

Socheolas

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Introduction

Editorial Board

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Introduction

Twelve months ago we launched the inaugural edition of *Socheolas - The Limerick Student Journal of Sociology*. The second edition followed within six months and we are delighted now to present the third edition of *Socheolas*, featuring six new articles by undergraduate students of Sociology at the University of Limerick. This edition again offers wide ranging critical discussion of key questions by student contributors. Topics addressed include the ongoing relevance of Marxist theory; critical evaluations of the welfare state; institutional racism in Irish society; critical analysis of digital technologies and two unique approaches to Irish identities, which are explored through discussion of hybridity, diaspora and symbolic ritual.

The first article in this edition, written by Grace O'Sullivan, focuses on the contemporary relevance of Marx's conflict-based theory of social change under capitalism, particularly as outlined in the pages of the Communist Manifesto. The paper is characterised by a sustained focus on the current applicability of the concept of class employed therein. O'Sullivan considers the concepts, theories and arguments involved in light of the historical situation they were intended/developed to interpret and thereafter considers the extent to which capitalism has evolved since the ideas of the Communist Manifesto were advanced. This attempt to assess subsequent inadequacies (or points of obsolescence) in certain aspects of Marx's thinking is coupled with well directed criticisms against the abundant superficial academic interpretations of Marx and related caricatures of Marxist theory.

Following this, Marese O'Brien presents a critical re-evaluation of The Beveridge Report, which is often hailed for its contribution to the foundations of the modern welfare state. However, O'Brien argues here that the Report was in fact oriented to beneficiaries who were imagined to be "white, male, British nationals in full employment". She challenges us to consider the report's impact on two key social categories – women and migrants. She argues that the provisions resulting from the Report served to marginalise immigrants and perpetuate women's economic dependency and position as unpaid carer.

In his article, James Carr also explores themes of marginalisation, by presenting a critique of the methods by which discrimination against Irish Muslims is measured. Carr outlines the ethnic and racial diversity of this religious and cultural community which includes second and third generation Irish-born Muslims, Irish converts to Islam and immigrants from an array of countries worldwide. As well as presenting evidence of

racism against this collectivity, Carr charts the inadequate and unsuitable recording and data collection protocols for hate crimes and discrimination and theorises this as a form of institutional discrimination.

Offering an international perspective on the experience of marginalised and disadvantaged groups, Tony Mulrennan, in his article on the journey of the iPod, presents an informative analysis of the device as a globalised commodity. Presenting it as an exemplar of digital capitalism, he illuminates the globalised process by which the iPod is produced. Employing world-systems and dependency theory, Mulrennan highlights the resulting inequitable division of profits across geographical regions and illustrates the manner in which this has a direct impact on the working conditions of those involved in the commodity's assembly.

Both Kieran Clancy and Ann-Marie Joyce engage the reader in consideration of the diverse manifestations of Irish identity with emphasis on the exploration of 'Diasporic' Irishness. In his article on 'Celtic and Irish Identity' Clancy explores the interpretation and symbolic performance of Irish identities among men, who are both Irish and of Irish descent and who are supporters of Celtic Football Club. Investigating Irish identity, symbolism and ritual, Clancy outlines the importance attached by supporters to the history and symbolism of Celtic in the reproduction and maintenance of Diasporic and Nationalistic forms of 'Irishness'. He further outlines the efforts made by club management to disassociate themselves from engrained associations with sectarianism and religious divisions, and the difficulties encountered in seeking to shift these long established and meaningful identifications held by fans.

Ann-Marie Joyce explores the complexities of 'return migration' by Irish families from the UK. In discussion with a group of 'foreign born Irish' – individuals who as children were born and raised in the UK by Irish parents and who subsequently returned to Ireland – Joyce creatively uncovers the impact of accent on the remembered feelings of belonging or of being an outsider among her research participants on their return. Exploring theoretical constructs such as hybrid identities, diaspora and cultural capital, Joyce's findings indicate the essential importance of accent as a marker of inclusion/exclusion.

Once again we have been very encouraged by the enthusiastic response from contributors who have demonstrated great originality and commitment. These articles showcase the depth and breadth of student interests in the field of Sociology, as well as the engagement of

undergraduate and postgraduate Sociology courses at the University of Limerick with key contemporary social issues. It is our shared hope that through writing for *Socheolas*, student contributors will continue to develop the confidence and ability to articulate their research findings in new forums and in new ways. As some members of the Editorial Board move on, we hope that *Socheolas* will continue to contribute to a growing sense of community amongst Sociology students and faculty in UL as well as helping develop Irish sociological debate at all levels of the discipline. We wish the best of luck to our colleagues who will take over the editorial and production work on *Socheolas* and we wish, once again, to offer our appreciation to the six authors whose hard work is presented on the following pages.

Editorial Board

Cliona Barnes, Amanda Haynes, Martin Power and Patricia Neville.

Editorial Committee

Carmel Hannan, Micheal O'Flynn, Maria O'Dwyer and Kathryn Ryan.
April, 2010.