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## ABSTRACTS

### Anne-Lise Head-König: Fathers' Power, Marriage and the Transmission of Land in Rural Switzerland (1860–1960)

The author deals with the transfer of the family farm to the next generation and its implications for the different members of the family. With the adoption of the "*code rural paysan suisse*" since 1912 one inheritor has been in a position to take possession of the parental farm, excluding his older and younger siblings, either after the parents' death or by contract whilst they were still alive. But even before then, one can find systems in some hilly parts of Switzerland which enabled only one child to take over the farm, the value of the farm being underestimated in such a manner that the share of the non-succeeding children was cut down to a minimum. We shall consider a catholic region where farms were seldom divided and where the demographic transition in the farm population occurred very late, mostly after World War I. The high average of children reaching the adult age in farm families sometimes contributed to increased tensions between parents and children and amongst the siblings who could not marry or stay on the farm.

Using micro-level analyses, the paper will attempt to analyse the changes which occurred during the century under observation and the impact the process of modernisation had on the farm family. Essentially, the author concentrates on the following topics: the timing of the transmission of land (to what extent did it occur more frequently at the death of the father for the 19<sup>th</sup> century generations, but earlier in life for subsequent generations?). Were there major changes in the choice of a successor? Was the timing of marriage for the sons who get the land marriage still closely connected to the transmission of land in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? And what happened to the siblings who marry without getting any property? Finally there is the question of the retirement contracts for the old parents which were often concluded at the time of the sale of the farm to the descendant: to what extent do the contracts concluded in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century still reflect the power of the older generation, especially that of the fathers over their adult sons who inherit, and this irrespective of the changes which occurred in the development of social legislation and the creation of a state pension?

## Steven King: Inheritance, Marriage and Household among the English Poor in the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century

While the history of courtship and marriage in England between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries has become increasingly rich, the experiences and motivations of one particular group, the poor dependent upon communal charity, have been much neglected. Nowhere are the English records sufficiently detailed to pinpoint definitively the proportion of each marriage cohort that might be classed as dependent poor, or to detail their personal marriage motivations. Yet, in the English counties of Northamptonshire and Berkshire there is evidence that a significant minority of all marriages included at least one partner who might be classified as 'dependent poor' where one defines this as dependent upon either charity or communal poor relief under the English poor law (1601–1834). Piecing together sources as varied as letters and official correspondence, communal accounts, newspaper reporting, this article asks how such people, and their partners, conceived of marriage, made their marriage decisions and experienced early married life. Evidence that poor law officials intervened directly in the marriage market and marriage decision-making process is assembled and analysed. How important such intervention was at the level of the individual remains obscure, but it is clear that officials believed that paupers were better off married than single, that the fertility consequences of their interventions were muted and that rural overseers were in any case good at passing on the demographic consequences of their decisions to urban communities in particular.

A supplementary and developmental analysis of pauper letters suggests that the households formed by the dependent poor may have been financially and residentially fragile, requiring support from parents, neighbours and 'friends' and above all from the poor law. Without extensive linkage between family reconstitutions and poor law data, it is impossible to document the extent of such dependence, but pauper letters suggest it to have been substantial. Importantly, the claims-making rhetoric of the newly married or those (such as parents) applying to the poor law indirectly so as to allow them to continue offering support to poor newlyweds, appears to have touched a nerve in the rural communities analysed here. While relief may have been intermittent, it was often substantial when worked out on a yearly basis, and officials clearly expected to be approached to help in supporting the households of the newlywed poor. Even where officials had real and enduring concerns over the moral standing and household management of paupers, they still paid rent, got clothes and furniture out of pawn, paid allowances and met doctoring bills. The particular, but not unrepresentative, experiences and strategies of two pauper families underpin the analysis and suggests that the underlying expectations that supporting new households was a valid part of the claims-making rhetoric, and the expectation of parish officials that they would eventually pay, is a clear thread running through all pauper letters from those who might be seen to be newlywed or those sup-

porting them. Thus, while it is possible to underplay the extent to which poor people could accumulate prior to marriage and the potential for poor families to provide their younger members with dowry-type help or inheritance, it has been all too common to forget that the greatest inheritance of all for such people was a settlement and the right to negotiate for poor relief. How the expectation of an engagement with the poor law shaped the marriage decision is complex, but we might note that only the claims of the sick were more successful than the claims of newlyweds or those supporting them in a league table of success and failure in the underlying pauper letter sample.

### Oláh Sándor: Land Inheritance in a Sekler Gentry Family in the Mid-Eighteenth Century

This study examines the land inheritance practices of an eighteenth-century Sekler gentry family. The main source is an inheritance agreement signed in May 1755, which recorded the distribution of property among three siblings and their families after the death of the parents. The inter-generational transference of estates is characterised by male inheritance, females received movable property at the time of their marriage.

The siblings took into account the size of the plots, soil quality, the financial situation of the families, and their earlier, unresolved property history. They divided and assumed individual ownership over the 138 separate plots of land inherited from their parents, however, their ownership was not entirely individual in the modern sense of the word. According to their original ownership status the plots of land were categorised into ancient and pledged estates, that is, acquisitions. Not every inherited estate was divided, undivided estates were inheritable and sometimes even remained in shared use. For the three heirs, ancient property was a joint institution, which helped to maintain social cohesion: it controlled actions and imposed duties on landowners for the benefit of social and individual security.

Pledged property was considered individual acquisition, thus the user of these lands assumed full right of disposal over them, as long as the pledger or their relative did not redeem those as 'closer kin' on the basis of fee tail rights. Thus, besides the joint and individual ownership by siblings, the inter-generational transference of estates involved the exclusive franchise 'by blood' and the shared responsibilities of fee tail. Temporary property rights over pledged estates were similar to property rights over individualised, privately owned property: heirs did not have a strict duty to keep them together.

## Pozsgai Péter: “Residents” and “Strangers”. Communal Domicile in Torna County on the Basis of the 1869 Census Registers

The preserved nominal documentations of the mid-19th century censuses are the most important out of the archive sources of Torna county: the listings of the 1850 and 1857 “Austrian” censuses and the house-registers of the 1869 census which was executed by the Hungarian statistical office.

The registers of the censuses of 1857 and 1869 indicate the names of the family-members and each co-residing members of the house who were present at the moment of the census. The register consisted of the house-number, the numbers of the households, the names and gender of the members of households, the year of birth, the religious denomination of the members of the household, the occupation and columns for presence and absence. The 1869 census included additional questions about the domicile (resident/stranger), birthplace and literacy. The censuses listed the number of domestic animals house by house, besides in 1869 all the economic buildings belonged to each house were conscribed.

This article presents the additional findings of a regional historical-demographic research project. In addition to a critical analysis of the different sources and presentation of the methodology used for the research, it also presents a few conclusions based on the investigation of rural migration, migratory routes and migration networks.

The source-critique should have been extended not only for the data-correction of sources and the shortages or mistakes of census-data produced by the census-takers, but for the critical analysis of the occupational terms and the household unit (*co-resident party*) as well, since for the establishment of the consistency of the source-group and for the reliable comparative analysis a “common denominator” should have been found among the “interpretations” and different use of concepts of the census-takers which differed from each other (slightly or considerably) in the majority of the settlements.

On the basis of the number of the residents and non-residents (“strangers”) determined from the census registers the proportion of migration cannot be reliably revealed, since the practice and classification of domicile from the part of the census-takers showed huge variations in the majority of settlements. Another possible way for studying the *migration* was to examine the population by the distribution of birthplaces. The advantage of the 1869 census that the birthplace of all the registered persons was indicated. In this analysis, however, the author deals primarily with the sources of inaccuracy in the 1869 censuses and the examination of the absent resident and the present non-resident (“strangers”) population.