

Kinship and a counter-hegemonic social order: former revolutionaries in southern Oman

Article (Accepted Version)

Wilson, Alice (2020) Kinship and a counter-hegemonic social order: former revolutionaries in southern Oman. *Journal Of The Royal Anthropological Institute*, 26 (2). pp. 302-320. ISSN 1467-9655

This version is available from Sussex Research Online: <http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/id/eprint/89983/>

This document is made available in accordance with publisher policies and may differ from the published version or from the version of record. If you wish to cite this item you are advised to consult the publisher's version. Please see the URL above for details on accessing the published version.

Copyright and reuse:

Sussex Research Online is a digital repository of the research output of the University.

Copyright and all moral rights to the version of the paper presented here belong to the individual author(s) and/or other copyright owners. To the extent reasonable and practicable, the material made available in SRO has been checked for eligibility before being made available.

Copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided that the authors, title and full bibliographic details are credited, a hyperlink and/or URL is given for the original metadata page and the content is not changed in any way.

Kinship and a counter-hegemonic social order: former revolutionaries in southern Oman

Alice Wilson, University of Sussex, alice.wilson@sussex.ac.uk

Author's manuscript accepted on 19 January 2020 for publication in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*

Abstract:

Critical reinterpretations of kinship studies questioned earlier ideas that kinship relations reflect and reproduce a dominant social order. 'New' kinship studies have nevertheless shown how even non-traditional family forms can reproduce traditional ideas about relatedness, values, and social hierarchies. Promising grounds for resisting ongoing tendencies to link kinship with conservative social reproduction arise from better understanding the circumstances under which kinship relations reproduce a counter-hegemonic social order. Kinship practices of former militants of a defeated revolutionary liberation movement in Dhufar, Oman, make visible veterans' networks and relations which transgress dominant tribal, ethnic, racial and gendered hierarchies. These practices show how, even in inauspicious circumstances of political defeat and marginalization, kinship relations can reproduce a counter-hegemonic social order – as well as a social afterlife of defeated revolution.

About the author:

Alice Wilson's research spans political and economic anthropology, with a focus on transformations in the relationship between governing authorities and governed constituencies in revolutions and liberation movements in the Middle East and North Africa. She is the author of *Sovereignty in exile: a Saharan liberation movement governs* (Pennsylvania, 2016).

Introduction

On a warm pre-monsoon evening in the city of Salalah in Dhufar province, on Oman's Indian Ocean coast, I was sitting with a group of men aged in their sixties and above. They had invited me to their nightly gathering to drink tea and talk. These men were former revolutionaries. In their youth had been members of the liberation movement active in Dhufar from 1965 until their defeat in 1975, forty years before our meeting. The revolutionaries had taken up arms to liberate Dhufar from British-backed dynastic rule; from 1968 they attempted the Marxist-inspired political, economic and social transformation of Dhufari society. When one of the ex-revolutionaries asked me to explain my research interests, I began to describe my wish to understand the long-term effects of revolutionary social policies aimed at challenging longstanding social inequalities. I mentioned as an example the revolutionary policy of encouraging marriages that contravened traditional social hierarchies which in Dhufar, as elsewhere in Arabia and neighbouring countries, habitually saw women marry within or above, but not below, their social group. One man, who hailed from a historically free tribal background, interjected to suggest that revolutionary innovations in marriage were not so important: 'The important thing was to encourage the idea that people had equality. Marriage was a small part of that, the more important thing was the idea of equality,' he explained. He went on to mention

other means of marking equality, such as giving pastoralists equal access to water resources.

Yet I knew that another man present, who in local understandings was classified as black and who until the revolution's abolition of slavery had been a slave, was still married to the woman of free background he had wedded during the revolution. This was precisely the kind of union – of a free woman and a historically unfree, black man – that would have been impossible before the revolution (and that was again deeply controversial since its defeat), but that revolutionaries had nevertheless encouraged. Several interlocutors had previously commented to me on this marriage's history and longevity. Other Dhufaris' quiet fascination with such a marriage suggested that the legacies of revolutionary kinship had proved enduring, noticeable and significant for former revolutionaries, their relatives and their peers. Kinship had become a means of marking and maintaining revolutionary social values which challenged dominant social hierarchies. Such kinship practices thus raise a broader question: how might kinship relations reproduce a counter-hegemonic social order?

For much of early and mid twentieth century, a core concern in Anglophone anthropology was to address a contrasting question: how might kinship relations reflect and reproduce a dominant social order? The premises for posing such a question fell apart following condemnation that the very field of kinship studies reproduced a Euro-American understanding of kinship based on biogenetic relatedness (Schneider 1972). But once kinship studies rekindled from the 1990s through the study of assisted reproduction and non-heteronormative family forms, the old question of kinship's relationship to a dominant social order in fact re-emerged. Amid the potential of 'new' reproductive technologies and family forms to disrupt some longstanding cultural assumptions (Strathern 1992; Weston 1991), 'new' forms of kinship also saw the reproduction of 'traditional' ideas about relatedness, values, and social hierarchies (Goodfellow 2015; Ragoné 2004). Rather than disappear for good, then, the question has persisted: might kinship relations lend themselves to reproducing a dominant social order?

A tendency to associate kinship relations with social conservatism has a long history in anthropology and the social sciences, taking a cue from Marxist criticism of the role of the family in reproducing capitalist exploitation and thus conserving prevailing power structures (Engels 1972 [1884]). Strikingly, whether in agreement or not with Marxist approaches, many anthropological assessments including within 'new' kinship studies have highlighted kinship's propensity for reflecting and reproducing prevalent values and hierarchies. This ongoing association between kinship and conservative social reproduction underscores a need for greater nuance in the assessment of kinship's relationship to a dominant social order, or dominant values and hierarchies. A more rounded account of kinship's role(s) within social reproduction should also consider kinship relations' potential to pose a challenge to dominant values and hierarchies and thereby reproduce a counter-hegemonic social order.

With such a task in mind, I examine kinship practices amongst Dhufar's former revolutionaries such as the socially heterogeneous group of men with whom I broached the legacies of revolutionary social policies. That evening, we all spoke guardedly: authoritarian government in Oman tolerated no public discussion of what locals called – and for simplicity I shall call – 'the Front' (*al-jabha*), Dhufar's defeated

liberation movement. In this context of political repression, for ex-militants who sought to maintain connections as erstwhile members of the Front and to reproduce into a new generation a sense of themselves as a community of former (no longer politically active) revolutionaries, one of the available means for doing so was through kinship practices. These kinship practices included: maintaining unconventional family units formed purposely during the revolution in order to challenge Dhufar's dominant social, ethnic, racial and tribal hierarchies; naming children, including those born in the post-war period, after revolutionary figures; and conceptualizing marriage amongst members of younger generations as opportunities for reproducing connections between former members of the Front. These practices share a quality of what I call 'kinship out of place': similar to 'matter out of place' (Douglas 1966) which stands out (as 'dirt') when things transgress their socially expected place, I see kinship out of place as kinship practices which have shifted to an unusual social context and thereby challenge a dominant social order. Dhufari ex-revolutionaries transposed everyday kinship practices (maintaining family units, naming children after namesakes and forging new generations of marriages) to unusual social contexts of persons who, without the legacies of revolution, would not claim such connections. Kinship out of place was visible to former militants and sometimes to their peers, and these practices reproduced a counter-hegemonic social order which challenged dominant social, ethnic, racial and gendered hierarchies.

These findings are significant for revisiting the relationship of kinship practices to dominant and counter-hegemonic social orders. Recent studies have shown that kinship practices can sustain activists aspiring to achieve progressive social change (Lazar 2017) and can motivate new recruits to join an insurgency aimed at achieving radical social transformation (Shah 2013). Additionally, and standing in contrast to longstanding observations of kinship's reflection and reproduction of a dominant social order, Dhufari former militants' practices show how kinship can help reproduce a counter-hegemonic social order. The implication of kinship practices in producing a counter-hegemonic social order is not unique to Dhufar's former militants. Yet other cases typically involve a permissive political context such as an active radical political movement or a liberal governing authority. In authoritarian Oman, neither of these conditions holds. Thus, the Dhufari case expands our understanding of the circumstances under which kinship practices may produce a counter-hegemonic social order. Where theoretically diverse anthropological analyses have suggested how the mundanity of kinship lends itself to the reflection and reproduction of a dominant social order, the Dhufari ex-revolutionaries' case suggests that mundanity can also lend itself to the reproduction of a counter-hegemonic social order even in a non-permissive political environment.

My argument here concerns the relationship of kinship to a dominant gendered, ethnicized social order, rather than to a dominant political order. In other circumstances, such as the 'quiet encroachment' (Bayat 2010) of a politically and economically marginalized but demographically massive population, mundane actions can engender resistance to authoritarianism. But in the very different context of the Omani Sultan's military and ideological defeat of the revolutionaries, and of Oman's wider post-war policies of economic development, resource redistribution, repression of political opponents and co-optation of ex-revolutionaries, former Front members' mundane kinship did not express political resistance of concern to the Sultanate. The fact that the Omani state closely surveilled ex-revolutionaries but did

not suppress these practices, and that Dhufaris told me about them, suggests the absence therein of political challenge of concern to Oman's government.

The absence from these kinship practices of political content of concern to the Omani state does not, however, preclude a wider significance of these strategies beyond kinship. My analysis here of kinship practices is part of a broader project (Wilson n.d.) – including the assessment of how Dhufari former revolutionaries' daily socializing practices helped reproduce revolutionary social values of social egalitarianism (Wilson 2019) – which argues that an understanding of the long-term legacies of revolution should include examination of the aftermath of defeated revolution. Asking what happens to ideas, people, and the connections between them after the military defeat of revolution, here I trace kinship practices to explore how people involved in a defeated revolution may reproduce themselves as a group and extend to future generations (who were not adults, or in some cases even born, at the time of revolution) participation in a network – a collectivity of persons connected in this case through shared experience and potentially shared values – of former revolutionaries. This social reproduction of revolutionary community through kinship strategies, alongside other strategies such as daily socializing to reproduce revolutionary social egalitarianism and the unofficial commemoration of former revolutionaries (Wilson n.d.), constitutes a social 'afterlife' of revolution – an afterlife in all three senses of a later stage of life, life after death (here, defeat), and continued use or influence (Oxford English Dictionary). The recognition of such a social afterlife enriches our understanding of revolution in several ways: by highlighting that legacies of revolution go beyond commonly made distinctions between revolutions which 'succeed' or 'fail'; by foregrounding an alternative perspective on revolution understood not in terms of what takes place during a revolution, but through the lens of those qualities of revolution which endure beyond silenced defeat; and by bringing to light a counter-history (Thompson 1963) of the experiences of the defeated, here defeated revolutionaries, which are all too easily left out of prevailing historical accounts. In the case of Dhufar, conventional narratives have stressed the success of the Sultan's and his allies' counter-insurgency war (e.g. Hughes 2009). Such accounts overlook how Dhufari revolutionaries' military defeat does not preclude an ongoing social afterlife of revolution – as an analysis of former revolutionaries' kinship practices shows.

I carried out research trips in Dhufar in 2013 and in 2015, including five months of fieldwork in 2015 when I lived in Dhufar's main city, Salalah. I lived first with a host family and then independently, and informally met 26 former militants and more than 20 family members through chains of acquaintances. While several men, and a few women, preferred to speak with me in English, I spoke Arabic with most women and some men. I talked with people in homes, cafes, private sector and public sector places of work and informal social gatherings. Mention of the Front was extremely sensitive in heavily-surveilled Oman. This necessarily constrained my fieldwork and interlocutors' willingness to discuss with me connections with veteran militants. Young people under 40 born after the war were generally more willing to discuss their experiences, while ex-members of the Front – under great surveillance – were most careful in their interactions with me. Interlocutors knew when they shared stories with me that I was a researcher wishing to write about legacies of Dhufar's revolution. Given the Front's sensitivity in Oman, to anonymize interlocutors I have withheld or altered biographical details, and used pseudonyms.

In what follows, I first assess the tendency of kinship studies to emphasize kinship's potential for the reproduction of a dominant social order, and identify grounds for extending recognition of kinship's reproduction of a counter-hegemonic social order. Then, having described Dhufar, its revolutionaries and their kinship policies, I explain how former revolutionaries' kinship practices in post-war Dhufar helped reproduce a counter-hegemonic social order which questioned traditional social hierarchies. I conclude reviewing these findings' implications for kinship and its relationship to counter-hegemony and revolution.

Revisiting kinship and social order

Anthropologists have long concerned themselves with the way that kinship relations across a range of sites – households, industrial and rural workplaces, ritual occasions, spaces of government – can legitimize and reproduce through existing and future generations power relations, gender dynamics, and wider political and economic structures. Over time, ethnographers have been increasingly concerned with kinship's potential to reproduce and legitimize (changing) hierarchies and structures of dominance across social life. The potential for kinship relations to reflect and reproduce a dominant social order is thus a long-running, and contested, leitmotif in kinship studies. Three strands within kinship studies outline important contours of these debates.

The first strand makes the case that kinship reproduces a dominant social order. Marx's ideas (Engels 1972[1884]) held that the family reproduced positions of class exploitation and privilege. Later generations of Marxists continued to analyse how different family forms reproduced values that supported capitalist production (e.g. Rapp 1978). Marx's scepticism about the family's role in conservative social reproduction prefigured different generations of anthropologists – including those in disagreement with Marxism – who asserted that kinship relations reflected a dominant social order. Structural functionalists analysed kinship practices as a means of reproducing dominant social, political, and moral orders (Radcliffe-Brown 1950), and ultimately thus reproducing a notion of society that surpassed its members. For structuralists, the observable patterns of kinship explained wider social patterns and structures (Lévi-Strauss 1969). Both approaches assumed a monolith-like 'society' that tended towards stability and self-reproduction, with kinship playing a key role in achieving these.

Whilst perhaps most (in)famous for doing so, structural-functionalists and structuralist approaches were not alone in attributing to kinship a key role in social reproduction. In studies of rural societies where analysts perceived that kinship provided key tools for managing labour and resources, the importance of kinship could extend to reproducing economic stability and explaining (non-capitalistic) labour patterns – as Chayanov (1966 [1925]) argued in his account of the Domestic Mode of Production. Adopting a critical view of the reproduction of a dominant social order, feminist anthropologists exposed the extent to which kinship relations naturalized an unequal status quo and concomitant forms of exploitation (Yanagisako 1979). For example, where women and men saw a woman's farm labour as a wife's 'natural' work, they did not recognize the labour value of this work and thus naturalized the exploitation of women's labour (Pine 2002).

At stake in kinship was not merely the reproduction of specific cultures of dominance, power and exploitation, however. Kinship studies as a field also reproduced the notion that a Euro-American biogenetic basis for the concept of kinship was a universal notion (Schneider 1972). Criticism of this bias, alongside the exposure of structural functionalism's and structuralism's ethnocentric assumptions about 'primitive society' prone to self-reproduction (Kuper 1988), saw kinship studies, as well as their association with the reproduction of a social order – fall out of fashion. The eventual resurgence of kinship studies through analyses of assisted reproduction technologies and non-heteronormative family forms, to which I turn shortly, nevertheless also resurrected the question of kinship relations' propensity towards reproducing a dominant social order.

But there is a flip side to any assumption that kinship relations help reproduce a dominant (conservative) social order. Programmes to change – usually 'modernize' – social life often focus on transforming, amongst other things, the family. Thus, a second strand within kinship studies traces kinship's role in attempts to transform – and to resist the transformation of – social life. Liberation movements and revolutionary governments seeking to transform society often attempt to change kinship so as to disrupt its reproduction of an older, now condemned, status quo. In parallel, such governments endorse a new, alternative set of social, including kinship, relations. For instance, Soviet and Soviet-inspired governments advocated transferring child-care from families to the state so as to avoid transmitting inappropriate social values (e.g. Goldman 1993; Wood 1997). The post-1968 socialist-inspired leadership of Dhufar's Front similarly reshaped kinship to transform society.

Kinship practices and language can become the very means through which to attempt social transformation. In areas of Sri Lanka governed by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), militants used the language of sibblingship to challenge traditional generation-based kinship hierarchies and to assert desired peer-to-peer relationships amongst co-militants (Thiranagama 2011: 32). Similarly, LTTE officials reworked funeral rituals in order to take these ceremonies out of families' hands and to emphasize martyrs' glorification (Thiranagama 2011: 215). In liberation movements in the Arab world, revolutionary authorities reduced bridewealth and wedding party expenses as a means of promoting political goals of nationalist solidarity with families mourning political prisoners during the first Palestinian intifada (Johnson et al. 2009), and nationalist intermarriageability beyond tribal affiliation in Western Sahara's liberation movement (Wilson 2016: 154-159). For Dhufari revolutionaries, techniques of replacing the family (such as by educating children in revolutionary residential schools) accompanied re-workings of kinship (such as encouraging inter-marriage beyond traditional social barriers) in order to reproduce a revolutionary social order.

In contexts of intervention in kinship to achieve social transformation, the notion of kinship's propensity to reproduce a recently dominant social order nevertheless persists. The expensive weddings that Palestinian and Western Saharan revolutionary authorities opposed in the 1980s reappeared in the 1990s and 2000s, with concomitant markings of social, class and tribal distinctions (Johnson et al. 2009; Wilson 2016: 159-175). Under socialism, in different ways kinship relations facilitated resistance against, or working around, the socialist state. During the Soviet era, relatives were amongst those categories of people who exchanged favours through informal reciprocal networks (*blat*) in order to circumvent the command

economy (Ledeneva 1998). In rural Poland, villagers experienced household-centred kin relations as a means of resisting the socialist state (Pine 1996). Similarly, Hungarians experienced the work they did in private non-state sector initiatives, often linked to the family, as a source of pride, autonomy, and resistance to alienating work for the state (Szalai 1991: 161).

Such cases of kinship facilitating resistance against socialism indicate kinship relations' potential for reproducing a counter-hegemonic (here anti-socialist) social order. But this overlaps in these instances with kinship relations' suitability for reproducing a remembered or idealized alternative (here pre-socialist) dominant social order. Furthermore, a strong local discourse of the family as a site of resistance against socialism deflects attention away from the extent to which the family under socialism was parasitic on the socialist state in that family exchanges relied on resources obtained from the state sector (Gal and Kligman 2000: 70). Studies of (radical) interventionism into the family, and kinship-based resistance against interventionism, thus partially uphold the propensity of kinship relations for reproducing a dominant social order in a remembered or idealized recent form. Moreover, kinship as resistance to socialism implies kinship as a means of attempted return to or creation of 'normal life' – just as those who lived through the disruption of revolution and war may turn to family life as a way of retrieving a 'normal' life (Das 2006; Vince 2016: 170) or 'going on as usual' (Johnson et al. 2009: 20). That kinship relations would help reproduce a counter-hegemonic social order incompatible with a return to 'normal' life would be a different scenario – to which I turn shortly.

In the very contexts (such as war, revolution and radical government interventionism) in which kinship is targeted as a generator of potential social change, kinship can thus become a field for reproducing an idealized or remembered social order and a sense of normality; a parallel phenomenon emerges in a third strand of kinship studies, namely scholarship about 'new' kinship from the 1990s. On the one hand, kinship studies revived as analyses of 'new' reproductive technologies (NRTs) and non-heteronormative families suggested how kinship relations might contest prevailing values and assumptions. Technologies such as in vitro fertilization undermined the apparent distinction between the 'facts' of nature and culture (Strathern 1992). Meanwhile, gay and lesbian notions of kinship suggested that family could be based on choice and love rather than biological relatedness (Weston 1991); gay parenting offered escape from prescribed sexual difference between parents (Hayden 1995: 47-8).

On the other hand, the temptation to conclude that radically new concepts of kinship are at stake is problematic (Strathern 1992). Users of NRTs may in practice reproduce hegemonic ideals: of biogenetic relatedness and aversion to suggestions of infidelity in Euro-American settings (Ragoné 2004), and of sexual propriety in Middle Eastern settings (Clarke 2009). 'New' families of choice only make sense in the context of a wider underlying assumption that biology is the base of relatedness (Weston 1991: 211). Meanwhile same-sex parents may reproduce bourgeois family values (Goodfellow 2015; Rivers 2013). The fact that even 'new' family forms can reproduce 'old' values points back to kinship relations as a privileged sphere for the reproduction of a dominant social order with associated hierarchies and distinctions.

Kinship's usefulness in the reproduction of a (current or recent) dominant social order runs as a leitmotif through debates in early to mid-twentieth century studies of kinship, analyses of kinship as resistance, and 'new' kinship studies, then. This

theme similarly characterizes much discussion regarding kinship in the Middle East. Regional preferences to avoid women marrying 'down' social hierarchies, to idealize endogamy to the point of endorsing marriage to the closest relative not prohibited by an incest taboo, to favour solidarity amongst agnates, and to assert the moral and practical authority of older over younger generations (Holy 1989) make kinship relations in diverse Middle Eastern settings important (yet contested) means of asserting and reproducing dominant social orders. In several Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) monarchies, the fact that governments discourage and in several cases – including in Oman – prohibit nationals from making a range of marriages with non-GCC members or non-nationals (Dresch 2005) underscores kinship as a national strategy of would-be conservative social reproduction.

Much attention has been paid to how kinship relations across multiple settings lend themselves to the reproduction of a dominant social order. How, then, to make sense of cases where kinship relations contest class-based, ethnic, racial and gendered dynamics of dominant social orders? For instance, former female revolutionary fighters in Algeria, some of whom take a critical position with regard to official narratives of state-endorsed nationalism, use kinship activities such as attending weddings, circumcisions and baccalaureate parties as a way of catching up with women whom they knew through militancy or in prison (Vince 2016: 235-6). They thereby keep active connections and histories excluded from official accounts of the Algerian revolution. For participants in Egypt's 2011 revolution to depose President Mubarak, the subsequent return of repressive authoritarian rule has seen kinship relations – such as a daughter questioning her father, or a husband and wife finding in their political disagreement reason for a divorce – become an area in which people still experience that the revolution transformed 'normal' life (Fernández-Savater et al. 2017: 146-7).

Cases such as those of Algerian and Egyptian revolutionaries inspire me to inquire, through a study of the kinship practices of Dhufari ex-revolutionaries and family members, about the specific ways, relations and institutions which produce family as a field for the generation of particular kinds of social relations. How might kinship relations produce not a monolithic notion of 'society' nor 'the' social order, but a spectrum of social relations encompassing a (contested) dominant social order as well as – my focus here – a counter-hegemonic social order that questions prevailing social hierarchies and values? Family can function as a 'regulatory structure' which, through forums such as welfare agencies, legal decisions and neighbourhood interactions, polices social relations, and reproduces hegemonic racial, gendered, class-inflected, and sexual divisions between norms and deviance (Rivers 2013: 7). Here I examine the potential of kinship relations to function as a regulatory structure to produce a counter-hegemonic social order – in the Dhufari ex-revolutionary case even in the absence of a permissive governing authority.

Dhufar: from revolutionaries to ex-revolutionaries

Today 'Dhufar' refers to the southern province of the country which in 1970 took the name and current territorial form of the Sultanate of Oman. The territory known as Dhufar has changed in scope over time (Morris 1997), and was once famous for its production of frankincense. In pre-1970s Dhufar, families from the coast, hinterland mountains and northern desert had long cooperated for trade, monsoon-related transhumant pastoralism, and marriage. These interactions followed contours of tribal, ethnic, racial and gendered social stratification.

Dhufar's social hierarchies overlap with those prevalent across Oman, the Arabian Gulf and the Middle East (Abu-Lughod 1986; Limbert 2010). Locals distinguish settled from transhumant, noble from dependent and free (tribute claimant) from unfree (tribute payer or slave). Those classed as belonging to the community of blacks (former slaves or descendants thereof) face further racialized stigma.ⁱ These differences intersect in Dhufar with internally stratified ethnic distinctions between patrilineal tribes of Arabic speakers in coastal and desert areas, and of speakers of Shaḥri, Mahri and Hobyot South Arabian languages in coastal, mountain, and desert areas.ⁱⁱ Arabic-speaking coastal elites include the *Sada* (who claim descent from the prophet Muhammad), *Kathiri* tribes and tribes of Somali origin. Non-elite Arabic-speaking coastal dwellers include those whose family's historical status ranged from traders to client fishing families (*baḥara*) and slaves (*'abīd*) or freed slaves – slavery having been abolished in Dhufar by the Front in 1968 and in the newly-formed Sultanate of Oman by Sultan Qaboos bin Said in 1970. In the desert region, Bedouin *Bait Kathir* tribes speak a Bedouin Arabic dialect. Speakers of South Arabian languages comprise mountain and coastal elites (*Qara*), those who were once their subordinates (the *Shaḥra*), mountain-dwelling *Kathir al-Jabal* tribes and desert-dwelling *Mahra* tribes who speak Mahri. As is the case elsewhere in the Middle East, kinship practices – ranging from agnate solidarity to allowing women to marry within or above, but not below, their social status – helped reproduce a stratified social order. When the leadership of Dhufar's Front committed to challenging these hierarchies and promoting social egalitarianism, policies to achieve this included interventions in kinship.

The political and religious history of Dhufar differs from that of predominantly Ibadhi Muscat and the interior of northern Oman (from which Dhufar is separated by the *jīdat al-Harasis* desert). Only in 1879, when warring Dhufari parties invited the then Sultan of Muscat to resolve their dispute did Dhufar, the population of which is Sunni, become a protectorate of the Sultan of Muscat. Sultan Said bin Taimur (ruled 1932 to 1970) treated the protectorate as a personal fiefdom. Whilst he had little practical control beyond the area around present-day Salalah, he allowed few opportunities for economic development, education or emigration. By the 1960s, young men were fleeing Dhufar in search of work and education in the Gulf. Some migrants joined George Habash' Arab Nationalist Movement and eventually formed the Dhufar Liberation Front (DLF) in 1965 (see Takriti 2013: 49-83). Though united in their intention to overthrow British-backed Sultan Said, DLF members' wider political orientations ranged from independence for Dhufar to Arab nationalism and Marxism. At the Front's second congress in Hamreen in 1968, the Marxists assumed the leadership of the renamed People's Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf. The embrace of Marxism committed the Front to radical interventionism in social, political, and economic life. The socialist turn also alarmed Sultan Said's backer, Britain, into scaling up an internationalized Cold War counter-insurgency war. Britain, Jordan and Iran participated, with the counter-insurgency intensifying after the 1970 British-backed coup (see Takriti 2013: 160-193) when Sultan Qaboos bin Said replaced his deposed father.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Front was at the height of its military power and held most mountain territory in Dhufar and coastal areas excluding the area around Salalah. The number of militants is difficult to assess. British intelligence estimated 1000 Front fighters in 1970 (Takriti 2013: 115). Estimates of the participation of female fighters (rare before 1968) vary between 5% and 30% (Takriti

2013: 122). The estimated numbers of fighters do not address support amongst Dhufar's estimated 30,000-40,000 wartime population (Hughes 2009: 278) – and in some areas one interlocutor suggested that 'nearly everyone' had been involved in the Front. In the fluctuating areas under its territorial control, as well as at its base in Hawf in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), the Front promoted social egalitarianism by supporting literacy and educational opportunities, emancipating marginalized groups such as women, slaves and client groups, rejecting tribalism, and encouraging inter-marriage across social groups. As regards kinship, the Front followed both strategies common for radical governing authorities: the displacement of existing kinship forms, as well as the attempt to harness kinship to achieve social change.

Heeding Marxist scepticism of the family as the incubator of values and interests antithetical to socialist emancipation, from 1968 the Front increasingly relocated the socialization of children to Hawf. The Front founded a primary and intermediate school within the (in theory) safer space of the borders of PDRY – although the counter-insurgency forces bombed the schools in 1971 and 1972 (Jacob 2010: 181). Until the revolution, only a few Dhufari boys had attended the sole boys' school in Salalah. Estimates of the number of pupils in the revolutionary schools in 1973 vary from 500 primary and 320 intermediate pupils (Jacob 2010: 184) to a combined total of 650 male and 350 female pupils (Takriti 2013: 122). Given the scarcity of resources, for a time pupils lived in the classrooms laying down blankets in the tents at night to sleep where they had studied (Jacob 2010: 192). Pupils' affectionate term for the primary school's director, Bahraini activist Layla Fahri, was 'Mama Huda' (Jacob 2010: 178) – an indicator of how the school environment acquired parental associations for pupils.

The Front also reworked kinship practices to encourage social change, as has occurred in other revolutionary authorities (Johnson et al. 2009, Thiranagama 2011, Wilson 2016). To encourage militants to intermarry across traditional social barriers, the Front reduced and standardized bridewealth (*mahr*) (Halliday 1970: 380). 'Unusual' marriages resulted, as discussed below. The gendered dynamics of marital life also changed. Where previously transhumance or migration saw a husband absent himself from the marital home for long periods, the revolution saw the reverse scenario of a wife travelling abroad for study whilst her husband remained working for the Front in Yemen or on the battlefield. Kinship reproduces not only relations but also the very social and physical substance of future generations: the Front's changes in kinship practices projected alternative social forms for the future. This future ended up being one of political defeat. But the effects of revolutionary kinship practices, and the possibilities for former revolutionaries' kinship to remain distinctive, would continue as an afterlife of revolution.

In 1975 Sultan Qaboos declared victory over the renamed (in 1974) Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman. Its leaders and remaining fighters withdrew to regroup from PDRY. The school operated until the late 1980s, closing without an official ending to the activities of the movement in exile (Jacob 2010). From Sultan Qaboos' accession in 1970 throughout the 1980s and 1990s, former militants gradually abandoned their opposition to Sultan Qaboos and returned to Oman. The Sultan's government offered varying levels of material handouts and political favour to ex-militants according to the timing of return, the position held in the Front and personal connection to the Sultan. Some ex-members of the Front held ministerial portfolios, such as Yusif bin 'Alawi, minister responsible for Foreign Affairs since 1997, and 'Abdul 'Aziz al-

Rawwas, Advisor to the Sultan on Cultural Affairs. Others scraped by on a meagre stipend.

Many former militants, male and female, as well as their children took up residence in Salalah, which transformed from a cluster of villages pre-1970 to a city of some 172,000 (108,000 Omanis and 64,000 foreigners) in 2010 (Sultanate of Oman 2013). All Dhufar's different social groups were represented in post-war Salalah. Everyone living in Oman, regardless of background, daily encountered the dominant public discourse that from 1970 Sultan Qaboos ushered in Oman's renaissance (*nahda*), a process of national modernization and progress (Valéri 2015 [2009]). The official narrative that Oman's history began again with Sultan Qaboos' accession in 1970 allowed no direct public discussion of the defeated militants. A stark reminder of the taboo of publicly mentioning ex-revolutionaries occurred in 2016. Omani journalist Abdullah Habib suggested on Facebook that the government should reveal the sites of graves of executed members of the Front so that mothers could mourn at their sons' graves at 'Eid. He was imprisoned and sentenced to three years of custody before being pardoned.ⁱⁱⁱ

Despite this context of the official invisibilization of former revolutionaries from public discourse, ex-revolutionaries' kinship practices reproduced a (non-politicized) network of former militants and a social afterlife of their defeated revolution.

Kinship out of place after revolution

Former revolutionaries living in Dhufar had diverse histories as militants and ex-militants. They included erstwhile fighters, school pupils, students abroad, diplomats, broadcasters and bureaucrats; they had ceased militancy at different times between the 1970 coup and my fieldwork in 2015, when the war in Yemen saw a handful return from there to Dhufar; some worked in private businesses and others for the government; some continued their revolution-era marriages whilst others divorced. Ex-militants also differed in their use, or not, of kinship as a means to maintain Front connections.

When kinship strategies of former revolutionaries maintained connections between ex-militants, these practices shared qualities of being 'out of place'. 'Matter out of place' (Douglas 1966) stands out (as 'dirt') when things move from their conventional social place to a socially transgressive context. Douglas' notion of 'out of place' ultimately reinforces assumed underlying categories of a 'correct' social order when things are 'in place'. Here I adapt the notion to track how, when kinship practices move out of place from a socially conventional to a socially unusual setting, these practices can shift from reproducing a dominant social order to reproducing a counter-hegemonic social order. In conventional deployment, kinship practices – such as maintaining a marital and nuclear family unit, naming children after significant namesakes, and forging new marriages – can reproduce dominant social (gendered, class-based, ethnicized) values and hierarchies. Kinship practices which move to an unusual social context and thereby become out of place can instead reproduce dissonant values. Amongst Dhufari ex-revolutionaries, various kinship practices were out of place by virtue of occurring in the unusual setting of connection between former Front members who otherwise might not have been linked.

Specifically, some ex-revolutionaries maintained 'unusual' family units formed during the revolutionary period to assert social egalitarianism instead of traditional social hierarchy; some named children after revolutionary figures, even after the end of the

war; and some conceived of marriages amongst the next generation as a means to reproduce connections with other ex-revolutionaries. By maintaining connections between ex-militants which cut across prevailing social, gendered, ethnicized and racialized hierarchies, these kinship practices challenged a dominant social order and reproduced a counter-hegemonic social order.

The form of kinship out of place which perhaps stood out the most for Dhufaris, whether closely connected to the revolution or not, was ex-militants' maintenance of unusual kinship units that had come into being through non-traditional marriages of the revolutionary period e.g. between a black man and a woman of historically free background, or a couple whose respective tribal and ethnic backgrounds normally precluded inter-marriage. One forum in which such instances of kinship out of place became hypervisible was in hospital visits. Illness, like death, necessitates visits from a wide circle of relatives and acquaintances in Dhufar (and in many Middle East settings). Until the advent in November 2013 of 'Gardens Mall' in Salalah, hospital visiting was virtually the only acceptable form of social visiting for many women in Salalah beyond weddings and funerals.^{iv} One evening when I was in Gardens Mall with some male students from Dhufar University, one young man recounted to me how his own kinship out of place had been exposed during a hospital visit.

When I met him, Ali was of College age and had married within the past year. In the course of conversation he told me that his parents had married under the auspices of the Front in a marriage that was unusual: his father was from a mountain tribe in western Dhufar but his mother was from the *Sada* (descendants of the prophet) – who usually do not give their daughters in marriage to non-*Sada* families. The parents had married in the revolutionary base in PDRY, and his three elder sisters had been born there. Eventually the family returned to Salalah, and his father took a government position. Ali was born in the early 1980s, and his father died a few years later. The family continued to benefit from the father's pension from the national government. Raised by his mother's family in Salalah, Ali spoke his father's mountain language with an unusual accent.

As a young adult, Ali had once been in the hospital visiting, and was with a group speaking his father's language. A man at a nearby bedside overheard him speaking with a strange accent for the context. What could a young man who spoke like that be doing with those companions? I wrote up Ali's story in my field notes. He recounted: 'The man saw me, noticed how I spoke, also how I looked, and asked me whose son I was. I gave a first answer, and then the man asked whose son exactly [I was], and I gave my father's full name. The man – I didn't know him at all – came and hugged me, and said that he was with my father in the Front, that he had named his eldest daughter after my sister.' Ali continued: '[The man] asked about my mother. He had to ask about her.' This last point is significant in that for men to ask about women to whom they are not related would in Dhufar normally be considered an inappropriate suggestion of intimacy. Yet, Ali implied by saying that the man 'had' to ask about his mother, the transgression of ordinary, here gendered, social boundaries was justified in the light of the camaraderie between former revolutionary fighters and their family members.

Such an ousting of kinship out of place in a hospital visit was not unique. On another occasion I was visiting a family hailing from an elite mountain tribe. Several of the household's female members, whose parents' generation had been young adults during the war, kindly encouraged me to ask them 'anything' about what they had

heard of the war period. The family, like so many others, had been deeply affected by the war. Women living within the government-controlled cluster of the then separate Salalah, Hafa, Awqad and Husn villages had smuggled food strapped to their bodies when they left the walled-off area, in order to assist food-bereft relatives in the zone beyond. Spouses had been separated by war, imprisonment and, finally, for the patriarch of this family, death while fighting with the government-formed counter-insurgency paramilitaries. When I asked if the women knew of any couples who had married under the Front in such a way as to flaunt traditional hierarchies, the women paused to reflect. One woman, Tuful, then replied that she had heard a story from friends about such a marriage. These friends had been visiting a sick relative in hospital. They noticed that the husband who visited a nearby female patient who hailed from a high-ranking mountain tribe – Tuful named the wife's tribe to me – was black. The observant hospital visitors later asked the patient's sister why her sibling was married to a black man. The sister explained that the husband treated his wife well. Tuful commented to me that this inter-racial marriage must have been a marriage made during the time of the Front. Years after defeat, some ex-militants maintained unusual family units, and this allowed them to reproduce a counter-hegemonic social order in which women and men could marry, stay married to spouses, and assert ongoing connections of friendship with persons with whom such contact would ordinarily be avoided. Notably, the response reported from the sister in the hospital not only eschewed mention of revolution (as was politically prudent) but subtly defended the legitimacy of a marriage in which a black husband treated his non-black wife 'well'.

A second form of kinship out of place, which was primarily visible to ex-Front families, projected connections from the time of the Front onto ensuing generations. Some former Front families adapted the common practice of naming children after those whom one wished to respect and honour. Dhufaris frequently explained cases to me where a child was named in honour of a grandparent or a parent's sibling. Naming children is loaded with moral force (Bodenhorn and vom Bruck 2006: 11). Names are a powerful means of generating relationships, while giving a particular name to a child can reveal the name-givers' relations to that child (Bodenhorn and vom Bruck 2006: 3). As we saw in the case of Ali's sister's namesake, former revolutionaries adapted the practice of naming a child after a significant namesake in order to honour revolutionary peers. They thus projected onto a new generation counter-hegemonic histories and connections.

I learned of another instance of revolutionary naming as I was telling a former militant, Salim, that the father of a Dhufari female friend of mine had served as a radio broadcaster during the revolution. Salim immediately asked about the names of the children. I listed the names of the three girls, which here I abbreviate to X., Y., and Z. He repeated and checked each name with me. Then he exclaimed 'He [the father] has named them after the women who were with us [in the revolution]. X. is my father's brother's daughter, so is Y., and Z. is the name of the president of the women's association. They [former revolutionaries] do this... Ask them why he named his daughters this way'. Salim then offered another example of such naming in honour of former Front members: 'I called my oldest daughter Narjes [changed here, and a word meaning a type of plant]. No one was called Narjes. But then I started hearing about lots of daughters called Narjes – I would ask, and they would say that they were called after her. I called her after Rosa Luxembourg'. Salim had made the connection between Narjes, a name meaning the flower Narcissus, and Rosa, a name meaning the flower rose. Significantly, 'X., Y. and Z.', as well as Narjes

and her namesakes, were born after the end of the war. If the imposition of fixed surnames made individuals visible to states for purposes such as taxation (Scott 1998: 71), amongst Dhufari former revolutionaries the passing on of first names with revolutionary associations made former militants legible to other members of the erstwhile revolutionary community.

These naming practices were all the more significant given the politics of public nomenclature under Sultan Qaboos. Salalah, and Oman more broadly, was saturated with street names and monuments which commemorated Sultan Qaboos and his renaissance, but there were no monuments or street names to recognize revolutionaries. As the case of journalist Abdullah Habib shows, an Omani who referred in public to the fact that Dhufar's landscape hosted unmarked graves of revolutionaries killed by government forces risked imprisonment. In the context of such official silence, naming children after figures important to the revolution – either historical inspirations or those with whom militants forged close bonds – was an alternative means of revealing relations as well as passing on a collective memory to a future generation. In acknowledging these namesakes in conversation with me, despite government surveillance, Dhufar's former revolutionaries implied that these naming strategies did not entail political resistance (as might be the case in the naming strategies of other politically repressed groups). But in Dhufar these naming strategies did reproduce into a future generation the possibility of knowing a counter-hegemonic social order in which traditional distinctions between tribes, status groups and genders could be surpassed.

A third kinship strategy which helped ex-revolutionaries to reproduce a counter-hegemonic social order concerned the forming of marriages in the next generation. A dominant marriage strategy in the Middle East is to privilege social 'closeness' between prospective marriage partners in terms such as relatedness (preferably through patriliney), class, tribe, education, residence or religion. Echoing Palestinian militants whose preference for marriage between politically compatible activists builds on the traditional prioritization of closeness between spouses (Johnson et al. 2009: 16), some Dhufari ex-revolutionary families formed marriages in the next generation which acknowledged closeness on the basis of erstwhile Front connections. Najat, the daughter of a veteran revolutionary couple, described to me that her older sister had married about a year earlier. 'She married a man whose father was in the Front', she described. After a short pause she added that the groom was also the bride's patrilineal cousin. The family's marriage strategy simultaneously conformed to the dominant ideal of patrilineal marriage, and projected connection between former Front families into a new generation. Wedding celebrations (as well as funerals) for members of former Front families presented further opportunities to reassert ex-revolutionary families' distinctive willingness to socialize beyond the conventional ethnic, racial and tribal hierarchies. Naser, a veteran revolutionary who was speaking to me about social mixing at weddings of members of Front families, commented: 'We don't care whether someone is black or white, red or yellow'. Making marriages in the next generation into a means of maintaining connection between former Front families was perhaps the most subtle form of ex-revolutionaries' kinship out of place. These marriages also blended with convention: Najat's sister's wedding was a marriage between patrilineal cousins (even though Najat stressed first the connection through former militancy), and large wedding parties often entailed social mixing based on educational, professional and residential connections. Yet for those participating who hailed from former revolutionary families, these kinship practices had shifted from merely reproducing

convention to reproducing simultaneously the counter-hegemonic social order of former Front members' social connections beyond Dhufar's everyday hierarchies.

It was not the case, however, that all former revolutionaries used kinship strategies to signal connections with one another. Some former revolutionaries moved in distinct spheres around Salalah, meeting only occasionally and some not meeting for years. On one occasion, I observed how kinship, and in particular the presentation of one's name, became a means through which a young man distanced himself from family connections with the revolution. For some, then, the problem was not how to continue acknowledgement of the revolution but how to 'cut the network' (Strathern 1996). Muhad, a young professional in his thirties, explained to me that his father had been absent in his childhood because, as far as he understood, he was one of the underground guerrilla fighters still attacking government positions into the 1980s. 'Actually I don't know what he was doing', Muhad clarified. I considered mentioning his father's name to another interlocutor, who had served in the revolution, to see if I could learn more about the family's story. But when I got home I found that Muhad's visiting card, most unusually, featured only his first name and the name of his tribe. The name of his father and grandfather, habitually listed on professional cards, had been omitted. It was as if his father, the former fighter from whom the son had distanced himself, had been erased. Those whose family life had been shaped by the revolution could also refuse the possibilities of kinship for making connections with that past.

Conclusion: kinship, counter-hegemony and revolution

In the years following their military and political defeat, some of Dhufar's former revolutionaries who moved back to Salalah used various kinship strategies to reproduce and make visible to themselves, and to others, connections between fellow ex-revolutionaries. These connections transgressed Dhufari traditional social hierarchies along tribal, ethnic, racial and gendered lines. These strategies of kinship out of place – maintaining non-traditional family units, naming children after revolutionary figures and construing new marriages as a way of revitalizing connections to a revolutionary past – thereby reproduced a social order that was counter-hegemonic both in the context of social hierarchies specific to Dhufar and those more broadly characteristic of the wider Arabian context. These findings are significant for reflecting on the relationship of kinship, on the one hand, to dominant and counter-hegemonic social orders, and, on the other hand, to revolution and related projects of social and political transformation.

Across different approaches to kinship in anthropology from the early 20th century to the early 21st century, a recurring theme has been the propensity of kinship relations for reproducing a dominant social order. Revisionist readings of kinship and the wider discipline cautioned against kinship studies' very reproduction of a Euro-centric notion of biogenetic relatedness (Schneider 1972), and against a notion of a homogeneous 'society' that could or should be reproduced (Kuper 1988). Yet once 'new' kinship emerged, scholarship continued to show that even as non-traditional family forms could question prevailing cultural assumptions, they could also reassert in new ways old traditions, values, and hierarchies of relatedness, personhood and gender (Goodfellow 2015; Ragoné 2004). In the contested processes of the reproduction not of 'society' but of dynamic social relations, kinship has very often featured as a powerful prism and 'regulatory structure' (Rivers 2013: 7) for reproducing hegemonic social hierarchies. The tenacity of kinship relations in

reproducing a dominant social order seemingly makes it tempting to surmise that kinship is especially suited towards social conservatism. Such a notion should nonetheless be resisted, with strong grounds for doing so lying not necessarily in an emphasis on the cultural innovations which have emerged from 'new' kinship forms. These forms will not always be 'new', and even when they have seemed so they also reproduced traditional values. Rather, I stress the need to pay greater attention to the ways in which kinship relations can help reproduce a counter-hegemonic social order.

Governing authorities arising from victorious revolutions have overseen many projects to reshape family life in order to produce a social order that transgresses the pre-revolutionary (e.g. Goldman 1993), just as more fleeting revolutionary contexts have seen family relations reconfigure to question 'normal' social hierarchies (Fernández-Savater et al. 2017: 146-7). The case of Dhufar's former revolutionaries expands insights into kinship's potential for the reproduction of a counter-hegemonic social order. This may occur even in politically inauspicious circumstances of political repression and marginalization. In Dhufar, two enabling circumstances seem crucial: first, the maintenance (and transmission through kinship practices themselves to a new generation) of memories of the Front's earlier endorsement of such family forms and the underlying values of social egalitarianism; and second, the absence of political threat of concern to the Sultanate from these kinship practices. Additionally, the Dhufari case underscores the complexity that it is not so much that kinship relations reproduce *either* a counter-hegemonic social order *or* a dominant social order, but rather a spectrum of social relations where dominant and counter-hegemonic values can overlap in tension. Najat's sister's marriage combined both Front connections and patrilineal endogamy, thus reproducing dominant and counter-hegemonic values and relationships.

Finally, the argument that kinship practices of defeated revolutionaries can reproduce a counter-hegemonic social order suggests that the significance of kinship to revolution is not confined to the aspirations of revolutionaries who enjoy a position of power (however precarious) over a population to transform kinship and thereby society. Changes in kinship practices affect the production of new generations of persons and relations. Consequently, it is not only revolutionary regimes which successfully capture state power that have the chance to create long-lasting effects through their interventions into family life (Goldman 1993; Härkönen 2014; Yan 2003). A fuller understanding of the long-term legacies of revolutions for social life must also take into account social legacies of defeated revolutions. For the Dhufaris whom I met and about whom I heard, kinship practices were a significant means of transmitting and expressing such a social afterlife of revolution. Recognizing their distinctive kinship practices brings into view a counter-history of post-war Dhufar which acknowledges that, beyond dominant narratives of successful counter-insurgency, are experiences and narratives of the defeated.

References

Abu-Lughod, L. 1986. *Veiled Sentiments: Honour and Poetry in a Bedouin Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Bayat, A. 2010. *Life as politics: how ordinary people change the Middle East*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- Bodenhorn, B., & G. vom Bruck. 2006. 'Entangled in Histories': An Introduction to the Anthropology of Names and Naming. In *The anthropology of names and naming*, ed G. vom Bruck and B. Bodenhorn, 1-30. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chayanov, A. 1966 [1925]. *The Theory of Peasant Economy*. Manchester: University of Manchester Press.
- Clarke, M. 2009. *Islam and new kinship: reproductive technology and the shariah in Lebanon*. New York: Berghahn.
- Das, V. 2006. *Life and words: violence and the descent into the ordinary*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Douglas, M. 1966. *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Dresch, P. 2005. Debates on marriage and nationality in the United Arab Emirates. In *Monarchies and nations: Globalisation and Identity in the Arab States of the Gulf*, ed P. Dresch & J. P. Piscatori, 136-157. London: I B Tauris.
- Engels, F. 1972 [1884]. *The origin of the family, private property and the state: in the light of the researches of Lewis H. Morgan*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Fernández-Savater, A., C. Flesher Fominaya, L. Carvalho, Çiğdem, H. Elsadda, W. El-Tamami, P. Horrillo, S. Nanclares & S. Stavrides. 2017. Life after the squares: reflections on the consequences of the Occupy movements. *Social Movement Studies* 16 (1):119-151.
- Gal, S. & G. Kligman. 2000. *The politics of gender after socialism. A comparative-historical essay*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Goldman, W. Z. 1993. *Women, the state and revolution: Soviet family policy and social life, 1917-1936*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Goodfellow, A. 2015. *Gay fathers, their children, and the making of kinship*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Halliday, F. 1970. *Arabia without Sultans*. London: Penguin.
- Härkönen, H. 2014. 'To Not Die Alone': Kinship, love and life cycle in contemporary Havana, Cuba. Helsinki: Research Series in Anthropology.
- Hayden, C. P. 1995. Gender, Genetics, and Generation: Reformulating Biology in Lesbian Kinship. *Cultural Anthropology* 10 (1):41-63.
- Holy, L. 1989. *Kinship, Honour and Solidarity. Cousin Marriage in the Middle East*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Hughes, G. 2009. A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965-1975. *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 32 (2):271-305.
- Jabob, M. 2010. *Qiyadat al-mujtam'a nahu al-taghayur: al-tajriba al-tabawiya li thawrat Thufar, 1969-1992*. Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al Wihda al 'Arabiya.
- Johnson, P., L. A. Nahleh and A. Moors. 2009. Weddings and War: Marriage Arrangements and Celebrations in Two Palestinian Intifadas. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 5(3): 11-35.

- Kuper, A. 1988. *The invention of primitive society: transformations of an illusion*. London: Routledge.
- Lazar, S. 2017. *The social life of politics: ethics, kinship, and union activism in Argentina*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Ledeneva, A. V. 1998. *Russia's economy of favours: blat, networking, and informal exchanges*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. 1969. *The elementary structures of kinship*. (trans J. Bell, J. von Sturmer & R. Needham). London: Eyre & Spottiswoode.
- Limbert, M. E. 2010. *In the time of oil: piety, memory, and social life in an Omani town*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Morris, M. 1997. *Oman adorned: a portrait in silver*. Muscat: Apex Publishing.
- . 2007. The pre-literate, non-Arabic languages of Oman and Yemen. *The British Yemeni Society Journal* 15 (available on <http://al-bab.com/albab-orig/albab/bys/articles/morris07.htm>).
- Pine, F. 1996. Naming the house and naming the land: kinship and social groups in Highland Poland. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Association* 2 (3):443-459.
- . 2002. Retreat to the household? Gendered domains in postsocialist Poland. In *Postsocialism: ideals, ideologies and practices in Eurasia* (ed) C. M. Hann, 95-113. London: Routledge.
- Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. (ed) 1950. *African systems of kinship and marriage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ragoné, H. 2004. Surrogate motherhood and American kinship. In *Kinship and family: an anthropological reader* (ed) R. Parkin & L. Stone, 342-361. Maldon, MA: Blackwell.
- Rapp, R. 1978. Family and class in Contemporary America: Notes toward an Understanding of Ideology. *Science and Society* 42 (3): 278-300.
- Rivers, D. W. 2013. *Radical relations: lesbian mothers, gay fathers, and their children in the United States since World War II*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Schneider, D. 1972. What is kinship all about? In *Kinship studies in the Morgan centennial year* (ed) P. Reining, 32-63. Washington: Anthropological Society of Washington DC.
- Scott, J. 1998. *Seeing like a State. How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Shah, A. 2013. The intimacy of insurgency: beyond coercion, greed or grievance in Maoist India. *Economy and Society* 42 (3):480-506.
- Strathern, M. 1992. *Reproducing the future: essays on anthropology, kinship and the new reproductive technologies*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- . 1996. Cutting the Network. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 2 (3):517-535.
- Sultanate of Oman. 2013. *Statistical Year Book 2012*. Muscat: National Centre for Statistics and Information.

Szalai, J. 1991. Some Aspects of the Changing Situation of Women in Hungary. *Signs* 17 (1):152-170.

Takriti, A. R. 2013. *Monsoon revolution. Republicans, Sultans and Empires in Oman, 1965-1976*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Thiranagama, S. 2011. *In my mother's house: civil war in Sri Lanka*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Thompson, E. P. 1963. *The making of the English working class*. London: V Gollanz.

Valéri, M. 2015 [2009]. *Oman: politics and society in the Qaboos state*. London: Hurst.

Vince, N. 2016. *Our fighting sisters: nation, memory and gender in Algeria, 1954-2012*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Weston, K. 1991. *Families we choose: lesbians, gays, kinship*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Wilson, A. 2016. *Sovereignty in exile: a Saharan liberation movement governs*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

———. 2019. Invisible veterans: defeated militants and the reproduction of revolutionary social values in Dhufar, Oman. *Conflict and Society: Advances in Research*. 5: 132-149.

———. N.d. *Afterlives of revolution in Dhufar, Oman*. Unpublished manuscript.

Wood, E. A. 1997. *The baba and the comrade: gender and politics in revolutionary Russia*. Bloomington : Indiana University Press.

Yan, Y. 2003. *Private life under socialism: love, intimacy, and family change in a Chinese village, 1949-1999*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Yanagisako, S. J. 1979. Family and household: the analysis of domestic groups. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 8:161-205.

Acknowledgements

My thanks go to the many people in Oman who made this research possible. For the sake of their anonymity, I do not thank by name here the many Omanis to whom I am so indebted. I am grateful to those from Oman who commented on earlier versions of this work and to Catherine Alexander, Charis Boutieri, Mandana Limbert, Miranda Morris, Rebecca Prentice, Marlene Schafers, Abed Takriti, Natalya Vince, and *JRAI's* reviewers for invaluable discussion and feedback on earlier versions. Opportunities to present this research at Columbia University, the London School of Economics, Northwestern University, Princeton University, University College London, the 2015 American Anthropological Association, and the 2018 Association of Social Anthropologists led to very helpful feedback. I am responsible for any errors. Fieldwork was funded by the Cambridge Humanities Research Grant and by Durham University's Addison Wheeler Research Fellowship.

ⁱ Notions of blackness are defined in historically and culturally specific ways in the Gulf, as elsewhere. Dhufaris defined belonging to the community of blacks on the basis of parentage rather than physical characteristics. Children attributed to a black father belonged to the community of blacks. Children born to the marriage of a man from a historically free tribe and black woman belonged to the father's tribe and not to the community of blacks, regardless of these children's physical characteristics. In parallel to questions of parentage, Dhufaris made aesthetic judgements about physical features associated with African heritage; however, parentage, not the possession of such features, was the criterion on which Dhufaris determined a person's belonging to the community of blacks or to a historically free tribe.

ⁱⁱ On modern South Arabian languages and their speakers see Morris 2007.

ⁱⁱⁱ On Abdullah Habib, see <https://www.middleeasteye.net/fr/news/oman-arrests-leading-intellectual-and-activist-rights-group-964650127> and <https://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/1885> (last consulted 9 August 2019).

^{iv} Gender segregation, inflected according to class and social standing, varies across the Gulf and neighbouring areas. In Salalah, women usually socialized in private settings such as homes or private hired spaces. This reflected the cultural expectation that women whose class, tribal, ethnic and racial position so required would protect their family honour by avoiding their name and face circulating publicly. Hospitals, where women's presence as a patient or visitor was legitimate, were for a long time the sole context where women of diverse social backgrounds could socialize in public; I am grateful to Miranda Morris and a Dhufari interlocutor for explaining the suspension of habitual gender segregation in hospitals. Offering the opportunity to participate in what Dhufaris perceived to be modern forms of leisure consumption, Gardens Mall became a further legitimate space for women from diverse social backgrounds to socialize in public in cafes, shops and even the cinema.