

Ireland's Neutrality and European Security Policy
Integration

Thesis

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate the impact, if any, increased European Security Policy Integration has had, and continues to have, on Ireland's traditional policy of military neutrality and its survivability. The thesis takes a qualitative approach in assessing the existence of this phenomenon. Analyses of 'Ireland's Neutrality', 'European Security Policy', and 'Domestic Perceptions of Irish Neutrality' have led to the conclusion that any supposed effect of European Security Policy Integration on Ireland's neutrality status is negligible. Furthermore, the existence of a 'neutral identity' as part of the overall 'Irish identity', was found to be one of the strongest determinants of the indomitability of Ireland's neutrality.

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1. Introduction

The practice of neutrality is not something that is peculiar to Ireland. Several nations decide to pursue such a policy, with reasons for doing so varying widely. Some choose to be neutral as a matter of principle, others because of the strategic benefit which they derive from such a position. Ireland is unique, in that its decision to embrace neutrality is predicated principally upon its colourful and often turbulent relationship with its closest neighbour, Great Britain. Out of the fight for independence was borne the principle of sovereign Irish neutrality, whereby the doctrine of non-involvement in military conflicts became inextricably linked to Ireland's hard-won sovereignty. Yet, the fledgling nation's commitment to neutrality has been sporadic and unpredictable. From having its existence questioned at one extreme of the spectrum, to being vociferously defended and upheld on the other, Irish neutrality continues to be studied and redefined, both in academic spheres, as well as in the realm of politics. Its viability and survival is constantly questioned in light of the continued changing landscape of international politics. Ireland's increased involvement in international peacekeeping missions, but above all, its engagement with Europe and the EU integration process, has put its neutrality under the spot light like never before. Having proven itself to be a keen and willing participant in the European project for decades, certain elements of EU integration have nonetheless begun eliciting a growing level of circumspection on the part of an ever more wary Irish public. Key among these, is the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, and its Common Security and Defence Policy, whose rapid increase in prominence in the last two decades has become one of the most controversial topics associated with European Integration. The main aim of this thesis is to investigate the impact exerted by the increase in European Security Policy Integration, on Ireland's traditional neutrality policy. My Main Research Question will thus be:

“What is the overall effect of European Security Policy Integration on Irish Neutrality, and to what extent is this effect conducive or destructive to the survival of Irish Neutrality?”

In order to ascertain an answer to this general question, it will be necessary to answer the following specific research questions:

Question 1

“What is the nature of Irish Neutrality?”

This question will be investigated in the first section of the thesis, which will comprise a chronological narrative, beginning with a look at the conception of Irish neutrality as a pursued policy and leading on to Ireland’s increased engagement internationally.

Question 2

“What is the nature of European Security Policy Integration?”

This issue will be addressed in the second part of the thesis, which involves an investigation of European Security Policy measures and their resulting implications for neutral member states

Question 3

“How is the issue of Ireland’s neutrality perceived in relation to European Security Policy, by its own citizens and political actors?”

In order to ascertain an answer to this question, it is necessary to look at the engagement of the Irish public and Irish political actors specifically, with European Security Policy. This will be done in the third section, which will take a look at the Treaties of Nice and Lisbon respectively, in order to better understand the interplay between European Security Policies and Irish citizens. The fourth section will address the positions of political actors relative to European Security Policy.

The thesis takes the form of a single case study, focusing exclusively on the Irish case. The reason for choosing this type of analysis, is due to the unique nature of Ireland’s traditional neutrality. An analysis of the impact of European integration on Irish neutrality within the context of a comparative case study, involving another neutral country, would most likely not yield as comprehensive an overview of the

Irish case, and could lead to an interpretation of Irish neutrality according to a formula with parameters which might be specifically suited to the interpretation of the comparison country's neutrality, and not to that of Ireland itself, or vice versa, i.e. the extrapolation of a foreign scenario to the Irish case.

In the greater debate surrounding Irish neutrality, this thesis fits in with the side, which advocates that Irish neutrality is very much a reality. Most of the proponents of the 'Unneutral Thesis', i.e. asserting that Ireland has never been neutral, focus purely on the Irish State's increased international political and military engagement over the last century as well as a lack of national legislation specifically guaranteeing 'neutrality'. This thesis, however, incorporates the 'Irish Neutrality Identity' in making a case to the contrary. Aside from arguing for the existence of Irish neutrality, this thesis goes further than the existing discourse, in proposing that Ireland's 'traditional' neutrality constitutes an even stronger and more indelible form of neutrality, than conventional, codified forms of neutrality. It argues that the strength of Ireland's neutrality is derived, somewhat counter-intuitively, from its ambiguity and lack of definition. It is also reasoned that it is precisely this ambiguous character which has resulted in the increased public debate and interest which the issue has amassed over the course of the last two decades.

The research itself constitutes an extensive literature review, with a wealth of material, both in the form of academic works by leading authorities on Irish neutrality and European Security Policy integration, as well as state-commissioned surveys on Irish attitudes towards neutrality and integration. It also makes use of Government documents, in order to gauge the evolution of neutrality in the political sphere. Additionally, online newspaper sources are used to add completeness to the picture, by providing information which is up-to-date on the latest developments in the area of Irish neutrality and European Security Policy Integration.

2. Ireland's Neutrality

2.1. The History of Irish Neutrality

Any attempt to comprehend the Irish stance on neutrality, must be made within the context of its history. Unlike other neutral nations, such as Austria, which is bound to its neutrality by the 1955 Austrian State Treaty and its constitution, Ireland's neutrality is tradition-based¹. Such a distinction is relevant, both when looking at the nature of Irish neutrality as well as its application, in so far as there not being any clear guidelines under which to conduct itself. The Irish predisposition towards non-involvement in international relations predates both the establishment of the Irish Republic, as well as the establishment of the Irish Free State as a self-governing dominion within the British Commonwealth.² At the heart of Ireland's stance on neutrality lies the desire not to be involved in 'Britain's wars.'³ This can be attributed in no small part to the collective yearning of the Irish people for self-determination and sovereignty, the two things which had eluded them for hundreds of years under British rule. Before 1922, the biggest obstacle facing Irish people was that of a perceived lack of freedom. The 'Irish struggle has always been for freedom - freedom from English occupation, from English domination.'⁴ This desire for freedom was not expressed solely through direct confrontation with the British, but also by the refusal to engage in Britain's wars. Such was the aversion to recruitment into the British army, that after the First-World-War, Britain decided to impose conscription in 1918. Although never enforced, this British decision had the effect of acting as a basis for future Irish governments to desist from international military commitment.⁵

2.1.1. Easter Rising

Tensions between Britain and Irish nationalist insurgents tended to wax and wane over the centuries of British rule, with a failed uprising in 1798 being followed by a period of relative stagnancy during the 19th century. Then in the early 20th century, the

¹ <http://nato.gov.si/eng/topic/national-security/neutral-status/neutral-countries/>

² Fanning, R. (1982), *Irish Neutrality: An Historical Review*, Irish Studies in International Affairs (p.27)

³ <http://www.fas.org/man/crs/crs2.htm>

⁴ Salmon, T.C. (1989), *Unneutral Ireland: An Ambivalent and Unique Security Policy* (p.83)

most illustrative manifestation of Ireland's struggle for freedom, and one which resonates deeply with Irish people to this day, presented itself in the form of the Easter Rising of 1916 and its aftermath. In 1915, a secret Military Council called the 'Irish Republican Brotherhood' had planned an uprising to be carried out before the First World War was decided. It infiltrated the 'Irish Volunteers', a group of Irish nationalists and began devising a plan for revolution. This plan even included a decision to do business with Britain's wartime enemies. A shipment of arms was expected to arrive from Germany to help the insurgents in their fight for freedom.⁶ However, this was intercepted by the British and forced to dock in Cork Harbour on Easter Sunday, the day for which the rising was originally planned. Orders were issued to all insurgents to postpone the rising until the following day, Easter Monday. Due to the confusion within the ranks of the Brotherhood, resulting from the capture of the German arms and the subsequent order of postponement, the rising was almost entirely limited to the Dublin area. It lasted for a total of 6 days and ended in complete failure, due to an inability by the rebels to capture Dublin Castle as well as principal transport sites in the city.⁷ Although the initial public reaction towards the rising was one of disapproval, the subsequent actions by the British authorities in dealing with the insurgents, would only work to fan the flames of public resentment towards British rule. A secret military tribunal was organised and fifteen of the rebels were shot by firing squad.⁸ This left a bitter taste in Irish mouths. Even with people whose antipathy towards the crown had not been as pronounced, these actions struck a cord. The struggle for independence was now well and truly a collective one. Upon being asked what Sinn Fein's (the Irish nationalist party) foreign policy was, Arthur Griffith, founder of the party, is rumoured to have replied: 'In any issue I find out where England stands. Ireland would be found on the other side'.⁹ The implication which this would have for neutrality is that, if Britain's policy was to engage in wars, Ireland's policy by implication would conversely be, to desist from doing so.

2.1.2. War of Independence

With the greater Irish sentiment now favouring insurrection against the British

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Moran, S.F. (2003) *Rising, 1916*, The Encyclopaedia of Ireland (p.932)

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

overlords that had ruled the island for centuries, Ireland was about to embark on its most important journey yet, and one which would lay the foundations for the establishment of the Irish Republic, the ‘War of Independence’. The War of Independence lasted from 1919 until 1921. It was fought between the Irish Republican Army, which employed guerrilla warfare tactics, with the aim of ridding Ireland of British rule.¹⁰ The war came to an end following the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which established the Irish Free State, but which also left 6 of Ireland’s Northern counties under British rule due to a Protestant majority residing there, creating what we now know as Northern Ireland.¹¹ This decision was not welcomed by many, as it was deemed insufficient for Ireland to be divided, with the only consolation for the 26 Southern counties being that of attaining ‘British dominion’ status.¹² The partition of Ireland, the requirement by Members of Parliament of the newly created 26-county Irish Free State to swear an oath of allegiance to the crown, as well as the retention of control by Britain over certain ports, known as treaty ports, were all seen as an affront to the cause for independence.¹³ This asymmetry of public opinion as well as the disharmony felt within the Independence movement, led to the Irish Civil War.

The two sides in the Irish Civil War were the anti-treaty forces (who were opposed to the Anglo-Irish Treaty) and the pro-treaty forces (who were fighting to uphold the Anglo-Irish Treaty). The anti-treaty forces were headed by Éamon DeValera, a staunch Republican, and on the other side heading the pro-treaty forces, was his former co-combatant in the struggle for Irish independence, Michael Collins. At the war’s conclusion, Ireland was left with a pro-treaty victory, an assassinated Michael Collins and a disheartened Éamon De Valera, who was now forced to pledge allegiance to the crown in order to have any influence in Irish politics.¹⁴ However, De Valera was yet to become one of the most influential statesmen of both the Irish Free State, and of the Irish Republic, playing a seminal role in Irish politics and in shaping

⁹ Salmon, T.C. (1989), *Unneutral Ireland: An Ambivalent and Unique Security Policy* (p.85)

¹⁰ <http://theirishwar.com/history/irish-war-of-independence/>

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Kissane, B. (2007), *Éamon de Valéra and the Survival of Democracy in Inter-War Ireland*, Journal of Contemporary History, Vol. 42, No. 2 (p.214)

¹³ Anglo-Irish Treaty, retrieved from http://www.nationalarchives.ie/topics/anglo_irish/dfaexhib2.html

¹⁴ Kissane, B. (2007), *Éamon de Valéra and the Survival of Democracy in Inter-War Ireland*, Journal

Irish neutrality.

2.1.3. Road to Independence

If Ireland was going to position itself as a neutral nation, it would be required to distance itself from Britain and increase its level of independence. And although complete independence had not been won and was certainly not yet on the cards, the period between the end of the civil war and the Second World War saw Ireland taking major steps in terms of self-determination. The steps were not tentative either. One of these, and probably the most significant, was the acceptance of the Irish Free State into the League of Nations. In 1923, the League of Nations Bill was passed through the Dáil (the Irish lower house of parliament), and the Irish Free State officially became a League of Nations member.¹⁵ Curiously, at this point, Ireland waived any requirement for it to be seen as a neutral state. It was fully aware of the nature of its obligations under membership and that participation in any just war, taken on by the League, merely required the consent of the Dáil.¹⁶ Ireland had never expressed its intention to seek a neutrality status, in spite of the fact that Switzerland had made such a possibility available, by setting a precedent in 1920, becoming neutral itself.¹⁷ It appeared therefore, that the agenda of the Irish Free State government of the time, was not concerned too much with neutrality. A more immediate priority for the Irish Free State, was to “test [its] sovereignty vis-à-vis Great Britain.”¹⁸ This would do more than just serve Ireland’s image internationally as an independent country. It would work towards healing the wounds inflicted on Anti-Anglo-Irish-Treaty Republicans, who were still brooding over their defeat in the Civil War. In the first eight years of its membership in the League of Nations, Ireland’s main aim was to “attempt to demonstrate not only to other governments but to the divided, disillusioned and sceptical Irish people that the anomalies of the 1921 Treaty could be resolved in Ireland’s favour.”¹⁹

What followed was a dramatic shift in Irish policy. Éamon De Valera, the Anti-Treaty civil war veteran had become President of the Executive Council of

of Contemporary History, Vol. 42, No. 2 (p.214)

¹⁵ Salmon, T.C. (1989), *Unneutral Ireland: An Ambivalent and Unique Security Policy* (p.101)

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Keatinge, P. (1970), *Ireland and the League of Nations*, Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review, Vol. 59, No 234 (p.133-147)

Ireland as his newly founded party Fianna Fáil had won the 1932 national elections. In September 1932, addressing the League of Nations, he spoke of a need to “show unmistakably that the Covenant of the League is a solemn pact, the obligations of which no state, great or small, will find it possible to ignore.”²⁰ Yet only three years later, the same man professed that there could “no longer be an obligation to go to war to maintain the principles of the League’. Ireland, along with other small states, could only resolve ‘not to become the tools of any great Power’, and they should all ‘resist with whatever strength they may possess every attempt to force them into a war against their will.’”²¹

De Valera’s policies concerning Ireland’s relationship with Britain directly, were geared at increasing Irish standing internationally as a separate nation by increasing its autonomy. In the late 30s, the time had come to start addressing the contentious stipulations of the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty. The government moved to abolish the oath of allegiance to the crown, as well as halting its obligation to pay land annuity payments, which were also a requirement under the former agreement.²² In immediate retaliation to these antagonisms, Britain declared an economic war against the Free State, which would last until 1938. During this period, Britain sought to balance out the unpaid land annuities by imposing penal ‘emergency’ tariffs on Irish imports with Ireland returning the favour by imposing corresponding duties, bounties and licensing restrictions.²³ Ireland’s economy suffered as a result, especially the agricultural sector. However, all was not in vain, as Britain relented with the signing of the Anglo-Irish Trade Agreement of 1938. The three Irish Treaty ports were returned to Ireland, and trade restrictions were mutually lifted. It is interesting to note that during the negotiations for the Irish Trade Agreement, De Valera proposed a defence agreement between Ireland and Britain, with a draft of such an agreement even coming before the Negotiating Conference. However, with the Treaty Ports being returned to Ireland, this was not further pursued.²⁴ The prerequisite for Irish neutrality, was now set, as the three harbour defences were now in Irish hands, and it

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Salmon, T.C. (1989), *Unneutral Ireland: An Ambivalent and Unique Security Policy* (p.101)

²¹ Ibid

²² Neary, P., Ó’Gráda, C. (1991), *Economic War and Structural Change: The 1930s in Ireland*, Irish Historical Studies, Vol. 27, No 107 (p.250)

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Fitzgerald, G (1998), *The Origins, Development and Present Status of Irish ‘Neutrality’*, Irish Studies in International Affairs, Vol. 9 (p.13)

could not be objectively claimed that a superficial military or strategic link between the two nations existed. Other developments in the previous year, such as the replacement of the Irish Free State Constitution with a new one, entitled *Bunreacht na hÉireann* (Constitution of Ireland) worked to further distinguish Ireland from its more powerful neighbour.

2.1.4. Irish Neutrality during the Second World War

The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 and the rise of Hitler brought the reality of a potential European War to the forefront of Irish political discourse. De Valera saw himself forced to consider the issue of neutrality. In 1920, De Valera held the position that “An independent Ireland would see its own independence in jeopardy the moment it saw the independence of Britain seriously threatened” and that “mutual self-interest would make the people of these two islands, if both independent, the closest possible allies in a moment of real national danger to either.”²⁵ Yet, by the late 30’s this position had started to shift. Article 28.3.1 of the constitution specified that ‘war shall not be declared and the state shall not participate in any war save with the assent of Dáil Éireann (Lower house of parliament).’ However, this constituted an expression of self-determination, rather than a commitment to neutrality per se.²⁶ The fact that Dáil approval was required for any decision to go to war could not be seen as anything more than a half-hearted affirmation of a preference for non-belligerence. Nevertheless, it was becoming clearer and clearer that neutrality was becoming an ever more attractive policy, that would allow Ireland to set itself apart from Great Britain. Neutrality almost became synonymous with self-determination.²⁷

And so it was that on the 3rd of September 1939, only two days after the outbreak of the Second World War, De Valera addressed the Irish nation, officially confirming its status as a neutral, explaining that “with our history, with our experience of the last war, and with a part of our country still unjustly severed from us, we felt that no other decision and no other policy was possible.”²⁸ In addition, the government passed the Emergency Powers Act, which allowed it to make any provisions ‘necessary or expedient for securing the public safety or the preservation of

²⁵ Fanning, R. (1982), *Irish Neutrality: An Historical Review*, Irish Studies in International Affairs, Vol. 1, No. 3 (p.28-29)

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid

the State, or for the maintenance of public order, or for the preservation and control of supplies and services essential to the life of the community.’ This act gave the Irish government wide-ranging powers, including media censorship as well as postal censorship, regulation and control of sea navigation, detention of persons that were not natural-born Irish citizens and the authorisation of arrests without warrant.²⁹ Apart from wanting to increase Ireland’s level of self-determination, neutrality also had a practical aspect to it. From De Valera’s perspective, if Ireland were to enter the war, it would be extremely vulnerable against the nations who were fighting it. The military superiority of these nations meant that Ireland would have little chance of affecting the outcome either way.³⁰ It has also been argued that Ireland was of more use to the Allies as an officially neutral state rather than an active belligerent, as participation in the war would have meant that Germany would almost certainly have attempted to invade it. This would have meant that Britain would be facing enemies on both sides of its shores and that the mobilisation of American forces to Europe could have become severely compromised.³¹ Others counter this view by insisting that the invasion of Irish territory was never strategically imperative for either Allies or the Axis, and that the risks and costs to military and morale that would be associated with such an endeavour, would trump any perceived strategic advantages.³²

In practice, Ireland’s official policy of neutrality was much less consistent. As it turned out, Ireland’s conduct during the war, initially at least, seemed to indicate a tendency to side with the Allied Forces. This was apparent in the secret assistance afforded by it to Great Britain. Ireland’s measured contribution towards the Allied cause came in several forms, including:

The provision by Irish coast-watchers, of shipping movements and information relating thereto, through a code which would be made accessible to passing British aircraft, as well as close cooperation between the Irish Army Intelligence and Allied Intelligence Services; Allowing for Britain to make use of an air corridor through Ireland, for its flying-boats stationed in Northern Ireland, thus facilitating quicker

²⁸ http://www.rte.ie/laweb/ll/ll_t09b.html

²⁹ <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1939/en/act/pub/0028/print.html>

³⁰ Sweeney, M. D. (2009), *Excerpt from “Irish Neutrality in World War II: Eamon de Valera’s Struggle to Protect Eire” An Independent Study* (p.2)

³¹ Roberts, G. (2000), *Three narratives of neutrality: Historians and Ireland’s war*, Ireland and the Second World War: Politics, Society and Remembrance (p.167)

³² Fanning, R. (1982), *Irish Neutrality: An Historical Review*, Irish Studies in International Affairs, Vol. 1, No. 3 (p.31)

access to the Atlantic; Allowing Britain to target German submarines in Irish coastal waters; Abstaining from banning foreign enlistment, so as to allow Irishmen to join the war effort; Limited internment for British soldiers (In the latter part of the war, the requirement for internment was completely abolished, save with regard to German soldiers); Assistance in returning damaged Allied aircraft; and allowing a radar station to be located in Ireland towards the end of the war.³³ Even the U.S. Office of Strategic Services, later to evolve into the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), pointed out that, “the Irish worked so closely with us on intelligence matters, almost as if they were allies.”³⁴ The extent of Ireland’s partiality however, wasn’t revealed until decades later, and neither was it the intention of De Valera to admit to any conduct on the part of Ireland which contradicted his public position and the official position of Ireland. Thus, the reality of Ireland’s unwavering neutrality was not questioned until much later.³⁵ According to T. Desmond Williams, ‘foreign policy, like every other policy, is dictated not merely by the objectives of the state... but also by the real possibilities of the situation.’³⁶ At the same time, it would seem that the prominence of the public face of neutrality overshadowed and continues to do so, the actual conduct of Ireland, not only in the mindset of its leaders, but also in the mindset of its people, Britain’s leaders, and indeed globally. At the conclusion of the war, Winston Churchill seemed content to portray Ireland as a foolhardy rogue, whose neutrality almost foiled the Allied victory, causing him to extol that ‘if it had not been for the loyalty and friendship of Northern Ireland we should have been forced to come to close quarters with Mr. de Valera or perish from the earth.’³⁷ And it is true that to an extent, Ireland conducted itself with a certain degree of impartiality. This is evidenced by the fact that the State kept its doors firmly closed to German Jews looking for exile.³⁸ Preceding the war, the Irish ambassador to Germany, Charles Bewley, advised that “Ireland should be protected from the contamination that would result from granting

³³ Fitzgerald, G (1998), *The Origins, Development and Present Status of Irish ‘Neutrality’*, Irish Studies in International Affairs, Vol. 9 (p.13-14)

³⁴ Finnegan, R., *Irish Neutrality*, (p. 26) retrievable at http://www.raco.ie/attachments/068_1_2_irishneutrality.pdf

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Roberts, G. (2000), *Three narratives of neutrality: Historians and Ireland’s war*, Ireland and the Second World War: Politics, Society and Remembrance (p.167)

³⁷ Fanning, R. (1982), *Irish Neutrality: An Historical Review*, Irish Studies in International Affairs, Vol. 1, No. 3 (p.32)

³⁸ <http://www.irishtimes.com/blogs/politics/2012/02/05/shatter-stirs-things-up-on-neutrality/>

residential visas to Jewish refugees.” The practice of refusing entry to Jews persisted throughout the entire war period.³⁹ The perception that Ireland had been completely neutral was only corroborated further by the fact that De Valera, upon hearing of the death of Hitler, paid a visit to the then German ambassador to Ireland, Edouard Hempel, offering his condolences (for which some demanded an apology by the former president of Ireland, Mary McAleese, at the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the ending of the Second World War in 2005).⁴⁰ Adding insult to injury for Great Britain, De Valera, in a radio broadcast from the 16 May 1945, stated that Churchill and the world should recognise ‘that there is a small island nation that stood alone, not for one year or two, but for several hundred years against aggression; that endured spoils, famines, massacres in endless succession; that was clubbed many times into insensibility, but that each time, on returning consciousness, took up the fight anew; a small nation that could never be got to accept defeat and has never surrendered her soul.’⁴¹ Far from acknowledging the victory of the Allies, this was merely a profession of Ireland’s perseverance through victimhood over the centuries. Never did De Valera directly praise the Allied war effort nor address its success.⁴²

The importance of an outward representation of neutrality to De Valera and his government cannot be understated. In July 1940, De Valera was made an offer by the British government, that almost seemed too good to refuse. The offer was one of a united Ireland, whereby Northern and Southern Ireland would become a whole-island nation. In return, Ireland would have to declare war on Germany or agree to the stationing of British troops on Irish soil.⁴³ Whether it was out of concern for Irish security, or whether the prospect of British troops on Irish soil affronted the sanctity of Ireland’s sovereignty, De Valera refused the offer. Besides, the partition of Ireland had been a great political tool, which De Valera had been able to use on the Irish public, to justify abstaining from involvement in Britain’s war⁴⁴

Ireland’s decision to remain officially neutral throughout the entire duration of

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ <http://m.irishtimes.com/newspaper/opinion/2012/0204/1224311248693.html>

⁴¹ Roberts, G. (2000), *Three narratives of neutrality: Historians and Ireland’s war*, Ireland and the Second World War: Politics, Society and Remembrance (p.170)

⁴² Ibid

⁴³ Fitzgerald, G (1998), *The Origins, Development and Present Status of Irish ‘Neutrality’*, Irish Studies in International Affairs, Vol. 9 (p.14)

⁴⁴ Fanning, R. (1982), *Irish Neutrality: An Historical Review*, Irish Studies in International Affairs, Vol. 1, No. 3 (p.32)

the Emergency (the Second World War as it was known in Ireland), was extremely wise, and to a large extent, self-serving, although, some would also argue that it was morally reprehensible.⁴⁵ The nation benefited greatly during the Emergency by conducting its foreign policy in this way. The fact that no intentional attacks were launched against Ireland, served to strengthen the legitimacy of Ireland's claim that it was indeed neutral. It was a validation, even by the Axis, of the country's neutrality status. However, Ireland was not completely spared the misery of wartime bombing. On the 31st of May 1941, Dublin was attacked by German fighter pilots, killing 34 civilians. Churchill was quick to quip that Ireland was finally paying the price for "sitting on the fence."⁴⁶ However, Nazi Germany was equally quick to apologise for the attack, with British intelligence officers even suggesting that RAF (Royal Air Force) experts had "bent" Luftwaffe direction-finding beams, causing them to miss their intended British target.⁴⁷ The rarity of such an occurrence cannot be said to mirror the situation in Belfast, which only the month before had been subjected to two nights of Luftwaffe raids that produced a death toll of 1,000 civilians, both Protestant and Catholic.⁴⁸ Having weathered the war quite comfortably, Ireland was now able to move forward by continuing to carve out its political future and its position on the international stage.

A few interesting things come to light when viewing Ireland's inclination towards neutrality from a historical perspective. Irish neutrality, at its elemental level, was ultimately borne out of a desire for self-determination and a yearning for freedom from Great Britain. The domination and oppression experienced by the Irish people over a period of centuries, and exacerbated by the aftermath of the 1916 Rising, had left a bitter taste, even after gains were being made in pursuit of its independence. This aversion to anything British, meant that the antithesis of British policy could form a legitimate basis for Irish policy, including any decision of whether to go to war or not. Before the late 1930's, Ireland did not concern itself all too much with the issue of neutrality as an official policy beyond its possible co-existence as a side-product of increased sovereignty. This appears to be down to a combination of having bigger proverbial fish to fry in its pursuit of independence and self-determination, as

⁴⁵ <http://www.irishcentral.com/news/Irish-Minister-says-Irelands-neutrality-on-Hitler-was-morally-bankrupt-138191239.html>

⁴⁶ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/why-the-nazis-bombed-dublin-1075966.html>

⁴⁷ Ibid

well as a possible under-appreciation of the level of instability that was to befall Europe. Nevertheless, as another Great War in Europe was swiftly approaching, Ireland had no choice but to take a stand, and in line with its defiance against the policies pursued by its former master, chose to opt for neutrality.

It would be foolish to claim nonetheless, that Irish neutrality was driven purely by an Irish desire for sovereignty and self-determination. Ireland, as a small nation with relatively few defensive capabilities, realised the danger of involvement in the Second World War. Although in practice its neutrality was often less than clear-cut, the position of the Irish government that was fervently maintained, was that Ireland was steadfastly committed to its practice of neutrality. The fact that Ireland's neutrality was not enshrined in its constitution, meant that any assistance given to Allied forces, as overt as it was, could not be legally challenged. The duplicity of Ireland's wartime policy was extremely useful. Ireland was in a position to avoid the strife of conflict by convincing axis nations that its neutrality was of an absolute nature, thus meriting exemption from being considered a target. At the same time, its more than parsimonious cooperation with the Allied forces allowed it to avoid the ire of a British nation, which could have easily become irate at its desistance from joining the Allies. Without knowing the historical background of Ireland's troubled relationship with Great Britain, one would be forgiven for assuming that Ireland was practicing a Machiavellian, realist form of politics. However, it was a combination of such realism coupled with Ireland's synchronous cultural and political separation from Great Britain, that contributed to the architecture of its unique position during the Second World War.

2.2. International Involvement

If Irish neutrality seemed somewhat duplicitous and ambiguous, Ireland's conduct in the mid and late 20th century, did little to counter this perception. As we will see in this section, the disconnect between Ireland's official position and the reality of its position became even more pronounced due to a variety of factors. Different administrations construed the doctrine of neutrality in different ways at different points in time. Furthermore, involvement in international peacekeeping missions

⁴⁸ Ibid

made it even harder to make sense of Ireland's bizarre neutrality position.

In the time period from the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty until the Second World War, neutrality had shifted from constituting an unspoken practice to becoming an official national policy, albeit one that was not constitutionally prescribed. The success of neutrality, in terms of emerging from the war unscathed, meant that there was an increased popular attachment to it. It "fostered enduring illusions about the moral basis of staying out of other people's wars."⁴⁹

2.2.1. NATO Invitation

In 1948, the 26 county nation was officially declared a republic with the passing of the Republic of Ireland Act. This act also formally recognised the country's withdrawal from the Commonwealth.⁵⁰ Whatever policies the Irish government would now practice, would have the outward representation of being tied to a completely independent Ireland. Unfortunately for De Valera it was also in 1948 that after a general election, he and his governing party Fianna Fáil lost power to an inter-party government led by another centrist party, 'Fine Gael'.⁵¹ It was almost immediately after Ireland's official declaration of independence, that the Irish Government was approached by the Americans to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Astonishingly, the then Minister for External Affairs, Seán MacBride responded to this request by pointing out that 'any military alliance with or commitment involving military action jointly with, the State that is responsible for the unnatural division of Ireland, which occupies a portion of [Ireland] with armed forces, and which supports undemocratic institutions in the north-eastern corner of Ireland, would be entirely repugnant and unacceptable to the Irish people.'⁵² This was a clear attempt to sway the Americans to alter their non-interventionist stance on partition. The prospect of a united Ireland appeared to be something for which the Irish government of the time was willing to make the large sacrifice of scrapping its position on neutrality. The hope that the Americans would take up a position favouring a united Ireland in return for Irish participation in the military alliance, turned out to be fruitless, as the United

⁴⁹ Jesse, N. G. (2006), *Choosing to Go it Alone: Irish Neutrality in Theoretical and Comparative Perspective*, International Political Science Review 2006 (p.11)

⁵⁰ Girvin, B. (2003), *Ireland, Republic of (Irish Free State; Éire/Ireland)*, The Encyclopaedia of Ireland (p.534)

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Fanning, R. (1982), *Irish Neutrality: An Historical Review*, Irish Studies in International Affairs,

States was already quite content with the military facilities available to them by other treaty members.⁵³ Thus, Ireland avoided joining NATO and its record of unbroken neutrality stood, even though the decision to refrain from joining was not actually motivated by a principled loyalty on the part of the government, to neutrality itself. It would be a whole half century after NATO's formation, that Ireland would join its Partnership for Peace initiative.⁵⁴

2.2.2. UN Membership and Peacekeeping

Whilst shying away from any military alliance, Ireland was fully aware that its idleness during the Second World War had dented its standing internationally and cast doubt on its commitment to global peace. It needed to somehow demonstrate its willingness to act internationally towards global security, in order to reclaim some semblance of dignity and credibility as a world actor. This opportunity presented itself in the form of UN membership. At the formation of the UN (United Nations), Ireland was prohibited from joining it. The organisation required that a member be ready and willing to use force in deterring aggression by one state against another if it was deemed appropriate by the organisation. It was held that a country which had not actively fought against Hitler, would not be able to take on such responsibility.⁵⁵ Yet in 1955, Ireland was finally allowed to join. Although moving to become member of the UN seemed like a betrayal by the Irish government of its own neutrality, the Minister for External Affairs at the time, Liam Cosgrave, made the case that one of the reasons for becoming a member was to steer clear of being associated with any particular block or group of nations. Oddly enough, he later claimed that he supported “the aim of those powers responsible for the defence and resistance to Communism.”⁵⁶ There is no denying that the mere act of joining the United Nations could be interpreted as an act, which is contrary to the tenets of neutrality. Article 2 of the UN charter provides that: “All Members shall give the United Nations *every assistance* in any action it takes in accordance with the present Charter, and shall

Vol. 1, No. 3 (p.33)

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_51979.htm

⁵⁵ <http://www.independent.ie/entertainment/books/a-frank-account-of-irelands-un-affairs-2235851.html>

⁵⁶ Finnegan, R., *Irish Neutrality*, (p. 27) retrievable at

http://www.raco.ie/attachments/068_1_2_irishneutrality.pdf

refrain from giving assistance to any state against which the United Nations is taking preventive or enforcement *action*.”⁵⁷ On the other hand, UN peacekeeping forces commissioned in 1956, could only be made operational subject to the “the consent of the parties [involved], the neutrality/impartiality of the peacekeepers, and [a] minimum use of force, [which was] meant to keep them above the conflicts that they were dispatched to ameliorate or end.”⁵⁸ It is precisely this innovative aspect of ‘neutral peacemaking’ as part of United Nations membership which has appealed to Ireland over the years. It has allowed the nation to mend its pre-1960s reputation as an isolationistic, uncooperative freeloader, by proving itself as a willing contributor to international peace. At the same time, Ireland has still been able to legitimately maintain an official position of neutrality. The high degree to which Ireland saw the importance of UN peacekeeping, was evident in the level of engagement that it demonstrated with regard to peacekeeping missions. It was even prepared to take part in the first mission of the UN to the Congo. The deployment of peacekeeping forces constituted an attempt to bring peace to a former Belgian colony that had received independence at short notice, but was missing proper infrastructure to maintain it. The mission lasted from July 1960 until June 1964 and within that period, 6,191 Irish soldiers took part, with a tally of twenty-six Irish peacekeeper fatalities at the end of it. Another large contribution came in the form of a 23 year mission to the Lebanon, as a result of the Israeli invasion of 1978. At the conclusion of its time there, the Irish peacekeeping contingent had recorded a loss of forty-seven peacekeepers.⁵⁹ Further Irish involvement came in the form of missions to Central America, Russia, Georgia, the former Yugoslavia, Cambodia, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Angola, Namibia, Western Sahara, Cote d’Ivoire, Liberia, East Timor and Chad. Participation in UN peacekeeping missions has been beyond exemplary, with Irish military personnel having contributed over 56,000 individual missions to over 54 different UN peacekeeping operations.⁶⁰ The importance that is put on participation in UN peacekeeping by the Irish government, is evidenced by the fact that in September 1993, when restating the roles of the Irish Defence Forces, it defined one of these as

⁵⁷ Smyth, P. (2009), *Neutrality*, Neutrality, Irish Experience, European Experience, Conference at Dublin Monthly Meeting of the [Quakers] Peace Committee, 8-9 May 2009, (p. 6)

⁵⁸ Donald, D. (2010), *Neutrality, Impartiality and UN Peacekeeping at the Beginning of the 21st Century*, International Peacekeeping (p.21)

⁵⁹ Connors, P. (2003), *United Nations*, The Encyclopedia of Ireland (p.1098)

⁶⁰ <http://www.irelandunnewyork.org/home/index.aspx?id=81379>

being “to participate in United Nations Missions in the cause of international peace.”⁶¹ Although Ireland has taken part in a host of missions, each participation in these is carefully considered. Today, for example, any intention to engage in such missions must be subjected to the so-called ‘triple lock’, whereby the approval for a mission must come from the UN Security Council, as well as from the Irish Government and the Dáil.⁶²

2.2.3. Further Developments

Another arena where Ireland was keen to make a mark, was in the realm of European affairs. Ireland’s abstention from becoming a NATO member had never presented itself as much of an issue, until it was, that in 1961, when Ireland submitted its application for membership of the EEC (European Economic Community), that concerns started being raised. As well as the weak state of the Irish economy, concerns over Ireland’s non-membership of NATO were also key in delaying Irish membership of the Community until much later.⁶³ The latter issue was resolved thanks to the repeated assurances relating to Ireland’s perceived neutrality, given to the ‘Big 6’ EU member states, by Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Seán Lemass of the Fianna Fáil party. On the 3rd of September 1962, at the invitation of the Irish government, 15 European journalists arrived in Dublin in order to be briefed on the political and social changes that had occurred in Ireland in relation to its application for membership.⁶⁴ Two days later, at a press conference Taoiseach Lemass stated that: “We do not wish, in the conflict between the free democracies and the communist empire, to be thought of as neutral. We are not neutral and do not wish to be regarded as such, even though we have not got specific commitments of a military kind under any international agreement.”⁶⁵ And so it was, that in 1973, after the holding of a referendum and with the signing of the Treaty of Accession, that Ireland, along with the UK and Denmark, joined the European Community.⁶⁶ Lemass’ claim was not without substance. Over the decades, Ireland has taken up policies which contravene

⁶¹ Connors, P. (2003), *United Nations*, The Encyclopedia of Ireland (p.1098)

⁶² <http://www.independent.ie/national-news/triple-lock-for-foreign-missions-to-stay-2333785.html>

⁶³ Keogh, D. (1997), *The Diplomacy of ‘Dignified Calm’: An Analysis of Ireland’s application for Membership of the EEC, 1961--1963*, retrievable at <http://www.ucc.ie/chronicon/keoghfra.htm>

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Ibid

the most elemental tenets of ‘neutrality’. Most recently, the country has aided the United States in the Iraqi and Afghanistan War, by commissioning the use of Shannon Airport by its troops.⁶⁷ Furthermore, in the recent release of state papers from 1981, it was revealed that Ireland had a contingency plan in place, which provided for assistance to the United Kingdom in the event of a nuclear war, in the form of pledging “500,000 of its citizens fit for military service.”⁶⁸

After the Second World War, the reality of Ireland’s increased involvement and commitment to international causes and organisations, has managed to compound the already obfuscated nature of its supposed neutrality even further. It is unclear whether Ireland’s zealous engagement in the area of international peacekeeping, as well as its readiness to help the Americans in their war, has in any way compromised its cherished neutrality status. On the face of it, one might be forgiven for assuming that this is in fact the case. This evolved form of neutrality is certainly a lot less clear-cut than the one which the country practiced during the Second World War, which in itself possessed a level of ambiguity. Added to this, the assertion by Seán Lemass, that Ireland does not wish to be considered neutral, also obscures the issue. But as we will see, it is Ireland’s relationship with Europe that has been the most defining and antagonistic one when it comes to Ireland’s self-perception of its own neutrality.

⁶⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/ireland/ireland_in_the_eu/index1_en.htm

⁶⁷ <http://www.pana.ie/>

⁶⁸ Hutton, B. (2011), *Secret plan to muster army of 500,000 in event of nuclear war*, Irish Independent,

3. European Security Policy

The European Union has evolved into a mammoth project of integration. Today, the economic dimension of this integration has proven to be its most renowned and by far, successful achievement. The development of a uniform security policy on the other hand, has received comparatively little attention. This is particularly ironic, given the fact that the European project was initially envisaged by its founders as a means, by which to hinder future wars between France and Germany. This ought to have made it a natural framework for the development of a common diplomatic and defence policy⁶⁹. Although economic integration initially seemed to take precedence over more political aspects of integration, the reality of security considerations entering the European integration discourse was inevitable.

The ways in which the EU has approached security policy have been manifold. Today's body of European security policies comprises the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), formerly known as the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The agents which brought about these Security innovations were European Amendment Treaties, in particular the Treaty of Maastricht, and the Treaty of Lisbon. All of these have caused the neutrality status of some of its Member States to be called into question.

3.1. The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy

Formalized European Foreign Policy cooperation commenced in 1970, with the then foreign ministers of the six countries of the EEC agreeing to meet every six months to consider foreign policy issues. The Single European Act, introduced in 1986 added legitimacy to these meetings by acknowledging them under the new title of European Political Cooperation (EPC). These then developed into Title V of the Treaty on the European Union which established the CFSP under the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992⁷⁰. Up until the Treaty of Lisbon, the CFSP constituted one of the three pillars of the European Union, the other two being the "Community Pillar" and the "Police and

Edition: 31/12/2011 (p.14)

⁶⁹ Hoffmann, S. (2000), *Towards a Common European Foreign and Security Policy?* Journal of Common Market Studies Vol 38, No. 2 (p. 189)

⁷⁰ Hurd, D. (1994), *Developing the Common Foreign and Security Policy*, International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Vol. 70, No. 3 (p. 421-422)

Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters” Pillar. Whichever matters and provisions fell under the Community Pillar were subject to the eponymous Community Procedure, whereas issues relating to the other two pillars fell under the Intergovernmental Procedure⁷¹. The Community Procedure, also known as the Community Method allowed for, among other things, widespread use of qualified majority voting in the Council of the European Union, a commission monopoly of the right of initiative, as well as uniform interpretation of Community law by the Court of Justice⁷². The Intergovernmental method on the other hand, was characterized by the Commission’s right of initiative being shared with Member States, the Council generally acting unanimously, with the European Parliament possessing a purely consultative role and the Court of Justice only having a minor role⁷³. The implications for member state neutrality were therefore of little concern up until the Treaty of Lisbon, which although not revolutionary, brought with it certain new procedural and constitutional features. One of the most salient aspects of the Treaty of Lisbon, was the abolition of the pillar system, whereby the European Community ceased to exist, being replaced by the European Union, which acquired legal personality⁷⁴. The Treaty clarified the EU’s competences, dividing them into four categories, namely ‘exclusive competences’, ‘shared competences’, ‘supporting competences’, as well as ‘special competences’. Exclusive competences, addressed by Article 3 of the TFEU (Treaty on the Functioning of the EU), cover areas where the EU alone is permitted to legislate and adopt binding acts. Shared competences, highlighted in Article 4 of the TFEU, cover areas where both Member States as well as the EU may exercise competence. The competence of the Member States in this instance is however, limited to areas where the EU has not already exercised, or does not wish to exercise its competence. Article 6 of the TFEU outlines supporting competences, whereby the EU possesses no legislative power relating to matters falling under this category. The legislative power rests with Member States, and the EU’s role is limited to the support, coordination and complementing of the action of Member States⁷⁵.

The fourth category, special competences, refers to the EU’s competences in relation to the ‘coordination of economic and employment policies’, the ‘flexibility

⁷¹ http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/eu_pillars_en.htm

⁷² http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/community_intergovernmental_methods_en.htm

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/eu_pillars_en.htm

⁷⁵ Ibid

clause’, and the ‘CFSP’. Regarding the latter, the “EU has competence in all fields connected with the CFSP. It defines and implements policy via, among others, the President of the European Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, whose roles and status have been recognised by the Treaty of Lisbon.”⁷⁶ If the CFSP were to fall under the ‘supporting competences’ category, whereby Member States are autonomously competent, Member State neutrality would be in no way infringed. However, the designation of ‘special competence’ status to the CFSP, adds an element of ambiguity. Nevertheless, the Treaty also stipulates that “the EU may not adopt legislative acts in [the CFSP] field. In addition, the Court of Justice of the EU does not have competence to give judgment in this area.”⁷⁷ Thus, although this innovative feature of the Treaty of Lisbon has enshrined the increased competence of the EU in the area of CFSP, the scope of said competence has been simultaneously limited. Wessels describes the situation as follows: “In the respective provisions of the Constitutional Treaty, CFSP was placed between the shared and supporting category of competences.”⁷⁸ Furthermore, the treaty states that “national security remains a national competence (Art. 4 (2) TEU), a phrase which was ... not foreseen in the Constitutional Treaty.”⁷⁹ Along with this, Treaty of Lisbon Declarations No. 18 and Declaration No. 24, both reinforce the inability of the EU to act beyond its competences⁸⁰.

3.2. The EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy

The development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy by the European Union itself, does not represent the only way in which European Security Policy has developed over the years. The other organisations which have been instrumental in the conceptualization and formulation of European Security Policy were NATO and the now obsolete Western European Union. In response to the military intervention of NATO in Bosnia, “the [US] Clinton administration recognised that there could be [future] crises within Europe in which the United States would not wish to intervene. It was therefore in favour of the idea of creating a kind of European pillar within

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Wessels, W., Bopp, F. (2008), *The Institutional Architecture of CFSP after the Lisbon Treaty: Constitutional breakthrough or challenges ahead?* Retrieval from http://www.jeanmonnetchair.uni-koeln.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Lehre/WS_08_09/ChallengePaperSeries_WesselsBopp.pdf

⁷⁹ Ibid

⁸⁰ Ibid

NATO - - in other words, a European security and defence identity” (Europa ESDI). This resulted in the creation of the European Security and Defence Identity. This new organ allowed the Western European Union to “introduce procedures for identifying NATO assets and capabilities on which the WEU might wish to draw with the agreement of the North Atlantic Council.”⁸¹ The successor of the ESDI was the European Security and Defence Policy ESDP, which came into being in 1999, at the Helsinki European Council.⁸² The difference between the ESDI and the ESDP, is that the former was predominantly a NATO-led initiative, whereas the latter constituted a wholly EU-guided project. The Treaty of Lisbon formally changed its title to CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy) and incorporated it into the CFSP⁸³. This means that overall responsibility of CSDP lies with the EU High Representative⁸⁴. Along with the CSDP, the subsumption of the Western European Union ‘Mutual Defence Clause’ into the CFSP, as per the terms of the Lisbon Treaty (discussed later on), represented another contentious issue.

Nonetheless, there are also features of the Lisbon Treaty, which make the CFSP, which now covers both the CSDP and the Mutual Defence Requirement (formerly only found in the WEU), seem rather innocuous to Member States’ neutrality statuses. The lifting of the “Enhanced Cooperation” mechanism, established by the Treaties of Nice and Amsterdam, to now include cooperation and defence matters, for example, represents a somewhat tacit acknowledgment of the diversity of member states and the inviolability of their neutrality policies⁸⁵. The Enhanced Cooperation Mechanism, for example, “enables a group of willing states to deepen their cooperation on CFSP.”⁸⁶ The Lisbon Treaty now extends this mechanism to include defence matters under the CSDP⁸⁷. This Mechanism is complemented by the “Protocol on Permanent Structured Cooperation”, which makes it possible for those Member States “whose military capabilities fulfill higher criteria and which have made more binding commitments to one another in this area with a view to the most

⁸¹ *Nato Handbook, Chapter 4*, retrievable from http://www.euc.illinois.edu/includes/docs/NATO_Handbook_Chapter_4_ESDI.pdf

⁸² <http://www.civitas.org.uk/eufacts/FSEXR/EX4.htm>

⁸³ *Ibid*

⁸⁴ *Ibid*

⁸⁵ *The Impact of the Lisbon Treaty on CFSP and ESDP*, Isis Europe, (p. 5) retrievable from http://www.isis-europe.eu/sites/default/files/programmes-downloads/2008_artrel_150_esr37tol-mar08.pdf

⁸⁶ *Ibid*

⁸⁷ *Ibid*

demanding missions [to] establish permanent structured cooperation within the Union framework.”⁸⁸ Both the Enhanced Cooperation and Permanent Structured Cooperation mechanisms represent manifest acknowledgments of the variance of military engagement and willingness to engage militarily among Member States, implicitly taking into account the neutral nature and status of some of its member states. On the face of it, the Common Foreign and Security Policy does not significantly encroach on the neutrality of any Member State, including that of Ireland. However, as we will see in the next chapter, the political landscape in Ireland over the last few decades has contributed to the increased perception by its citizens, of European Security legislation as constituting a threat towards Irish neutrality.

⁸⁸ Ibid

4. Ireland's Engagement with Europe

4.1. Ireland and the Beginning of European Security Policy

Out of all the member countries of the European Union today, few have managed to gain its attention and invoke bewilderment more so than the small nation at the edge of Europe, known as Ireland. Seen often as something of a renegade, Ireland's propensity to make things difficult for European technocrats, lies with its eternally careful and considered regard for the protection of its own sovereignty. Any encroachments on the Irish constitution, or on matters which are deemed to be so intrinsically tied to Ireland's sovereignty, would always be called into question. Ireland's relationship with the EU and integration was relatively complicit and incident-free during the first decades of its membership in the Community. This all changed in the late 80's however, with the introduction of the Single European Act, which was set to pass in 1986. The act was intended to amend rules governing "operations of the European institutions and [expand] Community powers, notably in the field of research and development, the environment and common foreign policy."⁸⁹ Having been signed by 11 out of the 12 member states in 1986, only Ireland was left to sign. However, the Supreme Court of Ireland, in the decision *Crotty v. An Taoiseach*, held that the government must hold a referendum whenever a European Treaty is proposed for ratification, where ratification would entail an amendment to the constitution.⁹⁰ This meant that ratification of the treaty ended up being postponed until the 1st of July 1987, after an Irish referendum result favouring ratification had come to pass. As far as the contents of the Treaty were concerned, the new aspects that spoke to common powers with regard to foreign policy, such as the codification of the European Political Cooperation (EPC, which would later spawn the Common Foreign and Security Policy, CFSP) therein, were of little concern to Ireland's neutrality. EU members would still be referred to as "High Contracting Parties" within the treaty, something which emphasised the "*de jure*" intergovernmental character of the EPC."⁹¹ Moreover, there appeared to be a certain "evolution in Irish public opinion on the issue of neutrality, arising from a growing acceptance of the

⁸⁹ http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/institutional_affairs/treaties/treaties_singleact_en.htm

⁹⁰ Cahill, M. (2010), *Ireland's Constitutional Amendability and Europe's Constitutional Ambition: The Lisbon Referendum in Context*, Gemran Law Journal Vol 09, November 2010 (p. 1209)

⁹¹ Smith, M. E. (2003), *Europe's Foreign and Security Policy: The Institutionalization of Cooperation*

desirability of political union and economic and monetary union within the Community...[as evidenced by] a public opinion poll in December 1988 that showed 60 per cent of Irish people supporting ... the proposition that a common organisation for defence should be created between the twelve countries of the European Community by 1992.”⁹² The ramifications of the *Crotty* decision however, go far beyond the consequences it had for the enactment of the Single European Act. For one reason or another, it has been felt, both by the successive governments of Ireland, as well as by the Irish people themselves, that every subsequent European Treaty would have to be subjected to a referendum, regardless of whether an actual amendment to the constitution would be necessary or not, in each respective case.

Neutrality had not yet revealed itself to be the divisive issue for Ireland, which it is today. Thus, it wasn't Ireland who slowed the progress on the Single European Act's successor, the Treaty of Maastricht. It was Denmark. The provisions on an EU citizenship, a European Monetary Union, and the development of defence cooperation under the CFSP proved to be too much for the Danes, leading them to request the inclusion of four specific treaty opt-out clauses, including all defence-related provisions under the CFSP.⁹³ This request was ultimately accepted. The Irish Government, on the other hand seemed to be quite comfortable with the defence aspects of the treaty, with the Taoiseach reporting that the Government's position on neutrality would remain unaffected.⁹⁴ In fact, very little of the public discourse was focused on the security implications of the Treaty, but rather on the economic implications of the EMU, the promise of a six billion-pound European budget payoff as well as the hot topic of abortion. Again, the Irish public voted in the affirmative, accepting the new treaty.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, the creation of the new CFSP pillar meant that Security Policy was now explicitly part of the European Union agenda.

Although security concerns hadn't featured all too heavily in the Irish discourse around EU legislation up until now, this was all about to change in the late

(p.150)

⁹² Fitzgerald, G (1998), *The Origins, Development and Present Status of Irish 'Neutrality'*, Irish Studies in International Affairs, Vol. 9 (p.16)

⁹³ Tonra, B, *Denmark and Ireland*, Centre for European Studies, Department of International Politics, (p.2) retrievable at

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1739574&http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1739574

⁹⁴ Ibid

⁹⁵ Ibid

90's thanks to the Treaty of Amsterdam. The lack of Defence integration was seen as one of the big flaws of the Maastricht Treaty, and this unfinished business had to be taken care of.⁹⁶ Whereas its two predecessors had focused mainly on the internal market and the EMU, the Treaty of Amsterdam would preoccupy itself with the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (AFSJ).⁹⁷ Under the treaty, a series of changes were made to the CFSP, that would not however, alter the structure or the nature of institutional involvement greatly.⁹⁸ Additionally, the provisions of the Petersberg tasks, a list of security, peacemaking and defence tasks, which were formulated by the Western European Union (WEU), would be incorporated into the Treaty.⁹⁹ The Irish Government started to become increasingly aware of the evolving character of the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI). Under Article J3 of the Treaty "The European Council shall define the principles of, and the General guidelines for, the common foreign and security policy, including matters with defence implications."¹⁰⁰ The fear that the EU was becoming a lot more than just an intergovernmental organisation, became even more pronounced, with the decision taken in NATO, that a European Security Entity would be centred within the Atlantic Alliance.¹⁰¹ One way in which this was envisioned, was by encouraging the fostering of closer ties between the Western European Union (WEU), which was seen by many NATO members as constituting the "European wing of NATO"¹⁰², and the European Union. At the early stages of Intergovernmental Conference negotiations on the Treaty of Amsterdam, the neutral member states Sweden and Finland decided that closer cooperation between the EU and the WEU was indeed necessary, but they did not wish to have the WEU subsumed by the EU altogether. Ireland took a slightly different position, in that it was willing to cooperate more closely on collective security operations as provided for in the Petersberg tasks, but that participation in combat missions was completely

⁹⁶ Gourlay, C., Remacle, R. (1998), *The 1996 IGC: The Actors and their Interaction*, Foreign and security policy in the European Union (p. 59-94)

⁹⁷ Chalmers, D., Davies, G., Monti, G. (2010), *European Union Law, 2nd Edition* (p.28)

⁹⁸ Craig, P., De Búrca, G. (2008), *EU Law: Text Cases and Materials, Fourth Edition* (p.22)

⁹⁹ <http://en.euabc.com/word/710>

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.pana.ie/idn/amsterdam.html>

¹⁰¹ Tonra, B, *Denmark and Ireland*, Centre for European Studies, Department of International Politics, (p.3) retrievable at

http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1739574&http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1739574

¹⁰² Oireachtas Debates, 11 December 1997, retrievable at

<http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/1997/12/11/00016.asp>

out of the question. At the same time, the idea of a closer relationship between the WEU and the EU was not deemed to be repugnant towards Irish officials.¹⁰³ Despite alluding to an increasingly diminished neutral character for the country, the Irish government insisted that “In Ireland’s case, participation in the Petersberg Tasks, will not affect [its] long-standing policy of military neutrality.”¹⁰⁴ It went on however, to say that “Proposals for the development of European military forces which would be available to the EU to undertake Petersberg operations are indicative of the recognition of both the indivisibility of European security and the need for a collective response by Europeans to these challenges.”¹⁰⁵ The Irish Government seemed to be well aware of the effect that the Amsterdam Treaty could have on Ireland’s tradition of neutrality. Article J7 of the Treaty went on to say that “The common foreign and security policy shall include all questions relating to the Union, including the progressive framing of a common defence policy, in accordance with the second sub paragraph (the merger of the nuclear armed WEU in the EU), which might lead to a common defence should the European Council so decide.”¹⁰⁶ Given the somewhat innovative developments that this new treaty brought with it, it was remarkable that little public attention was visited upon the defence issue. One of the possible reasons why the Amsterdam Treaty referendum led to a favourable outcome for Treaty ratification, was the fact that it was held on the same day as “The Good Friday Agreement”, the momentous Peace Treaty signed between the UK, Northern Ireland, and Ireland. Little media attention went the way of the Amsterdam Treaty. So little in fact, that there was no reporting of the proposed creation of an EU army of 60,000 soldiers.¹⁰⁷ It seemed that the potential security implications, of which the Irish government was completely aware of, seemed to elude the Irish general public. As highlighted earlier however, the Treaty did manage to nonetheless undermine its own potential, from an integration perspective at least, by introducing the enhanced cooperation mechanism, whereby it would become possible for some member states to cooperate further on certain matters, without requiring the cooperation of other

¹⁰³ Gourlay, C., Remacle, R. (1998), *The 1996 IGC: The Actors and their Interaction*, Foreign and security policy in the European Union (p. 59-94)

¹⁰⁴ White Paper on Defence, 2000, *Defence Policy and Programmes - Roles of the Defence Force*, retrievable at <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/special/2000/defence/sect3.htm>

¹⁰⁵ Ibid

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.pana.ie/idn/amsterdam.html>

¹⁰⁷ Ibid

member states.¹⁰⁸ Any concerns the Irish public might have had, could therefore be allayed quite easily by pointing to the addition of this provision to the Treaty. It is however unclear, what effect this provision might have on the future negotiability of Irish neutrality.

If it was the case that the Irish public had been left largely unaware of its government's ongoing dalliance with the EU and the latter's blossoming security and defence policy, this certainly ceased to be the case with the arrival of the Treaty of Nice.

4.2. The Treaty of Nice

The Treaty of Nice was signed in 2001, but its journey to ratification would be less than smooth. Its main aim was to tie up the loose ends of the Treaty of Amsterdam, as well as to address important institutional issues in preparation for the accession of the ten new member states, who would be joining the Union in 2004. Such issues related principally to the co-decision procedure, qualified majority voting, and the composition of institutions.¹⁰⁹ The Treaty also presented some relatively tacit implications for defence policy. Under Article 17.1 of the Amsterdam Treaty, the EU was mandated to “foster closer institutional relations with the WEU with a view to the possibility of the integration of WEU into the Union should the European Council so decide.”¹¹⁰ This article was removed under the Treaty of Nice, suggesting that the process of the transfer of WEU capabilities and institutions to the EU was very much in the process of being effectuated.¹¹¹ Both the ruling coalition of the Fianna Fáil and Progressive Democrat parties, as well as the largest opposition parties Fine Gael and Labour, were in favour of a “Yes” vote in the first referendum on the Treaty of Nice, which took place on June 7th, 2001. They were also supported in their position by a majority of interest groups,¹¹² as well as the religious, cultural, business, employer and trade union elite.¹¹³ In the minority, and favouring a rejection of the Treaty of

¹⁰⁸ Foster, N. (2009), *Foster on EU Law, Second Edition* (p.40)

¹⁰⁹ Hargreaves, S. (2009), *EU Law* (p.8)

¹¹⁰ Devine, K. (2009), *Irish Neutrality and the Lisbon Treaty*, Neutrality, Irish Experience, European Experience, Conference at Dublin Monthly Meeting of the [Quakers] Peace Committee, 8-9 May 2009 (p. 30)

¹¹¹ Ibid

¹¹² Devine, K. (2008), *Stretching the IR Theoretical Spectrum on Irish Neutrality: A Critical Social Constructivist Framework*, *International Political Science Review* 2008 (p. 467)

¹¹³ Devine, K. (2009), *Irish Political Parties' Attitudes towards Neutrality and the Foreign, Security*

Nice, were Sinn Féin (the nationalist party), the Green Party, the Socialist Workers Party, and a coalition of individuals and groups that had opposed previous Treaty amendments.¹¹⁴ The Minister for Foreign Affairs at the time, Brian Cowen, dismissed the opponents as “rejectionists”, who do not “recognise the tremendous benefits that Ireland has enjoyed from membership of the EU.”¹¹⁵ Because of the high level of endorsement from most of the country’s political as well as economic entities, the first Treaty was expected to be ratified as easily as the previous treaties had¹¹⁶. The Government’s referendum campaign focused mainly on EU enlargement, with the Taoiseach of the time, Bertie Ahern stating that an approval of Nice would “make it clear that [Ireland stands] ready to welcome up to twelve new members.”¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, the Government’s most concerted efforts were not enough in bringing about a “Yes” majority. For the first time in the history of its EU journey, Ireland managed to halt the progress of integration, when most of the voting public voted “No.” What is most surprising about this referendum, is the level of voter turnout, when compared with that of previous treaties. More than half of the people who voted “Yes” to the Treaty of Amsterdam, did not vote in the Nice referendum.¹¹⁸ Interestingly, there was also a decline in “No” voters as a percentage of the whole electorate. The percentage of “No” voters as a proportion of the whole electorate increased from 11.9 per cent in 1972, to 21 per cent in 1998, but had regressed to 18.5 per cent in the 2001 Nice referendum.¹¹⁹ Added to this, the percentage of prior “No” voters who decided not to vote this time, was only 36 per cent, compared to the 53 per cent of prior “Yes” voters who did not vote in Nice. Thus one of the largest factors for the end result, was a 17 percentage point turnout differential.¹²⁰ When looking at the reasons for voter behaviour, there were some key issues, which ultimately led the “No” voters to make their efficacious decision. The main influence on “No” voters

and Defence Policies, Irish Political Studies Vol. 24, No 4 (p.483)

¹¹⁴ Sweeney, D. R. (2003, *The Two Referenda on Nice, The Security Debate in Ireland, and the Limits of Europeanization*, Draft paper prepared for the Biennial Meeting of the European Union Studies Association, Centre of International Studies, University of Cambridge (p. 4), retrievable at <http://aei.pitt.edu/2961/1/164.pdf>

¹¹⁵ Ibid

¹¹⁶ Ibid

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 2-3

¹¹⁸ Sinnott, R. (2001), *Attitudes and Behaviour of the Irish Electorate in the Referendum on the Treaty of Nice*

¹¹⁹ Ibid

¹²⁰ Ibid

was undoubtedly the lack of confidence in the decision making process within the EU. Coming in a close second however, is the support for the strengthening of Irish neutrality, whereby support for neutrality could mean less involvement in EU co-operation and foreign and security policy.¹²¹ Indeed, of the overall voters, 40 per cent believed in strengthening neutrality, against 19 per cent who would have been willing to accept limitations on neutrality, with the rest undecided.¹²² Furthermore, when confronted with the two statements “The big countries in the EU have far too much power and influence” and “The small countries are well able to defend their own interests”, 51 per cent agreed with the former statement, with only 19 per cent taking the latter view.¹²³ This may well be down to a healthy suspicion on the part of the Irish people, of big “post-imperial states.”¹²⁴ However, such attitudes belie the fact that at the time, 72 per cent of the Irish adult population believed that Ireland’s EU membership was a positive thing, a level of support which was 25 per cent above the European average.¹²⁵ What becomes clear from the result of the first Nice referendum, is that aside from the lack of voter turnout as well as the apparent apathy displayed by the majority of Irish people (64.6 per cent of the population did not turn out to vote), a large segment of the Irish public had, whether justified or not, become increasingly dissatisfied and/or disillusioned with the way in which the European Union was operating. In terms of the CFSP, the changes proposed were not nearly as far-reaching as those introduced by the Treaties of Amsterdam and Maastricht.¹²⁶ What appeared to be the problem for the Fianna Fáil/Progressive Democrat Coalition in their attempt to encourage a “Yes” vote, was not so much the degree of proposed change under the Treaty, but rather the misguided “No” campaign, which put forth “bizarre [Treaty] interpretations... and inaccurate descriptions of [Treaty] contents.”¹²⁷

Confident that the plebiscite would yield a favourable result, the Government

¹²¹ Ibid

¹²² Ibid

¹²³ Ibid

¹²⁴ De Búrca, D. (2009), *The Place of Neutrality in Irish Politics*, Neutrality, Irish Experience, European Experience, Conference at Dublin Monthly Meeting of the [Quakers] Peace Committee, 8-9 May 2009 (p.8)

¹²⁵ Sinnott, R. (2001), *Attitudes and Behaviour of the Irish Electorate in the Referendum on the Treaty of Nice*

¹²⁶ Sweeney, D. R. (2003), *The Two Referenda on Nice, The Security Debate in Ireland, and the Limits of Europeanization*, Draft paper prepared for the Biennial Meeting of the European Union Studies Association, Centre of International Studies, University of Cambridge (p. 6), retrievable at

<http://aei.pitt.edu/2961/1/164.pdf>

¹²⁷ Ibid

was now left dumbstruck by a seemingly unlikely turn of events. Left reeling from the referendum's defeat, it now found itself at somewhat of an impasse as regards its continued plan of action. European Integration had come to a grinding halt, solely as a result of a decision taken by an island nation of four million inhabitants. The Irish government would be held accountable to the EU for its failure to sway public opinion in favour of ratification, and as such, would be expected to rectify the situation. And so they did.

4.3. Nice Treaty Clarification and a Second Referendum

On the 21 June 2002, Ireland made a National Declaration at the European Council meeting in Seville, in which it confirmed that its “participation in the European Union’s common foreign and security policy does not prejudice its traditional policy of military neutrality.”¹²⁸ It also pointed out that the “Nice European Council recognised that the development of the Union’s capacity to conduct humanitarian and crisis management talks does not involve the establishment of a European army.” So as to not leave any margin of ambiguity, the Government also reiterated the “Triple Lock” requirement, “by which the deployment of Irish military forces overseas requires the authorisation of the UN Security Council or the General Assembly, a decision by government [as well as] approval by the Dáil.”¹²⁹ In response to these affirmations, the European Council put forward its own declaration in which it acknowledged Ireland’s declaration, as well as assuring that the Treaty of the European Union “does not impose any binding mutual defence commitments... nor does the development of the Union’s capacity to conduct humanitarian and crisis management tasks involve the establishment of a European army.”¹³⁰ In addition, a clause was added to the Irish constitution, which ensured that Ireland would not join an EU based mutual defence pact without first calling a referendum.¹³¹ However, it was probably the rhetoric of the Government in the run up to the second referendum which was most influential. As part of its efforts at reinvigoration of the “Yes” campaign, the Government stressed the point of an uncompromised neutrality status,

¹²⁸ Keatinge, P., Tonra, B. (2009), *European Security and Defence Policy and the Lisbon Treaty* (p. 32)

¹²⁹ Ibid (p.28)

¹³⁰ Ibid

¹³¹ <http://www.pana.ie/idn/afternice.html>

even going so far as to address the issue via a public declaration.¹³² Whilst the immediate objective of these measures was accomplished, i.e. a “Yes” result in the second referendum, they also served to strengthen the idea of the existence of Irish neutrality. Never before had the “neutrality question” featured so heavily in the public debate as it did during both referenda concerning the ratification of the Nice Treaty. In the period between both referenda, the viability of European Integration became seriously questioned. If the arduous task of ratifying the Treaty of Nice led Ireland to assume a reputation as a difficult Member State, then the Treaty of Lisbon would only serve to corroborate this notion.

4.4. The Treaty of Lisbon

The ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon was not intended to be a drawn out, heated affair. It was, unlike the “Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe“, not intended to be subject to the will of the people in the form of a national referendum, let alone two. Instead it was supposed to be a low-key affair, with ratification set to take place by means of national parliamentary processes, by governments who possessed the mandate to ratify. Hungary, for example, ratified the Treaty a mere four days after signing it.¹³³ After the eye-opening failure that was the Constitutional Treaty, one would assume that any further European integration would be tentative and considered, with an exceptional level of due diligence being paid to the individual concerns of Member States. The Treaty of Lisbon did not however, reflect such an assumption. The far reaching reforms to be introduced by the Treaty would affect human rights as well as judicial and foreign policy. As previously highlighted, it would also merge the three pillars of the EU, giving the Union legal personality.¹³⁴ In its original form, the Treaty was neither cryptic nor unabashed about its intentions for the advancement of its Defence Policy. Its aim was to set out “a legal base for comprehensive EU competence in foreign, security and defence policy, making neutrality and [the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), later to be known as the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)] very significant, live issues in Ireland and across Europe.”¹³⁵ One of the most glaring features of the Treaty was the

¹³² Ibid

¹³³ Chalmers, D., Davies, G., Monti, G. (2010), *European Union Law, 2nd Edition* (p.48)

¹³⁴ <http://www.civitas.org.uk/eufacts/FSTREAT/TR6.htm>

¹³⁵ Devine, K. (2009), *Irish Political Parties’ Attitudes towards Neutrality and the Foreign, Security*

Solidarity Clause, now Article 222 of the Treaty, stating that “The Union and its Member States shall act jointly in a spirit of solidarity if a Member State is the object of a terrorist attack or the victim of a natural or man-made disaster.” The Mutual Defence Clause, under Article 42.7, goes even further by providing that “If a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.” However, the article then continues: “This shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States.”¹³⁶ Although this stipulation seems to acknowledge a difference in Member State Defence arrangements, the word “neutrality” itself is never explicitly mentioned. Another contentious issue, and one which flowed from the inclusion of Article 42.7 of the Treaty, was the continued effort to incorporate the WEU fully into the EU. Should the new Treaty enter into force, “its Article 42(7) would derogate Article V [of the Modified Brussels Treaty (MBT)]. As Article V [of the MBT was] the only provision of the MBT still in tact, it would also have the effect of terminating the WEU as a whole. The WEU would have completed its purpose.”¹³⁷ Further still, the European Defence Agency and its tasks would become enshrined into EU law, if the Treaty were to pass. This was seen by some as heralding a positive step, which would “normalise [the EDA] within the legal structures of the treaty, thereby allowing for greater transparency and oversight”.¹³⁸ Others however, interpreted this as a “definitive step towards the militarisation of the European Union and Ireland’s integration within the international arms industry.”¹³⁹ Despite the multitudinous implications the Treaty could have for Ireland’s neutrality, its major drawbacks would turn out to be the general high level of ambiguity surrounding it, a dearth of clarification, and quite simply, its volume of content. As Maria Cahill points

and Defence Policies, Irish Political Studies Vol. 24, No 4 (p.468)

¹³⁶ Topala, Oana (2011), *How Common is CSDP? Solidarity and Mutual Defence in the Lisbon Treaty* (p.2), retrievable at http://www.isis-europe.eu/sites/default/files/programmes-downloads/2011_artrel_631_esr53-briefing4-solidarity-mutuality.pdf

¹³⁷ Devine, K. (2009), *Irish Neutrality and the Lisbon Treaty*, Neutrality, Irish Experience, European Experience, Conference at Dublin Monthly Meeting of the [Quakers] Peace Committee, 8-9 May 2009 (p. 31)

¹³⁸ Tonra, B., CFSP in the 2009 Irish Referendum on the Lisbon Treaty (p.3), retrievable from http://ucd-ie.academia.edu/BenTonra/Papers/386448/CFSP_in_the_2009_Irish_Referendum_on_the_Lisbon_Treaty

¹³⁹ Ibid

out, “it is more than vaguely ridiculous that ‘ordinary’ people should be trusted to read a 300-page document, to understand its jargon, to identify the salient amendments that it makes, and to have an informed opinion about their merit, and to weigh up all the various pros and cons in order to arrive at a final decision either to accept or to reject the overall package.”¹⁴⁰ The enormity of the task of deciphering the important parts of the treaty did indeed prove to be too unpalatable for the Irish electorate. And when the incomprehensibility of the Treaty was coupled with an unconvincing pre-referendum political endorsement campaign, the Irish decided to once again vote according to the mantra: “When in doubt, throw it out.” On June 12, 2008, the Irish public had the pleasure of deciding, if not the future of European Integration, then at least the pace at which it would come about. With a turnout of 53.1 per cent of the electorate (significantly higher than both the first and second Nice referenda), the Irish people voted, with 53.4 per cent against the ratification of the Treaty. According to the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs’ ‘Research on attitudes and behaviour in the 2008 referendum on the Treaty of Lisbon’, the outcome was determined “mainly by a combination of (a) overall attitudes to European integration, (b) knowledge or lack of knowledge of the European Union and correct and incorrect perceptions of what was in the Lisbon Treaty, (c) a number of specific policy concerns and (d) some domestic political factors.”¹⁴¹ Moreover, an inclination towards identifying oneself as exclusively ‘Irish’ as opposed to ‘Irish’ and ‘European’, or ‘European’, increased the propensity towards voting ‘No’. Similarly, of those who identified themselves as being extremely ‘pro-neutral’, 77 per cent voted ‘No’, whereas those who were extremely willing to accept limitations on Ireland’s neutrality, only 35 per cent voted in the negative.¹⁴² A great deal of voters were arguably misguided in their concerns about neutrality, especially the ‘No’ voters. Misinformation pervaded the ‘No’ campaign from start to finish, with research afterwards indicating that 33 per cent of respondents, of which 48 per cent were ‘No’ voters and 26 per cent were ‘Yes’ voters, were of the firm belief that the Lisbon Treaty would introduce conscription to a European army.¹⁴³ All these factors

¹⁴⁰ Cahill, M. (2010), *Ireland’s Constitutional Amendability and Europe’s Constitutional Ambition: The Lisbon Referendum in Context*, Gemran Law Journal Vol 09, November 2010 (p. 1192)

¹⁴¹ Sinnott, R. (2009), *Attitudes and Behaviour in the Referendum on the Treaty of Lisbon*, Report for Department of Foreign Affairs

¹⁴² Ibid

¹⁴³ Keatinge, P., Tonra, B. (2009), *European Security and Defence Policy and the Lisbon Treaty* (p.

combined, meant that for the second time within a decade, the Irish people, in making use of their special power, brought about a bitter disappointment for integration enthusiasts. Just like with the Treaty of Nice, however, the response was to begin preparations for putting the issue right back to the people, with the hope that they would once more, overturn their initial decision. The challenge for the government this time however, was slightly different.

4.5. Another Second Referendum

Unlike with the first Nice Treaty referendum, where the main reason for the high ‘No’ vote, was a low overall voter turnout, the main factor influencing an unfavourable result in the first Lisbon Treaty referendum was the strength of support for a ‘No’ vote.¹⁴⁴ The response by the Irish government, in preparation for another referendum, would therefore not come in the form of a rallying cry to vote, but rather in the form of reassurance and clarification on key issues, in order to assuage the fears of the majority of voters. On the 19 of June 2009, the 27 countries of the EU, issued official guarantees to Ireland. Together, the Member States, including Ireland, formulated an agreed-upon position on the contentious issues that led to the Treaty rejection. These guarantees would become legally binding and would eventually “take the form of a Protocol to the two founding treaties at the time of the next accession treaty.”¹⁴⁵ This formulation, known as the “Decision of the Heads of State of Government of the 27 Member States”, makes it clear “that participation in EU operations is a national decision, subject to domestic legal requirements.”¹⁴⁶ It also emphasizes that “the Lisbon Treaty does not affect or prejudice Ireland’s traditional policy of military neutrality” and that “Ireland is not bound by any mutual defence commitment.” Concomitantly, the Irish government issued its own declaration on security and defence, in which it detailed the guarantees from an Irish perspective, as well as relaying the legislative and procedural measures that would be implemented should the Treaty of Lisbon be ratified.¹⁴⁷ This declaration, much like the Seville Declaration, emphasised the ‘Triple Lock’ mechanism. Once again, the hard work

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¹⁴⁴ Sinnott, R. (2009), *Attitudes and Behaviour in the Referendum on the Treaty of Lisbon*, Report for Department of Foreign Affairs

¹⁴⁵ Keatinge, P., Tonra, B. (2009), *European Security and Defence Policy and the Lisbon Treaty* (p.

29)

¹⁴⁶ Ibid

paid off. On the 2 October 2009, 67.1 per cent of the Irish electorate voted for the ratification of the Treaty, with only 2 of the 43 constituencies voting against the Treaty. This was the highest ‘Yes’ vote since the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, with overall turnout being the highest in an EU referendum since the referendum on joining the Community in 1972.¹⁴⁸ Encouragingly for the Government, the percentage of people voting ‘No’ because of concerns for Ireland’s military neutrality had halved from the first referendum on the Lisbon Treaty to the next.¹⁴⁹ In fact, those 2008 ‘No’-voters who were concerned about the impact of the Treaty on Irish neutrality, were more likely to switch to voting ‘Yes’ in the 2009 referendum.¹⁵⁰ This was most likely due to the renewed guarantees put forward by both the Government, and the 27 Member States. In comparison to the Nice referendum however, ‘neutrality’ was more of a side-issue during both Lisbon referenda, with loss of sovereignty, lack of information, general misgivings about the Treaty, as well as a “perceived pressure to vote Yes” being the most salient reasons for voting ‘No’. Nevertheless, it would also appear, that had the Treaty been in any way proven to impact upon Irish neutrality, the public would have voted against it. This is evidenced by the fact that in the post-election survey of the second Lisbon referendum, 35 per cent of respondents strongly agreed with the statement that “Ireland should do everything it can to strengthen its neutrality.” On the other end of the spectrum, only 2 per cent strongly agreed that “Ireland should be willing to accept limitations on its neutrality.”¹⁵¹ The Irish public sentiment had not shifted one iota towards an increased willingness to cede its cherished neutrality status.

Both the referenda on the Treaty of Nice, as well as the referenda on the Treaty of Lisbon have made it clear to both the Irish government, as well as the European Union, that in the journey towards achieving comprehensive integration, there will always be the hurdle of the Irish public. How much longer the status quo is tenable remains to be seen. The Treaty of Lisbon did not introduce anything, that would oblige Ireland to partake in military missions which its government does not

¹⁴⁷ Ibid

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.rte.ie/news/2009/1003/eul Lisbon1.html>

¹⁴⁹ Sinnott, R. (2010), *Attitudes and Behaviour in the Second Referendum on the Treaty of Lisbon*, Report for Department of Foreign Affairs

¹⁵⁰ Ibid

¹⁵¹ Ibid

support.¹⁵² Yet, as the scope of Europe's involvement in military interventions broadens to incorporate peace-making missions and combating terrorism in third countries, it will become increasingly difficult for Ireland to continue asserting that it is acting in a 'neutral' manner.¹⁵³ And the reality is, that a disconnect has been allowed to develop, between the Irish public's perception of its own neutrality on the one hand, and the actions of the Irish government. By convincing its public that neutrality constituted a non-issue in the Lisbon referendum, the Irish Government helped along the ratification of a treaty. By doing this, the Government has however, committed Ireland to a new piece of legislation, which distinctly addresses a Common Foreign and Security Policy that has obligations, although limited, attached to it. As was expected, the Western European Union ceased to exist on 30 June 2011.¹⁵⁴ Up until the Lisbon Treaty, the Government had always maintained that Irish neutrality was protected because the WEU and the EU remained "two separate organisations, established under separate treaties... and with separate responsibilities."¹⁵⁵ Now, this was no longer the case. Over the decades of treaty referenda, it has become clear, that Irish leaders, are trying to reconcile the evolving nature of the European Union with the traditional and somewhat inflexible expectations of the Irish public. John Maguire puts the point succinctly: "Having agreed to the supra-state level demands of ESDP... parties in government try to convince the sub-state constituency of public opinion that their neutrality agenda has been safeguarded through a combined strategy of minimising discussion of ESDP and reformulating concepts of military neutrality, in order to avoid punishment at the polls and to ensure EU treaty referendum amendments are passed." An odd phenomenon has presented itself in today's Ireland. The political elite's view of neutrality seems to be out of sync with the view shared by the majority of Irish people, i.e. that Ireland has always been, and will continue to be a neutral country.

¹⁵² De Búrca, D. (2009), *The Place of Neutrality in Irish Politics*, Neutrality, Irish Experience, European Experience, Conference at Dublin Monthly Meeting of the [Quakers] Peace Committee, 8-9 May 2009 (p.9)

¹⁵³ Ibid

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.weu.int/>

¹⁵⁵ Devine, K. (2009), *Irish Neutrality and the Lisbon Treaty*, Neutrality, Irish Experience, European Experience, Conference at Dublin Monthly Meeting of the [Quakers] Peace Committee, 8-9 May 2009 (p. 31)

5. Ireland's Political Actors: Irish or European?

Over the course of the 20th century, the neutrality discourse has been versatile and varied to say the least, with neutrality oscillating from being promoted as a living Irish philosophy, to being flatly denied, to being endangered. Although during the course of its struggle for independence, the question of Irish neutrality was still open-ended, this all changed in the early 1930's. With the outbreak of the Second World War, De Valera and his Government were adamant to leave no room for interpretation of the country's position in terms of allegiance, by expressing, in no uncertain terms that the country would follow a policy of strict military neutrality. Although the behaviour of Ireland towards the Allies and the assistance it afforded them, was in complete contradiction with this assertion, Ireland's *de jure* neutrality was nonetheless recognised and accepted, both domestically as well as abroad. The country remained relatively unscathed during the war, due in no small part to the Irish government's "neutral" claim. The downside of this was that, emerging from the war, Ireland had acquired a reputation as an unhelpful isolationist. It was in the interest of Ireland to re-establish credibility in the realm of international politics. This meant a reconsideration of its official policy. With the advent of Ireland joining the European Economic Community, the term "neutrality" suddenly vanished from the vocabulary of Irish politicians. During pre-membership negotiations with the EEC, the Irish government remained secretive about the degree to which it was committing Ireland to any possible future EU Defence Policy, with the crux of the public debate centring on economic implications as opposed to political points of interest.¹⁵⁶ The Government began to avoid making references to "neutrality." The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Patrick Hillery, when discussing Ireland's Foreign Affairs agenda, noted that "three issues - the assertion of its identity, the recognition of that identity by others, and the promotion and development of exchanges with other nations - are basic aspects of any country's relations with the world."¹⁵⁷ Suddenly the word "neutrality" was being substituted by the word "identity", which began to be thrown around much more frequently in the run up to accession.¹⁵⁸ As already mentioned,

¹⁵⁶ Devine, K. (2009), *Irish Political Parties' Attitudes towards Neutrality and the Foreign, Security and Defence Policies*, Irish Political Studies Vol. 24, No 4 (p.471)

¹⁵⁷ Ibid (p.472)

¹⁵⁸ Ibid

Taoiseach Seán Lemass, in 1962 even went so far as to deny the existence of Irish neutrality. If the period leading up to, and including the Second World War heralded the nascence of neutrality for Ireland, the decades leading up to European accession signalled its attempted assassination by Government officials. The leaders of the time were attempting to downplay the excessive level of salience that was being attached to Ireland's traditional neutrality. After all, the policy was not enshrined in the national constitution. At the same time, it was recognised that neutrality had become an important part of Irish identity, and an important part of the public psyche. That is why in the run up to the accession referendum of 1972, the political parties completely shied away from the topic in order to minimise its impact on public opinion. Neutrality did not feature in the White Paper on the terms of entry and consequently did not play an important role in the referendum debate.¹⁵⁹ The issue is further complicated by the fact that the “meaning and policy prescriptions of ‘military neutrality’ can be changed by government decree because ‘military neutrality’ is not defined in Irish legislation.”¹⁶⁰ Most of the main parties were in agreement, that ‘military neutrality’ was deemed to be “non-membership of military alliances, including the Western European Union, and non-assumption of the relevant mutual defence clause”¹⁶¹ However, within the context of the Lisbon Treaty ratification, ‘military neutrality’ has come to take on a slightly different definition, namely “[the joining of] a military alliance under certain circumstances i.e. joining the WEU through the ‘back door’ in a WEU-EU merger and assuming its mutual defence clause, even though this definition contravenes previous government definitions and the legal concept of ‘neutrality’ in the Second Hague Convention.”¹⁶² Still, with the ebb and flow of politics, it was not long before Ireland's official position changed, yet again. During the 80's, the trend towards renouncing neutrality and favouring a common EEC policy was being reversed. With the outbreak of the Falkland's War, the new Taoiseach Charlie Haughey reasserted Ireland's “traditional policy of neutrality” insisting that “the people of [Ireland] are deeply attached to [their]

¹⁵⁹ Ibid

¹⁶⁰ Devine, K. (2009), *Irish Neutrality and the Lisbon Treaty*, Neutrality, Irish Experience, European Experience, Conference at Dublin Monthly Meeting of the [Quakers] Peace Committee, 8-9 May 2009 (p. 29)

¹⁶¹ Ibid

¹⁶² Ibid

neutrality, and they are not prepared to see it eroded.”¹⁶³ To show how serious he was about this, the Taoiseach made the executive decision to withdraw sanctions against Argentina, justifying the move by holding that “there were indications that diplomatic and economic pressure was simply viewed as complementary to military action ... As a **neutral** country, [Ireland is] not prepared to back military action ... The Community has no role in the military sphere and it would be better for European unity and solidarity if it were not seen to take actions supportive of or complimentary to military action.”¹⁶⁴ This came from the same man, who had previously maintained that if the EEC were to evolve into becoming a political union, Ireland would be accepting of corresponding obligations that would arise, even where they were to include defence obligations.¹⁶⁵ Restating Ireland’s military neutrality position during the time of the Falkland’s War and attacking the validity of the EEC’s military jurisdiction, was probably not so much a signal that Ireland was unwilling to engage with Europe on matters of Defence. Rather it represented a re-emergence of the anti-imperialist feelings which had originally driven Ireland’s push for neutrality, and which juxtaposed the idea of neutrality with the treasured concept of sovereignty. The Irish Government was again refusing to engage in one of Britain’s wars.¹⁶⁶ Whether it was the intention of Charlie Haughey or not, the mere fact that the word “neutrality” had been reintroduced into the public domain, meant that neutrality was once again a living concept. Once Haughey was ousted from government in 1982, his party, the Fianna Fáil party, now in opposition, continued vehemently to advocate a “neutral” position. In addition, it demanded that the EEC make guarantees, that under the SEA, Ireland’s policy of neutrality would remain intact. However, 3 months later, and back in power, Haughey was in full support of the SEA.¹⁶⁷ It seemed that a party’s position on the neutrality issue, would change drastically according to whether the party found itself in power or not. This continued to be the case for the next two decades. Whilst all parties have been guilty of this practice, the most farcical example of overt duplicity came when the Green Party finally had their chance to form part of an Irish government in 2007. Ideologically left leaning, along with Sinn Féin (The Nationalist

¹⁶³ Devine, K. (2009), *Irish Political Parties’ Attitudes towards Neutrality and the Foreign, Security and Defence Policies*, Irish Political Studies Vol. 24, No 4 (p.476)

¹⁶⁴ Ibid

¹⁶⁵ Ibid

¹⁶⁶ Ibid

¹⁶⁷ Ibid (p.477)

Party), it strongly supported a broad interpretation of “active neutrality”, even going so far as to push for a “No” vote on the Treaty of Amsterdam and rejecting the Petersberg tasks, and campaigning against the amendment to the Treaty of Nice. Even its 2007 election manifesto underscored its differentiated position.¹⁶⁸ In 2002, the party pledged to “remain committed to protecting Irish neutrality from any further moves towards an EU Common Defence Policy or any strengthening of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and would seek a referendum to define neutrality in the Constitution.”¹⁶⁹ But having won power for the first time in its history, the party’s tone quickly changed. It was now in a coalition with Fianna Fáil, who by this stage had come to establish itself as a keen driver of integration. Having always been vocal about its support for neutrality in opposition, the Green Party now became completely silent on the matter, reneging on its manifesto promise of commitment to protecting Irish neutrality, by not considering the potential neutrality implications of the Lisbon Treaty.¹⁷⁰ More and more, the party became a shadow of itself, losing its status as a “radical campaign party”¹⁷¹ and having its integrity increasingly questioned, not only in relation to its position on ‘neutrality’, but on a host of other issues. It was no surprise then, that the writing was on the wall. In the 2011 election, the Green Party lost all of its seats in the Dáil, winning only 1.8 per cent of the national vote.¹⁷² One central lesson that the party learnt the hard way, was that deviating from one’s principles can have the severest of costs. If parties are going to want to stand a chance of remaining in government, they must act in the most transparent of manners. Perhaps it is this reality, which led the Fine Gael party, to openly state its support for the ending of Irish neutrality in the run up to the 2011 general election. Fine Gael leader Enda Kenny, in the party’s manifesto, unequivocally stated that he wished “Ireland to sign up to a new European security system.”¹⁷³ The party also went a step further and said that the ‘Triple Lock’ requirement should be “modified to allow troops to respond to a humanitarian crisis at short notice.” At the same time, Mr. Kenny believed that “Ireland should have the right to opt in or out of aspects of a

¹⁶⁸ Ibid (p. 482)

¹⁶⁹ Ibid (p. 486)

¹⁷⁰ Ibid

¹⁷¹ http://www.irisheaminerusa.com/mt/2011/03/22/gormley_quits_as_green_party_1.html

¹⁷² <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2011/0228/1224291011773.html>

¹⁷³ <http://www.irishecho.com.au/2011/02/16/kenny-to-push-for-eu-defence-role/7222>

mutual defence and security system on a case-by-case basis under any EU common defence system.”¹⁷⁴ This sparked a response by the Fianna Fáil party, i.e. that “Fine Gael in government would danger [sic] Ireland’s neutrality.”¹⁷⁵ The 2011 election was not however, decided because of an election promise by Fine Gael, of deeper collaboration with the EU on Defence issues. Rather, the ineptitude of the previous Fianna Fáil/Green Party coalition, left the Irish people with few alternatives. In government, Fine Gael, although not particularly proactive in taking steps to overturn Ireland’s neutrality, has continued to make felt, its opposition to the concept. The Minister for Defence Alan Shatter, has described Ireland’s pursuit of neutrality as being “morally bankrupt”.¹⁷⁶ The discourse on neutrality in the political arena has fluctuated over the years, with parties’ strong positions against it turning into avid support for it. While political parties may have had a change of heart now and again, the one thing that has remained constant, is the continuously increasing perception, by the Irish people themselves, of the existence of Ireland’s neutrality. It is a belief in neutrality, one which does not fit well with most Irish political parties’ wishes to nurture European Integration, but one which is so strong, that it has earned itself a level of legitimacy. It is hard to imagine a way in which any Irish administration would be able to circumvent this high level of support for neutrality, and accept any future binding European Security and Defence obligations, without encountering an overwhelming public backlash.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid

¹⁷⁵ Ibid

¹⁷⁶ <http://www.irishtimes.com/blogs/politics/2012/02/05/shatter-stirs-things-up-on-neutrality/>

6. Conclusion

From its very beginning, Irish neutrality has constituted an enigma. Riddled with perplexity, and leaving ample room for interpretation, it is a subject which has eluded politician, citizen and international observer alike. Ireland's neutrality is very much traditional in nature, and it is a policy which is very much unlike that of any other neutral European state. It lacks constitutional codification as well as official clarification. Yet it is palpable and real. Its character is rooted in a rekindled predilection towards defiance, both of illegitimate authority, and of imperialism, which found its expression in the early 20th century. After hundreds of years of political subjugation and repression by its powerful neighbour, the Irish people, finally made the decision to fight for their country's freedom. Much of the rhetoric surrounding the fight for freedom in the 10s and 20s revolved around a quest for 'self-determination', 'independence' and 'sovereignty'. The idea was that, in order to increase its freedom, the Irish Free State had to conduct policy which was diametrically opposed to British policy, thus asserting its distinct character both to its citizens, as well as to an on-looking international community. With the advent of the Second World War, the rhetoric took on a new dimension, as 'neutrality' was introduced as an additional term, becoming equally as synonymous with the struggle for freedom as all the others.

Over the course of the last century, the issue of the validity of Ireland's neutrality has been obscured by differing arguments, hypocritical contradictions and competing predications. Whether arguments have been in support of, or in denial of the existence of 'neutrality', all are equally provable and disprovable, as the concept is so ambiguously construed as to both favour as well as disfavour most arguments. Nevertheless what cannot be denied, is that 'neutrality' is very much a living concept, in the sense of representing a distinctly Irish characteristic, and being recognised by most Irish people. The existence of Ireland's neutrality is often contested, with proponents of such an argument claiming that Ireland's increased engagement internationally precludes it from being considered a neutral nation. Such argumentation fails to take into account the changing geopolitical dynamics of today's world, where peaceful cooperation with other nations is not necessarily tantamount to military partisanship. Neither does such polemic factor in the perceptions of the Irish

people themselves. Taking into account the attitudes of Irish citizens would be futile and misleading in a situation where such attitudes have no bearing on actual government policy. But as we have seen with Ireland, the power to decide over certain elemental issues such as neutrality, lies firmly with the people. After being cached and even disavowed by various different Governments for a period of decades after the Second World War, 'neutrality' suddenly started to feature heavily in the public discourse again, with its notoriety reaching its zenith during the referenda on the Treaty of Nice, where it became a divisive issue. Irish citizens became a direct part of the lawmaking process in both these instances, and again later with the referenda on the Treaty of Lisbon. As such, any comprehensive assessment of Ireland's neutrality is incomplete unless it takes into account the views of the people, that is, until such a day comes where the plebiscitary prerogative that the people have enjoyed since the decision in *Crotty v. An Taoiseach*, is taken from them. To ignore the immense impact which the Irish public has had on the nation's status as a neutral country, could lead to spurious conclusions.

Nevertheless, it would be equally imprudent to neglect Ireland's increasing role as an agent in international politics and its participation in international organisations, whose aims are often at odds with the pursuit of 'neutrality', where neutrality is defined in the most restrictive sense. Ireland has become party to several treaties, acceding as a member to the UN, as well as participating in NATO's Partnership for Peace programme. It has arguably gone above and beyond its call of duty in allowing the United States to use one of its airports in furtherance of its objectives in Iraq and Afghanistan. Direct international intervention by Irish forces has come in the form of UN peacekeeping missions. All of these actions put together, have placed Irish neutrality under the spotlight, and have certainly given 'Neutrality Deniers' the ammunition they require to make their case.

But no area has elicited such fervent debate on the issue of Irish neutrality as Ireland's relationship with the European Union. The more intense the momentum of integration becomes, the more the Irish people have started to re-evaluate their nation's relationship with the Union. Whilst survey evidence makes it clear that the Irish in general, look favourably upon membership of the EU, there are key issues which preoccupy the Irish psyche. The fear of losing sovereignty weighs heavily on the mind of the public, as does a corresponding loss of neutrality. The Common Foreign and Security Policy, in its current form, does not represent a revolutionary

feature of EU law. Even the distinguishing features of the Lisbon Treaty, such as the “Mutual Defence Clause”, give little cause for concern for any neutral EU member state, that its continued pursuit of a policy of neutrality could become sidelined. Even so, the heated public debates in Ireland preceding both the Treaty of Nice referenda and the Treaty of Lisbon referenda, dealt heavily with both the issue of national sovereignty and neutrality. This has meant that the two issues have again, as in the past, become interrelated and somewhat synonymous with one another, and have jointly and continuously pervaded Treaty discourse since the early 90’s. This phenomenon of chronic mistrust is deep-seated and has its roots in the story of Ireland’s fight for freedom from British rule. A majority of Irish citizens do not wish to hand over their sovereignty, which was earned through blood loss and sacrifice, by the ink of a pen on a treaty.

Yet the position of most of Ireland’s major party politicians today, has shifted to the point of being out of sync with public opinion. In fact, the last true champion of Irish neutrality was Éamon De Valera himself, having introduced the concept as an official policy of the Irish nation. After the Second World War however, and with successive governments comprised of different parties and attitudes, neutrality went from being viewed by many politicians as a matter of fact and an important part of Ireland’s identity, to constituting either an illusory non-issue or a bothersome hurdle standing in the way of formulating a workable European Security Policy. Over the course of deeper and deeper European Integration, politicians have become more and more eager to prove their willingness to cooperate with, and involve themselves in, supranational lawmaking, trying to concurrently promulgate the non-existence of Irish neutrality. At the same time however, they have encountered an unexpected resurgence of support for neutrality from the very same people who they are committed to serving, i.e. the Irish public. The source of this revival is arguably traceable to the Supreme Court Decision of *Crotty v. An Taoiseach*, in which the guidelines for dealing with any future Treaty ratifications were set, by imposing the referendum requirement. Unable to continue bypassing or denying the issue of neutrality in the public arena, Irish politicians found themselves increasingly answerable to the Irish people. With the advent of each Treaty, the discourse would inevitably turn to the issue of neutrality, and each time this occurred, the Irish would be reminded of Ireland’s neutrality. The “No” campaigners would remind the public that Ireland **is** neutral, and that neutrality **is** innately Irish. This has allowed for the

germination of the 'neutral identity' in the psyche of Ireland's citizens.

Many will argue that a case for Irish neutrality has become redundant, in view of the fact that Ireland does not possess a neutrality which is enshrined in fundamental Irish law. This thesis argues, that it is this very fact, which has allowed Irish neutrality to remain so strong. Without a formal point of reference, the Irish public will always be overly cautious in estimating the effects of EU Treaties and the CFSP on its vaguely defined neutrality. The mere fact that Irish neutrality does not exist in the form of a constitutional article, means that it will continue to be debated, and invariably remain overprotected. It is this very uncertainty about Ireland's neutrality, which has allowed it to become such a big part of the Irish identity. European Security Policies have had a negligible effect upon Ireland's neutrality. European Integration will continue, but for the foreseeable future at least, a consolidated European Security and Defence Policy would most likely not be able to enact its jurisdiction over Ireland, as long as the Irish people perceive their country to be neutral.

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