

AT THE CABIN. An ethnography of *kinning* in Norway.

Scientific abstract

This dissertation takes cabins and practices related to cabins as its point of departure for studying kinship and family relations among those who have access to a cabin in Norway. The dissertation is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Norway between the spring of 2017 and the autumn of 2018, with 40 cabins: cabin-owners, as well as with people who have a connection to these cabins. In this dissertation “the cabin” is a broad term, covering everything from shielings from the 18th century to newly constructed apartments.

Rather than taking for granted the existence of kinship and family as preexisting categories, this dissertation shows how these phenomena are enacted through things and practices. The findings illustrate that *kinning* is not limited to the human but can also include materiality and ancestors. The dissertation is therefore situated within an anthropology concerned with more-than-human relations. In addition, the dissertation brings to light tensions between different familial relations, such as the atomic family and expanded kin relations, as well as the ways in which humans negotiate and balance these relationships through cabins.

The cabin has had a central role in the construction of a Norwegian national identity. This is an idea still reproduced in media and Norwegian public discourse today, which contributes to an impression that experiencing and performing Norwegianness through the cabin is universal among Norwegians. However, statistical data shows that a large portion of the country’s population does not own or have access to a cabin. This dissertation underscores that cabin narratives and cabin practices can both include and exclude people’s belonging to kinship, family, and nation.

Finally, the research contributes to doing anthropology in one’s own society, where ordinary themes and commonplace situations, often taken for granted in Norwegian majority society, are instead emphasized. The dissertation also engages with methodological and academic challenges associated with “studying up” in Norwegian society, with its ideals of egalitarianism.