



MAX-PLANCK-GESELLSCHAFT

**Max Planck Institute  
for Social Anthropology**

**Report 2014–2016**

**Department  
'Integration and Conflict'**

## Imprint

Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Report 2014–2016  
Department ‘Integration and Conflict’

Editor: John Eidson

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Cover photo: Ploughing in Tigray, Ethiopia,  
‘Lands of the Future’ research initiative, Günther Schlee, 2016

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Report 2014–2016

Department  
‘Integration and Conflict’

*edited by John Eidson*

Halle/Saale



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## Structure and Organisation of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology 2014–2016

Because questions concerning the equivalence of academic titles that are conferred by institutions of higher learning in different countries have still not been resolved completely, all academic titles have been omitted from this report.

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## Department 'Integration and Conflict'

*Günther Schlee, with contributions by Christian Laheij, Jacqueline Knörr, Peter Finke and Patrick Heady*

### Departmental Activities 2014 to 2016 – and beyond

The time has come to bundle the things that fit together. Not everything can be tied up neatly, however; so I will also point to some loose ends, which others may wish to take up. Unintentionally, involuntarily, but inevitably I have crossed a line and have to suffer the consequences of that transgression. That line is the age limit. My retirement age, according to my original type of contract, was 65 years; but it was raised to 68, the age I am going to reach in 2019. Therefore, the meeting of our Advisory Board, the main addressee of this report, in 2017 will be the last one that I attend, and it will be the last time that I have access to that valuable source of advice. As our Advisory Board now meets once every three years, I will be gone, doing another job or looking for one, when it meets again in 2020. I have been sent packing, and you see me tying my bundles.

Tying bundles is a synthetic task. Many little things have to fit into broader categories, and one also wants to know how these categories interrelate. In fact, the interrelations themselves may be categorised – which is one way to name recurrent patterns. Such a synthesis is only possible on the basis of the results of a research programme that was designed to lead up to it. In the research design of my department, 'Integration and Conflict', drafted before the founding of the Institute in 1999, I tried to frame a broad topic with some key concepts and general research questions. The research questions were meant to be specific enough to facilitate comparisons between the different doctoral and postdoctoral research projects, so that the findings of the individual projects, in addition to being considered in isolation, could also yield comparative results. The nature of ethnographic fieldwork is very individual and personal, however, since every researcher has her or his background reading and past educational experience. The researcher also needs to be flexible when she or he arrives in a particular research setting, open to unanticipated things that prove to be important. Therefore, the design of a frame topic needs to be open enough to accommodate both individual interests and unforeseen opportunities. The task was to achieve a balance: The research design had to be specific enough to produce comparability and general enough not to be experienced as a limitation.

The Department has done research on one frame topic, 'Integration and Conflict', since its work started in 1999. Ethnographically, it has covered conflict-prone areas in West Africa, Northeast Africa and Central Asia and carried out research on paradigmatic cases of conflict and integration, for example, in the Balkans and in Northern Ireland; and it has dealt with Somali refugees and the African diaspora in Europe.

It has made theoretical advances that are documented in a book series and in articles in high ranking journals. In spite of excellent conditions provided by the Max Planck Society, the work is far from concluded. The complexity of what we study has grown, and with our theoretical advancement new questions have arisen.

There has been an increasing demand for our expertise in the fields of peace making and development aid, and also among journalists dealing primarily with problems of integration (or problems of political radicalization) within Germany and Europe. The relevance of our work, in fact and in the perception of others, has grown continuously and is still growing.

The Department has analysed processes of collective identification, along with corresponding processes of inclusion and exclusion. It has done so from an actor-oriented perspective, with ‘choice’ as a key concept. This perspective is helpful for explaining the causes of conflicts (and also the causes of refugee movements, *Fluchtursachenforschung*) and even more so in analysing the dynamics of conflicts as they unfold, as identifications and alliances tend to change in the course of a conflict.

The Department has been engaged in special programmes set up by the Max Planck Society to advance interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives. One of these is REMEP (Retaliation, Mediation and Punishment), in which our Department cooperates with the Max Planck Institute (MPI) for Penal Law, the MPI for International Law, the MPI for the History of Law, and, in our MPI, the department ‘Law and Anthropology’ (see the REMEP report under separate cover). Other special programmes in which our Department participates are MaxNetAging (with its centre of gravity at the MPI for Demographic Research) and Convivencia (in which we cooperate with the MPI for the History of Art, the MPI for the History of Science and the MPI for the History of Law). The Department receives funding from Convivencia for one Postdoc position, that of **Brian Campbell**, a Maltese who does research on Ceuta, the Spanish enclave in Morocco, where ‘convivencia’ has been revived as a policy relevant for internal multicultural politics. Given his background, Campbell’s own life experience complements his training as an ethnographer of the Mediterranean world, which is the regional focus of this programme. The other position funded by Convivencia is that of **Mark Sweha**, a PhD student who works on Syrian refugees in Germany and who is also interested in inter-group dynamics in Syria and in how they have been affected by the experience of migration and adaptation to conditions abroad.

### **Max Planck Initiative ‘The challenges of migration beyond integration’**

The Department is also represented in the new Max Planck Initiative ‘The challenges of migration beyond integration’, which deserves a separate subheading. Founded in response to political demand following the arrival in Germany of large numbers of refugees in 2015, this initiative has been approved and funded and has already started. The co-chairs of this programme are Marie-Claire Foblets (Director of

our Department 'Law and Anthropology') and Ayelet Shachar (of the MPI for the Study of Ethnic and Religious Diversity in Göttingen). Other Max Planck Institutes involved in this collaborative research are the MPI for Comparative Public Law and International Law (Armin von Bogdandy), the MPI for Demographic Research (Mirkko Myrskylä), the MPI for Human Development (Ute Frevort), and the MPI for Social Law and Social Policy (Ulrich Becker, Axel Börsch-Supan). Steve Vertovec, who is also from the MPI for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, leads a component of this project.

Our contribution to the project is informed by our basic approach to conflict and integration. We study processes of exclusion at both ends of the migration process, that is, in the refugee-producing country or region and in the country of destination – or the country of arrival, if the point of arrival is not identical with the intended destination. Processes of exclusion find their responses or counter-strategies in new forms of inclusive identification, alliance and solidarity.

In my group, **Tabea Scharrer** will receive full postdoctoral funding for her work on this project. She has been studying Somali migrants in Kenya and will continue along those lines. Her subproject has the title 'Belonging nowhere or everywhere? Somalian return migrants in East Africa'. Her focus will be on Somali who return to East Africa from Europe or North America. She is going to look at different forms of exclusion and inclusion in the West and in Kenya and Somalia, asking how these experiences shape the decisions to stay or to re-migrate and what specific possibilities for mobility these patterns of exclusion and inclusion enable and disable. Furthermore, Scharrer will ask how experiences of diversity and difference influence the way people perceive the world. While one effect of migration could be the development of a cosmopolitan notion of the world, another could be a more exclusive, national or religious ways of categorizing the world. Within my group, Scharrer has also been the person most active in planning this special initiative and in applying for funding.

Other projects within this new Max Planck initiative, carried out by Hoehne, Abdal-Kareem, Schröder, and Drent, will be supported by matching funds from my Department.

**Markus V. Hoehne**, who finished his doctoral studies at this Institute and the Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg in 2011, is now an Assistant Professor at Leipzig University. Like Echi Christina Gabbert, who conceived and coordinates the 'Lands of the future' project (described below), he did not wait for funding but started to do research on refugees right after the massive influx. With a group of students, he has already produced a report about a refugee camp in a village in Lower Saxony, where Gabbert mediated contacts for them. In his project for 'The challenges of migration beyond integration', he will carry out 'Baseline research on the situation and experiences of Somali migrants in Germany' together with Tabea Scharrer. Their aim is to close the huge gap in knowledge concerning one group of African refugees, Somalians, who arrived in recent years, and to provide

data complementing Scharrer's study of Somalian return migrants to Kenya. This research will be conducted not only by students at the university but also by Somalian migrants themselves. Many Somalians in Germany perceive themselves as 'second class refugees'. They feel they do not get the same level of support from the state that other refugees – particularly Syrians – get. In addition, many Somalians are kept in limbo for many months and sometimes years, waiting for the authorities to make a decision regarding their cases. In comparison to some other refugees, they find it more difficult to get German courses and are more often unemployed. This experience of being in limbo, of not really being able to start a new life, is directly linked to the question of return migration. In the case of Somalian refugees in Germany, it may be impossible to move back to East Africa or to go further afield. As a result, they are trapped in the current situation of immobility – of neither arriving, migrating nor returning.

This baseline research will explore the degree to which the migration histories of the refugees vary according to the pre-migration differences among them. For example, what difference, if any, do Somalians' regions of origin (Somaliland, Puntland, South-Central Somalia) make? Hoehne and Scharrer will also ask how the post-migration situation influences refugees' perceptions. How has their 'vision' of Europe changed or developed over the course of migration? What kind of image of Germany did the Somalian migrants have before they arrived, and how do they see it now? How does everyday racism and/or Islamophobia affect Somalians in Germany? How are these migration experiences and perceptions 'broadcast' (via Facebook and other social media) to relatives and friends back home, and why? Finally, Somalians will be asked if they intend to stay in Germany or move elsewhere in Europe, and if so, where and why? Are any Somalian deported from Germany back to Somalia, and if so, on what legal basis? And do any Somalians return to Somalia voluntarily? Why?

A third participant in 'The challenges of migration beyond integration' is **Zahir Musa Abdal-Kareem**, from Sudan, who defended his thesis on 'Group identification and resource conflicts in Gedaref State, Eastern Sudan' in 2016. At that time, he already had some experience with social work among refugees in Germany, and now he is employed as a 'sociologist' with an NGO providing social services in Halle (Saale). In this context his subproject has the title 'German integration policies and African Muslim Refugees'. Abdal-Kareem is interested not only in policies of integration and exclusion but also in processes of identification, which to no small extent may result from such policies. He will make use of his practical experience in describing and analysing the interaction of migrants with German public institutions (e.g., schools, banks, courts). He will look first at different policies pertaining to immigration, integration and also public services (employment, health, and education) and then at the rules set by public institutions to regulate the access of beneficiaries to services, asking whether these rules promote inclusion or exclusion.

Abdal-Kareem's study aims to assess the integration policies adopted by the state in Saxony-Anhalt for refugee and migrant communities. Do they provide a secure legal status free of discrimination? And how do they handle basic issues such as employment rights, health insurance, education, and family reunification? To what extent do German government authorities in Saxony-Anhalt collaborate with civil society organizations (CSOs) such as independent research institutes, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and women's rights groups for the purposes of integrating refugees and migrants into the state and society? More particularly, it will be asked if these policies recognize the social and cultural particularities of African Muslim refugees and migrants or whether they are applied in a way that imposes the assimilation of these groups to "German social life"? How are political and religious concepts such as "secularism" and religious freedom dealt with in the application of integration policies to African Muslim forced migrants in Saxony-Anhalt? These questions are linked to one of the themes in the first sub-project (Scharrer, see above), the topic of cosmopolitan practice. Furthermore, the experiences linked to exclusionary/inclusionary policies might trigger the wish either to migrate to another European country or to return to the home region.

Apart from the migrant/German dichotomy, processes of identification within the 'migrant' category will be observed as well. Do Muslim migrants from Africa share a common self-identification, or is this an imposed category?

The project will also explore the nature of social relations (e.g., intermarriages, relations inside institutions such as factories, universities and schools) between African Muslim refugees and members of their German host society in Saxony-Anhalt. What influence does the sociopolitical idea of secularism have on public opinion in Saxony-Anhalt? To give an example, how do employers in the host societies react when they see a colleague or an employee practice his prayers (*salaat*) or fast in the workplace during Ramadan? Do people interpret such behaviour as a threat to the value of "the modern secular European state"? Or do they consider it as a personal issue in accordance with the freedom of religion? Given the recent increase of "Islamic" terrorist attacks in the West, to what extent is the debate in Saxony-Anhalt on Muslim refugees and migrants politicized and radicalised, leading to anti-Muslim sentiments or Islamophobia? To what degree are these refugees considered to be a threat to European and/or German "cultural values"? Conversely, is Islam used as a mechanism for exclusion among Muslim forced migrant groups in Saxony-Anhalt? And, who are the actors, groups and institutions involved in these processes?

**Ina Schröder**, who submitted her thesis on 'Shaping youth: quest for moral education in a Mansi summer camp in Western Siberia' in 2016, is also participating in 'The challenges of migration beyond integration'. Like Abdal-Kareem, she is working for an NGO in Halle (Saale), where she is a member of a team providing 'high support accommodation' (*betreutes Wohnen*) for unaccompanied underage refugees, specifically, thirteen male minors from Syria, Afghanistan, Benin, Guinea and Ethiopia.

After half a year of work, Schröder reports a sense of frustration among the youths in her care. This statement made by an 18-year-old from Guinea seems to express the attitudes of others as well: ‘I did not risk my life just to stay in my room, to eat and to sleep! I wanted to do things, have a good job, to have projects. If I knew that it would be like this, I would never have come here. I would have stayed in Africa!’ People engaged in supporting these refugee minors have come to doubt the declared intentions of the government. “The German state does not want to keep these youth here. It is not interested in their education and in investing in them.” The social workers suspect that the role of institutions like the one for which Schröder works is to compensate for the disinterest of the German state in the long-term integration of these boys. Is it all about ‘impression management’? Are the NGO workers being used to make an exclusionary policy appear less obvious? However that may be, the leaders of the ‘high support accommodation’ team are sincere in their intentions to integrate the youths into German society. Their goal is nothing less than to provide for the young refugees’ upbringing, that is, to provide accommodations and care in daily life, to make sure that the young men attend school regularly, to assist them with applications for asylum, and to search for all possible legal ways to help them to stay in Germany. Moreover, Schröder’s team tries to learn about the boys’ personal interests and to direct them to suitable spare-time activities, which will help them to learn more German, to find local friends and to gain knowledge and skills in different professional fields.

Despite the good intentions of the “high support accommodation” team, the young refugees’ hopes for better assistance, education and a secure future cannot be met fully. Taken together, unfavourable legislation concerning refugees (especially from Afghanistan and most African countries), longish and opaque bureaucratic procedures, the lack of transparent information, underequipped school classes, experiences of discrimination, the lack of personal autonomy, and high expectations for quick integration put psychological pressure on them. Their attitudes toward their living quarters and the staff are ambivalent. The accommodations are viewed as both a place of refuge and an instrument of control; as a place where they can express their achievements but also unleash their frustration and dissatisfaction. In a contradictory manner, ‘high support accommodaton’ team members are perceived both as caring parents and as representatives of a cold, disinterested bureaucracy. Due to limited capacities, and given the constant threat of deportation, staff members cannot compensate to the full extent for structural shortcomings and the lack of political will to support and to integrate these youths in the country.

Abdal-Kareem, Schröder and others in their position feel that the shortcomings of state interaction with refugees are due in large part to the lack of sufficient knowledge among many officials and service-providers regarding their social, cultural, socio-economic, and political background and experience. Simultaneously, most officials do not differentiate between integration and assimilation. ‘Assimilation’ corresponds to a centripetal model of identification: the more the refugee becomes

like an ideal-typical German, the better. In contrast, 'integration' corresponds to a container model of identification: minimal requirements for living in Germany (such as learning the language and accepting the constitution) are established, while diversity in other spheres of life are accommodated, where possible. That is, the centripetal model is concerned with the approximation of a unitary cultural ideal, whereas the container model distinguishes between 'inside' and 'outside', allowing for a degree of diversity among 'insiders'. Schröder says that she wants to facilitate the integration of young refugees to the German state and society, while making it possible for them to reflect on their current experiences and to decide for themselves how they want to change and what they want to retain. This seems to imply finding a middle path between the two models just described.

The final participant in 'The challenges of migration beyond integration' to be mentioned here is **Albert K. Drent**. Drent is, in a way, a victim of his own marketability, which has delayed the completion of his doctoral dissertation about Fulbe in Cameroon. After returning from fieldwork and beginning to write his thesis, he accepted an offer to serve as a research associate in the Department of Veterinary Preventive Medicine at Ohio State University, where he cooperated closely with Mark Moritz from that university's Department of Anthropology. During his two years at Ohio State, Drent was responsible for coordinating several multi-disciplinary research-projects on pastoral mobility, conflict management, epidemiology and the transmission of foot and mouth disease in Cameroon.

After returning to Germany, Drent worked for the whole year of 2016 as an employment agent, working with refugees, at a job centre in Halle (Saale). Currently, for the benefit of 'The challenges of migration beyond integration', he is writing a working paper about his experiences at the job centre.

The examples given above show that work on the central theme of 'The challenges of migration beyond integration' is not restricted to the core project that is financed with special funds from the Max Planck Society. Indeed, this theme can become the hub of academic exchange for a number of alumni from my Department, who are employed elsewhere. This does not come as a surprise, since our programme 'Integration and Conflict' has prepared people for this kind of 'challenge' over the decades. One of our alumni is Lieutenant Colonel Dr. habil. **Youssef Diallo**.

After research in this Department leading to his Habilitation at the University of Leipzig on a West African theme (*Les Fulbe des espaces interstitiels*), Youssef Diallo had teaching assignments at the University of Leipzig, the University of Zurich, the German Armed Forces Command and Staff College (Hamburg), the Leadership Development and Civic Education Centre (Koblenz), and the Bundeswehr Operational Communication Centre (Mayen). He was also a guest professor at the George C. Marshall European Centre for Security Studies (Garmisch-Partenkirchen) in the framework of the 'Program on Applied Security Studies'.

In 2015 and 2016, Diallo, as a cultural advisor to the European Naval Forces-Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED), helped to rescue refugees from the Mediter-

ranean. Currently he is working at the German Federal Ministry of Defense in Bonn. He is a member of the “Staff Element” working on a concept of diversity and inclusion in the German Armed Forces (*Vielfalt und Inklusion im Geschäftsbereich des Bundesministeriums der Verteidigung*).

The renewed contact with Diallo will allow the Halle group to profit from his rich experience, and it may also result in having some of his practical experience find its way into scholarly writing.



*Youssouf Diallo. (Photo: Federal Ministry of Defense, 2016)*

## **Ties that Bind, Loose Ends, Links, and Bundles**

The perspectives opened by the many forms of cooperation described above have not been exhausted, and some of the loose ends (or possible research questions for the future) can be located in the field of interdisciplinarity.

Links among Departments within the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology have their basis in the fact that varieties of collective identification play into legal categories and forms of entitlement (citizenship, immigration, etc. – themes in the Department 'Law & Anthropology') and into economic opportunities and questions of property, including collective forms of property and common goods (the original idea of the Department Hann<sup>1</sup>).

The topic 'collective identification' has a number of affinities which can be used for developing new foci, either at this Institute, depending on who will lead the Department in the future, or by others somewhere else, including or not including me. Also, combinations of these topics – collective identification, law, and property – are possible, since they all link to the same frame topic, 'Conflict and Integration'.

### **Emotions**

The focus of the Department so far has been on strategies and choices which can be modelled in terms of cost and benefits for different (groups of) actors. We are fully aware that strong emotions play an important role in collective identifications. Some authors deal with these under the topic 'belonging' rather than 'identification'. Perhaps most fruitfully, these two perspectives should be combined to achieve a fuller understanding of the corresponding aspects of social relations and social action.

### **Demography**

Anticipated group sizes have been shown to be a strong factor in shaping choices of collective identification, and the relative sizes of groups may be seen to have a strong impact on inter-group relationships. Groups and categories of people to be studied in this context comprise not only ethnic and religious ones, but also age categories such as 'youth' and 'aged people', which have been shown to behave like all other forms of collective identification, growing and shrinking according to circumstances (not only in actual numbers of people per age bracket, but also in terms of where the boundaries are drawn between the categories and the roles ascribed to the people in question). These demographic perspectives deserve more attention.

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<sup>1</sup> See Schlee 2000, our Working Paper no. 1, for my original conception of the Institute as a whole. Later developments in the Department Hann, with its focus on 'Eurasian' specificities, have been followed critically. See Schlee 2015, Hann 2016 with comments, and Schlee forthcoming.

## Evolution

Intelligent choices about collective identification and alliance are part of success in life, and one way to measure one aspect of success is biological fitness. There is a complex interplay of cultural and biological evolution. To which extent biological dispositions may help people to acquire one variant of culture rather than another is a hotly debated issue and a politically touchy one, because it smacks of racism. But the relationship in the other direction – culture having a heavy impact on the number of progeny and changes in gene frequencies – can hardly be denied, and may have been given insufficient attention because it was overshadowed by endless nature-versus-nurture debates and political moralizing. For example, with the spread of agriculture from Anatolia, many human genes have diffused from Anatolia as well, although these genes may have nothing to do with agricultural skills. It was a cultural practice that enabled a population to spread biologically. It is also known that religious groups often grow numerically because they encourage reproduction and provide family-friendly social environments. Rates of biological reproduction may be high enough to compensate, or even over-compensate, for considerable losses by apostasy or conversion in each generation. Due to an anti-biological bias among social scientists in the past, the influence of cultural practices, including collective identification, on population dynamics appears to be understudied.

These are examples of what I have called loose ends or left-overs that I have come across in tying my bundles. They show that one very important result of the work of the Department ‘Integration and Conflict’ has been to raise new questions. But to avoid the impression that we have only produced loose ends, I now hasten to return to the neatly tied bundles.



*When the Gabra of northern Kenya move on, they have no saddles or other implements serving exclusively to fix the load on camels, apart from special kinds of rope and one or two pairs of sticks that are used only for this purpose. Rather, the sticks that form the skeleton of their collapsible huts are tied into bundles that support the rest of the load by forming a lateral frame. Everything needs to be rolled up or wrapped and tied together to find a specific place. (Photo: G. Schlee, 1980)*

### **Harvest: tying up the results**

Seven authors from my Department have collaborated in summarizing our theoretical approach to collective identities, and the way in which they change, in an article that has now appeared in *Current Anthropology* (Eidson et al. 2017). The authors present a comprehensive framework for the comparative analysis of collective identities and corresponding processes of identification, framing and alignment. Collective identities are defined as activated categories of likeness, distinction, and solidarity, located within any one of a number of possible frames (e.g., nationality, religion, gender, etc.) and aligned series (e.g., national, regional, or local categories of identification). Emphasis falls on the dynamics of identification, framing, and alignment within limits that are cognitive or semantic, on one hand, and social, economic, political, or legal, on the other. Specifying the limits within which identification, framing, and alignment may vary allows the authors to elide sterile debates about whether collective identities are invariable or variable and to focus instead on variation in the relative frequency, the typical duration, and the degree of ease or difficulty of acts of identification corresponding to distinguishable types. Such dynamics are examined with reference to co-determinants of identification: situations, circumstances, and actors' motives. In conclusion, the authors reflect on the qualitative and quantitative consequences of variable forms of identification in collective action. Multiple examples illustrate the utility of the framework for comparative analysis.

Another article with the title 'A case of mistaking identity' is in the pipeline. As I have pointed out above, however, for me, time has come for the big synthesis of decades of work, and books are better suited for this than articles. A book manuscript with the title *Difference and sameness as modes of integration* has been accepted for publication by Berghahn Books. At the time of writing it is undergoing last revisions. A mixture of an edited volume and a monograph, it has six contributions by friends and colleagues, including former students, and five contributions by myself. This may be more of Schlee than the reader is ready to digest, but it reflects my effort to trace the more general lines and to present a synthesis of the work of my group and its fringes, where the group extends into a network.

### **The State Creeps In**

When I first started to publish the results of my field research in a very remote, arid area of Eastern Africa in 1974, the state was not always in the foreground of my writings. Northern Kenya has always been only loosely under state control. State control has been intermittent, sometimes brutal, and rarely effective. In my early writing I could derive theoretical insight into the dynamics of interethnic relations from case histories in which the state hardly figured at all. Examples for this are provided in my articles about cross-cutting ties between ethnic groups and the role they play in the de-escalation and escalation of conflicts and in helping people to

cope with the consequences of conflict. I found parallels in the literature on Highland New Guinea, another setting remote from statehood.

For the generation of my students, ignoring the state, or relegating it to the background, is no longer possible. Because of changes that have occurred over the last several decades, political anthropology and the comparative study of violent conflict and rapid social change now always need to focus on the role of statehood at all levels, from the local administration to the ‘International Community’. Consequently, in recent years, it has also claimed a more prominent place in my own writings.

Earlier work in this Department by Dereje Feyissa and Christiane Falge on ethnic federalism in Ethiopia and its consequences for Gambella, one of Ethiopia’s regional states, located in the extreme west of the country on the Sudanese border, has now been taken up by **Mossa Hamid Wassie**, who has already successfully completed his twelve months of field research. The Department has also always had a focus on the Oromo, the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia and an important one in northern and eastern Kenya. In the past, Fekadu Adugna, now a professor at Addis Abeba University, analysed competition among the Oromo and the ethnic Somali of Ethiopia for the allegiance of smaller ethnic groups with no clear affiliation with either of the larger groups. Similarly, Dejene Gemechu, now a professor in Jimma, worked on Oromo/Somali/Konso relations. Presently, the work by **Alemayehu Debelo** and **Ameyu Godesso Roro** deals with Oromo – the latter with respect to land conflicts with the neighbouring Gumuz and foreign ‘direct investment’.

The growing role of states and ‘nations’, in spite of all discourses (and real forces) of globalization and ‘cosmopolitanism’ on the level, or scalar position, above nationhood, and in spite of ‘diversity’ on the scalar position below it, is not an Ethiopian but a global phenomenon. **Soledad Jiménez Tovar**, in her thesis, entitled ‘Centripetal mirrors: cultural conservation among Shaanxi Dungans in Kazakhstan’, defended in 2014, analyses the identity politics of a Chinese Muslim minority group in Kazakhstan vis-à-vis the varying but, in each case, very determined and explicit state ideologies regarding ethnicity and diversity in both Kazakhstan and China. Jiménez Tovar represents a growing interest in Asian Studies in Latin America, and she has been very helpful as the Centre for Anthropological Studies on Central Asia (CASCA), a collaborative research programme with Zürich (see below), has sought partners in this region.

According to **Florian Köhler**, who defended his dissertation on ‘Transhumant pastoralists, translocal migrants: space, place and identity in a group of Fulbe Wodaabe in Niger’ in 2016, state policy and zonification of the land are very important factors influencing forms of mobility among the Fulbe. Another is the job market created by development intervention.

In the case of the Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean (aka Diego Garcia), the colonial state transplanted an entire population. Thereafter, the U.S. acquired this group of islands as a military base free of inhabitants. In 2015 **Steffen F. Johannessen** defended his thesis ‘Sacralising the contested: the Chagossian diaspora and

their first pilgrimage to the homeland' (first supervisor: Burkhard Schnepel). It is an ethnography of the Chagossian community in Mauritius, and it is a history of the expulsion and creation of a diaspora (of which the Chagossians in Britain are another important element). Johannessen's thesis focuses on an especially revealing event: an excursion by ship from Mauritius to the Chagos archipelago, which gave Chagossians the opportunity to visit their land of origin and to discover the traces of its earlier habitation after decades of exile.

At the time of writing (March 2017), three theses have been submitted and are under review, including Ina Schröder's, mentioned above. Another is by **Siri Lamoureaux**. Her thesis 'Virtuous language: gendered morality and ethnonational politics among Moro Christians in Sudan' goes deeply into linguistic identifiers of forms of speech and levels of holiness and authority; but everything she describes is seen against the background of war waged by the Sudanese state against major parts of one of its provinces, Southern Kordofan, home of the Moro, one of the groups of the so called 'Nuba'. Modes of Moro mobilization mirror the Sudanese state project of 'Arabic-Islamic Civilization', insofar as they take the same form but with the opposite orientation.

In the most direct and explicit way, statehood is the subject of the dissertation of **Timm Sureau**, now the coordinator of REMEP (see separate report). His thesis, "'The last bullet': South Sudan's emerging state', deals fundamentally with the basic question of who or what the state is. Small wonder, perhaps, as he is dealing with the last state to be internationally recognized and the one that seems to be collapsing most quickly.

The state is certainly not a thing. It is not tangible. We constitute the state by talking about it, justifying our behaviour with reference to it and by behaving in a state-like fashion by signing forms, buying stamps, obeying traffic rules, paying taxes and observing public holidays. Sureau faces this problem by taking up the notion of *agencement*, proposed by Deleuze and Guattari and made digestible by DeLanda (2006). An armed rider, he notes, is a combination of representatives of two different species (human and equine), an inanimate object (a spear), plus intangible things such as skill. A mere list of these entities, viewed as unconnected things, is nothing to worry about. It is their arrangement, their combination, and their combined capacity for action that is menacing, and it is to this ensemble that Sureau applies the term *agencement*. In a similar fashion, a state is an *agencement*. Like the armed rider, the state also has animate components (namely, its citizens and officials), inanimate components (buildings, infrastructure, guns, vehicles) and substructures or components ordered along linguistic, geographic, ethnic, moral or economic lines. In his thesis, Sureau shows how such components have come together and, in some areas, receded again in South Sudan. Sureau has done research in two locations – Malakal, close to the border with Sudan, and Torit, close to the border with Uganda; and he has discovered that *agencement* has taken quite different forms in each case.

States, and the international relations between them, have repeatedly demanded our attention when we investigate access to agricultural resources and food security. Due to our focus on arid lands, we have often been concerned with changes in mobile livestock keeping and the state's forceful re-dedication of pastoral grazing lands for competing purposes. Opening up new perspectives, **Sandra Calkins**'<sup>2</sup> project, 'Islands of deficiency: bodies, banana plants and infrastructures in global health', addresses other aspects of the field 'food and power': genetic modification and corresponding legislation, global market forces, and dietary ideologies.

## Methodological Advances

Because, in our Department, we lay great emphasis on fieldwork and on the collection and analysis of ethnographic data, we are especially concerned with methodological questions, and we are open to experiments with new methods. Here, we describe two recent methodological advances, one involving new technologies and another involving a more sophisticated approach to the presentation of oral data.

### Using GPS and Photography for 'Citizen Science'

In November 2012, Awad Alkarim Tijani, Elhadi Ibrahim Osman and I gave a camera and a GPS device to a young Kenaana herdsman by the name of Muḥammad Yuusif. He had never used a camera in his life. We told him to do nothing with the GPS, just to keep it in his pocket, and to photograph everything he wanted while attending to grazing cows near Barankawa, a village that I have visited regularly since 1996. Later, we told him, we would ask him questions about the photographs, and he could explain to us what they depicted and why he chose to take these photographs in particular. He made 822 photographs, far too many to include in our documentation. Combining the time marked on the photograph and the GPS data, we could figure out the precise location where every photograph was taken. With a selection of these photographs, we produced Volume X in our 'Fieldnotes and Research Projects' series entitled *Pastoralism in interaction with other forms of land use in the Blue Nile area of Sudan: the methods of citizen science in the study of agropastoralism* (Alkarim et al. 2015). Our understanding of 'citizen science' was inspired by a talk by Jerome Lewis that my Sudanese team and I had attended in Halle. Lewis's talk was a plea to involve ordinary people in data collection and the production of knowledge.

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<sup>2</sup> For her dissertation, defended at the University of Leipzig in 2014, Sandra Calkins received the young scholars award of the African Studies Association in Germany (VAD). The revised manuscript, entitled *Who knows tomorrow? Uncertainty in North-Eastern Sudan*, has meanwhile been published in the Berghahn Anthropology Series (February 2016).

When we discussed the photographs with Muḥammad, he provided a wealth of information about plants, the preferences of cattle, the behaviour of the cows, his understanding of cow behaviour according to his own cow psychology, which people he met on the way, and many other things.

Since our first attempt to employ the methods of 'citizen science', we have used it again not only with other Arab herders but also with Fulbe; and further applications of this method for purposes of documentation are in the pipeline. This will enable us to explore local perspectives on different forms of herd management along ethnic and regional lines.

### **Arriving at New Philological Standards in the Presentation of Oral Data**

Unlike neuro-scientists, who visualize brain activities, social anthropologists (unless they team up with others) normally do not look into people's heads. Close observation of behavior, especially speech, is their method of gathering data from which they make inferences about feelings and thoughts. Language is as close as we get to thought.

In my Department, we have always applied a great amount of philological scrutiny to the way we treat language. In her recent thesis, mentioned above, Siri Lamoureaux analyses discourses in Sudanese Arabic and in Moro (a language from the Nuba Mountains) in a very elaborate way, paying particular attention to the use of Arabic loanwords in Moro and using, in her transcriptions, different fonts to distinguish language varieties.

Sudanese Arabic is also the medium in which my Sudanese colleagues and I carry out most of our research on ethnicity along the Blue Nile. This is a variety of Arabic that has hitherto escaped the attention of philologists, who tend to concentrate on literary varieties of the language. Volumes XVI and XVIII of our in-house publication series, 'Field Notes and Research Projects', contain rich documentation of full interviews, conducted in Sudanese Arabic and transcribed in three columns: Sudanese Arabic in Arabic characters; Sudanese Arabic in Latin characters, and an English translation. In the first two columns, Standard Arabic equivalents for Sudanese Arabic are often given in square brackets. Sudanese Arabic differs from Standard Arabic in spelling and especially in pronunciation. Standard Arabic has three vowels (unwritten if short), while Sudanese Arabic has five (also unwritten if short). In both, written 'long' vowels can be realized as /o/ or /uu/, /i/ or /ee/, that is, with different values, which are not always long. All this can be expressed in the middle column, where the transcription is in Arabic but using Latin characters. In transcribing and evaluating such interviews, an exhaustive description of what people actually said, how they said it and what they meant requires a degree of elaboration that goes way beyond the ways in which most ethnographic texts deal with original language materials.

I think we can also point proudly to our documents in Rendille ('Field Notes and Research Projects' vol. II) and Fulfulde (also in 'Field Notes and Research Projects', vols. XVI and XVIII). Since it has become increasingly difficult to include descriptive materials in books and articles, we have created the special series just cited in order to be able to present rich documentation of our findings, against which the reader can check our generalizations presented elsewhere. In addition, comparative linguists and scholars or interested parties with a philological rather than a social anthropological orientation might consult volumes in our 'Field Notes and Research Projects' series for source materials. Indeed, some of my earlier work has by now made it into adult literacy classes in Africa.

## Lands of the Future

Land rights are a central concern of political anthropology, not only in the sense of territorialized ethnicity (Schlee 2013; Schlee and Shongolo 2012) and administrative boundaries, but also in the sense of access to land for agricultural production. Problems involving access to land may take the form of conflicts among local actors, e.g., farmers and pastoralists or competing pastoralist groups; or they may involve big schemes by foreign investors, as in the global phenomenon that now goes under the name of 'land grabbing'. Land grabbing was the theme of a workshop at the Institute, organised by **Echi Christina Gabbert**, which resulted in a working paper with the title *Lands of the future*, co-authored by thirteen scholars of international standing from Canada, Ethiopia, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, the Netherlands and the United States. In the meantime, this working paper has circulated widely in workshops and conferences, and it has also found its way to policy makers. The network with the same name, 'Lands of the future', is administered by Gabbert, who has left the Institute for an assistant professorship at Göttingen University but remains closely associated with our Department (see <http://www.eth.mpg.de/lof>).

With a number of German and Ethiopian partners, we want to address problems of access to and use of land in a series of films. The name that we have chosen for this film series, which is part of the 'Lands of the future' project, is 'Guardians of productive landscapes'.

## Guardians of Productive Landscapes

*Günther Schlee with Ivo Strecker, Eyob Defersha and Mitiku Gebrehiwot*

### Events Leading Up to the Project

Initial ideas concerning the 'Guardians of productive landscapes' project were developed after 2014 when responsibility for the South Omo Research Centre (SORC), in Jinka, South Omo, was moved from the Institute of Ethiopian Studies in Addis Abeba to Arba Minch University (AMU), which is, like SORC, located in Ethiopia's 'Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region. Feleke Woldeyes, who was then President of AMU, had already begun a project in the nearby Dorze Highlands devoted to the preservation and upgrading of an endangered crop species, namely, 'ensete' (*Ensete ventricosum*). When Ivo Strecker – who had recently been engaged to teach at AMU – asked whether anyone had already documented this important venture by means of film, the answer was "no". This led to a discussion in which **Yohannes Yitbarek** (MA) – then Head of the Department of Anthropology at AMU, now a PhD student at the MPI – also took part. The result was a plan for a major film series focusing on indigenous crops in Ethiopia. Such films will be in the country's national interest, insofar as they become means both for teaching and research (see below) and for creating awareness of the high productivity and nutritional value of these – often undervalued – indigenous crops.

This first brainstorm was followed by Feleke's and Yohannes Yitbarek's journey to Germany in February 2016, when they visited our Institute. Here they met Günther Schlee and made plans for future cooperation. Ivo Strecker and Jean Lydall (an experienced ethnographic film maker) were also present and emphasized the need to develop further the use of film in Ethiopian studies. Film was an important tool for qualitative research when Strecker and Lydall were at SORC, as is demonstrated in the films *Duka's dilemma* (Lydall and K. Strecker 2001) and *Bury the spear* (I. Strecker and Pankhurst 2004) and in the essay 'Men and women on both sides of the camera' (Lydall and Strecker 2006). In preparatory discussions for the new project, they argued that this methodological approach to the study of cultural heritage should continue, particularly as it offers great opportunities for the upcoming generation of anthropologists in Ethiopia. Günther Schlee agreed and subsequently endorsed the acquisition of new, high quality film equipment by the MPI to be used to document cultural heritage in both northern and southern Ethiopia.

On 26 March 2016, a workshop addressing the problems of 'Equitable Development' took place at SORC, organized by Yohannes Yitbarek and attended by the new president of AMU and other members of the faculty, along with various officials from the South Omo Zone. Feleke Woldeyes – meanwhile Deputy Director of the Ethiopian Bio-Diversity Institute – gave the opening address, while Günther Schlee and Ivo Strecker followed with lectures addressing questions of 'equitable'

or ‘inclusive’ development. They presented ‘synergetic models’ that combine foreign know-how and local cultural heritage. Mr. Alemayehu, Chief Administrator of South Omo Zone, gave the closing speech in which he endorsed the developmental policies advocated by the speakers.

After the workshop Günther Schlee and Ivo Strecker travelled to the Ethiopian regional state, Tigray, and, after talks with students and staff of Mekelle University, they spent several days in the highlands of northern Ethiopia. As they studied the age-old small-scale organic farming in the region, they developed preliminary ideas for the ‘Guardians of productive landscapes’ project, as outlined in the next paragraph.

### **‘Guardians of Productive Landscapes’: the main idea**

Today, there are still millions of small-holder farmers worldwide who cultivate their crops without polluting the land and the atmosphere. Although in some respects ‘backward’ – because they rely only on manual labor and animal power – these ‘primitive’ modes of production are in other respects ‘progressive’ in that they do not contribute to the climate change that is threatening our planet. If anything, organic farmers help mitigate the global carbon problem as well as the danger of soil and water pollution. Furthermore, as mineral fertilizer is a finite resource, and herbicides and pesticides lead to the co-evolution of immune strains of weeds, fungi, and insects; and as the need for constantly increasing quantities of such substances involve serious health risks, mixed farming on a somewhat smaller scale with natural fertilizers and without the huge monocultures characterising the ‘modern’ agricultural sector might be the only sustainable option available. It also has the capacity to absorb labour, instead of causing a growing landless population to become rural-urban migrants or even transcontinental (economic or environmental) refugees.

The ‘Rights and Resources Initiative’ (RRI), an international NGO founded in 2005, has recently released a report entitled, ‘Towards a global baseline of carbon storage in collective lands’. The authors say that the results of their study reinforce the urgent need to make collective tenure security a critical part of national emission reduction strategies. While the focus of their report is on forest peoples, the RRI call for action applies equally well to small-scale farmers and pastoralists whose “historical role as stewards of the environment is not only essential for stabilizing Earth’s climate, it is also necessary to achieve global goals of sustainable development, food security, and poverty alleviation” (‘Towards a global baseline’, p. 1).<sup>3</sup>

Like climatologists, conservationists have also begun to see small-scale, traditional and indigenous communities in a new light. Calling them “guardians of biodiversity”, ethno-biologists and anthropologists have pointed out that these peoples

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<sup>3</sup> <http://rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Toward-a-Global-Baseline-of-Carbon-Storage-in-Collective-Lands-November-2016-RRI-WHRC-WRI-report.pdf>

care for and protect the biological resources on which they depend and in this way do a great service to sustainable human life on Earth.

As Borgerhoff Mulder and Coppolillo (2005: 81) have put it, the positive role of indigenous peoples “provides both a practical and a moral foundation for new policy initiatives that treat local people as partners and allies in conservation efforts”.

The ‘Guardians of productive landscapes’ project builds on these findings but also takes note of the vulnerability of those who have begun to be called ‘stewards’, ‘custodians’ or ‘guardians’ of particular habitats. Especially small-scale farmers who depend on rain-fed agriculture have been threatened by drought over and over again, and, consequently, have had to call for donations from national and international relief programs. This re-curent need for food aid in increasingly volatile environments has contributed to the image of pastoralists and small-scale farmers in Africa as ‘backwards’ and capable only of low productivity. This obscures the fact that, in the normal or good years, which are still more frequent than drought years, the very same families have not only fed themselves but have produced surpluses to feed a growing urban population. In contrast, large-scale mechanized agriculture displaces pastoralists and small-scale farmers and, instead of feeding them, produces, usually, for export markets, thus contributing nothing to food security in the countries where it is located.

Until recently, it looked as if the international community was beginning to turn climate and conservation commitments into action. A new situation seemed to have arisen, potentially offering small-scale, organic farmers food security in exchange for their contribution to climate security and their long-term contribution to sustainable agricultural development. In other words, the actual guardians of productive landscapes would not have to beg for aid anymore but would earn a seasonal income for their help in the combat against climate collapse. With a new administration in the US, which flatly denies scientific findings, all this seems to be uncertain again, and progress in this direction is threatened with reversal. This increases, rather than decreases, the relevance of the proposed research, both basic and applied, not only for solving problems that arise for the natural sciences but also for overcoming the even more formidable social and political obstacles to achieving equity and sustainability.

## Supervision of Doctoral Candidates

### Discussion, Teaching and Exchange

*Christian Laheij, Sandra Calkins and John Eidson*

#### *Departmental Colloquium*

During the semester, the weekly research colloquium, organised by John Eidson and Sandra Calkins, is the main forum for intellectual exchange among members of the Department 'Integration and Conflict'. The first few minutes of each meeting are devoted to organisational matters. Then, a pre-circulated text – mainly proposals and chapters written by PhD researchers but also work in progress by postdocs, senior scholars, or guests – are discussed and commented on.

During the period covered by this report, the colloquium was carried out in a spirit of reciprocity that discouraged sporadic participation and encouraged all, especially those who presented papers during the semester, to comment on others' work freely and constructively. Junior researchers were invited to make the first round of comments, so that they would not feel that they had to compete with the senior scholars in attendance. This procedure led to many lively discussions and to avid participation by those attending. The Department intends to continue to conduct the colloquium in this constructive and collegial spirit in the future.

#### *Annual Retreat*

Usually, in early September, the Department invites all members to participate in a five-day retreat, which is normally held in a conference centre in a rural location in Germany. The retreats provide an additional forum for the exchange of ideas in presentations of individual projects or in seminars devoted to special topics. The relaxed atmosphere, communal meals, and informal sociability all contribute to making these events particularly productive. Departmental retreats were held in 2014 and 2015; none took place in 2016 because the majority of PhD students were in the field conducting research and in several cases activities with them were organized in the field or within the region of their field sites (see below).

#### *PhD Student Mentoring*

In 2013, Departmental discussions were organised with the outgoing cohort of PhD students to evaluate their experiences of the PhD supervision offered by the Department and to identify points for improvement. One of the suggestions to come out of the assessment was to strengthen the involvement of the Department's research fellows in PhD supervision through mentorship programmes.

To this end, starting in 2014, a stipulation was added to the job description and employment contract of research fellows stating that they are expected to provide PhD mentorship. PhD students were encouraged to avail themselves of this opportunity and to seek out research fellows for individual mentoring. Not all members of the new cohort of students welcomed this idea. Some did not want individual mentoring and suggested, instead, that they would come forward, based on their own needs.

Sandra Calkins and Christian Laheij further organised student mentoring and research-proposal-writing workshops for the incoming cohort of PhD students in June and July 2014. This was followed up by regular meetings throughout the pre-fieldwork period, during which students discussed their progress as well as practical concerns relating to fieldwork.

Discussions are currently underway to assess the needs among post-fieldwork PhD students for writing-up seminars, to be organised in addition to the Departmental Colloquium.

The Department intends to evaluate the outcomes of these activities in the second half of 2017. Findings will serve as a basis for further improvement and as input for ongoing discussions at the Institute-level concerning PhD supervision.

### *Methods Lab*

Another proposal from the 2013 Departmental assessment of PhD supervision was to supplement the regular pre-fieldwork methods workshop, organised by Günther Schlee and Dominik Kohlhagen in June 2014 for students of the Departments 'Integration and Conflict' and 'Law and Anthropology', with specialised methods training.

In April 2015, Christian Laheij took the initiative with Günther Schlee, Sandra Calkins, Steve Reyna and Alexander Pashos to organise a methods lab. The lab took the form of a series of hands-on workshops designed to assist first-year PhD students in formulating their research plans. Each session consisted of a discussion of readings and practical assignments. The following topics were covered: survey methods, kinship diagrams and computing, participant observation, interviews, and risks and ethics.

A total of 17 students from the Departments 'Integration and Conflict' and 'Resilience and Transformation in Eurasia' participated, benefiting from presentations by post-fieldwork PhD students and research fellows recruited from across the Institute. A survey conducted after the methods lab showed that the participants rated the workshops favourably: on a scale of 1–10, the lab was given an overall mark of 7.8. The results of the survey have been shared with the Institute's administration to promote the organisation of similar workshops in the future.

## Intensified Forms of Peripatetic Supervision and Exchange with and among Doctoral Students

After reporting above on methodological advances, I want to point out that research organization – specifically, making information flow in the right way between people involved in the research process – is also an important part of methodology. In this section, I illustrate this point by focusing on visits to the field sites of researchers in my Department and on seminars with doctoral student in their respective research regions. Such visits and on-site seminars are one of the specialities of the Department. I regard interacting with doctoral students in the field and enhancing the exchange with them, among them, and between them and more advanced scholars as a core part of my work – and it is a part of my work that I greatly enjoy.



*Indira Alibayeva listening to a local historian, Shymkent, Kazakhstan, March 2015. (Photo: G. Schlee, 2015)*

In March and April 2015, I gave a course and two presentations at the Al Farabi University in Almaty, Kazakhstan, an important partner institution for our CASCA programme (see below). In that context I also managed to recruit a doctoral student, **Zarina Mukhanova**, for the project ‘Kinship universals and variation’ (or KUV – see below). From Almaty, I travelled to Shymkent for a visit to **Indira Alibayeva**,

who was halfway through her field research on local interethnic relations, especially with regard to Uzbeks in Central Asian states outside of Uzbekistan (see the report on CASCA below).

Many ethnic minorities in the world are formed when people cross boundaries, but the Uzbek minority in Southern Kazakhstan was formed when a boundary crossed people. The Uzbeks already inhabited this region when the boundary between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan was drawn. In fact, in Shymkent, Kazakhstan, and its environs, Uzbeks make up the majority. Many of them are economically well-placed, as even those involved in agriculture are located in the urban areas or the peri-urban belt of intensified production, close to their markets. Kazakhs predominate only in more extensive forms of agriculture further afield, namely, fodder production and keeping livestock on the open range. A third element in interethnic relations and contested interethnic hierarchies are the 'oralman', ethnic Kazakhs whom the government has invited to 'come back' to Kazakhstan from neighbouring countries such as Uzbekistan and China.

### **Tracing Connections: report from the departmental Africa in-field exchange**

*Christian Laheij*

On 4 April 2016, the Department organised a workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, for PhD students in the REMEP research school who were conducting research on the Horn of Africa. The workshop lasted for four days and was followed by a round trip to the field sites of research fellow Christian Laheij in northern Mozambique and PhD student Christian Straube on the Copperbelt in Zambia. Afterwards, all participants returned to their respective field sites to continue their research. It is a tradition of the Department to organise such mid-fieldwork meetings for every cohort of PhD students. The meetings provide participants with the opportunity to take a step back from the thick of ethnographic research, to reflect jointly on individual progress, and to explore the linkages among the various projects and the contribution of each to the broader Departmental programme. What is more, the in-field meetings present students with a platform for engaging with experts and researchers working outside academia on similar topics and for sharing their insights and experiences – which is another mainstay of the Department's work (see, e.g., Schlee 2008: 107–169).

A description of the REMEP workshop in Nairobi, organised by Dominik Kohlhagen, who was at that time coordinator of REMEP, is included in the latest REMEP report to the Advisory Board. This section on the workshop in Nairobi features an analysis of the contributions that REMEP students from our Department are making to our understanding of Departmental research topics such as identity, difference, integration and conflict. It also provides an overview of the various activities for outreach and public engagement that were part of the workshop.





The next few paragraphs supplement the description of the Nairobi workshop with an overview of the field visits that followed it. The day after the workshop, PhD students Faduma Abukar Mursal and Mossa Hamid Wassie joined Günther Schlee and Christian Laheij in the Institute's vehicle to drive to Mozambique and visit Laheij's field site in the urban periphery of Nampula City, located in the northern part of the country. Initially, the route took the group along the Indian Ocean coastal cities of Mombasa, Dar es Salaam and Mtwara. Following the visit to Nampula City, the trip continued inland in the direction of Luanshya, Zambia, where Christian Straube's research is based. Driving across the African continent gave participants a taste of its vastness, and also of the connections linking East and Southern Africa. Some of these connections are centuries old, like the networks of Islamic trade and learning spanning the Indian Ocean and reaching into the East African interior. These networks hold renewed significance today, due to competing strands of religious interpretation and funding travelling along its nodes, evident in freshly painted mosques dotted along the roadsides. Other connections are of more recent origins: the relics of pan-African Socialism, convenience and mobile phone stores operated by Somali migrants, and Chinese economic diplomacy in the form of infrastructural investments. Tracing these connections was an important element of the field visits.



*Largely parallel to the Nairobi-Mombasa road and parallel to the metre gauge railway constructed in the early 1900s (with British capital and mostly Indian labour), the standard-gauge 'Uganda Railway' is now being built by China Road and Bridge Corporation, a subsidiary of China Communications Construction Co. (Photo: C. Laheij, 2016)*

In Nampula City this meant spending time in the peri-urban neighbourhood where **Christian Laheij** conducts his research on the emergence of Islamic reformism. This Salafi-inspired reform movement is part of a global phenomenon, the followers of which seek to emulate the example of the first generations of Muslims, both in their everyday lives and in reforming local religious practice. Just as elsewhere in Africa, Salafism has rapidly been gaining ground in northern Mozambique in recent years, at the expense of Sufi Brotherhoods such as the Qadiriyya and Shadhiliyya Orders (cf. Brenner 1993; Kresse 2009; McIntosh 2007; Rosander 1997). The question is why, and what its impact is in a setting of religious pluralism such as Nampula City, where Muslims constitute a minority. Laheij answers these questions by drawing attention to the radical break with notions and interdependence, and corresponding demands for redistribution that Islamic reformism offers to young, upwardly mobile Muslims. Such an analysis links with other work in the Department on what Schlee (2003; see also Schlee and Shongolo 2012) calls processes of "rigidification": the adoption and cultivation of ever more stringent standards of purity for purposes of inclusion and exclusion, whether in struggles over political power or over scarce economic resources. The contribution Laheij makes to furthering understandings of rigidification is that he is interested not only in its normative but also in its epistemological dimensions: he found, in Mozambique, that contestations over demands for purity are rooted in distinct world views.



*Class at a madrasa for men in Nampula City. (Photo: C. Laheij, 2016)*

The visit to the neighbourhood of Laheij's fieldwork included a number of stops to share and discuss these findings. At a reformist *madrasa* (Qur'anic school) where male participants of Nampula City's Islamic reform movement meet every morning to advance their Islamic knowledge, the visitors sat in on one of the classes and participated in a group discussion about people's reasons for joining the reform movement and the difficulties they experience in an environment where many do not share the same beliefs. At a subsequent breakfast meeting with neighbourhood residents of different religious persuasions, members of the group were given an impression of this environment and of how others in the neighbourhood see Islamic reformism. This was followed by a visit to the neighbourhood's community court, which is one of the main fora for dispute resolution in the locality, and by attendance of *qasida* (Islamic poetry) rehearsals at one of the oldest mosques of the neighbourhood, a Sufi mosque. Both occasions presented an opportunity to ask local people about the impact of religious change in northern Mozambique, in the religious domain as well as in the public sphere in general. Finally, after the neighbourhood visit, the group travelled to Mozambique Island to gain a historical perspective on the topic of Laheij's research. Located just off the coast of Nampula Province, this



*A view from the stone town of Mozambique Island down to the lower town, which was originally inhabited by slaves. It is lower because the stones for the upper town were taken from there. (Photo: G. Schlee, 2016)*

island is home to the former capital of Mozambique, representing the historical centre of Islamic expansion in the country.

Luanshya, where **Christian Straube** was doing research on the Zambian Copperbelt, was the round trip's final destination. Straube's fieldwork there focused on developments following the reprivatisation of Zambia's copper sector in 1997, which resulted in several mines being taken over by private and state-owned Chinese mining companies. Originally, Straube had planned to study the ramifications of this development for Chinese-Zambian relations. During the field visit, however, he explained that difficulties in gaining access to Chinese-owned mines had led him to change topics and explore the current uses of former mine clinics, clubs, community centres, taverns and sports facilities in the area. Many of these buildings were constructed by mining companies during the era of paternalism, lasting from the beginnings of industrial mining under corporate colonialism in the 1920s to the operation of the mines by the state-owned Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines in the 1980s and 1990s. During this period, mine towns had resembled total social institutions, with social control over mineworkers and their families being exercised from the depth of the mine shaft to every corner of the miners' housing. However, with reprivatisation, the clinics and other social welfare buildings were stripped from the mines as so-called 'non-core social assets', and they were abandoned by the mines' new owners. They became corporate debris, facing ruination, and Straube studies not only how this fate echoes that of mining town residents under neoliberal reforms, but also how, in the process, buildings have also become inscribed with feelings of nostalgia and belonging, with identifications with the past constituting rallying points for claims of citizenship and alternative futures.

During the visit, Straube gave the group a tour of several social welfare buildings in Mpatamatu, a township situated on the outskirts of Luanshya, which is the main site of his fieldwork. He showed how the buildings have been re-appropriated by township residents since their abandonment by the operators of the mines in 1997, to serve new functions, such as the hosting of Pentecostal worship services in a former sports complex, the teaching of school classes in buildings where mineworkers used to receive their salaries, and the production of coffins in what once was a youth club. According to Straube, these re-appropriations offer valuable insights into how people manoeuvre between continuities and discontinuities in their living environment. For example, the trust in God's care and guidance in the face of anxiety, which was a recurring theme in the Pentecostal services Straube attended in re-appropriated buildings, finds echoes in Mpatamatu's residents' longing for the bygone era of paternalism. Conversely, whereas remnants of the township's infrastructure bear witness to the social prominence and corporate identity that mineworkers used to enjoy, its current take-over by other groups of the labour force, particularly teachers, suggests the dissolution of the township as a mineworkers' space and the transformation of its social stratification. Straube's unravelling of the complex economic and social

history of Mpatamatu through former social welfare buildings, and how people interact with them, highlights the creative agency involved in identity work. It was a fitting conclusion to a productive exchange of ideas and experiences during the trip, and one that participants took with them when they travelled back to their field sites.



*Mpatamatu Sports Complex today houses one church, two schools and a gym for weightlifting.  
(Photo: C. Straube, 2016)*

## **Research Group 'Integration and Conflict along the Upper Guinea Coast of West Africa'**

*Jacqueline Knörr*

### **Background and Outline of Our Research**

The Research Group began its work in 2005 and is currently the only such group world-wide engaging in long-term comparative research on this particular region of Africa. In addition to senior scholars, postdocs and PhD candidates at our MPI, its members include international associates and research partners, currently at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois (USA), the University of Brasilia and the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris. We have continued to involve former PhD students in our work as well as visiting scholars who deal with issues relevant to our research.

The research group studies integration and conflict as interrelated dimensions of social interaction. We conceptualize integrative and violent forms of interaction as facets of the social structures and dynamics prevalent in the societies in which they occur and study them in relation to people's own constructions of identity and difference. Our work takes into account the impact and repercussions of specific historical experiences on the societies we investigate, as these have a vital impact on how values, institutions and traditions are applied in specific strategies of conflict initiation, conflict avoidance, and conflict resolution. The goal of our research is to contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics that affect integration and conflict at the local, regional, and (trans)national levels.

The Upper Guinea Coast of West Africa is particularly heterogeneous in terms of its social and political structures, its ethnic identifications, and the languages spoken there. Despite such differences, local and subregional life-worlds are characterised by generalisable sociopolitical and cultural patterns, including patterns of change, that help to explain variability. The theoretical attention of the research group is absorbed with discovering these patterns of intra-regional similarity and difference, and change and continuity. The region is not a set of atomistic language and cultural entities to be described piecemeal. Historically, its social and cultural makeup has been affected by the many encounters among the different groups and societies located there, as well as by their interaction with the great empires of the Sahel region and with the Europeans who first arrived in this part of Africa in the sixteenth century. European traders and liberated slaves of diverse origins settled in the region; and their interactions among themselves and with local populations played an important role in shaping social configurations. The experiences of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and of external political domination (which included but

was not limited to colonialism) have also influenced people's attitudes towards and relations with strangers.

Some of the countries in the Upper Guinea Coast region have gone through some of the most violent conflicts in Africa in the recent past, while others have experienced wide-spread political instability and recurrent outbreaks of violence. However, the societies of the Upper Guinea Coast have also experienced – and continue to experience – extended periods of integrative and peaceful interaction. There are complex mechanisms, embodied in socio-cultural institutions and in established social and political practices, that allow for the incorporation of strangers, the integration of socio-cultural difference and (re-)conciliation after conflict and crisis.

In Upper Guinea Coast societies, traditional institutions of political power – among them the so-called secret societies – have often played important roles both in situations of conflict and in processes of post-conflict reintegration. In the wake of recent regional conflicts and wars, such institutions have begun to face severe challenges and must now compete with new models of social and political participation. These new models include local and international NGOs operating at different levels and in various fields of social, economic and political development. We examine the controversies and contestations involved in the interactions between traditional modes of political authority and new forms of leadership, power and participation.

As social and cultural configurations in the Upper Guinea Coast region have been strongly influenced by both internal and external encounters and exchanges, we also include societies beyond the Upper Guinea Coast in our research, especially those that were and are connected to the region by (for example) the Atlantic slave trade, the expansion of colonialism, and global networks of exchange. In this way, we aim to achieve enhanced understandings both of the involvement of the Upper Guinea Coast in contemporary processes of local, regional and (trans)national interaction and of the identities and alliances that those processes have generated and continue to generate.

Our research has focused on social dynamics that are closely interrelated with processes of integration and conflict in the region, including especially the following:

- Conceptualizations and practices of nation- and statehood under conditions of socio-economic crisis and inequality; post-war/post-conflict practices of nation-/statehood from 'below'.
- Conceptualizations and practices of nation- and statehood in contexts of ethnic diversity; the relationship between ethnic and national identities; the interaction of ethnic, local and national identifications among different social actors and groups.
- The role of settler/creole groups in interethnic relations, postcolonial nation-building and (re-)constructions of nation- and statehood; creole identities and languages in processes of integration and conflict in contexts of ethnic diversity.
- Traditional and local leadership vis-à-vis the nation-state's institutions and (I) NGOs; their interactions and their impact on political discourses and practices on local, (trans-)national and regional levels.

- Discourses concerning origin and descent and their impact on intergroup relations, identity constructions and ethnic representations vis-à-vis the nation-state, NGOs and international (political) actors.
- Contestations and interactions of different models and practices of 'gender' and 'generation' and their impact on society in general.
- The role of transnational and diasporic relations and interactions on social and political configurations and practices on local, (trans-) national and regional levels.
- Processes of identification and discourses of integration in contexts of prolonged humanitarian assistance for asylum seekers.
- The role of oral histories, experiential knowledge, formal education and religious beliefs in processes of inclusion, exclusion and differentiation.
- The unfolding and ending of crisis, normality and exception; the production of crisis by local, national and international dynamics and actors; the social and political effects of the Ebola crisis on social relations.

### **Doctoral Theses and Degrees**

Both of the two young scholars who were our doctoral students during the report period – Anaïs Ménard and Maarten Bedert – have submitted and defended their PhD thesis, obtaining outstanding results.

In her PhD thesis entitled 'Beyond autochthony discourses: Sherbro identity and the (re-)construction of social and national cohesion in Sierra Leone', Anaïs Ménard explores the role of Sherbro identity in Sierra Leone, an identity that, due to its particular history, plays an important role in the context of local and national processes of integration and as a mediating force in interethnic and rural-urban relations. She studied these interactions and constructions of identities in different locales, all of which are characterized by increased in-migration and by intense interaction between different (ethnic) groups and between state agency and local modes of integrating differences and strangers. In her thesis, Ménard shows how ethnic identity may not function primarily as a means and strategy of differentiation, but rather as a contribution to trans-ethnic and national cohesion by being situated in-between specific relevant collective categories of identification that may otherwise be thought to be mutually exclusive and even antagonistic. Whereas the roles played by widely acknowledged 'in-between' groups – e.g., creoles, 'Eurafricans', Métis, etc. – in the (post-)colonial construction of trans-ethnic and national identities have found substantial research interest, the roles that ethnic groups perceived as autochthonous have played and continue to play in this regard have, until now, attracted little attention. Ménard also shows that the 'tribal imperative' that is often attributed to African societies may be neither 'tribal' nor 'imperative' but, rather, a trans-ethnic construction. Her dissertation contributes significantly to the understanding of discourses and social practices that relate to and engage with ethnic identities,

autochthony discourses, and the (re-)construction of nationhood in postcolonial and post-conflict contexts.

Maarten Bedert's dissertation 'Of strangers and secrets: continuity and change in the articulation of belonging in contemporary Liberia' is set among the Dan, a small ethnic group in the northeastern border region of Liberia. He views his field site as a set of relations between people and their environment and observes the interconnectedness and relatedness of people and institutions from a bottom-up perspective. He focuses his analysis on the major constituents of social relations among the Dan and along the Upper Guinea Coast more generally – namely landlord-stranger reciprocity and secrecy – and thereby manages to reveal the integrative potential of institutions that have usually been described as establishing and maintaining difference and separation. He shows that, despite severe conflict between landlords and strangers, the reciprocity and secrecy characterizing their interrelations have an integrative potential that has been largely overlooked. Not only do Bedert's observations lead to a better understanding of Upper Guinea Coast societies; they also show that it may well be socially beneficial to let local institutions play central rather than marginal roles in processes of reintegration and conflict resolution. He also demonstrates that it is important to realize that ethnic identification and difference in Liberia, as elsewhere, are not root causes of conflict but are instrumentalised to serve as strategies to gain access to manifold resources in situations and contexts corresponding to experiences of (collective) deprivation and marginalization. Bedert's dissertation provides an in-depth analysis of an impressively rich body of ethnographic data and makes an important contribution to the understanding of the dynamics of change and continuity in processes of inclusion and exclusion in post-war Liberia and beyond.

### **The Otto Hahn Medal and the Otto Hahn Award of the Max Planck Society**

Anaïs Ménard has been awarded both the Otto Hahn Medal for her PhD thesis and the Otto Hahn Award for her postdoctoral research proposal. The Otto Hahn Medal is awarded by the Max Planck Society for outstanding PhD theses upon nomination by their respective institute. Among the recipients of the Otto Hahn Medal, a few particularly outstanding scholars are also awarded the Otto Hahn Award upon proposal of a postdoctoral project. The Otto Hahn Award provides funding and support for a two-year postdoctoral research position at a research institution of the candidate's choice, after which the awardee will be promoted to a W2 position and supplied with the funds to lead their own research group at a Max Planck Institute.

In 2015, Ménard was one of the two Otto Hahn Medal recipients who received the Otto Hahn Award for her proposed postdoctoral project entitled 'Who's afraid of integration? Race, ethnicity and belonging in contexts of migration'. In comparative perspective, Ménard will explore the social experience of race and ethnicity among second-generation immigrants in France and Germany, countries that differ in terms of their historical trajectories with regard to immigration and their political models

of integration. Taken together, these differences result in varying societal and legal conditions that affect how second-generation-immigrants perceive their identity and belonging within the respective European nation-states. The project will deal with the lived experience of being perceived as an immigrant in contemporary European contexts. It will focus on public discourses regarding integration and exclusion and on social practices of self-identification and self-representation and their impact on social relations.

This is the first time that the Otto Hahn Medal and the Otto Hahn Award have been awarded to a PhD candidate at our institute, and it is only the second time that the Otto Hahn Award has been received by a PhD candidate in the state of Saxony-Anhalt. The bestowal of these most prestigious awards for new PhDs in Germany on one of our own has certainly been an outstanding and most joyful accomplishment within our Upper Guinea Coast group, the Department and the Institute.



*Anaïs Ménard's presentation at the General Assembly of the Max Planck Society, 15 June 2016.  
(Photo: J. Knörr, 2016)*

**Individual Research Projects (in alphabetical order)**

**Jonas Klee's** doctoral project deals with the relationship between different varieties of Luso-Creole identity and processes of integration and conflict in the Ziguinchor region of Senegal. He explores whether creole populations' former role as political and commercial elites continues to give them a privileged position in specific social and political contexts and how they make use of cultural and historical resources to stress differences from and similarities with other non-creole Casamançais and Senegalese, on the one hand, and creole immigrants from Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, on the other. In doing so, he will also draw on comparative materials regarding creole identities in the Upper Guinea Coast region.

**Jacqueline Knörr** is continuing her research on creolization and pidginization of identities, languages and cultural representations in Upper Guinea Coast societies and Indonesia, exploring in particular their roles in the construction of transethnic commonalities and social concepts and political practices of nation- and statehood in postcolonial contexts of significant diversity. Most recently, she has focused on the interaction of creolization and pidginization, on the one hand, and postcolonial concepts and practices of cosmopolitanism and transnationalism, on the other. She has also deepened her understanding of initiation practices in their relation to specific perceptions of social personhood, and she has continued to follow the biographies of former (re-)migrant children and youths, a long-term project that has been going on for thirty years and now involves people in their forties and fifties.

**Agathe Ménétrier's** doctoral project investigates the relationship between processes of identification and discourses of integration among long-term refugees in the context of prolonged humanitarian assistance in Dakar, Senegal. Through ethnographic observation of the daily lives of these refugees, she aims to shed light on their coping and adaptation mechanisms as related to the strategies of assistance employed by relief workers. She explores how the latter – based on gendered, cultural, and ethnic ascriptions – apply measures of inclusion and exclusion to specific groups of refugees in the context of their integrative operation and how the ones who are targeted negotiate to fit or escape these ascriptions. Particular attention is paid to the local context in which migration is experienced and to the lives of refugees beyond 'refugeeness'.

**William P. Murphy's** research and writing has focused simultaneously on rethinking the paradigmatic analytical models of Upper Guinea Coast social and political organization, as applied to recent political crises and post-conflict institutional rebuilding, and on the analysis of the language of patron-client reciprocity, viewed as social critique articulated by clients in post-conflict socio-political reconstruction. He has also engaged in the social-structural analysis and critique of psychiatric models of post-conflict community reconciliation of ex-child combatants and studied the language and logic of violence in the civil wars of Liberia and Sierra

Leone, employing political theory concerning patron-client relations and a semiotic approach to cultural reflexivity.

**David O’Kane** has continued his research and publication activity on education policy in post-war Sierra Leone. Most recently, he has been developing a new project dealing with decision-making and strategic choices of local respondents in the Sierra Leonean city of Makeni in their struggle to combat the 2013–2015 Ebola Virus Disease and its effects on their community – a struggle that has become more difficult with the sudden and unexpected deceleration of the international response to that crisis.

**Anita Schroven** has engaged in comparative research concerning experiences of recent crises in Sierra Leone and Guinea. She has explored how societies reacted to the Ebola outbreak, comparing this with reactions to previous experiences of violence and war and focusing her analysis on the question of how generational and gender relations have evolved under the given circumstances. She has also investigated the intricacies of the unfolding and ending of crises, along with the corresponding repercussions for concepts and practices of normality and crisis, exploring how these result from interactions of local, national, and international dynamics and are influenced, among locals, by past experiences with outside interventions.



*A child's grave in the burial ground of Kailahun's Ebola Treatment Unit (ETU). (Photo: A. Schroven, 2016)*

**Wilson Trajano Filho** has focused on notions of personhood and citizenship in the coastal Upper Guinea Coast region. He found that the sentiment of belonging to and identifying with a community, and with the corresponding rights of citizenship, is linked to a conceptualization of personhood based on the individual's membership in a corporate group (e.g., lineage, territorial unit, age group, initiation society). He relates this pattern to the patrimonial grammar of both the political cultures of West African coastal societies and the European empires that expanded into the region in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The creole centres, which emerged in the process of interaction between different local groups and European settlers along the West African coast, were the first to take steps towards the constitution of the nation-states that currently exist in the region. Wilson Trajano Filho's findings suggest that, as a result of having incorporated the aforementioned concepts of belonging, these nation-states continue to be characterized by a holistic and non-individualist notion of personhood that ties the nation-state's representatives to corporate groups.

### **Conferences, Workshops, Panels**

Members of our Research Group organized two conferences at our Institute, two panels at major international conferences, and several internal workshops (which included visitors).

In October 2014, Jacqueline Knörr and Wilson Trajano Filho organized the conference 'Creole Languages and Postcolonial Diversity in Comparative Perspective' at our Institute. The conference attracted many well-established colleagues working in this (interdisciplinary) field of research and included young researchers as participants and speakers as well. The meeting turned out to be a lively forum for sophisticated and challenging interdisciplinary debate and received, subsequently, very positive reviews. Drawing on research in different regions, including but not restricted to the Upper Guinea Coast, participants explored the relationships between the social meanings and functions of creole languages and their social, political, and historical contextualisations. We discussed the roles that creole languages play in processes of integration and conflict and in creating diversity and unity (and "unity-in-diversity") at different societal levels. Participants explored how creole languages serve as vehicles for establishing and mediating differences, channelling conflicts, and (re-)establishing cohesion through their use in historical narratives, political discourses, and popular culture. They discussed the relationship between creole languages and other types of languages – such as indigenous, national, and official languages – and examined the hierarchies that are constructed by relating them to one another and to different groups of people in various social contexts. The different contributions revealed how the role and meanings of creole languages and, more specifically, their potential and limitations with regard to transethnic identifications and cohesion, largely depend on how they are socially, politically and historically situated and contextualised in society at large. A volume entitled *Creolization and*

*pidginization in contexts of postcolonial diversity: language, culture, identity*, co-edited by Jacqueline Knörr and Wilson Trajano Filho and including revised and elaborated versions of most contributions to the conference, is currently under review with Brill. First reviews have been decidedly affirmative.

In November 2015, and in reaction to the Ebola crisis that had hit our region of research, Anita Schroven (in cooperation with Rose-Marie Beck from the University of Leipzig) organized the conference 'Beyond Ebola: knowledge production and the limitations of translation' at our Institute. Employing approaches from Science and Technology Studies, participants explored effects of the integration and translation of anthropological knowledge in the medico-humanitarian interventions in West Africa. Reflecting on the humanitarian industry's established modes of knowledge selection, participants observed that there is a problematic conceptual segregation between what is thought to be the 'pure' academic field of medical anthropology and 'applied' or 'contract' anthropology. The majority of the workshop papers, currently being edited by Anita Schroven and Janice Graham (Dalhousie University, Canada), will be submitted in a proposal for a theme issue to a medical-anthropology journal. Concerning the Ebola crisis, Anita Schroven also co-organised a panel at the MAGic conference 2015 in Sussex (organised by the EASA Medical Anthropology Network and the RAI Medical Anthropology Committee), as well as a round table at ECAS 2015 in Paris.

Maarten Bedert and Anaïs Ménard, who were, at the time, still doctoral students, co-organized two panels at international conferences: 'Rethinking Conflict in the Upper Guinea Coast Region: ethnographies of the post-war moment' at the 2014 African Studies Association Meeting in Indianapolis; and 'Secret Societies and Resistance in West Africa' at the 2015 European Conference on African Studies (ECAS) in Paris. Apart from that, all members of the group presented papers at various international conferences. In late 2016, we began developing the thematic design for our research group's next conference at which we intend to deal with the societal, political and cultural effects of out-migration on West African societies.

Our annual 'Workshop in the Field' – which has always connected workshoping with getting to know each other's field site – came to a temporary halt after 2013 for two reasons: our PhD students had concluded their field research and were writing up their doctoral theses; and the Ebola outbreak made such a workshop inadvisable under the given conditions. In addition to that, the recruitment of new PhD students was delayed for one year due to the Ebola crisis, and, as a result, no fieldwork was done during that period. However, our previous Workshops in the Field proved to be advantageous for all members of the group. Getting to know each other's respective field site, and experiencing varying fieldwork conditions, enabled us to discuss each other's data in a more in-depth and comparative manner. It also allowed all participants to realize that the other researchers' field sites, like their own, involved intricacies and obstacles to overcome as well, thereby helping them to avoid the 'exceptionalist' bias often found among young (and not so young) anthropologists.

Having visited PhD students in the field and getting to know their field sites allowed supervisors to contextualize and envision their students' data, which also facilitated the interaction between supervisors and PhD students in the writing-up process. With both of our new doctoral students currently conducting their fieldwork in Senegal, the next 'Workshop in the Field' is scheduled to take place there in December 2017.

Our Annual Research Group Retreats were continued as usual (printouts of annual programmes are available on request). At these retreats we discussed our current research, including theoretical and methodological issues and the challenges and obstacles involved in fieldwork. In addition, we conducted mock defences and engaged in planning and coordinating joint endeavours such as publications, workshops and the invitation of visiting scholars.

### **Publications (see also the special section on Publications in this volume)**

Group members' individual publications are documented in the Publications section of this Report and will not be dealt with here. Two volumes have been co-edited by members of the Group, namely *The Upper Guinea Coast in global perspective* (J. Knörr and C. Kohl) and *Politics and policies in Upper Guinea Coast societies: change and continuity*<sup>4</sup> (C. K. Højbjerg, J. Knörr and W. P. Murphy). Apart from that, several joint Max Planck Working Papers have been published by members of the Group; other joint papers as well as a co-edited book are currently in the making (see above: *Conferences, Workshops, Panels*).

### **Outreach: (social) media, blogs, politics (see also the Appendix of the Report)**

Members of the Upper Guinea Coast Research Group have been and continue to be involved in various networks, working groups and commissions of governmental and non-governmental agencies and political parties, thereby sharing their regional and anthropological expertise beyond academia and impacting political agendas and policy-making in various spheres of social and political life. Group members have also been invited as speakers and called on as experts by various government institutions (e.g., the United States Department of State; foreign ministries of Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium, and the German development agency, the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit or GIZ). Members of the Group have been interviewed, and their expertise has been featured in newspaper articles and radio programs particularly in connection with the Ebola crisis, the political upheavals in the region and the practice of Female Genital Cutting worldwide.

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<sup>4</sup> This book appeared in November 2016, but as the book's copyright states 2017, it is not listed in the Publications section of this Report.

The Group is maintaining a Facebook page named 'Integration and Conflict along the Upper Guinea Coast' (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/UpperGuineaCoast>) as well as a blog under the same name (<https://upperguineacoast.wordpress.com>). Both have proved to be effective means of establishing a presence on social media. The Facebook group now includes, we believe, most major scholars active in research on this region of West Africa.

### **In Memoriam**

There were sad moments, too. Christian Kordt Højbjerg, a long-time member of our Research Group and associate professor at the University of Aarhus (Denmark), died in April 2014 at the age of 52 years. Christian made great and valuable contributions to our work. He demonstrated mastery of many skills: he was a dedicated ethnographer, a critical and in-depth analyst, an inspirational teacher, a compassionate man and a fine scholar with an open and active mind. We have lost a wonderful friend and colleague whom we will miss and keep in our hearts and minds as an inspiration for our lives and research.



*Christian Kordt Højbjerg, 1961–2014. (Photo: D. Xygalatis, 2011)*

## **Report on the Activities of the Centre for Anthropological Studies on Central Asia**

*Peter Finke*

### **Introduction**

Central Asia has been a major focus of research activities in the Department ‘Integration and Conflict’ from the earliest days on. Since its founding in 2012, the Centre for Anthropological Studies on Central Asia (CASCA) serves as a coordinating framework for these activities, in collaboration with the Department for Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies at the University of Zurich and with many other colleagues throughout the world. Defining Central Asia in a broad sense to include the former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as well as Mongolia, Xinjiang and Tibet, CASCA has turned into one of the largest and most productive arenas for anthropological engagement with the region worldwide. Today, with some twenty scholars as members, including twelve PhD students in Halle, Tübingen and Zurich, and with an extended network of associates and collaborators, it is a very prominent player in the academic field.

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the people in Central Asia have seen some turbulent periods with economic booms and crises, growing social tensions and ethnic conflicts as well as rising global interest in the region due to its geo-strategic location and worries about the spread of radical Islam. This contrasts sharply with the view of most researchers who, on the basis of their experiences in Central Asia, describe it as a relatively peaceful spot on the planet. In economic terms, some parts of the region have seen a steady increase in living standards since the early days of post-socialism, while others fare less well. A common theme, however, is the growth in inequalities in a world that is much less secure than the one of a generation earlier.

Academically, Central Asia is still a little known place, although it represents a growing niche for anthropologists and political scientists in particular. In many parts of the region, research conditions remain difficult, to put it mildly, and in some they seem almost impossible at the moment. The focus of attention has, accordingly, been shifting from some states to others in recent years. In particular, the Chinese parts of Central Asia are prone to suddenly changing political circumstances and may often be inaccessible. Research topics have also changed – from a focus on economic issues and socio-political transformations in the aftermath of socialism to a broader set of questions regarding identity politics, religious movements, the rise of consumerism and modern communication technology, and the role of international NGOs.

## Recent Activities of CASCA

The aim of CASCA is to strengthen academic engagement with the region through our own research projects, international collaboration and the organization of scientific meetings of various kinds. The major event in the recent past was our hosting of the biennial conference of the European Society for Central Asian Studies (ESCAS) in October 2015 at the University of Zurich. As this is the largest organization of its kind in Europe, hosting the conference was a particularly welcome opportunity to position CASCA as a prominent player in academic engagement with the region. Under the umbrella theme, 'Central Asia in the XXI Century: historical trajectories, contemporary challenges and everyday encounters', some 150 scholars from all over the world congregated for three days to discuss new findings and insights into the history and current situation in Central Asia. The event was financially and logistically supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), the MPI for Social Anthropology, the University of Zurich and its Department of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies, as well as the City and Canton of Zurich.

Apart from hosting the ESCAS conference, members of CASCA have participated in numerous other conferences and workshops. Especially noteworthy was the CASCA panel at the meeting of the Latin American Association for Asian and African Studies at the University of Colima, Mexico, in 2014, which was put together by Soledad Jiménez Tovar. The conference was opened with the keynote lecture held by Günther Schlee in Spanish. An English version of his lecture was presented at the University of Campinas, Brazil, and has since been reworked as a journal article (Schlee 2017).

Another seminal event was the first Summer School organized by CASCA with Sarsen Amanzholov East Kazakhstan State University in the city of Oskemen in 2016. It was followed by a three-day retreat of the CASCA group in the mountains of Katon-Karagay, in the Altay Range. Previously, retreats featuring intensive discussions on projects and publications, and accompanied by social activities and explorations of the local setting, had been organised regularly in Switzerland; but this was the first time one was held in Central Asia.

Retreats are one excellent way of exchanging ideas, as they usually involve most of the current members of CASCA getting together for several days in a relaxed and mutually supportive atmosphere. Another important activity has been visits to the field sites, particularly, of CASCA's PhD candidates by their respective supervisors. The idea here is to have intensive face-to-face meetings that allow the visitors to become familiar with the actual field site where the study is taking place. During the last few years, such visits have taken the two directors of CASCA, Günther Schlee and Peter Finke, several times to Kazakhstan where Bakhyt Muratbayeva, Indira Alibayeva, Dinara Abildenova, Zarina Mukanova and Verena La Mela are currently

doing research. Visits have also been paid to Margarethe Waldt<sup>5</sup> in Uzbekistan, Baktygul Karimova and Louise Bechtold in Kyrgyzstan, Linda Tubach in Mongolia and to Meltem Sancak, who works with Central Asian migrants in Turkey.

The other visible expression of research activities is, of course, publications. The work done on Central Asia ranks very prominently in the Berghahn series on 'Integration and Conflict', as is demonstrated by the publication in recent years of monographs by Peter Finke (*Variations on Uzbek identity*, 2014), Sophie Roche (*Domesticating youth*, 2014), Rita Sanders (*Staying at home*, 2016) and Mateusz Laszczkowski (*City of the future*, 2016). Based on papers given by CASCA members during the conference at the University of Colima, and including further invited contributions, a volume entitled *Pertenencias múltiples, identidades cruzadas: nuevas perspectivas sobre Asia Central*, edited by Soledad Jiménez Tovar, is, at this writing, being published by the El Colegio de México. An overview of CASCA activities can be found in *Framing the research, initial projects*, volume VI of the 'Field Notes and Research Projects' series of the Department 'Integration and Conflict', while another volume in this same series – *Notes on food and identity in Central Asia*, edited by Aida Alymbaeva – is about to appear (volume IX). In addition to that, members of CASCA have published extensively in different journals and other places (see the lists of publications).

### Current CASCA Projects

Research schemes within CASCA are manifold and flourishing. Many of them are conducted in close cooperation with the anthropology unit in Zurich. Since its founding just a few years ago, CASCA has been quite successful in acquiring third party funding from various sources. Research is done on a broad range of topics, which include economic processes and social transformations, identity politics and inter-ethnic relations as well as emic understandings of kinship and the consequences of long-distance migration on both sending and receiving societies.

The largest joint project, entitled 'Ethnic differentiation, interethnic relations and conflict in Central Asia: the case of the Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kazakstan', was funded via the D-A-CH program of the SNSF and the German Research Council (DFG). Three PhD students, Indira Alibayeva, Baktygul Karimova and Khadija Abbasi, and one senior scientist, Wolfgang Holzwarth, are looking at the different manifestations of being Uzbek in areas adjacent to Uzbekistan. The sites covered have seen various degrees of conflict, with the exception of Kazakhstan, and diverging national policies towards their respective minorities. Taking the earlier study by Peter Finke on identity configurations within Uzbeki-

<sup>5</sup> In 2016, Margarethe Waldt, who has now finished her fieldwork and archival research on the Khrushchev era in Uzbekistan, received the Dr. Walther Liebenz Research Award, for her MA thesis, written at the Humboldt University in Berlin before joining the MPI.

stan as its point of departure, this project aims to develop a more comprehensive description of such configurations across the region. As this report is being prepared, the PhD students are writing up their results. A final workshop on the project with external participants has been held, and an edited volume of the comparative findings is planned.

Central Asia is also one of the research sites of 'Kinship universals and variations' (KUV), the new project in the Department 'Integration and Conflict'. Building on the earlier EU-funded project on 'Kinship and social security' (KASS), which compared different sites within Europe, the aim is to study the meaning of and variations in kinship in other parts of the world. More on the overall research agenda is laid out in the part of this report written by Patrick Heady, Alexander Pashos and Martine Guichard. Within the framework of KUV, three PhD projects are located in Central Asia, namely, the ones by Louise Bechtold on ritual economy and feasts in southern Kyrgyzstan, Verena La Mela's on the role of kinship in trade relations among Uygurs in south-eastern Kazakhstan and Zarina Mukanova's on genealogies and social relations among Kazakhs in the same region.



*An elderly Uzbek from Afghanistan doing pile sorting. (Photo: K. Abbasi, 2016)*



*Neighbours with rope waiting for matchmakers to take a fee to enter the bride's house.  
(Photo: D. Abildenova, 2015)*

Another topic that is shared by several members of CASCA is the fate of members of the Kazakh diaspora, many of whom followed the call by president Nursultan Nazarbaev to resettle to their ‘ancestral homeland’. When Kazakhstan achieved independence in 1991, the titular nation made up only some 40 per cent of the population, and many who qualified as ‘Kazakh’ were highly Russified. Those Kazakhs who had stayed outside of Soviet influence for most of the twentieth century seemed an ideal tool in ‘Kazakhizing’ the country. So far, around one million people have followed the president’s invitation, and their various fates in integrating in Kazakhstan as well as maintaining relations with their places of origin in Uzbekistan, China and Mongolia are being investigated by Indira Alibayeva, Zarina Mukanova and Peter Finke as one aspect of their current projects.

Research by CASCA members also extends into the eastern parts of Central Asia with three projects devoted to the current situation of pastoral nomads. Peter Finke continues his longitudinal fieldwork among Kazakhs in western Mongolia; Linda Tubach is working among neighbouring Mongolian-speaking groups; and Emilia Sulek studies Tibetans in China’s Qinghai province. All three sites are populated primarily by pastoralists who try to adapt – more or less successfully – to the age of the market and, thereby, also develop different forms of formal or informal co-operation among themselves. In each setting, people also have to struggle with state interference, for better or for worse, and with ill-conceived suggestions that they turn to more enclosed types of livestock management to prevent a ‘tragedy

of the commons'. By and large, however, things have taken a turn to the better for pastoralists in Central Asia with the expansion of local and national markets, rising demand for animal products in urban areas and falling of prices for transportation. Even in Kazakhstan, where pastoral movements had almost ceased by the mid-1990s, the economic recovery has made this an attractive niche yet again, as a pilot study conducted last year revealed.

The migration of different groups into and out of Central Asia has been a recurring pattern for decades and, indeed, for most of the history of the region. Since the end of the Soviet Union, this has taken new forms. In particular, with the economic downturn in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, several million people have been on the move in search of jobs. Russia has been the most frequented destination, but Turkey has become an increasingly popular option in recent times as well. The fate of these migrants to Turkey, their motives and integration into a society that is viewed as being rather similar in cultural and linguistic terms, is being studied by Meltem Sancak. While this migration has been strongly gendered, with women being engaged in different kinds of domestic work, Central Asian men have also started to migrate to Turkey to work in trade, on construction sites or in restaurants in Istanbul and other major cities. Relationships with the local population are often strained, partly because of a mismatch of cultural expectations, but also due to the fact that most of the Central Asian migrants stay in Turkey illegally, thus becoming vulnerable to exploitative practices.

### **Findings by CASCA Researchers**

These projects, in all their diversity, have a number of common themes that invite comparison. As is the case for most studies in the former socialist world, the economic transformations that have been going on for more than 25 years form the backdrop for all other developments. While the relevance of the term 'postsocialism' may be debatable after such a long time, some of the legacies of socialism are still observable, although in some places more than in others. Among these, uncertainties of property rights and specific attitudes towards the market and entrepreneurship rank prominently. At the same time, it is here that differences between, say, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, are most visible – socialist legacies being stronger in the latter than in the former. In CASCA, there has been a concurrent shift in choices of research sites, due partly to restrictions in some countries. As a result, the current projects deal primarily with places where market transitions have proceeded quite far and people have started to invest more openly in new businesses. Many have benefited from this development, although by far not all and not in every region. But the process of adapting to new conditions and taking advantage of new opportunities has clearly progressed in recent years and led to moderate recovery in many parts of Central Asia, including most notably Kazakhstan, Mongolia and Tibet, as shown by the research of Indira Alibayeva, Peter Finke and Emilia Sulek.

The development of the market economy has had several implications, however, which seem almost predictable. One is growing inequality and precarity for at least part of the population. Apart from threatening some with impoverishment, this affects a much larger segment of society, namely, those who have to deal with the insecurity that a largely unregulated market economy inevitably brings with it. Insecurity is further aggravated by the necessity of conforming to social norms in everyday life that require the public display of success, even if this is hardly affordable. This trend is most obvious in the ever more opulent staging of life-cycle ceremonies, as described by Louise Bechtold and Dinara Abildenova. Often, people go into debt in order to fulfil social obligations that increase constantly as the nouveaux riches aim to match or top each other. Needless to say, this also has an impact on cohesion and the prospects for cooperation within society. And, as soon as a new crisis sets in, it endangers the moderate affluence that average households have been able to achieve over the last couple of years.

Migration has become the strategy adopted most often by those who have not benefitted from economic recovery (and also by some who have). Millions of men – especially, young men – have left Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan for Russia, thus affecting those who stayed behind deeply, as described by Louise Bechtold, Baktygul Karimova and Meltem Sancak. Some of them have never returned, decid-

ing instead to settle down in Russia or becoming victims of Russian right-wing aggression; but the majority have used money earned in Russia to invest back home. As noted previously, recent trends in Central Asian labour migration have established Turkey as the second most popular destination. Among the Central Asian states, however, Kazakhstan is unique in being more of a destination, rather than a point of departure, for migration. Migrants to Kazakhstan include not only labour migrants from Kyrgyzstan or Uzbekistan but, especially, the ethnic Kazakh ‘repatriates’ from China, Mongolia and Uzbekistan, mentioned above. As is true for other migrants as well, the ‘oralman’, as they are officially called in Kazakhstan, maintain intensive transnational ties with their countries of origin and the kin left behind.



*Despite the disavowal of responsibility, the state authorities did provide Ak Zhar residents with electricity. (Photo: E. Isabaeva, 2012)*



*Young Tajikistani Uzbeks riding donkeys in a sportive contest. (Photo: W. Holzwarth, 2015)*

Another way of adapting to changing political and economic conditions is to utilise ties of kinship and other social networks. Traditionally, these have played an important role all over Central Asia, albeit in varying ways and according to different rules. In Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, where members of the KUV research team are conducting their fieldwork, it is first of all patrilineal descent and an extended lineage-based system of social relationships, economic support and inheritance rules that matter. This is confirmed by the findings of Zarina Mukanova, Dinara Abildonova and Louise Bechtold. Other types of relatives – as well as non-relatives – also have their place, but, at least ideologically, agnates take first place. The situation is very different for the Uyghurs and Uzbeks studied by Verena La Mela and Indira Alibayeva, among whom locality and membership in the same community are key points of reference. Within the framework of KUV, and also in other projects, CASCA members will ask how these cultural models are adapted to changing economic and social circumstances, and also to the demographic changes in Central Asia. Here also issues of trust, cooperation and solidarity in rapidly stratifying societies come into play.

All the changes and transformations cited above have also led to new configurations of people's identity with far-reaching implications for mutual relationships. One theme that runs through many of the studies is the distinction of genealogical and territorial models of identity, understood as a cognitive scheme, that had been developed by Peter Finke (2014). While concepts of ethnicity are not at the core of all CASCA projects, they play into all of them to various degrees. This is most explicitly the case for the project on Uzbeks in four different Central Asian countries. In a very different way, ethnicity is also a prominent theme in the research on Kazakh repatriates and the contested understandings of ethnicity entertained by locals and migrants in Kazakhstan. But ethnic demarcations and conflicts show up in other cases as well, as they form an important part of people's everyday experience. And they account for a broad spectrum of state policies that try to re-define the basis of national identity and majority-minority relations.

### **Conclusion**

CASCA has been flourishing now for almost five years, and it still keeps growing, both in membership and as a worldwide network of scholars. This is clearly in line with our aim to strengthen scientific knowledge about a region so neglected in academia. It will, so we hope, also have a positive impact on the life of people in Central Asia. Given rapid globalization, the emergence of economic opportunities and growing social cleavages as well as new modes of identity politics and conflicts, developments in Central Asia are relevant for all of us. With its emphasis on everyday life experiences and on the hopes and worries of real people, anthropological scholarship can play an important role in Central Asian studies. CASCA will continue to make important contributions along these lines.

## Kinship Universals and Variation (KUV)

*Patrick Heady with Martine Guichard and Alexander Pashos*

Kinship provides individuals in all societies with a basic part of their identity – and typically does so at several levels. Domestically, it provides people with homes, practical and emotional support and the corresponding obligations, and access to a short-range web of bilateral ties. Politically and legally, it provides people with claims to citizenship and to ethnic and lineage identities – as well as clusters of rights and duties associated with property and inheritance. In many societies it is ritually elaborated in the form of godparenthood, milk kinship, and so on. For all these reasons it is central to the focus of the Department 'Integration and Conflict' on the themes of identity and cohesion.

The KUV research team currently has eight members – four senior staff: Patrick Heady (coordinator), Günther Schlee, Alexander Pashos and Martine Guichard – and four PhD students: Louise Bechtold, Verena La Mela, Zarina Mukanova and Barbara Pieta. We aim to treat kinship as part of a science of society, engaging with some of the big comparative questions that were first raised by Morgan and the other ancestors of kinship anthropology a century and a half ago.

### Concepts, Methods and Sources of Data

But is this a realistic ambition? There are reasons for thinking that it might not be. You do not have to spend much time scanning through journals such as *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (JRAI)*, *American Anthropologist* or *Current Anthropology* to realise that experts disagree – sometimes implicitly and quietly, but often overtly and passionately – both about what kinship is, and about how it should be studied. The disagreements are of several kinds – and the differences which attract most attention are not necessarily the ones with the most significant implications for research. There are two which appear to raise fundamental difficulties.

Most famous is the dispute – ignited by Durkheim in a book review in 1897 but still generating books and special journal issues – as to whether kinship is 'biological' or a matter of social relationships and 'culture'. Participants in this dispute do not always define their terms, but we can see what is involved by taking the example of scholars who do, and considering the implications for the claims that we made in our opening paragraph. When writing that paragraph, the idea of kinship that we had in mind was something like 'a system of relationships, with its own vocabulary, that incorporates but goes beyond procreative connections'.

Strict sociobiologists would have problems with the final part of this definition – the words about 'going beyond procreative connections' – because for them kin relationships are simply those between people who are connected through biological

procreation, and kin behaviour depends on indicators of the closeness of this procreative link. They therefore tend either to ignore, or to exclude, ‘classificatory’ relationships, as well as those that are based on adoption, genealogical fictions and symbolic elaborations. The field this defines is clear, but it leaves out a good deal of what we are interested in. The opposing position – originally set out by Durkheim and most recently reiterated by Sahlins (2013) – is that those relationships which are not ‘biological’ in the sense just given must be ‘cultural’ (in Durkheim’s terms “defined by Society”). However, the cultural meanings involved are not limited to the obviously non-biological examples – and so there is an important sense in which all kin relationships are culturally defined. But culture is the opposite of biology, and so kinship (or at least the part that truly matters) cannot be biological at all. *QED!*

If this sounds a little illogical, that is because it is. The question is badly posed – asking us to choose just one aspect of kinship (biological or non-biological) when empirically given kinship systems always include relationships of both kinds – and often have ways of distinguishing between them, for instance by qualifiers such as ‘birth-’, ‘step-’, ‘adoptive-’. This is the crucial point, because it means that in all societies the relationships covered by our somewhat clumsy definition – ‘a system of relationships, with its own vocabulary, that incorporates but goes beyond procreative connections’ – can be identified in practice, and that we therefore do have a clearly defined object of research. The composite structure of really existing kinship systems also casts doubt on *a priori* attempts to decide which kinds of theory will be relevant to any particular problem. This is just as true for sociobiologists, whose narrowly defined field of ‘biological’ relationships might nevertheless be influenced by cultural factors, as it is for the Durkheim-Sahlins party, whose ‘culturally’ defined relationships might also be influenced by ways of thinking and feeling that are biologically innate. Whether and when these cross-theoretical entanglements apply in fact, is a matter for empirical investigation.

Another serious controversy, associated with the ‘new kinship’, concerns the supposed need to choose between two kinds of research goals: the interpretation of meaningful behaviour and the construction of valid general theories. For reasons of space we will deal with this argument more briefly. As the title of our project suggests, we are committed to the second goal – but, as a method, we are equally committed to the first. Here again, but in a more subtle way, the choice – between understanding meanings and intentions, and formulating general theories – is badly posed. The need for choice would only arise if general theories could somehow ignore understandings and intentions, or if the psychology of cognition and motivation had nothing relevant to say about particular interactions.

Our final argument for a scientific approach is cruder: over the last few decades several groups of scholars have ignored the problems that we have just been discussing, and have simply got on with their research – often with notable success. We include in this list: the work of historical demographers on family systems; work by anthropologists and linguists on the logical structure, and likely historical

evolution, of kinship terminologies; and the work done by sociobiologists within the framework of their clear, if narrow, definition of kin relationships. However, it is the very success of these approaches that defines the problems that now need to be tackled – and provide the context for our own work in KUV.

The problem with all these successful approaches is that each is based on a limited range of data sources, which themselves suggest the problems and theories that can be addressed. For instance, the population registers used by demographers focus particularly on household composition and lend themselves to questions about economic and fertility strategies – but say little about wider kinship links or the world of meanings within which these activities take place. Linguistic research on terminology emphasises the historical working out of cognitive patterns, but links this only loosely to the practical aspects of kinship which were outlined in our opening paragraph. Sociobiological data, which overlaps with that of demographers, provides evidence of cultural effects – which still need to be explained.

The need now is to integrate these approaches and to bring them more clearly to bear on the facts and meanings of kinship practice. To make the different approaches commensurable, we need integrated data sets that provide the information that all of them require. There is one data set that already does this – namely George P. Murdock's *Ethnographic atlas* – which is extremely valuable (Murdock 1967; Gray 1999). But the quality of the information is only as good as that of the ethnographies on which it is based – which limits the range of questions that can be tackled. There is a need for something more precise and flexible – which is where our own work comes in.

### **Our Starting Point: a comparative study of European kinship**

We first faced the need to incorporate different theoretical viewpoints in a single study during the KASS (Kinship and social security) research project which this Institute coordinated on behalf of the European Union (6th Framework Programme; see Grandits 2010, Heady and Kohli 2010, Heady and Schweitzer 2010). The aim was to identify the different factors that would lead relatives to be more or less willing to help each other in practical ways. The range of perspectives that we needed to allow for included those of economics, evolutionary cooperation theory (a.k.a. sociobiology), historical and cultural models of family relationships – and, last but not least, the insights gained from participant observation. Our solution was to conduct fieldwork in 19 different field sites, spread across eight European countries, speaking seven different languages. In each field site we combined ethnography with formal network interviews – applying a version of Rivers' genealogical method (1910) and collecting detailed information about mutual assistance and other interactions among network members. Our tool for conducting these network interviews was the Kinship Network Questionnaire (KNQ) – a software for laptop computers that was developed by Gordon Milligan and Christian Kieser in the Institute's IT

Department, to implement our version of the Rivers approach. Data from the KNQ interviews provided the quantitative basis for the statistical assessment of alternative theories. Since the KNQ interviews were carried out in our ethnographic field sites – and usually conducted by the ethnographers themselves – the quantitative results could readily be linked to the interpretations arising from the ethnographic side of the research.

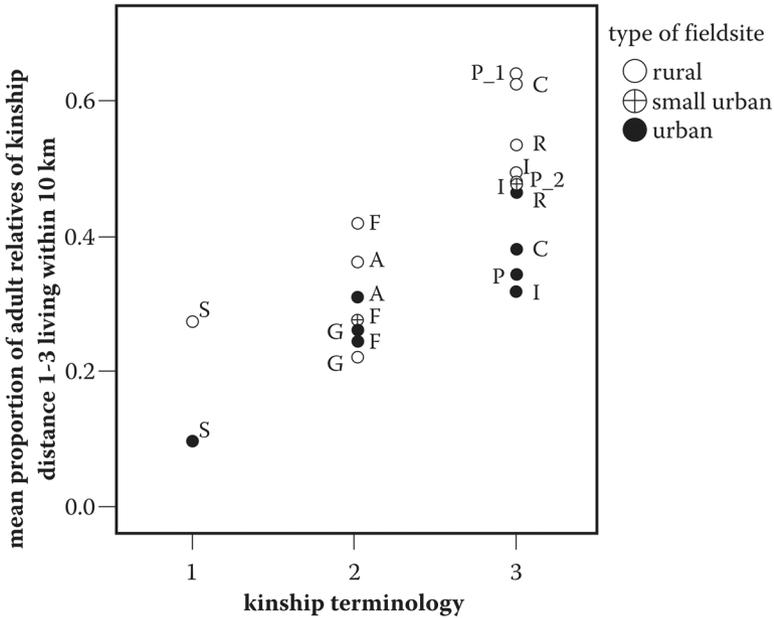


Figure 1: Spatial concentration of relatives by kinship terminology and area type. The letter by each icon indicates the country in which the field site is located: Sweden (S), France (F), Germany (G), Austria (A), Italy (I), Croatia (C), Poland (P) or Russia (R).

The findings confirmed sociobiological predictions about altruism towards close genealogical kin, but they also showed strong economic and cultural effects, and provided insight into how these might work. Figure 1 summarises the main comparative points. It shows that kinship networks are shaped very differently in different parts of Europe – scattered in the north and west, but tending to concentrate within local communities in the south and east. They are also more clustered in rural areas, reflecting the residential and marriage choices of farming families. (Both the regional differences and the association with farming are highly significant statistically.) The farming effect makes sense in economic terms as the result of pragmatically rational choices by the people concerned; but ethnography makes clear that it is not just a matter of self-interested calculation. “We are all one family here” is a slogan that

motivates collective action at the local level – which still matters in European agriculture, where a good deal of practical cooperation continues to take place without the mediation of money.

<b>Kin terms type</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Father</b>	<b>Father-in-law (WF)</b>	<b>Grandfather (FF)</b>
1	Swedish	far	sväfar	farfar
2	German	Vater	Schwiegervater	Großvater
2	French	père	beau-père	grand-père
3	Italian	padre	suocero	nonno
3	Croatian	otac	tast	deda
3	Polish	ojciec	teść	dziadek
3	Russian	otets	test'	dedushka

*Table 1: Selected male kin terms.*

The fact that people really do care about the social meaning of kinship emerges from the quantitative data too: throughout Europe the activities that involve the widest range of relatives are neither economic, nor directly linked to the duty of mutual care. Ritual gatherings, particularly weddings, are the occasions that most effectively mobilise the kinship network. The importance of kinship meanings is highlighted by another finding as well: that the macro-regional differences in residence patterns and cooperation coincide with differences in the structures of kinship terminology (see Table 1). These differences, which centre on affinal terms – and have been discussed by Jack Goody (1983) and by social historians such as Michael Mitterauer (2010) – do not correspond to the descent-based distinctions that define the standard anthropological terminology types. We are still pondering possible explanations for their association with differences in kinship practice.

## **Our Objectives during 2014–2016**

We have presented some findings from the KASS study because we think that they illustrate the power of the ‘KNQ-plus-participant-observation’ approach – and confirm that, with its help, ethnography can be used to address theory-driven comparative questions in a rigorous way. It suggests that the KNQ could be an important addition to the general tool-kit for kinship research, both in anthropology and other disciplines.

The main KASS findings were published in 2010. KUV, which began in 2013, takes up the story where KASS left off. Our long-term aim is to carry out further comparative studies of significant theoretical issues, no longer restricted to Europe. But in order to do that we need to refine the methods and think more deeply about recent developments in kinship theory. The work we are currently doing in KUV is on a smaller scale, but designed to prepare the way for larger studies in future. Basically we have been doing four things:

- I. Improving and extending the computerised Kinship Network Questionnaire.
- II. Training researchers to handle the KNQ, and more generally to think qualitatively and quantitatively at the same time.
- III. Using the methodology in ethnographic studies at PhD and senior levels in varied contexts that will help us to develop questions and concepts for future comparative studies.
- IV. Organising two conferences in which scholars from different disciplinary and theoretical backgrounds have discussed fundamental issues of kinship theory and research methods.

## **Enhancing the Kinship Network Questionnaire**

One priority was to make the original KASS methodology available to other researchers. Patrick Heady worked with staff at the Leibniz-GESIS Institute for the Social Sciences to document the methods and make them publicly available as part of the GESIS social science archiving system at Cologne. This work was completed in 2015, and information about the methods – including downloadable copies of the Kinship Network Questionnaire and analysis programs – is available online at GESIS Datorium (‘Kinship Network Questionnaire (KNQ) and Associated Systems’; <http://dx.doi.org/10.7802/83>). The data files themselves are also catalogued and stored at GESIS but, for reasons of confidentiality, cannot be downloaded over the Internet. However, the KASS version of the KNQ implemented a fixed set of questions – those required for the original project. If the KNQ methodology is to be used for new projects, researchers need facilities to redesign the questions to meet their own research needs. So our main technical priority has been to redevelop the questionnaire software to make this possible – and also to incorporate features (such as the ability to record classificatory kin with whom no direct genealogical link is traced) which

are not relevant in Europe but matter greatly in other parts of the world. The re-development work has been carried out on our behalf by a programming team in Beijing, headed by Kong Jing of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences – working on an original request from us which has been modified, as the work continued, in the light of their ideas and our experience of working with prototype versions.

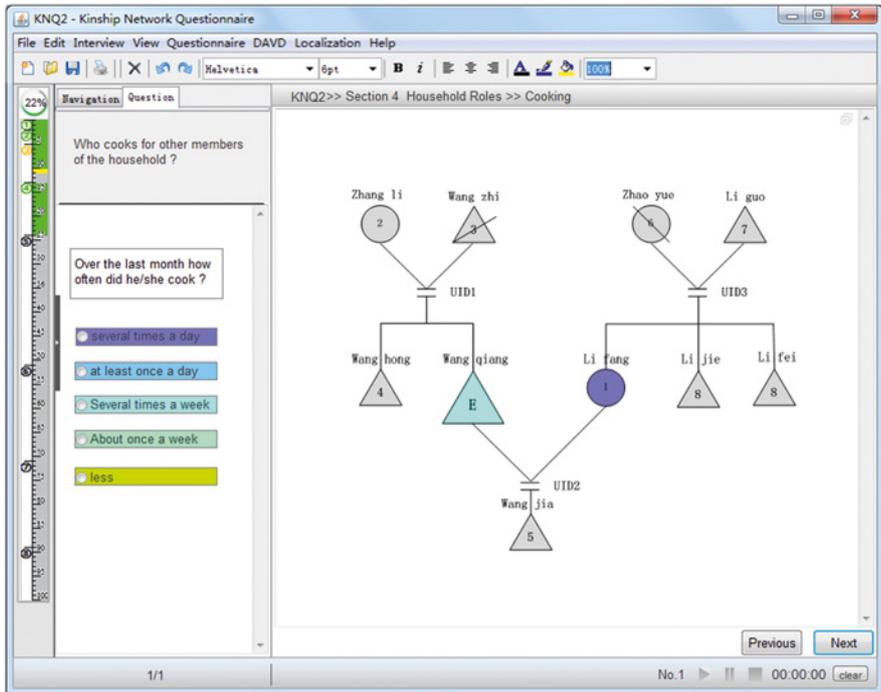


Figure 2: KNQ2 Interview Software – example of a question screen with a very simple network.

Prototype versions of the new KNQ2 have been available for testing and for use by our PhD researchers since autumn 2015. Another task is writing programs to process and analyse the raw data which the questionnaire produces. This work is currently being done by KUV team member Alexander Pashos. We are aiming to deliver to the end-user a prepared data file, which contains a set of new computed kinship variables (derived from the raw data) and makes it easier for the users to analyse the data in accordance with their own various requirements. Data processing scripts will be offered for SPSS users. However, the KNQ2 output data can also be used with other statistical programs such as 'R'. We presented initial versions of both KNQ2 and the follow-up programs at a conference organised at our Institute in September 2016 – and will publish the complete software set online once we have used it some more ourselves and are confident that it is robust.

## Learning to Use the KUV Approach

Once the first prototype version of KNQ2 was nearing completion – towards the middle of 2015 – it was time to recruit PhD students who would work with it in their research projects. In fact the software was not the only thing that needed to be ready: there was also the ‘liveware’ – ourselves. Naturally the priority was to provide the PhD students with training that they needed; but, in one respect or other, the combination of theories and methods that we have been trying to deploy has required all of us, including the older members of the team, to acquire new knowledge and skills.

As part of the training, senior team members offered two courses in kinship theory. In winter semester 2015/16, Günther Schlee organised together with Martine Guichard and Alexander Pashos a block seminar ‘Anthropology of kinship’ at the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg. The presentations in the course gave an overview about classical kinship concepts, theories and terminologies. Current research topics regarding classical and new kinship questions, and evolutionary perspectives had been presented and discussed. This was followed in winter semester 2016/17 by a course, given by Patrick Heady, on the use of mathematical network ideas in kinship theory and research. The PhD students, and Martine Guichard, also attended statistics courses – and a one-day workshop on sampling methods and the ethical issues involved in obtaining informed consent.



*Scene from the Freyburg wine festival.  
(Photo: L. Bechtold, 2015)*



*On the slopes of the Surselva valley.  
(Photo: A. Pashos, 2016)*

Just as important, however, was learning to apply this knowledge – and handle the KNQ2 software – in the field. Technical skills – editing and using KNQ2 – are part of this. But even more important is the whole experience of engaging imaginatively with a new social reality, formulating relevant research hypotheses, thinking about how they could be tested statistically, designing the required KNQ2 questions, conducting the interviews, and finally analysing and reporting the results. As all of these were new experiences for PhD students whose training, up to that time, had been in qualitative methods, we thought it unwise simply to send them off to their field

sites and hope for the best. Our solution was for them to conduct two small research projects, under real fieldwork conditions, near their academic home bases in Halle and Zürich – before attempting to apply the same methods in their own research sites.

The first of these projects was a study of family businesses in the wine industry, focusing on the respective roles of kinship and other ties. This began with a visit to the Freyburg wine festival in September 2015. Patrick Heady and the PhD students Louise Bechtold, Verena La Mela and Zarina Mukanova used the occasion to learn something about the wine trade in the Saale-Unstrut valley, just to the south of Halle. During the next few weeks the students developed their research questions, and programmed them into the KNQ2 software. Over the winter they individually went back to the Saale-Unstrut valley to conduct three interviews each with local wine-growers. They were able to download the data and start the analysis at the end of January 2016.

The second small research project took place at the beginning of June 2016 during a 10-day scientific retreat in the Surselva valley, in a Romansch-speaking part of Switzerland. The participants in the retreat were the KUV students La Mela, Mukanova and Pieta, and senior team members Schlee, Pashos and Heady – together with Peter Finke, our Zürich cooperation partner from the Centre for Anthropological Studies of Central Asia (CASCA). Daily workshops were held on the practical usage of the KNQ2 software, and on classical kinship research questions. The students presented their PhD projects, and applied the KNQ2 software to produce preliminary versions of the questionnaires that they would use for interviewing in their own field sites.

The joint research project – which we carried out in Surselva itself – consisted of a small survey on language use in this effectively bilingual (Romansch and German-speaking) area. In the project questionnaire – which was designed by the group as a whole – informants were asked about their various social networks, including those involving kinship, neighbourhood, work and leisure; and they were also asked about the language they use in each context.

These preliminary research projects provided valuable experience of the different phases of the research process – and the KNQ2 software itself was given a useful quality test. We are grateful for the generous help we received from local people in both places.



*Interviewing in the Surselva valley.  
(Photo: G. Schlee, 2016)*

## PhD Research Projects

*Kinship and Genealogical Relations: practices of name avoidance and networks of feasting and gift exchange in rural southern Kyrgyzstan*  
Louise Bechtold

Louise Bechtold was the first member of the KUV team to use KNQ2 in her own research. In March 2016 she returned to her field site in Kyrgyzstan to follow up two topics that are central to her overall theme, but which were difficult to grasp with qualitative methods only: (1) kin classification and name avoidance and (2) relationships of mutual assistance at life-cycle feasts.



*A village in southern Kyrgyzstan. (Photo: L. Bechtold, 2016)*

In her previous fieldwork Bechtold had observed that married women avoided mentioning the names of their husband's relatives. Instead they often used a combination of kinship terms and various circumlocutions – referring for instance to where the person lived, or to their profession. Name avoidance is a classic anthropological theme, and in order to evaluate alternative theories Bechtold needed precise information – about the practice itself, and about associated behaviour. She used the edit function of KNQ2 to add questions for use in interviews with married women.

Specifically, she wanted to identify the people whose names they avoided, to record how they addressed and referred to these people instead, to discover who they joked with, and to note the people whose presence they avoided physically.

The second research topic concerned the relationships involved in life-cycle feasts. Participation in feasts and giving *koshumcha* (literally “contributions”) are considered by local people to be the most important ways of maintaining relations to kin, affines, neighbours, and friends – and opting out of these obligations is described as “leaving kinship” (*tuuganchylyktan chyguu*). But from an observer’s point of view, knowing that these relationships matter is not the same as understanding how they really work. Detailed registers are kept of the contributions made at feasts, and so Bechtold was able to create a data set for her analysis of exchange relationships by matching information in the contribution registers with information on genealogical and neighbourhood connections collected using KNQ2. With this database she can, for instance, test whether the Kyrgyz concept of a patriline or rather an etic category such as kinship distance (as understood by sociobiologists) has more value for explaining the contributions to these feasts.

Bechtold is now analysing her data. At the time of writing, the other three PhD students are in the field and are still considering how best to integrate network data into their overall research plans. So we are not yet able to say exactly how they will adapt and use KNQ2. However, the following paragraphs provide a short overview of their respective research projects.

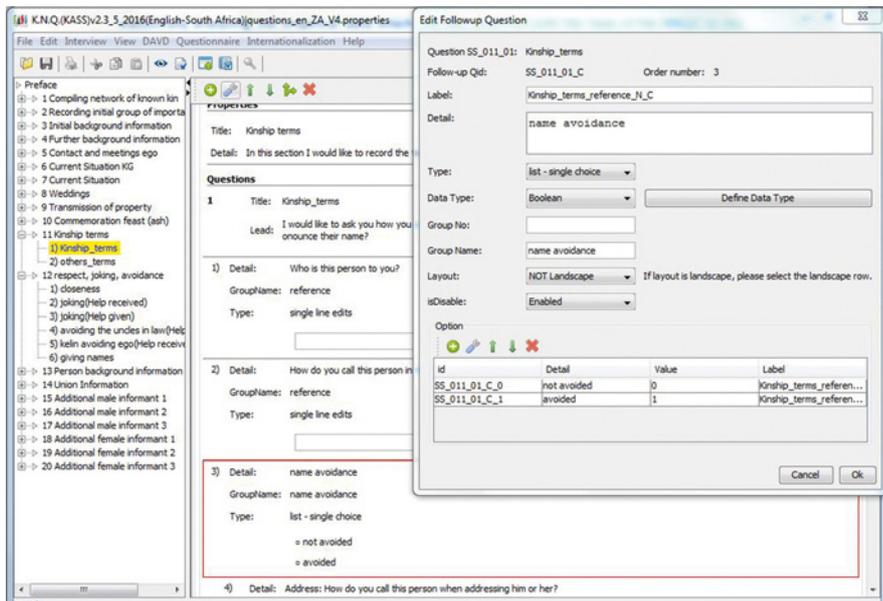


Figure 3: Using the 'questionnaire revise' function of KNQ2 to add questions about name avoidance.

*Kinship and Social Identification in Southeastern Kazakhstan:  
the relevance of patrilineal descent in economic and social life*  
Zarina Mukanova

Tribalism is increasingly described as being particularly pronounced in Central Asian countries where access to economic and political hierarchies is now said to depend largely on clan membership and kinship ties. But is this impression really justified? Working in a village in southeastern Kazakhstan – inhabited both by long-term residents and Kazakh ‘repatriates’, who migrated from other Central Asian countries into the region after the end of the Cold War – Zarina Mukanova uses KNQ2 to get a better idea of the actual significance of patrilineal descent and affinal kinship in daily life. She also examines the relationship between the ‘local’ population and the ‘repatriates’. Although their ‘return’ was supported by the state in the cause of nation-building, it has caused problems of distribution of resources and social adaptation. Mukanova is thus interested in finding out whether descent ties play a major role in processes of integration and conflict, or whether alternative political and economic networks bridge or reinforce the distinction between ‘locals’ and ‘repatriates’.

*Kin Relationships, Trade and Social Change among  
Uighurs in Southeastern Kazakhstan*  
Verena La Mela

The group at the centre of this project consists of Uighur traders in the town of Zharkent close to the Chinese border. Zharkent was founded in 1882 as Yarkand by the first Uighur migrants from nearby Chinese Xinjiang, and has recently developed into a prosperous economic centre in the new ‘Silk Road Economic Belt’. Verena La Mela focuses on trade networks, on the important actors within these networks, and on the roles which women play in the business relationships concerned. She also investigates whether kinship or locality matters most for Uighur traders. How do the traders establish trust in order to cooperate, especially in long distance trade across the Chinese border? La Mela uses qualitative and quantitative methods, including extensive participant observation at bazaars and in family businesses, social mapping and the collection of genealogies and trade networks using KNQ2.

*Growing Old in a North-Eastern Italian Town*  
Barbara Pieta<sup>6</sup>

This project investigates people's engagement with categories of 'third' and 'fourth age' at a time of demographic change and reconfiguration of welfare provisioning in northeast Italy. Until the 1930s, when industrial employment started to replace the previously dominant *mezzadria* (sharecropping) system, old age had been associated with a privileged position in kinship groups and the wider community. However, more recently, particularly with the rapid ageing of the population and shrinking welfare state provisions in the last four decades, old age has gradually become associated with costly and extensive periods of senescence; and it is now seen as a challenge to the individual's, their families' and the community's welfare. Barbara Pieta researches the ways in which elderly residents conceptualize and enact their membership in kin and community groups. What statuses and roles are now available and how are these constructed, controlled and negotiated between various actors at the community and family level? Pieta's goal is to understand, how characteristics and internal dynamics of kin and non-kin networks affect the ways in which elderly residents experience and articulate their old age. In order to analyse the kin- and non-kin networks of the elderly, she aims to combine her ethnographic research with statistical data on the elderly's social networks obtained through the KNQ2.

### Senior Research Projects

Research by senior members of the KUV team has also involved a combination of participant observation and quantitative methods. Quantitatively, it has drawn on the *Ethnographic atlas*, a comparative survey of grandparenting, and the European network data collected in KASS – and also includes plans for new work using the KNQ2 software.

*Kinship and Political Systems*  
Günther Schlee

Günther Schlee is investigating the interaction between political and kinship structures – and the deep history of their combined development. He combines a comparative approach – drawing on the *Ethnographic atlas*, among other sources – with insights from his own and others' ethnographic research. A particular interest is the social and political implications of different terminology types.

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<sup>6</sup> Barbara Pieta's research is financed by the Max Planck International Research Network on Aging (MaxNetAging). It is the latest of several joint projects linking our Institute and the MPI for Demographic Research (see Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Report 2008–2009, Volume 1, p. 16).

Table 2 – taken from a recent article by Schlee (2017) – relates Murdock’s standard kin-term classification (based on the structure of cousin terms) to the level of political organization. Although there is a great deal of free-play in the relationship, it is noticeable that full state institutions are a good deal rarer in societies with what Morgan called ‘classificatory’ kinship systems (Murdock’s Crow, Omaha, Iroquois and Hawaiian) than among those with Morgan’s ‘descriptive’ systems (Murdock’s ‘Descriptive’, ‘Eskimo’ and ‘Sudanese’). Schlee refers to contemporary ethnographic studies in Africa and Central Asia – including studies of both functioning lineage systems and societies undergoing economic ‘modernisation’ – to illustrate the curtailment of extended kin relationships and the changes in kin-term usage that accompany the growth of state power. It is likely that similar social processes accompanied the formation of the first state societies in the ‘High-Culture-Belt’ that included the Mediterranean, South and East Asia, and the societies of Central America and Peru.

### *Cross-Cultural Research on Asymmetric Kin Investment*

Alexander Pashos

Alexander Pashos works on kinship from the perspective of the evolution of human social behaviour. He is interested in how social and biological mechanisms interact with each other. In his research, he tests predictions derived from evolutionary (a.k.a. sociobiological) theories.

An example is the ‘paternity (un)certainty’ hypothesis, which suggests that people will be more likely to help relatives to whom they are linked through women than those to whom they are linked through men. This is because, according to the theory, what matters for cooperation is the biological connection – which is certain in the case of mother-child links but always open to some doubt in the case of fathers. This may throw light on a commonly found pattern of ‘asymmetric’ grandparental care. There are numerous empirical surveys from Western societies which show that on average children receive more care from the parents of their mother, particularly their maternal grandmother, than from the parents of their father. The ‘paternity uncertainty’ hypothesis would neatly explain this bias – and has found its way into evolutionary textbooks as the likely explanation.

Nevertheless this hypothesis has its weaknesses (Pashos in press). In an earlier comparative study of grandparental care-giving in Greece and Germany, Pashos found that rural Greeks invested most in the children of their sons. Confidence of paternity may well be high in Greek patrilocal village communities but – since it can never be higher than confidence in maternity – the ‘paternity uncertainty’ hypothesis, if valid, would only explain a more or less strong preference to invest in daughters’ children. It can never explain a greater tendency to favour sons’ children. There must be other reasons for grandparental bias, and this also suggests that paternity uncertainty might not be the only explanation for the matrilineal bias found elsewhere.

<b>Kin Terms of Cousins</b>								
<b>Crow</b>	<b>Descriptive</b>	<b>Eskimo</b>	<b>Hawaiian</b>	<b>Iroquois</b>	<b>Omaha</b>	<b>Sudanese</b>	<b>Mixed</b>	<b>Total</b>
29	10	41	166	124	31	6	6	413
	56.9%	14.7%	49.4%	53.2%	52.5%	44.3%	46.2%	60.0%
Stateless societies								49.0%
22	40	15	124	97	35	4	4	341
	43.1%	58.8%	18.1%	39.7%	41.1%	50.0%	30.8%	40.5%
Petty and larger paramount chiefdoms or their equivalent								
0	18	27	22	15	4	3	0	89
	0%	26.5%	32.5%	7.1%	6.4%	5.7%	23.1%	10.6%
Larger states								
51	68	83	312	236	70	13	10	843
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total								

Table 2. Kin terms and political systems – based on data from the Ethnographic atlas.

In order to pursue this question, Pashos has undertaken a wider comparative study of grandparenting in patrilocal, matrilocal and neolocal communities in rural mainland Greece, Kyrgyzstan, Bashkortostan, and East Java as well as in Germany and the USA. He is currently analysing the data. The findings confirm the cultural variability of grandparental care, and the aim of the analysis is to identify proximate causes of differential kin caregiving.

*Between Disintegration and Integration: Fulbe refugees  
from the Central African Republic in Cameroon*

Martine Guichard

This research project deals with Fulbe people who have fled violence from bandits and rebel groups in the Central African Republic and relocated to Cameroon from 2003 onwards. Martine Guichard is particularly interested in the strategies based on changes in social networks that these refugees use in order to maximize their success in gaining a livelihood in Cameroon. Such network strategies may involve more engagement in clientelistic arrangements with people of higher socio-economic status and an increasing participation in religious congregations. They may also include the development of new friendships and the forging of new kinship ties with members of host communities. Each of these network strategies can be seen as providing a particular form of integration into local communities, and alternative forms of integration may lead to access to different resources (land, jobs, etc.) needed for livelihood. The network strategies followed to maximize access to different resources may be combined with one another and lead to renegotiation of certain aspects of identity.

All these network strategies will be empirically explored in this research project. But special attention will be given to networks of kinship and friendship. The significance of these webs of relationships as sources of support has not been seriously discussed in the literature on refugees in Africa. By examining more systematically both kinship and friendship practices in a situation of forced migration, this project aims to fill this gap in the practical literature.

In order to assess the specific impact of forced migration on the way people do kinship, the project will also examine kinship practices among a comparable group of Fulbe who have not been displaced. This may enable Guichard to fill a gap in the theoretical literature as well – one having to do with the social implications of ‘relinking’ marriages between relatives. Since marriages of this kind are frequent among the Fulbe, she hopes to use the KNQ2 software to test the hypothesis that ‘relinking’ marriages reinforce kin cohesion and solidarity – a claim which is often made in the anthropological literature but which still lacks empirical confirmation.

*A 'Cognition and Practice' Approach to European Kinship*  
Patrick Heady

Over the last few years Patrick Heady has continued to work with issues arising from the KASS findings set out in Figure 1 and Table 1 above. The existence of differences between European regions is confirmed by many sociological and demographic studies, and extends to other areas of behaviour that border on kinship, including gender relations and fertility levels. There are also differences in religious marriage rules and in attitudes to godparenthood. It is rather remarkable that variations in so many aspects of practical behaviour line up with each other, and that they also correspond to differences in symbolism and in kinship terminology.

Heady has drawn on ethnographic and statistical sources – including but going beyond those provided by the KASS study – to investigate some of these connections. One theme has been the implications of kinship patterns for the functioning of local communities – and the impact of economic change on the relationships concerned. He argues that changing community dynamics help to explain European demographic developments, including the onset of ultra-low fertility (Heady 2017). Another theme has been the attempt to theorise connections between terminology and kinship behaviour in Europe in a way that would be consistent with explanations that have been suggested for kinship in other parts of the world (Heady in press). Reconciling theories of European and non-European kinship may well require changes to the theories on both sides – which takes us back to the 'big issues' that we mentioned at the start of this report.

### **Looking to the Future: communication and plans**

The search for a more comprehensive theoretical framework was the underlying theme of two conferences on kinship topics held at our institute.

In April 2015 Mikołaj Szołtysek and Patrick Heady organised a workshop (hosted jointly with the Department 'Resilience and Transformation in Eurasia') on the history and prehistory of family systems. The workshop – which was named in honour of Jack Goody and George P. Murdock – brought together demographic historians, archaeologists, evolutionary and social anthropologists to compare theories, methods and empirical findings. The collected papers are being published as a double issue of the journal *Cross-Cultural Research* (April and July 2017) – which we hope will provide a useful reference point for kinship scholars.

The second conference, organised by Patrick Heady and Günther Schlee in September 2016, was entitled 'Kinship, Cognition and Practice'. It brought together cognitive, linguistic and social anthropologists to consider the current state of the long-term research programme – initiated by Morgan a century and a half ago – on connections between kinship terminology and systems of practical social organisa-

tion. The papers covered a wide range of themes, and the discussions were lively. In this case too we are hoping to bring out a conference publication.

A notable feature of both conferences was the enthusiasm of the participants, and the feeling that, by bringing together representatives of different traditions of kinship research, we were doing something new and valuable. Needless to say, the discussions did not produce consensus; but clarifying differences is as important as establishing common ground. We feel that the ideas that were discussed, and the contacts that have been established, offer a good basis for the development of new, theoretically promising, research plans.

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## Publications

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# Location of the Institute



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