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### **The Patriarchy Index: A comparative study of power relations across historic Europe**

The concept of family system is one of the most frequently used in studies of historical demographic structures. At the same time, it has long remained rather poorly defined, and has been used to denote a range of varying circumstances (see Smith 1979; Laslett 1983; Todd 1985; Wall 1991, 623; Berquo & Xenos 1992; Goody 1996; Mason 2001; Oris and Ochiai 2002, 20-25; Fauve-Chamoux 2006; Polla 2006; Ruggles 2009). Nevertheless, many scholars employed the term and used it as a key concept in comparative systemic investigations of the organization of family across time and space in Europe. Laslett and other scholars linked with the Cambridge Group tradition (most notably Hajnal) tended to focus on the triad household structure- age at marriage – and service, and on the marriage – household formation nexus, in their wide ranging attempts at explaining intra-European familial differentials. Wall instead, suggested the key feature to be accounted for is the size and composition of the kin group within the household. Both Todd and Das Gupta stressed the importance of postmarital residence, but while the former believed the other crux in family system analysis are the contours of parental authority, the latter favoured effects of inheritance patterns. The ongoing discussion was given a new impetus in the studies of Ruggles, who argued that family structure and living arrangements should be most profitably analyzed from the perspective of the elderly. Members of the Eurasian project on the History of family recently went even further in stipulating that one of the most important characteristics distinguishing various family systems is the sequence of individual life course transitions (Drìbe, Manfredini, Oris, Derosas). Kok added yet another building block to these theoretical considerations by pointing out promising ways in which family systems could be approached through the prism of illegitimacy.

All in all, the current state of historical demographic research on the family exhibits a significant proliferation of discourses and variety of approaches to the problem of how practically to pin down various dimensions of family systems to a meaningful number of quantifiable variables. Whereas all approaches mentioned above suggest one or another valuable way to measure family systems across time and space, each of them tends to favor one aspect of the family system at the cost of neglecting others.

Our intention in this paper is to suggest a ‘master variable’ to be employed in cross-cultural studies of family systems. This measure has to be A) **holistic** - it has to capture as

many important aspects of familial behaviour as possible; B) **feasible** – i.e. to be easily derived from historical census-like microdata with often limited information; C) **quantifiable** – one has to be able to compute it from basic numerical variables derived from individual level sources; and finally, D) **comparable** – it must yield quantities that can be easily compared across time and space, and between societies.

To meet these requirements we suggest an indexed composite measure that incorporates various variables related to familial behaviour. We call this measure the index of patriarchy. The index is based on a wide range of variables pertaining to the sphere of nuptiality and age at marriage, living arrangements, postmarital residence, power relations within domestic group, position of the aged, sex of the offspring, such as: Proportion of female household heads; the proportion of ever married women in the age group 15-19 years; Proportion of wives being older than husbands; Proportion of young women living as non-kin; Proportion of elderly men co-residing with a younger household head; Proportion of neolocal residence among young men; Proportion of elderly people living with lateral relatives; Proportion of elderly people living with married daughters; Proportion of boys among the last child; Sex ratio of youngest age group, etc.

To explore comparative advantages of the index we use information from census and census-like microdata for a sample of **over million individuals** from historical Europe from Atlantic to the Ural. For all available datasets from the Mosaic Project ([www.censusmosaic.org](http://www.censusmosaic.org)) and the North Atlantic Population Project (<https://www.nappdata.org/napp/>), we compute a list of well-specified variables and based on these variables an index of patriarchy is proposed. The index allows us to identify regions with different degrees of patriarchy within one country, across regions of a country, or across and within many broader zones of historic Europe.

The index suggested in this paper yields a handy tool for comparative studies of power relations in historical families, and provide a list of numerical variables easily derived from census microdata that can be used for measurement purposes. Through this it illustrates how the ‘intensity’ of patriarchy can be measured across time and space. Our notion of patriarchy, however, encompasses a much wider realm than in most usual accounts. The notion of ‘patriarchy’ has pervaded the scholarly descriptions of peasant families in preindustrial Europe. In using the term, however, scholars have referred to many different elements sometimes in combination, sometimes not (e.g. the dominance of patrilineal descent, domination of men over women and of the older generation over the younger generation). Combinations of the many various elements of power relations in the composite Index of

Patriarchy can substitute for rather vague notions of 'family systems', and through this may help to suggest new more promising ways to account for geographies of family organization across historic Europe.