

“Kinship and social security” in European comparison: rationale and research plan of an EU-funded project

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1. Introduction

KASS has now been under way for two years. A great deal of cross-national census and survey data has been assembled; the historical research teams have completed and revised their country reports; most of the field work is completed, and the fieldwork teams have also drafted their initial ethnographic reports. Preliminary quantitative analysis has also been carried out on the data from the first 340 kinship network questionnaires received from the field teams.

As the entire KASS research group is about to meet in Graz to discuss the findings so far, it seems an opportune moment to remind ourselves about the comparative, theoretical and policy agendas, and the ways in which the research design envisages that historical, ethnographic and quantitative analyses can be combined to address them.

A second reason for writing this paper is that increasingly members of the KASS consortium are finding ourselves invited to present accounts of KASS to seminars and conferences - and even to write articles setting out initial findings. In this situation there is a need for an authoritative statement of KASS's aims and methods to be made available - for general reference, and as a background to which the authors of more specific papers can refer. The present paper is intended to meet that need, and will be placed in the public part of the website. We hope that it will be the first of a series of methodological papers on KASS themes.

Given that our purpose is to explain the main features of the KASS research design, and the consideration that underlay it, we do not think that we can do much better than quote the proposal in the form that was eventually agreed with the EU research funding authorities. Most of the remainder of this paper is therefore a direct quotation from that document. A consequence of this is that the research plans are referred to in the future tense, even though a good part of what is described below has now happened. Rather than correct the tenses of the verbs we have preferred to leave the text as it was. *Where the implementation of the KASS differed substantially from the plans described in the application document we have inserted paragraphs in italics explaining the changes, and the reasons for them.*

The bibliography given at the end of this paper is based on the references cited in the original research proposal. Of course many other contributions to the literature are extremely important for the topics we address in this outline. At the moment they are not included, but they will be integrated in the final version of this paper which we intend to produce after the conference.

2. Overview

The state and the family (including the whole network of relatives) are the two greatest providers of social security in modern Europe. Like the state, the family provides care, education, financial support, and help in finding employment. It also influences (and occasionally controls) choices involving career and marriage. However the role of the family is not constant over time and space. We know, from statistical sources and from sociological and ethnographic studies, that it varies greatly between different parts of contemporary Europe. Changing patterns of marriage, cohabitation and divorce, declining fertility and aging populations, also have implications for the family's social security role. Though the role of kinship in social security has important implications for state and EU policy on social security, gender discrimination and social exclusion, it remains relatively little understood – despite challenging contributions in recent decades from anthropology, economics and evolutionary theory. One reason for this is that conventional data sources such as census and surveys do not collect the full range of data needed to evaluate these theoretical developments.

The only sort of data that is capable of capturing enough factual detail about kinship networks, while also investigating the way these relationships are actually experienced, is ethnographic fieldwork. One of the central ideas of this proposal is to use ethnographic methods, followed by both interpretative and mathematical analyses of the resulting data to illuminate the questions above. The second central idea is that current trends need to be understood in their historical context. The fieldwork studies will be carried out in eight European countries and will be placed in context by reviews of existing knowledge of the current social security role of kinship ties, and of the historical background. The implications for policy will be examined in the final part of the project.

3. Background and project objectives

Introduction

In all societies immediate family members are expected to help each other, but the kind of help expected, and the degree to which it is extended to more distant kin, is very variable. In Europe, recently published figures from the European Community Household Panel (ECHP) show dramatic differences in the proportion of widowed parents living with their children, and in the proportion of young people who leave the parental home before marriage (Eurostat 2002). These findings line up with ethnographic studies which, like the statistical figures just quoted, suggest that southern Europe is more family-oriented than the north – and go beyond the statistical results in exploring the importance of relations by marriage and descent in many areas of practical life. Although the formerly communist countries of Eastern Europe have only just begun to be covered by Europe-wide official surveys, and are as yet relatively lightly studied by social anthropologists, the evidence suggests that they resemble southern Europe in both these respects – but of course with specific features and some exceptions (IPTS/ESTO 2002 p102). These differences are paralleled by demographic differences: until a few decades ago the less family-oriented societies of northwest Europe enjoyed historically lower

fertility rates than the rest of the continent. The parallelism is still there, but now has the opposite sign, with the family-oriented societies of southern and eastern Europe now having exceptionally low fertility rates.

When looking at the situation at a point in time, the explanations offered for differences in the role of kinship connections tend to draw on various combinations of the following ideas

- the influence of custom and mutual expectation (or habitus)
- a range of practical motives:
 - ‘naturally’ altruistic feeling towards kin (self-reported; affirmed by evolutionary theory; and assumed in some economic analyses)
 - direct reciprocity (other versions of rational choice theory)
 - investing in moral relationships (this is the approach most emphasised by social anthropologists)
- the symbolic meanings associated with kinship (also widely drawn on by anthropologists).

The findings of European family history lend general support to an explanatory strategy that combines the different approaches. As shown by the studies of Goody, Mitterauer and others, European history is characterised by a process of mutual adaptation between kinship system, economy, state, religion and other parts of the socio-economic system. There is every reason to suppose that a full understanding of the social and economic role of kinship today needs to take account of all these dimensions of explanation. This is the reason for the combination of ethnographic fieldwork and formal analysis proposed above.

Why help your relatives?

If we want to understand and predict the extent of welfare support provided by relatives, we need to understand the reasons why kin might help each other. The answers to this question depend on cognition, motivation and circumstances. Most accounts are based on some combination of the following five *motives*

1. an altruistic desire to meet the relative’s needs,
2. a desire to reciprocate generosity already received,
3. a calculating desire to stimulate feelings of reciprocal obligation on the part of the kinsman you are helping,
4. a desire to reinforce the status of the family as a whole,
5. a desire to accumulate social capital yourself.

To quote the title of a book edited by Medick and Sabeian (1988), interactions between relatives are a matter of both interest and emotion.

These motivations yield differing predictions about helping behaviour. Here are some examples.

- Motive 1 suggests that the extent of help will vary inversely with the potential recipient’s resources, and directly with the potential donor’s resources. Hence it predicts genuinely redistributive behaviour.

- Actions inspired by motive 2 need not have any redistributive effect at all – though there may be some mutual benefit if each of the reciprocal gifts is made at a time when the donor is relatively affluent compared with the recipient. The tendency of assistance of this type is thus to increase the security of both parties.
- The same is true of actions inspired by motive 3 (which presuppose that the recipient will respond in line with motive 2). But motive 3 has an additional implication which is very important. In effect it involves a self-interested investment in what Bourdieu would describe as social capital. Whether such investments are worthwhile depends on what alternative investments of money and time are possible. If you have little economic capital, investment in kinship networks may be an effective way of ensuring that help will be available at times of exceptional need. However, if you are comparatively rich yourself, or if you feel adequately protected by state or private insurance, you may prefer to avoid involvement in kinship networks for fear that the obligations you would incur would outweigh the help you received in return. In that case you might prefer to invest directly in your own property.

Combinations of these three motives form the core of the discussion of mutual aid between relatives in the economic and evolutionary literature (Axelrod 1984; Becker 1991; Gérard-Varet et.al. 2000; Jones 2000). This literature predicts that there will be strong helping relations between some classes of kin. It also predicts some of the ways in which patterns of mutual aid are related to economic circumstances. One of the distinctions drawn in the anthropological literature is between ‘inclusive’ and ‘exclusive’ kinship systems (Schweitzer 2000). ‘Inclusive’ systems are those in which people use kinship connections to establish relations of mutual aid with as wide a group of kin as possible; ‘exclusive’ systems are those in which close kin are sharply marked off from the rest, and mutual aid is restricted to this narrow group. There is both ethnographic and historical data which suggest that inclusive systems tend to be found among relatively poor people, who effectively insure against misfortune by cultivating relationships of mutual aid, while exclusivity is more typical of prosperous groups with enough capital to withstand misfortune and a material incentive to preserve that capital from the claims of distant kin (Goody 1976; Pedroso de Lima 2000).

The economic literature is of course based on the notion of “rational choice”, but it is worth noting that motives 1 and 2 go beyond the notion of *self-interested* rational choice. Since motive three depends on motive two for its effectiveness it also presupposes motivations that go beyond rational self-interest. This raises the issue of where motives 1 and 2 come from.

One answer is offered by evolutionary theory, which argues that a tendency to behave altruistically to close biological kin is likely to be selected for, as is a general tendency to reward helpful behaviour and punish hostile actions. The evolutionary theory behind the hypothesis of kinship altruism yields quite precise predictions as to who will be helped – depending on the closeness and the certainty of the biological relationship. However, it is important to realise that it does not necessarily imply that biological relatedness as such is the motivating factor. Other factors – such as being reared together, or sharing food –

which had a strong association with biological relatedness, might equally have been selected for as stimuli for helping behaviour. This point is important, because it reduces the apparent conflict between evolutionary theories and anthropological accounts of the cultural construction of relatedness.

Anthropological accounts focus on the variability of kinship constructs, but also emphasise the very frequent use of a number of biologically relevant core symbols – such as shared substance and the family house – in constructing these relationships. They are also reflected in different kinship terminologies which group together and contrast particular sets of relatives in culturally specific ways. Some studies (most famously Schneider's (1968) study of American kinship) have suggested connections between terminological systems and other aspects of kinship related symbolism. There is a theoretical tradition, with a good deal of empirical support, which relates variations in kinship terminology to differences in inheritance practices (Goody 1976; Morgan 1997) as well as in residence and marriage patterns (Murdock 1949; Lévi-Strauss 1969). What matters for the study of social security is the implication that different symbolic and terminological constructs are likely to be associated with different patterns of mutual aid between kin.

Patterns of reciprocity are also culturally constructed, at least in part. The evidence that a sense of reciprocity, or equity, is a distinct motivating principle, which can override rational self-interest, has been repeatedly affirmed by the findings of experimental games set up by psychologists and behavioural economists. However many of these experiments are based on western academic contexts and there is some limited evidence that the relative importance attached to self-interest and reciprocity may vary between societies (Henrich et al. 2001). There is also a great deal of anthropological evidence that accepted norms of exchange vary both between societies, and between different social contexts within the same society (Humphrey & Hugh-Jones 1992; Parry & Bloch 1989).

There are therefore good grounds for arguing that some aspects of motives 1 and 2 above are culturally constructed, even though the importance of both motives seems to be a cross-cultural universal. This does not negate the validity of the economic models which incorporate these motives, but it means that when using the models we need to be aware of the possibility that these motives may have different weights in different societies – and that these weights may change.

The final two motives for helping relatives – the desire to reinforce your own and your family's status - are more problematic, both theoretically and in terms of their consequences for the distribution of welfare. We find ourselves dealing with notions of personal and collective identity – expressed in terms of the symbolism already described – but operating of the family being seen as something distinct from that of its members – or as identified with a privileged heir, or only with the sons of the families. Marriages of non-heirs may be discouraged, both because of the threat of “dividing the house” and because of the risk of losing status by entering into an alliance with a family of lower status. The honour of the family may also require an appropriate relation between the sexes, in which they keep to recognised spheres of activity and in which the status of men

may be higher than that of women (Bourdieu 1976). It is clear that the association between personal and family honour can lead to less privileged members of the family making social and financial sacrifices in support of the more privileged few.

Here again, different societies have different systems of identity and status – and so the distributional consequences of status-directed family assistance are likely to differ. There is a good deal of disagreement among social scientists about the importance of differences in status systems and the other partially symbolic aspects of kinship relations. The observation that social honour is often correlated with wealth has led some Mediterranean scholars to argue that it is nothing but a way of representing wealth. Some writers have seen the differential treatment of siblings within families as primarily the outcome of the strategic calculations of the parents and of the siblings themselves – which result in family members entering into differentiated sets of reciprocal obligations. The correlations between developments in kinship terminology and changes in political and economic systems also suggest that the construction of kinship may reflect underlying economic imperatives- a point that has been argued explicitly by Marxist system theorists (see discussion in De Haan 1994). This is a question of both theoretical and practical importance.

Why create new relatives?

So far we have been looking at the direct effects of mutual assistance on welfare levels. However, patterns of mutual aid between relatives may also have an indirect effect on social welfare, through their impact on reproduction – and hence on the balance between productive and dependent age-groups in the population as a whole. One way of looking at this is to ask what connections there might be between the reasons for helping relatives and the reasons for creating new relatives – by marriage and by procreation.

Considerations of mutual assistance and welfare levels are central to economic theories of demographic transition. Caldwell (1976) argues that potential parents will adjust the number of children in response to the pattern of economic transfers between the generations. In systems where economic benefits flow predominantly from parents to children, parents will wish to have few children. Where the balance of benefits flow from children to parents, then parents will wish to maximise the number of their offspring. Caldwell points both to economic changes accompanying modernisation which have largely ended the economic contribution of people during their childhood, and to the contrast between the kinship system of the modern West with very limited mutual aid between kinsman outside the immediate nuclear family, and those of non-western societies where more distant kinship links were also important sources of economic and political aid – and in which grown children, and their relatives by marriage, would be an important economic and political asset.

Becker (1991) also takes account of the costs and benefits of children to the parents themselves, but lays the primary stress on another factor – the altruistic wish of the parents to maximise the total economic well-being of their children, and their more distant descendents. He argues that the structure of returns on child-care and educational

investment in the modern economy is such that total welfare is maximised by having fewer, more prosperous children. He differs from Caldwell in treating kinship altruism as if it were constant.

A combination of the two approaches would help to explain the historical contrasts in fertility between northwest Europe and the southern and eastern part of the continent – discussed by writers such as Hajnal (1982) and Laslett (1972). If we take as given the ethic of mutually independent self-sufficient households in north western Europe, and an ethic of mutual assistance between kinsmen in the rest of the continent, then the way for parents in north west Europe to protect levels of welfare – whether for themselves or their children – would be to concentrate on amassing economic resources and limiting the number of offspring amongst whom they would have to be shared. By contrast the favoured strategy in the rest of the continent would be to amass a stock of helpers and political allies by having numerous children and using them to form marriage alliances with other families. Thus the desire for social security, expressing itself in the context of different rules regarding mutual assistance between kin – offers a powerful explanation of historical fertility patterns between different parts of Europe.

There are two problems with these explanations however. They are theoretically limited because they only consider explicitly two of the five motives for mutual aid between kinsmen listed above – even though ethnographic studies such as those of O’Neill (1987) and Bourdieu (1976) suggest that the other motives have also had an historical impact on patterns of reproduction. Secondly they fail to explain the collapse of fertility levels in southern Europe during recent decades. This has occurred despite the fact that family ties in southern Europe remain stronger than those in the north. Though no convincing explanation of this phenomenon has yet been found, it is worth noting that it has accompanied the dramatic strides that southern Europe has made to join the modern economy. There has been little time in southern Europe for assumptions about the mutual obligations of kin to adjust to the demands of modern capitalism – unlike the situation in northern Europe and North-America, where the two systems developed together over centuries. A working hypothesis of this research is that a mismatch between conceptions of the mutual responsibilities of kin and the demands of the modern economy, may be at the root of the failure of southern European families to reproduce themselves. If such a finding were confirmed, it would also have implications for patterns of fertility in eastern European societies as they too adapt to the demands of modern capitalism.

The key issues and the data to assess them

The overall aim of this project is both to establish the extent of the social role played by family members and more distant kin, and to investigate the causal processes involved at both the social and individual levels.

In order to meet these objectives the project will undertake three key scientific tasks.

The first is to document the extent of mutual aid between kin – identifying its overall extent, and the differences between countries, social strata and urban and rural districts.

This is important also for policy makers, since it shows the extent of tacit reliance on kinship that underpins current official policies. Growing awareness of the financial limits of the expansion of state social security has led in recent decades to increased efforts by governments and survey institutes to measure the extent of unofficial social security. This means that a variety of statistical sources are now available, ranging from traditional ones such as censuses through to innovative ventures such as the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP).

We shall draw on sources such as censuses, the ECHP, and household surveys of income and labour force participation, to provide aggregate information on the kinship structure of households and on labour market participation in relation to age sex and family status. This data – much of which is collected in comparable ways in different European countries will enable us to make some initial indirect inferences about the monetary and non-monetary contributions of different categories of household member. In some countries it will be possible to go beyond this by looking at surveys that have aimed directly to measure unpaid helping roles – and looked at the social networks connecting members of different households. Here too it is possible to draw on measures which provide comparable data between different countries – for instance the questions on social networks incorporated in some waves of the ISSP.

The need to collect standardised information during relatively short interviews limits the amount of data that can be obtained from official sources, and so we shall supplement these data with findings from already published qualitative studies, as well as from our own ethnographic studies. Nevertheless the great advantage of census and survey data is that, because of its comparability, it enables us to identify with confidence which countries, regions and social groups are more or less involved in those kinds of mutual aid which the surveys identify. We shall be using the statistical data in this descriptive sense, not as a basis for individual-level behavioural modelling (for reasons explained below).

In order to obtain an initial idea of the possible causes and implications of the patterns of mutual aid revealed by this statistical data, we will place it in the context of information on state models of social security. Under the heading of “state models of social security” we include both the major features of the state benefit systems, including the amount spent on them, and the legal provisions covering the forms of aid that family members are obliged to provide for each other. We shall be interested in the apparent “fit”, or lack of it, between the state models and the patterns of mutual aid between relatives that can be discerned from the statistical data.

The following table gives some examples of the kind of descriptive data that can be obtained from statistical sources. It compares the way public welfare expenditure and various indicators of mutual aid between kin vary between different EU member states. Ebbinghaus 1999 groups the welfare policies of EU member countries into four groups, and gives the percentages of GDP they spent on public welfare in 1993. His figures are set out in column A of Table1.

Table 1: Differences within the EU in public and kin-related welfare

Ebbinghaus's Classification	A	B	C	D	E	F
Nordic Countries						
Sweden	38	-	-	48	-	80
Denmark	31	34	19	43	-	80
Finland	35	30	-	50	-	62
Central countries						
Germany	28	64	21	48	45	64
Austria	26	65	-	53	55	63
Belgium	27	83	28	47	-	66
Netherlands	30	43	18	48	-	67
Southern countries						
France	27	70	35	54	-	68
Italy	25	95	65	60	73	42
Portugal	16	91	58	70	-	70
Spain	23	92	61	74	-	41
Greece	17	84	69	62	-	54
Anglo-Saxon						
UK	23	51	28	49	44	70
Ireland	21	81	33	63	-	48

The rest of table 1, is related to various measures of the strength of family ties – also drawn from European statistical sources. Column B (from Eurostat 2002 p23) shows the proportion of women aged 20-24 in 1998 who were living with their parents (or with other members of their parental generation). Column C (from Le Bras 1997 Table 1.5) shows the proportion of young people in 1990 who had found their jobs through family or friends. Column D shows the proportion of women aged 65 and over in 1998 who were living with other people (Eurostat 2002 p127 – figures taken by eye from chart). Column E, which has only four entries, are taken from Höllinger & Haller 1990, and based on data on social networks collected as part of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). The figures given are for the percentage of adults who see their mother either every day or several times a week (taken by eye from figure 2). Column F (from chart in Eurostat 2002 p67) shows employment rates among married or cohabiting women with children in 1998.

Taken together the figures in the table tell us a good deal, but they also have important limitations. The strong negative correlations between public welfare spending, and indicators of mutual assistance between kin suggest that the two are to some extent

alternatives. But they do not explain the process that brings this about. Does state policy adapt to meet the deficits of the social security levels provided by kinship networks, or does the level of support from kin rise or fall to meet changes in the level of state provision? Given the pressure on state welfare budgets throughout Europe, and their near collapse in some post-communist countries, this is not just an academic question.

The table also suggests that different kinds of kinship obligation are associated with each other. Thus help by adults to elderly parents is associated, at country-level, help by parents to young adult children – suggesting some kind of intergenerational reciprocity. The tendency for high levels of mutual aid between kin to be associated with relatively low labour market participation by married women, underlines the importance of women's role in family support activities – and raises questions about the implications of kinship-based social security for equality of opportunity. The fact that one of the ways in which parents can help children is by finding them work suggests that the strength of mutual aid between close kin is related to the role that kinship ties play in structuring economic relationships, and possibly with the importance of patronage networks. However, the existence of these associations does not, in itself, tell us why the amounts of intergenerational reciprocity differ between countries. Nor do they tell us anything about the processes by which mutual aid between closer and more distant kin may be connected.

Implicitly the table also poses the question of the relationship between economic and cultural processes. If the countries in the table are grouped into northern, central and Mediterranean there is a clear tendency for the former to be least kinship oriented while the last group are most kinship oriented. The three groups of countries also have different systems of kinship terminology. As noted above there is a good deal of historical and ethnographic evidence for associations between kinship terminologies and the patterns of economic interaction between kin. Is the difference between European kinship terminologies also related to the differences in helping patterns and, if so, what is the pattern of causation? Are cultural understandings of relatedness influencing economic behaviour, are they simply registering differences in behaviour that are due to economic factors, or is there a two-way interaction between economic and cultural systems?

As we note below, proper policy planning requires both a description of the current situation, and the ability to foresee how the system may change in response to developments in state policy, and to ongoing changes in other aspects of the economic and social system. This kind of prediction requires an understanding of the questions about causation raised, but not answered, by the aggregate statistical data. This raises the question of what kinds of data might be needed to throw light on the causal processes.

One sort of data which might potentially be helpful is disaggregated statistical data, analysed at individual or household level. Data from cohort studies is particularly valuable as the ability to order events helps to clarify the direction of causation. However, while we believe that such analyses of disaggregated survey data are potentially very useful, we will not undertake them as part of this research project – since the amount of

money available to fund a STREP is limited, and we believe that in this case there are advantages in concentrating our efforts elsewhere. There are two reasons for this.

- One is the evidence that kinship behaviour is part of wider cultural and political systems, and therefore cannot only be investigated at the individual level – but needs also to be investigated in terms of national and regional systems.
- The second reason relates to the analysis of individual behaviour, which is of course also essential. The point here is that the choices affecting individual decisions about how much to cooperate with close and distant kin are very complex. The choices involve present life plans, labour market opportunities and other economic resources, as well as consideration of the extent of the individual's kinship network, the property and other resources which its members have at their disposal, as well as the extent of reciprocal obligations arising from previous interactions. This kind of data is too complex to be collected by ordinary survey methods - and for this reason we shall use anthropological fieldwork techniques to collect the required rich data about kinship obligations.

This brings us to the second and third of this project's three key scientific tasks.

The second task is a historical analysis of changes in relationships between kin, and the interaction of these changes with economic changes and with official policies – covering the century and a bit since the start of modern state welfare systems. The purpose of this will be to trace the macro-level relationships between changes in family, economic and state-welfare systems.

Particular interest will focus on the interrelation between the different state models of social security (see Esping Andersen 1990; Ebbinghaus 1999 and for eastern Europe Mares et al 1996 and IPTS/ESTO 2002) and the social security role assumed, or continued by families and kinship networks. We shall be interested in the patterns of changes that accompanied the formation of the capitalist economy (Ehmer 1991; Rosenbaum 1992) and in the possible existence of longer-term continuities (Kaser 2000; Kerzer and Laslett 1995; Wall et al 2001).

Because we are dealing with historical data the statistical information base about family behaviour will be less rich than that available from statistical surveys today. Essentially it consists of the staple information used by family historians: namely censuses, civil registration data and information about legacies and other property transactions between kin. Information about the political and economic context will be drawn from the historical literature. The work will be primarily a matter of reanalysing existing findings from the viewpoint of this project, and reports on each participant country will be written by scholars who are already expert in the field.

Some new data analysis, primarily census-based, will be undertaken however – first to ensure a base of comparable information relating to each country included in the project, and secondly to extend the record of family-historical analyses, which typically tail off in the early twentieth century, up to the present.

For interpreting these results we shall draw on the lead historical researchers' expert knowledge of major economic developments, major changes in the levels and allocation of state welfare, and changes in the legal obligations governing family members obligations to assist each other (including legal provisions concerning inheritance).

The third task will be the collection and analysis of field-work data. This will have two purposes. The first will be to collect the kind of detailed factual information about kinship networks, property and economic circumstances that is required for an adequate analysis of the economic factors affecting mutual aid between kin. This will include data on use of the state welfare system, and some information on contributions to, and use of, other non-official sources of welfare, such as help between friends and neighbours. The resulting data will be analysed using both network analysis and regression-related techniques, and the results will be compared with predictions derived from the literature on behavioural and institutional economics. (For information on network analysis and its application to kinship data see Wasserman and Faust 1997 and Schweitzer and White 1998).

Using fieldwork techniques will also enable us to collect information about the cultural meanings attached to kinship behaviour. These will include ideas about gender, and about relationships between the generations – as well as understandings about relationships between property, identity and biological kinship. As part of this we shall seek to replicate Schneider's famous analysis of the meanings implicit in American kinship terminology for the main systems of kinship terminology current in contemporary Europe. We will relate these results findings to the quantitative analyses of the network data, in order to see whether cultural meanings enable us to understand aspects of behaviour which depart from the predictions of the economic models.

Further details are given below in the plan of research.

Representativeness

In order to complete these research tasks satisfactorily the project requires data that is representative in two distinct senses.

Task 1 – documenting the extent of mutual aid between kin – requires us to use data that is representative in the statistical sense. For that reason, as much as possible of the data will be drawn from censuses and from surveys with statistically representative sample designs.

Task 3 – the collection and analysis of fieldwork data – requires a different kind of representativeness. Even with the total of 16 field sites planned for this study, it would be impossible to provide anything approaching complete representation of all, or even most, of the differing kinship patterns in Europe's different countries and regions. Field-work sites should be representative in a different sense: their purpose is not statistical

representation, but scientific relevance. The field sites should therefore be chosen in such a way as to cover a wide range of situations which differ in relevant ways.

Since urban and rural sites provide very different requirements for mutual aid and cooperation, we have chosen to compare an urban and a rural field site in each country. At the same time we have tried to choose the countries in such a way as to represent the full range of different kinship systems – in terms both of terminology and of historic patterns of inheritance and social organisation – while also paying attention to the quality of the available historical and ethnographic material.

The result has been a selection which includes:

- three central western countries - France, Germany and Austria – with somewhat different histories, and strong regional variations in inheritance systems, but sharing closely related kinship terminologies
- one Nordic country – Sweden – with a distinct Scandinavian kinship terminology, and a cultural emphasis on the importance of the nuclear family
- one Mediterranean country – Italy – with very good historical and ethnographic documentation of kinship systems, which resembles the EU's other Mediterranean member countries both in their relative strong cooperative relations between kinsmen, and in their shared system of kinship terminology
- three eastern European countries: Poland, Croatia and Russia. Historically eastern European countries show pronounced tendencies to patrilineal inheritance and male authority, and to extended cooperation between a relatively wide range of kin (Kaser). The countries we have selected share certain features of their kinship terminology including a tendency to conflate siblings and cousins, while at the same time distinguishing other relatives more than is done by the central-western and Mediterranean countries. At the same time they differ, with Croatia placing an exceptional stress on patrilineal inheritance, while Russia provides the classic (and best documented) case of a system with extended classificatory equivalence of brothers and cousins. These three countries also provide a range of social-security experience over the post-socialist period, ranging from the relatively rapid 'shock therapy' experienced by Poland, through the administrative and economic disorganisation of Russia, to the impact of war and population displacement in Croatia.

Altogether the choice of countries reflects what we believe is an appropriate compromise between representing the range of situations within the current EU and accession countries, while exploiting the additional insights available from incorporating the full range of Europe's major kinship systems.

4. Research, analysis and publication plan

4.1. Introduction - general description and milestones

The project is expected to last for three years altogether.

Earlier in this proposal we identified three key scientific tasks:

1. To document the extent of mutual aid between kin.
2. An historical analysis of changes in relationships between kin, and the interaction of these changes with economic changes and with official welfare policies.
3. The collection and analysis of fieldwork data, in order to analyse the economic and cultural bases of mutual aid choices made by specific individuals.

4.2. Workplanning

Socio-historical analysis

Tasks 1 and 2 will be organised together – under the heading of *socio-historical analysis*. In each country where we do research there will be a report on what is already known about the present social-security role of family and kinship ties, and the historical developments that have led to this point. This will be written either by a family historian or a specialist in contemporary social security with some historical background. A research assistant will be appointed to collect the necessary literature and carry out analyses of publicly available data.

We envisage the scope of, and sources for, the contemporary part of these country reports, as follows. The report will draw on sources such as censuses, the ECHP, household surveys of income and labour force participation to provide aggregate information on the kinship structure of households and on labour market participation in relation to age sex and family status. This data will enable us to make some initial indirect inferences about the monetary and non-monetary contributions of different categories of household member. In some countries it will be possible to go beyond this by looking at surveys that have aimed directly to measure unpaid helping roles – and looked at the social networks connecting members of different households. We will also supplement these results using findings from already published qualitative studies.

The historical part of the report for each country will analyse changes in relationships between kin, and the interaction of these changes with economic developments and with official policies – covering the century and a bit since the start of modern state welfare systems. Because we are dealing with historical data the information base about family behaviour will be less rich than that available from statistical surveys today. Essentially it consists of the staple information used by family historians: namely censuses, civil registration data and information about legacies and other property transactions between kin. Information about the political and economic context will be drawn from the historical literature. The work will be primarily a matter of reanalysing existing findings from the viewpoint of this project. Some new data analysis, primarily census-based, will

be undertaken however – in order to extend the record of family-historical analyses, which typically tail off in the early twentieth century, up to the present.

The great advantage of census and survey data is that, because of its comparability, it enables us to identify with confidence which countries, regions and social groups are more or less involved in those kinds of mutual aid which the surveys identify. We shall be using the statistical data in this descriptive sense, not as a basis for individual-level behavioural modelling (for reasons explained in section 2 above). To enhance comparability we shall, wherever possible, draw on surveys – such as the Eurostat-sponsored ECHP and Labour Force Surveys (LFS), and the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) – whose data collection methods ensure comparable data from different countries.

The socio-historical analyses will be coordinated by the University of Graz who will ensure that that comparable ground is covered in each national report. In addition the University of Graz will arrange for certain summaries of twentieth century census and demographic data to be sent to it from the socio-historical team in each participant country. The University of Graz will then integrate this data into an overall analysis of trends in household composition and fertility, taking account of social class, and urban-rural effects – as well as the relation between these trends and the factors identified in each country report. The report will also cover information on contemporary differences in helping behaviour, where this is available from multi-national surveys.

Fieldwork data collection

The *fieldwork and associated analysis* will be organised separately. In each country where we do research there will be two field-work sites, one rural and one urban. The fieldwork at each site will be led by an experienced academic, but most of the data collection will be carried out by one or more graduate field assistants. As explained in section 2 above, the sites should be chosen to illuminate important issues rather than to be strictly representative. The fieldworkers will collect both qualitative data on the meanings attached to kinship relationships and structured data on mutual aid amongst networks of kin.

Since the field data is at the core of the project, it is worth saying some more about what it would consist of, and how it would be collected. There would be a combination of

- (a) structured interviews with individuals and couples about their kinship networks, their circumstances generally, and patterns of mutual assistance
- (b) semi-structured interviews about ideas and values connected with kinship
- (c) participant observation
- (d) some archival data.

We will say something about each of these data-collection methods in turn, and then say something about how they will be treated in the analyses. (The information provided here

is of course only an outline. More detailed plans will be developed during the project itself, and will draw on the collective expertise of all the team members.)

Structured interviews about kinship networks and mutual aid. About 40 of these will be conducted in each field-site. (*The target number for urban fieldsites was later reduced to 30 interviews.*) The interviews will be structured in the sense of collecting clearly specified information, rather than of following a fixed order of questioning. As the amount of information requested will be considerable, a single “interview” might sometimes be spread over two or three sessions on different days – covering anything up to six hours altogether.

Each interview will be conducted either with a married, or cohabiting, couple, or else with an unmarried (i.e. single, divorced, widowed, separated) individual. *In the event each interview was conducted with a specific sampled individual - though of course their partners were often present.* The respondents will be asked for several kinds of information.

- The names and genealogical connections of all the relatives by descent or marriage who they are able to name, including ancestors no longer living, and distant connections linked by several descent and marriage ties (e.g. son’s wife’s father’s brother’s wife). The interviewees will be prompted in a systematic way, in order to make sure that if a particular kind of relative is not named it is because the person’s name (or existence) is not known to them, and has not simply been overlooked. We can refer to this set of relatives as the individual’s or couple’s *network of known kin*.
- Certain key facts about each member of this network – to the extent that the interviewees are able to provide the information - including where they were born and where they live now; economic position, educational level, general state of health, some indication of wealth or living standards, any special political or other status.
- Similar information about about the interviewees’ themselves – including their own economic and health circumstances, including their participation in state and private insurance.
- Information about the frequency and type of social contact with each member of the network of known kin (including ritual relationships such as god-parenthood)
- Information about helping relationships – either helping, being helped, or both – with members of the network of known kin. Kinds of help would be prompted for, anything from helping with shopping, to child-minding at one end to leaving a legacy, paying for an operation, paying for educational fees and maintenance, or providing a young couple with a house, at the other. In the case of major items of help – particularly those between parents and children – we would seek to record the pattern of help over the whole life-time.
- Comparable information about neighbours and friends with whom the interviewees have helping relationships.
- A limited amount of information relating to marriage and family formation. This would not include questions about contraception or medical problems, but would

cover the process and criteria involved in choosing partners and planning the size of family – including the roles of parents and other relatives in these decisions.

In some communities, access to so much detailed data depends on the interviewer already being known to and trusted by the interviewees. For this reason random samples will not always be possible – and in fact it will often be easiest to secure interviews with relatives of people one has already interviewed. There are insights to be gained by conducting interviews with people who belong to each others' networks of known kin, but there is also the danger of collecting information from a single untypical part of the community. While we will use this kind of “snowball sampling” (Frank and Snijders 1994) within groups of relatives, we will impose controls limiting the number of interviews that can be conducted within the same kinship “snowball”, specifying independent starting points for different “snowballs”, and ensuring a degree of overall balance in terms of age group and economic position.

In the event we did not pursue the idea of snowball sampling - opting instead for stratified random sampling. One reason for this was that fieldwork needs to be localised while, in urban areas in particular, networks of kin are often highly geographically dispersed, making the snowball procedure impractical. A further, and decisive reason was that snowball samples are biased in favour of people with many network connections. It is possible to correct for this bias (as discussed in the paper cited above) but the procedures are complex, and require appropriate interviewer training as well as statistical weighting calculations which would not be transparent to the field teams, who would themselves need to interpret the data. As snowball procedures (even with reweighting) are also less statistically efficient than stratified random sampling, we preferred to take the latter option, and invest the necessary time and effort in making contacts and building the level of trust within the local fieldwork areas required for acceptable response rates.

Interviews about ideas and values connected with kinship: about a dozen interviews on this topic will be conducted at each field site. The aim of the interviews will be to elicit local views on issues relating to the different possible motives for helping, or not helping, kin that we outlined in section 2 above – creating the possibility of alternative explanations of the factual data collected in the network interviews. The interviewees will be selected so as to reflect the balance of the community in terms of age, gender and economic circumstances. In addition two or three discussion groups on the same topic will be held. General themes will include: how kin should behave to each other; what it is “natural” to expect of behaviour between different categories of kin; the respective roles of men and women in family life; how do relationships between kin differ from relations with neighbours or friends; relations between various kinds of kin group and society at large; how do ideas about kinship relate to other social, religious and political ideals; conflicts between different aspects of kinship relationships; how to find a marriage partner; reasons for staying single, or cohabiting; how many children to have; what changes have taken place in family relationships over recent years. We shall also

ask about connections between kinship and property; and about the various ways in which kinship ties are celebrated in formal and informal rituals.

While most field teams have made use of these interviewing and discussion group approaches, it was decided that we should be less prescriptive about the exact numbers and composition of interviews than is implied in the preceding paragraph.

Participant observation: The final category of data that we have mentioned consists in part in being present when the activities discussed in interviews actually take place, seeing unexpected details, taking the opportunity to ask about them while they are actually happening. It is also a matter of collecting contextual information about daily economic and social life in the community concerned, and interviewing prominent informants. Some important aspects of the kinship system – including its possible links with local identity, class distinction, and patronage networks, may only become apparent in this way.

Archival work. Field work is often linked with archival research – particularly in European contexts. We are fortunate that some of our research partners have done extensive archival research which can be used to provide context to the field data collected in this study. Even where this is not the case, it will generally be useful for the field workers to collect some archival data: in particular visiting local population registries to check on changing spatial patterns of marriage, and trends in relation to births outside marriage.

Analysis of fieldwork data

An ethnographic field report will be written on the work from each field-site, focusing particularly on the data on the ways in which kinship relationships are understood – and on the information emerging from participant observation. The reports will relate their findings with examples from the kinship network data – but will not analyse the network data in depth. However, the findings of the ethnographic reports will contribute to later stages of the analysis of network data described below.

A formal mathematical and statistical analysis of the data on mutual aid within kinship networks will be carried out at the MPI for Social Anthropology. Expert advice and assistance will be provided by

- MPI Rostock on demographic issues
- MPI Jena on the implications for the analysis of theoretical developments in behavioural and institutional economics
- The Department of Ethnology at Köln University who will advise on the application of network analysis to ethnographic data (as well as helping to design the data-collection instruments used in the network interviews).

Taken together, the fieldwork will have produced data on 640 ego- or couple-centred “networks of known kin” (NKKs). Each NKK potentially provides

- measurements of the amount of help received from kin by people in various situations of need (as defined by age, family composition, economic and health status)
- measurements of the patterns of assistance associated with different kinship dyads (mother: daughter; father-in-law: son-in-law etc)
- measurements of the overall extent and structure of the NKK
- measurements of how well different theories predict the overall pattern of helping interactions between the central individuals or couple and their whole network of kin. (In this sense each of the 640 NKKs provides a distinct assessment of the performance of any given theory).

During an initial phase of exploratory analysis MPISA will work with colleagues at MPI Jena and Köln University to define appropriate quantitative measurements for each of the above. These will then be calculated for all 640 NKKs. In the case of the theory, we will calculate the predictive power for each NKK of various theories based on the first three motives for helping discussed in section 2 above: altruism, reciprocity, and self-interested helping. At this stage, the theories we look at will not allow for cultural variation.

In the first stage of the main analysis we shall analyse the results from all sixteen field-sites together, in order to obtain a global assessment of which need-situations generate most help from kin, and which are less effective in doing so. We will couple this with an analysis of which kinship relationships provide most help, and how far the amount of help received is related to the extent of the recipient's NKK. During this first stage of the main analysis we will also look at the average predictive power, over all NKKs, of the theories for which we have calculated prediction scores.

The second stage of the main analysis will be to examine variation between different field sites in the extent of help provided. If there are differences we shall try to explain them – looking at both cultural differences, and different patterns of economic life and property holding. A first check on possible cultural differences will be to analyse variation between field-sites in average NKK-level prediction scores for different theories – to see whether there are indications that altruistic, reciprocal or self-interested motives have different weights in the communities considered.

This brings us to the third stage of the main analysis. Further investigation of differences between field sites will need to focus on differences in characteristic patterns of help between kin, and will require the construction of a model of exchanges within each field-site – in which the patterns shown by the network data are discussed in the light of the findings of the ethnographic reports. In some cases this may involve the formal specification of a 'local theory' of helping motivations, and comparing its effectiveness with that of the general, non-culturally specific, theories that were evaluated in the first stage of the analysis.

Further stages of the analysis will involve investigation of demographic issues – also looking at both general and site-specific explanations.

Finally, we shall relate the findings of the network analyses, both the general and the area-specific parts, to the general patterns identified in the socio-historical analysis – with the intention of adding to and, if possible, explaining some of the patterns and developments identified there.

4.3 Publication plan

The final report will be published in book form in three volumes:

- Volume 1 will cover the socio/historical analysis and will consist of an edited version of the country and overall reports that were earlier placed on the websites.
- Volume 2 will cover the ethnographic studies in each country, and the results of the overall analysis of network data.
- Volume 3 will consist of papers discussing the policy implications of the scientific findings presented in the first two volumes. As policy depends on values as well as on scientific findings, we do not expect there to be unanimity on the policy implications. For this reason, as well as chapters written by members of consortium, we shall invite other experts in the field to comment on the implications of the project's findings – and would welcome some suggestions from the EU as to whom we might invite. In this way, we hope to involve an important section of the policy community in the dissemination and assessment of the policy results.

Major findings will also be placed on the website – subject to the need to protect the legitimate interests of the publisher of the printed reports.

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