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Performing manhood and fatherhood : A case study of men/fathers as symbolic mediums

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to consider family as a kin network of exchange and to show that manhood and fatherhood is a cultural value transacted within this network. It attempts to also show that such value is variably negotiated as identity is performed in relation to ideological constructs of space. To do this, the physical and ideological space to which kin belong is explored as a cultural borderland, suggesting that men/fathers are able to exceed bounded constructs of identity while also being subject to them. In particular, I try to illuminate some of the dynamics that impact on men's/fathers' negotiation of discursive codes of intra-cultural sameness and difference to be valued not only as men/fathers, but as *good at* being men/fathers. Within this context, some of the symbols of identity that enable a man/father to be *good at being* a man/father are considered. The ethnography highlights the ways in which men/fathers are able to access and mediate symbolic resources, showing how these processes impact on their positioning on a continuum of self and worth. In this regard, performances of providing in relation to performances of the social and genetic imbrications of kinship constitute a key focus. .