

**Sociological Association of Ireland  
Postgraduate Conference 7<sup>th</sup> November 2009 Programme.**

**Registration and Welcome.**

**9.30-10am**

**Room: AX1**

**Keynote Address**

**Prof Sean O’Riain.**

**Title: Society as a Constitutive Force: Unlocking Sociology’s Potential (Through the Lens of the Economic Crisis).**

**Room: AX1**

**Tea/Coffee Break.**

**10.45-11am**

**Parallel Session 1A)**

**11.00- 12.15**

**Room: AX1**

**Title- Methodologies- Issues on the Craft of doing Research.**

Chair: Mary Corcoran

**Leeanne O’Hara (Queens University).** [lmccarroll03@qub.ac.uk](mailto:lmccarroll03@qub.ac.uk)

Title: The Use of Participant Photography in Researching Substance Use Among Young People.

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Conducting research with young people on sensitive topics such as substance use and misuse can be challenging particularly in relation to the disclosure of information in a research setting. Using innovative methods with young people can not only enhance the quality of information collected but also increases interest and motivation among them to take part in the research. This paper will discuss the use of photography as a method of examining drug use among young people living in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Two areas identified as high in social deprivation, high in drug related crime and adolescent substance use were targeted for inclusion in the research. Young people were aged between 13 and 17 years during the time of data collection and were accessed via youth clubs or detached projects in the area where they live. In total 58 young people took part in the research and all were issued with a disposable camera prior to participating in focus groups. They were asked to take photographs of what they did in their free time in the community and what they liked and disliked about where they lived. An advantage of using photography was that it allowed young people to become active participants in the research. Young people were able to provide a visual representation of their lifestyles through the images and subsequently dictate the direction of the research and themes that emerged in the focus groups. In the paper findings from focus group sessions and examples of images taken by young people relating to their substance use behaviours will

be presented to demonstrate the benefit of using this method to collect sensitive information from this hard to reach population. More specifically findings on the themes of prevalence of substance use, the availability and accessibility of both licit and illicit substances, methods of substance use, locations of substance use in the community will be presented. Also discussed in this paper will be ethical considerations such as anonymity, and how these were addressed in the research process. Although the research was an ethnographic study of the effects of neighbourhood and leisure on substance use behaviours among young people living in a specific area of Belfast in Northern Ireland, the use of innovative photography and the benefits of using such an approach may be transferrable to research projects involving this population of young people in various locations.

**Jessica Mannion (IT Sligo).** [s00052546@itsligo.ie](mailto:s00052546@itsligo.ie)

Title: Issues of the Unknown- Emancipatory research methodologies.

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Emancipatory methodologies are used as a way to approach disability research that is unknown to many. During the research process it has become evident that several people do not fully understand this new process, leaving its credibility and explanation difficult to prove. In other research methods, the researcher's role is one of being subjective. Emancipatory researchers are often accused of being biased. According to Barnes (1996) 'you cannot be independent in oppression; you are either on the side of the oppressors or the oppressed.' (cited in Oliver, 1997) When using emancipatory methodologies in research, the social relations between the participants and researcher are very different to other methods. The disabled people are the experts', they own the research and are involved in the whole research process. The researcher's role is one in which they offer their knowledge and skills to what are known as the co-researchers. Emancipatory processes can be used in research in order to not only hear the voices of the experts but for these experts to be able to empower themselves and bring about social change. The participants get together and discover the commonalities shared between them in which they experience oppression. Through emancipatory art processes, a medium of art and drama to facilitate discussion, the co-researchers discover disabling barriers that exist in their lives. The next stage is emancipatory advocacy, where the co-researchers decide to take the research to another level. Together the co-researchers decide to empower themselves and together they decide how they are going to remove any existing disabling barriers. These barriers are then removed by the group.

**Aura Lounasmaa (NUI Galway).** [a.lounasmaa1@nuigalway.ie](mailto:a.lounasmaa1@nuigalway.ie)

Title: Researching Moroccan Women: Issues in methodology, difference and power.

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My paper will present the methodology I plan to use for my PhD research. First, I will briefly introduce my research topic entitled Muslim Feminisms: 20 years of women's activism in Morocco, and my principal research questions. I will then introduce the methodologies I plan to use: semi-structured interviews, participant observation and qualitative content analysis, as well as the sampling strategies used for each. As my study takes place in culturally distinct environment where I face linguistic challenges, the use

of triangulation is important. My paper will discuss how the chosen methodology negotiates some of these challenges and increases the reliability of my data. With feminist methodology I wish to eliminate ethical issues from my research and contribute to movement-relevant theory, which works with social movements in order to add to their knowledge and improve practices. Although my research borrows ideas from feminist research, I resist the often oversimplified portrayal of power relations in the field, whereby researcher always holds the power, and wish to have an honest discussion about the changing nature of the power relations throughout the entire process of research. The discussion on power is also related in the postcolonial critiques of western research in the Global South, but must move forward from the false dichotomy of powerful Westerner versus victimised Southerner and realise the empowerments and intersectional identities of each party to the research. Lastly, I will try to capture the ethical dilemmas my research poses and how I may overcome these.

**Dave Walker (UCC).** [davewalker31@gmail.com](mailto:davewalker31@gmail.com)

Title: Qualitative Research Interviewing, Reflexivity and Data Generation- or Where's the Science in Qualitative Social Science?

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This paper will explore qualitative research interview techniques discussing such issues as the role of the interviewer, the 'naturalness' of the setting, speech acts, replicability, reliability and validity of data and theorisation. The researcher's position is that for any research process to have justifiable claims to authenticity the context, interactions, power dynamics, societal milieu and politico-historical contexts must be considered. In addition issues of methodological orientation e.g. positivist, constructionist, interpretivist must also be addressed. The paper will examine a number of issues concerning planning of the interviews. Furthermore it will discuss issues of 'scientific detachment' paying particular attention to the actual interview setting, power dynamics, social and historical contexts and relate them to the presenter's own research and interests. The paper will then consider the position of the interviewer as 'objective' observer, recorder and co-generator of data. Drawing on the work of Goffman, Searle, Myers, Kitzinger, Hammersley, and Barbour, among others, a framework will be presented for the design of the interview process and the actual conduct of interviews. Collectively, I suggest all of these elements are necessary components of a full and in-depth and truly scientific, qualitative study of the data generated whether it is through a semi-structured, one-to-one interview or the more complex focus group session.

Key Words: Scientific, Qualitative, Reflexive, Interviews, Post-modern.

**Emma Brännlund (NUI Galway).** [e.brannlund1@nuigalway.ie](mailto:e.brannlund1@nuigalway.ie)

Title- Researching conflict zones and gender: Methodological and Ethical issues.

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This paper analyses the methodological and ethical dilemmas that may arise when doing feminist research in a conflict zone. Reflecting on researching the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, this paper emphasises critical research questions and the importance of a reflexive approach to the embodied positionality of the researcher. This doctoral study focuses on the articulation of identities in the context of political engagement in a conflict situation. Gender, politics, lived experiences, historical narratives and context

specificities are all factors that are considered. The methods employed are semi-structured in-depth interviews and participatory observation. The objective of this paper is to reflect on the practical execution of research in a conflict zone which is often referred to as the “world’s most dangerous place”. Firstly, we highlight the importance of the research question. The contribution of feminism to social research is its propensity to ask different kinds of questions. In the context of the Kashmir conflict, much work has been done on inter-state relations. This research shifts the focus from the state to the everyday lives of the individuals who have lived through the conflict and thus links the present state of affairs with past inequalities. Secondly, we articulate the importance of reflexivity. This perspective brings out questions about the impacts of positionality in the data collection and analysis processes. Issues of power and ethics in the relationship between the researcher and researched must be identified and deconstructed, especially being a ‘Northern’ woman researching identities in a conflict in the ‘Global South’.

### **Parallel Session 1B)**

**Title: The Value of Religion?**

**Room: AX2**

Chair: Brian Conway

**Denise Cleary**

[d.e.cleary@hotmail.com](mailto:d.e.cleary@hotmail.com)

Title: Critical Realism and the Sociological Study of Religion?

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The purpose of the paper is to explore the benefits of using a critical realist framework for the sociological study of religion, in particular in the way in which religion is reproduced and transformed inside the family unit. Critical realism, through its pre-occupation with ontology and the nature of knowledge is able to offer a unique and exciting framework within, which to both conceptualise and research the changing constitution of religion in a changing Ireland. The central tents of critical realism seeks to discover the underlying structures and mechanism within the family that produce changes in the reproduction of religion that are not directly observable but appear beneath the surface of social reality. The paper presents a conceptual and theoretical framework that is centred on the key assumptions of critical realism. The paper concludes that, critical realism is able to offer not only an alternative to both positivist empiricism and hermeneutical interpretivism but a unique opportunity for sociologists of religion to move away from studies using the generic variables of the early 1900’s such as church attendances, belief in a god and ordination figures and begin to re-focus, through theory driven research on building multi-layered models that have the capacity to explain religious change on more than just the individual level and across more than one particular denomination or faith.

**Kerry Gallagher (NUI Maynooth).** [kerry.gallagher@nuim.ie](mailto:kerry.gallagher@nuim.ie)

Title: Religion and Social Integration: A Case Study of Polish Catholics in Ireland.

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The Celtic Tiger boom coupled with the expansion of the European Union Ireland witnessed unprecedented growth in migration figures; from 2004 to 2006 figures for

immigrants from new member states accessing personal public service numbers was over two hundred and ninety-nine thousand (Barrell, Fitzgerald & Riley 2007:5). One noticeable gap in the research on immigration to Ireland, that should be addressed, is the actual integration process of these ethnic minority groups into Irish society. As shown by McCauliffe (2007) transnational religious identities are crucial to Diaspora communities in the process of immigration. The role of religion in this process of 'assimilation' (Portes & Rambaut, 2001) or integration could, to a convincing degree, highlight the successful integration process from the initial entry of an individual into Ireland to their establishment in society. A prominent institution in its own right, the Catholic Church, since the latter half of the twentieth century, has felt pressure from the ever loudening voices of the secularization advocates. However, if we turn our attention to 'imported Catholicism'-through the strong presence of the Polish community in Ireland that has intensified over the past number of years (estimated two hundred thousand Poles now reside in Ireland (Monaghan 2007:44)) the Catholic Church has counter-acted the secularization claim that accompanies modernity. With the absence of strong state activity in Ireland regarding migrant integration even further focus falls on the religious institutions to guide and help new ethnic groups. Given the current climate surrounding immigrants in Ireland my research will address the extent of the role that the Catholic Church plays in the integration of Polish immigrants into Irish society.

**Caillin Reynolds (MIC Limerick).** [caillin.reynolds@mic.ul.ie](mailto:caillin.reynolds@mic.ul.ie)

Title: Religion and Morality in Ireland, 1981-2008: An Analysis of EVS data.

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This paper presents an analysis of the survey data from Ireland, focussing on the relationship between religiosity and morality over the past 30 years. The paper draws on four waves of the European Values Study (1981, 1990, 1999 and 2008), a large-scale, cross-national, and longitudinal survey research program on basic human values. As well as presenting a descriptive analysis of the changes in religiosity and morality (such as attitudes towards divorce, abortion etc.) that have occurred in Ireland over a thirty year period, the paper presents an investigation of specific hypotheses related to value change. It is assumed that religion and certain moral values are closely connected, but according to theories of secularisation and individualisation these strong ties are becoming increasingly weaker. The reputed decline of the Catholic Church's 'moral monopoly' over the hearts and minds of Irish people, coupled with the country's recent rapid modernisation make Ireland an exceptionally interesting and critical case for testing hypotheses related to religiosity and value change. Findings are discussed in relation to theories of secularisation, individualisation, and modernisation/post-modernisation. As the 2008 EVS data from the rest of Europe is still forthcoming, Irish trends in religiosity and morality are briefly contextualised within those of Europe a decade ago.

**Susie Donnelly (UCD).** [susiedonnelly@gmail.com](mailto:susiedonnelly@gmail.com)

Title: From Sacred to Sensational: The Reporting of the Bishop Eamonn Casey Paternity Scandal in the Irish Media.

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The Irish Catholic Church has been faced with a variety of scandals over recent years, from child sex abuse scandals such as those involving Brendan Smyth and Sean Fortune

in the mid-1990s to scandals of institutional abuse such as that which has been detailed this year in the findings of the Ryan Report (2009). However, nearly 20 years ago newspaper reports that a Catholic bishop fathered a child with a young woman shocked and appalled the nation like never before. This would not be the first or last occasion in which an ordained Catholic clergyman broke his vow of celibacy. However, the Bishop Casey and Annie Murphy affair would be the first clerical sex scandal to challenge the authoritative position of the Catholic Church in Irish society. The reporting of this scandal paved the wave for a transformation in how the Irish media investigated and reported on the Church. This paper seeks to describe and analyse the circumstances under which the Casey paternity scandal broke and was reported on in *The Irish Times* in May 1992. Finally, it is argued that this scandal, while regarded as a milestone event in Irish social history, can more specifically illustrate macro-level relations between the Church and the media in Ireland and reveal the beginnings of a shift in the balance of power between these formative social institutions.

### **Parallel Session 1C)**

**Title- Education and Young People.**

**Room: Seminar Room**

Chair: Eoin Flaherty.

**Anne Marie Byrne (St Patricks College).** [amb@ireland.com](mailto:amb@ireland.com)

Title: Education for Juvenile Offenders- process and experience of an Irish Children Detention School.

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The current provision and experience of education for juvenile offenders is an area that has not been the subject of significant academic research in Ireland. Historical analysis suggests that the emphasis on education was not paramount in former industrial schools and reformatories during the 19th and part of the 20th century. Education is a crucial factor in the lives of young offenders in that it has the possibility to promote their personal and academic development, providing them with a means to viable reintegration into society, a fact that is fully recognised and promoted in the contemporary Children Detention School (CDS) setting. With ongoing developments such as the implementation of the Children Act 2001 and the handover of responsibility for CDS from the Department of Education to the Irish Youth Justice Service of The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform in 2007, there are continuing processes of development within the juvenile justice system in Ireland. This thesis proposes to examine one of these processes: that of education for juveniles in detention. In doing so it is hoped that the growth and development of the current provision can be observed, opportunities can be given to those interviewed to express their views and reflection can be made on the possibilities for future advancements. Working on this research project provides a welcome opportunity to advance the body of knowledge regarding the augmentation of current policies in the youth justice system in Ireland.

**Katherine Cagney (WIT).**      [kcagney@wit.ie](mailto:kcagney@wit.ie)  
Title: Changing Irish Childhoods.

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This research focuses on families in modern Ireland. Families are becoming increasingly diverse, and family forms have changed dramatically recently. While there has been considerable quantitative studies on childhood, (National Longitudinal Study of Children 2009, Barnardos, 2007), there has been little in- depth sociological enquiry about what it feels like to spend time in a family (Corsaro, 1997). Family represents a constructed quality of human interaction or an active process rather than a thing-like object of detached social investigation (Morgan, 1999). This qualitative study explores what life is like in Irish families in 2009 and places special emphasis on listening to the voices of children in the family. This inclusion of children’s voices in the research process recognises current trends in Sociology to ‘rediscover’ childhood (Corsaro 1998). Within the new sociology of childhood, children are seen as competent social actors able to contribute their views to the research (Green & Hogan 2005). Joint story telling is an important part of the culture of each family, it is how families organise their experiences and make them meaningful. This study, therefore, explores which aspects of spending time together are most significant for families and how families spend time together and what spaces they use; sitting around the kitchen table or chatting while commuting (Urry, 2007). This presentation will:

- Explore the challenges of interviewing families as a group.
- Aim to discover whether certain rituals and routines are unique to each family, or share common themes with other families.

**Jane Carrigan (St Patricks College).**      [jane.carrigan@spd.dcu.ie](mailto:jane.carrigan@spd.dcu.ie)

Title: The experience of education and learning in the lives of students in Irish prisons- a life history approach.

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This research is an attempt to listen to the narratives of male prisoners who are accessing educational classes in the prison, in order to hear their story of what education and learning has meant in their lives, their motivation for attending classes and their educational plans for the future. The decision to concentrate on male prisoners was two-fold. Firstly, the Irish prison population is overwhelmingly male (Irish Prison Service Report, 2007). Secondly there is evidence to suggest that men are underrepresented in literacy and basic education programmes (Learning for Life, 2000; Owens, 2000) and that the literacy level and educational attainment of those in prison is much lower than in the community (Morgan & Kett, 2003). Through exploration of the impact of both penal and education policy in Ireland, analysed through the lens of postmodernism and with the theories of Goffman and Giddens underpinning the research, various questions on the nature of prison in general and prisoner education specifically emerge. The paper will offer an overview of the literature and theoretical framework. A life history approach is being used in this research and the paper will outline the rationale for using this methodology and give a brief report on the pilot study. I am mindful too of Foucault’s (1975) observation that the concept of a prison is so much a part of modern life that the idea of a society without one is almost inconceivable and as part of this research the

cultural context of prison policy, both nationally and internationally is analysed and data from prisoners themselves will be located within a cultural context.

**Wendy Fuller (NUI Maynooth).** [WENDY.FULLER@nuim.ie](mailto:WENDY.FULLER@nuim.ie)

Title: 'Planners' and the 'Unsure', early policy relevant findings for a cross cultural qualitative study.

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Based on ongoing PhD research, this paper explores the ways young rural people in Ireland and Vermont, USA conceptualise their academic achievement, their communities and their ideas about their future life plans. Via in-depth, qualitative research, this doctoral work is essentially hoping to afford insights which might contribute towards future elements of the National Development Plan's School Planning Initiatives (National Development Plan 2007-2013 et al. 2009), County Council Development Plans (e.g. Meath Local Authorities 2007) and the Rural Development Plan (CAP Rural Development Division 2007) in working towards supporting and facilitating young rural people, communities and schools. In this paper I will offer a brief background to the research, discuss the methodology, explore some of the early findings and provide some preliminary thoughts on how the analysis will continue and hopefully yield rich data useful for informing governmental and policy initiatives pertinent to rural areas.

**Lunch Break- 12.15-1.15.**

**Parallel Session 2A)**  
**1.15-2.30pm**

**Title- Migration: Active citizenship and the State.**

**Room- AX1**

Chair: Wendy Fuller

**Brian Moss (UCD).** [brian.moss@gsoc.ie](mailto:brian.moss@gsoc.ie)

Title: Citizenship and Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission.

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An ombudsman is traditionally understood as being an advocate of citizens, bringing their claims of inadequate public service to the attention of services themselves in the hope of affecting a resolution to the grievance in question. Existing research on ombudsman services suggests that their service users generally tend to be well educated, politically effective and in employment. The exception is police oversight bodies where evidence from USA and England-Wales, among others, suggests that service users are predominantly from geographic areas of socio-economic deprivation with low educational attainment. A number of ombudsman services have been created in Ireland in recent years but to date there has been a lack of data in respect of who avails of these, theoretically, universally accessible advocates. The current paper considers emerging evidence from the caseload of one Irish ombudsman entity, the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC). A survey of GSOC complainants suggests that the majority are not from areas of socio-economic deprivation and also have higher levels of educational attainment than expected. The paper concludes by posing a number of

questions, among which is why GSOC's customer base appears to differ from that of police ombudsman-type bodies in other jurisdictions

**Sam Olinger (UCD).** [samtobo@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:samtobo@yahoo.co.uk)

Title: Policing and Diversity in Contemporary Ireland.

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Given that Ireland has recently undergone rapid ethnic diversification and is now considered to be a multicultural society, my research is an ethnographic exploration of Irish police officers' experiences of policing in that changing social environment. The paper I hope to give would concentrate on some of the major themes of my preliminary research findings regarding how Irish police officers (Gardaí) conceive of, talk about and interact with ethnic minority communities. By focusing on the experiences of Gardaí and the discourses they draw on to 'make sense of' policing an increasingly diverse public this paper would also situate the complex relationship that is now unfolding between the police and ethnic minority populations within the broader socio-historical context of Irish Policing.

**Jenny Dagg (NUI Galway).** [jennydagg@gmail.com](mailto:jennydagg@gmail.com)

Title: Governmentality of Immigration in Ireland.

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This article explores the relationship between governmentality and immigration in Ireland. It seeks to identify the genealogy of the problematic of immigration from an Irish context and to develop the emergence of the rationalities and technologies of government that inform immigration policy at present. The rationalities and technologies of government, as regards immigration, are central to examining and understanding the discursive transition of the immigrant from one habitus to another during the immigration process.

**Emmanuel Okigbo (UCD).** [emmaokigbo@yahoo.com](mailto:emmaokigbo@yahoo.com)

Title: The African Community in Ireland and the New Political Activism.

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This paper in part is an unpublished PhD proposal submitted to the School of Sociology, UCD. It investigates the nature and dynamics of African immigrant political activism in twenty-first century Ireland within the context and discourse of immigration, integration, political participation and how these are shaped by identity and belonging. As new migrant communities in Ireland strive to grapple with the internal, institutional and structural forces in Irish society that shape and determine their lives and experiences, they seek ways of articulating their belonging to and achieving full representation in the polity. The concept of the 'African Community' in Ireland is both problematic and contentious. The controversy rests in the difficulty of defining an African immigrant community in a way that is generally acceptable. This project uses a qualitative approach as this enables the researcher to properly explore the subjective dynamics of the lived and broader experiences of African immigrants within the institutional contexts of immigration, integration/social inclusion, community formation and political activism in Ireland. In the first year of my doctoral programme, my research will seek to provide a critical analysis of the motive, vision, goal and institutional dynamics that catalyze the current explosion and growth. It also looks at the flowering of this new interest amongst African

immigrant in recent years, focusing on the increasing involvement of Africans in Irish politics in various capacities, including party membership, standing for electoral positions, voting, canvassing for candidates in the electoral process and so on.

Parallel Session 2B)

**Title- Media and Music**

**Room AX2**

Chair: Colin Coulter

**Chris Lowe (NUI Maynooth).** [chris\\_lowe369@hotmail.com](mailto:chris_lowe369@hotmail.com)

Title: Theming around One City One Book: A Transitory Personapolis

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In 2009 Dublin City Libraries made *Dracula*, and by extension its author Bram Stoker, the focus of the annual One City One Book festival. The book was chosen as its global recognition value would help bolster Dublin's attempt to be given status as an *UNESCO City of Literature*. As a consequence, for a month, Dublin became a virtual hobby space for fans of *Dracula* and Gothic literature. This research draws heavily on the work of Kaichiro Morikawa (2004), Matt Hills (2002), and Nick Couldry (2000, 2003, 2007, 2008). For this paper I am concerned with how Dublin became a personapolis or virtual hobbyspace for a month and how fans used the space within that time. To this end I use visual analysis. It derives from early research for my Ph.D.

**Michael Murphy (IADT).** [michael.murphy@iad.t.ie](mailto:michael.murphy@iad.t.ie)

Title: 'Before the music- the production of the Irish Record Industry'.

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'Before the Music: The Production of the Irish Record Industry'

As Bradby pointed out, accepting the 'virgin birth myth' of an Irish band neglects the ordinary (and far more revealing) origins of a band and can often lead to comparisons with legends. Given the hyperbolic cultural discourse on the importance of music combined with the decline of the Irish industry as a producer and enabler of Irish artists, it is the 'ordinary' and the industry which may provide the revelations. Yet very little has been written about the 'behind the scenes' production of the Irish record industry. Peterson and Berger's 'Cycles Of Symbol Production' (1975) model would be an excellent diagnostic tool for gauging the health of the domestic music industry. They interrogated the relationship between firms and the marketplace. Specifically they focused on:

1. The relationship between market concentration and homogeneity of the cultural product.
2. The form of the changes in these variables over time.

The initial aim of my study (following Peterson and Berger) is to analyse the industrial trends in the Irish pop music charts over the past four decades. Market share can be taken as a proxy for market power. Who were the successful firms? What were the long term trends?

**Sean O'Seachair (DCU).** [seanshana@gail.com](mailto:seanshana@gail.com)

Title: An Ethnohistory of Recreational Dance in an Irish Community 1940-1960.

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Recreational dance in Ireland during the period of this study has been somewhat neglected by social researchers. This is despite the subjective importance of these cultural forms for people remembering the period. This study takes as its starting point an oral history of the various types of dance events of the time based on formal and informal interviews. The historical dimension will be opened up by consulting newspaper archives, census returns and local history publications. It is hoped to draw on the respective strengths of sociology and history to construct a well-rounded and critical cultural history. Though mainly inductivist in character, some sensitizing concepts that are proving useful at this stage of the research are *communitas*, class and gender. Broader questions around how communities construct their histories are also emerging.

**Deirdre Moore (UL).** [0364797@studentmail.ul.ie](mailto:0364797@studentmail.ul.ie)

Title: Lesbian visibility in *The L Word*: Bodies that matter!

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This qualitative research seeks to critically examine lesbian visibility in *The L Word* and lesbian reception by an Irish lesbian viewing audience. *The L Word* has had such a strong online presence and reality for its audience that I decided to conduct online ethnography in the form of 'e-interviews'. However, this method was not without difficulty, the physical remoteness and the uncertainty that arose during the sometimes long delays between interviewee responses was at times annoying and frustrating and out of my control. The dearth of lesbian visibility in mainstream media more generally, as well as the negative stereotypical visual representation and problematic narrative content, when lesbianism has been portrayed, has left lesbian viewers eager for positive representation and understandably emotive about the prevalent stereotypes. The reception analysis of *The L Word* revealed a particular lesbian audience's perspective on lesbian visibility. *The L Word* invoked different types of responses, both positive and negative, from the interviewees. Everyone I interviewed agreed on one thing: they would like to see more portrayals of lesbianism, with better storylines, character development and a more diverse lesbian representation than are currently available in media/television product.

### 2.30-3.0

### Tea/ Coffee Break

**Parallel Session 3A) - Two Parallel Sessions.  
3.00- 4.15**

**Title: Migrant, Mobility and Integration.**

**Room: AX1**

Chair: Paul Ryan

**Antje Roeder (TCD).** [roedera@tcd.ie](mailto:roedera@tcd.ie)

Title: Immigrants and European Unification- Does mobility matter for attitudes?

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In this paper, attitudes of immigrants towards European Unification are analysed to determine in how far they differ from the native population and between immigrants from different regions. The two main theories on attitudes towards Europe would predict overall more positive attitudes. Firstly, self-interest should lead migrants to evaluate Europe more favourable, as certain groups in particular have gained from it in the past mainly in terms of enhanced mobility and legal rights as immigrants, and can realistically expect to gain more in the future. Secondly, being an immigrant as opposed to a native citizen has an impact on national identities and individual identifications as European, with the supra-national level likely to be more attractive to people with multiple national affiliations. Using data from the European Social Survey, findings confirm that migration status, region of origin and citizenship status are important predictors of attitudes, whereas other socio-economic factors are comparatively less important for migrants than for the native population.

**Ying Yun Wang (TCD).** [wangyy@tcd.ie](mailto:wangyy@tcd.ie)

Title: A Comparative Analysis of Hong Kong Chinese Migrants' Heterogeneity and Experience in Ireland.

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The Hong Kong Chinese in Ireland are a visible group in economic terms in the example of their ubiquitous Chinese restaurant business. They started to come to Ireland since the 1950s. Paradoxically, they are an invisible group in terms of academic research. Drawing on semi-structured qualitative interviews, I explore Hong their heterogeneity and experience in Ireland in terms of occupations, setting (rural Ireland or urban Ireland) and migration orientations. The comparison of first-and second-generation Hong Kong Chinese demonstrates the complexity within them. My findings shed light on the varied experience of the underestimated Hong Kong Chinese in Ireland. This paper is based on 6 pilot interviews with 7 first generation Hong Kong Chinese. They mainly come from the New Territories, Hong Kong and work in the Chinese catering business. Although primarily coming to Ireland for work, they were also migrated due to class divisions and family responsibilities. They self-identify themselves as the earlier Chinese migrants to distinct from the other Chinese migrants, the Mainland Chinese. They highlight the difference on the political regimes, language and working attitudes. They are aware of the impact of increasing Mainland Chinese from the 1990s have caused on their living in Ireland. As the distinctions between two waves of Chinese migrants emerged in the pilot interviews, the findings from those Hong Kong Chinese interviewees are compared with my previous co-study of the mainland Chinese students in Ireland.

**Jean Kennedy (WIT).** [JAKENNEDY@wit.ie](mailto:JAKENNEDY@wit.ie)

‘Motherhood and Social Integration: The Case of Polish Migrants in Ireland’.

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While family research in Ireland is expanding, mothers and ethnic minorities are two still neglected areas (Cousins, 2006). This MA (Research) project aims to examine the impact of having children on cultural interactions in Ireland. It is proposed to select a key migrant community in Ireland, the Polish community (60% of all EU workers in Ireland, 33% of whom are women, CSO, 2006) and discuss with Polish mothers their experiences of social interaction, and the impact of having children on this ‘interculturalisation’ process. In an effort to do so, the context of Polish women migrating to Ireland will be explored. What role, if any, did accession into the European Union have on their choice to migrate and raise children in Ireland? In this same period, Ireland has experienced large inward migration flows, and the demography of the nation has been altered significantly (Culleton, 2007). This has introduced a plethora of new cultural practices regarding family structures to Irish society. Clearly familial configurations, particularly with regard to how ‘femininity’ and motherhood are perceived, have experienced considerable reformulation. Rapid social change in Irish society has altered the structures of families. Increasingly obvious is the discrepancy between the ‘monolithic, breadwinner model enshrined in family policy in Ireland, and the lived reality of family life’ (Kuhling & Keohane, 2007). In the last 15 years, there has been a phenomenal growth in co-habiting partnerships, lone parent families and unmarried couples (CSO, 2007). This paper will explore the factors that influence the social integration of Polish mothers in Ireland, the impact of the recent recession and the future outlook for Polish mothers.

**Lorraine Mancey (TCD).** [manceyl@tcd.ie](mailto:manceyl@tcd.ie)

Title: The Complexity of Development.

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My research is an ethnography of an international development organisation who wanted to become a learning organisation. It describes two vignettes of ‘learning’ events both in the Irish headquarters and in an embassy in central Africa and re-conceptualises how a development organisation learns. Language influences development in many ways: and development organisations use language and concepts that inhibit certain ways of thinking and viewing the world, whilst privileging others. Policy briefs, planning documents, strategic frameworks, project documents, sector reports, monitoring and evaluation log frames, are all indicative of a particular approach and central to this is the framework of development as a discourse; as a system of knowledge, practices and power. In the world of development people may operate with the same language, but will often have different understandings. Development is not a monophonic engagement, where voices are constructed in a single and continuous manner; it instead consists of discourses, texts and stories, familiar and embedded with multiple meanings. This paper elaborates upon development's "linguistic crisis" and argues for a polyphonic understanding of development discourse. This paper offers an alternative framing to problems and solutions within aid and development and seeks to understand the multiplicity of organisational realities through a narrative lens where the apparently independent and disconnected elements are seen as related parts of a whole; and where development itself can be understood as a continual learning process.

## Parallel Session 3B)

**Title: Activism and Social Change.**

**Room: AX2**

Chair: Kerry Gallagher.

**Elaine Desmond (UCC).** [elainedesmond5@hotmail.com](mailto:elainedesmond5@hotmail.com)

Title: Identity, Ideology and Political Will Formation: A Case Study of Genetically Modified Foods in Ireland.

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That the public sphere debate on genetically modified (GM) foods in Ireland has largely abated in recent years has led many to believe that public resistance to the technology has been satisfactorily addressed through the democratic process. EU directive 90/220/EEC, in particular, supports a precautionary approach to the foods and permits individual nation states to ban the cultivation and/or import of crops already approved for use within the EU. It is a resolution which, in the view of many, restores GM foods as an area in which nation-state sovereignty should preside. This research seeks to highlight, however, that the issue of GM foods remains unresolved and sociologically pertinent, serving as a synecdoche of the wider environmental movement and presenting, much like human genome research in the study undertaken by O'Mahony and Schäfer (2005: 17), as 'an issue in waiting.' A critical discourse analysis approach as outlined by Fairclough (1989; 1992; 2003) and Van Dijk (1997; 1998) is combined with frame analysis (Benford and Snow, 2000) to analyse in-depth interviews with leading non co-present actors engaged in the issue of GM foods in Ireland. This research illustrates the vital role of discourse in innovating social change. It also highlights, however, that deeply embedded identity (micro-level) and ideological (meso-level) positions of key actors are hindering the process of political will formation (macro-level) as per the counter-factual core-periphery model of democracy proposed by Habermas (1996). This suggests that discursive deliberation on the concept of democracy itself is an urgent requirement within Irish society.

**Emmett Fox (NUI Galway).** [e.fox3@nuigalway.ie](mailto:e.fox3@nuigalway.ie)

Title: Taking a deeper look at Climate Change related behaviours.

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Value-action gap and psychological studies of risk perception have revealed the poverty of the information-deficit model. Something deeper is at work in the individual and collective systems that animate our responses to risk. Employing the social theory of Bourdieu this study seeks to add texture to the underlying dispositions that unconsciously inform our responses. The elective affinities that form from our habitual social interactions – interactions that incorporate both field and habitus – largely determine whether or not we respond proactively to risk. Identifying interrelated elements of the path-dependent dimensions of habitus – both collective and individual – is integral to understanding climate change related behaviours such as overconsumption and high energy use. Incorporating the habitus into a broader historical portrayal of the interlocking fields and collective habitus, particularly in relation to society-nature relationships, will add further weight to the analysis of climate change risk responses. By

focusing on new developments in this area such as the emergence of new social movements and the entailing habitus transformations this study hopes to contrast elective affinities as new forms of capital emerge (environmental capital) and the material reality of environmental crisis deepens.

**Terry Dunne (NUI Maynooth).** [terrydunne@gmail.com](mailto:terrydunne@gmail.com)

Title: The Law of Captain Rock

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The Whitefeet movement was a combination of miners, agricultural labourers and small farmers in Kilkenny and the Queen's County in the late 1820s and early 1830s, particularly concentrated in the colliery district to the north-east of Castlecomer and reaching a special intensity between the autumn of 1831 and the summer of 1832.

The aspects of Whitefeet activity considered in this paper are those where there was a parallel between the forms of the Whitefeet combination and the forms of the state and of the ruling class in general, this especially the case with practises from the legal system. These aspects were the administration of oaths, a general commonality in discourse especially as expressed in Whitefeet notices, the use of exemplary punishment and finally the issuing of notices. This consideration will involve such questions as to what extent did these activities involve an appropriation from state practise on the part of the Whitefeet and what does that appropriation tell us about the social outlook of some of the participants in the movement. As well as this there will be a discussion of what might be considered similar processes at work in other movements in other settings along with the theories advanced to explain them and their applicability or otherwise to the Whitefeet movement.

**Mimi Doran (UCD).** [mimidoran@hotmail.com](mailto:mimidoran@hotmail.com)

Title: Media Literacy: Can social activists set the media agenda to be followed by the elite.

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This research documents the Participatory Research and Action case study of St Michael's Estate Regeneration Team, Inchicore, Dublin. It documents the story of a working class community's journey to become media literate. The breaking news story about the PPP regeneration project at St Michael's Estate and others across Dublin City was first reported in the Irish Times with the headline "Council to meet developer over stalled projects, fears for €265m Dublin regeneration projects" (19th May, 2008). In the days and weeks that followed many national and local media covered the collapse of the five PPP regeneration projects in Dublin. This research analyses part of that media coverage and examines the process through which St Michael's Estate Regeneration Team gained prominence in the national media, the voices that they competed with as news sources and how they gained the public's interest from May 2008 to Jan 2009. It focuses mainly on media activity in local and national press and national TV and the issuing of press releases. It charts their journey from being a relatively unknown community group to becoming recognised nationally as media experts. It outlines the media literacy programme they followed and highlights the impact media coverage had on how their story unfolds. They are using mainstream and new media to tell their story, raise public awareness, instigate debate, influence policy and legislation.

4.15 - 4.45

**Dr. Pauline Conroy, Ralaheen Associates.**

'Beyond the economic crisis- opportunities for the Social Science Postgraduate'.

Ralaheen was formed by Dr. Pauline Conroy and Ailish McShane in the 1990's. The company team includes specialists in social research, graphic design, layout, illustration and communications. Ralaheen conducts independent social policy research for Government Departments, Trade Unions, Community Groups and private sector clients.

4.45-

Wine Reception.