How does being a parent in the field influence a researcher’s positionality and the production of ethnographic knowledge?

Based on regionally and thematically diverse cases, this collection explores methodological, theoretical, and ethical dimensions of accompanied fieldwork. The authors show how multiple familial relations and the presence of their children, partners, or other family members impact the immersion into the field and the construction of its boundaries.

Female and male authors from various career stages exemplify different research conditions, financial constraints, and family-career challenges which are decisive for academic success.

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Contents

Acknowledgements  |  7

On Being a Parent in the Field  
Practical, Epistemological, Methodological and Ethical Implications of Accompanied Fieldwork  
Rosalie Stolz, Katja Metzmacher, Michaela Haug, Fabienne Braukmann  |  9

POSITIONALITY, SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE

Rethinking the Ethnographer  
Reflections on Fieldwork with and without Family in Mexico and Namibia  
Julia Pauli  |  39

Unexpected Resonances  
Observations of an Expecting Ethnographer  
Corinna A. Di Stefano  |  61

Circulating Family Images  
Doing Fieldwork and Artwork with/about Family  
Simone Pfeifer  |  81

Returning to the Field as Mother  
Reflections on Closeness and Difference in Long-Term Fieldwork  
Michaela Haug  |  101

PRODUCING ETHNOGRAPHIC KNOWLEDGE

Entangled Family  
Parenting and Field Research in a Togolese Village  
Tabea Häberlein  |  127

Falling in and out of Sync in Upland Laos  
Relative Immersive Processes and Immersive Processes with Relatives in a Khmu Village  
Rosalie Stolz  |  145
“We Will Go on Vacation, while You Work”
A View from a South African Playground on the Ambivalent Reception of the Sani Pass Infrastructure Project
Anne Turin  | 165

Bringing My Wife and Children to the Field
Methodological, Epistemological and Ethical Reflections
Leberecht Funk  | 185

CONSTRUCTING THE FIELD

On Being a Father in the Field
Mobility, Distance and Closeness
Mario Krämer  | 209

Whisky, Kids and Sleepless Nights
The Challenge of Being a Mother, a Student and a Researcher
Tabea Schiefer  | 223

Capturing Sounds
Children’s Voices in the Field and how They Impact Our Research
Andrea Hollington  | 243

Shared Field, Divided Field
Expectations of an Anthropological Couple in Southeast Asia
Felix Girke  | 259

From Tightrope Walks to Entangled Families
Erdmure Alber  | 259

Authors  | 287
The idea behind this volume was born in informal and recurrent conversations over the years in the hallways of the University of Cologne. While we shared our diverse experiences of parenting in the field during coffee breaks and other informal conversations, our passion grew for bringing the manifold implications of being a parent in the field to the more prominent place it deserves. We have been very happy to see that many colleagues shared our concern and we are grateful that our idea of bringing together several colleagues who had conducted fieldwork with family members for a workshop was met with support and endorsement.

The workshop “Feldforschung und Familie. Herausforderungen und Implikationen des Elternseins im Feld” (Fieldwork and Family. Challenges and Implications of Being a Parent in the Field), held in June 2018 at the University of Cologne, was a wonderful experience of collegiality. Although many of the workshop participants became authors of this volume, some of them only enriched the workshop. We thus wish to explicitly acknowledge the presentations by Dennis Akena, Ute Dieckman, Katharina Diederichs, Martina Gockel, Carmen Ibáñez and Sandra Kurfürst, who presented, among them, some voices from the Global South and raised such important issues as the implications of being a single mother, working with sensory approaches, the conscious decision to leave children behind during research and the renegotiation of fatherhood and masculinity as a “native anthropologist” while conducting research at home. The presentations of two of the editors of the present volume have unfortunately not become part of this book due to other commitments: Fabienne Braukmann addressed the seldom reflected on topic of breastfeeding during fieldwork, as a conscious choice, thereby revealing the negotiable social norms of the Haro speaking community of South Ethiopia; and Katja Metzmacher explored the intricacies of conducting fieldwork in Uganda together with her anthropological partner, staying with their child in one of his family’s homes, and being confronted with both local norms and her own ideas about gender roles, motherhood and becoming a wife.
We also wish to express our gratitude to the representatives of the bodies and institutions in Germany and at the University of Cologne that are involved in the process of funding (accompanied) anthropological fieldwork: Ines Medved (DFG, German Research Foundation), Erdmute Alber (in her function as the spokesperson of a review board at the DFG), Michael Hillenblink (DAAD, German Academic Exchange Service) and Sandra Staudenrausch (Research Management, University of Cologne), who participated in a plenary on the structural conditions of balancing fieldwork and family. We warmly thank the Fund for the Implementation of Gender Equality at the University of Cologne who was the main donor for our workshop. We further thank the Global South Studies Center and the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, both at the University of Cologne, who also contributed financial and logistic support for our venue. The student assistants and the staff of the GSSC energetically supported the workshop and made sure that everyone felt well cared for. Thank you very much for your tireless efforts!

Developing a book out of this inspiring workshop was a rewarding task. First of all, we wish to thank the contributors for their commitment, compliance with deadlines and procedures and the very productive exchange of ideas. It was a pleasure for us to help in bringing this publication to fruition. Along the way, we received steady and unflinching support from Mary Chambers, who proofread the whole manuscript and, in the pressing last phase, from Lea Fernengel, who formatted the manuscript. For many authors this was their first time publishing about their personal experiences of being a parent in the field. What started with a certain amount of reservation at first (can this be the stuff of an anthropological publication?), turned out to provoke new avenues of thought in the contributors’ own reflections on the field and on accompanied fieldwork.

This volume aims to foster an already existing, although marginal, scholarly conversation on being a parent in the field in order to shed light on the importance of taking the social conditions under which fieldwork encounters with family evolve ethnographically and in analytically serious ways. By addressing not only the epistemic gains but also the challenges and miscellaneous implications of accompanied fieldwork, we explicitly address a remaining watershed in junior academic career trajectories: the point when young scholars, especially female scholars, become parents. The rich and reflexive accounts of this volume make visible some of the many ways in which ethnographers try to bring together both family and field. We would be delighted if this publication became a source of inspiration and encouragement.
On Being a Parent in the Field
Practical, Epistemological, Methodological and
Ethical Implications of Accompanied Fieldwork

Rosalie Stolz, Katja Metzmacher, Michaela Haug and Fabienne Braukmann

The image of the “lonely anthropologist” (Gottlieb 1995), diving into foreign waters without any cultural baggage from home, continues to dog anthropology. However, accompanied fieldwork is as widely practised as it continues to be a surprisingly marginal topic within the discipline. The present volume, drawing on a rich and diverse set of ethnographic cases, aims to shed light on the noteworthy challenges and valuable implications of contemporary accompanied fieldwork. Researchers enter the field in a variety of company, including colleagues, research assistants, translators, friends and family members (cf. Cupples and Kindon 2003). This volume focuses on anthropologist parents who conduct fieldwork accompanied by their child(ren) and their partner or other family members, who often come along to help with childcare. The configurations of fieldworkers’ families in the field exhibit an enormous variety. As shown by the contributions to this volume, reflecting upon the family conditions under which fieldwork is conducted is far too valuable to leave it to conversations in the corridor. It is the stuff ethnographies are made from – even if mostly invisibly so.

The presence of an anthropologist’s family members is often not guessable from the ethnographic account (Korpela, Hirvi and Tawah 2016: 3). In the

1 The authors of this volume stem from a binary gender background and were mainly socialised in Western Europe. We are aware of the fact that a more diverse authorship would have led to more insights and different results than those covered in the present volume. We encourage further reflections and publications around accompanied fieldwork by non-binary and diverse ethnographers in manifold research settings to enhance future learning in anthropology.
acknowledgment section the reader might find hints at the anthropologists’ family (Cornet and Blumenfield 2016b: 1), although these are often added after the highlighting of the collegial and institutional support and the stressing of the adoptive and other close social relations to local interlocutors. While kin ties to the field seem to add to the fieldworker’s credibility, non-local kin ties obviously do not (Flinn 1998: 2). There is a concern that ethnographic data might either be compromised by the contingencies of the anthropologist’s personal social life or altogether “written on another page” (Cornet and Blumenfield 2016b: 3–4; Hollington this volume). Strikingly, reflections upon the fieldworker’s social identity, assumed to having a profound impact on the ethnographic process, are notably silent when it comes to the fieldworker’s family status (Sutton and Fernandez 1998: 111).

A small niche of anthropological literature on accompanied fieldwork counters this silence, addressing the presence of children in the field (e.g. Butler and Turner 1987; Cassell 1987; Cornet and Blumenfield 2016a), the family dimension of anthropological research (Flinn, Marshall and Armstrong 1998) and the intertwine-ment of work and family life (Brown and Dreby 2013). Some anthropologists are also experimenting with new modes of depicting the fieldworker’s diverse impressions and the viewpoints of their various family members. Among these innovative “collaborative tales” (Gottlieb 1995: 23) are coauthored pieces either by parents and their children or by anthropologists and their (anthropologist) spouses (see also Klass and Klass 1987; Fluehr-Lobban and Lobban 1987; Nichter and Nichter 1987); coauthored pieces with different sections authored by family members (Gottlieb, Graham and Gottlieb-Graham 1998); single-authored pieces including accompanying children’s diary entries (Scheper-Hughes 1987); and special issues involving single-authored pieces written by family members cross-refering to each other (C. Sutton 1998; D. Sutton 1998). Similar creative solutions for monographs have yet to be established.

Works reflecting on the implications and challenges of being a parent in academia more generally are currently attracting increasing attention, such as the accounts (very personal in parts) compiled by Elrena Evans and Caroline Grant (2008), Narelle Lemon and Susanne Garvis (2014) and Mary Marotte, Paige Reynolds and Ralph Savarese (2010). Of particular interest are aspects of gender and academic structures in the humanities and social sciences. Recent accounts present personal experiences and practices in the different roles of being a mother and a researcher (Biller-Andorno et. al. 2005; Black and Garvis 2018; Evans and Grant 2008; Lemon and Garvis 2014; Marotte, Reynolds and Savarese 2010) or

2 See Felix Girke (this volume) for a more detailed elaboration on anthropological couples.
analyse underlying power relations with regards to gender and the academic system (Pereira 2017; Murgia and Poggio 2019). Others explore the implications of femaleness and motherhood for research in specific fields of study (e.g. Brown and Casanova 2009; Porter and Schänzel 2018).

Earlier or later in their careers many anthropologists have to set family and fieldwork in relation to each other; what might appear as a walk on a tightrope, when trying to balance long-term fieldwork, family life and academic schedules, is a challenge worth taking, as Erdmute Alber (2005) argued emphatically. There is a considerable diversity of answers to the important question of balancing family and fieldwork – in particular for female but increasingly also for male researchers (Brown and Dreby 2013: 8; Cornet and Blumenfield 2016b: 8–10). Yet there remain gaps in counselling, methodological training, funding and institutional support that challenge young academics. In particular, the ethics of accompanied fieldwork occupies the minds of many affected researchers, and unsurprisingly, was of particular concern in the earlier publications on accompanied fieldwork (Alber 2005: 45; Butler and Turner 1987; Cassell 1987). Still, a more concerted effort of reflection and the development of institutional support structures is needed (Funk this volume; Korpela, Hirvi and Tawah 2016: 13; Schepers-Hughes 1987). Accompanied fieldwork provides a treasure of ethnographic insights, of reflections upon fieldwork and on the boundaries of the field. Even when the object of anthropological research appears to be disconnected from the fieldworker’s family situation, a closer examination often reveals its influence on the ethnographic process (Pauli this volume), the results of which have hitherto been largely unconsidered (Cornet and Blumenfield 2016b: 7–8).

Beyond having a particular family status, bringing children to the field might put one’s cherished cultural relativistic attitudes to the test (Haug this volume; Leslie 1998: 52–56; D. Sutton 1998). According to which standards should one’s own children be treated? How do family routines and marital relations fit into field routines and local expectations of proper marital or parenting behaviour? Feelings of vulnerability might be exacerbated when children’s behaviour, the researcher’s parenting interventions and local but also collegial expectations are at odds (Di Stefano this volume; Linnekin 1998: 79–81; Nichter and Nichter 1987).

Who it is that observes or is observed might be reversed – perhaps enhancing the feeling of shared humanity but possibly being alienating as well (Korpela, Hirvi and Tawah 2016: 6–11, 15). These configurations change with researchers’ life trajectories, as they and their children grow older (Sinclair 1998), with divorces, remarriages, deaths (Flinn 1998), as well as with the development of further kin ties to locals over a longer time span (Gordon 1998; Häberlein 2014 and this volume; Haug this volume). It is not always possible nor desirable to bring
the whole family to the field, yet absent family members, as Simone Pfeifer (this volume) and Trisia Farrelly, Rochelle Stewart-Withers and Kelly Dombrowski (2014) make us aware, can exert their own presence in the field.

LOGISTICS OF ACCOMPANIED FIELDWORK

In order to reconcile fieldwork and family life, some anthropologist parents have shifted their research topics from faraway places to their own society in order to bring the two closer together (Gottlieb 2012; Rudd et al. 2008a), while others face the decision of whether to separate from their children for an extended period of time or to take them and other family members with them. This is no easy decision, as it involves highly emotional and challenging ethical concerns (see below), as well as a variety of practical considerations. Whether a parent feels that it is convenient to take children along or would prefer to leave them at home depends on the particular research location, locally available infrastructure, health and educational facilities, the duration of the stay, the age of the children, finances, childcare arrangements and last but not least on the network of people (partner, ex-partner, grandparents, etc.) they can rely on at home and abroad. All contributors to this volume have had the experience of conducting fieldwork with their child(ren), and some have also conducted fieldwork alone and with varying constellations of children of different ages and other family members over the course of their careers. All of them have found different and creative solutions to conducting accompanied fieldwork, varying according to the requirements of their field, their research topics, institutional and financial constraints and the needs of their children and family members.

As is true for travelling with children in general, good preparation and planning can save a lot of trouble and alleviate anxieties (Blumenfield 2016: 185), while remaining flexible will save the day when carefully laid plans go off the rails (Barta et al. 2009: 7). Paul Starrs et al. note: “With family along, fieldwork is no longer just about the researcher and a cluster of cherished contacts – documents and archives, peoples and places, organizations and outlooks. Suddenly logistics become far more complex.” (2001: 75) Taking children to a well-known research location facilitates planning, but of course it is never possible to prepare for all contingencies. Conducting field research in faraway places requires not only the arranging of the necessary travel documents and visas for all accompanying family members, but also consultation with travel medicine specialists about the necessary immunisations and preventive medical care, with follow-up examinations possibly recommended upon return, a suitable travel health insurance that
covers all family members, and maybe even emergency medical evacuation insurance, depending on the “remoteness” of the research site.

Further health related preparations may include attending a paediatric first aid course, the compilation of a comprehensive travel first aid kit and appropriate gear, such as mosquito nets and child-sized life vests. Another major challenge is organising childcare and schooling. Accounts of anthropologists who took their children to the field (e.g. Cassell 1987; Cornet and Blumenfield 2016b) reveal a great variety of caregivers in the field, including accompanying partners and relatives, full and part time nannies as well as local friends and relatives. Some researchers, such as Felix Girke (this volume), made use of local childcare facilities. Schooling options often depend on the children’s language skills and the availability and affordability of international schools. Several researchers have been hesitant to enroll their children in public schools, e.g. Mette Halskov Hansen in rural China (2016: 34), because of poor quality and/or divergent educational methods, and instead have preferred to homeschool their children (Blumenfield 2016: 190; Haug this volume).

The ability to speak a locally used language is of great advantage, not only to make use of local daycare and schooling facilities, but also to support the independent undertakings of the accompanying partner or relatives. The social and professional background of the researcher’s partner/spouse, as well as their envisioned role during fieldwork, plays a decisive role from the planning stage onwards. Non-anthropologist accompanying partners have to find their own roles and tasks, such as technical and medical assistance, language teaching or diary writing, during fieldwork, alongside or overshadowed by the often-strenuous demands of childcare and adaptation to a perhaps unknown field (see the chapters by Funk, Krämer and Turin in this volume). Researcher couples might profit from possible professional collaboration in the field, but might also need to demarcate their own autonomous fields of research (see the chapters by Girke and Pauli in this volume).

As several examples have shown, the availability of transportation, either public or one’s own, and the resulting (im)mobilities (see the chapters by Haug, Krämer and Turin in this volume) can have a significant impact on field research, as can the particular housing situation. Living in one’s own flat in an urban environment (e.g. Pfeifer this volume), staying with a local (host) family (e.g. Shea 2016) or running one’s own household (e.g. Häberlein and Stolz’s chapters in this volume), all come with different implications and challenges.
PRECARIOUS CAREERS AND FINANCING ACCOMPANIED FIELDWORK

Research funding, funding organisations’ policies and the researchers’ ability and willingness to use additional private funds significantly influence the logistics of doing accompanied fieldwork. Financial frameworks also significantly impact on the career prospects of junior anthropologists, especially women. Even though higher education policies and strategies envision gender equality at all levels of qualification, balancing a scientific career and family remains a major challenge and still presents a key barrier for female scholars to reaching the upper echelons of faculties and universities.3 Added to this, in social and cultural anthropology, young academics find themselves confronted with the demands of balancing long-term fieldwork, often abroad, and family planning – a challenge that also continues to impede female careers more often (Lynn, Howells and Stein 2018; Murgia and Poggio 2019; see Rudd et al. 2008a, 2008b for data on anthropologists at US universities).

Due to a lack of information and of institutionalised family support, parent researchers often have to navigate hazy information on funding opportunities or might not make use of the full range of support they would be eligible for. In the long run, researchers who are not yet established, considering these options (see also Biller-Andorno et al. 2005), might postpone family planning, quit academia or, as a third option, switch “in and out” of academia, between secondary employment and academic positions (see Bueskens and Toffoletti 2018; Lemon and Garvis 2014). As Tami Blumenfield mentions, “The costs involved in bringing families along are often prohibitive”, and the additional expenditures, in particular international plane fares, require “extended family support or spousal subsidization” (2016: 189). However, this precariousness is not inevitable.

A quick glimpse at other professions that involve long-term stays abroad highlights existing standards for the financial support of accompanying family members. For example, employees in the international development cooperation sector, as well as diplomats and other employees of the German Federal Foreign Office, are self-evidently accompanied by family members, for whom the coverage of expenses is the norm; these expenditures comprise lump sums for relocation,

3 Country reports and general publications proliferate; see, for instance, the CIRGE report for US universities (Rudd et al. 2008) and the report of the German Rector’s conference (2012) for German universities. Reports on specific universities can be found online, such as the report of the University of Cologne: https://gb.uni-koeln.de/e2106/e2113/e26701/Gender_Datenreport2018_NEU_WEB_ger.pdf (last accessed May 8, 2019).
school fees and allowances for accompanying partners and other family members. Additionally, the accompanying family members can seize the opportunity of being included in the preparations for an assignment abroad, often by taking a language course, intercultural training or other tailored courses. These efforts have grown out of the insight that the dissatisfaction of the accompanying partner is a major reason for premature terminations of assignments abroad, as demonstrated by the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ).

In contrast to these high standards, anthropologists are often required to justify their budgets for accompanied fieldwork to third-party donors or university administrators and are usually left to themselves to handle the task of preparing accompanying partners and children for living in their field sites. However, lack of preparation for encounters within an unfamiliar environment, feelings of isolation or the lack of a meaningful occupation can place a major burden on accompanying partners and can ultimately risk the well-being of the family as a whole.

A small but not insignificant flagship of a German university administration that meets the needs of a parent researcher involves cases of travelling with a breastfed child: the reimbursement for accommodation and travels costs of a breastfeeding mother travelling on business (and an accompanying partner) is required by the federal state law on travel costs in Bremen, one of the 16 federal states of the Federal Republic of Germany. It is now applied by the University of Bremen and should be used as a guiding model for other university administrations in Germany. This can probably also provide an administrative case for a long-term research trip, which by law is to be considered as a business trip and requires a travel authorisation request to be approved for the university. Taking this practical example of a university adjusting to family needs as one step forward, perhaps the above-indicated guidelines for foreign officers and development workers could also apply to long-term fieldworkers and guide funding institutions in reworking their policies?

Despite the great differences in the type and scope of the funding received by each of the contributors to this volume, they share in common the precarious burden of going abroad accompanied by family without a comfortable financial buffer. Having prioritised long-term fieldwork and taken up this financial risk paradoxically opens up the possibility of an academic career in the field of social anthropology, for which long-term fieldwork is seen as a key qualification. However, a variety of fieldwork-financing strategies, such as those stated further

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below, are not considered in the regulations and financial policies of funding agencies. We are confident that pointing out structural gaps and barriers can help funding agencies to adapt their policies and improve their administrative guidelines according to the requirements and implications of accompanied long-term fieldwork.

Besides the few existing grants\(^6\) for BA and MA anthropology students, the special situation of accompanied fieldwork is not acknowledged in the offer of student scholarships at all, even though, at this qualification level, students are the most vulnerable group in the academic hierarchy. When not conducting research under the umbrella of an already existing larger research project, as Anne Turin (this volume) managed to do, the availability of support programs for student researchers-cum-parents depends on the gender funds provided by a university. Trying to make use of those funds, Tabea Schiefer (this volume) saw herself confronted with the rejection of her applications, which were justified with the financial situation of her husband. Still eager to conduct fieldwork, Tabea Schiefer had no other solution than to cover her own and her child’s research expenditures in Scotland and Germany on a private basis. Other vulnerable groups of students, such as students with special needs, single parents, or students coming from the Global South, probably experience further obstacles and (im)possibilities of realising accompanied fieldwork.

The research stays of PhD students take up to twelve months or longer and in general enjoy a relatively stable funding situation – at least regarding the fieldworker’s costs. Structural and financial support for accompanying children and/or partners varies greatly between different research projects and universities. It is noteworthy that there are third party donors which do not grant additional gender costs for PhD students within their gender equality policy. Hence, the willingness of financial administrators and principal investigators to shift financial items and material resources within the accountancy of research centres seems, de facto, to be of major relevance for funding outcomes. The contributors to this volume conducted field research under PhD scholarships (e.g. Hollington and Stolz this volume) or as (part-time) employees in a third-party funded project (e.g. Di Stefano, Funk and Pfeifer this volume). While Andrea Hollington and Simone Pfeifer paid family-related costs themselves during their PhD research, Leberecht Funk and

\(^6\) The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), for instance, offers student scholarships for research and internships abroad that include lump sums for an accompanying partner and an allowance for childcare. BA and MA students, who receive a state loan under the Federal Training Assistance Act (BAföG), can apply for funds when going abroad during their studies. Here, the possibility of applying for special funds covering childcare fees in the country of destination is available.
Rosalie Stolz received partial financial support for their accompanying family members. The observable differing practices in financial support for accompanied fieldwork at the PhD level should be taken as a wakeup call for mainstreaming structural imbalances and for institutionalizing equal support for accompanied long-term PhD fieldwork.

The post-doctoral level is more comfortably equipped, with German public and private (non-profit) funding agencies\(^7\) providing post-doctoral researchers with additional gender equality funds and offering a range of financial family support for research stays abroad. These funds, depending on the third-party donor, cover travel costs for family member(s) to and/or within the country of research, visa fees, childcare and medical support. Occasionally, dual career opportunities are also part of the service.\(^8\) While Andrea Hollington was not granted additional funding for accompanied fieldwork expenses during her PhD research, at the post-doctoral stage, she received additional travel grants for her accompanying children. Another contributor to this volume with considerable fieldwork experience in Togo with different family constellations is Tabea Häberlein, whose expenses for the children’s travel costs, childcare fees and medical treatment were usually approved. Also funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), Felix Girke was able to cover the costs related to taking his child on field research in Myanmar. For Mario Krämer, his conception of private and professional life implied a separation of his DFG grant – to be used solely for professional matters in Namibia and South Africa – from the expenses for his accompanying family members, which he covered by private means. While most of the stated examples relied on one donor, for Michaela Haug, a combination of funds from different sources enabled her family to accompany her on long-term fieldwork in Indonesian Borneo.

As the contributions to this volume show, each long-term fieldwork project, each accompanying family member and each research location entails specific requirements. Anthropologists should not shy away from constantly searching for information on support and negotiating the possibilities for financing their fieldwork with family. Above all, universities and funding institutions should better reflect the fact that inherent in the anthropological discipline lies long-term fieldwork – a significant time span during an anthropologist’s career that a researcher might want, at some point, to balance with family life. This requires presuming solid and convenient funding structures, particularly in order to retain female careers in academia in balance with their male peers.

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\(^7\) To name a few: the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, German Research Foundation (DFG), the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Volkswagen Foundation and the Fritz Thyssen Foundation.

\(^8\) E.g. Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Germany.
ACCOMPANIED FIELDWORK AND THE PRODUCTION OF ETHNOGRAPHIC KNOWLEDGE

Accompanied fieldwork impacts not only on the practical conditions of fieldwork, it also inadvertently leaves an imprint on the ethnographic encounter and the process of knowledge formation, as has been pointed out variously (e.g. Cassell 1987b: 169–170; Korpela, Hirvi and Tawah 2016: 4). However, it has not found its way into the prominent debates on ethnographic fieldwork methods and knowledge generation as a relational and affective process (Spencer and Davies 2010; Stodulka, Dinkelaker and Thajib 2019). Likewise, elaborations and critiques of the concept of immersion into the field implicitly embark from the idea of the solitary fieldworker (Carsten 2012; Okely 2012; see also Stolz this volume). But what contributions can accompanied fieldwork actually make to the generation of ethnographic data?

With a family in tow, daily life as a locally understandable and effective social unit allows the fieldworker to gain various first-hand experiences of the nitty-gritty of social life (see also Counts and Counts 1998). Rosalie Stolz (this volume) describes how living in a house in northern Laos paved the way for participating in and gaining insights into kin-based sociality. Feeling one’s way through accompanied fieldwork was a source of ethnographic knowledge of Tao children’s socialisation of a particular emotional repertoire for Leberecht Funk (this volume); witnessing how his children were subject to intensive teasing provided profound insights into the topic of his research.

It is an anthropological truism that the fieldworker’s positionality shapes, yet does not determine, insights into and social interaction in the field (e.g. Okely 1992; Rosaldo 1989; Robertson 2002). Being a parent in the field, as this volume underlines, apparently heightens a reflexive awareness of the relational dimensions of ethnographic knowledge, for a variety of reasons (Flinn 1998; Haug and Stolz this volume). Being an understandable social person and becoming similar is stressed in various studies. Drawing on her long-term perspective on the different field sites of Mexico and Namibia, Julia Pauli (this volume) recapitulates how similarities and differences in family status influenced her research in both field sites: while in Namibia her being married was crucial for her access to certain wedding rituals, in Mexico her not yet being a mother affected her access to information surrounding birth and childcare.

In her research on transnational families, Simone Pfeifer (this volume) traces (the limits of) her similarity to her female interlocutors who, like her, have to manage long-distance relationships. She reflects upon her absent/present family and the feelings of uneasiness this occasionally provoked – rendering her sensitive
towards the pains and coping strategies of young Senegalese migrants. However, when the researcher enters the ethnographic scene, not only as a specific social persona on her/his own, but also together with the family, apparent similarities (e.g. the social status of being a parent) as well as obvious differences (e.g. social practices) may affect the encounter in both positive and negative ways. In that respect, experiences of discordance may also teach the ethnographer lessons about the sociality practised in the field.

Particular family configurations might be at odds with local values that are therewith exposed as such. Forms of segregation might become visible through the forms of sociality that are not possible because of the ethnicity of the fieldworker’s companions, and their behavioural routines, as Anne Turin (this volume) worked out in the context of South Africa. Conflicting views on educating and caring for children might actualise vividly, and often harshly, ontological viewpoints on both sides, the local and the anthropologist’s (Funk this volume; Korpela, Hirvi and Tawah 2016: 8–11). Normative expectations of marital relations, in particular intimacy and proper conduct as wife/husband, might produce an incisively felt ethnographic knowledge. Over the long run, when repeatedly returning to the field with one’s children, fieldworkers and their local acquaintances might stress differences with more laxity, for different views cannot then easily compromise an already robust social relationship. Recapturing the experience of “growing up in the field” during several periods of research in Indonesian Borneo, Michaela Haug (this volume) shows how fieldwork can be an open-ended dialogue with acquaintances and family that allows the expression of discordant views.

Finally, being a parent in the field can also prove to have no direct impact on (rapport with) interlocutors, or might even be an outright hindrance. Mariette van Tilburg (1998) describes how she realised a few months before her planned research on childlessness and infertility in Senegal that she was pregnant; considering that “[t]o focus on barren informants while I myself was pregnant would be a cruel mockery” (ibid: 179), she decided to change her topic accordingly. Joan Cassell nonchalantly mentions that since “studying up”, her family background was of no interest to her interlocutors and thus to her fieldwork anymore: “The surgeons I am now studying would be bored by my kids” (1987: 269). Felix Girke (this volume) also stresses that for his relationships with professional interlocutors in the field of cultural heritage in Yangon, his being a parent in the field was apparently neither of concern nor impact. Simone Pfeifer (this volume) mentions that while in Dakar her family ties were of much interest, among the Senegalese in Berlin they were not. These cases exemplify the continuous efforts to demarcate
family and non-family spheres that underlie not only ethnographic accounts and fieldwork decisions but the social dynamics and encounters in the field as well.

Do we tend, out of reflex, to associate family and accompanied fieldwork with sunshine and roses? Probably not, but stories of sunny days in the field correspond much better to the prevailing ideal of modern academic parents who are able to cope with double and triple loads – pursuing successful careers, being ambitious partners and caring fathers or mothers all at once. Positive stories are much easier to share than accounts of fears, exhaustion and the limitations experienced. However, focusing on the bright and enriching elements of accompanied fieldwork may not always have a motivating effect, but can also place a burden on young scholars who feel that they have to live up to such ideals (Schiefer this volume).

Kinship also “carries ambivalent or negative qualities” (Carsten 2013: 246–247). Ruptures during accompanied fieldwork might reveal our own conceptions of family life, parenting and partnership. As the strenuous phases of fieldwork can put one’s worst instincts on display, the same can hold true for family dynamics and mental health. While there are good reasons to keep darker episodes within one’s diary, the form a conflict takes, the way in which it is aggravated or resolved, provides glimpses into social lifeworlds (see Berger 2009). Given the current call for taking the researcher’s affects and the emotional dimensions of the fieldwork encounter seriously, as “epistemic affects” (Stodulka, Selim and Mattes 2018; see also Stodulka, Dinkelaker and Thajib 2019), here we could probably find many an untold story that it would be worthwhile to think about.

**CONSTRUCTING THE FIELD IN ACCOMPANIED FIELDWORK**

Ethnographers, whether accompanied or not, enter their “fields” as people with individual personalities, roles and identities. Private information about oneself is already hardly to be restrained in participatory research, and thus “disconnect[ing] our [family] lives to live our fieldwork” becomes even more impossible (Amit 2000: 15); parenthood is an important part of anthropologist parents’ lives and of their identity as researchers. As such, it can significantly influence the construction of the field and thereby also the production of ethnographic knowledge. Especially in the company of family members, an ethnographer might see her/himself confronted with the loss of “impression management” (cf. Linnekin 1998: 71–83), which results even more in the (re)negotiations of “the field”. Parenthood can shape the field quite practically by determining one’s movements in the field (Krämer and Turin this volume), by opening up new sites of field research, such
as playgrounds (Turin this volume; see also Korpela, Hirvi and Tawah 2016) or by limiting one’s mobility (see Turin this volume; Cassell 1987). Tabea Schiefer, (this volume), for example describes how her research on whisky consumption in Germany and Scotland grew out of the wish to find a research site within Europe that would satisfy both family and academic needs.

In anthropology, areas of study no longer tend to be perceived as sets of bound geographical and cultural boundaries but rather are thought of as permeable and flexible field sites (Gupta and Ferguson 1997). At these locations of contemporary ethnographic research, anthropologists more and more often study communities of practice rather than conceptualised cultural groups (see Amit 2000; Marcus and Okely 2007), thereby actualising the questions of the construction of the field and of its boundaries. Increasing communication technologies, for instance mobile phones and social media, manifest the unboundedness of fields and the continuity of participatory practice by the researcher and the researched, even when the researcher is physically absent from “the field” (Pelckmans 2009, Pfeifer this volume) or when fieldwork is conducted “at home” (Caputo 2000: 19–31). Accompanied fieldwork, specifically, shapes the boundaries of the field site in unanticipated ways. It is for this reason that an open reflection on accompanied fieldwork in anthropological writing (see also Hollington this volume on similar aspects for linguistic recordings) valuably adds to our analytical practice of constructing “our” fields and the multiple facets they can take – especially with family in tow.

The professional and private interlinkages between ethnographers and their “fields” change over the course of long-term fieldwork, through the courses of our own private lives as well as through the ways fieldwork creates and reshapes personal bonds through constant returns to the field (Howell 2012; see Häberlein, Haug and Pauli this volume). Tabea Häberlein (this volume) shows how her family and field lives became increasingly entangled over the years, as she developed a research family in the field in rural northern Togo, brought her children along, fostered a young Togolese woman and became regarded as a grandmother. As the field is constantly reconstructed over time, its “personal, professional and fieldwork involvements of ethnographers are mutually constitutive” (Amit 2000: 11). In the broad sense, this involves reflecting on and making decisions about taking one’s children, partner or other family members to the field. Therefore, the construction of the field is not reduced to various actors and unexpected variables during the actual course of fieldwork, as alluded to above: constructing the field starts with the preparation of a certain research topic and, thereafter, with the practicalities of and preparation for fieldwork itself. This is why the ethnographer has to be regarded as “an even more agent in the construction of the field” (ibid: 13),
who imagines, anticipates, designs and creates the field from her/his own personal background and professional perspective.

With regard to fieldwork with family, during the initial phase of designing a research topic and the related fieldwork, a parent researcher can reflect upon different locations of “the field” suitable to family members. This could involve, for instance, decision-making and considerations that relate to the age of child(ren), the private or professional expectations of the partner, climate conditions and the infrastructure needed for the successful realisation of fieldwork, such as access to health care. It might be desirable, and in some settings feasible, to keep a private “family” sphere apart from the sphere of the “field”. Research by appointment and the availability of children’s daycare or suitable schools might allow for a continuation of family routines with the promise of comfort and safety for the fieldworker, and the company of family, while allowing time for undisturbed field research (Girke this volume). Mario Krämer (this volume) reflects upon the underlying conceptions that made him prefer to keep his own domestic sphere and the field spatially and theoretically distinct during his research on the struggle over neo-traditional authority in Southern Africa, only to realise that his family situation influenced his professional interaction with his assistants and colleagues.

Where does the field end and where does the anthropologist’s own domain begin? Tatjana Thelen and Erdmute Alber (2018) have argued recently for an analysis of the processes of “boundary making” that reproduce the contemporary divide between the knowledge domains of politics and kinship within anthropology. Another correlate of this is the divide between family and (field)work (Dreby and Brown 2013), which becomes particularly pertinent when considering the politics of writing: what belongs in the depiction of the field? That this “boundary work” (Thelen and Alber 2018) entails constant efforts of editing and cutting-out is highlighted in Andrea Hollington’s account (this volume) of the methodological practice of linguistics. When documenting and analysing spoken language sequences, audio-taped transcriptions are usually cleared of undesired voices. Reflecting upon her disciplinary reflex of filtering her own children’s voices on audiotapes as background noise, she realised that the boundary work invested in producing a corpus of language data that fits disciplinary ideologies might curtail the researcher’s understanding of actual language use.

As the contributions to this volume highlight, acknowledging the presence of family members in the field and the ways in which they are (in)directly linked to the making of the field in ethnographic writing reveals fieldwork to be about “social experience”, rather than being a tale of “social isolation” (Amit 2000: 14–15).
THE ETHICAL CHALLENGES OF ACCOMPANIED FIELDWORK

Being a parent in the field implies various highly emotional issues and ethical concerns, which are barely addressed in the large body of literature on good research practice, anthropological university education or in the ethical guidelines of major anthropological associations. The focus lies largely on encouraging a differentiated engagement with the ethical quandaries of fieldwork and the (potentially contradicting) relationships and responsibilities an ethnographer has towards his or her interlocutors, funders, employers and home or host governments, as well as towards wider society.

Taking a family to the field provides not only the appealing spirit (at least to some) of heading into a shared adventure, it also implies exposing our children, partner or other family members to potential physical and emotional threats. Some of these might be quite obvious, like the risk of contracting malaria in the tropics or being confronted with traces of violence in post-conflict areas (which are thus easier to avoid, like e.g. by taking malaria prophylaxis or choosing a different field site), while others are rather oblique and as a consequence difficult to anticipate. Exposing one’s self to various kinds of risks is one thing, but exposing others, and especially the children for whom we are responsible, takes on an entirely different dimension, as “one can risk one’s ‘self’ more freely than one’s children” (Cassell 1987: 261). Several researchers have pointed out that together with our children, we bring our specific ideas concerning child rearing practices, security, health care, socialisation and education to the field and quickly reach the limits of cultural relativism when these are questioned (see Cornet and Blumenfield 2016b; Funk this volume; Glover 2016; Hansen 2016; Shea 2016). David Sutton, conducting research on the Greek island of Kalymnos together with his wife and their baby son, pointedly summarises his astonishment: “While the Kalymnians and I had agreed to disagree over many issues and to learn from each other, when it came to our children, suddenly both they and I were convinced that we had a monopoly on truth. Why was cultural tolerance, mine and theirs, suddenly in such short supply?” (1998: 127) Other researchers experienced the limits of practising cultural relativism when they realised how deeply their children had become socialised in the culture their parents had ventured out to study. Heather Young Leslie, conducting field research in Tonga, and Diane Michalski Turner (1987: 104), working in Fiji, both describe how they suffered “severe insecurity because of the loss of a shared cultural solidarity” (Young Leslie 1998: 54) with their daughters, and Heather Young Leslie even considered leaving her daughter behind in Tonga (ibid: 53).
Weighing up whether to take children to the field or leave them behind, considerations might revolve around the emotional stress that a prolonged separation might have on the child(ren) as well as on the departing parent (Farelly, Stewart-Withers and Dombroski 2014; Goodenough 1998; Pfeifer this volume). European and Euro-American notions of motherhood make it much more difficult for mothers to leave their children behind than for fathers (Flinn 1998: 11). When taking children along to places considered “exotic” or “dangerous”, parents are confronted with being charged irresponsible, as experienced by Susan Frohlick (2002), who conducted research with two young children and her husband in a mountaineering base camp at the foot of Mount Everest. In particular, pregnant ethnographers might be confronted with heightened normative expectations and explicit criticisms for exposing themselves to fieldwork-associated risks (see Di Stefano this volume; Porter 2018). Heading off alone and leaving children behind, however, confronts women, particularly, with the allegation of being a “bad” mother, which can result in twofold emotional distress – that of being separated from her children, which may already involve feelings of guilt (Sutherland 2008), and additionally that of being subject to malicious judgements.

Early accounts of taking children to the field are written with a daring undertone, like for instance the account of Harald Schultz (1961), who took his eight-year-old son to Brazil, or David Maybury-Lewis (1965), who took his baby son into the Amazonian rainforest. Encounters of the eight-year-old with piranhas and the life-threatening dysentery of the baby boy are described as dangers overcome which seem to belong to a proper adventure. Reading these writings more than 50 years later gives the impression that taking children along and exposing them to these dangers was considered an integral and rather unquestioned part of the rite de passage that makes up fieldwork and constitutes “the anthropologist as hero” (Sontag 1966). Or – as seems more likely – these early colleagues simply didn’t find it appropriate to share their inner conflicts and fears with their readership. Although challenges that have to be circumnavigated remain an inevitable part of fieldwork, anthropologists today are more sensitised to possible consequences and they seem to have a greater need for security (cf. Howell 2011).

Health concerns are among the most pressing issues – especially for anthropologists who travel to places characterised by poor infrastructure, limited health care and a high risk of exposure to infectious diseases, as is typical for many rural areas in the Global South. Encounters with poisonous animals, household accidents and “simple” emergencies, such as appendicitis, can become life threatening because of the long distance to medical assistance. However, living in an urban environment also implies specific hazards, such as for example the increasing air pollution in Chinese cities (Blumenfield 2016: 188). Several anthropo-logists
have described how their children not only lost a lot of their accustomed freedom, but also fell severely ill in mega cities like Bogota (Hugh-Jones 1998) and Delhi (Nichter and Nichter 1987), after enjoying relatively good health in the countryside.

The psychological and emotional stress that results from living in a foreign lifeworld and being confronted with irritating behaviour or painful experiences is vividly described by Nancy Schepers-Hughes’s children, who struggled with the experience of extreme poverty when they accompanied their mother during her research in a Brazilian shanty town (Scheper-Hughes 1987). Leberecht Funk (this volume) describes how the unsettling experiences that his wife and children had resulted in feelings of guilt on the part of the anthropologist. Similar feelings have been reported by other ethnographers as well and range from “guilt at the thought of dragging a child to a possible hazardous and unhealthy field site for the sake of an anthropological career”, and “guilt at inabilities to control and socialize a child in the field” to “guilt at losing control and publicly yelling at a child” (Flinn 1998: 11). Conducting accompanied fieldwork is thus inextricably related to the crucial and not easily answered question of what we can expect our children, our partner or other relatives to bear. Candice Cornet and Tami Blumenfield even go a step further by asking whether we are violating children’s rights by engaging them in (field) work and making them – intentionally or not – “a form of research strategy, an instrument to accessibility or a tool to humanize relationships in the field.” (2016b: 4)

Accounts of the effects of fieldwork on children vary greatly according to the research setting involved, the age of the children and their individual personalities. While some children have had deeply troubling experiences (Schepers-Hughes 1987; Fernandez 1987) others have wished to be more actively engaged in their parents’ research (Wiley 1987: 110), and yet others again have developed a deep personal attachment to the field sites of their parents (see the video account by Lydall et al. 1995; Flinn 1998: 14). Acknowledging that our children and other accompanying family members have not only an indirect impact on the insights we gain, e.g. by positioning us as parent or spouse, but also often actively contribute to the production of ethnographic knowledge, finally raises the important question of how to place them in our writing (Cornet and Blumenfield 2016b: 3). Without wishing to propagate a rigid normative framework for accompanied fieldwork, its ethical implications should nevertheless find entry into our discussions of research ethics and ethical guidelines. The silence that largely envelops accompanied fieldwork in official debates and that reduces it to intimate personal conversations makes it more difficult to anticipate and prepare for the challenges it implies. We hope that this edited volume contributes to placing the epistemological,
methodological and ethical implications of accompanied fieldwork on a more central stage with regard to the supervision of students, exchanges between colleagues, and wider university structures, in order to strengthen financial and institutional support for it.

THE CHAPTERS IN THIS BOOK

This edited volume moves beyond mere accounts of accompanied, ethnographic fieldwork and pinpoints implications for theoretical and methodological thinking. Aiming to present manifold perspectives we have integrated scholars from different career stages, including MA and PhD students, post-doctoral researchers and senior scholars. The chapters cover different fieldwork settings with different family constellation in rural and urban areas across different continents and various research topics. At the same time, we develop critical reflections on gender-biased academic realities by means of shedding light on the experiences and opportunities of funding accompanied fieldwork.

Julia Pauli discusses categorial and biographical similarities and differences between the fieldworker and the field. Drawing on her own ethnographic experiences in Mexico and Namibia and her changing family status – from being a young researcher without offspring during her first fieldwork in Mexico to being in the field with her anthropologist husband and their daughter in Namibia and later again in Mexico – she describes how being similar or different in crucial categories with her interlocutors influenced and shaped her research and ethnographic reasoning in different ways. Based on her ethnographic analysis, she argues for a stronger consideration of what she terms family normativity, i.e. the values attached to particular family configurations in different societies.

Corinna Di Stefano reflects upon the various expectations and reactions she saw herself confronted with due to her “bulging body” while conducting research during her pregnancy in the Lesser Antilles. In considering different resonances to her visible pregnancy, she shows that the family involvement projected on the researcher’s body is not always a door opener. Her interlocutors’ reactions, in particular, revealed the close connection between reproduction and migration decisions. The eventual threat of exposure to chlordecone, a teratogenic pesticide used in banana cultivation, made her aware of her privileges in the field.
Simone Pfeifer conducted research with and without her husband and son in Dakar and Berlin. Inquiring into transnational media practices, Pfeifer focuses on her own media practices, including the use of Skype to communicate with her home-based family, that made the longing for absent family members and the condition of unstable WiFi a shared experience between her and many of her female interlocutors. In an artistic collaboration with her partner, both relate to a West African tradition of family images, creating a collage that brings the layers and dynamics of accompanied fieldwork to life. Their joint project is an example of an innovative form of ethnographic knowledge and art production into which the (non-)anthropologist spouse brings his perspective.

In her contribution to this volume, Michaela Haug reflects on how the multiple elements of her identity, as well as different phases of parenthood, have influenced experiences of closeness and difference over the course of her long-term engagement with the Dayak Benuaq in Indonesian Borneo. Most accounts of growing into and growing up in the field are depicted as linear processes of steadily increasing closeness as initial differences and distance are successfully overcome. In contrast, she describes her experience of growing up in Dayak Benuaq society from an unmarried and childless undergraduate student into a married mid-level academic with three children as an uneven road which included rewarding highlights but also disconcerting ruptures.

In her account of her long-term research in Togo, Tabea Häberlein describes how she became involved in various kin roles and how her German and Togolese families got increasingly entangled. Over the course of several research periods she became the social child of a Togolese family, the foster mother of a local child, a biological mother and a social grandmother. In her contribution to this volume she shows how growing into these different roles provided her with deep insights into the making of kin relationships and personhood. She argues that giving and receiving personhood, as a mother as well as a child, is a process of affiliation, driven by different kinds of social interaction.

Rosalie Stolz reflects upon how the presence of her husband and son influenced their social becoming in the field and her grasp on kinship among the Khmu of northern Laos by discussing the processes of immersion from the perspective of her husband, her son and herself respectively; she traces how her being a socially mature woman impacted upon her kin positioning in the field, how her husband’s lay medical treatment of a local elder only seemed to provoke a conflict, and finally, how her son’s behaviour and the local expectations of children of his age
were partially and tellingly at odds with each other. She uses the metaphor of “falling in and out of sync” in order to address the mutual attunement between the field and non-anthropological companions that builds on its own forms of resonance.

Anne Turin mobilised her close but also extended family support in order to live in Himeville, South Africa to conduct research on the reception and impacts of the tarring of the Sani Pass, a road that stretches through the National Park. Turin discusses the practical but also the ethnographic implications of her fieldwork situation: the expectations of the accompanying adult carers of her daughter of what the stay in South Africa should feel like (as the suggestive title “We go on vacation while you work” indicates), and how her experiences at playgrounds with marked social segregation added to her insights on the controversial infrastructure project.

In his account of his fieldwork among the Tao on the Taiwanese island of Lanyu, Leberecht Funk allows us intimate insights into the vicissitudes of living in a suspicious and timid social environment in which eye-contact and a wide range of other social behaviour are avoided for fear of omnipresent spirits. His research on children’s affective socialisation gained in complexity as well as in delicacy due to his first-hand observations of local children’s behaviour towards his sons. Funk traces his feelings of distress and guilt in order to shed light on the hardships of accompanying spouses and children, as well as on Tao values and emotions.

Mario Krämer explores the compatibility and differentiation between family and professional life during 15 months of research in South Africa and Namibia with a family of five. He builds on Max Weber’s vision of “science as a vocation” to discuss the partially contradictory requirements of professional and private “vocations” in the sense of being responsible for caring for one’s family. His contribution shows how the presence of his family and his responsibilities as a father affected the methodological approach of his research, his movements and his position in the field, and eventually also the insights he gained into the development and change of neo-traditional authority in Southern Africa.

Tabea Schiefer discusses her experiences as a student mother and researcher in higher education by taking insights from seminars to supervision. Rather than meeting the promoted ideal of fieldwork in a far away place, for her, a support structure that fit her ideals of family life was a major precondition for the choice of her fieldwork setting. Accompanied by her daughter, husband and sister-in-law,
she reflects on how family support positively impacted on her sensory-ethnographic research among whisky consumers in Scotland and Germany.

Andrea Hollington critically reflects on common practices of excluding sounds and voices during linguistic fieldwork and data processing with the aim of creating “academic” representative recordings. However, taking into account her own long-term anthropological linguistic fieldwork experiences in various African countries, she explores how the captured sounds and voices of her accompanying children have impacted on her field recordings. Therefore, she pleads for a widening of the linguistic perspective to an integrated analysis of polyphonic and multidimensional soundscapes and the contextualised environment of communicative situations. This timely approach incorporates the researcher and accompanying family members into the context of fieldwork and the creation of linguistic data.

That a field can be divided while it is shared by a researcher couple accompanied by their son is shown by Felix Girke. Staying in Yangon, Myanmar, both Girke and his wife pursued their respective research agendas and shared the responsibility of childcare in what he calls “radical egalitarianism”. He reflects upon the rationales of their decision to keep their family life and fieldwork close yet separate, and relates them to the history of anthropological couples and the often conflicting implicit rules of anthropological careers. That the field indeed turned out to be divided is considered by Girke to be characteristic of his field of cultural heritage, whose cosmopolitan expert-interlocutors themselves strove to keep work and family life distinct.

In her afterword, Erdmute Alber starts with a reflection upon her earlier usage of the image of walking on a tightrope when thinking about balancing life as a researcher and as a mother. Rather than walking alone on a tightrope, the endeavour of accompanied ethnographic fieldwork, she argues, is nothing other than the consistent implementation of the ethnographic method of participant observation. She stresses the relational character of fieldwork and the epistemic value of analysing the imprints of accompanied fieldwork on the research process. Against this backdrop, her remarks on the challenges of funding and supervising accompanied fieldwork provide food for thought. Taking up the notion of entangled families, Alber argues for a stronger consideration of the wider set of kin and quasi kin relations that extend beyond the primary kin of the fieldworker and cross-cut the boundaries of the field and home.
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