

EARLY MODERN COURT STUDIES



Edited by Liesbeth Geervers and Harald Gustafsson

Dynasties and State Formation in Early Modern Europe

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Early Modern Court Studies

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Dynasties and State Formation in Early Modern Europe

*Edited by
Liesbeth Geervers and
Harald Gustafsson*

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Cover illustration: Family potrait by David Klöcker Ehrenstrahl (1690–99) showing Queen Dowager Hedvig Eleonora, Charles XI of Sweden, Prince Charles (XII), Queen Ulrika Eleonora, Princess Ulrika Eleonora, Duke Frederick IV of Holstein-Gottorp, Dowager Duchess Fredericka Amalia of Holstein-Gottorp (sister of Queen Ulrika Eleonora) and Duchess Hedvig Sophia of Holstein-Gottorp (daughter of Charles XI)

Queen Ulrika Eleonora and Dowager Duchess Fredericka Amalia were sisters. Their children, Hedvig Sophia of Sweden and Duke Frederick IV of Holstein-Gottorp were married in 1698.
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1. Building Dynasties, Shaping States: Dynasty and State Formation in Early Modern Europe

Liesbeth Geervers and Harald Gustafsson

Abstract: The introduction discusses the concepts of dynasty and state formation and their interrelated nature. It stresses the need to define the concept of dynasty as a kinship group with an acute sense of historical continuity, claiming the right to rule a certain territory and manifesting this claim in political, social and cultural ways; and the related concept of dynasty formation as the acts, conscious or unconscious, whereby such a group achieved and upheld its position as a dynasty, and how that position developed and changed.

Keywords: dynasty, state formation, early modern Europe, dynasty formation

Dynasties

Dynasties are becoming ever more central in research on medieval and early modern power. The field has advanced to such a degree that the first articles focusing on dynasty as a concept have now seen the light, among them one by Natalia Nowakowska.¹ One of the conclusions of Nowakowska's article is that dynasty is a concept that is used in various different meanings: as an 'an umbrella term for early modern monarchy'; to describe succession regimes; or as a self-fashioning discourse.² The first use focuses on monarchies, the second on successions and the third on self-representation.

1 Nowakowska, 'What's in a Word?'

2 Nowakowska, 'What's in a Word?', pp. 460-61.

However, some researchers have also focused on dynasties as social groups, like Peter Haldén, who recently argued that (aristocratic) family groups were essential building blocks in pre-modern state formation.³ A few years ago, and incidentally without using the term 'dynasty', Giora Sternberg sketched the intricate status differences between members of the wider Bourbon dynasty during the reign of Louis XIV, inadvertently delineating the hierarchies that shaped the broader dynastic group.⁴ This volume intends to add its voice to the choir of dynastic history by engaging with the concept of dynasty, breaking it down into several constitutive concepts and exploring the relationship between dynasties and state formation.⁵

It is only logical and right that historians are beginning to wonder what we actually mean when we use the term 'dynasty'. This question is perhaps all the more relevant because the term was not normally used during the early modern period, at least not in its usual modern meaning. Anyone who has worked with genealogies will recognise that terms like house (*casa, maison, Haus*) or lineage (*prosapia, Stamm*) were used much more commonly to refer to the family at the heart of the work. Alternatively, the issue was sidestepped completely by referring to 'the genealogy of the counts/dukes/kings of ...'.⁶ The term 'dynasty' was almost never deployed in this context. Instead, until around 1750 'dynasty' was used in the meaning Aristotle gave to it: namely a power structure, lordship or dominion, with the implication of arbitrary rule by an extreme oligarchy.⁷ The term normally described polities in antiquity. 'Dynasty' did not gain its modern meaning until the late eighteenth century.⁸

Therefore, the contemporary meaning of the word 'dynasty' does not help us when we wish to analyse family-based power structures in early modern Europe. This does not mean that we should not use it. There may be benefits to using concepts that contemporaries also used to describe the phenomena in their own time, but there are plenty of examples where

3 Haldén, *Family Power*.

4 Sternberg, *Status Interactions*.

5 This volume is a result of the research project 'Re-thinking Dynastic Rule: Dynasties and State Formation in the Habsburg and Oldenburg Monarchies, 1500–1700', funded by Riksbankens jubileumsfond (P17-0090:1). Our initial conclusions have been published elsewhere: Gustafsson, 'Dynasty Formation'; Geevers, 'Ny dynastisk historia'.

6 A few examples of the use of 'house': Péril, *La genealogie et descente*; Rasch and Stumpf, *Hauß Osterreich*; Morigi, *Historia brieve*. Examples of the use of 'lineage': Hossmann, *Genealogia Austriaca, Das ist: Oesterreichischer Stam[m]*; Vitignano, *Prosapia D'Austria*.

7 Nowakowska, 'What's in a Word?', p. 454.

8 Nowakowska, 'What's in a Word?' The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives the meaning 'a succession of rulers of the same line or family'.

sticking a modern label on such a phenomenon is equally helpful. Would Emperor Ferdinand II ever have used the term 'confessionalisation'? Or, for that matter, how often does Cardinal Richelieu refer to 'state formation' in his writing and correspondence? Yet such terms both illuminate and summarise important developments in seventeenth-century Europe. That 'dynasty' was not a contemporaneous term is therefore not a problem in itself, but it does add to our responsibility to define it carefully, as with all our analytic concepts. This is not something that all authors devoting works to dynasties are wont to do. Nowakowska is entirely right in pointing out that many historians use the term uncritically and with multiple meanings. This is of course a result of the fact that the term is so widely used, even in our modern-day conversations about royal families, that its meaning appears to be quite self-evident. Obviously, the various uses Nowakowska identifies indicate that — at least among historians — it is actually not immediately clear what 'dynasty' does mean.

This is not because of a lack of definitions. One definition often used is proposed by Wolfgang Weber, who wrote that a dynasty was 'an optimised manifestation of the family' with 'a heightened sense of identity', a 'collection of assets', and practices of marriage and inheritance that aim to keep the assets together, and 'an increased sense of historical continuity'.⁹ Weber has been criticised, by Heide Wunder among others, for focusing too much on dynasty as an agnatic line. Instead, Wunder has stressed the cognatic perspective: both men and women have to be taken into account with their different roles within a dynasty. She sees a dynasty as 'a complex web of relations and fields of action for the men and women [of the family] living at a given time'.¹⁰ It is important to bear this web of family relations in mind and not focus solely on the father-and-son perspective of the dynasty. What could be labelled the vertical dynasty, the dynasty's extension into the past and into the future, is important, but so is the horizontal dynasty, the actual group of 'living men and women', and how they perceived and acted out their dynastic relations. The horizontal perspective on dynasty is often neglected but will be central in this book.

Weber's use of the definition can give the impression of 'dynasty' as something that is either achieved or not yet achieved by a ruling family. Once such and such elements were in place, we can speak of a dynasty. But the

9 Weber, 'Dynastiesicherung', p. 95; 'eine optimierte Erscheinungsform der Familie'; 'erhöhte Identität'; 'gemeinsam genutzten ... Besitz'; 'gesteigerte historische Kontinuität'.

10 Wunder, 'Einleitung', pp. 16–17, p. 18: 'komplexes Beziehungsgeflecht und Handlungsfeld der jeweils gleichzeitig lebenden Agnaten und Agnatinnen'.

focus on a family's contemporaneous members — a set of individuals that changed with each death, birth and marriage — and how they coalesced into a cohesive dynasty group 'at a certain time' (to paraphrase Wunder) highlights the fact that we cannot consider dynasties to be a 'finished product' at any time during their existence. In addition to changes in the 'biological hardware' — the actual family members — we should also take into account that membership of the dynasty was subject to social conventions: sanctioned marriages brought new members to the family, whereas unsanctioned — say, morganatic — marriages did not; the children were treated quite differently depending on whether they were the fruits of lawful marriages, unsanctioned marriages or extramarital relations. And there is the perennial question of where the dynasty ended: were nieces and nephews still part of it? Did this depend on whether they were the offspring of a sister or a brother? Did this change over time, and did it depend on certain circumstances? What constituted the 'dynasty' could change over time and according to circumstances, and depended on the different contexts in which it operated. Indeed, rather than chasing an elusive definition of this protean family group, it might be more useful to focus on the processes that caused it to change shape. In line with this thought, we find it more fruitful to see 'dynasty' as a process, to focus on dynasty *formation* rather than dynasties, which can be seen as a continual process, just like state formation.¹¹

Here, we will understand dynasty as a kinship group with an acute sense of historical continuity, claiming the right to rule a certain territory and manifesting this claim in political, social and cultural ways.¹² Dynasty formation refers to the acts, conscious or unconscious, whereby such a group achieved and upheld its position as a dynasty, and how that position developed and changed. An important feature of dynasty formation is that the interests of individual family members needed to be subordinated to the family's collective interests, be they political and social (holding on to, and extending, its patrimony and status) or cultural (representing the family group). This often happened through the promotion of dynastic awareness both among the family members and among a wider public, with the intention of establishing the dynasty as a social unit, and solidifying its claims to its assets and its societal position.

11 Weber uses the concept *Dynastiebildung* (dynasty building), but we prefer dynasty formation, stressing both conscious and unconscious acts forming the dynasty. *Dynastiebildung* can also give the impression of something that has been achieved once and for all.

12 Definitions of the central concepts in dynasty research are discussed in an earlier publication of our project; see Gustafsson, 'Dynasty Formation', pp. 347–50.

Our understanding of dynasty and dynasty formation deliberately avoids defining the kinship groups in terms of who belonged to the dynasty and who did not. Who were seen as members and who not depended on the context in each individual case. There could be different political, social or cultural concerns dictating the inclusion of persons in the dynasty or their exclusion. The dynasty was also open to different ways of organising the internal hierarchy of the group. There was not one fixed way in which a dynasty should be seen and behave; how the dynasty formation process of a given princely family developed is an empirical question.

Another important concept used in this volume is dynastic centralisation. With ‘dynastic centralisation’ we mean the degree to which the ruling prince tried to control his relatives — and possibly succeeded. It refers to the concentration of power within ruling families in the head of the family, whereby the family head becomes more powerful and junior relatives less autonomous. In general, our hypothesis is that there was a process of dynastic centralisation going on in the early modern European dynasties, which was mirrored by, and closely connected to, the centralising process we see within states.¹³

Dynasties and States

One of the factors that may have impacted dynasty formation is state formation. During the early modern period, European states, entangled in an emerging state system, in many cases developed a greater coherence, effective tax systems, military muscle and centralised rule.¹⁴ This is a sweeping characterisation of processes that were far from unidirectional, and most European states remained more or less loosely connected conglomerates of areas where the authority of the ruling centre differed between different territories.¹⁵ In the long run, however, the polities of Europe achieved a greater ‘stateness’. In the discussion of this state formation process, many aspects have been highlighted, for example the importance of such interest

13 Gustafsson, ‘Dynasty Formation’; Geevers, ‘Ny dynastisk historia’.

14 The modern classic on this development is Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States*. See also, e.g. Downing, *The Military Revolution*; Glete, *War and the State*; Tuong Vu, ‘Studying the State’; Gustafsson, *Makt och människor*; Dincecco, Cox and Onorato, *Warfare, Fiscal Gridlock, and State Formation*, SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3836109> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3836109>.

15 Elliott, ‘A Europe of Composite Monarchies’, pp. 48–71; Gustafsson, ‘The Conglomerate State’, pp. 189–213; Morrill, ‘Dynasties, Realms, Peoples and State Formation’, pp. 17–43.

groups as the traditional aristocracy,¹⁶ the estates,¹⁷ emerging capitalist groups¹⁸ and indeed the common people.¹⁹ Different social groups and networks have thus been singled out as influential within the state, and many contemporary scholars see the state as a network that can be used by other networks.²⁰ But less attention has been given to dynasties as possible power groups, or networks, at the heart of the state, and the relation between state formation and dynasty formation remains to be explored.

What role did dynasties play in the state formation process? Nowakowska sketched how concepts of dynasty, monarchy and succession can merge in the implicit thinking of historians, which indicates that 'states' and 'dynasties' were highly connected, forming a relationship that can be called symbiotic. In early modern European history, there were very few states without ruling houses, especially after the heyday of city republics came to an end. Even among the republics that remained, some had dynastic elements — the Orange-Nassaus held several more or less hereditary stadholderates in the Dutch Republic, while the English Protector Oliver Cromwell made use of royal trappings and was succeeded by his son.²¹ Many an overthrow of some tyrant or other ended with the election of another monarch in their place. Such examples highlight that it was hard to imagine a polity without a hereditary head. Even in elected monarchies, the new ruler was normally a close relative of the old. At the same time, dynasties were of course founded on some material base, often hereditary — one of the core elements of dynasties would seem to be the handing down of a patrimony to following generations. That did not need to be a state in the modern sense — aristocrats who held non-sovereign lordships were avid dynasty-builders as well²² — but historians generally associate dynasties with sovereign polities.

In addition, Michael Mann used the term 'dynastic centralisation' to refer to the efforts of the Austrian Habsburg rulers to impose a common

16 Anderson, *Lineages*.

17 Holenstein, 'Empowering Interactions', pp. 1–31; Rutz, 'Möglichkeiten und Grenzen fürstlicher Herrschaft', pp. 97–126, p. 102: characterises estates as 'Strukturelement vormoderner Staatlichkeit'.

18 Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*.

19 Te Brake, *Shaping History*; Gustafsson, *Makt och människor*; Dørum, Hallenberg and Katajala, *Bringing the People Back In*.

20 Glete, *War and the State*; Braddick, *State Formation*.

21 The historiography on the Orange-Nassaus is extensive. Recent monographs in English include: Stern, *Orangism in the Dutch Republic*, and Broomhall and Van Gent, *Gender, Power and Identity*; Woodford, *Oliver Cromwell's Power*.

22 Geever and Marini (eds), *Dynastic Identity*.

administration on their fragmented domains, composed of civil servants who were loyal to the dynasty.²³ Mann's use of the phrase indicates how dynasties could play a role in holding states together by providing a focus of loyalty: centralisation around the dynasty. Particularly in monarchies where proto-national identities were not strong — as was the case in many conglomerates — and overarching institutional structures were absent or weak, such a 'rallying around the flag' meant dynasties played an important role in keeping monarchies together.

Spain and Denmark

How did state formation processes shape dynasty formation? Preliminary answers to this question have emerged from our research project 'Re-thinking Dynastic Rule', which centred on the Spanish Habsburgs and the Danish Oldenburgs during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As explained above, we see dynasties as changing family groups. Our research shows that both membership and internal organisation were subject to change over time, and state formation played a role in these changes. Succession practices are a case in point. In the sixteenth-century Oldenburg monarchy, partitions were still possible — not in the kingdom of Denmark-Norway but in the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, outside the kingdom proper. This led to the emergence of several branches that became quite independent of each other — different dynasties, we might say. However, partly at the demand of the local estates, who resisted further political fragmentation, these partitions stopped. During the seventeenth century, younger brothers were provided for outside of the monarchy, in prince-bishoprics. This intervention by the estates changed the position of brothers within the House of Oldenburg markedly: brothers no longer set out on an independent path by acquiring their own portion of the dynastic patrimony but experienced a substantial status decline. The status decline was accompanied by obstacles to marriage which limited the number of branches of the dynasty.²⁴

From the middle of the seventeenth century, there was a drive towards dynastic centralisation in Denmark. When Frederick III had to relinquish much of his power to the aristocrats in 1648, he increased his power within

23 Mann, *Sources of Social Power*, pp. 338–51. Mann's 'dynastic centralisation' may be described as 'centralisation around the dynasty'. As noted before, we develop another definition of the term in this volume, which may be described as 'centralisation within the dynasty'.

24 Gustafsson, 'Dynasty Formation'.

the dynasty by excluding his half-siblings from influence. In 1660, the King took power within the state when Denmark-Norway became a hereditary, absolute monarchy. This was followed by heavily centralising administrative reforms, but also by the King's total domination of the dynasty. Dynastic centralisation thus preceded state centralisation, and in the end each strengthened the other.

Equally, the combined forces of increased administrative centralisation and pressure from the estates shaped the Spanish Habsburg dynasty. In both the Austrian and Burgundian predecessor dynasties, partitions had been common practice and they continued during the sixteenth century, but then stopped. This was not due to the existence of a monarchy-wide succession law that prohibited partitions, but rather to a changed perception of the monarchy: previously, the dynasty's patrimony had been seen as a collective possession, but after 1600 it came to be conceived more and more as an indivisible whole — a process we can trace in successive royal testaments.²⁵ In this case, the wishes of the estates of, for instance, the Low Countries — who had fielded many proposals to have a second son as their hereditary prince — clashed with emerging notions of 'reasons of state', which disapproved of the dissection of the state.²⁶ And, as in the Oldenburg case, this dramatically changed the position of brothers, who no longer had a chance to strike out on their own or marry — two closely connected developments.

But the continued pressure from local estates provided a role for younger princes nevertheless: estates in both the Low Countries and Portugal pushed for the appointment of governors of royal blood, which provided high-ranking opportunities to younger brothers, sisters and other relatives. Negotiations between the estates and the central court — where unity-friendly ministers wielded much influence — thus changed the roles of family members within the monarchy. Younger princes were to play a subordinated role as governors, instead of becoming independent rulers in their own right. While the central administration could become more centralised, partly due to the end of partitions, the dynasty flourished and became a power group where multiple members were called upon to govern, turning the Spanish Habsburg dynasty into a beast with several heads. But a strong hierarchy existed between the various heads, of course. At the end of these developments, the Spanish Habsburg monarchy had become perhaps a more

25 Geevers, 'The Miracles of Spain', pp. 99–119; García-Badell Arias, 'La sucesión de Carlos II', p. 147.

26 Rivero Rodríguez, *Olivares*, p. 193. Esteban Estríngana, '¿Renunciar a Flandes?', pp. 85–110.

cohesive ruling group, with various members ruling different territories, but also more stratified, with a king who commanded and relatives who obeyed. Centralisation within the states thus impacted the Oldenburg and Spanish Habsburg dynasties in different ways, but that state formation had an impact on the shape of dynasties seems undeniable.

Lessons from the Contributions in this Volume

While a comparative research project focusing on two monarchies may steer us clear of the usual mistake of elevating a single observation into a model, the sample is of course still too small to draw any solid conclusions. This volume expands the empirical base for our contentions beyond the Danish Oldenburgs and Spanish Habsburgs by bringing together contributions on France, England and Scotland, the Austrian and Spanish Habsburg monarchies, Sweden and the county of Nassau, a collection of Lutheran, Calvinist and Catholic polities that were either quite territorially centralised or not at all. This broadens the basis for tentative conclusions and hypotheses, although it has to be kept in mind that most of the contributions focus on Protestant north-western Europe. Five of the eleven articles deal with Sweden and Denmark, since one of our purposes was to bring Nordic dynastic studies into closer contact with current international research and to expose a wider audience to Nordic research on this topic.

In the following short presentation of the contributions, we will discuss three aspects central to our project and the subject of this volume that recur in many of them: the extent and organisation of the dynasty; the relation between dynasty formation and state formation; and dynastic centralisation. How ruling houses dealt with these questions gave rise to, and was a result of, their dynastic culture.

Several of the authors highlight what we have termed the horizontal perspective on dynasty instead of the vertical — defining dynasty as a family's contemporaneous members and not only as a line of successive rulers. In her chapter on sacral and divine legitimation for monarchy (Chapter 2: 'Divine Right of Dynasty: Deposing the God-Given Monarch in Protestant Europe'), Cathleen Sarti studies depositions of monarchs in Northern Europe. She asks how rulers with such a strong divine legitimacy as the Scandinavian and British monarchs could still be deposed, without breaking with this religious ideology. The answer is that legitimacy was anchored not in one single person but in the dynasty as a whole. By bringing an uncle, a brother or another close relative of the deposed monarch to the throne — a person

from the horizontal dynasty — the idea of kingdom by the grace of God was upheld. This shows that ideologies on divine right were in fact projected on the horizontal dynasty instead of only on rulers.

Seeing dynasty as a group of contemporaneous individuals necessarily opens up for studying inclusion and exclusion — who was part of this group and who was not? In Fabian Persson's study of the Palatine relatives of the Swedish rulers (Chapter 3: 'Presence Makes the Heart Grow Fonder: Proximity and the Creation of Dynasty'), it is obvious that presence or absence at the court was an important variable in establishing membership. In the first generation, the Palatines worked hard to be physically present at the royal castle in Stockholm, which worked relatively well, and one of their own, Charles Gustav, was to follow his cousin Queen Christina on the throne. But in the next few generations, despite being close relatives of the kings, the Palatines failed to be present and were in fact excluded from the dynasty; they were, so to speak, pushed outside the horizon.

Whereas Persson highlights the importance of presence, Rubén González Cuerva highlights the role of education, socialisation and employment in delineating the extent of the dynasty. (Chapter 4: 'The Austrian Nephews: The Offspring of Maximilian II and Maria of Austria at the Service of the Spanish King'). The division of the Habsburgs into an Austrian and a Spanish branch created a situation where some of the sons of Maximilian and Maria were raised at the Spanish court by Philip II and employed in Spanish service, while others stayed in Vienna. As González Cuerva concludes, 'the interpretation of dynastic interests varied from individual to individual'. There were conflicting interests, in which not least the senior women of the family had an important say, and instead of two well-defined Habsburg branches, we find a much more amorphous and malleable dynastic group.

We once again meet Philip II in Liesbeth Geever's study of how he, in 1586, arranged the layout of the royal crypt in the Escorial and thus rearranged the dynasty (Chapter 5: 'Sixteen Corpses: The First Reburials in the Escorial in 1586 and the Dynastic Dynamics that Made Them Happen'). Not just kings and queens were buried there, but also their children — infants, adults and illegitimates — and even an array of nephews, cousins and other relatives. This created an inclusive, 'post-mortem' dynastic group. Two family dynamics were at work here. First, Philip as family head exercised increased authority in mandating burials in the Escorial, including for individuals who had indicated other wishes (a 'pull' dynamic). Second, peripheral relatives who previously would not have had any expectation of being buried in the dynastic crypt actively pushed for burial in the Escorial, by making

testamentary stipulations handing control of their place of burial to the family head (a 'push' dynamic). Interestingly, the young Austrian archdukes that served in the Spanish monarchy, described by González Cuerva, make their appearance again in the crypt, showing how socialisation, employment and burial were connected.

Rulers and their relatives often worked together to shape the dynastic family group, by being present, sending their children to other courts and settling on place of burial together. Mats Hallenberg's contribution (Chapter 6: 'An Elected Dynasty of Sweden? Blood, Charisma and Representative Monarchy') highlights the autonomy of the Swedish kings in another aspect: While King Gustav Vasa deliberately involved the relatives of his two wives in governing the country, his sons choose to distance themselves from their relatives among the Swedish nobility, trying to make the dynasty more exclusive. Taken together, our contributions demonstrate that there existed several strategies, both on behalf of the ruler and of the family members, to manage the flexible outer borders of the horizontal dynasty.

Hallenberg also highlights the complicated relations between dynasty formation and state formation. The Swedish Vasa monarchy was formed in an interplay between the ruler, the noble elite and the diet (the *riksdag*); Gustav Vasa made the project a 'joint responsibility' by getting the agreement of the council of the realm and the four-estate *riksdag* for the introduction of hereditary monarchy and the creation of duchies for his younger sons. Hereditary monarchy strengthened the position of the ruler, but it was achieved in cooperation with other groups in society, who would become, in the future, arbiters of the position of the king. In this way, a *monarchia mixta* developed that proved to be a long-lived framework for politics in Sweden.

The relationship between state formation and dynasty formation is further explored by Joakim Scherp (Chapter 7: 'Narrowing Dynastic Rule: Models of Governance, Social Conflict and the Hobbesian Bargain in Early Modern Sweden (1560–1718)'). When Queen Christina of Sweden decided to abdicate from the throne in 1654, she did her best to give her cousin and successor Charles Gustav a strong position with respect to the aristocracy and the Swedish *riksdag*. Yet, Scherp argues, the Council of the Realm and *riksdag* made a conscious effort to limit the dynasty's power by only granting hereditary rights to the new King's offspring, while cutting off his other relatives — his brother Duke Adolf Johan and indeed the abdicated queen — from the royal family tree. The relatives' position did not improve under kings Charles XI and XII, who managed to limit the power of the Council — we might recall that Persson showed how the relatives of these kings were relegated to a peripheral position. The Swedish example thus

highlights how power players like the Council and the *riksdag* could establish parameters for the dynasty's composition.

Both Hallenberg and Sarti show how sudden changes, like the deposition of rulers or introduction of new forms of government, did not exclude continuity; to a large extent, the dynasty represented this continuity. Jasper van der Steen (Chapter 8: 'The Nassaus and State Formation in Pre-Modern Germany') also deals with how dynastic continuity was possible. Besides offering a good general discussion on state formation and dynasty formation, Van der Steen's chapter focusses on the practice of partitioning the holdings among the sons of the Nassau dynasty. Like many other German princely houses, the Nassaus did not practice primogeniture, and their small county came to be divided and subdivided many times. Conventional wisdom would say that this hampered state formation, but the family repeatedly made provisions for future reunifications, should one of the lines be extinguished. These family pacts, together with state-building activities in the respective parts of the patrimony, represented, as Van der Steen claims, 'a different road to modernity'.

Another common tool for dynastic continuity was marriage. In his article (Chapter 9: 'Dynastic Marriage Spheres in Early Modern Europe: A Comparison of the Danish Oldenburgs and Three Houses of the Empire'), Harald Gustafsson claims that marriage was an essential means of dynasty formation, useful both for creating and maintaining inter-dynastic networks, and to demonstrate the status of the house or even enhance it. It has often been claimed that most European princely houses were related to one another; that there existed a 'European family of princes'. The present study falsifies this hypothesis; on the contrary, it supports claims that there existed a relatively closed marriage sphere among the Lutheran houses. Religion was important in choosing spouses for princely children, but equality of status was most important. The quest to give the children the opportunity to retain their appropriate status level seems to have been more important than possible political gains.

A clearly discernible concern for providing for all the dynasty's members through inheritance or marriage did not, however, get in the way of dynastic centralisation, which was a tendency that can be observed in many of our cases. We have already seen Hallenberg noticing it for the early Vasas. Scherp draws a parallel between Charles XI and Frederick III in Denmark, who took control of his family before introducing absolutism in the state. Philip II's regrouping of the deceased members of the family, as shown by Geever, also demonstrates these new powers of the ruling member of the dynasty. In contrast, centralising within the Spanish Habsburg monarchy was delayed, according to Cuerva, by the fact that the members of the

Habsburg dynasty pursued their different individual interests; perhaps too little dynastic centralisation after all?

In France, dynastic centralisation and a centralisation of state power was on the move in the seventeenth century, which left the younger sons of the king in a precarious situation. In his contribution (Chapter 10: 'The Frustrations of Being the Spare: Second Sons in the French Monarchy and their Increasingly Limited Roles in Politics and Society, 1560s–1780s'), Jonathan Spangler examines the fate of four younger brothers of kings, who traditionally bore the title of *Monsieur*. Having been autonomous political power players wielding considerable military clout in the sixteenth century, dynastic centralisation forced them to distinguish themselves in social and cultural ways instead from the middle of the seventeenth century onwards. They acted as patrons of the arts or even of political writings: the last *Monsieur* examined, Louis-Stanislas, count of Provence, took part in the public debate in this way in the period leading up to the French Revolution. Over the generations, younger brothers had gone from being rivals of their ruling brothers to being decisively subordinated.

While we have seen that dynastic centralisation had consequences for politics and culture, the contribution of Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen shows that there were alternatives to dynastic thinking (Chapter 11, 'Danish Dynastic Histories in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Claus Christoffersen Lyschander, Vitus Bering, Ludvig Holberg and Hans Peter Anchersen'). Most histories that are discussed were written while the Danish kings were establishing their dominance within their dynasties and in the realm. We can see the development reflected in the histories. Arild Huitfeldt, writing around 1600, described the situation *before* centralisation within the dynasty and the Oldenburg monarchy, singing the praises not of the dynasty but of the Council of the Realm as the focus of authority; he presented Denmark as an *elective* monarchy, which downplayed the dynasty's role (but elevated that of the Council), and abhorred the partitions going on in the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, which was a dynastic rather than a 'national' policy. Later authors, however, tended to focus on the long sequence of kings and the fact that the Danish kingdom had always been in essence a *hereditary* monarchy, which downplayed the role of the Council and was probably exactly the sort of focus a dominant family head and ruler would have appreciated. This sort of centralisation also allowed for a kind of unification between ruler and people: many later authors were also keen to give the Danish realm and people a long, heroic and basically mythical history. This is an interesting hint at the affinity of dynastic thinking with emerging ethnicistic and nationalistic thinking.

All these articles thus highlight different aspects of dynastic centralisation (inheritance, marriage, deposition, burial, historiography, the roles of junior relatives as well as of other power wielders like the Nordic Councils of the Realm), and different ways of going about it: each dynasty dealt with it in its own way. It might be fruitful to speak about differing dynastic cultures; there were alternative paths of dynasty formation, just as there were varieties of interplay between dynasties and state formation.

Ways Forward

Early modern dynasty formation and state formation were deeply interconnected, but neither process was determined by the other. In the long run, both dynasty formation and state formation in early modern Europe moved in the direction of centralisation, but only in the very long run, and as a result of context-bound actions, not as an inevitable process. Both processes were also influenced by many other developments, less touched upon in this volume, such as rising merchant capitalism, globalisation, demographic changes, social protest or war. We believe our project and the contributions in this anthology have shown how dynasties and dynasty formation existed in a complicated societal framework. The dynasty itself can be regarded as interest group in the state, and as other such groups, it could be more or less coherent.

Building on the contributions to this volume and our own studies of Spain and Denmark, it is possible to point to a few important paths for further dynastic studies. One is the varying extent and organisation of the horizontal dynasty. Who was regarded as belonging to the dynasty varied between different contexts, and the same person could be treated as a family member in one respect, but not in another. This was not only dependent on the choice of the ruler. The agency of other family members is important to take into account, as well as the agency of other interest groups in the state like parliaments and estates or, in Scandinavia, the Council of the Realm. This process of dynasty formation was often characterised by dynastic centralisation. Whether or not dynastic centralisation occurred depended on the outcome of the negotiations between all these stakeholders. A question for further research is thus: When and why did dynastic centralisation succeed or fail, and how was this connected to state formation? Closely connected to this is the drive we have seen for dynastic centralisation. It was driven by the head of the family, but he (or very occasionally she) always had to take into account the actions of other

family members, as well as the political framework and the actions of other interest groups in the state.

In this context, gender differences ought to be studied more closely, but also different possibilities and strategies for dynasty members of differing age and marital status. Being eldest son or one of the cadets created different problems and opportunities, while there might have been less differences among the daughters. Daughters married off to other dynasties had an interesting dual position as link between two houses. The possibilities of women to influence dynasty formation is worth further studies, as well as the positions and actions of illegitimate family members.

Such questions could preferably be investigated in comparative studies of different dynasties. Comparison is also needed to address the question of dynastic culture. What factors lay behind how dynasties chose to act, for instance when marrying off their younger members or distributing heritable resources, even partitioning the right to rule, between them? There were surely political and material factors involved, but also something that could be called cultural preferences. Both dynasty formation and state formation took place within a framework of cultural conceptions on how society and human relations should be organised.

All in all, we hope this volume demonstrates the advantages of working with 'dynasty' as an analytical concept and of looking for connections between dynasty formation and state formation. Like state formation, dynasty formation was — and is — a continuous process, wherever there were kinship groups striving with some success for a central position within a polity. That this process can be played out in a multitude of ways depending on political, social and cultural contexts is perhaps the most important message to take from our project and this volume.

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