



# 2019 Annual Report: Executive Overview

Whitaker Institute for Innovation and  
Societal Change

Date: May 2020



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## Directors Message

The Whitaker Institute in 2019 continued to provide an institutional framework for undertaking high quality research in business and social sciences and for the development of a vibrant research culture. Our research output continued to be significant ranging from peer-reviewed journal articles, books, book chapters, published reports, conference publications, conference contributions and policy briefs.

As a major research institute committed to advancing public policy and business practice and to taking an active part in shaping Ireland's future, the Whitaker Institute has an important role to play in gathering together policy makers, business leaders, researchers, students and members of the public to exchange knowledge and ideas. In that regard, I am delighted to note the tremendous success of several high-profile events organized by the Institute in 2019, as detailed in this annual report.

T.K. Whitaker's plan for economic development in the late 1950s transformed Ireland from a closed, stagnant economy to one of the most open, dynamic economies in the world. The threats and opportunities associated with issues such as climate change and Brexit require further transformations. Researchers at the Whitaker Institute, working in multidisciplinary research clusters, have been busy producing research in these areas. We are committed to doing more.

The Institute continued to play a critical role at NUI Galway in helping researchers in the business disciplines and social sciences to identify and apply for external research funding. This report outlines the strong performance of Whitaker members during 2019 in securing national and international research funding.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my colleagues on the Institute's Executive Management Team (Elaine Wallace, Angela Sice and Courtney Yanta) for their dedication and hard work during the year.

Prof. Alan Ahearne  
Director

## Scholarly Outputs

**Table 1:**

2019 Whitaker Institute Publication Counts derived from NUI Galway's Institutional Research Information System (report run 30/01/20)

Publication Type	Count for 2019
Book	10
Book Chapter	56
Conference Contribution	106
Conference Publication	58
Edited Book	8
Other Journal	3
Other Publication	76
Peer Reviewed	280
Published Report	31
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>628</b>

## Media Coverage / Selected News Items

### 2019 Monsignor de Brún Memorial Lecture



*Philip Lane, Governor of the Central Bank of Ireland*

The 2019 Monsignor Pádraig de Brún Memorial Lecture, entitled Climate Change and the Irish Financial System, addressed the implications of climate change for the Irish financial system. Delivered by Governor of the Central Bank, Philip Lane, the lecture emphasized all sectors will be affected by climate change, whether through exposure to weather-related shocks or the economy-wide transition to low-carbon means of production and consumption. These structural changes will require considerable investment by households, firms and the government to retrofit buildings and switch to low-carbon production techniques and transportation methods.

The biennial public lecture is held in honour of Monsignor de Brún who served as University President from 1945 until 1959. The memorial lectures have been running since the 1960's with Professor Stephen Hawking giving a lecture in 1994 on "Life in the Universe".

To read more about the event, see press reaction and listen back to Governor Lane's lecture, click [here](#).

## Whitaker Research Day 2019



*Professor John McHale, Dean of the College of Business, Public Policy and Law; Professor Martina Lawless, Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI); Professor Alan Ahearne, Director of the Whitaker Institute*

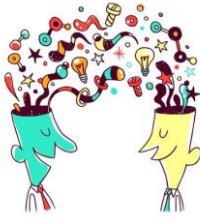
The Whitaker Institute held its fourth annual Whitaker Research Day on 10 April 2019. More than 70 staff and students registered for the event which took place in the Hardiman Research Building at NUI Galway. The theme of the day was Brexit with three panels discussing different affects Brexit could have on Ireland.

A highlight of the day was the plenary session by Professor Martina Lawless, Associate Research Professor at the ESRI. Professor Lawless highlighted how Irish households and business are heavily reliant on trade with the UK and outlined the effects of Brexit on such trade. The day also featured poster presentations from across the Institute, with 20 posters from 11 research clusters. Maeve McArdle (Applied Systems Thinking) won the prize for best PhD poster entitled 'Behavioural change for a circular economy.' Second place went to Aoife Ni Fhlatharta (Environment, Development and Sustainability) for her poster entitled 'Ensuring Rural Sustainability? The Necessity for Positive Discrimination Towards Female Entrepreneurs in the Rural'.

For more information on the day, and to view Prof Martina Lawless' slides, click [here](#).



## Whitaker's Ideas Forum



The year brought another successful round of the weekly Whitaker Ideas Forum, which saw seventeen speakers from eleven different research clusters. There was a wide range of topics discussed including effects of flood risks on the Irish Housing market, domestic violence and businesses in the global south and diasporic links and on-going transnational relationships in migration and return. Each seminar was followed by a dialogue between the presenter and attendees, whereby the audience was encouraged to ask questions and engage in dialogue.

## New Seminar Series: How to Publish in Top Academic Journals



The Whitaker Institute and the JE Cairnes School of Business and Economics were delighted to host a new seminar series entitled: How to Publish in Top Academic Journals. Each seminar featured a senior editor from a highly-ranked Business/ Economics academic journal, with a chaired discussion and Q&A session following the presentation. Refreshments were provided after each seminar which helped to facilitate networking and informal discussion. In the first three seminars, we were pleased to welcome Professor Chris Chapman, University of Bristol; Professor Becky Reuber, University of Toronto, and Dr Catherine Welch, University of Sydney Business School. In the fourth seminar, our own members Professor Kieran Conboy and Professor Esther Tippmann provided expert advice on how researchers can move from data gathering and analysis, to planning journal publications, along with overcoming key challenges in the journal publication process. For more information and to view upcoming seminars in this series, click [here](#).

## Celebrating 10 years of Marine Economics and Policy Research at NUI Galway



Top: Dr Paul Connolly, CEO, Marine Institute, Dr Stephen Hynes, director of SEMRU, NUI Galway and Prof Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, President of NUI Galway at the opening of the 10th Annual Marine Economics and Policy Research Symposium held in the Marine Institute, Oranmore.

Bottom: Speakers and chairpersons from day one of the 10th Annual Marine Economics and Policy Research Symposium held in the Marine Institute, Oranmore.

The 10th Annual Marine Economics and Policy Research Symposium was held on Thursday and Friday the 28th and 29th of November at the Marine Institute in Oranmore. Organised each year by the Socio-Economic Marine Research Unit (SEMURU) of the Whitaker Institute, NUI Galway, with the support of the Marine Institute, the one and a half day event provides an update on a wide range of policy topics related to the marine sector in Ireland and further afield.

To mark the 10th year of the event, the symposium showcased the international linkages that have been established between SEMRU and partner institutes across a number of EU projects such as ATLAS, MOSES, MERCES, SOPHIE and ALICE. Speakers included academics and marine policy makers. It was a packed agenda with 19 speakers across the two days. International speakers included Prof Nick Hanley, University of Glasgow, Dr Adriana Ressurreição, Centre of Marine Sciences, Faro, Portugal and Dr Rolf Groeneveld of Wageningen University, the Netherlands. Read more about the event [here](#).

## Policy Briefs



This year saw continued success with Whistaker's popular Policy Brief Series. The briefs, provide succinct yet informative analyses on some of Ireland's current public policy issues reflecting a variety of research topics being conducted by Institute-affiliated members. 2019 saw the launch of ten new policy briefs, to bring the total in the series to fifty-four. Topics ranged from Extended Working Life Policies, Blue Care, Implementing Whistleblowing Systems in addition to many others. To read published briefs or to sign up to receive new policy briefs click [here](#).

## Whistleblowing: Toward a New Theory – Book Launch



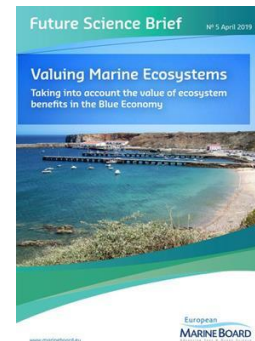
On 4 April a book launch was held for 'Whistleblowing: Toward a New Theory' the latest book from Professor Kate Kenny (Work, Organizations and Society cluster). An introduction to the book is provided by Dr Tom Clonan and Professor Ricca Edmondson. The financial industry, rife with scandals, is the focus of Professor Kate Kenny's penetrating global study. Introducing



whistleblowers from the United States, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and Ireland working at companies like Wachovia, Halifax Bank of Scotland, and Countrywide–Bank of America, *Whistleblowing* suggests practices that would make it less perilous to hold the powerful to account and would leave us all better off.

## Valuing Marine Ecosystems

Scientific Director of the Whitaker Institute, Stephen Hynes, co-authored a new report on 'Valuing Marine Ecosystems' in the European Marine Board. Click [here](#) to download the report.



## Launch of Ireland's Ocean Economy Report



*Minister for agriculture, food and marine Michael Creed TD discusses the SEMRU Report on Ireland's Ocean Economy Report with co-author Dr Stephen Hynes, SEMRU, NUIG.*

The Whitaker Institute's **Socio-Economic Marine Research Unit (SEMURU) cluster** released its latest update on the performance of Ireland's Ocean Economy.

Coinciding with the Our Ocean Wealth Summit and the Government's Annual Review of its Integrated Marine Plan – Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth, the report presents a complete and comparable profile across thirteen marine related industries in Ireland.

The latest figures were announced by Minister for Agriculture, Food & the Marine, Michael Creed, TD at the Annual Ocean Wealth Summit in Cork on 10 June. The 2019 Summit saw national and global leaders discussing the health of our oceans. This included senior Government and UN representatives from island states sharing experiences on oceans' health and climate change.

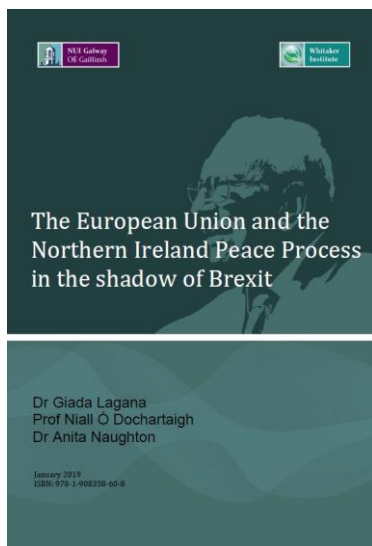
Read more and download the report [here](#)

## New Report on Strengthening Disaster Resilience by Tom McDermott



**SEMURU** member, Dr Tom McDermott, has co-authored a new report for the Asian Development Bank. The chapter, entitled 'Strengthening Disaster Resilience', is the thematic chapter in the annual [Asian Development Outlook report for 2019](#).

## The European Union and the Northern Ireland Peace Process in the shadow of Brexit



In February the Whitaker Institute launched a new report, written by Giada Lagana, Niall Ó Dochartaigh and Anita Naughton entitled 'The European Union and the Northern Ireland Peace Process in the shadow of Brexit'. The report highlights the substantial and deeply-rooted character of European support for the search for a political solution in Northern Ireland. It is based on a symposium at the National University of Ireland Galway in April 2018 that brought together several of the architects of the European Union peace programmes in Northern Ireland for the first time in twenty years, to reflect on the role the EU played in the peace process. The report looks back at the EU role and discusses the challenges posed by Brexit twenty years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, at a time when EU involvement in the peace process and cross-border relations in Ireland are at the centre of public debates.

## Violence, Space and the Archives Conference



*Co-organiser Gary Hussey presents his paper in a panel chaired by Prof Miguel Centeno at the Violence Space and the Archives Conference, NUI Galway, May 2019*

The Conflict, Humanitarianism and Security Research Cluster co-organised a conference on Violence, Space and the Archives in NUI Galway on 23-24 May 2019 with almost thirty speakers from across Europe and North America. The event brought together archivists, political scientists, sociologists, historians, geographers, human rights scholars and others to explore key themes at the intersection between violence, space and the archive including: archiving in times of conflict; conflict and digital archives; the silence of the archive; collective memory and resistance.

Among the highlights were keynotes by Patricia Sleeman (UNHCR digital archivist) on Archives in a time of chaos and by Prof Patrick Joyce (author of *The State of Freedom*) on The Politics of Forgetting. The conference included a symposium with Prof Brendan O'Leary- joining

by video-link from Philadelphia- Margaret O'Callaghan (QUB) Mary Harris (NUIG) and Niall Ó Dochartaigh on O'Leary's new 3 volume 'A Treatise on Northern Ireland' published by OUP in April 2019. Other speakers included Breandán MacSuibhne (author of 'End of Outrage') and Deborah Kaple (author of 'Gulag Boss: A Soviet Memoir'). Read more [here](#).

## Dr Lorraine Morgan and Dr Su-Ming Khoo win President's Award for Research Excellence



*Dr Lorraine Morgan and Dr Su-Ming Khoo with President Ciarán O hÓgartaigh*

Congratulations to Whitaker Institute members Dr Lorraine Morgan, cluster leader of Agile and Open Innovation, and Dr Su-Ming Khoo, cluster leader of Environment, Development and Sustainability who both received awards at the 2019 Research & Innovation Symposium and President's Award for Research Excellence. Dr Lorraine Morgan earned one of the Early Stage

Research Award while Dr Su-Ming Khoo was one of the recipients of the Research Supervisor Award while. Read more about it [here](#).

## InterTradelreland All-Island Innovation Program



The Whitaker Institute was delighted to host three events as part of the InterTradelreland All-Island Innovation Programme. In January, we welcomed Joe Haslam, Executive Director of Owners Scaleup Program at IE University, who delivered a lecture and masterclass on growth through innovation. In June, Whitaker hosted a

panel event on 'Scaling a Tech Business: Lessons Learned' at the Galway Technology Centre. Chaired by Dr Majella Giblin of the Whitaker Institute, panellists on the day included Paul McElvaney, CEO of LearningPool; John Brosnan, CEO of Netfort; and Mary Ryan, Assistant Director at Westbic. Finally, in October Prof Nuran Acur from the University of Glasgow hosted a lecture and masterclass which explored the role of open innovation in SMEs.

## Call to Revisit Tax Relief on Pensions in Ireland



*Dr Emer Mulligan and Deputy Kate O'Connell, Fine Gael TD.*

Whitaker Institute member Dr Emer Mulligan of the Performance Management research cluster has co-authored a new report on the Pensions System in Ireland titled 'Pensions in Ireland: The Perspectives of Irish Citizens and Implications for the Irish Pension System and Reforms.'

The report was launched by Deputy Kate O'Connell, Fine Gael TD, concludes that the Irish Pension System is not fit for purpose, calls for revisiting the tax relief provisions on pensions, and suggests policymakers need to begin to listen to what citizens want with respect to pensions. Download the report [here](#).



## Survey of Marine and Coastal Overseas tourism in Ireland



*Seamus Neely, CE, Donegal County Council; Dr Stephen Hynes, SEMRU, NUI Galway; Cllr. Niamh Kennedy, Leas Cathaoirleach, Donegal County Council; and Doug Allan, Wildlife Cameraman*

The Whitaker Institute's Socio-Economic Marine Research Unit (SEMURU) has released a report that presents estimates of the value of coastal and marine overseas tourism activities in the Republic of Ireland for the year 2018. Launched at the Donegal Marine Tourism Conference, the report presents a profile of overseas tourism activity in coastal Ireland across 20 coastal and marine activities.

SEMURU carried out a survey of overseas visitors to Ireland, funded by the Marine Institute through its Marine Research Programme. The purpose of the survey was to estimate what proportion of total holiday expenditure was in coastal areas (coastal tourism) and what proportion was on undertaking marine related leisure activities (marine tourism). Download the report [here](#).



## Whitaker Institute / Cairnes School Inaugural Professorial Lecture Series



*Top Left to Right: Mark Gantly, Professor Esther Tippmann, John Devitt, Professor Kate Kenny  
Bottom Left to Right: Senator Pádraig Ó Céidigh, Professor Jonathan Levie, Tomás Ó Síocháin, Professor Alma McCarthy, Professor Alan Ahearne, Dr Tom Acton.*

The Whitaker Institute in association with the J.E. Cairnes School of Business, was delighted to launch the 'Cairnes School/Whitaker Institute Inaugural Professorial Lecture Series' which featured our four newly appointed professors. The events, which were conversation style, saw the Professors in dialogue with chairs, whom were notable in their fields.

Professor Alma McCarthy kicked off the series on 9 October with a discussion on talent management and development in the public sector, chaired by Tomás Ó Síocháin, CEO of the Western Development Commission (WDC).

Professor Kate Kenny continued the series on 23 October with a discussion on Whistleblowing and ethics, chaired by John Devitt of Transparency Ireland.

Following this, on 6 November, Professor Esther Tippmann shared her expertise on the challenges of developing subsidiary companies in Ireland in a conversation with Mark Gantly, President of the American Chamber of Commerce and Senior R&D Director at Hewlett Packard Enterprise.

The series closed on 27 November with Professor Jonathan Levie who discussed entrepreneurship and regional development with Senator Pádraig Ó Céidigh, Entrepreneur and Independent Senator in Seanad Éireann.

## Institutional Events

Table 2: 2019 Events Summary

Event Type	Total for 2019
Conferences	1
Colloquiums and Symposiums	6
Industry Events	3
Public Lectures	7
Launch Events	1
Seminars	47
Workshops	5
Total	70

## Competitive Funding

Funding Body	Title of Project	Principle Investigator	Amount Awarded
<b>Irish Research Council</b>			<b>€231,765</b>
	Strengthening Public Administration Institutions Through Digital Technologies: Investigating Effective Adoption of Digital Technologies in Tax Administrations	Dr Emer Mulligan	€219,999
	New foundations 2018: Village Plan for the future of development of Moycullen, Co. Galway - MCDA Plan 2030	Dr Patrick Collins	€11,766

Other Government		€2,190,679	
Science Foundation Ireland	D-REAL: SFI Centre for Research Training in Digitally-Enhanced Reality - David Healy	Dr Jane Walsh	€104,500
Interreg IV	AHFES - A quadruple helix Atlantic Area healthy food Ecosystem for growth of SME's	Dr Jane Walsh	€161,824
H2020	RURALIZATION	Dr Maura Farrell	€500,150
Gender-Net Plus	Violence against women migrants and refugees: Analysing causes and effective policy response (GBV-MIG)	Dr Niamh Reilly	€173,562
Teagasc	Walsh Fellowship - Measuring Labour Input On Irish Dairy Farms Using The Teagasc National Farm Survey	Dr Doris Laepple	€88,000
Marine Institute	Usage of Irish Seas and Coastal Ecosystems For Tourism Development (Uisce Tourism)	Dr Stephen Hynes	€375,631
Marine Institute	Modelling Ireland's Maritime Transport Industry (MIMTI)	Prof Alan Ahearne	€366,756
EU Erasmus +	Big Ideas for Better Schools: Leading 'big issue' transformation in schools – diversity, democracy and equity	Prof. Gerry MacRuairc, Dr Manuela Heinz and Dr. Cornelia Connolly	€74,462
SEAI	Social acceptability of wind farms and electricity export; a discrete choice econometric approach	Dr Thomas Van Rensburg	€233,796
UNFPA Mongolia	Study on the Economic Costs of Gender-based Violence in Mongolia	Dr Nata Duvvury	€71,998
UNFPA & UN women NY	UNFPA and UN women NY	Dr Nata Duvvury	€40,000

## Major Research Projects

### Strengthening Public Administration Institutions Through Digital Technologies: Investigating Effective Adoption of Digital Technologies in Tax Administrations

This project aims to carry out a rigorous study of how the contextual, organisational, technological and human factors interact in the adoption of data analytics and digital technologies in tax administrations. Through in-depth interdisciplinary case studies of selected tax authorities that have adopted and used data analytics and other digital technologies, we will: 1) develop a refined understanding and model of successful digital technology adoption in public institutions, 2) translate findings into guidelines for decision-makers on how to effectively deploy digital technologies, in a transparent and accountable manner; and 3) Identify necessary technical updates to standards related to the deployment of the respective digital technologies in public institutions. Read more [here](#).



### AHFES - A quadruple helix Atlantic Area healthy food Ecosystem for growth of SME's

A quadruple helix Atlantic Area healthy food Ecosystem for growth of SMEs (AHFES) is a project that seeks to improve the competitiveness and growth of SMEs in the value chain of healthy eating and daily life, contributing to the development of a transnational innovation ecosystem that helps entities to access information, partners and markets and align their products and services to the needs and expectations of the consumer. Specifically, AHFES's mission is to achieve an ecosystem of healthy food in the Atlantic Area of four propellers (public authorities, industry, research and citizens) for the growth of SMEs.



### RURALIZATION



European economic, social and territorial cohesion is threatened by the unequal development of growing urban and declining rural areas. RURALIZATION develops a novel perspective for rural areas to trigger a process of ruralisation as counterforce to urbanisation, that is, a development towards a new rural frontier offering new generations stimulating opportunities for economic and social sustainability within a rural context. These opportunities will serve both existing inhabitants of rural areas, to overcome the dilemma between place attachment and lack of economic opportunities, and rural newcomers who bring novel and innovative perspectives and relational networks to rural areas. RURALIZATION will utilise both quantitative and qualitative methods to develop innovations and to make these transferable to other contexts. Innovative practices will be selected by two methods. First, by the use of statistical data and foresight analysis to find areas that deviate from the general trend of rural decline and distinguish, using a multi-actor approach, the instruments and approaches that may contribute to these trend breaches. Secondly, through the study of new approaches and instruments in practice, and by developing these in a multi-actor context, to be applied in new contexts of application. Based on the call, innovations will be on facilitating rural newcomers, rural jobs, new entrants into farming and access to land for new generations. In foresight analysis rural dreams

of new generations will be investigated and alternative rural futures will be designed and reflected with rural stakeholders and focus groups in terms of possibility, probability and preferability. Actions will be formulated to make positive futures reality. The outcomes of the project will result in novel options for policy makers and practical tools for rural actors. An extensive communication campaign will disseminate the project and its results.

## SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY OF WIND FARMS AND ELECTRICITY EXPORT; A DISCRETE CHOICE ECONOMETRIC APPROACH

Economic growth requires a supply of affordable energy. The improved cost effectiveness of wind-energy has made it increasingly viable technology for this function. Wind-farms are associated with community-objection due to the perceived disruption they create. This can undermine swift transition to wind-based energy production. The EU Renewable Energy Directive sets out to achieve 20% of its energy production from renewable sources by 2020. The directive allows member-states to import energy from renewable sources as a means of achieving their individual renewable energy targets. Some argue that the flexibility associated with the trade of renewable energy between nations can be mutually beneficial to both countries, resulting in increased energy security, lower electricity prices and system efficiencies. The proposed research is cognisant of this fact and developments in EU and international policy regarding international trade in the renewable energy sector. It poses a timely and critical question: How does the export of renewable energy affect the social acceptability of wind-farm development and what is the nature of any social costs? It investigates how the social-acceptance issue impacts costs associated with wind-farm deployment. The project will investigate the preferences for the development of export-based wind-farms using a choice experiment, a public survey instrument and econometric analyses. Outputs from the project will have a lasting impact on the direction of research in renewable energy. The proposed research will also have direct impact on international renewable-energy development policy by informing estimates of the social and economic costs associated with wind-energy exportation.



## Usage of Irish Seas and Coastal Ecosystems For Tourism Development (Uisce Tourism)



*Marine Institute*  
*Foras na Mara*

Since the publication of Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth – An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland (HOOW-IMP), there has been an increased recognition of the importance of Ireland's marine natural resource as a national asset. This is particularly true for tourism and recreation in marine and coastal areas. With marine assets consisting of 900,000km<sup>2</sup> of seas and a coastline stretching 7,700 km, the Irish marine and coastal tourism sector has the potential to be a key driver of growth in what are often rural areas with limited other opportunities for economic development. There is a need however to establish a comprehensive understanding of Ireland's marine tourism and leisure industry, to accurately estimate the potential impact of new policy measures aimed at developing the sector. While some noteworthy research has been carried out on the sector the National Marine Research & Innovation Strategy 2017–2021 notes that research in this area is "Ad-hoc" and suggest other topics worthy of further research. With these topics in mind and building on past research this project proposes to produce an audit of marine leisure enterprises and the key 'blue' assets, beaches, piers, cliffs, etc. that are used by such enterprises. The project will also examine the attitudes of local communities and management towards the impact of marine related tourism



activities in their area and provide guidelines for the appropriate development of 'blue' asset based social enterprises. It will also employ past marine tourist survey datasets to develop a model of demand for marine tourism activity in Ireland that estimates the influence of the characteristics of tourists on marine activity participation. It is envisaged that outputs from the project will lead to the identification of strategic policies that could be adopted by Government to develop a holistically sustainable sector in the long term.

## Modelling Ireland's Maritime Transport Industry (MIMTI)

The overall objective of this research project is to explore how the maritime transport (MT) industry can support the growth of the Irish economy. As an internationally trading island economy, economic activity in Ireland is highly dependent on maritime transportation. Consumers depend on the MT industry to obtain imported consumer goods; Ireland's export sectors depend on the MT industry to bring their products to markets abroad; and Irish manufacturing industries depend on the MT industry for delivery of imported intermediate inputs as part of their global supply chains. As a small open economy, growth in Ireland depends critically on the international competitiveness of the economy, as identified in *Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth* (2012). The costs and efficiency of the MT industry have a marked bearing on this country's competitiveness.



Although it is clear that there exists a strong interconnectedness between the MT industry and Ireland's macroeconomy, research is needed to better understand and quantify the macroeconomic effects of changes in Ireland's maritime transport industry. A key focus of this project will be on the construction of new economic models to examine how increased investment in Irish ports may be expected to boost the wider Irish economy. We will use these models to evaluate whether the National Ports Policy (2013), which introduced categorisation of the ports sector, is meeting its core objectives, and examine what reforms, if any, to the policy are needed in light of national and global developments since 2013 (for example, Brexit, Project Ireland 2040, and the transition to a low-carbon economy).

## Research Infrastructure

### Local Authority Finances



Winner of the 2014 WA and the 2015 World Summit Award, the website [www.localauthorityfinances.com](http://www.localauthorityfinances.com) aims at increasing awareness of how taxpayers' money is spent locally by providing cross-council information on local authority spending and income, disaggregated by expenditure function and revenue source. Aimed at improving transparency and accountability, the interactive

web application can be used to readily access and more easily understand individual council income and spending budgets, but also cross-council comparisons, with a view to identifying differences in local authority spending and income, but also star performers and council laggards. The project will contribute to a wider debate on the future role of local government in Ireland, but also on current issues relating to, for example, local authority financial performance, balance between business and non-business local taxes (e.g. commercial rates versus local property tax), decentralisation of expenditure functions (including social housing), planned city

council boundary extensions and local council mergers, and the future governance of local governments e.g. the role of Chief Executive versus directly-elected Mayor. Over the longer term, this project will, by highlighting cross-council differences and best performing councils, help to measure and, ultimately, improve the financial performance of local authorities. This project is of interest to a number of different stakeholders, including local and national policymakers, political parties, media outlets, researchers and academics, and above all, communities, taxpayers and citizens. Click [here](#) to visit the website.

## Effective Research Supports

### Writers Retreat

In April, staff members took three days out to work intensively on papers for publication. The retreat ran from 9-11 April in the Connemara Coast Hotel, far enough away to allow participants to leave other work concerns behind, but near enough to be very manageable. The retreat was extremely popular this year, with a waiting list. Seventeen colleagues from across the Whitaker and beyond joined the retreat and the diverse group made for rich discussion and connections during break-times. Participants reported substantial progress on their projects including completing book proposals, full first drafts and revisions on paper. The value of the retreat is in the lack of distractions and meetings, the time to give to writing without being rushed, and the peace of mind that comes from advancing writing.

The December Whitaker Writers' Retreat, which ran from the 2<sup>nd</sup> until the 4<sup>th</sup> saw over twenty staff from the Whitaker and Moore Institutes spending some protected time away from the office working on a publication. Most of those in attendance were working on journal articles and substantial progress was made with many people reporting completed targets such as new papers outlined, first full drafts complete or revisions finished. It was very satisfying to finish the academic year with a sense of achievement. In feedback people emphasised the value of the flow they could achieve over an extended time without interruptions. *"I appreciated the flexibility that each participant was afforded in making the days the most productive for themselves."*



## Whitaker PhD Forum 2019



On 6th June 2019, the Whitaker Institute hosted its annual forum for NUI Galway PhD students, in the Hardiman Research Building. Targeted at students at all stages of their PhD, the event was fully subscribed, with 80 students registered for the one-day event.

The day consisted of a morning and afternoon session both of which provided invaluable information on the PhD journey, the Viva process, and life afterwards. Speakers on the day included Professor Alma McCarthy, Sinead Beacom Researcher Development Centre, Adjunct Professor Mary Cawley, Dr Rachel Hilliard, Tasos Mastopolous and Trish Finnan.

PhD posters were on display throughout the day, and poster sessions took place during coffee and lunch breaks. The poster sessions also facilitated interaction and networking. Attendees were provided with an online set of supporting materials from the speakers, as well as a copy of the recently updated PhD Viva Guide.



## Appendix



# WHITAKER INSTITUTE IN THE MEDIA 2019



112 Hits in National  
Media Outlets



16 International  
Media Articles



20 Hits in Local  
Media Outlets

**148 Media Mentions  
for Whitaker  
Members**



14 Radio  
Broadcasts



17 Printed Articles



8 Television  
Appearances



**109 ONLINE ARTICLES**

## IMPACT\*



10,778,334 PEOPLE REACHED



€530,860 WORTH OF PRESS

\*The data shown are only reflective of 59 out of the 226 media pieces  
Source: NUI Galway Press Office



## THE WHITAKER INSTITUTE ONLINE 2019

### TWITTER

**294,800**  
IMPRESSIONS



**3143**

PROFILE VISITS

**213**

NEW FOLLOWERS

### MAILING LIST

**218**



**20,581**

NEW SUBSCRIBERS

MAILOUTS OPENED

### WEBSITE

**31,300**

ENGAGEMENTS

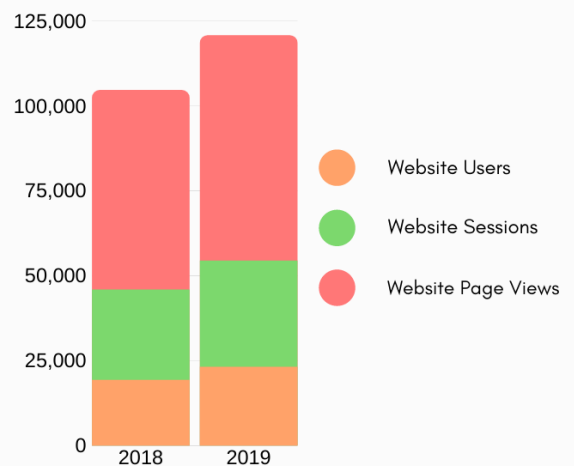


**66,322**

PAGE VIEWS

**22,731**

NEW USERS

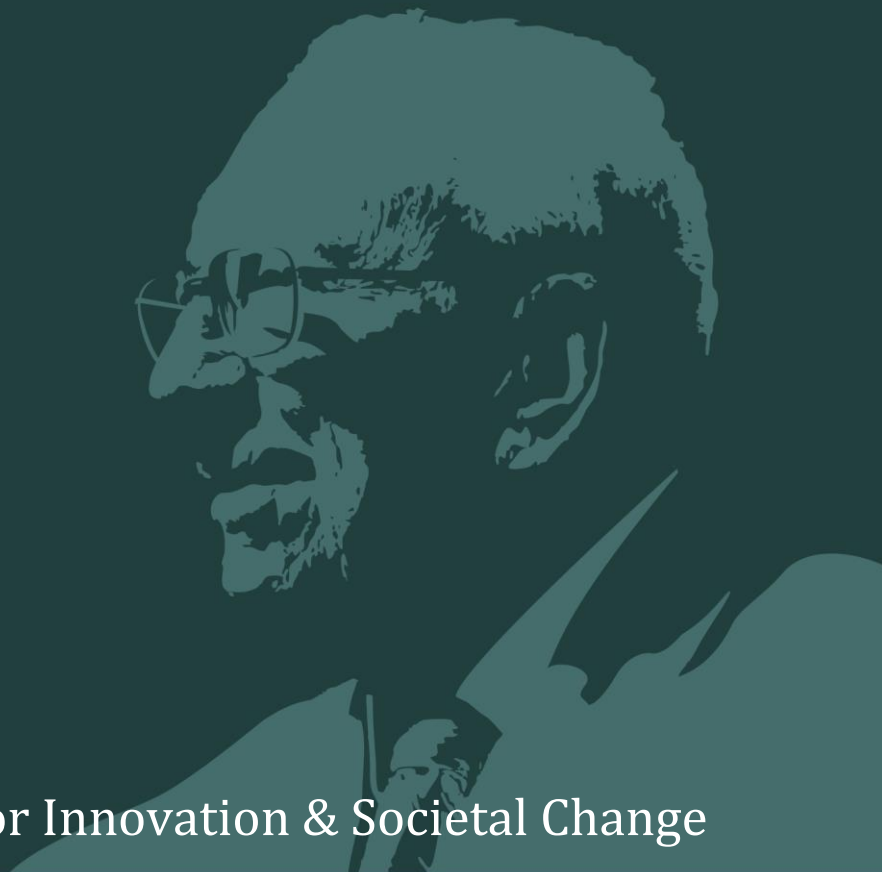




NUI Galway  
OÉ Gaillimh



Whitaker  
Institute



## Whitaker Institute for Innovation & Societal Change

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