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English summaries

Bernard Derouet, Luigi Lorenzetti, Jon Mathieu:

Introduction. Family Practices in Mountain Societies:

Clues for a Comparative History

Whereas the interdisciplinary study of mountain societies in Europe can look back on a fairly long tradition, research into the family practices and the modes of social reproductions in these areas has started only a few decades ago. Since then, a considerable number of monographs on single mountain regions and societies have been produced. The present project aims at going beyond the monographic stage by taking together an ensemble of investigations and by beginning to compare them, on a European scale. This introduction to the volume puts forward a series of methodological reflections on comparative family research both in the mountains and in other areas. Most notably, it points to the complexity of criteria to be taken into account for that endeavour.

Dionigi Albera:

Towards a Comparative Analysis of the Domestic Organisation in the Alpine Area

The paper outlines the methodology and some central results of comparative analyses of family structures in the Alpine area. The comparison is based on concrete case studies, but it transcends the limitations of micro-history; yet it does not fall back into the simplifications of earlier sweeping family maps either. Three types of domestic organisation for the Alpine area are proposed. They are thought of as “ideal types” (not “real types”) and do not concern the co-residential group only, but include certain traits of the social context (kinship, community, larger polities). This relational comparative approach suggests that juridical and political factors are more efficient for explaining family dynamics than ecological, cultural, and linguistic factors.

Rolande Bonnain-Dulon:

A Survival Strategy for the Younger in the Pyrenees

The inegalitarian inheritance system of the Pyrenees worked in periods of scarce population but not when the population increased. Apart from the solutions in individual migration, there were collective solutions, often envisaged with the agreement of the head of the house. They resulted in the creation of grouped settlements for the younger deprived of inheritance on the communal and inter-communal lands.

The land hunger led to different strategies according to environmental contexts and historical periods. In the Basque Country and the Azun Valley, these settlements were enduring and recognized as institutions. In the Baronnies of the Central Pyrenees, on the other hand, the attempts at occupying the mountain have sparked off conflicts with the neighbouring communes.

Bernard Derouet:

*Male Inheritance, Household Organisation and Forms of Economic Opening:
the Divergent Destinies of the Franche-Comté and the Creuse*

The study of two French regions of middle mountain, between the 16th and 19th centuries, procures the opportunity of giving an insight into the variability of family systems in history, their adaptability, in connection with the degree of opening of these societies and the kind of contact they build and keep with the outside world. Each of these two regions, whose family practices were formerly very near (with equal inheritance restricted to the only sons, frequent joint possessions and joint-families), will experience important turning points in these practices, but at a quite different time and in very dissimilar ways – the first one shifting towards the stem family and the single heir succession, the other one towards nuclear family and equal treatment granted to all children, daughters as well as sons.

Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, Sølvi Sogner:

*Intergenerational Transmission and Stem-Family Models:
from Norwegian Mountains to Pyrenees*

In order to uncover the mechanisms of reproduction which two rural mountain societies in Europe developed in order to secure efficient strategies of family continuity, the authors compare the odal farm system of Norway and the stem family system of the Central Pyrenees, their inheritance systems, their customs regarding the transfer of farm property, and the respective legislative systems. Although the two family systems differ in several respects, the comparison allows a clarification of the concept of house and lineage respectively in the two societies. Both systems have had to confront important socio-economic and demographic changes since the 17th century: in periods of growth they have been obliged to open up to the market and to the external world, and in difficult times they have tried to compensate for the effects of rural outmigration and long distance emigration.

Joseph Goy:
*Peasant Families, Systems of Succession, and Transmission:
 Observations on Research in the French Alps (17th to 20th Centuries)*

The article surveys the principal studies on the social and population history of the French Alps, by illustrating the variety of domestic forms and transmission practices. The local realities bring out the different solutions of domestic groups. They were mostly embedded in the culture of written law, favouring single heirs, but often resulted in the equal treatment of the sons, in co-inheritance, and in a series of measures for the maintenance of the family equilibrium. The article stresses the limits of the approach proposed by F. Le Play and A. de Brandt. In trying to define a geography of family devolution, their analyses neglect the plasticity and historical variability of practices.

Anne-Lise Head-König:
*Transmission of Property in a Region of Ultimogeniture: Family Practices
 in Southern Germany (Black Forest) and Switzerland (Emmental),
 18th and 19th Centuries*

This paper aims at demonstrating how in two mid-range European mountain areas, the Black Forest in Germany, and the Emmental in Switzerland, during several generations up until the 20th century the transmission of the family farm to the youngest son was the favoured mode of transfer. The aim was to maintain the farm as a viable economic unit. This procedure necessitated a number of adjustments regarding the timing of the transfer and the payment of compensation to such brothers and sisters as then did not succeed to a share in the family farm. In this context, the development of new activities – agrarian and proto-industrial – was vital for these disadvantaged members of the family in order to enable them to have a sufficient income to establish a household of their own.

Karl Kaser:
*Pastoral Economy and Family in the Dinaric and Pindus Mountains
 (14th – early 20th Centuries)*

This paper aims at reconstructing patterns of pastoral economy, social organization and adaptation to the environment in the period of Ottoman domination of the Balkans, and more specifically at evaluating the interaction of environment, strategy of overseeing the flock and its impact on family and kinship structure. It focuses on the area, which consists of the Southern Dinarics and the Northern Pindus mountain

ranges, comprising Montenegro, Albania and Northern Greece. It is shown that herding did not automatically lead to a certain social organization nor did a certain social organization lead to distinctive types of herding. The ecological factor, the milieus of the long and the short distance herding, were important, but never absolutely decisive for economic and social organization.

Luigi Lorenzetti:

From Systems to Practices. Family, Kinship, and Household Structure in the Italian Alps, 16th to 19th Centuries

In the Italian Alps, the family unit was controlled by the patrilineal principle based on male descent, patriarchal location and dowry transfer to married daughters. Family customs were nonetheless fairly flexible and evinced a whole range of solutions reflecting both local ecotypes and particular local laws and traditions. Thus, on the one hand, from the end of the 18th century onwards, tighter mechanisms for accessing and managing private and collective (land) resources reinforced exclusive practices. On the other hand, it is just as true that local laws regulating intergenerational relations continued to have an impact on household structures and their regional features.

Jon Mathieu:

Diversity of Family Practices in Mountain Societies: Why?

The article reviews selected explanations for the diversity of family practices in mountain regions in order to gain a more methodical idea thereof. The first section offers comparative evidence about the alpine area from the 16th to the 19th centuries. The second section goes into the discussion and illustration of historical arguments. The issue "family practices" is, of course, a wide field, which can be treated from many perspectives. Here the focus is on questions of inheritance and household composition. As a result two interlinked variables seem especially efficient in explaining the divergent developments observed: the settlement patterns associated with particular inheritance preferences, and the statebuilding processes leading to territorial regulation since the mid 16th century.

Monica Miscali:

Land Sharing and Power sharing. A Community in Sardinia

This article analyses the way in which the inheritance system of a Sardinian community was organised during the 19th century. The Sardinian inheritance system established an egalitarian propriety division between all heirs, females included. The propriety was transmitted from parents to children in different phases tied up with the economical and productive cycles of every single family. Because of that, equality was often reached during the entire life cycle of the testator and not only through his or her single will that could apparently appear to be non-egalitarian. The rigorously egalitarian inheritance norms of the Sardinian community were acquired within the social fabric of the community and were not only the result of laws imposed on its inhabitants.

Francine Rolley:

Contrast of Family Practices in Two Forested Mountains, the Morvan and the Vosges, 16th to 17th Centuries

Although these two mountains have comparable contexts, the structure of their family units differ considerably: while Morvan families live in a carefully organized family community defined in marriage contracts, in the Vosges, a couple constitutes an independent economic entity where the wife's rights and the equality between the children were guaranteed. Several elements may explain these differences: isolated populations in the Morvan remained stable until the Revolution and were subjected to mortmain in the strong and opposition-less seigneurial system; on the contrary in the Vosges, populations were more mobile and landlords were weakened in the 16th century under the policy of the dukes of Lorraine and by the creation of communities of villagers.

Pegerto Saavedra:

The Logic of Two Family Systems in the North-Western Mountains of the Iberian Peninsula (18th and 19th Centuries)

The upswing of family studies is an enrichment to social history, but it provokes a certain embarrassment with the researchers since it confronts them with a multitude of possible factors and connections, difficult to control. This paper, therefore, restricts the comparison to mountain regions in the Northwest of the Iberian Peninsula. There, during the 18th and 19th centuries, one can detect mainly two family systems prevailing in different parts: stem family and tendency to indivisibility on the one

hand, and nuclear family with flexible forms of inheritance on the other hand. Important clues for explaining them concern the nature of the family economy. In the first case, agriculture was paramount, whereas in the second case a major role was played by complementary activities.

Pier Paolo Viazzo:

Pastoral and Peasant Family Systems in Mountain Environments

It is widely assumed in the historical, geographical and anthropological literature that pastoral populations tend to be characterized by extended family forms. The most articulated model positing a strong association between mountain environments, pastoral economies and the prevalence of joint family households has been proposed for the Balkan area. This article briefly reviews the Balkan evidence and compares it with new data on transhumant shepherds and peasants in two villages in the Italian Western Alps, focusing on the structure and composition of their households. Besides shedding doubts on the general validity of the "pastoral model", these data also raise questions concerning the characteristics, functional mechanics and ultimate roots of Alpine demographic systems.