



NEWSMAIL | DECEMBER 2021

Research projects, publications and events

Dear Members and Friends,

Since the summer, when we were looking forward to a brighter future and a return to in-person teaching, research, and scientific exchange, we again find ourselves largely disappointed.

Nevertheless, CaSt remains productive and we are happy to welcome two new members to our network: Quirin Rieder and Sofía Ugarte. In addition, during the last months CaSt hosted Anne Sophie Grauslund and Olia Kazakevich as guests at our Vienna base. In addition, we congratulate Ahmad Moradi for the prize he won for his article.

Finally, we can also announce a few new publications by and upcoming events with network members, which you might find interesting.

Despite the difficult situation, we hope you have a relaxing winter break and wish you all the best for 2022!

If you have your own announcements to share, please send them to:
cast.ksa@univie.ac.at

NEWS

CaSt welcomes [Quirin Rieder](#) and [Sofía Ugarte](#) as new members!



Quirin's research interests centre on the relation between uneven access to infrastructure and the reproduction of social inequalities, as well as the role of state actors in this interplay. The ethnographic focus of his PhD project is on provision of electricity infrastructure as care in Gilgit-Baltistan, a region in northern Pakistan.



Sofia's research explores how economic and political imaginaries are constructed in and through intimate subjectivities and gendered-racialized encounters. Central to her work are feminist theories of social reproduction and their convergence with anthropological debates about state-formation and economic practices in postcolonial contexts.



[Olya Kazakevich](#) (Central European University) is a guest at the CaSt research group from October 2021 to February 2022. In her doctoral research "On the politics of beauty: Mothers of disabled children and the limits of (national) optimism," she explores the relationships between disability, beauty/femininity, and care in contemporary Russia by focusing on charity beauty makeovers for mothers of disabled children.



[Anne Sophie Grauslund](#) (Aarhus University) joined CaSt as a guest in October and November 2021. Her PhD project examines a special kind of visiting children's nurses (*sundhedsplejerskers*), their work and their interaction with parents and toddlers. Based on a long-term fieldwork among *sundhedsplejersker* and parents, her research explores the different logics of care, the nurses work by, as well as how ideas about family, parenting, health and wellbeing are produced and negotiated in the meeting between parents and the health care sector in Denmark.



[Ahmad Moradi](#) won the [SIEF Young Scholar Prize 2021](#) for his article "[The Basij of neighbourhood. Techniques of government and local sociality in Bandar Abbas](#)". Congratulations!

Published in: *Urban Neighbourhood Formations: Boundaries, Narrations and Intimacies*, edited by Hilal Alkan and Nazan Maksudyan, 237–257. Routledge 2020.

PUBLICATIONS

Letizia Bonanno: The Work of Pharmaceuticals in Austerity-Burdened

The Work of Pharmaceuticals in Austerity-Burdened Athens. Modes and Practices of Care in Times of Crisis

Letizia Bonanno
University of Kent, UK

ABSTRACT
Based on ethnographic fieldwork carried out in a social clinic of solidarity on the outskirts of Athens, the article explores how modes and values of care are constantly reconfigured at the intersection of an ever-expanding grassroots voluntary medical sector, the state and the household in a moment of severe economic distress. It traces the changing relations of care across these three realms where diverse modes of care have traditionally unfolded. In suggesting that pharmaceuticals have become increasingly crucial to social, economic and political relations amongst citizens who can no longer afford health care, I show how in the Athenian context, the circulation, sharing and exchanging of pharmaceuticals reinforces collective social bonds and argue that domestic modes of care (*frontida*) have increasingly been informed by biomedical modes of care (*iatriki perithalpsi*) stemming from the intermittent availability and unavailability of pharmaceutical drugs.

KEYWORDS Care; pharmaceuticals; solidarity; Greece; social pharmacies

In the field of anthropology, incursions into the realm of the sociality of pharmaceuticals have sporadically been made (see Prazm 2004; 109; Han 2013; Pinto 2014; Eick 2017), mainly focusing on how the pharmaceuticalisation of care is a response to and a consequence of forms of state neglect and abandonment (Garcia 2010; Buhl 2004, 2012). Scholars in the field have argued that pharmaceuticals can also legitimise forms of disregard and violence against the most vulnerable members of families and households (Han 2012a, 2012b; Buhl 2012; Pinto 2014). Holding on to the epistemological potential of pharmaceuticals in testing out reconfigurations of modes and practices of care, the purpose of the present article is to highlight how, in the Athenian context, the circulation, sharing and exchanging of pharmaceuticals reinforces collective social bonds and thus to ethnographically amend the hypothesis that a greater resort to pharmaceuticals contributes to the individualisation of care. As I will show, in today's Athens, pharmaceuticals represent a means of reconstituting and re-socialising care at the intersection of ever-improving households and the

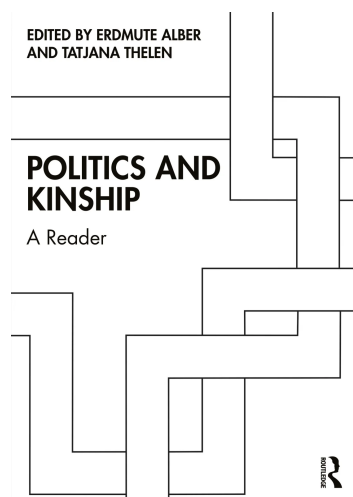
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Athens. Modes and Practices of Care in Times of Crisis.

in: *Ethnos Journal of Anthropology*.

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Politics and Kinship: A Reader

edited by Erdmute Alber and [Tatjana Thelen](#).
Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

This reader offers an overview of the entanglement of politics and kinship in both theoretical debates and everyday practices.

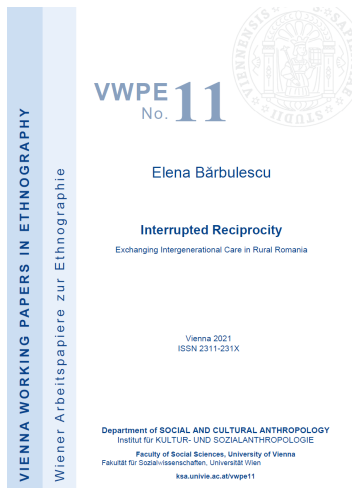
Reviews:

"*Politics and Kinship*, with a superb introduction by Thelen and Alber, enables us to understand contemporary societies through the entanglement of politics and kinship. The editors are to be lauded

for providing the conceptual tools with which we can overcome the theoretical loss much social theory has suffered by leaving unquestioned the specific modernist differentiation of politics and kinship that travelled the world in the service of specific governmental projects. The encompassing perspective presented in this collection ought to enrich many fields of research." (Julia Eckert, University of Bern)

"Kinship and politics are incommensurable concepts, yet equally salient for anthropology. The chapters in this lively and wide-ranging collection show the enduring interest in thinking through – and with – the shifting conceptual, empirical, and ideal relations between them." (Michael Lambek, University of Toronto)

"Volume editors Thelen and Alber have imaginatively assembled a series of texts to document anthropology's enduring fascination with the mutual entanglement of kinship and politics. Their daring mix of respected classics with exciting new scholarship should prompt new, valuable, and perhaps



Elena Bărbulescu: Interrupted Reciprocity. Exchanging Intergenerational Care in Rural Romania.

= [Vienna Working Papers in Ethnography](#), no. 11.

This working paper begins with observations of how villagers in rural Transylvania talk about their kin in an apparently 'cold' and instrumental way. Grandmothers' refusal to provide childcare has resulted in a long-term change in family ties. They interpret the state-provided childcare as a source of change among intergenerational circles of

support in the family. I juxtapose this experience with an ethnographic case study of apparently 'warm' intergenerational solidarity in which a grandmother agrees to care for her grandson in Italy and receives healthcare in return. In sum, I argue against over-positive visions of care and demonstrate its potential ambiguities, especially in the lives of women.

7 FIAT Automobiles Serbia *The Split Moral Economy of Public-Private Partnerships* Ivan Rakovic

In June 2017, two thousand workers at Fiat Chrysler's new car plant in the Serbian town of Kragujevac went on strike. As being summer, the trade union complained, the temperature on the shop floor had reached 40 degrees Celsius, and the workers could hardly bear themselves. While allowing people to take sick leave, the management required the same production quotas from the remaining workforce, which had already been depleted after an entire shift had been laid off. The strikers thus demanded an ending of the output quotas and the hiring of new workers. They also insisted on a rise in salary from 30,000 dinars (11 euros) to 50,000 dinars (18 euros), that bonuses for the previous year be paid and that the commuting expenses of those working the night shifts be refunded. In the following three weeks, they regularly attended their workplaces, standing by the documented machinery. They marched through town demanding that the company management negotiate, figuring their media coverage throughout the region.

Many observers on the left saw this as a welcome return of proletarian politics. They noted how the strike was happening not in a rational 'social property' enterprise on state support – a familiar figure in the post-socialist nation building – but in one of the most profitable foreign-owned firms, one that was a crucial contributor to the national GDP. This meant a break with the different socio-political logics of the post-socialist state and its aim for engaged wages – and a reversion to more 'informal' labour actions, where workers simply withheld their labour power in order to advance capital (Philp and Maitz 2017). The fact that workers seemed to be shifting from being victimized to being self-empowered, from clients to claimants,

Ivan Rajković: FIAT Automobiles Serbia: the split moral economy of public-private partnerships.

in [Moral Economy at Work: Ethnographic Investigations in Eurasia](#), edited by Yalçın-Heckmann, Lale, 135–155. New York; Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Traditionally, the concept of moral economy has been used to grasp the obligations that bind

states, employers and workers. But how neoliberal bureaucracies balance their old social responsibilities with their new role of mediating transnational capital, remains unknown. This chapter explores popular expectations around FIAT Automobiles Serbia, a public-private partnership shared between the FIAT-Chrysler corporation and a post-Yugoslav state. To cheapen its work costs, FIAT has moved manufacture of its new model to Serbia, appropriating the former Zastava factory in exchange for concessions and tax reliefs. Initially angered with new Italian bosses and mass layoffs that ensued, local workers soon learned that no preferential treatment could be expected from a foreign private company. Instead, they doubled their expectations of the Serbian state, demanding even bigger concessions to keep FIAT in town. Public-private partnerships thus not only distribute gains to the private and risks to the public sphere, as is commonly argued. Instead, they create a dual moral economy which projects paternalism onto the state, while relieving capital of its social dues.



Sektion Sozialpädagogik und
Pädagogik der frühen Kindheit (Hrsg.)

Familie im Kontext kindheits- und sozialpädagogischer Institutionen

Staat, Familie und die Konstruktion von Differenz.

in [Familie im Kontext pädagogischer Institutionen. Theoretische Perspektiven und empirische Zugänge](#), edited by Sektion Sozialpädagogik und Pädagogik der frühen Kindheit, 41-53. Weinheim: Beltz Juventa.

[Tatjana Thelen](#) und [Anna Ellmer](#) nehmen aus ethnologischer Perspektive in ihrem Beitrag in den Blick, wie vor dem Hintergrund soziohistorischer und staatlicher Regulierungen die institutionelle Herstellung von normativer Familialität

als Rahmung elterlicher Sorgepraktiken hergestellt wird und welche Effekte sozialer Ungleichheit damit einhergehen.

Nach einer Einführung in den theoretischen Rahmen von *(un-)doing difference* sowie dessen Entfaltung nicht nur auf interaktionaler Ebene, sondern auch auf institutioneller und gesellschaftlicher Ebene, wird an zwei ethnografisch untersuchten Fällen die sozialstaatliche Differenzkonstruktion von Familien im Kindergarten und in der Sozialen Arbeit in ihren multiplen, sich wechselseitig bedingenden Formen aufgezeigt. Deutlich wird, wie Imaginationen von Verwandtschaft, die sich von der eigenen an der Kleinfamilie orientierten Idee von Verwandtschaft unterscheiden, zu defizitären Zuschreibungen gegenüber Familien bzw. einzelnen Mitgliedern von Familien führen und wie diese sich auch intergenerational reproduzieren.

PhD in the spotlight: Marlene Persch Research during Covid – a report from the field

Doing research during Covid seemed impossible as the global pandemic spread. Pandemic-related restrictions had different effects on researchers. While those having returned from the field enjoyed the time to write their thesis, others had to enter their field stay due to travel restrictions. In the continuing months, challenges in the various stages of writing a PhD were discussed in the Social Sciences. Apart from travel restrictions, research possibilities and experiencing feeling disoriented, also ethical concerns of entering the field during the pandemic and maintaining research were matters of concern. Amongst anthropologists following an ethnographic approach changing to digital ethnography seemed to be the common opinion at first. An ethnographic approach requires spending time with interlocutors in their everyday life for a long period of time – a task which contradicts rules of physical distancing. Doing digital ethnography rather enables interactions with actors into the digital space that is online meetings, chats and websites. This change in method also entails adapting the research topic and the questions, because not every project is compatible with a digital approach.

In project, few many others, could not have been adapted to a digital framework without changing considerably. In my project, becoming a State Actor Prison Officer Training in Accra, Ghana, I focus on the transformation of outcasts into state actors during the making to become a prison officer. This means that for the duration of the training of one cohort, I follow the recruits and their families. Understanding how a commitment towards serving the nation is produced during training requires an ethnographic long-term position in the Prison Officer Training School. What I saw some of my colleagues trying to change their subject. I held on to my plans to go to Ghana. News of the availability of a research, later its availability in Vienna and finally reports of Ghanaian Prison Officers getting vacancies continuously reinforced my plan. Although travel restrictions and seemingly unlimited bureaucratic challenges when leaving Vienna delayed my departure, I finally arrived in Accra in mid-July (2021), welcomed and fully prepared.



Covid rules and hand-washing station in a communal facility in the Ghana Prison Service (© Marlene Persch)

[Read more](#)
■ Becoming a State Actor: Prison Officer Training in Accra, Ghana
■ Care in the Prison – Images and practices of care in the juvenile prison in Accra

Marlene Persch: Research during Covid – a report from the field

CaSt member [Marlene Persch](#), who is currently on fieldwork in Accra (Ghana), published a short report about the challenges of fieldwork during a global pandemic.

EVENTS

Academic Year 2021/2022 (online)

Seminar Series on Reproductive Justice

[Sofia Ugarte](#) is co-convening an online seminar series and reading group on reproductive justice at Cambridge University throughout the academic year 2021/2022.

The Reproductive Justice Research Network brings together scholars, activists, and practitioners from diverse disciplinary backgrounds. It entails a series of

events devoted to research, scholarship, and advocacy on reproductive justice in its broadest sense.

For more information about future events and activities, follow the network on [Twitter](#) (@ReproJusticeCam) or [Facebook](#).

28.-30. September 2022 (Vienna, Austria)

Call for Papers: 6th Vienna Ethnography Laboratory

"Relating Risks" is the thematic focus of the next ethnolab which will take place in fall 2022.

The laboratory offers a selected group of advanced PhD students and early post-doctoral scholars the unique opportunity to discuss their work with two distinguished guest scholars and present their findings and ideas at an interdisciplinary forum.

We're happy to announce that Prof. Michelle Murphy (Department of History, University of Toronto) and Dr. Michael Guggenheim (Department of Sociology, Goldsmiths University of London) will join the lab as guest scholars.

Conveners (University of Vienna, Austria):

Prof. Tatjana Thelen (Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology)

Prof. Janina Kehr (Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology)

Prof. Maximilian Fochler (Department of Science and Technology Studies)

For more information see: [Call for papers](#).

Deadline for applications: March 15, 2022.

Seasons Greetings,

Tatjana Thelen



CaSt - Care and State

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