

EDITORIAL NOTE

Celebrating Twenty-Five Years of the *Irish Journal of Anthropology*: Editors' Introduction to Special Issue

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This special edition celebrates the 25th anniversary of *The Irish Journal of Anthropology*. This issue comes at an interesting time, corresponding with the centenary (100 years following the division of the island into Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland) and following a year that included the official implementation of Brexit and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. To acknowledge and celebrate this milestone, we have compiled a special issue focused on *The Past, Present, and Future of Irish Anthropology*. Since the Irish Journal of Anthropology published its first volume in 1996, anthropology on the island has evolved as a discipline. To explore these developments, we collected contributions and original articles from a diverse group of students and scholars working on topics pertaining to the past, present, and future of anthropology in Ireland.

We are immensely grateful to the authors who have contributed to this Special Edition and to the reviewers who gave their time to constructively engage with the articles. The issue begins with a tribute to the late Fiona Larkan, a previous editor of the journal from 2011-2014, by Fiona Murphy. As the first female editor of the journal, she helped to shape the anthropology of Ireland through her guidance and expertise. Specifically, she called attention to new approaches in ethnographic writing, discussions on suicide in Ireland, and the value of public and applied anthropology.

Next, we present excerpts obtained from a selection of past editors to look at the *Role of the Irish Journal of Anthropology in Anthropology of Ireland* where we focus on the everyday entanglements of academia, people, and dissemination of knowledge through our journal. The brief interviews focused on understanding the role of past editors in their full capacity and how anthropology has developed, moved, and spread in Ireland. This is further understood in light of the recent changes occurring across the island and around the world.

The remainder of this issue brings together a collection of nine articles on a range of topics relevant to the anthropology of Ireland yesterday, today and tomorrow. We have chosen to organize this collection of articles into three time periods of past, present and future. Beginning in the past, Ketonen-Keating provides an extensive literature review that examines the progression of key theoretical frameworks in the anthropology of Ireland from the 1930s to the present. In this review, Ketonen-Keating addresses

developments in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, situated within broader trends in Europeanist anthropology.

Annemarie Majlund Jensen's paper takes the reader around a contested area of Belfast, the now demolished site of the Girdwood Barracks. She provides us with an ethnography of driving with Pete, an ex-British Army and NI-born veteran who served during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Annemarie weaves into her paper car driving as a practice and method of inquiry, yielding narratives which might not be otherwise revealed.

The next group of articles present original research being conducted in the present on peoples of and places in Ireland. Matthew Gault brings an interesting discussion on using Storytelling as a tool of reconciliation and peacebuilding in a transitional society. His ethnographic research is based on the rural life of Ireland, both North and South of the Border, where storytelling has been elaborated as a way of creating social solidarity among friends, neighbours, and the younger generations. However, at the same time, this tool cannot be considered a neutral way of generating awareness but a way to understand the context in which stories develop.

Drawing from research in a small fishing village on Ireland's Atlantic coast, Cleary presents us with fisher's perspectives on the interactions of seals and fisheries. He does so by engaging with recent decentring trends in anthropology, moving beyond a focus on humans to consider the agency of nonhumans, like seals. His ethnography demonstrates the roles of small-scale fishers and seals in the local ecosystem, demonstrating that nonhuman activity has the capacity to threaten some forms of human life with extinction.

Margaret Haverty and Sean O' Dubhghaill present a rich ethnographic description of the Irish expatriate community in Germany and their expressions of care. This presents us with one of the many topical issues COVID-19 has brought with it. Under structural restrictions, sending and receiving care were reshaped and reoriented by the crisis, prompting the authors to look into unique ways of adapting to the necessities through electronic engagements. Overall, along with context-sensitive analysis of gift-giving, the paper argues for sharing and stashing as measures of solidarity.

We conclude this special issue with two articles that look towards the future of anthropology in Ireland. Ciara Power presents a case for feminist anthropology on the Island in a form of a detailed and expansive review. In the process, she provides a comprehensive history of feminist thought and illustrates its occurrence across disciplines. She argues how feminist movements have overlapped in anthropology and other disciplines and concludes by providing a rich list of scholarship for our readers to read on.

Felix Schiedlowski's paper considers how the future encroaches on the present. Felix explores two seemingly discrete examples of peoples' temporal attachments – the Northern Ireland centenary celebrations and coal phase-out in a German mining area situated between Halle and Leipzig, previously in East Germany. His article looks forward, which, however, has consequences about how the future is bound up with the past and present. Felix's paper highlights how anthropology reveals peoples' temporal attachments causing us to consider how the future is comprehended within the past and present.

In addition to celebrating the first twenty-five years of the journal, we also intend this special issue to begin a discussion on future directions for the anthropology of Ireland. Some potential areas of interest include the expansion of research in Northern Ireland to look beyond conflict and post-conflict narratives. For example, additional focus on less visible populations, including LGBTQI+ populations, ethnic minorities, and migrants. Other emerging areas of research include the changing roles and relationships of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland post-Brexit. Politics on the island of Ireland continue to provide rich academic inquiry. However, as the political landscape continues its post-Brexit debates, there is scope for anthropologists to critically engage with the post-pandemic inequalities which have arguably been laid aside in favour of economic recovery. We also hope to see future engagement with the question of how Irish anthropology can contribute to the production of knowledge within increasingly globalized and diversifying local lifeworlds.

Finally, we acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic has had an enormous impact upon on research taking place on the Island of Ireland. Unfortunately, these impacts have continued beyond the initial lockdowns, and we remain in an uncertain present. Each of us has felt the effects of this uncertainty in different ways. For Amanda, her PhD research with Muslim women in Northern Ireland was conducted in women's spaces during the 8 months prior to March 2021 but shifted abruptly with the initial lockdowns to focus on the ways women engaged with new and evolving digital technologies to maintain their activities. Unfortunately, Tom's original PhD theme had to be abandoned due to the COVID-19 pandemic which prevented him recruiting within the overstretched and exhausted NHS to explore migrants and the management of their mental health. Fortunately, because Tom was able to take a period of withdrawal from his PhD, when he worked in a care home during the early days of the pandemic, he was able to begin a new research topic which now considers the impact of COVID-19 on researchers and their research. For Ashwin, her PhD work revolved around older adults in India, one of the most vulnerable cohorts in the pandemic, which led to online data collection from her informants. Keeping in mind the prolonged restrictions and the negative impact it might have on the mobility of older adults, her work now looks into secondary analysis of the nationally representative time-use data collected by the government. These experiences call attention to the possibility

inherent in anthropology to respond to rapid, unexpected periods of change, looking beyond traditional methodologies, field sites, participants and perspectives.