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INTRODUCTION
Transnational family ties and accompanied research in anthropological field research

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ABSTRACT. This introduction to the special section on 'Transnational family ties and accompanied research in anthropological field research' deals with research that is conducted in the company of family members. It is a topic that, although still marginalized, is receiving increasing attention, as the review of the literature on the subject to date in the paper shows. Accompanied field research leads to collaborative knowledge production and raises important ethical questions that need to be explored further. Reflections on the multifaceted realities of anthropologists, including the impact of their family ties in research settings, provide important insights into positionality, relationality and family normativity. This introduction underscores the importance of theoretical and epistemological discussions of accompanied fieldwork and explores the reasons why they are still scarce and often ignored. The special section takes into account the realities of transnational researchers. All articles are co-authored by researchers with transnational family ties. The authors have conducted research in their spouses' countries of origin, accompanied by their partners and children. They discuss how this research setting influences their positionality as researchers, highlighting the role of their spouses and other family members in anthropological knowledge production. The articles are the results of a panel of the working group 'Family in the field' at the conference of the German Association of Social and Cultural Anthropology (GASCA) 2023.

How ironic that claiming family ties with hosts
is a way of asserting authority in conventional ethnographic writing,
yet writing about accompanying family
has not been considered of theoretical significance
(Flinn 1998: 2).

Familial relationships and collaborative knowledge production

Immersive fieldwork is a core characteristic of anthropology as a discipline. Participating in everyday activities and discussing immersive experiences are therefore considered key methods. Reflections on the positionality and

situatedness of researchers are now understood as methodological principles (Okely 2012). Through the lens of relationality, anthropologists examine the complex webs of relationships within which interactions occur, thereby reflecting power relations and their own relationality in research settings. These approaches emphasize the significance of context, acknowledging that meanings, practices and subjectivities are constructed and negotiated within dynamic networks of interaction (Spencer and Davies 2010).

This special section seeks to explore the multifaceted dimensions of relationality in anthropological fieldwork by shedding light on the relevance of family ties and the impact of accompanying or collaborating family members on research and knowledge production. Reflections on the family status, personal relations or parenthood of researchers as part of their positionality and subjectivity have recently received some scholarly attention,[1] though there is consent that the topic continues to be marginalized and deserves more attention (Braukmann *et al.* 2020a: 9, Cornet and Blumenfield 2016a: 1). This special section extends current debates by focusing on researchers' transnational family ties and the role of accompanying and local family members.

All three papers are co-authored by anthropologists conducting research in the home country of their respective spouses. Spouses and other family members assume different roles either intentionally or unconsciously, which directly and indirectly influence research processes and outcomes. By sharing their perspectives, knowledge and networks, as well as their expectations, fears and doubts, and by taking on increased caring responsibilities and offering emotional support in everyday life, they act as partners and informants, assistants, collaborators or 'gatekeepers' and in some cases 'gate closers'. This topic is particularly important because it relates to the reality of researchers with transnational family commitments, showing how it affects their research and academic career choices. However, as the literature overview below shows, it has been largely ignored in scholarly debates.

At the same time, the papers contribute to the developing scholarly literature on the ideologies and practices of transnationally trained scholars and their (re)engagement with their varied localities (e.g. Le Ha, Kelley and Curaming 2020). The concept of transnationalism, as developed in the 1990s, emphasizes how migrants maintain connections across national borders, forming transnational social fields that link different places and groups (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc 1994). By using the concept of transnationalism, we aim to draw attention to the ways in which transna-

1 See review of literature below.

tional personal and professional connections are created, intermingled and maintained by anthropologists, especially in the case of binational and intercultural couples.

Drawing on their own experiences, the authors in this special section raise theoretical and epistemological questions that are relevant to anthropological research in general. They address structural inequalities based on the emotional, financial, social and academic benefits and costs they face when moving between countries, to which they are connected through family ties and their anthropological work. Their professional choices can thus be understood as a form of transnational practice. They also analyse the relationships between researchers and research participants and discuss anthropological research as an intersubjective and embodied practice of knowledge production. They challenge the dichotomy of 'home' and 'field', question ethnographic authority and authorship, and analyse embodied experiences at the intersection of care-work, family normativity and violence.

In the case of accompanied field research, family normativity, meaning the standards, rules, or norms related to family relationships and parenting that govern behaviour, thought and social practices, is of particular interest, especially when norms and expectations towards couples and parents in research settings differ from or even contradict researchers' own normative ideas.[2] The co-authored papers use different literary styles to engage the reader with their discussions, thereby contributing to the field of collaborative autoethnography, a methodological approach that is receiving increasing attention within the discipline (e.g. Coleman, Hyatt and Kingsolver 2017). In addition, the exchange between six anthropologists, ranging from a Ph.D. student (Anna Madeleine Ayeh) to a retired professor (Birgitt Röttger-Rössler), that follows the three articles, highlights the significance of a transgenerational perspective on researchers' positionality. The contributions build on the dynamic interactions in research settings, highlighting the transformative and reflexive potential of accompanied fieldwork and collaborative knowledge production.[3]

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[2] Dannenberg (2019), Hansen (2016), Haug (2020), Pauli (2020).

[3] Under accompanied fieldwork we understand fieldwork carried out by anthropologists who are accompanied into the field by their partners or other family members. The extent to which the accompanying partners or family members are involved in the field research can vary greatly, from partners who also conduct research on site or discuss research findings to children who record their experiences in writing or facilitate access to research questions, to family members who do not actively participate in the research but still impact the research setting through their presence, for example, by giving (or

Working group 'Family in the field'

The contributions to this special section resulted from a workshop and a roundtable organized by the working group 'Family in the field' of the German Association of Social and Cultural Anthropology (GASCA) at the GASCA biennial Conference of 2023 held in Munich. The three co-authored papers were presented at the workshop 'From "lonely hero" to accompanied research: professional expertise and family interconnections in ethnological fieldwork settings', organized by Julia Koch, Judit Tavakoli and Sophia Thubauville. The conversation at the end of this special section came out of the roundtable 'Anthropologists rarely walk alone: accompanied fieldwork and the contestation of ethnographic knowledge', organised by Michaela Haug and Rosalie Stolz. This working group had been founded two years earlier at the GASCA Conference of 2021 in Bremen by anthropologists located in Cologne and Frankfurt.

The foundation of the working group was preceded by workshops at the universities of Cologne (2019) and Frankfurt (2020) on the same topic. Both workshops dealt with the organization and financing of accompanied field research and its epistemological contribution to the research findings. The workshop in Cologne had the edited volume *Being a parent in the field* (Braukmann *et al.* 2020a) as its outcome; the results of investigations into the financing of accompanied field research, which accompanied the workshop in Frankfurt, were incorporated into the website of the working group (familieimfeld.org).

Currently, the working group deals with questions of accompanied field research and offers a permanent platform for anthropologists to exchange information and experiences. It offers a space to discuss theoretical, methodological, ethical and organizational questions concerning field research and researchers' families. Furthermore, the working group wants to assist researchers in finding funding for accompanied research and informing funding agencies about the need for accompanied research and the relevant financial requirements. This is a desideratum in anthropology as most

needing) emotional support. Accompanied fieldwork therefore represents an epistemological process that is mutually constitutive of the research field and the positionality of the researcher through its affective, relational and physical effects. (We thank the anonymous reviewers for underlying the importance of this correlation.)

field research is done during the PhD and postdoc phases, precisely when many people are also starting families and employment is often precarious.[4]

A final agenda of the working group is not only to discuss the topic of accompanied field research more intensively among colleagues, as with this special section, but also to sensitize students to the topic. Unfortunately, the topic of field research with one's family is still not part of the curriculum of programmes in anthropology. A first step by the working group to introduce the topic to students is therefore current work on a handbook on accompanied field research.

Exploring the relationality of anthropologists in research settings

In addition to our call for greater attention to accompanied fieldwork in anthropology, we would like to highlight relevant developments and achievements within the discipline that paved the role for this discussion. Since the founding of the discipline, relationships between researcher and researched have increasingly gained attention. The forms of collaboration that emerged and the ways in which they were theorized influenced both research settings and knowledge production. The founding fathers of the discipline, like Franz Boas, Bronislaw Malinowski, E.E. Evans-Pritchard or Claude Lévi-Strauss, embodied the ideal male anthropologist as a 'lone hero' who is exploring foreign cultures and societies and explaining indigenous perspectives, worldviews, and experiences (Kuklick 2008: 8). Contrary to other scientific tenets, like meticulous, firmly defined, highly repetitive and tireless data-mining, the trope of the 'ideal anthropologist' has been nourished by the spirit of adventure, audacity, and the willingness to endure hardships for the sake of anthropological insights. Their willingness to venture out into unfamiliar and strange places and, building on systematic fieldwork, to transform the collected data into objective knowledge was – and to a certain extend continues to be – heroized (Sontag 1963, Doja 2005: 650, Lambek 2015: 273). Heroism was depicted as the sacrificial acceptance of physical

4 Braukmann *et al.* (2020b: 14–17). Therefore, the working group aims at intensifying and consolidating the dialogue with funding organizations in Germany and Europe. Through continuous exchange, its aim is to encourage funding organizations to adapt their instruments and improve administrative guidelines according to the requirements and implications of long-term accompanied fieldwork.

and emotional challenges on the one hand and the validation of the collected data corpus by detaching it from subjective experiences, perceptions, and relations of the anthropologists on the other hand. Johannes Fabian describes his early anthropological experiences retrospectively, as those of a 'disembodied anthropologist' (2000: xii). This open heroism of anthropologists has been condemned within the discipline, especially following the so-called 'reflexive turn'. This turn refers to postcolonial, postmodern and feminist perspectives which critically engaged with ethnographers' colonial entanglements, their (re)production of inequalities, androcentrism and paternalism, as well as their involvement in processes of othering.

With Clifford Geertz's concept of 'thick description' (1973) from the 1970s and the Writing Culture movement launched by the work of James Clifford and George Marcus (1986) in the 1980s, the intersubjective nature of knowledge production in the field became widely acknowledged. Clifford and Marcus challenged practices of anthropological research and questioned the objectivity of anthropological accounts. They also introduced a paradigmatic shift towards more self-reflexive and interpretive approaches to anthropology.[5] Building upon this foundation, postmodern and postcolonial critiques further challenged traditional notions of objectivity and neutrality in anthropological research. The observers and their participation became one of the objects of ethnography (Spencer and Davies 2010). This 'reflexive turn' in anthropology paved the way for a more explicit recognition of the researcher's positionality (Boyer 2015), with a particular focus on female anthropologists and gender (Anderson 1986). Rather than viewing the researcher as a detached observer, scholars increasingly acknowledged the reciprocal influences and mutual shaping that occur in ethnographic encounters (Harding 1986). This also enabled new reflections on relationality between anthropologists and their informants in the field, resulting in 'the recognition and subsequent critique of the discipline's complicity with structures of inequality wrought by European colonial expansion and its aftermath' (Levi 2015: n.p.). This change has been illustrated by the emergence of collaborative and participatory methods, in which the co-researchers and co-producers of knowledge are more recognized and their position and subjectivity become an important factor.

The emerging changes in ethnographic writing, emphasizing the narrative and interpretative aspects (Rabinow 1977, Crapanzano 1980) and approaches to dialogic and polyphonic ethnographic writing, are also referred

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5 See also Marcus and Fischer (1986), Fabian (2014).

to as the 'literary turn'. Clifford described the new understanding of ethnographic writing by saying that 'cultural poetics is an interplay of voices, of positioned utterances' (1986: 12). The impulses set in the 1970s and 1980s initiated an ongoing process in contemporary anthropology of crafting new experimental textual genres (e.g. Taussig 1997), collaborative autoethnography being a recent example.

With the 'decolonial and postcolonial turn', based on the works of Michel Foucault (1977), Edward Said (1978), and Gayatri Spivak (1988) critical questions on how anthropologists' positionalities and roles are implicated in perpetuating or challenging systems of domination and oppression received more attention. The power dynamics inherent in fieldwork relationships continue to be in need of revaluation, particularly in contexts where researchers come from privileged backgrounds studying marginalized and peripheralized communities. Scholars in these fields have called for a shift towards more ethical and equitable research practices that prioritize reciprocity, accountability and the amplification of marginalized, peripheralized and indigenous voices (Harrison 1997, Ntarangwi 2010, Tuhiwai Smith 1999), especially in subfields like engaged anthropology, public anthropology or activist anthropology (Bodirsky 2022, Sillitoe 2007, Singer 2008). These new approaches enabled a better understanding of different relationships and forms of interaction in research settings. Recognizing and reflecting the significance of the complex relationship between anthropologists and the individuals or groups with whom they collaborate or approach as informants is crucial for the transparency of knowledge production. The same applies to ethical responsibilities in anthropological research.

Despite all these developments, the 'lone hero trope' continues to influence anthropologists' self-conception, as demonstrated by the continued side-lining of accompanied fieldwork in scholarly debates, despite its constitutive impact on the 'field' and on anthropological research. There is a general tendency to represent fieldwork experiences to the wider anthropological audience as 'ideal, unproblematic and among the best experiences a person can have in life' (Lecocq 2002). Fieldwork still continues to be described as a rite of passage, one that anthropologists are eager to master well. The family ties of researchers and accompanying family members continue to be concealed in academic literature and teaching. Naturally, many scholars conduct field research without being accompanied by close relatives and have good reasons for doing so. It is not always necessary, possible or recommendable to take family members along to the field. There are a number of

reasons for this, which can be either professional or personal. These include security or health concerns, family commitments, a lack of financial support, or the need to meet professional or educational requirements. There are a variety of approaches to anthropological research, each of which makes a valuable contribution to the discipline. At the same time, evidently, researchers do not conduct research alone but are part of a relational network. Relationships in research settings can be very diverse, including collaborative, consultative, intermediary or family relationships (Atkinson 2007). Referring to Atkinson's list of different relationships in research settings, one finds that a lot has been written on collaborative, consultative and intermediary relationships in research settings, as well as on experimental and innovative methodological approaches,[6] but less so on family relationships and accompanied research.

Not in every research setting are reflections on family ties equally important. If family relations, gender roles or generational differences are relevant to a research question or setting, it is crucial to reflect on the researcher's positionality, including family ties and family normativity. This might be less relevant in archival research or specific expert interviews. However, it is always important to consider the possible impact of family relations on the researcher's positionality.

Recent publications highlight how the absence of intimate relations and family members also influences researchers in different ways.[7] One of the older and better known examples are the revelations in Malinowski's diaries, which include his thoughts about his absent fiancée, Elsie Masson, reflecting both affection and frustration (Malinowski 1989). It is therefore not only the presence but also the absence of family members and family ties that affects researchers' positionalities and is constitutive of research settings. That is why questions related to (un)accompanied fieldwork can also be of significance for researchers who are conducting field research without their partners and close relatives.

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6 Boyer and Marcus (2020), Heffernan, Murphy and Skinner (2020), Lassiter (2005), Nolan (2013), Flynn and Tinius (2015).

7 Burger and Burger (2024), Farrelly, Stewart-Withers and Dombrowski (2014), Lecocq (2002), Pfeifer (2020).

Anthropologist couples: research partners, co-workers and assistants

As long-term ethnographic fieldwork was established as the main method of the newly founded discipline of anthropology after the First World War, accompanied research became quite common, though accompanying family members were rarely mentioned in ethnographic literature. Lévi-Strauss concealed the presence of his accompanying wife in *Tristes tropiques* (1974), only mentioning her on page 415 because of her departure from the field for reasons of ill health (Lambek 2015: 273). Even in the case of anthropologist couples who worked together, little has been written about their collaborations (e.g. Ariëns and Strijp 1989). Some have co-authored monographs, without mentioning the form of their collaboration in their academic writing. Boas's student Melville Herskovits went to the field with his wife Frances. She also had a PhD in anthropology from Columbia University and co-authored several publications with her husband (1934; 1958; 1964a, b). Frances and Melville's collaboration consisted of active participation in data collection and analyses, as well as logistic support, highlighting the impact of partnerships in anthropological research. However, this is barely mentioned in their publications. The same applies to Clifford Geertz's collaboration with his first wife Hildred, both holders of academic positions at Princeton during their joint research in Bali (Geertz and Geertz 1975). How spouses collaborated was mainly mentioned in letters, diary entries or personal reflections, published later, as in the case of Margaret Mead's letters from the 1930s on her joint research with her then husband, Reo Fortune, in New Guinea (Mead 1970b).

All the couples mentioned above, like many more who could be added,[8] were white, mostly European Americans and part of the Western scientific community. There was and continues to be little information on binational or intercultural couples' experiences with accompanied field research. Here we will refer to four examples, where the intimate partners of the mostly American anthropologists (except in the last case) were from the countries where the research was conducted. First of all, there is the example of William Bascom and his wife Berta. As a recently graduated anthropologist in

[8] See, for example, Margaret Mead and her third husband Gregory Bateson, Jane Miller Comaroff and John Comaroff, and in the German context Julia Pauli and Michael Schnegg, Birgitt Röttger-Rössler and Martin Rössler, Andrea Luithle-Hardenberg and Roland Hardenberg and Verena Keck and Jürg Wassmann.

1948, Berta Bascom accompanied her supervisor and future husband on a research trip to Cuba, her country of origin (Jacknis n.d.). Although an anthropologist herself, her contribution to William Bascom's work received little formal acknowledgment. This was the case for many wives of anthropologists whose collaboration remained concealed until today. Later Berta also accompanied and supported her husband during his field trips to Africa, but her influence on Bascom's research in Cuba is of particular interest for our topic. However, it has not been researched.

Alongside individual men and married couples, female anthropologists started to enter the field in the first half of the twentieth century. To the inner circle of Ruth Benedict and Margaret Mead also belonged Ruth Landes, who we want to draw on as a second example. After a brief marriage, she started her anthropological career as a divorced woman, working on marriage, divorce and widowhood among the Ojibwa, where she closely collaborated with the widow Maggie Wilson (Cole 2003, Landes 1938). In her biography of Ruth Landes, Sally Cole points out how Landes' marital status influenced her research interests: 'Landes, after her failed marriage, was especially sensitized to hear Maggie's stories about other women's experiences of marriage, separation, and divorce' (Cole 2003: 91). While subsequently doing research in Brazil, Landes met the Afro-Brazilian anthropologist Edison Carneiro, with whom she closely collaborated in research on Candomblé and engaged in a romantic relationship (Cole 2003). In her book *The city of women* (1947), Landes refers to Carneiro as her main informant. In an article written three decades after her fieldwork, she acknowledged his importance and influence on her own research, referring to him as a close friend: 'Apart from Edisons' repute as scholar and writer, […] I could not have stirred a step in Bahia without his, a man's, protection' (Landes 1970: 128). In the same article, she mentioned how she was mistaken for a prostitute and a communist and how her relationship to Carneiro influenced others' perceptions of her. She reflected on her situation as a female anthropologist and her family status as follows: 'I should have been accompanied by some staging of womanliness; for this, even a small boy-child would have served to "protect" me, symbolizing my mother status of dependence on a patriarch' (Landes 1970: 133).

Landes was the only single woman who attempted anthropological fieldwork in Brazil until the 1960s, whereas several of her fellow male anthropologists like Walter Lipkind, Melville Herskovits or Claude Lévi-Strauss were accompanied by their wives, 'who provided legitimate companionship, emo-

tional solace, and research assistance' (Cole 2003: 177–178). The importance of marital and family status becomes evident in this early reflection. Landes stated that accusations by the leading Brazilian anthropologist Arthur Ramos, that she 'used sexual lures to get informants', followed her to the United States, the United Kingdom and Africa, and affected Edison Carneiro as well, for whom the 'field' was his life (Landes 1970: 128). This first example highlights the impact of a romantic relationship between a female anthropologist and her local partner during field research, as well as the perception of this relationship locally and beyond by academics. Landes' experiences, along with the valuable contributions of other female anthropologists using feminist approaches, were long ignored in anthropological debates (Behar and Gordon 1995, Strathern 1987). However, they are essential in anthropological debates concerning positionality and subjectivity today.

Anthropology is about understanding different points of view by actively engaging with them. However, closeness and intimacy continue to be discussed as ethically problematic. A third example is the prominent case of Kenneth Good, who married Yarima, a Yanomama girl. During Good's research in Venezuela, she was initially offered to him as a child-bride. With time, he fell in love with her and eventually married her. Their relationship raised ethical questions within the anthropological community about the boundaries of researcher-informant relationships and the potential for exploitation or coercion in cross-cultural encounters. At the same time, anthropologists also acknowledged, that in his book *Into the heart: one man's pursuit of love and knowledge among the Yanomama* (Good and Chanoff 1991), written for a general audience, Good tackled the question of representation and reflexivity. He wrote about his emotions and biases along with his observations and includes also his wife's comments and perspective (Asch 1992).

Stephanie Nelson takes his book as an example to discuss the richness of erotic encounters in the field and how gender impacts the reception of relationships in the field and within academia (1998: 4, 6). She highlights the existing taboo on writing about romantic relationships in academia, except for the sexual practices of the Other (1998: 2). Apart from of a small body of scholarship (e.g. Kuklick and Wilson 1995), the 'asexual presence' (Isidoros 2015) of the researcher is considered the scientific norm. However, as emphasized by Nelson, it is only by disclosing and discussing intimate relationships that we understand how they impact on research findings. The case of Kenneth Good and his wife is an exceptional one in terms of both ethical and professional concerns, as well as because of the publicity it re-

ceived. Nevertheless, as the contributions to this special section make clear, intimate relationships during field research are far from being an exception. In addition, everyday academic life demands a high degree of mobility from academics, so that many binational partnerships are not only entered during research trips, but also last beyond them.

As a last example, we will draw on the more recent experiences of five anthropologists who met their spouses during their fieldwork, all in Pakistan (Grieser *et al.* 2024). Their co-authored article is published as an epilogue of an edited volume entitled *The multi-sited ethnographer* (Burger *et al.* 2024). It is written in the form of a letter, in which the authors describe the difficulties they faced in light of the reactions of German family members, friends, and their supervisor's doubts about their decisions to get married (Grieser *et al.* 2024: 309). They raise the question why partnerships that evolve during ethnographic fieldwork are still debated and even dismissed as professional failures by some (2024: 310). They conclude that 'despite all kinds of turns in anthropology, an informal moral code (still) tends to delegitimise relationships with partners from the field' (2024: 317). The authors thereby point to the relevance of epistemological issues related to marriage, such as access to a deeper understanding of aspects and the prevention of other insights caused by normative codes of behaviour that apply to family members (2024: 316). They also raise the important ethical question of how to write about private and personal matters when anonymizing research participants who are family members is not possible (2024: 307).

We picked these examples of partnerships in the field to highlight two things. First, the presence and collaborative work of accompanying family members during field research, as in the cases of William Bascom or Claude Lévi-Strauss, was and continues to be common, but it receives little attention in academic literature. Despite the reflexive turn, until today accompanying family members are often mentioned only in the acknowledgments section, in private letters or in personal reflections later in life. Second, relationships that evolved with locally based partners in anthropology were mostly concealed too, and if they became public, they caused critical debates. Until today, they continue to be perceived as an exception. To conclude, Berta Bascom, Edison Carneiro and Yarima contributed substantially to the research and academic work of their respective partners. Evidently, their presence shaped the research setting in which their partners collected data. Their impact on the process of knowledge production therefore requires further scrutiny. Their collaboration raises questions of subjectivity and relational-

ity, of the 'native anthropologist' (Narayan 1993), of the dichotomy of 'field' and 'home' (Burger and Burger 2024, Howald and Jousset [this special section]) and of the importance of positionalities, gender and family normativity in research settings (Dannenberg 2019, Pauli 2020). These questions continue to be of particular importance today for researchers with transnational family ties, as shown by the last example, and they deserve more attention.

Ethical responsibilities of accompanied fieldwork

Familial relationships either develop when anthropologists integrate into a community's social fabrics, forming close bonds with individual families or kinship networks, or they naturally exist, as when anthropologists study their own or their family members' community (Dwyer and Buckle 2009). Often it seems as if researchers would come into their research setting without a family background. In fact, of course, their family background affects their research in many ways without this being addressed sufficiently. Ethical protocols generally continue to problematize closeness and intimacy, though sexual relationships in the field are no longer tabooed or warned against, as in the past (Lambek 2015: 27). Michael Lambek sees a contradiction in explaining that

> […] the more intimate our relationships in the field, the richer our experience […] the deeper our understanding and the better our research – except for the fact that intimacy may weaken the critical detachment that is also a crucial part of knowledge construction (2015: 275).

Emerging fields like affect studies make efforts to deconstruct ethical and methodological concerns with subjectivity and entanglement (Stodulka, Dinkelaker and Thajib 2019). Lambek continues that '[i]ndeed, it is not unheard of for ethnographers to return home with partners and infants' (2015: 175). We urge that intimate relationships during field research, the transnational family ties of anthropologists and accompanied research are recognized as a widespread and natural part of anthropological research experiences. That is why the questions and challenges that go along with these experiences should be given appropriate attention.

Regarding the different forms of relationship that may develop during field research, Lambek defines betrayal as a core problem, one that results from leaving and writing 'frankly or from a critical angle about people

whose lives one has shared' (2015: 275). Yet, many anthropologists engage in long-lasting relationships in the field and stay connected with research partners, friends and romantic partners. Their interactions occur through several stages of life, in which the positionality of all the participants in a research setting are evolving and changing.

Ethical responsibilities in anthropological research entail recognizing the agency and expertise of informants, valuing their perspectives, and engaging in collaborative dialogue. Informed consent, confidentiality and cultural sensitivity are paramount when negotiating relationships in the field. 'Betrayal' should not be a defining element of the writing process. Ethical considerations entail protecting the welfare, privacy and rights of informants. All these guidelines also apply to relatives who are involved in research settings to various extents. However, until now, it seems that not all relationships and social positions have been treated with the same depths of reflexivity. While race, class and gender are important categories that define positionality and situatedness, family status, couple relations and family relationships are given less importance. Therefore, we need to question which relationships have been reflected on so far and which not.

Cris Shore pointed to the insecurity and uncertainty of anthropologists when talking about fieldwork experiences (1999: 28). Dimitrina Spencer and James P. Davies correctly indicate that there is a shift with regard to how emotions are addressed and employed by anthropologists (Spencer and Davies 2010: 7–8). They explain how it has been known that

> emotions (particularly during fieldwork) play an important role in anthropological insight and work before, during and after the 'field', but until recently [...] there has been little explicit and systematic discussion of how emotions actually form part of anthropological method (2010: 10).

The authors stress the 'empirical value of certain emotions, senses, experiences or reactions arising in the fieldwork' (2010: 8) and highlight how they can offer a route to understanding and insight (2010: 10). Despite the 'intersubjective turn' (Jackson 1998) and 'affective turn' (Clough and Halley 2007), many anthropologists still refrain from discussing subjective experiences as a source of knowledge, either because of ethical and methodological concerns, when publishing intimate and private information, or because they want to be associated with their professional pursuits rather than their personal lives in public discourse and academic literature. The normative idea of separating work and private life is of a certain importance, too.

Accompanied research in the literature: from anecdotes to epistemological contributions

Even though the topic of accompanied research in social anthropology, as outlined above, receives little attention, on closer inspection it does appear in the literature from time to time and often includes not only accompanying spouses, but also children.[9] In the first half of the twentieth century, along with Melville Herskovits and William Bascom, many male anthropologists had their wives accompanying them, though, as already explained above, their work was often neglected and went unacknowledged (Ariëns and Strijp 1989, Handler 2004). The article 'Three wives' tales: another view of anthropological field work' (Anonymous 1967) is proof that even in the 1960s it was still common for women to support their husbands in their research and take a step back in their own careers. Female anthropologists like Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead or Ruth Landes were rare exceptions. In addition to this disparity, Mead, who gave birth to a daughter in 1938, never took her on research trips as a child, writing instead that 'children of any age add tremendous hazards to field work' (1970b: 254). The majority of early German female anthropologists, even though they were married, had no children at all.[10]

The first parent anthropologists to take not only their spouses, but also their children to the field were John Joseph Honigman, who carried out accompanied research as early as 1944/45 and described it in his article 'Fieldwork in two north Canadian communities' (1970), and Harald Schultz, who wrote about his joint research with his son in the *National Geographic* article 'Blue-eyed Indian: a city boy's sojourn with primitive tribesmen in Central Brazil' (1961). Not long afterwards, one could also find female professionals, being accompanied by their husbands (Morris 1977) and children. Adding to these changes, the following important discourses in anthropology finally made open reflections on accompanied fieldwork possible. Hortense Powdermaker, who was alone in the field and did not have children, challenged the separation of private life and field research in her book *Stranger and friend*, and even went so far to claim that family and teams were becom-

9 In this literature overview, we focus only on literature on accompanied research in social anthropology. Interdisciplinary volumes (e.g. Muhammad and Neuilly 2019) and volumes that focus on accompanied field research in disciplines other than social anthropology (e.g. Brown and Dreby 2013) are not discussed.

10 Beer (2007: 284). Beer (2007) did an interesting study of seventy female German anthropologists, who were born between 1797 and 1930 and of whom forty were childless.

ing increasingly common research units (1966: 144). A few years later Peggy Golde, in her edited volume *Women in the field* (1970), argued that women's experience as anthropological researchers had to be acknowledged as different from men's. In the same book, Mead – considering gender and age perspectives – goes so far as to claim that ideally a three-generation family, including children, would be the best way to study a culture.[11]

The road was now open to no longer concealing accompanying family members, but at least mentioning them in publications that described the field research process and circumstances. In George D. Spindler's edited volume *Being an anthropologist: fieldwork in eleven cultures* (1970), which was intended as a description of research methodology and as an aid for students to acquire some insights into fieldwork realities, two contributors mention the presence of their children in the field throughout the text (Boissevain 1970, Hostetler and Huntington 1970) and four more contributors mention them in passing.[12] Some of the texts encouraged researchers to bring along family members and saw accompanied research as a win-win situation for the researcher's family as well as the local people (cf. Hostetler and Huntington 1970). However, one text described the worst-case scenario, of a toddler dying in the field (Hitchcock 1970), without further elaborating on the topic of security and safety. Also all other texts lacked an introduction or commentary that underlines the importance of discussing accompanied research for the discipline more widely.

Even though discourses in anthropology had changed, accompanied research continued being a topic discussed between researchers in the corridors or during coffee breaks. The sparse literature shown above was often dismissed as anecdotal[13] and left uncommented. Then, at the beginning of the 1980s, two initiatives emerged in the USA, which aimed to discuss taking children to the field for the first time. The first initiative was started by Barbara Butler and Diane Michalski Turner, who were based at universities in Wisconsin and Michigan. They organized a conference on the topic of children in field research at Michigan State University on 1 May 1982. The book *Children and anthropological research* that came out of their efforts (Butler and Turner 1987b) has seven contributions and a long introduction with a very detailed review of the sparse literature published on the topic

11 Mead (1970a). This ideal is, of course, hard to achieve. Mead herself, as mentioned above, did not even take her own daughter to the field, let alone her own parents.

12 Beals (1980), Hitchcock (1970), Norbeck (1970), Spindler and Spindler (1970).

13 See the book reviews mentioned below.

before 1981. In their introduction (Butler and Turner 1987a), they further discuss the effects of the researchers' identity on the fieldwork, the problems of separating the professional and domestic domains, and questions of objectivity and subjectivity. The anthropologists in their case studies all share a European American background and were in the field as a couple. In many cases the constituents of these couples were both carrying out research. Two anthropologists had local partners from Ecuador and Cameroon, who were, however, cultural outsiders in the areas their spouses were researching (Butler 1987, Huntington 1987). The topics of the contributions vary. One stresses accompanied research as an exchange on equal terms, as it gives local people the chance to interact with and observe the researcher's family and therefore the culture of the anthropologist (Butler 1987). Others included first-hand insights into children's play among the Hutterites to socializing children in the field (Huntington 1987). The volume was reviewed very positively, emphasizing the additional insights into the field one can gain through research accompanied by children (Munroe and Munroe 1988).

At the beginning of the 1980s in Philadelphia, Joan Cassell had a very similar idea. Being frequently asked by her students in the corridor how she had managed and experienced field research with her children, in 1982 she decided to look out for colleagues who also went to the field together with their families with the aim of producing a first book on the topic. In 1983 she organized a meeting at the American Anthropological Association. The final outcome, the volume *Children in the field* (Cassell 1987b), has ten contributions. Most of the contributors, all European Americans, were female anthropologists,[14] but there are also one male researcher (Wylie 1987) and three professional couples.[15] The accounts are mostly narrative and very varied in their topics and messages. Some are dramatic, like one on the death of a toddler (Hitchcock 1987; see also Hitchcock 1970) and another on children suffering extreme culture shock (Scheper-Hughes 1987). However, in the Conclusion the positive effects of field research for children are also mentioned. Cassell treats the contributions as practical tips and experience-sharing and does not claim that accompanied field research can offer any epistemological advantages.

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14 Cassell (1987a), Dreher (1987), Fernandez (1987), Hitchcock (1987), Hugh Jones (1987), Scheper-Hughes (1987).

15 Klaas and Klaas (1987), Fluehr-Lobban and Lobban (1987), and Nichter and Nichter (1987).

After the two volumes by Butler and Turner and by Cassell, both published in 1987 and focusing on children accompanying anthropologist parents to the field, the next similar volume, *Fieldwork and families* (Flinn, Marshall and Armstrong 1998), focused on families. This publication came out of meetings at the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania, which included not only researchers, but also their spouses and children. In addition to the focus on families, the book concentrates regionally on the Pacific. Apart from sharing stories, the implications of the publication were to challenge methodology and the research process by doing research as a family unit. The topics of the contributions, again all written by European American anthropologists, are normativity within a family, the costs and benefits of accompanied research, and challenging the model of the lone male ethnographer. However, the described families were not only typical American nuclear families like the 'Goodenoughs' (Goodenough 1998), but also transnational couples like Tamar Gordan and her Tongan husband Sione (Gordan 1998), or single mothers like Sheila Seiler Gilmore (Gilmore 1998). The volume also includes the first multivocal account of researcher parents and their daughter (Petersen, Garcia and Petersen 1998).

After the book by Flinn, Marshall and Armstrong, literature on accompanied research increased, but instead of edited volumes concentrating only on children or families in the field, these publications consisted of single articles published in journals or edited volumes on various topics and by researchers of different nationalities. This had the advantage that the topic finally found its way into different debates and fields of anthropology, instead of being dismissed as anecdotes and put in separate volumes. Topics to which debates about accompanied research contribute in these articles are amongst others embodiment, e.g. how the field changes for breastfeeding or pregnant anthropologists (De Casanova 2013, Pries 2014, Reich 2003); the ethics of research such as a reconceptualization of cooperation in field research (Middleton and Cons 2014); methodological problems such as carrying out research in war and conflict zones (Newman 2020); emotions (Dannenberg 2019); and positionality in the field (Cupples and Kindon 2003).

After the American volumes of the 1980s and 1990s, mentioned above, the next publication focusing on field research accompanied by family members was *Doing fieldwork in China…with kids* by Candice Cornet and Tami Blumenfield (2016b). The idea for the book came out of a panel at the American Anthropological Association's annual meeting in 2012. Ultimately, seven anthropologists and two children contributed to this edited collection, again

the majority of them are US citizens of European American background. The book's aim is to connect the topic of children in the field with theoretical discussions like the anthropology of aging, medical anthropology, or the changing identity and positionality of researchers (from young woman, wife, mother, to single mother). The publication contains two co-authored articles by anthropologist parents and their now adult children (Lozada and Lozada III 2016, Swain and Swain 2016) and ends with practical tips for research with children, including e.g. healthcare and childcare.

In 2020, Fabienne Braukmann, Michaela Haug, Katja Metzmacher and Rosalie Stolz added their volume *Being a parent in the Field*, a German discussion about accompanied field research, to the still mostly US American discourse. The thirteen contributions by German-based anthropologists, ten of them female and three male, cover all academic career stages, from MA students to professors near retirement age, who look back on their field research during their different career and family stages. The articles touch on discussions of positionality and normativity (Haug 2020, Pauli 2020) in the field. Quite new are discussions of the role of absent family members (Pfeifer 2020). In their Introduction, the editors call for more support in counselling, methodological training and financial support for accompanied research at German universities and by German funding agencies (Braukmann *et al.* 2020a: 11). The Introduction further also provides a good overview of the current problematics of funding for accompanying family members, specific to the German university and funding environment (Braukmann *et al.* 2020a: 11).

A very recent book (Burger *et al.* 2024) is dedicated to the 'invisible' sides of anthropologists in the field. One of the topics discussed here is kinship relations in the field, but the book also deals with anthropologists' leisure activities, practices of representation and politics in the field, all topics that, although they have a significant impact on anthropologists and their research, barely make it into their publications. Two articles in the volume deal with researchers and their families. The article by Menahil Tahir (2024) describes how her access to the field amongst Afghan immigrants in Pakistan was shaped by her parents. The second article, by Lisa and Tim Burger (2024), shows how the field itself is shaped when doing fieldwork 'with', as they call accompanied fieldwork. The Epilogue deals with marital partnerships that develop during research stays (Grieser *et al.* 2024: 309–313).

After the turn of the millennium, the increasing literature shows the changes in the lived realities of researchers. The literature reflects the grow-

ing number of female researchers, but also a diversification of gender and partner constellations, and an increase in people living in transnational families and as single mothers. Most of the literature on accompanied research today is written by women: only a few publications on this topic are authored by men.[16] Missing are especially the voices of researchers from the Global South and non-hetero couples and families. It will be imperative to include these absent voices and also to follow the implications of accompanied research in future debates in anthropology and to see how they change as the lived realities of researchers change.

Contributions to this special section

In this special section, we question how the classic ideal of the anthropologist as a 'lone hero' still affects the research ethics and methods of researchers today and ask how we can reflect relationality, including family ties, intimate relationships and the impact of accompanying family members during research without compromising professionalism and ethical values. The contributions highlight the implications of transnational family ties, of the roles of spouses originating from the countries of research and of family status on researchers' positionality – topics still underrepresented in the academic literature, as shown above. In so far as papers included the spouses of anthropologists thus far, these spouses were mostly also researchers,[17] and very seldom did they come from the research area.[18] If articles touched on the topic of transnational couples, the role of spouses or other family members as equal partners in knowledge production was not thematized.

The authors reflect on their social embeddedness as researchers and carers and the epistemic impact of their relationality (Koch Tshirangwana and Zehmisch). The multifaceted realities of academics need to be appropriately reflected in theoretical and practical debates within the discipline. If we do understand anthropological research as a relational and collaborative

16 See, for example, Funk (2020), Krämer (2020), Lozada and Lozada III (2016), Poveda (2009), Sutton (1998).

17 See e.g. Girke (2020), Burger and Burger (2024).

18 See e.g. Gordon (1998). The example of Gordon and the papers in our special section show that partners and other relatives who are considered natives or insiders in the field provide different access to information and interlocutors (see Kuiper and Schönebeck) and impact on how the research site is conceptualized and experienced (see Howald and Jousset).

endeavour, we have to think of innovative ways to discuss the role of family members as research participants. It is crucial to question why certain relations are still concealed in academic writing and how they should be properly represented and taken into account. We have to move away from the image of the 'carefree' anthropologist who devotes himself entirely to his research and conceptualize professionalism in new and more inclusive ways, acknowledging the added epistemological value of different research contexts resulting from researchers' different life stages, family constellations and transnational experiences. There is an urgent need to discuss, how academics reconcile the familial, financial and institutional challenges of their academic work while coping with uncertainty, dependency, fear or violence in diverse research settings. The authors of this special section illustrate how career-related decisions are intertwined with the life-planning strategies of transnational families. They analyse the impact of their own transnational family ties on their research and positionality.

The co-authored papers go beyond informal corridor conversations to discuss theoretical questions of emplacement, embodiment, collaboration and authorship. Claudia Howald and Amanda Jousset show that thinking through the lens of researchers embedded in transnational families enables them to rethink distinctions and relations between researcher and research participants, between home and field, between academic and private life. Their paper exemplifies the multifaceted ways in which family members make an impact on research settings and research findings. By using auto-ethnographic vignettes, the authors highlight the importance of affective spaces for knowledge production. They write about very personal and intimate encounters and vulnerabilities and look for an appropriate language to advance the discussion on accompanied fieldwork. Howald and Jousset are writing their 'her*stories' using excerpts of e-mail conversations and diary entries. By drawing on feminist and embodied approaches and focusing on the interplay between body, mind and the socio-cultural environment and its impact on epistemology, they contest power relations in academic knowledge production and highlight the value of patchwork ethnography. They show how their experiences challenge the limits of the categories 'field' and 'home', which they suggest thinking of as contiguous and shifting 'purposive spaces' that fulfil different functions in family and research contexts, as well as referring to 'research experiences' instead.

Gerda Kuiper and Grete Schönebeck discuss the impact of their 'local' partners and their relatives on their research, whose different collaborative

roles they describe. It is particularly compelling how family ties can facilitate access to certain research settings, but they can also be a hindrance. The authors also question the role of their partners in analysis and writing. They further ask how the familial entanglements and contributions of relatives, which could be unintentional, need to be reflected and acknowledged in publications. When family members are involved in research, their anonymity cannot be granted if personal relations are disclosed. Just as in any research context, ethical questions and consensual arrangements need to be discussed.

Julia Koch Tshirangwana and Philipp Zehmisch focus on the intersection of violence with the notion of care work. They are particularly interested in how cultural values and social norms impact research practice and care work in violent settings. They analyse their experiences as researchers with care commitments in South Africa and Pakistan respectively. Drawing on intersubjective experiences, they highlight the ambivalent relationality of father- or motherhood when confronted with violent normativity in the field. When family members share and negotiate meaning, emotions and understandings, they engage with each other's perspectives within given situations. Social norms in given situations can be perceived and intended as coercive, aggressive and harmful. Anthropologists and their family members need to decide how to cope with social norms they experience as threatening.

Kuiper and Schönebeck use the terms 'extended participant observation' and '"incidental" collaborators' to describe the methodological specifics of their relationality and positionality as researchers. Similarly, Koch Tshirangwana and Zehmisch explain their use of the term 'participating observer' instead of 'observing participant', thereby stressing their social embeddedness through local relatives.

The exchange between six anthropologists that follows the co-authored papers highlights the value of an intergenerational perspective on research experiences. It provides insights into the experiences of anthropologists of different ages, status groups and generations who are currently in a career phase between doctoral candidate and emeritus professor and who have carried out their research in different geographical areas and in various family constellations. They share positive aspects like the epistemic effects accompanied research had on their studies, as well as more challenging aspects, like controversies around the knowledge obtained when being accompanied by family members.

All authors stress the productive and enabling effects of collaborative, accompanied and embodied research, such as additional insights into the fields gained through the mere presence of family members in research settings or varying degrees of collaboration with accompanying or local family members. As highlighted earlier, apart from different family constellations and normativity, the absence of family members can also impact on processes of knowledge production, just like the embodiment of different life stages. The authors stress the need to engage further with the impact of varying family constellations and relations in research settings and the significance of transnational family ties for researchers' positionality. Using the lens of accompanied fieldwork can be very useful in advancing theoretical and methodological discussions in light of the multifaceted research experiences in anthropology today.

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