

Introduction to Volume 2, Issue 2

Fadwa El Guindi, Ph.D.
Retiree, University of California, Los Angeles
Former Distinguished Professor at Qatar University
Email: felguindi@gmail.com

Dwight W. Read, Ph.D.
Distinguished Research Professor
Department of Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles
Los Angeles, CA 90095 USA
Email: dread@ss.ucla.edu

The new journal, *Kinship*, has been providing a forum for critique, debate, analysis, and re-analysis that builds on systematic kinship knowledge, beginning when 14th century social philosopher Ibn Khaldun formulated a theory of culture and society anchored in kinship, and which has developed extensively since the establishment of anthropology as a discipline in Europe, the United Kingdom and the United States, with the systematic study of kinship becoming the core, par excellence, of anthropological theory. This journal attests to kinship's continuing centrality and importance for understanding humankind and its development.

This issue, Volume 2, Issue 2, 2022, bears witness to the continued vitality of research focusing on kinship as readers discover for themselves its content's deeply analytic quality which stimulates profound issues pertaining to the study of kinship. This is done without reducing kinship to a manageable formula or diluting it to cover 'everything' in people's lives. The conceptual and ethnographic issues addressed in this journal are carried out with expertise nourished by solid knowledge of the material discussed and the knowledge gained from the anthropological study of kinship over decades of research.

Faithful to its stated scope, the journal *Kinship*, since its inception in 2021, has been boldly confronting existing and emerging ethnography and theory pertaining to kinship as a universal category, while tapping into kinship practices as they are carried out across cultures. This issue includes two research articles, one research report and one analytic book review. The first research article is by William C. Young and is titled "The Uses of Kinship for Political Ends by Local Descent Groups in Jordan." Young states in his article abstract how:

At the level of face-to-face negotiations, three kinds of kinship (common descent, affinity, ritual kinship) are invoked in Jordan to garner support from an actor's kin and create political ties. At the level of large-scale organizations – such as tribes – appeals are made to kinship norms to mobilize members of each organization and enhance group solidarity. At the macroscopic level of

national politics, rhetoric about the “national family” is used to try to pacify groups who have lost political battles or who are politically marginal to the decision-making process.

He concludes the abstract, stating that “[A]nalysis of politics at all three levels can be improved by paying careful attention to kinship.”

The second research article is by Murray Leaf. The title is *Kinship, Genealogy, Objectivity, and Ethnocentrism*. He describes “the accumulation of mistakes leading to the collapse of anthropological interest in the scientific analysis of kinship and social organization in the 1980s, their persistence to the present, and the alternative that avoids them,” and proposes in conclusion that what led to the purported “apocalypse” of kinship study is the fact that critics, in his view, only applied critique to one stream of anthropological theory based on one system of epistemological assumptions, while there were more to be considered.

In this journal issue we introduce a new category, Research Report. The multi-authored Research Report raises a question in its title: “*Can a Local Descent Group Become an International Network? Research on the Rashāyidah in Five Countries.*” This research project combines the expertise of several international scholars and fieldworkers and promises to further the value of collaborative research. It also raises a pertinent question for anthropology about “descent-groups,” one that will be explored empirically, including ethnographic fieldwork. This exemplifies one of the goals of this journal as a forum to reexamine new approaches and further new ethnographic investigations in the continuing process of building kinship knowledge.

Last, but definitely not least, is a deeply analytic review of a recently appearing book on kinship terminologies by David B. Kronenfeld. The title of the book is *Types of Kinship Terminological Systems and How to Analyze Them. New Insights from the Application of Sydney H. Gould’s Analytic System*. The author of the review/critique is our French colleague from Paris, Alain Matthey de l’Etang, who is from the Association d’études linguistiques et anthropologiques. His analytic review raises crucial questions that might stimulate responses. We encourage comments or responses. To those interested in making a comment, please send your submission, no later than September 15, 2022 for consideration for publication in the next issue of the journal. There is no specified word limit. We look forward to your participation.