

Historische Familienforschung: Ergebnisse und Kontroversen. Michael Mitterauer zum Geburtstag. Edited by Joseph Ehmer, Tamara K. Hareven, and Richard Wall. Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 1997. Pp. 428. DM 88.00. ISBN 3-593-35753-4.

The book under review is dedicated to Michael Mitterauer, the historian who has been most instrumental in shaping historical family research. The volume offers a summary of the state of research that has now gone beyond its original quantitative-statistical direction toward the use of historical anthropological concepts and inquiries, especially those concerning gender history (*Geschlechtergeschichte*).

The first four contributions of this edited volume cover timely questions of the method and theory of historical research, the macro layers of research tendencies that also guide family history. The article by Tamara Hareven comes closest in its reference to family history. She examines the impact of family research on the reorientation of historical research in general away from older statistical approaches. As part of social history (p. 36f.) modern family history especially focuses on transitional phases, short-lived social "ad hoc institutions" in their transitoriness and the coexistence of various life and work styles. Peter Laslett, along with Mitterauer one of the shapers of early family history research, uses his concept of a "historical sociology" to probe nonfamily or antifamily counterproposals for the traditional family. He discusses their new significance against the background of the ever increasing rates of illegitimacy (in Scandinavia over 50 percent, in England and France 33 percent) (pp. 53–56). He sees here the possibility, even danger, of a "structural-normative change" (p. 54). Interesting correspondences emerge between his findings and comparative articles (at the end of this volume) on Japan and Europe (see below). Both Jürgen Kocka and Hans Medick, two antagonists in their discussion of micro-macro approaches, attempt to build bridges from their respective viewpoints. Kocka situates the history of family and household structures within a general understanding of social history as the history of society (*Gesellschaftsgeschichte*). Mitterauer, according to Kocka, exposed a central structure of society through his work. Kocka pleads for opening up *Gesellschaftsgeschichte* in the direction of cultural history that asks, in addition to and within structures, for meaning and action, explanation and decision-making as genuine examples of people's freedom of action, thereby supplementing and widening structural history. Based on the work of E. P. Thompson, Hans Medick, the classical micro-historian, develops the project of a social history of life as it is actually lived (*praxisnah*). According to him, it was Thompson's aim to show the meaningfulness (*Wertbezug*) of human action to history, that is, to take culture seriously as an action-directing mental structure (pp. 77–79). The following contributions move within this relationship of historical structural and actionist approaches that is increasingly directed more toward reciprocal cooperation than controversy.

A group of articles devoted to the history of structures (Edith Saurer, Roger Schofield, Angiolina Arru, David Sabean) looks at the societal framework for

marriage and family life. Roger Schofield offers the results of his quantitative research in the history of mentalités. He investigated dates for christenings, marriages, and funerals, and on the basis of an enormous compilation of family dates, he was able to chart the “decisions of common people regarding the important rituals of their lives, showing the economic and cultural influences that played a part in these decisions” (p. 95). In short, they were made on the basis of economic, social, and religious considerations, with the dictates of the church, as far as they existed, indeed structuring conduct.

Angiolina Arru examines immigration to Rome and the marriage chances of the immigrants within the existing city and communal societal structures, stressing the fact that a woman had greater difficulty than a man in gaining access to the marriage market of the indigenous population (p. 111). She too combines an analysis of marriage strategies and life-planning with an appropriate statistical analysis.

Edith Saurer's subject is social control and social disciplining in connection with marriage and married life as well as illegitimacy in the Habsburg Empire, and by using an *Enquete* of 1828–1830, she follows the rise in illegitimacy. In Venice, for example, because of different concepts determining traditional roles, but also as a result of other political conditions, she found many very early marriages, whereas in Bohemia and lower Austria it was the European marriage pattern that was generally followed where marriage was a privilege of the rich (p. 149). She affirms here her original question of whether illegitimacy was connected to the West European marriage model. Her study very clearly shows how a given legal condition (the role of civic standing for military recruitments, the right to inheritance, the consent of the lord to marriages, societal disadvantages because of illegitimacy) channeled people's actual options for action; that is, how structures are discernable in actions, but also how action (to marry early or late) discloses structures that are observable and that resulted in historically typifiable structures, in other words, that actions created structures.

David Sabeian discusses marriage in the bourgeoisie during the nineteenth century. The bourgeois family provided a class-specific ethics for everyday living. As a result, marriage alliances within classes contributed to class-building, or, as Sabeian formulates the issue: “For the process of class-building during the long nineteenth century, family relations were of fundamental importance” (p. 157). In spite of free choice of partners, the propertied class reconstituted itself through its sense of social awareness and its preference for similar lifestyles. Here we find a closer connection between genuine dimensions of cultural history and social structures.

A second group of contributors, by comparison, centers their attention on the actions of individuals and their concepts of life and its meaning. This part of the book is based on historical anthropology. Rainer Beck sees the desire for love and emotionality (aside from any economic condition that remained important) in the behavior of Bavarian peasant women and men of the eighteenth century as the critical ingredient in decision making. “People did not bend under duress, but ‘broke out’ of an order that ran counter to their

wishes" (p. 196). Christa Hämmerle distances herself from the "mother-centeredness" (p. 197) of the traditional illegitimacy research by studying (on the basis of autobiographical manuscripts) the relationship between illegitimate children and their fathers around 1900, that is, during the phase when the maternal principle was recognized, while Reinhard Sieder thematizes a "post-modern family career" in the 1990s. Whereas Hämmerle stresses the stigmatization of those born outside of wedlock (p. 211) and therefore must explain the relationship to the father and his family that often remained quite close, Sieder, by employing the explanatory category of an "economy of necessity" (p. 214), finds in the quite differently constituted postmodern period a wide-reaching acceptance of partnership and children outside of marriage, where the concept of "illegitimacy" is hardly still applicable (p. 252). Autonomization, individualization, *Intimisierung*, and eroticization are signs of this new meaning of partner relationships that mainly aims at self-fulfillment.

The two remaining groups of contributions are once more oriented toward the history of structures, such as typologies of European family models that were the great themes at the beginning of historical family research. Here Maria Todorova most definitely practices methods critique. Richard Wall furnishes the *Praxis-Probe aufs Exempel*. His systematic summarization of the vast amount of local and regional research is useful for the reader who is given a general overview of the work that has been done "vor Ort." Wall emphasizes the difficulty of a typology of structural history that is encountered as soon as one gets too close to the everyday world, when the impression of an extremely wide variability begins to dominate that quite possibly is more typical than the statistical norms may indicate.

Andrejs Plakans and Charles Wetherell attempt to situate the family in Eastern Europe between 1800 and 2000. They suggest a division of Eastern Europe into three subregions along the lines of structural differences. But they too stress the enormous variety and complexity of household compositions and assign great importance to peasant emancipation, urbanization, and land reform. They also find a model that comes closer to the Western European one whose common point of orientation in the twentieth century is the primacy of the individual.

Markus Cerman puts the assumption of structural history of a relatively uniform model of European marriage strategies into perspective by looking at Central Europe. He suggests a separation of the concepts of European marriage patterns and a respective family and household model that traditionally have been viewed as one (p. 341).

The fourth group of articles compares Europe and Japan between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. It is exactly through the comparative approach of their studies that Wakao and Saito deliver convincing proof for the shaping of family structure through cultural settings and the force of the actors' world-views (i.e., the Japanese ancestor cult): structure as product of culture. On the other hand they show clearly that this equation is also valid in reverse. As industrialization set out to reconstitute society both in Japan and Europe, a

pronounced “*Familialismus*” (focus on the family) developed as a bulwark against modernism, acting not merely as conserver but also as dynamo for a renewed integration of traditional values into today’s society (Saito).

Throughout, all contributions, including those with a stronger bent toward structuralism, display the intent to adopt a microscopic perspective that is action oriented (Sieder, Hämmerle, Sabeian, Arru, Beck, Saurer), but at the same time, or alongside of this approach, the quantifying methods stay in place (especially with Arru, Cerman, Saito, Schofield, Wakao, and Wall). While the discussion of an alleged contrast between micro- and macrohistory may have suggested otherwise, several of the contributions succeed in delivering a fruitful combination of qualitative and quantitative history. The volume under review, therefore, does not merely enhance historical family research whose multifaceted riches become apparent, but it also situates the discussion within the larger framework of history.

A very useful and quite extensive bibliography with a focus on recent publications functions as a welcome introduction to anyone who wishes to study the subject more intensively.

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