

- 3 We did a test for linearity for the variables age, education, importance of the armed forces, casualties, use of force and chance to succeed to see if their relationship with the dependent variable could be interpreted as linear. This appeared to be the case. Furthermore, we tested for multicollinearity of the independent variables by using the COLLIN-procedure in SPSS. According to the collinearity-diagnostics we do not have to worry about multicollinearity.
- 4 Van der Meulen (1997b); Everts (1996b, 2000).
- 5 See also Burk (1995); Larson (1996); Mueller (1994).
- 6 Janowitz (1960).

Part II

Public opinion and policy making on the use of force

6 Ireland

Neutrality and the international use of force

Karin Gilland

Introduction: the concept of neutrality

Unlike neutrality in other European countries, Irish neutrality must be understood not so much as a principled response to the geopolitical realities of the Second World War and the Cold War, as a manifestation of sovereignty particularly in the context of relations with Ireland's powerful neighbour Britain.¹ Irish neutrality was the behaviour of a small state anxious to assert itself against a domineering neighbour, from whom Ireland had won its independence as recently as 1922. The character of Irish neutrality since at least the Second World War is contained in the notion of military neutrality. It is a political rather than legal concept that allows Irish governments to take political, ideological and moral stands on international developments, but prevents membership of any military alliance.²

Military neutrality has guided the Irish approach to the international use of force in the post-war era. Its most significant feature in this respect is that it is seen as permitting a strong commitment to the United Nation's (UN) peacekeeping missions. Ireland joined the UN in 1955 and its involvement in peacekeeping began three years later in the Lebanon. Over the 40 odd years of Irish peacekeeping with the UN, neutrality and peacekeeping have been universally considered complementary sources of pride. Unlike other European neutrals, Ireland joined the then European Economic Communities (EEC) as early as 1973.³ The post-Cold War acceleration in European security and defence integration and the new configuration of organisations for regional security in Europe have necessitated a new set of policy responses also from neutral states in the post-Cold War era and many new policy questions have become relevant: is neutrality the best way to achieve goals in the new world order? Will neutrality continue to be complementary to peacekeeping? What, indeed, does neutrality mean in the context of intra-state, ethnic conflict, European integration, and an end to bi-polarity?

Politicians may have been aware of these hard questions for some time. However, the evolution of neutrality in their hands indicates that such

awareness is coupled with a reluctance to debate neutrality critically. Military neutrality is not static: since the end of the Cold War an increasing range of activities has become recognised by policy makers as appropriate for Ireland as a neutral. Yet, despite this evolution, the height of political debate is a virtual cross-party repetition of the mantra 'this does not have any implications for neutrality' directed at each other and at the Irish public. Public opinion on neutrality is generally favourable, although the available survey data indicate that ordinary people have a poor grasp of the meaning and implications of neutrality. This is not surprising in view of politicians' similarly diffuse understanding of it and their long-standing failure to critically examine the mantra behind which they hid from public opinion.

This chapter will open with an account of the political handling of neutrality, with particular emphasis on the changing range of activities that has been deemed complementary with neutrality before and after the end of the Cold War (1989–91). The focus subsequently turns to public opinion, to inquire what, if anything, neutrality means to the general public. These two levels of society are finally considered together. Their interaction is the core of representative democracy, yet these processes are difficult to pinpoint. It is assumed *a priori* that opinion and policy interact dynamically and thereby at least partly constitute each other. The task becomes one of assessing to what extent opinion (policy) affects policy (opinion) relative to other factors in the political and institutional context. The data are not sufficient to make strong claims about the mechanisms through which this occurs. Some sketches can be drawn, however, though they are necessarily suggestive rather than conclusive.

Irish neutrality in a changing international context

The international context in which foreign, security and defence policies are formulated and played out has changed considerably from that of bipolar conflict and tension that characterised the Cold War era. To review the developments that are relevant to Irish neutrality is an effective way of illustrating its flexible nature. There are party differences on neutrality, but the differences tend to be obscured. Fianna Fáil, historically the state's most dominant party, and the most nationalist among mainstream parties in independent Ireland, is more strongly associated with neutrality. The second biggest party, Fine Gael, has appeared more favourably inclined towards international involvement and alignments, but as will be seen Fine Gael has not always pursued such policies freely.⁴ Despite the rhetoric, neither of these two parties in government has ever pursued anything other than the limited notion of military neutrality. The Labour Party has been highly critical of their handling of neutrality, partly because it took longer to square the circle of neutrality and integration than either Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael. The circle was nevertheless squared relatively soon after

Ireland's 1973 accession to the EEC, and Labour has contributed to military neutrality in several coalition governments (though always as junior coalition partner). Significantly, Labour has not used its numerous spells in governments as opportunities to pursue a more demanding notion of neutrality than non-membership of military alliances.⁵ The small centre-right Progressive Democrats is a member of the European ELDR party group that favours a single European foreign policy, but this is not seen by the party to necessitate a change of neutrality. The Green Party and Sinn Féin, neither of which can be described in left–right terms, both remain highly critical of integration and its implications for neutrality, which they see as inherently negative.

The history of neutrality

How did Irish political parties arrive at the meanings they attach to neutrality today? In the context of other European neutral countries, Ireland is found at the minimalist end of a continuum that describes different interpretations of neutrality. The history of Irish neutrality from the Second World War explains why this is so. Neutrality became an outward symbol of sovereignty during the war, and in the decades that followed neutrality became intertwined with the national question: independence was still recent, and British rule continued in the six counties of Northern Ireland. Neutrality became a powerful symbol of Irish national identity. Although initially a reactive and pragmatic policy, neutrality took on some of the characteristics of a principle – but not, significantly, a principle based on a philosophy of international relations or international law. On occasion, a politician or political party in government has presented neutrality as a principle, but no government has pursued more than the minimalist notion of military neutrality. As a consequence, the range of activities that is seen as compatible with neutrality is rather wide in Ireland. Compared with Finland and Sweden which abstained from EU membership for over two decades longer than Ireland (significantly, until the end of the Cold War), and the legal basis of neutrality in Austria and Switzerland, there is a certain latitude in determining the meaning of Irish neutrality.⁶ Ireland's defence effort has moreover been relatively small compared to other neutral European states.⁷ The overall consequence is that political elites have been able to respond to international developments and simultaneously sustain the claim that their actions 'protect' neutrality – for one easily gets the impression that neutrality, rather than peace and security, is the object to be safe-guarded.

Neutrality and membership of the EEC

Throughout the Cold War the partition of Ireland was allowed to linger as a cause justifying neutrality (though this argument rarely appeared in

official statements); meanwhile, the pressure from NATO to join the Western alliance was minimal.⁸ Because partition was – and is – Ireland's unfinished national question, the links between neutrality and national identity were not dispelled. As European integration appeared on the Irish political agenda in the early 1960s, there was nevertheless a clear understanding at the highest political level that EEC membership might compromise neutrality.⁹ Notably, this was long before the EEC had any objectives in this area of policy. The Irish application to join the EEC was made without formal reservations about neutrality, and the remainder of the 1960s saw continuous statements of reassurance towards the EEC on this matter. At home, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael argued that neutrality was not a blanket policy that applied in all circumstances.¹⁰ Labour, the main opponents to the EEC, claimed that membership was the end of neutrality, but this view was given short shrift in the 1972 White Paper *The Accession of Ireland to the European Economic Communities*. It stated categorically that 'the Treaties of Rome and Paris do not entail any military or defence commitments and no such commitments are involved in Ireland's acceptance of these treaties' (Ireland 1972). But as the 1972 referendum on accession came closer, political statements became noticeably more careful and guarded. A certain amount of lip service was almost certainly paid to the European audience throughout the 1960s, but domestically Irish politicians appear to have been aware of the care needed in relation to neutrality if the referendum on accession were to be passed. On a 'see no evil, hear no evil' rationale, no military commitment could be envisioned even in the relatively long term, and hence neutrality was not construed as a problem in the 1972 White Paper.

The first decade or so of Irish membership did not restrict the Irish ability to decide on foreign policy, but towards the end of the 1970s some impact of European Political Cooperation (EPC) was visible. EPC provided member states with procedures for discussing and co-ordinating their foreign policy positions, and for acting in concert on matters of foreign policy, when they considered it appropriate. On issues where this was not the case, such as disarmament and decolonisation, Ireland continued to pursue its own goals. In the early 1980s a number of factors made neutrality a salient party conflict issue. At a time of international tension and domestic political instability (manifested in three general elections in an 18-month period in 1981–82), it was suggested that a British withdrawal from Northern Ireland might be possible in exchange for unspecified concessions on neutrality. During this time, Fianna Fáil was at times closer to Labour's maximalist view of neutrality than the military neutrality formula that Fianna Fáil had shared with Fine Gael for some time. A Fianna Fáil–Fine Gael competition for domestic consumption as to who was the 'most neutral' ensued, involving critical examinations of each others' credentials as guardians of neutrality (while the Labour Party argued that neither was suitable for the job). Yet, neither party responded

to the suggestion (endorsed by Labour) that neutrality should be in the constitution (Keatinge 1984: 29–32).

The Irish handling of the Falklands War demonstrates military neutrality in action at this time. At the outset Irish officialdom denounced Argentina and, in the interest of EEC solidarity, approved economic sanctions. As the agreement about sanctions expired Ireland (and Italy) did not renew it; because as a neutral Ireland would not take part in economic sanctions that were part of an overall campaign including the use of force. The Community ranks were broken, as Irish political parties could not afford to be seen in their own country to compromise neutrality.

The Cold War made NATO the undisputed location for West European security; and therefore the codification of the EPC under the auspices of the European treaties made no reference to defence. After some controversy a referendum was conducted in order to ratify the Single Act in Ireland. On the campaign trail the opportunity for Ireland to promote 'its' values under the proposed treaty amendments was highlighted, while infringements on neutrality were denied (Ireland 1986). Both neutrality and integration were popular with the general public, and could ostensibly continue as if unrelated to each other. Nevertheless, the ratification delivered by the Fianna Fáil government to the Italian presidency of the European Council subsequent to the referendum was supplemented by a declaration which made clear the limitations of demands that could legitimately be made upon a neutral by its European partners.¹¹

The end of the Cold War and its aftermath

Nonetheless, in the years that followed, the changing international context brought pressures for a reassessment of Ireland's situation. The end of the Cold War in 1989–91 led to new foreign policy considerations worldwide, and though its origins are unrelated to the Cold War structures of international politics, Irish neutrality began to evolve. The range of permissible activities has widened as a result. This could be observed already in the Gulf War of 1990–91. In a distinct break with previous behaviour, the Irish government (Fianna Fáil and the Progressive Democrats) approved the use of force by the international community. The facilities at Shannon Airport were used for refuelling Allied aircraft, which the government denied was an act of war. This has been called a 'defining event' (Keatinge 1992: 82), a reinterpretation of the Irish commitment to the UN. Fine Gael supported the government, which faced criticism from the parties of the left. The criticism grew stronger when the Minister for Foreign Affairs 'observed' a ministerial meeting of the Western European Union (WEU) in relation to the EC's involvement in the former Yugoslavia.¹² As the international context changed, so did the meaning of neutrality. By implication, Irish contributions to the international use of force changed, too.

Ireland and the European security architecture

The end of the Cold War also led to an impetus for European integration, while NATO was grappling with the new role it had to find for itself. In November 1993 EPC was replaced by the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) under the Maastricht Treaty, this time including the word 'defence'. However, the limits of the politically possible were also recognised, and CFSP's potentially far-reaching implications were curtailed by a level of ambiguity that challenged neither NATO's standing as the primary regional organisation for security, nor Ireland's neutrality.¹³ On 9 June 1992, in the context of the Maastricht Treaty referendum campaign, the leaders of Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, Labour and the Progressive Democrats promised a referendum on neutrality prior to any future changes to it. The Maastricht referendum passed with ease; yet again the political parties had argued convincingly that integration had no implications for neutrality.¹⁴ This formula worked also in the referendum on the Amsterdam Treaty (1998), where the European partners agreed to a 'progressive framing of a common defence policy'.¹⁵ In real terms, Amsterdam brought the so-called Petersberg Tasks (humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping, and tasks of combat forces in crisis management (including peace enforcement)) under the auspices of the treaties, to be carried out by the WEU.¹⁶ To diminish fears that neutrality was on a slippery slope the Petersberg Tasks, bar peace enforcement, were said to be 'fully in line with our commitment to UN peacekeeping'¹⁷ and neutrality was therefore unaffected by the new Treaty.¹⁸ Some went so far as to claim that Amsterdam effectively enshrined neutrality in the constitution for the first time.¹⁹ This was in stark contrast to the Green Party and Sinn Féin, who claimed that Ireland was sleepwalking into a military alliance,²⁰ and that the Treaty clearly undermined neutrality.²¹

Between Maastricht and Amsterdam the first Irish White Paper on Foreign Policy was published (1996). It is notable that this, the most comprehensive statement on foreign policy in Irish history, affords neutrality a prominent place in Ireland's approach to its external environment. The White Paper is characteristic of the Irish debate in that perceived threats are threats to neutrality rather than to peace and security. However, it does not rule out peace enforcement as a matter of principle, but makes it a question of organisational mandates and structures.²²

Simultaneously, Ireland's involvement in UN-sanctioned missions has taken a new turn through the removal of the limitation on Irish peacekeeping personnel to partake only in 'duties of a police character'.²³ This facilitated Irish participation in UNOSOM II, the UN's Somalian peace-enforcement mission, and attracted only minimal political opposition, from the small Democratic Left.²⁴ In 1997, Irish peacekeeping reached another important juncture, in the NATO-led peacekeeping mission SFOR in the former Yugoslavia. SFOR's peacekeeping mandate was complemented

with peace-enforcement equipment, should it be required.²⁵ Regional sub-contracting may be the predominant model for future UN missions and, to be able to participate in such missions, Ireland must have a relationship with NATO despite neutrality.

Ireland and NATO

Irish participation in SFOR means that a *de facto* relationship already exists, but the Partnership for Peace (PfP) emerged in the late 1990s as a context in which this relationship can be formalised. PfP requires countries to sign an individually formulated agreement with NATO to undertake joint ventures, suited to the level and degree of commitment of each individual country. The commitment concerns consultation and preparation for undertaking joint missions in peacekeeping, air and sea rescue, and humanitarian missions, but does not extend to undertaking missions *per se*. While Fine Gael has promoted PfP since the mid-1990s, Fianna Fáil characterised it as 'second-hand membership of NATO'²⁶ and as incompatible with neutrality (therefore requiring a referendum, should PfP ever be seriously considered) until early 1999. At this time, Fianna Fáil took a policy U-turn on PfP, and the Fianna Fáil-Progressive Democrat government maintained that PfP was not a military alliance, that participating in it would in fact affirm the basic principles of Irish foreign policy, that no referendum would be required to sign an agreement with NATO, and that changing international circumstances – now with an emphasis on international peacekeeping and conflict resolution – require adaptation:

Those of us who are attached to the maintenance of meaningful Irish neutrality must be prepared to adapt it to new situations. Partnership for Peace will allow us to keep credible, viable and constructive neutrality, which I think has always been the character of our foreign policy.²⁷

A flexible concept

There is both change and continuity in this statement. PfP is presented as a new way of pursuing and nurturing neutrality, not as a threat to it. Other European neutrals see PfP and neutrality as compatible, so there is nothing unique about this. In the Irish case, however, the traditional reluctance to ask what neutrality means, entails and prohibits seems to be particularly strong. In contrast, Swedish and Finnish foreign policy discourse now uses the term neutrality with serious qualifications, because it is no longer felt to describe accurately the current policies.²⁸

Neutrality in Ireland is clearly a flexible concept that can be imbued with different meanings in different circumstances (which is probably not

a uniquely Irish feature). Often, the meaning appears to depend on whether a party is in government or in opposition. However, the value of neutrality *per se* is rarely questioned publicly. Whether it is a means or an end, or both, remains unclear. If it is a means, what is it supposed to achieve? If it is a goal, what is the value of it? Politicians hesitate to raise these questions, fearful that they might offend the notion that neutrality is superior to all thinkable alternatives. Critical questions are therefore rare and there are, *ipso facto*, no thinkable alternatives. Irish troops now participate in models of peacekeeping that diverge significantly from the traditional UN model. PFP is no longer viewed as a threat to neutrality by the mainstream political parties, but as a normal part of a neutral's commitments and activities. In summary, the post-Cold War meaning of being a neutral state appears to be contained in the semblance of a foreign, security and defence policy, which in the last resort is independent. This may or may not entail a commitment of troops for the international use of force, but if it does, then that decision must be the prerogative of the Irish government. To be neutral is to stand outside *permanent* military alliances, with which Ireland can nonetheless interact on a frequent, regular and institutionalised basis.

A wider range of organisations and activities has become available since 1989–91, and policy makers have been reactive rather than proactive in their handling of how Ireland should relate to these organisations and activities. That neutrality is a defining feature of Irish foreign, security, and defence policy is often assumed; but does the assumption withstand scrutiny? After all, neutrality has been described as 'non-belligerence at best, and at worst an exercise in self-delusion' (Salmon 1989, cited in Keatinge and Laffan 1996: 27). In accordance with the Irish constitution, the Dáil decides how and when Ireland becomes involved internationally.²⁹ This is done on an ad hoc, case by case basis, and a formal end to the policy of neutrality would not as a matter of course alter either the substance or the procedure of the decision making. This begs an additional question: if neutrality is a form without apparent substance, why the collective inability among politicians and political parties to ask critical questions about neutrality? The remainder of this chapter suggests that a general fear of public opinion is the reason behind the unwillingness to do so.

Public opinion: neutrality and peacekeeping

As was explained in Chapter 1, views on the quality and suitability of public opinion in the making of foreign policy have focused on four criteria: the level of knowledge, and its stability, consistency and rationality. The case of Ireland is no exception to the rule that the problems of research into these characteristics are compounded by the presence of measurement problems that always qualify claims about the public's wishes and preferences.

What would we expect to find if Irish public opinion is stable, consistent, rational, and based on high levels of knowledge? We would need to know, first of all, whether people are sufficiently interested and concerned about the international use of force to have formed an opinion (*knowledge*). Then we might look at a time-series to see whether opinion appears *stable* over time, at least at the aggregate level (though this may hide individual-level instability). In parallel, it would be necessary to consider whether any new information or changes with implications for values underlying public opinion had occurred during the period in question. If so, then a change in opinion to reflect the new information's effect on the values would be expected. If not, the expectation would be for no changes over time in opinion (*rationality*). Finally, if our data demonstrated such excellent qualities, we would also expect to find that responses to different survey items would show that respondents were able to recognise what states of the world are complementary and contradictory with each other (*consistency*, clearly related to *knowledge*).

The policy of neutrality is the conceptual framework within which the international use of force as a political issue exists in Ireland; but is neutrality an underlying value in the usual sense, as discussed in Chapter 1? At the level of policy makers, the answer is clearly 'yes'. Among the public, this also appears to be true. At least one author has argued at length that Ireland has never been neutral in the proper sense of that term (Salmon 1989). However, data show that in the public mind Ireland is definitely committed to the idea of neutrality. Survey respondents have been asked in a number of different ways how they feel about neutrality and its potential alternatives. Five surveys between 1991 and 1996 show that anywhere between 55 and 69 per cent of respondents want to retain it.

The five surveys include two that use the same question wording, thus yielding a total of four differently worded questions. Stability is thus hard to estimate. All question wordings include the word 'neutrality/neutral', but only two refer explicitly to a 'common European defence union' as an alternative (surveys 1 and 3). These two did not have noticeably different response rates than the other three: 64 and 59 per cent. Surveys 2 and 4 moreover offer response categories with explicit mentions of common defence arrangements, and elicited 55 and 65 per cent, respectively, in favour of neutrality. Notably, the survey that elicited the highest level of support for neutrality (survey 5) is the only one that makes no mention whatever of alternatives to neutrality.

Questions about specific conflicts, however, show that Table 6.1's relatively low levels of support for wider European security arrangements may be misleading. When asked 'Currently, the world is worried about the crisis in the Persian Gulf provoked by the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. Please tell me if you tend to agree/disagree that, in order to deal effectively with such crises, the European Community should ...'

Table 6.1 Support for neutrality in the 1990s (in %)

Response	1991 1	1991 2	1992 3	1992 4	1996 5
<i>Keep neutrality:</i>					
Remain neutral/stay out of EC defence	64	29	59	55	69
Remain neutral in all circumstances ^a	*	36	*	*	*
<i>Drop neutrality:</i>					
Change policy of neutrality	*	*	*	*	20
Drop neutrality/join EC defence/join political union	25	24	*	19	*
Drop neutrality/join in wider European security	*	*	*	20	*
Become part of common European defence union	*	*	28	*	*
<i>No opinion:</i>					
	10	11	14	5	11

Text of the questions:

- 1 'Should Ireland drop its neutrality to take part in a common defence policy in the EC (European Community)?' (MRBI/*Irish Times* 3/1/91).
- 2 'Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion on neutrality?' (MRBI/*Irish Times* 15-16/4/91).
- 3 'Which of these two options would you personally prefer: that Ireland remains neutral or that Ireland becomes part of a common European defence union?' (Lansdowne/*Sunday Press* 29/5-8/6/92).
- 4 'Which of these statements comes nearest to your own opinion on neutrality?' (MRBI/*Irish Times* 8/6/92).
- 5 'There has been some discussion of Ireland's policy of neutrality. Do you think Ireland should maintain its policy of neutrality or should it be changed?' (MRBI/*Irish Times* 24-25/9/96).

(Eurobarometer 34 (1990)), 57 per cent of Irish respondents agreed that the Community should speed up its political, economic and military integration; 59 per cent agreed that it should form a common defence organisation; and 40 per cent agreed that a European rapid deployment force should be set up. It is true that the question did not specifically ask whether Ireland should participate in these potential activities, but this is nonetheless an indication of some inconsistency.

The meaning of neutrality

The indication grows into a suspicion if we turn to survey items on the meaning of neutrality. The question 'What does neutrality mean to you?' was asked in 1985 and 1992, with some interesting results (see Table 6.2).

In 1985, 25 per cent thought it meant 'no involvement in wars, no nuclear weapons here, not involved in Second World War'. This figure had increased to 35 per cent in 1992. The response category 'no military

Table 6.2 The meaning of neutrality (in %)

Question: 'What does Irish neutrality mean to you?' (multiple responses allowed)		
Response	1985	1992
No involvement in wars/no nuclear weapons here/ not involved in WWII	25	35
No military alliances/not in NATO	23	11
Independent, safe, peaceful, Irish	6	8
Should be in NATO, back EEC	4	6
Would mean nothing in nuclear war, does not exist	6	8
Don't know	31	21

Source: Marsh (1992: 5); MRBI/*Irish Times* 8/6/92.

alliance, not in NATO' lost 12 percentage points and went from 23 per cent in 1985 to 11 per cent in 1992. In fact, in both years of polling there were more people who did not know what neutrality meant to them than people who associated it with military alliances (31 and 21 per cent, respectively).³⁰ Nonetheless, only 6 and 8 per cent thought neutrality would mean nothing in a nuclear war, that neutrality in fact does not exist. The same numbers were recorded for 'independent, safe, peaceful, Irish'.

What can be learnt from these tables? If we turn to Table 6.1 first, all figures show clear majority support for neutrality. However, we might ask whether a 14 percentage point difference (69-55) is a sign of stability or instability. On the one hand, there may be an underlying, stable level of support that the polling techniques fail to establish conclusively. On the other hand, the figures may reflect real fluctuation in support for neutrality. As a crystallised meaning of neutrality among the public does not exist, instability may be expected; however, there is also evidence of a great deal of stability. This view is substantiated by data relating to the Gulf War and the conflict in Bosnia.

Table 6.3 shows that 67 per cent of survey respondents agreed with the Allies' efforts to force Iraq from Kuwait. Curiously, a slightly higher number of people, 75 per cent, thought that Ireland should provide peace-keeping troops. The figure dropped to 34 per cent as to whether Ireland should participate in UN military efforts to expel Iraq from Kuwait. The 75-34 per cent difference indicates some awareness of the distinction between peacekeeping and peace enforcement; 54 per cent furthermore agreed with the government policy of refuelling aircraft at Shannon, and 36 per cent agreed with financial aid to the Allies. Only 29 per cent, the lowest percentage of all the response categories, agreed that Ireland should not be neutral. In other words, 71 per cent of respondents thought Ireland should be neutral but still agreed with Irish participation in one of a range of peace-restorative capacities in the Gulf. Asked whether Irish troops should engage in peacekeeping (as in the Lebanon) or in peace enforcement (as in Somalia), 33 per cent responded positively to peace

Table 6.3 Public opinion on the Gulf War

Response	% agreeing
Ireland should provide troops for UN peacekeeping force in the Gulf	75
Sending troops to help US and its Allies	35
Ireland should align with US/Allies to resolve crisis	35
Ireland should participate in UN military effort to force Iraqi withdrawal	34
Ireland should NOT be neutral in the Gulf	29
Ireland should give further help to the UN if asked	42
Refuelling US aircraft	54
Efforts of the US/Allies to force Iraq from Kuwait	67
Provision of financial aid for US/Allies	36

Source: Marsh (1992: 11).

enforcement whereas 56 per cent did so to peacekeeping (11 per cent did not know).³¹ The data are not as detailed in relation to Bosnia. 71 per cent of respondents agreed that Irish troops should be part of NATO-led peace-enforcement efforts (18 per cent disagreed).³² This figure is comparable to the 75 per cent support for Irish participation in the Gulf War effort, thus indicating some aggregate-level stability and consistency in public opinion. However, it is notable that while the Gulf War data registered that support for peace enforcement is much lower than support for peacekeeping, no such distinction appears to have been made by respondents to the Bosnia question.

Neutrality and European integration

European integration has also generated data that help complete (or complicate) the picture of Irish opinion. Irish polling organisations have collected data at the Single European Act, Maastricht, and Amsterdam referenda. The data generated at the times of the referenda (1987, 1992, and 1998, respectively) (see Table 6.4) show that the mass public have no clear view of how integration affects neutrality despite the solid mainstream party insistence that there are no implications. In the run-up to the 1987 referendum a poll asked whether the Single European Act would 'bring us closer to joining NATO, the military alliance'.³³ A total of 40 per cent of respondents agreed (33 per cent) or strongly agreed (7 per cent) that this would be the case. At the time, there were no significant European-level developments of this kind, and viewed in this context the 40 per cent figure is remarkably high. Almost as many, 37 per cent, had no opinion (which might be a reflection on the referendum campaign, which has been characterised as unsuccessful, non-stimulating, and unfocused (Gallagher 1988)); 20 per cent and 3 per cent, respectively,

Table 6.4 Neutrality and European integration (in %)

Question	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	7	33	37	20	3
2	7	27	33	29	4
3	*	16	*	*	*
4	*	18	*	*	*
5	*	34	*	*	*

Text of the questions:

- 1 Will the Single European Act 'bring us close to joining NATO, the military alliance?' (MRBI/*Irish Times* 14/5/87).
- 2 Will a yes vote in the Single European Act referendum 'weaken our neutrality?' (MRBI/*Irish Times* 14/5/87).
- 3 What do you feel are the major issues which will be involved in the referendum on the Maastricht Treaty to be held on June 18?: 'Neutrality' (MRBI/*Irish Times* 8/6/92).
- 4 Why will you vote against [the Maastricht Treaty]?: 'Will weaken neutrality?' (MRBI/*Irish Times* 8/6/92).
- 5 Why did you vote no against the Amsterdam Treaty?: 'Neutrality' (RTE/Prime Time exit poll, 22/5/98).

Source: Irish Opinion Poll Archive, http://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/cgi/

disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Another survey question in the same poll inquired whether 'a "yes" vote in this referendum will weaken our neutrality': 7 and 27 per cent strongly agreed or agreed; 33 per cent had no opinion; and 29 and 4 per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed. A sizeable section of the Irish population was apparently suspicious of the political parties' denials that integration infringed neutrality; given the poor standard of the campaigns, opinion about the Act's implications for neutrality may have been based on a distrust of politicians rather than knowledge of the issues at hand.

Nonetheless, in relation to the 1992 Maastricht Treaty referendum only 16 per cent of respondents felt that Ireland's neutrality was the major issue of the referendum, and 18 per cent cited neutrality as the reason why they intended to vote against the Treaty.³⁴ The 18 per cent had turned into 34 per cent by 1998.³⁵ This is entirely what might be expected in view of the accelerated development of an international political identity for the EU in this time period. It demonstrates rationality and knowledge in public opinion: on the basis of new information and developments pertaining to neutrality, aggregate public opinion moved against that which constituted a threat to the value in question, neutrality.³⁶ An additional factor may be the effects of the Referendum Act (1998), a new regime of rules governing referenda which has the effect of promoting minority and peripheral views at the expense of mainstream views. In the case of neutrality, it meant that the persistent claim that integration did not affect neutrality was challenged by an equally prominent alternative view, which claimed that neutrality was affected by integration.

Consistency, too, is evident if the referendum data are compared with Eurobarometer data. The Eurobarometer regularly examines whether specific policies should be handled at the European or at the national level of government, according to mass publics across Europe. Foreign, security, and defence policy in different configurations are part of this survey item. The Irish respondents' views on security and defence policy (sometimes combined, sometimes separate in the response categories) indicate a stable trend of preferring the national level; 65–69 per cent, occasionally breaking the 70 per cent barrier, are typical levels of support for national-level decision making in the 1990–98 period.³⁷ However, on the single occasion when foreign policy formed a separate response category, it elicited a 63 per cent preference for the European level of decision making, and a mere 25 per cent for the national level.³⁸ We are again reminded of the influence that seemingly innocuous word changes can have, as well as the limited view of neutrality that apparently exists among the Irish public.

The Partnership for Peace might be expected to be viewed more negatively than European integration, due to the Partnership's connection with NATO, and due to the EU's relatively undeveloped security and defence capacities. However, the limited existing data indicate that there is widespread support for putting relations between Ireland and the Partnership on a formalised footing. Asked whether Ireland should be 'prepared to join the NATO-led Partnership for Peace programme for the purpose of engaging in joint peacekeeping exercises'³⁹ 77 per cent agreed, whereas 13 per cent did not. Three years later, 62 per cent were in favour, and 25 per cent against (13 per cent 'no opinion').⁴⁰

Organised public opinion

Public opinion can also be organised into issue or interest groups. These groups exist on the borderline between elites and the public, as they may be outside the realm of policy making in the strict sense but nonetheless act as opinion leaders and sources of information about political issues. Groups with a specific concern with neutrality are active in Ireland, and it was the efforts of a veteran anti-European campaigner (Mr R. Crotty) that brought about the 1987 Supreme Court ruling which established the subsequent need for referenda for Ireland to ratify amendments to European treaties. This was the first of many successful interest group attempts to change the political structures through which the public (and interest groups) may access and influence the decision-making processes at policy level. The Peace and Neutrality Alliance (PANA) was established in 1995 as an umbrella organisation for groups that oppose the transformation of the EU into a 'nuclear-armed federal superstate'.⁴¹ PANA states its objectives very clearly. First, it campaigns for the UN and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe as the

appropriate organisations for Ireland's security concerns. Second, 'Ireland should pursue a positive neutrality and independent foreign policy and not join or form an association with any military alliance, such as the WEU or NATO.' Third, disarmament and demilitarisation are to be the objectives of Irish policies. Fourth, co-operation with (or the condoning of) the actions of nuclear groupings are opposed. Fifth, the UN is the only organisation under whose auspices Irish peacekeeping is to take place.⁴² These objectives have been pursued by PANA by a document series ('European Defence Debate') in which current developments at EU-level are analysed and put in the context of neutrality.⁴³ The National Platform for Employment, Democracy, and Neutrality stands for a Europe of the nations, as opposed to a supranational EU.⁴⁴ It is a member of PANA but also has an independent record of action. Its leader, Mr Anthony Coughlan, secured a 1998 High Court ruling one month before the Amsterdam Treaty referendum which prevented Radio Telefis Eireann (RTE, public broadcasting service), from repeating the 'unfair allocation of airtime'⁴⁵ in previous referenda. The ruling laid down that free broadcasts must be allocated equally to pro- and anti-campaigns in constitutional referenda, irrespective of whether the campaigning bodies were parties or interest groups or combinations thereof. The Green Party has associated itself with these two groups in relation to neutrality and other European issues. Green MEP Ms Patricia McKenna has also sought redress through the courts for a perceived unfairness in referenda. Her case led to the Referendum Act (1998). Under the Act a Referendum Commission was established

[to] explain the subject matter of the referendum to the population at large, as simply and effectively as possible, while ensuring that the arguments of those against the proposed amendment to the Constitution and those in favour are put forward in a manner that is fair to all interests involved.⁴⁶

While the groups have been successful in changing the formal structures that surround referenda, they have not been successful in securing anti-European voting results, despite campaigning. In 1972, the Common Market Study Group focused on sovereignty and neutrality as well as the future of traditional industry and small-scale farming, all-important aspects of traditional values in Irish life and society (Common Market Study Group 1970). In 1987, neutrality as well as sovereignty, anti-nuclear arguments and conservative Catholic principles motivated interest groups (Gallagher 1988: 79). In 1992, neutrality and abortion were major anti-Maastricht themes that nonetheless lost out to campaign promises of £8b transfers to Ireland from the EC budget in the coming financial perspective, if the referendum were passed. The National Platform was the main co-ordinator of anti-Maastricht groups (Holmes 1993: 107). In

1998 neutrality formed the mainstay of the interest groups and Green Party campaigns, together with issues of sovereignty and democracy.⁴⁷

The opinion-policy relationship

The conceptual point of departure here is that opinion and policy are connected interactively, and thus partly constitute each other. Methodological considerations nonetheless prevent strong claims about the nature of this interactive connection, as the necessary data for that do not exist. The remainder of the chapter therefore contains sketches of the opinion-policy connection. The way to proceed here is to consider why neutrality, whose formal status does not differ from other areas of public policy, is treated as a quasi-constitutional policy by policy makers. Yet, paradoxically, they have rarely seriously considered constitutionally embedding neutrality. As a consequence, a political, as opposed to a constitutional, expectation was allowed to grow that only a referendum legitimises any changes to a policy that is no different from policies on education, health, agriculture, etc. in terms of its formal status, and in relation to which no expectation of referenda exists. The political promise of a referendum has undoubtedly served to defuse a sensitive issue by, in a sense, removing responsibility from the political parties to the public. The public, by all accounts, liked having this responsibility and reacted angrily to the Fianna Fáil-Progressive Democrat government's decision in 1999 not to conduct a PFP referendum: 71 per cent felt that a referendum should be held, whereas 18 per cent did not (11 per cent had 'no opinion').⁴⁸ This is a sign that political parties are able to take the lead, but it can also be read as a sign that they are ever fearful of public opinion. The Fianna Fáil-Progressive Democrat government of the day did not trust the people to make the 'right' decision in a referendum although we have seen that there is every indication that the public favours PFP.

The decision not to hold a referendum on PFP is a deviation from the tendency to use neutrality as a battering ram from the opposition benches, followed by complacency when occupying the government benches. Party competition is only an intervening variable, however, in so far as it would not occur unless it was thought to influence public opinion. Public opinion has also acted as a legitimising factor for Irish policy makers in external and domestic politics. The 1987 declaration attached to the Irish ratification of the Single European Act is a point in case, as is the more recent Fianna Fáil turnaround on PFP. In 1996 the party leader stated that the Irish people 'attach great importance to our neutrality', and that any association with NATO would 'represent a substantial change in defence policy, if not immediate implications for our policy of neutrality', which he and his party opposed. In 1999, the same party leader (now Taoiseach)⁴⁹ took the opposite view, but still inferred that public opinion was behind him.

Thus far representation from below. What about the impact of policy and policy makers on public opinion? Political parties are the vehicles of democracy as we know it, which has been modelled as a system of two or more competing parties as unitary actors that present the electorate with distinguishable policy packages at election time. The essence of elections, in turn, is to serve as public evaluations of the government's achievements as compared with the potential of the opposition (Dalton 1996: 246-54; Esaiasson and Holmberg 1996: 3-4; Rose 1984: 10-14). The range of political preferences available to the public is consequently limited to the preferences of the parties contesting an election. The result is that

in all modern representative democracies, it is the electorate that responds in a more or less active manner to the elites' policy initiatives, thus indeed having some 'power' . . . to hold the elites responsible within a policy framework set by elites rather than by the citizenry.
(Eulau 1987: 212)

The meaning of neutrality has evolved among policy makers. In the post-Cold War era a new set of activities, previously ruled out, has emerged as complementary to neutrality. Public opinion data give no conclusive indication of the public's response to this. Table 6.2 shows a shift in favour of 'no involvement in wars, no nuclear weapons here', whereas 'no military alliances, not in NATO' has lost out at the aggregate level, between 1985 and 1992. However, considering that NATO is a military alliance with nuclear capacity, thus connecting the two response categories, it is questionable whether this represents a shift in meaning at all. If so, it still remains unclear how this can be interpreted in relation to policy: no political party has suggested that Ireland should join a military alliance, nuclear-armed or not. The effects of policy on opinion are no clearer in data on specific events. Table 6.3 shows that 54 per cent agree with the refuelling policy that the government enacted during the Gulf War. It is impossible to estimate how this figure differs from the figure that would have been obtained had this policy never existed as more than a survey response category. Had refuelling been opposed by the government on the grounds that it offended neutrality, then the 54 per cent figure would presumably have been lower. But this remains an assumption.

However, parties do not only enact policies, they are also one of the public's primary sources of information about political issues. The public would therefore not be expected to have clearer, more crystallised opinions than political parties. The data reviewed here provide reasonable grounds for the argument that large parts of the public react rationally to new information provided by the parties: no neutrality-related action undertaken by an Irish government has been opposed by a majority of the public. However, we need to consider the quality of this information. In brief, if political parties do not take a clear stand on neutrality, how can

the public be expected to know what's what? If rationality is understood as opinion based on the best information available, Irish public opinion is rational in so far as it reflects the political handling of neutrality. The absence of a critical, public debate on neutrality is not a constructive context for stable, consistent, rational and knowledge-based public opinion. The main blame must be laid at the doors of the political parties.

This raises two questions. First, do the parties deliberately avoid public debate on neutrality? Second, have they a correct reading of public opinion?⁵⁰ The first question can be answered at several levels. At one level, all parties engage with neutrality in the public domain, which indicates a willingness to debate the issue. At another level, the nature of this debate is such that neutrality is virtually never questioned. A truly critical debate on neutrality would require the contributors to set out Ireland's objectives in foreign policy and only then consider whether neutrality is the policy most likely to achieve those goals. Consequently, the parties are not avoiding debate per se but they are economical about availing themselves of opportunities to raise the really hard questions.

This leads to the second question. Naturally, all parties like to think that they represent public opinion. The post-Cold War developments in Ireland's commitment to the UN as well as in European security have occurred with public approval, suggesting a correct reading of public opinion on the part of the parties. However, the apparent public approval of the PIP makes the refusal to hold a PIP referendum an unnecessary precaution, unless the Fianna Fáil-Progressive Democrat government distrust surveys or expect the public to turn against its proposal in the course of a campaign. Fine Gael, on the other hand, not only cite the 1996 figures in their policy document *Ireland and the Partnership for Peace* (1997), but in fact base much of their argument on these figures.

Finally, there is the interest group factor to consider. Their collective impact on political structures is clear but it is not clear how, if at all, they may have affected policy or policy makers beyond the effects of public opinion in general. Ireland's direct involvement in the international use of force appears less and less guided by the objectives advocated by these groups despite their successes in relation to referenda, broadcasting time and the Referendum Act. Their views do not appear to have been modified by the changing external context and conditions, nor by domestic party political responses to new circumstances for peacekeeping and security. Although interest groups ostensibly represent the ideal of public opinion in terms of stability, consistency, etc., it must also be kept in mind that at times change is more rational than stability.

Conclusion

It was remarked in the 1980s that no doctrine of Irish neutrality exists in the sense of a 'clearly stated comprehensive set of guidelines, widely under-

stood and acted on throughout the political system' (Keatinge 1984: 6). The continued validity of this remark is clear. Irish neutrality escapes precise definition, and remains 'an ill-defined but potent element of the state's political culture, a symbol of its sovereignty, [and] part of the currency of party politics' (Keatinge 1993: 160).

However, there is change as well as continuity. Policy responses to the changes in Ireland's international environment have redefined the range of activities that Ireland as a neutral can undertake. While policy on the international use of force is formally made with neutrality as a touchstone, it is also the case that neutrality is regularly reformulated to facilitate favoured policy alternatives. Neutrality is malleable in the hands of governments (and oppositions). Public support for neutrality appears stable despite the lack of any clear understanding of what neutrality means or entails, and it responds rationally and with some degree of consistency to new information and changes. This may be a reflection of the political parties' long-standing reluctance to engage intelligibly on this issue rather than a sign of enlightened public opinion. The outcome is a poorly thought-out policy, perfectly mirrored in largely uninformed public opinion. Under such circumstances, 'the policymakers' problem becomes more one of finding what actions will be acceptable within the existing range of opinion than of dramatically transforming opinion in the direction they prefer' (Russett 1990: 106). But Irish parties lead from the front when it suits them, too. With regard to the international use of force, then, neutrality matters more in terms of its domestic significance than as a basis for principled judgements about Irish participation.

Notes

- 1 I am delighted to acknowledge the generous help from Dr Michael Marsh and Prof. Patrick Keatinge of Trinity College, Dublin, and Dr Ben Tonra of the University of Wales at Aberystwyth. Remaining faults are, as ever, entirely of my own making.
- 2 Except in reference to other countries, neutrality and military neutrality are used interchangeably in this chapter, for ease of expression.
- 3 Maher (1986) provides a comprehensive account of the developments that led to Ireland's EEC membership.
- 4 The decision by the Fine Gael-led coalition government of the day to reject NATO membership in 1949 is an early demonstration of guardedness in this respect.
- 5 Labour's resolution of the neutrality-integration tensions may not survive the merger of Labour and Democratic Left in 1998. While Democratic Left (such as it was at the time of the merger with Labour) is a recently converted pro-European, it showed unease about the future of neutrality in the changing international context including European integration.
- 6 Though it is also true that 'neutral' Finland signed the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance with the Soviet Union in 1948; and that 'neutral' Sweden took a number of secret measures in the 1950s and 1960s in order to prepare for assistance from NATO (Sweden 1994).

- 7 Ireland's defence spending as per cent of GNP is not remarkably low, but the size of its armed forces is less than half than any of the other neutral European states (1982 figures, reported in Salmon 1989: 55).
- 8 When Foreign Minister Sean MacBride approached the US for a bilateral security arrangement in 1951, in total contradiction of neutrality (Salmon 1989: 167), the US showed no interest.
- 9 Dáil Éireann Official Report 199 (1963) 1149.
- 10 Dáil Éireann Official Report 230 (1967) 1104; 241 (1969) 1986; Salmon (1989: 221).
- 11 *Ireland Today* (Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Affairs), May-June 1987.
- 12 The WEU developed in 1954 on the basis of the 1948 Brussels Treaty (signed as a defensive alliance against Germany). During the Cold War it withered as the 'weak arm' of NATO but it is currently experiencing a (temporary) revival as the gradual development of the EU's defence component progresses.
- 13 Art. J.4.1, *Maastricht Treaty*.
- 14 See Ireland 1992 for an extensive version of this argument.
- 15 Art. 17.1, *Amsterdam Treaty*; as with previous EU-related referenda, the government issued a White Paper in 1998 (Ireland 1998). However, the so-called McKenna judgement (*McKenna v. An Taoiseach* [1995] 2 IR 10) made the Amsterdam White Paper a strictly informative document rather than an instrument of party policy. It has therefore been left out of the analysis.
- 16 Art. J.7; J.7.2, *Amsterdam Treaty*.
- 17 Mr David Andrews TD, Minister for Foreign Affairs, speech at the launch of the White Paper on the Amsterdam Treaty at the Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin, 26/1/98.
- 18 'Five of the Main Party Leaders Call for a Yes Vote', *Irish Times*, 15/5/98.
- 19 Fine Gael 'Mr Gay Mitchell TD speech at the EU Commission sponsored debate on the Amsterdam Treaty: Neutrality to be Enshrined in Irish Constitution of Amsterdam Treaty Passed', Dublin 13/2/98.
- 20 'Ireland Sleepwalking Into Military Alliance', *Irish Times*, 15/5/98.
- 21 'SF Urges No Vote', *Irish Times*, 15/5/98.
- 22 Ireland 1996 Art. 7.31.
- 23 Cited in Ireland 1996: Art. 7.11.
- 24 Democratic Left merged with Labour in early 1999.
- 25 'Bosnia Bound to Team Up with Nato Forces', *Irish Times*, special supplement 'The Defence Forces: 40 Years with the United Nations', 17/12/98.
- 26 *Dáil Éireann Official Report* 463 (1996) 1294.
- 27 Speech by the Taoiseach Mr Bertie Ahern TD on a Private Member's Motion, Concerning Partnership for Peace, *Dáil Éireann*, 28/1/99.
- 28 Keatinge (1993: 163-9); Luif (1995: 245-6, 251); 'Heady Days for Finland's EU Affair', *Irish Times*, 30/5/98.
- 29 Bunreacht na hÉireann: Art. 28.3.
- 30 This survey item (cited in Marsh 1992: 5) also contained some additional response categories, not all of which appear well suited to the question: 'should be in NATO, back EEC' and 'should stay as we are'.
- 31 'United Nations troops have two roles: (i) a policing role to keep the peace as Irish troops have been doing in the Lebanon, and (ii) a more active role of enforcing peace as UN troops are doing in Somalia. Should the government vote to change the role of the Irish troops from a peace-keeping role as in the Lebanon, to a peace-enforcing role as they would have in Somalia?', *MRBI/Irish Times*, 1-2/7/93.
- 32 'At the moment, there are various ways in which both neutral and non-neutral states in Europe co-operate together in the military field. Do you agree or

- disagree that Ireland should: Be prepared to serve in such places as Bosnia in a NATO-led peace-enforcement effort?', *MRBI/Irish Times*, 24-25/9/96.
- 33 *MRBI/Irish Times*, 14/5/87.
- 34 'What do you feel are the major issues which will be involved in the referendum on the Maastricht Treaty to be held on June 18?', *MRBI/Irish Times*, 8/6/92.
- 35 'Why did you vote no against the Amsterdam Treaty?', RTE/Prime Time exit poll, 22/5/98.
- 36 Though notably, this movement occurred despite elite assurances that integration posed no threat to neutrality.
- 37 Eurobarometer 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49.
- 38 Eurobarometer 44 (1996).
- 39 'At the moment, there are various ways in which both neutral and non-neutral states in Europe co-operate together in the military field. Do you agree that Ireland should: Be prepared to join the NATO-led Partnership for Peace programme for the purpose in joint peace-keeping exercises?', *MRBI/Irish Times*, 24-25/9/96.
- 40 'Do you agree or disagree that Ireland should be prepared to join the NATO-led Partnership for Peace to engage in joint peace-keeping exercises?', *MRBI/Irish Times*, 10/5/99.
- 41 Peace and Neutrality Alliance Information Bulletin [no date].
- 42 Peace and Neutrality Alliance 1998.
- 43 As an indication of PANA's view, consider: 'The Amsterdam Treaty: From Positive Neutrality to Nuclear Insanity' (PANA Amsterdam Treaty campaign leaflet).
- 44 National Platform 1998.
- 45 JR 209 [1997] Coughlan, Broadcasts Complaints Commission and RTE; see also 'Unfair Airtime Says Judge', *Irish Independent*, 25/4/98, 'RTE Found Guilty of Imbalance in Referendum', *Irish Times*, 25/4/98.
- 46 Referendum Commission 1998: 4; the McKenna judgment (*McKenna v. An Taoiseach* [1995] 2 IR 10) established that public funds may not be used to promote one-sided referendum campaigns.
- 47 'Common Defence Policy will Dominate Referendum Campaign', *Irish Times*, 27/1/98; 'Greens Reject Undertakings on Neutrality', *Irish Times*, 27/1/98; 'Opponents Highlight Alleged Threat to Neutrality', *Irish Times*, 27/1/98; 'Greens Anti-Treaty Drive Focuses on Neutrality', *Irish Times*, 24/4/98.
- 48 'Should there or should there not be a referendum on the issue of Ireland joining the NATO-led Partnership for Peace programme?', *MRBI/Irish Times*, 10/5/99.
- 49 Taoiseach is the Irish term for Prime Minister, meaning 'chieftain'.
- 50 I am obliged to the editors for bringing these two questions to my attention.

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Secondary sources

For references to secondary sources in the text see the integrated bibliography at the end of this book.

7 Moving away from war

Israelis' security beliefs in the post-Oslo era

Tamar Hermann

Introduction: coping with change

Since its embryonic days and well into the fifth decade of its existence as an independent state, the Israeli polity has been involved in a protracted, often violent conflict with the Arab world surrounding it.¹ Both sides in the conflict have developed a zero-sum definition of the relations between them, thereby investing the army and the effective use of force with maximal weight. Such an emphasis on the military and on the use of force is particularly paradoxical in the case of the Jewish/Israeli side in the conflict, as it is in sharp contrast with the usually docile traditional way of life the Jewish people had followed for almost two thousand years. Their subjugation in the countries of the Diaspora made the idea of physical resistance to existential threats so completely non-realistic that 'quietism', a passive acceptance of pogroms and other manifestations of physical abuse, became an integral part of the Jewish exilic culture.² The physical weakness of the Jewish people in exile produced an exceedingly and profoundly 'civilian' national culture that was devoid of any military aspects.

However, the situation which the Zionist newcomers encountered when they arrived in Palestine necessitated the development of a way of thinking that was inherently different from the one they had brought with them from their countries of origin. Reacting to the power relations between their neighbours and themselves, the use of force came to play a central role. What began as a need was soon translated into an ideology, and the ability to defend the Jewish population by military means became part of the Zionist movement's goal of 'normalisation', a vital change that would turn the Jewish people into 'a nation like all the nations'.

As will be described in more detail below, violent confrontations between Jews and Arabs erupted every few years from the late 1920s to the early 1990s.³ Thus, the Israeli security outlook that attached so much importance to its military capabilities remained virtually unchallenged for all these years. However, as will be discussed in the next section of this chapter, several critical developments unfolded and matured in the late 1980s–early 1990s, resulting in changes so significant and potent that a re-examination