

Author: Péter Óri

e-mail: ori@demografia.hu

Institution: Demographic Research Institute, Budapest

Address: Buday L. u. 1-3. Budapest, H-1024, Hungary

Long-term demographic change and local socio-cultural patterns: household structure in 19-21st century Hungary

Extended abstract

While the well known and nearly forty-year old Hajnal-model dividing Europe in two household formation patterns has been criticised for a long time,¹ most of the criticism was based on theoretical aspects or local data with small case numbers. Greater amount of information on the household formation patterns of East-Central Europe (the ‘eastern’ pattern according to Hajnal’s terminology) has been rarely available so far. This is particularly true for the territory of the former Habsburg Monarchy or the historic Hungarian Kingdom. Moreover, the long-term changes in marriage customs and household structure, the impacts of industrialisation, socialist modernisation and the change of regime in 1989 on these phenomena have been hardly examined.

Historical Hungary was the home of several ethnic and denominational groups before WW I. It was situated east of the ‘Hajnal-line’ but different ‘western’ and ‘eastern’ populations lived there in consequence of the medieval and early modern migratory flows. According to the Hajnal-model, the country should have been characterised by early marriage and complex household structure where the necessary labour-force demand in farming was assured by cohabiting household members (basically relatives), and the use of foreign labour-force (servants) in rural farming households was of low intensity.

But the multi-ethnic and multicultural character of the country, her geographic, economic and social diversity put the question whether we may speak about the existence of a unified ‘eastern’ pattern in Historic Hungary. If the macro and micro-level analyses verify that diversity in marriage customs and household formation, the dichotomous ‘east-west’ model cannot be sustained further. Only in that case has got it some basis, if the differences can be linked exclusively to ethno-cultural variety, if ‘western’ demographic behaviour is characteristic first of all of ‘western’ immigrant populations (mainly German settlers in this period). In other words, if the possible local patterns were the results of deeply embedded cultural characteristics maintained by migrating populations in the long run Hajnal’s theory would be confirmed to some extent. But if they have been created mainly by local geographic and economic conditions we should entirely refute it. A further possible question is whether those patterns persisted over time, prevailed up to the present, in spite of many important

¹ Only some examples of criticism from Central-European point of view:

Faragó, T.: Different Household Formation Systems in Hungary at the End of the 18th Century: Variations on John Hajnal’s Thesis, *Demográfia*, Special Edition, 2003, vol. 46, 95–136.;

Szołtysek, M.: Rethinking Eastern Europe: household-formation patterns in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and European family systems. *Continuity and Change*, 23. 2008/3. 389-427.;

Szołtysek, M.: Spatial Construction of European Family and Household Systems: A Promising Path or a Blind Alley? An Eastern European Perspective. *Continuity and Change*, 2012. 27/1. 11–52.;

Óri, P.: Marriage Customs and Household Structure in Hungary at the end of the 18th Century. The Case of County Pest-Pilis-Solt (1774–1785). In Fauve-Chamoux, Antoinette – Bolovan, Ioan (eds.): *Families in Europe between the 19th and 21st Centuries. From the the Traditional Model to the Contemporary PACS*. (Supplement of the Romanian Journal of Population Studies). Cluj University Press, Cluj-Napoca, 167–192.

changes (industrialisation, urbanisation, spatial mobility, modernisation process of socialism after WWII, a newer wave of mobility, the change of regime at the end of the 20th century).

A basic element of the Hajnal-model (young age at first marriage especially in the case of females) could be pointed out many times and moreover this custom persisted to some extent up to the 1980s.² At the same time, the picture about household and family structure remained contradictory in some respects. Local patterns in pre-industrial Hungary show a more complex model compared to the dichotomous one supposed by Hajnal.³ The elements of cultural patterns can be found (German versus Southern Slav communities) as well as the impacts of region, type of farming and settlement.⁴ Besides strong regional diversity the changes over time also can make the simplifying dichotomous model questionable. Tamás Faragó concluded that the size of households was growing and their structure was becoming more complex in the first half of the 19th century. Later he extended this statement to the whole century.⁵ The possible interpretation is the population growth, the developing over-population of certain regions the carrying capacity of which was low (remote mountainous areas, marshlands etc.). There the norm of early and general marriage was strong and the size and complexity of households increased as a consequence of growing population. According to this interpretation the higher frequency of multiple household forms was a historical development which can be observed from the 18th century, but its origin is unknown, and it was characteristic only of some regions in spite of the 19th century increase. In the 20th century the percentage of households with more nuclear families decreased even if the elements of the 'Eastern' model seem to have remained until the middle of the century. Since that time the decrease has been monotonous, the share of complex households has become insignificant by now.⁶ At the same time, the timing, territorial patterns and causes of this decrease have not been explored so far. The general interpretative framework of changes is the second demographic transition, but in the more detailed analyses rather the deep social and economic changes of the last twenty years has got larger stress, whereas Hajnal's model emerges only in discussions of historians and historical demographers dealing with 18-19th century population history.

MOSAIC project has collected micro-census data preserved in different European countries and builds up an on-line data-base which gives new possibilities to the research on

² See for instance: Csernák, M.: Marriage and Divorce in Hungary: demographic aspects of change. In Tóth, P. – Valkovics, E. (eds.): *Demography of Contemporary Hungarian Society*. Atlantic Research and Publications, Highland Lakes, New Jersey, 1996. 37–54. or

Pongrácz, M.: Characteristics of Partnership. In Óri, P. – Spéder Zs. (eds.): *Demographic Portrait of Hungary, 2012*. DRI, Budapest, 2012. 11–19.

³ See Faragó: Different Household Formation, op.cit., Óri: Marriage Customs, op. cit.,

⁴ See for instance: Andorka, R. – Faragó, T.: Pre-industrial household structure in Hungary. In Wall, R. – Robin, J. – Laslett, P. (eds.): *Family forms in historic Europe*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge–New York–London, 281–307.;

Óri, P.: Etnikum, felekezet és demográfiai különbségek a 18–19. századi Magyarországon. Pest-Pilis-Solt-(Kiskun) megye példája. [Ethnicity, denomination and demographic differences in 18–19th century Hungary. The case of county Pest-Pilis-Solt-(Kiskun)], *Demográfia*, 53. vol. (2010) n. 4. 373–405.

⁵ Faragó, T.: Háztartásszerkezet és falusi társadalomfejlődés Magyarországon, 1787–1828. [Household structure and rural social development in Hungary, 1787–1828] *Történeti Statisztikai Tanulmányok*, 3. KSH, Budapest, 1977, 105–214.

Faragó, T.: Nemek, nemzedékek, rokonság, család. [Gender, generations, kinship, family] In Sárkány, M. – Szilágyi, M. (eds.), *Magyar Néprajz VIII, Társadalom*. Akadémiai, Budapest, 2000. 393–483.

⁶ See: Faragó, T. *Bevezetés a történeti demográfiába*. [Historical Demography. An Introduction], Budapest, 2011, 85.

http://www.tankonyvtar.hu/hu/tartalom/tamop425/0010_2A_09_Farago_Tamas_Bevezetes_a_torteneti_demografiba/adatok.html

Murinkó, L. – Földházi, E.: Household and family structure. In Óri, P. – Spéder Zs. (eds.): *Demographic Portrait of Hungary, 2012*. DRI, Budapest, 2012. 113–122.

household structure and marriage patterns.⁷ The ‘Hungarian’ MOSAIC sample is based on the individual data of population census in 1869 and consists of about five thousand households, and covers all important geographic regions, ethnic and denominational groups of the country (Hungarians, Germans, Slovaks, Southern Slavs, Romanians, Roman Catholics, Calvinists, Lutherans, and Greek Orthodox population).⁸ Analysing the data we can separate the residence patterns existing in the Carpathian basin in the middle of the 19th century, we can test whether a simple dichotomous structure (‘western’ pattern of German settlers or ‘eastern’ pattern of the others) or a west-east slope of more transitional variations existed in this vast Central-European area. Besides cultural variable (denomination which can be the equivalent of ethnic affiliation in some regions) we can use geographic (region) and social (profession) ones. Besides household structure according to Laslett’s typology other important aspects can be examined: the presence of non-relatives (old persons and foreign labour-force) and its correlation with the household structure itself.

At the same time the aggregate data at community level of all censuses between 1869 and 2011 are at our disposal. From these data we can calculate the number of conjugal units per household for the period before WWI and after WWII for each settlement. For the period after WWII household structure according to Laslett-Hammel classification can be also reconstructed. On the basis of those data we are going to analyse the long term changes in household structure between the 19th and 21st centuries at national level, considering their basic (urban/rural and regional) variations and using a representative dataset of about 190 settlements around Budapest we try to explore the background of local differences. We seek for the explanatory variables of complex household structure (the occurrence of households with more conjugal units) using the data of censuses 1869, 1890, 1960, 1980, 2001 and 2011 – which may represent important turning points in Hungary’s social and economic history – in order to explore the impacts of demographic transition, socialist industrialisation and political, social changes at the end of the 20th century. Thus we would like to analyse the relevance of the Hajnal model for pre-industrial Hungary, and its possible persistence and changes in the 20th century up to the present.

⁷ See www.censusmosaic.org

⁸ Óri, P. – Pakot, L.: *Census and census-like material preserved in the archives of Hungary, Slovakia and Transylvania (Romania), 18-19th centuries*. MPIDR Working Paper WP-2011-020, 57 pages (December 2011). Rostock, Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, and Óri, P.: Magyarország társadalma 1869-ben. A Mosaic-projekt magyarországi adatbázisa. [Hungary’s society in 1869. The Mosaic-database for historic Hungary]. *Demográfia*, 2012/4. 292–315.