UCD GEARY INSTITUTE

DISCUSSION PAPER SERIES

European Economic Crisis:
Ireland in Comparative Perspective

Sebastian Dellepiane Avellaneda and Niamh Hardiman

UCD School of Politics and International Relations

Sebastian.Dellepiane@ucd.ie

Niamh.Hardiman@ucd.ie

Presented at American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Washington DC

2-5 September 2010

This paper is an output of the Mapping the Irish State project http://geary.ucd.ie/mapping funded by the IRCHSS, and based at UCD Geary Institute. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the Geary Institute. All errors and omissions remain the responsibility of the authors.

European Economic Crisis: Ireland in Comparative Perspective

Sebastian Dellepiane and Niamh Hardiman

Abstract

The current economic crisis has hit all European countries hard, but some are much more severely affected others. The problems manifest in European peripheral countries, especially Ireland, Spain, and Greece, have roots in domestic policy mistakes. However, the European context of these policy profiles also needs to be taken into account. The creation of the Euro initially yielded large credibility gains for the weaker economies, extending low interest rates across the Eurozone. But it also introduced a set of perverse incentives toward fiscal expansion which were supposed to be managed at domestic level. Weak European coordinating capacity meant there were few effective external disciplines on national decision-making. The sanctions built into the Stability and Growth Pact proved more controversial and therefore less constraining than originally envisaged. The problems accumulating in the weaker economies made them particularly exposed to crisis when the downturn came. The crisis is not merely one of peripheral economies' policy errors, but extends to the design of European decision-making and the management of monetary union. These issues are explored with reference to the Irish case: the crisis of the Irish and other peripheral economies points to a crisis at the heart of European politics.

Introduction

Ireland experienced one of the most severe economic contractions of the Eurozone, with a dramatic drop in growth and a sudden sharp increase in unemployment. It shares the experience of crisis with other European countries, but the trajectory and experience of crisis shows important variations. Each country experiences the crisis as a challenge to its domestic capacity to manage its own particular 'problem load'; there are variations in the institutional and political resources each can draw on to deal with its own issues.

But in addition to viewing countries' responses to crisis on a case-by-case basis, it may be useful to consider the wider political and institutional context within which domestic responsive capacity is situated. The creation of European Monetary Union (EMU) has played some part in creating the conditions for the domestic policy configurations that have intensified the experience of crisis in many countries. In the early years of EMU, the availability of a ready source of cheap credit created new growth opportunities. But as the economies of the Eurozone were at very different levels of development, the 'one size fits all' central management of the Euro threw major challenges of domestic adaptation back onto national governments.

When the crisis began to unfold, national governments were similarly charged with responsibility for putting their own domestic houses in order. But once again, there is a European dimension to the management of the crisis that exposes not only the weaknesses of national decision-making systems, but some systemic weaknesses in the institutional design of the Euro itself.

European experiences of crisis

From the perspective of the aftermath of the economic crash, it is now clear that some European countries were more vulnerable than others to economic downturn when it did come about. Yet why this should be so became clear only in retrospect. The near-collapse of the international financial system was the proximate cause of crisis, resulting in a sudden stalling of growth, the worst experience of recession for several decades, and a surge in levels of unemployment. At the same time, a sharp increase in fiscal deficit and a projected sharp rises in accumulated debt needed to be tackled. This accumulation of problems posed a

particularly difficult combination: reducing deficits through cutting spending or raising taxes when growth is slow risks deepening the recession. Higher unemployment automatically generates new demands on transfer payments while shrinking the tax base. But for the member states of the European Monetary Union, the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP), which requires deficits of no more than 3% and debt levels of a maximum of 60%, pushed the issue of fiscal consolidation to the top of the agenda. Moreover, governments' need to raise borrowing on international markets meant that the previously fairly undifferentiated risk profile of Eurozone members' bond spreads now came into question. Bond market behaviour greatly aggravated the pressure on governments during 2009 and 2010.

Figure 1. Debt and deficit as % GDP, 2010

As Figure 1 shows, the countries with the largest accumulated debts in 2010 were Belgium and Italy, along with Greece. These countries had long experienced the greatest political difficulties in controlling expenditure; qualification for Euro membership was most problematic for them. But what presented the most pressing challenge for Eurozone members was the sudden deterioration in fiscal deficit. Ireland held the unenviable record on this measure, followed by Greece, Britain, Spain, Portugal, and Iceland. And the concern that emerged during 2009/10 was that problems managing borrowing requirements would quickly result in greatly increased debt liabilities. Following the collapse of the Icelandic economy, sunk by the size of the financial industry and its extreme over-exposure to risk, a group of Eurozone members states next came under scrutiny. The weakest links in the single European currency then seemed to be constituted by Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece, and Spain, the unappealingly named PIIGS, or perhaps GIIPS (Dadush 2010).

However, the pathways by which countries had arrived at this point were rather different. On the face of things, the deficit problem is most readily explicable in the case of Greece, where as Figure 2 shows, fiscal deficits had persisted throughout the years of Euro membership.

Figure 2. Revenue, spending, and deficit profiles for four countries, 1998-2009

But Ireland and Spain did not run serious deficits during the 1990s, and indeed Ireland was running a fiscal surplus during most years up leading up to the crisis (O'Leary 2010).[1] Britain, outside the Eurozone, began to experience fiscal deficits during the 2000s, especially in the run-up to political transition from the prime ministership of Tony Blair to his long-anticipated successor, Chancellor Gordon Brown. But the crash, when it came, placed the peripheral countries of the EU in the most vulnerable position, especially Greece, Ireland, and Spain.

Why this should be has an international as well as a domestic aspect to it. The international dimension of problematic inter-state relationships within the single currency area has its origins in the terms on which the Euro itself was created. The relative exchange rates at which Eurozone member states locked into the Euro had long been under negotiation, and reflected the compromises struck by the two largest economies, Germany and France (Marsh 2009). Germany's preference for a strong and independent bank, based on the Bundesbank model, prevailed over the French desire to establish some mechanisms of democratic accountability for the bank's decision-making. Inflation targeting across the Eurozone as a whole was intended to be the European Central Bank (ECB)'s sole mandate. The implementation rules were given the title Stability and Growth Pact to indicate that inflation control was not necessarily intended to depress growth. Thus a buffer of not more than 3% deficit was permitted, which governments could use to counter shocks affecting a particular country. Each member state acquired new budget-framing and reporting responsibilities to the European Central Bank.

What was created was a multi-level macroeconomic policy. At the centre, the ECB had quite light regulatory and liquidity responsibilities. And unlike federal states, the transnational monetary union had no counterpart in fiscal policy – the total EU budget is estimated at some 1% of the GDP of the EU as a whole, and programmatic spending on targeted measures such as agricultural supports and regional cohesion policies accounts for most of this. Responsibility for keeping economic performance of individual states consistent with the

[1] 'By 1997, the Irish government was running a budget surplus and that outcome was repeated in all but one of the next ten years. Over the 1997-2007 period the budget surplus averaged 1.7% of GDP and the debt-GDP ratio fell from 74% to 25%. In the five years prior to the onset of the current crisis the average budget surplus was somewhat less than this at 1.3% of GDP'... 'Finland and Luxembourg also achieved surpluses in 10 out of 11 of these years, Denmark in nine, Sweden in eight' (O'Leary 2010, p.3).

policy parameters set by the centre rested in the hands of national governments. The result was analogous to a federal state with a centralized monetary and exchange rate policy, but effectively no fiscal policy to counter the effects of regional shocks, and fiscal buffers available at the state level only.

When the Euro introduced a sustained period of low interest rates, this gave a fillip to the project of integrating the European market in financial services as well as in freeing up product markets. It was recognized in advance that the low interest rates that most benefited the largest economies would not necessarily be optimal across all regions. The principal controls available to governments to control these surges in the peripheral economies were active fiscal policy to counteract spending, and active cost management to keep down relative cost structures and inflation.

The international context sets the scene for individual countries' adjustment challenges, in three respects. Firstly, a trade imbalance is inherent in the diversity of the size of European economies and their level of economic development: Germany is the principal exporting economy in Europe, but domestic levels of demand had been held under control as part of the domestic cost-containment strategy, thus reducing the capacity of smaller countries to export their own goods and services. Recent research confirms that in Ireland, Spain, and Greece, 'current account deficits were mainly driven by private investment and capital inflows coupled with competitiveness lags' (European Commission 2010, p.215).

Secondly, the successful performance of German exports and sluggish domestic German demand meant that German bank assets exceeded domestic borrowing requirements, so German investments flowed outward into the more rapidly growing economies. This contributed to the greater availability of personal as well as corporate credit facilities, fuelling the surge in indebtedness in the peripheral economies. At a more global level, something similar had been happening in the USA relative to China. China's sudden emergence as a global manufacturer gave rise to trade imbalances with the USA; China's surpluses were not deployed to raise domestic living standards, but flowed back to the US in the form of purchase of government bonds and other investments. Public deficits had their counterpart in a sharp increase in private borrowing capacity. Across the developed world, the increase in household debt since the 1990s served to raise living standards (or to maintain them in the

case of many US households) and boost demand, in what has been termed a form of 'privatized Keynesianism' (Crouch 2009).

Thirdly, low interest rates and expanded availability of personal credit combined to generate conditions conducive to house-price inflation across Europe, especially in Ireland and Spain. Cheap credit conditions permitted the peripheral countries to engage in rapidly rising borrowing, facilitating domestic credit booms, which were in turn reflected in hugely intensified construction activity and house price inflation (Conefrey and Fitz Gerald 2010).

These trends were transmitted through western economies by the surge of growth in the financial sector, as banks found innovative ways to create credit and sell new financial products. The scale of leveraging involved escalated sharply, and the market in various forms of hedges and derivates grew so complex that the level of risk was, in effect, impossible to estimate. All this was made possible by the spread of support for bank deregulation, especially in the Anglo-American world (though the Canadian banks had to function within a tougher regulatory regime, and Australian banks faced 'intrusive' regulation that may have helped forestall over-risky behaviour), and by the weaknesses of the international monitoring and bank regulation institutions. The rapid expansion of the financial sector across Europe far outstripped EU institutional capacities to oversee and regulate it (de la Rosiere 2009; Lanchester 2010). The nature as well as the extent of exposure to risk turned out to vary significantly across countries, depending on the extent to which banks bought into asset price bubbles in other countries, or engaged in intensified lending within their own countries that contributed to domestic asset bubbles. Icelandic banks suffered the first fate. Irish banks were mostly exposed to the second kind of risk, a traditional 'plain vanilla' kind of over-exposure to the domestic property market, and especially commercial property, but on a scale never before seen (Moghadam and Vinals 2010; Regling and Watson 2010).

A rise in interest rates would have been appropriate for the overheated Irish and Spanish economies in the early to mid 2000s. As they could not do this within the Eurozone, relative cost pressures had to be managed through other means, that is, fiscal policy and wage-cost containment. However, the paradoxical effects of the credibility gains these countries achieved through monetary union was to soften their budget constraints, compromising the viability of the original commitment. Economists tend to treat these resulting expansionary

fiscal policies as unintended consequences. But there is a case for arguing that EMU has helped promote pro-cyclical fiscal policies and the accumulation of deficits. The point is not confined to the Euro: Ed Balls, then economic advisor to British Chancellor Gordon Brown, said of New Labour's early decision in 1997 to make the Bank of England independent of political influence, that 'central bank independence liberated us'. That is, it assured the markets that Labour would not commit to a high-spending, high-tax strategy. The government gained in credibility, which helped keep interest rates low. And the government was freed to increase spending and incur greater deficits without retribution from the markets.

Domestic political institutions and economic policy

Membership of the Euro threw an unprecedented burden onto the adaptive capacity of the member states in two ways. Firstly, on the demand side, fiscal policy acquired new significance as the principal means whereby inflationary pressures could be managed and deficits kept to a minimum, consistent with the terms of the Stability and Growth Pact. Secondly, the institutions of wage bargaining thus also became more important as a potential means of managing domestic economic performance in the context of EMU, for unless loss of competitiveness could be managed through relative cost adjustments internally, the cost would be borne otherwise in the form of a rise in unemployment.

National processes through which budgets were approved and policy priorities established gained a new significance after 2000. As we have noted, Ireland did succeed in running fiscal surpluses for most of this time, though this generally came about through over-shoot of revenue projections rather than as a planned policy. The real problem lay in the fact that most of this buoyancy was attributable to frothy and cyclical property-related revenue source. While the overall ratio of tax to GDP changed relatively little, the composition of taxation changed a good deal, as the emphasis shifted away from personal income tax and toward taxes on activities to do with property transactions.

In view of the importance of fiscal policy as a stabilizing instrument under EMU, the capacity to run counter-cyclical fiscal policy became an advantage to the smaller economies that were more vulnerable to fluctuations in the wider international economic environment. Ireland's pro-cyclical budgets were commented on by international monitoring bodies including the

ECB, the IMF, and the OECD, and indeed in 2001 the ECB issued a formal criticism of Irish fiscal stance. Yet the conclusion of most of the reports was that, in view of the fiscal surpluses, Irish performance was acceptable (O'Leary 2010).

But the underlying trends in fiscal policy were problematic. Having adhered to publicly stated budget disciplines under the coalition government of 1994-7, subsequent Fianna Fáil-led governments explicitly stopped adopting constraints on government current spending in the early 2000s, just as the Euro was coming into being, and just as the boom was gathering pace (Regling and Watson 2010). This contributed to the sharp upturn in inflation in 2000 and 2001, as seen in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3. Consumer Price Index 1997-2009, annual % change

The components of inflation during the 2000s included indirect taxation feeding through to price increases in goods and services. Southern European countries also experienced increased inflation, but with lower standard of living costs; Ireland's competitiveness losses were greater. Moreover, during much of this period the value of the US dollar was weakening, which is particularly onerous for a country as massively dependent on exports, and especially to the US, as Ireland. The loss of export share was therefore painful. The upturn in Irish shoppers going on weekend trips to New York and Boston not only dramatized the discretionary income available to many in the Celtic Tiger era, but more subtly pointed to the incipient hazards of macroeconomic mismanagement.

Ireland lost control of its cost base, but it was not alone in this. Figure 4 shows the extent of the loss of relative competitiveness, which compares the countries of the European periphery with the EU average and with German performance.

Figure 4. Harmonized competitiveness levels

What this figure captures is the real effective exchange rate obtaining between the member states of the Euro itself. Ireland and Spain lost competitiveness most dramatically vis-a-vis their principal European trading partners, and Greece also experienced a worsening of its relative position. Ireland's was the worst performance by some margin: 'compensation per employee, which had grown more or less in line with the euro area on average until 1996,

increased at two to three times the euro area average from 1997 to 2008' (Regling and Watson 2010, pp. 21-2). In contrast, Germany maintained its relative domestic costs quite steadily over time (in part through geographical diversification of production across Eastern Europe (Marin 2010)).

One of the principal contributions to the scale of the fiscal collapse during the crisis was the distortion engineered in the revenue profile during the 2000s. Buoyant revenues hid a dramatic shift in the composition of taxation. As Figure 5 illustrates, personal income tax declined as a proportion of the total, while the revenues from the cyclical effects of the construction boom formed what is now clearly an unsustainably large proportion of the total.

Figure 5. Shifts in the composition of taxation, 1990-2008

In addition, governments had come to use tax reliefs very freely indeed to incentivize behaviour: total reliefs amounted to more than the total income tax take in 2005, and reliefs ran at three times the European average (Callan, Walsh and Coleman 2005; Regling and Watson 2010, p.27). This is consistent with the prevailing sense that the Irish growth model depended on an indirect and even minimal role for the state. Tax expenditures are a very active instrument of state policy, and potentially very expensive. But they involve an indirect way of acting that recurs elsewhere: the Irish state typically prefers to let markets deal with major distributive issues rather than actively intervening on principles of fairness or redistribution. This is apparent, for example, in the ways in which public funding is used to encourage and subsidize the accumulation private benefits in areas such as education, health care provision, and pensions coverage. And indeed, the same may be noted of the way in which the eventual rescue of the banks was managed, when government preferred to create a 'Special Purchase Vehicle' to buy up distressed assets at a discounted rate, rather than temporary nationalization of the banks as happened in the earlier Swedish approach to bank rescue. Both strategies require the injection of massive amounts of public funding to

recapitalize the banking sector. The political implications of each are clearly rather different, though their relative technical merits are contested.[2]

The policy stance responsible for the weak management of the budget derives from several sources: we might identify the role of electoral and party-political considerations, the framework of policy advice, and the wider incentives and constraints embedded in what we might term the Irish growth model.

Party political considerations are relevant here because the coalition of Fianna Fáil and the Progressive Democrats that held power between 1997 and 2007 led Ireland into Euro membership with a distinctive approach to the uses of public spending. Fianna Fáil Finance Minister Charlie McCreevy, now notorious for the pro-cyclical motto summarizing his approach to budgetary policy, 'When I have it, I spend it', was also personally as well as politically close to the leader of the economically liberal Progressive Democrat party, Mary Harney. This is not unlike the British Labour Party observation noted above ('central bank independence liberated us'). Politicians, we may say, are less interested in discipline per se than in the economic and political benefits attached to the institutionalization of discipline. The credibility gains won from Euro membership had very weakly institutionalized domestic disciplines to restrain the surge in pro-cyclical fiscal policy than ensued.

Spending obligations once incurred cannot easily be reversed. Figure 6 shows the upward trend in government current spending after 2000 (with a slight corrective after the 2002 elections), that was all too dependent on a relatively soft revenue base.

Figure 6. Government current expenditure and revenue, % GNP, 1960-2010

The suspicion of big government and preference for low personal taxation tilted the Fianna Fáil government toward the right on these issues. Moreover, the traditionally close relationship between Fianna Fáil and the construction industry was intensified by an expansion in the tax breaks and incentive schemes available to the building industry – a

[2] The topic has generated much discussion at http://www.irisheconomy.ie/index.php/category/banking-crisis, particularly in the contributions by Prof. Karl Whelan.

useful boost to economic activity just as US-led FDI began to shrink. Construction employment almost doubled over a decade to almost 14% of total employment in 2006. The close relationship between builders, developers, and the party carried on into party funding, although the extent of financial contributions has been difficult to probe.

Hallerberg and his colleagues have suggested that coalition governments tend to negotiate pre-commitment to budget outcomes (a 'contract' model of fiscal policy), whereas single-party governments tend to privilege the decision-making role of finance ministers (a 'delegation' model) (Hallerberg, Strauch and von Hagen 2007; Hallerberg, Strauch and von Hagen 2009). The latter conditions are said to be conducive to budget stabilization when there is little or no ideological conflict within the government, the former when ideological conflict is high. Governments also vary in the degree to which they were constrained by parliamentary deliberation to modify their policy proposals and adopt negotiated legislation (Döring 2001; 2004; Strøm 1998). Given the strongly autonomous role accorded to the finance minister in Ireland, and the low levels of ideological conflict in government, it should have been well suited to adopt strong targets on both spending and revenue and to make them stick. Yet this did not prove to be the case.

It might perhaps have been expected the autonomous powers of the Irish Finance Minister would be guided by strong procedural rules and formalized policy advice. This was not so, however; and international commentators frequently noted the unusually weak formal rules governing Irish budgetary procedures. Furthermore, public administration reform had lagged its Whitehall-model counterparts elsewhere in the English-speaking world, and the generalist model of recruitment had not been supplemented by recruitment of specialist professional expertise, especially in the area of economic competence (Hardiman 2009).

The dominant ideas within government and the senior civil service about what policy mix would be most appropriate were shaped by an acceptance of the low-tax, export-oriented model (even when not balanced by strong controls over public spending). The institutionalization of the low-tax model supported the ongoing reduction in personal tax liabilities. As financial services grew in importance relative to GDP, free-market preferences extended also to the acceptance of a principles-based rather than a rules-based approach to bank regulation, and the institutional separation of central bank and financial regulator

functions in a ‘light-touch’ regulatory approach. The net effects was what has been termed a ‘timid’ approach on the part of the financial regulator, and to what we now know to be a woefully misplaced assumption that the banks knew best and could be trusted to look after their own shareholders’ interests (Honohan 2010).

If government fiscal strategy is one side of the cost management strategy required within the Eurozone, wage bargaining is the other. Here too we can see that the domestic institutional configuration was not well suited to taking on board the full compliance requirements of Eurozone membership. Government-led tripartite pay deals had expanded greatly from the agreement that started the series of social partnership agreements under crisis conditions in the mid to late 1980s. The range of issues had expanded by the early 2000s. The number of organizations that had some involvement in the negotiations had greatly increased, since all the civil society bodies that had previously been given separate forum representation for policy influence were now part of the National Economic and Social Council (NESC). But the core deal continued to centre on pay moderation in exchange for increased personal disposable income through tax cuts, mainly through extending tax credits rather than taking down rates.

Three problems with this strategy were not addressed throughout the 1990s. Firstly, it is not clear that the changed policy framework and strategic priorities required by Eurozone membership really altered the bargaining priorities embedded in collective bargaining processes. Secondly, the uneven coverage of social partnership and the relative weight of the public sector unions came to be problematic. Thirdly, the extent of competitiveness losses emanating from inflation-fuelled settlements and rising public sector costs were not subject to any institutionalized monetary disciplines or constraints.

The rationale for engaging in rounds of talks leading to a deal at approximately three-yearly intervals was not only to get a pay deal, but to situate this in the context of an agreed framework of macroeconomic functioning. To this end, NESC published a strategy report prior to each round of negotiations. Social partnership was thus legitimated not only by its internal democratic accountability linkages, but by the notion that public interest considerations were built into its procedures. Indeed, some were led to argue that Ireland had evolved a new kind of social learning mechanism, a deliberative system that not only solved

conflicting distributive interests but permitted an open-ended process of defining what these interests might be (O'Donnell 2001; 2008; O'Donnell and O'Reardon 2002). But it is far from clear that this was in fact what happened once the objective of securing Eurozone membership had been attained. Increased industrial conflict broke out over high inflation, and rising house prices further fuelled union members' demands for higher wage compensation. The processes of wage determination through social partnership were not well suited to negotiating internal deflation, whether through fiscal measures or cost-restraining settlements by employers and unions. The trade union movement stressed the desirability of particular kinds of changes to the tax system such as increasing credits to remove the low-paid from the tax net (though this weakened the income tax base overall), and extending bands, rather than cutting rates of tax (ICTU 2010). But the net effect of the government commitment to tax reduction resulted in a path-dependent route of sharing out growth through rising personal incomes rather than through improvements in public services and other forms of collective consumption, with all the inequalities this entails between households. As a consequences, Irish employees quickly came to be among of the most lightly taxed in the OECD, outdone only by Korea and Mexico (OECD 2009, p.51). The costs of this policy package did not become apparent until it was too late.

The trade union movement had a rather distinctive profile compared with other OECD members states though. Because the foreign-owned high-profit and export-oriented sector tended not to recognize unions at all, union membership was concentrated in less export-dependent enterprises and in the public sector. The risks of a union profile such as this for inflation-generating settlements under conditions of growth have been recognized elsewhere (Garrett and Way 1999). Indeed, the fragmented nature of Irish public sector unions was recognized as a self-reinforcing source of upwardly competitive wage claims. The principal attempt to address this, through an exercise in 2003 in 'benchmarking' public sector salaries, was a contentious exercise. Many considered this to have paid too high a price to settle grievances, and it was only poorly linked into public sector reform priorities (Hardiman and MacCarthaigh 2011 forthcoming; O'Leary 2002). Relative wage differences between public and private sectors continued to be a source of disagreement and conflict (Kelly, McGuinness and O'Connell 2009).

Domestic institutions struggled with these issues against a backdrop of inflation that was higher than the EU average and a steady loss of cost-based competitiveness. The most direct corrective action to Ireland's over-heating economy – and Spain's – would have been an interest rate increase. In the German model on which the ECB was based, cost containment had been institutionalized by the interplay between industry-level collective bargaining and the signalling mechanism of Bundesbank interest rate increases. Translated to a Eurozone-wide level though, the ECB proved to be most attentive to the larger economies' slow growth and their need for a low interest rate stimulus (Crouch 2002; Franzese and Hall 2000; Hall and Franzese 1998). Thus the actors in collective bargaining processes in fast-growing economies could not depend on an external monetary policy constraint on their deliberations. In Ireland, as in Spain and Italy, the Maastricht convergence criteria had been internalized in to the social partnership procedures (Pérez 2002). But in an inflationary environment, the social partners had no further incentive to be self-binding. The Excessive Deficit Procedure was invoked against Portugal and Germany in 2002, France in 2003, the Netherlands and Greece in 2004 and Italy in 2005. But the sanctioning consequences of the Stability and Growth Pact proved weaker in their effects in the cases of Germany and France, when they in their turn breached the conditions even more egregiously than Ireland or Portugal (Hallerberg and Bridwell 2008). The so-called punishment mechanisms therefore became largely ineffective once EMU was launched (Blavoukos and Pagoulatos 2008). Moreover, prominent European leaders began to advocate more flexibility rather than more discipline, and Romano Prodi called the Stability and Growth Pact 'stupid' (Hallerberg et al. 2009, p.176). The credibility of the sanctions was called into question for other countries as a result. As the Irish parliamentary committee on European affairs noted:

> By late 2003 it became clear that their deficits were continuing to rise and that neither France nor Germany would meet their targets. Neither Member State faced sanction due to this non compliance. These cases pointed to obvious credibility and enforcement problems for the SGP. If the two largest euro area economies fail to comply with the rules then why should smaller countries do so? (Houses of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on European Affairs 2010, p.6)

In summary, the fiscal policy regime in Ireland was inappropriate to the conditions of monetary union. Although a fiscal surplus was often recorded, this was not a planned part of a counter-cyclical budgetary strategy, for which, under conditions of rapid growth, a very much larger surplus would have been appropriate. The underlying weaknesses in may

superficially seem to be a stable fiscal situation have recently begun to attract more notice (de la Rosiere 2009; O'Leary 2010). Thus Ireland, with its extraordinarily high growth rates between the mid-1990s and mid-2000s, should have been running super-high fiscal surpluses (as Finland was). To the contrary though, fiscal policy was consistently pro-cyclical, and this was a recurring phenomenon in Irish public life, where spending booms tend to exacerbate economic upturns and recession is worsened by the need to address accumulated deficits (Lane 1998). Small surpluses implied that the Irish public finances were highly vulnerable to a return even to moderate or sustainable rates of growth. There was little capacity for assessing the risk attached to weakening the revenue base or the capacity to withstand a downturn of any sort, let alone a major economic crisis on the scale that actually occurred. The institutional framework both for framing, monitoring, and implementing fiscal policy had many flaws. Correspondingly, the domestic institutional framework that was intended to make wage bargaining consonant with macroeconomic performance also proved to have many shortcomings, particularly in the foresight capabilities of the main actors.

But these domestic limitations also need to be placed in the wider context of European economic governance. The Euro was successful in bringing about low interest rates and freer cross-border mobility of financial assets. But the weight of adjustment accorded to national political systems proved to be too great. Among the perverse and unintended consequences of the Euro was the fact that an institutional design intended to bring about economic stability by ending currency volatility ended up by creating incentives for much greater instability in the form of very uneven growth, asset price inflation, and unsustainable credit expansion. Ireland, like the other European peripheral economies, fell victim to the politics of market-led indiscipline.

Responses to crisis: national adaptations and European coordinating capacity

The countries of the European periphery were more exposed than others to the effects of the financial crisis, and for members of the Eurozone, the conditions of the governance of the Euro itself made domestic adaptation more challenging. Similarly, once the economic crisis unfolded from 2008 on, the varying capacity of countries to devise a successful response has to be understood against the backdrop of the slow pace of response at the EU level, and the divided counsel about the most appropriate course of action that has prevented a coherent and

coordinated strategy from being implemented. In this context, the smaller or weaker member states have had little choice but to start vigorous programmes of fiscal consolidation, while larger and stabler economies debate the relative merits of strong budget control measures at the risk of slowing recovery, or postponing consolidation measures in favour of maintaining a growth stimulus through continued spending (Alesina and Perotti 2010; Economics: Free Exchange 2010; Giavazzi 2010). Yet the prospect that this would indeed stabilize their situation, let alone pave the way for economic recovery, remained uncertain. Greece continued to experience the greatest difficulties in 2010; but both Ireland and Spain, having undertaken fiscal austerity policies, still experienced lower levels of market confidence in their governments' bonds, and the prospect of a long period of economic hardship. The risk of a contagion effect, an unravelling of market confidence in Eurozone stability spreading form Greece to other countries, came to be a leading concern. The domestic institutions through which adjustments were managed first need to be considered; then we shall set these within the wider European setting.

We have noted that countries with strong executive autonomy from the legislature such as Ireland, Greece, and Britain, so far from using this to enforce a strong fiscal stance, were swayed by market incentives to take the brakes off and to permit a degree of fiscal laxity that would have been unconscionable in the preceding decade. (In the case of Britain, the capacity to allow its currency to depreciate against the Euro helped mitigate the damage this caused to its cost base, but at the expense of building up larger nominal deficits over the longer term). But once the full impact of the crisis hit, precisely this executive strength could be deployed to impose fiscal stringency, even when it was electorally unpopular. Figure 7 below outlines an index of executive discretion, based on measures of the powers available to government and to committees in parliament in initiating, amending, and securing the passage of legislation. It shows that there is a broad pattern to the scale of executive power depending on the growth strategy and model of capitalism in place. The Anglo-American model, with its strong reliance on market signals, tends to be relatively unconstrained by obligations to institutionalized political stakeholders. The Scandinavian model tends toward a more decentralized and negotiated model of political decision-making. Yet within each category there is also wide diversity, as for example between Greece and Spain within the 'mixed'

Mediterranean model of capitalism that features a strong state role in ownership and control of economic resources.

Figure 7. Index of executive power

The Irish government was able to commit successfully to fiscal consolidation once it had taken the decisions deemed necessary, and the emergency budget of the newly formed British Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government in June 2010 was billed 'the toughest in a generation' (Economist 2010). In the Irish case, the commitment to a strong programme of spending cuts came relatively early, in a succession of budgets during 2008 and 2009, and most dramatically in a further sharp unilateral cut to public sector pay in Budget 2010 in December 2009. Similarly, both Spain and Greece implemented painful cuts and tax increases on a scale that has nowhere been apparent elsewhere in Europe.

But the politics of implementing difficult choices varies across these countries depending not only on governments' capacity to introduce legislation, but also on its social legitimation. Securing political agreement among other parties varies with the ideological distance between parties, and implementing difficult choices similarly varies depending on the degree of social polarization and the capacity to engage in negotiated dialogue with organized social interests. As Figure 8 below suggests, the balance between left and right varies significantly across countries.

Figure 8. Ideological position of parties in four party systems, 1990s

And the underlying structure of the economy also constitutes a constraint on governments' freedom of action, as we have already seen. The growth strategy to which the country has been committed imposes incentives and constraints on governments to intervene in one way and not another. This is usefully captured by clustering countries according to their variety of capitalism (Hall and Soskice 2001; Molina and Rhodes 2007). Figure 9 below summarizes the principal structural variations in the manner in which countries respond to crisis.

Figure 9. Structural determinants of adaptive capacity to crisis

In no country has there been a negotiated imposition of internal deflation, but in Ireland the early implementation of sharp adjustment, and the relative absence of large-scale protest, is

attributed to many to the memory of the painful fiscal adjustment of the 1980s, and a widespread grudging acceptance that delay would ultimately prove costlier. In mid-2010, the Irish trade union movement voted to accept a deal that offered assurances that there would be no further pay cuts, in return for active implementation of public sector reform measures, the 'Croke Park agreement'. This acceptance of a form of 'concession bargaining' in the intensive though ultimately abortive pay talks leading up to the unilaterally imposed December 2009 budget; some basis for agreement between government and unions (though not now employers) had been reached which could be reactivated at this point. In Britain, the issues under discussion in the run-up to the election of May 2010 were about the timing and incidence of budget cuts, not the principle; and British trade unions are organizationally too weak either to organize resistance or to need to be involved as policy interlocutors (Hardiman 2010; Merkel, Petring, Henkes and Egle 2007). In contrast, as Figure 8 illustrates, Spain and Greece have stronger and more contested left-right divisions in their party systems. Yet the differences between these two countries are striking too, notwithstanding street protests in both countries at austerity measures during 2010. Spain has a more strongly developed tradition of forming social pacts and more strongly institutionalized mechanisms for resolving political contestation. In contrast, Greece has been characterized as 'une société bloquée', in which the principal method for managing internal conflicts is through allocation of selective benefits (or clientelism), and in which lower levels of political institution-building mean that the communist Left can gain more traction through popular mobilization than in other countries (Antoniades 2010; Featherstone 2005; Ongaro 2010).

The domestic institutional configuration of these countries helps to explain the variations in the profile of their responses to crisis. But once again, domestic institutional and political capacity is not the whole story, and the situation of each country in the international context, and the nature of its exposure to cross-national pressures, is also a critical part of the story. As of mid-2010 the trajectory of crisis is still unfolding, but the interplay between individual country responses and the coordination of response at the EU level brought out three key features of the governance of the Eurozone. The nature of Ireland's response can only be fully analysed once these background conditions are filled in. All three conditions have to do with the weaknesses in the implementation of the Stability and Growth Pact from an early stage, and for the failure to make any provision for the possibility of longer-term inability to

comply on account of serious domestic fiscal crisis (Dyson 2008; Heipertz and Verdun 2010). Firstly, the obligation to undertake policy adjustment exclusively at national level risked pushing the issue to the brink of the prospect of sovereign debt default. Secondly, once this prospect became conceivable, the coordinating capacity of the EU was revealed to be particularly weak and subject to fragmentation along lines of nationality. Thirdly, the dearth of ideas about Europe-level macroeconomic priorities and growth strategy became evident. The 'orthodox' view that rapid consolidation is desirable to secure a return to growth gained ground among the larger member states, including Germany, while a number of commentators pointed to the risk that this would further depress the prospects of recovery under conditions of a gravely impaired financial sector, no possibility of currency devaluation, and continuing structural trade imbalances.

Firstly then, once it became clear that the capacity of the peripheral economies to manage fiscal adjustments entirely within their own resources, the risk associated with sovereign debt on the international bond markets suddenly became much more differentiated, as Figure 10 illustrates.

Figure 10. Long-term interest rates

The design of the Euro, as noted above, required member states to manage fiscal policy independently and within the guidelines of the Stability and Growth Pact. The SGP was the product of compromises between German and French policy-makers: it was intended to reassure the German government that the ECB would be insulated from political pressures to allow inflation to rise to erode national debt, and to exclude the possibility that national debt problems would be shared by other member states. The second of these issues was precisely what was thrown back onto centre-state by the crisis. Because it had been ruled out of account at the outset, there was no means of providing a credit line to the countries under greatest pressure – specifically to Greece, whose fiscal imbalances dated back some time. The creators of the Euro, it was now clear, had ignored the basic design principle of Murphy's Law: that is, that if something can go wrong, it will. Something had to be done. But failure to plan for a worst-case scenario means that policy must be made under pressure and in crisis conditions. It took until late spring 2010 to provide supports in the form of a credit line to Greece from Eurozone member states, organized through the ECB. Alongside

IMF intervention, this eventually stabilized Greece's short to medium term borrowing problems.

This gave rise to the second problem, which is that it was not clear what the appropriate forum would be within which political mechanisms to prevent speculative attacks on individual countries could be worked out. The short-term issue centred on the urgency of a 'Greek bail-out', a difficult issue for German politicians facing important regional elections in May 2010. A combination of access to ECB loans on terms that were quickly drafted, and recourse to IMF loan facilities, defused the immediate issue for Greece. The credit facilities were tied to a programme not only of immediate painful fiscal austerity but also of reform of social programme design and tax administration reform, intended to provide assurances that the medium to longer term fiscal trajectory would be stronger. But the scale of the fiscal problems it faced was clearly immense, and increasingly opening up the possibility of sovereign debt default. This in turn exposed the extent to which the peripheral countries' problems were in fact Europe-wide problems. For the biggest single category of holders of Greek government debt is German banks. The German financial regulator in 2009 produced a worst-case scenario of up to €800bn in bad debts (Eurointelligence 2010). Stress testing of European banks had only begun, and very gingerly at that, in mid-2010 (Balzi, Reiermann and Reuter 2010). The guarantees extended by governments across Europe to their banks has meant that an enormous range of private debt is now in fact a potential public debt liability. The issue for the Eurozone during 2010 slowly changed colour from a problem of sovereign debt in one country, Greece, to the risk of a contagion effect as nervousness spread toward the much larger Spanish economy, to a growing realization that the underlying issue of financial sector stability itself has not gone away. The fiscal crisis risks becoming a banking crisis of enormous proportions.

The third issue therefore is the question as to what may be required to stabilize the current fiscal and financial crises and to provide the bases for the resumption of growth. The European periphery, particularly Ireland and Greece, but also Spain and Portugal, have had very little choice in this: unless their governments embarked on severe orthodox austerity programmes, the markets made it clear that they would be unable to continue to raise the borrowing they need to conduct their affairs. But these countries risked finding themselves in

a double bind, as indeed Spain already has: having embarked on austerity measures, Moody's rating agency downgraded its debt status on the grounds that its growth potential would now be lower and its capacity to service its debt correspondingly reduced. In the longer term, it is clear that market investors value growth and sustainable employment levels as much as fiscal orthodoxy, so anticipatory austerity to appease the markets may not achieve what is intended (O'Rourke 2010).

Furthermore, the orthodox view, if generalized on a country-by-country basis, leaves unanswered the question as to where the sources of recovery will be found. If all were to engage in competitive internal devaluations by accepting domestic hardships, a 'beggar my neighbour' effect could ensue, such that no country could provide the demand stimulus for the now increasingly competitive exports of the others. Yet the trend toward adopting orthodox austerity policies seemed widespread, extending to Germany and receiving the endorsement of the G20 in mid-2010 (Alesina and Perotti 2010).

The alternative view was mostly articulated by academic commentators and journalists: this is that adopting conventional orthodox deflationary measures in the throes of an economic downturn intensifies the risk of a 'double-dip' recession (Almunia, Benetrixt, Eichengreen, O'Rourke and Rua 2009; Dadush 2010; Marzinotto, Pisani-Ferry and Sapir 2010; Wells and Krugman 2010; Wolf 2010).

But the implications of this latter position have far-reaching political and institutional consequences. The decision-making of the European leadership clearly came to be perceived by the markets as too slow, too late, and in fact lacking in the credibility it was intended to produce. If the crisis is envisaged not merely a series of countries each with its own fiscal and competitiveness problems, but as a systemic problem of the insolvency of the banking systems of the major economies themselves, the problems will be of longer duration, and generating greater levels of political coordination to address them will be a matter of urgency.

Three possible futures may be considered for European economic governance. The first is to hold that nothing short of a large-scale coordinated political re-engineering of the European political system itself is required. Hallerberg et al conclude that 'it is important to centralize the budget process' (Hallerberg et al. 2009). Apart from the fact that a number of countries

with centralized budgetary procedures also ended up in fiscal trouble, suggesting that fiscal disciplines are not only due to centralization, but to some combination of monetary, fiscal and financial policies, centralizing the European budget process would require a massive increase in centralized political competences. One commentator stated the prospect as follows: 'the Eurozone will need to commit itself to a full-blown fiscal union and proper political institutions that give binding macroeconomic instructions to member states for budgetary policy, financial policy and structural policies. The public and private sector imbalances are so immense that they are not self-correcting'. In this view, European citizens face a stark choice, between 'reverting to dysfunctional and, as it transpires, insolvent nation states, or jumping to a political and economic union' (Münchau 2010). However, this view suffers from political implausibility. It is very unlikely, on past experience, that European voters would readily approve increased transfers of powers to a federal centre; there is a marked lack of appetite among European leaders for any new constitutional initiatives; and the German Constitutional Court has ruled that any further moves in this direction would be impermissible under their existing constitution. Furthermore, as Rodrik argues, it is far from clear that it is even possible, let alone accepted as legitimate, to 'domesticate' national polities and societies by delegating powers to supranational institutions (Rodrik 2007a; b). In the absence of a common working language, Europe-wide representative parties, and discursive capabilities that transcend national borders, it is difficult to see how any such legitimation could be achieved (McKay 1999).

The second possibility is for European leaders and the ECB to shift the terms of the debate about EMU. The 'official' position about the Euro is that no country can countenance sovereign debt default because this would undermine the viability of the single currency altogether, and would require the defaulting country to exit the single currency, with hugely disruptive consequences all round. But the case could be made that a government defaulting on its debt need have no consequences for the currency regime at all: 'in the event of a Greek government default, the system could assure the stability of the Greek financial sector, and concern itself with any bank runs or bank failures in the country, but not with the Greek government's difficulties', where 'its taxpayers and the creditors will bear the consequences' (Melitz 2010). This would require reforms to provide the ECB with stronger supervisory powers over banks in the Eurozone, and power to act as lender of last resort. It would detach

financial stability from fiscal stability, and avoid the moral hazard involved in underwriting bail-outs (however condition-bound). But while this position may be economically sound, since the argument that fiscal rectitude is required to guarantee the value of the currency may not be very strong, it is may be politically difficult to adhere to. Sovereign defaults are historically quite common, as Reinhart and Rogoff have documented, but they are desperately painful for countries that have to endure their effects (Reinhart and Rogoff 2009). 'No bail-out' may still be an inviolable principle within the Eurozone. But there are also powerful underlying normative assumptions that the EU stands for more than a free market area; that inequality of living standards is a concern; and even that social stability itself may be threatened by extreme fiscal crises and that tolerating this would be inconsistent with the EU's self-professed values.

The third outcome might involve more of the institutional bricolage through which institution-building within the EU has commonly taken place, with no grand design but rather multiple adjustments and fixes. This could happen alongside intensified bank supervision on the part of the ECB as outlined above. For example, in the first phase of the work of the Task Force on European Governance chaired by President of the European Council Hermann von Rompuy, European member states agreed in mid-2010 to permit peer review of their budget proposals (Van Rompuy 2010). Whether measures of this sort go far enough remains to be seen. On the design side, it may also be necessary to review the asymmetrical incentives built into the SGP (penalizing deficits but with little support to run surpluses), its cyclical inflexibility (since economic downturns may warrant deficits as a counter-cyclical measure), and its focus on current deficits (making it difficult to finance long-term capital investment projects). On the sanctioning side, it may still prove difficult to enforce credible sanctions against errant member states.

Conclusion

The domestic origins of countries' experiences of economic have to be taken seriously: Ireland was over-exposed to risk on a variety of fronts and suffered a correspondingly severe response to the international crisis when it came. The taxation system had been systematically weakened over time; political decision-making was not firmly grounded in adequate risk assessment; a massive asset price bubble was allowed to accumulate. As a small and very

open economy committed to a strongly market-conforming growth strategy, Ireland had fewer resources to counter an economic downturn. But governments also failed to plan for this contingency through active counter-cyclical budget management, and the design of banking sector regulation proved woefully inadequate. A low-tax discourse is embedded in the political system, and even the Labour Party and the Greens in Ireland find it difficult to make the case for rational and egalitarian tax reform, consistent with the need to keep productive assets priced low and encourage efficient use of scarce resources, through extending the revenue base to include such items as residential property and water use.

But in addition to these factors, it is useful also to recognize that there is an international dimension to Ireland's policy errors of the past decade. The politics of cheap money which lay behind the crisis depended on untested assumptions about nation-states' capacity to manage a policy mix consistent with ECB requirements. The under-institutionalization of the nominal policy constraints at European level imposed the need for heroic levels of self-restraint on the part of peripheral economies. The new politics of the Euro, which was meant to constrain domestic policy, in fact ended up softening budget constraints: the ties did not bind (Hallerberg and Bridwell 2008).

Similarly, there is a European dimension to the strategies adopted in response to crisis. Ireland adopted orthodox austerity policies early: the policy community has had no real experience of financial sector crisis, but has recent experience of fiscal crisis, and even if the precise policy mix of spending cuts and tax increases is contested, the belief that this would be most effective is widely shared. In the short to medium term, Ireland's policy options are tightly constrained. But in the medium to longer term, the conviction that this will restore Ireland's competitiveness conditions and therefore growth prospects depends on rescue coming from the international economy, as it did in the late 1980s. This is far from clear in the context of a Europe-wide persistence with the politics of austerity (Krugman 2010).

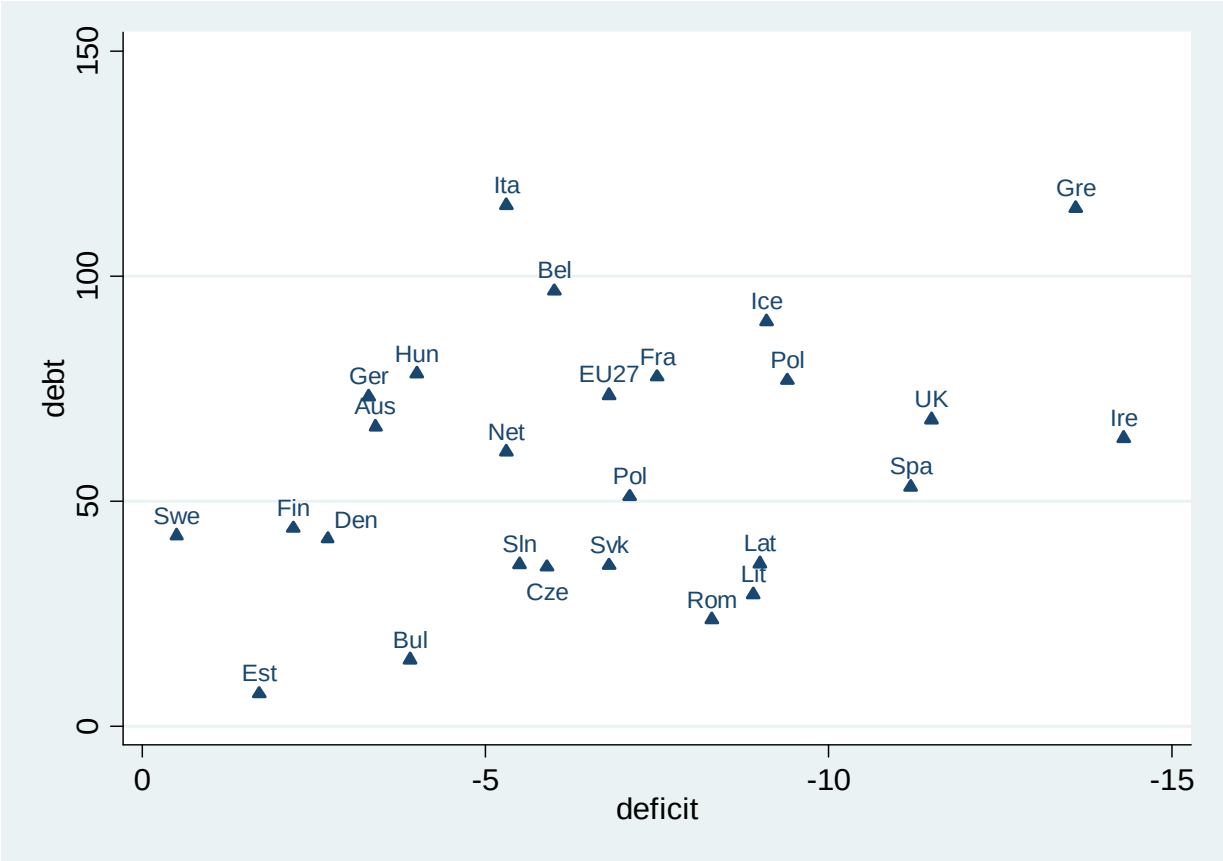
However, the terms of European political debate seemed set in the orthodox mould, and the capacity of European leaders to anticipate problems rather than respond in reactive mode seemed quite limited. New rules for framing and implementing national budgets were promised, to tighten up the latitude available at nation-state level. While this would help reduce the risk of severe fiscal imbalances arising in the future, it would do little to alter the

basic imbalances between monetary and fiscal capabilities at European level. And even the institutional locus of this reform was contested, with the Council of Ministers and the Commission vying for control over the new measures. But none of this went anywhere near either of the two major problems yet to be managed effectively at European level: bank recapitalization and the need to transfer large volumes of taxpayer resources into private institutions, and the formation of a coherent and credible broadly based macroeconomic strategy for the Eurozone as a whole, that would combine fiscal stabilization with a plausible strategy for economic recovery.

These issues are not new and will not readily be resolved. They originate in the disagreements between 'economists' and 'monetarists' (Marsh 2009, pp. 38-41), that is, between those who believe that currency unions are only possible when deep economic structures are fully aligned, and those who hold that monetary union itself is an effective driver toward convergence in economic performance.

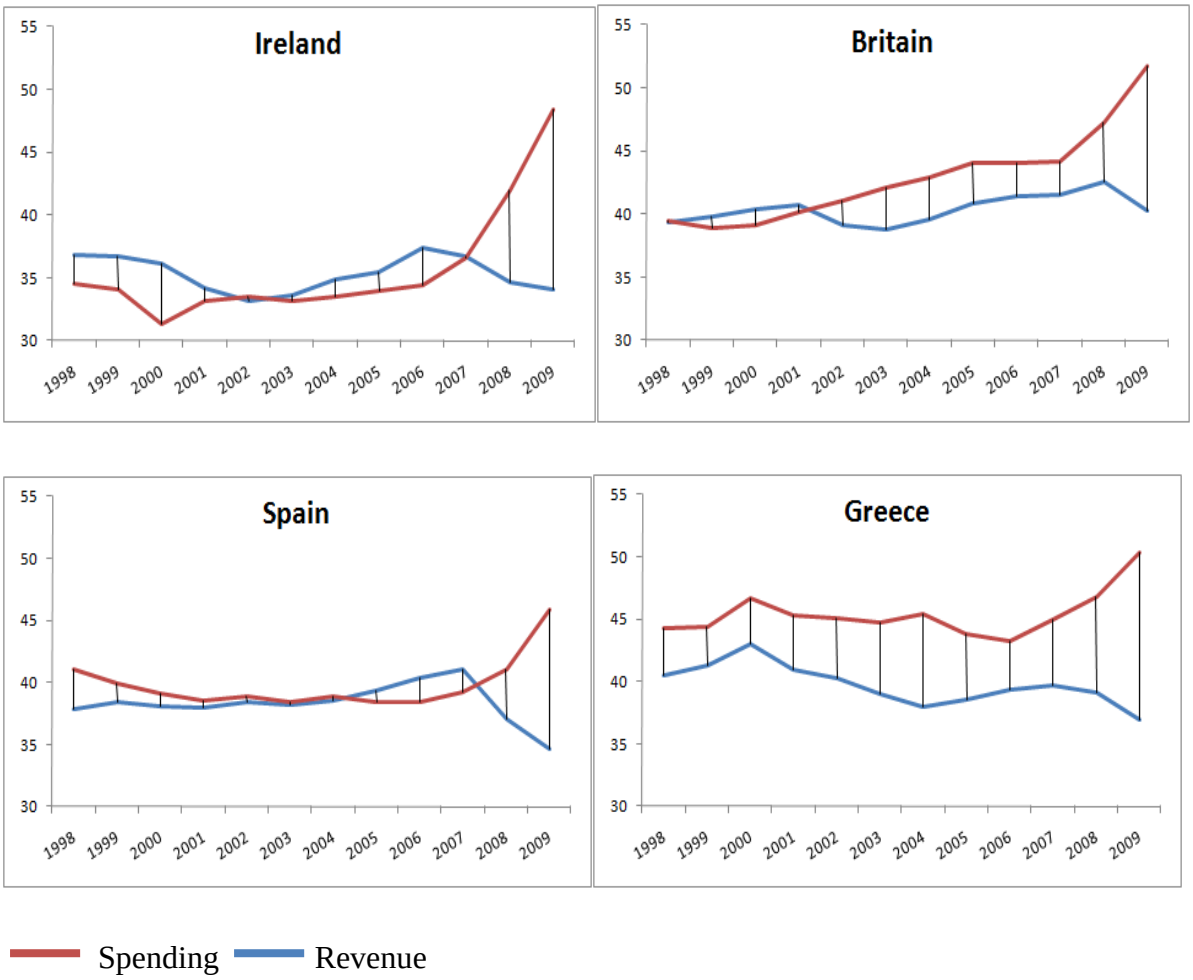
In summary therefore, Ireland has made many policy mistakes and is paying a high price for correcting them. The corrections are painful yet unavoidable. But the real dynamic for floating the Irish economy off the rocks of recession lies outside its control. The future for Irish growth prospects remains deeply tied into the terms of European debate.

Figure 1. Debt and deficit as % GDP, 2010



Source: General government deficit, general government debt, Eurostat.

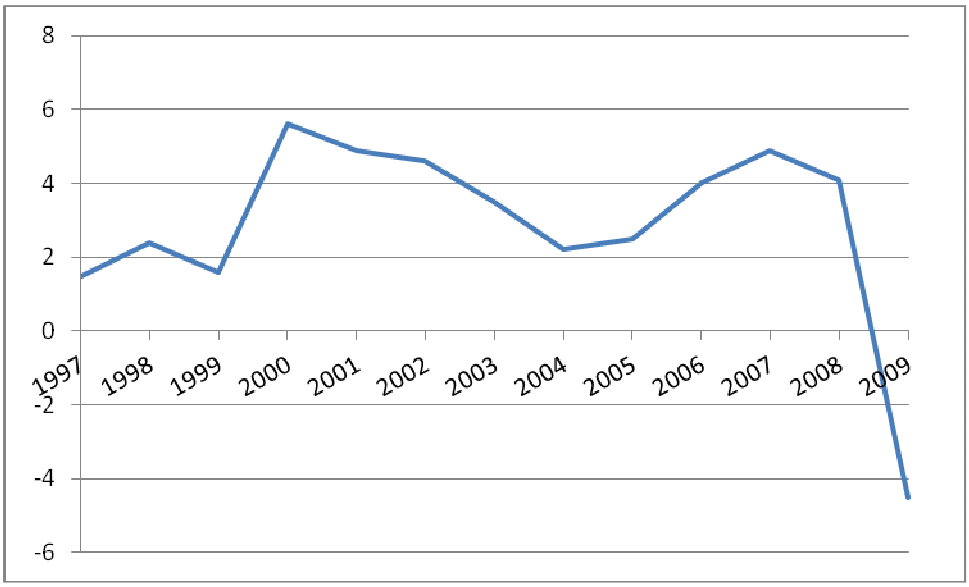
Figure 2. Revenue, spending and deficits as % GDP



Source: Eurostat.

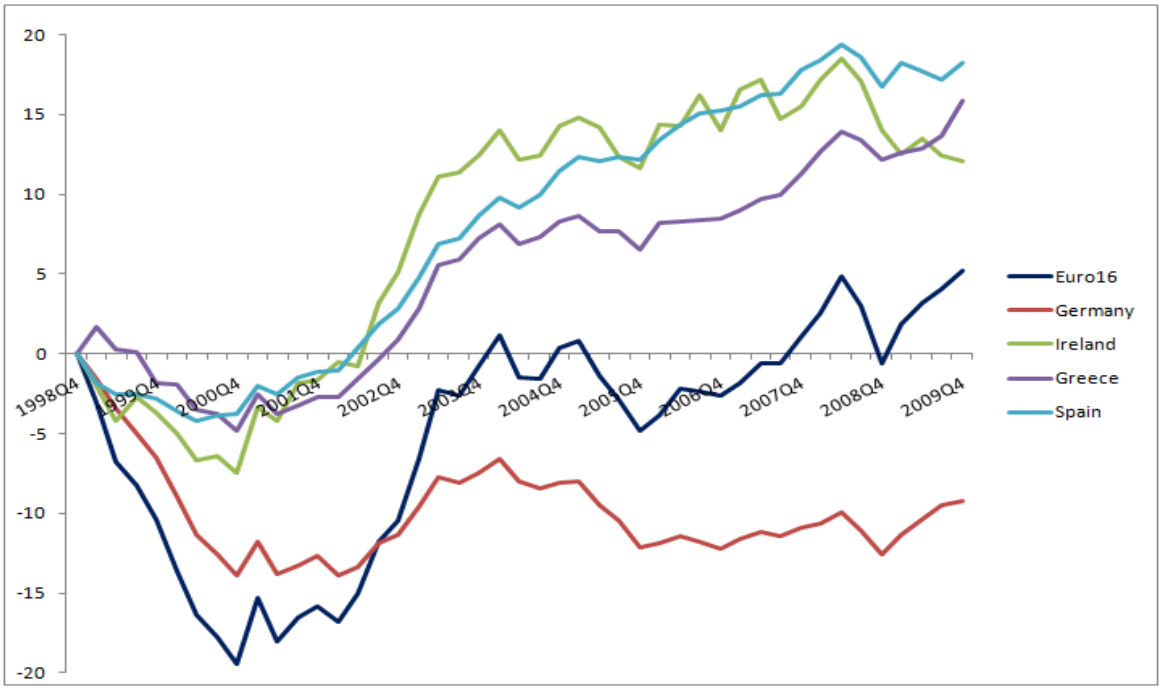
Note: GDP dropped sharply in all four countries between 2007 and 2009, especially in Ireland, which exaggerates the impact in these graphs of the weaker tax revenues alongside with continuing spending obligations.

Figure 3. Inflation 1997-2009



Source: Consumer Price Index, CSO

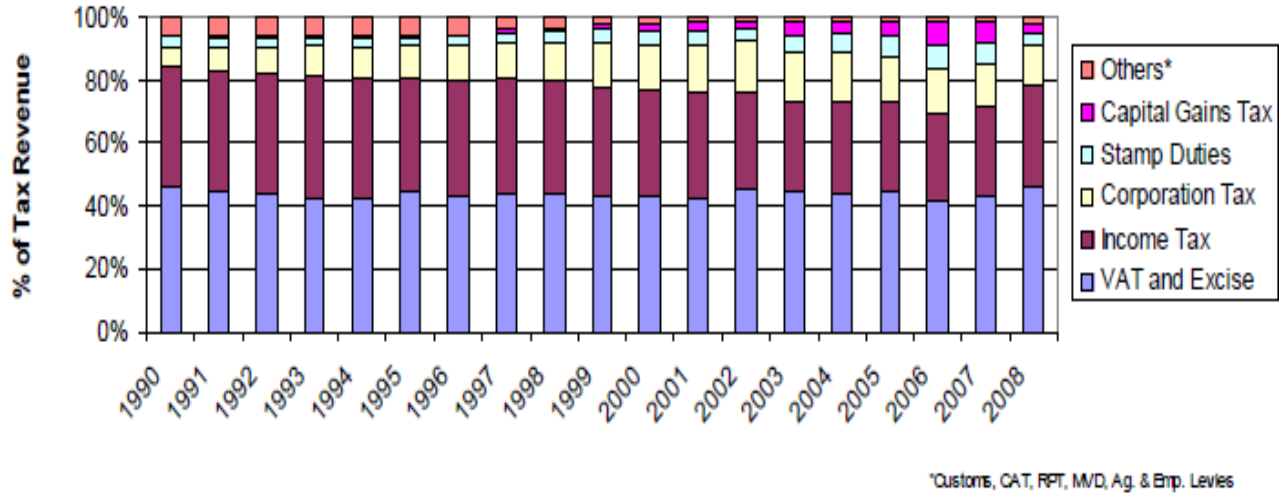
Figure 4. Harmonized competitiveness indicators, 1998-2009



NOTE: For the euro area, the real effective exchange rate of the euro vis-à-vis 21 trading partners is displayed. For euro area countries, the table shows the harmonized competitiveness indicators calculated vis-à-vis the same 21 trading partners plus the other euro area countries. A positive change points to a decrease in price competitiveness.

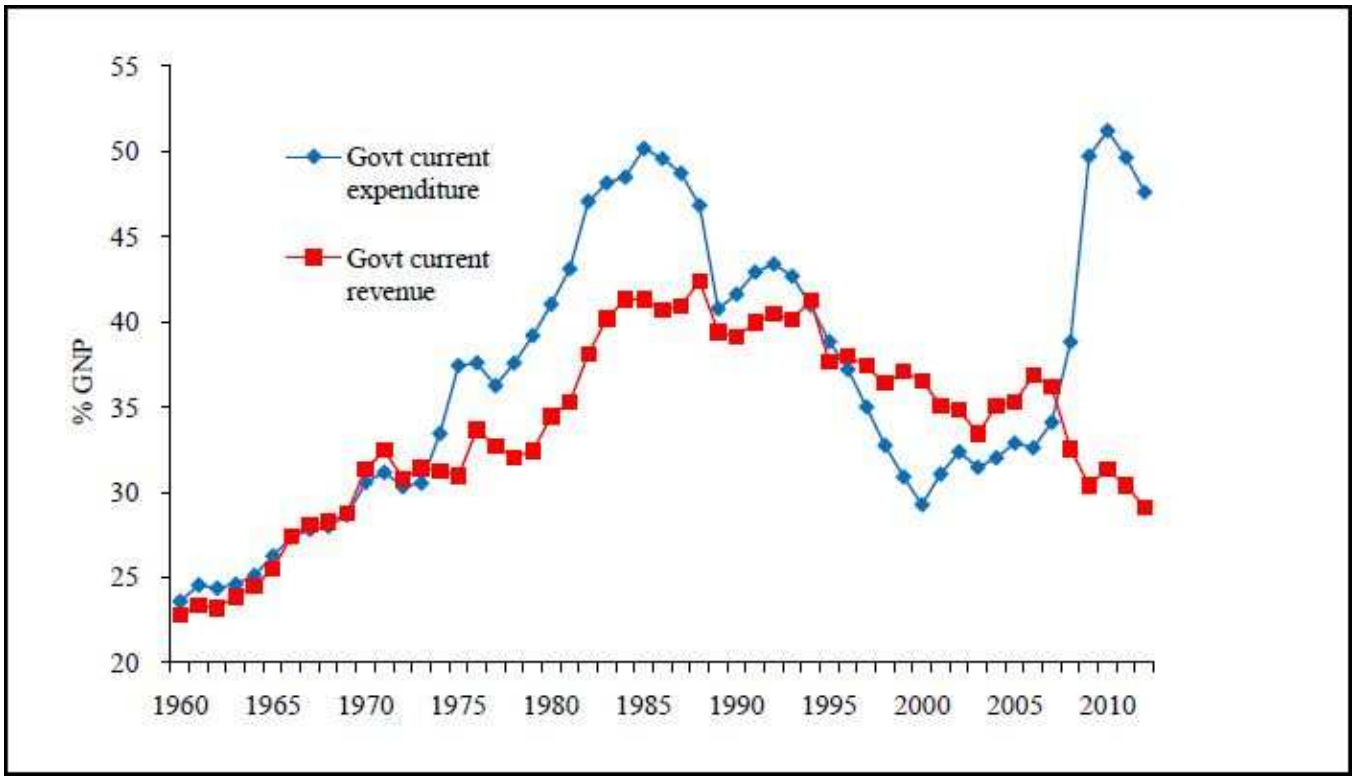
Source: Harmonized competitiveness indicators based on GDP deflators, % change, Q4 1998=100. European Central Bank.

Figure 5. Composition of taxation, 1990-2008



Source: (Regling and Watson 2010, p.27)

Figure 6. Government current expenditure and revenue, % GNP, 1960-2010



Source: Honohan 2010, Chart 2.9, p.30

Figure 7. Executive autonomy and varieties of capitalism

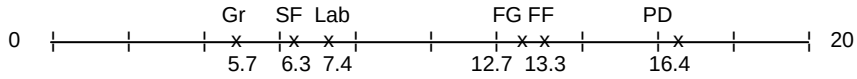
Varieties of capitalism	**Index of executive autonomy**	**Executive autonomy: group average**
Liberal	Ireland 4 UK 4	4
Mixed	Greece 5 Portugal 1 Spain 0.5 Italy -1	2
Continental	Germany 2 France 1 Netherlands 1 Belgium -1	1
Social market	Sweden -4 Iceland -2 Norway -1 Denmark -1 Finland -1	-2

NOTE: The data in the first column is derived from Döring 2001. Table 1 in that work itemized executive-enhancing legislative rules; we have allocated a sum of pluses and minuses to provide a single score. Table 2 itemized committee-strengthening parliamentary rules; a single score was similarly derived from this. The total from Table 2 was subtracted from Table 1 to give an index of executive dominance.

Sources: (Döring 2001; Hall and Soskice 2001; Molina and Rhodes 2007; Pontusson 2005)

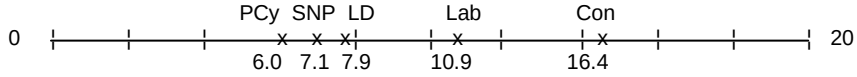
Figure 8. Ideological positions of parties in four countries

IRELAND



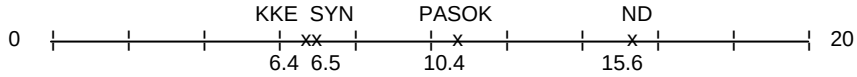
Gr: Green; SF: Sinn Féin; Lab: Labour; FG: Fine Gael; FF: Fianna Fáil; PD: Progressive Democrats

BRITAIN



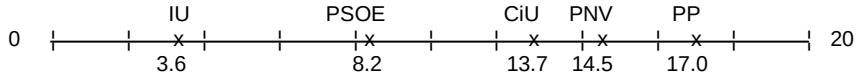
PCy: Plaid Cymru; SNP: Scottish National Party; Lab: Labour; Con: Conservative

GREECE



KKE: Kommunistiko Koma Ellados; SYN: Synaspismos; PASOK: Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima; ND: Nea Dimokratia

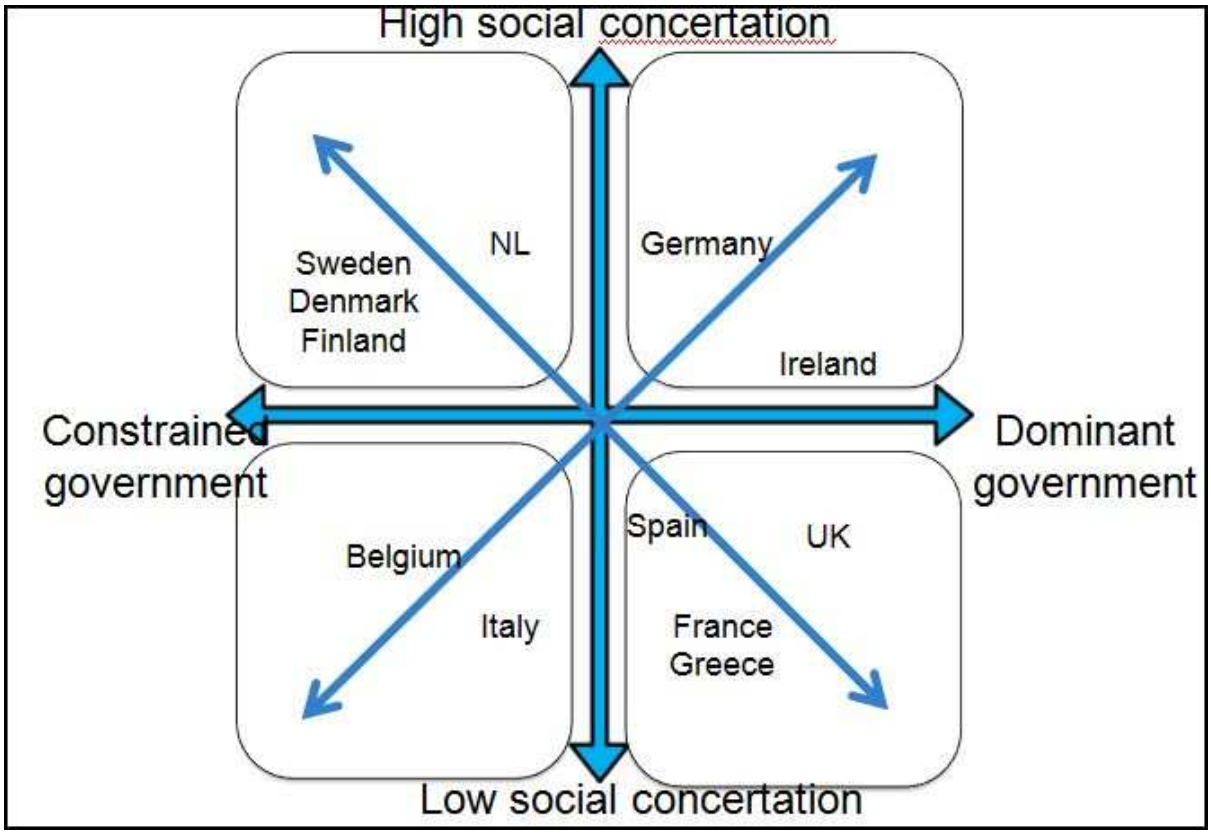
SPAIN



IU: Izquerda Unida; PSOE: Partido Socialista Obrero Español; PNV: Partido Nacionalista Vasco; PP: Partido Popular

Source: (Benoit and Laver 2006), Appendix B: Country Data

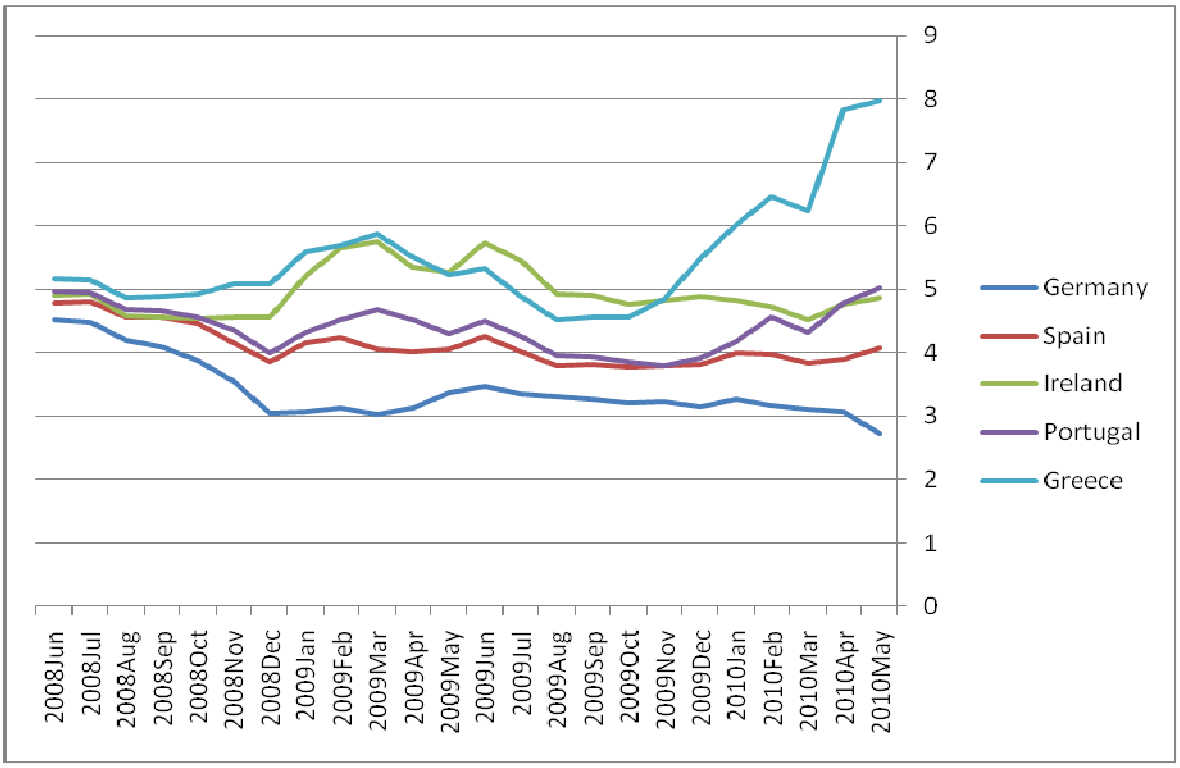
Figure 9. Structural determinants of government strategic response to fiscal crisis



NOTE: The horizontal dimension captures the index of executive autonomy in Figure above. The vertical dimension summarizes the ideological distance between parties which is also reflected in the structure of union organization and therefore in the capacity of government to engage in active concertation of economic interests.

The diagonal dimensions show that the 'varieties of capitalism' cross-cut these constitutional and political dimensions.

Figure 10. Interest rates on ten-year government bonds



Source: ECB Statistical Warehouse http://sdw.ecb.europa.eu, accessed 30.6.2010

References

Alesina, Alberto, and Roberto Perotti. 2010. German spending is not the cure. In *Vox*: Vox. http://www.voxeu.com/index.php?q=node/5176

Almunia, Miguel, Agustin S. Benetrixt, Barry Eichengreen, Kevin Hl. O'Rourke, and Gisela Rua. 2009. From Great Depression to Great Credit Crisis: Similarities, Differences and Lessons. Dublin: TCD.

Antoniades, Andreas. 2010. *Producing Globalisation: Politics of Discourse and Institutions in Greece and Ireland*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Balzi, Beat, Christian Reiermann, and Wolfgang Reuter. 2010. The Trouble with Stress Tests: Critics Question Soundness of Bank Check-Ups. *Spiegel Online* 22 June.

Benoit, Kenneth, and Michael Laver. 2006. *Party Policy in Modern Democracies*. London: Routledge.

Blavoukos, Spyros, and George Pagoulatos. 2008. The Limits of EMU Conditionality: Fiscal Adjustment in Southern Europe. *Journal of Public Policy* 28 (02):229-53.

Callan, Tim, John Walsh, and James S. Coleman. 2005. Tax Expenditures. In *Budget Perspectives 2006*, edited by ESRI, 47-60. Dublin: ESRI.

Conefrey, Thomas, and John Fitz Gerald. 2010. Managing Housing Bubbles in Regional Economies Under EMU: Ireland and Spain. *National Institute Economic Review* 211 (1):91-108.

Crouch, Colin. 2002. The Euro and Labour Market and Wage Policies. In *European States and the Euro: Europeanization, Variation, and Convergence*, edited by Kenneth Dyson. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Crouch, Colin. 2009. Privatised Keynesianism: An Unacknowledged Policy Regime. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 11:382-99.

Dadush, Uri. 2010. Paradigm Lost: The Euro in Crisis. Washington DC: Carnegie Foundation. http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Paradigm_Lost.pdf

de la Rosiere, Jacques. 2009. The High-Level Group on Financial Supervision in the EU. Brussels: European Commission. http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/finances/docs/de_larosiere_report_en.pdf

Döring, Herbert. 2001. Parliamentary Agenda Control and Legislative Outcomes in Western Europe. *Legislative Studies Quarterly* XXVI (1):145-65.

Döring, Herbert. 2004. *Patterns of Parliamentary Behaviour: Passage of Legislation Across Western Europe*. Ashgate.

Dyson, Kenneth, ed. 2008. *The Euro at Ten: Europeanization, Power, and Convergence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Economics: Free Exchange. 2010. Is Fiscal Consolidation Likely to Boost Growth? In *The Economist*. London. http://www.economist.com/blogs/freeexchange/2010/08/austerity

Economist. 2010. The Budget Wars: One More Unto the Breach. *The Economist* 1 July.

Eurointelligence. 2010. German banks have foul credits of over €200bn - highest level in the EU. *Eurointelligence* 29 June.

European Commission. 2010. Public Finances in EMU 2010. In *European Economy 4*. Brussels: European Commission. http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2010/pdf/ee-2010-4_en.pdf

Featherstone, Kevin. 2005. Introduction: Modernization and the Structural Constraints of Greek Politics. *West European Politics* 28 (2):223-41.

Franzese, Robert J., and Peter A. Hall. 2000. Institutional Dimensions of Coordinating Wage Bargaining and Wage Policy. In *Unions, Employers, and Central Banks*, edited by Torben Iversen, Jonas Pontusson, and David Soskice, 174-204. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Garrett, Geoffrey, and Phil Way. 1999. Public Sector Unions, Corporatism and Macroeconomic Performance. *Comparative Political Studies* 32 (4):411-34.

Giavazzi, Francesco. 2010. The 'stimulus debate' and the Golden Rule of Mountain Climbing. *Vox* 22 July 2010.

Hall, Peter A., and Robert Franzese. 1998. Mixed Signals: Central Bank Independence, Coordinated Wage Bargaining, and European Monetary Union. *International Organization* 52 (3):505-35.

Hall, Peter A., and David Soskice. 2001. An Introduction to Varieties of Capitalism. In *Varieties of Capitalism: the Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*, edited by Peter A. Hall, and David Soskice, 1-70. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hallerberg, Mark, and Joshua Bridwell. 2008. Fiscal Policy Co-ordination and Discipline: The Crisis of the Stability and Growth Pact and Domestic Fiscal Regimes In *The Euro at Ten: Europeanization, Power and Convergence*, edited by Kenneth Dyson. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hallerberg, Mark, Rolf Rainer Strauch, and Jürgen von Hagen. 2009. *Fiscal Governance in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hallerberg, Mark, Rolf Strauch, and Jürgen von Hagen. 2007. The Design of Fiscal Rules and Forms of Governance in European Union Countries. *European Journal of Political Economy* 23 (2):338-59.

Hardiman, Niamh. 2009. The Impact of the Crisis on the Irish Political System. Dublin: UCD Geary Institute. http://geary.ucd.ie/images/Publications/WorkingPapers/gearywp200932.pdf

Hardiman, Niamh. 2010. Economic Crisis and Public Sector Reform: Lessons from Ireland. Dublin: UCD Geary Institute. http://www.ucd.ie/geary/static/publications/workingpapers/gearywp201013.pdf

Hardiman, Niamh, and Muiris MacCarthaigh. 2011 forthcoming. The UnPolitics of New Public Management in Ireland. In *Administrative Reforms and Democratic Governance*, edited by Jean-Michel Eymeri-Douzans, and Jon Pierre. London: Routledge. http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415557214/

Heipertz, Martin, and Amy Verdun. 2010. *Ruling Europe: The Politics of the Stability and Growth Pact*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Honohan, Patrick. 2010. The Irish Banking Crisis: Regulatory and Financial Stability Policy 2003-2008. A Report to the Minister for Finance from the Governor of the Central Bank. Dublin: Central Bank. http://www.centralbank.ie/frame_main.asp?pg=nws%5Farticle%2Easp%3Fid%3D518&nv=nws_nav.asp

Houses of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on European Affairs. 2010. Fourteenth Report - European Monetary Union: Challenges and Options. Dublin: Government Publications Office. http://euaffairs.ie/publications/14th-Report-EMU-Challenges-Options.pdf

ICTU. 2010. ICTU Submission to the Investigation into the Causes of the Banking Crisis. Dublin: Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

http://www.ictu.ie/publications/fulllist/submission-to-the-investigation-into-the-banking-system/
Kelly, Elish, Seamus McGuinness, and Philip O'Connell. 2009. Benchmarking, Social Partnership and Higher Remuneration: Wage Setting Institutions and the Public-Private Wage Gap in Ireland. *Economic and Social Review* 40 (3):339-70.
Krugman, Paul. 2010. A Terrible Ugliness Is Born. *New York Times* The Conscience of a Liberal (29 June).
Lanchester, John. 2010. *Whoops! Why Everyone Owes Everyone and No-One Can Pay*. London: Allen Lane.
Lane, Philip. 1998. On the Cyclicality of Irish Fiscal Policy. *Economic and Social Review* 29 (1):1-16.
Marin, Dalia. 2010. Germany's Super Competitiveness: A Helping hand from Eastern Europe. *Vox* 20 June.
Marsh, David. 2009. *The Euro: The Politics of the New Global Currency*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Marzinotto, Benedicta, Jean Pisani-Ferry, and Andre Sapir. 2010. Two Crises, Two Responses. In *Bruegel Policy Brief*. Brussels: Bruegel Foundation. http://www.bruegel.org/fileadmin/files/admin/publications/policy_briefs/2009/January/pb_2010-01_final.pdf
McKay, David. 1999. The Political Sustainability of European Monetary Union. *British Journal of Political Science* 29:463-85.
Melitz, Jacques. 2010. Eurozone reform: A proposal. Centre for Economic Policy Research. http://www.cepr.org/pubs/PolicyInsights/PolicyInsight48.pdf
Merkel, Wolfgang, Alexander Petring, Christian Henkes, and Christoph Egle. 2007. *Social Democracy in Power: The Capacity to Reform*. London: Routledge.
Moghadam, Reza, and Jose Vinals. 2010. Cross-Cutting Themes in Economies with Large Banking Systems. Washington DC: IMF. http://www.imf.org/external/np/pp/eng/2010/041610.pdf
Molina, Óscar, and Martin Rhodes. 2007. The Political Economy of Adjustment in Mixed Market Economies: A Study of Spain and Italy. In *Beyond Varieties of Capitalism: Conflict, Contradictions and Complementarities in the European Economy*, edited by Bob Hancké, Martin Rhodes, and Mark Thatcher, 223-52. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Münchau, Wolfgang. 2010. The End of Muddling Through Is Nigh. *Eurointelligence* 29.6.2010.
O'Donnell, Rory. 2001. Towards Post-Corporatist Concertation in Europe. In *Interlocking Dimensions of European Integration*, edited by Helen Wallace, 305-21. London: Palgrave.
O'Donnell, Rory. 2008. The Partnership State. In *Contesting the State: Lessons from the Irish Case*, edited by Maura Adshead, Peadar Kirby, and Michelle Millar. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
O'Donnell, Rory, and Colm O'Reardon. 2002. Ireland: Recasting Social Partnership in a New Context. In *Wage Policy in the Eurozone*, edited by Philippe Pochet, 195-216. Brussels: PIE-Peter Lang.
O'Leary, Jim. 2002. Benchmarking the Benchmarkers. *ESRI Quarterly Economic Commentary* Winter.

O'Leary, Jim. 2010. External Surveillance of Irish Fiscal Policy During the Boom. Maynooth: National University of Ireland Maynooth. http://eprints.nuim.ie/1991/1/N210-10.pdf
O'Rourke, Kevin. 2010. What Do Markets Want? *Eurointelligence* (3.6.2010).
OECD. 2009. Taxing Wages 2007-8. Paris: OECD.
Ongaro, E. 2010. *Public Management Reform and Modernization: Trajectories of Administrative Change in Italy, France, Greece, Portugal and Spain*. London: Edward Elgar.
Pérez, Sofia A. 2002. Monetary Union and Wage Bargaining Institutions in the EU - Extrapolating from some Member State Experiences. *Comparative Political Studies* 35 (10):1198-227.
Pontusson, Jonas. 2005. *Inequality and Prosperity: Social Europe vs Liberal America*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
Regling, Klaus, and Max Watson. 2010. A Preliminary Report on the Sources of Ireland's Banking Crisis. Dublin: Government Publications Office. http://www.rte.ie./news/2010/0609/reglingwatson.pdf
Reinhart, Carmen M., and Kenneth Rogoff. 2009. *This Time Is Different: Eight Centuries of Financial Folly*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Rodrik, Dani. 2007a. The Inescapable Trilemma of the World Economy. http://rodrik.typepad.com/dani_rodriks_weblog/2007/06/the-inescapable.html
Rodrik, Dani. 2007b. *One Economics, Many Recipes: Globalization, Institutions, and Economic Growth*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Strøm, Kaare. 1998. Parliamentary Committees in European Democracies. In *The New Roles of Parliamentary Committees*, edited by L.D. Longley, and R.H. Davidson. London: Frank Cass.
Van Rompuy, Herman. 2010. Remarks by Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, following the second meeting of the Task Force on Economic Governance. Brussels: European Council. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/114979.pdf
Wells, Robin, and Paul Krugman. 2010. Our Giant Banking Crisis - What To Expect. In *New York Review of Books*. http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/may/13/our-giant-banking-crisis/?pagination=false
Wolf, Martin. 2010. Fear must not blind us to deflation's dangers. *Financial Times* 8 June.