IRISH JOURNAL OF ANTHROPOLOGY

VOLUME 24 (1) 2021 – SPECIAL ISSUE

THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF IRISH ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropological
Association of Ireland

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IN TRIBUTE TO FIONA LARKAN

The *Irish Journal of Anthropology* is a publication of the Anthropological Association of Ireland. The journal seeks to highlight work from a range of related disciplines such as Archaeology, Cultural Studies, Development Studies, Ethnology and Folk Studies, Gaeilge, Irish Studies, and Sociology. The *Irish Journal of Anthropology* is an open-access journal. Further information about the journal and the association can be found on the association website: www.anthropologyireland.org.

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EDITORIAL NOTE

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

Co-Editors: Amanda Lubit, Tom Marshall, Ashwin Tripathi

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 20112014, 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 form 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.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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Ankita is currently pursuing her PhD from the department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, India. She completed her undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from Presidency University, Kolkata, India, in Sociology. Later she joined Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India to pursue her M.Phil in the department of Sociology. Her interest area broadly includes Social Anthropology, Sociology of Religion and Cultural Studies with special focus on the belief and practice of serpent worship in Northeast India.

CORMAC CLEARY

Cormac is a PhD candidate in Social Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh. He holds a BA in Drama Studies and Sociology from Trinity College Dublin and an MA in the Anthropology of Food from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. His ESRC-funded doctoral research examines tensions at the intersections of wildlife management, nature conservation and heritage preservation in the Outer Hebrides.

MATTHEW GAULT

MATTHEW is a PhD Student in Anthropological Studies in the School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics at Queen's University Belfast. He currently conducts research on the memory and commemoration of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland in rural areas, primarily County Fermanagh. His interests include the politics of memory, storytelling, resistance, and rural studies.

MARGARET HAVERTY

MARGARET is a PhD candidate at the Ludwig-Uhland Institute of Historical and Cultural Anthropology at the Eberhard Karls Universität, Tübingen, Germany and Konrad Adenauer Foundation Scholar. Her PhD research project engages with Irish persons based in Germany, examining their expressions and constructions of 'Irishness' in the specific German context, as well as the impact of the pandemic and restrictions on their day-to-day lives abroad and their relationship to their country of origin. Her interests include (but are not limited to) cultural processes such as Europeanisation, migration, mobilities and understandings of cultural difference, particularly in the context of Irish communities in non-Anglophone settings.

CORRIE INNES

Corrie recently finished his Master's degree in anthropology at Queen's University Belfast. He wrote his thesis on national identity and group belonging among Scots-Irish football fans. He is interested in sport, identity, music, migration, ritual and emotion.

IRENE KETONEN-KEATING

DR KETONEN-KEATING is an Adjunct Lecturer at SUNY Geneseo in New York. Her dissertation research at the University at Buffalo (2017) examined the effects of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Reform on farming communities in Northern Ireland before Brexit. Her work contributes to public policy research by examining how supranational policies are implemented at the local level, "on the ground" in Northern Ireland. Dr. Ketonen-Keating has served as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Cultural Anthropology at SUNY Brockport (2016-2019), a Visiting Research Associate at the Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation and Social Justice Queen's University Belfast (2013-2014), and a Visiting Research Associate at the School of History and Anthropology Queen's University Belfast (2012-2013).

CHRYSI KYRATSOU

Chrysi is a PhD student in Anthropology and Ethnomusicology at Queen's University Belfast. Her academic interests are in musicking, migration, encounters, cultural flows. Chrysi's fieldwork research into the musicking of refugees sheltering in reception centres explores how refugees' aesthetic agencies are informed by their shifting backgrounds in which they live, and how they shape their sociality. Her project is recipient of a Northern Bridge DTP-AHRC studentship, and was awarded the BFE Fieldwork Grant 2019. She has a background in Music and Music Education. Her profile can be found on ResearchGate.

ANNEMARIE MAJLUND JENSEN

Annemarie is a visual anthropologist doing a PhD at Aarhus University. Research interests include the work of memory in post-conflict society and culture, especially how people remember the past – and how societies "deal" with it – in contexts of radical societal upheavals, migration, conflict and peace, and in developing methodologies to that end.

FIONA MURPHY

Dr Murphy is an anthropologist working in Queen's University Belfast. Her academic research focuses on Indigenous Australian politics and movements, refugee and mobility studies, and business anthropology. She has conducted fieldwork in Australia, Ireland, the United Kingdom, France, and Turkey, and has a particular interest in new forms of public and creative anthropology. She is the co-author of *Integration in Ireland:*

The Everyday Lives of African Migrants (2012) and has published in journals including *American Anthropologist*, the *Australian Journal of Anthropology***,** and *History and Anthropology.*

SEAN O' DUBHGHAILL

Dr O'Dubhghaill is a lecturer in International Affairs at the Brussels School of Governance (VUB) in Belgium where he gives courses on multiculturalism and migration. He graduated with a Ph.D in Social and Cultural anthropology in 2015 from KU Leuven, Belgium. He has published in *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, *The Irish Studies Review* and *Social Anthropology*. He released his first monograph, entitled *An Anthropology of the Irish in Belgium: Belonging, Identity and Community in Europe*, with Palgrave Macmillan in 2020. At present, he is working on the topic of exceptionalism and the notion of context in everyday interactions.

DAVID O'KANE

Dr O'Kane is an associate of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology and a graduate of the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. He has pursued anthropological research in Eritrea and Sierra Leone, and has taught in both of those countries, as well as in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, mainland Britain, New Zealand and the Russian Federation. He is currently developing research projects that will examine the effects of the global coronavirus pandemic on Sierra Leone, where the legacy of the Ebola epidemic of 2014-2016 remains highly relevant, and the pandemic's potential implications for north-south relations on the island of Ireland.

CIARA POWER

Ciara is a PhD researcher in Anthropology and Ethnomusicology at Queen's University Belfast. Her research documents and connects the experiences of creative workers and fans of electronic music in Belfast and Dublin. She is a recipient of a Northern Bridge Consortium funding award from the Arts and Humanities Research Council UK, and the Larmor University scholarship with Queen's University Belfast.

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Carles Salazar has a degree in Law and Contemporary History at the University of Barcelona, MPhil and PhD in Social Anthropology from the University of Cambridge. He is Full Professor of Social Anthropology at University of Lleida. He has been visiting professor at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth (2002), École des Haute Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris (2003), National University of Ireland, Galway (2009 and 2011) and London School of Economics and Political Science (2017). He has done research on forms of cooperation, religious beliefs, kinship and family structure, history of sexuality, history of anthropology and cultural understanding of biomedicine and genetics. His main research topic is the study of culture from a cognitive and evolutionary perspective. His latest publications include Explaining Human Diversity: Cultures, Minds, Evolution (London: Routledge).

FELIX SCHIEDLOWSKI

Felix is an anthropologist at the Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany. For his doctoral thesis, he is researching the making and unmaking of the post-coal society in the German energy transition. He has done fieldwork in the Central German mining region and in Northern Ireland, where he studied the post-conflict transformation of Belfast from a unionist perspective. His research interests include energy, political anthropology, temporality, urban anthropology and processes of change and stagnation.

IOANNIS TSIOULAKIS

Dr Ioannis Tsioulakis is Senior Lecturer in Anthropology and Ethnomusicology at Queen’s University Belfast. His research focuses on popular music in Greece, with an emphasis on session musicians, creative labour, and economic crisis. His monograph Musicians in Crisis: Working and Playing in the Greek Popular Music Industry was published by Routledge in September 2020. He has co-edited a volume entitled Musicians and their Audiences: Performance, Speech and Mediation (with Elina Hytönen-Ng, Routledge 2016), and has published numerous articles and chapters on Greek jazz music, cosmopolitanism and music professionalism. Ioannis is currently conducting research on the impact of Covid-19 on performing artists, with a number of publications and collaborative projects under development. Ioannis is also an active ensemble director, arranger and pianist.

REMEMBERING DR. FIONA LARKAN, IRISH JOURNAL OF ANTHROPOLOGY GENERAL EDITOR- 2011-2014.

BY DR. FIONA MURPHY

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Dr. Fiona Larkan was our much beloved friend, colleague, mentor to many, and the editor of the Irish Journal of Anthropology (IJA) from 2011-2014. In 2017, Fiona left us after battling a long illness for over 18 months. She continues to be missed by so many of us. Her family and closest friends will always feel an indefinable sorrow for what was her too soon departure from this life. Fiona had much more to do, more love to give, more friendship and advice to offer, more students to teach and undoubtedly, more words left to write. As a committed female journal editor, she left an important legacy in print and memory. She played a strong role in shaping the ever-complex form of anthropology on the island of Ireland in the years she edited the IJA (and of course with her own personal research and writing). Fiona's own anthropological journey was both international (South Africa based) and local thus allowing her to forge new networks, collaborations and forms for the journal under her keen editorial eye.

When Fiona assumed the role of editor, she was a relatively new PhD graduate starting out on a new career path in global health in Trinity College Dublin. It was a juggle and Fiona was busy like never before. Those of us closer to her saw her pull off a balancing act of being mother, wife, daughter, sister, friend, new employee in a busy graduate centre in a prestigious University as well as journal editor for the IJA. The labour she did for both the Anthropological Association of Ireland and the Irish Journal of Anthropology was voluntary (like much in academia). It was a mix of intellectual, emotional and indeed, physical labour (driving to the printers, packing boxes, distributing the journal- the hidden labours of academic journal work before online became the norm). Fiona did all of this without complaint. In fact, she conducted her editorial work with enthusiasm, conviction, dedication and some of us would have said, courage. It was exhausting but Fiona with her characteristic humility, honesty and energy embraced it. Indeed, she captured and evoked the frequencies of new and dynamic anthropologies of Ireland in her editorship as she dived deep into this busy life.

Her vision for the journal unfolded in multiple and diverse directions-shining a spotlight on the shifting terrain of anthropology on the island of Ireland. Fiona’s dedication to this sat deep in her bones. One of her first editions was the 2011 special edition in conjunction with Keith Egan and myself (Fiona Murphy) entitled ‘The value of ethnographic writing’ (Vol 14: 1) in which we set out to reflect some of the emerging work being conducted by doctoral students and early career researchers trained on the island of Ireland. This special edition was indeed a deeply personal endeavour for all three of us, emerging as it had from an idyllic week-long writing retreat in the beautiful Co. Wicklow led by Professor Michael Jackson, an anthropologist famed for his writing and creativity. So too, it was an endeavour of intersections for Fiona, an invitation at the beginning of her editorship for others to consider the IJA as an emerging space for more creative practices of anthropological writing and a new point of departure for the journal’s first female general editor. With that she chose for the cover of her first journal edition, a drawing by one of our fellow anthropologists Monika Weissensteiner, of the Celtic figure Ogma, the God of speech and writing endowed with the power of poetic vision. The perfect framing, it must be said, for Fiona’s journey as new IJA editor.

Subsequent editions would reflect the depth of Fiona’s anthropological curiosity, her willingness for cross-disciplinary collaboration and her personal intuitions and inspirations. Her ability to navigate with sensitivity and care the complex webs of academic personalities always struck those of us who worked closely with her, no personality was too big, no scholar was too junior and the pages she edited echo just this. Her own academic interests grounded in medical anthropology and global health also found new footing in the pages of the IJA thereby creating new intellectual spaces for this discussion on the island of Ireland (as did her work with the Irish Medical Anthropology Network (IMAN)). A wonderful example of this being a co-edited special section on suicide in Ireland drawn from the conference Ethnographic Approaches to Suicide Conference held at NUI Maynooth in March 2012 (cited by President Higgins in his World Suicide Day address in 2013) in Volume 15(2) published in 2012.

Fiona strived to show the world (and indeed other disciplines in the academy) why anthropology is so valuable. She was a wonderful ambassador for the discipline in its many forms and believed passionately in a public and applied anthropology. In "Anthropologists in the public sphere" Volume 16(2) 2013 with Keith Egan, Fiona's commitment to encouraging the public voice/s of anthropologists on the island of Ireland resounds with enthusiasm and hope. Her belief in an attentive anthropology mapped onto this issue of the IJA but also in her work generally as a brilliant ethnographer and anthropologist.

In Fiona's time as general editor, she also worked on two issues which reflected the conference work of the Anthropological Association of Ireland. The 2013 issue emerged from the significant 25th anniversary conference 'Ethnography from Margin to Centre: Celebrating 25 years of the Anthropological Association of Ireland'. This was a special issue of celebration and commemoration illuminating the evolution of anthropology on the island of Ireland and reflecting some of the key discussions from that conference. Fiona's final IJA issue in 2014 before she passed the editorial mantle to James Cuffe of UCC "Memory and Recovery' emerged from the AAI conference of the same name held in Sligo in 2014. It is in many ways fitting that this final journal issue would later evolve into an edited collection entitled *Memory and Recovery in Times of Crisis* (2017) published only a few months before Fiona's passing in December 2017. She would only get to hold the book in her hands for a short while, but was immensely proud of it. It, alongside the journals she edited, remain a strong testament to her care, attentiveness, and love for her scholarly work in its various forms. They also stand strong as documents of collaboration, collegiality and aspiration.

Fiona showed up to life in a certain way, always kind, deeply passionate, beloved as a mentor and a teacher, admired for her dedication and conviction. She loved a good giggle and always saw the humour in life even on difficult days. The Irish Journal of Anthropology and the Anthropological Association of Ireland are forever richer for having had her at the helm and we will all continue to miss her. We only wish she could be here with us all as we raise a glass to 25 years of the Irish Journal of Anthropology.

If you would like to read any of Fiona's work, you can search for her name on ResearchGate where a number of her publications have been uploaded.

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INTERVIEWS WITH

IOANNIS TSIOULAKIS 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.

WRITING IRELAND: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

BY IRENE KETONEN-KEATING

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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 Irish 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.

Acknowledgements

I would like to warmly thank the members of my dissertation committee at the University at Buffalo, who provided excellent advice on two earlier drafts of this article. They are Prof. Deborah Reed-Danahay, Dr. Vasiliki Neofotistos, Dr. Jaume Franquesa, and Dr. Tilman Lanz. Additionally, I greatly appreciate the outstanding work performed by the Editors of this Special Edition: Amanda Lubit, Tom Marshall, and Ashwin Tripathi.

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LOOKING TO THE PAST FROM BEHIND THE WINDSHIELD OF A CAR:

CAR RIDING AS ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH TOOL IN BELFAST

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Abstract: Moving through the city by car can bring about methodological as well as substantial insights into post-conflict society and culture. Identifying the general and specific advantages of car riding, and its potentials and limits as an ethnographic tool in the Northern Irish context, I demonstrate the importance of method contextualization in doing fieldwork on memories of conflict in Ireland. The article contributes to the formulation of methodologies for studying memories of conflict, thus highlighting what anthropological approaches to the past in Northern Ireland have to offer, while also bringing useful perspectives on post-conflict contexts outside the Island of Ireland.

Keywords: Memory, Methodology, Car Ride, Belfast, Post-Conflict

Introduction

Driving in cars with people is something anthropologists find themselves doing from time to time, as part of a ‘mobile method’ including ‘moving along’ interlocutors (Kusenbach 2003: 475; 2018: 345), an ‘ethnography on the move’ (Jagetić-Andersen 2013: 44) a ‘passenger-seat ethnography’ (Dawson 2017: 3), or because it is acknowledged as an ideal occasion for casual conversations (i.e. Knudsen 1995: 24). Whether riding together by car forms part of a method for the structured elicitation of ‘traffic talk’, or whether car riding and driving arise spontaneously on the road as the subject of conversation in ‘car talk’ with interlocutors, moving through the city by car can bring about methodological as well as substantial insights into conflict and post-conflict society and culture, politics and transition (Jagetić-Andersen 2013; Bishara 2015; Dawson 2017; Kruglova 2019).

As a method, car riding may be seen on par with other ‘moving methods’ such as walking methodologies like walk-and-talk interviews. In the research context of Northern Ireland, scholars have argued that walking methodologies carry new and innovative potential for Troubles research that needs to be further explored (Robinson 2020; Robinson and McClelland 2020a; Robinson and McClelland 2020b). Robinson and McClelland have highlighted the positive contribution that walking methods can bring to the study of ‘place-memory’ in post-conflict spaces and argue that such methods can ‘“trouble” dominant productions of post-conflict space, revealing its storied depth, multi-temporality and the alternative narratives of the past that frequently remain hidden in places touched by violence’ (Robinson and McClelland 2020a: 654). Others have highlighted how moving though the landscape can indeed serve 'as an aide-memoire' (Shirlow and Murtagh 2006: 9; Hocking et. al. 2018: 13) yet stressing that interviewing while walking 'clearly exclude certain types of participants' (Evans and Jones 2011: 849, cited in Hocking et. al. 2018: 13). I ask: What problems do walking methodologies raise in contexts where for historical reasons 'place' and 'memory' are highly contested phenomena? And what alternative tools are available to researchers working along interlocutors who might not necessarily feel capable or safe to 'walk-and-talk' about their memories in particular places? In other words: What to do when 'walking' is not conducive to 'talking'? How might we understand the car - and moving through the city of Belfast in it - literally, as a vehicle for exploring particular memories of a conflicted past?

Exploring these questions, I seek to continue a scholarly conversation about what particular methods can achieve when engaging specific individuals and groups in talking about the past in the particular Northern Irish context. Recognising the limits of walking methodologies as a supplement to the conventional interview, I proceed by identifying the general and the specific advantages of the car ride for anthropological exploration, as well as its implications and limits as an ethnographic tool in this specific context. Rather than focusing on driving as such, I focus on particular peoples' experiences of driving and riding in particular places, and the kinds of memories that emerge when driving in the post-conflict city.

Entering Girdwood / "I used to hate this intersection"

To document how this works, let me now turn to one ethnographic situation when, early in my doctoral fieldwork in 2018, I was offered a lift with Pete. This was not the first time I had been offered a drop-off near my place of residence by an interlocutor[1]. I use it as an example here because it was this rather short ride – actually two short rides – that made me question the taken-for-granted-ness of car riding in Belfast and the connections between this particular practice and how people remember the conflict in their everyday lives.

A resident of Belfast and army veteran[2], I first got to know Pete through a colleague of his and I was later invited to his family home in connection with an interview. Coming to Belfast as a researcher – and a foreigner, that is, as 'someone from the outside'[3] - without an active driving license, I have most often relied on public transportation to go out to such invitations, and yet, have just as often been offered a helpful ride by private car to return home. I have never had to ask for such favours, though, as Knudsen remarks with Mauss, asking someone to drive one somewhere as a favour to be, or not to be, returned indeed could be seen as part of the anthropological method too, underlining the status of interlocutors as superior 'givers' in relation to the ethnographic receiver' (Knudsen 1995: 22). In my experience, actually asking the favour has never been necessary. Besides, the willingness expressed by people to show one around or to participate in an interview have always seemed to me a favour in itself. One is then – and here I am happy to echo Knudsen's point about reciprocity - in debt to the people who pay attention to ones' research by spending their time on it in the first place. It is beyond doubt nevertheless that acts of generosity, such as being offered a lift, have not only proven essential for how I have come to appreciate Belfast as a city, as well as the hospitality of its people. It has also – and often by coincidence, if not by sheer serendipity - become a crucial means by which I have come to understand and learn about its distinct history and geography, including the visible and invisible markers of belonging and division that continues to straddle parts of the city along sectarian lines. But first of all, passengering with interlocutors has in Belfast been a matter of practicality in addition to building rapport. So it was this time too. My driver this October day served in Belfast during the height of the Troubles in the 1980's. He first went into the army general service, later to become part of the Ulster Defence Regiment, the locally recruited part of the British Army in Northern Ireland. I had been directed to him while attending an event organized by its veteran community, advised by a colleague of his who assured me that Pete's view on 'what happened over there' (in Northern Ireland) would be valuable to my research[4]. It is as our interview came to an end that Pete offers to take me back to the place near the city centre where I stay. I then jump into the front seat of the car to join him back along the Antrim Road. As we approach my temporary place of residence in Kinnaird Street, it becomes clear that our destination is that very street where Pete spent parts of his military service. It takes a while for him to realize that this is, in fact, surprisingly that place – Girdwood, or, at the time of his service, Girdwood Barracks, an area located just off the Antrim Road, squeezed in between the Crumlin Road and Clifton Park Avenue. We are still sitting in the car when he starts gesturing towards the corners of the street, demonstrating with his hand the position of the military installations of the Barracks that used to be in the neighbourhood: Pete said 'this was where the sanger was, here was the "pig", you know the "Flying Pig" that I told you about?' I recall the picture Pete has showed to me in the office we just left, of a heavy military vehicle – some would say a 'windowless moving fortress' (Richardson 2015: 10) - with large squared iron 'wings'. Pete changed the topic as if something else comes to mind. 'I don't understand how they could live here' he says with a thoughtful expression referring to the residents of the area we have just entered who, at the time of his service, he says, were 'cut off from the main road' by army fortifications. 'It must have been horrible', he adds. Then he continues. 'Supposed to be mixed, but ended up all Catholic' he notes, directing my attention to some newly built social housing estates at the end of the street. 'No Protestants want to move here'. We say goodbye. Later the same day, Pete sends me an e-mail admitting that he 'had a bit of a shock' when he learned that I was staying next to the site of his former workplace and that he had 'some flashbacks there'. He also sends me a number of photographs – about 10-12 – some of which are of Kinnaird street taken from up the sangar, the view obstructed by a massive military grid of the kind used to barricade British Army installations in the '70's and '80's. I take a couple of photographs myself and send them to Pete in return, letting him know that I think something very interesting can come out of this and that I would like to talk more about it next time we meet.

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Here I want to slow this ride down to reflect on its value as an object of study in the first place. As opposed to other rides with other interlocutors, something this time turned out to be different, if not because of the kind of conversation that emerged between us *en route*, which in many ways was like most car conversations informal and full of comments on traffic. What was different was that our ride happened to bring us quite literally into the heart of Pete's military experience in Belfast: the site of the former Girdwood barracks – and quite serendipitously so. This proved to become an important prompt for the continuation of our conversation, opening for new questions to be raised and new nuances to be brought to the fore. A brief note on entering Girdwood is suitable here: Until 2005 the Girdwood Barracks were Northern Ireland's largest British Army base located in North Belfast at the New Lodge/Lower Oldpark interface just off the Crumlin and Antrim Roads and Clifton Park Avenue. The barracks have a contested history and to some extent are still disputed. They are located at a so-called interface – that is, between a Catholic-and a Protestant part of the city – and have been the subject of political disputes as to how to transform the site into a civic space upon the dismantling of the barracks. In 2016 a community sports hub opened at the premises to be transformed into a 'shared space' for ('mixed') social housing. Here I do not want to go into the history of the area more than to say that it proved significant for the turn of our conversation and that as an 'everyday place of memory' - to use Alyssa Grossman's term (2019: 339-340)[5] – it inspired Pete to talk about his past as someone working in the area, as well as to reflect upon the meaning of the presence of his workplace, the barracks, for the area's residents.

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The relationship between 'everyday places of memory' and how they can be explored through driving is key to understand Pete's experiences soldiering in the city. Yet an example will serve to illuminate this so let's now return to the ethnographic situation of our car ride. At our interview the following week, Pete once again offers to take me to the centre. As we make our way southwards along the jammed road into Belfast, I notice a band that I like on the car radio. We begin to talk about music and concerts. Pete tells me that the new roads to Dublin makes it easy for him to go down to attend the shows of some of the bigger names and we exchange some of the names of our favourite artists. We talk like that until we reach the intersection just before Carlisle Circus where Clifton Street meets the Westlink.

The traffic intersection is located in between the neighbourhoods of a divided urban area with the Protestant Shankill stretching to the southwest and the Catholic New Lodge to the northeast. Pete stops the car for a red light. We are the first in a line of cars waiting to turn right onto Clifton Street - to the right in front of us, the Orange Hall, and to the left the road towards the city centre. We wait for a long time for the lights to turn green. As we wait, Pete seems to become impatient. ‘It is always like that’, he says. ‘I used to hate this intersection’. ‘We used to go this way, towards Girdwood, you know now where that is’. I think of our car ride into the Girdwood area a few days before. Pete lets go of the steering wheel and makes a gesture with both arms and hands to suggest someone holding a gun towards the window on his right side. ‘You would sit here and be like this’. He does the gesture twice, the air of someone being alert: ‘You’d just do like this’. He makes an abrupt gesture and shows how he would hold the gun tightly in his hands. ‘We would come here…Because we were regulars, we would take over from the part-timers. We would come here maybe two or three in morning, it would be empty, and dark, you would just sit here and wait…’.

Car Riding in Belfast: A Triad Analysis of People, Space and Method

This article is based on research conducted through fieldwork intermittently in Northern Ireland between 2018 and 2019. Geographically focused on Belfast, this research centred around experiences of serving the British state in the city during the recent conflict to discuss issues of memory and remembering with former soldiers in and around the city. At the time, my return to Belfast was propelled by my desire to tell a research story that would be able to convey a perspective of soldiering at different periods during the recent conflict – and of those who did the job – that would grasp what it was actually like to be part of the army and security forces during times of violent political upheaval. Yet it was equally to understand what it is like to remember such experiences today, when most of the traces of the military conflict have been erased from the city, as part of what has been coined, and more recently critically analysed as, a process of ‘normalisation’ (Irish News 2005; Switzer and McDowell 2011: 89-90), yet continues to resonate with those who drove the vehicles, worked in the barracks, sat in in the watchtowers and the sangers so characteristic for the city’s visual identity up until the military installations were gradually demolished as part of the post-1998 peace process.

The aim of this research then was to trace the complex dynamics, the affects and ambiguities of people’s memories of their time in service during the conflict and after, up until the (partial) withdrawal of troops from Northern Ireland in 2007. Rather than focusing on formal outlets such as journalistic and policy analyses, my aim was to conduct what Alyssa Grossman has framed as a ‘processual and interactive investigation of the dynamic and contingent ways that people’ – in this case former soldiers – ‘are interpreting, perceiving, remembering, communicating, and questioning elements of their daily lives’ (Grossman 2010: 18). Without reproducing stark dichotomies between the two, this investigation would focus specifically on elements of everyday lives pertaining to history and memory.

My concern in this article is a methodological one, however. I am interested in exploring the where, with whom and how to provide a perspective of what it was like to soldier in Belfast which takes into account the intersection of memories with everyday practices of moving around the city, the dynamics of social encounters and the effects of location and embodied experience on memory-telling in addition to issues specific to the post-conflict context such as considerations of security among interlocutors.

What I do then is to focus on the particular affordances[6] of the car ride as a means to allow for sometimes surprising perspectives to be brought to the fore in spaces that do not always allow for casual *walk* and even less for *talk*, that is, where talking about memories of conflict in public cannot always be considered unproblematic. Belfast is a historically divided city in which the conflict continues to be felt and to resonate among many of its residents who experienced up close the terrifying violence unfolding in the city for decades. Belfast is often analyzed as a divided and conflicted city and it has been argued that academic analyses tend to thereby marginalize other academic representations of Belfast that are 'not-the Troubles' (Lane 2019: 65). From a methodological point of view, however, and considering the city as a particular research context for anthropological inquiry, it is necessary to understand the effects of division on people's everyday practices. Anthropologists working in Northern Ireland have made important contributions to understanding these divisions, but also highlighted the need to look 'beyond the divided city' towards 'policies and practices of shared space' (Komarova and Bryan 2014). The 'post-conflict' city of Belfast (Shirlow 2006; Hocking et. al. 2018:878),[7] has then been the subject and setting for a diverse set of anthropological inquiries. Some have critically engaged with issues such as the persistence of ethno-sectarian and class-based segregation (Shirlow 2003a; 2006), including how 'memory and the reproduction of low-level violence are intertwined' (Shirlow 2006: 105) while also highlighting political processes in the conflict and post-conflict period to 'normalise' the city through various forms of economic development (Shirlow 2006: 100). While stressing how relations between movement, sociality and space in the city often cannot be defined singularly as a function of the conflict and the ethno-national tensions it has created, ethnographers have recently documented the persisting role of the Troubles – and memories of it – in processes of place-making (Svašek and Komarova 2018: 14). These contributions make clear how contemporary life in the city remains framed – though not exhausted by – experiences of the recent conflict and its aftermath, including the divisions it created. As a particular research context however, society in Northern Ireland is, as McLaughlin has phrased it, a context 'where identification with a particular experience might suggest a political position and therefore vulnerability to danger in the present' (McLaughlin 2018: 308). Analysing the relationship between ethnosectarianism and what he calls the 'reproduction of fear in Belfast' Peter Shirlow has argued that the 'sectarianised readings' (Shirlow 2003a: 86; 2003b: 89) of the city and 'fear of being a victim' of 'paramilitary and state violence' (Shirlow 2003a: 80) - means 'that many people living in conflictual arenas developed a comprehensive knowledge of' , what Shirlow, drawing on Frank Burton's ethnographic study (1987), calls '"safe" and "unsafe places"' (Shirlow 2003a: 80). This 'acknowledgement of spaces of fear and the location of unsafe places' (Shirlow, 2003a: 86) has left what Hocking and colleagues call an 'attendant fear' of finding oneself in the 'wrong place' (Hocking et. al. 2018: 877) and, so I argue, produced a concomitant sense of vulnerability when moving around in public spaces which is manifest in what McLaughlin has coined a 'heightened awareness of recognition' (McLaughlin 2018: 308).

Where, Whom, How: Car Riding as Research Method

Drawing on similar observations made with regards to other divided cities such as the city of Jerusalem, Hocking and colleagues stress how the fractured social context often left in the wake of violent conflict inevitably impacts upon 'the ease and safety of movement' (Hocking et. al. 2018: 877). Indeed, what researchers have coined the 'triadic relationship between people, place and mobility' (Fallov, Jørgensen and Knudsen 2013, cited in Hocking et. al. 2018: 3), is in Belfast 'complicated by violent legacies and sectarian associations' (Hocking et. al. 2018: 3). The post-conflict condition of segregation then conditions people's movement in particular ways, which must be taken into account when thinking about moving methods in the contemporary post-conflict context.

In this context, I argue, there is a *general* quality to moving methods, which is their capacity to capture the relationship between people and their movements in and between places. Yet there are *specific* qualities of them too, which depends on who these people are, what their position as research subjects is, what kinds of social places they are moving in and by what means of mobility. For this inquiry, I use an approach that I like to consider loosely along the lines of what I here, following Wacquant's discussion of Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' (Wacquant 2016: 64), will call a 'triple historization' (2016: 64) inspired by a concern with researcher reflexivity in the study of practice. With a nod to Bourdieu's 'Weber moment' (Wacquant 2018: 6) of social inquiry and vision of knowledge (see Wacquant 2018: 6), this principle entails the 'triple historicization' of people (the agent or interlocutor), the world (the social space that is the post-conflict social setting) and the method (researcher reflexivity and categories) (Wacquant 2018: 6; 2016: 64-65)[8]. Thinking with this approach allows me to pay attention to the relational aspects of and historically constituted social dynamics of the post-conflict city as a space for remembering and to see how the method of car riding can illuminate important facts about the specific ways in which people remember in it.

Note that this is to tentatively suggest to the development of methods for investigating issues of memory, remembering and the past in the particular Northern Irish context and not to conduct a systematic 'test' of the method itself. Rather, I argue, performing a triad analysis of car riding in Belfast, suggests how car riding, if available to use in systematic fashion, can be seen as a medium specific condition opening avenues for certain kinds of knowledge about the past and memory work which would otherwise be unavailable for historically grounded anthropological inquiry – and that there are specific reasons why this is so.

I thus allow myself to perform a 'triple historization' heuristically using the principle as a device to think about the meaning of context for how certain practices – such as car riding – acquire meaning and how exploring such meanings can be methodologically useful. Based on this, I perform three contextualising moves at once describing and analysing the specifics of practices of car riding in Belfast according to the specific post-conflict context and experiences of car riding among specific interlocutors in this context – in this case using the case of someone formerly employed in military service. Proceeding from this analysis, I draw out the empirical insights that may be derived from such an emphasis. The article therefore also contributes to ongoing conversations about the different meanings and uses of driving and riding in different cultures (i.e. Bishara 2015; Dawson 2017; Kruglova 2019).

Taking cue from studies of driving and car riding elsewhere, how might we understand car riding as an ethnographic research tool in a study of memories of conflict in Northern Ireland? Writing from the context of the occupied West Bank, Bishara has analysed the car itself as a material space and 'the road system [as] an everyday site [for] "embodied experiences"' (Bishara 2015: 33, 35). She explores how driving entails 'practical knowledge', what she calls a 'knowledge-in-motion' using Marcel Mauss (1973) to argue that driving is a 'technique of the body' and Pierre Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' (1977: 72) to argue that the embodied skills it takes to direct it can have cultural and political dimensions' (Bishara 2015: 36). Driving, she notes, 'is replete with affect' (ibid 2015: 34). It is 'a site of embodied politics' and 'as such makes up an element of [Palestinians] political habituses', that is, to 'everyday embodied experiences conditioned by social and political positionalities' (Bishara 2015: 35). As such, she points to how 'riding in cars generates specific kinds of socialities both within the car and between those in the car and others' (Bishara 2015: 36) and aptly coins the road a site for 'political', 'ranging' 'analysis in motion' (Bishara 2015: 48) through which interlocutors (in this case drivers in Israel and the West bank) may sometimes challenge 'prevailing assumptions about statehood, space and politics' (Bishara 2015: 48). In a similar fashion Kruglova explores the relationship between practices of driving and riding and the present-absence of the state in Russia, finding '"car culture"' a suitable 'lens through which to view how people articulate their relationship with the state' (Kruglova 2019: 458). She sees the car and driving as a site for people to comment and 'monitor' (ibid, 2019: 458) people and things around them, including the relative presence – or absence – of state power and signs of 'development' (2019: 458) in the urban or natural environment. She identifies car riding – and the language of automobility – as a site for 'political anthropologists [to expand the language] use[d] to write about the state' (Kruglova 2019: 457). Following these inspiring analyses leaves no doubt that driving and car riding play a role for how anthropologists approach their subjects. As a methodological technique and object of cultural analysis in itself driving and car riding with interlocutors however deserves further attention.

Car Riding as Ethnographic Research Tool

As a fieldwork device, cars have an advantage: Driving is something that people already do, all the time. More specifically, driving is something people do because it is practical, and especially so in a city built for cars. In Belfast specifically this is indeed the case. Along other UK cities (Martire 2017: 55), the city has been recognized as one of the 'most car-dependent' cities in Western Europe' (Martire 2017: 51), it has a complex infrastructure; it can be difficult to enjoy by foot and interlocutors know far better than anyone the often cumbersome-hassle of getting around. One interlocutor put it to me succinctly explaining his upbringing 'within a square mile' of one of those Belfast neighbourhoods in which the recent conflict hit most violently: 'you rarely frequented any outside [area] unless you had a car'.

Besides, cars are at once and the same time private and public, that is private spaces within public space. Following Dowler's analysis of 'the geopolitics' of mobility (2001: 160) and political subjectivity (2001: 173) in Belfast, cars provide a means for 'the expansion and restriction of public and private space' (2001: 160). The car can therefore serve as a useful device for facilitating mobility across boundaries and barriers to mobility in Belfast and in some regards also within them, which reflects larger social movement patterns in the city. This has an everyday dimension to it. Recent studies by an interdisciplinary group of researchers working in Belfast have explored the spaces residents of north Belfast move within everyday life and the extent to which these are influenced by segregation (Davies et. al. 2019: 1740). They conclude that residents are significantly less likely to move within mixed and out-group areas. Interestingly, they also find evidence to show how residents are more likely to travel along out-group sections of the main road if they are in a vehicle. More specifically, along main roads, people were 'more likely' to move within mixed or outgroup spaces 'when in a vehicle, rather than on foot' (ibid 2019: 1740, 1741). Segregation then, and the fear of finding oneself on the 'wrong' place to use Shirlow's phrase (2003b: 85) is an important contextual factor influencing the nature of social encounters in the historically divided city – but so is the vehicle, the car.

There is more to practical dimensions of car mobility then, which has to do with perceptions of safety and the nature of post-conflict social encounters. Dowler points to how, through the turmoil of the Troubles during the 1990's, the only 'safe and practical way' to travel between areas was to 'travel with a driver who was practised in getting around adversarial neighbourhoods' (2001: 161). Importantly, her analysis illuminates the ambivalent feelings of drivers in relation to (in)visibility, vulnerability and danger of riding but also the opportunities that driving affords in terms of traversing or even transgressing the visible and invisible borders of Belfast (Dowler 2001: 165). The empirical example of experiences among taxi-drivers during and after the conflict documented by Dowler highlights experiences of taxi drivers and the ambiguous sense of mobility and vulnerability experienced by individual drivers in interface areas during everyday practices of driving a taxi (Dowler 2001: 168). Driving a taxi in the Northern Ireland of the 1990's was, she notes, 'a peculiarly dangerous occupation' (Dowler 2001: 186). This point to the nearly constitutive relationship between car riding and specific occupational identities[9]. Along those of taxi-drivers crossing the boundaries between different communities, risking their sectarian or religious "purity" along that mobile trajectory, her analysis is useful for understanding another dangerous occupational practice: what John Hockey has analysed as the 'dangerous occupational practices' of soldiers 'on patrol' (Hockey 1986; 2013: 93-95).

Conversations in cars are in many ways illustrative of that which Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki has recently explored extensively to suggest how interview-related material that does not become part of 'the record' can be contextually important and of great research potential (2013). As Anne Knudsen has suggested in relation to her anthropological fieldwork among upper class strata of the Mediterranean south, 'car rides offer one of the most excellent ways in which to conduct a good conversation' (1995: 24, my translation). Not only, she argues, are cars enclosed spaces ideal for confidential information to be relayed or exchanged, they can also – and here this is more important: work as an isolated space for all kinds of conversations: no one is listening, only limited gestures are possible within the small space of the car and those that are possible are not easy to decipher from afar (Knudsen 1995: 24). Cars therefore can provide a certain degree of privacy, which together with its sense of familiarity is arguably not only conducive to any good conversation, as Knudsen remarks, but also for specific conversations that one (researcher and interlocutors alike) would rather conduct beyond reach of just any pedestrian or other random stroller.

Ambiguous Objects, Dangerous Occupational Practices and Memories of Driving

When I studied how people remember conflict in Northern Ireland, my point of departure was to focus on the experiences and memories of a particular group of people – that of those who served within the state forces during the conflict. At the same time, my attention was drawn to the everyday, embodied modes of remembering, in sum, to the articulation of memories that were different in kind from those I up until that point had been researching as part of public discourses, policy and media analyses. The car ride, I found here, was a powerful lens through which to study how people remember and articulate their relationship with the past in such everyday ways. In the rest of this article, I discuss the merits of car riding as a tool to study memories of conflict by situating the ethnographic situations above in the historical and contemporary Belfast context for a memory study with former soldiers like Pete.

Former soldiers in Northern Ireland comprise a diverse group of people, and as a group they are numerous, yet relatively invisible in everyday public life. Comprehensive research has pointed to the reluctance of ex-soldiers in Northern Ireland to declare themselves as such at all, something which researchers tie to the specific history of violent conflict that is the history of the Troubles (Armour et. al. 2021: 20). According to Stephen Herron who studied the experiences of UDR-veterans in the rural areas of South Armagh (Herron 2014), peace time Northern Ireland has not stopped those who used to be soldiers from taking note of unwelcome attention from strangers: 'looking over your shoulder' – has become a lifetime practice among many UDR-veterans (Herron 2017). The experience of being constantly under threat – of there being 'no safe place' to use Armour and colleagues' phrase (Armour et. al. 2021: 14) – is widespread among the Northern Ireland population of armed forces veterans according to a comprehensive recent study by scholars at Queens University Belfast (Armour et. al. 2021: 14). Because of the Troubles, many veterans in Northern Ireland live in their former operational theatre. This in turn means that the feeling of threat and 'constant vulnerability' associated with service on and off duty alike (Smyth 2004: 561), has not been eliminated in the period following transition to peace and post-army life. A considerable proportion (45.3%) of home service veterans responding to Amour's study reported that they felt they were at 'severe risk' because they had been in the military (Armour et. al. 2021: 36). When I began my research in Belfast, I found this experience to be decisive for how my investigation unfolded. Well ahead of our meeting, Pete and I had a friendly correspondence about how and where our interviews were going to take place, until Pete suggested I come to his family home in the outskirts of the city. 'I am concerned about my personal security still,' he writes to explain how we might be better off conducting our interview away from public eyes and ears, 'as you can imagine what we are going to talk about might not go down well in some circles.' Our exchange suggests the need to find appropriate – meaning safe – locations for interviews, too, is something of which interlocutors are well aware. After all, they are the ones to carry that sense of vulnerability to the public gaze that comes with conflict produced suspicion about 'who is who,' and its manifestation in the subtle but culturally significant phenomenon and practice of being able to 'tell' (see McCormack 2017: 56). Pete was no exception. The car in which we both found ourselves on our way to Kinnaird Street this day became an important practical tool for entering Girdwood and for our conversation around its significant role in Pete's life to take place.

Yet, while providing a sense of safety and intimate space away from the from the public, cars in Belfast at least, are historically ambiguous objects: up through the conflict, vehicles played key parts in hijackings, in abductions of individuals, and bombings frequently went off from cars where they'd been placed by paramilitary (though fully militant) groups. Car riding means different things to different people on different sides of the conflict. For individuals employed within the army and security forces in particular, the danger of putting oneself into one still resonate as they are associated by many with threats of being targets of sectarian attack. At the time of writing**,** it is not more than a month ago that a bomb was found placed under the car of an off-duty part-time police officer[10].

The real or imagined risk of putting oneself into a car and starting to drive brings me to another aspect of driving in Belfast. Driving in cars is a corporeal experience, a particular way of moving through the city, which shares features with the dangerous occupational practice of being 'on patrol' (Hockey 2013). Patrols, Hockey argues, 'have particular rhythms varying with terrain differences, day or night, and absence or presence of "enemy"' (Hockey 2013: 95). For former soldiers like Pete, as evident from the example above, car riding and being alert to the environment while driving in Belfast brings to the fore embodied sets of habits associated with soldiering. Particular modes of remembering that are at once embodied and reflective emerge as the car is the foundation of bodily experiences that are similar to what Hockey has called the 'patterns of movement on patrol', that are being absorbed in 'individual and collective memory' among soldiers (Hockey 2013: 96). Driving can then be seen as a site of embodied politics which together with the personal biographies of interlocutors as well as the effects of post-conflict urban landscapes triggers memories that are hardly possible to trace in any other way than through the car ride specifically.

Here I want to wrap up my argument. First, however, there's a point to be made regarding the materiality of 'the record' and the methodological question of accommodating the role of interlocutors and the singularity of their narratives in defining that materiality. My interlocutor forwarded his images and comments to me after our car-ride conversation providing me with contextual knowledge of what he thought was important for me to know about his experience of driving into Girdwood that day. The car ride thus also worked as a prop for reflection which allowed for the exchange and further expansion of what Sheftel and Zembrzycki calls the part of oral history that goes 'off the record' (Sheftel and Zembrzycki 2013) but which nevertheless 'provides context and texture' to a conversation (Sheftel and Zembrzycki 2013: 7) and arguably thereby adding to the materiality and scope of knowledge about everyday memories of soldiering the city.

Next, I take two further points to be revealing, which I would like to suggest as points of departure for further empirical analysis. First, the car offers space for confidentiality within public space. This allows for casual conversations to take place that would probably have been ruled-out otherwise, given the specific security context of Northern Ireland in general and of the Girdwood/Clifton Street area in particular. Secondly, the resonance of the car ride with the 'dangerous occupational practice' (Hockey 2013: 93) of patrolling Belfast experienced by soldiers in the past, become practical, material conduits for remembering certain routines, schedules, responsibilities, and, importantly, *vulnerabilities* associated with such a practice. Memories of driving can then be linked with the formation of political subjectivities and social positionalities centred on experiences of vulnerability associated with being part of fixed schedules and institutionalized routines. The latter points to (ex)soldier subjectivities defined by the particular vulnerability and exposure to (paramilitary) violence associated with being part of fixed shifts, official schedules and patterns of routine within state organisations as much as by the power of such organisations. At the same time, it opens for reflection on the effects the presence of state has on others living in proximity to military infrastructures and in turn, their exposure to state power.

Conclusions

In this article I have focused on the ethnographic situation of a car ride to explore its merits as an ethnographic tool for studying memories of conflict in Belfast. Taking a cue from scholars stressing the potential of moving methodologies to study place-memories and 'troubling' narratives of the Troubles, and putting it into dialogue with research 'on the move' elsewhere, I have argued that any such methodology must be reflexively analysed according to the specific post-conflict context. Locating the value of the car ride in relation to anthropological research on car riding and driving beyond the Irish context, I have demonstrated how research in cars with key interlocutors across contexts resonate and supplement each other. Based on observations from the passenger-seat within the enclosed space of a private car, the article has illuminated that not only does moving through the city matters for how memories are articulated in public space, so do particular *ways of moving*.

Car riding is different from conventional walking methods in particular ways. Driving in a private car produces a sense of safety conducive to conversation and a sense of vulnerability to, as well as memories of, violent exposure. The car ride is dotted with surprises and memories – sometimes violent ones too – which can be articulated in the safe space of the car. I have demonstrated how driving in post-conflict Belfast allows for certain nuances in narrative to be articulated that complicates prevailing narratives about the conflict by adding to them recollections of soldiering that are centred on everyday experiences of routines, rhythms and vulnerabilities in addition to opening for a certain reflexive engagement with the fact of military presence in Belfast as such. Based on this I find that passing by everyday places of memory by car can open conversations around and potentials for reflexive encounters with the past in ways that may not be possible otherwise.

Secondly, there is a certain corporeality to driving that makes car ride conversations different from those undertaken during more conventional walk-and-talks. It is possible to take this argument further considering how vulnerability comes to be either associated with, or indeed, detached from, 'a particular occupational body' (Hockey 2009: 479), in this case belonging to the ex-soldier whose working experiences and the memories of these experiences emerge during car rides. What Boyer has called 'the corporeality of expertise' (2015) is evident in 'reflex and gesture' (ibid: 244) emerging while driving, and grounded in, in this case, embodied memories of being alert– what Hockey calls 'switched on' - during past experiences of patrolling (see Hockey 2013: 95; Hockey 2009: 481). Careful attention to the gestures, reflexes, stories, comments, observations and even silences emerging while driving, provide useful points of entry for understanding everyday political experience in the post-conflict city. Considering these substantial analytical insights, car rides can be operationalized as a methodological technique, which, when sufficiently contextualized, can be explored by anthropologists across contexts. If used in systematic fashion, riding by car with key interlocutors can therefore prove substantially helpful in bringing new nuances to narratives about experiences in the past, that are qualitatively rich, yet might otherwise remain untold when sticking with conventional interviews.

It is a daunting task to write about car riding together at a time when sharing a small, enclosed space with someone who is not part of one's inner circle of closest family seems in itself a thing of the past. The article has laid the basis for hopefully further exploration of memories emerging while driving – and what it might look like for a former soldier from Belfast to be looking to the past from behind the windshield of a car.

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[1] Personal names are pseudonyms.

[2] The term veteran as an official and formal designation to describe former members of the state army as distinguished from ex-combatants from pro-state militias is discussed by Brewer (Brewer and Herron 2021: 123).

[3] On researcher positionality and interviews in Belfast, see Skinner 2012.

[4] Personal communication via e-mail, September 2018.

[5] In her 2019 chapter on 'everyday places of memory in post-transition Bucharest' (Grossman 2019: 339), Grossman addresses what she calls 'places of urban memory that are not so deliberately or explicitly commemorational' (2019: 339), pointing to how 'ordinary places' can nevertheless be 'tied to powerful and visceral impressions related to the city's complicated trajectories through the past and present' (2019: 339-41)

[6] I use the notion of affordance here in the 'relational sense' suggested by Waltorp (2018: 115-116, 125)

[7] On uses of the term 'post-conflict' in this context, see Hocking et. al. 2018: 7.

[8] For a discussion of the analytical principle of "triple historization" and it's debt to Weber's sociological work, see Wacquant 2018. For a 'concise genealogy and anatomy' of the concept of habitus, see Wacquant 2016.

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[9] For a comparative analysis illuminating this relationship, see Olma's analysis of taxi-driving – and taxi drivers - in the post-socialist Usbek capital of Tashkent (Olma 2021).

[10] April 2021, see: https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-56814575

STORYTELLING AND TRANSITIONAL SOCIETY IN COUNTY FERMANAGH

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Abstract: Storytelling is a major part of rural life in Ireland, both North and South of the Border, and has become a tool of reconciliation and peace building in transitional society. Sharing stories with friends, neighbours, and the younger generation is a way of creating social bonds, developing a narrative of the past, creating a shared identity, and establishing community boundaries. As a result, the peace building aims of using storytelling to generate mutual understanding and the use of storytelling by communities to define and maintain boundaries and legitimate their narratives of the past are in tension. Storytelling cannot be viewed as a neutral tool and an awareness of the agenda of each storyteller is important to understand what role and goals stories have in any given context. Using ethnographic research from the unionist community and the 'Innocent Victims' constituency in County Fermanagh, this paper will explore how storytelling is used to establish narratives of the past and assign blame for violence, support and critique the process of reconciliation within County Fermanagh and highlight the challenges that can develop when using storytelling as a tool for peacebuilding.

Key words: storytelling; peacebuilding; County Fermanagh; 'Innocent Victims'

Introduction

The sharing of stories is a major pastime in rural Ireland on both sides of the Border. It is an activity that every social group, in one form or another, engages in. Stories can be used to create social bonds, educate young people on shared communal and moral values, entertain people at parties or wakes, and to sustain the memories of lost loved ones. Since storytelling is a widely practiced activity, it has been incorporated into the peacebuilding tool kit as a way of creating cross-community ties, uplifting marginalized and unheard voices, and as a means to provide acknowledgement of wrong committed when it is not possible to obtain justice through the courts. However, there are risks to this approach, social groups already have established forms and uses for storytelling, and these may be in tension with the goals of those engaged in peacebuilding. Indeed, what 'peace' looks liked for one group may not be enough for other groups. Groups will also use storytelling to critique the peacebuilding process. To illustrate this, in this article I will be exploring the uses of storytelling by Fermanagh unionists and the 'Innocent Victims' constituency. I will start by providing relevant background context about Fermanagh. Then I will explore how storytelling is practiced in everyday social life and how Fermanagh unionists make use of these everyday stories to establish their communal boundaries and identities. I shall then turn to how stories shared at commemorative events and during educational tours are used to construct and legitimate narratives of the past and maintain the boundaries of a moral community. Finally, I will examine what impact this has on the use of storytelling as a tool for peacebuilding and what place it holds in the wider peace and legacy process in Northern Ireland.

Ethnographic Context

This research was primarily carried out in the Northern Irish border county of Fermanagh between 2019 and 2020. The county has a population of approximately 61,000 with a slight Catholic, Nationalist, Republican majority. Unlike the urban areas, Fermanagh is generally mixed with the exception of some housing estates in the main Town, Enniskillen, and a few villages. However, the border region is predominantly Catholic. The primary industries are agriculture and tourism, both of which require a level of cooperation across what have been considered 'traditional community boundaries'. Fermanagh's Westminster seat is held by the abstentionist republican party, Sinn Fein, and is represented in the local assembly by three Sinn Fein Members of the Legislative Assembly, and two Unionist MLAs, one from the Ulster Unionist Party and one from the Democratic Unionist Party. Westminster elections within the county often result in marginal victories between Unionists and Nationalists (Whitten 2020). Throughout the 1969 to 1998 conflict, 115 people lost their lives primarily as a result of actions carried out by the Provisional IRA (McKittrick, Feeney et al. 2007). Only 5% of investigations into these killing resulted in a conviction (Fealty 2019). Many of these attacks were carried out along the border which also acted as a safe haven from British Security Forces (Patterson 2013). Loyalism in Fermanagh was responsible for acts of violence and killings in the early 1970s, but their capacity for large scale violence was significantly reduced following the arrest of a prominent local loyalist paramilitary in 1975 (Burke 2018). Both Republicans and Unionists have made claims of attempted ethnic cleansing by the British/Unionist State or the broader Republican movement, respectively (Urwin 2020). Storytelling in Fermanagh, more broadly, has previously been studied by Henry Glassie during the early years of the Conflict in and about Northern Ireland (Glassie 1982; Glassie 2006). During this period people did not want to share stories of the ongoing conflict and remained silent about their experiences and suffering following the end of the conflict (Dawson 2007; Donnan and Simpson 2007; Gardiner 2008).

In this article I will be specifically focusing on the storytelling of members of the broad unionist community and the 'Innocent Victims' constituency. These groups overlap to a degree in County Fermanagh, and Northern Ireland more broadly, but the 'Innocent Victims' constituency has a broad base beyond Unionism. It is also worth noting that none of these groups are monoliths and not all individuals hold views entirely in line with their social group. The 'Innocent Victims' movement formed as a response to the 2006 Victims and Survivors (Northern Ireland) Act and is represented by Innocent Victims United, an umbrella victims group headed by the South East Fermanagh Foundation (SEFF). They argue that the 2006 Act creates an equivalence between those who were injured while committing criminal acts and those who were injured by those criminal acts. It was seen as an immoral appeasement of 'terrorists' against the best interests of those who were 'innocent' throughout 'the Troubles'. The group has received some degree of support from the DUP, UUP, TUV, SDLP and the Alliance Party for its campaigns. They also will not engage with either Sinn Fein or the PUP who they view as supporters, advocates, and glorifiers of terrorism. Across Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Great Britain, SEFF represents victims of the Provisional IRA, INLA, UDA, and UVF though their Fermanagh-based membership are primarily victims of the Provisional IRA. They are the largest victim group in the county and organize a range of educational visits and tours along the Northern Irish border region.

Stories and peacebuilding

Storytelling has been used as a tool in peacebuilding and in societies transitioning away from violent intercommunal conflict across throughout the world, including in Israel-Palestine and the Western Balkans (Furman 2013; David 2019). Dialogue groups which bring competing groups together to come to either common ground or an acknowledgement of a pluralist view of the past, oral history projects to produce a record of diverse views, and educational programmes are common ways this peacebuilding storytelling is used in Northern Ireland (Glendinning 2011). Indeed, storytelling and oral history were made an important part of the Stormont House Agreement in 2014 as a part of a wider strategy to address ongoing legacy issues in Northern Ireland (McGrattan 2016). Glendinning (2011) argues that in safe spaces storytelling can foster bonds and intercommunal dialogues but can run the risk of creating resentment by reminding all involved of the wrongs that were committed against them. In a sense, storytelling can become a repeat of past conflicts. David (2019) goes further arguing that dialogue groups in fact reinforce the identities that caused divisions and lessen the importance of other shared identities. By essentializing the contested and problematic identities, national, religious, gender, etc., in this way these forms of storytelling can hide other forms of identity which could lead to the development of new social relationship rather than the reinforcing of old social boundaries. This pattern occurs beyond face-to-face dialogue groups and can play out in oral history projects and educational tours as well.

In the sections above, I outlined how the 'Innocent Victims' constituency construct their moral and political boundaries through Border Trails and testimonies. For 'Innocent Victims', peace will not be built through dialogue with former paramilitaries who still believe that violence can be justified in any context. Such dialogues would be seen as giving legitimacy to those who continue to glorify historical acts of 'terrorism' and encouraging others to see violence as a legitimate tool to achieve a political goal. 'Innocent Victims' groups do engage in dialogue groups which do not include Sinn Fein or the PUP, though none occurred during my fieldwork.

While storytelling as a tool for peacebuilding carries with it many risks, as detailed above, it also has benefits. Many of the victims of violence I spoke to and interviewed remarked that sharing stories of what happened to them, their loved ones, or people they served in the security forces with helped their mental wellbeing. To quote one interviewee:

> *Telling their stories, telling the stories, keep telling and I think as well, believe it or not, Matthew, there is a therapeutic element in commemoration. You may not, may find that difficult, and maybe I'm not eloquent enough to explain it. But there's times when you come away from things and it was good to remember that. And I have to tell you, in 28 years' service, Matthew, I don't remember the names of all the men that died, that served with me. And that's to my eternal shame, but so remembering me, remembering them at sometimes maybe helps my conscience a little bit.*

This sentiment was often expressed by survivors in Fermanagh. Being given the opportunity to speak and to be heard was valuable in and of itself. However, some expressed a sense of fatigue from repeating their stories at different events while the 'Innocent Victims' movement's journey towards justice of their loved ones and hold those responsible to account seem to be making limited progress. Particularly when some of those responsible for their suffering are in positions which allow them to influence the peace and legacy processes.

'Innocent Victims' and some unionist groups in Fermanagh are sceptical of storytelling and oral history in peacebuilding. They see it as an opportunity for former paramilitaries to justify their actions and have their stories set out as established fact with no way of verifying them or holding them to account for any crimes committed. In their contributions to the Malone House Group's conference, and subsequent book, on legacy issues Aughey (2018), McGrattan (2018), and Ringland (2018) highlight these concerns in different ways. Aughey (2018) argues that there is a risk of an 'inversion of accountability' that does not force perpetrators to reflect on their actions or on the alternative actions they could have taken rather than violence. McGrattan (2018) points out that storytelling is a valuable tool in combating 'cultural amnesia' but, like Aughey is concerned that it might be a politically 'loaded dice' that 'lends itself to romanticized notions of the past' (2018: 60). Finally, Ringland (2018) that including storytelling in the legal structure of a legacy process provides an opportunity to humanize the suffering people experienced and could be developed effectively from the outset. Like the other contributors, he points out that it is important to bear in mind that it would be each storyteller's version of the truth. These concerns largely reflect the concerns 'Innocent Victims' shared during informal conversations. If these concerns are not addressed to their satisfaction, they would refuse to fully engage with these legacy structures as they would not be sufficient to build the peace they wish to see in Northern Ireland.

Storytelling in social life

The sharing of stories, from local gossips and 'yarns' to folklore and history, is an ever-present part of life in County Fermanagh. Anyone can be a storyteller, though certain individuals are renowned for their great skill at storytelling. This skill is often a combination of being an engaging speaker with good narrative flow and having a deep local knowledge. Storytelling can happen in any venue, from cafes and restaurants, to wakes, weddings, and ceilidhs (Cashman 2008). Stories are frequently shared along with the tea and coffee after church services and commemorative events. While commemorations are viewed as sombre occasions for reflection and uniting around a common purpose, sharing stories afterwards are important for creating social bonds and highlighting important communal values. In this section I will show how casual and informal storytelling can be used to provide examples of admirable character traits, teach people about the local social and political landscape, and reinforce the community's self-image. The venues and themes of these stories will overlap with the more formal storytelling that takes place during commemorations and Border Trails, however informal storytelling generally has a smaller audience and allows engagement between the narrator and the listeners.

Unionist stories of the conflict in and about Northern Ireland in Fermanagh cover a broad range of topics. These include former members of the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) or the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) sharing 'war stories', stories about Catholics and Protestants cooperating in farming and how the 'Troubles' changed this relationship, and of the suffering and loss experienced by members of the unionist community. Sharing stories of loss at the hands of the Republican movement, in particular, allows unionist groups to resist what they see as an attempt to forget about the 'Troubles' and to hold Republicans to account socially in the absence of any progress in attempts to hold specific individuals to account through the legal system. A few examples from my field notes will help illustrate these points:

> *A few people from a mix of generations gathered to have a chat. The discussion turned to village life and the remnants of animosity that still existed between, for want of a better term, the 'two communities'. We were told the story of a successful pub owner who had a relative killed by the IRA. He welcomed everyone regardless of religion and became one of the most successful in the area. It was claimed that he had the clearest reason of anyone to be bitter about the past but, unlike many*

> *in the area, he didn't allow that to affect his business or his relationship with his neighbours. The narrator also pointed out that many of the people most insistent on keeping old divisions were least effected by the events of the past.*

The purpose of this story was both criticism of those holding on to sectarian views and to show the benefits of moving on from the past. Though not explicitly stated, it was heavily implied that the financial success of his business was linked to his ability to accept all his neighbours regardless of their background. He was presented as a good representation of what the community should be like and how they should treat their neighbours. It explains how society is, at least in the view of the narrator, and puts forward a vision of how it should be. Another story told to me after an event deals with similar themes about the nature of Fermanagh society, but shows the cooperation between groups has deeper roots:

> *The storyteller was a farmer who used to be in the security forces. He told us about how Republicans helped him on his farm when he needed time off or had jobs that needed more hands. He did not know some of them were Republicans at first, but they told him about some of the places they had stopped on their way to work. This let him know what their beliefs were and let him know they knew everything about him. He also explained how he would help out on other farms when they needed time off. It was all part of keeping the rural economy going.*

This story, like the one before it, highlights the benefits of cooperation but also explains the way in which sections of the wider community work out what group people are part of. This process has been termed 'telling'. Like Burton's (1978) early conception of 'telling', these stories blend 'myth' with 'reality' to explain how you can know who has what political persuasion without ever asking. The specific details of the locations, omitted to preserve anonymity, provide an insight into the political and social landscape of the area. They teach the listeners, not only who is from what group, but how to identify new people based on their choice of pub, shop, and so on. While emphasising cooperation and connection, the story also reinforces the lines dividing groups.

It is worth noting that nationalists and republicans, particularly farmers, share similar stories about this inter-group cooperation. It is an example of what Harris (1972) called the 'common culture' shared by rural Protestants and Catholics. This shared history of economy and agricultural cooperation is used to contrast Fermanagh to the cities of Derry/Londonderry and Belfast where it is believed that people are less likely to meet, or rely on, people of different faiths and political backgrounds. Fermanagh storytelling emphasizes this perceived uniqueness not just in social relations but, as will be discussed in the next section, also in the way the conflict in and about Northern Ireland occurred in the county. I was frequently told stories that were prefaced with 'now here's a story they wouldn't understand in the cities' or 'I'll tell you what makes us different to those ones in Belfast'. The reflection on the difference between urban and rural experiences of the past mirrors people's views on the present. Highlighting the differences in their stories of the past, even to people who already know them, draws attention to the absence of these stories from the wider narrative of the past and of the present.

History-telling and educating about 'the Past'

History-telling, taken from Khalili's (2007) study of Palestinian commemorations, is a form of storytelling where a narrator provides their personal biography situated within a wider historical context as part of a public performance. Equally the narrator can share the biography of community or group members on their behalf. The latter form is common in 'Innocent Victims' commemoration events while the former is more common in the SEFF organized Border Trails. These forms of storytelling are less expensive than mass produced oral history books or films and are generally hosted in spaces which already have infrastructure for performances, such as church halls and SEFF's Conference Room. This allows for a more direct connection to the narrator and provides an opportunity to solicit further stories over refreshments after the event. Additionally, the stories can be tailored to different audiences to help build sympathy for the wider cause. For academic audiences, they tend to focus more on historical dates and statistics, while for general audiences there is more of a focus on emotions and making the audience personally relate to the speaker and the victims of the incidents being narrated. At its core, these forms of storytelling intend to gain public and political sympathy, motivate support for campaigns and lobbying efforts, to share their narrative of the Past, and combat the revisionism of other groups and movements within the region.

The narrative shared through 'Innocent Victim' history-telling attempts to correct what they see as the distortion of 'the Past' by Republican and Loyalist terrorism that has been allowed to spread since 1998. Members of the 'Innocent Victims' constituency reject the idea that violence is a legitimate tool to further political objectives. They argue that there is no 'political violence' and that the acts carried out by paramilitary groups should be considered to be 'criminal violence'. The history-telling also emphasizes how the security forces were upholding the rule of law and that there were democratic and non-violent ways open to individuals to enact the changes in policy and constitutional status they sought. However, as Sluka (2000: 130) shows, this view of the security forces has been contested and challenged by nationalist, republican, and human rights groups. They shift the frame of reference from a focus on political tactics and choices to a focus on moral choices. Viewing violence as inherently immoral, they do not believe anyone, or any party associated with, or providing justification for, paramilitaries, past and present, are illegitimate political actors. Framing the past in absolutist moral terms depoliticizes the past and simplifies it for outsiders. The 'Innocent Victims' recognize that the specifics of the Troubles and its legacies are complex and challenging to deal with, but at its core the issue is one of right and wrong.

The two forms of history-telling I will examine here are the 'testimonials' given during 'Innocent Victims' commemorations and SEFF's Border Trails. As with the stories shared in the previous section, I will be keeping the details of locations and specific dates obscured from the discussion of 'testimonials'. Each testimonial is unique to the individual narrator; however, they all share some key elements. Testimonials usually open with a description of the victim's personality, hobbies, hopes, and ambitions. They open with the narrator introducing themselves in terms of their relationship to the deceased (brother, sister, cousin, etc.) and with a short summary of the incident that made them a victim. It is rare to hear someone identify themselves using their political or religious identity during the introduction. This will then be followed by stories about their relationship with the individual who was killed. These stories highlight how special the person was to the narrator and their family while also making them relatable to the wider audience. For example, one speaker emphasized that their loved one was an 'ordinary working-class man who signed up for his country'. They will then tell of the impacts the loss had on their family and their life more generally. These stories attempt to put a human face on statistics and, as one listener put it, to see 'beyond the uniforms'.

The Border Trails organized by SEFF take groups in buses through the villages and border regions of Fermanagh to provide 'the true history of terrorism in Fermanagh'. There are five routes available, covering the North, Southwest, Southeast and West of the county as well as the county town of Enniskillen. SEFF see the Border Trails project as a necessary counterbalance to the tourist trails that developed in Belfast since 1998 (Skinner 2016). A representative of SEFF explained:

> *I suppose in truth, it comes from a feeling that we [should] have what we have in Belfast in terms of the Falls and the Shankill. If I'm a visitor to this country and I was brought on that walking tour or that bus tour or black taxi tour up in Belfast and that was the sole information I was being given regarding the Northern Ireland Troubles, by God I'd be leaving with a jaundiced view. And essentially the story of that area is told by ex-convicts, that's who does it. They have a form of arrangement between themselves, which has an economic element to it, and which also has a purpose of justifying their own ideologies. And it also struck me that there hasn't been a story of innocent victims essentially being recorded in that way to offer any level of counter, that this is actually the endgame, the brutality of the actual violence and the story of people who were resilient through that, kept their dignity and who didn't turn to retaliation, that where largely the view of it would come. Fermanagh*

> *obviously has a very unique set of circumstances in terms of the balance issue over the course of the Troubles. That borderland story is very, very powerful.*

There is an emphasis on the uniqueness of Fermanagh as a county, the idea that some groups are distorting the truth, and the focus on the 'Innocent Victims' refusal to engage in violence. These themes are developed throughout the Border Trail with the explicit goal of highlighting the 'futility of violence'. The ultimate hope of this project is to convince people there is no justification for armed struggle and prevent any return to the conflicts of the past. Any group seeking to go on a tour has to sign a declaration stating, 'In the context of "The Northern Ireland Troubles",' I/We acknowledge the futility of violence and are agreed that the use of violence in the furtherance of or defence of a political objective was/is wrong and unjustified' before they will be accepted on any of SEFF's Trails. This declaration is used to protect vulnerable members of SEFF who are actively involved in Border Trails who usually participate in a question-and-answer session before the tours.

Border Trails occur throughout the year but are more frequent during the summer. As a result, groups often incorporate a Border Trail into trip to Fermanagh. This is similar to how other tourist trails and historical tours operate within Fermanagh. The trails in the Southern part of the county start at SEFF's main office in the village of Lisnaskea. People are offered tea, coffee, and biscuits on arrival and will have a chance to socialize with volunteers and staff before being brought into the conference room. The room is laid out in "lecture hall format" with a large table and projector screen at the front. The Chairman or Director of Services will open the event by giving a short history of the organisation and the wider philosophy of the 'Innocent Victims' constituency before inviting a victim or survivor from one of the areas on the trail to give their testimonial. If no-one is available, then they will play video recordings of some interviews selected from their archive of oral history projects. The audience then get a chance to ask the narrator some questions before getting on the bus and making their way towards the border.

As noted above, Border Trails are adapted to suit their audience. There are, however, key themes and incidents that appear across all Border Trails, regardless of audience. The South East Trail takes in the region between Lisnaskea and the County Monaghan border. This includes the villages of Donagh and Rosslea (sometimes written as Roslea). This region experienced the highest level of Provisional IRA activity throughout the 70s and 80s. The topology of the area coupled with roads that cross the border more than five times over the course of a mile made the area idea for cross border raids. The Republic of Ireland was seen as a 'safe haven' for the IRA due to their refusal to allow British Security Forces to engage in 'hot pursuit' chases across the border (Patterson 2013). The region was also the site of clashes between protesters and security forces at the sites of road closures and between Catholic residents and Loyal Orders in the mid-90s. Historically, it was also a site of conflict during the aftermath of the Irish War of Independence and during 1956-62 IRA Border Campaign.

There are several key sites on the South East Fermanagh Border Trail which educate listeners about the philosophy of the 'Innocent Victims' constituency and highlight important local concerns about Truth, Justice and Accountability. The first site is a short distance from the main office near a roundabout. In the 80s, a Provisional IRA bomb exploded on a school bus driven by a UDR man. No-one was killed but some of the school children were injured. The driver's son, who usually helped him check the bus for suspicious devices felt responsible for what happened and years later took his own life. This illustrates a recurring theme throughout their educational storytelling, violence does not just impact an individual rather its effects ripple through families and communities for decades. This incident is also used to highlight the willingness of the IRA to cause injury to children in the pursuit of what they referred to as 'legitimate targets'. As the tour continues through Lisnaskea, the guide tells stories of the incidents that occurred near the Main Street. These include attacks on shop owners and off duty soldiers behind pubs followed by the installation of banners mocking the victims.

As the bus progresses out of Lisnaskea towards the border, the stories turn to the alleged attempts at ethnic cleansing and the Irish State's tolerance of IRA cross-border operations. The incidents used to support the claims of ethnic cleansing include two cases involving civilians. The bus is stopped by a long lane up to a farmhouse with several outbuildings dotted around the landscape. Several similar houses are nearby. The guide tells those on the tour that this is the house of a family who were the victims of an attempted 'human bomb' attack. This type of attack involved taking a family hostage while forcing one member to drive a bomb to a security checkpoint or police station. The family had no connections to any of the security forces but were a Protestant family on an isolated farm. The guide says this is why they were singled out, not just for ease of access but as part of a wider plan to intimidate the Protestant and Unionist population of the border region. This is further explored in the nearby village of Roslea beside the ruins of a shop. The owner was said to be the last Protestant business owner in the village before his assassination in 1977.

In the final part of the Trail I will discuss details of two incidents that took place before the Conflict and incidents that have occurred post-Good Friday Agreement. These are the killings of two Ulster Special Constabulary (USC) members in 1922, the killing of an off-duty police officer on the border in 1961, and the attempted mortar attacks on PSNI patrolling Lisnaskea in the late 2000s. The discussion of these incidents weaves the 1968 – 1998 Conflict into a wider story of Republican violence from the foundation of the

Northern Ireland state and continuing through to the present day. This reinforces the wider narrative that violence must be condemned in all contexts and times while also explaining why tensions and weariness remain within the border community of Fermanagh.

To summarize, the Border Trails present a narrative of the Conflict that is explicitly seen as a corrective to ‘revisionist histories’ put forward by other groups, primarily those aligned with former paramilitary factions. To quote one guide:

> *A tour, it tells the story of the people in this particular area. Tells the story of what happened, the true story of what happened. We don’t glorify it. We don’t enhance it in any way. We tell it exactly as it happened, how the terrorists operate, the support that they had in the local area, their methods of operation, the effects on families. And I mean in this locality alone, terrorism led to two members of the same family had been murdered or injured, later committing suicide. These are hidden victims.*

The emphasis is on the ‘true’ lived experiences of the civilians and security forces, who were the victims of unjustified and unjustifiable ‘terrorist’ violence. The Trails also seek to educate people away from considering violence in the pursuit of any political objective by showing the wider effects of that violence on families and communities. In this context, an absence of physical violence is necessary but not sufficient for a peaceful future. All justification and glorification of violence and armed struggle must be removed from society. By drawing together events from the foundation of the Northern Irish state through to the present day, they construct a historical narrative that emphasizes a timeless and absolutist moral perspective on the past rather than a political and relativist perspective.

Conclusion

As I have shown, Storytelling happens in a wide variety of settings, both formal and informal. Attempts to use storytelling as part of a wider peacebuilding project need to take into account how are used at an informal level and how this influences and challenges the forms of storytelling used by grassroots advocacy groups. Informal storytelling can provide insights into points of tension or boundaries that would not be known from the more formal forms of storytelling. Understanding where these lines are drawn both between and within groups, even if they are not consciously acknowledged, provides an insight into how wider peacebuilding efforts are developing at the level of everyday interaction. Groups like the ‘Innocent Victims’ constituency in Fermanagh view storytelling as a way of sharing their truths about the past as a means of correcting what they see as an unbalanced and ‘jaundiced’ narrative of the past which privileges the perpetrators of violence over the victims of violence. Their strong moral stance against violence and those who glorify it means they do not engage with former perpetrators who have not admitted their past actions were wrong. This means their educational storytelling is aimed not at creating a shared narrative or a plural narrative, but at establishing a singular true narrative wherein no violence can be justified to obtain any political objective. In line with this, 'peace' for 'Innocent Victims' is not just the end of violence but the removal of all narratives that could be used to justify future violence and the exclusion of those who share those narratives from wider political life. Storytelling can be a valuable tool for peacebuilding and exploring a plurality of views on the past, however, attention must be paid to the ways individuals and groups are already using storytelling to educate their own social groups and to establish and reinforce boundaries. Additionally, storytelling projects without robust mechanisms to provide justice and accountability for past wrongs is not sufficient for reconciliation and cannot address the underlying needs of communities in transitional societies.

Acknowledgements: This paper comes from PhD research funded by a Department for the Economy Studentship.

Declaration: The author was employed by SEFF from 2015-2018, before the commencement of the research project.

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'Alive with Seals': Seal-Fishery Conflict and the Conservation Conversation in Ireland

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Abstract: This article presents Irish fishers' perspectives on seal-fishery interaction as perceived increase in the population of seals causes a variety of issues including depredation of fish and damage to gear. The piece will juxtapose the fishers' own understandings with an analysis of national public discussions of the seal-fishery problem over the past year as some developments have been made in the government's willingness to engage with the issue. Grounded in recent developments of an anthropology beyond the human, this piece reflects on how anthropological knowledge can contribute to contemporary conversations around natural resource conservation in Ireland.

Keywords: environmental anthropology, County Kerry, fisheries, conservation, seals, wildlife, conflict

Introduction

The seal plays an important role in the folklore of Ireland. Historically, people making their living on the coast were 'always on good terms with the seals and close to them' and tell stories about seals taking care of lost babies, speaking, loving music or mourning the deaths of coastal people (Thomson 2001, 83). The large-scale economic exploitation of seals to the point of near extinction that took place in many parts of the world (Castree 1997) does not seem to have taken place in Ireland. Records of the harvesting of seals for medicinal purposes tend to be from peripheral and impoverished communities such as those in the Blasket Islands off the coast of Co. Kerry. These, such as Tomás O'Crohan's *The Islandman* written in 1937, already describe the sale of seal skin or oil to the mainland as a distant memory (O'Crohan 1951 [1937], 100). However, the place of the seal in the Irish consciousness is not entirely harmonious.

In the narrative of the seal bride common to Irish folklore (where a man forces a seal in human form to marry him by stealing her sealskin and she eventually, usually after bearing him children, finds it and returns to the sea) seals also represent an ambivalence in the relationship between humans and nature, as it is both 'antagonistic and productive' (Darwin 2015, 134). These stories provide foundational myths for many seafaring or aristocratic families, but also tend to associate the marriage with narratives of dispossession through the violation of some taboo. Thus the seal in the folklore is frequently connected with the downfall of the native aristocracy under English rule. These stories can be said to reflect a 'an infinitely more refined and sophisticated understanding of the delicate balance which exists between mankind and the natural environment than we find in what would be usually regarded as more advanced systems of belief' (Ní Fhloinn 1999, 241). They emphasize the close connection felt between coastal peoples and their natural environment, but also the feeling of potential for this connection to result in disaster and dispossession.

The perceptions held by the public in contemporary Ireland of the 'people of the sea' are however much less nuanced and ambivalent than this sketch of folk understanding would suggest. At least since the 1980s, threats to seals have been met with considerable public outcry in Ireland (Sleeman 1997, 250) and seals have taken central places in international environmental campaigns (Dauvergne and Neville 2011). Academic study of marine mammals such as seals has historically been sustained mainly for 'cultural reasons', but recently industrial interests have begun to consider it less as a 'scientific backwater': It has become clear that 'marine mammals are an issue that can make or break the economic viability of these projects' due to the massive public support for the cause of marine mammal conservation (Boyd 2009, 83). Given this brief sketch it is perhaps not surprising that the seal can find itself at the centre of bitter controversy in contemporary Ireland.

This piece will focus on one such controversy emerging from the interactions between seals and small-scale fishers in the southwest of Ireland. Fishers in this part of the country periodically bring the problem of the growing seal population and the impact of this increase on their already precarious livelihoods. In public discourse, however, they routinely have their concerns dismissed and in some cases ridiculed. I reflect on why it is that it seems so difficult to take seriously the claims of fishers about their environment under current dominant paradigms of thinking about human-environment relations. Grounded in recent developments of an anthropology beyond the human, this piece reflects on how anthropological knowledge can contribute to contemporary conversations around natural resource conservation in Ireland. Moreover, I argue that a shift in scale is required in the conversation surrounding seal-fishery conflict. On all sides, the argument tends to revolve around national-scale aggregate seal population measurements and monolithic constructions of what is in fact a very diverse fishing industry. The possible solutions imagined match the scale of the problem's conceptualisation. As we shall see, fishers often call for culls, the policy discussion tends likewise to revolve around culls as though they were the only option, and when other measures are proposed, the Irish media has a habit of mixing up culls with other forms of control. The following account will draw on interviews I carried out with fishers in a village in Co. Kerry in the summer of 2016 and put these into conversation with policy literature on the subject as well as news media surrounding a recent incidence in which the issue was thrust into the public consciousness.

The seal-fishery problem from the perspective of fishers

Ireland has one of the largest coastlines relative to land area in the EU. Marine industries in Ireland have been historically – some argue systematically – underdeveloped (O Donnchadha et al. 2000, 2). However, *Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth,* the integrated marine plan for Ireland, seeks to double the GDP share of 'ocean economy' by 2030– 'determined to put behind us the days of underachievement in the marine area' (Inter-Departmental Marine Coordination Group 2012, foreword). Within this and other strategies, the inshore fishing fleet is just one among many sectors vying for space. The Irish fishing industry is a diverse sector, ranging from large commercial endeavours to small boats carrying out seasonal fishing activity as a form of income supplement. The age profile of the industry is increasingly top-heavy as young people are less and less likely to take up roles, and between the years of 2008 and 2017 employment in the sector fell by 17% (STECF 2019, 101). This is borne out in the age profile of my interlocutors, who were for the most part over 60 years of age. In general, rural coastal areas show lower levels of affluence than other areas of the country (Hynes et al. 2019). As global fish production increases, alongside pressure on vulnerable fish stocks, the role of small-scale fisheries in national and international policy discussions tends to be marginal, but awareness is increasing that such fisheries have potential for driving sustainability in the fishing industry from social, economic, and environmental standpoints (UN FAO 2020). This awareness is demonstrated to some extent in the publication of Ireland's first strategy for inshore fishing development through a recently established Inshore Fisheries Forum.

I conducted interviews with a small number of fishers in Dunbeg (pseudonym). Dunbeg is a small fishing village located close to the most westerly point of the European Union in Co. Kerry on Ireland's southwest Atlantic coast. The main economic activities taking place in Dunbeg are fishing and tourism. Fishing in Dunbeg takes place on small boats (the largest being 56 feet) that fish close to the shore as they are not equipped to stay out longer than one day. With the exception of one, all of my interlocutors were extremely emotionally attached to fishing as an identity and way of life, saying that they are 'not happy if they're not out fishing all the time.' The experience of fishing is as an intrinsic and embodied identity. As one interlocutor puts it, 'I was born into it. Once the salt water goes into your blood you're never going to get it out.' Residents of the village are proud of its heritage as a dedicated fishing village, which is a rarity in Ireland as historically fishing has predominantly been a seasonal supplementary activity to subsistence farming. One interlocutor reacted in outrage to the recent addition of a number of historical information points around the village, calling them an 'insult' as they imply that the village 'was founded by some farmers who decided to go down to the water' as opposed to emphasising the cultural particularity of fishers. Conversely, while the fishing identity in Dunbeg is a source of pride to its inhabitants, it is impossible to ignore its coinciding disprivilege, for as one participant observed, the only time the village had a comparative advantage over its farming neighbours was during the potato famine of the mid-19th century with a ready source of marine sustenance.

All of my informants felt that their needs were not considered a priority by politicians, and that they had been 'sold out' in favour of farmers, on both national and international scales. As one informant put it: 'there's no votes in fish.' If the Irish fishery as a whole is obscured in the priorities of government by other interests, the fishers of Dunbeg are doubly so. There is wide consensus among my informants that a major threat to the sustainability of their livelihoods as fishers is the European Union, as most of them blamed the unfair distribution of quota allocation to French, Spanish and Dutch industrial offshore fishers, who are variously described as 'devious' or 'crooks,' responsible for the majority of the depletion of Irish fish stocks. As one put it:

> *The fish come in from the deeper water into the shallow water to spawn. They can't come in now from the deeper water because the big boats have them all caught outside. Hundreds of Spaniards fishing outside, in hundred fathom water 10 miles of the Skelligs, landing their fish into Dingle and Castletownbere every weekend. They have twice the quota that the Irish boats have, which is all wrong… It seems that the fisheries offices along the Irish coast have hardened on the Irish fishers, and when the French and Spanish land to send away their fish nobody checks them at all and they can do what they like.*

It is widely agreed that under the EU, fishing on the scale that it is undertaken in Dunbeg will cease to exist, and industry will be dominated by a few multinational companies. One interlocutor who had left fishing for IT indicated that while he did have 'yearnings' for the life of a fisher, he did not consider it a viable life choice and was unlikely to return. The various threats faced by the fishery and the apparent indifference of the government to these are compounded by the fact that the fishers have been unable to organize effectively: 'they would never agree. Even in this village, people would never get on with each other.' The ambivalence towards other fishers is encapsulated by another participant: 'That is the life of a fisherman, we all see after each other, even though we won't tell each other the truth. We never told each other the truth. God no, it's all lies.' There is thus a strong sense of community and solidarity, if not unified political cooperation or the sharing of knowledge about customary fishing grounds, about which they would never tell each other the truth. As such the fishing industry is largely ignored in a wider political context and simultaneously lacks a unified voice to advocate for itself effectively. The unwillingness of policymakers and the wider public to take seriously the knowledge and experience of fishers is reflected in the lack of confidence my informants had in their ability to contribute meaningfully to my work. For the most part they insisted they did not know anything interesting, or apologetically ended interviews saying things like ‘I weren’t much good to you anyway.’

What the attention to the broader political and economic picture as it is conventionally depicted does not do is prepare the observer for what these small-scale fishers on the edge of Europe perceive to be one of the most serious threats to their livelihood: seals. Large increases in seal populations predominantly on the west coast have had a heavy impact on fishers as they eat large quantities of captured fish and damage gear – or, more specifically, they eat relatively small quantities but destroy the quality of the catch by eating choice parts of each fish such as the liver. Mounting evidence from Ireland and elsewhere suggests that this is carried out by individual problem seals who learn to gain an easy meal from fishing gear, rather than a practice of the entire seal population (Varjopuro 2011, Königson et al. 2013, Cronin et al. 2019). Fishers, scientists and policy makers in Ireland have for long found the issue of seals impossible to agree on, due to their ‘different views of reality’ (Brennan and Rodwell 2008, 1075). This disagreement is compounded by the fact that there is no firm national policy position on the seal issue (Cosgrove et al. 2013, 4). Fishers have been so frustrated by the lack of government support or recognition that in 2004 a group carried out an illegal cull on the Blasket Islands (Cronin 2011, 752), leading to a large increase in National Parks and Wildlife Service staff in the area (Ó Cadhla et al. 2005, 28). This situation leads to an atmosphere of intense and bitter distrust.

The fishers of Dunbeg are unanimous that seals constitute a serious threat to their livelihoods. They are described by one participant as ‘the biggest plague of all,’ and by another as an ‘awful threat altogether to people.’ One went so far as to say that seals are the ‘biggest threat of all to fishing to be honest.’ My participants all reported having entire catches of pollock from gill nets ‘all torn off and destroyed’ by seal depredation. The sense is that this is a recent change, with the consensus being that seals weren’t an issue until (depending on the fisher) about twenty to thirty years ago but now the problem is getting ‘worse and worse.’ Now, as one put it ‘the place is alive with seals.’

The fishery are ‘crying out’ for something to be done, but being ignored. At one point, the government ‘brought some people out to see the damage they were doing and they still did nothing about it.’ There is thus sense of helplessness in a situation in which the government has done nothing to help and there appears to be nothing the fishers themselves can do to alleviate the issue. As my participants saw it, the government deferred to other groups with more clout than the fishers. First is the ‘animal rights crowd’ who oppose any form of control. Secondly many referenced the farming industry as receiving far more support than fishing, as referenced in the observation that ‘if some pest came in and killed calves or cows or anything like that the whole country would be brought to a halt.’

For all of my participants, a cull of the seal population was thought to be required to protect their livelihoods. It is not the contention of this piece that such a cull should be carried out. However, it is important to recognize that fishers in places like Dunbeg find themselves caught between a rock and a hard place caused by inconsistent marine conservation policies. On the one hand, insufficient conservation measures of fish stocks results in large trawlers overfishing stocks before they have a chance to enter the reach of the inshore fleet. On the other, more stringent conservation of charismatic megafauna and a refusal to engage seriously with the lived experience of fishers has resulted in an unprecedented seal population. Particular individuals within this protected population cause further problems in exploiting the fish that do manage to slip through the nets of the industrial fleet through depredation of the catch. Indeed, as O Donnchadha et al. argue, the Irish fisher along with the culture 'that is the most precious heritage in Europe' (2000, 50) is now in danger of disappearing. It is instructive, in light of this, to think of the language used by my participants when they describe themselves as 'threatened' by the action of seals. The label of 'threatened', in the language of conservation, designates a risk of extinction, normally at the hands of human activity. Is it possible to conversely conceive of a form of human life as being 'threatened' with extinction due nonhuman activity (combined with a particular legal context)?

Seals and fishers in the policy conversation

Having outlined the problem as experienced by the fishing community, I now turn to examine the ways in which seal-fishery interactions are conceptualized in the policy conversation, drawing on academic work by scholars of marine policy as well as a policy statement from the Irish Seal Sanctuary. Approaches to the problem of seal depredation tend to privilege the use of abstract statistical models in order to invalidate fishers' knowledge and to construct the issue in extreme and adversarial terms as though a large-scale cull of populations were the only solution available (see e.g. Yodzis 2001). In the Irish literature relating to seal-fishery interactions, the tendency is to emphasize the fact that, while there has been outcry from fishers, the economic loss has yet to be quantified and the scale of the issue remains unclear (Cronin et al. 2014). The groups involved are often reduced to seals and the fishery, usually at a national scale, which does not acknowledge wide differences between the sizes of different kinds of fisheries and seal populations in different areas - for example, Cronin et al. dismiss the claims of fishers by comparing the aggregate 'human fisheries catches for Irish waters' with the estimated fish biomass taken by seals: one million versus 21,000 to 24,000 tonnes (2014, 126). This is a facetious argument for, as I have noted above, the problem of seal depredation in gill nets is less to do with quantity of fish, and more to do with quality, as seals tend to eat small parts of each fish in a net rather than smaller numbers of whole fish. Of course I recognize that the aggregate population is an important piece of data in this story – a greater population of seals will necessarily lead to a greater number of interactions – but as I will argue, an excessive focus on population numbers (by actors on both sides of the conflict) does not help reach an equitable solution.

The insufficient conceptualisation of fishing diversity is highly pertinent in the case of Dunbeg as wildlife conservation measures (particularly of seals, as we have seen) disproportionately affect small-scale, inshore fishers, and yet discussion of the problem insists on referring simply to fishers as a homogenous category. Both species of seals (harbour and grey) in Irish waters are considered to be of Least Concern by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (Cosgrove et al., 2013; 7). Seals and their habitats are protected within 12 nautical miles of the Irish coast under Irish and EU regulation (Ó Cadhla et al. 2013; 4). The Blasket Islands in Co. Kerry, within a short distance of Dunbeg and the location at which they carry out much of their fishing, host the third largest colony of grey seals in the country, and its pup production and population figures almost doubled in the years between 2005 and 2011 (2013, 13). Harbour seals have a much smaller population nationally, but several important harbour seal colonies are found in the waters surrounding Dunbeg (Cronin et al. 2003; 17). The interactions between seals and fishers in Ireland are most severe in inshore fisheries (Cronin et al 2014, 123), which is pertinent to the case of Dunbeg. There is a strong indication that following the ban of salmon driftnet fishing in 2006, there has been a displacement of seal impact from the Moy salmon fishery onto other fisheries (2014, 126). Thus if we look at the seal population as a whole around the entire coast of Ireland, it is not obvious that they might pose a threat. However, taking into account the local specificities of certain kinds of fisheries in particular places, along with variations in seal population in different places, it becomes easier to imagine that some form of intervention might be required.

In a report written for the FAO, which makes the case for the understanding of fisheries as cultural entities as a ‘key’ to their management, Goodwin likens fishers to ‘marine biologists,’ whose knowledge, while aimed at the exploitation of fisheries rather than the supposedly ‘pure’ motives of ecological science, must be taken into account (2001, 24). Nevertheless, the conclusion in relation to the seal problem is often that no action is to be taken in the absence of valid scientific data despite there being ‘enough anecdotal evidence to suggest that seal interaction may constitute a problem for the fishery’ (Cronin et al. 2014, 128). However, the evidence is not merely anecdotal. One study has shown that depredation rates of fish by seals off the south coast have been found in one study to have doubled since the 1990s, and to be in fact higher than the qualitative estimates provided by fishers themselves (Cosgrove et al. 2013, 27). Despite this, fishers’ experiences of depredation of their catch by seals are dismissed in the face of a supposed lack of evidence as ‘scapegoating’ in the face of resource depletion and as representing the wrong-headed viewpoint in which ‘predators are seen as problems to be controlled not as integral parts of a functioning ecosystem’ (Cronin 2014, 752).

Similarly, fishers are often cast as victims of false consciousness, for instance in a policy statement from the Irish Seal Sanctuary. It states that ‘the problem and challenge to fisheries scientists, politicians and the fishing community is to face up to the internationally acknowledged problem of over-fishing; the takeover of the fishing industry by large business corporations and the displacement and systematic depopulation of previously sustainable fishing communities’ (Irish Seal Sanctuary 2014). These are of course valid points that contribute to the problems faced by my interlocutors. The problems facing small-scale fisheries are many, including a wide variety of environmental, social, political and economic factors. However it is interesting that an organisation that ‘is actively involved in trying to assist coastal communities’ (ibid.) would be so unwilling to *listen* to those communities on their own terms. Corporate overfishing is admissible into the list of problems in mainstream discourse, but blanket conservation of wildlife is not.

In these discussions, the focus on large aggregate figures as units of analysis also means that the seal question has a tendency to revolve around the dichotomy of to cull or not to cull: the form of action matches the units of analysis. This rather stark approach leads to similar dichotomies drawn on ethical terms. Consider the following extract from a piece of work based in the Irish context:

> *The question of whether to cull or not to cull involves a fact/value conflict where there is a lack of agreement over both facts (as illustrated by the scientific debate above) and values (socio-economic vs ecological/ethical objectives) (Brennan and Rodwell 2008, 1073).*

What is interesting here is the fact that ‘values’ are separated into two conflicting camps: ‘socio-economic’ and ‘ecological/ ethical.’ This betrays an inherent assumption that to place importance on the ‘socio-economic’ interests of one group, small-scale fishers, whose livelihoods, communities and cultures are threatened, is categorically not an ‘ethical’ thing to do. Ethics are only for the benefit of the other category of actors in this conflict, seals, and judgements are to be based entirely on scientific evidence, not on ethically suspect social factors or ‘subjective’ evidence. Under the going ontological human-animal divide, it is impossible to conceive of humans as being anything other than harmful to other organisms, and to imagine that the objects of traditional conservation policy might be causing harm to human groups. Strict sets of binaries – cull or do nothing/ethico-ecological values or socio-economic values – result in a stalemate where productive conversations are difficult, as we shall see in the next section.

Seals in the public imaginary: the 2020 Controversy

This section focuses on media discourse surrounding the seal problem. At regular intervals the inshore fishing fleet, usually focused in Co. Cork (Cronin and Connolly 2019) and Co. Kerry (Lucey 2019), calls for a cull on seal numbers, or for other measures to be taken. In recent years this has focused on the growing population in the Blasket Islands and making use of the language of sustainability, referring to seal numbers as they currently stand as 'unsustainable' (Lucey 2019). These calls tell similar tales to those of my own interlocutors, of how seals 'follow boats' and leave the fish 'in bits,' amid observations that 'they cull the deer and foxes but they don't care about the fishers' (Phelan 2020). As we shall see, however, some key actors do *not* call for culls. Despite this the tendency of the media persists to throw the word *cull* around at times when both fisheries representatives and the government insist that a cull is not under consideration.

Often the discourse involves highly value-laden language. An example of this is a piece from 1996 with the headline, *Protected Species now seen by many as the enemy* (Siggins 1996). The issue of seals often prompts rather extreme acts of protest, including a 2012 case where two seals' heads were nailed to a sign reading 'RIP CULL' and 'RIP I AM HUNGRY' outside a seal sanctuary in Kerry. Discourse surrounding this emphasizes the 'horrific' nature of the protests – note the opening line of this particular article which reads 'in the past two weeks a number of incidents have highlighted the plight of seals who reside in the coastal waters of Ireland' (O'Carroll 2012). The plight of the seals is highlighted, and not that of the fishers. One recent article, with the sensational headline *'Huge Rise' In Dead Seals Includes Many With Apparent Gunshot Wounds,* goes on to say that without post-mortems it is impossible to know whether the wounds are in fact inflicted by gunshots. It quotes a spokesperson from Seal Rescue Ireland saying 'The holes, which do appear in large numbers of the carcasses being reported, are most likely due to scavenging animals' (Conroy 2021) – thus there is no evidence to support the implication of gunshots. In response to this story a fisherman from Dingle was quoted as saying 'I can't understand why the media are villainising fishers for every time a dead seal washes up' (Sunderland 2020).

On the 23rd of September 2020 Michael Healy Rae, independent TD for Kerry, submitted a question to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, asking for details on the 'the steps that have been taken in the past six months to address the seal population problem here' (Houses of the Oireachtas 2020). This sparked a controversy surrounding the potential for a pilot scheme for management of problem seals by fisheries actors on an individual basis – crucially, a cull was not proposed. One license to shoot had been granted in the year up to that point, and a further three were under consideration, while one (seeking permission to shoot seals on the protected area of the Blasket Islands) had been rejected – the three pending applications were placed on hold until plans for the pilot scheme were advanced. Numerous news outlets reported this with the Irish Wildlife Trust's description of the scheme as 'insane' in the headline (e.g. Moore 2020, Conroy 2021). Contrast this to the words of fishers calling for culls in January 2020: 'They've culled foxes in the past. But you can't touch the seals, it's madness' (Mac an tSíthigh 2020). Some fishers were noted to have also claimed that while they agreed that seal populations were a problem, culling was indeed 'madness' (Duffy 2020). What is important to note here is that we have two perspectives whose proponents find each other so incomprehensible as to render each other 'insane,' but also the lack of a unified voice from the fishing industry.

The shooting of problem seals is continuously conflated by journalists with a widespread cull – see for example an article with the headline *Irish Government considers allowing cull on seals in Irish waters* (O'Connor 2020). Claims of plans for a cull have been rejected by ministers and branded as 'unacceptable' while the licensing of individual-level lethal seal management is still under consideration (Foxe 2020). Alongside the general confusion between culling and killing individual seals, the focus of the issue on the licensing of shooting seals from boats tends to be redirected from questions around ecology and animal welfare to issues surrounding safety concerns of firing a gun while on a boat (Quann 2020). Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage Darragh O'Brien tweeted on the 28th of September: 'For the avoidance of any doubt my Department has absolutely no plans for a general cull of seals as stated in the PQ response of Sept 15th & 23rd & I would not sign off on any pilot scheme which would involve fishers shooting seals from a boat.' The fact that the government continuously emphasizes the fact that individuals may apply for licenses, but simultaneously that there are no plans to approve shooting from boats for 'health and safety reasons' shows the lack of commitment to finding a middle ground solution between cull and inaction.

Statements are frequently made in the press, as in policy literature, that overfishing and other factors contributing to ecosystem decline are the true culprit behind the problem of decreased inshore fisheries catches (e.g. in RTE News 2020). The 2020 controversy was no exception. In response to this, Patrick Murphy, the CEO of the Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation, was quoted saying 'they are saying that the fish stocks are decimated? How is it that the seal population is growing, what are they eating? It does not add up.' This comes alongside arguments against the need for seals in marine ecosystems as an apex predator, as Murphy expresses concerns that without a predator preying on the seals themselves, their population is out of control – he cites a story of a swan in the River Lea being killed 'in agony' as an example of troubling phocine behaviour. Murphy is, however, against culling and shooting, and suggests the use of sterilisation (Duffy 2020). Murphy appeared on Cork's 96 FM on the 30th of September to argue against the idea that shooting as the only solution requested by the fishing community, pointing out that none of the numerous licenses given for the shooting of seals in recent years had been given to the inshore fisheries. He also points out that the derisive discourse surrounding the problem had been insulting to fishers who risk their lives in dangerous conditions to make a living (Cork's 96FM 2020). The September 2020 Controversy was characterized thus by the Fishing Daily: 'Irish fishers have been facing a barrage of abuse from an uneducated public who believe that the Irish fishers want to eradicate the seal population' (Fishing Daily 2020).

As noted earlier, the seal is a powerful figure in contemporary environmental imaginaries in Ireland, and across the western world. An examination of the media representation of seal-fishery conflict offers an insight into how the general public in Ireland understands the issue: essentially with a mixture of strong emotion, misunderstanding and misinformation. The media conversation around the seal-fishery issue is characterized most notably by conflation of culls with other forms of control by members of the public and journalists. It seems likely that this tendency to phrase the issue in sensationalist terms stems from the emotive power of the seal in the popular imaginary – that is, it makes for a better headline, and as we have seen that the emotional headlines relating to seals do not always map directly onto the facts. Secondly, I would argue, the fishing industry is commonly understood in negative terms, as we have seen in the policy literature. The differences between the scales of different kinds of fishing are not well grasped by an urban public which generally understands fishing as an overwhelmingly negative environmental force. This lack of understanding is not helped by the absence of a unified voice from within the inshore fishing industry itself, as culls are often called for by individual fishers while industry bodies insist that other measures besides culls are to be considered. In this somewhat chaotic public conversation, the monolithic figure of the environmentally destructive fishing industry prevails, and the concerns of those involved in fishing are misrepresented, ridiculed or dismissed.

Anthropological interventions

So, in light of this complex and contradictory situation, what can anthropological perspectives lend to the discussion? Ethnographic work on Irish fisheries has demonstrated how while fishing has been largely absent from national narratives, in those communities where it has a historical basis it is central to the formation of self and place. These studies demonstrate the ways in which fishing communities are embedded within local and national power networks in complex, contradictory and ambivalent ways (Donkersloot 2010; Donkersloot and Menzies 2015). Studies have demonstrated the role played by such communities in safeguarding a rich tradition of knowing and relating to the marine environment (Hinz and Power Bratton 2000). They have demonstrated how the stressed nature of small-scale fisheries endangers the indigenous environmental ethics that are central to a traditional fishing worldview (Power Bratton and Hinz 2002). Other work has demonstrated how traditional fishing worldviews, more than simply representing endangered ways of being that require preservation, can allow fishers to offer critiques of contemporary capitalism and envision alternative futures (McCormack 2017). However I posit that beyond the documentation of the richness of human experience (itself an important enterprise), anthropology and anthropologists can offer two crucial insights here.

The first is to offer a corrective on questions of scale. As I have noted above, the discourse surrounding the seal problem tends to focus on aggregate populations and large-scale units of analysis. The problem, however, is more quotidian in scale, and this is what an ethnographic approach can best add to this conversation. What are the *actual, daily* interactions that take place between the seal and the fisherfolk? Do they take place at the level of population, or at an individual level? In other European contexts, an approach that allows for this kind of thinking about marine ecosystem dynamics has been applied. Work from Scotland and Finland allows us to view a conception of seals and fishers as individual actors locked into specific relationships in specific times and places. These examples allow for practical solutions to the issue at hand, paying attention not just to reductive aggregates but also to smaller scale interactions. Even if the local or global population of grey seals is low, the impact caused by one seal can still be significant (Varjopuro 2011, 450). This is borne out in Königson et al.’s (2013) study of underwater fishing gear, finding that 600 raids on the gear by seals could be attributed to just 11 individuals, a total of 1% of the local population. They further found the elimination of these ‘problem seals’ had a dramatic positive effect.

A recent Irish study has also found evidence to suggest that such ‘problem seal’ activity takes place in Irish fisheries, and argues that population level management is not justified but that the problem is best solved at an individual or operational level (Cronin et al. 2019). It is thus clear that to speak of ‘seal populations’ as being the problem per se is not to paint the whole picture, as they are capable of individual variation in behaviour beyond ‘instinct.’ This mirrors the inadequacy of statements that ‘fishers’ as a homogenous group are simply motivated by the drive to maximize individual profit. Furthermore, it seems as though the total population number is not likely to have as major an impact as might be imagined. Instead, viewing the problem as an undesirable interaction between a number of individual agents can provide an effective solution. A similar scheme was also trialed in Scotland, but as of February 2021, no further licenses are being granted. This is to protect seafood exports in a post-Brexit landscape because US law prohibits the import of fish from countries whose fisheries allow the shooting of seals. This approach can however allow us to look beyond the cull/no cull binary of the current discussion, and focus more on facilitating place-based individual interactions between fishers and ‘problem seals.’

The second insight draws on recent trends in social theory to de-centre the ‘anthropos’ in ‘anthropology.’ Donna Haraway has argued for the recognition that we live our lives alongside other types of organisms interdependently. For Haraway, flourishing in the ‘entrails of humanism’ is a ‘discursive tie’ between all the gendered, racialized and taxonomized nonhuman others to rational Man. In response to this, including the agency of nonhumans in our accounts of social life, rather than thinking of animals as something apart from cultural life, ‘[loosens] the grip of analogies that issue in the collapse of all of man’s others in to one another’ (Haraway 2008, 18). Indeed as Rose notes, ‘the human-animal divide homogenises the beings on both sides’ (2011, 33) – therefore to allow the flourishing of diversity, the project of recognizing animal agency takes on an urgency within decolonial and feminist politics. Accordingly, the flipside of recognizing animal agency in human worlds is recognizing the ways in which humans and animals equally participate in shared worlds – what Bresnihan has referred to in his work on Irish fisheries as ‘the more-than-human commons’ (2016). Crucial also to this understanding is a commitment to ‘staying with the trouble’ (Haraway 2016) and to recognize that caring for the environment in messy ‘naturecultures’ is not always kind, that killing and care are not incompatible (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017). Thus, I propose that the small-scale fishers of Dunbeg are conceived as part of the ecosystem and not alien to it by virtue of being human. This allows for the recent interference in their livelihood by anthropogenic changes in seal ecology (i.e. increased conservation) to be viewed as a problem caused by the social construction of one actor’s interests as ‘objectively’ more important than the other’s. Both the seal and the small scale fisher are vulnerable to the multifactorial threats to the marine environment: the difference is that one receive legal protections and one does not.

Conclusion

The purpose of this piece has not been to fetishise the ‘traditional ecological knowledge’ of fishers above other forms of knowledge, nor is it to advocate for a seal cull. Rather, it is to suggest a synthesis of two forms of knowledge that have a tendency to oppose each other in public discourse. On the one hand, I do advocate for a willingness to take seriously the claims of certain fishermen that their livelihoods are threatened by seals. More precisely, I argue, they are threatened by a combination of the actions of individual seals and a legal and ontological context in which it is difficult to imagine humans as potential victims of animals. On the other hand it is clear that a cull is both morally repugnant to the majority of the human population, as well as being unnecessary if the increasing evidence base surrounding individual ‘problem seals’ is to be applied in policy. Lessons from the Baltic Sea allow us to align our interests with fishers while making use of the latest scientific evidence. They do so in such a way that does not imply large-scale culling of abstract ‘seal populations,’ but rather allowing for interactions between individual agents to take place on a local scale. A middle ground between total inaction (the current status quo) and a cull (some form of localized, individual-based management) may allow for co-existence between seals and small scale fishers. Even if these interactions seem ‘insane’ to many urban-dwellers, such approaches may help to keep the valuable heritage of our fishing communities, as well as our seas, ‘alive with seals.’

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'CARE (PACKAGES) IN A TIME OF CRISIS: IRISH EXPATRIATES IN GERMANY, TRANSNATIONAL SYMPATHY AND CIRCULATION.'

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Abstract: This paper suggests a novel research direction in 'Anthropology Ireland' in which closer attention is paid to the intensification of the desire for creature comforts among the Irish expatriate community in Germany. Physical expressions of 'care' and travel have been hampered by the structural restrictions brought about by both COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) and the departure of the UK from the European Union in Brexit. The notion that we advance is that these two crises, one a medical pandemic and the other a democratic crisis of sorts, have reshaped and reoriented Irish expatriates' relationships to 'home comforts', digital and face-to-face encounters, and have distorted perceptions of/on the future. The paper is grounded in a wealth of research obtained from Irish expatriates in Germany and was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2021). This provided a unique research vantage point to examine a context in which interlocutors were adapting to the necessity for mediated electronic engagements (using video-telephony and instant messaging tools) at the same time as the researchers were. This paper contends that necessity can be birthmother to adaptation, as well as invention, necessitating the renegotiation of everyday practices for this group. This is demonstrated through a context-sensitive analysis of 'goodies'/gift-giving, sharing (both in terms of material and experience), and 'stashing' as a measure of solidarity and strength in uncertain times.

Keywords: care packages, sharing, Irish expatriates, transnational, Germany, pandemic.

Introduction

The *Corona-Verordnung* (Corona Regulations) that are in effect throughout Baden-Württemberg, the German federal state in which one of the authors is based, made field research and opportunities for participant observation in physical settings during 2020–21 made them a rare occurrence. Occasional easing in the ebb and flow of restrictions was seized upon to engage with interlocuters face-to- face. Methodological opportunism (Breidenstein et al. 2015: 34f.) became the order of the day to an even greater degree for ethnographers working in circumstances that prohibited interpersonal interactions. The necessity to shift the emphasis from physical 'co- location' to that of digital or telephonic 'co- presence' became pressing (see

Beaulieu 2010). To that end, the pandemic made it necessary for the researchers to turn away from the imperative that 'worthy' fieldwork consists solely of embodied interaction and to delve into the work of digital ethnographers (see for example Postill and Pink 2012; Pink et al. 2016;Patty Gray 2016; Hine 2017; Markham 2018; Markham and Gammelby 2017; Fleischhack 2020; and Howlett 2021). In what follows, we examine the intensification of desire in response to the pandemic at a time of year when homesickness (and the parenthetical consumerist impulse to show affection in material terms) becomes most acute for many: Christmas. We then proceed to examine the specific composition of a variety of care packages, the dual impulses to both share and 'stash' and, finally, how communication is maintained virtually in the absence of physical proximity.

The fixation with fixist registers in ethnographic enterprises might stem from the inventor of the participant observation method, a method that necessitates proximity and close interpersonal interaction. Bronislaw Malinowski (1922) and the premium he placed regarding the necessity for physical proximity for ethnographic fieldwork weighed heavily upon the researchers as contact and travel restrictions came to define the everyday. In an ironic twist of fate, many ethnographers who were starting projects had intended to leave their 'armchairs', dictaphone and notebook in hand (often for the very first time) and were, as Marnie Howlett (2021:12) identifies, instead thrust into the position of having to work from their chairs because of the pandemic. In contrast to Radcliffe-Brown's time, the 'armchair ethnographer' of today might interact with multiple participants in a Zoom call, send instant messages to an interview partner or follow the 'digital flows' (Markham and Gammelby 2017) of their social worlds through their social media activity. The new state of affairs brought about by the pandemic still required the ethnographer, as George Marcus advocated, to 'follow the people' (1995: 106), this time, however, not merely as they moved through physical space, but also into their Skype Meet Now. Turning away from the 'false dichotomy' of online and offline (Leander and McKim 2003: 212), we embraced the principle that, as Christine Hine puts it, '[i]f people do it, then that is enough to make it a legitimate focus for ethnography' (2017: 22).

During the pandemic, it was necessary to understand both that which was being studied as being in flow and for the researcher to 'go with the flow' (Markham and Gammelby 2017: 454–6), showing flexible readiness to engage with interlocuters 'wherever' they happened to be. Consequently, as interlocuters increasingly began carrying out their daily activities online, we followed suit. Digital methods became, on the one hand, both essential to overcoming the problems presented to the research by the conditions of the pandemic and, on the other hand, fundamental in following interlocuters more effectively as they increasingly occupied digital realms. New ways emerged to create co-presence and to gain insights into their everyday lives. The problems posed in the execution of fieldwork, including the necessity for in- person contact, were mirrored by the experiences of the interlocutors who used care packages to broker the distance between 'home'[1] and abroad. These shared challenges, opportunities, and frustrations guided this project's methodological choices (Walton 2017).

In order to demonstrate the central role played by 'home' for many of the interlocuters, we might mention that the annual trip to Ireland plays a regulatory role in managing the experience of Irish expatriates. The COVID-19 pandemic and the domestic and foreign travel restrictions in Ireland and throughout Europe have meant that many have not returned to Ireland in a long time. This is a degree of spatial and social separation to which many are unaccustomed. The pandemic saw the 'territorial closure' (Löw and Knoblauch 2020: 222) of entire countries that were 'sealed off' (ibid.) from danger, similar to a *cordon sanitaire*. Many of the interlocuters in Germany live what has been termed transnational lifestyles and might, therefore, be considered transmigrants. As Glick Schiller et al. claim: 'Transmigrants take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns within a field of social relations that links together their country of origin and their country or countries of settlement' (1992: ix). This is not a static relationship, but rather constantly finds itself 'in-becoming' (Tedeschi et al. 2020) and this modulation is subject to both internal and external pressures. It is characterized by, among other things, a 'connectedness across borders, the formality/informality of frequent cross-border activities and practices, and the high intensity and degree of cross-border exchanges' (ibid.). Interlocuters in Germany are, to varying degrees, regular visitors to Ireland and these practices of mobility interweave their lives in Germany and in Ireland, connecting them socially, emotionally, physically, and psychologically. The absence of their annual trip home has been termed a 'safety valve' for many transmigrants living abroad by Marc Scully et al. ('ResearchingTransnational Families During the Pandemic' 2020), particularly for those on the continent of Europe, a place easily reachable from Ireland. Part of the benefit of residing in Europe, as opposed to one of the further flung, Anglophone poles (such as the United States, Canada, or Australia) is this exact propinquity to Ireland. This is well illustrated by Cronin and reflects a larger research lacuna into expatriates who reside closer to home and how this experience is viewed or framed as being insufficiently novel or authentic:

> *The permanent move to Canada but not the sojourn to Sicily, the emigrants' letters home from Australia, but not the visit to Berlin, become objects of critical inquiry. Irrevocability risks becoming a talisman of authenticity (real travel [exile] v. superficial travel [tourism]) and concentration on the Irish in New Communities may narrow the world to encounters with varieties of Anglophone Irishness and neglect individual Irish experiences of a multi- lingual and multicultural planet* (Cronin 2008: 185).

This closeness, or perceived closeness, became a remote reality during the pandemic and this led Irish expatriates to resort to commercial mediation and methods to demonstrate care and affection. This new, improvised economy was then threatened and upset with the UK's departure from the European Union (O' Dubhghaill 2019). In the following section, we turn our attention to 'care packages' and their recipients in the context of Christmastime during the pandemic.

Care Packages: "For both sides, that package was very meaningful"

Over the Christmas period 2020, packages from Ireland were ascribed an even greater importance by many interlocuters eagerly awaiting gifts from home. Their anticipation was, however, frequently disturbed by two factors. Firstly, December 21, 2020, saw German parcel delivery companies restrict packages to and from Ireland and the United Kingdom due to the new 'British mutation' of the Coronavirus (see *Süddeutsche Zeitung* from December 22, 2020). Secondly, the British exit from the European Union disrupted supply chains and deliveries early in 2021. These two crises interfered, once again, with the interlocuters' ability to compensate for the severance between themselves and Ireland. One interlocuter – a regular in her local post office to such an extent that she is a known personality there – was warned by a member of staff that the post office could not accept any packages to Ireland, nor could packages from Ireland be delivered to her. 'And,' she added during our telephone interview, 'we definitely saw that. I mean, even Christmas cards that were posted in Ireland on the tenth of December? And they made it to us on the second of February?'[2]

Given the restriction of physical movement to the island of Ireland from Germany, interlocuters turned instead to postal and parcel services, to *An Post* and DHL, to live out their transnational connections. This was not, however, a one-way system; interlocuters also sent packages from Germany containing local specialities like chocolate, biscuits, and soaps. Glick Schiller et al. point out that the sending of gifts is part of the efforts to maintain a transnational social field through the upholding of family ties (1992a: 4). Orla[3], who has lived abroad for over twenty years, points out that the power of the packages to overcome the distance lay not so much in their contents, but rather in the thought of the sender going to such an effort to put together and send a package, especially in the light of their incapacitation by travel restrictions. 'It's actually less the crisps, it's more the thought of their grandmother actually going and buying those crisps, and (-) packaging them, and sending them.' For Orla and her family, '*definitely* this time 'round […] for *both* sides, that package was very meaningful, very special…'[4]

Another interlocuter, Dearbhla, has lived in Germany since the mid-nineties. She is married to a German man and her two children were born there. In December 2020, she and her family faced the prospect of spending their first Christmas ever in Germany, as opposed to in Ireland. Normally, they would travel to Ireland where her children spent many summers with their grandmother. Every Christmas Eve, they attended the same family Mass in their local parish, thereby kicking off their Christmas celebrations in Ireland. In 2020, however, the COVID-19 pandemic intervened in her German-Irish family's usual rhythms as 'for the first time in 27 years we were not in Ireland, at home – the other one – for Christmas.'[5]

On one occasion, on a glorious late- November afternoon, on a 'socially- distanced' walk through the *Weinberge* in Stuttgart, conversation with Dearbhla turned towards the approaching Christmas season. Knowing that stricter measures were in store, it was suggested that Dearbhla document her experiences of this first Christmas in Germany to share with the researchers. This move was inspired by the crowd-sourced Google document edited by Deborah Lupton (2020) designed to help social scientists with innovative suggestions for carrying out qualitative research in the restrictive situation of a pandemic. With the help of some questions to guide Dearbhla in this photo/descriptive writing elicitation, the final format was left open to her, in the clear knowledge of her creative streak and hectic professional and family schedule. With access to 'the field' (as initially understood) increasingly obstructed and obscured, 'multi-sited' ethnography (Marcus 1995) and the paradigm of 'being there . . . and there . . . and there!' (Hannerz 2003) was wholly embraced to acknowledge the interweaving of digital and analogue in everyday life. Digital technologies are fundamental to the ways in which the interlocuters interact with their social worlds every day. As Miller et al. have recently pointed out, the smartphone has become that 'ubiquitous appendage to humanity' (2021: 4).

In recognition of the complex intertwining of digital and analogue in everyday life, we engaged with research partners in digital formats and, as is the case here, handed the creative reigns to Dearbhla for this unusual Christmas. In the New Year, she shared her pdf document entitled 'Christmas Chronicles.' The document takes us from the run-up to Christmas and informing Santa that he will be delivering to Germany and not Ireland this year, to occupying time with baking and video-calls to Ireland on the couch. This pdf, illustrated with photographs, is an example of the creativity of one family adapting to the changed circumstances of their transnational lives at Christmas due to the Coronavirus pandemic. In the following extract, we gain first insight into the importance of the postal services this Christmas for maintaining transnational relationships and bonds:

> *Never have we depended on the*
> *post more than this year.*
> *Normally, it is Ryanair or*
> *Lufthansa that transports us and*

> *our goodies.*
> *This year An Post and DHL took*
> *over the role to save Christmas!*
> *We fevered on both sides of the*
> *Irish sea – will the packages*
> *arrive in time? Will the faces*
> *light up like they always do?*
> *Everything arrived eventually*
> *but not all on time.*
> *Being late than never is always*
> *better than just never!*
> (Dearbhla's 'Christmas Chronicles,' December 2020)

Dearbhla's 'Christmas Chronicles' were a means of gaining ethnographic access to her day-to-day experience of this unusual Christmas. Conversely, in this case, her creative document highlights the enforced immobility of herself and her family and the mobility of the parcels winging their way across geographic space, as so palpably described above. The section that follows shifts focus from how timely an individual care package arrives to someone's door to focus on whether or not different consumables can be sourced on site.

Intensified Desire for 'Home Comforts'

There has been a noticeable turn towards objects and food items to create a sense of 'coming home', given that many are no longer in a position to travel. One interlocuter frequents the local 'English Shop' in Stuttgart to purchase some familiar items found in the cupboard he remembers from his childhood, reasoning 'when you're away from home those things […] especially now in a pandemic […] those kinda things give you a bit of a home comfort feel'[6]. This shop, due to Brexit and difficulties getting their usual stock from the UK, have turned to Irish suppliers and begun to stock Irish favourites such as Tayto crisps and Barry's Tea; the word of 'restocks' spreads in the interlocuters' circles on social media and in messaging groups. This information is passed on to others in order that those in similar situations might avail of the familiar products to ameliorate the sense of isolation. One interlocuter immediately reached out to two fellow residents of Stuttgart hailing from her home county to inform them of the sudden and unexpected availability of Hunky Dory's in the *Schellingstraße*[7].

In the case of Belgium, stock shortages in a small specialty store outside of Brussels somewhat inexplicably became national news in Ireland, a little over a month after Brexit came into effect. The Irish Independent published an article detailing the difficulties faced by an English specialty store, the Stone Manor near Brussels, in stocking their shelves, resorting to importing from Ireland rather than from the UK. The piece[8] outlines the manner in which this specialty store is increasingly gravitating towards Irish suppliers, rather than suppliers based in the UK. High-value consumables, including HP sauce, are singled out in the article as now being sourced from suppliers in Sweden. Indeed, there are some who would go to any length for this condiment, even though this remains a stopgap commodity for others; the more highly prized Ireland-based Y. R. Sauce is what is more commonly sought, and this was observed during the ethnographic project.

One interlocuter spoke on the phone about his favourite Irish food product, Y. R. Sauce. For Dónal, this 'exclusively Irish'[9] product has a fruitier taste than the other well- known brand of Yorkshire relish available in Germany and Belgium, H.P. Although Dónal has, in the past, made do with this less-than-ideal replacement, he does so somewhat reluctantly: 'If you're halfway through a bottle of H. P. sauce, you think, it's every bit as good. Then you get abottle of Y. R. and you think, "No,this is better."'[10] In May 2020, Dónal knew that he would have to go for some time without this item, given that he would not be receiving Irish visitors during the summer. Moreover, it might not be even possible to take the alternative in many cases, given its shortage too. Dónal wrote in February 2021 to inform the researcher that, with his relatives still 'in lockdown' in Ireland, he had to order his own 'care package,' sharing an image of the coveted Y.R. sauce.[11] We argue that while care packages are commonly sent from one person to another, a 'self-care' package, which contains both a taste of home and prevents a person from having to accept a substitute, reinforces the connection with home. In the following section, we shift the examination somewhat to a consideration of shared commodities that are shared during (brief) in-person encounters.

Sharing and Stashing

> *[Conn] proudly presents to me a Wright's of Howth bag from Dublin airport and he pulls out a giant bar of Dairy Milk, a smaller bar of Dairy Milk with Oreo filling and a bag of Tayto. He tells me it took all of his will power not to eat these items but promising them to me helped him to keep his temptation at bay. He tells me to hang on to the bag, as it is a lovely one, to remind me of home, and I can use it to transport my materials to the Ciorcal Comhrá when it starts up again.* Research diary entry from January 25, 2021.

Some interlocuters managed to return to Ireland for Christmas. Conn, a young professional with no family in Germany, undertook the trip to Ireland to visit his family over Christmas – sharing with one of the authors an image of a ghostly terminal one arrivals in Dublin airport on December 18, the Friday before Christmas.[12] Upon his return, he presented this same author with this gift, admitting that it was somewhat rushed, given that he had to leave Ireland earlier than originally planned due to the tightening of measures in Germany. Conn is not the only interlocuter who, having made it to Ireland, wished to share the spoils of a completed roundtrip. Aoife wrote on January 4, 2021, to ask if one author had 'any wishes from Ireland' before she returned to Germany[13]. Aoife had previously surprised the Germany- based researcher who joined her for a walk on a blustery, cold November day in Stuttgart – hands freezing cold, both walkers underdressed for the weather[14]. Upon taking leave of each other, Aoife calls the researcher back. From the compartment underneath the buggy, she produces a small plastic sandwich bag packed full of Tayto, assorted Cadbury's Roses, and Double Deckers and hands the gift over. Just as the information about the availability of Tayto and Y.R. Sauce in the Stuttgart English shop is shared throughout the relevant channels in Stuttgart and elsewhere, so too is the access to Irish products by those who returned to the island for Christmas with those who were unable to travel. These gifts are thoughtful tokens meant not only to bring joy as a comestible, but to sympathize with a transmigrant who was unable to travel, to know that they were being thought about and that their hardship was not forgotten. Giving gifts to close the distance between country of origin and abroad is a topic discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

The scarcity of these goods in pandemic Germany and Belgium is reflected in the practice of stashing. In 2020, the All-Ireland Football Final took place in the run-up to Christmas, itself a jarring experience for GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association) fans. In a rare face-to-face encounter, one researcher was invited by an interlocuter to join her and her family for the event. On December 12, 2020, a curfew came into effect in Baden-Württemberg and I was uneasy about whether I would make it back to my apartment before the eight-p.m. curfew. As a gift, I brought, amongst other items, three bags of Tayto crisps, my last, to give to Aifric who missed her family in Ireland greatly. Her children swooped down on, and then devoured, two of the packets of crisps, leaving just one. Realising this, she stashed this final packet in a small compartment in her living room coffee table. When it came time to leave, and after establishing that I would be able to continue to follow the match on a live ticker, Aifric waved goodbye from her couch and her husband and children saw me out with a jovial '*slán*.' Dublin eventually won the game and Aifric wrote later that evening, after I commiserated with her on her team's loss, remarking: 'I have a pack of Tayto to drown my sorrows!!!!'

The same interlocuter, who had not seen her family in Ireland since the Christmas period 2019, told me as she folded the washing during our telephone interview in May 2021, that in the past, she would often distribute the spoils of a trip to Ireland, wanting to '*share* what is home'[15] with friends in Germany unfamiliar with Ireland or Irish products. Now, she admits, to being more 'protective'[16] of the precious items that made it to her by post, 'because they've become much harder to get.'[17] Although she would share her Irish goodies with other Irish people in the locality, whom she could rely on to 'appreciate those things,'[18] she no longer feels the need to share these special treats with those who may enjoy the taste on the surface, but not necessarily appreciate the full meaning of having access to these items so rare in Germany and, therefore, so laden with ascribed connotations of home. No longer able to 'come and go'[19] from Ireland as before, these coveted items are in this case ascribed a particular worth only appreciated by those initiated into what are understood to be 'Irish' consumption practices. In what follows, we turn our gaze to the context of the pandemic and to the everyday adaptive practices that were brought into existence by the changes to the interlocutors' international mobility over the Christmas period.

'Making it all more bearable': Adapting[20]

> *It was clear on so many fronts, extra catch-up calls, Whatsapp crisis therapy, alcoholic shots in the dark, it was all there. Whether at home or at home, everyone felt the gap and filled it as best as they could.*
>
> Dearbhla's 'Christmas Chronicles,' December 2020

Christmas became a trying period for the Irish expatriates who were coming to terms with the fact that they could not return to Ireland and could not foresee when this situation might change. There was a great deal of powerlessness as well as a will to adapt creatively tangible in conversations surrounding travel restrictions over the Christmas period. In our interview in November 2020, Dearbhla stated that 'there are times when I'm on my own and I think about it and it makes me terribly, terribly sad. Like I know the reality of me saying I've never spent one Christmas in Germany. I will get through it, but I don't want to have to.'[21] As is the case for many others, improvisation and adaptation become a strategic necessity to navigate the insecurity and powerlessness brought by the global pandemic and manifested itself in the simplest of daily considerations, such as where one will attend Mass and where, in a country in which turkey is not traditionally consumed at Christmas, to source such a thing for Christmas dinner.

The order of their lives prior to the pandemic, where affordable and reliable air travel connections made regular visits to their country of origin possible, has been disrupted and finds itself under threat (see Frie and Nieswand 2017; see also Frie, Kohl and Meier 2018). The strong, negative impact of the pandemic on the movement of people and goods must first be interpreted and integrated into their daily lives and practices. This plays out on the level of how to make the best out of Christmas in Germany and adapt to the use of digital technologies to stay in touch with their social contacts in Ireland. As is clear from Dearbhla's statement, her expectations about the future vacillate and she can no longer rely on the habitual practices involved in returning to Ireland for Christmas. Moreover, with interruptions in trade, even a guaranteed method to broker a way to bridge the gap through consumerist fare is jeopardized, leading to a greater feeling of sub- optimality. Threatened orders are characterized by the fact that actors can no longer be sure if they can rely on their expectations (ibid.: 6, author's translation). According to Frie and Nieswand (2017), these are moments when new scripts of action (‘*neue Handlungsskripte’*; ibid.) are developed so that actors may come to terms with the changed situation they find themselves in. The interlocuters that they find, as well as the researcher, are in the process of interpreting the events in order to find possibilities of action under conditions that appear particularly uncertain and unforeseeable. In that way, both the ethnographer and the people with whom they explore the social field find themselves constantly realigning expectations and recalibrating modes of action. One of the biggest and most obvious manners in which disruptions have taken place in response to the pandemic is in terms of how communication takes place and this is examined in the following section.

Mediated electronic engagements: Establishing ‘the connection ’now and in the future

The pandemic has necessitated an increase in the use of digital tools in order to interact with social contacts on the island of Ireland. During the late spring, early summer of 2020, the embargo on shared encounters with other human beings in physical space was compensated by the intensification and higher frequency of digital connections, as Cara described during our Skype call in May 2020:

> *'cos everybody is kind of remotely based now, they need the connection, or feel they need the connection […] I find it's the same with family. […] there's more (--) we would have always had a WhatsApp group, […] even for our family, but it would […] always have been just texting […]. Whereas now, we use it for calls and we use it for video calls and we use Houseparty? We have a family Houseparty call? […] on Sunday afternoon, so everybody dials in for half an hour or an hour, and, you know, you've got (-) five different families of people, all grouped together, and they're all on this call at the same time […] and everybody loves it, you know? It's great, great.*
>
> Skype interview with Cara, May 22, 2020, lines 153–163.

Cara describes how the increased use of videotelephony in familial communication has meant a greater degree of contact between herself and her parents and siblings than before the pandemic. Enthusiasm for this new mode of communication is palpable in our conversation and she tells me about this during our Skype session, sipping from an Ireland mug and speaking into her professional-looking headset. Family quizzes and other interactive games or activities become part of standard modes of communication. However, this can often prove difficult, given the pandemic's overbearing presence. Fionnuala, a woman who lives with her German husband in Munich, drew our attention to this. Fionnuala and her family created their mother's kitchen table in an online setting, thereby gently steering conversation away from the Corona-shaped elephant in the room. On one occasion, each sibling and their families baked an apple pie and sent pictures to their mother who judged the best submission. The family then enjoyed tea or coffee with a slice of their pies, Fionnuala 'dialled in' from Bavaria, other siblings from the UK, the USA, and other locations in Ireland. It was a positive experience for her to 'have that connection'[22] despite the pandemic preventing her from her (normally quite regular) visits to Ireland. Videotelephony provided her and her family with an opportunity to have 'a virtual (-) Sunday afternoon with [Mum][23].' This 'densification of digital networking processes' (Löw and Knoblauch 2020: 222) and the creativity that informs participants' use of them contrasts sharply with the spatial closing of territories and countries (ibid.: 223), even as new avenues of digital interaction are being opened up to more traffic. The tension between 'delimitation' of digital communication and 'limitation' (ibid.: 222) of physical interaction and traversing of geographical space is exemplified in the case of the virtual tea and cake with Mum. Abrupt and prolonged physical immobility and heightened digital mobility has led to such creative engagements with communication technologies. The pandemic, as a territorially 'unbounded' (ibid.: 222) phenomenon with real repercussions in the daily lives of the interlocuters living transnational lives to look into the future with a sense of uncertainty. This will be examined in the following section.

Uncertain perceptions of the future

> *My head doesn't get around the fact that [Dearbhla] can't decide. It's not in my hands. It's always been in my hands […] and that's what has probably made life here so easy for me, is because I always said 'I can go.' If it was America, I think it would probably be a bit different […] but ((inhales)) I remember my Dad saying to me, 'you don't need to emigrate.' I've never considered myself as an emigrant. […] people emigrated and never went back home. I just moved somewhere else. I sometimes see my Mum more often than my sister who lives in [Ireland].*
> Interview with Dearbhla, May 29, 2020, lines 207–216.

Many transmigrants in Germany and Belgium travel to and from Ireland and this plays a large role in their practice of Irishness when they are both away from and staying in Ireland. By returning occasionally or frequently to Ireland, they can renew their social and interpersonal relationships, as well as revivify their relationship to their country of origin. The pandemic and the ensuing travel restrictions have removed one of the most fundamental elements of their transnational lives. As Dearbhla so elegantly put it in May 2020 during our first face-to-face encounter, sitting on an orange canvas stool in the driveway she had converted into an outdoor oasis during the strict '*Kontaktverbot*' of the first lockdown, it is the removal of this ability to return easily - that 'I can go'-feeling - that leads to a level of uncertainty and a state of liminality hitherto entirely unfamiliar to her and her German-Irish family.

In contrast to those who have left Ireland to lead lives in further flung locations, such as Australia or America, Dearbhla points out that the move to Germany is not as dramatic an embarkation in the minds of those living on the European continent. The availability of cheap, regular flights to Ireland characterized the attitudes towards those migrants who have been termed in the media the 'Ryanair Generation', and those who took advantage of advances in information and communications technology, the 'Skype Generation.'[24] The matter-of-course to-ing and fro-ing from between Germany/Belgium and Ireland for everything from Christmas to Confirmations vanished overnight and has not reliably returned at the point of writing. The topography of Ireland as an island cut off from the continent by a body of water is foregrounded by the unavailability of flights as, at Christmas, one interlocuter describes how his Italian friend can simply jump in a car and overcome the distance with a greater degree of agency. This group, on the other hand, rely on airlines (or on other occasions, ferry companies) to broker a physical connection to the island. Many deliberations have been prompted for a further interlocuter by the restrictions on travel experienced during 2020-2021, despite her having lived in Germany for almost twenty years:

> *I suppose in a way the pandemic has kind of […] shaken up our connection with Ireland, maybe, and with Germany as well? […] I think it's exposed this something we hadn't really dealt with or come to the fore before. For me. Personally. It's been a bit of a journey to understand, where am I now, in relation to Germany and in relation to Ireland.*

Conclusions

Travelling regularly to Ireland from Germany was, prior to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the ensuing restrictions on international travel, one way in which the Irish research collaborators living in Germany maintained their connections to Ireland whilst living their daily lives in Germany. In the absence of their regular visits, gift-giving, sending, and receiving care packages, sharing, and stashing goodies, and the imaginative and resourceful use of digital tools stepped in to ameliorate their feeling of isolation from the island of Ireland and their social contacts there, thereby maintaining their transnational social field. These practices were used as a means of coming to terms with and renegotiating their everyday lives with an eye to uncertain perceptions of the future in the threatened orders brought about by the pandemic, the travel restrictions, and Brexit. As the restrictions brought a reassessment of the methods, the ethnographers began to realize that flexibility was required to 'follow the people' as they adapted to and learned to get by with the new challenges and uncertain future of their connection to Ireland. Much of the flowing through digital and analogue socialscapes carried out by the researchers was a reaction to the reality of the way interlocuters were forced to live out their transnational lives in a European Union with severely decreased freedom of movement.

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[1] The concept of 'home' is used frequently throughout this article as it is a term which we encounter time and time again in the field. However, it is a fluid and at times ambiguous concept, changing flexibly depending on the context. 'Home' is used to refer to the place they are from in Ireland, to their residence in Germany, they 'go home' in both directions, to Ireland and to Germany. This ambiguity of the concept gains another layer with the increasing use of digital technologies to maintain personal ties with social circles and to reinforce imaginings of the home in Ireland. Miller et al (2021) discuss the smartphone as the 'Transportal Home' as well as 'a place within which we now live' (219). Significantly, migrants already encounter daily 'the limitations of the traditional concept of home as a single physical location, which would separate them from much of their family and their sociocultural upbringing' (220).

[2] Telephone interview with Orla, March 31, 2021

[3] All research participants have been assigned pseudonyms to afford them anonymity.

[4] Telephone interview with Orla, March 31, 2021

[5] Dearbhla's 'Christmas Chronicles,' December 2020.

[6] Signal voice message elicited on March 15, 2021

[7] Telephone interview with Orla, March 31, 2021

[8] "'Ireland is fairly reliable' – speciality shops in EU switch to Irish suppliers" from the Irish Independent on February 21, 2021.

[9] Telephone interview with Dónal, May 06, 2020

[10] Telephone interview with Dónal,

[11] Dónal shares this information via Telegram messenger, February 4, 2021

[12] Dublin airport saw 1.2 million passengers pass through during the Christmas period 2019. For the same period in 2020, the airport predicted 137,000 passengers would pass through, 10,000 of those for connecting flights. (‘Dublin Airport Christmas Passenger Numbers Down by 88%’ 2020). In the fourth quarter of 2019, 8,540,952 persons passed through Irish airports. In the same quarter in 2020, they numbered 759,015, a staggering drop of 91.1 percent (‘Aviation Statistics Quarter 4 and Year 2020’).

[13] Research diary entry from January 7, 2021, regarding message received via WhatsApp on January 4, 2021.

[14] Research diary entry from November 23, 2020

[15] Telephone interview with Aifric, May 3, 2021

[16] Ibid

[17] Ibid

[18] Ibid

[19] Ibid

[20] This is the title of one page from Dearbhla’s ‘Christmas Chronicles’ which describes the ways they attempted to keep their minds off not travelling to Ireland at Christmas by creating their own culinary treats to have a mini-Christmas-market at home. This creativity was “a real necessity to master our normal now.”

[21] Interview with Dearbhla in Stuttgart, November 13, 2020

[22] Telephone interview with Fionnuala, May 12, 20

[23] Ibid.

[24] For a discussion on these terms as well as that of the ‘Generation Emigration’ section of the Irish Times, see Gray 2013

A CASE FOR FEMINIST ANTHROPOLOGY ON THE ISLAND OF IRELAND

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Abstract: In this paper, I argue a case for feminist anthropology on the island of Ireland and showcase previous feminist anthropological projects that focused on Ireland and Northern Ireland in the form of a literature review. I use the feminist wave metaphor to compare feminist history on the island of Ireland with that of Anthropology and other subsidiary disciplines to illustrate how these movements largely overlap. In the process, I include previous work from the Irish Journal of Anthropology that I deem appropriate for this discussion of feminist history, activism and scholarship in Anthropology and the wider Irish and Northern Irish sociocultural landscapes.

Keywords: Feminism, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Feminist Anthropology, Gender, Race, Sexuality

Introduction

This paper is written for researchers in the field of Anthropology and allied disciplines, who are interested in pursuing feminist anthropological projects on the island of Ireland. Queen's University Belfast (QUB), Maynooth University (MU) and University College Cork (UCC) are currently the only institutions north and south of Ireland that offer Anthropology as structured academic degrees. These courses offer a wide range of perspectives across social sciences ranging from gender, sexuality, race, to name a few. However, I am yet to locate dedicated modules on feminist Anthropology in their curriculums. With constant urges to create educational platforms that engage in discussions around marginalisation and exclusion in societies, it is also important to engage in new pedagogies of feminism in Ireland and Northern Ireland. For instance, as Stockett and Geller (2006) usefully write about how feminist pedagogy can initiate change and enhance alternative ways about knowing the world. Thus, it is my aim in this paper to accredit feminist thought and demonstrate how earlier interventions within the feminist movement have transformed and changed the way anthropologists as well as other social sciences and humanities disciplines conduct research in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Although it is essential to further the discourses of the history of feminist anthropology, it is equally important to highlight the highs and lows of the field. I hope the knowledge presented in this paper will act as an introduction to the vast body of work in feminist Anthropology and Irish feminisms for scholars across the fields.

Gilligan and Zappone (2015) note that Irish and Northern Irish feminisms are committed to activism and transformation having considered an array of issues such as suffrage, political representations, abortion and reproductive rights, the newer landscapes of LGBTQ+, gender violence, prostitution, sex trafficking and issues posed by migrant women. Scholars inside and outside the academy have roughly divided both feminist activism and feminist theory into three different waves. However, over the past decade, such scholars questioned the emergence of a fourth wave of feminism: theoretically, socially and politically. It goes beyond the scope of this article to cover every feminist intervention in Ireland, Northern Ireland and the many sectors of feminist anthropology itself. Yet, this paper highlights some feminist interventions that have contributed greatly to many aspects of Irish and Northern Irish societies; however, I argue that there is a need to establish a collective *Feminist anthropology Network* that is specific to Ireland and Northern Ireland. It has been argued by Silverstein and Lewin (2016) that anthropologists have confronted the impact of relativism while addressing cultural systems that are deeply controversial and unsettling to Western ideologies such as female genital surgeries, veiling and polygamy. Moreover, they argue that while feminist activists advocated for the removal of such customs, others questioned the discourse behind feminists' aim to remove these cultural practices. Walley (1997) suggests that debates surrounding these controversial topics were 'shaped by the exoticization of those engaged in these customs and by obsessions with sexual pleasure that arguably have their roots in particular Western sensibilities' (Walley, 1997 in Silverstein and Lewin, 2016: 16). Drawing inspiration from the questions posed by Silverstein and Lewin (2016), is it possible that feminist activism in Anthropology suppresses local culture traditions, particularly in non-Western societies? Do feminist anthropologists need to question the meaning of their Western assumptions and their impact on local customs and traditions? Thus, this paper attempts to uncover answers to these questions through a methodical overview of the history of Irish feminist activism and Anthropology.

I start with providing a brief juxtaposition of feminist history on the island of Ireland with that of Anthropology and other humanities and social science disciplines as a means of demonstrating how these sociocultural developments largely coincide. I, then, present a review of previous research that I consider successful in scoping the history of feminism and creating new and diverse approaches to understand the realities of life in Ireland and Northern Ireland, particularly in the arena of anthropological discourses. As previously mentioned, feminism can be roughly divided into four waves, and as Stockett and Geller (2006) argue, wave distinctions are indeed historical and generational moments in time that are useful analytical tools to showcase the evolution of feminist activism and theory. Therefore, I structure this paper according to the wave metaphor. Keeping in mind the aims and objectives of this special issue in the Irish Journal of Anthropology (IJA), I have also referred to past volumes that have showcased feminist thought in relation to the island of Ireland. For this, I conducted a quick search through previous issues of this journal and took note of paper titles which featured key words or themes that I considered relevant to feminist research (gender, woman, man, sexuality, race). Furthermore, I incorporated readings outside of IJA that I had previously encountered during my MA and PhD programs along with new readings which aided my understandings of feminist histories north and south of Ireland. Throughout my search in IJA, I came across just one recent article which featured 'feminism' in the title and focused on the feminist movements in Argentina (Vivaldi and Gomez, 2018). After I collated a list of titles, I began to read each article individually and I subsequently chose nine articles to include which I considered most useful to showcase the state of the subfield. Overall, the works that I included in this paper have been particularly useful for enhancing my understandings of intersectional feminism and have allowed me to develop my Irish feminist anthropologist identity. I respect that many authors may not position their writings in strict feminist lines, yet I deem their work valuable to demonstrate how feminist interventions can create further avenues of research, particularly in the discipline of Anthropology. I conclude this paper by presenting recommendations for the future of feminist anthropology on the island of Ireland.

The First and Second Waves

> If we define feminism as 'advocacy of equal rights for women coupled with organized and sustained action for the purpose of achieving them', then Ireland, both north and south, was not wanting in feminist advocates during what is considered to be the 'first wave' of feminism (Marylin Boxer, 1982 in Ward, 2015: 23).

In the above quote, Ward (2015) discusses the need to expand definitions of Irish feminism which draws on Marylin Boxer's (1982) description of the first wave in France during the 19th century: 'advocacy of equal rights for women' (23). As Ward notes (2015), since the 1860s, Irish women borrowed campaigning tactics from British suffrage groups in their early quests for equal rights. She further argues that framing the first wave of feminism as a movement solely focused on campaigning for voting, property and education rights, marginalizes the place of feminism in Irish nationalists' women's agendas. In *Nationalism and Feminism*, Ryan (2020) states that feminism was instrumental in the Irish revolution, particularly during the War of Independence between 1917 and 1923. Although the nationalist movement was complex, it positioned women in the public domain through activism and protest for Irish independence; though, women remained in conservative gender roles within private spheres. Interestingly, feminists had to negotiate between the demands for Ireland's right to self-determination while advocating for women's suffrage rights and fighting for the reconstruction of traditional images of womanhood. Similarly, between the 1920s and 1970s, Bacik (2007) suggests that women in Ireland were still under-represented in the public domain and women were placed in roles as wife, mother, virgin, and nun by the influence of the Catholic Church. These stereotypes were embedded in Irish law, particularly within the Articles of the 1937 Constitution (Bacik, 2007). The early interventions by feminists in the first wave in both Ireland and Britain resulted in increased access to higher and secondary school education for women and girls; the security of married women's' property rights; greater access for women to the professional world; and women's right to the parliamentary vote (Ward, 2015). However, despite these advancements, as Bracken (2016) argues, for the most part, in the early and mid-twentieth century, femininity in Ireland was ascribed to mothering and reproducing offspring for the future of Ireland.

By the 1970s, feminists in Ireland had entered into a second wave as they engaged in street protests, political lobbying and they had won enormous battles against 'a church-controlled, patriarchal, political hegemony' (Healy, 2015: 72). Yet, despite feminists' significant efforts to bring about changes to individual rights for Irish women, in *Contemporary Feminism in Northern Ireland,* Turtle (2015) argues that from the 1960s, second wavers in Northern Ireland took on feminist activist projects not only for women's rights, but also for poor living conditions in many communities where living standards were considerably lower than other parts of the United Kingdom (UK). However, in spite of high unemployment and growing emigration around the 80s, many feminist projects majorly revolved around reproductive rights and gender-based violence (Healy, 2015). Moreover, what remained remotely absent were the discussions around consciousness and identity, deemed crucial for feminist politics of Ireland (Mullin, 1991). Although collective goals appeared feminist, Turtle (2015) suggests there was a lack of strong feminist ideologies of identity present in activism, particularly in Northern Ireland. In fact, as the connection between feminism and nationalism deepened, it was difficult for Protestant women to join feminist campaigns (ibid). Hunger strikes and war in Northern Ireland silenced many from the south of the border due to fear of the conflict of the Troubles, yet it mobilized and brought many women from the north down south in search of refuge, 'but never forgetting the need to address the war, and its cause, in their hometowns' (Healy, 2015: 76). The rise of feminist and women's studies in academia was an important attribute of the second wave, particularly within Irish scholarship and in the discipline of Anthropology. This has been well captured in Healy's (2015) *Second Wave Feminism in Ireland: Reflections on Then and Challenges for Now – One Activist's Perspective*, where she draws on her lived experiences of the emergence of women's studies and feminist scholarship both inside and outside the academy. She writes that towards the end of the 1980s, the discipline of women's studies developed in universities creating a space and place for feminist analysis and vision building. Similarly, women's education was elevated outside the academy by groups like *Women in Learning*, a women's group that facilitated women's studies classes in Dame Street, Dublin for many years.

Particularly in Anthropology, two feminist anthropology publications are beneficial in situating the origins of the field. First, Stockett and Geller's (2006) edited volume, *Feminist Anthropology: Past, Present and Future,* and second, Silverstein and Lewin's (2016) *Mapping Feminist Anthropology in the Twenty-First Century*. Thus, in this section, I borrow from the introductory chapters of both edited volumes to summarize the emergence of feminist anthropology as a sub-discipline from the late 1960s onwards. American cultural Anthropology and British structural functionalism began to diversify understandings of socio-culture as more fluid rather than by the fixed models that had long been considered in the field. Such new perspectives were also imagined for women and men, and feminism made its way into the Anthropology discipline through the second wave (Silverstein and Lewin, 2016). Feminist anthropologists began to critique masculine bias in human experiences and previous foundational teachings in the discipline (Stockett and Geller, 2006). Historically, feminist anthropologists filled the gaps by critiquing social structures that had emerged from the work of anthropologists such as Malinowski and Evan-Pritchard, who had missed the importance of women's roles in creating and maintaining culture(s). Interestingly, in many non-western societies, women attained powerful positions rather than being considered inferior to men (Geller and Stockett, 2006; Silverstein and Lewin, 2016). Thus, debates sparked between those who claimed that the subordination of women was a feature in all global societies, and those who advocated for difference, and traced subordination to certain socioeconomic situations (ibid). During the second wave, many scholars drew on a handful of important scholarship that paved the way for future feminist anthropologists, including *Women, Culture, and Society* (Rosaldo et al., 1974) and *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (Rapp, 1975). One key theoretical assumption of this time described the gendered structure of societies as reflective of maintained, socially constructed arrangements and gender ideologies between men and women. Such arrangements were mostly inherited cultural structures (see Koskoff, 1987; Rosaldo et al., 1974).

In relation to feminist anthropology in Ireland, Nancy Scheper-Hughes' (1979/2001) controversial ethnography *Saints, Scholars and Schizophrenics* is arguably one of the leading publications to put Ireland on the map in the world of Anthropology and indeed feminist anthropology. During her investigations in 1974 and 1975 in Ballybran, Co. Kerry, Scheper-Hughes observed Irish Catholic villagers and discovered that living spaces, places of work, recreation activities and religious practices were constructed on the basis of gender. In a later article, Scheper-Hughes (1983) notes that central to her research was the notion of a 'dying Ireland' that was occurring due to long effects of colonialism, migration of rural communities to urban towns and cities, displaced agricultural workers, reliance on younger generations and mental health issues. However, as Scheper-Hughes argues '[no]where… was the demoralization and anomie more apparent than in the sexual devitalization of especially male villagers, who were slow to court, reluctant to marry, and the majority content to remain celibate sons and brothers of their natal households until death' (1983: 149). The response she received to her publication from Irish natives and Irish Americans in the format of book reviews and letters, branded her as anti-Catholic and insensitive to Irish spirituality, and in the same response article, Scheper-Hughes states her biases that may have contributed to her findings in Irish sexuality and gender such as her Irish Catholic education, her American identity and 'ego,' and her American feminist identity and perspective. In relation to the latter, Scheper-Hughes identified a feminist agenda when she interpreted male domination, segregation of the sexes and sexual alienation in Ballybran (ibid). Although feminist anthropologists strive to articulate the resistance experienced by women, there have been many unsuccessful attempts at showcasing 'the complex ways that agency and subordination intersect in a variety of locations and institutions, including religion' (Silverstein and Lewin, 2016: 14). I deem Scheper-Hughes' earlier work as an important example of the tensions that can exist when possessing multiple researcher identities: anthropologist, feminist and feminist anthropologist. Indeed, it is not feminist anthropology that is guilty as a whole that runs the risk of suppressing local cultures through the use of negative assumptions and personal biases, rather just one feminist anthropologist on this occasion. However, one cannot deny the fact that Scheper-Hughes' important ethnographic study contributed to social change on the island of Ireland and created an opportunity for third and fourth wave feminist anthropologists and other interdisciplinary scholars to showcase various unique intersectional inequalities that perpetrated (and still perpetrate) Irish and Northern Irish society.

Third Wave

After over a decade of emigration due to high unemployment, the birth of the 'Celtic Tiger' in the mid-1990s brought immense socioeconomic and societal change in Irish society. As Sheehan et al (2017) note, women's place in Irish society had seen the most dynamic shift due to the changing economic and labour structures of the country. These changes were deemed successful due to the abolition of wage scales, acceptance of divorce, minimal inequalities in welfare systems, introduction of maternity leave and the increase of births outside of wedlock (ibid). In fact, scholars (Bracken, 2016; Heffernan, 2017) argue that feminist movements and the postfeminist Celtic Tiger era brought positive changes in women's sociocultural positionality in Ireland. Furthermore, Ging (2009) argues that postfeminist culture comprises a number of key developments, such as the widespread acceptance that gender equality and the 'capitulation of feminism's rejection of the sexual objectification of women' (57). At the same time, in Northern Ireland, the creation of the Good Friday Agreement symbolized an 'ending' of The Troubles—a conflict that had been occurring since the rise of the Catholic Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s (Edge, 2009). Turtle (2015) argues that the development of the women's movement since the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland had yet to receive extensive documentation within feminist intervention due to post-feminist discourses. In her analysis of visual media representations of the Troubles and the peace process in Northern Ireland, Edge (2009) argues that from

1992 onwards, film and television productions which focused on the Northern Irish conflict include narratives about making sense of conflict and post-feminist discourses of masculinity (particularly 'the new man') and femininity. Indeed, as Edge points out, 'while patriarchal culture will always work to naturalize unequal relationships, as in the appearance of popular post-feminist discourses, how it does this will always be influenced by other cultural factors' (2009: 185).

In *Representations of History, Irish Feminism, and the Politics of Differences,* cultural anthropologist Molly Mullin (1991) argues that by the late 80s, Irish feminists claimed that feminism had been defeated in Ireland and strong internal divisions existed within feminist movements, as those who participated in the sociocultural development of women did not strictly identify with the feminist label (Mullin, 1991). Despite the economic and social boom in Ireland, the Irish public were not always so forthcoming about issues such as sexuality and race (Bracken, 2016). In fact, in her insightful book chapter titled *Feminism and Migrant Women in Early 21st Century Ireland*, Mbugua discusses how the evolution of the Celtic Tiger attracted many immigrants and changed 'a once homogenous society into an emerging multicultural society' (2015: 220). Many indigenous Irish felt threatened by this change in Irish society, and immigrants were subjected to individual and institutional discrimination and racism. Black migrant women were largely subjected to discrimination, and to counteract this, Mbugua notes how this resulted in the emergence of Black feminist organisations in Ireland like *AkiPwa* that works towards building an inclusive Irish society and aims to 'challenge individual and institutional racism, sexism, sexual harassment and exploitation (2015: 222).

The third wave of feminist theory re-instated the importance of considering race, sex and sexuality in feminist investigation. Scholars like Judith Butler (1993; 1999) were (and still are) instrumental figures in redefining categories of gender, sex and sexuality. They heavily criticized the theorizations of second wave feminists' theorisations of gender as a social construction and sex as a biological facet, and instead, they described such categories as natural and created through discourses, performance and representation, where the body remained as a focal point (Stockett and Geller, 2006). Another major flaw in second wave feminist thought stemmed from debates instigated by African American and other feminists of colour who critiqued the lack of focus on the intersections of sexuality, race, ethnicity and gender beyond white middle-class women (Koskoff, 2014). This led to the intersectional approach, first coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989; 1991) to address the ways in which gender and race intersect and construct Black women's experiences, particularly in the workplace. Additionally, this theory was developed to show how race and gender shape political, representational, and structural factors of violence towards women of colour. An interesting turn started in 1980-90s when feminist anthropologists began to critique their own ways of theorising gender and foreground themes they were not considering (Lamphere, 2006). By the third wave, it was indeed clear that feminism had not been as inclusive as it claimed (McClaurin, 2001) and had been guilty of the marginalisation of Black feminist thought with failure to include works from Black feminist anthropologists in the repertoire of feminist theories in educational settings. These developments at the intersections of age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, class and gender were considered vital to identity construction (ibid). Thus, the edited volume of *Black Feminist Anthropology* (McClaurin, 2001) was a revelation in the sub-discipline, presenting a set of ideologies, theories and ethnographic methods that were found within and outside the Anthropology discipline. It acted as a cultural mediation between Black scholars and academia, Black anthropologists and the Anthropology discipline, and Black and white feminists.

Such issues were also noted in Irish feminist scholarship, as Bacik (2007) argues that by the third wave of feminism, women's voices in Ireland were firmly rooted in the public arena, and issues of class, race and sexuality began to be addressed in Irish scholarship. However, in contrast, McDonagh (2020) argues, that while the third wave of feminism recognized intersectionality in scholarship, this theoretical underpinning did not reflect racism, discrimination, biases and other difficulties for marginalized Traveller women in Ireland at the time. Indeed, one of the most pressing issues in Irish society is the discrimination and exclusion faced by non-white individuals and Irish Traveller communities. To counteract these absences, McDonagh (2020) notes how Traveller women created their own feminist organisations including The *National Traveller Women Forum* in 1988 and *The Pavee Point Traveller* and *Roma Centre* in 1998. Both initiatives fought for Traveller women's rights and adopted feminist-based practices in navigating gender-based violence, promoting equality and ensuring diversity in Ireland. This has been strengthened by Bhreatnach (2007) in her IJA article, where she centralizes the origins of Traveller communities in Ireland. She does so by outlining theoretical aspects proposed by interdisciplinary scholars to demonstrate the gaps within understandings in relation to their dispossession and poverty. She also critiques historians' habits of placing the origins of Irish society in Celtic culture and notes how Traveller activists advocate for the origins of Travellers to be considered as a separate history within Irish society. This thought-provoking article raises questions as to whether more historical and anthropological work need to document histories, material and cultural artefacts of Travellers' pasts.

Another aspect of the third wave brought women's positionality centre stage. For instance, Wardell (2007) points out that women who farm in Ireland had been an under researched topic in Anthropology and wider academic fields. Her collected stories are from twenty-three women who attained diverse farming roles in Waterford, Offaly, Wicklow, Kildare, Laois, and Carlow. Themes relating to gender and labour, gender discrimination, health and hazards in the workplace, and nostalgia were determined in the analysis of the project, which are particularly relevant to feminist anthropological research. Her research opened doors for further investigations that utilize feminist methodologies to analyse and gather rural perspectives of women's positionality in farming and the gender power dynamics within these roles. Likewise, Cronin (2008) argues that in the late 2000s, anthropologists had mostly avoided researching intimate partner and child violence. Not only does she highlight literature about domestic violence to examine the social suffering of women living in Northern Ireland who had experienced violent home life, but Cronin also moves away from postmodern theories of social realities, which she argues commonly displaces the individual from their world. Interestingly, Cronin usefully analyses topics of gender, sex, economics, and social class, and cleverly links Northern Ireland's post-conflict identity to domestic violence, as she states 'when violence outside the home decreases, violence within the home increases' (2008: 32). Cronin's example of analysing cases of violence conceptually and methodologically within the public and private domains of Northern Ireland could be useful to feminist anthropologists who position their work in broader areas of conflict transformation.

The topic of religion and intersections of gender and intersectionality in Ireland, Northern Ireland and the broader Anthropology discipline makes an interesting area of research, which feminist anthropology on the island of Ireland is in a good position to explore. Ensuring the visibility of women's activities and their economic contributions to societies as well as the analysis of power dynamics is a fundamental concept within any feminist quest (Lamphere, 2006). For over a century, women in Irish society have fought to have their voices heard and their stories written into Irish histories. Irish feminists' pasts, presents and futures have and will envision a more inclusive Irish society (Gilligan and Zappone, 2015). In her examination of evangelical gendered discourses of emotion, Foye (2011) analyses the life narratives of ministers' wives in Northern Ireland and provides readers with a deeper insight into the various kinds of conflicts in life in ministry. Such conflicts contribute to the subordination of women since evangelical circles often position men as 'the privileged owners of rationality and objectivity' and women as 'the psychologically weaker sex, due in part to the fact they are characterised as more 'emotional' (Foye, 2011: 39-42).

This leads us to the discussion around gender, sexuality, and mental health. An aspect that had also been covered in relation to gender in IJA by Sheehan (2012), in his ethnographic investigation of a suicide gender paradox amongst individuals living in Dublin estates. Sheehan (2012) notes how social events in Ireland have contributed to the labelling of suicide as a predominantly male issue by overshadowing suicidal behaviour and self-harm amongst females. However, as Sheehan observed, men and women equally attempt suicide, particularly after the end of a committed relationship. Similarly, Garcia (2012) asks whether an increase in gender equality led to women's development of life skills, social skills and coping strategies, and in turn, minimized their suicide rates in Ireland. She draws on feminist theory considering gender as a social construct, an idea that demonstrates how children, women and men are socialized into different gender categories (Maccoby, 1988). Garcia (2012) suggests that gender identities are a critical part of mental health issues and how masculine expectations are deeply engrained in Irish society. Moreover, she suggests that '*[g]ender* does not mean *women* since, *gender equality* is not a women's affair exclusively,' as women have expanded their roles and functions within society, and men have yet to achieve a similar expansion (Garcia, 2012: 26). These conclusions are indeed relevant to contemporary feminist narratives and the inclusion of masculinities in the analysis could be considered more of an important aspect in feminist research today. Having said that, there continues to be an inherent bias in favouring men over women in Western societies. However, from my understanding of feminist history, there seems to be another level to this argument which sees feminist discourses prioritize inclusivity for cis women rather than other minority gender and non-gender identities. In particular, previous research has demonstrated the struggles faced by transgender individuals living on the island of Ireland. For instance, in 2011, a report found that many transgender people in Northern Ireland suffered mental health issues at some stage of their lives, which were largely linked to negative social experiences such as discriminations, prejudice, social stigma and alienation from loved ones. The report found that transgender people felt marginalized from Northern Irish society because of their gender identity (McBride, 2011). However, these exclusions in feminist discourses throughout the third wave are taken by the fourth wave feminists, which seem to be instigated by the boom of new media technologies (Koskoff (2014). This has been elaborated further in the next section.

Fourth Wave

Many current debates, particularly online, reveal extreme views of pro and anti-feminist narratives (Cree, 2014). Nonetheless, these discussions that take place over social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogging sites, allows many feminists to challenge micro-processes of day-to-day sexism, misogyny, racism and comment upon specific events reported on mainstream media (Munro, 2013; Cree, 2014; Chamberlain, 2016; Harvey, 2020). The fourth wave echoes many issues from the second wave, 'but there are also different issues and less clear or ridged 'feminist' parameters' (Cree, 2014: 939). Specifically, on the island of Ireland, there have been some significant milestones in the previous decade contributing to a revival of feminist intervention through activism and scholarly publications. Turtle (2015) notes, that when Northern Ireland entered into the 21st century, new activist networks outside of the structure of mainstream feminism emerged out of a desire to re-establish collective feminist activities and identities, and religion, political divisions and periods of intense violence were no longer issues for feminists in the north. Incidents like the death of Savita Halappanavar, who died in University Hospital Galway in 2012 from a septic miscarriage, renewed the pro-choice movement in Ireland, as Halappanavar was refused abortion earlier in her pregnancy due to Irish laws (Field, 2018). In this period, Turtle (2015) notes how sexual and productive rights were major concerns for feminists in Northern Ireland which resulted in vigils for Savita Halappanavar as well as pro-choice creative media campaigns showcasing the experiences of women denied access to abortion and facilitating education workshops on reproductive rights of women.

In May 2015, the marriage referendum in Ireland, which originated from a lengthy activist campaign by LGBTQ+ communities, was passed by an enormous majority of Irish citizens 'and the definition of marriage in the constitution was broadened to introduce marriage equality' (Elkink et al., 2017: 361). Ireland became the first country in the world to legalize same sex marriage through a national referendum. In 2020, same-sex marriage was legally recognized in Northern Ireland and initial ceremonies began to take place from February of that year. Yet, as Crammer and Thompson (2018) argue, in Northern Ireland, the refusal to introduce same sex marriage because of the influence of religious beliefs and culture had meant that Northern Ireland was 'out of step' with the rest of the United Kingdom (Though of course, it is subject to UK legislation since 2020). Despite this, since 2015, Northern Ireland has experienced a 'feminisation' in political leadership when Arlene Foster was elected leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), one of the largest parties in Northern Ireland (Matthews and Whiting, 2021). In 2016, the centenary year of the Easter Rising, a new political quota developed to ensure that at least 30% of candidates in Irish political parties in Ireland who ran for election were women (O'Toole, 2017). The following year, Michelle O'Neill was elected leader of Sinn Féin in Northern Ireland, while Mary Lou McDonald became president and leader of Sinn Féin in the south (Matthews and Whiting, 2021). The year 2016 'was also a time when campaign to Repeal the Eighth amendment, Ireland's constitutional ban on abortion, was in full swing' (O'Toole, 2017: 7). Grassroots campaign organisations such as the *Abortion Rights Campaign*, the *Coalition Repeal the Eight Amendment* and the *National Women's Council of Ireland* (NWCI), lobbied and raised the public's awareness in advance of the upcoming election on the topic of abortion (Field, 2018). In 2018, Ireland voted to remove the constitutional ban on abortion in most instances. The scale of the vote instigated a change within Irish society to a more socially liberal outlook similar to the marriage referendum in 2015 (Field, 2018). Yet, for Northern Ireland, women's rights to abortion were delayed until 2019, when abortion became decriminalized, however, commission of these services have not been administrated because of the COVID-19 pandemic (Kirk et al, 2021).

Over the years, the voices of Black Irish feminists have contributed to feminism both inside and outside the academy. For instance, author Emma Dabiri (2019) published the notable publication, *Don't Touch My Hair*, which gives readers an insight into her life as a mixed-race Irish child, where experiences involving her hair are symbolic references to racism in Ireland. In the *Sociological Observer*, Joseph (2021) writes about the murder of George Floyd in the US at the hands of the police in July 2020. The killing sparked huge controversy as Black communities stood in solidarity with the harsh realities of police brutality. Joseph notes that many

Black citizens in countries across the Atlantic drew parallels with the Black Lives Matter movement in the US, and in Ireland, many accounted their experiences of racism. Cullen and Murphy (2021) also note that since the beginning of the global pandemic, feminist organisations in Ireland, such as the NWCI, developed resources for women that were COVID-19 related. Cullen and Murphy (2016) previously critiqued NWCI for their little focus on vulnerable and minority experiences, particularly in relation to austerity. Subsequently, NWCI addressed these issues in their pandemic talks, as well as hosting a series of anti-racist seminars, which emphasized the experiences of indigenous ethnic minority Traveller women, asylum seekers, migrant and Roma women (Cullen and Murphy, 2021). Another important milestone came in January 2021, when the final report of the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes was published, which was considered 'of utmost societal and sociological significance' (Condon, 2021: 1). From the late 1700s, the Catholic Church and Irish government established Magdalene laundries and Mother and Baby Homes aimed at housing women who became pregnant out of wedlock. Their last institution did not close until 1996 (Clark, 2020). The report found that a total of around 57,000 women were institutionalized and approximately 9000 babies and children died whilst in the care of the State and the Catholic Church (The Irish Times, 2021). However, researchers, members of Government, media representatives and the general public raised issues shortly after its release. In particular, archivist Catriona Crowe noted that the final conclusions of the report were inconclusive in respect to questions of physical abuse, coercion and forced adoption (Condon, 2021).

It is evident that Irish trans histories in feminism and wider society are underrepresented. This facet is argued well by Sherlock's (2015) book chapter titled *Trans Rights in Ireland: A Feminist Issue,* which provides readers with an insight into Irish trans histories, activism, research, challenges and the relationships between feminism and transgender issues. Sherlock argues how core feminist challenges such as access to healthcare, inequalities, violence and media representations are indeed key issues in trans movements. Sherlock further states that '[e]verytime a feminist movement fails to consider and include trans analysis and perspective, cisgender feminists assert their privilege in a way which actively contributes to the marginalisation and exclusion of trans realities' (2015: 325). In recent months, feminist organisations, such as the *Women's Policy Group* (WPG) in Northern Ireland, have campaigned for trans rights. In September 2021, the WPG wrote to the Northern Irish Executive about the importance of safeguarding the rights of trans people in Northern Ireland (WPG, 2021). Hines (2019) argues the importance of accepting trans-inclusive feminism in today's societies. She further notes that creating and maintaining fundamental links between feminism and trans movements is key to promoting social justice for all in feminism and beyond. Thus, it is important that feminists on the island of Ireland today focus much of their efforts to create a feminism that is trans-inclusive.

In relation to feminist anthropology on a global scale, the fourth wave of feminism led towards a new scholarly journal by the Association of Feminist Anthropology. As of August 2021, the journal has published three issues packed with intersectional feminist anthropological perspectives. Co-editors of the first issues, Davis and Mulla (2020) usefully define the aims and objectives of the journal and recognize the criticality of the COVID-19 pandemic on already fragile inequalities and vulnerabilities in many aspects of global societies. They believe that a meaningful recovery can only be achieved by drawing on and learning from lessons of feminist anthropological praxes. What I find most exciting about this journal, is the interest that feminist anthropology is rendering, and I consider this scholarly intervention as a new wave in feminist theory in Anthropology that informs future pedagogies and intervenes in the structural inequality that exists within academic institutions. While there are many useful contributions in this journal, two articles are especially apt with regard to their reflections on this issue. In *The things we believe: anthropology and feminism in the #MeToo era,* Walters (2020) writes that feminist anthropology tends to leverage feminist praxis in ethnographic practices rather than call out its placement in academic structures of Anthropology. Moreover, she notes how the discipline’s failure to make changes in university curricula and undermine patriarchal structures ‘continues to section off designated feminist spaces where “women” are still its primary practitioners and primary subjects’ (Walters, 2020: 35). Secondly, Smith et al. (2021) co-authored *Cite Black Women. A Critical Praxis (A Statement)* with The Cite Black Women Collective, an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary initiative that comprises femme, queer and gender non-conforming individuals from various disciplines and sectors. The collective is dedicated to highlighting Black women scholars who have often been forgotten for their contributions in the academy (Smith et al., 2021).

Anthropologists and other interdisciplinary researchers have indeed explored issues of racism in their projects about the island of Ireland. Joyce (2015) usefully writes about the everyday racism experienced by Irish Travellers and demonstrates the impact that identity status has on mental and physiological health. In contemporary Ireland, there is a reluctance to admit to racism against Travellers, and Joyce further argues that the clear division between Travellers and non-Travellers can be traced to historical instances of exclusion which aimed to wipe out Traveller and nomadic culture. This process of exclusion stemmed from governing bodies, urban planners and policy makers to control Travellers’ spatial mobility. Not only does this article educate readers about the realities of everyday racism, but it also points out the impacts of structural oppression from authorities, which is an important aspect, particularly within Black feminist anthropology, in its quest to destabilize and transform structural racism and sexism that symbolizes histories of Anthropology and other disciplines, in North America and Europe (McClaurin, 2001). In the future, investigations of Irish Travellers’ lived experiences in contemporary Ireland would be strengthened if Irish feminist anthropologists' foreground Black feminist theory to understand the complexities of racism and how it intersects with gender, class and place.

In the *Sociological Observer*, Michael and Joseph (2021) argue that the COVID-19 lockdown has illuminated marginalized and vulnerable communities in Ireland and the underlying racism that exists. Though, COVID-19 did not create racism and socio-economic inequality, it has highlighted the disparity between privileged and deprived identities in Ireland. The authors emphasize the need to mobilize discussions of ontological ideas of race and ethnicity, Black identities and citizenship as a means of developing a scholarship that is critically reflexive of Western domination. Joseph (2021) notes how Irish people commonly deny issues of racism and situate them primary within the jurisdictions of the US. What can feminist anthropologies do to further understandings of racial bias and the realities of racism that exist in Ireland and Northern Ireland? Irish anthropologist, Fiona Murphy, has contributed to literature on issues of migration and direct provision in Ireland. In a co-authored book publication, Mark Maguire and Fiona Murphy (2012) examine the everyday lived experiences of former asylum seekers and migrants who have lost a great deal due to conflict and have attempted to make new livelihoods in Ireland. Lack of adequate housing facilities, limited working rights, inaccessible higher-level education and ongoing structural violence is still ever present in everyday lives of asylum seekers and migrants, and the lack of information of government producers influences racism from white residents in Ireland. Murphy's (2021) critical reflection on the experiences of asylum seekers in direct provision in Ireland during COVID-19, highlights the failings of a system that has been in place since April 2000. In addition to this insightful piece, Murphy reflexively discusses the history of her research as an anthropologist of displacement, which is helpful for younger generation anthropologists who are interested in this area of research. Indeed, feminist anthropology in Ireland and Northern Ireland can learn a great deal from critical race theories and theorists who define race as a social construct and consider racial inequality as rooted in socioeconomic inequality, health inequality, and other social stratification in Ireland and beyond (Michael and Joseph, 2021). As this review has established, the publications included in this analysis show how anthropologists and other researchers have previously explored feminist topics in their research quests, and open new pathways of analysis for future feminist anthropologists.

Conclusion

To conclude, I have aimed to provide readers with a starting point in a quest to situate feminist anthropology firmly in the broader Irish and Northern Irish Anthropology discipline by discussing the directions that authors have previously taken in feminist discourses. In this article, I have presented literature that focused on some historical accounts of feminist activism and scholarship that is being done on Ireland and Northern Ireland together with writings from the broader feminist anthropology sub-discipline. I also reviewed some of the key literature from the IJA and beyond to showcase a selection of works by scholars in Anthropology and other humanities and social science disciplines that focused on feminist themes. In the introduction of this paper, I argued the need to develop further the subdisciplines of feminist anthropology on the island of Ireland, so that questions surrounding power dynamics, equality, visibility, inclusion and exclusion can continue to be documented and discussed. In light of the extensive timeline of feminist intervention in Ireland, Northern Ireland and the broader discipline of Anthropology, it is possible to create new and diverse modes of incorporating feminist thought in Anthropology and produce an inclusive environment for scholars of all genders, non-genders and other intersectional identities in which to collaborate. There is a need to collect information from those who already identify as Irish and Northern Irish feminist anthropologists and invite others who align their research interests within the realm of feminist anthropology. Such information would be helpful to further document feminist anthropological research north and south of Ireland and be useful in creating a committees or organisations specifically for Irish and Northern Irish feminist anthropologists who are interested in networking and identifying with a collective group. Such a community would provide a safe space for feminist anthropologists to discuss and voice their concerns about issues inside and outside the academy, and possibly brainstorm solutions to these problems.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to sincerely thank the editors of this special issue for IJA as well as both peer-reviewers for their valuable insights. I would also like to extend my thanks to my supervisor, Professor Fiona Magowan, for her support and encouragement throughout the writing of this paper.

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HOW TO DEAL WITH THE FUTURE? ANTHROPOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS FOR STUDYING ATTACHMENTS TO TIME IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND EASTERN GERMANY

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Abstract: In this paper, attachments to the future in Northern Ireland from a unionist perspective are taken into account. Celebrating the Northern Irish centenary can hardly be uncontested. Therefore, the official engagement with this event by the Northern Irish Office, labelled as 'Our Story in the Making', appears to be non-political and future-oriented. The latter inspires this paper to offer a temporal reading of the centenary. I argue that time, especially in the form of futures, can be regarded as a resource. To strengthen this argument, I introduce ethnographic data from fieldwork in Eastern Germany. Alongside this comparative case, I show that focussing on time allows for a different reading of Northern Ireland.

Keywords: Northern Ireland, centenary, Eastern Germany, time, future

Introduction

The Northern Irish centenary of 2021 allows for a journey through time. Narratives of past and future are invented, commodified and challenged within the fluid context of present-day Northern Ireland. The temporality of Northern Ireland – a contested past, a present in doubt, an uncertain future – shapes the making and unmaking of the centenary. Furthermore, as this article argues, notions of temporality appear as a driving force in local knowledge production about everyday life in Northern Ireland. Dealing with the painful legacy of the Northern Irish conflict has become a significant policy of the peace process, politics, public discourse and academia. The past appears as an ever-present reference point for understanding and studying this place and its people. Instead of *dealing with the past*, this paper argues for understanding notions of *how to deal with the future* as a reference point for the anthropological study of Northern Ireland.

Therefore, this paper aims to read Northern Ireland differently. The peace process is frequently depicted as a role model to bring various violent conflicts across the world to an end; or as fragile, imperfect, and locked in a stalemate (see Jarman 2016; Nagle 2018; Shirlow 2018 for a detailed analysis of the peace process's contradictions). In this paper, I argue that an anthropological focus on temporality can offer a way out of this contradiction. In particular, the renewed surge on literature about the future (Appadurai 2013, Bryant and Knight 2019; Pels 2015; Ringel 2016; Salazar et al. 2017) is an opportunity to grasp how people deal with the inconsistencies of contemporary Northern Ireland, across notions of conflict/peace, British/Irish or progress/decline. As a vantage point for such a temporal reading of Northern Ireland, I will turn my attention to the 2021 centenary celebrations, which refer to the past, take place in the present, and augur the future.

Under the aegis of the Northern Ireland Office, the future is the vantage point in the official centenary campaign, labelled as 'Our Story in the Making – Northern Ireland beyond 100' (Northern Ireland Office 2021). Whilst references to politics and the past are avoided as far as possible, Northern Ireland is portrayed as a land of unlimited possibilities. In this place, the underlying subtext, the future, is made. However, given the complexity and contradictions of Northern Irish politics, local knowledge production cannot solely align with such positive and apolitical references about Northern Ireland's future.

In this article, I ask how does focusing on temporal orientations within and beyond the centenary celebrations allow for a different reading of Northern Ireland? And what can Irish anthropology gain from framing the future as an 'ethnographic object' (Ringel 2018: 12)? In the following pages, I will use anthropological theory about temporality and ethnographic data from my research on unionism in Belfast in 2017[1] to show how references to time and notions of the future are means of orientation in current-day Northern Ireland. I will also show how official and apolitical future visions, as they appear in the Northern Irish centenary campaign, should not be understood as universal categories. Finally, to strengthen my argument and show how the merits of focusing on future notions are not limited to the Northern Irish case, I will later introduce the Central German mining district in Eastern Germany as a second field site. Here, the designated end of coal mining in 2034 is rewritten as a government plan for a better and brighter future. Comparing these two places might seem flawed at first glance but allows us to see the strategic and political element of how future orientations are built to bridge present-day 'gaps in the real' (Stewart 1996: 41). Therefore, instead of predicting *the* Northern Irish future, this article aims for a temporal reading *of* Northern Ireland.

Notions of the past and future

Should the island of Ireland be one Irish state? Or should a distinct Northern Irish state on this isle remain? Not long ago, 2021 was deemed a focal point in remembering and rewriting this Irish question. The Northern Irish centenary would be entrenched between the symbolic trenches of the slogans of Protestant-Unionist-Loyalist *No surrender,* and Catholic-Nationalist-Republican *Ireland will be free*. Some feared violence on the streets and political upheaval, whilst others saw the chance for reconciliation through remembrance. However, the most important political force of change has recently challenged this outlook: Brexit and the Northern Irish Protocol, Covid and the search for new normality, or intensified debates about Irish unity. The

Northern Irish writer Susan McKay sums up: ‘It was meant to be a year of celebration’ but Northern Ireland ‘is not enjoying its centenary’ (McKay 2021).

Whilst writing this paper during the Spring of the centenary year, Northern Ireland is still shaken by the global Covid-19 pandemic and the ramifications of Brexit. Both events do not leave much space for a centenary, never mind celebrations. Political upheaval, mainly but not exclusively over Brexit, and especially the Northern Ireland Protocol, did not depend on the centenary. At the same time, the country saw a week of riots in April, which was described as the most severe outbreak of violence in recent years. But even without those political distractions, mass gatherings to celebrate Northern Ireland at 100 would not be possible, as many Covid restrictions are still in place. Therefore, the current celebrations or reflections almost exclusively occur online in historical forums or written documents such as opinion pieces for regional and international news outlets. Most of the latter with a strong focus on the antipode of Northern Ireland 100, namely the prospect of an upcoming united Ireland in the near future. The constitutional question is dominating politics and large parts of society since the foundation of Northern Ireland in 1921.

Maybe the Irish question will remain unanswered for a long time. For one side, the current status will be wrong; Northern Ireland remains contested. Whilst nationalism seeks to overcome the constitutional status quo, a united Ireland would mean defeat to most unionists. As a part of the United Kingdom, constitutionally, Northern Ireland is not Irish, or not yet. But with its distinct political and cultural setting along the dominating strands of Protestant and Catholic identity, and with the history of the Northern Irish conflict and peace process, the country is often regarded as not convincingly British either. Recalling Margaret Thatcher's words from 1981 that Northern Ireland would be as British as Finchley, Cochrane says that ‘the fear is that Northern Ireland is as British as Gibraltar, or as British as the Falkland Islands – and both are a very long way from Finchley’ (Cochrane 2021: 341). Against this background, and with the omnipresent peace triad of reconciliation, trust and justice in mind, how will the Northern Irish centenary look?

Historical anniversaries offer orientation and the possibility to rearrange the mutual dependence of past, present and future (Landwehr 2020: 9). Such temporal reference points all bear upon the past in one way or the other, but their meaning is shaped in the here and now (Nora 2005: 553). To put it even more precisely, ‘[a]nniversaries of historical events make us look at history from a perspective shaped all the more by the present’ (Ther 2020: 30). Based on this understanding of historical anniversaries, this article will not deal with the past but will approach how people in the present, with reference to the past, deal with the future. This temporal reading of Northern Ireland, I propose, allows us to see things differently. Living with the ruptures of conflict and peace (or the sudden end of a political system, as I will show in the second comparative case of Eastern Germany) challenges notions of normality in the present and ways to approach the future. The ethnographic material to follow will show how people relate to seemingly neutral future visions. But first, the following section introduces how the future plays a role in the Northern Irish centenary campaign.

Apolitical and future-orientated: Northern Ireland at 100

The following paraph gives an impression of how one of the centenary videos – a melange of political canvassing and the commerciality of a travel agency – introduces the milestones of the official centenary campaign initiated by the British government and led by the Northern Ireland Office.

A curved line pans through the pictures of happy faces (referring to a 'Youth Programme'), landmark Northern Irish sites such as the Giant's Causeway (entitled with the plea to 'focus on our ever-brighter future'), a flowery meadow (representing 'a specially-created, unique Northern Ireland Centenary Rose'), or a Royal Mail lorry in Belfast (carrying a 'special postmark' 'to mark the centenary'). Plenty more such pleas and projects occur in this video, all accompanied with enchanted piano and string music. Finally, after roughly two minutes, the line's journey ends by forming a circle, filled with the slogan 'Our Story in the Making: NI beyond 100' (Northern Ireland Office 2021).

The campaign aims to 'showcase Northern Ireland on the world stage, […] reflecting on our past while looking forward to a positive future […]as we go beyond 100' (ibid). Academic, historical, cultural, religious, and business events are staged in Northern Ireland and in some cases across the UK. Such a high-stake centenary programme partly originated from commitments made by the British government in the *New Decade, New Approach* (NDNA) agreement in January 2020. Under the banner of 'Promoting Northern Ireland's culture, heritage and society', the UK government under Boris Johnson pledged to 'mark the centenary of Northern Ireland in 2021 in a spirit of mutual respect, inclusiveness and reconciliation' and to 'reflect on the past as well as to build for the future' (Government of the United Kingdom and Government of the Republic of Ireland 2020: 49).

The NDNA agreement, dating back to the younger history of political upheaval, is only one reminder of the highly political context in which this centenary is marked, not exclusively but prominently, by the Northern Ireland Office. Most recently, unionism mobilized against the Northern Irish Brexit protocol, whilst nationalist pressure for a border poll intensified. Or, as Evershed and Graff-McRae point out: 'There is no neutral or apolitical commemoration. What is (or is not) to be commemorated, and how, is always […] driven by political pressures' (Evershed and Graff-McRae 2020). And yet, anything political is absent in the official centenary programme. 'Our Story in the Making' can be regarded as an antipode to any symbolism of Northern Irish, British or Irish nationalism. Northern Ireland is neither portrayed as a political or spatial entity, whilst contiguous and unavoidable discussions about a contested past are outsourced into academic forums. The absence of politics is a quintessentially political phenomenon, not as a coincidence but as a political act of its own. As the anthropologist Susan McKay indicated in her research about the 1992 Canadian 125-year anniversary celebratory policy, government-initiated celebrations would have conflicted with that time's political anger and fragmentations. Therefore, a policy was designed 'to make the celebration of Canada appear '"populist", "participatory" and non-political' (McKay 1997: 141). McKay's research introduces us to a different setting, more than 20 years ago, but shows us how apolitical centenary celebrations can be a policy designed to gloss over existing political problems.

As we have seen so far, the official Northern Irish centenary programme is merely apolitical, in line with McKay's case study of Canada, and strongly future-orientated. Northern Ireland at 100 shall mean 'beyond 100': 'reflecting on our past while looking forward to a positive future' to 'shape the future Northern Ireland as we see it' (Northern Ireland Office 2021). But this future orientation stands against all those disputes over the past and against ruptures of the present, which seem to challenge any future of Northern Ireland. The future in Northern Ireland is often regarded as the future of Northern Ireland, which is traditionally located in a binary: the Protestant-Unionist-Loyalist will to hold on to the constitutional status quo and the Catholic-Nationalist-Republican aspiration of Irish unity. However, in the official centenary campaign, constitutional arguments are avoided as far as possible. Here temporal orientations become an asset, a currency. Or, in other words, having no future is not an option. The reference to time, especially to the future, will be focused on in the following pages.

A temporal reading of Northern Ireland – Voices from the field

In anthropology, time can be understood as a relation (Fabian 1983) or 'as an intensity shaping the unfolding of relations' (Farías 2017: 35). Furthermore, time allows us to 'understand and represent ourselves in the world' (Balkenhol 2012: 7). Temporal orientations shape the actions of today, and as such, the future can guide or awaken the present (Bryant and Knight 2019: 2, 192). In *The Anthropology of the Future*, the authors go as far as to say that 'without a concept of futurity the present ceases to exist as such' (ibid. 16). In his ethnography of the Eastern German city of Hoyerswerda, Felix Ringel mentions the possibility of the future being 'lost and exchanged' (2018: 12). Therefore, Ringel argues that the different ways people relate to the future are significant to becoming aware of their present (ibid. 7). The centenary campaign orchestrated by the Northern Ireland Office already gave us an impression of how the future can become an apolitical narrative for the present. In contrast, the vignettes to follow (material from my fieldwork about unionist attitudes to the urban changes of Belfast in 2017) illustrate a more uncertain relationship to ideas of the Northern Irish future.

I met Philip[2] at a family fun day at the Museum of Orange Heritage in East Belfast. Here, where the Orange Order intends to showcase its history in a family-friendly way, I contacted him in the café/shop area of the museum, and I quickly learnt about his passion for the Ulster-Scots people and language. We agreed to continue our conversation a few days later. When we met again, Philip offered me a cup of tea, some biscuits and the chance for me to finally understand something about Ulster-Scots 'talk, sound, language and how to worship God', as he describes it. Philip grew up in the Northern Irish countryside, and his parents are actual Ulster-Scots speakers. He is a Presbyterian Protestant, engaged in a marching band: 'I play the pipes'. Philip passionately speaks about and defends Ulster-Scots, he dismisses the claim that it would be just dialect or 'bad English', as he frames it.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, modern Irish nationalism initiated a 'wider ethno-cultural revival' to provide 'new symbols for the emerging Irish national identity' (Watson 2014: 179). The pressing demand for an independent Ireland in the 19th and 20th centuries left unionists in Ireland without manifold cultural capital resources. Therefore, the Ulster-Scotland linkage had to be re-invented. 'Nationalists find a potent unifying force in the Irish language, unionists seek a counterpart in Ulster-Scots' (McCoy and O'Reilly 2003: 156). The foundation of the Northern Irish state initially solved this problem. As the constitutional question was answered, political support for Ulster-Scots declined. But more than 70 years later, during the peace process, Ulster-Scots suddenly became important again. The unionist negotiating team needed an equivalent because of nationalist demands for cultural and political equality, so Ulster-Scots had its political revival. Unfortunately, as Philip declares in disillusion, for tactical reasons merely, 'they didn't know an awful lot about it.' Although Philip passionately believes in Ulster-Scots, he knew that such political tactics would only manifest the public image of Ulster-Scots as something *inauthentic*, especially in contrast to the massive Catholic-Nationalist-Republican campaign for an Irish Language Act (O'Doherty 2019: 181).

Philip knows about this public image of Ulster-Scots. He vigorously defends Ulster-Scots as something enjoyable, inclusive and profoundly positive. But Philip is not welcome everywhere. Some see his work as something political, as 'part of conflict'. To him, this should be separated. 'Culture is culture; language is language; health is health. There should be a place for everything.' Philip here points out a vital point in understanding unionism in Northern Ireland. Culture, for example, in the form of Ulster-Scots, had to be made beneficial. Nationalists, in the absence of political participation in a young Northern Ireland, had their distinct Gaelic tradition. Unionists needed to fill this vacuum (Vallely 2008: 250, McCoy and O'Reilly 2003: 156).

Ulster-Scots identity is made of such contradictions: 'it's not cut and dry, it's complex,' Philip argues. But, on a temporal scale, how can such faults align with future visions? After nearly two hours, our discussion about Ulster-Scots has moved into the territory of Scottish independence, Brexit and, as Philip considers, all those 'uncertain times' that lie ahead. Philip explained that

> you have started me on now thinking about all this and me enter a state of depression. It's this, who are we? What does it mean to be a unionist, loyalist, whatever it may be? Where are we going in the next ten, twenty, thirty years? Whereas you have this drive focus and strategy in Irish nationalism and republicanism. I don't think they have this level of doubt and some soul searching as to who exactly are we. We are unionists here, but we know rightly that London and the Prime Minister would quite happily get rid of this because we cause much trouble. We are a huge financial drain on the economy for all we ever produce. We are loyal to the union, but is the union loyal to us?

Philip's anticipation of a Northern Irish, Ulster-Scots reading of the future reveals the 'multitemporality of the present', as Peter Pels argues: 'how specific futures work out in different past and present-day locations' (2015: 789). That the Northern Irish centenary does not equal celebration is only one reminder of how contested history is and 'how narratives on violence in the past are tied to particular ideas about politics in the present' (Evershed 2018: 78). Meanwhile, Brexit might be a 'turning point in British history' (Shore 2016: 490), in which 'everything, including our theory of society, is now open to negotiation' (Evans 2017: 219), 'an event through a mix of hoped and feared, promised and threatened, futures' (Anderson et al. 2020: 257). What does that mean for Northern Ireland, as 'Irish unity has again come onto the political agenda in response to Brexit' (Todd 2021: 62)? Asked more precisely, 'does Northern Ireland have a viable political future?' (Cochrane 2021: xiv). In such circumstances, the present appears as a *rite de passage*, as the not yet and no more, stuck between change and standstill. As the second vignette illustrates, seemingly neutral future visions raise questions about attachments to and finding a place in the future.

In a street off the Shankill Road in West Belfast, is an inconspicuous red-brick terraced house, where I was invited to learn about the future of the Orange Order, the Protestant fraternity's 'key to the relationship between Unionist politics and the Protestant churches' (Brady 2013: 231), and its main celebration in the marching calendar and cultural fabric of (Protestant) Northern Ireland, the 12th of July, *The Twelfth*. No other institution in the country unites as many elements of unionism as the Orange Order. But, as Kaufmann notes:

'Many outsiders know the Orange Order as the incomprehensible organisation at the centre of the conflict-ridden July marching season' (2007: 1). *The Twelfth* could be a celebration of culture, a tourism asset, or at least an important day for some, just a day-off for others. But parades on this day are also associated with conflict, excessive consumption of alcohol, sectarianism, hooliganism (Kennaway 2015) – and misrepresentations, Mark and Steven[3], two senior Belfast Orangeman, told me: 'We are portrayed as a dragon, we are portrayed as Neanderthals. We are portrayed as many things. Our job is to change that perception[4].' To counter the negative perception of the parades, Mark and Steven aim to broaden the meaning of the day. On top of its religious character ('We are still the defenders of Protestantism'), the Twelfth shall be regarded as a festival, a family-friendly event called *Belfast Orangefest*.

For more than one hour, accompanied by tea and instant coffee, Steven and Mark give me an impression of what *Orangefest* aims to do: 'We explain what we are all about', 'entertainment' and to 'dress the city'. Next, they reflect on problems with the *Twelfth* – 'social behaviour, drink, drugs, mindless hooliganism' – problems which most events of this size face worldwide, they both stress. Finally, they admit that they 'failed miserably' in getting their message out and intend to foster confidence by saying: 'We live with what we have got, we try to make it better. And we will make it better.'

Just as with Philip, the longer the interview goes, I am running out of questions, which is not the worst option for an ethnographic interview. So, Steven and Mark now take over to say what they want to say and what this interview has triggered them to say. It is, just as with Philip, facing an uncertain future:

> I believe we have a message. We are part of it. We can't be ostracised; we can't be thrown out. And we can't be murdered out of… we can't be killed out of society completely; we still have a place within it. And we need to put our message out, and people need to understand that we play a major part in what happens within Northern Ireland.

Phillip, Mark and Steven talk about how they aim to find a place for *their unionist culture* in a post-conflict Belfast (Komarova and O'Dowd 2013; Schiedlowski 2020). When the interviews were conducted in 2017, the Northern Irish century felt a long way away, and the future was not an outspoken issue. And still, I argue, both cases reveal how the future is an issue for my interlocutors. From different perspectives, they take the future into account when arguing about past and present-day Northern Ireland. Philip, Mark and Steven aim to find a place in the future of Northern Ireland; they aim to keep pace with future visions, try to create an attachment to or challenge them. They deal with the presence of the Northern Irish past, but they simultaneously try to deal with the future. Anthropology can and should be ‘unpacking these futures, too’ (Ringel 2020: 364).

So far, we have seen that the Northern Irish centenary is less about the past than about the future – either as the apolitical ‘Our story in the making’ or as the prospect of a united Ireland looming. But what the examples from Ulster-Scots and the Orange Order have shown is that anticipating the future is not apolitical at all. Just as ‘invented traditions’ can be made out of the past in the here-and-now (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), the future is read in the present. The political precarity of unionism (Aughey 2000: 185f) especially makes anticipating the future in Northern Ireland difficult. The future is a gamble, a resource to claim. Philip, Mark and Steven all tried to envision a future of which they form a part, a direct result of sense-making in the present. The question for anthropology, I argue, is therefore less about what kinds of future visions are on the table or what is set to become a reality. As the ethnographic material shows, imagining a future can be a gamble of the present – something anthropology can show. I intend to strengthen the validity of this argument by comparison with a seemingly different regional and political context. In Eastern Germany, my second field site, I studied the unmaking of lignite mining and the making of post-fossil futures in the region around the city of Halle. Economic transformations into a post-fossil world sometimes run against the omnipresent memory of the multiple changes and ruptures of the German reunification process, called *Wendejahre*, the turnaround years 1898/1990.

But then, why not compare the future making of Northern Irish and, for example, Scottish unionists? How can a comparison based on the very individual research biography of the author strengthen the argument of this paper? Comparing two different social groups in two other places is indeed valuable, I claim. I attempt what Sian Lazar calls ‘disjunctive comparison’, a form of comparison she regards as ‘inherent to anthropology’ (Lazar 2012: 351). Northern Ireland is commonly read in the unionist-nationalist binary. But to compare apples with pears allows us to see things differently, on a broader scale. What is the bigger picture of thoughts about the ordinary and nations of the good life? Where the ordinary is lost for one reason or another, the future can appear as a bridge into it – I claim we can see that in some parts of Northern Ireland *and* Eastern Germany. Lazar says that ‘disjunctive comparison has the potential to raise questions that may not emerge through a more strictly representative form of comparison’ (Lazar 2012: 352). So, in the following part of the paper, I do not introduce unionist counterparts in Scotland or another post-conflict society, to mention two more common comparative examples. Instead, I introduce the Central German mining district in Eastern Germany. A place where notions of normality have been challenged and where the relationship between past, present, and future is in imbalance.

Comparative view: (Un-)Making post-fossil futures in Eastern Germany

The gradual implementation of the German coal phase-out by no later than 2038 will provide mounting challenges for the three German coal-mining districts. One of them, the Central German district, located halfway between the Eastern German urban centres of Halle and Leipzig, is this article's focus. Climate justice, energy transition, and the finite nature of fossil resources are the driving forces behind this process labelled as *Strukturwandel*, structural change, indicating that something more significant than a pure economic transformation is intended. The regionally established interplay of labour, economy, energy, politics and identity are set to change. Pillars of society will be renegotiated, modified or improved. Challenges of today are labelled as chances for tomorrow; *Strukturwandel* is set to be a transition towards a sustainable future. Therefore, the German coal phase-out is embedded in the global and long-established debate about climate change. First and foremost, coal phase-out is one critical step in the German energy transition. Alongside the nuclear power phase-out before 2022 and the build-up of renewable energies like solar, wind power or hydrogen, Germany intends carbon neutrality by 2050. Between June 2018 and January 2019, a commission on growth, structural change and employment, *Wachstum, Strukturwandel und Beschäftigung*, aimed to find a consensus between climate justice, energy security, economic stability, and social peace in the three remaining coal districts Rhineland, Lusatia, and Central Germany. Commission members, a mixture of politicians, scientists, stakeholders, and representatives from the affected regions, agreed to power down coal energy by 2038 at the latest, while compensating this process with 40 billion euro: 'The aim is to develop the coal regions into European model regions for rooted political transformations' (Kommission für Wachstum, Strukturwandel und Beschäftigung 2019: 9; translation by the author). Besides those 40 billion euros, the focus towards 2038 allows for an otherwise reasonably open process orientation. Also, 2038 seems to be quite far away from all those compulsions of the present. Such a long timeframe is not bounded by legislative periods but turns into a space of unlimited possibilities.

Within this process of *Strukturwandel*, no one can escape the future. Political, economic, and social actors invite 'future workshops' and ask, 'How do we want to live in 2040?' There exists omnipresent haste for the future, in which visions and fears of the present are caught. The future becomes a necessity in which to participate with *Strukturwandel*. However, due to the afterlives of the breaks and ruptures from German reunification, parts of the local population are sceptical towards such notions of change, progress, and future. Civil servants responsible for implementing these changes are well aware of those cold and distant notions. They emphasize the moment of gradualness: 'We now have 20 years to prepare', as the 'decay of the old (industrial) parallel universe only begins in ten years[5].'

The Central German coal district is no stranger to the ideas of *Wandel* and *Wende*, transformation and change. This becomes obvious when we frame the Southern parts of Saxony-Anhalt and the Northern parts of Saxony not as Central but as a part of Eastern Germany. Today's 'model region' framing was the 'blooming landscapes' narrative back then, famously coined by German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Blooming landscapes were set to illustrate that all the effort and sacrifice of the Eastern German population – the break-up of their economy, of their state, of their everyday reality – was worth it in the long run. Today, one can identify such landscapes in this region: a chemical industry of national importance, the European infrastructure hub airport Leipzig-Halle, and various academic institutions with international networks, among others. However, a different reading of East Germany illustrates why Kohl's 'blooming landscapes' are so often quoted in cynicism. Less economic power, less wealth, less trust in state institutions, accompanied by clichés like less open-mindedness, less grace, less good: 'The East is and remains a special problem area, not just because of its ongoing deprivation, but also because the past left scars' (Mau 2019: 164, translation by the author).

A German Democratic Republic (GDR, formerly East Germany) travel guide from the summer of 1989 indicates how suddenly the world stood upside down. In this book, the East German state is portrayed as one of the 'ten leading industrial nations in the world' (Benthien 1990: 16): the digger and buggy from Zeitz 'go out into the world' (ibid.: 365), Weißenfels is set as a 'hub of the shoe industry' (ibid.: 389), and Merseburg is regarded as 'the political, economic and cultural centre for the industrial area' (ibid.: 389). In an editorial note, the authors apologize that the 'multiple changes' between the deadline in June 1989 and the book's publishing in early 1990 could not be addressed. A brand-new book in which life in the GDR was idealized became a reminiscence of the past even before it was published. The authors, just like many others, became 'passive observers' (Mau 2019: 135) of a world gone down. The region saw 'a post-social competitiveness shock', as a solid industrialized region became deindustrialized (Bartholomae and Woon Nam 2014: 255). Economists attest to the East's lower productivity, less income, and less competitiveness than West Germany (Institute for Economic Research Halle 2019). The people's lifeworld, industrial setting, voting patterns, and understanding of democracy: everything appears to be wrong or not good enough, too often. In Eastern Germany, sometimes, something seems to be wrong with the present (Gürtler, Luh and Staemmler 2020: 32).

The quest for the future is a dual process: coal phase-out and innovation strength, decline and renewal. The latter refers to concepts such as green hydrogen or smart cities whilst the energy source coal is deemed not to be up to date anymore; 'coal is the 19th century' proclaims a sticker on a lamp-post from the environmental movement *Ende Gelände*. Future is a currency, and any attachment to coal seems to run out of capital. However, as one of the many contradictions within *Strukturwandel*, some actors tend to disagree with this focus on future associations. For people who currently work in the coal industry and are surrounded by coal both locally and symbolically, a coal phase-out in roughly 15 years is not a faraway scenario. *Strukturwandel* as future expectation, but coal does not seem to match with that. 'If you come along with projects that include the word coal, you can turn around and go,'[6] says a coal industry representative, 'coal won't last long'[7], says a delegate from a coal council. It is their lived experience; it influences their plans for work and family life. To them, the post-coal future kicks into everyday life.

The notion of being a society in transition, of not-yet-and-no-more, is a striking similarity between Eastern Germany and Northern Ireland. *Strukturwandel* can be regarded as the condition of the East, whilst a post-conflict status is often used to paraphrase the difficulties of Northern Ireland. In both cases, as this paper has shown, people struggle to deal with the past. The future is staged as a neutral and apolitical policy, a guiding narrative towards normality, to notions of how life could be. But then, people have to relate to such narratives. Their present-day hardships define if and how they can keep pace with such notions of an envisaged future of normality.

Conclusion

In this paper, the official Northern Irish centenary campaign was taken as the vantage point for a temporal reading of Northern Ireland. I have shed light on the temporal aspects of 'Northern Ireland beyond 100' and compared this campaign with the quest for post-coal futures in Eastern Germany. I intended to show how notions of temporality are necessary forms of knowledge production in everyday life.

Felix Ringel, who compared Eastern Germany with the United Kingdom post-Brexit, argued that in both places, people 'had to renegotiate their relations to time in general and the future more specifically' (Ringel 2020: 364). How people deal with the future is a thing of the present, strongly influenced by the past. I have argued that focusing on temporality as a form of local knowledge production allows for an understanding of Northern Ireland beyond the dualism of positive and negative peace.

In Northern Ireland, past notions are starkly shaped by violence and disruption, whilst present-day politics is dominated by demands of the peace process, the ongoing Irish-vs-British divide, and the demon Brexit. Therefore, all too often, Northern Ireland was and still is regarded as a *place-apart*. To borrow from Kathleen Stewart's reading of the post-industrial Appalachian region, an 'other America', Northern Ireland might also represent 'a world in which there is something wrong with the everyday', shaped by a 'daily conflict between what is and what might have been' (Stewart 1996: 50). All too often, the linkage between past, present, and future does not make sense.

In Eastern Germany, which is often regarded as an *other Germany*, notions of rupture and (constitutional) change are omnipresent, too. Studying ideas and anticipations of the future are fundamental to understand how people relate to notions of change, transition or progress. Change is omnipresent in Central Germany, but it is close-knit with stagnation. Anticipations of the future are embedded in ghosts of the past. Therefore, *Strukturwandel* intends to craft climate and economic sustainability, the sustainability of lifeworlds and regional identities. I see *Strukturwandel* as the guiding narrative in which this region shall be fixed, reconstructed, made better.

Although the local context is reasonably different, both the official centenary celebrations by the Northern Ireland Office and the long-running policy of post-coal lifeworlds can be regarded as a bridge into a future consisting of normality and notions of the *good life*. Ruptures, uncertainties and illusions can be glossed over by gifting the future. In Eastern Germany and Northern Ireland, a policy is set up to cover the ‘gap in the real’ (Stewart 1996: 41) by introducing the future as a resource.

To answer the central question of this article: focussing on temporal orientations means to study the interplay and mutual dependency between past, present, and future. It is not enough to study how people deal with the past. Whilst the future might be staged as a universal notion, open for everyone, the lived reality is more complex. As both cases from Northern Ireland and Eastern Germany have shown, people cannot easily break with the struggles of past and present and, therefore, fill those gaps in the real. The paper argues for studying how people align with futures visions in Northern Ireland, how they might struggle to keep pace with them and how they might or might not gain access to the resource future.

Whilst attachment to place is long studied in Northern Ireland, anthropology should also study people's attachment to time. In Northern Ireland, as in Eastern Germany, the future can become an asset. Access to future narratives plays a vital part in bridging the gap to dominant narratives of order, normality, and notions of the *good life*.

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[1] From July to September 2017, I conducted ethnographic research in and around the city of Belfast. During that time, I conducted formal and informal interviews with various unionist actors, participant observation, used written documents as a source and walking as a method. I aimed to trace how unionist actors approach, plan, think about the city and negotiate their place in a modern Belfast and thus the Northern Irish peace process. The findings of this project have been presented at the conference of the Association of Peace and Conflict Studies in Anthropology in Belfast (2019) and published with the ZeFKo Studies in Peace and Conflict (2020).

[2] Name changed

[3] Names changed

[4] 03/08/2017

[5] 25/5/2020

[6] Fieldwork conversation, 27/10/2020

[7] Fieldwork conversation, 21/10/2020.

FINDING WAYS THROUGH EUROSPACE: WEST AFRICAN MOVERS RE-VIEWING EUROPE FROM THE INSIDE

JORIS SCHAPENDONK

REVIEW BY CORRIE INNES

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Geographer and ethnographer, Joris Schapendonk offers an insight into the anthropologies of migration, mobility, borders, globalisation, and the West African diaspora in Europe, through his ethnographic exploration of the lifeworlds of African movers in Europe. Schapendonk describes his methodology as 'trajectory ethnography'; working with a core group of informants and others introduced through that core group over an extended period. He travels to meet them in their disparate locations as opposed to focusing on one single physical field site, an approach that captures 'im/mobility as it unfolds' across shifting destinations, aspirations, breakthroughs and setbacks over time (p. 8).

The book presents a 'de-migranticized' perspective on African mobility in Europe. Schapendonk presents two interrelated arguments supporting his call to move away from the language of migration. Firstly, the terminology is tied up with the 'normative logics of the nation state' (p. 2) logics his research participants – movers, as he calls them – operate outwith. They have become experts at transcending and overcoming the expectations of the nation state, refusing to 'reground in a national space' after they arrive in Europe, in favour of operating in, indeed producing and enacting, a 'post-national Europe' free of the limitations of national belonging (p. 2). Schapendonk highlights the cruel irony that while the EU has had limited success creating a post-national, integrated Europe through programmes like Erasmus, the African movers who come closest to actually producing this post-national landscape find their movements strictly and harshly controlled by the same authorities.

Schapendonk's second argument against migration terminology is that it limits us to a 'reductionist and sedentarist understanding' of the mobility of so-called migrants (p. 3). Migration language encourages us to think of migration as an in-between phase between place of origin and destination, with any further movements classified as onward migration. This fails to capture the complexity of West African movers' mobility, which frequently involves moves both between and within Europe and Africa, often living trans-local lives between disparate locations. Schapendonk also notes that the idea of the 'migrant' is a political artefact, produced and reproduced through discourses and political practices which control and restrict movement.

While some movers do have unrealistic expectations of the economic rewards Europe has to offer, and political persecution and oppression do play a role, Schapendonk refuses to explain West Africans' desire to reach Europe in this simplistic, push/pull idiom. Instead, he grounds the desire to reach Europe in the notion of 'worlding' – the urban sensibility that the real action, the real purpose of urban life, is always taking place somewhere else (p. 18-9), and pre-existing West African cultures of mobility. These cultures of mobility encourage diverse and innovative practices of mobility.

Movers adopt a wide array of 'hustling' practices in their efforts to reach Europe, including earning money to fund visa applications (perceived as a ‘lottery’) or pay for their travel by the 'backway' through Libya and other hubs of irregular mobility. They also nurture direct connections with Europeans either online or physically through the West African tourist industry. Schapendonk argues that would-be movers ‘invert the logics of an oppressive political economy… to create space to manoeuvre within a setting of precarity and uncertainty’ (p. 27). This is to say that they turn their precarious, subaltern positions to their advantage, using them to create new possibilities for mobility to Europe.

Once they reach Europe, movers rarely settle in one place permanently, instead exploring new destinations and returning to old ones in a cycle of multiple mobilities. Seemingly paradoxically, receiving citizenship or papers to remain in country X does not trigger permanent settlement; instead it more often opens doors for further mobility. This is exemplified by several informants who worked towards the goal of attaining a Dutch passport to improve their chances of relocating to the UK.

Successful mobility relies on the strength of the movers’ 'affective circuits', the broad and ever-changing network of personal connections we all maintain. Movers have to navigate these affective circuits much as they have to navigate the physical landscapes of Europe and Africa, to arrange everything from work and accommodation in Europe to payment of Libyan smugglers. Schapendonk uses the term 'affective circuits' (p. 57) in an attempt to move away from the language of social networks and 'strong and weak ties' preferred within migration studies. He argues it allows a more nuanced understanding of social connection and social capital, as it accounts for the fact connections need to be maintained, the possibility that connections can fail to produce material gains, and the reality that they impose responsibility as much as opportunity.

Schapendonk's call for a 'de-migranticized' view of West African mobility is compelling. Adopting this perspective clearly offers the anthropologist a greater, more nuanced understanding of migration and mobility from Global South to Global North which will only remain at the forefront of European policymaking in years to come. Eurospace is readable and reasonably accessible, with the 'trajectory ethnography' methodology allowing for powerful, emotionally resonant experiences of individual informants to be captured and communicated.

While it does include some female informants, Eurospace acknowledges it primarily focuses on young men. Other work could and should be done by researchers to explore the distinctively female West African experience of mobility in Europe. Finding Ways Through Eurospace is nonetheless a valuable, important work which should be read by scholars working in the fields of migration/mobility, European integration or African diasporas. It will also be of interest to scholars interested in biopower and governmentally, given the level of control exercised by the state on movers across their lives.

PACING MOBILITIES: TIMING, INTENSITY, TEMPO AND DURATION OF HUMAN MOVEMENTS

VERED AMIT AND NOEL SALAZAR (EDS.)

REVIEWED BY CHRYSI KYRATSOU

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Vered Amit's and Noel Salazar's edited volume, *Pacing Mobilities: Timing, Intensity, Tempo and Duration of Human Movements* was released in June 2020, and is the 8th volume in the series 'Worlds in Motion' by Berghahn Books. The book was released during a period when notions of 'mobility' are being challenged, and what used to be taken for granted or infused with a sense of privilege –at least for those described in the volume as of 'middling, Euro-American profile'- is longed for. This context makes the volume's insights into diverse aspects of experiencing mobilities, as defined by the complex settings within which humans move, even more interesting as they highlight the contested character of 'moving.' Reviewing a book on the 'pace of mobilities' after a year of the ongoing pandemic and lockdowns that have unquestionably perplexed humans' mobilities, and at the imminent materialization of the promise for easing restrictions and resuming mobilities, can be pretty interesting on its own.

As Amit and Salazar argue in the Introduction, so far, emphasis has been placed on spatial dimensions of mobility, rather than temporal ones, although movement occurs within time. While 'pace' has always underpinned mobility, it has not been extensively employed as a tool to explore and understand it. However, it is the very notion of 'pace' that is key in understanding the complexities that (im)mobility entail, as this book highlights. As Amit and Salazar eloquently argue, 'pace is a concept that helps us understand the dynamic relationships between people, space and time' (p. 2). In other words, pace allows us to situate the embodied experience at the intersections of spatiality and temporality. Consequently, focusing on 'pace' can help reorient our view of (im)mobilities to look beyond geographic and/ or social movement (see Reed-Danahay 2020 for a recent take on Bourdieu's notion of 'social space'). 'Pace' enables us to understand mobility within the conditions that define it, as well as view mobility itself as a condition defining and a practice shaping everyday life.

In terms of identifying the purpose of mobility, the chapters are distinguished into three parts, focusing respectively on recreational mobilities (Salazar, chapter 1; Dyck and Hognestad, chapter 2; Kaaristo, chapter 3), the wish to 'escape' from a given 'pace of life' and search for a more suitable one (Forget, chapter 4;

Korpela, chapter 5), and mobility undertaken for employment and/or educational purposes (Suter chapter 6; Reed-Danahay, chapter 7; Amit, chapter 8). Each chapter shows individuals' endeavours to move efficiently, their narratives of experienced mobilities, and the constraints they had to consider and navigate. Such approaches reorient the reader into critically assessing stereotypical understandings of mobility as 'positive' or 'negative.' They suggest that we reflect on who and under which circumstances is someone eligible for a particular type of mobility, and eventually what it takes 'to move.' What emerges palpably throughout the chapters comprising this volume is that mobilities and their respective distinct pace, occur at the intersections of overlapping or conflicting spheres of life, such as balancing work and family needs with the desire to accompany athletes on road trips (Dyck and Hognestad); balancing the inner body rhythm with external factors urging for movement at a specific pace, so as to retain the leisure character of an activity (Kaaristo); navigating migration bureaucracy and meeting the needs of family members at different stages in their lives while pursuing an alternative to the Western lifestyle (Korpela).

Moreover, mobilities actualize within pre-existing sociocultural contexts that urge particular types of mobilities to occur in the first place. Sociocultural contexts may comprise the structures that enable or hinder mobilities for professional or educational purposes illustrating the dependency of the people who undertake these mobilities and their limited control over the conditions of their movement (see Suter; Amit). Sociocultural contexts also shape the imaginaries and emotions that lead to the individual choice to move, either for well-being reasons (Salazar), to enhance their social position (Reed-Danahay), or to live in a way that resonates with culturally embedded notions of 'freedom' (Forget).

Focusing on the notion of 'pace' enables the reader to understand mobility in both its spatial and temporal dimensions. Under this scope, the reader can grasp the interactions of competitive factors, namely the wider, sociocultural contexts that suggest specific mobility trajectories, and the individual's efforts to control and/or negotiate them. The idea that pertains to this volume is that mobility is actualized not only across space, but rather, also across time. What really affects the overall experience is the timeframe within which spatial movement occurs, and the factors that determine it.

Undoubtedly the volume focuses on a wide range of mobilities, though this is undertaken by a very specific group of people. As the editors themselves clarify, the prime focus is on types of mobilities that are undertaken by people of a 'middling Euro-American profile.' More specifically, the focus is on people whose sociocultural references are located in Europe and (North) America and come from a 'middle' economic background. The latter, means that while they may have access to resources that facilitate their mobility, at the same time they need to carefully consider how to manage these resources, which are subject to the terms and conditions of the respective providers (e.g. funding scheme, firm's policies etc.). Moreover, their capacity to move is further impacted by the broad range of infrastructures (e.g. transport policies, governmental regulations etc.) that facilitate and/or constrain mobilities.

This volume is the fruit of a call for papers on pacing mobilities hosted among the 2018 meetings of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA). The comprehensive discussion developed in each chapter benefits from rich ethnographic accounts and diverse theoretical frameworks. Thus, it provides insights into mobilities that exceed the particular scope of the volume. This volume could benefit anybody interested in studying and understanding mobilities more broadly. It draws relations between the sociocultural context within which mobility occurs, the desires and struggles of those who undertake it, and how the overall spatio-temporal mobility experience may affect those who undertake it.

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SELFISHNESS AND SELFLESSNESS: NEW APPROACHES TO UNDERSTAND MORALITY

LINDA L. LAYNE (ED)

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At a time when one's strivings and choices are evaluated through pre-given moral categories, when 'the self' becomes the recurrent site of ethical judgements this book marks an empirical turn in the discourse on morality. In critically discussing the definition of 'selfishness' and 'selflessness', the editor of the book, Linda L. Layne, presents an ensemble of essays mapping the role of morality in day-to-day decision making. Flagging the underpinned theoretical framework, she problematizes the uncritical internalization of sacrosanct moral judgements. The chapters in this edited book jointly probe into moral conscience embedded in emotional and rational choice making. The accounts of moral experience not only hint at the instances of interpersonal negotiations in resolving ethical obligations but also promote respect for personhood. In countering the rationalization of moral conscience, the book upholds the overlooked aspect of day-to-day decision making based on individual ethos.

The multitudinous hierarchies in vocabulary, feeling and sensibility depicted across the chapters call for debunking the unquestionable effectiveness of morality in our lives. The context of abolitionist (Barker-Benfield, chapter2), anti-sexist movement (Delap, chapter 3), selfless motherhood (Faircloth, chapter 4), single mother by choice (Graham and Layne, chapter 5), selfish masturbators (Mohr, chapter 6), altruistic organ donors (Strathern, chapter 7) and intersubjective reciprocity between human and animal relations (Barbara Bodenhorn, Chapter 8) together invite readers to take an 'ethical turn' by explicitly studying moral phenomena at an intersubjective level. Discontinuities between dichotomies like good/evil, black/white, selfish/selfless give way to an understanding of the liminal spaces that hardly ever catches our attention. The possibility of engaging with the genealogy of moral categories challenges the hegemonic claim of discursive knowledge production that is limited within 'what ought to be'. For example, Charlotte Faircloth's study of the British La Leche League of '*Full Term*' *Breastfeeding Mothers* brings up the shared meaning of selflessness attached to the maternal roles of women in contradiction to the castigation of selfish mothers engaged in breastfeeding older children as a source of sexual gratification. This paradox unravels the politics of moral judgement that construe the identity of a mother through her socially expected roles rather than the essence of the mother-child bond. Here, the selfhood of a breastfeeding mother lies in 'the dualistic self/other' dichotomy that moralizes 'selflessness' over 'selfishness'. The multidisciplinary approach offered in the book questions the consequentialist understanding of morality that is often limited within the ambit of righteousness of an act. These broader arguments invite a multi-disciplinary interpretation of morality.

The book's larger arguments look at questions like: what does it mean to be selfish; how can one tell if one is, in fact, selfish and what are the criteria by which such judgements are made? The theoretical framework that spans from Mauss to Asad places moral reasoning at the intersections of a wide range of disciplines to succinctly deconstruct the binary thinking of hierarchized categories. The perennial debates on moral relativism over that of moral absolutism are not settled in the chapters but the ethnography of 'selfishness' and 'selflessness' invites an empirical turn that deserves serious attention. However, the rich theoretical engagement embroils the quintessence of morality over the trope of personal and moral obligation. The nature and purpose of morality based on the dichotomy of selflessness and selfishness is also explored beyond the choice of virtue or conscientious duty. Even 'mundane morality' is based on an ethical motive. For example, Susanna Graham and Linda L. Layne probe into *Single Mothers by Choice in U.S and U.K* encouraging the reader not to supplant the negative moral judgment with the dimension of selfless parenting.

Along with debunking the hierarchal relationships between moral categories, the chapters also unravel the ethical threshold of a society at a given time. Dispensing with binaries, the chapters enquire into everyday dynamics of right and wrong, good and bad actions. Mutually gratifying interpersonal negotiations counter the unquestioned moral sanctions of society, and the ethnographic accounts question the symbolic association of personal values with moral values. The normative system of thinking is pushed beyond the universal understanding of morality and ethics. Particularly, Lucy Delap's work on 'self-effacement' emphasizes the politics of construed 'selflessness' against the call of personal gratification. Justifying 'self-effacement' as a novel ideal of humanity hints at the paradox that resides between personal values and social norms.

The book's profound contextual and theoretical literature broadens our conception of morality that otherwise is veiled by academic siloing. All chapters delve into interesting aspects of moral reality in our day-to-day lives. For example, Sebastian Mohr, through his ethnography on Danish sperm donors, considers the religious stigma assigned to masturbation to be unethical. By looking into biomedical facilitation of life, through sharing or selling of sperm, he brings forth the need to integrate personal moral principles with biomedical ethics.

This book is indeed a remarkable contribution in the field of social history and philosophy of morality that discovers the layers of moral categories. Here the rigorous theoretical abstraction presumes a specialist audience. Therefore, this book is best recommended to readers who already possess a familiarity with the subject. Apart from this limitation, the book flows consistently to arrive at sharp conclusions that are integrated with larger concern of evaluating self and society as morally charged.

ETHIOPIAN WARRIORHOOD: DEFENCE, LAND & SOCIETY 1800-1941 (2018)

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In Imperial Ethiopia, the *Chewa* were the guardians of (some of) the people and the military vanguard of the empire, warriors who "bore responsibility for defending land and society" (p. xix) – and the story of their rise and fall, as Tsehai Berhane-Selassie tells it, offers an insight into both Ethiopian history itself, and also into general problems of transition to modernity and state-society relationships. Dr. Berhane-Selassie is well placed to tell this story, due to her family connections with the Ethiopian aristocracy and the court of Haile Selassie. That latter connection was by no means a happy one: at an early stage in this book, she tells of how her father ran afoul of the Emperor and was subjected to a period of house arrest and surveillance. This mirrors the fate of the *Chewa* themselves in the last decades of the old Ethiopia. At the end of the nineteenth century European imperialist forces were circling around Africa as a whole. Among them was Italy, who would try to seize Ethiopia in 1896 at the battle of Adwa, only to suffer a famously ignominious defeat. Even after Fascist Italy finally occupied Ethiopia in the 1930s, they would be harried at every point by the *Chewa,* who organized guerrilla resistance while the Emperor remained in exile. This was perhaps their finest hour: never, afterwards, would they have the same position in Ethiopian society. As centralizing and modernizing forces emerged in late imperial Ethiopia, the *Chewa* found themselves squeezed into obsolescence.

So, who were the *Chewa*? An image of imperial Ethiopia as a "feudal" society provides an initial insight into their social position and political role. Like the knights of medieval Europe, they could be seen as one pillar of a tripartite division of society, one in which peasants and clergy upheld the social order alongside them. 'I say that the *Chewa* "could" be seen as such' – a caveat which the reader should note. As Berhane-Selassie makes clear, characterizations of Ethiopia as "feudal" are only helpful up to a certain point, and beyond that point the historical analogy between Ethiopian society and that of Medieval Europe breaks down (pp. xx, 3). Where it breaks down most spectacularly is in the relationship between the *Chewa* and the people from whose ranks they emerged – the peasant masses of highland Ethiopia.

A key point is that warriorhood, in imperial Ethiopia, was a fundamentally meritocratic occupation. Ordinary men (and war was almost always, though never quite exclusively, a male undertaking), could enlist in the ranks of a local commander, and one day hope to rise through those ranks to a position of high military respect. Young boys were socialized for military life at a very young age, when they played childhood games dedicated to the development of their leadership potential – and their "ability to move in political society" (p. 145). This entailed a heavy emphasis on team formation, self-control and humility, and the forging of strong solidaristic friendship bonds with their peers. Their boyhood games mimicked war itself, both in the rhetoric deployed and the tools employed.

For older boys, as for men, military training was more intense, involving, very often, the use of horses. Travel on horseback was necessary for military mobilization, which often involved deployment to distant border regions, and also for familiarization of would-be *Chewa* with their local environments. The ecology of the Ethiopian highland communities, located as they are atop an elevated chain of rugged mountains and high mountain valleys, created a militarily vital connection between the people and the land, a connection designated by the emic term *hager.* This people-land unit was always situated in particular ecological zones and conceived of in terms rich in affective tropes. Those from outside the area were assumed to be marginal, or enemies, or worthy targets of (literal) emasculation.

Chewa warriors were always required to be both strongly rooted in their communities, and highly networked as well. These orientations had to be retained and renewed even in times of war or civil disturbance. Marriage ceremonies, for example, were events when virility and social bonds were celebrated and renewed and the *Chewa* would recommit themselves to their local lands and communities. With all this behind them, and much work to do before them, the *Chewa* flourished for many decades. Tsehai Berhane-Selassie provides a wealth of detail on the cultural and social world they and their communities built.

This world may not be one for which the concept of "feudal" is as well suited as it may at first sight appear, but it was a world of the kind that was ultimately abolished by the kinds of historical processes that led to the end of other "feudal" orders. As noted above, the feudal concept is not really applicable to Ethiopia, other than as a heuristic "rule of thumb" with which to begin an investigation of local realities. It may not be really applicable to the European context in which it emerged the concept of "feudalism" is a product of the eighteenth-century French enlightenment, and not of the historical period it proposes to understand. If the neologism "feudal" is to have any utility in understanding either medieval Europe or 19th and 20th century Ethiopia, it is in highlighting how both are very different cases of societies that went through experiences of acceleration, in which previously stable social environments were disrupted by processes of change and communication which grew consistently faster over time, until they finally brought an end to what had appeared – at least to some – to be eternal social orders.

The breaks with the past wrought by modernity have inspired many generations of social theorizing. Some of the most fruitful of these have been, in my opinion, those that emphasize the connection between human society and the natural world, and which pay attention to the networks and connections human beings forge with that natural world and with each other. Berhane-Selassie's rich historical ethnography is as relevant to anyone working on those themes as it is to those concerned with the military history of Ethiopia, or of Africa in general.

It must have seemed that that way of life that the *Chewa* represented would continue to serve Ethiopia into the future, given their role in the victory at Adwa and in the resistance to Italian fascist imperialism. This may have been the *Chewa's* finest hour: it was also the prelude to their decline. After Ethiopia became a front in the Second World War, and then a zone of British military administration. Subsequent developments sounded the end of the *Chewa*, but not of their memory.

The British would install themselves in Eritrea for another decade: further south, in Ethiopia itself, they reinstated Haile Selassie as the Emperor of an expanded Ethiopian state. He would rule until his fall in the revolution of 1974. Before that, in the Cold War, Haile Selassie became a reliable ally of the west (which fostered the federation of Eritrea with the rest of Ethiopia: later, in 1962, after revolt broke out in the Eritrean lowlands, he abrogated the former Italian colony's self-governing status, an act followed by three decades of war). The Emperor allowed many of the old resistance fighters to form a new "territorial army" (the designation of which must have been inspired by the British volunteer formation of the same name), but also elevated his modern-minded camp followers to the position of a new aristocracy. The latter tactic excluded the *Chewa* from their old status, while the former tactic provided breathing space for the creation of a modern, professional army. It was from the ranks of that army that the dictatorship of the *Derg* emerged after the revolution of 1974: its rule was far more repressive than that of the Emperor, but it would ultimately fall to revolutionary armies from the provinces.

Today, in Ethiopia, the centralized state still struggles against centripetal forces that threaten renewed crisis, and even collapse of the state itself. The inability to politically integrate Ethiopia's rival provinces and their respective ethnic groups has led, since November 2020, to a renewed civil war, one that has, as of this writing (November 2021), involved brutal atrocities against civilians on all sides (see Nyssen 2021, Africa Research Bulletin 2021) This suggests that the issues raised by the rise and fall of the *Chewa* will not go away – especially those relating to the relationship between the Ethiopian masses and central state authorities. For the masses, Berhane-Selassie says, still feel that the idea of the *Chewa* evokes 'trustworthiness, sincerity, reserve, and unselfish consideration of others' (p. 291). Would Ethiopia's civilian communities feel or speak this way about any of the parties at war in their country's present catastrophe?

We cannot yet say how Ethiopia's peoples would answer that question. We can say, however, that Tsehai Berhane-Selassie has written a book about Ethiopia's recent past that will be relevant to her country's future. Anyone working on the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia or Eritrea would also be well-advised to read this text, as would anyone, beyond Ethiopia and its neighbours, who is involved in similar debates over similar cases.

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