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## **Toward a conceptual framework for the variation in historical family and household systems across Eurasia**

### **Family history and the poverty of theory**

The field of family history has been flourishing for almost 50 years. Over this period, family historians have been preoccupied with codifying, cataloguing, classifying and — above all — mapping historical family forms<sup>1</sup>. While these historians were good at unraveling, documenting, and describing the variation in human domestic groups (and the related demographic behavior)<sup>2</sup> in the past, they were

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<sup>1</sup> Some recent overviews of the discipline include: S. Ruggles, “The Future of Historical Family Demography”, *Annual Review of Sociology* 38 (2012): 423–441; M. Szołtysek, “Spatial construction of European family and household systems: promising path or blind alley? An Eastern European perspective”, *Continuity and Change* 27, no. 1 (2012): 11–52.

<sup>2</sup> The key umbrella term for the discussion presented in this paper is the notion of the family system (e.g. E. Berquo, and P. Xenos, eds., *Family Systems and Cultural Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), which is often used interchangeably with terms “domestic/household, family organization.” The family system’s main contributory factors include household formation patterns, family forms, the nature of the family life course, and marriage behavior. The structural manifestations of family systems in historical census (or census-like) microdata can be effectively understood by means of detailed observations of the domains of leaving home, life-cycle service, marital behavior and household formation, domestic group structure, and individual living arrangements. Since the substantial body of historical-demographic knowledge suggests the “organismic” correspondence between the building blocks of family systems; i.e., their mutual morphological interdependencies we assume that the explanations for the variation in the organization of the co-residential groups, differences in nuptiality, the pace of home-leaving, household formation, and the presence of life-cycle service (our independent variables) can be sought in the familiar — and perhaps even identical — sphere of group behaviors, social attitudes, and politico-economic and environmental factors; although exceptions inevitably occur; see: S. De Vos, and A. Palloni, “Formal Models and Methods for the Analysis of Kinship and Household Organization”, *Population Index* 55, no. 2 (1989): 174–198; M. Barbagli, “Three Household Formation Systems in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Italy”, in *The Family in Italy from Antiquity to the Present*, ed. D.I. Kertzer and R.P. Saller (New Haven-

less adept at systematizing the causes of this variation in a theoretically informed manner<sup>3</sup>. In their efforts to provide explanations for the observed regional diversity

London: Yale University Press, 1991): 255–269; P.H. Reddy, “Family Structure and Age at Marriage: Evidence From a South Indian Village”, *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 26, no. 3–4 (1991): 253–266; R. Wall, “European family and household systems”, in *Historiens et populations. Liber Amicorum Etienne Helin* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Academia, 1991): 617–636; D.I. Kertzer, “The Joint Family Household Revisited: Demographic Constraints and Household Complexity in the European Past”, *Journal of Family History* 14, no. 1 (1989): 1–15; also M. Szołtysek, *Rethinking East-central Europe: family systems and co-residence in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth* (Halle-Wittenberg: Martin-Luther-Universität; Habilitation thesis submitted to the Philosophische Fakultät I der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg). However, as will be discussed later in the text, a loop of causality between some of those independent variables is likely to occur, as well. This is especially the case for the effect of marriage behavior on other aspects of the family system as defined above.

<sup>3</sup> Quite unlike their colleagues in the neighboring field of family sociology; see, among others, R.F. Winch, *Familial organization. A quest for determinants* (New York: The Free Press, 1977); idem, “Theorizing About The Family”, *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 3, no. 1 (1972): 5–16; M.F. Nimkoff, and R. Middleton, “Types of Family and Types of Economy”, *American Journal of Sociology* 66 (1960): 215–225; R. Blumberg, and R. F. Winch, “Societal Complexity and Familial Complexity: Evidence for the Curvilinear Hypothesis”, *American Journal of Sociology* 77 (1972): 898–920; M.F. Nimkoff, ed., *Comparative Family Systems* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965); also I.F. Beutler, W.R. Burr, K.S. Bahr, and D.A. Herrin, “The Family Realm: Theoretical Contributions for Understanding Its Uniqueness”, *Journal of Marriage and Family* 51, no. 3 (1989): 805–816, and the discussion that followed.

However, the majority of frameworks developed within family sociology is of rather little use for historical studies due to sociologists’ continuing fixation on Durkheimian-Parsonian paradigm; e.g., H. Bertram, “Die Familientheorie von Talcott Parsons”, in *Die Geschichte der Familiensoziologie in Portraits*, ed. R. Nave-Herz (Würzburg: ERGON Verlag, 2010): 239–262. Indeed, there seems to be a structural hole between much of family sociology and international historical family demography: cf. G. Fertig, and M. Szołtysek, “Fertilität und Familienformationen in historischer Perspektive”, in *Handbuch Bevölkerungssoziologie*, ed. Y. Niephaus, M. Kreyenfeld, R. Sackmann (Wiesbaden: Springer VS; forthcoming). Contrary to this, the debate on the impact of urbanization and industrialization on family configurations, marriage patterns, and historical family formation has spawned more theoretical efforts, and it continues to do so; see T.K. Haraven, *Family Time and Industrial Time* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); D.I. Kertzer, and A. Schiaffino, “Industrialization and Coresidence: A Life Course Approach”, in *Life-Span Development and Human Behavior*, vol. 5, ed. P.B. Baltes, and O.G. Brim, Jr. (New York: Academic Press): 360–391; K.L. Lynch, “The European Marriage Pattern in the Cities: Variations on a Theme by Hajnal”, *Journal of Family History* 16, no. 1 (1991): 79–96; P. Puschmann, and A. Solli, “Household and family during urbanization and industrialization: efforts to shed new light on an old debate”, *The History of the Family* 19, no. 1 (2014): 1–12; M. Szołtysek, S. Gruber, B. Zuber-Goldstein, and R. Scholz, “Living arrangements and household formation in an industrializing urban setting: Rostock 1867–1900”, *Annales de Démographie Historique* (2011): 233–269. Recent attempts to conceptualize different paths through which family systems can influence wider societal and demographic outcomes also seem to be more promising in this regard; see M. Das Gupta, “Kinship systems and demographic regimes”, in *Anthropological Demography: Toward a New Synthesis*, eds. D.I. Kertzer, and T. Fricke (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 36–52; G.W. Skinner, “Family Systems and Demographic Processes”, in *Anthropological Demography*, 53–95; M. Vandezande, J. Kok, K. Mandemakers, “The impact of kin co-residence on survival chances of infants and children in the Netherlands, 1850–1909. A new

across major areas of Europe and Asia, scholars have pointed to the significance of a broad range of economic, cultural, and demographic factors<sup>4</sup>. The exploration of the contextual effects on historical household structures and co-residence patterns has revealed that human residential behavior is simultaneously affected by a variety of factors, as the economic, social, environmental, and institutional structures tend to intermingle in exerting a considerable — if sometimes unexpected — influence on the strategies of individual households and families regarding their structure, composition, and recruitment<sup>5</sup>. The complex tangle of settlement and environmental

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methodological approach”, *Romanian Journal of Population Studies* 5, no. 2 (2011): 139–160; J. Kok, M. Vandezande, K. Mandemakers, “Household structure, resource allocation and child well-being. A comparison across family systems”, *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 8, no. 4 (2011): 76–101.

<sup>4</sup> Our notion of “Eurasia” is a pragmatic one; following recent works of comparative anthropologists, we define it as “the whole area between the Siberian Arctic and the shifting borders of settled civilizations in the European, Iranian, Indian and Chinese worlds”; see C. Hann, “Towards a Maximally Inclusive Concept of Eurasia”, *Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Working Papers* 157 (2014). More bluntly, we may define Eurasia as the entire landmass between the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian and Arctic Oceans, with parts of Africa north of the Sahara potentially included on historical grounds as well; see idem, “The anthropology of Eurasia in Eurasia”, *Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology Working Papers* 57 (2003). By and large, our interest in Eurasian family patterns has been spurred by the newest research on household and family behaviors which increasingly operates within a Eurasian comparative setting, shifting attention from the search for patterns and regularities within Europe to efforts to draw inter-continental comparisons; see A. Fauve-Chamoux, and E. Ochiai, eds., *The Stem Family in Eurasian Perspective. Revisiting House Societies, 17th–20th centuries* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009); A. Fauve-Chamoux, “A comparative study of family transmission systems in the central Pyrenees and northeastern Japan”, *The History of the Family* 10 (2005): 231–248; R. Derosas, and M. Oris, eds., *When Dad died: individuals and families coping with family stress in past societies* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2002); F. Van Poppel, M. Oris, and J. Lee, eds., *The Road to Independence: Leaving Home in Western and Eastern Societies, 16th–19th Centuries* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004). Such an agenda would not have been possible if historical census or census-like microdata of comparable structure had not been available for much of both Europe and Asia; see M. Szołtysek, and S. Gruber, “The past, present and future of the Mosaic Project”, paper presented at the European Social Science History Conference, Vienna (2014).

<sup>5</sup> R. Wall, “Regional and temporal variations in English household structure from 1650”, in *Regional demographic development*, ed. J. Hobcraft, and P. Rees (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 89–113; A. Burguière, F. Lebrun, “The One Hundred and One Families of Europe”, in *A History of the Family*, vol. 2, *The Impact of Modernity*, ed. A. Burguière, C. Klapisch-Zuber, M. Segalen, and F. Zonabend (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 11–94; P.P. Viazzo, *Upland Communities: Environment, Population and Social Structure in the Alps since the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); D.I. Kertzer, “Household history and sociological theory”, *Annual Review of Sociology* 17 (1991): 155–179; R.L. Rudolph, “The European Peasant Family and Economy: Central Themes and Issues”, *Journal of Family History* 17, no. 2 (1992): 119–138; D.S. Reher, *Perspectives on the family in Spain, past and present* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1997); M. Oris, E. Ochiai, “Family crisis in the context of different family systems: Frameworks and evidence on ‘When Dad died’”, in *When Dad Died. Individuals and Families Coping with Family Stress in Past Societies*, ed. R. Derosas, and M. Oris (Bern: Peter Lang, 2002), 17–79; U. Brunnbauer, “Unity in Diversity? Historic Family Forms in Southeastern Europe”, *Historijski zbornik* 65, no. 1 (2014): 95–148; M. Szołtysek,

characteristics, along with the frequently unpredictable “human factor,” means that the observed diversity may not always be easy to understand or interpret<sup>6</sup>. Recently, following Therborn, some family historians have started to conceptualize family and household systems as “geo-cultures:” i.e., as institutions or structures which owe their coloring to the customs, traditions, and history of a particular area. This conceptual approach advocates a closer scrutiny of the relationships between large-scale spatial regularities and their local contexts<sup>7</sup>. However, apart from a fruitful borrowing of these concepts by family historians, there has been no further formulation of the theory in the field, and a basic systematization of the main forces which could intervene in such developments remains to be undertaken.

In fact, even a cursory scan of the family history literature up to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century reveals that over the last four decades there has been little explicit theorizing about variation in domestic group organization<sup>8</sup>. In the 40-year process of developing the techniques of comparative household analysis, a great deal of knowledge has accumulated on issues such as the types of households we would expect to find in various kinds of economic and social environments, and the demographic causes and consequences of household forms. By contrast, much less effort has been made to actually define theoretically appropriate contextual influences, and to embed these influences in a relevant theory of demographic-familial behavior<sup>9</sup>. This theoretical muddle is further aggravated by the tendency of many

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“Residence patterns and the human-ecological setting in historical Eastern Europe: a challenge of compositional (re)analysis”, in *Population in the human sciences: concepts, models, evidence*, ed. P. Kreager (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 431–468.

<sup>6</sup> M. Szoltysek, *Rethinking East-central Europe*, chapter 3.

<sup>7</sup> J. Kok, “Family systems as frameworks for understanding variation in extra-marital births, Europe 1900–2000”, in *Families in Europe between the 19th and the 21st centuries: from the traditional model to contemporary PACS*, ed. A. Fauve-Chamoux, and I. Bolovan (Cluj-Napoca: Cluj University Press, 2009), 13–38; G. Therborn, *Between Sex and Power: Family in the World 1900–2000* (London: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> We define “theory” very broadly here as a set of propositions (at various levels of formalization) that purport to explain a social phenomenon. From the demographic point of view, Burch defined theory as “general statements about social, economic, cultural, and demographic interrelations, or about the behavioural underpinnings of demographic events”; see T.K. Burch, “Theories of household formation: progress and challenges”, in *Household Demography and Household Modeling*, ed. A.E. von Imhoff, A.C. Kuijsten, P. Hooimeijer, and L.J.C. van Wissen (New York: Plenum Press, 1995), 86.

<sup>9</sup> For exceptions see: H. Medick, “The Proto-Industrial Family Economy: The Structural Function of Household and Family during the Transition from Peasant Society to Industrial Capitalism”, *Social History* 1 (1976): 291–315; S. De Vos, and A. Palloni, “Formal Models and Methods”; D.I. Kertzer, “Household history and sociological theory”; R.L. Rudolph, “The European Peasant Family”. These four propositions differ by the levels of detail and the general methodological and epistemological orientations of their authors. De Vos and Palloni are interested in formal modeling of observed household structure through the supply of kin and other demographic constraints. Kertzer’s approach focuses on household labor requirements with demographic and political-economic forces, while prioritizing the latter. Rudolph’s proposition merges institutional, economic, and cultural factors, but focuses primarily on the produindustrial household. The same can be said of Medick’s seminal paper.

scholars to refer to abstract macro-structural concepts (“serfdom,” “feudalism,” “hide system,” “protoindustrialization”) which they then use as a basis for making bold statements about the supposed foundations of European geography of family systems, while paying little or no attention to local realities<sup>10</sup>. Moreover, most scholars have failed to consider how demographic variation affects family structure and residence patterns<sup>11</sup>.

In this essay, I attempt to fill this gap by proposing a set of theoretical relationships which could help us to better contextualize and understand observed family patterns within various local or regional contexts. My ultimate goal is not to propose an overarching theory (or set of theories) capable of explaining the full spectrum of residential situations and behaviors across all time and space (or a yardstick to predict behavior), but rather to present a heuristic device which can be applied to the wide variety of regional patterns of family organization across Eurasia<sup>12</sup>. Various elements of this open-ended framework could be called upon in future research to organize the growing and disparate empirical evidence on family and household systems. The relationships described in this essay may help future scholars answer what seem to be the most pertinent research questions of the discipline today: how and why did certain patterns of living arrangements emerge in some places, but not in others? Are these patterns the result of differences in demographic, economic, and environmental variation, or do they have a deeper “cultural” basis? Were there different patterns of household organization across certain ecological niches, political-economic and socio-cultural contexts, or ethnic groups with different cul-

<sup>10</sup> For example: W. Secombe, *A Millennium of Family Change: Feudalism to Capitalism in Northwestern Europe* (London: Verso, 1992); A.S. Alderson, S.K. Sanderson, “Historic European household structures and the capitalist world-economy”, *Journal of Family History* 16, no. 4 (1991): 419–432; earlier also A. Macfarlane, “Demographic structures and cultural regions in Europe”, *Cambridge Anthropology* 6, no. 1–2 (1981): 1–17.

<sup>11</sup> For exceptions see: K.W. Wachter, E.A. Hammel, and P. Laslett, *Statistical Studies of Historical Social Structure* (New York: Academic Press, 1978); S. Ruggles, *Prolonged Connections: The Rise of the Extended Family in Nineteenth Century England and America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987); also M. Szołtysek, *Rethinking East-central Europe*.

<sup>12</sup> This, by the way, remains a dominant *modus operandi* among many of the most appealing historical demographic enquiries about the intricacies of multilevel effects on household, family, and demographic behavior; see esp. R. McC. Netting, *Balancing on an Alp: Ecological Change and Continuity in a Swiss Mountain Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); P.P. Viazzo, *Upland Communities*; B. Moring, “Economic and Ecological Determinants of Household Organisation in the Eastern Baltic Region”, *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 47, no. 3 (1999): 48–67; K. Kaser, “Power and inheritance: male domination, property and family in Eastern Europe, 1500–1900”, *The History of the Family* 7 (2002): 375–395; D.I. Kertzer, *Family Life in Central Italy, 1880–1910: Sharecropping, Wage Labor and Coresidence* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1984); also D.S. Reher, *Perspectives on the family in Spain*, chapter 3. One of the most rigorous antecedents of such an approach can be found in Davis’ and Blake’s analytical framework for the analysis of social structure and fertility; see K. Davis, J. Blake, “Social Structure and Fertility: An Analytic Framework”, *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 4 (1956): 211–235.



tural ideals? Why were some areas of Eurasia more heterogeneous than others, and what elements enhanced or reduced this diversity?<sup>13</sup>

The scope and character of a discipline which deals with the heterogeneity of social phenomena and the profound location-specific variations in family systems must be based on broad theoretical pluralism. The decision to draw from a range of theories was based on the assumption found in demographic-historic studies of co-residence that multiple context-dependent economic, social, environmental, and institutional structures influenced the strategies pursued by individual households and families in terms of their structure, composition, and recruitment<sup>14</sup>. Consequently, and in line with the general practice in the field of household and family history, the conceptual-theoretical framework presented below is based on considerations stemming from anthropology, sociology, history, and demography; as well as from other disciplines, like cultural ecology or even socio-biology. Theoretical pluralism is an adequate starting point for a research domain that will have to analyze a social institution (the domestic group, and its correlates) whose existence is technically universal but which assumes very different forms (and functions) in different societies. Thus, in the following pages we will make forays into admittedly very diverse research programs which operate at different ontological levels (i.e., individuals and larger social structures).

The overview presented below is not intended to be complete, if only because we cannot anticipate future developments in theorizing about coresidential patterns. The intention here is rather to sketch out the conceptual basis for organizing the diffuse and presumably complex findings which have emerged so far, and are likely to emerge in the future from regional and global comparative research on historical family forms<sup>15</sup>.

Some of the relationships discussed in the text have already been discussed,

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<sup>13</sup> It is important to keep in mind that there is a distinction between the ideal and the statistical norms with regard to the household as a social institution; e.g., L.K. Berkner, "The stem family and the developmental cycle of the peasant household: an eighteenth-century Austrian example", *The American Historical Review* 77, no. 2 (1972): 398–418. It is in principle possible for a society or a group within it to hold values associated with a particular form of residential organization, and yet to live in domestic situations which are very different from this ideal form. Within the approach advocated here, family patterns as manifested in census or census-like microdata are — rather understandably — given priority over the norms and values which are difficult to measure with historical statistical sources. It should also be noted that the theoretical framework discussed here is designed to deal with the "family of residence" and not the "family of interaction"; see T.K. Burch, "The size and structure of families: A comparative analysis of census data", *American Sociological Review* 32, no. 3 (1967): 347–363.

<sup>14</sup> E.g., E.R. Wolf, *Peasants* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966); D.I. Kertzer, "Household history and sociological theory"; R.L. Rudolph, "The European Peasant Family"; also R.F. Winch, *Familial organization*; A. Thornton and T.E. Fricke, "Social Change and the Family: Comparative Perspectives from the West, China, and South Asia", *Sociological Forum* 2, no. 4 (1987): 746–779.

<sup>15</sup> S. Ruggles, "The Future of Historical Family Demography".

operationalized, and partly “tested” by family historians; while others remain obscure and can be posited only tentatively. Such situations stem partly from data-related constraints. As far as historic Europe is concerned, most of the accumulated knowledge on the covariates of family systems is derived either from extensive case studies or from inquiries into small-scale subsystems<sup>16</sup>, and at best allows for low- or middle-range insights into the wide variety of regional patterns of family organization. The extent to which those propositions can be generalized across multiple settings in Europe and Asia is therefore disputable<sup>17</sup>. The importance of the current disciplinary moment is that historical family demographers may soon be able to approach these relationships in a systematic way using a global comparative approach<sup>18</sup>.

### Departure point: family variations and universals

The issue of the fundamentals of human family life lies at the core of the discussion on variation in domestic groups. Starting from a neo-individualist stance, one group of scholars have assumed that there has been a universal preference for small and simple households across time and space<sup>19</sup>. These scholars would assert that living in a nuclear family (or a “minimal residential unit,” as it is sometimes called) requires no explanation; arguing, for example, that it is an intrinsic human characteristic to prefer to reside in as small a group as is necessary to ensure the

<sup>16</sup> P.P. Viazzo, *Upland Communities*; M. Mitterauer, “Peasant and non-peasant family forms in relation to the physical environment and the local economy”, *Journal of Family History* 17 (1992): 139–159; idem, “Ostkolonisation und Familienverfassung. Zur Diskussion um die Hajnal-Linie”, in *Vilfanov zbornik. Pravo-zgodovina-narod. In memoriam Sergij Vilfan*, ed. V. Rajšp, and E. Bruckmüller (Ljubljana: ZRC), 203–221; K. Kaser, “Introduction: Household and Family Contexts in the Balkans”, *The History of the Family* 1, no. 4 (1996): 375–386; J. Mathieu, “Diversity of Family Practices in Mountain Societies: Why?”, in *Les pratiques familiales et sociétés de montagne, XVIe–XXe siècles*, ed. Bernard Derouet, Luigi Lorenzetti, Jon Mathieu (Basel: Schwabe, 2010), 173–187; 2000; U. Brunnbauer, “Unity in Diversity?”.

<sup>17</sup> One of the basic paradigms of Balkan family history has been the association of joint family appearances with agropastoralism and nomadism in alpine or highland areas far from communication and trade routes, and in borderland communities barely subject to state surveillance; see M. Mitterauer, “Komplexe Familienformen in sozialhistorischer Sicht”, *Ethnologia Europaea* 12 (1981): 47–86; K. Kaser, “Introduction: Household and Family Contexts in the Balkans”; U. Brunnbauer, “Unity in Diversity?”. However, none of these environmental predicates of the most complex family structures occurred in their original form in northern and central Italy, or in southern Belarus, where joint families were found to have existed; see D.I. Kertzer, *Family Life in Central Italy*; M. Szołtysek, *Rethinking East-central Europe*.

<sup>18</sup> S. Ruggles, “The Future of Historical Family Demography”; M. Szołtysek, and S. Gruber, “The past, present and future of the Mosaic Project”.

<sup>19</sup> For example G.P. Murdock, *Social structure* (New York: The Free Press, 1949); D. Popenoe, “Can the nuclear family be revived?” *Society* 36, no. 5 (1999): 28–30.

continuity of the species<sup>20</sup>, that the nuclear family represents a demographically irreducible entity<sup>21</sup>, and that it is the “natural” preference of every adult who is not part of a couple to maximize his or her individual autonomy, including in terms of residential choice<sup>22</sup>. All of these perspectives are based on the crucial assumption that any residential group larger than a simple family household must be the product of external constraints on household formation, or of behavioral norms which override the “natural” preference for simple family households.

Invoking a “collectivist” set of axioms, another group of scholars have argued that in most, if not all in human societies — and especially those in Europe — there has been an evolution away from large and complex households toward small and nuclear households. While assuming that human populations have a tendency to live in complex households (e.g., Burgess stated in his early work that the family is necessary for the socialization of children if social evolution is to continue<sup>23</sup>), they attributed the emergence of less complex and, ultimately, nuclear households to external factors which either inhibited the formation of larger households (usually demographic factors), or undermined complex households (such as the rise of individualism and the emergence of new gender symmetries)<sup>24</sup>. Relying on the developmental paradigm, these scholars produced accounts of unilineal transformations in family life in which they argued that the evolution of modes of subsistence from hunting, to herding, to agriculture, and then to manufacturing led to shifts in family patterns and family relationships<sup>25</sup>. The proponents of this perspective generally agreed that the more remote, isolated, and “primitive” a society was; the more complex the households within it would have been<sup>26</sup>.

While both of these perspectives have a certain appeal, they provide us with conflicting ideas about what issues we should seek to address (Which family form is more problematic: nuclear or extended?) and what assumptions about family forms we should take as being axiomatic in our scholarly inquiries regarding residence patterns, at least in the context of European history.

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<sup>20</sup> Among others, see W.D. Hamilton, “The genetical evolution of social behavior”, *Journal of Theoretical Biology* 7 (1964): 1–52; among historians: D.S. Smith, “The Curious History of Theorizing about the History of the Western Nuclear Family”, *Social Science History* 17 (1993): 325–353.

<sup>21</sup> J.F. Ermisch, and E. Overton, “Minimal household units: A new approach to the analysis of household Formation”, *Population Studies* 39, no. 1 (1985): 33–54.

<sup>22</sup> M. Verdon, *Rethinking households: an atomistic perspective on European living arrangements* (London: Routledge, 1998).

<sup>23</sup> E.W. Burgess, *The function of socialization in social evolution* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1916).

<sup>24</sup> E.g., T. Parsons, and R.F. Bales, *Family, socialization and interaction process* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1955).

<sup>25</sup> A. Thornton, *Reading history sideways. The fallacy and enduring impact of the developmental paradigm on family life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

<sup>26</sup> See T.K. Burch, “The size and structure of families”; M. Verdon, *Rethinking households*.



## Regionalization debate: Europe and Asia – Europe versus Asia

One difficulty scholars inevitably encounter when embarking upon the “family universals debate” is the enormous variability in human pair-bonding and residential arrangements observed across Eurasia; and the fact that for most periods of human history, these social systems were not randomly distributed geographically; i.e., that certain communities, regions, subpopulations, or even entire societies may have formed larger inclusive areas which shared basic patterns of domestic organization<sup>27</sup>. Investigating these presumed regularities has been the main focus of many of the sociological and historical studies of family forms. The first scholar who argued that there was a strong correlation between geography and family patterns was Le Play. He popularized the notion of a gradient of family and household types running from east to west in Europe, and claimed that patriarchal, patrilocal, and multi-generational households could be found among “Eastern nomads, Russian peasants, and the Slavs of Central Europe”<sup>28</sup>. In the more recent debate on European historical family systems and patterns of demography, scholars have become preoccupied with establishing borderlines and distinguishing between areas in which the “unique” European pattern could and could not be found. John Hajnal, following Malthus (1803), developed the viewpoint that there was a “unique” (northwestern) European marriage pattern (Hajnal, 1965), and proposed a demarcation line running through central Europe from St. Petersburg to Trieste which divided the continent into two family system zones with very different marriage, household formation, and individual life course patterns<sup>29</sup>. Starting from Hajnal’s hypothesis, Peter Laslett divided the continent into four broad geographical zones with specific family and domestic group characteristics. He retained Hajnal’s view that western Europe (and England in particular) was “unique” in its emphasis on the nuclear family household, but divided the rest of the continent into three areas (west/central or middle, eastern, and Mediterranean). Laslett argued that compared to the west, these areas had more complex families, lower ages at marriage, larger shares of the population (especially women) who married, and smaller shares of households with life-cycle servants<sup>30</sup>. This model came to substitute — or rather elaborate on, the previously

<sup>27</sup> E.g., S. Harrell, *Human Families. Social Change in Global Perspective* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1997); L. Fortunato, “Reconstructing the history of residence strategies in Indo-European-speaking societies: neo-, uxori-, and virilocality”, *Human Biology* 83, no. 1 (2011): 107–128.

<sup>28</sup> F. Le Play, *L’organisation de la famille selon le vrai modèle signalé par l’histoire de toutes les races et de tous les temps*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. (Tours: Alfred Mame et fils, 1871), § 12, 94.

<sup>29</sup> J. Hajnal, “European marriage patterns in perspective”, in *Population in history. Essays in historical demography*, ed. D.V. Glass, and D.E.C. Eversley (London: Edward Arnold, 1965), 101–143; idem, “Two kinds of preindustrial household formation system”, *Population and Development Review* 8 (1982): 449–494.

<sup>30</sup> P. Laslett, “Family and household as work group and kin group: areas of traditional Europe compared”, in *Family forms in historic Europe*, ed. R. Wall and J. Robin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 513–563.

accepted one of two regions with the symbolic demarcation line running roughly from St. Petersburg to Trieste.

Long acknowledged as historical-sociological orthodoxy, the Hajnal-Laslett models nevertheless came under attack from many angles. For example, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese scholars have successfully deconstructed the “Mediterranean” model by showing that it was based on inadequate data which obscured an unexpected degree of regional and sub-regional variation in marriage and household patterns in Italy and the Iberian Peninsula<sup>31</sup>.

Similar investigations of family types have been conducted for other territories as well. Early on, Sklar observed that in historical eastern Europe, both “western” and “eastern” European marriage patterns prevailed<sup>32</sup>, and more detailed studies have confirmed a striking amount of diversity in family patterns in 18th- and early 19th-century Hungary, Bohemia, Poland-Lithuania, and Ukraine. So great was the degree of variation in those areas that it is doubtful whether any rigid generalization could capture the wide range of family and household patterns found there<sup>33</sup>.

This ongoing reorientation of perspectives has sparked a debate about whether the family patterns of even northwestern Europe were much less uniform than was previously believed. As a considerable degree of inter-regional variation in familial organization within areas that were traditionally assumed to be dominated by simple (and neolocal) household systems has been found, some scholars have argued that Hajnal’s generalization fails to capture the complexity of the family and household patterns of the societies of northwestern Europe in the early modern era. Since the amount of available data on this period has increased exponentially since the publication of these seminal volumes in 1972 and 1983<sup>34</sup>, some scholars have felt compelled to reject all attempts to claim that major areas of historic Europe had a particular type of household system<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> E.g., D.I. Kertzer, “Household history and sociological theory”; P.P. Viazzo, “What’s so special about the Mediterranean? Thirty years of research on household and family in Italy”, *Continuity and Change* 18, no. 1 (2003): 111–137.

<sup>32</sup> J. Sklar, “The role of marriage behaviour in the demographic transition: the case of Eastern Europe around 1900”, *Population Studies* 28 (1974): 231–247.

<sup>33</sup> E.g., A. Plakans, and C. Wetherell, “The search for place: East European family history, 1800–2000”, in *Family history revisited. Comparative perspectives*, ed. R. Wall, T.K. Hareven, J. Ehmer, and M. Cerman (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2001), 257–281; M. Szołtysek, “Three kinds of preindustrial household formation system in historical Eastern Europe: A challenge to spatial patterns of the European family”, *The History of the Family* 13, no. 3 (2008): 223–257; idem, *Rethinking East-central Europe*.

<sup>34</sup> P. Laslett, and R. Wall, eds., *Household and family in past time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); R. Wall, and J. Robin, eds., *Family forms in historic Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>35</sup> D.I. Kertzer, “Household history and sociological theory”; R. Wall, “European family and household systems”; idem, “Transformation of the European family across the centuries”, in *Family history revisited*, 217–241.

Despite the growing interest in inter-continental comparisons of Europe and Asia<sup>36</sup>, there have been relatively few attempts to regionalize historical family systems in Asia. Admittedly, demographers have argued that a variety of family systems have long existed in Asia<sup>37</sup>. However, their exact historic metrics remain poorly explicated. Two major types of family systems typically ascribed to the continent are the partlineal/patriarchal joint- and stem-family systems<sup>38</sup> found in East Asia (China, Japan and the Republic of Korea) and in the northern tier of South Asia (Bangladesh, northern India, Nepal and Pakistan), and the “bilateral, more egalitarian and conjugally oriented” systems found in South-East Asia and the southern tier of South Asia (Thailand, Philippines, southern India and Sri Lanka)<sup>39</sup>. Furthermore, regional patterns of marriage and family and household formation have been studied for Japan<sup>39</sup>, but to a much lesser extent for China<sup>40</sup>. Among western scholars engaged in European spatial debates, few attempts have been made to investigate the differences in familial patterns across the Asian landmass. Hajnal was keen to equate the marriage and family patterns of several countries located “east of the line” in Europe with the patterns of “non-European civilizations” — a category which he used to lump together the highly diverse social, economic, and demographic systems of Asia<sup>41</sup>. Encouraged by this view, Swedish sociologist G. Therborn labeled the patterns of marriage and family he believes existed in eastern Europe as “Eurasian,” and claimed that “Eurasia stopped at the eastern shores of the Gulf of Finland”<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> N.O. Tsuya, W. Feng, G. Alter, J.Z. Lee, et al., *Prudence and Pressure. Reproduction and Human Agency in Europe and Asia, 1700–1900* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2010). See also literature cited in footnote 4.

<sup>37</sup> T. Dyson, and M. Moore, “On Kinship Structure, Female Autonomy, and Demographic Behavior in India”, *Population and Development Review* 9, no. 1 (1983): 35–60; J. Knodel and M.B. Ofstedal, “Patterns and determinants of living arrangements”, in *The Well-Being of the Elderly in Asia: A Four-Country Comparative Study*, ed. A.I. Hermalin (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 154; K.O. Mason, “Family change and support of the elderly in Asia: what do we know?”, *Asia-Pacific Population Journal* 7, no. 3 (1992): 13–32.

<sup>38</sup> J. Knodel, and M.B. Ofstedal, “Patterns and determinants of living arrangements”, 162; K.O. Mason, “Family change and support of the elderly”.

<sup>39</sup> A. Hayami, and S. Kurosu, “Regional Diversity in Demographic and Family Patterns in Pre-industrial Japan”, *Journal of Japanese Studies* 27, no. 2 (2001): 295–321; S. Kurosu, N. Tsuya, and K. Hamano, “Regional Differentials in the Patterns of First Marriage in the Latter Half of Tokugawa Japan”, *Keio Economic Studies* 36, no. 1 (1999): 13–38; T. Dyson, and M. Moore, “On Kinship Structure”.

<sup>40</sup> But see J. Goody, *The Oriental, the Ancient and the Primitive. Systems of Marriage and the Family in the Pre-Industrial Societies of Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), ch. 4; Z. Zhao, “Demographic systems in historic China: some New findings from recent research”, *Journal of the Australian Population Association* 14, no. 2 (1997): 201–232.

<sup>41</sup> A.P. Wolf, “Europe and China: two kinds of patriarchy”, in *Marriage and the family in Eurasia. Perspectives on the Hajnal hypothesis*, ed. T. Engelen, and A.P. Wolf (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2005), 226.

<sup>42</sup> G. Therborn, *Between Sex and Power*, 142.

By contrast, Wolf and Hanley argued that a typological distinction should be made between the Chinese joint family and the Japanese stem family, and suggested there were broad parallels between Japanese family patterns and those of various regions of historic western Europe<sup>43</sup>. This view has recently been challenged by Saito, who found significant differences between the Japanese stem system and its counterparts in historic Europe, while noting that the family pattern in Korea was between those found in China and Japan<sup>44</sup>. Meanwhile, the Eurasian Project in Population and Family History has uncovered important similarities between the two continents in terms of human motivation in family-population behavior<sup>45</sup>. Complicating matters even further, both early ethnographic studies and recent historical surveys have shown that there were relatively simple family structures and moderate patterns of nuptiality across large stretches of territory in the interior of Asia<sup>46</sup>.

Given the current state of research, we may doubt whether any region can be said to have a demographically uniform population. Continuing to assert that there was a dichotomous division of Europe into two zones of familial behaviors defined across some imagined “line,” or into several distinct familial regions, no longer appears to be defensible. Similarly, it is hard to justify a rigid juxtaposition of Europe and Asia. The emerging lines of inquiry suggest that Hajnal’s dichotomous model of family systems was not exhaustive, and that other kinds of systemic associations between marriage, household formation, and household structure — or various “scalar types” of these associations — have existed in historical Eurasia<sup>47</sup>. Space — i.e., the geographic factor in the sense in which it appeared in the works of Hajnal or Laslett — was significant only insofar as it constituted a platform for the manifestation and interaction of these complex influences. Thus, scholars are increasingly exploring different combinations of aspects of the model at different levels of population aggregates, while developing more flexible views of the nature

<sup>43</sup> A.P. Wolf, and S.B. Hanley, “Introduction”, in *Family and Population in East Asian History*, ed. S. Hanley, and A. Wolf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 3.

<sup>44</sup> O. Saito, “Two Kinds of Stem Family System? Traditional Japan and Europe Compared”, *Continuity and Change* 13, no. 1 (1998): 167–186; idem, “The Third Pattern of Marriage and Remarriage: Japan in Eurasian Comparative Perspectives”, in *Marriage and the family in Eurasia*, 165–193.

<sup>45</sup> N.O. Tsuya, W. Feng, G. Alter, J.Z. Lee, et al., *Prudence and Pressure*.

<sup>46</sup> G.P. Murdock, *Social structure*; W. Goldschmidt, E. Kunkel, “The Structure of the Peasant Family”, *American Anthropologist* 73, no. 5 (1971): 1058–1076; S. Harrell, *Human Families*, ch. 2; G. Thorvaldsen, “Household Structure in the Multiethnic Barents Region: A Local Case Study”, in *The 1926/27 Soviet Polar Census Expeditions*, ed. D. Anderson (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011), 117–134.

<sup>47</sup> A.P. Wolf, “Europe and China”; L.L. Cornell, “Hajnal and the household in Asia: a comparativist history of the family in preindustrial Japan, 1600–1870”, *Journal of family history* 12 (1987): 143–162; O. Saito, “The Third Pattern of Marriage”; S. Kurosu, N. Tsuya, and K. Hamano, “Regional Differentials”; M. Szoltysek, “Central European household and family systems, and the “Hajnal-Mitterauer” line: the parish of Bujakow (18th–19th centuries)”, *The History of the Family* 12 (2007): 19–42; idem, *Rethinking East-central Europe*.

and permeability of frontiers and transition zones, and the ways in which familial and demographic borders have been crossed and diffused, both across space and over time.

### Family variations as structural-functional adaptations

When we seek to compare the family systems in Europe and Asia across space and time, we are dealing with populations with very different levels of societal complexity (i.e., technological and social organization). It has been suggested that when we view societies as distributed along a continuum of complexity from very simple (hunting and gathering) to very complex (modern urban industrial), certain systemic relationships do emerge with regard to their dominant family and household patterns, because the needs for organizing a family system to carry out certain activities are determined by the nature of the social system in which the family system is embedded<sup>48</sup>. Over many years, a broad sociological consensus has been reached that the relationship between societal complexity and familial complexity tends to be curvilinear, with minima at the extremes of societal complexity (hunting-gathering and urban-industrial) and a maximum at some intermediate level (particularly among settled agricultural people). This hypothesis has been successfully tested for several hundred non-literate societies of Murdock's World Ethnographic Sample<sup>49</sup>.

Various extensions and modifications of this framework have been posited, suggesting how the varying patterns of internal relations within the household (and thus their membership rosters) may be understood in the context of local, regional, or even global production regimes. For example, the theory of protoindustrialization postulated a profound effect of rural domestic production on age at marriage, gender power relations and reproduction, and household formation and composition<sup>50</sup>. In places where artisan households produced for supra-regional markets, it appears that household formation processes were less constrained, marriages were more

<sup>48</sup> Some anthropologists have posited that worldwide differences in family organization were shaped by the differential sequencing of three major great social transformations: the transformation of nomadic bands into the ranks societies through sedentarization; the evolution of rank societies into complex societies with the class transformation; and, finally, the transformation of complex societies into modern societies with the industrial revolution; see S. Harrell, *Human Families*, 30–31.

<sup>49</sup> E.g., R. Blumberg, and R.F. Winch, "Societal Complexity and Familial Complexity"; also M.F. Nimkoff, and R. Middleton, "Types of Family and Types of Economy"; W.J. Goode, *World Revolution and Family Patterns* (New York: Free Press, 1963); S. Harrell, *Human Families*.

<sup>50</sup> F. Mendels, "Proto-industrialization: the first phase of the industrialization process", *Journal of Economic History* 32 (1972): 241–261; H. Medick, "The Proto-Industrial Family Economy: The Structural Function of Household and Family during the Transition from Peasant Society to Industrial Capitalism", *Social History* 1 (1976): 291–315; U. Pfister, "The Proto-industrial household economy: toward a formal analysis", *Journal of Family History* 17 (1992), 201–232.



companionate, and labor allocation needs favored bigger families and the periodic extension of households to include kin<sup>51</sup>.

Similarly, the world system perspective stipulates that families and domestic groups can be organized differently depending on the mode of international division of labor, i.e., depending on their embeddedness in the different zones of the capitalist world economy. Whereas the small nuclear family was believed to have been best suited to the capitalist “core” areas of historic Europe, it was considered to have been an “anathema” to peripheral modes of production in agricultural spheres<sup>52</sup>.

Unlike the concept of protoindustrialization and the world system theory, classic modernization theory proved to be much less useful in explaining differences in historical family forms and their change over time. While the influential writings of Parsons on the family<sup>53</sup> took little note of changing circumstances, family historians have accumulated evidence that the changes in the family have not been linear, including indications that there have been “modern” familial solutions in past societies, as well as “premodern” arrangements in the present day<sup>54</sup>. Arguing that the term industrialization masks a variety of macro-level forces, revisionist research by family historians has shown that the impact of industrialization on coresidential processes was determined by the type of industrialization involved. This means that “industrialization” likely had different effects on coresidence patterns and processes at different times and places<sup>55</sup>.

Differences in a region’s position within the prevailing infrastructure and trade and urban networks could also imply differences in the region’s current opportunity structure, which can influence the residential decisions of individuals and groups. For rural areas, being close to an urban center means better prospects for the marketization of the economy. These economies could be made more effective through

<sup>51</sup> D. Levine, *Family formation in an age of nascent capitalism* (New York: Academic Press, 1977); H. Medick, “The Proto-Industrial Family Economy”, 308–309; also T. Sokoll, *Household and family among the poor: the case of two Essex communities in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries* (Bochum: Brockmeyer, 1993), 27–29; U. Pfister, “The Proto-industrial household economy”.

<sup>52</sup> I. Wallerstein, J. Smith, „Households as an institution of the world economy”, in *Creating and Transforming Households. The constraints of the world-economy*, ed. J. Smith, and I. Wallerstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 3–23; A.S. Alderson, S.K. Sanderson, “Historic European household structures”; E. Kick, B. Davis, M. Lehtinen, and L. Wang, “Family and Economic Growth: A World-System Approach and a Cross-National Analysis”, *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 41, no. 2 (2000): 225–244.

<sup>53</sup> T. Parsons, and R.F. Bales, *Family, socialization and interaction process*; W.J. Goode, *World Revolution and Family Patterns*; also H. Bertram, “Die Familientheorie von Talcott Parsons”.

<sup>54</sup> M. Anderson, *Family Structure in Nineteenth Century Lancashire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); P. Laslett, and R. Wall, *Household and family in past time*; S. Ruggles, *Prolonged Connections*. Dissonant voices were equally widespread among sociologists; see S.M. Greenfield, “Industrialization and the Family in Sociological Theory”, *American Journal of Sociology* 67, no. 3 (1961): 312–322; and L.J. Rao, “Industrialization and the family: a world view”, *International Journal of Sociology of the Family* 3, no. 2 (1973): 179–189, for a good summary “from a world perspective.”

<sup>55</sup> D.I. Kertzer, and A. Schiaffino, “Industrialization and Coresidence”.

an accumulation of workers who were either family members (which would then lead to a greater complexity of family structures) or hired laborers. The presence of urban centers may have also affected peasant family in another indirect way: i.e., by stimulating the production of rural crafts, and, ultimately, the development of proto-industrial activity (see above). Finally, the large labor markets and the relatively dense urban networks offered potential alternatives to staying on the family farm, providing viable incentives for members of the younger generation to become hired laborers. On the other hand, the narrow labor markets and sparse urban networks tended to discourage individuals from leaving the parental home, and thus may have encouraged residential crowding.

### Family variations as ecological adaptations

Just as people adjust their family arrangements to the norms of the social organization to which they belong, these family forms and household membership patterns may be seen as adaptations to the ecological and environmental conditions of the local area. Ecological arguments have long been used in research to explain the forms of peasant households<sup>56</sup>. We refer to theories of ecological adaptation as a very general umbrella for a rather mixed bag of theoretical perspectives, all of which, however, assume that the forms of household and family organization arose in response to challenges, constraints, and opportunities created by local environmental factors. These environmental circumstances may operate either as direct and ubiquitous factors affecting family forms, or as mediating and differentiating variables<sup>57</sup>. The core concept is the notion of “peasant ecotypes,” or of patterns of resource exploitation within a given macroeconomic framework<sup>58</sup>. There are two models of family-historic “ecotypes:” one has identified six main peasant adaptations in the Nordic countries; while the other, which is more variegated, refers to preindustrial Austria<sup>59</sup>. Both models suggest that the organization of labor is the

<sup>56</sup> R. McC. Netting, “Agrarian ecology”, *Annual Review of Anthropology* 3 (1974): 21–56.

<sup>57</sup> E.R. Wolf, *Peasants*; M. Mitterauer, “Peasant and non-peasant family forms”; J. Mathieu, “From Ecotypes to Sociotypes: Peasant Household and State-Building in the Alps, Sixteenth–Nineteenth Centuries”, *The History of the Family* 5, no. 1 (2000): 55–74. Since households are the end consumers of most natural resources and ecosystem services, household dynamics pose also the environmental implications; see J. Liu, G.C. Daily, P.R. Ehrlich, and G.W. Luck, “Effects of Household Dynamics on Resource Consumption and Biodiversity”, *Nature* 421, no. 6922 (2003): 530–533; M. Bradbury, M.N. Peterson, J.G. Liu, “Long-term dynamics of household size and their environmental implications”, *Population and Environment* 36, no. 1 (2014): 73–84.

<sup>58</sup> O. Löfgren, “Peasant ecotypes: problems in the comparative study of ecological adaptation”, *Ethnologia Scandinavica* (1976): 100–115.

<sup>59</sup> O. Löfgren, “Family and Household among Scandinavian Peasants: An Exploratory Essay”, *Ethnologia Scandinavica* (1974): 17–52; idem, “Peasant ecotypes”; B. Moring, “Economic and Ecological Determinants”; M. Mitterauer, “Peasant and non-peasant family forms”.

decisive link in the causal connection between ecotypes and rural family forms, and both assume that the ecotype determines the structure of the family and family relations.

Apart from rigorous “ecotype” approaches, there is a plethora of looser conceptual frameworks in which family forms are being related to different “ecological profiles,” or environmental circumstances. For example, historical European multiple-family households are often regarded as specific environmental or economic adaptations<sup>60</sup>. The stem-family system has often been associated with agropastoral mountainous surroundings<sup>61</sup>. Joint families have as a rule been linked to areas with extreme environmental conditions (alpine or highland areas far from communication and trade routes; borderland communities barely subject to state surveillance), where a labor-intensive slash-and-burn agriculture or pastoralism required the pooling of family labor or the continuity of tribal cultures<sup>62</sup>.

The land regime — or, more precisely, the availability or scarcity of land — may have directly affected the configuration of households and the individual transitions that affect those configurations. Under the conditions of an inelastic agrarian economy, demographic pressures on land may have encouraged self-regulative efforts to prevent property and household fissions, which in turn led to increased household complexity and multigenerational crowding, or to outmigration<sup>63</sup>.

Environmental factors (e.g., dense forestation) may have affected the family behaviors of village inhabitants in many indirect ways as well. They may have functioned as barriers to the diffusion of certain types of management of the available resources, or to the implementation of agrarian or institutional policies from above<sup>64</sup>. Equally, they may have acted as elements that cemented the persistence of historically grounded patterns of behavior and culture<sup>65</sup>. Finally, after determining the character of subsistence economy and the means through which women contributed to its development, it transpires that ecological factors may have a bearing on the balance of power between the spouses, and, in a broader sense, on female autonomy and independence in society as such, in this way procuring female life course transitions and household membership patterns differently<sup>66</sup>.

<sup>60</sup> O. Löfgren, “Family and Household”; M. Mitterauer, “*Komplexe Familienformen*”.

<sup>61</sup> A. Fauve-Chamoux, “Family reproduction and stem-family system: From Pyrenean valleys to Norwegian farms”, *The History of the Family* 11, no. 3 (2006): 171–184.

<sup>62</sup> E.g., M. Mitterauer, “*Komplexe Familienformen*”; P.P. Viazzo, *Upland Communities*; see U. Brunnbauer, “Unity in Diversity?”, and M. Szoltysek, *Rethinking East-central Europe*, for more nuanced views.

<sup>63</sup> R. Andorka, “The peasant family structure in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (data from Alsónyék and Kölked in international comparison)”, *Acta Ethnographica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 25, no. 3–4 (1976): 321–348; U. Brunnbauer, “Unity in Diversity?”, 113–114.

<sup>64</sup> M. Szoltysek, *Rethinking East-central Europe*, ch. 3.

<sup>65</sup> W. Goldschmidt, E. Kunkel, “The Structure of the Peasant Family”.

<sup>66</sup> S. Harrell, *Human Families*.

### Family variations as institutional (coercive) adaptations

Family systems and their constitutive elements may also be shaped and molded by various institutional factors. This is because in many societies, a great number of key issues related to household recruitment strategies and composition must be viewed from the perspective of the “policies” of local or regional “superstructures” representing various institutions, such as village communities, guilds, welfare organizations, or broader frameworks of serfdom and manorial administration.

In places where society was organized in a horizontal and territorial way, and not (or not only) in a vertical way by means of descent groups, a village community might carry on many crucial social, economic, welfare and cultural functions. Its presence may play an important regulative role in the lives of their members and their families, including property or householding chores, and may therefore create functional alternatives to residentially bounded strong kinship groups<sup>67</sup>.

For example, in some southern German territories and the German-speaking parts of Switzerland, an elaborate system of marriage control involving the consent of the rural political community was developed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This mechanism was intended to determine whether the “position” of the couple was sufficient to allow them to marry. This system had direct implications for the pace of family and household formation, and thus for patterns of individual living arrangements<sup>68</sup>.

In some settings, opportunity structures offered by welfare institutions other than family and kin could be equally important. For example, elderly adults in 19<sup>th</sup>-century England might have managed to live alone more often than their counterparts in continental Europe (and in eastern Europe especially) because community support provided for the old and the infirm under the English Poor Law could make it possible for them to survive without relying upon close family networks and alliances<sup>69</sup>.

On the other hand, multigenerational residential crowding tended to occur in regions where insecurity was endemic and state power was weak, especially in frontier areas. In places where institutional penetration was weak, the power

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<sup>67</sup> D. Chiro, “The Romanian Communal Village: An Alternative to the Zadruga”, in *Communal Families in the Balkans: The Zadruga*, ed. R.F. Byrnes (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), 139–159; U. Brunnbauer, “Unity in Diversity?”.

<sup>68</sup> G. Fertig, “The Hajnal Hypothesis Before Hajnal”. Paper presented at the ‘John Hajnal Conference’, Stanford, März 1999. Revised version, December 2001; idem, “The Invisible Chain: Niche Inheritance and Unequal Social Reproduction in Pre-Industrial Continental Europe”, *The History of the Family* 8, no. 1 (2003): 7–19.

<sup>69</sup> R.M. Smith, “Fertility, economy, and household formation in England over three centuries”, *Population and Development Review* 7, no. 4 (1981): 595–622; idem, “Social institutions and demographic regimes in non-industrial societies: a comparative approach”, in *Human Population Dynamics*, ed. H. Macbeth, and D. Collinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 112–131.

and the role of complex hierarchically structured domestic groups may have been strengthened; i.e., in the absence of more formal institutions (such as the state, the church, the rural commune, or landlords) complex families may have filled this “power vacuum” by performing many important social, economic, legal, and cultural functions<sup>70</sup>. Furthermore, societies characterized by specific ecotypes may have had special security concerns: e.g., mobile pastoralist groups, who tended to move with large flocks of animals over large areas, would have required a steady supply of labor and protection, which was best provided by hierarchically organized kinship groups.

In the premodern regions of Eurasia where tributary modes of production prevailed, classes of non-producers often controlled some of the key elements of production, including land and labor. In addition, they were often able to control these resources and to collect products from direct producers by superimposing new forms of organization on pre-existing kinship structures<sup>71</sup>. Because in most tributary regions of Europe and Asia the claims of peasant families to arable land were not exclusive, peasant household heads sometimes encouraged patrilocal marriages of their sons (and less often of their daughters) in order to secure their claims to tenancies for themselves and their successors. Thus, there was a tendency to identify particular ‘lineages’ with particular farms or ‘houses,’ which in effect fostered multigenerational coresidence<sup>72</sup>.

In societies in which the inhabitants were legally subject to hereditary servility or serfdom, patterns of coresidence may have been strongly influenced by the landlords’ economic and political interests. However, the exact character and direction of those influences from above varied depending on the political and economic circumstances. In many areas of preindustrial eastern-central Europe, the emergence of manorialism led to a break-down in the institution of the grand complex family and lineage organization, and wherever the manorial economy was successfully implemented, its main effect was the decline in large multigenerational households<sup>73</sup>. On the other hand, the institutional mechanisms of serfdom in pre-industrial Russia encouraged the emergence of the great agnatic household as the key element of a broader system of relationships and dependencies which centered

<sup>70</sup> M. Mitterauer, “Family contexts: the Balkans in European comparison”, *The History of the Family* 1, no. 4 (1996): 387–406; U. Brunnbauer, “Unity in Diversity?”.

<sup>71</sup> A.B. Waltner, M.J. Maynes, “Family history as world history”, in *Women’s history in global perspective*, vol. 1, ed. B.G. Smith (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 48–91.

<sup>72</sup> A. Plakans, “Seigneurial Authority and Peasant Family Life: The Baltic Area in the Eighteenth Century”, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 5, no. 4 (1975): 629–654; C. Wetherell, and A. Plakans, “Intergenerational transfers of headships over the life course in an Eastern European peasant community, 1782–1850”, *The History of the Family* 3, no. 3 (1998): 333–349; M. Szoltysek, “Central European household and family systems”.

<sup>73</sup> M. Mitterauer, “Ostkolonisation und Familienverfassung”; M. Szoltysek, *Rethinking East-central Europe*; M. Cerman, „Serfdom and family”. Paper presented to the Conference Household and family in past time, Palma de Mallorca, September 9–11, 1999.



around the institution of the repartitional commune, in which land was subject to periodic repartition. Since the system was based on the rule that households containing larger numbers of adult workers (or married couples) received a larger share of the peasants' allotment of arable land, complex households were seen as vital components of social organization which received special care and attention from both the landlord and the local administration, and from the peasants themselves<sup>74</sup>.

### **Variability of family systems as a function of different kinship organization**

Just as there is an adaptable link between the organization of a family system and the nature of the larger social system, the relations within a household may be treated as a network of kin ties that extend beyond the confines of the domestic group. In various settings household groups can be embedded within larger kinship structures with lines of authority on some issues (the activities of marriage, alienation of property, but also including those groups' structures) going beyond household boundaries. Thus, observed patterns of household structures should be understood in the more general context of kinship<sup>75</sup>. A "stronger" interpretation of this general hypothesis would lead us to believe that any observed differences in the mechanics of the domestic group — in terms of both its structure and its membership patterns — are a mere function of the differences in the type of descent (and alliance) system. Thus, the mechanics need to be accounted for if we are to understand household variation on the ground. Seminal examples from anthropological studies support the notion that patterns of domestic group recruitment (like strategies of heirship and patterns of marriage) could diverge significantly under patrilineal, matrilineal, double descent, and bilateral kinship systems<sup>76</sup>. These different kinship idioms might inform people's householding behavior in very diverse ways,

<sup>74</sup> S.L. Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control in Russia: Petrovskoe, a Village in Tambov* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986); P. Czap, "The perennial multiple family household, Mishino, Russia, 1782–1858", *Journal of Family History* 7 (1982): 5–26.

<sup>75</sup> J. Goody, "The evolution of the family", in *Household and Family in Past Time*, 103–124; S.J. Yanagisako, "Family and household: the analysis of domestic groups", *Annual Review of Anthropology* 8 (1979): 161–205; D.W. Sabeen, *Kinship in Neckarhausen, 1700–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); A. Thornton, and T.E. Fricke, "Social Change and the Family", 753–754; A. Plakans, and C. Wetherell, "Households and kinship networks: the costs and benefits of contextualization", *Continuity and Change* 18 (2003): 49–76.

<sup>76</sup> J. Goody, *Production and reproduction: a comparative study of the domestic domain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); idem, *The Oriental, the Ancient and the Primitive. Systems of Marriage and the Family in the Pre-Industrial Societies of Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); F. Zonabend, "An Anthropological Perspective on Kinship and the Family", in *A History of the Family*, vol. 1, *Distant Worlds, Ancient Worlds*, ed. A. Burguiere, C. Klapisch-Zuber, M. Segalen, and F. Zonabend (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 8–70.

determining who may and may not live together, marry, bear children together, or expect reciprocity and welfare.

However, even if we do not accept the absolute “kinship imperative” in comparative household studies (and there are many scholars who do not<sup>77</sup>), it is still possible that differences in family patterns across Eurasia were associated with broad regional disparities in the process of the disintegration of lineage groups, and with the basic differentiation of kinship systems. For example, the permanence of mental structures regarding the very idea of lineage (like in China or early modern Belarus) may have simulated a form of patriarchal organization which implied a stronger group identity, the formation of hierarchical relations based on the authority of the “elders,” internal loyalty, and the primacy of bonding relations (i.e., internal) over bridging relations (extending beyond the family or kin circle)<sup>78</sup>. Within such a referential arrangement, complex family forms were likely to emerge, marriage was likely to have been rigorously controlled and to have occurred early, and the life-course trajectories of the offspring (especially the sons) would have been severely constrained<sup>79</sup>.

### **Family variations as the function of inheritance and property devolution patterns**

Another way to explain variation in living arrangements is to make reference to varying patterns of household succession. The rules governing land succession and strategies of heirship have often been cited as primary, exogenous factors in

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<sup>77</sup> See summary in M. Szoltysek, *Rethinking East-central Europe*, ch. 10. Note, however, that a reverse causal order between some aspects of kinship and domestic group organization is also possible. This concerns, for example, the influential theory in anthropology according to which changes in patterns of postmarital residence may in turn drive changes in descent system and kinship terminology; see review in D. Levinson, and M.J. Malone, *Toward Explaining Human Culture: A Critical Review of the Findings of Worldwide Cross-Cultural Research* (New Haven, CT: HRAF Press, 1980), 105–113; also L. Fortunato, “Reconstructing the history of residence strategies”, 107–108.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. F. Zonabend, “An Anthropological Perspective on Kinship and the Family”.

<sup>79</sup> K. Kaser, “Power and inheritance”; J.M. Halpern, K. Kaser, and R. Wagner, “Patriarchy in the Balkans: Temporal and Cross-Cultural Approaches”, *The History of the Family* 1, no. 4 (1996): 425–442. A recent contribution has suggested that the broader structure of people’s social networks — i.e., those which stretch beyond the confines of the household (including the frequency of social contact with non-residential kin) — must be taken into account when we are trying to understand and compare regional distributions of family structures; see B. Mönkediek, and H. Bras, “Strong and weak family ties revisited: reconsidering European family structures from a network perspective”, *The History of the Family* 19, no. 2 (2014): 235–259. While inherently plausible and exciting, this proposition provides no room for large-scale investigations of the past because of the general lack of availability of the historical data which would be needed; cf. A. Plakans, and C. Wetherell, “Households and kinship networks”.

determining family structure, as well as the associated demographic behavior<sup>80</sup>. Earlier research tended to analyze inheritance in terms of a simple partible-impartible dichotomy. For example, it has been assumed that in the ideal type of peasant society, the prevalence of partible inheritance should have led to lower percentages of unmarried people, a lower age at marriage, and less complex household structures. On the other hand, the prevalence of “pure” impartibility should have resulted in the emergence of co-residential stem families, higher celibacy rates, and out-migration; or in areas where the free movement of people was constrained (e.g., in areas with serfdom), of widespread lodging<sup>81</sup>. These arguments appear to be based on the assumption that law, or custom, is somehow exogenous to family practices.

A related issue is a well-known distinction between two forms of wealth transfers at marriage — i.e. between bridewealth and dowry systems, which, though remaining complexly connected to productive systems, politics and stratification, as well as to domestic groups and kin terminology, bear somewhat less unequivocal implications for demographic behaviour<sup>82</sup>. For example, although both dowry- and brideprice-paying societies tend to be patrilineal (children belong to the lineage of their father) and patrilocal (brides join the household of grooms and their families upon marriage)<sup>83</sup>, the different direction of wealth transfers at marriage may have important implications for postmarital wellbeing and intimate-partner relationships,

<sup>80</sup> E. Le Roy Ladurie, “Structures familiales et coutumes d’héritage en France au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: système de la coutume”, *Annales E.S.C.* 27 (1972) : 825–846 ; J. Goody, “Strategies of Heirship”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 15 (1973): 3–20; L.K. Berkner, “Inheritance, land tenure and peasant family structure: a German regional comparison”, in *Family and inheritance. Rural society in western Europe, 1200–1800*, ed. J. Goody, J.J. Thirsk, and E.P. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 71–95; L.K. Berkner, and F. Mendels, “Inheritance systems, family structure, and demographic patterns in Western Europe, 1700–1900”, in *Historical studies of changing fertility*, ed. C. Tilly (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), 209–225; E.R. Brennan, A.V. James, and W.T. Morrill, “Inheritance, Demographic Structure, and Marriage: A Cross-Cultural Perspective”, *Journal of Family History* 7 (1982): 289–298; also: D.I. Kertzer, “Household history and sociological theory”; R.L. Rudolph, “The European Peasant Family and Economy”; W. Goldschmidt, E. Kunkel, “The Structure of the Peasant Family”; C. Fertig, and G. Fertig, “Bäuerliche Erbpraxis als Familienstrategie. Hofweitergabe im Westfalen des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts”, in *Generationengerechtigkeit. Normen und Praxis im Erb- und Ehegüterrecht 1500–1850*, ed. S. Brakensiek, M. Stolleis, H. Wunder (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 2006), 163–187.

<sup>81</sup> L.K. Berkner, and F. Mendels, “Inheritance systems”; E.R. Brennan, et al., “Inheritance, Demographic Structure, and Marriage”.

<sup>82</sup> Worldwide, bridewealth as a condition of marriage transfer is most widespread among African, Circum-Mediterranean, East Eurasian and Insular Pacific societies included in Murdock’s Ethnographic Atlas, whereas dowry is restricted to Eurasia; see S. Anderson, “The Economics of Dowry and Brideprice”, *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 21, no. 4 (2007): 151–174; L. Fortunato, C. Holden, R. Mace, “From bridewealth to dowry? A Bayesian estimation of ancestral states of marriage transfers in Indo-European groups”, *Human Nature* 17, no. 4 (2006): 355–376.

<sup>83</sup> J. Goody, “Bridewealth and Dowry in Africa and Eurasia”, in *Bridewealth and Dowry*, ed. J. Goody, and S. Tambiah (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 1–58; R.G. Quale, *A History of Marriage Systems* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988).

and female autonomy in general (including residential chores). More importantly, “vertical” dowry transfers are usually linked to a wider Eurasian mechanism of property transfers termed the diverging devolution<sup>84</sup> which tended to coincide with late marriage and high rates of celibacy (at least in some parts of Eurasia), as well as with greater independence of the conjugal pair from their wider kin<sup>85</sup>.

However, we should take a less mechanistic and more pragmatic approach when seeking to understand how household succession was affected by the legal regimes under which people lived (Derouet 1989). Legal traditions did not dictate succession practices, but rather offered a regionally varying repertoire of options that could be used by families to arrange the succession practices in ways that were economically viable. From this perspective, adaptable family “strategies” rather than traditions or law appear to explain structural patterns (see below)<sup>86</sup>.

This leads into the much broader but also less confined terrain of parental authority<sup>87</sup>. Kinship structures, customary laws and religious prescriptions (see below) undoubtedly influenced marriage customs and household membership patterns, but we cannot assume that they were automatically obeyed, much less internalised, by all of the individuals concerned. As Wolf argued, in a very practical sense, “(...) how young people marry, when they marry, and where they reside after marriage will reflect the extent to which their society empowers parents”<sup>88</sup>. According to Wolf, the strength of paternal authority should function as a crucial factor in explaining differences in nuptiality systems between Europe and Asia, in fact – it is “the centerpiece of the global contrast Hajnal formulated”<sup>89</sup>.

Wolf distinguishes between what he terms “state patriarchy” and “property patriarchy”. Under the former, associated with various forms of “tributary systems”, parents were at liberty to exploit their children in return for allowing the political or military superiors the right to exploit them<sup>90</sup>. Because children (and grandchildren

<sup>84</sup> J. Goody, *Production and reproduction*.

<sup>85</sup> C. Hann, “Reproduction and Inheritance: Goody Revisited”, *Annual Review of Anthropology* 37 (2008): 145–158; cf. B. Derouet, “Sharing Inheritance or Exclusion? Timing, Destination, and Contents of Transmission in Late Medieval and Early Modern France”, in *Sibling relations and the transformations of European kinship, 1300–1900*, ed. C.H. Johnson, and D.W. Sabeen (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 31–46.

<sup>86</sup> See P. Bourdieu, “Les strategies matrimoniales dans le system de reproduction”, *Annales E.S.C.* 37 (1972): 1105–1127. Naturally, variable inheritance practices may themselves be the product of flexible adaptations to different environmental, economic, and agrarian contexts.

<sup>87</sup> J. Blake, “Parental control, delayed marriage and population policy”, in *World Population Conference, Belgrade 1965*, vol. II (New York: United Nations), 132–136; D.S. Smith, “Parental Power and Marriage Patterns: An Analysis of Historical Trends in Hingham, Massachusetts”, *Journal of Marriage and Family* 35, no. 3 (1973): 419–428.

<sup>88</sup> A.P. Wolf, “Europe and China: two kinds of patriarchy”, 225.

<sup>89</sup> Ibidem, 219, 225; earlier L.L. Cornell, “Age at marriage, female labor force participation, and parental interests”, *Annales de Demographie Historique* (1989): 223–231.

<sup>90</sup> A.P. Wolf, “Europe and China: two kinds of patriarchy”, 228.

as well) were capital resources, and, “like all capital resources were wanted in larger rather than smaller quantities”, parents imposed early and universal marriage on all their offspring. The general societal outcome of such practices usually implied an early age at marriage, lack of celibacy, and the emergence of joint-family households. Under what Wolf calls “property patriarchy”, parental authority was weak because it rested primarily on the premise of property control, without recourse to the sanction of higher authorities which resulted in later marriage and a general lack of widespread post-marital subordinated co-residence with the older generation. The pattern prevailed in much of pre-industrial Northwest Europe.

### The role of religion

Although contemporary social science have posited that religion and religiosity played an important role in determining demographic and human capital investment behavior, the exact patterning of those effects on household composition and household recruitment strategies in historical populations have been much more difficult to unravel<sup>91</sup>. This notwithstanding, it seems reasonable to assume that within Eurasia, religious differences could also act at least as intermediate or proximate “determinants” of the variation in family structure and residential behavior, if not as a crucial marker of divergent family behaviors in certain areas<sup>92</sup>. There is considerable anthropological and historical evidence showing that spiritual beliefs can provide the inspiration for prescriptions regarding family life, especially when it comes to the historical development of various definitions of and customs around marriage, the stages of life, and intergenerational relations<sup>93</sup>.

For example, the centrality of family life in Confucian statecraft made filial piety a lynchpin for the entire social order in imperial China<sup>94</sup>. As a set of interlocking principles, Confucianism emphasized a son’s duty to respect, obey, and support his parents; and, by extension, provided a model for proper relations between wives and their husbands’ parents, juniors and seniors (including younger and older broth-

<sup>91</sup> See C. Goldscheider, F.K. Goldscheider, “Ethnicity, religiosity and leaving home: the structural and cultural bases of traditional family values”, *Sociological Forum* 3 (1988): 525–547; E.L. Lehrer, *Religion, Economics, and Demography: The Effects of Religion on Education, Work, and the Family* (London: Routledge Press, 2009).

<sup>92</sup> For example: Gerald F. Moran, and Maris A. Vinovskis, “The Puritan Family and Religion: A Critical Reappraisal”, *The William and Mary Quarterly* (third series) 39, no. 1 (1982): 29–63.

<sup>93</sup> M. Jo Maynes, and A. Waltner, *The Family. A World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 20.

<sup>94</sup> A.P. Wolf, “Europe and China: two kinds of patriarchy”; S. Harrell, “Patriline, Patriarchy, Patrimony: Surface Features and Deep Structures in the Chinese Family System”, <http://faculty.washington.edu/stevehar/PPP.html> (accessed 29.9.14).



ers), and subjects and emperors. These idealized hierarchical social relations were epitomized in the Chinese extended (joint) family and domestic group.

Moral economies of family relations developed in the context of divergent religious doctrines may also be responsible for the conditions in different societies or among different sub-groups which lead some populations to delay marriage longer than others, and some populations to have much higher proportions than others of bachelors and spinsters who pass through their prime reproductive years without marrying at all<sup>95</sup>. The values of western Christendom, particularly its emphasis on marriage as a sacrament established by the spouses and not by their parents (the so-called “consent theory of marriage formation” in the Western Church), combined with the aversion of pre-Christian Rome to endogamous marriage, played a critical role in eroding the kinship principles underlying the social organization of medieval European societies, and in fostering societal requirements for a high marriage age and the rejection of patrilineal rules of household formation within a specific seigniorial agrarian regime of that time<sup>96</sup>. Meanwhile, the Orthodox Church (and the Greek-Catholic churches of eastern and southeastern Europe), had weaker institutional powers to curb the long-term effects of pre-Christian kinship practices, and often imposed different doctrinal teachings on its subject populations<sup>97</sup>.

On the other hand, the major Asian religions, like Hinduism, Confucianism, and Islam have long prescribed pre-puberty marriages for reasons of chastity<sup>98</sup>. In India, child marriages arranged by lineages can be traced back to social customs prescribed in Smritis. This form of marriage was practiced in order to strengthen

<sup>95</sup> E.g., B.R. Dixon, “Explaining cross-cultural variations in age at marriage and proportions never marrying”, *Population Studies* 25 (1971): 215–233.

<sup>96</sup> J. Goody, *Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); D.I. Kertzer, and M. Barbagli, eds., *Family Life in Early Modern Times 1500–1789. The History of the European Family*, vol. 1 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001); M. Mitterauer, “Ostkolonisation und Familienverfassung”.

<sup>97</sup> M. Mitterauer, “Ostkolonisation und Familienverfassung”; idem, „European kinship systems and household structures: medieval origins”, in *Distinct inheritances. Property, family and community in a changing Europe*, ed. P. Heady, and H. Grandits (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2003), 35–52; L. Bonfield, “Developments in European Family Law”, in D.I. Kertzer, and M. Barbagli, eds., *The History of the European Family: Family life in early modern times (1500–1789)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 96–98; cf. also C. Donahue, “The Canon Law On the Formation of Marriage and Social Practice in the Later Middle Ages”, *Journal of Family History* 8, no. 2 (1985): 144–158. Meanwhile, with the divergence of the Protestant and the Catholic churches an important line of division was drawn across early modern Europe, and led to the proliferation of ideas about parental power and about the appropriate legal and social norms governing marriage and conjugal relations; see M. Jo Maynes, and A. Waltner, *The Family*, 54–57.

<sup>98</sup> For example, A.S. Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization: From Prehistoric Times to the Present Day* (Motilal Banarsidass Publ., 1956); J. Sklar, “The role of marriage behavior”, 237–238. Also: T. Engelen, and P. Puschmann, “How unique is the Western European marriage pattern?: A comparison of nuptiality in historical Europe and the contemporary Arab world”, *The History of the Family* 16, no. 4 (2011): 387–400.

the prevalent joint family arrangements, as marrying while children prevented the spouses from opposing the union, and made them financially dependent upon the elders of the family<sup>99</sup>. The major Asian religions and doctrines also elevated the father to a position of power and authority in the family and other social and political institutions, which reinforced patrilineal aspects of kinship, patrilocal residence, and constraints on individual (male) autonomy (including leaving home).

### Family variation as the product of variable demographic conditions

The discovery of structural regularities in the residence patterns of any population or society may tell us something about the family and household formation patterns in a given area, but these patterns might also be attributable to chance, random variation, or demographic constraints. Thus, a finding that nuclear households predominated, that most young individuals tended to live apart from their natal families, or that the majority of elderly people did not coreside with their children in a given region could be indicative of a preference of the inhabitants for this type of arrangement over other types of arrangements, but it might also suggest the presence of unfavorable demographic conditions<sup>100</sup>. Joint forces of low fertility, high mortality, and late marriage, could have prohibited the formation of extended households by setting limits on the type and number of kin available for coresidence. High infant mortality limits the opportunities for parents to coreside with their adult children, and those elderly people having larger numbers of children had more opportunities for coresiding with one or more of them<sup>101</sup>. A rise in life expectancy at older ages — which occurred in many parts of Europe during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century — led to increases not only in the number of elderly people available for intergenerational crowding, but also in the number of people at risk of living on their own. The growth of the population may have also strained the existing family system, directly or indirectly: directly by forcing parents to export children to the grandparental home, indirectly by promoting the subdivision of holdings, thereby making complex households less viable<sup>102</sup>.

Furthermore, demographic factors broadly understood can interact with envi-

<sup>99</sup> J.L. Raina, *Structural and Functional Changes in the Joint Family System: A Study Based on D.C.M. Workers* (New Delhi: Concept Pub. Co., 1988), ch. 6.

<sup>100</sup> K.W. Wachter, et al., *Statistical Studies*; S. Ruggles, *Prolonged Connections*; P. Laslett, "Family, kinship and collectivity as systems of support in preindustrial Europe: a consideration of the 'nuclear-hardship' hypothesis", *Continuity and Change* 3, no. 2 (1988): 152–175; see also J. Knodel, and M.B. Ofstedal, "Patterns and determinants of living arrangements", 162–163.

<sup>101</sup> J. Knodel, and M.B. Ofstedal, "Patterns and determinants of living arrangements", 163.

<sup>102</sup> M. Szołtysek, "Residence Patterns and Demographic Constraints on Living Arrangements: the Case of Historical Eastern Europe", paper presented at the European Social Science History Conference, Vienna (2014). On a reverse causal order, see the section on institutional constraints above.

ronmental and economic effects through population density, which in pre-industrial societies was one of the basic parameters which shaped the framework of social and demographic relations. From Malthus to Lutz, scholars have posited that population density represented a fundamental constraint on human reproduction<sup>103</sup>. Meanwhile, agricultural economists have suggested that there are direct links between low population density, simplicity of technology, and land abundance on the one hand; and the non-existence of landless labor classes and hiring and labor exchanges on the other<sup>104</sup>. Still other scholars have pointed out that the quantity and amount of labor needed for successful agricultural production is a determinant of household composition<sup>105</sup>. In societies with limited options for capital investment, as well as low population numbers and abundant land, basic sources of labor — and hence household productive capacity — can be secured through household-extending strategies and the concentration of kin under one roof. Furthermore, when there is a strong demand for workers to manage the domestic economy, families may have a greater tendency to marry off their children as early as possible within the prevailing legal context, but to retain their labor by means of patrilocal residence.

Finally, the variation in the occurrence of some of the major constitutive elements of a given family system can be strongly related to differences surrounding the timing and character of marriage. The major distinguishing features of these systems were particular profiles of mean ages at marriage, as well as the underlying mechanisms of family formation; i.e., the rules dictating individual pre- and post-marital life course experiences. Societies defined by a late age at marriage generally had an early age of home-leaving a substantial share of life-cycle servants. Moreover, these societies were usually characterized by a simple family structure, although exceptions did occur<sup>106</sup>. This was especially true in societies which followed a rule that marriage should be neo-local; i.e., in which newly-weds were expected to carry all of the start-up costs associated with acquiring housing and stocking the household with necessary material possessions. It may be expected that in those societies there was a crucial link between the acquisitive phase in the life cycle of an individual (servanthood), marriage and independent postmarital residence<sup>107</sup>.

<sup>103</sup> W. Lutz, M. Testa, and D. Penn, "Population Density is a Key Factor in Declining Human Fertility", *Population and Environment* 28, no. 2 (2007): 69–81.

<sup>104</sup> E. Boserup, *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth: The Economics of Agrarian Change under Population Pressure* (Chicago: Aldine, 1965).

<sup>105</sup> E.R. Wolf, *Peasants*; R. McC. Netting, "Agrarian ecology"; R.L. Rudolph, "The European Peasant Family and Economy".

<sup>106</sup> M. Barbagli, "Three Household Formation Systems"; P.H. Reddy, "Family Structure and Age at Marriage"; D.I. Kertzer, "The Joint Family Household Revisited".

<sup>107</sup> P. Laslett, "The family as a knot of individual interests", in *Households: Comparative and Historical Studies of the Domestic Group*, ed. R. Netting, R. Wilk, and E. Arnould (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 353–379.

## Family strategies

It therefore appears that household studies have long viewed social institutions not as static, but rather as flexible entities which may become weaker or stronger under the pressure exerted by societal and cultural “superstructures.” However, households might vary across time and space, not only because they were shaped and molded by varied circumstances they were embedded in, but also because the individuals who lived in them might have responded to those different exogenous forces differently in different places<sup>108</sup>. The concept of family strategy<sup>109</sup> shifts the search for an explanation of variation in family forms away from societal and cultural “superstructures” toward the realm of domestic life; i.e., differences in family forms may be attributable to the intentional actions, decisions, and choices (or preferences) of individuals, even if the actors themselves were not completely free in their choices. Thinking of households as “manmade” from the outset involves seeing people as capable of acting to maximize their “joint utility” by expanding and contracting their respective domestic groups, manipulating the allocation of labor, and regulating the potential claims of other kin to support from the household (and thus, ultimately, to have an impact on household dependency ratios)<sup>110</sup>. Although coresidence patterns may readily be influenced by the preferences of multiple actors involved, with regards to shared versus independent living arrangements individuals and family units acting upon these preferences engage in complex costs and benefits assessments (including, e.g., economic benefits of co-residence, the vulnerability status of the family group, or the possibility of buying privacy with more resources) which in turn are embedded in demographic, economic, life course and historical-specific considerations<sup>111</sup>. Such strategies, however broadly defined, may represent a more or less universal repertoire of families and individuals in all cultures and in all historical periods, but they can also be viewed as possible or conceivable only at a given stage of “historical

<sup>108</sup> T. Engelen, “Labour Strategies of Families: A Critical Assessment of an Appealing Concept”, *International Review of Social History* 47 (2002): 453–464.

<sup>109</sup> P. Bourdieu, “Les stratégies matrimoniales”; P. Moen, and E. Wethington, “The concept of family adaptive strategies”, *Annual Review of Sociology* 18 (1992): 233–251; L.P. Moch, et al. “Family strategy: a dialogue”, *Historical Methods* 20, no. 3 (1987): 113–125; P.P. Viazzo, K.A. Lynch, “Anthropology, Family History, and the Concept of Strategy”, *International Review of Social History* 47 (2002): 423–452.

<sup>110</sup> M. Baud, T. Engelen, “Introduction: Structure or strategy? Essays on family, demography, and labor from the Dutch N.W. Posthumus Institute”, *The History of the Family* 2, no. 4 (1997): 347–354; also A. Thornton, and T.E. Fricke, “Social Change and the Family”.

<sup>111</sup> J.B., Casterline, et al., “Differences in the Living Arrangements of the Elderly in Four Asian Countries: The Interplay of Constraints and Preferences”, *Elderly in Asia Report* 91, 10. March 1991; J. Knodel, and M.B. Ofstedal, “Patterns and determinants of living arrangements”.

evolution”<sup>112</sup>, or as highly variable in nature under particular socioeconomic or cultural conditions<sup>113</sup>.

## Conclusions

After many years of making substantial progress, the major task for historical family demographers studying pretransitional rural societies is to make further advances in global comparisons; i.e., to provide complex, multifarious accounts of global family variation and dynamics across time and space. The current conditions are particularly suitable for addressing those global questions, as the ongoing revolution in the availability of historical census micro-data (see NAPP and Mosaic projects)<sup>114</sup> allows for the unprecedented expansion of historical research. This will, however, require scholars to develop new approaches and new tools, and to refine existing research concepts and problems. Above all, the current desideratum dictates that future empirical findings will be more theoretically embodied, and that scholars will make conscious efforts to search for multiple linkages between residential patterns and various societal domains.

The approaches discussed above suggest that we would benefit from examining highly differentiated regional and even local contexts, rather than focusing on macro regions exemplified by a few case studies<sup>115</sup>. Naturally, in reality the relationships sketched above were neither as unequivocal, nor as homogenous as is suggested by the sometimes schematic approach taken above. Indeed, they were often complex and puzzling. From a broad functional standpoint, it appears that the actual patterns of co-residence and their other associated elements (nuptiality, leaving home, etc.) depended on the net balance of the effects of all of the factors. Some of these factors may have operated as barriers to the diffusion of certain types of household recruitment strategies and other patterns of familial behavior, while others may have operated as elements which cemented their permanence under particular circumstances. Under certain environmental, institutional, and demographic conditions, the same factors may have fostered the emergence of specific family forms, while at the same time leading to the development of very different tendencies based on local conditions. Various subpopulations with different social organizations or politico-economic relationships may have developed similar residential patterns, but through quite different institutional mechanisms.

<sup>112</sup> N.Z. Davis, “Ghosts, Kin, and Progeny”, *Daedalus* (1977): 87–114.

<sup>113</sup> L.A. Tilly, “Individual Lives and Family Strategies in the French Proletariat”, *Journal of Family History* 4 (1979): 137–152.

<sup>114</sup> <https://www.nappdata.org/napp/intro.shtml>; [www.censumosaic.org](http://www.censumosaic.org)

<sup>115</sup> G. Fertig, and U. Pfister, “North-west Germany”, in *Making a Living: Family, Labour, and Income. Rural economy and society in north-western Europe, 500–2000*, ed. E. Vanhoute, I. Devos, and Th. Lambrecht (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 233–261.

Instead of analyzing residence patterns in isolation, scholars should try whenever possible to nest familial features of the respective populations within their social, cultural, and economic contexts. By establishing multiple links between the region's formal demographic properties and all of the significant features of the worlds in which its members lived, family historians should strive to demonstrate in each case how the economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions interacted<sup>116</sup>. This approach will provide us with a better understanding of the specific characteristics of many Eurasian societies, and thus will help us to classify, re-classify, and create a spatial mapping of the larger systemic relationships related to family organization in a given historical and geographical context.

In order to establish those multiple links between familial-residential properties and other domains in theoretically informed manner, linking census microdata to environmental, cultural-geographic and political-economic information will be necessary. Until recently, such an endeavor was a formidable task. However, thanks to the recent progress made in the availability of the open-access historical information, the data needed to explore many of those potential linkages may come from multiple sources. For example, geographic and environmental information can be marshaled using a plethora of online materials, such as the European Global Digital Archives of Soil Quality Maps (EuDASM) which contains regional, national, and global maps of soils and land resources for both Europe and Asia<sup>117</sup>, or Climate Reconstructions Datasets (including historical ones) provided by the National Climatic Data Center<sup>118</sup>. Data on kinship patterns, inheritance, property relations, and devolution can be derived from voluminous local surveys conducted in many areas of 19th-century Europe<sup>119</sup>, from local/regional ethnographies (especially in Asia), or from wide-ranging omnibus-type studies<sup>120</sup>. Historical family demographers who wish to obtain information for the Asian territories can, for example, use data from Murdock's Ethnographic Atlas as well as from Human Relations Area Files<sup>121</sup>. At least for Europe, an abundance of information can also be found in works of cultural geography, like Jordan-Bychkov's "The European cultural area: a systematic

<sup>116</sup> Already in 1970s, T.K. Hareven warned historians against wearing blinders when investigating the family and called for an "integrated analysis of all aspects of the family and its interaction within society"; see T.K. Hareven, "The history of the family as an interdisciplinary field", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 2 (1971): 412–413.

<sup>117</sup> [http://eusoiils.jrc.ec.europa.eu/esdb\\_archive/EuDASM/indexes/access.htm](http://eusoiils.jrc.ec.europa.eu/esdb_archive/EuDASM/indexes/access.htm)

<sup>118</sup> <http://hurricane.ncdc.noaa.gov/pls/paleox/f?p=517:1:::APP:PROXYDATASETLIST:6::>

<sup>119</sup> E.g. J. Goody, *Production and reproduction*; S. Harrell, *Human Families*; also M. Szołtysek, S. Gruber, S. Klüsener, and J.R. Goldstein, "Spatial variation in household structure in 19th-century Germany", *Population: English Edition* 69, no. 1 (2014): 55–80.

<sup>120</sup> E. Todd, *L'origine des systèmes familiaux*, tome 1, *l'Eurasie* (Paris: Gallimard, 2011).

<sup>121</sup> <http://www.yale.edu/hrf/>; J.P. Gray, "A corrected Ethnographic Atlas", *World Cultures* 10 (1999): 24–136; A. Rijpmma, and S. Carmichael, "Testing Todd: global data on family characteristics", paper presented at the Workshop Workshop "Agency, Gender, and Economic Development in the World Economy 1850–2000", Utrecht University, 2013.



geography”<sup>122</sup>. Local and regional compendia on agrarian and economic history (for example, *Historisch-Topographische Beschreibungen* provide broad coverage of German-speaking areas), as well as regional summaries of poll tax records, can also be used to create indicators of social structure and land-use patterns.

Thanks to new developments in data infrastructure within economic history, various indicators of human development (income and production, human capital and schooling, health and mortality) can be obtained for many parts of Eurasia and linked with local- and meso-level information on family and demographic patterns. For scholars interested in data mobilization across the Eurasian landmass, Russian Imperial data are among the best sources of information<sup>123</sup>, especially since some of these data have already been turned into an online electronic repository<sup>124</sup>. For many other parts of Eurasia, much can be achieved through cooperation with research projects such as the Clio-infra<sup>125</sup>, Global Collaboratory of the History of Labour Relations 1500–2000<sup>126</sup>, the Maddison project<sup>127</sup>, or Robert Allen’s long-term research on the global history of wages and prices<sup>128</sup>; all of these projects contribute to a data infrastructure which can be used to study long-term economic changes in the world economy over the past four to five centuries, with a special focus on the most recent 200 years. These exogenous data can be linked (region level) with the respective household data. The systematic statistical and geographical analysis of the connections between family systems and economic development can then be pursued, with a focus on the relationship between the different domains of family systems (e.g., age at marriage, celibacy, female headship, life-cycle service, household structure) and various exogenous outcomes.

In real life, residential behavior (like any type of individual behavior) is simultaneously affected by a variety of factors. In order to assess the unique effect of a specified factor, it is necessary to ensure that the confounding effects of all of the extraneous pressures are taken into account. For example, when accounting for the observed differences in family systems, environmental differences may be of importance only in controlled comparisons – i.e., when attempt is being made to control for the economic, demographic or institutional factors which in some

<sup>122</sup> T.G. Jordan-Bychkov, and B. Bychkova-Jordan, *The European cultural area: a systematic geography* (fourth edition) (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

<sup>123</sup> See, e.g., M. Kopsidis, K. Brusch, and D.W. Bromley, “Where is the Backward Peasant? Regional Crop Yields on Common and Private Land in Russia 1883–1913”, Working Papers 0046, European Historical Economics Society (EHES), 2013.

<sup>124</sup> See [http://ehes.org/EHES\\_No46.pdf](http://ehes.org/EHES_No46.pdf); see also the huge emerging collection under the name of ‘Electronic repository of Russian historical statistics, late XVIII –XXI Cc.’ developed by Gijs Kessler and Andrei Markevich, at <https://collab.iisg.nl/web/electronic-repository-of-russian-historical-statistics/about>.

<sup>125</sup> See <http://www.clio-infra.eu/>

<sup>126</sup> See <https://collab.iisg.nl/web/labourrelations>

<sup>127</sup> See <http://www.ggdg.net/maddison/maddison-project/home.htm>.

<sup>128</sup> See <http://www.nuffield.ox.ac.uk/People/sites/Allen/SitePages/Biography.aspx>

cases could play an equally important part as environmental ones in shaping family organization<sup>129</sup>. One way to comprehend the complicated nature of multi-level contextual relationships in the domain here discussed is to adhere to the formalities of various statistical procedures<sup>130</sup>. An equally useful, although generally less successful strategy, is to articulate the possible relationships between individual or household behavior and the socioeconomic, cultural, or ecological conditions with which they interacted, and to suggest a plausible hierarchy of determinants which may have influenced the behavior of “entities” in a given context. For such an approach to be useful, the contextual influences identified above must be embedded in diverse internal circumstances across various spatial entities<sup>131</sup>.

It remains our hope that as more historical demographic information becomes available<sup>132</sup>, the analytical framework advanced here will gradually be further refined and tested empirically against rich historical data, and using rigorous methods. Coming to terms with these issues would not only infuse family history with more of the kind of rigor and discipline demanded by the proponents of the social science approach; it would raise the discussion of the geography of the Eurasian family forms to a new level.

### **Toward a conceptual framework for the variation in historical family and household systems across Eurasia Summary**

Recognising the unprecedented opportunities for new developments in the comparative analysis of domestic groups and living arrangements in historic Eurasia, the essay proposes a broader conceptual framework which could be useful to scholars engaged in large-scale attempts to situate historical household patterns within multilevel associations, and to embed contextual influences in diverse spatial circumstances. Drawing on considerations from anthropology, sociology, history, demography and other disciplines — like cultural ecology or even sociobiology — the author of the essay introduces

<sup>129</sup> S. Harrell, *Human Families*, 428.

<sup>130</sup> E.g., D.L. Anderton, and D.E. Sellers, “A Brief Review of Contextual-Effect Models and Measurement”, *Historical Methods* 22, no. 3 (1989): 106–115; J. Sharpless, “Collectivity, hierarchy and context: the theoretical framework for the aggregation problem”, *Historical Methods* 17, no. 3 (1984): 132–140; S. Ruggles, “Stem Families and Joint Families in Comparative Historical Perspective”, *Population and Development Review* 36 (2010): 563–577; idem, “The Future of Historical Family Demography”. For statistical modelers, problems such as multicollinearity, are well known. For instance, in the logistic regression with an outcome variable that is a categorical dichotomy and a predictor variable representing a set of individual characteristics, it is possible to illustrate the unique effect of each specified characteristic by holding still or controlling for the effects of others; see more in F.C. Pampel, *Logistic regression: A primer* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2000).

<sup>131</sup> M. Szołtysek, *Rethinking East-central Europe*.

<sup>132</sup> See S. Ruggles, “The Future of Historical Family Demography”.

a heuristic device which can be applied to a wide variety of regional studies of family organisation. The conceptual framework proposed here could be used in future studies to organise the growing and disparate empirical evidence on family and household systems, and thus could help future scholars to provide better answers to the most pertinent research questions of the discipline.