

INTERVIEWS WITH

IOANNIS TSILOULAKIS AND CARLES SALAZAR

COMMENTARIES ON THE ROLE OF THE IRISH JOURNAL OF ANTHROPOLOGY IN ANTHROPOLOGY OF IRELAND BY PAST EDITORS

BY ASHWIN TRIPATHI

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A. Tripathi: What is your past/present affiliation with IJA?

I. Tsioulakis: I was Associate Editor of the IJA between 2014 and 2017, and previously Book Reviews' Editor between 2012 and 2014. I have been a subscriber/reader of the Journal since I joined Queen's University Belfast as a PhD student in 2007.

C. Salazar: I am not currently affiliated with the IJA, but served the editorial board as Editorial Advisory Board for several issues from 2007.

AT: In your opinion, what unique contribution does the Irish Journal of Anthropology bring to the anthropology community in Ireland?

IT: The huge value of the IJA is in publishing research in anthropology and cognate subjects from (and on) Ireland and beyond. Its commendable balance between themes related to the island (both thematically and geo-culturally) and a wealth of perspectives and localities across the world makes it a very approachable medium for both students and researchers, as well as a way to generate interest in critical anthropology among potential students, various stakeholders, and interested lay audiences. In the social context of Ireland (North and South), where anthropology is on the rise but also – institutionally – often in a precarious position, the IJA is a hugely important tool.

CS: A publication is a good way of bringing together national or regional scientific communities. Given the fact that there are not many departments of anthropology in Ireland (I am not sure about that since I have not been to Ireland for the least ten years), any means that contribute to making the Irish anthropological

community more visible should be promoted. I am not sure whether this is the 'unique' contribution of the IJA, but it is certainly an important role.

AT: How has anthropology in Ireland changed in the past years?

IT: The most interesting tensions within anthropology in Ireland are generated in the entanglements between researchers who are based on the island and those doing research focusing *on* cultures/societies therein, with significant overlap between those groups. As opposed to, say, British or American Anthropology (that are defined more as disciplinary traditions, who tend to be outward looking and very closely connected to colonial/imperialist histories), anthropology in Ireland is a field more malleable, in flux, and difficult to neatly define. The growth of the anthropology community on both sides of the border, and the diversification of their themes, in the past decade that I have been professionally involved in it, has shaped the field and significantly enriched its scope and critical contribution to both international academia and local cultures.

CS: Although I have not been to Ireland for years, I reckon it has become much more diverse in comparison to what it was thirty years ago, when I came to Ireland for the first time. Back then, anthropology in Ireland was mostly anthropology done by Americans (searching for their 'roots') and by Irish people (normally sociologists) on Irish people, with rather practical concerns in mind. But I suspect this is no longer the case. At least, this is the trend that I could observe in the few years that I could come back after that. Irish society is very different now from what it was thirty years ago, and this must have had repercussions on anthropology.

AT: Where do you think Irish anthropology is headed?

IT: It is hard to say, given the turbulent circumstances (pandemic, academic precarity, political instability in Britain/Ireland and more broadly) that we face. The one thing that we can say in confidence is that anthropology on the island and beyond will be connected to those circumstances, both as subject to their whims and – hopefully – as a critical and attentive commentator with an ear on the ground, which is what anthropologists do best. I'm especially excited to see how anthropology in Ireland engages with issues of 'New Communities' and BIPOC persons, in an international context where decolonisation and the radical forces of movements become influential factors.

CS: ...I suspect it might be in a similar situation to other countries, in Europe and elsewhere, which had been 'anthropologised' in the past.

AT: What future do open access, peer review journals like IJA hold for the discipline and beyond?

IT: Related to the above, and as the demand for socially-engaged research is increasing, open access is the way to go, and I am delighted to support the IJA mission. Our research is only worth the effort if it is accessible to everyone, no matter their institutional access or economic privilege.

CS: That's an important question. I believe the future is promising and harsh at the same time. It is promising because the anthropology community needs journals like IJA to publicize the research done in Ireland and to create some form of community consciousness among all those who do that research. But it will be harsh because the academic market is very competitive. It is all a matter of finding the appropriate 'niche' for the IJA, that is, people should have a 'reason' to publish in IJA instead of in any other journal.

The Special Issue Editorial Team (Amanda Lubit, Tom Marshall and Ashwin Tripathi) would also like to thank many other editors who were not available to contribute but acknowledged our efforts in putting together this special issue and look forward to its publication.