

Editorial

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Editor-in-chief

We are delighted to be launching *Studies in Social Wellbeing (SSW)*, an online, peer-reviewed, open access journal of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing, University of Malta. The plan to publish a faculty journal took seed in the early days of the faculty's life and has come to fruition nine years later through the commitment and hard work of many.

The journal has a broad scope and will be publishing papers which focus on topics related to wellbeing from a social perspective. The journal's vision reflects that of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing which is outward-looking, engaged with various communities, and deeply committed to promoting wellbeing, inclusion, equity, equality and social justice.

We are confident that through your readership and support *Studies in Social Wellbeing* will serve as the forum for the publication of original research which crosses and intersects disciplinary boundaries around social wellbeing. Our vision is for the journal to serve as the space for scholars and for practitioners to share their research and reflections on practice and for post-graduate students to publish their research. We welcome contributions which shine a light on what Foucault (Gordon, 1980) describes as 'disqualified knowledges', popular knowledge, the knowledge of the people. In this light we look forward to the journal becoming the space for

papers which are co-created with research participants.

The papers in this edition truly reflect the broad focus of the journal. In a stimulating contribution, Dr Anne-Marie Callus and Dr Sue Vella critically engage in a consideration of the Independent Living Movement (ILM) and capitalism especially in its neoliberal form (pp. 12-25). They clearly articulate the parallelisms and contrasts between the two and argue in favour of a 'relational interdependent view of autonomy'. Dr Marian Muscat Azzopardi touches on the harshness of the stigma faced by children in alternative care in Malta (pp. 26-35). This paper is informed by qualitative research carried out with children in alternative care. The author proposes a way forward for policy and practice to help address the important issue.

Dr Andrew Camilleri and Professor Andrew Azzopardi draw on two theoretical models, the *at-risk model* and the *protective factors model*, to embark on a useful analysis of the literature to explore the causes and correlations in relation to youth violence (pp. 36-52). In their analysis they conclude that the Maltese literature on the subject adopts the *at-risk model* which has less predictive results than the protective factors model. The authors call for more research to explore this further. Professor Andrew Azzopardi, Ms Jamie Bonnici and Professor Marilyn Clark write about a quantitative

study they carried out about the loneliness experienced by people in Malta during the COVID-19 pandemic (pp. 53-64) The study used a quantitative on-line survey with a sample of 906 adults in Malta. Interestingly the results show that the frequency of self-reported loneliness was linked to age group, nationality and occupational group. The study is of particular value as it compares with data about loneliness collected prior to the onset of COVID-19 and shows that rates of loneliness were markedly higher across the sample. The authors recommend interventions to ease loneliness based on their study.

This edition also features an interview with Dr Gauden Galea from the World Health Organization Office in China. Dr Galea, an expert in public health, kindly responded to questions about wellbeing and the COVID-19 pandemic (pp. 7-11).

Thanks are due to many as we launch *Studies in Social Wellbeing*. Firstly, to Professor Andrew Azzopardi, Dean of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing for believing in this project and for continuing to egg us on when energies were flagging. To the past and current chairs and members of the Research Publications and Scholarship Committee of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing for their unfailing support. To the members of the International Editorial Board for their consistent and constant support. To all the reviewers who offered their expertise and time so generously. To Ms Jamie Bonnici, assistant editor for her meticulous work and commitment. To the contributors, thank you for believing in the journal, there would be no publication without your contributions.

References

Gordon, C. (Ed.). (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interview and other writings 1972-1977*. Michel Foucault New York: Pantheon Press.