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THE CONSTRUCTION OF FAMILY MODELS IN EUROPE AND FAMILY HISTORY IN CROATIA

SUMMARY

Attempts at mapping family and households in rural historic Europe have come up with a bi-model (John Hajnal 1965, 1982) and its four-type variant (Peter Laslett 1983). One model has been named "European" or "western European", while the other, being constructed as its antithesis, can logically, and, in contradistinction to the "European" one, be termed a "non-European" model. In the text, relying on contemporary critical reassessments (Kertzer, Brettell, Hareven, Reher, Smith, etc.), the author presents and discusses tenets held by two champions of modelling family forms in historic Europe (Hajnal and Laslett).

According to a commonly accepted view, backed by available literature and sources, with respect to its family forms in the past Croatia would be classified as a "non-European" civilization. However, recent contributions cast at least some doubt at such perceptions. An argument is made in favour of a comparative study of family forms, pointing that what has been called a South Slavic *zadruga* exhibits similarities with family forms found in other parts of Europe, e.g. with the so-called *communautés taisibles* found in central France until the 19th c. At the same time, a move from a more historical and genetic approach (favoured by Milovan Gavazzi and his school) to a more functional one, relying on statistical data and demographic methods, might challenge a commonly received view about presence, distribution, and size of *zadrugas* in historical Croatia. Both some microlevel data for the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as macrolevel sources from the end of the 19th c., point to a balancing ratio of complex to simple household forms. The relative importance and distinctiveness of complex households in Croatian traditional culture can be questioned. Furthermore, it can be shown that differences in distribution arise from geographic, political and cultural as well as socioeconomic background: it looks as if socioeconomic differentiation, no matter whether it is found in the 18th century Slavonia, or in the 19th century Northern Coast (Hrvatsko Primorje) or in the medieval Dubrovnik, accounts for simple family forms found in town-like settlements and complex forms found in surrounding countryside. However, until a firmer argument can be made in favour of viewing Croatia as a junction of different family forms, rather than exclusively and uniquely as an area with families of the eastern or Mediterranean type, more and refined research into historical family forms is needed.