

Finding 'Ie' in Western Society :  
Historical empirical study  
for the paralleling and contrasting  
between Japan and Europe

Motoyasu Takahashi, ed.

Department of Social Science  
Faculty of Law and Letters  
Ehime University  
(愛媛大学法文学部総合政策学科)

**Finding 'Ie' in Western Society :  
Historical empirical study  
for the paralleling and contrasting  
between Japan and Europe**

**Motoyasu Takahashi, ed.**

**Department of Social Science  
Faculty of Law and Letters  
Ehime University**

(愛媛大学法文学部総合政策学科)

# Summary

## 1. Some comments for the comparative study of the *ie*

.....Hiroshi Hasebe

This paper aimed to define the *ie* that had been a specifically Japanese family group in the family researches in Japan. The Japanese *ie* family group has values that lead it to inherit and pass on its family business, family assets, family name, and family status in perpetuity. In addition, the legitimate lineal family of the Japanese *ie* is important as it has the responsibility for that maintenance, and to inherit and pass them on, and other collateral families or nonrelative (non-consanguineal) families contribute to the *ie*, and are made into branch families or expelled to the outside depending on the economic situation. When they formed a branch family and remained within the village, they would form a *dōzokudan* style family union according to their genealogical relationships. In addition, in order to maintain their economic lives related to production and consumption, they would form family unions for each function with other families as needed, and share labour, which had an important meaning in the family unions. The general social aspect of this sort of *ie* was the economic one of myriad family businesses that were the principal economic activity in both urban and rural areas throughout Japan from the pre-industrial Tokugawa period to the industrialization of the late 1880s to late 1910s (Meiji period). The family groups “garbed (Japanese-style) in the *ie*” controlled the base layers of society both deeply and broadly. With these characteristics of the Japanese *ie* as predicates, we believe we can reconsider the various “household families” that have been analysed in the various regions of pre-industrial Europe, and make some new discoveries by comparing these countries. In fact, family household groups with the same characteristics as the Japanese *ie* have been confirmed in regions in Western Europe, and by showing the mutual family relationships and community relationships in those regions we hope to be able to shed some light on some unexpected aspects of pre-modern or early-modern society.

## 2. Rethinking theories and realities of the 'ie' in Japan

.....Shoko Hirai

In this paper we would like to recast ie studies for comparative research, rethinking the theories and realities of the ie in Japan. Demographers and family historians generally treat the Japanese ie as a typical stem family, but not all sociologists in Japan consider the ie as a stem family. Rather they see the ie as a social unit or as a set of reciprocal relationships between "social parents" and "social children". We have tacitly used ideas or concepts drawn from the realities in Europe. In other words comparative studies are carried out based on a framework created by European realities.

In this paper, a new framework, based on Japanese realities, will be presented.

For that purpose, firstly we shall present the discussion points in the context of general "stem family" studies after confirming the definition of the stem family. Next, some theories of Japanese ie studies will be introduced and some ideas or concepts drawn from Japanese ie theories are proposed for comparative studies. Lastly, using these new concepts, we will analyze the realities in Japan and demonstrate the possibilities of new concepts or new perspectives overview the comparative studies on stem family.

## 3. Family Name and Family Continuity: in the context of Kin Relationships in Kami-shiojiri, Nagano, Japan

.....Motoyasu Takahashi

This paper shows the relationships between family names and inheritance in the context of kin relationships in an early modern Japanese village. Family name is one of the three main aspects of the Japanese 'ie' system, which acts as a business entity with multiple functions and features.

In Kami-shiojiri, the family branch's name, or the kamei, gradually appeared after the mideighteenth century, as the 'ie' became established. It happened when there was an increase in the number of stemming branches, and this was true up until the Meiji period when the ancient family group name, or the myohji became compulsory for the whole nation under the Meiji government. The period of the appearance of 'ie' and kamei coincides with the multiplication of stemming branches. The period also experienced

the clarification of the status of 4th cousins and a movement away from the more ambiguous and broader definition which included groups of 5th and 6th degree kin relatives who cooperated in doing the same tasks. A much stricter definition of what a cousin was reflects the multiplication of family branches, that is, the formation of more 'ie' with the same family group name. Such ies were more willing to draw their own family trees. Bunke, or a stemming branch from the main family, one of the paradigms of Japanese society, which did not exist as a system in England, still remains an important practice worth studying. Although this paper provides only a preparation for the parallel and contrast studies, understanding the succession of one generation by another and also the social and economic backgrounds which emerged from the village family tree complex would be fruitful areas for systematic analysis and synthesis from the dual perspective.

4. The House System in the Pyrenees Traditions and practices since the Modern Era .....Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga

The economic viability of Pyrenean houses depended upon the house system, a family system which imposed single inheritance or the transmission of all family assets to one child. These regulations were outlined in Ancient Customs, whose main goal was to perpetuate the family, its line and its blood by transmitting the house intact to one child from one generation to the next. The Customs treated individuals unequally, yet all children, whether they were heirs or excluded, were secured well-being. By implementing the customs, families thus provided for all the children and protected the house. In 1804, the French state wished to end these unequal practices. With the Civil Code, it imposed equal treatment between all siblings, all of whom being entitled to an equal share of family assets. In the process it abolished all customs and threatened the house system.

Despite the new law, though, families chose to perpetuate the customs, transmitting most of the assets to one child and keeping the house together.

They elaborated new strategies to circumvent the new law and to perpetuate single inheritance. These new strategies however were more unequal and gender-differentiated than in the past. Clearly

with the Civil Code, the French state failed to impose strict equality and more so between men and women.

5. Opportunity or Constraint ? Partible Inheritance, Family Property and Household Structure in Southwest Germany – Evidence from Inventories .....Christina Janine Maegraith

The dominant inheritance system in the southwest German Duchy of Württemberg was partible inheritance. Partible inheritance is defined as an inheritance system in which real estate and movables are divided up equally between all heirs, male and female. In Württemberg historiography partible inheritance is often viewed critically and made responsible for unlimited division of land and farms. But did this inheritance system always have negative consequences? Or did equal property transmission create opportunities for the heirs? Studying personal inventories of Wildberg und Auingen from the 17th to the early 19th century brought to light numerous individual strategies in which people found ways to circumvent the economic “irrationalities” of inheritance divisions. Especially when looking at land and buildings the question of increased fragmentation and its consequences has to be re-addressed. This paper therefore adopts a more contextualized approach, in order to ask whether this apparent constraint did not also contain opportunities.

6. Limitations on the role of British households as economic units .....Richard Wall

Households are often perceived as having both residential and income pooling functions. These claims are reassessed in this paper using evidence on households in the British past derived from detailed family budgets, information on the economic circumstances of persons in receipt of poor relief and enumerations of local populations. It is argued that the income of household members was not always shared out equitably with wage earning children using a proportion of their earnings for their own needs. Evidence that wives ate less well than their husbands is also discussed. In later sections of the paper consideration is given to the economic and cultural forces that helped shape household patterns and how these patterns have been interpreted by residents at the time, their contemporaries

and later commentators. It is argued that inequity in the distribution of the household's resources and the extent of assistance provided from outside the household make it unwise for historians to rely solely on the occupation of the household head to determine the social position of the household let alone those of all its members.

7. The role of family earnings in the English Industrious Revolution 1650–1780.....Craig Muldrew

This paper argues that in order to understand changes in the living standards of labouring families over time, as well as patterns of work, it is necessary to consider the work and earnings of all family members, including children, in detail. Certainly by the time David Davies and Frederick Eden came to write about the poverty caused by the great inflation in food prices after 1780, their key analytical tool was the family budget. They were aware that before the rise in prices, and also of fertility, the availability of work in the cloth industry, or in projects of agricultural improvement had led to increased earnings through family work. Here I will demonstrate how family earnings increased in the period after 1660, as both agricultural and industrial production increased, showing how important it is to go beyond simply measuring wage earnings. Agricultural historians have debated when crop yields went up, but certainly by 1700 England was producing enough grain to start exporting a surplus to the continent in most years once population stabilised. The increased availability of food energy produced by agriculture also led to an increased number of people being able to work in non-primary sectors of the economy. E. A. Wrigley has estimated that the percentage of the population engaged in primary agricultural production fell from 76% in 1520 to only 36% by 1801. In absolute terms this meant that the population engaged in agriculture in 1800 was about 3,140,000 compared to 2,870,000 in 1600 even though the amount of land under cultivation had increased considerably and crop yields were much higher. In addition the cloth industry grew in the period under consideration providing employment. There was a tremendous increase in the demand for labour in this period, much of which was met by the employment of women and children.

8. Historical Perspectives on widows, their children and survival strategies in Northern Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century

.....Beatrice Moring

In this presentation the composition of the households of widows in various locations in the Nordic countries in the past will be analyzed. The aim is to determine the level of co-residence and co-operation with family members who could make a contribution to the family economy. The issue of the number of dependants will also be addressed and the options for widows of carving out a reasonable existence for themselves and their children. Some pros and cons will be put forward as to the advantages of a traditional agrarian framework and the male bread-winner system.

## Preface

This project, 'Finding 'Ie' in Western Society : A Historical empirical study for the paralleling and contrasting of Japan and Europe' has not been completed yet, or more precisely is still developing. The next phase of the project is due to start imminently and will also include Italian and Czech regions and focus on the consumption economy of *ies*-families-households-ies in the context of communities and regions. In this connection I thought the following collection of articles published so far in this area would be useful. In future I would like to re-publish these with a full introduction based on recent discussions held at various international symposiums listed below which I myself have not yet fully digested.

This time, for an easy overview of the contents of the articles, I have compiled a brief introduction and summary at the beginning of the volume. Indices are not included, partly due to time constraints, but mainly due to a difficulty in reaching consensus on the meaning of the terms, as well as the breadth of the fields. After digestion of the recent discussions and materials, I will also later compile an appropriate index. This time, at least for the relatively unfamiliar Japanese terms for English readers, I have added a glossary at the end of the introduction.

2008 International Seminar at Ehime University (Matsuyama) and Kyoto Sangyo University (Kyoto), Japan (23<sup>rd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2008)

- Richard Wall, 'Limitations on the role of British households as economic units' (Paper 6 : *International Comparative Studies*, 5, 2009)
- Beatrice Moring, 'Historical Perspectives on widows, their children and survival strategies in Northern Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century' (Paper 8 : *International Comparative Studies*, 4, 2008)

2009 HPSS Seminars Lent Term 2008/9 The Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge, U.K. (16<sup>th</sup> February, 2009)  
'Households and property transmission in the context of village communities in Europe'

*Preface*

- Motoyasu Takahashi, 'Family name and family continuity : in the context of kin relationships in Kami-shijojiri, Nagano, Japan' (Paper 3)

2011 International Symposium at Tokyo, Kyoto and Ehime (21<sup>st</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2011)

- Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga, 'The House system in the Pyrenees traditions and practices since the Modern Era' (Paper 4)
- Christiana Janine Maegraith, 'Opportunity or constraint ? partible inheritance, family property and household structure in Southwest Germany ? evidence from inventories' (Paper 5 : *International Comparative Studies*, 8, 2012)
- Craig Muldrew, 'The role of family earnings in the English Industrious Revolution 1650-1780' (Paper 7)

2012 International Symposium at Cambridge University and Münster University (20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2012)

- Shoko Hirai, 'Rethinking Theories and Realities of the 'Ie' in Japan' (Paper 2)
- Hiroshi Hasebe, 'Some comments for the comparative study of the Ie from an economic history perspective' (Paper 1)

## *Acknowledgement*

I thank my university, faculty and department which funded the publication of this volume as a series of Supplements of Ehime University Economics Society. In particular, I should show my gratitude to all the members of the International Comparative Studies Society.

This volume evolved from the 2010-2 Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research B : Oversea academic reserach by Motoyasu Takahashi, 'Finding 'Ie' in Western Society : A Historical empirical study for the paralleling and contrasting of Japan and Europe' (Ref. No. 22402027) as well as 2010-2 Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research B : General by Motoyasu Takahashi, 'Genealogy of Servants in the Transition to the Market Economy: the comparative study of the early modern labour market in the rural areas in Japan and England' (Ref. No. 22330104).

March, 2013  
Matsuyama, Ehime

Motoyasu Takahashi

*The list of the contributors*

Motoyasu Takahashi, Ph. D., Faculty of Law and Letters, Ehime University, Japan

Hiroshi Hasebe, Ph. D., Graduate School of Economics and Management, Tohoku University, Japan

Shoko Hirai, Ph. D., Graduate School of Humanities, Kobe University, Japan

Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga, Ph. D., Universite de Cergy-Pontoise, France

Christina Janine Maegraith, Ph. D., Faculty of Economics, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

Richard Wall (passed away in 2011), United Kingdom

Craig Muldrew, Ph. D., Faculty of History, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

Beatrice Moring, Ph. D., University of Essex, United Kingdom

# Contents

## Summary

*Preface*

*Acknowledgement*

*The list of the contributors*

## Contents

Introduction	Motoyasu Takahashi	1
1	Some comments for the comparative study of the <i>Ie</i> .....	Hiroshi Hasebe 9
2	Rethinking theories and realities of the 'Ie' in Japan .....	Shoko Hirai 29
3	Family Name and Family Continuity : in the context of Kin Relationships in Kami-shiojiri, Nagano, Japan .....	Motoyasu Takahashi 63
4	The House System in the Pyrenees Traditions and practices since the Modern Era .....	Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga 95
5	Opportunity or Constraint ? Partible Inheritance, Family Property and Household Structure in Southwest Germany – Evidence from Inventories .....	Christina Janine Maegraith 133
6	Limitations on the role of British households as economic units .....	Richard Wall 163
7	The role of family earnings in the English Industrious Revolution 1650–1780 .....	Craig Muldrew 199
8	Historical Perspectives on widows, their children and survival strategies in Northern Europe in the 18 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup> century .....	Beatrice Moring 215

# Introduction

Motoyasu Takahashi

## **Purpose of the Research (Outline)**

This is the development of the Exploratory Research 'Finding 'Ie' in Western Society', and aims to prove how a family-household system came into being and what physical form it took in the regions of Japan and Europe in the period of the transition to the Market economy. This research group intends to analyse and compare the transformation of the village society in response to the transition to the market economy, and to comparatively research the complicated process of the appearance of the modern market economy society which cannot be understood simply by examining the recent theories about peasant life. This project is going to 1) reorganize the literature of 'Ie' studies in Japan which are now in chaos in several academic areas including economic history and sociology, 2) historically re-extract family and household in Japan and Europe in the transition to the market economy, setting axes of lineal family, farming organism and housing for the parallel and contrast, 3) reconstruct the process by which the market economy developed and established itself in village society by studying 'Ie'.

## **① Scientific background for the research**

### **The process of getting the idea for this research and the results of studies done so far**

This is, basically the development of the Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research: Exploratory Research 'Finding 'Ie' in Western Society' (2007-2008). This previous project confirms that it is the Japanese 'Ie' which is responsible for succession of business, property and name and that it has a verifiable existence and is not an invention. In addition, by examining the general factors of family or household, that is, the lineal family, farming organism and housing, we see that northern Europe, central Europe and southern Europe have the equivalent of Japanese 'Ie' ('Grand House').

Moreover, even in north western Europe, in particular England, where the factors of 'ie' have been assumed to be relatively weaker, it has been found that the 'family land' was the symbol of family continuum (the counter part of the Japanese 'Ie'), at least up until the early modern period. The research has further clarified that the kin groups which sustain and support the family continuum are not limited within the boundaries of a single village or parish but extend into neighbouring areas.

Therefore, in the previous Exploratory Research, the applicant found that as a result of cooperation between Japanese and European researchers the idea of 'finding Ie' in Europe is not as unlikely as it may sound. Nevertheless, the fact that a Japanese ie was often a family business makes them unique from the viewpoint of economic history. The fact that they were effectively management organisms also makes 'Ie' unique. On this point, there have been long discussions, and the results of these discussions still require further reorganisation and examination. Effective use of the rich results of European family histories, and demonstrative comparison in broader perspectives would lead to a solution. So, we re-read re-examine the peasant economy in terms of the 'Ie'.

### **Domestic and Oversea Trend of the research in connection with this study and the position**

This study could be the next generation's empirical research carried out under the auspices of the Eurasia Project (the representative is A. Hayami) and be important in the history of research. This research project is to conduct international comparative research into family and kin relationship groups and how they responded to the transition to the market economy, and this can be done from the original viewpoint of building a bridge between demographic history and economic history by means of a new focus on the 'Ie'.

When we consider how family and kin relationships have been examined in Europe we find that there are various approaches. However, the more varied the studies become, the more fragmentary: as the accumulation of studies by the mecca of historical demography, the Cambridge Group for the study of history of Population and Social Structure in England and the *Annales*

studies in France show. Furthermore, the 'International Integrated Micro Data Series' Project (the representative : S. Ruggles) which fundamentally reexamines the kinship relationships on a worldwide scale is also in progress. However, how to build bridges across the gaps that are the result of the fragmentation of the studies is a problem that has not been solved yet. Therefore, there are still few examinations of the communality of social and economic life or the multiplicity of families and kin groups. Japanese 'Ie' studies face this problem, too. Because so far, although in the discussion of theories on peasant life, 'Ie' has been treated as the concrete existing form of peasant farming, the relationships with the village society and the multiple communalities have been almost completely omitted.

Moreover, looking at things from the global viewpoint, in the field of Development Economics, family and household is the current important issue. The newly generated research approach in Europe might indicate a clue to how these issues can be resolved. On the other hand, the factors which are recognized as 'Ie' in Japan have not been properly treated, due to the lack of widespread recognition. In the matter of inheritance, the whole issue of what constitutes 'the family land' should be explained well by shedding light on the Japanese 'Ie'. In Japan, the scholars such as Kizaemon Aruga and Kichiji Nakamura have published the demonstrative monograph researches on 'Ie' located in the village societies. Yet, after a half century there are few translations of this work, not even brief introductions. Even now, a Japanese monograph on Japanese 'Ie' is still needed. This research project will give an opportunity for these classics to be introduced and translated using the international common historical glossary as set out below.

**② What issues will be investigated and how much can be achieved during the research period ?**

This research project carries out a comparison and analysis focusing on the 'Ie' as the fundamental layer of the village society responding to the emergence of the market economy in Japan and Europe. In the Exploratory Research mentioned above we confirmed that through cooperation and collaboration between Japan and Europe, 'finding Ie' is a viable proposition if we focus on the

following areas-genealogical relationships, farming organism and houses. Based on this, the current research project aims to carry out comparative research into the process by which the modern market economy society emerged.

Therefore, this research is going to 1) reorganize the literature of 'ie' studies in Japan which are now in chaos in several academic areas including economic history and sociology, 2) historically re-extract family and household in Japan and Europe during the period in which the market economy was established and to do this by setting axes of lineal family, farming organism and housing for the purposes of paralleling and contrasting, 3) build up a picture of how the market economy of village society developed through examining the 'ie'.

The research field is to be both Japanese and English villages whose social and economic history data have been established: Kami-shiojiiri, Ueda, Nagano and Willingham, Cambs. Added to this will be studies on north-western and east Germany, and on Czech villages where it is assumed that there will be little difficulty in obtaining materials of the same quality as that which we have for the Japanese and English villages: Nieder Sachsen and west Shresvich-Holstein and so on. Moreover, there will also be research findings for Northern France (Champagne and its surrounding districts), southern France (Pyrenees districts) and the Swedish mid-east Usteljutoland area. The earlier studies are used in these cases.

### ③ **Scientific characteristics and expected achievements and significance of the research in the area**

It should be emphasised that this international comparative research is done by the 'parallel and contrast' study approach. This approach means firstly to recognize the historical originality of each object and find the common, similar and distinctive points, not to find the different characteristics. This approach is, above all, based on the dialogues and communications between the researchers and their own cultures whose countries, backgrounds and histories are different, as is the basis of this study. With such premise, we can discuss 'ie' or family continuum.

Furthermore, three methods adopted here have academic characteristics.

(1) ***Constructing a Japanese and European high-level integrated genealogical database***

Based on the already established Japanese and English social and economic history data base (including Religious Faith Registers DB, historical documents image DB, wills DB etc.), newly acquired village historical materials and housing visual images we are able to construct a high-level integrated genealogical database. Employing the network database (e.g. GEDCOM etc.), we can construct a similar integrated database for continental Europe.

(2) ***Sharing the historical terms on family and household : 'Ie' glossary***

This will be done Mainly in English, setting up the historical glossary for 'Ie' or family and household on the web. This glossary grows as a result of discussion and takes in the historical context and genealogy. This glossary would be useful in facilitating this project and deepening the communication between different cultures. In reality, the current research group has already employed the glossary at international conferences and seminars in the form of an appendix for the papers, and the results have been well-received. The contents can be renewed at any time.

(3) ***The field research for the collection and examination of historical information on Housing***

In the process of the Exploratory Research mentioned above, the need to take into account housing and consider it to be one of the components of 'Ie' or family continuum, as it is an indispensable part of the family business. Therefore, M. Morris will participate in this project. As a specialist in the history of vernacular building history for both Japan and England as well as being familiar with folk buildings in continental Europe, Morris will organise the team responsible for examining English vernacular buildings for this project.

By carrying out this project, it may become much easier to discover the common factors shared by Japan and Europe relating to family or household systems with each placed in its own historical context. All This means that we will be making family history part of economic history, and demographic history, and, thereby making history truly interdisciplinary. This also means the practice of international social science with Japan as a starting

point.

### **Glossary**

*bunke* : family branch activities. The bequest of a certain amount of property or the parts of family business by the children who are not entitled to inherit whole parts of family name, property and business before the current household head's death, in order to make them independent. This also serves to spare the ie's property for non-heir-children and make and new Ies for them. Therefore bunke has two functions, those of generation replacement and continuity.

*dai-kazoku-seido* : extended family or large and joint family system in the pre modern Japan

Edo period (1603-1868) : early modern period

*hokonin* : servant

*hokonin-bunke* : servant bunke.

*honke* : the main household. the head of a household and his successor reside in this honke , and married younger sons usually build new homes apart, creating bunke (branch household). This relationship also used to describe certain fictive kinship relationships in Japanese society. Even when the establishment of the bunke occurred long ago and actual kinship is unclear, as long as both parties recognise a relationship, this honke-bunke relation continues.

*ie* : a traditional primary unit of social and economic organisation. Although it is often translated as 'family', the term seems to be closer to 'household'. This ie is seen as a continuum sustained by the principle of maintaining its name, property and business from the past, through the present, to the future. The members come and go through birth, marriage and death but the ie persists.

*kacho* or *kosyu* : the head or representative of the ie. The main role of kacho was to manage well and sustain and develop the family business and property inherited from his ancestors and to be passed on to his successor. The system of succession for the kacho was

basically primogeniture, but any male child, related or not, could be the successor as a legally adopted son (yoshi) or adopted son-in-law (muko-yoshi). The succession of ie is more important than the individual genealogical relationship. So, the range of ie is not limited to the kinship group (shinzoku). The usage of kinship terms (extending to first cousins) do not differentiate cognates (relative by blood) and affines (relatives by marriage). Along the same line, the members consider their servants, who live together with them, as their kin members and treated them as such.

*mura* : (village). Smallest unit of local government or the basic administrative unit ; also the 'natural' village, specifically the self-contained agricultural community.

*mura-uke* : this system is one of the contract systems that the village-officials had for collecting land tax from the villagers for lord.

*nago* : low-status peasants dependent on specific landowners. During the medieval period (mid-12th-16th centuries), nago were villain-like peasants who worked for such local landholders as myoshu. During the Edo period they were tenant cultivators in hereditary subordination to landowners called honbyakusho, in return for their labour, nago received use of land, separate dwellings, and common village property.

*nago no buyaku* : the corvee of dependent peasant (villain ?)

*oya* or *oyakata* : Parent. *ko* or *kokata* : child.

*Shumon-Aratame* : the sect-investigation. This was carried out in Tokugawa Japan to suppress Christians, from 166 (Kanbun 5th), by the ordinance of Tokugawa-Shogunate. The records of the investigations are called 'Shumon-Ninbetsu-Aratame-Cho'.

*Shumon Aratame-cho* : religious faith registers.

*Tokugawa Japan* : all areas that were under the sovereignty of Tokugawa Shogunate which covered almost all of Japan today. It

can be divided into two categories according to the patterns of rule. One is Tokugawa demesne (Bakufu-Ryo), or the land under the direct rule of Tokugawa-Shogunate. The other is Han-Ryo, or the land of which Tokugawa-Shogunate delegated the rule to Han. It resembles to (but is not the same as) western feudal society.

*yoshi* : a legally adopted son. *muko-yoshi* : an adopted son-in-law

# Some comments for the comparative study of the *Ie*

Hiroshi Hasebe

## 1. Position of the Problem

### 1-1. What is the *ie* ?

In sociological and historical research in Japan, there is the idea that the *ie* is a specifically Japanese family group, and this idea has guided the direction of research. The Japanese *ie* family group has been described in detail thanks to a large number of case studies : it has values that seek the maintenance of the life for its members and the prosperity of the overall unit, as well as cultural conventions that seek to sustain in perpetuity its family business (*kagyō*), family property (*kasan*), family name (*kamei*), and social status of family (*kakaku*). Each generation of heirs puts a remarkable amount of effort and passion into protecting the members of the *ie* they inherited from their forebears and their lives, working for the prosperity of the overall unit, and passing that on in turn to their own heirs, do in whatever they could to ensure this.<sup>1</sup> When examined from an economics history perspective, the general social aspect of this sort of *ie* was the economic one of myriad family businesses, great and small, that were the principal economic activity in both urban and

---

<sup>1</sup> This sort of *ie* is discussed, with particular reference to the shape of inheritance over multiple generations for family business, family property, and family name, in for example Hasebe Hiroshi, “Family Succession and Inheritance Strategies in the Tokugawa Japan, a case study on *Kaheiji- Sato’s IE* in the village of Kami Shiojiri” (Kinsei Nihon ni okeru *Ie no Keisho to Sōzoku*) (Kunikata Takashi, Hasebe Hiroshi, Nagano Yukiko eds., *Ie no Sonzoku Senryaku to Kekkō*, Tōsui Shobō, 2009). Note that the *ie* discussed in this article is not the *ie* system that was legally described in the Meiji Civil Code, etc., but the social entity of the *ie* that was used customarily in pre-modern societies.

rural areas throughout Japan from the pre-industrial Tokugawa period to the industrialization of the late 1880s to late 1910s (Meiji period). Incidentally, in modern Japanese literature the theme of conflict between the *ie* and the individual first appears at the beginning of the 20th century. It is true that in Japan up until then, whether as large or small farming groups in rural areas or landowners and the capitalist classes in the cities, family groups “garbed (Japanese-style) in the *ie*” controlled the base layers of society both deeply and broadly.

### 1-2. The discovery of the *ie*

In the early years of the 1870s, following the Meiji Restoration, the population of Japan was 33,000,000,<sup>2</sup> and there were a bit over 7,000,000 family groups, which were counted as households (*ko*). The first national census in Japan was held in 1920, and the family sociologist Toda Teizō has analyzed family forms based on this survey data, formulating that the main family pattern in Japan was the Western European-style nuclear family based around blood kin (consanguineous family)<sup>3</sup>. At the same time, interest in the existence of the Japanese-style family group, the *ie*, was growing among sociologists, folklorists, economists, and historians, and after the 1930s empirical study taking rural society as its field was started in earnest. A great deal of research was produced using both rural and urban societies as themes. This research provided awareness than in Japanese society, along with the *ie*, was the “*dōzoku-dan*” (“same

---

<sup>2</sup> According to Umemura Mataji et al, *Long-Term Economic Statistics 13, Regional Economic Statistics*, Table 22 (p.265), the population of Japan in 1873 was 33,010,218, and according to Table 20 (p.256) the number of households (*ko*) that same year was 7,043,770.

<sup>3</sup> Toda Teizo, *Kazoku Kōsei* (Family Structure), 1937. Today assumes the Western concept of “family” as equivalent to the blood-related family and read the “normal family” in the first National Census as “head of household, wife, their close relatives, servants, cohabitants, guests, etc.” and in particular his definition that the household was a cohabiting household that normally shared family expenses was criticized by Aruga Kizaemon and others (contained in *Kazoku to Ie, Aruga Kizaemon Chosakushu IV* [Family and *ie* : Aruga Kizaemon Collection IV]). This debate would later expand to become the famous “Aruga-Kitano Controversy” regarding the *ie* and family in Japan.

kin-group”) a union of *ie* with the same lineage, and other diverse family union social organizations. In addition, interest in the regional communities within rural society, the “*mura*” (villages), increased among many researchers. Later, after the war and until the 1970s, there was a great deal of research into the social groupings of the *ie*, the *dōzoku-dan*, and the *mura*, which produced a wealth of research findings. This was the golden age of *ie* research, as well as village society research, covering rural areas where there was large concentrations of *ie*.<sup>4</sup>

However, Japanese society was only actively discussed from the perspective of the *ie* until the early 1970s, after which interest among researchers on Japan in Japan moved swiftly away from the *ie* theory. Now, in the 21st century, looking at Japanese society with the focus on the *ie* is largely the province of historians or sociologists using a historical approach. The premise of this research lies in the major long-coming structural changes in Japanese society as the country adapts to a post-industrial society. The bulk of Japanese rural society is changing to depopulated areas known as “*genkai shūraku*” (marginal villages), and we are being warned of the dangers of extinction for regional rural societies. In parallel with these social phenomena, the *ie*-style attributes that characterized the foundation layers of Japanese society are rapidly vanishing from within that society. In fact we must acknowledge that the *ie* is no longer the characterizing symbol of Japanese society.

### 1-3. The *ie* as a historical existence

The history we covered briefly just now has formed the background to *ie* research. However, when we look at it from a historical point of view, we can see that it was relatively recently that the *ie* became widespread in Japanese society. Research from the past few years has shown that it was only in the late 18th to early 19th centuries that the family group common to most of the

---

<sup>4</sup> Survey research on the *ie* proceeded of necessity in parallel with survey research on communities such as *dōzoku-dans* and *mura*, which investigated the various social relationships of *ie*. Typical early examples of the work produced during this period are Aruga Kizaemon’s *Daikazoku Seido to Nago Seido* [Extended Family System and Nago System] (1939) and Suzuki Eitaro’s *Nihon Nōson Shakaigaku Genri* [Principles of Sociology in Japanese Rural Villages] (1940).

middle and lower classes within Japanese rural society was thought of by its members as an *ie*, and treated socially as an *ie*.<sup>5</sup> This point agrees with the economic facts that have been emphasized in recent Japanese economic history research. In other words, the Hōreki-Tenmei era (c. 1750-1790) that researchers on the history of commerce or maritime trade keep bringing up.<sup>6</sup> At this time in the 18th century, all regions of the country were being drawn into a substantial and widespread market economy thanks to rapid growth in maritime trade and commerce. This early modern market distribution, that grew by linking the three great cities of Edo, Osaka, and Kyoto (the “san-to” in Japanese) with regional cities (usually castle towns; “jōka”), spread widely during the Hōreki-Tenmei era to rural areas, converted the lives of a large number of farmers into market-oriented activities. The pattern of the myriads of middle and lower class rural family groups until that point has been unclear in the historical materials examined by historians, but during this period, and in line with the pace of economic phenomena, they start to emphasize their nature as an *ie* and subjectively declare their own existence within the rural community.

In actuality, it is thought that the *kagyō* and the *kasán*, which sought to sustain the *ie* in perpetuity, were, in most cases, generated, accumulated, and preserved through a relationship with market activities. Whether in agriculture, or in cottage industries in the farmhouse, or in local merchant activities, or even in real estate or moveable property, the ownership / accumulation of the production and wealth that sought to sustain the *ie* was itself established on the predicate of market activities. The family name

---

<sup>5</sup> Hirai Shoko, *Nihon no Kazoku to Life Course: 'ie' Seisei no Rekishi-Shakaigaku* [Japanese Families and Life Courses: Socio-history of “Ie” Creation], Minerva Shobō, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Saito Yoshiyuki, *Naikaisen to Bakuhan-sei Ichiba no Kaitai* [Inland Sea Ships and the Dissolution of the Feudal Market], Kashiwa Shobō, 1994. These facts were already noted by some historians as far back as the 1960s. For example, Nakai Nobuhiko, *Bakuhan Shakai to Shōhin Ryūtsū* [Feudal Society and Product Distribution], Hanawa Shobō, 1961, *Tenkan-ki Bakuhan-sei no Kenkyū: Hōreki-Tenmei no Keizai Seisaku to Shōhin Ryūtsū* [Research in a Period of Change for the Feudal System: Economic Policies and Product Distribution in the Hōreki-Tenmei eras], Hanawa Shobō, 1971.

(*kamei*) and family status (*kakaku*) were also simply gained as a result of the accumulation of wealth through market activities. Therefore it makes perfect sense that the reason that the period when common people started to think of their family group as an *ie* is the *Hōreki-Tenmei* era, the period when market activities were spreading out around the entire country. What we can readily suppose from this is that the traditional *ie* that makes up the foundations of Japanese society is not in fact some ancient tradition passed on from time immemorial, but in fact was generated from the second half of the 18th century, well into historical times. This sort of *ie* would, as noted earlier, undergo a sea change once the industrial age arrived in Japan and Japanese society changed to suit.<sup>7</sup> In literature we see the theme of the lash between the “individual” and the “ie,” but in fact this was completely unconnected with the changes in the nature of the *ie* society. It needs to be noted that the period that saw the start of serious research on the *ie* was also the period that saw the start of its breakdown. At the same time that people started saying that Japan was an *ie* society, it in fact was already becoming no longer so.

## 2. The *Ie* and *Dōzoku-dan* in Japan

### 2-1. Inheritance and succession of *ie*.

This section will use the classic model to discuss the basic features of what the *ie* is seen as. The authority to control and run the *ie* is termed the *katoku*, the patrimony. The present head of an *ie* inherited this *katoku* from his forebears, and must in turn pass it down to his descendents. Therefore, for the head of an *ie*, the main occupation of the *ie* that supports the family (the *kagyō*), the assets

---

<sup>7</sup> In Japanese society, the historical interpretation that the *ie* started to break down at the start of the 20th century is not necessarily accepted by all. However, among *ie* researchers, there is a broad consensus that the *ie* as a customary entity dating from the early modern period had already started to crumble considerably by the end of the Meiji period (c. 1910). For example, Matsumoto Michiharu (“*Ie* no Hendō Note [Note on *Ie* Changes],” Dōshisha University Institute for the study of Humanities and Social Sciences, *Kyōdō Kenkyū: Nihon no Ie* [Joint Research: Japanese *Ie*], Toshokankōkai, 1981) provides an far-reaching overview on the changes in the *ie*.

accumulated by the *ie* (the *kasán*), the *ie* name that carries out the tangible and intangible socio-economic functions (*kamei*), and the social status and position of the *ie* within the region or village (*kakaku*) must be increased and expanded by the head's generation, and at the same time, his role is to pass these down to the next generation.<sup>8</sup> As a result, in Japan there have been a variety of inheritance models to suit the region's socio-economic situation, customs, systems, or the *kagyō* and *kasán*.<sup>9</sup>

The blood relatives explanation, following Toda, uses consanguinity as the standard for dividing the family from non-family. However, in our understanding, the definitive division in the members of the *ie* is not whether they are related by blood or not, but rather in a clear difference in the family groups that maintain the *ie* described above between the lineal family member who becomes the head, and the collateral family members. In actuality, when there are non-blood members, such as live-in servants and the like, who are part of the *ie* family structure (in Japanese society, these are said to be “embraced”), the major division between the family members is not consanguinity but the gap between the lineal family members and others (collateral family members and non-consanguineous members). When the economic conditions for an *ie* are good, the collateral family is provided with a part of the real or moveable property, or part of the *kagyō*, and is made an independent branch house. There were also some cases in which long-serving live-in servants were also set up in their own branch family.<sup>10</sup> The union of *ie* known as a *dōzoku-dan* is simply the union of families that is

---

<sup>8</sup> In general, what determined existence for inheritance was, primarily, the family name, family business, the dependent family head (*katoku*), ancestor worship, care of family graves, position in the temple, and so on. Secondly, it was the assets and property that were seen as the family assets (*kasán*). There were both socially prescribed succession and legally prescribed inheritance, and the former often employed a system of primogeniture by the legitimate heir, whereas the latter, while the same as the former in regard to land and buildings linked to the family business, nevertheless often employed a rather freer inheritance method. Note that the contents division of inheritance and succession of the *ie* discussed in this article follow the issues raised by Takeda Nobu (Aoyama, et al, *Kōza Kazoku 5: Sōzoku to Keishō* [Lectures on the Family 5: Inheritance and Succession], Kōbundō, 1974, pp.303-319).

formed around the main house by these branch houses, whether related by ties of blood or not.<sup>11</sup> However, when economic conditions are bad, these collateral family members and non-blood related members leave the *ie* – are “thinned out” (*kuchi-herashi*) – and must leave to work in remote locations to send money to the *ie* or otherwise play their part in helping the *ie* remain in existence.

## 2-2. Independence of *ie* and *dōzoku-dan*

As noted above, we consider that the *ie*, as a mass social

---

<sup>9</sup> The inheritance pattern of an *ie* has previously been noted as having regional differences. At the least, until the 1970s, in contrast to the large families and sister inheritance system of eastern and northern Japan, western Japan was based around a separate residence retirement system, and the Kantō region contained both types (Mori Kenji, “Kita-Kantō Chihō no Ichi-sonraku ni okeru Inkyōsei to Sōzokusei [Retirement and Inheritance in a Village in the North Kanto Region],” Family History Research Committee eds, *Kazoku-shi Kenkyū 1* [Family History 1], Ōtsuki Shoten, 1980). This has already been emphasized in a number of ways, but the attempt at grasping regional features to divide Japan into east and west, not only in *ie* inheritance patterns but in housing styles or village layouts or even differences in economic development, is not in fact always something that throws existing regional differences into sharp relief. In fact, as society has, historically, always been changing, the regional differences in the modern period are not necessarily characteristics or individualities that exist unchanged throughout history. Therefore, and especially when we talk about regional differences in the *ie*, if we do not go back to the 18th century and also examine the ways in which the social structures of the *ie* and *mura* changes in line with the development of the market economy, then we will not be able to understand the original differences. Debates on the *ie* in peasant farming classes, including inheritance and succession across generations, will need to reexamined from the village history characteristics or written contents level. One minor attempt can be found in Hasebe, Takahashi, Yamauchi, *Kinsei Nihon no Chiiki Shakai to Kyōdōsei* [Regional Society and Cooperatives in Early Modern Japan], Tōsui Shobō, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Aruga Kizaemon, *Dai-kazoku Seido to Nago Seido: Nambu Ninohe-gun Ishigami-mura ni okeru* [Extended Family System and Nago System: in Ishigami Village, Nihohe County, Nambu Province], 1939.

<sup>11</sup> For the *dōzoku-dan* as a union of families, Aruga provides a great deal of thought-provoking arguments. Also see Hasumi Otohiko, “‘Ie-rengō’ no Keitai [Family Union Structure]” in Aoyama et al, eds, *Kōza Kazoku 6: Kazoku – Shinzoku – Dōzoku* [Lectures on the Family 6: Family, Relatives, Clans], Kōbundō, 1974.

phenomena, arose in many regions around Japan starting in the second half of the 18th century. Normally, for the *ie* to form an economically independent “household,” it needs to become independent as a market-friendly *kagyō*, and have accounts for the *ie*. That usually becomes standard through a “family” of a large *ie* becoming its own small *ie* after being made a branch family, and then gradually developing its own *kagyō*.<sup>12</sup>

Japan under the shoguns was an early modern society, so the market economy was based on political, economic, and legal systems that did not necessary mesh with it. Compared to the modern age, it was far harder for *kagyō* and household accounting to become independent, so people formed “family unions” (*ie-rengō*) as a way to work together to mitigate the risk of economic activities. These unions worked together in almost everything, including living and eating together, working, sharing communally, collaborating, and cooperating. When these family unions are bound in a genealogical group, they are known as a *dōzoku-dan*. Thus most families would form part of a family union, a *dōzoku-dan*, under the genealogical system.<sup>12</sup>

The *dōzoku-dan* would always have a central, core “*honke*,” or “main *ie* family,” with “*bunke*” or “branch *ie* families,” and “*bekke*,” or “separated *ie* families” arranged around its periphery in a hierarchy. Annual events would be gatherings to venerate the ancestors in rituals and share meals. Sometimes the *bunke* and the *bekke* would have their own peripheral *ie* (known as *nago* or *hikan* or a variety of other names). The *dōzoku-dan*, in this form of this sort of family union, would mutually create a variety of cooperative economic organizations, depending on the *kagyō* type, and be involved in economic activities. These activities would not be limited to agriculture or commerce, but often include mutual provision of benefits in daily consumption activities as well. The labour-intensive wet rice farming of Japan meant that at the same time as mutual provision and exchanges of labour (called “*yui*”), there were benefits in the form of clothing and food or other consumable products as

---

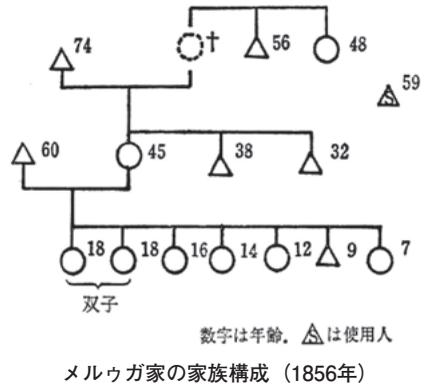
<sup>12</sup> The logic for this sort of genealogical family union is, naturally, supported by ancestor worship, and presupposed the close connections of *ie* with each other (op cit, *Kyōdō Kenkyū Nihon no Ie*).

repayment for the provision of this labour. The “overall mutual benefits relationship” (Aruga) seen in the *nago* system was simply the maintenance of production and consumption between *ie* in a *dōzoku-dan* through this form of distribution relationship.

### 2-3. On the Extended family Dogma

Aruga initially saw this sort of *dōzoku-dan* as family union to be an “extended family.” That was of course due to the strong influence on his thoughts of the “extended family” idea that was common among family researchers of his day, where in pre-modern societies the basic model for the family form was multiple couples and their consanguineal and non-consanguineal members all living together.<sup>17</sup>

In fact, we can say that there was a similar thing in the classical image of the family and household structure in pre-industrial Western Europe. For example, we might note that the stem family, as typified by the 19th century Merga farming family in the Pyrenees as depicted by Frédéric Le Play,<sup>13</sup> famous for his pioneering work in 19th century French family research, is a family union.<sup>14</sup> This sort of classical image is one shared by the world of French social history from the middle ages to the early modern period, as



<sup>13</sup> Catherine Bodard Silver’s “Introduction” to Catherine Bodard Silver, eds, trans., *Frédéric Le Play on Family, Work, and Social Change*, University of Chicago Press, 1982, provides useful views regarding Le Play’s (1806-1882) biography, thoughts, social activism, position in the history of social thought, an outline of French working-class family surveys, and the methodological characteristics of his *Monographie* as a social survey method.

<sup>14</sup> This sort of historiographical situation is explained efficiently by Ninomiya Hiroyuki in “Kaidai : Rekishi no Naka no ‘Ie’ [Outline : The ‘Ie’ in History]” *Sōsho : Rekishi wo Hiraku “Annales” Ronbunshū 2, Ie no Rekishi-Shakaigaku* [Collection : Opening up History – the Annales School Articles 2: Socio-history of the Ie], Fujiwara Shoten, 2010.

shown by Philippe Ariès.<sup>15</sup>

However, in contrast to this historical perception of pre-modern society as an “extended family,” statistical analysis of the large amounts of family data held in church registers and the like, from before statistics were regularly kept, has given rise to historical demography research that suggests a different ruling family pattern. This was spearheaded by the noted figure of Peter Laslett, leading the Cambridge School of British historical demography, who at a comparative research forum on household family at Cambridge in 1969 criticised the classical image of the “extended family” by carrying on Le Play’s family research in a critical fashion.

In his book, *The World We Have Lost : England Before the Industrial Age*,<sup>16</sup> he describes the pre-industrial rural society of England not as “extended family households” but as dominated by “simple family households” such as the nuclear family. He also noted that extended households and multi-nucleus households were very rare and only seen in the upper classes.

In it, he notes : “At that time the family was thought of not as one society only, but as three societies fused together. There was the society of man and wife, that of parents and children, and that of master and servant. The first of these was for the life of husband and of wife ; only death could put an end to their being members of each other, though this society could be and often was renewed by remarriage. The second association bound father and mother to son and daughter until the time came for the child to leave home, though he or she could return at will, at least up until marriage. But a servant did not enjoy permanent membership of the household in which he served. When a servant left, the relationship was over.”<sup>17</sup>

Laslett’s understanding of the family in early modern England

<sup>15</sup> Ariès, *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime*, Part 3

<sup>16</sup> Laslett, Peter, *The World We Have Lost : Further Explored*, 1965. His family analysis is deepened in *Household and Family in Past Time*, 1972, where he includes a look at “The traditional European household : variation by region and change over time. Four chapters written for a Japanese readership on the household as workgroup and kin group on the European Continent.”

<sup>17</sup> Laslett, *The World We Have Lost : Further Explored*, Third Edition 1983, p. 2.

placed a clear division between consanguinal and non-consanguinal family (servants). This “household family,” unlike the Japanese *ie*, did not have the cultural values of succession and inheritance of the family business, assets, name, rank, or other matters belonging to those groups. Therefore it is explained as a family group of a fundamentally different type to the *ie*. This understanding needs further examination by historians to determine if it really is correct for researching the early modern English family, but at present many family historians in England and Western Europe are working on the given assumption of Laslett and the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure.

Laslett considered the household family as a group or cohabitant group that carried out a single coherent economic activity. We can think of this as being almost the same awareness of the family as that of Toda et al, who discussed the cohabitant and consanguinal family theory noted earlier. Recent historical demography research on the family in Japan too has in actuality almost entirely replaced the understanding of the *ie* with Laslett’s “household family,” and there are many cases of starting and ending explanations of family patterns that were once seen as extended family households or complex family households as one aspect of the household cycle of stem families.<sup>18</sup> In that sense, we can say that the “extended family dogma” of Japanese family history research is heading towards rejection.

#### **2-4. The “Extended Family” and the “*Dozoku*”**

Is the “extended family” nothing more than a simple dogma? The various surveys and researches that have attempted to discover the diverse patterns of families, especially the nuclear family and the simple family household, and clarify their regional differences have certainly provided some impressive results, but could their focus on

---

<sup>18</sup> For example, see Kinoshita Futoshi, *Kindaika Izen no Nihon no Jinkō to Kazoku : Ushinwareta Sekai kara no Tegami* [Japanese Population and Families Before Modernization : Letters from a Vanished World], Minerva Press, 2002 or Okada Aoi, *Kinsei Sonraku Shakai no Ie to Setai Keishō : Kazoku Ruikai no Hendō to Kaiki* [Ie and Household Inheritance in Pre-Modern Village Society : Changes and Revolution in Family Types], Chisen Shobō, 2006.

the “extended family” family pattern perhaps be the thread that leads us to discover another, different, type of family group ?

We are assuming the Japanese *ie* as one analysis standard model and attempt to “discover” the existence of similar types in history in the periods when the market economy developed in Western Europe or the world. However, will this attempt allow us to actually contribute something new in terms of comparative research to existing researches ? Looking at it in terms of that goal raises the following problem structure. In other words, while most of the population in pre-industrial economic societies lived in rural societies, the various mutually independent “simple household families” would not have been able to engage in farming or other economic activities on their own. So in that case, would these families have had to form some sort of community ?

We can see this as two issues.

The first issue is, what sort of economic activities did these “simple household families” engage in ? Were lives such as farming done in some sort of cooperative labour, management, or use between other “simple household families” ? Or, did these “simple household families” share a mutual consumption life ? Did they form some sort of family union similar to the *ie* and *dōzoku-dan* of Japan ?<sup>19</sup>

The second issue is whether or not the distinctions seen between family members in the Japanese *ie* are also present in Western Europe. If we consider the “simple household families” in pre-industrial Western European society as appearing as an aspect of the recursive household cycle of the stem family, then the among the members of the stem family, other than the distinction between consanguineal and non-consanguineal, do we see a distinction similar to the “lineal family” and “collateral family + non-consanguineal family” ?

Are servants taken from the wide range of young people in the labour market, or are they taken from the “household family” with its various local cooperative relationships and consanguineal relationships ? This is asking whether relationships that are the same as the *dōzoku-dan* or the various “family unions” that provide mutual labour benefits are seen among the “household families.”

---

<sup>19</sup> Regrettably, Laslett does not address this issue due to the lack to research.

Focusing on this point should be significant in the sense of discovering and comparing the *ie*.

### 3. The *ie* and *Dōzoku-dan* in Japan

This next section discusses two cases of field study research that that focused on the *ie*, *dōzoku-dan*, and community in Japan.<sup>20</sup>

#### 3-1. Aruga Kizaemon (1897-1979)

Aruga carried out the first full-scale field research on the *ie* and the *dōzoku-dan* in Japan. For several years, starting in 1935, he visited Ishigami village in Ninohe County, Iwate Prefecture, and carried out a survey analysis of the *nago* system based around the wealthy land-owning Saitō Zensuke family. His findings were reported in a thick volume in 1939, and the form and structure of the Japanese *ie* he presented in them ended up defining the field for later *ie* and *dōzoku-dan* research.

Aruga laid out a family structure centred on the legitimate line, where the logic of the life unit that emphasizes whether the line for the families that made up the Japanese *ie* is legitimate rather than blood relations. The regional society of Ishigami village had the main house as the Saitōs, with collateral families and non-consanguineal (non-family) families (with servants as *nago*) separated out, forming a *dōzoku-dan*, which was the centre of activities for the regional society, led by the Saitō family. The Saitōs, who had the biggest farms in the village and were also in the lacquerware business, accepted workers from the other families in the *dōzoku-dan*, who were then fed by the Saitōs, and the annual rituals of the village were centred on the Saitō family as well. The families in the *dōzoku-dan* maintained their households by being included in the consumption and economic life of the Saitōs.

---

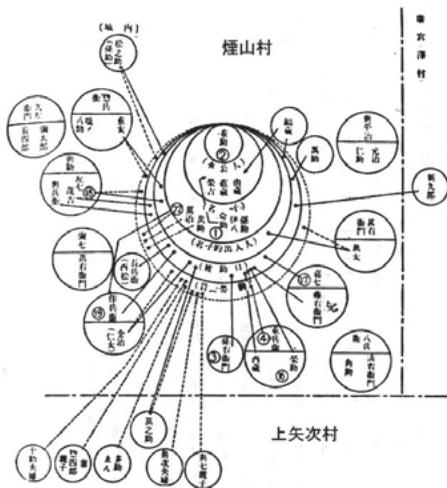
<sup>20</sup> A lot of research has examined Aruga Kizaemon and Nakamura Kichiji, but here I am going to work from Iwamoto Yoshiteru and Kunikata Keiji, eds., *ie to Kyōdōtai: Nichi-ō Hikaku no Shiten kara* [The *ie* and the Community: From a Japanese-European Comparative Perspective], Hōsei University Press, 1997.

**3-2. Field survey of Kemuyama village by the Nakamura Kichiji group**

Nakamura Kichiji (1905-1986), known for his work in agricultural administration history, carried out a field survey with young researchers starting in the early 1950s on the Takahashi family in the Matsunoki settlement of Kemuyama village, in what is now the town of Yahaba in Iwate. This history survey and research took five years, starting in 1951, and the results were published as a field survey report in 1956.<sup>21</sup> It later became the template for research on the early modern village and raised a number of key issues and points related to village community research.

This research was the first clear description of how the farming families living in rural village communities from the second half of the 18th century to the end of the 19th century formed family unions for each functional organization (labour, water rights, forestry, etc.), rather than just a union as a *dōzoku-dan* based on the main house-branch house relationship. It demonstrated how rural villages in Japan during the Tokugawa Period was certainly societies with a

村落の農業労働組織概略図 (幕末期)



cohesiveness as a level of community, but in reality, networks formed for each function – labour organizations, water rights organizations, forestry and wasteland usage organizations, land lease relationships, and life organizations – created a multi-layered and complex structure.

In addition, the complex “bundle of community organizations” with unclear outlines created around the

<sup>21</sup> Nakamura Kichiji, *Sonraku Kōzō no Shi-teki Bunseki: Iwate-ken Kemuriyama-mura* [Historical Analysis of Village Structures], Nihon Hyōron Shinbunsha, 1956 (re-issued in 1980 by Ochanomizu Shobō)

Takahashi family was not necessarily a family union that could be called a *dōzoku-dan*. The Takahashi Jyusuke family, who were the centre of the *dōzoku* known as Takahashi *Make* (Clan) as the main house, procured labour, and had mutual labour or consumption relations with families who were not in their *dōzoku*. Therefore, it was clear that the family unions conducting communal economic activities in rural society were not necessarily creating *dōzoku-dan* links as in Ishigami village. Since then, *dōzoku-dan* style family unions with a single legitimate linear line and family unions with a single economic life have been considered separately.

### **3-3. Layered structure of village-style cooperation – the Kami-Shiojiri village research group**

Following in the tradition of village field research from Aruga and Nakamura, the group composed of the academics Hasebe Hiroshi (the author), Takahashi Motoyasu, Yamauchi Futoshi, Iwama Kōki, et al has been conducting field studies in the former village of Kami-Shiojiri, now part of Ueda City, Nagano Prefecture. The research, which has been going on for two decades now, involves the digitalization of hundreds of thousands of old documents and historical materials from eight families, and creating a database from them. From this work, the group has been generating a great deal of data and results on Kami-Shiojiri from the 18th to 20th centuries, discovering the structure and changes in the *dōzoku-dan* and family unions covering 180 families within the village ; analyzing the family historical demographics ; the structure of the production and trade in silkworms, the main village industry ; the weaknesses and strengths vis-à-vis famine and disaster ; and the characteristics of its agriculture.

We have already determined that during the period from the second half of the 18th century to the end of the 19th, when Japan's market economy was forming, the various internal organizations of the village that made up the village-style community had a layered structure, as follows :

◇**Three-layered structure of organizations comprising the community in an early modern feudal village**◇

**{A} Domain rule – village administration – social life “cooperative”**

= (three top village officials – rice tax collection group – five-man group (neighbourhood relations) – village assembly – administrative social organization for maintaining the peace)

**{B} Economic “cooperatives” in economic life (production)**

= (“cooperatives” related to agriculture → labour procurement and land / water / mountain and forest maintenance and management organization)

= (“cooperative” related to market and trading activities → trading collaboration / traders association / financing association, etc.)

**{C} “Personal” “cooperatives” in *dōzoku-dan* style family union groups** = (kin / relatives / main house and branch house *dōzoku* organizations and life organizations related to ceremonial occasions)

We can explain the structure of these cooperatives within the village community as having been subsumed into the internal structures of the modern regional administration system following the Meiji Restoration, with the cooperative functions of {B} and {C} being gradually dissolved and redistributed as the market economy developed from the Hōreki-Tenmei eras in the second half of the 18th century, and being replaced by the cooperative of {A}.

When it appeared along with the market economy in the mid-18th century, the Japanese *ie* was forced to work in the bonds of the layered cooperatives of village society formed by the various family unions such as *dōzoku-dan*, along with having independence as a smallholder family group. We believe that it is only after having created a single standard model for the structures and changes that this sort of village-style cooperative and *ie* form that international comparative research into the *ie* can be productive.

#### 4. Summary and Issues

This modest article has laid out a number of facts ; to wit : the Japanese *ie* has the values that lead it to inherit and pass on its

family business, family assets, family name, and family status in perpetuity. In addition, the legitimate lineal family of the Japanese *ie* is important as it has the responsibility for that maintenance, and to inherit and pass them on, and other collateral families or non-relative (non-consanguineal) families contribute to the *ie*, and are made into branch families or expelled to the outside depending on the economic situation. When they formed a branch family and remained within the village, they would form a *dōzoku-dan* style family union according to their genealogical relationships. In addition, in order to maintain their economic lives related to production and consumption, they would form family unions for each function with other families as needed, and share labour, which had an important meaning in the family unions.

With these characteristics of the Japanese *ie* as predicates, we believe we can reconsider the various “household families” that have been analyzed in the various regions of pre-industrial Europe, and make some new discoveries by comparing these countries. In fact, family household groups with the same characteristics as the Japanese *ie* have been confirmed in regions in Western Europe, and by showing the mutual family relationships and community relationships in those regions we hope to be able to shed some light on some unexpected aspects of pre-modern or early-modern society.

## Bibliography

- Ariès, Philippe. *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime*, Éditions du Seuil, 1973.
- Aruga, Kizaemon. *Family and Ie*, Aruga Kizaemon Collection IV. *Dai-kazoku Seido to Nago Seido : Nambu Ninohe-gun Ishigami-mura ni okeru [Extended Family System and Nago System : in Ishigami Village, Ninohe County, Nambu Province]*, 1939.
- Bodard-Silver, Catherine. eds, trans., *Introduction, Frédéric Le Play on Family, Work, and Social Change*, University of Chicago Press, 1982.
- Hasebe, Hiroshi. ‘Family Succession and Inheritance Strategies in the Tokugawa Japan, a case study on Kaheiji- Sato’s IE in the village of Kami Shiojiri’, Kunikata, Keiji, Hasebe Hiroshi and Nagano, Yukiko. eds., *Ie no Sonzoku Senryaku to Kekkō [Survival Strategy of Ie and Marriage]*, Tōsui Shobō, 2009.
- Hasebe, Hiroshi, Takahashi. Motoyasu and Yamauchi, Futoshi, *Kinsei Nihon no Chiiki Shakai to Kyōdōsei [Regional Society and Cooperatives in Early Modern Japan]*, Tōsui Shobō, 2009.

- Hasumi, Otohiko. ‘*Ie-rengō*’ no Keitai’ [Family Union Structure], Aoyama et al, eds, *Kōza Kazoku 6 : Kazoku – Shinzoku – Dōzoku [Lectures on the Family 6 : Family, Relatives, Clans]*, Kōbundō, 1974.
- Hirai, Shoko. *Nihon no Kazoku to Life Course : ‘Ie’ Seisei no Rekishi-Shakaigaku [Japanese Families and Life Courses : Socio-history of “Ie” Creation]*, Minerva Shobō, 2008.
- Iwamoto, Yoshiteru and Kunikata, Keiji. eds., *Ie to Kyōdōtai : Nichi-ō Hikaku no Shiten kara [The Ie and the Community : From a Japanese-European Comparative Perspective]*, Hōsei University Press, 1997.
- Kinoshita, Futoshi. *Kindaika Izen no Nihon no Jinkō to Kazoku : Ushinawareta Sekai kara no Tegami [Japanese Population and Families Before Modernization : Letters from a Vanished World]*, Minerva Press, 2002.
- Laslett, Peter. *The World We Have Lost : England Before the Industrial Age*, London, 1965.1. *The World We Have Lost : Further Explored*, Third Edition 1983.
- Matsumoto, Michiharu. ‘*Ie no Hendō Note*’ [Note on *Ie* Changes], Dōshisha University Institute for the study of Humanities and Social Sciences, Kyōdō Kenkyū : *Nihon no Ie [Joint Research : Japanese Ie]*, Toshokankōkai, 1981.
- Mori, Kenji. ‘*Kita-Kantō Chihō no Ichi-sonraku ni okeru Inkyosei to Sōzokusei*’ [Retirement and Inheritance in a Village in the North Kanto Region], Family History Research Committee eds, *Kazoku-shi Kenkyū 1 [Family History 1]*, Ōtsuki Shoten, 1980.
- Nakai, Nobuhiko. *Bakuhan Shakai to Shōhin Ryūtsū [Feudal Society and Product Distribution]*, Hanawa Shobō, 1961.
- Nakai, Nobuhiko. *Tenkan-ki Bakuhan-sei no Kenkyū : Hōreki-Tenmei no Keizai Seisaku to Shōhin Ryūtsū [Research in a Period of Change for the Feudal System : Economic Policies and Product Distribution in the Hōreki-Tenmei eras]*, Hanawa Shobō, 1971.
- Nakamura, Kichiji. *Sonraku Kōzō no Shi-teki Bunseki : Iwate-ken Kemuriyama-mura [Historical Analysis of Village Structures]*, Nihon Hyōron Shinbunsha, 1956 (re-issued in 1980 by Ochanomizu Shobō).
- Ninomiya, Hiroyuki. ‘*Kaidai : Rekishi no Naka no ‘Ie’*’ [Outline : The ‘*Ie*’ in History], *Sōsho : Rekishi wo Hiraku “Annales” Ronbunshū 2, Ie no Rekishi-Shakaigaku [Collection : Opening up History – the Annales School Articles 2 : Socio-history of the Ie]*, Fujiwara Shoten, 2010.
- Okada, Aoi. *Kinsei Sonraku Shakai no Ie to Setai Keishō : Kazoku Ruikei no Hendō to Kaiki [Ie and Household Inheritance in Pre-Modern Village Society : Changes and Revolution in Family Types]*, Chisen Shobō, 2006.
- Saito, Yoshiyuki. *Naikaisen to Bakuhan-sei Ichiba no Kaitai [Inland Sea Ships and the Dissolution of the Feudal Market]*, Kashiwa Shobō, 1994.
- Suzuki, Eitaro. *Nihon Nōson Shakaigaku Genri [Principles of Sociology in Japanese Rural*

- Villages*], Jichosha, Tokyo, 1940.
- Takeda, Wataru and Aoyama, et al, *Kōza Kazoku 5: Sōzoku to Keishō [Lectures on the Family 5: Inheritance and Succession]*, Kōbundō, 1974, pp. 303-319.
- Toda, Teizo. *Kazoku Kōsei (Family Structure)*, Kobundo Shobo, 1937.

# Rethinking theories and realities of the '*ie*' in Japan

Shoko Hirai

## 1. Introduction

### (a) Aim of this study

In this paper we would like to recast *ie* studies for comparative research, rethinking the theories and realities of the *ie* in Japan. Demographers and family historians generally treat the Japanese *ie* as a typical stem family (Cornell 1987, Fauve-Chamoux 2009, Ochiai 2009, Saito 1998), but not all sociologists in Japan consider the *ie* as a stem family, as defined in the following part of this section. Rather they see the *ie* as a social unit or as a set of reciprocal relationships between “social parents” and “social children,” as explained in Section Two. We have tacitly used ideas or concepts drawn from the realities in Europe. In other words comparative studies are carried out based on a framework created by European realities. In this paper a new framework, based on Japanese realities, will be presented.

In order to rethink *ie* studies, we will tackle the issue in the following three steps. Firstly, we shall present the discussion points in the context of general “stem family” studies after confirming the definition of the stem family in Section One. Next, some theories of Japanese *ie* studies will be introduced and some ideas or concepts drawn from Japanese *ie* theories are proposed for comparative studies. Lastly, using these new concepts, we will analyze the realities in Japan and demonstrate the possibilities of new concepts or new perspectives for comparative studies.

**(b) Definition of the stem family**

Demographers and family historians generally treat the Japanese *ie* as a stem family. In a recent comparative study on stem families, edited by Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux and Emiko Ochiai published in 2009, the *ie* is also regarded as one of the most typical stem families (Fauve-Chamoux and Ochiai eds. 2009). In this book the stem family is defined in two stages. Definition One, generally covering all stem families, is based on residential conditions, and is : “only one married child remains with the parents”. This definition would also clarify the difference between heirs’ and non-heirs’ life courses ; the heir marries and remains with his parents, but non-heirs leave their parental household, or remain there unmarried for the rest of their lives. Definition Two is seen as a stricter extension of Definition One, covering, specifically, the inheritance of the family assets, family name, and family business by the heir and the house remaining intact over the generations. In order to meet Definition Two, we need both a generous amount of documentation, from which the family business, assets, and name can be determined, and also observations of detailed inheritance patterns based on these documents. Stem families we can confirm in Europe are generally considered to meet both these conditions, but, in part as research in Asia generally has not yet progressed sufficiently, we shall lay this second definition to one side and concentrate for the moment on discussing the stem family based on Definition One (see Fauve-Chamoux and Ochiai, 2009).

Although we have a wealth of documentation about family assets, family names, and family businesses in Japan, most of the *ie* studies from the perspective of stem family use Definition One. Treating *ie* as per Definition Two, Japanese sociologists would not consider the *ie* as a stem family, but consider it as a social unit, or an *ie* based on the total reciprocal relationships between social parents and social children, as explained the following section. They regard the *ie* as something greater than the family.

**(c) Discussion on stem family in Europe and Japan**

Before describing the unique characteristics of the *ie* studies proposed by Japanese sociologists, we shall present the differences

between European realities and Japanese realities regarding the stem family in order to clarify the tacit presupposition in existing stem family studies.

When looking at stem families in Europe, it is considered that a stem family system existed to control or to repress nuptiality or fertility in societies where resources were extremely limited. In general villagers in Europe would have about four surviving children if they got married. So the control of nuptiality was very important, whether intentional or not. It was the stem family system that would systematically control nuptiality.

In stem family studies the difference between heirs' and non-heirs' life courses are also discussed, in particular connected with marriage or dowry. When the heir got married, the bride brought a dowry to her husband's house. It was important for parents and siblings because it would possibly enable another child to be married off. The number of non-heirs who could be married out depended on the parents' economic strength including the bride's dowry. And the remaining unmarried children would be seen as "spares," or as a workforce who would spend their entire lives in their natal house. In other words, the stem family functioned as a strong system for limiting marriages, or rather, controlling births, and inheritance was discussed in its relationship to other siblings or to the dowry. For the same reason, the discussion also noted how rigid stem families in traditional cultures weakened or dissolved due to the Napoleonic Code, industrialization, increases in migration to the New World, and other factors of modernization (see Arrizabalaga 1997, 2005, Moring 2003, 2009).

However, there was no dowry system in Japan. A daughter being married off might bring along a little something as a "makeup allowance," but in the case of early modern farmers, that would be a very small amount, too insignificant to bother noting in the records. Moreover, in early modern Japan, fertility was low, with around three children per family in the north-eastern region, and four to five in central Japan (Hayami 2001), and they would end up with just two surviving children, so the situation was completely different to

Europe, where what to do with the non-heirs (the left-over children) needed to be considered. Moreover, in Japan from the 18th century there were numerous cities, large and small, all over the country, and movement from the rural to urban areas was frequent, so there was always the choice of leaving the farm and moving to the city. As a result, with the exception of a few mountain villages, discussions of the stem family was not concerned with it as a system to limit marriages or control fertility (conversely, fertility was discussed as possibly being adjusted by each couple, with frequent mention of abortions or infanticide). Rather, the low fertility created a situation where families would have to spend time and money in searching for an heir. The problem here is adoption. In Japan, when a family had no sons, it was common for them to adopt their daughter's husband in as a "groom-son," or "*muko*." Or even if they had no children at all, it was not hard to adopt one. It was seldom considered an issue that the adopted son was not actually related by blood (Kurosu 1997, Kurosu and Ochiai 1995).

Moreover, in Japan, with a few children, no dowries, and early marriage, it was extremely difficult to ensure a spare heir in case the first one died. There were numerous cases when a family would lose anyone to inherit when the heir died. If a new heir was not found, the family would go extinct. In fact, there were frequent cases of families going extinct until the Definition Two stem family became established (Hirai 2008). Frequent extinctions of families meant that there was room for the creation of new ones, or in other words, branch households. The idea that families going extinct can create branch households may seem a little strange. To explain it, we will need to look at sociological *ie* theory in Japan. In the next section, I will present some classical ideas of *ie* theory, including the *ie-village theory* and the *ie-union theory*. In Japan, the *ie* has not only been understood as a single *ie* or family, or in other words as a stem family. Rather, the focus has been on the mechanism by which an *ie* created a branch, or the shape of the relationship between main household and the branch households. This is closely related with the features of the early modern Japanese village. Therefore, in the next section, I will present some of the sociological discussions concerning the *ie* from a different point of view to the stem family.

The background to the extinct families and the branch household becoming barter can also be understood from looking at the relationship between villages and *ie* in Japan, and between *ie* and *ie*.

## 2. Sociological theories of the *ie*

### 2.1 *Ie*-village theory

#### (a) Features of the village<sup>1</sup>

Before starting to look at the *ie* from the viewpoint of the *ie*-village theory, we need to take a look at how the village carried out many functions as a governing structure in early modern Japan. I will use the example of Nihonmatsu Domain to explain the administrative system.<sup>2</sup>

As shown below, Nihonmatsu was a domain with a population of about 80,000, made up of 110 villages, and divided broadly into Adachi County and Asaka County. Each county had its county representative (*gundai*) and county magistrate (*gun-bugyō*), who carried out the administration. Each of these was fairly large, with about 40,000 people each, so were in turn further split up into about five groups (*kumi*), with each having a magistrate's office where local government was carried out. Each *kumi* was made of about ten villages. However, the magistrate's office would not directly rule the villages, but rather the villages would be controlled by a village headman or *nanushi*. The magistrates controlling each ten-village bloc would merely rule indirectly, through the headmen.

The village headmen were local village people and their rank was still that of farmer, but in fact they carried out a number of jobs. Tax collection, for example. Early modern Japan taxed its farmers with a tax on the land, which had been measured by cadastral surveys or *kenchi*. The owners of that land would not however pay the tax directly: that was the responsibility of the village as a whole.

---

<sup>1</sup> This part is based on *Motomiya-Cho-Shi* (The history of Motomiya Town).

<sup>2</sup> Administrative systems in the early modern period vary greatly depending on the ruler, so there was no nationwide, unified system as there was in the modern period. We can however consider that most systems were generally similar.

Therefore the village headman would collect the total taxes owed by the village and pay them as a lump sum. In that sense, a village was a community bound by a common destiny.

A village's administrative ability can also be seen from the vast amount of administrative documents that can be uncovered from the storehouses of the village headmen. The reason that historical demographers and historians can use these local documents and carry out a variety of research into the histories of the common people is thanks to these vast amounts of administrative documents that still remain. For example, I used population registers from a village of about 100 households (400 people), each generation of which was stored in the headman's storehouse. The headman's house also contains documents on taxation, records of village events, or disasters, daily administrative diaries, and so on, which can completely fill the storehouse. Even a small village like this would produce enough documents to fill literally hundreds of cardboard boxes. In other words, the village functioned as a terminal organization, and should be considered as the equivalent to today's local government bodies.

#### Nihonmatsu Domain

- Adachi County ; county representative and county magistrate
  - Five groups (Kumi) ; magistrate / ten villages per group
    - Village (headman)
- Asaka County
  - Six groups
    - Village (headman)

#### (b) Village and *Ie*<sup>3</sup>

So what are the components of this village as administrative organization? It turns out that they are the *ie*. It was not individuals that formed a village, but the *ie*. The collective of the *ie* was the village. The *ie* theory formed from focusing on this point is termed *ie-village* theory. Let us take a look the *ie-village* theory of one of its

---

<sup>3</sup> This part is based on Hasegawa Yoshikazu, Takeuchi Takao, Fujii Masaru, Nozaki Toshiro, *Nihon Shakai no Kiso Kōzō* [Basic Foundations of Japanese Society], 1991.

leading proponents, Yoshikazu Hasegawa (1930-1995).

Hasegawa focused on what he described as “for farmers at the start of the early modern period, it was often that case that one *ie* would contain within it a multitude of families and management bodies,” [Hasegawa, et al. 1991 : 4], and “the social unit of the *ie* is clearly not the same as the units of the families and management bodies” [Hasegawa, et al. 1991 : 4], noting that “the *ie* system is a system with its own different character, one that should be seen as separate from the family system” [Hasegawa, et al. 1991 : 4]. Hasegawa characterized this difference as “showing clearly that the Japanese *ie*, while it may have contained families and management bodies, was itself a system and a unit that went beyond family or enterprise” [Hasegawa, et al. 1991 : 4], emphasizing that the *ie* was created using a different principle to that for the family and management unit.

So what is this principle that creates an *ie*? Hasegawa states that “the Japanese *ie* system is inwardly regulated by the family, enterprise, and community, but is itself perhaps better considered as having strong characteristics of a village system or lord’s peasant control system” [Hasegawa, et al. 1991 : 66]. He proposes that by considering the *ie* as a public unit, a “*kabu*” or “stock,” for control, the difference between the *ie* and family can be explained, and the character of the *ie* made clear.

Naturally, the actuality was, as Hasegawa notes, “in many regions, from around the middle of the early modern period, one *ie* would generally be formed by one family and enterprise. The social unit of the *ie* was virtually congruous with the units of the family and the enterprise,” [Hasegawa, et al. 1991 : 4] with the public unit, the management unit, and the family unit all overlapping from around the latter half of the 18th century.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, what is the significance in Hasegawa emphasizing the special nature of the *ie* as a public unit? He notes: “For the *ie* to exist as a stock means two things. One, the inheritance and succession of the *ie* does not necessarily occur within relatives. [...] The other is that for the *ie* to exist as stock, the validation of its qualifications as an *ie* are not

‘private’ matters” [Hasegawa, et al. 1991 : 81] . In other words, when deciding the succession of an *ie* and the formation or extinction of an *ie*, the aspect of the *ie* as a public unit carries a great deal of weight. Thus the point is emphasized that the *ie* is not something that can be explained from internal principles (familial principles), but by external ones.

The Japanese stem family is not necessarily perpetual, and follows a pattern of birth and extinction. In Hasegawa’s theory, the birth and extinction of an *ie* are not just limited to the problems of the individual families, but are considered as problems that are affected considerably by the village’s decisions. When looking at the *ie* as a stem family as I mentioned in the first section, there is a strong tendency to try to explain it using family theories or inner theories, but by reconsidering the family from the character of its external relations, we can see something take shape, and that is the lure of the *ie* theory as stock.

## 2.2 *Ie* and Dozoku theory<sup>5</sup>, or *Ie*-union theory

As noted above, when we look at the village and the *ie* from the point of view of public administrative systems, we can simplify things down to that the village is composed of *ie*, but in the actual lived world, the *ie* forms a number of different sub-groups, and these exist in a complex interrelationship that varies by time and place. In pre-modern society, without any public welfare systems, it was vital for everyone to help out each other in various ways in order to live. In Europe the Church had a massive influence in both public and

---

<sup>4</sup> To superimpose this over the definitions given at the start of this article, the family at the start of the early modern period would only satisfy Definition One of the stem family, and was not a stable one that possessed a multi-generational permanence. This is presumably where the inconsistency between the *ie* and the family arose. However, we can assume that gradually stable stem families that would meet Definition Two appeared, and the inconsistency lessened. Understanding the issue in this way means Hasegawa’s understanding tallies with the empirical research results on the stem family.

<sup>5</sup> Dozoku means a group constituted of several *ie*. The relationships between *ie* and *ie* in the same Dozoku is connected with the relation between main-branch *ie*.

private spheres, but there was no equivalent in Japan. Naturally in any age the network of relatives functions as a safety net, but in early modern society, where the *ie* had a meaning over and above family and relatives, relationships among *ie* that went beyond individual-based networks grew in importance. One of the debates that focus on how these *ie*-unions are done and the characteristics of the grouping is called *ie-dozoku* (*ie-union*) theory.<sup>6</sup> Here we shall consider the relationship among the *ie* in *ie-union* theory, based on the *ie* theory of Aruga Kizaemon (1897-1979).

**(a) The *Ie* as a large family ; the *Ie* as a set of reciprocal relationship<sup>7</sup>**

Aruga saw the *ie* as an “extended family,<sup>8</sup>” focusing on the attributes of the members of this extended family and the relationships and connection principles between them, and laid out his theory that the principles of the extended family were the real source of the basic constitutive principle of society. In terms of members, he considered that “first, the Japanese extended family would have not only its consanguineal members, but also to pay careful attention to the fact that it absorbed a lot of non-consanguineal members” [Aruga 1966 : 694]. He thus focused on the presence of non-consanguineal members in the *ie*, especially the *nago*, or peripheral *ie* to a *bunke*, and showed what principles dictated how they were absorbed by the *ie*. He then gave particulars regarding the relationships between the landlord and the *nago* in the situation where the *nago* was being absorbed by the *ie*, thus providing a principle that allowed the relationship between both to work. In other words, what he termed the relationship between the parent and child, or the master and apprentice. The master and apprentice relationship is explained by Aruga as “a union through a

---

<sup>6</sup> Not all Japanese villages were comprised of these *ie*-unions. The *dozoku* were mainly strong in eastern Japan, and weaker in the west (Fukutake Tadashi, 1948). That means that *ie*-union theory cannot be applied to all villages, and should be considered more as a characteristic of eastern Japan.

<sup>7</sup> This part is based on Aruga’s theory (Aruga 1960, 1965, 1966, 1971).

<sup>8</sup> His “extended family” is completely different from that in Hammel-Laslett classification. It means to extend not the conjugal family but the family itself. In other words, his extended family would contain plural households connected with the *ie*-union (see Table 1).

moral prescript protected by a sense of unity formed as the parent is appointed with the full control and protection and guidance of the child, and the child is to give full service to the parent" [Aruga 1966 : 707-8]. The "parent and child" here are of course not the blood-related actual parents and children, but simply the social standings within the *ie*, and both can maintain their reality through their reciprocal relationships. The background to this is explained as "in the harsh living conditions of Japan, in a peripheral region and with only a small-scale economy, there was no other alternative" [Aruga 1966 : 707-8]. In other words, he positions the master and apprentice relationship as a mutual aid system for allowing lifestyles to be maintained and uses the principle to interpret the *ie*.

So in that case what form did extended families, with these characteristics, take? Aruga divided family forms into two types (see Table 1). One is the "simple family," made up of stem family members and unmarried collateral relatives or unmarried non-relatives, and the other is the "complex family" which includes married collateral relatives and married non-relatives (See Footnote 8). While retaining the stem family as the base, Aruga sorted families based on whether the collateral relatives or non-relatives were married or not. He stressed the importance of differentiating between simple families and when there were several simple families collected together, noting that "the extended family resembles a multiplicity of simple families collected together, but as long as they actually form a single *ie* through a single family budget, a single labour organization, and a single shared rite for the gods, then we cannot see them as multiple simple families collected together" [Aruga 1966 : 110]. He stressed this as he considered it necessary to make clear what sort of combination principles were in operation when an *ie* had one household budget, one labour organization, one shared ritual group, or in other words had one enterprise.

In this typification, (while Aruga's term "simple family" remains unique) there was a distinction made between whether collateral relatives were married or not, but this is a point that is commonly seen in existing stem family research as well, and not a unique insight on the part of Aruga. However, including the marriage status

Table 1 Family Types based on Aruga

Family Type	Members
(1) Simple Family*	Stem family members** + unmarried collateral relatives / non-relatives
(2) Complex Family	Stem family members + married collateral relatives / non-relatives = <b>Extended Family</b> = <b>Ie</b>

\*A Family does not necessarily mean a household. Some families are formed by several households ; others are formed by one household.

\*\*Stem family members mean that head and his wife and parents/grandparents and the heir with his wife and children.

of non-relatives is the unique typification Aruga provided, with his emphasis on the principle of absorbing non-relatives. The distinction between relatives and non-relatives becomes extremely significant in modern society, but in earlier ones the line between public and private was still hazy, and the perspective to examine this point should be important.

Another important aspect of Aruga's family formation theory is that extended families do not actually necessarily all live together. Aruga recognized that an extended family that might have started out as living under one roof would transition to a multiple-residence extended family as a part of its dissolution process, and this family system did not assume that everyone lived together. In this case, the defining characteristic of whether an extended family is maintained is found in the combination principle of whether the "parent-child" (*oyakata-kokata*) relationship, based on the mutual beneficiary relationship, is maintained. Previously, when I examined the changes in the family I suggested that the independence of the household may have increased in the second half of the early modern period [Hirai 2008], but this remains an untouched issue, as we need to consider not just the characteristics of each household, but the process by which they became independent, and what scope we should use as the axis to analyze it: by household, by multiple-residence extended family – how should we treat the *bunke* and retired households (*inkyō*) ?

#### (b) The *Ie*- union or Dozoku

Aruga saw the essence of the Japanese *ie* as the extended

family. That extended family did not necessarily, as noted above, all live under the same roof. However, even when members lived in separate locations, it was not as individual *ie* living independently, but as a relationship that maintained a “parent-child” relationship based on mutual benefits. In other words, “we cannot explain the specific and actual form of the *ie* without separating it from the social relationships which form its foundation” [Aruga 1971 : 24], and “one *ie* only first exists in terms of its links with other *ie*, so, strictly speaking, an *ie* cannot exist in isolation. What defines an *ie* are both internal and external ; internal momentum and external momentum, coming together as one” [Aruga 1971 : 24-25]. This is on a different level to Hasegawa’s public lifestyle, but is a viewpoint that says we need to examine the reciprocal interactions among *ie* in order to see the characteristics of the *ie*.

This splitting up of an *ie* into different residences creates what is termed the “*dozoku*.” There are two ways a new *ie* is established : one type is when it moves in from another village and settling down, and the other type is when it splits off an existing *ie* in the village. With the latter, the new *ie* is generally called a *bunke*, “branch house.” At that time, “the branch household (*bunke*) always, without exception, belongs to the main household (*honke*)” [Aruga 1971 : 25]. However, the theory that includes a branch household in the *ie-union* (*dozoku* group) is not based on relatives or blood, but simply on the reciprocal relationship required by social relations of the period, so it was possible even for unrelated servants to leave and form their own *bunke* and be part of the *ie-union*.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> “The increase in *ie* formation in a village is due to moving in and getting established, or by splitting off into a *bunke*, but most *bunke* divisions would be in terms of close relatives and consanguinity. However, being a relative was not the foundation for a *bunke*. That is, a *bunke* did not necessarily have to be made of relatives. As I noted earlier, the *bunke* formed from the necessity of the original main house to develop economically, so was not necessarily done to set the *bunke* up as independent. [...] Whether or not to set a *bunke* up as independent was decided by the internal and external factors of the main house’s operation, but there was no change in the fundamental meaning of a *bunke* due to these differences.” [Aruga 1971 : 30-31]

In general, the *ie-union* (*dozoku*) tended to be understood as having formed based on the genealogical relationship of the *honke/main household* and the *bunke/branch household*, but Aruga's stance was that it was not sufficient to explain it in terms of only the family relations, the genealogical relationship. That is, he emphasized that the pre-requisites for the formation of the *ie-union* are the socio-political, economic, and social conditions of the time, and the importance of understanding that the *bunke*, or branch household was formed deliberately by the *honke*, or main household, and was done as part of the economic dominance of the main household to provide support for it.<sup>10</sup>

As discussed above, sociological *ie* research in Japan has, in addition to treating the *ie* as a stem family, examined it in terms of a public unit, and in terms of reciprocal relationships (as *ie-union*). From the former, we realize the importance of seeing the *ie* not in terms of a family but in terms of a public unit; from the latter, we realize the importance of seeing the *ie* not in terms of consanguinity and genealogy but in terms of the characteristics of *ie-ie* relationships as mutual aid organizations. Both cases presumably include aspects that have been noted in some areas in Europe, but by using a clear theory constructed from Japanese *ie* theory we should be able to carry out new comparisons between Japan and Europe.

### 2.3 New research project on Kami-Shiojiri village

Demographers analyzing the Japanese *ie* usually use only

---

<sup>10</sup> “The formation of an *ie* was immediately related to maintaining its lifestyle, so right from the start the original genealogy of the *ie* needs to be intimately connected with the mutual aid organizations of their *ie*. So just having one *ie* split off from another did not determine that *ie*'s genealogy. Originally, the meaning of this genealogy included a certain level of mutual aid relationships, and there was also the sense of cliques, of belonging to certain of the main house's political, economic, or social might. As we come closer to the present, cleavage along these lifestyle relationships lines gets supplanted by along the line of the existing genealogy, so the word “birth” or “bloodline” (*shutsuji*) used in history, for example, is then understood as referring only to genealogy.” [Aruga 1971 : 71]

population registers, the *Ninbetsu Aratame Cho*, because this data provides a great deal of information about local family life, although we also have a variety of local documents. However, we can observe neither the *ie* as a social unit nor the *ie-union* in population registers. In the following part of this paper we try to provisionally approach the *ie* as a social unit or the *ie-union* in population registers. This is the first step to a new study of the *ie*. Entering the second phase of the research, a new research project, the Kami-Shiojiri Project, offers solid potential. The Kami-Shiojiri Project, headed by Hiroshi Hasebe, will attempt to clarify the overall villagers' lives from multiple perspectives and go beyond the categories of existing stem family studies or community studies, through the use of a range of different local documents. Kami-Shiojiri is a small village in central Japan, in which numerous kinds of documents still survive. Selected findings related to the *ie* have been published in the past few years (Takahashi 2007, Hasebe 2009). However, these are far from a complete study of the Kami-Shiojiri Project. This project, thanks to its wealth of documents, will be able to describe the multiple realities of local villagers.

In this project, Hasebe proposes an approach that analyzes the three-layered structure of organizations comprising the community in the early modern Japanese village.

- (1) Domain rule - village administration – social life “cooperatives”
  - Rice tax collection group
  - Five-man group (neighbourhood relations)
  - Administrative social organization for maintaining the peace
- (2) Economic “cooperatives” in economic life (production)
  - “Cooperatives” related to agriculture
  - Labour procurement and land/water/mountain and forest maintenance and management organization
- (3) “Personal” “cooperatives” in *ie-unions*
  - Kin / relatives / main and branch household *ie-union* organizations
  - Life organizations related to ceremonial occasions

### 3. Data and methods

#### 3.1 Data

##### (a) Sources

This study focuses on the farming village of Niita in Northeastern Japan (Tohoku), in what is now Motomiya City, Fukushima Prefecture. Early modern Niita was located between the merchant town of Koriyama and the castle town of Nihonmatsu along the main road called Sendai Matsumae. Niita has been considered a relatively wealthy village within the Tohoku region because of its very fertile soil (Narimatsu, 1992), but a wide range of local documents reveal that the domain of Nihonmatsu, which includes Niita, was struck by disasters at least once every two years. Food shortages and cold-weather damage occurred frequently, with the second half of the eighteenth century in particular being quite severe. The agriculture in this area was mainly rice cultivation. In this region, a market economy gradually spread from the second half of the eighteenth century, and in the nineteenth century upland farming crops and silkworm culture increased.

Niita is very famous in historical demography because its population registers are one of the richest sources of data in the preindustrial world, and numerous studies have been done using these registers.<sup>11</sup> In each study on Niita from the perspective of historical demography, the analytical unit is a household or a person. This study uses the same data as the previous demographic studies, but employs a different approach, as explained in the following parts of this section.

---

<sup>11</sup> A great deal of demographic research has been done by Satomi Kurosu, Noriko Tsuya, Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux and Emiko Ochiai on the stem family in this village. For a general outline on the village of Niita, see Narimatsu (1992) and Nagata, Kurosu and Hayami (1998). For a historical-demographical approach, see Tsuya and Kurosu (1998, 2001, 2002, 2004); Kurosu (1997, 1998); Hirai (2008). For an analysis of households, see Nagata (1999); Ochiai (2005); Okada and Kurosu (1998); Hirai (2008).

Population registers in Niita, known as *Ninbetsu Aratame Chō* (NAC) covers a period of 151 years from 1720 until 1870. These registers were made every year and there are only five years where data is missing. It is quite rare anywhere in the world for such a continuous series of data to survive. The NAC of Niita registered household units, and included census-type information, such as names, ages and relations to the head of the household, and records of life events, such as births, deaths, marriages, adoptions, entries into service, migration, headship transmissions, and name changes that occurred in the course of a year. Information on land holdings was also included, containing six important aspects: landholdings, leased land, landlord, rent land, tenant, and cultivated land.<sup>12</sup>

### (b) Population and households in trends

Figure 1 displays the demographic changes in Niita from 1720 to 1870, as well as those in the adjacent village of Shimomoriya. The population was 540 in 1720, the initial year of observation, but decreased from 1770 onwards to 366 in 1820. Thereafter a reverse trend set in, and eventually the population numbers returned to the 1720 level. Both villages displayed similar tendencies in population changes. Birth rates for the Tohoku region were relatively low compared to the rest of early modern Japan (Hayami, 2001). The total fertility rate in these two villages was around three (Tsuya and Kurosu, 1998), but between 1760 and 1799, when cold weather hit repeatedly, this rate dropped to 2.62.

Figure 2 shows the number of households in Niita and their mean size. In 1720 there were 132 households. The number of households remained stable for 60 years but gradually decreased

---

<sup>12</sup> The six different varieties of information on landholdings are:

- (1) Landholdings: listed not by size of land but by yield, which is officially fixed by land surveys for tax collection purposes.
- (2) Leased Land: the total amount of currently leased land, by official yield
- (3) Landlord: the name of the landlord
- (4) Rented land: the total amount of currently rented land, by official yield
- (5) Tenant: the name of the tenant
- (6) Cultivated land: the recorded currently cultivated land, by yield  
= 1) + 2) - 4)

after 1780. The decrease was certainly not dramatic but the trend continued steadily until 1840. After that the number of households remained nearly constant until 1870. Conversely the average size of households remained stable at around four members from 1720 to 1830. After 1830 it began to grow, finally reaching more than six.

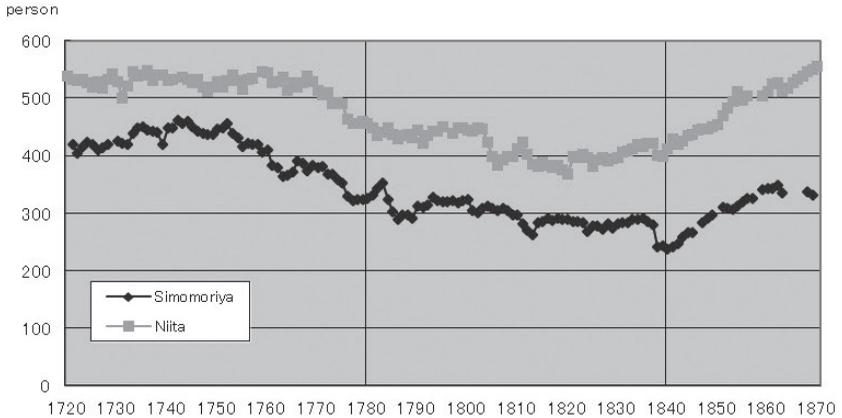


Fig. 1 Demographic changes in Niita and Shimomoriya, 1720-1870

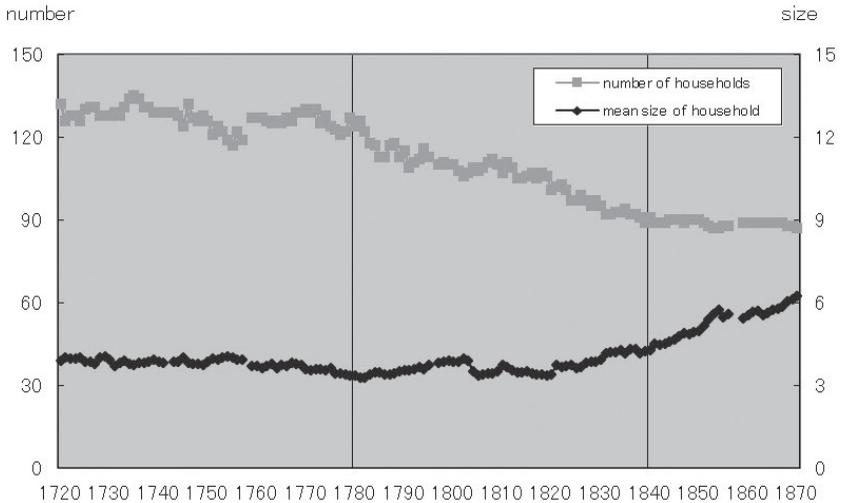


Fig. 2 Number of households and mean household size in Niita, 1720-1870

**Table 2 Household structure in Niita, 1720-1870, based on the modified Hammel-Laslett classification\***

	Household			
	Total 1720-1870	1720s	1780s	1840s
1 Solitary	12.4%	8.2%	16.3%	6.6%
2 No family	2.6%	0.7%	3.9%	2.8%
3 Simple	32.1%	37.7%	33.5%	26.5%
4 Extended	17.6%	18.8%	18.5%	23.3%
5 Multiple (stem)	32.6%	31.1%	25.3%	36.8%
Multiple (non-stem)	2.3%	2.9%	1.7%	4.0%

\*See Hammel and Laslett (1974) for the original classification and Okada (2000) for the modified classification.

It is possible to divide the period under observation into three parts based on the population and household characteristics: the stable period (1720-1760), during which the population, the number of households, and average household size were stable, the decline period (1780-1810), during which the average household size was maintained but the population and the number of households decreased, and the expansion period (1830-1870), during which the number of households remained stable but the population and the household size grew.

The household structure in this village was constantly a stem-family type (See Table 2). Based on the modified Hammel-Laslett classification (see Okada 2000), multiple stem family households account for 32.6% and extended family households constitute 17.6%, whereas only 2.3% were multiple non-stem family households. Focusing on individuals, but excluding 'servants,' 48.1% of residents under 60 years of age lived in 'multiple stem families,' 18.3% in 'extended family households,' and very few were 'solitary' (2.3%). The same proportion of those over 60 also lived in 'multiple stem family households,' or 'extended family households,' but the elderly were more likely to live alone (8.1%).

### 3.2 New approach to the *ie*

#### (a) Three useful units ; the household, the *Ie*, and the *Ie-Union*

As Japanese sociological theories reveal, it is not enough to take a household as the analytical unit of the Japanese traditional family. In order to come closer to the realities of the *ie*, we will attempt to add new analytical units, the *Ie* and the *Ie-union* (*dozoku*), and adjust them to our sources, the population registers.

(1) Household ; Each unit recorded in the population registers (*Ninbetsu Aratame Chō* : NAC) is a household. This is a common analytical unit of historical demography.

(2) *Ie* : From the perspective of Japanese sociology, an *ie* is a household that is thought to have had the duty of land tax, as explained in Section Two. In the population registers of Niita, each household has a social status recorded : Head of House (*Ie-nushi*), Peasant (*Mizu-nomi* ; which means peasants who can only afford water to drink), and Tenant. Head of House refers to a household which has their own landholdings or currently cultivated land recorded in NAC. Peasant and Tenant refer to households which have neither landholdings nor cultivated land. So the social status of Head of House (*Ie-Nushi*) is used as an indicator of whether a household is an *ie*. On the other hand, if the status of the household is Peasant or Tenant, its household is not an *ie*, or non-*ie* because they are seemed not to have had responsibility for tax payment. We usually use *ie*, written in lower-case, but we use *Ie*, with a capital, in terms of using it as the limited definition mentioned above.

(3) *Ie-union* (*Dozoku*) ; An *Ie-union* is composed of more than two households : a main household and its branch household(s). If a branch household creates another branch, both branch households are included in the same *Ie-union*. Using population registers of Niita, we can know what relationships there were among households after 1720. So in this paper we can recognize *Ie-unions* based on relationships only after 1720. Although the relationship between a main household and branch ones also existed before 1720, we can only determine this following observation. We will also employ the phrase *Ie-union* in terms of using it as the limited definition.

**(b) General outlines of households, *Ie*, and *Ie*-unions in Niita**

There are 348 households that appeared between 1720 and 1870 in Niita if each household is connected vertically. Some households disappeared in a few years, and others survived more than a hundred.

They are classified into three categories on the basis of their origins : original households, branch households, and new households. Original households, which existed as of 1720 total 132, and branch households that separated from either the original or branch households total 118. New households which were established by immigrants after 1720 total 98.

**Table 3** Number of households within and without *Ie*-unions in Niita, 1720-1870

	Households within <i>Ie</i> -Unions	Households Without <i>Ie</i> -Unions	Total
1720	0 (0.0)	133 (100)	133
1730	16 (12.3)	114 (87.7)	130
1740	54 (37.5)	90 (62.5)	144
1750	51 (38.1)	83 (61.9)	134
1760	63 (47.0)	71 (53.0)	134
1770	80 (56.7)	61 (43.3)	141
1780	74 (55.2)	60 (44.8)	134
1790	74 (57.4)	55 (42.6)	129
1800	63 (54.8)	52 (45.2)	115
1810	73 (62.4)	44 (37.6)	117
1820	68 (61.8)	42 (38.2)	110
1830	71 (70.3)	30 (29.7)	101
1840	66 (69.5)	29 (30.5)	95
1850	63 (69.2)	28 (30.8)	91
1860	65 (72.2)	25 (27.8)	90
1870	65 (73.0)	24 (27.0)	89
total	946 (50.1)	941 (49.9)	1887

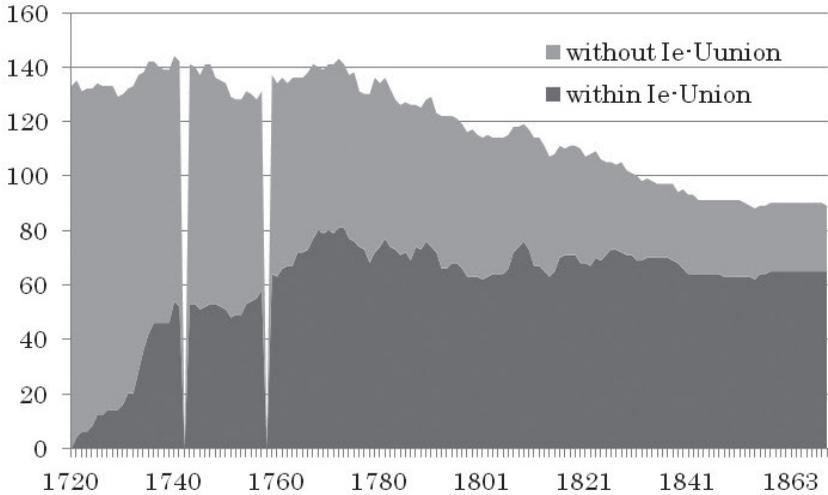


Fig. 3 Number of households within and without *Ie*-unions in Niita, 1720-1870

Focusing on social status, 160 (46.0%) households out of the 348 total households are *Ie*, recorded as Head of House, throughout the period. 78 (22.4%) households are non-*Ie*. The rest of the households are mixed by *Ie* and non-*Ie*, as the status can be changed. They are classified here as neither *Ie* nor non-*Ie*.

In Niita we find 55 kinds of *Ie*-unions between 1720 and 1870. Just half of all households, 174 out of 348 households, formed an *Ie*-union. There are naturally no *Ie*-unions in 1720, but the number of households forming an *Ie*-union increases gradually, reaching 80 (56.7%) in 1770. As few branch households were established after 1800, the number of the *Ie*-unions was largely fixed after that (see Fig.3 and Table 3).

## 4. Realities of the *Ie*

### 4.1 Perpetuity

#### (a) Households, *Ie*, and *Ie*-unions

In this section we will analyze the perpetuity of the family, one of the main features of the stem family shown in Definition Two,

**Table 4** Distribution of household longevity in Niita, 1720-1870\*

N	Original	Branch	New	Total
151 years (1720-1870)	37	0	0	37
101-150 years	7	20	1	28
51-100 years	32	33	6	71
1-50 years	56	65	91	212
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>348</b>
%	Original	Branch	New	Total
151 years (1720-1870)	28.0	0.0	0.0	10.6
101-150 years	5.3	16.9	1.0	8.0
51-100 years	24.2	28.0	6.1	20.4
1-50 years	42.4	55.1	92.9	60.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\*"Original" households existed in 1720. "Branch" households were established by village members as branches after 1720. "New" households were set up by immigrants after 1720.

using the three units of a household, an *Ie*, and an *Ie*-union explained above.

Firstly, the longevity of each household is observed, and divided into the three categories shown in Table 4. In general, looking at the Total column in Table 4, just one in ten households survived from the first to the last year of observation. This means that it is quite rare for households to last. Even if we only focus on original households that existed in 1720, only six out of 10 last longer than 50 years. Also, among branch households, less than half survive for 50 years. New households established by immigrants are the most fragile of the three categories, with 90% of them disappearing before reaching 50 years old.

Table 5 Distribution of *le* and non-*le* longevity in Niita, 1720-1870\*

N	<i>le</i>	<i>le</i> ↔Non- <i>le</i>	Non- <i>le</i>	Total
151 years (1720-1870)	34	3	0	37
101-150 years	18	10	0	28
51-100 years	38	32	1	71
1-50 years	70	65	77	212
Total	160	110	78	348
%	<i>le</i>	<i>le</i> ↔Non- <i>le</i>	Non- <i>le</i>	Total
151 years (1720-1870)	21.3	2.7	0.0	10.6
101-150 years	11.3	9.1	0.0	8.0
51-100 years	23.8	29.1	1.3	20.4
1-50 years	43.8	59.1	98.7	60.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

\*“*le*” means those households that formed a social unit from the beginning of the household to the end.

“Non-*le*” means those households that formed a social unit in the village from the beginning of the household to the end.

“*le*↔Non-*le*” means those households whose label changed during the survival period.

Next, we will examine the longevity of each *le* and non-*le* in Table 5. The *le* survives a bit longer than normal households, but just one out of five *le* households survives for 151 years. More than 40% of the *le* became extinct before they reached 50 years old. Needless to say, non-*le* never lasted more than 50 years. A non-*le* should be considered as a temporary formation of existence in the village.

Naturally, an *le* was distinct because of failure of its succession. This is shown in an examination of one case that of a man named *Ihei*. *Ihei* was the head of his household, and was blessed with two sons. However, his older son and heir died in his thirties, when *Ihei* was 63 years old. The heir was married, but did not have any children. So the wife (*Ihei*’s daughter-in-law) returned to her natal house after his death. As *Ihei* had lost his heir, the younger son returned to his parental house from service in 1736, three years after the heir’s death. This means that *Ihei* could find a new heir.

Table 6 Distribution of *le*-union longevity in Niita, 1720-1870

N	<i>le</i> -union	Household	
		within <i>le</i> -union	Without <i>le</i> -union
151 years (1720-1870)	35	28	9
101-150 years	5	23	5
51-100 years	9	49	22
1-50 years	6	74	138
Total	55	174	174

%	<i>le</i> -union	Household	
		within <i>le</i> -union	Without <i>le</i> -union
151 years (1720-1870)	63.6	16.1	5.2
101-150 years	9.1	13.2	2.9
51-100 years	16.4	28.2	12.6
1-50 years	10.9	42.5	79.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Certainly, the second son inherited the house and lived with his mother after *Ihei* died in 1737. But his mother left to get remarried and when the new head, the last person in this household, died in 1746, the *le* was finally extinct. This shows that although villagers seemed to be eager to perpetuate their family in general, it was not easy for either a household or an *le* to do so.

Thirdly, we will observe the continuity of each *le*-union in Table 6. As the table shows, 35 out of 55 *le*-union lasted for 151 years, from the first observation year to the last, although only 10% of households survived for this period. Even if households within an *le*-union do not survive for long, the *le*-union itself can survive (see households within *le*-union in Table 5). What is the difference between the *le*-union and households within the *le*-union? The next example uses the *Seikuro* family.

In the *Seikuro* family, the main household that lasted from 1720 to 1780 created a single branch in 1752. The main household was inherited by the daughter and her husband and the daughter's

eldest son, 27, established the branch, while the second son, 18, remained in the parental house as the heir to the main household. The daughter lived with her husband and two children until she died in 1780 at 36. After her death, her husband, the head of this household, left the home, remarried, and become the head of his new wife's household. Their children went to the new house with their father. As a result, the main household became extinct. On the other hand, the branch household established by the first son of the daughter remained to the end of our observation period, 1870. When the branch started in 1752, its social status was Non-*le*. It was clearly the branch of a main household that had *le* status and had landholdings. But the branch received almost the same amount of landholdings as the main household after the main household became extinct. In other words, it was as if the main household and the branch household exchanged places.

As can be seen from this example, it was not a problem for individual households and *le* to go extinct. Even if an *le* became extinct, it would still remain in one of the *le*-unions, and as a result the social unit would be maintained or the family line would carry on. Even if it was the main household that went extinct, this would probably not have been an issue. We may note how it was the social unit or family line that was supposed to be carried on, not the individual households.

### **(b) Perpetuity trend of households and *le*-union**

Now we know the general characteristics of the continuity of each unit : household, *le*, and *le*-union. Next we will explore whether or not a tendency towards perpetuity existed for the entire 1720-1870 period.

In order to observe this tendency, the proportion of households surviving within the 151 year period for longer than 50 years is used as an indicator. As Table 7 shows, of original and branch households, only 60% were over 50 years old in 1770 ; then the proportion slowly but steadily grew, reaching 79% by 1840, and finally, by the last observation year, 1870, most of them had survived for more than 50 years. Of new households, none survived for more

than 50 years in 1770, but by 1840 the proportion of households surviving for more than 50 years grew to 40%. The surviving proportion in original and branch households was much higher than in new households, but the trend was the same in both household types. In short, the trend of household continuity was not constant. In particular, household continuity had become stronger by 1840.

The reason the number of *le*-unions increased rapidly between 1730 and 1770, as shown in Table 3 in Section Three, is because many branch households were established. But in later periods few branch households appeared. Due to very low fertility and the population decrease between 1770 and 1830, villagers could not create as many new branch households. When the population increased after 1840, the surplus sons left their natal houses and joined other houses for marriage or adoption in order to inherit. In short, while surplus sons in the latter half of eighteenth century would create branches, surplus sons in the nineteenth century would become heirs in pre-existing households through adoption or marriage.

Recalling the household condition of discontinuity and the *le*-union condition of continuity between 1720 and 1870, we need to rethink the meanings of the two trends of perpetuity: in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, each household was not independent and villagers did not mind if households became extinct so long as the *le*-union continued, but in the 19<sup>th</sup> century villagers were very concerned that households continue. In other words, in Niita a *le*-union was a social unit in the 18<sup>th</sup> century but characteristics of households and *le*-unions in Niita changed at the beginnings of 19<sup>th</sup> century, reflecting larger social changes such as the growth of the market economy or the progress of proto-industrialization. As a result, a household itself became a social unit in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 4.2 Family assets

In this section we will analyze whether or not family assets are maintained intact from one generation to the next by the unit of the household or by the unit of the *le*-union. The records of landholdings are used here as the indicator of family assets

Table 7 Number of households surviving for more than 50 years (in two household types) in Niita, 1770-1870\*

	Original + Branch	New	Total	Original + Branch	New	Total
1770	76	0	76	60.3	0	54.3
1780	69	1	70	57.0	5.88	50.7
1790	69	2	71	63.3	11.1	55.9
1800	72	2	74	72.7	13.3	64.9
1810	72	2	74	72.7	13.3	64.9
1820	69	1	70	72.6	8.3	65.4
1830	68	1	69	73.1	14.3	69.0
1840	70	2	72	78.7	40.0	76.6
1850	67	3	70	78.8	50.0	76.9
1860	71	2	73	82.6	40.0	80.2
1870	74	2	76	87.1	40.0	84.4
Total/ Average	777	18	795	72.6	21.5	67.8

\*The denominator is all households existing in each year.

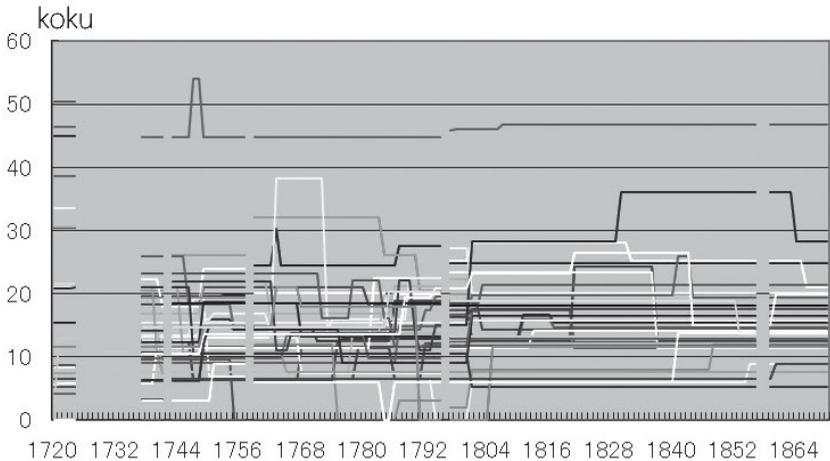


Fig. 4 Landholdings of each household surviving for 151 years in every ten years in Niita, 1720-1870

\*The blue line on the top shows the landholdings of village headman's household.

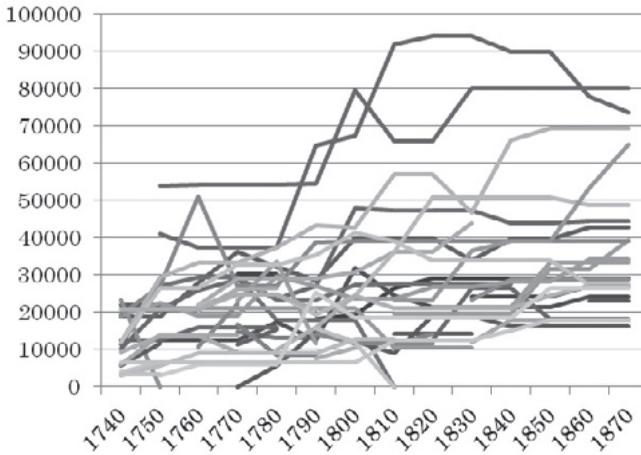


Fig. 5 Landholdings of each *le*-union surviving for 151 years by decade in Niita, 1740-1870

Table 8 Trend in decreasing landholdings within successive households in Niita, 1740-1870

	Number of successive households	Decreasing landholdings : more than 5 (10) within successive households	%
1740→50	115	16	13.9
1750→60	105	3	2.9
1760→70	116	10	8.6
1770→80	112	11	9.8
1780→90	103	11	10.7
1790→00	106	5	4.7
1800→10	101	13	12.9
1810→20	99	2	2.0
1820→30	92	1	1.1
1830→40	91	2	2.2
1840→50	89	3	3.4
1850→60	88	2	2.3
1860→70	89	2	2.2
Total	1306	79	6.0

Table 9 Trends in decreasing landholdings within successive *le*-unions in Niita, 1740-1870

	Number of successive <i>le</i> -union	Decreasing landholdings : more than 5 (10) within the successive <i>le</i> -union	%
1740→50	18	1 (1)	5.6 (5.6)
1750→60	19	0 (0)	0.0 (0.0)
1760→70	24	1 (1)	4.2 (4.2)
1770→80	27	4 (1)	14.8 (3.7)
1780→90	23	2 (2)	8.7 (8.7)
1790→00	23	1 (0)	4.3 (0.0)
1800→10	22	4 (2)	18.2 (9.1)
1810→20	23	0 (0)	0.0 (0.0)
1820→30	23	2 (0)	8.7 (0.0)
1830→40	23	0 (0)	0.0 (0.0)
1840→50	22	1 (0)	4.5 (0.0)
1850→60	22	2 (1)	9.1 (4.5)
1860→70	23	0 (0)	0.0 (0.0)
Total	292	18 (8)	6.2 (2.7)

explained in Section Three. As information on landholdings is missing between 1725 and 1735 in Niita, we will observe family assets after 1740.

Firstly we will show the change of landholdings in each household and each *le*-union every ten years in Figures 4 and 5. As 348 households are too much to show in one figure, 10% of households that lasted for 151 years are used here. It is clear that both households and *le*-unions failed to maintain family assets intact for more than ten years. In particular, their landholdings in both units frequently changed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, while this was not seen in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in either unit.

Next, we will calculate an accurate number that shows the extent of the decreases in their landholdings to some degree (5 or 10

koku) in ten years. As shown in Tables 8 and 9, about 6% of households as well as Ie-unions decreased their landholdings in 10 years. This means that neither households nor Ie-unions played an important role in maintaining family assets, though the Ie-union does have an advantage over households in terms of perpetuity.

## 5. Conclusion

People do not merely live among various networks ; they live through connections with various levels of groups. In pre-industrial societies, we need to rethink what unit of analysis is suitable for the situations in the individual societies. The present study has featured the unit of the Ie and Ie-union that are based on sociological ie research on Japan, and has attempted to re-analyze existing population registers using this unit. The meaning of the “household” unit, which is hard to grasp in analysis of households only, and its changes should now be a little clearer. This research should provide some suggestions for new paths for comparative research based on the realities on Japan.

## Bibliography

- Arrizabalaga, M. (1997) The Stem Family in the French Basque Country, *Journal of family History*, 22-1, pp. 50-69
- Arrizabalaga, M. (2005) Succession strategies in the Pyrenees in the 19th century : The Basque case, *The History of the Family*, 10, pp. 271-292
- Aruga, K. (1960) Kazoku to Ie (Family and the Ie), *Tetsugaku*, 38
- Aruga, K. (1965) *Nihon no Kazoku* (Japanese Family), Tokyo : Shibundo
- Aruga, K. (1966) *Nihon Kazoku Seido to Kosaku Seido* [Japan's Family System and Tenant Farmer System], (Collected Works, Vol. 1-2)
- Aruga, K. (1971) *Dōzoku-dan to Shinzoku no Riron* [Theory of Dōzoku-dan and Relatives] (Collected Works, Vol. X.)
- Cornell, L. (1987) Hajnal and the Household in Asia : A Comparative History of the Family in Preindustrial Japan, 1600-1870, *Journal of Family History*, 12-1-3, pp. 143-162
- Fauve-Chamoux, A. and Arrizabalaga, M. (2005) Family transmission in Eurasian Perspective ; Introduction, *The History of the Family*, 10, pp. 183-193
- Fauve-Chamoux, A. (2009). A Comparative study of family Transmission Systems

- in the Central Pyrenees and Northeastern Japan, *In Fauve-Chamoux, A. and Ochiai, E. eds., The Stem Family in Eurasian Perspective: Revisiting House Societies, 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Peter Lang, pp. 529-559.
- Fauve-Chamoux, A. and Ochiai, E. eds., (2009) *The Stem Family in Eurasian Perspective: Revisiting House Societies, 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Peter Lang.
- Fauve-Chamoux, A. and Ochiai, E. (2009) "Introduction", *In Fauve-Chamoux, A. and Ochiai, E. (eds.), The Stem Family in Eurasian Perspective: Revisiting House Societies, 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Peter Lang, pp. 1-50
- Hajnal, J. (1965) European Marriage Patterns in Perspective, *In Glass, D. V. and Eversley, D. E. C. eds. Population in History*, Edward Arnold
- Hajnal, J. (1982). Two Forms of Preindustrial Household Formation System, *Population and Development Review*, 8, pp. 449-494
- Hammel, E. and Laslett, P. (1974) Comparing Household Structure over Time and between Culture, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 16
- Hasebe, H. et al. (2009) *Kinsei Nihon no Chiiki Syakai to Kyodosei*, Tosui-Shobo
- Hasegawa, Y., Takeuchi, T., Fujii, M. and Nozaki, T. (1991) *Nihon Shakai no Kiso Kōzō [Basic Foundations of Japanese Society]*, Horitsubunkasha.
- Hayami, A. (2001) *The Historical Demography of Pre-modern Japan*, University of Tokyo Press
- Hayami, A. and Kurosu, S. (2001) Regional Diversity in Demographic and Family Patterns in Preindustrial Japan, *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 27-2, pp. 295-321.
- Hayami, A. and Ochiai, E. (2001) Household Structure and Demographic Factors in Pre-industrial Japan, *In Liu, T. et al eds., Asian Population History*, Oxford Univ. Press.
- Hayami, A. and Okada, A. (2005) Population and households dynamics: A mountainous distinct in northern Japan in the Shumon Aratame Sho of Aizu, 1750-1850, *The History of the Family*, 10, pp. 195-229
- Hirai, S. (2008) *Nihon no Kazoku to Life Course: Ie Seisei no Rekishi Syakaigaku* (Japanese Family and the Life Course: Historical Sociology on the Emergence of the Ie), Kyoto: Minerva-Shobo
- Kurosu, S. (1997) Adoption as an Heirship Strategy? A Case from a Northeastern Village in Pre-Industrial Japan, *Japan Review*, 9, pp. 171-189
- Kurosu, S. (2009) Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in a Stem Family System: Women in Two Northeastern Japanese Villages, 1716-1870, *In Fauve-Chamoux, A. and Ochiai, E. eds., The Stem Family in Eurasian Perspective: Revisiting House Societies, 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Peter Lang,
- Kurosu, S. and Ochiai, E. (1995) Adoption as an Heirship Strategy Under Demographic Constraints: a Case from Nineteenth-Century Japan, *Journal of*

*Family History*, 20-3, pp. 261-288

- Laslett, P. (1972) Introduction : The History of Family. In Laslett, P. and Wall, R. eds., *Household and Family in Past Time*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press
- Moring, B. (2003) Nordic Family Patterns and the North-West European Household System, *Continuity and Change*, 18 (1)
- Moring, B. (2009). Land, Inheritance and the Finnish Stem Family, In Fauve-Chamoux, A. and Ochiai, E. eds., *The Stem Family in Eurasian Perspective : Revisiting House Societies, 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Peter Lang, pp. 173-202
- Moromiya-Cho-Shi-Hensan-Iinkai, *Motomiya-Cho-Shi* (The history of Motomiya Town)
- Nagata, M. L. (1999) Balancing Family Strategies and Individual Choice : Name Changing in Early Modern Japan, *Japan Review*, 11, 145-166
- Nagata, M. (2009) Name Changing Patterns and the Stem Family in Early Modern Japan : Shimomoriya, In Fauve-Chamoux, A. and Ochiai, E. eds., *The Stem Family in Eurasian Perspective : Revisiting House Societies, 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Peter Lang, pp. 361-378
- Nagata, M. L., Kurosu, S. and Hayami, A. (1998) Niita and Shimomoriya of the Nihonmatsu Domain in the Northeastern Region of Tokugawa Japan, Kyoto : EurAsian Project Working Paper Series, 20
- Narimatu, S. (1992) *Edojidai no Tohoku Noson* (A Northeastern Agricultural Village in Edo Period), Tokyo : Dobunkan
- Ochiai, E. (2009) Two Types of Stem Households System in Japan : the Ie in Global Perspective, In Fauve-Chamoux, A. and Ochiai, E. eds., *The Stem Family in Eurasian Perspective : Revisiting House Societies, 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Peter Lang, pp. 287-326
- Okada, A. (2000) Kinsei Nomin Syakai niokeru Setaikosei no Saikuru (Household Cycles on Agrarian Community in Early Modern Society), *Syakaigaku Hyoron*, 51-1
- Okada, A. and Kurosu, S. (1998) Succession and the Death of the Household Head in Early Modern Japan : a Case Study of a Northeastern Village, 1720-1870, *Continuity and Change*, 13-1, pp. 143-166
- Saito, O. (1998) Two Kinds of Stem-Family System ? Traditional Japan and Europe compared, *Continuity and Change*, 13-1, pp. 167-186
- Takahashi, M. (2007) Family Continuity in England and Japan, *Continuity and Change*, 22-2, pp. 193-214
- Tsuya, N. O. and Kurosu, S. (2001) Mortality Responses to Short-Term Economic Stress and Household Context in Early Modern Japan : Evidence from Two North-Eastern Villages, In Bengtsson, T. and Saito, O. eds., *Population and Economy : From Hunger to Modern Economic Growth*, Oxford : Oxford University

Press

- Tsuya, N. O. and Kurosu, S. (2002) The Mortality Effects of Adult Male Death on Women and Children in Agrarian Household in Early Modern Japan : Evidence from Two Northern Villages, 1716-1870. In Derosas, R. and Oris, M. eds., *When Dad Died : Individual and Families Coping with Family System in Past Societies*, Bern : Peter Lang
- Tsuya, N. O. and Kurosu, S. (2004) Household Life Course in Two Farming Villages in Northeastern Tokugawa Japan : Retirement, Death, and Extinction. Presented at the 2004 European Social Science History Conference, Berlin, March 24-27

#### Acknowledgments

For this paper I made use of the database of the research project in which I participated, the Eurasia Project on Population and Family History led by Professor Akira Hayami and funded by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture. I am deeply indebted to the following persons : Professor Akira Hayami, general supervisor of the database project ; the late Mr. Seigo Endo who kindly allowed the use of documents ; Ms. Saeko Narimatsu who constructed the BDS (Basic Data Sheets) ; all the members of the Historical Document Research Group at Keio Gijuku University, especially Ms. Masako Unosawa ; and Professor Yoshihiko Ono of Hokkaido University who devised the database program.

# Family Name and Family Continuity : in the context of Kin Relationships in Kami-shiojiri, Nagano, Japan

Motoyasu Takahashi

## Introduction

This paper aims to show the relationship between family names and inheritance in the context of kin relationships in an early modern Japanese village. Family name is one of the three main aspects of the Japanese 'ie' system, along with family trade and family property, which acts as a business entity with multiple functions and features.

For the purposes of this historical analysis I would like to divide family names into two categories. One is the family group name. This name, *myohji*, is taken by the head of the whole family group.<sup>1</sup> However, in the Edo period, peasants were not officially allowed to give themselves such a name except in cases where special permission was given. And then there was also the *kamei* or the family name associated with the whole family group typically had many branches stemmed from the original branch. This name was more likely to be given or declared by individuals. I would like to use *kamei* in order to differentiate between them, as in general there is no clear distinction made. Of course, in Japan, as in other countries, people used to have multiple names, and were given new names at each stage of their lives. Each person used a name appropriate to the stage of life they were at, or according to their personal circumstances. For the Sato men, in their family trees two types of

---

<sup>1</sup> For the naming practice, M. L. Nagata, 'Balancing Family Strategies with Individual Choice: Name Changing in Early Modern Japan', *Japan Review* 11 (1999). Also see S. Smith-Bannister, *Names and Namig Patterns in England 1538-1700* (Oxford, 1997) for comparison with England.

names can be seen : publicly used names such as *tohrina* and real names which consist of two Chinese characters, i. e. *jitsuna*.<sup>2</sup> *Tohrina* was used for official purposes such as in administrative documents. On the other hand, *jitsuna* was for informal use and we can find it, for example, in the family tree documents.

Here I will show the family branch's name, or the *kamei*, gradually appeared as the 'ie' became established and this was more likely to happen when there was an increase in the number of stemming branches, and this was true up until the Meiji period when the *myohji* became compulsory for the whole nation. In fact, the period of the appearance of 'ie' and *kamei* is due to the proliferation of stemming branches. The period also saw the clarification of the status of fourth cousins and a movement away from the more ambiguous and broader definition which included groups of fifth and sixth degree kin relatives who cooperated in doing the same tasks. There was now a much stricter definition of what a cousin was, undoubtedly reflecting the notable increase in the number of family branches ; in other words the creation of more 'ie' with the same family group name.

In this paper, I will first explain the character of the Japanese 'ie'. Secondly, I will examine the general background of families in Kami-shiojiri based on the demographic data. This will be followed by a discussion of the kin relationships and inheritance customs of this village. Finally, after looking at one particular case history, we will draw some conclusions from the appearance of family names.

---

<sup>2</sup> For those of higher rank, such as the Samurai class, in the early modern period adapted their names to suit the occasion as follows. To show their origin they use *sei* (surname) and to show the family group *myohji*. In the case of well-known Nobunaga Oda, he named himself Taira, which originated with the emperor Kanmu in the Heian era of the eighth and ninth centuries and one of the main four *seis* with Minamoto, Fujiwara and Tachibana, to indicate his origin. The Satohs and the Haras are only two family groups who used the *jitsuna*, as they were supposed to have originated with the ex-subjects of the Lord Takedas. However, after the downfall of the Takedas they returned to farming and constraint not to use the *sei* which is reserved for the samurai under the Edo government's rule.

## 1. Brief explanation of Japanese ‘ie’ system

The word “ie” probably requires some explanation for English readers. It can be best defined as the traditional primary unit of social and economic organization in Japan. Although it is often loosely and somewhat misleadingly translated as ‘family’, the term seems to be closer to ‘household’. This *ie* is seen as a continuum sustained by the principle of maintaining its name, property and business from the past, through the present, to the future. The members come and go through birth, marriage and death but the *ie* persists. The head, *kacho* or *kosyu*, is the representative of the *ie*, and it was his principal role to manage the *ie* effectively, and to sustain and develop the family business and property inherited from his ancestors, as well as ensuring that it was passed on to his successor. The system of succession for the *kacho* was basically primogeniture, but any male child, related or not, could be the successor as a legally adopted son (*yoshi*) or adopted son-in-law (*muko-yoshi*). What was most important was for the *ie* to be passed on to someone rather than lost, and the individual who took over did not have to be in the same blood-line. It can be clearly understood from this that the range of *ie* is not limited only to the kinship group (*shinzoku*). It is interesting to note that in this period the usage of kinship terms extending to first cousins does not differentiate between cognates (relatives by blood) and affine (relatives by marriage). In a similar way, the members considered their servants, who lived together with them, as their kin members and treated them as such.

It is after World War II that the Village Society study group, represented by Kichiji Nakamura, set the standard for future research on *ie* and village society. In particular, the Kemuyama-Mura (Iwate), and later the Imai-Mura (Nagano) studies are important and quite unique, for they clearly established that village society did not consist of scattered land with different owners, but was made up of a number of more functional family unions in which each family was engaged in farming and various economic activities.

Nevertheless, due to the lack of any translation of these studies into English, or, with a few exceptions, almost any other foreign

language, these studies have not become well-known in the social and economic history field.<sup>3</sup> Apart from *ie*, another particularly important, but not always well-understood, term is 'bunke'. This contrasts with the Japanese term for the main family, which is *honke*. Bunke means the bequest of a certain amount of property, or parts of the family business, to the children who are not entitled to inherit all of the property, business and the family name before the current household head's death, with the aim of making them independent. This also serves to save the *ie*'s property for children who were not supposed to inherit and to set up new *ies* for them. From this it can be seen that a *bunke* has two functions, those of generation replacement and ensuring continuity.

## 2. Kami-shiojiri (Ueda-shi), Nagano.

Kami-shiojiri, Nagano, in Japan, was an average-sized village whose main industry was the commercial farming of silk worms. According to the historiography of the Ueda area in which the village of Kami-shiojiri was situated (Ueda Chiisagata Shi, *Ueda-Chiisagata Historiography*),<sup>4</sup> during the Edo period this village was of average size for that particular area. In the early nineteenth century the population was almost 800.<sup>5</sup> However, the number of messuages was almost the same. In Ueda Chiisagata Shi we see that this village was distinguished by the fact that it had a rather high number of family members, between eight and ten.

---

<sup>3</sup> For instance, even in the recent studies on Japanese *ies*, there is no common view on the term. While O. Saito uses the term 'household' for *ie* in the study based on the first national census of 1920, Y. Wakao, whose main field is Germany, uses the term 'family' instead in his research focusing on the mid-western region of early modern rural Japan; O. Saito, 'Two Forms of Stem Family System in One Country? The Evidence from Japan's First National Census in 1920' and Y. Wakao, 'A Comparative perspective on Rural Families in Japan from the Early Modern Period until the Middle of the Nineteenth Century', in R. Wall, T. Hareven and J. Ehmer with the assistance of M. Cerman, eds., *Family History Revisited Comparative Perspectives* (Newark and London, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> *Ueda Chiisagata Shi 2* (Kawasaki, 1983), p. 429.

<sup>5</sup> Ueda-shi Museum Kami-shiojiri the Sato Kasaburo's Records, 1/719-47, 1/774, *Shumon On-aratame-cho*, and the Babas Records *Shumon On-aratame-cho*.

It left unexamined, plentiful documents including family pedigrees, village listings and migration documents. As with many Japanese families in the Edo period (1603-1868), Kami-shiojiri people made good use of the foster system. We can therefore easily find much longer generation continuity, typically 10 or 15 generations in 200 years, sustained by the tightly-knit kin networks, which were the result of *bunke* (family branch activities) as mentioned above. In contrast, as I have discussed elsewhere, out of 417 married couples in sixteenth century Willingham only one couple produced an eighth generation which was recorded in the FRF.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, in the relatively short period of the first half of the nineteenth century, and therefore still within the Edo period, the average number of household members in Kami-shiojiri steadily decreased to a quite remarkable extent. Although we do not, have any evidence to reveal the separate residence of the nearest kin after setting up a household, this does not disprove the existence of collaboration between close kin living within the same villages.<sup>7</sup>

As noted previously, in the historiography of this area Kami-shiojiri was unusual in that it tended to have a rather high number of family members, eight to ten. It is still necessary to investigate how each unit of Shumon Aratame-cho, generally taken to be a household in the field of demographic study, organized and maintained itself. The discrepancy between the numbers of messuages and Shumon Aratame-cho units is related to this point, particularly as the average number of unit members of Shumon Aratame-cho was 8.8 in 1783 and gradually decreased to 5 fifty years later.<sup>8</sup> The average number of married couples per unit steadily decreased from 2.1 (in 1783) to 1.1 (in 1837). In this 50 year period (Table 1), at least on the Shumon Aratame-cho, lineations or nuclearisation of the family seemed to progress rather quickly.<sup>9</sup>

Even during the six year period, 1804 to 1809, the average number of members in each Shumon Aratame-cho unit decline

---

<sup>6</sup> M. Takahashi, 'Family Continuity in England and Japan', *Continuity and Change*, 22/2 (2007), pp. 197-8.

<sup>7</sup> P. Laslett and R. Wall, *Household and Family in Past Time*, pp. 25, 56-8.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. H. Hasebe, 'Human Mobility and Social Organisation' in *Social History in 'Human' Mobility (Hito no Ido no Shakaishi)* (Tokyo, 1997).

Table 1 The Changes of Population and Households in Kami-shiojiri

year	The Number of Messages	The Number of Units of Shumon Aratame-cho	Population	Population/ No. of Units (D/C)	The Number of Married Couples	No. of Married Couples/No. of Units (F/C)	Men's population	Women's population	Men/ Women
1783	75	93	815	8.8	201	2.2	429	385	1.11
1785	75	94	806	8.6	201	2.1	417	387	1.08
1788	75	93	783	8.4	187	2.0	414	369	1.12
1798	75	91	802	8.8	202	2.2	429	373	1.15
1800	75	93	790	8.5	192	2.1	418	372	1.12
1802	75	93	794	8.5	189	2.0	412	382	1.08
1804	75	92	786	8.5	190	2.1	406	378	1.07
1805	75	91	799	8.8	183	2.0	414	385	1.08
1806	70	90	793	8.8	186	2.1	403	390	1.03
1807	70	90	796	8.8	188	2.1	412	384	1.07
1808	70	102	801	7.9	191	1.9	414	387	1.07
1809	70	120	803	6.7	194	1.6	417	386	1.08
1810	70	120	817	6.8	193	1.6	419	398	1.05
1811	70	119	816	6.9	195	1.6	419	397	1.06
1812	70	120	803	6.7	195	1.6	412	391	1.05
1813	70	120	817	6.8	195	1.6	416	401	1.04
1814	70	121	804	6.6	193	1.6	411	393	1.05
1815	70	121	809	6.7	195	1.6	419	390	1.07
1816	70	121	815	6.7	195	1.6	419	393	1.07
1817	70	122	811	6.6	195	1.6	417	394	1.06
1818	70	122	801	6.6	192	1.6	411	390	1.05
1819	70	124	802	6.5	192	1.5	408	394	1.04
1820	70	125	817	6.5	193	1.5	414	403	1.03
1822	70	126	821	6.5	192	1.5	419	402	1.04
1823	70	128	833	6.5	190	1.5	420	413	1.02
1830	70	139	837	6.0	187	1.3	432	401	1.08
1831	70	140	835	6.0	183	1.3	427	408	1.05
1832	70	141	839	6.0	186	1.3	425	414	1.03
1833	76	144	844	5.9	184	1.3	429	415	1.03
1834	76	147	844	5.7	181	1.2	429	415	1.03
1835	76	152	850	5.6	183	1.2	429	421	1.02
1836	76	155	827	5.3	180	1.2	414	413	1.00
1837	76	155	811	5.2	176	1.1	404	407	0.99
1838	76	154	796	5.2	170	1.1	394	401	0.98
1839	76	154	793	5.1	165	1.1	396	397	1.00
1840	76	154	784	5.1	172	1.1	394	390	1.01
1841	76	154	794	5.2	168	1.1	395	399	0.99
1842	76	154	787	5.1	168	1.1	395	392	1.01
1843	76	155	790	5.1	168	1.1	400	390	1.03
1844	76	155	781	5.0	176	1.1	397	384	1.03
1845	76	156	800	5.1	181	1.2	405	395	1.03
1846	76	155	803	5.2	180	1.2	404	399	1.01
1847	76	155	805	5.2	183	1.2	410	395	1.04
1848	76	155	813	5.2	176	1.1	416	397	1.05
1849	76	155	805	5.2	169	1.1	411	394	1.04
1850	76	155	808	5.2	173	1.1	415	393	1.06
1851	76	155	804	5.2	178	1.1	412	392	1.05
1852	76	155	814	5.3	175	1.1	414	400	1.04
1853	76	155	824	5.3	175	1.1	417	407	1.02
1854	76	155	842	5.4	173	1.1	428	414	1.03
1855	76	158	842	5.3	177	1.1	436	406	1.07
1856	76	161	842	5.2	175	1.1	437	405	1.08
1857	76	161	844	5.2	170	1.1	440	404	1.09
1859	76	162	861	5.3	173	1.1	456	403	1.13
1860	76	163	862	5.3	170	1.0	451	411	1.10
1861	76	165	863	5.2	172	1.0	450	413	1.09
1862	76	166	871	5.2	168	1.0	450	421	1.07
1865	76	163	855	5.2	164	1.0	447	408	1.10
1868	76	165	854	5.2	165	1.0	439	415	1.06

Table 2 The numbers of bunke (stemmed family branch) in Kami-shiojiri Shumon Aratame-cho

year	<i>Bunke</i> events	Units	Numbers of newly established units by <i>Bunke</i>	Average	Numbers of members/unit
1804	0	92	0	0	8.5
1805	1	91	1	1	8.8
1806	0	90	0	0	8.8
1807	5	90	12	2.4	8.8
1808	7	102	18	2.6	7.9
1809	1	120	1	1	6.7

significantly from 8.5 to 6.7 (Table 2). In fact, the immediate substantial increase of population seemed to encourage the families concerned to set up a *bunke*. The head of a household and his successor resided in the *honke* (the main household), and married younger sons usually built new homes separately, thus creating *bunke*. This relationship also used to include certain essentially fictitious kinship relationships in Japanese society. Even when the establishment of the *bunke* occurred long ago and the degree of actual kinship is unclear, as long as both parties recognise a relationship, this *honke-bunke* relation continues. Groups numbering more than twenty members have been found to be involved in such cases. In 1808 there were eight family branches, the number being partly a result of administrative orders. After this date the household units comprised more than twenty members. One wonders what sort of principles the organization of the unit was based upon. Considering only the decrease in the numbers of married couples in a unit, and ignoring any other possible factors, it would not be inappropriate to postulate that the 'nuclearisation' of families progressed considerably even in such a short period.

The number of units in the Kami-shiojiri Shumon Aratame-cho

<sup>9</sup> Focusing on the inter-relationships between landholdings and the family life cycle, M. Takagi has picked up Niinuma, Sendai as the research field, M. Takagi, Landholdings and the Family Life Cycle in Traditional Japan', *Continuity and Change*, 15/1 (2000). He shed some light on how changes in family composition were reflected in their landholdings, using Mitterauer's life-cycle model, *ibid.*, pp. 63-70.

increased from 92 in 1804 to 120 in 1809. Such an increase in a short period contrasts sharply with the stability of the message numbers, which held steady at around 70. The former increase is a result of *bunke*, or family branching activities, as discussed above. As for the turnover in the Kami-shiojiri Shumon Aratame-cho, during the process of compiling the database of Kami-shiojiri families, the author researched the turnover as shown in the documents. Of the 806 individuals recorded in 1785, 107 still remained in 1830, which is 13% of the total. It is difficult to define a generation. However, if we assume that one generation spans 20 or 25 years, 45 years could see 3 generations.

### 3. Kami-shiojiri Families and Households : Family Trees and the Family names

Using the Kami-shiojiri village family trees I investigated inter and intra family marriage and foster-child relationships. As the two family trees show, the family trees were made based on original documents (Appendix a + b).<sup>10</sup> The family trees illustrate the turnover of householders and their relationships with other family members. The broken arrows signify the setting up of a new branch or *bunke*. As time passed more sub-branches were created.

#### 3-1. *Bunke* (family branch activities) and Kin in the Household

The proportion of cases where the relationships between the householders is unknown steadily increased. Here we compare the distribution of kin in the same household in eight different years as a matter of principle using the Kami-shiojiri Shumon Aratame-cho (Table 3). The results provide evidence of rapid family nuclearisation. As the number of households declines, the disappearance of 'cousins' and a rapid decrease in the number of kin of 3 degrees, such as uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces, becomes evident. Moreover, the increase in the number of kin of 1 degree should be noted. Again, these changes occurred during a single generation that is in a period of around thirty years. As far as the one degree kin are concerned, the proportion of single persons increases as the

---

<sup>10</sup> The Sato Hachiro-emon's Records, Ueda, the Satos Family Trees.

Table 3 Kins in the same household (unit in Kami-shiojiri Shumon Aratame-cho) s

Relationship with the householder	1783	%/total	1798	%/total	1804	%/total	1813	%/total	1823	%/total	1833	%/total	1843	%/total	1853	%/total
4+degrees																
cousin	156	25%	153	24%	150	24%	89	14%	76	13%	56	10%	17	3%	20	3%
cousin-wife	47	7%	50	8%	50	8%	21	3%	18	3%	14	2%	3	1%	4	1%
cousin-son	2	0%	4	1%	2	0%		0%	4	1%	3	1%		0%		0%
cousin-daughter	1	0%	1	0%	3	0%	1	0%	2	0%		0%		0%	1	0%
cousin-adoptedson	1	0%	1	0%	1	0%		0%		0%		0%		0%	1	0%
3degrees																
nephew	32	5%	37	6%	26	4%	21	3%	16	3%	9	2%	17	3%	16	3%
nephew-wife	10	2%	11	2%	10	2%	11	2%	4	1%	1	0%		0%	1	0%
niece	7	1%	16	3%	15	2%	20	3%	13	2%	9	2%	7	1%	8	1%
uncle	6	1%	5	1%	6	1%	8	1%	4	1%	3	1%	2	0%	1	0%
uncle-wife	4	1%	3	0%	2	0%	3	0%	2	0%	2	0%		0%		0%
aunt	1	0%	1	0%	3	0%	2	0%	1	0%	4	1%	4	1%	3	1%
2degrees																
younger brother	20	3%	21	3%	20	3%	19	3%	20	3%	23	4%	25	5%	20	3%
younger brother-wife	12	2%	6	1%	9	1%	7	1%	11	2%	8	1%	5	1%	9	2%
younger sister	2	0%	2	0%	2	0%	3	0%	6	1%	6	1%	6	1%	7	1%
elder brother	3	0%	5	1%	7	1%	7	1%	4	1%	2	0%	5	1%	5	1%
elder brother-wife	3	0%	5	1%	6	1%	6	1%	3	1%		0%	2	0%	1	0%
elder sister	3	0%	1	0%		0%	1	0%	3	1%	5	1%	7	1%	5	1%
grand mother	4	1%	1	0%	2	0%	2	0%	6	1%	4	1%	6	1%	3	1%
grand son	56	9%	35	6%	51	8%	60	9%	46	8%	48	8%	43	8%	47	8%
grand son -wife	3	0%	2	0%	3	0%	1	0%	2	0%	2	0%	3	1%	4	1%
grand daughter	1	0%	11	2%	9	1%	19	3%	14	2%	35	6%	22	4%	40	7%
1degree																
son	97	15%	99	16%	97	16%	128	20%	125	22%	140	24%	129	25%	151	26%
son-wife	33	5%	33	5%	30	5%	45	7%	43	7%	39	7%	31	6%	44	8%
daughter	31	5%	27	4%	36	6%	71	11%	66	11%	81	14%	102	20%	103	18%
adopted son-wife	8	1%	5	1%	6	1%	7	1%	5	1%	6	1%	11	2%	14	2%
mother	26	4%	29	5%	31	5%	41	6%	37	6%	41	7%	43	8%	38	7%
father		0%	4	1%	1	0%	1	0%	1	0%	4	1%		0%	2	0%
adopted son	11	2%	7	1%	6	1%	13	2%	7	1%	11	2%	15	3%	15	3%
mother-in-law	1	0%	1	0%		0%		0%	1	0%	2	0%	2	0%	1	0%
Others																
widow	27	4%	28	4%	25	4%	11	2%	13	2%	16	3%	10	2%	9	2%
relationship unknown	16	3%	13	2%	9	1%	21	3%	22	4%	10	2%	1	0%		0%
relationship unknown-wife	4	1%	8	1%	4	1%	5	1%	5	1%	3	1%	1	0%		0%
	20	3%	21	3%	13	2%	26	4%	27	5%	13	2%	2	0%	0	0%

number of married couples in a household unit decreases. Although the absolute numbers are generally small, the ‘unknowns’ who might include relatives more distant than even cousins, disappear after the 1840s. This suggests that a distinction between kin and non-kin was developing in this period. Economic factors seemed to have had greater influence on the forms of labour in the household.

### 3-2. Family Groups (ie-unions : *Dohzoku*) and Generation Turnover

The research into the relationship between the family groups and the silk-worm egg merchants in Kami-shiojiri provides the following data. Even the Tsukada family, who produced the famous silk-worm egg merchant Mohei Tsukada, had some family branches which did not produce any merchants. On the other hand, five main family groups, or ie-unions : *Make-Dozoku*, a corporate group of kin composed of a number of families, and generally residing in the same village (Satos, Shimizus, Babas, Yamazakis and Sunoharas), produced many silk-worm egg merchants on the basis of the same family groups : members of those groups had close relationships led by the main branch (*honke*). Counting the numbers household members within each family group in a period of about half century (between 1785 and 1839), reveals that there were increases in the households of the main family groups mentioned above, along with the Tsukadas and the Haras, and these increases were in proportion to the increase in the total household numbers in the village (Table 4 and Graph 1). However, the other family groups show hardly any change at all. Although it was not very marked, the differences between larger and smaller family groups certainly became clearer. As a market economy was developing the nature of family groups was likely to have been affected. Why was this so ?

It seems reasonable to assume that Inheritance customs would reflect changes in the nature of family groups. Inheritance in Edo-period Japan involved three elements : family business, property and name. We do not know how often the custom of primogeniture was observed at the ordinary family level.<sup>11</sup> But it would seem that Primogeniture was called into question more often in Kami-shiojiri than in comparable English villages. Even considering the existence of *kura* (warehouses), which in Japan was supposed to be inherited as an attachment to the property, partible inheritance could be difficult. However, to set up a *bunke* must have required some property. We should therefore ask what was required to set up a household or family to meet such a requirement and what exactly were the requirements. Of course, premises or properties as places of production, and houses as living space, should be distinguished. How the increase in the number of the households affected the villagers' daily life also needs more research. However, what we can

say is that the number of individuals who were able to keep hold of some resources, thus enabling them to make a living, seem to steadily increase.

In a period of about eighty years, between 1783 and 1868, 325 units saw a change in the identity of the head of the household. In 37 out of the 325 cases the next generation kept the same name. Rather prosperous, families with long histories who were of good lineage were more likely to do so, even to the extent that the names were formalised. However, the relatively low number of cases tells us that it was certainly not happening more often than might reasonably be expected.

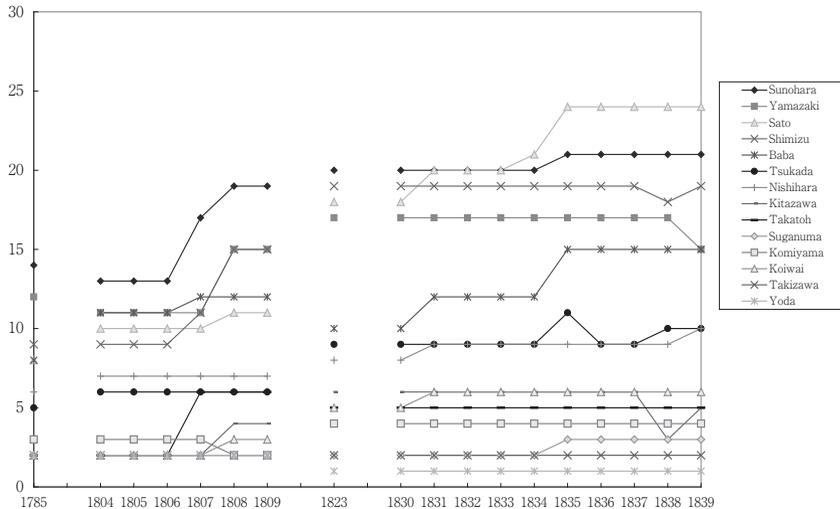
Another important point is that 126 cases did not follow the custom of primogeniture: in fact, fewer than four out of ten did so (Table 5). It should be pointed out here that even the eldest sons on the Shumon Aratame-cho were not necessarily the eldest sons by birth. It should also be noted that households with only one son

---

<sup>11</sup> Although the fieldwork was carried out in Kyoto, an urban area, Mary L. Nagata has discussed the important role of women when it came to the headship and succession in early modern society, M. L. Nagata, 'Headship and Succession in Early Modern Kyoto', *Continuity and Change*, 19/1 (2004). In the case of Kami-shiojiri, the headship of the units of the Shumon Aratame-cho is almost entirely limited to men. Of course, it is possible to find women taking such positions, but these individuals are often supervised by village mayors or wardens as 'dai-han (the seal was substituted)'. It is worth noting that A. Okada and S. Kurosu have shown that a sixth of all heirs were women observed in the Shumon Ninbetsu-cho in the case study of Niita village, Koriyama for the period of 1720-1870. The proportion rises to as many as a quarter of the total where the reason for the change in headship was death. This data is indeed interesting, but the local custom of succession by women (*Ane-katoku*) seemed to significantly affect the phenomenon. A. Okada and S. Kurosu, 'Succession and the Death of the Household Head in Early Modern Japan: a Case Study of a Northeastern village, 1720-1870', *Continuity and Change*, 13/1 (1998), pp. 150-1, in particular table 2. Kami-shiojiri, a village of central Japan, is not supposed to have the custom. It is also rarer to find cases where retirement was the reason for the change in heirship in Kami-shiojiri, compared to Niita in which more than half of all cases were due to retirement, *ibid.*, pp. 153-4. In fact, as the comparison of the headship succession and reasons for change in headship in villages in two regions of Japan shown by Okada and Kurosu clearly demonstrates (Table 7), Niita's percentages are still relatively lower. Therefore, to discuss these differences and reach a definite conclusion would require the gathering of further data, *ibid.*, pp. 158-61.

Table 4 Family Groups (ie-unions : Make-Dozoku) in Kami-shiojiri

year	Sunohara	Yamazaki	Sato	Shimizu	Baba	Tsukada	Nishihara	Kitazawa	Takatoh	Suganuma	Komiyama	Koiwai	Takizawa	Yoda	Total	Others	The numbers of all units
1785	14	12	8	9	8	5	6	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	77	17	94
1804	13	11	10	9	11	6	7	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	82	8	90
1805	13	11	10	9	11	6	7	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	82	9	91
1806	13	11	10	9	11	6	7	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	82	10	92
1807	17	11	10	11	12	6	7	2	6	2	3	2	2	2	93	8	101
1808	19	15	11	15	12	6	7	4	6	2	2	3	2	2	106	11	117
1809	19	15	11	15	12	6	7	4	6	2	2	3	2	2	106	11	117
1823	20	17	18	19	10	9	8	6	5	2	4	5	2	1	126	4	130
1830	20	17	18	19	10	9	8	6	5	2	4	5	2	1	126	12	138
1831	20	17	20	19	12	9	9	6	5	2	4	6	2	1	132	8	140
1852	20	17	20	19	12	9	9	6	5	2	4	6	2	1	132	10	142
1833	20	17	20	19	12	9	9	6	5	2	4	6	2	1	132	11	143
1834	20	17	21	19	12	9	9	6	5	2	4	6	2	1	133	11	144
1835	21	17	24	19	15	11	9	6	5	3	4	6	2	1	143	7	150
1836	21	17	24	19	15	9	9	6	5	3	4	6	2	1	141	8	149
1837	21	17	24	19	15	9	9	6	5	3	4	6	2	1	141	10	151
1838	21	17	24	18	15	10	9	3	5	3	4	6	2	1	138	9	147
1839	21	15	24	19	15	10	10	5	5	3	4	6	2	1	140	10	150



Graph 1 Family Groups (ie-unions : *Make-Dozoku*) in Kami-shiojiri

were not rare. Therefore, that ‘primogeniture’ makes up more than half of all cases does not necessarily demonstrate the dominance of such a system. Nevertheless, the data showing that more than half the eldest sons were inheritors supports the commonly held view that the principle of primogeniture was generally adhered to. In addition, the number of cases where the second sons took over from older brothers is small, numbering only 6 in total.

We set out to calculate the percentage of families that would have disappeared had there been no adoption throughout the period of 1783-1868, and found 50 cases of sons being adopted. Therefore about one sixth (15%) are ‘those who would have disappeared had there been no adoption’, if ‘adoption’ is interpreted in the wider sense.

### 3-3. Bunke (Stemmed Family) and Kin Relationships : from the group of ‘cousins’ to individual ‘cousin’s

Compared to the results of the other studies, Kami-shiojiri *Shumon Aratame-cho* indicates that the *bunkes* by the second and third sons account for less than one tenth of all 94 cases and ‘cousins’ account for more than two fifths. I have found that, regarding the

Table 5 'Inheritance' appeared in Kami-shiojiri Shumon Aratame-cho : the eldest son

	Major families (kin groups)	Minor families (kin groups)	Total	1 son	2 sons	3+ sons	Inheritance before death
1783	0	2	2	2	0	0	
1785	2	3	5	3	1	1	
1788	2	2	4	4	0	0	1
1798	10	3	13	10	3	0	1
1800	5	0	5	4	1	0	1
1802	4	2	6	4	2	0	
1804	0	1	1	1	0	0	
1805	0	2	2	2	0	0	
1806	1	0	1	1	0	0	
1807	1	0	1	1	0	0	
1808	1	0	1	0	1	0	
1809	1	1	2	1	1	0	
1810	2	3	5	5	0	0	1
1811	0	1	1	0	1	0	
1812	1	1	2	0	2	0	
1813	0	1	1	1	0	0	
1814	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1815	1	0	1	1	0	0	
1816	1	2	3	2	1	0	
1817	3	0	3	2	1	0	
1818	1	0	1	0	1	0	
1819	1	0	1	0	1	0	
1820	3	3	6	4	2	0	
1822	3	0	3	3	0	0	
1823	0	2	2	2	0	0	
1830	13	8	21	13	6	2	3
1831	1	0	1	1	0	0	
1832	1	2	3	2	1	0	
1833	2	0	2	0	2	0	
1834	1	1	2	2	0	0	
1835	3	1	4	4	0	0	
1836	4	0	4	1	3	0	
1837	3	2	5	1	4	0	
1838	2	2	4	3	1	0	
1839	3	3	6	5	1	0	
1840	1	0	1	1	0	0	
1841	5	0	5	3	1	1	
1842	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1843	2	1	3	3	0	0	1
1844	4	0	4	2	2	0	
1845	1	0	1	0	1	0	
1846	0	1	1	1	0	0	
1847	0	3	3	2	1	0	
1848	1	2	3	3	0	0	
1849	1	0	1	1	0	0	
1850	1	0	1	0	1	0	
1851	1	2	3	2	1	0	
1852	0	1	1	1	0	0	
1853	1	0	1	1	0	0	
1854	1	0	1	1	0	0	
1855	3	1	4	4	0	0	
1856	8	1	9	8	1	0	3
1857	2	0	2	1	1	0	
1859	3	3	6	4	2	0	
1860	2	1	3	2	1	0	
1861	2	0	2	2	0	0	
1862	1	1	2	2	0	0	
1865	6	4	10	5	4	1	2
1868	4	4	8	2	3	3	
	126	73	199	136	55	8	13

'cousins' on the Shumon Aratame-cho who became *bunke*, only one third of the total are true cousins separated by four degrees. The others are 5 or more degrees apart, which means that the fathers or even grandfathers were cousins (Table 6). Therefore, on the basis of the family trees, we can say that the *bunkes* had been set up in the previous generation and there are often generation gaps between the Shumon Aratame-cho and family trees with regard to the precise timing of the *bunkes*. This suggests that they had been substantially stemmed for they were reasonably independent. The family trees as informal documents recorded such a reality. However, the *bunkes* were not sufficiently well-established to be independent as administrative units and the Shumon Aratame-cho, as more formal documents, do not show them as such. Nevertheless, over the course of several generations, they had enough economic independence to be recognized as administratively independent of the village society and then stemmed on the Shumon Aratame-cho, too. When *bunkes* were carried out informally, there were a variety of different explanations, and contemporaries often recorded the reasons they happened. To understand *bunkes* requires cross-referencing with the Shumon Aratame-cho, family trees and other such documents, for the reality may be found as a result of studying these various documents alongside each other.

#### **3-4. Generation continuity on the family trees in Kami-shiojiri**

In Kami-shiojiri village, the granting of official permission for taking a surname and wearing a sword only happened relatively recently. However, by the the period of the Bunka, the 1800s-1810s (between 1800 and 1820) at the very latest, the main branches of all the family groups had been allowed to give their names as the official names, and the main prosperous stemmed branches had been also permitted to use their names. By the 1860s, there are substantial numbers of villagers whose ranks are those of *shoh-ya*, the village headman, or even *oh-joh-ya*, the headman of the village groups. To have such permission they must have donated a substantial amount of money to the lord.<sup>12</sup> It indicates that through

---

<sup>12</sup> Ueda-shi Museum Kami-shiojiri the Sato Kasaburo's Records, 2/51, *Murakata On-shoshi-cho*, 1853 and 1856.

78 Family Name and Family Continuity :  
in the context of Kin Relationships in Kami-shiojiri, Nagano, Japan

Table 6 'Bunke (stemmed branch)' appeared in Kami-shiojiri Shumon Aratame-cho : 'cousin'

	year	Family	Honke	Age	Family Trees Ref. no
1	1785	Takamizawa	Takibe	55	
2	1798	Baba	Giheiji	54	2-5
3	1802	Sato	Gisuke	58	12-1
4	1805	Terada	Jin-emon	56	2-4
5	1807	<i>Takato-o</i>	<i>Chogoro</i>	78	
6	1807	Takato-o	Chogoro	78	
7	1807	<i>Takato-o</i>	<i>Chogoro</i>	78	
8	1807	<i>Takato-o</i>	<i>Chogoro</i>	78	
9	1807	<i>Takato-o</i>	<i>Chogoro</i>	78	
10	1807	Baba	Gi-emon	63	2-4
11	1807	Takamizawa			
12	1807	Shimizu	Chusuke	31	19-5
13	1807	Sunohara	Gizaemon	63	4-2
14	1807	Sunohara	Gizaemon	63	same as above
15	1807	<i>Sunohara</i>	<i>Gizaemon</i>	63	<i>same as above</i>
16	1807	Sunohara	Gizaemon	63	same as above
17	1808	Yamazaki	Tanosuke	27	4-4
18	1808	Yamazaki	Tanosuke	27	same as above
19	1808	Yamazaki	Tanosuke	27	same as above
20	1808	<i>Yamazaki</i>	<i>Tanosuke</i>	27	<i>same as above</i>
21	1808	Yamazaki	Tanosuke	27	same as above
22	1808	Koiwai	Teisuke	55	
23	1808	Koiwai	Teisuke	55	
24	1808	Koiwai	Teisuke	55	
25	1808	Kitazawa	Kishichi	56	1-6
26	1808	Kitazawa	Kishichi	56	1-6
27	1808	Kitazawa	Kishichi	56	1-6
28	1808	Sato	Zen-emon	36	1-14
29	1808	Sunohara	Matajiro	84	S1-4
30	1809	Takizawa	Kin-emon	59	6-5
31	1811	Shimizu	Juzaemon	32	4-1
32	1813	Sato	Zen-emon	41	1-14
33	1815	Sato	Sozaemon	46	10-3
34	1820	Yamazaki'	Heisuke	43	S2-3
35	1822	Sunohara	Uuemon	65	6-2
36	1823	Yamazaki	Sukezo	56	6-3
37	1830	Nishihara	Mataemon	70	7-4
38	1830	Baba	Yagoro	34	7-4
39	1830	Sato	Rigoemon	50	6-4
40	1830	Shimizu	Kizaemon	58	11-9
41	1831	Sato	Tsunegoro	56	17-3
42	1831	Baba	Yagozaemon	71	8-2
43	1831	Baba	Yagozaemon	71	8-2
44	1831	Sato	Tsunegoro	57	17-3
45	1834	Sato	Seizaemon	27	4-6
46	1834	Suganuma	Tei-emon	57	2-4
47	1834	<i>Yamazaki</i>	<i>Goro-emon</i>	44	5-5
48	1834	Yamazaki	Goro-emon	44	5-5
49	1835	Tsukada	Moheiji	55	
50	1836	Yamazaki	Shichiroemon	59	16-4

Note : Including the cases of adopted.

■ 4 kin degrees cousin

*italic* : not 'cousin'

Notes	Bunke	Relationship with the Honke	Age	Family Trees Ref. no
	Bunshichi	cousin	37	3-4
	Rikichi	4th generation of cousins	37	14-4
	Hatsutarō	son of cousin	33	10-3
Retired ?	Kichiroji	2 or 3rd gen. of cousin	50	1-6
<i>Retired &amp; Stemmed</i>	<i>Yagohe</i>	<i>second+son</i>	34	
same as above	Heiji	cousin	34	
<i>same as above</i>	<i>Shige-nosuke</i>	<i>second+son</i>	41	
<i>same as above</i>	Yokichi	<i>second+son</i>	44	
<i>same as above</i>	Isuke	<i>unknown</i>	51	
	Hirohachi	3rd gen. of cousin	53	14-3
		cousin	33	
Retired & Stemmed	Kozaemon	2 or 3rd gen. of cousin	36	
	Bunzaemon	son of cousin	36	5-2
	Yu-emon	cousin	40	7-3
	Oriemon	brother	57	4-2SB-1
	Gozaemon	unknown (cousin)	72	3-4
	Inu?jiro	the father is cousin	44	11-1
	Kyuzo	the father is cousin	48	10-1
	Zenjiro	the father is cousin	50	8-2
	<i>Zen-nojo</i>	<i>uncle</i>	62	7-1
	Wasuke	the father is cousin	63	9-2
	So-juro	cousin	13	
	Kaichi	cousin	35	6-2
	Bunjiro	cousin	44	
	Hikozaemon	the father is cousin	44	2-3
	Jin-nojo	the father is cousin	44	3-3
Retired & Stemmed ?	Hikoshiro	unknown (cousin)	44	4-2
Retired & Stemmed	Kichijiro	3rd gen. of cousin	46	S-2
	Jinpachi	unknown (cousin)	66	S-2
Retired & Stemmed	Senzo	the father is cousin	47	S-3
Retired & Stemmed	Zenbe	cousin	37	6-3
	Kuranojo	3rd gen. of cousin	26	11-5
	En-emon	cousin	36	19-2
	Chu-emon	son of cousin	48	S1-5
	Kyuzo	cousin	48	2-5
	Kahei	cousin	55	6-2
	Yo-emon	the grandfather is cousin	48	8-2
	Chu-be	the grandfather is cousin	38	6-2
	Sejiro	3rd gen. of cousin	32	
	Gensen	2 or 3rd gen. of cousin	59	16-3
	Risuke	2 or 3rd gen. of cousin	74	8-3
	Naka-emon	2 or 3rd gen. of cousin	43	9-4
	Yazaemon	cousin	43	9-4
	Matsu-emon	unknown (2nd gen.of cousin)	51	15-3
	Hachirobe	5th generation of cousins	49	13-3
	To-jiro	the grandfather is cousin	37	1-6
	<i>Gorozaemon</i>	<i>uncle</i>	56	13-1
	Shin-emon	2nd gen of cousin	34	12-2
Retired & Stemmed	Mozaemon	cousin	25	
	Kakuzaemon	4th generation of cousins	37	15-5

the silk-worm egg industry they became prosperous enough to make such a donation. Earning their living in such a way allowed them to draw their own family trees. On the other hand, the strengthening of the 'ie' consciousness must offer some further explanation as to the prevalence of this phenomenon.

I have drawn the coordinate models based on the family trees of the main family groups in Kami-shiojiri. In these models, the vertical line represents the number of the generations from the first generation of the main branch and shows when each bunke started (Figure 1~3). A broader horizontal line can also be seen, and this is the generation line which Gonin-gumi (frankpledge) Ninbetsu-aratame-cho of 1713 identifies. By looking at the patterns for the heads of the groups and the members, we see the gonin-gumi's groups were organized according to the pedigrees of the Dohzoku family group. Other horizontal groups with the same patterns are formed for the heads and members of Gonin-gumi in 1832, which was just before the organization had been transformed from the Dohzoku family oriented into the neighbourhood. So it seems to be the case that the 1771 Ninbetsu-cho is a halfway stage in the development that took place between 1713 and 1832. This period was when the bunkses of family groups started generating their own bunkses.

As for the jitsuna, the Satos often use the word 'Nobu (trust) : for example Nobu-hiro. The sharing of the word by the group members indicates they belonged to the Satos. This jitsuna shows the origin and only the Satos and the Haras had this system, making them unusual among their contemporaries.

We also see some changes in the naming patterns for the torhina. The more stemmed branches there are, the more new tohrinas are produced according to the names of the first generation, or sometimes the most vigorous generation of the new branch. Moreover, even when more branches are stemmed, as happened in the case of the Shimizus, they insert a middle name : either Ju-zaemon-Kanzo or Shin-emon-Kyozo. Such a process echoes the relationships between the honkes and bunkses.

It should be assumed that in Kami-shiojiri the Shumon Aratame-cho was a formal and administrative document, and it did not deal with each family's katoku, *ie* inheritance. My belief is that such







katoku was to be treated purely as a private matter. For the same reason, I would say that *kandaka* as the basic index for taxation does not necessarily show such informal information as each family's inheritance or turnover,. In Japan when someone dies or when there was a change in headship, there are supposed to be three components that are handed on to the next generation : property, name and business. In particular, for those with quite a small amount of property, or even those who were not sure they had property at all, what they owned was not the most important consideration. For such people the family name accompanied by the rank or status of the *ie* was more significant, as the case of Goro-emon Yamazaki illustrates. In this case there was trouble with *ie* inheritance of the Yamazakis as 'honke' (mainline), although the *kandaka* itself was not very large. I think when the nature of the inheritance or turnover significantly changed, the procedures which had not previously been treated as proper 'customs' now seemed to be regarded as such.

#### 4. Inheritance and *ie* in Kami-shiojiri ; the Case of Goichi Yamazaki

The issue of what a unit of Shumon Aratame-cho means has been awaiting resolution for some time. It can best be understood as being neither an *ie* acting as the patron of temples nor as a residential group. However, the descriptions of kin relationships suggest it is at least a type of kin group. Moreover, to acquire the pedigrees of the kin relationships the family trees are indispensable. The case below illuminates this well.

A case : the Yamazakis Goichi (1841-1857)

Goichi of the Yamazakis had been a member of the unit headed by his grandfather Goro-emon (58 years old, Yamazaki family tree No. 5-7, registered for the tax as 0.816 *kan*) since his birth in 1840. The number of the members of the unit was 6 at the birth of Goichi, but in the following year the number reduced to four with the departure of Goichi's grandmother-in-law (33 years old, Grandfather's second wife ; on the grounds of incompatibility, returned to the household of Jindayu Yamamura of the Matsushiro-han (clan) and the death of

his young aunt who was three, just one year older than him. In 1842, next year the mother of Goichi died at the age of 21 and the number of family members was then only three. Furthermore, in 1848 Goichi saw his father Togoro die (32 years old, adopted son, Yamazaki family tree No. 5-6). In reality, this Togoro was from the Goro-zaemons. He had entered the family as an adopted son to marry 17 year-old Asa, who was his cousin, in 1838 when he was 22 years old. In 1848, the same year as his father's death, Goichi lost the relationship with his stepmother (23 years old; 'for the mismatch, returned to the household of Yahei, the father, of Imojiya village') although the precise sequence of events is unknown, and with Shiu, his younger sister-in-law, who was 4 years old ('being adopted to the household of Ushimatsu, of Imojiya village'). The relationship between Yahei to whom her mother returned and Ushimatsu is unknown. When Goichi's grandfather Goro-zaemon died the following year (1849), he maintained his unit by himself ultimately (and was to remain alone in the long term). Goichi was 10 years old at that point. The unit was unchanged until his early death at the age of sixteen. On the Shumon Aratame-cho of 1855, the note says 'died last *U* (year of rabbit) March'.

Although it seems to be by no means rare in early modern villages, this movement of people both in and out was rather surprising. 'The main line of the Yamazakis does not have any descendants and spread into four families. The first one is Sukenojo at Sakaki, *Tabi-ya* (the trade of Japanese sox); one, Kakubei; one, Chunojo; one Kichibei. Because of this the line of Kichibei was assumed to be the main line in Kami-shiojiri and the Goro-emons maintained their relative prosperity in the Kichibei branch of the line of Gen-nojo-Jinkichi. Goichi was the descendant of these Goro-emons and another adopted son entered the Goro-emons from the Goro-zaemons after the death of Goichi. However, in the Shumon Aratame-cho the unit of the Goro-emon stops, and it is impossible to find such lines. In addition, the Shumon Aratame-cho does not show Goichi's personal circumstances including where he lived. The nearest line for the Goro-emons was the Goro-zaemons and Goro-zaemon was the real grandfather of Goichi, but he used his savings for Goichi arbitrarily which caused trouble among the relatives.

**Source : A verbal note for the petition. On the death of Goro-emon (1851)<sup>13</sup>**

*A verbal note for the petition for the Lord*

First. Our Honke Goro-emon died last June, when I myself was sick and went to stay at Kusatsu spa. Since Goichi, the successor is ten years old and still a minor, Goro-emon could have asked the bunke Goro-zaemon, to look after Goichi after his death. However, because they were usually on bad terms, Goro-emon firmly asked Zentaro and Chunojo from among his relatives and Mohei from Gonin-gumi that when he died Goichi should be looked after in their household until he reached adulthood. He also requested that the savings should be taken care of by the other household while the sorting out of all the goods was done. Moreover when Goro-emon made his will, it was done in front of his relatives, and not only the two mentioned above. When such an agreement had been made, I was away. Nevertheless, as Zentaro and Chunojo and the members of the Gonin-gumi agreed together, the details should be clarified by them if you ask.

However, after the death of Goro-emon, Goro-zaemon said an outrageous thing to both Zentaro and Chunojo, in order to get hold of the savings unfairly and collect all the goods. As both Zentaro and Chunojo had been specifically asked by Goro-emon, they felt very resentful. Yet as they are only distant kin, they could not resist the claim and had to hand over the money. Since then Goro-zaemon has used the savings and goods for his own benefit. I came back from Kusatsu Spa to hear all the details Zentaro and Chunojo mentioned above. To respect the terms of Goro-emon's will, and in order to maintain the Honke line, we tried to persuade him to change his mind. Despite our efforts, he refused to reconsider. The relatives and Gonin-gumi members also tried, but he again refused. So they pleaded with Yakusho (the administrative office) to find a solution. It ordered the village reeves to get involved with the discussion with Goro-zaemon, and again to urge him to respect Goro-emon's will in order to maintain the Honke's line. Still, however, Gorozaemon defied them, and they were disappointed. But they did not give up and again pleaded with Yakusho, and this time it ordered the village reeves to get involved more closely, and even its own intervention was suggested as a last resort in the event of continued disagreement. However, Goro-zaemon now suddenly agreed and the dispute was almost settled amicably. To everyone's surprise, the minor Goichi nevertheless stated his disapproval, and as a result they failed to reach a final settlement. I suppose this is due to the fact that Goro-emon had deceived Goichi. Without such strong disagreement from Goichi, Gorozaemon would be able to discuss with us the timing of the administrative

---

<sup>13</sup> Ueda-shi Museum Kami-shiojiri the Sato Kasaburo's Records, 2/1909.

*interruption (see comment above about this word) if he really thought the Honke is important. Even without the will of Goro-emon, he should have firmly arranged the maintenance of the Honke line by any means, especially as he thought the Honke was important. So in displaying the attitude described above, it must be assumed that he conspired to usurp the Honke.*

*It is indeed difficult to write down the details fully, so I will explain them orally when you inquire. I beg you to settle Goro-emon's will so as to maintain the Honke line as well as ensuring our relatives get along with each other, please.*

*Kaei 4 (1851) year of wild boar March Shin-emon Seal*

*To the village Yakusho*

(\*The underlines are drawn by the author of this paper)

After the death of Goro-emon (Appnedix b : the Yamazaki family trees no. 5), his grandson Goichi was to succeed to the Honke. However, he was only ten years old and too young to do so. Therefore before his death Goro-emon arranged for his relatively distant kin Zentaro (family trees no. 7) and Chunojo (family trees no. 18) accompanied by Mohei from Gonin-gumi to look after Goichi until he reached the age at which he could inherit and manage the savings as well as the goods. In theory, the nearest kin, *bunke* Goro-zaemon (family trees no. 13) should have been in that position, but Goro-emon and Goro-zaemon had never got along with each other. This arrangement was confirmed in the will of Goro-emon with all of the relatives as witnesses. However, Goro-zaemon unjustifiably claimed the savings and the goods for the inheritance fund of Goichi. Knowing that this had happened, another close relative and *bunke*, Shin-emon, tried to persuade Goro-zaemon in a very respectful way to maintain the Honke-mainline in his will. However, Goro-zaemon stubbornly refused to agree. Shin-emon and the other relatives kept trying to persuade Goro-zaemon and finally pleaded with the village administrative office and the village reeves to become involved. Although Goro-zaemon still refused to agree, in the end he changed his mind noticing that the authorities were about to intervene. However, young Goichi refused to agree at this point and so there was no settlement. Shin-emon guessed that was due to the hidden intention of Goro-zaemon to usurp the Honke line. However, respecting Goro-emon's will and insisting on the maintenance of the Honke-line, *bunke* Shin-emon pleaded with the village office to settle

this dispute while hoping the relatives would get along with each other.

Although this dispute was settled peacefully, Goichi died quite early, at the age of 16. The 'Honke' kept its line by the adoption of the younger brother of Goro-zaemon. However, it should be confirmed that the 'Honke' was the main-line for the *bunkes* of the Goro-emons, which was not necessarily the original main line of the Yamazakis in Kami-shiojiri (family trees no. 1 and 5).

### Conclusion

In Kami-shiojiri, the family branch's name, or the *kamei*, gradually appeared after the mid-eighteenth century, as the 'ie' became established. It happened when there was an increase in the number of stemming branches, and this was true up until the Meiji period when the ancient family group name, or the *myohji* became compulsory for the whole nation under the Meiji government. The period of the appearance of 'ie' and *kamei* coincides with the multiplication proliferation of stemming branches. The period was also notable for the clarification of the status of fourth cousins and a movement away from the more ambiguous and broader definition which included groups of fifth and sixth degree kin relatives who cooperated in doing the same tasks. A new, much stricter definition of what a cousin was reflects the multiplication of family branches, that is, more 'ie' with the same family group name. In a related trend, they were also now more willing to draw their own family trees.

*Bunke*, one of the paradigms of Japanese society, which did not exist as a system in England, still remains an important practice worth studying. Although this paper provides only a brief introduction to what might be dealt with in more detail in future parallel and contrast studies, understanding the way one generation succeeded another and also the social and economic backgrounds which emerged from the village family tree complex would be a fruitful area for systematic analysis and synthesis from both perspectives simultaneously.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- Ueda-shi Museum Kami-shiojiri the Sato Kasaburo's Records, 1/719-47, 1/774, *Shumon On-aratame-cho*, and the Babas Records *Shumon On-aratame-cho*.
- Ueda-shi Museum Kami-shiojiri the Sato Kasaburo's Records, 2/51, *Murakata On-shoshi-cho*, 1853 and 1856.
- Ueda-shi Museum Kami-shiojiri the Sato Kasaburo's Records, 2/1909, *A verbal note for the petition. On the death of Goro-emon*, 1851.
- The Sato Hachiro-emon's record, Ueda, *The Family Trees*.

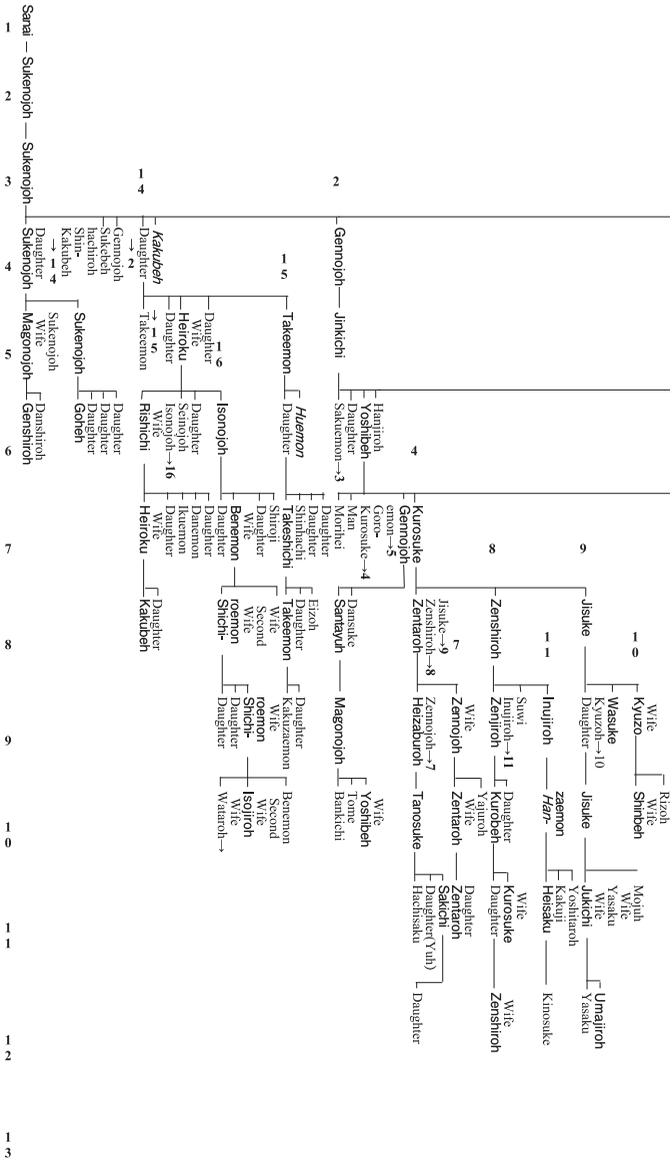
### Secondary Sources

- Hasebe, Hiroshi. 'Human Mobility and Social Organisation' in *Social History in 'Human' Mobility (Hito no Ido no Shakaishi)* (Tokyo, 1997).
- Laslett, Peter and Wall, Richard. Wall, *Household and Family in Past Time*.
- Nagata, Mary Louise. 'Balancing Family Strategies with Individual Choice : Name Changing in Early Modern Japan', *Japan Review* 11 (1999).
- M. L. Nagata, 'Headship and Succession in Early Modern Kyoto', *Continuity and Change*, 19/1 (2004).
- Okada, Aoi and Kurosu, Satomi. 'Succession and the Death of the Household Head in Early Modern Japan : a Case Study of a Northeastern village, 1720-1870', *Continuity and Change*, 13/1 (1998)
- Saito, Osamu. 'Two Forms of Stem Family System in One Country? The Evidence from Japan's First National Census in 1920', in R. Wall, T. Hareven and J. Ehmer with the assistance of M. Cerman, eds., *Family History Revisited Comparative Perspectives* (Newark and London, 2001).
- Smith-Bannister, Smith. *Names and Namig Patterns in England 1538-1700* (Oxford, 1997).
- M. Takagi, 'Landholdings and the Family Life Cycle in Traditional Japan', *Continuity and Change*, 15/1 (2000).
- Takahashi, Motoyasu. 'Family Continuity in England and Japan', *Continuity and Change*, 22/2 (2007).
- Wakao, Yuji. 'A Comparative perspective on Rural Families in Japan from the Early Modern Period until the Middle of the Nineteenth Century', in R. Wall, et. al, eds., *Family History Revisited Comparative Perspectives*.
- Ueda Chiisagata Shi* 2 (Kawasaki, 1983).





Appendix b : Kami-shiojiri family trees : the Yamazakis





# The House System in the Pyrenees

## Traditions and practices since the Modern Era

Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga

### Introduction

The Pyrenees, a mountain region stretching along the Southern border of France and the Northern border of Spain, has always been a region of non-specialized farming and of small or medium property ownership. Its economic viability has always depended upon the implementation of single inheritance. As a result, family assets have traditionally been transmitted undivided to one child from one generation to the next, thus making possible the survival of family farming enterprises and their long-term sustainability in communities. These ancient succession practices became abiding laws when Charles VII, king of France, demanded their codification in the late fifteenth century or the early sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> These written laws or *customs* perpetuated a system which is now referred to as the house system, one which was founded on specific single inheritance practices and which imposed a household structure known as the stem family.<sup>2</sup> The customs thus gave a legal basis to specific family values and traditions. They also unveiled cultural

---

<sup>1</sup> In 1454, King Charles VII of France ordered that the ancient local oral customs and traditions of all provinces, including those of the Pyrenees, be written in French and approved by local *parlements* in an attempt to codify all family succession practices in France. These codes or *customs* became written, legal laws implemented until the French Revolution. While some of the customs were written in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, others were in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>2</sup> Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux & Emiko Ochiai (eds.), *The Stem Family in Eurasian Perspective. Revisiting House Societies, 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2009.

values which not only commanded unequal succession but also the cohabitation of parents, the single heir or heiress and their respective unmarried children in the same house as stem families. In the end, the system did not protect individual rights but instead family lineage, the house, and its economic stability.

The house system and the unequal succession rules which it imposed were meant to disappear with the French Revolution and the abolition of all privileges on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 1789. Subsequently, the Civil Code of 1804 enforced strict equality between siblings and the partition of the family assets between them. These changes were bound to have a dramatic impact on the house system and therefore on families in the Pyrenees. In the first place, this paper will define the traditional Pyrenean house system using the Basque example as a case study from the Pyrenees and Basque Customs to illustrate it.<sup>3</sup> The analysis will demonstrate that in the *ancien régime*, the system had different unequal effects on individuals depending on their status as heirs or excluded children.<sup>4</sup> Then, using family reconstitutions, cross-analyzed with land registers and succession records from the Basque Country since the early nineteenth

---

<sup>3</sup> The French Basque Country then had three provinces and therefore three *Customs*, one in each of the three provinces : Labourd, Basse Navarre, and Soule. The customs of Labourd were later published in *Coutumes générales, gardées et observées au País et baillage de Labourt, et reffort d'icelui*, Bordeaux, J-B Lacornée, 1760. The customs of Basse Navarre were published by Jean Goyhenetche in *For et coutumes de Basse-Navarre*, Bayonne, Elkar, 1985. Finally, the customs of Soule were published by Michel Grosclaude, *La Coutume de la Soule. Traduction, notes et commentaires*, Saint-Étienne-de-Baïgorry, Izpegi, 1993.

<sup>4</sup> Many studies have explained how the house system and the stem family system worked in the Pyrenees before the French Revolution. See Eugène Cordier, *Le Droit de famille aux Pyrénées : Barège, Lavedan, Béarn et Pays Basque*, Paris, Auguste Durand, 1859 ; Alain Fougères, *Les Droits de famille et les successions au Pays Basque et en Béarn d'après les anciens textes*, Bergerac, H. Trillaud, 1938 ; Maïté Lafourcade, *Mariages en Labourd sous l'Ancien Régime. Les contrats de mariage du pays de Labourd sous le règne de Louis XVI*, Bilbao, Universidad del País Vasco, 1989 ; Jacques Poumarède, *Les Successions dans le Sud-Ouest de la France au Moyen Age*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1972 ; Anne Zink, *L'Héritier de la maison. Géographie coutumière du Sud-Ouest de la France sous l'Ancien Régime*, Paris, EHESS, 1993, among others.

century,<sup>5</sup> the paper will proceed with a demonstration on how, despite the new egalitarian law of the Civil Code, ancient cultural values and unequal inheritance practices have survived until recently. Pyrenean families have managed to circumvent equality in order to perpetuate the house system for decades. In the process, they have used old and new strategies to avoid partition and the sale of the family house. The demonstration will thus prove that families have indeed struggled to avoid implementing equality and that traditions have unconditionally prevailed over state regulations (those imposed by the Civil Code). Compromises, concessions, and sacrifices have however been necessary for the system to survive after the French Revolution. In the end, the analysis will allow the reader to understand how and why prevailing Pyrenean cultural values and practices as well as the traditional house system and stem-family household form have survived until today.

## 1. The House System according to the Customs

The Pyrenean house system which dates back to ancient times is clearly outlined in the written *Customs*. These Pyrenean local laws written in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries defined the Pyrenean house both as a household and an economic unit. The household was composed of two couples (those of the parents and of the single heir or heiress) with unmarried children, all residing and

---

<sup>5</sup> For the purpose of family reconstitution research, I selected 20 couples in six villages in the three French Basque provinces: 20 couples in Sare (a mountain village in the province of Labourd), 20 couples in Aldudes and 20 couples in Mendive (two mountain villages in the province of Basse Navarre), 20 couples in Alçay (a mountain village in the province of Soule), 20 couples in Isturitz, and 20 couples in Amendeux (two lowland villages in the province of Basse Navarre). All these villages were distant and isolated from Bayonne, the provincial capital of the French Basque Country. All the civil records (births, marriages, and deaths) were used to reconstitute the 120 families over three generations. Then information derived from the succession records (*Enregistrement*) and the land registers (*Cadastre*) were used to cross-analyze the data collected from the civil registers and to complete family reconstitutions. In the end, genealogies provided a large set of information which allowed the analysis of family practices and emigration in the nineteenth century and the twentieth century.

working in the same compound, where only one member from each generation could marry and settle and the others were either forced to celibacy in the house or to emigration. The system therefore imposed single inheritance, exclusion, and co-residence as stem-families.<sup>6</sup> The house was also an economic unit with working, living and storage spaces, each space occupying one storey of the building. While the house was the center piece of the household's living arrangement, the land around it was the heart of its sustainability. The system thus upheld Pyrenean family cultures and values to perpetuate the family line, the family lineage, and the family name,<sup>7</sup> cultural values which for the most part still prevail today.

The customs not only protected the house over individuals, but they also guaranteed the eco-demographic equilibrium of communities. Considering the limited economic potentials of the Pyrenean communities, it was a matter of economic survival to make sure that the number of households and farm holdings remained stable over time. This stability secured the livelihood to residing individuals and households in communities. In addition, as Frédéric Le Play later argued, the house system was not only necessary to

---

<sup>6</sup> Louis Assier-Landrieu (dir.), *Une France coutumière. Enquête sur les "usages locaux" et leur codification (XIXe-XXe siècles)*, Paris, Éditions du CNRS, 1990 ; Georges Augustins, *Comment se perpétuer ? Devenir des lignées et des destins des patrimoines dans les sociétés paysannes*, Nanterre, Société d'ethnologie, 1988 ; Agnès Fine-Souriac, « La famille-souche pyrénéenne au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Quelques réflexions de method », *Annales ESC*, 1977, 3, 478-487 ; Gérard Béaur, « Land transmission and inheritance practices in France during the *ancien régime* : differences of degree or kind ? », in David R. Green & Alastair Owens (eds.), *Family Welfare. Gender, Property, and Inheritance since the Seventeenth Century*, Westport (Connecticut), Praeger, 2004, 31-46 ; Bernard Derouet, « Pratiques successorales et rapport à la terre : les sociétés paysannes d'Ancien Régime », *Annales ESC*, 1, 1989, 173-206 ; Pierre Lamaison, « La diversité des modes de transmission : une géographie tenace », *Etudes rurales*, 110-111-112, 1988, 119-175 ; among many others.

<sup>7</sup> In the Basque case, the name of the original owner of the house was the name given to the house and to all the successive residents and owners, a name which was used as the reference name to identify individuals in the community and transmitted to the residents of the house whether the house was passed on to the next generation through the female or male line.

secure economic stability to families and communities but also “progress to the nation”.<sup>8</sup> More importantly, Pyrenean customs dictated rules in favor of single inheritance, rules which clearly shaped the lives of the single heir or heiress as well as his or her spouse, parents, and excluded siblings. More specifically, the laws defined the rights of the heir or heiress, the conditions of his or her marriage into the house, and his or her obligations towards the parents and towards the excluded siblings.

There were common grounds in all Pyrenean written customs, the most important one being the obligation to select one child to become the single heir of the house. Depending on areas, however, the choice of the single heir differed significantly. In the Basque Country, Lavedan and Barège, in the Western part of the French Pyrenees, the heir had to be the first-born male or female child (*aînesse intégrale*), a system favoring first-born headship and heirship without gender distinction (male or female primogeniture).<sup>9</sup> There, first-born women enjoyed the same rights and position as first-born men. In these areas, therefore, successions were either matrilineal or patrilineal depending on the sex of the single heir. Status was not determined by gender but by birth rank, the first-born child, male or female, enjoying all the rights and privileges in the house to the detriment of his or her siblings (even when the second-born child was a son). In Bearn and the Baronies, however, the heir was to be the first-born male child of the family (male primogeniture), a system which excluded women from inheritance, notwithstanding their

---

<sup>8</sup> Frédéric Le Play was a nineteenth-century reformer who advocated for the survival of some ancient family and inheritance practices to guarantee families’ survival and communities’ eco-demographic equilibrium. These ancient practices were to be perpetuated in mountain areas in particular as a strategy to secure progress to mountain communities and to the nation. See Frédéric Le Play, *L’Organisation de la famille selon le vrai modèle signalé par l’histoire de toutes les races et de tous les temps*, Paris, Tequi, 1871; *La Réforme sociale en France déduite de l’observation comparée des peuples européens*, 3 volumes, Paris, Dentu, 1878; Frédéric Le Play, Emile Cheysson, Bayard, & Fernand Butel, *Les Mélouga. Une famille pyrénéenne au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Textes réunis par Alain Chenu*, Paris, Nathan, 1994.

<sup>9</sup> Eugène Cordier, *Droit de famille aux Pyrénées. Barège, Lavedan, Béarn et Pays Basque*, Paris, Auguste Durand, 1993.

birth rank, unless no sons were born in the family.<sup>10</sup> In the same way, in French Catalonia, the heir had to be a son, but the latter was to be selected among any of the sons.<sup>11</sup> The system excluded women from inheritance altogether, as in Bearn and the Baronies, unless no sons were born in the family. Thus in Bearn, the Baronies, and Catalonia, successions were almost exclusively patrilineal, women rarely inheriting the house. Despite the above mentioned inheritance practices in the Pyrenees, the single heir or heiress inherited all assets, the family house and the land, leaving the other siblings with nothing except some cash or at best a dowry to marry away. Let's now use the Basque customs to analyze the way the house system worked and shaped individuals' lives.

According to the Basque customs, the first-born single heir or heiress had many obligations and these were undifferentiated, no matter the sex of the heir. Among these obligations, there were those related to the house. The single heir or heiress had to live and work on the family farm, maintain or even improve the farm, and finally raise a family and transmit the assets hopefully intact and preferably in a better shape to the next generation. Second, the single heir or heiress had obligations towards his or her parents. He or she had to care and provide for ageing parents in the house through their retirement until they passed away. Third, the single heir or heiress had obligations towards siblings. He or she had to finance some siblings' out-marriages so that they enjoyed a decent livelihood elsewhere. Finally, when these siblings remained

---

<sup>10</sup> Alain Fougères, *Les Droits de famille et les successions au Pays Basque et en Béarn d'après les anciens textes*, Bergerac, H. Trillaud, 1938 ; Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, « Le fonctionnement de la famille-souche dans les Baronnie des Pyrénées avant 1914 », *Annales de démographie historique*, 1987, 241-262 ; Isaac Chiva & Joseph Goy (eds.), *Les Baronnie des Pyrénées. Maisons, mode de vie, société*, Tome I, Paris, Editions de l'EHESS, 1981 & *Les Baronnie des Pyrénées. Maisons, espace, famille*, Tome II, Paris, Editions de l'EHESS, 1986 ; Jacques Poumarède, *Les Successions dans le Sud-Ouest de la France au Moyen Age*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1972 & « Famille et ténure dans les Pyrénées du Moyen Age au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle », *Annales de démographie historique*, 1979, 347-360.

<sup>11</sup> Louis Assier-Andrieu, *Coutume et rapports sociaux. Etude anthropologique des communautés paysannes du Capcir*, Paris, Editions du CNRS, 1981.

unmarried, the heir or heiress had to care for them and secure their livelihood through their life. In order to force the single heir or heiress to fulfill these numerous obligations, the customs imposed rules which conditioned his or her settlement and life in the house. All obligations were outlined in the marriage contract. The document identified the single heir or heiress and his or her spouse, outlined the specific information related to the financial settlement affecting marriage and inheritance, and finally indicated the value and use of the spouse's dowry.

With regard to the single heir and heiress's marriage contract, the customs established that the selected child became the heir or heiress on the very day of the marriage. As a consequence, he or she immediately inherited all family assets, namely the family house and land. Inheritance did not take place when the parents died (as it was later the case with the Civil Code) but when the young heir or heiress married, established himself or herself in the house with his or her spouse, and raised a family there. In any case, when the young heir or heiress married into the house, he or she became the young masters (*maîtres jeunes*) and the parents the old masters (*maîtres anciens*). They all lived together and they all shared obligations, responsibilities, and power in the house. Together, they managed the family business as *co-seigneurs* or co-managers and made decisions affecting the house.<sup>12</sup> Though a master, the heir or heiress could not dispose of the assets as he or she wished because he or she was obligated to maintain the house intact at least. He or she could only sell assets as a last resort and with the consent of all residents. In order to secure the economic viability of the house, farm tasks were divided between all the residents, men being affected to field chores and women to house chores. Finally, the revenues of the farm served to the well-being of the house and its residents and to marry excluded children away.

---

<sup>12</sup> The old and young heirs or heiresses and their spouses were not owners of the house. They were only managers or *seigneurs*, in charge of keeping the house together and transmitting it to the next generation. As a consequence, they alone could not dispose of it, but only with the collective approval of all residents (parents and unmarried siblings).

The spouse was not just any spouse. He or she had to pay his or her way into the house by bringing a sizable dowry into the marriage, one which could immediately be incorporated and re-invested into the house in order to make the family business sustainable over time. The cash dowry which the heir's or heiress' spouse brought into the marriage depended on the size and value of the inherited property. The strategy consisted in choosing spouses of equal or higher status, men and women who could for sure hand over the necessary dowry to the heir or heiress. As a result, heirs' marriages were both homogamous and endogamous, connecting two families of equal social and professional backgrounds. The dowry comprised an amount of money in cash and personal material possessions (a trousseau for example) which had to be made available upon marriage. These, however, could not be disposed of immediately for fear that the young couple could not secure progeny, in which case the dowry had to be returned to the spouse's family. Indeed, the customs indicated that in case of death or of failure to secure progeny, the dowry could not be used by the heir or heiress but instead it had to be returned to its original donor. In order to avoid having to return the dowry, families either kept the dowry untouched or accepted "trial marriages" (*marriage à l'essai*), allowing the selected heir or heiress to have pre-marital relations in order to secure progeny to the house. It was therefore common for heiresses or heirs' wives to give birth to their first-born children within eight months after the marriage. These ancient practices clearly overrode strict church regulations (those which were implemented after the Council of Trent of 1559–63), yet they were common until the French Revolution.<sup>13</sup>

Though inheritance advantaged one child over the others, customs imposed strict rules to protect heirs', parents', and siblings' interests, rules which at times made headship and heirship burdensome. These rules obligated the single heir or heiress to care for the house, for his or her ageing parents through retirement, and

---

<sup>13</sup> Maïté Lafourcade, *Mariages en Labourd sous l'Ancien Régime. Les contrats de mariage du pays de Labourd sous le règne de Louis XVI*, Bilbao, Universidad del País Vasco, 1989, p. 297.

finally for siblings' well-being. In order to reach these goals, the heir or heiress and his or her spouse had to work hard to at least maintain the house and land intact, and therefore make sure that the family business remained prosperous over time. These were necessary prerogatives to successfully transmit the house and land intact or in a better shape to the next generation. Not only did the young couple need to maintain the house but they also had to save enough to marry away one sibling. For that matter, the spouse's dowry played a major role because it served to the successful settlement of one of the siblings. As the dowry was made available upon marriage, it was delivered to the heir's parents but, as mentioned earlier, it was disposed of only after the young heiress or the heir's wife could secure progeny. Then it was used as a down payment for one of the excluded siblings to marry an heir or heiress in the community or in a nearby community. Traditionally, the heir's spouse' dowry was used for the second-born son or daughter to marry an heir or heiress of equal status and equal professional background in the community. These marriages therefore were as endogamous and homogamous as heirs'. In exchange for the dowry being used for one sibling's marriage, the spouse gained rights in the house. He or she was entitled to the status as co-manager or *co-seigneur* of the house as well as care and retirement in the house until death. In this manner, two children in each family were decently settled, both of them maintaining their social status in the community as property owners, one as an heir or heiress and the other as an heir's or heiress's spouse, with the only difference that the heir or heiress held decision-making powers to which the spouse was not entitled.

In exchange for the right to enjoy headship and heirship, the heir or heiress and his or her spouse had major constraints. They first had to house, feed and care for the elderly parents who resided with them. Though the latter partly withdrew from headship and heirship upon the single heir's or heiress' marriage and settlement into the house, they could not be ignored and sent away from the house. Instead they resided in the house until death. They actually maintained their status as property owners and masters of the house even when they retired. In addition, they continued to have a

say on the decisions related to the house and the family business. Thus, inheritance in favor of the single heir or heiress did not mean that from the time he or she settled in the house, he or she could make decisions alone and that his or her parents lost control of the house. Instead, decisions and powers were shared between the old and the young masters and at times, for many years after the heir's or heiress' marriage sometimes.

Caring for parents was not the only constraint. The young heir or heiress and his or her spouse also had obligations towards the younger siblings, namely those excluded from inheritance. While one of them, the next one in line usually, received the heir's or heiress' spouse's dowry in order to marry into a local propertied family, as explained above, the other excluded siblings had to be taken care of one way or another. Families could rarely collect more than one dowry and therefore, could not marry more than two children, the first-born child who became the heir or heiress and the second-born child who married an heir or heiress. Consequently, among the three children which families had at the time on average, one was deprived of inheritance or compensation. But because the customs forbade complete exclusion and destitution, the third-born male or female child, had specific rights over the house, the most important one being known as "*droit de chaise*". It gave excluded unmarried children the right to reside, work, and retire in the house and participate in decisions.<sup>14</sup> As long as this excluded child was not compensated and remained unmarried, the single heir or heiress was compelled to house, provide for, and care for him or her through life. Thus by law, the unmarried sibling's life of services under the heir or heiress entitled him or her to lodging, food, care, and retirement in the house until death.

---

<sup>14</sup> On this issue, see Maïté Lafourcade, *Mariages en Labourd sous l'Ancien Régime. Les contrats de mariage du pays de Labourd sous le règne de Louis XVI*, Bilbao, Universidad del País Vasco, 1989, p. 307 especially and Eugène Cordier, *Droit de famille aux Pyrénées. Barège, Lavedan, Béarn et Pays Basque*, Paris, Auguste Durand, 1993, p. 75-91.

## 2. The Stem-Family system and its stabilizing effects

The above-mentioned practices inevitably shaped household structures because they imposed the co-residence of three generations from the same family as stem-family households. These structures were the natural emanation of the house system, which together with single inheritance guaranteed the eco-demographic equilibrium of families and of communities in the Pyrenees. The stem family form indeed imposed cohabitation for the sake of the house and its dwellers, all of whom then collectively secured multi-generational mutual assistance and well-being in the house. At the time of the heir's or heiress' marriage, the household may have comprised a large number of people as the heir or heiress, his or her spouse, his or her ageing parents, and unmarried men and women from each generation (unmarried uncles, aunts and siblings). Depending on family size, this could have led to the cohabitation of more than ten people under the same roof, especially in wealthy families who could afford to sustain and employ several unmarried siblings and servants.<sup>15</sup> This cohabitation could last a number of years, despite the late marriage age of the heir or heiress and his or her spouse (25 for women and 27 for men on average). Slowly, however, relatives either departed (especially unmarried uncles, aunts, siblings and/or children) or passed away (especially ageing parents, uncles or aunts), leaving the younger couple and their unmarried children alone in the house. The household form then became simple. When the next generation's heir or heiress married, settled in the house, and had children, the household became complex again and shaped as a stem family. Thus, in the life-course

---

<sup>15</sup> For Frédéric Le Play, stem-family households may have sustained the residence of eighteen people in the same house and perhaps more, depending on the number of children in the family. The system was self-reproducing every twenty five years. Le Play argued that the stem-family form was the ideal household form in the Pyrenees for families and communities to avoid bankruptcy and economic decay. See Frédéric Le Play, *L'Organisation de la famille selon le vrai modèle signalé par l'histoire de toutes les races et de tous les temps*, Paris, Tequi, 1871, 33-34 and also chapter 2.

evolution of each household in the Pyrenees, the household structure evolved from stem, to simple, and back to stem family forms as individuals successively married, or departed, or died and the next generation married into the house. The stem-family household form thus self-regulated and self-perpetuated itself for the sake of the family house and the family lineage. It safeguarded communities' social reproduction and economic sustainability and was a vital component of the house system.<sup>16</sup>

This self-reproducing system had stabilizing repercussions on families and communities in the Pyrenees as well as in other regions of the world.<sup>17</sup> Concerning families, the system not only allowed the household to self-perpetuate itself in a stabilizing, unchanging fashion from one generation to the next, but it also contributed to everyone's well-being in the house and within the community. In an area where resources were not expandable, the system allowed families to make sure that the number of people who could settle

---

<sup>16</sup> Discussions have been going on about the relevance of simple or complex household forms in European societies in the past. This discussion has led prominent researchers such as Peter Laslett to conclude that stem-family households were minority household forms in Western Europe in the past. Yet others, such as Lutz K. Berkner, have demonstrated that household forms had to be considered over the life-cycle evolution of households. Their discussion has proposed opposite conclusions from Peter Laslett, namely that stem-family households were a more common household form than argued earlier, especially in mountain areas such as the Pyrenees. See Peter Laslett and Richard Wall (eds.), *Household and Family in Past Time. Comparative Studies in the Size and Structure of the Domestic Group Over the Last Three Centuries*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972 and Peter Laslett, Richard Wall, & Jean Robin (eds.), *Family Forms in Historical Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983. See also Lutz K. Berkner, « The stem-family and the developmental cycle of the peasant household: an eighteenth-century Austrian example », *American Historical Review*, 77 : 2, 1972, 398-418.

<sup>17</sup> Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux & Emiko Ochiai (eds.), *The Stem Family in Eurasian Perspective. Revisiting House Societies, 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2009 ; Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, « Les frontières de l'autorégulation paysanne : croissance et famille-souche », *Revue de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, 50, 1993, 38-47 ; Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, « Système de la coutume. Structures familiales et coutumes d'héritage en France au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle », *Annales ESC*, 4-5, 1972, 825-846.

and reproduce themselves in the community be limited to two persons in each family. The system indeed secured economic stability to all the residents in each house and in the community as long as only two of them were allowed to marry and settle. The other residents for their part served both as free labor and as potential replacements in case of the heirs' premature death. Widows and widowers found in their unmarried siblings or in-laws convenient replacements for their deceased spouses. While men took over farm activities, women cared for the house and underage children.<sup>18</sup> As a result, this system, which treated individuals unequally depending on birth ranks rather than gender in the Basque Country, secured the necessary, vital mechanisms for social reproduction and well-being for everyone.

Thus, the stem-family system, and the house system for that matter, guaranteed the eco-demographic equilibrium of each house and each community, each household being able to keep the family assets undivided and prosperous, always making sure to find replacements in times of accidents of life. Each community then maintained a stable number of people, of houses, and of households. Their reproduction mechanisms were constrained as a result of non-expandable economic resources which required farming households to employ a stable and constant number of people over time. The system had successfully and legally self-reproduced itself for centuries until the French Revolution when customs became illegal. These unequal privileges were permanently abolished on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 1789 and replaced with the Civil Code, which became effective in 1804. The new law then enforced equal succession. These new regulations inevitably threatened the house system and made the stem-family form obsolete. Did the French Revolution and the implementation of the Civil Code actually change practices? When they did, to what extent and to what effects? Using Basque family reconstitutions, cross-analyzed with land,

---

<sup>18</sup> Families dealt with accidents of life differently in different places. Practices therefore differed depending in regions. See Renzo Derosas & Michel Oris (eds.), *When Dad Died. Individuals and Families Coping with Distress in Past Societies*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2002.

succession, and notary registers in the nineteenth century and the twentieth century, we will see that the new law did affect practices, but not to the point of destroying unequal succession, the house system and the stem family household form.

### 3. The House System since the Civil Code

The Civil Code had great consequences on the house system, on Pyrenean farm holdings, and finally on stem-family households. All were threatened to disappear as a result of the implementation of the egalitarian law. Because the code now imposed the obligation to share all assets equally between all siblings, it seemed impossible to perpetuate the old unequal practices of the house system and single inheritance as in the past. The new law was meant to guarantee siblings equal rights over inheritance and to force the partition of all assets between all legitimate descendants. It inevitably threatened family stability as well as the economic viability of both families and communities, as Frédéric Le Play argued.<sup>19</sup> Data derived from family reconstitutions in the Basque Country since 1800 however indicate that families resisted equal partition both for the sake of the house system and because of the potential threat which the implementation of the law constituted for communities. Families soon realized that it was vital to elaborate new strategies to circumvent the law in order to perpetuate their ancient family values and practices. Yet how could families circumvent the law without risking state sanctions and bankruptcy?

Two problems emerged out of families' design to perpetuate unequal successions despite the Code. How could they circumvent the law and ignore the local notaries whose obligations were to enforce the law? And how could families transmit all assets to one child when his or her siblings were legally entitled to an equal share of the inheritance and therefore in a legal position to force partition? It soon became self-evident that the ancient system could only survive if all members of the family approved inequality and unequal

---

<sup>19</sup> Frédéric Le Play, *La Réforme sociale en France déduite de l'observation comparée des peuples européens*, Volume 3, Paris, Dentu, 1878, Chapitre 30, 132-150.

partition despite the law.<sup>20</sup> The data from the 120 genealogies from six communities in the Basque Country in the Western Pyrenees in the nineteenth century and in the twentieth century clearly indicate that with the help of notaries and the necessary approval of all the siblings, families elaborated new specific strategies, successful ones apparently, to perpetuate the traditional unequal, single-inheritance practices, until today. In so doing, they adapted aspects of the old customs and adopted new strategies in order to make old unequal regulations fit within the prerogatives of the new egalitarian law. In the same process, they had to satisfy all siblings' personal ambitions in order to discourage them to demand partition. It appears that excluded siblings accepted inequality under one condition that they had access to new opportunities, those which emerged out of the new contemporary demographic, economic, and social developments, those which became accessible in the new era of industrialization, urbanization, and emigration. The following discussion will demonstrate that indeed families did manage to circumvent the law but only because excluded siblings accepted sacrifices and compromises in exchange for greater freedom of movement and opportunities. As a consequence, single-inheritance practices, the stem-family system, and therefore the house system have prevailed until recently, excluded children making the best of

---

<sup>20</sup> Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux & Ioan Bolovan (coord.), *Families in Europe Between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries, From the Traditional Model to the Contemporary Pacts*, Cluj (Romania), Cluj University Press, 2009 ; Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga & Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux (Guest eds.), *Family Transmission in Eurasian Perspective. The History of the Family : an International Quarterly* (USA), 10 : 3, 2005 ; Gérard Béaur, Christian Dessureault & Joseph Goy (eds.), *Familles, terre, marchés. Logiques économiques et stratégies dans les milieux ruraux (XVII<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2004 ; Roland Bonnain, Gérard Bouchard & Joseph Goy (eds.), *Transmettre, hériter, succéder. La reproduction familiale en milieu rural : France – Québec, XVIII<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Lyon, Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1992 ; Gérard Bouchard, Joseph Goy, & Anne-Lise Head-König (eds.), *Problèmes de la transmission des exploitations agricoles (XVIII<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Rome, Editions de l'Ecole Française de Rome, 1998 ; David R. Green & Alastair Owens (eds.), *Family Welfare. Gender, Property, and Inheritance since the Seventeenth Century*, Westport (Connecticut), Praeger, 2004 ; Anne-Lise Head-König, Luigi Lorenzetti & Béatrice Veyrassat (eds.), *Famille, parenté et réseaux en Occident (XVII<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Genève, Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Genève, 2001.

the situation and refusing partition, for the sake of the family house.

The Code had an immediate impact on single inheritance practices. The heir or heiress could no longer inherit the family house and land and was no longer entitled to full succession upon marriage as in the past. New strategies had to be elaborated to avoid partition and secure full inheritance to the single heir or heiress. In the process, parents, heirs, and siblings had to agree to make the necessary arrangements to prevent the family house from breaking down and going bankrupt. They thus had to go around the new regulations which protected individual interests over those of the house, the family, and lineage. How could they proceed when parents for example could not disown one or several of the children and when each child now was legally entitled to an equal share of the inheritance upon their parents' death? Along the same line, the single heir or heiress could no longer receive all assets upon marriage but only a part of it when both parents died. The following discussion will demonstrate that families elaborated new complex strategies to perpetuate ancient, unequal practices despite the egalitarian law, yet concessions and compromises were necessary to successfully transmit all assets to one child.

Considering direct succession, the Civil Code proposed various prerogatives, each depending on the number of children in the family. The law permitted parents to advantage one child over the others by granting that child a larger portion of the inheritance or an extra share at a given time (usually upon that child's marriage). In this manner, the law allowed parents to legally transmit one half of the assets to one child upon his or her marriage when they had one child, one third of the assets when they had two children, and one quarter of the assets when they had three children or more.<sup>21</sup> As

---

<sup>21</sup> In book 3, title 2 on donations and testaments, chapter 3, article 913 of the Civil Code states : « The donations, either by act or testament, cannot exceed half of the assets, if the donor has one legitimate child, one third if the donor has two legitimate children, and one fourth if the donor has three or more legitimate children ». See Edouard Dalloz & Charles Vergé, *Code civil, annoté et expliqué d'après la jurisprudence et la doctrine*, Tome 2, Paris, Bureau de la Jurisprudence Générale, 1874, p. 710.

Basque families had on average three children or more in the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, the extra share generally amounted to one quarter of the assets, to be transmitted to one child, prior to succession and separately from the other three-quarter share to be equally allotted between all the children. Thus with the Civil Code, the selected heir or heiress who married into the house legally received one quarter of the family assets in advance upon marriage while his or her parents were still living and residing in the house. Contrary to what happened in the past though, he or she was only secured a larger portion of the assets, but certainly not all the assets. Then by the time his or her parents died, the single heir or heiress received his or her legal and equal share over the remaining three-quarter share in addition to the extra share he or she had received upon marriage and settlement into the house. This legal share amounted to 25% of all assets when there were three children in the family, to 18.8% of all assets when there were four children in the family, to 15% of all assets when there were five children in the family and so on. At best, the single child could receive half of the assets, one quarter from the extra share and another quarter from the legal share.<sup>22</sup> In order to collect the other half of the assets, families had to elaborate additional strategies, some which excluded siblings had to approve in order to avoid partition.

As in the past, the single heir's or heiress' spouse played a major role in the reproduction of ancient practices and social norms. He or she brought a dowry into the marriage which was then used by the single heir or heiress to collect an additional share of the inheritance. Indeed, the spouse brought a dowry worth as much as the extra share or one quarter of the assets which the single heir or

---

<sup>22</sup> See also Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga, « Succession strategies in the Pyrenees in the 19th century. The Basque case », *The History of the Family: an International Quarterly* (USA), 10 : 3, 2005, 271-292 and « Stratégies de l'indivision et rapport à la terre après le Code civil : le cas basque au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle », in Gérard Béaur, Christian Dessureault & Joseph Goy, (eds.), *Familles, terre, marchés. Logiques économiques et stratégies dans les milieux ruraux (XVII<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2004, 171-183.

heiress had received upon marriage. Then the heir or heiress used the dowry to “buy off” at least one of his or her siblings. As in the past, the family waited until the couple secured progeny in order to use the dowry. They needed to make sure that they did not have to return the money if no child was born, hence many heirs’ first child being born within eight months after the marriage. Once the single heir or heiress was secured progeny, the spouse’s dowry was used to constitute a dowry for at least one of the single heir’s or heiress’ siblings. The latter then married an heir or heiress within the community, one of equal status and rank. As a consequence, thanks to the spouse’s dowry, one of the heir’s or heiress’ siblings received full, legal compensation for his or her legal share of the inheritance, thus making it possible for the single heir or heiress to collect an additional quarter of the family assets. After collecting the extra share, the legal portion, and the assets purchased with the spouse’s dowry together, the single heir or heiress and his or her spouse controlled three quarters of all the assets. They then had many years ahead to collect the remaining quarter of the assets, to which the other sibling (s) was (were) entitled.<sup>23</sup>

Another prerogative which was stated in the customs but not guaranteed by the Civil Code referred to the ancient right which was granted to both the single heir or heiress and his or her spouse to enjoy the benefit of life-long residence and care through retirement in the house. In order to provide for each other through life, couples

---

<sup>23</sup> Depending on regions in Europe and elsewhere, strategies differed. Yet the goal was to keep the family house intact and viable. See Rolande Bonnain, Gérard Bouchard & Joseph Goy (eds.), *Transmettre, hériter, succéder. La reproduction familiale en milieu rural: France – Québec, XVIII<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Lyon, Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1992 ; Gérard Bouchard, Joseph Goy & Anne-Lise Head-König (eds.), *Problèmes de la transmission des exploitations agricoles (XVIII<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Rome, Editions de l’Ecole Française de Rome, 1998 ; Alain Collomp, *La maison du père. Famille et village en Haute-Provence aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1983 ; Bernard Derouet, « Transmettre la terre. Origines et inflexions récentes d’une problématique de différence », *Histoire et sociétés rurales*, 2, 1994, 33-67 ; Margaridad Durães, Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, Lorenç Ferrer & Jan Kok (eds.), *The Transmission of Well-Being. Gendered Marriage Strategies and Inheritance Systems in Europe (17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2009.

(the single heir or heiress and his or her spouse) had to include a clause of mutual assistance and care in the marriage contract.<sup>24</sup> The Civil Code did provide for prerogatives to that effect. Indeed each spouse could donate as much as half of the assets to the other, all in usufruct or half in property and half in usufruct. By this process, each controlled a good part of the spouse's assets and both spouses were secured livelihood in the house through retirement and until death. This mutual donation was reduced by half when the single heir or heiress of the next generation received the extra share upon marriage. In the end, this mutual donation strategy prevented partition until both the older heir or heiress and his or spouse died. It also gave the single heir or heiress of the next generation extra time to come up with the necessary compensation to acquire the remaining assets. As long as the single heir or heiress and his or her parent(s) controlled more than half of the assets, no partition could be enforced and all could live and work in peace in the house. In later years, however, the heir or heiress and his or spouse had to find a solution to collect the last quarter share and thus avoid partition.

It appears that families had difficulty collecting enough money to compensate all the children for their legal share of the inheritance. Only the heir or heiress and one (or two perhaps) of his or her siblings could marry decently into the community. They were house owners either because they inherited the family assets or because they had married into a propertied family. Large families, however, had to elaborate more complex strategies to make sure that the house and land remained intact. Legally they could not force excluded children to relinquish their share of the inheritance. Yet in order to avoid partition when both parents passed away, heirs or heiresses had to find complex solutions to prevent siblings from

---

<sup>24</sup> Heirs' marriage contracts all included « community » and « mutual donation » clauses which protected each of the spouses against partition and destitution. Each owned and/or controlled half of the other's assets, making it impossible for their children to force partition until the other spouse passed away. In this manner, the heir or heiress and his or her spouse could live and retire in the house and were cared for by the next generation's heir or heiress.

demanding their legal share of the inheritance and therefore force partition.

In most cases, families managed to save or sometimes accepted to borrow money in order to compensate excluded children. The strategy was then to take out loans in order to propose a compensation of smaller value than the legal share of the inheritance but at the time when siblings were young and needed the money to start their new life. When these children accepted a smaller, early compensation, they departed from the house permanently and signed a legal document stating that they had received a full compensation and had no intention to demand additional compensation upon their parents' death. As in the past, compensation, no matter the size, signified permanent exclusion.<sup>25</sup> By accepting a smaller, yet earlier compensation, departing children made a sacrifice for themselves and for the sake of the family and of the house. They however received enough money to start a new life in French cities or in America at a time when they needed it the most. Their sacrifice therefore had both negative as well as positive sides. They indeed received a smaller, earlier compensation but enough to help them to plan for their future. All siblings were not so lucky though, especially the youngest, often female unmarried siblings. As they generally received nothing, they relinquished their shares of the inheritance for the sake of the family and the house. By the time their parents died, they were already older, established, and sometimes all provided for. Their life no longer depended on this compensation, all the more so that the compensation sometimes amounted to a small amount of money and did not mean much any longer. Succession registers indicate that excluded siblings eventually and willingly signed testaments donating their share of the inheritance to the single heir or heiress of the house, whether he or she was a sibling, a nephew or niece (the single heir or heiress of the next generation). Finally, as a pay-off for the donation (in the same way as with the customs), uncompensated unmarried men

---

<sup>25</sup> On this issue, see Gérard Bouchard, John Dickinson & Joseph Goy (eds.), *Les Exclus de la terre en France et au Québec (XVII<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècles)*. *La reproduction familiale dans la différence*, Sillery (Québec), Septentrion, 1998.

and women could retire in the family house, a possibility few envisaged though.

In the end, it appears that heirs and their spouses managed to acquire all the shares of the inheritance and avoided partition. They successfully kept the family assets all together, and later transmitted them intact to the next single heir or heiress. The cadastre as well as succession registers indicate that hardly any families in the Basque Country were forced to equal partition and sell the house.<sup>26</sup> When there was no descendant, either because they had all departed from the house (to cities or overseas), remained unmarried, or had all died without progeny, the family found a distant relative, one from another branch of the family to take over the family business and to make the house live on. It appears that the Pyreneans, and the Basques among them, valued old traditional family values, making all efforts possible to perpetuate them for more than two centuries after the Civil Code was first implemented.

#### 4. Consequences of the Civil Code on the new inheritance system

The implementation of the egalitarian laws of the Civil Code undoubtedly had important, positive and negative, consequences both on the parents and on the single heir or heiress and his or her spouse. The burden of the new law however weighed more on the young heirs than on their parents, the latter now having the advantage to remain in control of the house and the business until they died. The young heir or heiress and his or her spouse however were those who had to make the greater financial efforts and the necessary concessions in order to keep the house together and

---

<sup>26</sup> While land registers (*Cadastre*) in the Basque Country indicate that few families were actually forced to sell the assets in order to partition them between all siblings, in Bearn, partitions were more common, younger siblings, especially women, resenting unequal partition and demanding their legal share of the inheritance. Such demands sometimes forced the single heir to sell the family assets to satisfy siblings' demands. See Christine Lacanette-Pommel, *La famille dans les Pyrénées. De la coutume au code Napoléon*, Estadens, PyrèGraph, 2003.

transmit it intact to the next generation. The strategies which young heirs had to elaborate were sequential and involved life-long efforts, struggles, and planning. In the past, the single heir or heiress had tremendous privileges because he or she received full ownership of the house and land upon marriage and their parents soon gave up the management of the family business. With the Civil Code, however, the heir or heiress and his or her spouse had limited privileges. They were only secured 50% of the assets upon marriage, half of which originated from the parents' extra share donation and the other half from the share acquired with the spouse's dowry. Thus the advantages which the single heir or heiress enjoyed with the Customs were no longer secured by the new law. Finally, with the Civil Code, the young heir and heiress had to share headship and heirship with his or her parents until the latter passed away.<sup>27</sup>

The law had other negative effects upon the single heir or heiress. The latter had to wait until some of the siblings departed from the house before he or she could marry and settle into the house. In addition, after the marriage, he or she had to accept the debts contracted in order to settle siblings into another house or elsewhere, debts which he or she had to pay off later in life. Not only were there already debts to reimburse but the single heir or heiress had to wait until both parents died before he or she could acquire his or her legal share of the inheritance, the one from the three-quarter portion to be equally partitioned between all siblings. Meanwhile, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, more and more siblings demanded a compensation to leave the house and depart for America where opportunities appeared more and more attractive. Single heirs consequently had to find hundreds of francs to finance migrating siblings' fare across the Atlantic Ocean and for

---

<sup>27</sup> Also see Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga, « Droits, pouvoirs et devoirs dans la maison basque : la place des hommes et des femmes au sein des familles basques depuis le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle », *Vasconia. Cuadernos de Historia-Geografía*, 35, 2006, 155-183 & « Marriage strategies and well-being among 19<sup>th</sup> century Basque family property owners », in Margaridad Durães, Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, Lorenç Ferrer & Jan Kok (eds.), *The Transmission of Well-Being. Gendered Marriage Strategies and Inheritance Systems in Europe (17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2009, 53-74.

their settlement in America. As a result of these new trends, the single heir or heiress not only enjoyed headship and heirship very late in life (after his or her parents' death) but at a high cost. Departing siblings for their part enjoyed greater freedom of movement and opportunities as young adults. Thus, by the second half of the nineteenth century, the data show that headship and heirship were no longer perceived as attractive positions as in the past.

In these conditions, the spouse's dowry came to be convenient. Thanks to it, the heir or heiress could pay for a good part of the debts and thus acquire additional shares of the inheritance but, contrary to what happened in the *ancien régime*, he or she had to share decision making and power in the house with his or her spouse. The latter, especially men, used more and more often the prerogatives of the Civil Code to demand that the dowry invested in the house secured them ownership rights upon a portion of the house. In the end, the single heir or heiress no longer enjoyed full headship and heirship over the house but instead, had to share them first with parents and then with the spouse.

Soon headship and heirship no longer appeared attractive as they imposed partible inheritance, the obligation to finance siblings' departure before marriage and pay debts, and the collective ownership of the assets between the ageing heir, the young heir and their respective spouses. This opened the door to the emergence of new attitudes. More and more first-born son, and even younger sons, refused headship and the heavy responsibilities that came with the position. Instead they departed from the house to America with the goal of saving money to reimburse siblings with their shares of the inheritance and of returning to the house with money after the departure of the younger siblings. The data however show that this hardly ever happened because many departing sons eventually fared so well in America that they refused to sell their newly acquired assets to return to the house. They instead renounced headship and heirship, allowing another sibling to take over the family business.

The consequence of this situation was that more and more first-born or younger sons left the house to settle in America or in cities so that the responsibilities of headship and heirship were more and more handed over to a younger sister.<sup>28</sup> Subsequently, as the nineteenth century unveiled, more men emigrated to America and more women inherited the family house. With time, headship was more and more assumed by women, first-born daughters as well as younger daughters to the point that in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, female inheritance became more common and replaced the more traditional male or female primogeniture which had prevailed until the French Revolution.<sup>29</sup> The system which consequently emerged out of these new practices, strategies and decisions first led way to an undifferentiated male – female, first-born or younger inheritance system with matrilineal and patrilineal decent successions. Later, the data show that more first-born or younger women inherited the house. The system thus led way to more matrilineal-decent than patrilineal-decent successions, practices which favored inheritance through the female rather the male line of the family.<sup>30</sup>

The above study thus shows that the Civil Code had a great impact on the traditional single inheritance system which the customs had regulated. It clearly forced changes in the way in which

---

<sup>28</sup> On this issue, see Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga, « Les héritières de la maison au Pays Basque au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle », *Lapurdum*, VII, 2002, 35-55 & « Female primogeniture in the French Basque Country », in Emiko Ochiai (ed.), *The Logic of Female Succession: Rethinking Patriarchy and Patrilineality in Global and Historical Perspective*, Kyoto (Japan), International Research Center of Japanese Studies, 2002, p. 31-52.

<sup>29</sup> On such issues, see Margaridad Durães, Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, Lorenç Ferrer & Jan Kok (eds.), *The Transmission of Well-Being. Gendered Marriage Strategies and Inheritance Systems in Europe (17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2009. See also Beatrice Moring (ed.), *Female Economic Strategies in the Modern World*, London, Pickering & Chatto, 2012.

<sup>30</sup> Practices in the Auvergne in Central France also shifted towards more female inheritance in the course of the nineteenth century as a result of growing male emigration. See Rose Duroux, « The temporary migration of males and the power of females in a stem-family society. The case of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Auvergne », *The History of the Family*, 6 : 1, 2001.

the single heir or heiress was selected and property transmitted. Yet impartible inheritance never disappeared. While the above discussion demonstrated that the Code indeed had an impact on the heirs and their spouses (whether older or younger, male or female heirs) and their lives, the next discussion will show that the Code had an even greater impact on the destinies of the excluded children, men and women.

## 5. Consequences of the Civil Code on excluded children

While in the *ancient régime*, excluded siblings were entitled to well-being through marriage with an heir or heiress or celibacy at home, with the Civil Code, all children were entitled to an equal share of the family assets, an equal, legal portion out of the three-quarter share of the assets to be divided between them upon the death of both parents. The law however imposed a major constraint. Indeed children were entitled to an equal portion but they were forced to wait until both parents died to demand their share. What the Civil Code granted adult men and women however was greater freedom of choice, movement, and decision. Excluded siblings were no longer limited to marrying an heir or heiress or to life-long celibacy and services under the heir or heiress. With industrialism, urbanization, and emigration, men and women now enjoyed greater employment and migration opportunities. They could find even better, more stable jobs in towns, cities and overseas. The data indicate that many took advantage of this freedom to find ways to secure themselves a decent, equal, or better life outside the family house.

The data also indicate that more and more excluded children, first-born or younger sons but also daughters, departed from the family house to reside inside or outside the Basque Country so that they could secure themselves a new, perhaps better life. The research derived from the 120 genealogies indicates that excluded children envisaged a wider range of migration options and these options were gender-differentiated. While a lot of the women settled in French towns and cities, nearby or in other regional cities or Paris, a lot of the men preferred migration to America, Argentina and Uruguay but also Chile, Mexico, Cuba and the United States.<sup>31</sup>

Clearly the data indicate that migration across the Atlantic Ocean had become an attractive option, one which appealed to men more than to women.<sup>32</sup> That is because, contrary to the women, many men who did not inherit or marry an heiress sometimes received an early yet smaller compensation for their shares of the inheritance upon departure to America, a compensation which they used as young adults to pay for their passage across the Atlantic Ocean and to settle down in America.<sup>33</sup> These men often fared well in America, where they bought land and started a business. The women were not well provided for, especially the younger ones, who often received no early, smaller compensation upon departure. They therefore resorted to a settlement in local towns or regional cities, where they worked as maids, shop attendants, seamstresses, or weavers. Some of them worked hard in order to gather a dowry and later get married.<sup>34</sup> While some of these women married propertied

---

<sup>31</sup> On overseas emigration to America, see William A. Douglass and Jon Bilbao, *Amerikanuak. Basques in the New World*, Reno, University of Nevada Press, 2005. See also « Cent ans d'émigration basque française en Amérique du Nord : Synthèse et nouvelles perspectives (1860-1960) » in Adrien Blazquez (textes réunis par), *Emigration de masse et émigration d'élite vers les Amériques au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Le cas des Pyrénées basco-béarnaises*, Orthez, Editions Gascogne, 2010, 113-155.

<sup>32</sup> On this issue, see Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga, « Structures familiales et destins migratoires à Sare au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle », *Lapurdum*, II, 1997, 237-255 & « Basque migration and inheritance in the nineteenth century », in Annemarie Steidl, Josef Ehmer, Stan Nadel, and Hermann Zeitlhofer (eds.), *European Mobility Internal, International, and Transatlantic Moves in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Göttingen (Germany), V&R Unipress, 2009, 135-150.

<sup>33</sup> On this issue, see Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga, « Celibacy and Gender Inequalities in the Pyrenees in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries », in Tindara Addabo, Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga, Cristina Borderias & Alastair Owens (eds.), *Gender Inequalities, Households and the Production of Well-Being in Modern Europe*, London, Ashgate Publishing, 2010, 219-234.

<sup>34</sup> Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga, « Urban migrants and domesticity in the 19th century: the Basque Case », in Suzy Pasleau, Isabelle Schopp (eds.), with Raffaella Sarti, *Proceedings of the Servant Project*, Vol. IV, Liège, Éditions de l'Université de Liège, 2006, 303-327 & « Destins de femmes dans les Pyrénées au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle : le cas basque », Numéro spécial, *Itinéraires féminins. Annales de Démographie Historique*, 2006, 2, 135-170 & « Basque women and migration in the nineteenth century », *The History of the Family. An International Quarterly*, 10 : 2, 2005, 99-117.

artisans or civil servants who secured them a stable life and upward social mobility in cities, others remained unmarried, never able to save enough money to constitute a decent dowry or chose an independent life as celibate women despite lower social mobility.<sup>35</sup>

Thus men and women from rural propertied families in the Basque Country, and in the Pyrenees in general in the past two centuries, had different migration, professional, and social destinies depending on their sex, their birth rank, their marital status, their migration destination, and their professional destinies. Inheritance practices in the Basque Country before the Civil Code never favored men over women. All had destinies which differed depending on their birth rank rather than gender. In the nineteenth century and in the twentieth century however, more gender inequalities emerged, men, whether first-born or younger, often having greater and better opportunities than women. When looking at gender and status, it clearly appears that women enjoyed fewer powers and were bound to receive less recognition, if at all, than men. In the end, after the French Revolution, women had greater chances to enjoy poorer destinies.<sup>36</sup> As a result of these gender-differentiated treatments, more women experienced downward social mobility than men. They could have avoided lower destinies as celibates by joining their brothers and marrying well-established fellow-citizens there.<sup>37</sup> Instead they settled in French towns or cities where they had to make a living for themselves away from home. This was apparently the price to pay for greater individual liberty and greater freedom of

---

<sup>35</sup> On the issue of celibacy, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Le bal des célibataires. Crise de la société paysanne en Béarn*, Paris, Seuil, 2002. See also Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga, « Rôles et statuts des femmes dans les sociétés pyrénéennes : le Pays Basque aux XIX<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècles », in Nelly Valsangiacomo & Luigi Lorenzetti (eds.), *Donne e Lavoro. Prospettive per una storia delle montagne europee, XVIII-XX secc.*, Milan, Italie, FrancoAngeli, 2010, 296-318 & « Gender and migration in the Pyrenees in the nineteenth century : gender-differentiated patterns and destinies », in Beatrice Moring (ed.), *Female Economic Strategies in the Modern World*, London, Pickering & Chatto, 2012, 127-144.

<sup>36</sup> See Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga, « Pyrenean marriage strategies in the nineteenth century : the Basque case », *International Review of Social History*, 50 (2005), 93-122.

movements. All aspects considered though, it seems that for the sake of the house, all siblings, especially women, made greater sacrifices to perpetuate single inheritance and ancient family values and practices, all of which have survived since then and until today.

## 6. Case studies

In order to illustrate the above arguments and show how families perpetuated the house system and therefore the unequal single inheritance system which depended on it, I will use the E. family who originated from the mountain village of Sare. This family history did not differ much from many others, yet serves as a model and an illustration of the new succession strategies and practices which Pyreneans had to elaborate in the nineteenth century and the twentieth century in order to perpetuate the house system.

Michel and Marie got married in 1806 at the time when the Civil Code was not fully enforced in the Pyrenees. That is why Michel inherited his parents' house and land entirely upon his marriage, a property of five hectares which he alone owned and controlled through his life. His wife, Marie, brought a dowry worth 1000 francs, which was not large at that time, considering her parents owned a property of 32 hectares. As a result, Marie married downward, not only because she had a rather small dowry but more importantly because she had given birth to an illegitimate child before marriage, a child whom both she and Michel recognized in the civil marriage certificate. Following the marriage ceremony, Michel's parents strove to perpetuate ancient practices despite the Civil Code. Marie's dowry was incorporated into the house to compensate Michel's siblings. Though the dowry served to keep the house together, Marie made no benefit from her investment. When she died she owned her dowry,

---

<sup>37</sup> See Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga, « Les femmes pyrénéennes et l'émigration transatlantique aux XIX<sup>e</sup> et XX<sup>e</sup> siècles : une réalité mal connue », in Natacha Lillo & Philippe Rygiel (eds.), *Rapports sociaux de sexe et migrations*, Paris, Publibook, 2006, 59-70 & « L'émigration des pyrénéennes en Amérique du Nord aux XIX-XXe siècles », in Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga (guest ed.), *Histoire sociale – Social History*, « Les femmes et l'émigration en Amérique du Nord / Women and Emigration to North America », (novembre-November) 2007, 40 : 80, 269-295.

and nothing else, though the use of her dowry gave her legal rights over the house according to the Code. In exchange for her investment (as traditions allowed), she lived, worked and retired in the house, and enjoyed the status of co-manager of the house. Michel and Marie started their life as “*maîtres jeunes*”, or co-managers of the house, one as the heir and the other as the heir’s wife in the same way as the customs dictated before the French Revolution. Despite the Code, they lived in the house according to the old traditional rules. Subsequently, however, ancient practices changed. When Michel’s and Marie’s children became young adults, the family was forced to abide by the new law and use the prerogatives of the Civil Code to perpetuate the house system.

Michel and Marie had five surviving adult children who were all born before 1820 and became adults in the nineteen forties. According to the customs, Pierre, the first-born child, should have inherited the family house, yet he never did, either because he was conceived out of wedlock and illegitimate or because he never married. He remained single in a nearby village where he worked as a blacksmith throughout his life, a craft for which his father had trained him. His sister, Marie, the next one in line, was the one who inherited the house and land when she married Jean-Baptiste in 1841. Though a woman and second-born, she was selected as the single heiress, over her older and younger brothers. Clearly she suffered no gender inequality. Her husband brought a sizeable dowry into the marriage, one which amounted to 2000 francs and which was used for her brother, Pierre, the third-born child, so that he could marry Gracieuse in 1842, and then settle in America. The family could not afford to endow the two youngest sisters, Marie-Rose and Marianne. As a consequence, the former became a nun in a local convent and the latter a maid in Paris. Both remained single and experienced downward social mobility.

In order to make sure that the house remained intact, it appears that the family forced or accepted gender inequalities. Out of the five children, only two received some kind of compensation and married. As in the past, they both fared well, one as the heiress and the other as an heir’s wife. Three children however never married, but, out of

the three, only the first-born son did quite well as a blacksmith. All relinquished their shares of the inheritance and signed testaments acknowledging their willingness to donate their shares to the single heiress, for the sake of the family house. It was clear that in the first half of the nineteenth century, men and women did not hesitate to sacrifice their life and future for the sake of the family. The Civil Code could not be fully enforced, three children accepting exclusion and Jean-Baptiste's dowry being used to endow one child with no return on his investment. The above shows that in the first half of the nineteenth century, customs were perpetuated as in the past. This situation however did not last. In the second half of the nineteenth century and beyond, we will now see that inheritance practices suffered great transformations.

Marie and Jean-Baptiste who married in 1841 had inherited the family house and the five hectares of land which Marie had received from her father. Together they had three children, two sons and a daughter. The first-born son, Martin, and his third-born brother, Pierre, both received an early, smaller compensation for their shares of the inheritance before they moved to America. They had the money to pay for their voyage across the Atlantic Ocean and for their settlement. None of the two married, yet both became successful merchants. They perhaps anticipated returning home for retirement, yet they never did. As a consequence, Jeanne-Marie, the second-born daughter, inherited the family assets when in 1876 she married Pierre, the owner of a hotel in a nearby village. His dowry allowed her to keep the house together and to pay back the debts which the family may have encountered when the two brothers received money to move to America. The main difference between this generation and the previous ones was that Jean-Baptiste co-owned the house and land which his wife, Marie, had inherited. Indeed, Jean-Baptiste used the Code's prerogatives to make sure that his investment into the house paid off and made him co-owner of his wife's inheritance. Thus he and Marie shared ownership of the assets which Marie had inherited from her mother. This case study thus shows growing gender-differentiated treatment and inequalities in the nineteenth century. It highlights that Marie was indeed chosen as an heiress over her two brothers (as in the past), but only to allow her two

brothers to have better futures. In the same line, Marie, the single heiress, had extensive rights but she now had to share headship and heirship rights over the house with her husband.

The above case study shows how old and new strategies were used to permit families to finance marriages and emigration and to force younger, female children to accept no compensation and celibacy for the sake of the house. The house system thus survived over time because of greater gender-differentiated treatment, women accepting more sacrifices than men. Thanks to these sacrifices, the house system survived and households continued to structure as stem families. Indeed in 1841, when Marie and Michel, the older heirs, allowed their daughter, Marie, and their son-in-law, Jean-Baptiste, to settle in the house, most of the unmarried children resided in the house with them. As a result, the household structured as a stem family. Over time, Marie's three siblings left the house, the first one to a nearby village, the second one to a nearby town, and finally the third one to Paris. Upon the departure of all siblings, the household was still structured as a stem family, two married couples (the old and new heirs) living together. When Marie's parents passed away though, the household then structured in a simple family, one couple living with their unmarried children, until Jeanne-Marie, the next-generation's heiress married into the house.

The demonstration clearly shows that when there were three children, the family had no difficulty keeping the house together by compensating the excluded siblings with an early, smaller share of the inheritance and thus helping them to emigrate. The problem emerged when there were more than three children, as in the case of Michel and Marie who had five surviving adult children. It was impossible to collect the money to compensate all five children. One was selected as the single heir and another one received a dowry, married away, and emigrated to America. Besides these two children, however, the other three children received no compensation, especially the two daughters. As a result, all remained single. None could afford a dowry and a marriage into a propertied family. They could have legally demanded their share of the inheritance, which for each amounted to 15% of the three-

quarter share to be divided equally between all of them. Yet by the time their parents died, they probably no longer needed the money nor had the desire to force compensation. They all wrote testaments donating their legal share of the inheritance to Jeanne-Marie, the next generation's heiress.

## Conclusion

This study not only shows how families circumvented the law in order to perpetuate ancient unequal family values and practices, but it also demonstrates that state law had rather limited effects upon families' cultural and inheritance practices. Despite France's centralized law which secured equality to all men and women, local cultures and traditions towards inequality survived over time, indicating that states did not immediately manage to impose equality everywhere in France. Individuals and families were capable of circumventing the law but only because all family members agreed. Family lineage and the house system were strong traditional values for which individuals and families made sacrifices and were willing to struggle.

Though the Civil Code did not abolish permanently custom practices, it did transform them because it forced families to adapt their old practices and adopt new strategies to perpetuate single inheritance. The new law consequently did affect practices, yet families' will to protect the house system was stronger. Circumstances did help them to circumvent the law though. New economic and professional opportunities in French cities and in America encouraged excluded children to accept early, smaller compensations before their permanent departure from the house. They could then envisage a better life for themselves and their family elsewhere. We could even extrapolate by saying that single unequal inheritance probably survived the Civil Code because of the new opportunities which industrialism, urbanization, and emigration to America offered at the time. Excluded siblings thus had new options besides inheritance, some which were sometimes preferable to headship and heirship and which clearly benefited men more than women.

## References

- Abelson, A., « Inheritance and population control in a Basque valley before 1900 », *Peasant Studies*, 7 : 1, 1978, 11-27.
- Arrizabalaga, M.-P., « The stem family in the French Basque Country : Sare in the nineteenth century », *Journal of Family History*, 1, 1997, 50-69.
- Arrizabalaga, M.-P., « Structures familiales et destins migratoires à Sare au XIXe siècle », *Lapurdum*, II, 1997, 237-255.
- Arrizabalaga, M.-P., « Les héritières de la maison au Pays Basque au XIXe siècle », *Lapurdum*, VII, 2002, 35-55.
- Arrizabalaga, M.-P., « Female primogeniture in the French Basque Country », in E. Ochiai (Ed.), *The Logic of Female Succession : Rethinking Patriarchy and Patrilineality in Global and Historical Perspective* (31-52), Kyoto (Japan), International Research Center of Japanese Studies, 2002.
- Arrizabalaga, M.-P., « Stratégies de l'indivision et rapport à la terre après le Code civil : le cas basque au XIXe siècle », in G. Béaur, C. Dessureault, & J. Goy, (Eds.), *Familles, terre, marchés. Logiques économiques et stratégies dans les milieux ruraux (XVIIe-XXe siècles)*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2004, 171-183.
- Arrizabalaga, M.-P., « Pyrenean marriage strategies in the nineteenth century : the Basque case », *IRSH* 50, 2005, 93-122.
- Arrizabalaga, M.-P., « Succession strategies in the Pyrenees in the 19th century. The Basque case », *The History of the Family : an International Quarterly* (USA), 10 : 3, 2005, 271-292.
- Arrizabalaga, M.-P., « Family transmission in Eurasian perspective. Introduction », with Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux (ghest editors), *The History of the Family : an International Quarterly* (USA), 10 : 3, 2005, 183-193.
- Arrizabalaga, M.-P. « Droits, pouvoirs et devoirs dans la maison basque : la place des hommes et des femmes au sein des familles basques depuis le XIXe siècle », *Vasconia. Cuadernos de Historia-Geografía*, 35, 2006, 155-183.
- Arrizabalaga, M.-P., « Peter Laslett et la famille pyrénéenne : bilan et débats », in Francisco García González (ed.), *La historia de la familia en la Península Ibérica (SS. XVI - XIX). Balance regional y perspectivas*, édité par F. García González, Cuesca, Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha (Spain), 2008, 409-440.
- Arrizabalaga, M.-P., « Basque migration and inheritance in the nineteenth Century », in A. Steidl, J. Ehmer, S. Nadel, and H. Zeitlhofer (eds.), *European Mobility Internal, International, and Transatlantic Moves in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*,

- Göttingen (Germany), V&R Unipress, 2009, 135-150.
- Arrizabalaga, M.-P., « Gender and well-being in the Pyrenean stem-family system », in Bernard Harris, Lina Gálvez & Helena Machado (eds.), *Gender and Well-being in Europe, Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, London, Ashgate Publishing, 2009, 85-102.
- Arrizabalaga, M.-P., « Marriage strategies and well-being among 19<sup>th</sup> century Basque family property owners », in M. Durães, A. Fauve-Chamoux, L. Ferrer & Jan Kok (eds.), *The Transmission of Well-Being. Gendered Marriage Strategies and Inheritance Systems in Europe (17<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2009, 53-74.
- Arrizabalaga, M.-P., « Celibacy and Gender Inequalities in the Pyrenees in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries », in T. Addabo, M.-P. Arrizabalaga, C. Borderias & A. Owens (eds.), *Gender Inequalities, Households and the Production of Well-Being in Modern Europe*, London, Ashgate Publishing, 2010, 219-234.
- Arrizabalaga, M.-P., « Rôles et statuts des femmes dans les sociétés pyrénéennes : le Pays Basque aux XIXe - XXe siècles », in N. Valsangiacomo & L. Lorenzetti (eds.), *Donne e Lavoro. Prospettive per una storia delle montagne europee, XVIII-XX secc.*, Milan, Italie, FrancoAngeli, 2010, 296-318.
- Arrizabalaga, M.-P., Fauve-Chamoux, A. (Guest eds.), *Family transmission in Eurasian perspective. The History of the Family : an International Quarterly (USA)*, 10 : 3, 2005.
- Assier-Andrieu, L., *Coutume et rapports sociaux. Etude anthropologique des communautés paysannes du Capcir*, Paris, Editions du CNRS, 1981.
- Assier-Andrieu, L. (Ed.), *Une France coutumière. Enquête sur les "usages locaux" et leur codification (XIXe-XXe siècles)*, Paris, Éditions du CNRS, 1990.
- Augustins, G., *Comment se perpétuer ? Devenir des lignées et destins des patrimoines dans les paysanneries européennes*, Nanterre, Société d'ethnologie française, 1989.
- Barcelo, R., « Transmission héréditaire et systèmes de production : le cas de la Soule (Pyrénées-Atlantiques) », *Sociologie du travail*, 3, 1988, 443-460.
- Béaur, G., « Le marché foncier éclaté. Les modes de transmission du patrimoine sous l'Ancien Régime », *Annales ESC*, 1, 1991, 189-203.
- Béaur, G., « La transmission des exploitations : logiques et stratégies. Quelques réflexions sur un processus obscur », in G. Bouchard, J. Goy, & A.-L. Head-König (Eds.), *Problèmes de la transmission des exploitations agricoles (XVIIIe - XXe siècles)*, Rome, Ecole française de Rome, 1998, 109-116.
- Béaur, G., « Land transmission and inheritance practices in France during the ancien régime : differences of degree or kind ? », in D. R. Green & A. Owens (Eds.), *Family Welfare. Gender, Property, and Inheritance since the Seventeenth Century*, Westport (Connecticut), Praeger, 2004, 31-46.
- Béaur, G., Dessureault, C., & Goy, J. (Eds.), *Familles, terre, marchés. Logiques*

- économiques et stratégies dans les milieux ruraux (XVIIe-XXe siècles)*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2004.
- Berkner, L. K., « The stem-family and the developmental cycle of the peasant household : an eighteenth-century Austrian example », *American Historical Review*, 77 : 2, 1972, 398-418.
- Bonnain, R., « Migration, exclusion et solidarité », in G. Bouchard, J. Dickinson, & J. Goy (Eds.), *Les Exclus de la terre en France et au Québec (XVIIe - XXe siècles)*, Sillery (Québec), Septentrion, 1998, 271-290.
- Bonnain, R., Bouchard, G., & Goy, J. (Eds.), *Transmettre, hériter, succéder. La reproduction familiale en milieu rural : France - Québec, XVIIIe - XXe siècles*, Lyon, Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1992.
- Bouchard, G., Goy, J., & Head-König, A-L. (Eds.), *Problèmes de la transmission des exploitations agricoles (XVIIIe - XXe siècles)*, Rome, Editions de l'Ecole Française de Rome, 1998.
- Bouchard, G., Dickinson, J., & Goy, J. (Eds.), *Les Exclus de la terre en France et au Québec (XVIIe - XXe siècles). La reproduction familiale dans la différence*, Sillery (Québec), Septentrion, 1998.
- Bourdieu, P., *Le bal des célibataires. Crise de la société paysanne en Béarn*, Paris, Seuil, 2002.
- Chiva, I., & Goy, J. (Eds.), *Les Baronnies des Pyrénées. Maisons, mode de vie, société*, Tome I, Paris, Editions de l'EHESS, 1981.
- Chiva, I., & Goy, J. (Eds.), *Les Baronnies des Pyrénées. Maisons, espace, famille*, Tome II, Paris, Editions de l'EHESS, 1986.
- Collomp, A., *La maison du père. Famille et village en Haute-Provence aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1983.
- Comas d'Argemir, D., & Soulet, J.-F. (Eds.), *La família als Pirineus*, Andorre, Impremta Solber, 1993.
- Cordier, E., *Droit de famille aux Pyrénées. Barège, Lavedan, Béarn et Pays Basque*, Paris, Auguste Durand, 1993.
- Derosas, R., & Oris, M. (Eds.), *When Dad Died. Individuals and Families Coping with Distress in Past Societies*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2002.
- Derouet, B., « Pratiques successorales et rapport à la terre : les sociétés paysannes d'Ancien Régime », *Annales ESC*, 1, 1989, 173-206.
- Derouet, B., « Le partage des frères. Héritage masculin et reproduction sociale en Franche-Comté aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles », *Annales ESC*, 2, 1993, 453-474.
- Derouet, B., « Transmettre la terre. Origines et inflexions récentes d'une problématique de différence », *Histoire et sociétés rurales*, 2, 1994, 33-67.
- Dessureault, C., Dickinson, J., & Goy, J. (Eds.), *Famille et marché (XVIe - XXe*

- siècles), Sillery (Québec), Septentrion, 2003.
- Douglass, W. A., *Etchalar and Murelaga. Opportunity and Rural Exodus in Two Spanish Basque Villages*, New York, St Martin's Press, 1975.
- Douglass, W. A., « The Basque stem-family household : myth or reality ? », *Journal of Family History*, 73 : 1, 75-89, 1988.
- Durães, M., Fauve-Chamoux, A., Ferrer, L. & Kok, J (eds.), *The Transmission of Well-Being. Gendered Marriage Strategies and Inheritance Systems in Europe (17<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2009.
- Etchelecou, A., *Transition démographique et système coutumier dans les Pyrénées occidentales*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1991.
- Fauve-Chamoux, A., « Les structures familiales au Royaume des familles-souches : Esparros », *Annales ESC*, 3, 1984, 514-528.
- Fauve-Chamoux, A., « Le fonctionnement de la famille-souche dans les Baronniees des Pyrénées avant 1914 », *Annales de démographie historique*, 1987, 241-262.
- Fauve-Chamoux, A., « Les frontières de l'autorégulation paysanne : croissance et famille-souche », *Revue de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, 50, 1993, 38-47.
- Fauve-Chamoux, A., « Household forms and living standards in preindustrial France : from models to realities », *Journal of Family History*, 18, 2, 1993, 135-156.
- Fauve-Chamoux, A., « The stem family, demography and inheritance », in D. Siddle (Ed.), *The European Peasant Family and Economy*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1995, 86-113.
- Fauve-Chamoux, A., « La reproduction familiale en milieu paysan : le destin des exclus », in G. Bouchard, J. Dickinson, & J. Goy (Eds.), *Les Exclus de la terre en France et au Quebec (XVIIe - XXe siècles). La reproduction familiale dans la différence*, Sillery (Quebec), Septentrion, 1998, 73-91.
- Fauve-Chamoux, A., « Strategies of household continuity in a Stem-Family Society : from heirship to headship », in R. Derosas, & M. Oris (Eds.), *When Dad Died. Individuals and Families Coping with Distress in Past Societies*, Bern, Peter Lang, 2002, 121-139.
- Fauve-Chamoux, A., « Le rôle des femmes dans la transmission des biens en France », in C. Dessureault, J. Dickinson, & J. Goy (Eds.), *Famille et marché (XVIe - XXe siècles)*, Sillery (Québec), Septentrion, 2003, 245-260.
- Fauve-Chamoux, A., & Ochiai, E. (Eds.), *Maison et famille souche : perspectives eurasiennes*, Kyoto (Japon), International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 1998.
- Fine-Souriac, A., « La famille-souche pyrénéenne au XIXe siècle. Quelques réflexions de méthode », *Annales ESC*, 3, 1987, 478-487.
- Fougeres, A., *Les Droits de famille et les successions au Pays Basque et en Béarn d'après les*

- anciens textes*, Bergerac, H. Trillaud, 1938.
- Goy, J., « Transmission successorale et paysannerie pendant la Révolution française : un grand malentendu », *Etudes rurales*, 110-111-112, 1988, 45-56.
- Goy, J., « Les exclus de la transmission et la loi, 1789-1980 », in G. Bouchard, J. Dickinson, & J. Goy (Eds.), *Les Exclus de la terre en France et au Québec (XVIIe - XXe siècles). La reproduction familiale dans la différence*, Sillery (Québec), Septentrion, 1998, 21-34.
- Goyhenetche, J., *Fors et coutumes de Basse-Navarre*, Bayonne, Elkar, 1985.
- Green, D. R. & Owens, A. (Eds.), *Family Welfare. Gender, Property, and Inheritance since the Seventeenth Century*, Westport (Connecticut), Praeger, 2004.
- Head-König, A.-L., Lorenzetti, L., & Veyrassat, B. (Eds.), *Famille, parenté et réseaux en Occident (XVIIe - XXe siècles)*, Genève, Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Genève, 2001.
- Lacanette-Pommel, C., *La famille dans les Pyrénées. De la coutume au code Napoléon, Estadens*, PyrÉGraph, 2003.
- Lafourcade, M., *Mariages en Labourd sous l'Ancien Régime. Les contrats de mariage du pays de Labourd sous le règne de Louis XVI*, Bilbao, Universidad del País Vasco, 1989.
- Lamaison, P., « La diversité des modes de transmission : une géographie tenace », *Etudes rurales*, 110-111-112, 1988, 119-175.
- Laslett, P., & Wall, R. (Eds.), *Household and Family in Past Time. Comparative studies in the size and structure of the domestic group over the last three centuries*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972.
- Laslett, P., Wall, R., & Robin, J. (Eds.), *Family Forms in Historical Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Le Play, F., *L'Organisation de la famille selon le vrai modèle signalé par l'histoire de toutes les races et de tous les temps*, Paris, Tequi, 1871.
- Le Play, F., *La Réforme sociale en France déduite de l'observation comparée des peuples européens*, Trois volumes, Paris, Dentu, 1878.
- Le Play, F., Cheysson, E., Bayard, & Butel, F., *Les Mélouga. Une famille pyrénéenne au XIXe siècle. Textes réunis par Alain Chenu*, Paris, Nathan, 1994.
- Le Roy Ladurie, E., « Système de la coutume. Structures familiales et coutumes d'héritage en France au XVIe siècle », *Annales ESC*, 4-5, 1972, 825-846.
- Lorenzetti, L., Head-König, A.-L., & Goy, J. (Eds.), *Marchés, migrations et logiques familiales dans les espaces français, canadien et Suisse, 18<sup>e</sup> - 20<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Genève, Peter Lang, 2005.
- Poumarède, J., *Les Successions dans le Sud-Ouest de la France au Moyen Age*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1972.
- Poumarède, J., « Famille et ténure dans les Pyrénées du Moyen Age au XIXe

- siècle », *Annales de démographie historique*, 1979, 347-360.
- Segalen, M., *Quinze générations de Bas-Bretons. Parenté et Société dans le Pays Bigouden Sud, 1720-1980*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1985.
- Segalen, M., & Ravis-Giordani, G. (Eds.), *Les cadets*, Paris, Editions du CNRS, 1994.
- Verdon, M., « The stem family : toward a general theory », *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, X : 1, 1979, 87-105.
- Verdon, M., « Rethinking complex households : the case of the Western Pyrenean 'Houses' », *Continuity and Change*, 11 : 2, 1996, 191-215.
- Yver, J., *Égalité entre héritiers et exclusion des enfants dotés : essai de géographie coutumière*, Paris, Éditions Sirey, 1966.
- Zink, A. *L'Héritier de la maison. Géographie coutumière du Sud-Ouest de la France sous l'Ancien Régime*, Paris, Editions EHESS, 1993.

# Opportunity or Constraint ? Partible Inheritance, Family Property and Household Structure in Southwest Germany – Evidence from Inventories

Christina Janine Maegraith

## I. Introduction

The dominant inheritance system in the southwest German Duchy of Württemberg was partible inheritance. Partible inheritance is defined as an inheritance system in which real estate and movables are divided up equally between all heirs, male and female. In Württemberg historiography partible inheritance is often viewed critically and made responsible for unlimited division of land and farms. Angelika Bischoff-Luithlen, for example, viewed partible inheritance as a constraint imposed by the law, where “the inheritance of the deceased was divided up into as many parts as there were heirs regardless of the further existence of the farm holding.”<sup>1</sup> But did this legal “constraint” always have negative consequences? Or did equal property transmission create opportunities for the heirs? This raises additional questions about the implementation of the inheritance division: How was partible inheritance practised and was it in fact ‘equal’? How were real estate matters handled and was there an equivalent to ‘family land’? How was family property defined and what consequences did this have for family strategies and household structure? These are open questions which cannot be exhaustively answered in this context. But evidence from personal inventories in two Württemberg communities, Wildberg and Auingen, from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, can shed some light on them.

---

<sup>1</sup> Angelika Bischoff-Luithlen, *Der Schwabe und die Obrigkeit. Nicht nur Gemütvollnes aus alten Akten und schwäbischen Dorfarchiven*. Stuttgart 1989, p. 58f. She called it literally a “democratic constraint”.

This paper evolved from the research project ‘Human Well-Being and the “Industrious Revolution” : Consumption, Gender and Social Capital in a German Developing Economy’ at the Economics Faculty of the University of Cambridge, lead by Professor Sheilagh Ogilvie. It is supported by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).<sup>2</sup>

## II. The Context

### 1. The Communities

Wildberg and Auingen are located in Württemberg. Württemberg was a Duchy of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation from 1495 to 1806. In 1534 Protestantism was introduced and made compulsory. After the collapse of the Old Empire in 1806, Württemberg became a Kingdom and was part of the new German Confederation (*Deutscher Bund*) established in 1815. Wildberg is a small town in the Black Forest, and Auingen is a small agrarian village in the Swabian Jura, close to the town of Münsingen. Both are located 50-60 km from Stuttgart, the capital city of Württemberg.

In Wildberg, the four largest occupational categories were farming, day-labouring, ‘proto-industry’ in form of export-oriented worsted production, and traditional crafts. Many households relied on by-employment, for example farming a small amount of land in combination with operating a craft or proto-industrial workshop. The village of Auingen was more agricultural with a high proportion of full-time farmers. Crafts in combination with farming did appear among Auingen households, and proto-industry also played a role in form of linen-weaving, especially around and after the 1750s.<sup>3</sup>

What were the main demographic characteristics? Based on previous studies by Sheilagh Ogilvie on Wildberg and on our

---

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.econ.cam.ac.uk/Ogilvie\\_ESRC/index.html](http://www.econ.cam.ac.uk/Ogilvie_ESRC/index.html) [accessed March 2012]. The paper was presented at a symposium in Japan (Kyoto and Ehime) organised by Motoyasu Takahashi. The aim was to compare different inheritance and family systems in England (Craig Muldrew), the Pyrenees (Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga), Japan (Hirai Shoko) and Württemberg. Therefore this paper focuses on aspects which were discussed at the symposium and regarded as important for further comparative studies.

demographic studies of both communities, we can say that households consisted mostly of nuclear families. Often, daughters and sons left the household to work as servants between the age of 15 and 30. Women and men in Wildberg married in their mid to late twenties, but there was a high rate of lifetime celibacy especially among women. And in households hardly any co-resident kin were present, but non-kin co-residents such as servants and inmates were quite common.<sup>4</sup>

The population size of both communities fluctuated considerably and was heavily affected by the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) with the Imperial army invading the area in 1634. It took Wildberg more than 100 years to fully recover, and Auingen was even deserted for a time. Following wars further slowed down the recovery of the communities' population throughout the seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1 Population Development of Wildberg and Auingen 1625-1816**

Year	Wildberg	Auingen
c.1625	1542	c. 350
1634	1650	435
1641-42	1005	28
1654	1079	84
c. 1675	1430	141
1700	1225	202
c. 1725	1518	334
1744	1477	338
1780	1629	c. 410
1806	1533	424
1816	1646	484

Source : Ogilvie, K pker, Maegraith, Community Characteristics, Table 1.

<sup>3</sup> For more details on the communities of Wildberg and Auingen see Sheilagh Ogilvie, Markus K pker, and Janine Maegraith (2009). "Community Characteristics and Demographic Development: Three W rttemberg Communities, 1558-1914." Cambridge Working Papers in Economics 0910.

<sup>4</sup> Sheilagh Ogilvie, *A Bitter Living: Women, Markets, and Social Capital in Early Modern Germany*. Oxford 2003, esp. chapter 2.

<sup>5</sup> For more details on the communities of Wildberg and Auingen see Ogilvie, K pker, Maegraith, *Community Characteristics*. On the consequences of the Thirty Years War see pp. 25-33.

## 2. Household and family property

How can we define ‘household’ and family? In Württemberg the word ‘family’ hardly appears in legal documents before 1806, when the so-called family registers were introduced. Historians argue for the use of ‘household’ instead, which comprised the nuclear family, non-nuclear co-resident kin, servants, and lodgers.<sup>6</sup>

What were the economic characteristics of such households in this agrarian society? According to Württemberg historians such as Andreas Maisch, the pre-industrial economy resembled a family economy in which the family formed a unit of production: land and resources were the property of the family and family members made up the work force, sometimes complemented by servants.<sup>7</sup> However, recent studies show that in rural Württemberg people, including many women, often worked as individuals, offering their labour or their products for wages in the market, separately from their family. In addition, families employed outsider workers such as spinners, who were not members of the co-resident group.<sup>8</sup> With the options of by-employment in the form of crafts, if the family owned land, and seasonal wage labour, a family could secure its livelihood. But the family was also integrated into the economy of the local community and its social and institutional structure, as well as constraints such as inheritance system, marriage restrictions and the crop rotation system.

But this rural household structure does not resemble a ‘family farm’ in areas of partible inheritance. The family property including the buildings and land were not necessarily passed down as an

---

<sup>6</sup> Martin Burkhardt, *Haushaltstrukturen im 18. Jahrhundert im deutschen Südwesten und die Legende von der vorindustriellen Großfamilie*, in: *Florilegium Suevicum. Beiträge zur südwestdeutschen Landesgeschichte. Festschrift für Franz Quarthal zum 65. Geburtstag*. Ed. by Gerhard Fritz und Daniel Kirn, Ostfildern 2008, p. 128; David Warren Sabean, *Property, Production, and Family in Neckarhausen, 1700-1870*. Cambridge 1990, p. 116.

<sup>7</sup> Andreas Maisch, *Notdürftiger Unterhalt und gehörige Schranken: Lebensbedingungen und Lebensstile in württembergischen Dörfern der frühen Neuzeit*. Stuttgart 1992, ch. 4.7.2.

<sup>8</sup> Ogilvie, *A Bitter Living*.

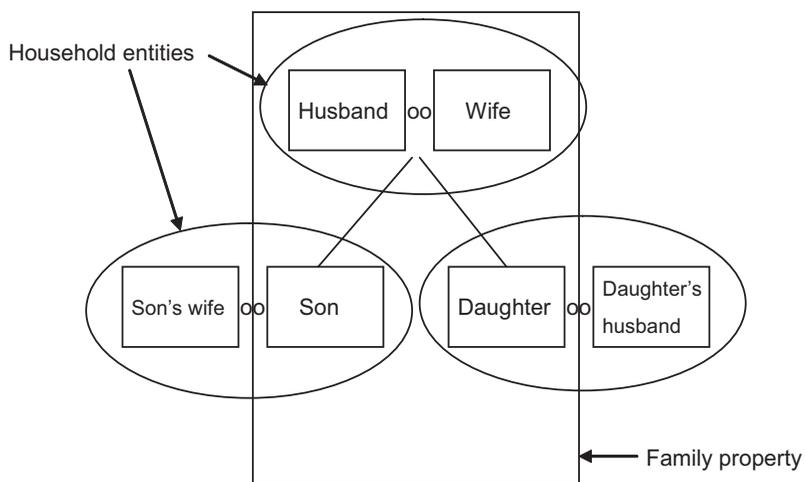


Fig. 1 Family property and its components

entity and kept within one family, but instead the estate was divided up among the heirs and its separate components were frequently sold or purchased on the market. It was thus subject to change. The family property in this context describes the property owned by a nuclear family, mainly husband and wife, until it was divided up after their death. This can be seen in Figure 1.

Property, which comprised both immovable property and moveable goods, was extremely important and it seems often to have been quite influential in the choice of a marriage partner, where marriage portions and future inheritances would be taken into account. Andreas Maisch concludes that property was strongly linked with responsibility and not liberty: the nuclear family was expected to react to any deviation by a family member in order to protect the family property and future inheritance shares.<sup>9</sup> This was reflected in the careful regulation and consistent enforcement of the Württemberg inheritance laws.

<sup>9</sup> Maisch, Notdürftiger Unterhalt, esp. ch. 7.2.1.

### III. Partible Inheritance (*Realteilung*)

According to Michael Anderson, inheritance and its various practices are important factors when looking at household economics. Inheritance can be seen as one method of property acquisition or transmission, and as defining the *life chances* of a person.<sup>10</sup>

Within partible inheritance systems, real estate and movables are divided equally among all heirs, male and female. The estate that was to be inherited comprised what was referred to above as ‘family property’. Primogeniture, by contrast, is the right of the firstborn to inherit the entirety or the better part of the estate.<sup>11</sup>

In Württemberg, as a precondition to partible inheritance, women had property rights. However, it is important to keep in mind that women’s property rights were constrained in two ways. First, unmarried or widowed women had to be represented by a guardian (*Geschlechtsvormund* or *Kriegsvogt*) in legal and financial matters – such as their marriage or inheritance decisions. And second, married women were legally subordinate to their husbands who retained the decision power. In legal and financial matters married women were either represented by their husbands or by a *Kriegsvogt* as well. Therefore, women could not act independently in legal and financial matters although they retained their property rights.<sup>12</sup> The same was true of all unmarried children, male and female, who were assigned a guardian (*Pfleger*) to administer their possessions, often until they married. The guardians were named in the personal inventories and signed the document as representatives of the principals.

---

<sup>10</sup> Michael Anderson, *Approaches to the History of the Western Family 1500-1914*. London and Basingstoke 1980, p. 67.

<sup>11</sup> See Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga’s paper in this volume.

<sup>12</sup> See on women’s property rights Heide Wunder, “Er ist die Sonn’, sie ist der Mond”. *Frauen in der Frühen Neuzeit*. München 1992, esp. chapter XI. On the constraints through gender tutelage see Ogilvie, *A Bitter Living*, p. 186-187, and 250ff.

Partible inheritance was practised in most parts of Württemberg. The Duchy had been favourable towards partible inheritance from an early date and between 1555 and 1610 the Württemberg national law code (*Landrecht*) was constituted which implemented this inheritance system.<sup>13</sup> Traditionally scholars have approached the phenomenon of partible inheritance from four different directions: geography, legal history, agrarian history and inventory studies. The geographical studies look at spatial distribution, changes over time and effects on the size of farms.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, studies in agrarian history look at the effects on farm sizes, land distribution and agricultural productivity. The fragmentation of land as a direct consequence of inheritance division is viewed as both an opportunity for levelling land ownership and a constraint on agricultural productivity. Especially for the nineteenth century it is argued that increased fragmentation of farms and land, in combination with population growth, led to a decline in agricultural productivity.<sup>15</sup> The nineteenth-century German economist Friedrich List coined the expression “dwarf economy” (*Zwergwirtschaft*) in this context.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Rolf-Dieter Hess, *Familien- und Erbrecht im Württembergischen Landrecht von 1555 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des älteren württembergischen Rechts*. Stuttgart 1968. He discusses in detail the development of family and inheritance law, including marital property laws and the specific inheritance regulations.

<sup>14</sup> See Karl Heinz Schröder, *Vererbungsformen und Betriebsgrößen in der Landwirtschaft um 1555* (Historischer Atlas von Baden-Württemberg IX. 6, 1985), with a bibliography.

<sup>15</sup> „Realteilung und Bevölkerungswachstum drückten auf die Betriebsgrößenstruktur und drohten das System der „kleinen Kultur“ in die Sackgasse der „Parzell- und „Zwergwirtschaft“ (Fr. List) zu führen.“, Wolfgang von Hippel, “Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte 1800 bis 1918.” in *Handbuch der baden-württembergischen Geschichte: vol. 3: Vom Ende des Alten Reiches bis zum Ende der Monarchien*. Eds. H. Schwarzmaier, H. Fenske, B. Kirchgässner, P. Sauer and M. Schaab. Stuttgart, 1992, p. 518 and 648.

<sup>16</sup> Friedrich List, *Die Ackerverfassung, die Zwergwirtschaft und die Auswanderung*, in: *Deutsche Vierteljahrs-Schrift* 1842 H. 4, 119-164. In *Schriften, Reden, Briefe* Bd. 5 Aufsätze und Abhandlungen aus den Jahren 1831-1844 (1928), p. 418-547.

In inventory studies partible inheritance is regarded as a legal inheritance system which produced certain sorts of inventory documents. This highlights different aspects: in combination with legal history, this approach addresses questions of property rights, household structure, household contents, marriage strategies, and inheritance division. Often the phenomenon of partible inheritance has been interpreted very critically, based on the putative effects of inheritance division. Angelika Bischoff-Luithlen was already quoted at the beginning of this paper describing partible inheritance as a “constraint” imposed by the inheritance law. Likewise, Andrea Hauser discusses the “rational irrationality of divisions” and the social constraints of this inheritance practice in her detailed inventories study.<sup>17</sup> David Sabeau highlights the effects of partible inheritance on family dynamics and property transmission and is more cautious regarding the aspect of increased fragmentation.<sup>18</sup> Hans Medick discusses the geographical and agricultural approaches but does not draw a general conclusion concerning the effects of partible inheritance itself.<sup>19</sup>

The development of partible inheritance remains one of the most disputed topics in agrarian history, in which possible links between inheritance systems and population and economic developments such as proto-industry are discussed. And it remains a disputed topic within inventory studies where questions regarding fragmentation, unlimited divisions and the economic consequences of inheritance division are raised. However, the debate about partible inheritance remains biased as long as the comparative aspect is not taken into account. It would be extremely fruitful if, for example, the geographical approach was to be taken further and the partible and impartible areas within Württemberg after 1806 were to be compared. This would shed more light on questions such as

---

<sup>17</sup> Andrea Hauser, *Dinge des Alltags. Studien zur historischen Sachkultur eines schwäbischen Dorfes*. Tübingen 1994, esp. p. 351ff.

<sup>18</sup> David Warren Sabeau, *Property, production, and family in Neckarhausen, 1700-1870* (Cambridge 1990).

<sup>19</sup> Hans Medick, *Weben und Überleben in Laichingen, 1650-1900*. Göttingen 1997, pp. 171-173 and 188.

women's property rights and its implications, as well as strategies of the heirs and of offspring who did not inherit.

Studying the inventories of Wildberg und Auingen brought to light numerous individual strategies in which people found ways to circumvent the economic "irrationalities" of inheritance divisions. Such examples allow us to view inheritance divisions in the context of the individual strategies and opportunities that equal shares offered for the heirs. This paper therefore adopts a more contextualized approach, in order to ask whether this apparent constraint did not also contain opportunities. Can personal inventories tell us more about the actual practice of partible inheritance?

#### IV. The Documents : Personal Inventories (*Inventuren und Teilungen*)

What are personal inventories? Inventories were written up to assist the legal regulation of property divisions in order to avoid inheritance conflicts. They consist mainly of lists of possessions. They list, describe and value the entire possessions of the individual or couple in question, including immoveable property such as buildings and land; moveable goods such as clothing, tools, all household goods and food; and financial assets and liabilities. Death inventories also contain a balance sheet presenting a calculation of the total value of the assets as well as a calculation of inheritance divisions.<sup>20</sup>

Death inventories were made compulsory for most Württemberg inhabitants with the national law code in 1555. From 1610 onward, marriage inventories were also supposed to be drawn up in order to

---

<sup>20</sup> On "Inventuren und Teilungen" see also Markus Küpker and Janine Maegraith (2009). "Human Well-Being and the 'Industrious Revolution': Consumption, Gender and Social Capital in a German Developing Economy, 1600-1900." AKA-Newsletter 25 : 19-41. Markus Küpker and Janine Maegraith (2012). "Der Schatz des Alltäglichen." *Momente. Beiträge zur Landeskunde von Baden-Württemberg* 3, 12-17.

record what was brought into a marriage by both bride and groom. A marriage inventory would thus record what was in principle supposed to remain respectively the husband's or wife's property and at the same time form the basis for a future death inventory. Marriage and death inventories continued to be compulsory in Württemberg until c. 1899/1900.<sup>21</sup> The communities were in charge of the inventorying process for which at least two members of the community court and the town clerk were delegated.<sup>22</sup>

Unlike in other European societies, the writing up of inventories in Württemberg was in principle obligatory for all inhabitants. They were mostly drawn up for married people, and for individuals leaving an inheritance or debts. Inventories were also written up for some unmarried persons who left an inheritance. In a preliminary analysis we found that inventories indeed cover a large proportion of the community's tax payers – including women. After 1740, this proportion reaches over 80 percent of inventoried males and females linked to the tax registers via our family reconstitution.<sup>23</sup>

Within the Württemberg system of partible inheritance, drawing up inventories was central. To define the estate that was to be bequeathed to heirs, the inventories listed personal possessions individually. This makes it possible to distinguish the possessions of both women and men. For example, marriage inventories usually list brides' and grooms' possessions separately, and death inventories

---

<sup>21</sup> Wildberg's inventories survive for the period 1602-1900 ; Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart (HStAS) A 573 Bd. 4798-4869 (1602-1810), Bd. 4870-5137 (1616-1853), A 573 a 564-660 (1805-1900). Auingen's inventories cover the period 1677-1900 ; Stadtarchiv Münsingen B au 001-065. See on their archival holding Küpker and Maegraith, *Human Well-Being*, p. 25.

<sup>22</sup> On the inventorying process see Bischoff-Luithlen, *Der Schwabe und sein Häs*, 17-18 ; on the role of the town clerk see Hildegard Mannheims, *Wie wird ein Inventar erstellt ? Rechtskommentare als Quelle der volkskundlichen Forschung*. Münster 1991, p. 36-54.

<sup>23</sup> Sheilagh Ogilvie, Markus Küpker, and Janine Maegraith, *Household debt in early modern Germany : evidence from personal inventories*. Cambridge working papers in economics 1148, figure 1 : Percentage of taxpayers inventoried at least once, Wildberg 1565-1744.

itemize women's and men's clothing in separate lists. The reason for this is that clothes, tools and jewellery were regarded as being each person's own possessions or pre-belongings (*Voraus*, items defined as an individual's own possession). The Württemberg inventories are therefore well suited to explore consumption patterns, but also the composition of households and family property as well as the practises and strategies of the people involved.

### **The different types of inventory**

Württemberg inventorying regulations distinguished three main types of inventory: the marriage inventory, the contingent inheritance inventory, and the actual inheritance inventory. However, our experience showed that there were also at least two other inventory types: *pre-mortem* property transfers and "decreed inventories".

a. A marriage inventory (*Beibringungsinventar*) was supposed to be written up within a quarter of a year after a marriage took place. It was sub-divided into three main sections: the introduction, the inventory of the groom's possessions, and the inventory of the bride's possessions. In the case of a remarriage, the inventory was supposed to record the precise family relationships prevailing at the time, any existing children, and information concerning the deceased spouse.

b. A contingent inheritance inventory (*Eventualteilung*) was drawn up after the death of one spouse. It also had three sections. The first was the introduction, with all necessary information on the official procedures and the persons involved, such as the deceased spouse, his or her partner and the surviving children. This was followed by the inventory of the combined possessions of the married couple. At the end, a balance-sheet was struck and an interim inheritance-division was established. The surviving spouse kept the estate including the inheritance share of the children in his or her 'usufruct' until he or she decided to hand out part of the shares in due course (*pre-mortem* property transfer) – or until he or she died.

c. The actual inheritance inventory (*Realteilung*) was written up when

a widowed spouse or a single person died. It included an inheritance-division in which inheritance-shares were calculated and distributed among the heirs. It was structured in the same way as a contingent inheritance inventory, except that it also contained a complete inheritance-division at the end.

d. *Pre-mortem* property transmissions could be drawn up if, after the death of one spouse, the surviving spouse decided to pass on some of the property to adult children before his or her death. For this, a list of the transmitted property was drawn up.

e. Decreed inventory is the term given to those cases in which the authorities decided to order an inventory to be made. This could be in the case of over-indebtedness of a household or if a wife was deserted by her husband.

The different types of inventories alone show how property was transferred in a gradual way : part of the property would be given to the children at marriage and some after the death of one parent ; the remaining part of the inheritance or family property would be distributed after the death of the second parent.

## V. Evidence from the Inventories

What can these inventories tell us about family property, inheritance practices and individual strategies ? In what follows, I describe some of our interim findings from the inventories, accompanied by several case studies.

### 1. Real estate

Not every household possessed buildings, and young couples seldom had their own house to start with. We can assume that some lived as lodgers at first. According to the more negative view of partible inheritance, houses were rigorously divided up between the heirs. But while the Wildberg and Auingen inventories do show that buildings and especially houses were divided up, few were actually divided into smaller parts than one half. It seems as if parents preferred to pass buildings on to one of their children, and especially

in Auingen we can find in many marriage inventories financial agreements relating to the purchase of buildings between parents and their marrying children.<sup>24</sup> The other children would then be ‘equated’ (i.e., compensated), and this would show up in their financial assets. Otilia Florin from Switzerland, for example, had sold her half-share of her parent’s house to her brother, who owed her at the time of her marriage in 1680 150 Gulden (fl.), of which he handed her over 34 fl in cash. The remaining 126 fl. were treated as financial assets on which her brother paid interest.<sup>25</sup> Buildings were the most valuable asset in a household: a *Behausung* (house, dwelling) functioned not only as accommodation, but in most cases also as workshop, and the adjacent garden as a source of food provisions or income. It often also had a barn and stable under the same roof. Accordingly, houses proved to be one of the most important assets and were strongly associated with the ability of an individual or couple to borrow money, as we found in analyzing the debts recorded in the inventories.<sup>26</sup>

Land was passed on as individual pieces to the heirs, not as a single entity that appertained to a multi-generational extended family. After the death of the parents the heirs could either retain the pieces of land, or sell them on the market to buy adjacent land; sometimes they would sell them back to relatives or purchase other pieces from relatives. Thus, real estate was not necessarily kept within one family, but frequently sold or purchased on the market.

## **2. Marriage inventory : origin of the marriage portions**

A marriage inventory established what the spouses brought into their marriage. This would consist partly of what the spouses’ parents had given their offspring for their marriage portion; and

---

<sup>24</sup> Andreas Benz, for example, was to subtract 300 fl. of the agreed house and land purchase and treat this as his marriage portion from his father. Stadtarchiv Münsingen B au 047 Inv. 21. 11. 1800.

<sup>25</sup> Stadtarchiv Münsingen B au 001, Inv. [no number] 6. 8. 1680.

<sup>26</sup> Sheilagh Ogilvie, Markus Küpker and Janine Maegraith (2012). “Household Debt in Early Modern Germany: Evidence from Personal Inventories.” *Journal of Economic History* 72(1), 134-167.

partly of what the bride or groom had bought themselves, for example with the money they had saved during servant-hood. The marriage inventory therefore also defined which of the items was the undisputed own property of the bride or groom.

The bride's (or groom's) parent's portion of this actually consisted of a pre-mortem property transfer to their marrying child. In principle it remained part of the family property of the bride's (or groom's) family, until the parents in that family died and the final inheritance division was drawn up in an actual inheritance inventory. Only the items highlighted as 'own' remained the unquestioned property of the bride or groom, together with the above-mentioned "pre-belongings", which typically comprised clothing, jewellery and tools.

For example, in the Auingen marriage inventory of the farmer Hansß Hürning and Barbara Herrenmann in 1682, the origin of the marriage portions was carefully defined.<sup>27</sup> The groom received his marriage portion from his parents and nothing was defined as his 'own'. However, most of the draught- and farm-equipment he only received in the form of a half-share, which meant that he and his parents shared the same tools and that he continued to contribute his labour. The bride, by contrast, received nothing from her father, and this was stated explicitly in the inventory. But she had saved money as a servant and the inventory stated concerning her clothing: "The following clothes she had made, bit by bit, from her wages as a servant". The other household items she had received from her mother except for the cattle and poultry, which were defined as her 'own'. The bride's marriage portion was therefore made up of two parts: what was her 'own' and what she had received from her mother.

The 1806 Wildberg marriage inventory of Johann Michael Kleinert, a worsted-weaver, and Christiana Margaretha Schmalzlenin contains a detailed agreement between the bride's

---

<sup>27</sup> Stadtarchiv Münsingen B au 001, Inv. [no number] 20.2.1682.

mother and the bride.<sup>28</sup> The bride's mother had decided to hand over her entire property to her only child, her daughter, and this also included the bride's dead father's inheritance-share. Whereas the bride's dead father's inheritance-share was to become the bride's own property immediately, her mother's property was to be treated as a loan until her mother's death. That meant that the bride had to pay interest on the property and the mother retained the right to live in the house and to use the moveable goods. In addition, the bride was not to be allowed to sell anything without her mother's consent. Thus this property was linked with obligations. This example also shows how it was possible for property also to be linked to a person : although the mother wanted her daughter to have the property, she knew she had to protect herself from misfortunes such as marital conflicts between her daughter and son-in-law, for example, or her daughter's early death. By retaining property rights vis-à-vis her daughter, she secured her own future livelihood.

### **3. Provisional inheritance and the definition of 'family property'**

In the case of the death of one spouse, a contingent inheritance inventory was drawn up. It comprised the belongings of the combined household of the married couple and was in principle supposed to describe the family property at that point of time. It calculated the 'probable' share of the heirs, should the other spouse die as well and a final division be drawn up with the same number of heirs. For this, an inventory was created and the calculation of the inheritance-division was added at the end. Legally, this type of inventory comprised the following property components :

- The marriage portion of the husband + inheritance from parents or relatives
- The marriage portion of the wife + inheritance from parents or relatives
- The couple's belongings : Anything they had gained or lost during their marital life together.

The components of the property as described above were not

---

<sup>28</sup> HStAS, A 573 Bd. 5082 (1806) Inv. Nr. 5, 22. 1. 1806.

listed as groom's or bride's marriage portion in the inventory. Instead, the inventory consisted of a structured list of possessions and the monetary value of the marriage portion was used to define the respective shares of different parties. After the inventory was drawn up, the clerk proceeded to calculate the heirs' theoretical share by defining :

- The sum of the deceased spouse's marriage portion plus inheritance (A)
- The sum of the widowed spouse's marriage portion plus inheritance and pre-belongings such as clothes (B)
- The sum of gained or lost wealth (C) :  
= Total wealth of the inventory minus the sum of A and B (minus funeral costs)
- Calculation of the share of the widowed spouse based on his or her marriage portion and half of the gained or lost wealth :  
 $B + C/2$
- The share of the deceased spouse would be :  $A + C/2$   
This equalled the value of the inheritance that was to be bequeathed.
- Depending on the number of surviving children the sum of the inheritance is divided up between the children and the widowed spouse.
- If a child dies during the lifetime of the widowed spouse, the shares are being recalculated.

The widowed spouse's inheritance was defined equally between husband and wife ; no distinction was drawn between men and women. Likewise, the inheritance shares of the children, male and female, were treated equally. But only with the death of the second parent was the estate actually divided up between the heirs.<sup>29</sup> Sabeau, for example, finds that in the Württemberg village of Neckarhausen in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries all

---

<sup>29</sup> See Hess, Familienrecht, 175. The Landrecht (national law-code) gives a slightly different definition of the inheritance shares : in the case of up to four children, the widowed parents received half of the estate ; in case of more than four children the parents were to get one third, and the children two thirds.

siblings were indeed treated equally.<sup>30</sup>

This can be verified with our inventories. An example of a contingent inheritance inventory of a widowed spouse with six unmarried children illustrates the calculation discussed above. In October 1739, about 15 weeks after the death of Heinrich Rockenbauch, baker in Wildberg, a contingent inheritance inventory was drawn up. As heirs the document defines the widow Anna Margretha, and their six unmarried children.<sup>31</sup> An inventory of the combined possessions is made and after subtraction of the debts, the value of the family property comes to 625 Gulden (fl.) 21 Kreuzer (kr.) 5 Heller (hl.). The calculation of the inheritance shares commences with the parent's marriage inventory from 1709 according to which the husband's marriage portion had been 12 fl. 11 kr., and he had inherited from his father in 1720 9 fl. 25 kr. 1 hl. The widow's marriage portion was 30 fl. 2 kr. She had inherited nothing from her parents during the period of her marriage. The spouses' combined marriage portion and personal inheritance subtracted from the overall sum of the property resulted in a surplus of 573 fl. 43 kr. 4 hl. Each spouse was entitled to one half of this surplus. The latter plus the father's portion equalled the total inheritance that was to be bequeathed, and this was divided into seven parts: the widow's plus those of the six children. Each child had in principle a claim on the value of his or her share, in this case 42 fl. But the widowed mother retained usufruct during her lifetime and the actual inheritance shares were not yet handed out. However, the widowed mother was responsible for keeping the shares together and for ensuring that they were not mismanaged.

#### **4. Actual inheritance inventory and the final calculation of inheritance shares**

In the case of the death of a widowed spouse with surviving children, an actual inheritance inventory was drawn up. At the end of the inventory the clerk made a final calculation of the inheritance shares. Each surviving child received the same share; and this share was specified in separate detailed lists attached to the main

---

<sup>30</sup> Sabeau, Property, p. 186.

<sup>31</sup> HStAS, A 573 Bd. 4984 (1739), Inv. Nr. 21, 7.10.1739.

inventory. In these lists it was defined who would receive which items of real estate, who would receive which moveable goods, and how any debts would be allocated. These shares were equally distributed, which can be seen in the fact that in some cases the moveable goods were even distributed by lot.

An example from 1739 shows, however, how another component of property might enter into the final calculation of the value of the estate that was to be inherited : previously-handed-out pre-mortem inheritance shares. Johannes Niemand, a tailor and the town's messenger, died in 1739 on his way back from an errand. He was a widower and left two married daughters, one married son and one absent son whose whereabouts had been unknown for 22 years.<sup>32</sup> The inventory-makers assessed Niemand's property as having a total value of 172 fl. 6 kr. But before this was divided up, the property shares, which had previously been handed out to the three married children as their marriage portions, were pooled back into the family property. These shares were thus equivalent to *pre-mortem* property transmissions. However, in order to ensure that every child received an equal share, these had to be included in the estate. The new total value of the property had then to be divided by four, as there were four children. Now every child had a claim on 73 fl. minus whatever marriage portion that child had received in advance. For example : The eldest daughter, Maria Salome, had already received 58 fl. 39 kr. at marriage. This was now subtracted from her inheritance share which left her with c. 14 fl. still to claim.

This example sheds light on two aspects of the Württemberg inheritance and property system. First, family property was an entity which existed until both parents died – even if their children married and received a marriage portion or a *pre-mortem* property transfer. Second, the fact that the shared-out marriage portions of the children were taken into account in the calculation of the family property (at least as this manifested itself in the form of inheritance property) shows how meticulously the inheritance calculation was administered, and how important it was to allocate equal shares

---

<sup>32</sup> HStAS, A 573 Bd. 4984 (1739) Inv. Nr. 23, 11. 12. 1739.

among the children – even if one of them had been missing for 22 years.

### 5. Re-marriage

In Württemberg, a widowed spouse was allowed to remarry after a minimum period of six months. Remarriage was quite frequent, especially if small children survived, although it was much more common for widowers than for widows. Just as at first marriages, so also at remarriages, a marriage inventory was supposed to be drawn up. This posed a special problem for inheritance questions. The children of the first marriage retained a claim on the estate of their deceased parent, which was defined in a contingent inheritance inventory when that parent died. However, they would not have any inheritance claims on the new spouse of their parent. This could lead to complicated situations. An example of 1733 shows how this could also give rise to co-operation between parents, step-parents and children.

In 1707, the Wildberg citizen, butcher and innkeeper Johann Albrecht Memminger died. He left behind his widow, Agnesa, and five unmarried children. Probably because his widow already had in mind to remarry, no death inventory was drawn up. And indeed, one year later Agnesa married Jacob Loercher, a journeyman butcher.<sup>33</sup> A marriage inventory was drawn up which constituted at the same time in part the death inventory of the deceased Albrecht Memminger. His and his widow's household property constituted the bride's marriage portion, followed by the groom's marriage portion.

Agnesa Memminger, as an innkeeper's widow, brought in a large estate with a value of 4186 fl. 8 kr. 3 hl. This estate, however, included the children's inheritance shares from their father, which Agnesa retained in usufruct. The groom's marriage portion, by contrast, was valued at about 0.7% of the bride's portion. In spite of this unequal start, the couple apparently led a happy marriage in the course of which the estate was considerably increased. When Agnesa died in 1733, a death inventory was drawn up which showed

---

<sup>33</sup> HStAS, A 573 Bd. 4953 (1708) Inv. Nr. 1, 5. 3. 1708.

that the estate now had a value of over 5507 fl. 44 kr.<sup>34</sup> By 1733, Jacob Loercher himself had become a successful innkeeper and member of the community council, and all five children of his wife's first marriage were still alive and now married.

The normal procedure of inheritance division would have left the widowed husband with a comparatively small share, because his marriage portion plus one half of the increase during marriage would have been the basis of his share. But at the end of the inventory the inheritance settlement between the widower and his step-children was amended. The provisions of this amended settlement at first sight seem very surprising. He, the widower, agreed to abstain from all his inheritance claims, including his personal shares. In return, his stepchildren assigned him the same legal position as if he had been their sibling. This meant that the entire estate that was to be inherited was to be divided into six equal parts and each sibling, including the widower, was to receive the same share. This resulted in a huge benefit for the Jacob Loercher. The estate became considerably larger once the handed-out marriage portions of the stepchildren were pooled back in, and thus the share of the widower also increased. In the end, every heir had a claim of 1238 fl. 58 kr. The stepchildren had decided on this settlement out of respect for the achievements of Jacob Loercher as their stepfather and were therefore showing substantial co-operation with him. Legally they were not obliged to act in this way.

## **6. Inheritance procedures if no children survived**

But what happened if a couple left no children behind ? In this case, the estate went either to the parents of the deceased, should they still be alive, or to the siblings. If the siblings were also deceased, their children in turn would inherit. In some cases this could lead to very complicated reconstructions of families. In a contingent inheritance inventory of 1673 from Wildberg, for example, the inventory-makers had to draw up a family tree in order to understand the hierarchy of inheritance.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> HStAS, A 573 Bd. 4978 (1733) Inv. Nr. 12, 11. 3. 1733.

<sup>35</sup> HStAS, A 573 Bd. 4920 (1673) Inv. Nr. 1, 27. 2. 1673.

Jacob Stepper and his wife Apolonia died in 1673 within two days of one another and left behind no children. In the case of Jacob, a family tree was constructed in order to determine the legal heirs who had claims on his estate; these consisted mainly of Jacob's cousins from both sides of his family. In the case of Apolonia, no family tree was necessary, as her siblings had left children and the inheritance hierarchy was clear. However, one of Apolonia's sister's deceased sons had left two little children as orphans. Although these young children had no claim on the estate, the heirs decided to give the two children a share as charity; the share was valued at 18 fl. 37 kr., equaling 1.7% of the total value of the estate.

### **7. Decreed inventories : duty and responsibility for family property**

As mentioned above, an inventory could also be drawn up if an exceptional case made it necessary to estimate the estate of a household. In 1671, for example, the authorities ordered an inventory to be made of Hans Steimlin and his wife Catharina, because of the creditors' persistent enquiries concerning whether Hans Steimlin would ever be able to repay. In this case, the inventory was used to clarify the financial status of the debtor in order to appease the creditors.<sup>36</sup>

### **8. Poverty and Inheritance**

But what happened if an inventoried person was too poor to either pay his or her remaining debts or if there was nothing to bequeath? In some cases we have evidence that an inventory was simply not drawn up for a particular deceased person on the grounds that he or she was too poor and had nothing to pass on. In one case, in 1740, the widow of the worsted weaver Lorenz Dingler, Anna Maria, was found to be very ill and poor. She owned a small house, but with her debts subtracted from its value hardly anything would be left. The authorities therefore decided that the sole heir of the deceased, namely Lorenz's sister, together with the creditors, would have to be put off until the house had been sold.<sup>37</sup> For Anna

---

<sup>36</sup> HStAS, A 573 Bd. 4918 (1671) Inv. Nr. 10, 20. 2. 1671. His debts resulted from the large inheritance share for his children from his first marriage.

Maria this meant that she could retain her house as long as she lived.

### 9. Conflict

Although inventories were drawn up in order to regulate the inheritance process and avert any conflicts, they could not fully prevent inheritance conflicts from arising. In those cases, the guardians and inventory-makers aimed for an amicable settlement (*Vergleich*) between the parties involved. In 1747, for example, a death inventory was drawn up for Franciscus Franz, *Kastenknecht* in Wildberg.<sup>38</sup> He left behind his second wife and children from two marriages. This meant that for the children of the first marriage an actual inheritance inventory had to be calculated distributing their shares from their dead mother and their recently deceased father. Franciscus's daughter from his first marriage, Christina Catharina, had emigrated with her husband to Pennsylvania nine years earlier. During the calculation of the family property it turned out that she had received too much for her marriage portion, which should have been pooled back into the estate that was now to be inherited. As this was impossible because she had emigrated, the guardian of the son of the first marriage stepped in and negotiated a settlement in the son's interest with the children of the second marriage. The son from the first marriage was paid out a one-off compensation. This case shows that the role of a young person's guardian was not only to administer the possessions of his ward, but also to represent the ward's interests and to negotiate amicable settlements on behalf of the ward if possible. If conflicts persisted, this would be recorded in the records of the community court or the church court, but not necessarily in the inventories themselves.

### Conclusion : Opportunity or Constraint ?

What conclusions can we draw about the Württemberg family and property system on the basis of these detailed personal inventories ? There is a tendency in the historiography to highlight

---

<sup>37</sup> HStAS, A 573 Bd. 4985 (1740) Inv. [no number] 9.12.1740.

<sup>38</sup> HStAS, A 573 Bd. 4994 (1747) Inv. Nr. 10, 13.9.1747.

the constraints imposed on people in this society by the partible inheritance system. These constraints are supposed to have included the increasing fragmentation of arable land and, it is sometimes argued, a consequent declining agrarian productivity in nineteenth-century Württemberg. The historiography shows that many people of rural communities had by-employments to secure their livelihoods as often the pieces of arable land were too small or too few for a family to survive solely from farming them. Correspondingly, buildings were sometimes divided up into entities which some outside observers regarded as “uneconomic”.

The inventories show, by contrast, that buildings were not necessarily divided up between all heirs. Instead, an economically sensible arrangement was reached. One frequent strategy was for the buildings to be passed on to one of the heirs, with the others being compensated from the remainder of the inheritance or in form of financial assets (*Aktiva*). Another strategy was for the buildings to be divided, but usually only into two parts. Likewise, pieces of land were divided between heirs but were not subject to unlimited divisions. Dividing the land between the heirs resulted in a situation in which land ownership was widely distributed. In addition, the fact that in this economy the concept of a ‘family farm’ did not exist, enabled the heirs to sell their inherited land on the market and thus realign their landholdings to a more efficient set of locations. Although people might consequently own just a small piece of land this could result in economic opportunities for many poorer members of society: land and buildings were extremely important assets when obtaining credit and during the nineteenth century it became even an obligation to provide land as collateral when applying for formal debts.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> For the nineteenth century see Anne Mauch “Private Überschuldung im 19. Jahrhundert im Königreich Württemberg” (PhD project) and Anne Mauch, “Ländliches Darlehenswesen in wirtschaftlichen Krisenzeiten. Eine Untersuchung am Beispiel der Beurener Unterpfandsbücher und -protokolle (1846-1854)”. MA thesis, University of Tübingen, 2009, p. 12. The same finding emerges for the seventeenth century, as can be seen in Ogilvie, S., M. Kúpker and J. Maegraith, “Household Debt in Early Modern Germany: Evidence from Personal Inventories”. *Journal of Economic History* 72(1) (2012), 134-167.

Access to credit is very important in expanding economic opportunities for poor people, and has a beneficial effect on the wider economy, as emerges from many studies of modern-day developing countries. The widely distributed ownership even of very small pieces of land, which was one consequence of the Württemberg partible inheritance system, meant that micro-credit was accessible to a large proportion of people in pre-modern Württemberg. Moreover, the fact that female offspring inherited equally with male ones meant that real property which could be used as collateral for obtaining credit was also available to women, another important desideratum to emerge from research on modern developing economies. These considerations cast doubt on the widely held view that the partible inheritance system had uniformly negative effects on the opportunities open to individuals and the performance of the economy.

What conclusions can we draw about the idea of family property on the basis of the evidence from these inventories? The legal procedure of drawing up an inventory made it possible to determine the meaning of family property. Family property comprised the combined possessions of husband and wife. Part of this could be handed down to marrying children in form of their marriage portion. Other parts could be handed out as a *pre-mortem* property transfer. But it legally remained family property until both parents died. Examining the inventories for Wildberg and Auingen also revealed that inheritance divisions and transfers of family property were indeed equal in practice between all heirs. Property was transferred gradually by the parents to the children, which maintained a mutual dependency between the generations.

What wider implications does this have? In principle, this meant that both sides, parents and children, were bound to one another by property rights, responsibilities and expectations. Parents were expected to keep their property together and to administer it in a responsible way so as to pass it on to their children. The children, on the other hand, when receiving property transfers during the lifetime of their parents, did not become fully independent from the parental household, but were expected to co-

operate with the older generation.<sup>40</sup> Since the family property was transmitted only gradually, offspring and parents remained dependent on each other: the father might still retain important tools for trade or farming, and the sons and daughters might still provide labour. In some cases, offspring were expected to accommodate their parents in their house or lodging, although analyses of census-type household listings show that this was quite rare.<sup>41</sup>

The linking of marriage portions to the family property also implied that bride and groom both retained ownership of their respective property throughout their marriage to one another. This meant that spouses were supposed to manage the couple's assets responsibly, although of course they did not always do so. But in theory a wife could make claims in court should she suspect her husband of mismanagement of her property, and court records show that this did actually happen.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, property was linked with responsibility, not with liberty, as Andreas Maisch also found in his study of rural Württemberg society.<sup>43</sup> Although this responsibility was linked with legal constraints, one could argue that partible inheritance offered opportunities for the heirs. Women, for example, retained property rights and inherited equally with men, which was an opportunity – even if their rights were constrained by male guardianship.

A more balanced approach to partible inheritance shows that this system did not only create constraints but also offered opportunities, as well as leaving room for individual strategies. This in turn illuminates the importance of further comparative studies of

---

<sup>40</sup> Sabeian argues similarly throughout his book, *Sabeian, Property*.

<sup>41</sup> Only a minority of households contained two generations at once in the same household (a Type 5 household in the Laslett-Hammel classification), see Ogilvie, *A bitter Living*, ch. 2, for exact figures.

<sup>42</sup> Ogilvie finds that this was a major reason for marital conflicts, see Ogilvie, *A Bitter Living*, ch. 4.

<sup>43</sup> Maisch, *Notdürftiger Unterhalt*, ch. 7.2.1.

inheritance and household structure. Such a comparative approach is increasingly being adopted by scholars,<sup>44</sup> and has been explored with considerable success during an international symposium in Japan in September 2011, in which the different family and inheritance systems of the Pyrenees, England, Württemberg und Japan were compared.<sup>45</sup>

## Selected Bibliography

### *Demography, household structure*

**Michael Anderson**, *Approaches to the History of the Western Family 1500-1914*. London and Basingstoke 1980.

**Martin Burkhardt**, Haushaltstrukturen im 18. Jahrhundert im deutschen Südwesten und die Legende von der vorindustriellen Großfamilie, in : *Florilegium Suevicum. Beiträge zur südwestdeutschen Landesgeschichte. Festschrift für Franz Quarthal zum 65. Geburtstag*. Eds. Gerhard Fritz und Daniel Kirn, Ostfildern 2008, p. 111-138.

**Michael Mitterauer**, Zur Familienstruktur in ländlichen Gebieten Österreichs im 17. Jahrhundert. In : *Beiträge zur Bevölkerungs- und Sozialgeschichte Österreichs*. Eds. Heimold Helczmanovski. Wien 1973, 167-222.

**Sheilagh Ogilvie**, *A bitter living: women, markets, and social capital in early modern Germany*. Oxford 2003, esp. chapter 2.

**Sheilagh Ogilvie**, *State corporatism and proto-industry: the Württemberg Black Forest, 1580-1797*. Cambridge 1997, esp. chapter 8.

### *Agricultural structure, partible inheritance (Württemberg)*

**Wolfgang von Hippel**, Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte 1800 bis 1918, in : *Handbuch der baden-württembergischen Geschichte : vol. 3 : Vom Ende des Alten Reiches bis zum Ende der Monarchien*. Eds. H. Schwarzmaier, H. Fenske, B. Kirchgässner, P. Sauer and M. Schaab. Stuttgart, 1992, 477-784.

---

<sup>44</sup> See for example P. Pozsgai and A-L. Head-König (eds.), *Inheritance practices, marriage strategies and household formation in European rural societies*. Brussels : Brepols (2013).

<sup>45</sup> Research project led by Motoyasu Takahashi "Finding 'ie' in Western Society : A Historical empirical study for the paralleling and contrasting of Japan and Europe", Western Economic History, Faculty of Law and Letters, Ehime University, Japan. [http://web.me.com/takahashimotoyasu/Finding\\_ie\\_HP/Welcome.html](http://web.me.com/takahashimotoyasu/Finding_ie_HP/Welcome.html) [accessed March 2012].

- Wolfgang von Hippel**, *Die Bauernbefreiung im Königreich Württemberg. Band : 1 Darstellung*. Boppard a. Rhein 1977. (Forschungen zur deutschen Sozialgeschichte ; 1, 1) esp. vol. I pp. 62-66, vol. II pp. 58-60.
- Friedrich List**, Die Ackerverfassung, die Zwergwirtschaft und die Auswanderung, in : *Deutsche Vierteljahrs-Schrift* 1842 H. 4, 119-164. In *Schriften, Reden, Briefe Bd. 5 Aufsätze und Abhandlungen aus den Jahren 1831-1844* (1928), p. 418-547.
- Meinrad Schaab**, Siedlung, Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft von der Stauferzeit bis zur Französischen Revolution. in *Handbuch der baden-württembergischen Geschichte : vol. 2 : Vom Spätmittelalter bis zum Ende des Alten Reiches*. Eds. H. Schwarzmaier, H. Fenske, B. Kirchgässner, P. Sauer and M. Schaab. Stuttgart, 1992, 457-585.
- Matthias Schönthaler**, „Unser Sach bleibt zusammen“. Zur Geschichte der bäuerlichen Erbsitten auf dem Calwer Land, in : *Der Landkreis Calw* 27 (2009), 147-162.
- Karl Heinz Schröder**, Vererbungsformen und Betriebsgrößen in der Landwirtschaft um 1955 (*Historischer Atlas von Baden-Württemberg IX*. 6, 1985).

*Legal structure, inheritance and property*

- Ulrich Herrmann, Andreas Gestrich and Susanne Mutschler**, Kindheit, Jugend und Familienleben in einem schwabischen Dorf im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert (bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg), in Peter Borscheid und Hans J. Teuteberg, Eds., *Ehe, Liebe Tod. Zum Wechsel der Familie, der Geschlechts- und Generationsbeziehungen in der Neuzeit*. Münster 1983, p. 66-330 (with bibliography).
- Rolf-Dieter Hess**, *Familien- und Erbrecht im Württembergischen Landrecht von 1555 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des älteren württembergischen Rechts*. Stuttgart 1968.
- Julie Marfany**, 'Choices and constraints : marriage and inheritance in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Catalonia', *Continuity and Change*, 21, 1 (2006).
- P. Pozsgai and A-L. Head-König** (eds.), *Inheritance practices, marriage strategies and household formation in European rural societies*. Brussels : Brepols (2013 forthcoming).
- Jane Whittle**, 'Servants in rural England c. 1450-1650 : hired work as a means of accumulating wealth and skills before marriage', in Maria Ågren, Amy Louise Erickson, Eds., *The Marital Economy in Scandinavia and Britain 1400-1900* (2005), 89-107.

*Studies on southwest German inventories :*

- Angelika Bischoff-Luithlen**, *Der Schwabe und die Obrigkeit. Nicht nur Gemütvolltes aus alten Akten und schwäbischen Dorfarchiven*. Stuttgart 1989.
- Andrea Hauser**, *Dinge des Alltags. Studien zur historischen Sachkultur eines schwäbischen Dorfes*. Tübingen 1994.

**Andreas Maisch**, Notdürftiger Unterhalt und gehörige Schranken : Lebensbedingungen und Lebensstile in württembergischen Dörfern der frühen Neuzeit. Stuttgart 1992.

**Hildegard Mannheims**, *Wie wird ein Inventar erstellt? Rechtskommentare als Quelle der volkskundlichen Forschung*. Münster 1991.

**Hans Medick**, *Weben und Überleben in Laichingen, 1650-1900*. Göttingen 1997.

**David Warren Sabean**, Property, production, and family in Neckarhausen, 1700-1870. Cambridge 1990.

**David Warren Sabean**, Kinship in Neckarhausen, 1700-1870. Cambridge, 1998.

*Project publications :*

**Ogilvie, S., M. Küpker, and J. Maegraith**. "Community Characteristics and Demographic Development : Three Württemberg Communities, 1558-1914." *Cambridge Working Papers in Economics* 0910 (2009).

**Ogilvie, S., M. Küpker, and J. Maegraith**. "Women and the Material Culture of Food in Early Modern Germany." *Early Modern Women : an Interdisciplinary Journal* 4 (2009) : 149-159.

**Ogilvie, S.** "Consumption, Social Capital, and the "Industrious Revolution" in Early Modern Germany (Long Version)." *Cambridge Working Papers in Economics* 0943 (2009).

**Küpker, M. and J. Maegraith**. "Human Well-Being and the 'Industrious Revolution' : Consumption, Gender and Social Capital in a German Developing Economy, 1600-1900." *AKA-Newsletter* 25 (2009) : 19-41.

**Maegraith, J.** Fashion in the Archive. In : Giorgio Riello & Peter McNeil (eds.), *The Fashion History Reader : Global Perspectives* (2010) : Snapshot 8, 160-162.

**Ogilvie, S.** Consumption, Social Capital, and the 'Industrious Revolution' in Early Modern Germany. *Journal of Economic History* 70(2)(2010) : 287-325.

**Ogilvie, S., M. Küpker and J. Maegraith**. Krämer und ihre Waren im ländlichen Württemberg zwischen 1600 und 1740. *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie* 59 (2011), 54-75.

**Ogilvie, S., M. Küpker, and J. Maegraith**, Household debt in early modern Germany : evidence from personal inventories. *Cambridge Working Papers in Economics* 1148 (2011).

**Ogilvie, S., M. Küpker and J. Maegraith**. Household Debt in Early Modern Germany : Evidence from Personal Inventories. *Journal of Economic History* 72(1) (2012 forthcoming), 134-167.

**Ogilvie, S., M. Küpker and J. Maegraith**. Frauen und die materielle Kultur des Essens im frühneuzeitlichen Württemberg : Ergebnisse aus wildberger

Inventaren. *Zeitschrift für Württembergische Landesgeschichte* 71 (2012 forthcoming).

Project webpage : [http://www.econ.cam.ac.uk/Ogilvie\\_ESRC/index.html](http://www.econ.cam.ac.uk/Ogilvie_ESRC/index.html)

# Limitations on the role of British households as economic units

Richard Wall

## 1. Introduction

My own experience of living in different types of households illustrates how difficult it could be for a census enumerator to establish the boundaries of some households. In the summer of 1951 I entered my second household on the border of Wales when my father acquired a new property together with his married brother and two simple family households were merged and were then further enlarged with the addition of an unmarried brother. The new household was what Peter Laslett was later to call a *frèreche* or type 5d in the Laslett-Hammel classification scheme.<sup>1</sup> The property was, however, a large one and as there was a separate living room for each family (also accommodating the unmarried brother in one case), if a household is defined on the basis of the sharing of a common living room,<sup>2</sup> then two households would have existed not one. On the other hand, we did share a common kitchen and one stove. But there were two dining tables, one for each family, and two cooks. But the cooking was not divided on family lines as my mother cooked for the vegetarians who were my father, myself and her married brother-in-law while my aunt cooked for the carnivores; namely for all the members of her family except her husband and also for her unmarried brother-in-law and my mother. Viewed from

---

<sup>1</sup> Peter Laslett, 'Introduction', Peter Laslett and Richard Wall, eds., *Household and Family in Past Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> See discussion in R. Wall, 'Regional and temporal variations in the structure of British households since 1851', Theo Barker and Michael Drake eds., *Population and Society in Britain 1850-1980* (London: Batsford, 1982), p. 67.

this perspective, which any outsider could only have been derived from a detailed interview, there was just one household present. At the time we did not view the household as special nor distinguish it with a special name such as *frèreche* or anything similar. Yet both then and in earlier centuries, households of this type were very rare in England as analysis of censuses and census type documents has since shown.

In 1958, following legal advice that it would be more difficult with a shared property to ensure when one brother died that the property passed in direct descent and not laterally to the surviving brothers, we divided the property between the two families and two simple family households re-emerged without any change of residence. At various times other households also occupied other parts of the property, some permanently and one a week-end retreat. As their premises were (largely) self contained and included kitchens the census should have identified these as separate households. When I left for London in 1962, five households occupied a property that had been run as one household until 1958.

In London I boarded in the household of the eldest sister of my mother. Two other unrelated males were also boarded. In a census, had one been taken, I might have been recorded as a nephew (a type of no family household in the Laslett-Hammel scheme comprising co-resident relatives who were not siblings and did not include either a married couple or apparent and child) Alternatively, the relationship could have been ignored in which case I would be listed as a boarder (and fall outside the Laslett-Hammel scheme). Such a census should, however, have placed all three boarders and my aunt in one household and listed as separate households the other inmates of the house who catered for themselves.

A year later, I moved into a flat with two unrelated students. As the lounge in this flat also functioned as the bedroom for one student it is not absolutely clear whether this would mean that with only partial access to a common living space we had created two households and not one (if to be registered as a household there has to be a communal living area). However we did establish a common budget to purchase food and operated a cooking rota so this would have been one household if the household was defined, as for the Family Expenditure Survey in Britain in the 1970s as a group of

people living at the same address and having meals prepared together and with common housekeeping.<sup>3</sup> But within a year I was on the move again to yet another part of London where I resumed my status of a boarder in the household of two widowed first cousins of my father. Again the census, had one been taken, could have classed me either as a distant relative or as a boarder.

This experience of living in different households also raises other issues than the difficulty of defining a household when the only information available is a census schedule or a survey form and the property has not been visited. The first is that as the census is only conducted every tenth year none of the time I spent in households which were not simple family households (limited to married couples with or without children or a lone parent with children) would ever have been recorded in a census. The second point is to note the extent of the collaboration between relatives, even in England, the supposed heartland of the North West European household system where simple family households predominate. Until the age of 24 I had spent more of my life in households that were not simple family households than I had within simple family households. Admittedly, my experience is very unlikely to be typical but it does illustrate the point that households of very different types can co-exist even though censuses show that simple family households constitute the majority of household in England. I will therefore set out below (see sections 4 and 5) a broader perspective on the different types of households that have existed in England in the past. The focus will be on how both outside observers and some of the residents at the time interpreted the presence of different types of households, and thus complement Laslett's count of the frequency of different household types.<sup>4</sup> First, however, it is necessary to give further consideration to how effective were English households in the past at apportioning income between the various members of the

---

<sup>3</sup> R. Wall, 'Regional and temporal variations in the structure of British households since 1851', p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> P. Laslett, 'Introduction', p. 85; do., 'Family and household as work group and kin group: areas of traditional Europe compared', Richard Wall, Jean Robin and Peter Laslett eds., *Family Forms in Historic Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 518-9.

household and whether households were self contained residential units.

The information on households in England before the first national census in 1801 is derived from lists of inhabitants drawn up by a variety of persons for a variety of purposes. Many were compiled in connection with the taxes levied under the Marriage Duty Act in operation between 1694 and 1705. Other lists were made at the behest of local landowners or by local clergymen ; some lists appear from fuller details provided on wage earners than on farmers to be concerned with the economic circumstances of the poor (as in the case of the Cardington list of 1782,<sup>5</sup> or Corfe Castle in 1790, see copy of list in Library of Cambridge Group). In many cases neither the name of the complier nor the objective can be discovered. The diversity of lists is so great that no standard definition of the household is likely and in fact almost no list-maker ever offered one when they enumerated the inhabitants, inserting lines or leaving spaces (although by non means invariably) to indicate where one group ended and the next began. These blocks of names were identified by Laslett as households.<sup>6</sup> He then made the further assumption that residents shared certain characteristics, in particular that they slept habitually under the same roof, cooperated together in many ways and had ties of support, dependence or mutual dependence with some or even all of the other residents. Laslett appreciated nonetheless that these assumptions could 'scarcely be regarded as secure.'<sup>7</sup> He also recognised that relatives and others who lived near but not within the household (and therefore could not be considered household members) might still make an important economic contribution to its well-being and eat regularly at the family table. However, no firm evidence was provided to validate any of these propositions and in the following sections of this paper I will therefore first indicate some of the limitations to the level of support that was provided from within the household, and in particular by unmarried children. I will also attempt to quantify the

---

<sup>5</sup> See David Baker, *The Inhabitants of Cardington in 1782* : Bedfordshire Historical Record Society (Luton, 1973) vol. 52.

<sup>6</sup> P. Laslett, 'Introduction', p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> P. Laslett, 'Introduction', p. 25.

extent of support received by households from members of other households and from the community in general, through, for example, assistance in cash or kind from the Poor Law. Certain sections of the population have been better documented than others, for example, persons receiving poor relief while continuing to live in their own homes (outdoor relief), the widowed and the elderly and of necessity the focus will have to be on these groups rather than on entire populations.

The extent of the support households could derive from its members and from elsewhere raises important issues. In the first place if, for example certain members of the household used some of their earnings for their personal expenditure, there could have been some important limitations on the ability of households to fulfil what is often assumed<sup>8</sup> one of its core functions by redistributing income between its earners and non earners (or less well remunerated earners). Secondly, the existence of major channels of assistance emanating from outside the household means that assessment of the viability of the household economy derived solely from the employments of members of the household could be seriously misleading.

## 2. The Household as an Income Pooling Unit

A number of lists record the earnings of different members of the households of the poor and the extent of poor relief. For poor widows with wage earning children, the earning power of these children could be crucial. For example, children provided 65 percent of earnings of nine such households listed in 1597 in Ipswich, 48 percent of earnings in 6 households in Salisbury in 1637, 89 percent of nine households in Corfe Castle, Dorset, in 1790 and 73 percent in 21 households in Ipswich in 1906.<sup>9</sup> It would, however, be unwise to assume that all the earnings of the children were placed at the disposal of the household in general. Evidence from other communities indicates that some children retained a proportion of

---

<sup>8</sup> When for example the household is defined on the basis of common housekeeping as for the Family Expenditure Survey in Britain in the late twentieth century, see Wall 1982 : 68.

their earnings to spend as they saw fit. One reference to this practice occurs in one of the budgets of labouring families in 1789 compiled by David Davies where the eldest son (aged 14) in the family of a married labourer from Holwell, Somerset, earned £6 10 shillings per annum but spent 15 percent of that on his clothing. This was considerably more, sometimes double, what most labouring families spent on clothing one person.<sup>10</sup> There may also be a hint that older children may simply have used their earnings to meet the costs of their maintenance and retained the surplus for themselves, in a reference to an enumeration of Sandwich, Kent, in 1776, in which unmarried children above the age of 30 who still lived in the parental home were classed as lodgers.<sup>11</sup> At the start of the twentieth century, Rowntree also argued that older children living with their parents in York, contributed only that part of their incomes to the family purse that any other lodger would pay for board and lodging.<sup>12</sup>

Evidence is also available for the households of 12 widows in Ipswich in the early years of the twentieth century.<sup>13</sup> On average the children of these widows had handed over to their mothers 74 percent of their earnings. There was, however, considerable variation within with one widow receiving all the earnings while at the other extreme another widowed mother received just under half of the earnings. In the households of two married men, his children were

---

<sup>9</sup> Details from Wall 2008, based on analyses of lists of the poor in parts of Ipswich and Salisbury in John Webb, *Poor Relief in Elizabethan Ipswich*: Suffolk Record Society vol. IX (Ipswich, 1966) and Paul Slack, *Poverty in Early Tudor Salisbury*: Wiltshire Record Society (Devizes, 1975), the list of Corfe Castle in the Library of the Cambridge Group, and information on widows in Ipswich in Royal Commission on the Poor laws 1909, Appendix vol. XVII: Appendix to Interim Report no. 2, Appendix E: 421-8.

<sup>10</sup> David Davies, *The Case of Labourers in Husbandry* (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1795), especially p. 179.

<sup>11</sup> William Boys, *Collections for an History of Sandwich in Kent* (Canterbury, 1792) cited in R. Wall, 'Mean household size in England from printed sources', P. Laslett and R. Wall eds., *Household and Family in Past Time*, p. 166.

<sup>12</sup> B. Seebohm, Rowntree, *Poverty. A Study of Town Life* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1902), p. 117, note 1.

<sup>13</sup> Royal Commission on the Poor Laws 1909, Appendix vol. XVII: Appendix to Interim Report no. 2, Appendix E: pp. 421-8.

contributing two thirds of their earnings. Apart from the rare exception, these children, it should be noted, were considerably less generous than were their fathers who even although most retained some of their earnings for beer and tobacco, made available a much larger proportion of their earnings to meet the expenses of housekeeping.

These findings need careful consideration. In the first place they would appear to indicate that widows and their non earning children might be somewhat poorer than would first appear from a consideration of the earning power of their households. However this would not be the case if the mothers were thereby spared the cost of maintaining their earning children. There is some merit to this argument but it is evident that widows would have lost some potential income as children retained some of their earnings for additional personal expenditure. In the rural districts of Suffolk investigated by the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws (1909, Appendix vol. XVII),<sup>14</sup> adult sons living in the parental home were said to be meeting the costs of their board, lodging, mending and washing. Some sons were more generous in that they also paid most or even all the rent. However, there were also said to be some spendthrift sons who when out of work expected a parent to support them even if that parent was receiving poor relief. Level of earnings, custom and the character of the son were the three factors mentioned which determined what proportion of their earnings they were prepared to make available for the household as a whole.

The second implication is that the economic circumstances both of widows and married couples with earning children is likely to have been very variable depending on what proportion of their earnings children made available. It is also necessary to modify the standard understanding of how household income varies according to the age of the household head. As set out by Rowntree,<sup>15</sup> this indicated descent below the poverty line between birth and 15, a second descent between about 30 and 40 when any children in the household would be too young to earn much, and then a final descent into poverty after the age of 65. Rowntree was thus ignoring

---

<sup>14</sup> The Poor Laws 1909, Appendix vol. XVII : Appendix to Interim Report no. 3.

<sup>15</sup> B. Seebom, Rowntree, *Poverty*, p. 171.

his own observation that older children would not be contributing all their earnings to the household. If due account is now taken of this, then households where the head was between the ages of 50 and 65 (and which would be most likely to contain adult children) would be somewhat poorer than he envisaged. It also follows that the descent into poverty in old age or on widowhood might be less severe.

However, it should be emphasised that these remarks apply only to wage earning households. Studies of the economies of family farms in the 1940s and 1950s suggest that the situation of sons who remained, unmarried, at home to help run the farm were very different. These accounts, from Llanfihangel yn Ngwynfa, Montgomeryshire, in 1940 and Gosforth, Cumberland between 1950 and 1952 indicate that the sons of labourers had considerably greater independence and more cash than the sons of farmers.<sup>16</sup> In return for this largely unpaid work one son could expect eventually to inherit the parental farm, sometimes jointly with an unmarried sister although they could be well into middle age before this occurred.<sup>17</sup> Sons who did marry would, once a suitable farm became available, be provided with by their fathers with most of the stock and implements. Daughters would also receive some stock but principally household goods.<sup>18</sup> This would imply some depletion in the resources of the parental farm as sons and daughters married but this was not very likely until many farmers were in at least in their late fifties given that the mean age a first marriage of the sons of farmers was over 31 and daughters of farmers over 27 in Llanfihangel yn Ngwynfa and over 25 in Gosforth.<sup>19</sup>

Another limitation on the ability of households to redistribute income is that there is considerable evidence from some populations that indicates that in the allocation of food priority was given to feeding the breadwinner and working adolescent children.<sup>20</sup> An

---

<sup>16</sup> Alwyn D Rees, *Life in a Welsh Countryside. A Social Study of Llanfihangel yng Ngwynfa* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1951), p. 63; W. M Williams, *The Sociology of an English Village: Gosforth* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956), p. 43.

<sup>17</sup> See accounts of households in A. D. Rees, *Life in a Welsh Countryside*, p. 69; W. M. Williams, *The Sociology of an English Village*, p. 51.

<sup>18</sup> A. D. Rees, *Life in a Welsh Countryside*, p. 65.

<sup>19</sup> A. D. Rees, *Life in a Welsh Countryside*, pp. 65-6; W. M. Williams, *The Sociology of an English Village*, p. 45.

examination of the diets of British men and women in the 1890s showed that men consumed more calories than women (3,320 as opposed to 1,870) and twice as much meat protein.<sup>21</sup> Fewer of the meals consumed by married women contained any meat. Analysis of the meals of adult males and females in six households from Corsley, Wiltshire, over a two week period in 1906, shows that meat formed part of 14 of the meals taken by married men but only 11 of those taken by married women.<sup>22</sup> Ross argues,<sup>23</sup> that when wives made sure that their husbands received the best of whatever food was available this not only acknowledged the value of the husband as a worker but also his privileges in the household. Another factor, however, could also play a role and that was peer pressure, the need of the man not to lose face at work. As a Mrs T explained to Rowntree to justify why she and the children had no meat for breakfast while the breakfast her husband took with him to work included bacon: [Mr T] 'must have a bit of bacon to take with him for his breakfast, or else all the others would talk so'.<sup>24</sup>

Some households also operated what were in effect dual economies. For example the wife of a farmer in Llanfihangel yn Ngwynfa in the 1940s was responsible for the poultry, the collection of eggs and the making of butter and from the sale of these at the local market bought the groceries, her own clothes and those of the younger children, and replenished the stock of household equipment. Rees considered that the wife's mini budget was largely independent of that of her husband and that wives tended not divulge the details.<sup>25</sup> In some parts of southern Montgomeryshire, Rees reports that that the separation of budgets was even more marked with the wife of a farmer starting married life, separately financed by a dowry provided by her parents. Rees was inclined to

---

<sup>20</sup> Ellen Ross, *Love and Toil. Motherhood in Outcast London 1870-1918* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 33-5, 55.

<sup>21</sup> Diets collected by Dr Thomas Oliver as reported by E. Ross, *Love and Toil*, p. 33.

<sup>22</sup> Analysed from M. F. Davies, *Life in an English Village. An Economic and Social History of the Parish of Corsley in Wiltshire* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909).

<sup>23</sup> E. Ross, *Love and Toil*, p. 34.

<sup>24</sup> B. Seebohm, Rowntree, *Poverty*, p. 332.

<sup>25</sup> A. D. Rees, *Life in a Welsh Countryside*, p. 63.

see the origins of this practice in medieval Welsh law which allowed women married to freemen (but not serfs) to dispose of their clothing, meal, cheese and butter without consulting their husbands (*ibid*). This link, however, is speculative particularly as Williams also reported wives of farmers as operating their own budgets in much the same way in Gosforth, Cumberland in the early 1950s.<sup>26</sup>

The households of wage earners provided fewer opportunities for husbands and wives to establish dual economies as the most of the income on which the household relied, was provided by the husband. However it seems highly probable that the wives of such men used their often meagre earnings to supplement the housekeeping budget. Not all such earnings were included when information was collected on household budgets and this may explain in part why the expenditure of some households was reported as exceeding their earnings.<sup>27</sup> In 1909 Davies was still experiencing difficulties in establishing whether, and if so, to what extent, wives supplemented the earnings of their husbands.<sup>28</sup>

### 3. Support from Outside the Household

A number of cases of children supporting elderly widowed or disabled parents, even when they did not live with them, have been documented for English populations. One elderly man in Corfe Castle in 1790 was, for example, at least in part supported by his children who lived elsewhere (census of Corfe Castle 1790, copy in Library of Cambridge Group). On the other hand, Eden documented from Seend, Wiltshire, in 1796 much more limited assistance to a widow by a son aged 18, living independently, who was only giving his mother six pence a week as payment for her washing and mending his clothes. The rest of his earnings of ten shillings a week as a bricklayer were devoted to his own maintenance. From the information given by Eden, sixpence constituted 5 percent of his

---

<sup>26</sup> W. M. Williams, *The Sociology of an English Village*, pp. 41-2.

<sup>27</sup> Frederic Morton Eden, *The State of the Poor. Or an History of the Labouring Classes in England* (London: J. Davis, 1797. Reprinted 2001 Bristol: Thoemmes Press), p. 734.

<sup>28</sup> M. F. Davies, *Life in an English Village*, p. 138.

earnings and just over 3 percent of the income of his widowed mother who had several wage earning children and was in receipt of poor relief.<sup>29</sup>

Examination of some family budgets from Corsley, Wiltshire in 1906 reveals the variety of arrangements that might be made. One aged widow, living on her own, was largely supported by a daughter who paid her rent of £5 and sent her bacon, butter, potatoes and firewood should her own store be exhausted.<sup>30</sup> Analysis of the housekeeping budget indicated that the daughter provided 61 percent of the food budget in the first week of observation and 81 percent in the second.<sup>31</sup> A niece who lived nearby looked after her and a great niece recorded the expenditure and the nature of the meals that the widow was eating. Three children helped to support another widow in Corsley. Two married sons each contributed two shillings per week and a married daughter made a home for her mother, taking three shillings and sixpence (88 percent of the four shillings) to meet the cost of her keep. In the summer the mother undertook some housework while her daughter was working in the garden and in return the daughter gave her a share of the profits from the sale of garden produce as pocket money, amounting in all to 12-13 shillings.<sup>32</sup> The experience of this family thus demonstrates not only cooperation between siblings in the provision of care to an elderly parent but also the way in which an elderly widow could still make a contribution to the family economy and see that work rewarded by a transfer of cash from daughter to mother.

In general, however, married children with families of their own could only provide limited support to their parents. In 1906 in Market Drayton, Shropshire, married sons were typically paying six pence or one shilling to the Poor Law Guardians as partial compensation for the amount of outdoor relief the Guardians were providing to their widowed parent.<sup>33</sup> These amounts represented

---

<sup>29</sup> F. M. Eden, *The State of the Poor*, pp. 797-8.

<sup>30</sup> M. F. Davies, *Life in an English Village*, p. 218.

<sup>31</sup> The value of the food provided has been estimated using the information on the cost of these items when purchased by other families in Corsley.

<sup>32</sup> M. F. Davies, *Life in an English Village*, p. 190.

<sup>33</sup> Royal Commission on the Poor Laws 1909, Appendix vol. XVII: Interim Report 4, p. 217.

between 3 and 7 percent of their earnings and between 17 percent and half of what had been granted in poor relief. Many married children with households of their own did not provide any financial support to their parents. Analysis of the information that was provided on some of 'typical cases' selected by the Royal Commission from the list of outdoor poor in Govan, Glasgow, again in 1906 shows that only about half of the married children provided any assistance to a widowed mother.<sup>34</sup> The evidence collected by Booth on the economic circumstances of the elderly in rural areas of England in 1892 also indicated that support from family members (identified simply as relatives), when available, was usually combined with other sources of income. The amount of assistance was not specified but the sources of support were given. Only a fifth of the elderly were maintained solely by relatives while a third needed the support of the Poor Law, just under a third received charity, a fifth were earning and 14 percent had savings from which they derived some income.<sup>35</sup> A quarter of all rural elderly were reported as receiving some assistance from relatives.<sup>36</sup>

The family budgets also indicate that on occasion some support might be provided by siblings resident elsewhere, more distant relatives and even neighbours.<sup>37</sup> However such support (usually provided in kind rather than as cash) was usually limited and taking into account the number of potential donors, whether neighbours or relatives, was not often available.<sup>38</sup> Employers (or former employers)

---

<sup>34</sup> Royal Commission on the Poor Laws 1909, Appendix vol. XVII: Appendix B2.

<sup>35</sup> Earnings and reliance on savings or property could be combined with help from relatives; hence the percentages exceed 100%. See R. Wall, 'Relationships between the generations in British families past and present', Catherine Marsh and Sara Arber eds., *Families and Households. Divisions and Change* (London: Macmillan, 1992), p. 82; calculated from Charles Booth, *The Aged Poor in England and Wales* (London, Garland Publishing 1894: Reprinted 1980 New York), pp. 339-40.

<sup>36</sup> R. Wall, 'Relationships between the generations in British families past and present', p. 81.

<sup>37</sup> B. Seeböhm, Rowntree, *Poverty*; M. F. Davies, *Life in an English Village* and the Royal Commission 1909, Appendix vol. XVII: Appendix to Interim Report 5, Appendix B 92 Govan: 180 and Appendix E (13) Paisley: 195.

<sup>38</sup> On the availability of kin see Beatrice Moring and Richard Wall, Richard, *The Welfare of Widows in Northern Europe* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2008).

and local landowners might also provide some assistance. This could involve the provision of food while at work, allowing their labourers to buy grain at below the market price and permitting the gathering of firewood. The value of such assistance, given the many forms it might take, is difficult to estimate but was almost certainly less than the pensions some employers were paying to elderly former employees or their widows in the Thingoe Poor Law Union in Suffolk in 1906. These pensions of two shillings a week, paid by agents employed to manage the estates of the landowners, represented 80 percent of the amounts granted as out relief by the Poor Law Guardians. Payment of out relief was, however, apparently not curtailed nor were the pensions even recorded in the records of the Poor Law because these agents, many of whom also served as Poor Law Guardians, thus ensured higher incomes for their pensioners at very little cost to the landowner.<sup>39</sup>

Poor relief could also provide substantial additional support but again was clearly intended to supplement earnings with the level of assistance providing 10 percent of the income of the households of widows with wage earning children receiving assistance from the Poor Law in Ipswich in 1597, 17 percent in Salisbury in 1637, 22 percent in Corfe Castle in 1790 (assuming relief on the same scale as in other Dorset parishes at the time) and 27 percent Ipswich in 1906.<sup>40</sup> Except in Ipswich in 1597 when only three of the nine households received poor relief, all these households even though both the widows and their children were in employment, also received assistance from the Poor Law. Indeed most widows identified as belonging to sections of the population classed as poor or working for wages needed the assistance of the Poor Law: two thirds in Cawston, Norfolk, in 1601, 55 percent in Cardington,

---

<sup>39</sup> Royal Commission on the Poor Laws 1909, Appendix vol. XVII, Interim Report 3, pp. 182-3.

<sup>40</sup> Detailed analysis in R. Wall, 'Widows, family and poor relief in 18th and 19th century England'. Paper presented to European Social science History Conference, Lisbon (2008) based on J. Webb, *Poor Relief in Elizabethan Ipswich*; P. Slack, *Poverty in Early Tudor Salisbury*; census of Corfe Castle in library of Cambridge Group and Royal Commission on the Poor Laws 1909, Appendix vol. XVII, Appendix to Interim Report2, Appendix E (4) : 152-7

Bedfordshire, 71 percent in Corfe Castle in 1790 and 76 percent in Ardeleigh, Essex, in 1796. Men from within the wage earning population were much less likely to receive poor relief: 48 percent in Cawston but only 10 percent in Cardington and just one percent in Ardeleigh.<sup>41</sup> Only when men were elderly and at best earned much less than they had when younger, did appreciable proportions of men receive poor relief. For example 38 percent of elderly men from the wage earning population in Cardington were granted outdoor poor relief as were 10 percent of men over the age of 65 in Ardeleigh. But these proportions were much lower than the proportions of elderly widows assisted by the Poor Law in these communities at 67 and 60 percent respectively.

In the late nineteenth century, total reliance on the Poor Law was unusual just as it had been in earlier centuries, and as was the case with support from relatives. Booth's study of the rural elderly in 1892 shows that just over a fifth of those who received poor relief, had no other source of support.<sup>42</sup> Other channels of support were charity and relatives (each 38 percent), the earnings of the elderly themselves (16 percent) and their savings and property (14 percent).

#### 4. Households as Residential Units

Houses are malleable and can be extended and reconstructed to meet the changing requirements of the households within them or modified to accommodate fewer or additional households. The enumeration of the inhabitants of Puddletown, Dorset, in 1724-5 revealed many instances of how houses had been divided between different households, their living space clearly distinct from that of their neighbours, and with other households living in outhouses.

---

<sup>41</sup> Analysed from Tim Wales, 'Poverty, poor relief and the life-cycle: some evidence from seventeenth-century Norfolk', Richard M. Smith ed., *Land, Kinship and Life-Cycle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); D. Baker, David Baker, *The Inhabitants of Cardington in 1782*; Census of Corfe Castle 1790, copy in library of Cambridge Group, and E. H. Erith, *Ardeleigh in 1796* (Easr Bergholt: Hugh Tempest Radford, 1978).

<sup>42</sup> R. Wall, 'Relationships between the generations in British families past and present', p. 82; calculated from C. Booth, *The Aged Poor in England and Wales*, pp. 339-40.

Comparison with a later enumeration of 1765 also shows both examples of houses with one household at the earlier date accommodating two in 1765, and vice versa (copies of the enumerations in the Library of the Cambridge Group). If all lists of English populations were of this quality, identifying households would be no problem but the enumeration of the residents of Puddletown is unique. Reassessment of the hundreds of lists that were compiled before 1801 indicates that many did not, as Laslett believed, list households.<sup>43</sup> In urban areas, particularly London, it made more sense to list all the residents of each house while in numbers of smaller settlements it was deemed sufficient to list the inhabitants without making any attempt to distinguish one residential group from another. Some of the lists of the late seventeenth century taken in connection with the Marriage Duty Act of 1694 made separate lists of paupers (who were excused payment of the tax), and bachelors and widowers over the age of 25 without dependent children (who had pay an additional tax) rather than including them with other members of their households. Analysis of those lists that specified the relationships of all, or nearly all, persons within the name blocks to the first person listed indicated that more households were headed by married couples and that they contained more relatives, but fewer children, servants and lodgers than initially Laslett and I had suggested.<sup>44</sup>

Many writers on English society in the seventeenth and eighteenth century also found no inconsistency in dividing the population into units that they described as houses or families, the latter term signifying households as the term 'household' was rarely used. Even Gregory King, one of the most acute observers of the population and social structure of seventeenth century England, referred on occasion to 'houses or families' although elsewhere he presented exactly the same figures for units he identified as houses, and made other estimates which took account of differences between the number of persons per house and per household.<sup>45</sup> During the

---

<sup>43</sup> P. Laslett, 'Introduction', p. 25.

<sup>44</sup> R. Wall, 'The household ; demographic and economic change in England, 1650 -1970', R. Wall, J. Robin and P. Laslett eds., *Family Forms in Historic Europe*, p. 496.

<sup>45</sup> R. Wall, 'Mean household size in England from printed sources', p. 163.

course of the eighteenth century, the more perceptive observers began to make this distinction between the number of residents in a house and the size of the household<sup>46</sup> and in 1782 the influential writer on the state of the British economy, George Chalmers, could declare that 'house' and 'household', considered synonymous terms a century earlier, had by then acquired distinct meanings.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, failure to make appropriate distinctions between houses and households (still referred to as families) persisted into the nineteenth century as is evident from examining the results of the first national censuses. John Rickman, the official responsible for the first census of 1801 considered that the information relating to families (by which he meant households) was particularly suspect not only because the term had been variously understood in different parts of the country but because in some areas the question had been completely ignored.<sup>48</sup> In the latter case it was simply assumed that the number of families (households) was the same as the number of inhabited houses (Census of Great Britain 1801 : 40).<sup>49</sup>

Some commentators were certainly uncertain as to whether they were documenting the number of persons in a house or in a household. For example, in successive editions of Richard Price's work on the population of England, 'houses' appeared as a column heading in the first edition of 1779, only to be omitted for the second edition and replaced with 'families' in the collected editions of his works in 1792, even though an adjacent column continued to be headed 'persons per house'.<sup>50</sup> Some of the data published by Price

---

<sup>46</sup> R. Wall, 'Mean household size in England from printed sources', pp. 165-6.

<sup>47</sup> George Chalmers, *An Estimate of the Comparative Strength of Great Britain*, 1782, p. 115, cited in R. Wall, 'Mean household size in England from printed sources', p. 166.

<sup>48</sup> Census of Great Britain 1801, p. 496. Cited in R. Wall, 'Mean household size in England from printed sources', p. 160.

<sup>49</sup> Census of Great Britain 1801, p. 40.

<sup>50</sup> Richard Price, 'An account of progress from the Revolution and the present state of population', W. Morgan, *The Doctrine of Annuities and assurances on Lives and Survivorships* (1779) ; 1780 First separate edition, *An essay on the Population of England from the Revolution to the Present Time*. 1792 Collected Edition, *Observations on Reversionary Payments, and on Schemes for providing Annuities for Widows, and for Persons in Old Age*.

also feature in other studies of the time, usually recorded as referring to ‘houses’ but on one occasion to ‘families’. However, in addition to confusion about whether persons per house or per household had been documented, ambiguity arose because of the frequently voiced opinion that the duties of the householder extended over all those persons who resided within his house. For example householders in Westminster in the early seventeenth century were held responsible for the good behaviour not just of their children and servants but also that of their lodgers.<sup>51</sup> As late as 1851 the introduction to the 1851 census of Great Britain defined ‘family’ (household) as including all residents in a house, including casual lodgers :

‘The first, most intimate, and perhaps most important community, is the family’ not considered as the children of one parent, but as persons under one head ; who is the occupier of the house, the householder, master, husband, or father : while other members of the family are, the wife, children, servants, relatives, visitors, *and persons constantly or accidentally present in the house*’ (Census of Great Britain 1851 : xxxiv ; my italics).

According to Sarti,<sup>52</sup> citing the 20 volume Oxford English Dictionary of 1989, the first recorded use of the term ‘family’ to indicate all people who lived under one roof or under the same householder, date from the mid sixteenth century while in France such usage was considered rare in a dictionary of 1762. In the Middle Ages, ‘family’ might include all those who worked for the same master or used as a synonym for servants.<sup>53</sup>

Alongside a broad definition of the household, some narrower ones also found favour. The same census report which in 1851 supported the broad definition of family (household) quoted above

---

<sup>51</sup> W. H. Manchée, W. H. 1924. *The Westminster City Fathers (The Burgess Court of Westminster)*. (London : John Lane The Bodley Head, 1924), p. 9, and for actions by children and servants, *ibid* : pp. 119, 99.

<sup>52</sup> Raffaella Sarti, *Europeans at Home. Family and Material Culture 1500-1800*. (New Haven and London : Yale University Press, 2001), p. 33.

<sup>53</sup> R. Sarti, *Europeans at Home*, p. 32.

stated elsewhere that the census enumerators had failed in many instances to count as householders those single lodgers, widows and widowers who occupied parts of houses. For the analysis of the structure of the household that was included in the report, such lodgers were first reclassified as heads of households (Census of Great Britain 1851 : c-ci).<sup>54</sup> Such problems continued to bedevil the census takers into the twentieth century with Block commenting that the recorded total of 689,000 single person households in the 1931 was under-estimated due to the recording of many such households as lodgers. These difficulties arose because the officials trying to interpret the results of the censuses considered that many of the persons reported by enumerators and householders as lodgers were actually householders as they had part of the houses in which they lived set aside for their use. The householders who filled in the census schedules (together perhaps with the enumerators, who for the censuses between 1851 and 1901, were responsible for copying the information from schedules filled in by householders) did not accept that those persons who took lodgings could thereby have established separate households. Different considerations drove Young and Willmott to redraw the boundaries of the household in their study of working class households in Bethnal Green in East London in the 1950s. As there was such extensive cooperation between family members, Young and Willmott decided they should pay no attention as to whether relatives were living in the same or a different household, providing they were residing in the same dwelling.<sup>55</sup>

## 5. The Identification of Different Types of Household

When classifying households, most historians have adopted (sometimes with modifications and additions) the classification

---

<sup>54</sup> Census of Great Britain 1851 : c-ci. R. Wall, 'Regional and temporal variations in the structure of British households since 1851', T. Barker and M. Drake eds., *Population and Society in Britain 1850-1980*, p. 69 ; W. A. Armstrong, 'A note on the household structure of mid-nineteenth century York in comparative perspective', P. Laslett and R. Wall eds., *Household and Family in Past Time*, pp. 212-3.

<sup>55</sup> Michael Young and Peter Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London : Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), p. 209.

scheme developed by Gene Hammel and Peter Laslett.<sup>56</sup> The classification distinguishes households on the basis of whether they contain just one conjugal family group, either a married couple (with or without unmarried children) or a lone parent and an unmarried child. Such households were termed simple family households. Alternatively, if households included not only a conjugal family unit but also other relatives, they were identified as extended family households if the additional relatives such as grandchildren, siblings or a parent did not themselves form a separate conjugal family unit and as multiple family households if they did. Households without conjugal family units were of two types: first, solitaries, and, secondly, 'no family' households. These latter consisted of co-resident relatives such as siblings, or more distantly related or unrelated persons who were not members of a conjugal family unit (as defined above).

This classification has been widely used to chart geographical variations in household forms by region, the type of local economy and country.<sup>57</sup> It has in fact become customary to characterise populations depending on whether they appear to favour the formation of simple or more complex households and in particular multiple family households<sup>58</sup> and Laslett himself used the

---

<sup>56</sup> P. Laslett, 'Introduction', p. 31 ; E. A. Hammel and P. Laslett, 1974. 'Comparing household structure over time and between cultures', *Comparative Studies in society and History*, 16 (1974), pp. 73-110.

<sup>57</sup> This is despite the fact that the classification has also attracted a great deal of criticism, particularly its focus on kinship ties while ignoring the economic contribution to the household economy of different members of the household, regardless of their kin relationship to other members. The classification should in fact be accompanied by other analyses of the composition of households (as recommended by Laslett 1983 : 560-3) or the classification of households in terms of their kinship structure extended to take note of the presence of servants, boarders and lodgers. Not all households of solitaries, for instance were one person households as the presence in such households of servants, boarders and lodgers was ignored when classifying such households as solitaries as the householder did not share the household with a relative or friend. See the studies of R. Wall, 'The transformation of the European family across the centuries', Richard Wall, Josef Ehmer and Tamara K. Hareven eds., *Family History Revisited. Comparative Perspectives* (Cranbury NJ and London : Associated University Presses, 2001), pp. 223, 227.

classification in this way.<sup>59</sup> Yet comparatively little attention has been given as to whether members of these various societies were aware of the fact that they were living in households that centuries later have been designated as simple, extended or multiple let alone as a no family household even though the members of a no family household were usually relatives (on the limitations of the concept of the 'no family' household).<sup>60</sup> When defining the boundaries of the household, Laslett was keen to stress that it was important to take account of where contemporaries thought these boundaries should be ; whether for example to include or exclude the retired parents of the household head.<sup>61</sup> It thus seems logical that the same principle should extend to the identification of different types of household.

The local population would have known that households could be larger or smaller and more or less complex as all the historical populations that have so far been studied even when dominated by a particular type of household, for example by simple family households in England or by multiple family households in many Russian populations, also included some households that were of a different type (complex households in England and simple family households and solitaries in Russia). It does not necessarily follow, however, that such households were viewed at the time as aberrant or different. If, for example, we look at the ways households in England in the seventeenth and eighteenth century were understood at the time, we find that not even the most perceptive observers classified households on the basis of their kinship structure. Terms such as simple and extended family (or anything similar) were never used. Most informed observers knew (correctly) that English households were usually small, containing on average, between four

---

<sup>58</sup> R. Wall, 'The transformation of the European family across the centuries', pp. 222-3 and 226-7.

<sup>59</sup> P. Laslett, 'Introduction', p. 85 ; do., *Family Life and illicit Love in earlier Generations* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1979) ; do. 'Family and household as work group and kin group : areas of traditional Europe compared', R. Wall, J. Robin and P. Laslett eds., *Family Forms in Historic Europe*, pp. 518-24.

<sup>60</sup> See R. Wall, 'Life course and socio-economic perspectives on no family households'. Paper presented to 32nd Social science History Conference, Chicagon, 2007.

<sup>61</sup> P. Laslett, 'Introduction', p. 27.

and five persons.<sup>62</sup> However, even when they exaggerated the size of households this was because they included in the household too many servants and lodgers as opposed to large numbers of relatives, in addition to unmarried children. John Graunt, for example, who was the first to attempt a serious investigation of mortality in England, allowed three servants as well as a man and his wife and three children when estimating in 1662 the average size of London households as containing eight persons.<sup>63</sup> Other commentators such as Arthur Young in the 1770s tended to over-estimate the number of children in the household, particularly if the parents were poor.<sup>64</sup> Two (presumably prosperous) farmers responding to an enquiry by Arthur Young into the consumption of meat reported families (households) of 14 and 16 persons respectively, but in this case this did not signify the presence of many children or relatives but that they had included in their households passing tradesmen, labourers employed on a seasonal basis and harvesters.<sup>65</sup> Exceptionally, references can be found to English households containing many relatives but such households are not identified as households of a particular type but only in terms of the relationships between the various members. Nor are these references accounts of actual households. George Cruikshank for example was simply presenting a caricature of the Victorian household when he envisaged it containing 47 persons, including 25 children together with parents, grandparents, two great grandmothers, three aunts, one uncle and seven servants.<sup>66</sup> Nor had T. D. Fosbroke, writing in 1807, actually seen the household of Mrs Church of Staunton, Gloucestershire

---

<sup>62</sup> Observations summarised in R. Wall, 'Mean household size in England from printed sources', pp. 168-9.

<sup>63</sup> John Graunt, *Natural and Political Observations on the Bills of Mortality* (1662), cited in Wall, 'Mean household size in England from printed sources', p. 168 and see P. Laslett, '1972: 168 and see P. Laslett, *The Earliest Classics* (Farnborough: Gregg International. 1973).

<sup>64</sup> Cited in R. Wall, 'Mean household size in England from printed sources', pp. 171.

<sup>65</sup> Arthur Young, ed., *Annals of Agriculture* (1784-1815), XXXII, pp. 517, 525 cited in Wall, 'Mean household size in England from printed sources', p. 167.

<sup>66</sup> Cited in R. Wall, 'Mean household size in England from printed sources', p. 172.

whose household prior to her death ten years earlier, he reported had contained the old lady herself, her daughter, granddaughter and her granddaughter's children.<sup>67</sup>

The first national census of Britain was taken in 1801 and was then continued decennially (apart from 1941). From the outset totals of families (households), houses and persons resident in each parish were published but before 1951 almost no attempt was made to investigate the composition of households even though from 1851 the relationship of each member of the household to the household head was recorded in the enumeration books and after 1911 on the schedules completed by householders. There were just two occasions when household composition was analysed and these were for a specially selected set of districts in 1851 and 1861. The results were published as part of the General Reports.<sup>68</sup> Households were first distinguished according to the marital status of the household head: 62 percent of whom were married couples, 16 percent widowers and widows, and 21 percent bachelors or spinsters. There were also a few households (less than 1 percent) where the household head was absent on the night of the census. The members of the household were then classified according to whether they were identified as children, relatives, servants or trade assistants. The details of classification established how many households headed by married couple, the widowed or the unmarried contained children, relatives, servants or trade assistants; how many only children, only relatives, only servants or only trade assistants etc. but no attempt was made to interpret the patterns. There was no reference to boarders or lodgers as such persons had been reclassified for the purposes of this analysis as heads of households which accounts for the high percentage of households reported as headed by unmarried men and women. Nor

---

<sup>67</sup> Cited in R. Wall, 'Mean household size in England from printed sources', p. 173.

<sup>68</sup> Census of Great Britain 1851: c-ci; Census of Great Britain 1861 and Census of England and Wales 1861. The basis on which these districts were selected is unknown but they are not a representative sample of districts. Almost no rural areas were included in the 14 districts selected in 1851 and 11 of the 14 districts were located in the north-west, the north-east or the south-east.

did the Census distinguish different types of relative. Taking all 14 districts together, 12.6 percent of households contained relatives, not far short of the 15 percent that reanalysis of the published results of the 1951 Census suggested was then the case nationally.<sup>69</sup> However, as pointed out above, as the numbers of households in these districts in 1851 have been inflated by reclassifying lodgers as household heads, then, as argued by Armstrong,<sup>70</sup> 19.7 percent of households could contain relatives rather than 12.6 percent, indicating a significant fall in the proportion of households with relatives during the following century. The disparity between these two estimates indicates the importance of defining the household in such a way that the same definition is applied at both dates.<sup>71</sup> On the other hand, it may not always be appropriate to attempt to impose a consistent definition when, as for example in the present case, the improvement in living standards between 1851 and 1951 made it relatively easy in the middle of the twentieth century to perceive certain individuals as residentially independent when their equivalents a century earlier could be recorded as lodgers. Due regard also does need to be paid to how the members of these households defined, or can be inferred to have defined their households, giving their views precedence over the opinion of distant census officials. If this approach is applied to the recording of households in the 14 districts in 1851, then lodgers should not have been reclassified as householders and 19.7, not 12.6 percent of households contained relatives.

Another issue is why the officials responsible for publishing the results of successive censuses ceased after 1861 to explore the issue of household composition, only taking it up again in 1951. One might

---

<sup>69</sup> W. A. Armstrong, 'A note on the household structure of mid-nineteenth century York in comparative perspective', p. 213 ; R. Wall, 'Regional and temporal variations in the structure of British households since 1851', p. 69. In making this comparison it has been assumed that there was no major inconsistency between 1851 and 1951 in the definition of 'relative' and there is no way of determining whether such an assumption is valid.

<sup>70</sup> W. A. Armstrong, 'A note on the household structure of mid-nineteenth century York in comparative perspective', p. 213.

<sup>71</sup> The same point also arises in connection with comparisons across space whether between different regions or countries.

perhaps draw the inference that in comparison say with information about numbers of people, houses and families, the age structure, marital status, occupations and migration (as measured by birthplace against current residence), it was less easy to identify why either central or local government officials needed to have details about the relationships of household members. The omission is, however, a little puzzling as elsewhere in Western Europe the composition of the household was investigated in detail before the end of the nineteenth century. To cite just one example the census of Berlin of 1880 taken by the city authorities included a classification of households into 32 categories.<sup>72</sup>

Even in the late twentieth century, census officials have not deemed the issue of the presence in the household of relatives other than children of sufficient importance to distinguish them as a category of household member.<sup>73</sup> Tabulations of household for the General Household Survey and Family Expenditure Survey ignored relationships completely in favour of (different) combinations of adults and children. The decennial census did take account of relationships within the household but did not identify all relatives and also changed the classification from census to census. In 1951, for example widowed and divorced children who resided with their parents were counted as children and in 1961 and later as relatives. Siblings of the household head, if under the age of 16, were also included with other children in 1951 and in later censuses as relatives. In 1961 it is impossible to identify households with 'lone ancestors' (a household with a parent or grandparent of the household head or his wife) if unrelated persons were also present in the household. The recorded number of households with relatives was also defective in the tables on household composition in the Census of 1971 in that grandchildren resident with a grandparent in the absence of their parents were counted as children and not as relatives and households containing two or more married couples or parent-child groups, who were related but not by direct descent were not identified. The fivefold classification of households used by Gray

---

<sup>72</sup> Census of Berlin 1880 Part II : Table VIII.

<sup>73</sup> Details summarised from R. Wall, 'Regional and temporal variations in the structure of British households since 1851', pp. 64-5.

for his study of the household in Britain in 1947 also paid very little attention to relationships between household members other than those between parents and adult children.<sup>74</sup> His category of 'other' households, for example, included widows with children, widows with grown up children and also married couples living with married children and some grandchildren. A much more informative classification was used by Young and Willmott in their study of the working class families in Bethnal Green in East London. Having found it difficult to extract useful information on the composition of the household from the 1951 Census they devised a classification scheme that in fact bears a close resemblance to the later Hammel-Laslett classification of household types but with some additional details such as distinguishing between parents living with married sons, married daughters in two generation households and between parents with married sons and married daughters in three generation households.<sup>75</sup> The only advantages provided by the Hammel-Laslett scheme is the identification of households of widowers and widows with unmarried children and the presence of other relatives than siblings in households also containing one married couple or parent and unmarried child.

Apart from some inferences about how the members of certain populations may have perceived the difference between the status of householder and lodger, none of the evidence considered so far offers any insight into the range of views that residents (as opposed to outsiders) might hold of the differently structured household within their community. For this, other evidence is needed and some is available from examination of sociological and anthropological studies of both rural and urban populations undertaken in the

---

<sup>74</sup> P. G. Gray, *The British Household* (London: The Social Survey, 1947), as cited in Mogey, *Family and neighbourhood. Two studies in Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 15-6.

<sup>75</sup> M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London*, pp. 209-10. There are also major similarities between the Hammel-Laslett scheme and the classification of households proposed by Henry (1967): 44-5 and used by Blayo, Klapisch and van der Woude in Laslett and Wall, eds., *Household and Family in Past Time*, although Henry considered that a widow or widower heading a household was also the head of a family even if there was no other member of the family present.

middle decades of the twentieth century.

It seems sensible to begin in Llanfihangel yn Ngwynfa, Montgomeryshire which was the earliest of the communities to be surveyed, in 1939 and 1940. In Llanfihangel, farmers and their relatives undertook 80 percent of the work on the farms carried out by males while the wives, female occupiers of holdings and their female relatives did 90 percent of the work undertaken by females.<sup>76</sup> Fifteen percent of the households of the farmers contained additional relatives such as an unmarried sibling, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece or cousin and there were a number of three generational households. However, almost half of these three generational households were regarded by Rees as temporary or makeshift arrangements. Two of the households contained married daughters whose first child had arrived before a farm had been found for the new family (the young husbands lived with their own parents). Another two households included widowed daughters with children and a further two three generational households were established when the grandparents took into their households the illegitimate child of a daughter. Instances where a married son lived with an aged father formed a distinct minority even of the three generational households.<sup>77</sup> There is a certain similarity between these households in Llanfihangel and the interpretation I offered of the role of the household as a provider of welfare in order to explain the presence of relatives in the households of the inhabitants of Colyton, Devon (only a minority of whom were farmers), in the middle of the nineteenth century (155 who insisted that such arrangements had to be acceptable to the householder and could not be claimed as a right).<sup>78</sup> In Llanfihangel, there seemed to be no conscious preference expressed in favour of a particular type of household other than that if there were no unmarried children, an

---

<sup>76</sup> A. D. Rees, *Life in a Welsh Countryside*, p. 60.

<sup>77</sup> A. D. Rees, *Life in a Welsh Countryside*, pp. 60-1.

<sup>78</sup> R. Wall, 'Work, welfare and the family: an illustration of the Adaptive Family Economy', Lloyd Bonfield, Richard Smith and Keith Wrightson eds., *The World we Have Gained. Histories of Population and Social Structure* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 282-9, but see P. Laslett, 'Family, kinship and collectivity as systems of support in pre-industrial Europe: a consideration of the 'nuclear hardship' hypothesis', *Continuity and Change*, 3(2); 153-75.

aged father should live in the household of a married daughter. This is in sharp contrast to the acknowledgement of the higher status of married men who would no longer be referred to by their Christian names and the name of their father's farm but by Christian and surname or as 'the husband of a particular farm'. On the other hand it is possible to infer a decided preference against the co-residence of a married son with his parents given that so few did so even though in a large number of families, one son, usually the youngest, inherited the parental holding.<sup>79</sup> For this, there could be an economic explanation as hill farms would not generate sufficient income to support a large household. Rees, however, felt that many of the residence patterns were shaped by medieval Welsh law according to which the father retained control of the land of the kindred until his death and was then succeeded by his youngest son.<sup>80</sup> Another inference that could be drawn is that it was the influence of his mother that prevented the inheriting son from marrying during her lifetime as she would never willingly surrender the management of the household to a daughter in law.

In Gosforth which Williams studied between 1950 and 1952, the usual practice was for farmers to retire to a house they had bought in the district and pass the farm to a son, usually the eldest.<sup>81</sup> It seems plausible that inheritance by the eldest rather than the youngest son (as in Llanfihangel) was feasible because the father was prepared to retire. On the other hand, both in Llanfihangel and Gosforth, the co-residence of a married heir and a parent was unusual. In both communities, therefore there very few stem families of the classic type even though many farms were inherited by a son. In Llanfihangel, most heirs did not marry until their parents were dead; in Gosforth until they had retired. Both in Llanfihangel and Gosforth it was also customary for the widow of a farmer to retain possession of the farm for the rest of her life (unless in the case of Gosforth her late husband had already retired). When in a few cases, a son did inherit the holding immediately following the death of his father and his mother was still alive, the inheriting

---

<sup>79</sup> A. D. Rees, *Life in a Welsh Countryside*, p. 68.

<sup>80</sup> A. D. Rees, *Life in a Welsh Countryside*, p. 71.

<sup>81</sup> W. M. Williams, *The Sociology of an English Village*, p. 49.

son would be obliged to support her for the rest of her life as long as she did not remarry.<sup>82</sup> The latter limitation appears also in arrangements governing the transfer of customary land on some medieval English manors (although the widow did not forfeit the land if her new husband paid a high entry fine) and in retirement contracts in the Nordic countries.<sup>83</sup>

Williams was keen to stress the difference between retirement arrangements in Gosforth from those in some other rural communities. In Gosforth, the farmer and his wife on retirement relocated to a new house in the district whereas in medieval England and in contemporary Ireland, a separate room was reserved for them on the farm, or in Germany in the *Altenteil* which was still on the farm but often consisted of a separate dwelling.<sup>84</sup> This distinction, however, places too much emphasis on the element of residential proximity (indeed the Irish case was interpreted by Laslett<sup>85</sup> as involving co-residence when the essence of the retirement arrangement was the same. It seems very likely that even after retirement the elderly couple continued to assist with the farm work just as they did elsewhere<sup>86</sup> and just as did the sons of farmers in Gosforth who were not destined to inherit the parental farm and who moved off the farm after they had married. Some sons although living in different parts of the parish turned up daily to help their father.<sup>87</sup>

The children of the residents of Gosforth whose fathers were neither farmers nor craftsmen, were allowed a greater deal of independence once they reached working age. Nevertheless, the villagers informed Williams that when families had been larger at the

---

<sup>82</sup> A. D. Rees, *Life in a Welsh Countryside*, p. 72 ; W. M. Williams, *The Sociology of an English Village*, p. 52.

<sup>83</sup> J. Ravensdale, 'Population changes and the transfer of customary land on a Cambridgeshire manor in the fourteenth century', R. M. Smith ed., *Land, Kinship and Life-Cycle*, pp. 202-3 ; B. Moring, 'Nordic retirement contracts and the economic situation of widows', *Continuity and Change*, 21 (3), 2006, pp. 383-418.

<sup>84</sup> W. M. Williams, *The Sociology of an English Village*, p. 53.

<sup>85</sup> P. Laslett, 'Introduction', p. 27.

<sup>86</sup> B. Moring, 'Nordic retirement contracts and the economic situation of widows'.

<sup>87</sup> W. M. Williams, *The Sociology of an English Village*, p. 46.

start of the twentieth century, the practice had been to reward whichever child had taken care of the elderly parent by ensuring that it was this child who received the larger share of any moveable property after their death, as there was no land to inherit.<sup>88</sup> Both Mogey (for Oxford) and Young and Willmott (for Bethnal Green) also indicate that even in urban areas in the 1950s, the ties between working class parents and their adult children, particularly between mothers and daughters remained strong after they had established separate households. Indeed, as mothers and married daughters spent so much time in each other's households and ate and drank there, Young and Willmott argued that to some extent the households were merged as eating at the same table helped define what constituted a household.<sup>89</sup> Mogey in reporting the proximity of the households of married daughters to those of their mothers in the St Ebb's district of Oxford, termed them stem families even though the generations did not co-reside, there was no land to inherit and the link was between mothers and daughters rather than between fathers and sons.<sup>90</sup> It is significant that Mogey had to borrow the term 'stem family', used by Le Play to identify peasant families where the son designated as the heir co-resided with his father. Mogey's adaptation of the term implies that there was no suitable expression in use locally to describe this type of pattern. Both in Oxford and Bethnal Green it was possible to observe a clear preference on the part of both generations to live near rather than to share a household, with the persons interviewed, emphasising the negative aspects of a shared household with the parents.<sup>91</sup>

## Discussion

The evidence discussed above demonstrates that there were some important limitations to the amount of support available from within the family. For example, many wage earning children

---

<sup>88</sup> W. M. Williams, *The Sociology of an English Village*, p. 57.

<sup>89</sup> M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London*, p. 31.

<sup>90</sup> J. M. Mogey, *Family and neighbourhood*, p. 54.

<sup>91</sup> J. M. Mogey, *Family and neighbourhood*, p. 54; M. Young and P. Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London*, p. 17.

contributed only a proportion of their earnings to the household budget. In some poorer families, married women did not eat as well as their husbands. On the other hand it is also clear that many children even when they had households of their own were willing to contribute through their work or in cash to the support of their parents. The Poor Law, employers and former employers might also assist in some cases. Such assistance should be viewed as complementary to that provided by family members, whether residing in the same household or in other households, rather than replacing assistance that the family might otherwise have provided.

Some of these sources of support are easier to quantify than are others. The support of the Poor Law to widows with wage earning children was shown for example to provide between 10 and 27 percent of the income of such households in various populations between the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. Such a level of support seems relatively modest and does not suggest that the collectivity was as significant source of assistance as Peter Laslett argued should be the case for societies such as that of England where nuclear households predominated. Such households could offer less family support than could complex households in the event of the illness and death of a productive member of the household.<sup>92</sup> On the other hand, more extensive support from the Poor Law would be provided to the elderly, both men and women, who were either no longer able to work or who could earn very little.<sup>93</sup> This indicates that in the past the collectivity in England was an important resource for those persons in greatest need of assistance, although instances of elderly persons who were almost entirely supported by their children, who had households of their own, have also been recorded for various communities (for example from Corsley, Wiltshire, in the early twentieth century).

Evidence has also been produced above that demonstrates that support from family members in England to a widowed mother could be limited. At the outset of the twentieth century, for example,

---

<sup>92</sup> P. Laslett, 'Family, kinship and collectivity as systems of support in pre-industrial Europe', p. 155.

<sup>93</sup> R. Wall, 'Work, welfare and the family : an illustration of the Adaptive Family Economy', p. 142.

married sons with households of their own to maintain, were contributing no more than between 3 and 7 percent of their earnings to the Poor Law Guardians in Market Drayton, Shropshire, as partial compensation (varying from 17 to 50 percent) of the assistance provided by the Guardians to their widowed mothers. Evidence from Ipswich for the same period shows even working children resident with their widowed mothers contributing only 73 percent of their earnings to the household budget. Nevertheless, it is clear that the widow's own earnings combined with the contribution from the earnings of her resident children provided the largest share of the household budget.

Intermittent and generally a smaller amount of support was provided by the other constituent elements of the collectivity such as friends and neighbours, charities and the Church (to adopt Laslett's 1988 definition of collectivity).<sup>94</sup> More significant was assistance from employers in the form of provision of subsidized food (and sometimes in the form of pensions from former employers). Such assistance could be viewed as another type of support by the collectivity but perhaps should be considered as an addition to the wages of the worker or former worker.

There are also some wider implications of these results that need consideration. Much research, for instance on social mobility and the standard of living of different sections of the population uses information on the occupation of the head of the household (or family head in the case of studies based on analyses of parish registers) to determine the social position of all members of the household or family. Variability in the extent to which members of different households pooled their incomes and in the frequency with which the standard of living of particular households was boosted by assistance from members of other households as well as from various public bodies, indicates that such measurements of social position will in some cases be seriously misleading. Not all labourers for example would be equally dependent on the wages paid them by their employers. Some persons in late middle age might not be quite as prosperous as first appears if co-resident children retained a

---

<sup>94</sup> P. Laslett, 'Family, kinship and collectivity as systems of support in pre-industrial Europe'.

proportion of their earnings. Nor would the difference in the standard of living of widows heading their own households and that of married women be as large as suggested by the different earning power of their households if married women did not receive an equal share of the household's resources.

## Bibliography

- Armstrong, W. A. 1972. 'A note on the household structure of mid-nineteenth century York in comparative perspective'. In Peter Laslett and Richard Wall Eds., **Household and Family in Past Time**: 205-14. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Baker, David. 1973. **The Inhabitants of Cardington in 1782**. Luton: Bedfordshire Historical Record Society vol. 52.
- Block, A. 1946. **Estimating Housing Needs**. London: The Architectural Press.
- Booth, Charles. 1894 (1980). **The Aged Poor in England and Wales**. London. Reprinted 1980 New York: Garland Publishing.
- Boys, William. 1792. **Collections for an History of Sandwich in Kent**. Canterbury.
- Chalmers, George. 1782 (1802). **An Estimate of the Comparative Strength of Great Britain**.
- Census of Berlin 1880. 1885. **Die Bevölkerungs und Wohnungs Aufnahme von 1 December 1880**. Zweites Heft. Berlin: Statistischen Amtes der Stadt Berlin and Verlag von Leonhard Simion.
- Census of Great Britain 1801 **Abstract of Answers and Returns pursuant to Act 41 George 3 for Taking an Account of the Population of Great Britain**. British Parliamentary Papers (BPP) 1801-2 vol. VII.
- Census of Great Britain 1851. **Population Tables Part I**. BPP 1852-3 vol. LXXXV.
- Census of England and Wales 1861. **General Report**. BPP 1863 vol. LIII.
- Census of England and Wales 1951. **Housing Report**, Appendix A, Tables A1 and A 5; **1 per cent Sample Tables**, Part II, section VI, Table VI: 8.
- Census of England and Wales 1961. **10 per cent Sample. Household Composition Tables**, Table 26.
- Census of England and Wales 1971. **Household Composition Tables**, Table 13.
- Crikshank, George. 1851. **Comic Almanack and Diary**.
- Davies, David. 1795. **The Case of Labourers in Husbandry**. London: G. G. and J. Robinson.
- Davies, M. F. 1909. **Life in an English Village. An Economic and Social History of the Parish of Corsley in Wiltshire**. London: T. Fisher Unwin.

- Eden, Frederic Morton. 1797 (2001). **The State of the Poor. Or an History of the Labouring Classes in England.** London : J. Davis. Reprinted 2001 Bristol : Thoemmes Press.
- Erith, E. H. 1978. **Ardleigh in 1796.** East Bergholt : Hugh Tempest Radford.
- Fosbroke, T. D. 1807 **Abstracts of Records and Manuscripts respecting the County of Gloucestershire.** Gloucester.
- Graunt, John. 1662. **Natural and Political Observations on the Bills of Mortality.**
- Gray, P. G. 1947. **The British Household.** London : The Social Survey.
- Hammel, E. A. and Laslett, Peter 1974. 'Comparing household structure over time and between cultures'. **Comparative Studies in society and History** 16 : 73-110.
- Henry, Louis. 1967. **Manuel de Démographie.** Geneva and Paris.
- Laslett, Peter. 1972. 'Introduction'. In Peter Laslett and Richard Wall Eds., **Household and Family in Past Time** : 1-89. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Laslett, Peter and Wall, Richard Eds., 1972. **Household and Family in Past Time.** Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Laslett, Peter. 1973. **The Earliest Classics.** Farnborough : Gregg International.
- Laslett, Peter. 1979. **Family Life and illicit Love in earlier Generations.** Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Laslett, Peter. 1983. 'Family and household as work group and kin group : areas of traditional Europe compared'. In Richard Wall, Jean Robin and Peter Laslett Eds., **Family Forms in Historic Europe** : 513-63. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Laslett, Peter. 1988. 'Family, kinship and collectivity as systems of support in pre-industrial Europe : a consideration of the 'nuclear hardship' hypothesis'. **Continuity and Change** 3(2) ; 153-75.
- Manchée, W. H. 1924. **The Westminster City Fathers (The Burgess Court of Westminster).** London : John Lane The Bodley Head.
- Mogey, J. M. 1956. **Family and neighbourhood. Two studies in Oxford.** Oxford : Oxford University Press.
- Moring, Beatrice. 2006. 'Nordic retirement contracts and the economic situation of widows'. **Continuity and Change** 21 (3) : 383-418.
- Moring, Beatrice and Wall, Richard. 2008 **The Welfare of Widows in Northern Europe.** Woodbridge : Boydell and Brewer.
- Price, Richard. 1779 (1780, 1792) 'An account of progress from the Revolution and the present state of population'. In W. Morgan, **The Doctrine of Annuities and assurances on Lives and Survivorships.** 1780 First separate edition, **An essay on the Population of England from the Revolution to the Present Time.** 1792 Collected

- Edition, **Observations on Reversionary Payments, and on Schemes for providing Annuities for Widows, and for Persons in Old Age.**
- Ravensdale, Jack. 1984. 'Population changes and the transfer of customary land on a Cambridgeshire manor in the fourteenth century'. In Richard M. Smith Ed., **Land, Kinship and Life-Cycle** : 197-225. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Rees, Alwyn D. 1951. **Life in a Welsh Countryside. A Social Study of Llanfihangel yng Ngwynfa.** Cardiff : University of Wales Press.
- Ross, Ellen. 1993. **Love and Toil. Motherhood in Outcast London 1870-1918.** New York and Oxford : Oxford University Press.
- Rowntree, B. Seebohm. 1902. **Poverty. A Study of Town Life.** London : Thomas Nelson and Sons.
- Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress. 1909. British Parliamentary Papers vol. XLIII. **Report by Miss Constance Williams and Mr Thomas Jones on The Effect of Outdoor Relief on Wages and Conditions of Employment.** Appendix vol. XVII cd 4690.
- Sarti, Raffaella. 2001. **Europeans at Home. Family and Material Culture 1500-1800.** New Haven and London : Yale University Press.
- Slack, Paul. 1975. **Poverty in Early Tudor Salisbury.** Devizes : Wiltshire Record Society.
- Wales, Tim. 1984. 'Poverty, poor relief and the life-cycle : some evidence from seventeenth-century Norfolk'. In Richard M. Smith Ed., **Land, Kinship and Life-Cycle** : 351-404. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Wall, Richard. 1972. 'Mean household size in England from printed sources'. In Peter Laslett and Richard wall Eds., **Household and Family in Past Time** : 159-203. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Wall, Richard. 1982. 'Regional and temporal variations in the structure of British households since 1851'. In Theo Barker and Michael Drake Eds., **Population and Society in Britain 1850-1980** : 62-99. London : Batsford.
- Wall, Richard. 1983a. 'The household ; demographic and economic change in England, 1650-1970'. In Richard Wall, Jean Robin and Peter Laslett Eds., **Family Forms in Historic Europe** : 493-512. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Wall, Richard. 1986. 'Work, welfare and the family : an illustration of the Adaptive Family Economy'. In Lloyd Bonfield, Richard Smith and Keith Wrightson Eds., **The World we Have Gained. Histories of Population and Social Structure** : 261-94. Oxford : Basil Blackwell.
- Wall, Richard. 1992. 'Relationships between the generations in British families past and present'. In Catherine Marsh and Sara Arber Eds., **Families and**

- Households, Divisions and Change.** London : Macmillan : 63-85.
- Wall, Richard. 2001. 'The transformation of the European family across the centuries'. In Richard Wall, Josef Ehmer and Tamara K. Hareven Eds., **Family History Revisited. Comparative Perspectives** : 217-41. Cranbury NJ and London : Associated University Presses.
- Wall, Richard. 2006. 'The contribution of the Poor Law in England towards alleviating economic inequalities at the end of the eighteenth century'. **Revista de Demografia Histórica**, XXIV (II) : 135-54.
- Wall, Richard. 2007. 'Life course and socio-economic perspectives on no family households'. Paper presented to 32<sup>nd</sup> Social science History Conference, Chicago.
- Wall, Richard. 2008. 'Widows, family and poor relief in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century England'. Paper presented to European Social science History Conference, Lisbon.
- Webb, John. 1966. **Poor Relief in Elizabethan Ipswich.** Ipswich : Suffolk Record Society vol. IX.
- Williams, W. M. 1956. **The Sociology of an English Village : Gosforth.** London : Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Young, Arthur. 1770. **A Six Months Tour through the North of England.**
- Young, Arthur Ed., 1784-1815. **Annals of Agriculture.**
- Young, Michael and Willmott, Peter. 1957. **Family and Kinship in East London.** London : Routledge and Kegan Paul.

## The role of family earnings in the English Industrious Revolution 1650–1780

Craig Muldrew

In this paper I will examine how family earnings increased in the period after 1650 as both agricultural and industrial production increased showing how important it is to go beyond simply measuring wage earnings.<sup>1</sup> Agricultural historians have debated when crop yields went up, but certainly by 1700 England was producing enough grain to start exporting a surplus to the continent in most years once population stabilised. The increased availability of food energy produced by agriculture also led to an increased number of people being able to work in non-primary sectors of the economy such as shop keeping or cloth production. E. A. Wrigley has estimated that the percentage of the population engaged in primary agricultural production fell from 76% in 1520 to only 36% by 1801.<sup>2</sup> In absolute terms this meant that the population engaged in agriculture in 1800 was about 3,140,000 compared to 2,870,000 in 1600 even though the amount of land under cultivation had increased considerably and crop yields were much higher.

This certainly suggests that agricultural labour had become more productive over this period. There were many authors writing after 1650 who advocated ‘improvement’, and promoted the ‘industriousness’ of labour as necessary for improvement. More employment would eventually lead to more production and more

---

<sup>1</sup> These themes are dealt with at greater length in my book, *Food, Energy and the Creation of Industriousness: Work and Material Culture in Agrarian England, 1550-1780*, (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> E. A. Wrigley, ‘Urban Growth and Agricultural Change: England and the Continent in the Early Modern Period’, in E. A. Wrigley, *People, Cities and Wealth*, (Oxford, 1987), pp. 170.

wealth for all including those who laboured, as can be seen in John Houghton's, *England's Great Happiness or, A dialogue between Content and Complaint* (1677) :

But our height puts us all upon an industry : makes every one strive to excel his fellow, and by their ignorance of one anothers quantities, make more than our markets will presently take off ; which puts them to a new industry to find a foreign Vent, and then they must make more for that market ; but still having some over-plus they stretch their wits farther, and are never satisfied till they ingross the trade of the Universe. And something is return'd in lieu of our exportations, which makes a further employment and emprovement.<sup>3</sup>

Trends in standards of living have hitherto been dominated by the measurement of real wages ; that is the purchasing power of money wages over time, but here I intend to look at the nature of work in more detail. Work on the standards of living has focused on the best way to construct real wage series to track change over time. This is typically done by looking at evidence of daily food consumption together with the cost of clothes, fuel, rent and other household costs, to create a 'typical' 'basket of consumables' bought over the course of a year for a family of a certain size. Prices of these goods are examined to work out their changing cost for different years. Evidence of monetary wage payments is then collected to form a time series, and the real wage is calculated as the percentage of the basket of consumables which could be bought by a single family in a year.

The first, and until recently, the only long term attempt to do this was the work of Henry Phelps Brown and Sheila V. Hopkins in their two articles 'Seven Centuries of Building Wages' and 'Seven Centuries of the Prices of Consumables, Compared with Builders' Wage-rates' published in the journal *Economica* in 1955 and 1956.<sup>4</sup> In order to measure a historical standard of living all the way from 1260

---

<sup>3</sup> John Houghton, *England's Great Happiness or, A dialogue between Content and Complaint*, (London, 1677), p. 7.

to 1954 Phelps Brown and Hopkins attempted to construct four baskets of consumables for 1275, 1500, 1725, and 1950, to introduce a rough measure of change over time. But the evidence they had of both diet and the consumption of household goods before the nineteenth century was very limited. Consisting of only one medieval account book of two priests, and David Davies and Frederick Eden's budgets for poor families during the hard years of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Since they were not interested in actual consumption, they did not investigate the accuracy of what building workers might actually have been consuming. They were more interested in having a reasonable standard measure which could track the changing prices of comparable units. However, their real wage series became a seminal tool in explaining socio-economic change in the early modern period. Figure 3 from their second article famously showed that real wages, owing to the price inflation of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, fell to a nadir during the run of bad harvests in the late 1590s. Prices of food were shown to have risen by over six times between 1550 and 1650, while nominal money wages only rose by 2.5 times in the same period. In contrast real wages were at their highest when food prices and population were low in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. After 1650 gradually rising money wages together with falling food prices led to slowly rising real wages.<sup>5</sup>

Such real wage series are valuable in that they provide a rough index of very long term change over time, and they also provide a way of comparing living standards in different countries or areas of the world. But, the numerical abstraction of such series often masks the difficulties in collecting evidence robust enough to be used in comparative terms, given the sweeping changes which have occurred in England since 1209.<sup>6</sup> But, the adult male wage was only one aspect of the way in which a family earned wealth, as has been

---

<sup>4</sup> Henry Phelps Brown and Sheila V. Hopkins, 'Seven Centuries of Building Wages,' in Henry Phelps Brown and Sheila V. Hopkins, *A Perspective of Wages and Prices*, (London, 1981), pp. 1-12; Henry Phelps Brown and Sheila V. Hopkins, 'Seven Centuries of the Prices of Consumables, Compared with Builders' Wage-rates,' in *Ibid.*, pp. 13-59.

<sup>5</sup> Clay, Christopher, *Economic Expansion and Social Change: England 1500-1700*, (Cambridge, 1984), vol. I, ch. 2.

pointed out in much recent work.<sup>7</sup> In the most comprehensive set of contemporary budgets from the period, those made by David Davies and Sir Frederick Eden in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the earnings of a household head in the majority of cases constituted less than two-thirds of household income, and this was after the introduction of spinning machinery radically diminished the most significant employment for women.

To find out what an eighteenth century agricultural labourer might have been spending, it is possible to use an example from Frederic Eden, and then work out how much the cost would have been at sample years from earlier in the century. This is done in Table one below for a number of years. The example used here is for an agricultural labourer's family of nine from the parish of Streatley in Berkshire which Eden visited in July 1795. The man was 50 years of age and three of his children were out at service and so not part of the family. Two others, twelve and fifteen years old worked as ploughboys for neighbouring farmers, while the two youngest aged five and seven did not work. The wife earned 1s. 6d. a week but Eden does not say what she did. The man could earn 8s. a week in winter, 12s. in summer and 3s. a day for 10 days during harvest. Altogether they earned £46 a year, and although Eden does not say how much the children earned, it would have been about £8 each. He claimed these were very high earnings, as this was a wealthy agricultural

---

<sup>6</sup> Recently a new long term series of farm labourers' wages has been constructed by Gregory Clark from 1209-1869. Clark looked at a much larger sample of farm labourers wages from all over England, in contrast to Phelps Brown and Hopkins, who based their series on building labourers wages from the south. Gregory Clark, 'The Long March of History: Farm Wages, Population, and Economic Growth, England 1209-1869,' *Economic History Review*, 60, (2007), pp. 97-135; Gregory Clark, 'Farm Wages and Living Standards in the Industrial Revolution: England, 1670-1869', *Economic History Review*, LIV (2001), pp. 477-505.

<sup>7</sup> Lucassen (ed.), *Wages and Currency; Global Comparisons*; Peter Scholliers and Leonard Schwarz (eds.), *Experiencing Wages: Social and Cultural Aspects of Wage Forms in Europe since 1500*, (New York/ Oxford, 2003); Michael Sonenscher, 'Work and Wages in Paris in the Eighteenth Century', in Maxine Berg, Pat Hudson and Michael Sonenscher (eds.), *Manufacture in Town and Country Before the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, 1984).

Table 1 LABOURING FAMILY BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR 1568, 1597, 1625, 1680 and 1740<sup>8</sup>

	Weekly Amount	Daily Calories Man	Prices in 1568	Yearly Cost	Prices in 1597	Yearly Cost	Prices c. 1625	Yearly Cost	Prices c. 1680	Yearly Cost	Prices c. 1740	Yearly Cost	Percentage of Expenditure c. 1740
Bread (Wheaten)	45 lbs.	1412	15s. qrtr.	£3 11s.	50s. qrtr.	£11 14s.	32s. qrtr.	£7 10s.	32s. qrtr.	£7 10s.	25s. qrtr.	£5 17s.	17
Meat	16 lbs beef	480	1½ d. lb.	£4 11s.	2d. lb.	£6 1s.	2½ d. lb.	£7 12s.	3d. lb.	£9 2s.	2½ d. lb.	£8 14s.	25
Small Beer	16 gal	875	Barley 10s qrtr.	£2 6s.	Barley 28s. qrtr.	£6	26s. qrtr.	£5 12s.	18s. qrtr.	£3 17s.	1d. gal.	£3 9s.	10
Table Beer	4 gal.	914 <sup>9</sup>		£1 18s.		£4 19s.		£4 12s.		£3 3s.	2d. gal.	£1 14s.	5
Pease Pudding	25 lbs.	887	7s. qrtr.	18s.	30s. qrtr.	£3 17s.	22s. qrtr.	£2 16s.	18s. qrtr.	£2 6s.	12s. qrtr.	£1 10s.	4
Bacon	½ lb.	21	1½ d. lb.	3s.	2d. lb.	4s.	2d. lb.	4s.	3d. lb.	7s.	3d. lb.	7s.	1
Cheese	2 lbs.	224	1.5d. lb.	£1 6s.	2d.	£1 14s.	4d. lb.	£3 7s.	4d. lb.	£3 7s.	5d. lb.	£2 2s.	6
Butter	3 lb.	505	3d. lb.	£1 19s. 6d.	5d.	£3 5s.	4d. lb.	£2 12s.	6d. lb.	£6 12s.	4½ d. lb.	£2 10s.	7
Total Food		5306		£16 12s.		£41 9s.		£35 15s.		£37 1s.		£26	75
Rent				£1 8s.		£1 16s.		£2		£2 10s.		£2 10s.	7
Fuel				13s.		17s.		£1 3s.		£1 13		£2	6
Clothing, lighting and other costs				£1 17s.		£2 8s.		£3 1s.		£3 11s.		£4	12
Total				£20 10s.		£46 10s.		£40 5s.		£43 18s.		£34 10s.	100

<sup>8</sup> For an explanation of how these amounts were calculated see Muldrew, *Food, Energy and the Creation of Industriousness*, pp. 117–21, 136.

<sup>9</sup> Here the man is assumed to drink 50% of the strong beer, and the eldest sons the rest.

area on the banks of the Thames with good market connections to London, so there must have been continual employment. But, their expectations were even higher, as they spent what Eden termed the ‘enormous’ sum of £63 18s. He claimed this was the result of prices being over a third higher than they were in the previous year. As a result the parish paid their rent of £2 5s a year and £7 16s. to pay for the cost of his two youngest non-working children, indicating that they did not regard this level of consumption as profligate. In Eden’s budget £52 3s.(82%) was spent on food and £11 14s.(18%) on household goods, rent, fuel and clothing.

At the very beginning of the period the earnings of the husband together with his two sons was almost enough to cover the living expenses of the whole family of six. In the 1540s wages were 25% lower, but wheat prices were about 40% lower as well, so there would have been little deficit. The moving average of wheat prices began to rise more quickly in the 1580s to over 20s. a quarter, but much of this was due to much higher prices in bad years such as 1586. Things, however, changed dramatically with the two bad harvests of 1595-6 followed immediately by the terrible harvests of 1596-7. During these years shortage was so acute that there were dearths in some northern areas and prices doubled while wages remained static. The potential shock of this great dearth comes out quite clearly here. After this, the deficit between male earnings and expenses during the seventeenth century was considerable, before rising nominal wages and falling food prices almost closed the gap again by the mid-eighteenth century. The remainder of this paper will be spent looking at the value of other different possible earnings, before returning to this calculation at its end to determine the extent to which these deficits could have been overcome.

## 1. Numbers of servants

Before looking at additional earnings for other sources of wages or piece work it is important to try to obtain some notion of just what percentage of labourers would have been working by the day as opposed to being employed in service on yearly contracts. As has been stressed by Ann Kussmaul, service remained a vital part of

social organisation in the early modern period with 25-35% of families in the seventeenth century containing servants, from one young inexpensive maid servant to over 100 servants in great households with their livery. Service was generally a life cycle position whereby young boys and girls from poorer households would move to a different household to learn housekeeping and the skills of husbandry.<sup>10</sup> At the time it was thought that the authority of strangers was much more appropriate than that of parents which was likely to be too kind to prepare children to be independent and responsible for themselves. It was also an institution through which employment was offered to young celibate individuals. Most servants came from poorer families -81% of the labouring population had been or were in service. Two young people from a labouring family would have to save money while working as servants if their parents had little capital to bequeath to them. Thus the institution of young people working in other household-families as single celibate individuals until they could save enough allowing them to marry and have children. Typically service extended from age 15-29 and there were both household servants and so called servants in husbandry who were agricultural workers. Such servants boarded and ate with the family they worked for and were paid £2-5 a year in money.

Providing food for a family, including a large number of servants, was often cheaper than having to give money to a number of individuals expected to find their own food. But perhaps the most important reasons for keeping servants was social and moral. Since servants were family members and under the authority of its master their behaviour could be monitored, and skills and discipline could be taught and enforced. In the 1730s William Ellis still thought it best to keep young people as servants, which,

must rebound to their Masters and Mistresses Profit, for according to their Management they may be made either

---

<sup>10</sup> Sheila McIsaac Cooper, 'Service to Servitude? The Decline and Demise of Life-Cycle Service in England'. *History of the Family*, 10 (2005), 367-86. Some sons of yeomen, however, remained in their parent's household working as servants. John Smith, *Men and Armour for Gloucestershire in 1608*, (London, 1902).

Table 2<sup>11</sup>

-MEN	IN SERVICE	15-19	35%
		20-24	30%
		25-29	15%
-WOMEN	IN SERVICE	15-19	27%
		20-24	40%
		25-29	15%

serviceable or unserviceable. I never knew a farmer thrive that let his Servants stay long, or lie out nights, to go to common Dancing or Drinking Bouts, etc. ... to rise at Five is the way to thrive.<sup>12</sup>

Since the cost of food of a servant was borne by his master, to fully understand standards of living we need to have some idea of how many day labourers there were compared to servants in husbandry, and further how they were hired. Although the evidence is slender for the late sixteenth century it would seem probable that it remained most common to hire labourers as servants in husbandry by the year with board, or food and reduced rent if the servant had their own family. However, the earliest large scale statistical evidence is that of the Gloucestershire Muster list which indicates that in that county 66% of the male agricultural workforce was hired as servants. The evidence of October marriages suggests this percentage went down in the years afterward, but recovered after 1650. This is supported by the other early eighteenth century censuses and Arthur Young's figures which suggest that 50% of the male workforce, and 60% of the agricultural workforce counted by Young were servants. Since food, lodging and some clothing was supplied by the hiring farm in these cases, all of these labourers would have been insulated against rising food prices in the period before 1650, and after 1770.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> J. A. Sharpe, *Early Modern England A Social History 1550-1760*, (London, 1987), pp. 210-11

<sup>12</sup> William Ellis, *The Country Housewife's Family Companion*, (London, 1750), p.vii. ; Keith Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England 1660-1900*, (Cambridge, 1985), p. 82.

## 2. Non-monetary perquisites

For the labourer supplied with food, but not his family, the inflation of food prices was born by the farmer, since wages without food and drink always rose in the same proportion to wages without food and drink. As we will see, it was common for farmers to supply their day labourers with food at work in order to ensure that the work they wanted done could be performed. By the 1760s, though, we have the information collected by Arthur Young. In his series of wages almost all of the examples included beer and food, or at least just beer during the 10-12 weeks of summer work. However there is evidence which suggests that provision of beer during the winter was more extensive than suggested by Young. Although Frederick Eden generally looked on beer favourably as a source of nutrition, when describing diets in Gloucestershire he complained that :

a very pernicious custom takes place in this county, as in many others, of allowing labourers an enormous quantity of liquor. That the more they receive in liquor the less they receive in wages, there can be no doubt : in many parts of the county the labourer receives almost as much liquor as is equal to his day's pay ; and is thus encouraged in a practice which is not more ruinous to his health, than prejudicial to his family.<sup>14</sup>

Another way in which day labourers could have helped to offset high food prices for those families was to either negotiate some extra payment in kind, or to purchase food off of their employers on credit, or at a price lower than the market rate. At Dunster farm in Somerset, in addition to wages, labourers also received cider in the summer, the run of a pig, unlimited turf for fuel and milk in the

---

<sup>13</sup> Ann Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 97-114 ; A. J. and R. H. Tawney, 'An Occupational Census of the Seventeenth Century', *Economic History Review*, 5 (1934-5), pp. 50-53, 59-62 ; Young, *Northern Tour*, IV, pp. 236-246, 355-360, 364-65 ; Arthur Young, *The Farmer's Tour Through the East of England*, (London, 1771), IV, pp. 375-78

<sup>14</sup> Sir Frederick Morton Eden, *The State of the Poor, or a History of the Labouring Classes in England*, I-III (London, 1797), pp. 105, 511.

winter. One labourer At Thornborough farm in Yorkshire was often paid in mutton, beef and butter allowed at reduced prices. Thus, nominal wages were only the basis for more complex negotiable means of payment.<sup>15</sup> They were meant to be the chief measure of the value of a labourer by time or task, but in economist's terms, they remained 'sticky' because simple pence rates for work made accounting easier and provided a price basis by which the value of the labour could be compared.

### 3. Children's work

Even before entering service, from the ages of about 7-9, it was expected that boys would be hired on at wages one half or less of an adult. Also, any boys who did not go off to work as a servant would be earning the equivalent of adult day wages by about the age of 18. In the 1760s Arthur Young estimated that there were 111,498 boys in employment. Also, young girls could start adding to the family income by spinning rough yarn from a similar age before becoming milkmaids or housemaids. Young girls could also help their mothers in looking after children, thus freeing the latter to engage in labour to earn money. In her work on women's and children's labour on a sample of Somerset farms, Helen Speechley discovered that children there normally started agricultural work at age eight or nine, and that on the Nynhead estate in the 1680s 16% of the day labourer force were children. Both girls and boys could pick stones from fields, pick fruit, or weed, while boys could drive sheep and cattle and lead ploughs. However, even children as young as three could be employed scaring birds with their rattles in a field.<sup>16</sup>

### 4. Dependency Ratios in Families

As Thomas Sokoll has pointed out, the concept of dependency

---

<sup>15</sup> Helen Speechley, 'Female and Child Agricultural Day Labourers in Somerset, c. 1685-1870', (University of Exeter, PhD., 1999)., p. 115, n. 8 ; E. W. Gilboy, 'Labour at Thornborough: An Eighteenth Century Estate', *Economic History Review*, 1st ser., 3 (1931-2), pp. 388-98, p. 392-3.

<sup>16</sup> Speechley, 'Female and child agricultural day labourers', pp. 157-60, 165, 167, 173, 179, 182, 185.

ratios is crucial to understanding how much a household might earn.<sup>17</sup> A family with a greater number of children under the age when wage earning could begin (usually about seven to nine in most parts of England) would have been poorer because they had to earn enough to feed and support their small children while the wife's earning power was reduced by the time spent looking after the young children. Thus, in the earliest years of marriage earning power was most dependant on the husband, but once the majority of children reached their teens the earning power of the household was at its maximum as the children were able to earn almost as much as the adults, and the wife had more free time. If only the father was working and there were say three children below the age of nine, expenses would probably be about 25% less but without the children's earnings the family would be much worse off. Feeding a small child of 4-6 probably would have cost £2-3 a year, with 3 ounces of meat a day and between £1-2 without, in the mid eighteenth century.<sup>18</sup> Assuming a cost of another £1 a year for clothing, furniture and medicine means that it would cost about £21 to raise only one child to age seven. For most young labouring families savings from a time period spent as a servant would have been needed to begin a family to pay for this. Ann Kussmaul estimated that two servants marrying who had been in service from 6-10 years could save between £27-£60 together depending on their combined length of service, and whether they were able to save  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{2}{3}$  of their wages.<sup>19</sup> Thus a period in continual serve while young was crucial to be able to afford to start a family.

## 5. Spinning and other work

There was a great demand for female labour during the summer in agriculture. And there was probably more employment available for the months from May to September than there were women

---

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Sokoll, *Household and Family Among the Poor; The Case of Two Essex Communities in the Late Eighteenth and Early nineteenth Centuries*, (Bochum, 1993), 23-45.

<sup>18</sup> This calculation is based on a child's consumption being equal to .4 of adult food consumption.

<sup>19</sup> Kussmaul, *Servants in husbandry*, pp. 81-83.

available for the work. As Table 3 demonstrates, there was also a dramatic increase in potential earnings from spinning yarn for the expanding cloth industry.

Table 3 ESTIMATES OF TOTAL EARNINGS FROM SPINNING AT DIFFERENT DATES

Date	Employment	Total Earnings
1580	225,083	£744,462 (£443,132 + 68% to account for inflation <sup>20</sup> )
1615	338,427	£877,647 (£765,503 + 14% to account for inflation)
1700	481,564	£2,604,057
1741	651,038	£4,560,754
1770	785,627	£5,499,389

In addition to this there is much evidence than English linen production expanded from a very small industry to something quite substantial by the mid-eighteenth century. At a rate of spinning of six pounds a week for a married woman, flax spinning might have provided employment for another 416,667 wives in 1750 at 3s. a week. Even more dramatically than in the woollen industry this was an increase in employment that had occurred in the late seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries, given that in 1622 imports of raw flax and hemp were only 18% of their value in 1700. If we were to add to this the figure of about 100,000 women employed in hand knitting stockings, the potential employment in 1750 could have been in the order of 1,153,667 or about 60% of *all* women over the age of 14 in the country, or 52% of women over the age of 10.<sup>21</sup>

## 6. Home Production

In addition to working for wages many labouring families also engaged in some form of home agricultural production. However this was undoubtedly declining over time as increasingly families earned more from participating in the labour market rather than selling home produce. Only 30% of labourers taken from a sample of 972 probate inventories had such crops before 1700, falling to only 20% afterwards. In addition the areas of crops under cultivation were

---

<sup>20</sup> Clay, *Economic expansion*, I, p. 49.

<sup>21</sup> Craig Muldrew, 'Th'ancient Distaff' and 'Whirling Spindle': measuring the contribution of spinning to household earnings and the national economy in England, 1550–1770', *Economic History Review*, 65 (2012), pp. 498–526.

very small. Almost half were under 1.9 acres. This still means that, even in the sixteenth century, the great majority of labourers did not farm their own land. Pastoral agriculture was clearly more important to labourers than arable production. More than half of labourers' inventories listed cattle, most of which were cows.<sup>22</sup> Many labouring families were also saving money by brewing their own beer for family use rather than having to purchase it at the alehouse. It was also possible for families to make some extra money selling beer to neighbours. The rights to wood could be worth £1 18s. a year after the labour of cutting it was subtracted, but again if work was scarce this could be vital, and would have been something which attracted families to wood pasture districts.

## 7. Total Family Earnings

Finally it remains to add up all of the potential earnings we have discussed above. In the following Table I have added all the possible family earnings together so they can be compared with male earnings. The table assumes the work of one child between the ages of 7-12, working about 80 days of the year, together with the two teenage sons, but if more children were working earnings would have been greater.<sup>23</sup> The rise in the value of cows, pigs, fuel and beer is based on a rise in the prices of the relevant products. Also for families with access to common rights, or who possessed a small farm with a low rent, earnings could have been greater.

Here we can see the importance of adding family earnings to the husband's wages. This is evidence to support de Vries' thesis that increasingly family labour was adding income to family earnings.<sup>24</sup> By the eighteenth century, increased earnings combined with falling

---

<sup>22</sup> Jane Humphries, 'Enclosures, Common Rights, and Women: The Proletarianisation of Families in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', *The Journal of Economic History*, 50 (1990), pp. 24-8

<sup>23</sup> This calculation does not include families with only infant children, as most were expected to save for their period in service however for those without enough savings there would have been a larger deficit.

<sup>24</sup> Jan de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behaviour and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present*, (Cambridge, 2008).

**Table 4 ESTIMATES OF ALL OTHER FAMILY EARNINGS COMPARED TO MALE WAGES**

DATE	Earnings for Wife's Spinning	Wife's Agricultural Work	Children's Work	Cow and Pig	Gleaning and Fuel	Beer at Work	Total	Deficit of Male Earnings From Table 5.4	Balance
1568	£2 4s.	£3	£2	£2	£1	£1	£11 4s.	-£2.7	+£8 10s.
1597	£2 4s.	£3	£2	£2	£1	£1	£11 4s.	-£26.3	-£15.1
1625	£2 12s.	£3 10s.	£2	£3	£1	£1 10s.	£13 12s.	-£15	-£1 8s.
1690	£5 5s.	£4	£3	£4	£2	£2	£20 5s.	-£15.9	+£4 7s
1760	£6 2s.	£4 10s.	£4	£4	£2	£2	£22 12s.	-£44s.	+£18 8s.

prices allowed labourers to continue to increase spending on improving the quality of their household goods, as well as purchasing other new foreign goods such as tea and sugar, and also to increase their spending on clothes. Much of this came from increased demand for spinning in the cloth industry which provided new opportunities for employment, but dairying and other agricultural work continued to provide opportunities for employment. Thus, there is certainly evidence that more people in labouring families were working more days in the year. By the eighteenth century, increased earnings combined with falling prices allowed labourers to continue to increase spending on improving the quality of their household goods, as well as purchasing other new foreign goods such as tea and sugar, and also to increase their spending on clothes. Much of this came from increased demand for spinning in the cloth industry which provided new opportunities for employment, but dairying and other agricultural work continued to provide opportunities for employment. Thus, there is certainly evidence to support the thesis that increasingly family labour was adding income to family earnings in the period from roughly 1670-1770, before rising food prices and declining employment in spinning due to mechanisation once again reduced standards of living.

### Bibliography

Clark, Gregory. 'The Long March of History: Farm Wages, Population, and Economic Growth, England 1209-1869,' *Economic History Review*, 60 (2007)

Clark, Gregory. 'Farm Wages and Living Standards in the Industrial Revolution :

- England, 1670-1869', *Economic History Review*, LIV (2001).
- Clay, Christopher. *Economic Expansion and Social Change: England 1500-1700* (Cambridge, 1984).
- Houghton, John. *England's Great Happiness or, A dialogue between Content and Complaint* (London, 1677).
- Cooper, Sheila McIsaac. 'Service to Servitude? The Decline and Demise of Life-Cycle Service in England'. *History of the Family*, 10 (2005).
- Eden, Sir Frederick Morton. *The State of the Poor, or a History of the Labouring Classes in England*, I-III (London, 1797).
- de Vries, Jan. *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behaviour and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present*, (Cambridge, 2008).
- Ellis, William. *The Country Housewife's Family Companion* (London, 1750).
- Gilboy, E. W. 'Labour at Thornborough: An Eighteenth Century Estate', *Economic History Review*, 1st ser., 3 (1931-2).
- Humphries, Jane. 'Enclosures, Common Rights, and Women: The Proletarianisation of Families in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', *The Journal of Economic History*, 50 (1990).
- Kussmaul, Ann. *Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1981).
- Lucassen, Jan. (ed), *Wages and Currency. Global Comparisons from Antiquity to the Twentieth Century*. *International and Comparative Social History*, vol. 10. (Bern, 2007).
- Muldrew, Craig. *Food, Energy and the Creation of Industriousness: Work and Material Culture in Agrarian England, 1550-1780* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).
- Muldrew, Craig. 'Th'ancient Distaff' and 'Whirling Spindle': measuring the contribution of spinning to household earnings and the national economy in England, 1550-1770', *Economic History Review*, 65 (2012).
- Phelps Brown, Henry and Hopkins, Sheila V. 'Seven Centuries of Building Wages,' in Henry Phelps Brown and Sheila V. Hopkins, *A Perspective of Wages and Prices* (London, 1981)
- Phelps Brown, Henry and Hopkins, Sheila V. 'Seven Centuries of the Prices of Consumables, Compared with Builders' Wage-rates' in Phelps Brown and Hopkins, *A Perspective of Wages and Prices*.
- Scholliers, Peter and Schwarz, Leonard (eds.), *Experiencing Wages: Social and Cultural Aspects of Wage Forms in Europe since 1500* (New York/ Oxford, 2003).
- Sharpe, J. A. *Early Modern England A Social History 1550-1760* (London, 1987).
- Smith, John. *Men and Armour for Gloucestershire in 1608* (London, 1902).
- Snell, Keith. *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England 1660-1900* (Cambridge, 1985).

The role of family earnings in the English  
Industrious Revolution 1650–1780

214

- Sokoll, Thomas. *Household and Family Among the Poor; The Case of Two Essex Communities in the Late Eighteenth and Early nineteenth Centuries* (Bochum, 1993).
- Sonenscher, ; Michael. 'Work and Wages in Paris in the Eighteenth Century', in Maxine Berg, Pat Hudson and Michael Sonenscher (eds.), *Manufacture in Town and Country Before the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, 1984).
- Speechley, Helen 'Female and Child Agricultural Day Labourers in Somerset, c. 1685-1870' (University of Exeter, PhD., 1999).
- Tawney, A. J. and and R. H. 'An Occupational Census of the Seventeenth Century', *Economic History Review*, 5 (1934-5).
- Wrigley, E. A. 'Urban Growth and Agricultural Change: England and the Continent in the Early Modern Period', in E. A. Wrigley, *People, Cities and Wealth* (Oxford, 1987).
- Young, Arthur. *The Farmer's Tour Through the East of England* (London, 1771).

# Historical Perspectives on widows, their children and survival strategies in Northern Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century

Beatrice Moring

## Introduction

Studies of working class biographies in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain have evidenced strong economic ties between mothers and children. While many mothers seem to have expected to control the earnings of the children, the sense of obligation towards the mother extended in many cases even into the time after the child had left home.<sup>1</sup> Local studies from France, Italy and Austria have demonstrated that widows in a rural environment tended to reside with their children, even in urban localities up to half of the widows spent their lives in households of or with children.<sup>2</sup> The question that is going to be raised in this presentation is ; How did the composition of widows' households reflect an adjustment to economic necessities in the Nordic past. What kind of arrangements did the widows embark upon. Is it possible to go beyond mere composition of the household to analyze how the economic cooperation between widows and their children functioned.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ross, Ellen. "Rediscovering London's Working Class Mothers", in Lewis (Ed) *Labour and Love*. Oxford 1986. p. 85-86.

<sup>2</sup> Fauve-Chamoux, *Widows and their living arrangements in pre-industrial France*. *The History of the Family* 7 (2002) p. 103-107 ; Kertzer & N. Karweit, 'The Impact of Widowhood in Nineteenth Century Italy', Kertzer & Laslett, *Aging in the Past*. pp. 239-240 ; Jim Brown, 'Rural widows in lower Austria 1788-1848'. *The History of the Family* 7 (2002) p. 120-123.

**Table 1.1 Percentage of widowhood of population over 15 in Sweden and Finland**

Sweden	Widows	Finland	Widows
1750	15.1	1751	14
1800	13.7	1800	11.2
1850	13.1	1850	12.5
1890	11.9	1875	8.5

Sources ; Sundberg, Historical Statistics of Sweden (Stockholm 1969) p. 79, 110 ; Suomen taloushistoria III ; FOS VI, Befolkningsstatistik for aren 1750-1890, 29, (Helsingfors 1899), pp. 12-13.

## 1. Widows, economy and activity

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Nordic countries were basically rural and agrarian. The population statistics of Sweden in 1775 shows that about 85 percent of the population were engaged in primary production, mainly agriculture with auxiliary pursuits like cattle, forestry, fishing, transport etc. Seven percent of the females of the active population in the countryside were widows. One third of the widows were running a farm or a croft (32%) while a slightly larger group (37%) lived as retired in the household of a child or another person who had taken over the running of the farm. One third (28%) was economically dependant on non-family members. These widows were either working as servants (2.2%) or resided in a cottage on the land of somebody else. Some of these were performing a number of tasks around the neighbourhood.<sup>3</sup>

The population statistics of Finland for the same year reveal similar trends. As these figures contain also the enfeebled, non-active part of the widows it will affect the general distribution within the categories. Therefore only 25% are registered as running farms and 20% as living in retirement on the farms. The registration of the urban widows is not very illuminating as it was done using the occupational classification of their ex-husband which might be fine

---

<sup>3</sup> Nils Wohlin, *Jordbruksbefolkningen i Sverige, Emigrationsutredningen Bilage IX*, (Stockholm, 1909) p. 197-207.

when dealing with a craftsman's widow, presumably still running a workshop, but in the case of a sailors' widow or a soldiers' widow supplies no information about the economic activity of the woman. By 1800 the only change that can be observed is an increase in the cottagers' widows and in the part of the widows residing in urban areas. However, the 19<sup>th</sup> century statistical tables experienced considerable change. Rural women were more and more absorbed into meaningless categories like "assisting family members", where wives, daughters and mothers were lumped together, the statistics in Sweden are even more problematical.<sup>4</sup> Calculating the total number is simple, in 1875 about 13% of the women over 15 in Finland were widows (83,200). However, by this time the socio-economic changes in society had resulted in an increase of the landless groups. While the farmers as a group still showed some increase their share of the rural population was decreasing; 12% of the widows were landowning heads of farms. 4% (3,257), of the widows were employed by others 68% of the widows (56,471) were described as "other widows of the working classes". The remaining 16 percent of the widows were divided between the groups; the retired, women in poor houses or parish paupers, other poor women, however the ratios remain unclear (58% of all poor were female, any age group and marriage status.<sup>5</sup>

18<sup>th</sup> century eastern, northern and central Sweden shows co-residence between 2-3 generations in 19 to 41 percent of the households. Elderly women are found in large numbers in the households of their married children. The proportion of families with old parents or widowed mothers varies depending on the degree of proletarianisation of the society. The regional differences in Sweden are to a large extent connected to this issue, the socially stratified south and west have seemingly smaller and less complex households and less inter-generational cohabitation. A socio-

---

<sup>4</sup> K. Vattula, Kvinnors förvarvsarbete i Norden under 100 ar (1870-1970), *Studia Historica Jyväskyläensia* 27, (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, 1983); Anita Goransson, Kon som analyskategori i den ekonomiska historien, Rapport III, Fra kvinnehistorie till kjonshistorie, Oslo, 1994.

<sup>5</sup> Finlands Officiella Statistik (FOS), The national population statistics, Finland.

economic breakup of the families however, reveals that the many small workers and inmates households are affecting the averages. In actual fact the farmers' households were no smaller than in other parts of the country.<sup>6</sup>

In Finland the degree of inter-generational cohabitation shows a similar pattern. The higher the proportion of farmers households of the total number, the higher the percentage of households with parents or a parent. While the complicated economic and ownership structure of eastern Finland results in a large proportion of complex households, even there the link between the process of proletarianisation and household size can be detected.<sup>7</sup>

The Laslett-Hammel classification scheme has enabled us to gain insights into inter-generational cohabitation patterns. However for a study of widows and their families it is unfortunately inadequate. A simple classification scheme has been developed for the specific purpose of analyzing widowhood structures. When applied on rural populations not surprisingly the co-residence with

---

<sup>6</sup> Moring, B. (2003). 'Nordic Family Patterns and the North West European Household System', *Continuity and Change*. 18 (1), pp. 77-103 ; Mats Hellspång & Orvar Löfgren, Land och stad. Svenska samhällstyper och livsformer från medeltid till nutid. (Liber, Lund 1988). pp. 242-3, 248-50 ; Orvar Löfgren, 'Family and Household among Scandinavian Peasants', *Ethnologia Scandinavica*, 1974 pp. 40-3 ; David Gaunt, 'Household Typology: Problems-Methods-Results', Åkerman, Johansen and Gaunt, eds., *Chance and Change* (Odense University Press, Odense, 1978), pp. 81-2 ; Christer Lundh and Mats Olsson, 'The institution of retirement on Scanian estates in the 19<sup>th</sup> century', *Continuity and Change*, 17(3), 2002, p. 373-404 ; Ingrid Eriksson and John Rogers. *Rural labor and population change* (Uppsala University, Uppsala, 1978), pp. 163, 166.

<sup>7</sup> Beatrice Moring, Skärgårdsbor. Familj, hushåll och demografi i filändsk kustbygd 1635-1920. Helsingfors : Finska Vetenskaps-Societeten, 1994, pp. 52-5, 68 ; do., 'Marriage and social change in western Finland 1700-1870.', *Continuity and Change* 11(1), 1996, pp. 102-6 ; do., 'Family Strategies, Inheritance systems and the Care of the Elderly in Historical Perspective', *Historical Social Research* 23 N1/2 1998, pp. 72-7 ; Eino Jutikkala, *Suomen talonpojan historia*. Turku : WSOY, 1958, p. 191 ; Anu Pylkkänen, Puoli vuodetta, lukot ja avaimet. Helsinki : Lakimiesliiton kustannus, 1990. pp. 370-424 ; Terhi, Nallimaa-Luoto, 1990. Hämeenkyrön historia 1722-1865. Vammala : Hämeenkyrön kunta, pp. 68-70 ; Högnäs, Hugo. 1938. Sytning och arvslösen i den folkliga sedvänjan i Pedersöre och Nykarlebybygden 1810-1914. Åbo, p. 77-8.

Table 1.2 Widows, socio-economic position and activity patterns, Finland, Sweden, nat. level

	Finland 1775all	Sweden 1775rural	Finland 1800	Finland 1875
Farmer, crofter active	24.7%	31.8%	27.9%	12%
Cottager* active	12.4%	28.3%	20.3%	?
Servant	3.9%	2.2%	3.9%	4%
Retired, ex farmer or crofter	20.6%	37.0%	17.9%	?
Old, infirm, unable to work or in hospital or poorhouse	14.9%		7.9%	16?%
Old infirm performing minor tasks	10.8%		6.2%	
Soldiers' widow	3.3%		0.4%	
Other**	9.4%		15%	68%

Source : Population statistics\*\* Urban widows, 1775 listed according to husbands' occupation, no information of living conditions : Widows of noblemen 0.7%, widows of clergymen 0.8%, widows of town burghers 1.2%, widows of craftsmen 0.5%

children stands out as the most common type of existence. While far from identical there is a resemblance between the categories of co-residence with unmarried children and headship and with married children and non- headship. The widow whose husband died early, with young children seems to have been more likely to spend time at the head of the household than one whose husband died when the children were adult.

## 2. The farm and the widow with children

An important issue when discussing Nordic land holding and transmission is the separation of the concepts of headship and ownership. Until 1734 land was in theory owned by kinship groups in accordance with the medieval legislation. Women as well as men could inherit land and females had inheritance rights to family property. Even though the rights of the wider kinship group

decreased in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the notion of “rights to the land” remained. At certain times in a persons’ lifetime bonuses were handed out, at marriage, after the death of a father. If a sale was proposed agreement had to be reached. Most of the time, however, the ownership was of a theoretical nature. In practice this corporative outlook had resulted in a dualism for practical purposes. Landholdings were run by a head who only owned part of the farm, he also had an acting deputy, his wife. While the law set limits to the independent economic powers of a wife, in reality women exceeded these continuously for example by sorting out important economic matters at court. In these situations the woman did not act as herself but as her husband.

When the husband died his property was inventoried for division between the widow and the children. Landed property inherited by the widow from her own family, was not legally the property of the husband at the time of death. The purpose was to make a list of the marriage property and the individual property of the husband. In rural Sweden and Finland the legal share of the widow was one third and that of the children two thirds.<sup>8</sup> In urban areas and Denmark the widow inherited 50%, and variation between these two can be found in the Germanic area, in some cases childless widows could inherit the whole property.<sup>9</sup>

As a widow a woman attained unrestricted control over her own property. While she did not have any ownership rights to her husbands’ inherited family land she could retain the headship if her children were young. She became the guardian of her children (even though after 1669 with advice from her husbands’ kin). As the mother of the prospective heir her power could be considerable. She could even remarry and still remain running the holding while her son or daughter from the first marriage was growing up to adulthood. Needless to say, if the land or farm originated from her own family her position was secure.<sup>10</sup> The court records of 16<sup>th</sup> and

---

<sup>8</sup> O. Hultman, *Upplandslagen Aarfde balkier*, vol.X; Kulturhistorisk Lexicon for Nordisk Middelalder III (Copenhagen 1958) pp. 682-5; Huebner R. *A History of German Private Law*. London 1918 p. 651.

<sup>9</sup> F. Hallager & F. Brandt, *Kong Kristian den Fjerdes Lov af 1604* (Kristiania 1855) p. 73, 77; Huebner 1918 p. 644-5.

Table 2 Residence patterns of widows in Finnish and Swedish localities, percentages

Year, locality	Alone	Child M	Child Um	Kin	Non relative	Total	Widow head	Widow n h
Hou 1701	0	59	33	4	4	100%	66	33
Inio 1745	0	46	38	5	10	100%	35	65
Keuru 1750	1	42	25	15	11	100%	26	74
K, H 1790	13	62	26	1	0	100%	43	57
Ko-H 1809	10	60	26	1	2	100%	42	58
Kuml 1809	4	59	31	0	4	100%	37	63
H 1859	10	35	54	0	0	100%	68	32
K 1859	18	29	52	0	0	100%	70	30
H 1890	10	48	39	1	1	100%	51	49
N Swe Lte19c	3.3	67.4	11.2	6.7	11.2	100%	37	60

Hou + Houtskar, Ko = Korpo, Kuml = Kumlinge 1790, Korpo-Houtskar, 1809 Kumlinge, 1859 Houtskar, 1890 Houtskar, Sweden late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Child Married, Child Unmarried.

Sources : Tax registers, communion books

17<sup>th</sup> century western Finland show considerable activity among widows attending to economic transactions, land use, control of farm, disputes, inheritance, retirement, servants etc. Also in Sweden and Norway widows acted independently in the courts participating in disputes of the control of land and the handling of economic matters.<sup>11</sup>

Headship was commonly transferred to men in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century and widows succeeded only in 5-10 percent of the cases. The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of an increasing number of

<sup>10</sup> A. Holmback & E. Wessen, Svenska lanskapslagar 1940 p.361 ; Pylkkanen 1990 pp. 98-103, Communion books, tax registers. Huebner p. 621-623, 628 ; KLNMI III 681-682.

<sup>11</sup> Pylkkanen 1990 p. 353, Makela 1989 p. 38, 100 ; Sandvik 1994 pp. 101-2.

widows heading households, in some areas 20 percent or more.<sup>12</sup> The reasons were connected with a larger number of proletarian households but also with the better survival of children. Where an adequate labour force could be maintained the possibility of successfully running the farm was not an issue. Therefore the mothers could care for the land while the children progressed towards adulthood and marriage.

Studies of leaving home patterns in the Nordic countries have shown that wherever the family had any assets the children tended not to leave the parental home until they were in their late teens or early 20s. Even in poor families children performed tasks seasonally or intermittently and the definite leaving home and taking up a permanent position did not take place until after confirmation i. e. about the age of 15 (Moring 2003).

**Table 3** Mean household size of widows' households, percentage with widow present, mean age of widow

Year and locality	MHS WH	MHS NH	Farm widow	Land-less	Head	Mother of head	Age, head	Age, not head
Korpo 1754	4.7	7.6	7.1		3.3%	16.6	49.2y	67.7y
Korpo 1790	4.3	6	6.0	2.5			54.6y	65.3y
Ko-Hou 1790	4	7	4.9	1.9	12.6%	22.1%	54.3y	65.3y
Ko-Hou 1809	4.5	6.5	7.2	3.8	11.1%	19.8%		
Hou 1859	4		6.4	2.5	12.1%			
Viol 1838		9	9.0	3.0	16.6%	10.8%	52y	
Houts 1895	2.9	4.1			8.2%	9.6%	52y	68y

<sup>12</sup> Pylkkanen 1990 p. 369 ; B. Moring, 'Economic and Ecological Determinants of Household Organisation in the Northeastern Baltic Region', *Scandinavian Economic History Review* vol 47, nr 3, 1999. Moring, *Widowhood options*, 2002 p. 87.

**Table 4 Residence patterns of widows in south eastern Finland, percentages**

Year and locality	Alone	With married child	With unmarr child	With relative	With non relative	Total	Head of househ	Not head of househ
Viol 1818	2	65	26	5	3	100	10	90
Viol 1838	2	38	56	3	1	100	45	55
Viol 1851	4	44	40	11	1	100	74	26
Viol 1876	12	41	44	3	1	100	57	43

**Table 5 Composition of the households of widows**

Widow's household	MHS	Adult Males	Adult Females	Child -15	All household	MHS	Adult Males	Adult Females	Child -15
1790 Finland	5.9	1.4	2.4	1.5	1770 Finland	6.6	2	2.2	2.3
1801 Norway	5.8	1.4	2.3	1.6	1790 Fi	5.3	1.7	2.1	1.5
1801 Norway	5.7	1.1	2.5	2.1					
1801 Norway	4.9	1.1	2.3	0.8					
1809 Finland	6.8	1.7	2.5	2.6					
1855 Fi	4.5	0.9	2.0	1.6	1859	5.8	1.9	2.3	1.6
1859 Fi	3.8	0.8	1.9	1.1					
1895 Finland	2.7	0.4	1.6	0.8	1920 Fi	3.4	1	1.2	1.2
19 <sup>th</sup> c Sweden	4.9	1.3	2.3	1.2					

1790, Korpo-Houtskar, Finland ; 1801 Ullensager, Nesodden, Moss, Norway ; 1809 Kumlinge, Finland, 1855 Replot, Finland, 1859 Houtskar, Finland, 1895 Inio, Finland ; Sweden late 19<sup>th</sup> century, 1770 Korpo-Houtskar, 1790 Korpo-Houtskar, 1859 Kumlinge, 1920 Houtskar, Finland.

The size and composition of widows' households reflects this pattern. The households on the farms headed by widows were larger than those of landless widows. The children over 15 remained in the household. In addition to children the households could include other relatives or servants. The operational potential of the farm was a high priority. Crofters' widows generally retained the croft for life and sometimes it could be handed over to the next generation. The likelihood of finding one adult or semi adult child in these households was quite considerable in relation to other landless households. In south eastern Finland it was still unusual for farmers' sons to leave home until marriage in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the average number of males over 15 in the widow headed households was 2-3. The cottagers or inmates widows were the most likely to live alone or with only young children. These families had no assets to exploit and income had to be found outside the household. This is also the group that was most likely to spend their last years as parish paupers either alone or lodging with other people.<sup>13</sup>

### 3. Widows and retirement

When the children reached adulthood and marriage the succession issue was finalized and the mother could retire. In a study of localities in north western Finland in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the mean age at retirement was 56 for widows and 57 for married women but 60 years for both married men and widowers,<sup>14</sup> 55 for women in central Finland, 57-60 for women in Northern Sweden and early 60s in western Norway. An age calculation for widows in south western Finland shows a mean age of 50-53 for widowed household heads (female) and a mean age of 55-69 for widowed mothers residing with their children. Longitudinal studies of the households in the same region reveal that the headship transfer generally coincided with two

---

<sup>13</sup> B. Moring, 'Together or Apart ; Sibling Inequality, Marriage and Household Strategies in Pre-Industrial Finland', T. Hamynen, ed. *Family Life on the North Western Margins of Imperial Russia* (Helsinki, The Society for Finnish Literature, 2004). pp. 147-74 ; Moring 1999 Economic and Ecological Determinants.

<sup>14</sup> Hognas 1938 p. 187.

things. The most common time of headship change and retirement was at the death of the household head, however only when a married child was present in the household. The other event that triggered headship change was the marriage of the eldest child after a period of headship by a widow, or in some cases her second husband.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> century a headship change did not necessarily mean an ownership change. Retirement was only a gradual withdrawal from certain tasks and duties. After the legislative reform of 1734 retirement was legally understood as the handing over of a conditional gift. This revolution of a traditional concept, once understood, could only be acceptable through the erection of new safety measures. The conditions of the conditional gift had to be unambiguous (in writing) as the interests, not only of two individuals, but also of the rest of the family were at stake. With an absolute ownership change the land could be sold on to a non-kinsman.

The purpose of a retirement contract was to ensure a satisfactory generational transfer, to arrange for suitable compensation to non-inheriting siblings and provide for their upkeep until adulthood. It also included settlements for disabled family members, dowries for daughters and the suitable launching of family members into the world through a proper wedding feast. The other purpose was to create a mechanism for a gradual withdrawal of the older generation from onerous working tasks. The detailed specifications of rights and duties of the young generation in relation to the old developed differently in different parts of the Nordic countries depending on land ownership and general economic circumstances on local and regional level. Wherever the land was mainly freehold, the level of debt high and the land market active the frequency of detailed contracts is the highest. Contracts were set up to secure life in old age in case the children had to give up the land. As a retirement contract was in the legal sense a mortgage on the land, not a contract between two individuals, the contract followed the farm to the new owner not the bankrupt son.

While Nordic legislation viewed a married woman as a legal entity (unlike the English common law), she always remained a member of her own family as far as land inheritance was concerned.

Table 6 Headship in young generation, households with widows in Korpo- Houtskar 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century

	Mean age	Son head	Daughter head	MHS	Total
Farmer 1754	67.7	70%	30%	7.6	20
Farmer 1790 H		94%	6%	7.6	53
Farmer 1790 K	69.5	92%	8%	7.8	28
Landless 1790		75%	25%	6.0	4
Landless K	55	100%		4.0	7
Farmer 1809 H		96%	4%	7.1	50
Landless 1809		100%		5.8	
Farmers 1895		76%	24%	6.2	26
Landless 1895		73%	27%		15

Sources : Tax registers, communion books

Her marriage to her husband gave the right to 1/3 of the marriage property but just as her husband had no claim on her inherited land, she had no claim on his. Her right to upkeep in old age rested on three foundations; her work input on the farm during her marriage, the obligation of children to take care of their old parents, whether the parents had funds or not, and thirdly her bargaining position as the proprietor of 1/3 of the assets on the farm, including farm animals, tools and inventories. In addition to this the wife was always included in the contract made for a couple during the lifetime of man and wife whereby her husband made sure that his wife would be taken care of in widowhood.<sup>15</sup>

A considerable part of the widows in the localities included in

<sup>15</sup> Kaaperi, Kivialho, *Maatalouskiinteistojen omistajainvahdokset Halikon tuomiokunnassa 1851-1910* (Helsinki 1927), pp. 101, 107-10, 125-49; B. Moring, *Skärgårdsbor. Familj, hushåll och demografi i filändsk kustbygd 1635-1920*. Helsingfors: Finska Vetenskaps-Societeten, 1994, pp. 56-63; Moring 1998 p. 70; Pylkkänen 1990 pp. 180, 362; Jutikkala 1958, pp. 320-3.; Probate inventories Korpo, parish; Löfgren 1974 pp. 41-2; Högnäs, Hugo. 1941. "Arvejord och syttningsfolk". Kalender utgiven av Svenska Folkskolans Vänner. pp. 78-88. p. 84-5; Högnäs 1938 p. 42-6, 52-9, 77-80, 219-24; Nikander, Gabriel, Byar och Gardar, *Det svenska Finland*, Helsingfors 1921. pp. 71-4; John Gardberg, *Hushållning och byväsen kring norra delen av Skiftet. Skärgårdsboken*. Helsingfors, 1948, pp. 570-2.

this study resided in the household of a child as a household member not a household head (Table). It also seems that the most common system of residence was that with a son. The households were fairly large which indicates that the farming operations could be conducted successfully.

#### 4. Landless widows in the countryside

While the widow of a farmer could expect care by her family or economic security established in a retirement contract such was not the situation of the landless widows. These widows of crofters, cottars, soldiers, and inmates had to mobilise a combination of sources of income to be able to fend for themselves and their children.

A soldiers' widow was often in dire straits, the cottage had to be vacated after the death of a husband, and only if a son managed to be appointed after the father did the widow have any hope of hanging on to her home. The crofters' widow had the most advantageous position. Many contracts of the early and mid 19<sup>th</sup> century in Finland and Sweden were for the lifetime of husband and wife or at least for fifty years. In some areas they even included a clause permitting the extension of the contract to the succeeding generation if the crofter was a close relation to the farmer, for example a younger brother. In such cases the widow could continue on the croft together with her children and occasionally even documents similar to retirement contracts could be set up. However in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century 25 year contracts and sometimes ones for an even shorter time were used in regions where the landowner had plans for restructuring his economic operations.<sup>16</sup>

Cottager was usually another name for farm labourer if young or inmate if old. Some cottagers had constructed their houses on the land of a farmer or the village common while some lived in buildings

---

<sup>16</sup> Jutikkala 1958 ; Edvard. Gylling, Edvard Suomen, *Torpparilaitoksen kehityksen pääpiirteet* (Helsinki, 1909) pp.177-80 ; Arvo M.Soininen, "Unohtunut torpparivapautus". *Arki ja murros, tutkielmia keisarinajan lopun Suomesta*. Helsinki, 1990, pp.330-1 ; Frans Petter, Von Knorring, *Hembygden 1910* ; Matti Favorin, *Virolahden historia II* (Mikkeli, 1992).

owned by other people, in the latter case the term was usually inmate. In addition to the cottage the cottager often had a potato patch, kept a pig and sometimes even a cow. Although occasional or even permanent farm work was available for poor widows, remarriage or the assistance of the parish was often necessary for survival after the loss of a husband and earner (see below).

In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century the number of inmates was fairly restricted and hardly anybody young and able bodied was included in the group. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century some inmates resided on the actual premises of the farmer, or in outbuildings on the farm, but formed their own households. In these cases the farmer had sometimes taken in the inmate out of charity or agreement with the parish authorities.

The obvious candidates for assistance were family members and kin, however, a comparison of demographic behaviour between socio-economic groups in the Nordic countries has revealed that the higher age at marriage and the fewer children among the landless put the widows at risk of not having assisting kin in their time of need.<sup>17</sup>

The balance between producers and consumers was unevenly distributed between the socio-economic groups. The reason for this was not only demographic but also a question of household organisation. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century the smaller size of the proletarian family and the slighter generational depth created a greater danger of a widow residing in a household with no adult males after the death of her husband. In south east Finland the female headed landless households in 1838 contained on average 1 male and 2 females, one of these was a child under 15, in many cases the male. In south western Finland the landless widows resided in households of 1.9 persons, the vast majority of which were either solitary or families with children under 15.

In addition to the number of children the family had family size was affected by age at leaving home. A study of difference in behaviour of socio-economic groups has revealed that of a cohort of

---

<sup>17</sup> Moring 2003, *Nordic Family Patterns*; Moring 1996 *Marriage patterns*, ; Kaukiainen, Yrjö. 1979. *Social structure and demographic development in a southern Finnish parish, Lohja, 1810-50*. Helsinki.

Table 7 Family structure of landless widows in south west Finland

	Mean age	Sons + 15	Dau + 15	Children -15	Alone	MHS	Total
Landless head 1790		2	3	17		2.6	31
Landless K	54.6	10	12	16	0	2.5	39
Landless 1809 head				7	7	1.8	14
Landless 1895		13	5	16	8	2.7	43

\*Can also include younger children

Table 8 Occupational structure of household head in households where widow resided as head or non-head

	Farmer	Crofter	Inmate, lodger	Cottager	Fisherman, Sailor, Craftsman	Other
1790 KH	60.9	2.8	17		14.3	1.9
1859 H	47.3	34.5	18.2		5.2	
1855 R	42	23.3	27		2	7
19t c SW	44	25	12		5.4	4
1895 In	25	20		49		6.8
1901 In*	11.4	31.4	5.7 (pauper)	45.7	5.7	8.6
1801 Ne	32.9	26.6	14.9 (in) 17 (lod)	6.4		2.1
1801 U1	26.6	16.6	10 (in) 23.3 (lod)	6.6	6.6	9.9

\*Inio 1901 only female headed households

Sources : Tax records, Communion books, Census of Norway 1801

sons born 1790-1820 in south east Finland 45 percent of those from landless families had departed by the age of 24 while only 15 percent of farmers' sons left their parental household and most of them at a later date.<sup>18</sup> The earlier departure of landless children from the parental home relieved the widow of the burden to provide for the children. On the other hand, in a rural environment live in service

<sup>18</sup> Communion books.

was the obvious career for young people unless they migrated. In either case the chances of taking care of their old mothers were non-existent until they could establish themselves as householders. Even so communal residence was more common than one would suppose. In 1895 landless widows did not as a rule reside alone. The average size of their households was 3.2 persons including the crofters, where widows often did live with children ; or 2.2 for the widows of inmates and cottagers. Married or unmarried children were the most common residence partners but examples can be found of other kin like siblings or even parents. While solitary widows were a commonplace in 19<sup>th</sup> century rural Finland and Sweden, women who were never married were at a greater risk to be alone in old age.<sup>19</sup>

Of landless women in a marriage cohort (1750 to 1770) from south west Finland 25% died before their husbands, 4% remarried and 21% died in a household of an adult married or unmarried child. 23% had no living offspring in the parish and died in households of strangers or alone. 23% died in households of non-kin or alone even though they had children living and working in the parish (belonging to the landless group). This situation was very different from that of the widows of farmers, in the same cohort, the vast majority of whom died on the farm into which they had married as head or former head.<sup>20</sup>

## 5. Urban life, widows, poverty and survival

The Nordic countries were basically agrarian until the 1860s and even as late as the 1890s the vast majority of the population resided outside urban areas. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however some urban and industrial clusters started to develop in connection with the capitals and elsewhere in the countries. Employment could be secured in centres of textile factories, metalwork, sawmills and the growing sector providing the urban centres with services and goods. The countryside was clearly overpopulated by the end of the century. Not in the sense of actual space but in the sense of space available for more agricultural exploitation. Some marginal lands were already in

---

<sup>19</sup> Moring 2002, 'Widowhood options', Moring 2002, 'Systems of survival'.

<sup>20</sup> Family reconstitution study ; communion books ; Moring 1999.

use in northern Sweden and Finland where the agricultural season was far too short for successful farming. The turn of the century saw the emergence of migration overseas but migration into towns of younger children and the offspring of poor families had been the case for some decades. The industrial towns of the 1880s and 1890s showed the same problems as industrial towns have all over the world. Overcrowding in low standard housing, low paid shift work, child labour and semi starvation in times of unemployment or crisis. Irrespective of the negative sides, migration was steady and continuous. In the manufacturing towns a system emerged that was not part of the traditional fabric; the male bread-winner system. While the poor families in rural areas in some cases relied more on the father than other family members fringe bonuses and the right to keep a cow or some sheep could provide a buffer in problematic times and poverty was connected to illness and old age primarily, not to unemployment.

A study of income generation in workers households in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century indicates that while the possibly of adding to the family income through family based production was possible for women in the countryside, their opportunities for income generation in an urban setting was more limited. In addition to the problem of responsibilities for child care the wage differences between men and women could be considerable. While women could earn more than 60% of the male wage in some industrial sectors, in others a women was paid only 40% of that of a man. The remuneration of casual work like washing and cleaning was even less rewarding however labour intensive.<sup>21</sup>

While the situation for widows in the countryside varied radically depending on whether the family was of the landholding or landless class, the increase in the urban population was essentially an increase in proletarians. One of the hallmarks of proletarians is that they rarely accumulate savings or capital, but consume their earnings immediately. Within an urban environment the wages would be higher than in the countryside but so would rent and the cost of living. In 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe social reformers and politicians

---

<sup>21</sup> Sakari Heikkinen, *Labour and the market* (Helsinki, 1997), pp. 85, 160; P. Markkola, *Työläiskodin synty* (Helsinki, 1994) pp. 107, 110.

seem to have suffered from some sort of hysterical fear that all married women were busy working in factories and elsewhere and therefore neglecting their children, with the countries consequently going to the dogs. Suitable legislation was passed, for example against night-work, in some countries in the 19<sup>th</sup> others in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The result of some of this legislation was that women were barred from work that could be combined with family duties and that certain economic sectors became totally male dominated. Being a widow in such an industrial area was a virtual disaster. It is also ironic that a scrutiny of labour statistics shows that the fear had been unfounded. The large female part of the industrial workforce was primarily unmarried.

A study of a sample of the female industrial workers in Stockholm in the 1890s shows that 78 percent were unmarried, 14 percent married and 7.4 percent widowed.<sup>22</sup> In Finland the situation was similar. While it might seem as if widows were not particularly actively seeking employment it should perhaps be noted that only 12 percent of the women over 15 were widows and this particular group was biased towards older age groups with a consequently larger proportion of individuals incapable of working.<sup>23</sup>

While widows in general were well represented in the older age groups the widowed industrial workers were younger. The mean age of widows in industrial work in Finland was 42 years, many of these were supporting or living with 2-3 children, the age range in Sweden spanned from 20 to 74 but by far the largest group was those between 30 and 49 years. The widows favoured work in silk factories, tobacco factories, metalwork, cotton factories, work with precious metals, ceramics, washing, rag sorting, hand knitting, brewery work and working as bricklayers assistants.<sup>24</sup>

The issue of combining family duties with employment came to the forefront in a survey of industrial night shift work in 1920s

---

<sup>22</sup> J. Leffler, 'Zur Kenntniss von den Lebens und Lohnverhältnissen Industrieller Arbeiterinnen in Stockholm', *Skrifter utgifna af Lorenska Stiftelsen* 15, 1897. pp. 15-7.

<sup>23</sup> Leffler 1897, pp. 40-41; K. Key-Aberg, 'Inom textilindustrien in Norrköping sysselsatta arbetares lonevillkor och bostadsförhållanden', *Skrifter utgifna af Lorenska Stiftelsen* 12, Stockholm, 1896, p. 48-50.

<sup>24</sup> Snellman 1912, p. 29; Leffler 1897 15-7.

Table 9 Marital status of female industrial workers in Finland 1910-12

	Unmarried	Married	Widow
Tobacco factory	71%	22	7
Textile factory	85	10	5
Bakery	82	14	4
Printing works	89	9	2
Mechanical industry	64	19	17
Paper-mills	69	19	12

Sources : Snellman, G. (1912) *Undersökning angående pappersindustrin*, Helsingfors ; Industristyrelsen, p. 20.

Finland. A larger proportion of widows could be found among the women engaging in such work than among those doing day shifts. In the paper mills surveyed no less than 30 percent of women on the night shifts were widows. While the sawmills engaged only 15 percent widows for the night work it was still more than in daytime. 63 percent of these widows were supplying the needs of young children while the rest had at least one child with some earnings. The majority with children were residing together with a family member, mother, sister grandmother or other kin who did the child-minding if a child was still under 7 years old.<sup>25</sup> While they suffered from the exhaustion caused by lack of sleep because of problems with resting in crowded flats, particularly the widows expressed worries about possible restrictions in night-work as they did not believe that work during the day would be provided. They stated as the reason for working nights that the income of other family members was insufficient and that night shift work could be combined with family duties.<sup>26</sup> About 4 percent of the widows in the study resided in the household of their parents, the majority were heads of household and rented either from their employer or on the free market. 65 percent shared household either with a family member, other than child, or with a lodger.<sup>27</sup> 17 percent of the

<sup>25</sup> SVT, *Sosiaalisia Erkoistutkimuksia* 12, *Yotyontekijattaret* 1935 p. 8, 10-1, 98-9.

<sup>26</sup> SVT 1935 pp. 114-5, 119.

<sup>27</sup> SVT 1935, pp. 14, 67.

widows had at some point been given assistance by the municipal social welfare institutions, in most cases in the form of free health care, some had received small sums of money or assistance in kind (firewood).<sup>28</sup>

## 6. Widows and their children

For a widow children were both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand small children needed care, which if no help could be found affected the type of work the widow could engage in. On the other hand when a child reached working age the small income that could be generated might prove to be the crucial sum the family needed. In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the industrial town of Tampere every fifth woman over 35 was a widow and every second of these widows had a child or children.<sup>29</sup>

While the image of the poor widow with many children is very powerful, it is not necessarily supported by fact. Most of the urban widows encountered in surveys and family studies had one child or two children, sometimes three, much less frequently is evidence found of families with four children or more (see table).

In late 19<sup>th</sup> century Stockholm one half of unmarried female industrial workers lived with their parents, particularly mothers. One half of the widows engaged in this sector lived with one or several children.<sup>30</sup> Even though Stockholm had a long urban history 60 percent of the women in Lefflers' sample of industrial workers were migrants, only 40 percent had been born in Stockholm, which of course reduced the availability of kin outside the immediate family, for potential cohabitation.<sup>31</sup>

One in four or one in five of young workers in the textile town of Norrköping lived with parent(s) in the 1870s. By 1894 27% lived with their parents. 80 percent of the young people staying with parents were female.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> SVT 1935 pp. 53-54, 139.

<sup>29</sup> Markkola 1994 pp. 106-7.

<sup>30</sup> Leffler 1897 p. 15.

<sup>31</sup> Leffler p. 137.

<sup>32</sup> B. Plymoth, *Fattigvård och filantropi i Norrköping 1872-1914*. Stockholm: University of Stockholm, 1999, p. 65.

Table 10 Widows engaged in industrial work and their co-resident children, 1890s Sweden, urban communities

Norrköping	%	Stockholm	%	Norrköping	%
0 child	28	0 child	25	0 child	28
1 child	34	1 child	32.9	0 ch income	22
2 children	14	2 children	21.5	1 ch income	26
3 children	10	3 children	8.9	2 ch income	18
4+ children	14	4+ children	11.4	3+ ch income	4

Sources : Key Aberg 1896 p. 48 (women working in the textile industry, nr of widows in survey 48). Leffler 1897 p. 16-19 (women engaged in industrial work, all types, nr of widows in survey 237) Of the Widows with children engaged in industrial work in 1890s Stockholm, 1 child 44%, 2 child 28%, 3 child 12%, 4 child 12%, 5 child 2% (Leffler 1897 p. 25).

Another study of female workers in the textile industries of Norrköping show a propensity to remain with parents, particularly widowed mothers. A study of young textile workers revealed that of those entering the factory at the age of 15 33 percent were the children of widows. In the 1870s 37 percent of the young textile workers co-resided with parent(s). Longitudinal observations of this group revealed that women held the families together even after the loss of a husband. Through united efforts and pooling of income the family continued as a family, even though the economic situation could be dire and poor relief had to be applied for. However, in cases where the mother died and the father remained several families fell apart and the children were fostered to relatives or strangers.<sup>33</sup>

## 7. Income and economy

While the question of co-residence can be established in many cases, we do not always know what the contribution of the child was to the economy of the family. However some surveys did tackle this issue. The study of female industrial workers in 1890s Stockholm reveals that where there was common residence there was pooling of resources. 52% of the widows had a child or children with earnings contributing to the family economy only the 20 percent that had

<sup>33</sup> Goransson, 1988, pp. 249-251, 259.

children without earning did not receive a contribution.<sup>34</sup>

A study of working class households in Stockholm, conducted a couple of years earlier, indicated that married men would assist mothers economically even when they did not co-reside. On the other hand unmarried children, particularly daughters, would remain in the parental household, if the mother was widowed, and pool their income with her. Sometimes the daughter handed over all her earnings to the mother. Frequent examples can also be found of cohabitation between a widowed mother and a widowed, abandoned or unmarried daughter with children. Widows with young children seem to have sought the company of kin or taken in lodgers for the purpose of assistance with childcare.<sup>35</sup>

In the industrial town of Tampere 1905 the workers of the largest textile factory living in factory accommodation 8 percent of the families were ones where the primary earner was a child or children taking care of old mothers. In addition to this poor working families where both parents had some income retained their children who added their earnings to the family pool. "Even if I did work I never made any real money because my wages were small and I was taking care of my mother after she became ill" The poor relief authorities gave some assistance but the main provider was the daughter.<sup>36</sup>

The living conditions of working-class widows and their children can be illuminated by a survey from the years 1908-1909. The vast bulk of the families were selected to fit the criteria of "so called normal" families but 32 widows' households found their way onto the pages of the detailed study. The widows were all occupationally active and all but one had children in the household. Half of the widows were industrial workers while half were engaged in typically female activities like washing, ironing, working as a seamstress form home etc. 36 percent had another adult, generally a child over 18 in the household. Even though 63 percent had only minors in the

---

<sup>34</sup> Key Aberg 1894 p. 48.

<sup>35</sup> af G. Geijerstam, 'Anteckningar rörande fabriksarbetarnes stallning i Marks harad' *Skifter ugifna af Lorenska Stiftelsen* 10, 1894. pp. 55, 57, 63 ; Leffler 1897 pp. 103, 110, 125.

<sup>36</sup> Markkola 1994 p. 111.

household some of these managed to generate some income. The widows earned less than the cohort on average, but the family income could be reasonable if several children were in employment. Most of children's earnings were absorbed into a communal economy in these families. Pocket money was handed out or small sums kept for lunches etc but whenever the economic situation was problematical the children would provide a total contribution if they lived at home. In 20% of the families the contribution of the children was more than 30% of the family income. In one case the contribution of the children was no less than 83% of the total income as the widowed mother, a washerwoman, was not making very much money. In 20% of the families the children earned less than 10% of the total while in 31% the contribution was between 10 and 30% of the total earnings.<sup>37</sup>

While the mean income of all households in the survey was 616 marks/year (expenditure 605), male heads of households demonstrated an maximum income of 2700 marks/year and a minimum income of 416 marks/year. The maximum income of a female household head was 1770 marks/year and the minimum income 159 marks/year. In female headed households with the mother occupationally active the average economic contribution of the children was 35% of the family income.<sup>38</sup>

The shortage of funds was covered through borrowing, the use of savings and owing the tradesmen. When the situation became really problematic, assistance was sought from the poor relief authorities, the factory pension funds, private charities and relatives. Some of the families received second hand clothes and gifts of food. Some received temporary out- relief. One widow was given support from the factory illness and emergency fund, another woman received free firewood and in a third case the widow was relieved from paying rent.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> V. Hjelt, *Undersökning av yrkesarbetarnes lefnadsvillkor i Finland 1908-1909*. Helsingfors: Industristyrelsen, 1911.

<sup>38</sup> Hjelt 1911, pp. 28-30, 46, 59.

<sup>39</sup> Hjelt 1911, pp. 2-42.

## 8. Widows and Poverty

1733 only 11% of the widows receiving poor relief in Stockholm were under 60 years old. The support was given to the old and infirm.<sup>40</sup>

Between 1872 and 1888 the majority of women dying in the poorhouse in Stockholm were widows, very few were registered as having children and even fewer children living locally.<sup>41</sup> In the urban as well as in the rural society the assistance of kin was of vital importance.

Between 1874 and 1914 about 10 percent of the population in Norrköping did at one time or other receive assistance from the poor relief authorities. In 1896 70 percent of these were women.<sup>42</sup> In 1890 15 percent of the widows in Norrköping were widows with children receiving poor relief. In 1904 35 percent of the widows received poor relief, many of these resided with adult children. The poor relief authorities did not conceive it as a problem that they together with the children were keeping the widow.<sup>43</sup>

In the industrial town of Tampere in Finland 1870-1910 20% of out-relief recipients were men i. e. poor families 1890 (1910 28%). The majority of recipients were adult women, 1899 2/3 of these women were widows, 45% with children.<sup>44</sup>

## 9. Co-residence and co-operation

The 144 widows receiving permanent out relief can be divided into three main groups, younger widows with small children, older widows pooling their relief money with their adult children and widows without children.

Sharing household with one child or two children was the most

---

<sup>40</sup> Jonsson 1984 p. 275.

<sup>41</sup> S. Jacobsson, *Fattihjonets värld I 1800-talets Stockholm* (Uppsala : University of Uppsala, 1981) pp. 152-72.

<sup>42</sup> Plymoth, p. 71, 142.

<sup>43</sup> Plymoth pp. 64, 177.

<sup>44</sup> Markkola p. 109.

Table 11 Age of widows receiving poor-relief in Tampere 1899-1900

	20-39	40-59	60-79	80 +	no age	20-49 corr	50 + corr
Nr	11	27	60	10	36	52*	92
%	7.5	18.7	41.6	6.9	25	36.1	63.8

\*The widows without age information have in many cases information about the age of their children. Whenever a widow has a child under the age of 5 she has been added to the group of 20-49 year olds in the correction calculation.

Source : Tampere municipality, Notes of poor-relief inspector on recipients of out relief, November 1899-November 1900.

common residence pattern. While having three children in the household was not unusual, very few examples are found of widows struggling to feed six or seven children. While 73% of the widows lived with children 27% lived alone, with non-kin or other relatives. Because of the thoroughness of the poor-relief authorities, in their hunt for relatives possibly able to assist the poor, we know that out of the 34 widows who did not share household with a child 28 were either childless or had no children in the town or neighbouring parishes. 3 received assistance from children living locally and one was sent some support by her son's widow in Helsinki.<sup>45</sup>

While the number of children sharing household with their mother is of interest, even more so is the ability of these children to make an economic contribution or the extent to which the mother had to provide for them somehow. For the purpose of analysis the children were provided with the labels "Adult earning child", defined as a child over the age of 12 with an income, and "minor child", i. e. a child under the age of 12 or a child over the age of 12 without an income. The dataset does not include information about age for all children, however, those without age were invariably adult (over 18 years old, married or in full employment).

It is perhaps not surprising that the widows who co-resided with adult children only, were usually older than those who also or only had a minor child in the household. Of the 49 adult co-residing children 12 were definitely married, while a large proportion of the remaining 36 were probably, but not necessarily, unmarried. 29 widows had both adult and minor children in the household and 32

---

<sup>45</sup> Tampere Poor relief inspector, notes.

lived with young children only. However 6 of these widows had an adult relative in the household, usually a mother. One had moved back into her parental household when she became widowed.

Of all the widows under observation three co-resided with siblings, two with sisters and one with a brother.

Of the 110 widows with children in the household, 29 percent lived with minor children only. 25 percent lived with adult daughters or married daughters with husbands who paid the rent and cared for the widow. 17 percent lived with daughters who brought earnings to the house, contributed towards the rent or the family economy and helped their mother to care for younger siblings. 7 percent lived with a married or unmarried adult son, 3 percent with more than one earning son, and the rest had both sons and daughters who brought some money into the household. While sons did stay on to help their mothers and some cared for them in old age it was more common for daughters to do so. Sons were sometimes present but

**Table 12 Co-residence patterns of widows receiving poor relief, urban community**

Year 1899-1900	Adult earning child*	Adult and minor child	Minor child	Relative only	Lodger or sharing	Alone
Nr	49	29	32**	1	17	16***
%	34	20.1	22.2	0.7	11.8	11.1

\* Adult earning child defined as child over 12 years old with an income. Of the 49 12 definitely married (8.3%), while a large proportion of the remaining 36 were probably unmarried. Altogether 144 widows, 28 without child in the council area or neighbouring parishes. \*\*6 with other relative, \*\*\*4 received economic assistance from non co-resident children. Co-residence with family members other than children, 5 mothers, 1 parents, 2 sister, 1 brother

Source : Tampere municipality, Notes of poor-relief inspector on recipients of out relief, November 1899-November 1900.

**Table 13 Gender distribution of children residing with widowed mothers on poor relief in Tampere 1899-1900**

Year 1899-1900	1 adult daughter	1 adult son	Multiple daughters	Multiple sons	Sons and daughters	1 minor child
Nr	28	8	12	3	57	2
%	25	7	11	3	52	2

Source : Tampere municipality, Notes of poor-relief inspector on recipients of out relief, January 1899-November 1900, 110 widows with children

not contributing “the son drinks all his earnings”, “son useless, drinks” or unable to do so “son unemployed”, “son invalid”. The inspector also sometimes pointed out that while the daughter took care of her old mother she received little or no assistance from her brother whose earnings were used for his wife and children. However there are also examples of daughters leaving the parental home to work elsewhere and let their brothers and sisters channel their energy into keeping the family afloat. Oral history collections also evidence the mother daughter link in this society.<sup>46</sup>

## 10. Lodging

The overall tendency seems to have been to favour vertical kinship assistance and female cooperative groupings are particularly in evidence. Such behaviour seems to be connected with urban societies and has been recorded for other times and places.

17 widows shared household with non-related persons only, in most cases the lodger or lodgers were settled in the household of the widow not vice versa. However in some cases they were “sharing”, i. e. it was not clear who was the lodger. 6 widows had lodgers in their house in addition to their children and one had two foster children who had reached working age and paid a contribution towards the rent.

While the system of lodging was seen by the social reformers as a de-moralising practice that should be eradicated,<sup>47</sup> the problem of questionable sleeping arrangements of the opposite sexes was not in evidence in the households of these widows. All the lodgers in the sample were female and only present where the widows did not have adolescent or adult sons. The reasons for lodging were clearly economic. In situations where two women shared space and economy the mutual advantages do not need to be discussed.

24 of the widows either kept lodgers or shared household with another woman, in some cases the widow herself was the lodger. The economic effect of this strategy was that less money had to be

---

<sup>46</sup> Poor relief inspector, notes ; Markkola 1994 p. 111.

<sup>47</sup> G. R. Snellman, *Tutkimus Vahavaraisten asunto-oloista vuonna 1909 Tampereen kaupungissa*. (Tampere : Tampereen kaupunki, 1909). p. 45.

found for rent. While the average rent for all widows in the cohort was 8 marks it was 6.2 marks for those with lodgers sharing the rent costs.

## Conclusion

The economic position of propertied widows consisted of several elements. Inheritance from the woman's own family, land and personal possessions, and one third of the marriage property, i. e. movables or land bought with money.

In addition to these property rights the widow had the right to act as a guardian for her minor children and run her husbands' farm until one of the children was old enough, married and capable of taking over. When she retired from the headship she had the right to expect upkeep for the rest of her life and if life could not continue amicably under the same roof, compensation had to be given.

The empirical evidence from Finland, Sweden and the other Nordic countries shows that co-residence between widowed mothers and married children was quite common in a farming environment. The space issue could be solved relatively easily and participation in certain tasks, like child minding and (sometimes highly specialized) textile work could be fitted in with reduced physical strength. Because of a general preference for males in land transfer a higher proportion of farmers widows resided with married sons than with married daughters.

A crofters' widow with a child could generally provide for herself and keep her family. The landless widow however who neither inherited anything nor had retirement provisions to fall back on was in a problematic situation.

Where opportunities existed for earning without leaving home, as in industrial areas, a number of children stayed with their mothers. Even after marriage some provided economic assistance. Urban working class widows co-operated with their children, particularly daughters. They ran an economy of multiple elements, earnings, children's earnings, lodgers, foster children and poor relief. The most common type of relief, out relief was not sufficient to live on, but it was often combined with family assistance.

In rural areas supporting the widows by allowing them to grow

potatoes or graze animals in ditches or by the roadside suited the ideology of the protestant work ethic. Irrespective if the cottage of a widow was situated on village land or that of a farmer, a potato patch would be found next to it. Landless widows could rent or borrow shares in fields either as payment for work or on a sharecropping basis. However, if these widows could not pool their resources with somebody else they would be likely to end up as a parish pauper. The most destitute were the most likely to have children going into service or children with limited means and reduced ability to assist old mothers.

A review of widows dying in the care of the parish, urban or rural, revealed that the majority did not have children, at least not within the community or their children were too poor or unable to assist their mothers.<sup>48</sup>

## Bibliography

- Aarnio, Aulis. 1991. "Perimysjärjestelyt maanomistusolojen kannalta." pp. 43-65 in *Suomen oikeushistorian pääpiirteet*, edited by P. Letto-Vanamo. Helsinki: Gaudeamus.
- Bocker, Carl, Christian, Survey of the rural economy in Finland 1833-1834, National Archives Helsinki.
- Brown, Jim, Rural widows in lower Austria 1788-1848. *The History of the Family* 7 (2002) p. 120-123.
- Dribe, Martin and Christer Lundh, Retirement as a strategy for land transmission in pre-industrial Sweden, *Continuity and Change* 20 : 2, August 2005.
- Dyrvik, Ståle et al. 1979. *Norges økonomiske historie I*. Oslo.
- Eriksson Ingrid and John Rogers. 1978. Rural labor and population change. Uppsala University. Uppsala.
- Fauve-Chamoux, Widows and their living arrangements in pre-industrial France. *The History of the Family* 7 (2002) p. 103-107.
- Favorin, Matti, Virolahden historia II. Mikkeli, 1992.
- Fougstedt, G. and A. Raivio, Suomen vaeston saaty ja ammattiryhmitys v. 1751-

---

<sup>48</sup> B. Moring, 'Widowhood options', 2002, p. 95; do., 'Widows, children and assistance from society in urban Northern Europe 1890-1910', *The History of the Family*, 13(1), 2008, pp. 105-17.

- 1805, Tilastollisia tiedonantoja 40, Helsinki 1953.
- Fure, Eli, *Historisk Tidskrift* 1986 , 65 : 1.
- Flöystad, Ingeborg, Kvinnene i arbeidslivet, in Tranberg and Winge (eds), *Kvinnekar I det gamle samfunn 1500-1850* 1985.
- Gardberg, John. 1948. Hushållning och byväsen kring norra delen av Skiftet. *Skärgårdsboken*. Helsingfors.
- Gaunt, David. 1978. "Household Typology : Problems-Methods-Results", in *Chance and Change* ed by Åkerman, Johansen and Gaunt. Odense University Press, Odense.
- Gaunt, David. 1983. The property and kin relationships of retired farmers in northern and central Europe. Wall, Robin & Laslett (eds.): *Family Forms in Historic Europe*. Cambridge.
- Goransson, Anita, Kon som analyskategori i den ekonomiska historien, Rapport III, *Fra kvinnehistorie till kjønns historie*, Oslo 1994.
- Goransson, Anita. *Fran familj till fabrik*, Lund 1988 University of Umea, pp. 249-251, 259.
- Gunnlaugsson, Gisli A. and Olof Gardarsdottir. 1996. "A life course perspective on the household position of Icelandic widows". *Continuity and Change*. Cambridge.
- Gylling, Edvard. 1909. Suomen torpparilaitoksen kehityksen pääpiirteet. Helsinki.
- Fougstedt, G. and A. Raivio, *Suomen vaeston saaty ja ammattiryhmyitys v. 1751-1805*, Tilastollisia tiedonantoja 40, Helsinki 1953
- af Geijerstam, Gustaf. Anteckningar rörande fabriksarbetarnes stallning i Marks harad. *Skrifter ugifna af Lorenska Stiftelsen* 10, 1894. Stockholm.
- Goransson, Anita. *Fran familj till fabrik*, Lund 1988, University of Umea.
- Gronstroem, Oscar. *Helsingin tyovaen taloudellista oloista*. Esitelma kansantaloudellisessa yhdistyksessa. Porvoo 1897.
- Haapala, Pertti. *Tehtaan valossa*. Helsinki 1986, Societas Historica Finlandiae.
- I Finland pa 1900-talet, *Historisk Tidskrift for Finland* 2 : 1998.
- Hallager, F & F. Brandt, *Kong Kristian den Fjerdes Lov af 1604* (Kristiania 1855) p. 73, 77 ; Huebner 1918 p. 644-645.
- Helland Hansen, Kjeld. 1966. "Karskipnaden." Heimen XIII. Oslo.
- Hellspong, Mats & Orvar Löfgren. 1988. Land och stad. Svenska samhällstyper och livsformer från medeltid till nutid. Liber, Lund.
- Hemma bast- Minnen fran barndomshem I Helsingfors*, Helsingfors 1990.
- Heckscher, Eli, *Sveriges ekonomiska historia*, Stockholm 1949, Bonnier.
- Heikkinen, Sakari, *Labour and the Market*, Helsinki 1997.
- Hjelt, Vera. *Arbetsstatistik XIII. Undersökning av yrkesarbetarnes levnadsvillkor I Finland*

- 1908-1909. Helsingfors 1911.
- Hjelt, Vera. *Tutkimus ammattityöläisten toimeentuloehdoista Suomessa 1908-1909*. Työtilasto XII. Helsinki 1912.
- Höjrup, Ole, *Landbokvinden*, Kobenhavn 1966.
- Högnäs, Hugo. 1938. Sytning och arvslösen i den folkliga sedvänjan i Pedersöre och Nykarlebybygden 1810-1914. Åbo.
- Högnäs, Hugo. 1941. "Arvejord och sytningsfolk". Kalender utgiven av Svenska Folkskolans Vänner. pp. 78-88.
- Holmback, Ake and Wessen Elias, *Svenska länslagslagar*, Stockholm 1940.
- Huebner R. 1918. *A History of German Private Law*. London .
- Hultman, O. 1916 *Upplandslagen Aerfde balkier*, vol. X , Helsingfors.
- Jaakkola, Jouko. 1986 "Työvaen avustuskassat 1800-luvun Tampereella", in Kiuasmaa et. al. ed. *Yksilo ja yhteiskunnan muutos*. Tampere, University of Tampere.
- Jaakkola, Jouko. *Armeliaisuus, yhteisoapu, sosiaaliturva*. Helsinki 1994, Sosiaaliturvan keskusliitto.
- Jacobsson, S. 1981. *Fattihjonets värld I 1800-talets Stockholm* (Uppsala : Unversity of Uppsala).
- Jutikkala, Eino. 1958. *Suomen talonpojan historia*. Turku : WSOY.
- Kaukiainen, Yrjö. 1970. *Viirolahden historia I*. Lappeenranta : Virolahden kunta.
- Kaukiainen, Yrjö. 1979. Social structure and demographic development in a southern Finnish parish, Lohja, 1810-50. Helsinki, Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia.
- Kertzer & N. Karweit, *The Impact of Widowhood in Nineteenth Century Italy* in Kertzer & Laslett, *Aging in the Past*. p. 239-240.
- Karlsson, Lynn, *Mothers as Breadwinners. Myth or Reality in Early Swedish Industry ? Uppsala Papers in Economic History 39*, 1995.
- Key-Aberg, K. *Inom textilindustrien in Norrköping sysselsatta arbetares lonevillkor och bostadsförhållanden*. Statistisk Undersökning. *Skrifter utgifna af Lorenska Stiftelsen 12*, Stockholm 1896.
- Laslett, Peter. 1988. Family, kinship and collectivity as systems of support in pre-industrial Europe: a consideration of the "nuclear-hardship" hypothesis. *Continuity and Change 3(2)* p. 153-175.
- Laslett, Peter & Wall Richard. 1972. *Household and Family in Past Time*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Le Play, Frederic. *L'Organisation de la famille selon le vrai modele signale par de toutes les races et toutes les temps*, Paris 1871.
- Leffler, Johan. *Zur Kenntniss von den Lebens und Lohnverhältnissen Industrieller Arbeiterinnen in Stockholm*. *Skrifter utgifna af Lorenska Stiftelsen 15*

1897. Stockholm.
- Löfgren, Orvar, *Family and Household among Scandinavian Peasants*, Ethnologia Scandinavica 1974.
- Löfgren, Orvar, familj och hushall – Slakt och aktenskap, in Hellspong, Mats & Orvar Löfgren, *Land och stad. Svenska samhällstyper och livsformer från medeltid till nutid*. Liber, Lund 1988.
- Lundh, Christer and Mats Olsson, The institution of retirement on Scanian estates in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *Continuity and Change* 17 ; 3, 2002, p. 373-404.
- Markkola, Pirjo. *Tyolaiskodin synty*. Helsinki 1994, Societas Historica Finlandiae.
- Mitterauer, Michael. 1992. "Peasant and Non-peasant Family Forms in Relation to the Physical Environment and the Local Economy." *Journal of Family History* 17 : 2 1992, pp. 139-159.
- Moring, Beatrice. 1993. "Household and Family in Finnish Coastal Societies 1635-1895." *Journal of Family History*, 18 : 4.
- Moring, Beatrice. 1994. *Skärgårdsbor. Familj, hushåll och demografi i filändsk kustbygd 1635-1920*. Helsingfors : Finska Vetenskaps-Societeten.
- Moring, Beatrice. 1996. "Marriage and social change in western Finland 1700-1870." *Continuity and Change* 11 : 1.
- Moring, Beatrice. 1998. "Family Strategies, Inheritance systems and the Care of the Elderly in Historical Perspective." *Historical Social Research* 23 N1/2 1998.
- Moring, Beatrice. 1999. "Economic and Ecological Determinants of Household Organisation in the Northeastern Baltic Region". *Scandinavian Economic History Review* vol 47, nr 3, 1999.
- Moring, Beatrice, *Familjestrategier i det forindustriella Finland (Family strategies in pre-industrial Finland)*. *Keulakuovia ja peranpitajia*, R. Oittinen and M. Rahikainen (eds). Helsinki 2000, Societas Historica Finlandiae. pp. 117-134.
- Moring, Beatrice, Nordic Coastal Communities in Historical Perspective, the Interaction of Economic Activity and the Household. *Journal of Maritime History* Vol. XIV, No. 2, December 2002 pp. 145-165.
- Moring, Beatrice, "Systems of Survival- Continuities and Discontinuities after the Death of the Household Head", in *When Dad Died - Family Stress and Household Dynamics in Historical Societies*, edited by R Derosas and M. Oris. Peter Lang Bern 2002 pp. 173-193.
- Moring, Beatrice, Widowhood options and strategies in pre-industrial northern Europe, *The History of the Family, An International Quarterly*, Volume 7 Number 1, 2002. Special issue Widows in European Society.
- Moring, Beatrice, Conflict or Co-operation - Old Age and Retirement in the Nordic Past. *Journal of Family History* Vol. 28, No. 2, April 2003 pp. 231-257.

- Moring, Beatrice, Nordic Family Patterns and the North West European Household System, *Continuity and Change* 18(1), May 2003 pp. 77-103.
- Moring, Beatrice, "Property and Power. Women and the Holding and Transmission of Land", in *The Logic of Female Succession: Rethinking Patriarchy and Patrilineality in Global and Historical Perspective*, edited by E. Ochiai. International Center for Japanese Studies. Kyoto 2003. pp 75-100.
- Moring, Beatrice, "Together or Apart; Sibling Inequality, Marriage and Household Strategies in Pre-Industrial Finland," in T. Hamynen (ed) *Family Life on the North Western Margins of Imperial Russia*. Helsinki, The Society for Finnish Literature 2004. pp. 147-174.
- Moring, Beatrice, Retirement Contracts and the Economics of Widowhood in the Nordic countries, *Continuity and Change*, (2006).
- Moring, Beatrice, 'Widows, children and assistance from society in urban Northern Europe 1890-1910', *The History of the Family* 13 : 1 2008, pp. 105-117.
- Morn, Paul. *Liby hemman, Mariehamn 1977*, Ålands Folkminnesförbund.
- Nallimaa-Luoto, Terhi. 1990. Hämeenkyrön historia 1722-1865. Vammala : Hämeenkyrön kunta.
- Nikander, Gabriel, Byar och Gardar, Det svenska Finland, Helsingfors 1921.
- Niskanen, Kirsti (ed), *Foreställningar om kon*, Stockholm 1998.
- Nordberg, Karl. 1925. *En öst-äländsk skärgårdsby*, Åbo.
- Pylkkänen, Anu. 1990. *Puoli vuodetta, lukot ja avaimet*. Helsinki : Lakimiesliiton kustannus.
- Raussi, Eljas. 1966. *Virolahden kansanelämää 1840-luvulla*. Helsinki : Suomen Kirjallisuuden Seura.
- Rogers, John and Lars-Göran Tedebrand. 1993. "Living by the Sea : Farming and Fishing in Sweden from the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Century. *Journal of Family History* 18 : 4.
- Rose, Sonya. "The varying household arrangements of the elderly in three English villages Nottinghamshie 1851-1881". *Continuity and Change* 3 ; 1 1988.
- Ross, Ellen. "Rediscovering London's Working Class Mothers", in Lewis (Ed) *Labour and Love*. Oxford 1986. p. 73-98.
- Sogner, Solvi. *Folkevekst og flytting*. Oslo 1979.
- Sogner, Solvi, *Gifte kvinner i bondesamfunnet pa 1700-tallet*, in Tranberg and Winge (eds), *Kvinnekar i det gamle samfunn 1500-1850*, Oslo 1985.
- Soininen, Arvo. 1974. *Vanha maataloutemme*. Helsinki : Suomen.
- Soininen, Arvo 1961. *Pohjois-Savon asuttaminen keski ja uuden ajan vaihteessa*. Historiallisia Tutkimuksia LVIII. Helsinki.
- Soininen, Arvo M. 1990. "Unohtunut torppari-vapautus". *Arki ja murros*,

- tutkielmia keisarinajan lopun Suomesta. Helsinki.
- Sundstrom, Sigfrid, *Untersuchung uber die Ernahrung der landbevölkerung Finnlands*, Helsingfors 1908.
- SVT (Official statistics of Finland), *Sosiaalisiä Erkoistutkimuksia* 12, Yotyontekijättaret, Helsinki 1935.
- Talve, Ilmar, *Finnish Folk Culture*, Helsinki 1997.
- Tedebrand, L-G, *Generationsrelationer, Historia och demografi- valda texter*, Umea, 1999.
- Tedebrand, Lars-Göran, *Selanger, en sockens historia*, Sundsvall 1983.
- Törnroos, Birger. 1980. *Stenbådan - ett åländskt fiskeläge i Bottenhavet*. Mariehamn.
- Wall, Richard, Jean Robin and Peter Laslett. 1983. *Family Forms in Historic Europe*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.
- Vattula, Kaarina, *Kvinnors forvarvsarbete i Norden under 100 ar (1870-1970)*, *Studia Historica Jyväskyläensia* 27, Jyväskylä 1983.
- Vilkuna, Kustaa. 1934. *Suomen Kulttuurihistoria II*. Helsinki.
- Virtanen, E. A. 1934. *Kyläyhteiskunta ennen isoajakoa. Suomen kulttuurihistoria II*. Helsinki.
- Willert, Hanne. 1995. "Three-generational families in 19<sup>th</sup> century rural Denmark". *Scandinavian Population Studies* 10. Lund.
- Winberg Christer, *Folkökning och proletarisering*. Lund 1977.
- Åländska domböcker 1641-1643.
- Wohlin, Nils, *Jordbruksbefolkningen i Sverige, Emigrationsutredningen Bilage IX*, Stockholm 1909.

(Beatrice MORING/Essex University)

[編者略歴]

たかはし もとやす

高橋 基泰 Motoyasu Takahashi, Ph. D

1962年茨城県生まれ

東北大学大学院経済学研究科博士課程修了

博士(経済学)

愛媛大学法文学部教授(西洋経済史)

Professor, Western Economic History, Faculty of Law and Letters, Ehime University

e-mail : moto@LL.ehime-u.ac.jp

主要業績

『村の相伝：近代英国編－親族構造・相続慣行・世代継承－』刀水書房、1999年(1999年度日本村落研究学会研究奨励賞受賞)

'Family Continuity in England and Japan', *Continuity & Change*, 22/1 (2007, May)

*Village Inheritance in Early Modern England : Kinship Structure, Inheritance Customs and Generation Continuity* (Matsuyama, 2003)

(Margaret Spufford との共著) 'Families, Will Witnesses and Economic Structure in the Fens and On the Chalk : Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Willingham and Chippenham' *Albion*, 28/3 (1996)

'The Number of Wills Proved in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, Graphs, with Tables and Commentary', in G. Martin and P. Spufford eds., *The Records of the Nation* (Woodbridge, 1990)

Finding 'Ie' in Western Society :  
Historical empirical study  
for the paralleling and contrasting  
between Japan and Europe

---

2013年3月29日

29 March, 2013

編者 高橋 基泰  
Motoyasu Takahashi

発行者 愛媛大学法文学部総合政策学科  
Faculty of Law and Letters,  
Ehime University

印刷者 セキ株式会社  
Seki Co., Ltd.  
松山市湊町7丁目7-1

---

非売品