ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR OF THE IRISH ELECTORATE IN THE REFERENDUM ON THE TREATY OF NICE

Results of a survey of public opinion carried out for the

European Commission Representation in Ireland

Survey carried out by Irish Marketing Surveys Limited, in association with EOS Gallup Europe

Analysis and report by

Professor Richard Sinnott

Public Opinion and Political Behaviour Research Programme

Institute for the Study of Social Change, University College Dublin

Full Report, including figures and tables, are available in the Representation's website: http://www.euireland.ie

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The purpose of the report that is summarised here is to examine what the Irish electorate did (and did not do) on 7 June 2001 and why. The report is based mainly on an analysis of a survey carried out in the aftermath of the referendum on behalf of the European Commission Representation in Ireland (referred to from here on as the ECR survey). The survey was conducted by Irish Marketing Surveys Ltd in association with EOS Gallup Europe. Fieldwork for the survey was conducted between 20th August and 10th September 2001 among a quota sample of 1245 adults. The questionnaire is presented in an appendix to the full report. The report also draws on the Eurobarometer series of surveys (1973-2001), the ISSP (International Social Survey Programme) 1996 survey on national identity, the post-Amsterdam survey carried out on behalf of the European Commission Representation by Lansdowne Market Research and the MRBI/Irish Times surveys conducted during the Nice referendum campaign.

The referendum results

Analysis of the results of the referendum indicates that

- more than half of those who had voted 'yes' to Amsterdam abstained in the Nice referendum.
- because turnout in European referendums in Ireland has varied from a high of 70.9 per cent (1972) to a low of 35.4 per cent (2001), the actual growth in the size of the 'no' camp as a proportion of the electorate is much more modest than the 2001 result in particular might seem to suggest
- the 'no' vote in European referendums *as a proportion of the whole electorate* has grown from 11.9 per cent in 1972 to 21 per cent in 1998. In the Nice referendum of June 2001, the 'no' vote, again as a proportion of the electorate, actually fell back to 18.5 per cent
- whereas 53 per cent of the prior 'yes' vote seems to have stayed at home, 'only' 36 per cent of prior 'no' voters did so. That 17 percentage point turnout differential is by far the largest factor explaining why the proposal to ratify the Nice Treaty was lost.
- the evidence also indicates that the 'yes' side only managed to persuade one-third of its Amsterdam supporters to vote 'yes' to Nice and that about one-in-ten 1998 'no' voters voted 'yes' in the Nice referendum.

Arising from all this, the main questions to be answered are: Why did people abstain in such large numbers? What were the factors that led to a majority 'no' vote?

Irish attitudes to integration

The ECR and other surveys provide evidence on attitudes to integration and on people's experience of the referendum that can be used to tackle these questions. Specific findings in relation to people's attitudes include:

- only one person in ten, or, at most, one person in six has a substantial interest in European affairs; on a nine-point scale ranging from little or no interest to very interested, only one-third make it beyond the half-way point
- an index of knowledge of the European Union and its institutions shows a rather sorry picture - 63 per cent score zero, 25 per cent score 1, 10 per cent score 2 and a mere 2 per cent score 3.
- at first sight, Irish attitudes to integration look very positive - 72 per cent of the Irish adult population believe that Ireland's membership of the EU is a 'good thing', a level of support that is some 25 percentage points above the European average
- on other measures of attitude, however, the picture is rather different -- faced with a hypothetical dissolution of the Union, 54 per cent of respondents say they would be indifferent or simply don't know what to think
- this indifferent/don't know proportion grew significantly between 1998 and 2001 to a point at which it now outnumbers those showing any enthusiasm for integration; in short, well before the referendum itself, there were signs of a small but significant shift in Irish attitudes to integration.
- attitudes have also shifted on a measure that taps people's leanings towards full integration versus the protection of independence; in 1996, 55 per cent favoured the pro-integration option and 32 per cent leaned towards the protect independence option; between then and the final Irish Times/MRBI poll of the Nice campaign, support for the full integration option declined from 55 to 40 per cent with the result that, shortly before polling day, anti-integration sentiment had inched ahead of pro-integration sentiment
- in the wake of the referendum pro-integration support fell further and now stands at only 25 per cent, or less than half what it was in 1996
- anti-integration sentiment also fell back from the peak it had registered in the final poll of the Nice campaign and, at 35 per cent, it is now just slightly ahead of what it was in 1996
- most importantly, these levels of support for both the pro- and the anti-integration positions must be read in the light of the fact that each is outnumbered on this dimension of attitude to integration by the combination of the uncommitted and, or, the confused.

Attitudes to issues in the Nice referendum

Turning from overall support for integration to the specific issues that arose in the Nice referendum campaign, the ECR survey shows that

- there is a plurality in favour of enlargement of the Union (41 per cent say they are in favour and only 15 per cent saying they are against) but it is also important to note that 43 per cent have not made up their minds on this issue
- on neutrality and EU co-operation in the area of foreign and security policy, opinion is spread across a wide spectrum: 50 per cent come down, with varying degrees of commitment, in favour of participation in EU peace-keeping/peace-making operations (as against 15 per cent who lean toward refusing to participate in such operations)

while, at the same time 40 per cent came down on the side of strengthening neutrality even though this might mean being less involved in European foreign and defence policy (as against 19 per cent who lean towards accepting limitations on neutrality). Thirty-six per cent take a don't know or non-committal position on the EU peace-keeping/peace-making operations, while 41 per cent do likewise on the neutrality issue

- on the issue of EU decision-making processes, almost half (46 per cent) either take a non-committal middle position on the scale or give a don't know or no-opinion response; the half (approximately) that do take a view are fairly evenly divided between those who are satisfied and those who are dissatisfied, though the latter are somewhat more intense in their view
- on the more general issue of the exercise of power in the European Union, opinion is considerably more clear-cut and, from the point of view of the Union, more negative; asked to choose between the two statements that "The big countries in the EU have far too much power and influence" and the statement that "the small countries in the EU are well able to defend their own interests" only 30 per cent were non-committal and 51 per cent came down in favour of the view that the big countries have too much power as against 19 per cent who took the view that the small countries are well able to look after themselves
- on the issue of whether current proposals for the development of the European Union will make things like divorce and abortion more easily available in Ireland, 47 per cent adopted a non-committal or don't know position on the scale; a further 20 per cent tended in varying degrees to dismiss the idea that there is any such effect; however, one third of people believe, again to with varying degrees of conviction, that such an effect is likely, with eleven per cent being fully convinced that this is so.

The referendum experience

The ECR survey also provides evidence of people's experience of the referendum:

- for most of the electorate, that experience was not a happy one - by referendum day, a mere 8 per cent felt they "had a good understanding of what the treaty was all about" and a further 28 per cent felt that they "understood some of the issues but not all that was involved"; thus, two-thirds of people felt either that they were "only vaguely aware" of the issues involved (28 per cent) or that "did not know what the Treaty was about at all" (35 per cent)
- when abstainers were asked: "Had you voted in the referendum on 7th June, would you have voted in favour or against the Nice Treaty? 20 per cent of abstainers said that they would have voted 'no' while only 10 per cent said they would have voted 'yes'; the really striking fact, however, is that 69 per cent of those who abstained indicated that they still did not know how they would have voted

The fact that referendum communication and campaigning left something to be desired is confirmed by respondents' less than enthusiastic evaluations of a wide array of sources ranging from the media, to the explicit campaigns, to informal discussions

- none of the sources examined was found to be of value by even half the respondents

- the sources of information found to be most valuable were television news and current affairs programmes (45 per cent), discussion within families and among friends and colleagues (43 per cent), radio news and current affairs (42 per cent) and the newspapers (40 per cent)
- the leaflets and brochures circulated by the parties and organisations campaigning on each side come in a good way behind the media, the 'no' campaign (31 per cent) being a tiny fraction ahead of the 'yes' campaign (28 per cent) in this respect
- given its assigned role as an even-handed purveyor of information and arguments that are meant to state both sides of the issue with equal force, a positive rating of 30 per cent for the Referendum Commission is a particularly poor reflection on that aspect of the communication process
- one-in-four respondents said that they found the Nice Treaty a valuable source of information; as it is highly unlikely that many people had access to the text of the treaty, this proportion presumably reflects people's sense of having considered aspects of the treaty as conveyed in media coverage and in public debate
- a similar proportion found the Government's White Paper on the Nice Treaty or the summary of that document to have been at least of some value
- at the lower end of the scale of perceived value one finds the poster campaign (19 per cent at least of some value), the Office of the European Commission and the European Parliament (14 per cent) and internet sources (11 per cent).

Sources of abstention in the Nice referendum

By far the most frequent subjective explanation given for abstention was lack of information and lack of understanding of the issues; forty-four per cent of Nice abstainers explained their non-voting in these terms; this is up substantially compared to the Amsterdam referendum, when 'only' 25 per cent of abstainers cited lack of knowledge or understanding as their reason for not voting.

The extent of the influence of this sense of lack of understanding of the issues is confirmed by detailed statistical analysis that shows that, controlling for the effect of habitual abstention, non-voting in the Nice referendum

- was influenced most of all by the feeling of not understanding the issues
- the probability of abstention was also increased by being young (either under 25 or between 25 and 34), by resort to the offices of the European Commission and European Parliament for information and, more marginally, by the view that the big countries in the EU wield too much power and influence
- on the other hand, the probability of abstention was reduced by having a lower middle class occupation, by finding the Government's White Paper or a summary of it helpful, by finding discussion of the issues with family, friends or colleagues helpful and by the belief that current EU developments will make things like divorce and abortion more easily available in Ireland.

Sources of the 'no' vote in the Nice referendum

As with the analysis of the sources of abstention, the sources of the 'no' can be examined by first considering people's subjective accounts of their reasons for voting as they did and by following this with a detailed statistical analysis of the socio-demographic and attitudinal characteristics of 'yes' and 'no' voters.

- On the 'yes' side, the predominant characteristic of people's conscious or remembered reasoning was a general belief in European integration or in Irish membership of the Union and in the desirability of enlargement.
- On the 'no' side, the predominant characteristic of the voters' decision process was a feeling of not being adequately on top of the issues and a tendency to follow the maxim, which had been prominent in the 'no' campaign in the Amsterdam referendum, "if you don't know, vote no".
- Forty-one per cent of 'no' voters decided during the last week of the campaign or on the day of referendum itself. Late decisions of this kind occurred among only 29 per cent of 'yes' voters; this suggests that ratification of the Nice Treaty may well have been lost in the final stages of a less than riveting campaign.

The statistical analysis provides considerably more detail on the factors leading to a 'no' vote:

- even when controlling for a wide range of variables, there was a persistent gender factor, women being more likely to vote 'no'
- predictably, those who found the 'yes' campaign material valuable were more likely to vote 'yes' and vice versa for the 'no' campaign and voting 'no'
- two types of media coverage seem to have influenced vote choice but in opposite directions: those who found television news and current affairs programmes valuable were more likely to vote 'yes', while those who found radio news and current affairs programmes valuable were more likely to vote 'no'.
- finally in this category of communication effects, those who found the offices of the European Commission and the European Parliament useful were more likely to vote 'yes'.

Attitudes, issues and the 'no' vote

The influence of political attitudes and perceptions is particularly important as such influences need to be taken into account in responding to the outcome to the referendum. The key findings in this regard are that:

- the most important attitudinal influence on the 'no' vote seems to have been dissatisfaction with the way in which policies and decisions are made in the Union
- support for strengthening Irish neutrality even if this means being less involved in EU co-operation on foreign and defence policy is the second most important influence but its effect is noticeably weaker than the effect of dissatisfaction with EU decision-making.

- the neutrality issue is closely followed as a factor leading to a 'no' vote by opposition to enlargement and by the feeling that the big countries have far too much power and influence (essentially another aspect of the decision-making issue)
- even allowing for the influence of these specific attitudes, the general preference for an approach to the European Union that emphasises protection of independence rather than full integration also contributed to a 'no' vote
- the perception that current proposals for the development of the Union will have a liberalising effect on the availability of divorce and abortion in Ireland also affected vote choice; however, the effects of this perception are complex and are different in different segments of the society; the overall effect of this perception *is to increase the probability of voting 'no'*; however, this overall effect only becomes apparent when one takes account of the fact that the combination of a perception of a liberalising effect and being under 35 *increased the probability of voting 'yes'* and, likewise, that the perception of liberalising effect and being female *also increased* the probability of voting 'yes'.
- 'no' voters were more inclined to feel they did not understand the issues and were inclined to make up their minds only in the final stages of the campaign; 'yes' voters, on the other hand, were more likely to feel uncertain about the decision they had made.

Conclusion

The point is so important that it bears repetition: abstention, rather than a swing from 'yes' to 'no', was the key feature of the behaviour of the Irish electorate in the referendum on the Nice Treaty. This means that, instead of asking a single and apparently obvious question (Why did the Irish people turn against EU treaty change?), one must ask two distinct questions: (1) Why did so many abstain? and (2) Of those who did come out to vote, why did a majority vote 'no'?

The major factor accounting for the extraordinarily high level of abstention was the electorate's sense of not understanding the issues involved. This comes across very strongly in the subjective accounts given by those who abstained and is confirmed by the statistical analysis that assesses the impact on abstention of a wide range of variables and identifies the sense of lack of understanding as the key factor. This finding is consistent with many other aspects of the data in the ECR survey, principally with the recurring high level of don't know or non-committal responses. These indications of high levels of indifference and don't know are confirmed by data from the Eurobarometer and other surveys, underlining the fact that the problem of lack of understanding and lack of commitment on European issues is not peculiar to the issues arising from the Nice Treaty.

People's experience of the Nice referendum campaign, across a wide range of communication channels, was not a happy one and did very little to increase their propensity to vote. With the exception of the Government's White Paper (or the summary of it), the campaign process failed to contribute to mobilising participation and, by implication, failed to enable electors to clarify their minds on the issues. As a communication process, taking that term in the broadest sense to include a wide range of

communication processes, the campaign did not work either as well as it might have, or as well as it needed to given the prevailing sense of incomprehension in the mind of the electorate. There is no doubt but that the Nice Treaty is hard to explain. The point is that this cannot provide an alibi - given the Irish constitutional context, ways must be found to inform the public about the issues involved and to foster the public's confidence in its understanding of the issues. As to people being mobilised to vote by their attitudes or beliefs in this area, it is striking that the only attitude/belief variable that contributed to increasing the probability of turning out to vote was the perception that current proposals for the development of the EU would make divorce and abortion more readily available in Ireland.

The most important attitudinal or issue-related determinant of the 'no' vote seems to have been general dissatisfaction with EU policy-making processes rather than concern about specific issues. However, support for strengthening Irish neutrality and opposition to enlargement (although the latter was very much a minority view) also contributed to a 'no' vote. So too did the perception that EU developments would have a liberalising effect in regard to moral issues, a very important point being, however, that the direction of this effect was different in different segments of the society.

Finally, one should note that a 'no' vote tended to be a late decision. This fits in with the finding that it was boosted by the sense of lack of understanding of the issues. But this kind of potential volatility is not confined to the 'no' side, as it appears that 'yes' voters vote was more likely to be uncertain about their decision. The fact that these characteristics of both 'yes' and 'no' voters persist even when controlling for the influence of all the other variables underlines one of the fundamental messages to emerge from this research, namely that lack of understanding, uncertainty and indecisiveness are quite pervasive in Irish public opinion in this area. All of this points to the need to for a clear political debate about Europe, a debate that may change some minds from 'yes' to 'no' and some from 'no' to 'yes' but a debate that above all will need to change minds from incomprehension and confusion to some degree of clarity and conviction. The recently established National Forum on Europe will no doubt contribute to this process but it is also the case that how referendums are conducted and how they are approached by all concerned will need to be critically examined.

THE REPORT

Introduction

While the outcome of the Irish referendum on the Nice Treaty was clear and decisive, exactly what happened in terms of the behaviour of the electorate and in terms of the reasons for that behaviour is far from clear. The purpose of this report[1] it to examine what the Irish electorate did (and did not do) on 7 June 2001 and why. The report proceeds first by considering the referendum results themselves, taking account not just of 'yes' and 'no' voters but also of abstainers, looking at each of these groups over time, and attempting in particular to track the shifts that occurred from one group to another between the Amsterdam and Nice referendums. The main part of the report follows and is devoted to an analysis of the evidence of a survey of the attitudes and behaviour of the electorate carried out in the aftermath of the Nice referendum on behalf of the European Commission Representation in Ireland. The survey was conducted by Irish Marketing Surveys Ltd in association with EOS Gallup Europe[2]. As appropriate, evidence from other surveys is used to supplement the main analysis and, in particular, to examine trends over time[3].

'Yes', 'No' and abstention in five European referendums in Ireland (1972-2001)

On the face of it, opposition to integration appears to have grown very substantially over the course of the five European referendums held in the Republic of Ireland between 1972 and 2001. Thus, the 'no' vote increased from 17 per cent in 1972 to 30 per cent in 1987 (SEA), to 31 per cent in 1992 (Maastricht), to 38 per cent in 1998, culminating in decisive growth to a winning majority (54 per cent) in the Nice referendum of June 2001.

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[1] This report was prepared as part of the Public Opinion and Political Behaviour Research Programme at the Institute for the Study of Social Change, University College Dublin. Research assistance by Elva Hannan is gratefully acknowledged.

[2] The survey was carried out under the framework contract (Flash Eurobarometer) with EOS Gallup Europe managed by the Opinion Poll Section of the Directorate General for Press and Communication of the European Commission. Fieldwork for the survey was conducted between 20th August and 10th September 2001 among a quota sample of 1245 adults. The questionnaire is provided in the appendix to this report. As post-election and post-referendum surveys tend to substantially overestimate turnout and quite often overestimate support for the winning side, it is worth noting that the reported turnout in the survey (42 per cent) is, in comparative terms, quite close to the actual turnout of 35 per cent and that the survey estimate of the 'yes' and 'no' votes (42 and 58 per cent respectively) is also quite close to the actual result.

[3] Additional surveys used in this way include the Eurobarometer series of surveys (1973-2001), the ISSP (International Social Survey Programme) 1996 survey on national identity, the post-Amsterdam survey carried out on behalf of the European Commission Representation by Lansdowne Market Research and the MRBI/Irish Times surveys conducted during the Nice referendum campaign.

However, because turnout in European referendums in Ireland has varied from a high of 70.9 per cent (1972) to a low of 35.4 per cent (2001), the actual growth in the size of the 'no' camp as a proportion of the electorate is much more modest than the 2001 result in particular might seem to suggest. As Figure 1 shows, the 'no' vote in European referendums *as a proportion of the whole electorate* has indeed grown over time, but only from 11.9 per cent in 1972 to 21 per cent in 1998. In the Nice referendum of June 2001, the 'no' vote, again as a proportion of the electorate, actually fell back to 18.5 per cent. The decline was modest (down by 48,902 votes or 2.5 percentage points (i.e. the 'no' to Nice percentage of the electorate minus the 'no' to Amsterdam percentage - see Table 1). To have been able to maintain its vote to that extent in the face of huge overall abstention in the referendum of 2001 was a very significant achievement by the 'no' camp, an achievement that was in stark contrast to the catastrophic decline in the 'yes' vote (down by 666,976 votes or 18.1 percentage points). However, the fact remains that the 'no' vote did decline and, consequently, to ask why the Irish people have suddenly taken an anti-integration turn is to ask the wrong question.

On the face of it, the data considered so far might seem to suggest a very simple picture, namely that, in comparison to the Amsterdam referendum, the 'yes' vote fell 18 percentage points, the 'no' vote fell two-and-a-half percentage points and abstention went up just over 21 percentage points and that was that. However, because these are net figures, they do not necessarily reflect the real amount of movement between the various options ('yes', 'no' and abstain) from Amsterdam to Nice. A more detailed analysis of the constituency-by-constituency results using a recently developed methodology for ecological inference[4] confirms the expectation that the actual situation was more complex. The analysis indicates that more than half of those who had voted 'yes' to Amsterdam abstained in the Nice referendum. Abstention also occurred among those who had voted 'no' to Amsterdam, though at a lower rate. Whereas 53% of the prior 'yes' vote seems to have stayed at home, 'only' 36 per cent of prior 'no' voters did so. That 17

[4] By identifying the underlying patterns in the relationships between the various choices at the level of the constituencies, the Thomsen method of ecological inference seeks to estimate the flow of votes between one referendum (or election) and another. It should be emphasised that the method only provides estimates.

percentage point turnout differential was by far the largest factor in the defeat of the proposal to ratify the Nice Treaty. Table 2 also indicates that the 'yes' side only managed to persuade one-third of its Amsterdam supporters to vote 'yes' to Nice and that, as vox pops and radio talk-ins suggested, there was indeed some movement from 'yes' to 'no'. That movement seems to have amounted to about 13 per cent of the 'yes' to Amsterdam vote, though one should also note that this seems to have been partially offset by the 9 per cent of 1998 'no' voters who voted 'yes' this time around (see Table 2).

All of this points to two key questions. First, what were the reasons for such widespread abstention? Secondly, focusing on the minority of the electorate that did turn out to vote, what were the main factors leading to a majority 'no' and a minority 'yes' to the proposal to ratify the Nice Treaty? In order to deal adequately with these two questions, it is necessary, first, to provide a brief account of the attitudinal background against which referendums on EU treaty changes occur in Ireland, that is an account of what might be called the political culture of European integration. The report then looks at attitudes to some of the key issues in the referendum and at people's response to the campaign and to the various sources of information that were available to them in the run-up to the referendum. It concludes by analysing the nature and sources of abstention and of the 'no' vote, taking into consideration both people's own accounts of their reasons for their action (or inaction) and the full range of attitudinal and socio-demographic variables provided by the survey.

The political culture of European integration in Ireland

Interest and knowledge

Issues having to do with the European Union are a minority interest in Ireland. On a nine-point scale defined at one end by the statement "I am very interested in issues relating to the European Union" and, at the other end by the statement "I have little or no interest in issues relating to the European Union", only one-third make it beyond the half-way point of the scale, i.e. indicate their position on the scale as being between points 1 and 4 (see

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Readers interested in the methodology will find a detailed account of the problem and the approach at http://www.ps.au.dk/srt/multi/thoms00.pdf.

Figure 2). Fifty-one per cent either place themselves below the mid-point of the scale or don't even have an opinion on whether or not they are interested.

In the light of this widespread lack of interest, it is not surprising that the electorate is not very well informed about European affairs. Knowledge of matters related to the European Union was measured in the survey by three political/institutional questions and by a question regarding the date on which Euro notes and coins will come into circulation. The level of knowledge of the date of the coming into circulation of the Euro currency is extremely high (92 per cent). This shows that on simple factual matters that have an impact on individuals, that have a very high profile, and that are systematically publicised, accurate knowledge can become almost universal. However, when it comes to political knowledge, the story is very different. Putting the answers to the three political/institutional questions together to form an index of political knowledge shows a sorry picture - 63 per cent score zero, 25 per cent score 1, 10 per cent score 2 and a mere 2 per cent score 3. Quite clearly, attitudes to European integration as well as attitudes to and behaviour in the Nice referendum must be assessed in the light of the low levels of knowledge revealed by this index.

Support for European integration

The fact that Eurobarometer surveys over the years show that Irish people have a high level of approval of Ireland's membership of the Union is well known. The most recent Eurobarometer (a survey conducted every six months in all member states on behalf of the European Commission) indicates that 72 per cent of the Irish adult population believe that Ireland's membership of the EU is a 'good thing'. Irish support for membership of the Union, as measured in this way, is some 25 percentage points ahead of the EU average (see Figure 3). Given this level of support, why did the Nice referendum result in defeat for the 'yes' side? Part of the answer lies in the fact that one can be in favour of Ireland's membership of the Union and against the Nice Treaty. However, part of the answer also lies in the point made at the outset of this report - namely that, because of the low turnout, the proportion voting against Nice was under 20 per cent and that the contrast with the Eurobarometer data on support for membership is not all that stark. The final bit of the

answer is that the Eurobarometer 'membership' indicator, which tends to attract the most attention, does not tell the whole story about attitudes to integration in Ireland or elsewhere.

An alternative Eurobarometer measure that tends to receive less attention poses the following hypothetical question: If you were told tomorrow that the European Union had been scrapped, would you be very sorry about it, indifferent or very relieved? In Ireland in Spring 2001, 43 per cent per cent said they would be 'very sorry' and a mere 3 per cent said they would be very relieved. The really important aspect of the response to this question, however, is that 54 per cent of respondents either say that they would be indifferent to the scrapping of the Union or give a don't know response. This indifferent/don't know proportion grew significantly and, as Figure 3 indicates, came to outnumber those showing a degree of enthusiasm for integration at some point between 1998 and spring 2001. As Figure 3 also indicates, one has to go all the way back to the mid- to late 1980s to find a similar deficit of support relative to indifference in Irish attitudes as measured in this way. Thus, well before the referendum itself, there were signs of a small but significant shift in Irish attitudes to integration.

Further light is thrown on Irish attitudes to integration and, in particular, on changes in these attitudes by a question asked in a series of survey since 1996. This alternative measure of attitude to integration asks which of two statements is closest to the respondent's view, the statements being (1) Ireland should do all it can to unite fully with the European Union and (2) Ireland should do all it can to protect its independence from the European Union. In 1996, when this question was first asked in an ISSP survey, 55 per cent favoured the pro-integration option and 32 per cent leaned towards the protect independence option (13 per cent gave a don't know response). This identification of one-third support for the protection of independence is important in so far as such a distribution of opinion is clearly much more consistent with the outcomes of the Maastricht and Amsterdam referendums in Ireland than the distribution shown by the Eurobarometer membership questions. The ISSP question has been asked four times since 1996 (immediately after the Amsterdam referendum, in two Irish Times/MRBI

surveys during the Nice referendum campaign and in the ECR survey that is the basis of this report). The trends in the responses over the five time points show two striking features. The first is the gradual decline in support for the full integration option (from 55 to 40 per cent) over the first four time points, that is from 1996 up to and including the final poll taken during the Nice campaign. This was more or less matched by the gradual increase in support for the protect-independence option to the point at which, in the final poll of the Nice campaign, anti-integration sentiment had inched ahead of pro-integration sentiment.

The second striking feature of the trends in Figure 4 is what happened in the aftermath of the Nice referendum. *Both* the pro-integration and the anti-integration sides lost support and the proportion of don't knows increased to 40 per cent. The fall in pro-integration support was the greater; it now stands at only 25 per cent, that is at less than half what it was in 1996. Anti-integration sentiment also fell back from the peak it had registered in the final poll of the Nice campaign and, at 35 per cent, it is now just slightly ahead of what it was in 1996. This means that, in the wake of the Nice referendum, the "protect independence" option outscores the "unite fully" option by 10 percentage points. However, these levels of support for both the pro- and the anti-integration positions must be read in the light of the fact that each is outnumbered by the combination of the uncommitted and the confused. This implies that, far from helping the Irish electorate to clarify its position on European integration, the Nice referendum and its outcome have left the electorate in a remarkable state of agnosticism.

Attitudes to selected issues

Enlargement

The issue of enlargement was approached in the European Commission Representation survey via a two-part question, the first part seeking an overall response to the issue and the second probing respondents' perceptions of the pros and cons of enlargement. On the broad for and against measure, the balance of expressed opinion is clearly on the positive side, with 41 per cent saying they were in favour and only 15 per cent saying they were

against. However, consistent with the data already presented, 43 per cent gave a don't know response.

This summary position can be clarified and amplified by examining the responses to the open-ended question on perceived advantages and disadvantages of enlargement. About two-in-five see no particular advantages in enlargement and a very similar proportion feel the same about potential disadvantages. In other words, whether it be a matter of being for or against, or spelling out advantages or disadvantages, a plurality of the electorate of approximately the same size (40 per cent or thereabouts) have no view on the matter. As to those who do see pros and cons, there are some obvious common themes and some themes that are specific to the identification of advantages or disadvantages. Thus, for example, 23 per cent see economic advantages in enlargement while 28 per cent see economic disadvantages. Eight per cent see advantages in terms of sovereignty and power in the shape of a stronger and broader Europe while 19 per cent worry about the implications for sovereignty and the exercise of power in terms of direct loss of national sovereignty or in terms of Europe simply becoming too large and unwieldy. Other categories that arise in the responses are specifically positive or negative. For example, 11 per cent cite the benefits in terms of fairness that enlargement will bring, while, on the negative side, 7 per cent worry about the implications of increased migration.

Neutrality and security policy

Irish neutrality and its implications for participation in a European common foreign and security figured prominently in the referendum debate. In dealing with this issue, the ECR survey took a two-pronged approach. The first was to allow neutrality concerns (or any issue or set of issues that might have influenced the voters' decisions) to emerge in the responses to an open-ended question on why people had voted the way they had. This exploratory approach has the advantage of identifying the key issues without prior suggestion or cues being provided by the survey question. If people, in thinking about their vote, were strongly exercised by the EU's Rapid Reaction Force or by possible military interventions for the purpose of "peace enforcement" or "peace-making" within or outside the European area, one would expect these matters to arise in the responses to

the open-ended question. However, this kind of questioning has its limitations. In the first place, it is likely to be incomplete - even with the encouragement of multiple responses, respondents rarely give a full account of what has affected their vote. The open-ended questioning technique brings with it the additional disadvantage that one only obtains evidence of attitudes to the issue for those who spontaneously mention it as a reason for voting in a particular way. If one were relying totally on an open-ended question of this sort, one would have no evidence regarding attitudes to the object in question across a large swathe of the population.

In order to obtain data on attitudes in this area across the electorate as a whole, the survey posed questions designed to measure attitudes to two broadly defined issues that arise in the debate on Ireland's involvement in European security policy co-operation. The first question sought to measure people's attitude to participation in peace-keeping and peace-making operations that are decided on by the European Union. The second question measures their attitude to neutrality and its implications for Irish involvement in EU co-operation on foreign and defence policy.

In the light of the traditions of Irish involvement in UN peace-keeping and of Ireland's policy of neutrality, it is not surprising that Irish opinion leans in the direction of support *both* for peace-keeping/peace-making on the one hand *and* for strengthening neutrality on the other. The largest endorsement is for participation in European peace-keeping/peace-making: 50 per cent come down, with varying degrees of commitment, in favour of such participation, 36 per cent are in the middle or simply don't have a view on the matter and 14 per cent are against. On the issue of Irish neutrality, opinion was somewhat less clear-cut; 40 per cent came down on the side of strengthening neutrality (even though this might mean being less involved in European foreign and defence policy), 41 per cent adopted a non-committal middle position or did not know and 19 per cent were in favour of accepting limits on neutrality (in the interest of greater involvement in EU foreign and defence policy). In summary, Irish people as a whole give a moderate endorsement to involvement in EU peace-keeping/peace-making operations and to a policy of strengthening neutrality, with the endorsement of the former being marginally stronger.

This leaves Irish policy-makers with the difficult task of trying to find a case by case balance between these potentially conflicting values while also indicating that opinion in this area is not hard and fast.

Power and decision-making in the EU

Rather than getting tied down in the detail of the particular proposals for institutional reform that were part of the Nice Treaty, the ECR survey sought to ascertain the degree of people's satisfaction with the EU's decision-making and policy-making process as a whole. The results show that people find this a difficult issue - almost half (46 per cent) either take a non-committal middle position on the scale or give a don't know or no-opinion response. The half (approximately) that do take a view are fairly evenly divided between those who are satisfied and those who are dissatisfied, though the latter are somewhat more intense in their view. However, when it comes to the simpler issue or to, as it were, gut-feelings about the exercise of power in the European Union, opinion is considerably more clear-cut and, from the point of view of the Union, more negative. Asked to choose between the two statements that "The big countries in the EU have far too much power and influence" and the statement that "the small countries in the EU are well able to defend their own interests" only 30 per cent were non-committal and 51 per cent came down in favour of the view that the big countries have too much power as against 19 per cent who took the view that the small countries are well able to look after themselves. It is also striking that 22 per cent are in full agreement with the negative view while only 5 per cent agree fully with the positive view.

Influence of the EU on moral issues in Ireland

The possibility that the current proposals for the development of the European Union will make things like divorce and abortion more easily available in Ireland was one of the issues raised during the campaign. As with the issue of neutrality, one can examine the influence of such issues on the outcome of the referendum by means of an open-ended question on reasons for voting 'no'. However, in this case the disadvantages attached to the open-ended question technique may be compounded by the possibility that some people will not be willing to be explicit about such an issue being the reason for their vote

and may instead express the same reservations in general terms such as loss of sovereignty or dilution of Irish identity or some such. Accordingly, if the effect of these moral issues on the outcome of the referendum is to be assessed, it is essential to have a measure that gets at the attitude or, more precisely, at the perceptions of the population as a whole in this area. The question used in the survey seeks to measure the extent of the perception that current proposals for the development of the European Union will make things like divorce and abortion more easily available in Ireland versus the perception that these development proposals will have no effect whatsoever on whether things like divorce and abortion will become more easily available in Ireland. The results are presented in Figure 9. Not surprisingly, given the difficulty of verifying either prediction, 47 per cent adopted a middle or don't know position on the scale. A further 20 per cent tended to dismiss the idea that there is any such effect. However, one third of people believe, to varying degrees, that such an effect is likely, with eleven per cent being fully convinced that this is so. The issue here is not whether one view on this issue is right or wrong. What is of interest is that a significant section of the population believes that such an effect exists. The question to which we shall return below is: Did such perceptions have an impact on how people behaved in the Nice referendum?

The referendum experience

When respondents in the survey were asked to assess how good their understanding of the issues was by the time referendum day came round, a mere 8 per cent felt they "had a good understanding of what the treaty was all about" and a further 28 per cent felt that they "understood some of the issues but not all that was involved". This put almost a two-thirds majority on the lower end of the scale, i.e. feeling either that they were "only vaguely aware" of the issues involved (28 per cent) or that "did not know what the Treaty was about at all" (35 per cent) (see Figure 10).

What accounts for such a widespread sense of lack of understanding? One major reason is presumably that Nice is not an easy number. However, given the inevitability of referendums on EU treaty changes, that is an insufficient answer - in the Irish context, ways must be found to inform the public about the issues involved and to foster the public's confidence in its understanding of these issues. The sense of lack of

understanding is obviously also related to the low level of interest in and knowledge about European affairs already documented in this report. It is highly likely, however, that the low levels of understanding are also related to the way in which information and arguments about the issues were communicated in the course of the referendum campaign. Figure 11 provides an indication of how people evaluated a selection of the sources that might have provided them with information regarding the issues raised by the referendum. The various sources evaluated are arranged from left to right in descending order of the proportion finding the source in question either "very valuable" or "somewhat valuable".

It is striking that none of the sources mentioned was found to be of value by even half the respondents. Those sources of information found to be most valuable (counting both "very valuable" and "somewhat valuable") include television news and current affairs (45 per cent), radio news and current affairs (42 per cent) and the newspapers (40 per cent). The leaflets and brochures circulated by the parties and organisations campaigning on each side come in a good way behind the media, the 'no' campaign (31 per cent) being a tiny fraction ahead of the 'yes' campaign (28 per cent) in this respect.

Even more problematic than the low rating of the 'yes' and 'no' campaigns is the rating given to the activities of the Referendum Commission. The impact of its efforts can by judged from the fact that its value rating ("very valuable" plus "somewhat valuable") is sandwiched in between the rating of the 'yes' and the 'no' campaigns. Given its assigned role as an even-handed purveyor of information and arguments that are meant to state both sides of the issue with equal force, a positive rating of 30 per cent is in fact a much worse result for the Referendum Commission than for the campaigners on either side. The campaigns are and are meant to be one-sided and therefore are less likely to be regarded as valuable by those who are predisposed towards the opposite side. The even-handed remit of the Commission means that different aspects of its material should appeal to both sides and it should, therefore, have a higher rating than either of the partisan campaigns. Figure 11 indicates clearly that this was not the case. One-in-four respondents said that they found the Nice Treaty a valuable source of information. As it is

highly unlikely that many people had access to the text of the treaty, this proportion presumably reflects people's sense of having considered aspects of the treaty as conveyed in media coverage and in public debate. A similar proportion found the Government's White Paper on the Nice Treaty or the summary of that document to have been at least of some value. Here one may well be dealing with direct access in so far as the summary of the White Paper was distributed to all households. At the lower end of the scale of perceived value one finds the poster campaign (19 per cent at least of some value), the Office of the European Commission and the European Parliament (14 per cent) and internet sources (11 per cent).

All of the above sources are based on some organisational effort dedicated to either informing or persuading people regarding various aspects of the Nice Treaty and expending considerable resources of time, effort and, to varying degrees, money in doing so. It is particularly noteworthy therefore that people regarded an entirely informal source as on a par with the best of the formal sources of information in the lead-up to the referendum on the Nice Treaty. This informal source is the process of discussion that occurs in families and among friends and colleagues. At a 43 per cent rating as either very valuable or somewhat valuable, this was regarded by people as being as good a source as the media and considerably more valuable, therefore, than any of the campaigns, whether that of the Referendum Commission or of either the 'yes' or 'no' sides.

It must be emphasised that, while these data provide a useful overall assessment of the penetration of and public response to the various sources of information and argument, they do not provide a definitive answer to the question of the impact of these sources on turnout and abstention. It could be, that a particular source (the Government White Paper, for example) might have been found valuable by only a relatively small group of people but, for that group, may have had a significant effect on the likelihood of them turning out to vote. This vital aspect of the issue is taken up in the final section of the paper.

Sources of abstention in the Nice referendum

There are two different kinds of abstention and two different kinds of abtainers. One kind is rooted in the attitudes and experiences of the potential voter and can be referred to as voluntary abstention. Typical reasons for voluntary abstention are lack of interest in the election or in politics as such, a sense of disenchantment with the political process or a feeling of not having enough information or understanding to make a sensible choice. For the circumstantial abstainer, on the other hand, the reason for abstention has to do with some circumstance that prevents him or her from voting. Typical examples would be absence from home, a problem with voter registration, work or family commitments on the day or illness or disability. In terms of understanding the political behaviour underlying a particular election or referendum result and especially in terms of teasing out the political implications of a given level of turnout, the first of these types (i.e. voluntary abstention) is obviously the most important.

Table 3 presents the reasons for abstention that were given by those who did not vote in the Nice referendum, with comparable figures for non-voting in the Amsterdam referendum[5]. In the case of the Nice referendum, by far the most frequent explanation given for abstention was lack of information and lack of understanding of the issues. Forty-four per cent of Nice abstainers explained their non-voting in these terms. This is up substantially compared to the Amsterdam referendum, when 'only' 25 per cent of abstainers cited lack of knowledge or understanding as their reason for not voting. The next most prevalent reason for abstention is lack of interest and lack of commitment, more than half of which would seem to be due to lack of interest in politics as such rather than lack of interest in the affairs of the European Union. This kind of abstention remained fairly constant at about one abstainer in five as between Amsterdam and Nice. The remaining reasons in Table 3 have to do with circumstantial abstention. The overall level of circumstantial abstention was down significantly, which is precisely what one would expect given the huge increase in abstention (i.e. abstention increases because

[5] One should bear in mind that the Amsterdam referendum coincided with the referendum on the British-Irish Agreement and that this undoubtedly had an effect both on the turnout and on differences in the reasons for abstention as between the Amsterdam and Nice referendums.

peoples' attitudes to the particular contest change not because their circumstances change - if these attitudes become more negative, voluntary abstention goes up relative to circumstantial abstention). The most frequent source of circumstantial abstention in the Nice referendum was absence from home (15 per cent), followed by problems with registration or voting cards, followed by time constraints and work pressure.

The analysis of the sources of abstention that follows concentrates on the sources of voluntary abstention, this being the form of abstention that is both most problematic and most amenable to a political response. The subjectively-stated reasons for abstention provide some evidence as to why people did not vote but do not tell the full story. In order to get at the full, or at least a fuller story, it is necessary to take account of all the other information we have on the respondents in the survey - their demographic characteristics, their perceptions of and attitudes to the issues and their experience of the referendum. Since this involves many factors that may themselves be interrelated, it is essential to examine the effect of each individual factor while controlling for or taking into account the simultaneous effect of the others. In technical terms, this requires a multivariate analysis and, given a dichotomous dependent variable (in this case voluntary abstention versus voting), the appropriate multivariate statistical technique is logistic regression.

In a logistic regression the impact of each of the independent variables is indicated by the logistic coefficient (the B column in Table 4). However, a more intuitively satisfactory measure of the effect of each variable is given in the Exp(B)) column; this gives the factor by which the odds of the event occurring (in this case voluntary abstention) changes when the independent variable in question changes by one unit. If this factor is one or very close to one, the variable has no effect. The more the factor exceeds one or the more it is less than one, the greater the effect of the variable (a positive effect if the Exp(B) exceeds one and a negative effect if it is less than one). One must also take account of the column labelled "Significance". This indicates the statistical significance of the effect in question; for example, a significance level of 0.05 or less indicates that the effect in question is significant with a 95 per cent probability.

Table 4 makes a first stab at explaining voluntary abstention in the Nice referendum by looking at the effects on abstention of a range of demographic variables. In doing so, it controls for habitual abstention. Quite clearly, if an individual has never voted, he or she is highly likely to have abstained in the Nice referendum and such abstention is unlikely to be due to anything to do with the referendum or with the issues being debated. Accordingly, the analysis of voluntary abstention controls for the effect of being a habitual non-voter (habitual non-voters are defined as people aged 35 or over who have never voted).

Not surprisingly, habitual non-voting has the largest effect on the probability of being a voluntary abstainer is. However, it is also clear that, even allowing for this effect, the probability of voluntary abstention in the Nice referendum was also related to social class and occupation, to age and, more marginally, to being a resident in a rural area. In class and occupational terms and taking the professional and managerial class as the reference point, the probability of abstention increased if the individual had a skilled or unskilled working class occupation, was a farmer, or, independently of being a farmer, was from a rural area. In age or generational terms, voluntary abstention was higher among younger people (both the under-25s and the 25 to 34 year olds, (note that this applies to voluntary abstention and cannot be explained by reference to registration problems or difficulties arising form difficulties related to residential mobility that may affect younger age groups). So far, this is a very partial analysis. What we really want to know is not just what were the demographic characteristics of voluntary abstainers but what was it about their political experiences or attitudes that led them to abstain. One can think of such potential effects as campaign and communication effects on the one hand and attitudinal effect on the other.

When the full range of variables is included in the analysis of voluntary abstention (Table 5), the effect of being a habitual abstainer remains very strong but the picture of the demographic effects changes considerably. First of all the age effects are noticeably weaker. What this means is that the inclusion of communication and attitudinal effects in

the analysis accounts for some but not all of the age-related effects that were evident in Table 4. The picture of the effects of social class changes more extensively. Once one takes account of experiences and attitudes, the only significant social class effect is that individuals in lower middle class occupations are substantially less likely to have been voluntary abstainers in the Nice referendum. The final change between Table 4 and Table 5 in terms of demographic effects is that the weak rural effect that was evident when the analysis only included demographics disappears when account is taken of people's attitudes and their experience of the campaign.

The evidence in Table 5 underlines the ineffectiveness of most of the campaign and communication processes in so far as mobilising voters in concerned. Only two of the campaign/communication variables did anything to reduce the probability of voluntary abstention. These two variables were the process of informal communication, i.e. discussion of the issues with family, friends and colleagues and use of the Government White Paper or the official summary of that document. One other communication variable was effective, but in the direction of encouraging abstention rather than voting - Table 5 indicates that those who found the offices of the European Commission and European Parliament in Ireland valuable in the lead-up to the referendum was more likely to be voluntary abstainers. The finding is puzzling but may be a reflection of the fact that the offices in question were obliged to act as conduits for neutral information rather than acting as advocates of a 'yes' vote. The net result may have been to leave the user of this source confused or suffering from information overload and therefore more likely to abstain.

Three other communication variables - the 'yes' and 'no' campaigns and the activities of the Referendum Commission - are included in Table 5 but only to show that, although in theory they should be the prime movers of turnout, they did not have any statistically significant effect on the probability of voting or abstaining. The absence of the other communication variables from the equation indicates that none of them, including all of the various forms of media coverage, had any effect on the probability of people turning out to vote.

The final segment of Table 5 tests for the effect on abstention of a number of key attitudes and perceptions. The overwhelmingly predominant effect in this category is the feeling of not being able to understand the issues involved. As the final column in Table 5 shows, a unit change in this variable increased the odds of being a voluntary abstainer by a factor of five. It is striking indeed that the effect of this variable is of the same order of magnitude as the effect of being a habitual non-voter. In short, this analysis provides independent confirmation of the indications that emerged from abstainers' own accounts of their inaction, namely that the main source of the huge abstention in the Nice referendum was the feeling of not being adequately informed and not understanding the issues.

One might have expected that strong feelings on a number of issues would have served to mobilise people to vote. In order to test for such possible mobilising effects, people's views on the range of issues covered in the ECR survey were included in the final analysis. Only one of these attitudes had a clearly significant effect: the belief that current EU developments will make things like divorce and abortion more easily available in Ireland had quite a substantial mobilising effect, i.e. it reduced the odds of being an abstainer rather than a voter by a factor of 0.55 (see the right hand column in Table 5). One other attitudinal variable (the view that big countries have too much power and influence) might be regarded as having a marginally significant but opposite effect , i.e. there is some evidence that it may have increased the probability of voluntary abstention, presumably because it is part of a fatalistic attitude that says that what small countries or people in small countries do will not make any difference. However, Table 5 indicates that none of the other attitudes (to neutrality, to EU decision-making, to enlargement, or to integration versus independence) did anything to mobilise the electorate to turn out to vote.

In summary, controlling for the effect of habitual abstention, non-voting in the Nice referendum was influenced most of all by a feeling of not understanding the issues. Beyond this dominant factor, the probability of abstention was increased by being young

(either under 25 or between 25 and 34) and by resort to the offices of the European Commission and European Parliament for information. On the other hand, the probability of abstention was reduced by having a lower middle class occupation, by finding the Government's White Paper or a summary of it helpful, by finding discussion of the issues with family, friends or colleagues helpful and by the belief that current EU developments will make things like divorce and abortion more easily available in Ireland. It must be emphasised that these factors affected whether or not people went to vote; why they voted 'yes' or 'no' when they got there is the subject matter of the next section of this report.

Sources of the 'no' vote in the Nice referendum

Before turning to a multivariate analysis of the 'no' vote similar to that just presented for abstention, it is worth considering some basic features of the choice people made in the referendum, namely when they made their decision, how certain they were about that decision and the overt reasons they gave for it.

There were small but significant contrasts between those in the 'yes' and the 'no' camps in regard to when they had made up their mind and in regard to the certainty attached to their decision. Forty-one per cent of 'no' voters decided during the last week of the campaign or on the day of referendum itself. Late decisions of this kind occurred among only 29 per cent of 'yes' voters. This suggests that ratification of the Nice Treaty may well have been lost in the final stages of a less than riveting campaign. On the other hand, the data on the degree of certainty attaching to the 'yes' and 'no' decisions shows that the 'no' camp had a slightly greater proportion of true believers to start with (28 per cent of them being 'absolutely certain' of their decision compared to 18 per cent with such conviction among 'yes' voters). 'Yes' voters were more likely to fall in the middle of this certainty scale (i.e. to be 'pretty certain' or to 'have some reservations or doubts').

Perhaps reflecting the kind of campaign conducted by the 'yes' side, 'yes' voters tended to give very general responses to the question on reasons for their decision. Thus the most prominent reason given was an overall belief that ratification was a good thing or was part and parcel of something we were already committed to and had benefited from. Forty

per cent of the responses were in this vein. A further 22 per cent referred to the belief that enlargement was a good thing or that it was only fair to give others a chance. After that, fourteen per cent took guidance from the government, or from their preferred political party or politician including guidance via the debates that occurred on television. Four per cent followed the advice of family or friends and 10 per cent give a mixture of other reasons.

We have already seen that a felt lack of information and understanding was a major factor in discouraging people from turning out to vote. The influence of that factor did not end there. It turns up again among the reasons for voting no - in fact, at 39 per cent, it is by a long chalk the single most frequently mentioned reason for voting 'no'. Concerns about loss of sovereignty and independence came a long way behind the don't know factor at 16 per cent and the most frequently cited specific issue (neutrality) clocked in at only 12 per cent. Two other issues crop up in the subjectively-stated reasons for voting 'no' but do so with extremely low frequency (migration or refugee problems (3 per cent) and the abortion issue (1 per cent). General references to the Nice Treaty as a bad idea amounted to 7 per cent and, not surprisingly given that the bulk of the political class was on the 'yes' side, far fewer 'no' voters took their cue from political leaders (7 per cent citing party or politician or the influence of television debates in comparison to 14 per cent of 'yes' voters). 'No' voters were also less likely to cite the influence of family or friends.

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that this evidence regarding the reasons people gave for voting 'yes' or 'no' does not provide a comprehensive account of the sources of either the 'yes' or the 'no' vote nor, therefore, of the sources of the outcome of the referendum. What it does provide, however, is an indication of the kind of thinking that underpinned (if that is not too strong a term) the vote on each side. On the 'yes' side, the predominant characteristic of people's conscious or remembered reasoning was a general belief in European integration or in Irish membership of the Union and in the desirability of enlargement. On the 'no' side, the predominant characteristic of the voters' decision process was a feeling of not being adequately on top of the issues and a tendency to follow the maxim, which had been prominent in the 'no' campaign in the Amsterdam

referendum, "if you don't know, vote no". While these observations are important in understanding the source of the 'yes' and 'no' votes, they need to be supplemented by a rigorous analysis of the effects on vote choice of the full range of socio-demographic variables, communication and campaign variables and attitudinal variables described in earlier parts of this report.

As with the analysis of the sources of abstention, it is useful to get a picture first of how the 'no' vote was related to people's basic demographic characteristics even though this picture is likely to change as the effects of other variables are taken into account. Looked at in this way, the probability of voting 'no' was higher among women than among men and higher also in certain social classes but was unaffected by generational differences (being under 35 or 35 and over) or by urban-rural residence. In class terms and taking the middle class as the base of comparison, the probability of voting 'no' was increased by being lower middle class, or by being skilled or unskilled working class but (consistent with the absence of an urban-rural effect) was unaffected by being a farmer.

The problem is that, while these (limited) socio-demographic patterns undoubtedly exist, they may merely reflect the influence of other factors such as campaign exposure or pre-existing beliefs or attitudes. The 'other' factors of particular interest in this context are (a) the possible effects of the campaigns, of the media coverage and of the information sources people used in the run-up to the referendum and (b) the effects of people's attitudes to the main issues that arose in the referendum campaign and that have been set out in this report (attitude to integration versus independence, to enlargement, to neutrality and foreign and security policy co-operation, to the exercise of power in the EU, to whether EU developments are likely to affect the availability of divorce and abortion in Ireland). In addition to these policy-related preferences and perceptions, it is also worth including three variables indicating the state of mind of the voters as indicated by the timing of their decisions, by the certainty attached to those decisions and by voters' subjective assessment of their grasp of the issues.

The results of this comprehensive analysis indicate that, even when controlling for a wide range of variables, gender continues to have an effect in the direction of increasing the probability of voting 'no' (see Table 8). However, all the social-class effects disappear and the age variable (under 35 versus 35 and over) continues to be insignificant. Predictably enough, those who found the 'yes' campaign material valuable were more likely to vote 'yes' and vice versa for the 'no' campaign and voting 'no'. The campaigns may not have done anything to boost the turnout but they did register with and appeal to supporters in the respective camps. Two media effects are evident in Table 8 and it is striking that they run in opposite directions: those who found television news and current affairs programmes valuable were more likely to vote 'yes' while those who found radio news and current affairs programmes valuable were more likely to vote 'no'. Finally in this category of communication effects, those who found the offices of the European Commission and the European Parliament useful were more likely to vote 'yes'. None of the other campaign or communication variables had any effect on the vote choice of those who turned out to vote. This of course implies that the activities of the Referendum Commission, while they may not have done anything to foster higher turnout, were at least consistent with the Commission's mandate to be even-handed.

This brings us to the crucial question of what were the issues and attitudes that led to the 'no' vote on June 7th. The evidence in Table 8 suggests that the 'no' vote had its origins in a range of issues but also indicates that one can, to come degree at least, put these issues in order of importance. The most important attitudinal or issue-related determinant of the 'no' vote seems to have been dissatisfaction with EU processes rather than outcomes, i.e. with the way in which policies and decisions are made in the European Union rather than with the nature of those decisions. Support for strengthening Irish neutrality even if this means being less involved in EU co-operation on foreign and defence policy is the second most important influence but its effect is noticeably weaker than the effect of dissatisfaction with EU decision-making. The neutrality issue is closely followed by opposition to enlargement and by the feeling that the big countries have far too much power and influence (essentially another aspect of the decision-making issue). The final attitude that seems to have played a role, albeit a lesser one, is the leaning towards an

approach to the European Union that emphasises protection of independence rather than full integration.

This analysis of the impact of attitudes leaves one effect that is notable by its absence - the evidence in Table 8 seems to suggest that the perception that EU developments will affect the availability of divorce and abortion in Ireland had no influence on how people voted. This is particularly surprising in view of the substantial effect this variable had on whether or not people voted (see Table 5). How is it that this belief helped to motivate people to turn out to vote but doesn't appear to have affected the way they voted? The answer of course lies in the fact that the perception that current proposals for the development of the EU will affect the availability of divorce and abortion can be associated with a negative or a positive attitude to the outcome foreseen. Those who disapprove of such an outcome (the conservatives) will, all other things being equal, tend to vote 'no' while those who approve of the outcome (the liberals) will tend to vote 'yes'. The result is that, if one simply puts a variable measuring the perception into the analysis, its impact will be nil because the expectation leads the different groups that share it to vote in opposite ways.

That something like this did in fact occur in the Nice referendum can be demonstrated by creating a variable that captures the interaction between the perception of the effect in question and the likelihood of approving or disapproving of it. In the absence of a direct measure of approval or disapproval, one can use generation and gender as factors that are likely to interact with the perception that current EU developments will make divorce and abortion more readily available in Ireland, which, for short, we can refer to as the perception that current EU developments will have a liberalising effect in this area. Technically, this means creating two interaction terms - an interaction between being under 35 and believing that EU developments will have a liberalising effect and an interaction between being a woman and holding such a belief. When these interaction effects are added to the model, the result throws considerable light on what happened. Table 9 shows that when one allows for the fact that the perception may have different effects as between different generations and as between men and women, the perception

of a liberalising effect *per se* substantially *increases the probability of voting 'no'*. However, taking this overall influence into account, perception of a liberalising effect combined with being under 35 *increased the probability of voting 'yes'*, and perception of a liberalising effect and being female *also increased the probability of voting 'yes'*. Close inspection of Table 9 also shows that, when these interaction terms are included in the model, the impact of both gender and generation on voting 'no' is clarified. In the generational case, being under 35 had no significant impact prior to the inclusion of the interaction terms. However, after their introduction, the age variable has a statistically significant and fairly substantial impact in the direction of increasing the probability of voting 'no'. In the case of gender, the tendency for women to vote 'no' becomes stronger and more clearly evident, once, that is, the effect of the interaction of gender and the perception of a liberalising effect is taken into account.

The remaining significant effects in Tables 8 and 9 have to do with the aspects of the state of mind of the voters and how these were related to vote choice. Making a late decision was significantly associated with making a negative decision. The sense of not understanding the issues was also a factor leading to a 'no' vote. However, being uncertain about one's decision was more a feature of 'yes' voters. In summary, 'no' voters were more inclined to feel they did not understand the issues and were inclined to make up their minds only in the final stages of the campaign; 'yes' voters, on the other hand, were more likely to feel uncertain about the decision they had made.

Conclusion

The point is so important that it bears repetition: abstention, rather than a swing from 'yes' to 'no', was the key feature of the behaviour of the Irish electorate in the referendum on the Nice Treaty. This means that, instead of asking a single and apparently obvious question (Why did the Irish people turn against EU treaty change?), one must ask two distinct questions: (1) Why did so many abstain? and (2) Of those who did come out to vote, why did a majority vote 'no'?

The major factor accounting for the extraordinarily high level of abstention was the electorate's sense of not understanding the issues involved. This comes across very strongly in the subjective accounts given by those who abstained and is confirmed by the statistical analysis that assesses the impact on abstention of a wide range of variables and identifies the sense of lack of understanding as the key factor. This finding is consistent with many other aspects of the data in the ECR survey, principally with the recurring high level of don't know or non-committal responses. These indications of high levels of indifference and don't know are confirmed by data from the Eurobarometer and other surveys, underlining the fact that the problem of lack of understanding and lack of commitment on European issues is not peculiar to the issues arising from the Nice Treaty.

People's experience of the Nice referendum campaign, across a wide range of communication channels, was not a happy one and did very little to increase their propensity to vote. With the exception of the Government's White Paper (or the summary of it), the campaign process failed to contribute to mobilising participation and, by implication, failed to enable electors to clarify their minds on the issues. As a communication process, taking that term in the broadest sense to include a wide range of communication processes, the campaign did not work either as well as it might have, or as well as it needed to given the prevailing sense of incomprehension in the mind of the electorate. There is no doubt but that the Nice Treaty is hard to explain. The point is that this cannot provide an alibi - given the Irish constitutional context, ways must be found to inform the public about the issues involved and to foster the public's confidence in its understanding of the issues. As to people being mobilised to vote by their attitudes or beliefs in this area, it is striking that the only attitude/belief variable that contributed to increasing the probability of turning out to vote was the perception that current proposals for the development of the EU would make divorce and abortion more readily available in Ireland.

The most important attitudinal or issue-related determinant of the 'no' vote seems to have been general dissatisfaction with EU policy-making processes rather than concern about specific issues. However, support for strengthening Irish neutrality and opposition to enlargement (although the latter was very much a minority view) also contributed to a 'no'

vote. So too did the perception that EU developments would have a liberalising effect in regard to moral issues, a very important point being, however, that the direction of this effect was different in different segments of the society.

Finally, one should note that a 'no' vote tended to be a late decision. This fits in with the finding that it was boosted by the sense of lack of understanding of the issues. But this kind of potential volatility is not confined to the 'no' side, as it appears that 'yes' voters vote was more likely to be uncertain about their decision. The fact that these characteristics of both 'yes' and 'no' voters persist even when controlling for the influence of all the other variables underlines one of the fundamental messages to emerge from this research, namely that lack of understanding, uncertainty and indecisiveness are quite pervasive in Irish public opinion in this area. All of this points to the need to for a clear political debate about Europe, a debate that may change some minds from 'yes' to 'no' and some from 'no' to 'yes' but a debate that above all will need to change minds from incomprehension and confusion to some degree of clarity and conviction. The recently established National Forum on Europe will no doubt contribute to this process but it is also the case that how referendums are conducted and how they are approached by all concerned will need to be critically examined.

Figure 1 European referendums in Ireland: 'yes', 'no' and abstention as proportions of electorate, 1972-2001

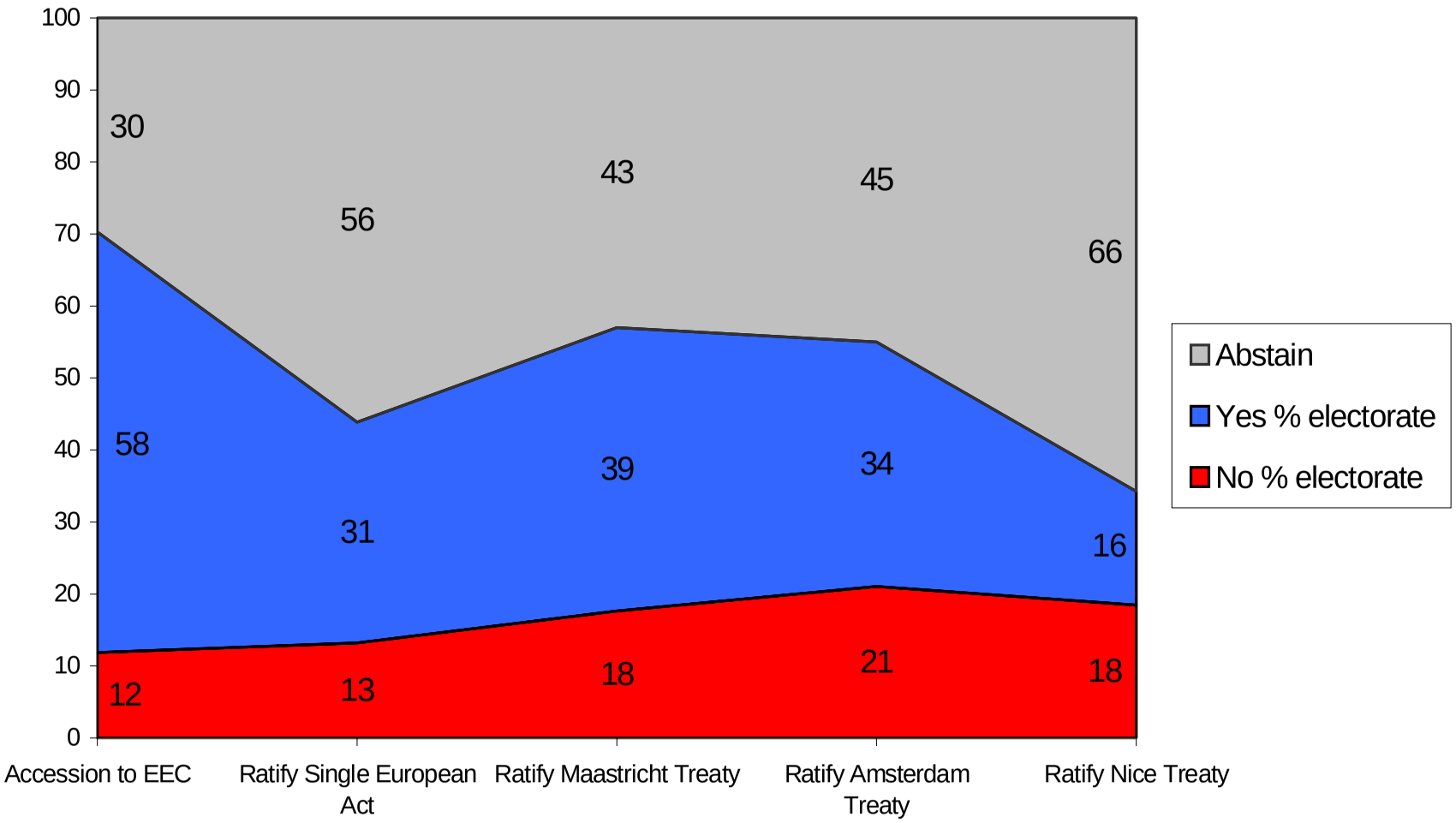

Figure 2 Interest in issues relating to the European Union

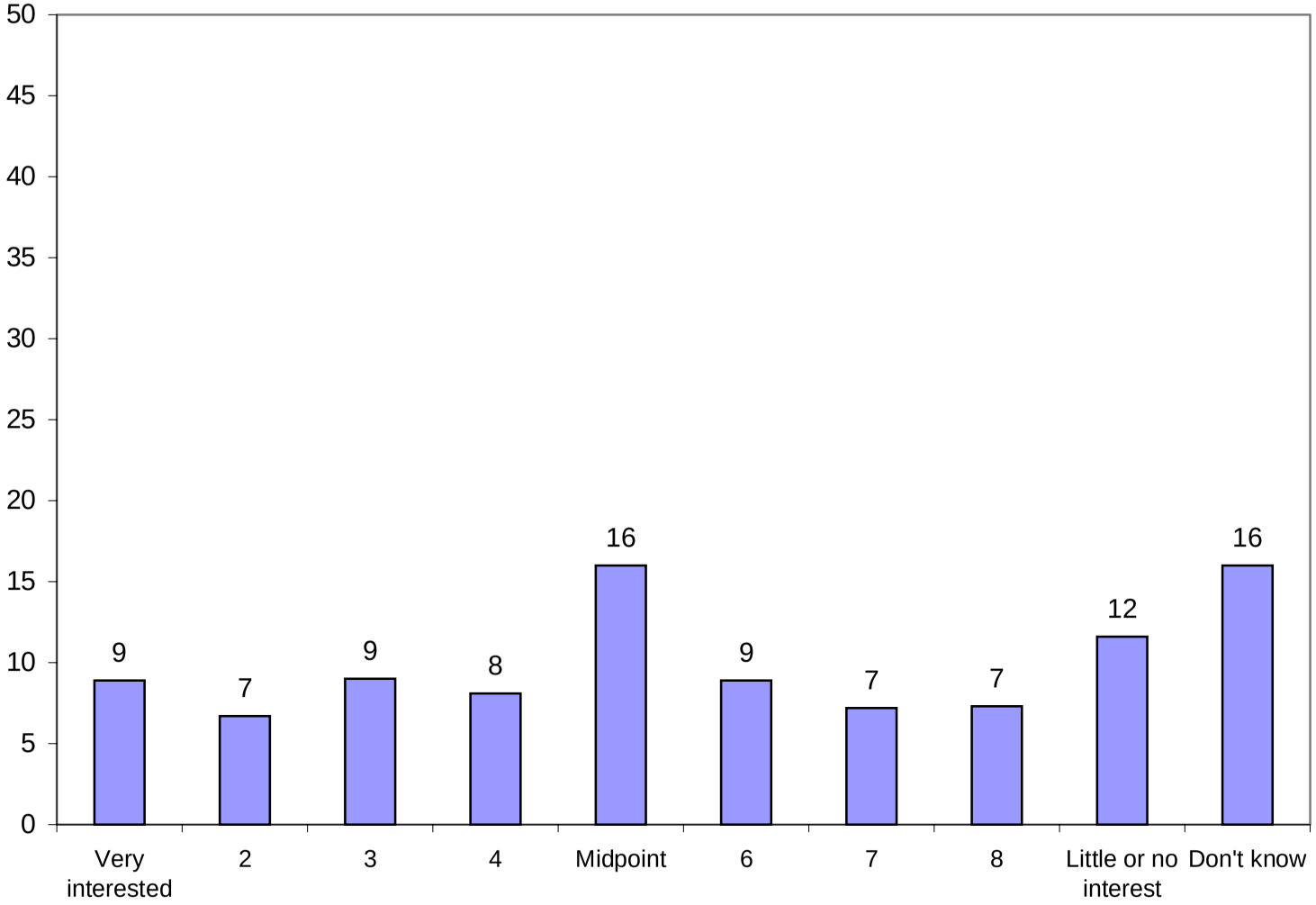

Figure 3 Irish attitudes to the European Union on three Eurobarometer indicators (membership, benefits and dissolution), 1973-2001

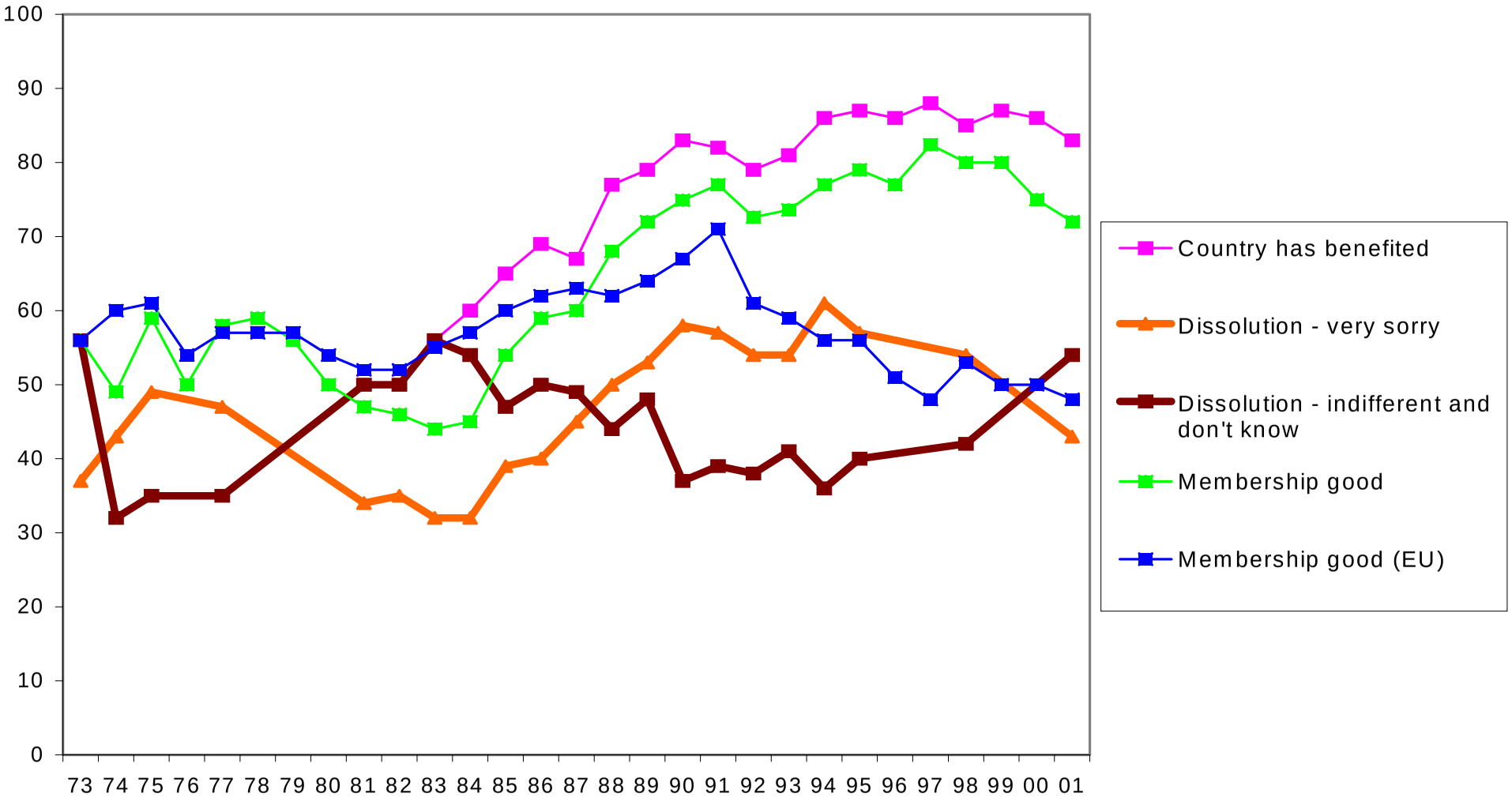

Figure 4 Attitudes to European integration (ISSP measure), 1996-2001
(Sources: ISSP 1996; Lansdowne, 1998, Irish Times/MRBI 2001, ECR Survey 2001)

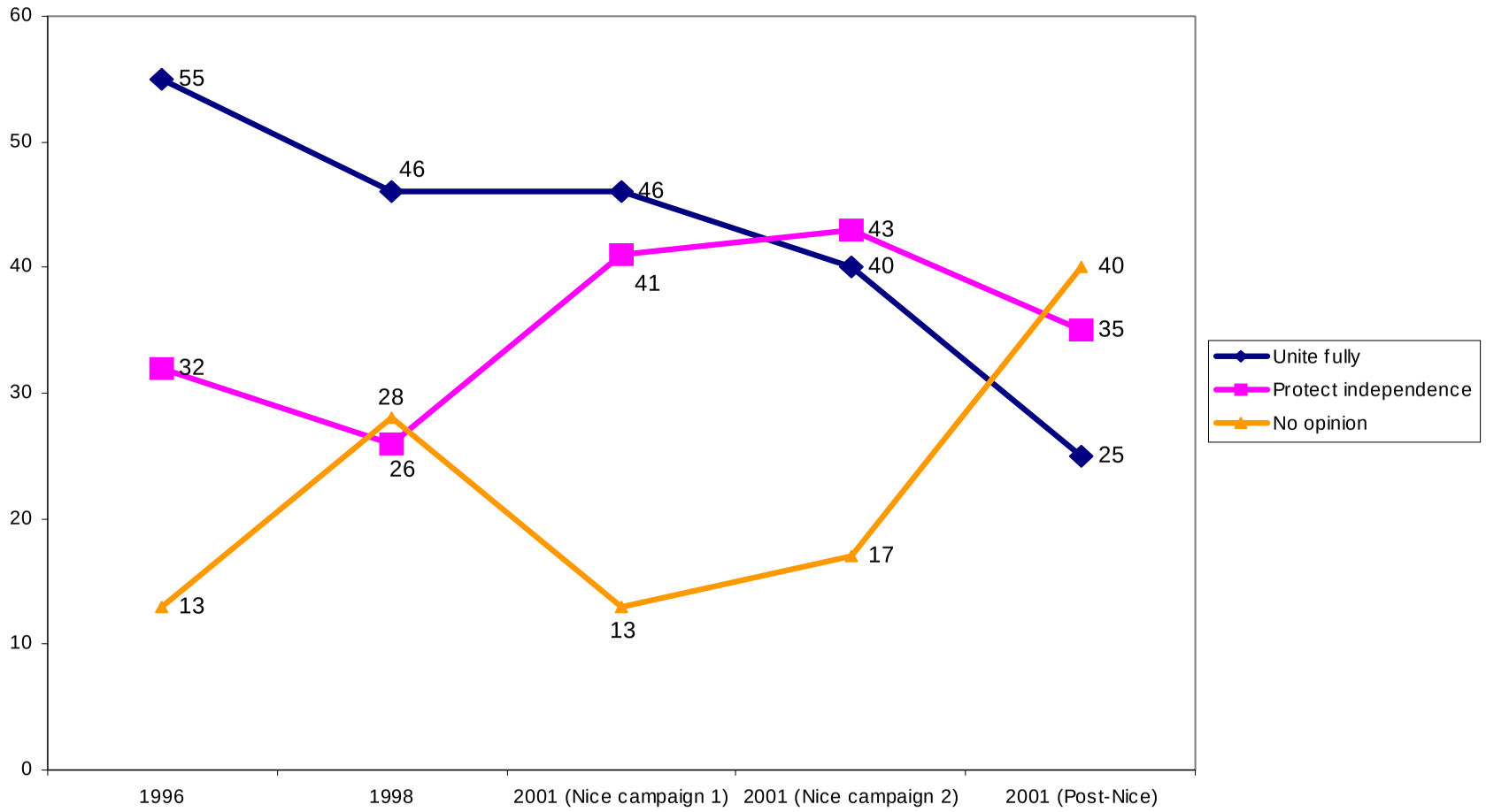

Figure 5 Attitudes to participation in peace-keeping and peace-making operations decided on by the European Union

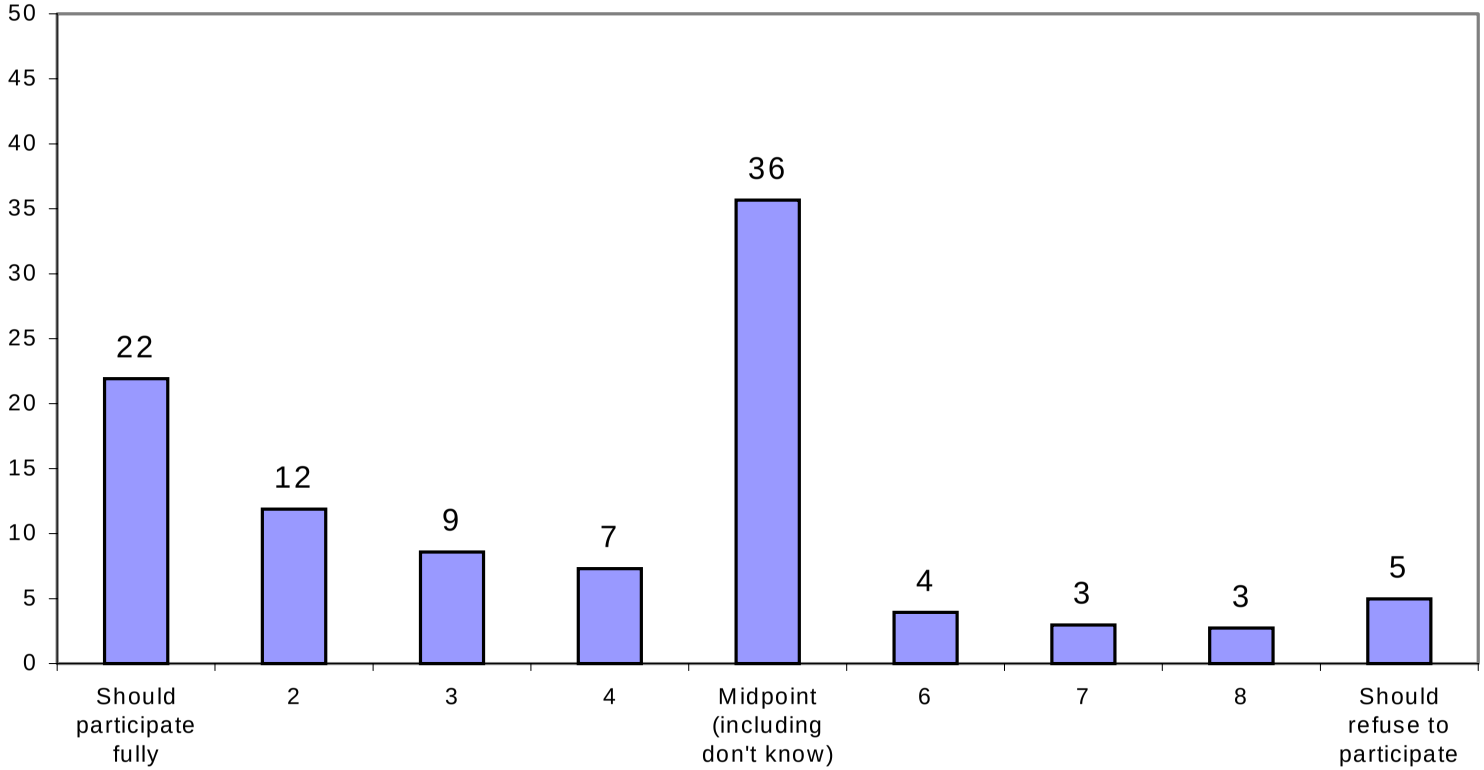

Figure 6 Attitudes to neutrality and involvement in EU co-operation on foreign and defence policy

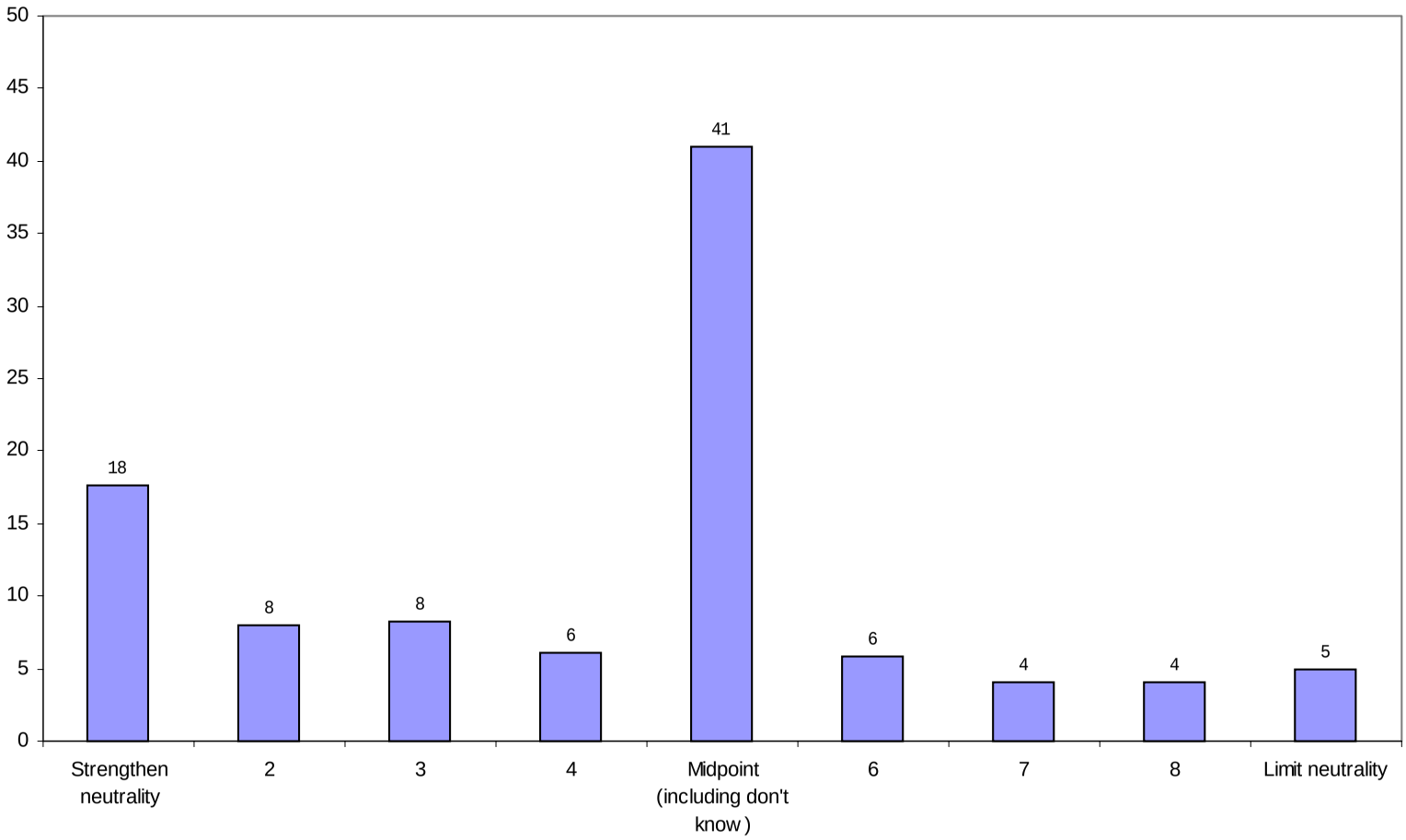

Figure 7 Satisfaction with the way in which policies and decisions are made in the EU

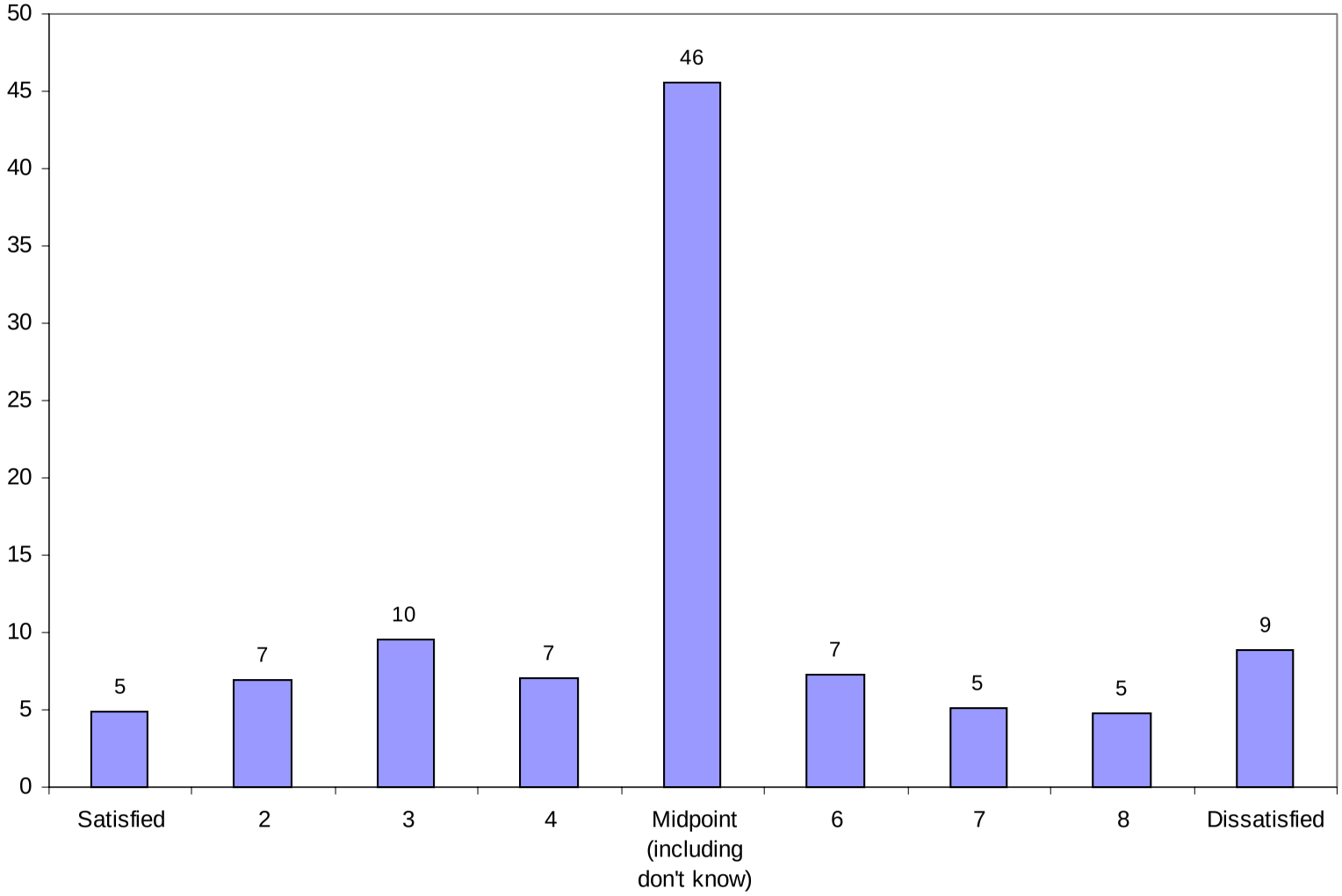

Figure 8 Attitudes to power of big and small countries in the EU

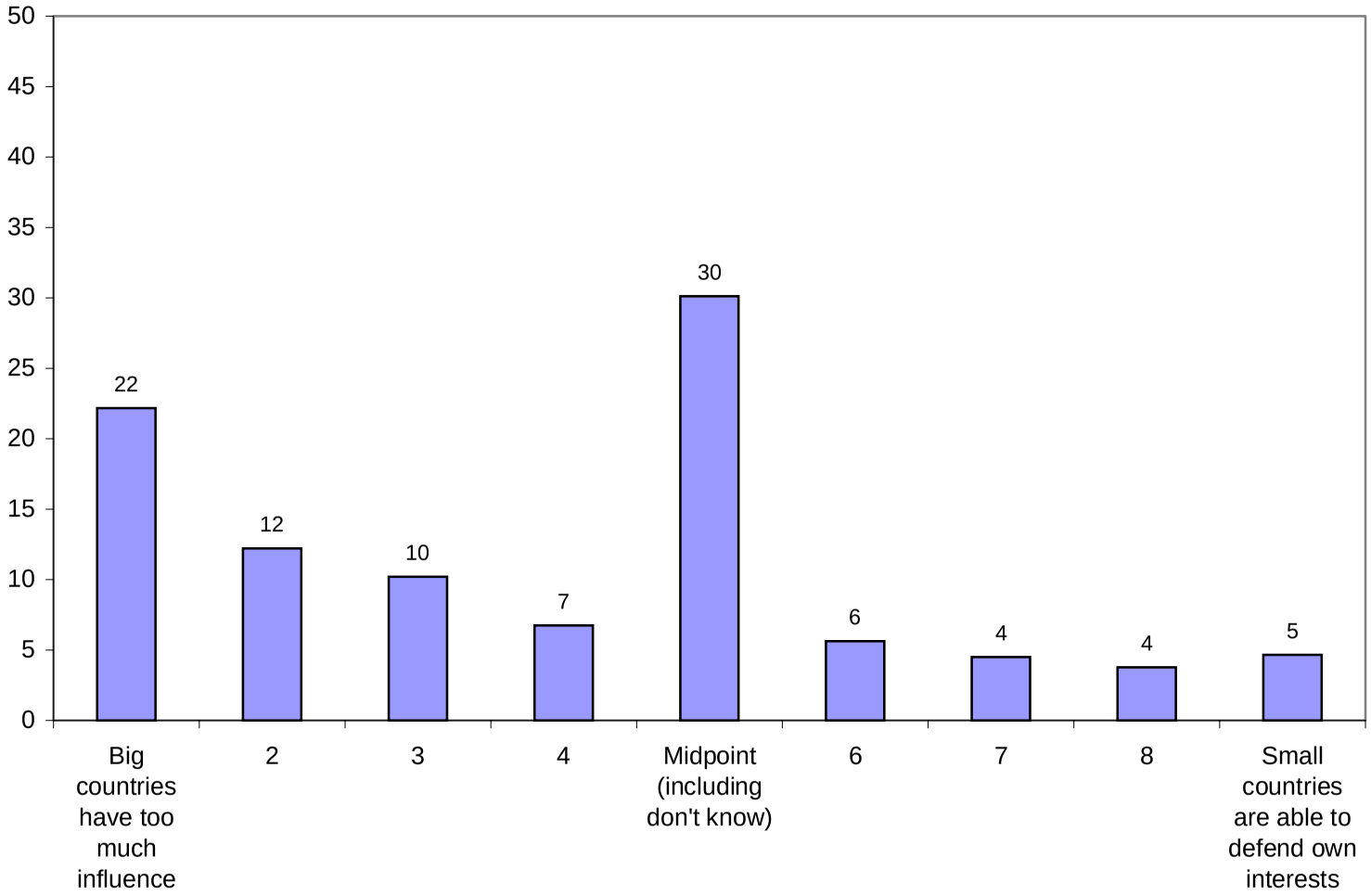

Figure 9 Perception of effect of development of the European Union on availability of divorce and abortion in Ireland

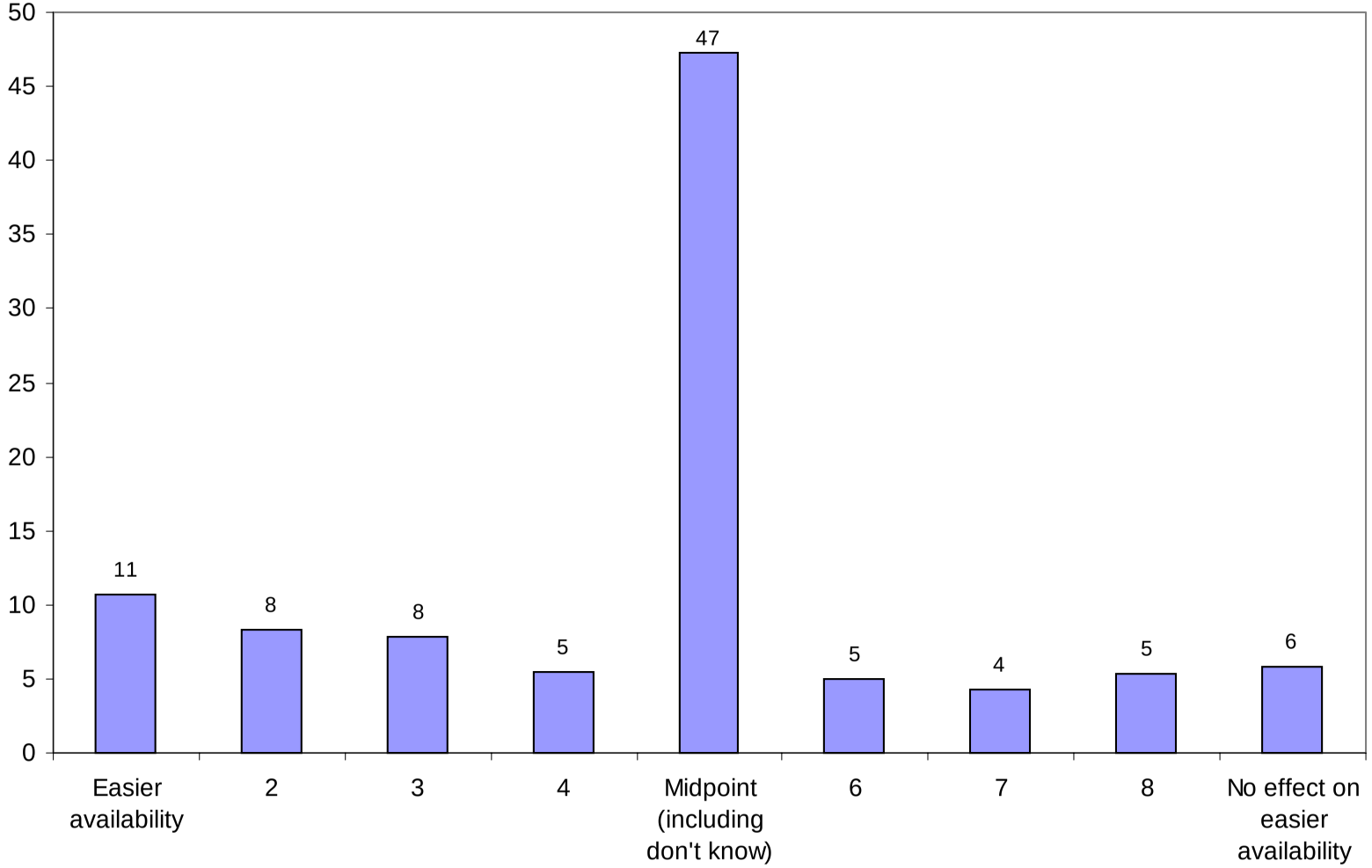

Figure 10 Perceived level of understanding of issues involved in Nice Treaty

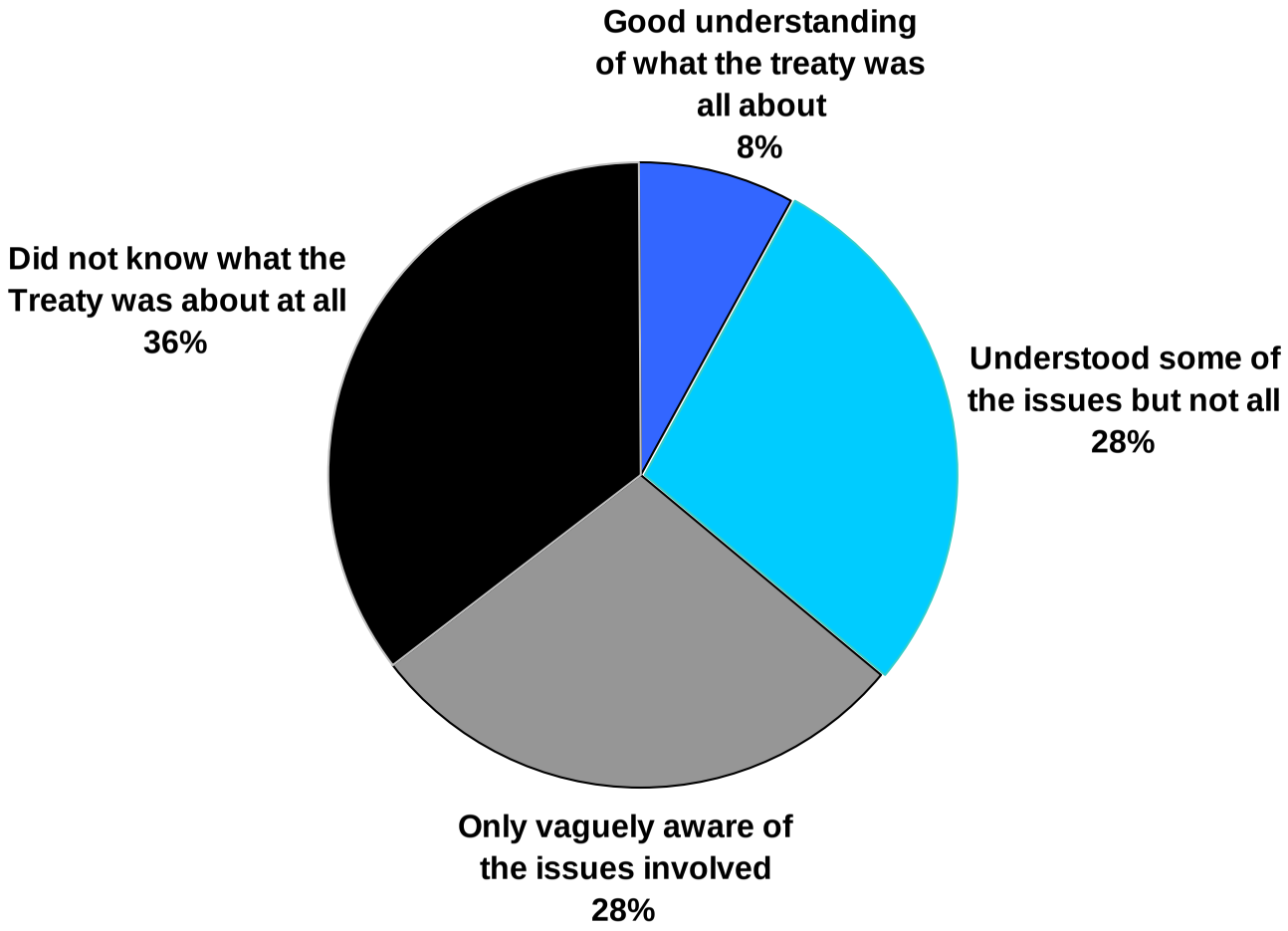

Figure 11 Usefulness of sources of information in the Nice referendum

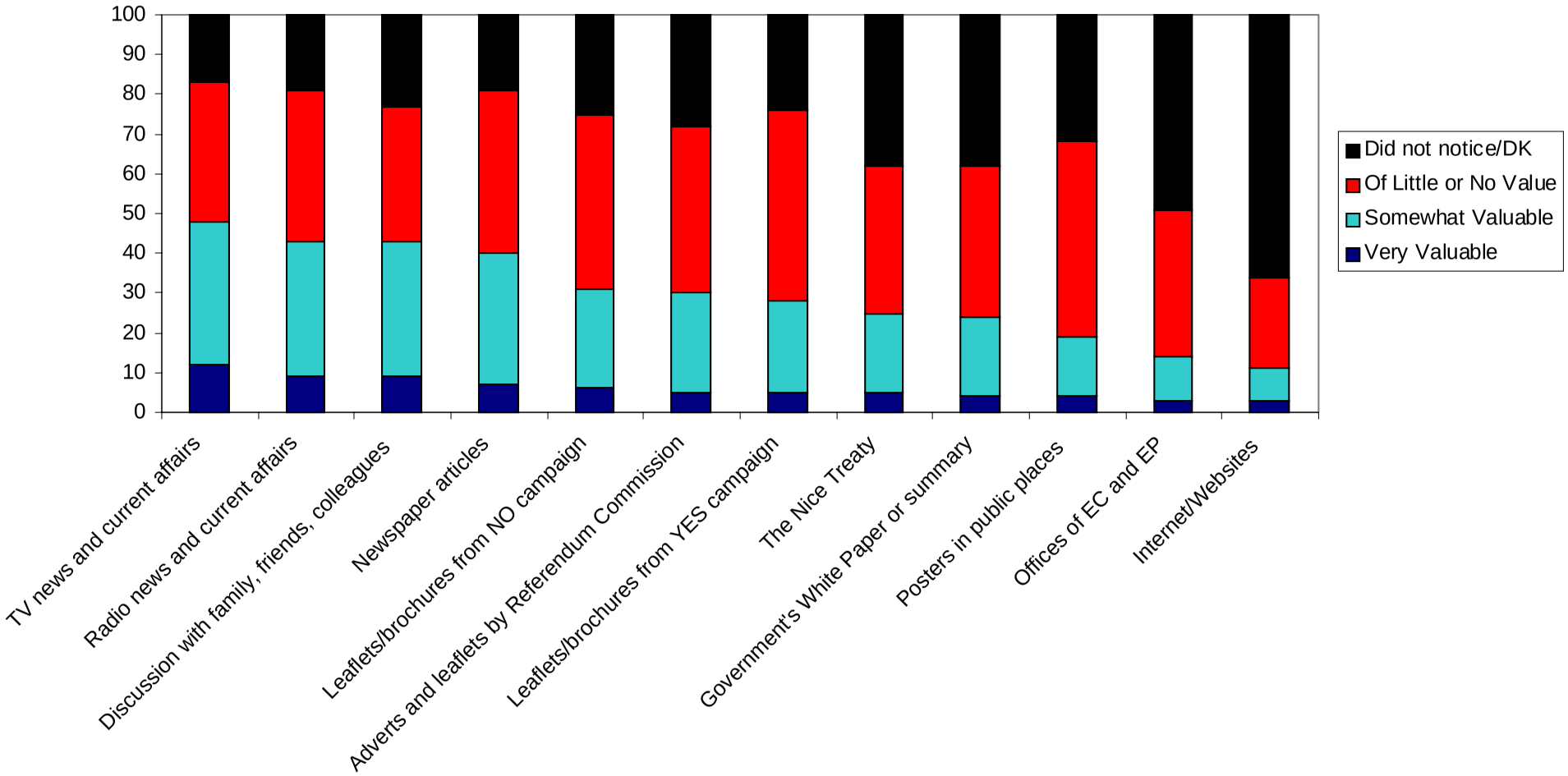

Figure 12 Attitudes to the European Union on four Eurobarometer indicators (unification, membership, benefits and dissolution) in all member states, 1973-2001

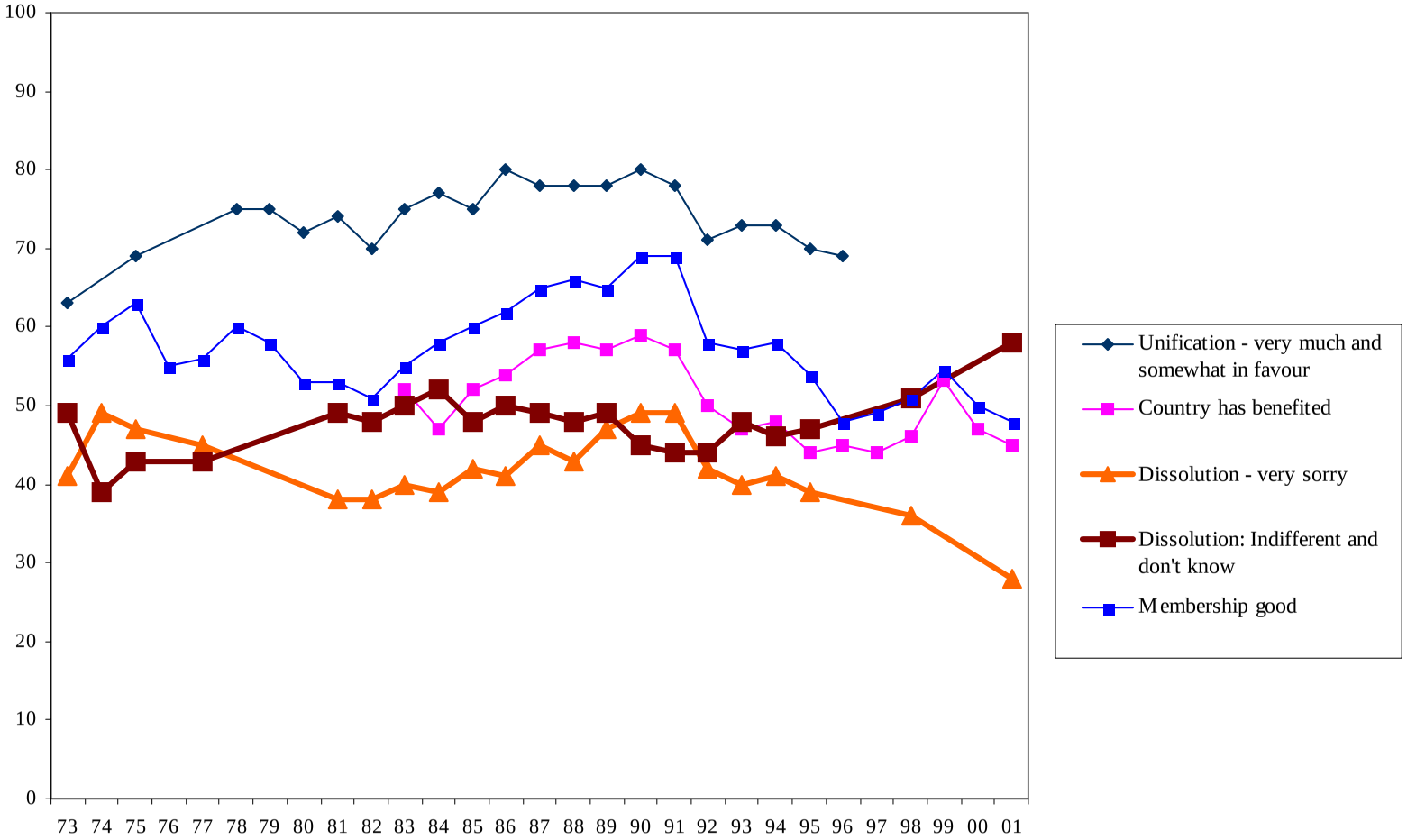

Table 1 Votes in favour, votes against and abstentions in Nice and Amsterdam referendums in raw numbers and in percentages of total electorate

	Nice results (votes)	**Amsterdam results (votes)**	**Difference (Nice minus Amsterdam)**	**Nice results (%)**	**Amsterdam results (%)**	**Percentage point difference (Nice minus Amsterdam)**
Yes	453461	932632	-479171	15.8	33.9	-18.1
No	529478	578070	-48592	18.5	21.0	-2.5
Abstained	1870134	1203158	666976	65.2	43.8	21.4
Invalid	14887	33228	-18341	0.5	1.2	-0.7
Electorate	2867960	2747088	120872	100	100	

Table 2 Ecological inference estimates of how voters in the Amsterdam referendum voted on Nice

Estimated vote on Nice	**Amsterdam 'yes' voters %**	**Amsterdam 'no' voters %**	**Amsterdam abstainers %**
Yes	33.8	9	5.1
No	13.1	54.3	5.8
Spoilt	0.4	0.3	0.6
Abstained	52.7	36.4	88.5

Table 3 Reasons for abstention in the Nice and Amsterdam referendums

	2001	**1998**
Lack of understanding/Lack of information	44	25
Not interested/Not bothered	20	21
On holiday/Away from home	15	16
Registration/Voting card problem	10	18
Too busy/Work constraints	8	12
Illness/Disability	4	9
Other	0	0
n =	**630**	**612**

Table 4 Logistic regression of voluntary abstention - socio-demographic effects

Variable	B	S.E.	Significance	Exp (B)
Habitual non-voting	1.5982	0.5947	0.0072	4.9439
Socio-demographic effects				
Under 25	1.0495	0.2452	0.0000	2.8562
Age 25-34	0.5976	0.1778	0.0008	1.8177
Lower middle class	0.0826	0.2792	0.7674	1.0861
Skilled working class	0.8476	0.2776	0.0023	2.3340
Unskilled working class	1.1114	0.2667	0.0000	3.0385
Farmer	1.1506	0.3303	0.0005	3.1602
Female	0.1382	0.1387	0.3189	1.1482
Rural residence	0.2576	0.1566	0.1001	1.2938
Constant	-1.4057	0.2598	0.0000	
Initial log likelihood function	1281.1414			
Improvement in fit	74.667			
Degrees of freedom	9			
Nagelkerke r^2	0.103			

Table 5 Logistic regression of voluntary abstention - socio-demographic, communication and attitudinal effects

Variable	B	S.E.	Significance	Exp (B)
Habitual non-voting	1.6425	0.7820	0.0357	5.1679
Socio-demographic effects				
Under 25	0.6864	0.3371	0.0417	1.9865
Age 25-34	0.5278	0.2469	0.0325	1.6952
Female	-0.2073	0.1933	0.2834	0.8128
Lower middle class	-0.7643	0.3623	0.0349	0.4656
Skilled working class	-0.3633	0.3619	0.3155	0.6954
Unskilled working class	-0.3646	0.3502	0.2978	0.6945
Farmer	-0.1430	0.4302	0.7396	0.8667
Rural residence	-0.0013	0.2151	0.9953	0.9987
Communication and campaign effects				
Discussion with family etc	-1.0107	0.2131	0.0000	0.3640
Office of the EU Com and EP	0.9984	0.4081	0.0144	2.7139
Govt White Paper or summary	-0.9734	0.3503	0.0055	0.3778
Leaflets etc of 'yes' campaign	-0.4082	0.3398	0.2297	0.6648
Leaflets etc of 'no' campaign	-0.3884	0.3104	0.2108	0.6781
Ads from Referendum Commission	0.1976	0.2906	0.4964	1.2185
Attitudinal effects				
Lack of understanding of issues	1.6453	0.1340	0.0000	5.1826
Perceived liberalisation	-0.5943	0.2221	0.0075	0.5520
Big countries too much power	0.3054	0.2093	0.1445	1.3572
Strengthen neutrality	0.1633	0.2202	0.4585	1.1774
Protect independence	0.1491	0.1469	0.3103	1.1608
Anti-enlargement	-0.1167	0.1488	0.4331	0.8899
Not satisfied with EU decision-making	0.1085	0.2553	0.6708	1.1146
Constant	-4.4040	0.5620	0.0000	
Initial log likelihood function	1270.4513			
Improvement in fit	531.883			
Degrees of freedom	22			
Nagelkerke r^2	0.585			

Table 6 Reasons for voting 'yes' in the Nice referendum

Generally a good idea, development of existing commitments	44
Enlargement a good thing, give others a chance	22
Influence of govt., political party, politician, TV debate	14
Advice of family or friends	4
Other	10
Don't know	6
n =	**204**

Table 7 Reasons for voting 'no' in the Nice referendum

Lack of information	39
Loss of sovereignty/independence	16
Neutrality and military issues	12
Bad idea in general	7
Influence of political party, politician, TV debate	6
Would create refugee problems	3
Abortion issue	1
Advice of family or friends	1
Other	2
Don't know	13
n =	**300**

Table 8 Logistic regression of the 'no' vote - socio-demographic, communication and attitudinal effects

Variable	B	S.E.	Significance	Exp (B)
Socio-demographic effects				
Under 35	0.1495	0.2584	0.5629	1.1612
Female	0.4319	0.2349	0.0660	1.5402
Communication and campaign effects				
Leaflets etc of 'yes' campaign	-1.2010	0.3318	0.0003	0.3009
Leaflets etc of 'no' campaign	0.9930	0.3269	0.0024	2.6994
Television news and current affairs	-0.8869	0.3831	0.0206	0.4119
Radio news and current affairs	0.7208	0.3622	0.0465	2.0562
Office of the EC Com and the EP	-0.5568	0.3134	0.0756	0.5730
Attitudinal effects				
Not satisfied with EU decision-making	1.3158	0.3419	0.0001	3.7278
Strengthen neutrality	0.8553	0.2625	0.0011	2.3520
Anti-enlargement	0.7241	0.1740	0.0000	2.0629
Big countries too much power	0.6834	0.2425	0.0048	1.9806
Uncertain about voting decision	-0.6562	0.2957	0.0265	0.5188
Made mind up in last week of campaign	0.6113	0.2515	0.0151	1.8428
Protect independence	0.4489	0.1475	0.0023	1.5666
Lack of understanding of issues	0.3015	0.1609	0.0610	1.3518
Perceived liberalisation	-0.1257	0.2490	0.6137	0.8819
Constant	-3.0895	0.5830	0.0000	
Initial log likelihood function	674.6002			
Improvement in fit	190.744			
Degrees of freedom	17			
Nagelkerke r^2	0.428			

*Table 9 L*ogistic regression of the 'no' vote - socio-demographic, communication and attitudinal effects with interactions

Variable	B	S.E.	Signifcance	Exp (B)
Socio-demographic effects				
Under 35	0.6373	0.3333	0.0559	1.8913
Female	0.8021	0.2857	0.0050	2.2302
Communication and campaign effects				
Leaflets etc of 'yes' campaign	-1.2517	0.3420	0.0003	0.2860
Leaflets etc of 'no' campaign	1.0961	0.3367	0.0011	2.9924
Television news and current affairs	-0.9091	0.3901	0.0198	0.4029
Radio news and current affairs	0.7001	0.3691	0.0579	2.0139
Office of the EC Com and the EP	-0.5911	0.3209	0.0655	0.5537
Attitudinal effects				
Not satisfied with EU decision-making	1.3787	0.3470	0.0001	3.9698
Perceived liberalisation and under 35	-1.3363	0.5694	0.0189	0.2628
Perceived liberalisation and female	-1.1102	0.4977	0.0257	0.3295
Strengthen neutrality	0.9462	0.2699	0.0005	2.5759
Perceived liberalisation	0.8423	0.4088	0.0394	2.3216
Uncertain about voting decision	-0.7057	0.3001	0.0187	0.4937
Anti-enlargement	0.6729	0.1762	0.0001	1.9598
Big countries too much power	0.6280	0.2469	0.0110	1.8739
Made mind up in last week of campaign	0.6265	0.2550	0.0140	1.8710
Protect independence	0.4351	0.1503	0.0038	1.5452
Lack of understanding of issues	0.3321	0.1622	0.0406	1.3940
Constant	-3.3409	0.5978	0.0000	
Initial log likelihood function	674.6002			
Improvement in fit	206.438			
Degrees of freedom	20			
Nagelkerke r^2	0.457			

APPENDIX – THE QUESTIONNAIRE

TREATY OF NICE REFERENDUM SURVEY

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ASK ALL ADULTS AGED 18+

Q.1a) On the 7th June last, a referendum was held on the Treaty of Nice (*pronounced Niece*). As you may remember, many people did not vote in that referendum.
How about you? Did you vote in the Referendum on the Nice Treaty?

IF VOTED ASK, OTHERS GO TO Q.3a):

b) How did you vote in that referendum - in favour or against the Nice Treaty?

SHOW CARD "A"

(c) Using this card, can you tell me roughly when did you make up your mind how you would vote in the Nice referendum?

Q.1a)
- Yes – voted 1
- Did not vote..... 2

Q.1b)
- Voted - In favour..... 1
- Voted - Against 2

Q.1c)
- At the time the referendum was announced..... 1
- Fairly early on during the referendum campaign..... 2
- In the final week of the campaign 3
- On the day of the referendum itself..... 4

Q.2a) What were the main reasons why you voted in favour/against (AS APPROPRIATE) the Nice Treaty. **PROBE FULLY AND RECORD VERBATIM** Any other reasons? Anything else?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 V X O	
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 V X O	

Q.2b) When you had made up your mind to vote in the referendum, how certain were you about your decision to vote in favour of/against (as appropriate) the Nice Treaty. **READ OUT** - Were you …….?

… Absolutely certain..... 1
… Pretty certain..... 2
… Some reservations/doubts..... 3
… Not at all certain..... 4

IF DID NOT VOTE ASK: OTHERS GO TO Q.4

Q.3a) Why did you not vote? **PROBE FULLY AND RECORD VERBATIM** Any other reasons? Anything else?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 V X O	
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 V X O	

Q.3b) Had you voted in the Referendum on 7th June, would you have voted in favour or against the Nice Treaty?

- Would have voted in favour..... 1
- Would have voted against 2
- Don't know 3

ASK ALL

SHOW CARD "B"

Q.4 There are many different ways by which people get information in relation to referendums. I have a list here of several possible sources of information. Please say how useful, if at all, you found each of them in the lead up to the referendum on the Nice Treaty, on 7th June. Using this card, would you say you found each of the sources mentioned very valuable, somewhat valuable, of little or no value or did you not notice or see the source at all?

READ OUT. ROTATE ORDER. TICK START.↓	Very Valuable	Some-What Valuable	Of Little or No Value	Did Not Notice/ See	No Opinion/ DK
• Advertisements and leaflets put out by the Referendum Commission	1	2	3	4	5
• The Government's White Paper or a summary of it	1	2	3	4	5
• The Nice Treaty itself	1	2	3	4	5
• Newspaper articles	1	2	3	4	5
• Television news and current affairs programmes	1	2	3	4	5
• Radio news and current affairs programmes	1	2	3	4	5
• Leaflets/brochures circulated by the parties and organisations campaigning for a YES vote	1	2	3	4	5
• Leaflets/brochures circulated by the parties and organisations campaigning for a NO vote	1	2	3	4	5
• Posters on roadways and in public places	1	2	3	4	5
• Offices of the European Commission and European Parliament in Ireland	1	2	3	4	5
• Internet/websites	1	2	3	4	5
• Discussion with family, friends and colleagues	1	2	3	4	5

ASK ALL

SHOW CARD "C"

Q.5 By the date of the referendum (June 7th), how good was your understanding of the issues involved? Please use this card to choose the phrase that applies best to you.

▪ I had a good understanding of what the Treaty was all about ..... 1 ▪ I understood some of the issues but not all that was involved..... 2 ▪ I was only vaguely aware of the issue involved ..... 3 ▪ I did not know what the Treaty was about at all..... 4	

SHOW CARD "D"

Q.6 I have a number of statements here that people sometimes make about Europe. I would like you to indicate on this scale which of each pair of opposing statements comes closest to your view. A score of one would indicate that you agree fully with the statement on the left. A score of nine would indicate that you agree fully with the statement on the right. Of course your view could be somewhere in between. Also of course there may be issues that you have no particular view on. If so, please just say this and we will move on to the next item.

Ireland should participate fully in all the peace-keeping and peace-making operations decided on by the European Union								Ireland should refuse to participate in any of the peace-keeping and peace-making operations decided on by the European Union	No Opinion/ Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X

The current proposals for the development of the European Union will make things like divorce and abortion more easily available in Ireland								The current proposals for the development of the European Union will have no effect whatsoever on whether things like divorce and abortion will become more easily available in Ireland.	No Opinion / Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X

I am quite satisfied with the way in which policies and decisions are made in the EU								I am quite dissatisfied with the way in which policies and decisions are made in the EU	No Opinion / Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X

Ireland should do everything it can to strengthen its neutrality even if this means being less involved in EU co-operation on foreign and defence policy								Ireland should be willing to accept limitations on its neutrality so that it can be more fully involved in EU co-operation on foreign and defence policy	No Opinion / Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X

The big countries in the EU have far too much power and influence								The small countries in the EU are well able to defend their own interests	No Opinion / Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X

I am very interested in issues relating to the European Union								I have little or no interest in issues relating to the European Union	No Opinion / Don't Know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	X

Q.7a) It is envisaged that, over the coming years, there will be further enlargement of the EU. The EU is at present negotiating with 12 candidate countries. 10 of these countries are in eastern and central Europe. The other two are Cyprus and Malta. We are interested in how people feel about further enlargement of the EU and what people see as the possible advantages and possible disadvantages of such enlargement.

First of all, in general terms, are you in favour or against such enlargement of the EU?

- In favour 1
- Against..... 2
- Don't know 3

Q.7b) Secondly, what do you see as the possible advantages of enlargement of the EU? **PROBE FULLY**. Any other advantages? Anything else?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 V X O	
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 V X O	

Q.7c) And what about possible disadvantages? **PROBE FULLY**. Any other disadvantages? Anything else?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 V X O	
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 V X O	

SHOW CARD "E"

Q.8a) As regards the European Union in general, which of the following comes closest to your own views?

- Ireland should do all it can to unite fully with the European Union..... 1
- Ireland should do all it can to protect its independence from the European Union 2
- Can't choose, don't know..... 3

ASK IF CODES 1 or 2 AT Q8a, OTHERS GO TO Q9

Q.8b) Could you tell me whether you are very certain about this view, somewhat certain or not certain at all?

- Very certain 1
- Somewhat certain 2
- Not certain at all 3

ASK ALL

SHOW CARD "F "

Q.9a) Using this card, please tell me how many European Union Member States are there at present ?

- Nine 1
- Twelve 2
- Fifteen 3
- Eighteen 4
- Don't know 5

CONTINUE SHOWING CARD "F "

Q.9b) How many Irish Members are there in the European Parliament?

- Nine 1
- Twelve 2
- Fifteen 3
- Eighteen 4
- Don't know 5

SHOW CARD "G "

Q.9c) What is the name of the **President** of the European Commission in Brussels? **.**

- Jacques Delors 1
- Jacques Santer 2
- Gerhard Schroeder 3
- Romano Prodi 4
- Don't know 5

SHOW CARD "H "

Q.9d) On what date will the €uro notes and coins come into circulation?

- 1 October 2001 1
- 1 January 2002 2
- 1 June 2002 3
- 31 December 2002 4
- Don't know 5

Q.10 Finally, there have been **seven** general elections in Ireland in the last 20 years. Thinking about these or **[IF RESPONDENT LOOKS AS IF HE OR SHE COULD BE UNDER 35]** about the ones for which you have been eligible to vote, would you say that, as far as you can remember, you have …..? **READ OUT**

… Voted in all of them 1
… Voted in most of them 2
… Voted in only some of them 3
… Not voted in any of them 4