

Research and Innovation Overview 2024

Department of Anthropology

The Department of Anthropology at Maynooth University is a vibrant centre for the study of human cultures and societies. With a dedicated team of academic staff, postdoctoral researchers, and postgraduate students, the department conducts cutting-edge research on topics ranging from the impact of technology on ageing to global issues of race, governance, and environmental justice.

Head of Department: Professor David Prendergast



Research Themes and Focus Areas

The department's research spans a wide range of topics in anthropology, with key focus areas including:

- **Digital Anthropology and Ageing:** Research in this area examines how technologies, such as smartphones, impact the lives of older adults.
- **Cultural Responses to Crisis:** Faculty explore social and cultural responses to global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, authoritarianism, and environmental challenges.
- **Public Health and Ageing:** Several members of the department focus on health, ageing, and the lifeworlds of older adults, engaging with community-based research across Europe and beyond.



Significant Research Outputs

In 2022-2023, members of the Department of Anthropology produced a number of significant research outputs, including:

Publications

- Dr Pauline Garvey published *Ageing and the Transportal Home in Anthropology and Aging* (2023), a comparison of the use of smartphones in Shanghai and Dublin.
- Dr Garvey's book, *Ageing with Smartphones in Ireland: When Life Becomes Craft* (2021), co-authored with Daniel Miller, has been downloaded over 10,000 times.
- Professor Mark Maguire co-authored an article on Special Forces deployment during the war in Ukraine titled *Anticipation, Social Theory, and the Stories We Tell Ourselves*, published in *Telos* (Winter 2023).

Awards

- Professor Hana Cervinkova was awarded the prestigious Maynooth University Teaching Award for 2022-2023 and was elected a member of the Academy of Europe.

Grants

- Dr Chandana Mathur participated in the PANI_Water project, funded by the EU Horizon 2020 Scheme, with a total project value of €4.97 million. Dr Mathur and Professor Honor Fagan are co-principal investigators on this important initiative addressing water access issues in India.



Collaborations and Partnerships

The department actively collaborates with both national and international partners on a wide range of research projects. Highlights include:

- **Global Foresight Project:** Professor Mark Maguire continues to collaborate with international colleagues on the Global Foresight project, funded by the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, and has completed a study on counterterrorism in European airports.
- **PANI_Water Project:** Dr Chandana Mathur and Professor Honor Fagan lead the social science work package in collaboration with NGOs such as Development Alternatives and TARA Technology and Action for Rural Advancement in India.



Research Impact and Societal Contributions

The department's research has a broad impact, from contributing to critical discussions about technology and ageing to advancing public understanding of health, governance, and environmental justice. Many of our faculty members are involved in engaged research with communities and NGOs, addressing societal challenges on both a local and global scale.

- Dr Jamie Saris contributed to RTE Brainstorm with an article on what we can learn from the Aka people about care, which has gained widespread public attention.



Future Directions

The department aims to continue its work in digital anthropology, public health, and crisis response, while expanding collaborations across Europe and beyond. Future projects include further research on race and racism in East/Central Europe, the Balkans and Eurasia, how technology shapes the lives of older adults, and the societal implications of crises such as the war in Ukraine.

The Department of Anthropology at Maynooth University is at the forefront of anthropological research, producing impactful work that engages with both academic and public audiences. The department remains committed to exploring the complex cultural, social, and environmental challenges facing contemporary societies.