Irish Social Attitudes: 2021-22

Topline Results from Round 10 of the European Social Survey
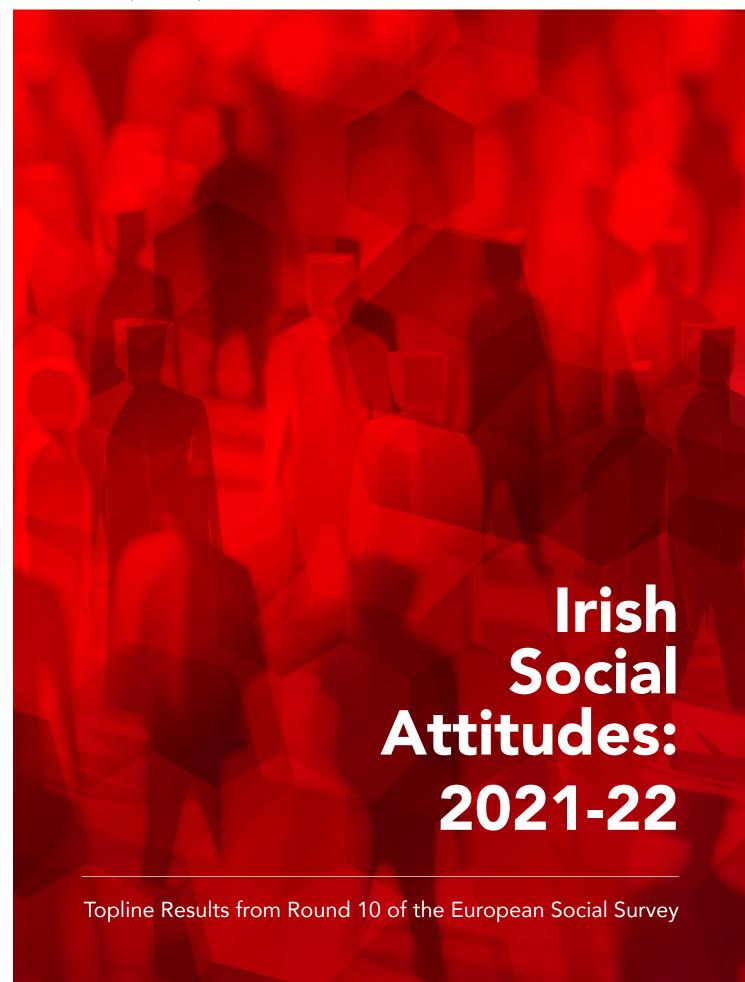
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Welcome to a unique snapshot of Irish society. The European Social Survey (ESS) is an academically driven, cross-national resource that is representative of the Irish adult population (15+). It is one of the longest continuously running data collections in Europe, starting with the 1st Round in 2002. It also uses a comparable questionnaire and sampling design such that any participating country can be compared to any other. Ireland is one of inaugural participants and, as a result, these findings build upon two decades of insight into Irish society and its relationship to the rest of Europe.

The 10th Round of the ESS (ESS10) includes 31 European counties between 2020 and 2022. What follows is the key findings for Ireland, resulting from in-person interviews with a representative sample of the Irish population conducted between 2021 and 2022. These data shine a light on to one of the most trying moments in recent memory – the COVID-19 pandemic. Few resources exist that offer a similarly comprehensive and internationally comparable view of what Irish society was thinking and doing at that time. As such, this report is a testament to a very difficult and, in the end, undeniably rewarding effort.

ESS10 was coordinated at University College Dublin in the Geary Institute for Public Policy with funding from the Irish Research Council (IRC). For such a broad and comprehensive source of information, the team involved is notably small as the resources were almost entirely dedicated to the in-person data collection. Dr Ebru Işıklı, the indefatigable postdoctoral researcher for ESS10 (and now ESS11), was the keystone for the fieldwork. Arriving when travel still involved a 2-week quarantine, Dr Işıklı is in no small part responsible for the success of the Project as a whole. The general coordination was carried out by me, Dr Mathew Creighton, in the School of Sociology and Dr Micheál Collins in the School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice. The overall administrative management was driven by Emma Barron in the Geary Institute.

In addition, the fieldwork itself was carried out by Behaviour & Attitudes – now Ipsos B&A. The successful partnership between UCD, the IRC, B&A and the fieldwork teams resulted in a safe, large, and representative sample of respondents at a time when physical travel was severely curtailed by the pandemic. It is a credit to the expertise, professionalism, and persistence that the work was completed safely. In addition, as we managed to maintain an in-person approach, the data are comparable to all previous waves, which was not the case in many other European contexts. This is a notable achievement and was not at all guaranteed.
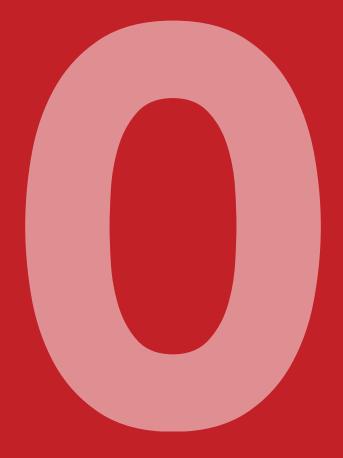
Following a summary of key points, this report will offer a description of 12 distinct dimensions of Irish society. The topics range from health to happiness and from democracy to digital work. Following the results, there is a section on methodology and the original wording for each question used in the analysis. That said, this is just the beginning of what's possible. These data are publicly available to all and, as a result, are a key source of information that is reproducible, reliable, and representative. Enjoy.

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CONTENTS

KEY POINTS

TRUST IN OTHERS

o The extent to which people think that most people can be trusted fluctuates over time, seeing the lowest level of trust around the economic recession, while it has been stable for the past three rounds.

o The level of trust varies by level of education. Respondents with tertiary education exhibit higher levels of trust (69%) compared to those with a lower secondary school degree (46%).

TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

o When it comes to public institutions, we see the highest level of trust in An Garda Síochána (police) (73% high trust), followed by the legal system (59% high trust) and parliament (46% high trust). However, politicians and political parties are trusted comparatively less.

o The mean levels of trust in the Gardaí and the legal system have been relatively high throughout the period of observation, whereas higher levels of fluctuation are seen for the parliament, politicians (34% high trusting) and political parties (30% high trusting).

DEMOCRACY

o The survey shows a strong preference for living in a democratically governed country (93% agreement) compared to accepting a leader above the law (25% agreement).

o New questions on attitudes towards authority were added to the core section of the ESS and found that 62% believe in teaching obedience and respect for authority to children. Regarding loyalty towards leaders, 33% agree it is crucial, while 39% disagree, indicating a divided opinion among respondents.

HEALTH AND HEALTH SERVICES

o Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, there was no observable rise in self-reported poorer health; in fact, approximately 45% of the population reported very good health, mirroring figures from a decade earlier. For those with a tertiary degree and those in paid work, over 50% report very good health. Those in the bottom two deciles of the income distribution are notably less likely to report good health. Age patterns the perception of good health. The older ages – relative to the middle range of the age distribution – is a time of relatively greater satisfaction with health care service provision in Ireland.

EU UNIFICATION AND ATTACHMENT TO EUROPE

o The term 'unification' in this context denotes the ongoing process of advancing European integration. 53% expressed a preference for further EU unification, reflecting a prevailing pro-European sentiment while 66% of Irish respondents exhibit a relatively strong level of emotional attachment to Europe.

o Trust in the EU parliament, which decreased in the economic crisis, recovered from 2012 and only returned to its pre-crisis level in 2021/2. Rural respondents exhibit lower trust in the European Parliament; indicate that they believe that EU unification has already gone far enough, and lower levels of emotional attachment to Europe.

LIFE SATISFACTION AND HAPPINESS

o   Irish people's satisfaction with life and their level of happiness remains high although average happiness levels marginally decreased in 2021/2, compared to 2018, suggesting that there was limited impact associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

o   There is a social gradient in people's perception of their general health, with those on a higher income more likely to report good health compared to those in the bottom third of the income distribution.

ECONOMIC SATISFACTION AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME ADEQUACY

o   Overall, 45% of the Irish population were satisfied with the state of the economy when ESS10 was conducted; a figure which has declined 9 percentage points since 2018. Within this, there are some differences by age group. Relative to the overall population, the least satisfied are those aged 25 and under while those who are retired for more than a decade (aged 76 years plus) are the most satisfied.

o   Given their household's current income, the ESS found that 40% of the population believe they are 'living comfortably' while a further 38% are 'coping'. Around one in seven households (15%) are 'finding it difficult' to live on their current income with 6% 'finding it very difficult'.

o   At the bottom of the income distribution four in every ten households find it difficult or very difficult to live on their current income while among the top 20% of the income distribution three-quarters of household are living comfortably.

IMMIGRATION

o   The post-2010 period indicates a steady increase in the positive perception of immigration across all domains, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. Overt attitudes toward immigrants are sensitive to the economic context but generally positive in Ireland. Among those with a tertiary education, over 80% see immigration as economically beneficial, culturally enriching and an improvement in life in Ireland.

RELIGION

o   Three out of five respondents belonged to a religion in 2021/2 (61%). This is still the majority of respondents but over time we see a steady decrease from 86% in 2004.

o   Those who still belong to a religion are more frequently female, older, less educated and from rural areas in Ireland.

CLIMATE CHANGE

o   The ESS 10 results find that Irish people are positive about limiting energy consumption to reduce climate change but concerned about how much of the population would participate in such an initiative. Compared to ESS8 (2016) confidence in governments taking action to tackle climate change increased, but overall optimism in their role remains low.

COVID-19

o The ESS10 survey found that almost half the population reported that someone in their house had caught COVID-19. One quarter of respondents (27%) reported a change in their labour market situation with the largest group (11.1%) being furloughed. Satisfaction with how the government handled the pandemic was high with only 12.9% rating it at 4 or below on a 0-10 scale.

DIGITAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

o ESS10 shows a significant shift in work dynamics due to COVID-19. 30% work from home more often, 37% accept remote work more, and 27% rely on online communication for collaboration.

TRUST IN OTHERS

Figure 1.1: Response to the question, "Generally Speaking, Would You Say that Most People Can Be Trusted, or that You Can't Be Too Careful in Dealing with People?" in Ireland
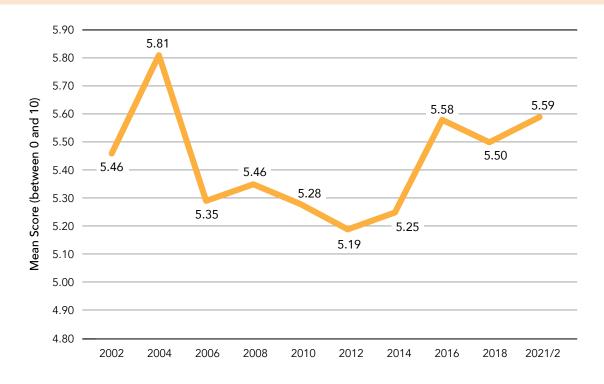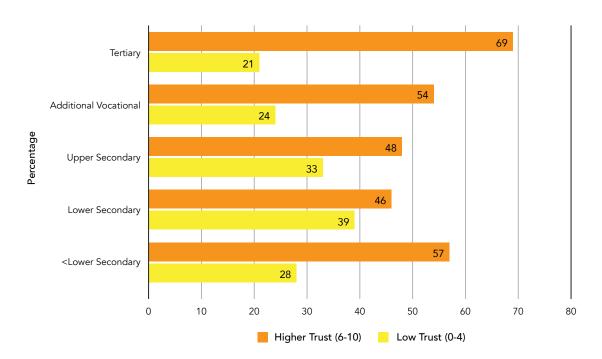

Figure 1.1 shows the trend over time in the average level of trust reported in Ireland. Trust in others was measured on a scale from "(0) you can't be too careful" to "(10) most people can be trusted". Between 2002 and 2021/2, the yearly averages range from 5.19 in 2012 to 5.81 when trust levels reached its peak in 2004. After this peak, we see a downwards trend until 2012; a period characterised by economic instability, crisis, austerity, and recession. The curve slowly started to climb again after this period and stabilised around 5.5. Between 2016 and 2021/2, the average level of trust hovered around 5.5. See Question 1 (A4 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.2: Response to question, "Generally Speaking, Would You Say that Most People Can Be Trusted, or that You Can't Be Too Careful in Dealing with People?

The level of trust varies completed level of education, which is shown by the proportions in Figure 1.2, which are derived from the same question as the averages reported in Figure 1.1. Respondents with tertiary education exhibit higher levels of trust with 69% indicating their trust to lie between 6 and 10 on the questions original 11-point scale. Of note, the relationship with education is not linear. In other words, each higher level of completed education does not correspond with an incrementally higher level of trust. Specifically, there is limited variation between the various secondary school and vocational degrees. In addition, those who left school before obtaining a lower secondary school degree are slightly more trusting than those with upper secondary school degree. See Question 1 (A4 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 1.2.

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TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

Figure 2.1: Percentage Reporting Low and High Trust in Political Actors and Institutions

Institution	Higher Trust (6-10)	Low Trust (0-4)
Politicians	34	49
Political Parties	30	51
Parliament	46	35
Legal System	59	27
Police	73	16

Percentage

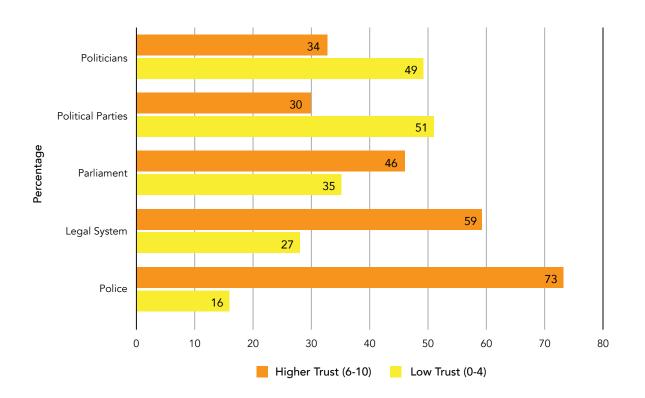■ Higher Trust (6-10)   ■ Low Trust (0-4)

Figure 2.1 reports the percentage indicating lower and higher levels of trust in Irish institutions. We see the highest level of trust in An Garda Síochána (i.e., police). 73% of the respondents answered between 6-10 (higher levels of trust) on a scale where 0 indicates 'No trust at all' and 10 signals 'Complete trust'. After An Garda Síochána, the legal system is the next most trusted institution with 59% of the respondents indicating high trust (i.e., a response of between 6 and 10, inclusive). Notably, politicians and political parties are trusted comparatively less with nearly half of the respondents indicating a lower level of (i.e., a response of between 0 and 4, inclusive). See Question 2 (B6-B10 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 2.1.

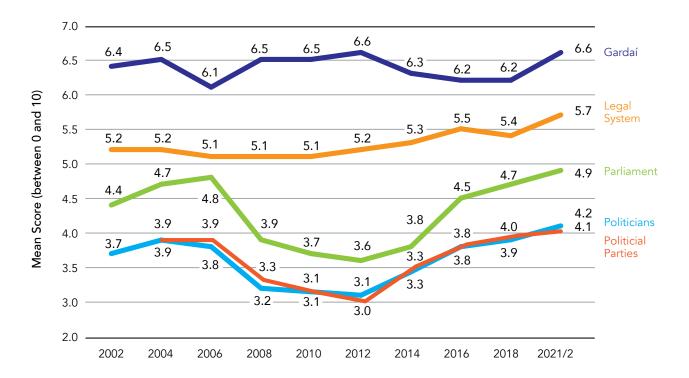## Figure 2.2: Average Levels of Trust in Political Actors and Institutions

Figure 2.2 reports the average level of trust in Political Actors and Institutions on the 11-point scale where 0 equals no trust and 10 equals complete trust. A standout is An Garda Síochána (i.e., police), which was the recipient of relatively high and stable levels of public trust throughout the period of observation (2002-2021/2). There are small deviations from this general trend with a minor drop in 2006 and, again, after 2012. By 2021/2, the average response returned to earlier levels. Similarly, trust in the legal system has remained relatively stable. That said, the pattern is less stable for average levels of trust for the parliament, politicians, and political parties. The pattern does suggest that lower levels of trust are seen during the economic crisis, which roughly corresponded to the calendar years 2008 to 2012. By 2021/2, the pattern appears to return to pre-crisis levels in terms of average reported trust. See Question 2 (B6-B10 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 2.2.
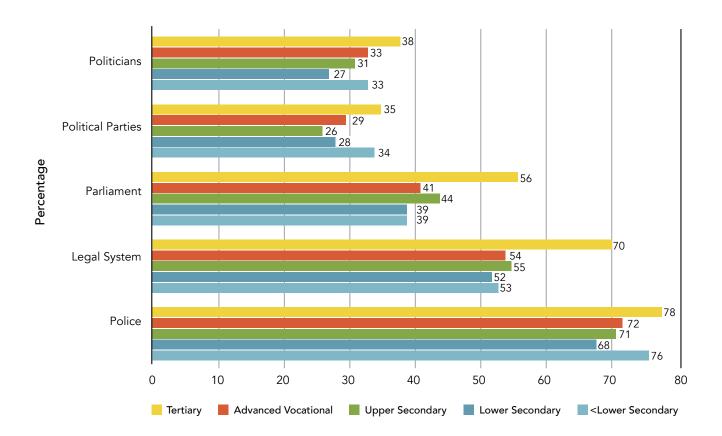
Figure 2.3 indicates the percentage reporting higher levels of trust in political actors and institutions, which is indicated by a response of 6 through 10, inclusive, where 10 equals complete trust. A clear pattern that emerges is that the levels of trust are greater among those with higher levels of education. Respondents with tertiary education have higher levels of trust across all categories. However, for political parties and politicians, educational differences are negligible, which indicates that completed education is not predictive of self-reported trust for these categories. The biggest gap between those with tertiary education and other degrees emerges when queried about trust in the parliament (56% higher trust) and the legal system (70% higher trust). Highly educated respondents (i.e., tertiary degree) trust the police the most, followed by the legal system, and the parliament. See Question 2 (B6-B10 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 2.3.

DEMOCRACY

Figure 3.1: Perception of the Importance of Democracy and Acceptance of Authoritarianism in Ireland

How important for you to live in a democratically governed country
- 93% (Higher)
- 3% (Lower)

Acceptable for country to have a strong leader above the law
- 25% (Higher)
- 69% (Lower)
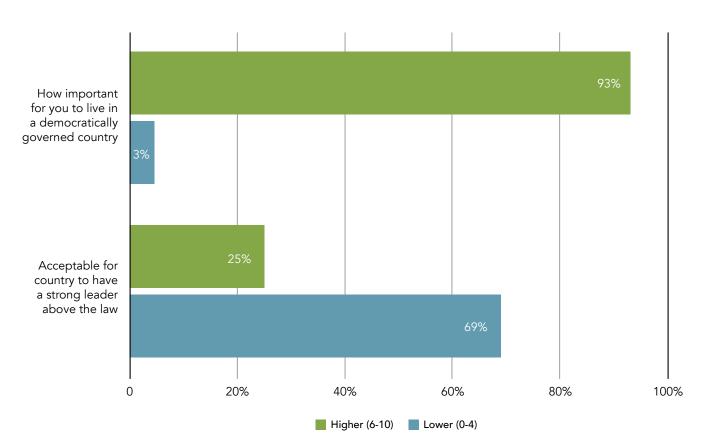
Higher (6-10)   Lower (0-4)

Figure 3.1 indicates the percentage higher or lower levels of agreement with statements about the importance of living in a democracy and acceptability of authoritarian governance. An overwhelming majority of respondents (93%) consider it highly important to live in a democratically governed country,

reflected in very high agreement with the statement (i.e., a response of between 6 and 10, inclusive). This is consistent with the response by only a quarter of the population indicating agreement with the statement that it would be acceptable to have a strong leader who is above the law. The other side of this coin is that 69% of the Irish population indicate lower agreement with the same statement (i.e., a response of between 0 and 4, inclusive). The pattern indicates a clear preference for democratic governance and limits on the power of any given political leader. See Question 3 (B25a and 37a in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.2: Perception of Political Loyalty and Socialisation of Authority in Ireland
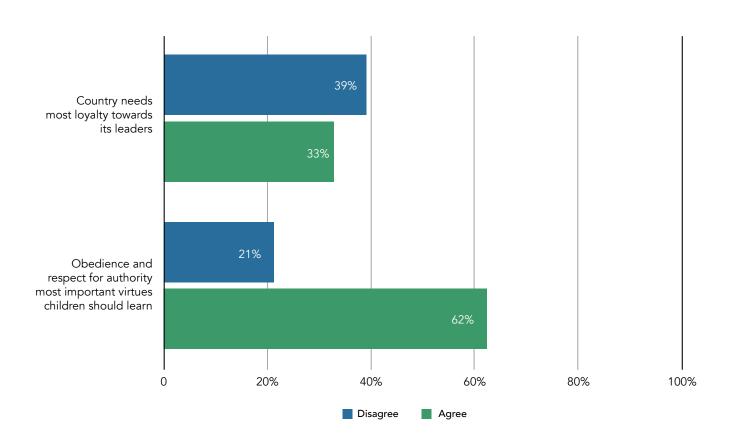

Figure 3.2 reports the percentage who agree/disagree with statements about political loyalty and socialisation. The survey results indicate that 62% of respondents believe that obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues for children to learn. On the other hand, when it comes to loyalty towards leaders, 33% of respondents agree with the statement, while 39% disagree. This suggests a clear division in perception. Clearly the interpretation of the importance of loyalty, obedience and respect vary notably by their target (i.e., leaders) and their recipient in terms of socialisation (i.e., children). See Question 3 (B38 and 39 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 3.2.

HEALTH AND HEALTH SERVICES

Figure 4.1: Percentage of the Population who Report "Very Good" or "Fair/Bad/Very Bad" Health in Ireland
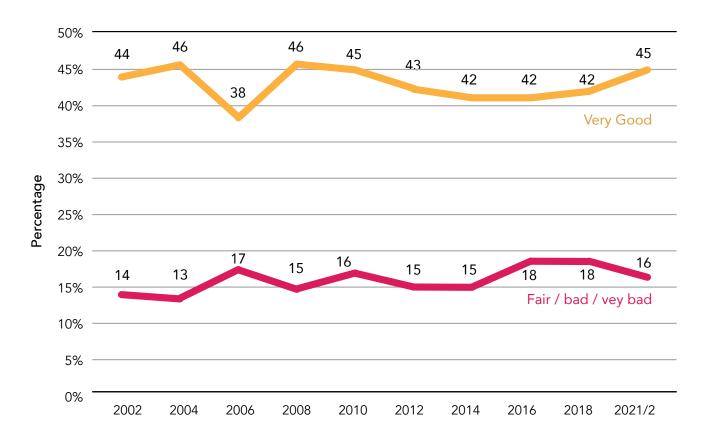
Figure 4.1 compares the percentage that report poorer health, defined by self-reported health of fair/bad/very bad, to those who consider their health to be very good. The trend is one of notable stability despite periods of rapid economic growth (2002-2008), austerity (2008-2014), recovery (2014-2018) and the recent pandemic (2021/2). The only deviation from a pattern of self-reported good health is a slight dip in 2006.

Most notably, the period including the COVID-19 pandemic, which the 2021/2 data captures, did not translate into an increase in self-reported poorer health. In fact, about 45% of the population report very good health, which is the same as seen a decade earlier. See Question 4 (C7 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.2:** Percentage of the Population who Report "Very Good" or "Fair/Bad/Very Bad" Health by Employment Status and Education in Ireland
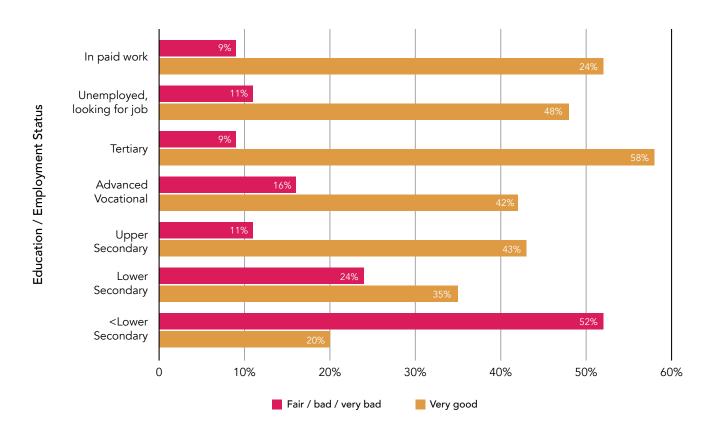

Figure 4.2 reports the distribution of self-reported health by employment status and level of completed education. Clearly, although the pattern of self-reported very good health is notably stable across time, this perception is not shared by all members of Irish society. Among those with the lowest level of completed education, 52% report poorer health relative to 20% who report very good health. Of note, this 32-point gap has widened since the last round of the European Social Survey, when it stood at only 9 percentage points. Other categories of completed education and employment statuses are not similarly disadvantaged in terms of self-reported health. For those with a tertiary degree and those in paid work, over 50% report very good health. In fact, aside from those with less than lower-secondary education, no other category of education or employment reports more than 24% of respondents with fair/bad/very bad health. See Question 4 (C7 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.3 reports the pattern of self-reported good health by income decile. Two patterns emerge. First, those in the bottom two deciles of the income distribution are notably less likely to report good health. Second, good health is somewhat consistently reported from the 3rd until the 10th decile. In other words, over 80% of the population who earn more than the bottom 20% of the income distribution in Ireland, report good health. In contrast, of the lowest earners, only about 60% report similarly good health. See Question 4 (C7 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.4 shows the trend in self-reported very good health and satisfaction with the healthcare system in Ireland by age categories. Clearly, age patterns the perception of good health. There is a steady decline in the percentage that report very good health across the age range with only 17% of the eldest respondents reporting very good health in comparison to about 63% of surveyed individuals who were 35 and younger. Of note, the clear decline in self-reported very good health by age does not translate into a parallel decline in satisfaction with the Irish healthcare system. In fact, the youngest and oldest respondents report similar levels of satisfaction at 48% and 51% respectively. As seen in the previous round of the European Social Survey, there is some evidence that satisfaction with health care declines after the 20's. That said, the older ages – relative to the middle range of the age distribution – are a time of relatively greater satisfaction with health care service provision in Ireland.

EU UNIFICATION AND ATTACHMENT TO EUROPE

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Figure 5.1: Perception of Trust in EU Parliament, Acceptance of further EU Unification, and Emotional Attachment to Europe

Chart legend: Sceptical European (0-4) | Pro-European (6-10)

Category	Sceptical European (0-4)	Pro-European (6-10)
Emotional Attachment to Europe	18%	66%
Attitude to European Unification	21%	53%
Trust in EU Parliment	28%	54%

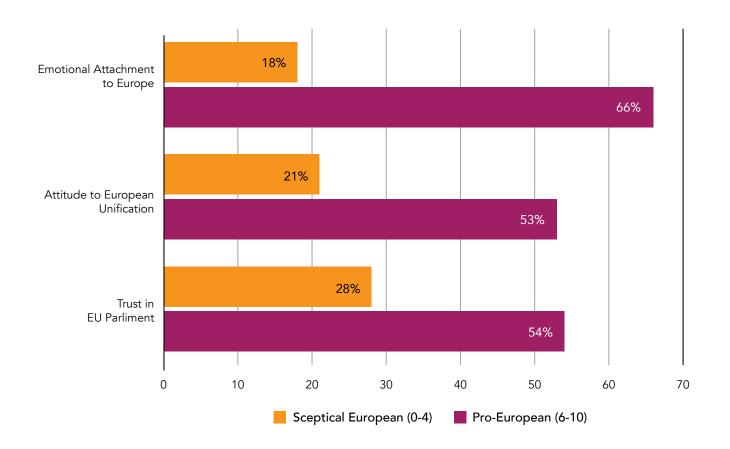**Figure 5.1** considers attitudes toward the European Union using three related questions. The questions about trust in the EU Parliament ranges from 'no trust at all' (0) to 'complete trust' (10). Attitudes toward EU unification range from 'Has already gone too far' (0) to 'Should go further' (10). Emotional attachment to Europe ranges from 'Not at all emotionally attached' (0) to 'Very emotionally attached' (10). For each

type of attitude, pro-European sentiments are measured as responses of 6 to 10, inclusive. Euroscepticism is defined by a response of 0 to 4, inclusive. Of note, a greater percentage of respondents in Ireland report higher trust in the European Parliament than in the Dáil (Irish parliament) – 54% compared to 39% (see Figure 2.1). That said, about 21% are sceptical in that they do not indicate support for further EU unification, interpreted as sceptical European. Of note, 'unification' is intended to refer to the process of progressive European integration. Indicative of general pro-European sentiment, 53% indicate their preference that EU unification should go further. Less than 18% of Irish people indicate a low level of emotional attachment to Europe, while 66% have relatively strong attachment to Europe. By way of comparison, 88% indicate strong attachment to Ireland (results not shown). See Question 5 (C10, B37 and B11 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.2: Perception of Trust in the EU Parliament and Attitudes to EU Unification in Ireland
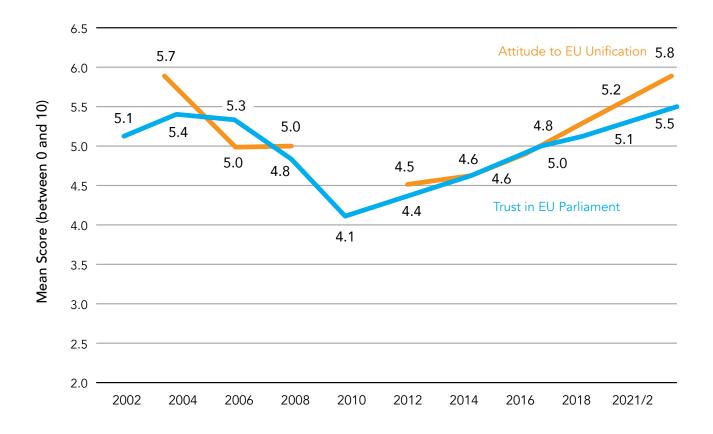
Figure 5.2 reports that average response to the 11-point question on trust in the EU Parliament and perception EU unification, which was used to estimate the percentages reported in Figure 5.1. The general perception of Europe declined during the economic crisis (2008-2012), reaching a new low around the time that Ireland was drawn into the EC-ECB-IMF Economic Adjustment Programme in 2010. While trust in the EU parliament increased in subsequent years, it only returned to its pre-crisis level in 2021/2. See Question 5 (C10, B37 and B11 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 5.2.

**Figure 5.3:** Perception of Trust in EU Parliament, Support for EU Unification and Attachment to Europe by Educational Attainment in Ireland
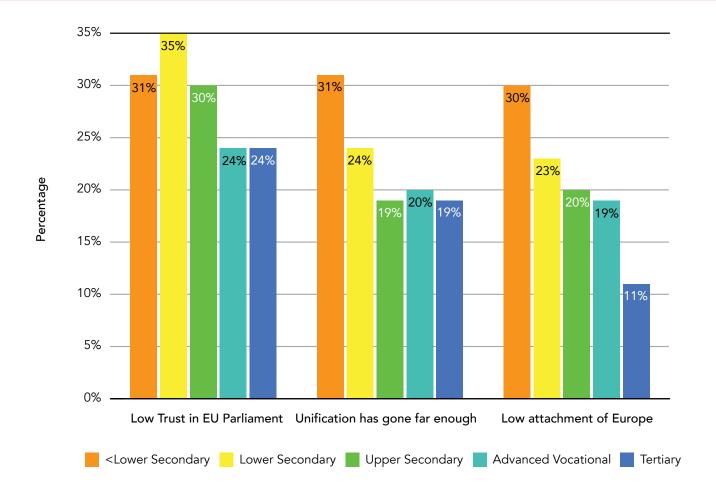
Figure 5.3 reports the distribution of Eurosceptic respondents for three questions about perception of Europe in Ireland (see description of Figure 5.1 for details about the questions and definition of Euroscepticism). Overall, Euroscepticism appears to decline with greater attained education. For example, about 31% of respondents with less than a lower secondary education are Eurosceptic for the three questions reported in Figure 5.3. In contrast, only between 24% and 11% are similarly inclined among those with a tertiary education. See Question 5 (C10, B37 and B11 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.4: Percentage Reporting Relatively Low levels of Trust in EU Parliament, Support for EU Unification and Attachment to Europe by Urban and Rural Residence in Ireland
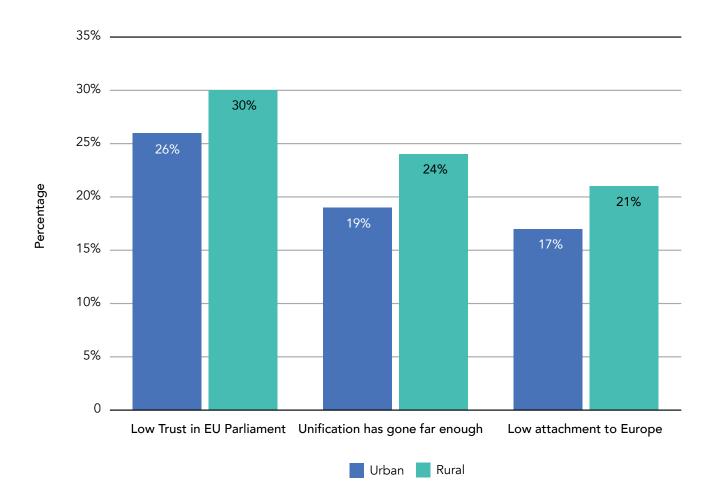
Figure 5.4 reports the percentage Eurosceptic by urbanicity. Rural residents in Ireland are consistently more sceptical of the European Union than their urban counterparts. Specifically, rural respondents exhibit lower trust in the European Parliament; indicate that they believe that EU unification has already gone far enough, and lower levels of emotional attachment to Europe. This is reflected in the greater percentage Eurosceptic among rural respondents in each of the questions reported in Figure 5.4. See Question 5 (C10, B37 and B11 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 5.4.

LIFE SATISFACTION AND HAPPINESS

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Figure 6.1: Average Level of Life Satisfaction and Happiness in Ireland
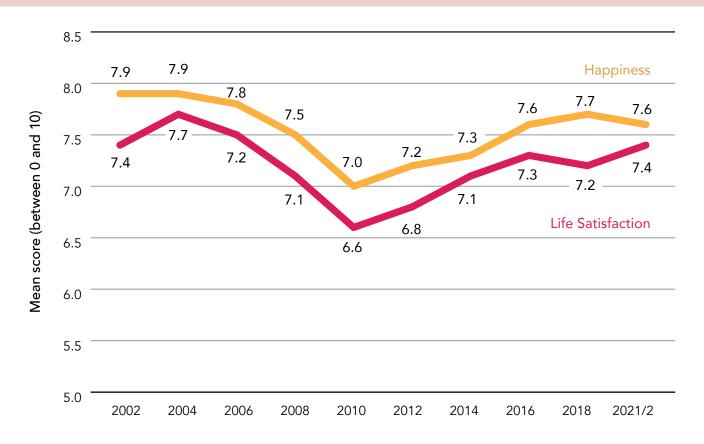
Figure 6.1 indicates a limited change in people's level of life satisfaction when compared to 2016 and 2018. When asked to rate "how satisfied are you with your life as a whole nowadays?" on a scale from 0 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (extremely satisfied), the average response in 2021/2 was 7.4. In general, people's life satisfaction has remained high for the period reported in Figure 6.1. That said, it dipped to its lowest level (6.6) in 2010 coinciding with the Great Recession and the severe socio-economic context

in Ireland from about 2008 to 2012. People's level of happiness, measured on a scale from 0 (extremely unhappy) to 10 (extremely happy), follows a similar pattern. In addition, the average happiness level marginally dipped in 2021/2 compared to that observed in 2018, suggesting that there was limited impact associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. See Question 6 (B27 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 6.1.

Table 6.1: Life Satisfaction and Employment Status in Ireland

	Satisfied (6-10)	Dissatisfied (0-4)
Paid work	85.7%	5.9%
Unemployed, looking for job	82.1%	10.4%
Inactive (not looking for a job)	82.5%	10.0%
Total population	**84.3%**	**7.7%**

Note: Scale ranges from 0 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (extremely satisfied). Satisfied includes those scoring in the range 6-10, dissatisfied includes those scoring in the range 0-4.

Table 6.1 highlights one further decomposition of the 2021/2 life satisfaction variable, delineating the percentage satisfied and dissatisfied by employment status. It outlines the proportion of individuals who are satisfied or dissatisfied by employment status. Overall, a greater proportion of those in paid work report being satisfied. See Question 6 (B27 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 6.1.

ECONOMIC SATISFACTION AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME ADEQUACY

Figure 7.1: Percentage of the Population in Ireland Satisfied with the Present State of the Economy
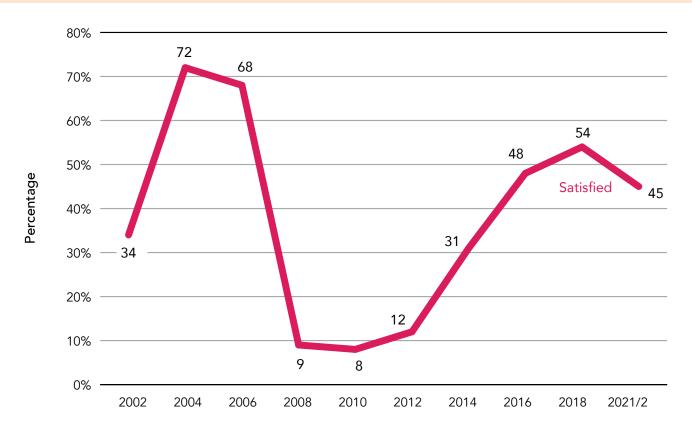
Figure 7.1 indicates that the Irish population's satisfaction with the present state of the economy declined between 2018 and 2021/2. Scale ranges from 0 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (extremely satisfied). Satisfied includes those scoring in the range 6-10. In 2018, 54% of the population expressed satisfaction compared to 45% in 2021/2. Over the ten waves of the ESS the results from this indicator offer another insight into people's experience of periods of economic boom, bust and recovery over the past two decades. The results from 2008 onwards reveal people's protracted experience of the economic crash (2008-2012)

and the subsequent slow economic recovery between then and the COVID-19 pandemic (2012-2021/2). See Question 7 (B28 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.2: Satisfaction with the Present State of the Economy in Ireland by Age Groups
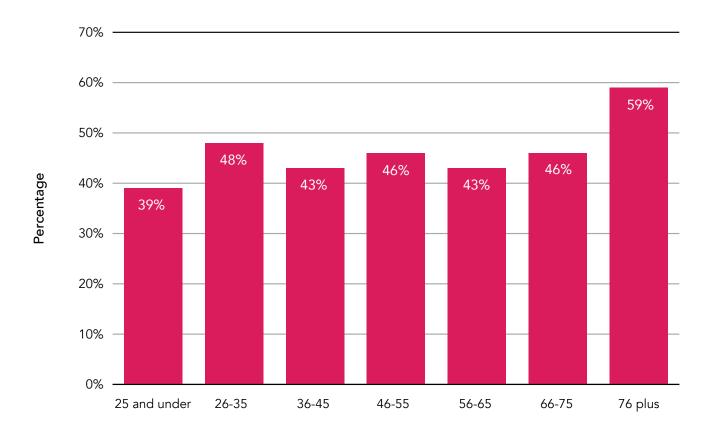
Figure 7.2 reveals notable differences in the perception of the current state of the economy in Ireland by age-group. The least satisfied are those aged 25 and under, with 39% of this group reporting satisfaction compared to a figure of 53% in 2018 (not shown). That decline may reflect some challenges (e.g. housing) and uncertainties (e.g., job opportunities, living costs). At the other end of the age distribution, those who are retired for more than a decade (i.e., 76 and older) are the most satisfied, remaining largely unchanged compared to the level of satisfaction observed in 2018. See Question 7 (B28 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 7.2.
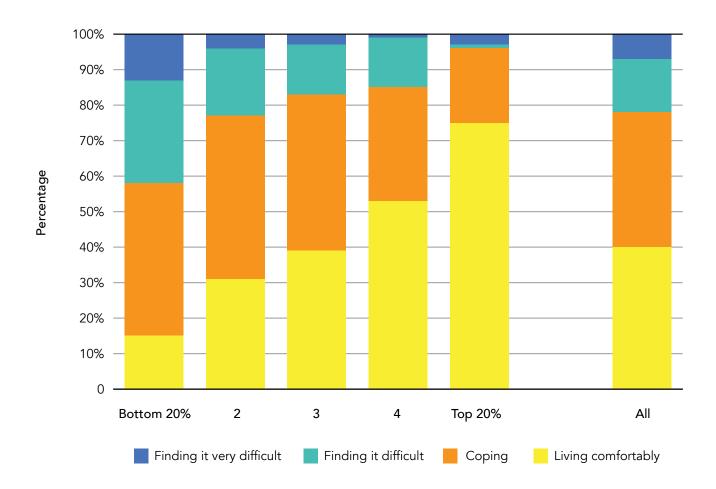
Figure 7.3 provides further insight into attitudes toward the macroeconomic context in Ireland, measuring respondents' perception of their household's current income. About 40% of the population believe they are 'living comfortably' while a further 38% are 'coping'. Approximately one in seven households (15%) are 'finding it difficult' to live on their current income with 6% 'finding it very difficult'. At the bottom of the income distribution 42% of households find it difficult or very difficult to live on their current income while among the top 20% of the income distribution three-quarters of households are living comfortably. See Question 7 (F41 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 7.3.

IMMIGRATION

Figure 8.1: Perception of the Impact of Immigration on the Economy, Culture, and Life in Ireland
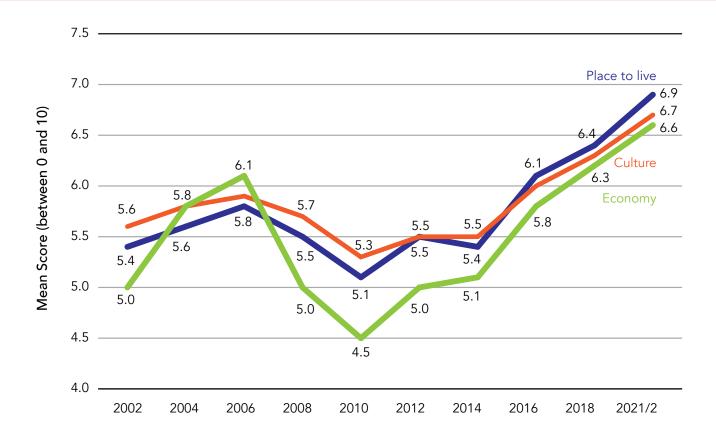
Figure 8.1 reports the average response to three related questions on the perceived impact of immigration to Ireland. Specifically, respondents report how they see immigrants' economic role [(0) Bad… (10) Good], cultural influence [(0) Undermine…(10) Enrich] and impact on life [(0) Worse…(10) Better] in Ireland. Higher averages indicate a relatively more positive perception of the role of immigration. There is a notable decline in the average perception of the impact of immigration in 2008, with all three measures reaching

their nadir for the period observed in 2010. It is during this period that the average perception of the economic impact of immigrants records an average value of less than 5, which indicates a slightly negative view. That said, the post-2010 period indicates a steady increase in the positive perception of immigration across all domains, including during the recent COVID-19 pandemic (2021/2). These two patterns indicate that overt attitudes toward immigrants are sensitive to the economic context but generally positive in Ireland. See Question 8 (B43,B44 and B45 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 8.1.

Figure 8.2: Percentage Who Positively view the Impact of Immigration on the Economy, Culture and as a Place to Live by Education in Ireland
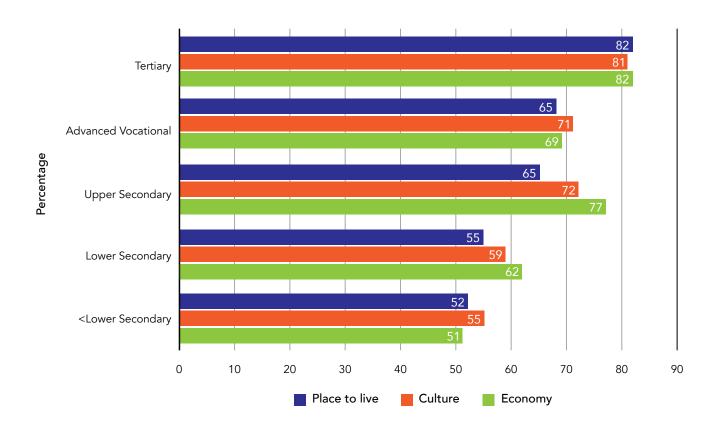
Figure 8.2 reports the percentage of the population that reports a value of 6 or more on the 11-point scale used to measure attitudes toward the impact of immigration on the economy, culture, and life in Ireland. The bars in the figure are interpretable as the percentage of Irish society that sees immigration as economically beneficial, culturally enriching and an improvement in life in Ireland. Overall, perception of the positive impact of immigration on the economy, culture and life in Ireland is broadly within levels of completed education. But, when the differences between levels of completed education are considered, some notable gaps emerge. For example, among the least educated between 51% and 55% see immigration positively, depending on the aspect of Irish society queried. In contrast, among those with a tertiary education, over 80% see immigration as economically beneficial, culturally enriching and an improvement in life in Ireland. This is about a 30 percentage-point increase. See Question 8 (B43,B44 and B45 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 8.2.

Figure 8.3 compares those employed to those unemployed but seeking employment. As with Figure 8.2, the percentage captures the percentage of the population that reports a value of 6 or more on the 11-point scale and is interpretable as the part of Irish society that sees immigration as economically beneficial, culturally enriching and an improvement on life in Ireland. The pattern is not substantively different across the distinct questions reported in Figure 8.3, indicating that perceptions do not vary substantially by the perspective being evaluated (economy vs. culture vs. place to live). However, in all areas queried, the unemployed indicated a less favourable view with the difference between the 11 and 13 percentage points. ee Question 8 (B43,B44 and B45 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 8.3.

RELIGION

Figure 9.1: Percentage of the Population Belonging to any Particular Religion in Ireland
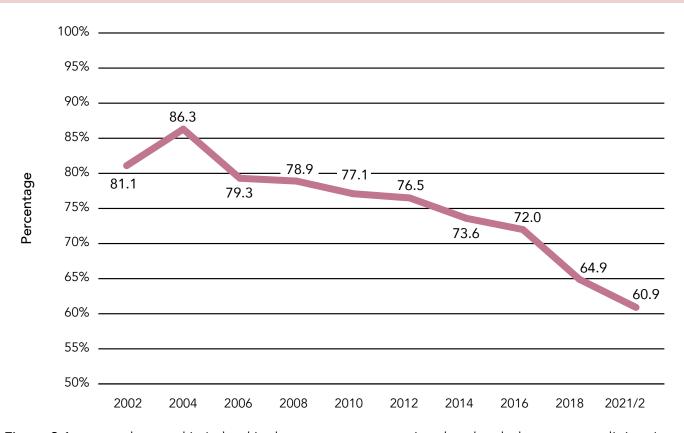
Figure 9.1 reports the trend in Ireland in the percentage reporting that they belong to any religion. In 2020, 61% of respondents in Ireland belonged to a religion. Although this remains a majority, the pattern is one of steady decline for the period of observation with over 80% indicating an affiliation with some religion in 2002. Between 2016 and 2021/2, the proportion of those belonging to a religion declined by over 10 percentage points. Although there is variation, the majority of those indicating a religious affiliation were Roman Catholic. See Question 9 (C11 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 9.1.

Table 9.1: Distribution of Belonging to any Particular Religion or Denomination in Ireland by Various Characteristics

	Percentage Yes	Percentage No
Total Population	60.9	39.1
Gender		
Male	55.2	44.8
Female	66.4	33.6
Age		
25 and under	49.5	50.5
26-35	50.3	49.7
36-45	55.9	44.1
46-55	60.8	39.2
56-65	69.3	30.8
66-75	77.2	22.9
76 plus	84.2	15.8
Highest Completed Education		
Less than lower secondary	76.1	23.9
Lower secondary	70.3	29.7
Upper secondary	52.4	47.6
Advanced vocational	63.5	36.5
Tertiary education	58.5	41.5
Location		
Urban	58.7	41.3
Rural	66.1	33.9

Table 9.1 reports the percentage who do (and do not) identify with a religion/denomination in Ireland in 2021/2. Those who indicate an affiliation are more frequently female, older, less educated and from rural areas in Ireland. The proportion of those indicating a religion increases with age with 84% in the highest age group (76 years and older). In contrast, the youngest age group (25 years and younger) are the least likely to identify with a religion (49.5%). Nearly three out of five respondents with tertiary education belong to a religion, 76% of those with less than lower secondary school education belong to a religion. See Question 9 (C11 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 9.2.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Figure 10.1: Perception of Climate Change in Ireland
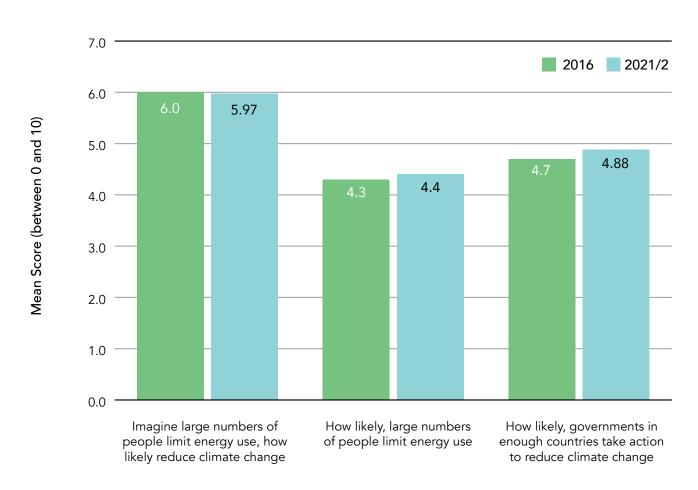
Figure 10.1 reports perceptions of climate change as the average response to three related 11-point questions. Each question queries respondents' views of the potential impact of limiting energy

consumption on reducing climate change, comparing responses in 2016 to those in 2021/2. In general, participants expressed a positive outlook, with average scores of 6.0 and 5.97, respectively. However, there is also a concern that not everyone would take part in such efforts nor will governments take action to reduce climate change. In both cases the average response was less than 5 in 2016 and again in 2021/2. Although slight, the pattern highlights the potentially lower level of optimism in the role of governmental initiatives and the actions of others in mitigating environmental challenges. That said, the stability across time is notable. See Question 10 (C35 and C36 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 10.1.

11

COVID -19

Figure 11.1: Percentage in Ireland Who Reported Having COVID-19

NO
I have not had
COVID-19

50%

47%

YES
I tested positive
for COVID-19

3%

YES
I think I had COVID-19
but was not tested / did not test positive
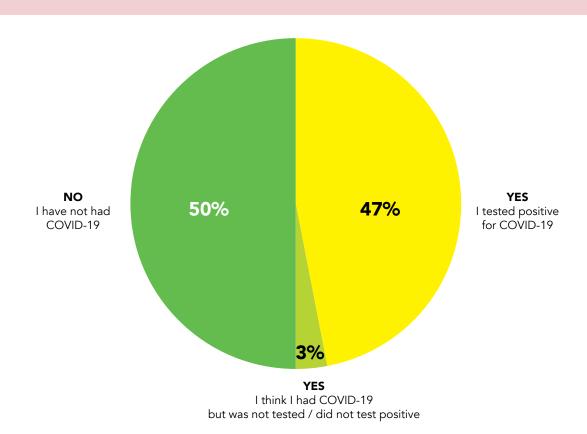
Figure 11.1 reports the distribution of responses to a question about whether respondents had tested positive for COVID-19 at the time of the survey (2021/2). A small number of respondents thought they had caught COVID-19 but they had not been formally tested 3 per cent. Of those who did not have such doubts, about half had tested positive for COVID-19 and half had not. See Question 11 (K17, K18 and K19 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 11.1.

I have not lived with anyone since the start of the pandemic

9%

NO **38%**

49% YES

4%

YES
but they were not tested / did not test positive

Figure 11.2 indicates the percentage in Ireland who have been in contact at home with someone who had COVID-19. Almost half reported that someone in their house had caught Covid. Finally, just over 8% lived alone since the start of the pandemic and it was not relevant to their situation. See Question 11 (K17, K18 and K19 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 11.2.

Category	Percentage
None of these	59%
I was furloughed	11%
My working hours were reduced	6%
The income from my job was reduced	5%
I was made redundant / lost my job	3%
I was forced to take unpaid leave / holiday	2%

Percentage

Figure 11.3 reports self-reported change in employment status after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. When asked about their labour market situation since the start of the pandemic just over one quarter of respondents (27%) reported a change in their labour market situation with the largest group (11.1%) being furloughed. See Question 11 (K17, K18 and K19 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 11.3.

Figure 11.4: How satisfied with government's handling of COVID-19 in Ireland
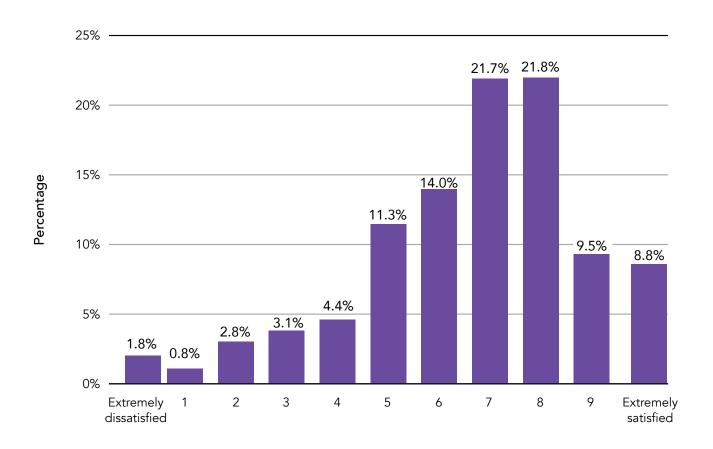
Figure 11.4 indicates the trend in satisfaction with the Irish government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. In general, satisfaction with the government was high with only 12.9 per cent measured at 4 and below on a scale where a response of 0 indicates 'extremely dissatisfied' and a response of 10 indicates 'extremely satisfied'. See Question 11 (K17, K18 and K19 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 11.4.

12

DIGITAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

Figure 12.1: Change in Remote Work for Employees in Ireland
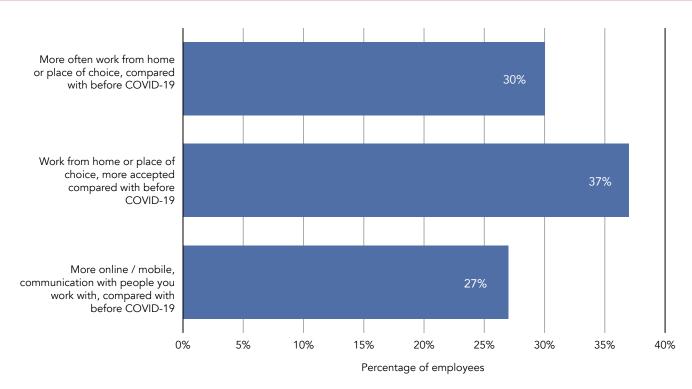
Figure 12.1 reports the percentage reporting each of three dimensions of remote work – frequency, agency, and digital interaction. Results reveal a noteworthy shift in work dynamics since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. About 30% of employees mentioned that they now work from home or their preferred locations more often. Also, 37% indicated an increased acceptance of working from home or alternative locations compared to the pre-pandemic era. Moreover, 27% employees mentioned that they rely more on online and mobile communication to connect with colleagues, showing a clear rise in virtual collaboration. See Question 12 (G40, G43 and G60 in ESS10) at the end of the report for the original wording and scale of the question used to generate Figure 12.1.

OVERVIEW OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL SURVEY

METHODOLOGY

The European Social Survey (ESS) is an academically driven cross-national survey that has been conducted across Europe since its establishment in 2001. Every two years, interviews are conducted with newly selected, cross-sectional samples. The survey measures the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns of diverse populations in more than thirty nations. Ireland has been a participant in all rounds of the ESS survey, supported by funding from the Irish Research Council.

The ESS sample is designed to be representative of all persons aged 15 and over (no upper age limit) resident within private households in each country, regardless of their nationality, citizenship or language. Individuals are selected by strict random probability methods at every stage. Following the principles of the ESS sampling strategy, the Irish sample for the 10th round of the survey in Ireland had three stages. First-stage units are clusters of electoral divisions: 625 were selected with probability proportional to size (population aged 15+) using systematic random sampling within each of 17 strata defined by a city/urban/rural classification within regions. At the second stage, 6 addresses were selected by simple random sampling within each Primary Sampling Unit (PSU) and at the third stage one individual was selected at each address using the last birthday technique.

On behalf of the UCD based national coordination team, Behaviour & Attitudes - now Ipsos B&A- conducted fieldwork in Ireland between November 2021 and August 2022 through face-to-face interviews with a total of 1,770 individuals, achieving a response rate of 36.31%.

KEY QUESTIONS AND VARIABLES USED IN THIS REPORT

1.   TRUST IN OTHERS

A4.

Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?

You can't be too careful										Most people can be trusted	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

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2.   TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

B6-B10.

How much you personally trust each of the institutions?

B6

Ireland's parliament?

No trust at all										Complete trust	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

B7

The legal system?

No trust at all										Complete trust	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

B8

The police?

No trust at all										Complete trust	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

B9

Policitians?

No trust at all										Complete trust	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

B10

Political parties?

No trust at all										Complete trust	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

3. DEMOCRACY

B25a

How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically?

Not at all important										Extremely important	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

B37a

How acceptable for you would it be for Ireland to have a strong leader who is above the law?

Not at all acceptable										Completely acceptable	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

B38-B39

To what extent do you agree or disagree that…

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	(Refusal)	Don't know
B38 Obedience and respect for authority are the most important values children should learn.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B39 What Ireland needs most is loyalty towards its leaders.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. HEALTH AND HEALTH SERVICES
C7

	Very good	Good	Fair	Bad	Very bad	(Refusal)	Don't know
How is your health in general? Would you say it is… READ OUT…	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. EU UNIFICATION AND ATTACHMENT TO EUROPE

C10

And how emotionally attached do you feel to Europe?

Not at all emotionally attached										Very emotionally attached	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

B37

Now thinking about the European Union, some say European unification should go further. Others say it has already gone too far. What number on the scale best describes your position?

Unification has already gone too far										Unification should go further	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

B11

How much you personally trust the European Parliament?

No trust at all										Complete trust	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

6. LIFE SATISFACTION AND HAPPINESS

B27

All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole nowadays?

Extremely dissatisfied										Extremely satisfied	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

7. ECONOMIC SATISFACTION AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME ADEQUACY

B28

On the whole how satisfied are you with the present state of the economy in Ireland?

Extremely dissatisfied										Extremely satisfied	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

7. ECONOMIC SATISFACTION AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME ADEQUACY (CONTD)

F41

Please tell me which letter describes your household's total income, after tax and compulsory deductions, from all sources? If you don't know the exact figure, please give an estimate.

	Annual
J	Less than €16,000
R	€16,000 to under €24,000
C	€24,000 to under €30,100
M	€30,100 to under €37,000
F	€37,000 to under €44,500
S	€44,500 to under €53,500
K	€53,500 to under €64,000
P	€64,000 to under €77,700
D	€77,700 to under €97,000
H	More than €97,600

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8. IMMIGRATION

B43

Would you say it is generally bad or good for Ireland's economy that people come to live here from other countries?

Bad for the economy										Good for the economy	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

B44

Would you say that Ireland's cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?

Cultural life undermined										Cultural life enriched	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

B45

Is Ireland made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?

Worse place to live										Better place to live	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

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9.   RELIGION

C11

Do you consider yourself as belonging to any particular religion or denomination?

Yes	No	(Refusal)	Don't know
1	2	7	8

10.   CLIMATE CHANGE

C34

Now imagine that large numbers of people limited their energy use. How likely do you think it is that this would reduce climate change?

Not at all likely										Extremely likely	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

C35

How likely do you think it is that large numbers of people will actually limit their energy use to try to reduce climate change?

Not at all likely										Extremely likely	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

C36

And how likely do you think it is that governments in enough countries will take action that reduces climate change?

Not at all likely										Extremely likely	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

11.   COVID-19

K17

Have you had coronavirus? Please answer using this card.

Yes, I tested positive for coronavirus	Yes, I think I had coronavirus but was not tested/did not test positive	No, I have not had coronavirus	(Refusal)	Don't know
1	2	3	7	8

K18

Has anyone living with you had coronavirus?

Yes, someone living with me tested positive for coronavirus	Yes, I think someone living with me had coronavirus but they were not tested/did not test positive	No, no one living with me had coronavirus	I have not lived with anyone since the start of the pandemic	(Refusal)	Don't know
1	2	3	4	7	8

K19

Please tell me if any of the following happened to you as a result of the coronavirus pandemic?

I was made redundant/lost my job	The income from my job was reduced	My working hours were reduced	I was furloughed	I was forced to take unpaid leave/ holiday	None of these	I have not been in work at any time since the start of the pandemic	(Refusal)	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	77	88

C36

Overall, how satisfied are you with the [country] government's handling of the coronavirus pandemic?

Extremely dissatisfied										Extremely satisfied	(Refusal)	Don't know
00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	77	88

12. DIGITAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

G40

Compared with before the coronavirus pandemic, would you say that you work from home or from another place of your choice…

Much more often now	A little more often now	About the same	A little less often now	Or, much less often now	(I cannot work from home or from another place of my choice)	(Refusal)	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	55	77	88

G43

Compared with before the coronavirus pandemic, how accepted is it for employees in your organisation to choose to work regularly from home or from another place of their choice nowadays?

Much more accepted now	A little more accepted now	About the same	A little less accepted now	Much less accepted now	(Employees need to work from home due to coronavirus restrictions)	(Employees in my organisation do not have a regular workplace)	(Employees in my organisation do not work regularly from home or from another place of their choice)	(Refusal)	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	33	44	55	77	88

G60

Compared with before the coronavirus pandemic, would you say that you have online or mobile communication with the people you work with…

Much more often now	A little more often now	About the same	A little less often now	Or, much less often now	(I don't have online or mobile communication with the people I work with)	(Refusal)	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	55	77	88