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General topic: “Inequalities: Politics, Policy, and the Past”  
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CRICEC

**CRISES AND CHANGE IN THE EUROPEAN COUNTRYSIDE**

**PROGRAMME ET RÉSUMÉS**

Primary Network: Family/Demography

Other Networks: Labor, Rural, Agricultural, and Environmental

Thursday, November 06: 10:15

Jeudi 6 Novembre 2014, 10:15

**Organisers:** Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, CNRS/EHESS-Paris (Centre de Recherches Historiques) [antoinette.fauve-chamoux@ehess.fr](mailto:antoinette.fauve-chamoux@ehess.fr)  
avec Laurent Herment, CNRS/EHESS-Paris (Centre de Recherches Historiques)

ARE CRISES CHANGING THE VALUE OF CHILDREN INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE FAMILY?  
**LES CRISES CHANGENT-ELLES LA VALEUR DES ENFANTS  
HORS DE LA FAMILLE ET EN SON SEIN ?**

**CHAIR**

Antoinette FAUVE-CHAMOUX, EHESS/CNRS, Centre de Recherches Historiques, Paris, France

Matt NELSON, Université du Minnesota, USA

*Relieved of These Little Chores: Working Children on North American Farms, 1850-1950.*

Fabrice BOUDJAABA, Laurent HERMENT, EHESS/CNRS, Centre de Recherches Historiques, Paris,  
France

*Wage-Earning Children in Countryside Households of Paris Basin during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century.*

Christine FERTIG, Université de Münster, Allemagne

*Family Strategies in Good and Bad Times: Having Children in Premodern Society (Northwestern Germany, 18th/19th c.)*

Ofelia REY CASTELAO, Université de Saint-Jacques de Compostelle, Espagne.

*Are Heiresses a Solution or an Alternative to Family Crisis in Eighteenth Century Rural Northwestern Spain?*

Marius EPEL, Université Babes Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca, Roumanie

*Changing Values and the Crisis of the Romanian Families from Transylvania during WWI.*

**DISCUSSANT**

Mary Louise NAGATA, Université Francis Marion, USA

**avant le 15 octobre 2014**

**Résumés:**

M. Nelson. *Relieved of These Little Chores: Working Children on North American Farms, 1850-1950.*

Throughout the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries, family members provided the main labor force on farms. Due to how the United States Census defined occupations in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries, family farm labor was likely underreported in the Census, particularly for spouses. Using national level data for the United States from IPUMS-USA and microhistorical evidence from pioneer diaries and time use studies, I attempt to correct these figures using a family life cycle perspective of work. I argue that in early family life cycles, spousal labor was common in the farm fields. Once children were born, child labor, particularly sons, substituted spousal labor in what has traditionally been defined as “farm work”. While farm and household work was usually defined by the cultural, economic, and ideological context of farm families and communities, the blurred lines of housework and farm work challenges the assertion that “domestic work”, often performed by women, should not be considered while measuring farm work. Instead of distinguishing housework and farm work to study intra household relationships and dynamics, I focus on task-orientation to explain the work patterns of farmers, spouses, and children.

F. Boudjaaba, L. Herment. *Wage-Earning Children in Countryside Households of Paris Basin during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century.*

The theory of Chayanov and the work of P. Laslett are very popular among rural historians. The former theory establishes a link between the size of the family and the size of the agricultural estate. The latter establishes that children began to work in order to amass money for wedding or because they were an element of the household economy. In a certain extent, these two theories are generally accepted as the explanation of the economic pattern of the household economy in the countryside. In fact, in the Paris Basin, the theory of Chayanov is not relevant because the type of rights on the land was not at all the same that those considered by Chayanov. The life cycle phenomenon was not provoked by a Chayanov effect but by a double necessity: helping children to marry; the willingness to be protected during old age. Regarding the issue of the labour of sons and daughters, there is no study for this region during the nineteenth century. It is possible to wonder if the pattern described by P. Laslett is verified. In fact the condition (age, profession, etc.) by which children worked are unknown. To better understand these conditions we use a large data base of about 17.000 people recorded in the census of 1836 for two regions located at about 50 km of Paris. Thanks to the cadastre, we can also assess the level of fortune of a large sample of household. We can use a lot of variables to understand under which conditions children became wage-earners: age of children, number of children in the household (male and female), profession of parents and children, etc. and reassess the behaviour of rural households facing the labour of children and especially the case of the young women.

C. Fertig. *Family Strategies in Good and Bad Times: Having Children in Premodern Society (Northwestern Germany, 18th/19th c.).*

It is still an open question in historical demography whether premodern families made attempts to control their fertility. It is well known that people delayed their marriage in hard times, but there are only few studies addressing the question of deliberate fertility control in marriage. The paper will contribute to this debate by analyzing marriage and birth giving in Northwestern Germany, using data on life-courses and households. A central question will be if people restrain their fertility behaviour in difficult times, such as economic crises.

O. Rey Castelao. *Are Heiresses a Solution or an Alternative to Family Crisis in Eighteenth Century Rural Northwestern Spain? .*

Temporary male migration to Castile, Andalusia and Portugal was a permanent reality for eighteenth century families of Northwestern Spain. But a new phenomenon appeared with emigration to America for good. There was also an important female migration to cities, mostly for domestic service jobs. Women followed the same migration routes than men, except that America was not a destination for females. Regional male deficit was the highest in Spain and it was enhanced in Northwestern Spain because of the military policy of the Bourbons: beginning 1726 a mode of recruitment for the Navy was imposed to the local population, resulting in much higher male mortality, than the traditional mortality at sea.

Given a traditional demographic context of low birth rates, family had few potential heirs available, which penury was aggravated by a high percentage of couples without children, who had to invent solutions to this lack of successors. But the transmission system which was legal gave de facto a large freedom to parents for transmitting their assets as they saw fit. As a result, the family transmission model of Northwestern Spain was very favorable to women. Relying on historical sources as notarial records, court cases, testimonies, etc., the ambition of this paper is not to explain the main regional pattern present in Northwestern Spain, but to estimate to what extent daughters represented a higher value than males in this specific context, compared to other family systems. In the province under study, daughters had specific care responsibilities towards elderly parents and aging relatives in order to face family crises. For a family, under which circumstances was it good or even better to have daughters?

- M. Eppel. *Changing Values and the Crisis of The Romanian Families from Transylvania during WWI*. During the First World War, traditional family reproduction strategies, family formation and conjugal life were highly perturbed by the state of war, the mobility of the male population and long absence of young males – sons and husbands - from family homes. Through the example of Transylvania and thanks to rich religious records, this paper will explore continuities and changes in the value of children – be they legitimate or illegitimate, sons or daughters – and continuities and changes in the social and religious control over sexual behavior in times of war and crisis.
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