Halle Studies in the Anthropology of Eurasia

Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology

Distinct Inheritances

Property, Family and Community in a Changing Europe

Editors: Hannes Grandits and Patrick Heady







LIT

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This book explores the relationship between inheritance practices, property systems and kinship. It brings together contributions from family history, demography and social anthropology in order to investigate the origins, workings, and implications of Europe's diverse inheritance systems. The richness and antiquity of Europe's historical archives provide a unique opportunity for anthropologists and historians to develop a shared understanding of the interaction of economic, demographic, and social processes as they unfold over time. These long-standing issues have become more urgent with the collapse of European communism and the attempt of the countries concerned to return to - or join for the first time - the capitalist system.

The chapters are grouped into three historical periods: the longue durée leading from antiquity through medieval developments up to the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; the transition to modernity, which saw the abolition of feudalism, widespread development of capitalist employment and an increased emphasis on individual property ownership; and finally the transitions into and out of socialism in Eastern Europe. The chapters show how Europe's inheritance systems - variations on the themes of communal, partible and impartible inheritance – have connected family forms with distinct economic and political regimes, including different forms of feudalism, village self-government, different phases of capitalism, and the ambiguities and complexities of "actually existing socialism".

Historical developments and differences in economic and property systems have been paralleled by developments in religious ideas, which suggests that more is at stake than issues of economic strategy. Several case studies explore the interplay of ideals and interests in the elaboration of families' inheritance strategies, but the book makes no attempt to come down on either side in the long-running argument between cultural and materialist interpretations of economic life. Its message is rather that inheritance practices operate on several different levels at once. In allocating rights to property they simultaneously reflect family ambitions, define social groups and hierarchies, match population to resources, and express fundamental values. Being interwoven with so many aspects of social life, inheritance practices tend to be rather stable, but when they do change the consequences are far-reaching. The issues raised in this book have profound implications for the way we theorize kinship, political, and economic relationships - and for our understanding of the place of European societies in the wider context of Eurasia and the world.



Halle Studies in the Anthropology of Eurasia

General Editors:

Chris Hann, Richard Rottenburg, Burkhard Schnepel, Shingo Shimada

Volume 2

LIT

Hannes Grandits and Patrick Heady (eds.)

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https://doi.org/10.52038/978-38258-6961-x

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Cover photos:

Photo 1: "Hercegovinian Familiy" Arhiv Hercegovine u Mostaru. Zbirka fotografije (Archive of Hercegovina in Mostar).
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Gedruckt auf alterungsbeständigem Werkdruckpapier entsprechend
ANSI Z3948 DIN ISO 9706

Bibliographic information published by Die Deutsche Bibliothek
Die Deutsche Bibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at http://dnb.ddb.de.

ISBN 3-8258-6961-x (pb.)
ISBN 3-8258-7334-x (hc.)

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Preface

The chapters in this book derive from a conference at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in December 2001. The first years in the life of a research institute are a period of special intensity. One wishes, of course, to establish and carry forward the institute's own research program, and to disseminate the results as rapidly as possible. At the same time, it is important for both practical and symbolic reasons to lay down markers for the medium and longer term. It is important to explore the connections between one's own research themes and related work, both by colleagues within one's own discipline, and by scholars working in adjacent fields. The gains from bringing different methods and perspectives to bear on the same topic are particularly obvious when it has implications for many different aspects of social life, as is the case with our investigations of contemporary postsocialist transformations. Our initial cycle of projects has concentrated on changing property relations in the rural sector. The first results were disseminated at several international conferences in 2002, and a sampling of this work is about to appear in Volume One of this series.

It is therefore appropriate that the second volume should reflect the institute's wider agenda, by placing property issues in a longer historical perspective, and by juxtaposing anthropological studies with complementary perspectives from social history and historical demography. I am delighted that this volume contains contributions from scholars such as Sir Tony Wrigley, Britain's foremost historical demographer; from Jack Goody, an anthropologist whose work over the last forty years has tackled many issues of very long-term historical transformation, without losing sight of their pertinence for present day societies; and from Michael Mitterauer, an historian adventurously crossing the same boundaries in the other direction. In inviting Wrigley, Goody, Mitterauer and other distinguished *Grenzgänger* between anthropology and the "historical sciences" to speak at the first conference in our Institute's permanent building, we had several goals in mind. First, we wanted to demonstrate a conviction, perhaps best articulated by the mature Evans-Pritchard, that anthropology is ultimately inseparable from history. Second, we wanted to give notice of a long term intention to trespass across all academic boundaries, whenever we perceive the potential for cross-fertilization. Third, by focusing on property, inheritance and the family in contexts of social change, we wanted to prioritize themes that would feed directly into our current research projects. I am particularly

pleased that several new studies by our own researchers have found their way into the final selection of papers for this volume.

I am grateful to Hannes Grandits and Patrick Heady for all their inputs, both in organizing the conference and in producing this book. I also thank those who made valuable contributions, but whose papers could not eventually be included. Finally, it should be put on record that without the pioneering spirit of many members of our support staff, this conference could hardly have taken place at all. With our Institute contracted to take possession of its buildings in September 2001, we had assumed that it would be reasonable to plan an opening conference for December. As things turned out, the conference was indeed the first in our new premises, but it *preceded* our move. It was all rather trying at the time, but in retrospect the lack of overhead lighting, of telephones and electronic contact to the world, all contributed to a memorable Advent atmosphere.

Chris Hann

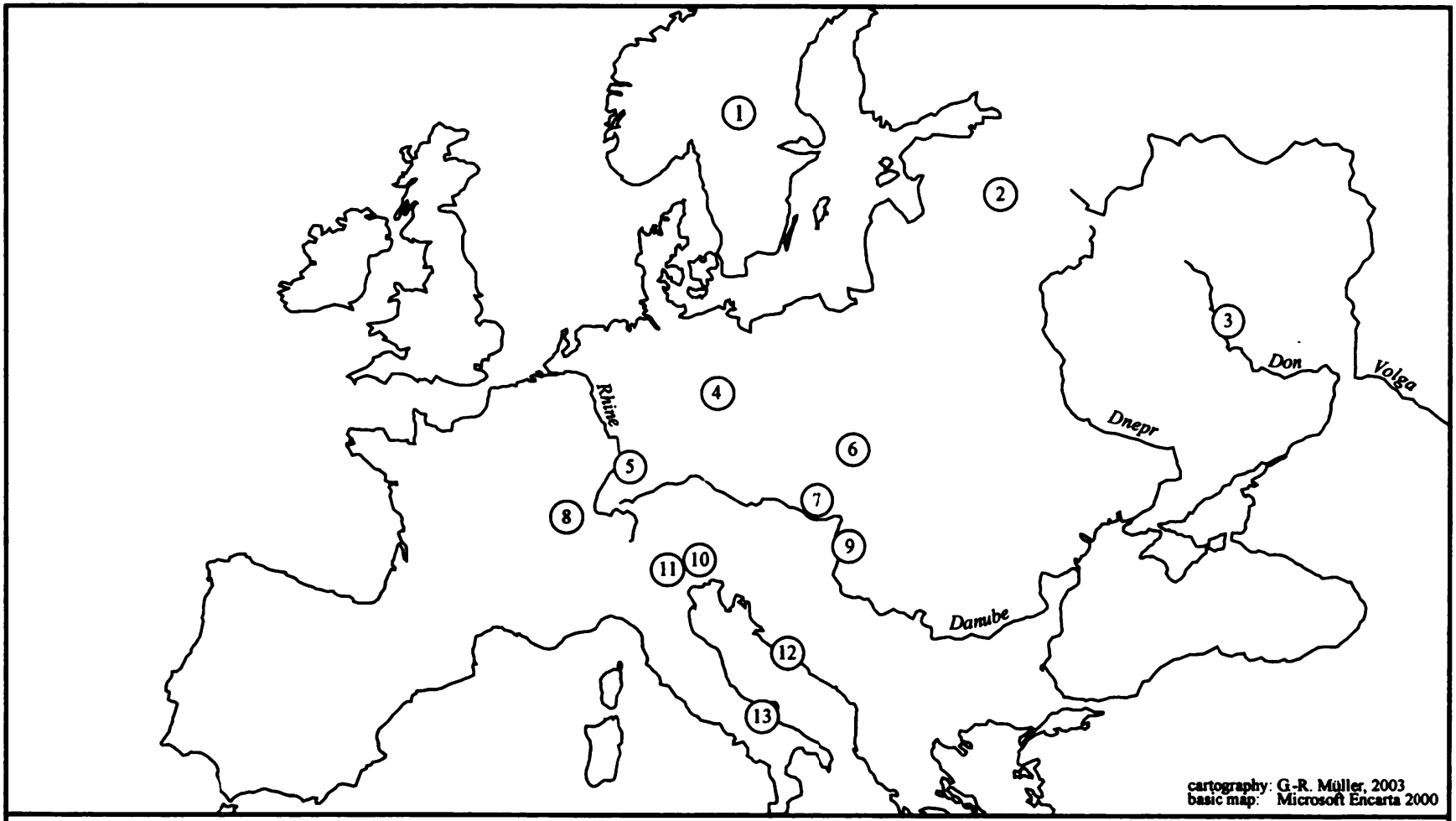
Halle, January 2003.

Editors' Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the people who contributed to the conference at which the idea of this book first took shape. We are grateful to all the conference participants and support staff. Bettina Mann, the research coordinator of the Max-Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, ably managed the conference organization assisted by Anke Brüning. We also owe thanks to the institute staff who helped in the preparations and during the conference itself.

Ralph Orlowski has played the central role in organizing the production of this volume. Andreas Hemming, Jeremy Spencer, Christina Kincaid, and Sevdalina Wiezorrek helped with language and copy editing. The maps were drawn by Gerd-Roland Müller. We are grateful to Paul Robert Magocsi and Karl Kaser for permission to adapt maps originally published by them. Judith Orland designed the cover using pictures generously provided by the Arhiv Hercegovine in Mostar, the Sächsisches Landesamt für Archäologie and Chris Hann. The index was put together with the help of Silke Riemann, Berit Westwood and Karoline Haufe.

None of this would have happened without Chris Hann, who was the moving spirit of the whole project. Together with Hannes Grandits he put together the original conference program and since then has provided consistent support, suggestions and encouragement during the time that it has taken the conference contributions to grow into this book.



Map 1: Specific research sites of case study authors

1 - **Marks** - Lillhärdal (Härjedalen)	6 - **Pine** - Polish Tatra mountains	10 - **Lanzinger** - Innichen/San Candido
2 - **Visser** - Pskov Oblast'	7 - **Torsello** - Vágkirályfa	11 - **Cole** - St. Felix
3 - **Heady** - Listnoe	8 - **Layton** - Plateau of Levier (Franche-Comté)	12 - **Leutloff** - Biskupija and Knin
4 - **Eidson** - Southern Leipzig region	9 - **Thelen** - Mesterszállás	13 - **Colclough** - Ascoli Satriano
5 - **Sabean** - Neckarhausen and Kirchentellinsfurt		

Chapter 1

Introduction: Property, Family, and Community in a Changing Europe: A System and Historical Approach

Patrick Heady and Hannes Grandits

The Aims of this Book

This book is about how we should understand the connection between inheritance, property, and kinship – and the ways in which they are implicated in all spheres of social life. It focuses on Europe and basically asks three questions: How do European inheritance systems work, how different are they, and how did they get to be the way they are? These questions are, of course, extremely interesting in themselves. They also provide a framework within which to bring together and review a number of different traditions of work in the field of family history, demography, and the anthropology of Europe.

The richness and antiquity of Europe's historical archives provide a unique opportunity for anthropologists and historians to develop a shared understanding of the interaction of economic, demographic, and social processes as they unfold over time. The pioneering work initiated by Laslett and his colleagues (Laslett 1972; Hajnal 1965, 1982; Wrigley and Schofield 1981; Wall, Robin, and Laslett 1983) highlighted the relation between household composition, economic organization, and demography in Europe over the centuries leading up to the Industrial Revolution. Their work has since been greatly extended by detailed local and regional studies in different parts of Europe (e.g., Mitterauer 1975, 1990; Ehmer and Mitterauer 1986; Flandrin 1978; Faragó 1986; Segalen 1986; Gaunt 1987; Viazzo 1989; Kertzer and Saller 1991, Kaser 1995, 2000; Plakans and Wetherell 1997; Sabean 1998). Pan-European reviews of the family history tradition, are given by Hareven and Plakans (1987) and Ehmer, Hareven, and Wall (1997).

A distinct tradition of research, which also makes intense use of local archives – sometimes combined with contemporary fieldwork – derives from social anthropology and focuses on kinship, residential groupings, and

marriage alliance (e.g., Halpern 1958; Davis 1973; Loizos 1975; Galt 1991; Sant Cassia and Bada 1992). Anthropologists have also used a combination of contemporary fieldwork and historical archives to investigate the relation between demography, kinship, social stratification, and political power. Examples are Bourdieu (1962), O'Neill (1987), and Schneider and Schneider (1995).

Implicit in these perspectives is the question of how population is kept in balance with natural resources. Cole and Wolf (1974) make the connection explicitly but return in the end to an emphasis on kinship and political economy. The most thorough-going single study of the population resources balance is Netting's study of the Swiss village of Törbel (1981) – which attempted to apply, in a European context, ideas of cybernetic population control developed by Rappaport in New Guinea (1984). Viazzo (1989) has developed this approach further in a detailed comparative review of historical demographic studies of alpine communities. Most of these reach back well before the Industrial Revolution and focus on the maintenance of equilibrium. For more recent times, from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century, cooperation between demographers and anthropologists has been stimulated by the Princeton study of the European demographic transition, which used official statistical data aggregated at province level from all over Europe. In this case demographers took the initiative in opening a dialogue with anthropologists when they discovered that the associations that they had been expecting between economic development and demographic change were not as close as had been anticipated (Coale and Watkins 1986; Watkins 1990; Hammel 1995; for reviews of the whole field, drawing on these and other traditions in demographic anthropology, see Greenhalgh 1995 and Kertzer and Fricke 1997).

As Goody reminds us in this volume, European inheritance systems are only a part of the wider set of Eurasian inheritance systems, which themselves differ from the systems found in Africa and elsewhere in the world. Fauve-Chamoux and Ochiai (1998) consider stem families in a Eurasian perspective. At the same time Goody's work (Goody 1983, 1990, 1996; Goody, Thirsk, and Thompson 1976) – placing European family and inheritance patterns in a wider Eurasian context and tracing their distinctive features back to developments in late classical times and the early history of Christianity – has been extended and partly revised by more recent work by Mitterauer (1993, 1999, 2003). Kaser (1996, 2000) has elaborated models to deal with patterns of inheritance and family in the still under-researched European East in medieval and modern times.

Questions about the relationship between property, inheritance, and society at large have become more urgent with the collapse of European

communism and the various dislocations accompanying the attempt of the countries concerned to return to – or, more accurately, in some cases, join for the first time – the capitalist system. Scholarly understanding about how property works has been enriched and challenged by a series of ethnographic studies of the process of "transition" in former socialist countries (Verdery 1996; Abrahams 1996; Bridger and Pine 1998; Burawoy and Verdery 1999; Hann 2002; Leonard and Kaneff 2002; Mandel and Humphrey 2002) – and over the last ten years or so, the experience of post-socialism has been one of the factors contributing to an increased interest in property relationships more generally. Several recent publications (Allen 2000; Carsten 2000; Schweitzer 2000) indicate that interest in kinship is also on the rise again. Kinship and property relations provide the framework for much of our practical life, and the emotions they arouse are as strong as any that we experience. We hope that the material presented in this book will throw some light on how they work.

Ways of Understanding European Kinship and Property Systems

It may be useful to start by setting out some very general points about what inheritance does – and about the kinds of factor that influence inheritance practices and their effects. Briefly, inheritance passes on property and other rights from generation to generation and in so doing

- places people and collectivities in relation to physical resources;
- places people socially;
- and helps to shape the social structures within which they live.

Since property and rights are also passed on at marriage, the effects of inheritance systems have to be considered in conjunction with those of marriage patterns. Other factors which influence how inheritance systems work include

- economic, environmental, and political circumstances (some of which may be beyond the influence of the social group in question);
- the strategies by which individuals and collectivities respond to their circumstances;
- systems of meaning (including implicit ideas) according to which people construe their situations and evaluate the courses of action open to them;

- demographic factors (some of which respond to strategies and some of which are inescapable consequences of the arithmetic of reproduction).

Strategies, circumstances, and meanings interact in ways that are sometimes very complex.

A crucial point is that inheritance practices do not only concern the family itself; they also concern the rest of the community. Major aspects of the inheritance system tend to be strongly backed by public opinion and embodied in laws. Where these laws are implemented by a self-governing local community, law and public opinion may roughly coincide. In other instances, where there is a marked divide between governing strata and other people, or between national laws and local ideals, this is not the case. But whether law and opinion agree or disagree, they are always involved – so we need to ask why inheritance decisions are never simply left to the families themselves.

One reason is that it would be difficult for the members of any particular family, left to themselves, to agree an inheritance strategy. At least in the short term, questions of inheritance pit the individual members of a family against each other in a zero-sum game: for the simple reason that the more any of them gets, the less there is for the others. There will always be pressure to bring forward or delay the passing on of inheritance or to pass it on some other way – and the outcome always risks leaving the families riven by resentment. To avoid this emotionally and practically damaging situation, the family needs to appeal to public opinion – or possibly even to public authority – to help them out. Local ideas of distributive justice become an anchoring point for the family itself – and receive its support for that reason. There is thus a feedback effect that tends to reinforce whatever are the existing inheritance norms.

A second reason for public opinion to be involved is that questions of succession (and marriage) affect access to shared community resources. Until two centuries ago most European communities owned substantial common lands, and some still do. In many circumstances, avoidance of the "tragedy of the commons" (Hardin 1968) – the over-exploitation of shared resources – depends on limiting access to them to members of a community whose adherence to the rules of fair and renewable exploitation can be enforced by group sanctions (Ostrom 1990).[1] The greater the group allowed

[1] There is now an increasing body of experimental work studying the way people actually play games of cooperation and bargaining – and the findings tend not to support the radical version of the rational self-interest position that underlies Hardin's argument. We return to this point in the section on *Wealth, Values and Habitus*, below.

access, the less resource there is for each participant. Since one of the things which inheritance (and marriage) rules determine is community membership and access to common resources, the rest of the community has a vital interest in ensuring that particular families apply the accepted inheritance rules and do not extend the right of access to the commons in a way that is detrimental to existing members of the community.

Much more is involved, for both family and community, than just the inheritance decision itself. Inheritance practices are related to systems of meaning encoded in the naming conventions for buildings and land, in the way kinship terms group or distinguish certain relatives, and are even associated with different forms of religious and folk ritual. At the same time, the systems have different practical consequences: in the spatial distribution of dwellings; in the size and distribution of fields; and in the relative emphasis placed on independence and cooperation. So, adopting a different inheritance rule from one's neighbors might well amount to acting in a way that was both socially meaningless and practically awkward.

Inheritance Rules and Social Patterns

Inheritance endows the individual with both material resources (of which agricultural land can be taken as a paradigmatic example) and a set of social relationships both within the family and outside. The most basic item of social inheritance is the fact of membership in a family. Within the family there may be ties of obligation to the parents, ties of comradeship and duty to siblings, as well as various connections to more distant kin. Both ownership and kinship bring with them membership of the wider social units that recognize the right of residence and regulate the practice of economic life. Social inheritance involves more is inherited than mere membership of the community – inherited wealth and the social honor of the family one is born into provide a particular status within the community which always influences, and can sometime be decisive for, the individual's life chances. As later chapters of this book will show, the material and immaterial aspects of inheritance are closely linked in practice, but it is sometimes useful to consider them separately for the purposes of exposition.

If we focus first on the inheritance of material resources, the basic elements from which current European systems are built are rather simple. There are three basic possibilities, which can be adapted and combined in various ways.

1. Communal inheritance, in which individuals inherit from their parents a general right of access to the whole of the community's resources.

2. Impartible inheritance, in which the community's resources are divided into distinct parcels which are preserved intact from generation to generation, and only one of the children inherits the parents' parcel.
3. Partible inheritance, in which the community's resources are held in distinct parcels, but the parcels are not preserved intact. Instead each parcel is divided up between some or all of the children of its previous owners.[2]

The geographical distribution of these options, and of their principal variants and combinations, is discussed in the chapters by Mitterauer, Kaser, Layton, Grandits, Brunnbauer, Plakans, and Goody. The different options have material consequences for residence patterns and for the spatial form of marriage networks. *Impartible inheritance* preserves isolated farms and allows outmarriage. *Partible inheritance to sons only* allows outmarriage and groups kinsmen's houses together. *Partible inheritance by both sexes* promotes endogamy and counteracts lineage segregation.

It is a little less easy to identify clearly distinct systems of immaterial inheritance, but the systems described in this book do seem to differ in terms of their positions along one important dimension. The difference is between a sense of identity that focuses on property ownership and honors contractual debts and an identity that focuses on kinship ties and is bound by kinship obligations. This distinction involves ways of recruiting household labor, whether relatives can be paid, how much one socializes with distant relatives, and differences in kinship terminology.

As a first approximation, the material presented in this book suggests that communal inheritance goes with kin-based identity, impartible inheritance goes with property-based identity, and partible inheritance goes with either, or various combinations. Over the very long term there is evidence of a movement away from systems that stressed communal inheritance and defined kinship identity in patrilineal terms, toward systems of partible or impartible inheritance and a conception of identity that emphasizes property over kinship, conceptualizing kinship in bilateral terms. However, the shifts involved are neither uniform nor complete.

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[2] The simplicity is not quite as great as it appears. Special arrangements are required in cases (2) and (3) in the absence of children – or children of the appropriate sex. Goody (1983; 1996) argues that the arrangements usually adopted in Eurasia – outright adoption, adoption of the son-in-law, and marriages of heiresses to close relatives – distinguish these systems from those in Africa and elsewhere, where inheritance by a more distant co-lineal kinsman is more usual and might take precedence over inheritance by the couple's own children. The probability of the absence of an appropriate heir is discussed by Wrigley (in this volume).

We will not attempt to prove these points here. The reader can explore the relationships both in the details of ethnographic chapters and in the historical arguments of Mitterauer, Kaser, Layton, and Goody. When thinking about the historical trends, readers might also like to ask themselves how far the possibility of individual economic mobility during the lifetime affects these relationships between property, kinship, and identity and whether the trends described in the previous paragraph are likely to continue.

Population, Resources, and Inequality: The Impact of Inheritance Rules

The property transactions involved in inheritance and marriage can be looked at as a means of matching population to resources.

One way of looking at this was pioneered by Malthus (1973 [1872]). His argument, discussed below by Wrigley, was that with limited resources available to the community as a whole, unchecked fertility would lead population to increase until the resulting reduction in per capita resources caused mortality to rise to a level at which the population stabilized. The result of unchecked fertility would thus be material misery. Higher living standards could only be attained by restricting fertility to a level that did not press quite so hard on resources. In a world in which technical progress is slow (as it was before the Industrial Revolution) this argument is broadly realistic. The question then becomes how fertility levels can be kept down to the required level. Malthus himself saw the acceptance of moral restraints as the solution and, though his terminology now sounds rather quaint, a major focus of family history and historical demography has been the attempt to identify social practices which may have had the effect of limiting fertility. Deliberate birth control within marriage seems to have been rare in Europe before the start of the demographic transition of the 19th and 20th centuries. So, in previous centuries, limiting fertility generally implied placing restrictions on marriage itself: either by limiting the number of marriages that took place at all or reducing the number of fertile years per marriage by raising the average age at marriage. This is where the connection with inheritance comes in. Impartible inheritance would provide a very effective way of limiting marriage, by ensuring that, however many children a parental couple had, in the next generation only one couple would inherit their economic capital and so be able to found a family – thus keeping the number of reproductive couples constant from generation to generation.

The evidence that impartible inheritance was indeed a factor in reducing fertility levels is suggested by the fact that northwest Europe, which had relatively low fertility in pre-industrial times, was also characterized by impartible inheritance in many areas. More specific demonstrations are

provided by local community studies, such as that of Lanzinger in this volume, which shows how a local community enforced a rule of impartible inheritance in order to maintain the balance of population and resources.

Systems of partible inheritance would require some additional mechanism to keep births from outrunning available resources. One possibility would be a rule that new couples need to attain some necessary level of property ownership before marrying. In fact such a rule might also apply in a system with communal property if, for instance, land was held communally but houses and work implements were not and newly married couples were required to acquire houses and working equipment before marrying. On this interpretation, those instances in which partible inheritance or communal property were associated with high marriage and birth rates would be communities in which these alternative means of marriage regulation had failed to develop.

Inheritance rules do not only have an impact on the overall balance between resources and fertility; they also have distinct effects on the distribution of resources and fertility within the community. None of the three basic inheritance systems necessarily leads to inequality. This is true even of impartible inheritance. If population is stable and everyone gets married (albeit at a late-enough age to keep the fertility rate down), then, as Wrigley points out in his chapter in this volume, the number of estates without male heirs will match the number of men excluded from the inheritance to their parental property. The surplus young men can then be matched to the estates without male heirs either by marrying heiresses or by adoption.

Nevertheless, impartible inheritance does contain more potentiality for material inequality than do the other systems. This is partly because, when population is growing, impartible inheritance generates a division between a class of property owners and another class without property, consisting of their noninheriting siblings and the descendants of those noninheriting siblings. But it is also because impartible inheritance effectively preserves inequalities that have arisen for any reason, including inequalities deriving from military conquest or commercial success. Partible inheritance systems tend to dilute these inequalities from generation to generation, since unusual wealth not only gets passed on to all the children but also puts each in a good position to get married, and hence to disperse the wealth among an ever-widening circle of distinct marriages. This process will be most rapid in the case of fully partible inheritance, since in that case property is passed to the marriage households of daughters as well as sons.

Population, Resources, and Inequality: The Outcomes of Strategies

The underlying assumption of the previous section is that married couples try to maximize their fertility, subject to the constraints of various rules. Though this is a very useful model for preindustrial Europe, it cannot be the whole truth. The demographic transition of the 19th and 20th centuries (discussed in this volume by both Wrigley and Plakans) has produced an entirely new situation. Birth control within marriage has become the norm, and there is now no tendency for population to press against resources. The birth rate is below replacement – and furthest below in some of the countries with traditions of partible or communal inheritance. This is now one of the issues at the top of the demographic research agenda. Theories relating to the contemporary demographic situation no longer assume that couples see their own fertility as an unconditional good. Instead couples (or each partner within the couple) are assumed to follow strategies in which fertility as such is only one objective, others being the future economic prospects of their children and the parents' own financial and social status (Becker 1998).

But if people balance fertility against other objectives now, perhaps they did so in the past as well. Bourdieu (1962) used data from rural Béarn to argue that the local practice of largely impartible inheritance should be understood as the outcome of complex family strategies rather than as a fixed cultural rule. In this section we explore the implications of this viewpoint for our understanding of the demographic impact of the main European inheritance systems. We will start by considering systems of partible inheritance, since this is where the element of choice is most apparent.

If continuity of the household estate is a culturally valued objective, partible inheritance sets up what O'Neill (1987), writing about a community in northern Portugal with fully partible inheritance, has described as a conflict "between patrimony and matrimony" – i.e., between the preservation of estates and the number of children allowed to marry. With fully partible inheritance the marriage options that would preserve an inheritance are:

- For just one child to marry and the remaining siblings to bequeath their property to that child's children. This option actually leads to an increase in the household estate, because of the property brought by the in-marrying spouse.
- For two children to marry, with one of them bringing in as much property as the other takes out. If such marriages are repeated over time within the same small set of prosperous families, then it may be possible to retain (or regain) not just to the same amount of property but the same actual fields.

However, in some societies with partible inheritance, the process of division is simply accepted. In communities with neo-local marriage, such as Törbel (Netting 1981) or Neckarhausen (Sabean 1998 and in this volume), the preservation of the household estate is not a cultural ideal. Alternatively, where new couples set up home in or near the parental dwelling, the older generation may value this accumulation of kinsmen and welcome the process that converts wealth into a greater number of relatives. Something like this seems to have been the situation among the south Slav communities studied by Halpern (1986) and by Rheubottom (1996). Other more complex marriage strategies are also possible in which physical property is traded for social capital, as in the case of 17th-century Ascoli, described in this volume by Colclough.

From this point of view, the overall fertility level in a given community would depend on the relative priority that different families gave to the property-centered aim of improving economic status by restricting marriage and fertility, compared to the alternative aim of maximizing the number of relatives. If we think of these as alternative ways of attaining status, then it is clear that the strategy chosen may well depend on the respective feasibility of the two options for the group concerned. One explanation of the frequently observed phenomenon of higher fertility in economically disadvantaged groups is that the property-centered route to status is not open to them, leaving maximization of family size and kinship connections as the most practical way of achieving status (for an example, see Schneider and Schneider's (1995) analysis of the changing birth rates of landless laborers in Sicily).[3]

There are some analogies between the Sicilian case and the exceptionally high fertility of the Russian peasantry. Russian serf-owners and state authorities deliberately promoted large complex households in order to increase the amount of labor per household that would be available for work on the landlords' land and for state purposes such as military service. Given the level of landlords' exactions, accumulating private wealth was not a very feasible option for Russian peasants, but early marriage and high fertility was. This also suited landlords' requirements for more labor. Communal ownership of the land used for peasant subsistence ensured that a household that expanded through the marriage of a son received the additional land necessary to support the new couple and their offspring. The redistribution activities of the *mir* were thus supported both by landlords and public authorities as well as by the peasants themselves (Czap 1978; Hoch 1989; see also Heady in this volume). Thus in the case of pre-revolutionary Russia it is

[3] Cf. Shaffer (1982) and Segalen (1991) who show that tenant farmers marry younger and have more children than small-holders who practice partible inheritance.

possible to argue that household structures, fertility levels, and the system of property ownership can all be explained in terms of the interaction between the strategies of the dominant and subordinate class. Similar arguments can be made in other parts of eastern Europe.

The development of lower fertility in Northwestern Europe can also be understood in terms of a response by subordinate classes to the strategies of the dominant class, with the difference that in this part of Europe the feudal overlords imposed impartible inheritance with the aim of preventing overpopulation from reducing the surplus that could be obtained from a given amount of land. In this situation it would have been futile for peasants to pursue a strategy of maximizing family size and kinship connections, since the poor prospects of the noninheriting children would have meant that any alliances they made would have brought little social prestige. It would therefore have made sense for the peasantry to adopt a status strategy based on the preservation or accumulation of property (the differences between feudal regimes in Western and Eastern Europe are discussed below by Mitterauer and Kaser).

Wealth, Values, and Habitus

The successful maintenance of wealth differentials does not only require appropriate marriage and inheritance strategies on the part of the richer families; it also calls for the ability to withstand other peoples' envy. As Goody reminds us in the final chapter of this volume, envy seems to be a human universal: an expression of a basic egalitarianism, which is in permanent tension with the equally strong tendency to strive competitively for success on behalf of oneself and one's kin. In many cultures, the fear of envy is expressed in beliefs about the ability of envious people to harm their more successful neighbors by supernatural means such as witchcraft or the evil eye. It is in this sense that Goody argues that the egalitarianism of socialist movements expresses the same underlying idea as African witchcraft.

In fact there are many parts of present-day Europe in which people fear the supernatural powers of people who envy their productive and reproductive good fortune (Delamont 1995). Schneider (1990) has argued that underlying these fears is what she calls an "equity consciousness" – a predisposition to egalitarianism and reciprocity – that had to be stigmatized (as dangerous envy) and set aside as capitalism developed. In an argument that complements Weber's (1988 [1904]) celebrated thesis that the "protestant ethic" induced entrepreneurs to rationalize their lives and to succeed economically, she maintains that Christianity, and more particularly Protestantism, also freed entrepreneurs from the restrictions imposed by egalitarian

pressures, by turning their attention away from relations with their neighbors toward their relation to God.

This raises an issue that runs through the whole of this book, namely the motives and values that influence decisions on inheritance, marriage, and related aspects of domestic and economic life. How great a role is played by economic logic (rational choice in terms of material production and consumption) and how does this relate to considerations of reciprocity, morality, and what Bourdieu (1977) called *habitus*. In one form or another, this issue is addressed in the chapters by Colclough, Marks, Torsello, Thelen, Pine, Eidson, and Heady. Bourdieu himself discussed these issues in his study of inheritance in Béarn (1962). A key concept in that study was honor, which is a form of what he later referred to as social or symbolic capital. The notion of honor, much debated in Mediterranean anthropology, is closely related to both morality and reputation. The societies described in this book seem to differ in the amount of stress they place on different aspects of reputation, emphasizing variously self-sufficiency, wealth, connections with the right families, and generosity – to kin, to affines, or to the community as a whole.

When people behave in an approved way there are always two possible interpretations: that they are genuinely moved by moral sentiments or that they are attempting to construct a reputation which they can use as a form of social capital. The latter interpretation seems to strike many scholars as more hardheaded and economically plausible. There is an interesting connection here with recent developments in the discipline of economics itself. One of these is a growing interest in testing particular aspects of rational-choice theory experimentally. Results consistently confirm that moral sentiments have a major influence on actual behavior. There is also some evidence that these effects differ in ways that are related to the organization of economic life in the society concerned (Henrich et al. 2000).

One implication of this work is that collective forms of property may often be more practically effective than Hardin's initial argument concerning the "tragedy" of the commons suggested. It therefore has consequences for theories of the development of economic institutions. Other economists, working on the same topic, are investigating the explanatory power of the rational choice framework when complex real-world constraints are introduced into the models (Knight 1995). So, despite the obvious differences between the two disciplines, there are striking parallels between economic and anthropological work on property issues – both in the issues addressed and in the range of alternative assumptions made about the motives underlying social and economic actions. The prospects for future collaboration between the disciplines look promising.

Bourdieu (1977) used the expression "*habitus*" to express the idea that people develop many of their patterns of practical activity and social action without explicitly reasoning out the motives for what they are doing, even to themselves. Bloch (1992) has expressed the same idea in an article on "things which go without saying," which draws on psychological work on nonpropositional ways in which meaning can be conveyed. There is now a substantial body of findings within cognitive anthropology on the importance of nonpropositional ways of thinking (D'Andrade 1995: 143-149). The contributors to this book follow previous authors in citing several examples of nonpropositional communication of property and kinship relationships. Examples include: patterns of commensality (Marks, in this book; Heady, in this volume); ways of naming houses (Cole and Wolf 1974; Pine, in this volume); and kinship terminologies (Anderson, 1963; also Colclough in this volume; Heady, in this volume; Leutloff-Grandits, in this volume; Mitterauer, in this volume; Morgan 1997 [1871]). Here too, there seem to be ways in which developments in the anthropology and history of property and kinship systems could learn from and contribute to developments in neighboring disciplines.

The Dynamics of Change – and the Homogenizing Transformations of the 19th and 20th centuries

Thus inheritance practices are typically embedded in complex and interlocking systems of property and kinship relationships. This creates pressures for consistency between different parts of the system and typically (but not always) makes the systems highly resistant to change. At the same time, it means that when one part of a system does change, the change is likely to have far-reaching knock-on effects. All the substantive chapters in this book are to do either with system change or with the ways in which local systems persisted in the face of outside pressures. In comparing the different chapters in this book, readers may like to ask themselves why, in the face of altered circumstances, some systems seem to have been resilient, others reacted by changing in important but non-fundamental ways, while yet others collapsed altogether.

It may be helpful at this point to review some of the main processes of change with which this book deals. The first group of chapters discuss, under the title of the *longue durée*, the establishment of distinct property systems in different parts of the continent during medieval times and their gradual evolution in the centuries preceding the political, social, and economic revolutions that started in the late 18th century. Mitterauer discusses how the rise of Christianity was associated with a series of economic and political changes that saw the establishment of commercial cities in the Mediterra-

nean and, later, north of the Alps, the establishment of feudal tenure and impartible peasant landholdings in Western and Central Europe. Kaser discusses the persistence of patrilineal systems in parts of Eastern Europe and the development there of a different, tribute-based form of feudal overlordship.

In the following centuries economic changes affected all parts of the continent, but in different ways and to very different extents. A process of endogenous transformation toward a capitalist system began in England, where developments that started in the Middle Ages eventually led to the replacement of "feudal" relations by "capitalist" agriculture (Wall 1983; Hilton 1969; Aston and Philpin 1985). In this process the people who had formerly been peasants were either degraded to landless, wage-working farm hands or else became yeomen leasing tenancies at commercial rates from capitalist landowners (Scott 1998). Another early shift toward the marketization of rural relationships occurred in places where close links between a specialized farming and an urban economy had developed, as happened in parts of the Netherlands from the 16th and 17th centuries (De Vries 1974) – or where expanding city economies integrated whole rural regions into the market system, as happened, for instance, in Swabia (Kriedte, Medick, and Schlumbohm 1981) and Vorarlberg (Fitz 1985). Proto-industrialization was an important factor in these cases and also stimulated the development of capitalist social relations in many other centers throughout Europe (Ogilvie and Cerman 1996). Capitalistic and market principles also characterized rural society in those Mediterranean regions where sharecropping predominated (Epstein 1998; Ruiz 1998).

The chapters by Layton, Sabean, Colclough, and Wrigley discuss different aspects of this gradual transformation toward capitalism in the western part of the continent. These "modernizing" trends can be contrasted with developments in the eastern part of the continent. In the agrarian regions of Eastern Europe lying between the Elbe and the Ural, the period from the 16th through the 18th centuries actually witnessed the intensification of peasant servitude (Blum 1957; Revesz 1976; cf. Verdery 1983). At the same time, patrilineal kinship groups continued to be important in parts of the Balkans, partly because of the role they played in the military organization of frontier areas and mountainous regions where state control was weak (see the chapters of Brunnbauer, Kaser and Leutloff-Grandits).

It is now time to consider the series of interconnected changes which have transformed European property and kinship systems over the past 250 years.

Defeudalization and Legal Homogenization within the Boundaries of the State

In the course of the 18th and 19th centuries almost all European societies went through a process of defeudalization on the way to a more "modern" system of property relations. In a series of successive reforms all European states introduced new legal systems in place of earlier heterogeneous feudal and local community regulations. The provisions of these new legal systems also had major effects on the transmission of property from one generation to the next. So, even at the level of the family, standardized rules based on individual and equal property rights, closely linked to capitalist principles, started to put earlier practices in question.

Different forms of feudalism had developed in France, Prussia, the Habsburg, the Ottoman and Russian empires, and the many other parts of Europe. The process of reform and defeudalization also took a number of different courses. Initially the reform process allowed for many compromises and exceptions, and a mixed regime of "traditional" and "reformed" regulations often continued for decades. Nevertheless – although the legal frameworks continued to differ – the process of legal "modernization" meant that systems of community organization in different parts of Europe were becoming more similar.

Legal reforms started earlier, and created less disruption, where they built on and reinforced "endogenous" processes of economic and social change. In these countries, state promotion during the 19th century of "capitalistic" norms of partibility, equality, and individuality was usually consistent with existing community norms. In most parts of Western Europe the legal transformations started comparatively early, and the reforms introduced in the course of the French Revolution after 1789 led to the final systematic dissolution of the remnants of the feudal system.

But the reform process started a good deal later in the eastern part of the continent, where local society was generally organized on other principles and, therefore, the introduction of the new regulations in the process of defeudalization challenged the existing basis of community life. In the Habsburg Empire the fundamental legal transformations from feudal to capitalist state organization started after the 1848 revolution; in the Ottoman Empire the introduction of new land codes in the framework of the *tanzimat*-reforms did not happen before the 1850s; and in Russia the formal abolition of serfdom was proclaimed in 1861 (for more details of these transformations, see Grandits, Brunnbauer, and Plakans in this volume).

All over the continent, the introduction of "modern" legal regulations opened local and regional social systems to varying but usually increasing levels of monetarization, marketization, and social mobility. Where the new

state laws contradicted local custom and practice, there was often a mixture of contestation (both open and tacit) and compromise between the two sets of norms. This was so, for example, in many areas of male partible inheritance in southeastern Europe, where newly introduced state laws promoted the right of women to a share of the family property and in this way began to undermine the existing principles of family organization (Kaser 1995). The same holds true for regions of impartible inheritance, such as the Austrian Alps, where legal reforms limited the concentration of inheritance on a single heir at least in principle (Mantl 1997). For decades the tension between the preserving forces of established local models and the transforming power of the new legal organization and socioeconomic realities required people to develop strategies to get along with both. In many parts of Europe this tension still exists (de Haan 1994; Rogers 1991), and the case studies presented in this book provide detailed analyses of the issues and strategies involved (see for instance the chapters by Torsello; Cole).

Transition to Urban Industrial Society

The 19th and early 20th centuries saw the emergence and rise of the working class. Demographic growth, partly connected with incipient industrialization, strained the resources of rural areas and led to mass migration into the expanding urban settlements and industrialized regions. More and more countries developed to become predominantly urban and nonagricultural societies. The Netherlands and England were the first. Several regions in Belgium, Northern France, in the Basque provinces, in the Ruhr area, in Saxony, and Bohemia followed during the course of the 19th century. In all European societies the "proletariat" developed its own ethos as a class. It is generally believed that in proletarian households the principles of family formation were not, or only to a minor degree, centered on inheritance of property from the parental generation. Finding a permanent job and earning enough money played a much more important part in decisions about marriage and the formation of a family. This change clearly reduced the importance of the earlier diversity of rural inheritance regimes, and hence added a new homogenizing force to that already introduced by legal modernization. But, at the same time, recent research has shown that distinct historical backgrounds continued to have an effect.

In a comparison of working-class families in England and Central Europe in the 19th century, Ehmer (1991) showed that in both contexts the economic situation in a region had an important effect on family formation. But nevertheless the age at marriage, especially of the male population, and the percentage of unmarried persons were much higher in Central Europe. One of the decisive reasons for this was the persistence of elements of a

traditional artisan economy in Central Europe throughout most of the 19th century. Marriage was not often socially approved before the worker had completed his traditional time as journeyman. Segalen (1998) has shown with the help of French examples that different family formation characteristics existed within different branches of industry. There were particularly strong differences between home-worker families and families that depended on factory employment. Areas dominated by the steel or mining industries, whose labor force was predominantly male, had different family formation characteristics than regions of textile production, where women were often the main factory employees. And finally families were much more stable among the permanently employed and well-paid skilled workers who often formed a separate social group, than among the masses of the waged people, who were repeatedly forced to change their employment.

One of the most important reasons for differences in family patterns was that a large part of the proletarian population in many European societies still lived in rural areas. They continued to be involved in the rules and dynamics of their local communities, and these "distinct inheritances" influenced their responses to economic change. Marks (in this volume) analyses these influences in all their complexity in his study of a community in northern Sweden between 1850 and 1930. Here timber companies bought property rights in the land and forests, and wage labor replaced farming as the dominant source of livelihood for the majority of the local population. Nevertheless, local subsistence and family strategies continued to be passed from one generation to another and significantly shaped the adaptation to the new circumstances.

This is also true for many of the proletarian families who migrated to centers of employment but still remained in close contact with their place of origin. This pan-European phenomenon was very pronounced in many parts of Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Švecová has given a vivid example in her study of migrant workers from a Slovak mountain community. They used to spend most of the year working in quite distant urban centers but continued to focus their life strategies on their home community. There, their families worked the family land, and endogamous marriage patterns continued far into the 20th century, preventing many "outsiders" from marrying into the local community (Švecová 1966). A similar development in the context of a Polish mountain community is described by Pine, in this volume.

The 19th and the early 20th century were not only the time of the rising working class; they were also the golden era of bourgeois society. The bourgeoisie were becoming the leading economic and political elite and developing a middle-class lifestyle that became an ideal for large segments

in the urbanizing societies. When we talk of bourgeois models of family and inheritance, comparisons between European societies show many similarities in the principles on which they were based. A particularly strong consciousness of intergenerational cooperation strengthened the explicitly family-centered bourgeois ethos, which focused on the transmission of economic and social capital – though the extent of this transmission depended on the standard of living and the position of the family in the society (Sieder 1998). Nevertheless, the social origins of the bourgeoisie, and the processes by which it rose to prominence, varied from place to place (Kocka 1995). In some countries and regions, the rise of the bourgeoisie was closely bound to industrial development; in others the bourgeoisie was strongly influenced by the nobility; while in other places rural merchants who still remained partly tied to a local way of life played a leading role.

Thus despite the Europe-wide similarities in the development of proletarian and bourgeois cultures, many differences remained. While, in some parts of the continent, thorough-going economic transformation brought about fundamental reorientations of family strategies, elsewhere economic development lagged behind, leaving growing populations to grapple with limited resources in relatively traditional ways (see Grandits, this volume). Though these two contrasting situations could exist in different regions of the same country, the processes of transformation generally went furthest in the northern and western parts of the continent, widening the gap between them and the countries of southern and eastern Europe.

Europe Divided between East and West

The Russian revolution of 1917 and the later collectivization campaign introduced a more radically collectivist system of property relationships than any Europe had seen before. Once the dust had settled after the Second World War, Europe was divided into two parts characterized by fundamentally contrasting property regimes. In Western Europe the importance of "private property" as a fundamental basis of the whole democratic system was stressed. Inherited forms of property continued to play a significant role in economic organization, and in the reproduction of the social elite. In many countries the laws regulating private property changed remarkably little during the 20th century.

This was not true for the states of Eastern and Southeastern Europe that found themselves included in the communist block. Here the earlier capitalist elite lost its dominating position, and nearly all industrial production and distribution was taken over by the state. Large land-holdings were expropriated, and efforts were made to force smaller farmers into cooperative farms. Different models of agricultural organization emerged in differ-

ent parts of Eastern Europe. In some places private farming was almost totally replaced, or limited to minimal plots of land. In others it was possible for cooperative farmers to continue with substantial private production, in a symbiotic relationship with the cooperative farm to which they belonged. Only in Poland and Yugoslavia did most peasant farmers successfully oppose collectivization. In all the socialist countries various forms of employment in the newly formed cooperatives or in other sectors of their increasingly industrialized economies became the dominant source of livelihood. Family and community organization, which, until then, had often revolved round the inheritance of land, increasingly lost this orientation.

There have been numerous ethnographic studies of the impact of collectivization and other aspects of socialist policies (cf. e.g. Halpern 1967; Hann 1980; Kideckel 1993; Creed 1998). On the level of the local communities theses policies were intended to produce an egalitarian distribution of resources. A relative uniformity of economic and property standards for every family was the aim. But pre-socialist traditions and concepts of family, inheritance, and property still remained influential. Informal strategies often brought the planned systems closer to traditional local concepts, with which they might conflict in principle but could be combined in pragmatic solutions in everyday life.

Nevertheless, the influence of the state grew to become enormously strong. In particular the growing reach of its welfare and educational system began to limit and reduce the familial support which had been so important earlier. It took over more and more social-security functions as well as opening options through education. However the contradiction between claim and reality in the increasingly crisis-ridden socialist economy and regional differences in the efficacy of state-provided support often remained enormous.

In European societies outside the socialist world continuation of earlier realities and hierarchies of community life was much stronger. Nevertheless existing social and economic relationships also underwent a process of transformation in the non-socialist part of Europe.This had to do with the emergence of an almost completely wage-and-salary-oriented economy. In the decades after the Second World War, wage employment became the main source of livelihood for the great majority of the population even in rural areas. Agriculture became increasingly dominated by large enterprises and provided the basis of family income for a constantly shrinking percentage of the rural population, although once again with marked regional variation.

Another way in which developments in non-socialist countries paralleled those in the socialist block was in the growing social role of state

institutions. Despite substantial differences in national policies, the overall picture was that increasingly efficient state-organized welfare and educational institutions tried to promote a more balanced access to resources and chances within each society. But in practice inherited property and capital from the family could still secure advantages and maintain more obvious social differences than in the socialist countries. Thus, although some general directions of change were similar in both parts of the divided continent, the different property systems had substantial consequences for economic and social life.

Towards a more "Standard European" Regime of Property, Inheritance, and Family?

With the breakdown of socialism, the reform of property relations was on the agenda of the newly formed democracies. In the majority of cases governments attempted to compensate or to return to families the private property they lost during collectivization. But how far could the societies return to characteristics of their community organization before the socialist transformation? In practice, many features of the socialist order were preserved as well. Indeed in some states this socialist legacy dominated the character of the reform. This is an unfinished process, and distinct tendencies still prevail in the various post-socialist countries.

Six empirical studies in the final section of this volume shed light on these differing developments. Pine discusses the pattern of inheritance and marriage relationships that maintained the cohesion of a non-collectivized Polish farming community through the political and economic changes of the 20th century, though that community now seems threatened by young people's desertion of the land. Visser looks at the coping strategies of contemporary Russian peasants and contrasts their historical heritage of collective action with their current rejection of both cooperative and commercial agriculture. Heady compares features of the Russian kinship system with those of societies farther west, arguing that they fit the land-transmission system of the pre-communist Russian *mir* but may be ill-adapted to family farming on the Western model.

Thelen looks at how some families in a Hungarian village were able to maintain their relatively high status from before the middle of the century through the successive transformations of collectivization and de-collectivization. Eidson examines similar issues in an East German community. Leutloff-Grandits shows how Serbian villages in the Krajina region of Croatia used their patrilineal ties to build up informal ownership structures that circumvented the regulations of the communist state but left them with-

out formal title to their land after Croatian wartime expropriations in the 1990s.

These few examples illustrate the diversity of postsocialist transformation (Hann 2002; Stark and Bruszt 1998). Still there are clear tendencies toward a capitalistic regime of property relations that – to a greater or lesser degree – is based on laws privileging private property. The current process of integration of several former socialist countries into the European Union is reinforcing this tendency. Of course the situation within the European Union is not static and in recent decades a series of economic, political, and demographic changes have affected the role and organization of family life. While many of the directions of change are common to much of Europe, their detailed impact is variable, depending – as Cole reminds us in his chapter on recent changes in South Tyrol – on interactions with local circumstances and values. Does this mean that there is still room for alternative systems of kinship and property relations, and how far are these alternatives limited by political and economic developments? The final section of this introduction looks briefly at the contemporary situation in Europe as a whole.

Inheritance and Kinship in Contemporary Europe

Most of the chapters in this book focus on agricultural communities. This is a natural outcome of the professional preoccupations of historians and anthropologists. In the past the overwhelming majority of Europe's inhabitants worked on the land, and, even today, most anthropological research is carried out in small, rural communities. How far can conclusions developed in these research environments be applied in the economically complex, mainly urban communities of today's Europe?

It is not just the mode of inheritance that may change when one comes to modern urban societies – it is also the appropriate mode of investigation. Historians thrive on archives, and anthropologists thrive on small communities in which one can gather both representative quantitative data and the insight that comes from participant observation. In studying modern urban society, the two functions must be split. The collection of representative information on family patterns, inheritance practices, and the transmission of social position call for social survey methods and statistical analysis. We are not aware of any Europe-wide survey of inheritance practices, but valuable statistical data does exist on other aspects of kinship and inheritance systems.

Segalen (1986) was one of the first anthropologists to make the connection between rural studies and the statistical information available from social surveys. Among the topics she discusses is the very marked tendency

for marriage to take place between people whose parents belong to similar occupational categories. On the surface at least, this practice seems rather analogous to the tendency in many rural communities between families with similar positions in the status and property-owning hierarchy. Both cases raise similar issues concerning the relative importance for these marriages of economic calculation, reciprocity and shared *habitus*.

Table 1.1: Figures from the European Community Household Panel Survey for 1998[4]

	Greece	Italy	France	Ger-many	Den-mark	Sweden
Women aged 20-24 living alone	4%	1%	13%	23%	40%	---
Women aged over 65 living alone	38%	40%	46%	52%	57%	52%
Men aged under 65 belonging to a civil association	12%	26%	29%	32%	62%	69%

How much can contemporary statistics tell us about the persistence or otherwise of the distinctions between the kinship and social systems in different parts of Europe? Table 1.1 compares statistics on aspects of family and social organization in some countries belonging to the European Union. As can be seen, there are clear differences between the northern, central-western, and Mediterranean countries – with the arrangements of the latter placing more emphasis on kinship ties and those of northern countries placing more emphasis on other forms of association. Though the figures focus on a few aspects only, the statistical differences would not be there without corresponding differences in values and patterns of social interaction – involving the societies as a whole, not merely their rural sectors. The statisti-

[4] The figures in table 1.1 are taken from Eurostat (2002) pages 23, 127, and 141. The figures in the second and third rows were copied by eye from charts.

cal differences are also broadly consistent with the conclusions of the historical and ethnographic studies in this book. More research – archival, statistical, and anthropological – will doubtless be needed both to extend these comparisons and to understand them fully, but it seems certain that Europe's distinct inheritances will continue to be a living reality for some time yet.

Acknowledgement

We wish to thank John Eidson, Chris Hann, Karl Kaser, Robert Layton, and Frances Pine for their comments on earlier versions of this introductory chapter.

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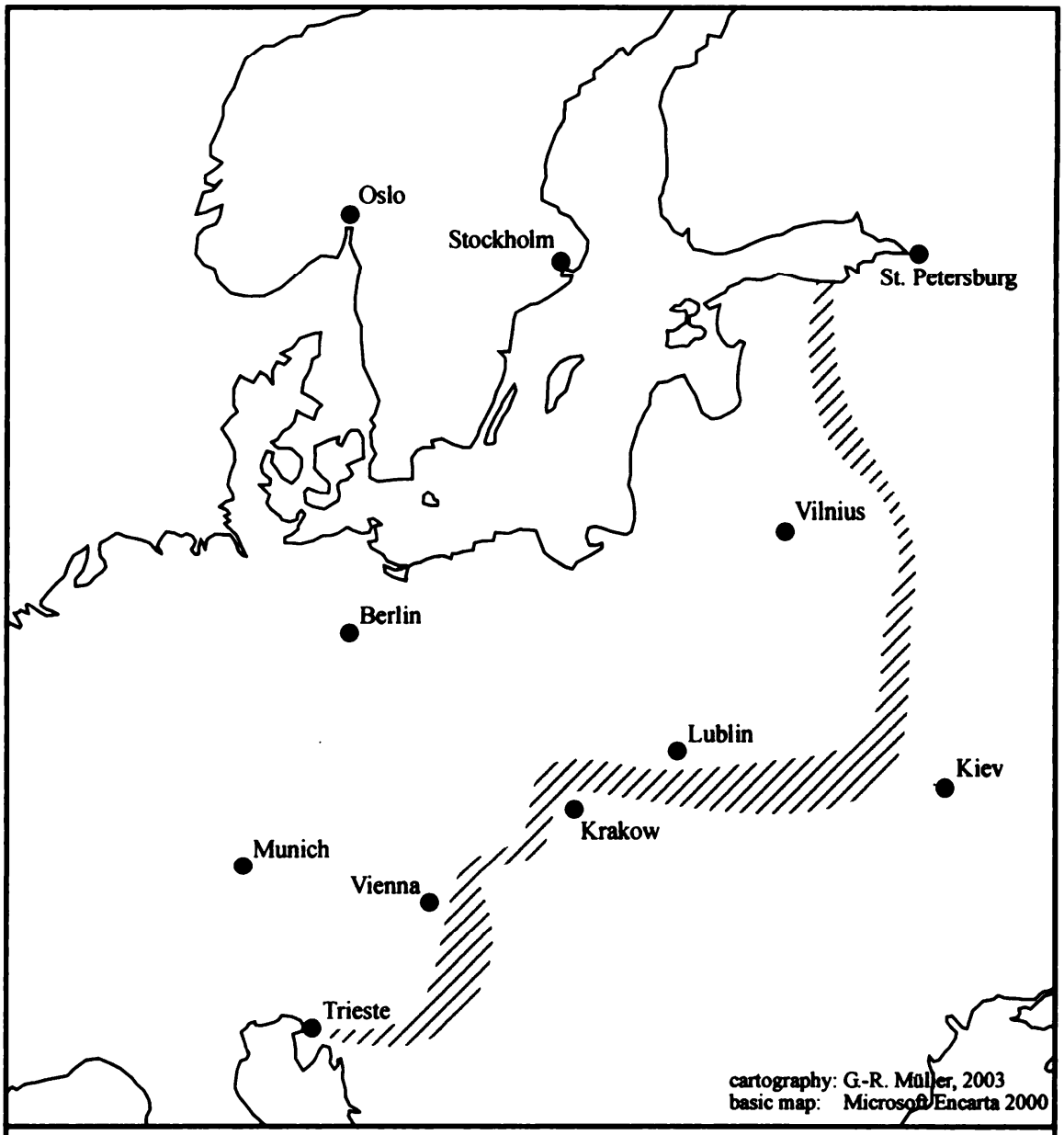
Part I

The Longue Durée

How did European inheritance systems get to be the way they are? Which particular processes and historical developments have shaped models of family and community organization? How much continuity is there in European inheritance, family, and community regimes? The chapters in this section deal with these questions. Different approaches complement each other: the analysis of long-lasting historical processes, theory driven regional comparisons, and in-depth studies of the complexities of specific local histories. The following introductory comments aim to highlight and link together some arguments put forward in the chapters of this section, but are not meant to summarize them.

In the opening chapter Michael Mitterauer shows that many basic features of European family, inheritance, and community organization can only be understood in reference to medieval origins. An example of this is the emergence of parallel terms for paternal and maternal relations in the kinship terminology of most of the European languages. A shift from a *bifurcate-collateral* system of kinship terms toward a *lineal* system started in late antiquity and, step by step, took effect throughout most of Europe in the medieval period, with the spread of Christianity. This transformation of kinship terminology can be understood as an indication of fundamental changes in kinship systems, involving a loss in significance of ties of patrilineal descent. New concepts of social bonds, established by the sacraments of marriage and baptism, gained increasing importance. Mitterauer also analyses how the secular order established by the feudal empires of the Middle Ages constituted a social framework affecting the order of family and community. In particular, the *Hufenverfassung*[1], which spread from the Carolingian Empire, where it was developed, over much of the continent during the High Middle Ages, introduced a new social order strongly based on impartible inheritance – though many parts of Mediterranean and Eastern Europe escaped its influence.

[1] The feudal order based on the *Hufe*, i.e. the *mansus* or hide.



Map2: Historic borderline between different feudal and demographic systems
(based on: Kaser, K., 2000, Macht und Erbe, Wien: Böhlau, p. 75.)

Karl Kaser also deals with the consequences of feudalism in his outline of the geographical distribution of the main European inheritance systems, which differentiates Western, Eastern, and Mediterranean zones. In a further step, he concentrates on Eastern European societies and shows how parts of Eastern Europe – along the much discussed Hajnal Line, running from Trieste to St. Petersburg – formed a transitional zone not only for household formation traditions but also for inheritance norms. The main parts of Eastern Europe east and southeast of this zone did not experience the feudal

transformations associated with the *Hufenverfassung*. Instead tributarian systems of power, in stronger or weaker forms, dominated the rural societies in the European east, but do not appear to have interfered with household affairs to the same extent as occurred under the Western system of *Grundherrschaft*. Kaser shows that, consequently, household structures and inheritance practices in the rural societies of Eastern Europe preserved a common rule of equally partible male inheritance, though there was some regional variation in the specifics of household formation.

In the next chapter, E.A. Wrigley considers demographic constraints on the operation of inheritance systems. The first part of his analysis focuses on situations – typical of most European history before the industrial revolution – where economic resources and population are both static. One consequence of such a situation is that, regardless of the ideological stress on patrilineal descent, the statistical chances that a father would have been able to pass over his property to an adult son would be limited to about 60 per cent. Wrigley also shows why, given static economic resources, the consequence of a sustained rise in the birth rate would be a corresponding rise in the death rate – restoring the population to static equilibrium but with a higher total population and lower living standards. Against this background he then compares the demographic experience of some Western European countries as they entered the phase of population expansion and urbanization that accompanied the industrial revolution – showing that the contribution of changes in fertility, nuptiality and mortality rates varied from place to place. Wrigley concludes his analysis with a discussion of the inheritance consequences of the below-replacement birth rates of contemporary Europe.

In the following chapter Robert Layton answers the question "What creates village democracy in Europe?" with a comparative analysis of the patterns of social interactions that sustain or undermine community organization. The reference points for his comparisons are 15 villages in the French Jura. In these villages, inheritance relationships – characterized by partible inheritance and the maintenance of large commons – played an important role in sustaining a centuries-long practice of cooperative cheese-making, which, from the 13th century up to the second half of the 20th century, linked village households into collective organizations. Layton contrasts this with the operation of impartible inheritance, which he sees as discouraging cooperation elsewhere in France, and of cumulative change that led to the enclosure of the commons in England.

The remaining chapters in this section are case studies of continuity and change, on the threshold of the modern era. David W. Sabean's chapter on interhousehold cooperation and the devolution of property in two communities in southwestern German Württemberg in the 18th and 19th century

deals with partible inheritance regimes, where each child, male and female, was treated with obsessive equality. His detailed analysis presents communities where inheritance was not essentially concentrated on the marriage of the children or the death of the parents, but where instead the productive resources were gradually ceded to the younger generation in a long, drawn-out process. The transfer of immovable and movable property took place over decades and most often involved a close connection between the household management of parents and inheriting children, under the authority of the older generation. Massive demographic growth and the increasing marketization of the rural economy in the 19th century did not change the basic principles of the existing inheritance regime, although it altered the balance between the generations and regrouped marriage circles within the community.

The inheritance norms that characterized intergenerational relations in the South Tyrolean community of Innichen/San Candido between the 18th and early 20th centuries, studied by Margareth Lanzinger, provide a striking contrast to the system described in the previous paragraph. The local ideas about property in Innichen were strongly guided by the wish to preserve the existing social structure – i.e. the number of houses and estates – in the community. The means to reach this goal were inheritance practices strongly oriented toward impartible inheritance. Lanzinger shows how, despite central government advocacy of legal reform, the regime of primogeniture, and local authority control of domestic affairs, became stricter in response to economic and demographic changes in the course of the nineteenth century.

The chapter by Nevill Colclough, about the small Puglian town of Ascoli, illustrates how a local inheritance regime underwent a major transformation. Colclough contests the view that Southern Italian peasant communities have "always" been characterized by an inheritance regime where arable land was mainly inherited by sons, usually on the death of the father, and the daughters' more limited share of the family patrimony was passed over as a dowry. Colclough, through an analysis of notarized marriage contracts – which exist for Ascoli families from the 16th to the 19th century – shows that, on the contrary, in earlier times intergenerational transmission of wealth was rather female-centered, and that though sons were seen socially as the crucial heirs they received little more than patrimonial residues upon their father's death. This began to change in the first half of the 19th century, when legal and economic changes initiated a process that led to sons becoming the main heirs, no longer only symbolically but increasingly in material terms as well.

Chapter 2

European Kinship Systems and Household Structures: Medieval Origins

Michael Mitterauer

Introduction

The founding volume of modern family history research, *Household and Family in Past Time*, by P. Laslett and R. Wall, has the characteristic subtitle "Comparative studies in the size and structure of the domestic group over the last three centuries in England, France, Serbia, Japan and colonial North America, with further materials from Western Europe" (Laslett and Wall 1972). "Medieval origins" of these structures were not the subject then. Hence, only one of the volume's contributions considered the medieval roots of the family structures it discussed. In "The zadruga as process," Eugene Hammel wrote, "My intention is to show that the familial zadruga is basically a product of patrilocal extension and virilocality, that it seldom remained intact for more than two full generations, and that it existed in the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries in some areas in a form not substantially different in structure and even in size from that found in those areas in the nineteenth century and even today." And "indeed the purpose of the analysis is to point up the rather remarkable conservativism in underlying kinship principles despite the cultural flux of Balkan history" (Hammel 1972: 339).

In *Family Forms in Historic Europe,* the succeeding volume to *Household and Family in Past Time*, the situation is similar (Wall, Robin, and Laslett 1983). The contribution by David Gaunt, "The property and kin relationships of retired farmers in Northern and Central Europe," is the only one to consider in detail the medieval origins of the institution it discusses – that of "retirement" – and to deal with the social context in which it arose (Gaunt 1983: 249-280). An important contribution to the same volume is made by Carl I. Hammer's study on "Family and 'familia' in early-medieval Bavaria", which deals with the manorial framework of peasant family rela-

tionships and outlines some aspects of their development up until the modern period (Hammer 1983: 217-248). My aim in this chapter is to follow the general approach of these authors – which may previously have seemed rather marginal to the discipline of family history – and extend it in terms both of the historical depth of the research and the breadth of the social context used to understand household structures. It is my thesis that many decisive questions arising from "comparative studies in the size and structure of the domestic group over the last three centuries" can only be answered with recourse to medieval origins and when considering the social contexts of family forms that then developed. This is particularly true when we seek an explanation of the basic patterns described by Peter Laslett in 1983, in his overview on "Family and household as work group and kin group: areas of traditional Europe compared" (Laslett 1983). Attempts at such an explanation can be presented here only briefly and sketchily; my point of departure is Eugene Hammel's "underlying kinship principles."

Tendencies of Change

In his fundamental study on "Changing kinship in Europe" (1963), R. T. Anderson referred to a momentous process of change to be noticed in the kinship terminology of most European languages: a shift from a *bifurcate-collateral* system of kinship terms toward a *lineal* one. Characteristic of the former system is a terminology differentiated according to a bifurcation into a paternal and a maternal line; by contrast, the latter is standardized in both directions. One particularly marked difference between the two systems is the naming of the parents' siblings. In the bifurcate-collateral type, the father's and the mother's brothers are differentiated – for instance, in Latin, as "patruus" and "avunculus," or in an earlier phase of German, "Vetter" and "Oheim." Correspondingly, the father's and mother's sisters are termed "amita" and "matertera," or "Base" and "Muhme."

In the more recent lineal type, however, siblings from the father's and the mother's side are equal. The French "oncle" and "tante," the English "uncle" and "aunt," and the German "Onkel" and "Tante" refer to both. The process of matching the kinship terms for the father's and the mother's side also affects other degrees of kinship within the lineal system. We may therefore speak in terms of a process of parallelization of paternal and maternal relations in general. At the beginning of the Middle Ages, this characteristic process had been completed by only two European languages, though two particularly important ones, namely Greek and Latin. In Greek, such tendencies toward parallelization can be noticed as early as between the fifth and the third centuries B.C. Toward the end of antiquity, a similar transition took place in Vulgar Latin. All languages originating from Vulgar Latin – from

Portuguese to Romanian – have preserved this type of kinship terminology. Among the languages of Germanic origin, English was the first to undergo the shift toward a parallelized system. It developed during the period subsequent to the Norman Conquest on the basis of expressions originating from French. Central European areas likewise underwent this transition quite early; most of the languages in east-central Europe – Czech, Slovenian, Polish, and Hungarian (a language of Finno-Ugric origin) – followed suit, although with a distinctive time lag. Particularly late was the parallelization of Russian, Ukrainian, and the Baltic languages. One European region has preserved the differentiated kinship terminology, or a mixed type which only differentiates between the parents' male siblings, until today – namely the Balkans. We can still find this kind of terminology in Bulgarian, Macedonian, Serbian (except for Dalmatian Serbian), Bosnian, and Albanian, and thus not only in the Slavonic Balkan languages. So the great process of transformation of European kinship terminologies, which started 2,500 years ago in Greece, did not affect all regions.

Apart from aligning kinship terminologies of the paternal and maternal side, there is another noteworthy development in the course of these great transformation processes: the parallelization of kin by blood and by marriage (Anderson 1963: 22-33; Goody 1983: 269). The French expressions "beau-père" and "belle-mère," "beau-frère" and "belle-soeur," as well as "beau-fils" and "belle-fille," are constituted in analogy to the terms for blood relations of the first degree. The same is true for the Dutch "schoonvaeder" and "schoonmoeder," for the German "Schwiegervater" and "Schwiegermutter" and corresponding compounds. The English composite constructions "father-in-law," "mother-in-law," "brother-in-law," etc., indicate the origins of this terminological system: the ban on marriage in canon law, which is also the root of the terminological alignment of "uncle" with the husband of the aunt, and of "aunt" with the wife of the uncle. Likewise, the wife's and husband's relations by marriage are parallelized. The region where we still find different expressions for in-laws up to the present, depending on the sex of the speaker, is once again the Balkan area with most of its languages.

Terms for relations by godparenthood also have to be counted among the aligning kinship terms appearing in the European languages in the course of the Middle Ages (Lynch 1986: 333; Goody 2000: 29). The Latin "patrinus," "matrina," "filiolus," "filiola," "compater" and "commater" are derived from the terminology for blood relations, as are the expressions "godfather," "godmother," "godchild," "godsiblings," and their analogies in the Germanic languages. Thus with regard to relationships of godparenthood, the languages of Christian Europe have developed, along with relationships

by blood kin and by marriage, a highly characteristic third group of relationships with its own specific terminology.

Of course, kinship terms often outlive the kinship orders in which they developed. Hence a particular kinship system cannot be derived simply from a particular kinship terminology. As for terminological innovations, however, we may safely assume that there are indeed new concepts of kinship underlying them. It is quite obvious that the expressions for relations by marriage and by godparenthood arising in the Middle Ages were connected with new concepts of bonds, which were conceived as being established by the sacraments of marriage and baptism. On the whole, the great transformation process of kinship terminology of European languages that has developed since late antiquity can be understood as an indicator of fundamental changes in kinship systems. This process points toward a development characterized, on the one hand, by a *loss in significance of the ties of patrilineal descent*, or of ties of descent in general, and on the other hand, by a *gain in significance of ties by marriage*, or by various forms of "spiritual relationship" (Mitterauer 2003: 366).

The Balkans, the area where patrilineal terminology has lasted longest, also saw the preservation of other manifestations of patrilineality. The Balkan area is the region where, in analogy to the places of settlement shared by lineage communities among the living, there is also evidence, into the 20th century, of shared burial places for the dead. Many other manifestations of patrilineal kinship have persisted until recently, or up to the present, in parts of the Balkans – such as the duty of blood vengeance among agnates, the levirate as a marriage rule, and the commemoration of patrilineal ancestors at the celebration of the patron saint of the house (Kaser 1995: 178-233). Nowhere in Europe have elements of patrilineality lasted as long as in this area. In contrast, the direction and dynamics of the processes of change in kinship systems in the core zones of Europe became all the more distinct.

Inheritance systems express kinship relationships in a particularly clear way. On the basis of patterns of property transfer in rural areas, Karl Kaser recently presented an attempt at a European survey: "The geography of the inheritance practices in Europe at the threshold of the modern period presents, in brief, the following general picture: in the Mediterranean, a tributary agrarian system with a conjugal, nuclear-family-oriented pattern of inheritance tending towards equality; in the western part of Europe, a manorial agrarian system with a conjugal or nuclear-family-oriented pattern of inheritance based on unigeniture or equality; in the eastern part of Europe, a tributary agrarian system with agnatic centered, equal male inheritance" (Kaser 2000: 72-73).

Using additional characteristics, Kaser distinguishes that "three main tendencies that can be divided into numerous sub-varieties can be found: the Western European, with a focus on individual impartible inheritance, that includes the support of other male or female heirs with dowries [...]; the Mediterranean that – based on Roman-Byzantine roots – required equal inheritance that may even turn into a preference for female heiresses [...]; and finally, the inheritance system in Eastern Europe with its focus on equal male inheritance, often excluding female heiresses" (Kaser 2000:17; cf. 27-74).

The legal patterns of inheritance clearly correspond with the general tendencies of change in the kinship systems during the Middle Ages and with the geographical areas affected by them. At the start of the Middle Ages there was a contrast between two major systems: on one side, the Greco-Roman urban culture of the Mediterranean world with its tendencies toward bilateralism and equal inheritance of sons and daughters; and on the other side, the tribal cultures outside the Roman Empire, where patrilineality and joint male inheritance of property prevailed (although these features were much more marked among the insular Celts and the Slavic tribes than among the Germanic ones). The Frankish Empire added an important new element to the European scene, namely feudalism, which introduced the manorial organization of agriculture on the basis of the *Hufenverfassung* system – which used the impartible *Hufe* (the *mansus* or hide) as the principal form of peasant holding. As this system, which is discussed more fully in the latter part of this chapter, spread, it tended to replace the tradition of patrilineal descent with a new tendency toward unigeniture. Starting from the Frankish Empire and its successors, in the course of the Middle Ages these structures also spread out to large parts of the European periphery (Kaser 2000: 63-67; Mitterauer 1999). The Russian principalities as well as the newly forming Slavic empires of the Balkans remained outside, however. In the southeast, the ancient heritage of the Byzantine Empire was already on the retreat from the early Middle Ages onward, although in the Aegean area it persisted under Ottoman rule, which becomes evident, for instance, in an extraordinary preference for female inheritance on several Greek islands.

The tendencies toward a parallelization of kinship terms of the paternal and maternal line, and of blood relationship and relationship by marriage, which can be observed in most European languages, find their counterpart in other manifestations of changes in kinship systems as well. These changes are the signposts of fundamental processes in the development of family and kinship. They indicate a loss in significance of groups of patrilineal descent and of the complex patrilineal family forms corresponding to them, as well as a general decline of thinking in terms of descent and lineage. Kinship

concepts oriented on ancestors retreated in favor of ego-focused ones; and, consequently, the sense of unity among agnates, which could be characterized with the paradoxical term "group ego," and found its expression, for instance, in blood vengeance and levirate, retreated as well. Kin relationships became more open, more diverse, more differentiated in their functions and, as a consequence, less binding. New forms of kin relationships and quasi-familial ties arose – primarily godparenthood, vassalage, and confraternity. Based on these, comprehensive social forms emerged that utterly distinguish the development of European societies from other cultures that are more strongly oriented by descent.

With regard to the effects of kinship systems upon family structures, the vital point is that the medieval trends spreading from the south and west of the continent created a high degree of flexibility. This is clearly shown in an ideal typical confrontation with the systemic constraints of patrilineal patterns, which predominated in the east and southeast. For sons, patrilocality was no longer compulsory: Neolocality, and consequently living in basic household forms of the nuclear family type, was possible. Likewise, for daughters it was no longer compulsory to leave home when they married: They could remain within the house and continue the family. There was no longer any obligation for either sons or daughters to marry early; to continuing the patriline, by giving birth to as many sons as possible for the husband's lineage group, had ceased to be a cultural value, much less a religious one. Aside from ties within the scope of the manorial system encouraging late marriage, there was, in fact, no obligation to marry at all, and the status of celibacy, when connected with entering a spiritual community, was held in high social esteem. For widows, there was no obligation to remain with the families of their deceased husbands; remarriage was possible at any age and, not infrequently, even welcomed within the manorial framework. There was no obligation to adopt someone if one had no sons: Continuing the patriline through physical or fictitious parenthood was not required. For sons, there was no obligation to remain in the parental house or to return to it; hence individual mobility and migration became possible. And, finally, there was no obligation for the paterfamilias to maintain his position of authority in old age: The principle of seniority applying to ancestor-oriented societies did not apply here (Mitterauer 2003).

Only in one respect did the new tendencies developing in medieval kinship systems bring new ties, and this was marriage. The marriage model developing in late antiquity and the Middle Ages did not have Christian roots alone but was elaborated within the Christian churches and essentially propagated by them. This marriage model was monogamous: Polygamy and concubinage were excluded. It was for life; divorce was not permitted. And

it was a matter of consent: It was the marrying couple's will, not a contract between the families of their origin, which was constitutive for the marriage. Although individual consent remained programmatic for a long time and came to prevail only gradually, there nevertheless emerged with the Christian marriage model a new family model, which became directive to the development of the European family: the "spouse-centered family."

Another characteristic of family organization that became more distinct during the Middle Ages, apparently connected with the loss in significance of lineage bonds and the gain in significance of the conjugal relationship, is the role of the house or household as the decisive unit of familial community (Laslett 1972: 23-44). As soon as patrilineality no longer played a role in kinship orders, the principle of patrilocality also lost some of its influence on the composition of the family. In those European regions where the manorial system prevailed, the rules of household formation did not favor cohabitation with relatives (Kaser 2000). Basic family forms consisting of the married couple and their children were the predominant pattern (Hajnal 1983: 73; Laslett 1983: 516). However, we do encounter cohabitation with nonrelated persons – a constellation quite unthinkable within the more rigid patterns of patrilocality. This was a characteristic development in many societies of medieval Europe: The need for labor supplementation resulted in employment of farm hands, farm maids, journeymen, apprentices, maidservants, etc. According to medieval understanding, all these people belonged to the family, although as a rule they were not related to the head of the household. This applied equally to the various types of foster children. What was decisive for family membership was living under one roof, eating at one table, or working together – *not* having an ancestor in common. A very open and flexible system of family organization developed due to the decreasing importance of lineage bonds. Hence the family gained multifarious potentials, especially as a unit of organization of labor. Cohabitation of both related and nonrelated persons enabled extended households to emerge in adaptation to various tasks. Also, there were possibilities of an extended form of *familia*, (*Rahmenhaushalt*), grouping a number of households in familial or quasi-familial relationships (Bosl 1975; Hammer 1983; Fichtenau 1992: 134). A significant example is the manorial *familia*. The European family system with its particular openness and flexibility was (not least through such comprehensive extended households and *familiae* models) part of the basis for the special development of European societies. Analogous to and in causal connection with the characteristic focus on the couple, this family system can be described as "domo-focused," i. e., centered upon the house.

The *tendency toward individualization within the family,* the foundations of which were already laid in the Middle Ages, also ranks among the set of characteristics of Europe-specific family developments; this found expression not only in the frequently emphasized increase of individual disposable property as opposed to common property of family and kinship groups. Even more important was the long phase of adolescence determining the "European marriage pattern" (Hajnal 1965), the frequent phenomenon of leaving the parents' home, movement between households in the course of domestic service, the fact that service in other people's houses was linked with various forms of instruction, the traveling experiences of "life-cycle servants," and, in general, the comparatively high individual mobility in societies with predominantly neo-local settlement (Mitterauer 1992: 20). Ties with the family of origin could be loosened by such factors. Especially in adolescence, competing social forms played an important role: above all, youth groups and, from the late Middle Ages onward, also schools. The strength of cooperative and institutional social forms, especially in the highly urbanized core areas of Europe, was another general factor that provided the individual with possibilities of personal development beyond his familial roles. Certainly for men such chances of individualization existed in a higher degree, but the open, flexible family organization created conditions for women, which were in many respects analogous, as well.

Causes of Change

The fact that the spread of Christianity in medieval Europe must have played an important role in the transformation of kinship and family structures is shown even at a single glance at the new kinship terms then arising. The "in-laws" hint at the influence of canon law, and the expressions for relations by godparenthood reflect the more important influence of the sacrament of baptism. Moreover, it can be said that the religious insignificance of descent, which was to become so very essential to the development of European kinship and family systems, is a genuinely Christian structural element. Although nowhere laid down as a dogma, it nevertheless implicitly formed part of the basic structures of Christian social order. Baptism as "birth in spirit" took precedence over "birth in flesh" (Lynch 1986: 261). Christian religious practice does not recognize any hereditary charisma. It is succession by consecration, not succession by lineage, which is in the foreground. Christianity is a markedly communal religion. With its spread, communal social forms arose, counteracting organized lineage groups. In the Middle Ages, this applied to all Christian or newly Christianized societies. This genuinely Christian basic structure explains why the lineage-oriented elements of kinship and family systems lost importance and led to a fundamen-

tal openness to influences by extra-religious factors. The crucial influence of the organization of work on the development of the family in Europe cannot be deduced directly from characteristic features of Christianity; it can, however, be reconstructed indirectly, since Christianity created the preconditions for such a flexible form of kinship and family system. In other world religions, attributing a greater significance to descent, the preconditions for an adaptation of family structure to the requirements of the organization of work do not exist in quite the same manner.

Christianity, unlike other great religious communities, scarcely gave any detailed directions as to the inner order of family and kinship – with one exception, which is not genuinely Christian, however. The principles of monogamy and marriage by consent, which were so essential to the development of the "spouse-centered family," were doubtlessly spread in the Middle Ages as particularly Christian values, which by that time they had indeed become (Angenendt 1997: 269 –290). Yet their origins were different. The roots of the Christian concept of marriage as a whole, and consequently those of the "spouse-centered family" as well, reach further back. It is significant that in kinship terminology we already encounter decisive indicators in pre-Christian Greek. Much of what found entrance into the medieval kinship and family system through Christianity had its roots far back in Greek and Roman antiquity or pre-Christian Judaism.

Aside from genuinely Christian factors and those factors adopted by Christianity from ancient traditions, other factors emerging from later developments of the individual Christian churches also have to be considered. The papal church as a highly centralized and organized religious community is a special characteristic of Western Christianity that did not develop before the High Middle Ages. It was uniquely successful in having its norms recognized within the scope of its jurisdiction – including its radical prohibition of marriage among relatives. Christian churches with lower penetrative power were not equally successful, as can be observed, for instance, in the continuing practice of levirate in some regions of the Balkans (Kaser 1995: 163). The reason for this was not a fundamental difference between the Roman Church and Orthodoxy, with regard to prohibition of endogamy, but a difference in their power to prevail against the kinship customs of the pre-Christian substratum. The great orders of the Roman Church, especially the preaching orders, were a substantial instrument of penetration. These universal orders were also a special characteristic of the West. They were of high importance for the development of individual lay piety and thus for processes of individualization within the family. This is only one of many examples. At any rate, Christianity as an explanatory factor for European kinship

and family structures has to be seen as a structure in process itself, which at different times was effective through different individual factors.

Corresponding to the papal church as an organized religious community, the feudal empires of the Middle Ages as secular authorities likewise constituted a social framework affecting the order of family and kinship. Starting from the Carolingian Empire, in the course of High Middle Ages, feudalism spread until it comprised the greater part of the continent. Only Eastern Europe and substantial parts of the Mediterranean remained outside. What proves to be a particularly fundamental factor of change in the context of feudalism is the principle of unigeniture. Its influence can be noticed on all levels of society, from succession of princely thrones down to impartible inheritance among the landed peasants. But what certainly had the broadest effect upon family organization was the manorial foundation of the system. It seems that the so-called *Hufenverfassung* on both secular and ecclesiastic estates laid the foundation for some structural elements that – at least from the High Middle Ages onward – were characteristic of peasant family forms in Western and Central Europe and large parts of Eastern Europe as well: one married couple per farmstead as a basic rule, no marriage previous to succession of property, frequent handing over of farmsteads through the remarriage of a widow, retirement (*Ausgedinge*) as a form of maintenance of the parents, or of one parent, when they were no longer fully fit for work, and, above all, domestic service as a flexible form of labor supplementation according to the individual needs of the farmstead (Kaser 2000: 67-74). A precondition of all of these phenomena was the far-reaching right of the landlords to interfere with the family relationships of their subjects, comparable to those of the "senior" toward his vassals. Within the whole feudal and manorial system, deep personal dependence in a legal sense played an important role. It originated in traditions of serfdom, although a serfdom, which – unlike slavery – was, in principle, compatible with marrying and settling down. In the course of the Middle Ages, the landlords' right to interfere with the family relationships of their subjects developed in very different ways, depending on both the period and region concerned.

Feudalism and its manorial foundation started to spread from the core of the Carolingian Empire between the Seine and the Rhine, where the agrarian revolution of the Middle Ages had also started (Rösener 1993: 49-63). These developments were doubtlessly connected. Technologically, an essential precondition of the agrarian revolution was the fact that the use of the heavy plow allowed cultivation of pieces of land that until then had not been arable and were therefore not fully exploited. With the introduction of the three-field system, agrarian production, and thus the subsistence of the

population, could be raised suddenly. This resulted in a strong growth of, at first, the rural population but eventually also of the urban population.

The three-field system decisively influenced the specific character of the traditional landed peasantry of Western and Central Europe. What was characteristic of the landed peasantry of this extended region as early as the Middle Ages was a high degree of cooperation between wife and husband. The gender-specific division of labor was comparatively balanced, meaning that many tasks could be performed either by men or by women. And, what is more, many of the substantial tasks on a farm were performed together, with equal or unequal distribution of the roles (Mitterauer 1989: 856-871). This applied, for instance, to grain harvest, hay harvest, or meadow work, in general, and to cattle breeding in the stables near the house. In an intercultural comparison, this situation appears remarkable, not least as opposed to the circumstances in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. The singular importance of cooperation between husband and wife in the peasant family economy of Western and Central Europe raises the question of whether the tendency toward a spouse-centered family in this area perhaps had economic reasons as well. Manorial coercion might have encouraged both cooperation and balance of labor. Certainly the manorial system had an influence upon gender-specific division of labor among the landed peasantry insofar as it relieved them from military service. The transition from peasant warrior to plowman contributed to overcoming dichotomous forms of division of labor – and thus of gender roles as well. Such dichotomous forms did, as is shown, for instance, by the circumstances in Eastern Europe, substantially support masculine orders and patrilineal kinship patterns (Kaser 2000: 297-303). The agrarian revolution starting from the core of the Frankish Empire implied a balancing of labor and gender roles among the rural population. Together with the three-field system and the *Hufenverfassung*, throughout the Middle Ages these patterns spread deep into Eastern Europe.

Based on the fundamental improvement in subsistence levels brought about by the agrarian revolution, there evolved – starting, in essence, from the same core zones – a rich urban culture, which, from the High Middle Ages onward, also reached other parts of Europe north of the Alps. To the feudal empires of this area, cities were by no means an alien element. They were, on the contrary, an integrative part of the feudal system. Among the urban population, many of the general tendencies of change in family and kinship structures appeared in a radicalized form (Mitterauer 2003: 303). This is true, for instance, for the decline of lineage thinking, the loss in significance of kinship, the strength of spouse-centered family forms, the frequency of households with cohabiting non-relatives, the great variety in both the extent and composition of households, the functional release of the

household family by cooperative and institutional social forms, the decline in significance of family economy in relation to individual wage labor, and, on the whole, the first signs of individualization within the family. Compared with the surrounding countryside, the cities often show a particularly dynamic development in kinship and family structures. What have to be considered in this context are not only economic factors such as specifically urban forms of division of labor or social factors such as a specifically urban mobility. The cities were also centers of religious concerns. Here the impact of the specifically Christian structures discussed above took effect in a particularly significant form. It is certainly not a mere coincidence that the new terms of kinship terminology from which these considerations started can first be ascertained in this urban environment.

Regional Patterns and Structural Borders

Viewed against the background of systemic conditions of medieval kinship and family structures as have been outlined here – although in sketchy and incomplete form – it appears useful to rethink the much-discussed question of European "marriage patterns" and "household typologies" that has been put forth for debate by, above all, the works of John Hajnal and Peter Laslett. This also touches upon the problem of the *longue durée* of European kinship and family systems. Many structural elements of Hajnal's "two kinds of pre-industrial household formation" (Hajnal 1983: 65), or of Laslett's "fourfold tendency in household composition in traditional Europe" (Laslett 1983: 517), have already been mentioned here. They have been located, not only by a formal characteristic of European extended regions such as the "West," the "East," or the "Mediterranean" but also by a description of their social context, such as the feudal system, the *Hufenverfassung*, or patrilineal kinship patterns. If viewed from the perspective of the medieval origins of European patterns of kinship and family structures, it becomes evident that these systemic conditions cannot be fixed to certain static regions of the continent specified by points on a map. The structural borders between areas of equal or similar systemic conditions moved markedly in the Middle Ages.

Much simplified, it can be said that at the beginning of this epoch, two extended regions with completely different structures were facing each other: on the one side the highly developed urban culture of the *Imperium Romanum* with Christianity as a communal and evangelizing religion with clearly descent-opposing tendencies and, on the other side beyond the Limes, the various forms of tribal organization and tribal cults that placed a high social value on genealogical origins. The area influenced by the first of these structures spread with the gradual Christianization of Europe, which was concluded toward the end of the Middle Ages. The schism between the

Western and Eastern Church in the 11th century probably had no fundamentally differentiating effect upon the structures of family and kinship. What appears much more essential is another factor of transformation. With feudalism, the manorial system, the *Hufenverfassung*, and the three-field system, there emerged in the central area of the Frankish Empire, subsequent to the agrarian revolution of the Early Middle Ages, a completely novel type of social structure which powerfully influenced family and kinship. With the expansion of the Carolingian Empire and its successors, these structures infiltrated the south and, above all, the east. But new kingdoms and territories that had never belonged to the Frankish Empire also adopted them and passed them on. This is true, for instance, for England, from where the process of transformation of the insular Celts started, who in the Early Middle Ages were descent-oriented to the extreme (Charles-Edwards 1993: 21-88).

Many characteristics that Hajnal and Laslett have classed with the "European marriage pattern," or with the "Northern and Western" type of "tendencies in domestic group organization in traditional Europe" are most likely based upon this agrarian pattern, which spread, from the Early Middle Ages onward, from the core of the Frankish Empire: above all, the high mean age at first marriage, the link between succession in property and marriage, and the institution of life-cycle servants. Hajnal has delimited the expansion of the European marriage pattern to the east with a line from Trieste to St. Petersburg (Hajnal 1965). This refers to a European structural border reaching far back into the Middle Ages. Elements of the Western agrarian system, the *Hufenverfassung* above all, were spread to this border – or, more properly, transitional zone – in the course of the medieval settlement in Eastern Europe (Rösener 1993: 70; Kaser 2000: 63). Obviously the specific conditions of household formation determined the high ages at marriage of men and women and the low frequency of marriages. The Hajnal line does not, however, correspond with the border between Western and Eastern Christendom. In part it runs far west of the latter. The only connection between these two structural borders is the fact that only the Rome-oriented lords, and the colonists who they sponsored, practiced the Western system of agriculture. Croatia and large parts of Hungary and Poland are located between the two delimiting borders: Although they belonged to the Western church, they were not touched by the spread of peasant settlement in Eastern Europe. With regard to the development of kinship terminologies, we may state that, while Slovenia and Bohemia and Moravia followed suit in adopting the lineal system, the same was not true for Croatia and Slovakia. This reveals once more the far-reaching structural influence that the colonization toward the east exerted upon family and kinship.

Toward the Mediterranean, there was no such distinct boundary to the spread of the patterns of the Frankish agrarian order comparable to the one in the East. In the climatic and ecological conditions of this region – little rain and rather light soil – the spread of the three-field system arrived at its natural limits. Other patterns of the agrarian order, however – manorial structures, forms of rural communities, peasant tenancy rights, and habits of inheritance – were not necessarily linked to natural preconditions. Apart from the systemic conditions of the agrarian order, it has to be considered that also the structural differences were not so marked as in the eastern parts of Europe with regard to the degree of urbanization. So, as for the social framework of family and kinship systems, a structural border comparable to the Hajnal line is not likely to be found in the Mediterranean. Nor are there any such indications to be found in the demographic data.

If the hypothesis is correct that the expansion of the European marriage pattern corresponds with the expansion of specific elements of the agrarian order, which first had been developed in the Frankish Empire, then we may assume that there were tendencies toward a standardization within this area. The hypothesis does not in itself suggest that family patterns outside the area – in Eastern Europe or the Mediterranean – need have been homogeneous (see, e.g., Livi-Bacci 1999: 136). Any element of common structure in these parts of Europe would have to be interpreted in its own right, considering the conditions in which it arose. For Eastern and Southeastern Europe, the principle of patrilineality appears to have been such a structural element. Many common characteristics of the family system of this extended area can be explained on the basis of this principle of the kinship system. Its persistence in the individual regions of this extended area, however, will have to be viewed in different ways. The persistence, observable, for instance, in the mountainous regions of the western Balkans and due to a pastoral economy and low penetration by both secular and ecclesiastical authorities, should not lead to typological generalizations comprising the whole Balkan area, let alone all of Eastern Europe (Kaser 1995: 268).

Similar kinship principles could still lead to very differing patterns of family structures even within that extended area. For instance, ecological factors played a major role (Kaser 2000: 235-269). Within the scope of analogous structures of the manorial system, different conditions of labor organization among wine growers and cattle breeders neighboring each other resulted in completely different family forms. A similar differentiation is to be found between city and country, or between different social milieus. In the nobility, for instance, descent consciousness and lineage thinking, although lacking any religious backing in Christianity, still play an important

role with regard to family structures. Especially in those regions of Europe where the ties by kinship systems are weak, such differentiation has led to a great variety of family forms coexisting under equal systemic conditions. This raises the question of whether a particular statistical frequency of family forms or a particular mean age at first marriage in a local population are a sufficient basis of classification in a comparative, Europe-wide typology.

Much of what recent research on family history has reconstructed with reference to a European comparison of types of household composition or patterns of household formation makes reference to medieval origins. Sources that would allow for a quantitative analysis on a broad basis do not exist for the Middle Ages. But perhaps the path to an explanation based on roots reaching thus far back does not even require quantitative analysis. What has been attempted here is to develop typologies of historical family forms starting from their social context. This strategy might also prove productive for historical family research in more recent periods. This approach would require integration of historical demographic family research with a historico-anthropological line of inquiry.

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Chapter 3

Power and Inheritance: Male Domination, Property, and Family in Eastern Europe, 1500-1900

Karl Kaser

The history of the rural family in Eastern Europe is, compared to the knowledge of family history in Western or Mediterranean Europe, still almost *terra incognita*. There have been some isolated studies of the Russian family, in the period of serfdom, conducted by Soviet or by Western researchers (e.g. Hoch 1986 or Czap 1982) for the pre-emancipation period (until 1861), and several studies have looked at family organization in the context of the legal changes and urban migrations of the post-emancipation period. The best investigated area in Eastern Europe is the Baltic region. Prominent here is the work of Plakans (1983, 1987) and his colleague Wetherell (Plakans-Wetherell 1992). Significant work has been done in Estonia as well (Palli 1983). For the Balkans, Katsiardi's paper presents an excellent overview of current family history research of the Balkans (Katsiardi-Hering 1997). The work of Halpern (Halpern 1967) and, subsequently, Hammel (1972) needs also to be mentioned. In the 1980s, Todorova (1993) began to publish her work, which focused on Bulgarian family history as well as, more broadly, Balkan perspectives. In the field of comparative European studies, Mitterauer (1990, 1996) has emphasized trans-cultural perspectives and the contextualization of family patterns. Kaser (1995, 1996) analyzed family patterns in the Western Balkans, where pastoral economies have shaped the history of the family.

Our knowledge about inheritance practices and patterns of generational transfer of property in Eastern Europe is also rather patchy, compared to our knowledge of Western Europe and the Mediterranean. Works such as those of Bohac, on peasant inheritance strategies in Russia (Bohac 1985), or Bushnell (1993) are exceptions. Most of the studies show clearly that family structures can be affected by inheritance patterns. The need now is for a way

of bringing together the isolated data on inheritance practices into a conceptual framework.

The available empirical evidence for Eastern Europe suggests that inheritance patterns in most rural areas during the period from about 1500 to 1900 were variants of a single predominant system – that of equally partible male inheritance. This system included both mobile and immobile goods but excluded women's marriage portions, which consisted typically of self-made textiles and clothes. This pre-modern inheritance system excluded women not only from inheritance but also from ownership of property in general and so provided an economic basis for the power of men and the subordination of women. The empirical evidence also suggests that there were transitional zones or sub-regions where Eastern European inheritance practices merged with those of Central Europe and the Mediterranean. Thus the transition zone from Central to Eastern Europe, the so-called Hajnal line, was seen to run from Trieste to St. Petersburg. This line was first identified as a zone of transition between two European marriage patterns (Hajnal 1965) but turns out to separate different inheritance patterns as well (see Map 2 on page 32). It represents the western fringe of a pattern that was spread over most of the Eurasian continent in the past – including Anatolia, the Middle East (Lindholm 1996: 56, 236), northern India (Lardinois 1997: 362), China, and Taiwan (Thornton and Hui-Sheng 1994: 26; Linck 1997: 107).The transition zone from the Balkans to the Mediterranean crossed continental Greece and comprised parts of the West Adriatic coastal region.

Equally Partible Male Inheritance

The inheritance geography of Europe can be roughly divided into three large areas: Western, Eastern, and Mediterranean zones, each with its own variations. Omnipresent, of course, is the potential for administrative intervention to change the customary laws of inheritance, whether for purely economic or even military purposes. Two basic variants, the *Grundherrschaft* system[1] and that of a tributary system, can be distinguished. The exclusive goal of the tributary systems was to force the peasant families to pay their taxes and fees and fulfill their labor obligations vis-à-vis the landlord, while the *Grundherrschafts*-system enabled the landlord to intervene in questions of inheritance, family organization, and landed property. Europe had *Grundherrschaft*-systems in Central and Western Europe, while various forms of

[1] *Grundherrschaft*, a German term that is difficult to render precisely in English, can be defined as a specific form of landlordship, mainly in Central Europe and parts of Western Europe, which is characterized by a variety of economic and legal tools placed at the disposal of the landlord to impose his will on his serfs.

tributary systems were most characteristic of Eastern and Mediterranean Europe. In addition, we have to consider whether or not agnatic structures played a decisive role. Where the agnatic ideology was crucial, inheritance usually was considered patrilineal property of the group and was controlled by the group. In regions where the role of the agnatic group was weak or nonexistent, inheritance procedure focused on the conjugal couple and the nuclear family. Thus we have additionally to differentiate agnatically (with the focus on the descent group) and conjugally oriented areas (with the focus on the nuclear family). Eastern Europe belonged to the first; Western and Mediterranean Europe, with the exception of the larger islands – Sardinia, Corsica, Sicily, Crete, and Cyprus – belonged to the second. The Mediterranean area, dominated by tributary systems, was conjugally oriented. The tendency to provide the children of both sexes with inheritance portions had a long tradition and was rooted (Goody 1990: 456) in the inheritance laws of the Roman Empire.

In the Mediterranean, there exists a long tradition of equally partible inheritance, the tributary system, and the relative absence of patrilineal descent concepts with the nuclear family as the primary social unit. In Western Europe, the result was the same, but the reasons and contexts were different. Most parts of its rural society were organized according to the *Grundherrschaft*-system under the direct control of a *Grundherr* (landlord), who organized his territory and the peasant families on it so as to achieve the best economic results. He had more direct legal, administrative, and judicial power over his peasants than landlords in Eastern Europe or in the Mediterranean. At the same time, the bonds between the landowner and his superior in the feudal hierarchy, in terms of mutual military obligations and solidarity, were very strong, which limited the tendency toward local autonomy.

One of the main goals of the *Grundherr* was to keep the landholdings of his serfs the same size over generations. This principle of impartibility was usually maintained against the will of the peasants, who considered an inheritance of land the best provision for all their children; although this did not prevent the peasants themselves from coming to the conclusion that impartibility was the better solution, especially when their landholdings had already come to be quite small (Goody 1976: 27-35; Berkner-Mendels 1978: 211).

The Western and Central European pattern of unigeniture, the right of succession to the impartible inheritance of land and nuclear family on the farmstead, developed in two phases. It originated during the 7th and 8th centuries in the Frankish kingdom, the territory of which covered large parts of Central and Western Europe, before Charlemagne came to power. In the second phase, between the 11th and 14th centuries, this inheritance pattern

was extended eastward in the course of a massive colonization of conquered territories by *Grundherrn* and their peasants. They first reached the Elbe and then moved eastward (Higounet 1986). Thus an important zone of cultural transition was established. This zone not only divided two marriage patterns but also different systems of inheritance and household formation. It divides the *Grundherrschaft* system from tributary systems, conjugal – from agnatic-centered systems, and systems of impartible inheritance from those with equally partible male inheritance.

In territories east of the transition zone, tributary systems were almost never replaced by *Grundherrschaft* systems, and thus inheritance followed traditional patrilineal customary laws until the 19th and early 20th centuries. In the wide plains of Eastern Europe, large feudal estates were established on tributary lines. Usually the larger part of the estate was under direct control of the lord, and the minor part was distributed out to the dependent peasantry. This is why the surplus of the lord consisted not mainly of fees and taxes paid by the serfs but of the labor they were compelled to do on the fields directly under the control of the lord. The power of these lords was considerable, and in many cases they competed with the country's central institutions for power (Revesz 1976).

From the 14th to the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire, which was based on Islamic law, consolidated its control over most of Southeastern Europe. A new agrarian regime was established. The former Christian feudal lords were replaced by Muslim *spahis*, who had only the right to take 10 to 20 percent of the harvest from the peasants; there were no other legal or economic obligations. This usufruct right of the *spahi* could not be transferred to his children. From the late 16th to the 18th century, this system, which was beneficial for the peasant, changed to become the *çiftlik* economy, which was similar to the East European estate system. The peasants lost their independent status and became tenants on large *çiftlik* estates (İnalcik 1985).

Along the Adriatic coast, where the Venetians had had some territorial control since the late medieval period, the *colonate* was employed. This organization had roots in the Roman agrarian system. It was basically a tenant system. The peasants were free to contract a tenant relationship with the landowner, who usually lived in a nearby town. The tenant was obliged to turn over anything from a quarter to two-thirds of the harvest to the owner. There were no further significant obligations (Tomasevich 1955: 116). Specific agrarian conditions developed along the border zones between the Ottoman Empire on the one hand and the Russian and Habsburg empires on the other. These border zones, defended by privileged peasant-warriors, ran intermittently from the steppes of southern Russia, across the Balkans, to

Croatia. To take a specific example, after resettling the war-devastated territories in Croatia, a militarized agrarian society was established in the 16th century by the Habsburgs. In this case, peasants were granted land in exchange for military services. Here, Habsburg military officers replaced the administration of the former feudal lords (Kaser 1997: 29-66).

In the mountainous areas, especially in those of the Western Balkans, no stable state or feudal order could ever be established. When the Ottomans occupied the Balkans, many people fled to these regions, which therefore became densely populated. They lived there herding sheep and goats. Since the administration of the Ottoman Empire was not able to establish order and protection for the livestock breeders, they elaborated their own tribal society based on agnatic lineages (Kaser 1995: 62-137).

Although the rural societies and legal systems in which peasants and livestock breeders lived were very different, the household structures and the inheritance practices in these systems did not differ much from each other. Everywhere among the agrarian population, equally partible male inheritance was the rule. The household group of kin and in-married wives was identical with the labor group, which was not complemented by non-kin servants. The only conclusion that we can draw from this observation is that the agrarian systems and their representatives, the landlords, did not successfully interfere with household affairs by reorganizing, e.g., the inheritance system according to their economic interests. Bushnell (1993), who investigated the question of whether the serf owners controlled serf marriage in Russia (1773-1861), comes to the conclusion that noble intervention was strongest on the issue of the bride transfer payment. But, ultimately, serf marriages were shaped more by social and cultural practices than by noble intervention.

The ownership or management of landed property by agnatic household groups was widespread in Eurasia and was also the dominating pattern in Eastern Europe. With the new agrarian order introduced by the eastward colonization by *Grundherrn* and their tenants, its distribution was pushed back to the east. Thus the transition zone became the dividing line between conjugally focused land inheritance and agnatic-centered inheritance. This becomes clear when we review the inheritance practices along this transition zone.

In the area of contemporary Slovenia, equally partible male inheritance had begun to be eliminated by the 9th and 10th centuries (Vilfan 1968: 72-84; Winner 1977: 125-34). Croatia remained untouched by this colonization movement, and the traditional inheritance pattern survived. In Hungary, impartible inheritance was introduced in the German villages founded during the eastward colonization. At the same time, the Hungarian rural population

continued with the traditional inheritance behavior. It is interesting that the inheritance systems in Bohemia and Moravia – in what today constitutes the Czech Republic, on the one hand, and in the Slovak Republic, which was part of Hungary until 1918, on the other hand – were completely different. Bohemian customary law had provided for equal male partible inheritance, but this was replaced by the new German law brought with colonization (Maur 1996). Slovakia was only colonized in the form of isolated settlements, and the traditional system, which was even adopted by several German settlements, survived (Švecova 1974: 7-16).

The Polish kingdom formally introduced the German legal system and the agrarian system of *Hufenverfassung* (based on the *Hufe* – the *mansus* or hide – as the standardized concept for a peasant holding) throughout the country after colonization, despite the fact that colonization itself only reached western Poland (Hupka 1910: 39-56). This introduction was successful in western Poland; and in the core area of Lithuania, the *Hufenverfassung* was also introduced and the land systematically redistributed. But in the eastern parts of the Polish-Lithuanian state, including Belarus and the Ukraine, male partible inheritance and strong agnatic communities survived (Conze 1940: 29-52; Revesz 1976: 204; Kula 1976: 198; Kochanowicz 1983: 155-64). A considerable portion of the Baltic region was also affected by German colonization. Prussia was colonized by German settlers and landlords, and the agrarian structure of Kurland, Livonia, and Estonia was reorganized by German feudal lords who introduced impartible inheritance.

Reasons for the Emergence of Partible Male Inheritance

The emergence of partible male inheritance cannot be explained in terms of existing cultural values. Instead, it can be explained historically, paying special attention to economic factors. The main reason could have been economically based patterns of male-centered division of labor. This could explain the exclusion of women from property and inheritance and the monopoly of men in access to it. But how can the emergence of this kind of division of labor be explained? In this preliminary explanation, two ecotypes of household economy have to be considered: the woodland ecotype, based on a slash-and-burn economy, and the mountain ecotype, based on sheep and goat breeding.

It is clear that slash-and-burn economies[2] were very widespread in early Eastern Europe. This was a general economic pattern outside the mountainous regions of the Western Balkans during the medieval and early modern period. The importance of this economy is reflected by the Old Slavic calendar, the lunar phases of which were connected to segments of the slash-and-burn economy: the first was the month in which the trees were cut, the second the month of drying the trunks, and so on (Grekow 1958: 39). This was a very extensive kind of economy. Through population increase, the clearing communities were forced to use previously cultivated fields again; permanent settlements and permanent fields emerged. In Lithuania and Belarus, the slash-and-burn economy continued to play a significant role until the late Middle Ages (Conze 1940: 24); slash-and-burn agriculture was also practiced in the modern period in the eastern Baltic, in Slovakia, Poland, and on the territory of the former Yugoslavia (Lewicka 1972: 119-42; Podolák 1972: 167; Filipović 1972).

The slash-and-burn economy was also widespread in the woodlands of the East Finnish province of Karelia during the early modern period. The data from this region from the 16th century onward (Moring 1993, 1996; Waris 1995) and from northern Europe generally (Ahvenainen 1996) is very important because it explains how it worked. The connection of this kind of economy to equally partible male inheritance becomes very clear. Only men were allowed to organize the fields and to cultivate them; they brought in the harvest. Access to the soil was a male privilege. This could have been the reason for the transfer of this exclusive male right from one generation to the other. Women were limited to housework and cared for the livestock, which included wool processing. Therefore, upon marrying, they received textiles and possibly some livestock (Waris 1995; Moring 1993, 1996).

The slash-and-burn economy favored not only exclusive male inheritance of land but also joint family organization and cooperation by the whole village community. Originally, the boundaries of the economic activities of a group in the woodlands were also the boundaries of their hunting areas. Later, they became the boundaries of the village. The village community organized the usage of the cleared areas (Moring 1993, 1996). The more male members a household comprised, the larger the size of woodland for

[2] Today this kind of agriculture is the predominant system in aboriginal New Guinea and on some Pacific Islands. It is important in Amazonia and in the mountainous areas of South and Southeast Asia. It is based on the use of fire to clear fields that are usually farmed for one to three years and abandoned until the forest cover grows back. The fire clears the ground while the ashes provide a fertilizing mulch. Fallow periods usually vary from ten to 60 years. A family farming one hectare on a 50-year cycle, opening a new field each year, would thus require access to a total of 50 hectares of land (Leaf 1996: 33).

clearing assigned. This kind of labor needed the collaboration of several men; constructing a large household was thus economically useful (Gaunt 1987: 123).

The mountain pastoral economy in the Western Balkans provided similar challenges. It was based upon sheep and goat breeding and involved transhumance. In some places, the distances between summer and winter pastures were short, comparable to the situation in the Alps, but in others, transhumance involved long-distance seasonal migration. Usually, the herding was conducted by family members and kin; non-kin shepherds were an exception. For the labor-intensive summer season, pastoral working groups consisting of related household groups were formed. The summer pastures, which were the economic basis, were usually the joint property of the group. Where tribal territories existed, the winter pastures and the fields were also joint property. This pastoral economy was based on a division of labor similar to the slash-and-burn economy. Unlike in the Alps, where security was assured since medieval times, herding in the Balkans was dangerous, since the Ottoman Empire could not guarantee security to the pastoral societies. Herding was thus absolutely tied to carrying weapons, to hunting and fighting animal thieves and protecting the flocks on the migration between the seasonal pastures. It was the male group that was exclusively responsible for the livestock; women could never be herders – they were only allowed to help in the processing of wool and cheese. This kind of rigid division of labor was, again, the reason for the male monopoly on property and inheritance. The agnatic ties in the generational transfer of property, supported by tribal and patrilineal organization, were prominent (Kaser 1995).

Inheritance Pattern and Household Structure

It has already become clear that the tributary systems allowed the people to practice their traditional inheritance practices. The same was true with household arrangements. The system of equally partible male inheritance offered several variants for property transfer: Transfer might not have been part of every individual life-course, in which case a large and complex household could emerge; it could be systematically carried out upon the marriage of the sons, which would have a system of nuclear families as its consequence; or it could be carried out after a certain period of marriage, e.g., upon the death of the father, and the individual life-course would experience phases of both nuclear and complex family constellations. These were the possibilities the inheritance pattern offered to the people. They decided according to economic and cultural considerations, or administrative pressure or rational individual conviction could lead to complex structures in order to avoid the parceling of the farmsteads. Cultural and economic rea-

sons usually interacted. If we regard the decision not to include non-kin labor in the labor unit as a cultural reason, the decision to achieve a large household with a number of male workers was an economical one, as was the fission of a household. Demographic and historical change could result in changing household arrangements; the modern state, finally, enacted laws against this inheritance practice, and socialist concepts of modernization led to the nuclearization of the family. The empirical evidence usually allows a fragmented snapshot of family structures; only the phase of the destruction of this traditional inheritance system and its accompanying household formation patterns are well-documented.

We will need many more regional and local studies before we can be in a position to reconstruct household formation patterns throughout Eastern Europe. For the time being, this is only possible for the Balkans – and even here our knowledge of the historical dynamics is limited (see Kaser 1996). For this region, we can differentiate the distribution of three household formation patterns. The first is characterized by patrilocal marriage arrangements and the tendency not to split the household at any particular point of the life-course, e.g., the death of the household head, but at a certain point in the household cycle that might not be reached for generations. Upon the marriage of the sons, their wives came to live with them, and the grandsons did the same. The group could thus become quite large. When the members of the household decided to split, they divided the property equally, according to lines of descent. This pattern was widespread and covered regions in Hungary proper, Croatia and Slovakia, most parts of Serbia, western Bulgaria, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania and northern Greece, and variants occurred in the Mani region on the Peloponnesus. This area can be subdivided into two parts and the pattern into two variants, a southern and a northern one, the transition zone between the two variants running through Croatia. In both, the principle of equally partible male inheritance was the rule, but partition varied across generations for different reasons. In the northern variant, scarcity of land seemed to be the decisive reason because complex household structures were combined with high population density. The most commonly practiced strategy to avoid the diminution of landed property through equal partible inheritance was to make the sons stay together, to prevent fission. From Hungary proper, we can find similar evidence. Complex household structures were common from the 18th century onward, especially in densely populated areas in the southern parts of the country. The southern variant is characterized by a distinctive patriarchal cultural background: strong blood ties, ancestor worship, patrilineality, patrilocality, bride price, blood feuds, and patrilineal kinship structure.

The second household formation pattern was also characterized by patrilocal marriage arrangements, but the division of the household took place at a certain point of the household cycle (given that there was more than one son). When the sons married, their wives came to live with them and their parents; the separation and the transmission of property into equal parts took place upon the death of the father or when the last son was married and the daughters had all been married out. Analyzed structurally, such societies appear as having predominantly nuclear family households with a small proportion of complex households. Ideally, complexity was experienced by most people at two points of the life-cycle: from marriage until the complex household separated and again later, when sons brought in daughters-in-law. This pattern was also widespread in the Balkans – it was dominant in Hungary proper, in Bulgaria, and in continental Greece. It clearly dominated in regions with an abundance of land, whereas in regions with a high population density and scarcity of land, the tendency to avoid fission was stronger.

The distribution of the third pattern was limited to regions settled by Romanians. The residence arrangement was neo-local, and the families were structured nuclearly. At the time of marriage, the sons received their equal shares of land, left the parents' house, and established separate residences. The youngest (or the oldest) remained with his parents. Thus the composition of a Romanian's household changed in the course of his married life: ideally formed by a single couple, then a couple with unmarried children, and finally two couples in a stem-family constellation with unmarried children. The concern for equality dominated the division of property. The parcels of land were divided in such a way as to be equal quantitatively and qualitatively. The obligation to divide property during the father's lifetime was very strong. When, in the course of the second half of the 19th century, more and more daughters began to receive equal inheritance rights to land, an inheritance competition in bringing in equal land parcels emerged. A marriage contract could fail if one of the promised partners was not able to contribute an equal share. The reason for the division of property at marriage is not entirely clear. The abundance of land was, in any case, a prerequisite.

The household formation patterns in the rest of Eastern Europe cannot be defined this clearly – but were nonetheless analogous, in that they, too, were based on male partible inheritance and in that the fact that the household was the primary working unit. The societies of Eastern Europe had no servants on the farmsteads. One might come to the conclusion that this system could not react to changing demographic and economic requirements since the number of workers could not be adjusted year by year as in the life-cycle-servant system in the West. Did this mean that, instead of the amount

of labor defining the composition of the household, the composition of the household defined the amount of labor that could be carried out? This system was much more flexible than it appears at the first glance. In Russia and Romania, where village communes existed, the land was regularly distributed and readjusted to the labor potential of the household, and the pastoral societies constructed large kin-based working units for the labor-intensive summer season. In addition, due to the system of equally partible landed inheritance, neighbors were usually close kin who mutually supported one another on the basis of kinship solidarity.

In conclusion, it has become clear that in rural Europe east of a transition zone, a distinctive inheritance pattern dominated, which seemed to represent the western fringes of a system that was spread over considerable parts of Eurasia. This inheritance pattern, rooted in the male-centered forms of labor division of pastoralist and slash-and-burn economies, was one of the main reasons for male-centered gender relations and family ideology. Women were not only excluded from inheritance but generally from property. This was the material side of female inferiority in rural society. On the other hand, this inheritance system made it possible to develop a wide variety of family forms – nuclear, stem, and complex family forms – which can all be considered as potential modes of adaptation to changing economic and demographic conditions. In this respect, this type of family was at least as flexible as the predominantly nuclear family of Western Europe and the Mediterranean.

The struggle against this inheritance system and related household formation systems and family ideologies began in the second half of the 19th century with the enactment of laws, which promoted the equality of both sexes in inheritance. The governments were not very successful in transforming law into practice until just after World War II. Socialist modernization was so effective in this respect that this subject has become a closed chapter of the family history of Eastern Europe.

Acknowledgement

This article is a summary of the monograph: Karl Kaser: *Macht und Erbe. Männerherrschaft, Besitz und Familie im östlichen Europa*, 1500-1900, Böhlau, 2000. Research was conducted within the framework of the project "Patriarchal Social Structures in the Balkans," funded by the Austrian Research Foundation. This paper is a significantly revised and shorted version of a paper that was published in the quarterly *The History of the Family* (Kaser 2002).

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Chapter 4

Intrinsic Growth Rates and Inheritance Strategies: A Perspective from Historical Demography

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Historical demography lies in the area of overlap between the social and the biological, and demographic behavior is affected by both influences. This is true of all or almost all aspects of demographic behavior. Death and taxes, a wit once remarked, are the only two certainties in life. But even the incidence of death in all communities is profoundly affected not just by inescapable physiological changes or conditions, the aging process, the impact of inherited defects, and the vigor of the immune system but also by social and economic circumstances, the quantity and variety of nutrition, the density of population, conventions concerning personal hygiene, and so on. The same is true of fertility. Fecundity, the capacity to bear children, is principally a physiological attribute of individual couples, but fertility, the number of children actually produced, though conditioned by fecundity, is also profoundly influenced by social conventions about the timing and incidence of marriage, about the degree to which sexual relations outside marriage are countenanced, about the frequency of sexual relations within marriage, about the time spent breastfeeding, and so on. Since social as well as biological influences affect almost every aspect of the demography of a community, there are very wide differences between communities, due chiefly to the former in most cases. It is probable that human populations have exhibited greater diversity in their demographic attributes than other animal species because social conventions and economic circumstances can influence both fertility and mortality so heavily and in ways that have no analogue in other animal populations.

Against this background, in what follows I shall examine briefly the ways in which demographic variables condition inheritance strategies before reviewing the demographic experience of some Western European countries

against this background, chiefly in the centuries before the advent of fertility control within marriage.

The intrinsic growth rate (IGR) is one of several demographic measures the object of which is to eliminate the effect of transient phenomena in order to focus on underlying structure. It identifies the rate at which a population would increase or decrease if current fertility and mortality rates were maintained at the level prevailing at a given point in time long enough for transient features to disappear. At any given moment, as a result, say, of a past epidemic in which the victims were largely children, there may be relatively few men and women in the child-bearing age groups and, as a result, a relatively small number of births, perhaps fewer than the current number of deaths, but this does not mean that, if fertility and mortality remain unchanged, the population will continue to decline. It is perfectly consonant with a steady, even rapid growth in numbers in the long term. The IGR records the rate of growth that will eventually come into being, given the continuance of current demographic characteristics. A population that has shed any transient features in this fashion is termed a stable population. The process of calculating an IGR also enables many other characteristics of the stable population to be identified, some of which are important to the consideration of inheritance strategies (cf. Preston, Heuveline, and Guillot 2001: 141-55; Shryock and Siegel 1971: II, 526-9). It may prove helpful in this connection to draw attention in particular to the following salient facts.

A zero IGR, that is, a combination of fertility and mortality that implies that in the long run the population will neither rise nor fall, implies that about 20 percent of all married men will have no surviving children when they lie on their deathbeds while another 20 percent will have one or more surviving daughters but no surviving son and the remaining 60 percent will have at least one surviving son. These proportions held true for populations in the past both when the zero IGR was the result of high levels of fertility and mortality and also when fertility and mortality were both low. And the same is also true for intermediate cases.

The method used to derive the result was somewhat crude: It consisted in considering three possibilities that roughly span the range of historical experience; a society in which the chance of a child surviving to his or her father's death was one in three, where it was one in two, and where it was two in three. If fertility and mortality are in balance, this in turn implies three different average family sizes and in each case a related set of distributions of children born. For any given family size, say of five children born, it is possible to determine the frequency of each possible combination of sons and daughters by binomial expansion (there are six possible combinations of the sexes of the children in a family of five: five females; four females and

one male; three females and two males; two females and three males; one female and four males; and five males).

This procedure, combined with an assumption about the level of mortality, will yield an estimate of the frequency of any given outcome. Suppose, for example, that we wish to establish the likelihood that at least one female but no male heir will survive at the death of the father. This may be calculated for each sex combination of a given family size and multiplied by the frequency with which that combination occurs. For example, where there is a one in two chance of surviving to the death of the father (and, for simplicity, assume that the chance is equal for boys and girls) if two female and three male children were born, the likelihood that at least one daughter will still be living at her father's death is three in four, while the likelihood that all three sons will have died is one in eight, giving a combined likelihood of three in 32. The likelihood of two female and three male children in families of five children is 10 in 32 by binomial expansion. Therefore, the overall likelihood of there being at least one female but no male heirs in families of five, where two of the children are girls and three are boys, is three in 32 multiplied by 10 in 32, equaling 30 in 1,024. Similar calculations for each possible type of five-child family, plus similar calculations for each of the other family sizes in the overall distribution, can be aggregated to give an overall result for the likelihood of any given eventuality – no male heirs, one male heir, two male heirs, one female but no male heir, and so on. More sophisticated exercises, including those using population-simulation techniques, produce broadly similar results.[1]

Since in the vast majority of past populations the IGR must have been very close to zero, it follows that the six to two to two ratio (60 percent with a male heir at death, 20 percent with a female but no male heir, and 20 percent with no heir of either sex) captures the empirical situation facing communities in the past most of the time. Population growth rates have been high in almost all populations in the past two centuries, and it is therefore easy to forget the fact that rapid growth was rare to a degree before the industrial revolution, except in areas of new settlement or following a major change in productive technology, such as took place in the Neolithic food revolution. Even a population growth rate as low as one per 1,000 per annum will cause a population to double in 700 years. Over a period of 5,000 years, a brief period even in the short history of mankind, such a population would grow to 150 times the original population count. Although short-term "shocks" will have affected the 20 to 20 to 60 ratio severely at times, the

[1] For a fuller description of the method just briefly described and for a demonstration of the stability of the six to two to two ratio across a range of combinations of fertility and mortality that result in a zero growth rate, see Wrigley 1978.

average situation must have displayed this pattern. Many families could not have preserved the male line by the procreative activities of the married couple. Nor was the situation straightforward for many of those fathers who had a surviving son. In almost half such cases there would have been more than one surviving son, a situation which might produce complications of a different sort.

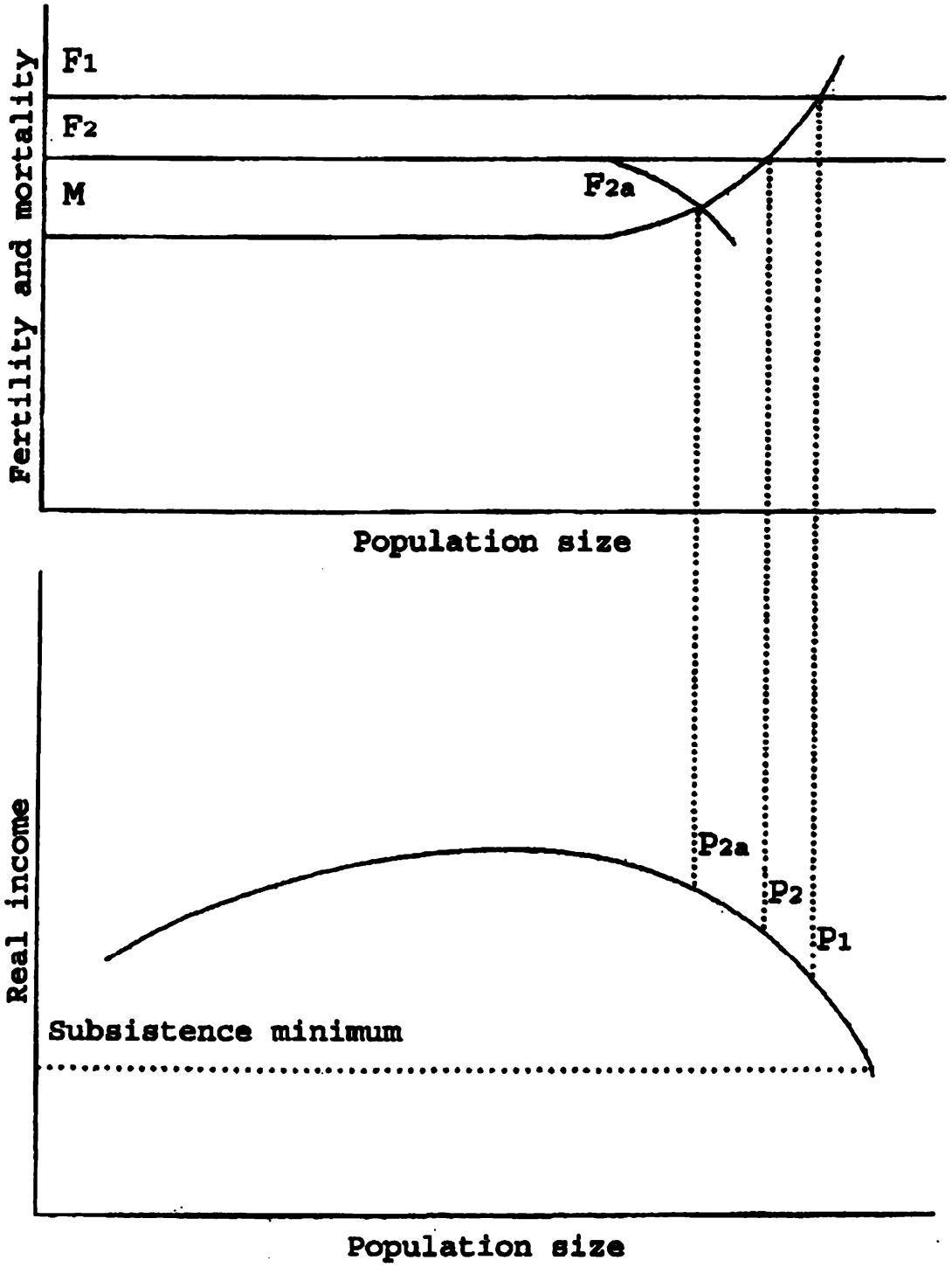
Before considering some of the implications of an IGR of zero for inheritance strategies, it is salutary to note that even a relatively modest departure from a zero rate can result in striking changes in the characteristics just described. For example, where the rate is zero the pressures on a family with two or more surviving sons may be minimal because, as is intuitively obvious and readily demonstrable, in a stationary population the "surplus" sons in families having several surviving males will be balanced by the same number of "niches" in families that either have no surviving children or no surviving male children. The situation changes drastically when the population is not stationary. Where the growth rate is 1 percent per annum the ratio of surplus sons to available niches is more than two to one, while if the growth rate rises as high as 3 percent per annum the comparable ratio is almost six to one. Rates as high as the latter figure have been reached in a number of Third World countries since World War II. Conventions concerning inheritance that function smoothly in the absence of rapid population growth, therefore, may be put under great strain if the IGR rises in communities in which, say, there is a close association between access to a holding of land and the possibility of marriage. In the recent past the opposite type of situation, where a population is declining and the IGR is negative, has been very rare, but the ratios just quoted are sensitive to movement away from the zero rate of growth in either direction. Thus in the decades following the Black Death in England, when the population continued to decline, there were far more niches than surplus sons, a situation which may also entail serious difficulties.

Although the basic demographic characteristics of a population in which the IGR is zero are common to all such populations, the implications of these characteristics will vary widely according to the conventions by which the transfer of property and authority from one generation to the next is determined. Suppose, for example, that there is a preference for property to pass from father to son rather than devolving to other family members or to a person who is not a member of the family. Since there is only a 60 percent chance that this will occur between successive generations, it follows that the chance of this happening on three successive transfers (that is, from one man to his great-grandson) is only a little more than one in five. The probability of a succession of this type being maintained over, say, three

centuries is vanishingly small. However strong the preference for such an arrangement, society must evidently be able to cope with the impossibility of maintaining links of this kind between successive generations for more than a few iterations. The problem can be overcome in many different ways. Even if a male heir is mandatory, the family line suffers much less threat if collateral heirs are acceptable where a direct heir is lacking. The longevity of many hereditary peerages in Britain depended upon this point in the days before its radical reform (Wachter and Laslett 1978). If a female heir is able to solve the problem by marriage, and there is a female heir, the problem will disappear until it is time for the next generation to inherit. Again, if the problem arises in a society in which adoption is widely practiced, social convention can normally offset biological failure. The likelihood of a difficulty arising on this score is also substantially diminished if it is open to a man to take more than one wife, especially when a first wife does not produce a son in the early years of their marriage. A more radical solution which appears to have been common in much of Western Europe is to solve the problem by downgrading its importance. If the succession of a direct male heir is preferable but falls well short of being mandatory, his absence may be the occasion of regret but nothing more (Laslett 1977; Laslett 1988).

Provided that the IGR was at or very close to zero, the combination of fertility and mortality that produced this was irrelevant in the past so far as the number and sexual balance of surviving offspring was concerned. But it does not follow that the level of fertility and mortality that resulted in a balance between the two was irrelevant in other contexts that affect inheritance. If the focus of interest lies not in the presence or absence of a male heir but in the scale of property transfer that can take place, there may be very substantial differences between communities in which both fertility and mortality are high and those in which both are low. It is a simple matter to show that *ceteris paribus* the population size which will be attained in the first case will be higher than in the second and, further, that living standards are likely to be significantly higher in the second case than in the first. The point is illustrated schematically in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Fertility, Mortality, and Living Standards



In the upper part of Figure 4.1, three different combinations of fertility and mortality that result in zero growth are shown. In the lower part of the figure the implications of the three combinations for living standards are illustrated. In the archetypal Malthusian case, fertility is high and invariant (F_1) and mortality rises with increasing population size until the two are in balance and both are at a high level. The resulting pressure on resources causes living standards to be pushed down close to the subsistence minimum (P_1). A second possibility involves a lower but also invariant level of fertility (F_2), such as might arise in a population in which the average age at marriage was higher than in the first case or where breast-feeding customs caused births to be more widely spaced. As in the first case, mortality rises as the population increases, but the two are in balance at a lower population total and the resulting standard of living is more favorable than in the first case. The third possibility differs from the second in that fertility as well as mortality is sensitive to population pressure and eventually declines with increasing numbers (F_{2a}). This might occur, for example, where the ability to enter marriage was conditional upon the availability of a holding of land. Assuming indivisibility of landholding, this would oblige a couple eager to marry to wait until a holding fell vacant due to a death in the senior generation. In this case population growth ceases at a still earlier point with beneficial implications for living standards (Schofield 1976). In summary, to borrow the terminology of the classical economists, it appears that at one extreme a society might be forced to concentrate almost exclusively on providing itself with the necessities of life, while at the other it might reasonably expect to enjoy in some measure the comforts of life and even, occasionally, afford its luxuries.

Although an IGR very close to zero must have characterized the great majority of communities in the past, this was not true of all communities in any period, and during the last quarter millennium most European populations have grown rapidly. It may be of interest, therefore, to sketch some of the salient features of change in Western European countries and to place their experience in a wider context.

Until the advent of modern medical and public-health facilities, a rate of growth much above 1 percent was exceptional because mortality rates even in relatively healthy communities were much higher than those prevailing today. In general, rates of population growth were much lower still. Yet even a rate of growth of 1 percent per annum was substantially higher than characteristic rates of growth of output. Hence the tension that Malthus attempted to encapsulate in his famous supposition that population, if left unchecked, tended to grow geometrically, while output could only expand arithmetically at best. In contrast, after the industrial revolution rates of

growth of output of 2 percent per annum or higher became relatively common, and indeed in recent years, in the "tiger" economies, rates in excess of 5 percent per annum have been attained over a considerable span of years. It became possible, so to speak, to eat one's cake and have it, too. Population could grow freely while living standards still rose substantially, especially as the advent of the widespread practice of contraception within marriage caused population growth rates to fall steadily and substantially. Before the industrial revolution, population growth was normally restrained by the fact that output rarely expanded by more than 0.5 percent per annum, and frequently far more slowly.[2] Any prolonged period in which population was rising faster than output, of course, necessarily implied increasing misery and, at some point, a sharp correction.

Occasionally, this tension was absent. There was a conspicuous example of this in North America in the first two centuries of settlement. In the English colonies along the Atlantic seaboard, population roughly doubled every quarter-century largely by natural increase, yet the economic circumstances of the population improved. This was possible, however, only because of the abundance of fertile, unsettled land available for settlement. The population was thinly scattered, and there were no towns of substantial size. In consequence, infectious disease took only a limited toll. This in turn points to a feature of all pre-industrial economies that serves to explain the difficulties they experienced in securing rapid output growth and also suggests why it was that the problem disappeared in the wake of the industrial revolution. The basis of all material production in pre-industrial societies was the output of the land. Then, as now, the land was the source of almost all foodstuffs, but in addition it was the source of all the main raw materials of secondary industry. Wool, cotton, silk, straw, hides, hair, and, above all, wood were the basis of the major industries. Industries using such raw materials afforded the great bulk of manufacturing employment (Wrigley 1988). Mineral raw materials were also important, since metals were widely used. However, the thermal energy needed to convert mineral ores into metals or clay into bricks or pottery was obtained chiefly from wood, which also normally provided the heat needed in industries such as brewing, dyeing, and baking. Thus organic raw materials were used in all forms of material production, either exclusively or as an essential element in the production process.

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[2] In considering how improbable it was that growth was sustained even at the modest rate of 0.5 percent per annum, it is well to note that an economy growing steadily at this rate would expand by two-thirds in the course of a century and by more than 12 times over a period of 500 years.

Because the material culture of pre-industrial societies was so heavily dependent on organic raw materials, the scale and pace of economic growth was constrained by the degree of success with which the land could be made to yield more abundantly. Once land readily suitable for agriculture had been fully taken up, this could only mean either intensifying the use of existing land or taking into cultivation poorer and poorer land. Hence in turn the problem of which the classical economists were constantly conscious and to which Ricardo gave definitive expression in the form of the law of diminishing returns (Ricardo 1951: 125-6). The classical economists were all pessimistic about the possibility of sustained exponential growth of the type to which we have become accustomed and were inclined instead to expect the advent of the "stationary state," because in the pre-industrial world the very process of growth, by increasing pressure on the land, ensured that each further step in the process of expansion became progressively harder to take (Wrigley 1987b). Of the three basic factors of production, land, labor, and capital, the second and third were in principle indefinitely expansible, but the first was in fixed supply, with gloomy implications.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, parts of Europe were beginning to move from the pre-industrial era into a new and much more economically dynamic age. How did the demography of the populations in question change during these centuries? It was once conventional to suppose that population growth in pre-industrial societies was tightly constrained by the absence of economic expansion and that the dynamic element in maintaining a balance between population size and the economic base supporting the population was mortality. For a sequence of years that might last as long as a generation, fertility might exceed mortality and numbers would rise, but, following a bad harvest or a run of bad harvests, the population would be pruned back sharply in consequence of the greatly increased mortality associated with economic distress and food shortages, only for the cycle to repeat itself with the return of more normal harvest yields. This, for example, was the pattern described by Goubert in the Beauvaisis in the 17th and early 18th centuries (Goubert 1960). Other events might cause high mortalities and a sudden contraction in the population, notably the unpredictable visitations of major killing diseases, but the fundamental pattern was determined by the tension between resources and numbers and was resolved by fluctuating mortality levels.

With a model such as this in mind, it seemed obvious that a move to higher rates of population growth was most likely to occur because the periodic outbursts of high mortality became less frequent and less destructive, thus knitting together the sequences of years of rising population that had in any case been frequent. By eliminating mortality surges, population

growth would necessarily accelerate. Economic growth made this possible by increasing the capacity of the community to produce goods and services, thus raising the "ceiling" that had limited population growth. Flinn was one of those who gave a particularly telling description of the way in which the gradual amelioration and eventual disappearance of mortality "peaks" might cause the population growth rate to rise slowly (Flinn 1974).

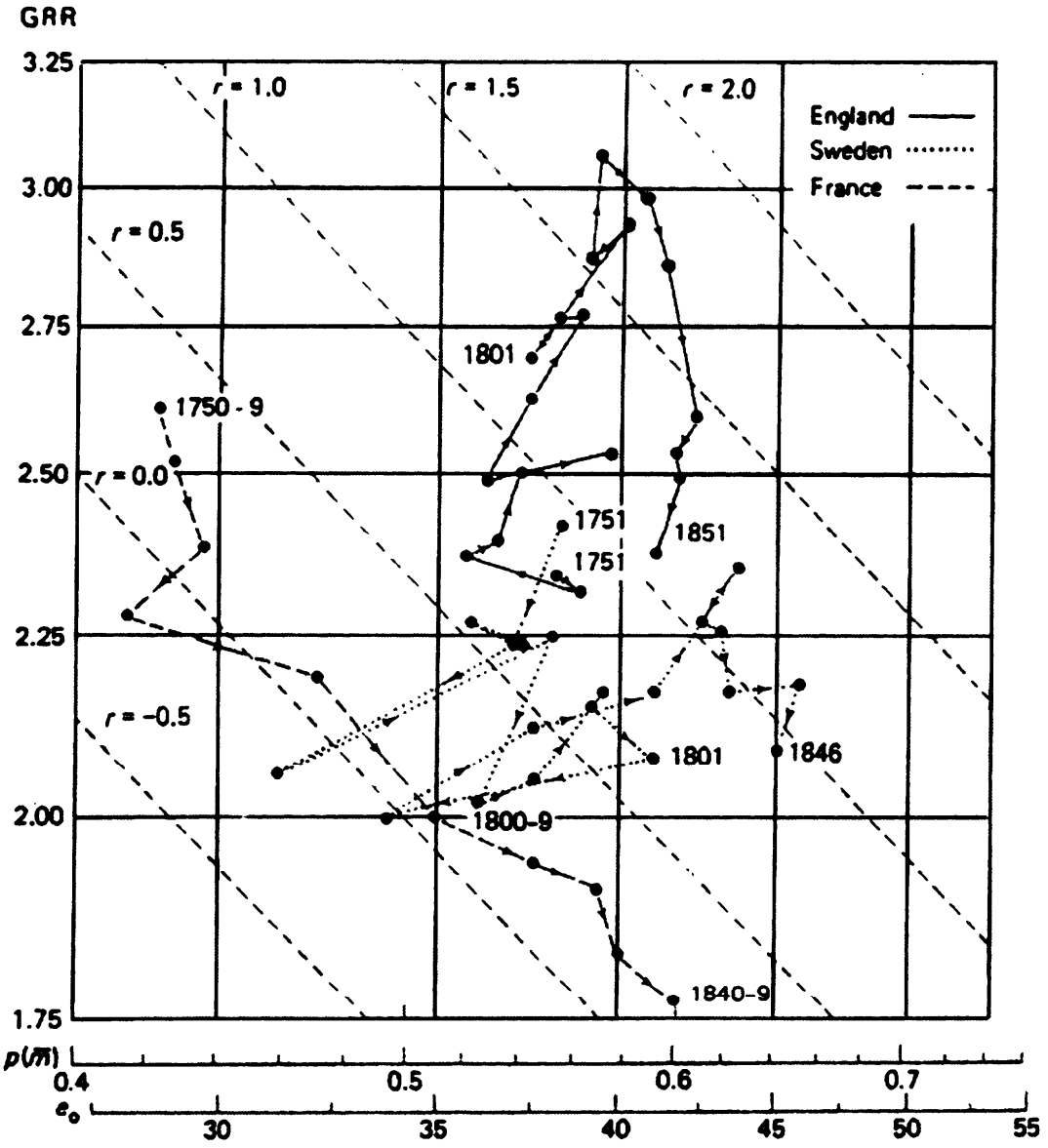
In the simplest form of this model, fertility was often treated as virtually unchanging. With falling mortality, growth rates would increase. Only with the increasingly widespread adoption of fertility limitation within marriage in the later decades of the 19th century would fertility levels change significantly. Growth rates therefore tended to increase for a century or more until the advent of family limitation. Thereafter, they fell steadily until in the interwar period, with marital fertility at a very low level, IGRs were frequently negative. This paradigm was held to have wide applicability, though it was always recognized that France was a major exception, in that in parts of France fertility within marriage was falling from the end of the 18th century, and the course of population growth was in consequence very different

This model has the attraction of being simple and intelligible. Is it also supported by empirical evidence? A first point to emphasize is that as knowledge of fertility and mortality trends in the 18th and 19th centuries has increased, the notable lack of uniformity in the experience of different European countries has become apparent. Some notion of the extent and nature of the contrast is given by Figure 4.2. Figure 4.2a shows the experience of England, France, and Sweden over the century from 1750 to 1850. In the case of England and Sweden, the plotting points refer to five-year periods; in the case of France, to ten-year periods, which explains, at least in part, the less hectic behavior of the French line. Figure 4.2b represents the same data, but rather than showing each individual plotting point, it "boxes" the points for each country to show the characteristic "shape" of that country's demographic history over time. Both figures make use of a method of representing simultaneously not only fertility and mortality changes but also IGRs. The diagonal lines labeled $r = 0.5$, $r = 1.0$, etc., each show the locus of all combinations of fertility and mortality that result in an IGR of 0.5 percent per annum, 1 percent per annum, and so on. The two axes refer to fertility (the gross reproduction rate, or GRR) and mortality, the proportion of women surviving to the mean age of reproduction, $p(m)$, which in turn is a function of life expectancy at birth, also shown on the horizontal axis. Any given proportionate increase or decrease in either the GRR or $p(m)$ will have the same effect in raising or lowering the intrinsic growth rate. It is therefore easy to establish whether changes in fertility or mortality had the greater

impact in altering the intrinsic growth rate. Each point shown on the lines in Figure 4.2a represents that combination of fertility and mortality that prevailed at the time represented by the point.

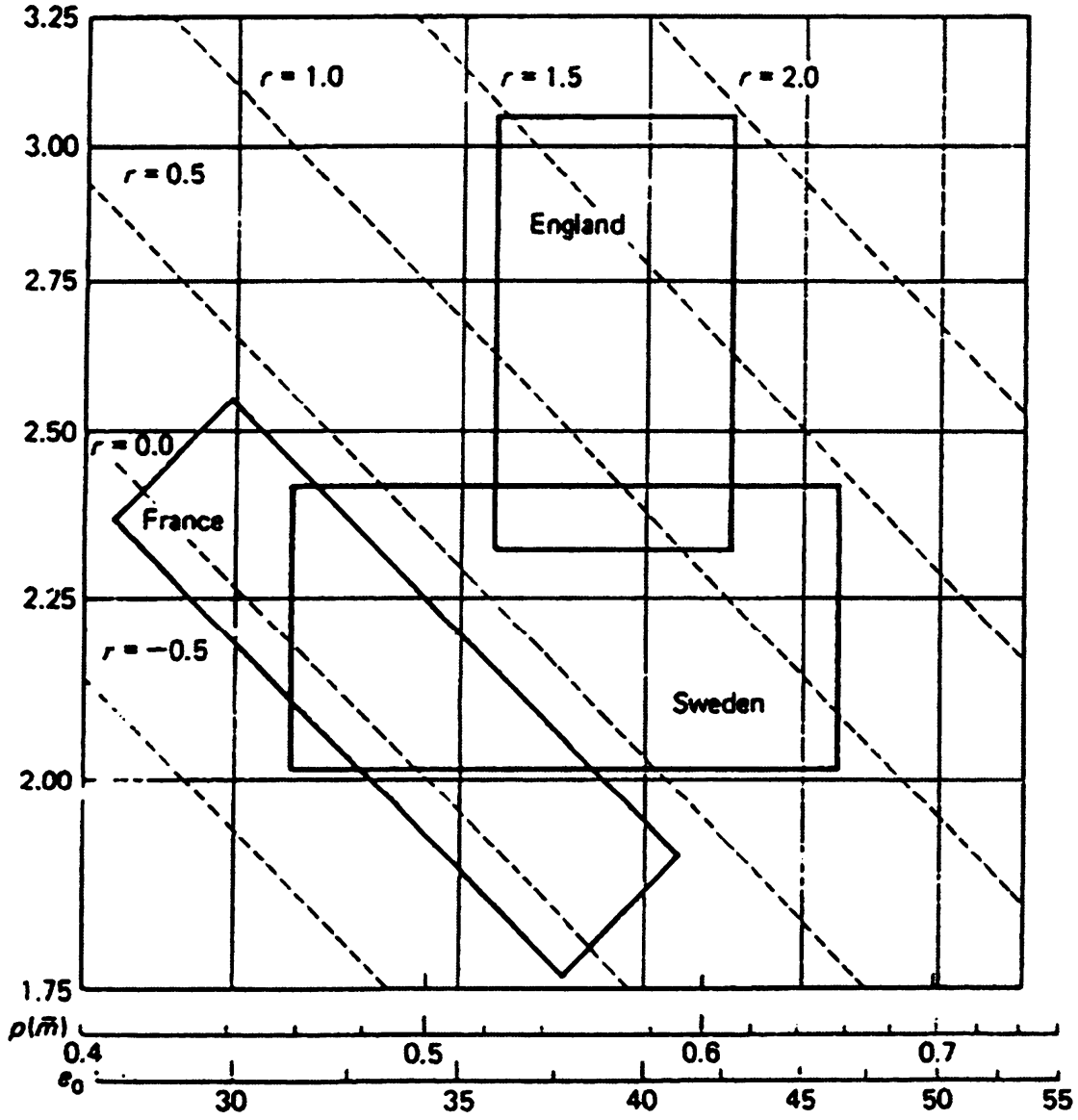
Figure 4.2: Intrinsic Growth Rates in England, France, and Sweden, 1750 to 1850 [3]

Figure 4.2a



[3] Source: Wrigley and Schofield 1981: fig. 7.13, 246, fig. 7.14, 247.

Figure 4.2b



As will be clear from both figures, there was a great difference between England, France, and Sweden in the relative importance of fertility and mortality movements in changing population growth rates during the century in question. Only Sweden fits the simple model of demographic change sketched above. Although fertility varied somewhat over the period, there was no decided trend, only random fluctuation. Death rates, on the other hand – though subject in the earlier decades to violent short-term change, as in 1771 to '75 or 1806 to '10, when mortality surged – showed a general tendency to improve between the mid-18th and mid-19th centuries. As a

result, the intrinsic growth rate in Sweden, though fluctuating wildly from one quinquennium to the next during most of the century, rose from roughly 0.5 percent per annum to about 1 percent per annum. It is perhaps no accident that the view that mortality trends dominated growth rate changes should have been so influential in shaping assumptions about the demographic history of Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, since Sundbärg's work ensured that Swedish demographic history was known in detail before the outbreak of World War I, whereas comparable data from most other countries has only been secured in recent decades and is still lacking for many (Sundbärg [1907] 1970).

French demographic history followed a relatively straightforward but very different course. Fertility and mortality declined almost exactly in step, paralleling the line representing a zero rate of intrinsic population growth, though normally slightly above it. Much of the increase in numbers in France during this period was a result of the changing shape of the population pyramid rather than because of any widening in its base. The number of births occurring each year scarcely changed for almost a century and a half down to circa 1870, though falling slightly toward the end of the 19th century.[4]

England was quite different from either of the other two countries. The IGR rose dramatically between circa 1750 and the 1810s, from about 0.75 percent per annum to a maximum of 1.7 percent per annum, before falling back to a little over 1 percent per annum in the middle of the 19th century.[5] Over the century, there was a modest improvement in mortality, but both the major rise and the subsequent substantial fall in the IGR were primarily attributable to changes in fertility.

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[4] Over the 130 years from 1740 to 1869, the average annual total of births was 1,011,000, but the annual average in each component decade 1740 to '49 to 1860 to '69 varied only between a maximum of 1,062,000, from 1780 to '89 and a minimum of 964,000, from 1800 to '09, and the series lacks any trend. After 1870, there was a modest fall in decadal totals (Blayo 1975: 52-3; Henry and Blayo 1975: tab. 23, 112). An adjustment was made between the data for 1740 to '49 to 1820 to '29, taken from the first article, and those for 1830 to '39 to 1860 to '69, taken from the second article, referring to France within the boundaries of 1954 and 1861, respectively, by inflating the latter in the ratio between the two in the overlap decade of 1820 to '29.

[5] The data that underlie the points plotted in Fig. 2a were taken from an exercise in inverse projection based on aggregative totals of births and deaths derived from Anglican parish registers and carried out in the late 1970s. Subsequent work using family reconstitution data suggests some slight modifications of the gross reproduction rates and expectation of life estimates used in the figure, but the changes would make only trivial changes to the pattern shown in Fig. 2a. The slightness of the changes will be clear from a comparison of the estimates in Wrigley and Schofield 1981: tab. A3.1, 528-9; and Wrigley, Davies, Oeppen and Schofield 1997: tab. A9.1, 614-15.

Not only were the gross changes in fertility in the three countries very different, the behavioral patterns underlying them were also very different. Oversimplifying somewhat to keep the discussion within bounds, there was little systematic change in any aspect of social behavior that affected fertility in Sweden. In France, the very substantial fall in the GRR was predominantly attributable to the increasingly widespread practice of fertility control within marriage. In England, the steep rise in fertility was principally a result of changes in nuptiality. Fertility within marriage increased somewhat, partly because of a major fall in the stillbirth rate, which had its greatest proportional effect on age-specific marital fertility rates in the older age groups, and partly because of the marked rise in the proportion of brides pregnant at marriage, which was most evident in the younger age groups, and an associated sharp rise in the proportion of all illegitimate births (Wrigley 1998; Wrigley et al. 1997: 421-7). But the pronounced rise in fertility visible in Figure 4.2a was mainly due to a fall in the average age at which brides and grooms married. Mean age at first marriage for women fell from about 26 to about 23.5 years between the late 17th and early 19th centuries, while there was a comparable fall for men from almost 28 to little more than 25 years over the same period (Wrigley et al. 1997: tab. 5.3, 134). Such a fall substantially increases overall fertility, *ceteris paribus*.[6]

The demographic histories of both France and England in this period, therefore, show the danger of ignoring the capacity of fertility to influence changes in population growth rates long before the widespread fall in fertility within marriage that characterized the period from circa 1870 to circa 1930 in most of Europe outside of France. That this was so should occasion no surprise. It is implicit in the existence of the marriage-related customs in much of Europe that were markedly different from those found in all other major civilizations, such as China, India, the Muslim world, or the classical world. In general, in these societies the timing of marriage for women was determined by the process of physiological maturation. Once a woman was sexually mature, she was expected to be married.[7] Only those suffering from

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[6] The "pure" fertility effect of this change in marriage age would raise overall marital fertility by 20 percent, but this understates the effective impact of the change because a higher proportion of each cohort would marry and embark on a reproductive career with an earlier rather than a later age at marriage, and there are other effects resulting from the impact of mortality that also enhance the "pure" effect, so that a more realistic figure for the impact of the change in marriage age on fertility is 23 percent in the circumstances of early modern England (Wrigley et al. 1997: 136-7).

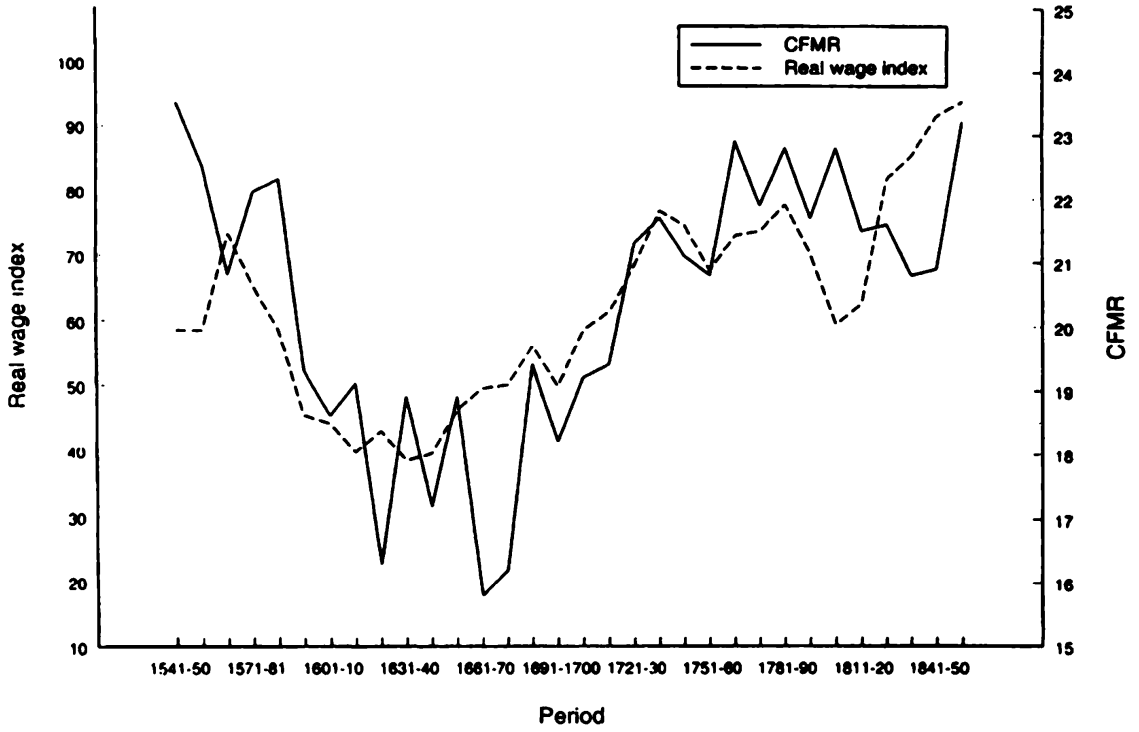
[7] It does not follow, however, as might once have been assumed, that early and universal marriage for women necessarily implies a high level of overall fertility. Since marital fertility rates were sometimes well below the levels characteristic of Europe in high-nuptiality countries, and abortion might be practiced extensively; see, for example, Lee and Wang Feng 1999.

some conspicuous physical or mental handicap could stand outside the conventions that required early and universal marriage for women. In Western Europe, in contrast, while sexual maturity was a necessary condition for marriage, it was not a sufficient condition. Each couple contemplating marriage needed to be in a position to demonstrate their economic independence, since in most of Western Europe marriage usually entailed setting up a new household rather than joining an existing one (Hajnal 1983).

In a social environment in which it was necessary to accumulate independent resources in order to marry, it was always possible that changing economic circumstances would alter the timing and incidence of marriage. In worsening economic circumstances, it was to be expected that brides and grooms would tend to marry later in life, since it would take longer to achieve a "target" level of resources sufficient to embark on marriage. Equally, deteriorating conditions tended to induce an increasing proportion of each rising generation not to marry at all. When conditions improved, of course, earlier and more universal marriage might result. There is clear evidence from England in the early modern period that nuptiality expanded and contracted in broad sympathy with secular economic tendencies. In almost all societies, economic circumstances heavily influence *short-term* fluctuations in nuptiality. In years of abundant harvest, couples everywhere were more likely to marry than in years in which food was in short supply and prices were high. But superimposed on these short-term changes, societies in which marriage behavior was sensitive to economic "signals" sometimes displayed a close sympathetic relationship between *long-term* trends in real wages, used as a surrogate measure of general economic well-being, and the comparable trends in nuptiality. This may be seen in Figure 4.3, which shows the pattern found in England between the mid-16th and mid-19th centuries.

The fluctuations in nuptiality shown in Figure 4.3 (see next page) were, of course, paralleled by comparable swings in fertility. Age-specific fertility *within* marriage varied only slightly, but changes in the timing and incidence of marriage meant that fertility was controlled *by* marriage. In the case of England, it is further intriguing that society managed to "regulate" not merely fertility within marriage, by altering its timing and prevalence, but also fertility outside marriage. In periods when marriage was late and many women never married, illegitimate births, rather than growing more common, as might have been expected on general grounds, became instead much rarer, while in periods when marriage was early and universal, illegitimate fertility was high. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, a period of youthful marriage and little celibacy, about a quarter of all first births in

Figure 4.3: Crude First-Marriage Rates and Real-Wages Trends in England[8]



England took place outside marriage, and a further quarter, though born to married women, were conceived before their marriage had taken place, whereas in the later 17th century, when early marriage was rare and many men and women never married, the comparable figures were only a quarter as high (Wrigley 1981: 155-63).

[8] The crude first marriage rate was calculated by relating the decennial totals of first marriages to the population aged 15 to 34 at the midpoint of the ten-year period. The population totals for the four five-year age groups between 15 and 19 to 30 and 34 were weighted one to five to three to one in order to reflect approximately the distribution of marriages between the four age groups. First marriages were calculated from the totals of all marriages using the assumptions set out in Wrigley and Schofield 1981: 426-7. The real wage-index was calculated using the decadal real-wage estimates of Goldstone for the period down to 1691 to 1700 (Goldstone 1986: 32); the Phelps Brown and Hopkins index modified to include a "northern" component as described in ibid. 432-3 for the period 1701 to '10 to 1771 to '80; and Feinstein's (1998: 652-3) estimates thereafter. The Goldstone and PBH series were linked by treating the decadal value for 1691-1700 as 50 in both cases. The PBH and Feinstein series were linked by indexing the Feinstein series to the value of the PBH series for 1771 to '80. Sources: Wrigley and Schofield 1981: tab. A9.2, 642-4; Wrigley et al., 1997: tab. A9.1, 614-15; Goldstone 1986: tab. A1, 32; Feinstein 1998: app. tab.1, 652-3.

The so-called Western European marriage system was not universally found even in Western Europe, while both Mediterranean Europe and Eastern Europe had marriage systems with characteristics were markedly different from those just described (Smith 1990). Their complexities forbid brief summary. Even to attempt a balanced description of the Western European system is beyond the compass of this essay, but the illustration given in Figure 4.3 serves to make a point of great importance. In many parts of Europe in the early modern period, economic change was likely to affect fertility no less than mortality. This did not come about, in the main, because of any alteration in the tempo of child-bearing once a marriage was in being but because an improving or a deteriorating economic environment altered the proportion of women who were married in their twenties, the prime child-bearing years.

It would be naive to suppose that marriage patterns changed in an invariant fashion in response to economic changes. For example, if in a given rural community worsening economic circumstances reduced employment opportunities for women, marriage might appear as the only viable option for a young woman, and, perversely, earlier rather than later marriage might result (Snell 1985: 210-7). Or, again, if an unbalanced local labor market caused very large numbers of young women to move into an area where textile employment was growing rapidly but where opportunities for male employment were more limited, the large surplus of women in the marriageable age groups might reduce their prospects of early marriage (Wrigley 1961: 145-51). Nor should the potential importance of structural change in the economy in causing a change in the functioning of the marriage market be ignored. It has been argued, for instance, that the development of proto-industry – by encouraging early and universal marriage among those engaged in, say, framework knitting or other forms of domestic industry – produced, by the ratchet mechanism first postulated by Mendels, a continued, even accelerating rate of population growth, despite sharply deteriorating living standards (Mendels 1972; see also Kriedte, Medick, and Schlumbohn 1981). This "model" of proto-industrial life has not fared well under subsequent empirical investigation, but it illustrates the way in which apparently perverse changes may occur because of the way in which economic "signals" are read under different socioeconomic regimes.[9] At all events, it is safe to assert that the nature of marriage as a social institution in Western Europe implies that there is no reason for surprise if a period of rapid economic change led to substantial changes in fertility no less than in mortality.

[9] There is an admirable review of the failure of the proto-industrialization thesis to "save the phenomena" in Ogilvie 1997: ch. 2.

To complicate matters further, and despite the comments made above, there might also be changes in fertility independent of nuptiality change. For example, the most important single influence in determining the mean interval between births was the prevailing custom regarding the length and intensity of breast-feeding. In some European populations, as in parts of Bavaria, children were weaned at birth. In consequence, marital fertility was very high since the effect of lactation in delaying the return of fecundable monthly cycles was absent. In other parts of Europe, it was normal to breast-feed each child for two years or more, and where such a custom held good, birth intervals were much lengthier and marital fertility in consequence was much lower. Marital fertility rates were a third higher in areas like Bavaria than in areas like England as a result.[10] If there were a change in breast-feeding practice, such as might be provoked by an increased female labor force participation in work away from the home, therefore, there was always a possibility that marital fertility rates would change independently of any change in nuptiality.

Just as there was no inevitable pattern linking economic growth to fertility change, it would be an error to suppose that improving economic circumstances necessarily led to a fall in mortality. It is true that many contemporaries inclined to this belief. Adam Smith was one of those who supposed that a period of improvement in "corn wages" would lead, through better nutrition, to a reduction in mortality. *Ceteris paribus,* this is a reasonable expectation, but the process of economic growth was not only likely, through an increased demand for labor, to cause wages to rise but also to set in train other changes, the effect on mortality rates of which was not benign.[11] For example, inasmuch as a growing economy was also normally one in which the proportion of the population living in towns and cities was

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[10] For example, in the Bavarian village of Anhausen, where children were normally weaned at birth, the total marital fertility rate from age 20 to the end of childbearing was 10.1 children over the period 1692 to 1799. The comparable figure for a group of 26 English reconstitution parishes over the period 1600 to 1824 was 7.4 children (Knodel 1970: tab. 8, 369, Wrigley et al. 1997: tab. 7.1, 355).

[11] In a rather chilling passage, quite as bleak as any that Malthus was later to pen, Smith remarked, "Every species of animals naturally multiplies in proportion to the means of their subsistence, and no species can ever multiply beyond it. But in civilised society it is only among the inferior ranks of people that the scantiness of subsistence can set limits to the further multiplication of the human species; and it can do so in no other way than by destroying a great part of the children which their fruitful marriages produce. The liberal reward of labour, by enabling them to provide better for their children, and consequently to bring up a greater number, naturally tends to widen and extend those limits." He added, "The demand for men, like that for any other commodity, necessarily regulates the production of men; quickens it when it goes on too slowly, and stops it when it advances too fast" (Smith 1961: 89).

rising, economic growth in the past tended to increase mortality rather than to reduce it. Urban death rates were commonly much higher than those in the countryside. William Farr, the dominant figure in the English Registrar-General's office in the middle decades of the 19th century, attempted to establish the empirical relationship between the density of population and the prevailing mortality level using data from English registration districts in this period. He concluded that mortality varied as the eighth root of population density, a relationship implying that urban death rates could easily be twice as high as those in the country (Farr 1885: 165, 174-5). In the worst urban slums, where families might share a single room without running water and with the most primitive sanitary provision, death rates were often appallingly high. Yet such cities were a normal concomitant of rapid economic growth. Victorian England affords many instances of the huge "urban penalty" paid by those residing in towns, but there were equally terrible equivalents across the continent in cities such as Berlin, Paris, Hamburg, or Vienna.[12] Moreover, increased frequency of movement, by increasing the likelihood that infectious diseases would reach a larger proportion of the population, tended to raise mortality.[13] And an expanding economy invariably led to increased frequency of movement.

Western Europe was, in a sense, privileged in its marriage regime. Many populations could not afford the luxury of low fertility because mortality was unavoidably high, because of the prevalence and severity of infectious diseases, for example. In such circumstances, low fertility would mean the eventual disappearance of the population in question. In other cases, the minimum attainable level of mortality might be low, but high fertility in effect enforced high mortality because resources were limited and mortality was, so to speak, forced up to the same level as fertility as the population increased. Where social conventions about the timing and incidence of marriage resulted in high fertility, therefore, they may be said also to have prescribed high mortality. Relatively low fertility combined with similar levels of mortality, such as parts of Western Europe enjoyed, may arguably

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[12] Weber referred to an inquiry conducted in Berlin in 1885 that stretches belief. It showed that a total of 1,285,000 people were living in tenements consisting of either one room, two rooms, three rooms, or four rooms. Of these, only 73,000 were living in the first group, or less than 6 percent of the total, but nearly one half of all deaths occurred in this group (Weber 1899: 349). For a review of the issues involved in this question and an incisive contribution to the debate, see Szreter and Mooney 1998.

[13] Utterström, in a pioneering article, showed how the more favorable economic circumstances and better access to food supplies of eastern Sweden failed to offset the combined effects of higher urbanization and greater frequency of contact brought about by more commercial exchange. As a result, mortality tended to be higher in the more developed east than in the more isolated west (Utterström 1954).

be regarded as a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for a comparatively high standard of living in pre-industrial circumstances for reasons set out schematically in Figure 4.1 and further developed in Figure 4.3.

Marriage emerges as a particularly significant variable in Western European countries in the period before the widespread practice of fertility limitation within marriage. Both directly and indirectly, it was also important to many aspects of inheritance. Its direct significance hardly needs to be stated. The choice of spouse must necessarily be of central importance to the reception of resources from the senior generation (both before and after the marriage itself) and to the strategy employed by the couple when they in turn must plan for disposal of their assets to the next generation. Indirectly, it was equally important in the past. Demography exercised an obvious influence, in that the number of children born to a couple was largely a function of their ages at marriage (especially, of course, that of the wife) and the average duration of the marriage was a function of prevailing mortality levels. But these points are both obvious and somewhat trivial. Of greater significance was the influence of Western European nuptiality characteristics at the societal rather than individual level. The timing of marriage was not only of significance to individual couples. The fact that men and women quite commonly remained single throughout life and that women married much later in life than in other societies, and further that both these variables were sensitive to economic opportunity, tended to relieve some of the tension between numbers and resources that was an omnipresent feature of "organic" societies – that is, societies dependent upon the produce of the land for almost all their material artifacts as well as their food (Wrigley 1988). Marriage acted as a gate through which men and women had to pass if they were to engage freely in reproduction. The width of the gateway was not fixed. It opened wider in good times but grew narrower when times were bad. Many individuals in Western Europe in the past spilled around either side of it, remaining single permanently, or were obliged to delay in the forecourt of the gateway before passing through because of the press of numbers trying to enter. Individual deprivation could, however, bring general benefit by securing a more favorable accommodation between production and reproduction. Early and universal marriage for women, such as was the norm in most societies, did not *necessarily* imply severe tension between numbers and resources. Other means of preserving the bulk of the population

from bare subsistence were feasible,[14] but it is plausible to suppose that the conventions concerning marriage that had been normal in much of Western Europe for several centuries before the industrial revolution made for a particularly efficient and sensitive "solution" to this problem.

Inheritance strategies are necessarily strongly influenced by the nature of the prevailing economic and social structures. In concluding, it may be of interest to indulge in some speculations about the significance of the radical changes of the past two or three centuries in this regard and, in particular, about the replacement of a rural society by an urban one.

It is sometimes said that the Neolithic food revolution – by giving point to the concept of individual ownership of the land, making possible a more hierarchical ordering of societies, and causing far greater disparities in wealth between individuals and families – also ensured that heirship strategies became vastly more important. The same revolution also made possible, for the first time, substantial, permanent urban settlements in which most of the inhabitants had no direct stake in the land. For such people, the transmission of property from one generation to the next presented very different problems and opportunities from those facing communities, the main wealth of which consisted of a landholding. One element in the tension between town and country that is a recurrent theme of agricultural societies turned on this point: Customs and prescriptions that suited one context might be irrelevant in the other. But there were also limits to the scale of urban growth in agricultural societies. For example, if a figure of 5,000 inhabitants is taken as the dividing line between rural and urban settlements, then it is likely that, between 1300 and 1800 in Western Europe, as a whole the urban proportion of the total population grew only slowly and uncertainly from about 10 to about 13 percent.[15] Over the half millennium during which Western Europe underwent radical change and moved toward a period of world dominance, this is a very modest rise. In certain limited areas – such as northern Italy, the Rhine corridor and the Low Countries, and, toward the end of this period, England – this percentage was substantially exceeded, but there was no strong, continent-wide tendency toward urban growth. Overall numbers rose,

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[14] See Lee and Feng 1999: ch. 7 for a summary of their views about the way in which fertility was restrained in China in times past. There is a fascinating account of the interplay of infanticide and adoption in avoiding excessive population pressure while at the same time ensuring the continuance of the male line in a Japanese village in the 18th and early 19th centuries in Smith 1977.

[15] Estimates of urban percentages by country and region may be found in de Vries 1984. His overall estimates for towns of 5,000 or more inhabitants between 1500 and 1800 may be found in Table 4.14, p. 76. Bairoch is bold enough to attempt estimates over a still longer period beginning in 1300, using the same criterion of 5,000 inhabitants as the lower limit of town size (Bairoch 1985: tab. 11.1, 177). See also Wrigley 1987a.

but the urban percentage did not. In such circumstances, the granting of royal privileges to towns might ease the difficulties caused to city dwellers by the major differences between urban and rural life, but the predominant pattern for society as a whole was set, inevitably, by those with a stake in the land.

Figure 4.4: Urban Growth in England, France, and the Netherlands[16]

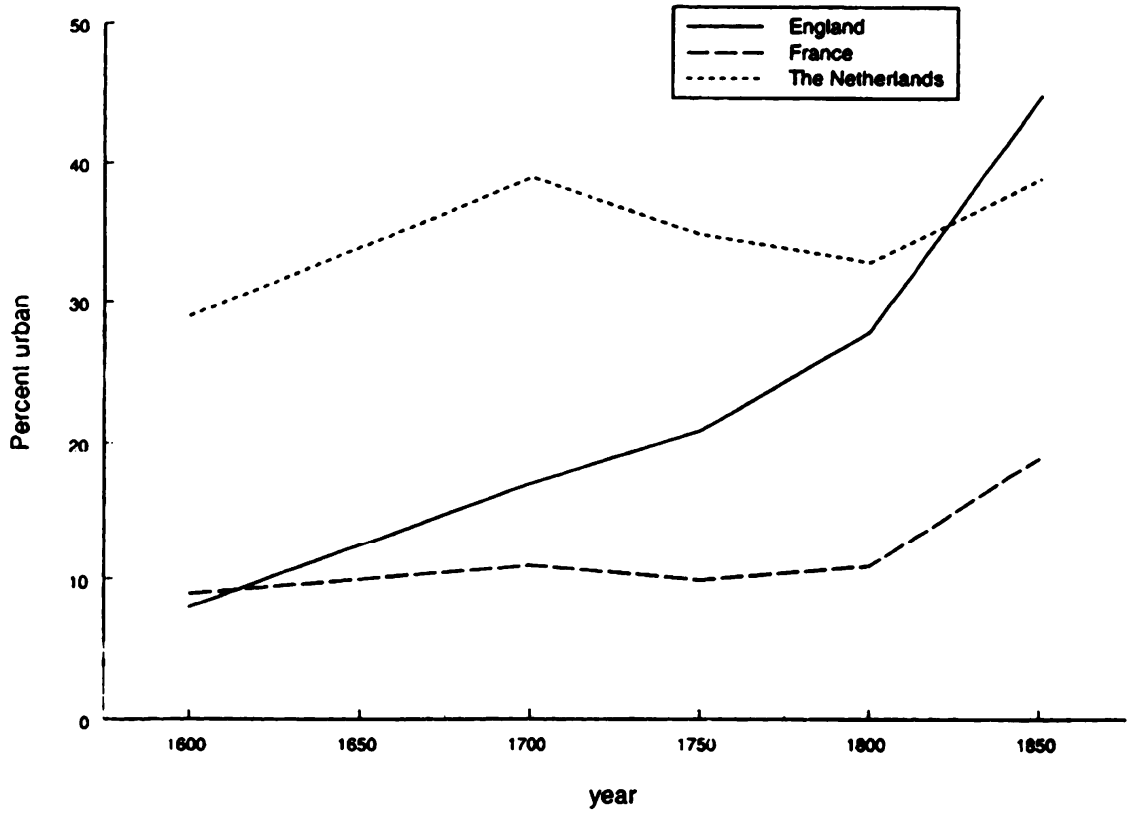


Figure 4.4 (see next page) shows the onset of a more radical change in this regard. The Netherlands in the 16th and 17th centuries became an urban society, and England followed suit, though with a considerable time lag, but France, England's principal rival in the period after William III's accession to the throne, showed little change. Dutch urbanization lost momentum in the 18th century, and by the 19th century Holland was less urbanized than England, but these were probably the first two countries (as opposed to city-states) in which ownership of a piece of land or access to land by lease or

[16] Source: Wrigley 1987a tab. 7.2, 162; tab. 7.8, 182; tab. 7.9, 184-5; Bairoch, tab. 13.4, 221.

rental was of little or no importance to a majority of the citizens. In the case of England, this was increasingly true even of those who continued to live in the country. In 1800, for example, roughly half of all rural inhabitants earned their living from some form of employment other than agriculture, and even those who worked on the land seldom had any property stake in it, because landless laborers formed the bulk of the agricultural labor force.

I mention these facts not as a preliminary to advancing a general thesis about the significance of urbanization in relation to the modification of heirship strategy but rather to suggest that this is an issue that might repay further study. That there may be marked disadvantages both to the individual and to society as a whole from the excessive subdivision of land is evident, and that conventions like the principle of primogeniture may well be adopted in these circumstances in order to avoid or reduce the problem seems clear. It did not follow, even under primogeniture, that the son to whom the property was devolved was always fortunate to have been selected in this fashion (and the same holds true, of course, for comparable conventions like ultimogeniture). In England, a landholding to which the designated son succeeded was sometimes so heavily burdened with debts secured against the property – in order to provide dowries for daughters or to advance the careers of other sons – the privilege of succeeding to the property became a dubious one.
But the problem did not arise – or, at all events, did not arise in the same way or with the same acuteness – in families in which few or none of the assets of the senior generation were in land. Great interest may therefore attach both to the analysis of the differences in heirship strategy between those with land and those without and also to any more general changes that took place as rapid urbanization took hold, divorcing more and more of the members of each succeeding generation from the constraints associated with the holding of land as the principal asset of the family.

The change from a rural to an urban society has meant, of course, that those whose livelihood is drawn from the land are as small a minority today as town dwellers were in the 12th century. Many have absorbed "urban" values. The transmission of a holding intact to the next generation no longer represents a strong priority for many landholders. In any case, the children of farmers are often more than happy to leave the land. The comparative study of the inheritance strategies now and in the past would reveal much about the degree to which the prevailing practice is determined by factors that do not change, such as resolving the claims of different offspring, and those that do change, such as the types of resources possessed by the senior generation. In considering these issues, it is, of course, always important to take account not only of the disposals that take place following the death of a member of the senior generation but also of disposals that precede death and may mean

that *postmortem* arrangements are no more than the final act in a linked series of decisions.

Demography does not stand center stage, so to speak, in such matters, but it prompts much of the stage action, and this remains true today no less than in the past. It is clear that the demography of 21st-century Europe will pose new challenges in this regard. Fertility is such in countries like Italy, Spain, and Germany that each succeeding generation, in the absence of large-scale immigration, will be only about two-thirds the size of its predecessor. Over a period of a century, in these circumstances, a population will decline to only a third of its former size, and a much larger proportion of men and women will, of course, be childless at death. Many of those who possess assets will be unable to leave them to direct descendants. An increasing proportion of each younger generation, therefore, may expect to inherit not only from their parents but from more remote kin, assuming that those dying childless choose to leave most of their assets to relatives rather than to, say, charitable bodies. Of those who do have children, a much higher proportion will have only one child, so that the question of appropriate division between children will not arise. These are among the issues that can be explored effectively by creating simulated populations and endowing them with demographic and social characteristics that mirror those that exist or are expected to occur. It would be possible, for example, to model the extent to which the devolving of wealth from the older generation at death offsets the greater burden on those of working age that will arise from the steadily rising proportion of the population above retirement age. This is a complex issue but may become a pressing problem, well worth close attention for practical as well as theoretical reasons.

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Chapter 5

What Creates Village Democracy in Europe: A Comparative Study

Robert Layton

Villages on the Plateau of Levier, in eastern France, are characterized by a high degree of self-government. They are also notable for long having possessed producer cooperatives (*fruitières*), first recorded in 1264. Members of the early *fruitières* shared a cauldron that was taken from house to house according to a daily rota. Every member took their milk to the house that held the cauldron for that day. The cheese belonged to that household and it was theirs to sell. Cheeses were exported by wagon to Lyons, Paris, etc. In the 18th century, permanent dairy buildings were constructed and full-time dairymen employed. During the early 20th century many associations consigned cheese production to entrepreneur dairymen who absorbed the risks of production for a volatile market. After World War II, numerous villages returned to cooperative production, although declining numbers of farmers have since forced many cooperatives to amalgamate.

The aim of this paper is to investigate the qualities of social interaction that sustain or undermine community organization. Fifteen villages on the Plateau of Levier were surveyed during my original fieldwork (1969, 1972), and the same villages were resurveyed during further fieldwork in 1995. The village that formed the base for my fieldwork is referred to here as Pellaport. Literature on other villages and regions provides comparative material. Although the case studies on which this paper is based come from Western Europe, they are relevant to Eastern Europe, because they relate to the theory underpinning collectivization. The studies throw light on the conditions under which collective management of resources is sustainable, or not. Franche-Comté, the old province within which the Plateau of Levier is situated, has a walk on part in the history of communism. Proudhon ("property is theft") was born in Besançon. Kropotkin was inspired by the voluntary associations he found among watchmaking communities in the

Swiss Jura to argue for the importance of cooperation in evolution. In his study of *mutual aid* he wrote, "After a week's stay with the watchmakers, my views on socialism were settled. I was an anarchist." (Kropotkin 1972 [1902]: 4). Kropotkin also commended *fruitières* (Kropotkin 1972 [1902]: 211).

Although the Levelers and the Diggers (active at the time of the English Civil War) were influenced by the rediscovery of Tacitus' account of the Germans, their practical experience of common ownership derived from the Open Field system (Hill 1958: 90, 113). Marx followed the Levelers in assuming there was an original human condition in which resources were unowned, or all property was collectively owned. "Communal property... was an old Teutonic institution which lived on under cover of feudalism" (Marx 1930 [1867]: 802). The principal weakness in Marx's analysis, from the perspective of this paper, was his failure to subject the dynamics of collective ownership to an analysis as penetrating as his analysis of capitalism. Marx's approach to collective ownership was flawed by his treatment of it as the natural or original human condition, thereby apparently removing the need to analyze the specific conditions that sustained it. Elements of the open field system have survived much better in the Jura and the Alps than in England, and I summarize some reasons why this has been so.

The analysis is built on a reevaluation of Bourdieu's and Giddens's theories of social process. Bourdieu and Giddens are both critical of the ahistorical quality of the structural analysis promoted by Radcliffe-Brown and Lévi-Strauss (Bourdieu 1977: 5; Giddens 1984: 25). Structural analysis tends to render variation in individual performances as deviations from an unwritten score (social structure) that is, in fact, an artificial construct built by the analyst. Bourdieu argues participants in exchange experience it as a sequence of transactions through time, each of which is prompted by the previous offering and seeks to influence subsequent exchanges. To abolish temporal process is to abolish strategy. Giddens wrote similarly that social systems are created by the situated activities of agents, taking place through time and in space. Social structure is not a constraining force, external to human action. It is the agents' activities that reproduce the conditions that make those activities possible (Giddens 1984: 170).

Habitus is the individual's subconscious reconstruction of the rules and tactics deduced from others' actions. Structure and action reproduce each other like the chicken and the egg. Each individual's *habitus* can be seen as a structural variant of those learned by other members of the community. For Bourdieu, the primary problem is to explain how the *habitus* of each individual member of the community converges with that of others.

Since social systems are built on the differentiation of roles, the problem for Giddens is, on the other hand, to explain how *different* social positions are bound together into a social system – that is, to explain how structuration occurs. Agents are "distributed" through society, and Giddens's goal is to explain "how the limitations of individual 'presence' are transcended by the stretching of social relations across time and space" (Giddens 1984: 35). Giddens argues that this framework is built through the exercise of power. He minimizes reciprocity and cooperation.

Giddens contends, in contrast to Bourdieu, that "all competent members of society ... are expert 'sociologists' (1984: 26), with a 'theoretical understanding' of the grounds of their activity (5). It is agents' consciousness that renders them free from *the blind forces of social evolution*" (italics mine) (Giddens 1984: 237). Giddens claims that agents' motives are grounded in a need for "ontological security" rather than adaptation to their environment (Giddens 1984: 86, 136, 288-93). I argue not only that Giddens's theory of structuration is consistent with aspects of evolutionary theory but that an evolutionary approach to cooperation and territoriality can explain why there are limits to the possibilities of structuration. Giddens fails to make a clear distinction between adaptationist and progressive evolutionary theories. Giddens does not point out that adaptationist (Darwinian) and progressive theories of evolution (Spencer, Marx, Durkheim) are radically different. Neo-Darwinian theory deals purely with the adaptation of organisms to their local environment through the chance effect of random variation and does not attempt to explain the emergence of complex forms of order (Kauffman 1993).

Giddens also seems to slip into the structural-functionalist fallacy of supposing it is society that must adapt, not the behavior of individual agents (Giddens 1984: 235-6, in contrast to *op. cit.* 294). He ignores a large body of literature when he claims there is no equivalent in human "societies" to the process of natural selection. (Dawkins's theory of "memes" is only one of many similar theories. (Dawkins 1976)) *Habitus* itself has the qualities needed to behave in an analogous way to the genetic material on which natural selection acts; it can generate an indefinite variety of dispositions and behaviors, and, according to Bourdieu, *habitus* tends over time to converge with "objective" conditions. If Bourdieu is right in his argument that a system must be realized in practice if it is to be learned and transmitted, then, where ecology prevents the realization of a cultural trait, the trait will not be practiced, learned, and perpetuated. That is, the most adaptive variants are most likely to be transmitted by performance and learning (except where an internal dynamic creates power differences and the weak can be coerced into acting against their own interests).

While finding Giddens's ideas useful, I argue (like Marx) that the effect of structuration is as likely to transform as to reproduce the conditions from which it arises. There is therefore value in looking for the causes of social change in the internal dynamics of social interaction. But I reject Marx's simplistic notion that collective ownership of property is the original or natural human condition. There are two recent theories of commons management that I draw upon below.

Historical and geographical comparisons between European villages reveal the circumstances in which co-evolving social strategies tend to support or undermine each other, hence enabling or inhibiting the "stretching" of particular patterns of relationship in time. The recursive effect of using certain cultural strategies is to create the conditions in which those strategies either can or cannot readily be put into practice in the future. When the realization of strategies undermines the conditions that make them possible, the social system will change. If a social system has become unstable, a single change at one point may precipitate an avalanche of further changes in other parts of the system as, for example, cooperation collapses in different areas of social life (see Kauffman 1993: 242 and 255 for analogous ideas in evolutionary biology). Wider social processes for which village life has no responsibility may also undermine local strategies.

The Plateau of Levier and the surrounding district are distinguished by the durability of *fruitières* and common land (pasture and forest). French geographers have argued that various factors promoted *fruitières* on the Plateau of Levier – *adaptation to the foothills of the Alps, nucleated settlements combined with corporate management of village land,* and *access to trade routes*. Community studies carried out by anthropologists[1] in France, Switzerland, Italy, and Spain show that all the processes identified by the French writers have important recursive effects on the probability of the social system persisting. Anthropological studies also highlight the importance of the rule of inheritance: *Partibility and unigeniture* generate different social systems. This is particularly the case during periods of *population growth*. Finally, an important catalyst of change which has preoccupied Western European agricultural policy makers is *overproduction in agriculture*.

[1] Wylie (1966), Cole and Wolf (1974), Friedl (1974), Netting (1981), Zonabend and Verdier (Zonabend 1984, Verdier 1979), Behar (1986), Rosenberg (1988), Rogers (1975 and 1991) and Ulin (1996).

Common Property as an Adaptation to High Altitude

On the Plateau of Levier, a rule of thumb holds that the better 50 percent of land is capable of being plowed and is privately owned, while the poorer 50 percent belongs to the commune. Only slightly more than 11 percent of the land in the Tyrolean valley studied by Cole and Wolf is suitable for cultivation (Cole and Wolf 1974: 146). Traces of abandoned fields on the mountainside above St. Felix show that current cultivation has extended private ownership to the limit of ecological sustainability (Cole and Wolf 1974: 147). These examples support the argument of Dyson-Hudson and Smith (1978), and Netting (1981), that collective ownership is more appropriate for poorer land, where the quality of pasture is unpredictable (see also Behar 1986: 230, 241).

The socio-ecological theory of territoriality was originally developed to explain animal behavior, and first applied to human territoriality by Dyson-Hudson and Smith (1978). The theory holds that it will be adaptive to defend the boundaries of a territory if the resources within it are sufficiently dense and predictable to outweigh the costs of defense. When resources are scarce and unpredictable, both the cost of defending a large enough area to guarantee subsistence and the risk of resources within it failing will be too great to justify defense.

Viazzo notes many anthropologists have argued that the widespread occurrence of village assemblies and councils of household heads in mountainous regions reveals the evolution of a distinctive socio-political organization in response to distinctive ecological conditions (Viazzo 1989: 24-5). In the Alps, the Andes, and the Himalayas, economies are based on a combination of livestock rearing with cultivation of crops in small fields. The optimum ratio of herders to livestock can be as high as 1:30-40, many more animals than traditionally owned by a single household. A common herd whose movements are facilitated by collective grazing rights saves labor. A rota, or the hiring of herders, releases the rest of the population to work in the fields (Viazzo 1989: 21-4). In this view, different communities have independently discovered the best solution, namely collective management.

However, the same institutional arrangements have existed over a much wider area of Europe than the Alps. The three-field system once covered much of France north of the Loire, much of England, Germany, and Poland (Bloch 1966: 48; Dahlman 1980: 95; Rösener 1994: 158-64). Even in the Alps, moreover, the closed corporate community is not universal (Viazzo 1989: 280). Since they have occurred in many ecological settings, systems based on common rights to land cannot be considered an adaptation *to* high altitude in any purposive sense. Like random genetic variations, such social systems are merely most likely to endure – that is, be reproduced success-

fully through cultural practice, under conditions that favor the persistence of collectively managed land alongside privately worked fields.

Agency and the Perpetuation of Cooperation

A 19th-century court ruling from Besançon recognized that the traditional *fruitières* depended on "mutual confidence and good faith" (Guyétant 1870: 73). The court's interpretation is closer to current thinking on the evolution of cooperation. Cooperation and reciprocity will only take root if good faith can be rewarded. Their success depends on the scale and form of social organization. Lotteries and rotas appear to be pervasive strategies for maintaining mutual confidence in villages with variants of the open field system, or locally managed common land. McCay and Acheson, and Ostrom, showed such a system only works when "free-riders" can be detected and punished.

Hardin (1968) argued that it was difficult if not impossible to regulate exploitation of the commons. Any individuals who over-exploited a common resource degraded its value for everyone. Others who showed restraint suffered the effect of over-exploitation without gaining the benefit. Hardin predicted that collective ownership, therefore, always breaks down into individual ownership. Hardin drew on the work of Lloyd, a 19th-century writer who proposed a parallel between common grazing land and the labor market. Lloyd argued that the market was a public good to which there was open access. Where children had to fend for themselves from an early age and there were no restrictions on entry into the labor market, nothing would limit the size of working-class families. The market was flooded with labor, and wages fell. It should have been in the working class's interest to restrict the number of children they had, to keep wages high. The difficulty was that if a few families produced large numbers of children, the level of wages fell for everyone, and the large families earned more than those who had showed restraint. Large families were transforming the niche in which all workers tried to survive. Since others were not to be trusted, the rational strategy was for all to have large families (Lloyd 1964 [1833]).

Ostrom, McCay, and Acheson argued that under appropriate conditions, common resources could be regulated. Ostrom draws on the evolutionary theory of games to identify the conditions most likely to enable successful control of the commons by those who use them. People who interact regularly in a local context, who have developed shared norms and patterns of reciprocity, who can monitor whether their associates are adhering to the agreed level of exploitation, and who can punish free-riders are most likely to succeed (Ostrom 1990: 184-8). The conditions identified by Ostrom for successful management were met, not only on the Plateau of

Levier and in other French, Spanish, and Alpine communities but also in medieval England. Successful conservation of the commons was therefore the result of particular social arrangements, enacted in appropriate conditions. Self-regulation depends on limiting access to, and use of, a shared resource. The recursive effects of regulated and unregulated exploitation will clearly be different.

Suitable ecology is not enough to explain the success of *fruitières*. Even in the early 19th century, 600 years after their appearance on the Plateau of Levier, most *fruitières* were still located in the district around Pontarlier. 19th-century writers considered the harsh climate responsible for their distribution, but in 1951 the French geographer Lebeau argued against environmental determinism. He compared the plateau on which the *fruitières* flourished with the physically very similar region of Haut-Bugey, at the southern end of the Jura. Here, there were no extensive pastures. All the available land in Haut-Bugey was devoted to the production of cereals to feed the inhabitants. There were few cattle in Haut-Bugey. They were used to draw plows and wagons and provide manure for the fields, not to produce cheese in marketable quantities.

Lebeau (1951) pointed out that the Plateau of Levier belonged to the open field zone. Villages were nucleated, the open field system enabled everyone to put their cattle into a single herd, which grazed on the commons or the fallow field, and an assembly of household heads regulated community affairs. Those who devised the *fruitière* took advantage of these existing customs by extending them to a new activity, the pooling of milk to make large, durable cheeses. It was only possible to take milk to a neighbor's house because homes were clustered in the village. Rotas were probably an established custom (e.g., to provide herders for the collective flock on common land). Lebeau points out that Haut-Bugey belonged to a different culture area (the *bocage* zone) and lacked all these advantages. Its inhabitants lived in scattered hamlets. Although Lebeau does not mention this, Haut-Bugey also lay in the large zone of southern France where inheritance is by unigeniture (see map in Le Roi Ladurie 1976: 39).

Bloch also contrasted open field systems, with their collective obligations, to the regime of enclosed fields in the *bocage* regions of France.[2] Enclosed fields in the *bocage* are almost always associated with hamlets rather than villages, and hamlets may eventually be reduced to single houses (Bloch 1966: 60). These regions were characterized overwhelmingly by

[2] The *bocage* comprised much of Brittany, Cotentin, Maine, Perche, Poitou and the Vendée, most of the Massif Centrale, Bugey, and the Pays de Gex.

what Bloch called "a spirit of individualism," which led each household to look after its own livestock and undertake little cooperation with others. The persistence of attitudes of mind must, however, be explained by uncovering the mechanisms that reproduce a *habitus* or practical consciousness and transmit it from one generation to the next. Successful transmission will depend, in turn, on agents' ability to realize social relationships by implementing cultural strategies (see section on partibility and unigeniture below).

Production for Trade/Market

A market in agricultural produce is compatible with the cooperative management of resources, but increased participation in market production can precipitate social change. Dietrich and Garenc conclude that access to trade routes was the critical variable accounting for the success of *fruitières* on the Plateau of Levier. They point out that the more northerly Plateau of Maiche had a similar cultural history to the Plateau of Levier but did not lie on a trade route and for many centuries failed to adopt *fruitières* (Dietrich and Garenc 1963: 72). The Plateau of Levier was bounded by long-established trade routes, which made it possible to export cheese for sale beyond the region. The genius of those who invented the *fruitière* was both to extend existing customs in order to exploit an opportunity for trade and also to develop a cheese suitable for long-distance transport by wagon on rough roads. Other European village studies support Dietrich and Garenc's argument that access to trade routes was crucial to the success of *fruitières* on the Plateau of Levier (Friedl 1974: 30; Rosenberg 1988: 99).

England under the Open Field System

Although English villages now lack effective government or community cohesion, village government had been robust during the centuries when much of England was dominated by the open field system. Each village chose a jury at its village court. The court admitted new freeholders and tenants to the community and passed bylaws compelling residents to repair chimneys and clear pathways and forbidding them to encroach on access tracks, by over-plowing the edge of strips, or to allow animals to graze on fields before crops had been harvested. The jury also stinted (limited) the number of animals each household could graze on commons (Ault 1972; Chibnall 1965: 231; Orwin and Orwin 1938: 154-9). Nucleated settlements grew up at the heart of the open fields.

As in England, the three-field rotation was undermined in the region of the Plateau of Levier during the 18th century, when maize, millet, and legumes were first planted in the fallow fields of villages. Yet, unlike Eng-

land, common land was not divided, and the right to graze the fallow survived for over a hundred years. Given the inherent stability of the system of collective rights, it is not enough to argue it was swept aside in England by the simple tide of progress.

Partibility and Unigeniture Generate Different Social Systems

St. Felix and Tret are two adjacent north Italian villages with different inheritance rules. Cole and Wolf argued that the choice of partibility or unigeniture arises from the need to choose between two conflicting goals: to keep the holding intact as a material basis for perpetuating the family line or to give all children the best possible start in life (Cole and Wolf 1974: 236, cf. Hrdy and Judge 1993). The cultural tradition to which St. Felix belongs had chosen one; Tret's cultural tradition had chosen the other. While ecological conditions had forced a convergence of inheritance practice in the two villages they studied, the village ideologies had different consequences (i.e., recursive effects) for the distribution of authority in the household and for inter-household relations. There is a greater propensity to participate in cooperatives in Tret and other communities characterized by partible inheritance. Partible inheritance is generally associated with a dense network of mutual aid sanctioned by the threat of ostracism. In St. Felix, on the other hand, unigeniture is associated with an ideal of household self-sufficiency, minimizing inter-household networks of mutual aid (Cole and Wolf 1974: 168, 243). Augustins and Barthelemy have suggested this difference is intrinsic to the two systems (Augustins 1990: 59; Barthelemy 1988: 199).

Partible inheritance is a leveling mechanism. In both St. Felix and the Aveyronnais village of Ste. Foy, on the other hand, non-inheriting children are subordinated, and men who have inherited the family property dominate village politics. As in St. Felix, farmers in Ste. Foy value self-sufficiency and prefer to hire labor if the household has insufficient (Rogers 1991: 101).

Partible inheritance seems to have been general throughout Anglo-Saxon England (Faith 1966: 79; Goody 1983: 121), but after the Norman Conquest it was displaced by unigeniture except in Kent, East Anglia, and parts of Yorkshire (Faith 1966: 81-2, Flandrin 1979: 76). Unigeniture is not intrinsic to the open field system, but the result of seigniorial policy: The powerful imposed it on the weak. By the 12th and 13th centuries, those areas of England where open field cultivation was practiced were overwhelmingly characterized by unigeniture (Faith 1966: 84-5; Goody 1983: 119; Williamson and Bellamy 1987: 43). I argue its recursive effect was to undermine the community of interest on which the open field system depended.

Local Self-government and Management of the Commons

Effective village self-government depends on local control of productive resources. Rétif de la Bretonne noticed this correlation in the late 18th century, writing, "The little parish of Saci, since it has commons, governs itself like a large family" (quoted Bloch 1966: 180). This correlation holds good both in villages characterized by partible inheritance and in St. Felix, the Tyrolean village where unigeniture is practiced. On the other hand, villages with partible inheritance but lacking control over their own commons (Abriès, Tret) are characterized by patronage (Cole and Wolf 1974; Rosenberg 1988).

Population Growth

The contrasting recursive effects of partible inheritance and unigeniture are not inevitable. If the size of the population is static (or declining) there will be no practical difference between partibility and unigeniture. In a static population, each married couple will be replaced by two children. The full implications of unigeniture for rural social structure were only realized when the population of England and those parts of Germany practicing unigeniture was rising. Disinherited children of prosperous farmers could afford to become merchants, train for a profession, or enter university. Smallholders sent their non-inheriting children into the world penniless (Howell 1976: 151-4). From the end of the 15th century, social differentiation increased (Campbell 1984: 103; Howell 1976: 152). The development of a "European marriage pattern" mitigated the effect of partible inheritance during this period of population growth. If only one son and one daughter married and the rest were forced to remain celibate, family holdings would not decrease in size. The effect of population growth in communities applying a rule of unigeniture will, however, be particularly divisive, since siblings of the household head necessarily have no land (Cole and Wolf 1974: 201, Netting 1981: 174). In a system of partible inheritance, celibate siblings remain shareholders in the family holding. In England, population growth, combined with unigeniture, created social divisions between a landed minority and a growing body of landless households who depended on the commons. The community of interest in the village was fatally undermined while, at the same time, opportunities to profit from trade in agricultural products were growing. Opposition to enclosure came from small landowners and the landless. Following Axelrod's (1984) model for the evolution of reciprocal altruism, enclosure suddenly enables the end of mutual dependence to be foreseen, and those who can manage without mutual aid will withdraw from the social contract.

Post-war Change on the Plateau of Levier

The comparative analysis of village systems in preceding paragraphs shows how change in resource management on the Plateau of Levier might be explained. The history of cooperative resource management on the Plateau of Levier suggests it has three advantages: minimizing variance (since commons are not divided between households), sharing costs, and taking control out of the hands of individual entrepreneurs. Collective exploitation of the pasture evens out variation in the patches available to individual households. The traditional *fruitière* originated as a way of pooling resources in order to make large-enough cheeses to be exported from the region. The village cooperatives of the Plateau of Levier satisfy Ostrom's conditions for success. Members interact regularly in a local context. They have developed shared norms and patterns of reciprocity, both in the wider context of mutual aid and in the specific experience of the successful management of cooperatives over a long period. They anticipate needing to cooperate for an indefinite period into the future. In the management of the common pasture, opportunities exist to monitor whether associates are adhering to the agreed level of exploitation of the collective resource, and free-riders can be punished (Cf. Ostrom 1990: 184-8).

In most villages, the continuing decline in the number of *cultivateurs* after World War II eventually prompted the division of the commons between those who remained. In Pellaport the commons were divided in 1979. The division took place, however, without privatization. Some dairy cooperatives (*fruitières*) have amalgamated, a decision foreshadowed by events in a few other villages as long ago as 1969. The irony of the dairy economy on the Plateau of Levier is that, despite successful management of the literal commons, the market for Comté cheese has been treated as an open-access commons. As more and more cheese is manufactured, so its price falls. It only needs some *cultivateurs* to increase production for all to have to follow suit if their incomes are not to be eroded, just as overstocking by a few households can degrade the value of common grazing for everyone. If other households cannot increase production, they will be forced out of agriculture. The consequences feed back upon the management of village resources.

Designation of Comté as a product subject to *appellation controlée* was a way of fencing the market. When a large industrial dairy that threatened to take business away from village cooperatives was established in the region, the regional association of dairy cooperatives successfully had the regulations modified to establish that genuine Comté had to be made in a dairy no more than a certain distance from the smallholdings that produced

the milk. This reduced the catchment area for the industrial dairy to that available to local cooperatives and destroyed its commercial advantage.

The introduction of EC milk quotas in 1984, on the other hand, has had a damaging effect precisely because of the difficulty of monitoring free-riders. Every dairy cooperative suspects those in neighboring villages of cheating, by accepting more milk than its associates are allowed to produce according to their quotas. Even within cooperatives, the suspicion may arise that some associates have done a secret deal with the dairyman, only entering part of their production in their record book but being paid for all the milk they deliver. The cooperative in one of the villages surveyed had disbanded in acrimony over such allegations.

Conclusion

The repeated application of particular principles of collective organization over time has given the regional social system of the Plateau of Levier its particular historical trajectory. There are two reasons why social change on the plateau appears to follow a linear trajectory that looks more like progress than an adaptive radiation in which communities increasingly diverge as they adapt to different economic niches. Comparison of the 15 villages I surveyed shows that, at any time, several alternative strategies exist. Diversification analogous to an adaptive radiation is, however, inhibited by the uniform change in the social environment created by inflation in the price of milk, itself the consequence of strategies to increase output. A second constraint on variability is the wish to avoid the risk of adopting an unfamiliar strategy.

The implementation of new strategies transformed local culture. To what extent should sociological analysis take variation in individual agents' strategies into account when studying the cause of social change? Lorenz coined the term "butterfly effect" to express the notion that a small, chance event could displace the state of a system (Stewart 1997: 127-9). At first, the effect might be imperceptible, but as the cycle progressed, the trajectory of the system diverged from that which it would otherwise have followed. Nelson and Winter suggested that the uncertainty surrounding decisions to innovate was so great that innovations could effectively be treated as chance events (Nelson and Winter 1982: 15, 276), the impact of which could therefore be compared to the butterfly effect. Ruelle similarly argued that the complexity of the universe makes free will a meaningful notion, since no one can predict the future in any detail and it would take an impossibly long time to determine the truth or falsity of certain propositions (Ruelle 1991: 33). Agents face both risk and uncertainty (Smith 1988: 230-1). In a chaotic social system, the consequences of risk and uncertainty are magnified. The

future state of the social system is unknowable and, to the extent he or she can exercise free will, the agent must choose which course of action to take.

The effect of such chance events depends on the stability of the system. If each variable can only change to a limited extent, the system "must return infinitely often to states near its original state" (Stewart 1997: 50), and the butterfly effect will be greatly reduced. The more unstable the state of the system, the greater the effect of a small, chance deflection from its current trajectory. The effect of some apparently chance event is no longer "erased" by subsequent evolution (Ruelle 1991: 88-9, cf. Brown 1996: 121). By choosing one strategy, and thus positioning themselves in the system, agents set off along a trajectory that may diverge increasingly, and unpredictably, from the alternative routes they might have followed had they adopted a different strategy (compare Rosser 1996: 200 and Morphy and Layton 1981: 68). The more chaotically a social system behaves, the greater the impact of variation in agents' strategies upon structuration and the more the history of its agents' activities emerge as a separate field of study.

Radcliffe-Brown (1952) hoped to demonstrate the scientific character of structural functionalism through the discovery of sociological laws derived from correlations between the forms of social institutions. The interactionists, followed by Giddens and Bourdieu, objected that Radcliffe-Brown treated social structure as if it had a life of its own, rather than recognizing it as the by-product of interaction among socially informed agents. Radcliffe-Brown was in effect sampling social process at particular moments in time to discover correlations between customs but not asking how the social processes responsible for these correlations were generated. The method of structural functionalism developed to study small-scale, non-Western societies can be interpreted as the observation of a long run of social events from which the anthropologist calculates the probability of certain states being repeated, hence describing the system in a probabilistic way (cf. Ruelle 1991: 5). To the extent that each cycle of events follows the same path as previous ones, this method will give an accurate account. Structural functionalism will therefore be most appropriate to the study of simple systems, where there are few interrelated variables and not much energy is being put into the system. The greatest failure of structural functionalism was its failure to take account of the way colonialism was drawing the communities studied into an increasingly complex world system. A comparative survey of European village studies led to the conclusion that partible inheritance tends to be associated with a nucleated village and a strong network of mutual aid. Unigeniture tends to be associated with isolated, self-sufficient farms exclusively working their own land. This was the pattern that developed in England after the enclosures. The right of a community to manage its own re-

sources contributes to local democracy, while dispossession encourages patronage. These conclusions recall Radcliffe-Brown's search for general correlations between the form of customs. Such correlations do not, however, arise from the dead hand of social structure, obliging people to take up roles that will sustain the social order. They emerge from the *agency* of socially informed actors, even though the recursive effects of their strategies are to generate patterns of interaction beyond any individual's control.

Acknowledgement

This chapter is based on the final chapter of my book Anthropology and History in Franche-Comté (Layton 2000).

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Chapter 6

Devolution of Property in Southwest Germany around 1800: Interhousehold Cooperation and the Distribution of Tools in Germany in the 18th and 19th Centuries

David Warren Sabean

In this paper I will deal with several issues having to do with intergenerational transition in rural farming/peasant communities in the cultural area of the German southwest during the 18th and 19th centuries. One issue has to do with strategies of heirship among small peasant holders in an area of partible inheritance. Such strategies contrast sharply with those systems that passed on farms or other immovable property as integral units, but what I have to say suggests revisiting areas of impartible inheritance as well. A second issue has to do with succession to different kinds of property and the way *that* succession influenced intergenerational cooperation. A third issue, closely related to the first two, deals with the period of transition between generations, often thought to be abrupt in European peasant societies, but here describes a long, drawn-out process, which, although it was characterized by important key moments, was not marked by sharp changes. A fourth issue deals with the agricultural revolution and the economic transition to capitalized agriculture and ever greater economic differentiation – how the new situation put pressure on the embedded structures and practices developed in the "long" century after the Thirty Years War. And a final issue looks at how social differentiation and class formation were structured in part around ownership and succession and mediated by access to different kinds of things. I will draw on my work on the village of Neckarhausen, situated on the Neckar River just outside of Nürtingen, and the important and well-researched work of Andrea Hauser on Kirchentellinsfurt, a village near Tübingen, also characterized by partible inheritance (Sabean 1990, [1997]; Hauser 1994).

Give or take a few nuances, the system of partible inheritance in the two villages is characterized by the following model. Property passed to

each child as he or she married. A characteristic aspect of Württemberg property law and traditional practice was to treat each child with obsessive equality. Students of Württemberg society are blessed with a vast outpouring of documents of all kinds, an important genre of which makes up the long series of inventories taken at the inception of each marriage and at the death or retirement of each spouse. For each marriage, there is a complete snapshot of all property, from small garden plots and parts of houses to sacks of grain, knives, forks, and spoons and cartfuls of manure taken at three points in its career. And if a spouse remarried, the same accounting took place for the new couple, detailing the property rights and expectations to property of all the children of each family, or as the French would put it, of each "bed" (Sabean 1990: 187-93; Hauser 1994: 66-70).

Both sons and daughters shared equally in immovable property, and in principle, both marriage partners brought land into a marriage. There were differences in the kinds of movable property accorded to children by sex – which had to do with clothing, outfitting the couple with linen and so forth, and with production equipment, tools, and animals – the tools of a trade belonged to a man, while typically a woman brought a cow to the marriage. Children were treated equally in several ways. As each married, he or she was given a portion of the parents' property, which tended toward some rough degree of fairness. Of course, dribbling out land over the course of as much as 20 years would reflect the ups and downs of economic conditions, but investigation of hundreds of inventories suggests attempts to treat each child the same. There was a further catch – as a parent died, all the property already given out was "thrown back" to be finally divided in a carefully accounted equal fashion, which could go so far as to divide up all the movable property into separate lists that were then apportioned by lot – the same could be done for immovable property if there was enough land to warrant such treatment. I have even found siblings setting aside a father's will to make sure that a wastrel brother and a deceased brother, both of whom had emigrated to America, were accorded their proper shares in the inheritance (Sabean 1990: 247-55; Hauser 1994: 194).

The property of a married couple was always carefully kept separate as belonging to each spouse and his or her line, and as land or goods were devolved upon the next generation, they were always designated as from the mother (*mütterliches*) or father (*väterliches*). The only property a couple held in common was what was accumulated or lost during the duration of a marriage. There were various ways property could be treated in the event of the death of one spouse. If the older couple was elderly, then the survivor could allow the property of the deceased spouse to pass to the children. But in most cases, after the inventory and accounting, what now belonged in

theory to the children was held (*verfangen*) in the usufruct of the surviving parent until he or she decided to die or retire. This practice had quite different effects in the 18th from those in the 19th century, for widows in the earlier period frequently gave up the *väterliches* to grown children as soon as they were alone and often passed on their own property as well. But in the straitened situation of the 19th century, not only did parents – and especially widows – live longer; they also frequently held on to property until they died (Sabean 1990: 193-201).

The problem that I find so fascinating has to do with the process of devolving resources onto the younger generation. It was common at a marriage to give each child an arable plot in each of three fields and a strip of meadow – although this very much depended on the wealth of a family. At least some cultivable property was always given to the newlyweds. Württemberg law and custom made it clear that it was not proper to delay the marriage of children unreasonably long. But there were many ways to pass on property. It was quite possible, for example, for some or all of the strips of land or the buildings to be mortgaged, which precluded passing on such property directly, and what remained encumbered could only be held by the heir in usufruct. And in any event, parents might pass on only usufructory rights in a strategy to rein in an obstreperous child or to punish a poor spousal choice. After the inception of marriage, the young couple was then expected slowly to accumulate land and property. They could add strips through purchase, with or without taking on a mortgage. Over the first 20 or so years of marriage, parents could dribble out parcels through outright gift, sale, usufruct, sharecropping, rent, or as the guarantee for an annuity. While most children throughout the period between 1700 and 1870 married between the ages of 25 and 30, few came into the full set of properties until their late forties and early fifties. Even when a parent retired, he or she would customarily hold on to some land to be worked by the children. The important point to be seen here is that productive resources were accorded to the younger generation in a long, drawn-out process, punctuated by two points – the marriage of each child and the final retirement of the parents (Sabean 1990: 256-99; Hauser 1994: 191, 196).

While these parameters describe the structural features of the system, they had quite different effects over time. The population of the village between 1700 and 1870 rose progressively from around 340 to 1,000. While the village carefully recovered wasteland, the larger population came to divide up the land into ever smaller portions. But even at the end of the period, there were no householders in Neckarhausen without some land. Strips were slowly broken into smaller parcels, and the average size holding was whittled away. Beginning slowly in the 1760s and with ever increasing

rhythm, the village reorganized agriculture to introduce stall feeding, root crops and leafy brassicae, new field rotations with the abandonment of the fallow field, and intensive flax production. The "Agricultural Revolution" in the village made it possible to reallocate labor, treat land more intensively both in terms of labor and capital, and allow farms to exist on smaller amounts of arable land. The opening up of markets for produce was followed from the 1830s by new labor opportunities, especially in the building trades, in the larger region (Sabean 1990: 21-2, 442-52). Capital circulation allowed or forced villagers from the 1780s onward increasingly to mortgage their land, and it also allowed them to increase the capital investment in production, lowering the ratio between inventory (traction animals, plows, harrows, carts, and wagons) and land. A third factor in shifting relations between generations had to do with the propensity of older groups to hold on longer to property, and they retired less often. The total amount of wealth held by those over 45 rose by 20 percent between 1710 and 1870. The average age of retirees rose steadily from the 1740s, reaching about 70 by the 1860s. A final point: The real crises hit the generation centered around the period 1810 to 1830. This is the generation that shouldered the brunt of agricultural reorganization, plunging into debt in order to finance the rapid changes. It faced a reorganization of labor, drawing women massively into agriculture, which partly explains a burst of separations and divorces. This is the generation where the gap in the age apportioning of productive resources first opened considerably. The effects of political and market instabilities led to wild fluctuations in the prices of land and buildings. Finally, it was in this generation that an internal market in land was finally fully established. Whereas at the beginning of the 18th century most land was allocated through inheritance, by this generation, just as much was allocated through purchase as through devolution. The decade of the 1810s saw a rush of bankruptcies and foreclosures and a kaleidoscopic reapportionment of landholdings, with the actual age of buyers increasing. The crisis only reinforced the tendency of older groups to own and control land. Property was not devolved when the next generation was ready to manage, but when the older generation could no longer administer (Sabean 1990: 256-8; Hauser 1994: 199).

Given the slow transition between generations and the effects of the economic changes on the age distribution of land, how did parents and children relate to each other in agricultural production?

First it is very important to understand that there was no sense of a common enterprise between parents and married children. Clearly, before a marriage, the two families negotiated a settlement, and within a year the young couple would be inventoried. It was common for the neogami to move in with one set of parents for the first several months, but it was thought

improper to keep the young people around too long as a work force without resources or pay. Still, the transition was not abrupt. The families lived together and worked together up to half a year or even a year, up to the point when the young couple was inventoried. Thereafter, they set up their own accounts and established their own quarters. Of course, there were tensions and conflicts over the separation, but there was no economic advantage to stay together in one building. Like land, buildings were chopped up into separate apartments, with the kitchen and heated room frequently shared, but the families living together in a building often had no relation to each other and carried on no common enterprise. Records of disputes show clearly that all things – even a kitchen dish rag – were subject to individual rights. In any house with more than one family there was a clear demarcation of such rights. If a kitchen was shared, there was a separate schedule for its use, and each implement and rag was allocated to particular ownership. Children may or may not have shared a building, stall, or barn with parents, but whatever the situation, rights and space were carefully delineated. There was no notion of a family enterprise encompassing several generations and no sense of particular properties under temporary management of a patriarch who would have to pass it along. Parents and children were not coparceners in an estate. Although each decade in the village brought increasing pressure on living space, couples never pooled land or living or storage quarters (Sabean 1990: 259-99; Hauser 1994: 191-3, 345).

Yet the older generation held onto considerable power through a simple expedient. Land and building space was transmitted as the children married but never tools or the instruments of agricultural production. Without the plow team, plow, harrow, or wagon, the land the children received could not be worked. In this system, smaller enterprises were completely dependent on the larger ones, the poor on the rich, the young on the old. Only large farms or older farmers had all the necessary equipment to work the land. However, there were certain crucial shifts that took place with parcelization and agricultural reorganization. At the beginning of the 18th century, land was worked with horses, which were expensive to maintain and required complex gear. With the agricultural changes of the turn of the century, villagers shifted to oxen to work the land, and even single cows were adapted to carting and maybe even to harrowing and plowing. With greater ratios of capital to land, smaller farms came to have at least some equipment, and by 1800 it was typical for brothers or brothers-in-law to be coparceners in agricultural tools. This still set the older generation with equipment against the younger without any (Sabean 1990: 300-11; Hauser 1994: 193).

Under these conditions, how did the enterprises of parents and married children interrelate? In the inventories, there is considerable evidence concerning wages and outstanding debt obligations between parents and children, and this evidence can be supplemented by cases of conflict that came before the village courts. It was the usual pattern for parents to charge for services with the plow and wagon, for they had to amortize their capital investment by using equipment on smaller/dependent farms. In many cases, a strip that needed to be cultivated as a unit was divided up and part of it allocated to a child. What was grown and harvested on the child's portion belonged to him or her, but plowing and harrowing could only take place for the larger parcel as a whole. Thus children were anchored in the village as strips and parcels were hived off for them, but they remained dependent on their parents for cultivating their resources. In return, children labored for their parents only for wages. For any kind of labor parents charged children; children charged parents and in-laws. Kinship played a crucial role, in that people with inventory relied on kin to offer opportunity to work land and those with only labor worked for kin with resources enough to hire them. Over time, as parents leased, sold, gave, and rented ever more parcels of land to their children, they continued to maintain equipment until near the end. Ownership, use rights, tools, and labor were the elements of complex reciprocities that structured relationships (Sabean 1990: 311-16).

From the point of view of the younger generation, the phases of growing independence look like this: During their late teens and early twenties, they left their families to go into service, often outside the village. For those trained in a handicraft, this was the period of journeyman wandering, frequently involving extensive travel. Before they married, young men, at least, had come to work for themselves. After marriage, for a while a man and his wife became integrated into one of their parents' enterprises, up until strips in the fields, meadowland, and a garden plot or two were definitively allocated. In many instances, this happened at the end of the annual agricultural cycle. Then they were dependent for a long time on the older generation for farm labor, occasional jobs, handicraft employment, or from sources outside the village. Children were never set up with enough resources to be independent. Even as they accumulated land, they remained dependent, waiting for a major transfer of land and equipment at the death or retirement of aged parents.

All through the period, one strategy for maintaining children during the transition period was to set them up in a handicraft, which was practiced with ever less intensity as land was accumulated. During the transition, children plied a trade, opened a pub, found agricultural labor inside and outside the village, worked their own land, and worked for wages for parents

and in-laws, who had no unconditional call on their labor. Their accounts were totally separate. From around 1800, the necessity of setting up in a trade became ever more important, and handicraft skills tended to be passed on from father to son (Sabean 1990: 316-20).

In impartible inheritance regions, passing on a farm meant to give up authority, and it is a commonplace in the literature to see the retired father as powerless, even a figure of fun. In partible-inheritance Württemberg, the moral authority of parents continued to be respected throughout the entire transition, or at least that was the model. While the children kept their own accounts and were allocated carefully delineated rights, often moving out from under their parents' direct oversight, they still were expected to accord their elders far more authority than similar independence would allow for in impartible-inheritance regions. But in the 19th century, the longer period of transition, the fewer resources to go around, and the more general impoverishment of large sectors of the population brought enormous tensions in relations between generations. Increasingly, parents made use of the institutions of the village and regional courts and the offices of the village authorities and church to enforce discipline on the children (Sabean 1990: 321-4).

In looking at the issue of class formation, it is important to understand that the distribution of property displays almost exactly the same curve in Neckarhausen in 1870 as in 1700, despite a tripling in population. While there were substantial differences in the size of farms, there were few if any households in the village at any point in time that did not have some land, and there were no sharp discontinuities that set off one group from another. But how the wealthy were connected to the poor changed radically over time. Around 1700, various kinship practices connected households of different fortune together. Among other things, newlyweds brought quite different portions to their marriages, with the wealthiest marrying among the poorest. A system of linking through affinal ties brought three, four, or five households into the same orbit, but because marriages linked families with different resources, these chains of affines were asymmetrically linked to each other. A group of such households usually had one much wealthier or powerful man at its center who acted as a patron to a set of clients. Godparentage integrated villagers together in another way, with wealthier, older, and more powerful villagers standing as godparents for those poorer, younger, and weaker, again establishing patron-client ties. The issue that I want to point to here has to do with the way the instruments of labor (horses, plows, wagons, and the like) mediated between groups with different resources. Looking at evidence from inventories, it becomes clear that those with expensive inventory sold access to it to their immediate clients, linked through marriage or spiritual kinship. And those with only their labor sold

that to their patrons, those with significantly more land to work. Both the wealthy and the poor needed to build claims on others to amortize expensive equipment or to provide work opportunities (Sabean 1990: 223-46; Sabean 1998: 92-168; Hauser 1994: 333).

By the end of the 18th century, the earlier forms of integrating villagers had disappeared. For one thing, marriage portions were matched with rough equality, which brought people from the same strata together. Furthermore, rather than marriages in the form of asymmetrical linkages looping back to create a ring of affines, repeated marriages between allied lines brought about a system of cousin marriages, something that never occurred before 1740. This double form of endogamy, by wealth and by blood, was the matrix for closing off strata into self-conscious classes. While the new form began among the political elite around mid-century, by the 1780s the landed wealthy had cut off all marriages with their poorer relatives. And they began to choose their godparents not from wealthier "strangers" but from among their closest consanguineous kin, and they stopped acting as godparents for poorer clients. This shift coincided with the development of a significant land market in the village, which came to be controlled by coordinated sets of cousins. And at the same time, steps were taken over several decades around 1800 to introduce and carry out an agricultural revolution. Important for the issues we are looking at here, agriculture no longer was carried on with horses but mostly by oxen and even by cows. As I pointed out earlier, capital equipment over these decades came to be in the hands of ever smaller producers, and while this equipment mediated between generations, it no longer mediated between classes (Sabean 1990: 371-415; Sabean 1998: 208-60; Hauser 1994: 387-91).

Conclusion

1) Strategies of heirship. In smallholding Württemberg, immovable property was passed on by the senior generation beginning at marriage, anchoring children in the village and getting them started in agricultural production. The idea was to start them lean, even for families with considerable property and few children. The Swabian saying was: "Don't put young bees in a full hive."

2) Succession to kinds of property. Much discussion of property devolution leaves out the problem of how property and productive resources are used, and I have argued here that it is important to pay attention to more than just land. It was the control of the tool kit and frequently the location of property that kept the enterprises of young and old interlocked in a context of carefully delineated property rights, a practice of remuneration for rendered services, and the absence of coparcenership.

3) The period of intergenerational transition was long, drawn–out, and never abrupt. Parental control was circumscribed by allocated rights, the lack of a common budget, and separate living quarters. Yet the moral authority of parents remained in place longer than in other agricultural regimes. Parents were accorded respect – according to the ideology of village authorities – not because they headed a common enterprise but because they were the source of the children's wealth.

4) The agricultural reorganization, growing product, labor and land markets, capitalization of production, and mortgage and debt put pressure on the system by increasing the period of dependence of younger generations, giving them longer periods for seeking wages outside the family and village and a longer period for exercising a trade. This distorted the system of authority and shifted the dynamics between generations. The '30s and '40s of the 19th century saw a massive emigration, largely of young couples in their thirties with children, as well as a pattern of circulating around the region for years until resettling in the village once sufficient land was accumulated.

5) Social differentiation also created a pattern of class differences, for which the patterns and rules of property devolution remained as they had been under "traditional" agriculture, but whose meaning had been, at least for the large class of pauperized villagers, hollowed out. Access to tools patterned in some ways the manner whereby people with quite different levels of resources related to each other.

6) It is well to look at property as an "idiom" that connects people and divides people in patterned ways. It has been the argument in this paper that the "thinginess" of property matters and that different kinds of things mediate relationships differently. Here I have pointed to the fact that in looking at inheritance, we have to look at all the things that are passed on between generations, and not just concentrate on land, and develop techniques for using "property" analytically for understanding different ways relations among people can be shaped and distorted.

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Chapter 7

Toward Predominating Primogeniture: Changes in Inheritance Practices in Innichen/San Candido, 1730 to 1930

Margareth Lanzinger

In large parts of Tyrol, historical studies of demographic variables show extreme values: There is hardly any population growth to be noticed and the mean age at first marriage is very high, as are the celibacy rates (Klein 1971: 34-62, 54; Ortmayer 1995). The area is notorious for a restrictive official attitude toward marriage (Mantl 1997; 1999), resulting in an extreme form of the so-called European marriage pattern (Hajnal 1965). Furthermore, political activity at the regional level often opposed the reforming tendencies of the Habsburg monarchy, insisting on traditional rights, privileges, and customs, and expressing rather skeptical or disapproving attitudes toward change. The central aim of this article is to reconstruct the connections between local politics, family strategies (or, speaking more generally, the patterns of action within families), demographic patterns, and inheritance practices by means of a micro-historical study of Innichen/San Candido, a small market town in South Tyrol.

Even an initial review of the local historical sources is enough to show that marriage and access to property were key issues for this society (cf. Lanzinger 2000). Local ideas about property, and actual property transactions, were characterized by a deep interest in guaranteeing the continuance of a particular social structure within the local community by means of inheritance practices that left each estate virtually unchanged (Fauve-Chamoux 1995; Viazzo 1989: 263). Consistently with this, would-be marriage partners were required, from 1820 on, to obtain communal permission before getting married – which enabled the community to prevent the formation of landless couples. The fixity of the property structure was further reinforced by a taboo on building new houses that was effective from the 18th century until the 1860s. In this context, inheritance practices played a

major role as a supporting factor in reproducing the property system. When looking at the modes of access to property and transmission of property as a whole, we can observe notable changes from the 18th to the 19th centuries: Primogeniture becomes the predominant form of property transfer. The central question of this paper is how these changes came to pass. The answer is to be found in reconstructing the various contexts. In particular, it turned out necessary to go beyond household and family, extending the analysis to take account of the communal level and of the underlying cultural concepts. This perspective obviously exceeds the usual range of family history, although following its major aims (Mitterauer 1990; Ehmer, Hareven and Wall 1997).

First, attention is drawn to the community as an administrative, political, and cultural unit as it deals with its own people and with outsiders. The second part shows how the community managed local public affairs in general and the commons in particular in an Alpine context. The subsequent sections move on from the matter of resources to consider the house as a highly prestigious object and describe the means of obtaining access to property. The final part analyzes property transmission within households.

The Social Implications of Communal Government

One of the principles of communal life in Innichen was citizenship: Every man from outside wishing to participate in public life and be fully entitled to communal rights had to buy local citizenship.[1] The local representatives decided about admission to citizenship and usually required that an applicant should have a certain degree of wealth or special professional abilities. The amount the applicant had to pay depended on certain criteria – it was higher for those who had purchased property with good economic potential, such as guest houses or mills. It was cheaper when marrying a daughter or widow of a local citizen (cf. Hahn 1988: 144). In a few cases, men were admitted without money or property, paying only a minimum amount. In two of these cases, this may have been due to the fact that they married women with illegitimate children.[2] Thus even the most rigid principles were not absolute and there was still some room for negotiation.

For the lower classes, a limited number of jobs in the community that did not require any specific qualifications, a night watch, for instance, were available, and people not belonging to the group of privileged citizens were

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[1] Non-citizens living and working in Innichen also had to be admitted and had to pay an annual fee.

[2] In this context, it is important to note that Innichen belongs to a region with a low rate of illegitimacy.

thus integrated into the local order (cf. Kaschuba 1991: 75). Integrating the poor into communal life can be seen as a strategy of the more privileged classes to keep society stable and to create a certain degree of consensus despite great social inequalities.

Legal changes concerning community membership made in the 19th century with the intention of relaxing or at least standardizing residence requirements throughout the Habsburg monarchy did not take effect in Innichen until the end of the century (cf. Spiegel 1906: 809-43; Pace 1896: 974-1108; Klabouch 1975: 273; Wendelin 2000: 173-346). To men from outside, the town remained closed throughout almost the whole period being discussed. When in the mid-19th century, the "old" system, depending on the town representatives alone, was abolished, access to citizenship became even more difficult. A more detailed investigation shows that in the uncertain transitional phase of the 1860s, marriage behavior was characterized by a marked local endogamy that severely limited the number of in-marrying men.

For women, however, the situation was totally different: Marriages between a bridegroom from Innichen and a bride from outside appear to have been very frequent. From 43.4 percent in the period between 1750 and 1799, the percentage of this kind of marriage rose to 47.5 percent between 1800 and 1849 and finally to 53.1 percent between 1850 and 1899.[3] As compared with other regions, this result proves to be an unusual pattern (Arru 1997: 111). One reason for it might be that women did not as a rule inherit property and were therefore tied less strongly to their places of origin. A conjecture that local exogamy might have been connected with occupational endogamy attainable only on a marriage market larger than the local one could not be confirmed. The openness of the local marriage market to women from outside might be some kind of compensation for it being closed to men, enabling families to establish and maintain supra-local relationships in this way.

From 1820 onward, there existed a law declaring property as a precondition for marriage. The local authorities issued the necessary consent, called "political marriage consensus" (Mantl 1999; Mantl 1997). Such restrictive practice was not new, except that a former custom had now become an official rule. Its aim was to avoid an increase in the number of poor families, who would have had to be supported by the community. The Habsburg monarchy repealed this law in 1868, except in Salzburg and Tyrol. In Salzburg it was in force until 1883 and in Tyrol until 1921 (Ehmer 1991: 61; Pelikan 1981: 93-172). Again, an examination of how this consensus was

[3] Statistical analysis of the family database containing approximately 1,000 reconstituted local families of the 18th and 19th centuries.

handled at Innichen at the end of the 19th century reveals that it was more strictly applied than was provided for by law. Although at the time official consent was legally required only for day laborers and others without regular work, property, or a permanent residence, in practice everyone had to apply for it. In particular, the economic situation of those who had the right of domicile at Innichen, but lived outside and wanted to get married, was thoroughly scrutinized.

The Management of the Commons – Property as a Crucial Factor

Innichen is situated at 1,175 meters above sea level in the Dolomites; the summer pastures reach an altitude of 2,500 meters. Grain, especially wheat, grows only in the lower reaches on the sunny slopes and at the bottom of the valley. Arable land is generally scarce and therefore precious (cf. Viazzo 1989: 18). The fallow land is not used for pastures but for hay harvest.[4] All livestock – cows, sheep, goats, and pigs – were tended by herdsmen hired by the local authority; a large part of the minutes taken annually by the local administration deal with the employment of these herdsmen and the regulation of their responsibilities and rights.[5] In the summer, the calves and horses remained on Alpine pastures shared with the neighboring village. There was a local Alpine commission, consisting of representatives of the communities in question, to deal with these issues.[6] The right to drive one's cattle to the Alpine pastures was, like many other rights and duties, linked to certain houses or farmsteads.

Several tasks were handled by the inhabitants in turn, that is, every year by another house owner (cf. Rhoades and Thompson 1975: 541).[7] Two of them formed the Alpine commission, three others had to inspect the fireplaces and chimneys, three kept the bulls, and four were obliged, among other things, to organize a fire-fighting squad in case of a forest fire. The two tasks first mentioned were reserved for men; the two others were open to women as well.[8] Toward the end of the 19th century, this system changed: Participation by all house owners was no longer required, and "specialists" were employed instead.

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[4] This special agrarian economy is called ley farming, and is typical for Alpine areas (see Stolz 1930: 93-139).

[5] See: Municipal archives Innichen, Sitzungsprotokolle, annual Gemeindeabhaltungsprotokolle.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Rhoades and Thompson see this rotational system as a "process that encourages civic responsibility and harmony" (Rhoades and Thompson: 541).

[8] See: Municipal archives Innichen, Sitzungsprotokolle, annual Gemeindeabhaltungsprotokolle.

The whole arrangement of rights and duties was linked to a fixed number of houses, the goal apparently being to keep the yields and costs at the same level. Some village regulations in Tyrol include a prohibition on building new houses, arguing that the consumption of wood would be too high and the commons would be depleted (Wopfner 1951: 160).

Thus it becomes clear that property and communal policy were strongly interrelated: Property was a precondition for foreigners to be admitted, for couples to get married, and for villagers to receive the benefits of the local commons. Furthermore, houses and farmsteads were a link between the formal decision-making process at communal level, and the management of resources and social life within households, families, neighborhoods, and kinship groups. As for inheritance practices, it has to be emphasized that the stability of land and house ownership was a highly important part of the communal system.

The House as a Stabilizing Factor?

Whenever someone in Innichen wanted to build a house or even to install a new stove or oven, he needed the permission of the local authorities. Several times a year, "fire inspectors," together with a bricklayer and a holder of a court office, examined the fireplaces and chimneys of the town. They were obliged to report flammable but also unauthorized fireplaces to the mayor.[9] The number of kitchens, living rooms – called "Stuben" – and chimneys was subject to control.

From a record of 1799 regulating each house's contribution to the night watchmen's salaries, it emerges that in the preceding four decades only one new house was built.[10] For the previous decades of the 18th century there are also hardly any traces to be found referring to a newly built house. The total number of 128 houses, as quoted in 1799, did not change until the 1860s.[11] It is no surprise, therefore, that the construction of the only new house resulted in a conflict between the local council and the builder, Johann Zeberle. The latter won this confrontation with the aid of the Tyrolean

[9] See: Municipal archives Innichen, Sitzungsprotokolle, annual Gemeindeabhaltungsprotokolle.

[10] See: Tiroler Landesarchiv Innsbruck (TLA), Verfachbuch Innichen (VBI) 1799, fol. 1234.

[11] See: Collegiate archives Innichen, Familienbuch 2, 1829-1849 (a kind of household list) and Ortsrepertorium der gefürsteten Grafschaft Tirol und Vorarlberg. Auf Grundlage der Volkszählung vom 31. Dezember 1869 bearbeitet von der k.k. Statistischen Centralkommission in Wien. Innsbruck 1873: 41.

provincial government in Innsbruck.[12] Employed as an "imperial and royal road worker" and probably coming from the South German area, he was obviously not willing to accept the restrictive local policy. The building plot allocated to him by the community was located – perhaps in reference to a symbolic order of space – on the far side of the bridge at the edge of the small market town, next to a hospital for contagious diseases. This exceptional case and the vehement objections of the local officials demonstrate that the restrictive settlement policy was consciously followed, even if the arguments sound rather vague and tangential: In Johann Zeberle's case, they asserted that he had chosen the very plot already chosen for a new school building. In another case, a local citizen sold a plot to the community in order to prevent it from being purchased by a private person, who – according to a rumor – might build a house that would result in an unspecified "diminution" upon the woods and the local citizens.[13]

Consistently with the stable number of houses, the number of inhabitants hardly shows any changes either: In 1751, 1,090 people lived in the market town and in the mountain area belonging to the same parish (Kramer 1962: 30); in 1869 the corresponding figure was 1,102,[14] with slight deviations in the meantime. A population increase is noticeable only from the 1870s onward.[15] For many other villages in Western Europe, the same period can be characterized as a phase of strong population growth (Sabean 1990: 41; Netting 1981: 60, 96; Schlumbohm 1994: 49).[16] This atypical situation can be explained by a whole set of reasons: A large part of Tyrol is well-known for having been hostile toward industry (cf. Heiss 1990: 301). The absence of pre-industrial and industrial activities in the whole region around Innichen preserved an agrarian-handicraft-commercial social structure. Two factors sustaining a concept of balance between economy and population coincide here: a system of guilds and a sensitive Alpine ecology.

In models originated by Gunther Ipsen (1933; 1941) and Gerhard Mackenroth (1953), a certain stability in pre-industrial societies is connected

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[12] TLA Innsbruck, VBI 1781, fol. 881. The ruling from Innsbruck is added to a later record.

[13] In the original version: "... wie unter der Hand schon verlauten wollen, ein oder anderer Partikular Käufer, sollte dieser die Concession zu erbauung eines Hauses anbringen, folglich der burgerschaft wegen Bewaldung und sonsten eine Beeinträchtigung machen könnte." TLA Innsbruck, VBI 1777, fol. 330.

[14] See: Ortsrepertorium: 41.

[15] See: Vollständiges Ortschaften-Verzeichniss der im Reichsrathe vertretenen Königreiche und Länder nach den Ergebnissen der Volkszählung vom 31. Dezember 1880, edited by the k.k. Statistischen Central-Commission in Wien. Wien 1882, 169.

[16] In Neckarhausen a tripling of the population occurred in a period of 170 years: from 340 inhabitants in 1700 to 930 inhabitants in 1870 (Sabean 1990: 41); Netting (1981: 60) describes a population doubling from 260 in 1700 to 572 in 1860. Schlumbohm (1994: 49) notes a growth in Belm from 2,252 to 3,296 inhabitants between 1772 and 1858.

with a so called "iron chain between inheritance and reproduction," mainly achieved through marriage as the regulating instrument. Although the political context in which this concept was developed in the 1930s is quite problematic, it is still relevant because of its influence on historical demographic theory (Medick 1996: 296; Schofield 1976: 151; Ehmer 1991: 63; Ehmer 1992/93: 60-70; Gehrmann 2001: 23-45). Jürgen Schlumbohm (1994: 368) discusses a strange contradiction between the fundamental importance of this theory and the scarcity of empirical evidence. Moreover, the empirical evidence shows that a rigid connection between inheritance and the chance to marry was not as widespread a pattern as the model assumes because there were alternatives to land-based subsistence through inheritance, such as the purchase of a house, living as lodgers on wage income, or migration (Zeitlhofer forthcoming). Although inheritance was undoubtedly important, it was not the only possibility of accessing property. Therefore, specific social and ideological contexts are necessary for the "iron chain" to take effect. Innichen/San Candido being a rather restrictive community, it seems quite suitable a place for testing this assumption.

Access to Property: Some Basics

As described above, the local political concept was a very restrictive one, aiming at stability in the community's social structure. One element of this policy was a strict limitation on the building of new houses. Building a new house was not a realistic residence option for a young couple. This meant that there were primarily two ways to come into the possession of a house or farmstead: through purchase or through inheritance. Divisions of houses also took place but only to a very limited degree: It is possible to tell, from documentary evidence and the pattern of farm names, that all the divisions of farmsteads in the Innichberg (the mountain area belonging to Innichen) took place before 1700.

Purchase

Because inheritance itself was not a legal procedure, some transferals of property between generations were described as "purchases" in the legal records. But succession within the family was nevertheless orientated by the inheritance model and was accompanied by more detailed arrangements regarding other family members, and therefore it seems appropriate to maintain the distinction between inheritance and purchase. The number of purchases of houses or of parts of houses by those other than the close family members was not negligible. Especially halves, thirds, or quarters of houses often came onto the market. They were obviously cheaper, and in some

cases they seem to have served as a starter house for young couples or for people from outside. They were also an affordable type of property for unmarried and elderly people.

Division of a House

There were several different reasons that could lead to the division of a house: It could have been the result of joint inheritance by two brothers, which sometimes occurred in the 18th century. The division could occur a few years later, in the next generation or when one owner-family wanted to sell their part. The same range of possible developments can also be observed when two couples bought a house together. The sale of one half or one third of the house was also a way to get out of financial difficulties. In the case that such a part of a house should be sold again, the owner of the remaining part was given the right of first refusal. Sometimes the division of a house was a family strategy to enable another child to get married. Finally, it could have been the consequence of contradictory specifications in different contracts, for instance when, according to a will, the property was to be inherited by the daughter, but, according to a marriage contract, by the second wife.

Inheritance Models and Practices

The Customary and the Legal Model

The first important legal principle was the separation of the property of husband and wife. As a consequence, the property of the deceased spouse belonged to the children or to the closest relatives, if there were no children. The situation for widows, especially of widows without children, could be very difficult, considering the predominance of male-owned property. She normally had at least a room at her disposal – the "free wood and rent" room for her retirement – and a right to a livelihood and clothing. Other rights of use and allocation needed to be clearly defined in a marriage or transferal contract to guarantee at least a minimum standard of living. The extent of her rights depended on her real or symbolic capital (Erickson 1990: 21-39; Todd 1994: 421-50).[17] One can find the precisely indicated place in the common living room where the widow was allowed to put a table, a chair, and her spinning wheel, or the exact dimension of her garden patch,[18] and so

[17] Erickson (1990: 36) emphasises the women's concern for security in their widowhood. See also Todd 1994: 421-450.

[18] See for example: TLA Innsbruck, VBI 1785 I 5, fol. 1r ff.

on. A widow would usually lose all these rights and benefits in case of remarriage.

Secondly, the inheritance customs followed the principles of impartibility and primogeniture. It provided that the eldest son would receive the principal share of the property, the house or farmstead, with the farmland, the meadows, and the garden belonging to it as one economic entity. Daughters inherited only if there was no son, if the son or the sons were not able to run the family estate, or if they had no interest in it. A priority was given to men over women and to elder siblings over younger ones.

Inheritance was organized in this way in the so-called Freistifts Ordnung, from 1555, a manorial regulation that had to do with, among other things, inheritance (Strobl 1973: 375-395). This regulation and model of inheritance also had an effect on the practice of the later system of "Erbbaurecht,"[19] which later became the main basis of inheritance rights in the market town. In practice, the differences between these forms are not as extensive as has been assumed: The "Freistiftrecht," typical for the eastern part of Tyrol, was seen as disadvantageous for the peasants mainly because transferal within the family originally depended on the decision of the landlord and at the very beginning the contract had to be renewed every year, generating a very uncertain situation. In time this problematic aspect acquired an increasingly formal character; in the 17th century – as the analysis of some conflicts shows – the hereditary nature of property was considered as fact, even in the peasants' perception (Kühebacher 1969: 89; Beimrohr 1986: 175-218; Beimrohr 1991: 169-72; Palme 1994: 28).

The main practical difference between the two inheritance systems seems to have been that Freistift peasants had to keep the property until their death (Fresacher 1952: 90).[20] Only after their death could their sons or daughters inherit. To avoid this stipulation, the father had to present himself as very old, as unable to run the farm, as weak or sick (Fresacher 1952: 61). Taking this special context into consideration, statements of this kind should be interpreted cautiously and rather as a strategic than as a concrete statement about the physical state of a specific person.

In 1778 some older men – "Freistift Holden," Freistift peasants, themselves – made an official statement in the local court that the customary inheritance law in Innichen was "the allocation of property to the eldest son,

[19] The manorial system in Tyrol differs form all the other regions: It is rather weak, and the manorial relationship concerns only the land, not the individuals, who are personally free and only under the authority of the Tyrolian government and law.

[20] "Der Besitz wurde ausschließlich auf Lebzeiten den Untertanen zum Nutzgenusse überlassen" (Fresacher 1952: 90).

always [...] and to nobody else."[21] This local law was threatened with abolition as a result of a new Habsburg law, the "Erbfolgepatent," enacted by Joseph II in 1787. The "Erbfolgepatent" stipulated equal portions for each child, with the division of estates as consequence. "Varied and urgent complaints" induced the provincial government to enter negotiations with the central authorities (Wörz 1835: 101; Palme 1994: 32), which finally, in 1795, led to a "special peasant law of succession" (Wörz 1835: 121) confirming the impartibility of property and primogeniture customary in the region of Innichen (in other parts of Tyrol, the youngest son was the favorite heir).

In 1868, the legislature of the Austrian part of the Habsburg Empire lifted this "special peasant law of succession" in most parts of Austria – but made an exception for Tyrol and Vorarlberg, where the peasants had a certain political influence and opposed the abolition of their customary inheritance law.

In 1900, a law "on the legal relationship of the closed farmsteads in Tyrol" required that a "closed farmstead," i.e., one that was to be kept impartible, must be able to support adequately a family consisting of at least five persons (Palme 1994: 35). In South Tyrol, pressure for the division of property grew after the province came under Italian control in 1919. The pressure intensified under fascism, and in 1929 the division of property became effective through a new law. People tried to avoid it as far as possible. Under the Nazi regime from 1943 to 1945, impartibility was reestablished, and in 1952 the provincial government of Bozen reintroduced the "closed farmstead" and embodied it in a law in 1954 (Cole and Wolf 1974: 178; Stocker 1994).

One has to emphasize that there is no automatic correspondence between norms and practice. This does not mean that norms are unimportant: They do, first, provide a basic orientation and, second, provide guidelines for how rules can be legally changed. Yet, finally, one has to take into consideration that the range of family situations and strategies is much wider than can be covered by law. The framework outlined here offers general guidelines, which cannot simply be ignored; at the same time, however, they are changeable through regulations or arguments laid down in contracts or wills and they are changeable also because of a broad variety of constellations and situations within the households and families, because of differing interests and preferences of individuals.

[21] TLA Innsbruck, VBI 1778, fol. 577.

Agreements between the Generations

The following remarks refer to agreements made between a man and his parents-in-law or other relatives, such as uncles, on the succession of property in cases where these persons were still alive at the time of transferal. They normally continued living in the same house – but there are also exceptions – and insisted on certain conditions. The contracts that set out these conditions showed a great variety in individual claims to power, room, money, or goods. Generally speaking, there was a tendency for the settlements to provide for a common household including both the elder and the younger generation – sharing most spheres of the daily life, such as rooms, meals, and labor. A separate household was usually not considered at the beginning, but might emerge as a solution in case of quarrels or conflicts. One can imagine that under these circumstances the entry of an "outsider" into the household would have been a critical event. It would amount to a change of positions, a shift of power, and the balance would have to be established anew.

Women as Heiresses

A rough overview of the conditions made by the retiring generation at the end of the 18th century seems to suggest that the situation was seen as more critical if the "outsider" was a man, the prospective husband of an inheriting daughter or niece. In this situation, the designated son-in-law was included in the agreements on the succession of property made with the bride's father and the other relatives in the retiring generation. The son-in-law often got the whole family estate, sometimes only a part of it. The agreements tended to be more detailed in these cases than when the succession passed to a son and his wife. The reason for this may have been that a daughter as heiress creates more worries and fears for the elder generation and a stronger feeling of insecurity concerning their own future.

A second case needs to be mentioned in this context: when a woman became an heiress of her parent's property after her father's death or after a contract of succession was made without a prospective son-in-law. She might remain unmarried and owner of her family's estate, or she might marry later on. In the latter case, she usually transferred at least part of her property to her husband, sometimes in two stages, for instance one half at the wedding and the other half one year later. The "marital order" provided that the husband should have owner status. In such cases, the woman could reserve far-reaching rights, to protect herself should she be widowed.

There were also a few cases in which mothers took opportunities to provide an inheritance for another son or for a daughter. An unusual decision

was made by the widow Theresia Rainer, who sold one half of her house to her eldest son and the other half to her youngest daughter, so that she could also get married.[22] She was the only unmarried child of the family at that time. Her future husband did not have enough money to buy a house on his own – as is suggested by the fact that his mother-in-law also had to pay the citizenship charge.[23] The eldest son lost one half of his expected inheritance. In general, it seems that women were more willing to furnish daughters with a subsistence base. Transfers of property between relatives repeatedly follow this pattern: Unmarried aunts sometimes gave their houses to a niece. A childless peasant couple found the "ideal" compromise: A niece of the wife married a nephew of the husband and they got the farmstead.[24]

Toward Predominating Primogeniture

Reconstructing the situation of siblings, mainly of brothers, with regard to ownership requires an enormous effort, despite the amount of information recorded in the archives. A survey of couples getting married in two selected decades, from 1730 to 1740 and from 1830 to 1840, was made. The results show that the situation in the 18th century differs strongly from that in the 19th century. It may be said, in summary, that in the 18th century, higher flexibility and higher mobility manifest itself in several ways: Even eldest sons, meaning potential heirs to their parent's houses, bought other houses, married into their wives' family estates or settled elsewhere. The families also appear to have moved more often within the market town. As a consequence, persons disadvantaged by law – i.e., younger siblings, daughters, women in general – had more chance of inheriting themselves.

In the 19th century, the situation appears to have been quite different: The probability that the eldest son would take over the family estate was very high, and under "normal" conditions – apart from indebtedness or emigration – it became unusual to sell a family estate. There was a shift toward rigidity and immobility (cf. Schlumbohm 1994: 391; Hohkamp 1995: 338).[25] Declining mortality as life became increasingly "safe" provides part of the explanation. In the 19th century, there are no more of the peaks in the mortality rate caused by epidemics that had previously particularly affected people in the prime of life. In addition, economic changes leading to a decline in handicrafts also had an effect. This was an interrelated development

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[22] See: Bezirksheimatmuseum Schloß Bruck (BHM) Lienz, Oberforcher Regesten (OR) III 1, VBI 1799 XI 8, fol. 1104.

[23] See: Municipal archives Innichen, Bürgermeister Amtsraitungen (BAR), Fasz. 6/51, 1800-1801, quoted from Rogger, 1986: 171.

[24] BHM Lienz,., OR III 7, Verfachbuch Heinfels (VBH) 1691 I 25, fol. 19.

[25] For a differing model, see Arrizabalaga 1997: 54-58.

situated in different locations: in the small market town itself and in the industrial centers. Some important trades producing for a supra-regional market, such as weavers or glove-makers, were no longer profitable as compared to industrial production. The railway extension in the second half of the century supported the spread of industrial products and destroyed or reduced the previous types of commercial activities, trade relations, and trade routes, to the detriment of the craftsmen, of the carriers, and of the trades connected to them, such as the cart-makers, smiths, and innkeepers.

At the same time, young men who would formerly have left Innichen to practice their trades as traveling journeymen no longer did so. Changes in the industrial centers also resulted in a decline of local mobility: Studies focusing on the situation in Vienna show, for example, that in the phase of rapid industrialization, most of the people moving there to find work came from more local areas around the city. People coming from farther away were rare (cf. Ehmer 1994: 115). Vienna – which is approximately 500 kilometers away – was formerly an important destination for people from Innichen.

Emigration – in great part emigration of qualified apprentices with a real chance of later on settling down elsewhere as master craftsmen (as can be seen from references to their occupations and places of residence in documents relating to the deaths of their parents and other kin) – had been a crucial element in the earlier, more flexible inheritance system. Now the situation left less room for maneuver: Potential heirs preferred just to take over the property they were entitled to; younger brothers remained in or returned to the town. Sometimes they lived and worked in their brother's houses as unmarried men. They also appear as so-called Pfründner in special old-age institutions, where they give their money to the local hospital and in return receive a basic livelihood, consisting mainly of board and lodging.

The case of one or several sons renouncing their inheritance in favor of a younger son or daughter seems to become very exceptional. Many more property transactions followed the normative model than previously. This means for women, as a logical consequence, that they – together with younger siblings in general – were on the losing side of economic change, at least until new types of economic activities appeared to offer other opportunities, such as the gradual development of a tourist industry in the last decades of the century.

Table 7.1: Mean Age at First Marriage in Innichen[26]

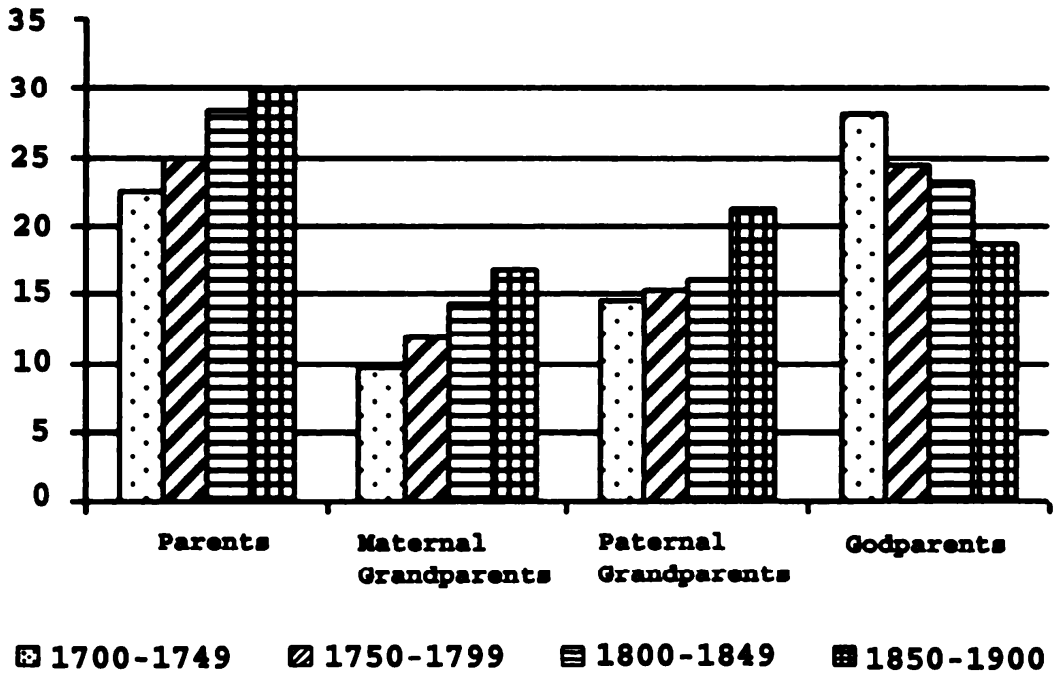
	Women	Men
1700-1749	25.9	26.4
1750-1799	28.5	30.0
1800-1849	28.0	30.8
1850-1899	31.5	34.5

The rise in the mean age at first marriage can be seen as an indication of the worsening of the social and economic situation, as can be the extremely high unmarried rates at the end of the 19th century: In 1880, 48.3 percent of the women and 50.1 percent of the men aged between 41 and 50 years were still unmarried in the administrative district of Lienz, to which Innichen belongs (Mantl 1997: 45).

The increasing concentration on the family estate and the immediate family appears also in the choice of godparents: In the 18th century, godparents were selected mainly from outside the immediate family but within the local society – following a pattern of reciprocity. People who got married at about the same time were particularly likely to become godparents to each other's children. In the course of the 19th century, this pattern changed: On the one hand godparents more often lived relatively far away from Innichen, and on the other hand – which is more important in the context of this paper – brothers, sisters, and also brothers–and sisters-in-law acted increasingly often as godparents (cf. Lanzinger 2002: 124). In addition, the modified naming practice fitted in with the changes outlined above: In the 19th, century the use of names of parents and grandparents rose whereas the use of names of godparents declined. A gender-specific statistical analysis shows that this change involved almost exclusively the naming of boys. The greater importance of the male line and their continuity may have found its expression not only in the inheritance practice but also in the naming practice.

[26] Statistical analysis of the family database

Figure 7.2: Naming after Parents, Grandparents, and Godparents in Percent of All Baptized Children[27]



In conclusion, the changes toward a system of predominating primogeniture can be interpreted as an adaptive pattern: coping with signs of disintegration of more and more elements of local life, by adopting an immobile, inflexible, and patriarchal form of family organization.

Acknowledgement

The results presented in this paper are based on my PhD thesis, completed in 1999, which focused on local and familial contexts of marriage in Innichen in the 18th and 19th centuries; it is in the process of being published (Lanzinger 2003).

[27] In the case of multiple naming after the indicated persons, each case was counted. The assumption that in such cases the name refers to the oldest person does not seem plausible to me (see van Poppel et al. 1999: 275).

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Chapter 8

Invisible Patrimonies: Capitoli Matrimoniali in Ancien Régime Ascoli

Nevill Colclough

Introduction – Heirship Present and Past

The main aim of this paper is to describe and explain the somewhat unusual pattern of female-centered property transmission that characterized the small Puglian (south Italian) town of Ascoli Satriano in the final years of the *ancien régime*. It also briefly explores the circumstances under which that system was transformed in the course of the 19th century.

What is distinctive about Ascoli's *ancien régime* system is best illustrated by summarizing key differences between heirship strategies in the recent past – the years between 1880 and 1960 – and those of two centuries earlier.

Patrimonial dynamics in near-contemporary Ascoli were relatively standardized and fall well within the expected range of variation for south Italian peasant communities as described in a score of post-war Anglo-American and more recent indigenous ethnographies. In the context of a land-based, agro-town economy (Blok 1969; Davis 1969),[1] arable land was mainly inherited by sons, usually on the death or social retirement of fathers. Daughters received their share of family patrimony on marriage, ideally in the form of a dowry house and start-up goods. Increasingly, as one moves into the 20th century, dowry took on a symbolic character. Houses were no

[1] In the Anglo-American ethnographic tradition, south Italian agro-towns are seen (wrongly, in my view) as part of the Braudelian *longue durée*. A defining characteristic is that their essentially peasant populations are concentrated into densely packed, highly nucleated urban centers. Minifundia and latifundia are symbiotically combined: Town-based peasants commute daily to their scattered plots but also constitute a "captive" wage-labor force for large estates; the countryside is largely deserted. This settlement pattern is reinforced by a code of values (cultural urbanism) that contrasts the civilizing force of urban institutions with the physical and moral wilderness of the open countryside.

longer routinely provided, and trousseau became the key element in dowry provision, with fine linens and clothes the markers of female virtue and potential domestic skills (Schneider 1980).[2] Despite legal insistence on bilateral division, on balance this system of transmission favored males. Men's near monopoly of landownership allowed them to dominate the main productive asset in a subsistence-based economy. For elites and smallholders alike, it also acted as a brake on the division and scattering of holdings in a period of rapid population increase.[3] The carefully balanced mix of latifundia and microfundia on which Ascoli's economy depended was best maintained by ensuring the integrity and viability through time of both large estates and peasant smallholdings.

If one moves back 200 years to the last century and a half of the *ancien régime*, there are several puzzling differences in dowry and inheritance patterns, none of which have obvious parallels in the contemporary ethnographic record. In many respects Ascoli's *ancien régime* system of property transmission was the mirror opposite of that which I have just described. Within a generally bilateral context, marriage rather than death was the focus of intergenerational transmissions, with women its main beneficiaries. Apart from a score of landowning and professional families, the bulk of family assets passed though women in the form of high-cost clothes, linens and household goods, a dowry house, and often *una vigna* – an orchard with some arable attached. In addition, there were elaborate, differential provisions for widows, who legally had first call on the family estate. Conversely, sons received little more than patrimonial residues on their fathers' death – immaterial inheritance in Levi's (1988) memorable phrase.

Although not unique (cf. Ravis-Giordano 1987; Delille 1988), this pattern of female-centered inheritance is sufficiently distinctive to require further elaboration and explanation. It is also worth exploring the circumstances that led to the switch from a marriage-oriented pattern of intergenerational transmission in which patrimonies mainly passed through women, and men received little more than immaterial inheritance, to a death-oriented

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[2] It is important not to understate the economic significance of dowry nor neglect its productive potential in the articulation of household economic and political strategies. Trousseau can certainly be characterized as symbolic inheritance, but that does not permit us to dismiss it as mere "treasure" or consumer decoration. Linen, jewelry, and paraphems were beyond male and judicial authority and were valuable, easily convertible assets during widowhood or other periods of crisis. Similarly, female control over the accumulation and transmission of trousseau was a key element in the successful placement and matching of daughters upon which the status ranking of families ultimately turned.

[3] In this period, Ascoli's population almost doubled (7,000-13,000), despite large-scale overseas migration.

system in which daughters were endowed with symbolic property, with sons receiving the productive bulk of the family estate.

Capitoli Matrimoniali – Women's Hidden Estate

One of the difficulties in judging the balance between male and female inheritance, the spread of wealth throughout the community, and the extent of female property rights in early modern Ascoli is the strong fiscal and patriarchal bias of its three 18th-century tax and property registers – the Hearth Tax of 1728, the *Catasto Onciaro* of 1754, and the *Catasto Provvisorio* of 1798 to 1806. As legal minors, women were only residually subject to taxation, and their role in the labor market and as property-holders was consistently underrecorded. Female activities outside the home, in petty trade or paid employment, were systematically ignored.[4] Trousseau treasures – linens, jewelry, household goods and furniture, high-cost clothes, and pin-money – which collectively accounted for a significant fraction of community assets and household investment, were disregarded. Dowry and dower estate were hidden under the names of male household heads. In these circumstances, simple aggregate analysis of these registers is inevitably flawed (Davis 1976).[5]

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[4] Officially, women were as invisible in the labor market as in property registers, confined to a handful of occupations – servants, midwives, wet-nurses, and prostitutes – in unrealistically small numbers. Notarial comment paints a different picture, providing clear, if indirect, evidence of a wide range of job opportunities within the town – as seamstresses, petty traders, informal servants, artisans, shopkeepers, innkeepers – as well as paid employment in the gleaning fields and during the grape harvest.

[5] John Davis's (1976) pioneering account of gender and property rights in Pisticci provides a good example of the deceptive quality of these sources. In one of the few anthropological studies to examine the distribution and intergenerational transmission of property in the late 18th century, he argues that, in a heavily peasantized Pisticcese economy, individual property ownership was comparatively rare, mainly controlled by men, and generally passed on upon death. A cursory reading of Ascoli's *Catasto Onciario* or *Catasto Provvisorio* appears to confirm his findings. Thus, Ascoli, too, was dominated by institutional landowners, with about 85 percent of its 60,000 hectares falling into this category in 1754. The rest comprised the home farms of a dozen or so large (invariably male) landowners – in all, about 11 percent – and a large number of *vigne*, the formal ownership of which was widely diffused among male household heads. In 1806, both *vigne* and urban houses (far more widely spread among core Ascolani families than a century later) were mainly ascribed to men.

Yet this male, death-centered model of property transmission can only be allowed if one is prepared to overlook the fiscal bias of property registers and accept (as many anthropologists have) that the peasant subsistence base of local economies became more marked as one moves back in time and that land use and rights in property remained essentially unchanged between the pre-modern and modern periods. In the case of Ascoli, none of these propositions is sustainable.

A more accurate, gender-sensitive account of female property ownership is provided by a detailed series of *Capitoli Matrimoniali* (notarized marriage contracts) that runs from about 1580 to the 1860s.[6] These were by far the commonest life-cycle contracts. Indeed, almost one half of all Ascolani marriages in this period were notarized, and there is evidence of a flourishing traffic in homemade contracts that could be formally registered if required. Although the full economic implications of marriage payments can only be understood by comparing marriage contracts with transfers at other stages of the life cycle, one indicator of the centrality of marriage is the fact that *capitoli matrimoniali* outnumbered wills by more than three to one.

In part, the prominence of *capitoli matrimoniali* reflects the widely accepted view that women had the right – indeed, the need – to marry and, if necessary, remarry. Under Neapolitan statutes, fathers and near-male kin could not reasonably refuse marriage and appropriate dowries for their daughters beyond the age of 25, and Ascolane occasionally instituted judicial proceedings for failure to do so. The creation of special confraternity-run trusts (*maritaggi*), aimed at facilitating the marriages of deserving poor women, marked the importance attached to female matrimony. Indeed, contributions to community *maritaggi* constituted the most conspicuous form of private charity in 17th- and 18th-century Ascoli.

A second reason for widespread recourse to written dowry contracts was the complexity and variation in legally recognized forms of marriage payment prior to the introduction of the standardized provisions of the Napoleonic civil code. Within Ascoli's main matrimonial catchment area – south Puglia, northeast Basilicata, and the Beneventano – there were no fewer than ten distinct dowry/dower regimes, quite apart from special feudal ordinances and the patrilineally skewed rules of the noble association of *Nido* and *Capuano,* to which the town's elite increasingly turned from the mid-18th century (De Stefano 1986).[7] With about one quarter of marriages

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Since it tended to exclude women's estate, the property base of ordinary Ascolani families, as reflected in the registers, was deceptively small. But it was probably sufficient to meet their needs in an economy that turned more on commerce and urban activities than on direct cultivation and subsistence farming. Arable land was cheap and readily available to rent (see below). In these circumstances, there was little point in trying to balance dowry houses against male arable holdings.

[6] As the locally apprenticed custodians of a tradition of practical literacy, *ancien régime* notaries were readily available, and their charges modest. Their services were widely used at all levels of society – in life-course and political matters as much as in commercial contracts. With this spread, there is, as Muir (1999) has argued, an important sense in which notarial contracts can be seen as one of the "weapons of the weak."

[7] Ascoli's dowry system in this period has been classified by De Stefano (1986) as essentially Lombard with some Roman law inflection. He also details the other dowry regimes found throughout Puglia.

involving at least one partner from outside Ascoli, there was scope for constructive combination, and notaries had to make clear under what rules dowries were constituted.

Dowries varied in size according to status, and a small but growing landowning and professional elite employed a different set of heirship conventions. But the contracts of most ordinary citizens followed town statutes. Conformity to local tradition was guaranteed by the presence of the *Regio Giudice,* a municipally appointed official who, under Lombard conventions, often doubled as *Mundualdo,* the benign, somewhat nominal guardian of legal minors, especially women.

Marriage contracts had three components: *assegni dotali* (dowry proper); *assegni maritali* (gifts from husband to bride); and dower provisions.

The *assegni dotali* passed from the bride's father and/or brothers to her husband or (when widows, and occasionally unmarried women, endowed themselves) through the *mundualdo* to the husband. They had two main parts. The first consisted of the symbolically important new bed (*lettera nuova*) and *pannamenti* and *suppellettili* – linen, day clothes, ornaments, furniture, and kitchenware. The bride was consigned *vestita come si trova* (in everyday clothes), leaving responsibility for the wedding dress and ceremony with the husband and his kin. Cash values were not routinely ascribed to these goods, but on the evidence of inventories and occasional valuations by mutual friends, they amounted to about one half the total value of the dowry. The second element was the house, *vigna,* or a cash replacement.[8]

The dowry was administered by the husband but could not be alienated by him. On the death of a childless wife, it returned to the donors. When faced with economic distress, wives could, and frequently did, apply to the royal courts in Naples for permission to release dowry assets. Although husbands formally managed wives' property, in practice much of it escaped their control, since it belonged to an exclusively female domain. Male alienation from the world of *pannamenti* and *suppellettili* is clearly marked by language shifts within the *capitoli matrimoniali* themselves. The opening and concluding formalities are in Latin, the core legal stipulations in Italian, but the sections detailing styles, forms, and colors of clothes and linens or the intricacies of embroidery and jewelry design slip imperceptibly into local dialect, revealing authentic women's voices, as the notary or his scribe move into automatic registration mode.

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[8] In recognition of the dowry they received, daughters typically renounced future claims on the family estate. The importance of the house (*casa*) as a key element in dowry provision was reflected in the language of marriage itself. Married men were described as *casati* (housed), married women as *maritate* (husbanded).

A second element in the *capitoli* (the husband's gifts to his wife) was generally glossed as the *honores* or the *meffio,* the morning-gift of the Lombard tradition. Conventionally, they were valued at one quarter of the *assegni dotali.* They took two forms: first, an elaborate, costly ceremonial costume and accoutrements that sometimes became female-line heirlooms; second, a small cash payment, often described as *spilli e lacci* (pin and ribbon money) for richer recipients. Both passed absolutely into the wife's possession.

The final component was the dower settlement that again came in two parts. The first was the somewhat unusual *lucri reciproci* (reciprocal payments), a smallish sum to be paid in either direction on the death of either partner. The second part of the dower was the Lombard *quarta,* the quarter of the husband's estate that upon death passed absolutely to his wife. After the promulgation of the famous *Prammatica De Antefato* legislation of 1617, for the largest properties, this clause was gradually replaced by the more restrictive rules of *Nido* and *Capuano* that limited the widow's rights to simple usufruct, on a usually smaller fraction of her husband's estate (De Stefano 1986).

In comparison with the near-contemporary marriage settlements described earlier, *ancien régime* wives fared remarkably well. They had fuller access to a wider range of symbolic and real property and, as widows, enjoyed more protection and greater room to maneuver through *mundualdo* representation than their 19th– and early-20th-century counterparts. Furthermore, under Neapolitan law, they enjoyed specially protected status. This was expressed in the important privilege of being allowed to plead civil suits in the court of their choice[9] and also in the fact that local notarial interpretation of national codes often turned in their favor. A good example is the local application of rules of *pareggio.* Under the *Regie Prammatiche* (statutory law), parents were enjoined to divide property *a pareggio* (equally) among children. In the Ascolani notarial tradition, in wills and marriage contracts alike, this term was most commonly used to denote equality in the treatment of sisters' marriage settlements. When used in its wider sense of an equal portion of the family estate, it was almost invariably employed in the context of what Ascolani called *matrimonio per pompa* (show-marriage). Here, it was made clear that daughters (never sons) had been endowed *oltre pareggio,* beyond their share of family patrimony. Furthermore, since sons were expected to ensure that their sisters were suitably married before seeking partners for themselves, daughters' claims

[9] In a system where courts were ranked and offered different standards of justice, this was a valuable right. Some men (*versurieri*) rented plots from the crown (Royal Customhouse) for the sole purpose of gaining access to its courts, thus avoiding baronial jurisdiction.

ing partners for themselves, daughters' claims took temporal as well as material precedence.

Overall, for all but a handful of leading families, the cost of clothes, personal effects, and pin-money that passed into the direct control of women (together with dowry houses and *vigne*) absorbed the bulk of the family estate. Indeed, in the small number of cases where I was able to link a willed death settlement to an earlier marriage contract, almost without exception, daughters received a significantly larger share than sons. This general pattern of intergenerational transmission is well summarized in the testamentary deposition of a middle-ranking Ascolani father in a will drawn up in 1710. He regrets that, having successfully given his daughters in marriage, he can offer his two remaining sons little more than symbolic patrimony – token property residues and a father's commendation to the Bishop of Ascoli, his long-term secular and spiritual patron (Archivio di Stato di Lucera, Atti Notarili, s.2. Giove, prot. 1806 f. 19).

The privileging of female heirs is also confirmed by a close reading of the *Atti Preliminari*, the family self-assessment sheets that formed part of the raw data from which the *Catasto Onciario* was constructed. Although houses were subsequently registered in husbands' names, Ascolani repeatedly cited the dowry origins of both *vigne* and houses, sometimes vainly seeking tax exemption for *vigne* on the grounds that they were quintessentially female property. Again, the list of debts set against income derived from male properties, which is one of the most salient features of the *Catasto Onciario,* was largely the result of charges incurred in endowing sisters and daughters. Similarly, notaries' bills of sale leave little doubt that Ascolani saw dowry as belonging essentially to wives. Descriptions of property were consistently punctuated with references to neighboring dowry houses and the orchards of named women. In these contexts, the judicial or fiscal status of property was scarcely relevant.

With most immovable property passing through the hands of women, what then of man's estate? For middle-ranking Ascolani, the most commonly cited possessions were trade goods, animals (especially draft and transport animals), workshops, storage pits, and capital sums invested in commerce, artisan enterprises, and agriculture. These assets were not generally derived from death settlements, and what distinguished them most from the property inherited by men in the late 19th century was the virtual absence of arable plots. While some of these goods were plainly of family origin, most appear to have been acquired by working adults. In part, this category of property can be seen as the fruit of immaterial inheritance – the acquisition of skills, know-how, economic and political contacts, and reputation handed down in the male line from previous generations. But here, too, a

note of caution is required. Succession to crucial, opportunity-bearing offices such as the canonary, the Royal Customhouse, and the notariate itself (and the transmission of artisan and commercial enterprises) passed as readily from father-in-law to son-in-law – with ecclesiastical office, from mother's brother to sister's son – as from father to son. Immaterial inheritance was not the exclusive preserve of sons and male heirs.

Inheritance Logics

If this analysis is correct, how might one account for Ascoli's highly distinctive marriage– and daughter-centered system of inheritance and the comparative generosity of its *ancien régime* dower settlements? There are five main explanations:

- The first is fiscal advantage. When a substantial fraction of family patrimony passed through daughters in the form of *pannamenti* and *suppellettili* and both dowry houses and female occupations were tax-exempt, the bulk of family assets avoided fiscal depredation altogether.
- A second reason is that, in a society characterized by economic risk and demographic uncertainty, the establishment of privileged trust funds through dowry offered a strong measure of security and legal protection. Husbands were free to engage in speculative economic and political ventures. Their own property was subject to legal distraint, and a surprising number of Ascolani were imprisoned for debt or misuse of public funds or forced to seek ecclesiastical sanctuary to avoid creditors. But their home base and subsistence resources for families remained relatively secure. Similarly, the fact that *ancien régime* widows enjoyed direct control over a sizable portion of deceased husbands' estates offered some measure of protection for surviving family members – a breathing space and the means to finance a subsequent remarriage.
- A third factor is the moral horror – near moral panic – surrounding unattached women and unprotected orphans, which was expressed in both national legislation and local notarial comment. In contrast with later centuries, 17th– and 18th-century Ascoli had little institutional provision for either. The need for male tutelage was the most commonly given reason for the speedy placement of unmarried daughters and the near-immediate remarriage of widows.
- Fourth, it is important to ask why sons and brothers were prepared to relinquish claims to *pareggio* – the equal shares of family patrimony

to which they were legally entitled. Part of the answer is that their own prospects, and the level of dowry they could expect to receive, were set by the style and quality of their sisters' weddings, which were a diacritical test of family reputation and status. Hence the need for potlatching *matrimoni per pompa*, especially for the eldest of a set of sisters. It is worth adding that, in a society that encouraged repeat marriage and affinal re-linkage, investment in affinal connection in itself created long-term security. The advantages of this practice are well-illustrated by the patrimonial dynamics of rising middle-ranking and richer Ascolani families.

- In the years of rapid, crisis-punctuated expansion that followed the Great Pestilence of 1656, two elite heirship strategies emerged. The first, more conservative strategy stressed the long-term protection offered by family marriage-funds *(maritaggi)*, the pursuit of ecclesiastical careers, and restricted repeat marriages, often through affinal re-linkage, within narrowly prescribed marriage circles. Its aim was to maintain family status in periods of risk, turbulence, and demographic uncertainty. A second, more adventurous strategy, typically employed from the late 18th century, sought to profit from an expanding grain market and the greater opportunity to acquire land on easy terms (cf. Russo 1995). Its focus was on what Visceglie (1988) has described as the pursuit of dreams of immortality, investment in *lignage* – family palaces, chapels, and crests; restrictive heirship; marriage according to the rule of *Nido* and *Capuano*, which reduced a daughter's share to trousseau and a cash payoff – her dower expectations to mere usufruct. The intention was to preserve house and estate intact in the male line. In the last resort, these two strategies were not mutually exclusive: The first was far commoner in the 17th and early 18th century; the second came into its own with the land settlements and the intensification of Tavoliere (Puglian plains) agriculture in the last quarter of the 18th and early 19th century.
- A fifth reason for privileging and protecting female inheritance was the need to attract an immigrant male labor force. This was particularly important in the crisis years of the late 1650s and also in the last quarter of the 18th century, which saw a strong expansion of cereal and small-animal production in Ascoli as the market adjusted to rapid population growth in the capital. A similar explanation has been suggested by Delille in his account of the demographic structure of the matrilineally inflected communities of south Puglia (Delille, 1988). Thus he argues that, in periods of agricultural expansion, there was a constant need for imported male labor. This was re-

flected in high rates of masculinity, and early first marriage for women. It also found expression in divergent devolution and generous house-based dowries designed to capture immigrant workers.

In large measure, this explanation holds for Ascoli, too. Throughout the period under review, more than one quarter of all female marriages were with outsiders, and the town offered an attractive haven for noninheriting sons from the zone of *quartiers lignages,* the patrilineal belt of the Beneventano, Sannio, and Salernitano hinterland to the west. A house and its accoutrements were powerful inducements. Equally, marriage into an Ascolani family provided entry to the benefits of citizenship: rural employment at lower rates of taxation, free medical services, privileges in trade and commerce, the eventual prospect of access to municipal contracts, and ecclesiastical careers. Thus the compiler of the Hearth Tax of 1728 commented on Ascoli's generosity to outsiders but recognized that, without a wife and home within the town, immigrant workers were unlikely to stay for long.

Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, a wife, affines, house, and rights of citizenship were the most powerful incentives to immigration; a century later, with the opening of the Tavoliere to plow agriculture, these incentives were gradually supplanted by the prospect of easy access to arable plots as leaseholders or colonists on the plains of Puglia.

Processes of Transition

With the introduction of the Napoleonic civil code in 1810 and the concomitant sponsorship by the French regime in Naples of major agrarian reform (Marino 1988),[10] heirship strategies in Ascoli underwent a slow but far-

[10] In Puglia, state-sponsored agrarian reform had begun in the 1770s with the dissolution of monastic estates and establishment of a series of new rural settlements. It was reinforced by the abolition of feudalism, in 1806, and the subsequent partition and sale of feudal and ecclesiastical demesne. As a result, large amounts of arable and pasture became available to local entrepreneurs and small-scale colonists. For Ascoli, however, the most consequential of these reforms was the abolition of the Royal Customhouse, a crucial royal monopoly that, for over 300 years, had regulated land use on the north Puglian plains.
Throughout the *ancien régime,* the Customhouse, southern Europe's largest state-managed system of transhumance, had dominated the regional economy of which Ascoli was a part. Its main task had been to maintain a politically and ecologically sensitive equilibrium – matching the needs of shepherds from the interior with those of farmers on the sheep-manured, high-yielding, malaria-ridden Tavoliere; sustaining and balancing the yield of the sheep capitation tax (*fida*), the single most important source of royal revenue, against the grain requirements of a fluctuating, riot-prone population in the capital; and binding a regional economy that combined both mountains and plains. Its demise had far-reaching effects – destroying the balance of the regional economy and opening the way to conversion from pastoral to arable production. For further details, see Marino 1988.

reaching process of change. The most immediate impact was on large properties. Under the rigorous, one-size-fits-all bilateral rules of the new code, elites lost access to male entails and to the restrictive provisions of *Nido* and *Capuano*; for the first time, women came to own meaningful property in their own right. In the first part of the century, with the ready availability of land for purchase, an emerging local gentry was generally able to maintain family estates intact; after unification, their heirs were increasingly compelled to turn to other strategies – high rates of celibacy for daughters and male cadets, cousin marriage, and concubinage – precariously to preserve house and holdings in the male line.

For ordinary citizens, the effects of the new code were less dramatic and certainly less visible.[11] Nevertheless, from the relatively small number of wills and marriage contracts that have survived for the period between 1810 and 1860, it is possible to discern four main trends. First, in order to comply with the strict bilateralism of the new legislation, almost from the outset, there was a concerted effort to balance women's marriage portions against male death settlements. Second, especially among a new generation of colonists and immigrant day laborers, there was a growing trend toward patrilocal residence, and a more pronounced patrilineal skew to kinship and inheritance arrangements.[12] Third, by the end of the period, in a far more stratified community, dowry houses were gradually giving way to rented housing. House-based dowries remained the ideal (perhaps the norm), but women were gradually excluded from real estate, endowed instead with elaborate trousseaux and promissory cash payments often delayed until the death of parents. Fourth, arable smallholdings, which were generally the most valuable family asset, were almost exclusively reserved for sons and passed on upon death.

Although the new inheritance provisions of successive civil codes provided the pretext and occasion for many of these changes, it was, above all, the transformation of Tavoliere agriculture and the increasing peasantization of Ascoli's economy that most plausibly account for the switch from a marriage-oriented, female-centered pattern of property transmission to a death-triggered system favoring males. With the opening up of Tavoliere lands to plow cultivation, land-hungry cultivators from the Central Uplands and south Puglia, tempted by the prospect of small-scale land distributions

[11] The introduction of the standardized dowry and inheritance provisions of the Napoleonic civil code reduced the need for notarial contracts; the high costs of a more professionalized notarial service further inhibited popular demand. From the 1820s, the frequency of wills and *capitoli matrimoniali* steadily declined.

[12] These changes were in part stimulated by the arrival of large numbers of immigrants from the patrilineally inflected Benevento hinterland.

and the chance of jobs on newly created latifundia, moved into the town in ever-increasing numbers. With the rapid expansion of landowner-financed, low-cost housing estates, Ascoli took on the aspect of a company town. Urban trade and interregional commerce gave way to large-scale rural enterprise, and core citizens complained of being submerged in a second Ascoli – a sea of alien agricultural day laborers and peasant farmers. In these circumstances, land ownership took on new meaning. For elites, it became the primary source of status and authority, to be stoutly defended against the erosive bilateral provisions of successive civil codes. For poorer townsmen, it offered the prospect of self-sufficiency and a vital hedge against starvation and underemployment in a harsh and exploitative environment – best owned and inherited by those directly responsible for its cultivation.

Unlike many of my anthropological colleagues who have been inclined to see southern Italy as more peasant-like the further back one moves in time, my view is that, for Ascoli at least, its peasantization was the product of recent, essentially 19th-century processes of modernization: the demise of the Customhouse, the emergence of an agro-town economy, the introduction of large-scale capitalism and industrialized farming to the countryside. The peasantization of a substantial segment of its population was then a late, short-lived phenomenon, roughly corresponding to the years between 1880 and 1960, the rules of property transmission of which I described earlier.

Ascoli under the *ancien régime* was quite different. It had a small peasant subsistence sector and some middling and large landowners, but less than one half of its resident population was permanently engaged in agriculture. Its fully monetarized economy was geared to commerce – to provisioning large estates and transhumant shepherds; the transport and placement of grain, animals, and other products on the Neapolitan market; and the organization of regional trade. In a high-risk new-frontier economy, fortunes were quickly made – and just as rapidly lost. Until the final decades of the 18th century, land ownership was only of limited importance. The status of local elites turned as much on successful forays into the professions, ecclesiastical careers, and trade as on the possession of rural holdings. With land readily available for rent on the plains below the town (at about one fifteenth of the cost of similar properties closer to the capital (Massafra 1984)), incentives for land accumulation were relatively weak. Even for households specializing in agricultural production, the ownership of draft animals and the much more costly pastures (*mezzane*) necessary for their maintenance were far more cost-effective than the possession of arable estates. For poorer families, as long as potential small cultivators could forage in extensive natural pastures and sheep reserves, and more profitably obtain grain by gleaning than

from direct cultivation, subsistence farming played only a secondary role in the local economy.

For all but a handful of large proprietors, the fragmentation and scattering of land, and its careful preservation in compact estates through the generations, was neither a problem nor a necessity. Access to the privileges of citizenship and, ultimately, to trade and urban occupations was far more critical, as was the security of a protected home base, which under the legal conventions and convictions of *ancien régime* Naples was best provided through women.

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Part II

The Great Transformation to Modernity

What happened to European inheritance patterns and social structures in the transition from the pre-modern to the modern world? What do we know about this transition in Eastern Europe? How much did it differ from the better studied processes of transition in Western Europe? How much continuity and change can be found in family formation strategies and communal relations during the transformation from agricultural to industrial, socialist, or consumer society? The chapters in this section attempt to answer these questions either by making inter-regional comparisons of social and cultural developments in the 19th and early 20th centuries or by analyzing these historical processes at the level of local communities. The main focus is on Eastern Europe, but the findings are contrasted with examples from Central and northern Europe. As before, these introductory remarks are intended to link together some arguments put forward in the chapters of this section, but they are of course not able to draw a complete picture of the whole discussion.

In the opening chapter, Andrejs Plakans emphasizes the "post-serfdom" period in Eastern Europe – i.e., the time from about the mid-19th century to World War I – showing that these decades witnessed the beginning of modern patterns of population behavior in almost all Eastern European societies. Over this period the demographic contrasts between Eastern Europe – where the marriage age had been generally lower, marriage nearly universal, and the tendency to complex household constellations in many regions strong – and Western Europe were beginning to fade in intensity. Plakans draws on the findings of the European Fertility Project to show how the rates of mortality and fertility successively underwent massive change and also discusses regional diversities within Eastern Europe Both the changed family and kinship constellations resulting from this "demographic transition" and the newly introduced legal frameworks of the post-serfdom period also required people to adjust their inheritance strategies. By discussing common factors and variations in the course of such adjustment proc-

esses, this chapter also makes clear where further research is needed to fill the gaps in our knowledge of the great transition to "modernity" in Eastern Europe.

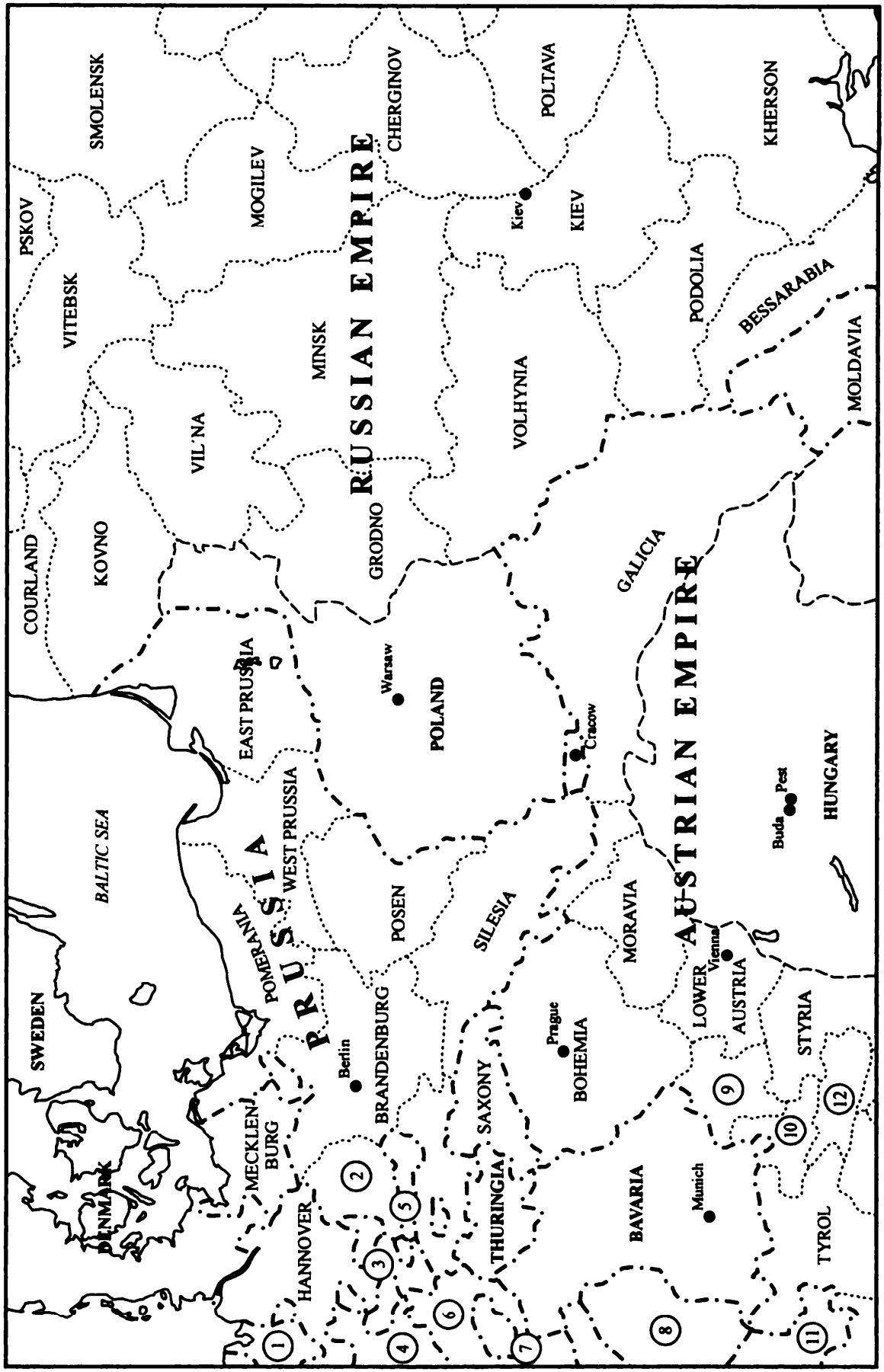
The following two chapters can be seen as attempts to push back the limits of our knowledge about Eastern European (southeastern and central-eastern in particular) societies in the period of emancipation and modernization. Ulf Brunnbauer's chapter about inheritance and family forms in the late-Ottoman and early post-Ottoman Balkans starts with a critical overview about family and property relations in Ottoman Europe. With regard to inheritance practices he shows how in Ottoman times different levels of legal authority – i.e., the regulations of the Ottoman state, stipulations of religious law, and customary law – laid down conflicting rules for the "appropriate" way of passing over land and property between the generations. However, it seems that customary law most often dominated in the rural communities, where, far into the 20th century, the absolute majority of the people lived. Equal partible inheritance, mainly restricted to the male descendants, generally formed the core of this customary law. But despite the general importance of partible male inheritance, household constellations varied throughout the regions. This was closely linked to differences in the timing of property transfers between the generations and was also strongly influenced by the level of integration of the regions into the economy and market of the Ottoman Empire. The newly formed nation-states, which replaced Ottoman rule, began to speed up land and legal reforms and to transform rural property regimes, but this was not necessarily paralleled by industrialization and economic modernization and reforms of inheritance law were widely ignored in practice.

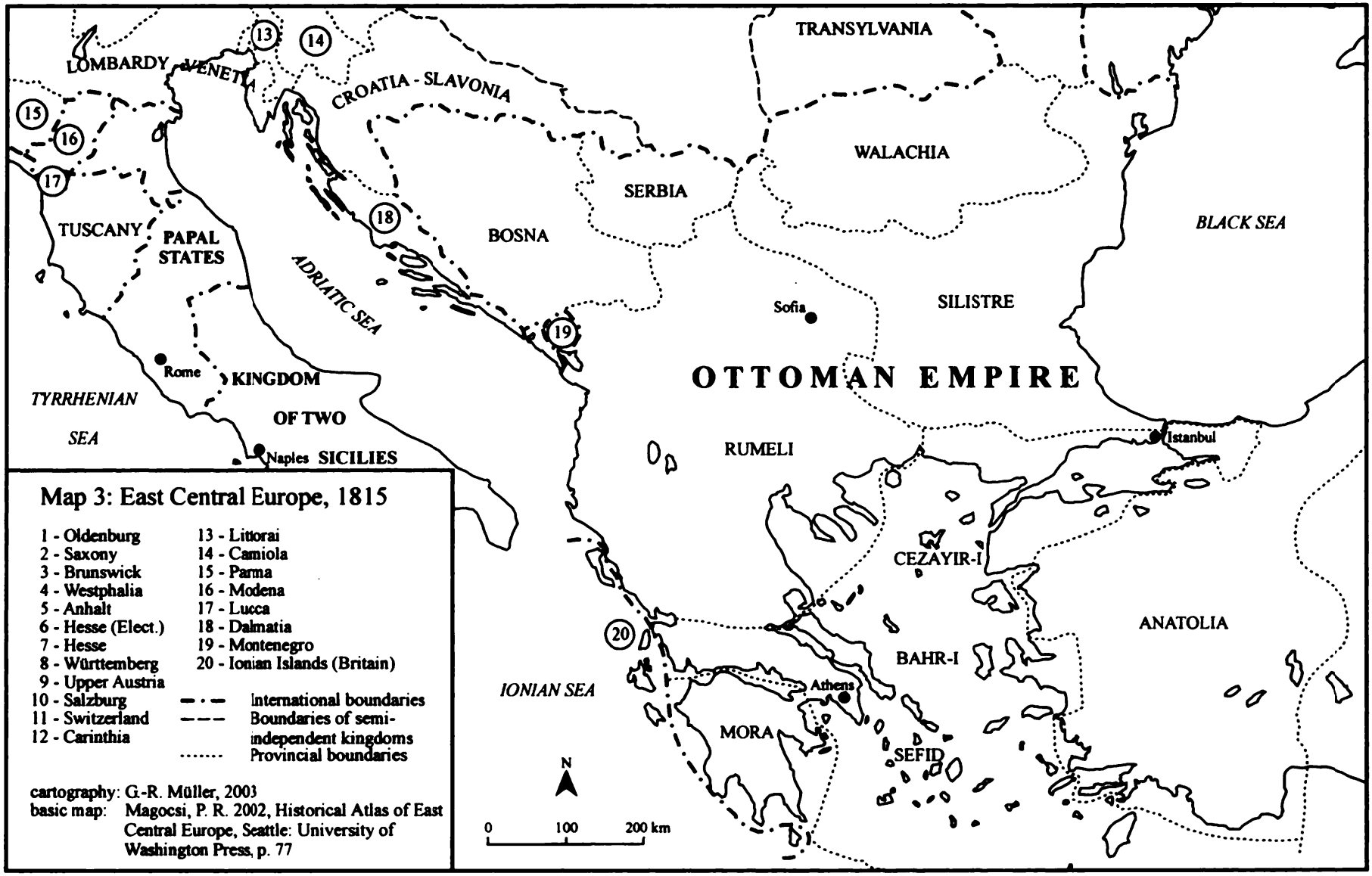
On the other hand, the emancipation process in the Habsburg Empire, which is discussed in the following chapter by Hannes Grandits, was accompanied by an advancing industrialization process – at least in some regions. The diverse consequences this could have for regional or local inheritance strategies are discussed in the final part of the chapter. But the main focus is on the link between inheritance and the character of social change during the decades of emancipation, when modern legal, administrative, and economic institutions replaced the feudal system. Grandits shows how regionally diverse customary concepts of inheritance and familial organization – and the way these concepts were reformulated, partly revised, or even strengthened in the emancipation period itself – provide an important background for understanding the logic behind diverse trends of social change. The Habsburg Empire stretched over zones with differing inheritance traditions and diverse forms of traditional rural economic organization. Most parts of its western provinces had been structured by a feudal order based on the

Grundherrschaft and a peasant economy, where impartible inheritance was a typical feature, but in most of the southeastern and eastern provinces partible male inheritance had been the dominating principle – combined in many places with a system of large estates.

Davide Torsello's chapter on the Hungarian village of Vágkirályfa, in southern Slovakia, shows that the trajectories of social change during the emancipation process were shaped by such preconditions but were also subject to diverse local and individual influences. Torsello follows the development of the village society from the mid-18th and 19th centuries, when it was part of the Hungarian part of the Habsburg Empire, up to the time of collectivization in socialist Czechoslovakia. He shows that a small class of medium and large landholders (the so-called *gazda* families) was able to strengthen its power and leading position within the community during the change from feudalism to an intensifying capitalist social order. Landownership and social status were traditionally thought of as inseparable. So the most important prerequisite for maintaining the social status of the *gazda* was the preservation of the landholdings in the face of the ongoing land fragmentation process caused by population growth. In spite of the Hungarian traditional system of male-focused multigeniture, particular adaptations in the inheritance and marriage strategies were practiced to reach this goal. Inequality among heirs as well as a system of marriage within the same status group made up the two pillars of the system. While these strategies enabled the group of *gazda* families to uphold their leading position vis-à-vis the smallholders and landless until the socialist period, collectivization brought the economic end of this privileged position – although most of these families still managed to maintain or reproduce much of their former social capital.

In the following chapter Hans Marks discusses kinship and inheritance strategies in a rural community in Härjedalen, in Sweden, and demonstrates the extent to which historically developed mental norms can persist during and after far-reaching economic changes. At the end of the 19th century, timber companies acquired property rights and introduced wage labor in the form of timber cutting, thus integrating this formerly remote region into the network of industrial capitalist relations. Marks shows that in this community, which possessed huge communal forests, the personal ownership of landed property, although certainly an asset, was traditionally of limited importance in social evaluations. The major normative emphasis rested on the "independence", both economic and social, of each family household. The aim of inheritance arrangements was to uphold this independence.


SMOLENSK
PSKOV
VITEBSK
MOGILEV
CHERGINOV
POLTAVA
KHERSON
Kiev
KIEV
RUSSIAN EMPIRE
MINSK
VIL'NA
VOLHYNIA
PODOLIA
BESSARABIA
MOLDAVIA
COURLAND
KOVNO
GRODNO
GALICIA
AUSTRIAN EMPIRE
EAST PRUSSIA
Warsaw
POLAND
Cracow
BALTIC SEA
WEST PRUSSIA
PRUSSIA
POMERANIA
POSEN
SILESIA
MORAVIA
Buda
Pest
HUNGARY
SWEDEN
Berlin
BRANDENBURG
Prague
BOHEMIA
LOWER
Vienna
AUSTRIA
STYRIA
MECKLEN
BURG
SAXONY
HANNOVER
THURINGIA
BAVARIA
Munich
TYROL
DENMARK
1
2
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Map 3: East Central Europe, 1815

1 - Oldenburg
2 - Saxony
3 - Brunswick
4 - Westphalia
5 - Anhalt
6 - Hesse (Elect.)
7 - Hesse
8 - Württemberg
9 - Upper Austria
10 - Salzburg
11 - Switzerland
12 - Carinthia
13 - Littorai
14 - Camiola
15 - Parma
16 - Modena
17 - Lucca
18 - Dalmatia
19 - Montenegro
20 - Ionian Islands (Britain)

— · — International boundaries
— — — Boundaries of semi-independent kingdoms
····· Provincial boundaries

cartography: G.-R. Müller, 2003
basic map: Magocsi, P. R. 2002, Historical Atlas of East Central Europe, Seattle: University of Washington Press, p. 77

So despite the right of every child to be treated equally, the impartibility of the property was stipulated in the inheritance contracts. The most common situation in practice was that one child, usually a son, "bought" the farm and compensated the other siblings, but only rarely in land. When the timber companies began to buy the farms and to enclose the forested village commons, the village households soon began to become dependent on wage labor, beside farming. Marks shows how wage labor was incorporated into the peasants' overall household strategy still preserving much of the earlier ideals of the "independence" of the individual household.

The transition of a local community predominantly living from farming to a later period, when wage labor or entrepreneurial ventures became of predominant importance, is also analyzed by John Cole. In his chapter about the South Tyrolean village of St. Felix between the 1960s and 1980s, he describes the social dynamics which accompanied this process. One of the crucial changes affected the way the people thought about inheritance. Up until the 1960s, the community had been dominated by those who took over the family farms. Impartibility and the right of the eldest son to inherit were seen as a centuries-old principle of intergenerational relations. Returning in the 1980s, Cole found that the situation had been almost reversed. Instead of the regime of primogeniture, it was increasingly expected that the youngest child, very often the youngest daughter, should take over and care for the family farm. Possessing a farm had ceased to be generally desirable, as the opportunities to make a living outside agriculture had become more attractive in a prospering regional economy. However, at a deeper level, the system showed strong historical continuity in the privileged position of the males. The advantageous course was now to set aside farming in favor of starting a business or working for a wage, and the sons, especially the eldest, remained those who had the first choice in exercising their preferred option.

Chapter 9

Household, Inheritance, and Kinship in Eastern European Post-Serfdom Societies

Andrejs Plakans

History and Anthropology

Efforts to marry the disciplines of history and anthropology began perhaps a half century ago and still constitute an ongoing project. The insights each discipline has brought to the other over the years are too numerous to detail here (e.g., Lewis 1968; Mitterauer 1990), but, in my view, a distance continues between the theoretical and suggestive ideas of anthropologists and the guidance needed by working, archive-oriented historians. The time period from about the mid-19th century to World War I in Europe – the era we here call "post-serfdom" – is a case in point. In that stretch of decades, momentous changes were occurring in the larger contexts of the everyday lives of ordinary rural people throughout Europe – changes that must have affected such mundane matters as who lived with whom, who was understood to be related to whom, and how parents and children settled questions of inheritance. Moreover, recorded information about such activities expanded exponentially, as literacy increased, the "social sciences" made their first appearance, and as governmental and private institutions inventoried populations under their control in myriad ways, producing a continuous historical record of unprecedented density and detail. This was true not only in the relatively stable states of the European west but also in the old and creaky empires of Eastern Europe. To cut into this historical record and to give shape to its various elements is the job of historians and of researchers from other disciplines who have an interest in the past. But is it possible to do so well, on topics of interest to anthropologists and social historians, without surrendering the concerns close to the heart of historians, namely, multilayered narratives of long-term change – "the larger picture"? Anthropologists, of course, have always counterposed *synchrony* and *diachrony*, but what is here at stake is something different.

The Impact of Large Events

In the period from about the mid-19th century to the beginning of World War I, Eastern European societies emerged from the so-called second serfdom (Blum 1958) and thereafter experienced several kinds of accelerating changes that may have altered the basic "rules of the game" of everyday life, including kinship and property relations at the household level. Starting in the 19th century, a typology of these changes includes serf-emancipation, economic modernization, the sharpening of national consciousness, the demographic transition and rapid population growth, and population transfers of various kinds. To this typology must be added regime changes of various kinds, as in the old Ottoman territories new national states appeared, the German lands became unified, and as the Habsburg monarchy became the Austro-Hungarian Empire. All these alterations required community-level adaptation to new circumstances. The processes of adaptation differed from community to community; moreover, the adaptation of families and individuals also differed since the altered circumstances caught these social units at different phases of the family developmental cycle and the individual life cycle.

The overlapping and interpenetrating nature of these frames of reference suggests that we are dealing with subject matter in search of a disciplined approach. It remains to be seen whether the research directed to historical families for the "pre-modern" period can be adapted to the decades we focus on here. Much of the research of the late Peter Laslett (Laslett and Wall 1972; Wall, Robin, and Laslett 1983; Laslett 1983), for example, was termed by him "historical sociology," and the work of such scholars as Jack Goody (e.g. Goody et al. 1976), Martine Segalen (e.g. Segalen 1986), David Sabean (e.g. Sabean 1998), and Michael Mitterauer (Mitterauer 1990) has frequently been termed, by these scholars and by others, as "historical anthropology." In principle at least, we should be able to apply their insights to the decades that witnessed the beginning of modern patterns of population behavior. Yet such application has been made rarely, and almost not at all for the European east, so that we do not know clearly at this time if the analytical concepts developed by these researchers can be useful for understanding the decades that some take to mark the transition between the "pre-modern" and "modern" world.

Did an East-West Divide Continue in the Post-serfdom Period?

What should we look for in the European east that in the post-serfdom period made it different from the European west? First, John Hajnal's early and

influential findings (Hajnal 1965), that in the European east age at first marriage for both sexes was generally lower than in Western Europe and that marriage in the east was nearly universal, have survived repeated testing – most recently by the research of the Princeton Fertility Project (Coale, Anderson, and Härm 1979) – even though some research has revealed populations on either side of the Great Divide whose characteristics contradict the predicted patterns. When this contrast began to fade in intensity still remains an open question. Second, Eastern Europe is the one region of the continent where research on the history of family structures repeatedly found a high incidence of relatively complex family households, over time and space (Wall, Robin, and Laslett 1983). This is not to say, of course, that the simple family household did not exist or that Eastern Europe was the only continental region where the complex varieties were to be found. It is to say that a quarter-century of research has reduced for Eastern Europe the degree of surprise when complex formations were found, because they turned up in traditional societies as far separated as Finland in the north and Serbia in the south, as well as central Russia in the east and Hungary in the west. The reasons for their existence may have differed from place to place – that puzzle has not been solved yet – but the range of 30 to 60 percent of all family households in the complex category in a given historical household listing (as contrasted to the western proportions of 2 to 10 percent) is a finding that no longer startles in the way it once did. In the east, a variety of socioeconomic regimes supported family developmental cycles in which relatively long phases included, for example, the co-residence of newly married offspring and their parents, the co-residence of married older offspring and their parents, the co-residence of married siblings (usually, but not always, brothers) after parents died, and sometimes even the co-residence of more distant kin. In the extreme example of these bunching patterns, the Russian household specialist Peter Czap has spoken of the "perennial multiple family household" to describe a regime in which households were always complex regardless of the phase of the developmental cycle (judging by the age of the head) they were in (Czap 1982). With respect to the central problem we are concerned with, it is clear that the residence rules of many places in the Eastern European region kept substantial numbers of family members and kin in close proximity to each other. But how long did they keep doing so? An increase in migration rates – brought about by looser post-serfdom rules and customs restricting movement – must have impacted the distribution of household structural types, but we do no know for sure.

Temporal Continuities and Discontinuities in the European East

To most specialists of Eastern European history the research concerns of historical sociology even now remain somewhat remote from "real" history. But this situation is changing, and even among Russian historians there are now a handful of researchers who are interested in micro-structures (Goncharov 2001, 2002). Eventually, periodization for Eastern Europe will be more settled than it currently is, but at this juncture there continue to be disagreements. During the 19th and 20th centuries, the populations of the Eastern European lands, as populations elsewhere in Europe, are said to have undergone a process of "modernization." The theory of the "demographic transition" (Caldwell 1976), which sought to describe these changes precisely, foresaw an early phase in the process, initiated by a sustained decrease of mortality levels (especially infant mortality) even while fertility levels remained high. Sustained levels of fertility in combination with decreased mortality created a period of very rapid population growth. Next in temporal sequence came the beginning of a sustained decrease of fertility levels. In the final phase of the transition, both mortality and fertility levels achieved a new equilibrium, presumably consistent with the new overall conditions of "modernity." By the end of the 20th century, all European states had "passed through" this process, and much research has been devoted to the timing and patterns of these passages. Unfortunately, as far as Eastern Europe is concerned, there does not seem to be a consensus about where and when the "sustained drop in fertility" began. The question is important because the size of sibling groups, especially in adulthood, set the limit to the size of kin groups and, indeed, played an important role in the continuing atrophy of kin terms.

Although discussions of the "demographic transition" model connect only weakly with the writings about the history of kinship, the changes the model describes – falling into the post-serfdom period – had to have had an impact on the kinship domain through the addition and subtraction of people to the pool of persons who qualified for kinship designations (Plakans 1984). Thus, for example, the decline in mortality enlarged each sibling set and, by increasing longevity, made possible the coexistence in time of more generations than was likely in earlier periods. At the same time, the decline in fertility would have affected the kinship domain in the opposite direction. The reduction in the number of persons born to each couple would have reduced each sibling set. It is tempting to guess that these various aspects of the demographic transition cancelled each other, but we do not have any empirical evidence for Eastern Europe to make such a claim. The "demographic transition" literature makes fairly clear, however, that the impact of

these processes would not have been felt uniformly throughout the Eastern European region.

As the European Fertility Project (EFP) – to date, the most ambitious comparative project of the fertility component of the transition – has shown a full-scale regional model for the transition is not possible to construct (Coale, Anderson, and Harm 1979; Coale and Watkins 1986). Throughout the whole 19th century, mortality levels in many areas of Eastern Europe were declining, but it is impossible to extract from the data a single period during which a sustained decline began *everywhere* in the region. Efforts at periodization have been somewhat more successful with identifying the beginnings of a sustained decline of fertility levels in subregions. The findings of the EFP suggest that such a sustained decline in fertility began first in the southern areas of Eastern Europe (save the Balkans [Todorova 1993, 1997]) during the final decades of the 19th century but not until the third decade of the 20th century in the central and eastern parts of the region (Demeny 1968; Heer 1968). This periodization has been recently contested for Russia, however, with the argument by Mironov (Mironov and Eklof 2000: 55-122) that the transition to modern patterns in the Russian Empire began in the first half of the 19th century.

This ongoing dispute renders impossible an unambiguous conclusion about the onset of the demographic transition everywhere in Eastern Europe. Moreover, a review of the EFP's nuptiality data continues to suggest the strong possibility of major subregional differences. Table 9.1 (Plakans and Wetherell 1997) presents a reordering of the EFP's 1870 I_m measure, which is an index representing the proportions of females, ages 15 to 49, who were married, relative to a baseline population of Hutterite women, who have one of the highest and most reliable records of fertility. We can see that the western tier of the Eastern European Region, which here includes some of the western border provinces of the Russian Empire, fell into three relatively distinct zones: a northern, a central, and a southern.

Table 9.1: I_m in Eastern Europe, 1870

Northern Zone		Central Zone		Southern Zone	
Zone	.493	Zone	.665	Zone	.769
Finland	.495	Lithuania	.603	Yugoslavian Area	.804
Latvia	.491	Poland	.634	Ukraine	.721
Estonia	.479	Belarus	.634	Moldavia	.742
		Hungary	.692	Romania	.748
		Austria: Poland	.612		
		Austria: Czech.	.509		
		Austria: Yugoslav.	.502		

In all these regions the I_m was lower than in Russia proper, which meant that there is every reason to believe that in Eastern Europe the start of the demographic transition was differentiated subregionally. In the western areas of the region, the proportion of females in the childbearing years who were married was comparatively low by 1870, whereas in the eastern areas, especially within the Russian population proper, that proportion was at considerably higher levels.

What remains open for Eastern Europe in the post-serfdom period are questions about subregions: of the start of the transition there, its temporal length, and the timing of the arrival of the new balance of patterns. Answers to these questions, in turn, would yield information on how such macro-demographic shifts in the course of time affected kin pools in different subregions. They would also enable the researcher to seek connections between macro-demographic change and kinship ideology by examining the continued proximity to EGO of certain kin types.

The later start of the demographic transition in Eastern Europe meant that significant growth in total population continued at high levels during the last decades of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. This meant that the pool of potential kin was increasing. The fertility decline that started somewhat later, however, cut in the other direction, as did the unprecedentedly large scale of the processes related to emigration and military conflict. But because for most of the 19th century Eastern Europe did not experience demographically cataclysmic events, can we say that kinship ties

for the most part continued undisturbed? The emigration of many to distant places required that far greater attention to ties be paid than would have been the case had relatives remained in close proximity.

Using New Rules: The Case of Inheritance Practices

In transferring to the European east and to the post-serfdom period conceptual equipment developed by reference to Western Europe, three considerations are important: the size of affected subpopulations, the mixture of legal traditions, and the constantly changing definitions of heritable property. The number of persons whose bequests – if there were any – were affected by written law continued to be small even past the mid-19th century point, though the number was growing. Written law codes and customary law varied from region to region, but we do not know at this time how they were interpreted and enacted. Descriptive accounts of the laws themselves reveal even greater variety than is present in the west, because the written and customary law codes guiding life in the 19th century were combinations of customary and imported rules. Bulgarian inheritance law, for example, contained both Roman and Byzantine elements (Garnefsky 1961: 88), filtered through Bulgar codifications from the ninth century. In Czech lands, the original Slavic codifications of inheritance laws of the 13th century were severely modified during the Habsburg period by new regulations of Germanic origin, producing a mixture that was finally codified in 1811 and lasted until a major reform in 1951 (Nemec 1961: 115-7). The complicated political history of the Hungarians and their residence in several different adjoining states meant that the original codification of Hungarian inheritance law in 1514 did not affect all Hungarians for much of its existence (Szirmai 1961: 150-1). The Romanian Civil Code, first enacted in 1864, closely followed post-revolutionary French law and, in the Transylvanian region of the country which had a large Hungarian-speaking population, was modified by Hungarian laws of the 1870s (Stoicoiu 1961: 225). In the territories of the South Slavs that were to become Yugoslavia after World War I, inheritance laws drew on the Austrian Civil Code, the Serbian Civil Code, Montenegrin customary inheritance law, Hungarian customary law, and the customary law of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian region (Adamovitch 1961: 247).

A frequent theme of all these codes was their pre-egalitarian nature. During the century and a half from about 1750 to the present, the peasantries of many parts of Eastern Europe had to live with continual changes in basic definitions of property ownership and, by extension, heritability (Revesz 1964). In the initial phase, under serfdom, the ownership rights of peasants involved, at best, movables but not land as such (Blum 1978). Even usufruct rights to a holding were not secure, insofar as the estate authorities could

(and frequently did) claim a vacated holding for the demesne (the estate lands, as contrasted with the land set apart for peasant use). Efforts by reforming central governments to secure peasant rights to landed property were weak and only partially successful. In the post-serfdom period, agrarian reforms of various kinds tended to fix property rights and rights of bequest. But the process was vary ragged throughout the region, and the idea of private property in the western sense remained distant for large numbers of persons, not because land did not exist that could be owned but because the concept of ownership itself remained strange.

For most the 19th century, land, which in Eastern Europe remained the principal indicator of wealth, could not be accumulated by most peasants during their own lifetimes. Even this generalization, however, has exceptions. Whether or not headships in serf areas could be bequeathed at the death of the incumbent, remains at this time an open question likely to have different answers, depending upon the area of Eastern Europe that is being discussed. In the regions where the dominant form of rural organization was the serf estate (*Gutsherrschaft*), some peasant sons could nurture expectations of succeeding their fathers, but the father could give no assurance that a recommended successor would be acceptable to the estate authorities. It was in the interests of the estate for there to be familial continuity, of course, but a multitude of reasons could work against that preference. As a result, the contrast between Western European areas where customary inheritance worked smoothly and the eastern serf estates was substantial. Though few longitudinal studies have been carried out in either part of Europe, those few are suggestive. In the villages of the western German area of the Schwalm, Arthur Imhof (Imhof 1975) found farms with familial continuity over as many as seven generations of heads, whereas in an intensely studied serf estate in the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire three successive censuses (1816, 1833, and 1859) showed only a few farms in which there was familial continuity over all three enumerations. In the Baltic, evidently, while the father-son succession did work, the father-son-grandson sequence appears to have been very rare, suggesting, within the domain of generational relations, the need to understand better the long-term parent-child relationships that emerged when no material bequests were expected by the children.

What about movables and money as heritable objects that could cause generational disputes? Although most descriptions of 19th-century Eastern European peasantries recognize the existence of socioeconomic stratification, they tend on the whole to be keyed to the size of the holding (full peasant, half-peasant, quarter-peasant, cotter, etc.) rather than to relative assets apart from the holding. Though it is clear that peasants could enhance

their standard of living during their lifetimes while occupants of a fertile holding, it is much less clear how they might have been able to accumulate sufficient non-landed wealth for inheritance questions to loom large at the end of their lives. Jack Goody's conceptualization of continuous wealth flows from the parental to the children's generation (property devolution), starting with the first marriage of children, is apropos here, because the dowry (for daughters) as well as help for setting up in a new farm (for sons) were both known practices in Eastern Europe. It is quite possible, given the subsistence level of most peasant households, that such pre-mortem distributions prevented any accumulation of wealth to be distributed at death. If this were so, inheritance questions would not arise at the end of life and would not materially affect generational relations at that time. Bulgarian common law, for example, permitted pre-mortem distributions of property, with the share the testator reserved for himself devolving upon the heir who had looked after him in old age; in some regions, in fact, the distribution of the estate could be annulled if the heir refused to look after the testator (Garnefsky 1961: 89). But how widespread such regulations were, especially under conditions of serfdom, is not known at this time, nor is how positive law of this kind was adapted to the new circumstances of the late 19th century.

Property and Personal Relationships

How did the changes noted above alter personal relationships? Eastern European societies before the 20th century were replete with organizational forms that possessed great potential for absolute control over the labor force. Authority in the landed serf estate, for example, resided with its owner (or lessor), who traditionally was quite adept at formulating work rules for estate peasants, particularly if the estate was involved with long-distance marketing of its crops. The economic success of a landed estate depended, in fact, on how well estate managers were able to regulate the labor potential of the estate peasantry, who at times numbered in the thousands. Similarly, in nonagricultural enterprises, owners or managers also were free to establish conditions of work, but the overall influence of such regulation was not felt until well into the 20th century. The greatest potential source of work regulations was the government, which in Eastern Europe, more often than not, was autocratic in form. Yet in spite of claims of nearly absolute power, autocratic governments in the east, when in a reforming mood, consistently had to settle for partial reform that seldom touched those domains of everyday life with which we are here concerned (Plakans 1987).

Most people, including those in rural populations, continued even in the post-serfdom period to enact a number of social and familial roles simultaneously. Meyer Fortes has suggested that in pre-modern societies role

systems are frequently juxtaposed: In them, structural domains "tend to be fused together, whereas in complex societies they tend to be numerous and structurally differentiated" (Fortes 1969: 99). In the post-serfdom period of Eastern European society we will probably find an in-between situation. Though recent historical research on the social micro-structures of Eastern Europe has tended to focus on one set of roles – those of the household – because these were the least ambiguously described in historical sources, researchers were forced by the same sources to recognize that these roles were not the only ones at stake. This issue has presented particularly thorny analytical problems because of the localized nature of everyday life. If the work group, the kin group, the family group, and the co-residential group involved (more or less) the same persons, then it logically follows that each person had numerous roles to enact. Here historical sources present us with local communities in which role systems comprise a thicket.

The evidence that we have about these matters at the moment comes from the pre-serfdom past but probably applied to the post-serfdom period as well. It was not unknown, for example, for the male head of a peasant farmstead to be simultaneously involved in a public office (the headship), a position of private authority (head of family and/or kin group), and at the same time to be making a contribution to the total labor effort of the farmstead (the world of work). Similarly, his wife had specific farmstead duties and responsibilities as well as the obligation to help with fieldwork when necessary. Each of these involvements was regulated by different rules and customs, some emerging from the estate authorities and some from peasant custom but all capable of being overridden by the necessities of the moment. A good example pertains to the role of farmstead (or household) head. Stepping down from a farmstead headship for reasons of age would have affected not only the familial group residing on the farm but also in many respects the future economic well-being of the estate since a weakened farmstead could mean temporary loss of agricultural product as well as labor. But stepping down from a headship did not necessarily mean surrender of position in the private spheres of family and kinship, where the authority of the landowner did not normally penetrate. Studies of the Balkan zadruga in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria in the 20th century have shown differences between the headship of the communal group and the small family within the group. In Yugoslavia, for example, the head of the zadruga had much less authority than the head of the small peasant family (St. Erlich 1966: 33); and, in Bulgaria, the senior male of the zadruga consulted, but the father of the small family assumed godlike powers and brooked no questioning of his decisions (Sanders 1949: 66). Since an individual could step down

from the headship of a zadruga but retain his status as head of a constituent family, these differences are of considerable importance.

In the familial domain, therefore, different rules held, because an individual, after stepping down from an office, could still have substantial authority, as head of the family group or elder in the kin group, over such matters as marriage of females and the disposition of resources. The stepping down process was sometimes extended out of respect for the older man. The anthropologist Joel Halpern observed in the Serbian village of Orasac that "in many cases an older person retains the honorary position of head while in actuality a son, or sons, [have] taken over the reins" (Halpern 1967: 204). Though no longer in full control of all material resources of the group, an elderly person would still retain moral authority and was often turned to for advice. Edit Fel and Tamas Hofer in their classic study of Hungarian villagers observed that "the presence of an experienced old man may be extremely useful for the family and kin group and even the whole community, especially if he formerly held office. His advice is asked on questions of inheritance, and when someone dies he is called upon to preside at the division of the estate" (Fel and Hofer 1969: 204-5). Least of all did withdrawal from a headship, and the accompanying diminution of private authority, mean a complete abandonment of the world of work. In the near-subsistence economies that characterized Eastern Europe until well into the 20th century, all persons worked until they died, though during the last years of their lives their contributions to the total labor effort of the group gradually lessened. Old men in the Albanian subculture of Yugoslavia, for example, took oxen out to graze, watched and fed the poultry, and prepared seed corn (Grossmith 1976: 239). In old age the nature of work may have been changed for reasons other than physical incapacity.

The Future of Research in the Post-serfdom Period

Our forays into the dense historical material of the "post-serfdom" period of Eastern European history suggest something of the difficulties facing anthropological history. A neatly delineated community study is bound to miss the larger changes going on in and around the community, whereas the larger patterns may not be exemplified by the community at all. Moreover, the complexity of these decades calls into question such easy dichotomies (much evident in the older anthropohistorical literature) as "pre-modern" and "modern," "pre-industrial" and "industrial." The job of combining the insights of the two disciplines will continue to be difficult and will need the guidance of some general organizing ideas. We assume here the proposition that at ground level change was continuous – people were born, married, and died; formed and dissolved households; and bequeathed something to their

offspring. This means that the particular actors and transactions in any moment were likely to be different than those in the preceding and the following moments. Information about particular people and particular life events – in the form of primary sources – are the stuff historians deal with, needing as they do to sift it for important patterns at moments in past time but also for pattern changes over time. The job is complicated further by the fact that the units of analysis – individuals, families, communities, regions, and entire national states – were themselves changing during the period in question in Eastern Europe. Which changes were short-term and which long-term, which trivial and which important, and which of them evidenced underlying civilizational and cultural continuities that did not respect political borders become very important questions.

The continuous changes going on in the domains of co-residence (households), relatedness (kinship), and devolution of property (inheritance) can be understood as the null hypothesis, and a host of identifiable historical event-clusters – the empirical historical evidence – during the period the incidents have to be examined for their impact on ongoing change. Did a particular agrarian reform change family patterns? Did the creation of a new nation-state introduce convergence of patterns in its citizens? Did a new inheritance law mandating equality among heirs really have that effect? We want to find out in each instance how great an interruption was created in the continuous stream of changes. Some event clusters – such as serf emancipation or the formation of new nation-states, for example – may have produced real system-wide discontinuity, becoming transformations and forcing subsequent changes to move in some new direction. Others probably had trivial impact and did not disturb the main trajectory of change. Transformatory event clusters need also to be examined with respect to intentionality – was the change of direction they created meant to take place and in the manner intended – and intentionality can in turn be examined with respect to whether it was legislated (taking the form of new rules brought into being through consultation and discussion) or mandated (issued from some governmental authority without consultation with the people affected). Both of these types of intentional measures can also be examined further with respect to the instrumentalities of implementation – how did they enter daily life and at what pace? This program of research is obviously a tall order, but we shall not be able to answer such questions until systematic research on communities, micro-structures, and property flows becomes as assiduous as it has been for western societies in the same time period.

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Chapter 10

Descent or Territoriality: Inheritance and Family Forms in the late Ottoman and early post-Ottoman Balkans

Ulf Brunnbauer

In this paper I examine the interaction between social structures, inheritance patterns, and family forms in the late Ottoman Balkans and the immediate period after the end of Ottoman rule in the Balkans – that is, the 19th and early 20th centuries. The first part of the chapter reviews property and family relations during Ottoman times. In the next section, the study of mountain societies in the Balkans serves as a case study for examining the reasons for the differences in household structures that evolved in the mountains despite similar ecological constraints and analogous notions about inheritance. Finally, the chapter aims at problematizing views of linear progress in terms of economic and social development from Ottoman to national state rule. It shows that the societal processes triggered by the end of Ottoman rule had ambivalent results. While Balkan inheritance practices proved to be an important element of continuity between the Ottoman and the post-Ottoman period, in the changed framework of national states and private ownership relations, they had some adverse and surprising side effects.

Inheritance, Agrarian Relations and Household Structures in the Late Ottoman Balkans

In order to understand the implications of inheritance patterns in the late Ottoman Balkans, it is necessary to review agrarian relations and patterns of land use in the Ottoman Empire. In the 19th century, rural smallholders were the single most important group of producers in the Ottoman Balkans (Adanir 1989: 154). This pattern resembled the "classical" model of Ottoman agrarian organization that had developed in the 14th and 15th centuries. The eminent scholar of Ottoman social history, Halil İnalcık (1994: 143), called this model "*çift-hane*": Peasant farms worked with the labor of the

peasant's household (*hane*) and a yoked pair (*çift*) of oxen. Until the 19th century, Ottoman peasant landholdings were usually parts of larger fiefdoms (*timar*) consisting of state-owned land originally given to Ottoman cavalrymen (*sipahis*) or officials for their services to the Sultan. Timar-holders had no rights of jurisdiction over the peasants on their timars, so no personal dependency between timar-holder and peasants existed, at least in legal theory. Timar-holders did not interfere in the modes and organization of agricultural production and were prohibited by the state from encroaching on the peasants' land and independence. They only had the right to collect the taxes that the peasants owed the ruler.

The timar system changed its nature considerably from the late 16th century onward due to inflation and changes in the economic as well as military organization of the empire. Instead of supporting the sultan's cavalry, timars were increasingly leased out to tax-farmers, who rented the right to collect the taxes from the peasants of a certain territory for a certain period of time. They either retained a share of the taxes they collected for themselves or received some sort of wage (İnalcık 1994: 65). Tax-farmers often demanded excessive taxes because the government was too weak to intervene on behalf of the peasant masses, although it tried to maintain its policy of protection of the peasants against usurpation and exploitation by local notables. During the process of decentralization that characterized the Ottoman Empire from the late 16th to the early 19th century, many tax-farmers and other local notables succeeded in acquiring large private landholdings (so-called *çiftliks*), upon which peasants sometimes were degraded to the status of mere sharecroppers. The description of the process of çiftlik formation – upon which consensus has still not been reached among students of Ottoman social and economic history (for interpretations of çiftlik formation, see McGowan 1981: 67-79; İnalcık 1984) – is far beyond the scope of this paper. However, it should be mentioned that, in contrast to earlier assumptions, which compared the creation of large çiftliks to the "second serfdom" in Eastern Europe and viewed it as a process of establishing capitalist export-oriented plantations, çiftliks never became the dominant form of agricultural organization in the Ottoman Balkans (Lampe and Jackson 1982: 36; Adanir 1989: 151). They proliferated only in certain areas, such as Macedonia, but even there they did not encompass the majority of peasants or land. Çiftlik owners were, furthermore, often less interested in the organization of agriculture, as such, than in the interests, taxes, and rents that the peasants on their land had to pay. Agriculture continued to be organized on the principle of çift-hane (Adanır 1998: 303). Many çiftliks were also rather small in size and were often located in malaria-stricken lowlands, which could not be used for purposes other than pasturing. Due to the lack of

available labor, agricultural production on çiftliks could not be intensified, while many smallholders embarked on the cultivation of labor-intensive cash crops such as tobacco. In the 19th century, when central government control again grew stronger, the importance of çiftliks declined further.

While the Ottoman government always tried to protect the peasants against greedy landlords, it did not grant ownership rights to the peasant producers – most of whom worked state land (*miri*), which made up some 90 percent of the arable land (İnalcık 1994: 105). Private land (*mülk*) owned by members of the Ottoman elite and pre-Ottoman noblemen was of lesser importance, especially with regard to agriculture. The third important category of land in the Ottoman Empire was the land of pious foundations (*vakıf*), which in certain regions could amount to considerable portions of the arable land. However, peasant farms on *mülk* and *vakıf* land seem to have differed little from those on state-owned land, though there were certain differences in tax obligations (Faroqhi 1979: 121). Peasants, who were by any measure the predominant majority of rural producers, possessed usufruct rights to particular farms (*çiftlik*) that were supposed to be large enough to feed the peasant family and guarantee some surplus production for tax payments.[1] In their regulations, the government set the amount of farmland for a farm at between five and 15 hectares, depending on the fertility of the soil (İnalcık 1994: 147). Peasants were independent in the organization of their production and had the security that their possession rights could not be alienated by the local nobility.[2] The state hoped to safeguard the viability of its main tax base, the peasant households, with these regulations. Peasants could not sell, donate, endow, or mortgage the state-owned land that they possessed and could not change the way the land was used without approval by the government. But peasants nevertheless enjoyed certain rights, which distinguished possession from simple tenancy, such as the right of bestowing it onto their sons and preeminent rights of acquisition by wife, daughter, and brother (İnalcık 1994: 110-1; Faroqhi 1995: 66).[3] However, the state prohib-

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[1] As can be seen by comparison to the explanation on the previous page, the term *çiftlik* has two senses. It can be used both for the large private land-holdings of notables and for the small peasant farms worked by rural families.

[2] The main limitation was that a peasant household that did not till the land for three consecutive years lost its possession rights.

[3] If there were no surviving sons, other close relatives, especially daughters, could inherit, but they had to pay a special fee to do so. Dispossessing a family was regarded as unjust by the Ottoman government. The local law for the province of Karaman, in southern Anatolia, for example, stated in 1584 that it would be unjust to take land away from the family of a deceased farmer who had no sons, because he had spent his whole life investing in his farm (Faroqhi 1995: 66). Generally, women in Ottoman society could own property, which they indeed often did as illustrated by the significant number of pious foundations endowed by women (Faroqhi 1995: 118 and 136).

ited the division of the çiftlik upon transfer from father to son(s) in order to safeguard its viability. Several surviving sons were expected to cultivate their father's land in common (Faroqhi 1979: 120). The state went to great lengths, especially in the classical period (from the 14th to the first half of the 16th century), to ensure that peasant landholdings were not divided and remained sufficiently large to maintain a peasant family (Faroqhi 1979: 148). But even in that period of relatively efficient central control, divisions of peasant landholdings apparently did occur (Faroqhi 1979: 120). It seems rather unlikely that the ban on çiftlik division could have been upheld in the 17th and 18th centuries, when the central government could barely impose its authority in many regions. But since these centuries were times of high mortality, the potential consequences of division did not yet manifest themselves, since in many cases fathers did not have more than one son – if any – to succeed them. Moreover, land was abundant and the population density in the Ottoman Balkans and Anatolia was low, so that partitioned farms could increase their size by adding new land (Duben 1985: 86). The cultivation of wasteland was even encouraged by the Ottoman government, which hoped to extend its tax base by granting ownership or possession rights to those who brought "dead land" (*mevat*) under cultivation (İnalcık 1994: 121-2). Customary law assumptions about the access of households to communal land, which was a typical feature of Ottoman villages, and the right of households to reclaim village wasteland also added resources beyond what the individual households owned and possessed (see Todorova 1993: 127).

The occurrence of divisions of landholdings suggests a pattern of partible inheritance, such as Karl Kaser has shown to be typical for the Balkans and Eastern Europe in general (2000). However, little is known about actual inheritance practices in the Ottoman Balkans before the 19th century, as the documentary evidence is scant. Generally, inheritance strategies seem to have been embodied in a web of different, often contradicting legal proscriptions and vernacular assumptions on the one hand and changing social and economic conditions on the other. From the point of view of inheritance law, the three main determinants were the regulations of the Ottoman state, stipulations of religious law, and local customary law. Ottoman regulations, as already mentioned, stipulated the indivisibility of estates on *miri* land. Sons should inherit property in common, as a corporation (Duben 1985: 83). But Ottoman regulations were not uniform for the whole country, since they included local customary law (*örf*) in the specific law collections (*kanunname*) of newly acquired provinces. The application of state law was also dependent on the local context because the typical local Ottoman judge (*kadi*) refrained from the strict implementation of normative legal rules and standards. "For him, it was better to conform to local traditions than to

disrupt that local order and perhaps make way for chaos" (Ortaylı 1985: 97). Decisions on inheritance of private property and family matters were generally left to the autonomous realm of the recognized religious communities (*millets*) as long as vital state interests were not concerned. Islamic religious law, for example, favored division of the property among all heirs and also demanded that female heirs receive a share[4] but was not applied to *miri* land in order to prevent fragmentation (Duben 1985: 83). Finally, inheritance was very much shaped by local customary law, which seemed to have stipulated postmortem equal division between male heirs. As a result of this complicated web of influencing factors, "[i]t is indeed possible to find a full range of practices (or at least rules) from primogeniture to absolutely equal division among all offspring regardless of sex [...]" (ibid., 82).

The situation became even more complicated in the course of the 19th century because inheritance and land laws changed as part of the *Tanzimat* Reforms. In 1831, the *timar* system was abolished and the new laws stressed the protection of ownership and possession rights. In 1856, Muslims and non-Muslims became equal before the law, with the same rights of access to landed property. But even the major Ottoman Land Code of 1858 fell short of transforming state ownership of land into private ownership; rather, it reiterated the traditional distinction between the different categories of land, of which state land was the most important (Ortaylı 1985: 100).[5] The land code also prohibited the sale of state land without consent by the government, but, on the other hand, it gave the peasants strong possession rights and allowed the division of estates on state land. The code is said to have had conservative as well as liberalizing aspects (Adanır 1979: 34). Later, peasants with usufruct rights received the right to mortgage their land and to sell it to creditors as payment for their debts (Milkova 1965: 40). Documents from the 19th century show a lively trade in state land, i.e., in rights of its possession. The trend toward strengthening the rights of land possessors on state land was manifest also in changes in official inheritance regulations: Inheritance rights were extended to other categories of relatives of the deceased (Duben 1985: 84). In 1847, daughters received a rightful claim to parts of their fathers' property, even if there were surviving sons. Previously, they could inherit only if there were no sons and had to pay a special fee

[4] Islamic law stipulated fixed shares of the inheritance for different categories of heirs, among whom the closest male cognates of the deceased ranked first and were to receive the largest proportion of the property (see Kaser 2000: 132).

[5] The consequences of the Land Code of 1858 are the object of lively controversy among specialists. Some argue that it resulted, against its intentions, in the strengthening of private land ownership, while others assert that the Land Code precluded the possibility of the dispossession of the peasantry and consolidated small peasant possessions (see Adanır 1998: 310).

(Milkova 1961: 78, Duben 1985: 83). Further reforms in 1849, 1858, and 1867 made other kinsmen in descending as well as ascending lines eligible for inheritance, and a broader group of kin and non-kin could inherit for a fee in case no closer relatives of the deceased had survived (Milkova 1961: 78-9).

However, as in many other societies, inheritance law, ideology, and practice diverged considerably. It can be shown that a relatively homogenous pattern of equal male inheritance prevailed in most of the Ottoman Balkans. Maria Todorova writes that "[t]he principle of partible equal inheritance was dominant in Southeastern Europe in general" (1993: 127). Women were mostly excluded from inheritance and did not receive a dowry.[6] Even among Muslim populations, women usually did not inherit, despite religious prescriptions for female inheritance. Muslim women nevertheless still seem to have inherited more often than Christian women (Kaser 2000: 135). Furthermore, Muslim women were supposed to receive a marital gift (*mehr*) from the parents of the bridegroom upon marriage (Duben 1985: 82; Duben and Behar 1991: 114). Brides, among Muslims as well as Christians, also brought significant trousseaux into marriages; these consisted mainly of household effects like carpets, clothes, dishes, etc. Even without a formal dowry, marriages were therefore connected with some sort of property transfer from the parent generation to the young couple. But generally there was – with some notable exceptions – no formal minimum as regards property required for marriage because everyone was supposed to marry at a relatively young age.

Equally divisible inheritance reflected strong communal ties and impeded the emergence of a landless and dispossessed class that would have sought employment outside of farming. Excess rural labor usually did not migrate into the towns, adopting instead a form of seasonal labor migration that was widespread throughout the Ottoman Balkans in the 19th century (Palairet 1987). Seasonal labor migrants did not completely break with agriculture and returned home during the peak periods of the agricultural season in order to help their family work the land. To leave the village community altogether would have meant giving up any claim to a share of a father's property. Seasonal labor migration was especially typical of the mountainous areas of the Balkans, which first seem to have experienced land shortages in the 19th century. In many other regions of the Balkans, the population density remained low, and land was still quite abundant. In the first half of the 19th century, the average population density in the Balkans was 13.4 persons per square kilometer, while in countries such as Italy it was

[6] In parts of Greece and on some Greek islands, daughters did receive a dowry in form of real property (Kaser 2000: 136).

about three times as much (Todorova 1993: 126). Partibility was therefore possible because new viable farm units could be created out of divided property either by attaching previously uncultivated land or, where land was already scarce, by adding incomes from labor migration and proto-industrial textile production to the yields of farming.[7] A major result of the frequent division of landholdings was that small and medium-size farms dominated the Balkans (and Anatolia). According to one estimate, in the 1860s some two thirds of all farms in the vilayet of Edirne had less than 20 hectares of land. In the district of Šumen in the Danube-Vilayet, which was one of the most developed provinces of the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century, the average farm size was 4.76 hectares. The distribution of farms according to size was as follows:

Table 10.1: Distribution of farms by size in the District (*Kaza*) of Šumen, 1875-1878[8]

Farm Size (in Hectares)[9]	Number of Farms	In Percent	Total Acreage (in Hectares)	In Percent
0-1.8	304	17.5	219	2.6
1.8-2.7	154	8.9	355	4.3
2.7-4.6	439	25.3	1,612	19.5
4.6-9.2	695	40.0	4,418	53.4
9.2-13.8	128	7.4	1,391	16.8
13.8-18.4	18	1.0	285	3.4
18.4-27.6	4	0.2	88	1.1
55.1-64.3	1	0.1	64	1.4
Total	*1.738*		*8,280*	

[7] In many regions of the Balkans, proto-industrial textile production flourished in the 19th century, especially in mountains where land was scarce. This proto-industry often worked to meet the demand of the state, especially for the uniforms of its new army (see Todorov 1972: 230 passim).

[8] Source: Draganova 1980.

[9] This calculation took into account only farmland that was located within the village boundaries. Leased land in other villages, which did not make up a significant amount of total holdings anyway, was not considered.

Population growth combined with divisions of landholdings led to ever smaller average farms sizes in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was reckoned that, in 1907, 34 percent of all farms in the European part of the Ottoman Europe (Rumelia) were smaller than 0.9 hectare and a total of 81 percent smaller than 4.6 hectares (Quataert 1994: 864). The pattern of small, often minute peasant landholdings was one of the most salient Ottoman legacies in the Balkans, especially in Serbia and Bulgaria, and proved to be a major obstacle for the modernization of agriculture as well as for industrialization. Property division also occurred in towns where it led to very complicated and fragmented building patterns in the town quarters, or *mahallas* (Faroqhi 1995: 167).

Inheritance was closely linked with family forms and household structures because in the countryside the possession of land was usually the crucial precondition for the establishment of an independent household. But new families were established even without owning property, for in the Balkans marriage was not linked to the possession of a farmstead as in other parts of Europe. Early and universal marriage was the ruling ideal. As long as these new conjugal units did not have access to productive resources of their own, they could hardly establish an independent household. Alen Duben wrote that "mortality rather than nuptiality appears to have been the engine pulling the system" of household formation because a married son would have to wait for his father's death to divide the property and to establish his own household (1985: 82). However, married sons did not always wait until their father's death. As shown by recent research, in many regions of the Balkans multiple-family households were rather rare because households divided before the death of the household head. Married sons often left the parental household quite soon after their marriage or even upon it (see Todorova 1993; Kaser 1996a; Caftanzoglou 1997; Brunnbauer 2001; Gruber and Pichler 2002). Complex household structures did not predominate in all regions of Ottoman Anatolia either (Gerber 1989).

This fact leads to two conclusions: Firstly, postmortem division of property might have been the general ideological rule as regards the timing of inheritance (Duben 1985: 82; Kaser 2000: 134) but for many reasons the transfer of property from father to son(s) could happen during the father's lifetime. Moreover, postmortem inheritance did not imply that no devolution of property at all took place at marriage. If the married sons remained with their father until his death, it was rather unusual that they continued living together after his death. The internal dynamics of complex households, which were often exposed to tensions and conflicts, might have pushed toward earlier division with at least partial property devolution. A complex household organization was therefore, in most cases, only a short-term

solution in the household cycle, the length of which depended on the dynamics of the household, demographic realities, and the availability of land. For many people in the Ottoman Balkans, the joint household took up relatively short periods in their lives, while they lived most of their lives in nuclear or extended families. Quite a few never experienced household complexity at all. As I will show in the next section, the kind of household structure which was dominant in a particular region depended very much on the local context and the relevant social, economic, and ecological conditions. The inheritance pattern was generally one of equal male inheritance, but its timing and concrete realization allowed for a variety of household structures. Social groups that were not dependent on land for their survival could even practice neo-local residence.

Mountains and Families

In this section I will examine household structures and their relation to inheritance patterns in one specific and highly characteristic ecological milieu in the Balkans: the mountains. Concentrating on one kind of ecological system reduces the number of determining factors that must be analyzed in order to be able to explain certain social and cultural phenomena. My aim is to provide an explanatory framework for the differences in household formation and organization under very similar ecological conditions.

In historical writings on the family in the Balkans, the frequency of complex households has been explained in terms of the demands of mountain ecology. Karl Kaser, for example, related the existence of complex household formations in the mountainous western Balkans to the prevailing economic strategy of transhumant or (semi-)nomadic livestock breeding in this region. Large, multiple households would have provided a good solution to the problems of labor recruitment and labor organization of sheep and goat breeding. These households were part of a patriarchal culture and a society that was based on patrilinear groups (tribes and clans). Kaser explained those structures with reference to the security needs of the people in the mountains in the Balkans where the state could presumably not provide security (Kaser 1992, 1995). Maria Todorova (1993: 174), who, in general, argues against the prevalence of complex households in Southeastern Europe, nevertheless thinks that complex households were more frequent in the mountains. These arguments are grounded mainly in four basic assumptions as regards the economic and political context: Firstly, sheep breeding was the predominant subsistence strategy in the mountains of the Balkans, combined with some agriculture; secondly, households relied only on their own labor for their livestock-breeding operations; thirdly, the security situation in the mountains was very volatile because the (Ottoman) state could

not impose its monopoly on violence; and, finally, mountain societies in the Balkans were rather isolated.

However, recent research has complicated these notions. Mountain societies in the Balkans were not uniform, despite similar ecological conditions. They were integrated to differing degrees into wider social and economic networks, and these differences – including differences in the local impact of state institutions – led to differences in community organization. On the other hand, upland communities in the Balkans found some similar solutions to the common problems of their natural habitat, solutions that are comparable to mountain communities in other parts of the world (on commonalities in mountain communities, see Rhoades and Thompson 1975; Guillet 1983). The most important questions are to what extent mountain communities relied only on natural resources and could be regarded as closed communities, where ecology was the driving force behind social and cultural practices. A historical-comparative and anthropological approach allows one to discern what was determined by nature and what was determined by external forces.

During the 19th century – and, in some regions, even earlier – many people in the mountains of the Balkans were engaged in various trades and did not earn their living exclusively from subsistence farming. The concept of closed ecosystems therefore does not work for many a Balkan upland community. Market integration was facilitated by the *Tanzimat* reforms in the Ottoman Empire, which stimulated the economy and improved the security situation. One such important activity was seasonal labor migration (Palairet 1987). Albanians from the western Macedonian mountains or Christian Bulgarians from the Rhodope Mountains were, for example, well-known as masons throughout the Ottoman Balkans. Tailors and weavers from the Bulgarian mountains came to work in the towns of the Aegean coast and Asia Minor, and Bulgarian gardeners worked in the Habsburg Monarchy. Traders and mercenaries were other migrant groups originating from the mountains. In some mountain regions, such as in northern Greece and Bulgaria, household-based textile production systems emerged in the 19th century, mainly to meet the needs of the new Ottoman army (Todorov 1972: 230 passim; Palairet 1983; Brunnbauer 2000/2001: 330-3). These economic strategies originated from the perennial lack of land in mountains but also from the new market opportunities within the gradually changing Ottoman society and economy. On the other hand, large parts of the mountain population, especially in the more isolated areas, still earned their living primarily from the typical mountain economy of combined agriculture and livestock raising (similar to the Alpine *Alpwirtschaft*). Another strategy was to specialize in (semi-)nomadic or transhumant sheep breeding, which was

heavily dependent on the specific patterns of Ottoman demand as well as unimpeded travel between summer pastures in the mountains and winter pastures in the lowlands.

The forms of household organization in the Balkan mountains were equally variable. Household formation in the mountains was based in part on elements common to most Balkan societies, such as equal male inheritance, universal marriage, low ages at first marriage (especially for women), patriarchal authority, seniority, and lack of (life-cycle) servants. A decisive point for household formation was the timing of inheritance and the role of property for the establishment of new households. Among seasonal labor migrants, for example, land was not essential for the viability of a new household. In many other cases, part of the father's property was devolved upon marriage, or soon thereafter, making the fission of old and the establishment of new households possible. Among the (semi-)nomadic and transhumant livestock breeders of the western Balkans, on the other hand, property was often not divided even after the death of the household head. In these societies, the household owned all its property as a corporate group, and household fission did not occur in every generation (Kaser 2000: 175). Large, complex households were a likely outcome of this inheritance pattern, while nuclear families dominated in other parts of the Balkan mountains, most notably where property was more easily divided. These differences are illustrated in the following table:

Table 10.2: Household Typology of Mountain Communities in the Balkans, 19th and Early 20th Centuries

Place	Syrakko (i)	Konaj (ii)	Dikanca (iii)	Monte-negro (iv)	Široka läka (v)	Arda (vi)	Bansko (vii)
Region	*Pindus (Greece)*	*North Albania*			*Rhodopes (Bulgaria)*		Pirin (Bul-garia)
Year	1898	1918		c. 1860	1877	1913	1909
Confession	Orthodox	Catholic	Muslim	Orthodox	Orthodox	Muslim	Protestant
Household Type	*in percent*						
Unknown	1.0	4.8	6.5	20.6	0	4.4	0
Solitaries	3.2	0	0	0	0.9	0	1.5
No-family Households	0.9	0	0	1.9	0.2	0.6	4.4
Simple Family Households	54.7	21.4	69.6	2.8	80.8	53.2	57.4
Extended Family Households	20.6	23.8	10.9	66.3	11.0	31.9	16.2
Multiple Family Households	20.5	50.0	13.0	8.4	7.1	10.0	20.6

NOTES:

[i] Transhumant Vlach (Aromunian) shepherds. N = 344 households (Caftanzoglou 1994: 82).

[ii] Mainly transhumant agro-pastoralists. N = 42 households (Gruber and Pichler 2002: 355).

[iii] Mainly seasonal migrant workers. N = 46 households (ibid.).

[iv] Mainly transhumant agro-pastoralists. N = 107 households (Kaser 1996b: 53).

[v] Shepherds, itinerant craftsmen, traders, smallholders. N = 437 households (Brunnbauer 2001: 232).

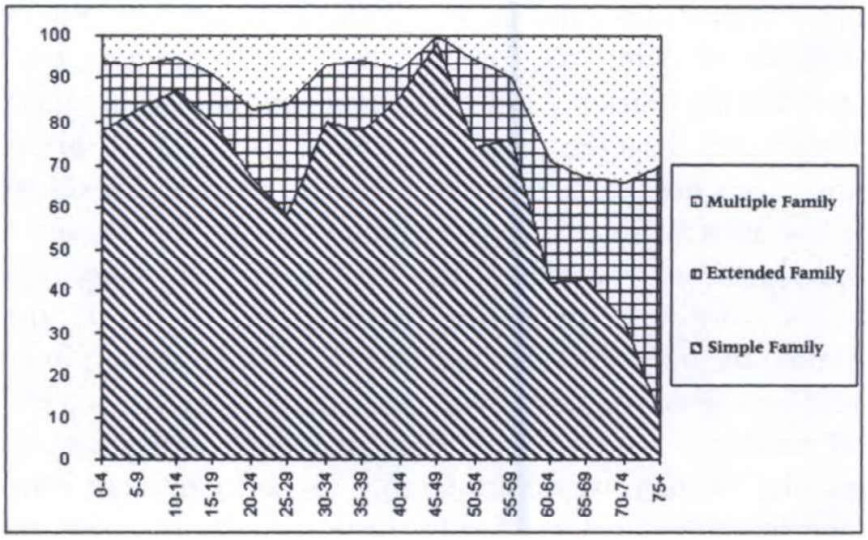
[vi] Smallholders, combining agriculture and transhumant shepherding. N = 160 households (ibid.).

[vii] Mainly traders and artisans. N = 68 households (Brunnbauer, forthcoming).

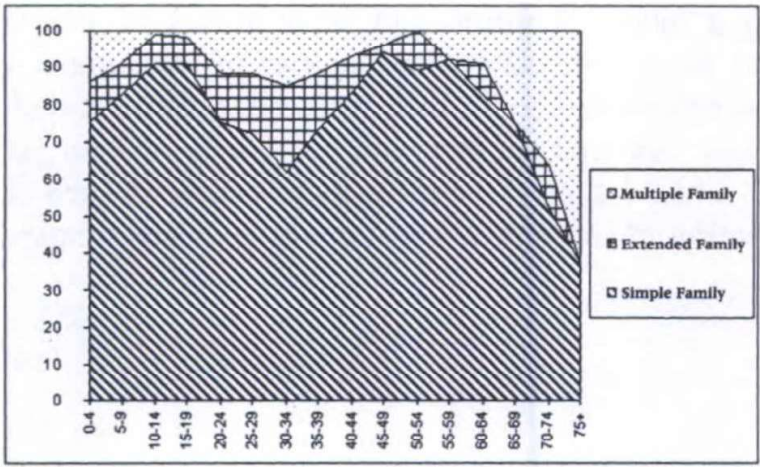
These typologies, of course, reflect only snapshots of a particular time. Many of the simple family households would develop into extended and joint ones; joint households in turn would become nuclear ones. High rates of simple households did often just mean that the nuclear phase was the longest in the developmental cycle of households. Household complexity was mainly a result of the prevailing post marital residence pattern, which in many mountain communities (and in the Ottoman Empire in general) was patrivirilocal (see Kaser 1995: 157; for Ottoman Turkish families, see Duben 1985: 84). A girl left the household of her parents and joined her husband in his parental household. Together, they continued to live with his parents, although in most cases not for their entire lives. Patrivirilocal residence was usually tied to low ages at first marriage, which was a typical feature outside Western Europe. In the second half of the 19th century in many regions in the Balkans, men married in their early twenties at the latest; girls well before they reached the age of 20 (Kaser 1995: 151-2). However, in communities where seasonal labor migration and other market activities were dominant, neo-local residence patterns were also practiced, and the age at first marriage, especially of men, was considerably higher. Christian men in the Rhodopes in the late 19th century, for instance, usually married when between 23 and 30 years old (Brunnbauer 2001: 238). Neo-local residence in communities of labor migrants was possible because the possession of arable land was of minor importance for the establishment of new households. Men had to instead learn a trade and construct their own house before they could marry. This was the reason their age at first marriage was rather high. In places where seasonal labor migration and other forms of non-farming occupations provided the livelihood of the majority of inhabitants, people only rarely formed complex households, mostly toward the end of their lives, when they remained as surviving parents with the family of their youngest son (see Chart 1). As Chart 1 shows, the majority of people in such communities, with the exception of the oldest age cohorts, lived in simple family households.

Chart 10.1: Life Cycles of Orthodox Women and Men by Household Constellation in Široka Lăka (Rhodope Mountains), 1877

Women (N = 962)



Men (N = 1,020)



x=age cohort,
y=per cent of population
Source: Brunnbauer 2002: 346.

Also in those mountain regions, where post marital residence was patrivirilocal, most married men became head of a household in their lifetime, although sometimes quite late. Multiple family households divided in their developmental cycle and rarely remained together over more than one generation. Married brothers who had stayed with their father usually separated right after his death.

The practice of property and household division was flexible and took local social, economic, and political conditions into consideration. High mortality rates, migration opportunities, and other nonagricultural economic activities counteracted population growth and potential land scarcity fueled by property division. In many mountain regions, population density remained low, and households could bring new land under cultivation after fission. Manpower requirements, which were relatively high in sheep breeding and in combined agriculture, did not necessarily result in the formation and maintenance of joint households either. In some regions, such as the Rhodopes, men from landless or land-poor families worked as hired shepherds. Another way to satisfy labor needs was to draw on reciprocal help within the community (Brunnbauer 2000). Brothers, who usually lived next door to one another, often continued to work formally divided land or flocks together or at least help each other. Cooperation of brothers and reciprocal relations in the village community and among neighbors, who were often kin, were facilitated by an inheritance system that stressed equality among the heirs and did not produce a class of landless, disinherited paupers (for the connection between inheritance and reciprocity, see Cole and Wolf 1995: 299). Only in the mountains of the central western Balkans did households have a tendency to not divide in each generation. There, households could develop into large agglomerations of various kinsmen, consisting of several families and numbering up to several dozen persons (Kaser 1995: 265).[10] This pattern was based on a practice of property transfer that can hardly be called inheritance, since property was not devolved from owner to surviving kin but remained instead in the corporate ownership of the household.

What are the reasons for these differences in household structures, despite the similarity of ecological pressures and some basic cultural assumptions as regards family life? Economic adaptation strategies do not provide a satisfying answer when we consider, for example, the different patterns of household organization among transhumant agro-pastoralists in the western and the eastern Balkan mountains. It seems that the level of integration in the state and the modes of the social networks through which households inter-

[10] This complex family form was often called "zadruga" because it was supposed to be typical of the Southern Slavs. It was not. Karl Kaser renamed it, for this reason among others, "Balkan family household" (Kaser 1995: 265).

acted were decisive. Joint households dominated in regions in which the state was weak and patrilineal kin groups were responsible for maintaining security.[11] It was the many dangers to life and well-being in the mountains of the central western Balkans (as well as central and eastern Anatolia) that forced people to rely on their patrilineal kinship ties in order to protect themselves. The tribe or the patrilineage organized relations among the households, which can be viewed as the co-residential smallest units of the larger patrilineal group, and between the households and the wider world. Households tended toward large and complex formations in order to be able to provide the necessary manpower to protect themselves and to pursue their agro-pastoralist economic activities. This form of social organization was based on the principle of (male) descent, which was enforced and reproduced by an ideology of absolute male dominance with its concomitant cultural values. Significantly, the area where the ancestor cult was spread in the Balkans almost overlaps with the area of distribution of the complex "Balkan family household" (Kaser 1995: 211 passim).

In contrast to the tribal areas with predominantly complex households, small nuclear or extended households with an average of four to six members prevailed in those mountain regions of the Balkans that were better integrated in the political structures of the Ottoman Empire and therefore faced fewer security problems. In these regions, the village community was the main social institution mediating between the households and the wider world. As in other mountain regions in the world, village communities were responsible for a wide range of important decisions concerning the well-being of their members (see Rhoades and Thompson 1975: 539-40; Viazzo 1989: 24). Their role was officially acknowledged by the Ottoman government, which, through the administrative reforms in the second half of the 19th century, recognized village communities as the smallest of its administrative units with certain rights and duties. Solidarity and reciprocal relations within the village community significantly lowered the risks of households becoming destitute in case of economic failure. Under the influence of village communities, patrilinear kinship ideology gave way to a greater stress on bilateral relations as well as territorial proximity. Households were integrated into a horizontal network of other households that would come to help in case of need. This network included households of the women's kin

[11] Paul Stirling made a similar observation in his study on Central Anatolian villages in the 1950s (Sterling 1965: 247-8). These villages were rather isolated, and the state could not assert security. That is why patrilinear kin groups and large complex households were responsible for the protection of the members of the household, the kin group, and of the property of the household. Haim Gerber, on the other hand, explained the rare occurrence of joint households and joint possessions in 17th-century Bursa by the high level of state-asserted security and the proximity to the capital of Istanbul (Gerber 1989: 418).

as well as non-related neighboring households and, in the end, the whole village community (Brunnbauer 2000). Village communities also exerted strong control over land: They owned communal land, access to which was of great importance for all households, and also exercised collective control over the use of the land cultivated by private households. The village community decided where crops should be planted and which lands should lie fallow. The notion of private property has therefore to be problematized because households could not freely decide on the use of their plots.

Roughly speaking, the model of strong village communities refers to the eastern Balkans (Bulgaria and Romania) and parts of Greece (Stahl 1986). An imaginary boundary running through western Bulgaria seems to separate those regions in which descent was the main principle of social organization from those in which territoriality provided the dominant means of social organization. One can also speculate whether stronger ecclesiastical organization in the eastern Balkans contributed to the strength of the territorial village community as opposed to the descent-oriented societies of the central western Balkans, where the penetration by the church was rather superficial. In any case, both Christianity and Islam are community-based religions (see Mitterauer 1996: 394). Beyond the village community, in areas with seasonal labor migration, professional organizations in the sense of guilds (*esnaf*) played a role in social integration. The guilds were corporate groups, which facilitated cooperation among their members, fixed their social status, and exercised control over their socialization (Brunnbauer 2000/2001: 341-2). Guilds acted as cult communities, too, worshiping a specific saint. Thus guilds fulfilled many functions for which, in the central western mountains of the Balkans, descent groups were responsible.

In summary, I argue that, in the mountains of the eastern Balkans, the prevalence of relative security and stability, strong authority of the village community, low population pressure, and the existence of auxiliary activities made household fission and property division manageable and economically possible. The ideology of patriarchy was less developed and territorial and professional principles of social organization prevailed in the place of descent. Village and occupational solidarity prevailed over the corporate behavior of the patrilinear kin group.

The End of Ottoman Rule

The consequences of the end of Ottoman rule for local social organization still constitute a neglected field in the study of Balkan history. The national historiographies of the Balkans have generally focused on the break with the "feudal" Ottoman past that "liberation" has brought about. A closer look, however, will reveal a complex process of continuities as well as changes

that affected the lives of the people of the formerly Ottoman territories in the Balkans. Due to the lack of pertinent studies, especially in the fields of everyday life and family patterns, I will develop my argument mainly by focusing on one case study, the Bulgarian Rhodope Mountains, of which the largest part remained under Ottoman control until 1912.[12] However, I believe that some of the developments in the Rhodopes are rather typical, not only of other mountain regions in the Balkans but of former Ottoman regions in general.

As regards property relations, the end of Ottoman rule brought an end to the prevalence of state-owned land. The successor countries transformed possession rights into full ownership, and the land of fleeing Muslim landowners was occupied by Christian peasants. Serbian peasants, for example, received full ownership rights without exemption payments in 1839 (Calic 1994: 48). Inheritance laws stipulated free divisibility in Serbia already by 1844 (Calic 1994, 49). In Bulgaria, the inheritance law passed in 1890 stipulated the equal division of property among all of a household's children, male and female alike. However, this regulation was widely neglected, and women continued to be disinherited. The government reacted by amending the law, in 1906, to give male heirs the right to inherit twice as much as their sisters (Todorova 1993: 129). But the law was still not observed in the countryside, and in the 1930s it was still common practice for women to relinquish their rightful shares "of their own free will." With the end of the Ottoman land regime, the role and authority of the village community also began to weaken. This resulted in the decline of communal land, which was transformed into private land. In Bulgaria, for instance, communal land was reduced from 920,000 hectares in 1897 to 327,474 in 1938, despite an increase in state territory. In Serbia, communal land was gradually put into private hands beginning in the second half of the 19th century (Calic 1994: 48). In mountain regions, the privatization of land, especially of forests, and the decline of communal control had devastating ecological consequences because old patterns of sustainable farming ceased to be practiced and many forests were converted into fields and pastures, which led to erosion (see McNeill 1992: 298-9). Despite these liberalizing tendencies with respect to landownership, community control over crop rotation continued and became a major obstacle in the rationalization of land use (Sundhaussen 1990: 158).

The end of Ottoman rule and the concomitant changes in agrarian relations and inheritance laws coincided with the demographic transition in the Balkans. As a result, the pressure on land increased tremendously and the

[12] In my dissertation (Brunnbauer, forthcoming), I studied household structures in their relation to the environment in the Rhodope Mountains in the 19th and 20th centuries.

size of landholdings further declined. Data from Bulgaria and Serbia indicate a pattern of small and medium-size peasant farms.

Table 10.3: Farm Size in Bulgaria, 1897-1934[13]

Size (in Hectares)	1897		1908		1926		1934	
	Abso-lute	In Percent	Abso-lute	In Percent	Abso-lute	In Percent	Abso-lute	In Percent
0-2	162,861	29.82	193,408	30.19	181,935	24.24	239,417	27.06
2-5	148,571	27.20	168,961	26.38	245,584	32.72	319,688	36.13
5-10	138,595	25.38	162,271	25.33	210,441	28.03	231,881	26.21
10-30	88,238	16.16	107,150	16.73	107,951	14.38	90,855	10.26
Over 30	7,819	1.43	8,712	1.36	4,702	0.62	3,028	0.34
Total	546,084	100	640,502	100	750,613	100	884,869	100

Table 10.4: Farm Size in Serbia, 1899[14]

Size (in Hectares)	Absolute	In Percent
0-2	79,862	32.65
2-5	97,720	39.95
5-10	49,679	20.31
10-50	17,182	7.02
Over 50	148	0.06
Total	244,591	100

[13] Source: Wolf 2001: 197.
[14] Source: Calic 1994: 79.

These holdings often consisted of small allotments spread over the whole territory of the village. Regulations in Bulgaria, which set the minimum size for fields at 0.3 hectare, were not observed, and plots continued to be divided into even smaller shares (Wilhelmy 1935: 244). Attempts by the Bulgarian government, in the inter-war period, to facilitate land consolidation were in vain. In mountain areas, where, as in other parts of the world (see Friedl 1973), fragmented landholdings were a typical feature of farming, fragmentation increased even more. Farms were not only small in size (in the central part of the Rhodopes, in the mid-1920s, around 3.5 hectares, including forests and pastures) but also divided into many plots, as illustrated by the following example from the Rhodope Mountains:

Holding of One of the Largest Landowners in the Village of Čokmanovo, 1918:

Total of 3.85 hectares of land, divided thus:

- Eight field plots of between 0.2 and 0.01 hectare; three plots of the first, three of the second, and one of the third quality
- Five plots of forest of between 1.2 and 0.2 hectares
- Five plots of meadow of between 0.3 and 0.05 hectare
- One plot of wasteland of 0.2 hectare

In the Muslim village of Žerka, in the Rhodopes, an average household in 1929 owned only 1.2 hectares of land divided into 11 plots. Farms such as these were hardly viable, and most peasant households did not produce enough cereals to satisfy even their own basic needs. Due to encroachments on communal land, the village community could not provide much alleviation either. In contrast to the 19th century, not only had population levels and pressure on the land increased, but due to the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the drawing of new state borders, the people of mountain regions such as the Rhodopes had also lost their traditional opportunities in non-farming occupations. Proto-industrial cloth production, seasonal labor migration, and large-scale sheep breeding, which had all depended on free access to the large Ottoman market, perished in these regions. Widespread misery in the early 20th century was only slightly alleviated by tobacco growing and logging (which led to further deforestation and ecological decline).

Evidence from villages in the central part of the Rhodope Mountains indicates the possibility that economic problems resulted in delayed household fission. Farm sizes declined to a point where further divisions would jeopardize the viability of farmsteads. The loss of auxiliary, non-farming job

opportunities made it difficult for the Christian population to continue neo-local post marital residence.

Table 10.5: Household Typology of a Mixed Christian and Muslim Town (Čepelare) in the Rhodopes, 1920s-'30s[15]

	Orthodox Bulgarians		Muslim Pomaks	
	1920	1934	1920	1934
Household Type	In Percent			
Solitaries	1.6	4.8	2.7	4.9
No-family Household	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Simple Family Household	82.0	61.3	48.6	39.0
Extended Family Household	13.1	20.9	21.6	24.4
Multiple Family Household	3.3	12.9	27.0	31.6
Average Household Size	4.71	4.81	4.42	5.17

The notion – so dear to the Bulgarian ethnographic mainstream, particularly under socialism – that families have developed from large and complex ones toward simple forms after "capitalist modes of production" had intruded into village life must therefore be modified. At least in this region, households apparently reacted to changed economic circumstances with an increase in their complexity and size, not the other way around.

Conclusion

The population of the European parts of the Ottoman Empire shared a set of common notions about inheritance and family, such as equal male inheritance and universal marriage. But even under similar ecological conditions, inheritance practices and household structures differed, due to the different forms of political and economic integration of local communities into the Ottoman Empire. The cultural notions underlying inheritance and household practices did not form a rigid matrix determining family forms. They were,

[15] *Source*: Brunnbauer, forthcoming.

instead, mental frameworks within which people had considerable discretion in the development of their strategies. They adapted not only to the environment but also to the different regional constraints, forces, and opportunities offered by the state and the market. These cultural notions did not change immediately after the end of Ottoman rule.

As regards inheritance and property, changes in the realm of legislation of the new national states in the Balkans often just formalized traditional practices. The peasants' titles to land were strengthened while, at the same time, land became increasingly scarce, due to the combined effects of rapid population growth and the divisibility of inheritance. The effects of divisibility were no longer checked by traditional regulations, like the institution of the commons. Since industrial job opportunities hardly arose and no significant tendency toward urbanization occurred before the communist takeover, the situation of the rural population in the formerly Ottoman lands became increasingly difficult. Equally divisible inheritance provided, on the one hand, all adult males with – increasingly small – farmsteads, while, on the other hand, it impeded a population shift from rural to urban, and thus modernization and industrialization: People were reluctant to leave the village as long as they possessed land of their own, however little. With no industrial jobs available, rural overpopulation became one of the most significant features of Balkan societies in the inter-war period, resulting in emigration but not intensification of agriculture and industrialization (see Sundhaussen 1990).

Acknowledgement

This paper is the result of research funded by the Austrian Science Fund FWF (project grants 12394 and 14833).

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Chapter 11

Inheritance and Social Change in the Decades of Emancipation in the Late Habsburg Empire: Some General Trends

Hannes Grandits

Introduction: Changing Property Rights

The reforms in the Habsburg Empire that followed the 1848 revolutionary uprisings triggered an accelerated transformation of peasant societies. A modern concept of state administration was to replace the feudal order, which contemporaries had long considered outdated. In 1848, serfdom was abolished, and in the following decades a new administrative, taxation, and legal system was introduced step by step. Questions of property rights were central to this comprehensive reform project.

Through the process of the so-called *Grundentlastung*, the rural population was to receive the full ownership rights to the land that they worked. In the feudal order, this land was bound with obligations (of cash, labor tribute, or payment in kind) to aristocratic and ecclesiastical corporate landlords who sometimes held centuries-old ownership rights on it. The *Grundentlastung* can thus be seen as emancipation and a privatization process – emancipation from the strong influence of the feudal landlord on the family economy and a privatization in the sense of handing over of full property rights of the former "rustical" land – i.e. the peasant holding worked directly by the family and, in principle, inherited from generation to generation – to the peasant families.

But to obtain these full property rights, the former serfs had to compensate the former feudal lords financially for renouncing their traditional rights on the land and, of course, for the consequent loss of income. Regional state commissions were formed to calculate these sums, which varied greatly between the households, depending on the size of their landholdings and the particular obligations associated with each landholding. Since this

compensation was to be paid in cash, the families had to intensify their orientation to the market in order to earn the money required.

The time frames and modes of payment varied throughout the different crown-lands. Most often a period of 20 years was determined, in which the peasant households had to compensate their former landlords. The compensation process began in the 1850s, and the introduction of the new taxation, administration, judicial, and, in particular, economic order turned out to be of important influence on the everyday life of the rural families for much longer than 20 years. The great majority of the population of the Habsburg Empire was affected, since throughout the empire, agriculture was by far the most important source of livelihood. In 1869-1870, 67 percent of the economically active population of the Austrian part of the double monarchy was still working in agriculture, and the corresponding figure in the Hungarian part reached 80 percent (Matis and Bachinger 1973: 146; Berend and Ránky 1973: 515).

With the beginning of the reforms, the people were forced to adapt to the newly introduced post-feudal order and the capitalist principles on which it was structured. Especially in the decades of the Great Depression, which caused a Europe-wide agrarian crisis between 1873 and the middle of the 1890s, the adaptation to the new circumstances occurred in an atmosphere of crisis, dislocation, and rapid social change in many parts of the empire, since traditional household economic-survival strategies often ceased to function.

But the situation varied regionally and socially and resulted in dissimilar trends of change – sometimes with radical changes in the traditions of household formation, sometimes conserving its basic principles. In this chapter, the disparate trends of change set off by the processes of defeudalization will be explained by a way of regional comparison.

Three background points have special importance for this explanation and will be dealt with in the following order: Firstly, some aspects of feudal organization (the prevalence of cash or labor tribute) before 1848 and their consequences will be discussed; secondly, in the main part of this paper a closer look will be taken at the different inheritance rules prevailing in the disparate regions of the Habsburg Empire (the impact of the inheritance norms on the course and outcome of changes set off by the emancipation process in the second half of the 19th century had a particular importance and will be analyzed with the help of local examples); thirdly, some changes in family organization closely bound to the beginning of industrialization of the Habsburg Empire will be addressed in the final part of this paper.

The End of Feudal Cash and Labor Tributes

One of the existing structural differences that strongly influenced the paths of socioeconomic change in the Habsburg territories was the contrast of two fundamental rural economic modes, which had developed historically in the preceding centuries (Rebel 1999: 190-225). In the western part of the empire, in the Alpine and especially in the German-speaking regions of present-day Austria but also in the non-German Alpine fringes and immediately north of it, peasant economies were by far the prevailing model of socioeconomic organization. Here feudal obligation was principally based on cash tributes. In many parts of this region – Tyrol, Salzburg, Upper Austria, or Carinthia, for instance – labor tribute either no longer existed or was very limited (Mitterauer 1986; Mitterauer 1992; Viazzo 1989; Ortmayer 1995).

On the other hand, in many regions under the Hungarian crown but also in parts of Bohemia, Galicia, Bukowina, and also in parts of Lower Austria, the peasant economies co-existed with or were even dominated by large estate enterprises (Hanák 1984; Andorka 1978; Purš 1963). In these regions, where such "landlord economies" were strong (and were working wide areas of the so-called dominical lands, i.e., the land directly controlled by the landlord), labor tribute, the so-called *robot* (for the use of rustical land, the land of the peasant holding), was the prevailing form of feudal obligation for the rural households. In many regions in Galicia, for example, every village household was obliged to send a work force, sometimes for several days a week, to the estate of the feudal lord. This was similarly the case in many of the other areas with strong landlord economies. Although *robot* was fundamental to these landlord economies, they also needed the labor of permanent servants and that of day laborers, to a varying degree.

With the transformations after 1848, the changes in land-tenure relations took different paths in these two contexts. In the peasant economy of the Alpine west, land-tenure relations did not change much. Seen from the perspective of the rural households, the abolition of the old order meant for the peasant economies that the previously often high cash tribute to the landlord was increased for a certain period to pay the compensation. That brought a large proportion of the peasant households into severe financial difficulties, and not a few to ruin, but it did not cause a fundamental reorganization of the system of peasant farming as a whole.

In the areas of strong landlord economies, the abolition of feudal obligations, i.e. the labor tribute, had a much greater effect on the everyday economic organization of the rural households. The obligation of working the land of the landlord was replaced by an obligation to produce enough for the market to cover the compensation that needed to be paid. Most often the peasants and smallholders were not used to being involved in the market,

since it was primarily labor that they had to that date been obliged to deliver. Many could not earn this money with income from their farming alone. Masses of people were required to work additionally or exclusively as day laborers to pay their compensation debts or even to survive. Many did this on the estates of the former landlords. Many also migrated seasonally to earn the money that needed to be paid. Some landlords often invested the money from the *Grundentlastung* into a radical and capitalist-oriented modernization of production. The estate owners often managed to increase their estate size in the course of the "separation" of rustical and dominical land, when peasant households were not able to pay for "their" land. In general, the reorganization of the feudal order was accompanied in the regions of estate economy by far-reaching economic and social reorientation of the village households.

Inheritance Traditions and Patterns of Change

Inheritance and Household Formation

The course of the transformation process was also connected to the varying local traditions of inheritance. To start with, regions with impartible inheritance can be distinguished from those where norms of partible inheritance were dominant.

If we walked through the empire in the middle of the 19th century, we would have encountered the following state of affairs: Starting from the south, we would have found a strong tendency toward partible and equal male inheritance in the rural areas of Dalmatia, Slavonia, and Croatia (as well as Bosnia-Herzegovina, which from 1878 on was attached to the empire) (Erlich 1964; Kaser 1996: 375-386). This changes when moving to the north, crossing to the Slovenian lands (at that time mainly part of the provinces of Carniola, Carinthia, and Styria) (Portis-Winner 1977). Here the norm of a single (male) heir taking over the peasant farm and its land prevailed. Impartible inheritance dominated in almost all of the Austrian Alpine provinces as well (with the exception of western Tyrol, parts of South Tyrol, and Vorarlberg, on the western fringe, where partible inheritance for male and female descendants was the guiding norm) (Mitterauer 1986). We also find the norm of impartible inheritance dominating in most of Bohemia and Moravia (Horský and Maur 1993). When moving from the Bohemian lands into the Slovak territories, at that time the Hungarian north, the boundary between inheritance norms would have been passed a second time (Švecova 1991; Horská 1994). Here, equal male inheritance, quite similar to the Slavic South, was again the guiding principle. The majority of the rest of the Hungarian territory was also, despite a few inconsistent enclaves, in principal a

region of mainly male partible inheritance (Andorka and Faragó 1983; Faragó 1986). And partible male inheritance was a particularly strong principle in Galicia and Bukowina. Simply said, we have the tendency that impartible-inheritance norms dominate in the west and northwest while inheritance practices favoring male partible inheritance dominate in the south and east of the empire. This corresponds in general terms – if we leave aside here a number of exceptions and if we also add Galicia and Bukowina to the Hungarian side – with the borders between the Austrian and Hungarian part of the double monarchy.

The historical roots for the formation of such dissimilar regional inheritance regimes reach back into medieval times. The development and later the expansion of a feudal order strongly based on the *Hufenverfassung* (the feudal and social order founded on the *Hufe* – the *mansus* or hide) as the principle displacing the tradition of patrilineal descent, is a very convincing explanation (Mitterauer 1999; see also Mitterauer's chapter in this volume). The research on the persistence and transformation of earlier forms of patrilineal kinship organization in many southeastern and eastern parts of the Habsburg lands has contributed much to the understanding of the different inheritance traditions in the regions under consideration (Kaser 2000; see also Kaser's chapter in this book).

How did this structural dissimilarity in inheritance norms affect the developments in the transformational period after 1848? It is not possible to answer this question with a strictly bipolar model; partly because impartible inheritance was legally abolished in 1868 in most of the Austrian crown lands, as was the strong discrimination against female inheritance rights in the regions of partible male inheritance – but of course not only there – by the successive introduction of the Austrian civil code of law, the *Allgemeine Bürgerliche Gesetzbuch* (ABGB), throughout the empire. (Nevertheless, both norms would live on as decisive cultural ideals, at least for the last decades of the 19th century, if not longer.) In addition, it is clear that norms and practices did not mean the same thing and that family strategies of passing property from one generation to the next often could result in a variety of solutions despite the predominance of a specific ideal norm (Cole and Wolf 1974). Seen on the whole, it remains, however, possible to explain some trends where one or the other inheritance norm prevailed.

I.a.) In regions of impartible inheritance in the Habsburg Empire, we find different poles of development. One trend is the continuation of the practice of keeping the transmission of immovable property very much oriented on a single heir. The attempt to avoid the division of the family farm was closely connected with a policy of limiting the number of family farms. Examples from the inner-Alpine regions can help illustrate this. In

Innichen/South Tyrol, described in detail in the chapter by Lanzinger in this volume, the rule of primogeniture and the transmission of property as a whole had the result that the number of houses in the community did not change throughout much of the 19th century. The norm that one heir should take over remained a community ideal and – as an exception in the legal provisions – a part of the legal system until World War I (see also Lanzinger 2003).

These tendencies to preserve impartibility were particularly strong in many other inner-Alpine parts of the Austrian provinces as well. Here, they often resulted in an enormous percentage of landless people who did not inherit a house and farmland and worked as servants in the households of other family farms. In the Carinthian and Styrian counties of St. Veit, Murau, and Judenburg, for instance, almost half of the rural population lived as servants. Even in 1902, the percentage of servants in these counties made up, respectively, 49, 46, and 45 percent of the farming population. In many other surrounding counties, the proportion of people belonging to the class of farm servants was not very much below this level (Österr. Statistik 1902). Since the farm was usually taken over relatively late in life and since it was not common in these regions for servants to marry, we find that throughout the 19th century and even into the beginning of the 20th century, a marriage pattern, in which marriage was late for males as well as for females, prevailed. A high percentage of the overall population never married at all (Mitterauer 1986). In the Carinthian and Styrian counties mentioned above, this "Alpine marriage pattern" had the effect that more than 80 percent of the males were not married when they were 30, and even when they were 50, between 30 and 40 percent of them were bachelors (Ehmer 1991; Ortmayer 1995).

I.b.) But we can find different trends in other regions of impartible inheritance. Here, the rules of impartibility lost their earlier potency – if these rules were ever followed that adamantly at all. In most of the regions of the Habsburg Empire where impartible inheritance dominated, a varying part of the rural population belonged to the group of cottagers or smallholders (*Keuschler*, *Häusler*, *chalupci*, etc.). Different to the *Bauern*, the village peasants, they previously had only limited rights to the village commons and/or had only very small plots of land. Usually their cottages were built more at the periphery of the village. This class of smallholders developed primarily because the rules of impartibility of land were not followed very strictly. With the new legal inheritance regulations of 1868, which promoted the right of inheritance for all children, the principle of impartibility was further undermined, and as a result the number of smallholders steadily increased. In eastern Styria, for instance, the ratio of cottagers to peasants

varied from village to village but rose progressively in the course of the second half of the 19th century. In 1896, in the eastern Styrian county of Feldbach, 60 percent of the village households already belonged to the group of cottagers, and peasant households only represented 40 percent of the total (Kaser 1988: 54).

I.c.) Another aspect of change can best be illustrated by looking at some regions in Bohemia that showed the same combination of impartible inheritance of peasant farms and a rising number of cottagers. Impartible-inheritance rules had traditionally resulted in a relatively high marriage age in the Bohemian territories, with both women and men often not marrying before their late twenties. However, an important difference between Bohemia and the Alpine regions was that in many parts of Bohemia, house and landownership had not been a stringent precondition for marriage, even before the transformations of the second half of the 19th century – and as a result, the tradition in Bohemia had been that almost everyone eventually got married, i.e. the rates of non-marriage frequently remained far below 10 percent (Ehmer 1991). This was connected with the important role played by proto-industrial production in several Bohemian regions and probably also with a historically strong system of retirement contracts, in which parents handed over the farmstead to a marrying child and often even worked as an autonomous part within the peasant household (Stefanová and Zeitelhofer 1999).

With the transformations of the second half of the 19th century, the association of marriage with the possession of land lost even more of its earlier importance in predominantly agricultural settings. Married servants/lodgers, often called *deputátníci*, who worked and lived for a period of time in peasant households (as they did on large estates) increasingly became an even more important group in the villages than they were before. Nevertheless, impartible-inheritance practices continued to be of significance in everyday life, reproducing different categories – peasants, cottagers, and lodger households (Horský and Maur 1993). Such a trend can also be found, although less accentuated, in some other regions in the Habsburg Empire where impartible inheritance predominated.

II.) Let us turn now to trends of change in regions in which partible inheritance was traditionally dominant. In most of the southern and eastern parts of the Habsburg Empire, this went together with a strong tendency to favour of male heirs. Though the family formation patterns in the various parts of this zone differed during the period covered by this chapter, there were also some general features that distinguished them from the patterns of family formation in the impartible-inheritance zone. Universal marriage was common in almost all the partible-inheritance areas, sometimes combined

with very low ages at marriage for females and even males, as, for instance, in many parts of Croatia, where most of the women and a large part of the men were married in their early twenties. Marriage was not closely linked to the ownership of enough land or a homestead, and the young couples of more prosperous families could at least initially stay in the house of the groom's father; or household division was carried out on the occasion of the marriage.

II.a.) An important trend in some areas was the division of large multi-nucleus households into smaller units. The most spectacular example of this was found in many parts of Croatia-Slavonia, where in pre-emancipation times practices had led to the frequent occurrence of very large households, which have become known under the term *zadruga*. In the traditional regime of intergenerational relations, all male family members were entitled to get an equal share of the property, and men typically remained in their parental home after marriage. Household divisions were carried out at different stages in the development of the family – in many regions rarely before the death of the father (Stojsavljević 1973).

In addition, up until the second half of the 19th century in many villages of feudal Croatia-Slavonia, household divisions had also been bound to the permission of the feudal authorities. Troublesome procedures and often high costs of legal registration of household divisions functioned in such a way that household divisions were often not carried out in every generation. (Feudal lords were often interested in maintaining an unchanged system of labor tribute, and they thus often tried to keep families rather large, arguing that too many household divisions would lead to increasing land fragmentation and poverty.) As a consequence, in many regions some of the households in the villages could become quite complex and sometimes consisted of 15, 20, or even more household members. A similar constellation existed in the Croatian-Slavonian military border, where military laws made household divisions a difficult procedure – securing a system of larger families, which better supported the system of peasant soldiers that existed on the borders between the Habsburg and Ottoman empires for centuries (Grandits 2002).

The transformations after 1848 began to put the existing structure seriously into question. Although they were blocked in the 1850s for two decades by specific laws that protected the so-called *zadrugas*, the reformed property laws definitely favored individual and not collective family farming. Beginning shortly after 1848 and in particular during the agrarian crisis of 1873-1895, a massive movement of household divisions took place throughout the villages of Croatia-Slavonia or Dalmatia, often doubling or

tripling the number of village households within a few years (Pavličević 1989; cf. also Halpern and Anderson 1970).

For example, there were 68 households in the village of Lekenik in the Turopolje region, south of Zagreb, in 1857. Within the next decades, this number rose to 119 in 1880, and 173 in 1890. This development was quite similar in the village of Bobovac, which, until the dissolution of the military border, belonged to the Banija district. Here, the number of households in 1857 numbered 53. By 1880, the number of households rose to 135, and, in 1890, to 167. In both villages the average household size fell from more than ten, in 1857, to about five, in 1890 (Grandits and Gruber 1996).

A similar change of family formation strategies took place in large parts of Galicia and the Slovak regions. As in Croatia, partible male inheritance was crucial to household formation, and sons usually remained in the household of their father after marriage – though households were usually divided before they reached the size of the largest complex households in Croatia. Here, too, emancipation was the prelude to a phase of rapid reduction of household size. For instance, in 1869 in the village of Brzeziny, in the Galician Ropczyce county, southeast of Cracow, 505 married couples were counted in the 354 households of the village. Since only in few exceptional cases the couples that lived together were not closely related kin, this figure indicates that a high percentage of households consisted of more than one married couple and their children. By 1900, this had changed in such a way that 580 married couples lived in 525 households (Hupka 1910: 155). The number of houses had increased but the number of married couples living jointly in the same household had fallen dramatically.

II.b.) Another aspect of the transformations in many regions of partible inheritance was a socially differentiated pattern of change of family formation structures. This can be observed in many parts of Hungary – but not only there. In rather well-to-do families, the tendency was strong to form three-generation households – one, only rarely two, of the male heirs remained after marriage in the parental household. But in those families where land tenure was limited, neo-local marriage patterns and single-family structures were extremely dominant, since the smallholder households most often were far from capable of supporting a larger number of family members (Andorka and Faragó 1983: 281-307).

In the well-studied village of Átány, in the county of Heves, in the northern part of the Great Plain, for instance, this led to an increasing social separation of the richer peasants (Fél and Hofer 1969). Household divisions were the main reason why a large proportion of the village households were living on rather small plots of land or why they belonged to the land-poor group of cottagers, or *zsellers,* as the latter category was called. Since equal

inheritance of all sons was still the leading norm in the village, different strategies were applied among the better-off peasant households to avoid the division of the property in every generation, so as not to risk losing its social status or its economic position. The co-residence of the parental generation with one married son has already been mentioned as a crucial strategy. Another one was to support the other sons, if there were any, in finding a job or good position outside of agriculture. They were supported and encouraged to aspire to careers in the administration, the church, or the military, or they were helped in establishing another business.

A comparable social situation existed in the village of Vágkirályfa, in the Danube lowlands, in southwestern Slovakia, which belonged at that time to the northern Hungarian Poszony county and is described in more detail in the chapter by Torsello in this book. Here, as in many other parts of Hungary – as well as throughout most of the regions of the empire – around the turn of the 20th century, female inheritance of land ceased to be merely a written principle of the new legal regulations and started to become an established practice in everyday life. In the richer village families, daughters received land as part of their inheritance upon marriage or upon the death of their father even some decades earlier. But it was an imbalanced inheritance that was practiced – imbalanced in the sense that females got only a small share of the land and sons the large majority and also in the sense that among the larger peasant families a strong tendency emerged to favor the son that remained in the household. Thus the marriage strategies began to be oriented more and more toward the expected land that the bride or the groom would inherit. Still, the inclusion of females in the inheritance of land began in general to further the process of land fragmentation, especially when population growth began to increase.

These last examples shed light on the social differences and the different logics that were bound to them concerning family contexts and strategies. They also relativize a little bit the notion of the importance of potentially culturally homogenous regions.

Demographic Change and Increasing Scarcity of Land

One of the most important consequences that followed upon the emancipation process was a phase of massive demographic growth, which became a determinant factor of everyday life throughout the Habsburg Empire. Within the general expansion, there were regional differences, which appear to reflect the differences in inheritance patterns and family formation practices discussed above. The following table about the natural population increase in the different parts of the Habsburg Empire between 1871 and 1914, illustrates this very well (see Katus 1982: 64).

By far, the lowest rates of population increase can be found in the Alpine lands – the figures in the table cover both the regions where impartible-inheritance regulations remained in full effect and those where legal changes led to an increase in the cottager population.

Table 11.1: Natural Population Increase (Annual Fertility and Mortality Rates Combined) in the Habsburg Empire between 1871 and 1914
[Rates are given per 1,000 population]

	Alpine Provinces*	Sudeten Provinces*	Karst Provinces*	Hungary*	Croatia-Slavonia*	Carpathian Provinces*
1871-1875	3.8	10.5	6.1	- 2.4	-4.8	5.0
1876-1880	5.5	9.2	7.0	7.5	9.0	10.2
1881-1885	4.8	8.6	10.3	11.2	13.0	9.9
1886-1890	5.5	8.1	9.2	11.3	13.7	13.2
1891-1895	6.2	9.2	9.9	10.0	8.7	13.1
1896-1900	8.0	11.0	10.5	11.6	11.2	16.2
1901-1905	8.4	10.2	10.4	10.8	12.2	15.6
1906-1910	7.6	10.2	13.9	11.4	13.4	15.4
1911-1914	6.3	8.0	13.2	11.3	11.1	14.1

* Alpine provinces: Lower– and Upper-Austria, Salzburg, Styria, Carinthia, Tyrol, Vorarlberg; * Sudeten provinces: Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia; * Karst provinces: Carniola, Küstenland, Dalmatia; * Hungary: all comitates of the Hungarian crown except those in Croatia-Slavonia; * Croatia-Slavonia: here separately listed from Hungary; * Carpathian provinces: Galicia, Bukowina.

The rates of population increase were higher in the "Sudeten provinces" (Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia), where, as we have seen, impartible inheritance tended to be combined with a higher marriage rate than in the Alps, since the ownership of a house and landed property was not a strict condition of marriage. Bohemia, parts of Moravia, and Silesia also emerged as the

most industrialized parts of the Habsburg Empire in the second half of the 19th century, and the rising opportunities for finding employment outside the agricultural sector further weakened the traditional linkage of inheritance and marriage.

The figures for the "Karst provinces" cannot easily be related to inheritance and household formation since the region included both the impartible-inheritance zone of Carniola and the partible-inheritance zone of Dalmatia. However, the remaining areas of partible inheritance show a much clearer pattern. Beginning in the late 1870s, after major epidemics had hit many parts of Hungary and Croatia-Slavonia, all regions of partible male inheritance experienced several decades of enormous population growth. In Galicia and Bukowina (the "Carpathian provinces"), it reached annual growth rates of even 16 per thousand and resulted, for example, in the population of Galicia almost doubling from 4.5 to 8 million inhabitants between the mid-19th century and 1910 (Buszko 1978). In Hungary and in Croatia-Slavonia, the rates of increase were not far from these.

Partibility furthered land fragmentation in more and more regional contexts. And among the families of the poorest households, with land plots of hardly more than half a hectare, the question of land played a diminishing role in the marriage decision. It even seems that fertility rates were higher among land-poor wage laborers than among better-off peasants (Magyar Statisztikai 1916). By the end of the 19th century, the landless or land-poor rural proletariat, who were obliged to work as day or seasonal laborers, was estimated at one third of the total population of the Hungarian part of the empire (Andorka 1978: 19). The situation seems to have been particularly severe in Galicia, where in the 1890s a local agricultural reformer described his home region of Podolonia in the following terms (Surzycki 1896: 262):

> In every village you maybe have a few prosperous peasants, and they sometimes can even own up to 25 hectares [of land]; then you maybe have some medium sized peasants with 5 to 10 hectares, but because of the partition of the patrimonial also this land gets increasingly fragmented. All other households own a half, or a hectare or a hectare and a half. ... sometimes you can find a small peasant farm with 3 hectares land, but which is divided into almost 30 plots of land....

The situation during the agrarian crisis that hit the Habsburg Empire from 1873 to the mid-1890s was particularly critical. While the peasants with potentially viable holdings tried to survive with a combination of different strategies, of which some were discussed earlier, the response of the land-

poor and those peasant families with a larger number of potential heirs was often internal migration and massive overseas emigration.

One regional example from the Great Hungarian Plain can help us to illustrate an internal moment of this emigration movement. Here, a large part of the population initially lived in a series of agrarian towns or very large villages, which were quite characteristic for the regions of the Great Plain east of the Danube and the Tisza. A large part of the wide and rather infertile lands of the so-called *puszta* remained uninhabited. Now a migration movement into this wide and sparsely populated region began; people settled on solitary farms, the so-called *tanyas*. The number of these *tanyas* increased massively in the Hungarian Plain from 50,000, in 1850, to 700,000, in 1910. In some of the counties of the Great Plain, almost a fourth of the total population finally lived dispersed on such solitary farms (Balogh 1965: 429-479; Hanák 1984; Hollos 1989; cf. also Hann 1980;).

These decades of the 19th century also saw the real start of mass overseas emigration from Austria-Hungary. Year by year, tens or perhaps hundreds of thousands of people left their homeland for America. Galicia, Western Hungary, Croatia, and Dalmatia, which were all struck by land fragmentation, were particular regions of mass emigration when family relations and support began to stretch across the Atlantic Ocean.

Although the population growth in the Alpine provinces was less dramatic, population growth nevertheless led to the development of a growing proportion of completely landless men and women in the communities – and, as we have seen above, the already existing broad class of landless servants and (farm) laborers rose massively. The constraints of such a life in some Alpine regions are illustrated very well in the recollection of Johann D., born in the Alpine Pongau region of Salzburg in 1887. He spoke about the life of his mother, grandmother, and father at the time of his birth (Weber 1985: 197).

> My mother was a Sennerin [dairymaid] on the Ennsalm, for years already. She rose from a Kleindirn to a Moardirn [lower servant positions] to become a Sennerin. That involved a lot of work, efforts and cost her much of endurance. But she was young and restless in her wish to own once something of her own. She put one Kreuzer on the other...
>
> As all other days in the life of my mother, also that special one began very early. In the first light of the day she went for the cows on the pastures. The walk was already hard to take, because the child in her body was soon to be born. It would not take long, until it comes, she thought. Until the driving down of the cattle from the mountain

> pastures she could keep it with her, than she would have to bring it to her mother. There the small sweetheart would have it good. Her mother lived in a cottage belonging to a peasant farm. During summer she worked as a day-labourer and she spun and knitted during winter. In this way she could earn a living and was appreciated by all peasants because of her industry.
> Franzl, the father of the child [the father of Johann D.], was also an able person. Of course he was a leaving [non-inheriting] farmer's son, and a share of inheritance could not be expected. In addition he had eleven siblings. But he was hardworking and also saved up Kreuzer by Kreuzer to buy his own small farmstead one day and to marry.

Since neither parent of Johann D. belonged to those who "inherited," they could not marry before they had a small farmstead "of their own." They finally achieved their goal, although very late in their lives. Johann's father was more than 50 and his mother beyond 40 years of age when they married. Such biographies were not uncommon for landless people – and many never managed to have their own land.

Industrialization and Different Effects

One possible way out of rural poverty was industrial work. Industrialization really began to shape the everyday life of a massively growing number of people in Austria-Hungary during the second half of the 19th century. It reduced the percentage of the population living from agriculture in the Austrian part of the Habsburg Empire from 67 percent in 1869-70, to 53 percent in 1910, and from 80 to 66 percent in the Hungarian part in the same time period (Matis and Bachinger 1973: 105-232; Berend and Ránki 1973: 462-527).

Some segments of the rural population had of course not, or only partly, been dependent on agriculture even before the industrial expansion in the second half of the 19th century; the size of these segments varied greatly between the regions. Northeastern Bohemia, northern Moravia, Silesia, southern Bohemia, parts of Upper Austria, and Vorarlberg were well-known centers of proto-industrialization, with an intensive focus on textile production already in the 18th century or even before. Here, up to a half or even more of the people were living in part or primarily from nonagricultural occupations (Cerman 1994; Myška 1994; Fitz 1985). Some inner Alpine areas as well as regions in northern Hungary had a long mining tradition. As historical family research shows, the logics and needs of labor organization in proto-industrialized contexts or among craftsmen and tradesmen families

influenced the inheritance strategies and forms of family organization to a high degree. Intergenerational cooperation and transmission of property could vary from the principles prevalent in the local community, but this was not systematically the case (compare here Ehmer 1984).

Within the Habsburg Empire, regions with a proto-industrial tradition experienced early industrialization, but the rising development of industrial centers was not limited to these regions. The following three examples illustrate different ways in which industrial development influenced rural family patterns.

The first example is a village in the Prague region that experienced a wave of intensive industrialization in the second half of the 19th century (Hrušková 1993: 201-208). In the village of Přezletice, in 1850, 92 percent of the household heads were earning their living from agriculture. By 1900, this number fell to less than 40 percent. Most of these men found jobs, combining seasonal occupation in the construction industry with work in a nearby sugar refinery. Nevertheless, agriculture still remained a dominant source of income for family economies but became mainly a task for women, children, and the elderly, who had to work the land and were only occasionally assisted by their husbands, fathers, or sons. Because of the new opportunities, the previously important principle of impartible inheritance lost much of its significance, resulting in a lower marriage age for both sexes.

In the second example, in the Waldviertel region, in Lower Austria, processes of industrialization affected family life in a different way. Here the proto-industrial sector had been an important employer for a large percentage of the regional population throughout the 19th century and even earlier (between 20 and almost 40 percent of the households in the counties of the Waldviertel lived primarily from the proto-industrial sector in the mid-19th century) (Komlosy 1988). The particular form of industry was spinning and weaving organized through a system of putting-out and homework. The marriage age was quite low, and among the home workers only few remained unmarried, which was quite a contrast to many other neighboring Alpine regions. The relatively positive income opportunities made this possible (Zeitelhofer 1995: 131-9). However after the 1850s, following a dramatic fall in global textile prices, more and more production was transferred to newly built mechanized factories. Much of the production was also moved away from the region. The consequences were disastrous for many of those families who had lost their only source of income. The young people, especially, began to emigrate massively. They moved to the growing metropolis of Vienna, in particular, and the Waldviertel became one of the regions with the strongest regional emigration in Austria-Hungary (Parnre-

iter 1995: 350). New family and social relations followed this permanent outflow of the young. For those remaining in the region, the importance of agriculture again increased rapidly, as did the importance of inherited land.

The Teplice region, our third example, shows another development. It formed one of the cores of the steel industry in the increasingly industrialized region of northwestern Bohemia (Englisch 1982). The expanding industry required massive immigration of male workers. Family formation and marriage patterns thus rarely followed the local norms. Inheritance of land and property also played a minor role for many, since income from industrial work was the main factor that enabled couples to marry and to begin a family. Since the number of male immigrants was much higher than that of female immigrants and since they often had to earn a basis for living before they could marry, the average marriage age for men was often very high. Nevertheless, the tradition of only a small percentage of men never getting married, so prevalent in most of Bohemia, was also valid for this region of rapid industrialization (Ehmer 1991).

These three examples illustrate three possible ways in which the start of rapid industrialization began to reshape principles of family formation in the second half of the 19th century. Many other examples in several other regions of rapid industrialization, as, for example, the Vienna basin, the Mur-Mürz region of Styria, Vorarlberg, several parts of Bohemia and Moravia, the Budapest area, etc., could be added to these illustrations. Depending on the different circumstances of industrialization, social ties were, to a varying degree, refashioned and rearranged.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude with a rather general point, by underlining the necessity of being conscious of periods of radical change in the history of the local or regional societies that we are studying in this book. It is a fact that the so-called traditional forms of social and economic organization and of cultural logic in any given region owe their origins not only to historical continuities but also to specific processes of transformation. To get a full impression of the so-called historical background of a society, one should consider both the historical continuities in its social organization and the equally important historical periods and processes of social transformation.

As this paper has tried to show, most regional societies of the Habsburg Empire experienced the emancipation decades as a crucial period of historical transformation. The release from feudal restrictions and the coming of new economic circumstances created situations in which the structure of society and the balance of population and resources were both thrown into question. Throughout the empire, standardized and more "equal" legal

regulations for private property – affecting also the intergenerational transmission of property – began to challenge the local and established norms of social organization. But the social transformations set off by the introduction of the new legal and economic framework took different courses in different places.

Knowledge of the regionally diverse customary concepts of inheritance and familial organization, and of the way these concepts were reformulated, partly revised, or even strengthened, in the emancipation period itself provides an important background for understanding the logic behind the diverse trends of social change. This background also helps us to understand the sources and effects of the massive wave of demographic growth that accompanied the emancipation and reform process, and to analyze the social effects of industrialization. Taken together, these processes characterized an epoch during which the elites of the Habsburg Empire, guided by models of the "modern" nations in the West, became increasingly effective in pushing forward their project of transforming the country into a capitalist industrialized state.

Acknowledgement

This paper is a result of the comparative work on family and household formation patterns in the regions of the Habsburg Empire done for the project "Sozialgeschichte der Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918," financed by the Austrian Academy of Sciences (Grandits, forthcoming).

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Chapter 12

The Validation of Power in the Transition from Feudalism to Socialism: The Case of Vágkirályfa, Southern Slovakia, 1769-1959

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Introduction

Analysis of the web of social relations that characterized the feudal system of land tenure provides a helpful approach to understanding the ongoing social and economic differences in Central and Eastern European countries (see, for example, Gunst 1989). Social conditions in these countries are far from uniform and must be understood as functions of heterogeneous local realities (Smith 1998). In the village where I did fieldwork,[1] the system of property relations that emerged at the end of feudalism set a pattern of power construction and legitimacy that has endured in some respects to the present day.

Inequality and exclusion from economic resources provide the basis for structures of domination, and it is in terms of these structures that the analysis of power relations must be framed. I will deal here with three social groups that made up the village in the historical period from the second half of the 18th century to the mid-20th century: the medium and large landowners, the small landowners, and the landless peasants. The main argument is that the nature of the feudal system of social and economic relations in the village made possible the consolidation of a small group of medium and large landholders who maintained control of economic resources. The focus of the paper will be on the way in which this group strove to maintain power

[1] I did fieldwork in the village of Vágkirályfa (Král'ová nad Váhom) from May 2000 to September 2001 as part of my Ph.D. research at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle. Unless indicated otherwise, all data presented here were gathered in the course of my interviews.

and on the dynamics by which domination became validated through the strategies and choices adopted by the three groups.

In the first section I will deal with some general features of the land tenure system in the village during late feudalism. I will then move on to consider techniques of power management framed within two social features: marriage and inheritance strategies. Finally, I will deal with the manner through which justification of the kind of social and economic relations dominant in the period was achieved. The final section will consider some features of the collectivization process that introduced state socialism to the village.

The Village

The village of Vágkirályfa is situated in the southwestern part of Slovakia. The region belongs to the Carpathian arch; most of the territory lies in the Danube Lowlands (Podunajská Nižina), and it borders the Danube Plain (Podunajská Rovina), the southwesternmost part of the country, and the Danube Hill Land (Podunajská Pahorkatina) toward the northeast.

As the name suggests, Vágkirályfa (from Vágkirályfalva, "Vág royal village") was founded on a Hungarian royal estate in one of the most fertile areas of southern Slovakia. The first historical reference, dated 1002,[2] refers to the settlement of a region called "Terra Wag,"[3] which was afterward donated to the monastery of the Benedictine Order. The village remained under the order until 1548, when it was transferred to the Jesuits. Later, after the Habsburg monarchy dissolved the Jesuit Order in 1773, the whole estate passed to the Foundation of the University of Pest. This status was maintained throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, except for some short-term leases to Hungarian and foreign nobles.[4]

The Feudal Land Tenure System

The social structure of the feudal Hungarian village centered upon the traditional hierarchy of nobility and serfdom (Fél and Hofer 1969: 27). The serfs

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[2] This is the year to which the first official written record in the Hungarian language, discovered in the church of Deáki (Diakovce), about 12 kilometers southwest of the village, refers.

[3] This is situated along the serpentine of the Vág River's course and would have comprised the town of Vágsellye, Vágkirályfa, and Vághosszúfalu.

[4] In 1776, Serione, an Italian noble, is said to have rented the estate and introduced a number of new crops (Vágkirályfa A Vizi 1998).

were divided into landed (*telkes jobbágy*) and landless peasants (*zsellér*).[5] Although in many cases the actual difference between the two categories was only formal, the basic definition of their social statuses centered on the use-right of land. The *jobbágy* was defined as the peasant who "owned the use-right of land and was able to transmit it through inheritance" (Vágkirályfa Történelmi Kronika 1987: 16). The standard unit of land allocated to the *jobbágy* was measured in *telek* (*mansio*, *sessio*, or *fundus*). The *telek* was defined as composed of "one plot of intravillain[6] land of the size calculated to produce 2 vats (*köböl*) of grain, the house, including pantry, garden, courtyard and stable, and 20 *hold* (1 *hold* is 0.414 ha) of extravillain land, including arable and grazing land, pasture and wood" (Vágkirályfa Történelmi Kronika 1987: 16).

Early records indicate that, in 1587, the village was composed of 21 *telek* accounting for 400 *hold* of land, all of which is classified as arable, owned by *jobbágy* families, 1,600 *hold* of land owned by the church, and 24 *zsellér* (Vágkirályfa Történelmi Kronika 1987: 22). The number of landed peasants does not seem to have increased during the years of Turkish rule, since there is a reference in 1664 to 22 taxpaying peasants and a miller (Vágkirályfa Történelmi Kronika 1987: 25). However, the next two centuries saw an increase in the number of peasant households, accompanied by a corresponding fall in the average amount of land held by each *jobbágy* household, and the gradual emergence of inequality between *jobbágy* households.

In 1769, the first Urbarium[7] was compiled in the village. Holders are divided this time into three categories: *gazda* (five families), *jobbágy* (44 families), and *zsellér* (23 families). The *gazda* group referred to those large peasant landowners holding in average from ten to 20 *hold* (4.2 to 8.4 hectares). The *jobbágy* group owned up to ten *hold*, and the *zsellér* had no land. In all 660 *hold* of farming land (273 hectares divided into 184 hectares of

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[5] *Zsellér* included all serfs who did not own arable land or use-right to it but who potentially could gain such rights. According to a settlement of the second half of the 18th century, this category included all villagers under the jurisdiction of one landlord who lacked any land or owned less than one eighth of a *telek* (Fél and Hofer ibid.: 24). Moreover, *zséller* were distinguished according to their owning a house (*házas*) or not owning a house (*hazátlan*).

[6] The distinction between "intravillain" (*beltelek*) and "extravillain" (*kültelek*) land is still used today in cadastral documents to define plots included within the village territory or outside of it, namely, arable land, pastures, and woods.

[7] In 1767, in the course of the enlightened Habsburg rule, the Urbarial Law was passed. This defined the normative size of a peasant landholding and codified the exact nature of peasants' obligations. In order to provide statistical evidence needed to implement the norm, all municipalities were expected to compile Urbaria, i.e., fiscal accounts of the villages' population, amount and quality of land, animals, produce, and taxes on them.

arable land and 89 hectares of meadows) were allotted to the *gazda* and *jobbágy*. Each household was obliged to provide a number of days of labor (manual or with draft animals) corresponding to its ownership status. The average (calculated per ten *hold* of land) was set at 26 working days per year with draft animals or 52 days of manual work (Urbarium 1769).

The next written record that gives a picture of the development of the village's tenure system is the Conscriptio Possessionum (Register of Possessions), compiled in 1828. According to this document, the number of landed peasants increased to 85, that of *zsellér* to 52; the presence of 26 craftsmen (20 of them millers) is also recorded. As a result of the increase in population, the average land plot shrank to 1.79 hectares. As in 1769, three households had plots double the average size, or larger – but these plots too were now much smaller, the largest being only ten *hold*. The overall amount of land belonging to *gazda* and *jobbágy* is calculated to be 162 hectares.[8]

The dissolution of the feudal estates, proclaimed in Hungary in 1853,[9] brought about important changes in the village's property map. A document dated 1864 records the main measures taken to abolish the Urbarial system: reclassification of plots, distribution of parts of the feudal estate, determinate ownership entitlements to *zsellér*, use-rights of forests, meadows, and rivers, abolition of corvées, and new taxation procedures. Among the most significant changes in the village were the redistribution of land and extensions of peasant use-rights on the noble estate. Approximately 25 hectares of meadows were allocated to landless peasants; peasants became free to cut wood from the forest for their needs as well as to extract river products without being subject to any levy.

The village chronicle records the dissolution of feudalism as "an important moment for the freedom of peasants, but that, unfortunately, did not improve the general situation of distress and poverty in the village" (Vágkirályfa Történelmi Kronika 1987: 121). A total of 742 *hold* (307 hectares) of land was allocated to *jobbágy*. The average size of allocated plots was only 2.8 hectares. The data relative to the changing social structure at the turn of the 20th century underline that the main outcome of the post-feudal transformation was the creation of a large stratum of small landowners (Table 12.1). The number of landed peasants (*jobbágy*) increased steadily from 44 families, in 1769, to 110, in 1864. On the other hand, landless peasants, who were excluded from the reassignment of land, also faced the process of demographic increase, the number of *zsellér* families rising from

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[8] The apparent differences in the overall amount of land in the successive Urbarium records may be partly due to modified recording practices or differences in the land categorizations applied.

[9] In Vágkirályfa, the process started in 1864.

52, in 1828, to 62, in 1864 (Vágkirályfa Történelmi Kronika 1987: 94). The number of the large landowning families, which the 19th century's (1828 and 1864) archival documents refer as *gazda*, doubles from five, in 1769, to ten, in 1828, and later contracts to seven families, in 1864.

Table 12.1: Social Position in the Village During Feudalism (Unit: Household)[10]

	1587	1769	1828	1864
Gazda	n.a.	5	10	7
Jobbágy	21	44	85	110
Zsellér*	24	23	52	62
Craftsmen	0	6	26	n.a.

Fél and Hofer rightly underline that the feudal land tenure system had a permanent influence on the social structure of the Hungarian villages, and this influence was felt throughout the early modern period (ibid. 33). I maintain that in Vágkirályfa the extent to which this influence was felt in the course of transition to capitalism or socialism depends significantly on the relations of power that developed among the different social groups. In particular, the increased opportunities to own and purchase land became the actual basis on which social ranking was consolidated. In 1864, a trend toward increasing inequality seems to have become established: seven households appear registered as owning more than 20 *hold*, and of them, three are owners of more than 30 *hold* (Vágkirályfa Kisközség Telekkönyve 1893). This process reached its climax in the first quarter of the 20th century when, due to population increase, land became a very scarce resource. The peasant families with relatively large landholdings, *gazdák*, became the leading social and economic stratum in the absence of a resident noble landowner in the village.

[10] Indicates peasant families without arable land plots; n.a.: not available: *Sources:* Urbarium 1769, Conscriptio Possessionum 1828, Vágkirályfa Történelmi Kronika 1987.

The Perpetuation of Power and Status

In this section I will demonstrate how the group of *gazda* families managed power and maintained their privileged access to economic resources. Land ownership and social status were traditionally thought of as inseparable (Fél and Hofer 1973; Švecová 1991). Informants' recollections of the pre-war period share the idea that "one was nobody without land. All moments in a person's social life were determined according to his ownership of land; from marriages to funerals, all stages of life were sanctioned by one's type and quantity of land" (Antal b.1927). Moreover, the social position of individuals within the community and their participation in official tasks were, indeed, functions of being landed or landless and of their being able to administer their resources so as to perpetuate the social status. The following is the story of one of the larger landholding kin groups of the village as told by one of their descendents.

> My father came from a big family; they were seven brothers and sisters. He used to work as a land manager for the baron of Diószeg. It is only 20 km distant from here, but he rarely could allow for a visit to his children in the village. He worked hard every day and at night he did not even have the strength to take the pen and write his family. After the death of my grandfather, he left the work there and came to look after the land; he had inherited some 31 hold. Soon he became famous in the village for his keen knowledge of farming; all he knew he had learned from the German baron who owned machines and used modern technology for farming. After a while, everybody in the village could distinguish his strips of land from those of the others: they were healthier and more fertile. He was twice elected village mayor; this demonstrates the sort of respect people had towards him. He eventually was very popular because he supported the introduction of a small unemployment subsidy. This was 10 Crowns a month, not a big sum, but you could buy some flour, sugar and salt with it! (Mihály b.1925)

The most important prerequisite for maintaining the social status of the *gazda* was the preservation of the landholdings. The kin group may have sought to maintain its status through a series of strategies in two spheres: marriage and inheritance. These are by no means separate issues since analysis of the choices related to marriage need to be supplemented with attention to the inheritance patterns followed by the kin groups (Goody 1976).

The same informant as above, descendent of one of the *gazda* families, recalled how it was difficult for him to marry his wife, despite his family's wealth.

> At that time there were two families with more land and animals than us, I was in love with the daughter of one of these, but her father would not concede her to me. She had been promised to the other family, even though she kept on refusing the other suitor. The biggest difference between me and him was that he was the only son and we were four brothers; under no conditions would her father have agreed to our marriage. And what's more, when he was young, he also used to court another girl, but he was refused, they preferred a richer one to him. It is like he wanted to take revenge for this on me.

Another informant, addressing the problem of marriage within the village during the late Habsburg Monarchy period, confirmed the view that the choice of brides was a delicate question that could affect the future status of any landowning peasant. Here are her words:

> Once the world was different. As a girl you were not allowed to marry whomever you wanted to. Family interests came first and the girl's power to decide was limited. Even though each family had some land on which it could survive this became almost nothing after division among sons. That is why finding a wife who could bring in some more land was vital. The problem was even more serious for those who had more land. They married among themselves; nobody would have wanted a woman from a family with less land [Anna b. 1932].

Local ethnographic studies of pre-socialist inheritance systems provide evidence that the large landowners pursued a number of strategies aimed to perpetuate their power and status (Tessedik 1979; Fehérváry 1988). First, in spite of the Hungarian traditional system of multigeniture, in the case of *gazda* families there was an evident degree of inequality among heirs (see also Szabó 1940). This trend can be explained as a strategy adopted to prevent the estate from breaking down into minor plots after inheritance. As Fehérváry (1988) demonstrates for a rural community situated at about 30 kilometers' distance from Vágkirályfa, unequal transmission of land among heirs was a prerogative of the *gazda* group and not of the small peasants. Fehérváry (1988: 114) indicates that the strategy of centering property

around one male heir was common among large *gazda* families of the region. In this case, younger sons were compensated, obtaining minor portions of the family estates or by parental investment in their education. Multiple sons were potential obstacles to the maintenance of the family estate, and it was necessary to find employment for them outside agriculture in order to avoid the possibility of plural inheritance claims.

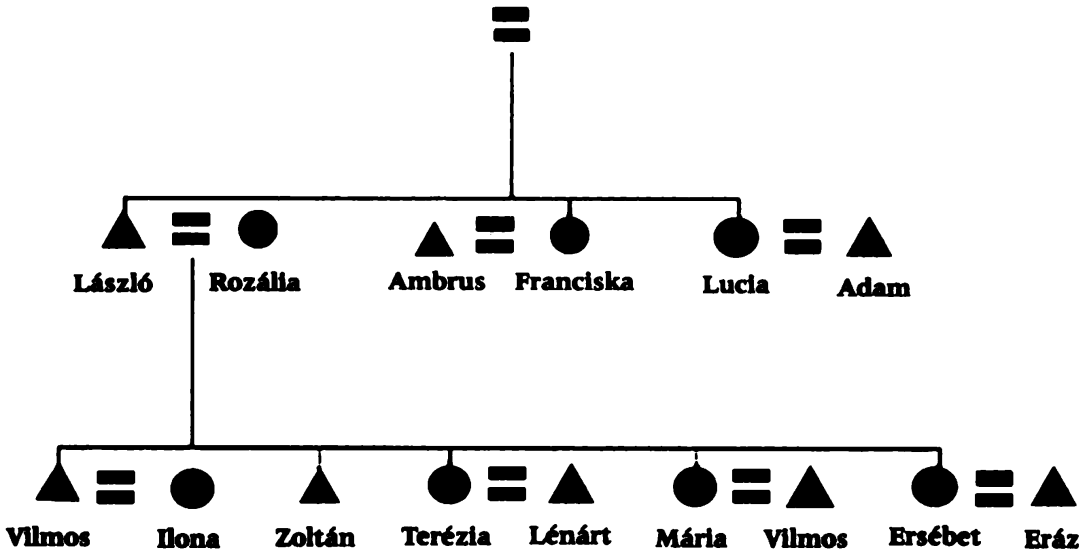
Secondly, marriage between exponents of similar class was another way in which large owners could seek to perpetuate their status. Especially in order to be able to marry up, daughters had to be provided with a dowry consisting also of some plots of land. Although informants underlined that the custom of bringing a dowry at marriage is a "modern one," which can be ascribed to the turn of the 20th century, in the case of *gazda* families this custom did exist before. Daughters had to be accompanied by some land at the moment of their marriage, especially (see below) if the tie was to be built with a family of the same or higher social level. In Vágkirályfa, unlike in the case described by Fehérváry (1988), this land was usually arable terrain and not only orchards (vineyards or plum trees), and the quantity of land received increased according to the rank of the bride-receiving family.

Following the findings of Fehérváry (1988), I would like to introduce a small sample of the historical transformation of family property of two village *gazda* families. This is a limited case introduced with the aim of illustrating the kind of strategies that *gazda* families adopted in order to maintain control of their assets over time. The archival sources on which these examples are based are holdings sheets (*birtok lap*), which include all the registered parcels that make up one family holding and map its changes in ownership, transactions, and inheritance in a period generally ranging from 1880 to 1949. Because in the village each owner has his land divided in a number of parcels that belong to several registered holding sheets, it is difficult and out of the scope of this paper to provide quantitative evidence of patterns of transmission. What these examples can do is offer some insights into *gazda* families' strategies of preservation of their holdings and into these strategies' temporal change.

The first (Case A) is the case of a *gazda* family that, at the end of the 19th century, owned about 14 *hold* (5.8 hectares) of land. Owning more than ten *hold*, this family was included in the category of the large *gazda* families, even though it was the one that held the smallest amount of land in the group. The registered holding with which this example deals amounts to 5.3 hectares of land covering 96 percent of the family property. This is divided into 18 parcels, five of which are forest (0.5 hectare in all) and 13 of which are arable land.

The first historical record, dated 1897, indicates that the farmstead is divided unequally among siblings. The only son, László, receives five-eighths of the whole based on the fact that he was the actual holder (and probable worker) of the land. The two sisters, Franciska and Lucia, receive the remainder of the holding. However, there is inequality also between them, since Franciska receives the double of Lucia in the form of gift (and not merely inheritance). It is explained by informants that Franciska needed that share to marry another *gazda* and set up house in the village, whereas Lucia married a man from a neighboring community and left the village.

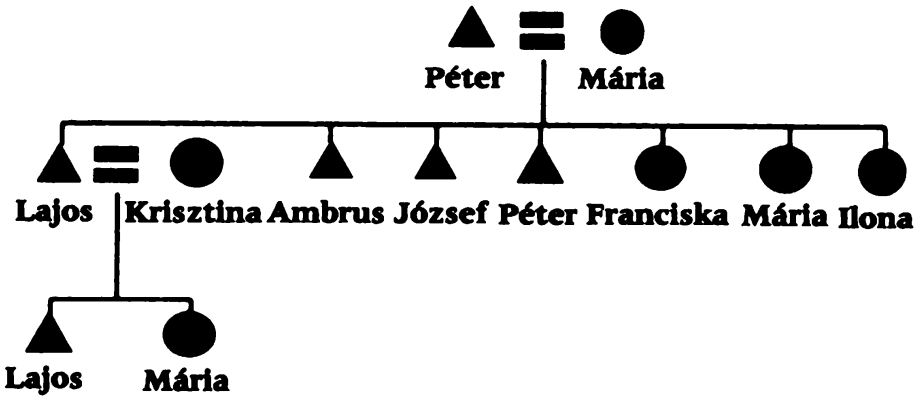
In 1900, later transfers of parcels indicate that all property has become centered in the hands of the male heir, László.



In the 1930s, a second series of transfers is registered, and this follows two directions. First, three small parcels (0.6 hectare) are transferred to Julius and his wife, an unrelated couple that helped the family. Second, two substantially bigger plots (0.9 hectare) are acquired by Zoltán, the second of László's sons. In the 1940s, following agreement among siblings who conceded their shares to Zoltán, he becomes the central heir of the family holding, which, as informants indicated, was cultivated by him until the late 1950s. Among the other siblings, Vilmos died in the early 1940s, and the three sisters (Terézia, Mária, and Ersébet) conceded their shares of property to Zoltán in exchange for cash payments.

Case B deals with the family of Péter, who in 1893 was one of the three largest *gazdák* in the village. He owned over 21 *hold* (8.6 hectares) of land divided among arable, forest, and meadows. The registered holding

considered here is made up of 19 parcels composed as follows: 12 of arable land, four of forest, a meadow, a garden, and a house plot. The holding amounts to 5.2 hectares of land, making up about 60 percent of the family property. In 1881, Péter appears as the only owner of the holding, which he partly inherited and partly purchased (house and garden). In 1915, following Péter's death, the transmission process starts. Seven offspring (four sons: Lajos, Ambrus, József, and Péter Jr.; three daughters: Franciska, Mária, and Ilona) receive their shares of inheritance in different moments, when they became of age (from 1915 to 1918), and in unequal parts.



As in Case A, following siblings' agreements, property is maintained almost intact in the hands of one male heir, Lajos. All offspring (including Lajos) receive a portion of the house and the garden. In 1926, the situation with the house and garden plot is settled, as Péter Jr. purchases the other siblings' shares and gains full ownership.

Concerning all other land, in 1929, Lajos divided one-third of the registered holding between his children, Lajos Jr. and Mária, and maintained in his hands two-thirds of the whole. The document does not provide further information on the holding. According to informants, Maria married another *gazda* in the village and left. Lajos Jr. inherited all the plots from his father in the late 1930s.

As these two cases indicate, the idea of inequality in transmission of land finds strategic justification in the need to recombine, at a certain historical point, the family estate. This happened in Case A around the central heir of László, in 1900, and Zoltán, from 1930 to 1940. In Case B, Lajos, in 1915, and his son, Lajos Jr., after 1929, maintained control of most of the holding.

The second point that needs to be stressed is that female heirs needed to receive land in order to marry with other members of the same social group. This is also part of the rich peasants' family strategies that aimed to

preserve power and status in the course of the village's historical transformation.

The Validation of Power

After having considered the range of strategies the *gazda* families adopted in order to perpetuate their economic and social statuses in the village, I would like to move to the role of the other social categories. The relevant question is how could medium and large owners legitimate their exercise of power in the community and secure its acceptance by the other groups? I would like to answer in two ways. The first regards the relationship between landless peasantry and *gazdák*; the second concerns the reasons why small peasants endorsed the existing power relations.

The existence of a large stratum of landless households provided the community with an important base for constructing social, economic, and political dominance. Large landholders were traditionally seen in the village as crucial personalities because they held public offices and they were potential employers. Poorer social strata knew that they could count on the availability of agricultural work in the peak season. But the existence of interpersonal relations between the two groups was crucial, since the small number of *gazda* families could not cover the work-seeking needs of the large population of mini- and non-owners. Informants stressed the idea that, whereas occasional labor could be performed by any person in search of some wheat, maize, or potatoes, seasonally scheduled farming operations were entrusted only to the most trustworthy households.

Until the 1950s, peasants from the villages round Vágkirályfa were employed seasonally on local manorial estates that in certain cases could be situated at several kilometers' distance.[11] Most of this labor force derived from landless villagers, although the portion of landed peasant women was significant.[12] Despite this practice being fairly diffuse in the area, Vágkirályfa is often remembered by local informants as a village where "men were not keen to work outside." Two explanations were given for this preference. The first regards the idea that finding employment in the village constituted a better way to maintain control of family matters. One informant

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[11] The closest manorial estate to which poor peasants commuted to work was Óny, situated five kilometers northeast of the village. However, more common was work in larger estates, such as the Müller (11 kilometers), Tornóc (17 kilometers), and Diószeg (23 kilometers) estates and some estates even farther away.

[12] Peasant women traditionally worked out of the village in the early modern period. Not only was it considered to be an important task for women from small landowning families to contribute through paid labour to the household economy; they eventually became acquainted with urban lifestyles.

regarded the custom of traveling daily to the work site as "disruptive," both for personal health and family life.

The second answer concerns the opportunities that long-term working relations with *gazda* families in the village could offer to the landless. Since it was in the interest of the *gazda* family to keep long-lasting and trustworthy relations with its helpers, the custom of presenting landless peasants with crop products, animals, or even small plots could be of strategic importance.

One exemplary case is provided by Case A, where the landowner, László, presented one of his helping families, E. Július and his wife – of *zsellér* origin – with some plots of land.

János, the descendant of another village *gazda* who owned more than 20 *hold* of arable land, remembers that his father was highly reputed in the village for the trust he could inspire in his workers.

> I did not work on my father's land. I had my studies and then I sought work out of the village. There was a number of "helpers" working under the strict supervision of my father. They were always very happy to work for him; it was much better than going elsewhere where you were simply a stranger. Then my father knew how to compensate those faithful to him. Many helpers received seasonal crop gifts from him; I even know about a widow who got a goat in exchange for her work [János b. 1924].

These cases, for which further evidence can be found in other cadastral documents, bring to the light the idea that patron-client relations could provide effective economic strategies in societies where the development of capitalist forms of agriculture has been relatively slow and difficult.

An important role in maintaining the balance among the three social groups was played by the small peasants. Though they made up the majority of the landed peasantry, their lack of resources prevented them from counterbalancing the economic and social status of the *gazda* group. Instead, smaller peasant proprietors seem to have viewed the *gazdák* as a social and ideological resource, which they drew on to further their own material and ideal interests as property-owning peasants.

Present-day villagers recognize the presence of a number of medium to large families as an important feature of the community's history. The important economic role of these families, as well as the "ideological" benefits their presence entailed for the community as a whole is stressed. People today still share the idea that those were the families who had always been accorded the highest esteem in the community; hence being on good terms with them was considered an important prerequisite not only for

obtaining help in case of need but also for gaining social prestige. An "ideological" stress on the social extraction and history of these families' kin group is continuously reconstructed in the everyday references to the past. To quote an example, the most respectful linguistic forms used today for describing the reputation of a family are "large peasant family" (*nagy paraszt család*), "well-to-do peasant family" (*modos paraszt család*), or, in the case of a single (male) individual, "peasant son" (*paraszt gyerek*). The frequent use of these expressions when referring to families that held comparatively large amounts of land in the past and worked hard on it indicates that landowners were viewed with respect.

These families came to constitute the "actually existing authority" in place of the absentee owners of the formerly feudal estate. Moreover, because they managed their own land, resisted collectivization more fiercely, provided employment opportunities, maintained patronage relations in the community, and eventually constituted living examples of "success" over poverty, the *gazdák* served to cement social relations within the community.

In order to clarify the features of Vágkirályfa's particular relationship between large and small landowners, I would like to mention the case of a neighboring community, Tósnyárasd. Unlike Vágkirályfa, here the existence of two large landowners in the village, one of them claiming noble descent and the other of Jewish origin, is visible in the patterns of social and economic interaction. Tósnyárasd did not know the development of medium to large peasant households, and power relations remained confined to the sphere of action of the two landowning families and their relationship with their tenants. The authority of the large landowners in Tosnyárasd remained untouched until the advent of socialism.[13] As a villager from this community commented, "whether you liked it or not, they had the land. It was us who had to be on good terms with them; they did not need to worry" (Péter b. 1952).

The Socialist Transformation

Despite the rapid and often dramatic changes that occurred in Slovakia during the first half of the 20th century, the power of the middle-sized landowning group in Vágkirályfa remained untouched. Several factors can be considered as accounting for this process: the ability of the *gazda* families to maintain their control of not only economic but also political resources and

[13] And even after. Villagers today remember vividly the role of the two rich families in the village. Although neither of their members returned to the community after 1989, the people interviewed confirmed the idea that their presence accounted for the historical development of agricultural, social, and cultural life in the community.

the lack of alternative economic poles, both in the community and in the town, able to consolidate a middle-class stratum in the village.

The *gazda* group, however, could not endure the massive changes that followed the transition to socialism with the same degree of resistance. Diversification of the village's occupational structure due to the building of a large industrial complex in the nearby town of Šala, demographic increase, the steady urbanization process, and the consolidation of the communist ideology did not leave space for the unfolding of practices of power management that had characterized the village past. The start of the collectivization process marked the beginning of the decline of the large landowners' power.

The socialist agricultural cooperative was established in Vágkirályfa in a slow and difficult process. The founding of the institution was attempted for the first time, in August 1949, with land collected from the village's common property, the church estate, and some plots contributed by its founders. However, due to the peasants' general unwillingness to contribute their own property, the cooperative was eventually dissolved at the end of that year. In March 1950, a village meeting was held to discuss the future of the organization. Its founders asked the landowning peasants to contribute their land to form the cooperative and join it as members. Their response was, as expected, negative.

Despite the outspoken opposition, the small cooperative remained and slowly expanded. The early 1950s are remembered as a dark period in the village's history, one in which extreme means were adopted in order to induce peasants to join the collectivization. Informants remember these dramatic years of the village's history in terms of physical violence and psychological terror. However, the most fruitful strategy for accomplishing collectivization was undoubtedly the compulsory requisition of, and taxes on, agricultural products. Although the effect was gradual, the power of this measure was clear as peasants became unable to cope with the heavy burden of taxation.

> I had to provide 300 liters of milk, some 300 eggs, butter, lard and some chickens. I can say I was lucky if I think that the gazda were forced to give up to 500 liters of milk, one pig and a huge quantity of flour. They were choking us in this way. No wonder if people finally joined the cooperative! (Nándor b. 1929)

Collectivization started showing significant results in the second half of the 1950s, and private farmers' opposition began to fade. Finally, in 1959, the

process was concluded; almost all the land was registered to the cooperative management.[14]

Did the power of the large holders vanish completely under the weight of the profound changes after 1948? The answer must be looked for in the social processes that characterized the village's life throughout the socialist period and eventually outlived it. I would like to point out that members of the previously dominating group were never ostracized during the time of collectivization and that they never left the village. Among those who opposed collectivization, some sought employment in other sectors, and others attained positions in the local administration.

What remained intact of the *gazda* social status was, despite the major changes, their reputation and the trust that villagers manifested in their relations with them and their kin groups. People continued to share the idea that those were the families who had always been accorded the highest esteem in the community. The reason for this continuity in the reputation of former *gazda* has its roots in the manner by which power had been achieved and managed in the pre-socialist period: Villagers could not recall episodes in which domination was exerted by means of coercion. On the other hand, memories and narratives of the village's past were essentialized in the role and function of the *gazda* personalities. These memories could not be erased, even by over four decades of state socialism.

Conclusion

The construction, exercise, and maintenance of power in a social context are complex processes that require a set of conditions and interplaying factors. The "possibility" that some group or individual would exert their influence and domination on others, to put it in Weberian terms, does not simply depend on the ability or means such a group possesses to achieve these goals. The need to acquire legitimacy, or, in other words, the willingness of determinate social strata to recognize power, is at least as important as the ways and instruments through which domination takes place. In Vágkirályfa, the interplay between three groups provided the bases for justifying the exercise of power.

As the case of Vágkirályfa suggests, the traditional Hungarian feudal model pivoting on the polarity of nobility::serfdom presented a number of local variations. The absence of a landowner nobility stratum in Vágkirályfa itself provided the community with a comparatively articulated society in

[14] In Czechoslovakia, formal ownership of land remained private throughout the socialist period even though, after the 1960s, nobody seemed to bother to register property at the cadastral office.

which the large peasant landowners acquired the leading role. This was possible thanks to their relatively large availability of land assets, the manner in which these were used to maintain their social status within the community, and the relationship they built with the other groups.

The profound changes that marked the socialist transformation introduced a different social order in which relations of property ceased to constitute the basis of domination. Collectivization, industrialization, and demographic pressures eroded the foundations upon which the large landowners had built their power. However, this class was able to maintain its social prestige and transmit it through generations. Practices and techniques of power are grounded in the relation of individuals to the economic resources, but their exercise through time comes to pervade the whole social sphere of interaction between dominators and dominated.

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Chapter 13

Bereft of Property: Change and Continuity in Family Organization in Härjedalen, Sweden, 1850 to 1930

Hans Marks

Introduction

In his review of the historical development of Scandinavian peasantries, Orvar Löfgren (1980) argued that most studies of European peasantries have an agricultural bias: focusing on grain farming and horticulture. While predominantly agricultural peasantries can be found in Scandinavia – in the great plains of Denmark and southern parts of Sweden – Löfgren's typology of peasant ecotypes in the Nordic countries shows that in most places peasants handled very complex combinations of local resources. He argued that a concept like "jack-of-all-trades" was more appropriate for studying peasantries than the idea of agricultural specialists (1980: 191, cf. 1974, 1976, 1978).[1] Although certainly interesting from an ecological and ethnographic point of view, it is not the typology of peasant ecotypes that is important but the fundamental idea that people are constantly combining and shifting (local) natural resources, processing techniques and rights to property and labor in earning a living under the pressure (or absence) of changing political and economic conditions (Hoppe and Langton 1994: 14-7). The concept of the jack-of-all-trades comes near the concept of occupational pluralism as developed by McCann (2000) in his study of a Nova Scotian shipbuilding community. McCann states that "[occupational] pluralism in a resource-based economy can be viewed as a long-term strategy, deliberately chosen either to exploit the environmental possibilities of staple production (e.g.

[1] For analytical reasons, Löfgren made a distinction between six main peasant adaptations in the Nordic countries: the agricultural, the woodland, the maritime, the *seter* (or summer pasture), the mountain peasant, and the swidden cultivator. See also Gaunt (1978 and 1979). See also Mitterauer (1990) for the analytical quality of the ecotype concept in family and household research, especially in the Alpine area, and for a critique see Mathieu (2000) differentiating between ecological and sociopolitical approaches.

subsistence farming, summer fishing, winter lumbering), or to cope with the shortcomings of industrial capitalism (e.g. market fluctuations, seasonal layoffs, unstable incomes). As a means of earning a permanent livelihood, these strategies are practised to both create and sustain family well-being" (2000: 487). Occupational pluralism, or the idea of the jack-of-all-trades, can be considered a general subsistence strategy within peasant households – combining the exploitation of local resources, craft production, and wage labor in transitional periods where relations of production are being restructured. Little attention, however, has been directed toward the social implications and mental consequences of such subsistence strategies. Large parts of the population of the northern Scandinavian mountain and forest regions in the late 19th and 20th century followed this kind of generalized subsistence strategy, in different environments and under changing political and economic conditions.

This chapter is about a specific peasant subsistence strategy in northern Sweden and how its complexity comes to the fore in many aspects of labor organization and property, kinship, and inheritance. Special interest is directed at how this strategy was adapted during the economic transition at the end of the 19th century, when timber companies acquired property rights and introduced wage labor in the form of timber cutting. The trajectory of this proletarianization process shows how the normative values associated with a subsistence strategy that was "fundamentally a learned response passed from one generation to another as a matter of necessity" (McCann 2000: 14) were nonetheless carried into the industrial era by successive generations. Adjustments in the realm of social ties and the labor process had to be made, but these stayed within the expected and acceptable: In the development of wage labor, kinship ties played a crucial role. This chapter will not attempt to construct a theoretical typology covering all the different forms and trajectories historically present in the northern part of Scandinavia but will focus instead on the intricate complexities and conjunctures of the subsistence strategies in a single community. It will use this empirical inquiry to reveal the interconnectedness of environmental, sociopolitical, and historical variables (Østerud 1978: 67).

Peasant Freehold, Subsistence Strategy, and Normative Implications

In 1845, more than 90 percent of the farms in northern Sweden were peasant property, whereas in the middle and southern parts of Sweden less than half of the land was peasant freehold (Østerud 1978: 132-133). However, in Norrland, the northern part of Sweden – an inhospitable hilly and mountainous area, consisting predominantly of woods and marshland on rocky soil,

cut by lakes and rivers – the natural conditions are mostly harsh and very unfavorable to farming. Härjedalen, which this chapter is about, is the name of an administrative area in the province of Jämtland, situated in southern Norrland. In 1850, some 6,060 people lived in Härjedalen: a population density of about one person per two square kilometers. The settlement pattern in the region was dominated by houses scattered over the landscape, surrounded by small patches of arable land, and organized into small villages and hamlets. Although several of these settlements date back to the Middle Ages, the area is characterized by an ongoing process of land reclamation. The village of Lillhärdal and its surrounding hamlets in the southern part of Härjedalen, with a population of approximately 1,050 inhabitants in 1850, will stand as an example in this chapter.

The inhabitants of Härjedalen were all peasants with small property holdings of up to five hectares of arable land. Since 1645, when the province was incorporated into the Swedish Kingdom, the peasants had always been free peasants, taxed directly by the Crown. Within the limits of kinship, the peasants could freely dispose of their inherited property. Newly acquired or colonized land could be sold without the consent of a kinship group.

The force and claims from above – from the Crown or the state apparatus – were relatively minimal. The farms were taxed, but the tax was often collectively reduced or exempted because surplus production was low or even absent (Wichman et al. 1962). Military demands were met in day labor in the maintenance of fortifications and roads, but, again, they were minimal in their extent and stretched over years. Agrarian reforms or restructuring never affected the district. The only reform worth mentioning occurred at the beginning of the 19th century, when Crown domains, largely consisting of forested land, were turned over as common property to the taxpaying peasantry in order to secure their subsistence base and to encourage land reclamation. In fact, the districts enjoyed a large measure of self-government. This was also a prerogative of the tax-paying peasantry. Ownership of a "taxable farm" was a precondition of representation in the village council, and voting rights (along with ownership rights over unenclosed land) were proportional to the farm's tax burden. In the district of Härjedalen there was only one royal representative – a bailiff, who supervised the courts of justice, held twice a year, and the collection of taxes. In all administrative parishes, sub-bailiffs and their assistants were stationed, but they all were local men chosen from among their midst. Compared to southern Swedish communities, the state apparatus did very little to press the peasants in Härjedalen to organize households and cooperate at the community level (cf. Blum 1971: 556; Mathieu 2000).

Around 1850, the economy was centered on nonspecialized households exploiting common resources. Domestic production was organized around agriculture, hunting, gathering, and trading, with the goal of self-sufficiency. Most important in this skeleton of production was a kind of semi-pastoralism. Cattle provided a highly flexible and multipurpose form of production; pastoralism provided an opportunity to reduce the risks of an agriculture-based existence in these meager regions. Together with other activities like tilling arable lands, hunting, fishing, gathering, and non-commercial trading, this pastoralism also reduced the dependency on other households. Shortages of one economic resource usually struck all households equally and could only be substituted by relying on other resources within one's own reach. Access to resources was, at mid-century, relatively open because of vast, unenclosed woodlands and marshes. There was no market, either in the villages or in the county of Härjedalen, in which to sell agricultural and other household produce. Until the second half of the 19th century, the markets that existed were legally confined to several cities. Once a year, just before or after Christmas, most of the peasants of Lillhärdal left the village by sledge to trade in these cities or in Norway. Craft production was prohibited until 1846, and after the ending of the guild restrictions and long into the 20th century, inventories at death still show a remarkably high number of tools and utensils to produce wooden, iron, wool, or leather products.

There developed over the years in these environmental and sociopolitical circumstances a type of peasant household in which people laid great normative emphasis on the independence of the productive unit. This attitude should probably be understood as a form of risk avoidance. Instead of cooperating with other households and investing in social and political relations to avoid risks, the peasants developed a strategy of risk avoidance that focused mainly on material resources; they invested in the knowledge and flexibility to use and combine them over time and space. Inter-household cooperation was thus minimal, albeit in practice households did need to cooperate when they used resources together, such as in the woodlands and mountain meadows or, in rare circumstances, when a sudden unexpected danger, like a bear, threatened them all. It is from these rare instances that one can learn about the way these peasants viewed social relations. Such cooperative undertakings or actions were always under-communicated. Borrowing tools, a cart, or a horse from a neighbor was also a delicate matter, because one could be degraded to the level of someone who was not able to take care of self and household. A meticulous attitude and handling of

language and etiquette was necessary to avoid possible judgments of that nature.[2] Notions of respect and respectability were at stake.

Although landed property was indispensable in this household economy, the primary concern of the peasants was the organization of the households' labor power (cf. Gaunitz 1979: 40). People were evaluated and judged on their working capabilities and the way they organized labor and resources into a viable household. A reputation for practical skill was an important criterion when attributing people a certain status within the community. The possession of landed property, although certainly an asset, was less important in social evaluations.

Inheritance and Labor

This normative stress on practical independence, engendered within the subsistence economy and the local sociopolitical conditions, also expresses the political and legal incapability of the free peasantry to force possible laborers into a more binding relationship. The peasantry could not create nor appropriate an enduring labor force, with one exception: their own kin, and only to a certain degree – namely, their siblings. It is here that inheritance comes into the picture.

Generally speaking, the social and historical sciences have conceptualized these regions in Sweden as egalitarian communities. Two facts pointed in this direction: the relatively even distribution of landed property, in the context of the absence of landless and noble classes, and an assumed ideology of partible inheritance sustaining this even distribution. However, on taking a closer look the situation becomes more complicated. When I spoke to older people in the 1980s and discussing how they and their parents acquired their farms, they always revealed patterns of inheritance in which the accepted norm was that farms should usually be treated as impartible and in which sons were preferred. I came to learn that when they spoke about inheritance, they in fact meant the sale of a farm to one or more of their kin. On several occasions I was invited to act as a legal witness when generations switched property rights, occasions that confirmed this practice. There is some historical continuity in it.

David Gaunt, in his article on property and kin relationships of retired farmers in northern and central Europe (Gaunt 1983a), showed how retirement contracts between peasants and their kin became part of the transition of property between generations, a practice that could make the actual own-

[2] In an autobiographical and historical book, Högman (1936), son of a peasant from Lillhärdal, reveals many tacit normative aspects of this peasant mental attitude in the fields of production, education, and sociability.

ership of the farm rather unclear. In Sweden, from the beginning of the 18th century (1734), however, the retirement contract lost its importance as a separate legal institution, and retirement stipulations became part of the law regulating sales and ownership of farms, so that retirement clearly implied transferring ownership to the next generation. In effect, most peasants regulated inheritance inter-vivos by the sale of their homestead.

A short reconstruction of inter-vivos inheritance, i.e., the sale of farms before death, in the parish of Lillhärdal during the 19th century may illuminate the inheritance practice. The general pattern was as follows:

1. The inheritance of a farm nearly always took place before the death of one of the elders and was, in fact, a sale within the kin group.
2. The contracts were never between seller and buyer only but always involved a wider network of relations between siblings and between children and parents.
3. Until 1875, farms were never sold to more than two siblings; predominantly, the sale was to one of the children, male or female. Sometimes a lottery system is mentioned where chance decided which of the siblings would be eligible to buy the farm.
4. The other siblings were not disinherited but were compensated in cash for their share under varying conditions: A married sibling sometimes got his or her share immediately, sometimes after a stipulated period of years, and sometimes received a larger amount than unmarried siblings. An unmarried sibling could claim his or her share when leaving the household. This generally meant when he or she got married (this was often explicitly stipulated as an extra condition); and sometimes it was stipulated that the siblings would get (part of) their share in cash only after the death of one or both of the parents.
5. Generally, the contracts included additional conditions concerning the parents. Sometimes the parents claimed a part of the selling price; sometimes they reserved some cattle and arable land to themselves. From 1858 onward, they sometimes claimed the income from a collective tree-felling contract connected to the farm; and nearly always, as mentioned by Gaunt, the sales contract contained a retirement agreement.

Thus family property could be and was divided. The concern of the peasants was not directed toward the impartibility of the property as such but to the maintenance of a viable household structure and organization that could operate in a relatively independent way. This arrangement was also in the interest of the parents, because they would in the future still rely on the produce of the farm, legally backed up by the retirement stipulations. Farms

were thus divided only within the limits of what people expected would be a viable household.

This strategy put pressure on different categories of siblings, and in different ways. At the most, two of them could buy the farm. These new household heads were thereby indebted to the other siblings, buying them out as part of carrying out inter-vivos inheritance. However, my concern at this point is with the disinherited siblings. Although they were not legally "disinherited" – they got their share in cash – I will use the term for analytical reasons. Did they evolve or could they have evolved into a landless class over the years? In other words, how or in what way were they proletarianized?

The situation of disinherited siblings depended on whether or not they were married, as we have seen in the sales contracts discussed above. Married siblings would already have established some rights to landed property. These rights might consist of rights to taxable property inherited by marriage, nontaxable pieces of other farms, or rights to newly reclaimed pieces. The principle that a couple could only marry when they possessed some pieces of land was deeply rooted in marriage practice (Marks 1994). Quite often, eldest sons and daughters on the verge of marriage were given a part of the taxable farm, a piece of arable land, and woods for use by their new household. However, these pieces of property, although legally private property, were not taxed, so the new couple was politically dependant on the tax-paying peasantry represented in the village council. Formally, they were also excluded from property rights in the vast woodlands. They established themselves as a category of crofters and homeowners who had the generally accepted right to use all resources in the forests for household production and could reclaim new territories and erect a taxable farm. Although they were politically dependant, one cannot say they lived under deplorable circumstances. Some of these crofter households even prospered more than the households of free peasants with political rights. In fact, these crofters were smallholders who could become free peasants when their homestead became liable for tax.

The second group of disinherited siblings was made up of the unmarried ones. Although they could in the future acquire a smallholding by marriage, buy arable land or a nontaxable partition, or even reclaim parcels of woodland, they became farmhands with the sale of a farm. Though their work was indispensable for the household economy, they were not a class of landless laborers. By kinship they had the privilege of remaining part of the household and the obligation of providing their labor. But their position could also give rise to conflicts within the family. They were attractive partners on the courting market, because they received a nice sum of money

upon leaving the homestead. However, not everybody married. There were numerous cases in which bachelors and spinsters, as they grew older, continued to live with their married siblings, who owned the taxable farm. These unmarried siblings often learned a trade or craft, or owned some cows, and lived relatively independently of the main farm. Thus they created a niche in or next to the main household, and tensions between them could rise.

All in all we see that the possibility of employing labor on a permanent basis was nearly absent. If at all, peasants could only temporarily dispose of labor from other households, and preferably within the realm of kinship. The natural conditions and the norms governing this system of household production implied hard labor without producing a real, stable surplus. The possession of property, although indispensable to the household economy, did not guarantee prosperity.

This system of household production and inter-vivos inheritance resulted in a relatively egalitarian social structure. In 1855, the village of Lillhärdal consisted of the following household categories:[3]

Taxable Peasant Households	136
Crofter Households	33
Homeowners	36
Other Households	34

At the level of the community, the crofters, homeowners, and the last group of "other households" were all politically dependent on the freeholders, the tax-paying peasantry. Two points are crucial for understanding the extent and limits of this dependency: The first point is that, through kinship ties and inheritance, the landless classes were generally able to find a niche. Apart from owning a house, homeowners (a category that included several retired peasants) had, for the most part, some pieces of arable land and cattle and were hard to distinguish from the households officially categorized as crofters. The final group of "other households" consisted of widows, retired peasants, some spinsters, a tailor, a blacksmith, a policeman, a sexton, and some village poor. Varying extremely in wealth, in terms of property this was the most dependent category: They rented their houses and plots.

Even more important for the position of politically dependent households were the concepts of labor and the acquisition of property. The subsistence strategy of the freeholding peasantry implied a particular way of thinking about labor. Risk avoidance, through the use and organization of a

[3] Based on 'Fem års Tabell för Lillherrdals District Åren 1851, 1852, 1853, 1854 og 1855. Upprättad till följe af Kronofogden E. Daléns Orders den 22 Marteï 1856' (Statens Myndighetens Archive, Östersund's Provincial Archive)

multiple set of natural resources, generated a system of social norms that made it nearly impossible to appropriate someone else's labor or to allow others to put a claim on your own labor. Intrinsically tied to these ideas was the conviction that through labor people acquired their own property, their own wealth, which they alone could dispose of. This is especially apparent in how people conceived of the deployment of labor in the vast forests and commons. By putting labor into one of the resources in this territory, they laid claim to its produce, be it hunted animals, felled trees, or reclaimed marshland for producing fodder. Labor deployed to reclaim arable land was even acknowledged in court as a basis for claiming private property rights, with a clause that by permanently cultivating it over the course of five or ten years it could become private property. On the other hand, such entitlement could also be lost if the land was not cultivated, further emphasizing the connection between the ideas of property and labor (cf. Macpherson 1975; Hann 1998).[4]

Peasants Without Property

If we now turn to the beginning of the 20th century and look at the distribution of property in this village, we see an enormous turnover of peasant property into industrial property. By 1904, more than 75 percent of the taxable peasant property had been sold to timber companies (expressed in surface area, it amounted to 80 percent of the territory). The area, like other large parts of Norrland, seemed to be very attractive for timber companies.

The turnover of peasant property into industrial property started with a severe conflict over felling rights between some of these companies. Following litigation in the late 1860s, they decided not to rely on the acquisition of felling rights to secure the raw material for their operations but to buy the land itself. At first that was not easy. It was impossible to buy forest separately from the farms, because the area was not enclosed. The woodlands were one large area to which the taxable farms had a collective right (proportionate to the amount of tax each farm paid). Only by forcing an enclosure procedure on the whole village would it be possible to appropriate individual parcels. But to be legally able to apply for the enclosure act, one had first to be in the possession of a taxable farm within the village. The peasants themselves never asked for the enclosure act to separate their part of woodlands and thus be able to negotiate with a timber company over the sale of their share. Although the peasants could have used the cash connected with the

[4] Cf. discussion on the exclusivity of property rights in relation to labor in Macpherson (1975) and Hann (1998). The exclusiveness here is directed toward the produce of labor instead of land as a thinglike object, a perspective that probably has its roots in older hunter-gatherer societies.

sale, they were reluctant to partition and enclose land. They had good reasons not to enclose. First, the enclosure had to be paid for according to the size of the property owned, and the unenclosed property was very extensive. In an almost cash-free economy with low surplus production, it was unthinkable to the peasants to bear the level of indebtedness that would result from the enclosure procedure. Second, there was little prospect that restructuring land ownership would lead to successful agricultural commercialization, even in the sector of dairy production. Third, put in the normative context, it would have been impossible for a peasant to ask for an enclosure and live happily thereafter, because the act of instigating the enclosure would draw all the peasants into indebtedness. Fourth, enclosing would also mean turning commonly held property in the forest into exclusive areas. This would mean excluding oneself from the use of resources in the larger territory and possibly result in the complete exclusion of crofters and homeowners, one's own kin, from the use of these resources. Such an action was unimaginable.

Notwithstanding the peasants' reasons for opposing enclosure, the enclosure process in Lillhärdal started in 1876, on the initiative of the timber companies. The specific type of enclosure asked for – the so-called laga skifte, based on a law enacted in 1827 – only needed one petitioner owning a taxable farm, not the majority of the village council. One of the competing timber companies acquired this legal status. By way of two straw men, they had acquired two taxable farms, and both straw men requested the enclosure of their personal entitlement. In the next ten years, the whole area was inventoried and described by a special commission of the land register office. In 1886, they reported that the peasants had sold more than 60 percent of the taxable farms to several timber companies. What had happened was virtually unimaginable. Over these years the value of the farms rose enormously, sometimes reaching ten times the original price paid at inheritance. State and communal taxes based on these new values rose accordingly (Hedlund-Nyström 1972: 70). Thus peasants did not only become indebted by paying for the enclosure process itself but also through the effects that market mechanisms had on other aspects of their life. Peasants who were on the verge of a inter-vivos inheritance during this period of rising farm prices sold their farms because none of the group of siblings was willing to indebt himself that much; they saw themselves forced to sell their taxable farms.

In addition to the sale of the farm, the contracts with timber companies included tenure rights for 50 years, or a lifetime of one of the peasant's sons, and priority rights to future lumber contracts. Thus, through the sales, the peasants tried to secure the economic base of households by attaching work privileges. At the time they probably thought in terms of buying back the farm buildings and arable parts of their landholdings, once they had

earned the money to do so. But it took nearly half a century before legislation was passed that allowed farms and arable land to be bought and sold separately from the forested part of the property holdings.

Between 1886 and 1904, another 15 percent of the taxable farms were sold. Ultimately, less than 25 percent of the tax units, consisting of 20 percent of the area, remained in the hands of the free peasantry. The owners of this remaining land had not, in fact, refused to deal with the timber companies. Following a strategy devised by an outside lawyer, most of them had leased the felling rights of their land to one or another of the competing companies in return for reimbursement of the costs incurred during the enclosure procedure.

The consequences of this transition in property rights were manifold, but I will confine myself here to the production cycle of the peasant households. Although the peasants were deprived of property rights and thus lost their political majority in the community council, everyday life seemed to go on more or less as before. Most of the peasants stayed on their farms as tenants. As before, they could use all the resources in the woodlands that were important to their multifaceted production cycle: Mountain pastures or marshes for making fodder, hunting, fishing, and trapping were not restricted, nor was there a prohibition on cutting timber for fuel. Economic opportunities even seem to have widened since the local peasants had privileged rights to bid for the work in timber cutting and floating. Peasant labor in lumbering was organized on the basis of household membership and close kinship: Fathers, brothers, and brothers-in-law organized themselves into teams, depending on the household formation. A lumbering team consisted of two to three lumberjacks and a horse driver. Thus teams could be organized without depending on unrelated households, and in that respect there was continuity in the labor process, even on a normative level. Lumbering became one of the many resources that a peasant household had at its disposal. Although it did not bring that much, lumbering meant that the households could count on some cash earnings and could afford not to undergo the long trips to trading centers. A small shop could open its doors and sell products previously bartered or traded, like grain and salt and other consumption goods.

However, there were limits to this household strategy in the community. From 1885 to 1910, the rate of formation of new farms in Härjedalen was one of the lowest in the province (Rolén 1990: 40-51). The scope for founding new farms had been severely reduced by the enclosures and the transfer of property rights, although the new legislation on the partitioning of taxable farms in the 1890s was very liberal. The new owners, the timber companies, although they were keen to secure a stable labor force for their

industry, were not eager to create new agrarian households. They were industrial companies and had no interest in operating agrarian branches within their business. Thus a situation developed in which many households were not able to maintain the demands of self-sufficiency on the basis of independent household organization and resources. They were dependent on timber companies for access to arable land and meadows on the one hand and for access to wage labor in order to pay the rent on the other. One of the out options at the time was emigration to the United States or Canada. In Lillhärdal, there were two peaks of emigration, one between 1885 and 1895 and another between 1905 and 1915. The first peak shows the aftermath of the large-scale sale of farms; the second peak is partly due to the low wages earned in the timber industry at that time, which put severe pressure on household resources. Market conditions during both peaks pressed hard on the possibilities of living up to the learned normative complexity of an independent household. There was no relaxation of these conditions until the early 1920s.

Wage Labor and Property

Parliamentary inquiries into the land sales, emigration, and agrarian conditions in the first decades of the 20th century led to new legislation that created stable conditions for working peasant households. From 1908 to 1913, a voluminous report on emigration (Emigrationsutredningen 1913) was published under the editorship of Gustav Sundbärg. It not only described the ongoing process of emigration to the United States and Canada; it also described the impact this process had on the internal development of the Swedish peasantry as a whole. The political and emotional breadth implied in the report covers the social, political and cultural role of the peasantry in Swedish national history and nation-building. Although never at the forefront politically, the north Swedish peasantry was described as a sturdy and self-reliant population, resembling "the best in the old peasantry"; mass emigration of these peasants hit the nation culturally in its heart. Especially in the north, large-scale emigration seemed to be due to the enormous turnover of peasant property to timber companies. Sundbärg's report recommended proactive agrarian policies to Parliament to restore the figure of the sturdy peasant in the northern provinces. Some of these recommendations were put into effect in the following years, especially those concerning the creation of working peasant smallholdings.

Years before, in 1892, the Riksdag had discussed possible legislation to stop the crumbling of peasant property in the northern provinces. However, no political majority was reached to curb the sale of peasant farms. Parliament only passed new legislation on the partitioning of farms to ease

the way for more people to acquire a piece of land. Not until 1901 was a parliamentary commission appointed to examine the possibilities of a more restrictive law on the sales of peasant landed property. As a conservative member of Parliament representing the county of Härjedalen, the attending clergyman of Lillhärdal, Sven Johan Enander, advocated a ban on the sale of land to timber companies in his address to Parliament. He was infuriated about the companies' practices in his parish and the consequences of capitalist developments in general and did not abstain from using insulting and abusive language to make his points (Falck 1957). The results of the parliamentary discussion were enacted in the Prohibition Law (förbudslagstiftning) of 1906, forbidding peasant sales of property to industrial companies, or, to put it another way, imposing a ban on companies acquiring peasant property. However, private salesmen could still operate their business in speculating with peasant property as intermediaries. The straw-man laws of 1925 and 1934 (bulvanlagarna) ended their role as go-betweens (Hellström 1917: 124-7; Rolen 1979: 157-160).

Furthermore, new tenant laws (1909) and laws and subsidies supporting the creation of working peasant farms (1904) were passed to strengthen the agrarian development of the region and to break the power timber companies had over agrarian property in general. Through these laws the populations of these hinterland villages were able to continue to live up to the normative aspects of their subsistence strategy. The labor force of 3,814 workers engaged in timber cutting in Härjedalen during the season of 1934 and 35 consisted of the following social groups (Rolén 1990):

Peasants and Their Sons	32.5 percent
Tenants and Their Sons	14.9 percent
Workers with Agrarian Property	21.0 percent
Seasonal Workers	31.6 percent

Thus the majority, 68.4 percent, were smallholding peasants of varying degrees of wealth in property. Commercial agriculture or dairy farming never developed because of the unfavorable natural environment, but "those who had enough land to feed a horse and several cows had a basis for their existence" (Rolén 1990: 43) by combining available household labor and natural resources.

Kinship Regulating Labor and Property Relations

During the transition in property relations, kinship ties were used to establish relationships that continued to embody the norms of self-sufficiency and independence. Despite all the new opportunities, all classes tried hard to be as independent as possible when it came to their agrarian household. A double-sided economy grew: on the one side, agrarian households strove to maintain a level of subsistence, and, on the other side, a market economy with wage labor opportunities developed. This money-oriented economy was organized within a wider circle than that of the household and included kinfolk especially.

The classes of peasants, tenants, and crofters operated the household economy as they were used to – in a complicated, multifaceted manner. However, in the long run they became more and more differentiated. The peasants and tenant farmers profited from a small and rather unstable local market for dairy products and horses, created by the timber companies. The newly created group of crofters with small subsidized properties was expected to engage in the commercial agrarian market but never rose above the subsistence level. This group was also in a position of disadvantage, compared with tenants, when competing over timber contracts. Eventually, after the turn of the century, several members of this group specialized in a trade such as carpentry, painting, or blacksmithing, mostly doing seasonal work. These tradesmen also benefited from the extension of the internal market and were organized autonomously in one-man or family businesses. Fathers, sons, and sons-in-law cooperated so that they could cope, often as part-time tradesmen. Thus crofters, in particular, adopted a subsistence strategy of occupational pluralism in which they combined an agrarian household with lumbering and a trade.

Lumbering in the winter season became vital to all households. Most peasants had sold their holdings and now paid an annual rent. To fulfill their rent obligations they were contracted by the timber companies. After the lumber season the rent was deducted from the earnings of their team. Because peasants organized the work themselves and usually relied on close kin, the labor could be repaid in services, perhaps by transporting fodder or fuel or watching an extra two cows in the summer. The still-propertied class of peasants organized lumbering the same way: For them, cash income had also become important; since 1870, taxes were collected in cash. When taking part in lumbering as a team, they, too, usually worked only with workers from their own household or close kin, although they could theoretically have operated as entrepreneurs in organizing several teams. Their behavior was an expression and consequence of the local norms relating to the appropriation of labor and the independence of households. As in the

past, it was difficult to rely on hired labor because every household organized their resources and labor in different ways and according to different time schedules. Some of the peasants, and several outside entrepreneurs, did try to organize timber cutting on an entrepreneurial basis, but these businesses always failed. Because they could not organize labor from within the villages on a permanent basis, they had to rely on itinerant laborers from other provinces who were hard to discipline in an environment that could not be overseen or controlled.

The peasant class and their changing inheritance practices provide the best example of the emergence of new forms of kinship relationship. After the large-scale sale of farms, the inheritance strategies of those families who still owned farms altered in several ways. The value of their forest property had risen disproportionately to the value of the actual farm holdings. Their response was often to transform the forest land into a fund: an impartible inheritance to which all heirs had equal rights. For technical and economic reasons, this property was not divided anymore. Thus one result of the capitalist enclosure of the commons was to give rise to a new form of collective ownership based on kinship.

These collective arrangements did not apply to the agrarian property of the farms, in regard to which a variety of inheritance options developed. Most of the property was sold to heirs before the death of the parents. Sometimes parents enlarged their holdings by buying arable land in order to split the farmstead into fairly equal and viable parts for their children. The wooden buildings were sold, moved, and erected elsewhere. But depending on the biography, marital status, and previously acquired property of the siblings, farms could also be sold to one or two of the heirs. The mountain farms and meadows could also be separated off and sold to one of the siblings. In fact, the variability rose, due also to the possibility of mortgages taken on the forests in order to ease inheritance processes.

The consequences of another aspect of these inheritance strategies are still visible in the landscape: At the beginning of the 20th century, several property-owning peasant families erected huge buildings, two or three stories high, to be used as the living quarters for their children. Although this suggests the development of co-residence and extended families, the siblings and their partners and offspring used these living quarters as separate apartments; they all had separate kitchens, toilets, living rooms, and bedrooms. They did not share a household. The same happened with the stables and barns, the tools and arable land. The households, as consumption and production units, were separated from one another. However, they cooperated on two points: In the summer, the women took the cattle up to the mountain farms and meadows together, although the dairy produce was neatly kept

separate for every household. In the winter, the men formed a timber-cutting team, sometimes logging their own forest, sometimes employed on a contract for one of the timber companies. Even here the cooperation did not extend into more than the actual organization of the activities. The horse driver, who was responsible for the contract, got a larger share because his job included the care for his horse. The loggers were paid separately, according to their productivity. Living in cabins far away from home, they did not even share their meals or their coffee, not because of animosity between them but simply because they had learned to take care of themselves and not to involve themselves in the business of other people. Again and again the theme of labor and the entitlement to its produce come to the surface as normative themes regulating behavior.

Conclusion

Enclosure, as part of an industrial capitalist development, mobilized kinship ties in the realm of capital and labor. On the one hand, farmers who could maintain their property rights created family funds of forest property. The agrarian resources, however, were divided between the heirs according to principles of partible and equal inheritance. Thus the industrial activities in the region created incentives to unite the interests of a kin group when it concerned their rights and claims to capital goods with industrial value.

On the other hand, almost all farmers, tenants, and crofters participated in the newly created wage-labor sector; partly because they were privileged because of contracts, partly to pay the rent to timber companies, and partly because a cash economy developed and changed consumption and production patterns that suited their household economy. However, when deploying labor in a subcontracting fashion, they never went beyond the boundaries of kinship ties. The normative principles implied in the appropriation of labor and its product within the subsistence economy were actively mobilized to organize wage labor. Thus wage labor became adapted from within the peasants' household strategy. Kinship developed more than ever before to become an overarching organizational principle beyond the household but stayed strictly within the boundaries of wage labor or craft production. In agrarian production, households were still obliged to stress their independence, both normatively and in practice. This virtue of household production was highly appreciated and still generated esteem within the public realm.

When studying historical or contemporary transitions, we may look for the emergence of new social categories, dramatic shifts in the meaning of property and inheritance processes, or demographic changes in household composition – and construct new typologies to describe these developments.

However, when attempting to understand what the changes mean to particular groups of people, there is much to be learned from the interconnection between environmental factors, sociopolitical pressures, and, last but not least, the mental norms that govern the possibilities people are able to perceive. "Cultural commitments can influence family 'adaptations' in nuanced ways that are only evident when focus is on the process rather than the outcome" (Creed 2000: 332). During the process of adaptation to capitalism in Härjedalen, the extension of kinship ties did not express an autonomous value system; instead, it was part of a learned practice that incorporated newly developed economic relations into an existing mental landscape of normatively meaningful social relationships.

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Chapter 14

The Last Become First: The Rise of Ultimogeniture In Contemporary South Tyrol

John W. Cole

Introduction

This paper focuses on economic behavior and understanding in a small village in northern Italy. It is a consideration of changes and continuities that took place between the early 1960s and the end of the 1980s. The point of the exercise is to think about the use of property and its transmission between individuals. This is considered to be a process of interaction between legal rules, vernacular beliefs, and political economic processes.

In the 1960s, people in this village subsisted chiefly on their own agricultural produce. Sale of goods and services was secondary and subordinate to production for use. In contrast, by the 1980s, people were primarily dependant on wage labor or the sale of goods and services, although many, but not all, continued to augment cash income by production for use.

The village, St. Felix, lies in the upper reaches of the alpine Valley of Non, right at the political boundary between two Italian provinces, South Tyrol and Trentino.[1] This boundary is the *Hidden Frontier* of the book reporting on the 1960s research of the late Eric R. Wolf and me (Cole and Wolf 1999). In that book and in several companion articles, we reported on the contemporary interplay of economic, ecological, and social processes and on their historical antecedents in two neighboring villages, St. Felix in

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[1] The area is called *Alto Val di Non* in Italian and *Nonsberg* in German. It includes both German– and Romance-speaking villages. The four German-speaking villages are collectively known as the *Deutschgegend am Nonsberg*. For the Val di Non/Nonstal as a whole, Wolf and I used a historic name, *Anaunia,* in our 1974 work. Trentino is also known as *Provincia di Trento;* the South Tyrol is *Südtirol* in German and is officially known as *Alto Adige* in Italian, although *Sudtirolo* is becoming more common in vernacular Italian and even in print. A few colleagues now use "Tirol" in English rather than the traditional "Tyrol."

Tyrol and Tret in the Trentino (Wolf 1970; Cole 1973). In this paper, however, I shall concentrate on St. Felix and the Province of South Tyrol.[2]

Returning to this province in the 1980s, I was gratified to see that the changes in the villages were generally in directions that we had predicted in our earlier work there. I was fascinated by the details of how these processes had worked out. I was especially intrigued by significant changes that had taken place in people's relationship to property and to each other and how they themselves understood these changes. At the same time, it was clear that rather striking changes were taking place in the South Tyrol's political situation and that these were interwoven with the changes taking place in the village.

On one level, this essay can be taken as a comment on attempts to link specific inheritance norms with economic success or failure. My view is that "inheritance" is about how productive property is passed from one generation to the next. It insists on examining the full range of actual inheritance behavior rather than attempting to isolate a norm or inheritance ideology that determines economic behavior.

Property

Now it is time to turn to the idea of "property." The basic idea is that property is something that one can possess, make use of, and deny the use of to others. Any material object or concept can be culturally defined as property, and therefore it can in some sense be "owned" by someone. However, we recognize that the objects necessary to the means to a livelihood constitute a particularly significant subset of property. A tractor or factory is a different form of property than a wedding ring or a cabin in the woods – the difference, as it were, between tools and trinkets. Anthropologists with a historical bent – Jack Goody, for example – have long since pointed out the importance of inheritance of this kind of property where the social system is linked to ownership of the means to a livelihood (Goody et al. 1976; Goody 2000). In anglophone anthropology, there is a long tradition of distinguishing between modes of access to property – for example, in contrasting between "tribal" and "peasant" societies. I absorbed the debates about this at the knee of Marshall Sahlins as a graduate student in the 1960s, first by reading Karl Polanyi and his "bulldog," George Dalton, then by absorbing the writings of their various critics. We also learned about a proletarianization process, wherein commoners were stripped of their ownership of the means to a livelihood and went to work for a wage.

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[2] I returned to the area only briefly in 1980. Research having a bearing on this paper was carried out in 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1989-90, and 1991.

There is a striking contrast between the role that property inheritance plays in the lives of most people today and the role that it played in the lives of people in the past, even in the not-too-distant past. We are all well aware that commoners in Europe and North America once depended directly or indirectly on farming for their livelihood. Under these conditions, inheritance processes played a major role in social dynamics. One either inherited a bundle of productive resources or was disinherited and had to depend on social ties to the favored heir or heirs for access to a livelihood. For most, this was land, buildings, tools, animals, and seed; for others, it was a family business, made up of a shop and its inventory of goods, or a craft learned over an extended period of apprenticeship. For almost everyone, social standing was a direct outcome of the inheritance process.

With rare exceptions, women had no direct rights to property. The favored would marry a man endowed with the means to a living. A substantial dowry would help a woman ensure that men of property might come a-wooing. The dowry would likely include objects of use within the household but might also include land or the tools of production. In any case, the dowry was likely to pass from father to husband rather than actually being the property of the woman herself. In any case, without a dowry, a woman was unlikely to secure a landed mate.

The disinherited – men and women alike – were at a decided disadvantage. Without property, prospects were few. It was very difficult to make a living as an agricultural laborer, whether remaining as a dependent on an inheriting sibling's estate or cutting loose and joining the rural labor force. Without prospects, the landless settled as "cotters" on the village margin or joined the uprooted forced to "hit the road" in search of work. In North America, to work for another long marked one as socially and morally inferior. It is important to keep in mind that inheritance processes are as much about denying property to some as about making it available to others and structuring social relations between primary heirs, secondary heirs, and non-heirs.

Today, inheritance plays a marginal role in most of our lives. Of course, for the rich and super-rich, inheritance of wealth and the means of generating more wealth remains of great significance. As for the rest of us, we may or may not, at some point in our lives, fall heir to a bundle. But, no matter how large or small, this bundle is rarely significant in the formation of our life plans or in establishing our place in society. We study; we learn a craft, a trade, or a profession. We get a job or set up a practice, marry (or not), and get involved (or not) in community affairs. Our parents, or other benefactors, may assist or hinder us in reaching our goals. They may even make resources available or withhold resources in attempts to influence our

choices. Nevertheless, we are, as a rule, well and truly launched by the time any inheritance comes our way. An inheritance is more likely to serve as a windfall, rather like a beached whale in earlier times. It's nice to have, but one doesn't stake one's future on waiting for it to happen.

Contemporary Tyrolean Political Economy

Now it is time to see if I can't ground some of the foregoing musings. The 1980s found me back in the South Tyrol. One of my interests was how political elites worked to preserve the distinctive South Tyrolese identity through a program of economic development and political activism (Cole 1999, 2001). This had been made possible by a significant change in the province's political standing initiated in the 1970s, around the time Wolf and I had finished our book. The change was from a charter of *Regional autonomy* to a new charter of *Provincial autonomy*. Under the Regional system, mandated by the victors after World War II, the provinces of South Tyrol and Trentino were combined and subordinated politically to the resulting region. The new system established two independent Provinces, which participate as equals in regard to matters of regional concern.

The major significance of this change was that it put the German-speaking Tyrolese in political control of the Province of South Tyrol. Demographically, German-speakers make up about two-thirds of the population of South Tyrol with Romance speakers making up the remaining third. The political will of the Tyrolese is represented by the *Südtiroler Volkspartei* (SVP), which consistently garners over 80 percent of their vote and dominates the provincial government. Under the old regional system, the German-speakers had always been in the minority. The Trentino was, in effect, entirely Italian, so, combined with the citizens of the South Tyrol, Italians easily controlled the regional government. The transfer of power in the South Tyrol was certainly not immediate but was doled out gradually. The new governing structure was up and running quite quickly, but it took over a decade of negotiations with Rome to fully work out the "implementing procedures" of the new autonomy statute (locally called "The Package"). However, the *Volkspartei* lost no time in exerting its new power. In particular, it took steps to stimulate the provincial economy in a way that would benefit the German-speaking population. Two actions of significance were to put a virtual stop to further expansion of the Bolzano/Bozen Industrial Zone, which had been established under the Fascists and continued to be dominated by Italians. At the same time, they took steps to stimulate the growth of industry in the countryside where most Tyrolese live. One of these was to encourage every community to develop a local industrial zone, both

to support local entrepreneurs and to attract outside investment. Table 14.1: Population of Trentino-South Tyrol by language group (in thousands) [3]

	South Tyrol			Trentino
Year	German	Italian	Ladin	
1900	190.2 (91.4%)	8.6 (4.1%)	8.9 (4.3%)	360.2
1961	232.7 (62.2%)	128.3 (34.3%)	12.6 (3.4%)	412.1
1981	279.5 (64.9%)	123.7 (28.7%)	17.7 (4.1%)	442.9

A second step was to establish seven rural industrial zones. These were distributed throughout the province in an attempt to put every villager within reasonable commuting distance of industrial or white-collar employment. While outside capital was welcomed in these undertakings, control would be exercised by Tyroleans. Another step was to establish schools where children could learn the skills required by the new economic opportunities, supplemented by continuing education programs where workers could upgrade their skills or learn new ones.

Other steps were taken to strengthen both tourism and agriculture. The province established guidelines, training programs, and financial incentives to help farmers respond to new European Community agricultural policies. They also assisted communities in developing ways of attracting and housing tourists. At the same time, an overall Provincial *Raumordnungsplan* included guidelines for rural communities to establish their own zoning ordinances. Village councils were not only encouraged to set aside space for commercial development but were instructed to prohibit the construction of new housing in the countryside. One could not, for example, install an heir in the ancestral home and build another house on the same estate for a daughter or second son. All new construction was to be confined to a designated area in the central core of the village. It was presumed that this would

[3] The South Tyrol and Trentino had both long been a part of *Land Tirol* in the Habsburg Empire. With the dismantling of that empire following World War I, the two became a part of Italy. Following the rise to power of Mussolini and the Fascists in the 1920s, Italy initiated an Italianization drive in the South Tyrol. This included the establishment of an industrial zone in Bozen/Bolzano and the migration of thousands of Italians into the province from central and southern Italy. Other measures were taken to Italianize the Tyrolese and even, in 1939, to remove them to Nazi Germany. For more about these processes and their significance for contemporary politics, see Cole and Wolf, 1974; Cole 1999 and 2001; and references cited in these works.

be adequate to accommodate the growing number of wage laborers and entrepreneurs.. On the one hand these measures were intended to protect the rural character of the countryside by preventing "urban sprawl." On the other, they were intended to expand the range of economic options open to village residents, thus encouraging rural population growth while providing an infrastructure that could accommodate this growth.

While the measures taken by the South Tyrolese leadership were designed to create and maintain a healthy economy, they also had a strong ideological component. During the forced industrialization and urbanization of the Fascist era, and during the period of the Regional Charter, the South Tyrolese had drawn strength from their identity as a rural agrarian folk. They resisted not only Italian political domination but what they saw as the immorality of Italian urban culture. With the establishment of the provincial charter, every economic measure was simultaneously ideological in nature. Strengthening the rural economy and keeping much of the population in rural residence was explicitly intended to preserve "traditional" interests and values among wage earners and entrepreneurs.

However, the political leadership also recognized that ever more Tyrolese were taking up urban residence and values. This understanding prompted the *Volkspartei* to establish both a "workers movement" and an entrepreneurial wing within the party to represent these emerging interests. The SVP leaders have constantly stressed that theirs is a *Sammelpartei* (Holzer 1991: 115-116). Their hope was to keep political debate within the party so that agreements could be reached internally and the party could continue to present a united front in Italian politics.

Meanwhile, Back on the Farm[4]

So how has this all played out in the Deutschgegend am Nonsberg (Klebelsberg, 1959)?

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[4] The data that Wolf and I collected in the 1960s included interviews, archival materials, and a variety of sorts of printed matter. It also included "participant observation." We both lived in the area for extended periods of time. Among other things, this enabled us to complete a survey of all households in the village. This is all reported in our book (1974). The data from the 1980s is similar. I was again able to complete a survey of all households. Using a combination of archival material, interviews with village functionaries, and household interviews, I was able to link each 1980s household to its antecedent in the 1960s and, conversely, to determine the fate of each 1960s household, including those no longer represented in the village. More recently, I have been able to benefit from the restudy of the area conducted by the Swiss linguistic anthropologist, Daniela Weber Egli (1992, 1993). In addition to relying on her published work, I have also benefited from quite a number of detailed discussions with her.

Well, a shift in the practice and significance of farming in St. Felix, since fieldwork there in the 1960s, was clearly evident and everyone had something to say about it. Agriculture continued to be dominated by dairying, and there were actually more cows in the village in the '80s than in the '60s. However, while in the '60s almost every household lived primarily from their own land, in the '80s there were only a handful of households whose principal income came from farming. Most households still practiced a mix of farming and some other occupation, but while the number of such households showed little change, there had been a significant shift in the relative importance of farming and other occupations. To put it in the simplest terms, in the earlier period, wage labor or entrepreneurial ventures were clearly subordinate to farming. They were undertaken to strengthen agricultural production or to augment agricultural income. In the later period, these families depended primarily on wages or profits, and farming was of secondary importance. This in spite of the fact that farm incomes had increased dramatically. Moreover, whereas in the earlier period the priest and the schoolteacher were the only households supported by salary alone, in the later period there were numerous families fully dependent on wages who engaged in no farming whatsoever.

In the 1960s, the dominance of household subsistence strategies led Wolf and me to follow local usage and anthropological convention and refer to the villagers as *Bauern* (peasants). Even those who depend primarily on farming today clearly pursue market rather than subsistence strategies. They are no longer referred to as *Bauern*, except in certain political and ceremonial contexts. Thus I shall refer to them as "farmers." This is as good a place in this paper as any to mention that the entire Trentino-South Tyrol region has become very prosperous by European standards and that the village of St. Felix has shared in this prosperity.

In step with provincial trends, the village of St. Felix (now combined with the neighboring *Deutschgegend* village of Unser Liebe Frau im Wald into the Commune of Unser Frau-St. Felix) had established an industrial zone. Located there were five enterprises: a combined bar, inn, and gas station; a trucking firm; a construction firm; a furniture factory; and a clothing factory. The clothing factory was a branch of a German firm headquartered in Munich, but the others were all owned and operated by local entrepreneurs. The bar/inn/gas station combo and the trucking firm were owned by the same extended family and relied primarily on family labor. The construction firm and furniture factory were each owned and managed by a single family but hired their work force locally. The clothing factory hired a local work force made up entirely of women, but the manager was a man who commuted to the village daily from the lowlands. While the number of workers these enterprises required varied from time to time, the

workers these enterprises required varied from time to time, the scale of employment in the 1980s was in the range of 50 or so to over 100. Bearing in mind that the total population of Unser Frau–St. Felix was around 750, this scale of entrepreneurial activity had a considerable impact.

Of course, with the expansion of both opportunities for education and employment in the lowlands, villagers could also leave the village and commute to work or opt to both live and work outside of the *Deutschgegend.* In either case, they could easily maintain close ties with friends and family in the village. This is a good place to mention that while there had been no more than three or four motor vehicles in the village in 1965, they were ubiquitous in the 1980s. I had the impression while I was there that I was the only one who ever walked anywhere anymore.

The consequences of these developments on the local communities were topics of ongoing discussion in the commune, with me to be sure but with one another as well. Much of the talk had to do with the employment and marriage opportunities for women. People talked about how young women were becoming increasingly reluctant to commit to life as a farmer's wife, since there were plenty of men around who worked for a wage, or for profit – so women had the option of marrying men with non-farm income. Moreover, women could work in the local garment factory while married to a man who had a waged job, or as a result of working outside the village, they might meet and marry men they met where they worked, thus leaving for urban residence. There were also cases of women marrying into the neighboring Romance-speaking villages, something that had rarely if ever happened in the past. There were even a few cases of career women who chose not to marry at all, most spectacularly in the case of a woman with a career as a civil servant who was elected mayor of the commune (Weber Egli 1992, 1993).

A corollary to this is that young men who are heirs to their family homesteads are having a difficult time finding wives. Everyone had to tell me the tale of one farmer in particular, the heir to one of St. Felix's solid middle-sized holdings. He was somewhat shorter than average, which added spice to the tale. Being short as well as being a farmer put him at a considerable disadvantage in seeking a mate. He had, I was told, proposed marriage at one time or another to every eligible woman in the village and had been turned down by one and all. Not incidentally, as it turned out, the village priest was also from a family loaded with short genes. When the priest's unmarried sister happened to visit the village and meet the young farmer, she was soon proposed to, and being not only short but of a traditional outlook, she accepted.

Of course, the changing circumstances were also having an impact on the career choices of men. They, too, were beginning to look with favor on non-farm careers. My short farmer acquaintance was distinctly in the minority in his enthusiasm for farming. Even eldest sons, designated heirs of their (usually) fathers' farms were beginning to set aside their right to management and ownership in order to pursue non-farming careers. As older siblings leave the farm, or even leave the village altogether, pressure mounts on younger siblings to remain at home to care for aging parents. More often than not, the heir turns out to be the youngest female. So the inheritance of a farm is turned from an enviable privilege of the eldest son into compensation for the burden of caring for the elderly.

These tales of construction regulated, of wives sought, and of female heirs were in marked contrast to life in times past, as revealed to the late Eric Wolf and me during our research in the 1960s. At that time, and as far into the past as local records would take us, the position of heir was a privileged one, carefully regulated by law and custom. Those with land constituted a village elite, materially better off than non-heirs and in firm control of local political affairs and social life. Without land, people either left the village to seek their fortune in the outside world or remained as dependent farm hands on a sibling's farm. Except in rare cases, men inherited property or left the village and women married a landowner or left the village. New households were rarely created, and there was virtually no pressure to divide up a farm for new house plots.

So here we find both continuity and change. What has changed is the significance of owning a farm. What did not change, or is changing more slowly, is the privileged position of males. The male advantage now is to set aside farming in favor of starting a business or working for a wage, and it is the son, especially the eldest, who has first choice in exercising this option.

This situation was not entirely surprising. Wolf and I had noted that, historically, the desirability of inheriting land had varied depending on circumstances outside the village. When opportunities in the lowlands were few, possessing a farm was very desirable. But when there were opportunities outside the village, even if elsewhere in Europe or abroad, the importance of inheriting land vis-à-vis other occupations was diminished, albeit never to the extent to be found in the 1980s.

Ultimogeniture?

What *was* surprising to me was that so many of my younger acquaintances would casually mention to me that ultimogeniture had "always" been the village norm and would stick to that view when I challenged them. They explained that the responsibility for one's parents was a burden, that older

siblings would leave the farm for better circumstances, and the youngest, usually a woman, would be expected to shoulder the responsibility of caring for the elders. The farm was compensation for assuming this burden. The circumstances that might have led one to prefer farming were outside of the range of their imagination.

This certainly intrigued me. As I have already pointed out, in the past the ideology of impartiblity and primogeniture was clearly and forcefully articulated by one and all, even though constantly violated in practice. Discrepancies interested, indeed fascinated, villagers. But each exception to the ideology, to the alleged norm, was seen as unique, a product of special circumstances. There was no calculation of the frequency of these deviations, no awareness of just how often the norm was violated in practice, no questioning of the ideology itself. So for belief in primogeniture to erode and give way to ultimogeniture, not only in practice but as ideal and ideology, represented an impressive sea change.

What Are Inheritance Patterns, Anyway?

Some cautions, then: One is that we need to show great care when writing about an "inheritance pattern" or "practice" if it is the actual transmission of property we are interested in. Sometimes these terms have been derived from the study of a legal system or are inferred from the documents in an archive – a deeds registry office, for example. At other times, assertions about inheritance are based on local interviews and reflect the village norm. What I am suggesting here is that none of these, taken alone, is likely to reveal just how property actually changes hands.

Villagers were for the most part also relatively unsophisticated in their understanding of the requirements of the national inheritance laws. It was, and is, usual for them to engage a lawyer when a transfer of property was anticipated. The lawyer would take the villager's intentions and express them in terms of the national and provincial legal requirements. Simply put, Italian law required partible inheritance but also allowed for sale of property. So what would happen when a St. Felix farmer wanted to pass his undivided estate on to a single heir? The conflict between the national law and farmer's intent could be reconciled by leaving the farm to one heir but stipulating that others would (sooner or later) receive some amount of cash. The legal document would show an act of partible inheritance followed by sale of property shares.

Thus was a villager's understanding reconciled with the (contrasting) law of the land even while the ethnographer's notes show that neither national law nor local norms determined how property was actually transmitted.

In closing, I want to make a final comment about the significance of locating social and cultural practice in its historical context. In the *Deutschgegend*, social dynamics swirled around access to viable agricultural holdings throughout the 19th and well into the 20th century. Inheritance ideology in St. Felix had emerged in reaction to the policies of the Habsburgs, which stressed the importance of maintaining viable agricultural estates intact from generation to generation (Rebel 1998). They persisted after the South Tyrol was transferred to Italian sovereignty following the collapse of the Habsburg Empire in 1918. And, if anything, they were strengthened in opposition to the Italianization efforts of the Italian Fascists during the 1930s and '40s.

Although alternatives to farming as a way of life waxed and waned over the years, they never rose to a level where they challenged the advantages afforded by control of an agricultural holding. Finally, near the end of the 20th century, the transformation of the political economy in which these communities are embedded has both transformed agricultural practice and relegated it to a less central economic role. Concomitantly, social dynamics have been transformed in ways that I have outlined above.

Acknowledgements

I want to express my gratitude to the organizers of the conference that led up to this publication for thinking of me as a participant, thus giving me the opportunity to work out some of the ideas expressed in this paper. Both the Südtiroler Sozial– und Wirstschaftsinstitut in Bozen and the Museo degli Usi e Costumi della Gente Trentina in San Michele have provided me with timely assistance, for which I am grateful. I am also pleased to acknowledge the financial support of my research in South Tyrol in 1988 by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. Several periods as Director of the University of Massachusetts Department of Anthropology European Field Training program allowed me to spend time in the Trentino–South Tyrol Region during the 1980s. Finally, I want to thank Patrick Heady for his thoughtful suggestions for revisions, without which this intervention would have been much less clear and to the point.

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Part III

In and Out of Socialism

As a consequence of the Russian Revolution or after World War II, most societies of the former socialist sphere in Eastern Europe experienced a much more far-reaching reorganization of their property systems than those in Western Europe. But did the progressive introduction of the socialist system cause the long-lasting inheritance, property, and family organization patterns, discussed in the previous sections of this book, to lose all their importance? What else was socialist family and community life about? Finally, when, after the breakdown of the socialist order, privatization programs were carried out in these societies – and some governments even aimed to (partly) "return" to "earlier" existing property arrangements – what consequences did this have for patterns of social organization? How much do we need to know about the legacy of pre-socialist and socialist property, family, and community arrangements to understand present characteristics of the post-socialist transformation? The findings of the following six detailed studies of communities and social strategies in the process of moving "in and out of socialism" offer some answers to these questions. But they also shed light on quite distinct tendencies with regard to historical traditions of family and inheritance in different parts of Eastern Europe.

In the first chapter, on kinship, inheritance, and property relations in the Polish Carpathian Mountains, Frances Pine deals with an issue that was also discussed in the last chapter of the previous section: how familial and communal relations are affected by the fact that fewer and fewer households in the community earn their living from farming. But before interpreting this rapidly accelerating development of the post-socialist decade since 1989, she makes clear how strongly kinship relations and the possession of land have been interconnected over the past centuries – and identifies other critical historical moments in which community structures experienced transformations. One of these critical moments was the emancipation process in the second half of the 19th century. After that the inheritance system of equal partible inheritance, together with a rapidly growing population resulted in a situation in which land fragmentation – as well as labor and emigration –

increasingly characterized community life. Although socialism began to level the relations between the different strata of the village – and formed another critical moment – the fact that farming was not collectivized meant that the house and the land, its inheritance and division, continued, in a fairly unaltered form, to be of crucial importance in shaping the relations between the generations, the gender groups, and different households within the community. In addition it also served as a point of security vis-à-vis the state. Although losing much of this economic importance in the ongoing post-socialist de-agrarianizing processes, land has remained a powerful metaphor for kinship. Relationships are still, as Pine shows, articulated through place and kinship, although it seems unclear to what extent new economic developments will destabilize existing authority structures within the family and the community.

In the following chapter, Patrick Heady shows how, prior to collectivization, the system of property transmission in Russian peasant communities was very different not only from that in Western Europe but also from those in Slavonic societies farther west – one of which is described in Pine's Polish case study. Western European societies were characterized by an inheritance system in which property was devolved upon close relatives, typically members of the next generation of the nuclear family. In large parts of Russia, ownership of land cultivated by the peasants was vested in the local peasant community as a whole – the *obshchina,* or *mir*. Though the actual farming was done by separate households, the *obshchina* regularly repartitioned the land to ensure that the amount of land cultivated by each household was proportional to the household size. Russian kinship terminology also differed – in ways consistent with the differences in property regimes. Heady shows that the relevant aspects of Russian kinship terminology have not changed since collectivization, and presents ethnographic evidence of the continuing importance of kinship in the Russian countryside. He further argues that the reactions to the land reforms of the 1990s in Russia – where the response to the opportunity to set up independent family farms on privatized land has been negligible in most regions – are consistent with the assumptions implicit in Russians' kinship system and historical model of property relations.

The chapter by Oane Visser also focuses on the post-socialist land reforms in Russia in his description of the continuing dominant importance of the former *kolkhozy* and *sovkhozy* in rural communities in the northern Russian region of Pskov. Visser shows why redistribution of land in the course of the agricultural reforms had little appeal for the rural population. For the people it seemed to be a more realistic strategy to remain employed in the now-privatized collectives and continue to use their infrastructure,

although the main income of the households came from their small household plots, which every family was entitled to own but which hardly consisted of more than half a hectare of land. Since the majority of the collective enterprises were either in a permanent economic crisis or even bankrupt, these developments led to an ongoing slowdown of community activities. In this situation neither the risky task of starting up private family farming nor the "return" to pre-socialist community patterns of collective action seems to offer attractive prospects. As Visser shows, it is the symbiosis of small-scale household farming closely attached to crisis-torn collectives – along with the increasing importance of kinship relations – that enables people to make a living.

Post-socialist land reform took a very different course in rural Hungary, as Tatjana Thelen shows in her chapter about the farming community of Mesterszállás. Here, the privatization of the earlier collectivized land attracted much interest. But not all village households ended up on the winning side. Thelen shows how many of those who before socialism had belonged to the land-rich village elite and had dominated the local affairs – the pre-socialist authority of such *gazda* families in Hungarian village life is discussed in detail by Torsello in the second section of this book – fared particularly well in reclaiming collectivized land. This was partly due to the nature of the privatization procedures. The second important reason for being on the advantaged side after privatization depended on the ability to mobilize the relevant social capital to obtain influential positions during land privatization. While communal life was affected by changed property relations, family life was also transformed by the switch of the majority of the village households back to private family farming. Thelen shows how control over land and its inheritance favored the greater authority of the elder males and weakened the position of the younger generation – that of younger women in particular.

The question of status, and its transfer from before the middle of the century through the successive transformations of collectivization and de-collectivization, is also dealt with in John Eidson's chapter on small-business families in the Leipzig region of post-socialist East Germany. Eidson, with the help of two detailed case studies, illuminates how "heritage" – which might be termed "social capital" – and inheritance of property rights together constitute the background for understanding the behavior and activities of small-business and family enterprises in the post-socialist decade. In both case studies, material assets inherited from the family and made material capital, as a consequence of the de-collectivization process, played a role in maintaining or starting entrepreneurial activities. Also in both cases, personal experience, community networks, and heritage of family traditions

strongly influenced the decisions – to continue to run a former semi-private drugstore and to transform parts of a collective into a meat-processing firm – and the entrepreneurs' approaches to various economic difficulties.

In the final chapter of this section Carolin Leutloff-Grandits demonstrates the drastic consequences of the legacy of socialist and pre-socialist inheritance practices for Serbian villagers in the Krajina region of Croatia after the wars of the 1990s. In the community she studied, family formation strategies had traditionally been based on patrilineal household, residence, and inheritance patterns. Equal male inheritance remained an important feature of everyday familial relations throughout much of the 20th century, despite opposing state laws. It also found spatial expression in the settlement structure, when as a result of household and land division the houses of a kinship group come to be assembled in close vicinity. In socialist times the family land was not collectivized but remained in private hands. Moreover, families used their patrilineal ties to build up informal ownership structures that circumvented the registration regulations of the communist state. Inherited plots of land and, in particular, newly built houses were not or were only partly registered – in order to preserve the younger generation's chance of being allocated communally owned apartments in the nearby town, where, as a consequence of socialist industrialization, a majority of the village population were employed. Unfortunately this strategy left most of the Serb villagers without formal title to their land and houses after the Croatian wartime expropriations of the 1990s. When refugees returned from emigration after the war, many found their houses occupied and, due to the lack of documentation, found it very difficult to prove their ownership rights.

Chapter 15

Reproducing the House: Kinship, Inheritance, and Property Relations in Highland Poland

Frances Pine

The Place

The road from Kraków to the Polish Tatra Mountains traces a path through a wide expanse of evergreen forest, opening occasionally into a small village and its outlying fields. In some villages old log huts, with thatched roofs and lines of faded blue paint between the logs, outnumber the newer wooden houses and brightly painted stucco dwellings of the 1970s and the enormous, multi-storied Alpine villas that have emerged since the end of socialism, in 1989. In others, few wooden huts remain, and the surprisingly large new houses dominate. Many houses are decked out with large, vivid signs, calling passing traffic in to buy, "wholesale and retail," tiles, building materials, foreign cheap clothes, leather goods, and such. Cottage industry, 21st-century style, is clearly being superinscribed onto more entrenched layers of peasant farming and pastoralism, the "traditional" pursuits of Góral.[1]

Long, very narrow strip fields begin behind the houses and extend outward over the hills and valleys around each village, giving the landscape a remarkable patchwork effect. These narrow strips of land sowed with various crops and farmed by different village houses tell more vividly than any words the story of decades of land division. Historically, images of the land in the Podhale are framed by the "curse" of partible inheritance, described so brilliantly by Segalen (1984), among others. It is here that the sense of loss and longing that haunts so much of Góral oral tradition, songs, and stories may be seen to be rooted, and it is here that both what makes these mountain people Górale, and what makes them always poised to lose that sense of being, is located. Ideologically, the land is the center of what it

[1] I follow Polish usage and use Góral for the singular (highland/er) and Górale for the plural (highland/ers).

means to be Góral. Written into the system of partible inheritance is both their fierce egalitarianism, reflected in the practice of giving equal shares to all sons and daughters, and their constant insecurity, as the land is diminished and diminished, until it is no longer viable, by this division. Perhaps even further back is a collective memory of transience of place: As shepherds in the 14th and 15th centuries, their forebears moved across the Carpathians, claiming rights to alpine pastures, establishing mountain farms, and settling here and there. Later, from their settled farming communities in the 19th century, they traveled away as migrant laborers and economic migrants across Europe and as far as North America. These patterns of egalitarian inheritance practices, division and fragmentation of land, and economic migration continued through the 20th century to today. To remain who they are, Górale have to leave their homes; to meet the demands of kinship and community, they have to divide their houses and constantly re-inscribe the borders of their landscape. The conflicts here, between unity and fragmentation, between kinship and individualism, between sense of place and distance, and between rootedness and movement, are almost insurmountable.

Village Histories

When the land that was to comprise the village was cleared and divided in 1601, it was part of the demesne of the Polish king, who granted it, with other large tracts of land, to a member of the gentry in exchange for services to the crown. This particular village was divided into 12 *rola*, each consisting of about 60 hectares of arable land, meadow, and woods. Each of these was handed in usufruct to a single family, to be worked for their subsistence and for payments in kind to the lord. The village as a whole also held rights to a communal forest plot. Four hundred years later, there are over 200 houses; the villagers own their lands, although they still hold communal rights to some forest and there are periodic debates about whether this should be sold. A few villagers also have shares in *spółki* – fields owned by four or five individuals, usually patrilateral kin, who work and harvest them in turn. The average farm size is less than five hectares; the largest, about 20 hectares.

In this paper I argue that the nature of property relations, particularly as they are expressed through land, has not been consistent in the 400 years that make up the history of the village. Rather, property has meant different things at different times and has changed meaning at particular critical

moments.[2] Under Austro-Hungarian law, in 1848 the village peasants were granted title to the lands their forebears had been farming since the beginning of the 17th century. Once land rights had been granted, accounts in the land records increasingly testify to lands mortgaged or lost to unpaid debts; similarly, land becomes divided and fragmented, between heirs, at an alarming rate. In other words, the moment of emancipation, which marked a critical moment of independence and social adulthood in terms of legal and civil rights, also unleashed a set of problems that would undermine and erode these newfound freedoms for decades to follow. At the turn of the 20th century, hardship, disease, and famine drove villagers to America in search of work. In the early 1950s, the socialist state attempted to take control of agriculture; fears of losing their lands grew large in the villagers' imaginings and were reflected in their elaboration of the house economy, the ideology of land, and a strong anti-state discourse. Ironically, it was at least partly through machinery and distribution cooperatives, more limited than the forced collectivization experienced by other eastern Europeans but still enough to antagonize local people, that the terrible poverty that had marked this region for a century came to an end. Most recently, in the years after 1989, when the socialist institutions that regulated agriculture were dismantled, local emphasis on agricultural land seems also to have diminished, and the values of property are, I would argue, increasingly located in other forms and media: in house plots but in social networks and new types of knowledge and information technologies as well. As things become increasingly more complex in the early 21st century, land is in fact of decreasing overall economic importance; however, it retains its emotional, aesthetic, or social value.

I am less interested here in the institutional implications of change than in the ways in which people rearranged their lives and their labor at these critical junctures, and ideologies of property, often expressed through kinship, were modified and reemerged in slightly altered forms. Despite the laws that ensure all offspring of a marriage equal rights, property relations

[2] Veena Das (1995) developed the idea of "critical events" in her inspiring book of that title. I am clearly borrowing her vocabulary here: However, in this context, it seems to me that it is particular moments (sometimes but by no means always beginning with a critical event such as emancipation or war), which often extend over a wider space and longer period of time, that are the site of the "critical" shifts in ideology and practice. These are reminiscent of the historical moments referred to by Marx, when (for instance) changes in technologies of production outstrip the pace of change in social relations (of production), generating revolutionary processes; and of the identification by Bourdieu (1977) of the particular moments when "doxa" is laid open to heterodoxy and hence destabilized. It seems to me that in Góral local history, it is these moments of shifting ideologies which must be taken into account in the consideration of how meanings of land and personhood transform over time and, conversely, how core ideas remain consistent despite changes.

are different for men and women, and these differences become visible and sometimes even explicit at these times. Following this, land and labor can be seen as two major manifestations of property relations that have different implications for gender and socioeconomic inequality. Finally, I suggest that there is an ideology and an aesthetic of land that ties villagers to their history and their place. In this sense, part of the inheritance of a village child lies in knowledge, memories, and narratives or stories, which are passed from generation to generation and which locate them as Górale against other Poles, just as material inheritance locates them in a particular house in relation to other houses and as a member of a complicated house community as opposed to the state.

Land, labor, and inheritance all play crucial roles in inheritance and exchange, sociality, and what it means to be a person. However, these processes and the meanings attached to them are not static. In very basic ways, the principles underlying inequality or generating senses of belonging undergo fundamental changes throughout village history. Part of the challenge of understanding rural communities in the post-socialist states, or more generally in the age of global capitalism and increasingly unclear rural urban boundaries, is to account for changes in understandings of property, substance, and inheritance.

Making Kinship

I suggest that the Górale have two dominant ways of talking about kinship and belonging. One is through types of genealogies that sometimes but not always overlap or coincide – genealogies of people, obviously, but also, and often more importantly, genealogies of the house and the land (Pine 1996). The other is inside/outside – the village and the state and a wider geography that extends to the parameters of space defined most particularly in terms of trade routes and routes of economic migration (Pine 1999, 2002a and b). In the first sense, which I am primarily concerned with here, property and inheritance are critical parts of making the known world of kinship; land is passed down from generation to generation, continually divided until the system of equitable division, ideally generating equality between all sons and daughters of the house, becomes instead a curse endured by the house, the family, and each individual involved. Property, in the form of land, goods, and money, is associated with the house to which a person belongs at birth and the house or houses of which, as an adult, she or he is a member.

House membership, conferred at birth, may be either matrilineal or patrilineal. The house recruits its membership primarily through kinship and marriage. Residence may be either uxorilocal or agnatic at marriage and may change several times over the years, before the couple set up their own new

house or take over one of their parents' houses. Further, biological kinship is only one of several bases for house membership. Through marriage, both sons-in-law and daughters-in-law may be recruited into the house, although the son-in-law coming from outside with empty hands occupies a position like a poor bride and is known by the scathing term *przystac*: One comes in, to serve. Children, usually kin, may also be brought into the house as foster sons and daughters. Adolescents and adults came as domestic servants until the 1950s and still come as lodgers – or even as anthropologists. Belonging to a particular house entitles that house to a person's labor; conversely, it also entitles that person to a share in the produce of the house and often, though not always, a right to inherit some of its land. More than anything else, a person's house name tells everyone else in the village who they are, what their status is, and to whom they are related – in other words, how they are to be known and judged. The physical buildings and material existence of the house, its boundaries, and its membership are all highly flexible and shift over time. What endures, and what is reproduced, is the idea of a named house and of generations of people attached to it and working for it.

The Land

Land has a similar genealogy. Both men and women inherit land, and it is also transferred at marriage, leased, bought and sold, and mortgaged. Each field, each strip of forest, each pasture, is known by a particular name, which may have been associated with a particular house since the 18th or 19th century or may have changed houses once or many times. People know the provenance of their own fields and distinguish between individual field owners – husband and wife, daughter-in-law, etc. – although each at any given moment belongs to a particular house. Most people know the names and genealogies of the land of their kin and neighbors, and many of the older villagers, particularly those most intensely involved in farming, know the genealogy of virtually every field.

The combination of the mountain ecology (long winters, high altitude, and poor soil) and socioeconomic factors – the way that houses and land continually fragment and realign people and resources – determine that it is always difficult, and usually impossible, to sustain an entire family through farming alone. Parish records and other documents indicate economic specialization within the village and, far more importantly, a history of trading beyond village boundaries, since its foundation in the early 17th century. Both men and women worked and work outside farming as well as within it; from the 19th century, for instance, parish records identify men as builders, smiths, and cobblers, with women primarily identified as midwives. And oral history as well as parish records testify to the fact that both men and

women traveled quite far afield, as traders and itinerant laborers. In the stories, the songs, and the memories transmitted over generations, there is a continual theme of instability, of the fragility of the social and economic world (see Pine 1999; 2002a). Between 1895, the beginning of the massive emigration, and 1914, when the United States stiffened its immigration policy, more than a million people left Galicia for America *za chlebem* (in search of bread). It is estimated that two-thirds of these were Poles (Narkiewicz 1976 21-22, Kieniewicz 1969: 210-211).

It is here that we can see the other core metaphor of Górale kinship: inside/outside. Inside is the house, the kindred, the village – it is ideally characterized by relations of reciprocity, shared morality, and likeness. Authority structures exist, based on gender and generation, within houses, but they are viewed as legitimate hierarchy. Outside is a different place, where people must go but where relations are not ordered through shared belonging, reciprocity, sameness, and morality. Rather, individualism, accountability, and, indeed, price and purchase, sited within an intrusive or encroaching hierarchy epitomized by the state, form the basis of sociality. That this is anathema to ideologies of proper social behavior is clear from the stories returning migrants tell, of the evil that takes place in big American cities, the interpersonal and impersonal violence, the racism, dishonesty, corruption, etc. However, in order to maintain the house it is necessary for some members to leave (see Pine 1999).

Metaphors of Kinship and Strategies of Reproduction

At certain times these two core metaphors of kinship shift. In the late 19th century, and, indeed, until the end of World War II and the beginning of the socialist period, houses reproduced differently, according to their lands and the labor at their disposal. In other words, the egalitarian ethos inherent in partible inheritance was in fact undermined in practice (Bourdieu 1976). Through dowry, village endogamy, marriage strategies such as unions between cousins or between a brother and sister of one family to a sister and brother of another family (*na fyrmak*), and/or enforced celibacy (i.e., bachelorhood rather than sexual abstinence) of some sons, people tried to counteract land fragmentation. The richest houses reproduced themselves fairly consistently. The middle sector alone really conformed to the ideals of equal inheritance among siblings, balanced by exchange and reciprocity between houses. The poorest and landless effectively had only labor with which to bargain. Here we see women, without dowries or access to land, who married late or not at all but often bore one child or more out of wedlock. In other words, for a hundred years or so, or from the time of emancipation

until the socialist regime, well-established, very different reproduction processes characterized richer and poorer houses.

The socialist period brought with it, at least by the 1960s, the end of extreme poverty. Although it is clear both from marriage and birth records and from oral accounts and memories that many women were pregnant when they married, illegitimate births, particularly those not followed shortly by the mother's marriage, became increasingly unusual. For one thing, the socialist state enforced paternity payments for the first time. This led quickly to changes in practice – as I was told when I was first doing fieldwork: "So men started to say, well, if we have to pay these vast sums anyway, we might as well marry the woman and get the benefits of a wife." Increased participation in the monetary economy also changed the practical significance of agriculture and the house economy. Wage labor in the state sector became widely available during this period; this in turn served as a leveling device, although the villagers professed to hate the work and to distrust the state. People also became more and more creatively involved in informal dealings, often under the guise of the house economy and domestic production. Women made cheeses for sale and spun, knitted, and wove; men carved wooden trinkets and wove baskets, and entire houses revolved around the production of leather and sheepskin goods or the operation of *meliny* (speakeasies, illicit vodka houses). Most important, migration to Chicago took on even greater significance because of the massive hunger for dollars shared by everyone from the highest state official to the lowest villager (Pine 2002b).

Although the house economy, and the dominance of land in ideologies of property and inheritance, continued to be espoused during the late socialist period, in practice quite another kind of property and property relations was being developed and elaborated, involving knowledge networks, kin and friendship links, and a variety of skills and knowledge practices extending over time and space. None of these was new, exactly, but their elaboration became extreme during this period. In effect, although village ideology continued to emphasize house and land and kinship, the other core metaphor, inside/outside, was actually becoming more significant. Education played an increasing role as well. The socialist state instigated compulsory education to the age of 15; this meant that entirely new work and communication skills were developed by the youngest generation. Both economically and politically, the authority of the house, and of senior generations, was undermined throughout this period, although ideologically it remained central.

Land, Labor, and the State

In the 1970s and '80s, people spoke about land, and the relationships and labor arranged around it, as the focus of village life. Land occupied a huge space in village talk – who owned which fields, who was going to inherit or take over which, what fields or woods or pastures would comprise marriage settlements, where the next new house was to be situated, and so on. Conflicts within families usually came down to land, although they were often represented in different terms. For instance, when a married son wanted to take his inheritance and his wife's dowry fields away from the core farm and set up his own house, the tension within the house might well be couched in domestic, female terms – "Our daughter-in-law is lazy and refuses to do housework or even to look after her own children properly"; "My mother-in-law is an old cow who expects me to do everything and allows her own daughter to do nothing." The father and son would talk morosely in the bar, and at vodka drinking sessions in the houses of kin and neighbors, about the female conflicts, "those women's affairs" – *kobiece sprawy*. Everyone knew, however, that underlying this apparent conflict between women was a deeper and more dangerous threat to the integrity of the house economy, originating in the irreconcilable desires of the father and son for control over land and labor – the battle over who was really in charge.

If internal threats to the integrity of the house and the land tended to be hidden or masked by projection onto less dangerous ground, threats to the land, perceived or real, which stemmed from the *outside* were more likely to be stripped bare and revealed in the most blatant fashion. The socialist state, for example, was explicitly attacked, and its stated aims and objectives rejected, in terms of land: "They are communists and they want to collectivize our land," (which, in fact, I think was never the intention, in this area, so highly unsuitable for large-scale farming of any sort) "and who would we be without our land?" In that sense, land was never merely fields and crops and production – it was the major source of social identity, social status, kinship, affinity, and other types of sociality. In Schneider's (1984) terms, the land and the house formed a core metaphor, which embodied genealogical memory, economic status, and internal /within-the-village connectedness.

As I have argued elsewhere (Pine 1996, 1999), however, the house and its land was in fact continually subsidized by income from waged labor in the state sector, second economy dealings, and, above all, by economic migration. In a sense the house, with its legitimate hierarchies of gender and generation, acted like the state, at a time when the state itself was viewed as excessively intrusive; in other words, the metaphor of house and land provided a moral and ideological alternative to the state. The question here must be whether, with the demise of the intrusive socialist state, the house and

land are now transformed in ideological as well as practical terms. I shall return to this later.

The Ideology of Land and the Practical Economy

Property relations, forms of exchange and reciprocity, and particular processes of reproduction, with implications for constructions of gender and status, change and transform at particular critical moments. The representation of land and labor, located in the house and generating relations between houses, expands and contracts at particular junctures but maintains an ideological consistency over time that masks changes in actual practice.

Villagers map their social world primarily in two ways. In one set of images, they describe themselves in terms of equality and sameness: We are all kin here; here, everyone is family. This is usually in either explicit or implicit comparison with the outside world, where inequality is seen as both endemic and shocking. In the other discourse, people are described in terms that emphasis difference and distance: "*They* live in Grapa [historically, and still by repute, the poorest section of the village] while *we* live in Kowale [the oldest families, the biggest farms], so we have little to do with them; they are *bogaci* [rich people]; they are *dziady* [beggars]; we are *nie biedni, nie bogaci* [not poor, not rich]. *Wielcy ludzie i wielcyi ludzie* [great people and great people ... marry each other/godparent each other's children]." These are internal distinctions, which are conjured up to explain the mapping of the village from the inside, who does what with whom, who together make up networks and circles of reciprocity and exchange, and who is excluded from one but central to another. They are based on three sometimes distinct, often overlapping criteria: size of land holding, house membership, and economic standing.

By the late 19th century, farms in the village were fragmented, dwarfed, and highly irregular. The situation of individual families fluctuated with the developmental cycle of the particular house, as the balance between adult labor and dependants changed, as land was brought in or alienated through marriage, and as members of some households went to work outside agriculture, while others hired live-in farm hands and domestic servants. Labor was organized and exchanged around land; marriages were arranged or forbidden on the basis of land; those without land subsisted through a subordinate relationship with landowning peasants, townspeople, or the manor or were dependent upon wealthier kin. Those with the most land relied upon the labor of those with little or no land in maintaining their farms. In terms of general classifications, however, all of these peasants were poor. At the turn of this century, the largest farm consisted of 26 hectares. In 1947, when the socialist regime was established in Poland, there

was no farmer in the village with enough land to be classified as a *kulak*, and no land redistribution took place in the village.

Beginning in the year 1947, sociologists from the Institute of Rural Sociology in Warsaw collected economic and agricultural data on the village as part of a national study. This material indicates that immediately after World War II, the village consisted of 105 houses. These can be divided into three strata on the basis of size of landholding: The first stratum consisted of 20 houses that were landless or rented or owned less than two hectares; the middle stratum encompassed 75 houses that owned between two and seven hectares; the third stratum, comprising farms over seven hectares, was by far the smallest, consisting of only ten houses. The sociological data show that in the first stratum, consisting of those with the smallest landholdings, four of the farms, or 25 percent, were rented, and three houses subsisted entirely on the basis of support from kin. Within this stratum no house could achieve even a minimal level of self-sufficiency on the basis of agricultural production. In the middle stratum, which represented 70 percent of village houses, only 2.5 percent of the farmland was rented. Each house in this category produced enough potatoes on their own land to meet their own needs, although the majority was unable to fulfill its grain requirements. In the final stratum, the smallest and the wealthiest, all of the farms were inherited rather than bought or rented. The survey shows that all of the peasants in this sector were engaged entirely in agriculture; most relied on seasonal hired help and at least two had permanent live-in servants. Each of the farms in this stratum was able to meet its needs in both potato and grain production.

The three strata represent flexible, rather than rigid, socioeconomic categories. Life stories and genealogies that I recorded in the late 1970s and the '80s show that the position of individual women and men, and individual families and houses, frequently shifted. Particular fortunes rose and fell, and the status of the parents was not necessarily reproduced by all of the sons and daughters in each generation. However, as broad categories based on socioeconomic differentiation, the three strata were maintained well into the second half of the 20th century. And villagers themselves continue to classify each other as *bogaci*, as *nie bogaci/nie biedni*, and as *biedni* or *dziady*.

Reproduction of the House

Houses reproduce differently, and they do so for different reasons at different historical points. The late 19th century, when partible inheritance, combined with crop failure, famine, and plague resulted in the most acute poverty and privation, was a moment of crisis for most low– and middle-strata houses. Parish record entries, land records, and, above all, oral family histories tell of young villagers leaving to try their luck in the United States; older

villagers, in their seventies and eighties in the late 1970s, recounted in vivid detail their memories of childhood hunger, of begging their mother, on their knees, for a crust of bread. These are bleak, harsh, and unforgiving memories. This was the time, historically, when houses split, when more people left the village than ever before, when the demographic consequences of physical hardship were most palpable. But for the upper stratum houses, there was clearly more stability at this time, and although from the Ojak house (see below), for instance, one son left for America, the family managed, through *fyrmak* marriage, cousin marriage, and celibacy, to keep the house and lands intact. Similarly, at this period we see the rise in the fortunes of a few individuals. But within the poorest stratum of the village population, we also can see over generations how limited the possibilities of escaping poverty were (see below).

Genealogies of Stratification

These transformations become clearer when we examine particular houses, as they reproduce over time. The following genealogy of the Ojaks,[3] for instance, shows the interplay of farm and family through five generations, from the early 1900s to the present.

Jan and Anna, both from the village, married and had four sons. Andrzej, their eldest son, did not marry. The second son, Wojciech, and his wife together received eight hectares from their parents and later built a new house. Jozek, the third son, emigrated to the United States. The youngest, Jan, and his wife, Antoszka, remained with Jan's parents and inherited the core farm; supplemented by Antoszka's dowry and, later, Jozek's share, this gave them 15.5 hectares. Although their lands were farmed separately and they were now considered separate houses, both the families and farms of Wojciech and Jan continued to be known by the name Ojak.

Wojciech had a son and a daughter. These two siblings married a brother and a sister *na fyrmak*, and no land changed hands at the marriage. The eight-hectare farm eventually passed to Ludwik and his wife, Filomena. Ludwik and Filomena, while still known as Ojak, also became known as *Ludwika*. They had two sons, Jan and Jozef, who divided the farm. In the next generation, the changes of the late socialist period are reflected. Jan had three daughters, of whom one married a farmer and took over the farm, the other two receiving house plots and education; one is a lawyer. Josek turned the farm over to his eldest son; the other children work outside farming.

[3] The names used in this paper are all typical Góral names, but for reasons of confidentiality they are not on the whole the real names of the people, families, or houses discussed.

On the core parental farm with which I started this account, Jan and Antoszka had three sons and a daughter. One son and the daughter emigrated to the United States, one son died celibate, and the third son, Karol, was the residual heir to his parents' entire 15.5 hectares. Karol married Helena, who brought a two-hectare dowry from her parents' ten-hectare farm. Apart from the land settled on Wojciech in the previous generation, the holding remained intact and was increased by Helena's dowry.

Karol and Helena had two daughters and five sons. The eldest son, Jan, married the only child of a farm of similar standing and joined that house, taking with him two hectares. The third son, Władek, emigrated for a time to America and on his return received a house plot from his parents. He married late, had one daughter, and did not farm on his own. Mietek, the fourth son, received money as a marriage settlement, which he used to buy land; he was incorporated into his wife's house. Antonina, the youngest daughter, married out, receiving one hectare. The youngest son, Bronek, entered the priesthood and received money. Staszek, the second son, inherited the remainder of the farm, about 14 hectares. He married Janina, the daughter of a neighboring family with a similarly large landholding, and his sister Marysia married Janina's brother; as this was a marriage *na fyrmak*, no land was transferred. Despite the rules of equal inheritance and the number of siblings, only a little over three hectares was alienated from the Ojak farm in this generation.

Staszek and Janina have two daughters. The elder daughter, Jadźka, married a craftsman from another village and received as her dowry half a hectare for a house plot. Neither of her two children work on the farm; her daughter, a teacher, received money as a dowry, and her son, an entrepreneur, will inherit the house and plot. Baśka, the younger daughter, attended agricultural college and was expected to take over the large and successful parental farm. However, her farmer husband emigrated to America when their children were still young, and she and the children joined him when the children were in their teens. It is now unclear what will happen to the farm.

At the opposite extreme of Góral land history were people with few or no property roots in specific farms who moved about, leaving a village when things became too hard or when a parent's death dispossessed them of land rights, buying land and moving to a new village if they managed to accumulate a sum of money. The following genealogy gives us a glimpse of the strategies of such poor families.

Antoszka, Rozalia, and Maria were daughters of a landless village man with a small pension. Their mother had inherited some land from her father in Zakopane, sold it when she married, and rented and eventually bought land in the village. At the time of Antoszka's birth in 1904, the

family had no farm. She and her sister Rozalia both went into service in their early teens. The parents were reputed to be poor at farming; Antoszka herself as an old woman swore that they had no idea even how to milk a cow – but they dealt with moneylenders in Nowy Targ, buying and selling small plots from time to time. They lived where the poorest and transient families made their houses, and their land transactions, all in this area, should not be mistaken for indications of affluence; rather, the father's small pension provided a little ready capital and hence a little more purchase power than some. Antoszka and Rozalia claimed that their parents had six hectares in 1945, although I never found any evidence to confirm this. Records show that in 1955, their mother, by then widowed, owned less than half a hectare.

Antoszka bore two illegitimate children, Helena, in 1923, and Staszek, in 1930. In 1934, she married a village man with whom she was living as a domestic servant. She received half a hectare from her parents, and her husband bought 1.36 hectares with money he received as his marriage settlement. Later they were to buy more land, but they never farmed more than 2.4 hectares, and some of that was rented. They had a son and a daughter.

Antoszka's sister Rozalia married a landless man from outside the village. Her mother sold her .45 hectare, an unusual type of transaction between parent and child that I think suggests poverty; in the life stories I heard decades after, there was no intimation of bad feeling between the mother and any of her daughters. Rozalia later was given .35 hectare by her mother, and she and her husband eventually obtained a further .21 hectare, but they never farmed one entire hectare. Rozalia bore five children, of whom three survived. The third sister, Maria, also married and apparently received no land. She earned money working as a fortune-teller, and she and her husband were executed by the Nazis. They left behind one child, a daughter, who was raised by Maria's mother and her sisters Rozalia and Antoszka.

In the third generation the landholdings of all of the children remained small and fragmented. Antoszka's illegitimate daughter, Helena, married a man born in the United States, the son of a village economic migrant. Helena received .9 hectare from her mother, and her husband was given 3.5 hectares from his parents' land in the village. Antoszka's illegitimate son, Staszek, married out of the village and received no land. Jan, Antoszka's legitimate son, married a local woman; she received money to buy a hectare of land, while he received .20 hectare and the materials to build a house. Both husband and wife worked in the wage sector and purchased more land, bringing the size of their farm to 3.7 hectares. Antoszka's youngest daughter, Maria, married a landless man from Nowy Targ. They lived with Antoszka until her death and inherited the house and land. Both worked in the factory in Nowy Targ until it closed down in the early 1990s.

Rozalia's daughter Maria married a village factory worker. They received building help from her parents, and with money from his, they bought two hectares and rented a further 1.5, but with 12 children they had difficulty making ends meet. Rozalia's two sons remained at home, unmarried; they helped with the half-hectare farm and worked sporadically in the wage-labor sector.

Róża, the daughter of the fortune-teller, never married. She lived alternately with her mother's mother and mother's sisters: It was generally felt that she never recovered from losing her mother in such traumatic circumstances; she was viewed as a fragile, frail creature, emotionally and physically, and no one considered her capable of work.

This chronicle is typical of the poorest smallholders. It was only in the mid-socialist period, when wage labor became a possibility, that an escape from poverty began to seem possible. Even those who worked in the socialist state sector never left that insecurity behind them; since the closing of the factories, Antoszka's children and grandchildren have subsisted on making and selling cheeses, working as day laborers in farming and construction, and other ad hoc arrangements.

The difference between this case and the previous one is the difference, historically, between upper (or middle) stratum peasants and the poor. Although a house is maintained for several generations here, and a line of close kin is recruited primarily through the matriline, there is no core farm, and for most members of this kindred, there was no strategy possible to increase their holding and create one. Rather, they have relied extensively on mutual help and reciprocity, on some pooling of resources, and on diverse economic activities in order to get by.

Post-Socialist Trajectories

In the decade following the end of socialism, villagers' own representations of the economy of this village have changed. Fewer and fewer houses still earn significant income from farming. Members of the current generation, who finished school after the end of socialism, work in other areas: They set up their own small businesses, they work as teachers, lawyers, or surveyors, they go abroad as economic migrants, they are learning languages and setting up IT businesses and e-mail accounts. From time to time they still help their parents and grandparents work the land, but their main employment is located elsewhere. Since the demise of the socialist state there has been greater acknowledgement of the importance of all types of work, including those that lie quite *outside* subsistence family farming. In other words, the pattern of simultaneously overemphasizing farming and the house economy, and masking or underemphasizing the significance of other economic do-

mains and activities, which was so entrenched during the communist period, has altered. The importance of land remains, but it is now expressed in terms of space and place (in terms of kinship, house, and village) on the one hand and of the economics of the house plot on the other.

Villagers' strong attachment to and identification with their house and land can be understood partly in terms of economics, as land tends to hold or increase its value, and partly as a rational response to the shifting tide of Polish politics. Despite the uniformly poor soil, it is possible to grow some crops and to raise some livestock in the Podhale. For centuries peasants and smallholders looked on the land as their only real security; although historically many were dispossessed, and many worked outside agriculture from necessity, villagers still believe that as long as they have the capacity be self-sufficient they will be protected against the devastations of national conflict, war, and political upheaval. This attitude to the land is reflected in the care they take of it, the names they give to it, and the intimate knowledge they have of it. As an ideology or aesthetic, it is unequivocal: Their ancestors fought long and hard to own their land, and for generations it has represented their main source of strength and their main hope. Even at the beginning of the 21st century, younger villagers, working outside agriculture and aspiring to own only a house plot, still subscribe to this. Land is a powerful metaphor of kinship, and it is also an economic and material asset. It serves as both for Górale, but at different historical junctures, one or the other takes precedence.

Conclusion

In the summer of 2000, I was in the village; the evening before I left, I went for a walk with my friend Jadžka. We walked up the hill from her house into the forest and then traced the village boundaries on the edges of the cultivated fields beyond the forest edge. As we passed each field, she commented on the state of the crops and the attention, or lack of attention, that had been paid to weeding. Interspersed with this commentary were little snippets of stories of her life, memories of childhood, of her parents' and grandparents' stories, each located at a particular point in the landscape. Sometimes I asked whose the field was, where the owners were now, who from the house was still farming, and who was away as a migrant. Several times, unusually for her, she was unsure of the provenance of a field and would say, "Oh, I *think* that's Józek's – or maybe I'm wrong. Maybe Józek's is the *next* one..." When she got to her father's fields, however, she was clear, and quite critical, running the grains between her fingers, worrying aloud about the amount of waterlogging – there had been heavy rain – commenting that he'd better see to this or that problem quickly, that he was overworked and short of

labor now, and that he was too old to carry on much longer or to bear the responsibility of the farm. She herself has an office job in town, and although she has always worked on her parents' farm, she has no fields of her own. Her son, the eldest grandchild, now runs a section of the large periodic market in town and appears set to be an entrepreneur. He helps his grandfather when he can, and I asked, idly, whether he would know the fields by name and by owner. "Oh, yes, of course," she said. "He knows them far better than I do now. He could answer all your questions."

A year or so later, I listened to her and her mother talking as I drove them to market. We passed four or five cows out to pasture, and Jadźka asked, "Whose are those? Belts'?" "No, no," said her mother immediately, "they're not from Belts, they are Bereś' cows." I started laughing and asked her how she could possible tell – they all just looked like cows to me. She answered quite seriously, almost sharply, that it was nothing to do with the cows, of course. It was the land. "You know the cows by the land [*pole*]."

These conversations raised for me all sorts of questions about land, about what it means now, at the beginning of the 21st century, when fewer and fewer houses are relying on agriculture even for subsistence, and when the young villagers are very much part of the post socialist expansion into many different types of work and different types of knowledge, all of which appear to have little to do with the land and everything to do with moving away from it toward different types of sociality, relatedness, and economy.

Until very recently, relationships were articulated almost exclusively through place and kinship. Most recently, however, independent individualistic relations are becoming more pervasive. Information technologies, migration networks, college degrees, and even new technologies of farming may all be economically more important than land. It is not yet clear to what extent these new forms of capital will destabilize old authority structures within the house and between houses, but the turn of the 21st century seems to be emerging as yet another critical moment.

Acknowledgements

The research on which this paper is based was conducted between 1977 and 2002 and was funded variously by the SSRC (1978-81), the ESRC (1988-90, Grant R0002314 and 1991-95, R0002330190), with additional help from the British Council (1977-79, 1981) and the Max Planck Institute (2002). I gratefully acknowledge this support. I also thank the editors of the volume, who have been constructive in their suggestions for organizing the text and patient in waiting for the results. Przemek Bogdanowicz also read and commented on the paper, and I am as ever grateful for his knowledge and insight.

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Chapter 16
Kinship and Economy in the Russian Countryside: A Provisional Model

Patrick Heady

Introduction

In Russia, as in other formerly socialist countries, one of the objectives of agricultural reform was to promote the establishment of "peasant" (*krestianskie* or *fermerskie*) farms. Although there was no set size for these farms, legal provisions were enacted to enable each would-be *fermer* to cultivate a fairly substantial amount of land. (In practice the average size of *fermerskie* farms during the early 1990s was over 40 hectares and gradually rose during the decade (Wegren 1998: 177; Stroev 2001: 608)). These farms were thus intended to be many times larger than the "private plots" of a bit less than half a hectare allowed to every rural household during soviet times. The image that policymakers had in mind when they envisaged the development of *krestianskie* or *fermerskie* farming was probably something like the medium-scale commercial family farms that characterize – though in declining numbers – many parts of Central and Western Europe. It is commonly thought that farms of this type are likely to produce efficiently for the market – motivated partly by economic incentives and partly by the owners' emotional attachment to their own land.

Implicitly this image combines economic and kinship elements. Had anthropologists been consulted by the policymakers, we could have filled in various important details of how this model actually works in the central and western parts of the continent – for instance, the strategies that individuals and families pursue to keep the family farm intact or assemble enough land to maintain a viable farm – and what these strategies imply for inheritance and marriage practices. (There are, of course, significant local variations on this general theme, which ethnographers and historians have described and compared (de Haan 1994: 151-186)). We would also have discussed how social pressures, as well as economic rewards and emotional attachments,

motivate the would-be farmer to maintain or develop the farm and pass it on to the next generation.

However, in the event, the refinements we could have added to the Western model of the family farm would probably have been of little use to policymakers in Russia itself, since the response to the opportunity to set up family farms on the Western model has been so unenthusiastic that it casts fundamental doubt on the relevance of this particular economic kinship institution in contemporary Russian conditions. Does this mean that seven decades' experience of collective farming have finally severed the connection between agriculture and kinship? Were the practical difficulties during the 1990s simply too great? Or might it mean that the Western model of the family farm – even in its ethnographically informed variants – is inapplicable to the very different system of kinship and property relationships in the Russian countryside?

The first of these explanations is inherently improbable: The relatively high productivity of "private plots" during soviet times and since does not suggest any tendency for family farming as such to wither away. Indeed, although the cultivation of household plots and small additional amounts of rented land is referred to in official statistics as "subsidiary" ("*podsobnoe*"), the proportion of agricultural production attributed to this "*lichnoe podsobnoe khoziaistvo*" – "personal (or household) subsidiary farming" – has, as we shall see below, now expanded to more than half of Russia's total agricultural output.

The second explanation is far more attractive. The reforms to agriculture were implemented during a period of economic crisis and low overall demand in the Russian economy, and in addition, the previously very high agricultural subsidies were withdrawn. As a result, by the late 1990s, agriculture as a whole was visibly going through very difficult times, which hardly provided an encouraging background for people thinking of taking on the major commitments involved in setting up commercial farms. (Initial subsidies to *fermerskie khoziaistva* were themselves withdrawn or reduced in real value after 1994 (O'Brien and Wegren 2002: 10)). In addition the institutional infrastructure of established markets and credit institutions was largely lacking, and would-be *fermery* often faced obstruction by local power-holders (Alina-Pisano 2002; Perrotta 1998; Wegren 1998: 182-226).

But the impact of difficulties does not only depend on the magnitude of the problems themselves; it also depends on the attitudes of the people who are facing the difficulties. It is possible that if Russian country people had been more enthusiastic about commercial family farming, they might have made more headway even in the difficult circumstances of post-soviet Russia. Some writers have suggested that egalitarian or collectivist attitudes

may have played a contributory or even decisive role in the failure to develop *fermerskoe khoziaistvo* (Ioffe 2001; Paxson 2002). However, there are problems with this view, too. Where are these egalitarian and collectivist attitudes supposed to have come from? Given that attitudes to the *kolkhozy* (collective farms) were at best ambivalent, it does not seem very plausible to derive this value orientation directly from socialist practice or indoctrination. There are difficulties also with explanations that trace the attitudes back to the peasant commune (the *obshchina* or *mir*) of tsarist times, which lasted up to collectivization. If current attitudes are based on the ideology of the peasant commune, why have no attempts been made to revive the *obshchiny*?

A final difficulty arises when attempts are made to compare or combine the "practical difficulties" and "cultural attitudes" approaches – namely that they often seem to be virtually incommensurable. Where the one focuses on costs, prices, and access to loans and markets, the other reports notions of personhood, relatedness, emotions, and the implicit rules of informal interactions – what Paxson (2002) aptly refers to as the "metaphysics of exchange."

The contention of this paper is that many of the problems with the "cultural attitudes" approach can be resolved once we bring kinship into the picture. In some parts, at least, of the contemporary Russian countryside, kinship networks provide a very important practical context for collective action on non-market principles. There is a also good deal of continuity between the principles of kinship organization today and in pre-soviet times, thus suggesting at least a partial answer to the question of where collectivist attitudes come from. Kinship relationships also lend themselves more easily than some other aspects of culture to quantitative analysis, both at the micro-level of who helps who, and at the macro-level of associations between kinship organization and other aspects of economic and political life. This reduces the degree of incommensurability between practical and cultural explanations and makes it possible to investigate long-term processes of interaction between cultural and practical constraints.

This chapter outlines a provisional model of the contemporary economic role of kinship in the Russian countryside – partly based on my own fieldwork and the work of anthropological colleagues but taking account also of Russian rural history and of the tradition of anthropological work on kinship and economic systems that goes back to Morgan (1997 – first published in 1871). One reason for calling the model *provisional* is the limited amount of information on which it is based. In particular I have spent just four months doing fieldwork in the Russian countryside. In the year 2000, I lived for three weeks in a small town in the north of European Russia and visited various places in the surrounding countryside – briefly staying

somewhere I refer to as the northern village. In the same year I spent three weeks in Southern Russia, in a large village I will call Zelyonoe, in Voronezh *oblast'*, in the heart of the famously fertile black-earth region. In 2002 I spent ten weeks in a village I will call Listnoe, in Lipetsk *oblast'*, also in the black-earth region, but not as far south. The model is also provisional in the sense that while suggesting solutions to some problems, it raises new questions about others – which will be reviewed briefly at the end of the chapter.

Some Points about Russian Kinship

Kinship and Locality

Kinship locates people in a physical sense, in part because houses and residence rights are inherited. (Though collective farms did provide some public housing, much rural housing remained in private ownership throughout the socialist period.) The inheritance of residence rights seemed to be equally important in the north and in the south. In the northern town, my host had built the house in which I stayed about ten years before – and now, following the death of his parents, had inherited their old house and the ground on which it stood. He was engaged in demolishing this house and building a new one – into which he intended to move with his wife, leaving the present house for his youngest, and still unmarried, daughter. He had also lent money to an older daughter and son-in-law to enable them to buy a dilapidated but still sturdy brick structure, which they planned to renovate and convert to a mixed residence and restaurant or shop. The couple with whom I stayed in the northern village had inherited their house from the wife's parents. The young couple next door – who had built their own house – consisted of the daughter of another neighbor and her husband, who had come from Ukraine and now worked near the village as a lumberjack. She helped her father, who lived directly over the road, look after his cow. The head of the household in which I stayed in Zelyonoe lived over the road from his two married sons. His brother lived in the next street, next to the boundary of my host's private plot. This group of relatives helped each other with agricultural work on their private plots. The other families at our end of Third International Street – a wide stretch of grass on which cattle and poultry grazed in between two rows of houses – were also related to each other through patrilineal ties and related to my host's family through his deceased wife.

Kinship also provides a system of personal ties that symbolically attach individuals to each other and, ultimately, to the community as a whole. The link to the previous generation is celebrated as a tie to named ancestors.

The respectful way of addressing a person is by first name and patronymic – suggesting that what gives the person their social standing is their personal descent tie to their father. That is, so to speak, an external recognition of the importance of the parent-child tie. Within the family group, it is celebrated in the way people mark their sense of continuing connection with dead relatives. The tie to deceased members of the immediate family is celebrated by sharing drink with them at Troitsa and other holy days. At the same time, this ritual provides a link to the community as a whole. If possible people drink with their ancestors at the graveside itself, sitting on benches in family groups – and also moving between groups of relatives, so that the village as a whole seems to be a single group united in mourning of its shared ancestors. So people are placed by descent in relation to their forebears and, hence, to the piece of ground in which their forbears are buried – along with the ancestors of the rest of the community.

Since shared descent links people together both spatially and symbolically, it is not surprising that the association between community and kinship is also reflected in place names. Each hamlet in the northern village was named after the surname of the main family that lived there – and in fact hamlets had alternative names, reflecting the changes in size of different surnamed groups within them. In the South – where, unlike the North, communities had been historically dominated by aristocratic owners of land and serfs – several villages were named after their former aristocratic owners.

Kinship and Movement

Marriage provides occasions for physical movement – or fixes movements that have already taken place – often over great distances. Sibling and descent ties also provide people with ways of moving around the country. I rented a room for a few nights with a family in St. Petersburg. Also staying there was the niece of my hostess, who had come from the Ukraine to take the entrance examination for St. Petersburg University. (She passed the exams and later moved in with the family when she returned to St. Petersburg to begin her studies – to the delight of the daughter of the house, who enthused over the prospect of being joined by her *sestra.*) An old man in Zelyonoe had five children – born in the 1950s – only one of whom was a permanent resident of the village in 2000. After completing her education, one of his daughters had found a job in a provincial town in the far North of Russia – to which she was followed by every single one of her siblings, as they too tried to make a career away from home.

Kinship and Mutual Assistance

I was present in Listnoe during September at the time of the potato harvest. Potatoes are the main crop grown on each family's private plot. However, the team that assembles to harvest each potato plot typically contains more people than just the inhabitants of the household concerned. I recorded the composition of 24 potato-harvesting teams working on private plots. The size of these teams was very variable – they ranged from two people up to 19. At or near the lower end of the range were an elderly brother and sister, and there were a few cases in which a married couple and their children harvested their own potatoes. The largest team consisted of two married sisters and various of their relatives by descent and marriage, plus seven friends and neighbors. The median size was eight people. In almost all the groups, relatives of the plot-owners substantially outnumbered neighbors and friends. (Only one of the 24 groups consisted mainly of friends and neighbors of the owners). Ten of the groups contained people who were related to each other as first cousins (in Russian, *dvoiurodnie brat'ia* or *dvoiurodnie siostry*), and seven of the groups contained people who were related to each other as parents of the same married couple (in Russian, people related in this way are referred to as each other's *svat* or *svakha*).

Members of the team were not paid – the relationship involved was described as *pomoshch'*: "helping" each other. The plot-owners did typically provide a special celebratory lunch for the whole team, either at their home or as a picnic, and people who came from towns to help their elderly relatives might receive a share of the harvested potatoes to take back with them. Mostly, however, the recompense took the form of an understanding that the helpers would themselves receive help when they needed it. What seemed to be involved here was not strict reciprocity, but – at least in part – the ambiguous logic of the gift. While some people said that they kept count of how many days' work they owed, and were owed by, different people, others denied that this was the main motive – claiming that they helped each other out of sympathy. Probably a mixture of motives is involved, and the system seems flexible enough to include both balanced help between equals and an element of care for older people for whom the work of potato harvesting has become physically difficult. The other principle involved is kinship amity: People sometimes said that one should help *svoi liudi*, "one's own people," by which they meant one's relatives.

The only exception to the rule of no payment comes in the case of the work of breaking the land to bring the potatoes to the surface. This involves either a horse and plow or a tractor and mechanical potato excavator. People normally pay for this work to be done by the owner of the horse or tractor. However, in that case, the tractor driver or plowman does not form part of

the group in the full sense; he simply does the job and goes – returning later to go over the land a second or third time. If, however, the horse or tractor is owned by a relative or neighbor, the owner is counted as part of the group but is also obliged to carry out the plowing or excavating without payment. There is thus a clear distinction between a world of close relationships, in which the gift-like logic of mutual aid prevails, and more distant relationships, in which it is acceptable to ask for monetary payment. Interestingly enough, though, tractor-owners seemed a little reticent in telling me about the work they charged for, preferring initially to talk about the way they used their tractors to help their neighbors. This suggests a feeling that, ideally, one would treat everybody as though they were neighbors or kin.

Although potato-picking is a particularly visible occasion for mutual aid, people also help each other out in minor ways on a day-to-day basis – and the same principle of mutual aid between kin can be used to assemble a work group for a major task. During my stay in Listnoe, a relative of my hosts was engaged in building an extension to his house. Although he did pay some specialist workmen, he also received several days' unpaid labor from each of eight kinsmen – respectively, his father, son, mother's brother, sister's husband, sister's son, two father's sister's sons, and his wife's brother's son. My host, who was one of the helpers, told me that no recompense was involved. On the other hand, the owner of the house explained that the help he received from his mother's brother, who was in fact a building worker by profession, was so valuable that he had made a particular point of helping him out in other ways. Here again there was a mixture of moral commitment as kinsmen and recompense for effort, with no rigid boundaries between the two.

Kinship Terminology

The terminology of kinship is particularly interesting for someone who has previously worked in Western Europe, because it is quite different. Morgan noted in his classic study of *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* (1997 (1871): 40-43) that Russian (and some other Slavonic) kinship terminologies are more *classificatory* than Germanic and Romance terminologies – particularly in the fact that siblings are grouped together with cousins (both parallel and cross) by the use of the terms *brat* and *sestra* (brother and sister) for all these relationships. It is possible to distinguish between the different degrees of relationship – thus a male first cousin would be a *dvoiurodni brat,* a "two-birth" brother, and a female second cousin a *troiurodnaia sestra* – but people often use the simple terms, without these clarifications, even when referring to cousins. The terms *brat* and *sestra* can

also be used metaphorically to include the whole community, as Stalin did when he addressed his first wartime broadcast to his "brothers and sisters."[1]

The terminology of marriage and affinity also differs from that in Western Europe. In English, French, German, and Italian, the word for "to marry" is the same for both sexes[2]; and in English, French, and German – though not Italian – the terms one uses for affines are very similar to the words used for the corresponding kin (e.g., father-in-law, *beau-père, Schwiegervater*). The terminology suggests that the relationships and parties directly and indirectly involved on each side of a marriage are in some sense comparable. None of this applies in Russian. The words used for kin and for affines are entirely distinct – as are the terms that describe the affinal relationships between a woman and her in-laws and a man and his. The suggestion is that fundamentally different sets of people are involved, with the implication that marriage is a kind of movement. This is made explicit in the expression for marriage (as applied to a woman). She *vikhodit zamuzh,* or "goes out with [or behind] a husband."

A Provisional Model of Kinship and Cooperation in the Russian Countryside

In this section I will try to combine these elements into a provisional model of kinship and cooperation in the Russian countryside. The model is *provisional* in the sense that although it is consistent with the facts presented above, the evidence presented so far is not nearly enough to establish that it applies generally. Some additional confidence can be gained by comparing the description given above with Paxson's (2002) account of ideas of relatedness and exchange in the northern Russian village of Solov'ovo. After presenting the model, I will try to increase its plausibility in two other ways: by showing that it is consistent with a tradition of anthropological theory about kinship and economic life and by showing that it is consistent with the history of Russian responses to agrarian reform during the 20th century.

The model is simply this: Kinship, by descent and marriage, is identified with a sphere of relationships in which people receive benefits as a right – without monetary payment. The benefits received include the right of residence and the right to assistance in time of need. People wish to spread this network of mutual assistance rather widely and therefore use kinship terminology in a way that emphasizes the closeness of the connections involved – identifying cousins with brothers and sisters and explicitly recog-

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[1] I would like to thank Dr O. Artemova for this Information.

[2] In Italian this is true of the verb sposare but not of the verb maritarsi. See also Colclough (this volume) page 147, footnote 8.

nizing affinal relationships that involve frequent collaboration (such as *svat* and *svakha*) with special terms. Marriage outside the group of existing kin serves to spread the web of kinship as widely as possible in each succeeding generation and is consistent with the symbolism that suggests that the cohesion of the community as a whole is thought of in terms of kinship ties, and with the sense that relationships within the community should be based on mutual assistance rather than commercial self-interest.

Such a model would be consistent with the relative lack of interest in medium-scale commercial farming. To the extent that commercial farming requires concentrating the family's efforts on one's own farm, it must reduce the level of materially and emotionally supportive interaction with the wider kin group. Miller and Heady (2003) give some anecdotal evidence of the stresses involved for those few nuclear families who have taken the step of setting up as *fermery*, but that is probably not the main point. The crucial factor is that the idea of the self-sufficient nuclear, or stem, family, which is intrinsic to the Western European identification between family and commercial farm, does not correspond to anything in the Russian experience of kinship-based farming – so that commercial farming represents a movement into the social, as well as the economic, unknown. If the model is right, it is simply not the sort of thing that most people would consider.

Russian Kinship as an Inclusive System

The appeal of this model may be increased by placing the data in a comparative context. There is a tradition of anthropological theory, starting with Morgan (1997(1871)), that focuses on the connections between property and kinship – including the terms that people use to classify their relatives. In addition, connections have often been drawn between property systems and marriage patterns – perhaps most elegantly by Maurice Bloch (1975). Putting together Morgan's and Bloch's arguments, one could say that in societies with relatively little productive capital, people have an interest in building wide social networks that can be drawn on in case of need. This leads them to develop kinship systems that Schweitzer (2000) would describe as "inclusive," i.e., systems that extend apparently close relationships to as wide a circle of kin as possible and widen the network further by encouraging marriages to members of other kinship groups. However, with the development of productive capital and, particularly, private property in productive capital, this need for wide social networks takes second place to an even more pressing need to ensure that the group's efforts to build and maintain its productive property benefit members of the group itself – and are not diverted to the benefit of outsiders (people who would be called free-riders in game-theory parlance). So societies of this type tend to adopt "exclusive"

kinship systems that restrict access to property by distant kinsmen while preferring marriages with existing relatives to marriages with complete outsiders.

Goody's analysis of *Ethnographic Atlas* data in *Production and Reproduction* broadly confirms this picture of the relationship between property and inheritance systems. (Goody 1976: see particularly chapters 1 to 4, and Tables 3, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14 and 22 in Appendix 1.) None of the statistical associations is absolute, but they are strong enough for us to be reasonably sure that real causal connections are involved. Anderson's (1963) analysis of the historical changes in Indo-European kinship terminologies is also consistent with this general argument. So how well does the argument fit the data relating to Russia itself?

The contrast between western European and Russian kinship terminologies is fully consistent with the differing systems of peasant property ownership over the last few centuries. The "exclusive" terminologies of Western societies corresponded with inheritance systems in which property devolved on close relatives, typically members of the next generation of the nuclear family. The system in Russia was quite different. Though ownership of houses, animals, and equipment was passed on to the next generation of household members, ownership of the peasants' most important resource – the land they cultivated on their own behalf – was vested in the local peasant community as a whole: the *obshchina* or *mir*. Though the actual farming was done by separate households, the *obshschina* regularly repartitioned the land so as to ensure that the amount of land cultivated by each household was proportional to the household size (Blum 1961: 525-527; Dunn and Dunn 1988: 8-11; Hoch 1989: 16, 107, 158; Shanin 1986: 76). So the "inclusive" kinship terminology was matched by an inheritance system that did in fact give priority to equal treatment within the notional kinship group constituted by the local peasant community.

The contrast between the Russian and Western systems of kinship and inheritance is shown particularly clearly by the way they reacted to the pressure of population on limited resources. Some of the most influential studies have been carried out in the Alps – because the shortage of cultivable mountain land makes the pressure of population on resources particularly apparent. The emphasis of studies, such as that by Cole and Wolf (1974), has been on ways in which those who are relatively well-endowed with land deny access to their less fortunate relatives. Perhaps the most extreme example of this was the Austrian system of indivisible estates subject to single-heir inheritance (Viazzo 1989: 187-192; Lanzinger this volume). The response of Russian peasants to growing population pressure in the last two centuries of the tsarist regime was the exact opposite – they simply intensi-

fied the process of repartition so that each adult continued to receive a share – and even introduced the repartition system in some areas where it had not been the practice before (Ioffe and Nefedova 1998: 44-50; Shanin 1986: 79).

The model is also consistent with the behavior of the rural population during the 1917 revolution and under the communist regime. During the revolution they strengthened the *obshchini* by reincorporating the land and families who had been separated from them in the last years of the tsarist regime. However the subsequent process of collectivization went further than the ethic of brotherly mutual aid embodied in the *obshchina* system and was also rightly perceived and resented as a mechanism for extracting a surplus from the peasantry. (Fitzpatrick 1994: 62-76) Peasants responded by working far harder and more productively on their private plots than they did for the collectives (Ioffe and Nefedova 1998: 80-84). Though peasant participation in the collective farms was imposed by force, their effective cooperation had to be obtained, to the extent that it was, in a process of bargaining between management and work force that has been described by Humphrey (1983: 300-372).

Moving on to the post-communist era, the reforms in the 1990s had three main features (O'Brien and Wegren 2002: 8-11; Perrotta 1998; Syrodoev 1994: 70-72, 115-118).

- In order to enable collective farms to respond flexibly to market pressures, their responsibilities for housing and social services were transferred to the *sel'sovety* – rural district councils.
- Ownership of the collective farmland was vested in individual members of the farm, each of whom received a certificate affirming their title to a share – a *zemelnyi pai* – consisting of a certain number of hectares of land in an unspecified location. If the collective made a profit, this certificate entitled the holder to receive some rent. The *zemelnyi pai* could be inherited, and rented out, but not sold.
- People could set up as independent farmers – *fermery*. Any member of the collective could apply to have the land of his *zemelnyi pai* located and then farm it himself as a *fermer*, and might also rent land from other people who had chosen to withdraw their land from the collective. It was also possible to rent more land through special land-reallocation arrangements – which could also be accessed by people who had not previously been members of a collective farm.

The response to the reforms has been very similar over most of the country (including my northern and southern field sites) – and has also been consistent with the values of the inclusive kinship system. Only about 2 percent of

households set up as *fermery* – thereby adopting a strategy of investing as a narrow kinship unit in their own land and machinery – and the number of *fermery* has not increased since the mid-1990s (Stroev 2001: 601 Tables 25 and 27).

However, there was equally little enthusiasm for the continuing – though often renamed and reorganized – collectives. Collective farm production declined steadily through the 1990s, so that by 1999 it was only 40 percent of what it had been in 1991 (Stroev 2001: 594 Table 12). The removal of the collective's social-service functions, which was meant to improve its performance by enabling its leaders to concentrate on purely economic tasks, may have fatally weakened them by removing the bargaining power vis-à-vis their own workers, which their responsibility for public housing and other desirable public services had previously placed in management hands.

Most agricultural production now takes the form of subsidiary household farming (Stroev 2001: 593 Table 10). In Listnoe many households supplemented their private plots (which had recently been converted to private property) with additional land rented from the public authorities and with the use of wasteland for grazing (Miller and Heady, 2003). The main organizational principle is household-level production cushioned by the kind of mutual assistance described above. In practice most households have access to as much public land as they feel they need for their household farming – a system not entirely unlike that previously operated, over a larger proportion of each district's land surface, by the *obshchini.*

Kinship, Culture, and Economic Interests

So far I have argued as though the line of causation in the Russian case went from the implicit culture of kinship, encoded in the terminological system, through the resulting behavior patterns to the continuance of compatible political and economic institutions. The argument is related to Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* – the learned, but not reflected-on, mental patterns that tend, in stable circumstances, to produce behavior that is practically effective and socially appropriate. A terminological system can help to direct people's unreflective attention to certain relationships rather than others – and so reinforce the spontaneous learning of culturally approved behavior that would also be supported by ritual and the daily experience of work and social interaction. I have emphasized the pervasiveness of the *habitus* that forms round kinship relationships and implied that, therefore, other parts of the system are likely to adapt to it.

However, although the historical record provides an impressive testimony to the resilience of the Russian kinship and property system, it would

be wrong to treat the kinship and property system as an unchangeable aspect of Russian culture. As in other parts of Europe, it is clear that long-term processes of social change took place. Though the importance of extended kinship ties seems to have been a feature from early times, the evidence suggests that the development of the redistributive *obshchina* was a phenomenon of the last few centuries. Whereas, elsewhere in Europe, the economic developments of the last few centuries have been accompanied by a shift to a more "exclusive" kinship system and the retreat of systems of communal labor (whether imposed by landlords or organized by the community itself), in Russia, both landlords and the state increased their demands for labor and tribute, and the institution of the redistributive commune seems to have spread as a response to these demands. The introduction of redistributive communes was promoted on different occasions and in different places by different social strata: sometimes by the state, sometimes by landlords, and sometimes by the majority of the peasantry themselves. The peasant concern to share what resources there were, implicit in their "inclusive" kinship system, was reinforced by the concern of government officials and estate managers to maximize their revenues by ensuring that each peasant household had enough resources to fulfill its tax and feudal obligations (Blum 1961: 508-523; Melton 1998: 237-240, 262-265).

Friedrich's analysis of the history of Russian kinship terminology shows that a major change occurred at about the same time as these sociopolitical developments. The previous terminological distinction between patrilineal and matrilineal kin disappeared between 1500 and 1700 (Friedrich 1962: 14). This is the period when, according to the sources cited above, serfdom became firmly established, and the practice of communal land distribution by the *obshchina* was just beginning to develop. In the 20th century, the patrilineal extended households of tsarist times (Czap 1983; Hoch 1989: 65-90; Worobec 1995: 76-117) were replaced by nuclear-family households. If such large changes can take place, why have the features emphasized in this paper remained constant?

To understand this, it may be helpful to turn to the other side of Bourdieu's (1977) "theory of practice," which emphasizes that *habitus* is formed from the experience and practical strategies that prove most successful in the community's environment. Up to now, Russian country dwellers have needed to turn to their kin because, over the centuries, the behavior of their social and political superiors has proved both unpredictable and harsh. After a fondly remembered period of predictability and relative prosperity during the Brezhnev years, the old pattern seemed to return amid the disruption and economic collapse following perestroika and the reforms of the 1990s. In such an environment, economic individualism presents a consider-

able risk. In the circumstances, it is not surprising that collective values are still intrinsic to the way Russian country dwellers organize the interface between domestic life, work, and the community at large. The values implicit in their kinship system need to be viewed seriously, and sympathetically, by anyone concerned with the future of Russia's rural communities.

If the argument of this chapter is correct, we should also take seriously issues arising from anthropological kinship theory. One way of doing this would be to document the practical workings of the kinship system more thoroughly, including residence and marriage patterns. As Gessat-Anstett (2000: 631) comments, relatively little is known about the Russian marriage system. To sustain the argument about the contrast between Western Europe and Russia in patterns of mutual assistance, more rigorous data than those presented here on mutual aid between kin would need to be collected in both Russia and Western Europe. The most important questions of all, however, concern the processes by which an established kinship *habitus* may change, or be conserved, in the face of lasting economic transformations. For better or worse, the Russian countryside is likely to provide plenty of opportunities to investigate this question over the next few years.

Acknowledgements

The research on which this chapter is based was supported by the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle.

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Chapter 17

Family Farms, Community, and the Decline of the Former Kolkhozy in Russia

Oane Visser

Introduction

In the early 1990s, the return to the private family (or peasant) farm became the dominant ideology of the agricultural reformers in most of the Eastern European countries. In some of those countries, the private family farm (Albania, Georgia, and Armenia) or a mix of family farms and family associations (Romania and Bulgaria) became the dominant group of producers in practice. In Russia, as in other large former Soviet republics, the privatized *kolkhozy* and *sovkhozy* remained the dominant producers, still occupying about 90 percent of all agricultural land (Spoor and Visser 2001). The general expectation of a quick rise of private family farms (expressed in World Bank 1992) did not materialize (Spoor and Visser 2001). Many of the successor organizations to the *kolkhozy* and *sovkhozy* became unprofitable in the course of reforms. The farm managements did not fire employees but reacted by reducing wages and delaying payment.[1] As a result, wage arrears and payments in kind became chronic, and the income of the rural population fell drastically.

The employees were dependent on the *kolkhozy* and *sovkhozy* not only for their income but also for a whole range of services, such as cheap housing, health care, day care, and cultural activities. These enterprises were "total social institutions" that provided most of the social services needed by the rural population. This chapter will describe the decline of these total social institutions and investigate how farm employees experience and cope

[1] Wages in the agricultural sector are very low. In the Pskov region they are just 560 Rubles a month, which in 2001 was about 20 U.S. dollars; 1,513 Rubles is considered the minimum wage for an adult by the Russian Bureau for Statistics (*Pskovskaia Gubernia*, 22 Nov. 2001, p.14).

with the dwindling social and economic role of these enterprises. How do households compensate for the loss of income, and are there any formal or informal local institutions that take over the role of farm enterprises to some extent? Does inter-household cooperation fill this vacuum, and how has cooperation and rural community life changed? Furthermore, the chapter deals with the question of why households still stay in the enterprises, even when they are hardly paid.

The rural population in the less well-to-do Russian regions, located in the north and northwest of the country, was hit especially hard by the collapse of the centrally planned economy. The agricultural sector in these regions, with unfavorable soils and climate, depended on federal budget transfers, which diminished drastically in the 1990s. In these areas the question of household survival strategies is most acute. This chapter describes the kinds of initiatives households undertook to cope with the consequences of the post-communist economy in one of these regions, the Pskov *oblast'* – as well as in the Moscow region. It is based on fieldwork carried out in 2000 and 2001 consisting of ethnographical research and a survey.[2] The survey included 20 large-scale enterprises, 20 peasant farms, and 80 subsidiary household enterprises. The ethnographic research consisted of semi-structured interviews at different farms and agricultural enterprises and a short case-study of a large-scale enterprise.

To explain why rural households in Russia remained largely within the agricultural enterprises, I will first briefly discuss the privatization process and pre-communist rural structure in Russia compared to that of Central Europe.

The Patterns of Privatization

When privatization was introduced in Russia and the other CIS countries, these societies could not refer back to a long history of private and individual landownership. Collectivization in the Soviet Union began about a quarter of a century earlier than in Central Europe. After 70 years of collectivized agriculture, it was all but impossible to give land back to the heirs of the former owners. Furthermore, Russian peasants had neither a tradition of independent family farms nor of private, individually owned property.

In the second half of the 19th century, family ownership of land and movable capital was introduced in Russia. However, most land was held in

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[2] The survey was carried out with the help of A.A. Efimova and A.Efimova Jr. I am thankful to them for the broad knowledge of Pskovian agriculture they shared with me. In the Moscow region the research would not have been possible without the kind help provided by V.Koshelev of the Timiriasev Academy.

common by the *mir* (the Russian rural community) and to a lesser degree by the household. Both forms of property were not subject to inheritance but to division (Dunn and Dunn 1967: 11). In 1906, agricultural reforms started, the aim of which was the distribution of land among rural family heads as private property. However, before these reforms gained momentum, the communists had already taken over. By the end of the 1920s, when the communists started mass collectivization, only about 10 percent of the land was privately owned (Dunn and Dunn 1967: 31).

Not surprisingly, at the onset of agricultural reform in the beginning of the 1990s, redistribution of land had little appeal to either the rural population or the reformers. Privatization predominantly took the form of transformation of *kolkhozy* and *sovkhozy* into shareholder enterprises. The employees who became shareholders could opt to take their share in land and start a private farm. (Following the terminology of official publications, these farms are referred to below as "peasant" farms.) The majority of agricultural enterprises in Russia have been privatized, but, as in the other large CIS countries, they have remained largely intact, as most employees remained shareholders.

The "Flourishing" of Household Enterprises

In the past decade, agriculture in the Pskov region was characterized by a sharper decline than in most other regions of Russia;[3] agricultural land cultivated by the enterprises decreased by one third (Goskomstat Pskov 2000: 19). During the survey work it was indicated to me that the land now covered with low bushes and small trees was agricultural land a decade ago. The production in the enterprises declined even more drastically than the amount of cultivated land did. While the agricultural enterprises only showed a decline, the household sector started to "flourish"; the farm workers increased the size of their private plots – the so-called subsidiary household enterprises that they already had as *kolkhoz* or *sovkhoz* workers – as a less risky alternative to independent (peasant) farming.

In all parts of Russia, the acreage held by household enterprises has increased significantly since the start of reforms, although they remain very small.[4] The land per household increased from a third of a hectare, in 1990,

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[3] The profitability of the enterprises declined quickly in the first half of the 1990s and continued downwards until 1998. While in 1990 only 1 percent of the enterprises in Pskov were unprofitable, in the course of the 1990s that number increased quickly to reach 97 percent, in 1998 (Goskomstat Pskov 2000: 19).

[4] In some regions (in the black-earth regions of southern Russia, *Krasnodarskii Krai*) quite large household enterprises can be found that own up to 30 pigs. The number of such cases is small.

to more than half a hectare, in 1998 (Goskomstat 1999:16). Nevertheless, compared with peasant farms (on average about 40 hectares) and the former collective enterprises (several thousand hectares), they remained very small, although their share in the total production has increased remarkably.

In Russia the household plots accounted for 5 percent of agricultural land in 1998 (Goskomstat 1999:45). In the less well-off areas in the north of European Russia, the share of the plots amounts to around 15 percent. The share of the private household in total production increased from 25, in 1990, to nearly 60 percent, in 1998 (Goskomstat 1999:18). In 1999, rural households accounted for more than three-quarters of the agricultural production of the Pskov region (Goskomstat Pskov 2000:15).

The term *flourish* with regard to household enterprises is put in quotation marks above for several reasons. The increased share produced by the households is, first of all, a result of falling production in the collective sector. In most Russian regions, real production by rural families increased only slightly. And although the households may have become important producers in the agricultural statistics, this fact does not interest the rural households, let alone make them proud. For the rural families the increase in private plot production is borne out of pure necessity and is experienced mainly as an extra burden.

Workers in unprofitable enterprises with low wages and large arrears appeared to have larger plots than workers from the more successful enterprises (Visser 2003). Employees had private plots of, on average, 20 *sotok* (0.2 hectare) in the two most profitable enterprises we visited. In enterprises that were less successful, but still profitable, employees had plots that were four times larger (0.8 hectare). Employees of enterprises that were on the verge of bankruptcy had household enterprises of, on average, 1.8 hectares. Some farm workers even had parcels of up to ten hectares of land.

In the profitable enterprises, the income of the employees consisted primarily of their farm wage. Households in most of the weak enterprises indicated that their main source of income did not come from the agricultural enterprise but was generated by their labor on their own household land. In fact, rural families have returned to the situation of the first decades of communism. Until the 1950s, *kolkhoz* workers did not receive, or hardly received, wages. They earned a living from their own private plot production and sometimes a limited in-kind salary from the *kolkhoz*. The main difference for the farm workers today is that they now have the freedom to leave the enterprise.

However, the lack of spontaneous decollectivization by collective and state farm workers themselves during the privatization period of the 1990s was one of the most striking features of land reform in Russia for most

(Western) observers (Ioffe and Nefedova 1997). The lack of farm formation spurred quite a lot of research on private farm formation and the factors that prevented rural households from establishing a private farm. Problems that have been found include farm workers' lack of the general agricultural knowledge required to manage an independent farm (Brooks et al. 1996; Serova 1999: 15); the unstable, risky economic environment (Serova 1999: 16); declining state support for private farms (Visser 2003:135); and the lack of cooperation or hostility of enterprise managers and village residents toward the private farmers (Nikulin 2002b: 416).

However, as the situation in the large agricultural enterprises has deteriorated from year to year, the aforementioned arguments on the risks of private farming are not sufficient to explain why employees stay in the enterprises, since they would apparently have little to lose from leaving. Farm workers have to wait weeks or months (up to four months in some of the interviewed enterprises) for their wages. Moreover, they mostly receive a significant share of their salary in kind (in agricultural products produced by the enterprise). The increased labor on the plots together with the formal labor in the enterprise means an extreme work load in the summer season, especially for the women who do most of the work on the plots. Some women indicated that they worked more than 70 hours a week on average. By starting their independent farm, workers would not have to work for the farm enterprise without being paid and, instead, could enlarge their own plots.

One would suppose that the bad state of the large-scale farms and the lack of a salary would stimulate workers to leave the enterprises, as they have done in Moldova. There households first stayed in the large-scale enterprises, but more recently, as the situation in these enterprises became very strained, they have begun to leave in large numbers to start private farms (Spoor and Visser 2001).

However, in Russia, although some of the employees left the farms, only few of them have started independent private farms. Even if farm employees earn most of their income from their own plot production, they see starting their own independent farm as an even worse option than remaining with the declining enterprise. The accountant of an unprofitable farm enterprise expressed the feeling of many farm workers when she said that "the farm enterprise is the last piece of bread for the employees."

Informal Services Provided to Rural Households

The reason why most employees prefer to enlarge their small plots incrementally while staying with the large-scale enterprise can only be understood when we take the Soviet legacy into account. It is especially important

to discuss the specific nature of the property relations between household enterprises and the collective farm and the provision of services to the former by the latter.

In the socialist system, the private plots and herds, being anathema to communist ideology, were initially prohibited during the first collectivization drive in the early '30s (Lerman et al. 1994: 528). As this "total collectivization of peasant property" resulted in fierce resistance and declining production, the policy was relaxed and private plots were officially recognized. Private plot production and food selling were tolerated to varying degrees throughout the communist period to compensate for the shortcomings of the collective sector.

Moreover, the boundaries between the agricultural enterprises and the household enterprises were vague. Households could let their livestock graze on the collective meadows. Employees could use the tractors of the enterprise to plow their plots, and they could acquire fodder for their cows and pigs informally. Collective farms paid the households for the milk and marketed it together with the milk from the collective herds. In short, a symbiosis existed between the collective and the individual enterprises: Households could increase their food supply and save money for other expenditures by expanding their plot with subsidized inputs from the collective (Humphrey 1998). The collective farm management, on the other hand, could motivate its low-paid workers with these informal, in-kind transfers.

During *perestroika,* and especially after the privatization of the *kolkhozy*, the expansion of the household enterprises gained even more momentum. The central restrictions on private plot production were lifted, and it became attractive, if not to say necessary, for farm employees to increase private production. During privatization, employees officially acquired ownership of the plots they had already used during the communist period. Furthermore, most enterprises distributed somewhat larger fields for household use. Finally, households could lease additional municipal land in most regions.

Private households' access to the resources of the large-scale farms was continued or increased. The process of integration (symbiosis) between the collective farm and the household enterprises that was stimulated by *perestroika* in the 1980s, especially in the livestock sector, was intensified after privatization. The large-scale enterprise became more and more a provider of services and resources for the small-scale household sector. The enterprise prepared fodder and provided young animals for the households and arranged transportation to market their products.

In the mid-1990s the farm enterprises in Pskov reduced the amount of free or subsidized fodder they provided for the households because the costs

of fodder (especially grain) increased as a result of rising fuel prices. But they maintained a whole range of other services. All 20 enterprises we visited plowed the plots of their employees. Nearly all the enterprises provided young livestock for their employees and sold stores to them below market price. At all but one of the enterprises where employees owned cows, they were allowed to let them graze on the meadows of the enterprise. More than half of the enterprises sold fodder to their workers. The marketing of milk from private cows was carried out by half of the enterprises.

Apart from the resources that the enterprises offered its members, a semilegal or illegal flow of goods to the household sector already existed during the communist period. Since 1991, the stealing of enterprise resources has become a widespread phenomenon (see also Humphrey 1998: 463; Nikulin 2002b). During a stay at an agricultural enterprise in the Moscow region, I witnessed how employees took and sold enterprise milk in the evening. The privatization of the *kolkhozy* and *sovkhozy*, making the employees shareholders, did not, as a rule, result in better care for enterprise property. On the contrary, the decline in discipline during the transition led to widespread stealing from farms – actually *increasing* the access of households to farm-owned inputs.

Decline of Farm Enterprises as Social Institutions

The role of the former *kolkhozy* and *sovkhozy* as providers of wages has dwindled. Fortunately, for the short-term survival of the household enterprises, the informal (in-kind) transfers from the collective are continuing, as we have seen. Their function as "total social institution" has been reduced even more drastically. Facing sharply reduced state support and rising debts, most enterprises slashed the social services they used to provide. The rapid decline in the rural population in Pskov and many other regions in the northern half of European Russia further complicates the maintenance of social services. A tendency to privatize accommodation has meant that the provision of housing and rent subsidies by farm enterprises has decreased. Agricultural enterprises also reduced their budget for education. From 1992 to 1994, one tenth of the enterprises stopped contributions to schools and day care (Brooks et al. 1996: 44).

Both rural residents and town-dwellers are all too aware of the deterioration of social and economic life in the countryside. In conversations about agriculture with urban Russians, they often reacted very pessimistically, saying, "What is left over from agriculture in Pskov? Forest is taking over the pastures and you hardly see cows anymore" or "What is interesting about agriculture? It is only interesting if you like drinking vodka." On several occasions, Russians in towns and in rural areas told me stories about

large-scale enterprises where most of the livestock had disappeared and only one or two tractors were left.

Although employees usually blamed management for the social and economic decline of their enterprise (and vice versa), there is also a widespread feeling that the state is responsible for the deterioration. Asked if, and what, subsidies enterprises now receive from the state, farm specialists mostly reacted cynically, saying "Subsidies? What subsidies do we get? Nothing! Nobody helps us, neither science nor government. We have to do it ourselves." One farm worker said, "Nobody in the government is interested in agriculture anymore. They only talk about oil, metal, and precious stones. Have you ever seen the agriculture in the news on television? We are a forgotten class."

During communism, the farm workers were long ignored and treated as second-class citizens. Rural residents did not acquire internal passports until the mid-1950s. They were bound to the village and farm enterprise. Furthermore, it was only after the 1950s that *kolkhoz* workers started to receive formal wages. Only in 1965 did the *kolkhoz* workers acquire the status of paid farm employees, with all the social rights of urban employees, such as pension, disability subsidies, and, later on, day care, children holidays, etc. (Dunn and Dunn 1967:69). They have rapidly been losing much of this support since the introduction of the market economy. As Humphrey (1998: 461) states, it is difficult to imagine the extent to which people's expectations have been dashed: "Till recently there were expectations that electricity would be free, children would be taken to school, heating or winter fuel would be provided, pensions, grants, and wages would be paid, houses would be maintained [...]. They feel abandoned." When talking about the deterioration of village life and the role of the state, people mentioned, for instance, the reductions in local hospitals and village schools. But, most of all, people complained about the decline of bus connections between their village and farm office or the nearby town.[5] This is a problem villagers are confronted with daily, or at least weekly. Furthermore, they drew my attention to electricity cables that had fallen down. These examples (of bus connections and electricity cables) seem to have a highly symbolic value. They are indicators not only for the deterioration of village life but even more so for the way villagers feel they have been left isolated by the state.

Social and cultural activities have also been seriously curtailed. In the weak enterprises we visited, the state of the *dom kul'turi* – the village center

[5] The number of buses available for public transportation in the Pskov region in general declined by 17 percent in the last decade (Goskomstat 1999: 95). The decline in the number of buses in rural areas is probably much greater. The same applies for the decline in how frequently they service their routes.

for theatre, music, and other celebrations – was indicative of the cultural life in the village; the *dom kul'turi* was run down or the entrance was boarded up. The picture that emerged from the interviews with the villagers was no different. The majority of villagers complained that the frequency of cultural festivals and other community or enterprise celebrations had declined. Sporting events, which some of the enterprises formerly organized, have been stopped completely. According to the specialists, most enterprises previously helped employees who were in difficulties. This kind of ad hoc support has also declined.

In this chapter, I am focusing on those farm enterprises that still exist formally and also function to some extent. These farms form the majority of enterprises in Russia. However, in some cases, weak enterprises have totally disintegrated and stopped functioning. Before we go on, let us consider an example of what happens in such cases. When an enterprise is disbanded, the management as a rule leaves to join other enterprises with better prospects or for positions in the district agricultural department. We visited a farm enterprise that had stopped functioning; the role of the enterprise as the central community institution had been taken over by the local high school. The school owned its own tractors and machinery and used them to produce food for school meals. The school bus and the truck owned by the school had become the main means of public transportation. During Whitsuntide, I saw how a large group of villagers gathered by the school to be driven to the cemetery. At Whitsuntide, Russians traditionally go to the cemetery to mourn the family dead. The son of the school director was not exaggerating when he said that his father had become the leader of the village. However, this director had good connections in the regional government, as he admitted himself, which made it possible to claim the resources (such as the new school bus) to play such a role. Whether this is a general pattern is a question for further research.

Inter-Household Cooperation and Community Life

Reformers and Western advisers, stressing the need to dismantle the social-services system of the agricultural enterprises, have proposed a shift of these services to the municipality. However, local authorities are also in dire straits and not capable of assuming all these obligations. While practically all farms have reduced the range of social services, only in a minority of cases have these services been transferred to the village council (*sel'sovet*) (Brooks 1996:44). "As a rule, the village administration, having practically no resources, is constantly asking the leaders of the enterprise to give any kind of support to the school, hospital, roads, et cetera" (Nikulin 2002b: 10). In some cases the *sel'sovet* have taken the initiative, as with the collection of

milk from rural dwellers, for marketing by a number of *sel'sovets* in Pskov district. However, the services provided by the municipality are far from being able to compensate for the reductions by the farm enterprises.

Thus the question arises of what kinds of economic support emerge between households to mitigate the hardships of economic reform and the decline in social services provided by the farm enterprise. Are there any signs of a visible return to the situation before communism, when the village community (the *krug* or *mir*) was influential in many aspects of economic and social life?

In pre-communist society, the community held the land, and part of that land was divided (and frequently redivided) equally between the households according to their needs. The different household parcels were spread over the territory of the community. Furthermore, rural families cooperated in a large number of credit societies and producers' associations, which they set up at the beginning of the 20th century (Dunn and Dunn 1967: 13).

As communal land was redistributed to households during the first years of communism to win rural support during collectivization, the influence of the (informal) village community over household farming declined. By the end of the 1920s, mass collectivization started and household farming became regulated by central policy and the management of the established collective farms.

In the communist period, a premium was placed on the establishment of separate households, as each *kolkhoz* household was entitled to a full-scale household plot. Some families divided into nuclear-family households to gain access to more land while maintaining a common budget (Dunn and Dunn 1967: 75).

To investigate support networks and cooperation in the post-communist rural community, employees were asked how many people they know that would be prepared to help them by lending a sum of money, about 100 Rubles (just over three Euro), for a short period of time. As a point of comparison, the average monthly wage in Pskov was 580 Rubles, in 2001, and wages at the enterprises where I conducted interviews varied between 200 and nearly 2,000 Rubles. On average, people knew about six people whom they could expect to help them out in case of sudden need, but the range was extreme: One tenth of the employees stated that they only knew one person, or even nobody at all, to ask for money. On the other hand, some people knew ten or 20 people to approach for such a favor. What changes have taken place? Did mutual support between households increase during the reforms? Unfortunately, the reverse appears to be the case. Only one employee indicated that he could borrow money from more people than during the communist period. Nearly three-quarters of the 80 employees

(and managers) stated that the number of people they could ask for money had declined compared to the last decade of the Soviet period.[6] A positive sign is that several people commented that since the recovery after the crisis of 1998, it has become easier to borrow money from neighbors, friends, or acquaintances: "Some years ago, I would have had nobody to turn to for borrowing money. Nowadays, I know some people who are able and willing to help me."

What other kind of help do villagers provide each other? Since production and labor on the private plot has become much more important, one wonders whether households support each other with regard to labor on the plots, like, for instance, milking a neighbor's cow when they are away or watering their crops.

It appears that households clearly expect less help from each other on plots than they do with regard to money lending. Half of the employees only know one person outside their household who would be prepared to help with labor related to their household plot. One tenth of the employees do not expect any help from other villagers at all. As one of these employees stated, "we count on no one except ourselves."

Herding cows in turn, helping with machinery (above all, plowing), and manual labor on the plot are the most common forms of help. More than half of the employees were engaged in these forms of cooperation. Employees keep their cows near their houses at night. At most of the enterprises, the cows graze together on the meadows of the farm enterprise in the summer season. Employees guard the herd of private cows in turn.

Most of the work on the private plots, on which the villagers concentrate on labor-intensive, high-value crops, is done manually. However, about half the households stated that they receive help when it comes to mechanized labor. Rural families generally do not own machinery. In most of the enterprises, plowing is done by the enterprises. But in some of the enterprises machinery was transferred to employees (see also Fadeeva 2000). Although most families sell (or exchange) part of their produce (sometimes after simple processing), only 20 percent of the households cooperated in any kind of marketing or processing of their produce.

Villagers stated almost unanimously that most of the help that their household received came from relatives. The predominant tendency, under

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[6] This decrease may partly be explained by the fact that the availability of scarce products during communism depended more on connections than on money. The Soviet proverb "Better have 100 friends than 100 Rubles" aptly summarizes this. In the current situation, consumers just need money to obtain products. Moreover, prices have risen and wages in agriculture are low. Thus money has become much more essential to survive, and it is understandable that people are more reluctant to lend it, if they have any money in reserve at all.

communism, to split up the family into smaller entities to get access to more household plots while maintaining a common budget and cooperating in household production appears to continue (see also Humphrey 1998: 467).

Not only has the cooperation between households decreased. The participation in community celebrations and the scope of such festivities has declined as well, as in other parts of Russia (O'Brien and Patsiorkovski 2000; Nikulin 2002b: 19). About two-thirds of the families we interviewed participated less frequently in village festivals than during communism.

Conclusion

The dwindling social and economic role of collective enterprises and the overall economic decline of the last decade have brought hardship to the Russian rural population, since it appears that the reduction of social services by farm enterprises has only been compensated to a very limited extent by the activities of the municipalities. Households are left mainly to their own devices; rural families survive on the produce from their plot and what they obtain from the collective, either legally or semilegally. It appears that inter-household cooperation is limited and has decreased since the fall of communism. The decline of participation in community life seems to be a very widespread phenomenon. But with regard to inter-household support, studies in other (southern or Siberian) regions show evidence of more cooperation (O'Brien and Patsiorkovski 2000) or a more diverse picture (Humphrey 1998: 463). Unfortunately, in the poor, agriculturally weak region of Pskov, where the need for a social safety net is very acute, social support between rural households appears to be weak.

The villagers are pessimistic about the future of agriculture and the prospects of their enterprises and generally blame the state for this. Although a significant proportion of the employees are pessimistic about the fate of their enterprise (more than 40 percent believe that household farming will continue to be dominant in their region for the next decade), they still do not see a shift to independent farming as a feasible alternative. Boris Nemtsov, who led the vigorous decollectivization campaign in Nizhnii Novgorod in the 1990s, acknowledged that "the main hindrance in the privatization of land in the province of Nizhnii Novgorod is the unavailability of those wanting to become owners" (Ioffe and Nefedova 1997: 200).

In a region like Pskov, where many enterprises are unprofitable or near bankruptcy, the incentive to leave the farm seems at first sight to be very strong. As has been shown, households still receive important, mostly informal, or even illegal, resources and services from the farm enterprises, even when they are near bankruptcy. The importance of this semilegal symbiosis for the households can be illustrated by the income from live-

stock, the most stable form of household plot income year-round. Households in unprofitable farms have, on average, one or two cows and some other smaller livestock. The costs are minimal, since employees can let their cows graze freely on the enterprise pastures and can also collect hay. The income derived from one cow is more than the average monthly wage of about 300 Rubles at the unprofitable farms we visited. So it is clear that employees have much to lose from leaving the enterprise. Employees would miss the essential inputs for their plot if they started their own farm. Moreover, our research suggests that in a weak region like Pskov, the lack of strong support networks between the villagers makes a step into independent farming very risky.

The fact that the take-up of private "peasant" farms has been disappointing might easily lead to the conclusion that the large farm enterprises will remain the dominant producers in Russia. The slowdown of the unexpected expansion of household farming, in the second half of the 1990s, reinforces this idea. Furthermore, as O'Brien and Patsiorkovski (2000) have pointed out, the expansion of household enterprises in the 1990s is widely seen as a marginal and transitional phenomenon. "There is a sense that household farming performs a valuable function, but at the same time that it has no future" (Gardner 1999: 78). The assumption is that household farming will automatically disappear as the economy grows. As a consequence, both government and scholarly attention seem to be shifting away from family farming, whether in the form of subsidiary household enterprises or of private "peasant" farms.

However, family farming, embedded in different systems, has been a continuous and essential feature of communist and pre-communist agricultural society (Ioffe and Nefedova 1997). The development of household farming needs attention, since it has important consequences for the work of the agricultural enterprises because of the symbiotic relationship between the two. Moreover, the household smallholding, being one of the few stable aspects of rural life, has become "the centre of the gravity of local economies," around which rural households build their strategies (Humphrey 1998: 463).

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Chapter 18

Are the kuláks back? Inherited Capital and Social Continuity in Mesterszállás, Hungary

Tatjana Thelen

Introduction

The title refers to a quotation from the village of Mesterszállás, where the fieldwork underlying this chapter was carried out.[1] A 52-year-old widow said, "The old kuláks are coming back," and she added:

> My parents only had a little land because they were poor peasants. What is sure is that this system [the new one] helps the rich people [Interview No. 40, 07/18/2000].

Two aspects of her statement seemed interesting: First, she used the term *kulák*, which is a highly pejorative term for wealthy peasants in early socialism,[2] and second, she implied a social continuity in her village, which is much contested in the scientific literature. This article explores how much social continuity can be found in terms of social groups and family structure in the village and how they are perceived on the local level. Two aspects of this development are emphasized here: First, the extent of social continuity, due partly to the new importance of inherited capital; and secondly, how this is perceived on the local level. Western literature, which focuses on the cruel measures of socialist collectivization and tends to stress a perceived unity of

[1] The fieldwork took place in 1999 and 2000. Besides participant observation, different interview techniques were used as methods of data collection. In the following, informal talks are quoted as DN (diary note). Quotations from formal interviews indicate the interview number. The questionnaire was completed by 113 households and addressed the composition of households, basic sociological data, and opinions about the system change, compensation, landed property and its use, and prospects for the future. Additionally life histories and semi-structured interviews with experts were taped.

[2] The Russian term *kulák* was adopted in Hungary.

peasant society against communism, might overlook the dislike of once-poor peasants for former and new hierarchies. Besides, privatization also has an impact on other social differences such as those due to age and gender. Under post-socialist conditions of fundamental change the new property regime may also lead to new family conflicts.

The Field Site and Some Major Findings

Mesterszállás is a small village in the great Hungarian plain. It is a formerly outlying settlement that gained its independence from its mother town in 1897.[3] The settlement consisted at that time of about 300 scattered farms. The structure of property at the time of collectivization was marked by small and medium-size holdings.[4] During socialism the village was completely collectivized, and a well-known cooperative was developed.

With the implementation of the laws for compensation and distribution of cooperative land in the 1990s, a typical ownership structure for post-socialist countries developed in Mesterszállás: One large-scale enterprise, a few larger agrarian family businesses, some new middle-sized holders, and many small-scale producers emerged. Agriculture was and continues to be the main source of income for the local population since very little employment was to be had in other sectors. Thus Mesterszállás is strongly affected by the post-socialist crisis in agriculture as evidenced in sinking production and collapse of markets. 30 percent of the working-age population is unemployed. In terms of the categories used by agrarian sociologists, the process of transformation in Mesterszállás can be said to have produced a situation of stagnation (Csite and Kovách 2000: 24).[5]

As was revealed during fieldwork, descendants from old "kulák" families are overrepresented among the new post-socialist mid-size holders

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[3] Induced by the introduction of private landed property in this region after 1848, the consolidation of farmland in 1853, and the regulation of the river Körös at the end of the century, the whole region of about 4,000 hectares was settled with more than 300 scattered farms (*tanya*). One of the best-known ethnographical descriptions of the Hungarian *tanya* on the great plain is Györffy (1983: 293-328 [1937]). As an agrarian sociologist, Erdei worked on the *tanya* and lived in the scattered farms (1942: 132-33). For a village history of Mesterszállás, see Barna (1995) and Barna and Gulyás (1997).

[4] The distribution of property in 1949 was: 0-5 kh, 119 households; 5-10 kh, 100 households; 10-20 kh, 136 households; and more than 20 kh, 114 housholds (KSH 1949). Kh (Katasztralis hold) is an old unit for measuring land and equals about 0.6 hectare (There were alternative definitions of "hold" – see Torsello p. 227, this volume, and Fél and Hofer 1969 p. 409 (glossary)).

[5] The statistics for Mesterszállás are from the mayor's office (Mesterszállás Község Önkormányzat). For the overall situation and structure in Hungarian agriculture after the land distribution and privatisation, see, for example, Juhász (1998), Varga (1998), and Csite and Kovách (2000).

and new agricultural entrepreneurs. Out of the five private enterprises that work an area of more than 100 hectares, four have close kin relationships to former wealthy peasants. Also, two old men (sons of former wealthy peasants) were able to work more than 100 hectares until 2000, with the help of the cooperative. The new mid-size holders, who work from 20 up to 100 hectares, have, without exception, a pre-socialist wealthy peasant background.

The question arises of why such a high level of social continuity exists? And are there other social relations that show a similar degree of continuity? In the following, it will be shown, firstly, how the social reproduction of the village hierarchy was facilitated by post-socialist legislation, and secondly, that this reproduction has only been effective for families who had also been successful under socialism and so had enough social capital in the transformation period. Thirdly, there are hints that the introduction of the new property system has led to some reproduction of pre-socialist power relations within families.

Inherited Property and Social Continuity

The privatization of agricultural property had two aims: The first was a moral one – the compensation for suffering during the early phase of socialist collectivization and kulák persecution – while the second was a modernization project, the creation of a "modern" (Western) agricultural property structure in Hungary, which, it was thought, would lead out of the economic crisis.[6] One consequence of the moral aim was a system of allocation that favored families whose property had been expropriated. Law 25 decreed that a compensation voucher with a value of 1,000 Forint should be given out for each Gold Crown (*aranykorona*) of expropriated land.[7] These vouchers could then be used in land auctions. At the same time the law set the minimum price for buying one Gold Crown of land at 500 Forint – only half the

[6] Obviously the latter aim failed: Production rates have fallen more than in times of collectivization, and the crisis in agriculture is even greater than in socialist times. The production of pork, for example, declined in the years 1989 through '93 about 40.1 percent, and grain production about 45.6 percent, while productivity was reduced from five tons per hectare to three tons. Overall gross agrarian production sank in 1992 in comparison to the previous year by around 20 percent (the compensation law was passed in 1991). The proportion of employment in agriculture sank from 17.1 percent in 1990 to 7.2 percent in 1998 (from 818,000 to 261,000 persons), and production of food in the years 1991 to 1994 sank by about 30 percent (Csite and Kovách 2000: 14f; Csáki 1994: 617).

[7] Many legal instruments deal with compensation and privatization. Most important for compensation was Law 25 in 1991 and, for the transformation of cooperatives, Law 1 in 1992. For a chronological list of all laws, government decrees, resolutions of parliament, and court rulings, see Petri (1998).

value of the compensatory voucher for having had this amount of land expropriated. As a result, participants at land auctions could double the extent of their landholdings – so long as they agreed that they would all bid for the land at the minimum price. On the local level, in Mesterszállás, the proceedings for land distribution were all based on such agreements.[8] Some days before the auction, everyone interested in the land to be auctioned met, negotiated, and agreed upon its distribution. As a result, all land in Mesterszállás was sold at the minimal price of 500 Forint per Gold Crown. Thus everybody received land worth twice the value of their former holdings and therefore, in most cases, doubled the area of their land.

In addition to this "compensation land," two other forms of land were distributed: So-called member land, which was landed property brought into the cooperative by "voluntary" entry, was handed back with equal Gold Crown value. In this case there was no possibility of increasing the value and, therefore, size of the land. The last category of land that was distributed was the small amount given to members and employees of the cooperative who had no land of their own. The procedure thereby privileged formerly wealthy families entitled to compensation.

Those who were in a disadvantaged position recognized the advantage of formerly wealthy families. Not everyone expressed this as explicitly as the woman cited in the beginning, but others also felt they were being treated unfairly, since a lot of small peasants also experienced joining the cooperative as being forced. The procedure of early collectivization as expressed in high tax obligations for nonmembers and agitators who came to every house, left smallholders with the impression that there was no way of escaping collectivization. Now they feel cheated as a result of receiving less land in compensation than the former wealthy peasantry. This opinion is reinforced by the overall economic situation in which small scale production generates less and less income, many people are losing their jobs, and the overall prospects for the rural population are anything but bright. However, the pre-socialist class of wealthy landowners is not being reproduced in its entirety, and the conditions for success are found in the more recent, socialist past.

The Role of Social and Cultural Capital for Social Continuity

In Mesterszállás, those who have started a successful family business with their compensation land explain that their success is due to the family peasant tradition. Despite these references to the pre-socialist past and to their

[8] There are no data on land auctions, but Hungarian sociologists believe that about 70 percent of auctions were not real but agreed-upon (Harcsa, Kovách and Szelényi 1998: 224; see also Burgerné 1996: 411). For a description of a real auction, see Swain (1996).

ancestors, the successful post-socialist agrarian family businesses have taken a modern form as highly specialized and mechanized farms. Most of these new entrepreneurs had agrarian training and used to be in leading positions in the cooperatives. All but one of them (who was too young at that time but who is a cousin of one of the others) were also members of the local land commission that was responsible for privatization. In all of these enterprises, one family member, usually a retired one, left the cooperative in 1992 with his or her share of land. By leaving the cooperative at this time they also got their property shares paid out, in machinery, for example. This was only possible for a short period of time. By becoming entrepreneurs they also avoided curtailment of their entitlements, which, otherwise, the law envisaged if the value exceeded 200,000 Forint. It seems that in addition to inherited capital they had the relevant social capital to obtain influential positions during land privatization, important information about the procedure, and the cultural capital to start a successful agrarian business.

However, the social reproduction of the formerly wealthy peasants as a social group is only partial. A part of the agrarian proletariat as well as some of the former wealthy families migrated from the village in the early socialist period. Also, only some of the pre-socialist rich peasantry are successful entrepreneurs today. In contrast to today's most successful family businesses, some of the new mid-size holders with wealthy peasant background already ran private farms in socialist times. They were "socialist entrepreneurs," as Szelényi (1989) defined them. In general they hold a rather old peasant set of values, such as attachment to land, mixed farming, and uninterrupted production chains in combination with an anti-communist political attitude. They, and some of those with a poorer peasant background who also left the state sector in the 1980s, altogether tend to be losers in post-socialist times. They were not able to extend entrepreneurial experience – in other words, to apply their cultural capital – as they depended heavily on the local symbiosis with the cooperative, now no longer functioning. At the beginning of the 1990s they lacked social capital in the form of networks that would have served as channels for the information they needed to transform their enterprises. Their cultural capital – that is, their agricultural knowledge – was outdated. It is often stated (in the village and elsewhere) that being cut off from family farming tradition is a common reason for the failure of a family business. However, peasant knowledge is only useful if it is transformed and combined with modern knowledge, rather than being confined to traditional family agriculture.[9] In the words of Bourdieu (1983),

[9] This knowledge can also be made up for. For example, neither the mayor nor his son had agricultural training when they started family farming. The latter took a correspondence course in the meantime.

it is among some of the typical socialist entrepreneurs that the danger of loss inherent to cultural capital, i.e. "antiquity of *habitus*," has become evident. The rest of the losers are those who had always lacked economic capital: mostly formerly poor peasants and farmhands, some of whom expressed their disappointment, as cited in the beginning of this chapter.

That social reproduction is only partial is also demonstrated by the cooperation pattern among private farmers. Cooperation occurs mainly within the three private post-socialist agrarian producer types. Thus the five largest family businesses exchange information and certain tasks free of charge. New mid-size holders cooperate in the same way. The smaller producers have to pay for services and feel themselves discriminated against when it comes to the distribution of information. New economic divisions are more relevant for behavior than, for example, former class affiliation or pre-socialist social capital.[10]

Socialist Conditions for Social Continuity

If, as it seems, social capital was one relevant resource for successful social reproduction of part of the former wealthy peasantry, the question arises of which aspects of socialist conditions enabled them to be in the position to exercise their legal advantage in post-socialism successfully?

Even under early socialism there were institutions that fostered social continuity. While the first wave of collectivization excluded the formerly successful, wealthy, and middle peasant strata, the second wave of collectivization consciously moved toward the integration of these social groups into the cooperatives. The government had realized and utilized their influence and knowledge and thereby embraced the traditional peasant value order. Many of the former middle peasants attained leading positions (Juhász 1986-87: 8). Szelényi wrote of the process:

> In a certain sense they reproduced within the kolkhoz the hierarchy of power and prestige of the village from before collectivization [1989: 169].

This is also true for the village of Mesterszállás. While the village was strongly affected by the expropriations of the first wave of collectivization,[11]

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[10] For a more detailed interpretation on forms of capital during the process and on Szelényi's thesis of the importance of cultural capital, see Thelen (2001).

[11] Ninety-nine individuals were on this list, which is a lot in relation to the total number of households (about 350). The list can be found in the district archives of Szolnok (Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok Megyei Levéltár: Megyei Tanács VB. Pénzügyi Osztaly. Szám nelküli iratai 1950-53).

and members of the local agrarian proletariat founded the first cooperative, in the late '50s the peasant elite was included in the process and former "kuláks" became the heads of the cooperative, leading agronomists, or brigade leaders. For example, in 1957 Márton K., whose father had been on the *kulák* list in 1949, became the head of one of the cooperatives. This development is also remembered by the formerly poor peasants and sometimes viewed with suspicion. Mrs. K., whose father was a farmhand (*cseléd*) and who married the son of a poor peasant, remembers:

> My husband never joined the Party, but the others, the bigger [peasants], after everything was taken from them – they joined, of course only after some time. In the beginning they were not allowed to, and then they became the bosses [DN 09/06/1999].

Then, in the phase of consolidated socialism, there were other conditions that sustained social continuity. In this period a major change in the organization of work and the staff of the cooperatives took place in Hungary. Beginning in the late 1960s, an increasingly high number of young experts entered leading positions in the cooperatives. Konrád and Szelényi (1978) interpreted this transition as part of a general class struggle, in which the intelligentsia, becoming a class of its own, struggled against the former elite, including the rural elite in management positions. However, what actually happened in Mesterszállás was that a significant number of these young, trained technocrats who replaced the rural elite were, again, sons of formerly wealthy peasants. One factor that might have motivated these sons of former "kuláks" to stay in the field of professional agriculture was that in the course of the reforms it once again became possible to make a good living in the rural areas. In terms of long-term social reproduction, the "struggling classes" in Mesterszállás overlapped, and thus parts of the pre-socialist hierarchy were reproduced.

This social continuity was supported further by marriage preferences in the village. Despite collectivization, the principle "field to field" (föld a földhöz) that is described in ethnographies of the region but also figured prominently in village conversation, seems still to have been applied during socialism. Almost no marriage between formerly wealthy and formerly poor peasants was reported in Mesterszállás. In most cases such a strategy of

marriage preferences is not verbalized, but the social hierarchy is internalized, so that one only meets the right persons.[12] Only when asked directly why there was no upward mobility for members of some families, despite their physical attractiveness, a 51-year-old farmer said:

> Pretty, yes, pretty, but of what value is it to marry a [name] or [name], if one knows how they live, from one day to another. They don't think of the future [Interview No. 110, now independent farmer on around 360 hectares, himself from a middle peasant family and married to the daughter of a formerly wealthy peasant].

It seems that in Mesterszállás, where formerly wealthy peasants could at least in some sense keep their social position, it made sense to follow the old marriage pattern.

Inherited Capital and Social Continuity in Family Structure

In dealing with privatization, one not only has to consider new vertical divisions but also a change in horizontal dimensions. It is clear that in favoring inherited property and moral compensation for past suffering, land was distributed mainly to the older generation. With landowners being mostly pensioners, what does that mean for the younger generation? Answering this question, one has once again to take into account the overall changing situation for the rural population in post-socialism. Another horizontal dimension in the village structure is the division of gender. Given that men and women were equally entitled to inheritance during socialism and to compensation by post-socialist legislation, who is actually dealing with managing the newly available resources?

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[12] A lot of stories circle about who wanted to marry whom and was not allowed to because of difference in wealth. These stories do not end with collectivization but go on into the '70s as well. Today the rejection of a marriage by the parents is sometimes explained as "the family does not fit to ours," but this often also entails a different social origin. Another hint to marriage pattern is given in the questionnaires. In 49 households, the question "Have you had compensation vouchers at your own disposal?" was asked of both partners. In 39 cases, either both or neither of them had personal claims. These data are influenced by the age of the respondents since the younger generation only inherited claims if the parents died. Still, the numbers hint to the fact that in most cases both partners stemmed either from a poor or a rich family. Sárkany (1983: 281) stated that parental influence even increased and that the material family background was taken into account in the socialist period.

Privatization and Intergenerational Conflicts

Following the enduring agrarian crisis that followed the privatization in 1991, Mesterszállás as a whole was confronted with decreasing standards of living and increasing unemployment. Because of lower prices for meat and the bankruptcy of a nearby meat plant in 2000, the local population suffered severe losses. Since the beginning of bankruptcy proceedings at the local agrarian cooperative in 1999, private production of labor-intensive crops (vegetable and spice crops) in cooperation with the cooperative, which was previously available for all members, has also come to an end.

One consequence of this is that young families with no or almost no land of their own often have to give up animal production for the market altogether. They cannot work their small plots and buy fodder on their own – it has become too expensive. Some of these families are increasingly withdrawing from agricultural production, which had, until now, constituted a considerable part of their earnings. Others try to work more land of their parents, but they then have to convince them of their capacity to do so. Sometimes they succeed, sometimes not. If they do so, this sometimes leads to joint production, which is another source of conflict.

For example, one couple in their early thirties with three children came back to their parents' village at the beginning of the '90s. Until then they lived in another village, where they both worked and had built a modern family house. One reason for them to come back was that they thought of working part of the husband's father's land. Coming back, László found work in the local cooperative but could not persuade his father to hand any land over to him. His father left part of his land in the cooperative and worked part of it alone. Although he was helped by his son, it was mainly his business, decision, and profit. Still, due to his working place László and his wife could produce a considerable amount of peppers on their own in cooperation with the cooperative. Since the crisis of the cooperative was already visible on the horizon, László changed his job to the local mayor's office, where he received less pay but had a "safe" workplace. The couple thought of supplementing the loss in income by increased private production. Finally, after ten years and with his father also recognizing the crisis in the cooperative, László at last persuaded his parents to try growing one hectare of peppers together. This was the source of continual conflict around the year 2000. László wanted to use fertilizer; his father did not. The young couple started hoeing; the elder couple thought it was still too early. Conflicts continued for the whole year about the right time and method of watering, harvesting, and so on. Finally, after all disputes and hard work they had fewer peppers than expected and could not sell them for a good price.

In another case, the father handed over most of his land to his son, who worked it as one of the larger entrepreneurs in the village. In this case the younger couple had also made their living in socialism by means other than farming, the husband working as a self-employed painter, and they bought a family house in a small town nearby. In the post-socialist period she lost her job and he took up farming on the land of his father. Mihály concentrated on grain production and the family did not engage in animal husbandry at all. However, his father decided to buy an old stable about three kilometers from the center village from the cooperative. He bought some calves and decided that his daughter-in-law should take care of them in the morning. Since then she has had to get up very early in the morning and cycle all the way to the stable to look after the calves, and she has to leave her sons (18 months old and three years old) at home; she did not welcome this arrangement. However, she agreed, and two years later it was still her task.

In summary, young families, who had earned their living in socialism by means other than farming, lived apart from their parents, and built their own houses, are now relying on their parents for their source of income. As indicated by the examples, this seems to hold true in case of part-time, small-scale production (first example) as well as in case of larger family farms (second example). This pattern very much resembles the pre-socialist situation as described by ethnographers. Ethnographic studies reported the importance of the *gazda*, the head of the family, in the pre-socialist family. He decided about production and work in the fields, while his wife, the *gazdaasszony,* managed the household, thereby ruling over all younger women living in it. In the typical case, both would maintain their power until death (Fél and Hofer 1969). There was little chance for a younger couple to become independent before that, and those who tried often ended in very poor circumstances (Bell 1984: 62). The older generation, therefore, played a crucial role in the life of the younger generation, through their control of the landed property.

Collectivization changed this power structure profoundly. With the loss of the family land, the older generation lost much of their power in the family, especially the head of the family, who previously decided about the work of all family members. The younger generation now had its own income and sometimes would even earn more money than the *gazda* did. With increased standards of living, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, and cheap credits made available by the cooperative, young couples would, by building their own house, separate earlier from their parents, forming their own household. By membership in the cooperative, the younger generation received their household plot. In Hungary, in the 1970s and 1980s, this

remained a stable, slowly enlarged land right that contributed considerably to the modest wealth of the rural population. Therefore the young generation was no longer solely dependent on the property of their parents. Generations still cooperated for private agricultural production, but for the means of production the generations now depended upon the cooperative more than on privately owned property. Bell describes the changes as follows:

> Collectivization removed the material basis for parental power in families where children remained home. With the loss of control over his land, the gazda lost much of his dominance in the family. He was no longer the leader of an enterprise, but at best the family's representative in the collective farm (and later not even solely that). He no longer really had the authority or the arena in which to direct his grown children at home [Bell 1984: 196].

Now, in times of decline of cooperatives and their associated production on household plots, newly established private property in land, and, in many cases, loss of other sources of income such as a secure place of work, the younger generation again depends increasingly on the decisions and property of their parents. Thus by favoring inherited property, the law almost automatically had the consequence that most of the new landowners are pensioners and that only about five families in Mesterszállás received enough land to farm successfully under post-socialist conditions. This means that under the current crisis in agriculture and the loss of other rights at the same time, pre-socialist family structures are partly coming back. However generational differences are not the only dividing line in families; another one is gender, which will be explored in the following section.

Landed Property and Social Continuity in Gender Relations

Gender is a critical issue in the post-socialist transformation (Pine 2002: 96), but most of the studies that deal with themes such as social construction of identity, reproduction policies, and political engagement of women are concerned mainly with the situation of urban women (Funk and Mueller 1993; Rueschemeyer 1994; Wejnert and Spencer 1996; Gal and Kligman 2000a and 2000b). Interestingly enough, gender does not play a prominent role in the literature on post-socialist land privatization.[13] It seems as if a biased view hindered even the bringing up of questions about the role of

[13] Exceptions are DeSoto and Panzig (1995), Bridger (1997), and Pine (1998). Although these studies do not deal concretely with the engagement of women in privatization, they still point to the consequences of the process for rural women.

women in post-socialist agriculture, perhaps because it seemed all too natural that women were not engaged in the land question or in a "modern" mechanized European agriculture. It may also be that the question was not raised because the liberal project, in contrast to the socialist one, never embraced a project of emancipation. However seemingly "natural," gender divisions are culturally constructed, so the question of female engagement and role in privatization and post-socialist rural family structure must be raised.

With re-privatization, men and women had, as former landowners or heirs, the same legal entitlements to compensation. Thus there was no difference in inherited economic capital, as in the case of generations, and, in theory at least, there existed the possibility for women to engage in land privatization and become agrarian entrepreneurs. All the more so since they would not have been obliged to sit on a tractor themselves but could have managed the working of the land by renting it out or contracting machine work.

Despite this and the fact that, nowadays, almost all women are landowners, there is no female agrarian entrepreneur in Mesterszállás. Even women whose husbands are engaged in part-time or full-time agriculture often do not know how much land they have in their own name or what exactly is produced in what amount on the family land. One woman stated, in a questionnaire, that she could not answer the question about the best term for their family agriculture, since this was her husband's "affair" (I, No. 56, 09/27/1999, 31 years old). In the same interview she stated that their main source of income was the family's agricultural production.

The actual process of privatization was already mainly managed by men. In general, women delegated their compensation entitlements to close male kin. Out of the 158 individuals asked in the questionnaire, 63 had personal entitlements to compensation. Half of them were men (32) and half women (31), but only seven women stated that they had dealt personally with them. In contrast 26 men managed their entitlements alone. All of those looking for help (21 women, five men) asked a male family member.[14] Only one old woman, who was born into a wealthy peasant family that was expropriated, had to manage her claims alone, since she had no close male kin. She complained about the local procedure, because she did not receive the land she wanted:

[14] The remaining three women and one man sold their vouchers. No man (and no woman) had their entitlements managed by a female member of the family.

> Because I'm a woman, when I came there, the men already distributed the land among themselves. I went there three times, and they always put me off [DN 08/28/2000, 80 years old].

She claimed that distribution favored the wishes of men and that she was told her claims would not be as important, since she was not going to work the land. It was true that all those involved in auctions were men; there may have been discussions within families about this matter, but men were active in the public sphere.

Decisions to leave the cooperative and start a private agricultural enterprise were largely dependent on the existence of male family members; families who had the same compensation entitlements as the now successful entrepreneurs but "only" had daughters left the land in the cooperative. For example, Márton S. has about 65 hectares in the cooperative. Asked why nobody in the family works the land, he said, "I have two daughters" (DN 04/09/1999, 72 years old). He did not explain further, but the sentence tells us all. Asked what they would have done if they had a son, he said, "Then we surely would do it [work the land]."

Thus it seems as if a cultural pattern of male identification with the land as reported in ethnographic descriptions for the pre-socialist period (Fél and Hofer 1969) persisted until post-socialism. This may be another reason for lack of studies about gender relation in post-socialist rural society. However, this culturalistic view neglects the long period during which socialism shaped rural life and the major changes it brought to the lives of men and women. As already indicated above, collectivization altered family relations profoundly; not only did the elder generation lose power but the male head of the family especially. This was supported by the socialist project of liberating women through their taking part in the labor force. Despite these policies, a gendered division of labor persisted in socialism, too.[15]

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[15] During socialism, overall female participation in the work force increased rapidly: Whereas, in 1949, 60 percent of all women between the ages of 14 and 64 years old were housewives, students, or otherwise dependent, in 1975 only 6.4 percent were in such a position. Nevertheless, through all phases of socialism inequality between men and women persisted: Women achieved on average a lower educational standard than men, they were paid less for the same work, and remained in lower positions even with high education. Thirty-five percent of all men with middle training attained high management positions (i.e., with a relatively low educational standard), whereas only 7.5 percent of all women with higher education reached management positions. Ninety percent of all women with higher education worked in subordinate positions. In 1974, educated female workers received only 74 percent of the wages of their male colleagues. In lower and middle management positions, they received between 77.5 percent and 83.8 percent of the salary of their male counterparts (Lampland 1989: 311-314).

This influenced the position of women in Mesterszállás in mutually conflicting ways. On the one hand, more women than ever before took a place of work outside their home; on the other hand, they mostly worked in "typical" female sectors such as vegetable gardening and poultry farming. Also due to the socialist division of labor according to gender, most administrative workers in cooperatives were women. Therefore, in some cases they had been the superiors of male workers. Even so, as was true for the overall power structure in former socialist states, the hierarchy was male-dominated. Women mostly held less lucrative jobs and were rarely found in leading positions in the cooperative. Nonetheless, with the rise of Hungarian agriculture and especially the household production in cooperation with the cooperatives in the 1960s and '70s, women contributed considerably to household income, which also influenced their position in the family. This private production was associated mainly with women, who, while their husbands worked in "official" places of work, managed animal production and intense crop cultivation at home.

When privatization started, women did not take part for several reasons. For some of them, socialism meant a liberation from the hard and lonely life on an isolated farm. Going back was not advantageous and had no romantic touch for them, as it had for some men. One woman, whose son is one of the new private farmers who tends to describe the peasant way of life in rather romantic terms – "Our land is our life" (DN 04/18/1999) – and who still has some of her compensation vouchers at home, says, "I worked enough in the fields [*határon*]; I don't need that anymore" (DN 05/25/1999).

Especially for the middle and young generation of women, socialism meant liberation from hard work and lonely life on a scattered farm. They ascended into "clean" jobs in administration or education and did not want to become peasants again. These women had, in the beginning of the 1990s, the structural advantage of being employed in sectors that were not among the first to shrink, and many of them only lost their jobs recently. At the beginning of the 1990s, it was not foreseeable that the kind of intense agricultural production on the household plot in which they mainly worked would have no future. With the decline of cooperative farms, all the benefits they provided (household plot, seeds, and channels of distribution) changed or even disappeared. Ten years after the beginning of changes, women's reluctance to engage actively in privatization became an economic disadvantage that may also have altered their position in the family. Interpreted in terms of capital, they had economic capital but not enough social capital to gather important information about development in agriculture and lacked the cultural capital to start an agrarian business. Thus the lack of female agrarian

entrepreneurs is the result of a complex development and by no means "natural."

Conclusion: Are the *kuláks* back?

To answer the question posed at the beginning, some of the formerly wealthy peasants are back in elite positions in village society. The argument proposed here is that it was a combination of the legal circumstances and inherited economic capital, coupled with social capital accumulated during socialism, that enabled some men of the formerly wealthy peasant class to engage successfully in private farming, while pre-socialist poor peasants and women were the losers in privatization.

The legal conditions for privatization favored previously expropriated property, i.e., in the course of re-privatization, formerly wealthy families received double the amount of land back that they had lost under socialism. Consequently, former wealthy peasants were almost the only ones who had the chance to acquire enough land for successful modern family farming.

But social reproduction is only partial: Besides inherited economic capital, social capital, in the form of relationships to the important institutions and people, was crucial for success. Social capital appears also to have been more important, at the moment of privatization, than cultural capital in the form of what Szelényi (1989) called "entrepreneurial spirit." It was the former class affiliation that was crucial for the entitlement to inherited economic capital in land, but its realization depended on the accumulated social capital in the socialist period. Today, five families in Mesterszállás are successfully running Western-style family farms, whereas the others, new middle peasants and smallholders, are suffering more in the economic crisis. It seems that the disappointment with the growing social inequalities in post-socialism is sometimes expressed in terms of the pre-socialist social hierarchy, as in the quotation at the beginning of this chapter, thereby stressing the perceived successes and equality of the socialist period.

Given this crisis in agriculture, more families try to rely on their family land again. But this means that young families, who had been independent in times of socialism, have to rely on the property of their parents again. Taking into account the gendered pattern of identification with land and despite the work relations in cooperatives during socialism, they usually have to rely on the decisions of their fathers. Thus recent developments show social continuity in two respects: Some former "kulák" families are back in an agrarian elite position, and old men have regained some of their power in the family.

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Chapter 19

Heritage and Inheritance in Small Business Families of Postsocialist East Germany: Two Case Studies from Leipzig's Southern Region

John Eidson

On Farms and Other Family Businesses

Perched midway between primary groups and the market, the family business may be viewed as a privileged category of both social and economic analysis. It is incumbent upon the managers of family businesses both to maximize returns on the scarce goods they allocate in market transactions *and* to provide for a group of beneficiaries whose claims on these same goods are exempt from market pressures, at least to some degree. In the case of small businessmen and businesswomen, it is especially evident that maximizers are also social actors who participate in social groups and networks located in concrete yet variable cultural, political, and economic settings (Gudeman 2001).

Perhaps the best test for the stability or plasticity of the social groups and networks in which small-business persons participate is to observe them over time, especially under changing political and economic circumstances. It is in this spirit that I offer two case studies drawn from a project set in the rural and industrial area south of the city of Leipzig. This region is located in the northwest corner of the historical territory of *Sachsen*, or Saxony, which was occupied by the Soviet army following World War II and became part of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in 1949. In 1990, Saxony was reconstituted as one of the five new states of the Federal Republic of Germany.

In this part of Germany, there are a number of good reasons for considering family farms together with other kinds of small businesses. During the 19th century, a sizable portion of the Saxon peasantry entered the ranks

of the rural bourgeoisie as owners of medium-sized agricultural enterprises.[1] Since that time, it has often occurred that the daughters of farmers have married businessmen or managers, or that the sons of farmers have become small businessmen.[2] Social mobility among those involved in farming, small business, and even public administration or industrial management was no doubt fostered by the regional pattern of agricultural inheritance, whereby one child, often the eldest son, took over the farm, while the other children received monetary payments, which allowed them to buy another farm, pursue careers in other fields, or acquire a suitable spouse. During the socialist era, from 1945 to 1989, family farms and other small businesses were, moreover, subject to comparable policies and pressures. Finally, given the intermarriage and the occupational mobility among members of farming and other small business families, the inheritance of agricultural land has often played a role in the privatization not only of agricultural enterprises but also of many other businesses after 1990.

This chapter contains sketches of persons who have reprivatized existing businesses or founded new businesses by drawing on experiences, aptitudes, and resources that they acquired by virtue of their social origins, their social and political affiliations, and the ensuing opportunities. The categories that I cite in the title of the chapter, "heritage" and "inheritance," are employed in this very general sense. By "heritage," I mean those things that are often glossed as "social capital" or "symbolic capital," including family tradition, education and training, style of life, taste and attitudes, reputation, and connections through kinship, friendship, the community, the workplace, or politics (Bourdieu 1990). "Inheritance" refers to property rights passed down within the family from older to younger generations in conjunction with particular events in the life cycle of family members (cf. Goody 1976). The question that I would like to answer is this: What role have heritage and inheritance played in shaping the responses of members of farming and other small-business families to conditions in the GDR and since the *Wende*, or change of systems, in 1989 and 1990? This question cannot be answered definitively in this short contribution, but the case studies should serve to highlight some of the relevant issues and to provide some of the components

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[1] I am referring to the *Mittelbauern*, or middle peasants, who formed a large and powerful minority in much of the Saxon countryside. In order to emphasize their status as entrepreneurs and members of the bourgeoisie, I shall call the middle peasants "farmers." On rural populations and class relations in modern Saxony, see Blaschke (1965: 279-287) and Czok (1983: 9-12); cf. Evans and Lee (1986).

[2] My evidence for this statement is anecdotal rather than statistical, but after one year of field research I know of many farming families for which there is evidence of intermarriage with small business families and of occupational mobility with regard to a range of entrepreneurial activities over several generations.

that must be included in any adequate treatment of the topic. Though these case studies are not statistically representative of the field site as a whole, I have purposely chosen contrasting cases indicative of the range of variation within the larger sample.

The Southern Region of Leipzig

For most of its history, the *Südraum,* or Southern Region, of Leipzig was an agricultural hinterland dotted with several villages and a few market towns. From the liberal reforms of the post-Napoleonic era to the radical reforms under Soviet occupation following World War II, the regional economy was dominated by a strong class of farmers with medium-sized enterprises (Gross 1968). Aside from many small farms with about five hectares, there were, in most villages, several farms with 10 to 20 hectares of arable land. Only a few farms had over 20 hectares, with the exception of the so-called *Rittergüter,* or noble estates, which could be found in less than half of the villages. In the Southern Region of Leipzig, many of the noble estates had less than 200 hectares of land, which was relatively small for the territories that were later combined in the Soviet occupational zone and the GDR (Kretschmer 1998: 33-37; cf. Koester and Brooks 1997: 4).[3]

Beginning in the late 19th century, the Southern Region of Leipzig and neighboring territories saw the growth of a new economy based on coal mining, which reduced the significance of agriculture without eliminating it. The presence of lignite, or brown coal, under the meadows and wetlands of the region had long been common knowledge, but the exploitation of this low-grade resource was not possible until new technologies for dehydration and compression were developed (Bilkenroth and Snyder 1998). Once these technologies were available, coal mines, usually funded by joint stock companies, sprang up over the whole Central German coal-mining district, corresponding roughly to the areas surrounding the cities of Bitterfeld, Halle, Merseburg, Leipzig, and Zeitz (Kretschmer 1998). The switch from underground mines to the more productive – and more destructive – surface mines occurred in the first decades of the 20th century. Coal provided the energy that was needed for the industrial boom in Germany at end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, in which Leipzig played a leading role. It also served as the basis for the rise of power plants and chemical

[3] Such noble estates were large agricultural enterprises, which, by the 19th century had either aristocratic or bourgeois owners, who either managed their own estates or hired managers to run them. In contrast to *Bauernhöfe* (farms), which were family enterprises, the noble estates had a staff of agricultural laborers (Blaschke 1965).

facilities in the Southern Region of Leipzig, as in the whole Central German coal-mining district.

The new industries required laborers, who came from the rural and mountainous regions of the *Erzgebirge*, the *Vogtland*, and, somewhat farther afield, Silesia (Hofmann 1995: 93-97). These new workers took up residence in refashioned farm buildings and, later, in new housing complexes, which changed the character of many villages. Industrialization led to social conflicts between old and new populations and to political and economic conflicts over the use of land for agricultural, industrial, residential, or recreational purposes. Typically, the patrons and clients of industry "won out," and in the course of the 20th century, many villages and fields were sacrificed in whole or in part for the expansion of surface mines and for the building of industrial installations and new quarters for laborers (Bischoff 1997; Kretschmer 1998).

Simultaneously, industry created new opportunities, especially in the form of gains for property owners through the sale of land, alternative forms of employment for the children of farming families, and new local markets for providers of services. In Saxony, laws governing the ownership of subterranean resources were subject to change over the years, but under widely varying political régimes they still guaranteed to landowners some form of compensation for the exploitation of these resources (Kabisch and Berkner 1996; Kretschmer 1998: 37-40). In the early 20th century, when underground mines were still the rule, many farmers received sizable cash payments by conceding rights to extract the coal beneath their land and to use the surface of their land in the effort (Eidson 1998a). Farmers used these revenues to modernize their homes and barns, establish small rural factories, or purchase retirement quarters in Leipzig. Payments made to private landowners and to village communities help explain the rich, urban character of many villages, which had finished roads, plastered houses with ornamental gates, and barns with brick or stone vaulting (Scholz 1998).

In the latter 20th century, as the expansion of industry coincided with the collectivization and industrialization of agricultural production, the carbo-chemical industry absorbed members of the work force who had been released from rural occupations. Many small businesses thrived by providing for the needs of the industrial workers and their families, who numbered in the tens of thousands (Fobe et al. 1999).

Conflicts between agriculture and industry became acute with the intensification of lignite mining in the GDR, which lacked other fossil fuels. This resulted in the destruction of villages and the pollution of the environment, which, in the long run, contributed to the destabilization of the socialist government (Eichner 1999).

Following the collapse of the party state and the opening of East Germany to the world economy, the carbo-chemical industry, upon which the region was almost totally dependent, suffered a severe crisis. According to estimates, the number of jobs available in industry in the Southern Region of Leipzig fell from over 30,000 to under 3,000 between 1990 and 1993 (Hofmann 1995: 91). While many of the younger residents left the region in search of work, middle-aged and older members of the work force went into retraining, make-work, or early retirement programs (Fobe et al. 1999). Massive private investment and even larger government subsidies have saved the carbo-chemical industries, which remain important for the regional economy but which now provide only a small number of jobs (Bilkenroth and Snyder 1998; Brümmer 2002; Roesler and Semmelmann 2002). In this same region, the half-dozen cooperative farms and state farms left over from the socialist era suffered a similar fate, as will be seen below. Most have survived in an altered form but with only 10 percent of the previous number of employees (cf. Jähnichen 1998).

The Survival and Revival of Entrepreneurship in the Second Half of the 20th Century

In the decades following World War II, the entrepreneurial classes of East Germany were targeted by the economic policies of the socialist authorities (Maier 1999). These policies included, especially, the centralization of public administration, the nationalization of businesses and industry, the collectivization of agricultural production, and the expansion and consolidation of the control of the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei*, or Socialist Unity Party.[4] The intent was to break the power of the bourgeoisie, which was viewed as the agent of imperialism and fascism, and to unite the population in a society that was, at least in principle, classless (Siegrist 2001). In what came to be known as "real existing socialism," the means of production were controlled by agents of the socialist state and jobs were made available to practically all members of the work force.

In some ways, these measures were quite effective, at least for as long as the socialist state was able to sustain itself. Analyses of class relations in the GDR emphasize the dissolution of the middle classes of the pre-capitalist and capitalist eras and the emergence of new classes, including functional elites, a new service class, and a new administrative sector (Siegrist 2001). While it is clear that this view of social classes corresponds to observable

[4] For a review of these developments, see Weber (1999). The Socialist Unity Party was formed in 1948 through the forced merger of the Communist Party (KPD) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD).

trends in the GDR, it must be supplemented with reference to the persistence and reemergence of entrepreneurship, often under unexpected circumstance (Eckart 1983; Pickel 1992; Buechler and Buechler 1999).

Data from the Southern Region of Leipzig bear witness to a variety of entrepreneurial activities under socialism, only a few of which are touched upon in the case studies selected for this chapter. The most obvious of these involved the persistence of small businesses in the service sector, many of which were partially nationalized but some of which remained private throughout the socialist era – for example, drugstores, gardening shops, stores for school and office supplies, and bakeries. Even within nationalized businesses and industries, however, there is much evidence of practices that might be described as entrepreneurial in a broad sense of the term. While planning hierarchies were rigid and production goals explicit in the GDR, attempts to realize these plans and goals under conditions of scarcity often required flexibility and initiative on the part of actual producers (Kohli 1994: 49). Indirect evidence of this is provided by the many businesses that were founded by former managers of nationalized businesses and industries after 1990 (Koch and Thomas 1994). In the Southern Region of Leipzig, for example, restaurants that had belonged to the *Sozialistische Handelsorganisation* (HO) – the centralized agency for retailing in the GDR – were quickly privatized in the first years after the change of systems, often by the socialist-era managers or their children. Other new businesses were founded by former managers from the socialist carbo-chemical conglomerate, who often recruited those who had previously worked under them. While all informants stress the novelty of the market economy into which they were plunged, some suggest that the adaptability they had developed in an often chaotic "planned economy" stood them in good stead in the market economy as well.

Only two points regarding entrepreneurship in the agrarian sector need be mentioned in this context. First, it is well-known that in socialist countries with collectivized agriculture, private production continued "on the side" and provided a significant supplement both to the Gross Domestic Product and to the income of members of rural populations (Szelényi 1988). This was no less true in East Germany, despite limitations on the amount of private land and animals one could possess (Eckart 1983). The second point, which has not been widely recognized, is that entrepreneurship often continued or reemerged within the cooperative farms themselves, as shall be indicated in the case study materials presented below (cf. Eidson 1998b, 2001).

It is impossible to do justice to the topic of entrepreneurship in the Southern Region of Leipzig after 1945 and, again, after 1990 in the context of this short contribution. Nevertheless, it may be illuminating to consider

two case studies in somewhat greater detail. Both case studies provide evidence of the interconnection between farming enterprises and small businesses in nonagricultural sectors. Of special interest is the role that is played by heritage, or entrepreneurial traditions, proclivities, and networks, on the one hand, and by resources attained through inheritance on the other. The first case study involves a druggist, in the small town of Neukieritzsch, whose ancestors were farmers and who married the daughter of a leading farmer in the neighboring village of Breunsdorf. The second case study concerns the son of a farmer from the same village, who worked for a cooperative farm in the GDR and became the co-founder of a meat processing plant on the grounds of the former socialist cooperative after 1990.

"We're just little fish": The Story of a Small-Town Druggist

Bernd Teubner was born in Neukieritzsch in 1926 in the same house that he, his wife, and his son now occupy.[5] The *Drogerie*, or drugstore, is on the ground floor, and the front entrance to the house leads right into the store. Over the picture windows on either side of the door is a large sign that looks as if it might have been quite modern a few decades ago. The main room of the store is simply furnished, with shelves on the walls and a counter and cash register to the left. At the back of the store is a second room with hardware and gardening supplies, and beyond that is a hallway leading to the back courtyard and a flight of stairs leading up to the residential quarters on the second floor.

Teubner's great grandfather was a farmer in the nearby village of Kahnsdorf and also served as the village mayor. His grandfather, however, received instruction in business management at a reputable school in the town of Grimma, some 25 kilometers to the northeast. Upon completing his training, Teubner's grandfather became a coal merchant in Leipzig, where his father was born. Soon, however, the grandfather gave up this business and moved to Neukieritzsch, just a few kilometers west of Kahnsdorf, where he became a buyer and seller of grain. Neukieritzsch was well suited for such a business, since it had been founded in the mid-19th century as one of the few stations on the new railroad running through the agricultural district between Leipzig in the north and Altenburg in the south. Teubner's grandmother opened a grocery store on the site of the current store, which his father, who received his vocational training in Leipzig, transformed into a drugstore after World War I.

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[5] "Bernd Teubner" is a pseudonym, as are all other personal names that appear in this chapter.

After serving as a teenage soldier at the end of World War II, Teubner was trained as a druggist and photographer in Leipzig. Together with his young wife, he took over the family drugstore in Neukieritzsch in 1958. His father-in-law, who lived in the adjoining village of Breunsdorf, had four children and a farm with a good cattle stall and 19 hectares of arable land. Before too long, however, both Teubner and his father-in-law were confronted with state policies directed against independent farmers and other small-business persons (Maier 1999: 846-851). During the drive for the collectivization of agricultural production in the spring of 1960, when practically all farmers were forced to give up their private enterprises, at least in part, the father-in-law entered into one of the three socialist cooperatives in Breunsdorf. Since he had decided to join the fully collectivized "type III" cooperative, he was required to contribute not only his land but his complete inventory of farm animals, equipment, and other factors of production.[6] Although he retained legal title to his land, he lost control over its use and no longer profited from production or rents. In short, he ceased to be an independent farmer and became, instead, a member and employee of the agricultural cooperative (Eidson 1998b).

Initially, Bernd Teubner retained his status as a private small businessman, but, by the early 1970s, his store had taken on a semiprivate, seminationalized form that was characterized by the so-called *Kommissionsvertrag* (commission contract) with the nationalized agency for retailing. I shall let Herr Teubner explain this arrangement in his own words:

> We were independent merchants and had a commission contract with the socialist retailing agency, the HO ... They paid the rent for us, the so-called fixed costs, and the warehouse belonged to the HO. We had to keep track of our inventory, and we got a commission for the turnover we made ... We didn't have a free market, like we do now. Those were fixed prices. But there were some advantages to that, especially for small businesses. On the basis of our receipts, which showed the consumer prices, we could calculate the profit margin or the gross profits exactly. If I bought a product for a mark and sold it for one mark and 30 pennies, then the profit margin ... was 30 percent. And this sum would be split in half or in thirds and shared with our contract partner ... The taxation was progressive ... so if I had a higher turnover it was taken away from me ... Just to

[6] In the only partially collectivized "type I" cooperative, land was pooled and crops were produced collectively but animals were still managed privately in one's own stalls. The "type II" cooperative was an intermediary form that rarely occurred. See Bauerkämper (1997).

> give an example, if there was 20,000 marks profit left over in the end, I would have to pay 20 percent of that sum in taxes. And everything above that was taxed progressively, up to 70 percent. That meant that, for every mark, I only got to keep 30 pennies. So it just wasn't worth it anymore ... There was no sense in knocking yourself out. We were motivated more by a sense of idealism. It would have been a violation of our self-understanding as business people to have done any less.[7]

In 1989, the last year of the East German party state, Teubner retired and handed over the store to his only son, who was born in 1953 and who had also received formal training as a druggist and photographer. Nevertheless, Teubner Senior was still the owner of the store and of the house in which the store was located, and he continued to influence major decisions regarding the future of the family business. The most important decision facing the Teubners concerned the renovation of the store. Such measures are periodically necessary in all businesses, but, in Neukieritzsch, special conditions arose with the modernization of the local infrastructure after 1990. The town straddles the railroad track, with the densely populated center to the west and an older but smaller settlement, where the store is located, to the east. Up until the early 1990s, a pedestrian bridge, which sat atop mounds of earth piled up on both sides of the tracks, provided a direct connection between the town square and the Teubners' neighborhood. With the rebuilding and modernization of the center of town, however, the bridge and the earthen bulwark upon which it had rested were removed. There is still a pedestrian underpass connecting the two parts of town near the train station, but this route requires a detour of perhaps 200 yards. This meant that the location of the store was suddenly much less favorable. What's more, by the mid-1990s two new competitors emerged on the west side of the railroad tracks, where the majority of residents live – namely, a small private hardware and garden supplies shop and a local franchise of a West German drugstore chain.

In order to understand the Teubners' response to this situation, it is necessary to review briefly the resources that were available to them. It is clear from Bernd Teubner's statements that he and his family had some savings, which they had built up during the GDR era and converted into West German marks (DM) at a favorable exchange rate in 1990. Given the emphasis that Teubner places on securing adequate retirement benefits for himself, his wife, and his son, however, it seems unlikely that these savings would be tapped for new business investments. A more likely source for investment capital was the inheritance from his father-in-law, the owner of a

[7] Interview with Bernd Teubner on 25 July 2001.

relatively large farm, who arranged for the distribution of his wealth to his four children before his death in 1998. The money that made up the inheritance had two distinct sources, the first of which was the sale of land to the coal-mining concern both before and after 1990. The coal concern of the socialist era forced property owners to accept payment for land at only a fraction of its market value. Therefore, those who sold their land before 1990 were severely disadvantaged. Furthermore, they had no legal grounds for compensation in the Federal Republic of Germany, since they had signed sales contracts during the socialist era (Eidson 1998a). As was the case with many landowners, Teubner's father-in-law achieved mixed results by selling some land before and some land after the change of systems.

The other payments that were distributed among the heirs of Teubner's father-in-law were derived from the decollectivization of agricultural production beginning in 1990. According to the *Landwirtschaftsanpassungsgesetz* (Agricultural Adjustment Act) of June 1990, former members of the socialist cooperative were eligible for reimbursement, depending upon the kinds of contributions that they had made to the cooperative over the years (Mittelbach 1995). When he joined the cooperative in 1960, Teubner's father-in-law had been required to relinquish his fields and to turn over almost his whole farm inventory as payment in kind toward a rather high entry fee. Then, in 1991, the restructured cooperative farm credited him with DM 40,600 in compensation for the value of his inventory contribution and for the use of his land. Six hundred German marks were paid out immediately, and the remaining DM 40,000 were converted into interest-bearing shares in the new cooperative. Somewhat later, on the basis of new calculations of unpaid land rents and in consideration of contributions that he had made to the socialist collective through his labor, Teubner's father-in-law was credited with an additional DM 120,000 worth of "personified assets," which, in this case, were not interest-bearing. The difference between these two forms of assets became inconsequential, however, when he decided to liquidate all of his shares and to divide the payments, which were made in installments over a period of several years, among his heirs.

The amount of money that the Teubners received – a quarter of the total – was not insignificant for the household budget, but it was too modest to make much of a difference in decisions concerning the modernization of the drugstore. Therefore, the Teubners were still dependent upon credit. The question was how much should be invested in modernization and to what end? On these points, father and son were of a different opinion. Teubner reports that his son wanted to move the store to the west side of the railroad tracks, where it would be closer to the center of town and more accessible to most customers, many of whom are elderly and not prepared to make the

trek to the train station, through the underground passage, and beyond. Teubner vetoed this idea, however, arguing that it would require a large amount of credit for an investment that would be disproportionately high in relation to the resulting earnings. Teubner feared that they would not be able to service the debt and would consequently go bankrupt. Therefore, rather than expanding, they opted for what might be called a strategy of maintenance. After minimizing investments in modernizing the store, they want to stay in business until Teubner's son, who was 48 years old in 2001, is ready to retire. At that time, he will begin receiving a guaranteed pension from the state, which will be supplemented through additional payments that he has made to a voluntary retirement fund. If they manage to stay in business for that long, they might try to find someone to take over the store, but the prospects are not good. It is more likely, Teubner presumes, that the store will be closed. After all, this has been the fate of most of his colleagues in the region, either during the GDR or after 1990.

Teubner's stance toward the brave new world is a very cautious one. He views the regulated free market as a foreign domain in which he and his son lack the experience and the resources that are necessary for successful operation. In conversations, he emphasizes the difficulties and risks in obtaining credit and narrates stories of spectacular bankruptcies, which may be understood as parables for the well-advised small-business person.

> We just couldn't understand the way the banks treated the smaller businesses. For example, my son had to renovate the store. Now, it seems like I've been renovating here all my life, but after 20 years your facilities are too old, and it has to be done again. We had to rebuild the interior so that all the products were on display and the customers could pick out what they wanted. So he did it and paid for most of it himself. But he also took out a loan for 20,000 marks, because the interest rates were low ... and I had to put up the collateral. With my own home! Of course, the security was much higher than 20,000 marks, even though we had more than that in our account with the same bank ... And the paperwork! Notaries and banks and securities and all that! ... I'll never provide security like that again, not even for my own son ... It's just too risky! But we didn't really know what we were doing ... We're just little fish – 20,000 marks is nothing! But look at these entrepreneurs who have taken millions of marks in credit and put up everything they own as collateral! Here in Neukieritzsch, even in this little place, we've already had three cases of bankruptcy [since 1990].[8]

[8] Interview with Bernd Teubner on 25 July 2001.

"We started with six people and built it up from scratch": How a Farmer's Son Became a Meat Processor and Lost His Fortune

One of the tales of bankruptcy that was told by Bernd Teubner concerned Georg Preissler, who, like Teubner's father-in-law, had moved to Neukieritzsch after the government ordered the evacuation of Breunsdorf in the late 1980s. Born in 1951, Preissler is the eldest son of a reputable farming family, who owned a fairly large farm in Breunsdorf for almost two centuries.[9] In 1960, his father entered a partially collectivized "type I" cooperative farm, which was incorporated into the fully collectivized "type III" cooperative in 1970. At that time, Preissler had already begun to study agronomy, and he returned to Breunsdorf a few years later to take a management position in the division for crop production of the local cooperative farm.

By the time of Preissler's return, however, the days of the Breunsdorf cooperative were numbered. For in the early 1970s, the government called for the creation of more highly industrialized cooperatives combining the farming operations of several villages. These new and much larger cooperative farms specialized in either crop production or animal husbandry and were integrated into regionally based agricultural complexes (Eidson 1998b). By the late 1970s, the Breunsdorf cooperative had merged with a group of enterprises in and about the village of Stolpen, located about six kilometers to the west; and in the last years of the GDR, Preissler was the head of fodder production in the cooperative farm for crop production in Stolpen.

In my interviews with former cooperative farmers, there is much evidence of the persistence or reemergence of entrepreneurial behavior among "type III" cooperative farmers, who were subsequently hindered in their activities by the policy of separating crop production and animal husbandry (Eidson 1998b, 2001). The official explanation for the division of the cooperative farms into specialized yet interdependent units with separate bookkeeping was couched in both economic and sociopolitical terms. Industrialization, expansion, and specialization were supposed to transport agricultural production to new evolutionary heights; simultaneously, the restructuring of the personnel in the specialized cooperatives was supposed to eradicate lingering distinctions between farmers and agricultural laborers and to complete their assimilation to the model provided by the urban work force (Boehme 1978: 488-490). From the viewpoint of entrepreneurial cooperative

[9] The Preissler farm, which had been in the family at least since the early 19th century, had 15 hectares in 1840 and 17 hectares in 1952 (source: Flurbücher of Breunsdorf from 1840 and 1852, Staatliches Vermessungsamt Borna).

farmers, however, the new policy was directed specifically against the lucrative strategies that they had taken such pains to develop:

> The members of the type III cooperative were, for the most part, employees, unless someone had a position of responsibility, such as the head of the stall or the brigade ... Still, it was different than a state-owned company, because the sense that "this belongs to us" was stronger. If, at the end of the year, we had produced a surplus, then a supplemental salary could be paid out ... And this produced a different attitude toward work in the agricultural cooperative. There really was a cooperative spirit, but not enough, I'd say, since it came from the state ... In a type III cooperative where animal and plant production were still together, the state requirements played a secondary role. You could still do pretty much what you thought was right. If the state said, "You have to deliver 100,000 tons of sugar beets," but you didn't have enough beets for fodder, then you took some sugar beets, dumped them on the edge of the field, and covered them up with dirt. Later, in the winter, the beets were fed to the cows in order to get more milk and to make money with the milk. The farmers didn't really care if there was any sugar in the shops or not. They said, "First our cattle have to be fed, and then we'll make our delivery to the state" But with the separation of animal husbandry and crop production, they really had leverage on us, since each enterprise was legally autonomous and did its finances independently ... It was a matter of state direction, in order to introduce a form of control into the cooperatives.[10]

In 1990, the agricultural conglomerate in Stolpen consisted of one cooperative farm for crop production, with 2,300 hectares of arable land, and one cooperative farm for animal husbandry, with 1,500 cattle and 8,000 hogs scattered over several stalls in a group of neighboring villages. The former had 180 employees, and the latter had 240 employees – though many of these worked in the nonagricultural divisions of the cooperative farms, such as the accounting office, the construction division, the mechanical workshop, and the cafeteria in the social hall. After the socialist régime had collapsed and the transition to an unknown future had begun, the members of the two specialized cooperatives met and agreed to merge in a single new cooperative, as defined in the law of the Federal Republic of Germany, and to continue with agricultural production under new circumstances. This decision was in accordance with the Agricultural Adjustment Act, which stipulated

[10] Interview with Georg Preissler on 7 August 1994.

that the socialist agricultural cooperatives had to be dissolved or reestablished in a new legal form by the end of 1991. As noted, they or their legal successors were also required to compensate former members in accordance with their contribution to cooperative assets.

After crop production and animal husbandry were merged, the next step in starting up the new cooperative was to shed the various nonagricultural divisions that had been part of the socialist enterprise. The membership assembly of the cooperative farm agreed to sponsor the founding of several subsidiary corporations, which took these nonagricultural divisions as their point of departure. While the new cooperative later severed its ties to these corporations and only a few are still in business today, they still allowed many former co-op members to continue working until they were eligible for early retirement (cf. Krambach and Müller 1993; Koester and Brooks 1997: 11). The overall result was that the number of people employed by the cooperative farm fell from 400 to 200 by 1993. By the end of the decade, this number had been further reduced to the current level of about 40 employees.

A few of the members who had previously contributed land to the socialist cooperative – whose fathers had contributed land – took the opportunity to remove their land and to start up new private farms in 1990. This option was not open to Georg Preissler, despite his love of farming, since the agricultural land of his father had already been destroyed by an active surface mine or was scheduled to be mined in the next years. The choice that presented itself to Preissler was, then, either to stay with the restructured cooperative or to head one of the new companies that split off from it. Together with Heino Schneider, who had been the head cook in the cafeteria of the socialist cooperative, Georg Preissler founded a meat processing plant, buying facilities and using personnel from their former employer. In this way, Preissler took on a role and acquired a status that corresponded more or less with that of an independent farmer with his or her own family business. The following statement was made in 1994; by the end of the 1990s, the number of employees in the meat processing plant had more than doubled.

> It all began in the social hall [of the cooperative farm] in Stolpen, cooking lunch and running a little butcher shop. Then the cafeteria didn't work anymore, because after the currency union, people weren't willing to spend four or five marks on lunch anymore. So we concentrated more on meats and sausage ... We started with six people and built it up from scratch. Now we're up to 28 employees.[11]

[11] Interview with Georg Preissler on 7 August 1994.

Preissler's father, who died in the late 1990s, had previously developed long-range plans for passing his assets on to his three children. When, in 1985, it was announced that Breunsdorf would soon be evacuated and destroyed, property owners were urged to sell their homes and land to the coal-mining concern. Preissler Senior's response was to have his house and garden legally separated from his agricultural fields and to bequeath the former to his eldest son, Georg, while keeping the latter for himself. This made it possible for his son to negotiate with the coal concern not as a mere tenant but as a homeowner, who, in the event of forfeiting his house, would be entitled to a replacement. Preissler's older sister and younger brother had already left Breunsdorf and acquired homes, which were scarce goods in the socialist economy, through their marriage partners. Since Preissler and his wife had borne the costs of maintaining the parental homestead after the collectivization of agricultural, he was, in the eyes of his siblings, entitled to the compensatory payments and services that were rendered by the coal-mining concern. Later, the family strategy "paid off." Preissler and his wife did in fact receive a replacement home in Neukieritzsch, which they built themselves with financing from the state coal-mining company.

Upon the death of their father, Preissler and his two siblings also benefited from his sales of agricultural land to the coal concern, some of which occurred before 1990 (for unfavorable prices) and some of which occurred after 1990 (for much better prices). In addition, Preissler cashed in the two shares, worth DM 5,000 each, that he had received for his contributions to the assets of the old cooperative farm. Finally, Preissler's mother gave two of the shares in the cooperative farm that she had received from her husband to her eldest son.

As it turned out, none of the benefits that resulted from sales of land to the coal concern or from the distribution of the assets of the cooperative farm obviated the need to borrow a sizable chunk of money in 1991 in order to build up the new meat processing plant. It is well-known that meat processing is a capital-intensive business, and the array of machinery in the plant founded by Preissler and Schneider attests to this fact. These two entrepreneurs differ from Teubner not only in the amount of start-up capital that was needed to open their new business but in their general strategy of expansion. As has already been shown, *Preisschneider* Meats, as it is called, began with half a dozen employees and grew to 28 by the mid-1990s. By 2001, it had 73 employees, some of whom worked in the main plant and some of whom worked in sales counters in area grocery stores or in mobile sales units.

Preissler and his partner were bitterly disappointed when they were forced to declare bankruptcy on the tenth anniversary of the founding of their company. They attributed their financial difficulties to outstanding

payments, that is, to the failure of wholesale customers to pay their bills – which is a common problem for small businesses, not only in East Germany (cf. Dirschka 1999). Direct sales in supermarkets were also adversely affected by the BSE, or "mad cow," scandal, which had reached Germany by the end of 2000.[12] The court appointed a bankruptcy administrator who leased the grounds and facilities back to Preissler and Schneider almost immediately. A new company was founded with Preissler's daughter, a trained tax accountant, as its business manager. According to a newspaper report, the company was, as of June 2002, once more "in the black" (Barthel 2002). What's more, the 21 employees who were released in 2001 have all been rehired, so that the number of employees and sales branches has risen almost to the level of the period preceding the declaration of bankruptcy.

In a conversation that took place in October 2001, Preissler and his wife expressed their frustration with the fate of their enterprise, noting that this was not what they had expected when they started out with great optimism in 1991. Preissler complained that the bank was unwilling to lend them money on the basis of their status as a corporation, as it would have in West Germany, but instead insisted that they offer up their private home as collateral, requiring that both he and his wife sign the corresponding documents. What's more, they now believe that they were eligible for special subsidies or subsidized forms of credit for founders of new businesses but the bank failed in its obligation to inform them of this fact. Because of this, they are suing the bank for malpractice and hoping that this will allay the danger of losing their home.

Preissler notes that he could have stayed with the successor to the socialist cooperative farm but chose to head a split-off company, largely out of a feeling of responsibility toward some of the farm employees, mostly women, who would otherwise have become unemployed. The fact that he has created jobs for over 70 people is of no interest to the bank whatsoever, he observes. Like many other small-business persons, Preissler complains that the government bails out large companies with financial difficulties but takes no notice of the small ones.

Impractical Heritage, Inadequate Inheritance?

Both Teubner and his younger colleague, Preissler, are from old and established families in Leipzig's Southern Region. On this basis and because of their status as businessmen, they are known and respected members of the

[12] The BSE scandal negatively affected the sale of beef and other meats throughout Germany, though from late 2000 to early 2002 less that 200 cases had been reported in the whole country, mostly in West Germany (especially in Bavaria).

local community. Nevertheless, their experiences during the socialist era, the decisions they made after 1990, and the consequences of these decisions have led them along different paths, which entail varying relations to the market, their families, and the community.

Bernd Teubner is a kind of local elder statesman who still interacts regularly with customers when he substitutes for his son in the drugstore. His wife is the respected daughter of a prosperous farmer, and, like many other women from farming families – and in contrast to most people from the coal-mining milieu – she regularly attends services at the local Lutheran Church.[13] The Teubners' son, who shares the public acknowledgement and respect that his parents enjoy, is especially visible not only as a local businessman but also as a photographer who works on commission for special events within the community. Despite their relatively high prestige, however, the Teubners are by no means community activists. With the exception of the public roles just mentioned, their lives are played out mostly in the private world behind the humble façade of their small store. From the street, one cannot see the large garden behind the house, which is the place of frequent gatherings for a wider circle of kin. In the interest of a healthy balance of accounts, Teubner declines the many requests from local clubs and civic groups that he sponsor their festivals or other projects, noting that the corresponding deductions would have no effect on the amount of taxes that he, or his son, must pay. "When you're just barely breaking even," he says, "it doesn't help to have those receipts for charitable contributions!"

Georg Preissler is, first and foremost, a provider of jobs, not only for his grown daughter and son (a trained butcher) but also for many others. Judging from both his statements and his behavior, it is clear that he takes his responsibilities as an employer seriously, perhaps even viewing his company as a kind of public trust. But Preissler also plays an active role in the local community. One of his direct lineal ancestors became the first mayor of Breunsdorf when the liberal village ordinance went into effect in Saxony in 1839; and his father-in-law was the mayor of Neukieritzsch during and immediately after World War II. In the democratic election of 1990, Preissler himself became the last mayor of Breunsdorf, holding this post until the remaining fragments of the doomed village were absorbed by Neukieritzsch a few years later. Since then, he has served in the town council of Neukieritzsch, where he has also taken on the role of deputy mayor.

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[13] In 2001, 23 percent of the population of Saxony was Lutheran and 4 percent Catholic (see www.statistik.sachsen.de). This was the heartland of the Reformation almost 500 years ago, but it was subsequently subject to far-reaching processes of secularization. The few Catholics in the Southern Region of Leipzig and in other parts of Saxony as well are mostly refugees from Silesia or their descendants.

In his capacity as a local businessman and community "personality," Preissler sometimes makes public gestures of exemplary generosity – which must, of course, also be understood as a form of advertising. For example, when the incumbent mayor of Neukieritzsch handed his office over to his newly elected successor in 2001, Preissler provided an ample buffet of luncheon meats, rolls, cheeses, and condiments for the public reception that was held in the ceremonial room of the town hall. This occurred shortly after his company had declared bankruptcy. In the summer of 2002, Preissler and his partner held a well-attended open house on the grounds of their reopened meat processing plant in Stolpen. This gala affair, which was held together with the adjoining cooperative farm, featured grilled meats, beer, a brass band, prize drawings, and tours of the plant.

The lifestyle of the Preissler family also varies from that of the Teubners, at least to some degree. The house that they built with funding from the coal-mining company is not ostentatious, but it is the exception to the rule, insofar as it is freestanding and has a lawn in the front and a large garden in the back. Somewhat more "conspicuous," in Veblen's sense, are the stables in the back of the house, visible from the adjoining alley, and the large plot of land which the Preisslers lease from the town government and upon which their three horses graze. In addition, Preissler has bought several hectares of land from the state privatization agency, where, independently of his partner, he keeps deer that are occasionally slaughtered and sold to area restaurants. The fenced-in meadows with the grazing herd of deer are popular among couples and families taking walks on Sunday afternoons.

Both Teubner and Preissler are local businessmen with a commitment to their vocation and with a strong sense of self, family, community, and local history. They number among the most knowledgeable and articulate informants in my ethnographic project. They have, however, adopted different business strategies, especially since the change of systems, which might be characterized as maintenance and expansion, respectively. The results have been barely adequate in one case and nearly disastrous in the other – though the fortunes of the meat processing plant may now have changed. Nevertheless, these outcomes should not be judged strictly in economic terms, since neither Teubner nor Preissler may be seen as "maximizers" in a strict sense of the word. Each is, in his own way, not only a businessman but also a provider. Teubner might be said to be minimizing losses, rather than maximizing profits, in the interest of the financial stability of his family. He views it as especially important to secure the pension that his son will receive, provided he stays in business for the required number of years. For his part, Preissler seems to be trying to maximize not only profits but also benefits for himself, his family, and his employees.

Teubner's strategy of maintenance displays some continuity with his behavior in the GDR, which corresponded more or less to the cliché of withdrawal into a niche (Gaus 1983). At that time, he ran a stable business and led a secure life on the basis of the commission contract with the socialist retail agency; and today he aids his son in "staying afloat" with minimal entanglement in the wider market, while advising him to make all necessary arrangements for a comfortable retirement. Were we to confront Teubner with this apparent continuity in his behavior, he would no doubt argue that the climate for small businesses is just as unfavorable in the recently expanded Federal Republic of Germany as it was in the GDR, if in a different way (cf. Thomas 1996). Indeed, the Southern Region of Leipzig, with its dependence upon nationalized industries that collapsed when exposed to the world economy, may have represented the worst of both worlds – socialist and postsocialist – for local providers of goods and services, confronting them, first, with hostile policies and, then, with rising competition and sinking demand. Who, then, is to argue that Teubner should pursue a strategy of expansion and risk the fate of those who have declared bankruptcy and, as in one especially lurid case in Neukieritzsch, even taken their own lives (Schulreich 2000; cf. Walitzek 2002)?

At first glance, Georg Preissler may appear to be the born entrepreneur, who was finally released from the constraints of central planning in 1990 and who then had the opportunity to fulfill his ambitions in the free market. He would probably laugh at this oversimplified notion. For this active and capable individual – who was once arrested, if only briefly, on charges of espionage when he could not prevent some sheep from the socialist cooperative from straying onto the railroad tracks and being killed by a West German train that was crossing East German territory – has found the regulations and hindrances of the new economic landscape to be just as obscure, absurd, and threatening as those of the old one, if in a very different way.

Clearly, both Teubner and Preissler are among those who have benefited from processes of decollectivization and privatization after 1990, which have been accompanied by increasing social inequality. Nevertheless, these sons of the rural middle class do not seem to have benefited inordinately, given, first, the social services that the German government provides for the propertyless and the unemployed and, second, the devaluation of the heritage and inheritance of small-business persons in both the socialist and postsocialist eras. In neither case was the inheritance from the agricultural holdings of parents or parents-in-law – which, by regional standards, were fairly large – of decisive help in reorganizing and modernizing the family business after 1990. Rather, both were dependent upon credit, and the one who risked

taking more credit soon regretted this decision. Given the relatively small size of the sums involved, the inheritances in question were, perhaps, best suited as supplements to annual earnings, either in the form of salaries or pensions.

There are, of course, successful local businesses in this part of East Germany as well, and we must reserve judgment on their fate until a broader range of evidence is available (Fobe et al. 1999; cf. Claus 1996 and Maier 1999). Still, it is curious that, in the Southern Region of Leipzig, the two political parties that have the strongest claim to represent the interests of small businesses, the Christian Democratic Union and the Free Democratic Party, are led disproportionately by former mid-level managers from either the socialist cooperative farms or the nationalized industries – or by younger people in banking, insurance, or public administration. This seems to indicate that, despite the real gains in freedom that accompanied the change of systems, postsocialism is not exempt from larger trends in the world economy, including the decline of small business.

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Chapter 20

Houses without Owners? Historical Insights into Missing Ownership Documents for Houses in Rural Croatia in the 1990s

Carolin Leutloff-Grandits

Introduction

In this paper I want to address the problem of missing or inaccurate proofs of ownership for houses and land in the former war zones of Croatia. Missing ownership documents are not only typical of the former war zones in Croatia but are also a problem in many other rural areas in Croatia, as well as in other countries of southeastern Europe. However, due to the war in Croatia from 1991 to 95, in which up to 70 percent of the houses in the war zones were destroyed or damaged and about 20,000 housing units occupied (Ministry for Public Work 2001) and in which hundreds of thousands of people were expelled, the need for documents to prove ownership of one's (private) property became far more pressing.

In the Croatian post-war context, the reconstruction and repossession of houses came to be a very difficult process. In the year 2000, about 10,000 housing units in Serbian ownership (and partly in Croatian ownership, too) were still occupied by Croatian (or Serbian) settlers from other regions (Ministry for Public Work 2001). About 45,000 housing units had yet to be rebuilt (OSCE Reports 2000: 10). Until the year 2000, the Croatian government was formed by the HDZ, a Croatian nationalist-oriented party led by then-President Franjo Tudjman. This party (which retained power for longer at the local level) showed little political will to resolve these property cases (OSCE-Reports 2000). In addition to this, the fact that in many cases the ownership proofs needed to start administrative procedures were missing provided another impediment.

This paper will attempt to give some anthropological and historical insights into the social and administrative reasons for the absence of proofs of

ownership for private houses and land in post-war Croatia. I want to show that this is, at least in the case of land, accompanied by a specific, historically based inheritance practice in which all male children inherit an (equal) share of the land (and other property), which led to high fragmentation as well as to frequent co-ownership of land. I want, furthermore, to show that the lack of ownership documents resulted from economic strategies and housing policies during the socialist political regime, in which the registration of private property had negative effects on individuals' social and economic possibilities.

The arguments developed in the article are based on data that I collected during my anthropological fieldwork in the village of Biskupija near Knin from May 2000 until July 2001.[1] During fieldwork, participant observation of ongoing property transactions remained at the center of the research. This was accompanied by the collection of narratives and life-histories, which gave me many insights into inheritance practices, household composition, and the changing use of property, etc. To cross-check information given in narratives, I visited the land registry – and cadastre[2] – office in Knin and the archive in the nearby town of Zadar and collected documentary information.

The arguments presented in this article will be developed in the following stages. First, I want to describe the socio-historical context of the village in the 1990s and the situation of missing ownership documents. This will be followed by a description of the cadastre and land registry situation. To give the historical and anthropological insights into missing ownership documents, I will then continue with a description of the (changing) male inheritance and property system and the social organization in Biskupija before 1945. In the last section, I want to illuminate the changing meaning of houses, land, and inheritance under socialist property policy from 1945 onward.

Missing Ownership Documents in Biskupija in the 1990s

The village of Biskupija is situated in the karst region of the Dalmatian hinterland, only a few kilometers from the town of Knin. The landscape is hilly, in some parts even mountainous. Before the 1990s war, the village had about 1,000 inhabitants living in about 270 households (Hrženjak 1983:436). At that time, less than ten percent of the inhabitants were Catholic, while more than 90 percent were Serbian Orthodox. The inhabitants were mostly

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[1] The fieldwork was carried out and funded within the framework of a Ph.D. scholarship at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Germany.

[2] The cadastre is another real estate register. See below for details.

employed in one of the factories in the town of Knin and used to work on their private agricultural land as a secondary form of employment. As in pre-socialist times, most of them engaged in sheep and cattle breeding on private as well as communally owned land and in the production of homemade wine and *raki*. During the war in the 1990s, two major population displacements occurred during two key periods of the war.

After the dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia in 1990, extremist Serbs in the southern parts of Croatia started to revolt against the new established Croatian state. In 1991, with the support of the Yugoslav Army and Serbian paramilitary groups, they took control of about one third of the Croatian territory and established the (never internationally recognized) "Republic of Serbian Krajina," of which the town of Knin became the capital and the village of Biskupija was a part. In the course of these events, all Croatian families were successively expelled from their houses and homeland and had to leave the Serb-held territory by 1993. Many of their houses were destroyed or allocated for use by Serbs, who fled into the Serb-held territory from other parts of Croatia.

In August 1995, the situation changed drastically when the Croatian army succeeded in "retaking" the Serb-held territories. Almost all the Serbs of the village as well as from the whole "Republic of Serbian Krajina" fled to Serbia and the Serbian Republic of Bosnia before the advancing Croatian army (Mappes-Niediek 1995). After the reintegration of the formerly Serb-held territory into the Croatian state, most of the local Croats returned home and repossessed and, for the most part, reconstructed their houses. Many of the abandoned Serb houses were destroyed. But many Serbian houses were also allocated to new Croatian settlers. In the village of Biskupija, new Croatian settlers occupied about 70 big, modern houses, mostly situated on the main road.

Five years later, in 2000, by the time of my fieldwork, about 300 mostly elderly Serbs had returned to the village from their exile. Many more had expressed their wish to return, but Croatian settlers still occupied about 60 Serbian houses in the village, and many houses were still in ruins. Since 1998 about 30 Serbian owners had applied for repossession of their houses. However, the political will to solve the problem was missing, as were the proper ownership proofs that were needed to claim repossession of the houses. Only four of the 30 houses claimed were listed in the land registry under the name of the applicant. Additionally, 15 applicants were registered owners of the land on which the respective house was built (which was seen as sufficient proof of ownership by the administration), but their houses as such were not registered. Two applications could not be processed because of the fact that the applicants were not the full owners of the house but only

owned a share of it. In the other cases, the house was not registered, and even the land on which the house was built was not the legal property of the applicant, or only in very fragmented parcels (anything from one half to 1/200th) (Ministarstvo 2001). Much the same applied to destroyed houses. Thus many owners whose houses were occupied or destroyed were not able to make a successful claim for repossession (or reconstruction) of their houses. They first had to go through difficult, long-drawn-out, and expensive administrative procedures to clarify the legal ownership of their houses. Even when they succeeded in supplying all the necessary documents for a full claim, it was often not possible for them to repossess their house.[3]

Inaccurate Cadastre and Land Registry Situation

To throw more light on the question of missing ownership documents for houses in the rural area of Knin, I would like to describe the ownership document situation a little more from the administrative side. In Biskupija, as in all other regions of Croatia, there are two different offices in charge of the documentation of possession and ownership of land and houses. The one is the *cadastre office* (*Ured za katastarsko-geodetske poslove*) the other one the *land registry office*.

In the cadastre you can find information about those individuals who have the right of possession over land, a right which includes the obligation to pay the taxes for the land.[4] The land registry (*zemljišne knjige*) office provides information about ownership (*vlasništvo*) and mortgages (*teret*) taken on property.

The land registers that are now in use go back to the year 1903 and Austro-Hungarian rule. They consist of three parts: the first part (A) consists of the description of one landholding (*zemljišnički uložak*); each landholding consists of a number of land plots (*oznaka zemljišta*), and for each unit you find a description of the land and/or houses concerned. Part B consists of the list of persons (*vlasnički list*) who have a share in the property. When property has been passed on by inheritance, changes are made in the list to indicate which property shares have been transferred to the ownership of other persons. Part C is a list (*teretni list*) of mortgages taken out on the property. Due to the system of ownership documentation, the history and patterns of property transmission in the Knin region can easily be traced back to the

[3] The implementation of repossession procedures was very difficult, at least until 2001, even if all documents were available. These difficulties, however, cannot be discussed here.

[4] The cadastre office was modernized in 2000, computerizing the possession files. This was financed by an international organization. It is now very easy to find out about all possessions (*posjed*) of an individual, as well as about the user (*korisnik*) of every single documented piece of land.

beginning of the 20th century. When I was looking at the land registries in the Knin office during my fieldwork, I tried to follow the history of property transmissions. Here I could make some interesting observations: While all property and property transmissions were carefully listed (down to the smallest stables and barns) during the Austro-Hungarian regime, it was easy to see that, later on, ownership documentation was left incomplete or in many cases stopped altogether. Most of the houses built after 1950 through 1960, especially in rural areas (70 to 90 percent), had not been entered in the land registers at all. In many cases the last owner of a landholding had been registered in the 1950s and by now was probably deceased. I was also stunned by the fact that property, especially land, was extremely fragmented. Some plots were so fragmented that owners would own only a few square meters of the plot, or the landholding had numerous co-owners. Finally, the information about the owner of a landholding which I obtained in the land registry did not necessary correspond with the information about the user of this landholding which I found in the cadastre office. While the land book stated that a certain piece of land was owned by one (possibly long deceased) person, the cadastre stated that the possession right had been transferred to a son who was paying the taxes for it.

I was not the only person who found the land registers confusing. The local inhabitants, who were in need of ownership documents, were often themselves ignorant of the legal status of their property and astonished at what they found. When I was sitting in the land registry office and looking into the ownership documents, I had the opportunity to observe the customers (and, mostly, they had to queue) trying to solve their property situations.

Most of the customers were Serbs who visited the land registry in order to get a proof of ownership to present to the administration for repossession and reconstruction of their property. In the land registry office, however, they found, instead of their own names, the names of many already deceased relatives under whom the land was divided. To discover what share of the property they would be entitled to, they sometimes had to trace back several generations, and often not just of their immediate line of kinship. Mostly, the people themselves did not know much about their deceased relatives, or they could hardly remember them. One woman, speaking to the officer in the land registry office who had asked about the ancestors recorded as owners in the land registry, called out, "Let the dead people rest, and do not dig them up ... ." The real property situation and the legal situation did not seem to correspond in the minds of the people. In fact, the people

seemed not to have been aware of the importance of property documents up to this time.[5]

The discrepancies of use and ownership rights, as well as between the factual knowledge about ownership and the legal ownership situation, leads us to the question of the historical roots and the social side of ownership transmission in the former war zone around Knin. In the following I want therefore to concentrate broadly on the historical development of the property system and social organization of the village in the last 300 years. I will focus especially on changing household formations and inheritance practices as well as on the changing relations of people to the land and the houses they built and inhabited.

From Equal Male Inheritance to More Individualized Property Forms

Most of the local population in the village of Biskupija, as well as in the whole region of Knin, can trace the arrival of their family to the area in the beginning of Venetian rule in 1689. At that time, the Venetian Republic laid the foundation of a property and social system, some aspects of which still exist.

After defeating the Ottomans in the end of the 17th century, the Venetians tried to attract people to settle in the devastated and abandoned area by granting them ownership rights to the land they would cultivate. Many families came from Bosnian and Herzegovinan territories in the south or from the northwestern parts of the "Croatian" Zagorje to Biskupija as well as to many other villages in the region at that time. After their arrival, they were given a certain amount of land according to the social position of the household head (*glava kuće)* and the number of household members (Corelić 1993: 170). The property was registered under the name of the household head, who had to pay a tenth of the harvest as a tax to the state (Paić 1998: 20-1; Soldo 1993: 155). Furthermore the peasants had to serve the Venetian *providur* (Commander of the regional state administration) in work and military services, defending the borders of the Venetian Republic (Novello 2000: 64-5; Soldo 1993: 164).

Generally, the relations to the land in this *aquisto nuovo*, the newly acquired parts of the Venetian Republic to which the region of Knin be-

[5] The other, smaller group of visitors in the land registry office were Croats, mostly settlers in the region, who were trying to find what kinds of houses would be easier to buy, i.e., which houses had an entry in the land books. They also wanted to find out if the Serb owner, who might have offered the house for sale, was also the owner of the land on which the house was built. Even people who had full ownership of a house often had only a share in the land.

longed, were different from both the feudal systems prevailing in large parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the *kolonat*-system which was common in the older parts (*aquisto vecchio*) of Venetian Dalmatia.[6] Due to the special property system, peasants had the privilege of selling and buying land and were in principle the owners of the land. In practice, however, the relation to the land already started to change during this period of rule by the Venetian Republic. Peasants with relatively little land had to sell parts of their land because of poverty. They then sold it to citizens (*građani*) in Knin and often became fully dependent on the new owners of land. They became sharecroppers, giving up to half of the harvest from the plot to the new owner, and were often even more impoverished than peasants in the other feudal Croatian territories. In this way, a kind of *kolonat* relation was established.

In social terms, a special patrilineal household, residence, and inheritance pattern existed in the rural area. A distinctive feature of the region was equal male inheritance. In general, females were excluded from the ownership of land and houses. The family surname was transmitted patrilineally; the father also determined the family's social position. Patrilineality was also supported by the yearly household or family *slava* festivals (*krsna slava*), in which every family celebrated the patron saint of the male line of descent. Aspects of this festival date back to pre-Christian times, and the festival still continues today. The male household head had special ritual tasks during the festivities, like the lighting of the slava candle to worship the (male) ancestry and the breaking of the slava bread. Kin, neighbors, and friends not celebrating slava on the same day would come for a visit. All the people with the same surname living in the same village celebrated their slava on the same day, which symbolized the common ancestry of these families and underlined the corporate identity of the (perceived) lineage. Furthermore, slava festivals had an agrarian component, expressed in the symbolism of grain and bread presented on the slava table, which was linked to the fertility and livelihood of the ancestral land and property (Kaser 1993; Rheubottom 1976).

This common patrilineal identity found a spatial expression in the settlement structure. Villagers with the same surname used to live in lineage-like hamlets (*bratstvo*). This settlement pattern was based on patrilocality and a special marriage system, in which men as well as women married at a relatively young age. Men stayed in the parental household, while women left upon marrying. Starting from the largest lineage, Biskupija contained the following named lineage hamlets: Popović (with 48 households in 1991),

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[6] In the *kolonat* relation, the owner, mostly living in a town, handed over his property to a kolon who had the right to use the land based on a private agreement lasting for between one and 60 years.

Dmitrović, Prijić, Milić, Sladić, Katić, Vidović, and several others. As Čapo-Žmegać (2000:498) points out, a viri-local residence rule is also indicated by the kinship-expressions of the Croatian language. The Croatian language differentiates between the father's brother (*stric*, uncle) and the mother's brother (*ujak*, uncle), but it does not differentiate the father's sister from the mother's sister (*teta*, aunt). Aunts all live outside of one's own household (they marry out), while the father's brother could not. There are similar kinds of patterning with *zet* which designates the sister's or daughter's husband, i.e., men who take women from a household are designated by the same term, regardless of their generation level. The same holds for the son's or brother's wife (*snaha*)."

According to the cadastre list, some of the hamlet families used to live in so-called *zadrugas* (known in Biskupija as *zajednicas*), extended and complex family households with several married couples, in which parents shared a household together with their unmarried daughters, (married) sons, and the sons' wives and children. Daughters would move out upon marriage (Kaser 1993; Soldo 1993: 153).

The existence of a *zajednica*, however, was not only based on "cultural" but also on economic grounds: The mixture of shepherding (often in the mountains), agriculture (on private ground), household labor, etc., made it necessary to rely on a larger household that acted as one production unit relying mostly on its own produce (Grandits and Gruber 1996; Tomasevich 1975:182; Nakićenović 1999). Still, common production units did not have to be placed under one roof. The distribution of labor sometimes made it necessary to live at quite some distance from one another (Tomasevich 1955:178). This was partly also the case in Biskupija. The village was, historically, composed of three parts: Biskupija itself, a settlement situated on the edge of a fruitful field (Kosovo Polje), and the settlements Lopuse and Pliskovo, situated on the mountain slope. The three parts belonged together, as families were often split between them: One part of the household was situated up the mountain to care for the cattle and sheep while the other part of the household was engaged in agriculture in the valley (field). Both family segments exchanged their products and acted as one production unit. Settlements of families named Popović, Bukorović, etc., can even today be found in the valley and on the karst plateau.

When the Austrians took power in 1812, neither the legal property system nor the social and economic organization in the village changed fundamentally. The same applied for the inclusion of the region in the newly founded "Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs" (1918 to 1941).

It can be assumed that, at least up to the beginning of the 20th century, a certain number of complex households, *zajednicas*, existed in the village.

Peričić (1998:88) gives evidence that, in 1842, the average family in Biskupija had about eight members, which might indicate that, often, at least two married couples lived together. During my fieldwork in 2000, several older people from Biskupija could remember that their parents lived together with the father's brother and parents in such a complex household. These *zajednicas* were finally divided by World War II. This implies, first, the division of land, which was then cultivated by a nuclear family, but it often also implied the division of the house and other buildings. For example, Jelica Popović, born in 1926, who was the only person to still live in the older part of the Popović hamlet in 2000, remembered stories about the division of the *zajednica* in the years 1923 and 1924. The group of brothers, who up to that time lived together in a house with their families, divided the land and founded individual households. They had to divide the house, too, and built a new entrance door for the divided household.

With the equal division of property between all male offspring, the land was rapidly fragmented. When a father had several sons, every son basically got the same share of every plot of land. Most often the father died without writing a will and the siblings agreed to the customary practices of inheritance. Sometimes, brothers who inherited the same share of land tried to invent some practices to prevent the severe fragmentation of land plots. One practice was, for example, to group the existing land plots into more or less similar shares by bundling plots together after the death of the father. For four brothers, the land plots were divided into four numbered bundles. The brothers than put the numbers in a hat and every brother drew a number. Each was then entitled to the land of the number he had drawn. (This happened at the end of the 1940s, as reported by Blagoje Popović). However, the division of property was not necessarily reported to the court. By not registering the property in the land registries people could avoid administrative costs, like taxes and transaction costs, while at the village level the administrative entry was not important to prove ownership of land. There they relied on customary law.

Social differences between villagers and residents of Knin, as well as between villagers themselves, were intensified by the increased monetarization beginning in the mid 19th century and by the demographic explosion. In Biskupija, and in other villages in the region, many family members were forced to migrate out of the region because of the scarcity of land and the general agricultural and economic crisis that resulted in severe poverty.

From the mid-19th century up to the 1950s, people were leaving the village *trbuhom za kruhom*, with an empty belly for bread, because their small land plots could not feed them any more. Sometimes they received some money to a start a new living, but in general parents and brothers were

not able to buy them out. Instead, according to customary law, they still received an equal share of land, even when they migrated out of the village and did not have any intention to return to the village. In the land registries, many of them could still be found as owners of a share in the property, and they would even transmit those rights to their sons, although in practice they would not use the land anymore. This formal co-ownership of land had a strong emotional and social meaning: To own land in the locality meant to belong to the community and to the patrilineal descent group. In economic terms, however, their ownership of land was rather insignificant. Their share of land was worked by their brother or brothers who stayed in the village and who then fulfilled the obligation to the pay taxes on it. However, there were also examples in which land remained uncultivated because a co-owner who left the village did not want his brother at home to work his land.

A peasant livelihood was the general rule in the region well past the 1950s. The area belonged to the so-called passive regions (*pasivni kraj*) and was one of the poorest areas in Croatia (Bićanić1936), with very small parcels of land due to the high fragmentation. There was nearly no industry, and even the town of Knin was a very small place (Crkvenčić 1991:191-3; ibid. 1993). Many village houses built before World War II had only one room with an *ognjište* (an open fireplace). Most peasants had no beds and slept on straw, sometimes even sharing the room with the animals. But social stratification also existed in the village. Land was a marker of social barriers: People from families who were not equally rich (or poor), in terms of the amount of land they owned, would not marry each other (see Jesaić 1999:7).

Changing Markers of Reputation: From Ownership of Land to Ownership of Houses

The social and political reordering and modernization that began with the coming to power of the new socialist regime, in 1945, also had its effects on the realms of landed property and agriculture. First, a property reevaluation and redistribution took place, followed by the introduction of new agricultural concepts and industrialization. This had a large impact on the value and meaning of land and agriculture, and the value and usage of houses at the local level, and could in part be recognized in the land registries as well. I will briefly outline some of these tendencies.

With the land reform in 1945, private land above ten hectares (also depending on the quality of land) or property encompassing more than four flats or several houses was expropriated without any compensation and became "property of the people" (*opća narodna imovina*) (Borić 1996:38-9). With the expropriation of land, a social engineering and an equalizing of social differences took place: Poor people became richer, rich people poorer.

Many of the larger landholding families from Knin had already left the country during or immediately after World War II and had in part sold their land before leaving. The expropriated land was put under state administration and was later either redistributed to landless families or given to the agricultural cooperatives. In the villages of the region around Knin, the changes in land ownership and land usage were not severe. Almost all farmers, even the richer ones, had less than ten hectares and did not lose any land during the expropriation. While some families lost a house or a flat in the town of Knin, other previously landless families received very small amounts of land from the state.

From the late 1940s on, another reform changed the relation of the people to the land: The collectivization of agriculture was driven forward in Biskupija, like in most parts of socialist Yugoslavia. Agricultural cooperatives, called *seljačka radna zadruga*, to which people had to give their private land, were founded. However, in Biskupija the cooperative proved to be unproductive, like many others in socialist Yugoslavia, and was dissolved in 1953 (Borić 1996).

Only with the beginning industrialization of the region in the second half of the 1950s did the household and social pattern change rapidly. In Knin, a screw-and-rail factory was opened in 1955 and was successively expanded in the following decades, employing an increasing number of workers, who had previously been peasants (Rašeta and Pajić 1986:120). With the advancing industrialization of the region, the sources of income for households changed, too. While up to the 1950s the household economy was based mainly on agriculture and agrarian wage labor, from the 1950s on non-agrarian-based income increased.

In 1981 it was usual for one and sometimes even several members of the households in Biskupija to work outside the village, predominantly in the town of Knin. Other household members continued working on the private agricultural plots, and the factory workers would join them after their shift and on weekends and holidays (Nyström 1987:31; Olsen 1989:151-9; Simić 1973). The figures of household types in the region around Knin (and including the town of Knin itself) show the following distribution (Rašeta and Pajić: 1986:34):

Table 20.1: The percentage of agricultural and non-agricultural households in the Knin-municipality (1961-1981)[7]

	1961	1971	1981
Non-agricultural Households	24.8 percent	50.8 percent	32 percent
Mixed Households	38.3 percent	26 percent	59.8 percent
Agricultural Households	36.9 percent	23.2 percent	8.2 percent

In line with the socialist policy in which private agriculture was neither promoted nor recognized, industrialized and urban life gained value, while the value accrued to land ownership diminished. This was reinforced by the growing living standard based on the shift from solely agricultural to industrial labor, which put agriculture in the position of secondary employment. In the rural area, people stopped investing in land and started investing in private houses. From the 1950s on, the building of new houses started in rural areas as well. Beginning in the 1960s, bigger and more modern houses were built and developed to become a marker of standing within the village community.

A general housing policy was introduced by the socialist state in the 1960s. In local factories, "socially owned" (*društveno vlasništvo*) by the workers and under worker's self-management (*radna samouprava*), housing funds were founded to solve the housing question for worker's families (Rašeta and Pajić 1986:122). Workers had to pay a certain percentage of their monthly income into the fund (*samodoprinos*). Socially owned flats were built with about half of the money. The other half was used to provide workers low-interest loans for the building of individual family houses. In general, the installments on the loan were deducted directly from the salary of the individual worker. Some families who had lost a family member in World War II fighting for the Partisans also received a housing plot in a newly created quarter of the town of Knin.

As opposed to the capitalist system, in which people have to have a guarantee to be eligible for a loan, "social" and "political" criteria proved to

[7] The substantial changes which the table shows between 1971 and 1981 in the proportions of non-agricultural and mixed households are rather surprising, and may owe something to changes in the definitions used to compile the data.

be most decisive in socialist Yugoslavia. Flats and loans for houses were allocated to workers and their families following a certain distribution scheme, which took account of years of employment (*radni staž*), payment into the housing fund, family and property status, the housing situation of the family, and political orientation such as party membership, the commitment to the Partisans during World War II, and the like (cf. Nord 1992: 292). According to the socialist policy, families in need could either acquire a tenancy right to a flat or a loan for a family house. Loans for the construction of a house could not be granted if people had already received tenancy rights to a flat. They also had to return the flat as soon as they had a family house to use. The possibility of either building a private house or receiving a socially owned flat can therefore be seen as a social entitlement. By 1985, 325 flats were built by the screw-and-rail factory in Knin, and 426 workers received loans for their individual housing projects (Pajić and Rašeta 1986). However, the criteria for granting a loan or receiving use rights for a flat were not always followed in practice.

This was possible because the allocated loan was not paid out in cash but mostly in kind. People received building materials, like bricks, doors, or windows, which varied in number and quality. This depended on the size of the factory or company someone worked for, the social criteria mentioned above, and personal connections to power-holders, etc.[8] Some institutions, like the school and other public institutions, would not give out loans at all. People working for these institutions therefore had much greater difficulties in constructing a house or acquiring a flat, while other people with good connections to local power-holders easily got a larger loan or a better-located flat than others (cf. Nord 1992: 292).

To live in a flat in town was especially attractive for young married couples. Many of them worked in town but lived – as this was traditionally the rule – in the household of the husbands' parents in rural areas. Thus most of the young people applied for tenancy rights to socially owned flats in Knin. In general, however, the possibility of constructing a house in the countryside was considered the better choice. As in pre-socialist times, people liked to live on "their own" belongings (*na svojem*), as one informant explained to me, to be a *gazda* (house owner), *glava kuće* (head of the house or household), and to have a garden and the possibility to work a garden plot.

Due to limited financial possibilities and cash flow, as even the loans were paid in kind, the main construction work for a house was still done by

[8] This, however, is nothing specific to the Knin region or, more generally, to socialist Yugoslavia but could also be seen in other socialist countries. For Hungary, this is described by Bodnar and Böröcz (1998).

the family and relatives, neighbors and friends. People helped each other to complete the major part of the construction, i.e., laying the foundation and building the walls and roof (see, for example, Bringa 1995). This was still accompanied by costs, as volunteers expected to be invited for meals, which generally included lots of meat, maybe even a barbecue with one or several lambs and the like. Very often, houses that people had started to construct stayed half-finished for years, until the family had enough money saved to buy further building material to continue with the construction.

To receive a flat for one of the adult children and at the same time to be able to build a house on the countryside was the cherished aim of most of the families. Therefore, most of the families tried to bypass the official requirement that they choose between applying for a flat or for a loan for the private family house. When they needed a loan to construct the family house, they often declared that they needed the loan for the building of a stable (or anything else) instead of for a house. In other cases, when two generations in the same household worked in the same factory, the one would apply for a loan for a house and the other would apply for a flat. Of course, the lively house-building activities, which began in the 1960s but were especially prominent in the '70s and '80s and often took place parallel to the granting of a flat, did not stay undiscovered in the small rural communities. However, by that time, the local socialist administration was not as strict in controlling and punishing such acts of "wild building" in rural areas, and often not even in urban centers. There was the general policy that buildings that did not exist on paper should not be taken into further consideration. The construction of private family houses belonged in the private realm of the citizens.

Others who did not benefit from a loan of the socialist state went on to finance the construction of new houses out of their private savings. However, many homeowners still avoided registering the new house in the land registry, because property in the form of a house would exclude them from the possibility of receiving other social entitlements.

Non-registering of houses was also connected to the "traditional" inheritance practice of the patriline and the personalized relations in the village, too. For the sites of the new houses in the countryside, most people in Biskupija chose locations a few hundred meters away from the old settlement, closer to the main road running along the lower part of the valley. Previously, only the stables had been situated on this most fertile land. Its use as building sites was an expression of the changing valuation of land from the late 1970s and 1980s onward. But even in the new location families would try to build houses on "their own land" (*na svojem*). Brothers still tended to build their houses close to one another, particularly if they held

joint ownership rights to a piece of land in this area – though, as explained above, the land was often not registered under their names. But there were also social and economic reasons why brothers built houses next to each other, because even after the division of extended family households and joint landed property, close relatives helped each other in cultivating the land and acted in many ways as a communal labor unit.

In some cases, the plots selected for a new house were too small and neighboring land was purchased from relatives, neighbors, or friends. Again, the purchase was often not registered in the land registry. Only an informal contract between the buyer and the seller was made and kept. People did not feel it necessary to report the transaction to the administration, because they knew what they owned. Additionally, reporting such transactions to the administration could only have negative effects. People would have to register the land in the cadastre office (which involved relatively high costs),[9] construction might have been forbidden in the specific area, and they would have to pay property transfer taxes (normally 5 to 10 percent of the value of the property). So even the houses built in the 1970s and 1980s were often not registered.

Conclusion

Socialist Yugoslavia was a very special case compared to other socialist countries: Collectivization, expropriation, and nationalization of property were not as widespread, while private property (in land as well as in houses) existed throughout socialist Yugoslavia to a greater extent than in other socialist countries of Eastern Europe.

Still, in contrast to Western European countries, the legal situation of private property (as documented in the cadastre and the land registers) was in many cases very different from the real situation. In rural Croatia, many proofs of ownership did not exist or were very inaccurate. One reason for this was the process of maneuvering by which people resolved the tension between the extremely fragmented ownership produced by the egalitarian inheritance system and the factual usage of property by only one or a limited number of (mainly patrilineal) kin. The many legal (co-)owners of property did not correspond to the smaller number of users of the land. The other main reason for not registering property was related to the strategic practices by which family groups manipulated the socialist housing and property system, in order to evade the social priorities on which the system was based and so obtain both loans for financing private house construction and tenancy rights to socially owned flats.

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[9] In the years 2000 and 2001, this cost the equivalent of between 300 and 500 German Mark.

Such maneuvering between custom and legal rules, on the one hand, and economic considerations, on the other, must certainly have taken place in other (socialist) countries, too. In the village of Biskupija, in Croatia, however, it reached such a point that about 70 percent of the rural houses build after the 1960s are not registered in the land registries. In the war-torn parts of post-war Croatia, the missing property proofs for houses had far-reaching consequences: They prevented factual owners from regaining possession of their property.

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Part IV

Assumptions Revisited

Parts I, II, and III of this book have investigated developments in a single continent: Europe. Studies of particular communities have been placed in the context of economic, political and demographic processes as they unfold over time.

However, there are other ways of placing community studies in context, and perspectives from which the European experience can be seen as just one example of social laws that apply to humanity in general. In the final chapter of this volume, Jack Goody emphasizes commonalities in the development of socialist movements and regimes over all of Eurasia. He relates the rise and decline of socialism to a universal tension between the desire to better one's own and one's family's condition, and the desire for fairness in society as a whole.

Chapter 21

Sorcery and Socialism

Jack Goody

I was asked to talk about some broad links between property and family in the West and East in the sense of Europe and Asia. This has been a subject that has long interested me, and I have tried to embody my thoughts in books on the family and marriage such as *Production and Reproduction* (1976) and The *Oriental, the Ancient and the Primitive* (1990). Their general theme ran counter to the attempts of many European historians, demographers, and sociologists (as well as some anthropologists – L. Dumont, for example) to emphasize European differences in order to try and explain the coming of capitalism and of recent European advantage. I, on the other hand, tried to emphasize the similarities between the major Eurasian societies (brought out for me in the contrast with Africa), especially in terms of strategies of heirship, under what I called the advanced agricultural regimes ushered in by the Bronze Age, which had affected them all. Any explanation of European advantage, real or supposed, had to be looked for elsewhere: major similarities existed in property and the family across the broad East-West axis.

In *The Oriental, the Ancient and the Primitive,* I argued that the nature of social differentiation ("class") that had developed in Bronze Age societies with their more complex agriculture and their "urban revolution" meant that efforts were made by senior generations to preserve the status of all members of a family, of a sibling group, both male and female. The main means of so doing was to provide women as well as men not only with status but with property to match. That transfer to women was frequently made at marriage (in the form of dowry) rather than at death (in the form of inheritance), since that was the point at which it became important to make a "proper" alliance and to put one's cards on the table. Nevertheless, a daughter often had some benefit from inheritance as well. This form of what I've called diverging devolution meant that no (unilineal) clan or lineage could ever retain the totality of its property (though it might retain its land through

unisexual transmission) since its resources had to be distributed bilaterally (not necessarily equally) through both males and females. Indeed, if there were no sons, all the parental property would be transferred to the daughter, as heiress, rather than to male collaterals. These marital and life-cycle transfers differed in important ways from those involved in the bride-wealth transactions of African societies, where a standardized amount of goods and service passed to the bride's kin, not to the bride herself; there was no bilateral transmission within the sibling group.

One associated feature in Eurasia was the attempt to retain the property transmitted to women within the group by pressing them to marry in, especially when an heiress inherited all the property, as happened with the *epiklerate* in ancient Greece (who had to marry her father's brother's son, as in Arab countries) or in early Jewish law (where she had to marry within the clan). A further set of strategies of heirship, such as adoption, characterized many of these societies, the result being that the structures of the domestic groups were similar in many respects across the Eurasian landmass. Of course there were differences, as with what has been referred to as the European marriage pattern, late marriage for both men and women and the large-scale employment of in-living life-cycle servants. A great deal of weight has been placed on this difference in relation to the process of modernization, but in terms of household size and the links with the economy these have not been great, and factors associated with the transmission of property (e.g. dowry) have many similarities (Goody 1990). More generally it seems theoretically and methodologically wrong to concentrate on the few differences in family structure as the significant factor when there were so many similarities (or alternatives).

The broad connection between the nature of stratification and the general type of heirship strategy seems to me established. But that does not mean all actions are determined. As I tried to lay out in *The Ancient, the Oriental and the Primitive*, there are a number of alternatives: strategies that meet the same requirements for providing an heir, plural marriage, adoption, and so forth. The same seems to be the case with other aspects of systems of inheritance or descent, the choice between which may depend upon an appreciation of the problems involved in one system and a consequent switch to another. An example would be the switch between partible and impartible inheritance. The notion of impartible transmission embodies that of one man, one plot, whereas the partible variety embodies that of distributive justice, of the equality of siblings. The shift is related to the inevitable tensions, perhaps contradictions, existing within any one system. One procedure attends to one impact of the problem but raises another, which can be dealt with only by a switch of system. A tension between collective and

individual ownership can be seen in the organization of some French villages, especially in mountainous areas where we find collective communes as well as individual plots. That was even clearer in pre-Soviet Russia, where the institution of the *mir* gave much more emphasis to the collective principle, though the land was cultivated by individual families. Similar tendencies were pursued in early manorial farming systems where there were also rights over commons that largely disappeared in England (Thompson 1975) but are still significant in France since communes often own productive property, usually woodland.

These alternative strategies have some consequences (not as many as is often assumed) but no fixed causes. In a more complicated way, that is perhaps true of the difference between the presence of matrilineal and patrilineal descent groups, even of bilateral systems. While we certainly find some statistical associations, such as that of matrilineality with hoe agriculture ("The cow is the enemy of matrilineality"), we find each of these systems of descent, inheritance, and succession in virtually all types of political economy.

These strategies are hardly alternatives in most demographically stable situations as far as males are concerned, since only about 50 percent of the population will end up with one or more male heirs and those that have more than one are balanced by the number of couples that die without children or with daughters alone. So under these conditions the act of division rarely arises. For similar reasons the alternative of primogeniture or ultimogeniture is rarely critical.

Relevant here is the question of what these systems of rules actually mean. When I worked in an area in Northern Ghana that practiced the matrilineal inheritance of movable property at death, one found in fact that as much wealth was often passed on between father and son during the father's lifetime. Gifts *inter vivos* were not subject to the same rules. Education and training now becomes an aspect of such counter-inheritance transfers.

East and West Eurasia

That was in the past. Since then, Europe, from the 19th century, has led the way in the process of industrialization. How have the situations in East and West diverged or converged since then? Clearly, developments have taken place in respect of modernization, industrialization, and capitalism throughout these regions, and those changes have been seen in the West as associated with their development of entrepreneurship and individualism. However, such qualities are also perceived to exist in eastern societies that have successfully modernized, first in Japan, then in Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and now in mainland China. At the same time convergence has

taken place in an ideologically opposed direction, in relation to the collectivist (i.e., anti-individualist) ideology of socialism (or communism) with notions of common ownership, which has appeared at a continuous government level both in the West (Russia and Eastern Europe) and in the East (China and Vietnam) as well as at an electoral level throughout both regions. How have these two factors affected the East and the West in relation to family structure? In virtually all pre-modern societies, many individual producers have had direct access to the means of production, though with the advent of complex (for example, plow or irrigation) agriculture in post-Bronze Age cultures that access has been qualified by the unequal ownership of land, by tenancy arrangements of various kinds, and, indeed, by the existence of a body of landless laborers who did not even have any indirect rights in the means of production (though they may often have had other more voluntaristic claims on the largesse of the main producers).

Craftsmen, too, did not always own the tools, such as looms, they worked with, so that the whole system of ownership and the hierarchy of rights became of much greater complexity with the shift for an increasing part of society first to the craft and manufacturing activities of differentiated urban cultures and then to industrial production in which work and means became radically separate for the great majority of people. Clearly this shift changed the nature of the relationship between individual, family, and property.

It also gave rise to attempts to reverse the situation but by getting back not so much to a peasant society (though such movements did take place) as to a society where the means of production were held in common. In this endeavor there was often a fanciful return to an earlier egalitarian "paradise" where large families were supported by collective ownership. The modem versions of this idea took various forms, but while communism or "scientific socialism" was internationally the most prominent, at least until recently, electoral socialism played a very important role in most European (and many other) societies. The belief in the desirability of a more equal allocation of scarce goods ("the relief of poverty") represented an industrial version of the notion of distributive justice that marked the luxury societies of the post-Bronze Age, especially in the works of their philosophers and religious writers, and which expressed itself in giving, in charity, and occasionally in welfare from the state.

Socialist redistribution is clearly more radical. If we are looking at the relations between kinship and property, we have at the present day, or for the recent past, to take account of the changes in the nexus arising out of all kinds of socialist transformation. That factor has been important for East and

West Europe as well as for the East in the wider sense – for China and Vietnam and the USSR.

The communist movement that gave rise to the enormous political changes that took place in Russia, in Eastern Europe, in China and Southeast Asia, and to a lesser extent in America and Africa was founded on a version of the claim of the 19th-century French reformer Proudhon (cf. 1994) that "property is theft." That version was intimately connected with the advent of industrialization in which the means of production became owned by relatively few individuals (capitalists) while the bulk of the workers had only an indirect interest, as they saw it, in the results, since the profits went to the owners. In some respects, the situation had existed before. Under advanced agricultural production, as we have seen, not everyone had access to, let alone owned, property in the sense of the means of production. Even many of those who did had to pay rent to some landlord, and the resulting differentiation invariably led to individual feelings of envy as well as to more general movements of opposition to this state of affairs, such as that of the Levellers in England in the 17th century.

I do not mean to suggest that such sentiments and thoughts were altogether absent before the coming of the Bronze Age. In the hoe cultures of Africa, where until recently people were rarely differentiated with regard to the extent of their holdings in land, the success of their farming nevertheless varied; not all land was the same, not all weeding was thorough, some plots were better manured, and some received more rainfall. Such different results at harvest gave rise to envy, and that in turn to witchcraft or sorcery, against which special medicines made their appearance – like the black cross on a pale stone in the corner of a LoDagaa field. However, in giving this paper the title "Sorcery and Socialism" I did not intend to identify either socialism or its supposed opposite, capitalism, with witchcraft. I was referring to the jealousy, the resentment, the absence of "natural justice" ("All men are created equal") to which such inequalities, like the unequal treatment of siblings, tend to give rise – feelings that may call for alternative social arrangements as well as for aggression, whether mystical or not.

I do not want to draw too clear a link between sorcery and socialism, but on the other hand I do not see a clean break. Both arise from the inequalities we face in life, but those inequalities (or comparative advantage) were greatly increased by the coming of complex agriculture (the plow, the wheel, and irrigation), introducing landlordism, and later again by the capitalist organization of industry, alienating workers, to use Marx's expression, from the tools they used, which were seen as ending up in the hands of a few (although with the stock market and pensions the few became more numerous). Socialist ideologies and practices were ways of attempting to tackle

this aspect of modernization which we need to see as just as intrinsic as individualism, the Enlightenment, the nuclear family, or even love (romantic love) to the whole process.

Socialism then represents an attempt to deal with such inequalities – in electoral regimes by attempting palliative action, in communist ones by radically redistributing property rights, whether in land or industry, either by socializing them (nationalization) or by pooling them in some kind of cooperative.

Both these movements were spectacularly successful between the two world wars. Electoral socialism, its doctrines, and its practices, influenced not only the parties of the left but also those of the right, who under an electoral system had to address themselves to the desires of the majority. Everywhere the result was a significant move toward social welfare at all levels. And there were also remarkable achievements on the more extreme (confiscatory) level in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam, Cuba, and other areas. This latter movement, which has largely collapsed basically for reasons, in my view, to do with property and the family that bear upon efficiency, exercised for a time a great influence on both. What is particularly interesting to students of society from a comparative point of view is that, despite their 19th-century Western origins, the appeal of these movements reached all types of society in all continents, but especially in Eurasia, East and West, obliterating in the process some earlier opposition. And while the radical form has largely collapsed, we should not delude ourselves into thinking that the problem it attacked has disappeared, for the poor are always with us – indeed, social differentiation is always a problem as well as possibly a functional requisite of the market economy. And the enormous reach of these doctrines emphasizes the universality of the problem.

In earlier work, I have tried to show the continuities between East and West in the context firstly of the changes stemming from the Bronze Age, especially the introduction of the plow, the harnessing of animal power, the development of crafts, workshops, and mercantile activity, and above all the advent of writing and archival knowledge. I have presented the argument that the household and domestic organization generally worked in much more similar ways in the two areas than would be allowed by European protagonists of the notion of the significant differences that supposedly inhibited the development of the economy – scholars from Malthus to Marx, Weber and many Western historians, especially historians of the family, and demographers. I would argue, too, that further similarities can be seen in the mercantile and cultural revolutions of the 16th and 17th centuries in both areas, so that in a recent book Pomeranz (2000) can persuasively argue,

against many Eurocentric historians, that from an economic point of view, in 1800 the levels of those developments in the East and the West were not substantially different, one from another. The great divergence he argues came in the 19th century, when Europe "took off." From then on, industrialization certainly changed the rural-urban balance, and similarities in the strategies of heirship and management in farm families became of less importance in the overall picture.

From 1800 the comparison of East and West was now influenced by the coming of the Great Divergence, by the difference between the industrialized West and the developing world of the East. But in evaluating how that difference affected family and population, we have to remember that the East was not that far behind, at least in terms of crafts and mercantile capitalism, and that as far as modernization more generally was concerned, efforts were soon made to follow the Western mode, starting with the modernization drive that followed the 1868 overthrow of the Tokugawa regime in Japan. Shortly afterward, the Chinese Revolution of 1911 and numerous reform movements in India, all of which had their precursors, attempted to change the family structures and sentiments of the East along Western lines. A parallel facet of this modernizing process has been a differentiation between the capitalist and the revolutionary socialist regimes, a difference that is particularly relevant to East-West comparisons, since 1917, in the case of Russia, and since 1945, in the case of China and Eastern Europe. Electoral socialism, which is necessarily an alternative, falls between the two blocks.

How have such changes influenced property and the family? Electoral socialism always has to look over its shoulder at alternative ways of handling social relations, ways that tend to insist on the autonomy of property and the family. By and large, following earlier worries about the inequalities produced by inheritance, both these and revolutionary regimes have been more insistent than others on taking a proportion of inherited wealth for the purposes of the state and its citizens.[1] In the early USSR, virtually all such property was confiscated, so that there was no legal concept of family property rights over time, except the acquisition by all of rights as citizens, which included derivative rights in state property as well as to employment, education, health, sport, and other benefits. However there is evidence from capitalist societies that individual entrepreneurs do take into account their offspring when planning for the expansion of industry; I have given examples from both Europe and India in *The East in the West* (Goody 1996a: chapters 5 and 6). Much activity was carried out specifically for one's progeny, and that also applies to commerce and shopkeeping. In the East, "joint families" are often engaged in some kind of business. And in Europe it has been held

[1] See for example Wedgwood 1929.

that family firms (or those of mixed ownership) are the most profitable form of investment. Socialist economies largely missed out on this form of activity. But even for employees, the pressure to help children (or sometimes more distant kin) in the present and in the future is clearly a spur to savings, acquired through increasing work or restricting consumption. There would seem to be no such incentive when inheritance is not permitted, when the transmission of property between generations is frowned upon, and when one is automatically entitled to support from the community. Hence lower levels of output per person would be expected. Stakhanovite workers laboring to the maximum of their capacity for the common cause would seem to be the ideal exception rather than the norm. Nevertheless, despite these explicit ideological positions, there have been practical forces pulling in favor of family transmission in socialist regimes and equally of welfare provision in capitalist ones. Both types of regime have been subject to the opposed trends.

Recent notions of collectivization at the level of the economy were not paralleled in socialist regimes by an emphasis on the larger family or the large kinship group, either in the shape of the clan or of the extended family. That was not true of their historical perspective. Ideologically, the socialists looked back toward a supposedly earlier state of affairs, when property and persons were all held in common – the primitive communism as sketched out by the American lawyer-anthropologist L. H. Morgan (1877) and taken up from his *Ancient Society* by Marx, in his notebooks (cf. Marx 1972), and Engels, in *The Origin of the Family* (1902 [1884]). As far as the family was concerned, under this dispensation, kinship groups were held not only to be large but women were said to be owned in common – as were men and land.

However, as far as the distant past was concerned, we know that both these claims were imaginary. While kinship groups and relationships were often larger and wider respectively, while in hunting and gathering societies land was effectively held in common by the "horde" (or, better perhaps, of common concern to it) and its animal produce often shared, there is no question but that notions of individual property were applied to food and to other possessions. Under hoe agriculture, the wider kin group holds certain rights, but so too does the individual farmer (or householder). The same is true of rights in women (or in men). We may for example discern a collective aspect to the levirate (and to widow inheritance) as well as to some other features, but specific rights in women and men were always vested in their individual partners; they formed couples, even in polygamous societies. Kin groups such as clans and lineages could be large, kin spread widely, though groups and ranges became smaller and narrower over time, losing some of their earlier functions. This process is sometimes spoken of as the rise of

individualism, but in fact it is nothing of the sort. Men and women were already individuals, although their actions were heavily influenced by their membership of wider kin and local groupings, rather as ours are by churches, by associations, and by local and national governments. Long before the coming of industrialization, the establishment of state power had begun to modify the wider kinship framework, with the state taking on and expanding many of the functions of social control hitherto performed by such groups and ranges. Clan and empire, lineage and state were at least partly opposed. Some have also seen larger households (one meaning of the extended family) as intrinsic to these wider kin groups, to be later replaced by the elementary or nuclear family. I find little evidence for this claim, except to the extent that, in relatively stable agricultural communities, larger numbers of relatives inevitably gather in the same vicinity, occasionally in the same house (but rarely household in the housekeeping sense). And some kind of nuclear family always lay at the core.

The notion that earlier structures of household and family (as distinct from clan and lineage) were very different is paralleled by the idea that the East was very different (with grand families, which were more "primitive") from the West. In other words, the West differs from all these regimes, in the past as well as in the present, and according to many it is that very difference that has helped to promote modernization (specifically capitalism for some). We were already programmed in that direction while China, for example, was characterized by a failure to control its population (being dependent on positive checks, as Malthus contended) and by its non-European pattern of early marriage (Malthus 1798; and Hajnal 1982). In an interesting recent study Lee and Feng (1999) argue that, since historical times, family formation in China has been characterized by a collectivist as against an individualistic approach – though in the course of proposing this binary view, the authors comprehensively dispose of the Malthusian (and later) analysis of Chinese demography; the Chinese were well aware of preventative checks and engineered low fertility.

Socialist and Capitalist

This opposition between East and West at the level of the household and family is, like a number of others of the same ilk, definitely unacceptable, a fiction of Europeans trying to account for their economically based superiority in the 19th century. That view is lent support by taking into account this question of the influence of socialism on the family and demography. Socialist doctrine, with its collectivist program, appeared both in the individualist West – with its entrepreneurs, its Protestant ethic, it nuclear families, and its essentially European patterns of marriage (as they are seen to be) – and in

the midst of the collectivist (according to some), despotic (again according to some) tendencies of the East. I would suggest that this very fact of the transcultural nature of socialist doctrine draws attention to similarities in the contemporary social structures of both areas, similarities that must have existed before as well as after the coming of socialist regimes ("really existing socialism," in Hobsbawm's phrase).[2] That fact supports my argument for parallel development in East and West Eurasia and the abandonment of the strong theories of Malthus, Marx, Weber, and a host of others about the nature of the differences in relation to modernization. But given this similarity in distribution, was there nevertheless a difference between socialist and capitalist countries in the consequences for family structure now or in the recent past? How, for example, was the family affected by the socialism of communes and of collective farms, to take the two extreme cases?

In those situations, each individual is, in principle, treated as an independent unit in relation to the benefits conferred by state and commune. In fact, it proved impossible not to recognize and to make allowances for domestic ties, not simply between husband and wife, woman and man, but between adjacent generations. In theory, the transmission of property rights between them was not permitted. But families belonged to the same commune (in rural areas) and passed down a certain right of belonging (as in the parallel case of the kibbutz in Israel). While there was no question of distributing ownership rights in the means of production in this process, personal belongings were obviously handed down from one generation to the next (by gifts, *inter vivos*, as well as *propter mortem*), and these might include family heirlooms and money that had not been confiscated in one way or another.

In an earlier draft of this paper, I tried to crystallize the problem of the differences between purely capitalist, permanent socialist, and electoral socialist regimes by looking at data from the UN Demographic Yearbook (1997) and found little difference in terms of rates of marriage and marital fertility. If one looked at the mean size of households, again there was little difference between different political regimes within the same continent (1995: 27. 576ff).

I then looked more specifically at the differences in one country, Germany, that was divided between capitalism and socialism and which has been studied in depth by Borneman (1992) for Berlin. The same trends were observed, at different rhythms, with regard to marital fertility, proportion

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[2] If we look at the rate of increase in the population in the same sources, East Asia is 1 (all Asia 1.5), not all that different from Western Europe, at 0.6 (all Europe 0.2, pulled down by East and South Europe, where there is no growth); the continent that stands out is Africa, at 2.7.

marrying, age of marriage, rates of divorce, informal partnerships, and births out of wedlock.

That is not to say there were no important differences relating to the governance of these regimes. Firstly, while, in 1988, 51 percent of women of working age in the West were employed, the figure in East Germany was 91 percent. That difference was related to the high provision of support in the East (that is, for child care), the relatively low wages in an expanding economy, as well as to the goals of the women concerned – not all worked because they were constrained to do so by politicians or by the economy. In Germany as a whole, employed women (as a percentage of working-age women) stood at 50 percent, in 1939. After the war, it dropped in West Germany, rising, in 1960, until it reached pre-war levels, in 1982. In East Germany there was a steady rise to 91 percent, six years later, as a result of the full employment policy and the factors reported above. However, the trend was nonetheless in the same direction, and in these and other respects East Germany seems historically more modern than the West (Bornemann 1992).

Collectivist and Individualist

Let us return to the general question of comparing so-called collective and individualist regimes on a wider canvas. While in the former, the continuity of families could not be expressed by handing over productive property, much else was transmitted between adjacent generations in the process of socialization; Stalin's children did not starve. Discrimination between families occurred even where formal steps were taken (as in the kibbutz and elsewhere) to minimize the advantages or disadvantages derived from parenthood – differences that even capitalist regimes often try to modify by taxation, benefits, and compensatory programs of one kind or another in the interests of social justice. But certainly some continuity was lost by not being able to establish one's children in the precise way that one would wish and that one's situation might have permitted, for example, by handing down a house, a shop, or a farm.

The suggestion has been made that for some individuals this restriction may have lessened the desire to accumulate – because not only could you not take it with you at death; you could not pass it on, except to the state, so that the will to add wealth to farm, shop, or factory may have been diminished. Hence the restriction is seen as in part responsible for problems in the system of production that eventually led to its collapse. While ownership of the means of production was vested in the people, rights were not in the hands of particular people (as shareholders) and from this standpoint might as well have belonged to others, the others who controlled them. The con-

trollers were anonymous and placed restrictions on the accumulation and transmission of rights within the family.

With regard to the link between family and property, this relationship has been modified by welfare policies in all countries of the developed world. For reasons to do with the organization of production, no longer are the aged completely dependent on their children to help them when they are incapacitated. The enterprise has its pension (an interesting concept in itself), and the state steps in, making a minimal contribution. Children are thus liberated from having to make upward transfers of wealth at this or any other point in time,[3] partly because everyone has contributed to taxes or to occupational pensions. Once again the tie between kin is weakened, except for downward flows. The children may rejoice in their freedom; many of the elderly, too. The results in terms of household size and loneliness are obvious (though many live close by their kin and are consoled by home entertainment). Retirement homes substitute for the West Room, the Altenteil, or the dower house.

Such arrangements mean that the nuclear family, the couple, or even the individual become more isolated, except of course in their direct relationship with the state and possibly with the mediating institutions of civil society (lawyers and the Citizens Advice Bureaux). Although immediate family fortunes may be taken into account in the right of access to welfare, in both socialist and capitalist regimes adults were treated largely as individuals (occasionally as one of a couple) in the government's eyes, before the law (a woman becomes responsible for her debts as her automatic claims on her husband's wealth diminish), and before the economy, since each individual is separately employed (as distinct from the case under agriculture, early industrialization, or proto-industrialization, with their notion of a family wage). Each is individualized, not only in the primarily ideological sense of many apologists for the modern world but in a concrete political, legal, and economic one (relative to industrial production and to wage-earning) that affected all political systems in a similar degree and hence affected similarly the structures of their families, of demographic change, and of styles of life. Industrial production was no monopoly of the West, even if its capital finance was.

As is often insisted upon in the West, whatever benefits socialist or collectivist production provided (and there are some spheres in which that form of organization is still valued, as well as often being regretted for others, such as the recently privatized and later reorganized British railways), it was unable to match capitalism in terms of the supply of consumer

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[3] See Caldwell (1982) on the demographic transition.

goods (as distinct from the provision of health, housing, and permanent employment). That failure is often expressed in relation to restrictions on the market, which is seen by the dominant Western ideology as the only rational (their form of rationality) way of organizing the distribution of goods and services. But that is a very partial view, not only because welfare is deliberately excluded from the calculation but because the transmission of goods between generations is invariably organized on specific family lines. For the inheritance of property is everywhere passed down between close kin and affines. In the West, many (indeed in numerical terms the vast majority of) enterprises continued to be transmitted between kin (and to be partially organized by them) rather than through market mechanisms; the same is partly true of political systems as we see in the contemporary Congo (the late president and now his son), U.S.A. (Bush and, earlier, Kennedy) and in Britain (for the headship of state). Many of the most successful firms in the market are family firms in a broad sense rather than the bureaucratically rational corporations advocated by American management theory. As I have argued elsewhere, economic advance in former Eastern Europe may perhaps be best promoted by encouraging the growth of family firms rather than of bureaucratic multinational corporations (although even these latter are often influenced by family considerations at the top – and sometimes at the bottom, too, in terms of continuing employment opportunities).

In any case, there is an aspect of the family that we cannot avoid if the former socialist regimes revert to the notion that people should be allowed to provide for their offspring by passing on wealth to them, a process which consequently differentiates individuals and hence preserves advantage but at the same time (and this is one of its rationales) possibly stimulates the national economy by encouraging accumulation and competition. In other words, we have to recognize two overlapping spheres of economic activity, working according to somewhat different principles, the sphere of the family (or household) and the sphere of the enterprise. The state has inevitably to operate in both, at least in modern times. In any society, therefore, one area of human interaction, namely the family, is significantly excluded from the market and in general pursues a collectivist policy, whatever individualist approach is taken by the state in other domains.

This fact goes part of the way to explain the enormous success, even if temporary, of collectivist doctrines (in the shape of Marxian communism) over such a large part of the world in the 20th century. Both trends were everywhere present. To many today, after the "fall" of communism, the project seems to have been damned from the beginning. But at the time people did not see it that way, and even now the trend is not all one way, by any means.

From one standpoint, this earlier success represented the triumph of an ideology developed by Marx and Engels in the 1840s and later taken up by vigorous, organized revolutionary parties. The ideology of course had a long prehistory, not only in early 19th century socialist writings but well before, in those of the French Revolution, in 18th-century writers in France, and in earlier thinkers of the English Revolution. They in turn were dependent upon longstanding ideas about inequality and the need to abolish or modify it in favor of distributive justice, which are embodied, for example, in the English tradition of the class conflict between Normans and Saxons (given literary expression by Walter Scott in *Ivanhoe*) and in the Christian tradition by aspects of egalitarianism, going back to folkloric expressions such as:

> When Adam delved and Eve span
> Who was then the gentleman?

We may trace these concerns about inequality back to the Greek and Roman philosophers and moralists. But what is remarkable is that this apparently European tradition of socialism is taken up by vast populations in Asia, in China, Vietnam, and elsewhere, where a deliberate choice was made for the collectivist solution. Why? Not because of any appeal to European tradition but because of an inevitable conflict in those societies between the market and the non-market, between family and the political, between individual and collectivist, and between differentiation and equality. As a result, despite the supposed differences in the relationship between the continents, between East and West, of family and property, in collectivist and individualist backgrounds, and of ideological and literary traditions in East and West, a significant part of these huge regions opted for similar policies formerly developed in Western Europe and later applied in the Soviet Union and neighboring countries.

Regardless of the differences between the political regimes and between the explicit ideologies emphasizing the collective as against the individual, there seems to have been little difference in demographic variables, though clearly there was at the level of domestic organization, in particular of inheritance (which is everywhere, as we have seen, virtually restricted to a 'familial' range of kin). That is a remarkable fact, but of course the collectivity in question in capitalist, 'individualist' regions is not the family, except at the level of the overall economy, where bureaucratic values are often seen to conflict with familial interests. It is rather collectivist, socialist regimes that seek to modify the collectivism of the family. For them the relevant collectivity is otherwise the collectivity of the work group or the nation-state. In virtually no industrial society, whether capitalist or not, do the interests of

families lie in the augmentation of the work force but, more frequently, in the limitation of numbers of offspring, in order to maintain their own status and that of the children they have. In the Western socialist regimes, the control of population took place "naturally" as the result of the encouragement of women's work and the fact that in a low-wage, consumer-oriented economy a couple required two wages (or labor contributions) to maintain their standard of living. That was also true of higher-wage capitalist regimes where couples wanted to maintain their freedom of movement as well as the standard of life of themselves and their small holding of children. In the East, control took a more proactive form, above all in the one-child policies of China and in the short-lived campaign of democratically socialist India. By and large, collectivist regimes have attempted greater control than have individualistic ones, and as a possible result growth has been more limited. However, in capitalist regimes it is not at all clear that government policy has greatly influenced growth or control.

Let me add a point of clarification since I don't want to be misunderstood. Field-working anthropologists have traditionally been concerned with small rural communities, which has been one of their strengths. But it is at the same time one of their weaknesses. Reindeer herders are a fascinating subject for research, but they are hardly central to the main problem of comparison between East and West. One core problem of social anthropology is how to combine fieldwork studies (ethnology) with what I call comparative sociology. We must not let ourselves become specialists only of the margins.

In any case, I repeat that I am not mainly concerned here with the margins but with general similarities and differences in the relations between kinship and property, partly for Eurasia but also for East and West Europe – that is, between what were formerly permanent socialist and capitalist (or better electoral) regimes. My problem is that in both cases the demographic and family data, whatever the explicit property arrangements, seem to be much more similar than might be expected (and that many theories would predict). Increasingly, we find widespread changes in these spheres throughout the world, leading to a measure of convergence, and it is to that trend my attempt at explanation is directed.

There is another obvious comment. What you are looking at here, in Europe and in Asiatic Russia, are described as post-socialist societies. Inevitably, the data collected now look back critically on the earlier regime partly because that is what they think Western observers expect. Secondly, Western observers have their own triumphalism about freedom, capitalism, and their related ideologies. But socialism had its own spiritual, ideological dimension, not altogether unrelated (as my title waywardly suggests) to earlier

sorcery, at least in the egalitarian society where I worked in northern Ghana, which was often directed at people who were out of line: potential kulaks. Socialism is a kind of antidote, the egalitarian solution. I want to suggest that these two dimensions of egalitarianism and the promotion of self and family are always with us, and hence we may anticipate some continuing oscillation between, say, Thatcher and Blair and their respective ideologies.

In conclusion, I would suggest that the problem of East-West differences at the level of property and the family – whether between Europe and Asia or between capitalist and socialist regimes, specifically between West and East Germany – has to be seen in the context of these wider similarities, these global trends, which mean that in certain major respects (for example, the demographic ones) parallel trends apply overall. That is true of the demographic transition. It used to be seen as a purely European phenomenon linked to Malthusian principles. But it has been manifesting itself on a worldwide basis, even under different political, religious, familial, and economic regimes, providing substantial reasons to rethink the causal chain.[4]

Acknowledgements

This is the text of the 'keynote' lecture given at the opening of the conference described in the preface, the first anthropological address of any kind to be made in the new permanent building of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. The choice was doubly appropriate for, in addition to his personal contributions to the themes of this meeting, Jack Goody served for many years as an Adviser to the Max Planck Society in ist deliberations over how best to launch a new Institute in the fields of social anthropology.

[4] See Reher 2001.

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Chris Hann and the "Property Relations" Group

The Postsocialist Agrarian Question

Property Relations and the Rural Condition

"... anthropology needs a broader vision. It needs to shake off its strong association with the primitive and the exotic and become genuinely global in its comparisons. From this perspective, more sustained attention to Eurasia and a renewed focus on its underlying unity might launch the transformation of our parochial scholarly traditions into a mature cosmopolitan science."

– Chris Hann, in his preface to this series

This is an age of neo-liberalism, in which the advantages and virtues of private property are often taken for granted. Postsocialist governments have privatized and broken up state farms and socialist cooperatives. However, economic outcomes and the social insecurity now experienced by many rural inhabitants highlight the need for a broader anthropological analysis of property relations, which goes beyond changes in legal form. A century after Kautsky addressed 'The Agrarian Question' in Germany, it is therefore necessary to address a postsocialist Agrarian Question throughout Central and Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and China.

The studies collected here derive from the first cycle of projects at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology. They are prefaced by a substantial Introduction by Chris Hann, a Founding Director of the Institute.

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Halle Studies in the Anthropology of Eurasia

vol. 1, 2003, 488 pp, 30,90 €, pb., ISBN 3-8258-6532-0

LIT Verlag Münster – Hamburg – Berlin – London

Grevener Str./Fresnostr. 2 48159 Münster

Tel.: 0251 – 23 50 91 – Fax: 0251 – 23 19 72

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Market, Culture and Society

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Heiko Schrader
Changing Financial Landscapes in India and Indonesia
Sociological Aspects of Monetization and Market Integration
Heiko Schrader is an economist and sociologist. His present position is Reader in Economic Sociology and Social Anthropology at the Sociology of Development Research Centre, University of Bielefeld. He wrote his Ph. D. thesis and a book on traditional and contemporary trading patterns in the Nepal Himalayas and beyond. Furthermore, he edited a book, together with Hans-Dieter Evers, on "The Moral Economy of Trade – Ethnicity and Developing Markets". This book is the outcome of a five-year research project on the history of finance in India and Indonesia that he completed with his Habilitation at the Faculty of Sociology, University of Bielefeld. Presently the author is concerned with the study of business ethics in Southeast Asia.
Copublished with St. Martin's Press, New York
Bd. 2, 1997, 400 S., 24,90 €, br., ISBN 3-8258-2641-4

Han-pi Chang
Taiwan: Community of Fate and Cultural Globalization
Bd. 3, 1997, 296 S., 25,90 €, br., ISBN 3-8258-3559-6

Detlev Holloh
Microfinance in Indonesia
Between state, market and self-organization
In countries such as Indonesia, where access to formal finance by small farmers and microentrepreneurs is limited, self-help groups are important providers of financial services. In light of state restrictions imposed on the independent organization of society, self-help groups are also important elements of the 'third sector' of societal self-organization, through which their members improve their participation in development. The double character of these groups as self-help organizations and financial institutions has evoked the strategy of *Linking Banks and Self-Help Groups*. This approach has been implemented in Indonesia in order to establish business relationships between commercial banks, rural banks, non-government organizations and self-help groups. Access to outside credit increases the service capacity of financial self- help groups. Substituting outside debt for internal savings, however, undermines the groups' self-reliance and financial health. In contrast to the common assumption that peer monitoring makes self-help groups good borrowers, the study suggests that unprecedented amounts of outside credit may threaten the groups' viability both as financial institutions and self-help organizations. The relation between self-finance and outside credit is seen as the core of the groups' institutional development and viability and, therefore, becomes a major theme of the study. The groups used different self-finance models, which predicated the impact of outside credit on their financial development. Development agencies are called upon to respect the importance and autonomy of financial self-help groups as self-organized providers of financial services. Objectives such as poverty alleviation and microenterprise development cannot justify interventions which endanger the institutional viability of financial self-help groups. Microfinance strategies should strengthen internal and voluntary savings mobilization before opening up access to outside credit. Savings mobilization is the major precondition for a healthy and sustainable development of financial self-help groups. The limited prospects of transforming self-help groups into competitive savings-mobilizing financial institutions show that microfinance strategies have to go beyond the group approach and have to emphasize the building of viable microfinance institutions, which apply sound practices and provide sustainable services.
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– Chris Hann, in his Preface to this series

Distinct Inheritances
Property, Family and Community in a Changing Europe

Questions about the respective roles of private and state property have been at the center of European political life for the whole of the past century. Much less publicity has been given to the ways in which rights to property are transmitted over time and how different inheritance traditions have affected European societies. The chapters in this book draw on historical and anthropological research to show how inheritance practices connect the intimate organisation of domestic life with questions of economic development, political structure and religious belief.

The book traces the story from the coming of Christianity, through the imposition and dissolution of different forms of feudalism, to the development of the modern economy. Several chapters deal with the impact of communism and its collapse – and demonstrate how ideas about the inheritance of property and status are continuing to shape, and be shaped by, economic and social changes in a continent that is moving beyond the ideological dichotomies of the Cold War.

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ISBN 3-8258-7334-x
9 873825 873347