



## NEWSMAIL | DECEMBER 2020

Research projects, publications and events

Dear Members and Friends,

Our end-of the-year newsletter still finds us in difficult times and we hope you and your loved ones are well.

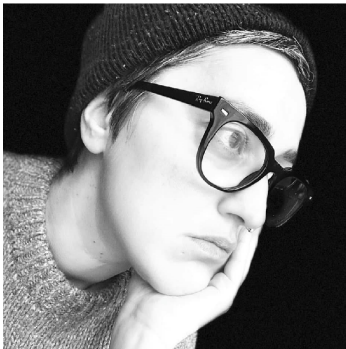
Although privileged in many ways, academic life, research and productivity suffer from restrictions on personal exchange and travel. While we are gaining experience in online teaching and discussion, we are also feeling its limitations. In that regard we have been very lucky that the [Ethnography Laboratory 2020 on Mobilities and Care. Transformations of belonging and inequalities](#) was one of the few events that partly took place in person. Besides the pleasure of being together, CaSt gained two new members through this event—we are happy to welcome Ahmad Moradi and Letizia Bonanno. We also wish to congratulate Marlene Persch for being awarded a PhD scholarship at Vienna Doctoral School of Social Sciences.

You will find more information below, along with announcements of upcoming events and new publications by members and friends which you might find interesting.

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

## NEWS

CaSt congratulates [Marlene Persch](#) on being awarded a scholarship at Vienna Doctoral School of Social Sciences (ViDSS). Her PhD project, “Becoming a State Actor: Prison Officer Training in Accra, Ghana”, focuses on the transformation of non-state actors into state actors in the training of prison staff in Ghana and the production of state awareness.



CaSt is happy to welcome two new members: [Ahmad Moradi](#) and [Letizia Bonanno](#).

Ahmad's research interests centre on questions of mobility, Islamic militancy and care in Iran and the wider MENA region. His PhD project explored Iran's revolutionary politics and state-like interventions in urban low-income neighbourhoods, with a focus on the paramilitary organisation of the Basij. In his recent research, he focuses on the struggles of Shi'a foreign fighters and their families to demand state recognition and social welfare in Iran upon their return from conflicts in the region.

Letizia's research revolves around issues of care and gendered labour regimes, biomedicine and statecraft. She has conducted long term ethnographic fieldwork where she researched the

process of pharmaceuticalisation of care and the emergence of grassroots self-organised healthcare facilities during the years of the economic crisis. Her current project focuses on the multiple processes of reconfiguration of care in austerity-burdened Greece.

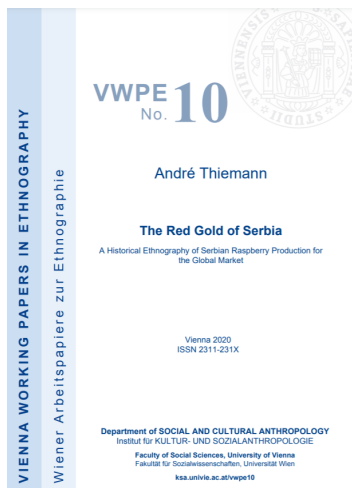
## PUBLICATIONS



### Nina Haberland: #Failures: Failed to belong – (Re)Negotiations of care in a Tanzanian social welfare office

Drawing on 12 months of ethnographic research in the Department of Health in a district in Northern Tanzania [Nina Haberland](#) explores the daily interactions between the social welfare officers and their clients and the processes that lead to

categories such as 'failed', 'in need' and 'deserving'. Several cases illustrate how the officers maneuver in concrete situations and reveal the application of different categories and the underlying meaning of what it means to be a 'proper' citizen.



## André Thiemann: The Red Gold of Serbia. A Historical Ethnography of Serbian Raspberry Production for the Global Market.

= Vienna Working Papers in Ethnography 10.

[André Thiemann](#)'s paper presents the first historical ethnography of raspberry production in Serbia, using an example of two typical actors in a field of entanglement between local production and kinship, global markets and politics of science. Introducing a small-farming household and a

manager-agronomist, it disentangles how raspberries became a major export commodity – the red gold of Serbia. This economic success is traced to configurations of the socialist Yugoslav development project since the mid-1970s, when the agricultural cooperative Arilje in southwestern Serbia assembled a complex production, processing, transport and commerce network at the intersection of state-financed science and technology and small-scale farming. During early post-socialism, this cooperative innovation became radically dispersed and production skyrocketed. However, this competitive fragmentation unravelled the collaboration between agroscientists and farmers and aggravated the problems these actors face today, including labour shortages and price fluctuations because of a diminishing 'quality' of 'their' product.



## Jan Beek and Thomas Bierschenk: Bureaucrats as para-ethnologists. The use of culture in state practices.

In: Sociologus 70 (1): 1-17.

This text, and the special issue to which it is an introduction, argues that bureaucrats may act as 'para-ethnologists' in their dealings with clients: their use of the category of culture is, after all, not that different from how anthropologists used it, before the discipline turned away from the term 'culture' in the 1990s, for implying reification and emphasising alterity, homogeneity, timelessness

and ethnicity. However, while anthropologists have become uncomfortable with the term, bureaucrats themselves have turned toward 'culture' as an explicatory category. Bureaucrats generate specialised knowledge on cultural others, relying on expert interviews, cultural mediators and observations. While nowadays bureaucrats themselves may be the object of anthropological research, they themselves produce cultural analysis. Indeed, scrutinising the analytical use of the term has allowed anthropologists to explore its emic uses. Doing research on para-ethnologists enables us to engage in second-order observing of how bureaucrats and clients 'write – or more often narrate – culture'.

## EVENTS

21.-24. June 2021


### Panel 'Care as act of transgression' at SIEF conference

This panel - organised by [Ahmad Moradi](#) and [Letizia Bonanno](#) - explores how rules and their transgressions shape relations of care. Given the substantial opacity of care as an array of practices, expectations and moral imageries, we draw attention to the ways in which relations of care are entangled with forms of violence and acts of transgression. Discussant: [Tatjana Thelen](#)

For more info on SIEF conference, [click here](#).

Wishing all of you a healthy end of the year and hopefully a better 2021 for us all!

**Tatjana Thelen**



### **CaSt - Care and State**

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