

This project represents a pioneering analysis of the relationship between past family organization systems and the evolution of gender and age inequalities in European societies during early modern times and up to the 20th century in a broad comparative perspective. The project seeks to understand patterns, causes and implications of patriarchally-oriented family systems, using the Patriarchy Index developed within population history and an unprecedented set of comparative data on demography, economy, history and environmental conditions among 300+ historical regional populations between 1700 and 1926. Although explorations into European historical family forms have a long pedigree, earlier studies on this subject had not resulted in a comprehensive reconstruction of the historical geography of patriarchal family formations, nor had they been able to capture the actual spatial and cultural diversity of seemingly homogeneous structures of family patriarchy. This applies both to the differences within Europe in the past as well as to Europe's place in a broader comparative perspective. Using previously unavailable historical data and carefully selected research tools, the project attempts to answer three general questions: **(1)** *What were the main differences between historical European societies in terms of the degree of patriarchalisation of their family structures, and how do these patterned differences compare with other world societies?* **(2)** *How family systems with varying degrees of inequitable practices affected the agency and well-being of European women in the past with regards to social and family roles, living arrangements, or the ability to shape the course of one's own life?* **(3)** *What was driving the observed differences in the patriarchal organization of the family over Europe and how did these factors vary between populations from different parts of the continent?*

These three main sets of problems are analyzed in the respective research modules. The **first** aims at reconstructing historical localized indicators of gender and age inequality in European family systems; placing them in a broad comparative perspective; showing that apart from differences between weaker or stronger variants of *one system*, the observed historical variability entails significantly *different systems* of family patriarchy. The **second** module illustrates empirically how the patriarchal family organization influenced the economic welfare and well-being of women in the household, their participation in the non-family labor market and how it co-determined gender inequalities in human capital acquisition. Finally, module **three**, using a qualitative comparison of three societies from 18th-century Eastern Europe, confronts the different contexts of family patriarchy with the aim of understanding the historical, spatial, environmental, and political-economic underpinnings that could have shaped it.

The research is based on a harmonized set of historical and contemporary microdata from publicly available population censuses that were collected through the world-renowned Mosaic, North Atlantic Population (NAPP) and IPUMS-International projects. These data are analyzed by mobilizing theories from various humanities & social science disciplines, and using advanced statistical methods as well as qualitative comparative analysis.

The project's results will identify the most gender (and age) inequitable historical family systems in Europe and will allow for problematizing the notion of historical patriarchy as a complex and spatially contingent phenomenon where various contours of male and female agency coexisted. The project will also leverage new explanations for the diversity of female autonomy for a huge number of European populations in the past by invoking varying degrees of sex- and age-related social inequality across different family settings. To disseminate project results a series of approx. six research papers will be written & submitted in due course to leading peer-reviewed journals in the fields of historical demography, cross-cultural studies, gender studies, spatial demography and economic history.