

The overall aim of this research is to explore the themes debated during both Irish Lisbon Treaty referendums. As the literature will expose, much has been written on the reasons why the result moved so emphatically from a 'no' to a 'yes' vote. We know that the referendums had different results, however, we may have lost sight of the campaigns themselves and the public discussions as independent phenomena.

As this thesis will demonstrate, EU integration is not an easy phenomenon to describe, with citizens often feeling no direct interaction with the EU institutions. National politicians and the media, therefore, serve as mediators and have an important role in helping citizens to make sense of European integration. It is therefore worthwhile analysing the key themes that arose during both Irish referendums within the context of Irish political and economic concerns of the time, and investigating how issues of European integration were framed by the 'yes' and 'no' campaigns and reflected in the broadsheet media to achieve cut through to Irish citizens.