



Ollscoil na hÉireann
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Dr Garret FitzGerald Memorial Lecture 2016/2017



In Defence of the State: Fractious Politics in Hard Times

Brigid Laffan

**Dr Garret FitzGerald
Memorial Lecture 2016/2017**

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Fractious Politics in
Hard Times**

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College Hall, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland,
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Edited by Emer Purcell and Sydney Tomko

CHANCELLOR: OPENING REMARK

Dr Maurice Manning



Nothing delighted Dr Garret FitzGerald more than public discourse and the articulation and defence of ideas. In seeking to honour him, the Senate of the National University of Ireland thought it appropriate to initiate an annual series of lectures in his memory on topics of national or international importance.

The inaugural lecture was given in 2011 by Professor Ronan Fanning on the theme *Garret FitzGerald and the Quest for a New Ireland*. That lecture was intended as a first assessment of Garret's legacy. Ronan Fanning's conclusion: 'That he left Ireland a better place than he found it, is a verdict for which I am confident I can command your assent.'

The second and third lectures, by Seán Donlon and Peter Sutherland respectively, were externally focused, Seán Donlon in UCC explored *Garret FitzGerald and Irish Foreign Policy*, while Peter Sutherland's topic in NUI Galway was *European Integration and the Taming of Nationalism*. The fourth lecture, held in Maynooth University, by John MacMenamin, examined the realities of the new Europe, specifically in its legal context. Over the course of these lectures, areas were explored which were of considerable interest to Garret and where his public contribution is apparent: social and political progress in Ireland, the resolution of conflict in Northern Ireland, Ireland's relationship with the wider world and the great European project.

This evening Professor Brigid Laffan will return to home territory, so to speak, and discuss the Irish State and the current state of Irish politics in a paper entitled: *In Defence of the State: Fractious Politics in Hard Times*.

We are very pleased that Garret's son, Professor John FitzGerald, will respond. With such formidable political and economic expertise, we can expect some interesting and astute perspectives on the current political landscape.

The Constituent Universities and Recognised Colleges of the National University of Ireland are spread across Ireland. The inauguration of the lecture series was accompanied by a commitment that the lectures would be given on the various campuses. This evening the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, a Recognised College of NUI is the host institution. I am grateful to Professor John Hyland, President of the RCSI, for providing this splendid venue for this evening's event.

Dr Maurice Manning

Chancellor



From left: Professor John FitzGerald, Professor Brigid Laffan, Dr Maurice Manning, Chancellor of NUI; and Dr Attracta Halpin, Registrar of NUI

Professor Brigid Laffan and Professor John FitzGerald



Professor Patrick Honohan, Dr Attracta Halpin, Hon Mr Justice John MacMenamin, Professor Brigid Laffan, Dr Maurice Manning, Professor John FitzGerald, and Dr Mary FitzGerald

IN DEFENCE OF THE STATE: FRACTIOUS POLITICS IN HARD TIMES

Brigid Laffan



It is an honour and a pleasure to deliver the 2016 Garret FitzGerald Memorial Lecture this evening in Dublin, the city that Garret loved so well. I would like to thank my colleague Chancellor Maurice Manning for affording me the opportunity to honour Garret in this way. In deciding what to focus on tonight, I felt that I should address issues that were central to Garret's interests and concerns but of course those were so wide ranging that I have had to be selective. Perhaps it may surprise you, but I will not focus on Europe or the European Union except indirectly. What I want to concentrate on tonight is Irish government and politics, on the Irish state and its uneven capacities, one hundred years after the 1916 Rising. Garret was passionate about politics and its potential to change society for the better. He had none of the corrosive cynicism that at times passes for political action and much political commentary today. He believed in politics and its capacity for good. Garret's last years were years of political and institutional trauma in Ireland. He witnessed first-hand the bursting of the economic bubble and the political, social and economic fall-out of Ireland's great recession.

The essence of my argument this evening rests on two pillars. First, I argue that the Irish state was not found wanting in hard times. I maintain that a relatively small cadre of politicians and public servants embedded in Ireland's institutions found the political and institutional capacity to address the country's myriad problems, to bring Ireland back from the brink. Second, I ask if we have learnt lessons from the 'bad times'. Put simply, has our political system developed sufficient capacity to guard against the pathologies of the past given that Ireland rather casually muddled its way into trouble I am less sanguine

about this. Ireland's crisis was caused by a combination of factors political, institutional, and cultural which created the perfect storm. Looking back from the vantage point of 2016, it might be tempting to down play the severity of the crisis, but this would be folly. At stake was nothing more or less than Ireland's economic, political, and social order. It was in this acute phase of the crisis that the Irish state proved its capacity and resilience.

PHASE ONE: ADAPTABILITY AND STATE CAPACITY

The crisis was experienced politically in two phases. Phase One under the Cowen Government, which included the bank guarantee, the nationalisation of Anglo-Irish Bank, the major stress testing of Ireland's banks, and the ignominy of becoming a programme country. Concerned about financial stability in Europe, Ireland was powered into an IMF/EU financial rescue largely by the ECB. Given the toxic link between the financial system and the sovereign, Ireland could not have avoided a bailout given the national and international context.

HOW DID THE COWEN GOVERNMENT RESPOND?

From autumn 2008, the Cowen Government and the administration went into overdrive – attempting to stabilise the Irish financial system, to understand what was really going on within the banks, and to arrive at a quantum of what the state exposure was. This in itself would have been a crowded and challenging agenda, but of course it was accompanied by a marked deterioration in the economy and the public finances. The guarantee, the examinations of the bank loan books, the stress tests, the nationalisation of parts of the financial system, the re-capitalisation of the banks, and so on, threw up a myriad of complex issues that were difficult to address. There was no optimal policy or policy instrument, no ideal policy tool kit. Grappling with the enormity of the banking crisis continued to challenge the Irish system of public policy well beyond the Cowen Government. The effects of the Lehman collapse began to be felt in the real economy as all economic indicators moved in the wrong direction. Emergency politics moved beyond the banks.

Fiscal Consolidation: History tells us that when a housing bubble bursts, the public finances of that country deteriorate dramatically. And so it was in Ireland. An 18% reliance on stamp duty as a revenue source in addition to the deteriorating economic situation brought Ireland into dangerous territory

already by autumn 2008. There was a palpable sense that the country needed to get on top of the public finances as the situation might spiral out of control. The fragility of the financial system and emerging cost of the bank bailout injected a sense of urgency. The struggles of the long 1980s, as successive governments fought to get on top of the public finances, lived on in the institutional memory of key state actors. The Irish state began a process of fiscal consolidation immediately. It was an outlier: 'The Irish state stood out among its European counterparts in adopting fiscal consolidation priorities close to the outset of the crisis that broke in 2008'.¹ The Department of Finance, driven by its Minister Brian Lenihan, regained control over the budgetary process.

The Death of Formal Social Partnership: Beginning in 1987, Ireland entered into a period of social partnership, which produced seven national agreements involving centralised wage bargains until the system ended in 2009. When social partnership began in the 1980s, Ireland was racked by high unemployment, inflation, and poor industrial relations. Social partnership made a major contribution to stabilising the Irish economy and contributing to its subsequent growth, but by the late 2000s it had become part of the problem for the following reasons:

1. It gradually expanded to encompass more and more areas of public policy with the result that focus and public responsibility was dissipated.
2. The range of social partners was greatly expanded with the result that central government assumed a role as mediator of interests and lost its ability to articulate the 'public interest' – the voters were not truly represented.
3. The focus on social partners with its underpinnings in associative democracy undermined the role of the Oireachtas and the elected representatives of the people.
4. The wage bargains, particularly following benchmarking in the early 2000s, disproportionately compensated those of us who were paid from the public purse. This meant that the public sector took too much of the national cake particularly given its pension regime and security of employment.

¹ Niamh Hardiman and Muiris MacCarthaigh, *How Governments Retrench in Crisis: the case of Ireland* (2013), p.3, <http://www.ucd.ie/geary/static/publications/workingpapers/gearywp201315.pdf> [Accessed August 2016].

Although the formal process of social partnership ended, its legacy had two important impacts on the subsequent management of the crisis. The government negotiated an agreement with the public sector unions known as the Croke Park Agreement (2010-2014), which included a pay freeze in return for efficiencies and a guarantee of no compulsory redundancies. Those involved on the union side were all experienced social partnership negotiators and remembered the crisis of the 1980s, and were thus willing to recommend what was a difficult agreement to their members. Moreover, there were far fewer protests in Ireland than in other programme countries and the trade unions did not participate directly in taking on the Government. In this crisis, the central state took back control.

Re-building Reputation: Ireland's fall from grace was particularly severe and rapid. The Celtic Tiger was transformed almost overnight into a basket case economy, a country that failed to regulate its banks and had sunk its money into overvalued housing estates and office blocks. Europe's shining light had become the Wild West. Ireland's openness to and dependency on the world economy and its loss of market access meant that there was an intuitive understanding that rebuilding reputation and credibility was core to Ireland's future. The process of re-building Ireland's image and harvesting all potential international sources of support began very quickly. Irish embassies worked collectively and systematically to counteract the bad news. State agencies such as the IDA and Enterprise Ireland went in search of market share and jobs. The greening of iconic buildings on the 17th of March throughout the world contributed to refreshing Ireland's image. On the 18-20 September 2009, the first Global Irish Economic Forum was held in Dublin. An analysis of the Taoiseach's diary since 2011 would highlight just how many trips were made to talk to potential investors and the annual St Patrick's Day exodus took on a new purpose.

Institutional Reinforcement: In September 2009, Patrick Honohan, a world-class economist, was appointed as Governor of the Irish Central Bank and was followed in January 2010 by Matthew Elderfield as Deputy Governor and Financial Regulator. These were vital appointments as the Irish banking system was heavily reliant on liquidity from the ECB and the task of stabilising the Irish banking system required a major injection of knowledge, experience, and credibility.

PHASE TWO: THE 2011 ELECTION AND ITS AFTERMATH

Autumn 2010 was a torrid time for the Cowen Government; the Trichet letters ratcheted up the pressure on the Irish government. By early November the idea of a bailout had moved from a possibility to a near certainty. The public presentation of the lead-up to the bailout was a shambles. The public shambles, however, was in stark contrast to the actual negotiations, which were led at official level by a very small team from Finance, the Central Bank, and NTMA. The approach was businesslike with the aim of securing a programme that was in line with Irish needs and interests to the extent possible when one was bargaining from a weak hand. The style was open and cooperative rather than conflictual and competitive. Ireland had one important card in entering the negotiations and that was the Plan for National Recovery that was to run from 2010-2014. This already involved a commitment to a further effort of fiscal consolidation with a front-loading of €6 billion in 2009. This became the fiscal pillar of the programme, which meant that unlike other programme countries, there was a higher degree of ownership of the programme in Ireland from the outset. The other pillars of the programme, particularly the downsizing of the Irish banking sector, were negotiated with the Troika. There were some structural reforms required, but given Ireland's flexible labour market, the structural reform package was much lighter than in the case of Greece or Portugal.

No government could survive the ignominy of the bailout or the communications shambles that accompanied it. The parties in government paid a very high price in the February 2011 election. The junior coalition partner lost all of its seats and the once natural party of government Fianna Fáil became the third largest party. This reflected incumbent losses that were a feature of crisis elections in Europe's troubled economies. Electorates threw the rascals out of power at the first available opportunity in most countries. The new coalition government, Fine Gael and Labour, came to power in the worst of times, but had a very large majority and were not in power in the 2000s. They formed a *Government of National Recovery* that pledged both economic and political renewal. The new government had to manage a complex external environment and a demanding domestic reform agenda while at the same time continuing harsh cuts to public spending and raising taxes. This was truly governing in hard and harsh times. Notwithstanding the continuity given the programme, the new government made some changes.

These were:

Core Executive Reinforcement: Given the enormity of the crisis and the demand for public policy, the Cabinet had to be reinforced. Ireland's core executive, which is at the heart of government, is relatively underdeveloped from a comparative perspective. The government set up an economic war council, which was called the Economic Management Council. This has received some very bad press over the years, but in my view, it was absolutely necessary to the tasks ahead. It consisted of the four key members of cabinet, the Taoiseach, Tánaiste, Finance Minister and Minister for Public Sector Reform. It brought together and consolidated necessary political authority and was very effective. It was chaired by the Taoiseach, and so had the authority of the most senior political office holder. A feature of the *Economic Management Council* was that its meetings were attended also by ministerial advisors and senior civil servants. It was the 'engine room' of government, which managed a complex array of public policies and relations between the coalition parties as it was perfectly balanced across the two parties. The work of the *Economic Management Council* was buttressed by a range of cabinet sub-committees, such as the Committee on Economic Recovery and Jobs, which engaged in detailed planning and analysis of the Pathways to Work initiative.

Institutional Reinforcement: The Department of Finance, the premier domestic department, had been severely criticized for its management of the budgetary process in the lead-up to the crisis. It certainly had lost control of the budgetary process, overwhelmed by the programmes for government and social partnership. The internal review and reflection began with the commissioning of the Wright Report, which was submitted in December 2010.² The 2011 Government decided to divide the department into two, which reflected the need to balance the coalition and the volume of work that was required from the Finance portfolio given the crisis. The new system consisted of a Department of Finance and a Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. Splitting the Department of Finance was a risk as it could have resulted in extensive bureaucratic infighting. It worked because of the commitment of the two ministers involved, Michael Noonan and Brendan Howlin, and their

² Rob Wright, *Strengthening the Capacity of the Department of Finance* (2010) <http://www.finance.gov.ie/sites/default/files/deptreviewwright.pdf>.

senior civil servants. The establishment of a Fiscal Advisory Council is also to be welcomed, but they are not being sufficiently listened to or incorporated into the budgetary process.

Quiet but Steely Diplomacy: Perhaps the greatest contrast in negotiating style between Ireland and Greece was between their Minister for Finance, Yanis Varoufakis, who served as the Greek Minister of Finance from January to July 2015, and Michael Noonan. I am constantly surprised at the media exposure that Varoufakis gets in Ireland – he appears as a star turn at this or that meeting and is fawned over on radio and television. He was a disaster as Greek Finance Minister – he left the economy in further decline, capital controls in place, and the banks shut. He had managed to alienate each and every member of the Eurogroup and did his country no service. In contrast, successive Irish ministers, central bankers, and officials opted for persistent but quiet diplomacy. Very quickly, ‘It is Labour’s way or Frankfurt’s way’ became a search for incremental improvements. The Irish approached the process as a series of iterative negotiations, which required persistence and doggedness in the face of repeated ‘Neins’. There were no unilateral moves after the bank guarantee. The strategy was to meet the numbers, negotiate a reduction in the debt burden through maturities, and a lowering of interest rates and negotiate changes through measures of fiscal equivalence. Irish ministers and officials were regarded as trustworthy and credible by the other side. They were seen as hard negotiators but committed to doing what was agreed. There were successes and failures; the promissory notes, a negotiation within a negotiation, were addressed, the minimum wage was increased to its previous level, but the treatment of senior unsecured bondholders remained contentious to the end. Ireland exited the programme in December 2013 and successfully returned to the financial markets. The programme provided a sufficiently large envelope of funding to enable Ireland to make the necessary adjustments, and stabilised its banking system. It emerged from the programme with the economy and the public finances on a sounder trajectory.

IN DEFENCE OF THE STATE

It will be the work of historians to chronicle all that it took to address the multiple crises that confronted Ireland with such rapidity following the global financial crisis. Ireland was one of the hardest hit states both in terms of the cost of the banking crisis and the real economy downturn. The fiscal

adjustment in its initial phase was also enormous and was done without the pressure of external actors. The response required the enactment of innumerable laws of considerable complexity and importance, the creation of new institutions and the reform of existing ones, a lengthy period of fiscal retrenchment, and unpalatable increases in taxes and charges. The system of public policymaking had to produce much more tangible policy output under duress and time pressure than would be expected in normal times. But the times were far from normal. Had Ireland not managed to rescue itself, albeit with outside support, its social, political, and economic order would have come under far greater strain than it experienced.

Notwithstanding the political and institutional weaknesses that exacerbated the crisis in the first place, three features of the Irish response stand out. First, the core of Irish government, both political and official, proved up to the enormous challenge of amassing sufficient political authority and capacity to navigate between the domestic and the external, and to successfully implement a recovery programme. This should not be taken for granted; hard times required politicians and public servants to stand up to considerable political and at times personal pressure. Governing at any time is a demanding and tough business. Governing in 'hard times' requires reserves of stamina, commitment, and perseverance that only become evident in the heat of a crisis. Second, central government and the wider state system transformed itself into a taskforce dedicated to alleviating Ireland's problems by repairing the reputational damage and by scouring the world for investment and jobs. Ireland's international links, the global Irish, were an enormous benefit in this regard. A small cohesive cadre of public servants and their political leaders had the unity of purpose to deliver. This was achieved at a time when Irish society felt real and justified anger about the bailing out of banks and bankers, felt betrayed by the failure of previous governments to guard against unacceptable risk, and at a time when many people were experiencing a reversal of fortune. Third, adaptability, flexibility, and domestic ownership were hallmarks of the response. This has both institutional and cultural roots. Necessary though it is to interrogate the political and institutional fragilities that characterize the Irish system of public policy, it is also important to acknowledge its undoubted strengths and capacity. It should not, however, take crisis politics to bring those strengths to the fore.

THE LEGACY: FRACTURED AND FRACTIOUS POLITICS

The 2011 Programme for Government's opening sentence was 'On the 25th February a democratic revolution took place in Ireland'.³ This represented understandable hyperbole given the results of the election; Fianna Fáil, for long the self-styled natural party of government experienced its worst electoral performance since its foundation and was relegated to third place. What happened in Ireland was not, however, a democratic revolution. Rather, the incumbents, who had been in power in one form or another since 1997, were kicked out. This was inevitable, as the party had presided over chaos in the banking system, exclusion from the financial markets, and the arrival of the EU-IMF Troika. The first crisis election in 2011 followed the pattern of other troubled countries where incumbents lost power and once dominant political parties were weakened. Electorates in the economically troubled countries opted for the available government either on the centre left or right, depending on who was in power when the crisis broke out. The centre of European politics held in the early years of the crisis.

The Fine Gael-Labour coalition was left to implement the Troika programme and to nurture a recovery if possible. It had the benefit of not having been in power during the times of excess and had a very large majority in the Oireachtas. The new government proceeded to implement the programme while trying to improve programme conditions and change some elements of the MOU. The core strategy was to hit the headline goals of the programme, but also to seek to alleviate Ireland's debt burden by continuously working with the external actors. They were also determined to re-negotiate a better deal on the so-called promissory notes, which was finally achieved by February 2013. The new government also tried to bail in senior unsecured bondholders in spring 2011 just after the election but did not do so given pressure from Ireland's creditors, the ECB and the US. The Fine Gael-Labour Government weighted the trade-off and opted for caution. Ajai Chopra, the former head of the IMF mission to Ireland, argued afterwards that unsecured bondholders in the two failed financial institutions, Anglo-Irish Bank and Irish Nationwide, should not have been paid. Perhaps caution was the wisest strategy as Ireland exited the programme and is not tied up in lengthy and costly legal actions

³ *Programme for Government 2011-2016*, Department of the Taoiseach (2011), p. 1. (http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Work_Of_The_Department/Programme_for_Government/Programme_for_Government_2011-2016.pdf).

from private actors. Politically, however, the cost was high; as individual citizens bore the brunt of the crisis, they could legitimately argue that the state found money for the banks and yet asked them to make enormous sacrifices.

The new government in 2011 appealed to the electorate with a promise of reform. The Programme for Government was overwhelmingly couched in the narrative of reform – constitutional reform, political reform, parliamentary reform, local government reform, and public sector reform. The annual reports of the government programme recorded achievements under each of these headings. The record on reform is mixed. If reform is understood as improvement, then there was some, but certainly not transformation. During the tenure of the last government, eight referendums were held and of those three were rejected, including the Oireachtas Inquiries and the abolition of the Seanad. A novel institution, the Constitutional Convention, designed to enhance citizens’ participation was established and will be used again on the 8th Amendment. The Convention’s most significant impact related to the referendum on Same Sex Marriage, which was decisively carried in 2015. Overall, Ireland’s system of accountability and oversight was deepened with laws relating to whistleblowing, lobbying, the establishment of an independent Garda authority and a revision of the system of appointments to state boards and judiciary. The Ombudsman Act (2012) expanded the remit of this office to a significant number of public authorities and the legislation on FOI was revised. Political, public sector, and local government reform seriously lagged the changes to the accountability framework. There were reductions in the salaries and expenses paid to politicians and in the number of TDs. Public sector reform altered appointments processes, working methods, and flexibility, but did not galvanise the system into deep change. It is vital to push on with public service reform, as it is so easy to lose the momentum once the upturn comes. Ireland has lagged in this area, and to grapple successfully with the many challenges a very able public service, with very capable leadership, is essential. This necessitates far greater attention to nurturing and training the top level in the administration. Notwithstanding a set of proposals on reforming local government, Ireland remains one of the most centralised countries in Europe. Effective local government reform is necessary for dealing with many of the challenges, such as housing and planning, and for placing real accountability on local politicians. There was no transformational reform of how Irish politics or administration works and far too many reform proposals with weak prioritisation. The electoral system, a systemic weakness, was left intact.

The 2011 Government served its full term during which Ireland exited the programme and began the process of economic recovery. The 2016 general election followed the pattern of other programme countries such as Portugal and Spain, whereby the largest governing party emerged from the election as the party with most seats, but faced enormous difficulty in government formation. Both government parties lost votes (Fine Gael - 10.6 % and Labour - 12.9%) and seats (Fine Gael - 26 and Labour - 30) with the result that the governing coalition could not return to power. Fianna Fáil, although it did not emerge as the largest party, made a major recovery gaining 24 seats. Sinn Féin increased its share of the vote and seats (+ 9), but did not leapfrog Fianna Fáil as the second largest party. Independents and small parties (fewer than 10 seats), excluding the Labour party, took 34 seats (19 in 2011) thereby further spreading the vote. The 2016 election exposed the systemic weakness of Single Transferable Voting. It fosters fragmentation, allows independents and small parties win a significant proportion of seats (21.5% in 2016) thereby weakening political parties and strengthening single-issue local independents. This subordinates the common good (which Garret always pursued) to parochial politics.

The 2016 election resulted in the most fragmented Dáil in Irish electoral history and the longest process of government formation. Governing Ireland was made much more difficult following the election. The 2011 coalition lost and were punished for governing in hard times, but it was difficult to find an alternative governing coalition. The Labour party in particular bore the brunt of voter anger and faces an up-hill struggle given the crowded political space on the left. Following lengthy negotiations, Fine Gael formed a minority government with the involvement of a number of independent TDs supported by a 'confidence and supply' agreement with Fianna Fáil. In 2016, government formation in the end came down to a reliance on independents, who by definition are a diverse group lacking the discipline of party politics and driven to privilege the local over the wider public good. The John Halligan saga concerning Waterford Hospital, underlines this in the starkest possible manner.⁴ But there was no other government available. The Labour party had to go into opposition. Fianna Fáil would not risk leaving political space to Sinn

⁴ <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/fine-gael-patience-for-difficult-john-halligan-wears-thin-1.2783402>

*Public protest against
the introduction of
Water Service Charges.
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Féin and did not want to go into a coalition with Fine Gael when it did not have a majority of seats. Governing was not an attractive proposition to the majority of TDs in the Dáil. This underlines a growing phenomenon of politics in Europe which is the rise of the 'challenger populist' parties. In Ireland this does not manifest itself in the rise of the far right; rather it may be seen in the fragmentation of electoral politics, the rise of single-issue local politics, the anti-austerity alliance, and the growth of Sinn Féin. The latter are trying to move beyond a politics of opposition but have a way to go. Ireland is not immune to populism. Populist politics seeks to distinguish between 'the real people' and a distant unaccountable elite – them and us, Dublin versus the rest, and so on. Populist politicians trade in the politics of 'you can have it all' and proffer easy solutions. But populists in Europe rarely assume power and rarely have to make the hard choices and trade-offs that confront those in government.

HAVE WE LEARNT?

Ireland's external environment has become much more challenging over the last year. We face a range of pressing policy issues on many fronts: climate change, Brexit, housing and homelessness, industrial relations in the public sector, Ireland's growth model/corporate tax, and the water issue. There are intense pressures on a fragile Government, from the world outside and from within the country on many fronts. In some ways the challenges are deeper than during the crisis because they are structural and there is no clear pathway ahead. The treatment of these issues in the media does not help us address them. Political commentary more often than not portrays politics as a game – who is in or out, who will be the next Taoiseach, will John Halligan survive, and so on. The John Halligan story mattered of course for the future of the Government, but the big issue at stake was and is the allocation of very scarce public

resources to the Irish health system. Social issues are addressed as human-interest stories and of course Irish culture is deeply attuned to the personal. On homelessness, telling the stories of individuals who find themselves without a roof over their heads puts the issue on the agenda, but does little to nurture debate on policy solutions or options. A key role of the media is to supply the information to enable citizens make judgements on the choices and trade-offs inevitably involved in policy making. Of course, 'bad news' is an easier sell than 'good news'. Today the controversial and colourful seems to trump the information/education role of the media. This is paradoxical as we live in a world of information overload. How much real debate of competing alternatives and arguments is generated in our media?

Turning back to government, a highly fettered government reliant on 'confidence and supply' support from the opposition is not what Ireland needs just now, but in my view an election is unlikely to change matters dramatically. I would expect the independents to lose and Fianna Fáil to gain seats, but it would not gain sufficient seats to make government formation easy. Having weathered the perfect storm, the legacy of fractious and fragmented politics weakens Ireland just at a dangerous time. Just now, Ireland needs to further strengthen its state capacity and have a long-term vision of where it is going across a broad range of vital issues. Irish politics has not created the conditions to deliver this.

So what have we learnt, if anything, from the crisis? There is much that might be said on this subject, but in order to crystallise the issue, I am going to argue that the policy outcome on Irish Water will be the acid test of the so-called new politics given the Dáil arithmetic. Let me state from the outset my strong personal opinion on this question. I regard water as a valuable and scarce resource that must be preserved and paid for. Otherwise individuals and families will waste it. Moreover, clean and drinkable water is a precious commodity necessary for health that must be invested in. The fact that in 21st century Ireland, there are routine 'Boil Water Notices' is an indictment of the lack of investment in water infrastructure over many decades. According to the EPA in 2014, 42 towns and villages were still discharging untreated sewage into waterways. Who wants to live in a country that tolerates this situation? The establishment of Irish Water and the manner in which it was politically handled leaves a lot to be desired, but the essence of the policy – a national utility for dealing with the supply of water and charges for usage beyond a certain level –

are unquestionably the right thing to do. It is what is done throughout Europe and there is no reason why we in Ireland should be exempt from this. And if having established the right framework with a revenue source, following the Expert Commission on Water, we end up paying for water through general taxation, Ireland will once again be subject to opportunistic politics and spineless politicians.

This policy outcome should really worry us for a variety of reasons.

- **The Nature of the Anti-Water Charges Protests:** There were times when the protesters went beyond peaceful and legitimate protest – I personally saw a protest on York Road, Dun Laoghaire when a man in a balaclava felt free to hurl abuse at Irish Water workers. The protest was ugly and bordered on a mob. Yet the experiences of the Irish Water workers received far less media attention than the protesters.
- **The Political U-turns on this Issue Highlight the Ease and Dangers of Populist Politics:** The political chain is easily identified. Paul Murphy frightened Sinn Féin and in turn Sinn Féin frightened Fianna Fáil. The evolving Fianna Fáil policy is the most worrying of all. Having argued for a suspension of charges, the party has apparently moved to support their abolition. It should remind us of the abolition of domestic rates in the late 1970s rather than their reform. That policy choice had a very detrimental longstanding effect on local services and pushed the rates burden onto small businesses. And, it meant that local services never received sufficient funds from general revenue. Abolishing rather than reforming rates was a very poor policy choice back then and the abolition of water charges would be a very poor choice now. Its long-term effects would be incalculable. Literally it could kill people or at least make them very sick if they do not have clean and safe water. In the past, funding water through general taxation failed through neglect. Why should we think it would be different in future?
- **Fianna Fáil ‘We’re Baaack’:** Fianna Fáil is a remarkably successful political party by international standards – it has governed this Republic for longer than any other party. The 2011 election was traumatic but it survived. But how much has it learnt? History will not be kind to the successive Fianna Fáil governments of the 2000s that bear a heavy responsibility for the vulnerabilities and risks that were taken with the wellbeing of this country.

The excesses they encouraged during the Tiger years did extraordinary damage to Irish society. That instinct and desire for power, so deep in its DNA, may not have been tamed sufficiently. The evolving Fianna Fáil policy on water charges should be severely tested and contested as it appears to want to trump for what it thinks is the popular policy at the cost of doing what is right. Popular and populist are close bedfellows. Fianna Fáil has forgotten far too easily the rates debacle of the 1970s and more recently the decentralisation programme. Both these policies weakened Irish public policy and its institutions of government. Moreover, Fianna Fáil was in government when Ireland argued for the insertion in the Water Framework Directive (2000) of a derogation from water charges at a time when it could have adopted a progressive approach and initiated charges at a time when people had more money.

- **If Water Charges are Abolished, what Message does this Send out to the 63% of Households that had Signed up to Pay?** If water charges are abolished, it will represent a victory of a vocal minority, not a majority. Just before the election, 63% of those covered were signed up to pay. This is a majority. People may not have liked another charge in tough times, but would pay water charges in return for a good infrastructure that is properly maintained. What is happening is a case of those who shout loudest getting their way. That is a democratic deficit. The idea being peddled by anti-water charge politicians that the people voted to get rid of water charges is a complete lie and should be challenged. Water charges were not a big issue in the general election in most constituencies, and the fact that there may be a majority in the Dáil who now say they are against water charges does not mean a majority voted for this. What message does abolition send out to those who paid what they owe to the state? No state should lightly favour those who don't pay over those who have paid. This will leave a very nasty taste and legacy.
- **Irish Exceptionalism:** Ireland will have a very big fight again with the Commission just at a time when it has major issues on corporate tax. Regardless of the legal opinion, Ireland would most likely lose a case in the ECJ and have to pay fines.

Much more importantly, do we really think that Irish Water will receive adequate resources from general taxation to begin to build a water infrastructure fit for the 21st century? Given the history of investment in the past, Ireland will more likely continue to struggle with a crumbling and inadequate water supply. And if Irish Water funding comes from general taxation, what does this mean for other areas of Irish public expenditure – health, education, and welfare? It will mean less money for other areas because Irish Water will be on the books and come under the public finance rules of the Eurozone. A public utility with charges is off books whereas if it comes from general taxation, then it will come directly out of the pot of money for all other areas of public expenditure. It is easy for politicians to tell the public ‘you can have it all’, but good politics is about good strategic choices.

I have concentrated on Irish Water because it is now in the hands of the elected politicians in a fragmented and divided Oireachtas. The decision rests with the 157 TDs as the policy outcome is not in the hands of a government with a stable majority. The Dáil bears a heavy responsibility. Will a majority of TDs be populist or responsible, opportunistic or principled? Will a majority privilege the now over the right of future generations to good clean water? For me it is a test of what we have learnt from the crisis. It is the canary in the mine that casts light on the state of Irish politics and our capacity for good governance. The Irish political system remains hyper responsive to the local and vocal, but governing requires responsibility. If, as I fear, the worst happens on Irish Water and its funding, then I would be pessimistic about our ability to address the many challenges out there, such as Brexit, Ireland’s growth model, and climate change.

RESPONSE

John FitzGerald



Chancellor, Professor Laffan, ladies and gentlemen, it is a real pleasure to respond to this paper. My father would have been hugely enthusiastic about the paper and the stimulating presentation – he would have talked for hours afterwards. I agree with most of what Brigid has presented this evening, so all I am going to do is amplify two of the themes raised.

The first one was ‘Ireland was not found wanting’. The origin of the crisis goes back to the hubris of the 2000/2007 governments. What is interesting is that on the night of the election results in 2007, my father was having his usual whale of a time on the Election Night programme. Richard Bruton came on and my father asked him ‘why did you not campaign on the dangers of Fianna Fáil’s economic policy and how it could destroy the country?’ Richard Bruton’s answer was interesting; he argued that Fine Gael had conducted focus groups and there was no way the people of Ireland would have voted for a party that disagreed with the economic policy being pursued. In an article, subsequently published in June 2007, my father suggested that this decision not to campaign on economic dangers showed a lack of leadership by Fine Gael. I think that the decision not to campaign on economic dangers accurately reflected the public mood and was also reflected in the decision of the electorate. However, what is interesting to consider is how this all-pervasive hubris about the future took hold across the bulk of the population. What was there in terms of media, of lobby groups, and our perception of ourselves that delivered this policy? The government was not alone in pursuing this policy, and I think that is a matter for further research. Brigid talked about how the 2007/2011 Government dealt with the crisis. They may have begun ineffectively in 2007/2008, but

undoubtedly Brian Lenihan did an excellent job in helping rescue Ireland from the mess we had gotten ourselves in. As Brigid said, the 2011-2016 Government got thrown out for doing a good job: my feeling is that generally politicians are hung for the wrong crime, and certainly in this case it is true.

It is interesting to contrast the Irish experience with the Spanish experience. Here, the outgoing Government deliberately under promised going into the election. I discussed this with the Department of Finance and I said I actually don't think things are as bad, I think Government revenue would be greater than you expect and expenditure lower. However, they were determined, and the Minister Brian Lenihan was determined, that the Irish people had been let down too often and it was better to under promise. It did not make the incoming government's job in early 2011 easier, because the government had a plan, developed by the previous administration, which it was politically able to deliver on, and out-perform in every quarter in the subsequent three or four years. So in terms of Irish citizens, and in terms of the outside world the Irish government was seen to be a success. They delivered on what they promised.

By contrast, in the Spanish case, the outgoing government in late 2011 raised the bar and said they were going to quickly get down to a three percent deficit and do even more — something that was clearly impossible to anybody looking at the situation from outside. The Rajoy Government came in and handled it very badly, but they had been set an absolutely impossible target. If you look at what successive Spanish governments did over the period, it was not as tough or difficult, but it was quite courageous in terms of the changes that they made. Ireland is seen as the success story, Spain as the failure. In actuality Spain was successful, but with more political difficulty.

In the Irish political system, parties who were totally opposed to each other, de facto came together and delivered a solution. Whereas for the Spanish this was not possible. Maybe being twenty years further on from a civil war makes a difference. This was not the first time that the Irish political system came together to rescue us from an economic crisis – this happened in the 1980s with the 1987 Tallaght Strategy.

Brigid talked about the fissiparous political parties delivering fractious politics, in today's Dáil. However, it is interesting if you contrast Ireland with Spain. We have a government, a government that is highly constrained, that may

not deliver, where the decision-making is very difficult, but we have a government. Whereas in the Spanish case, they are heading back for a third election. In the end we will muddle through, and the political system will work together to deliver a solution.

Brigid talked about reputation and rebuilding reputation. I think that there was major failure in the run up to the crisis in that Ireland did not engage politically or diplomatically with the rest of Europe and we failed to maintain or develop friendships and alliances. Enda Kenny, through the Christian Democrat Party, had done so throughout that period, but Fianna Fáil did not have a similar counterparty. When the crisis hit we needed to develop very rapidly these alliances and friendships because we needed the support of our friends in Europe. It required a major effort as you talked about, and it was both a diplomatic effort by civil servants but also Brian Lenihan played an important role. Whereas before Irish ministers did not turn up in Brussels, Irish ministers started turning up in Brussels pretty fast after 2008.

One aspect that is not often commented upon is that in terms of the bailout, Sweden, Denmark, and the United Kingdom contributed to the loans to Ireland on very generous terms. We had support from our neighbours outside the Euro area, whereas in the Spanish, or Portuguese, or Greek cases, they did not.

We did have friends, but I wonder if the Apple case had happened five or six years earlier, would people have been willing to bail out Ireland? The failure of successive administrations to tackle these loopholes in the Irish tax law has done Ireland a lot of damage and is an issue for the future. I just hope that our friends in Europe will still be there to help us deal with Brexit in spite of the widespread concerns about our corporation tax policy.

In terms of Brigid's second thesis on policy-making – policy on financing water – this just depresses me and there is nothing I can add to what she said on that issue.

I began my career in the Department of Finance in 1972, and policy-making is a much more complicated process now than thirty years ago. People see it as 'oh it is civil servants, it is politicians', but actually it is civil society in a hugely complex way. In terms of formal consultations, in terms of lobbyists, and publishing papers and so on, it is a complex process. But Brigid said one thing that certainly rang a bell and makes us slightly different from other

countries: social issues are addressed as human-interest stories rather than as policy failures.

I think that is a problem and I remember a time that the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) briefed the former Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, ten or fifteen years ago, on a range of issues. In each case, the Taoiseach brought back a theoretical point, or a survey that had been conducted producing certain results, to a specific case he had come across in his constituency. It wasn't that he did not think generally, but how he fixed theoretical concepts in his mind was through individual cases. Maybe, in terms of how we researchers present our research, we have to communicate in different ways. I would prefer if it wasn't that way, that 'Joe the moan', is how you change Irish policy. Resistance to evidence and experts is not just an Irish phenomenon. We have seen it in the Brexit referendum and in Trump's America, where evidence is actually seen to be an unnecessary encumbrance. How one deals with this is a problem.

There was an interesting paper a few years ago by Clare Leaver of Oxford University in the *American Economic Review*, and it was called 'Bureaucratic Minimal Squawk Behavior'.⁵ She looked at the NHS and a range of other cases. She reports that those working in the National Health Service (NHS) 'report an intrinsic sense of vocation but also an extrinsic desire to protect their professional reputation'.

It is natural in the political process that politicians will pay considerable attention to points of view that receive wide coverage in the media. In so doing they may be pushed into making decisions that benefit specific interests with loud voices. Regulators are paid to take the flak and, in the light of their statutory mandates and the best evidence available, press on in the public interest. However, even independent public servants may find it difficult to resist strong lobbying resulting in adverse publicity that might be seen to affect their individual reputations. How we deal with that is a problem.

It goes back to the whole issue of lobbying and the extent to which, if you can get publicity for your thesis, that will determine whether you will have a significant impact on policy; if you don't get publicity, you won't influence policy.

⁵ Clare Leaver, 'Bureaucratic Minimal Squawk Behavior: Theory and Evidence from Regulatory Authorities', *American Economic Review*, 99.3 (2009), pp 572-607.

I became very conscious of that when I presented a number of papers in the Department of Finance while I worked there; I left in 1984 and I was invited back in 1986. Nobody paid much attention to my papers in the Department of Finance when I worked there, but I had published the Medium Term Review in early 1987 with my colleagues in the ESRI, and the Department then invited me back to tell the same story. There was a three-line whip and everybody had to turn up and listen to these words of wisdom because it had appeared in the media and because it had a lot of publicity. That is the world we live in, policy-making has become more complicated and how one deals with it I am not sure.

Brigid talked about institutional reform, and it not being transformational. I think you are right that it is not transformational, but I do think that there have been significant improvements. For example, there has been a change within the administration in terms of how they approach things and their openness to seek advice from outside. The Department of Finance, for example, has published a whole string of papers on their website and in academic journals, yet they receive no public attention. Whereas if they had been released under FOI, for example, if somebody got an exclusive, the situation would be quite different. There is one paper, which said that property tax is a much better way to raise revenue than income tax. That would have been headlines, but it appeared in an academic journal. The administration is interacting and able to publish, and you will see it in other areas. It is not true of all government departments, but there have been changes.

Brigid raised the issue of the split of the Department of Finance into two Departments in 2011. I think it has worked because the ministers get on, but that is not a guarantee for the future and I am not sure it is a long-term option. I was at a dinner in an embassy where senior officials from the Ministry of Finance from another government came to find out about this experiment in Ireland. And Brendan Howlin, the Minister, was there and he explained how he got on with Michael Noonan, which was true, but that did not convince anyone that it would work elsewhere. It may not be a long-term solution.

One area where the public service I think fell down, was first of all, in not looking to or consulting widely with people outside, but also a lack of attention to the need for experts and expertise within their own ranks. One of the reasons I left the Department of Finance in 1984 was I was told that I had to stop being an economist if I want to be promoted. Now, that culture continued

until fairly recently, but it has changed. I think a lot more needs to be done to improve that. You need to have a mixture within the public service. A world run by economists would be a sad place, but a world run without economists would go broke. I think one must find a happy medium in this.

The one area where I might actually disagree with Brigid is about centralised government. Yes, we are very centralised, but we have seen an innovation in local government where local government has its own revenue source in property tax. Most local governments in Ireland are now run by the opposition and not by government parties. In very many cases they have chosen to reduce property tax and not tackle the problems of social housing, flooding, and a range of other issues. Albeit they could not raise a huge amount of revenue, but the policy seems to be very much like Northern Ireland – we spend, central government pays. It would be ideal to develop a local government where people actually say ‘yes we have a problem with social housing and we are going to address it and take responsibility, and raise the revenue to do so’. But, in reality, nobody is going to do anything about social housing unless the central government does; however, they are having great difficulty doing that because the local authorities are getting in the way. So how we get from a situation of centralised government to one where local government actually delivers a better solution rather than a worse solution, I am not sure.

And so to end, I found, as you would gather, what Brigid said very stimulating. Your final question was ‘will Ireland be resilient in the face of a coming crisis?’ My answer would be, if the crisis was of the same form as either the 1980s crisis or the last one, and if it came while the people who dealt with the last one were still around, then I think we would not get into that mess. But the problem is, crises tend to come every twenty years, and maybe I won’t be around to see the next one, I think my father said that in the 1980s but he was certainly around to see this one. The problems may be of a different kind. What will the challenges be? This is unknowable. I am inclined to agree with you, we have not transformed the way we do business. And whether we will be as resilient in the face of the next crisis that faces us, I am not sure. Thank you very much.



Dr Garret FitzGerald with Professor Brigid Laffan celebrating the Yes vote for the second Lisbon Treaty in 2009.

©Photocall Ireland

Professor Brigid Laffan 's presents her lecture in College Hall, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland



Dr Maurice Manning, Professor Brigid Laffan, and Roisin Laffan

Garret FitzGerald



Dr Garret FitzGerald PhD MRIA had careers in air transport, economic consultancy, university lecturing, journalism, politics, and business. After graduating with a first class honours degree in history and modern languages from University College Dublin and being called to the Irish Bar, he spent the first twelve years of his working life in Aer Lingus.



Portrait by Carey Clarke PPRHA of Dr Garret FitzGerald in his NUI Chancellor's robe. This painting is on display in the NUI offices on Merrion Square

In 1959, he was appointed a lecturer in Economics in University College Dublin. His political career began in 1965 when he was elected to Seanad Éireann. Four years later, he was elected to the Dáil. From 1973 to 1977 he was Minister for Foreign Affairs, following in the footsteps of his father, Desmond FitzGerald, who had served as first Minister for External Affairs in the new Irish State from 1922 to 1927. Garret became leader of Fine Gael in 1977, and held the position of Taoiseach between June 1981 and March 1982, and again between December 1982 and March 1987. As Taoiseach, he was President of the European Council in the second half of 1984.

In 1983, he established the New Ireland Forum as a preliminary to the negotiation of the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement.

Dr FitzGerald was the author of nine books. *Towards a New Ireland* was published in hardback in 1972 and in paperback in 1973. His autobiography *All in a Life* was published in 1991, followed by *Reflections on the Irish State* in 2002 and *Ireland in the World: Further Reflections* in 2005. He was a weekly columnist for *The Irish Times* for over 50 years.

Conferred with an honorary degree of the National University of Ireland in 1991, Dr FitzGerald was similarly honoured by other universities in Britain, the United States, Canada and South Africa

Dr FitzGerald was elected Chancellor of the National University of Ireland in 1997, having been a member of the Senate of the University since 1972. He continued as Chancellor until 2009, and in 2008 he presided over the University's centenary celebrations. As Chancellor, his major preoccupation was with the continued high standard and standing of NUI degrees. He was particularly interested in the transition of students from second level to third level and in the mentoring of students in their first year at college. Statistical studies he had undertaken in NUI pointed to the reliability of the Leaving Certificate examination as a predictor of success at university. He was an early champion of wider social participation in higher education. In January 1999, the Senate made a pre-budget submission to the Minister for Education and Science, seeking increased support for disadvantaged students. In 2001, a document prepared by Dr FitzGerald 'The Issue of Access' calling for the NUI constituent universities to address urgently the issue of access for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds was circulated. He was a staunch defender of university autonomy. Under Dr FitzGerald's Chancellorship, the range and value of NUI awards was enhanced significantly. He delighted in the opportunity afforded by the annual Presentation of NUI Awards ceremony of meeting outstanding students and graduates from across the federal university. Despite its considerable weight, he continued to wear the Chancellor's robe commissioned by NUI in 1922 for Dr Éamon de Valera.

Garret FitzGerald died on 19 May 2011 at the age of eighty-five.

ON PARTY POLITICS

Until 1963 there had been no legal recognition in Ireland of the existence of political parties. This was partly a carry-over from British constitutional theory and partly a reflection of a utopian and totally unrealistic belief by the founders of our State that we could avoid the emergence of party politics here. The Civil War, together with the re-emergence of the Labour Party in the aftermath of the struggle for independence, put paid to that particular illusion.

Nevertheless, for forty years after Independence candidates in Irish elections in theory stood as individuals rather than as party members: party labels did not appear on election ballot papers until this was authorized by legislation enacted in 1963.

Garret FitzGerald, *Reflections on the Irish State* (Irish Academic Press, 2003), p. 75

ON IRISH POLITICS IN THE 1980S

The absence of a consistent pattern of ideological divisions of the kind common elsewhere in Europe was, of course, frustrating for some people. Nevertheless, throughout most of the period since independence this curiously pragmatic and shifting political structure served Ireland reasonably well. Thus, it protected Ireland against swings to extremes of right and left: by 1934 Fascism had been marginalized in Ireland, and in a country in which a high proportion of the population were farmers or shopkeepers, Communism never had a chance to get a grip on any significant section of public opinion.

As had happened briefly in 1927, and again in the 1940s, the 1980s saw the emergence of some new small political parties. These were:

- Democratic Left (as Sinn Féin/The Workers' Party eventually became), which introduced the left-wing element of Sinn Féin to the parliamentary system, but which has since merged with Labour;
- the Progressive Democrats, who introduced a slightly exotic element of right-wing ideology into Irish politics;
- the Green Party, whose emergence reflected the failure of the main parties, preoccupied with economic development, to address environmental issues.

In a political system noted for its lack of ideological divisions, this recent proliferation of parties, combined with the diversion of support away from

Haughey-led Fianna Fáil, has created a situation in which almost any party might and, given the opportunity would, go into government with one or other of the two larger parties – the only excluded combination being a Fianna Fáil-Fine Gael Government.

Leaving aside the Haughey factor and its continuing residual effects, this Fianna Fáil-Fine Gael combination is excluded not, as some people fondly imagine, because Civil War memories – which so far as most politicians are concerned ceased to be a factor many decades ago – but rather because of the instinctive recognition by politicians in these two parties of the dangers of the mammoth majority that such a combination would enjoy, and would probably continue to enjoy for a disturbingly long period of time.

Reflections on the Irish State (Irish Academic Press, 2003), pp 61-62

ON IRISH POLITICS IN THE NEW MILLENIUM

It seems to me that we enter the new millennium, this same party system may in its present form be ill-adapted to our future needs.

First of all, so far as the electorate is concerned, if almost any political combination becomes possible, one of the principal factors motivating people to vote for a particular party – a wish to determine the shape of the next government – disappears. Some, at least, of the twelve percentage point decline in electoral turn-out between 1981 and 2002, may derive from this new negative element in our political system.

In turn these developments have spawned an increase in support for the independent candidates, most of whom are locally-focused and whose support for the formation and retention in power of a particular Coalition may depend upon agreement by that Coalition on a deliberate, and potentially damaging and unjust, misallocation of public resources in favour of the constituencies that they represent.

The fact that in 2002 we have six parties in the Dáil, as well as several socialists and a substantial number of Independents, many of them locally focused rather than issue-focused, may in future make much more difficult the formation of governments with majorities capable of acting effectively in the overall interest of the people as a whole.

Reflections on the Irish State (Irish Academic Press, 2003), p. 63

Brigid Laffan



Brigid Laffan is Director and Professor at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, and Director of the Global Governance Programme, European University Institute (EUI), Florence. In August 2013, Professor Laffan left the School of Politics and International Relations (SPIRe) University College Dublin where she was Professor of European Politics. She was Vice-President of UCD and Principal of the College of Human Sciences from 2004 to 2011.

She was the founding director of the Dublin European Institute UCD from 1999 and in March 2004 she was elected as a member of the Royal Irish Academy. She is a member of the Board of the Mary Robinson Foundation for Climate Justice, the Fulbright Commission (until September 2013) and was the 2013 Visiting Scientist for the EXACT Marie Curie Network.

In September 2014, Professor Laffan was awarded the UACES Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2012, she was awarded the THESEUS Award for outstanding research on European Integration. In 2010, she was awarded the *Ordre national du Mérite* by the President of the French Republic.

Recent publications include *Testing Times: the Growing Primacy of Responsibility in the Euro Area* in *West European Politics*, 2014, Vol. 37, No. 2, *In the Shadow of Austerity: Ireland's Seventh Presidency of the European Union* in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 2014, Vol. 52, No. 1, and *Framing the Crisis, Defining the Problems: Decoding the Euro Area Crisis* in *Perspectives on the European Politics and Society*, 2014, Vol. 15, No. 3.

John FitzGerald



John FitzGerald is an Adjunct Professor in the Economics Department in Trinity College Dublin, having previously been a Research Professor in the Economic and Social Research Institute in Dublin. Before joining the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) in 1984 he spent 12 years in the Department of Finance.

He works on macro-economic policy and energy policy. He has published extensively on fiscal policy and the behaviour of the Irish economy and on energy and climate policy. He is a member of the Central Bank of Ireland Commission, Chairman of the Irish government's Climate Change Advisory Council, and a member of the Royal Irish Academy.



Dr Maurice Manning, Chancellor of NUI, Professor Brigid Laffan and Dr Attracta Halpin, Registrar of NUI

The Hon Mr Justice John MacMenamin



Dr Maurice Manning, Chancellor of NUI, Professor Brigid Laffan and Professor John FitzGerald



Dr Maurice Manning, Chancellor of NUI and Professor Brigid Laffan





Dr Garret FitzGerald PhD MRIA, 1926-2011

Political leader, international statesman, scholar, writer, and public intellectual, was Chancellor of the National University of Ireland from 15 October 1997 until 12 March 2009 and a member of the Senate of the University from 1972 until 1997.



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