Salient But Not Polarized: The Role of the EU in the Irish Electoral Arena

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INTRODUCTION

The February 2020 Dáil elections in Ireland have not been an ordinary election: First, they are the first real post-crisis election—in the Irish case, even a post "dual crisis" election (the Eurozone crisis and Brexit). And second, for the first time ever, Sinn Féin won the most votes, while the two formerly dominant parties, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, shrank to a fraction of their former strengths, and the government to emerge was a coalition between these two previously irreconcilable enemies (Cunningham & Marsh, 2021). For these reasons, the election marks the end of an era in Irish politics (Gallagher et al., 2021). Thus, it is especially interesting to understand the relevance of the EU and Euroscepticism in this election.

This chapter will begin by discussing Ireland's relationship with the EU as well as the role of Euroscepticism in Irish politics, to then explain the

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general political context of the February 2020 Dáil elections, discussing the relevance of social issues, the EU and Brexit. Then, we will present data on the salience and the tone of the EU in media and parliamentary debates in Ireland in 2020, in order to understand how important the EU was during electoral campaigns, and during the previous parliamentary year for parties. Next, we move to an analysis of voting behaviour in the February 2020 elections, using survey data to determine which factors mattered most in driving vote choice amongst the Irish electorate, and end the chapter with conclusions.

Ireland's Relationship with the EU: Stable Support Despite the Euro Crisis and Brexit

Irish politics are traditionally marked by high levels of public support for the EU, based on a broad appreciation of the benefits of EU membership. Economically, EU membership has been a key factor in the modernization, diversification and growth of the Irish economy (Murphy & Hayward, 2009) Moreover, being equal partners in the EU has helped to "disrupt and dilute the historically asymmetrical relationship between Ireland and the UK" (Murphy, 2021, p. 105). Indeed, public support for the EU in Ireland has been consistently above the EU average since the 1980s, and did not suffer significantly since the onset of the Eurozone crisis (Simpson, 2019a). Although there has been a drop in trust towards the EU since the onset of the financial crisis, the Irish are still amongst the countries that rate the EU most positively and report a higher-than-average attachment to the EU (Galpin, 2017). While many Irish were disappointed and angered by the performance of the EU during the economic crisis, in particular, those who experienced increased economic instability, overall, most Irish remain enthusiastic supporters of the EU project (Simpson, 2019a, 2019b). A possible explanation for this fact is that the financial crisis was understood most widely as a domestic crisis in Ireland, and attributed to longstanding problems in Irish society, particularly amongst the political and economic elite: "Having revealed widespread corruption in the country's banking, economic, and political system, the crisis was seen as one brought about primarily by the Irish elite themselves" (Galpin, 2017, p. 140).

But apart from a generally positive view amongst the electorate, issues having to do with the European Union are "a minority interest in Ireland" (Murphy, 2021, p. 100). In other words, unlike in the UK,

Europe is not an issue that mobilizes Irish public opinion in any significant way. As Murphy (2021, p. 101) remarks, there is also a certain disconnect amongst Irish between "positive perceptions of the EU and low levels of knowledge," with voters typically "taking their cues from political actors including political leaders, parties, interest groups and movements" (*ibid.*). Both main parties, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, have been consistently pro-EU since its beginnings (Benoit, 2009; Hayward & Fallon, 2009). The Labour party was initially rather opposed to the EU, but has become clear, if sometimes critical, EU supporters during the 1980s (Murphy & O'Brennan, 2019). The Green Party shows a similar development, but remained eurocritical until well into the 2000s. Sinn Féin's position on the EU has been more complex—after a very strong rejection of European integration in the name of national sovereignty in the 1970s and 1980s, the party has started to become more nuanced since the 1990s (Maillot, 2009). They now combine a support for continued EU membership with a core element of soft Euroscepticism, including opposition to the EU's economic and social agenda, which has led them to campaign against all Irish EU treaty referendums (Murphy, 2021; Murphy & Hayward, 2009). While Sinn Féin, together with a variety of civil society anti-EU movements, has clearly channelled an anti-EU narrative during those referendums in 2001 (Treaty of Nice) and 2008 (treaty of Lisbon), none of them ever advocated for an outright Irish exit from the EU (Hobolt, 2005). And while the initial No-vote in both referendums shows that there is a certain level of Euroscepticism amongst the Irish electorate, researchers have concluded that "the depth and intensity of opposition to the EU in Ireland is not deep-rooted" (Murphy, 2021, p. 103).

Despite the severity with which the financial crisis hit Ireland in the years following 2008, and the "earthquake election" of 2011 (Marsh & Mikhaylov, 2012) that swept away the long-standing incumbent Fianna Fáil, the impact of the Eurocrisis and the bailout agreement on public sentiment towards the EU was similarly minimal (Simpson, 2019a). In contrast to the two previous EU referendums, and fearful of the consequences of rejecting another EU treaty, the Irish electorate supported the Fiscal Treaty in a 2012 referendum (Murphy & O'Brennan, 2019). Moreover, public protest against austerity and the EU was limited, and largely concentrated around internal policy proposals such as water rights and housing (Fitzgibbon, 2013). In sum, the Irish political system has accommodated public displeasure with the EU and there remains a

strong pro-EU consensus within the Irish political system and across society more broadly (Murphy & O'Brennan, 2019). Interestingly, while a growing Euroscepticism since the Eurozone crisis has been observed in media and elite discourses (Gora, 2018), there are no indications of a similar lasting trend in the Irish electorate (Simpson, 2019a).

Even Brexit could not fundamentally change this dynamic, despite having a very direct and profound impact on Ireland, and sparking concerns about the stability of the Northern Ireland peace process over a re-opening of the inner-Irish border issue. But all major political parties in Ireland made it clear since the UK's 2016 Brexit referendum that they were hoping for a Remain decision, and subsequently shared a similar perspective on how the Irish government should approach the UK–EU negotiations (Murphy, 2021; Murphy & O'Brennan, 2019). In essence, "Brexit has been quite remarkable for having generated so little division and disagreement in Ireland" (Murphy, 2021, p. 95). As a result, Brexit—and the EU—has been generally considered as a topic of minor importance for the Irish election campaign of 2020 (Cunningham & Marsh, 2021).

The Elections of 2020—An End to Irish Exceptionalism?

Traditionally, the Irish party system is strongly weighted towards the centre-right and structured around a competition between Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil to lead government coalitions with smaller parties, recently mostly the Labour party (Little, 2021). The party system was "defined and structured by the integrity of the quarrel between Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, even if its origins lay in events of the early 1920s and policy differences between the two parties were increasingly harder to discern" (Gallagher et al., 2021, p. 5). The economic crash of 2008 set in motion what seems to be the end of this system: the 2011 elections brought a clear punishment of the incumbent, Fianna Fáil, mostly as a result of public dissatisfaction with the economic crisis and the Troika-led bailout programme that the government signed in 2010. However, the 2016 elections partly normalized the situation again, with Fine Gael's results reverting back to their normal range, and Fianna Fáil recovering some ground (Gallagher & Marsh, 2016). Tolerated by Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael formed a minority government in coalition with independent members of the Dáil. A version of the traditional two-and-a-half-party system seemed

to persist, with Sinn Féin taking Labour's traditional position as the half-party (Field, 2020).

Under the pressure of the unfolding Brexit process which threatened Ireland's fragile political equilibrium, this minority government remained stable until late 2019 (Little, 2021), despite having been rocked by scandals for much of its duration (Field, 2020). The focus on Brexit dictated the pattern and focus of Irish politics after 2016 and "distracted attention from other domestic policy priorities and consequential wider global developments" (Murphy, 2021), despite being more important amongst political elites than voters. Yet, with the finalization of the Withdrawal Agreement between the UK and the EU in late 2019, support for the government soon decreased, and social issues moved back into focus. While the economy had recovered between 2016 and 2019, healthcare, retirement and housing took the place of unemployment and the economy as the public's main concerns (Little, 2021). When a series of scandals culminated in motions of no-confidence against the housing minster as well as the health minister, the Government decided to call for new elections instead of risking a defeat in early 2020. In this climate, Sinn Féin managed to run a very successful campaign strongly based on social media (Park & Suiter, 2021). The party opposed the planned increase in retirement age, an issue that became central to the electoral campaign, to the surprise of the two centre-right parties. Moreover, Sinn Féin also focused on state intervention, welfare spending and public housing, taking a clear opposition to Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, and successfully drew an "anti-elitist populist narrative" (Park & Suiter, 2021). While Fine Gael pursued a broadly traditional centre-right platform of tax cuts and economic liberalism, Fianna Fáil positioned itself slightly to their left, combining tax cuts with increased cash transfers in social welfare and promising to address the housing crisis through measures to increase private home ownership (Field, 2020).

As a result of this focus on social issues, Brexit was much less salient during the 2020 elections than it had been in the previous years—only 1% of exit poll respondents indicated it as the most important issue in the elections (Field, 2020). The two most important issues were clearly health (32%) and housing (26%), followed by pension age (8%), jobs and climate change (6% each). The fact that Brexit was not an influential issue at the polls was certainly to the disadvantage of Fine Gael, which was perceived to have handled it competently (Little, 2021), and was the only political party that sought to mobilize electoral support around its record

on Brexit and its capacity to steer the country through the next phase of negotiations (Murphy, 2021).

At a low turnout of 62%, the 8th of February elections resulted in vote shares of 24.5, 22.2 and 20.9% for Sinn Féin, Fianna Fáil, and Fine Gael, respectively. Independent candidates—traditionally a very important factor in Irish elections—gathered 12.2%, while the smaller parties came out at 7.1 (Green Party), 4.4 (Labour Party), 2.9 (Social Democrats), 2.6 (People Before Profit), 1.9 (Aontú) and 0.4 (Independents 4 Change) %. These elections have thus clearly shown that the Irish political landscape has changed, continuing a pattern that began in the two preceding elections: Sinn Féin became the largest party by vote share for the first time, only failing to become the largest party in the Dáil (lower house) because it underestimated its own electoral potential and therefore selected too few candidates (Field, 2020; Little, 2021). As Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael both refused to collaborate with Sinn Féin, they were left with only one option—a coalition with each other, which, including the Green Party, finally secured a majority in the Dáil. This formal coalition is another novelty in the Irish party system, although the two major parties did have a history of cooperation, like Fianna Fáil supporting the Fine Gael minority government under a confidence and supply agreement since 2016. Overshadowed by the sudden onset of the COVID-19 crisis shortly after the elections in February, government formation took a record 20 weeks, and a minority caretaker government remained in power until June 2020, when the new coalition government finally took over. Interestingly, government and opposition are now divided along right–left lines more than at any other moment, suggesting that "Irish exceptionalism in the structure of its party politics may be coming to an end" (Little, 2021).

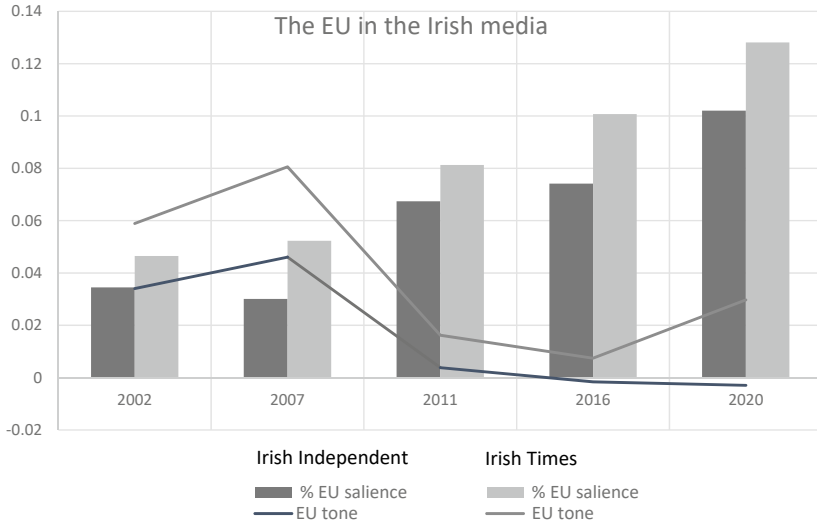## Politicization of the EU in the Irish Media and Parliamentary Debates

The Media

To understand better how the EU is portrayed in the Irish media, we analyzed the two main Irish newspapers: The Irish times, a liberal mainstream newspaper, as well as the Irish independent, a rather conservative and anti-elitist Tabloid newspaper. For both newspapers, we have data from 2002 to 2020, which covers the three months before each election.

We look at both EU salience (measured as the % of articles that mention the EU) as well as EU tone (the tone of those articles mentioning the EU). The tone measure refers to an average of two measures obtained in an automated fashion. Namely, it combines a measure of the sentiment of the title of the article, and a measure of the average sentiments of the EU sentences in the article itself. Thus, once the EU sentences have been identified, a sentiment score is calculated for each of them, and the tone measure is the average sentiment score within those speeches.

Looking at the two newspapers, we can see a similar development over time: While the salience of the EU has steadily increased since 2002, the tone has become more negative. This is true for both newspapers, although the salience of the EU is slightly higher in the Irish Times, while the tone is slightly more negative for the Irish Independent. Both newspapers have evolved from a rather low salience of the EU combined with a positive tone in the 2002 and 2007 elections, to an increasing salience and gradually more negative tone since the 2011 elections. Clearly, the Euro-crisis with the following bailout and the austerity politics have caused Irish media—both mainstream and tabloid—to talk more about the EU, and to be more critical. The 2016 and 2020 elections see even higher levels of salience while the tone remains neutral to negative. This effect is certainly strongly influenced by the debate about Brexit, which started in 2016 with the British referendum, and was very salient again in the months previous to the February 2020 election, given that a Brexit agreement became finalized after long and difficult negotiations in December 2019 (Fig. 10.1).

Parliamentary Debates

Next, we look at the role of the EU in parties' discourses in parliament. Here, we have data from 1997 to 2019, which covers each year that a party has been present in the Dáil, the lower house of the Irish parliament. Again, we are comparing the salience of the EU—as a percentage of speeches that mention the EU out of all speeches made by members of parliament from that party—as well as the tone of those speeches, ranging from positive to negative. In the case of parliamentary debates, this measure refers to the average sentiment in all the EU sentences uttered in a given speech. Looking at the right-wing parties first, we can see a similar development when it comes to salience, which has slowly increased in both parties' speeches since the late 2000s, again showing

Fig. 10.1 Politicization of the EU in Irish media

a clear effect of the Eurozone crisis. However, the EU tone shows a different development: Fianna Fáil started off with a very positive tone about the EU, but shows a clear trend to the negative since 2007, which intensifies from 2011. This is in line with Fianna Fáil being in government until 2011, when they lost the elections in a landslide, mostly due to their role in implementing the Troika-led bailout and austerity policies. Clearly, the party has since turned away from their strongly pro-European stance, and used their role as an opposition party to show a more critical discourse on EU issues. Fine Gael, at the same time, had a more neutral EU tone during the 1990s and 2000s, and then shows a development to a more positive tone since 2011—the year they won the elections and became incumbent. In general, Fine Gael is considered to be the most pro-EU political party, and it tends to outperform Fianna Fáil at European Parliament elections. This comparison of the two major right-bloc parties shows again that the Irish bailout and the following elections in 2011 changed the party dynamics as well as the way the EU is discussed in parliament substantially.
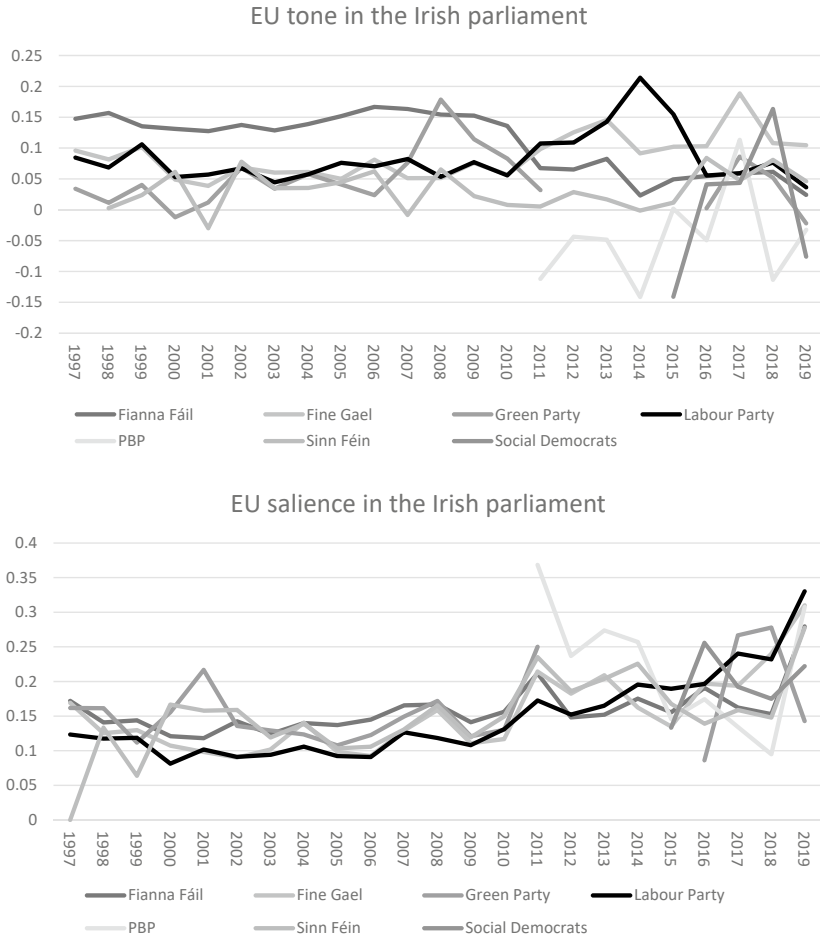
Turning to the parties of the left bloc now, the situation is overall similar, pointing to the fact that the EU is not an issue that aligns strongly

with the left−right divide. Overall, almost all left-wing parties follow the trend of an increasing salience of EU topics in parliamentary debates, especially since the Eurozone crisis. When it comes to the EU tone, the development is different again. Looking at the Green Party and the Labour party—two traditionally rather pro-European parties—we can see that after an increasingly positive EU tone during the 2000s, the tone turned more negative in recent years, following the Eurozone crisis. In the case of the Green party, the negative trend in tone started in 2008, while the Labour party only turned more critical of the EU from 2015. Both parties show the most negative tone on the EU in 2019. Sinn Féin, the most Eurosceptic amongst the mainstream parties in Ireland, shows a steadier trend, with a mostly neutral tone on the EU throughout the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s, pointing to the fact that that the Eurozone bailout has not changed Sinn Féin's position on the EU—which makes sense given that it was rather critical in the first place. Since the 2016 elections however, we can see a trend to a more positive discourse on the EU, which is in line with the party adopting a more pro-European approach and clearly opposing Brexit. Lastly, People Before Profit (PBP) and the Social Democrats, two challengers left parties that grew strongly after—and partly in reaction to—the Eurozone crisis, show a similar trend of relatively high levels of EU salience, together with a rather negative tone on the EU since their entry into the Oireachtas in 2011 and 2016, respectively (Fig. 10.2).

Determinants of Irish Voting Behaviour in the 2020 Elections

Data and Methodology

As the other country-case chapters, the analysis of voting behaviour in the 2020 Irish elections is based on data from the two-wave Maple online survey fielded before and after the election, and relies on the second, post-electoral, wave. In Ireland, this wave contains 998 respondents and was fielded between February 17 and April 05, 2020. This section will focus on the major factors explaining voting behaviour for each of the main parties. To do this, we create a model of voting behaviour, including sociodemographic variables, ideology, economic perceptions and leader effects. Our goal is to contrast different issues and their importance for the vote choices.

EU tone in the Irish parliament

Fianna Fáil · Fine Gael · Green Party · Labour Party
PBP · Sinn Féin · Social Democrats

EU salience in the Irish parliament

Fianna Fáil · Fine Gael · Green Party · Labour Party
PBP · Sinn Féin · Social Democrats

Fig. 10.2 Politicization of the EU in Irish parliamentary debates

Our dependent variable is vote recall, capturing respondents' vote choice in the previous elections. We use a categorical variable that captures the vote choice for each major party.[1] As independent variables, we use gender, age (in years, from young to old), education (8 categories, from low to high), being trade union membership (respondent and household), and religiosity (4 categories). When it comes to political attitudes, we test for ideology (left−right-placement, 11-point scale), assessment of the national economic situation (5-point scale), and opposition to immigration (support for a more restrictive immigration policy, 5-point scale). Support for the EU is measured with the following indicator:

> Some people believe that the process of European integration should move forward to the creation of the United States of Europe. Others believe that the European Union should be dissolved in order to return to a situation in which states are fully sovereign. In which point of the following scale would you place yourself? (0. The EU should be dissolved—10. The EU should move towards the United States of Europe)

Moreover, we also test the effect of an Ireland-specific question we included in the survey about retirement age, which was one of the most salient issues in Ireland at the time of the elections:

> To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "Workers should be able to retire at 65, reverting past legislation which extended the pension age to 68, even if that could have future financial implications for the sustainability of the Irish welfare state."

Lastly, we test for leader effects using a battery of questions that ask respondents how much they like a political leader (on an 11-point scale from "dislike strongly" to "like strongly"), we use the party leader(s) of the respective party in each analysis (apart from PBP who have a centralized leadership). All independent variables are recoded to a 0 to 1 scale to ease comparison of the effect sizes. Given that our dependent variable,

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[1] We only analyze the vote for parties that have at least 10 respondents indicating that they voted for them. Due to too few cases, we had to exclude Aontú and Independents4Change from the analysis. The remaining parties are Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, Labour, Sinn Féin, the Social Democrats, the Green Party, People Before Profit, as well as independent candidates.

vote choice, is categorical, we use multinomial logistic regression models, with the incumbent party, Fine Gael, as a baseline category.

Results

Table 10.1 in the appendix shows the results when predicting the vote for the seven parties we analyze (Fine Gael, Fianna Fáil, Labour, Sinn Féin, the Social Democrats, the Green Party and People Before Profit) as well as for independent candidates, comparing voters of each opposition party to the baseline, the incumbent Fine Gael. Model 1 includes sociodemographics, ideology and political issues, and Model 2 adds economic perceptions as well as leader effects.

When it comes to sociodemographic characteristics, some effects stand out: namely, compared to Fine Geal voters, voters from most left parties (Sinn Féin, Labour, Green Party as well as PBP) are younger, while Independent voters are slightly older. Sinn Féin and Labour voters are also less educated. Trade Union membership is not significant. A higher religiosity clearly distinguishes Fiánna Fail voters from Fine Gael voters. Gender, just as trade union membership, does not significantly affect vote choice for any party in our model.

Moving to political attitudes and issues, we can see a clear effect of ideology on the vote for almost all parties compared to Fine Gael: Fiánna Fail voters are slightly more left-leaning, and voters for the left-bloc parties (Sinn Fein, Labour, the Green Party, and especially the Social Democrats and PBP) as well as the Independents are significantly more left-leaning. Sinn Féin is the only party that benefits from EU issue voting, by attracting more Eurosceptic voters compared to Fine Gael, but also Independent voters tend to be more Eurosceptic. While immigration is not a highly polarizing issue, both Sinn Féin, and, to a lesser degree, Fianna Fáil and Independent voters tend to be slightly more anti-immigration than Fine Gael supporters. The Ireland-specific issue—early retirement age—matters for Sinn Féin voters, who tend to support it, and Social Democrats, who surprisingly reject early retirement more than Fine Gael.

Looking at Model 2, negative economic evaluations clearly increase the likelihood of voting for Fianna Fáil over incumbent Fine Gael. Lastly, several parties profit from strong leader effects, especially Fianna Fáil, Sinn Féin and the Green party. Compared to Fine Gael, voters of all opposition parties tend to reject the current PM and Fine Gael candidate Varadkar.

Next, we look at the average marginal effects of ideology and political issues, comparing all parties. We can see that all three political issues (retirement age, immigration, and the EU), most strongly drive the vote for Sinn Féin on the one hand, and for the incumbent Fine Gael on the other hand. Clearly, amongst the opposition parties Sinn Féin managed to politicize all those issues most, and to attract voters in favour of an early retirement age, but critical of immigration and the EU. The two parties are also on the ideological extremes when it comes to left−right—Sinn Féin voters are strongly driven by a left-leaning ideology, and Fine Gael voters by a right-wing ideology (Fig. 10.3).

Average marginal effects (AME) and 95% confidence intervals based on multinomial regression models. For the full table of AMEs see Table 10.1 in the appendix (Model 1). Data source: Maple online survey, wave 4.
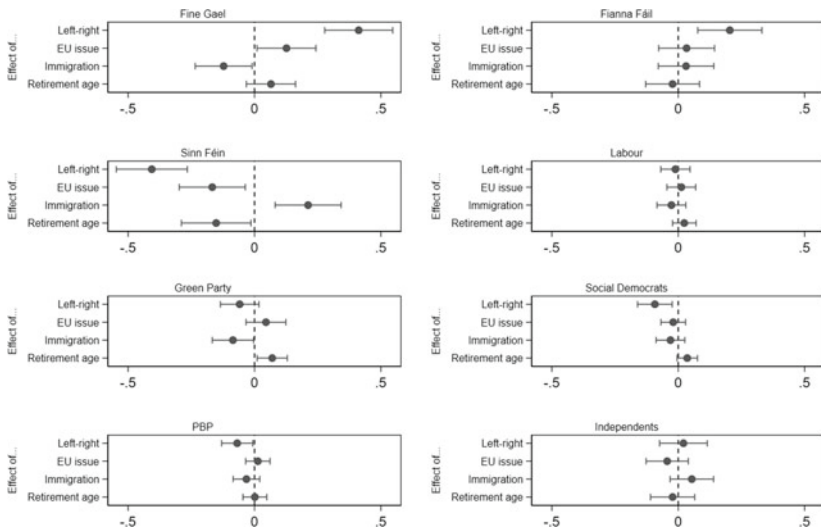

Fig. 10.3 Average marginal effects of selected variables

Conclusions

This chapter has attempted to understand the degree of politicization of the EU in Irish politics and media, and the implications for the 2020 national elections. Generally, the literature agrees that Ireland is a traditionally pro-European country, in which Euroscepticism has never been a strong driver of political discourses, electoral campaigns or party competition: "What opposition there is to the EU in Ireland is largely confined to periods when the issue is publicly salient, namely during EU treaty referendum campaigns. Outside of these episodes, Euroscepticism is a marginal force in Irish politics, a trend confirmed by the results of the 2020 election" (Murphy, 2021, p. 94). The data we analyzed can, at least partly, confirm this statement: looking at the politicization of the EU in Irish media and parliamentary debates, two trends have become obvious: first, the salience of the EU has very clearly increased across both newspapers and in all parties' speeches over the past 20 years. Given that Ireland has witnessed three referenda on EU issues (2001, 2008, 2012) as well as an EU-led bailout (2010) and a long debate about the Brexit (2016−2019), this is hardly surprising. At the same time, Irish print media has also developed a more critical tone on the EU since the Eurozone crisis, and reinforced this trend during the Brexit debate. Parliamentary debates show a more nuanced picture, with parties somewhat converging in their tone on the EU—while the two centre-right parties have either become more critical in their tone (Fianna Fáil) or remained the same (Fine Gael), the formerly Eurosceptic left-wing Sinn Féin has gradually become more positive in their EU tone. Given that party competition is not taking place over EU issues, it is unsurprising that our analysis does not reveal a very strong impact of EU issue voting. Yet, we can see that Eurosceptic attitudes are still driving the vote for Sinn Féin, despite the softer Eurocriticism the party has recently adopted. Pro-European attitudes, at the same time, significantly affect the vote for the incumbent Fine Gael. Interestingly, in the EU issue as well as other salient issues such as immigration and social welfare, Sinn Féin and Fine Gael are at the two extremes of the spectrum, and seem to attract voters with opposite convictions. They are also the two parties that profit most from left-wing (Sinn Féin) and right-wing (Fine Gael) ideology amongst the voters. The fact that Sinn Féin, of all the opposition parties, managed to position itself most clearly against the incumbent when it comes to the

EU as well as other issues is certainly an explanation for their electoral success in 2020.

Lastly, it is important to remember that the COVID-19 crisis which hit just after the Irish elections has clearly shifted the political landscape profoundly, with the potential to strengthen Ireland's focus on economic and social issues over the EU issue. While Sinn Féin is the only party that does, at present, profit from Eurosceptic voting, it seems unlikely that they will use this issue in the near future and return to a more critical agenda. After all, the current political conditions already present an opportunity for Sinn Féin to consolidate its new place as a major party, given that they have a clear electoral profile that distinguishes them from the centre-right parties, but also within their own political bloc. As Little (2021) has noted, the economic and social costs of the Covid pandemic will inevitably be a major political issue, and existing problems of housing and healthcare provision have not gone away either. With the Brexit issue finally off the table, it seems unlikely that Irish electoral competition will focus on European over internal issues any time soon, despite its potential for mobilization due to an increased salience.

Appendix

See Table 10.1.

Table 10.1 Determinants of vote choice in the 2020 elections, full models

Baseline: Fine Gael	Fianna Fáil		Sinn Féin		Labour		Green party	
	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]
Gender (male)	0.218 (0.295) [0.002]	−0.075 (0.438) [−0.010]	0.255 (0.276) [0.007]	0.092 (0.446) [0.006]	0.778 (0.546) [0.020]	0.720 (0.659) [0.025]	−0.022 (0.423) [−0.014]	−0.112 (0.573) [−0.007]
Age	−1.068 (0.663) [0.102]	−0.132 (1.051) [−0.001]	−3.443*** (0.625) [−0.441**]	−1.223 (1.024) [−0.155*]	−2.065+ (1.056) [−0.003]	−2.186 (1.461) [−0.069]	−3.064*** (0.899) [−0.063]	−1.544 (1.239) [−0.059]
Education	−0.087 (0.730) [0.062]	−1.283 (1.092) [−0.075]	−1.612* (0.693) [−0.320**]	−1.569 (1.079) [−0.127]	−2.352+ (1.366) [−0.061]	−3.278* (1.543) [−0.096*]	0.006 (0.983) [0.036]	−0.403 (1.361) [0.020]
Trade union	0.118 (0.406) [0.007]	−0.463 (0.588) [−0.030]	0.167 (0.386) [0.025]	0.110 (0.554) [0.043]	0.188 (0.710) [0.004]	−0.459 (0.795) [−0.011]	0.006 (0.586) [−0.005]	−0.188 (0.729) [0.001]
Religiosity	1.273* (0.523) [0.178**]	1.210 (0.758) [0.105*]	−0.060 (0.480) [−0.066]	0.533 (0.763) [0.051]	−0.510 (0.893) [−0.023]	−0.200 (1.026) [−0.015]	0.072 (0.714) [−0.003]	0.381 (0.924) [0.003]
Ideology (right)	−1.186+ (0.698) [0.204**]	−0.277 (1.142) [0.101]	−4.313*** (0.653) [−0.406**]	−1.024 (1.086) [0.071]	−3.167** (1.133) [−0.011]	−1.339 (1.691) [−0.005]	−4.005*** (0.956) [−0.059]	−3.475* (1.451) [−0.103+]
EU support	−0.557 (0.553) [0.033]	0.193 (0.859) [0.073]	−1.411** (0.515) [−0.167*]	−0.869 (0.816) [−0.033]	−0.470 (0.959) [0.012]	−0.843 (1.202) [−0.012]	−0.073 (0.840) [0.045]	−0.608 (1.096) [−0.003]

Baseline: Fine Gael	Fianna Fáil		Sinn Féin		Labour		Green party	
	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]
Anti-immigration	0.926+ (0.543) [0.031]	0.620 (0.782) [0.060]	1.464** (0.505) [0.212**]	0.102 (0.794) [0.014]	−0.029 (0.956) [−0.027]	−1.041 (1.135) [−0.037]	−0.734 (0.847) [−0.085*]	−1.034 (1.089) [−0.049]
Against early retirement	−0.542 (0.489) [−0.022]	−0.392 (0.730) [−0.071]	−0.919+ (0.471) [−0.152*]	0.193 (0.781) [−0.025]	0.276 (0.772) [0.024]	−0.009 (0.987) [−0.011]	0.803 (0.626) [0.070*]	1.077 (0.855) [0.039]
Economy got worse		1.867* (0.947) [0.116+]		0.819 (0.930) [0.005]		−1.541 (1.323) [−0.079+]		1.090 (1.190) [0.016]
Like leader: Martin		7.652*** (1.197) [0.561**]		0.096 (0.987) [−0.318**]		−0.581 (1.318) [−0.087*]		3.683** (1.384) [0.069]
Like leader: Varadkar		−6.845*** (1.120) [−0.233**]		−6.235*** (1.078) [−0.129*]		−4.905*** (1.442) [−0.025]		−5.136*** (1.384) [−0.014]

(continued)

Table 10.1 (continued)

Baseline: Fine Gael	Fianna Fáil		Sinn Féin		Labour		Green party	
	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]
Like leader: Howlin		-0.789 (1.053) [0.002]		-1.193 (1.104) [-0.032]		1.097 (1.524) [0.067]		-0.430 (1.507) [0.022]
Like leader: McDonald		-0.402 (0.817) [-0.189**]		5.854*** (0.899) [0.578***]		-0.987 (1.197) [-0.093**]		1.006 (1.060) [-0.034]
Like leader: Ryan		-0.244 (1.083) [-0.041]		-0.028 (1.051) [-0.031]		1.657 (1.427) [0.051]		3.883** (1.352) [0.179**]
Like leader: Murphy		1.283 (1.752) [0.153]		-1.823 (1.606) [-0.226*]		-0.150 (1.827) [0.005]		-2.625 (2.174) [-0.123]
Like leader: Shortall		0.023 (1.494) [-0.093]		2.243 (1.433) [0.163]		2.757 (1.794) [0.067]		0.780 (1.742) [-0.010]

Baseline: Fine Gael	Fianna Fáil		Sinn Féin		Labour		Green party	
	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]
Constant	0.357 (0.861)	−1.183 (1.523)	2.696+ (1.468)	2.696+ (1.468)	2.109 (1.356)	4.398* (1.833)	2.513* (1.120)	1.710 (1.801)
N	540	445	540	445	540	445	540	445
Pseudo R^2	0.137	0.409	0.137	0.409	0.137	0.409	0.137	0.409

Baseline: Fine Gael	Fianna Fáil		Social Democrats		PBP		Independents	
	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]
Gender (male)	0.218 (0.295) [0.002]	−0.075 (0.438) [−0.010]	−0.297 (0.623) [−0.013]	−0.888 (0.918) [−0.019]	0.363 (0.625) [0.003]	0.805 (0.881) [0.017]	0.585 (0.374) [0.032]	−0.056 (0.509) [−0.006]
Age	−1.068 (0.663) [0.102]	−0.132 (1.051) [−0.001]	0.233 (1.367) [0.057+]	1.335 (1.942) [0.031]	−2.671* (1.325) [−0.009]	0.787 (1.715) [0.027]	−1.012 (0.828) [0.076]	2.079+ (1.193) [0.192**]
Education	−0.087 (0.730) [0.062]	−1.283 (1.092) [−0.075]	1.628 (1.388) [0.055+]	2.248 (1.877) [0.060+]	−0.873 (1.543) [−0.003]	−1.521 (2.137) [−0.013]	1.298 (0.868) [0.162**]	0.933 (1.204) [0.141*]

(continued)

Table 10.1 (continued)

Baseline: Fine Gael	Fianna Fáil		Social Democrats		PBP		Independents	
	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]
Trade union	0.118 (0.406) [0.007]	-0.463 (0.588) [-0.030]	-0.161 (0.864) [-0.006]	-1.597 (1.342) [-0.028]	0.118 (0.849) [0.001]	-0.292 (1.010) [-0.002]	-0.049 (0.518) [-0.012]	-0.128 (0.637) [0.004]
Religiosity	1.273* (0.523) [0.178**]	1.210 (0.758) [0.105*]	0.097 (1.046) [-0.001]	-0.188 (1.444) [-0.008]	0.304 (1.030) [0.005]	0.331 (1.357) [-0.000]	-0.357 (0.634) [-0.047]	-0.965 (0.869) [-0.104*]
Ideology (right)	-1.186+ (0.698) [0.204**]	-0.277 (1.142) [0.101]	-6.806*** (1.458) [-0.092**]	-8.210*** (2.451) [-0.135**]	-6.286*** (1.418) [-0.068*]	-4.975* (2.204) [-0.073+]	-2.492** (0.845) [0.021]	-1.018 (1.270) [0.018]
EU support	-0.557 (0.553) [0.033]	0.193 (0.859) [0.073]	-1.649 (1.116) [-0.020]	-2.468 (1.611) [-0.038]	-0.388 (1.162) [0.013]	-0.990 (1.504) [-0.007]	-1.336* (0.661) [-0.044]	-0.920 (0.912) [-0.028]
Anti-immigration	0.926+ (0.543) [0.031]	0.620 (0.782) [0.060]	-0.516 (1.272) [-0.031]	-0.913 (1.566) [-0.018]	-0.539 (1.225) [-0.032]	-2.062 (1.568) [-0.043]	1.411* (0.670) [0.054]	1.040 (0.880) [0.077]
Against early retirement	-0.542 (0.489) [-0.022]	-0.392 (0.730) [-0.071]	1.047 (0.879) [0.036+]	3.070* (1.401) [0.055*]	-0.378 (1.128) [0.001]	0.931 (1.337) [0.012]	-0.694 (0.635) [-0.022]	0.550 (0.860) [0.023]

Baseline: Fine Gael	Fianna Fáil		Social Democrats		PBP		Independents	
	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]
Economy got worse		1.867* (0.947) [0.116+]		2.250 (1.667) [0.029]		0.458 (1.610) [-0.009]		0.845 (1.043) [-0.000]
Like leader: Martin		7.652*** (1.197) [0.561**]		3.680+ (1.883) [0.024]		4.453* (1.827) [0.047]		2.098+ (1.119) [-0.014]
Like leader: Varadkar		-6.845*** (1.120) [-0.233**]		-5.266** (1.968) [0.001]		-6.238*** (1.818) [-0.015]		-6.561*** (1.198) [-0.109*]
Like leader: Howlin		-0.789 (1.053) [0.002]		-3.539 (2.360) [-0.052]		-3.604+ (1.999) [-0.056]		-1.166 (1.222) [-0.019]
Like leader: McDonald		-0.402 (0.817)		-1.454 (1.477)		1.728 (1.401)		1.225 (0.908)

(continued)

Table 10.1 (continued)

Baseline: Fine Gael	Fianna Fáil		Social Democrats		PBP		Independents	
	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 1 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]	Model 2 B (s.e.) [A.M.E.]
Like leader: Ryan		[-0.189**] -0.244 (1.083) [-0.041]		[-0.065**] 0.023 (1.929) [-0.006]		[-0.013] 2.107 (1.937) [0.039]		[-0.068+] -1.949 (1.193) [-0.160*]
Like leader: Murphy		1.283 (1.752) [0.153]		3.757 (3.444) [0.081]		3.801 (2.639) [0.091+]		-0.189 (1.842) [0.006]
Like leader: Shortall		0.023 (1.494) [-0.093]		1.365 (2.793) [0.006]		-2.411 (2.615) [-0.079]		1.789 (1.631) [0.051]
Constant	0.357 (0.861)	-1.183 (1.523)	1.417 (1.546)	1.612 (2.618)	2.816+ (1.531)	1.865 (2.463)	0.492 (1.015)	1.091 (1.654)
N	540	445	540	445	540	445	540	445
Pseudo R^2	0.137	0.409	0.137	0.409	0.137	0.409	0.137	0.409

Multinomial regression models; standard errors and average marginal effects are reported in parentheses

+$p < 0.10$, *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$

Data source Maple online survey, wave

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