

# Intra- and inter-household network capital<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to outline the theoretical model of an empirical piece of research we plan to carry out in the next two years. Our model emphasizes the intertwined nature of intra-household processes such as production, consumption, and reproduction. As for intra-household processes, our approach treats household members not as isolated actors but as interrelated within the household. The focus of our analysis is network capital, which (1) on the individual level expresses the activity of a household member in inter-household networks (e.g. contacting relatives), (2) on the intra-household relational level assesses the position of household members as regards each other (relations among network-poor and network-rich household members), and (3) on the household level refers to the aggregated value and structure of the households' network capital (e.g. network-poor and network-rich households).

The structure of the paper is as follows: after introducing our household concept in general, we outline the alternative concepts of household as a firm and the "container" of reproductive processes. In the next chapters we outline the concept of network capital, and operationalize this idea as an intertwined model of intra- and inter-household processes. Next, we develop an extended household model and incorporate our network capital approach into this. Finally, we outline the next steps we intend to take towards empirically verifying our model by selecting a "best of" collection of previous empirical analyses about inter- and intra-household processes.

**Keywords:** household, network capital, domestic production, social reproduction

The aim of this paper is to outline the theoretical model of a piece of empirical research we plan to carry out in the next two years. Our model emphasizes the intertwined nature of intra-household processes and their interrelatedness with various macro-level processes. As for intra-household processes, our approach treats household members not as isolated actors but as interrelated within the household. The focus of our analysis is network capital, which (1) on the individual level expresses the activity of a household member in inter-household networks, (2) on the intra-household relational level assesses the position of household members as regards their network capital in relation to each other, and (3) on the household level refers to the aggregated value and structure of households' network capital.

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To start with, we accept the claim of economic historians that the household as an economic actor is “eternal” (e.g. part of the “structures of everyday life” (Braudel 1979) or the “oikos” (Polanyi (1944/2001)<sup>2</sup>). This is important, since for mainstream economists and sociologists households remained invisible for a long time, having been deemed “natural” and/or “theoryless” (as compared to other major actors, such as the state or the market). However, from time to time, scholars keep on rediscovering the household as an economic actor. Since the early 1970s, the household has been rediscovered in various forms<sup>3</sup>, such as

- a coping solution in crisis situations (Caplowitz 1979),
- a natural resource (Boulding 1972),
- the owner of huge amounts of national wealth (Burns 1975),
- an actor in petty production and/or commodification (Friedmann 1978),
- a means of resisting capitalist exploitation for the working class in affluent capitalism (Humphries 1977, Minge-Kalman 1978, Wallerstein 1984).

More sophisticated approaches have developed different household models and compared the household to the dominant institutions of the modern era (market and state), and explained the paradox of being eternal but remaining invisible as the result of (1) differences in size, governance and operational principles between households and the dominant institutions, and/or (2) as the result of the household remaining the dominant form of production for certain economic systems or social groups (such as the peasant mode of production or simple commodity production) that are themselves eternal but usually too small or too weak to become visible – and/or because of technical innovations and changes in capital endowments and in the organization of society, which mean that the household becomes more and more relevant again as a result of the decline in the hegemony of mass production dominated by state and market actors (Gershuny-Pahl 1981).

My approach (Sik 1985, 1994) added further explanations for the eternal (and invisible) nature of the household, such as (1) its irreplaceability in relation to specific tasks (such as everyday routines and rare but unavoidable troubles with

2 Although in his seminal opus, Polanyi (1957) ignored the household as an integrative form.

3 Which very likely was not unrelated to other revivals in the 1970s, such as the rediscoveries of “non-standard” socio-economic institutions like the informal economy (Henry 1978, 1981, Gershuny 1979, Mars 1982, Pahl 1984), ethnic and local economies (Wallman 1979, Ward and Jenkins 1984), self-employment/simple commodity and small-scale production/sweatshops (Long, 1984).

domestic/self-subsistence reproduction and production, etc.) and (2) its usefulness for certain socio-economic entities (family business, marginal groups, ethnic enclave economies, etc.). These are situations and social groups that exist in every era and society, a common feature of which is that the household is more (or perhaps the only) institution that is available to them – the market alternative being too expensive, or state redistribution being inaccessible.

The eternity (and invisibility) of the household as a producer and reproducer is even more understandable if we take into consideration the fact that households are not atomized but small and independent units embedded into inter-household networks (Sik 1985, 1988/a, 1988/b).

## Alternative concepts of domestic production

If we want to conceptualize the eternal nature of the household, we should not treat the household simply as an aggregate of individuals “*who share the same living accommodation, who pool their income and wealth and who consume goods and services collectively...*” (SNA 1993). Instead, we should approach it as a complex institution comprising both various and intertwined economic and social processes. In our approach, households are neither “... *monolithic blocks possibly led by a male benevolent dictator*” (Grossbard 2010: 1), nor do we interpret them as atomized black boxes where inputs and outputs are measured, but intra- and inter-household processes are ignored (as in standard neoclassic economics<sup>4</sup> and statistics, such as in the course of estimating household satellite accounts (Sik–Szépe 2002)).

To conceptualize intra- and inter-household processes, we follow the steps of institutional economists, and envision the household as a combination of a firm – where goods and services are produced and consumed, investments are made, etc. – and a container of reproduction in a wide sense (including the processes of having and socializing children, creating and maintaining various elements of identity, selecting and fine-tuning values and norms, etc.).<sup>5</sup>

In our model, the firm and the container aspects of the household are intertwined, and this dual nature of the household explains (1) the strong inertia of the advantages of this institution over market and state actors (flexibility in terms of time-management and labor organization, altruistic behavior, the long-term

4 The proponents of New Home Economics have been arguing since the 1980s that the unitary model of the household should be replaced by more complex household models (Becker 1965, Becker 1981, Alderman et al. 1995), which resulted in the development of various forms of bargaining or consensual models that approach the household as a group of individuals, each of whom possesses a relative level of bargaining power in decision making (Donni and Ponthieux 2011/2, Grossbard 2010, Piccoli 2017).

5 Social reproduction is, as Katz puts it, everyday “life work” which involves those “material and social practices through which people reproduce themselves on a daily and generational basis” (Katz 2001: 711). Common aspects of social reproduction include food provision, safety and shelter, clothing, child and elderly care, healthcare, emotional or affective labor, education, food production and laundry and cleaning, shopping, participation in religious and civic activities, daily paperwork, social networking, household maintenance, etc.

One could argue that we should introduce the term family to incorporate the processes of social reproduction. While this is a valid idea, we decided against it since it would (1) put theoretically too much emphasis on the biological nature of the institution, and (2) would be empirically redundant, since (a) among those who live under the same roof, in most cases the borders of the household and the family are identical, and (b) those who live apart fall into the category of kin.

commitment of intra-household members, efficient monitoring and control), as well as (2) its limits (small size, spillover effects, inflexibility of its borders, etc.), as articulated in the classical writings about this theory (Boulding 1972, Ben-Porath 1980, 1982, Pollack 1985 – Gershuny 1988).

Therefore, the essence of our approach is conceptualizing the household as a unique institution embedded into macro-level socio-economic opportunity structures created by the state and market.

Ben-Porath's (1980) solution was to use the concept of identity, and approach it as a continuum within which the family and the market are the two extremes. The former is the "maximum-identity" institution, in which transactions are repeated games among interlocked actors and operate as a high-inertia locus of implicit contracts, while the latter is characterized by frictionless transactions among anonymous actors. On this continuum several types of identities can be identified, offering entirely different conditions for the transactions.<sup>6</sup>

From this idea, Ben-Porath developed three "worlds": that of the family, of friends, and of firms. These institutions differ from each other in the importance of identity, and in consequence involve different actors characterized by different advantages and limitations, who have different solutions for coping with such limitations. Comparing the family and the firm, Ben and Porath concluded that the gains from intra-family transaction beyond what each could produce on his own in the market or at home, rest on the gains from the division of the labor in the household... Co-operation between family members is advantageous partly because of the superiority of transactions between partners tied in a long-term relationship embedded in the family... This encompasses not only the allocation of labor time between home production and the market, but transactions in capital, the joint management of property, mutual insurance and help, and so on... The gains from the family connection are likely to be larger (at least for large families) the less developed are the markets for labor, capital and insurance and less active the government in providing substitute services... (Ben-Porath 1982: 2).

Pollack (1985), using the transaction cost approach to analyze the operation of the household, used the elements of standard economics (such as cost-benefit analysis, and production functions), and accepted some of its axioms (such as the relevance of preferences, and the concept of optimization), but extended the scope of analysis to the structural and organizational aspects of the household as an institution. Comparing the family and the market, he suggested that *"the advantages of the family as a governance structure for organizing particular activities flows from its ability to integrate those activities with pre-existing, ongoing significant personal relationships"* (Pollack 185: 585). His examples support his thesis in the case of home production,

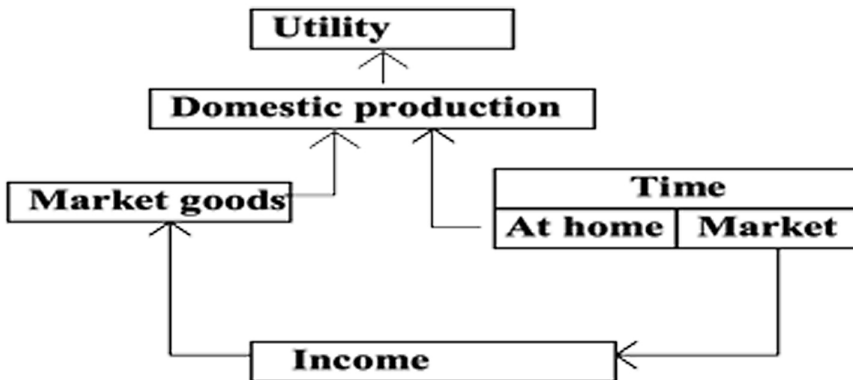
6 For example, a child's birthday cake can be prepared at home or bought on the market. Even if we assume that these two cakes are identical, the former contains the intangible additional value of embodied care and love as it was produced by fellow household members (Sik-Szép 2002). Or, if we elaborate the paradigm of ironing (Pahl 1984): while the actual work of ironing itself is similar in all these situations, its socio-economic status is entirely different depending on whether it is done at home by an adult household member (domestic work), by a servant (market work), by a child (altruistic help), in a hotel (market work), in a shelter by a volunteer (charity), or in a school for gladiators in Rome (slave labor).

consumption, insurance, and small-scale commodity production as well. He added, however, that the very same structural characteristics of the household that give it a competitive edge over market or state actors in certain situations are the main reasons for its disadvantages in other situations. For example:

- its small size makes monitoring easy and cheap but generates a higher per-unit production cost (economies of scale),
- long-lasting commitment to the household is beneficial for creating altruistic behavior but might cause emotional spillover effects (i.e. inferior performance in the household increases tension among its members),
- well-defined borders increase “We-consciousness” (strengthen identity) and, consequently, long-lasting commitment to the goals of the household, but make the border of the household rigid, and limit the chances of improving the performance of domestic production and reproduction (e.g. it is difficult to train a fellow-household member, and the replacement of an under-performing member is impossible).

As a first step towards developing a new approach to conceptualizing the household, we created a model that differentiated between the income-earning and domestic production of the household (Figure 1). With this model, we can overcome the crudest simplification about the household (the household as limited to being only a consumer and/or as an income-pooling unit), and within its framework we can interpret the principles of the transaction cost approach (e.g. alternative uses of time, which can be the basis for bargaining among household members, and potentially the cause of emotional spillovers).

Figure 1 *The structure of the basic household model*



Moreover, this bargaining household model, though ignoring the role of the various forms of capital, offers a feasible design for the analyses, which can be considered the first step towards our network-capital-sensitive household model. For example:

- The decision-making process of adjusting income earning and labor market activity to domestic production (and vice versa) within the household has been frequently researched, as well as its impact on social stratification, labor market status, and class relations (Lasse, Mogstad, Zafar 2014, Greenwood et al. 2014).
- The division of labor between spouses in domestic production and its relation to their labor market status has been a core topic of gender and time-budget studies (Del Bocca–Flynn 2005, Bloemen–Stanca 2008b, Bittman et al. 2003).
- Focusing on the relative income and satisfaction of spouses, there is negative association between the woman’s share of the couple’s total earnings and life satisfaction; the latter not only for men, but for women as well. Moreover, this association is stronger if the couple prefers traditional gender roles (Hajdu–Hajdu 2018).
- The impact of significant labor market events (such as promotion or termination) on the time spent on domestic work, and how this association varies according to couples’ levels of education is an especially lucid example of “doing gender”:  
men in less-educated households tend to reduce their time on housework more, and their women increase their housework time more, than is the case in other households in which men are promoted. Furthermore, when men in less-educated households are terminated [lose their jobs], they reduce while their partners increase their housework time, whereas in other households the effects point in the opposite direction (Foster–Stratton 2017: 27).
- Migration-related, intra-household decision-making bargaining has also been an oft-researched issue – e.g. commuting time among dual-earner couples in England and Wales (Roberts–Taylor 2015), long-distance labor migration in the UK and Germany (Lersch 2012), and joint residential and job location decisions of dual-earner couples in France (Picard et al. 2013).
- Finally, Bertocchi et al. (2012) in a time-series analysis found that *“the decision-making power over family economics is not only determined by strictly economic factors: differences in age and education, by making individuals more knowledgeable, more experienced, and savvier, are also shown to matter. (...) this pattern has progressively strengthened over the 20-year sample period under consideration. In other words, the intra-household balance of power appears to be not just a question of money, but also of brains, and this is increasingly so”* (Bertocchi et al. 2012: 33).

## The concept of network capital

In the early 1990s, I started to use the term network capital (Sik 1994) as a substitute for social capital because I realized that the notion of “social” is a bad metaphor.<sup>7</sup> I argued that if we use the term “social” in such a vague form, we implicitly reject the social features of financial, human, and physical capital, and “*by this we ignore all that Simmel wrote on money, Polanyi on market and redistribution, Granovetter on embeddedness, and Bourdieu on reconversion...*” (Sik 2010: 79-80).

I assumed that networks are useful in the course of analyzing strategic decision making processes, because networks are (1) either created intentionally to make profit, or (2) the networks that Ego was born into (i.e. those that are not the product of strategic investment) can be converted – perhaps only temporarily, under certain conditions, and with limits – into profit-making capital.

When defining network capital, I accept the simplest approaches used in standard economics: (1) that network capital is used to produce goods and services while it remains unchanged, and (2) in the hope of future benefits, Ego sacrifices current consumption and invests<sup>8</sup> into networks.

Comparing network capital to other forms of (monetary, physical, and human) capital, I argued that taking into consideration several relevant aspects of capital,<sup>9</sup> network capital meets the minimum criteria of being capital. For example:

- although its alienability is more problematic than that of other forms of capital,<sup>10</sup> network capital can be purchased (e.g. corruption, or clientele building), exchanged (reciprocity), donated (altruistic help), and inherited (ancestors’ networks<sup>11</sup>),
- its durability and reliability can be high, but it might decay (due to natural reasons such as death, or migration, or by not being “properly” managed<sup>12</sup>),
- convertibility, substitutability and flexibility are basic characteristics of networks, and network capital has the potential to contribute to the production process by increasing the productivity of other capitals (e.g. informal networks in the firm).

7 According to Gozzi (1999), the term social capital is an oxymoron; i.e. the two items, “social” and “capital” unite two contradictory ideas: the former emphasizes solidarity, altruism, reciprocity, etc., the latter profit, rationality, speculation. This oxymoron, like the quality of the term social capital, explains why it has become so trendy and dangerous (a “weasel word,” according to Hayek); namely, for the reason – in quoting Shakespeare – that its use as a prefix sucks the meaning from a word “as a weasel sucks eggs” (quotes Steel 1993: 8-9)

8 Which involves risk: i.e. network capital can be lost, or at least lose its original value.

9 A similar exercise was carried out by Robison et al. 2002 but somewhat different dimensions were used, such as service potential, durability, flexibility, substitutability, decay, reliability, opportunities for (dis)investment, ability to create one form of capital from another, and ethical uses.

10 This characteristic of network capital has been criticized by economists (Arrow 1999, Durlauf 1999, Schuller et al. 2000, Solow 1999) because: (1) the alienability of network capital is unavoidably biased by the fact that network capital is always embedded into networks, thus it consequently has no exclusive possessor, or rather several members of a network possess the common stock of capital. Moreover, (2) it often contains unmeasurable amounts of investment from multiple possessors, therefore it is difficult for Ego to estimate the value of the network capital.

11 Especially important in peasant societies, in family businesses, and in certain crafts (dentistry, the law, etc.).

12 In reciprocal transactions, the maintenance of network capital is especially difficult – i.e., in relation to who owes what to whom, and/or because of (often mutual) suspicions of being exploited.



To sum up, I assume that households use network capital to make ends meet and/or to increase the productivity of production/reproduction. The source of network capital can be (1) the Ego-centered networks the household members were born into, or have acquired as part of their everyday life and can convert (temporarily?) into capital, or (2) intentionally created ties (investments) aimed at achieving certain goals. The former source of network capital is more likely to be used in the course of reproduction, the latter in domestic production processes. This intra-network capital originates from outside of the household, and can be acquired from other households (as part of their inter-household networks) or from individuals from other institutions (such as the workplace, school, clubs, etc.). In both cases, household members are co-owners of the intra-household network capital and use it for their own as well as for their households' goals.

## The extension of the institutional model – intra- and inter-household network capital intertwined

Our household model conceptualizes the household not as an atomized unit but as being embedded into inter-household networks (Sik 1994, Sik–Wellman 1999, Sik 2012). This modification of the institutional approach, however, significantly changes the assumptions of the operation of the household in regard to both intra- and inter-household relations.

As compared to the continuum of identities model constructed by Ben-Porath (1980), in our model friends do not constitute a separate layer between family and firm, but rather constitute one type of Ego-centered network rooted in the household and embedded into the inter-household network. In other words, friendship is both part of intra-household processes and serves as a bridge between otherwise independent households.

As to Pollack's model (1985), our approach modifies both the advantages and the limitations of the household's governance structure as compared to market and state actors: the advantages and the limitations are both decreased, while retaining the unique characteristics of the household. For example,

- the inter-household network offers the household an extension of its operations without changing its borders, loosening its strict identity management, and changing its internal structure, while emerging inter-household obligations decrease the independence of the household (e.g. reciprocal debts emerge) and may cause status inconsistency among household members (e.g. the increasing burden of managing inter-household networks assumes extra effort for those household members who are responsible for the management of these networks within the household, and this may affect their intra-household status),
- while the household's ability to create We-consciousness and long-lasting commitment remains intact, the incorporation of inter-household networks may cause emotional and status spillovers among household members (e.g. ceremonial activities undertaken to express the relevance of inter-household

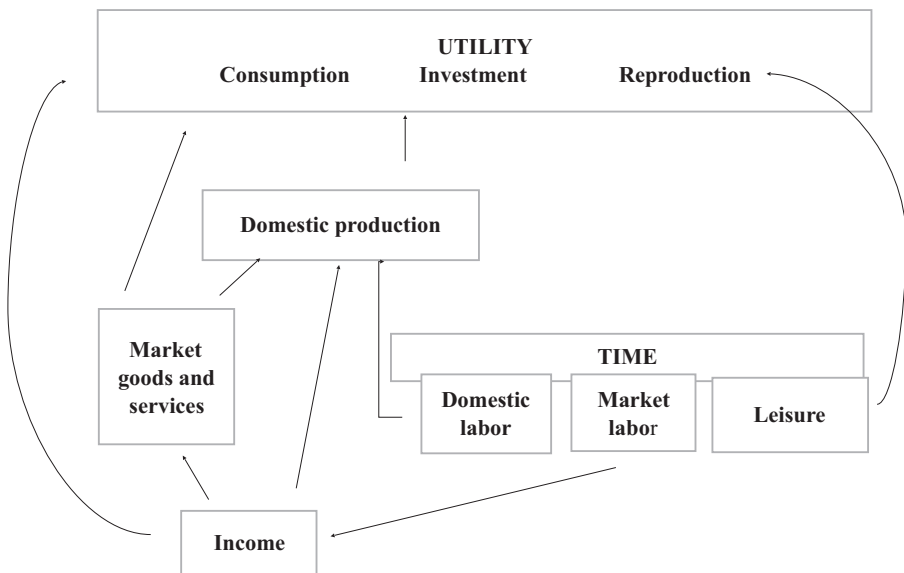


- networks may create new roles within the household and consequently disturb the existing intra-household's emotional order and power relations),
- the incorporation of inter-household networks through intra-household networks increases the proportion of reciprocal transactions at the expense of altruistic ones, which also increases the importance of bridging forms of network capital over bonding ones. These relative changes obviously affect the intra-household's role and status structure, as well as power relations.

## The dynamics of an extended household model and the intra- and inter-household networks

In order to develop a household model that incorporates intra-household network capital (i.e. the dynamic combination of individual, relational, and aggregated structures among household members), we have to identify the processes that are the bases of intra-household bargaining and cooperation.<sup>13</sup> Our household model is the extended version of the model in Figure 1 but contains (1) utility functions in more than one format (distinguishing between consumption, investment, and reproduction in the wide sense, as mentioned earlier), (2) domestic production (as the combination of domestic labor, market income, and goods), (3) various forms of market influence that contribute to all forms of utility directly and indirectly, and (4) leisure as a source of reproduction.

Figure 2 *The structure of the extended household model*



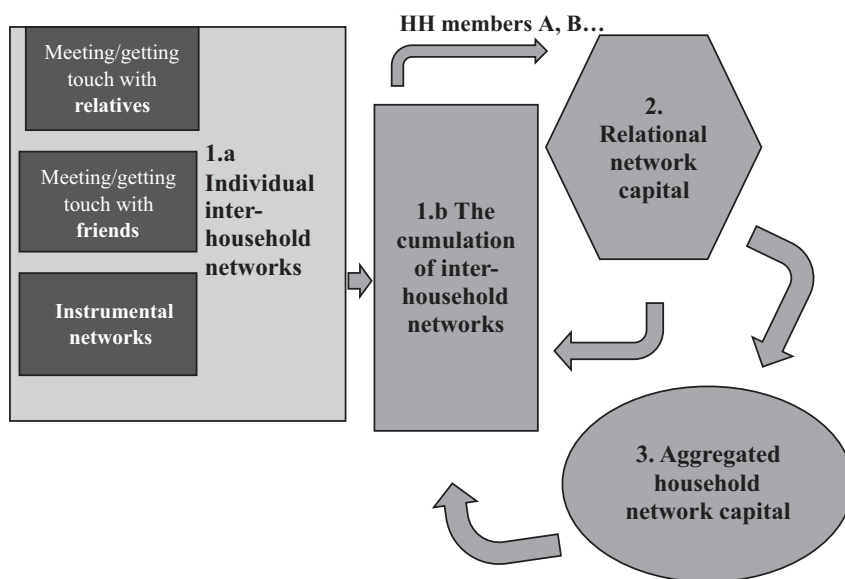
<sup>13</sup> Cooperation is "a situation where competitors simultaneously cooperate and compete with each other" (Walley 2007).

This model offers us the structure into which we can later incorporate first intra-household network capital processes, and second embed the emerging complex model into various macro-level processes.

As to the role of networks in these processes, there is a large body of literature on the role of networks in family/domestic production/reproduction, but only in an aggregated format. Just to illustrate these with a few classics from various disciplines: anthropology (Bott 1957, Lomnitz 1977, Sahlins 1972), home economics and statistics (Goldschmidt–Clermont 1982, Reid 1934), sociology (Young–Wilmott 1957/2013, Litwak–Szelenyi 1969), network analysis (Wellman–Wortley 1990).<sup>14</sup>

Since, however, we could not find in the literature any relevant analyses of the dynamics of intra- and inter-household networks, let alone network capital, we had to develop a new conceptual frame and research design to carry out such an analysis – i.e., one that measures the inter-household networks of household members but conceptualizes them as the possessions of the intra-household network capital of the household members.

Figure 3 The dynamics of inter-household networks and intra-household network capital



In Box 1 we introduce the proxies of inter-household networks in the way that we operationalized the related questions in the special module of the EU-SILC 2015

<sup>14</sup> Moreover, there is a large literature about the role of networks in different parts of the world and in various socio-economic processes in which family/household networks have a significant role. A multitude of excellent examples of these cases can be found in the two volumes (and a third is on its way) of a large-scale project designed to illustrate the operation of informal economic processes all around the world (Ledeneva 2018/2019).

survey.<sup>15</sup> Focusing on the size and combinations of these inter-household networks, we can identify the network characteristics of household members on an individual level (Box 1) as well as the size and composition of these networks among the household members (Box 2). The combination of these individual networks is the basis of the analysis of relational network capital (Box 3) which serves as the basis of the estimation of the aggregated network capital of the household (Box 4). In other words, we identify the inter-household networks of the household members individually, and analyze their intra-household distributions, associations, and aggregated forms; i.e., the size and structure of relational and aggregated intra-household network capital. Finally, both relational and aggregated network capital will be added to the individual household members' characteristics as proxies of their position in the household and of their household on a macro-level.

To illustrate the dynamics of the model, first we analyze the size and composition of inter-household networks of the two spouses separately (Box 1), then – still on the individual level – their combinations (Box 2). The next step is describing the relations between the size and composition of the networks of the spouses (Box 3), and their aggregated features on a household level (Box 4). The terms we use in the model imply that while in the course of implementing the analysis at the individual level we identify the various types of inter-household networks, and when we focus on their relational and aggregated structures we conceptualize them as capital owned by the household and its members.

We assume that the relational network capital is closely associated with other intra-household processes (described in Figure 2). The latter serves as a channel through which to mobilize inter-household resources (both on a reciprocal and altruistic basis, in tangible (labor, money) or intangible (information, advice) forms, etc.). The roles of household members in these processes are, however, unequal, which influences their intra-household bargaining position (e.g. in terms of domestic production and concerning the amount and timing of labor market activity) and power relations (e.g. the allocation of consumption goods and services and on investment). These relational inequalities may also have significant impacts on reproductive processes such as satisfaction, use of time, and resources for leisure and children, etc.

Aggregated household network capital can be conceptualized as a component of household resources that is no less relevant than wealth, human capital, or income. Consequently, a lack of household network capital can be seen as a form of poverty, which may deepen the level of marginality of the household by reinforcing other aspects of poverty. Assuming that the opposite is also true (i.e., well-to-do households own more network capital than average), then the level of aggregated network capital is a significant source of macro-level inequality.

<sup>15</sup> See the regulation, the indicators, and the assessment of the 2015 special module: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/income-and-living-conditions/data/ad-hoc-modules>

## The next steps

To conclude the paper, we have selected some examples from the literature to illustrate the ways we plan to use our model as the basis of empirical analysis:

- Households invest into various forms of capital such as fiscal capital (e.g. savings), human capital (i.e. education and various soft skills), physical capital (such as durable goods, housing, and wealth), and emotional capital (see Cottingham 2016), and use these various forms of capital in the course of domestic and petty commodity production, in consumption, and reproduction, as well as outside the household, e.g. in attaining a higher income, better job, career, higher status, etc.
- The structure of these investments (as well as intra-household income distribution, consumption patterns of food and cultural items, and leisure time) can be different among household members, and these differences can have a significant impact both on their intra-household power relations and on the operation of the household as an entity. A comparative analysis of intra-household income distribution in households with co-residing young adults showed that some of them “*stay at home longer in order to enjoy better economic well-being, some stay at home longer as a strategy to overcome the difficulties faced in the labor market or on the housing market or both, whereas others stay at home longer in order to support their family of origin*” (Medgyesi–Nagy 2017: 377).
- The intertwined operation of reproduction processes with the operation of the household as a production/consumption unit as well is illustrated by Grossbard et al. (2014) and (Bolzendahl–Gubernskaya 2016) who found that white men with black spouses do less housework than those in an all-white relationship; Oreffice (2014) shows that when compared to US-born couples (or foreign-born ones from countries with similar gender roles to those in the US), households whose culture of origin supports strict and unequal gender roles behave differently – i.e. with regard to how spouses evaluate their labor market opportunities versus staying at home.
- The size, structure and legal conditions of the household can cause significant differences in intra-household processes – e.g. between nuclear and extended households (Greenhalgh 1982), or between married couples and common-law partnerships (Bukodi 2005).
- Discrepancies in values concerning the reproduction process among household members can affect the stability of the household and the efficiency of its production. For example, whether the spouses perceive their position in the household similarly or differently, or whether there is a discrepancy in their level of satisfaction with various aspects of their situation (Breunig et al. 2005), and if they have conflicting or identical political attitudes, may have a significant impact on the functioning of the household (i.e. tension versus

smooth cooperation)<sup>16</sup>: women who earn more than their partners are likely to reduce their labor market participation to fulfill traditional gender roles (Bertrand et al. 2013), while intra-household satisfaction is closely associated with the relative income position of the spouses (Bütikofer–Gerfin 2009), and the perception of intra-household power relations is related to the status of members of the household (Bertocci et al 2012,–Antman 2014).

- Finally, intra-household adjustments in inter-generational labor market behavior have been lucidly demonstrated by analyses of school-to-work strategies and of the probability of worklessness (Berloffo et al. 2017a, 2017b).

As indicated in the introduction, the aim of this paper is to outline the theoretical model of a piece of empirical research we plan to carry out in the coming years. Standing on the shoulders of our predecessors, we intend to analyze empirically the following questions:

- What are the typical characteristics of intra-household network capital and how are these associated with other intra-household production, consumption, and reproduction processes?
- How does intra-household network capital relate to the socio/economic/demographic characteristics of (1) household members, (2) their intra-household relations, and (3) the household as an entity?
- How are these intra-household network relations related to the external socioeconomic characteristics of households; i.e. to the state and market-dominated macro-level institutions that define the opportunity structure within which the household operates?

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<sup>16</sup> For example, intra-household political homophily (as shown through the voting behavior of couples and parents/children in the UK during the 2015 General Election and in the recent EU referendum –Carabat et al. 2017), or heterophily.

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