**family/家(Jiā)**

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| Final Remarks | Ute Klammer, SUN Xiangchen | 30 May 2022 |

The discussion on the topic of "family" in a comparison between Europe and China has highlighted some parallels, but also different emphases.

In both Europe and China, the family is very important in the social fabric. Families are an important and stable harbour for daily life. They are characterised by the emotional bond of their members and they are an important basis for mutual support. In China as well as in Europe, the nuclear family is an important unit for socialisation, for the upbringing of children and for the support of older family members in need of help. In this context, the upbringing of children in the family is of particular importance in China: without the Christian promise of resurrection and eternal life, which characterises European culture at least in part, children are the guarantor of continuity and immortality. Having children and thus ensuring continuity is therefore a core concern of Chinese families. This is not generally the case in Europe. In Europe, for example, in the course of the "second demographic transition", not only has the average number of children per family declined without political directives, but the proportion of childless women/couples has also risen.

A difference between Europe and China can also be seen in the fact that European families - despite all the differences that can be observed between different European countries - tend to be more individualistic today than Chinese families. This can be seen, for example, in the area of intergenerational support and care, which plays a greater role in China than in Europe. While Chinese grandparents see it as a central task to look after their grandchildren - also to support their working daughters and sons - in Europe children are expected to be looked after mainly within the system of public childcare. Grandparents play only a supplementary role here, especially since they often do not live in the same place as their children and grandchildren. Also, when older family members need care, they are often cared for in professional elder care facilities. However, this is more pronounced in the Scandinavian welfare states than in the continental European welfare states.

Unlike in Europe, in China the concept of family is historically directly linked to the "house" or "home". "Family" describes the place where the members live and the way they interact. This explains the great importance attached to home ownership in China. Thus, the high mutual commitment of family members in China is also reflected in intra-family financial transfers, which enable young couples to acquire home ownership at an early age. Such intra-family financial transfers are unusual in Europe or at best common between parents and children. In some European countries - such as Germany - home ownership does not have the same significance as in China. Many families, especially young families, live in rented flats. "Home" in China, however, means more than the family's place of residence - it also describes structures of a natural authority between generations, between father and son. In China, ideas of "filial piety" and "benevolence" closely associated with the "family" therefore contrast with an individualistic view of humans, which is more dominant in Europe. In the the new generation, young people in China are also becoming more and more individualistic, but family, as a source of value, still provides a certain spiritual value in their life.