WRITING IRELAND: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract: This literature review situates key works in the anthropology of Ireland within broader directions in Europeanist anthropology by examining various theoretical approaches used in the decades between 1930-2020. Many early publications on the Republic of Ireland fit neatly into wider anthropological trends. Functionalism was an important theoretical paradigm in both the anthropology of Ireland and Europe during the 1930s and 1940s. Throughout the 1950-1970 period, much of the ethnographic writing about Ireland emphasized the idea that rural communities were dysfunctional and dying, a process called "anomie." This approach was strongly critiqued later, when ethnographers began to focus on processes of social continuity and change. In contrast, the anthropology of Northern Ireland has generally been centred on "The Troubles" or sectarian conflict between Catholics and Protestants. Two of the earliest monographs analysed how practices of both conflict and conflict-avoidance shaped the lives of rural villagers in Northern Ireland. Later works specifically examined the experiences of paramilitary members and their support communities. By the 2000s-2020s, there was a focus on how Irish Catholic and British Protestant ethnoreligious identities are created, maintained or contested in a post-conflict society.

Keywords: literature review, anthropological theory, Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Europe

Introduction

Ireland, like much of the world today, is experiencing turbulent times and dramatic changes. To help us as we move the anthropology of Ireland forward into a new era, we first need to understand what has come before and how we arrived at where we are today. This literature review examines the use of key theoretical frameworks in the anthropology of Ireland in the decades between 1930 and 2020, and situates these within broader directions in Europeanist anthropology. The Republic of Ireland is discussed first, and Northern Ireland second. This article primarily examines anthropological works which are well-known and have been extensively cited. Some of the earlier works (especially on the Republic of Ireland) fit neatly into the wider anthropological trends of the times. Functionalism was important in both the anthropology of Ireland (Arensberg 1937, Arensberg and Kimball 1940) and the anthropology of Europe during the 1930s and 1940s (Cole 1977, Albera 2006). Similarly, a focus on processes of continuity and social change was prevalent in the

anthropology of Europe (Behar 1986, Collier 1997, Reed-Danahay 1996) and in anthropology of the Republic of Ireland specifically during the 1980s to 2000s (Kaul 2009, Peace 2001, Salazar 1996, Shanklin 1985).

On the other hand, ethnographic writing about Northern Ireland tends to focus on concerns of sectarianism and sectarian violence, which have no neat equivalents in the broader anthropology of Western Europe. The earliest writing on Northern Ireland, with fieldwork conducted during the 1950s and 1960s, examines how Catholic Nationalists and Protestant Unionists work toward maintaining neighbourly relations and avoiding sectarian conflict (Bufwack 1982, Harris 1972), especially in rural areas. By the time of the Troubles, approximately 1969-2005, the anthropological gaze has moved toward examining sectarian violence directly (Aretxaga 1995, Feldman 2003, Kelleher 2006). After the Good Friday Agreement (1998) and the de-commissioning of Irish Republican Army (2005) weapons, several anthropologists have examined how sectarian identities are created and maintained in the absence of military conflict (Donnan 2010, Viggiani 2014, Zenker 2013). Others have documented how local people intentionally subvert sectarianism and create reconciliation between Catholic Nationalists and Protestant Unionists (Bryan 1997, Lepp 2018, Lubit 2020, Nagle 2006). A key approach in the current anthropology of Northern Ireland is examining the effects of Brexit on local communities (Wilson 2020).

Ireland and Northern Ireland within the Context of Europeanist Anthropology: An Overview

Ireland was one of the first areas of Europe to be studied by anthropologists. Although anthropologists today study all aspects of Irish society, most early anthropology in Ireland focused on farming communities as isolated, homogenous wholes. One of the earliest of these was Conrad Arensberg's (1937) functionalist study of rural Country Clare. During the 1970s and 1980s, much of anthropological writing on Ireland was focused on "anomie," or the idea that rural communities were dysfunctional and dying (Brody 1986, Fox 1978, Messenger 1969, Scheper-Hughes 1979). This approach was later critiqued, when ethnographers began to focus on processes of social continuity and change (Kaul 2009, Peace 2001, Salazar 1996, Shanklin 1985).

The "Troubles" have been the direct or indirect focus of much of the anthropological literature on Northern Ireland. Two of the earliest works on this topic are Bufwack's (1982) *Village without Violence: An Examination of a Northern Irish Community* and Harris's (1986) *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ulster: A Study of Neighbours and "Strangers" in a Border Community.* Both monographs examine how rural Protestants and Catholics (who are less likely to live in segregated communities than urban residents) manage their interactions in a largely peaceful manner. Later ethnographers (Aretxaga 1995, Feldman 1991, Sluka 1989) chronicled the violence of the British occupation, particularly against Irish Catholics.

Directions in the anthropology of Ireland often mirror those found in the anthropology of Europe. Anthropology began as the study of the Other, and since most anthropologists were American (or indeed European), the Other was thought to live in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Latin America (Peace 1989:92). Cole notes that the earliest studies of Europe were conducted during the 1920s and 1930s, and the regions studied included Ireland, Sicily, and the Balkans (1977:344). Later, during the 1950s, more Mediterranean areas were studied (Albera 2006:109); as well as other peripheral regions of Europe, such as Norway, Denmark, Wales, and Yugoslavia (Freeman 1973:743). However, anthropology "continued to focus on the exotic and the primitive" (Cole 1977:352). For example, Albera states that "ethnographic research in [the Mediterranean] showed a tendency to 'tribalize,' to give preference to the most marginal zones of the region…opposing the primitivism of [this area] with the modernity of Europe" (2006:113,116).

Taylor and Peace both discuss how the Irish have been characterized as Others in ways that are very similar to how various European peasants and non-Europeans have been viewed. Taylor explains that the anthropology of Ireland originated with "a late Victorian search for primitive survivals on the western edge of the island" (1996:216). Peace agrees with this idea of being distant in time, and states that the Irish "epitomize in the present Our historical past," in a way which was particularly convenient for early anthropologists; since the rural Irish were more recognizable as the ancestors of the West than the Sudanese tribes, West African pastoralists, or Amazonian hunter-gatherers who represented an even more "primitive" humanity (1989:91-93). These early studies of Ireland always focused on the most marginal communities. Taylor explains this trend by stating that "as Ireland is to England, so are the islands of its western shore to Ireland" and that this "authentic" area included the Aran Islands, the Blasket Islands, Western Galway, and southwestern Kerry (1996:216). To this list, Peace adds an island community in Donegal; which is to the north of the previously mentioned areas but also a part of the West. He explains that "the Tory Islanders are more immediately recognizable as Our historical ancestors. They are where We have been not too long ago" (1989:93).

This focus on the "primitive" meant studies of rural areas and "peasant" societies for the rest of European anthropology as well. Cole explains that "the anglophone anthropology of Europe is overwhelmingly the study of rural Europe" (1977:365). Albera adds that "a large part of anthropological research in the Mediterranean was undertaken in rural communities…" (2006:113). According to Freeman, the "definition and analysis of the 'peasantry,' of its internal characteristics and external relations…" has been one of the most important topics in Europeanist anthropology (1973:745). Lass agrees with this, stating "initially, the ventures of our discipline into Europe had been into the same familiar sphere of culture that has defined the domestic ethnographers and folklorists: the proper peasants" (1997:722).

In addition to these shorter observations, Rogers has extensively analyzed "peasants" in present-day France. She explains that "in general, French ethnographers of France have focused on 'traditional' peasant societies…" (1987:58). Often, these peasants are paradoxically viewed as representing the "real" nation, and contrasted with its modernity. According to Rogers, "the peasant persona serves…sometimes as the antithesis of modern France and sometimes as its authentic essence" (1987:56). This is certainly true of Ireland as well. For example, Taylor states that "the west of the west, the seaboard of Kerry…[is] the very heartland in the symbolic geography of Irish identity…" (1996:219), although Shanklin differs from this view: "the west of Ireland…is the Gaelic-speaking and backward region…" (1985:5).

To summarize: just as anthropologists of Europe focused on the peripheral regions of that continent, such as the Celtic Fringe (Ireland, Scotland, Brittany), Mediterranean (Spain, Italy, Greece), or non-Indo Europeans (Finns, Sámi, Hungarians) (Cole 1977:352), anthropologists of Ireland also focused on marginal regions. This primarily refers to the western seaboard, which is the poorest, least urbanized, and "most traditional" part of the country. It is also where the Gaeltacht or Irish-speaking areas are located (Taylor 1996:216).

Functionalism in Ireland: The 1930s and 1940s

In general, developments in the anthropology of Ireland have mirrored developments in the anthropology of Europe. Both began with functionalist studies of "peasant" communities, which were assumed to be ahistorical. For the anthropology of Ireland, the best-known classics of this genre are Arensberg's (1937) *The Irish Countryman: An Anthropological Study,* and Arensberg and Kimball's (1940) *Family and Community in Ireland,* both of which study the peasant farmers of county Clare in Western Ireland. Arensberg (1937) and Arensberg and Kimball (1940) explain that they "regard society as an integrated system of mutually interrelated and functionally interdependent parts…[this] is the central hypothesis of functional anthropology" (1940: xxix). Their chapters describe the standard topics of a functionalist monograph, such as kinship, subsistence, inheritance patterns, etc.

Both books' portrayal of Irish peasant life is largely positive. The communities described (Luogh, Rynamona, and Inagh) function well, everyone has a role to play, and the people have diversions such as ceilidhe dances, fairy lore, and market days. The authors have however been critiqued for ignoring social change and the impact of recent events. For example, Scheper-Hughes accuses Arensberg of having "failed to address the events of the Easter rising [of 1916] and the effects of the new Irish Free State on his static portrayal of the timeless Irish countrymen of Clare" (2001:29). However, this seems like an unfair criticism, since Arensberg specifically states that:

> *We all know something of the Land War and Sinn Fein and the bitter internecine strife of the Trouble. If we know anything of Ireland's history we see these rough upheavals of tranquil scene as great punctuation marks upon a real page of struggle lasting seven hundred years [of opposition to British colonial rule*] (1937:15).

Scheper-Hughes may have meant that Arensberg does not analyse the effects of the war in his ethnography; because he conducted fieldwork over fifteen years after the end of the war. However, it is possible that the war was not a topic of everyday importance for Arensberg's interlocutors, or was a topic deliberately forgotten and silenced by them.

Another example of Arensberg discussing social change is his analysis that "today folk belief is undergoing marked change like all else in this world, like all else in Ireland" (1937:212-214). As examples, he points out that belief in fairies (the sidhe, or "good people") seems to be dying out; but it is being replaced by both a stronger, more orthodox Roman Catholicism, and a belief in ghosts. He adds that there are many stories regarding dead British soldiers "patrol[ling] the roads where the banshee may have walked [before]" (1937:212-214). Despite the criticism the two books have received, both continue to be reprinted (Arensberg 1937 in 1950, 1959, 1968, and 1988; Arensberg and Kimball 1940 in 1968 and 2001) and are extensively referenced. Examples include Egan and Murphy 2015:13; Salazar 1996:14; and Scheper-Hughes 2001:4,26,29,96. Many ethnographies of Ireland start with an explanation of how they will be similar to, or different from, one or both of these classics.

As Herzfeld notes, anthropology has often been criticized for focusing on "marginal" rural communities (1987:131). This has also been true for the anthropology of Ireland. Most early ethnographers focused their work on the impoverished farmers of the West, although there were also rural communities in the East of Ireland. But these tend to be wealthier, and were viewed as less "authentically" Irish (Taylor 1996:216). For example, Gibbon has remarked that "Irish anthropology has done little else *but* revisit Arensberg and Kimball" (1973:484). Likewise, Taylor believes that "the regional and topical foci of [Irish] anthropological studies…remain[s] too mired in the western bogs, namely, endless variations on Arensberg and Kimball…" (1996:214). However, both *The Irish Countryman: An Anthropological Study* (1937) and *Family and Community in Ireland* (1940) were well received by the Irish public, who thought they were accurate and sympathetic depictions of life in the Irish countryside; unlike many subsequent works, which have proved controversial (Scheper-Hughes 2001: xvi). In the following section, we will explore how ethnographies of the 1960s and 1970s focused on *dysfunction* rather than function in the rural communities of the Irish Republic.

Instead of examining how various elements of a community created a functioning, homogenous whole, anthropologists of the next era examined practices that were no longer convenient and satisfying to local people. Anthropologists began to ask “what is going wrong in this community?”

Anomie and Apathy in the Republic’s Rural Communities: The 1960s and 1970s

During the 1970s, anthropologists emphasized dysfunction in the small rural communities of the West of Ireland, which were commonly characterized as “dying” rather than changing. Anomie was a particularly popular concept. Specifically, it referred to eight major problems. These were a feeling of hopelessness, a devaluation of farming, low rates of marriage, low rates of cooperative work, high rates of emigration, high rates of mental illness, and the loss of both the Irish language and traditional art forms, such as singing and dancing. These problems are extensively documented in Messenger’s (1969) *Inis Beag: Isle of Ireland,* Brody’s (1974) *Inishkillane: Change and Decline in the West of Ireland,* Fox’s (1978) *The Tory Islanders: A People of the Celtic Fringe,* and Scheper-Hughes’s (1977) *Saints, Scholars and Schizophrenics: Mental Illness in Rural Ireland.*

As previously mentioned, all of these works take place on the western seaboard. Messenger’s book is set on the smallest of the Aran Islands, for which “Inis Beag” is a pseudonym. “Inishkillane” is an amalgam of many communities. Three of these were bilingual; two located in Donegal, and one in Galway. The other two are English-speaking, and found in West Clare and West Cork (1973:2). Tory Island is not a pseudonym, and is located off the coast of Donegal, in the far northwest of Ireland. In contrast, Scheper-Hughes' “Ballybran” is on the Dingle Peninsula of West Kerry in the far southwest and is also bilingual. She revealed its real name to be An Clochán in the revised edition (2001:29,131-132).

Examples of the hopelessness and destruction associated with anomie took many forms. Scheper-Hughes describes how “rural Ireland is dying, and its people are consequently infused with a spirit of anomie and despair” (2001:61). Brody states that “the Inishkillane community is intensely demoralized” (1973:98). Fox explains that the state is destroying the Tory way of life because it “paradoxically cannot let [the islanders] live in their culture of relative poverty but must, because it cannot tolerate their poverty, destroy their culture” (1978:192).

Illustrations of traditional lifeways, such as farming and fishing, losing their respectability and value include Scheper-Hughes statement that “for at least three decades, the selection of an heir for the land has been governed by the process of elimination rather than by choice…the last [child] to escape…get[s] stuck by default with an unproductive farm..[and a] lifestyle of almost certain celibacy…”(2001:106). According to Fox,

the people of Tory Island feel that "there is nothing for [the young] here" (1978:29). Brody adds that "today almost a majority of country people of the remoter districts find their way of life a burden to be avoided if possible" (1973:72).

Due to this desire to avoid farm life, many women especially escaped the countryside through emigration. According to Brody, "country girls have refused to marry into local farms" (1973:98). Scheper-Hughes lists how during her fieldwork over the period of a year, "there were no matches, engagements, or marriages [in Ballybran], and only the most furtively hinted at and fleeting courtships" (2001:97). Fox believed that marriages on Tory Island were unlikely, since most of the girls left for the greater part of the year to work on mainland Ireland or in British cities; increasing their chances of forming families elsewhere (1978:20). However, alternate explanations for the low rates of marriage are available. Messenger believes that many men on Inis Beag did not want to marry, due to their negative Jansenist (a puritanical form of Roman Catholicism) ideas regarding sexuality (1983:125).

The previously mentioned anthropologists also argue that these low rates of marriage cause high rates of mental illness, in particular, schizophrenia. According to Brody, "the mental breakdown is becoming almost a routine part of the country life" (1973:100). Scheper-Hughes cites statistics that in 1971, two out of every one hundred males in Western Ireland were in a mental hospital. 89% of these patients had never been married, and "more than one half had been diagnosed with schizophrenia" (2001:135). Messenger lists conditions that "mak[e] for personality depression" on the island, including intrusive priests, hypochondria, malicious gossip, poverty, boredom, and isolation (1983:126).

Messenger also found that these same negative features result in high rates of emigration, which had become an institutionalized part of the island's culture (1983:126). Fox felt that the Tory Islanders suffered from the same difficulty, in that "emigration…steadily erodes the island population and undermines its chances for survival" (1978:20). Brody further explains that "whereas in the past, within the traditional social structure, emigration was a necessary mainstay of the pattern of family farming, today it is for many a simple preference" (1973:13).

Low rates of formerly widespread cooperative work, such as cooring (reaping grains, such as wheat or oats) and meitheal (to bring in the hay in large groups) were also viewed as being under threat. Brody states that "cooring has all but disappeared from the life of the rural people" (1978:139), a statement Scheper-Hughes agrees with (2001:96,111). Nor was farming the only activity affected. Fox relates how cooperative fishing

was also becoming less common on Tory, because many men were worried about losing their (certain) unemployment benefits over (uncertain) fishing income (1978:29).

These anthropologists noted concerns about the loss of the Irish language and traditional arts, such as certain types of singing and dancing. Scheper-Hughes found that “only four households in the parish are Irish-speaking ‘from the cradle,’ and all of these comprise elderly bachelors or widows, none in any position to teach the language to a new generation” (2001:132). Fox believed that another negative factor on Irish language use was the Tory Islanders’ widespread practice of working as migrant laborers in England or Scotland, where they became used to speaking English (1978:22-23). Other examples of “culture” being lost included the traditional house party. According to Brody, “the ceilidhe is eliminated” by increasingly modern forms of socializing, such as renting hotel dining rooms for wedding receptions (1973:36). Providing an in-depth description, Scheper-Hughes writes how “the winter ceilidhes, friendly fireside chats with neighbor and spirited step-dancing in the kitchen, have been replaced by the watching of television among the more prosperous and radio listening among the rest” (2001:133).

Other anthropologists (Egan and Murphy 2015, Peace 1989, Wilson and Donnan 2006) have criticized the previously discussed ethnographies for emphasizing the negative, and argued that it was the anthropology of Ireland that was in crisis, not rural Ireland itself. For example, Egan and Murphy argue that “ethnographic accounts in Ireland until at least the mid-1980s were dominated by (mis)representations of rural life” (2015:136). Wilson and Donnan point out that “the subjects of this research became in large part its objects: ‘classic’ traditional, repressed, anomic, ignorant and sexist peasants, whose local community life and culture were out of their hands…we would dispute a good deal of the theorizing, comparative frameworks and conclusions reached” (2006:24-27). In the next section, we will examine how anthropologists of the 1980s and 1990s began to view new cultural practices in the rural communities of the Republic of Ireland as a form of “change” rather than “death” or “dysfunction.” It was now recognized that just like all communities, Irish villagers were abandoning practices which no longer felt useful to them and starting new forms which were more meaningful. Additionally, anthropologists of the 1980s and 1990s recognized that many practices were “changing” rather than “dying.”

A Time of Change: The 1980s and 1990s

Later Europeanist ethnography (starting approximately during the 1980s) has examined processes of social change versus continuity. The countryside was no longer viewed as isolated from wider society; but rather, anthropologists examined how social change occurs in relation to outside influences, such as the nation state and the EU. Some questions examined include: which cultural practices disappear; which remain in similar

forms; and which continue to be practiced, but in new ways? Other anthropologists examined identities in these communities, and how these were formed in dialogue with wider national (or European) society. Some examples of ethnographies examining these topics include Behar's (1986) *Santa María del Monte: The Presence of the Past in a Spanish Village;* Reed-Danahay's (1996) *Education and Identity in Rural France: The Politics of Schooling;* and Fishburne Collier's (1997) *From Duty to Desire: Remaking Families in a Spanish Village.*

The anthropology of Ireland has largely followed a similar pattern. This interest in social change is clearly visible in the ethnography of Ireland, in monographs such as Shanklin's (1985) *Donegal's Changing Traditions: An Ethnographic Study,* Salazar's *A Sentimental Economy: Commodity and Community in Rural Ireland* (1996), Peace's (2001) *A World of Fine Difference: The Social Architecture of a Modern Irish Village,* and Kaul's *Turning the Tune: Traditional Music, Tourism, and Social Change in an Irish Village* (2009).

Shanklin's ethnography of Banagh in southwest Donegal investigated the changes in practices of caring for cattle, as well as the continued meaning of the animals as a source of social prestige. She explains how cattle are still more important than other livestock, such as sheep. According to her, the importance of cattle began with the ancient Celts, and can be seen in documents such as the Annals of Ulster, which "record 274 cattle raids between the ninth and fifteenth centuries," and how these raids were what made a chief "glorious" (1985:39). Early religious stories also demonstrate the power of saints by describing their control over cattle (1986:44). She argues that this ancient emphasis on cows is still seen in how farmers use new and improved pasturage techniques for cattle but not sheep; and how they are far more likely to call a veterinarian to deliver the best of modern care to cattle, but not sheep (which are instead treated with home remedies). This was the case even when cattle prices were low; and the animals were not more economically valuable then sheep (1985: 95,215).

Salazar studied an area called the "Three Districts" in Galway. In contrast with Scheper-Hughes, Brody and Fox, who all believed traditional cooperative patterns of agriculture to be "dying," Salazar found that they have merely changed forms. Rather than being governed by strict rules of which kin or neighbors owe a certain type of help to each other, he found that "no customary regulation seems to govern this unsystematic flow of exchanges except a diffuse norm of generalized reciprocity." However, the people involved in these exchange networks always belonged to at least two of the categories of relative, neighbour, or farmer; since this increased the chances of receiving services in return in the near future (1996:126-128).

Peace documents rural life from the vantage point of a community divided into a countryside of farmers, a pier of fishermen, and a town of small publicans and shopkeepers. He found that despite these differences in lifestyle and issues of prestige, the people of all three "realms" identified as a community in relation to surrounding areas (2001:12-13). They also felt powerless in relation to the lrish Government, which they viewed as consisting of unfriendly outsiders; who denied many of their needs, such as another school teacher, or help settling disputes without bankrupting both parties through long court cases (2001:106). Peace felt that it is important to understand that although this community is fully "modern" in all ways, it is not homogenous with the rest of the Irish state, but rather continued to preserve its own identity and unique practices (2001:1-13).

By examining the practice of Irish music in the village of Doolin (County Clare), Kaul argues that "living traditions are not representative of everything that is moribund, antiquated, balkanized or conservatively 'local.' Instead of being conceptualized as being in opposition to globalization and cosmopolitanism… traditions can clearly thrive in their midst" (2009:157). He supports this key point by analyzing how "traditional" Irish music changed from crossroads dances, céilís, and country house dances (all of which incorporated other activities such as visiting, gossiping, and tea drinking) during the 19th century to a revival of traditional music during the 1950s and 1960s, to a tourist attraction aimed at "outsiders" during the Celtic Tiger economic boom (1997-2007).

The anthropology of Ireland during the 1980s and 1990s followed the same patterns as the anthropology of Europe. Ethnographers of both Ireland and Europe were interested in processes of social change. This can also be seen in some later ethnographies, such as Kaul's (2009) *Turning the Tune: Traditional Music, Tourism, and Social Change in an Irish Village.* In contrast, the anthropology of Northern Ireland differed sharply from other Europeanist anthropology. Here, the interest was primarily on conflict (or its absence) between Catholic Republicans and Protestant Unionists. This focus on ethnoreligious identities has no clear equivalent in the anthropology of Western Europe.

Northern Ireland before the Troubles: The 1950s and 1960s

In contrast to studies of anomie in the countryside of the Republic, anthropological studies conducted in rural Northern Ireland during the 1950s-1960s focus on Catholic-Protestant relations (Harris 1972; Bufwack 1982). They emphasize the lack of violence between the two communities, but also analyze the patterns of prejudice and discrimination faced by Catholics. Harris for example found that the lives of rural people were differentiated mostly on the basis of whether they had small, "mountainy" farms on poor land, or large, lowland farms on good land; rather than being similar or different based on their sectarian identity.

Mountainy farmers were materially poorer, their farms were more old-fashioned (using horses for ploughing rather than tractors, for example), but they had more spare time and closer social relations with one another. This included practices such as spending evenings in one another's kitchens, talking by the fireside, or sharing their few books. In contrast, large farmers were had technical advantages and were wealthier, but they had more formal, rigid conventions; which decreased the amount of time spent together. And despite the fact that these economic and lifestyle differences were the primary distinctions between people, there was also a sectarian aspect. Catholics were far more likely to be mountainy farmers than were Protestants; and Protestants owned most of the lowland farms (Harris 1972:23-33). The two "sides" also attended different churches and schools, played different sports, shopped in different stores, and patronized different professionals (Harris 1972: 132-148).

Ironically, this emphasis on prejudice and conflict may explain the lack of perceived anomie in rural Northern Ireland. For example, Scheper-Hughes (2001) admits that one of the reasons Ballybran seemed anomic was because she omitted all mention of the area's Republican activities. These provided "the few spaces of vitality, passion, and camaraderie [in the community, which] were largely channeled into covert activities on behalf of the local IRA" (2001:30).

This illuminates another significant point when comparing the anthropologies of the Republic and Northern Ireland. Although ethnographies of Northern Ireland emphasize sectarian prejudice (Harris 1972, Bufwack 1982) or political violence (Aretxaga 1995; Feldman 1991; Sluka 1989) and those of the Republic generally leave out any mention of either, we might be reasonable to question this separation. Is violence really the sole focus of life in the North, or are there other facets anthropologists could investigate? Similarly, descriptions of the Republic that omit reference to the Troubles might seem incomplete. If Scheper-Hughes found IRA activity in Kerry (in the southwestern part of Ireland), it might seem likely that these activities exist in other villages in the Republic. This would not necessarily take the form of violent incidents; but might include activities like those of Scheper-Hughes's Ballybran landlord, who she admits "used our attic to store a small arsenal of guns and explosives that he and a few of his comrades were running to Northern Ireland" (2001:30).

Much of the literature on the rural Northern Ireland of the 1950s and 1960s focused on how Catholics and Protestants evaded overt conflict with one another by avoiding contentious topics and aggressive gestures while emphasizing their solidarity, often as farmers. In contrast, most anthropological studies on Northern Ireland during the next three decades (1970s-1990s) focused on armed violence in urban neighbourhoods, which are either solidly Catholic or entirely Protestant. The three types of groups involved in the conflict were

Republican (Catholic) paramilitaries, Loyalist (Protestant) paramilitaries, and the security services (the Royal Ulster Constabulary and British Armed Forces). Many ethnographers also examined how the violence impacted ordinary people living in these segregated urban communities.

The Troubles in Northern Ireland: The 1970s to 1990s

The anthropology of Northern Ireland during the 1970s to 1990s was largely focused on the Troubles. "The Troubles" describes a period of armed conflict between the British Armed Forces and various paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland lasting approximately from 1969 to 1998. The largest of these paramilitary organisations was the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Their goal was the reunification of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Most of their members and supporters were Irish/Catholic/ Nationalist. Members of the British/ Protestant/Unionist community generally supported the British Armed Forces and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (Sluka 1989:78). In everyday speech, local people use "Catholic" and "Protestant" to refer to their communities. This can however be confusing to people unfamiliar with Northern Ireland; since the "Troubles" were mostly about politics, not religion (Ruane and Todd 1996: xiv).

Of interest during this period (1970s) are Jenkins' (2014) analysis of "black magic" rumours from the early 1970s demonstrating how stories were started, circulated, and believed to varying degrees. After a young child was murdered in 1973, regional newspapers began to report other "occult" activity, such as animal sacrifice and satanic rituals. Jenkins argues that some of these stories may have been created or spread as propaganda by agents of the British Army, in an effort to keep local people indoors at night. Jenkins also evaluates how "popular" culture (such as Hollywood movies), Protestant and Catholic religious teachings, and elements of more autochthonous cosmologies (banshees, the "unquiet dead") all play a role in how local people understood these tales of the supernatural.

Historical memory plays a significant role in how the conflict continues to be understood and embodied. Describing the 1990s, Feldman explains that "historical memory is a mass-produced commodity in Belfast's political culture, written onto the built environment- by place names, memorials, bullet pockmarks, and bomb debris- into people's choice of residence and spouse, into almost every calendrical observance and march, and as the excuse for each act of violence" (2003:60). Nevertheless, he treats his interlocutors very sympathetically, and documents how much of their behavior is a response to state terror enacted by the U.K Government. He describes how life "in a militarized and 'surveilled' city- where death by unofficial state execution…[has] supplanted judicial process, the common rules of law, and human rights…" (Feldman 2003:58-59) has a terrible impact on residents. He further describes how a Catholic key interlocutor, Sean,

could "by simply living a life of noninvolvement in Belfast…[become] at any time…the object of loyalist assassination, police interrogation and torture, and shoot-to-kill 'arrest'…" (2003:58-59).

Sluka (1989) examined the Divis Flats of West Belfast as a case study of why many Catholics living in the urban ghettos of Northern Ireland support the IRA or INLA (Irish National Liberation Army). He found that many residents of the Divis Flats believed themselves to be "members of a politically powerless minority in a sectarian and unjust political, economic, and social system," (1989:78) that they wanted a United Ireland and felt that only armed struggle would be an effective way of achieving that goal. These views created sympathy for the armed Volunteers of the IRA and INLA (1989:78).

Another prominent ethnographer of Northern Ireland, Kelleher, described how Catholic and Protestant identities in the small city of "Ballybogoin" have been formed in relation to one another over several centuries of British colonial rule, rather than existing in an independent, primordial fashion. Social memory aided by daily movements through shared spaces, bodily practices that mark Catholics and Protestants, and an annual cycle of remembered and celebrated historical events contribute to these opposed relationships (Kelleher 2006).

In similar style, Aretxaga (1995) has documented how this process of political violence has affected women in particular, since they are also subjected to gendered forms of violence, such as strip searches by the police or male wardens in women's prisons. Her case study is focused on the Dirty Protest, which saw Republican prisoners leaving urine and faeces in their cells to register their objection to violence by prison staff. Women prisoners were also forced to cope with menstruation in these unsanitary conditions. Aretxaga argues that "ethnic and political violence predicated on the bodies of women cannot be considered as an addendum to violence performed on men's bodies…it might have disparate meanings and effects that are crucial to both the construction of sexual difference and the construction of ethnic identity" (1995:145).

Howe (1990) documents the Troubles in a particular way, by examining their economic effects on both Protestant and Catholic areas in Belfast. He found that people from the two ethnoreligious communities cope through differing unemployment practices, with Catholics more likely to accept the necessity of manipulating welfare funding to survive than Protestants. This is because Catholics are much more likely to live in neighbourhoods with few job prospects.

The anthropology of Northern Ireland was understandably focused on the Troubles during the 1970s to 1990s. Ethnographers sympathetically examined the problem from various perspectives, such as paramilitary

members (Feldman 1990, 2003), residents of Catholic ghettos (Sluka 1989), women (Aretxaga 1995), and working-class people (Howe 1990). During the next decades (2000s-2020s), focus often remained on the urban communities of Belfast (Bryan 2017, Lepp 2018, Nagle 2006, Viggiani 2014, Zenker 2013) or Derry/Londonderry (Lubit 2020). Some ethnographers examined rural areas, particularly along the border (Donnan 2010). However, anthropological studies were now developing an interest in how sectarian identities were created and maintained (Donnan 2010, Viggiani 2014, Zenker 2013) or resisted (Bryan 2017, Lepp 2018, Lubit 2020, Nagle 2006) during a time of relative peace.

Post-Conflict Ethnography of Northern Ireland: The2000s to 2020s

By the 2000s-2020s, there was a focus on how Irish Catholic and British Protestant ethnoreligious identities are created and maintained in a post-conflict society. For example, Donnan analyses how Protestants living near the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland narrate experiences of identity (2010:254). He found that many felt anxious and insecure after the border became less visible and more porous following the Good Friday Agreement (2010:255). His interlocutors in the small village of Glananne, with a population of less than 500 people, travelled considerable distances to avoid Catholic areas while shopping or relaxing, and felt that it would be foolish to do otherwise (2010:263).

Viggiani's (2014) work focuses directly on the Troubles, in the form of the ubiquitous murals found throughout the working-class neighbourhoods of Belfast. Most honour paramilitary members killed during the conflict, promote political ideas, memorialize victories and losses, and create or sustain ethnonational identities. This artwork also replaces state narratives of the conflict, which are largely absent from public view. Ironically, the murals are also promoted as tourist attractions by business owners. Rather than being artifacts of the Troubles era, most murals have been painted between 1998 and 2013.

Zenker (2013) examines the relationship between Irish [Gaelic] language and identity in Catholic West Belfast during 2003-2004. Through the experiences of 28 key interlocutors, he describes their reasons for learning the language, and largely living their lives through this medium. Zenker also explores four other aspects of Irish culture (language, sport, music, and dance) and how these create his interlocutors' feeling that "Irishness is all around us".

In addition to the more "traditional" approach of examining how Catholic/ Nationalist and Protestant/Unionist identities are created and maintained in opposition to each other, recent ethnographers of Northern Ireland have also looked at how narratives of sectarianism are opposed by local people. For example, Nagle has analyzed how St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Belfast City Centre have been re-imagined

after 1998 to include Protestant Unionists, as well as Catholic Nationalists. St. Patrick is celebrated by both communities, because he:

> *Appears as a portmanteau figure… continually subject to semiotic struggle, his putative essential meaning prone to conflicting interpretations… for Irish, Roman Catholic nationalists St. Patrick evokes a Celtic, precolonial Ireland. Alternatively, British, Protestant unionists have envisaged Patrick as a Christian missionary born in Britain, whose missionary diocese extended only to Ulster, independent from Papal authority, a member of the Anglican Church who interpreted scripture in an analogous way to Protestant clergy* (2006:37).

Thus, the shared figure of St. Patrick allowed the planning of an "inclusive, outdoor event, supported by nationalists and unionists, to mark St. Patrick's Day in 2006" (Nagle, 2006:39). Although certain elements of the celebration remained contested, it nevertheless provided an example of possibilities for intentionally creating a cross-community event.

Bryan (2017) utilizes the concept of "multiethnic carnival" (2017: 135) to examine ways in which Catholic Nationalist and Protestant Unionist share space in urban Belfast. He argues that both St. Patrick's Day and the Lord Mayor's Show are examples of shared space, although St. Patrick's Day in particular has been adapted to fit this new ideal. Despite being often associated with Irish patriotism, for this particular event, the Irish Tricolors were replaced by multicoloured shamrocks, meant to welcome Protestant Unionist participants (Bryan 2017:134-135).

Lepp has examined Belfast Giants Hockey matches as a case study of cross-community socializing, where both Protestants and Catholics can support the same team and "choose to enjoy the experience of the hockey game, rather than be caught in the politicized attachment of meaning expected of shared space" (2018:32). Lepp's interlocutors simply wanted to enjoy the sport, without being forced to consider their leisure time through the political lens of reconciliation. This was often achieved though intentionally refusing to read political meanings into the behaviors of fellow fans, such as their choice of clothing colours (which in other Northern Ireland settings can be read as indicative of a Catholic Nationalist or Protestant Unionist message) (2018:38).

In contrast, Lyra's Walk for Peace, memorializing young journalist Lyra McKee who was accidentally shot and killed by dissident Republican paramilitaries in Derry/Londonderry in 2019, "made visible a third non-sectarian option: of peace, reconciliation, and togetherness" (Lubit 2020:14). Here, organizers and

participants chose to send an explicitly political message rejecting ethnoreligious segregation and violence. In addition, Lyra's identity as a lesbian woman and LGBTQ activist was visibly recognized, with rainbow symbols included on t-shirts signs, and backpacks displayed during the walk (Lubit 2020:23). The anthropology of Northern Ireland during the post-conflict era (2000s to 2020s) has examined both processes of how Irish Catholic and British Protestant identities are created and maintained, as well as challenges to sectarianism, and creation of shared spaces.

Conclusion

Through examining ethnographies of Ireland (North and South) over the past century and comparing them to the anthropology of other areas of Europe, we can see how developments in the latter have deeply influenced the former. The anthropology of Ireland began with functionalist studies of peasant communities, similar to anthropology elsewhere in Europe, during the 1930s and 1940s. During the 1980s and 1990s, there was a strong interest in processes of social change and the creation of identity in both the Republic of Ireland and continental Europe. Examining where anthropology has been before can help us to understand where it is going in the future. What topics are of interest to our discipline, and how has life changed for our interlocutors?

The anthropological literature on Northern Ireland (1950s-2020s) is more difficult to situate into broader trends in Europeanist anthropology. Here, research tends to focus on the creation or subversion of ethnoreligious identities and divisions. Despite the formal end of the "Troubles" in the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, anthropologists remain interested in how experiences of sectarianism affect local people. Many interlocutors react in surprising ways, explicitly or implicitly rejecting divisions between Protestants and Catholics, while others embrace them as central to cherished traditions and identities.

Future directions for research on Northern Ireland will likely focus on Brexit. Wilson (2020) has begun to examine how people living near the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland view the departure of the United Kingdom from the EU after the Brexit referendum of 2016. Catholic/Nationalist people in particular fear the possibility that a "hard border" with watchtowers, customs checks, and a British military presence will re-emerge, undoing "over twenty years of peace, reconciliation, and cross-border economic and political development" in their communities (2020:32). More research on this topic will be fruitful, as Brexit proceeds and possibly changes direction to a border in the Irish Sea.

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