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**Euroscepticism in pro-European countries:
analysis of public euroscepticism in Ireland**

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TABLE OF CONTENT

1	INTRODUCTION	4
2	EUROSCEPTICISM: DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF THE PHENOMENON	10
2.1	Euroscepticism by Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak	11
2.2	Euroscepticism by Peter Kopecky and Cas Mudde	13
2.3	Euroscepticism by Christopher Flood and Simon Usherwood	15
2.4	Euroscepticism by Catharina Sørensen	17
3	CASE STUDY: IRELAND AND THE EUROPEAN UNION	19
3.1	Opting for the European integration`	19
3.2	Irish membership in the EU	22
3.2.1	Irish 1 st NO to the European Union (Treaty of Nice)	29
3.2.2	Irish 2 nd NO to the European Union (Treaty of Lisbon)	32
3.3.	Ireland and the Euro zone crisis	35
4	ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC EUROSCEPTICISM IN IRELAND BY SØRENSEN'S 4 DIMENSIONS	40
4.1	Economic euroscepticism	40
4.2	Sovereignty-based euroscepticism	44
4.3	Democratic euroscepticism	51
4.4	Social euroscepticism	54
4.5	Hard euroscepticism	58
4.6	Sum up of the analytical part	61
5	CONCLUSION	64
6	BIBLIOGRAPHY	67
7	APPENDIX	73

LIST OF TABLES AND GRAPHS

TABLES

Table 1: Flood and Usherwood's categorization of positions towards the EU or its specific aspect(s).....	16
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GRAPHS

Graph 1: Perception of no benefits from the EU membership.....	41
Graph 2: Against European economic and monetary union with one single currency, the euro.....	43
Graph 3: Perception of the EU as a waste of money.....	44
Graph 4: Against an EU-Government.....	45
Graph 5: EU as a threat to national identity and culture.....	47
Graph 6a: National level of decision making, 2001.....	49
Graph 6b: National level of decision making, 2011.....	49
Graph 7a: Preference of national government in tackling economic crisis.....	50
Graph 7b: Preference of the EU in tackling economic crisis.....	50
Graph 8: Dissatisfaction with democracy at the EU level.....	52
Graph 9: Perception that one's voice is not being counted in the EU.....	54
Graph 10: EU as a threat to social benefits.....	56
Graph 11: EU should put more emphasis on social issues.....	56
Graph 12: EU membership is a bad thing.....	58
Graph 13: EU is going in wrong direction.....	60

1. INTRODUCTION

The occurrence of the Euro zone crisis contributed significantly to euroscepticism spreading across the European continent. Europe has witnessed the emergence of frequent anti-European rhetoric by established political parties in various EU member states, episodes of noticeable disunity amongst European leaders when it comes to dealing with the crisis, as well as the rise of popularity of the new political parties with an anti-European agenda. In addition, the Eurobarometer data have reported growing dissatisfaction with the EU amongst European citizens, including the sharp decrease of trust in the European project. This considers not only the Euro zone member states, but also all other EU member states as well as the future EU members. Although public opinions towards the EU have demonstrated different phases in terms of the rising and falling trends of support, what strikes the most in the current situation is the observable trend of growing public euroscepticism in traditionally pro-European countries (Leonard et al., 2013; Debomy, 2011; Debomy, 2013). Considering these observations, the aim of this thesis is to explore the main pattern and dynamics of public euroscepticism in Ireland, as one of the countries that belongs to this group. The thesis will examine the Irish public euroscepticism over time, in order to be able to detect what triggers the sceptical attitudes towards the EU amongst Irish pro-European population, and thereby to indicate the predominant type of the phenomenon in the Irish case.

According to many authors, euroscepticism is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon (for example Sørensen, 2007; Vasilopoulou, 2013). Regardless of the widespread usage of the label, there is still no coherent definition or fine concept of euroscepticism in the academic community (ibid.). However, in line with the first definition, provided by Paul Taggart, Euroscepticism signifies both the categorical opposition and various critical positions towards the European integration project (Taggart, 1998).

In general, Euroscepticism might be examined from different perspectives, including the political party system, the media, the public opinion or the civil

society organizations perspective. The reason why the thesis focuses on public opinion goes in line with Hooghe and Marks' thesis of the end of citizens' so-called *permissive consensus* regarding European issues, which is being replaced by a *constraining dissensus* (Hooghe, Marks, 2008). In its first decades, the European integration process was largely elite-driven, and followed by unquestioned and passive support from large part of the population. However, since the early 1990s citizens' became more active when it comes to European issues. This was the case especially because of closer European co-operation in affairs other than market integration, touching more upon traditional nation-state competences, thereby having more implications on the ordinary citizenry (ibid.). Consequently, the European issues became more salient amongst the general public, demonstrating also no hesitance in stopping further European integration if citizens disagree with the plans and proposals at the stake. This was greatly exemplified in the case of defeated EU referenda in Denmark, Ireland, France, or the Netherlands. It appeared clear that, when it comes to the European politics, political leaders have to ensure popular endorsement. Therefore it is largely acknowledged by politicians and the academic community that public opinion cannot be ignored anymore. On this basis, the thesis believes that it is especially relevant to examine the eurosceptic public attitudes, investigating more the grounds and developments of this phenomenon.

When it comes to the analysis of public euroscepticism in pro-European countries, Ireland appears as an interesting case study for several reasons. First of all, Ireland has gained a reputation of being exemplary European very soon after the country's accession to the EU. Ireland was a country that was able to take advantage of many aspects of the EU membership, which have also contributed to its successful economic development, making the Irish case the European example of success. Ireland has a proven reputation as the skilful holder of the EU Presidencies, with the promotion of the common European goals on its agenda confirming its *communitarian* stance (Gouez, 2013; Laffan, 2003). Also, according to the Eurobarometer surveys, Ireland is always at the top when it comes to popular support of the EU membership or citizen's perceptions of the

country's benefits from it. Second, notwithstanding this highly supportive profile, Irish citizens have voted "no" on initial EU referenda on both the Nice (2001) and Lisbon Treaties (2008). This might be a sign of the Irish changing relations with the EU and possible emergence of euroscepticism amongst Irish citizens. Interestingly, both Treaties were endorsed on the repeated referenda, although they were not revised. In addition, the third reason is that Ireland is a referendum country. Thus, Ireland is a good case for examining public euroscepticism due to its constitutional requirement on holding referendum whenever a new EU Treaty is negotiated. This allows better analysis of citizens' attitudes towards the EU. Also, it demonstrates decisive impact of the Irish public opinion on the European integration process. Fourth, Ireland is an EU member state for 41 years. This allows analysis from a historical perspective, enabling the evaluation of the developments and variations of possible types of Irish euroscepticism over time. Finally, Ireland appears as a good case given its experience of the current Euro crisis. In particular, Ireland was hit very badly by the crisis, which was in the Irish case mostly "home-made" due to its banking system. As regards to that, Ireland became a part of the EU/IMF bailout program. However, the country was able to come out from the program and to return to economic growth very quickly, becoming once again a European success story. Considering that, it seems interesting to examine public attitudes towards the EU during the crisis (especially considering EU/IMF austerity measures) as well as after the crisis, and to investigate whether or not those events have triggered eurosceptical feelings amongst Irish population.

The thesis will analyze the public euroscepticism in Ireland according to the typology developed by Catharina Sørensen. This author was selected because of its focus on conception of the very nature of the euroscepticism, and primary interest in public euroscepticism. Based on a comprehensive review of the existing academic literature on euroscepticism, the author has developed four ideal types of (public) euroscepticism. In particular, Sørensen concludes that euroscepticism may have economic, sovereignty-based, democratic or political/social character (Sørensen, 2007). The typology was further empirically

tested and confirmed by analysis of euroscepticism in the case of the UK, Denmark and France. Also, the author's work is one of the most recent works in the study of euroscepticism. The thesis believes that the typology developed by Sørensen is well thought-through and applicable to any European country. Moreover, the author developed a useful methodological framework for examination of the public euroscepticism, which will be also used in the thesis. In particular, Sørensen has selected specific questions from Eurobarometer surveys as indicators for analysis of respective dimensions of euroscepticism.

Therefore, the empirical analysis conducted in the thesis will rely on Eurobarometer data. The Eurobarometer is the main opinion monitoring instrument of the European Commission. It was developed by Jacques-René Rabier, the former Director-General of the Press and Information Service of the European Communities with the aim to gather more information on citizens' opinion. The data obtained serve as the guidance for the EU information policy, but also to provide more insight on opinions shared amongst citizens of particular European country. The first Eurobarometer public opinion survey and corresponding report was conducted in 1974. Since then, Standard Eurobarometer surveys are conducted on a regular basis, twice a year. Apart from the standard Eurobarometer survey, which is the main tool in examining public opinion, there are also Special and Flash Eurobarometer surveys. The Special Eurobarometer surveys are related to in-depth thematic surveys, while Flash Eurobarometer surveys are ad hoc thematic surveys, conducted with the aim of getting fast results (Signorelli, 2012).

The thesis will use data provided from the Standard Eurobarometer polls. The polls and data provided are valuable materials for examination of public opinion on European issues comparatively and over time. Apart from the questions proposed by Sørensen, the thesis will also introduce and examine additional Eurobarometer questions as indicators for the specific eurosceptic dimension, in order to be able to follow recent developments in public attitudes. Although the Eurobarometer questionnaires tend to ask the same set of question over time in

order to follow trends (Signorelli, 2012) in European public opinion, this is not always the case. In particular, the question may change or not being asked anymore, depending on developments in the Union. Although this might be taken as the advantage, considering the possibility of following most recent trends, it also might be disadvantage if one tries to follow particular patterns in long-term perspective. However, the thesis believes that this obstacle could be bypassed by choosing another similar question offered in the survey, which allows trace of the same phenomenon.

Based on the considerations stated above, the thesis wishes to analyze and explain the main pattern and dynamics of public euroscepticism in Ireland. The thesis's point of departure is based on several assumptions. Given the Irish reputation of „good European“ and its pro-European population as per Eurobarometer data, the thesis assumes that the levels of euroscepticism for any given dimension will demonstrate lower scores as compared to the EU average. Also, given the Irish rejection of the two EU Treaties, which were mostly related to the new EU decision-making processes and institutional set-up, the thesis assumes that the sovereignty-based dimension of the euroscepticism will play an important role in the Irish case.

The structure of the thesis will go in line with the following order. After the Introduction (Chapter one), the thesis presents a theoretical framework of the concept of euroscepticism in the Chapter two. In addition, the most widely known definitions will be presented, including Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak's „hard“ and „soft“ euroscepticism, Peter Kopecký and Cas Mudde's categories of attitudes related to European integration, and Christopher Flood and Simon Usherwood's list of positions taken in relation to the integration process. Finally, Catharina Sørensen's typology of public euroscepticism (economic, sovereignty, democratic and socio/politically based euroscepticism) will be explained. This concept will be further used in examination of the euroscepticism in the case study. The third Chapter of the thesis provides a historical overview of the Ireland's experience as an EU member state, highlighting the main events that have shaped Irish relations with the EU. Following this presentation, the fourth

Chapter provides the analysis of the public euroscepticism in Ireland. More precisely, each of Sørensen's four types of euroscepticism will be tested in the Irish case on the basis of the corresponding Eurobarometer data. In particular, specific questions from surveys will be used for each type, covering the whole period of Irish membership in the EU. The Chapter will conclude with a brief sum-up of the analytical part. Finally, the fifth Chapter provides main findings and concluding remarks of the thesis.

2. EUROSCEPTICISM: DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF THE PHENOMENON

According to many authors, Euroscepticism is seen as a relatively new term considering its first appearance in the mid-1980s. However, it seems that it became very quickly a buzz-word not only in political, but also in journalistic and popular discourse. The British origin of the term is widely acknowledged, as the reference to it was first found in an article of *The Time* in 1986 (Harmsen, Spiering, 2004: 15-16; Leconte, 2010: 3). Euroscepticism was first linked with the British reservations regarding the creation of the European common market, and later it has broadly signified British distinctiveness from the rest of Europe, as well as British opposition towards closer European co-operation (ibid.). This was also confirmed through the speech delivered by the UK's Prime Minister Thatcher at the College of Europe in 1988, widely known as the first political speech directly criticizing the course of the EU (Lecomte, 2010: 3; Usherwood, Startin, 2011). Nevertheless, it seems that Euroscepticism was not perceived as exclusively British phenomenon. *The Economist* has employed the term in 1992 to describe unfavorable public opinion towards the EU in Germany, when the country was requested to change its beer law in accordance with the Common market practices (McLaren, 2010: 391). Also, the term was largely popularized in Continental Europe following the process of the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. In addition, the academic community started to increasingly explore the phenomenon, especially in terms of its definition and conceptualization. Therefore, the aim of this Chapter is to present the main academic contributions to the study of Euroscepticism. In particular, several influential definitions of the phenomenon will be provided, in order to better understand its very nature.

2.1. Euroscepticism by Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak

In the academic literature, the first definition of the term euroscepticism was provided by Paul Taggart in his Article “A touchstone of dissent: Euroscepticism in contemporary Western European party system” (Taggart, Szczerbiak, 2008). According to the author, the concept may be broadly understood as “*the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration*” (Taggart, 1998: 365). Also, the author notes that “*all opponents of the EU are, at least, sceptical but not all sceptics are opponents*” (ibid.: 365). Taggart emphasizes that Euroscepticism encompasses different attitudes towards the EU. Namely, he indicates an anti-integration position that opposes the key ideas of European integration, including the EU, and a position which is not necessarily against European integration, but which contains sceptical views regarding the EU. In particular, one could oppose the EU because of its inclusiveness, in a sense that it tries to bring together too diverse elements that could not be consolidated. On the other hand, one could oppose the EU due to its exclusiveness, in a geographical or social sense (ibid.: 365-366).

This initially provided definition was further developed by the author in cooperation with his colleague Aleks Szczerbiak. This was done by those two researches in order to be able to comparatively analyze the phenomenon in European political systems. In particular, they have introduced distinction between “hard” and “soft” euroscepticism. According to the authors, hard euroscepticism refers to the categorical opposition regarding one’s country EU membership, seeking withdrawal from the EU or having policies irreconcilable with the logic of the EU. On the other hand, soft euroscepticism indicates qualified opposition to the integration process regarding certain EU policies or considering national interests (Taggart, Szczerbiak, 2008: 240-241). Although envisaged as a working definition, the hard and soft distinction was widely accepted and used in other academic analyses. However, the concept was also criticized. As acknowledged by the authors, the most constructive critique

regarding their definition was provided by Kopecky and Mudde. In particular, those two authors have argued that “soft” euroscepticism was too broadly defined, and more generally, they stressed that one’s opposition to the EU membership does not necessarily indicate opposition to the European integration project (ibid.: 241). In addition, Taggart and Szczerbiak have modified their concept, stating that

“Hard Euroscepticism might be defined as principled opposition to the project of European integration as embodied in the EU, in other words, based on the ceding or transfer of powers to supranational institution such as the EU“

while

„Soft Euroscepticism might be re-defined as when there is not a principled objection to the European integration project of transferring powers to a supranational body such as the EU, but there is opposition to the EU's current or future planned trajectory based on the further extension of competencies that the EU is planning to make“ (Taggart, Szczerbiak, 2008: 247-248).

Finally, the authors conclude that the study of Euroscepticism and its implications could contribute to better understanding of politics in general, given that it reflects public disapproval of both, political institutions and elites. Therefore, it could be used as a tool to investigate better the elements of the wider sceptical public attitudes (Taggart, Szczerbiak, 2008: 260).

Furthermore, the authors have also referred to the works of Kopecky and Mudde (presented below), and Flood (presented below), commenting their classifications of (party-based) euroscepticism. Kopecky and Mudde (2002) have elaborated four ideal types of possible (party) position towards Europe (i.e. *Euroenthusiasts*, *Eurosceptics*, *Europragmatists*, and *Eurorejects*) by distinguishing general support / opposition to the European integration and support / opposition to the EU. When observing this conceptualization, Taggart and Szczerbiak stated that the categories of “Eurosceptics” and “Eurorejectionists” are well thought and even more applicable than their distinctions, whereas they found the definition of “Europragmatists” illogical, and the one of “Euroenthusiasts” too inclusive.

Therefore, their main criticism account for the need of more nuanced categories if one wants to classify both, opposition and support to the European integration. In addition, the authors proposed re-formulation of Kopecky and Mudde's classification in the way that only opposition towards the European integration should remain included and elaborated (Taggart, Szczerbiak, 2008). As regards to Flood's (2002) six categories of (party) positions on Europe (*EU - rejectionist / revisionist / minimalist / gradualist / reformist / maximalist*), the authors have emphasized that typology is rather too detailed but also the fact that some political parties may be listed in several categories. In addition, the authors found that the classification as proposed by Flood causes difficulties when it comes to the operationalization (ibid.).

2.2. Euroscepticism by Peter Kopecky and Cas Mudde

In the article "The Two Sides of Euroscepticism: Party Positions on European Integration in East Central Europe", Kopecky and Mudde introduce a new conceptualization of opposition to Europe in order to better define what exactly euroscepticism is (Kopecky and Mudde, 2002: 299). The authors make clear distinction between support for the European integration (i.e. *diffuse* support), distinguishing the Europhiles from the Europhobes, and support for the European Union (i.e. *specific* support), making division between the EU-optimists and the EU-pessimists. More specifically, Europhiles support key ideas on which process of European integration is based, and embodied in the EU. On the other hand, Europhobes are the ones who do not support one or more key ideas related to the European integration, including the EU. Furthermore, the EU-optimists demonstrate support for the current state of the EU, as well as its future developments. On the contrary, the EU-pessimists do not share this attitude towards the EU, neither in the given time nor in future consideration, remaining pessimistic regarding this issue (ibid.: 300-302).

By combining those distinctions, the authors have developed four categories of possible (party) position on Europe. To start with, combination of the Europhile

and the EU-optimist positions makes *Euroenthusiasts*, featuring both, support for the ideas of European integration and the EU. The combination of the Europhile and the EU-pessimist positions creates *Eurosceptics*, who are in favor of the ideas of European integration but remain pessimistic regarding the ways those ideas are presented in the EU. Another combination includes Europhobe and EU-pessimist positions, creating *Eurorejects* who oppose both, the ideas of the European integration and the EU. Moreover, combination of Europhobe and EU-optimist positions makes *Europragmatists*, featuring indifference towards the ideas of the European integration but support to the EU, based on the cost benefit analysis from the EU membership (ibid.: 302-303).

However, the authors have emphasized that their categories are only ideal types, and that in reality euroscepticism may have different forms, depending on the different perceptions of the European integration as well as the EU. Nevertheless, they believe that the main attribute of all eurosceptics is that they are europhiles. This means that regardless what eurosceptics oppose when it comes to the EU, they are always in favor of the European integration ideas (ibid.: 304). Another fact emphasized by the authors is that different positions, as outlined above, may only change according to the dimension *support to the EU*. This means the only possible shifts are from the Eurosceptics to the Euroenthusiasts and vice versa and/or from the Eurorejects to the Europragmatists and vice versa. This indicates, according to the authors, that support or opposition to the very *ideas* of the European integration are ideologically determined. On the other hand, when it comes to the support for the EU, authors underline the role of the party strategy as an important factor (ibid.: 319-320).

2.3. Euroscepticism by Christopher Flood and Simon Usherwood

In his work “Euroscepticism: A Problematic Concept“, Flood argues that Euroscepticism appears as the slippery phenomenon in the academic researches, which remained largely unclear (Flood, 2002). Therefore, he offers alternative definition, coupled with the new classification of positions towards the EU and its developments. To start with, Flood defines euroscepticism as

*„attitudes and opinions represented in discourses and behaviors (...) which express doubt as to the desirability **and/or** benefits **and/or** long-term viability of European **or/and** EU integration as an objective **or** in the general framework created so far **or** in some important aspects of that framework of institutions, processes and policies **and/or** as it is anticipated to occur in the future”* (Flood, 2002: 3)

However, later on the author has emphasized that the term euroscepticism actually signifies *EU*-scepticism. According to the author, no political party or other groups are generally against Europe in terms of co-operation between European states. However, they may oppose the EU as a form of co-operation (ibid.: 6). Also, Flood perceives *EU*-scepticism as purely negative concept, encompassing negative arguments by negatively analyzing particular dimensions of the EU. As some of the examples of the most popular arguments used by eurosceptics, he indicates objections regarding the EU’s over-centralization and technocracy, as well as lack of democratic credentials (ibid.: 8).

Furthermore, Flood considers that the hard / soft categories proposed by Targat and Szczerbiak are vague. He believes that the hard dimension does not allow distinction between one’s tendency to withdraw from the EU membership and one’s tendency to keep the Union in its present form. Also, the author argues that soft dimension is too open, and it does not allow distinction between actual opposition to some of the EU’s aspects and the constructive critique regarding some developments in the Union. As regards to the Kopecky and Mudde’s

classification, Flood argues that their distinction along ideology lines, i.e. positions regarding European integration, in the suggested form of the Europhile and the Europhobe is too limiting, considering numerous possible variations of the ideological stances (ibid.).

As regards to these critiques, Flood offered a set of possible positions, including both negative and positive stances towards the EU in order to better understand public debate and political actions regarding this issue. He listed a total of six positions, ranging from the *rejectionist*, who opposes EU membership in whole or as regards to some specific parts to the *maximalist*, who is eager to push forward integration process, considering the EU as a whole or in terms of specific policies. Also, Flood suggested that each of the indicated position should carry the prefix *EU-* (ibid.: 5). Later on, the initial classification was slightly modified in the author's collaborative work with Simon Usherwood (Flood, Usherwood, 2007). The two authors offered value-neutral categories of one's position towards the integration as embodied in the EU, listed according to the degree of support / opposition. This time, the authors did not suggest any prefix. Also, they pointed out that categories should serve as purely descriptive, content-free tools indicating basic positions towards the EU:

Table 1: Flood and Usherwood's categorization of positions towards the EU or its specific aspect(s)

Table 1: Categories of EU Alignments (on EU in general or some specified aspect(s) of it)	
Maximalist	pushing integration as far and as fast as is feasible towards the practical realisation of a chosen model
Reformist	endorsing advance of integration, subject to remedying the deficiencies of what has already been achieved
Gradualist	accepting some advance of integration, as long as it is slow and piecemeal
Minimalist	accepting the <i>status quo</i> , but wanting to limit further integration as far as possible
Revisionist	wanting to return to an earlier state, usually before a treaty revision
Rejectionist	outright refusal of integration, coupled to opposition to participation

Source: Flood, C., Usherwood S., 2007: 6

The authors emphasized that the presented categories could be used in analysis both, individually and in combination, because the main aim of classification is to provide tools to map different positions according to their description. Moreover, the authors have also referred to Taggart and Szczerbiak's critique regarding their categorization as too detailed and difficult to use in terms of operationalization. In particular, Flood and Usherwood have pointed out that categorization could serve for in-depth analysis of one's position towards the EU, which acknowledges the complexity of such positions (ibid.: 6-7)

2.4. Euroscepticism by Catharina Sørensen

Most recently, Catharina Sørensen defines euroscepticism as *“a sentiment of disapproval —reaching a certain degree and durability — directed towards the EU in its entirety or towards particular policy areas or developments“* (Sørensen, 2007: 62). Given Sørensen's main interest in the manifestation of Euroscepticism in public opinion, she also defines public euroscepticism as perceptions of the EU deficiencies by the public, and not only stances oriented towards disintegration of the Union (Sørensen, 2008: 6). Also, in line with the Taggart and Szczerbiak's distinctions she presupposes the existence of hard and soft public euroscepticism. Moreover, the author considers Euroscepticism as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, and therefore attempts to define the main characteristics which it can assume. By examining existing literature on (public) euroscepticism, Sørensen creates its four ideal types, namely economic, sovereignty-based, democratic and political euroscepticism (ibid.: 6-8; Sørensen, 2007: 137-141).

Economic euroscepticism is based on one's evaluation of the EU based on cost - benefit analysis of the EU membership. Therefore this type of euroscepticism appears in relation to the perceptions of a lack of the economic benefits. Notwithstanding citizen's acknowledgement of the economic benefits acquired from the EU membership or not, sceptical opinion towards the EU may also

appear due to the fear of declining national sovereignty. According to Sørensen, those concerns constitute sovereignty-based euroscepticism, with the negative stances towards supranational integration in its core. The main feature of the democratic euroscepticism is one's perception of the EU structures as undemocratic. This type may assume one's perception that one's voice is not counted at the EU level or insufficient relevance of the European Parliament as the representative institution of the citizens. The final type indicated by Sørensen is related to one's political beliefs when assessing the EU. On the basis of her research, Sørensen concludes that the main feature of this particular type accounts for social considerations, meaning that sceptical opinion towards the EU arises from the perception that the EU does not engage enough in social matters (Sørensen, 2008: 8; Sørensen, 2007: 119-120; 137-141).

The author stresses that four ideal types are not necessarily exclusive, meaning that sceptical opinion could be conceived on the basis of more than one of indicated dimensions (Sørensen, 2007: 120). Also, Sørensen provides a set of indicators in form of the Eurobarometer questions as a tool to examine public euroscepticism in different countries. Moreover, the author states that the general typology of euroscepticism that she provides could be employed in cases other than public opinion. As per her research, the author concludes that different countries indicate different type(s) of euroscepticism (Sørensen, 2008:15).

3. THE CASE STUDY: IRELAND AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

The Republic of Ireland has been an EU member state for already 41 years. Over the course of this long period both, the country and the Union that it joined back in 1973 went through significant changes, experiencing tremendous political and economic developments. When analyzing Irish membership in the EU, many authors describe it as a long and complex relationship (for example Laffan, O'Mahony, 2008; Girvin, 2010). This complexity is also reflected in different labels that the country acquired during its long term membership in the EU, including “reluctant European”, “good European”, “conditional integrationist”, “a country saying no” and more recently “programme country” and “successful bailout country” (Laffan, O'Mahony, 2008; Bertoncini, 2013). Therefore, the aim of this Chapter is to provide a historical overview of the Irish EU membership experience, and to address key developments that have shaped Irish – EU relations until the present day in order to understand better this complex relationship.

3.1. Opting for the European integration

During the 1950s, when the initial steps in building up of greater European integration took place in the continental Europe, Ireland remained a bystander (O'Driscoll, 2013). To great extent, this was the case due to the Irish different experience of the Second World War (WWII), and consequently different challenges that the country was facing in the post-war period as compared to the continental Europe. Unlike the rest of Europe that had experienced bloody and devastating war, Ireland had only an “Emergency” thanks to the country's declared military neutrality but also its geographical isolation (Girvin, 2010; Gouez, 2013). As consequence, Europe saw great reaction against nationalism in the aftermath of the WWII, and therefore started to co-operate supra-nationally in order to attain longstanding peace and prosperity. Paradoxically, the Irish war experience had actually confirmed Irish nationalism, in a sense that it allowed the Irish state to demonstrate its political independence from the UK by remaining

neutral in the war, regardless of the UK's involvement. As regards to this, the Irish political culture remained largely unchanged, enabling the maintenance of Irish traditional attitudes towards nationality and identity, with the neutrality at the core of those conceptions (Laffan, O'Mahony, 2008: 10; Girvin 2010: 90).

Another Irish paradox accounts for country's greater economic, financial and to some extent political dependence on the UK, following the acquisition of independence from the British Empire. In fact, the leading ideal of the country in the first decades of independence was the one of the autarchic society, pursuing protectionist economic policies and political isolationism. However, this strategy failed to prevent high levels of unemployment, huge waves of emigration, and decreasing living standards of Irish society, and contributed to even closer economic ties with the UK, on whose market Ireland was highly dependent. The Irish reality was one of the small, poor and rural countries with almost no economic and political significance (Laffan, O'Mahony, 2008; Laffan, 2003).

Given the unsustainable situation in which the country found itself, Irish political leaders started to pay more attention on the multilateral co-operation that took place in Europe, including post-war liberal economic strategy that a majority of European states have implemented. Thanks to the great role of the new Prime Minister Lemass and his administration, decisive shift in Irish politics has been made in the late 1950ies, with the economic modernization of the country as the main objective. On this basis, the possibility of the membership in the European Economic Community (EEC) was considered more intensively (O'Driscoll, 2013; Laffan, 2003). The membership in the EEC was seen as the opportunity to enhance the country's economy, especially due to the option of financing Irish agriculture. Also, given the country's economic dependence on the UK it was largely expected that if the UK decided to apply, Ireland would be bound to do the same. Moreover, when the British application appeared evident, Ireland pre-empted the UK in submitting its *aide-mémoire* to the EU Commission and six

founding member states of the European Communities¹. Unwisely, Irish policy-makers emphasized the country's dependence on the British decision to join but also the Irish difficulties regarding compliance with the obligations stipulated by the Treaty of Rome. The latter was the case due to the country's poor development, military neutrality and dispute over Northern Ireland. Such note has not only increased scepticism of the EEC member states regarding Irish economic and political credentials to meet required obligations from the membership, but also regarding Irish intentions for joining the Communities (Aan de Wiel, 2013). Therefore, unlike the other application states (namely the UK, Denmark, and Norway), the Irish government had to convince the EEC that Ireland is an appropriate candidate. In addition, Ireland was the last among applicant states to open formal negotiations with the EEC, even though it applied first (O'Driscoll, 2013). Moreover, for obvious reasons Irish negotiations were determined by the UK's. Given the French strong opposition to the UK membership, it took Ireland three rounds of negotiations with the EEC, and total of 11 years to obtain the membership (O'Driscoll, 2013).

Notwithstanding Ireland's traditional and conservative society (Girvin, 2010: 77), the vast majority of its population, business groups and main political parties were in favor of the government's decision to join the EEC in 1961 (Aan de Wiel, 2013: 326). This was the case because membership was presented by the Irish political elite as opportunity to achieve the country's plans of economic modernization, but also to enhance Irish independence, and improve the country's position in international affairs. Indeed, the European framework was largely seen as an opportunity to break economic and political dependence on the UK (Girvin, 2010; Laffan, O'Mahony, 2008). According to Dukes, there was a long and constructive public debate in Ireland throughout the negotiation period, and by the time of the accession referendum to the EEC, Irish people were well informed regarding the EEC (Dukes, 2008). However, political aspects of membership were

¹ The six states that launched process of European integration are Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany. In 1951 these states established European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), and in 1957 they founded European Economic Community (EEC) and European Atomic Energy Community (Euroatom) (O'Driscoll, 2013: 1)

largely subordinated by expected positive economic impacts, fitting well with the national plan of economic development (Girvin, 2010; Laffan, O'Mahony, 2008). The Irish referendum on accession with the turnout of 71 percent, and 83 percent of electoral votes in favor confirmed that the idea of economic advantages and enhancement of the status of the small Irish state was enthusiastically embraced by Irish citizens. On this basis Ireland joined the European Communities on 1 January 1973, along with the UK and Denmark (Laffan, O'Mahony, 2008: 27-30; Dukes, 2008).

3.2. Irish membership in the EU

Generally speaking, the economic impact of the EU membership was the most significant in the Irish case, although political and social influence should not be underestimated (Laffan, O'Mahony, 2008). However, Ireland's experience in economic terms did not confirm Irish high expectations during the first decade of membership. When Ireland entered the EEC, it was the poorest and least developed member state. Considering the oil crises, followed by recession and stagnation period in Europe during the 1970s and 1980s, the EEC member states were reluctant to foster integration, especially in the area of regional development (*ibid.*). Therefore, Ireland did not receive its expected funding. This coupled with the poor economic management and the country's inability to adjust to the EEC system, contributed to the Ireland's overall weak economic performance. Nevertheless, the country received contributions within the framework of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) and the European Social Fund (Laffan, O'Mahony, 2008; Laffan, 2003).

Following the re-launch of European integration, in terms of the creation of the European single market, and reforms of cohesion and structural funds, Ireland was eligible to receive great financial support as the less developed country in the Union. Ireland used this funds for improvement of physical infrastructure, and for development of human capital in terms of trainings and education. In line with this developments, Irish government has also significantly reformed domestic

policies in order to enable Ireland to be sustainable in the highly competitive European market. This particularly refers to the country's taxation system, and labour market regulations (Laffan, O'Mahony, 2008). On this grounds, Ireland was able to achieve economic recovery and growth. The combination of European fundings, European single market and monetary union, Irish flexible economic policies, notably lucrative corporate tax system coupled with young English-speaking and well educated workforce, and Irish traditionally strong relations with the US, enabled Ireland to experience tremendous economic growth in the 1990s. The Irish government attracted investments from key global actors, especially US multinational companies (Dineen et al., 2012; Donovan and Murphy, 2013). In fact, Ireland succeeded to position itself as an intercessor of the high-tech revolution between Silicon Valley and Europe, and therefore became an European technological hub. This was the period of the so called „Celtic Tiger“ (Donovan and Murphy, 2013: 27). Since the early 1990s Ireland has continuously recorded growth in exports, employment and overall economy, and thus already by the 2000s it superseded other EU member states. Ireland became one of the richest and most globalized EU countries. The Irish tremendous economic transformation and achievements made this country the EU success story, and Irish experience became aspiration for both, the EU member states and the EU candidate states (Laffan, O'Mahony, 2008; Bertoincini, 2013).

However, in 2008 the international financial crisis exposed vulnerabilities of fundamentals of the Irish growth, starting from the early 2000s. Faced with a burst of the credit and property bubble, Ireland entered a severe banking and financial crisis. When initial Government policy responses failed in their aim to sustain the banking system, and financial difficulties of the country became evident, Ireland had officially requested financial assistance from the EU and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (McHale, 2012; Whelan, 2013). Therefore, from 2010 to 2013 Ireland was a part of the EU/IMF bailout program. Under the program, Ireland was dealing with its debt problems through austerity measures, closely supervised by the European Commission and other international creditors (Barret, 2011). The actions proposed by the program as well as the country's performance

have proven to be successful. Ireland was able to meet targets set in the program and was the first country to exit the three-year long EU/IMF bailout program. Therefore, the country became the EU's „successful bailout story“. (European Commission, 2013; Donovan and Murphy, 2013: 264).

From a political perspective, Irish officials were always trying to distance Ireland from the UK position in the EU by building up more *communitarian* approach since the accession (Girvin, 2010). In fact, during the first three decades of the membership in the EU, Ireland strongly supported main European projects. Also, the country proved its role in effective conduction of the EU Presidencies, being strongly committed in promoting and achieving priorities of the common European interest. In this regard, the country gained reputation of the “good European” (Gilland, 2004; Gouez, 2013). However, this Irish stance was largely the case due to - in Laffan’s words - “goodness of fit” between developments of integration at the European level and Irish national preferences in terms of economic modernization. Also, significant EU financial assistance to the country contributed to this “good fit”. In general, Ireland actively supported initiatives regarding the creation of the European single market and monetary union, as well as agriculture and cohesion policies (Laffan, 2003).

On the other hand, consecutive Irish governments were very cautious regarding co-operation in the fields that Ireland found problematic. This especially refers to the area of security and defense policy, given the Irish non-NATO membership and military neutrality, as well as the area of justice and home affairs, including Schengen Agreement due to Irish common travel zone with the UK (Laffan, 2003; Girvin, 2010). Other issues that proved to be controversial for Ireland include co-operation regarding fiscal policies, given the Irish lucrative corporate tax rate, and the role of the European Court of Justice (ECJ), considering Irish conservative stances towards abortion (Gouez, 2013). The Irish hesitance when it comes to co-operation in particular fields created amongst other Member states an opinion of Ireland as a conditional supporter of the integration process (Laffan, O’Mahony, 2008).

Nevertheless, Irish political elites and the Irish population are largely perceived as one of the most pro-European in the Union (Gilland, 2008; FitzGibbon 2009). In fact, all mainstream Irish political parties are pro-European. The two largest parties, namely the Fianna Fáil and the Fine Gael are fundamentally pro-European, including Fianna Fáil's coalition partner, the Progressive Democrats. After being against European integration for some time both, the Labour Party and later on the Green Party moved towards a pro-European position due to their accession in the coalition governments. Considering the domination of mentioned parties in the Irish political landscape, and particularly harmonization of their position towards the EU, Europe was never a salient or controversial issue in Ireland. However, this has changed significantly with the defeated referendum on the Treaty of Nice (FitzGibbon 2009; FitzGibbon, Guerra, 2010). However, in her analysis of the Irish political system in the aftermath of rejected Treaty of Nice, Gilland concludes that rather low levels of euroscepticism could be found. In fact, the only parliamentary eurosceptic party is the Sinn Féin. Other eurosceptic parties, namely the Workers' Party, the Socialist Party, and the Christian Solidarity Party are extremely marginalized in the Irish political system, with little political influence. The main objections of those parties when it comes to European integration are negatively perceived consequences on Irish neutrality and worker's rights (Gilland, 2004; Gilland 2008). Furthermore, FitzGibbon and Guerra have demonstrated that populism² regarding the EU in Irish political system appears only during the EU referenda, with the Sinn Féin largely using populist rhetoric in its campaigns. However, those populist tactics are proven unsuccessful at the national level (FitzGibbon, Guerra, 2010). What is interesting in the Irish case is that main eurosceptic voices and oppositions to the integration process are coming from organized civil society groups. Although their presence could be traced in every European referendum campaign, the most significant role and the impact of those civil society groups was evident in referendum campaigns on the Treaty of Lisbon (FitzGibbon, 2009; FitzGibbon, 2013a).

² Populism is understood by authors as „ (...) *an idealistic construction feeding the idea of belonging to the same group (...). Populism is usually „moralistic“ and it holds with it a sort of mystic dimension that strengthens „its“ people 's closeness*“ (FitzGibbon, Guerra, 2010: 277)

Holding referenda whenever a new Treaty is negotiated on the European level is another Irish specificity when it comes to European affairs. Unlike in the other EU member states, the Irish parliament can only ratify a respective treaty if citizens endorse it at the referendum (Halligan, 2012). The Government's obligation to conduct a referendum on each EU Treaty has its grounds in Constitutional Article 29.4, and the main ruling regarding this Article, known as the Crotty case (Barrett, 2013). First of all, in order to allow the country to become an EU member state, an accession referendum was held. However, constitutional changes were also required in order to accommodate obligations from the membership. As regards to that, in the Irish case it was decided to insert a new catch-all amendment to the Constitutional Article 29.4 just to enable accession (O'Mahony, 2009: 433; Barrett, 2013). Such decision had implication on reasons why the EU referenda are a necessity in Ireland. In particular, when the next EU Treaty, i.e. Single European Act (SEA) was agreed in 1986, the Irish parliament was about to ratify it. However, the Irish citizen Crotty questioned this decision in the court implying that a new Treaty goes beyond Constitutional provisions, and therefore it breaches the initial consent given by the Irish citizens. Based on Article 29.4, the Supreme Court's judgment confirmed Crotty's concerns and stipulated a need of a new constitutional amendment to ratify the SEA. Once again it was decided to hold a referendum to accommodate changes arising from the SEA Treaty. The implication of this particular ruling is reflected now in consecutive amendments of the Constitution and holding referenda, following every EU Treaty (O'Mahony, 2009: 434; Barrett, 2013: 4).

Moreover, the conduct of referenda in Ireland was further regulated by two significant Court rulings in the McKenna case on fairness in referenda, and the Coughlan case on referendum broadcasting (O'Mahony, 2009; Coughlan, 2013). The 1995 judgment on the McKenna case has banned the practice of public spending in the bias promotion of the case during referenda. In order to enforce this judgment, it was decided that a multi-party Referendum Commission shall be established in run up of each referendum to inform the citizens on the targeted

issues in a fairly manner. The Coughlan judgment in 1998 accounts for equal allocation of the airtime on national radio and television station for all advocated positions in given referendum campaign. Those stipulated practices are also legally embedded in the Referendum Act. As regards to the EU referenda, the ones on Amsterdam and Nice Treaty were the first to conduct with application of the new rules (Gilland, 2004; O'Mahony, 2009).

So far Irish citizens voted on the EU Treaties on nine occasions (see Appendix 1). Up until the initial defeat of the referendum on the Treaty of Nice in 2001, Ireland was an example in conducting EU referenda successfully. This served as a confirmation of Ireland's reputation as a "good European" but it also built up the Government's confidence in putting European Treaties on vote. As pointed out by O'Mahony, the successive Irish governments and other pro-European campaigners were able to easily ensure public support for further integration process by emphasizing benefits acquired from the EU membership. This came at cost of comprehensive explanation of relevant issues related to the respective EU Treaty to the citizens (O'Mahony, 2009: 435). Also, given the large pro-European stance of the Irish political establishment and citizens' overall support towards European integration, the EU referendum campaigns were shorter and less enthusiastically conducted than campaigns for the general elections. Despite a noticeable declining trend in the electorate's turnout, EU referenda were comfortably carried out, with average support of 60 percent (ibid.). Therefore, the rejection of the Treaty of Nice in 2001 was shocking for both, the Irish and European political elite. However, the Treaty was overwhelmingly endorsed at the repeated referendum, returning the Irish pro-European reputation on track. But, the new shock was followed by the rejection of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2008 (Laffan, O'Mahony, 2008). A year later, the Treaty was accepted in the same vein as the Nice Treaty. Notwithstanding the rejections of Nice and Lisbon Treaty on initial referenda, Irish public opinion remains largely positive towards European integration, as well as the mainstream political parties (FitzGibbon, 2009; O'Mahony, 2009). However, successive analyses of Irish public opinion have demonstrated markedly low levels of knowledge regarding the EU (for example

Sinnott, 2002). Another interesting fact is that citizens clearly do not follow their pro-European party cues, when voting on EU referenda (FitzGibbon, Guerra, 2010: 281). This was especially exemplified in initial rejections of the Nice and Lisbon Treaties. Considering the Irish pro-European political landscape, when it comes to the campaigning for the EU referenda the incumbent Government and its pro-European political rivals find themselves on the same side. This situation causes confusion amongst the electorate. Therefore, the citizens tend to assess issues at the stake by relying on the campaign in general. When voting on EU referenda, citizens consider arguments provided by the “No” and “Yes” campaign, rather than voting advice from the party they support (Quinlan, 2011). Also, based on the analysis of the “double vote” on Nice (Sinnott, 2002) and Lisbon Treaty (Garry, 2013; Quinlan, 2011) the conclusion was drawn that Irish EU referenda have “first-order effect” to great extent. This means that, when it comes to the EU referenda, citizens do vote and/or change their mind according to the targeting issue rather than on evaluations of performance of current government or political ideology. This emphasizes the need of leading the effective campaigns that will be persuasive enough to mobilize citizens’ support (ibid.).

Considering that the Treaty of Nice and the Treaty of Lisbon were not renegotiated and changed by the time of conducting repeating referenda (O’Mahony, 2001; Quinlan, 2011), one could wonder why have Irish citizens then endorsed those Treaties in the second referendum? Also, given the high support to the European integration amongst the Irish citizens throughout this period, the situation becomes even more intriguing. Therefore, in order to better understand acceptance of the respective Treaties, the following two sections will provide more information regarding Irish “double voting”.

3.2.1. Irish 1st NO to the European Union (Treaty of Nice)

The Treaty of Nice was negotiated at the European level in 2000. The main features of the Treaty included reforms of the EU institutional and decision-making set-up in order to efficiently accommodate envisaged augmentation of the member states due to the next enlargement wave of the Union (O'Mahony, 2001; Gilland 2002).

The period prior to the referendum on the Nice Treaty in Ireland was marked with unusual political discourse regarding the European integration by high ranking officials of the incumbent Finna Fail and Progressive Democrats coalition government. This refers to the critical public speeches regarding the over-regulated European social and taxation model as well as Ireland's position in the EU, emphasizing the negative EU impacts on the Irish culture. Also, there was a harsh critique on the European Commission due to the dispute over Irish public expenditures between the Irish Minister of Finance and the EU Commissioner for Economy and Monetary Affairs. Furthermore, given the country's economic growth and convergence with the EU average developmental levels, Ireland became non-eligible for the EU regional and structural funding. In the same vein, it was evident that Ireland will become contributor to the next EU budget. Taken together, those events have created an unfavorable atmosphere towards the EU in the country just before the Nice Treaty was put on vote (Gilland, 2004; Gilland, 2008).

In the referendum campaign, the "Yes" campaigners were a coalition government, and pro-European opposition parties the Fine Gael and the Labor party, supported by pro-European civil society organizations, trade unions and business associations. The major advocates of the "No" side were the political party the Sinn Fein, the Green Party and the Socialist Party, as well as quite numerous opposition groups and alliances. The pro-Nice campaigners argued that Irish citizens should support accession of the candidate countries, pointing also to possible Irish benefits generated from an enlarged European market. On the other

hand, protagonists on the “No” side raised different concerns when opposing the Treaty. Clearly misinterpreting provisions of the Treaty, their main arguments included deterioration of the Irish military neutrality, negative impacts on Irish abortion legislation, and negative configurations in the balance of power within the Union, diminishing Irish influence (Gilland, 2004; O’Mahony, 2001).

On June, 2001 the referendum on Treaty of Nice was held together with two other referenda. These referenda were related to the removal of the reference on death penalty from the Irish Constitution, and the endorsement of the Statute of Rome establishing the International Criminal Court. Unlike those two referenda that were largely supported, the Treaty of Nice was rejected by 53.9 percent of citizens voting No to 46.1 percent of citizens voting in favor. Another striking thing was unusually low turnout of only 34.8 percent (O’Mahony, 2001).

In general, the negative referendum’s outcome was ascribed to the Government’s weak campaign. According to Gilland, the reasons behind that was the Government’s confidence due to the previous successful EU referenda, but also its focus on the next year general elections, in political and financial terms. Therefore, there was reliance on the role and engagement of the Referendum Commission regarding campaigning (Gilland, 2002: 532). Also, the fact that three referenda were held on the same occasion, contributed to the general complexity (O’Mahony, 2007). Furthermore, Sinnott’s research on electorate’s behavior pointed out that the main reason for voting “No” as well as to abstain from voting was lack of information and/or understanding the issue. Although at relatively smaller pace, other reasons for voting “no” included fear of losing national sovereignty and perceived negative impact on the Irish neutrality. According to Sinnott’s analysis, uninformed electorates tended to vote “no”. It was also revealed that main abstainers were “yes” voters. Nevertheless, those who voted “yes” did so mostly because of their general appreciation of Irish membership in the EU rather than supporting this specific Treaty (Sinnott, 2002).

Considering the analyses of defeated referendum and facing the need of its re-running, the Government engaged significantly in addressing the issues of citizens' concerns. First of all, the Government has established the National Forum on Europe with the main aim to deliberate on European issues, especially on the future of the EU towards a wider public. Members of all parliamentary parties take part in the Forum, as well as representatives of numerous civil society organizations. Given its task to reach and inform as much citizens possible, the Forum's meetings are also held regionally. In addition, the Forum has the online platform, containing broad range of informative materials (Barrington, Garry, 2010; Dukes, 2008). Secondly, the Irish Government and the European Council have concluded the Seville declarations, specifying the Irish role in common foreign and security policy. The main part of these declarations was the so-called "triple lock conditions", according to which Irish troops may participate in overseas actions only upon the UN authorization, and approval by the Irish Government and Parliament (Laffan, 2003: 26). Thirdly, the Irish parliament acquired greater role regarding the management of the European issues (ibid.).

On this basis a new referendum campaign was held. The supporters of the referendum, including coalition government, pro-European opposition parties, and the wide range of civil society groups organized within umbrella group "Irish Alliance for Europe" were highly engaged in campaigning. The "No" side consisted of the same protagonists, which had been pursuing the "No to Nice" agenda. The repeated referendum, held on October, 2002, had a turnout of 49.5 percent of electorates, with 62.9 percent voting in favor. Unlike the first referendum, the repeated one had greater turnout with increased percentage of the electorate voting "yes", while the amount of "no" voters remained the same (Gilland, 2004). Therefore, the second referendum on the Nice Treaty is often characterized as mobilization referendum, because "yes" campaigners were able to persuade the supportive citizenry to participate in the referendum (Quinlan, 2011). The achieved positive outcome of repeated referendum enabled Ireland to ratify the Treaty.

3.2.2. Irish 2nd NO to the European Union (Treaty of Lisbon)

After the rejection of Constitutional Treaty by France and the Netherlands in 2005, the Lisbon Treaty was agreed on European level in 2007. The Treaty was greatly technical in nature, dealing with the policy- and decision- making procedures in the EU. As in the case of ratification of the Treaty of Nice, Ireland was the only country to hold a referendum (Quinlan, 2011).

The Irish referendum kept being postponed by the Fianna Fáil - Progressive Democrats - Green Party coalition government due to the fact that Prime Minister Ahern was involved in judicial accusations. At the end, the referendum date was announced by the new Prime Minister Cowen who replaced Ahern after his resignation. Those events created an unfavorable atmosphere regarding politicians amongst Irish citizens prior to the referendum (March, Schwirz, 2013).

According to FitzGibbon, the referendum campaign was completely taken over by civil society groups opposing the Treaty. In fact, campaigning started even before official announcement by the Prime Minister, with the Libertas group criticizing the Lisbon Treaty already in December, 2007. Soon, the other opponents of the Treaty started to campaign, raising their eurocritical stances (FitzGibbon, 2009: 20). During the official referendum campaign, the main protagonist of the “No” side included political party the Sinn Fein and the Socialist Party, and anti-Lisbon civil society groups Libertas, C oir, and People's Movement. This time, “No” campaigners did not create any joint alliance. Rather, they were opposing the ratification individually, emphasizing different aspect of the Treaty that they found problematic. The main arguments of Libertas group included the Treaty’s negative impact on Irish taxation policy and loss of Commissioner which will, as they argued, diminish Irish influence in the Union and foster domination of large Member states. The eurosceptic civil society group C oir was focused on the role of the European Court of Justice (ECJ), emphasizing that enhanced authority of this institution will deteriorate Catholic family values and change Irish abortion legislation. The negative role of the ECJ was also emphasized by People's Movement group. They argued that the ECJ will contribute to introduction of neo-

liberal EU legislation, leading to the loss of jobs and diminishing worker's rights in Ireland (ibid.: 14-15). Based on their previous experience in campaigning against the EU Treaties, mentioned eurosceptic civil society groups have led well organized campaigns, challenging pro-European political establishment. On the other hand, the "Yes" campaigns, especially the one of the pro-European political parties, were not harmonized and they were less enthusiastically led. In addition, the "Alliance for Europe" contributed only with limited positive impact due to its late formation (ibid.). Furthermore, the National Forum Europe has witnessed low participation of citizens and thus, failed to inform a wider public. Campaigning of other supporters, such as business groups and civil society organizations was also flat. On the whole, supporters of the ratification failed to present persuasive arguments for the Treaty, running their campaign in terms of refuting "No" side's misinformation (O'Mahony, 2009).

On June, 19 2008 Irish citizens rejected the referendum on the Treaty of Lisbon with 53.4 percent voting "No" to 46.6 percent supporting the Treaty. The turnout was 53.1 percent (FitzGibbon, 2010). Once again, the analysis conducted in the aftermath of the failed referendum has indicated lack of knowledge as the main reason for opposing the Treaty, including abstention from voting. Another aspect arising from this factor was great misinterpretation of the provisions stipulated by the Treaty (Quinlan, 2011: 140). In addition, the main fears amongst Irish citizenry regarding the Treaty accounted for "Irish taxation policy, workers' rights, Irish abortion laws, and the loss of Irish influence in the Commission with the ending of a guaranteed Commissioner" (FitzGibbon, 2010: 227).

As in the case of the defeated referendum on the Nice Treaty, there was a clear stance from Irish European counterparts that Treaty will not be renegotiated. Therefore, the Irish government had to conduct another referendum, reassuring citizens' support. In order to have a better case for the ratification of the Treaty, the Government negotiated with other member states a set of legal guarantees addressing main concerns of Irish citizens. These guarantees provided clear acknowledgement that the Treaty of Lisbon will not negatively affect issues of

citizens concerns as indicated in conducted post-referendum analyses (Quinlan, 2011; FitzGibbon, 2010).

The Irish second referendum on the Treaty of Lisbon was held within significantly different political and economic setting. The country was dealing with the banking crisis coupled with economic decline and increasing unemployment. Also, there was a rising trend in dissatisfaction with the Government (Quinlan, 2011). However, this time the “Yes” campaign was more united, and backed with numerous pro-Lisbon groups, promoting the Treaty to the different parts of Irish society. Also, the representatives of the US multi-national corporations operating in Ireland joined the promotion of “Yes” campaign. Considering obtained guarantees but also the economic crisis, supporters for the Lisbon Treaty pointed out the need of the EU in tackling the crisis as well as the consequences of the rejection of the Treaty regarding Irish membership. On the other hand, the “No” campaign saw withdrawal of the Libertas group at the beginning, and its reappearance in the middle of the campaign. Considering that, the start of campaigning was missing articulated right wing arguments. The main issues emphasized by numerous no campaigners considered negative effects of the Treaty on workers’ rights, public services, and military spending (FitzGibbon, 2010: 230-234).

With the turnout of 58.9 percent, the second referendum on the Lisbon Treaty was passed with 67.1 percent of citizens voting “yes” to 32.9 percent voting “no”. According to analyses conducted in the aftermath of the repeated referendum, there was a switch in electorate’s voting in support of the “yes” side. This was different from the repeated referendum on the Treaty of Nice which was passed thanks to the mobilization of abstaining supportive voters. Also, unlike the first referendum on Lisbon which recorded increased percentage of electorate voting “no”, the second referendum indicated decline in “no” votes (Quinlan, 2011). High levels of citizens’ knowledge regarding the Treaty were also recorded, emphasizing the greater role that was played by the Referendum Commission but also the Irish media when it comes to informing a wider public (FitzGibbon, 2010). To conclude, it seems that a stronger and more informative “Yes”

campaign had significant impact on the referendum's outcome. However, their focus on significance of the EU membership in general, especially given the economic crisis rather than the Treaty itself should also be kept in mind (March, Schwirz, 2013).

3.3. Ireland and the Euro zone crisis

Another event that affected significantly the Irish position and consequently Irish relations with the EU was the Irish banking and financial crisis. Therefore, this section will provide more details about those events, in order to have more insight on how the crisis happened and how it was tackled.

As noted before, Ireland started to experience an extraordinary growth in the 1990's. In this early catch-up process, Irish economic growth was based on high productivity and export (Dineen et al., 2012). However, from the 2000's onwards, Ireland was experiencing a credit and property bubble. There were several factors that have contributed to the development of this bubble. First of all the Irish Euro zone membership, which has decreased interest rates and removed exchange risks, and thus facilitated cross-border wholesale funding for Irish banks. Second, there was a rising demand for housing due to an increase of income level of the Irish society, and a continued rise in asset values. In the words of Donovan and Murphy (2013: 288), there was an obsession amongst Irish society in accumulating property assets, as this was perceived as the best way to obtain financial security and wealth. Finally, there were numerous tax incentives for property development, such as tax deduction for mortgages, and subsidies for commercial real estate development that have additionally fuelled the property boom. Under these circumstances, banks have increased their credit outflows by lending extensively to property developers and/or retail mortgage borrowers. As result, the total stock of mortgage loans in Ireland rose from only €16 billion in 2003 to €106 billion in 2008, while property-related loans to construction projects increased from €45 billion in 2003 to €125 billion in 2008. The Anglo Irish Bank was the

first bank who specialized in property development, and soon other banks were following (Whelan, 2013; Regling, Watson, 2010).

Due to intense market share competition, banks have loosed their lending standards to great extent. Also, the Irish banks have fundamentally changed their funding model. From 2003 onwards, the Irish banks ignored basic banking principle of fractional reserving³, and they approached the inter-banking market and excessively borrowed short-term from other banks in order to make loans. As result, “net indebtedness of Irish banks increased from only 10 per cent of GDP at the end of 2003 to over 60 per cent by 2008” (Honohan, 2010: 4). Lax banking governance, especially in terms of risk management coupled with an insufficient regulatory oversight of the banking system at both, domestic and European level, contributed to the high exposures of the banking sector to property landing and individual borrowers, and to its dependence on wholesale funding, and thus failed to prevent the crisis (Regling, Watson, 2010).

The banking crisis in Ireland took place in 2008, when six main banks in the country encountered severe liquidity problems, and thus required assistance from the Government. Two events have triggered the banking crisis in Ireland. Firstly, the sharp decline in property prices in early 2007, and shortly after the collapse of Lehman Brothers. Such developments have exposed the vulnerability of Irish banks in terms of their negligent lending practices and funding structure (ibid.; McHale, 2012). Moreover, those events have also affected public finances, as the government receipts in form of tax revenues were heavily dependent on property sector. This coupled with the maintenance of the extended public expenditures, contributed to the running of greater public deficit (Donovan and Murphy, 2013).

In order to sustain the Irish banking system, the Irish government has employed several policy measures including liability guarantees, recapitalization, and removal of toxic loans from banks balance sheets (McHale, 2012). In September

³ A fractional reserve refers to the traditional lending practice in banking systems, based on balancing loans to deposits. It provides banks with the ability to meet their obligations (in: Black et al., 2012)

2008, the Government conducted its first policy measure by offering a two-year guarantee on all liabilities of Irish banks, including customer deposits, interbank deposits, and bond holders liabilities. The main aim of this measure was to diminish banks' funding challenges. The second measure was the recapitalization of the banks, starting with initial state capital injections for two main banks, namely Allied Irish Bank (AIB) and Bank of Ireland (BoI) in 2009. The third policy measure was the establishment of the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA). The purpose of NAMA was to remove the most toxic loans off the balance sheets of the participating banks in exchange for the government bonds. Thus, the banks had a possibility to exchange those bonds for cash with the European Central Bank (ibid.).

However, by 2010 the Government encountered difficulties in financing both, the public deficit and the NAMA at the same time. In particular, the Irish debt to GDP ratio was approaching 100 percent due to the combination of large deficit and huge costs of banks bailout. Thus, international markets started to lose their confidence in the creditworthiness of the Irish sovereign. Considering the situation, the rating agencies allocated lower ratings to the Irish banks, which contributed to the outflow of corporate deposits. Facing the increasing liquidity outflow, the Irish banking system became more and more dependent on the European Central Bank's funding. This, coupled with greater pressure from the EU has prompted the Irish government to request financial assistance from the EU and the IMF (Donovan and Murphy, 2013; Whelen, 2013). The agreed EU/IMF €85 billion bailout program was aimed on helping Irish authorities in dealing with critical problems, namely bank restructuring and regulation, as well as the public finances and structural reform. The program, especially its financial part, included a great level of conditionality. It contained a set of measures and policy tools with a rigid implementation timetable, and financial assistance was depended on quarterly progress reports (Barrett, 2011).

Meanwhile, due to the severe crisis that hit the Euro zone, the EU member states agreed upon several improvements regarding the set-up of the Euro zone area. In

particular, the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (or shortened the Fiscal Compact) was agreed, providing more of financial regulations as well as better monitoring mechanism of the member states (Donovan, Murphy, 2013). Once again, Ireland was the only country to approve the Treaty by referendum. However, considering that the Fiscal Compact Treaty was an intergovernmental treaty, the possible negative outcome of the Irish referendum could not block its implementation. Moreover, it was agreed that the Treaty will enter into force, once ratification was completed in 12 out of 17 Euro zone member states. Also, the countries who failed to ratify the Treaty will not be eligible for funding from the European Stability Mechanism (FitzGibbon, 2013b).

Considering that, the Irish referendum campaign saw serious and committed campaigning from the “Yes” side. The supportive campaign was dominated by mainstream pro-European political parties, emphasizing importance of the Treaty ratification due to the Irish uncertain economic circumstances, and the necessity of securing the EU funding. On the other hand, the “No” campaign was stressing that the Treaty will bring more of austerity measures stipulated by the EU. Also, the Referendum Commission as well as Irish media was highly engaged in informing a wider public. The referendum on the Fiscal Compact Treaty was held on May, 31 2012. With the turnout of 50 percent, the Treaty was approved by 60.3 percent of electorate voting in favor. However the support was largely seen as reluctant because the main reasoning behind voting “yes” was economic necessity or access to future EU funding, rather than the perception that the Treaty was genuinely good (ibid.). In fact, since the beginning of the bailout program it was noted that Irish – EU relations were at very low levels. The anti-European rhetoric appeared ever present, while overall public support towards the EU has decreased. The ECB was especially negatively assessed by both, Irish politicians and public (FitzGibbon, 2013b; Donovan, Murphy, 2013).

Nevertheless, the combination of measures proposed by the EU/IMF bailout program, the government incentives related to the macroeconomic stability and the attraction of foreign direct investments as well as Irish orientation towards

export have contributed to the Irish economic recovery. As regards to this recovery, on December 2013 Ireland exited the bailout program. However, in order to obtain a fully functional banking system, and to achieve positive economic outlook considerable work remains (European Commission, 2013; Whelan, 2013). Also, considering the deteriorations in the Irish-EU relations during the crisis, Ireland will need to improve its reputation as the "good European" by being involved more actively in discussions on wider European issues, and not only in those serving to its self-interest (Donovan, Murphy, 2013: 271)

4 ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC EUROSCEPTICISM IN IRELAND BY SØRENSEN'S 4 DIMENSIONS

The aim of this chapter is to provide an analysis of public euroscepticism in Ireland over time, and to investigate which of the four ideal types of the concept of *public euroscepticism* developed by Sørensen prevails in the Irish case. In addition, each of the four dimensions of public euroscepticism - economic, sovereignty-based, democratic, and social (Sørensen, 2007) - will be examined by using specific Eurobarometer questions and data provided for Ireland and the EU average. Also, the fifth dimension – hard euroscepticism - will be added in order to examine overall level of euroscepticism (Sørensen, 2007) in Ireland in comparison with the EU average. Each indicator accounting for a specific dimension will be illustrated, explained and discussed. The chapter will conclude with the brief summary of the overall analytical part.

4.1 Economic euroscepticism

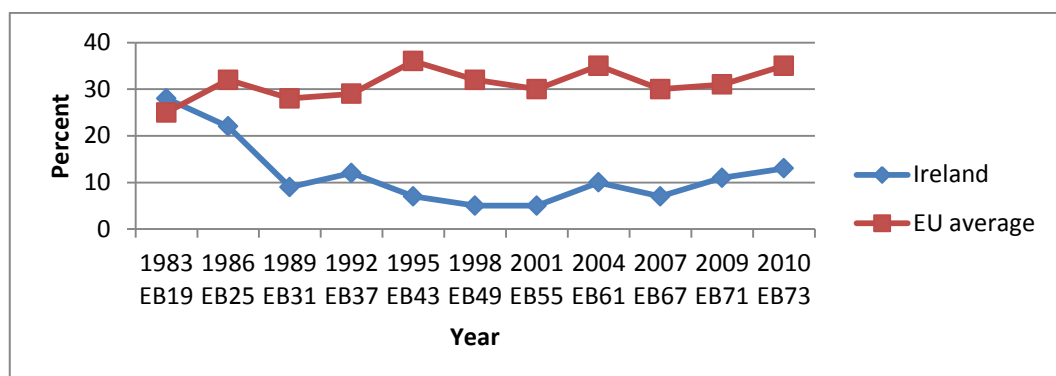
This section investigates the first dimension, i.e. economic euroscepticism. According to Sørensen, the economic character of euroscepticism reveals whether or not citizens perceive that their country benefited economically from the EU membership. Additionally, citizens who feel their country did not gain economically from being an EU member state, tend to be more sceptical towards the EU (Sørensen, 2008). Therefore, Sørensen proposes following Eurobarometer question as an indicator to examine the economic dimension:

Taking everything into consideration, would you say that (YOUR COUNTRY) has on balance benefited or not from being member of the European Union? (European Commission, 2014)

This question was one of the standard Eurobarometer questions, being posed in every Eurobarometer survey on the regular basis from 1983 up until 2010. The respondents were offered three options as possible replies: *benefited / not benefited / do not know* (European Commission, 2014). The graph below

represents percentage of the citizens in Ireland and at the EU average level who do not feel their country has benefited from the EU membership.

Graph 1: Perception of no benefits from the EU membership



Source: European Commission, 2014

The first observable finding from the given graph is that Irish citizens are overall less sceptical according to the economic dimension than the EU average. From 1983 to 2001 one can observe slightly different dynamics of public opinion in Ireland and at the EU average level. In the case of Ireland there was a sharp decrease in sceptical opinion, from 28 percent in 1983 to only 9 percent in 1989. This decline in sceptical opinion coincides with the time when Ireland started to benefit significantly from the EU regional policy funds, and later on from Cohesion and Social Funds (Onofrei et al., 2008). Since then, Ireland recorded constantly lower levels of scepticism as compared to the EU average. One can also observe extremely low levels of economic euroscepticism during the so called Celtic Tiger period (from the early 1990's until 2007), when Ireland experienced extraordinary economic growth, partly thanks to the country's EU membership or more precisely the country's membership in the European Monetary Union (Donovan, Murphy, 2013). However, in 2004 there is an increase of scepticism recorded. This coincides with the so called "Big-bang" enlargement, when ten states entered the EU, but also with the fact that Ireland will become net contributor to the EU budget for the next multiannual financial framework due to its tremendous economic development achieved during the Celtic Tiger period (Onofrei et al., 2008). Also, following the occurrence of the Euro zone crisis, one

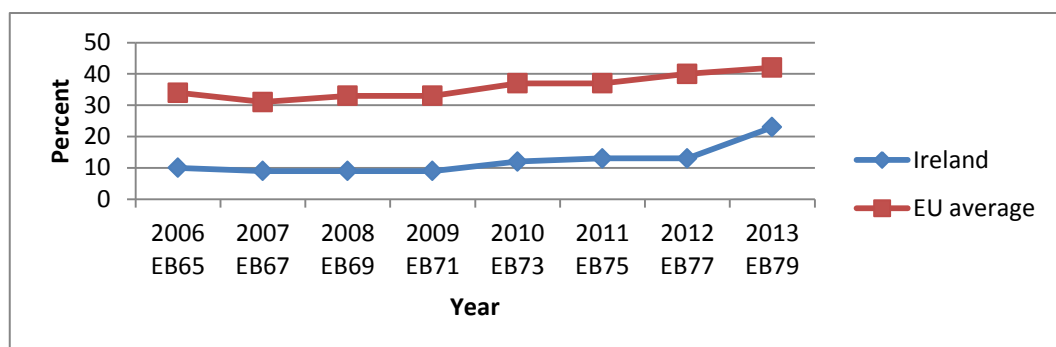
can observe consecutive increase in scepticism from 2007 (amounting only 7 percent) to 2010 (amounting 13 percent) when the question was posed for the last time. As regards to the EU average, the dynamic is quite different. In general, between 1983 and 2010 sceptical opinion was almost consistently increasing; from 25 percent (the lowest level in surveyed period) in 1983 to 35 percent in 2010. By observing the graph, one may conclude that peaks of sceptical opinion coincide with the EU enlargement waves. This may indicate the public perception of the redirection of available funding towards new member states, which are usually less developed than the EU average (Sørensen, 2008). As in the case of Ireland, there is an increase of sceptical opinion at the EU average level from 2007 to 2010, following the Euro zone crisis.

Given that the last available data for assessing sceptical opinion regarding perceived benefits from the EU membership was for the year 2010, the thesis includes a new question as an indicator. By doing so, the thesis will be able to trace economic euroscepticism until the last Eurobarometer survey, and provide better insight of developments of sceptical opinion, taking into account the period of economic crisis. The following Eurobarometer question has been chosen:

Please tell me for each proposal, whether you are for it or against it: „A European economic monetary union with one single currency, the euro“ (European Commission, 2014)

Although the question differs from the previous one, the thesis believes that it enables examination of economic euroscepticism considering that citizens who perceive a lack of economic benefits from the EU membership are expected to be less supportive for European economic and monetary union with single currency. Given the current crisis, this appears especially relevant. As regards, the graph below demonstrates percentage of citizens in Ireland and at the EU average level who are against such Union and single currency. The time span is from 2006 to 2013.

Graph 2: Against European economic and monetary union with one single currency, the euro



Source: European Commission, 2014

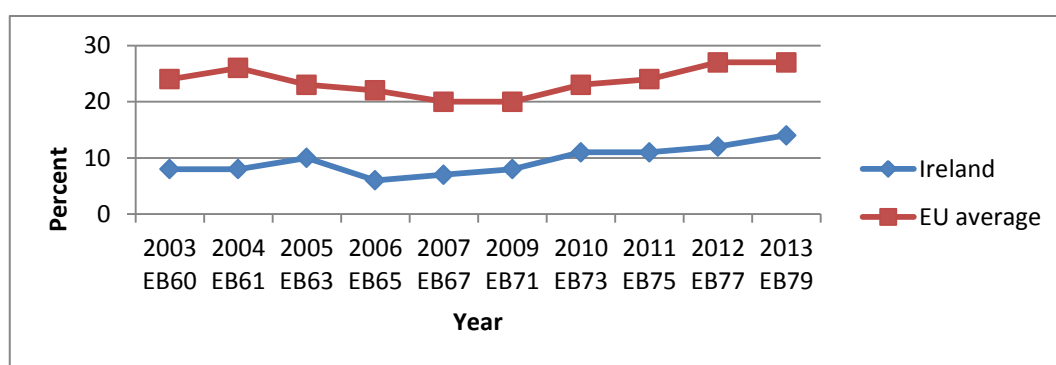
When observing the graph it is clear that, when it comes to the economic euroscepticism, Irish citizens are less sceptical than the EU average. Also, one can observe the same dynamics of public opinion in Ireland and at the EU average. Starting from the 2006, only 10 percent of Irish citizens were against European economic and monetary union with one single currency - the euro - while at the EU level 34 percent of the population was against. This percentage slightly decreased in the following year in the both cases, and remained stable over years. However, in 2010 the sceptical opinion started to increase at both, Irish and EU level reaching its peak in 2013. As regards, in 2013 a total of 23 percent of Irish citizens and 42 percent of population at the EU level were against European economic and monetary union and the Euro. Clearly, the Euro zone crisis had a negative impact on citizens' perceptions of usefulness and benefits from the unique economic and monetary union using the single currency. Therefore, it becomes evident that support for the European economic project decreases in the framework of the crisis.

The next Eurobarometer question proposed by Sørensen to examine the economic dimension is:

What does the European Union mean to you personally?(European Commission, 2014)

This question was first asked in the given form in 2003, and since then it has been a part of every Eurobarometer survey. Unlike with the previous indicators, this question allows to grasp one's individual perception of the EU economic benefits. The respondents were offered multiple replies, one of which indicated the EU as a waste of money (European Commission, 2014). The graph below represents percentage of citizens in Ireland and at the EU average level replying that the EU is a waste of money.

Graph 3: Perception of the EU as a waste of money



Source: European Commission, 2014

Once again, Irish sceptical opinion is significantly lower than the EU average. In both cases there are no significant changes in the development of public opinion from 2003 to 2009, with sceptical opinion ranging between 6 to 10 percent in the case of Ireland, and between 20 to 26 percent at the EU level. However, from 2010 there is an increasing trend of sceptical opinion at both levels. Considering the Euro zone crisis, one could conclude that the longer the crisis last, the more citizens perceive European Union as a waste of money.

4.2 Sovereignty-based euroscepticism

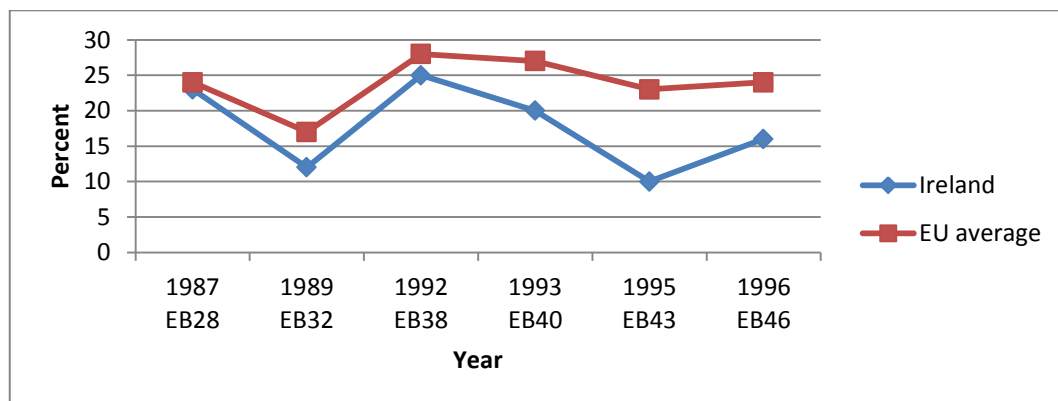
This section analyzes the second dimension of public euroscepticism which is based on one's perception that national sovereignty is weakening due to the EU membership. Therefore, in line with the sovereignty-based euroscepticism, supranational integration is perceived as a threat to national sovereignty (Sørensen, 2008). As one of the indicators to examine this dimension, Sørensen

proposes Eurobarometer question considering the creation of the European government. The question was posed in Eurobarometer surveys in following formation:

Are you for or against the formation of a European Union with a European government responsible to the European Parliament?
(European Commission, 2014)

This question was asked in various intervals only from 1987 to 1996. Given the available time span, presented data might be considered outdated, and thereby less relevant. However, the thesis believes that the data present a valuable source in measuring sovereignty-based euroscepticism, due to concrete provision of more insights on citizens' perception regarding supranational integration. In addition, the graph below illustrates the percentage of citizens in Ireland and at the EU average level against an EU-government.

Graph 4: Against an EU-Government



Source: European Commission, 2014

It is observable from the graph that Irish citizens are less sceptical towards the idea of creating EU Government than the EU average. Data recorded for Ireland are constantly lower than the EU average throughout the analyzed period. Another observable fact is pronounced dynamism in the development of sceptical opinion. As illustrated in the graph both, Irish and EU average sceptical opinion demonstrate similar dynamics. There is an obvious decline in sceptical opinion from 1987 to 1989 (in Ireland it decreased from 23 to 12 percent, and the EU average level from 24 to 17 percent), followed by an increase of sceptical opinion

from 1989, reaching the peak in 1992 (in Ireland sceptical opinion rose from 12 to 25 percent, and at EU average level from 17 to 28 percent). The high levels of scepticism regarding the creation of an EU Government observable at both levels coincide with the period of ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. According to Vasilopoulou, the period after the Maastricht Treaty was marked by significant change in sceptical public opinion towards the EU, revealing citizens' greater concerns regarding the weakening of national sovereignty under the closer European political co-operation. The difficulties in ratification of the Maastricht Treaty clearly demonstrated that citizens are more cautious when it comes to the transfer of traditional national competences (such as foreign policy or currency) to the supranational level (Vasilopoulou, 2013: 159-160). However, the graph demonstrates a decreasing trend in sceptical opinion at both levels from 1992 to 1995, but in the next one-year period the sceptical opinion in Ireland rose from 10 to 16 percent, while at the EU average level it remained moderate, with the increase of only one percentage point.

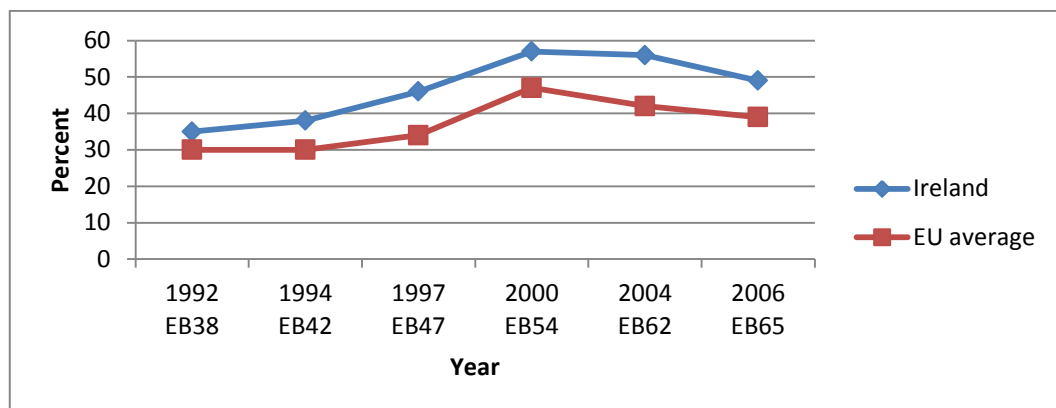
As noted before, the sovereignty-based euroscepticism accounts for the fear of supranational integration, and therefore focuses on citizens' perception that the more in terms of integration will come at cost of national sovereignty and therefore national identity (Sørensen, 2007). In addition, the thesis introduces another indicator for this dimension. The Eurobarometer question:

Some people may have fears about the building of Europe, the European Union. Here is a list of things which some people say they are afraid of. For each one, please tell me if you - personally - are you currently afraid of it, or not? (European Commission, 2014)

offers multiple answers, one of which is loss of national identity and culture. This question was posed in various intervals from 1992 to 2006. Regardless the limited time span, the thesis believes that data obtained are valuable and relevant for analysis of the sovereignty-based euroscepticism. The main objection to European integration along this dimension accounts for the shift of sovereignty to the supranational level (Sørensen, 2007), implying also the shift of political identity to the EU level. The graph below represents the percentage of the citizens in

Ireland and at the EU average level who are afraid that building of the European Union implies loss of national identity and culture.

Graph 5: EU as a threat to national identity and culture



Source: European Commission, 2014

When observing the graph, it is clear that Irish citizens share more fears regarding the loss of national identity and culture, thus being more sceptical towards the EU in line with the sovereignty-based dimension than the EU average. Also, Irish sceptical opinion is consistently higher than the EU average during the whole period of analysis. Another observation is that both levels follow the same pattern of development in sceptical opinion. In particular, both levels are marked with repeatedly increase in sceptical opinion from 1992 to 2000. In 2000, euroscepticism reached its peak at both levels amounting 57 percent in Ireland, and 47 percent at EU average level. However, in following years there is an observable trend of moderate decrease of the sceptical opinion. The data from the graph and the observable dynamics in development of public opinion clearly goes in line with a postfunctionalist theory of European integration by Hooghe and Marks and confirms their thesis on the end of the public *permissive consensus*. The core of their thesis is claim that “identity is critical in shaping contestation on Europe” (Hooghe, Marks, 2008: 1). In other words, it seems that the more identity sensitive policies started to be part of the supranational co-operation; citizens tend to be less supportive towards European integration. Additionally, the authors stress that what matters the most is one’s perception of national identity in inclusive or exclusive terms. If a person holds exclusive national identity,

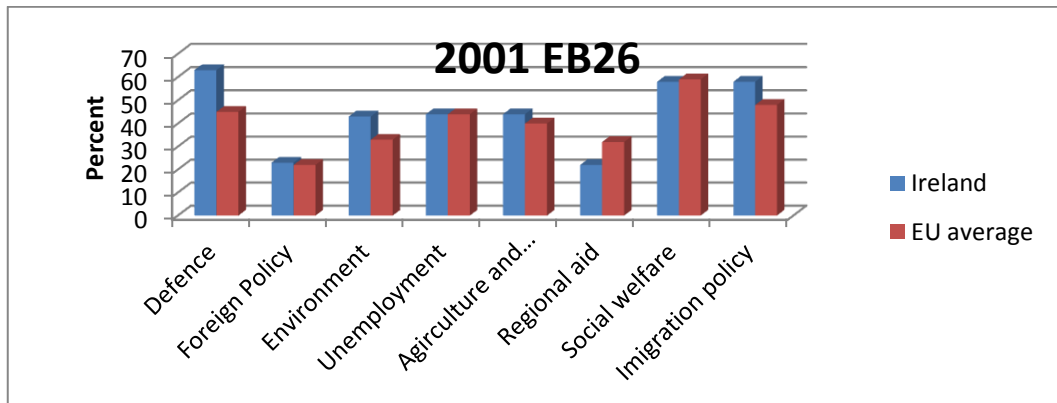
identification with one's own country and its institution will be perceived as incompatible with the European integration (ibid.: 13). The fact that Irish citizens are more reluctant to allocate more sovereignty to the supranational level as compared to the EU average indicates more exclusiveness of the Irish identity. Considering Irish history, especially Irish struggle for independence from Great Britain, and the strong sense of uniqueness of Irish people, presented findings appear more understandable. According to O'Kelly, "(the Irish) independence was rooted in the idea that a culturally-based nation required sovereignty in order to have control over its own destiny" (O'Kelly, 2004: 515). Therefore, the idea of being Irish as distinguished from British was built upon cultural claims encompassing the strong sense of group membership, the territory, the language (Gaelic) and the religion (Catholicism). Given the fact that Irish identity remained deeply culturally rooted, deeper integration of the EU and therefore stronger European influence are often perceived not only as a threat to national sovereignty but also to the idea of cultural uniqueness (ibid.). This is at odds with perceptions of American influence, which is more comfortably embraced given the strong family, linguistic and cultural links between two countries (O'Kelly, 2004; Gouez, 2013). Clearly, presented findings confirm Girvin's suggestion that, although Irish membership in the EU had influence on the Irish society there is little evidence of the emergence of European political identity (Girvin, 2010).

The next Eurobarometer question proposed by Sørensen, indicates citizen's preference of national or EU decision making. The proposed question has following formulation:

For each of that decision-making should be made by (NATIONALITY) government, or made jointly within European Union? (Eurobarometer, 2014)

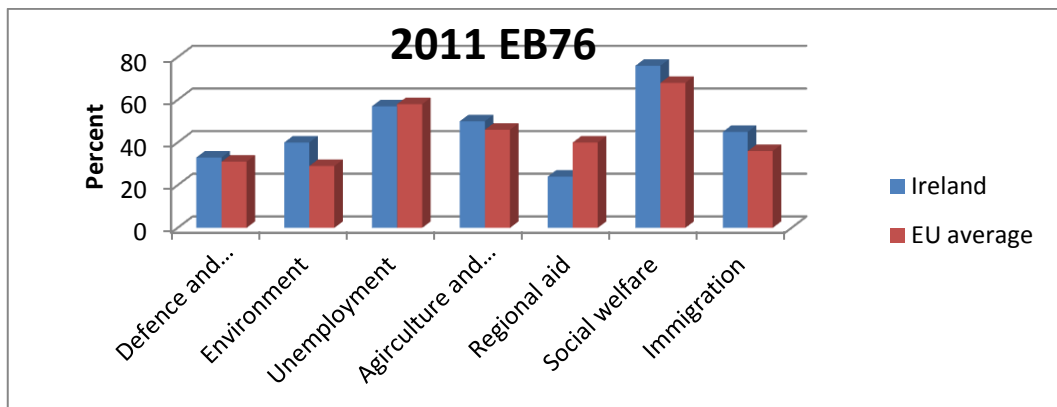
The two graphs below illustrate the percentage of citizens in Ireland and at the EU average level that opted for national decision making for the eight selected policy areas. The graphs represent data collected in 2001 and 2011.

Graph 6a: National level of decision making, 2001



Source: European Commission, 2014

Graph 6b: National level of decision making, 2011



Source: European Commission, 2014

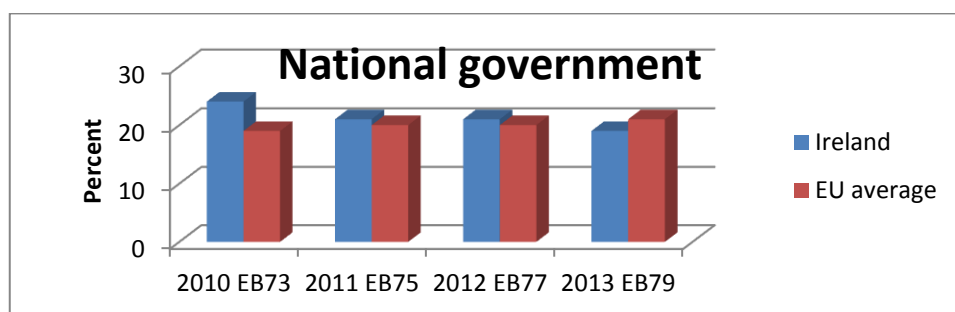
When observing the graphs, it is evident that Irish citizens are less in favor of EU decision-making than the EU average. More specifically, in 2001 Irish citizens stated that decisions should be decided at national level in 5 out of 8 policy areas. In 2011 the situation remained almost the same, illustrating Irish preference for national decision-making in 5 out of 7 policy areas. As evident from the graphs, Irish citizens hold that so-called traditional national competences, namely foreign policy and defense or immigration policy should remain in the domain of national decision making. The only area for which Irish citizens are clearly less in favor of national decision making is regional aid. This is not surprising considering Irish benefits and achievements in the area of regional development thanks to the EU Cohesion Policy instruments.

The thesis introduced an additional Eurobarometer question as indicator for preferences of national or EU decision-making in order to provide more insight of public opinion given the current economic crisis. The question has the following formulation:

In your opinion, which of the following is best able to take effective actions against the effect of financial and economic crisis? (European Commission, 2014)

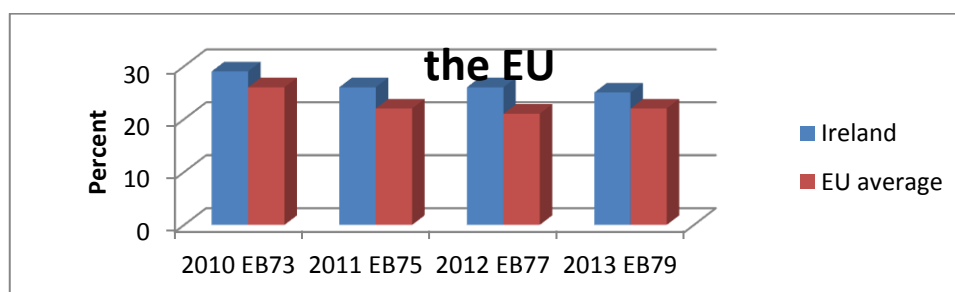
The respondents were offered multiple answers, and the thesis analyzes data provided for options; *national government* and *the European Union* in order to examine whether or not citizens became more in favor of national decision-making given the economic crisis. In addition, the graphs below represent percentage of the citizens in Ireland and at the EU average level who opted for aforementioned options. The time span is 2010 to 2013.

Graph 7a: Preference of national government in tackling economic crisis



Source: European Commission, 2014

Graph 7b: Preference of the EU in tackling economic crisis



Source: European Commission, 2014

As demonstrated in these graphs, when it comes to dealing with economic and financial crisis, Irish citizens are in favor of actions taken by both, national government (with the exception of the year 2013, where there is a marked decrease of 3 percent) and the European Union; as compared to the EU average. In order to understand this ambiguous result, the work of Jepsen appears valuable. In his analysis of Irish euroscepticism, Jepsen concludes that, although Irish citizens became less supportive to the EU given the current crisis, they still believe that the best solution to tackle with the crisis and consequently to improve the Irish economy is a combination of national and European power (Jepsen, 2012: 27). The data illustrated in graphs clearly confirm this conclusion.

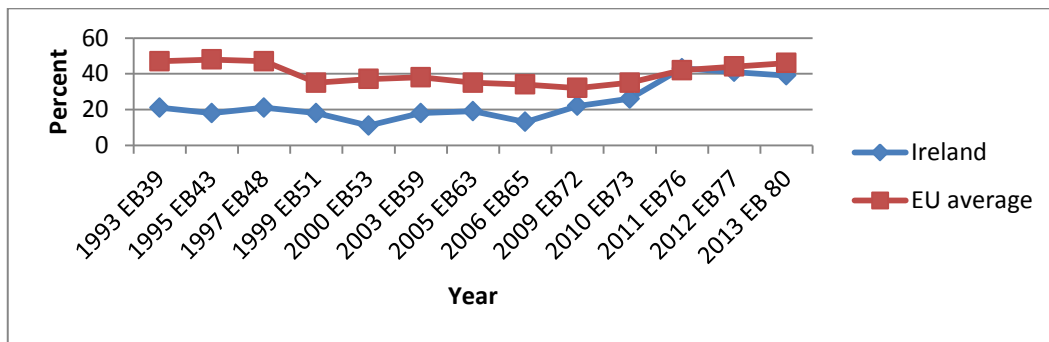
4.3 Democratic euroscepticism

This section investigates a third dimension of public euroscepticism, labeled by Sørensen as democratic euroscepticism. This dimension focuses on sceptical opinion towards the EU's democratic credentials. As regards, this dimension enables measurement of the citizens' perceptions on the EU's democratic shortcomings, also known as "democratic deficit" (Sørensen, 2007). Sørensen proposes following Eurobarometer question as an indicator for this dimension:

On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in the European Union?
(European Commission, 2014)

This question allows analysis of general public (dis)-satisfaction with the democracy at the EU level (Sørensen, 2008). The graph below illustrates combination of percentages of citizens in Ireland and at the EU average level replying that they are not at all satisfied and not very satisfied how democracy works in the EU. This question first appeared in Eurobarometer survey in 1993. Therefore, the time span is from 1993 to 2013.

Graph 8: Dissatisfaction with democracy at the EU level



Source: European Commission, 2014

In general, when it comes to the democratic dimension sceptical opinion at the EU average level appears more stable than in the case of Ireland. In fact, after a decline of 12 percent in period from 1997 to 1999, the EU average scepticism remained consistently moderate for over a decade, ranging from 32 to 38 percent. However, from 2009 there is observable increasing trend in sceptical opinion, reaching the peak of 46 percent in 2013. In the case of Ireland, ups and downs of sceptical opinion are more dynamic. What strikes the most in the Irish case is the great increase of dissatisfaction with the EU democracy following the year 2010. As illustrated in the graph from 2010 to 2011 sceptical opinion rose from moderate 26 percent to 43 percent. Thus, unlike in the previous years when Ireland recorded repeatedly lower levels of democratic euroscepticism than the EU average, the sharp increase of sceptical opinion in 2011 made Ireland for the first time more sceptical towards democracy in the EU, than the EU average. However, in contrast to the continuing increase of sceptical trend at the EU average level, Ireland recorded a decline of democratic dissatisfaction in the next two years, being again below the EU average. When observing the levels of dissatisfaction with the EU democracy in Ireland, it becomes evident that the peak was reached in the year when the Irish Government requested financial assistance from the EU and the IMF in order to be able to cope with its banking and financial crisis that hit the country (European Commission, 2011). According to Laffan, entering the EU/IMF bailout program was a traumatic experience for Ireland considering the great level of conditionality and rigid monitoring procedure

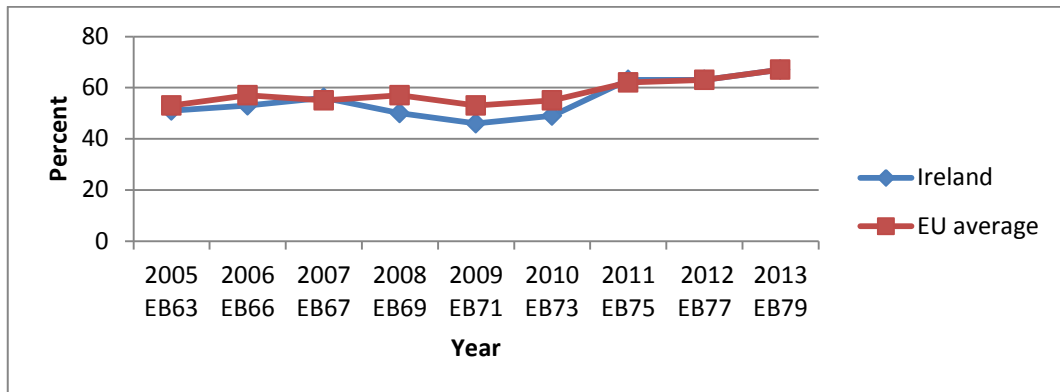
stipulated by the program. For the first time in the history, Ireland found itself completely dependent on external funding, and obliged to comply with the measures imposed from abroad (Laffan, 2013). As regards, the vast majority of the Irish population started to regard the EU through the negative lenses of imposed austerity measures. Moreover, the significant role of Germany and France in dealing with the Euro zone crisis sparked old concerns amongst Irish citizens regarding the balance of power between small and large member states within the EU. Those fears were fueled by Irish media that also coined the term “Merkozy diktat” in order to describe decisive impact of Germany and France on decision making in the EU, very often without consulting the other member states (Gouez, 2013). However, gradual reduction in democratic euroscepticism could be traced, following the Irish rapprochement of the end of the three-year long EU/IMF bailout program. Still, sceptical opinion remained significantly higher, as compared to the long term average recorded for Ireland. Regarding the EU average, it is evident that dissatisfaction with the EU democracy increases as the crisis prolongs.

According to Sørensen, democratic euroscepticism may also be result of citizens’ perception that their voice is not taken into account at the EU level (Sørensen, 2008). In line with this argument, the thesis includes another Eurobarometer question as indicator for democratic dimension. The selected question is:

Please tell me for each statement, whether you tend to agree or tend to disagree: „My voice counts in the European Union“ (European Commission, 2014)

This question has become standard question in Eurobarometer surveys since 2005. Respondents were offered three possible answers: *tend to agree / tend to disagree / do not know* (European Commission, 2014). The graph below represents the percentage of citizens in Ireland and at the EU average level who answered they tend to disagree.

Graph 9: Perception that one's voice is not being counted in the EU



Source: European Commission, 2014

According to the findings, Irish scepticism is in line with the EU average. Also, it seems that development of sceptical opinion at both levels follow the same pattern, with observable increasing trend from 2010. The two levels converge in 2012, recording 63 percent of citizens stating that they do not think their voice counts in the EU, and reaching the peak of 67 percent in 2013. What strikes the most is that this indicator illustrates one of the highest scores at both, Irish and EU average level of public scepticism, compared to the previous indicators. The results clearly demonstrate citizens' perceptions of the lack of democratic practices at the EU level, emphasizing their feeling that their opinions are not taken into consideration when decisions are made. This also indicates the problem of perceived insufficient representative set-up at the EU level.

4.4 Social euroscepticism

This section focuses on analysis of the social dimension of public euroscepticism. According to Sørensen, this dimension allows investigations of citizens' dissatisfaction with the EU social credentials, focusing more on issues of justice and solidarity. In addition, Sørensen argues that citizens, who feel that the EU does not pursue the social welfare due to its market based orientation, tend to have more sceptical views towards the EU (Sørensen, 2007: 118-119). In order to examine this dimension, Sørensen proposes a Eurobarometer question related to

citizens' perceptions of a possible loss of social benefits as the consequence of co-operation at the EU level. The question has following formulation:

Some people may have fears about building of Europe, the European Union. Here is a list of things which some people may say they are afraid of. For each one, please tell me if you, personally, are currently afraid of it or not? (European Commission, 2014)

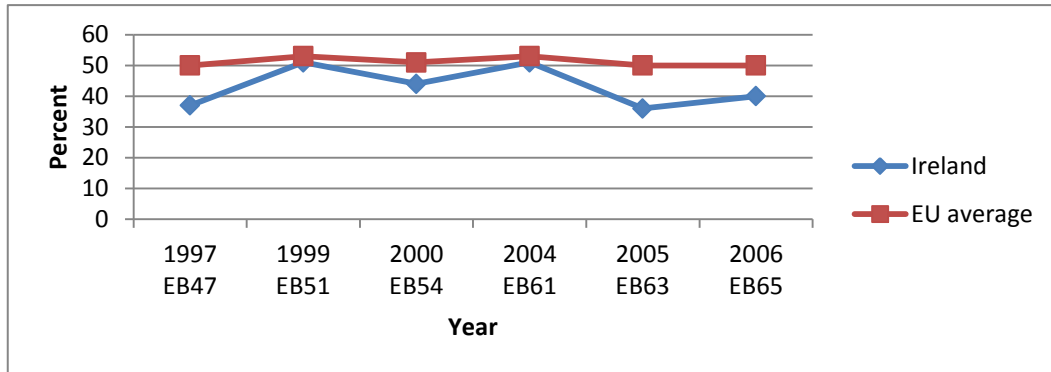
The question offers multiple answers, one of which is *the loss of social benefits*. The first graph below illustrates the percentage of citizens in Ireland and at the EU average level who answered they are afraid of loss of social benefits. The question was asked occasionally during the period from 1997 to 2006. Given the limited time span, the thesis introduces another indicator for this dimension in order to follow more recent developments. The selected additional Eurobarometer question is:

European integration has been focusing on various issues in the last years. In your opinion, which aspects should be emphasized by the European institutions in the coming years, to strengthen the European Union in the future? (European Commission, 2014)

This question offers *social issues*⁴ as a possible answer. The thesis believes that this additional question enables capturing of the same trend regarding dimension of social euroscepticism. The second graph illustrates the percentage of citizens in Ireland and at the EU average who think the EU should put more emphasis on social issues in the future.

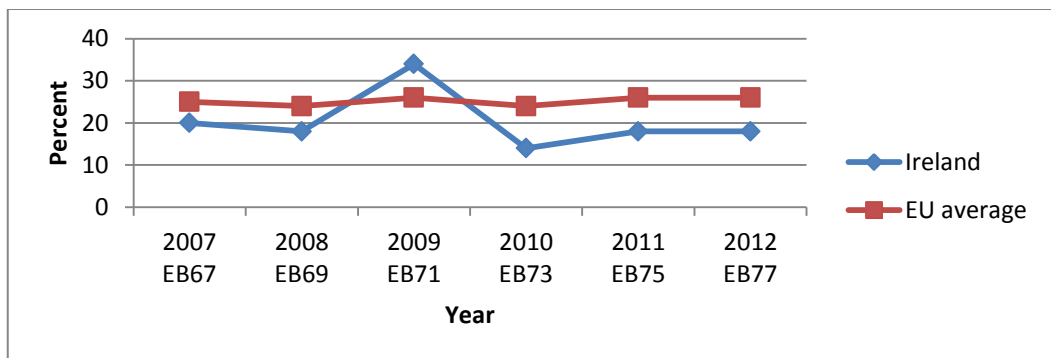
⁴ The offered answer has been slightly modified in successive Eurobarometer surveys as follows: 2009 EB 71 - social and health issues ; 2010 EB 73 – social policy; 2011 EB 75 - social policy; 2012 EB 77 - social policy (European Commission, 2014)

Graph 10: EU as a threat to social benefits



Source: European Commission, 2014

Graph 11: EU should put more emphasis on social issues



Source: European Commission, 2014

As regards to the first indicator, it is evident that Irish citizens are less sceptical than the EU average throughout the examined period. It is observable that on the whole, there is little dynamism in development of sceptical opinion at the EU average level on this indicator, ranging between 50 to 53 percent. Although the Irish sceptical opinion is marked with more ups and downs, it never surpassed the EU average levels.

Once again, little dynamism is evident at the EU average level when observing results for the second indicator. The percentage of citizens at the EU level, who think the EU institutions should deal more with social issues, is markedly stable. Taken as a whole, Irish citizens appear less concerned with social policies at the EU level, being mostly below the EU average. However, concerns related to social issues increased significantly in 2009 reaching the peak of 34 percent, and thus surpassing the EU average level. However, in the next year public concerns

regarding this issue decreased sharply, reaching the lowest level (14 percent) recorded in the available time span. This was followed by moderate levels of concern in continuation.

The relatively lower levels of social scepticism in Ireland as compared to the EU average are not surprising, considering the difference between the Irish welfare state system and other existing systems in the EU. According to Sapir, Ireland and the UK have a liberal, so-called Anglo-Saxon, social model which differs significantly from other social models in the EU namely, Nordic, Continental and Mediterranean social model. Unlike other European welfare state systems, which are more generous in terms of social benefits, and consequently more expensive, the Irish liberal model is relatively cheap due to its low social expenditures. In particular, the liberal model is more oriented on workfare rather than welfare strategies, focusing its social spending on people in working age. The liberal system has proven sustainability, performing on a high level of efficiency. On the other hand, the model demonstrates low level of equity, lagging behind other models when it comes to social indicators (Sapir, 2006). Therefore, it appears reasonable that citizens at the EU average level share more fears when it comes to the loss of social benefits, because their national social systems may not sustain high levels of social expenditures given the current economic crisis. Thus, it seems more likely that incentives for reform of unsustainable systems will come within European co-operation. As noticeable in the second graph, in 2009 there is a striking increase of number of Irish citizens who think European institutions should focus more on social policy. In 2008 Ireland experienced the burst of mentioned credit and property bubble, followed by the banking and financial crisis. In this regard, severe consequences for the Irish society became obvious in the aftermath of the crisis, demonstrating skyrocketing rates of unemployment, and the inability of Irish households to pay off their mortgages (McHale, 2012). Thus, the increase in citizens' concerns regarding social issues seems understandable.

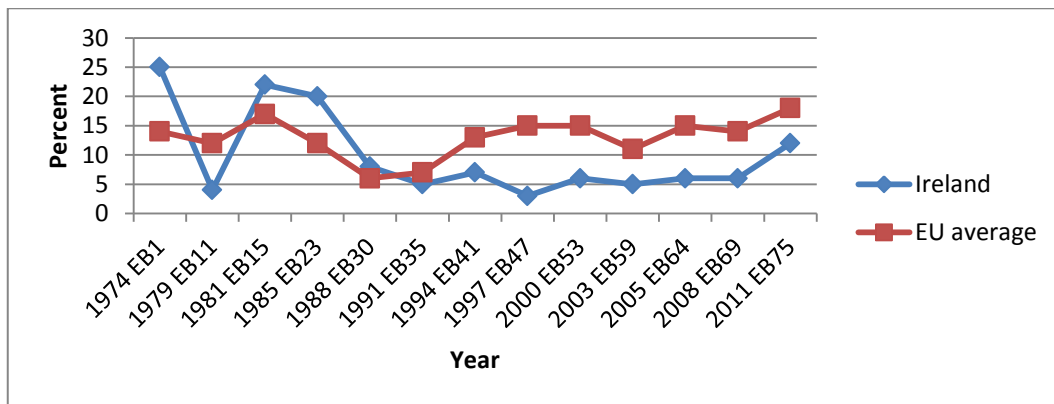
4.5 Hard euroscepticism

The aim of the last section here is to assess the overall level of scepticism towards the EU in Ireland and at the EU average level. Indicators for this dimension focus on citizens' general attitudes towards the idea of European co-operation. In order to measure level of hard euroscepticism, Sørensen proposes analysis of following Eurobarometer question:

Generally, do you think that your country's membership of the European Union is a good thing, a bad thing, neither good nor bad or do not know?
(European Commission, 2014)

This was a standard Eurobarometer question, being asked regularly since the first conducted Euroabrometer survey in 1974 up until 2011. The graph below illustrates percentage of the citizens in Ireland and at the EU average level replying that EU membership of their country is a bad thing.

Graph 12: EU membership is a bad thing



Source: European Commission, 2014

As illustrated in the graph, the first decade of Irish membership in the EU has been marked with more pronounced levels of hard euroscepticism than the EU average. However, in 1985 Irish hard scepticism declined significantly, and since then the country repeatedly recorded very low levels of sceptical opinion, being constantly below the EU average. When observing this dynamic, the thesis agrees with Sørensen's argument that one should be cautious when interpreting public opinion of newly acceded EU member state, considering the adjustment period to

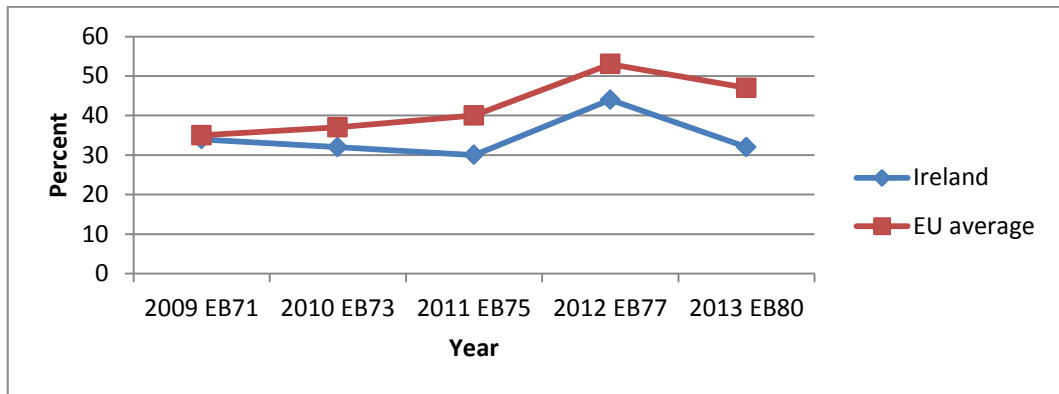
the membership (Sørensen, 2007: 189-190). In fact, Irish sceptical opinion presents a very similar dynamic during the first decade of the EU membership as recorded in the case of UK and Denmark (ibid.: 189), the two countries which entered the EU at the same time as Ireland. After this period, each of the three countries have recorded a decline of hard euroscepticism, with Ireland recording significantly lower levels throughout the available time span, compared to the EU average. Since 2008, there is an observable moderate rising trend of hard euroscepticism at both, Irish and the EU average level. The marked trend coincides with the occurrence of the economic crisis that hit the EU. Therefore, the rise of negative perception regarding the EU membership was expected, considering severe economic and financial consequences of the crisis, and the implementation of austerity measures in a majority of European countries.

The question on perceptions of one's country membership in the EU was posed for the last time in 2011 within the framework of Eurobarometer survey. In order to examine recent developments of hard euroscepticism, the thesis introduces additional Eurobarometer question, as an indicator for this dimension. The selected thesis is:

At the present time, would you say that, in general, things are going in the right direction or the wrong direction in the European Union? (European Commission, 2014)

The thesis analyses the percentage of citizens in Ireland and at the EU average level answering that the EU is going in wrong direction (see the graph below). The time span is 2009 to 2013. The thesis holds that the selected Eurobarometer question and offered reply reflect hard euroscepticism due to the expectation that, if one perceives the EU is going in wrong direction, it would be clearly against European co-operation.

Graph 13: EU is going in wrong direction



Source: European Commission, 2014

The graph demonstrates that, since 2011 sceptical opinion at Irish and EU average level follow similar pattern. It is evident that Irish citizens are less sceptical than the EU average, having lower percentages of sceptical opinion throughout the given time span. Furthermore, at both levels scepticism peaked in 2012 when a total of 44 percent of Irish citizens, and total of 53 percent of citizens at EU average level perceived that, generally speaking, things in the EU are going in the wrong direction. Interestingly, both levels reached the peak of scepticism in the period marked by negotiations of the so-called Fiscal Compact Treaty, which was signed in 2012. This may indicate that the citizens were not much in favor of greater fiscal and banking regulation and co-operation at the EU level. Though Irish citizens supported the Fiscal Compact Treaty at the referendum (with 60,3 percent voting “yes”), according to many this should not be interpreted as an actual endorsement; rather the Irish supported the Treaty mostly due to pragmatic reasons, i.e. in order to have access to the funding from European Stability Mechanism (Gouez, 2013). Nevertheless, in 2013 both levels of analysis recorded a decrease in sceptical opinions. In Ireland there was a decrease of 12 percent, while at the EU average level scepticism decreased 6 percent.

4.6 Sum up of the analytical part

This section will provide a brief sum up of the levels of euroscepticism in Ireland within all dimensions proposed by Sørensen. On the whole, there are at least four elements that appear evident.

First of all, the investigation confirms the expectation of the thesis that Ireland will demonstrate lower levels of euroscepticism regarding different dimensions in comparison with the EU average. According to the findings accounted for selected indicators, sceptical opinion in Ireland is mostly below the EU average throughout the examined periods, confirming the Irish pro-European stance. This especially holds true when it comes to hard euroscepticism, given the little evidence of rejectionist attitudes towards the EU amongst Irish citizens. However, the closer analysis of other dimensions reveals that Irish public opinion is more nuanced. In particular, the investigation demonstrates pronounced dynamics of sceptical opinion in the Irish case across different indicators used in the thesis. This is especially related to sovereignty-based, democratic and social euroscepticism. On the other hand, such dynamism is less evident at the EU average level, where developments in sceptical opinion appear more moderate and more consistent over time and across examined indicators.

The second observable feature is the Irish fairly utilitarian approach towards the EU. Not surprisingly, there is little relevance of overall economic euroscepticism in Ireland. Since the mid 1980s sceptical opinion was at very low levels across all indicators used for the examination of this particular dimension. The lowest levels of scepticism follow the period of Irish great benefits coming from the EU funds, coupled with the period of the country's economic growth during the „Celtic Tiger“ era. However, there is an observable trend of moderate increase of the sceptical opinion during the economic crisis, indicating Irish declining satisfaction with the EU. In general, one could conclude that the findings fit well with the Irish economic reasoning when it comes to the EU membership. As pointed out in the overview of the Irish EU membership experience, the perceived economic

benefits and prosperity were always a significant leitmotif of the Irish support to the European integration.

The third striking feature in the Irish case is the relevance of sovereignty-based euroscepticism. Although Irish sceptical opinion appears nuanced even within this specific type, the perception of supranational integration as a threat to national identity and culture seems to be the very strong. According to Girvin's analysis, the Irish citizens share a strong sense of collective values and traditions as well as national symbols, while the attachment with the Europe remains weak and mostly subordinate to the primary identification with Ireland (Girvin, 2010: 82-86). The Irish strong emotional consciousness about national sovereignty and its main symbols, notably the country's military neutrality, are evident during the Irish EU referenda. As presented in the third Chapter of the thesis, the Nice and Lisbon campaigns in Ireland were especially related to the sovereignty issues, illuminating how important they are for the Irish population. In fact, it seems clear that Irish people are not willing to support further European integration if it is perceived as a potential challenge to the core elements constituting their national identity. In addition, Irish traditionally strong relations with the US - due to their linguistic, cultural, family and economic links- have also contributed to a lower sensibility towards Europe (Gouez, 2013). The strong sense of Irish national identity also appears evident when it comes to the question of decision-making. According to the findings, Irish citizens largely consider national decision-making appropriate when it comes to policies which are perceived as the core national competences.

Finally, there is an observable general trend of increasing euroscepticism according to all indicators in the framework of the economic crisis. The Irish economy suffered a lot due to the economic crisis. To a great extent, Irish citizens acknowledge the domestic factors that caused the crisis in Ireland, notably the irresponsible behavior of Irish banks and individuals. However, there is also a remarkable tendency in blaming the reluctant behavior of the international actors, notably European Central Bank when it comes to both, preventive and active measures in dealing with the crisis. There is a great sense amongst Irish society

that they bear the burden of rescuing not just the Irish banks but also the whole Euro zone system. Therefore, Irish society strongly supports the Government's efforts in obtaining reliefs from the ECB in terms of debt restructuring. This, coupled with the austerity measures implemented within the three-year long bailout program, contributed to rather negative feelings regarding the EU amongst the Irish citizens (Donovan, Murphy, 2013; Gouez, 2013). Moreover, the perception of austerity measures as "imposed" from the outside, coupled with strict supervision of their implementation by foreign creditors, raised sovereignty issues in Ireland when it comes to the relations with Europe. In addition, being a "program country" has contributed to Irish fears of rule of the large member states within the Union (Gouez, 2013; Laffan, 2013). Clearly, those factors have contributed to the raise of sovereignty-based euroscepticism in Ireland. As regards to the rise of democratic euroscepticism during the crisis, the famous "Merkozy diktat" could serve as a good explanation. In fact, when taken together, all provided examples could illustrate why Irish citizens perceive democratic shortcomings in the EU. Also, the greater concerns about social policies seem understandable, given the high levels of unemployment, reductions of welfare rates and increases of taxes that came at stage during the period of crisis and implementation of austerity budgets (ibid.). Notwithstanding the raise of all dimensions of euroscepticism within the Irish society, one should keep in mind that still there is a great consensus amongst Irish that Ireland can deal better with the crisis as a part of the EU. Also, even though the support for the EU membership decreased during the period of economic crisis, it is still among the highest in the Union and it is still perceived as crucial for Ireland in engaging with the European and world affairs (ibid.).

5 CONCLUSIONS

The Euro zone crisis has revealed increasing dissatisfaction with the EU amongst European population. In addition, many have argued that, in the framework of the crisis, euroscepticism has infected the whole European continent like a virus (for example Torrbelanca, Leonard 2013). In fact, even the most Europhile nations have shown signs of greater criticism towards the European project. Considering that European citizens have acquired greater or in some cases decisive role when it comes to the developments of the European integration process, it is very important to examine better what triggers the sceptical attitudes towards the EU amongst European citizenry. The thesis finds this even more necessary when it comes to the traditionally pro-European countries.

Therefore, the thesis has selected Ireland as one of the most pro-European countries, to examine possible sceptical stances of its citizens. In particular, the thesis has reviewed Ireland's experience in the EU and it has conducted an analysis of the public euroscepticism in Ireland with the aim to detect the main pattern and dynamics of the phenomenon over time. The analysis has followed the typology and the methodological framework provided by Catharina Sørensen. Accordingly, the four types of (public) euroscepticism - economic, sovereignty-based, democratic and social - were examined in the Irish case by using corresponding Eurobarometer data.

In general, the analysis has shown that there is little evidence according to which Irish citizens could be considered to be eurosceptic; as compared to the EU average. Therefore, these findings have confirmed thesis' assumption that the levels of euroscepticism, corresponding to the different dimension, will be lower in Ireland as compared to the EU average. Nevertheless, the analysis has also demonstrated the relevance of sovereignty-based euroscepticism in the Irish case over time, implying citizens' fear of the EU's impact on national sovereignty. This finding also confirms the thesis' initial expectation. Also, it seems that the economic euroscepticism in Ireland follows the country's (in)-tangible benefits

from the EU membership, being very low in the period when country benefited the most, while showing increasing trends during economic crisis. This reveals the Irish utilitarian approach to the EU. Further, although there was little evidence of democratic and social euroscepticism over time, these dimensions have recorded increasing levels in the framework of crisis. In particular, after being consistently lower than the EU average, the democratic euroscepticism in Ireland has increased and converged with the EU average levels following the economic crisis. As regards the social euroscepticism, dynamics is slightly different. After being at repeatedly lower levels, Irish concerns related to social issues increased significantly in 2009 reaching its highest level in observing time span, and thus surpassing the EU average level. However, already in the next year the concerns regarding social issues have decreased, recording declining trend since then.

These dynamics of eurosceptical attitudes, coupled with the historical overview of the Irish EU membership, reveal that Irish support towards the EU is nuanced. Clearly, Irish citizens are very supportive towards some parts of the European integration process, and less to the others. Due to the historical reasons, the Irish narrative and the reasoning when it comes to the European integration process were always more of economic than ideological nature. To the largest part, Irish support to the EU followed the good fit between economic developments in the Union and Ireland's domestic plan of the economic modernization. The economic aspect of the integration process was never controversial in Ireland, except in the cases when other European political leaders challenged the Irish lucrative corporate tax system. The approach to European political co-operation becoming closer is in the same vein. Although supportive for some parts, Ireland is very reluctant to give up exclusively national competences in specific policy areas, notably in defense affairs. As presented in the thesis, the main reason behind this is the country's tradition of military neutrality, which also holds strong identity connotations. Drawing from Irish historical legacy, the military neutrality during WWII was seen amongst Irish as a confirmation of the country's independence from the UK. Therefore, any European proposal that might challenge Irish military neutrality triggers sceptical attitudes amongst the Irish citizenry. This was also demonstrated by initial rejections of the Nice and Lisbon Treaty on the EU

referenda. Due to the Irish strong consciousness about their national sovereignty and its main symbols, Irish citizens are not willing to support further European integration if it is perceived as a possible challenge. Taken together, those findings indicate that Irish approach to the EU integration is highly pragmatic.

Notwithstanding Irish overall high support towards European integration, the thesis has demonstrated that public euroscepticism could be expected along sovereignty-based dimension. This coupled with the slightly rise of all other eurosceptic dimensions in the framework of the economic crisis may serve as a silent warning for domestic leaders. As demonstrated in the example of two rejected EU referenda, if supportive Irish attitudes are not mobilized or if European issues at the stake are not well explained, Irish citizens do not hesitate to act differently towards the EU. Therefore, Irish Europhile mainstream political parties should actively engage with citizens in order to deal with sceptical attitudes.

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APPENDIX: Irish EU Referenda

Table 1: Irish EU Referendum Votes and Results

Referendum	Turnout	%	Yes	%	No	%	Result
Accession (1972)	1,264,278	70.9	1,041,890	83.1	211,891	16.9	Yes
Single European Act (1985)	1,085,304	44.1	755,423	69.9	324,977	30.1	Yes
Maastricht (1992)	1,457,219	57.3	1,001,076	69.1	448,655	30.9	Yes
Amsterdam (1998)	1,543,930	56.2	932,632	61.7	578,070	38.3	Yes
Nice I (2001)	997,826	34.8	453,461	46.1	529,478	53.9	No
Nice II (2003)	1,446,588	49.5	906,317	62.9	534,887	37.1	Yes
Lisbon I (2008)	1,621,037	53.1	752,451	46.6	862,415	53.4	No
Lisbon II (2009)	1,816,098	58	1,214,268	67.1	594,606	32.9	Yes
Fiscal Compact (2012)	1,589,204	50.5	955,091	60.4	626,907	39.6	Yes

Source: Michael Holmes, 'The European Parliament Election in Ireland, 5 June 2009'. *European Parties Elections and Referendums Network European Parliament Election Briefing No 35* at http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/documents/no_35_epernep2009ireland.pdf; and <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2012/0601/breaking1.html>.

Source: John FitzGibbon: REFRENDUM BRIEFING NO 19 THE REFERENDUM ON THE EUROPEAN FISCAL COMPACT TREATY IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND, 31 MAY 2012 In: the European Parties Elections and Referenda Network (EPERN) - Sussex European Institute, published: 22 April 2013