

Call for Applications

Kinship, Illegal Cooperation, and Criminalization

“Clan Crime” Debates and Family-Based Networks in European and Global Perspective

International Workshop & Edited Volume

Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen–Nürnberg (FAU), Erlangen, Germany

19–20 October 2026

Organised within the DFG-funded project

**KIN-COOPERATIONS: Illegal Cooperation and Kinship Dynamics —
An Anthropological Analysis of al-Rāšidiya in Germany**

Organisers:

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Workshop Concept

Across Europe, debates on organised crime are increasingly framed through kinship. Terms such as “clans,” mafia families, tribes, extended families, family based-crime, or “blood ties” have become central lenses through which certain forms of crime are publicly interpreted. In several EU countries—including Germany and Sweden, among others—“clan crime” has developed into a dominant topic in political and media discussions, particularly when crimes are attributed to specific ethnic or migrant-origin groups. These debates often imply cohesive, hierarchically organised families with unconditional loyalty and collective criminal intent, thereby turning kinship itself into an explanatory category.

Research in anthropology, criminology, sociology, and related fields, however, points to a far more complex reality. Kinship-based formations range from loose extended families with mixed

livelihoods to tightly organised criminal enterprises. Kinship may function as a resource for illegal cooperation, but it is also a framework for care, conflict mediation, social protection, and everyday survival. Within larger kinship fields, typically only certain segments are involved in illegal markets, while many relatives remain uninvolved, distance themselves, or actively resist. At the same time, state categories, police statistics, and media narratives may contribute to the criminalization of kinship—for example through surname-based policing, “clan” labels, or assumptions about “family cultures of crime”—with far-reaching consequences for stigma, policing strategies, legal practice, and social participation.

This international one-and-a-half-day workshop is organised within the DFG-funded project KIN-COOPERATIONS, which analyses illegal cooperation within a specific kinship group originating from al-Rāšidīya (Mardin, Turkey) in Germany. Drawing on New Kinship Studies and the Anthropology of Crime and Criminalization, the project conceptualises kinship not as a fixed organisation but as a flexible social field, and illegality not as a cultural trait but as a situational practice of cooperation shaped by trust, risk, gender, generation, and structural marginalisation.

While KIN-COOPERATIONS provides the conceptual and organisational framework, the workshop explicitly adopts a comparative European and international perspective. It invites contributions that examine how “clan crime” discourses and kinship-focused crime narratives emerge across countries, how they intersect with processes of racialisation and ethnicisation, and how they relate to diverse empirical realities of cooperation, conflict, and everyday life.

Aims of the Workshop

The workshop seeks to:

- move beyond monolithic and culturalising notions of “clan crime” across Europe;
- analyse illegal cooperation as decentralised, situational, and relational practice;
- examine kinship as a resource, constraint, and contested social infrastructure;
- investigate how criminalization is produced through state practices, media narratives, and legal categories—especially when linked to ethnicity and migration;
- foreground gendered and generational dynamics, internal differentiation, and law-abiding family segments;
- reflect critically on methods and ethics in researching criminalised kinship formations.

Thematic Focus and Possible Topics

We invite empirically grounded and theoretically informed contributions addressing one or more of the following themes:

Kinship and illegal cooperation

How do descent, marriage, “kinning,” and quasi-kinship structure cooperation in illegal markets? Under what conditions do specific segments of extended families become involved in sustained criminal activities, while others do not?

Comparing European “clan crime” debates

How do “clan crime” narratives differ across EU countries (e.g., Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Denmark)? What political, media, and policing dynamics produce these debates, and how do they relate to empirical realities?

Criminalization, categorisation, and state practice

How do police, prosecutors, courts, and administrative bodies work with categories such as “clan,” “family crime,” or “tribal violence”? What are the consequences of surname-based policing, kinship-focused statistics, and ethnicising narratives?

Media, public discourse, and racialisation

How do journalism, social media, and political communication construct “criminal families” or “dangerous kin groups”? What are the effects on everyday life, integration, institutional trust, and stigma—especially for ethnicised communities?

Migration, transnationality, and digitalisation

How do migration trajectories, legal statuses, transnational mobility, and digital infrastructures (e.g., WhatsApp, Telegram, TikTok) reshape kinship relations, solidarity, and illegal cooperation across borders?

Gender, generation, and internal differentiation

Gendered participation and invisible labour; masculinities and honour; generational change and conflict; women’s strategies of stabilisation and resistance; law-abiding and distancing family members within criminalised kinship fields.

Methods and ethics

Long-term ethnography and life histories in criminalised communities; digital ethnography of kin networks; access, trust, safety, anonymisation, and ethical challenges when working with sensitive material.

Contributions may draw on ethnographic research, historical analysis, legal and policy studies, quantitative approaches, digital and media research, or interdisciplinary perspectives. We explicitly welcome both academic and practice-oriented contributions, including reflections from policing, social work, NGOs, and journalism.

Workshop Format and Publication Plan

The workshop will take place over one and a half days at FAU Erlangen (Germany) in 19-20 October 2026. It will begin on the afternoon of Day 1 and continue through a full Day 2.

The workshop is conceived as the starting point for an edited volume on kinship, illegal cooperation, and criminalization, co-edited by the organisers. All accepted participants will be invited—and are expected—to contribute a chapter to this volume.

Publication process

- **Before the workshop:** submission of an extended draft (approx. 5,000–6,000 words), circulated among panel members and discussants.
- **During the workshop:** presentation and in-depth discussion of drafts.
- **After the workshop:** submission of a full chapter (approx. 6,000–8,000 words), revised on the basis of feedback.
- Chapters will undergo internal review and professional copy-editing.

Participation in the workshop, including coverage of travel and accommodation costs, is conditional on commitment to this full publication process.

Eligibility and Application Procedure

We invite applications from:

- scholars at all career stages, with particular encouragement for early-career researchers and PhD candidates, in anthropology, sociology, criminology, law, history, political science, media and cultural studies, or related fields;
- researchers in practice-oriented institutions (e.g. police analysis units, NGOs, social work organisations);

- practitioners who reflect analytically on kinship-related crime in their professional work and wish to contribute to an academic–practice dialogue.

Application materials:

1. **Abstract** (300–400 words) outlining the empirical case or theoretical focus, methods, and main argument, and explaining how it fits the workshop theme and the planned book chapter.
2. **Short bio** (max. 200 words), including current position, institutional affiliation, and up to three relevant publications or projects.

Please send applications to:

Dr. Mahmoud Jaraba: mahmoud.jaraba@fau.de

Subject line: *Application_KIN-Cooperations2026*

Deadline: 01.04.2026

Applicants will be notified by: 01.05.2026

Practical Information

The working language of the workshop will be **English**. Subject to budget availability and applicable funding rules, we aim to reimburse reasonable travel and accommodation costs for contributors whose applications are accepted and who subsequently submit a full chapter for the edited volume. Reimbursement will be processed in accordance with FAU administrative requirements and the relevant travel expense regulations, and requires the submission of the necessary forms and receipts.