



Rethinking European Kinship

Transregional and Transnational Families



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In the current discussion of ethnic, trade, and commercial diasporas, “circulation,” international or global networks, and transnational communities, reference is continually made to the importance of families and kinship groups for understanding the dynamics of dispersion. Not very many of the studies, however, proceed to detailed examinations of those families and kinship groups that are or were scattered across the map, living in diverse cultural, ethnic, or political spaces, and coordinating their activities, maintaining claims upon each other, or carrying on various kinds of reciprocities. We want to suggest a series of analytical tools, themes, and conceptual clarifications that could be useful for opening up fresh discussion.¹

Many of the chapters in this volume take up the challenge of postculturalism by looking at the way families and kinship groups are formed within the production and circulation of goods. Cultural forms and ways of representing reality cannot be simply set aside—the social imaginary plays a central role in how people relate to each other, of course. But we are not just after the “imaginary.” The accent throughout this book is on how ideas circulate within social situations, and on these situations themselves: how and why people migrate, what the consequences are for a particular regime of property devolution, why the demands of state

or nation call for particular responses, or what women do when their fathers or brothers change the rules of the game.

To begin a consideration of transnational families, we should be careful not to take the word *family* for granted. It is not a term that has great historical depth even in European history. In the Middle Ages, *familia* referred to those who depended on a lord, and it did not single out his parents, siblings, and children.² Until late in the eighteenth century, in most European languages, the *house* was the relevant term to cover relationships that we now capture with the word *family*, and yet it encompassed groups of people, social dynamics, and political rights that are missing in our own vocabulary.³ When we speak of “international families,” we are certainly pushing the boundaries of a concept that was devised to represent a form of social organization that grew up with the nation-state and civil society. Western observers took over the word *family* to talk about themselves and devised the notion of “kinship” to talk about those others who had not yet benefited from modern life and European culture. And the disciplines of sociology and anthropology were put together to parcel out an intellectual division of labor to correspond to the broad map of modern and traditional societies. To the sociology of the family was opposed the anthropology of kinship, and kinship suggested a science devoted to the study of relationships of peoples connected by descent or marriage and a field of obligations, claims, rights, and duties that penetrated or went beyond the boundaries of the nuclear family.

For many years now, European historians have been trying to break down the neat divisions suggested by this older self-understanding of the West and its self-conscious adoption of a linear model of modernization. It turns out that kinship in the sense of connected families and households was and still is central to the dynamics of European societies and that it is quite possible to study kinship in Europe along formal lines, to analyze systematic practices, and to account for regular shifts in kinship structures.⁴ Taking up the question of the nature and importance of transregional and international families in European historical experience suggests a recourse to kinship analysis, a lively exchange between history and anthropology, and a fundamentally comparative perspective. It offers the possibility to reexamine European narratives, on the one hand, and, on the other, to transgress European boundaries.

This book grew out of discussions among an international group of historians that during the past decade has been actively attempting to think through the implications of taking the idea of “kinship” seriously for the history of European societies. One of the main strategies was to look at social situations over a long period, this time from the end of the Middle Ages to the beginning of the twenty-first century. And

there are many things left out, such as forced mass migration of slavery, ethnic cleansing, deportations, and mostly the complex history of colonialism, in order to concentrate on a particular set of issues. The point, as we will explain below, was to think through the results of research into European families, households, and kinship practices to pose a set of questions for participants to entertain. Rather than contribute to a global consideration of “transnational” families, we would like to add a series of new issues and problems to the debate by reviewing once again experiences from Europe and by placing them in a broader, comparative perspective. In what follows, we will suggest strategies for bringing problems of power, the circulation of property, and structures of relationships to the core of discussions about transregional and transnational families.

Authority, Hierarchy, and Power

The figures of diasporas, international and transregional communities, and networks seldom prompt questions about authority, power relations, hierarchies, formal and informal sanctions, or the kind of socialization of individuals that allows for collectively coordinated strategies. Issues of power in European historical research into the family have most often been associated with (apparently) sedentary settings, in particular with ways of conceptualizing the “house.” Two of the most influential ethnographers of the nineteenth century, Frédéric Le Play and Wilhelm Riehl, both stressed paternal authority and its devolution from one generation to the next as the key to understanding how the complex unity of the house could be welded together.⁵ Their understandings of the household as a social unit with similar characteristics from the ancient world to the present, of course, were developed from research on noble and large peasant households where attention centered on the dynamics of landed property, inheritance, the patriarchal power of the father/manager, and the moral capacities of the collectivity. The logic of the “stem family” (*famille-souche*) (Le Play) and the “total household” (*ganzes Haus*) (Riehl) grew out of the necessity of maintaining the integrity of the patrimony, which in turn determined power relations within the family.

Otto Brunner borrowed the concept of *das ganze Haus* from Riehl, who thought of the traditional house as a formation where ethical and social life, work, socialization, and welfare and emergency care were all combined together in a complex whole.⁶ Without the domination (*Herrschaft*) of the *Hausvater*, Brunner argued, such a set of complex functions could not be held together. Power was the key to Brunner’s in-

terpretation of the house: "All relations of dependence in the house were based on the lord of the house [*Hausherr*], who as the directing head created a whole out of them in the first place. ... The house [*Oikos*] is a whole which rests on the heterogeneity of its members, who are molded into a unity by the directing spirit of the lord [*Herr*]." In this understanding of rural households, some members had to be sacrificed to the goal of lineal succession and disciplined to collective "responsibility."

The concepts of Le Play and Riehl, who were nineteenth-century conservatives, and of Brunner, a National Socialist, have since been shown to owe a great deal to the nostalgia of an idealized authoritarian rural order that the authors felt was about to be eroded by the individualizing effects of modernity. Nevertheless, their ideas had great influence on the development of social history and provided an important point of departure for historical reflection about the development of innerfamilial hierarchies.⁷ At the same time, Le Play, Riehl, and Brunner cemented the problematic notion that questions about authority within families concerned primarily rural settings.

Pierre Bourdieu, who essentially reformulated Le Play, had greater success putting his stamp on the current international ethnographic discussion about the dynamics of the house.⁸ Focusing on the social reproduction of stem families in the Pyrenees, he tried to work out the set of practices (*habitus*) that conformed to the logic of the integral perpetuation of the patrimony. At the heart of the system of practices, patriarchal rule ensured the goals of property transmission and class endogamy. The head of the house defined the claims of each member, controlled information, manipulated "rules," and indoctrinated the children, who emerged with strongly interiorized principles of the tradition and schemes of perception that fitted them for the tasks at hand. The oldest son subordinated his interest to those of the line, and younger sons were socially primed to "embrace the traditional values" and "customary distribution of tasks and powers among brothers." As Bourdieu puts it, "the sociology of the family, which is so often depicted as based on sentiment, might be nothing but a specific aspect of political sociology."⁹

This short summary of a particular tradition in European ethnography might seem in the first instance too tied to the rural and the preindustrial world to be of much interest for looking at families that extend themselves across large spaces and are frequently grasped under the notion of "network."¹⁰ We think, however, that drawing from the ethnographic tradition's central focus on how a patrimony disciplines the members of the family is promising. This helps to overcome overly simplistic notions of a transition from traditional "tight" to modern "loose" forms of family organization. Within such a simplistic opposition, international

families that in many ways appear to be the epitome of the modern have primarily been looked at as networks but not as structures of dominance and subordination. Authority, discipline, and hierarchy are not matters that disappear with the advent of capitalism.¹¹ Bourdieu's reformulation of the issues in terms of the material and cultural things that mediate relations, the practices of socialization, and the logics of command and obedience seem fruitful ways of opening up new lines of research. Researchers might well give close attention to the way the allocation not only of land, farms, and castles, but also of capital, credit, and all forms of movable property mediate relations and distribute roles throughout a network of kin spread across extended areas. It might then well turn out to be the fact that many kinds of well-integrated international families are acephalous, but if so, then an account of the "political" practices of such families is all the more interesting.¹²

In chapter 11, Sabean discusses how the Siemens family built a powerful industrial enterprise during the nineteenth century that stretched from England to Russia and Central Asia. Family members as shareholders, managers, technicians, and workers were distributed throughout the family's industrial empire, all coordinated under the authority first of Werner Siemens in Berlin and later by successors chosen from the family. The reproduction of the family network, the practices of familial socialization, the linking of family members through endogamous marriage practices, and the disciplining of family members in the interest of the larger enterprise—all come under the heading of Bourdieu's notion of "political sociology."¹³

Antenhofer (chapter 3) tells a story about the reorganization of a high noble ruling family in the late Middle Ages. But she argues that the securing of the line, the development of primogeniture, and the reconfiguration of devolutionary practices to radically differentiate among siblings were something new. She chronicles the restructuring of the Gonzaga dynasty away from competition among equally qualified lines to the formation of a dominant line, the exclusion of women from succession, the differentiation of the eldest son from cadets, and the development of new forms of patronage. Furthermore, it was precisely in the context of this reorganization and development of new forms of family discipline that the family entered the European stage, creating alliances with the high nobility beyond the Alps and in France. For the quite different context of urban patriciates at about the same time, Teuscher (chapter 4) examines how the practices related to contractions of urban elites, their stability over time, and their "sedentariness" necessitated the mobility of younger sons. His chapter is an examination of the interdependence of property regimes and transregional dispersion and the

collective familial strategies that required the disciplined response of family members. He argues that patrician mobility, far from being just the cultural experience that is frequently highlighted in contemporary patricians' own accounts, was lived out in response to economic exigencies. And he critiques the often-held assumption that geographical mobility was incompatible with family cohesion: "Being gone was not a position outside, but inside the family."

It is not enough to consider power and authority as a family-immanent matter alone. Authority within kinship constellations also responds to juridical systems, state power, and social hierarchies, including those of gender. Piterberg (chapter 2) provides an interesting contrast to the European and later Ottoman experience by examining elite political "households" in military patronage states, with the Egyptian Mamluks as his example. There, precisely the problem was always to recreate the elite by *excluding* familial continuity from generation to generation in the holding of office or political power. The political household took in slaves, raised them, manumitted them, and passed power on to them. The children of the *grandees* had no rights to succession and seldom were able to affect it, blocked at every turn by the clients raised within the house. What the Ottomans effected after the fifteenth century was to combine the logic of the military patronage state with kinship politics by not allowing marriage of ruling families into surrounding elites. Powerful kinship ties were developed across the empire through marrying daughters of the sultan to imperial officers. What emerged in the sixteenth century was the strengthening of the household system with kin ties across the complex space of Ottoman rule.¹⁴ Similarly, Mettele (chapter 8) deals with a fascinating case counter to the kinds of kinship that we usually discuss. With the Moravians of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, she finds dynamics resembling those of kinship groups but in the name of a spiritual kinship, an imaginary order of belonging, networks of aid and solidarity, and rituals of "familial" observance. They always married internally to the group in marriages that were arranged—frequently through the casting of lots. In joining the sect, most people sloughed off their old kinship ties. And marriage among themselves was understood as an important tool for strengthening group cohesion. And through ritual activity, correspondence, and newsletters, they developed what Mettele calls a "narrative community" that came to be seriously challenged by the nascent nation-states.

Gender roles and shifting concatenations of force are a matter taken up for the late twentieth-century Palestinian camps in Jordan and Gaza by Latte Abdallah (chapter 13). There until the 1960s, the family was among the very few institutions that remained in place, and the condi-

tions of its existence in exile put a premium on older values and almost “dictatorial” powers of fathers. Latte Abdallah examines how what looks like an increasing fragmentation of social conditions went along with the step-by-step emergence of women to the head of many families. Both patriarchal power and marriage bonds were weakened as women (mothers, daughters, and sisters) became responsible for sustaining their families.¹⁵ Latte Abdallah’s account looks at the dialectic between the public discourse of camp families, the creation of family ideology, ideals of nationhood, and the conditions of exile. In the quite different context of early nineteenth-century bourgeois France, Johnson (chapter 10) looks at the role of powerful women inside a wider constellation of kin: how they maintained familial discipline through a continual flow of correspondence, marriage negotiations, oversight of manners, societal influence, and directing careers. He draws attention to the fact that kinship relationships have to be constantly monitored, created, and sustained by hard work and that particular tasks of this continuous effort are often delegated to or arrogated by one sex or the other. It is only in detailed and concentrated reading of texts that we are able to understand the nuances and costs of social power.

Succession and Inheritance: The Circulation of Property

The notion of “transnational families” provides new difficulties in imagining the social. Most social history until now has anchored analysis in unambiguous spaces, but transnational families can offer the problem of not being “locatable.” As Bryceson and Vuorela have argued, the attitudes of transnational families to place are “varied, ambiguous, and subject to change.”¹⁶ If “some individual transnationals espouse no origins, no permanent geographical attachments, and no final destinations,” what structures them and gives them coherence?¹⁷ Also Osterhammel has argued that one of the problems with operationalizing the concept of “transnationality” is that it can have no social structural substratum.¹⁸ He finds networks, flows, and transfers much too amorphous to build any kind of systematic social history. The terms that one continually encounters are “multilocality,” “mobility,” “migrancy.” If the issue in studying them is “connecting, mixing, and networking,” then one way to give form to them is to ask systematic questions about the material and immaterial things that mediate their relations. The advantage of studying kinship is that it can provide a systematic but not territorial definition of whom to include in an examination. How does the understanding of the

family vary according to the perceived claims and rights and obligations different members have for each other?

If property in some ways can be analyzed as a system of claims and obligations—as a set of relations around things—then kinship as a set of claims and obligations can be understood as a kind of property system or a bundle of resources. In order to make kinship analytically useful for the study of international families, it cannot be left as an amorphous, ill-defined set of values or vaguely defined networks, but necessitates careful consideration of how it functions and is structured in particular contexts—how rights are distributed, how people are socialized, or as Bourdieu puts it, how the things that mediate relations discipline those gathered around them, on the one hand, and engender particular kinds of knowledge, on the other—a *savoir faire*, a *habitus*, a particular kind of character formation.

From the early nineteenth century onwards, one major focus for studies of the European family has had to do with the effects of different forms of inheritance on the structures of the family and on regional and local political, social, and economic life. Much of this literature was centered on rural and noble social groups, and quite impassioned arguments about the effects of “closed” vs. partible inheritance practices developed. Large, open villages, with handicraft industries, regional mobility, intensive and innovative agriculture, egalitarian social structures, and small families were associated frequently with partible inheritance practices. Closed systems of inheritance—primogeniture, ultimogeniture, unigeniture—encouraged out-migration, sharp social differences, and a stress on the tight discipline of paternal authority. In such territories, it has frequently been argued, communal institutions were less developed, although recent work on Dutch regions by Hilde Bras and Theo van Tilburg suggests that authoritarian unigeniture practices might elicit stronger neighborly ties and more integrated kin groups.¹⁹

Comparative research by Bernard Derouet for different French regions has shown that systematic forms of property devolution in France—whether closed or subject to equal division—were not a vestige of an age-old past or a characteristic of a region, but solidified only during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and became a feature of early modern social development. And further, he has shown that the pattern of property devolution had important implications for political structures, the nature of local and regional social relationships, and the psychological development of individuals.²⁰ There have been several other important studies of the effects of different forms of property devolution that have raised questions about the way property can mediate quite different kinds of psychosocial behavior. In a study of Basque farming fami-

lies, Leonard Kasden argued that the eldest son and younger sons were socialized in such a way as to have quite different personality types.²¹ The eldest—the one destined to get the farm—tended to be solid, traditional, reflective, and unadventurous. Younger sons, whose destinies sent them across the Atlantic in fishing enterprises or as emigrants, developed what he called “entrepreneurial” personalities. In contrast to this kind of region, with its generations of out-migration, rural Austrians, studied by Sigrid Khera, sharply differentiated between their inheriting elder sons and sons destined to end up in the rural proletariat.²² As adults, siblings living in the same villages avoided each other, socialized in different circles, and even failed to be integrated into the clientage system of their inheriting siblings. Examples can be multiplied, but the point is that the form of property, the way it is held and distributed, and the way it is passed down the generations needs to be closely examined to understand how people connect to each other, what claims and rights they have on each other, and what obligations and duties they assume for each other. Patterns of distributing and circulating property are in part defined by family structures not only in rural contexts, but also in the contexts of migration and entrepreneurship, and examples such as the Basque case show that in many instances, the two are interrelated.

These considerations suggest that it is very useful to pay attention to the way property and resources mediate relations among international families. Scarce resources such as information can be the medium that makes far-flung merchant families successful. Gujarati families have been the subject of intensive study, for example, and we know that men circulated to Central Asia or to the many parts of the British Empire and beyond, always trying to return to the small region they set off from. Firms were organized and controlled from India, and we have a good overall description of the loyalties and controls and the financial arrangements that allowed the system to work.²³ Where we have far less understanding is with the property relations of the home territory, the circulation of wealth across and down the generations, obligations and opportunities for socialization and training, the work of women and the culture of families in the home base, the selection of those who circulate and those who stay put, the movement of credit and resources among family members, and the kinds of sanctions kin could wield. Space has also to be seen as a resource, and the circulation of resources cannot be abstracted from the issue of how fast and efficiently people themselves could circulate. Just as a historian has to take into consideration the development of different kinds of markets—land, capital, labor, or commodity—to understand the working of partible or unigeniture inheritance, so the observers of international families have to understand

means of transportation—pack trains, sailing ships, steamships, postal services, railroads, telegraph, airplanes, telephone, and e-mail. Different diasporas have put different weight upon issues of lineage and descent, and sometimes migratory populations treat kinship itself as a resource.²⁴ Furthermore, significant issues have been raised in contemporary debates about the integration and assimilation of migrants or their enduring allegiance to a culture and language of origin.²⁵ Whether migrants come in order to return to their home country or to stay in the new place is ultimately not only a question of culture and individual choice (both fetishes of current debates), but also of property regimes and income strategies of their families. It is precisely when one gets down to specifics, to the details of who gives, receives, and controls resources, whose needs are satisfied and interests taken into account, that we can understand the logic of different social forms. As Markovits suggests, “A network [is] a structure through which goods, credit, capital and men circulate regularly across space, which can vary enormously in terms of size and accessibility.”²⁶ Important in his conceptualization is the understanding that networks are not conceivable apart from the material objects that circulate through them.

Trivellato (chapter 6) provides a model for how to deal with the ways in which the understanding of the family varies according to the perceived claims and obligations members have for each other. Her argument is that one needs to take into consideration the larger structures of families and the place of women in the distribution of resources and the coordination of personal relations. Networks are not subject to a single law, but take shape according to how things and what things move through them and where people are located by age, status, and gender. Trivellato begins her examination by pointing out that studies on the business organization of trading diasporas rarely examine how those were influenced by “specific kinship structures, inheritance practices, and dowry systems.” She offers contrasting case studies of Sephardic Jews based in Livorno and Armenians based in Julfa, looking at the specifics of kinship structures and devolutionary practices. Not only does she reassert the family in long-distance trade, but she also shows the mechanisms of how it was done. And she is able to relate the different instruments of kinship—endogamy, dowries, family-based contractual relations—to the spatial distribution of networks, the nature of business ties, the formation of capital, the relative centralization of commercial arrangements, and the reliance on outsiders.

Teuscher (chapter 4) in his study of urban patriciates stresses that the networks of kin creating ties across regions were the outcome of sending nonsucceeding sons on the road. Yet they were supported by their

families on their journeys and often passed around among distant kin as they made their way. The key point was to keep them away from the home town and competition for scarce familial goods. In her account of the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire Phanariots (chapter 9), Philliou looks at a political group that constituted itself around the control of a fundamentally scarce good: information. The development of their transregional households, spread throughout the Ottoman Empire during the early modern period, contrasted sharply with other Ottoman elites, who constructed “monoregional” political and social networks. The informational webs composed by relatives in Istanbul, the Danubian principalities, and beyond allowed the Phanariots to control certain key imperial offices, around which they built powerful dynasties. Marriage alliances were largely endogamous and carried out with the intent of developing patronage networks. Their very position as Christians in a Muslim polity determined their eclectic approach to the instrumentalization of family relationships.

Those elites in Europe who occupied territories in between the great powers, France and the Empire, are the subject of Spangler’s chapter 7. He deals with European princely families with their own territorial bases who served in the great courts and in competing armies. They had their own houses and clients and in turn served in greater houses and as clients to greater powers. Their patterns of intermarriage, rules of succession, and cultivation of local political and social networks, and the fact that members of the same family were careful to assume high positions with political powers in competition with each other offers important insight into the specifics of Western state formation and nascent nationalism.

In Sabean’s (chapter 11) treatment of international entrepreneurial families in Imperial Germany, he deals with the nineteenth-century construction of a particular agnatic lineage configuration. The need for capital, connection, and the placement of children encouraged the widespread practice of endogamous marriage practices, although the strategy always necessitated both near and far marriages.²⁷ Developing international business enterprise called upon the widespread use of kin. A family rich in brothers like the Siemens or Rothschilds could place their members in many different states, taking advantage of the Russian, English, Ottoman, and Austrian empires.

Patterned, Structured, and Systemic Aspects of Kinship

Recent work on the history of the family in Europe has begun to look carefully at the systemic aspects of kinship cultures and is now at the

place where it is possible to map the shifts in kinship structures over time.²⁸ The key things to keep in mind for the study of international families are that it is possible to give a formal account of kinship and that different forms have significant implications for understanding how groups are created, maintained, reconfigured, and how they persist over time. Many recent case studies from different regions and social settings call attention to two major transitions in the development of European kinship. The first leads from the late Middle Ages into the early modern period, and the second can be traced from the mid-eighteenth century. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries witnessed a new stress on familial coherence, a growing inclination to formalize patron-client ties through marriage alliance or godparentage, and a tendency to develop and maintain structured hierarchies within lineages, descent groups, and clans and among allied families. These developments were closely connected to processes of state formation and the formalization of social hierarchies as well as to innovations in patterns of succession and inheritance, new forms of delineating and mobilizing property, and novel claims to privileged rights in office, corporations, and monopolies. While the first transition can be associated with an increasing stress on vertically organized relationships, the second one brought about a stronger stress on horizontally ordered interactions. During the early modern period, marriage alliances were sought with “strangers,” frequently cemented long-term clientage relations, and created complex patterns of circulation among different political and corporate groups (*Stände, ceti, ordres*) and wealth strata. Beginning around the middle of the eighteenth century, alliance and affinity, rather than descent and heritage, came to organize interactions among kin. Marriages became more endogamous in terms of class, milieu, and consanguinity: marriage partners sought out the “familiar.” Among other things, these innovations reflected reconfigurations in political institutions, state service, property rights, and the circulation of capital. In the nineteenth century, enormous energy was invested in maintaining and developing extensive, reliable, and well-articulated structures of exchange among connected families over many generations.

During the eighteenth century, in some areas from the early decades but almost everywhere by around 1750, the structures stressing descent, inheritance, and succession, patriline, agnatic lineages and clans, paternal authority, house discipline, and exogamy gradually gave way to patterns centered around alliance, sentiment, horizontally structured kindreds, and social and familial endogamy. The progressive dissolution of patrilineal systems of property devolution was probably most prompted by bourgeois concerns, by people whose wealth came to be centered more

directly on money, credit, and exchange than on land, monopolies, and birthright, and we can see some of the features that characterized these groups in the nineteenth century already in play with trading diasporas of the early modern period as Trivellato argues in chapter 6. Kinship structures are not dependent variables but innovative and creative responses to newly configured relationships between people and institutions and around the circulation of goods and services. Therefore there could be many different ways of developing patterns of interaction, cultivating networks, and evolving systems of reciprocity. Kinship and the alliance systems of nineteenth-century Europe were crucial for concentrating and distributing capital; providing strategic support over the life of individuals; structuring dynasties and recognizable patrilineal groupings; maintaining access points, entrances, and exits to social milieus through marriage, godparentage, and guardianship; creating cultural and social boundaries by extensive festive, ludic, competitive, and charitable transactions; configuring and reconfiguring possible alliances between subpopulations; developing a training ground for character formation; shaping desire and offering practice in code and symbol recognition; training rules and practices into bodies; and integrating networks of culturally similar people.²⁹ Along with this closeness based on familiarity came a stronger appreciation of romantic love, emotional accord, and similarity of personality as the basis of legitimate marriage. This was by no means contrary to economic considerations: the flow of sentiment and the flow of money operated in the same channels. Even though we are well aware that the mapping of kinship systems in Europe is just at its inception, it is hard to overlook the central importance of cousin marriages and repeated consanguineal endogamy, homogamy, and familial-centered construction of cultural and social milieus.

There are a number of essays in this volume that take up the issue of kinship structures. Teuscher (chapter 4) investigates some of the practices leading to the structures that were typical outcomes of the first transition. He deals with patricians in German-speaking cities at the end of the Middle Ages, when elites closed off. This came with an increasing pressure to limit the number of sons who could lay claims on their fathers' positions and property. One strategy was to establish hierarchies within families and to shape distinct but interdependent roles between those sons who stayed and those who left, which were important steps towards the development of dynastic structures. These allowed connecting local property to continuous successions of fathers and sons, i.e., to mark property as dynastic property. The local rootedness of dynasties and the continuity of their local property were crucial to patrician self-representation and are therefore still today highly visible for historians.

This rootedness of the dynasty was, however, in part brought about by a less-emphasized mobility of some of the dynasties' unprivileged members, whose life courses were characterized by dislocations, ruptures, and discontinuity.

Hohkamp (chapter 5) argues against a simple genealogy of state-building in Europe based on the linking of primogeniture and territoriality in favor of an understanding of the kinship dynamics of European rulers that not simply reiterates the dominant perspective of succession between fathers and sons, but looks at family organization also from the perspective of sisters, daughters, and aunts. She draws attention to the establishment of dynasties through the politics of marriage exchange and points to the fundamental actions of married sisters as mediators in the political system. She analyzes changes in the structure of marriages, pointing to the integral importance of cousin marriage after the middle of the eighteenth century. She wants a "rethinking of the emergence of modern nations and statehood not so much in terms of centralization around a vertical line of succeeding princes as through the cohesive web of relations-constructed translocalities, regions, and nascent states through the dynamics of kinship."

Spangler (chapter 7) deals with princely families from small territories between France to the West and the German principalities to the East. He takes up the role that these families played in the construction of early modern states and the problems posed for them in the aftermath of the French Revolution and the triumph of the nation-state. A key aspect is that members of the families took high office and high military positions on all sides, with France, Spain, and Austria. During the early modern period, the families divided into multiple lines, marrying back and forth and with other such families as well. Besides serving several sides of the political spectrum, they also developed well-integrated patronage networks in their own territories, so that when these come to be included in one state or the other, they played an important role in integrating the territories into the new states. And like the Phanariots, they served crucial functions as conduits of information, since their members were scattered among the important courts throughout Europe.

The concept of the nation and the discourses of nationalism reinforced the changing structure of the state, as the very nature of political authority came to be redefined; sovereignty was deemed to reside in the "nation," that is, all people living within the boundaries of a given state who putatively shared a national culture. The kinship terminology of patriarchy that legitimated absolutism gave way to a new terminology that privileged horizontal bonds: the brotherhood, *la fraternité* of all (male) members of the nation.³⁰ The connection between the shifts

in the nature of kinship and the character of the emergent polity could not be clearer. In Moya's chapter 1, the author discusses the migration patterns of peoples from the Paleolithic to the present, exploring the precise meaning of "national" in the notion of "transnational families." He argues that migration has always been a fact of human society and points out that humans have the most complex kinship webs in the animal kingdom. What makes transnational migration specific are new forms of political organization operating with clearly delimited spatial entities and rigidly monitored borders—so the phenomenon is at most five centuries old and for many regions of the world only little more than a century old. Moya distinguishes between "cross-communality," "trans-regionality," and "transnationality." All of these are important in mixing populations in specific ways and constructing different kinds of polities, but it is the nineteenth century that first saw the massification of international families. And for the nation-state, these families had integral meaning—they themselves form a mechanism for migration, determine the patterns of migration, and become a self-generating force.³¹

Johnson (chapter 10) considers a slightly different issue, for he argues that the construction of the nation itself is not understandable without the actions of those transregional families who linked the disparate parts of the territorial state to draw the sinews of the nation together.³² He offers a detailed analysis of the new nineteenth-century alliance system, with the centrality of cousins, and links that to the formation of class and the development of the nation. Interestingly, his families were coordinated by strong older women, much like Chamberlain (chapter 12) finds in the Caribbean, but here where conjugality was strong and mobility was confined to the nation. He points out that the families he deals with in Brittany created a strongly endogamous system of marriage in terms of locality, class, and kin, but balanced that system always with a set of marriages that reached out across space to other bourgeois groups with which they had no prior ties. He sees these two practices as fully complementing each other. So the nation-state both relies on the movement of kin-structured populations to invent itself and sets barriers to those same kinds of families to maintain its new identity.

Rutten and Patel (chapter 14) also deal with structural aspects of kinship in their study of migrants from Gujarat in India to contemporary Britain, some of whom arrived by way of East Africa ("twice migrants"). Coming from a series of villages, hierarchically ordered, the Gujaratis have a long history of migration. Marriage among them is characterized by separate marriage circles organized hypergamously (women marry upward) where differences between high-status and medium-status villages play a central role. Migrants to East Africa and those who went

directly to Britain have rather different traditions of maintaining links back to the home society. In Britain, the immigrants remain attached both to Indian culture and to the social relations of where they came from. Like Chamberlain, these authors put great stress on the nature of communication—through phone contact (and probably today through e-mail). Like those from the Caribbean, Gujaratis in Britain maintain contacts with their home villages by frequent travel. And also like them, some of the older generation become “world citizens,” spending several months during the year at different locations in Britain, India, North America, and other places where relatives have settled. In the end, Rutten and Patel argue that the two communities—the home villages and the British immigrant community—have to be treated in the same unit of analysis, while at the same time they cannot be considered as a homogenous transnational community.

Chamberlain (chapter 12) uses examples from the Caribbean to discuss a society whose very identity is based on migration. She puts great stress on the systemic aspects of kinship practices, including “serial polygamy,” weak conjugal unions, and bilateral descent lines. These are both the result of migration (and slavery) and constitutive of the kind of migration that characterizes families from the region. In this system, there is a powerful place for mothers and grandmothers, such that the kinship system has come to be characterized by “matrifocality.”³³ The Caribbean family, Chamberlain argues, has adapted well to migration. Migrants see themselves as having a wide kinship network, and this has played out well in Britain and North America. Those who leave the Caribbean maintain an imagined continuity with it through an emotional attachment and genealogical map of the kin. The fact of migration stretching out over a very long time has become a feature of life in the Caribbean and of the understanding of family.³⁴ In a quite different context from the Phanariots discussed by Philliou, the circulation of communication is also fundamental for Caribbean family dynamics. And one of the things that is passed on is the *habitus* of migration itself—how to do it.

Strategies

A fundamental question to be asked is whether considerations of the long-term developments in European kinship outlined above offer analytical possibilities for the study of international families as well. Rather than seeing mobility and great geographic spreads as modern or modernizing per se, we should ask whether there might be specific medieval or modern patterns of dispersing family members over extended areas.

Is there a “transnationalism” or “transregionalism” of families that is typical of the fluctuating kin groups of the Middle Ages and a different one or different ones characteristic of the more coherently organized kin groups of the early modern period? A key question is whether empires and nation-states make a difference for transnational families as much of the literature (sometimes idealizing empires) has framed the comparisons between modern and premodern groups. Are the kinship forms of merchant, entrepreneurial, and laboring families found in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries similar to those of political elites and merchants in the medieval and early modern periods?

In taking some of these considerations into the study of transnational families, one strategy might be to examine family members over several generations. Chamberlain has shown that such an approach leads to an understanding of how familial connections can be coordinated and how certain configurations shift from generation to generation.³⁵ In our account, we have stressed how the kinds of resources available and the structural nature of states and economies themselves both condition how families organize themselves and act as resources that families use for their own purposes. In this respect, we can expect that families are not simply “reactive.” An important “resource” is the people themselves, and anthropologists have paved the way for understanding the implications of different forms of marriage, filiation, and exchange. “Rechaining,” cross-cousin and parallel-cousin marriages, homogamy, hypergamy, lineages, clans, kindreds, incest prohibitions, affinity, consanguinity, and so forth are all concepts that are invigorating the study of European kinship systems in the past.

On a regional level, Gérard Delille has demonstrated how the formation of the leading dynasties in the center (capitals, courts) of early modern monarchies went along with the emergence of cadet branches that intermarried with local elites in the peripheries and thus tied the latter to the centers. Many researchers have noted that in different epochs, quite extensive reunions of families take place periodically: where relations are reinforced, younger people are acquainted or reacquainted with an extended set of relatives, and, often, the seeds of new marriage alliances are planted (chapters by Chamberlain, Sabean, and Rutten and Patel). Examining an extended family across generations allows a researcher to see how the forms of communication can show a dynamic in structural relationships (Chamberlain, Rutten and Patel). This kind of work also can show ways in which families (and different family members) conceptualize the family, develop certain kinds of identities associated with a lineage or a name or a connection with a central figure, always understanding that patterns of use and ways of modeling relationships are not

at all the same thing. Identity itself is a highly problematic concept: we find some dispersed families where members remain strangers where they reside, for whom national boundaries are irrelevant, and where primary loyalties and meanings arise from a nonlocatable network of kin. But there are other situations where families have been broken up through the process of adopting national identities. Chamberlain has stressed the mobility, ambivalence, and contradictoriness of identity in migrant families, and Khater, observing migrants returning to the country of departure with new experiences, skills, and wealth, uses the concept of “kaleidoscopic” identities.³⁶

To push the understanding of transnational families to the next level, we will need microanalyses of family interaction over several generations; systematic accounts of socialization, points of cohesion and fission, and distributions of obligations and claims; and close examination of familial norms, values, and representations.³⁷ It should also be possible to give formal accounts of patterns of exchange and reciprocity, marriage alliances, and the structures of affinity, consanguinity, clientage, spiritual kinship, adoptive and adaptive “relatives,” and friendship. These processes can be examined over the range of centuries during which the nation-state emerged, from its incubation in the “states” of medieval cities and principalities and within multi-“national” empires in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, through its triumph in the age of national and democratic revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth, to its hyperextension in the twentieth, as well as in the contemporary context of its contradictory trajectories as ethnic-regional claims vie with globalization.

Notes

1. Claude Markovits, *The Global World of Indian Merchants 1750–1947: Traders of Sind from Bukhara to Panama* (Cambridge, 2000), 260–61, discusses the concept of “trust,” which is the value most frequently ascribed to family business networks. The question is whether trust is embedded in dense kinship networks and is affective or rather a matter of rational calculation. He argues that family and kinship are not “privileged breeding grounds for trust” (262). Witness the frequent conflicts and sibling rivalries. What kinship networks offer are speed and ease of communication and they provide a “dense flow of accumulated information about past behaviour.” Trust is not an automatic outcome but the result of process.
2. Dieter Schwab, “Familie,” in Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Kosellek, eds., *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland* (Stuttgart, 1975), 255–58.
3. Claude Karnoouh, “Penser ‘maison,’ penser ‘famille’: residence domestique et parenté dans les sociétés rurales de l’est de la France,” in *Études rurales* 75 (1979) :

- 33–75. And see the discussion on the house in David Warren Sabean, *Property, Production and Family in Neckarhausen, 1700–1870* (Cambridge, 1990).
4. For a recent attempt to view the history of kinship in Europe, see David Warren Sabean, Simon Teuscher, and Jon Mathieu, eds., *Kinship in Europe: Approaches to Long-Term Development (1300–1900)* (New York, 2007).
 5. M. Frédéric Le Play, *L'organisation de la famille selon le vrai modèle signalé par l'histoire de toutes les races et tous les temps* (Paris, 1871); Wilhelm Riehl, *Die Familie*, vol. 3 of *Die Naturgeschichte des Volks als Grundlage einer deutschen Social-Politik*, 3rd ed. (Stuttgart, 1855).
 6. Otto Brunner, "Das 'ganze Haus' und alteuropäische 'Oekonomik'," in Otto Brunner, *Neue Wege der Verfassungs- und Socialgeschichte*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen, 1968), 103–27.
 7. Werner Trossbach, "Das 'Ganze Haus'—Basiskategorie für das Verständnis ländlicher Gesellschaften in der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 129 (1993), 277–314; Valentin Groebner, "Ausser Haus. Otto Brunner und die 'Alteuropäische Ökonomik'," in *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 2 (1995): 69–80; Claudia Opitz, "Neue Wege Der Sozialgeschichte? Ein Kritischer Blick Auf Otto Brunners Konzept des 'Ganzen Hauses'," in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 20 (1994): 88–98.
 8. Pierre Bourdieu, "Marriage Strategies as Strategies of Social Reproduction," in Robert Forster and Orest Ranum, eds., *Family and Society: Selections from the Annales*, trans. Elborg Forster (Baltimore, 1976): 117–44.
 9. *Ibid.*, 135.
 10. See for example the discussion throughout the collection of essays in Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, Gelina Harlaftis, and Ioanna Pepelasis Minoglou, eds., *Disapora Entrepreneurial Networks: Four Centuries of History* (Oxford, 2005).
 11. Gelina Harlaftis, "Mapping the Greek Maritime Diaspora from the Early Eighteenth to the Late Twentieth Centuries," in McCabe, Harlaftis, and Minoglou, eds., *Disapora Entrepreneurial Networks*, 147–71. Talking about the Black Sea trade in the nineteenth century: "The main strength of Greek shipowners ... were the networks of Greek diaspora merchant communities" (155). "The Chiot [from the Island of Chios] network was formed by members of about sixty Greek families." On p. 156, she discusses one of the large family networks, the Rallis, the largest and most influential family in the Chiot network with sixty-six members—siblings, first and second cousins married within twenty-four families. A prime characteristic of the multinational network was family control: "Kinship and common place of origin implied trust and facilitated entrance into the 'club.'" But their power derived from the "discipline dictated by the hierarchy and cohesion of the family." "Intermarriage was extensive as each family sought to mix with equals. ... Intermarriage made the family even more powerful" (164). "Intermarriage was used as an important strategy in keeping business together and the heirs were selected and educated carefully among this international family business elite, at the heart of which lay personal contacts and trust."
 12. Jonathan Israel, "Diaspora Jewish and Non-Jewish and the World Maritime Empires," in McCabe, Harlaftis, and Minoglu, eds., *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks*, 3–26. Armenian success was built "on a system of trust supplemented by informal methods of enforcing family, religious and business discipline" (7).
 13. Deborah Bryceson and Ulla Vuorela, "Transnational Families in the Twenty-First Century," in Deborah Bryceson and Ulla Vuorela, ed., *The Transnational Family: New European Frontiers and Global Networks* (Oxford, 2002), 3–30. "Transnational families have to mediate inequality amongst their members" (7).

14. Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, "Global Trading Ambitions in Diaspora: The Armenians and Their Eurasian Silk Trade, 1530–1750," in McCabe, Harlaftis, and Minoglu, eds., *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks*, 27–48. Dealing with Armenians in the Safavid Empire, she points out that one has to understand the household system of government—the same as with Ottomans (33).
15. See also the discussion of migration and paternalism in Akram Fouad Khater, *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870–1920* (Berkeley, 2001), 5: the new patriarchal order (upon remigration) subjected women to "new forms of control and discipline."
16. Bryceson and Vuorela, "Transnational Families in the Twenty-First Century," 7.
17. *Ibid.*, 25.
18. Jürgen Osterhammel, "Transnationale Gesellschaftsgeschichte: Erweiterung oder Alternative?," in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 27 (2001): 464–79.
19. Hilde Bras and Theo van Tilburg, "Kinship and Social Networks: A Regional Analysis of Sibling Relations in Twentieth-Century Netherlands," in *Journal of Family History* 35 (2007): 296–322.
20. Bernard Derouet, "Pratiques successorales et rapport à la terre: Les sociétés paysannes d'ancien régime," in *Annales ESC* (1989): 173–206; "Territoire et parenté: Pour une mise en perspective de la communauté rurale et des formes de reproduction familiale," in *Annales HSS* (1995): 645–86; "La transmission égalitaire du patrimoine dans la France rurale (XVI^e–XIX^e siècles): Nouvelles perspectives de recherche," in Francisco Chacón Jiménez and Llorenç Ferrer Alós, eds., *Familia, casa y trabajo*, vol. 3: *Historia de la Familia* (Murcia, 1997), 73–92; "Les pratiques familiales, le droit et la construction des différences (XV^e–XIX^e siècles)," in *Annales HSS* (1997): 369–91; "Pratiques de l'alliance en milieu de communautés familiales (Bourbonnais, 1600–1750)," in Guy Brunet, Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, and Michel Oris, eds., *Le choix du conjoint* (Lyon, 1998), 227–51; "Parenté et marché foncier à l'époque moderne: une réinterprétation," in *Annales HSS* (2001): 337–68; "La terre, la personne et le contrat: exploitation et associations familiales en Bourbonnais (XVII^e–XVIII^e siècles), in *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* (2003): 27–51.
21. Leonard Kasdan, "Family Structure, Migration and the Entrepreneur," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 7 (1965): 345–57.
22. Sigrid Khera, "An Austrian Peasant Village under Rural Industrialization," in *Behavior Science Notes* 7 (1972): 29–36.
23. Markovits, *Global World of Indian Merchants*.
24. Anne K. Bang, *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea: Family Networks in East Africa, 1860–1925* (London, 2003), 12, discusses the importance of genealogy and descent. She develops an interesting discussion of the culture of migration (23). Going overseas became a natural option. At each stop on the migration route, families were crucial for support (61). "In the pre-national world of the Indian Ocean, a *rami sâda* identity remained stable through several mechanisms. One was the rules applied to marriage, another was the status ascribed to them by other Islamic peoples. This identity was genealogical in origin, and was maintained as a tight-knit, trans-oceanic network of individuals linked together by blood and common experiences" (198).
25. See the articles in Bryceson and Vuorela, eds., *Transnational Family*.
26. Markovits, *Global World of Indian Merchants*, 25.
27. Huibert Schiff, "Jewish Bankers 1850–1914: Internationalization along Ethnic Lines," in McCabe, Harlaftis, and Minoglu, eds., *Diaspora Entrepreneurial Networks*, 191–216, here 194. He emphasizes bankers as members of extended families with far-reaching international contacts. Trust was based most powerfully on kinship re-

- lations (196). Starting up a banking house abroad began with extensive kinship network (202). Inter-marriage was an important strategy to create trust.
28. The pioneering work has been done by Gérard Delille in two important studies: *Famille et propriété dans le royaume de Naples (XV^e–XIX^e siècle)* (Rome, 1985); *Maire et le prieur: pouvoir central et pouvoir local en Méditerranée occidentale, XV^e–XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 2003).
 29. The argument here is taken from Sabeian, *Kinship in Neckarhausen*, 451.
 30. Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (London, 1992).
 31. Donna R. Gabaccia and Fraser M. Ottanelli, "Introduction," in Donna R. Gabaccia and Fraser M. Ottanelli, eds., *Italian Workers of the World Labor Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic States* (Urbana, IL, 2001), 1–17. They discuss the thesis of transnational migrants being "harbingers of nation-states in decline" but point to the central importance of migration as nationalism was being constructed (4).
 32. Ulla Vuorela, "Transnational Families: Imagined and Real Communities," in Bryceson and Vuorela, eds., *Transnational Family*, 63–82. "While some might see transnational family loyalties over-riding the individual's sense of loyalty to the nation, in fact it is national loyalties that may get in the way of family loyalties." Mary Chamberlain, *Narratives of Exile and Return* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1997), 29: "International migrants are by definition international people with allegiances and loyalties which transcend the nation-state."
 33. The issue of the powerful central woman who keeps kin in contact with each other and who manages relationships is dealt with in Deborah Bryceson, "Europe's Transnational Families and Migration: Past and Present," in Bryceson and Vuorela, eds., *Transnational Family*, 31–57. She discusses a Moroccan family in the Netherlands. A central figure to the extended family is Fatima, whose "determination and force of personality have made her a focal point for extended family network activity." She also points to family gatherings and feasts.
 34. She also raises the issue of whether the international family is inimical to the nation. On this see also Bryceson and Vuorela, "Transnational Families," 9. They pose the question of whether transnational families are contradictory to national feeling, a subversive threat to coherence of national state.
 35. Chamberlain, *Narratives*.
 36. Chamberlain, *Narratives*; Khater, *Inventing Home*.
 37. See, for example, the recent study by Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven, CT, 2009).