Tatjana Thelen is Professor in the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Vienna and will serve during the 2023 academic year as Distinguished Visiting Austrian Chair at Stanford. She previously taught at universities in Zurich, Bayreuth, Halle and Berlin. After carrying out fieldwork on post-socialist economic transformations in Hungary and Romania, she joined the Legal Pluralism Group at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology and shifted her interest to care and welfare with fieldwork in eastern Germany. She returned to Hungary and Romania, as well visiting Serbia, for a Volkswagen-founded project on access to natural and state resources in rural areas.

Her theoretical work has centred on the role of care responsibilities in the (re)production (or dissolution) of significant relations that bridge diverse fields in economic and political anthropology. A second major topic has been the state and especially its conceptual separation from kinship. This question was also at the heart of an interdisciplinary research group at the Center for Interdisciplinary research in Bielefeld that she headed along with colleagues from Los Angeles, Zurich and Bayreuth.

Her latest co-edited publications include The Politics of Making Kinship. Historical and Anthropological Perspectives (Berghahn 2023), Politics and Kinship: A Reader (Routledge 2022); Measuring Kinship: Gradual Belonging and Thresholds of Exclusion, a special issue of Social Analysis (2021), Reconnecting State and Kinship. (University of Pennsylvania Press 2018); and Stategraphy: Toward a Relational Anthropology of the State. (Berghahn 2018, revised reprint).

Tatjana also founded the research networks CAST (Care and State: https://carestate.univie.ac.at/) and currently works on a book proposal on the topic as synthesis of her former work.