

Call for Sessions - WEHC 2015 [S20103]

Proposed title of the session

Global Patterns in Family Structures and Their Impact on Development

Abstract

Historical legacies have long-term impacts that continue to be felt to this day (Nunn 2009). Although historical institutions (e.g. colonial institutions, religion) have been the subject of extensive research, the family as a historical micro-institution has received little attention. As the main vehicle of socialization and thus the transmission of behaviour and values, family deserves attention as a crucial determinant of development both in socio-economic and political terms. For instance, Greif & Tabellini (2010) and Greif (2006) claimed that while nuclear family type in Western Europe has led to the emergence of institutions such as guilds and universities at the local level, communitarian family structures, which were dominant in China, resulted in the emergence of institutions based on kinship relations. They claim these differences in the family structure are one of the factors explaining the diverging economic development between the two regions. Likewise, De Moor and Van Zanden (2010) link the European Marriage Pattern with development in medieval and early modern Europe. This link between family and development recently received more support from empirical studies. Duranton et al. (2009) provided evidence on the role of regional variation in Europe in terms of family structures and various development outcomes (e.g., GDP per capita, educational achievement, fertility). Alesina and Giuliano (2010) showed that family ties are a strong predictor of (female) labor force participation and political participation while Galasso and Profeta (2010) showed a link between family organisation and pension systems. Finally, the famous “quantity-quality tradeoff” argument highlights the link between household structure (in particular family size) and human capital formation (Diebolt and Perrin 2013). However, more research is required to understand the mechanisms through which family structures have a persistent impact on (current) development outcomes. One of the difficulties emerges from the scarcity of historical data to capture global variation in family structures.

We invite proposals on the variation in family structures between societies and its relation to global development patterns. Although we focus on the past two centuries, we welcome proposals on all periods. More particularly, the session will focus on the following questions:

- How do societies differ from one another in terms of how families have historically been formed?
- Does historical family organisation have a persistent effect on (current) political, economic, and social development? Does the effect of family change over time?

I. Corresponding Session Organiser

Prof. Claude Diebolt (University of Strasbourg [France])

II. Co-Organiser(s)

1. Corresponding Organiser.
2. MSc Selin Dilli (Utrecht University [Netherlands])
3. Dr. Auke Rijpma (Utrecht University [Netherlands])

III. Expected Participant(s)

1. Tracy K Dennison (California Institute of Technology [United States of America])
2. María M. Camou (Universidad de la República [Uruguay])
3. Felipe ValenciaCaicedo (Universitat Pompeu Fabra [Spain])
4. Warren Whatley (University of Michigan [United States of America])
5. Dacil Juif (Wageningen University [Netherlands])
6. Mikołaj Szoltysek (Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research [Germany])
7. David S. Reher (Universidad Complutense de Madrid [Spain])
8. Jan Luiten Van Zanden (Utrecht University [Netherlands])
9. Vera Molitor (University of Mannheim [Germany])
10. Federico Droller (Universidad de Santiago [Chile])