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Familism and Individualisation in East Europe and East Asia

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INTRODUCTION

The different paths of social transformation after the abrupt rejection of socialism in Eastern Europe (1989–1991) as well as the rather cautious systemic transformation of China and Vietnam since the 1980s have aroused a strong and constant academic interest in the social sciences. Indeed, the so-called defeat of state socialism by liberal capitalism does not deserve a lack of academic interest, but it should (further) encourage scholars to carry on full-scale studies. The reason is twofold. First, these societies with their (past) experiences of socialism are now an integral part of globalisation. Half of Europe and more than eighty percent of East Asia's population experienced socialist modernisation along with the succeeding systemic transformation. Second, the study of the transformation of these societies provides a great opportunity to test and reconsider already existing social theories.

Among the numerous studies on the post-socialist period, for instance, Susan Gal and Gail Kligman draw attention to the gendered character of post-socialism, suggesting that men and women have experienced the collapse of socialism in different ways, as well as the possibilities brought about by the new world.¹

Another scholar, Marc M. Howard points to the fact that people in Eastern Europe – even a decade after the collapse of socialism – are less likely to join voluntary organisations compared to other parts of the world, possibly due to the experience of obligatory participation in state-controlled organisations.² Others shed light on the post-socialist nostalgic turn of socialism, which is explained as a complex process of healing past experience while simultaneously facing new inequalities.³ Popular subjects for the period of political and systemic transformations include the collapse of state socialism,⁴ the politics of post-communism,⁵ political parties in the post-socialist era,⁶ the relationship of the state and society in post-socialist countries,⁷ globalisation and the state,⁸ minority rights,⁹

work discusses the gender politics in post-communist Eurasia (Racioppi & See, 2009).

² Howard, 2003. Anders Uhlin points to the different degrees of development of civil society in countries previously belonging to the Soviet Union (Uhlin, 2006).

³ Todorova & Gille, 2010.

⁴ Kamiński, 1991.

⁵ Mandelbaum, 1991.

⁶ Spirova, 2007.

⁷ Pickles & Jenkins, 2008.

⁸ Drahokoupil, 2009.

⁹ Rechel, 2009.

¹ Gal & Kligman, 2000. Another important

transitional justice,¹⁰ the post-socialist period seen through literature and language,¹¹ as well as ideologies and practices.¹²

Nonetheless, the concept of *post-socialism* – a term frequently applied to the case of Eastern Europe as well as China and Vietnam – is far from easy to grasp. The problem here lies with the word *post-*. *Post-* as an attribute does not tell much about the characteristic feature of the period that it refers to, but it rather emphasises the end of the previous period without being certain about what has come thereafter. Thus *post-* rather appears to be a convenient cloak for *being uncertain*, and presumably it will take a long time until it can be replaced with the proper expression assumed to show the core character of *post-socialism*.¹³ A similar problem arises in regard to the expression *transitional* societies. *Transitional* here cannot be referred to as the assumption that (post-) socialist¹⁴ societies are

now following a path suggested in the modernisation theory based on Western capitalism.¹⁵ The *radiant past*¹⁶ of these societies proves to be strong enough to cause them to follow a path similar to, yet different from, the one(s) seen in Western¹⁷ countries. This becomes particularly obvious in the case of China, where the notion of *transition* – regardless of the diversity of its contemporary rhetorics – does not pertain to the complete refusal of the former Maoist period but rather to the postponing, into the (far) future, of the original goals by socialist modernisation.¹⁸

At the same time, (post-)socialist societies themselves are also experiencing various transformational paths. The most remarkable difference emerges between East Europe and East Asia. Whereas China made a declarative statement of economic reforms as early as 1978, and was then followed by Vietnam under the name *Đổi Mới* (Renovation) in 1986, countries in East Europe carried out a more radical systemic change between 1989 and 1991. Further differences can be found among the countries in East Europe too, and ‘culture’

¹⁰ Stan, 2008.

¹¹ Andrews, 2008; Kovačević, 2008; Chitnis, 2004.

¹² Hann, 2002.

¹³ Caroline Humphrey states that “Sooner or later, as the generations brought up under socialist regimes disappear from the political scene, the category of postsocialism is likely to break apart and disappear” (Humphrey, In Hann, 2002: 13). Nonetheless, even if the term itself disappears, one should agree with Chris Hann stressing that “the reproduction of a common layer of socialist institutions, (...), will continue to have decisive effects on this interplay everywhere in Eurasia for many years to come” (Hann, 2002: 11).

¹⁴ The expression *(post-)socialist* is used throughout the introduction to highlight the fact that while East European countries today call themselves *post-socialist* (or *post-communist*), the governments of China and Vietnam – despite the remarkable economic reforms – continue to consider themselves *socialist*.

¹⁵ Verdery, 1996.

¹⁶ This term was used by Michael Burawoy and János Lukács (1992) as a keyword to describe the characters of the social transformation of Hungary before and after the change of the political system (1989–1990), but it can be applied to the case of each country with the experience of socialist modernisation too.

¹⁷ The expression *Western* throughout in this volume pertains to the countries in Western Europe and Northern America.

¹⁸ Latham, 2002. Kevin Latham also argues that people in contemporary China are much less afraid of becoming victims of some new-old political terror, and that they are rather more concerned with their social and economic conditions.

often becomes an explanatory variable to highlight these differences. The problem with ‘culture’ however is that it looks more like a *black-box, a mysterious residual variable*, which was fostered by anthropologists in many parts of the world, who tended to focus on particular aspects rather than similarities.¹⁹ Despite the existence of differences in the details, (post-) socialist countries – regardless of their location in Eastern Europe or socialist East Asia²⁰ – did have similarities. However, these similarities did not lie in a presumed common culture of socialism, but rather in social institutions and a common tendency to bureaucratic centralism.²¹ As Caroline Humphrey asserts, “those structures still had more in common than actually existing capitalisms”.²² Indeed, people in these countries – regardless of the differences in their everyday life before the socialist times – had to face similar institutional and bureaucratic frameworks imposed on them from above, and that might also be the reason for why people living in different (post-)socialist countries seem to be able to know “how to take a hint”.

Put into the language of social science, the common experience of (post-)socialist countries refers to the state’s previously unseen and extensive control (during the initial period of socialism) over economy, civil society and family, which was then followed by the withdrawal of state control and state

responsibility for these sectors. All these countries started with a totalitarian-state period, which then gradually changed to an authoritarian one.²³ The striking difference between East Europe and socialist East Asia lies not in the existence of this process per se, but rather in the different forms and degrees of the shrinking scope of state control and state responsibility.²⁴

²³ Elemér Hankiss, a prominent Hungarian social philosopher, differentiated the concepts of a totalitarian state and an authoritarian state in the following way. A totalitarian state does not tolerate the existence of any sort of organisations originating from *below*, whereas an authoritarian state permits the existence of such organisations to a certain degree in return for the tacit approval by the people of its ultimate power (Hankiss, 1989). Hankiss’ conceptualisation can be applied to other (post-)socialist countries too. According to Chris Hann, the process of the breaking (previous) ‘total social institutions’ in China started earlier than in Eastern Europe, and that this drew the attention of a number of social scholars and thus it is relatively well documented (2002).

²⁴ It must be noted that East European countries and socialist East Asia not only differ in the varied forms and degrees regarding the withdrawal of the scope of control by the state, but also in that China and Vietnam managed to produce a rapidly growing economy, while East European economies have seen economic difficulties over the past two decades. In the first place, unlike the fallen communist governments in Eastern Europe, the governments of China and Vietnam even today enjoy a degree of legitimacy. This is perhaps due to the successful economic developments of China and Vietnam, and also on the variant form of socialism introduced in East Asia. Whereas the socialist system was forcibly established by the former Soviet Union after World War Two in the case of East Europe, it became strongly connected to struggles for national freedom against foreign colonialism in the East Asian region, and therefore it gained a completely different (rather positive) connotation. This fact should always be kept in mind when one compares socialism in East Europe and East Asia. Yet, the shrinkage of the scope of control and responsibility by the state in general gives a common analytic

¹⁹ Hann, 2002.

²⁰ That is, Mainland China, Vietnam and North Korea. Nonetheless, it must be noted that North Korea has yet to carry out any noteworthy systemic transformation comparable to China or Vietnam.

²¹ Verdery, 1996.

²² Humphrey, In Hann, 2002: 12.

Whereas the sudden shrinking scope of state control was most striking after the change of the political system in Eastern European countries (1989–1991), the state in China and Vietnam still enjoys a considerable degree of control. In China, where the planned economy was largely replaced by a liberal capitalist economy, large and medium-sized state enterprises still continue to play a significant role in the country's economy. Likewise, while the formation of certain – mainly environment-related – grassroots organisations from below has become easier, the formation of political-oriented organisations continues to be banned, which highlights the weak formation of civil society in contemporary China.²⁵ As to family, one can see a remarkable withdrawal of state control and state responsibility in terms of care, especially in the case of elderly care.²⁶ The Chinese government stresses the value of the traditional practice of filial piety and even gives elderly parents the right to sue their adult child(ren) in case of negligence on the part of their children. Another particular phenomenon regarding Chinese families today concerns women. According to the ideology of socialist gender equality, women

framework to the comparative study of socialism and post-socialism in East Europe and East Asia.

²⁵ Nonetheless, following Chris Hann's suggestion, it must be noted that the Western-interpreted concept of civil society first "needs to be broadened, relativized and adapted to local conditions" before it is applied to non-Westerned conditions so that the term "can remain a useful general term" (Hann, 2002: 9). The problem here is that it is not easy to conceptualise the meaning of 'civil society' – due to a historical lack of it – in the Chinese (or the Vietnamese) context – a task that requires further study.

should not stay at home as housewives, rather they are supposed to work like men. However, in recent years, one can see a tendency for the appearance of a new-old ideology among women which stresses the positive image of a housewife over that of a working woman. The realisation of this ideology however becomes difficult for many of them due to economic hardship in their households.

The withdrawal of the state from the intimate sphere (family) is also emphasised by scholars writing on Vietnam, where the family and household have been put at the service of *developmentalism* after Đổi Mới, and where, since 1986, the concept of *gender equality* has been adapted to the needs of the state, along with a renewed emphasis on pre-socialist values and kinship ties.²⁷ The withdrawal of the state from the intimate sphere in terms of reductions in the extent of care provided has mixed influences on the family's traditional role of supervision and control. Filial piety in Vietnam still remains strong, largely, though not entirely, as a result of internal belief but also influenced by external social constraints.²⁸

Nonetheless, it must be noted that in regard to the changing relationship between the state and family, one can see a similar path among the countries of East Europe and East Asia. At the initial stage of the socialist period in most of the (post-)socialist countries, the communist governments in many of these countries intended to break up the previous

²⁶ Ochiai, 2010.

²⁷ Werner, 2006. Jayne Werner also draws attention to the phenomenon of the re-feminisation of agriculture.

²⁸ Barbiéri & Bélanger, 2009.

(pre-socialist) family ties and attempted to educate a new generation of 'individuals' that were supposed to become more connected to their workplaces than to their own families. However, these initial attempts were sooner or later given up, and the family again became the smallest unit of society, though this time with a strong emphasis on socialist gender equality. Systemic changes in China and Vietnam and political changes in Eastern Europe brought about new changes for the family again. Though the family continues to be considered the most important social unit by the state, one can see a significant decrease in terms of state support, which in return enhances dependence on one's own family, thus giving way to the emergence of a new-old age of familism (or family dependence). Interestingly, the appearance of this new familism is also accompanied by an opposite trend, that is, a remarkable pluralisation of family forms. The declining birth and marriage rate, the increasing divorce rate, as well as the increasing number of cohabiting couples, DINKs²⁹ couples, single parents (mainly single mothers),³⁰ or that of homosexual couples – though the degrees to which these phenomena appear vary from country to country – are also perceived in (post-)socialist societies. These phenomena, which are usually regarded as signs of individualisation in terms of self-fulfilment in

²⁹ "Double Income No Kids" – couples that do not intend to have child(ren) on purpose, and where both of the spouses work as a full-timer.

³⁰ 'Single mother' here does not refer to those who became single through divorce or bereavement, but rather to those who did not intend to marry the father of their child(ren) from the beginning. Thus 'single mother' here

Western countries, stand in a sort of contradiction to the enhancing family dependence imposed on individuals indirectly from above by the state. The two contradictory trends raise important questions regarding the (post-)socialist character of East Europe and socialist East Asia. Is the individualisation perceived here identical with that seen in Western countries, or is it something else, rather a superficial phenomenon with implications different to those of its Western counterpart? How is this related to the externally imposed family dependence, and how does it characterise the path of modernisation in (post-)socialist countries?

With the above questions in mind, the authors in the present volume, titled *Family and Social Change in Socialist and Post-Socialist Societies: Change and Continuity in East Europe and East Asia*,³¹ address the social transformations of eight 'transitional' societies in recent decades (Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, China and

rather refers to a chosen lifestyle.

³¹ A brief explanation of the title is in order. First, whereas 'family change' stands as the focus of the present volume, 'social change' refers to changes – in an expanded sense – to the state, economy and civil society, serving as an explaining variable of changes to the family. Second, to say 'socialist and post-socialist societies' does not refer in the first place to the two distinguishable periods before and after the systemic transformations, but rather to the fact that, unlike the countries in Eastern Europe, the governments of China and Vietnam still regard themselves as *socialist*. Third, the expression 'East Asia' in the title does not include all the countries of East Asia, but only the socialist part of the region excluding North Korea. North Korea was not included in this volume due to the difficulties in carrying out a satisfactory study on this country.

Vietnam).³² Each chapter discusses a different society and reveals the struggles that have taken place in the post-Cold War period in the reconstruction of the intimate and public spheres.³³ Struggles that have had recourse to two essential elements of modernisation in a social sense: *familism* and *individualisation*.

There are two books that are

³² This volume grew out of a project starting in June 2010 under the title “Transformation of the Intimate and Public Spheres in Transitional Societies: Family and Community – Taking China, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine as Case Studies” hosted in the Faculty of Letters of Kyoto University. This project was originally devoted to young researchers within the framework of our host program called “Kyoto University Global COE Program Reconstruction of the Intimate and Public Spheres in 21st Century Asia”. From April 2011, the team has broadened the research scope (firstly) by including other countries like Vietnam, and (secondly) by also focusing on subjects such as ‘family and marketisation’, as well as, ‘family and the state’. Consequently, the title of the project was changed to “Transformation of the Intimate and Public Spheres in Transitional Societies: Family, Community, State and Market – Taking China, Vietnam, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine as Case Studies”. Two international symposiums were opened in regard of the project. The first one was held in December 2010 under the name of “Empty Individualization and Familism in Transitional Societies: Hungary as a Case Study”, and the second one was held in December 2011 under a similar title as the present volume, “Family and Social Change in Socialist and Post-Socialist Societies: East Europe and East Asia”. Both symposiums took place in the Faculty of Letters of Kyoto University.

³³ The conceptualisation of the intimate and public spheres in this volume is as follows. The focus of the discussions in the respective chapters is on the intimate sphere (family), which is discussed and analysed in relation to the state, market and the civil society. These – as explanatory factors of the intimate sphere – are viewed as the public sphere (equivalent to a so-called “non-intimate sphere”) in a broad sense.

comparable in subject and perspective to the present volume. The first one is *And they lived happily thereafter? Norms and everyday practices of family and parenthood in Russia and Eastern Europe*,³⁴ and the other one is *Families in Eastern Europe (Contemporary perspectives in family research)*.³⁵ The former discusses family life (parenthood and childhood) in Russia and Eastern Europe, by also focusing on change and continuity in institutions and laws. The latter addresses fourteen Eastern European countries, for which the authors provide demographic information about families and discuss cultural traditions, marital and gender roles, parenting processes, family policy and programs within the societies, and the state of research on family issues. Both books stand close to this volume in their profiles. However, the present volume goes beyond the framework of these two books in at least two points. First, this volume links family and social change in (post-)socialist countries to the hotly-debated subject of modernisation, and second, it also outlines the possibility of an intercontinental comparison of family and social change by addressing the potential of a *modified second modernity transition* theory as a corrective to popular Western-based interpretations of current social trends. This can be expected to have an impact on fields such as sociology, social philosophy, anthropology, demography etc., and also on area studies such as East Europe and East Asia. The potential of a *modified* theory – as a revised theory to the Western-born and Western-centric second demographic transition

³⁴ Carlback et al., 2012.

³⁵ Robila, 2004.

theory – is supposed to give a better understanding of social and family change in these countries, by highlighting the fact that while transforming societies show similarities to Western societies in certain demographic trends (demographic individualisation, pluralisation of lifestyles), they also continue to exhibit strong family (marriage, divorce, gender division role) values/attitudes as well as high levels of family dependency. This points up the remarkable gap between actual demographic conditions and values or attitudes. As the authors in this volume suggest, this gap can be thought of as being the result of a sort of compressed modernity characteristic of these transforming societies, both in Eastern Europe and in China or Vietnam.

Making use of a semi-structured analytical framework, the respective chapters address the ambiguous relationship between familism and individualisation seen through change and continuity in demographic behaviour, family values, family solidarity, gender relations, state policy and marketisation. These topics are discussed in the majority of the chapters from three major analytical points of view. The first looks at the gap between the *actual demographic conditions* and *family, marriage, divorce* etc., seen through a.) (demographic) fertility rate versus (ideal) number of children, b.) (demographic) marriage rate versus (ideal) marriage values and attitudes, c.) children born-out-of wedlock versus (ideal) marriage values and attitudes, d.) (demographic) divorce rate versus (ideal) divorce values and attitudes, and e.) the degree of the actual (demographic) pluralisation of lifestyles (single parents (single mothers); cohabiting couples; DINKs couples;

homosexual couples etc.) versus general family values and attitudes. The second considers change and continuity in gender roles, focusing on the gap between women's *actual* employment rate versus *ideals* concerning women's work and their positions within the family. The third refers to the question of familism (family dependence and family solidarity). Each analytical view-point is discussed (wherever the related data proved to be sufficient) primarily from a time dimension (over a time-span of 30 years or so), a regional dimension and a social stratification dimension. Though the foci of the discussions and analyses may vary from chapter to chapter according to the authors' preferences (as well as to the available databases), each chapter discusses the ambiguous relationship of familism and individualisation by focussing on the above-mentioned analytical points. Hopefully this makes comparison across chapters easier for the reader.

The structure of the volume is conceived of as follows. It opens with the chapter on Russia – a country that played an enormous role in the social development of the countries in East Europe (along with Central Asia). This is followed by the chapter on Ukraine, which once belonged to the Soviet Union, but now it is an independent country, and it thus holds a sort of “in-between” position. This is followed by the chapters on three Central European countries, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary, and then by Romania from the Balkan region. Finally come the chapters on China and Vietnam – the two successful representatives of the post-1980s systemic change in socialist East Asia.

In the first chapter, the author concludes that Russia, in general, has entered the period of the second demographic transition, but this transition is not proceeding the way it is in the West, and therefore the related transition theory itself needs certain modification. First of all, the author argues that, for instance, marketisation in Russia leads to a growing sector of home services that makes the family as a unit less important for the individuals in terms of life strategy. However, the traditionalist rhetorics on family and gender relations – emanating from both the Church and the state – maintain a significant influence on certain values and attitudes, and, along with the inconsistent development across Russia's larger geographical regions, exercise a completely opposite effect on the aforementioned process. She argues that unlike in countries in Western Europe, where a growing autonomy in intimate relationships was accompanied with a growing support by the state for families with children, the postponement of childbirth and the increase in the number of cohabiting couples with children are taking place in a different discursive context than in Western Europe at the beginning of their second demographic transition.

The second chapter also comes to the conclusion that in post-Soviet Ukraine, while marketisation of the economy – though it may appear regressive and patriarchal in its intentions – has promoted new modern standards of life such as consumerism, the idealised image of the middle class or hedonism, the Church and the state act rather as the agents of re-traditionality. The originality of this chapter lies in that it makes use of the notion of 'two cultures',

referring to (the constant alternation in time of) a Culture-1 and a Culture-2 coined by Vladimir Paperny, a historian of architecture. It attempts to connect this notion to the interpretation of the second demographic transition process seen in contemporary Ukraine. The authors argue that the period of time between 1994 and the present day, that is the time of post-Soviet Ukraine, is characterised by the period of Culture-2, which pertains to the massive expansion of state control over social institutions. During this time the formation of civil society and the public sphere is interrupted, this then contributes to shifting society in the direction of totalitarianism. Thus the second demographic transition in contemporary Ukraine is not accompanied by increasing personal autonomy in terms of the intimate sphere, and is actually hindered by counter-effects from the state and Church.

In the third chapter, the author stresses that it is difficult to identify one tendency that could adequately interpret the nature and direction of social change in contemporary Poland. The author distinguishes two major and opposing forces influencing current social trends, and discusses the space between these two models of family life. One refers to the strength of the Catholic Church with its traditional division of gender roles, and the other to a model that is based on equal rights. The author concludes that, apart from certain phenomena such as the particularly low birthrate, the second demographic theory as it is cannot be applied to the context of Poland. The author argues that one can see a clear split between the intimate sphere (family) strongly valued by Polish people and replete with positive emotions, and the

public sphere which is viewed very critically. Utilising Edward Banfield's concept, the author describes contemporary Poland as a society characterised by *amoral familism*, which is thought to be responsible for the split between the intimate and public spheres, and also for the low commitment of Polish people to public life.

In the fourth chapter, the authors describe the process of social change in contemporary Slovakia – one of the countries “at halfway” (meaning countries of East Europe with a modern society but also with a traditional family system) – with three adjectives: postponed, compressed and multilinear. They argue that the socialist period brought two contradictory tendencies to families in Slovakia. First, it increased the intensity of family relations but it did not increase their quality. Second, it not only brought about a unified model of the family in terms of external characteristic features, but it also strengthened internal differentiation of values – from strong Christian values to liberal and gender sensitive attitudes. The change of the political system however led to the de-standardisation of individual lifestyles and increasing demands on the quality of family life. The authors argue that though the process of Western modernity, along with individualisation, (re)started from the late 1980s, it did not take place from *below*, but it was both implemented and imposed from *above* (by the state) and imported from *outside* (Western Europe). This argument is very important since it contradicts the standpoint taken by Ron Lesthaeghe and Dirk J. van de Kaa, who suggest that the second demographic transition, in the case of Western countries,

started from *below* due to a change in the normative value system. The authors of the fourth chapter further argue that the individualisation imposed from above and from outside is responsible for the postponed and compressed character of social change in contemporary Slovakia.

In the fifth chapter, the authors attempt to outline a typology of new pluralistic family structures in contemporary Hungary, and they draw attention to a deficit in Lesthaeghe and van de Kaa's second demographic transition theory from a standpoint different from the one seen in the fourth chapter. While the proponents of the second demographic transition theory argue that the transition started in the normative value system first, which was then later followed by actual demographic behaviour, the authors in this chapter point out that, at least in the case of Hungary, one can see an opposite direction of causality. They argue that the demographic changes (pluralisation of lifestyles) have preceded the relevant changes in the value system, and that this has led to a remarkable gap between the (apparently traditionalist) attitudes seen in survey studies and demographic individualisation – though they also argue that this gap may have narrowed over the past decade. One may venture to say that the arguments in the fourth and fifth chapters are complementary to each other, and that they together could even more efficiently contribute to the formation of a potential *modified* second demographic transition theory.

In the sixth chapter, the author outlines the changes and continuities for family in contemporary Romania. The author concludes

that one can see numerous contradictions in the attitudes of Romanians towards a variety of family-related issues that appear to indicate an incoherent and accidental pluralism deriving from propagandistic statements harking back to socialist times. Among others, she points out that young Romanian women with children-out-of-wedlock are not the East European sisters of the liberated and empowered women of the West, and that this can in no way be considered an obvious departure from modern forms of doing family towards post-modern variants. She further concludes that the case of Romania is just a different variant of what is described by the South-Korean-born term *compressed modernity*, in the sense that there is a greater retention of traditional social norms and gender roles, especially within the intimate sphere of the family, and that there is obviously much less pluralism in terms of family values and ideologies or much less antagonism between rural and urban areas than in the case of South Korea.

In the seventh chapter, the authors first point out that Asian scholars have found a reversed directionality in Asian modernisation in terms of cultural revolution and political changes, compared to Western Europe and North America. While cultural revolution preceded political changes in the West, Asian countries championed economic modernisation, but lagged behind in political changes, stumbling with social and cultural modernisation. This has led to a reversed and compressed character for modernisation in China. This manifests itself in 'individualisation without individualism',³⁶ a

³⁶ This term, along with the term *accidental*

feminist social pattern without real feminism, as well as in a mixture of traditional Chinese "close intergenerational relationships" and "pure relationships" influenced by modernity. As to the last of these, people in China emphasise more the liberation of humanity and have started to pursue the ideology of self-fulfilment with an obvious stress on more individual independence and autonomy. On the other hand, there is an opposite tendency which emphasises the basic family obligations and a closer intergenerational relationship, thus the authors conclude that China is not following the Western post-modern tendency in terms of atomisation of family members. The authors point to the existence of 'modern familism' in China, a term they use to refer to an intergenerational ideal pattern based on individualistic values.

In the eighth chapter, the author discusses family change by focusing on the institution of marriage. The author concludes that despite certain Western-style demographic changes, such as an increasing number of delayed marriages or choosing singlehood, as well as the increase in the number of divorces, the institution of marriage continues to be quite stable in contemporary Vietnam. Whereas young people enjoy a growing freedom in terms of spouse selection, parents still exert a certain decision-making power over their children's marriages. According to the author, changes in the Vietnamese family have been dramatic in terms of a tendency reflecting the interests of individual members rather than the family interest as a whole, but changes in the family are

pluralism, was coined by Chang Kyung-sup for use in a South-Korean context.

not taking place in a linear way as a result of economic development. The effects of modernisation are not linear, but they are exposed to the interaction of other social and cultural factors. The author draws attention to the fact that the marketisation of the economy has created more opportunities for individuals to act outside the control of the family, but at the same time the decrease in direct control by the state over individuals³⁷ causes individuals to become more dependent on their families too.

The reader may discover certain differences among the chapters in terms of concepts. One problem refers to the conceptualisation of *traditional*, *modern* and *post-modern*. For instance, while the majority of the authors tend to regard the conjugal relationship where the husband is the breadwinner and the wife is a housewife as *traditional*, some rather consider it *modern* (see Chapter 2). This latter interpretation stands close to the one seen, for example, in Japan, where this kind of conjugal relationship is viewed as a result of Japan's modern social transformation in terms of salaryman-isation.³⁸ It is worth carrying out an international comparative study of the various conceptualisations of this conjugal relationship as discussed in academic studies in an attempt to set up a useful typology.

Another problem refers to the conceptualisation of *familism* and *individualism* or *individualisation*. Whereas, for instance, the expression *familism* appears to be a rather neglected concept in the research studies on family in contemporary Vietnam, one can see

³⁷ Except for a few things such as the value of filial piety strongly supported by the state.

two translations of the English word *familism* in Chinese studies. One translation is *jiazu-zhuyi* 义家族主, which – besides the husband, wife and children – includes other family relatives such as cousins and their families, and thus might be better termed *kinshipism* rather than 'just' familism. The other one is *jiating-zhuyi* 义家庭主, which refers to a smaller unit – the nuclear family. This stands closer to the conceptualisation of familism seen in Western studies. However, whereas in Europe – especially in social welfare studies – familism is often interpreted as *family dependence as a result of external social constraints* with a negative connotation, this aspect seems to be less emphasised in Chinese studies. Rather, Chinese studies tend to stress on *internal cultural belief* in relation to familism with a positive connotation instead.³⁹

Likewise, there are two translations of *individualism* in Chinese too. One of the translations is *geren-zhuyi* 义个人主, which in a moral context often stresses personal interests over social ones, and is frequently confused with the word *egoism* with its pejorative connotation. The other translation is *geti-zhuyi* 义个体主, which refers to a value system stressing on individual subjectivity, creativity and individual rights, and considers feelings and affection as the major driving force linking family members, rather than innate responsibility and duty (see Chapter 7). One might venture to say that the former translation and interpretation of the Western concept *individualisation* might be somewhat more frequently used in China,

³⁸ Ochiai, 1997.

³⁹ See Rajkai, 2010a.

-serving as a tool for the formation of the Chinese national identity (as a *family-loving* people) contrasted with the image of an *individualised* (cold and atomised) Western world.⁴⁰ Moreover, this latter interpretation of Western individualisation stands close to the concept of *empty* (or *negative*) *individualisation* (üres individualizáció) coined by the Hungarian social philosopher, Elemér Hankiss, in socialist Hungary.⁴¹

These conceptual differences however do not decrease the value of the volume. On the contrary, the volume offers a valuable glimpse into the particular differences in the usage of relevant concepts in the study of family and modernisation, and thus it may contribute to the comparability of certain conceptual differences that would remain unnoticed otherwise.

Besides, though the respective chapters highlight different aspects and questions in terms of the relationship of family and individualisation, they all reach the conclusion that individualisation seen here through demographic data is not identical with that seen in Western countries. This suggests that the Western-born second demographic transition theory, which holds that demographic changes were preceded by changes in the value system first, and subsequently proceeded hand-in-hand while engaged in a process of mutual reinforcement, needs modification. In fact, Ron Lesthaeghe and Dirk J. van de Kaa, who first expected a sort of irresistible and sweeping expansion of the phenomenon described by the second demographic transition across all of

Europe and other parts of the developed world, later realised the remarkable geographical differences. In the case of East Europe, van de Kaa points to “the strikingly different environments in which people had, and have, to make their behavioural choices”.⁴² However, the actual reasons behind these geographical differences remain somewhat unexplained, and thus the second demographic transition theory in its original form appears to be unable to highlight the real conditions in, among others, (post-)socialist societies.

The respective chapters in the present volume all tend to agree that the decline of state control and state responsibility as well as the marketisation of the economy exercise opposing effects on the conditions of the intimate sphere (family). While marketisation tends to enable individuals to be less tied up by family bonds and to pursue individual self-fulfilment, the decline of the paternalistic state – in Eastern Europe also accompanied by the strongly traditionalist rhetorics of Church and state – rather increases one’s dependence on the family. Nonetheless, interestingly, the decline of state responsibility for individuals not only enhanced the significance of family solidarity, but with the disappearance of the (socialist) state’s forced standardisation of individual and family life, it also encouraged a certain de-standardisation of

⁴⁰ See Rajkai, 2010b.

⁴¹ Hankiss, 1982.

⁴² Van de Kaa, 2002: 30–1. Among others, he asserts that “In Central and Eastern Europe the timing and amplitude of the demographic shifts are different again. Before 1989 people had more basic concerns and finding a place to up a household as a cohabiting couple was well nigh impossible. After 1989 many new problems arose, they affected demographic behaviour and, in turn, made new behavioural choices possible.” (2002: 31).

lifestyles. This tendency however should not be considered identical with the one described by the second demographic transition theory in the case of Western countries.

Nonetheless, taking a look at the development of civil society, one can see a remarkable difference between East European countries and socialist East Asia. Whereas the abrupt political change in East Europe after 1989–1991 opened the gate to the development of civil society, it remains under close watch in China and Vietnam. However, this does not mean that civil society in Eastern Europe has been seen to flourish during this period. On the contrary, civil society – despite the differences among the countries here – is surprisingly weak, possibly due to remarkably low levels of social and institutional trust. On the other hand, while the development of civil society has not gained full approval from the national governments of China and Vietnam, levels of social and institutional trust appear to be much stronger here than in Eastern Europe.⁴³ One can venture to say that low levels of social and institutional trust along with the weak development of the civil society in Eastern European countries may also contribute to the increase of dependence on the family. This can be seen as producing a counter-effect on the perceived individualisation seen in the demographic data.

Furthermore, another remarkable difference between Eastern Europe and socialist East Asia lies in the fact that while the family and household were, in China and Vietnam, successfully put at the service of developmentalism through a shift from

collectives to a household responsibility system in the countryside, promoting rapid economic growth, the abrupt political changes in Eastern Europe did not bring the expected well-being and did not contribute to the reconstruction of the intimate and public spheres in general, but instead it has led to strongly segmented and atomised societies with low levels of social and institutional trust, stumbling between pre-modern and post-modern values. China and Vietnam on the other hand, with their much more cautious systemic transformation, managed to ease the difficulties of the accompanying social change somewhat better.

Nonetheless, regardless of these regional differences, the authors of the respective chapters all tend to point to a shared component of the character of these transforming societies, *compressed modernity*. While the full applicability of the concept of *compressed modernity* to the cases of (post-)socialist countries – a term proposed by Chang Kyung-sup based on a South-Korean context – awaits a careful investigation, one can easily recognise a similarity among these countries in terms of a remarkably rapid and compressed modernisation – *compressed* in the sense that the relatively well-distinguishable periods of pre-modern, modern and post-modern times (with the related demographic changes, values and attitudes) seen in Western countries appear to be rather congested, and all this leads to a social state full of contradictory trends. This *compressed modern* character, which needs to be taken into account when considering the possibility of a modified second demographic transition theory, is one of those factors

⁴³ See the data in the World Value Surveys.

responsible for the slow and clumsy reconstruction of the intimate and public spheres. Though the chapters in this volume cannot offer a full description of the dynamic interactions between the intimate and public spheres, they all provide a glimpse into the complex interplay among the four main sectors (the state, economy,

civil society and family) in these transforming societies. At the moment, one can only wonder how long this transformational period will last, and what constellations and implications the four main sectors in the respective countries will achieve “in the end”

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The Care Labor Market and the Position of Migrant Care Workers in South Korea

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I. INTRODUCTION¹

The Korean government is striving to bring about the ‘socialization of care work’ due to the changing face of the population structure in the Republic of Korea (hereinafter Korea), evidenced by one of the lowest birth rates in the world and a fast aging society (Jones, 2010). The socialization of care work effectively means the conversion of care labor, which has traditionally been the task of women in the family, into a public area domain. Recently, the socialization of care work has been discussed for two reasons in Korea. Firstly, it is hoped that it will serve to increase the use of female labor in the workforce, thereby serving as a solution for growing concerns that national competitiveness will shrink as the productive Korean population begins to decline soon after 2018 (Statistic Korea, 2011). It is notable that the employment pattern for Korean women typically follows an M shape (Lee, 2002: 143; Kim and Kim, 2004: 204-205), where women are employed when single, then take a break from their career for marriage and child birth,

less than 24 months of age, have all recently been set up to alleviate this problem. The other purpose is a ‘defamilization of care’, which means to reduce the burden of the social duty of care work from the family or family members which is found in the deeply rooted tradition of familism in Korea. Since the major subjects of care are infants, the sick, and the elderly, a wide range of policies and programs have been prepared under the overall banner of the socialization of care work.

This paper focuses on recent policy changes aimed at the elderly through the socialization of care work program. That is, by focusing on the introduction of, and the effects of, the Long Term Care Insurance for the Elderly (hereinafter LTCIE) system, which was introduced in July 2008, the paper highlights: 1) What the current situation is in the Korean care labor market and what conditions are for local and migrant care workers? 2) What has changed since the introduction of the LTCIE system? 3) How the institutional changes have affected the Korean care labor market and local and migrant care workers? Though care workers include both domestic workers and

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caregivers (ganbyungin 看病人²), this paper primarily focuses on caregivers.

II. BACKGROUND

The trend of a declining birth rate and an increasing aging population has come about very rapidly in Korea. According to Statistic Korea (Figure 1), the total fertility rate in Korea, which is the average number of children born to a woman over her reproductive lifetime (from 15 to 49 years old), stood at its lowest level of 1.23 in 2010, having already fallen below the replacement level of 2.0 in 1983, and far below its level of 6.0 in 1960. Meanwhile, the proportion aged 65 and above of total Korean population increased considerably to 11.3% in 2010 from 3.3% in 1960. It is estimated that one in every four people (24.3%) will be above the age of 65 by 2030.

Statistic Korea (2011) also predicts that the relative proportion of the economically productive population (15~64 year olds), out of the total population, will decline from 2018, not only because of the increasing numbers of elderly, which is a result of an extension in the average lifespan, but also due to the low birthrate. Therefore, the government is very concerned that Korean society will be caught in a 'support trap', with fewer numbers of

productive aged people having to support the elderly, with the result being that national competitiveness will decline. Meanwhile, even though the labor market participation of Korean women has been steadily increasing, it is still very low when compared to other OECD (Organisation of Economic Development) countries. Thus, the Korean government has been enacting a number of policies aimed at the 'compatibility of work and home' in order to enhance the use of female labor. One of the reasons the Korean government has been operating the LTCIE system since July 2008 is so that, as demands for elderly care increase, the burden of care does not fall predominantly on potentially productive women in the society.

III. THE CARE LABOR MARKET AND MIGRANT CARE WORKERS IN KOREA

As an informal sector occupation, accurate official statistics regarding care workers in Korea are hard to come by. According to the Ministry of Health and Welfare (2011), the number of domestic workers and care-givers were below 160,000 and 100,000 respectively. Although there are still as yet no accurate official statistics relating to the numbers of care workers in the private sector, according to the 2012 report of the Economic and Social Development Commission³, the size of Korea's care labor

² There are different names for caregivers used in Korea such as yoyangbohosa and ganbyungin. Ganbyungin has been used as a general term for caregiver in Korea, while yoyangbohosa is a new term used for a specific public sector job related to care for the elderly created by the introduction of the Long Term Care Insurance for the Elderly System in 2008.

³ The Economic and Social Development Commission (formerly named the Korea Tripartite Commission) is a presidential

market is estimated to be about 500,000 people, calculated by extrapolating official data to figure out the total size of the employees who work in this area (Table 1).⁴

Table 1 illustrates the size of public sector and the private sector care workers in Korea in 2011. The public sector is the purview of the government as part of its social welfare program, and there are about 160,000 yoyangbohosa who work under the LTCIE system. In addition, there are approximately 40,000 helpers who work for the social service voucher programs, provided by either the Ministry of Health and Welfare or the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, geared towards low income elders, disabled people, and mothers and their new born children. Meanwhile, the private sector employs roughly 90,000 ganbyungin and 210,000 domestic workers, who typically obtain work through employment agencies. Therefore, the number of care workers was approximately 200,000 in the public sector and 300,000 in the private sector in 2011.

There are as of yet no accurate statistics in relation to the numbers of the

advisory body, which was established in January 1998 for the purpose of overcoming the economic crisis in late 1997. It is a social dialogue body that labor, management, government and public interest groups participate in and is consulted by the government in relation to labor, industrial, economic and social policies.

⁴ According to a newspaper, the size of the care work labor market was estimated at approximately 600,000 people (Hankook Il bo, May 18 2011: <http://news.hankooki.com/lpage/society/201105/h2011051802403321950.htm>).

migrant care workers in Korea. The reason for this is there has been no official policy to introduce foreign care workers in Korea, unlike in Singapore or Taiwan, and also because the government has only allowed ethnic Koreans to work in some service sector industries, including domestic and care work, since the end of 2002.⁵ Immigration policy concerning ethnic Koreans came under the domain of the Working Visit System⁶ from 2007. Ethnic Koreans (mostly Josonjok) within the latter system should report their type of employment, whenever they commence or alter workplaces, to the Ministry of Employment and Labor. However, the report rate amongst Josonjok has only been around 50%. In addition, as Josonjok tend to change their jobs easily and frequently, it is very difficult to know how many of them work in care areas. In July 2010, the report rate slightly increased to 56.1% (167,000 reporting out of a total of 298,000), but only 5% (8,400 people) indicated they were working in the care work sector (Chung et al., 2010). Therefore, if

⁵ Foreign workers within the Employment Permit System, who are not ethnic Koreans, work in the manufacturing or agricultural and stockbreeding businesses, and cannot be employed in service sector occupations such as domestic and care work.

⁶ The Working Visit System for co-ethnics is a kind of 'labor permit system', which allows overseas ethnic Koreans to work in some parts of the service and construction industries. It allows for a maximum of three years work during a five year stay. In addition, the Working Visit System allows for free movement between the country of nationality and Korea, for a period of up to five years (termed a 'plural visa'). The intention of this latter inclusion was to alleviate the problems of large numbers of undocumented migrants and the dissolution of

100% of ethnic Koreans had reported, the number of Josonjok care workers would have been seen to be approximately 15,000 people. Other research related to Josonjok women (Lee, 2006; Lee et al., 2006) indicates that Josonjok women preferred to work in restaurants rather than in private households due to the lack of freedom, emotional stress and the lower social status of domestic work. Since it is too strenuous for aged women to work in restaurants, whether Josonjok women work in private households or restaurants depends on their age. Women below 50 years of age tend to work in restaurants and older women tend to be domestic or care workers. Therefore, most Josonjok women who stay in Korea tended to work in restaurants first and then move on to become domestic or care workers (Lee, 2006: 506-509). In consideration of this, and assuming that half of the Josonjok women who work in restaurants (44,000 people) move on to work as care workers, the numbers of Josonjok care workers in 2010 can be estimated to be anywhere from a minimum of 15,000 people (only the size of care workers) up to a maximum of 55,000 people (care workers plus half of the restaurant workers). Nevertheless, it can be said that the numbers of migrant care workers was proportionally very small out of the total numbers of domestic stay foreigners (1,200,000 people) and Josonjok (400,000 people) in late 2010.⁷

family structures within China.

⁷ In late December 2010, there were 1.2 million foreigners staying in Korea. Amongst these there were nearly 0.7 million migrant workers, of which 0.22 million foreign workers held E-9 visas under

IV. THE NEW LTCIE SYSTEM

As part of the 'socialization of care work' program, the Korean government has been operating the LTCIE system since 1st July 2008. The LTCIE system was introduced in order to give active physical support, for such things as daily housework, to people who could not manage by themselves due to geriatric ailments or diseases. That is, the system offers services through elderly care facilities or in-home long-term care services (home visits) to recipients. Social welfare for the elderly was mostly aimed at low income groups before this system was introduced. The LTCIE system caters to a wider body, with provisions for those of at least 65 years of age who need long-term care or those less than 65 years of age who have Alzheimer's disease or other qualifying geriatric diseases. Prior to the introduction of the LTCIE system, residential care facilities for the elderly were classified into three categories: 1) Free facilities were for those on social assistance. 2) Low-priced facilities for elderly people with low incomes that were not in receipt of financial assistance. 3) Full-priced facilities for those on higher incomes. The classification of free, low-priced, and full-priced residential care facilities was removed and all services were integrated into

the 'Employment Permit' system, 0.28 million co-ethnics held H-2 visas under the 'Visit and Employment' system and 0.2 million were undocumented migrants. The remainder, at 0.21 million were marriage migrants (with 0.2 million being marriage migrant women.). Josonjok made up over 0.4 million of the total.