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**The genealogy of Eastern European  
difference: an insider's view**

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## **THE GENEALOGY OF EASTERN EUROPEAN DIFFERENCE: AN INSIDER'S VIEW**

**Abstract:** The view of Eastern Europe as a locus of complex family organisation and familistic societal values has reached the status of general dogma in Western social sciences and demography. By offering an overview of almost entirely unknown scholarly achievements of Eastern Europeanists, this essay represents an attempt to persuade scholars to accept less stereotypical images of families from outside 'Western Europe'. Well into the late 1990s, Eastern European literature on family forms remained screened off from the main current of European thought. Thus, not surprisingly, tracing the lineage of work from east of the ostensible Hajnal Line reveals the sharp differences between the findings of Eastern European researchers and the dominant assumptions of Western science. These marginalised discourses need to be integrated into mainstream research and discussion, so that scholars can better understand marriage, family, household and community patterns in Europe and elsewhere. The diversity of family forms and the rhythms of their development in historical Eastern Europe revealed in this literature also provide us with an excellent opportunity to free ourselves from a simplistic view of the continent's familial history, and particularly from the one implied by the notion of a 'dividing line'.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the main defects of that whole terminology, and of the basic distinction between Western and Eastern Europe, lies in the impression obviously created that all of what is geographically “Eastern” is alien, or even opposed, to “Western” – that is, truly European – civilization’ (Halecki, 1950, 138)

The belief that East-Central Europe represents a locus of complex family organisation and familistic societal values has reached the status of general dogma in Western social sciences and demography, and has a wide currency in other intellectual circles as well (e.g. Thornton, 2005; Therborn, 2004; Grandits, 2010; Mitterauer, 2010). The notion of Eastern Europe’s divergent family developments was first articulated in 19th-century ethnographies. Whereas the German Romantic A. v. Haxthausen argued that Russian peasantry were invariably organised in large, extended and patriarchally structured families (Haxthausen, 1972[1846], 82; also Dennison & Carus, 2003); F. Le Play popularised the notion of a gradient of family and household types running from east to west, and located patriarchal, patrilocal and multigenerational households among ‘Eastern nomads, Russian peasants, and the Slavs of Central Europe’ (Le Play, 1871, § 12, p. 94; Le Play, 1982[1872], 259).

This 19th-century assessment of Eastern European difference penetrated deep into the collective consciousness, and was later perpetuated in modern historical demography and family history, which further sustained the myth of the existence of a demographically uniform Eastern Europe in which people marry young and live in patriarchal households. In the 1960s, J. Hajnal proposed the existence of an East-West gradient in European demographic behaviours with much greater force, and argued that the European nuptiality pattern extended over all of Europe to the west of a line running roughly from Leningrad (as it is now called) to Trieste (Hajnal, 1965, 101). He hardened Le Play’s initial distinctions between Eastern Europe and the rest of the continent, and was keen to equate the marriage pattern of several countries located ‘east of the line’ with marriage characteristics of ‘non-European civilizations’ (Hajnal, 1965, 104). This is how the ‘Hajnal line’ was conceived, a line that has since been often cited and discussed, and has indeed attained truly iconic status.

Whereas Hajnal himself provided a supplementary specification of differences in European familial characteristics by distinguishing between two kinds of household formation systems in pre-industrial times (neo-local and patri-local) (Hajnal 1982), his original hypotheses were further elaborated, reiterated and retold in the works of P. Laslett (Laslett,

1972, 1977, 1978, 1983). Despite the limited availability of data for continental Europe, Laslett was not discouraged from making bold interpretative inferences from single case studies, and from proposing four sets of tendencies in traditional Europe on the basis of domestic group organisation. Among the factors that shed light on the 'Western' familial pattern in Laslett's works were conflicted marriage, household formation and the co-residence patterns observed in 'Far Eastern Europe', even though he considered large parts of the Eastern-Central regions of the continent to belong to a hypothesised 'large intermediary area' between Western and non-Western family systems. Laslett's perspective on pre-industrial Eastern Europe as representing the greatest intra-European departure from the 'English standard' and from Western Europe as a whole was first substantiated by P. Czap's study of a single Russian community of Mishino (south-east of Moscow) (Czap, 1982; Czap, 1983). Due to the prevailing inclination of Western scholars in the early 1980s to search for striking contrasts in familial characteristics, and the wish to brand major areas of Europe as having a particular type of household system, Czap's case study suffered the mixed fortune of being regularly cited as representative of the whole country, and even of the whole continent to the east of Hajnal's line (Hajnal 1982, 468-469; Laslett 1983, 529).

Laslett's and Hajnal's tentative generalisations have long been respected in the research community. Reverence for the work of these scholars, as well as the long-term scarcity of research material available for Eastern Europe, encouraged other researchers to indulge in intellectual equilibristic and bold generalisations, all pertaining to 'a dramatic contrast' to Western European standards in the realm of family organisation and structure (Wrigley, 1977; Burguière and Lebrun, 1986; Burguière, 1997, 105-107; Alderson & Sanderson, 1991; Reher, 1998, 204; Kaser, 2001, 2002; Fauve-Chamoux, 2001, 221; Thornton, 2005, 52). The tantalising claims and tentative inferences of family historians (Laslett's and Hajnal's in the first order) provided a ready framework for scholars from other fields, and were eagerly transformed into 'solid' scientific evidence that helped to substantiate sociologists' or demographers' own claims (e.g. Therborn, 2004, 305). In a similar spirit, demographers took Hajnal's bipolar division of the continent from around 1900 at face value, and often too hastily used it as an additional tool to explain European-wide differentials in demographic transformations after the Second World War (Grassland, 1990; Rallu & Blum, 1993; Monnier & Rychtarikova, 1992; Rychtarikova, 1993; Philipov, 2003; Sobotka, 2003, 475; Sobotka, 2008).

Since the early 1990s, various scholars have criticised those mainstream takes on the topic from empirical, conceptual and epistemological points of view; and have suggested the

need to move beyond the stereotypical and artificial divisions of Europe into ‘Western’ and ‘Eastern’ (Todorova, 2006; Sovič, 2008; Plakans & Wetherell, 2001, 2005; Kertzer, 1991; Wall 2001; Szołtysek, 2008a, 2008b). Recently, some researchers have pointed out that the ‘Western’ homogenising take on Eastern European family patterns stems from four specific attitudes, all of which demonstrate the general lack of concern about the diversity of Eastern European family patterns: 1) a tendency to make bold inferences from partial and inconclusive evidence, 2) the lack of or the faulty specification of spatial references, 3) a tendency to neglect substantial counterfactual testimony and 4) an inclination to ignore the local, ‘native’ Eastern European literature on family and demography (Szołtysek, 2011).

However, as the persistent use of the division proposed by J. Hajnal to explain European contemporary demographic, socioeconomic and cultural differentials by social scientists suggests (recently Sobotka, 2008; Heady, 2010; Viazzo, 2010; De Moor and Van Zanden, 2010), the positions of ‘revisionists’ remain obscure within the mainstream discourse, and further attempts to persuade scholars to accept less stereotypical image of the families from outside ‘Western Europe’ are clearly needed. In this essay, we seek to broaden the intellectual horizons of the ongoing debate by offering an overview of almost entirely unknown scholarly contributions of Eastern Europeanists on historical family and demography. Well into the late 1990s, Eastern European literature on family forms had been cut off from the main current of European thought. It therefore should not come as great surprise that tracing the lineage of work from east of the ostensible Hajnal Line reveals sharp differences between the findings of Eastern European researchers and the dominant assumptions of Western scholars. These marginalised discourses need to be integrated into mainstream research and discussion so that scholars can gain a better understanding of marriage, family, household and community patterns—both in Europe and elsewhere. The diversity of family forms and the rhythms of their development in historical Eastern Europe revealed in this literature present us with an opportunity to free ourselves from a simplistic view of the continent’s familial history, and particularly from the one implied by the notion of a ‘dividing line’.

This paper is organised into three major sections. It opens by challenging the dominant discourse with well-established evidence from the mainstream demography and family history — so far thoroughly ignored, that provides a more nuanced view of spatial distribution of family patterns over Eastern Europe. In the second, most extensive part, selected contributions of Eastern European scholars are presented to demonstrate concepts of familial developments that were developed independently of the Western search for striking contrasts in familial

characteristics on the continent. This section is further subdivided into five components. Three of them are presented in order of the authors' geographical provenance, providing a sequential overview of the contributions of Czech, Slovak, Hungarian, Polish, Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian scholars. The other two components are thematic and deal with 19th- and early 20th-century theories about variations in archaic forms of family organisation in Eastern Europe, and on the role of early modern agrarian developments in the pre-configuration of Eastern European familial developments in the area<sup>1</sup>. The overarching conclusion of the paper is that the exceptions to simple models of European family patterns—such as a 'dividing line'—are so abundant that continuing to use these models as descriptive markers of European development can no longer be sustained. The paper closes with a general reflection on where research needs to go to move beyond overly simplistic geographic East-West scenarios that are insufficiently historicised.

## **TOWARDS A RECONCEPTUALISATION OF THE EASTERN EUROPEAN FAMILY**

The emergence of the orthodoxy proclaiming the existence of an East-West familial dichotomy, briefly described in the introduction, was only superficially accepted. The 'demographic brotherhood of thought' in the context of the familial characteristics of the Eastern part of the continent has actually turned out to be a smokescreen, and hides important differences in research perspectives, even among Western scholars.

One of the earliest heterodox investigations into Eastern European household structures were Plakans' studies of the big Latvian parish of Nerft in historic Kurland (17 noble estates, 771 farmsteads, 11,040 individuals) (Plakans, 1973; Plakans, 1975). An intriguing outcome of this careful examination of 18th-century household lists was the observation that, despite being representative of the family pattern that contrasted sharply with what was known for the West, the complex family in Latvia was not a universal feature in the lives of ordinary people (Plakans, 1973, 13; Plakans, 1975, 645). Even though Plakans' original remarks were later confirmed by a larger body of evidence (Plakans, 1983), his findings went largely unnoticed by scholars engaged in mapping European family systems.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is restricted primarily to a discussion of East-Central European area studies. Consequently, it takes only a very limited stance on the intense discussions among 19<sup>th</sup> century scholars of the morphology and social implications of the peculiar family type of *zadruga*, found in some parts of the Balkans, but often believed to encapsulate the very spirit of the Slavic familial tendencies. The variety of family forms in pre-industrial Russia is also omitted here (see, however: Mironov and Eklof, 2000, 124-132, 141-143; Polla, 2006, 2007; Mitterauer and Kagan, 1982, 108-111; Dennison, 2003).

In the meantime, J. Sklar carefully collected census data for every political entity of the Eastern European region from around 1900, which she then minutely decomposed into smaller political units (Sklar, 1974)<sup>2</sup>. Following Hajnal, Sklar also summarised her analysis in a statement that was very concise, but also divergent in its meaning: ‘(...) the East European regions that were to become Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Czechoslovakia, and Poland after World War I did not exhibit the Eastern European pattern of marriage behaviours, but were actually closer to the West European pattern’. By referring to values of the singulate mean age at marriage, she argued that ‘nuptiality in these regions at around 1900 followed the West European late marriage pattern’, with the female mean age at first marriage fluctuating between 24 and 27, and the age for men fluctuating between 25 and 30. Sklar observed commonalities across Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Czechoslovakia in the proportions single in different age groups, finding only a slight departure from this general tendency in territories that later became Poland. She concluded that people in all of these areas ‘married rather late, and moderate proportions never married at all’ (Sklar, 1974, 232-234; also tab. 6, 245)<sup>3</sup>. In the light of this abundant evidence, Sklar felt comfortable concluding that, in Eastern Europe around 1900, both ‘Western’ and ‘Eastern’ European marriage patterns prevailed, with the latter being followed by the Balkan countries. She substantiated her claims using some basic data on household size that showed only negligible differences between Baltic, Czech and Polish provinces and Sweden at around 1900 on the one hand (with the mean household size fluctuating between 4.7 and 5.2 persons), but more significant differences in relation to Bulgaria and Serbia (MHS 5.8 and 7.2, respectively) on the other. More speculative were Sklar’s comments on the relationship between marriage and residence patterns, and the way in which both were buttressed through kinship rules and practices in various parts of Eastern Europe. On the basis of ‘historical and observational studies’, Sklar maintained that ‘in the Czech, Baltic and Polish territories, the independence of nuclear family was reflected in the custom that the typical peasant farm should support one family only (...)’, and that the peasant practice was ‘to leave a farm undivided to one son who would marry and remain on the holding while “paying-off” his brothers and sisters (...)’.

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<sup>2</sup> J. Sklar was a student of Kingsley Davis at Berkeley, where she received her PhD in 1970 (title: ‘East European nuptiality: a comparative historical study of patterns and causes’). She died prematurely in 1977. Sklar’s analysis remains relevant and attractive to scholars today, if only because it surpasses Hajnal’s contributions in data collection and geo-spatial awareness, and because it attempts to contextualise crude demographic measures of marriage behaviour with information on kinship behaviour, religious doctrines and economic characteristics.

<sup>3</sup> Sklar contended that the 36.3% never-married at ages 20 to 29, and the 7.8% never-married at ages 40 to 49 among females in the Polish areas, ‘still reflect a rather late age at marriage and moderately high celibacy, especially compared with the Balkan countries’ (Sklar, 1974, 234).

According to Sklar, the emphasis placed on the independence of the nuclear family in the Czech, Baltic and Polish provinces produced strong pressures that tended to favour late marriage, sometimes leading to celibacy among the non-inheriting offspring. In contrast, the integration of the nuclear unit into the parental household in the Balkans created pressures favouring early marriage (Sklar, 1974, 234-236)<sup>4</sup>.

Sklar's observations pertaining to much of Eastern Europe were close to Hajnal's own description of the marriage contingent on the availability of self-sufficient positions or niches, and to inheritance practices he saw as underlying the formation of typically Northwest European households (Hajnal 1982, 452). Not surprisingly, Sklar took a very critical stance on Hajnal's assessment of Eastern European nuptiality, and argued that he not only exaggerated the difference between 'European' and 'East European' marriage patterns, but that he also purposely left out of his analysis those Eastern European countries which exhibited one or more characteristics of the 'Western European' pattern of marriage (Sklar 1971, 36 ff). Sklar seemed to want to relocate the dividing line suggested by Hajnal more towards the east, thereby moving countries such as Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland and Czechoslovakia into the zone of 'Western' marriage and household characteristics. Her repositioning of the demographic fault line in Eastern Europe also suggested including parts of Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian ethnic territories of the Polish state into the 'Western' zone (Sklar, 1974, 232, 234)<sup>5</sup>. Sklar's work (from the dissertation and from the published paper) sought—for the first time in modern population history—to dispel notions of historical Eastern Europe as a demographic monolith by suggesting that there were at least two distinct marriage patterns in the region. Her research uncovered not only a transition zone along the North-South axis, which seemed to delineate East-Central European from the Balkan marriage patterns; it also revealed the presence of noteworthy differences within East-Central Europe itself. Finally, Sklar's analysis opened up new perspectives for recasting Eastern European marriage and family patterns at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, few researchers took advantage of these opportunities<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Sklar's information on Polish customs was derived mostly from the work of Thomas and Znaniecki (see ft. 7, 235).

<sup>5</sup> 'Although people were not marrying as late in such areas as Grodno, Volhynia [northern Belarus, and the northwest corner of Ukraine] and Slovakia as in Western Europe, mean age at first marriage was higher than in the early marriage Balkan countries of Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia' (Sklar, 1974, 234).

<sup>6</sup> This genuine contribution to historical demography of Eastern Europe went generally unnoticed by mainstream scholars working on the geography of family forms, and it has not, to my knowledge, been mentioned in any work by scholars affiliated with the Cambridge Group (but see Plakans, 1987, 166; Kertzer, 1991, 163). Scholars from Eastern Europe rarely recognised the importance of Sklar's paper until very recently (Botev, 1990; Kera and Pandelejmoni, 2008; Pamporov, 2008).



Chojnacka (1976), a student of A. Coale at Princeton, proceeded along similar lines, unveiling the true spatial diversity of marriage behaviours in Tsarist Russia of 1897. Three belts of marriage regimes stretching from the west to east were found, with a gradual decrease in nuptiality observed when moving from the south to the north of the country. Chojnacka confirmed Sklar's earlier observation, and suggested a correction to Hajnal's hypothesis: '(...) applying Hajnal's terminology', she argued, 'the non-European pattern – defined as early and quasi-universal marriage – can be applied in the south and central regions of European Russia, but not in the north. The latter is much closer to the unique European marriage pattern (...)’ (Chojnacka, 1976, 204-205). Although Chojnacka was not able to establish a clear relationship between different patterns of marriage and different types of families, she nevertheless tentatively suggested that 'an extended patriarchal-type family' was dominant 'among the Great Russians, with a variety of modifications among Belarussian, and to a lesser extent among the Ukrainians'. Among the latter, she claimed, 'the nuclear family was more common' (Chojnacka, 1976, 211). As we can see, no claim for the universality of the prevailing family type on Russia's western fringes was made here.

Hajnal's hypotheses were also questioned by the authors of the Princeton monograph on Russia (Coale, Anderson and Härm, 1979). Their collection of figures on the singulate mean age at first marriage and proportion ever-married for Western European, Eastern European (including European Russia) and non-European (Asian and African) societies appeared to show that Hajnal's attempt at equating the 'Eastern European pattern' with marriage characteristics of 'non-European civilizations' (Hajnal, 1965, 104) was entirely misleading. On both indexes, the contrast between 'Western' and 'Eastern' European populations (the latter being Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Serbia; as well as the Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) was very reminiscent of the distinction between the latter group and non-European populations from the Far East and North Africa (Coale, Anderson & Härm, 1979, 136-139). Moreover, there was by no means an unequivocal spatial order to marriage and family patterns, even to the east of the Hajnal line. Again, three distinct patterns of first marriage were detected within European Russia, with the Baltic republics sharing the late experience of first marriage long customary in Western Europe (*Im* of 0.56 or less in 1897), and the Belarussian and Ukrainian territories displaying an 'intermediary pattern' (*Im* of 0.62 to 0.68) between the above pattern and the pattern of early marriages characteristic of territories stretching almost horizontally from the Black Sea to the Ural. While an examination of the spatial distribution of SMAM values for Russia's westernmost provinces in 1897 indeed revealed quite substantial differences in marriage ages, these

differences did not, however, unfold along a West-East axis, but rather vertically (Coale et al., 1979, 148-153)<sup>7</sup>.

A similar perspective was advocated in J. Ehmer's study of historical marriage patterns in the crown lands of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, 1880-1890 (Ehmer, 1991). Ehmer pinpointed a striking divergence of the Galician nuptiality regime from trends among the populations of the Kingdom's other provinces<sup>8</sup>. In Galicia at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, he suggested, the age at marriage tended to be much lower, almost all men were married by the age of 30 in some regions and permanent celibacy was nearly unknown (Ehmer, 1991, 144)<sup>9</sup>. When entering East Galicia, Ehmer observed, 'we are leaving behind the European Marriage Pattern and Household Formation System'. However, in spite of treating this area as a demographic monolith, Ehmer proposed that a demographic fault line ran across the province, dividing it into two parts along ethnic lines. The western part with the great majority of Poles (up to 90% of the local population) was characterised by relatively large proportions of never-married males, while the situation differed greatly in districts dominated by Ukrainians. Importantly, in Ehmer's view, the eastern Ukrainian family pattern represented an example of the 'East-Central European' family type, which was supposed to be prevalent in the entire Carpathian area and to extend into eastern Ukraine as well, and which was distinguished by the pattern of earlier marriage that 'might really be a transitional form towards Eastern European Marriage Pattern'. The marriage patterns of the Polish-speaking population in western Galicia that Ehmer saw as departing only slightly from the more Western-like tendencies of the other Crown Lands of Austro-Hungary (Ehmer, 1991, 145-148). Ehmer's contribution supplied more proof of the need to variegate the view of family tendencies east of Hajnal's dividing line. Still, Ehmer's picture of East-Central European diversity was drawn with a single brush of paint, and the concept of a 'transitional zone' between 'Western' and 'Eastern' marriage and household patterns located somewhere in East-Central Europe—to which he subscribed—still needed to be filled out with a more substantial body of evidence.

The concept of a 'transitional zone' between 'Western' and 'Eastern' marriage and household patterns was later promoted by another Austrian scholar. In twin publications, M. Cerman pointed out that Central Europe may be thought of as representing the transitional

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<sup>7</sup> The diversity of family and marriage patterns within Russian political boundaries has been noted by studies on the regional level, as well (see footnote 1).

<sup>8</sup> Up to the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Galicia (*Galizien* in German) constituted a historical region of Red Ruthenia south and south-east of the province of Lesser Poland, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. After the 18<sup>th</sup>-century partitions of Poland, it became a Crown Land of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy located in its north-east corner.

<sup>9</sup> Data used by Ehmer (various volumes of *Österreichische Statistik*) contained information on marital status by age only for males.

area with respect to European marriage patterns and household formation systems (Cerman, 1997, 2001). By focusing on Austrian and Bohemian data, Cerman blurred the existing geography of marriage patterns in that part of Europe by noting the surprisingly high proportions of married males in Bohemia relative to Austrian areas as early as in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and by suggesting the presence of an additional North-South fault line in the region (Cerman, 2001, 283-285). However, he still believed that, in the early modern period, Austria shared a more ‘Western-like’ household and family formation system with Bohemia, but not with Slovakia, where higher proportions of complex households co-existed with a lower mean age at marriage. Cerman was reluctant to consider the Slovakian family pattern as representing the ‘Eastern Hajnal-type family system’; instead, he saw it as far more appropriate to view Slovakia as part of a ‘very broad transitional zone, whose dominant household patterns were strongly influenced by local and regional socioeconomic and legal contexts’. ‘In Central Europe (...)’, he continued, ‘there existed not only an extreme variant of the Western European pattern (...) in rural areas of Austria, but also significant variations from this Western European pattern in other regions such as Slovakia and Hungary (...). The famous Hajnal line which appears prominently in the literature in its role as structural border between Eastern and Western family systems appears therefore to be diffused by the presence of areas where family forms were more mixed’ (Cerman, 2001, 301-302)<sup>10</sup>.

So much for the ‘dissidents’ among the circles of Western scholars of family forms<sup>11</sup>. By undermining the reliability of Hajnal’s statistics, especially the legitimacy of ascribing conclusions from his analysis to the entire territory of Eastern Europe, including for the period before 1900, the studies by Sklar and others paved way for the revision of the demographic

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<sup>10</sup> However, Cerman’s analysis does not make clear precisely where this transitional zone was located (apart from that it covered Slovakian areas), and which other territories it cut through, while reassigning others to different typological entities.

<sup>11</sup> Since 1983, attempts at canvassing the Balkan family and demographic realities have also been made (Todorova, 1983, 1996, also 2006; also Hammel, 1975). Todorova argued that the Balkan region should not to be incorporated as a whole into the ‘non-European’ or ‘Eastern European’ marriage and family pattern. ‘The characteristics of the family and the household’ [in the north-eastern Bulgaria of 1860s], she concluded, ‘do not make possible the establishment of some essential difference from the West European model’ (Todorova, 1983, 71-72). Accordingly, Todorova re-conceptualised the Southeast European area as having a great deal in common with Central and Southern Europe, particularly with regards to the occurrence of multiple families (Todorova, 2006, 105-108; cit. 105). The predominance of nuclear households was also reported for Macedonia (Hammel, 1980, 260-261) and Slovenia (Sovič, 2005, 167). Depending on the socio-economic setting, different household systems were observed in northern Croatia, with one of them being based on the predominance of nuclear households (Capo Zmegac, 1996, 386–392). Kaser also gives the most thorough assessment of the Balkan household types internal variation (see Kaser, 1996, esp. 380). According to him, the Bulgarian family pattern Todorova focused on represented only the transitional form from the more complex nature of family residential arrangements in the Balkan interior (ibid., 383). Recently, S. Gruber used micro-level population census data from Serbia and Albania to extract information on historical household formation and marriage patterns in both countries, and concluded that there are more indicators for different patterns than for only one family pattern in the two Balkan regions (Gruber, 2009; see also Gruber and Szołtysek, forthcoming).

landscape of this part of the continent. At the same time, however, the research presented in the above section still remained bound by the original framework in its efforts to relocate the line elsewhere, and these scholars were not prepared to jettison the concept of a line altogether. Through their innovative handling of the historic-statistical material, these researchers incorporated local historical demographic analyses into their own investigations, albeit usually only to a relatively small degree.

## **SPEAKING FOR ITSELF: EASTERN EUROPEANISTS ON FAMILY AND MARRIAGE**

### **19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century contributions**

Although the first independent studies on Eastern European family patterns appeared at almost exactly the time when the Cambridge Group framework for comparative analysis of families was completed and made known to a wider research community, their sensible voices went largely unheard by Western scholars. Either they were mentioned only in passing without affecting their general portrayal, or they became known to a wider public too late to stop the ongoing stereotyping of Eastern European demographic realities (Szołtysek, 2008a). These studies were, however, also preceded by an even greater number of studies from the period between the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 1960s that anticipated many threads of later English, Austrian or French studies on the history of family and kinship, even though they were based on different methodological premises and pursued different research goals. In this section, I will first briefly review these older studies of familial issues, and then move on to a discussion of more contemporary literature.

One of the objects of heated debates among Eastern European scholars since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century has the issue of ‘intra-familial relationships’ (a term applied to describe the totality of issues pertaining to familial land ownership, inheritance, kinship, co-residence and, to a degree, residential propinquity of relatives). In practice, the disagreements often come down to conflicting views about the origins, size, legal character and spatial distribution throughout Eastern Europe of the so-called *zadruga*-type family forms; i.e. a family community that in modern studies is frequently categorised as belonging to the residential community group (e.g. Hammel, 1975). Following Bogišić (1884), nearly all Southern-Slavic literature has deemed *zadruga* a relic of ancient all-Slavic forms of ancestral organisation, which can be traced back to the era of first settlement, and several East-Central European authors have also signed on to this theory (Szołtysek and Zuber-Goldstein, 2009, 7). This

image, popularised in a simplified version in Western literature, would then soon penetrate deep into the collective consciousness; and, with time, would condition the framework of debates on the geography of family forms in Europe (see, e.g., Macfarlane, 1981) by equating those archaic forms of communal social organisation with a supposed propensity to multi-generational co-residence over the whole eastern part of the continent, and among Slavs in particular, both historically and in more recent times. However, some of these early scholars also provided a striking acknowledgment that a diversity of family forms was visible in East-Central Europe as early as at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and that there were particularly strong differences in the patterns of family form development in the western and eastern lands of historic Poland-Lithuania.

K. Kadlec assumed that the Central European variant of *zadruga*-type forms known as *niedział* (literally ‘something undivided’), which was meant to be a commune of people bound by ancestral kinship who jointly manage a shared estate under the guidance of one leader (Kadlec, 1898, 1-3, 129-132)<sup>12</sup>, represented a prototypical form of family life common to all Slavic peoples. However, he also pointed out that *zadruga*-type communes survived exceptionally long only in southern Slavdom and in Russian countries, while they disappeared more quickly in regions inhabited by western Slavs<sup>13</sup>. Among Poles, the phasing out of this communal form happened earlier than among Czechs; most likely before the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The dissolution of *niedział* followed different patterns in the Czech and the Slovak populations as well. Among the rural Czech population, this family form could still be found only in exceptional cases in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, while in Slovakian territories (especially around the Carpathians) its remnants could be detected even later. The more rapid process of the individualisation of family life and property laws in western Slavdom is mainly attributable to the influence of Western ideas, especially the terminology of German law, and could be seen in the simpler structures and smaller sizes of local ‘undivided family communes’ relative to those in Russian lands, and especially to those in the Balkans (Kadlec, 1898, 1-2, 10, 49, 53, 75, 100-107, 125, 130). In Poland, as in the Czech territories, family collectives were quickly reduced to tighter communal forms embracing joint familial property in a narrow sense of the

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<sup>12</sup> Other ‘universal’ features of ‘*niedział*’ forms included the seniority principle in the succession of headship; the strong standing of widowed mothers as household heads (in other cases, the position of women in *zadruga*-type forms was usually only secondary); the domination of the patrilineal descent ideology and practice, also underscored by norms of equal partible inheritance among the male offspring or lateral relatives and ultimogeniture (in cases when splitting occurred) and patriarchal power relations.

<sup>13</sup> For a more contemporary argument for a much earlier disappearance of *zadruga*-type families among the western Slavs (Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, and also Slovenians), see also Gimbutas, 1971, 136.

term; most frequently between the father and unmarried sons (Kadlec, 1898, 75, 106, 117-119, 125, 130).

The most prominent of the Polish discussions of *zadruga*-type family forms can be found in the works of Balzer and Łowmiański. Balzer, a legal historian, found big family communes in medieval Bohemia, in Poland proper, as well as on the Polish eastern borderlands, where they assumed forms identical with patterns known from southern Slavdom or ancient Rus. However, these *zadruga*-like forms in Eastern Europe varied in durability. They disappeared fastest from the territories of the Polish Crown and Bohemia, and, if they lasted longer, then usually as relatively simple and small two-generational communes (Balzer, 1899, 185, 193, 241-242). On the western fringes of the Ukraine, family communes lasted well into the 16<sup>th</sup> century, both among the gentry and the peasant population (Balzer, 1899, 191-199). In some minor regions they did in fact survive up until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but then only among peasants. Eastern European family communes also differed with regard to their life cycle characteristics. In Poland and Bohemia they took the form of temporary joint-property groups (sometimes, but not always, also co-resident entities) which usually split either immediately or shortly after the demise of the head. Farther to the east in Poland, 'undivided family units' were more durable: in these remote areas, communes formed by brothers lasted over the entire lifespan (Balzer, 1899, 193-199).

Łowmiański was the first to reinterpret the communal property systems found in Lithuanian-Ruthenian lands of medieval and early modern Poland in strictly demographic categories. Importantly, Łowmiański maintained that property communes that jointly managed the land were composed of separate households, or *dymy* (hearths). The number of *dymy* making up a commune could vary substantially, and in the Lithuanian regions the number was lower than in Volhynia and Polessie (northern and north-western Ukraine). Furthermore, *dymy* also differed considerably in size: in the southern belt of Lithuanian-Ruthenian lands, they were bigger than in the more northern regions of the Grand Duchy (Łowmiański, 1998, 101-113, 132, 150-152).

These discrepancies were but a signal of the much more substantial differences in the material and social cultures of the Slavic people since the earliest medieval times (Łowmiański, 1967). Among Slavs, the disintegration of lineage groups into small families had already occurred during the period of intense settlement action between the 7th and 10th centuries; however, this dissolution did not always result in the conjugal family gaining

primacy<sup>14</sup>. At least in early modern Poland, grand families on the scale of extended Balkan *zadrugas* did not occur, as households consisting of more than one married couple remained exceptional (Łowmiański, 1967, 357-358). However, in some regions of Slavdom, the strong lineage system survived until very recently (Łowmiański, 1967, 346-350). Small and nuclear families from the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Polish Crown could be juxtaposed with residential communes from Belarus. At that time, multiple households had a marked advantage over single households (even up to 60%), as the population avoided the excessive parcelling of households through the extensive use of familial property communes (Łowmiański, 1967, 360-362). According to Łowmiański, the grand Belarusian families from the late early modern period were the continuation of a previously vanished institution prevalent in the western lands of Poland.

### **Czech, Slovak and Hungarian literature**

These early suggestions regarding the presence of an historical East-West gradient in family and kinship in Eastern Europe provided a unique agenda for more quantitatively elaborated studies into the structure of the family. Unfortunately, contemporary Eastern European family historians took on the challenge of further developing these insights only to a very limited extent.

They resurfaced most extensively in the Czech and Slovak literature. The investigation into family and household structures in former Czechoslovakia dates back to the late 1980s, when 'The 1651 Register of Subjects According to Their Religion' (*Soupis poddaných podle víry*), which covered almost all of the lands of historical Bohemia, was first examined with the use of modern quantitative techniques (Čaňová, Horská & Maur, 1987; Grulich & Zeitlhofer, 1999, 36-40)<sup>15</sup>. Since then, one of the basic premises of Czech and Slovak scholars studying historical household structures has been that an intermediary marriage and household formation pattern may have existed in Central Europe (Horská, 1989; Čaňová and Horská, 1992c; Grulich and Zeitlhofer, 1999, 51-52; Langer, 1994, 44). P. Horská was the first to introduce the concept of the 'Central European model of the family' (Horská, 1989; also Čaňová and Horská, 1992c), by which she meant a nuptiality pattern that represented a transition between the Northwest and the Eastern European models. She also asserted that,

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<sup>14</sup> F. Bujak has suggested that huge, lineage-based families among the peasantry of southern Poland vanished by the 12th and 13th centuries. According to Bujak, this process was the result of the landowners' policy of supporting of the 'innate drive' towards the individualisation of family relationships among the peasant population, with a view to multiplying their own profits, which were usually calculated on the basis of single household numbers (Bujak, 2001[1905], 111).

<sup>15</sup> *Soupis* was drawn up in 1651 by the Habsburg monarchy in the form of a register of households.

during 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the family household in the Czech countries never seemed to have been of the patriarchal type: it was most frequently composed of the parents and children as ‘elsewhere in the Western Europe’ (Horska, 1989, 142; Horska, 1994, 101, 104). Several studies have confirmed that picture, pointing out the overwhelming dominance of nuclear households in early modern Bohemia (up to 79%), followed by extended households (up to 32%), and relatively few domestic units shared by more than one family (up to 9%). In addition, a significant fraction of the young, unmarried population in Bohemia were found to have worked as unmarried servants in the households of non-kin (Čaňová, 1989, 1992a, 1992b; Čaňová and Horska, 1992c, 102; Horsky and Maur, 1993, 13; Horsky and Sládek, 1993, 83; also: Rumlova, 1993; Seligová, 1993; Grulich & Zeitlhofer, 1999). All of these features allow us to treat the Bohemian variant of the ‘Central European’ pattern of the family as being more or less compatible with patterns observed in Western Europe.

At the same time, however, Horska and others have warned that an important demographic fault line passed through the Czech lands during the early modern period. Whereas in Bohemia more complex family types could have been more widespread only before the 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>16</sup>, the ‘great family’ was much more usual in the Moravian Carpathians and Slovakia, where it frequently involved the co-residence of married brothers and sisters in a manner resembling the structure of joint-property systems of a fraternal *zadruga* type (Horska, 1989, 142; Horska, 1994, 101-104; Horsky and Maur, 1993, 14-15; Horska and Čaňová, 1992, 94-95; Langer, 1994, 44-45; also Svecova, 1989, 215). A feature that differentiated such residential arrangements from the Eastern or Southeast European realities was, however a specific set of power relations within these households, whereby a co-residing brother would occupy an inferior position and was entitled to share in household’s consumption only if he performed various labour services for the brother-head. The non-negligible geographical pattern was also believed to have existed in the Czech lands with regards to nuptiality, as the age at first marriage declines as we proceed from the north-west to the south-east parts of the region (Čaňová and Horska, 1992c, 90-94; Horska, 1994, 102; Švecová, 1989, 211). Švecová drew on ethnographic literature to link these two different family and demographic regimes in the area of the former Czechoslovakia with two historical types of property devolution: the one-heir system known as ‘*rodina jednonástupnická*’, and joint property systems known as ‘*rodina nedielová*’ (Švecová, 1989, esp. 215-216; also 1986;

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<sup>16</sup> However, some scholars who compared 16<sup>th</sup>- and 17<sup>th</sup>-century Bohemian household lists have argued that, in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century (1586), no relics of the ‘Eastern’ family structure can be found. Consequently, no clear turning point from one family system to another could be detected in Bohemia between 1586 and 1651 (Horský and Sládek, 1993, 81-82, 85).



1966; 1996, 28)<sup>17</sup>. She also argued that there was a decisive turn on the way from the ‘Eastern’ type of household formation (*rodina nedílová*) to the ‘Central European pattern’ (one-heir system) which took place in Bohemian lands between late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, but not in Slovakia (Švecová, 1966, 86-87; 1986, 203; Švecová, 1989, 212-215; also Horský & Sládek, 1993, 71-71, 81-82). In the latter, the development of nuclear or stem family arrangements was prevented by a family joint-property system, equal inheritance among the sons, the real partition and, finally, by a strictly agrarian environment (Švecová 1966, 85; 1986, 204; 1996, 15-16; also Langer, 1994, 44). Instead, she asserted, three- or four-generation families with parti-local marriage and patriarchal power relations were quite prevalent, and this pattern often persisted well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Švecová, 1989, 214-217; 1996, 22-25, 27-29). Švecová was persuaded to view the Slovakian family pattern as belonging to the ‘Eastern’ type of Hajnal’s typology, and the Western Carpathians as representing within the Central European setting the border between the two different family models he had proposed (Švecová, 1986, 204)<sup>18</sup>.

A similar diversity of family patterns was also found for late 18<sup>th</sup>- and early 19<sup>th</sup>-century Hungary. Andorka disproved the notion that polynuclear households would have been something of a general pattern in Hungary. Although they were fairly widespread in the Transdanubian region, places where the share of nuclear households was much greater and extended and multiple families much less prevalent could be easily found in other areas of the country (Andorka, 1976, 344). A later study of seven localities (Andorka and Farago, 1983, 294) suggested that the household structure in Hungary ‘seems to have been intermediate between western Europe on the one hand and Serbia and Russia on the other’, but allowed that important differences may have existed within the country.

Farago pinpointed those differences more precisely (Farago, 1986) by dividing up the marriage and household organisation patterns of several rural communities in Hungary into three specific categories: the ‘Western European’, the ‘Eastern European’ and, finally, the ‘East-Central European’ family model (*Ostmitteleuropäische Familienmodell*) (Farago, 1986, 135 ff). The latter category was supposed to encompass behavioural patterns representing a transition between the ‘Northwest European pattern’ identified by Hajnal and Laslett and the Russian reality. Capturing the diversification of family forms in the territories of the historical Hungarian Kingdom is also a primary research goal for recent Hungarian historical

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<sup>17</sup> In Švecová’s accounts, ‘*rodina jednonástupnická*’ which came to be prevalent in Bohemia, represented an equivalent of Le Play’s *famille souche* (Švecová, 1989, 210, 215).

<sup>18</sup> Complex and almost self-sufficient family collectives did not dominate the region of Slovakia entirely, however, and their incidence was connected with the variety of local ecotypes.

demography. Both Farago (1998, 2003) and Óri (2009) found a considerable patchiness in the patterns of marriage and household formation across pre-industrial Hungary, which evades classification using a simple dichotomous model.

### **Polish scholarship**

Between 1960 and 2000, around a dozen studies dealt more directly with the structure of the peasant household during the serfdom period in Poland. Most of these were isolated case studies describing family forms with various typologies, and were devoid of any reference to the models of familial organisation developed in the West (e.g. Brodnicka, 1969; Borowski, 1975, 1976; Górny, 1987, 1994, 111-119; Polaszewski, 1978; Kwaśny, 2001)<sup>19</sup>. Nevertheless, all of them reported more or less unequivocally a decisive predominance of simple family households in the historical Kingdom of Poland, even though the territorial basis of these investigations was limited almost exclusively to the western and south-western parts of the country (Kwaśny, 1966; Obraniak, 1968; Wachowiak, 1990; Kopczyński, 1998; Kuklo, 1998). These findings notwithstanding, Polish researchers generally hypothesised the predominance of nuclear households over the whole of historical Poland, tentatively assuming the existence of different family systems operating on the country's eastern outskirts. Acknowledging the homogeneity of manorial politics and the effect it had on the peasant family, W. Kula suggested that the dominance of the nuclear family had spread over the entirety of the Polish *corvee*-obliged rural population of the early modern era (Kula, 1972). Koczerska, in turn, extended the simple family model over the population of nobility, among which already in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries it replaced more kin-based residential arrangements (Koczerska, 1975, 100-109). With recourse to only a very modest body of data, Gieysztorowa proposed an operational hypothesis in which she noted that the age at marriage in historical Poland progressively declined when moving to the east, an idea that was recently authoritatively repeated by Kuklo (Gieysztorowa, 1987, 273; Kuklo, 2009, 280-282). In line with contemporary views offered by other central European scholars, Gieysztorowa accentuated the borderline character inherent in the patterns of Polish marital behaviours. This view was supported by a later, more comprehensive comparative analysis of nuptiality in Polish territories, in which it was argued that the marriage pattern in pre-industrial Poland may have been a cross between the 'Western' and 'Eastern' patterns, but that it was much

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<sup>19</sup> It was only during the 1990s that the Cambridge Group's methodology was comprehensively introduced in Poland (Kuklo, 1991; Kuklo and Gruszecki, 1994).

closer to the 'unique' Northwest European pattern than to patterns observed in the Hungarian, Russian and Ukrainian territories (Szołtysek, 2003, 124-155; also Kuklo, 2009, 356).

The previously mentioned hypothesis on the visible nuclearisation of family forms throughout the majority of the Polish Crown lands in the early modern period was supported by other studies of both rural and urban communities. M. Kopczyński's study of several dozen parishes in central and western Poland revealed the nuclear structure of the majority of peasant households, and the relatively high mean size of the domestic group resulting from the spread of hired servants and co-residing lodgers (Kopczyński, 1998, 171). The marked increase in the number of multi-generational families in the lands covered by his investigation was only brought about by peasant enfranchisement of the second half of the 19th century (Kopczyński, 1998, 108). Kuklo's study of six urban communities in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Korona additionally strengthened the level of certainty around the dominance of the simple family model in central Poland. In the urban centres, the two-generational family was prevalent (representing 66%-85% of domestic units in total), followed by unusually high proportions of solitary households (Kuklo, 1998, 77-83). According to Kuklo, the household structure in the Polish town of the pre-industrial era must be classified as 'typically West-European' (Kuklo, 1997, 255; Kuklo, 1998, 83). For the cluster of rural communities in 18th-century Silesia (today in south-west Poland), Szołtysek found a moderate age at marriage, the dominance of simple family households, and a high incidence of life-cycle servants. He also found strong indications of a stem family pattern in those places, together with cases in which the modes of household formation did not vary much from the neo-local principles prevalent in Northwest Europe, or followed exactly this type of pattern (Szołtysek, 2007). As Szołtysek argued, if the European great divide in family systems suggested by Hajnal really existed, it was certainly not located in Upper Silesia. It would be necessary to search for it farther to the east (Szołtysek, 2004, 88-89).

Indeed, Laszuk concluded that, in the mixed Polish-Belarusian rural areas in the north-east Polish Crown Lands, the domination of the 'Western' type of family was not all that unambiguous (Laszuk, 1999, 100-156). By and large, however, the share of joint-family type domestic groups was small, and only among the nobility did it rise to more than 4% of total households. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the simple family type still occupied a superior position (Laszuk, 1999, 120-123, 189-195). According to another author, the negligible importance of multi-generational families in Poland's eastern outskirts resulted from the widespread practice of allowing newly married couples to gain economic and residential independence. The individualisation of property and residence, the argument goes, was the core organisational

principle of the family household in the Polish eastern outskirts, both in the 18<sup>th</sup> and in the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Differences between different ethnic groups (e.g. Poles and Ruthenians) in this regard were supposed to be small (Budzyński, 2008, 163-164, 170).

More precise identification of the long-expected familial and demographic border in the historical Polish territories was attempted in Szołtysek's studies of living arrangements in different regions of Poland-Lithuania (more than 14,000 peasant households were analysed) (Szołtysek and Biskup, 2008; Szołtysek, 2008a, 27-28; also Szołtysek, 2008b, 2009a). The analysis initially revealed the juxtaposition of a more complex family system of the eastern communities with a homogenous but simple family pattern prevailing in the western Polish lands. However, it was soon established that, at the end of the 18th-century, not two, but three household and family patterns with substantial numerical and qualitative differences existed in the historical Polish territories. The structural progression within larger regions, Szołtysek demonstrated, nearly always moved in the same direction: from less kin-centred, more nucleated and neo-local households in the west; to much higher levels of household complexity in Poland's more eastward territories. However, even on those eastern outskirts (e.g. in Belarus) the family pattern still differed markedly from paradigmatic examples of the 'Eastern European family type' detected in Russia. These findings were taken as indicative of the existence of a wider Eastern European area with a similar family pattern at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with basic commonalities in household size and structure prevalent across Lithuania, Belarus, Red Ruthenia and western Ukraine; as well as Slovakia and the northern part of Hungary. Thus, they once more disproved the view that large parts of East-Central Europe have features typical of a homogenous family system. This research showed that Hajnal's dichotomous notion of Western and Eastern Europe could only be maintained at the highest level of generalisation.

### **Family and household studies in Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine**

Until recently, Belarusian, Lithuanian and Ukrainian scholars have shown little interest in studying domestic groups in the socio-historical perspective (Sliš, 2004). However, in early 1960s, Višniauskaitė demonstrated that the 'grand indissoluble family' (an equivalent to the term 'joint family' commonly used in Western terminology) never constituted a dominant household form in ethnic Lithuania between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>20</sup>. The

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<sup>20</sup> Aggregated data for 15 estates with 791 households; see Višniauskaitė, 1964, 8-12. By transposing the data from 1594-1700 onto Laslett's typology, we find that the share of simple households was around 81%, while an estimated 6.9% of households were multiple-family domestic groups.

nuclearised family system of Lithuanians was a direct consequence of lineage relationship decomposition, which affected the Baltic countries as early as in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries; and of a marked decline in family communes which followed. Both of these processes were additionally strengthened by the agrarian reforms of the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century (the introduction of the three-field system; Višniauskaitė, 1964, 4). The increase in peasant obligations due to manorialism and compulsory labour inflicted upon the peasants in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Lithuania caused the accumulation of family labour on the holding, and thus led to a dramatic rise in the number of multiple family households in Lithuania (representing 33% of all domestic units in the years 1700-1800). Paradoxically, however, the only moment when in some parts of Lithuania really complex multi-focal families were formed was during the 1930s and 1940s; i.e. when capitalism already was a fact of life (Višniauskaitė, 1964, 7).

Some Belarusian scholars (Kapyski and Kapyski, 1993; Golubev, 1992) applied a similar approach in their handling of the problem of household structure in various Belarusian ethnic territories between the end of 16<sup>th</sup> and the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Kapyski's analysis of 252 settlements revealed that, on average, a single household was comprised of no more than 1.2 conjugal family units, and that more than 85% of the total households had only one such unit. Most of the remaining multiple-family domestic groups contained two small families co-residing. Moreover, in Belarus the transition from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries was marked by an increasing simplification of peasant residential patterns, and one-family households made up the majority of domestic units all over the Belarusian territories (Kapyski and Kapyski, 1993, 43). Golubev obtained similar results (1700 peasant domestic units were analysed), and found that 73% of all households consisted of individual families. The share of the latter did, however, decline when moving towards eastern Belarus (Golubev, 1992, 88).

Referring to his study of several communities from central Belarus, Nosevich asserted that, based on 16<sup>th</sup>-century data, there is no reason to draw a sharp distinction between family structures in Eastern and Western Europe. He demonstrated that nuclear family households were absolutely dominant in Belarus in the second half of the 16th century (between 70% and 89% of total households), and that, in some places, such a pattern developed even earlier (Nosevich, 2004, 81-87). At the same time, however, he pointed to the emergence of a more complex family pattern in central Belarus during the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, which he linked to the gradual increase in feudal obligations imposed on the peasantry by the Eastern European landlords (Nosevich, 2004, 157-176). This finding notwithstanding, he concluded that, over almost the entire 18<sup>th</sup> century, the rural population in Belarus followed a pattern of rather moderate household complexity, which stood in marked contrast to the features of

19th-century Russia. According to Nosevich, this ‘balanced’ household pattern may have been widespread and persistent in some other parts of Eastern Europe, including northern Lithuania, Ukraine, Estonia, Karelia and parts of Hungary (Nosevich, 2007; Nosevich, 2004, 176). Towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the family pattern in Belarus gradually transformed into more communal forms already typical of the vast regions of Russia, with the share of multiple families rising significantly above 50%. It was this 19th-century phenomenon, but not its various antecedents, that made the distinction between family structures in Eastern and Western Europe so attractive to Western scholars (Nosevich, 2007).

The Ukrainian literature on family history offers yet another surprise. The overall description of the Ukrainian family system was drawn up with an emphasis on the powerful drive towards the independence of both individuals and family units in various historical periods, and on the uniquely ‘nuclear’ character of the Ukrainian peasant family (Tchmelyk, 1992, 41). The simple family, researchers argued, decisively prevailed in the Ukraine as early as in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when an estimated 84% of all peasant families had this form (Tchmelyk, 1999)<sup>21</sup>. The behavioural dimension of this characteristic was the norm, while the formation of joint production and residential units among kinsfolk was the exception. Even in cases in which such a unit was formed in response to poverty or other circumstances, there was no seniority principle, no joint property rights and no community of work among the co-resident families (Tarnovskiy, 1853, 3)<sup>22</sup>. Other scholars acknowledged the co-existence of both small and ‘big, undivided joint-families’ in early modern Ukrainian lands, but noted that a typical strategy of extension involved the addition of only one son who stayed at home in expectation of taking over the farm after the father’s death. The co-residence of married brothers sometimes encountered in the Ukraine in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was also predominantly temporary in character. According to Gurbik, both the paternal and the fraternal ‘undivided families’ of the early modern era had their roots in small conjugal families, and therefore must be distinguished from more archaic forms of ‘great patriarchal families’ typical of lineage-based systems of social organisation of the early medieval period (Gurbik, 2006, 152-156)<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> The tendency to portray ‘Little Russians’ (Ukrainians) as ‘individualists’, in contrast to ‘Great Russians’ (Russians *per se*), who were seen as ‘collectivists’, had already been noted by Kovalevskij in 1885 (Kovalevskii, 1885).

<sup>22</sup> Based on Tarnovskiy’s ‘field work’ observation in one village of Kijowszczyzna (central Ukraine) (Tarnovskiy, 1853).

<sup>23</sup> Gurbik argued that, in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Volhynia multi-focal family co-residence was a rare phenomenon, and single family households predominated. The picture changed dramatically when moving eastward through the northern Ukraine (Gurbik, 2006, 156-158). In our opinion, basic statistics on household structure provided by the author do not fully confirm his interpretive efforts.

While the majority of folklore studies were focused on the late 19th century, some authors argued that, in parts of the Ukraine, the ‘grand patriarchal family’ was in fact non-existent throughout the entire early modern period (Goško, 1976, 161-164; Goško, 1994). In his thesis on common law among Subcarpathian Ukrainians, Goško (1999, 227-242) put forth a set of strong arguments challenging the assumption—which appears as far back as 19<sup>th</sup>-century works by legal historians—of the domination of the ‘grand family’ in Russia’s most south-western regions<sup>24</sup>. This assumption, as has been pointed out by the author, rested on the misconstrued reception of the term ‘*dvorishe*,’ as it appeared in early taxation records from Ruthenian regions. Within this framework, *dvorishe* was usually defined as the formation of a land property commune, the joint management of this land and the communality of the final product achieved as a result of household labour. Goško’s major problem with the term was that it most often eluded too easy interpretations in categories of co-residential communes. In fact, he argued, *dvorishe* was neither a production nor a consumption commune, and it certainly was not a residential entity; it was, rather, a fiscal unit composed of one, two or more domestic groups. While in some cases those distinct family households were in essence patronimic communities of related persons who frequently co-operated economically on their shared plot of land, the residential and the economic separation of the sub-units of *dvorishe* were the norm (Goško, 1999, 228-230; also Goško, 1976, 138-139, 162-164; among Polish researchers – similarly Bardach, 1958, 232; Łowmiański, 1967, 356-357). Like Gurbik, Goško also ascribed the particularity of the modern familial arrangements of the Ukrainians to the drive towards the individualisation of specific family members, a process which was completed through the separation of individual land lots and the erection of new houses for those wishing to split. The prospect of division, and the exact moment in which the division occurred, naturally depended on the family’s economic potential. Because of the difficulties related to the acquisition of resources essential to the creation of a separate dwelling space immediately after matrimony, a post-marital co-residence of different generations sometimes occurred. But while the duration of co-residence varied, it was always a temporary state (Goško, 1999, 231-233). Such practices were circumscribed not only in regions around the Carpathian Mountains, but also occurred in other parts of Ukraine in both the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (e.g. Tarnovskiy, 1853, 3). The peculiar features of the agricultural landscape of substantial parts of Ukrainian Galicia closely reflect these patterns, as exemplified by the immense checkerboard of lands which came into being as a result of the long-lasting

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<sup>24</sup> In particular, the works of: Kovalevskii, Lutchitsky, Efimenko, Vladimirsky-Budanov, also Kosven.

hereditary land splits, as well as by numerous observations of contemporaries. In the words of a governor of a district in western Ukraine from the beginning of the 1780s, ‘When it came to Galicia, everyone preferred to manage their own plot of land, no matter how puny it might have been’ (Tokarz, 1909, 196-197; Goško, 1999, 295-299; Begej, 2003; also Gurbik, 2011, 332; Litvin, 2006, 152-159)<sup>25</sup>.

Other Ukrainian scholars presented a more variegated picture and proposed various caesuras to mark the beginning of the spread of simple family form across the Ukrainian territories. According to some, the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century marked the start of a more pronounced trend towards the disappearance of joint families in the Ukraine, which remained, however, still incomplete (Nahodil, 1955, 151 ff). According to others, the popularisation of single-family households in both the right-bank and the left-bank Ukraine did not occur until the 1770s or even later, although the simple two-generational household had definitely become the dominant family type by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Perkovskij, 1977, 106-107, 111; Perkovskij, 1979, 42-44)<sup>26</sup>. However, the risk involved in uncritically transposing the conception of the small nuclear family onto the realities of the period from before the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is clearly indicated by more contemporary historical-demographic research in the Ukraine (Krikun, 2001; Sakalo, 2008).

### **Manorial economy, agrarian change and the human-ecological setting in East-Central Europe**

Eastern Europeanists’ claims about the presumed historicity of the simple family pattern in large parts of the territory in question seemed to find justification in the results of studies extending beyond the realm of demographic structures.

Of the principal processes taking place in the economic and social life of early modern East-Central Europe, the rise of a ‘new’ serfdom and of a manorial-serf economy undoubtedly remains one of the most frequently mentioned and analysed (e.g. Millward, 1982; Kaak, 1991, Hagen, 1998). The massive growth in a landlord’s powers over the rural population in these

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<sup>25</sup> According to contemporary observers, the inheritance patterns prevailing in Galicia constituted one of the major reasons for the difficulties in acquiring wage-earning workforces in Galicia (Tokarz, 1909, 197, 205). Since the end of the 1780s, those practices were more or less efficiently discouraged by the emperor’s administration through the issuing decrees prohibiting the division of the smallest peasant lots. According to Goško (1999, 297-298), after the division of the estate, a ‘dwór’—i.e., a family hut—was to remain in the possession of the youngest son (differently in Begej, 2003). Sometimes, among poorer peasant families suffering from insufficient land ownership, an even division of land was substituted by the preferential treatment of some children over others (Begej, 2003).

<sup>26</sup> Perkovskij linked that process with the decline in joint-family farming resulting from demographic growth and an increase in unfavourable land/population ratio (Perkovskij, 1979, 41, 43).



areas led to an expansion of previously modest familial manor farms into large-scale domanial economies aimed at producing surpluses for sale on the urban markets of Western Europe. This type of seigneurialism prompted landlords to claim from their peasant subjects not only rents in cash and kind, but, above all, the labor services which were essential to the very functioning of the demesne farms (Kula, 1976; Topolski, 1974)<sup>27</sup>. More to the point, however, researchers argued that the hide system which developed within the framework of manorialisation not only brought about a great agricultural innovation on the continent, but also interacted strongly with other spheres of life, including family arrangements. Apparently, it encouraged trends towards developing the conjugal family, bilateral kinship and the loosening of genealogical ties; thereby transforming the very realm of family life (Mitterauer, 1999; Mitterauer 2010, 28-98; Kaser, 2002; also Szotysek and Zuber-Goldstein 2009, 18-19). In terms of origin and disposition, there were two essential features of the *Hufe* system: 1) the principle of single heir impartible farm succession, which meant that only one of the sons could inherit and marry; and 2) the ‘one couple-per-farm policy’, a rule which originated in the Carolingian period, and which dictated that only one married couple with children could live off a particular hide<sup>28</sup>. According to Mitterauer, the uniform populating of *Hufes* with nuclear families and the simultaneous prevention of a numerical accretion of farming families on them resulted from a systematic policy of seignury devised in order to facilitate the most beneficial collection of tribute (Mitterauer, 1999, 204, 211, 213). Both features worked against the formation and sustainability of complex families, favouring instead the neo-local formation of the family.

The diffusion of manorial systems of agriculture, land tenure and local administration over medieval and early modern Eastern Central Europe was a centuries-long process. In general, the western parts of the historical Kingdom of Poland had been fundamentally restructured starting in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, and their pre-existing Polish-Slavic legal and economic arrangements were replaced by the basic institutions of medieval Western Europe in their mostly German form, known as *Ius Theutonicum* or *Hufenverfassungssystem* (Hagen, 1998, 154-156; Mitterauer, 1999). During the two subsequent centuries, this legal and agrarian regime was further extended into the south-eastern areas of the Crown largely

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<sup>27</sup> The system led to the organisation of arable into a three-field system, introduced the seigneurial lordship and also established village communes governed by a mayor. Most often, the introduction of the system was accompanied by an increase in the share of labour dues among peasantry (more in Szotysek and Zuber-Goldstein, 2009).

<sup>28</sup> The original Latin term used to denote a hide on the area of Germanic settlement was *terra unius familiae* (‘land of one family’), which refers to a unit of land sufficient to support one family group. For more on the historical development of the *Hufe* system in medieval Europe, see Mitterauer, 2010, 28-57.

inhabited by the so-called Ruthenian (proto-Ukrainian) population (Persowski, 1926, 64 ff; Arłamowski, 1995; Inkin, 1963, 1974; Jawor, 1991, 5-20; Janeczek, 1992, 190-191; Balabuševič, 1993, 3; Hubryk 1999, 11; Litvin 2006, 89, 148; Budzyński, 2008, 85-94; Gurbik, 2011, 339). By the end of the 1630s, the new order had arrived at historic Volhynia and the northern shores of the right-bank Ukraine (west of the Dnieper river) (Hubryk, 1999, 125; Litvin, 2006, 122, 135, 144-45; Gurbik, 2011, 337 ff). The last manifestation of these processes was the methodical introduction of the ‘hide constitution’ (so-called ‘voloka reform’; Polish *pomiara włóczna*) among rural populations of Belarusians and Lithuanians in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards (Conze, 1940; French, 1969a, 1969b, 1970; Mitterauer, 1999).

The consequences of those agrarian changes were manifold and far-reaching. In the regions incorporated into the new system, dispersed, inter-mixed holdings of irregular sizes with scattered settlements were being gradually replaced by villages, which were made up of a number of dwellings characterised by regular building structure. These developments changed not only the layout of the lands, but also involved moving peasant living quarters and outbuildings, and frequently led to the relocation of entire villages (Kernażycki, 1929, 12-13; Kernażycki, 1931, 89-96; Pochilevich, 1952; French, 1969a, 1969b, 1970; Demidowicz, 1985; Hurbyk, 1999, 118-119; Gurbik, 2011, 339-340). The *pomiara* (measurement) also directly resulted in an advanced standardisation of the material and economic conditions of peasants’ well-being (Kernażycki, 1931; Pochilevich, 1952; Inkin, 1974; Litvin, 2006, 134). At the same time, however, the *voloka* reform accelerated the dissolution of formerly complex forms of socio-territorial and familial organisation, and stimulated the already ongoing process of the individualisation of families (Litvin, 2006, 154-155; also Bujak, 2001[1905], 111). Many authors have suggested that its main effect on the Polish eastern territories was the decline in ‘large, multigenerational households’ (e.g. Lubomirski, 1855, 220–221; Conze, 1940, 122–123, 140–141, 174, 206; Morzy, 1965, 122–123; also Kernażycki, 1931, 123-125, 128-129; Golubev, 1992, 88)<sup>29</sup>.

Actually, instead of a complete replacement of the previous rules and arrangements, institutional and settlement hybrids sometimes emerged in some of these eastern territories when in one region, or even in one locality, the elements of different organisational patterns

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<sup>29</sup> Kernażycki (1929, 16) plainly stated that the *voloka* reform was in fact directed against the institution of the grand, multiple family. The Belarusian researcher said outright that ‘to destroy immediately that old, centuries long, family regime turned out to be impossible’. It was also emphasised that villages in which, for a number of reasons, the relocation and reconstruction of buildings was not ordered (but only the measuring up of *volokas*) retained the old ancestral organisation based on grand families much more frequently than villages that were started as if from scratch (Pochilevich, 1952, 357-358, 386-387; similarly Golubev, 1992, 76).

co-existed (Hejnosz, 1930, 1-5; Persowski, 1926; also Inkin, 1974; Budzyński, 2008, 87-88). In some locations, the popularisation of a unified land structure, and especially of individual land management, was hindered by long-standing traditions of collective landowning (Litvin, 2006, 152 ff; Rosdolsky, 1954; Rozdolski, 1962, 277 ff; Hryniuk, 1991, 22-24; Inkin, 1974, 29-32; comp. Goško 1999, 227 ff). In some parts of the Ukrainian and Belarusian lands, traditional property, economy and family relations prevailed well into the 16th century, but their termination was brought on by the intensive development of manorialism in the 17th and 18th centuries (Hurbyk, 1999; Gurbik, 2006, 2011; also Markina, 1971, 78). In some parts of the southern Belarusian territories (particularly in the Polessia region), the reform's implementation was severely impeded due to the region's harsh ecological conditions (extensive swamps, with only tiny 'islets' of dry sites for settlements and fields) (French 1969a, 131; Kernażycki, 1929, 8-11; Kernażycki, 1931, 73-78; Kosman, 1970). In these areas, primitive forms of agriculture and archaic family arrangements survived well into the 1920s (Obrębski, 2007).

Throughout the early modern period, an overwhelming majority of the population of Eastern Central Europe lived in personal and hereditary subjection, with their property rights limited to an indeterminate leasehold. Since the peasant populations did not as a rule hold the subject status, a great number of key issues related to family formation processes should be viewed from the perspective of landlords' strategies and 'policies' (also Walawender, 1959, 145-146). Indeed, an abundant body of evidence seems to suggest that East-Central European landlords were customarily concerned with their peasants' property transfers and residential arrangements. The landlords often demanded that these arrangements be modified, and they usually had the real power necessary to implement their wishes (e.g. Rafacz, 1922, 176-180; Kula, 1972). Estate instructions from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth suggest that, in most parts of the territory, the maintenance (or, if necessary, the restoration) of tax- or labour-capable family units was among the landlords' most explicit economic interests. Such an orientation in seigniorial authority indicated that there was a strong—and, at times, direct—intervention of the landlord in the process of property transfer, which at the same time also provided strong incentives for neo-local household formation among the subject farmers (Szołtysek and Zuber-Goldstein, 2009).

Wishing to have the maximum possible number of peasant families ready to perform duties for the demesne, feudal lords in the western parts of the Poland-Lithuania not only separated co-residing couples of different or the same generations, but also employed other strategies to encourage the formation of households in a neo-local manner (Rafacz, 1922, 151-

154; Rutkowski, 1956[1914], 171; Kula, 1972; Woźniak, 1987; Szoltysek and Rzemieniecki, 2005, 135-136; Szoltysek and Zuber-Goldstein 2009, 23-24). Landlords could encourage neo-local household formation by enforcing a sort of domain relief, which allocated to peasants not only plots of land, but also the premises, as well as seeds for sowing. They could also reduce a young couple's work burden by placing the spouses in a lower category of rural population, which reduced their obligations to the corresponding kind of *corvee* without work animals, even if the couple had been provided with a large amount of land, such as a *Hufe* (*włóka* or *rola*) (Woźniak, 1987, 93-94). These neo-local principles seemed to be common knowledge even among contemporary observers, for it is easy to find statements such as this one, dated 1767: 'A serf, having no more property besides the clothes he gained while being in servitude, is usually forced to take over a holding together with an acreage just after his marriage' (Woźniak, 1987, 108).

Slightly modified but analogous tendencies can also be found in the Belarusian-Ukrainian lands. In the sparsely populated, more eastern parts of Poland-Lithuania with large land-to-labour ratios, the serf-owner's perennial desire was to multiply human numbers through marrying his serfs off early and universally. However, another of his chief goals was to prevent the co-residence of too many potential dues-paying units (Pochilevich, 1952, 406; Golubev, 1992, 57, 63)<sup>30</sup>. Responding to the farmers' attempts to accumulate family labour manpower, the owner of the Ginejciszki estate (central Belarus) asked his stewards and bailiffs in 1694 to 'split large and support individual families' (Morzy, 1963, 151; Golubev, 1992, 61, 65, 76). In their militant efforts to reduce the number of deserted holdings, some landlords ordered their landless inmates and lodgers (*bobyli*; *komorniki*) to be turned into household heads, or to otherwise be expelled from the village<sup>31</sup>. In his description of the processes taking place in southern Belarus in the second half of the 18th century, Kernażycki wrote: 'In that period it is very uncommon to encounter even the coresidence of fathers with adult sons, as then, the division of the family [and, obviously, its lack, too; M.Sz.] was entirely up to the feudal lord' (Kernażycki, 1931, 144).

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<sup>30</sup> Early and universal marriage among serfs was considered the landowners' greatest wealth, and the demesne officials were constantly reminded to encourage frequent weddings, either through small money rewards, or gifts of alcohol for those organising them. Servants in particular were encouraged to marry after reaching a certain age; see Pawlik, 1915, 90, 257, 277. For similar observations for Galician lands, see Goško, 1999, 254-255.

<sup>31</sup> 'Neither lodgers nor neighbours should keep holdings together; they should take empty *włókas* under cultivation'; Kiejdany inventory, 1588 (Kapyski and Kapyski, 1993, 44-45). When necessary, landlords' special provisions and support were available to make neo-localism feasible: '(...) and where two household heads are to be found in one house, a holding from which a two days of service can be fixed must be immediately apportioned, building new premises has to be prescribed, support in wood must be given, as well as one year freedom from all dues and obligations' (Pawlik, 1915, 24).

In the 18th century, in right-bank Ukraine under Polish rule (west of the Dnieper River), the situation was quite similar. The gradual process of the individualisation of the family (and, correspondingly, also of the simplification of its structure) was sometimes linked to an increasing trend towards chopping up the peasants' lands, a development which stemmed from demographic growth and an increase in the unfavourable land/population ratio (Perkovskij, 1979, 41, 43). In addition, the extensive internal colonisation of right-bank Ukraine was of interest as the population material for this region often came from the separation of extended families and the enforcement of neo-locality among generations capable of starting their own families and keeping house (Markina, 1971, 70-77; also Markina, 1961, 30-34)<sup>32</sup>. The policy of landowners, which was oriented towards a consistent reduction and unification of peasant land allotments, largely facilitated that process (Markina, 1971, 78). A trend towards splitting peasant lands with the view to populating them with ever-increasing numbers of subjects, and thus earning a greater income from labour, rent and tribute was also detected in the south-western Ukrainian lands of Galicia (Rozdolski, 1962, 214; Balabušević, 1993, 36; Goško, 1999, 235, 255).

The totality of these tendencies, even if some of them existed only on the declarative level or were prone to modifications under the influence of local environmental factors, created favourable conditions for neo-local marriage and household formation (Szołtysek and Zuber-Goldstein, 2009). It was only following the 19th-century enfranchisement reforms in East-Central Europe that the existing agrarian order underwent serious change. The question of to what degree the institution of the reforms led to a reformulation of peasant strategies of household membership recruitment remains as yet unresolved (Plakans, 2002). However, Polish ethnographic knowledge suggests that peasant enfranchisement in the second half of the 19th century might have brought about a marked increase in the number of multi-generational families among the rural classes (Kopczyński, 1998, 108). According to Markowska, a multi-generational family settling in Polish lands was only a temporary phenomenon, typical of the transition from feudalism to capitalism (Markowska, 1970, 195). The ephemeral emergence of this type of family arrangement in Polish lands between the years 1880 and 1900—that is, roughly during the period referred to in Hajnal's nuptiality statistics (1965)—perhaps points to the sole historical moment in which it is indeed possible

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<sup>32</sup> The outcome of such policies is generally reflected in the available household statistics from early modern times. According to the inventory of the Zaslowski estate in Volhynia, between 1722 and 1746 the number of households rose from 240 to 592; in the Pulmanska estate between 1717 and 1767, the total number of households rose from 112 to 198, and in the Dubrownicki estate between 1736 and 1750, the number of households grew from 306 to 585 (Markina, 1971, 70-71). It is very unlikely that in pre-modern Eastern Europe such dramatic growth in the number of households could be achieved by immigration policies alone.

to capture the phenomenon of multi-generational dwelling in one place in the history of the East-Central European family.

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

A substantial number of the 19-20<sup>th</sup> century family historians, historical demographers, as well as political economists and sociologists working on demographic and family-related issues concerned themselves with spatial designations and divisions of Europe. Preoccupied with establishing borders, drawing borderlines and distinguishing between different demographic and family systems in historical and contemporary Europe, scholars of those genres developed their own 'symbolic geographies' of Eastern European demographic space. First generations of experts in family organization and structure made a habit of searching for striking contrasts in familial characteristics and, not seldom, speaking in terms of dichotomous, East-West, contrapositions. Such an orientation in research was partially understood as it found its justification not only in the continent's original cultural pluralism, but also in the alleged socioeconomic and cultural-political distinction of its eastern part, both in the early modern era, as well as the post-II World war geopolitical divisions (Wallerstein, 1974; Berend, 1996; Chirot, 1989; Stokes, 1997).

Yet, for decades historians and social scientists eagerly viewed Eastern Europe as a relatively uniform social and economic regime. The validity of such homogenizing claims diminishes substantially once it is acknowledged that it was this part of Europe where for the past centuries a particularly large variety of linguistic, confessional, cultural, as well as socioeconomic niches had existed. Such a heterogeneity extended further into domains of ecology and institutional setting, with plains and mountains, free and unfree peasantries, and different patterns of settlement coexisting. The truly essential feature of the region revealed itself in the long-term coexistence of occidental (Roman Catholic and Protestant) and Byzantine-Slavic religious layers, and in quite frequent examples of tripartite linguistic and social layering (Kłoczowski et.al, 1994; Snyder, 2003; also Halecki, 1950, 1952; Szücs, 1988; Dingsdale, 1999, 2002). Surprising little of this internal complexity of the continent's eastern space has penetrated into the historical-sociological studies of the family.

The results of the above presented research undermine the legitimacy of Hajnal's model takes on a range of crucial points. As aptly noted by Sklar (1971, 1974), Hajnal's observations on the bipolar division of nuptiality patterns in Europe do not withstand confrontation with 'hard-core' demographic facts inferred from Central-European historical statistics. Throughout vast territories of East-Central Europe at the turn of the 19th century,

marital behaviours did not diverge drastically from patterns typical of Northwestern Europe. Sklar's argument, according to which Hajnal not only exaggerated the difference between 'European' and 'East European' marriage patterns, but that he also purposely excluded from his analysis those Eastern European countries which exhibited one or more characteristics of the 'Western European' pattern of marriage (Sklar 1971, 36 ff), seems to suggest that Hajnal's geographic hypothesis may not be acceptable even at the high level of generalization (comp. Plakans and Wetherell 2005, 111).

Equally incongruent with the postulates of Western science was the picture of the formation and structure of family forms on vast eastern territories painted in Eastern European historical-demographic literature. Substantial stretches of Eastern Europe (including also territories to the east from the border area suggested by Hajnal) have been ascribed with the prevalence of nuclear family model, at least during some historical periods. Throughout substantial sections of this part of the continent, again with the inclusion of some regions from outside the 'line', neo-localism seemed to have remained a dominant practice of household formation here and there (e.g., on the Ukrainian lands) undoubtedly constituting the very fabric of a prevalent familial ideology. Contrary to a widely held view, according to which Eastern European complex family patterns have supposedly made economic sense for both the Eastern European peasants and the landlords, given the circumstances of re-feudalization to which the two sides found themselves subjected (Alderson and Sanderson, 1991, 426; Rudolph, 1992, 122-124), in-depth studies of manorial practices suggest that seigniorial authority provided strong incentives for neo-local household formation among the subject farmers.

While many scholars revealed an inclination towards the belief in a geographical diversity of family forms on the lands of the European east, some others expressed a conviction of some 'borderlands' straying from patterns dominant throughout the majority of its territory. The notion that eastern Europe, just like western Europe, (Szołtysek, 2011), displayed a diversity of household systems in preindustrial times surfaces at various points in many of the works cited above. These differences may be linked to regional differences in political economic arrangements and ecological conditions in a variety of ways (see below).

One of the essential drawbacks of Hajnal hypotheses – as well as of most other classificatory ventures of western family historians – is that they are essentially time invariant. Despite the fact that Hajnal's distinction between two supra-national, large-scale family systems in preindustrial Europe was based on data from disparate countries coming from a variety of very different conditions widely separated in time (Szołtysek, 2009b), his

conclusions have been commonly taken as ‘primordial’ features of eastern European societies and regularly adduced as representative of the whole continent to the east of the ‘line’ across all historical periods (e.g. De Moor and Van Zanden, 2010). Meanwhile, however, the works of Lithuanian and Belarusian scholars clearly indicate that in some historical periods the actual differences between the East and the West in terms of the composition of residential groups were much less pronounced than one would expect, if not at all negligible (also Guzowski, 2011). Much seems to signal that the picture of Eastern European peasant family fixed in the minds of Western scholars was significantly affected by a rather unimpressive body of works treating essentially on familial behaviours in the post-enfranchisement era. The conclusions coming from these works, however, cannot be shifted into earlier periods.

The dispersion of Eastern European family forms, in time and space alike, provides ground for a critical evaluation of the conception of the ‘dividing line’. Although refining such ‘line’ and/or relocating it ‘elsewhere’ may still present an option for those preoccupied with delineating and mapping European family systems (see below), it seems that new conceptual developments will be indispensable for such mapping endeavors to be fruitful. The lability of external forms of familial life, so characteristic of Eastern Europe – what has already been pointed out by Plakans (2002) – proves an important argument in favor of jettisoning the concept of the ‘dividing line’ entirely, or substituting it with the notion of temporally fluent transitional zones, always however unstable and subject to transformations occurring in distinct contexts and for different reasons. Further retaining a dichotomous division into two zones of familial behaviours defined across some physical ‘imagined line’ appears, thus, totally out of the question (Kluesener and Dettendorfer, 2010).

From this basic assumption it follows, too, that all propositions which link the contemporary separateness of the Eastern European nations *en masse* – according to a specific feature of their social, political and economic life – with their supposedly historically grounded peculiarity in terms of marital behaviours or familial forms (e.g. Todd, 1985; Hartmann, 2004) will never reflect historical reality on the ground, and as such should never be validated. Sound refutation of Hajnal’s formulation by family historians should help to put an end to its uncritical regurgitation in other disciplinary circles.

It does not stem from that, however, that all claims of Eastern Europeanists should be accepted uncritically. Leaving aside the existence of a simplified dichotomous division of marital and familial behaviours in old Europe, it is not possible to go on claiming – and this is not the point, too – that the continent’s eastern part, in terms of familial and demographic features was but a straightforward projection of the reality of Western nations and as such



never differed much from Western Europe. In this context, several dangers surface: selective treatment of Hajnal's model proposals and drawing conclusions on the supposed sameness (or similarity) of the eastern and western parts of the continent solely on the basis of just one component of the model, in isolation from the circumstances under which the particular phenomenon (or feature) functioned in a given geographical-historic reality, prove significantly risk-prone. Let us illustrate it with two examples. The existence of the simple family model on substantial tracts of central Belarus in early modern times (Nosevich 2004, 2007) does not have to imply that we are dealing here with the reality of family life based on the same principles as in archetypal English parishes of Clayworth or Cogenhoe (Laslett and Harrison, 1963), even though this is exactly what the extremely high proportions of nuclear families in some Belarusian villages seem to be indicating. This fact becomes obvious upon the recognition that overwhelming majority of those distinct family households were in essence patronimic communities of persons related by parental or sibling links who lived in close residential proximity and frequently co-operated economically on their shared plot of land. The very meaning and working of nuclear family systems would be entirely different in those two disparate geographic and socioeconomic settings. In turn, Ukrainian explorations point to yet another circumstance – the possibility of a manifold classification of a given complex of marital-familial behaviours, depending on which of the variables we decide to ascribe with leading importance. Extreme neolocalism now known to have existed on some Ukrainian territories could suggest that we are dealing with an exaggerated form of Northwestern European pattern of household formation. Meanwhile, though, early and essentially universal marriage typical of inhabitants of Ukrainian villages, along with a general lack of the institution of life cycle service among them, seems to preclude the possibility of viewing Ukrainian patterns as corresponding to behavioural norms dominating in the West. Similar cases have already occurred in family history, and the observations of Eastern Europeanists brought on in the present essay further advocate the rejection of Hajnal's bipolar model of household formation processes on the count of its insufficient coverage of all historically viable behavioural variants (see also Kertzer, 1989; Barbagli, 1991; Saito, 1998; Szoltysek, 2007).

Let us finally remark that the substantive weight of Eastern Europeanists' observations could be partly diminished by the fact that the available source material was sometimes researched only cursorily, and not in depth, which often led into methodological or typological traps. The method of deduction from examples, applied instead of a fully comprehensive review of the problematics, spawned the co-existence of discrepant and often

irreconcilable perspectives on the issue. The archival material presented to support certain arguments often left much to dispute with regard to an accurate classification of family forms. Conflating household size with household internal composition - drawing bold conclusions about the latter from an analysis of data based solely on the number of domestics – seems a more general problem which, for example, shatters many Ukrainian studies of historical family forms (e.g. Tchmelyk, 1999, 34, 64-69).

Last, but not least, in some national discourses the entire dispute pertaining to the historical roots of one or another type of family has sometimes taken on a partly ideological character. It proves hard to resist the impression that the overall description of the Ukrainian family system, with its emphasis on the powerful drive towards the individualisation of family in all historical periods, constituted a fragment of a larger discourse depicting Ukraine's historical developmental paths as decidedly separate from Russia, stressing its membership in the West European culture at the same time (Hrushevsky, 1991, 142-144; Ševčenko, 1996; Ysaevych, 2000). In a similar vein, Polish family historians of the last two decades seemed to have been influenced by a re-emerging enthusiasm for defining a 'Central European' space and culture as distinct both from the East and the German *Kulturboden*, that came into being during the 1980s through the writings of Czech, Hungarian and Polish diaspora intellectuals (and, very often, historians) seeking to define a 'Central European' identity as a means to overcome the region's political divisions of the post-war era (e.g. Kundera, 1984; Vajda, 1988; Janowski et.al., 2005; Halecki, 1950; also Neumann, 1999, 146-160). Since 1989, east-central Europe has witnessed a series of transformations which have resulted in the region's geopolitical and geoeconomic repositioning within Europe, facilitating a creation of a new hierarchy of places within an 'old' geographical space (Dingsdale, 1999). In many such labelling exercises attempts to displace 'the East' away from the more western-oriented and more 'civilized' 'Central Europe' are clearly vivid (Neumann, 1999; Todorva 1997, 188). Such a relegation of 'the others' to the margins of Europe – the practice of 'nesting orientalism' – (re-)creates European 'borderlands' and an eastern 'periphery', shifting them further east (Bakic-Hayden, 1995). Eastern European family historians of today need to be very careful not to replicate an old 'Hajnal-like' dichotomous thinking over the east-central European space itself by artificially relocating the 'line' in one direction or another (most likely to the east).

With all this in mind, one is inescapably faced with the big question of where the field of inquiry should move, provided that all doubts and criticism of the traditional modeled approaches be incorporated into an emergent research agenda in historical family studies.

This grave issue has already been taken up in literature, in most cases in a convincing and exhaustive manner (Plakans and Wetherell, 2001, 2005; Farago, 2003; Kaser, 2010; Kertzer, 1991; Todorova, 2006; Sovič 2008a, 2008b). Not wishing to duplicate the remarks made elsewhere by others, we will limit our deliberations to only a few observations the validity of which appears unquestionable in the context of the most recent developments in the field.

First, attention should be drawn to factors facilitating further in-depth research into the spatial variation in family forms – along with corresponding aspects of demographic behaviours – in East Central Europe. While the above presented literature survey does not leave doubt as to the necessity of the revision of the dichotomous picture of coresidence patterns, in order to abolish the myth of the ‘dividing line’ in historic Europe, recourse must be made to wider in range, based on mass material, regional studies. The ongoing micro-data revolution – i.e. a combination of digitization, internet access and harmonization of surviving census and census-like materials – opens up a myriad of exceptional opportunities in the field of comparative studies of the geography of family forms and demographic patterns in a spatial perspective. Whereas an early stimulus in this regard has come from international data collection and dissemination efforts such as the IPUMS International and the North Atlantic Population projects, recent corresponding initiative of the Laboratory of Historical Demography at Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research known as the Mosaic Project has put the eastern-central part of the continent at the center of its research focus ([www.t.censusmosaic.org](http://www.t.censusmosaic.org); see also Goldstein et.al., 2011; Szołtysek and Gruber, 2011). It is expected that recent collaborative efforts of Polish, Hungarian, Lithuanian and other scholars will make it possible to achieve a much more nuanced geography of family patterns over the vast eastern European terrain, both in terms of its spatial and temporal aspects, and will capture a true diversity of family arrangements in historic eastern Europe. Only then, the pending (and, in fact, doubtful) question of whether it is still possible to brand major areas of historic Europe as having a particular type of household system can be properly evaluated. It is hoped that an emergence of this new scientific discourse, instead of utilizing traditional simplistic notions of dividing lines, will be pervaded by a more sensitive focus on the nature and permeability of frontiers, borderlands and transition zones, and the ways in which familial and demographic borders were crossed and diffused.

Indeed, it is most likely that prospective results of this and other similar investigations into regional patterns of family composition in eastern central Europe are going to reveal the true diversity of household forms within single societies and bounded geographical and/or administrative regions. These predictions – already partially corroborated (Szołtysek 2008a,

2008b; Óri, 2009) – yield substantial consequences with regard to prospective research into historical residence patterns. The essential part of this new agenda would be to identify and differentiate the composition and behaviour of multiple sub-populations in a given area or society. By revealing significant variations in household formation, marriage, residence patterns and welfare functions of the family group separating these sub-populations, scholars should put forth multilevel interpretations seeking to sort out social, ecological, economic and cultural factors which influence the observed divergences (Szołtysek, 2010b). Such a compositional approach by its very logic would question the existence of a demographically uniform Eastern Europe, and would help us to understand why some regions of the continent (and its eastern-central part in particular) were more heterogeneous than others.

The attractiveness of further studies into familial behaviours of East Central Europeans communities – but already in ‘world without Hajnal’s line’ – lies in those of their aspects which, though they did not constitute direct elements of the model, were organically bound to it. In particular, attention needs to be drawn to an as yet poorly investigated realm of intergenerational relations and the ways in which they were manifested in residence patterns of the aged and other vulnerable individuals in historic Eastern Europe (see, however: Andorka, 1995; Plakans, 2004; Szołtysek, 2010a). These issues retain a particular relevancy in the context of the hitherto debates on the geography of family forms, especially seeing that according to some authors the macro-regional family and marriage patterns have corresponded to contrasting systems of welfare provision and family well-being (Laslett, 1988; Schofield, 1989; Cain, 1991; Hartman, 2004; see criticism in Horden, 1998; Cavallo, 1998). Thus, taking up this very issue within the framework of East Central Europe’s internal diversification should spawn new perspectives on further in-depth studies into the dynamics of familial and intergenerational bonds throughout various historical periods and across varying socio-economic, environmental and cultural contexts.

The complexity of East Central European historic family problematics – in particular the lability through time of the forms of local family life - fashions out of this part of the continent a fascinating laboratory in which to investigate other nagging questions and test new hypotheses, out of which here we will mention only a few of a particular importance from our point of view. First comes the question of which dimensions of family life in Eastern-central Europe were most sensitive to historical change. It would be ideal if future research examined how different kinds of changes – demographic, social, economic, institutional or religious – have affected family life in Eastern Europe in different ways and in different time periods. Conversely, one can also ask how the family patterns and behaviours have conditioned the

forces of historical change in that particular geographical and socioeconomic setting. Given the exceptional place that East Central Europe has occupied – and continues to do so – in the discourse of social and economic sciences (e.g. the dichotomy between the ‘center’ and the ‘periphery’; agrarian dual division; distorted socioeconomic development), linking historical family systems with localized economic, sociopolitical or religious characteristics may prove to be a fruitful, if not an exciting, interdisciplinary exercise. Still to be risen to remains the challenge of a great debate on the relationship between different types of family system and prevailing living standards (Bengtsson et. al., 2004).

Finally, it would prove extremely useful to reflect upon the question of what has happened to East-central European family systems when their demographic underpinnings changed completely over the course of the first demographic transition. Provided that a fully comprehensive knowledge of the actual family systems in historic eastern Europe be achieved, the question whether their contemporary observed manifestations can be taken as the true remnants of historical patterns – i.e. the very issue of the persistence of the past – will be possible to answer without a risk of making unwarranted and simplistic interpolations (e.g. Szoltysek, 2009b).

All in all, the presumed diversity of family forms and the rhythms of their development in historical Eastern Europe – largely captured in the preceding sections of the paper – should finally free us from a simplistic view of the continent’s familial history, in particular from the one implied by the notion of a ‘dividing line’. The crux of the argument here is that such a break away from the homogenizing perception of Eastern Europe’s family and demographic past can help scholars to contextualize more recent demographic processes occurring in the continent’s eastern part more thoughtfully. It may also serve policy analysts to better understand the role of historical heritage in sociopolitical, economic and demographic currents of the new member states of the European Union, as well as some potential candidates for accession in the future. Last, but not least, this polarization of academic discourses presents a compelling invitation to posing the good old historicist question of ‘how it really was’ (*wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*).

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