

Abstracts for Panel 2: Care, kinship and borders

Conveners

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Panel abstract:

Family and kinship tend to be the foundation of what is considered ‘a normal life’ in diverse cultural contexts and care is central to making kinship. Breadwinning, domestic work, physical and emotional care work, providing protection and security, active participation in life cycle rituals and in daily life, are all forms of care that make families and kinship. Mixing rights and duties, care related family obligations are often fundamental for notions of morality, normality and sheer survival. Importantly, these obligations extend beyond the living to the deceased and the not yet born. But what happens to such practices of care and the making of kinship, when borders intersect families?

Be it people moving through borders via migration or borders moving through people via invasion, changing administrations, forced displacement or war, people are often obliged to engage with (or run up against) borders in their efforts to fulfil family obligations. How is care performed and kinship lived under these circumstances? What are the strategies employed? What are the effects on the everyday lives of people, on processes of border making practices and border regimes as well as on cultural phenomena? This panel invites papers engaging with these and related questions in diverse ethnographic settings and aims to engage in a comparative discussion of care and efforts to maintain kinship and family relations across changing, ambiguous and/or contested borders.

Number of total abstracts submitted for the panel: 8

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[Abstract: Örjan Bartholdson](#)

Örjan Bartholdson

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Paper title: Seeking One's Fortune Elsewhere : The Social Breakdown of a Smallholder Settlement in the Brazilian Eastern Amazon and the Consequences for the Rainforest

Abstract

Using two cases, Anapu and São Manoel, located in the Brazilian Amazonian, this paper discusses the relationships between smallholders' capacity for collective action, smallholders' potential to unite and defend their territories, and the role of the state. Recently a forest reserve of the settlement in Anapu was invaded by near 200 armed illegal squatters. We show how this event resulted from a gradual increase in internal tensions and loss of trust, thereby undermining attempts for collective action. A large reason for the lack of a functioning social network, reciprocal interactions and social trust is the migratory background of the settlers, which hinder the creation of extended kin networks, intermarriages between kin groups, as well as other forms of long-term networks of cooperation. This becomes clear when comparing Anapu to the social organization of the settlement of São Manoel in central Maranhão, which has been strong and functional for several decades. The reasons for the latter's social coherence and trust is that it formed around interlinked extended kin groups. Collective resistance against a predatory large landowner in the 1980s contributed to forging trust and cohesion that could effectively be used to acquire and maintain collectively owned fields and cattle, to formalize an association and a cooperative and to negotiate social tensions within the community. The reciprocal network of São Manoel has made it possible for its settlers to use its more restricted natural resources to a sustainable extent, without negatively affecting the eco-system of their habitat.

Keywords: collective action; social networks; forest reserve; reciprocity, the Brazilian Amazon

[Abstract: Katrine Bendtsen Gotfredsen](#)

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Paper title: Dilemmas of community, land and kinship in Georgian borderland villages

Abstract:

In this paper, I explore local effects of Russian border-making practices between the occupied territory of South Ossetia and Georgian controlled territory. Through the installation of physical barriers and symbolic gestures, such as signposts, fences and patrolling border guards, a previously invisible and elastic administrative boundary line is gradually being turned into a de-facto international border. Moreover, these activities are accompanied by instances of what is locally described as "creeping occupation" – the step-by-step moving of fences and barbed wire further into Georgian controlled land and seizing of more Georgian territory.

The border-drawing practices have grave effects on the lives and livelihoods of borderland communities. Some families have already experienced being cut off, or displaced, from their native farmlands, gardens and orchards, and others live with the fear and risk that this might happen at any

time. This ongoing uncertainty presents local families with a number of dilemmas: In a regional context traditionally characterised by close-knit kinship-based communities, should youth be encouraged to stay on the ancestral land and preserve territorial continuity? Are they obliged to act as “human shields” against the moving border, as one young woman proudly described it? Or, should individuals and families seek more sustainable security and long term preservation by pursuing education-, job- and marriage- opportunities beyond the local community? Are the futures of families and kin groups better cared for by cutting traditional connections with the land? Based on fieldwork in borderland villages, I examine how, and to which effect, such tensions reconfigure relationships between community, ancestral land and kinship obligations.

Abstract: Camelia Dewan

Camelia Dewan

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Title: Affect and Kinship: Women’s Labor Migration in Bangladesh

Abstract:

Climate crisis narratives portray Bangladeshi [Muslim] women as highly vulnerable to ‘climate displacement’ due to rising sea levels and overlook multicausal drivers of migration. This article historicizes labor migration as a key livelihoods strategy for women in Bengal, a region now deemed a ‘climate hotspot’. Drawing on long-term ethnographic fieldwork with divorced and landless single mothers, it further argues that women’s differential abilities to migrate is shaped by the affective kinship relations. It critically engages with development debates on coastal migration and the ‘vulnerability of female-headed households’ by pointing to a rapidly changing socio-economic landscape that has contributed towards shifting filial duties, a tendency towards matrifocal, uxorilocal living and women’s informal ‘second marriages’. It concludes that migration decisions to key sites of capitalist production are shaped by gendered and affective relations and contributes to anthropological debates on how kinship still shapes the functioning of capitalism.

Abstract: Nina Gren

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Paper title: Caring for patrilocality while adjusting to Israeli bordering processes

Abstract:

Borders and the re-drawing of borders have effects on families’ intimate lives. In this paper, I will discuss some of the ways Israeli occupation’s re-drawing of borders, through a legal framework of family reunification, a complex ID card regime and restricted mobility upheld by military checkpoints and ‘the wall’, influence Palestinian family life. Boundaries and hierarchical social taxonomies are established between Palestinian individuals and within Palestinian families -people who all identify as being

Palestinian and as belonging to the same society but who hold different legal statuses and different rights. Some of these Palestinians are citizens of Israel, others are so called Jerusalemites (holding residence rights in Jerusalem) and others yet are stateless Palestinians from the West Bank or Gaza.

In Palestinian society, people are traditionally patrilocal i.e. newly married couples establish their new household close to the husband's family. However, in the present situation, many families whose members hold different legal statuses, find it difficult to care for patrilocality. Living arrangements are increasingly adjusted to the law and the ID card regime mentioned above, which threatens earlier ways of doing kin (see Carsten, 2003). I will show how these changes indirectly shape people's ability and sometimes willingness to uphold moral obligations to their family at the other side of the 'border'. I understand this as an example of bureaucratic violence. In the US colonial context, Duran (2006) defined 'bureaucratic violence' as the diverse ways through which institutions alienate and dominate Native Americans. While doing so, indigenous cultures and ways of living are ignored and renounced. In similar ways, Israeli bordering processes reject Palestinian ways of living and imposes social transformation.

References

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Abstract: Svitlana Odynets

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Paper title: Negotiations about care inside Ukrainian transnational families located in Sweden

Abstract:

After Russian missiles and bombs started to fall on Ukrainian residential areas, millions of Ukrainian migrants of different generations were forced to leave their homeland and flee to the EU countries, the neighbouring ones at first hand. Sweden would not seem to be the first choice for Ukrainians, but during the first months more than 40 000 Ukrainians came to the country and joined the relatively small community of only 12 000 Ukrainian citizens who lived in Sweden since before the war.

My fieldwork conducted in Ystad shows that the majority of the refugees have expressed the intention to come back to Ukraine as soon as the war ends up, and many thought that it would happen before summer 2022. When it did not happen, some Ukrainians began to reconstruct their strategies for a longer stay in Sweden, and to plan more prolonged strategies which remind of the first stages in a "typical" integration project: providing school arrangements in Sweden for their children, attending Swedish language courses, and accepting jobs in the sectors of high labour demand (cleaning, gardening). On the other hand, others chose to return to Ukraine despite all anticipated challenges of living in a country with an ongoing war.

The paper is focused on the process of negotiating of care and decision-making in Ukrainian transnational families (typically comprised of fathers remaining in Ukraine and mothers with children

in the receiving countries) since summer 2022 in Sweden, at a time when the Swedish government expected that Ukrainians will “wait out” the war and then go back to Ukraine. How, why and by whom were the decision to stay abroad made, and which aspects seemed to be most important for these people? How the negotiations about children education and different aspects of everyday life are made, and how do it impact women’s life and professional choices?

[Abstract: Maria Padrón Hernández](#)

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Paper title: Care, Kinship and Borders in Western Sahara

Abstract:

The Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara have had a profound impact on Sahrawi families and their ability to enact kinship through care. The borders that Sahrawi families have had to relate to have varied in nature over time. Spanish colonialism, the establishment of independent Algeria and Mauretania, Moroccan invasion and occupation, the division of the country in an occupied zone and a “liberated” zone, partial autonomy in refugee camps in Algeria, an exile community in Europe and a second war since 2020 – they have all introduced borders of different kinds that intersect families to different effects. New technologies have also affected the possibility to enforce as well as defy borders over time.

This paper will explore how borders have affected care and kinship amongst Sahrawis. How have borders intersected families and how have people’s interaction with borders changed over time? What are the strategies employed and how have they adapted to new border regimes? How is the division of the Sahrawi people conceptualized, understood, and handled? In what situations do borders become more salient or porous?

[Abstract: Ruzibiza and Turner](#)

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Simon Turner, Lund University; simon.turner@soc.lu.se

Paper title: What have Religious caring practices got to do with kinship solidarity? The case of Burundian and Congolese Refugees in Kigoma, Tanzania

Abstract:

This article draws on exploratory ethnographic research conducted among Burundian and Congolese refugees in Kigoma, Tanzania between 2022 and 2023, examining the case of church formation by Burundian and Congolese refugees and their charitable work, hosting and helping newly arrived refugees. Inspired by Massa's (2020) claim that family ties are not "given" but "made", this paper argues that these church formations and charitable engagements are a medium through which kinship solidarity is built and maintained. Earlier studies have documented the role of religious organizations and ancestral worship in helping migrants during the assimilation/ integration into the host country (Levitt 2004; Yeoh and Lin 2013), as well as the role of religious institutions in transnational charitable engagements for the benefit of the ‘origin country’ (Mutambasere 2022; Van Dijk 2020). Zooming in

on this idea of family, ties as “made”, implying kinship ties that transcend family bonds, the paper contributes to highlighting how the charitable work of the Burundian and Congolese church owners to help their fellows' country mates/countrymen, can be conceived as the making of a family and that it should not be ignored as a form of kinship solidarity. We, therefore, explore the question of how the idea of making kinship influences the likelihood of engaging in charitable work/giving or support.

Key Words: Religion, Kinship, and Migration

[Abstract: Hossam E. Sultan](#)

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Paper title: The Dynamics of Care and Consensus in the Making of a Muslim Place of Worship

Abstract:

With no public call for prayer, as typically is the case in Swedish mosques, the mosaleen (worshippers) flood into the newly built Al-Hamd Mosque to wait for the prayer. As I enter, signs of its recent construction are apparent, debates and negotiations about the process are underway. As the call for prayer is performed, conversations quickly conclude, and the work is suspended. Abdo stands up and stretches his tall figure, taking his place in the front row joining the other mosaleen for the afternoon prayer. Care can be evident in everyday social interactions and cultural settings, particularly in the process of placemaking. This paper investigates care in relation to placemaking and religious practices in public. This ethnographic case examines the process of converting a space formerly used as a grocery store into a mosque in Uppsala, Sweden. I suggest that placemaking as a process of care, is done in parallel with two processes of consensus-making: community consensus and public consensus. First, community consensus occurs when actors uphold and/or contest a system of regularities at the mosque through rituals such as Taleem sessions (religious seminars). Second, public consensus provides access to shared agreements, acceptance, and an understanding of public display of religious practices in the Swedish society. Further, community actors adopt ‘tactics’ (de Certeau 1984) to navigate a lack of public consensus, while groups employ ‘strategies’ to overcome the lack of community consensus as they aspire to integrate religious practices into their life cycle rituals. Actors rely on a fluid understanding of their practices to navigate various social settings.