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SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL DIFFERENCES AND THE „EASTERN MARRIAGE PATTERN” IN HUNGARY, 1869

Researchers: Péter Óri and Levente Pakot
Contact: ori@demografia.hu

While the traditional view on household formation suggests that historical Hungary could be characterised by early marriage and complex households, results gained from the Hungarian Mosaic sample modify this simplifying approach to some extent. The Hungarian Mosaic sample is a cross-sectional database consisting of the micro-data from the 1869 census that have been collected within the framework of the MOSAIC Project (www.censusmosaic.org). The database is representative of the historical Hungarian Kingdom with respect to spatial and denominational distribution, and it is a rural sample consisting of approximately 30,000 people, and more than 6,000 households.

While approximately one fourth of the households proved to be of complex structure, the country as a whole was very far from a uniform model in this respect. In addition to some regional variety, the occupational status of household heads appears to have been a major determinant of household formation. Multiple family households were typical among landowners, whereas the dominance of simple family households was much stronger among artisans and unskilled manual workers (mainly

servants and farm hands). The differences among these groups seem to be similar with respect to the age at marriage and to becoming a household head in historic Hungary. Farmers particularly married early, however their marriages were not connected at all to headship. Therefore, on the basis of their marriage customs and household formation strategies, they seem to represent the “eastern marriage pattern” the best. At the same time artisans, non-manual workers and especially unskilled manual workers, became household heads much earlier and married later (Figure). In contrast to females, who married particularly early and left the parental household at the same time, marriage and headship in the case of males were separated life events. Consequently, the “eastern” pattern as a unified model can be valid only for female marriage customs. As for men, the picture is more diverse in all the aspects that are studied here. In addition to geographic zones or ethno-cultural conditions, socio-professional differences and local types of subsistence should be considered much more often when studying marriage customs and post-marital residence patterns in the past.

Figure: The impact of occupational status on being married, a household head and living in an extended and multiple family household (age-group 15–29)

Note: Extract from logistic regression analyses (relative risks, reference group is unskilled manual workers), Hungary, Mosaic sample, 1869

Significance levels: ever married: non-manuals and farmers at $p < 0.05$, missing at $p < 0.001$ level; head: all at $p < 0.001$ level; complex households structures: farmers at $p < 0.001$ level, non-manuals at $p < 0.05$, artisans at $p < 0.1$ level

