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New Europe College Str. Plantelor 21 023971 Bucharest Romania www.nec.ro; e-mail: nec@nec.ro Tel. (+4) 021.307.99.10, Fax (+4) 021. 327.07.74



BOGDAN MATEESCU

Born in 1988

Ph.D., "Nicolae lorga" Institute of Hisory, Bucharest (2017) Thesis: Demografia familiei și a gospodăriei în spațiul extracarpatic. 1780-1860. O abordare micro-statisică [Family and household demography in the outer-Carpathian territories. 1780-1860. A statistical micro-analysis]

> Researcher, "Nicolae Iorga" Institute of Hisory, Bucharest, Department of Modern History

> > Grants and fellowships

Doctoral scholarship granted by the Doctoral School of the Romanian Academy during the doctoral studies (2013-2016) POSDRU doctoral scholarship from the Romanian Academy (2014-2015)

Conference presentations in Romania, France, UK, Hungary, Sweden

Published articles on historical demography, social and institutional history of Wallachia (1830-60), slavery in Wallachia

Books (studies and published archival documents) Recensământul și administrația publică în Țara Românească. Studiu de caz și documente de arhivă despre recensământul general al Țării Românești inițiat în 1837 [Census and public administration in Wallachia. Case study and archival documents about the general census of Wallachia initiated in 1837]. Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română – Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2015 Familia în timpul robiei: o perspectivă demografică. Studiu și liste de populație din arhive [Family during slavery: a demographic perspective. Study and population lists]. Iași: Editura Universității "Al. I. Cuza". 2015

Căsătoria robilor: între alegerea cuplului și voința stăpânului. Studiu și documente de arhivă despre căsătoriile robilor din Țara Românească după 1830, [Marriage and slavery: between the couple's choice and and master's will. Study and archival documents about the marriage of slaves in Wallachia after 1830]. Brașov: Etnous. 2014

THE STRUCTURE OF RURAL HOUSEHOLDS IN 19TH CENTURY MOLDAVIA AND WALLACHIA: APPROACHING OLD CENSUSES, REVISITING PARADIGMS

Abstract

This research intends to contribute to historical household studies for Moldavia and Wallachia, taking on an approach still new in Romanian historiography: micro-analysis of population samples. We used data from two 19th century censuses (1838 and 1859) to help develop a historical paradigm as an alternative to a field in which sociologic theories elaborated since the 1930s are still Influential. While not perfect, our results show that knowledge on this subject can be improved through a systematic demographic approach. There is great potential to reconceptualize the inner workings of the household and to connect them both with international frameworks, as well as to different socio-economic contexts of the age, otherwise ignored.

History Depending on Sociology

The household lies at the core of individuals' private life. In historical times it was both a unit of production and consumption, as well as a medium of transmitting social and spiritual norms. It was both subject of policy making and a determinant of broader evolutions. For the Old Kingdom of Romania, the breakup of the household amid the children's marriage, coupled with inheritance, was seen as one of the reasons why smallholding agriculture could not develop, and as one of the causes of the failure of the 1864 land reform. By sociologists, simple households were seen as a determinant of the communal trait of the Romanian village. Overall, it is no wonder that family and household studies are an important focus in the broader field of humanities. One way of framing the subject is through family and household forms. While this approach is not purely demographical, historical demography played a key role in uncovering and understanding family forms, while at the same time

probing theories coming from non-statistical backgrounds. The idea of preindustrial complex households, as an expression of close family ties, was challenged by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, who used statistical methods to better understand what was a product of generalization. Since the 1960s and 70s, this progressed into mapping Europe according to social behaviors related to household patterns, and into raising questions about the link between these patterns and society and economy as a whole.

Romanian household studies largely remained outside this evolution, although the Romanian traditional household did make its way on the international stage. Trying to place the Romanian principalities on a historical map of social practices in Europe, historians like Maria Todorova, Karl Kaser and others inspired themselves from the work of Romanian sociologists, particularly those of Henri Stahl, greatly popularized by his son and follower, Paul Stahl. They postulated that the household was simple, new households formed at marriage, except for the last-born son who remained with his parents after his marriage, thus starting a new phase in the old household's evolution. Since this was the result of fieldwork done since the 1930s, its use lead to overgeneralization, not lacking awareness that "to project ethnographic findings back in time would be at least precipitous, and often incorrect".¹ Projections were made, nonetheless. French sociologists Daniel Chirot used this theory in the same context he discussed serfdom, State and economy in medieval period.² At the same time Romanian sociologists were unsure whether the realities they observed applied to earlier ages, and, opposite to Chirot, admitted the possibility of the existence of more complex forms.³

Nevertheless the recourse to sociology was inevitable, since Romanian academia did not develop a field primarily dedicated to the demography of historical household forms, although preserved sources were known⁴ and research was initiated. Ecaterina Negruți took on the task of working with population samples based on historical sources and shed light on family, life cycle and living arrangements of different communities in 18th- and 19th century Moldavia.⁵ Her work, published in 1984, included analysis on household structure and is so far the best for the outer-Carpathian regions. The downside was that she used minimal samples and did not connect with the discussion from the international field, or with the postulations of sociology. Since then, interest for this area feathered away, with only sporadic and lighter contributions, in papers or books where it was not the main subject. Romanian historical demographers

remained attached to more general (land accessible) topics. We only referred to the historiography for the two principalities and for the Old Kingdom of Romania, since this territory and context is more familiar to us. In opposition, Historians of Transylvania made significant headways in family and household demography (loan and Sorina Bolovan, Luminița Dumănescu, Crinela Holom, Daniela Deteșan, Șarolta Solcan, Levente Pakot, just to name a few).

The Romanian "traditional" household in the past: where do we carry on from?

The above critique was meant not only to highlight the slow progress of Romanian academia preoccupied with the territory of Old Kingdom, but also to address the usefulness of current concepts within the prospects of expanding the field. Having a historical population sample of several tens of thousands of individuals offers the opportunity of detailed analysis, and, with it, the challenge of what and how to address in the analysis. Like for any other subject, one could consider testing current knowledge, applying concepts used by international academia, or stepping into unexplored terrain and perform data mining. In our case, all options were considered, each carrying its difficulties.

Taking on the sociologic paradigm was problematic firstly because it did not use statistics to back its claims. Despite intensive documentation on economy, health, habitat, social practices in general, living patterns escaped statistical approaches. Even in the most detailed statistical inquiries, household structure proved one objective too far. The 1938 fieldwork undertaken by teams of students lead by Dimitrie Gusti did gather information on household size (number of members) and household headship by age and gender.⁶ Composition (co-living of different kind of families and/or single individuals, kin or non-kin) is not reflected in this work. A promising breakthrough was made by Henri Stahl and Ion Nicolescu in their research on village Nereju, where they classified households according to structure.⁷ Unfortunately, this new method did not mainstream into Romanian sociology, not even in Stahl's later works, neither in those of Paul Stahl. Generalization based on field observations or interviews (both coupled with vague observation in non-statistical historical sources) prevailed over strong empiricism.

Even so, sociology still provides a valuable reference point that could be used to model family and household metrics. Even if we do not know exactly how spread were the postulated patterns, we can attempt to measure them ourselves. Plus, even if it lacks hard data, sociology is still useful in offering explanations for certain social practices, thus pathways to interpreting statistic inquiries. But such a task is still not without difficulties because at some levels theories become too general and too vague, thus difficult to integrate into an empirical framework. Even if we have data and want to test the paradigm, it's not easy to know what to compare our results to. The biggest conceptual problem is the blurry distinction (or, rather, lack of distinction) between social norms and reality. The reader of sociologic studies is often left guessing if certain postulations describe realities, or rather they express, from the point of view of the interviewed subjects, a desired outcome in ideal socio-economic conditions. Let's take for example the idea of ultimogeniture: the last born remaining inside the household and subsequently marrying there. How many parents had more than one boy and survived to see him married? How many last born sons survived until marriage? Otherwise said, to what extent was this rule even demographically possible, especially in historical times, pre 20th century? The same can be asked about the separation at marriage. Since it was conditioned by endowment, what happened when it could not be provided? How often did parents fail to endow their children and how did this affect household formation?

Once more, it is not in any way to say that ethnography is barren. On the contrary, it left us with a treasure of information on kinship, folklore, habitat, rural economy. It is just that household structure was strangely left outside thorough documentation and analysis. It is also important to note that Henri Stahl added a historical dimension to his contributions. Some studies are extremely detailed and analytical, combining a whole array of sources – his study on underground dwellings.⁸ Again, the household, as understood in this study (as the domestic group), was left out of these historical endeavors.

This being said, when attempting to improve the knowledge in the field, the sociological paradigm offers only a general reference. The idea that contemporary households were simple was not original, as the idea was known before. Given the general terms used to express it, it was impossible not to have been known. The possibility of households having been more complex in past times (issue raised, but not probed) might just as well be an independent hypothesis, formulated as part of any effort related to the subject, in itself is not unique to Romanian inter-

war sociology. The most important suggestion that we could take is that regarding social norms. What sociologists suggested we should look for is the separation of children at marriage, who would have formed independent households from anyone else (*neolocality*).⁹ We should also mind the particular relationship between the last-born son and the parents, linked to coresidence. We are free to assume that later could translate into different instances: both couples present (we will refer to this as a *stem-ultimogeniture* pattern); one couple plus one widowed parent; parents plus unmarried child; a combination of all. We are also free to expand the focus on any other documented living arrangements. For all this, a systematic approach is necessary.

Therefore, we incorporated these *suggestions* into a broader framework of profiling household structure in historical times: that used by historical demographers. Not that this approach is free of pitfalls. One is conceptual, highlighted in the next section, the other is of perspective. The sources used here - census forms - are often described as snapshots of communities and residences. They tell us who lived with whom at a moment in time. We might know the relation between them but are left uniformed on their relation to others within the community or their past or future events. Classifying households by structure does not necessarily reveal social practices because one household could change composition along its lifetime. After the works of the Cambridge Group for Population studies were published, they attracted strong criticism for just this reason. To compensate, historical demographers turned to so-called life-course analysis: analyzing living patterns by age groups. This can be done from the point of view of the household, as well as from the point the view of the individual. Such an approach is the best proxy indicator for a longitudinal perspective. Even if it does not tell us what every individual went through during their lifetime, it shows what individuals of certain ages experienced, thus indicating life stages. For testing the sociological paradigm, centered on household formation and evolution, this type of analysis for census forms is our best option. In our Ph.D. thesis and in this paper, our primary goal was to document household patterns by performing two main sets of analysis household structure and life-course analysis.

Given the limitations of this publication, important methodological details, as well as bibliographical references, discussions and contextual elements, had to be omitted or oversimplified. A vast dissemination of source quality also had to be skipped.

Core Concepts

Household is a term loosely used, meaning different things in different instances. In Romanian sociology and ethnography, household can refer to human habitat, defined as the buildings within the same enclosure. It can also mean the same mobile property (tools, livestock, etc.), as well as the group of people within the enclosure. In the field of historical demography, the definition refers to the inhabitants of the same living space. A more precise definition could stem from the debate on what characteristics should be considered when looking at living quarters and the relationship between individuals inhabiting them. What is a shared space, and what counts as sharing?

Living together was most often hard to infer from population lists. Shared activities are safely assumed in the case of groups consisting of close kin (such as a nuclear family and its extensions) and even non-kin (like servants). But they become less transparent as more numerous individuals and families were grouped by the census agent under the same unit. It's harder to tell how tied together were unrelated families, lodgers, inmates. It's even harder to know if they shared common rooms (like the kitchen), or just happened to share the same building. The building does not necessarily fit the definition because it could comprise several households (like modern-day apartment blocks). For this reason, historians felt the need to distinguish between kin groups and residential groups in general. Even if the distinction, as Mikołaj Szołtysek points out, ¹⁰ is purely artificial, at least for some historical contexts, it still offers us a way to distinghuish between groups that are more simple and groups that are more complex. Current concepts originated in the work of the Cambridge Group, of Peter Laslett, Hammel and Richard Wall.¹¹ In practice, they used the term *household* to describe only close related kin living together. The term houseful was coined to designate the group inhabiting the same premise or building.

Another issue is that of economic and institutional establishments, where people not only worked or served, but also lived: shops, barracks, monasteries, institutional facilities, etc. Most historians exclude these, only accounting for "ordinary" households. The trouble is that most of the times, population lists do not mark such cases where they existed. Even when they do, historians exclude them from analysis, as focus usually fell on the importance of kinship.

Our sources posed the same problems. First, we only have a general idea of what the spatial unit of recording was: the *house* (casa). We don't know the situation on enclosure/premise-level, nor within each house (if, for example, there were multiple guarters/apartments). The later issue might seem attenuated by the small size of the houses at that time.¹² Limited to the *house* as the unit of spatial analysis offered by the census form, we then faced several obstacles in analyzing the data and presenting the results in this paper. First, the two sources were incompatible in fully breaking down the information on relation inside the house. The Wallachian census records everyone in the house and information about their relation to the household head. The Moldavian census, while again listing anyone under one roof, specifies the relation only inside nuclear families (with rare occasions). The relation between some nuclear families can be inferred by name and age of the heads, but, since it had to be done manually, it proved too time-consuming. In the current stage, we were compelled to compare the two samples by houses classified according to the number (not also type) of coresidential families and/or single individuals. Therefore, the house being so far the unit of analysis, would correspond to the academic equivalent of the houseful, although the situation on enclosure level – covered in Romanian censuses only since 1912 - would have provided better common ground. One might argue that in practice the difference between the two concepts in our rural population samples is slim.

For the sake of the simplicity imposed by editorial bounds, we classified them according to a modified and very simplified version of the Hammel-Laslett scheme, which is used for household classification. Since we applied it to housefuls, we included all the individuals (kin and non-kin). We used the following types:

- 1. Housefuls without family
- 2. -- with one nuclear family only¹³
- 3. -- with a nuclear family plus one or more single individuals
- 4. -- with more than one nuclear family

By single individuals, we mean individuals that do not live alongside their nuclear family. Regardless of whether they were single or not, those living in a house in which they were not the head, or part of the head's nuclear family, will be referred to as *coresidents*.

Regarding economic establishments, our sources are somewhat transparent in identifying them, the Moldavian census to a greater degree. We decided to include them in the analysis, differentiating them between

ordinary houses, when necessary. We opted to do so because for some segments of the population living there was more frequent than for others, for some even dominant. Almost all Jews in the rural Moldavian sample shared this pattern. Furthermore, it is also relevant when looking at the inner workings of ordinary households and life cycle of individuals: some, upon leaving the parental household, forming an independent household was not within their means or desire, but instead chose to engage in employment, (another aspect that sociology overlooked).

Sources and Population Samples

While our thesis was based in most part on the 1838 census of Wallachia, this project was initially designed to value newly discovered manuscripts from 1859 census of Moldavia, all from district Iași¹⁴ (Map 1). Unfortunately, during the transcription of the material, we encountered the sample problem as we previously did for Wallachia: some census takers decided to ignore the order of recording individuals by house. Out of seven subdistricts, only in two (Stavnic and Codru) were the instructions adequately followed. In Bahlui, Branistea, Copou and Turia, the recording was by fiscal family, while in Cârligătura house numbers were given only to house owners (not also to coresidents¹⁵ as well, except in sporadic cases). Thus, the total sample of 43000 individuals could be used in analysis related to nuclear family, while only the forms for the first two mentioned sub-districts (summing up some 13000 people) could be used for household analysis. This predicament pushed us to add Wallachia to the project by creating an entirely new sample from those used in our thesis.

While for Moldavia we selected the whole rural population that was publicly available, the Wallachian sample was drawn by two principles: 1. It should be extracted from circumscriptions where recording is sure to have been performed by house (or, at least is of optimal quality in this regard). 2. It should be as geographically diverse as possible, to explore the role different ecosystems might have played. We isolated a part of Eastern Wallachia that fitted these requirements. It is a strip of land that stretched in the districts of Slam-Râmnic and Buzău,¹⁶ from the mountainous border with Moldavia and Austria in the North, to the plains South of the town of Buzău. According to the census, it was populated by some 38000 people. We employed a geographically oriented filter of analysis, grouping the

villages into eleven micro-regions, in turn grouped in larger regions, as follows (the numbering follows that from Map 2):

Two micro-regions situated in the hills and mountains, on the country's Northern border:

(1) Râmnic North¹⁷ (7 villages, 2329 people)

(2) Slănic North (8 vilages, 4124 people)

Four micro-regions situated in the hills, some containing parts of more than one subdistrict:

- (3) Râmnic South (8 villages, 3182 people)
- (4) Slănic Center (9 villages, 3712 people)
- (5) Slănic South (12 villages, 4336 people)
- (6) Câlnău (11 villages, 3236 people)

Five micro-regions situated in the plains, all within Câmpu subdistrict: Two on the river Buzău:

- (7) river Buzău left bank (16 villages, 3793 people)
- (8) river Buzău right bank (11 villages, 2613 people)

Two on the river Călmățui:

- (9) river Călmățui West (12 villages, 3590 people)
- (10) river Călmățui East (8 villages, 3847 people)

One on district Buzău's Southern border; the most Southern part of subdistrict Câmpu:

(11) Câmpu South (5 villages, 2661 people)

Results will be presented both by micro-region and by the wider area they were part of: mountains and hills; hills; plain – river Buzău; plain – river Călmățui; Câmpu – South.

The Moldavian sample instead was more diverse population-wise. Here, Romanians made up 83% of the population (as opposed to over 90%). Roma were the second most numerous ethnic group (12%), followed by Jews (1.5%). Hence, some figures will be presented according to population group.

Results of the statistical analysis

A brief look at the results for the nuclear family alone, merely confirms what we expected from historical Eastern Europe: universal marriage, men married later and remarried more often than women. Without going too much into it (since it is not our main focus), we'll stop by pointing out some nuances. Early marriage, measured as the share of married girls ages 15-19 seems more prevalent in the Moldavian sample, and among Roma women in both samples, confirming previous results on larger samples of Wallachian Roma communities.¹⁸ Both Romanians and Roma in the Wallachian sample seemed to have had more (surviving) children than their counterparts in the Moldavian sample (Chart 4 - even if it refers to boys and married couples, it can be extrapolated for wider segments).

As a crude measure of living arrangements, housefuls in both samples proved to be mostly simple, composed of only a nuclear family (Chart 1). But, as discussions in the fields show, a simple profiling of domestic groups by structure inherently oversimplifies key behaviors like household formation and the relation between generations. So, a thorough dissemination and a careful look at nuances are necessary.

Out of the two samples, the Moldavian one shows the most complexity. Accounting for all houses with coded information, 65% of them hosted a single nuclear family. Some 16% also included at least one additional single individual (not the householder's child or partner), while 14% had two nuclear families or more. If we exclude from the analysis those houses that might be considered economic establishments, thus considering only those owned by the householder, then the percentages still remain roughly the same. Important differences can be seen across population groups.

At most age groups individuals spent their lives in simple housefuls, but in certain life stages, we find a mix of simple and complex patterns (Charts 5 and 6). The entrance into maturity coincided with sharing the living space with one's partner and children, also with someone else as well. Even among Romanian farmers, neolocality was less than half. In the next stages (over the age of 30), patterns become more simple, suggesting that individuals gradually became more independent. However, as they reached more advanced stages of life, they again began living alongside someone else, kin or non-kin. Men again drop to the 40-50% mark of *simplicity*, while the share of women living in simple housefuls declines dramatically, well under 30%, starting with the age of 60. Among former slaves and their descendants (the Roma people), this evolution was similar, although harder to observe, given the irregularities that spar at certain age groups, given the smaller size of the sample.

The sampled population of Wallachia showed more simple structures, with a staggering 84% single-family housefuls, 10% type 3, and only 3% multiple family housefuls. But what's interesting about this sample is its differentiation when broken down geographically.

In the hills and mountains, simple housefuls were overwhelming, with percentages as high as 90% (Chart 1). Multiple family housefuls barely register, with a maximum 2% in Slănic North-West. The most common form of complex households was nuclear family + single individual(s), but still generally under 10%. Predictably, the life cycle of individuals suggests very strong nuclear tendencies. Household formation is almost always about neolocality: 85-90% of married young men (ages 20-29) appear to have lived separated from other families, other than their own (Map 2). The same is observed for later years and into elderliness. Old age for adults of both genders (especially for couples) coincided with the sole company of the spouse and/or unmarried children (Charts 5 and 6). Looking at people over 40 years old in the two micro-regions spanning across the Northern border, 35% of widows and 26% of widowers were coresidents. In the hills, the analysis showed 35% and 18%, respectively (Map 4).

Lowlands proved significantly different from highlands, at the same time pretty divers. All lowland micro-regions still registered a majority of simple housefuls, but, as the general principle of our study goes, lifecourse should be considered more relevant than an aggregate of houseful and household types. Having this in mind, we observed that there were lowland micro-regions resembling the highlands, with dominant levels of nuclear behavior. On the river Buzău, simple housefuls were 84% of the total, neolocality was at 75% (age group 20-24) and 81% (25-29) (Map 2). However, coresidence among the elderly was higher. More complex patterns could be observed in the two micro-regions on the Călmățui valley, and even more complex further South. Here, one micro-region stood as its own category. Câmpu South resembles more the Moldavian sample than the Wallachian highlands. Single-family housefuls were only 65%, and simplicity drops when we analyze by age groups. Neolocality applied for some 43%-50% of young men heads of family. The majority of widowed persons were coresidents, with the highest percentage predictibily found among women - 81%, compared to just 23% in, for example, Râmnic North.

To conclude so far, even though in both samples the majority of houses were inhabited by a single nuclear family, social behavior still varied quite a lot across age, gender and region. In the Moldavian subdistricts of Stavnic and Codru, as well as in the most Southern tip of the Wallachian sampled area, early adulthood and old age witnessed mixed behavior (simple and complex). In these stages, half or over half of families/single persons shared the house with various others. At the same time, the sampled population from the Wallachian hills and mountains was dominated by simplicity at all stages of life.

How much can we generalize these results?

Given the small size of our sample relative to the overall population of the principalities, to what extent can we expect to find these patterns beyond our regional (and micro-regional) case studies? Confronted with the lack of detailed sources for a wider territory - which would be the ideal framework - we resorted to maximizing the use of census aggregates. We extracted two crude measurements: household size, measured as the number of people per house (HHS), and the average number of marital units (couples) per house (MUH), as a rough indicator of household structure. We then proceeded to map the principalities according to values at subdistrict level. Of course, being only aggregates, such measurements do not directly refer to complex behavior such as nelocality and old age coresidence. However, within the Wallachian sample, from one region to another, we did observe a strong correlation between the two sets on indicators (neolocality, coresidence, etc. - HHS, MUH). Therefore, one can assume a likelyhood of HHS and MUH varying according to the described behaviors on country level as well. We did not manage to develop an exact method of generalization, we only based our assumption on descriptive reading from the sample analysis. We took the most simple and the most complex micro-regions, extracted HHS and MUH, then saw where similar values appeared on the country's map, when analyzing census aggregates.

We searched for sources covering the entirety of either principality, giving the number of rural houses, as well as the number of people and that of married couples. Another option considered was the number of fiscal families, but our analysis showed that results could be distorted by different understandings of the concept, from one subdistrict to another. Given these criteria, the only matching source we found was the 1859 census summary of Wallachia.¹⁹

Performing the analysis mentioned above, the results on country level were very similar to those on micro-level (Map 3). Highlands generally showed low values, indicating more simple patterns, lowlands the opposite, but with significant nuances. The exact degree in which life course coresidence manifested themselves according to these values is debatable. For now, we can only propose various thresholds that can be considered markings for higher likelihood of some patterns:

- HHS<4.5, MUH<0.94. Found in the hills and mountains, these values would correspond to the most extreme nuclear behavior documented for Wallachia, described in the previous section. In 1859 subdistricts with these characteristics were found especially in the Northern half of Oltenia.
- HHS>4.9, MUH>0.98 found in micro-regions Câmpu South and Călmățui East (partially in Călmățui West), correspond to a mix of complex and nuclear behaviors. In 1859 such values cover the plains in Eastern Wallachia and those bordering the Danube (with some exceptions).
- HHS = 4.5-4.9, MUH<0.96. Hard to interpret. Low value of MUH would suggest nuclear patterns regarding whole families, but high HHS would point towards either more children, either more coresident single individuals. Overall, this would be characterized as leaning towards nuclear behavior. The fact that such cases appear more in the Norther half of the country (where nuclear patterns tend to be) consolidates this assumption.
- HHS = 4.5-4.9, MUH>0.96. Hard to interpret simmilar to the micro-regions on river Buzău? Nuclear patterns still dominant, leaning towards mixed?

Confronting factual paradigms: Where does the ethnographic paradigm fit in?

In interpreting our results, the Wallachian census of 1838 is more permissive in putting general socio-demographic theories to the test because it records relation inside the household, not just within the nuclear family.

The highlands stood out as a territory of simplicity. They confirmed the idea of marriage coinciding with household formation, but posed certain obstacles in affirming the stem-ultimogeniture pattern. A phase where two married couples (young and old) shared the same house did not seem to have existed in the studied population. The next instance we need to consider is that of only a single parent getting to reach the stage where their last-born son got to marry, inheriting the house along with caretaking responsibilities. Again, this can only be described as a rarity. The threshold of 13.8% of households that Henri Stahl found for Nereju (comprising both married and widowed parents living with married offspring) was nowhere near reached in our samples. We could only trace aprox. 100 cases out of over 4800 houses. We restate the observation that, in the hills and mountains, most elderly persons (including single individuals) did not live as coresidents. Even where some did seem to depend upon the caretaking of a householder, it was not only in a parents-son combination. A "traditional" parent-son arrangement was the majority only in fringe segments, such as very old widows (over 70). Moreover, even in the few cases where parents and married children did share the house, the ultimogeniture rule was not always respected, since in many cases a younger brother lived in the house as well. This shows that the married son was not the youngest. The concept of nuclear reincorporation was used by the Cambridge Group and others to describe how all the children separated from parents at marriage, but eventually, the parent would be reunited with one of them in extreme circumstances (incapacity, very old ages, etc.).²⁰ This concept might just as well explain old age coresidence found in the Wallachian pattern. Hopefully, future micro-simulation models and information connecting individuals from outside the household will help clarify the validity of this theory in our case. Expanding our view beyond the transition from one generation to another, it should be noted that coresidence - as rare as it was observed - was pretty divers, comprising parents, parents-in-laws, siblings and siblings-in-law, but also servants (Chart 2).

Wallachian lowlands, because of their diversity (most likely reflected on a country level as well), should be analyzed accordingly. Micro-regions Câmpu South and Călmățui East, the most complex ones, contradict from the start the idea of marriage coinciding with the separation of young couples from parents, since only half lived independently. Again, bringing statistical detail and conceptual nuance to the table, we see that the other half disproves sociologic theory. We basically observe the same issues as with the highlands. Even though coresidence happened more often, the patterns were somehow divers, not limited to parents and sons (Chart 2). Moreover, even when the latter instances did occur, it was not always with the last born, since younger brothers were present.

To conclude for Wallachia, depending on geography (landscape), patterns of household formation and structure seem either more complex, either simpler than postulated by sociologists for their subjects since the 1930s. Otherwise said, patterns were more nuanced, to a point in

which we need to employ new concepts and models to work with. In the highlands, the rule (preference) seemed oriented to as much separation as possible, transcending kin and ultimogeniture. Only a minority of widowed persons lived with their offspring.

In the most Southern areas of our sample, closer ties manifested insofar as sharing the same house, again going beyond simple parents-last born relationship. What might have worked here is a pattern in which regardless of birth order, children remained with their parents after marriage, but only for a short while. The parents could had gone through several such phases after the last born could had remained, this time for good. The stem-ultimogeniture might apply for some lowland regions, (river Buzău – left and right bank) but was certainly not the only form of co-residence.

For Moldavia nuances are harder to pinpoint, since important information is missing. Given the similarities to the microregion Câmpu South, we can explore with the plausible hypothesis that this sample too had more nuances rather than fitting the rough consideration of Henri and Paul Stahl.

Discussions and Hypothesis

Our findings show that living patters escalated from nuclear to mixed (nuclear and complex). There was a tendency to separate, that in some regions was pushed to the limits, while in others was suppressed. Why these differences, and why cannot the sociologic paradigm fit these observations on the 19th century?

Longitudinal demography: fertility, mortality, nuptiality. They have been discussed as potential limitations to complex living patterns, overwriting social norms. For example, Steven Ruggles argued that coresidence of the elderly in preindustrial societies could not have been possible at a large scale because of late marriages and high mortality.²¹ Other authors dismissed the importance of this factor, noting that different patterns might appear on populations with the same rates.²² Our results affirm the need for a cautious, nuance-sensitive and case-to-case approach when accounting for this factor. Indeed, it can be presumed to have had an important role, in so far as it did not allow a large scale presence of stem-ultimogeniture households. It seems that high fertility combined with high rates of remarriages meant that at least one unmarried son would be living with the householder until his or her late stages of life. This was

especially true in the case of the Wallachian sample, where even after 50 years, at least 70%(!) of all adults lived with at least one unmarried son. This should be considered a main reason for which the ultimogeniture theory could not broadly apply. It seems that life expectancy was too low, and children too many for stem-ultimogeniture households to form and dominate the social scenery. Alternatively, there was not enough time within the life cycle of individuals for such a pattern to manifest. However it is more difficult to carry the discussion from this point on. A number of cases could still have been possible, especially among widowed parents, and they are visible especially in the lowlands, as more widowed mothers lived with their sons. It remains for future endeavors to establish more exactly the influence of the longitudinal factors, and if it can explain geographical differentiations.

Wealth. Proved a good predictor of household and houseful structure, in the sense that it corelated positively with complexity. This was the case in both samples. In subdistricts Stavnic and Codru, this showed on a multitude of indicators. To give only a few examples within the present editorial constraints, we'll start with the value (Austrian florins) of mobile wealth of households, split into four tiers: 0-5, 6-10, 11-15, over 16. The percentage of complex housefuls within each tier is as follows: 23%, 27%, 32%, and 45%. In the Wallachian sample analysis yielded similar results when looking at the number of livestock per household. This relation (wealth-complexity) appears to fit a pattern observed in many parts of preindustrial Europe, like Hungary,²³ Serbia,²⁴ Scandinavia,²⁵ Bulgaria,²⁶ although the situation becomes more nuanced when considering occupations other than farming.²⁷

However, while they might appear as linear, these metrics could be the aggregate product of several different instances, strategies and social norms. Those having agricultural or domestic (or mixed) employees had more livestock than those without. In this case, houseful structure came as a result of needed farmhands, in turn determined by the larger amount of resources. Young householders living with coresident parents also had more livestock, which could be a result of inheriting whatever resources parents had left, as sociologists pointed out. Wealth can also be discussed from a geographical point of view, explaining why some regions had more complex household structures than others, as follows.

Ecosystems and general economy. Having the previous correlation in mind, it is no wonder that, in the case of the Wallachian sample, the geographical distribution of living patterns overlaps with one related to the general economy. Highlands and lowlands were different in terms of the quantity of certain resources. In a rough description, the plains used more livestock for farming more land, and had more pastoral animals, while highlands excelled more in tree and vine growing (as well as in some domestic livestock, like cows). One way to interpret this dichotomy in relation to household economy is by considering labor intensity. It is obvious that more plow cattle and cultivated land required a higher amount of labor, and this could explain the higher frequency of complex living patterns in the lowlands, as the following table suggests.

indicator	mountains and hills	hills	plain - river Buzău	plain - river Călmățui	micro-region Câmpu-South
% complex housefuls	8%	9%	14%	21%	35%
% married men ages 25-29, living only w. fam.	88%	86%	81%	74%	50%
houseful size	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.9	5.1
% men with 4 oxen or more	5%	6%	19%	37%	59%
% men with no oxen	57%	52%	36%	27%	24%
pastural livestock per individual	2.7	1.9	2.1	2.5	4.3
cultivated land (ha) per house	0.7	0.8	1.7	1.9	2.1
vineyard (ha) per house	0.033	0.132	0.097	0.022	0.019
fruit trees (no.) per house	26.5	18.8	7.3	0.1	0.0

Children remained in the parental household even after marriage in order to supplement as farmhands. More servants were employed for the same reason. More of the elderly were coresidents because caretaking in a labor-intense economy was probably more needed. Also, the fact that they had more assets to leave to next generation could've meant that more of them could exchange resources for caretaking. Nuclear hardship,²⁸ or what was hypothesized as a lighter possibility of satisfying material insurance and benefits in smaller family groups, was probably felt strongly in a more labor-intensive economy. Not only this not seemed to be the case in the hills and mountains, but the same resources could have required less labor than in the plains. For example, oxen used in the plains for plowing might have been used less so in the highlands, and more for transport. This could explain why in highland microregions the share of complex housefuls among upper-class farmers (4 oxen or more) was smaller (27-30%) than in Câmpu South (43%). Crucially, a great deal of the household resource management - tree and vine growth - did not require as much labor as land cultivation. If we accept that these implied tasks more accessible to women, children, and the elderly, than we can assume that there was a greater labor participation of individuals that were not adult males. Thus, simple patterns of living could have sufficed to a higher degree, not needing extra hands. This conclusion would generally fit the findings of anthropologists²⁹ (although not unchallenged³⁰) relating to female labor participation, lower in plough economies than in hoe eocnomies or those based on horticulture. The impressive number of independent (household-wise) widows and widowers in mountainous Wallachia (coupled with stronger headship of women there) can be explained within this framework.

Occupation and socio-professional categories. Going beyond farming, a closer look at the Moldavian sample (which is socially more divers) reveals a strong tie between living arrangements and social status and occupation. The vast majority of former nobles lived in complex households, indicative of affordable domestic service, as well as the household acting as the economic center of the estate, hosting some of the employees. The clergy also experienced high levels of complexity, as one social category that was slightly wealthier than farmers. The lack of precise information on relationship among all coresidents means that sometimes it's hard to determine the exact nature of such patterns. For Jews, the reason is certainly related to economy, in turn influenced by status and lack of civil rights. Not having the right to own lands, most of them turned to commerce and holding taverns, which they rented from estate owners. In rural, Moldavia, taverns and their premises constituted both their workplace and their home, which they often shared with journeymen and other employees. Thus, most Jews lived in complex housefuls (Chart 3).

Laws and regulations. They were discussed in the international field as determinants of complexity: more people or families chose to live together in order to pay less taxes. Sometimes (like in Russia³¹) landlords encouraged communal living as being more beneficial for the estate. No such pressure seems to have existed in our case since the household was not used as unit of taxation or to impose obligations in general (recruitment, labors, etc). The same applies to obligations due by small land tenants to large landowners. Sometimes laws even clarified that patrilocality or neolocality had no legal effect:

The Organic Regulation of Wallachia, art. 142.XII.:

Orice sătean căsătorit carele va avea o parte sau pe deplin aceste folosuri, deși s-ar afla măcar lăcuind subt un acoperiș cu părinții săi, va fi dator a răspunde proprietarului îndatoririle ce să cuvin...

[Any married villager who shall receive these benefits³² in part or in full, even if he dwells under the same roof as his parents, will be in debt to the land owner to fulfill the required obligations...]³³

The grand theme: land ownership. Some readers making this far into the paper might be asking: where are the small landowners - the free peasants / the moșneni? The entire sociologic talk about traditional households revolved around the ownership and transfer of land, with communal economy attached to it. The reality was that in the mid nineteenth century, a minority of the rural population owned land (as was the case with our samples). The reason we didn't prioritize this issue is that, following the statistical analysis, very few differences emerged between small landowners (moșneni) and small land tenants (clăcași). All the results we gave generally apply to both. In a separate past effort we looked at a different subdistrict, Câmpu from Romanati district.³⁴ The patterns there closely resembled those from Southern Buzău (high complexity), except about half the population were landowners. Again, no major differences between the population groups appeared. Overall, it seems that resources in general (not only land) shaped the structure of the household. The way in which land was used played just an important part (if not more important) than land ownership. Perhaps future analysis might reveal some peculiarities at some demographic segments, less on the population in general.

The great unknowns. So far, we've established several factors that explain or dismiss certain paradigms and theories. The interplay of others (some closely related) has so far been vague or hard to define, since the needed information is not present in our sources and a parallel research effort could not take place. We will at least tackle some hypotheses around them.

Communal economy/relations. A significant shortcoming of censusbased household demography is that it does not *see* beyond the units the census agent used to group or divide individuals. Kinship, social and economic networks outside the household are invisible, so their impact on household structure might be overlooked. This is one reason for which historical demography attracted harsh criticism,³⁵ although demographers were aware of this issue and never claimed to solve all of the problems by merely classifying and measuring households. The general premise of household demography is that persons who lived together had close ties, and this alone is meaningful to study. As for the wider context, it should be considered as an interdisciplinary problem rather than an insurmountable defect of household demography.

In our case extra-household relations are not expressed directly in the census forms, nor documented (by us) otherwise. In ethnologic studies, it has been postulated that households from the same community engaged in joint management of resources, thus the whole village acting like a household. However, this postulation has the same problem as household structure: it is covered by very general assessments and untested hypotheses, most of the time lacking enough conceptual precision to even be tested. For the lowlands, the idea of communal economy is dismissed by our findings that clearly show individual management of resources, indicated by patters and inferred strategies such as patrilocality and employment of farmhands. For the highlands, our findings do not exclude the idea of communal life but at the same time present a counter-theory: households were simple because, if managed individually, resources were much easier to use, thus no important external assistance was required. Of course, we don't exclude that joint management might have existed on a lower level, between relatives living separately and/or between direct neighbors. This leads us to:

Proximity. Such cooperation could have been spatially translated as a cluster of houses that shared certain interests. As Romanian ethnologists³⁶ pointed out, children could have built their house next to their parents, or brothers next brothers. Caretaking or resource sharing might had happened

between houses situated paces away. Some inventory and facilities might have been shared, as is the case for other historical contexts.³⁷ Thus, people might have shared the same activities that one would typically find among co-dwellers, but not live in within the exact same confines. The fact that they slept in separate neighboring buildings might be taken as a technicality, and not constituting a definitory in trait in conceptualizing the household. If this were true on a large scale, it would still not explain why the lowlands, where houses were closely packed together, had more complex housefuls. Again, measuring such issues was momentarily beyond our grasp, though not impossible. For the final form of our thesis, we will attempt to account for the order in which individuals are listed (as proxy indicator for proximity) and for kin networks inside each village.

The discussion on other factors such as habitat characteristics, mobility and inheritance had to be excluded from the current publication.

Conclusions

Historical household demography through micro-analysis is just one way of studying households in the past. Even if the sources we used are limited, a detailed analysis did manage to provide insight into the living patterns of the sampled rural population. At the same time, it offered a much needed empirical alternative to the easy but unsafe recourse of generalizing results of sociologic inquiries done in the inter-war era. Indeed, 19th century households reflected in the census forms were significantly more nuanced then those postulated. We showed that patterns linked to entering adulthood and old age were either simpler, or more complex than those expected based on sociological literature. The tendency for generations and families to separate not only varied, but also depended on much more than wealth transmission. It also went beyond the relation between parents and children. For a better understanding of 19th century households, we clearly need to look at labor relations, environment, longitudinal demography. The manner in which people shared living space was shaped by more and divers factors, as coresidents themselves were not only parents or married children, but also in-laws, siblings, servants.

NOTES

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- ³ Henri Stahl, *Contribuții la studiul satelor devălmașe românești. Volumul II : Structura internă a satelor devălmașe libere*, Cartea Românească, București, 1998, p. 101.
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- ⁷ Henri H. Stahl (ed.), Nerej. Un village d'une région archaïque. Vol. III: Les manifestations économiques, juridiques et administratives. Unités, procès et tendances sociales, Institutul de Științe Sociale al României, București, 1939, pp. 301-302.
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- ¹³ Nuclear family = head+spouse and/or unmarried children. Example: a married son and his widow mother = 1 family and 1 single individual.
- ¹⁴ Iaşi District Archives, fund Isprăvnicia Iaşi, as follows: for subdistrict Bahlui, units: 4967, 4969-4973, 5046; for Braniștea: 5013-5022, 5025-5045, 5062;

for Cârligătura: 5004, 5008-5011, 5057-5061; for Codru: 4979, 4981-4984; for Copou: 4975-4978, 5012; for Stavnic: 4958-4959, 4961-4966, 4968, 5047-5051; for Turia: 4980, 4985-5003, 5005, 5006.

- ¹⁵ This is problematic because people that lived in the same house were not listed consecutively, but by fiscal category. Tax payers were recorded first (in different categories), followed by those exempted. Since the latter have no house numbers (again, with some exceptions), it is hard to reconstruct their residence.
- ¹⁶ Romanian National Archives Central Office, fund Catagrafii, as follows: for subdistrict Câmpu (Buzău): I/92 (vol I, II); for Slănic: I/95: for Râmnic: I/103.
- ¹⁷ The names given to these micro-regions combine the name of rivers and of administrative units; they are purely conventional and should not be taken literally. (example: a hydronym does not imply that the whole of the basin was documented). See Map 2 for guidance.
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- ³¹ Tracy Dennison, "Housheold formations, institutions, and economic development: Evidence from imperial Russia", in *The History of the Family*, 16 (2011), 456-465.
- ³² The land received by each villager from the land owner.
- ³³ Zaharia Carcalechi (ed.), *Regulamentul Organic, întrupat cu legiuirile din anii* 1831, 1832 și 1833, și adăogat la sfârșit cu legiuirile de la anul 1834 până acum, împărțite pe fiecare an, precum și cu o scară deslușită a materiilor, Tipografia Curții, București, 1847, p. 81.
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Annexes



Map 1: Sampled territory.



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Map 2: Wallachian sample, 1838: percentage of male heads of nuclear family living only with their spouse and/or children, by age group.



Map 3: Wallachia, 1859 census, rural population. Subdistricts by proxy indicators of household size and complexity (see section *How much can we generalize these results?*)



Map 4: Wallachia, sampled therritory, 1838. Micro-regions by the share of coresidents among widows and widowers of 40 years and older. Total pop. sample: 37423.



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Chart 1: Moldavian (M) and Wallachian (W) subsamples by houseful structure. Tot. pop. sample: 50469 (only Moldavian subdistricts Stavnic and Codru included)



Chart 2: Wallchian subsamples: number and types of cases of coresidence (per 100 houses). Total pop. sample: 37423

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Chart 4: Wallachian sample and Moldavian subsamples: the share of married couples with at least one unmarried boy, by age group of the husband. Total pop. sample: 80647 (from all Moldavian subdistricts).



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Chart 5: Moldavian (M) and Wallachian (W) subsamples: share of males living in single family housefuls, by age group



Chart 6: Moldavian (M) and Wallachian (W) subsamples: share of females living in single family housefuls, by age group (for legend see Chart 5)