Social Sciences Research Centre
Joint Secretaries' Report 2022
(DRAFT, 12 December 2022)

- Since its formation in 1966 the Social Sciences Research Centre (SSRC) has provided a forum for interdisciplinary research between economists, geographers, political scientists, psychologists, and sociologists at the University of Galway. Central to the SSRC's identity has been the support it has provided to a broad and inclusive approach to interdisciplinary social science research. The SSRC is recognised as a dedicated research cluster within both the Moore and Whitaker Institutes.

- The SSRC (currently with 75 members) continues to host four strands of research: Equality and Diversity; Smart and Liveable Cities and Towns; Street Market Traders in Contemporary Ireland; and Changing Rural Communities. While these four strands of research provide the SSRC's current research focus, they are by no means exhaustive of the research interests of SSRC members. Proposals for new strands of research activity are always welcome. And in addition, the SSRC has always welcomed members with research interests that fall outside its main strands of research activity at any given time.

- During 2022 the SSRC co-organised two public academic events. The first of these events - a seminar (co-hosted with Teagasc) on the topic of 'Developing Rural Ireland in the Twentieth Century' - was held on 17 February 2022 to mark the publication of Dr Mícheál Ó Fathartaigh's pioneering book on the Irish agricultural advisory service in twentieth-century Ireland. The speakers at this seminar were Prof. Mary Daly (Royal Irish Academy and University College Dublin), Dr Peter Moser (Director, Archives of Rural History, Bern, Switzerland), Dr Declan O'Brien (Senior News Correspondent with the *Irish Farmers' Journal),* Dr Áine Macken-Walsh (Senior Research Officer at Teagasc's Rural Economy and Development Programme). The event was chaired by Dr Tony Varley (Joint Secretary, SSRC) while Dr Mike Hynes (Joint Secretary, SSRC) acted as organiser, administrator and provider of technical assistance.

  The second public event - a memorial colloquium co-organised with the School of Political Science and Sociology on 22 May 2022 - was held to celebrate the life and academic work of the late and much-missed Prof. Ricca Edmondson (a former long-time chairperson and director of the SSRC). This day-long event was addressed by 21 speakers across four sessions: 'personal and professional reflections'; 'researching cultural gerontology'; 'on rhetoric'; and 'on wisdom'.

- Within the Equality and Diversity strand of research, Dr Su-Ming Khoo is the Principal Investigator in the 3-year Irish Aid Coalesce project on higher education quality and equity in Ireland and South Africa, BCAUSE (*Building Collaborative Approaches to University Strategies against Exclusion in Ireland and Africa: pedagogies for quality Higher Education and inclusive global citizenship* IRC-COALESCE 2019-2022). Dr Khoo is a member of the African Critical Higher Education Studies Network ACUS, Critical Internationalisation Studies Network, Bridge 47 Knowledge Exchange Partnership; the COST CA19129 consortium on Decolonizing Development:

Research, Teaching and Practice 2020-2024; and NAWA-STER- 'Creative Human Rights Practice' module, Graduate School for Social Research, GSSR Specialization in Bridging Academic and NGO Research Spring Semester 2022/2023 NAWA STER "Sustainable International Growth in Doctoral Education: Collaboration and Mobility @ GSSR" (11-15 April 2023).

- Prof Kevin Leyden and Dr Mike Hynes continue to be active in advancing a programme of research related to the 'Smart and Liveable Cities and Towns' strand of research. Prof. Leyden's research has resulted in the publication (or acceptance for publication) of a number of academic papers that include: Kevin M. Leyden, Michael J. Hogan, Lorraine D'Arcy, Brendan Bunting and Sebastian Bierema. 'Walkable Neighborhoods: Linkages between Place, Health and Happiness in Younger and Older Adults'. *Journal of the American Planning Association* (Accepted 2022 and Forthcoming 2023); Kevin M. Leyden, 2022, 'Understanding Galway's Traffic Problem'. *Architecture Ireland*. (July/August), Issue 324; J. M. Halstead, S.C. Deller, and K. M. Leyden, 2022. 'Social capital and community development: Where do we go from here?' *Community Development*, *53* (1), pp. 92-108. With Frank McDonald (formerly *Irish Times*), Murt Coleman, (Chartered Engineer), Brendan Mulligan (Chartered Engineer) and Grace Fox (Leave No Trace Ireland), Prof. Leyden also participated in 'Light Rail for Galway: A Discussion. With Keith Finnegan (Galway Bay FM), Hardiman Hotel, Galway, 3 May, 2022.

  Related to the 'Smart and Liveable Cities and Towns' strand of research, Dr. Mike Hynes's research has resulted in 2022 in a number of peer-reviewed articles: M. Hynes, 'Virtual Consumption: A Review of Digitalisation's 'Green' Credentials'. *Front. Sustain. 3:969329, Insights in Sustainable Consumption: 2022*. doi:10.3389/frsus.2022.969329 ; M. Hynes, 'Walk a mile in my shoes! An autoethnographical study of urban walkability', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 5(5): (2022, pp. 619-644; Mike Hynes, Walkability: Transport policy, practice, and mobility in Galway city. The RIAI Journal, Issue 324 [available at riai.ie/discover-architecture/architecture-ireland-digital/issue-324]. With Prof. Frances Fahy (Geography), Dr Hynes is in addition Co-Principle Investigator on the CAMPAIGNers Project 'Citizens Acting on Mitigation Pathways through Active Implementation of a Goal-setting Network'. This research project - a 36-month H2020 project worth €5 million - aims to make low-carbon lifestyles a major part of the solution to climate change by identifying lifestyle transformation potential, and associated barriers and enablers across 5 continents and 16 major cities with over 20 million residents.

- Within the Changing Rural Communities strand of research, Dr Tony Varley has devoted time (with Dr Tomás Finn, History) to co-editing a book ('Inside Rural Ireland: Power and Change since Independence'). In addition, he has authored 'A New Land War? Land, Class Politics, and State-Building in Civil War Ireland' (article published on 5 December 2022 as a contribution to the Irish Civil War project, an online collaboration between UCC and RTÉ, https://www.rte.ie/history/irish-free-state/?134124124).

- There have been major developments in relation to the SSRC's research space in St Declan's (No. 6 Distillery Road) during 2022. Early in November the SSRC was contacted by the Buildings Office regarding the siting of a proposed Muslim prayer room in St Declan's. The Buildings Office's proposal to the SSRC was that we retain Room 202 and that we exchange Room 203 (our main research space) for Room 201 across the landing on the top floor of St Declan's. After an EGM held on 11 November and after consulting with the SSRC's Board members, the SSRC's counter-proposal put to the Buildings Office on 18 November was that the SSRC be allowed to hold on to Room 203 and that we give up Room 202 to facilitate the movement of the prayer room to St. Declan's. On 22 November we were informed by the Buildings Office that they were willing to accept our counter-proposal. Since then the James Hardiman Library has agreed to accept for their archives the SSRC's files (dating from 1965) that had been stored in Room 202 for many years.

  With the lifting of the COVID-19 restrictions on campus, the five desks available in the SSRC's two rooms (202 and 203) in St. Declan's have been used regularly by Dr Tony Varley, Dr Rachel McArdle, Dr Áine Macken-Walsh, Dr Anita Naughton, Dr Mícheál Ó Fathartaigh, and Dr Gerard Moran.

- The SSRC webpage, designed and maintained by Dr Mike Hynes and launched in 2016, has continued to be developed and attract considerable attention. Since January 2022, **13,250 'unique'** or different visitors have visited the webpage and over **110,296 pages** were examined. In all, the webpage has attracted **232,334 'hits' in** the current year. Dr Hynes also maintains the SSRC's active Twitter account that currently has **1,290 followers**.

Dr Mike Hynes and Dr Tony Varley (joint secretaries, SSRC)
12 December 2022