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CHAPTER 9

After Citizenship

The Process of Kinship in a Setting of Civic Inequality

APOSTOLOS ANDRIKOPOULOS

From the very beginning of my research on the Ghanaian and Nigerian communities in Greece and the Netherlands,¹ I have been struck by the central role of kinship, and of kinship vocabulary, in the lives of legally precarious migrants. Relations they cast in kinship terminology are typically those that have been crucial to realizing their aspirations and ensuring that the requisite resources become available at the right time for their daily survival. They may thus have borrowed from “family” in order to be able to migrate, traveled with the passport of a look-alike “brother” or “sister,” found jobs in Amsterdam using the identity documents of their “brothers” and “sisters,” worked closely with other “brothers” as street vendors in Thessaloniki, and cooperated to protect their otherwise vulnerable economic niche. The anthropology of kinship has over decades focused on societies with no or weak state organization, assuming that kinship loses its significance in modern state-organized societies. Although the social relations of West African migrants in Thessaloniki and Amsterdam, which they unequivocally describe in kinship terminology, are informed by understandings of kinship roles in their home communities, these relations are largely formed in Europe and are of utmost importance to them, especially in dealing with state violence, which they anticipate and experience on a daily basis. How does the unequal access to citizenship (civic inequality) contribute to the proliferation of these social relations commonly expressed in kinship terminology by West African migrants in Amsterdam and Thessaloniki? This chapter delineates why this

might be and why kinship terms, especially denoting siblinghood, are used to describe these newly formed relations in the context of migration.

A second observation relates to the striking disparity between the discourse of siblinghood and siblinghood as a set of practices in everyday life, between the way West African migrants in the Netherlands as well as in Greece talked about their “brothers” as opposed to what actually transpires in those daily interactions, in other words, to what kinship entails. In my interviews with the migrants in these two countries, kinship, especially brotherhood, was framed rather positively and was associated with solidarity, love, care, and support: “A brother is there to help, a brother is there to care for you, a brother would worry about you” and “[A relative is] somebody who wants your progress, who is always there for you emotionally.” In everyday practice, however, relations with their brothers and other kinsmen were complex and also involved mistrust, disappointment, envy, threats, and witchcraft accusations, and they often seemed exploitative to me. Why do kinship discourses, describing the newly forged social relations, differ so considerably from kinship practices?

This chapter examines the formation of kinship relations among migrants in two contexts of civic inequality. More specifically, it examines how legally precarious West African migrants mobilize and create kinship networks in particular contexts of civic inequality in Greece and the Netherlands. I suggest that exploring the relationship between kinship and inequality, such as unequal access to citizenship and to other state institutions, is analytically and theoretically useful for at least two reasons. First, it enables us to study kinship from a perspective in which hierarchy, conflict, betrayal, and feelings such as jealousy and fear are part and parcel of kinship (see also Pine, this volume). Although recent conceptualizations of kinship as a “mutuality of being,” “relatedness,” and “intersubjective participation” open up new possibilities for the study of kinship, they have often neglected the darker side of kinship relations. Second, showing how state-generated inequality structurally facilitates the development of kinship relations contributes to the long-standing effort to reconceptualize the dyadic opposition between traditional and modern societies and the presupposition that kinship organizes social, political, and economic life only in so-called traditional societies, while in allegedly modern societies kinship concerns can be separated from political and economic activities (for an elaboration of these classification practices, see also Thelen and Alber’s introduction to this volume).

Inequality and New Approaches to the Study of Kinship

Taking Schneider's (1980 [1986], 1984) critique of the anthropology of kinship as a point of departure, a new generation of anthropologists (Carsten 2000, 2004; Franklin and McKinnon 2001; see also Strathern 1992; Sahlin 2013) have contributed to the de-linking of biology from the study of kinship and showed how kinship evolves out of socially contingent contexts rather than referring to a set of biological relations. Moving away from the distinction between physical and social kinship, Carsten used "relatedness" as an inclusive concept to cross-culturally study "indigenous idioms of being related" (2000: 4). Similarly, Sahlin suggested conceptualizing kinship as a "mutuality of being" in which "relatives" refer to those "who belong to one another, who are parts of one another, who are co-present in each other, whose lives are joined and interdependent" (2013: 21). "Relatedness" and "mutuality of being" prioritize local understandings of how people see themselves as related and include all the different ways of constituting intersubjective participation in the study of kinship. Nonetheless, the way "relatedness" and "mutuality of being" have been conceptualized and applied in ethnographic studies tends to ascribe a prominent role to sharing as a mechanism of kinship. Although studies (Carsten 1997; Pauli 2013; Thelen, Coe, and Alber 2013) have convincingly shown the key role of sharing in the process of kinship, the importance attached to the theorization of kinship as a "mutuality of being" or "relatedness" obscures the complexities, tensions, and inequalities that exist within kinship relations.

Sharing and commonality imply closeness, mutuality, and often also equality. This conceptualization of kinship bears the risk of locating practices such as violence, treachery, jealousy, fights, and tensions outside the realm of kinship. As other ethnographic studies have shown (e.g., Geschiere 2013; Delaney 2001; Piot 1996; Lambek 2011; Dobash and Dobash 1979; Pine, this volume), these unpleasant practices and emotions are part and parcel of kinship relations. Marxist and feminist scholars have already pointed out the extent to which ideologies of kinship naturalize patriarchy and power dynamics within the family and mask hierarchical relations of production (Yanagisako and Delaney 1995; Collier 1988; Siskind 1978; Goody 1990; White 2004). Taking inequality as an entry point for studying kinship makes us more careful about idealizing kinship relations and enables us to see beyond the positive discourse on kinship in which our informants engage.

Politics, State, Kinship

In classic anthropological and sociological accounts, kinship has been conceptualized as the organizing structure of primitive/traditional societies, inseparable from other domains of society, such as economy, political organization, and religion.² This bipolar model claimed that kinship was irrelevant to and disentangled from other social domains in so-called modern societies, in part due to the presence of a centralized state authority, which granted to its citizens equal rights and obligations (citizenship), and also in part also due to the capitalist market, which had transformed socially embedded economic relations into impersonal transactions. According to this narrative, the presence of the state and the capitalist market also caused a transformation in the conceptions of personhood: from *persons-relatives*, whose social existence was firmly embedded in the web of kinship in traditional societies, to autonomous, rights-bearing, and rational *persons-citizens* in modern societies.³

Many anthropologists have been critical of the modern-traditional dichotomy and the place of kinship as a differentiating marker. Kuper (1988) noted that European anthropologists constructed the “myth” of a kinship-based primitive society as a way to contrast and portray their own societies as democratic and economically rational. From an empirical perspective, Carsten (2004) argued that the conceptualization of the modern society as composed of equal and autonomous individuals, in contrast to kinship-based traditional societies where interdependence formed the core basis of coexistence, is mainly based on philosophical, legal, and religious sources rather than on the study of everyday practices. In the last few decades, a stream of anthropologists in Europe and the United States have begun studying kinship in their own societies. However, their concerns about “families of choice” and their urging to reconsider the place of nature as a given in kinship, especially in studies on new reproductive technologies, gay kinship, and adoption, have turned their attention away from questioning whether kinship is intertwined with politics and economy. Nevertheless, these ethnographic studies persuasively demonstrate that kinship is also salient in the West and that the boundary between modern/Western and traditional/non-Western cannot be sustained through kinship as the marker of difference.

This chapter both builds on the valuable contributions of the new generation of kinship scholars and calls for a closer examination of the role of the state and citizenship in the process of constructing kinship in contemporary settings. Given that civic inequality is also an aspect of state-organized

societies, this chapter examines how exclusion from citizenship and other forms of state membership (residence permits, visas, etc.) can reinforce the formation of kinship relations. Examining how kinship, especially brotherhood, is constituted in two different contexts of inequality, this chapter shows that civic inequality can become a fertile ground for the proliferation and maintenance of kinship relations. The findings of this research provide evidence of the “persistent life of kinship” (McKinnon and Cannell 2013) in state-organized societies with capitalist economies and challenge the simplistic dichotomous distinction in social theory between traditional and modern societies. To be sure, this study does not argue that there were no transformations in the way people related to each other due to the presence of the state and the capitalist market. Nevertheless, it directs our attention to the exclusionary mechanisms of state institutions⁴ and their impact on social relations among those who live at the margins of the state. Such emphasis on the consequences of the intrinsically exclusionary character of citizenship is more necessary than ever in an era of increased transnational mobility and globalization.

Kinship and Migration: Sociological Perspectives

One of the first attempts to study the interplay between kinship, state politics, and the market in the West comes from a number of postwar sociological studies on the migration process. Litwak (1960a, 1960b) questioned the validity of Parson’s modernization hypothesis that extended family relations would lose their importance due to the occupational and geographic mobility that characterized industrialized societies. His findings showed not only that there was no decline in the cohesion of extended family but also that, on the contrary, the new conditions of industrialism sustained this cohesiveness by assigning new roles to its members. Litwak also noted that the extended family, having survived geographic dispersal, also facilitated the migration of its members. In times of economic and political hardship, individuals could rely on their relatives for financial and psychological help to migrate. Those who migrated established open lines of communication with their family members and transmitted information that assisted the migration of other family members (Litwak 1960b: 386). Some sociologists later called this phenomenon “chain migration” (MacDonald and MacDonald 1964; Choldin 1973).

Kinship plays an important role in the way chain migration operates. Networks of kinship span beyond legally closed borders and connect sending and receiving communities. Kinship provides a pool of resources for potential migrants that are necessary for them to be able to circumvent legal restrictions and that ultimately allow them to migrate. Upon their arrival, new migrants rely on their kinfolk for accommodation, assistance in finding a job, and important information about beginning a new life in an unfamiliar place. Tilly and Brown (1968: 142–43) stressed that “migration under the auspices of kinship seems to be most common among groups which have the least skill in dealing with impersonal urban institutions like markets, bureaucracies, and communication systems, or the most uncertain relationships to those institutions. The support and protection of their kinfolk balance their weakness in these other respects.”

Although this body of sociological literature emphasized the vital role of kinship in migration, it lacked an analytical theory of kinship and relied on the folk ethnocentric understanding of kinship as a blood relation. Soon sociologists realized that the social relations that were important for migrants were not identical to what sociologists comprehended as kinship relations. They gradually started using the term “fictive kinship” (Li 1977; Ebaugh and Curry 2000; Kim 2009) to frame the relations of migrants that resembled what they implicitly understood as real kinship. But not even fictive kinship could capture the diverse relations of migrants that played a pivotal role in their lives, and sociologists shifted to more general concepts, such as community, ethnicity, social networks, and social capital.

Building on the contribution of previous studies on the phenomenon of chain migration, Massey and his colleagues developed what came to be known as the migrant network model, which remains one of the most popular approaches to the migration process. For Massey and colleagues (1987, 1994), the migrant network is the set of social ties connecting nonmigrants and migrants between the sending and receiving communities. The members of the network “carry reciprocal obligations for assistance based on shared understandings of kinship, friendship, and common community origin” (Massey, Goldring, and Durand 1994: 1499). Massey and colleagues (1987: 140) suggested that these reciprocal obligations are stronger among kinsmen, especially between fathers and sons who have “the strongest relationships” in the network. The existence of migrant networks decreases the costs and risks of migration and thus facilitates the migration of well-connected aspiring migrants. According to this model, when migrant networks reach a certain

threshold, migration becomes a self-perpetuating phenomenon and cannot be curtailed by structural factors, such as restrictive immigration policies and labor demand.

All the above sociological approaches and numerous empirical studies showed the significance of kinship in the context of migration and how migrants rely on their social relations to overcome barriers and respond to opportunities created by the state and the capitalist market. However, these approaches, lacking an analytical understanding of kinship, also considered kinship only as a source of support and assistance with a positive impact on the life of migrants. The migrant network model and the chain migration literature, in a striking similarity to Sahlins's (1972) concentric circles model, considered kinship a greater source of support and of generalized reciprocity than other social relations and thus implied that the degree of assistance depended on social distance.

The two ethnographic cases that follow show that kinship is indeed important to migrants to help them secure resources that are difficult to access. At the same time, these cases demonstrate that kinship is not simply a safe haven and an ultimate source of support. Inequality and fear are intrinsic parts of social relations framed in a language of kinship by West African migrants in Amsterdam and Thessaloniki. The two ethnographic cases show that new forms of state-generated inequality can in fact fuel the reproduction of kinship and provide the justification for its survival in a state-organized society with a capitalist economy. The first case examines how a similar unequal position, in terms of citizenship status and the exclusion from the formal labor market, facilitates the formation of brotherhood relations among West Africans in Thessaloniki. The case shows that the emotionally strong solidarity relations between African brothers are also grounded in existential fear, shame, and a common economic interest.

Kinship and the Organization of the Unauthorized Trade of CDs in Thessaloniki, Greece

It was early evening in late August 2007 in Thessaloniki. As usual, the numerous cafés along the coastline were packed with people. Still, something seemed different around Thessaloniki's cafés in this otherwise typical evening: there was not a single street vendor selling compact discs (CDs). Customers in cafés were usually approached, almost harassed, by street vendors multiple times

while having their drinks. But no one was around that evening. The absence of the CD street vendors was conspicuous, not least because all of them were black sub-Saharan African migrants, the only numerically significant colored minority in the city. Thessaloniki, a city of about 800,000 residents, had thousands of migrants from the Balkans and the former Soviet Union and only a few hundred African migrants, mostly men, a majority of whom had worked at least for a brief period as street vendors of pirated CDs and DVDs.

I made a phone call to Paul and asked whether something had happened. Paul was originally from Nigeria, the only child from his family to have made it to Greece, and with the money he earned from the trade of CDs, he supported his parents and siblings, as did many other African migrants in Thessaloniki. He responded to my question with anger: "They killed our brother! Our brother is dead." The day before, Tony, a young Nigerian CD street vendor, had been killed when he jumped from the balcony of a café trying to escape two people who had been chasing him. Tony's brother explained to the newspapers:

My brother was arrested by policemen four days before he was killed. They beat him and took his bag with all the CDs. It was not the first time he had been chased. He was earning his living in fear of being arrested, as many other young Africans do in Thessaloniki and other Greek cities. (*Ta Nea*, August 8, 2007)

The tragic death of Tony outraged the African street vendors, who stopped work for the day and went to protest outside the police department. About 200 young African men holding pictures of Tony protested and demanded justice. For all those who found themselves in a similar situation of legal precarity, it was easy to see themselves in Tony's position. In the conversations I had with Nigerians and Ghanaians in Thessaloniki right after that deadly event, they all referred to Tony as their brother, no matter how well they knew him. The idiom of brotherhood was, in any case, widely used among African street vendors in Thessaloniki.

During one of the many times I was approached by a street vendor, this time while I was having coffee in a café, I asked the young Nigerian man whether he had the albums of a particular artist. "Wait, I am going to get some from my brother," he said and left. Another African vendor, who had not noticed my interaction with him, approached me and also tried to sell me CDs. The first vendor returned with the CDs I had requested, and he nodded

to the other vendor, signaling that I was already his customer (“Brother, please!”). They shook hands, and the second vendor left. “You have many brothers,” I said to the first one. “Every black man in Thessaloniki is my brother,” he replied.

The unauthorized trade of CDs by street vendors emerged in the mid-1990s in Thessaloniki and Athens and later expanded to other Greek cities as well. From its beginning until its disappearance in the years since 2010, this unauthorized trade was monopolized by young male migrants from African countries. At the time of my fieldwork, the majority of African migrants in the city were Nigerian men in their twenties and thirties who worked as street vendors for at least a couple of months. Only a few of them already had family members in Greece prior to their arrival, and the majority of them were convinced that their stay in Greece was merely a stopgap in their journey to a West European country. Some of them had entered Greece with tourist visas, which they overstayed, and some others clandestinely crossed the Greek-Turkish borders. Seeking asylum was a way to secure a foothold and obtain the so-called pink card, which allowed them to stay on in Greece for years until the decision on their asylum status was issued. In Presidential Decree 189 of 1998, the employment rights of asylum seekers in Greece were limited only to those professions that could not be filled by Greek and European Union (EU) citizens or by ethnic Greeks who were non-EU citizens. The restricted labor rights led African migrants to organize their trade and earn their living through it. The trade in CDs was by definition illegal, since they had no authorization to reproduce and sell copyrighted material. African street vendors in Thessaloniki needed to cooperate with one another to protect their very vulnerable economic position and keep themselves safe from police checks. The appeal to kinship was made, especially in the idiom of brotherhood, not only because they faced the same challenges but also because kinship regulated the organization of their unauthorized trade, which required a high level of trust and solidarity.

Fear and shame were two central emotions that structured the common experiences of all African men who worked as street vendors. First, their precarious legal status filled them with fears about being deported from Greece. Getting arrested for trading in copyrighted material would authorize the police to issue a deportation order. This fear of deportation was a daily reality that had led to the death of Tony. Their work, which demanded hours of walking around the city, exposed them to high risk and heightened their everyday anxiety and fear.

Second, the profession of street vendor was a matter of shame to these African men, who originated from families that enjoyed relatively good socioeconomic status (Andrikopoulos 2013). These men, who had gained respect within their home communities as migrants to Europe, were afraid that their respectability would be tarnished if relatives in Africa learned that they worked as street vendors, a job performed only by the very poor in Nigeria. This status paradox (Nieswand 2011) of migration forced street vendors to keep their job in Greece secret from their intimate relations in Nigeria. Although Joshua had stopped working as a CD street vendor in Thessaloniki and relocated to Amsterdam, he had desisted from talking about his past work in Greece to his relatives in Nigeria and especially to his father, a chief and a successful businessman: “I can’t go to Nigeria and when a person asks me what I’m doing, I tell him that I sell CDs. . . . They will look at you somehow. . . . My father never learned that I was selling CDs.”

There were also instrumental reasons for reinforcing the appeal to brotherhood among the African street vendors of Thessaloniki. It was quite important for those who participated in the unauthorized trade of CDs to keep the secrets of the trade known only to insiders. Thus, information about suppliers and producers of the pirated CDs was disclosed only to brothers who did the same job. Furthermore, street vendors had agreed that no one was allowed to sell a CD for less than five euros:

Apostolos: Can you sell [the CDs] for four euros, so you can offer the best price?

Jonathan: No!

A: Why can’t you do that?

J: We can’t do that. You are betraying the others and you get the price of the market down. . . . Nobody is gonna buy it for five euros again. You lose at the end and your people, your brothers, lose also.

The violation of the unwritten price rule was considered a brotherly betrayal that would harm the others and eventually those who broke the price rule. According to Jonathan and other African street vendors I talked with, if a street vendor started selling at a lower price than others who respected the price agreement, he would become competitive and increase his sales. Gradually the information about vendors selling at a cheaper rate would spread to the customers, and they would demand lower prices from all other street vendors. Under the pressure of bargaining, the other street vendors would have

to decrease their prices as well. In other words, the one who started selling at a lower rate may have a temporary increase in his income, but eventually this would decrease the income of everyone, including his own, in the future. Using the language of brotherhood in this trade setting invoked a sense of unity and supported the reason street vendors needed to collaborate.

Apart from the agreement on the price of CDs, collaboration among street vendors was necessary for many other reasons. For example, there were some meeting points in the city where street vendors went to exchange the CDs of which they had too many copies with other CDs that they lacked. In this way, they could always have a large variety of CDs and avoid the risk of losing customers. Additionally, street vendors trusted one another with their bags of CDs when they wanted to take a break, and they also informed one another about police checkups. All the above parameters of the organization of the CD trade demonstrate that brotherhood among African street vendors was not simply a term to refer to their shared experiences and emotions but instead was also instrumental in organizing the economic activity from which they earned their living.

This ethnographic case from Greece shows that the situation of extreme inequality in which legally precarious African migrants found themselves produced strong shared experiences and emotions, namely of fear and shame, as well as the need to cooperate and fight in solidarity for their survival. Brothers in Thessaloniki shared the same unequal position in society and for that reason shared more or less an equal status within the community. The ethnographic case that follows further examines the interrelation of inequality with kinship but in a setting in which inequality exists within kinship relations and in which brothers have different civic status.

Kinship and the Circulation of Identity Documents

“Where is Joshua?” I asked my Greek friend, Eleni, about her Nigerian husband almost one hour after I arrived at their place in Amsterdam. Eleni had met Joshua in Greece in 2003. A few years later, they got married and moved together to Amsterdam. “He’s talking on the phone with his friend Chidi,” she replied, and she explained to me that these days he talked with Chidi on the phone for hours. Chidi and Joshua had met in Greece and worked together as street vendors. From there Chidi went to Italy and later on to the United States, where he married an African American woman. The main topic of

the long phone conversations between Chidi and Joshua were the attempts of Chidi's brother, Victor, to enter Europe. Victor, with his own passport, had only managed to travel from Nigeria to the Republic of Georgia, where he was currently stranded. Joshua was trying to find documents for Victor or, more precisely, was looking for someone willing to lend his passport to Victor to allow him entry into the Netherlands. Eleni was aware of this plan and was not at all surprised at this strategy. It was not the first time she had heard about the circulation of identity documents among West African migrants. About ten years ago while cleaning the apartment of her boyfriend "Walter," she found another passport bearing his real name, Joshua, whereupon she left him to temporarily return to her family home until Joshua begged her to hear him out. "He said that the only way he could get a visa, and he paid for this and did other things, was to do it with the papers of someone else because he couldn't do it under his own name," Eleni recalled. She forgave him and helped him to get legalized by marrying him.

A bit later, Joshua finished his phone call and joined us in the living room. "How is your wife?" Eleni asked, teasing him about the close relationship he had recently developed with Chidi. Joshua apologized for being away and briefly explained that Chidi had asked him to help his brother Victor travel from Georgia to the Netherlands, which he intended to do. I interrupted, asking Joshua directly, "With someone else's documents?" He looked down at the floor, smiled, and said, "Ooh Apostolos! You know too much!" Questions about the borrowing and loaning of identity documents from an outsider such as me often left my migrant interlocutors feeling uncomfortable, afraid, or embarrassed, although they frequently talked and laughed about it among themselves. Similar to what Herzfeld (2016) has described as "cultural intimacy" in reference to the more disreputable aspects of national identity that contribute to the reproduction of shared national sentiments among citizens but are excluded from official national narratives, the feelings of embarrassment and fear associated with the exchange of identity documents reinforced an awareness of commonality among those involved in this practice.

Eleni encouraged Joshua to update us on the latest developments. Joshua said that he found Ugo, "a brother from the Bijlmer,"⁵ who was a Nigerian with a Dutch residence permit and "very much a lookalike" of Victor. For a reward of 2,500 euros, Ugo agreed to travel with his wife to Tbilisi and give his passport to Victor, who would then use it to travel to Amsterdam together with Ugo's wife. After Ugo's wife and Victor arrived in Amsterdam, Ugo would declare to the Dutch embassy that his passport had been lost and

would request the issuance of new travel documents. “Why do you need Ugo’s wife in this story?” I asked. Joshua said that Ugo’s wife would be necessary for showing Victor what to do and how to behave at Schiphol Airport as a holder of a Dutch permit, especially in case someone addressed him in Dutch. Her role would become more important if the immigration officers began to doubt whether the passport belonged to him. She could provide them with a marriage certificate and claim that Victor was indeed her husband, Ugo. Everything was set, with only the approval of the African American wife of Chidi pending. Once she allowed Chidi to pay this sum of money, Joshua could initiate the process. In the meantime, Victor would have to wait in Georgia.

Victor’s journey to the Netherlands depended on being financed by his brother in the United States. Since Victor did not meet the qualifications for legal entry into the EU, he had to follow other strategies to realize his aspiration to migrate to Europe. Victor’s project not only required a significant amount of money but also involved the time and effort of many other individuals to coordinate and realize this plan (see also Gaibazzi 2014; Piot 2015). The relations between all of these individuals were expressed in the language of kinship (“brother”) and unity (“us,” “we”). Although each of them had a different reason to participate, they all worked together for the success of this project. For Victor, the departure from Nigeria and the passage through the international borders had marked his entrance into a new web of relations and the beginning of a life in which he could access various resources only by relying on others and by impersonating someone else. But this brought Victor closer to other migrants with similar experiences or to those who could help him gain access to resources. For example, one of the reasons why Joshua was motivated to help Victor was that he had experienced similar difficulties in the past, including using someone else’s identity. On the other hand, Victor and Ugo also bonded because of their unequal civic status. In the process of his migration to Europe, Victor became closer to people such as Joshua, with whom he shared similar experiences, and others, such as Ugo, who held a relatively more privileged position. In the second case, Victor not only had to cooperate with Ugo but also had to learn about him and impersonate him, at least during the time he was crossing the border.

The use of someone else’s documents was a common strategy for unauthorized migrants in the Netherlands, as the story of Victor illustrates, not only to cross international borders but also to obtain work and earn a living. Legally precarious African migrants in Greece could survive with the money they earned through the unauthorized trade of pirated CDs. However, the

strict controls since the late 1990s against informal economic activities in the Netherlands left limited space for unauthorized migrants to work in unregistered jobs. A relatively safer possibility for them was to work “in camouflage” in the formal economy. Unauthorized migrants from West Africa and others borrowed the work permits of their “brothers” and “sisters” with proper documentation to find employment in the formal labor market. Mostly, they found jobs through temporary staff agencies (*uitzendbureau*). They preferred working for a temporary staff agency because the location of their employer (the agency) was different from the place where they worked (e.g., cleaning offices and restaurants), and this made being controlled by authorities more difficult.

Unauthorized migrants worked and paid taxes under the name of those whose work permit they used (see also Garces-Mascarenas and Doomernik 2007). The monthly salary was also deposited into the bank account of the actual work permit holder, not a bank account of the migrant worker. Each month the work permit user had to collect his or her salary from the work permit owner. According to the pact between the work permit user and the brother or sister, part of the salary would be retained by the work permit owner, which could be usually a third of the salary. Again, the idiom of siblinghood was used among themselves to frame their relationship. The lending and borrowing of identity documents between authorized and unauthorized migrants has been observed elsewhere in other migrant communities,⁶ where kinship relations also play an important role in regulating the exchange of documents.

The appeal to kinship in the exchange of identity documents provided the owners and the users of the documents with some sort of security that both parties would adhere to their side of the agreement. The exchange of identity documents entailed a risk both for those who borrowed and those who lent them. Many stories circulated about document providers, who kept a bigger percentage of the salary than agreed, holiday money, or the entire final salary. Migrants also spoke of document recipients who used the loaned documents in pursuit of criminal activities. Parallel to these stories, there were rumors about unauthorized migrants who practiced witchcraft against those who had loaned them their identity documents either because they were dissatisfied with the agreement they had made or because the document owners kept more than had been agreed upon. Through the language of kinship, authorized and unauthorized migrants in Amsterdam attempted to control all the above risks associated with the lending of identity documents.

Various identity documents (e.g., passports, work permits) that proved civic membership became objects of exchange between citizens and legally precarious migrants. The exclusion of many West African migrants from civic membership in the Netherlands made citizenship a scarce and desirable status. At the same time, the *inalienability* of citizenship intensified the unequal quality of this exchange. Proofs of citizenship (documents) could be exchanged, but the recipients could only use them temporarily as theirs. The inalienability of things, according to Mauss (2002), is a key characteristic of the gift economy that makes it different from the commodity economy where people have alienable rights over their private property. In gift exchange, there is an “indissoluble bond of a thing with its original owner”; thus, “it is wrong to speak here of alienation, for these things are loaned rather than sold and ceded” (Mauss 2002: 42). Similarly, citizenship could not be sold, and the ownership rights of documents cannot be transferred. In fact, citizens who lent their identity documents to noncitizens did not ever lose their civic status. This paradox of “keeping-while-giving” (Weiner 1992) not only reproduced the unequal relation between citizens and noncitizens but, in fact, strengthened the superior status of citizens who could expect reciprocation from noncitizens for their acts of giving without forfeiting their civic status.

These two features of citizenship—scarcity and inalienability—prescribed the conditions that made the exchange of identity documents necessary and determined the social outcome of this exchange. The highly asymmetrical exchange relations between document owners and document recipients were framed in kinship terms without, however, kinship diminishing their inequality.

Regulating Inequality: Discourses and Practices of Kinship

After several interviews with Patrick, a Ghanaian who had lived as an unauthorized migrant in many countries and had found himself in situations very similar to the two ethnographic cases presented here, I asked him what the word “brother” meant to him. In our interviews, Patrick had used the term “brother” to refer to other black migrants who lent him their identity documents that enabled him to either work or travel, to fellow Ghanaians who worked with him as street vendors in South Africa, and to African colleagues in Malaysia, who all worked with falsified documents for construction companies. Patrick answered my question as follows:

For me, I consider the word “brother” [as] somebody I can count on in times of difficulty. When I’m in trouble, the person that will be next to me, he is the one I consider a brother. Somebody who cheers me up and says “Look, guy, you can do it” or somebody who can help [me] out of my problem. I consider him more brother than my own siblings or my half brothers, or my extended family brothers.

Patrick’s definition of brotherhood papered over all the negative and unpleasant experiences he had passed through and framed brotherhood in a positive way. Such positive conceptualization was very common among these migrants when they talked about kinship and, most important, about siblinghood. Nevertheless, this did not imply that Patrick and other West African migrants suffered no negative experiences and emotions in these relationships. While the positive framing of brotherhood could make unequal relations more bearable, in practice they could turn abusive and be filled with negativity. Discourses of kinship may not directly reflect practices of kinship, but they still have a performative effect on those practices. A positive conceptualization of brotherhood had an impact on how unequal relations between brothers were experienced and negotiated in everyday life. As described earlier, for instance, the exchange of identity documents entailed a high level of risk both for the borrowers and the lenders of the documents. Those who participated in these exchanges framed their interdependency as brotherhood, projecting their expectations for caring, loving, and altruistic behavior that corresponded with the accepted norms of siblinghood, of how brothers should behave toward each other. By appealing to the code of brotherhood, borrowers and lenders of documents attempted to minimize the risks and dangers associated with the exchange of identity documents.

The newly formed kinship relations among West African migrants in Thessaloniki and Amsterdam, apart from being framed positively, required a necessary degree of force and inflexibility to fulfill their scope. Just after Patrick had offered his definition of brotherhood, I asked him whether he had many brothers. Almost annoyed with my question, he pulled from my folder the paper on which I had drawn his genealogy diagram, pointed to it with his finger, and said, “I’ve already told you.” Certainly, the idiom of brotherhood used among African migrants under precarious circumstances in Europe is associated with conceptions of brotherhood deriving from shared parenthood. Such an association does not mean that the term “brother” is used metaphorically. A kinship metaphor requires the existence of two separate

and clearly defined domains of social relations in which the one, perceived as real kinship, lends its vocabulary to the other. However, these migrants make no sharp distinction. As is evident from the interaction with Patrick, the two meanings of brotherhood, one a strong bond of social relations and the other a product of shared parentage, are intertwined and used interchangeably. Moreover, the distinction between real and metaphoric kinship would automatically disqualify the reason African migrants used kinship terminology to describe highly important relations for their survival in Europe. The analysis of the two ethnographic cases here shows that the relations that regulate access to scarce resources in highly ambivalent and unequal settings require a stabilizing force. The appeal to brotherhood and not to other forms of social relationship (e.g., friendship) among street vendors in Thessaloniki and the document providers and users in Amsterdam denotes a sense of obligation that is more difficult to renounce (see also Baumann 1995). To make these relations fulfill the function that they are expected to perform, on the one hand they need to be framed positively in a language of support and solidarity, and on the other hand they require such a degree of inflexibility that the obligations stemming from these relations cannot be easily dismissed.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzes the process of kinship in two different contexts of civic inequality and shows that Strathern's (1990) notion of "dividual" (in contrast to the nonpartible Western "individual"), which has become an "icon of the pre-modern subject" (Sahlins 2013: 27), could also be produced in response to the exclusionary dimensions of state policies and institutions. The kinship relations analyzed in this chapter did not appear in the absence of the state and the market, as the proponents of the modernity-versus-tradition divide would predict. On the contrary, they were heavily influenced by the state and the market. The ethnographic cases presented in this chapter show that citizenship, state borders, documentation, and the state-regulated labor market have not eliminated or diminished the role of kinship but instead have reconfigured it and in some cases rendered it stronger. Citizenship and market capitalism, despite their claims for offering equal opportunities, have generated new forms of inequality. Citizenship is internally inclusive and at the same time is externally exclusive because it applies to a limited number of people according to a series of criteria that exclude others (Brubaker 1992; Bosniak

2008). Those who are excluded from citizenship cannot enjoy a number of benefits available to citizens as rights. These new forms of inequality that are associated with state institutions offer kinship a fertile ground to proliferate and regulate unequal relations as well as to facilitate the distribution of resources that state politics makes scarce.

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Notes

1. This chapter is based on material I gathered in the context of various research projects on Nigerian and Ghanaian migration to Europe. Ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in Greece (2004–2005, 2006), the Netherlands (2008, 2011–2012), and Ghana (2011–2012).

2. For a critical review of this perspective, see McKinnon and Cannell (2013); McKinnon (2013); Kuper (1988); Thelen and Alber (this volume).

3. In neoliberal conceptions of personhood, as Edwards (this volume) explains, autonomy, individuality, and freedom of choice are brought together with accountability and personal responsibility.

4. Even for many of those who are formally included in the civic community, hierarchies of race (Stack 1974), gender (Pateman 1988), and class (White 2004; Bundgaard and Fog Olwig, this volume) make them dependent on other citizens/kinsmen.

5. The Bijlmer, officially Zuidoost, is the district of Amsterdam where most African migrants live.

6. For Mexicans in California, see Horton (2015). For Kyrgyzstanis in Russia, see Reeves (2013). For Indian Sikhs in France, see Moliner (2011). For Salvadorans in New York, Mahler (1995: 170). For various immigrants in the United Kingdom, see Vasta (2011).

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