

Dr Carole Holohan: Poverty and Welfare in post-war Ireland

Having a PhD student working on this project would assist my research and professional profile in a number of different ways. It would give me valuable experience as a people manager allowing me to develop my supervisory and managerial skills. It would alert those in the postgraduate community to the project and ultimately attract more PhD and postdoctoral students. While academic study of the social history of Ireland has broadened in scope over the last fifteen years, research on the history of poverty and welfare is a relatively recent phenomenon, with much of the focus on the nineteenth century and the operation of the Poor Law system. Two recent monographs¹ (and my own article)² demonstrate, however, a growing body of research on the twentieth century, while government commissions of inquiry and media debates on the role of institutions such as reformatories and industrial schools has given this kind of research a new resonance. This project is therefore likely to be attractive to postgraduate and postdoctoral students.

The PhD student's chief contribution to the project (apart from their own independent research for their thesis) will be to support in an administrative capacity the development of a network of experts on the history of poverty and welfare in Ireland. The potential for such a network was confirmed at a workshop organised by myself in 2014 ('The meaning of poverty' at University College Dublin, 5 September 2014 - <http://historyhub.ie/professor-mark-peel-dramatising-poverty-comparative-perspectives>)

Gathering those at the cutting-edge of poverty research at workshops and a conference will allow for the creation of synergies and the forging of new relationships with a view to closer collaboration in this field, which is a growing one in Ireland. This network will include those working on nineteenth and twentieth century Ireland, including Northern Ireland, with the aim of identifying common and transnational threads that link the experience of and responses to poverty across time and space. A conference and a number of smaller workshops will facilitate an investigation of the kind of macro narratives that can inform a long history of poverty in Ireland. In this way this award would indirectly contribute to my mid-term goal of writing the first survey history of poverty in Ireland, which will take the form of a co-authored book with Dr Lindsey Earner-Byrne.

As the leader of an Irish research network I would then forge links with an existing European research network based in the European Research Institute (Florence), 'The Quest for welfare and democracy: voluntary associations, families and the state, 1880-present' (<https://welfare-democracy.eui.eu/>). This network has regular events and brings together individual researchers from across Europe in order to facilitate the development of comparative, regional and transnational analyses. Interaction with this network would ensure that the Irish example contributes to broader understandings of welfare and poverty in the European context, and would assist my development as a high profile researcher in this field.

¹ See Lindsey Earner-Byrne, *Letters of the Catholic Poor, Poverty in Independent Ireland, 1920–1940* (Cambridge, 2017) and Seán Lucey, *The end of the Irish Poor Law?: Welfare and healthcare reform in revolutionary and independent Ireland* (Manchester, 2015).

² Carole Holohan, 'Conceptualising and responding to poverty in the Republic of Ireland, c.1961–71: a case study of Dublin' for *Social History*, vol. 41, no. 1 (2016) pp 34–53.