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Embracing Home: Options and Constraints in Relationships of Belonging

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Globalisation and mass movements of people – migrations, exile, tourism etc. – have led to changing conceptions of belonging. In particular, ‘home’ as the prior category of a stable identity has been called into question.

Recent anthropological theory has attempted to understand how belonging and home are being redefined. First, identity and belonging appear as a matter of choice, given that people are constantly switching codes and putting up new affiliations and attachments. Second, the re-essentialising strategies of ‘communities on the move’, where home is imagined as the fixed locality of a pristine existence, have come into focus.

Our workshop builds on these former debates. However, while those discussions focussed on ‘imagination’ and ‘construction’, we are more concerned with the level of concrete interaction: How are relationships of belonging – the emotional and moral commitment to a place, a political unit, or to groups of people – (re-)created in the encounters between individuals and the larger forces of society? How are they manipulated and transformed by structural constraints (e.g., state bureaucracies; nationalist/racist tendencies; economic pressures or acts of violence)? How have newly acquired cultural or religious bonds come to affect relationships of belonging which are based on ethnic or kinship affiliations? How do the often gender-specific perspectives on home become transformed over the various life stages of a person and how are these issues re-negotiated after death / in burials?

We intend to examine those relationships not as a unidirectional or bilateral flow, but rather consider the complex entanglement that constitutes home, which involves many different localities, communities and interconnections.

Heimat: Belonging as Resistance in a Europe of ‘Free-Floating’ Regions

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Although in the formation of identities reference to place continues to provide a means of spatial orientation, the process is increasingly detached from any clearly delimited territory. Instead, variable associations with social events and movements are located historically through personal biographies. Reference

to the regional level now points not so much towards a clear location or territory of one's own as a key source of identity, but rather towards an autobiography of resistance where identity is defined on the basis of the Other. Salient 'ethnic' conflicts as in Northern Ireland are only extreme examples of emerging meta-ethnicities – divided societies unified by their traditions of conflict. As the genius loci is replaced by a genius fabulae, space is used in new ways to anchor identity, 'region' becoming quasi a free-floating identity space. Following reflections – based on fieldwork in different parts of Europe – about tensions between Heimat and hegemony, and Heimat and frontier, the concept of Heimat as everyday resistance is developed in this paper. Is this new 'home on the range', strongly reminiscent of the great myth of the Frontier, merely a product of ideology, and if so, whose ideology is this?

Contested Homeland(s) in Two Londoner Turkish Cypriot Life (Hi)Stories

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This paper will argue that memory is not a fixed and finished product of 'the past', which is remembered or forgotten from time to time; instead, it is a political 'potentiality' that is reconstructed or re-created to legitimise 'the present'. I shall examine the fact that Turkish Cypriots of London have neither one 'homeland' to remember, forget, refer to or personalise with nor one common 'Other' to exclude. Instead they have multiple or blurred homeland(s) and 'Others' for different contexts and times. In this paper, I shall take up the life (hi)story narratives of two Turkish Cypriot women, both of whom migrated first from the South to the North of Cyprus and then to London. Both of them are coming from the mixed villages of Cyprus and since their migration to the northern part of the island and then to London they have never gone back to their 'birthplaces/homeland'. For one of them, this mixed village is just a birthplace and has neither a 'meaning' nor 'good memories'. On the other hand for the other 'Turkish Cypriot' woman, who prefers to define herself as 'Cypriot', neither London nor the northern part of the island is her 'homeland' rather the mixed village is.

Elsewhere and the Bambino: Neoliberal Geographies and the European Union

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This paper considers purposed constructions of 'home' in the political, social and economic landscape of the European Union. I take the cases of two populations, nominally Kurdish and Italian, who came (and were brought) together in a southern Italian town. I use the themes of 'Elsewhere' and the 'Bambino' as shorthand

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terms: the former, for a perpetual and self-perpetuating relocation that mediates the loss of, and putative return to, a homeland; and the latter for an argument over the true location of tradition and authentic belonging in the displacement of a home-town's symbolic centre. Both cases are deeply implicated by discrete migratory histories which speak of global and local instabilities and uncertainties, of complicated relationships to states and nations, and of positions within a disturbing social and economic order. In their experiences of displacement, these people are constrained to sell their selves, their labour, and ultimately their senses of home. I argue that their distinct but operationally similar imaginings of 'home' are expressions of neoliberal geographies mapped within a shifting political, economic and social environment, providing stability and certainty of belonging even as the construction reinscribes its loss.

Engaging Authenticity, Creating Home: the Consumption of Mass-Mediated 'Tradition' in Mali

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Anthropological theorising on identity constructions in the current era of globalisation tends to focus on the creation of relationships of belonging across territorial boundaries and distances. This paper focuses on continuities and disruptions in the fashioning of notions of belonging within national boundaries. It examines transformations in the politics of producing 'home' since the liberalisation of the cultural market in Mali. Notions of cultural authenticity are created, assessed and reconfigured through the production and reception of documentaries on 'local tradition' that are broadcast on national television in Mali. To illustrate this point, the paper retraces the different steps of the media representation of musical and speech performances, from the filming sessions to spectators' diverse, often gender-specific engagements with the final production of 'home'. Analysis places the film production process in the political economy of cultural production and accounts for some structural constraints that impinge upon the creation, marketing and consumption of 'cultural authenticity' in Mali.

By emphasizing that notions of belonging emerge through the consumption emotional attachment, the paper contributes to a body of literature that theorises the significance of massmediated culture to people's perceptions of themselves and of their place in a world of shifting attachments.

'Returning Home': Moral Conflicts in the (Re)Building of Disrupted Kin Relations in Post-Conflict Ayacucho, Peru

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Pallcca is a 'community' in the Andean highlands of Ayacucho,

Peru that 'returned' from displacement, following political violence between Shining Path guerrillas and the Peruvian armed forces (1980-mid1990s). Most people who 'returned' are widows. This paper explores competing notions of 'morality' and meanings of 'home' in gendered (re)constructions of Pallcca within local kin relations. Andean understandings about personhood arise through interrelatedness between kin who are connected to each other and their ancestors through production and reproduction of the land, inhabited by the living, but which political violence disrupted. Pallcca is a comunidad campesina or political/legal unit of collective citizenship that entails state participation and restrictions imposed under state-assisted community 'returns'. Local people 'returned' to Pallcca according to the religious doctrine about rebirth within Pentecostal Evangelicalism through which they 'imagined' (re)creating a future 'moral community'. Focusing on particular women's narratives within ethnography, this paper highlights the presence and significance of particular 'absent' kin in contemporary Pallcca. Who is absent and how did this occur ('disappeared', assassinated or fatal illness/accident)? This paper shows how experiences of kin loss shape religious personal choices (Catholic/Evangelical) within an Andean cultural context and how these influence the way in which 'home' is being (re)constructed.

Towards an Anthropology of Care: the Material Culture of the Romanian Home

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This paper concerns the material culture of homes in Suceava, a town in Romania, and the culture of care. In a situation of postsocialism, many people do not seem to know exactly what to aim for in creating home; home is of prime importance in Romania, but stereotypical homes are hotly debated and fragmented. Actual, material homes are developed in this situation as a part of multiple struggles and processes to create care within a particular space; and that certain objects in the home are indicative of this creative struggle occurring between the household and the church, the state, and with market institutions. The idea of care itself is ambivalent, encompassing simultaneously negative worries and warm emotions, and this ambivalence enables such struggles to be negotiated. The paper suggests that we need to reconsider many theories of care in the light of Romanian domesticity, to take account of its power dimensions.

Living With a History: Identity, Emplacement and a Family to Belong

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The paper is concerned with the aspect of belonging as historical continuity objectified in family genealogies and biographies, and

passed as cultural and social surroundings of everyday and/or an oral knowledge only. It focuses on a case study of one Lithuanian family whose members are the descendants of politically influential Lithuanian nobles. Historically they are related to the non-existing State of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which experienced its collapse at the end of 18th century. But the life story of this family continued to stretch along the periods of Tsarist Russia, Independent and Soviet Lithuania. In different times the family experienced different life stages - from belonging to the upper class to that of being in the fringes of society; from living in the native estate to that of being in exile. But despite social instability and forced re-settlement they identified themselves as descendants of a noble family who lived in Lithuania. In the paper I discuss the aspects of protection, and negotiation of identity and belonging. I deal with individual strategies of re-emplacement and re-creation of connectedness through ownership and "historisation" of a place as well as with the controversies surrounding individual and local discourses that follow the institutional re-establishment of belonging.

Domestic Boundaries, Visibility, Privacy, and the Window

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This paper focuses on Norwegian and Somali households and the materialisation of visibility. I do this through an examination of domestic boundaries amongst a group of Norwegian and Somali residents in the Norwegian town of Skien and argue that home windows are boundaries not only between public and private but also carry implicit expressions of Norwegian-ness, class and generation. Norwegian and Somali householders are compared through decorative practices such as window decoration and furniture provisioning. I argue household boundaries are negotiated in relation to often differing expectations of domesticity, whereby different weight may be given to categories such as privacy, hospitality, visibility, seclusion and access. Furthermore notions of the private are shown to be shifting and contextual and frequently have less to do with spatial categories than with an experimentation with the normative, a perception of the social gaze and a definition of self. Looking at ethnic minorities in Norway therefore does not just imply investigating their visibility but questioning the notion of visibility itself.