

Abstracts

Coming of age in a corporate society: Capitalism, Pietism and family authority in rural Wurttemberg, 1590–1740

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The history of childhood in a weaving district of southwest Germany is used to test two major theories of social and familial authority in early modern society: the sub-Weberian view that capitalism and strict Protestantism intensified such authority, and the ‘proto-industrial’ view that rural capitalism broke it down. The paper argues that in Wurttemberg strict Protestantism and rural industry adapted themselves to and reinforced the social and familial policies of local corporate institutions, rather than leading to early capitalism. These institutions predated the advent of rural industry and Pietism and survived their assimilation. It is argued that the interplay between local institutions and the central state is crucial not only in the evolution of social and familial authority, but also in the transition to capitalism.

Inheritance strategies and lineage development in peasant society

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Preliminary studies of property devolution in peasant societies have highlighted broad contrasts between partible and impartible systems. Resulting regional classifications take little account of the more complex realities of inheritance and their relationship with the ecology of peasant life: sets of strategies involve marriage alliances, the regulation of family fertility, migration, property transfers and excursions into the land market. Detailed evidence from the archival records of Savoy are used to argue that the reality of peasant inheritance may best be explained by reference

to longer-term generational cycles of adjustment to changes in family composition and oscillations in economic opportunity.

Crafts in transformation?: Masters, journeymen and apprentices in a Swedish town, 1800–1850

Lars Edgren, *University of Lund*

An ‘ideal type’ model of pre-capitalist craft production provides the framework for an analysis of the craft system in Malmö during the late guild period. It emerged that workshops were small, and that workers were predominantly unmarried and lived in their masters’ household. While apprentices were used as a source of labour and had little prospect of ever becoming masters, the career chances of those journeymen who could remain in their trade were good. Their status as workers was no more than a temporary phase in their life course. The major building trades operated quite differently, since here the journeymen were life-long wage earners. The extent to which journeymen were conscious of their interests and able to defend them is also discussed.

The Stockholm marriage: extra-legal family formation in Stockholm 1860–1890

Margareta R. Matovic, *University of Stockholm*

With the exception of Vienna, Stockholm in the middle of the nineteenth century had the highest level of extra-marital fertility of large European cities. It is therefore not surprising that it is often referred to as a nest of sin. This article calls such a view into question. Many illegitimate children were born into marriage-like settings and later legitimised by their parents. During the period 1860–90, 42 per cent of the couples for which banns of matrimony were being called were cohabiting, and somewhat over 11 per cent legitimised their children by marrying. The present study reveals a hidden structure of extra-legal family formation, primarily amongst unskilled workers and recently arrived propertyless women, that closely paralleled family formation within the institution of marriage. It is argued that their ability to provide for themselves influenced their attitude toward pre-marital sexual relations.

Sex-specific mortality and economic opportunities: Massachusetts, 1860–1899

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This study examines sex-specific mortality patterns of 10- to 19-year-olds in nineteenth-century Massachusetts in the context of regionally specific opportunities for their economic productivity. We test the hypothesis that children who had the potential for contributing to the family income received more and/or better care to the extent where it is measurable in their mortality rates. County-, town- and household-level data are analysed. Results show that boys had the mortality advantage in rural areas, where their labour was valuable in agricultural settings. In urban areas where girls had opportunities to earn wages in millwork or as domestics, the mortality differential diminished or reversed.