

PAA: Topic - Marriage, Family, Households and Unions; session on 'Family and Household in Historical and Comparative Perspective' organized by **Catherine A. Fitch**, University of Minnesota

Spatial Variation in Household Structure in 19th and early 20th century Germany

Short abstract

In the center of continental Europe, ranging from East to West and North to South, Germany includes many of the cultural, economic, and religious variations found across Europe. In this study, we take advantage of the great internal heterogeneity of 19th century Germany to gain a better understanding of the patterns and causes of household structure variation. Using aggregate data at scales ranging from the province to the *Kreis*, we document the contours, gradients, and variability of family structure using measures of household complexity and entry into marriage. The rich statistical data gathered by the Prussians and by the German Reich enable us to study not only geographic variability -- e.g., the existence of East-West or North-South gradients -- but also to examine the hypothesized roles of economic development, agricultural systems, inheritance practices, religion, ethnic background, and urbanicity. We plan to focus on four interrelated questions: (1) Are family structure and marriage patterns consistent with the hypothesized East-West distinction put forth by Hajnal? (2) Is the pattern of land-ownership and agricultural organization, notably the east-Elbian divide suggested by Weber, an important organizing principle of household and family structure? (3) Are patterns consistent with the agricultural development hypothesis most recently advocated by Ruggles? (4) Are patterns consistent with inheritance patterns as advocated by Berkner and others? Our analysis will use fine level data gathered in Prussian Kreise, as well as larger aggregations such as Regierungsbezirk to Province-level data. Demographic measures range from mean age of marriage, average family size, to number of coresident kin. A wide variety of socio-economic measures are available. Our preliminary analysis suggest to us no clear role of static distinctions such as the East-West gradient, religion, and ethnicity. Rather, if there is structure behind the variation it would appear to lie in a more complex set of economic and political arrangements. We plan to study how cross-sectional variation changes over time, allowing us the potential to assess to some degree the persistence of family forms.

General abstract

In the center of continental Europe, ranging from East to West and North to South, Germany includes many of the cultural, economic, and religious variations found across Europe. In spite of that, and despite the wealth of available material, in all debates over spatial organization of European family forms (Hajnal, 1965; Macfarlane, 1980; Hajnal, 1982; Laslett, 1983), household structure and household formation rules in historical Germany had either been neglected, or given only a most secondary importance during subsequent decades (Bähr, 1997; Marschalck, 1984; Peuckert, 2008; Janas, 2005; Rosenbaum, 1996; Weber-Kellermann, 1982; Lee, 1981). Household characteristics out there have been provisionally portrayed as forming an intermediate category and being somewhere between the extremes of the 'western' and 'eastern' types (Laslett 1983: 528-530; Robisheaux, 1998, 129-130). Equally circumstantial was the evidence provided by German ethnologists and demographers of the 1920-30s who asserted the 'typical' German type of the family to have always been the paternalistically-administrated (usually) two-generational small family with coresiding servants (Riehl, 1855; Sering, 1934; Ipsen, 1933; Conze, 1940; also Schlumbohm 1998; Brunner, 1956; Mackenroth

1953, 360, 362). Consequently, they had maintained that there was a fundamental contrast between German and Slavic populations in terms of family composition. This familistic border was supposed to still exist around the turn of the 19th century and to determine divergent demographic conduit of Germanic and Slavic populations during demographic changes associated with the first demographic transition (Knodel, 1974, p. 144-147; Haines 1971, 65-66). Few existing local studies suggest, however, such a homogenous picture of family pattern in Germany may have to be rejected (Berkner, 1976; Schlumbohm, 1994; also Pfister, 2008).

In this study, we use the rich statistical data gathered by the Prussians and by the German Reich to fill the existing gap in comparative demographic studies of historical family structures in Europe. More importantly, by focusing on 19th century Germany, we take advantage of its great internal heterogeneity to gain a better understanding of the patterns and causes of household structure variation. Using aggregate data at scales ranging from the province to the *Kreis* (or its equivalents) we document the contours, gradients, and variability of family structure using measures of household complexity and entry into marriage. The rich data available from the Prussian and German statistics enable us to study not only geographic variability -- e.g., the existence of East-West or North-South gradients - but also to examine the hypothesized roles of economic development, agricultural systems, inheritance practices, religion, ethnic background, and urbanicity.

We plan to focus on four interrelated questions: **(1)** Are family structure and nuptiality patterns consistent with the hypothesized East-West distinction put forth by Hajnal and others? (Hajnal, 1965, 1982; also Knodel, 1974, p. 144-147; Haines 1971, 65-66); **(2)** Is the pattern of land-ownership and agricultural organization, notably the Ostelbische socioeconomic divide suggested by G.F. Knapp and M. Weber (Knapp, 1887; Weber, 1892; also Brenner, 1976, 40-46), an important organizing principle of household and family structure as some scholars believe (Pfister, 2008)? **(3)** Are those patterns consistent with the ‘agricultural development hypothesis’ most recently advocated by Ruggles? (Ruggles, 2009); **(4)** Are patterns consistent with spatial distribution of inheritance practices and settlement patterns as advocated by Berkner (Berkner, 1976; see also Sering, 1897; Robisheaux, 1998; Pfeifer, 1956)?

Our analysis will use fine level data gathered in Prussian *Kreise*, as well as larger aggregations such as *Regierungsbezirke* to Province-level data. Demographic measures range from mean age of marriage (SMAM), average family size, to adults and marital units per household, and number of coresident kin (see Burch 1967, 1970, 1980; Burch et.al.,1987; Parish & Schwartz, 1972; Dandekar & Unde, 1967; Wall, 1991). A wide variety of socio-economic measures are available, notably the share of population working in agriculture.

Our preliminary analysis suggest to us no clear role of static distinctions such as the East-West gradient, religion, and ethnicity). It turned out that neither nuptiality indices (maps 5 and 6), nor measures of household complexity as calculated for different points

in time between 1875 and 1910 (maps 1-4) suggest the Slav/non-Slav differentials have represented a crucial demographic fault line within the region (see map 7). Neither was the great divide of agrarian regimes along the Elbe river (map 8) a good predictor of household and marriage patterns at the turn of 19th century. Our preliminary analysis pertains to the significance of patterns observed in both western- and eastern peripheral regions within Prussia, and then Germany. Those regions seem to have been characterized by higher mean household size, often higher nuptiality and greater propensity towards coresidence with kin. If there is structure behind the observed pattern it would appear to lie in a more complex set of economic and political arrangements which can be in accordance with our third and fourth questions-hypothesis.

Methodologically speaking, we will follow family demography literature about most efficient ways in using routine aggregate census data on number of households and on the population classified by age, sex, and marital status to investigate differences in household composition (Burch 1967, 1970, 1980; Burch et.al.,1987; Parish & Schwartz, 1972; Dandekar & Unde, 1967). We will proceed in following steps:

- Using all available measures (adults and marital units per household; mean household size; singulate mean age at marriage; percentage never married by age groups; number of coresident kin; number of solitary households) we will map cross-sectional variation in residential patterns across Germany at different levels of aggregation. We will start with the provincial level. This will be followed by including smaller territorial units of Prussia and other regions (Bayern in particular; see Rothenbacher, 1997) into analysis.
- Various measures of central tendency or dispersion will be employed to reveal intra-regional variation at different points in time, and at different levels of aggregation. Analysis of variance will be used to measure the relationship between intra- and inter-regional differences in household structure and nuptiality.
- In the regression model various household and marriage variables will be regressed on 'share Slavic speaking', 'share of estates', 'share of population working in agriculture', and type of inheritance variables to reveal, respectively, the effects of ethnicity, type of the agrarian regime, social structure and modes of property transmission within family.
- Cross-sectional variation will be studied over time, allowing us the potential to assess to some degree the persistence of family forms. The data for all Prussian and German regions and big cities at several different points in time will be mapped using GIS techniques. Maps with spatial patterns at different points in time will be compared using simple correlation matrix. A local Moran's I will be run to help us check if high and low values of the variables are clustering in space over time.

Although the richness of this data we intend to use is far smaller comparing to individual-level micro-census information now widely used in international comparative household and family studies (Ruggles, 2005), it has a big advantage as it allows the

systematic analysis of the basic features of residential units and marriage patterns in all German lands over a long period of time between mid 19th and early 20th century.

We believe the proposed research will have manifold scientific merits. Systematic analysis of data on residential units and across time is worthwhile, despite its inherent inability to tell us anything about broader, non-residential family or kinship structures (Burch et.al., 1987, 20). Revealing regional distribution of marriage and household patterns in Germany is particularly interesting, since it is this part of Europe that now remains a missing link in existing spatial models of family, after historical Iberian, French and even Eastern European patterns being recently comprehensively revealed (Le Bras & Todd, 1981; Rowland, 2002; Reher, 1998; Szołtysek, 2008a, 2008b). It is only through a careful spatial reconstruction of household composition within Germany that European geography of family forms can be fully accomplished. Cross-sectional, inter-regional comparison of household structure in Germany at different levels of aggregation and at different points in time forms excellent background against which other spatially differentiated, but more detailed studies of family composition in the nineteenth-century German Empire could be carried out in the future. The latter can be based either upon other local German censuses (Mecklemburg 1819, 1867; Schlezwik-Holstein, 1803) available to us, or on the relatively abundant collection of micro-census data for particular places, parishes or locations 1803-1867 recently discovered by MPI (Gehrmann, 2009).

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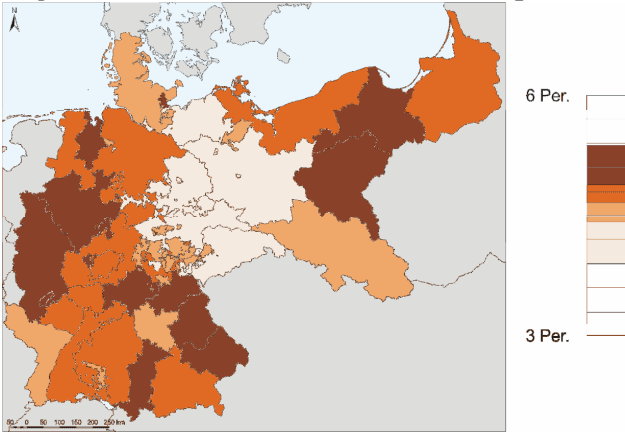
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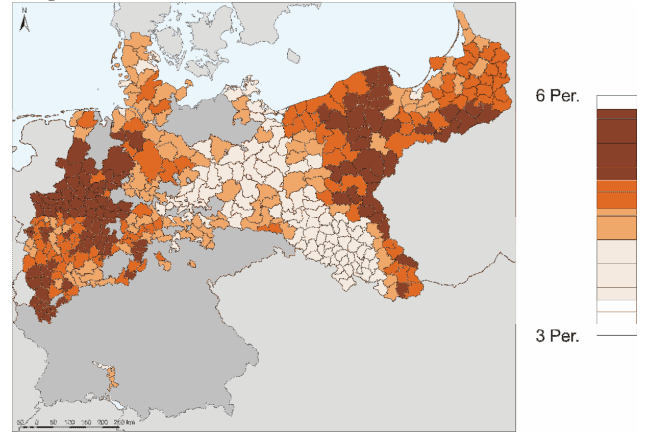
Maps

Fig 1: Mean HH-Size 1910 (Germany)



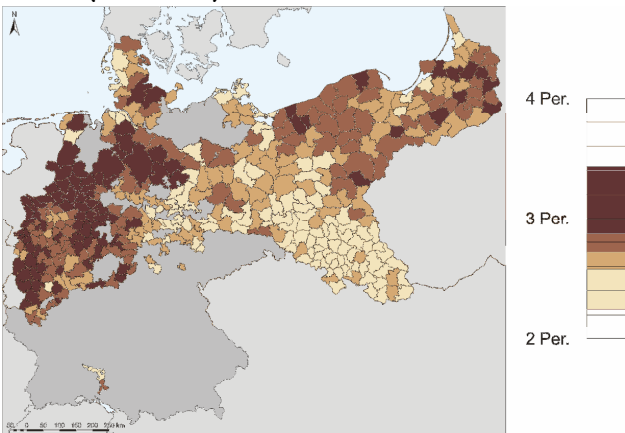
Source: Reich Statistical Office
Base Maps: HGIS Germany

Fig. 2: Mean HH-Size 1910 (Prussia)



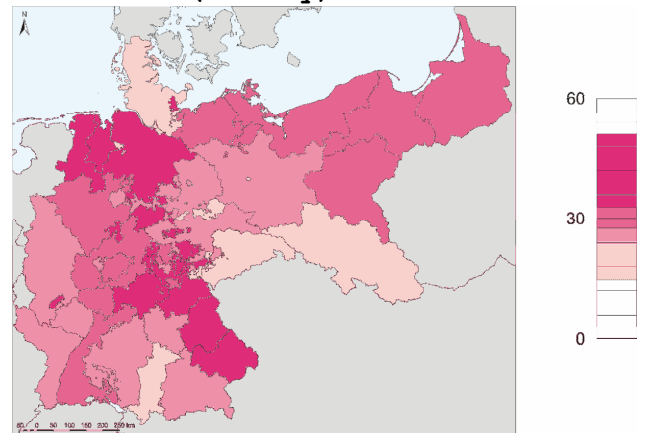
Source: Prussia Statistical Office
Base Maps: Hubatsch / Klein; HGIS Germany

Fig. 3: Adults (above 18 years) per HH 1910 (Prussia)



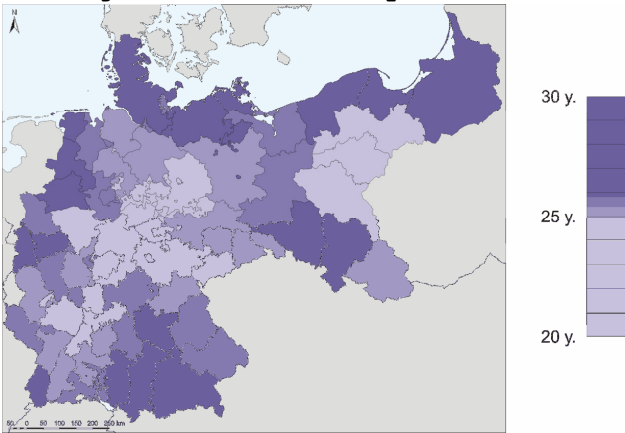
Source: Prussia Statistical Office
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Fig. 4: Co-resident Relatives per 100 Households (Germany)



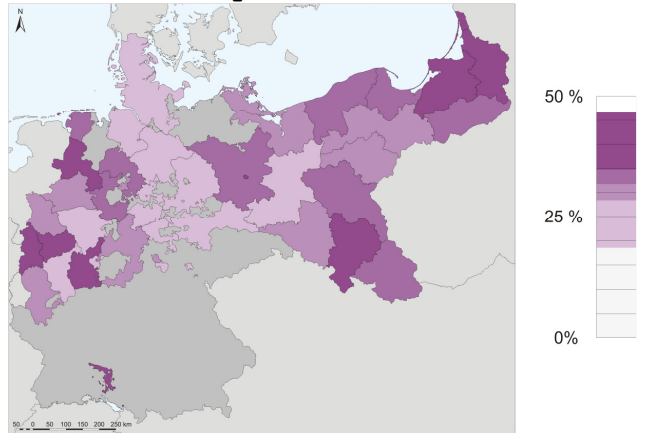
Source: Reich Statistical Office
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Fig. 5: Female Singulate Mean Age at Marriage in 1910 (Germany)



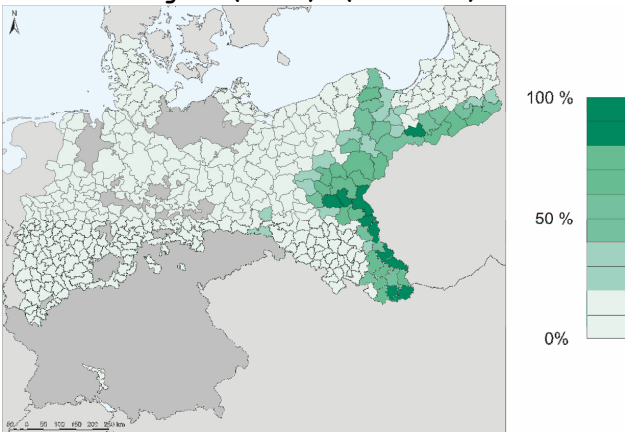
Source: Knodel & Maynes, 1976
Base Map: HGIS Germany

Fig. 6: Proportion Never Married Females 25-29 y. 1910 (Prussia)



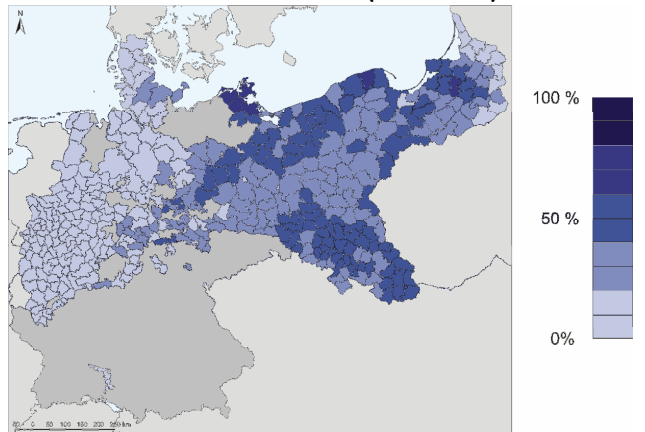
Source: Prussia Statistical Office
Base Map: HGIS Germany

Fig. 7: Share of Persons with Slavic Mother Tongue (1910) (Prussia)



Source: Prussian Statistical Office
Base Maps: Hubatsch / Klein; HGIS Germany

Fig. 8: Share of Estates in Total Number of Places 1910 (Prussia)



Source: Prussian Statistical Office
Base Maps: Hubatsch / Klein; HGIS Germany