Thelen, Tatjana; Erdmute Alber (Hrsg.): *Reconnecting State and Kinship*. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press 2017. ISBN: 9780812249514; 256 S.

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Thelen and Alber's timely and insightful collection of nine essays and a comprehensive introduction attempts to unite arbitrarily disjointed research areas: state and kinship. This collection written by anthropologists grew out of discussions about bringing together politics and kinship, beginning with 3 workshops in 2014 that led to a recently concluded ZiF Research Group on kinship and politics (p. 249).

Alber and Thelen's introduction discusses how and when state and kinship diverged. According to the editors, the interplay of state and kinship was central for evolutionist anthropology but dissolved during the 20th century into two topical containers that were strengthened by disciplinary confinements. Thelen and Alber emphasize the ubiquitous modernity narrative as a driving force for creating academic border regimes and classifications. The non-modern – formed by kinship – was allocated to anthropology while the modern, epitomized by a bureaucratic state, became the territory of sociology and political science. Its detrimental effects would not only include a distortion of the analytical perception of kinship's significance for state processes, but also an enhancement of the mighty operative Occidentalism that informs „'wars against terror'", „development policies," etc. (p. 2–6).

Though the process of keeping state and kinship apart began to revert in the last decades, not least due to innovations in reproduction technologies, the editors maintain that „the presumption of a deep-rooted opposition between kinship and the (modern) state [...] has remained surprisingly stable" (p. 2). Consequently, they „advocate a new holism" (p. 17) in order to unsettle these separations and oppositions. The notion of „traveling concepts" would enable us to study both the union and disjuncture of state and kinship, asking „whether concepts associated with one sphere [...] surface in the other" and how they „acquire new meanings in the process" (cover, p. 3). Focusing on situations in which distinctions begin to blur and „boundary work" becomes necessary could register the powerful effects of the arbitrary separation of state and kinship.

The volume contains two parts: In part I, „Traveling Concepts: Temporalities, Scales, and the Making of Political Order", Michael Herzfeld (Ch. 1) develops a fairly entertaining and almost structuralist interpretation of corruption as incest, of „too much" kinship „in the wrong place" (p. 47). Corruption would be „the political equivalent of incest", as both are „damaging the collective interest in favor of more selfish concerns" (p. 41). Herzfeld frankly admits that his contribution „is necessarily somewhat speculative" (ibid.). Despite occasional references to patronage in rural Greece and Italy, the agent – specific subjects, a people, a universal logic? – remains fuzzy.

Brilliantly analyzing publications of US-military anthropology, Thomas Zitelmann (Ch. 2) addresses „the cultural turn in military strategy" (p. 63) in the aftermath of 9/11 and shows how US-army social science operates within a logic of „binary othering". His fascinating and critical contribution reveals how a simplified and time-frozen model of segmentary political organization in terms of descent, gathered from classical anthropological studies, became the cornerstone for academic US-army understanding of the constitution of Arabs as non-Western „others" and for developing counterinsurgency finesse. Kinship-coded organization and allocation is valued as a potent weapon of 'others' in asymmetric warfare. Zitelmann points out two alternatives military anthropologists have developed so far to counter this threat of kinship, namely „winning-hearts-and-minds" or „shock-and-awe", that is, „wiping out the entire local social structure" of resisting people (p. 62, 75).

Frances Pine (Ch. 3) examines how people in Poland use multiple conceptions of public and private sociality in „spaces of kinship and spaces of politics" (p. 87), and how the state appropriated the idiom of kinship. She highlights the analytical significance of sto-

ries because they would „serve as moral acts and practices“ (ibid.), establishing an everyday measure for behavior. Pine aims to show how „different registers of kinship and sociality coexist“ (p. 88), yet her general references are confounding as she employs her „own field data from Poland over the past three decades“ (p. 87), beginning in a Polish village in 1977 [sic] and ending in a different village in the 1990s, spanning massive political-economic changes.

Victoria Goddard (Ch. 4) discusses „entanglements of kinship, politics, and the state“ (p. 122) against the backdrop of Argentinian history from the 19th century to the present, examining „the state as an assemblage of institutions, practices, and actors that effect subjectivation in relation to or in contrast with kinship“ (p. 109). Emphasis is placed on the struggles of relatives of the disappeared who are organized in Human Rights Groups. Goddard argues that the Argentinian state had to privilege „the primacy of blood ties and shared genetic material“ (p. 116) over nurture bonds as genetic testing became the central means of identifying the 'living disappeared', persons who were abducted with their parents or born in captivity and then raised under a false identity. Goddard claims that „arguments expressed in the language of kinship [...] can and do produce new idioms of politics and of the state“ (p. 122).

Ivan Rajkovic's contribution (Ch. 5) analyses a cognitive shift from identity to resemblance in understanding corruption in Serbia. Rajkovic sees a „new relational modality“ at work in post-socialist „discourse of belonging“ (p. 140, 137). People in Serbia would have left a common identity based on „metaphors of kinship, territory, and body“ (p. 138) which resulted in identification with corrupt politicians since Rajkovic holds that people commonly said they would not have behaved in a different manner if they were politicians. Nowadays, „[p]eople recognize aspects of politicians' practice as similar to their own while simultaneously denying identification“ (p. 139). For Rajkovic, such a move from collective identification towards individual resemblance based on self-interests, pushed by „the state rhetoric of market individualism“, „changes everyday relations“ and shapes the Serbian nation as a „community of the unrelated“ (p. 149, 133, 145).

Part II of the collection, „Classifying Kinship and the Making of Citizens“, opens with Jeanette Edwards (Ch. 6) who inspects „the UK debate on disclosure“ (p. 157) in donor reception. At stake is the possibility of donor-conceived children to know the identity of the donor and thereby one's own 'real' identity and siblings. Appealing to the state to provide transparency in kinship relations is, according to Edwards, a neoliberal promoter for a sovereign subject that chooses its kin, rendering „self-determining and self-making individuals to fashion their own life projects“ (p. 170). Transparency, a „traveling concept [...] that bridges political and kinship domains“ (p. 156), is masterly decoded by Edwards as both an effective medium for neoliberal policy and a subject to study „the kinds of personhood and dispositions that are fashioned by such a politics“ (p. 159).

Eirini Papadaki's (Ch. 7) excellent and detailed ethnographic contribution analyses how state social workers in an Athenian maternity ward decide if a kin relation is a 'good' or 'bad' one. In case of the latter, „a dekinning mechanism is activated“ (p. 193), authorized by law. In order to dissolve the kin relation, a birth mother's newborn is then transferred to a state care center and given up for adoption. For Papadaki, the social workers are invested as „gatekeepers in the creation or dissolution of kinship relations“ (p. 179). They would judge mothers according to middle class family ideals, keeping up an „ethical economy of reproduction“ (p. 180) that becomes a medium of the state to govern its people by realizing hegemonic ideals of family and personhood, or, as Papadaki writes, „the dominant maternal script“ (p. 194). Her superb complex analysis of decisions and ethical legitimations to sooth consciences when 'natural' bonds are cut off, is outstanding and very promising for future research into the complex of subjectivities, law, hegemonic norms and power.

Helle Bundgaard and Karen Fog Olwig (Ch. 8) consider various Danish child care institutions and focus upon its production of „'proper' citizens“. While such institu-

tions would raise the children's consciousness about their own families, the institution's personnel would also „play a central role in the reproduction of a proper citizenry", turning child care institutions into „a site of the production of new citizens" (p. 201). Children and families who do not fit hegemonic norms are marginalized by problematizing their behavior. The authors conclude that such institutions „seek to shape the future citizenry by teaching [...] the skills they regard as important to master in order to be part of Danish society" (p. 210).

Apostolos Andrikopoulos (Ch. 9) debates in an extraordinary contribution the ratio of inequality and the idiom of kinship among legally precarious migrants from Nigeria and Ghana who are living in Thessaloniki and Amsterdam. They would describe their relations „unequivocally [...] in kinship terminology", especially brother/sister, „to minimize the risks and dangers" and to „make unequal relations more bearable" (p. 220, 235). Such a practice used to be called 'fictive kinship' which according to Andrikopoulos disqualifies experiences and motives of building kin relations, suppressing the „performative effect" of the idiom of kinship on relations (p. 225, 235f). For Andrikopoulos, the „civic inequality", i.e., the „exclusion from citizenship" (p. 224), promotes the proliferation of the idiom of kinship, negating the modernist idea that kinship would lose significance in complex state societies. At the same time, he rightly criticizes that kinship studies usually evade kinship's dark sides like violence and inequality (p. 222). His attempt to hold attention on empowering aspects of kinship while not fading out its dark sides, is truly impressive.

Minor critiques relate, first, to the often mentioned „production of citizens". Nationality aside, what exactly is a citizen? What about political differences within and beyond the studied sites of citizen-production? If all public spaces necessarily participate in this process, what is the specific contribution of the researched ones? In short: it would have been more satisfying to circumstantiate the research locus in a differentiated manner. Second, 'the state' in its complexity – ideologies, administrative apparatuses, state agents, all in plural –, remains remarkably opaque. Cursory references to 'a' monolithic state abound, while occasionally 'state' seems to be used synonymously with 'nation'. This might stem from the noted initial, and more suitable, focus on politics and kinship. Third, the notion of an 'idiom of kinship', though omnipresent in the edition, lacks a theoretical discussion. Finally, it is a pity that several contributions are oddly un-ethnographic, turning some analyses into rather broad-bush and conceptual treatises.

However, certain flaws may be due to the pioneering effort of this volume, actually attesting its critique of the necessity of devising novel analytical junctures of kinship and state. This outstanding and stimulating volume will motivate others to push further its critical impetus which makes this contribution indispensable for future work on the nexus of kinship and state.

HistLit 2018-3-039 / Cristian Alvarado Leyton über Thelen, Tatjana; Erdmute Alber (Hrsg.): *Reconnecting State and Kinship*. Pennsylvania 2017, in: H-Soz-Kult 18.07.2018.