

## Introduction

As Head of the Department of Sociology I am delighted to be asked to introduce the inaugural edition of Socheolas - the Limerick Student Journal of Sociology. As a result of the effort, hard-work and dedication of the editorial team and the student contributors, what was merely a twinkle in our collective eyes earlier this academic year has come to fruition. Since the initial call for papers last Winter, the editorial team have been heartened by the enthusiastic response to the idea of a student journal of sociology from our undergraduate and postgraduate students. Students from all levels of our Sociology programme have contributed essays. Some of these contributions first saw the light of day as coursework or final year projects. They cover a range of interesting themes including the experiences of asylum seekers in Irish Society; poverty and social exclusion; debates about the welfare state, file-sharing, the smoking ban and audience reception of the globalised television series the L-Word. The students have written about themes that are of obvious interest to them but their essays also reflect the kinds of themes being covered in our undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The hallmark of a strong Sociology department is that it is critically engaged with the social issues that it finds itself surrounded by. The Limerick Student Journal of Sociology is a compelling example of how Sociology students in partnership with their lecturers can contribute to debates about contemporary society. The journal will be available in hard copy and in a soft-copy format on the Department of Sociology Website. I would like to commend all of the student contributors and the editorial team comprising of Dr. Cliona Barnes, Dr. Martin Power, Dr. Patricia Neville, Patrick Fitzpatrick and Dr. Amanda Haynes for all of their work. In conclusion, my hope is that this edition will be the first of many and that the journal will, over time, contribute in no small way towards building a strong sense of community amongst our Sociology students and faculty.

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