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When a small country votes No, the small country has a problem. When a big country votes No, the European Union has a problem.<sup>1</sup>

– Jacob Buksti

If voters are asked to vote twice on the same issue in a single year, why might they initially reject the proposal but then vote to approve it the second time? This has happened three times in European Union (EU) referendums, in Denmark (Maastricht Treaty or TEU in 1992-1993) and in Ireland (Nice Treaty in 2001-2002 and Lisbon Treaty in 2008-2009), as Table 1 demonstrates.

Table 1 here

Double referendums take place only when the proposal is about treaty ratification and only in small member states. Bigger member states such as France can – at least temporarily – put the brakes on the integration project when their public rejects a treaty. The smaller member states go back to their public to persuade them in second referendums, which have all been successful. Such swings in public opinion bring up questions on direct democracy as to whether political elites control referendum results or whether voters are capable of expressing their preferences in referendums (Altman, 2010; Magleby, 1984; Sartori, 1987). Moreover, they put the future of European integration at stake.

No work has studied these three double referendums comparatively. The existing literature highlights the *vigor*, *energy*, and *effectiveness* of the second round Yes campaigns in the Maastricht and Nice double referendums and identifies this change as the main causal factor in overturning the verdicts (e.g. FitzGibbon, 2009a, 2009b; Garry et al., 2005; Hobolt, 2009; O'Brennan, 2003; Qvortrup, 2005). Yet these studies mostly provide anecdotal evidence for the shift in campaigns. In the only comparative, in-depth analysis of these two double referendums, Hobolt (2009) finds that campaign information is what changed the referendum result in the second rounds. I take a step further by bringing together all three instances of double referendums and by uncovering the concrete campaign strategies through a close analysis of

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<sup>1</sup> Member of the Danish Parliament. Social Democratic Party. Interview, 13 May 2011.

campaign materials and detailed interview data. Campaigners from different countries not only report very similar strategies in the first versus second rounds, but also acknowledge that they learned from the previous double referendum cases. It is important to pay close attention to these strategies to fully understand how the campaigns mattered.

In a referendum campaign, the typical No campaign strategy is to associate the referendum proposal with unpopular themes to drive down public support for it (Jerit, 2004; LeDuc, 2005). In the double referendums, this was indeed the case in the first rounds, but not in the second rounds. Based on 38 in-depth interviews with Irish and Danish campaigners and public opinion data, I find that the Yes side blocked the No side from doing so by taking two steps in the second rounds. In all three cases, they first secured ‘reassurances’ from the EU on the key themes that the No campaign had raised in the first round. In a second step, they emphasized the risks associated with a second No vote. Faced with these new strategies, the No campaigners’ hands were tied in the second referendums. These findings are important for several reasons. First, a systematic analysis of campaign strategies, arguments, slogans and materials reveals the overlooked similarities across cases. Second, it shows that there is *learning* across cases, which has important implications. Given their lack of weight in the EU, small member states have developed a toolkit for reversing public opinion on EU treaties.

Below, I first summarize the findings of the EU referendum literature on the subject. Second, using extensive interview data, I document the campaign strategies. Finally, based on public opinion data, I demonstrate that the shift in the Yes side strategies helped overturn the negative verdicts.

### **Understanding EU Referendums**

The EU referendum literature has been divided between ‘second-order’ and ‘issue-voting’ interpretations, attributing the results to domestic or European factors. (Reif et al., 1980; Siune et al., 1994). Studies on the Maastricht and Nice Treaty double votes fall into these two camps

(Franklin et al., 1995; Garry et al., 2005; Svensson, 2002). The first group argues that the change in the level of government popularity caused the switch. Yet this explanation is directly challenged by the Irish Nice and Lisbon double referendums, as the governments were much less popular in the second rounds that approved the treaties (Sinnott et al., 2010). The second group claims that people's understanding of what the EU treaty means changed in the second round. Finding more support for the second model, recent research points to the increasing *campaign intensity* in the second round referendums (de Vreese, 2006; Garry et al., 2005; Hobolt, 2005).<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, what is missing in the literature is an in-depth study of campaign dynamics in these double referendums. For instance, studying the Nice double referendum, Garry et al. (2005) attribute the change in the result to the more *intense* and *effective* second campaign, which increased the salience of the issue and citizens' level of information. But this does not explain how exactly the two campaigns were different. The measurement of campaign intensity and salience relies primarily on subjective assessment by individuals in survey questions, and campaign effectiveness is based on anecdotal evidence.

Moreover, no work has compared all six of these referendum campaigns. Most of the existing research studies the campaigns either in one or both rounds of referendums in a single country, Denmark or Ireland (e.g. Gilland, 2002; Hayward, 2003; O'Brennan, 2009; Qvortrup, 2009, 2013; Sinnott et al., 2010; Sinnott et al., 2009; Svensson, 1994). Hobolt (2009), in the most complete research on the subject, brings together four of the cases (Maastricht and Nice votes) and shows that in the second referendum campaigns both *the quantity and the type of information* available to the public were different. In the Nice referendums, she finds that the quantity of information mattered. The second, 'more intensive' campaign provided more information and mobilized more Yes voters to vote. In the Maastricht referendums, on the other

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<sup>2</sup> Changes in campaign intensity or spending do not systematically correlate with the changes in referendum results. The literature presents contradictory results on campaign intensity depending on the measure used (e.g. Hobolt, 2006, 2009). Similarly, the Yes campaigns almost always spend more than the No campaigns, and the No side can succeed despite having fewer resources (de Vreese & Semetko, 2004, p. 58; Szczerbiak & Taggart, 2005).

hand, the type of information mattered. The second campaign framed the question differently, emphasizing the negative consequences of a rejection.

My goal is to bring together all double votes and systematically analyze the campaign strategies in the first and second rounds, uncovering the similarities across cases. Referendum campaigns have peculiar dynamics. No campaigners need only to raise doubts in the minds of voters and link the proposal to other less popular issues (LeDuc, 2005). We would thus expect the No campaigners to use this strategy in both rounds of campaigns. Indeed, in all three instances, they successfully did so in the first referendums (Hobolt, 2009; Sinnott et al., 2009). But why were they not able to achieve this in the second rounds?

The detailed interview data shows that in all cases, after the rejections, the governments sought reassurances from the EU on these politicized themes. This mechanism allowed them to ask the same question again. Having changed the context successfully, the Yes side could frame the question differently. To achieve this they used their second strategy, which was to raise the stakes of a second rejection. This time the Yes side could use the risk factor, which was more available to the No side in the first rounds. Importantly, Denmark designed these strategies, which the Irish learned and adopted later on.

## **The Campaign Strategies**

### *Data*

My analysis of the campaign strategies is based on personal interviews with the campaigners and on campaign materials. I conducted the field research in April-May 2011 and interviewed campaigners from all political parties and civil society groups that were active in the campaign. These interviews were in English, face-to-face, semi-structured, and based on opportunity and snowball sampling. A full list of the individuals interviewed and the questionnaire used are presented as an online appendix. I interviewed 38 campaigners (13 from Denmark, 25 from

Ireland), from all across the political spectrum. 16 of the interviewees were campaigners from civil society, 22 were from political parties; 17 were No campaigners, and 21 were Yes campaigners.

### *The actors*

As Table 2 shows, in both Denmark and Ireland, an important majority of the political parties supported the EU treaties during these referendum campaigns.<sup>3</sup>

Table 2 here

In addition to these political parties, there were civil society organizations that participated in the campaigns. In Denmark, two important movements, the People's Movement against the EC (both rounds) and the June Movement (second round) campaigned on the No side. In Ireland, in both Nice and Lisbon campaigns, the National Platform, the Peace and Neutrality Alliance, the pro-life Catholic group C oir (Lisbon Treaty), and the Libertas led by businessman Declan Ganley (Lisbon Treaty) recommended a No vote. In both countries there were civil society Yes campaigns too, such as the Danish European Movement, Irish Alliance for Europe and Ireland for Europe. Particularly in Ireland, these civil society Yes campaigns were considerably more active in the second rounds, and without exception, all my Irish interviewees stressed that they provided indispensable additional energy.

### *The arguments*

In the first rounds in both countries, the No campaign arguments tapped into the sensitive subjects for the society. In Denmark, the No side argued that the Maastricht Treaty would lead to loss of Danish sovereignty in a new United States of Europe, which would overrule Danish currency and citizenship. In Ireland, in both Nice and Lisbon referendums, the No campaigners repeatedly argued that the treaties would create a European super-state and cause loss of

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<sup>3</sup> While the government remained the same during the Lisbon referendums, it changed between the first and second rounds of the Maastricht and Nice referendums.

sovereignty, change Irish laws on abortion, lead to loss of social standards and military neutrality, and finally that Ireland would lose its permanent EU Commissioner. In addition, the Nice No campaign brought up the controversial issue of EU enlargement, whereas the Lisbon No campaign argued that the treaty would undermine Ireland's ability to set its own corporate tax rate and thereby have economic costs. The No campaigners used catchy slogans and vivid posters to convey their arguments. In Denmark, 'Towards the United States of Europe: Vote No!', 'No to the Common Defense', 'The Social Dimension: The What?' were among the No camp slogans. In Ireland, the No side similarly used slogans such as 'You Will Lose! Power, Freedom, Money! Vote No to the Treaty of Nice!', 'No to NATO, No to Nice', 'Lisbon: Good for Them, Bad for Us', 'People Died for Your Freedom, Don't Throw It Away'. Also, in the first Lisbon campaign, with the slogan 'Ireland Can Do Better', the No campaigners emphasized that a No vote would lead to a 'better deal', relying on their Nice Treaty experience.

In the second round, however, the arguments changed. The Yes side argued that Europe had listened to the Danish/Irish people and responded with legal guarantees. In line with the Edinburgh Agreement, Denmark would have four opt-outs in the fields of European citizenship, economic and monetary union, defense policy, and justice and home affairs. Ireland, on the other hand, gained a guarantee concerning its military neutrality with the Seville Declaration after the Nice referendum. Once again, after the Lisbon referendum, the Irish government obtained guarantees on the Irish commissioner, Irish competency over tax rates, abortion, neutrality, and workers' rights. In addition to the arguments on the guarantees, they stated the consequences of a second No vote. This shift was visible in the choice of slogans as well.

In Denmark, the Social Democrats switched their slogan from 'The North Has Much to Give to the EC' in the first round to 'With Edinburgh We Start a New Place' in the second round. The Liberal Party went from 'Vote Yes!' to 'Difference: Maastricht - Edinburgh', and 'Go for the Safe Choice, You Will Not Get Another Chance'. In Ireland too, the first rounds saw abstract Yes slogans such as 'Europe: Let's Be at the Heart of It' or 'Good for Ireland, Good for Europe'. The

second rounds witnessed more energized messages. In the second Nice referendum, the Labor Party conclusively put the emphasis on Europe: 'Hold your Fire. The Government Can Wait. Europe Can't. Vote Yes'. In the second Lisbon referendum, the Yes campaign argued: 'Yes to Jobs. Yes for Ireland. Yes for Our Economy' and 'Ruin versus Recovery'. In return, the No campaigners emphasized that it was *exactly* the same treaty and that the so-called opt-outs or guarantees would not be legally binding. In Denmark, the People's Movement argued: 'Not a Comma is Moved'. 'Exactly the Same Treaty as Last Year', added the Progress Party. In Ireland, Libertas similarly used the slogan: 'It Seems We Need to Tell Them Twice. Same Old Government, Same Old Treaty, Same Straight Answer. No.'. Figure 1 demonstrates these differences by providing a sample of campaign posters. In each mini figure the top row presents the first round posters, and the bottom row the second round ones.

Figure 1 here

### *Understanding the strategies*

#### The first campaign

Without exception, all Yes campaigners acknowledged that the No side effectively raised doubts in the minds of Danish and Irish voters in the first rounds. In Denmark, Niels Helveg Petersen, Minister of Foreign Affairs (1993), stated that the first campaign was badly managed from the Yes side.<sup>4</sup> Erik Boel, President of the European Movement, similarly said: 'The Yes side thought the Danes would vote Yes anyway, because they had never voted No'.<sup>5</sup> Jørgen Ørstrøm Møller of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed: 'We took it for granted. Almost all opinion polls before the referendum indicated that it would be a Yes. ... When the campaign evolved it dawned on us that a No was possible. Then it became difficult, almost impossible to create a new strategy'.<sup>6</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs (1992) Uffe Ellemann-Jensen stated his frustration: 'If you have a very aggressive No campaign and a lot of wimps on the Yes side who would rather say "Oh, no! This

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<sup>4</sup> Interview, 2 May 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Interview, 11 May 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Interview, 10 May 2011.



will not happen”, the skeptical Danes will vote No’.<sup>7</sup> On the No side, Socialist People’s Party MP Steen Gade stressed the same point: ‘The first Yes campaign’s bottom line was “it will not be as bad as you believe”, they lacked an offensive line’.<sup>8</sup>

In Ireland, Fine Gael MP Lucinda Creighton said: ‘Both of the first campaigns were characterized by an expectation that they would be carried. There wasn’t a very significant Yes campaign ... and there wasn’t a whole lot of information made available to the public’.<sup>9</sup> National Campaign Coordinator of the Ireland for Europe Brendan Halligan agreed: ‘In both occasions, the Yes side practically had no campaign the first time and then mounted a huge campaign the second time’.<sup>10</sup> Déirdre de Búrca of the Green Party described the first Yes campaigns in both double referendums as lackadaisical and lethargic, as opposed to the No sides which she characterized as passionate and focused on the details of the treaty.<sup>11</sup> Dick Roche, Minister of Europe, similarly explained that the Yes side lacked the energy, the enthusiasm, and the passion that the No side put in, stressing the strength of the No campaign posters.<sup>12</sup> Joe Costello, Labour Party MP, repeated the same point:<sup>13</sup>

The first [Yes] campaign was a disaster. ... There was a general expectation that it would pass without putting any effort or money in. ... There was a very good anti-Lisbon campaign run, very effective. It played on people’s fears, by and large fears of European army, fears of too much power going to Europe, loss of sovereignty, loss of corporate tax rate.

Both Danish and Irish No campaigners explained that they were intentionally specific in their argumentation. In Denmark, Jens-Peter Bonde, President of the June Movement, stated: ‘The task was to change the agenda from common market to a discussion about the EU as a political project. ... Union was a very negative word in Denmark’.<sup>14</sup> Ole Krarup, President of the People’s Movement against the EU, agreed: ‘The central point was that with the Maastricht

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<sup>7</sup> Interview, 10 May 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Interview, 5 May 2011.

<sup>9</sup> Interview, 19 April 2011.

<sup>10</sup> Interview, 11 April 2011.

<sup>11</sup> Interview, 14 April 2011.

<sup>12</sup> Interview, 27 April 2011.

<sup>13</sup> Interview, 15 April 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Interview, 3 May 2011.

Treaty they were creating the first steps of a Union'.<sup>15</sup> Søren Krarup of the Progress Party stressed that they wanted to protect the Danish krone.<sup>16</sup> To demonstrate this argument, they prepared a book entitled 'For the Crown and the Country', where *crown* had a double meaning, the currency and the monarchy.

In Ireland, Naoise Nunn, Executive Director of Libertas, compared the No campaign to guerilla warfare: 'You picked one little issue on which there was some doubt and contention, and then you sold and created enough doubt in the minds of the audience, and the Yes campaigners were struggling, backpedalling, trying to explain, and when they were explaining they were losing'.<sup>17</sup> For instance, President of Libertas Declan Ganley opposed the Lisbon Treaty because it would lead to 'unaccountable government'.<sup>18</sup> To explain this concept to the people, Libertas designed a poster showing the Irish proclamation of independence as void. In his words: 'How do you capture this idea in something that has popular resonance? Everybody recognizes the proclamation of independence'.

The Yes campaigners explained the difficulties they had in responding to these No campaign arguments. In Denmark, Jørgen Ørstrøm Møller of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said: 'The No campaign has an easier task because they appeal to the fears, anxiety, uncertainties, and emotions. Many said they were against the Euro because they would like to keep the portrait of the Queen on the coins. How can you argue against such an argument?'.<sup>19</sup> Charlotte Antonsen, Liberal Party MP, brought up the same problem: 'The more we defended and explained ourselves, the more complicated it got'.<sup>20</sup> Mogens Lykketoft, Social Democrat MP, agreed: 'It was easy to say that our sovereignty would be taken away'.<sup>21</sup> In Ireland, Karen White, member of Irish Alliance for Europe, similarly explained: 'If you are on the No side, you can appeal to different groups with

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<sup>15</sup> Interview, 6 May 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Interview, 12 May 2011.

<sup>17</sup> Interview, 12 April 2011.

<sup>18</sup> Interview, 20 April 2011.

<sup>19</sup> Interview, 10 May 2011.

<sup>20</sup> Interview, 13 May 2011.

<sup>21</sup> Interview, 3 May 2011.

different messages. We had to counter all these different arguments'.<sup>22</sup> Lucinda Creighton, Fine Gael MP, also argued that it was difficult because 'people needed only one good reason to vote against'.<sup>23</sup>

More specifically, the Yes side criticized the No side for creating diversions in the debate. In Denmark, Niels Helveg Petersen, Minister of Foreign Affairs (1993), brought up the No camp argument that if the treaty had passed, there would have been police forces of other EU countries on Danish streets.<sup>24</sup> Jacob Buksti, Social Democrat MP, added: 'Even worse, German police! ... There were deep-rooted elements there, such as the German invasion in the 1940s'.<sup>25</sup> Most of the campaigners recalled a discussion on the EU's ban on crooked cucumbers as well. In Ireland, similarly, Timmy Dooley, Fianna Fáil MP, stated that the No campaigners introduced arguments that were neither grounded in nor part of the treaties.<sup>26</sup> Brendan Kiely, Chief Executive of Irish Alliance for Europe, gave examples of such arguments, that the Irish Constitution would die or that Ireland would fail to attract foreign direct investment.<sup>27</sup> Dick Roche, Minister of Europe, stated his frustration similarly: 'They always come up, Ireland will lose neutrality, no we have not, Ireland will lose its character, no we have not, we will be subsumed in Europe, no we have not, we will lose our culture, no we have not'.<sup>28</sup> Brigid Laffan, Chairperson of Ireland for Europe, characterized the No campaign themes such as abortion and neutrality as Ireland's 'neuralgic issues'.<sup>29</sup>

While the No side effectively attached these unpopular issues to the EU treaties in the first rounds, without exception all campaigners acknowledged that the Yes side was better prepared in the second rounds.

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<sup>22</sup> Interview, 28 April 2011.

<sup>23</sup> Interview, 19 April 2011.

<sup>24</sup> Interview, 2 May 2011.

<sup>25</sup> Interview, 13 May 2011.

<sup>26</sup> Interview, 19 April 2011.

<sup>27</sup> Interview, 28 April 2011.

<sup>28</sup> Interview, 27 April 2011.

<sup>29</sup> Interview, 29 April 2011.

## The second campaign

The governments, the Yes side political parties and civil society groups devoted much more energy to the second campaigns and employed two new strategies to reverse the verdicts.<sup>30</sup> To begin with the first strategy, the 'guarantees' defined the campaign ground differently in the second rounds. This strategy originates from Denmark as they witnessed the first double referendum. Niels Helveg Petersen, Minister of Foreign Affairs (1993), explained the rationale:<sup>31</sup>

The second time around, we had to stress again and again that we were voting on something new. It was the Maastricht Treaty Plus. It was a new foundation for our membership. The second round's difficulty was answering to 'Why do you not accept the No vote?'. Therefore, it was very important to stress that it was something new to justify a second round.

Similarly, Charlotte Antonsen, Liberal Party MP, stated: 'Denmark had to come up with something: the opt-outs. We said to the Danes that we would not go further on those four themes, unless they would say Yes to them in another referendum'.<sup>32</sup> Jørgen Ørstrøm Møller of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs added: 'The Edinburgh Agreements was actually a contract between the political elite and the population, saying "We understood your message"'.<sup>33</sup> Mogens Lykketoft, Social Democrat MP, explained that in the face of these guarantees, the No side could not credibly make the same arguments again.<sup>34</sup> He added: 'The second round was won due to the opt-outs. It was not a very tough campaign'.

The next occasion of the double referendum was the Nice Treaty in Ireland. Anthony Brown, Director of Research for Ireland for Europe, explained that Ireland learned a key strategy in managing double referendums from Denmark.<sup>35</sup> Referring particularly to the Danish White Paper used at the time of the Maastricht crisis, Brown explained that they learned how securing guarantees provided the legal basis to ask the public to vote once again. He added that they

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<sup>30</sup> In Ireland, the second round civil society campaigns were also helpful in facilitating cooperation among the Yes campaign political parties.

<sup>31</sup> Interview, 2 May 2011.

<sup>32</sup> Interview, 13 May 2011.

<sup>33</sup> Interview, 10 May 2011.

<sup>34</sup> Interview, 3 May 2011.

<sup>35</sup> Interview, 20 April 2011.

invited Danish politicians to Ireland to discuss this issue. Joe Costello, Labour MP, explained the strategy: 'The lessons were learned. The areas that caused grief were identified and the government set about getting reassurances from the EU on these issues. That neutralized the main opposition arguments'.<sup>36</sup> Déirdre de Búrca of the Green Party mentioned that these guarantees 'swallowed people's worries', while Timmy Dooley, Fianna Fáil MP, stated that the No campaigners' arguments were 'headed off by the guarantees'.<sup>37</sup> Pat Cox, Campaign Director of Ireland for Europe, agreed: 'The guarantees blunted the edge of the No campaign. They have been robbed of the battleground'.<sup>38</sup>

The No side agreed that the guarantees were vital in the second referendums. In Denmark, Jens-Peter Bonde, President of the June Movement, said: 'In the first round, we set the agenda: "Union, Yes or No?" We won, because we won the agenda. This explains why we lost in 1993. They withdrew the word "Union" from the debate. We lost because of the Edinburg Agreement'.<sup>39</sup> In Ireland, Mary Lou McDonald, Sinn Féin MP, described the guarantees strategy as a successful political device to assuage and neuter the No side's arguments.<sup>40</sup> Killian Forde, Sinn Féin's Director of Strategy in the first Lisbon campaign, specifically referred to the problem of putting forward the 'we can get a better deal' argument in the first round.<sup>41</sup> This, according to him, weakened the No side's hand in the second campaign, now that Ireland *had* a better deal. John McGuirk, Communications Director of Libertas, agreed: 'Our point in the first campaign was that we needed a better deal, and we now had a better deal. They took the negotiating table away'.<sup>42</sup> 'This was it. This was as good as it would get for the No side', said the Executive Director of Libertas Naoise Nunn.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Interview, 15 April 2011.

<sup>37</sup> Interviews, 14 April 2011 and 19 April 2011.

<sup>38</sup> Interview, 28 April 2011.

<sup>39</sup> Interview, 3 May 2011.

<sup>40</sup> Interview, 26 April 2011.

<sup>41</sup> Interview, 12 April 2011.

<sup>42</sup> Interview, 18 April 2011.

<sup>43</sup> Interview, 12 April 2011.

There was a second strategy that complemented the first one. Now that the guarantees helped the Yes side to not be on the defense, they chose to dramatize the consequences of a second No vote. In Denmark, Minister of Foreign Affairs (1992) Uffe Ellemann-Jensen explained that they pitched the second round as a vote on EU membership:<sup>44</sup>

My argument was 'If you vote No, you have to leave the European Community'. In 1993, it was clear that it was a second chance and if we said No, then it would mean that the EU would continue without us. Then the No side backed down, because it was clear that a majority of the population wanted to stay in the EU.

Jacob Buksti, Social Democrat MP, confirmed: 'The underlining issue was that we would be out'.<sup>45</sup> So did Social Democrat MP Mogens Lykketoft: 'The argument was there in the second round'.<sup>46</sup> Liberal Party MP Charlotte Antonsen added: 'It was the underlying tone'.<sup>47</sup> Ole Krarup, President of the People's Movement against the EU, too, highlighted the same aspect: '[The Yes side] was arguing that it was a referendum about Danish membership in the EU'.<sup>48</sup> Jens-Peter Bonde, President of the June Movement, agreed: 'The Yes side threatened with exclusion'.<sup>49</sup> Holger K. Nielsen, Leader of the Socialist People's Party, stressed the importance of this new tone for reversing the vote: 'In the first round, one of the reasons that it was a No vote was because we said it had no implication for EC membership. The No would have no consequence for the Danish position in the Community'.<sup>50</sup> In fact, the Liberal Party's poster in the second campaign made this point very clear: 'Go for the Safe Choice, You Will Not Get Another Chance'.

In Ireland, Brendan Halligan, National Campaign Coordinator of the Ireland for Europe, explained that they learned this strategy from Denmark as well, referring to the Danish White Paper that was drafted after the Maastricht Treaty: 'We constantly made the point that if we were to vote No for a second time then the honorable thing for Ireland to do would be to

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<sup>44</sup> Interview, 10 May 2011.

<sup>45</sup> Interview, 13 May 2011.

<sup>46</sup> Interview, 3 May 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Interview, 13 May 2011.

<sup>48</sup> Interview, 6 May 2011.

<sup>49</sup> Interview, 3 May 2011.

<sup>50</sup> Interview, 4 May 2011.

withdraw'.<sup>51</sup> He added: 'The first round was about the future of Europe, the second round was about the future of Ireland'. In Fine Gael MP Lucinda Creighton's words:<sup>52</sup>

There was a very clear undercurrent throughout the second campaign on the Lisbon Treaty, the narrative was about Ireland's place in the heart of Europe. ... Implicit in that was the question ... do we want to be a semi-detached member or not a member at all of the Union? Similarly, for the second Nice campaign we used the argument 'It is better to be inside'.

Thomas Broughan, Labour MP, explained this phenomenon as 'more of the stick rather than just the carrot'.<sup>53</sup> Joe Costello, Labour MP, agreed: 'If we were to reject it a second time, it would be very hard to come to any other conclusion than that we had rejected the EU'.<sup>54</sup> Joe Higgins, Socialist Party MP, confirmed that the second campaign put the emphasis on 'membership'.<sup>55</sup> Similarly, John McGuirk, Communications Director of Libertas, characterized the second referendum as 'a proxy referendum for Ireland's continued membership in the EU'.<sup>56</sup> Scott Schittl, Campaign Director of Cóir, also argued that the second round was about 'being in the EU'.<sup>57</sup>

In addition to this new emphasis on EU membership, the Yes campaigners further raised the stakes by stressing the economic consequences of a second No vote. In Denmark, both the Liberal Party and the Social Democrats argued that a No vote would 'cost jobs and investments', 'cause irreparable damage to Denmark's economy', and that Denmark could not 'afford to create uncertainty about the future of Europe' (Worre, 1995, p. 243). This was the case in Ireland as well. In the second Nice referendum, the Yes side emphasized the negative consequences of a No vote concerning jobs, growth and Ireland's future (Hobolt, 2009). David O'Sullivan, the Secretary-General of the European Commission and an Irishman, stated: 'There is no Plan B. Not because we are trying to hide something or are not clever enough to devise one, but because a No vote will create a political crisis with consequences that we cannot foresee' (Costello, 2005, p. 376). Adrian

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<sup>51</sup> Interview, 11 April 2011.

<sup>52</sup> Interview, 19 April 2011.

<sup>53</sup> Interview, 27 April 2011.

<sup>54</sup> Interview, 15 April 2011.

<sup>55</sup> Interview, 13 April 2011.

<sup>56</sup> Interview, 18 April 2011.

<sup>57</sup> Interview, 26 April 2011.

Langan, the campaign manager of the Irish Alliance for Europe, similarly said: 'We structured our campaign around the theme of consequence ... In Nice I people had not been told that there were consequences of voting No. ... So there was an element of threat, but the threat was real'.<sup>58</sup> This, they tried to achieve, by combining the moral arguments on the enlargement process with the negative consequences of a No vote (Hobolt, 2009).<sup>59</sup>

Similarly, in Lisbon II, the Yes side used the unfolding economic crisis to further dramatize the consequences of a No vote. Ireland's economy worsened between 2008 and 2009. While the first campaign witnessed talk of a possible slowing of growth and a 'soft landing', such talk came to an abrupt end only three months after the first referendum (O'Riain, 2014, p. 236). Ireland was in full-blown crisis by September 2008 and the Yes side decided to present the Yes vote as the *only* solution to the severe economic situation. The crisis gave them an additional chance to control the risk factor, which was absent in the first round. Fine Gael MP Lucinda Creighton explained that the first round Yes messages had an aspirational and abstract tone and that they 'went back to basics' for the second campaign with a more economy-based argumentation.<sup>60</sup> Joe Costello, Labour MP, agreed: 'We export about 90% of our products, so we badly need markets, and this was not the time to be leaving the common market'.<sup>61</sup> This shift was indeed visible in second round Yes slogans: 'Yes for Jobs' or 'Ruin versus Recovery'.

This time the No campaigners complained that the Yes side was distracting from the treaty by bringing in themes such as 'jobs' which did not belong to the text. Socialist Party MP Joe Higgins described the Yes campaign as a 'campaign of fear and distortion'.<sup>62</sup> Killian Forde, Sinn Féin's Director of Strategy, said: 'There was a lot of discussion on whether Ireland would get kicked out of Europe and on jobs, jobs, jobs'.<sup>63</sup> President of Libertas Declan Ganley characterized

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<sup>58</sup> Quoted in (Hobolt, 2009, p. 192).

<sup>59</sup> This moral argument, mentioned by all of my Irish interviewees, was that Ireland, which benefited so much from the EU, was now blocking the entry of poor countries that suffered under the communist rule.

<sup>60</sup> Interview, 19 April 2011.

<sup>61</sup> Interview, 15 April 2011.

<sup>62</sup> Interview, 13 April 2011.

<sup>63</sup> Interview, 12 April 2011.



the second Yes campaign's message as 'If you do not agree with this, the country will sink'.<sup>64</sup> Mary Lou McDonald, Sinn Féin MP, similarly noted: 'They said if you wanted an economic future in this country, you had no option but to support this treaty'.<sup>65</sup> John McGuirk, Communications Director of Libertas, agreed: 'Essentially, there is very little you can do in the face of the entire political establishment saying you do this or you are ruined. There was no argument that we could make effectively in response to it'.<sup>66</sup> Eoin Ó'Broin, Campaign Director of the Sinn Féin, added:<sup>67</sup>

We found it incredibly difficult to have the same debate. The Yes campaign did brilliantly, in the same way we set the debate in the first round, they set the terms of the debate the second time around the economic stability and the future of the state. It became a tacit argument which is 'we are a small country, we cannot afford to take risky decisions as we did in the first round'.

In addition, in Ireland, the Yes side made subtle but important changes to the campaign environment. In the second Nice campaign, the government stopped the Referendum Commission from presenting arguments for and against the referendum proposals, which was an important asset for the No campaigners in the first round (Hobolt, 2009, p. 191).<sup>68</sup> Similarly, in the second Lisbon campaign, the No side lost a key platform to present their arguments. The National Forum on Europe, established in the aftermath of the first Nice referendum, ran regular debates between political parties and civil society groups across Ireland. The government decided to close this forum between the two Lisbon referendums.

Overall, the No campaigners acknowledged the difference these strategies made in the second campaign. In Denmark, Jens-Peter Bonde, President of the June Movement, said: 'In the second round, the government and the Yes side were mobilized and they changed the agenda. ... We had no chance'.<sup>69</sup> Referring to the Irish double referendums, he added: 'This is always the case in the second rounds'. In Ireland, Mary Lou McDonald, Sinn Féin MP, referred to the same issue: 'We ran into that wall', adding that those walls were identical in the Nice and Lisbon

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<sup>64</sup> Interview, 20 April 2011.

<sup>65</sup> Interview, 26 April 2011.

<sup>66</sup> Interview, 18 April 2011.

<sup>67</sup> Interview, 29 April 2011.

<sup>68</sup> Interview with Anthony Coughlan, National Platform, 14 April 2011.

<sup>69</sup> Interview, 3 May 2011.

referendums.<sup>70</sup> While Scott Schittl, Campaign Director of Cóir, characterized the second Lisbon campaign as ‘David versus 10 Goliaths’, Declan Ganley similarly said: ‘We knew we would not win the second time’.<sup>71</sup>

### **The Impact on Public Opinion**

From the eyes of the campaigners, the difference between the first and second rounds is remarkable, and more importantly, quite similar in all three instances. Below I discuss the significance of these campaign strategies for the public. Data on the Lisbon referendums are relatively more detailed and helpful in observing the impact of these strategies. To begin with aggregate-level data, Table 3 shows that the No campaigners succeeded in raising doubts on their themes in Lisbon I. A substantial majority of No voters believed that the treaty would compromise Ireland’s neutrality, interfere into its abortion and tax laws, decrease Ireland’s power in the EU, and cause unemployment, even though some of these themes were not related to the treaty.

Table 3 here

In the second round, the Yes side diffused the contention around these controversial No campaign themes. Sinnott and Elkink (2010) ask direct questions on the guarantees. Table 4 confirms that a significant majority of the voters agreed that the guarantees protected Irish interests.

Table 4 here

When looked at which group of voters switched in the second round, 87% of 2008 Yes voters voted Yes again in 2009 (Sinnott et al., 2010). Thus the main shift was on the No side; 25% of 2008 No voters shifted to the Yes side. The Eurobarometer (2009) asked respondents the reasons behind their switch. The two main reasons provided for a switch from a No vote to a Yes vote or from abstention to a Yes vote are, first that the treaty would help Irish economy, and

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<sup>70</sup> Interview, 26 April 2011.

<sup>71</sup> Interviews, 26 April 2011 and 20 April 2011.

second that it would be in the best interest of Ireland. This is broadly in line with the Yes campaign's new emphasis on the consequences of a second No vote. Media content data also parallel these findings. A comparative content analysis of the Irish newspaper coverage finds that the attention on economy/employment more than doubled in the second round, reflecting the new emphasis in the Yes campaign (Gora, 2010).<sup>72</sup>

Importantly, individual-level data confirm these patterns, controlling for alternative explanations such as socioeconomic factors, party identification, level of knowledge, and attitudes towards the government and the Union (Sinnott et al., 2010). This multivariate regression analysis shows that awareness of guarantees on the Commissioner and taxation was associated with voting Yes. As for the success of the second strategy, the same study confirms that the overall positive evaluation of Ireland's EU membership, and the expectation that the Yes vote would lessen Ireland's economic problems were the two key factors explaining the Yes vote, even when all the mentioned control variables are taken into consideration. The first one was an important factor in the first Lisbon referendum as well. This shows that the second factor, relating the vote to the economic crisis, benefited the Yes campaigners immensely. The influence of these strategies is also visible when looked at the 'switchers'. 2008 No voters who were concerned about the loss of Irish neutrality were more likely to switch to a Yes vote in 2009, pointing to the success of EU guarantee on this issue. Once again, with all the control variables in place, the same two factors that explain the Yes vote in 2009, the positive evaluation of EU membership and the expectation that the Yes vote would decrease Ireland's economic problems, were also the key factors explaining the switch from a No vote in 2008 to a Yes vote in 2009. Therefore, data on Lisbon referendums reveal that the Yes side's new strategies had a considerable impact on public opinion.

When looked at the Nice referendums, in the first round, 39% of the No voters rejected the treaty because of 'lack of information', 16% due to 'loss of sovereignty', and 12% in relation to

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<sup>72</sup> This study covers the *Irish Independent*, the *Irish Times*, and the *Evening Herald*, in the week preceding each referendum.

'neutrality and military issues' (Sinnott, 2001). Paralleling Lisbon I, the first No campaign's themes are directly reflected in the Irish voters' answers. A multivariate regression analysis also specifies factors such as dissatisfaction with EU decision-making, neutrality, opposition to enlargement, and the feeling that 'big countries have far too much power' as determinants of the No vote (Sinnott, 2001). In the second round, the reasons for voting No were different, as Table 5 demonstrates. While lack of information and loss of sovereignty lost importance as causes to vote No, neutrality remained as an issue for the No voters (Sinnott, 2003).

Table 5 here

However, in multivariate regression analyses, when compared to the first round, the impact of the attitudes towards neutrality became less important in determining the vote choice in the second round (Garry et al., 2005). In the second referendum, those who favored limiting Irish neutrality were 15 percentage points more likely to vote Yes than those who favored strengthening Irish neutrality, whereas this figure was 29 percentage points in the first round. This finding confirms that the Seville Declaration rendered this issue less problematic for the voters in the second vote.

The existing data is not suitable to study the impact of the second-round argument concerning Ireland's possible exclusion from the Union. However, in a multivariate regression analysis, Hobolt (2009) finds that attitudes towards the EU membership (pro-integration) became more important in determining the Yes vote in the second Nice referendum, linking this to the success of the Yes side in setting the agenda. Particularly, attitudes towards enlargement influenced the likelihood of voting Yes in the second round, which is in line with the Yes camp's strategy to couple the consequences of a second No vote with moral arguments on enlargement (Garry et al., 2005). Overall, 58% of the switch from the No vote to a Yes vote was caused by first-round abstainers voting Yes in the second round, and 42% from first-round No voters shifting to the Yes side in the second referendum (Hobolt, 2009). Furthermore, the 'switchers' who changed

their position to Yes were more pro-European than the consistent No voters (Hobolt, 2009). This suggests that the Yes side's new strategies arguably had an impact.

Finally, when looked at the Maastricht referendums, in the first round, 43% of the No voters rejected the treaty because of 'surrender of sovereignty', 14% due to the 'federal Union' idea, 13% in opposition to common defense policy, 11% because 'the EC should not determine Danish law', and another 11% to protect Danish identity (Hobolt, 2006). These answers confirm that the No campaign was successful in planting their arguments in Danes' minds, just as in Nice I and Lisbon I. In the second round however, the guarantees helped the Yes side. 62% reported to have knowledge of the Edinburg Agreement (Siune et al., 1994). More importantly, 44% of the voters thought that the second referendum offered them a new basis to vote on (Worre, 1995). 24% of the voters who had voted No in 1992 believed that there was a new issue to vote on in the second round, and 40% of this group changed from a No vote to a Yes vote. While this constitutes a small percentage of the overall voting population, this was the decisive group. Importantly, Hobolt (2006) notes that people who switched to Yes were more exposed to campaign information.

As for the second strategy, in the 1992 referendum, where EU membership was not on the agenda, half of the No voters stated that they would have voted Yes, 'if they expected a rupture with the EC' as a consequence of a No vote (Worre, 1995, p. 252). In the second round, the Yes campaign ensured that withdrawal from the EU was a theme. Indeed, those who feared a genuine exclusion from the Union increased from 14% in 1992 to 21% in 1993 (Worre, 1995). This strategy thus arguably helped the switch from the No side to the Yes side. As Siune et al. (1994, p. 115) conclude, Denmark's switch from No to Yes 'was primarily caused by the Edinburgh Agreement and a feeling of insecurity about Denmark's future position in Europe following a second No'.

Nevertheless, two methodological limitations should be stressed. First, without detailed panel data focusing on 'switchers' and their campaign exposure, it is hard to demonstrate the

causal link between campaign strategies and public opinion, as also highlighted by the literature (Hobolt, 2006, 2009). But the existing data strongly suggests that these strategies had an impact on public opinion and helped the Yes sides in reversing the negative verdicts. Second, there were numerous factors that played into the switch from a No vote to a Yes vote. The level of turnout and the composition of the Yes and No camps were not identical in the first and second rounds of the Maastricht and Nice double referendums. Yet, a detailed debate in the literature linked these factors to the *campaigns* (e.g. Gilland, 2004; Hobolt, 2006; Holmes, 2005; Laffan et al., 2005; Sinnott, 2001, 2003; Svensson, 2002). Hobolt (2006) shows that the switch of the Danish Socialist People's Party from the No side to the Yes side strengthened the second Yes campaign and their argument that the Edinburgh Agreement differed substantially from the Maastricht Treaty. Similarly, in the Nice double referendum, research related the low turnout rate to the absence of any sense of urgency in the first Yes campaign and emphasized the second Yes campaign's generation of a sense of national crisis and urgency (Laffan et al., 2005, p. 8). The Lisbon case, on the other hand, witnessed severe economic crisis in the second round. Here too, my analysis demonstrates that the campaigners tied the Yes vote to the recovery from the deepening economic crisis. Future research should analyze the interaction of these factors with campaign strategies with better data.

## **Conclusion**

The existing studies of double referendums show that citizens are capable of voting in line with their interests concerning Europe but that campaigns determine the degree to which they do so (Hobolt, 2009). Being the first study to analyze campaign strategies and materials systematically across all three instances of double referendums, this research takes a step further and shows that Danish and Irish elites used very similar strategies. In the first rounds, as expected, the No campaigners skillfully raised doubts in the public's mind. But the Yes campaigners *learned* from past experience and built a toolkit for reversing the negative verdicts. Focusing on specific

campaign arguments, slogans and materials, and using detailed interview data thus allow us to take a step back and understand the logic of campaign actors.

Nonetheless, there are other aspects of learning as well. During the first Lisbon campaign, Irish No campaigners explicitly stressed that Ireland could get a better deal after a rejection. They learned that there would be a second round, where they would receive concessions from the EU. This has implications, signaling a new form of negotiation power for small member states in guiding European integration. On the other hand, the Yes side did not learn from its Nice Treaty experience and repeated the same mistakes in the first Lisbon campaign. This is not very surprising because being a distant and complex entity, the EU is particularly susceptible to negative arguments. Moreover, the No side holds the advantage in referendum campaigns. 'Guarantees' or 'consequences of a rejection' are therefore not easy to bring up in the first rounds, which might partly explain the repetition of campaign mistakes.

The broader issue of democratic participation also deserves attention. Socialist Party MP Joe Higgins asked: 'The whole question is how democratic this is, making people vote until they deliver the right result for the establishment'.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, Sinn Féin MP Mary Lou McDonald said: 'If you get a Yes that is the right answer, if you get a No that is the wrong answer'.<sup>74</sup> But a senior EU official disagreed: 'If 26 countries say Yes and one country says No, what does it say about democracy? Why are the 26 countries penalized? It is not unreasonable to turn around to the No-voting country and ask what went wrong and address the problem'.<sup>75</sup> What we witness is therefore a clash between direct democracy in one country and representative democracy for the whole Union, and more particularly the question of who should compose the demos for these types of decisions (Altman, 2010, p. 25).

However, as Brendan Halligan put it: 'If Denmark wants to leave the EU, nobody is going to stop them, it is not a big deal. If Ireland wants leave the EU, nobody is going to stop us, it is not

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<sup>73</sup> Interview, 13 April 2011.

<sup>74</sup> Interview, 26 April 2011.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Richard Corbett, 27 May 2013.

a big deal. But if France votes No, that is that, there is no EU without France. As Orwell famously said, some are more equal than others'.<sup>76</sup> This implies that direct democracy does not function uniformly across the Union. Depending on their size, member states need different strategies in using the referendum mechanism on European Union questions.

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<sup>76</sup> Interview, 11 April 2011.



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	TEU I	TEU II	Nice I	Nice II	Lisbon I	Lisbon II
<b>Date</b>	2 June 1992	18 May 1993	7 June 2001	19 October 2002	12 June 2008	2 October 2009
<b>Yes vote (%)</b>	49.3	56.7	46.1	62.9	46.6	67.1
<b>No vote (%)</b>	50.7	43.3	53.9	37.1	53.4	32.9
<b>Turnout (%)</b>	83.1	86.5	34.8	49.5	53.1	59

Table 1: Results of double EU referendums

	TEU I	TEU II	Nice I	Nice II	Lisbon I	Lisbon II
<b>Conservative Party</b>	Yes	Yes				
<b>Center Democrats</b>	Yes	Yes				
<b>Liberal Party</b>	Yes	Yes				
<b>Social Liberals</b>	Yes	Yes				
<b>Social Democrats</b>	Yes	Yes				
<b>Socialist People's Party</b>	No	Yes				
<b>Progress Party</b>	No	No				
<b>Fianna Fáil</b>			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Fine Gael</b>			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Labour Party</b>			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Progressive Democrats</b>			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Green Party</b>			No	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Sinn Féin</b>			No	No	No	No
<b>Socialist Party</b>			No	No	No	No

Table 2: Vote recommendation of the political parties in the first and second rounds

<i>If the Treaty had been passed, do you think it would have...?</i>	<b>Yes voters (%)</b>	<b>No Voters (%)</b>
Compromised Ireland's neutrality	30	70
Made the practice of abortion more likely in Ireland	26	74
Led to a change in tax on business	33	67
Reduced Ireland's influence on EU decisions	33	67
Strengthened the protection of workers' rights	72	28
Cause even more unemployment	19	81
Led to losing our EU Commissioner for some of the time	48	52
Simplified decision making in the EU	66	24

Source: RedC Research

Table 3: Agreement with No campaign themes in Lisbon I

<i>Do you think with the guarantees ... ?</i>	<b>All voters (%)</b>	<b>Yes voters (%)</b>	<b>No voters (%)</b>
Ireland will remain in control of its own taxes	77	85	64
Ireland retains control of its abortion laws	82	85	74
Ireland will keep its Commissioner	87	90	79

Source: (Sinnott & Elkins, 2010)

Table 4: Perceptions of guarantees in Lisbon II

	Nice I (%)	Nice II (%)
Lack of information	39	14
Loss of sovereignty	16	8
Neutrality and military issues	12	17
Bad idea in general	7	25

Source: (Sinnott, 2003)

Table 5: Reasons for voting No in Nice I and Nice II



Figure 1: Campaign posters in Maastricht, Nice and Lisbon referendums (Top row first round, bottom row second round)