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| Title | Neutral diplomacy: an Irish perspective, 1939 - 1945 |
| Authors | Murphy, Steven |
| Publication date | 2016 |
| Original Citation | Murphy, S. 2016. Neutral diplomacy: an Irish perspective, 1939 - 1945. PhD Thesis, University College Cork. |
| Type of publication | Doctoral thesis |
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| Download date | 2026-10-07 09:56:43 |
| Item downloaded from | https://hdl.handle.net/10468/4002 |

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# ***Abstract***

This thesis is an investigation into the influence of the other European neutrals on the forming and framing of Irish neutrality during the Second World War. Heretofore, the overwhelming majority of historical treatments of Ireland's wartime experience have focused on the country's relations with the belligerent nations. Research on Ireland's relations with other neutral states during this period is sparse and this thesis seeks to bridge the gap in the discourse. The thesis focuses on other European neutral states with which Ireland had some meaningful interaction; Switzerland, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, and the Holy See. What is revealed is that the Irish government engaged in a process of experiential learning vis-à-vis neutrality informed by information exchanges with their neutral counterparts.

Ireland was a novice neutral and the Second World War was the first international conflagration to test the fledgling state. Consequently, the Department of External Affairs instructed its diplomats *en poste* in other neutral states to provide Dublin with useful information on the responses of their host countries to common issues. As the eyes and ears of the Department on the continent, Ireland's neutral outposts relayed the actions of the other neutrals to Dublin whilst also providing a vital communications link to Irish diplomats in Axis territory. Along this network, which has has been mapped out here for the first time, the Irish government learned of the censorship policies of other neutral states, their reactions to belligerent overflights, their measures to protect shipping, their internment policies, and their reactions to diplomatic pressure. Following assessments of their fellow neutrals' actions, some key Irish practices and diplomatic responses were brought broadly into line with them. Challenging the myopia of Irish wartime historiography, this thesis calls for historians to examine Irish neutrality within a wider context.