendum. The Sunday Business Post/Red C polls carried out in connection with the Lisbon Treaty referendum will also be analysed as they were more frequent. In connection with analysing surveys, Richard Sinnott will be found mentioned several times in this paper as he is one of the leading academics in analysing referenda results and was heavily drawn on during the three referenda in question.

Due to the topic being recently new, many of the sources will be newspaper articles. The dissertation will refer to articles written by the most prominent and acclaimed political journalists, politicians and academics. The personal attitudes of the journalists, politicians and academics have been considered and taken into account to respect academic standards in this dissertation.

In order to answer the problem statement, the dissertation will discuss nationalism in an Irish context below. The theorists referred to will be A. Smith, B. Anderson, P. Nora and M. Halbwachs. These theorists are referred to, because they highlight essential characteristics of the 2008 referendum campaign.
2.0 The no side had become strengthened between Nice and Lisbon

The introduction explained how the undecided voters were key for the result of the Lisbon Treaty referendum. It also showed how the undecided voters to a large extent swung to the no side. The no side was the successful campaigning side in the Lisbon Treaty referendum. This dissertation will therefore firstly focus on the no side which had become strengthened between the Nice Treaty referenda and the Lisbon Treaty referendum.

The main similarity on the no side between the Nice Treaty referenda campaigns and the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign was that most of the non-elected activists promoted either a social or moral agenda. The backbone of the no side was passionate and persistent individuals with a cause, but hardly any funding. The no side continued to be a strong compilation of organised and passionate individuals leading interest groups and organisations in the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign as it had been in the Nice Treaty referenda campaigns (The no side: main players, 2008; Qvortrup, 2002, January).

The main difference between the Nice Treaty campaigns and the Lisbon Treaty campaign on the no side was the emergence of the organisation Libertas. Libertas did not fit the traditional and typical description of a no side group. On the contrary, Libertas promoted liberal economic policies instead of social policies (Keena, 2008, p.3). The difference on the no side between the Nice Treaty referenda and the Lisbon Treaty referendum in the shape of Libertas and what the organisation represented had a substantial impact on the anti-treaty side in the referendum. The no side was already strong in its composition in previous campaigns, but it had a broader appeal and more funding backing it in 2008 due to the emergence of Libertas. This chapter will firstly examine the traditional no side players before discussing Libertas to illustrate how the emergence of Libertas strengthened the no side.

2.1 A backbone of non-elected committed ‘concerned citizens’

As mentioned, the no side was strong in its original construction. The core of the no side was groups presenting themselves as ‘concerned citizens’. This image has been possible in previous referenda due to a low trust in national political institutions in Ireland (Laffan & Langan, 2005, 26 April). There is also room for ‘concerned citizens’ in referenda as a vote against Government has been a significant reason for voting no since 2002 (Sinnott, 2003, 26 February). In 2008, there was a general low trust in national political institutions in Ireland, and the electorate appeared to be suspicious of a nearly united political establishment recommending the same vote in the referendum (European Commission, 2008a, July; Collins, 2008, p.15).7

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7 Even though the figure for trust in national political institutions in April 2008 had increased from 33 to 42 percent between autumn 2007 and spring 2008, it must be considered low as less than
The ‘concerned citizens’ in the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign were most of the main campaigners from the Nice Treaty referenda campaigns. The main characteristics and strengths of the traditional no side were the non-elected profiles leading diverse organisations most of which were united in left-leaning policies and their resistance towards the EU. The diverse gathering of socialist and left-wing groups could be viewed as a weakness, but this had not been the case in past referenda (Qvortrup, 2002, January).

The success of the no side had partly been a result of good organisation in 2001 (Qvortrup, 2002, January). In 2008, most of the groups on the no side united under the umbrella organisation for political organisations, trade unions, individuals and parties, the Campaign Against the European Union Constitution (CAEUC) which had was established in 2005 (The no side: main players, 2008).

The People’s Movement, People Before Profit, the Socialist Party and the Peace and Neutrality Alliance are worth mentioning in this connection as they were the main left-wing campaigners on the no side in the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign. The main activists representing the main left-wing organisations in the campaign were Patricia McKenna, Richard Boyd Barret, Joe Higgins, and Roger Cole, respectively (The no side: main players, 2008).

Large unions decided to back the no campaign in 2008 as they had done in 2001 and 2002. Unite representing 60,000 workers, the Technical, Engineering and Electrical Union, the state’s largest craft union, representing 45,000 members, and the Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union representing over 270,000 Irish workers all backed the CAEUC campaign in promoting a no vote (The no side: main players, 2008; Rogers, 2008, p.7).

In a rather unexpected manner, a far-right Catholic organisation called Coír joined the referendum campaign in May bringing perhaps the most entertaining, provocative and criticised campaign posters into the campaign. Coír stood independently as an organisation basing their campaign on moral issues, and added a different colour to the palette of the no side. The organisation

half of the electorate trust national political institutions. The level of trust in national political institutions was higher compared to trust in national political institutions in most Eastern European Member States, but it was considerably lower than in other western European Member States. For instance, 76 percent of Danes and 66 percent of Finns expressed trust in national parliaments in the same period (European Commission, 2008a, July).

Several of the bodies under this umbrella organisation were not particularly apparent during the campaign and simply repeated the prominent activists’ arguments.

Joe Higgins had previously been advocating a no as an independent member of the Dáil (the lower house in the Oireachtas), but failed to get re-elected in the general election in 2007 (The no side: main players, 2008).
seemed new, but it quickly became clear that the people behind Coír had previously been involved in other campaigns (Downes, 2008, p.11).

The strong backbone of concerned, non-elected and passionate activists was therefore also in place during the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign as it had been during the Nice Treaty referenda campaigns. In fact, there was only one parliamentarian party left on the no side in the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign. Sinn Féin offered the only elected forum sceptical of the direction they believed the EU would take with a ratification of the Lisbon Treaty (The no side: main players, 2008). Sinn Féin therefore came to speak the opinion of more people than the amount of actual votes the party normally receives in general elections, including the last general election in 2007 in which the party received approximately 143,000 votes (6.9 percent of the 2.08 million votes cast) ensuring them 6 seats in the Dáil (RTE Elections, 2007, May), and more than they most likely will receive in the next general election (Taking stock of our No, 2008, p.3).

Sinn Féin voters proved to be extremely loyal to party colours in the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign. 95 percent of the Sinn Féin voters who turned out to vote followed party recommendations and voted no to the Lisbon Treaty (European Commission, 2008b, July).

The parties on the no side do often not regard themselves as part of the establishment even though they are elected on the same terms as all other elected representatives. These parties therefore match the no side groups composed of ‘concerned citizens’. Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams stressed this view immediately after the result of the Lisbon Treaty referendum was announced: ‘It was very much David and Goliath contest, or in our case it was a Mary Lou and Goliath contest, and in this case Goliath lost again’ (Brennan, 2008, p.14).

The Green Party used to belong to the no side group and to consider itself as part of the opposition to the political establishment in Ireland. The party

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10 The construction of Coír revealed that people behind the campaign were the same people who had been behind the controversial campaign ‘Hello Divorce, Goodbye Daddy’ against divorce in the referendum campaign in 1995. Labour’s Spokesperson on European Affairs, Joe Costello, led the criticism of Coír revealing that the organisation shared offices with the Youth Defence and the Pro-Life Alliance. Coír’s address furthermore revealed connections to the Mother and Child Campaign which was active during the Nice Treaty referenda and which had connections to ‘extreme right-wing, quasi-fascist organisations in Europe’, according to the Labour Party’s Joe Costello (O’Brien, 2008, p.8).

11 Sinn Féin has opposed every single treaty since Ireland joined the EC in 1973, and the party Members of the European Parliament are members of the EU sceptical group, the European United Left – Nordic Green Left in the European Parliament. Nonetheless, Sinn Féin based their campaign on being pro-European, but against the Lisbon Treaty very much in line with Libertas’ campaign.

12 This will not necessarily result in an increase of voters for Sinn Féin at the next general election. McEvaddy for instance had contemplated long and hard before joining the same side as Sinn Féin (Nickey, 2008, 21 April).

13 Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams referred to Mary Lou McDonald, Member of the European Parliament for Sinn Féin, who was leading the Sinn Féin no campaign in 2008 (Brennan, 2008, p.14).
had since the foundation of the party in 1981 been advocating a no to all EU treaties. It had a profile as a ‘clean’ and honest political group and was considered the biggest threat to the yes side campaign. A group called ‘Green Party Supporters For Yes’ indicated that the party was split internally on the issue during the Nice referenda (Laffan & Langan, 2005, 26 April).

In 2007, the Green party secured Fianna Fáil the right to once again form Government and thereby became part of the inner core of the political establishment. Certain factions of the party continued to be of the opinion that Ireland had pooled too much sovereignty to the EU in previous treaties and hence should not support the institutional reforms of the EU as presented in the Lisbon Treaty. Even though the party did not officially promote a yes vote most elected representatives of the party, especially the Oireachtas members, embraced the Lisbon Treaty. The party remained split internally on the Lisbon Treaty and so did its voters who acted against party recommendations in 2008. 57 percent voted against ratification, while 43 percent voted for ratification (Molony, 2008, 14 June; Smyth, 2008, p.13). By joining the yes side, the Green Party did not become a considerable threat to or weaken the no side. The traditional no side remained strong.

2.2 The emergence of Libertas strengthened no side
The essential reason why the no side had become strengthened was the emergence of Libertas. Libertas was an important factor in the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign due to three main reasons:

1. Libertas was backed by massive, unprecedented funding,
2. the organisation had an ability to set a relevant agenda for the time of the referendum,
3. the new no side actor had a different appeal compared to the rest of the no side.

2.2.1 Massive funding
The first reason why the no side was strengthened by the emergence of Libertas was that Libertas was backed by an unusual large sum of money compared to even the wealthy actors on the yes side, but particularly compared to the passionate, but poorly funded actors on the no side. The official figures are still not available, but it has been estimated that Libertas received in

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In the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign, the party voted on whether or not the party would officially rally for a yes vote at a special convention on 19 January 2008. Rallying for a yes-vote united as a party would have required a 2/3 majority of party members in favour of the Treaty. 63 percent of the members attending the special convention supported the Lisbon Treaty. Hence, support fell narrowly short of the 2/3 majority required to back the Lisbon Treaty officially. Nonetheless, the signal that emerged from the special party convention was that a majority of members were in favour of the Lisbon Treaty, especially the Dáil members who had been advocating united party support (Greens fail to agree support for Lisbon Treaty, 2008, 19 January).
excess of €1.3 million to campaign against ratification of the Lisbon Treaty (Keena, 2008, p.15).

Mystery surrounded Libertas from the moment the organisation entered centre stage on the no side outspending all other bodies and parties participating in the referendum campaign. Elected representatives asked many questions about Libertas, but the main questions regarded a possible hidden agenda behind Libertas, and how the organisation received in excess of €1.3 million from donations when a single donation cannot exceed €6,348 and cannot come from non-Irish citizens resident abroad or from foreign bodies that do not maintain an office in Ireland in accordance with Irish electoral legislation (Keena, 2008, p.15). The no side, which is usually run on voluntary efforts, was therefore well funded due to the emergence of Libertas in 2008.

In comparison to Libertas, the main Government party Fianna Fáil spent approximately €700,000, the pro-EU organisation the Irish Alliance for Europe collected €600,000, the main opposition party Fine Gael had a budget of €500,000 and the opposition part the Labour Party estimated to spend €200,000 on the campaign. Next main spenders on the no side after Libertas were Coír and Sinn Féin. They each spent €100,000 on the campaign. The other no side activists spent less than €10,000 each (De Bréadún, 2008, 26 May).

The four main parties spent €100,000 on the first Nice Treaty campaign between them. The no side was never previously well funded, but built on voluntary campaigning until the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign. The Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign was the most well funded campaign on both the yes side and the no side compared to other referenda campaigns on European treaties (Laffan & Langan, 2005, 26 April).

The media and politicians questioned both funding and a possible hidden agenda behind Libertas and its close link with US military, as previously mentioned. There were even suggestions that the funding and the hidden agenda were closely interlinked, a suggestion founder Declan Ganley denied during and after the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign (Keena, 2008, p.15). The connection between Libertas and US military was never truly questioned by the public during the referendum campaign in which Libertas kept focus on their agenda and issues (Kerr, 2008, p.9).

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15 These figures were mentioned in the middle of the campaign. The official figures are not available yet.

16 It is publicly known that the directors of the company have a US military background, and that one of Rivada Network’s customers is the US military’s Northern Command. Ganley, who is described as chairman, chief executive and founder, stated during the campaign that there was no overlap between Libertas and Rivada Networks, but the most active volunteers in Libertas were at the same time employed by Rivada Networks including the executive director of the organisation, Naoise Nunn (Keena, 2008, p.3).
2.2.2 Libertas set the agenda
Funding is important as it enables groups, organisations and parties to spread their messages and reach the electorate through extensive campaigning, but it is not a guarantee for success in itself, as the defeat of the Nice Treaty in the first vote in 2001 showed. In 2001, the yes side spent more than the no side and still lost (De Bréadún, 2008, 26 May). This brings the thesis to the second point worth highlighting when discussing the importance of Libertas and the strengthening of the no side in the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign.

The second reason why the no side was strengthened by the emergence of Libertas was that Libertas set the agenda on essential issues that came to matter a great deal in the campaign in 2008. A major factor in the result of the Lisbon Treaty referendum might have been how the yes and the no side conducted their campaigns. The no side started their campaign much earlier than the yes side and managed to set the agenda, influence and dominate public opinion long before the yes campaign was under way (FitzGerald, 2008, p.18).

Nearly all of Libertas' arguments had been presented and tested by the end of February. Libertas announced already at the launch of its campaign that it would distribute 1.4 million leaflets containing most of the dominant claims in the campaign regarding economy and sovereignty. The group's website and campaign were up and running at the beginning of 2008 well before their pro-EU opponents' websites and campaigns had seen the light of day (Timeline of how campaign unfolded, 2008, p.3).

The agenda setting power is apparent when examining the opinion-shaping debate on taxation during the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign. Early February, Libertas presented its arguments on the loss of veto on taxation matters. The Government and the rest of the yes side reacted slowly to the argument and the style of the rebuttal was not as technical as the presented argument until much later in the campaign when spokesperson for the Commissioner for Trade, Peter Power, rebutted the argument in the same manner as it had been presented. By then, the no side with Libertas leading on economic issues was in a comfortable position presenting arguments, spreading doubt on issues and reacting to rebuttals made by the yes side (Timeline of how campaign unfolded, 2008, p.3; Hennessy, 2008b, p.9). Libertas, and the rest of the no side, was in a secure agenda setting position for most of the time in the referendum which would prove crucial for voting behaviour.
2.2.3 Libertas appealed to a new voter
The third reason why the no side was strengthened through the emergence of Libertas was that the organisation appealed to a new form of no voter compared to the traditionally dominant actors on the no side and thereby increased the no side's chances of attracting voters. For the first time in the history of EU referenda in Ireland, it was legitimately presented that a vote against the Lisbon treaty was not a vote against the EU. Declan Ganley declared that he was a strong European, but against the Lisbon Treaty. That was not a typical argument of an activist on the no side. Ganley was also a self-proclaimed liberalist which was neither a well-known characteristic of the activists on the no side (Keena, 2008, p.3).

Businessman Ulick McEvaddy backed Libertas and came to personify this new type of voter. McEvaddy did not play a highly active role in Libertas' campaign, but by supporting Libertas he came to symbolise how a businessman who had embraced EU membership, who was a personal friend of Commissioner Charlie McCreevy as well as Tánaiste (vice-leader of Government) Mary Harney and a supporter of the pro-EU party Fine Gael could be for EU membership, but against ratification of the Lisbon Treaty based solely on the content of the Lisbon Treaty (McGee, 2008, p.7).

Ganley’s strategy allowed those who were neither hard left-wing socialists nor hard right-wing nationalists to vote against the Lisbon Treaty and remain supportive of the EU functioning under the Nice Treaty (European Commission, 2008a, July). The new form of voter who was pro-EU on one side, but against the Lisbon Treaty on the other side might have been an important and decisive form of voter in the Lisbon Treaty referendum. The strategy of being pro-EU, but anti Lisbon appeared to attract soft yes voters leading to the increase in the no vote (European Commission, 2008a, July).

2.3 Chapter conclusion
The traditional no side was strengthened by the emergence of Libertas. The backbone of the no side in the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign was still passionate non-elected activists with a social agenda as observed in the Nice Treaty referenda campaigns. Libertas brought a different agenda and image to the no side; an image that was backed by massive funding. Furthermore, it was highly organised as an activist groups and had an ability to set the agenda on crucial issues in 2008. Additionally, Libertas followed the successful strategy of acting on behalf of concerned citizens. The appeal was hence broader in the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign as the no side also appealed to voters who were not necessarily hard left-wing anti-EU voters, but pro-EU voters simply concerned about the direction the EU would take with a ratification of the Lisbon Treaty.
3.0 The yes side did 'too little too late' in 2008
The no side was, as previously examined, strengthened in the 2008 campaign. The yes side on the other hand did 'too little too late' in the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign (Sheahan, 2008, p.6). The two aspects, 'too little too late' were closely connected in the referendum campaign. The 'too little' element was most of the time a result of the 'too late' element. The yes side, all the parties in the Dáil bar Sinn Féin, did not set the agenda with positive messages in the beginning of the Lisbon Treaty campaign. The slow start to the yes side campaign opened up a vacuum that was eventually filled by the organised no side. The yes side was therefore stuck in a difficult, defensive position, and it did not seem comfortable in this position (Sheahan, 2008, p.6; Leahy, 2008, 15 June). Focus in this chapter will be on the Government as it stood with the ultimate responsibility of ratification having presented the electorate with a referendum.

There are several reasons why the yes side did not mobilise enough support. This dissertation has chosen to highlight two main reasons to underline why the yes side was not sufficiently present on the campaigning scene in time. The first reason this dissertation will highlight is the internal rotation of leadership in Fianna Fáil and the Government (FitzGerald, 2008, p.18). The second reason is that the Government was caught in extensive negotiations to secure the backing from certain interest organisations and unions. This left the Government in a sensitive position in the last crucial weeks of the campaign (Collins, MacConnel & Roche, 2008, p.1). The result was a low level of support for the campaigning parties (Smyth, 2008, p.13).

3.1 Too little
There were several elements that indicated that the yes side did too little, but some are more worth mentioning than others. The three following observations in this section are judged to have been the most apparent elements of the failed yes side campaign with a focus on the Government:

- The Government did not campaign sufficiently during the campaign;
- the yes side failed to set the agenda and was kept in a rebuttal position;
- main campaigners had not read the treaty and showed a lack of knowledge on EU co-operation;

The first observation that is worth a discussion is that the yes side campaign and appeal was weak. In the beginning of the year, Minister for European Affairs Dick Roche was more or less left alone with the task to campaign for ratification on behalf of the Government (Hennessy, 2008, 1 May). This was not sufficient compared to the numerous actors on the no side. To further illustrate the weak campaign, it can be mentioned that the yes side did not canvass enough, neither in the beginning of the campaign nor in the end (Sheahan, 2008, p.6). According to the analyses made after the Nice Treaty referenda, door-to-door canvassing is an effective means to mobilise support in general elections as well as in referenda (Sinnott, 2003, 26 February). 85 percent of voters were not canvassed in the Lisbon Treaty referendum. The yes side canvassed less than the no side. 11 percent of Fianna Fáil voters were canvassed compared to 6 percent of Labour voters. The no side canvassed slightly more voters. 15 percent of Sinn Féin voters stated that they had been asked to vote no. The figures were low both for the yes and the no side, but the conclusion was the same: door-to-door canvassing is an effective means to get people to vote in accordance with recommendations given on the door step, and the yes side could have done much more to reach voters in this regard (Sheahan, 2008, p.6; Leahy, 2008, p.11).

The second observation worth highlighting is that the yes side did not set the agenda, but was kept on the defensive throughout the campaign. The yes side did not manage to get positive messages about the Lisbon Treaty and future European relations out to the public before the no side had presented their arguments. The yes side was therefore stuck in a position where they had to rebut no side arguments and be on the defensive (Sheahan, 2008, p.6; Leahy, 2008, 15 June). In other words, the yes side did not do enough to prevent the no side from sowing seeds of doubt and watch them grow (Leahy, 2008, 15 June).

Rebutting proved to be hard for the yes side. The no side often presented emotional arguments such as the argument that Ireland would lose its status as a neutral country or the argument that Ireland would never have a referendum again on European treaties if the Lisbon Treaty were ratified (McDonald, 2008, p.13). These emotional arguments required technical rebuttals, and it proved easier to catch the electorate’s attention through an emotional argument than to get the attention with a technical rebuttal (Sheahan, 2008, p.6; European Commission, 2008a, July). One crucial element to mention in connection with this dilemma is how important the style of an argument was in the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign. Issues are undoubtedly important in a referendum campaign, but what became clear in the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign was how messages, true or not, were conveyed, and the yes side failed to convey their arguments, often of technical and demanding nature, to the electorate (European Commission, 2008a, July).
The last observation worth highlighting is specific elements in the campaign regarding performance. Politicians who had a great deal of knowledge on European affairs, one being Taoiseach Brian Cowen the other Commissioner Charlie McCreevy, admitted to not having read the Lisbon Treaty (O´Brien, 2008, p.4). The no side seemed to have read the treaty. Whether they had read it or not, is irrelevant. What is relevant is that the no side appeared to be more on top of their arguments quoting from the Lisbon Treaty and questioning Government competences while the yes side admitted to not having read it (O´Brien, 2008, p.4). After the change of Government, some cabinet members such as the new Minister for Foreign Affairs Micheál Martin seemed convincing, whereas other yes side actors after the change of Government seemed less comfortable campaigning for ratification. Minister Mary Coughlan publicly stated that larger Member States were willing to give up their two Commissioners. All Member States only have one Commissioner. The Amsterdam Treaty provided for the change that required larger Member States to only have one commissioner instead of two (The Amsterdam Treaty: institutional matters, 2008). This was a crucial mistake to make when the Irish electorate was deeply concerned about the future loss of a permanent Irish Commissioner (O´Brien, 2008, p.10).

3.2 Too late
It has been mentioned several times that the yes side campaign got off to a slow start. The following will highlight the two main reasons why the yes side was in a rebuttal position during the campaign in 2008. After months of speculations and uncertainty in the political environment, a change of Government took place. When the new Government was finally nominated and elected, it was occupied with extensive negotiations in the crucial last weeks of the campaign (Collins, MacConnel & Roche, 2008, p.1). The timescale and atmosphere were decisive reasons for the rejection of the Lisbon Treaty in 2008 (Whelan, 2008, p.18).

3.2.1 Taoiseach resigned in the middle of campaign
As mentioned, the yes side campaign got off to a late start due to the change of Government announced early April and executed early May. The essential element to highlight in connection with the change of Government is that it affected the yes side campaign and resulted in a political vacuum which was filled by the no side campaign. In other words, the no side had filled the political vacuum while the political parties had been partly paralysed mainly by the absence of political leadership from the Government’s side (Leahy, 2008, 15 June).
Former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern announced 2 April 2008 that he would resign as head of Government and as leader of Fianna Fáil by 7 May. The announcement surprised the political establishment for two reasons: The referendum on the Lisbon Treaty was expected to be a month after Ahern’s resignation, and the general election in 2007 was viewed as a personal triumph for Ahern who was the first Taoiseach after Eamon de Valera to be elected Taoiseach three consecutive times (Hennessy, 2008, 6 May).

Nonetheless, the Mahon Tribunal investigating corruption in the political environment, including Ahern’s personal finances when he served as finance minister in the 1990’s, had clearly become an obstacle for Bertie Ahern to conduct his business as Taoiseach, and for the Government to hope for a favourable outcome in a referendum (Taoiseach resigns, 2008, 2 April). The referendum on the Lisbon Treaty was one of the key reasons why Bertie Ahern chose to step down as head of Government and leader of Fianna Fáil (Full text of Taoiseach Ahern’s statement, 2008, 2 April).

There seems to be a disagreement in polls judging the effect Ahern’s resignation had on the new Taoiseach Brian Cowen and trust in Government. Trust in Fianna Fáil climbed up five percent in a Sunday Business Post/Red C poll while the Eurobarometer did not see the date of the election of Brian Cowen as the ‘tipping point’, but viewed the whole period autumn 2007 to spring 2008 positively for the trust in national political institutions in general (FF gets poll bounce after Ahern resignation, 2008, 6 April; European Commission, 2008a, July).

The fascination with polls declaring increased support for national political institutions at the time of Ahern’s resignation should be limited as it was relatively low in general, and because the Irish electorate rejected the Nice Treaty at times when trust in national political institutions was even higher. 41 percent expressed trust in the national parliament and Government in 2001 (European Commission, 2001, October).

One of the main reasons behind the failed yes side campaign in 2001 was that a general election had to be held in 2002 and that the politicians were therefore preparing for this. In 2001, the Bertie Ahern-led government was finishing its first term. The Government and the political establishment were preparing for a general election in 2002 pushing the European referendum down the agenda. Ahern wanted to hold the referendum before the general election and therefore rushed through the first referendum on the Nice Treaty. The hasty character of the execution of the referendum has following the first Nice Treaty referendum been viewed as one of the reasons why the Nice Treaty was rejected in the first referendum. The second Nice Treaty referendum in 2002 was held after a general election that had secured Bertie Ahern his second term as Taoiseach and was hence not an obstacle for the referendum (Laffan & Langan, 2005, 26 April).
The main consequence to highlight is that the Government’s official campaign was launched a month prior to the actual referendum which was too late to get a campaign up and running, especially considering how the no side campaign had been up and running since the beginning of the year (Sheahan, 2008, p.6; FitzGerald, 2008, p.18; Leahy, 2008, 15 June).

The no side had been campaigning under the advantage that the change in Government proved to be a distraction from the referendum, as feared by the yes side (Kelly, 2008, p.14). Campaign director for Libertas, John McGurk, predicted that ‘the Government and Opposition will have their eye on the ball, and we will use this opportunity to campaign very vigorously for a No vote’. Fine Gael spokesperson on European affairs, TD (member of the Dáil) Lucinda Creighton, believed that the former Taoiseach’s unpopularity was less of a factor than presumed by the no side, but rightly expressed the concern that ‘the leadership race and the changes in the Government front bench would prove a distraction from the referendum’ (Kelly, 2008, p.14). The result of the referendum indicated that the yes side ended up suffering from the timescale and the consequential vacuum (Whelan, 2008, p.18).

3.2.2 Lisbon became a scapegoat for unions
The second reason why the yes side did not mobilise enough support for the Lisbon Treaty was the extensive negotiations with unions and interest groups that took place during the last weeks of the referendum campaign. Some unions wanted a Government guarantee stating that their interest were protected and used the referendum campaign as an opportunity to secure their interests. This left the Government in a delicate situation balancing European interests and unions’ interest (Sheahan, 2008, p.6; FitzGerald, 2008, p.18; Collins, MacConnel & Roche, 2008, p.1).

The political parties supporting ratification were in 2008 backed by some of the same main unions, business sector representatives and organisations as in the Nice Treaty referenda. The Irish Business and Employers Confederation representing 7,000 members advocated strongly in favour of a yes vote from the beginning of 2008. The Executive Council of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) representing 832,000 members also backed the Lisbon Treaty (Wall, 2008, p.11). Chambers Ireland representing 13,000 members decided to support the Lisbon Treaty (Chambers Ireland reaffirms ‘yes’ vote. 2008, p.12). The Irish Farmers’ Association (IFA) also backed the Lisbon Treaty (Collins, MacConnel & Roche, 2008, p.1). The Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers’ Association (ICMSA) decided to follow the IFA decision (Hennessy & Roche, 2008, p.4).
The business sector was also backed by a new sub-section of the organisation the Irish Alliance for Europe. The Irish Alliance for Europe was to serve as a pendant to Libertas and the organised no side. The alliance had strong forces such as politicians and business people backing the cause of the organisation. Securing the funding of €700,000 took longer than expected which resulted in a delay in the campaign. The Alliance for Europe and the civic organisations and individuals in it did therefore not completely serve as the wished for pendant to the no side in 2008 (Miller, 2008, 30 July).

The yes side was, as shown, backed by some of the largest unions and most of the business sector in Ireland. However, the backing of the unions was to a great extent conditional and connected to the domestic situation. The three best examples denoting this change in climate was ICTU, Chambers of Ireland and the IFA. ICTU voted on whether or not to back the Lisbon Treaty. The vote revealed that it was far from a unanimous decision that was behind backing the Treaty. The outcome of the vote was highly anticipated by the political actors in the campaign when it arrived on 21 May in the middle of the official campaign. 14 members voted in favour of the Lisbon Treaty, five voted against and eight abstained (Wall, 2008, p.11). President Chris Coughlan of Chambers Ireland personally opposed the Lisbon Treaty. Chris Coughlan was thereby caught in an interesting position in the campaign. Besides sitting as President of Chambers Ireland, which backed the Lisbon Treaty, he was also one of the campaign directors for Libertas (Chambers Ireland reaffirms ‘yes’ vote. 2008, p.12). The IFA decided to back the Lisbon Treaty on 3 June, just nine days before the referendum, following a unanimous vote in the executive council. Behind the unanimous vote stood months of negotiations with the Government, a massive demonstration and extensive press coverage (Collins, MacConnel & Roche, 2008, p.1).

3.2.2.1 Tell Mandelson where to stick it
The IFA will be studied further as it is a prime example of the negotiations that took place in the eye of the public in the middle of the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign colouring the debate to the no side’s advantage. The IFA particularly, but not exclusively, came to represent the created link between the referendum on a proposed EU treaty and specific, domestic concerns.

19 The McKenna Judgement from 1995 prevents funding from taxpayers to organisations, parties and other groups to be spent to advocate a specific view (Gallagher, 2005, p.83). The European Movement Ireland could therefore not play an active role in the referendum campaign promoting the Lisbon Treaty as it was funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs. Key people from the European movement therefore decided to make use of the organisation the Irish Alliance for Europe again that had been established following the No in the first Nice referendum. The Irish Alliance for Europe had been established as a means to organise the enthusiastic mainly non-elected representatives on the yes side in the second referendum on the Nice Treaty (Laffan & Langan, 2005, 26 April).
The IFA had in April conducted a massive demonstration against the ongoing WTO negotiations (O’Sullivan, 2008, p.2). The IFA claimed that cuts in agricultural support proposed by the European Commissioner for Trade Peter Mandelson would result in 50,000 Irish farmers going out of business, the loss of 50,000 food processing jobs and €4 billion worth of losses in trade income (MacConnel, 2008, p.1 & Cadogan, 2008, p.3).

The IFA had been demanding a Government guarantee to veto a deal under the then current conditions for several weeks, but before 3 June the Government had firmly refused to give a specific guarantee. A majority of farmers voted yes according to the final IFA recommendations, but the opposition against the Lisbon Treaty received a great deal of media attention and provided for yet another opportunity for the no side to argue against ratification in order to protect national interests. Libertas put up colourful poster telling Mandelson ‘where to stick it’ (Oakley & O’Sullivan, 2008. p.4) even though subsidiaries do not fit a liberal agenda.

Politicians and the pro-treaty side generally questioned whether it was too late to undo the damage on 3 June with only a week to go before the referendum. The main opposition party, Fine Gael, welcomed the decision by the IFA, but strongly criticised Cowen’s handling of the crisis describing it as ‘appalling’ (Collins, MacConnel & Roche, 2008, p.1). The no side kept building on the momentum. Anti-Lisbon group Libertas called the IFA decision ‘disappointing’, but totally expected, ‘because IFA President Pádraig Walshe was eager to avoid the blame for a No vote’. Patricia McKenna said both the IFA and the ICMSA had been put ‘under huge pressure’ and it was ‘nice but foolish’ to believe that the Government would veto a WTO deal (Hennessy & Roche, 2008, p.4).

The balancing of Irish domestic affairs and the European sphere was evident in this matter. The Taoiseach was later blamed for guaranteeing the veto too late, but the IFA was also blamed by pro-treaty commentators and politicians for using the Lisbon Treaty as a scapegoat. The Irish Government found itself in a delicate situation where domestic guarantees could cost it negotiating power in international affairs. The veto guarantee would secure the IFA yes vote, but would limit the Irish Government’s room for manoeuvre in the WTO talks (Don’t mention the V-word, 2008, p.10).

The last weeks of the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign were crucial when examining when undecided voters made up their mind. The extensive negotiations held up Government forces that could have focused more on setting the agenda and campaigning. More than half of the undecided voters (55 percent) decided how to vote in the final weeks of the campaign (European Commission, 2008b,
July). This gave the yes side an opportunity to set all sails as it was finally up and running in the last weeks prior to the referendum, but the Government was by then occupied with securing the backing of unions.

3.3 Result cemented failed yes side campaign

The result of the failed yes campaign was reflected in the result of the referendum. The electorate voted strongly against party recommendations. The electorate supporting yes side parties in general elections are not overwhelmingly loyal to party colours in referenda. The electorate seemed more willing to trust un-elected representatives or as one of the leading political commentators, Stephen Collins, described: ‘Instead they [the electorate] seem willing to put their faith in a rag-bag alliance including Sinn Féin, ultra-conservative Catholic groups, far-left activists and a wealthy man with connections to the warmongering US neo-conservatives who lives in a stately home’ (Collins, 2008, p.15).

A majority of Fianna Fáil voters backed the party (60 percent voted yes, 40 percent voted no). The Progressive Democrats voters were low in numbers as the party only held two mandates after the devastating party result in 2007, but the party’s voters proved to be loyal and backed party recommendations more than any other voters (69 percent voted yes, 31 percent voted no). The self-proclaimed most European party, Fine Gael, just about guaranteed that a majority of its voters backed the treaty (51 percent voted yes, 49 percent voted no), but the Labour Party (45 percent voted yes, 55 percent voted no) and the Green Party (43 percent voted yes, 57 percent voted no) did not run successful campaigns when examining voters backing (European Commission, 2008b, July; Smyth, 2008, p.13).

The result indicated that the yes side failed to demonstrate the connection between the visions of the Lisbon Treaty and the visions of the electorate for the future of the European Union (Sinnott, 2008, p.13; Leahy, 2008, 15 June). Furthermore, the yes side failed to recognise one of the most important lessons learned in the Nice Treaty referenda campaign. Campaigning matters and there is no room for complacency on the yes side to inform the electorate on a proposed treaty (Sinnott, 2003, 26 February), especially not when the treaty is of such a complex nature as the Lisbon Treaty (European Commission, 2008a, July).

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26 The poll prior to the referendum showed that there was no great unhappiness with the Government, and that the electorate would return Fianna Fáil to office for yet another term given the opportunity (Collins, 2008, p.15).
3.4 Chapter conclusion
The yes side did too little to mobilise support for ratification in the beginning of the campaign. The result was that the yes side failed to get out positive messages before the no side set the agenda. The change of Government meant that the main yes side party, Fianna Fáil, did not provide for the necessary leadership at due time. The change of Government and Government negotiations with unions, especially the IFA, held up efforts on the yes side to get out positive messages and stand united at a crucial time of the referendum campaign.

A political vacuum emerged from the lack of leadership which was successfully occupied by the no side. As a result, the yes side found itself in a difficult and critical rebuttal position throughout the campaign. The potential on the yes side did to a large extent remain unrealised in the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign.

4.0 A myriad of issues based on loss of sovereignty
As argued in the two previous chapters on the campaigning sides, the strengthened no side filled the vacuum created by a partly paralysed yes side. The agenda setting no side underlined national interests highlighted in previous referendum and introduced new issues. All of the issues in the referendum campaign were closely linked to the Irish national identity interacting in a European sphere. The issues were by the no side used as means to distinguish the Irish national identity in the EU, and to send the general message that the Lisbon Treaty contained a loss of national sovereignty.

4.1 Irish national identity
This dissertation argues that national identity was the overall theme of the issues in the referendum campaign in 2008. In order to discuss national identity in the context of the referendum, the dissertation will briefly examine national identity and national identity in an Irish context.

Nationalism sets the interest of the nation first in line (Smith, 2003, p.20). Nation, nationality and national identity are relatively new constructions that emerged at the end of the 18th century at the time of Enlightenment and revolution (Smith, 2003, p.16; Anderson, 1991, p.7). Even though it is difficult to term nationalism, this dissertation finds that there are three overlapping ideals of a nation: to achieve and sustain autonomy, a national unity and a national identity (Smith, 2003, p.21). Autonomy is perceived as closely connected to the idea of a collective unity. When autonomy is achieved a social and cultural unity of the nations’ members can truly take place.
A national identity in its ideal is an interest in collective characteristics and the historic and cultural foundation of these (Smith, 2003, p.44). Nationalism and its symbols and memories shape a people sharing a given nationality and their aims. Anderson argues that the definition of a nation is an imagined political community and by this sovereign and inherently limited to people sharing the same historic and cultural foundation (Anderson, 1991, p.6). Smith continues that a nation is not only connected to politics, it is also connected to culture and intellectualism as nationalism structures the global outlook and symbolic systems in a collective community (Smith, 2003, pp.109-110).

There are two ways to regard nationalism: subjectively or objectively. The subjective approach to nationalism states that nationalism, and thereby a national identity, is based on a sentiment of belonging to a collective and imagined community due to a historical background. In such a community, people share and celebrate the same memories, myths, symbols and values which create a sense of belonging, a national identity (Smith, 2003, p.11; Anderson, 1991, pp.4+11-12). A shared language, common traditions, a territory and institutions are the points of focus for the objective approach.

This dissertation will take the approach, like Smith, that nationalism is a mix of the subjective and the objective approach. Common to the two approaches is that they denote some sort of belonging and commonness. A nation is a mix between objective elements, such as a language, a flag, a territory and institutions, and subjective elements such as feelings, a shared will and a common destiny (Smith, 2003, p.24). The subjective feeling of belonging to a community can be expressed through objectives. These objectives can be the symbols of a nation: the name of the nation, national museums, statues, national holidays, lieux de mémoire (sites of memory) that become symbolic and national identity shaping sites (Nora, 1998, p.20; Halbwachs, 1992, p.175). The symbols and memories built bridges between the outer system of politics and social interests and the nation’s inner sphere (Smith, 2003, p.12-13).

**4.1.1 Nationalism in an Irish context**

Nationalism is by Smith not perceived as an ideology able to replace liberalism and socialism. It is more regarded as a supplement and can be viewed as a culture. One could argue that even though nationalism is not a full-fledged ideology such as liberalism and socialism (Smith, 2001, pp.19-21), it has as a culture or as a sentiment played a substantial part in Irish politics due to the history of independence and due to the fact that there are no great clashes of ideology in Ireland. Most of the parties are placed centre-right in the political spectrum. The two main parties even share same party roots (Keogh, 1994, pp.3-5).
The Irish have many symbols commemorating their common history and shared political system. Again, it is necessary to mention that this dissertation only examines the surface rather than all the nuances of Irish national identity and deals mostly with political identity. The Irish national identity is very much built on the fight against British rule, the times of religious and cultural oppression, immigration and economic development (FitzGerald, 2005, p.9). The common, classic Irish symbols denoting a shared sentiment of national belonging are for example the tri-coloured flag, the Irish language and the national anthem ‘The Soldier’s Song’. Many street names in Irish cities are names of revolution fighters and politicians. The most important national holiday is St. Patrick’s Day reminding the Irish of the time when Christianity came to Ireland. There is overall no lack of symbols denoting nationality in Ireland.

Ireland has gone through a dramatic transformation partly due to and during membership of the EU. Some argue that the economic independence achieved through membership of the EU was the real enabler for Irish independence and thereby extended sovereignty rather than decreasing it (Foster, 2007, p.20, FitzGerald, 2005, p.23). The story of the Celtic Tiger, and the socio-cultural and cultural consequences of this economic development, is still being written (Foster, 2007, p.1), but it is valid at this point in time to conclude that the Irish have gone from being oppressed economically and culturally by the United Kingdom to being the extremely, wealthy former dominion cherishing their Celtic culture. Irish independence, both economically and as a consequence social-culturally and culturally, has been boosted by European integration (Laffan, 2008, p.13).

One of the most interesting elements to highlight in this connection is how Ireland has looked outward and embraced Europeanisation and globalisation as means to prosper economically and at the same time has looked inward and highlighted a strong sense of national belonging and national sovereignty (Eurobarometer, 2008a, July). The revival of the Celtic culture is worth highlighting here. Since independence was granted to the Irish, it became a publicly expressed policy to spread the Irish language and culture to distinguish the Irish from the British through ‘church, state, and culture’ (Keogh, 1994, p.27-38). This process was initiated by the Cumann na nGaedheal party that would later merge with other groups and become today’s Fine Gael party (FitzGerald, 2005, p.72). Eamon de Valera, founder of Fianna Fáil, also saw the Irish language being a means to distinguish Ireland from the United Kingdom. Theorists often highlight the language as a means to separate one nation from the other even though it cannot be said about the English language which is shared by many nations. Eamon de Valera wanted to use the Irish language as a means to separate the Irish from the British (FitzGerald, 2005, p.72).
language, but the revival of Celtic names for children, of Celtic sports with the establishment of the Gaelic Athletic Association, of Celtic music and the emergence of new generations of Irish musicians and Irish authors writing about living in contemporary Ireland, in English, followed as a result of, independence, the mentioned policy and the economic development (Foster, 2007, pp.147-183 FitzGerald, 2005, pp.81-84; Keogh, 1994, p.27-38).

The symbols denoting a collective community has to function in the present. As Halbwachs argued, the sites of memory and the collective myths are to serve the present needs. In other words, a collective memory is a reconstruction of the past based on present needs (Halbwachs, 1992, p.183). Even though sites of memory are artificial and deliberately fabricated as claimed by Nora and Halbwachs, they still provoke a myth for people belonging to a nation and give political actors a memory to draw on during referenda (Nora, 1998, p.1; Halbwachs, 1992, p.183). The national identity seemed to be simplified and overemphasised during the Lisbon Treaty referendum. Coír certainly proved the point of overemphasising the Irish national identity as a means to recommend a certain vote on their posters. On the background of the Irish Proclamation of Independence from the 1916 Revolution, called the Easter Rising, the posters read 'People died for your freedom - don't throw it away' (Downes, 2008, p.11).

Smith argues that nationalism is only really decisive as a movement in times of crises when a nation is threatened by other ethnic or cultural groups (Smith, 2003, p.40-41). This could be an explanation to why the national identity is overemphasises during referenda in Ireland. The nation can be regarded as a product of a common history, or even a special, common destiny as a result of a common history. The idea about a common destiny is very emotional. The destiny of every nation is not to return to the 'glorious' past, but to reshape its spirit in modern terms and under changed circumstances (Smith, 2003, p.49). The Lisbon Treaty referendum can be seen as a part of shaping the spirit under threat. The no side seemed to build on a common destiny in a changing sphere and consider autonomy, unity and national identity threatened in the campaign.
4.2 Issues
There was a myriad of issues in the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign (Smyth, 2008, p.11). There were just as many reasons - personal, local, national and European reasons - for rejecting the Treaty. A way to find valuable issues to examine and discuss is to look at the main reasons for the. The connection between the result and the debate is that the result reflects the debate with a few exceptions. The most dominating issues for voting no were also the most prominent issues during the debate. This shows how people were influenced by the agenda set by the no side.

4.2.1 Reasons for rejection
In connection with a rejection of a treaty, the no vote is particularly interesting to examine. The first and second reasons for voting no to the Lisbon Treaty were lack of understanding (22 percent) and to protect Irish identity (12 percent), respectively. Lack of understanding will be discussed in the next chapter of the dissertation. The second reason is the overall theme of the chapter and will therefore be dealt with throughout the chapter. The third to the sixth main reasons for voting no indicated that the no side did indeed run a successful campaign. These reasons were to protect Irish neutrality (6 percent), the lack of trust in national politicians (6 percent), loss of a permanent Commissioner (6 percent) and to protect the Irish tax system (6 percent). Moral issues were also present in the campaign, and 2 percent of the electorate based their no on them (European Commission, 2008b, July).

The yes voters based their vote on more general reasons than the no voters who base their vote on issues (Garry, Marsh & Sinnott, 2005, p.216). 32 percent based their vote on the belief that it was in the best interest of Ireland. 19 percent voted yes due to the belief that Ireland benefited a lot from the EU. 9 percent felt that the Lisbon Treaty would keep Ireland engaged in Europe, and 9 percent felt that it would help the Irish economy to ratify the Lisbon Treaty. The fifth to the twelfth reasons for voting yes were institutional and about the EU’s role in a globalised world.

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There most surprising issues were that children from the age of three could be detained by 'Brussels', that the EU would put a barcode on children and that prostitution, hard drugs and porn would be legalised with the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. There was no limit to what could be linked to the Lisbon Treaty. These claims often stemmed from the far right Catholic organisations, sometimes backed by Libertas. They were outrageous, but showed that nothing was sacred in the referendum campaign. It furthermore indicates that the no side made this referendum about more than the Lisbon Treaty (Downes, 2008, p.11).

If compared to the issues in the Nice Treaty referenda, one will find that neutrality and military issues naturally influenced a greater part of the no vote (16 and 18 percent) in the Nice Treaty referenda, as the Nice Treaty provided for significant changes on this area such as giving the EU the right to lead missions formerly led by North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Anti-Government feelings made 10 percent of the electorate vote against the Nice Treaty in 2002 (this was not a reason to vote no in 2001). In regards to moral issues, 1 percent of the electorate found this to be the decisive reason in 2001 and 2002. Economic issues were not significant for a no vote in the Nice Treaty referenda (Sinnott, 2001, October).

The main reasons for voting yes in the Nice Treaty referenda was that it was generally perceived as a good idea to develop existing commitments (44 and 53 percent). Enlargement was a
4.3 Prominent issues and their common denominator

The similarity between the Nice Treaty referenda campaign and the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign was the re-emergence of issues known as national interests. The two most prominent examples of national interests in Ireland are abortion and neutrality. Abortion and neutrality provide two different stories on special national policies, and thereby the national identity, functioning in a European sphere. These are issues that have traditionally distinguished the Irish from the rest of the EU and which have always been present in Irish referenda on EU treaties. The former prominent national interests were joined by new national interest focused on the economic situation of Ireland.\(^5\)

One thing the issues - old as well as new - had in common in the Lisbon Treaty referendum was that the no side had made them the core issues in the campaign. The no side set the agenda and ran a convincing campaign compared to the yes side.\(^6\)

4.3.1 Loss of Irish Commissioner and voting weight

Institutional changes were part of the campaign, but not from a European perspective. The main institutional changes in the debate - the loss of the right to a permanent Commissioner, the new weighting system of votes in the Council of Ministers and the increase of areas decided by qualified majority voting - were all argued mainly from an Irish perspective. The no side turned them into examples of loss of Irish sovereignty in the Lisbon Treaty.\(^7\)

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\(^5\) Neutrality and economy were the two main concerns for the EC when the Community started considering Irish membership. Hence, the Irish diplomatic efforts in the first round of accession negotiations were focused on assuring the European political community that Ireland was economically prepared and had good faith in the longer term objectives for a political community possibly encompassing a defence element and to ensure that the poor economic state of the nation would not be obstructive (Keogh, 1997; Fitzgerald, 2005, p.127). Interestingly neutrality and economic matters were some of the main reasons why the Irish electorate rejected the Lisbon Treaty.

\(^6\) 67 percent of people in the European Commission survey made shortly following the Lisbon Treaty referendum found that the no side had led the most convincing campaign where as only 15 percent found that the same could be said about the yes campaign. Even yes side voters found the no side campaign the most convincing. 57 percent of yes voters found that the no side had run a better campaign compared to 21 percent who believed that the yes side had been more convincing. 81 percent of the no side voters found the no side campaign the most convincing compared to 4 percent who had thought so of the yes side campaign (European Commission, 2008b, July).

\(^7\) The loss of a permanent Commissioner was already included in the Nice Treaty which the Irish had ratified. The Lisbon Treaty was merely describing the rotation of the Commissioners. In the Nice Treaty, the rotation of Commissioners based on a system that has not yet been agreed on, will start in 2009. In the Lisbon Treaty, the rotation was agreed on and the rotation would not start until 2014.
4.3.2 Legalisation of abortion
When examining issues that denote national interests and identity, abortion is the first issue worth mentioning. Irish abortion legislation is strict compared to abortion legislation in the rest of the Member States. The strict abortion legislation in Ireland is one of the last remaining symbols of a former strong Catholic church and values in a country that has experienced a tremendous economic, political and social change during, particularly, the last two decades (Foster, 2007, p.147).

The policy on abortion has not been changed as a result of membership of the Union. It has nonetheless been a means to highlight national interests and national identity interacting in a European integrationist sphere in all three discussed referenda and to show how national interests can be threatened due to European co-operation of supra-national behaviour.

4.3.3 Loss of Irish neutrality
Neutrality is the second issue worth examining when debating traditional national interests and identity in referenda campaign. Neutrality is a more complicated issue compared to abortion when examining sovereignty. Neutrality has definitely changed as a result of EU membership (Tonra, 1999, pp.149-165), but the change has been directed from the Dáil. Neutrality is a cornerstone of Irish independence, identity and sovereignty. Neutrality as a policy was originally in the 1930’s intended to underline Irish independence (FitzGerald, 2005, p.126 + Tonra, 1999, pp.149-165). The Irish had fought long and hard for independence from the United Kingdom. Neutrality was one way for Ireland to distinguish and separate itself from the United Kingdom and the colonial past of forced conscription in the British army. Irish neutrality is therefore a prime, political symbol of national interests which has been used in the European referenda to distinguish the Irish and their political history from the rest of the Member States.

\[\text{Abortion is simply illegal and not an available service in the State. Women who wish to terminate their pregnancy will have to seek this service outside the borders of the Irish Republic. This strict legislation on abortion has been approved by the people in three referenda to date (Gallagher, 2005, p.73).}\]

\[\text{After the No to Nice in 2001, the Irish Government negotiated a declaration called the Seville Declaration. This Declaration includes a mechanism called the triple lock. The purpose of the triple lock is to protect the will of the Irish people in security matters through elected representatives. The triple lock ensures that a UN mandate and approval by both the Government and the Dáil is required for Ireland to engage in EU led missions. The weakness of the triple lock, especially in the time of a referendum campaign, is that the lock does not require a referendum. A referendum is only necessary in case of a complete abandonment of military neutrality as a policy secured through the Constitution.} \]

\[\text{Eamon de Valera did not constitutionally guarantee neutrality in Ireland. In Article 29, section 1 of the Irish Constitution from 1937, neutrality is indirectly mentioned: 'Ireland affirms its devotion to the ideal of peace and friendly co-operation amongst nations founded on international justice and morality.'} \]
'What is popularly described as Irish ‘neutrality’ has been, and continues to be, a powerful touchstone in the Irish body politics. Its genesis as government policy – first becoming operational at the outbreak of the 1939 - 1945 war – has since been transformed by a contemporary mythology and has been folded firmly within a political discourse related to Irish independence, identity and sovereignty. As a result, is popularly viewed as key indicator of Ireland’s distinctiveness and is part of what it means to be Irish’ (Tonra, 1999, p.24).

Ireland is very active in European security matters. Military neutrality, as neutrality is being termed in Ireland today, has developed to a great extent due to membership, and the development was apparent in the year of the Lisbon Treaty referendum when Irish troops were deployed in Chad in a Eufor mission (Irish soldiers to leave for Chad tonight, 2008, 20 February). The no campaign could therefore base part of its campaign on neutrality as the issue definitely served a purpose when highlighting the effect the EU can have on national policies and on cornerstones of national identity.

4.3.4 The taming of the Celtic Tiger
The main difference between issues in the Nice Treaty referenda campaigns and the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign was economic issues and the extent to which these came to be dominant points of focus in the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign. It can be argued that the economic issues played the same role as the old issues, abortion and neutrality, in contemporary Ireland. They were good in underlining Irish national identity and claiming the protection of sovereignty.

The reason for the emergence of these new issues was the changing economic times in Ireland. The Eurobarometer (European Commission, 2008a, July) showed growing pessimism among Irish people over the future of the economy in 2008. Less than one in ten expected to see an improvement in employment or the economy over the twelve months following the survey. Ireland's economic miracle had begun to look unstable already in 2007 due to escalating economic difficulties such as a fall in housing prices. The biggest jumps in jobless claims on record were recorded in 2008 (A Taoiseach in trouble, 2008, 27 November; CSO, 2008, 3 December) and a ballooning deficit became reality (Tansey, 2008, 1 July; European Commission, 2008, autumn). The fears of a recession were present when people went out to vote on 12 June. The fears became reality immediately after the referendum where the economic situation worsened.
It was this change in the economic situation that Libertas based essential elements of its campaign on. Libertas caused some concern and as a result many feared a yes would lead to a loss of foreign direct investment, endanger Ireland’s low corporate tax rate and not protect workers’ rights sufficiently (Miller, 2008, 30 July; Libertas, 2008). Libertas had its momentum in 2008. The first factor is that no side was as previously mentioned before the Lisbon Treaty referendum made up of left-wing groups and activists that had not had a tradition for focusing on economic issues unless these were linked to social issues. Libertas changed the composition of the no-side adding a liberal economic agenda to the opposition against ratification of a European treaty. The second factor is of domestic nature. Although the government was playing down the economic downturn in the months before the referendum (O´Brien, 2008b, p.17) and although the government and the business lobby groups warned, that the best interests of Irish economy would be served by ratification (source), it may be that many saw a no vote as the best way of protecting the remains of the Celtic Tiger. Domestic issues shape referenda on European treaties. The issues of corporate taxation, foreign direct investment and workers’ rights played a considerable part in the campaign in terms of a perceived threat to Ireland’s national prerogatives on these issues.

Declan Ganley underlined the point made in this section when he during the campaign stated: ‘Why would we vote for a treaty that weakens Ireland’s voice at the table at a time when there is a huge army of special interests lining up to try and deprive us of the one economic tool that we still have?’ (IT, 9 April, corporate tax plans spark strong reactions in Lisbon debate)

4.3.5 No without consequences
To cover all of the before mentioned issues, the no side presented a new argument that had not been presented before. The argument was a supplement to the powerful ‘if you don’t know, vote no’ argument. For the first time, a no campaign partly based its recommendation on a no without consequences. Sinn Féin and Libertas led the argument that the Irish electorate could reject the Lisbon Treaty as a means to get ‘a better deal’. Renegotiation was a possibility, and all it required was a no vote (McDonald, 2008, p.13, Fitzgerald, 2008, p.4). The argument caught on with the electorate. 76 percent of the electorate who voted against ratification thought that a no would mean that the Irish Government was able to renegotiate exceptions for Ireland. These voters wanted to ensure that Ireland kept its neutrality (83 percent), that Ireland kept its tax system (79 percent) and that social policies were

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"The Celtic Tiger is the term for the unprecedented economic growth Ireland experienced from the mid 1990's until 2007 where the economic development in Ireland was heading towards recession. Membership of the EU, a young, well-educated workforce, English as main language, a low cost of living, historical ties with the US and a low corporate tax rate are in this dissertation recognised as the most apparent reasons behind the rising of the Celtic Tiger."
kept a national prerogative (60 percent). The no campaign based on the common denominator national identity can be considered a success according to these figures (European Commission, 2008b, July).

4.4 Chapter conclusion
There was a 'myriad of issues' in the campaign that led to the no vote. The overall theme for all of the issues was national identity in a European sphere. Common for all issues was that they described the general Irish relations with the EU and how national identity and sovereignty can was challenged or threatened by European integration in the shape of the Lisbon Treaty.

The similarities and the differences in regards to issues between the Nice Treaty referenda and the Lisbon Treaty referendum reflected that times had changed domestically. The old national interests that used to serve as examples on the Irish national identity debate stood side by side with new issues.

The no side used the political vacuum to focus on domestic issues and the threatening of old as well as new national interests that distinguished the Irish from the rest of the EU Member States, and the yes side failed to sufficiently highlight issues from a European perspective. The electorate was confused and lacked knowledge on the proposed Lisbon Treaty.

5.0 Change in attitude to European integration
The following chapter will take a closer look at the attitude towards European integration. It explains the attitudinal context in which the no vote in 2008 took place (European Commission, 2008, July). This chapter argues that there was a change in the attitude towards the EU. Euroscepticism had in 2008 become a permanent part of Irish relations to the EU (De Bréadún, 2008, p.6; O´Brien, 2008a, p.17), and this sentiment serves as one of the most prominent part of the explanation why the Lisbon Treaty was rejected. The 2008 referendum were indirectly about the Irish-European relations, and they had changed (Leahy, 2008, 15 June).

In order to explain the sentiment Euroscepticism in an Irish context, the following chapter will involve several elements. The first section will discuss the very high level of support and the significant lower level of enthusiasm in Ireland. The difference between the two is that support seems to be linked to economic integration whereas enthusiasm seems to be linked to political integration. The second section will examine the strengthened sense
of national identity in Ireland. Euroscepticism seems to be the result of the increased sense of national belonging. The third section will therefore take a closer look at this sentiment in an Irish context. The fourth section will deal with the playing field of a referendum in Ireland and discuss what the change in attitude meant for the 2008 referendum campaign. Furthermore, this last section will take a look at the level of knowledge in Ireland as this is a decisive factor in the playing field of a referendum.

5.1 Support and enthusiasm
There is a tendency to only examine support when describing the Irish-European relationship, but several Eurobarometer analyses remark that if one wants to understand the paradox behind the rejections of treaties in Ireland, it is important to consider the level of enthusiasm as well (Sinnott, 2001, October, European Commission, 2008a, July).

5.1.1 Support
Support is measured through two main indicators in Eurobarometers. The first indicator is the ‘membership indicator’. The ‘membership indicator’ shows the percentage of Irish people who feel that membership is a ‘good thing’ for Ireland. The second indicator is the ‘benefits indicator’. The ‘benefits indicator’ shows the percentage of Irish people who feel that Ireland has ‘benefited’ from membership (European Commission, 2008a, July).

At the time of the first referendum on the Nice Treaty, the Irish were highly positive of EU membership (European Commission, 2001, October). 72 percent viewed membership of the EU as a ‘good thing’, and 83 percent believed that Ireland had ‘benefited’ from membership of the (European Commission, 2001, October). The overall approval of Ireland’s membership measured through the ‘membership indicator’ is high, but on average 10 percent lower than the level of support manifested by the ‘benefits indicator’ (Sinnott, 2003, 26 February). The figures for 2002 in regards to support were very similar. 74 percent viewed membership as a ‘good thing’, and 82 percent found that Ireland had ‘benefited’ from membership. The picture was to a great extent the same in 2008 as it had been in 2001 and 2002. 73 percent found membership a ‘good thing’, and 82 believed that Ireland had ‘benefited’ from joining the EU, (European Commission, 2008a, July).

Support of the EU appears to be closely linked to the economic progress seen in Ireland partly due to and during membership of the EU. This argument requires a closer look at the development of both support and funding since the 1980’s. Ireland has received close to €60 billion in funding from the EU since accession in 1973 (European Commission, 2008, 19 July). This is often viewed as the main reason why the Irish are highly supportive of the EU.
In the 1980’s when economic effects of membership, such as massive direct funding, were still not obvious in Ireland, support for the EU was low. Ireland lagged behind the Union as a whole when it came to support for European integration. However, in 1987 the Irish attitude to integration started to climb and had by the early 1990’s out passed the level of support in the Union as a whole. Support for the EU increased dramatically with the rise of the Celtic Tiger, denoting unprecedented growth, and the obvious signs of benefit from EU funding. The gap only got wider in the 1990’s when the average support for the EU declined in the Union as a whole, but continued to increase in Ireland (A Taoiseach in trouble, 2008, 27 November; European Commission, 2002, 11 October).

Ireland has gone from being a very poor Member State to being the second wealthiest when examining Gross Domestic Product (GDP) figures. When Ireland joined the EC, the Irish GDP was 66 percent of the EC average. In 2008, the Irish GDP was approximately 140 percent of the EU average. This made the Irish GDP the second highest in the EU only surpassed by Luxembourg (Sinnott, 2003, 26 February; Eurostat news release, 2007, 17 December). Support for EU membership remained high in 2008 as economic benefits of the EU were still very apparent, although the Irish were beginning to express concern for future economic progress (European Commission, 2008a, July). In summary, the Irish had experienced a positive and drastic economic development partly due to and during EU membership. Proportionately to economic growth, Irish support for membership increased from the mid 1990’s to present time.

5.1.2 Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm is another measure in Eurobarometers. Enthusiasm expresses commitment to the EU and is measured through what is known as the ‘dissolution indicator’. The question asked is ‘what would you feel if the EU were scrapped?’ (European Commission, 2008a, July). Figures for enthusiasm are much lower than the figures for support. Figures for enthusiasm were proportionally linked to the figures for support until the mid 1990’s. When support started to increase at the same time as Ireland became a wealthier country, the figure for enthusiasm started to decline. Enthusiasm in Ireland did not climb proportionately to economic growth as seen with support in the 1990’s. Instead, the gap between support and enthusiasm widened.

Today, the Irish are far from as committed to the EU as they are supportive of membership (European Commission, 2008a, July). It must be mentioned that enthusiasm in Ireland is high compared to other Member States, but that the issue in Ireland in connection with referenda is that enthusiasm has always been significantly lower compared to general support for membership (Sinnott, 2003, 26 February).
In 2001 just prior to the first Nice Treaty referendum, people had become more indifferent to than enthusiastic about the existence of the EU. The level of enthusiasm was very similar to the level in the late 1980’s. To the question ‘what would you feel if the EU were scrapped?’ 44 percent answered that they would feel very sorry whereas 54 percent would feel indifferent or did not know (European Commission, 2008b, July; European Commission, 2002, 11 October). In 2002, the figures had evened out slightly. 48 percent would feel very sorry if the EU were scrapped compared to 49 percent who would be indifferent or did not know (Sinnott, 200, 26 February). The general picture in Ireland at the time of the Nice Treaty referenda was hence a picture of a significantly lower level of enthusiasm compared to support and a high level of indifference. People had become agnostic (Sinnott, 2001, October).

In 2004, 43 percent felt indifference compared to 52 percent who would be sorry to see the EU dissolve (European Commission, 2008a, July), and enthusiasm had increased and indifference decreased slightly. Unfortunately, the Eurobarometer stopped measuring enthusiasm through the ‘dissolution indicator’ in 2004. The following can therefore only be an assumption based on the available data and reflections from 2008 following the referendum.

Enthusiasm would most likely not have been much higher, if higher at all, in 2008 compared to 2001 due to the drastic increase of the no vote in the Lisbon Treaty referendum. The level of indifference would most likely have been lower in 2008 compared to 2001 and 2002 as more people turned out to vote in 2008. The assumption above is based on the observation from 2002 that a low level of enthusiasm and a high level of indifference, as seen around Nice 1, is a strong indication of a low turnout (Sinnott, 2003, 26 February), but turnout was relatively high in Ireland in 2008. Indifference could therefore not have been as high in 2008 as in 2001. A higher level of enthusiasm and a lower level of indifference indicates that turn out will be higher as seen in Nice 2 (Sinnott, 2003, 26 February), but the result of the referendum in 2008 did not illustrate an increase in enthusiasm. On the contrary, the no side grew. As stated above, it can only be an assumption that both enthusiasm and indifference would have been lower in 2008. The result can also reflect the campaign which again is influenced by other elements.

Without assuming too much, it could be argued that enthusiasm for the EU would most likely still be significantly lower compared to support in 2008 considering the latest figures for enthusiasm in 2004 and the result of the Lisbon Treaty referendum. This assumption is backed by findings in the Government report made following the rejection in 2008.
To the question 'In general, does the European Union conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?’, 37 percent of the yes voters participating in the Government survey stated that they had a very positive view on the EU. The corresponding figure for no voters was 11 percent. The rather small difference between the two figures in a very EU positive country leaves no room for complacency in a campaign” (Millward Brown IMS, 2008, September). The degree of EU enthusiasm expressed in the Government survey reflected the same view found in the Eurobarometers until 2004: The figure for EU enthusiasm was much lower than the figure for support.

In order to underline the argument above, the dissertation will in the following section discuss another evident reason that can support the main argument in this chapter, namely the sense of national belonging.

5.2 Increased sense of national belonging
The dissertation will in the following take a closer look at the strong Irish national identity which was examined in the previous chapter. Evidently, the Irish claimed to be more Irish than European in 2008 than they did in 2001 and especially in 2002 (European Commission, 2008a, July). When enthusiasm was decreasing, the sense of national belonging was simultaneously increasing. The pro-integrationist side in Ireland had slimmed down by 2008.

In the words of the acclaimed historian Foster, this section of the chapter on changed attitude towards European integration will argue that ‘the underlying resentment of European integration on other than economic matters previously apparent in some leftist and Republican quarters persisted through the Tiger years and eventually rebounded with force when the populace rejected the Nice Treaty by referendum - a severe shock to the system’ (Foster, 2007, p.21). In other words, the resentment towards European political integrationist elements emerged around the turn of the millennium in more established circles of political life. The underlying resentment of European integration was expressed at the same time as an increase in the sense of national belonging was detected and seemed to increase at the cost of enthusiasm. The sense of national belonging was, as mentioned, even stronger in 2008 compared to 2001 and 2002.

In 2001, 55 percent of the Irish claimed to feel Irish only, 39 felt Irish and European. These figures stressed a strong national identity compared to a European identity. 3 percent felt European and Irish, and a mere 2 percent

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"The overall figure expressing a very positive view was 17 percent. 10 percent responded that they have a very negative view on the EU and 63 have a fairly positive view on the EU (Millward Brown IMS, 2008, September 2008)."
felt European only. The picture was slightly different in 2002 when 47 percent felt Irish only, 43 percent felt Irish and European, 4 percent felt European and Irish and 3 felt European only. The Irish embraced a European identity more in 2002 compared to 2001 (Sinnott, 2003, 26 February).

The situation had changed by 2008. The national identity and sense of belonging to Ireland had become strengthened. The question asked in the 2008 Eurobarometer prior to the Lisbon Treaty referendum was slightly different to the question asked in 2001 and 2002, but it painted a picture of a stronger sense of national belonging in Ireland. 59 percent were very attached to Ireland compared to only 10 percent who were very attached to the EU. 34 percent were fairly attached to Ireland and about the same figure, 38 percent, were fairly attached to the EU. 4 percent were not very attached to Ireland, but a staggering 30 percent were not very attached to the EU. Only 2 percent were not at all attached to Ireland whereas in comparison 16 percent were not at all attached to the EU. The second question asked regarded the future sense of identity. 59 percent of the Irish expected to feel exclusively Irish in the future (European Commission, 2008a, July). The Irish emerged as the members of the EU who were the most attached to their national identity only out passed by the very eurosceptic British (European Commission, 2008a, July).

The data above suggests that it was never going to be easy to ratify the political integrationist Lisbon Treaty when the Irish were highly committed to their national identity and only half of the population felt some sort of attachment to the EU (European Commission, 2008a, 26 February; Sinnott, 2008, p.13). This development had been on its way since the mid to late 1990’s where the Irish had become increasingly more interested in protecting independence. The figures for protecting independence compared to favouring full integration increased from the late 1990’s to the Nice-Treaty referenda (Sinnott, 2003, 26 February). An increase in the desire to protect independence and a strengthened sense of national identity was after the result of the Lisbon Treaty considered a platform for euroscepticism in Ireland (Sinnott, 2008, p.13, Laffan, 2008, p.13; Leahy, 2008, 15 June). It is important to remember that the Irish were still highly supportive of EU membership and hence economic integration, but that the Irish had become increasingly more aware of protecting independence and thereby less interested in strengthening the political integrationist element of the EU.

5.3 Closer to Boston than Berlin
Why was the debated sentiment, euroscepticism, winning ground in Ireland? A likely reason can be found in the fact that Ireland - as previously argued a strong nation - had benefited enormously economically from EU membership, and this was changing. The 2007 - 2013 EU budget indicated that Ireland would
become a net contributor during this period (Miller, 2008, 30 July). Money would flow from Ireland to Brussels, instead of from Brussels to Ireland. Ireland’s relation with the EU was changing.

The future economic benefits through direct funding seemed to decrease at the turn of the millennium pushing political aims of European integration into the limelight. Focus of European integration appeared to be more on the political integrationist element of the EU than on the economic integrationist element, and political integration does not necessarily enjoy support if there is no carrot at the end of the political integration stick in the shape of funding - especially not in a Member State where close to 60 percent do not feel European (European Commission, 2008a, July).

In order to underline euroscepticism in an Irish context, the dissertation will turn to two Irish female politicians. Minister for Health Mary Harney was not the reason for this sentiment, but she expressed Foster’s claim and the discussed results of the Eurobarometers above in a clear manner. Harney together with former minister Síle de Valera came to identify and personify the new Irish electoral opinion in regards to European integration which was evident in the 2008 referendum.

21 July 2000, Minister Harney gave a speech at a meeting of the American Bar Association in the Law Society of Ireland in Dublin. The speech indicated the transformation Ireland had experienced due to and during its membership of the EU. Furthermore, it expressed several tendencies partly explaining how the Irish could embrace European integration and reject a treaty at the same time - be supportive, but not enthusiastic. The speech illustrated how the Irish had been seeking both west and east. Turning to the liberal American business model rather than the social-democratic European model is considered a decisive factor in the rise of the Celtic Tiger. It is this turn that Mary Harney referred to in her speech.

‘Geography has placed this country on the edge of the European continent. One of our most significant achievements as an independent nation was our entry, almost 30 years ago, into what is now the European Union. Today, we have strong social, economic and political ties with the EU. As Irish people our relationships with the United States and the European Union are complex. Geographically we are closer to Berlin than Boston. Spiritually we are probably closer to Boston than Berlin’ (Aldous, 2007, p.185).
The main purpose of the speech was that Mary Harney wanted a real debate on Ireland’s relation to the EU. The economic reality had, as mentioned, changed dramatically since entering the EC in 1973. It was time to readdress the aims of membership as these were no longer as bound to economic progress as previously.

‘There are some who want to create a more centralised Europe, a federal Europe, with key political economic decisions being taken at Brussels level. I don’t think that that would be in Ireland’s interest and I don’t think it would be in Europe’s interest either... I believe in a Europe of independent states, not a United States of Europe’ (Aldous, 2007, p.187).

Eamon de Valera’s granddaughter and former minister, Síle de Valera, held a speech at Boston College the same year as Mary Harney gave her notorious speech. The same resentment and concern for a stronger centralised Union as seen in Harney’s speech was one of the main elements of de Valera’s speech. National sovereignty and the notion of a national identity were more apparent in de Valera’s speech compared to the speech given by Mary Harney. De Valera’s speech explains the paradox witnessed in 2001 and 2008 well.

‘Participation in the European Union has been good for Ireland. The Union has worked well. But it is not the cornerstone of what our nation is and should be...But we have found that directives and regulations agreed in Brussels can often seriously impinge on our identity, culture and traditions. The bureaucracy in Brussels does not always respect the complexity and sensitivities of Member States... At present, the Irish government is actively promoting policies of decentralisation. In the European Union, the opposite is taking place with the push towards closer integration. It is a move, I would not personally favour. It is not necessarily in our interests.’ (De Valera, 2000, 18 September).

Euroscepticism was on the rise at the time of the first Nice Treaty referendum. This sentiment must be considered strengthened and a permanent element of Irish-European relations at the time of the Lisbon Treaty referendum as the sense of national belonging had increased at the cost of enthusiasm and as the no side grew with 300,000 votes in the referendum. Euroscepticism was stronger in 2008 in Ireland (Laffan, 2008, p.13).
The result in 2008 therefore rightly or wrongly seemed as ‘the Irish falling out of love with the European Union because the money has run out’ (Cooney, 2008, p.22). It was probably more because the nuances of Irish-European relations had not been clear. The Irish were not ungrateful (Smyth, 2008, p.11). As examined in the previous chapter, the newly gained economic prosperity gave the Irish confidence in Ireland as a nation and thereby the confidence to reject the Lisbon Treaty (Taking stock of our No, 2008, p.3). It has often been argued that Ireland’s independence and sovereignty was strengthened by the accession to the EU, as they would sit at the same table and negotiate on equal terms with the United Kingdom, and because Ireland became economic independent from the British through membership (Laffan & Tonra, 2006, p.430; Laffan, 2008. p.13).

5.4 Playing field
The difference between the very high support and the significantly lower level of enthusiasm creates the playing field for referenda. This is the reason why campaigns matter in Ireland, and why the pro-treaty side cannot take ratification of a proposed treaty for granted in a referendum campaign. The low level of enthusiasm combined with a poor yes side campaign can be disastrous for the pro-treaty side in Ireland as seen in 2001. The levels of support and enthusiasm were more or less the same in 2002, but a more energised yes campaign helped mobilise the electorate (Sinnott, 2003, 26 February). In 2008, the no side campaign was more convincing than the weaker yes side campaign, and in the described playing field, this can mean rejection (Garry, Marsh & Sinnott, 2005, p.16).

In 2008, euroscepticism was an important element of this playing field. The no side appealed to this scepticism with their arguments as examined in the chapter on the myriad of issues. Sovereignty was an important overall issue in a campaign in 2008 as 59 percent of people felt exclusively Irish and due to the scepticism towards political integration. The higher lack of understanding of the Lisbon Treaty was an essential part of the playing field between the high support and the low enthusiasm in 2008 as this allowed a campaign to develop in a given direction (Sinnott, 2008, p16).
5.4.1 Higher lack of understanding
The level of understanding merits detailed analysis as referenda results seem to be dependent on the electorate’s understanding of a proposed treaty, and because it above all other reasons has been the number one reason for rejecting two treaties in Ireland so far.” Furthermore, Sinnott has indicated that the lower the level of understanding is the lower the level of enthusiasm is likely to be (Sinnott, 2008, 30 January; European Commission, 2008a, July).

The lesson learned in connection to lack of understanding in the Nice Treaty referenda was cemented in the Lisbon Treaty referendum. The higher the lack of understanding is, the higher the chances of rejection are (European Commission, 2008b, July; Sinnott, 2008, p.17; Garry, Marsh & Sinnott, 2005, p.203), and the percentage of people who did not feel informed was generally higher in the Lisbon Treaty referendum compared to the Nice Treaty referenda (Sinnott, 2003, 26 February; Sinnott, 2008, p.16; Sinnott, 2008, p.17).

If people feel confident in their knowledge on a proposed treaty they tend to back the treaty. People were twice as likely to back The Lisbon Treaty if they felt that they had some understanding of the subject. 66 percent of those who felt they had a good understanding of the Treaty, intended to vote yes, while 27 percent of these voters intended to vote no. None with a good understanding said they would abstain from voting, and only 8 percent had not made up their mind.” If one takes a look at the extreme end of the poll, out of those who did not know what the treaty was at all about 10 percent intended to vote yes, the same percent intended to vote no, 15 percent intended not to vote and a staggering 65 percent did not know how to vote. This will increase the chances of rejection. In other words, only one in ten who felt that they had no knowledge on the Lisbon Treaty intended to vote yes (Sinnott, 2008, p.17).

52 percent stated lack of understanding as the main reason for abstaining from voting in the Lisbon Treaty referendum, and 42 percent stated lack of information as the main reason for abstention.” The two issues, lack of understanding and lack of information, were not separated in the Nice Treaty referendum results and are also viewed as being closely connected in the Lisbon Treaty referendum result. Hence, this dissertation will in the following not separate the two as both terms express a lack of understanding. 44 percent stated lack of understanding/lack of information as the main reason for abstaining from voting in the first Nice Treaty referendum, and 26 percent had abstained from voting due to lack of understanding/lack of information in the second Nice Treaty referendum. More people abstained from voting due to lack of understanding/lack of information in 2008. Nearly a quarter, 22 percent, of those voting no in 2008 based their decision on lack of understanding/lack of information. This figure was lower than in Nice 1 (39 percent) and higher than in Nice 2 (14 percent) (Sinnott, 2001, October; Sinnott, 2003, 26 February; European Commission, 2008b, July)

The difference between knowledge and voting intentions was not of great significance when it came to voters who found that they had a good understanding of the Treaty and the voters who understood some of the issues, but not all. The corresponding figures were 62 percent (yes), 24 percent (no), two percent (abstention) percent and 12 percent (don’t know) (Sinnott, 2008, p.17). The difference was significant moving to the next category in the poll. People who were only vaguely aware of the issues showed a greater resistance to vote yes compared to the first two groups and a higher chance for being undecided voters. 39 percent intended to vote yes while 24 percent intended to vote no, 2 percent did not intend to vote and 36 percent did not know how to vote.
Several polls during the Lisbon Treaty referendum made it clear that the electorate stood with the constitutional power to decide on a matter they did not have a great deal of knowledge on. The Referendum Commission, which is a public body that oversees the referendum, made a survey in April which indicated that the Commission as well as the yes side were standing in front of a serious challenge (Healy, 2008, p.6; Hennessy, 2008a, p.9). 5 percent of voters believed that they understood the proposed Treaty very well or quite well, 15 percent understood it to some extent while 80 percent did not understand it particularly well or did not understand it at all (Sinnott, 2008, p.17).

People were less confident regarding their knowledge on the proposed treaty in 2008 compared to 2001 and 2002. Ten percent of people felt that their knowledge improved in the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign. This figure was much lower compared to the second Nice Treaty referendum where 25 percent felt that their knowledge improved (Sinnott, 2008, p.17).

The report issues by the Irish Government in September following the rejection of the Lisbon Treaty confirmed all of the above. The report indicated that lack of knowledge was a decisive threat to turnout and the yes vote (Millward Brown IMS, 2008, September).

5.5 Chapter conclusion
Support is judged to be connected to economic integration while enthusiasm is judged to be connected to political integration. The Irish have since the late 1990’s been highly positive of the EU, but the Irish have simultaneously been much less enthusiastic. At the same time as enthusiasm declined and support climbed, the sense of national belonging increased and was stronger in 2008 compared to 2001 and 2002. It is the significantly lower level of enthusiasm and a stronger sense of national belonging that can serve as part of the explanation to the paradox that Ireland rejected the Lisbon Treaty in 2008. As mentioned, it is in the difference between support and enthusiasm a referendum campaign must be played out. The playing field in Ireland makes campaigns important and gives no room for complacency, especially for the yes side.

The Irish attitude to the EU is changing as a result of a changed economic situation in Ireland. The Irish expressed a concern of European integration on other than economic elements at the beginning of this millennium which has become strengthened in 2008. The result of the Lisbon Treaty indicated that Euroscepticism is a permanent element in the attitude towards European integration in Ireland.
The level of knowledge is an important element in the playing field, and the reason why there is no room for complacency, especially for the yes side, is that if the Irish electorate express a low level of knowledge, the more likely it is that they will reject a treaty. The level of understanding was lower in 2008 compared to 2001 and 2002.

The result of the referendum reflected that the yes side did not manage to combine the European political conviction of the Irish people with the Irish identity in a convincing manner, and the no side argued that the two would clash with the Lisbon Treaty in a successful manner through the use of a series of issues seen from an Irish perspective.

6.0 Conclusion
The Lisbon Treaty was the second treaty to be rejected by the Irish electorate. The Lisbon Treaty referendum was different on a crucial set of issues compared to the Nice Treaty.

The change of attitude towards European integration had clearly changed in Ireland in 2008 and was the most prominent variable from the Nice Treaty referenda. The Irish are very supportive of European integration which can be linked proportionately to economic progress partly due to and during membership of the EU, but they are much less enthusiastic about integration. Enthusiasm is linked to political integration, and the campaign in 2008 was very much about the perceived aims of political integration. The 2008 referendum result revealed a discrepancy between the electorate’s attitude to future European integration on the political integrationist element of EU co-operation and the perceived intentions of the Lisbon Treaty.

The result of the Lisbon Treaty referendum cemented tendencies observed in the Nice Treaty referenda and revealed different lessons learnt compared to 2001 and 2002. The main conclusion was that the euroscepticism was a permanent element in the referendum, and that this element dominated the playing field.

The no side took control of the playing field. With the emergence of Libertas, the no side had a broader appeal and more funding backing it in the Lisbon Treaty referendum campaign. This appeal was coherent with the changed attitude to European integration. The no side campaign was successful as it focused on concerns expressed by the electorate and the change of attitude. A campaign based on protection of national interests had a stronger appeal than a campaign based on past and general relations with the EU.
The yes side had difficulties setting the agenda mainly due to a change of Government in the beginning and other domestic affairs dominating in the end. The political vacuum that opened up due to the slow start to the yes side campaign was filled by the no side. As a consequence, the yes side was on the defensive side throughout the campaign rebutting no side arguments.

The Irish national identity is strong and was very apparent in the referendum campaign as the focus point of the campaign was to protect Irish sovereignty and national interest in European integration. Ireland is seen as having strengthened sovereignty through the economic development partly due to and during membership. The economic development has strengthened the Irish sense of national belonging, and this was felt threatened in the 2008 referendum campaign.

The slogan to vote no to ensure that Irish national interests are renegotiated was a clever slogan in a campaign where the electorate stressed a strong sense of national belonging and was not sure that their political convictions corresponded with the proposed treaty.

The electorate seemed more confused about the direction of the EU and had a lower level of understanding in the Lisbon Treaty campaign compared to the Nice Treaty campaigns. The vacuum referred to previously was hence wider. The low level of understanding was reflected in surveys and in the very large group of undecided voters. The undecided voters were convinced by the no side campaign and as a result, the no side grew to an extent never seen before in Ireland.

The yes side, especially the Irish Government, was left with another devastating defeat in a referendum on an EU treaty. Some lessons learned were similar to the lessons learned in the Nice Treaty referenda, but others were decisively different. The main challenge for the political establishment is to redefine Ireland’s relations with Europe if their visions are to correspond with the electorate’s visions in the future.
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