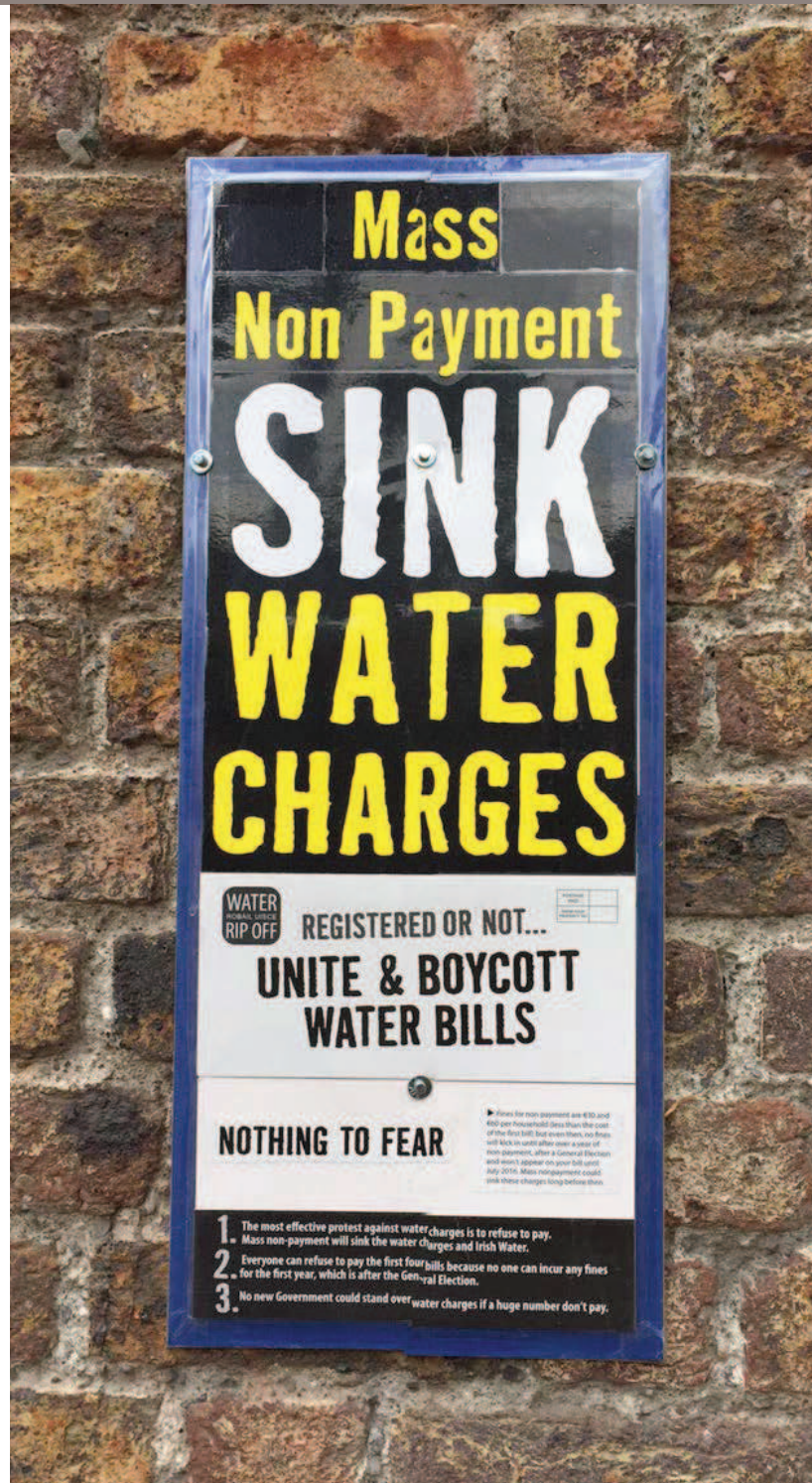


Perceptions of Water

Last year, water issues suddenly and unexpectedly, erupted in Ireland as a major political and social issue. Specifically, the responsibility of managing all forms and uses of water in Ireland has been shifted from local government to a new entity - Irish Water. Public debate has been furious, and activism against the changes has been obvious and often intense. By comparison, water rights and access have long been major environmental, economic, political and social concerns in the arid setting of Phoenix and Arizona. Building from a long-term social science study of water concerns, issues and rights based at ASU (the Global Ethnohydrology Study), the Water Institute at DCU is leading an Irish extension and application of the project designed to better understand the social and cultural dimensions of these emerging Irish concerns around water.

In this highly dynamic context, focus groups and interviews with activists and the wider public in Galway and Dublin are being conducted. This collaboration provides a unique opportunity to compare political and sustainability value associations with water and its stakeholders. Comparisons will also be made internationally between countries and regions of plentiful and scarce water supplies.

Globally, water is an increasingly scarce and contested resource. An improved understanding of how and why various societal groups are willing to share, conserve and pay for water is of vital importance to everyone.



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