

The 2016/2017 ZiF research group Kinship and Politics invites applications for:

## Kinship and Politics. Undoing the Boundaries

Summer School, 2 – 7 July 2017

For a long time the decline of kinship in the course of Western history seemed so certain that there was little interest in research on this topic outside the study of so-called ‘traditional’ societies. Linked to the notion of the decline of kinship is the separation of kinship and politics. Both have long genealogies and enormous consequences for research and policy-making. Particularly in the domain of politics the presence of kinship was (and is) seen as something to be exorcised in order to establish ‘rational’ administrative systems and mobilise colonial and postcolonial populations and has even found its way into current military strategizing on how to fight insurgencies. The presence of ‘kinship’ as opposed to ‘family’ is behind such distinctions as modern and traditional, “Western” and “Other” societies.

The summer school’s goal is to re-examine the relationship between politics and kinship. Organised by the [ZiF 2016/17 research group](#) on “Kinship and Politics,” the summer school intends to intervene in these debates by getting doctoral students and early career scholars to focus on this major conceptual problem. **The summer school will revolve around two core theoretical perspectives: (a) “kinship” and “family” as analytical categories and (b) uses of kinship in political practice.** The panels aim at bridging critical historical epistemology and empirical case studies. They are organised around four problem areas that should be examined from perspectives beyond a single discipline, region, or historical period:

1. **Property and kin relations**
2. **Conceptualising, implementing and negotiating the nuclear family**
3. **Boundary work: kinning the state – state kinning**
4. **The (re)making of political order, in particular through children**

These problem areas aim at challenging the long-held assumption that kinship has played an ever-declining role in “modernizing” societies and at interrogating the co-production of kinship and politics as well as the negotiation of their boundaries. Questions might deal with the conceptual divide between kinship and family worked out in Western social sciences during the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. How was the nuclear family understood in contrast with other kinship structures both within the West and in the non-Western world? How and why did states, non-governmental organisations and social movements take up normative constructions and apply them in the definition of estates and races, in welfare, warfare and international development? Research might also focus on how the boundaries between ‘family’ and ‘kinship’ have been mobilised and negotiated in political practices. Contributions could focus on the link between kinship, heritage, succession and loyalty to institutions raised in such topics as social parenting, compulsory pre-school education, home schooling and the forced removal of indigenous children. The issue of the use of children in the reproduction of the political order is not limited to political agencies: debates might include surrogate motherhood, fostering, international adoption practices and birth tourism for purposes of acquiring citizenship or social security benefits.

### **Organisers**

Erdmute Alber (Anthropology, Bayreuth), Jennifer Rasell (Anthropology, Bielefeld), David Warren Sabean (History, Los Angeles), Simon Teuscher (History, Zurich), Tatjana Thelen (Anthropology, Vienna)

### **Format**

The summer school offers up to 16 postgraduates and advanced doctoral students the opportunity to discuss their work with peers, senior guest scholars and distinguished fellows of the ZiF Kinship and Politics research group. Participants will discuss pre-circulated papers (up to 8000 words excluding the bibliography).

Among the commentators are: Susanne Brandtstädter (Anthropology, Cologne), Susan McKinnon (Anthropology, Virginia), Michaela Hohkamp (History, Hannover), Thomas Zitelmann (Anthropology, Berlin)

### **Accommodation and Travel**

Accommodation and travel costs (basic economy flights and second-class train tickets) of the participants will be covered. There are no fees for the summer school.

### **Application**

We invite postgraduates and advanced doctoral students from Anthropology, History, Sociology, Political Sciences and neighbouring disciplines to send us their applications by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017. Applications should include a letter stating the reasons for applying, a short CV, an abstract (250 words maximum) and an outline of research results (up to 5 pages) to be presented at the summer school.

Full papers (up to 8000 words excluding the bibliography) should be handed in by 11<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and will be distributed to all participants. It is expected that participants read all papers in advance.

Please send your application to the ZiF Kinship and Politics research group coordinator Miss Jennifer Rasell: [kinshipandpolitics@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:kinshipandpolitics@uni-bielefeld.de)

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the selection process by mid-April 2017.