

# Research and Innovation Overview 2024

## Department of Sociology

The Department of Sociology at Maynooth University aligns strongly with the university's strategic focus on impactful, interdisciplinary research. Contributing to key thematic areas such as society and public policy, health and well being and sustainability and climate change the department has an excellent track record of publication, including in the top 10% of Scopus-indexed journals. The department is well known for its commitment to public sociology and active citizenship, maintaining close engagement with communities at the local, national, and international levels.

**Head of Department:** Professor Mary Murphy



### Research Themes and Focus Areas

The department's research addresses key societal challenges by examining individual and collective experiences within broader global contexts. Key areas of focus include:

- **Public Sociology and Active Citizenship:** The department plays a leading role in translating sociological insights into practical, impactful policy recommendations.
- **Global Studies and Identity:** Faculty members explore changing identities and cultures in an increasingly globalized and digital world.
- **Political Economy and Environmental Studies:** Research in this area examines global transformations, political conflict, and environmental sustainability.
- **Social Relationships and Wellbeing:** The department investigates the changing dynamics of family, community, and institutional processes, and their impact on wellbeing.



### Significant Research Outputs

The department's research output between 2018 and 2023 included 122 peer-reviewed journal articles, 71% of which were open access. Significant achievements during 2022-23 include:

#### Publications

- Notable publications include articles in *Social Policy & Administration* by Hick and Murphy (FWCI: 14.54) and *Policy and Society* by Hogan, Howlett, and Murphy (FWCI: 12.90).
- A special issue of *Space and Polity* was edited by Professor Colin Coulter and included articles on the Northern Ireland census, inequality and Brexit (by Colin Coulter, Eoin Flaherty and John O'Brennan)
- Other papers included 'Thinking social movement learning, again' (Laurence Cox in *Globalisation, Societies and Education*) and "Workplace regimes in Western Europe" (Seán Ó Riain in *Economic and Industrial Democracy*).
- Professor Mary Murphy's book *Creating an Eco-Social Welfare Future* (Bristol Policy Press, 2023) uses Ireland as a case study, and addresses the institutional adaptations needed to move towards a sustainable welfare state. The book was nominated for the Richard Titmuss Social Policy Award.

### Awards and Grants

- Professor Jane Gray was awarded an ERC Advanced Grant for the LINLOSS project, worth €2.5 million, which explores social loss and innovation.
- Dr Brown's SFI-IRC Pathway Project received €552,500 to study anti-neoliberal parties and popular movements in the Andean region and Southern Europe.



### Collaborations and Partnerships

The department actively collaborates with various organisations and academic institutions:

- **Centre for European and Eurasian Studies:** Under Professor John O'Brennan's leadership, the Centre is at the forefront of discussions on EU enlargement and global politics, with extensive engagement in public discourse.
- **Family Carers Ireland:** Dr Pauline Cullen's collaboration on the Family Carers Ireland Research Report has shaped national policy discussions, including a parliamentary debate on caregiving in September 2023.



### Research Impact and Societal Contributions

The department's research has a wide-reaching impact on policy and societal change:

- **Environmental Sustainability:** Professor Murphy's work on eco-social welfare policy contributes to national climate action plans, and she continues to engage with the Environmental Protection Agency and other policy bodies.
- **Gender Equality:** Dr Cullen's research on gender and caregiving has influenced government policy on gender norms and political participation.
- Extensive ties with civil society continue across the department including work on education (Byrne), multiculturalism and anti-racism (King-O'Riain) and challenges of the Far Right (Cannon).



### Future Directions

The department will continue to focus on public sociology, climate and sustainability, intersectional inequalities and political economy, with plans to expand its interdisciplinary research and international collaborations.

The Department of Sociology at Maynooth University is a leader in sociological research and public engagement. Through its interdisciplinary approach, successful collaborations, and impactful publications, the department continues to contribute significantly to both academic scholarship and societal transformation.