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**Cuvinte cheie:** gospodărie familială, feudalism, Brüdergemeine, economie, religie

### **Gospodăria familială ca locus privilegiat pentru schimbul social**

#### **Rezumat**

Acest articol face câțiva pași către a contempla rolul gospodăriei familiale în tranziția dintre feudalism spre capitalism. Abordez această temă plasând schimbările din cadrul gospodăriei familiale în trei contexte diferite: Europa de Vest, un context colonial, și un context specific Est European. A doua parte a acestui articol discută structura caracteristică a gospodăriei familiale, a congregației Pietiste radicale Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine, care și-a avut “nervul central” în Herrnhut, în Saxonia. M-am aplecat îndeosebi asupra detectării aspectelor teologice și ideologice, și le-am plasat pe fundalul schimbărilor politice care aveau loc și care au premers formarea statului modern și au condus la omul alienat.

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**Key words:** Household, feudalism, Brüdergemeine, economy, religion

## **The Household as Privileged Locus of Social Change**

### **Summary**

This article takes the first steps towards contemplating the role of the household in the transition from feudalism to capitalism. I approach this by placing the changes in household within three different contexts: Western Europe, a colonial context and then a specific Eastern European context. The second part of the article discusses the particular household structure of the Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine, a radical Pietist congregation, which had its nervecentre in Herrnhut in Saxony. Here I specifically focus on tracing some of the theological and ideological features and place them within a framework of the political changes that were taking place as precursors to modern state formation and the alienated individual.

## The Household as Privileged Locus of Social Change

We do know that every system of production has had a special form of household to which corresponds a special system of family relationship.<sup>2</sup>

The word “economy” designated a form of government in the sixteenth century; in the eighteenth century, through a series of complex processes that are absolutely crucial for our history, it will designate a level of reality and a field of intervention for government.<sup>3</sup>

In the course of the late 1720s, the separation of unmarried men and women was evolving in the community of Moravian Brethren in Herrnhut. The groups, initially called *Banden* (lit. groups), became known as choirs (*Chören*), the predominant term from about 1737 and included married men and women, widows and widowers, unmarried men and women, boys, girls and children. In Herrnhut, the single brothers, single sisters, boys, girls and widows had their own separate dwellings. This particular household structure which divided the congregation in terms of gender, sexual maturity and marital status according to which they lived their daily lives,<sup>4</sup> was unusual for the time, and raised much speculation and suspicion, especially among the Lutheran clergy.

As part of a larger project, which analyses the ideology of the Brüdergemeine within the transition from feudalism to capitalism, this organisation of the household is particularly interesting and the larger objective with this analysis is to contemplate the role of the household in the transition from feudalism to capitalism. In this article, I will begin by discussing Foucault's explanation of the shift in the understanding of the family, from which I will take my point of departure. I then move on to argue my understanding of the shift, beginning in the colonial context and on to examining the transition from feudal household to the segregated household in Europe. Finally, I touch upon the household practices of the Brüdergemeine in Herrnhut.

First, however, I should clarify what I mean by household. In comparison with the term ‘family’, household is less focussed on the blood ties between the individuals within the household. Furthermore, there is emphasis on the dwelling (house, and in Greek *oikos*, which is a part of the word for household, *oikonomia*). So, I use household to denote the particular organisation of people within a dwelling, insofar these people constitute the basic unit of society and economy and contribute towards the reproduction of society and economy. With such a distinction I am not advocating a ‘household mode of production’ as the one developed by Michael Merrill.<sup>5</sup> As James

<sup>2</sup> Karl Kautsky, *The Class Struggle*, trans. William E. Bohn (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1910), p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population. Lectures at the Collège De France, 1977-78*, ed. Arnold I. Davidson, trans. Graham Burchell, Michel Foucault: Lectures at the Collège De France (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> R.6.Ab.No13, 1739 d4 (Purschen-Liebesmahl in Herrnhut zur Grundlegung ihres Hauses): 22 June 1739 the foundationstone for the Single Brother's house was laid in Herrnhut. [The first sisterhouse was built in 1755: Foundationstone laid on 24 April. Until then, they had lived in wings in various houses, up to 4 different places]. 14th November 1740 the Single Sisters moved into their rented house (R.6.Ab.No13, 1740, 3).

<sup>5</sup> Michael Merrill, "Cash Is Good to Eat: Self Sufficiency and Exchange in the Rural Economy of the United States,," *Radical History Review* 13, no. Winter (1977).

W. Wessman notes in his comment to Merrill's article,<sup>6</sup> it is crucial to distinguish mode of production from unit of production, and the household can ever only be a unit of production.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the household is, as a *unit* of production, extremely vulnerable to change, which is why it also is a good place to monitor socio-economic transition.

### ***Foucault and Oikonomia***

In his lecture series, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977–1978*, Foucault locates the shift in the understanding of the household as part of the re-focusing of the economy on something other than the family. Whereas before it had been the model of government, it shifted to being an element within the population, with the population becoming the focus of government, while economy became separated out as a distinct field.<sup>8</sup> This shift occurred through a number of complex processes, which Foucault then examines in the course of the lectures. The art of government's release from the household and family on the one hand, and the state and sovereignty on the other, comes, he argues, through a number of general processes:

‘the demographic expansion of the eighteenth century, which was linked to the abundance of money, which was itself linked in turn to the expansion of agricultural production through circular processes with which historians are familiar and so will not be discussed here. This being the general framework, I think we can say more precisely that the unblocking of the art of government was linked to the emergence of the problem of population. Or, let's say that there is a quite subtle process, which we should try to reconstruct in detail, in which we can see how the science of government, the re-focusing of the economy on something other than the family, and the problem of population are all interconnected.’<sup>9</sup>

While Foucault on the one hand emphasises how crucial these ‘complex processes’ are for ‘our history’,<sup>10</sup> he nevertheless designates his general framework as ‘the expansion of agricultural production through circular processes with which historians are familiar’ as something not to be discussed in his exposition. In fact, Foucault several times notes that it is the

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<sup>6</sup> James W. Wessman, "A Household Mode of Production-Another Comment," *ibid.* 22 (1979).

<sup>7</sup> While Lyndal Roper's analysis of the changes in household and gender following the Reformation in Augsburg, Germany is a feast of information and a pleasure to read, she nevertheless seems to analyse the household as an end in itself, downplaying the larger economic shifts that the Reformation was a response to. One reason for this could be the choice of Augsburg, which ‘had little countryside directly subject to it’ (p. 6), and whose economy was dominated by a large number of small household based workshops. Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg*, Oxford Studies in Social History (Oxford: Clarendon/Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 28-29.

<sup>8</sup> Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, pp. 140-41.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

emergence of ‘population’ as a category, which eliminates the model of the family,<sup>11</sup> but fails to explain *how* this shift takes place. The process which Foucault seems to be bent on avoiding is what is called ‘primitive accumulation’,<sup>12</sup> which may be determined as the historical establishment of capitalism and the emergence of capitalist wealth. The underside to the term, what it also called the secret of primitive accumulation, is that the peasantry were separated from the means of production, i.e. the land, and by subjecting them to starvation and abject poverty, were forced to enter into wage labour.<sup>13</sup> Within this particular process, the household was restructured and reorganised so as to match the new labour conditions.

### *The colonial context*

The process of separating a population from the means of production and undermine the self-sufficiency of the people not only took place among the peasants of Europe, but also in the various colonial situations. The seizing of land and gathering of indigenous peoples in reserves in North America is one example. In Greenland, primitive accumulation took on a slightly different guise, not because of the benevolence of the colonisers, but because of the particular circumstances of nature and the particular nature of the objects that were of interest to the colonisers.

Simplistically put, the colonial administration was dependent on the Greenlanders for profit. The colonisers were ill equipped to extract value from the country, and so need the Greenlanders to

<sup>11</sup> See especially pages 140-141: *The perspective of population, the reality of phenomena specific to population, makes it possible to eliminate the model of the family and to re-focus the notion of economy on something else* (140). ‘On the other hand, the family now appears as an element within the population and as a fundamental relay in its government. In other words, prior to the emergence of the problematic of population, the art of government could only be conceived on the basis of the model of the family, in terms of economy understood as management of the family. When, however, the population appears as absolutely irreducible to the family, the result is that the latter falls to a lower level than the population; it appears as an element within the population. It is therefore no longer a model; [...] The family will change from being a model to being an instrument; it will become a privileged instrument for the government of the population rather than a chimerical model for good government. The shift from the level of model to that of instrument in relation to the population is absolutely fundamental. And in actual fact, from the middle of the eighteenth century, the family really does appear in this instrumental relation to the population [...]. What enables population to unblock the art of government is that it eliminates the model of the family’ (141). Emphases added. And then on page 303 he states, ‘It should be understood, of course, that I will not try even to sketch the series of transformations that actually brought about the transition from this economy of souls to the government of men and populations.’

<sup>12</sup> Foucault displays his knowledge of the subject in *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 84-86. *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books). In spite of these pages, primitive accumulation is neither part of his analysis of the emergence of governmentality, as I am arguing here, nor part of his analysis of the body and sexuality, as Sylvia Federici points out. She notes that Foucault’s theory can only be defended ‘at the price of outstanding historical omissions’ Sylvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (New York: Autonomedia, 2004), p. 16. For this reason, it seems odd that both Michael Perelman (2000, p. 14) and Jason Read (2002, p. 37) refer to the pages from *Discipline and Punish* in their overall discussion of primitive accumulation, giving the mistaken impression that primitive accumulation is a fundamental part of Foucault’s overall analyses.

<sup>13</sup> See e.g. Merrill, “Cash Is Good to Eat: Self Sufficiency and Exchange in the Rural Economy of the United States; or Ben Fine, “Primitive Accumulation,” in *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, ed. Tom Bottomore (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985).

<sup>14</sup> The question concerning what constitutes a real Greenlander is the point of departure in Hanne Thomsen’s article ‘Şgte grønşndere og nye grønşndere -- om forskellige opfattelser af grønlandskhed’ (‘Real Greenlanders and New Greenlanders – on different perceptions of “Greenlandic-ness”’) in *Den jyske historiker* 81:21-56, 1998. Thomsen begins her article by pointing out the contradiction between, on the one hand, the discourse of authentic ‘Greenlandic nature’ peddled in films, the tourist-industry, and fiction/non-fiction, and, on the other, everyday life in one of the bigger cities in Greenland. This contradiction between modern lifestyle in the urban sprawl and the *expectations* of Greenlandic culture is resolved by designating city-life as Danish, while authentic Greenland is to be found in the settlements, personified in the hunter. This image of an authentic Greenland is, according to Thomsen, the result of Danish colonial politics and the attempts from the Trade to retain the population within a hunting mode of production. This meant that while seal-hunting was promoted as national labour, waged labour was deemed un-Greenlandic in the sense that Greenlanders were not ‘mature’ enough to perform this kind of work.

keep up their hunting life style in order to create profits for the Trade.<sup>14</sup> However, the hunting practices of the Greenlanders had to be honed to match not only the colonial standards of labour, but also the colonial desire for maximum profit. Thus in the *Instruction of 1782* the fourth post, ‘Concerning the Greenlanders’ delineates the various ways of dealing with Greenlanders, how to encourage them to hunt, and how to encourage them to store food for winter.<sup>15</sup> This shows the subsumption of Greenlandic practices within Danish colonial apparatus: Greenlanders had been hunting for centuries, and they had developed various means of storage; the directive, however, propagates the notion that hunting and storage – that is, ‘proper’/Danish modes of hunting and storage – are practices that Greenlanders need to be encouraged to follow. A helpful terminology could be Polanyi’s distinction between embedded and disembedded economy.<sup>16</sup>

So what does this mean for the household? While the colonial administration sought to preserve hunting as the primary occupation through references to protectionism, it simultaneously attempted to erode the internal distribution practices between Greenlanders.<sup>17</sup> The merchant Niels Egede had already in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century suggested that this tradition of distributing meat, blubber and skin according to who had participated in the hunt and transport, cut into the profits of the Trade. He suggested that the flensing (stripping the blubber from the whale) should take place on Danish ships at sea to avoid these distribution rules, which only took effect when the whale was grounded.<sup>18</sup> The internal distribution patterns of the Greenlanders were tied to conceptions of household, which in Greenland was much more extended than what you would find in middleclass Europe. In Greenland it was not uncommon for a household to consist of 7-8 (what we would call) ‘nuclear families’ to live together and internally distribute and use the harvest. The shift towards smaller units of dwelling took place in the second half of the nineteenth century and was completed by the end of that century and meant a fundamental shift in cultural practices.<sup>19</sup> Petersen shows how shift from the longhouse structure affected the maintenance of hunting and transport equipment and thus changed the dwelling patterns of the Greenlanders towards a less itinerant way of life.<sup>20</sup> But I also think it is important to bring in the changes in the understanding of ‘household’ in concordance with Lutheran ideals of family, which for the colonial administration was the culturally acceptable format.

### ***The Household and Primitive Accumulation.***

In Europe, the process of separating the peasants from the land was, as in the colonial

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<sup>15</sup> These are examples of how the directive repeats and thus institutionalises some of the attempts by the missionaries to control the labour power of the Greenlanders. See Lauridsen and Lythans for descriptions of how the missionaries encouraged hunting and proper food storage. Thomas Kring Lauridsen and Kaspar Lythans. *Det grønlandske kald*. MA thesis, Institut for Etnologi og Antropologi, Københavns Universitet, København, 1983, pp. 168-73.

<sup>16</sup> Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation. The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001 [1944]). Polanyi argued that a disembedded economy was a capitalist utopia, because capitalism was just as embedded in social relations as pre-capitalist economies were. The distinction is however useful to denote what happens in colonialism, because it can denote how the e.g. Greenlandic economy became disembedded from the Greenlandic society and then embedded in a colonial economy.

<sup>17</sup> Thomsen, *Real Greenlanders*, p. 24.

<sup>18</sup> Cited in Lauridsen and Lythans, *Det grønlandske kald*, p. 174.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Petersen, ‘Some considerations concerning the Greenlandic longhouse’. *Folk* 16-17 ((1974/1975)): 171-188, p. 171

<sup>20</sup> Søren Thuesen discusses their decline and the general material poverty as part of the social background for the emergence of the revival movement, Peqatiginniat in *Fremad, opad. Kampen for en moderne grønlandsk identitet*. København: Rhodos, 1988.

context, a long, difficult and violent one. In his classical study, *The Invention of Capitalism. Classical Political Economy and the Secret History of Primitive Accumulation*, Michael Perelman shows how classical political economy supported primitive accumulation and actively sought ways in which to undermine the self-sufficiency of the peasant population so that they would be forced to work for wages and supply the emerging capitalists with cheap labour. What interests me in this section is the role of the household in this process because the classical model of primitive accumulation explains the shift in the household from being an autarkic structure within traditional economy to being a site of production of laborpower and consumption within capitalist economy.<sup>21</sup> The adaptation of family economy to the needs of capital did not happen without a struggle. According to Perelman, the process took place through three steps: First hobbling the household economy's role as producer and to subordinate it to capitalist commodity production. Then comes exhorting it become more efficient producers of labour power. Finally comes the step of downplaying its changed production role and regarding it as the site of consumption only.<sup>22</sup> While all of these steps are important for understanding the developments and effects of capitalism, I will focus on the first step only, which addresses the initial breakdown of the independent household.

As Perelman reminds us, capitalism began in economies where self sufficiency was quite high.<sup>23</sup> According to Marx's description of pre-capitalist society: 'At bottom, every individual household contains an entire economy, forming as it does an independent centre of production (manufacture merely the domestic subsidiary labor of the women, etc.)'.<sup>24</sup> Primitive accumulation meant depriving the household sector of much of its means of production, leaving the emerging proletariat with no choice but to accept wage labour.<sup>25</sup> One of the ways in which this was done was the process of enclosure, eviction of people, suppression of religious holidays, restrictions on hunting. While enclosure and eviction separated people from the means of production and self-sustenance, the restrictions on hunting blocked off an alternative means for gathering food (alternative to buying, that is), and finally, the suppression of religious holidays meant a significant increase in the working days.

Enclosure denotes the process of getting rid of open fields and common lands. Federici explains that the open-field system was a system where peasants owned rights to non-contiguous strips of land in a non-hedged field. This had the advantages of protecting the peasants from harvest failure, gave a manageable work-schedule, and encouraged solidarity, since all decisions pertaining to management and cultivation were taken by peasant assemblies.<sup>26</sup> The commons, were meadows where cows could be kept, timber, berries and herbs could be gathered and a place to meet. In

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<sup>21</sup> Michael Perelman, *The Invention of Capitalism. Classical Political Economy and the Secret History of Primitive Accumulation*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2000, p. 90.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81. Perelman is highly critical of the formal scheme of pre-capitalist production and capitalist consumption, because, as he argues, capitalism also relies on household production. In line with this critique, he extends labour (in the social division of labour) to include nonwaged labour: 'All labor performed within the household that promotes economic reproduction, as well as production, falls within this definition of the social division of labor' and thus follows many feminists in seeing the capitalist household as one of production and consumption. The full argument unfolds on pp 74-80.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>24</sup> Karl Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations. With an Introduction by Eric J. Hobsbawm*, trans. Jack Cohen (New York: International Publishers, 1965), p. 79. See also 'Each individual peasant family is almost self-sufficient, directly produces most of its consumer needs, and thus acquires its means of life more through an exchange with nature than in intercourse with society' in "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels Collected Works, Vol. 11 (1851-1853)* (1979 [1852]), p. 187. In *Capital*, Marx also has a footnote to Dugal Stewart's description of the pre-capitalist life of peasants in the Scottish Highlands, *Capital* (London: Penguin, 1976), p. 616, n. 27. All references from Perelman, p. 72.

<sup>25</sup> Perelman, *Invention of Capitalism*, p. 93.

<sup>26</sup> See also Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, pp. 70-71.

Federici's words, the commons constituted 'the material foundation upon which peasant solidarity and sociality could thrive'.<sup>27</sup>

As an example of the effects of enclosure, I will use E.P. Thompson's example of the enclosure of Barton-on-Humber.<sup>28</sup>

[O]ut of nearly 6,000 acres, 63% (3,733 acres) was divided between three people, while fifty-one people were awarded between one and three acres: or, broken down another way, ten owners accounted for 81 % of the land enclosed, while the remaining 19% was divided between 116 people. The average rental value of the arable land enclosed rose in five years (1794-9) from 6s. 6d. to 20s an acre; and average rentals in the parish were more than trebled.

Enclosure was, as Thompson puts it, 'a plain enough case of class robbery, played according to fair rules of property laid down by a Parliament of property-owners and lawyers.'<sup>29</sup> It is not difficult to see how such a development would generate a multitude of impoverished families, who then could provide cheap labour. The one to three acres allotted to 51 people was not enough for subsistence, added to which were the enclosure costs, the rapidly rising rents and the loss of communal draught animals. Eviction was another practice which meant a significant restructuring of the economy. In Scotland the lairds claimed clan lands as their own private property and evicted scores of people to make room for e.g. pasture.<sup>30</sup>

So what does this mean for the household? In *Capital*, Marx develops the idea of the social division of labour to augment Adam Smith's notion of division of labour. Whereas Smith's division of labour denotes the division of labour within a (pin) factory, Marx's social division of labour is broader and refers to the carving up of the economy and how work is divided between different workplaces, all of which are coordinated by market forces.<sup>31</sup> In the social division of labour, which is capitalism, the household is transformed, according to Perelman, by being directed from household production towards commodities production and by introducing a distinction between the home and the workplace. However, it seems to me that Perelman overlooks a crucial phase in the transition from subsistence to money economy, namely the cottage industry. From the point of view of the household, this is highly important, in that the cottage industry assists in the breakdown of the social cohesion and organisation of the village economy.

Sylvia Federici points out that capitalist merchants could take advantage of the 'liberated' labour in the cottage industry. The merchant would deliver wool or cotton to be spun or woven, along with the instruments, and pick up the finished product, also known as the 'putting out system' analogous to contemporary notions of outsourcing.<sup>32</sup> Federici's point is to highlight how women's labour is subsumed under the men's wages, and how the male cottage worker depended on his family for care and assistance, children of all ages being employed. As she points out: 'the home-based organisation provided the workers with free domestic services and the cooperation of

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p. 71. See also David Sabeau, "The Communal Basis of Pre-1800 Peasant Uprisings in Western Europe," *Comparative Politics* 8, no. 3 (1976): p. 356.

<sup>28</sup> E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), p. 218.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> See Perelman, pp. 141-143.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 59

<sup>32</sup> Federici, *Caliban and the Witch*, p. 123, n. 32.

their children and wives, who were treated as helpers and paid low “auxiliary” wages’.<sup>33</sup>

Apart from the advantage of cheap labour for the employers, Federici also points out that the cottage industry prevented the danger of “combinations”, by which she means the joining of forces against the masters or employers. In hindsight, the cottage industry also provided an important step towards full wage labour in an external workplace,<sup>34</sup> in that it constituted the necessary change in social structure, which would help towards shifting the allegiance from a village collective to individual household, primarily by locating all the necessary equipment within the house, so that the family would be ‘self-sufficient’ in terms of what was needed to get the job done. Whereas before, the village provided the material network for provision, in terms of e.g. cattle and cart, and the commons provided the space to produce, the provisions now come from outside, and the cottage provided the space of production, thus severing the ties to the village. In this way, the cottage industry extended the notion of the household as a productive unit, but also transformed it, in that the household was reliant on the materials and tools from outside, but once they were delivered, were ‘self-sufficient’.

### *The Eastern-German context*

However, an important detail to bear in mind is the unequal development of Western and Eastern Europe.<sup>35</sup> According to Brenner this was due to a combination of the declining population and the colonial style village formations in the East, which led to the re-enservment of the Eastern peasant population, the so-called *Gutsherrschaft*. By contrast, the Western peasants were more organised at the communal level, the villages were more heavily populated, providing them with more leverage to pressure their landlords to free them from their serfdom. However, it is important to note, as does Immanuel Wallerstein, that this type of “feudalism,” indicated by the term re-enservment, was fundamentally different from the feudalism of the Middle Ages. The earlier feudalism was characterised by being embedded in a local subsistence economy, while the feudalism of 16<sup>th</sup> century Eastern Europe was part of an emerging capitalist world economy. This meant a shift in the relations between the landowner and the peasants, but also between the principality, the landowner and the peasants, since the peasants were now legally obliged to work part time on a large estate with the objective of producing for the world market as part of their serfdom.<sup>36</sup> So, basically, while the peasants in the West went from serfdom to ‘freedom’ to wage-labour, the peasants in the East went from serfdom to wage-labour. However, even though the examples above are from Western Europe, they can alert us to the *household* as the locus for economic paradigm-shifts.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p. 98 and p. 124, n32 cont. Thompson (1966) quotes an account from Cleckheaton (1830s): ‘Perhaps a more wretched class of workmen never existed than the old woolcombers. The work was all done in their own houses, the best part of their cottages being taken up with it. The whole family, of sometimes six or eight, both male and female, worked together round a “combpot” heated by charcoal, the fumes of which had a very deleterious effect upon their health. When we add that the workshop was also perforce the bedroom, it will not be wondered at that woolcombers were almost invariably haggard looking ... many of them not living half their days...’ p. 283.

<sup>34</sup> This transition is in all its brutality described in *The Making of the English Working Class*.

<sup>35</sup> Robert Brenner, "Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre- Industrial Europe," *Past and Present* 70, no. February (1976)

<sup>36</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System 1. Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011 [1974]).

I now want to focus more closely on the Oberlausitz, the area in which Herrnhut was situated. This area in general was decimated after the 30-years war and it seems that it was in the course of rebuilding after the war that this subtle shift from feudalism to Gutherrschaft manifested itself. The rebuilding of the Oberlausitz proceeded rapidly, and the towns, such as Zittau, Görlitz and Bautzen outstripped the villages. This development had a number of causes, such as the strong economic situation provided by the cloth and canvas production, as well as the stronghold of the Lusatian League,<sup>37</sup> which had managed to hold on to its economic privileges and trade monopolies. For the gentry, the rebuilding meant the opportunity to seize many of the abandoned farms, and settle new farmhands on them, such as many of the refugees from Bohemia and Silesia. In exchange the peasants were obliged to perform *Fronarbeit*, or bonded labour. In some cases the amount of labour was fixed by prior agreement in the Urbarium or registry. In the cases of no registry, it meant 6 days labour a week. On top of this came taxes in kind, not only to the master, but also to the church.

This reconstituted feudalism was however only one of the two main economic developments after the 30-years war. The other was linen weaving, which was a very important cottage industry in this region. In one sense, this slotted smoothly into the feudal structures, in that the cloth production was bonded labour and the spinners and weavers were part of the subservient population. However in this area, there was also a high number of free weavers, the ones who paid only protection taxes to the landlords, indicating that it was also part of a different emerging economic structure. The Lusatian League, whose entire operation was in opposition to the gentry, controlled all dimensions of the cloth industry. This was so not only in the six towns of the league, where they held privilege of production, but also in the villages, where they held trades rights with the village people, who were in the position to sell.<sup>38</sup>

These developments are important because they indicate that primitive accumulation did not take place in Eastern Europe, where the transition to capitalism took place within the structures of feudalism. The following section will look at how this may be traced in the particular household structure of the Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine.

### *The Herrnhut context*

The town of Herrnhut is near the current border between Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic, less than 100 km east of Dresden. It was founded when the count of the manor, Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf's estate manager allowed a group of refugees from Bohemia and Moravia settle on the highway between Löbau and Zittau in 1722. Even though most of the refugees were peasants, they were not permitted to uphold their livelihood through farming, but were forced to learn a trade, because the lands of the estate were already parceled out to the bonded peasants of the estate.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Established 1346. German name is *Oberlausitzer Sechstädtebund*.

<sup>38</sup> See Józef Leszczyński, *Der Klassenkampf Der Oberlausitzer Bauern in Den Jahren 1635-1720* (Bautzen: VEB Domowina-Verlag 1964), chapter 2.

<sup>39</sup> See Otto Uttendörfer, *Alt-Herrnhut. Wirtschaftsgeschichte Und Religionssoziologie Herrnhuts Während Seiner Ersten Zwanzig Jahre (1722-1742)* (Herrnhut: Verlag Missionsbuchhandlung, 1925), pp. 9-83 for a detailed description of the problems.

While the foundation of the town is usually dated to 1722, the foundation of the congregation is usually dated to 1727. At this time, the 30 families which had settled in 1722 had through increasing immigration from Moravia and a significant influx from the German surroundings become 300 people. This rapid expansion had led to significant internal strife. At this point, Zinzendorf had been released from his official duties in Dresden, and after returning to his estate, he began sorting out the problems in Herrnhut. Along with some of the leaders in the community, he began to talk with the various townspeople, and attempted to negotiate between the individual and the congregation as a group. It became clear to the leaders that it was necessary that the individual was helped and supported to see her or himself in the whole. It was also necessary that the congregation as a whole needed means to connect the various individuals. And thus arose the idea to divide the congregation into groups, which in time came to be the so-called choirs.<sup>40</sup>

The choir structure of the Brüdergemeine in Herrnhut is the arrangement of the community into groups of gender, marital status and age. It is the central feature of the community in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, indeed *the* ideological feature, which facilitated all practices in the community, and served at least two significant purposes. One, was to mediate between the individual and the community as represented by Jesus' body and second, the choirs provided the framework for establishing early factories and workshops. In this section, I want to examine the role of the choirs in the transition from feudalism to capitalism focusing on the choirs as sites of ideological reproduction, and as a structure, which enabled the community to move on the outskirts of the Gutsherrschaft.

### **The choirs as management of selves**

The concept of the choir is christological, gendered and corporeal. Christological, because it is logically constructed around the life of Jesus. Gendered because it fundamentally is connected to Jesus the man; and corporal because the negotiation between the individual and the whole is dependent on the body of Jesus. The following quote is from a community speech, which Zinzendorf gave in Gnadenfrey (current Poland) in 1747, and shows the connection between the Choir ideology and Christ.

A person just grows up with the Savior: he is to one everything that one precisely is: if one is a child, then He is a child to one, if one is a boy, then he is a boy to one, if one is a young man, then he is a young man to one, if one is a man, then he is a man to one. For the sisters it is just so that he is for her a maidenly heart with a particular Tenderness and special knowledge. And so one grows up with him into manhood and he is always there, just so.<sup>41</sup>

This particular excerpt is important because it relates to the various stages in life, and thus shows the logic behind the choir system of the Moravian community, which is, as mentioned, its basic social structure. While in the beginning (1720s and 30s), the groups, called classes, were divided according to spiritual maturity, the leaders early on became aware that age also played a difference. In the course of the 1740s, the spiritual advancement, still expressed in classes became a subgroup of the Choirs, which now were arranged according to external parameters, such as age

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<sup>40</sup> Hanns-Joachim Wollstadt, *Geordnetes Dienen in Der Christlichen Gemeinde*, vol. 4, Arbeiten Zur Pastoraltheologie (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 25-27

<sup>41</sup> Quoted and translated in Craig Atwood, "Sleeping in the Arms of Christ: Sanctifying Sexuality in the Eighteenth-Century Moravian Church" in *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 8/1 (July 1997), pp. 25-51, p. 28-29, translation modified.

and/or bodily changes.

For the men, the connection point between themselves and Jesus is the common property of the penis. As the quote above indicated, the manliness of Jesus means that the brothers hold a privileged position in relation to Jesus and his life. And this connection, or privilege is repeated and developed within the context of the choirs. Zinzendorf, and other leaders of the community, gave speeches to the individual choirs, which outlined this particular choir's relationship to Jesus at this particular time.<sup>42</sup>

Women, however, also have a place on the body of Jesus:

“The sisters have the clear and unequivocal image of the holy side of Jesus, which was opened on him on the Cross, whence he has given birth to our souls”.<sup>43</sup>

Here the side-hole on the body of Jesus is likened to the genitals of women, in order to produce the image that the side-hole gives birth to the souls of the congregation: the individual member is a child of the side-hole.<sup>44</sup>

The side-hole as the locus of the spiritual reproduction is something which is especially prevalent in the mid to late 1740s and is often connected with the fanaticism and opulent erotic language which is regarded as an embarrassing feature of the Sifting Time.<sup>45</sup> It seems to me that the whole idea of reproduction is a central part of the Sifting time. At this time in the Herrnhut congregation there were severe social upheavals, and the years 1743-45 were characterised by extensive soul-searching, a tightening of the choir discipline, exodus of members, a sharpening of the gender segregation, which had an impact on the lives of families and workshops. Even the noble families did not go unmarked. The tightening of segregation meant, e.g., that single brothers and sisters were not to mingle in daily life. If the blacksmith had a daughter as well as an apprentice, then one of them had to leave the house. If a noble family had an unmarried cook and an unmarried footman, or stable master, one of them had to go, or more often, they were married to each other. Several families left, or were banished.<sup>46</sup> It is in this particular context that the choir

<sup>42</sup> Typically, the choir-speech would be given by the leader of the choir, or of the congregation. Zinzendorf was the most eager speaker, and delivered, from the first speeches in 1744 to his death in 1760, over 3000 choir speeches. The context of a choir speech would typically be in connection with a worship service, after which the choirs would gather, and Zinzendorf or one of the other leaders would deliver a speech to the various choirs. The nature of the speeches could be reprimanding, or encouraging, or an exposition of scripture, or on the occasion of a particular celebration. My current research project examines the speeches he delivered in Herrnhut, which amounts to around 400 – many of which have not been systematically studied or published.

<sup>43</sup> The sidehole is the wound in Jesus' side. This originates in John's Gospel, 19:34, after the crucifixion and death of Jesus, where one of the Roman soldiers pierces Jesus' side, and blood and water comes out.

<sup>44</sup> There is of course much more to be said about the sidehole, which exceeds the limits of this article. For an analysis of the female imagery of the sidehole see Aaron Spencer Fogleman, *Jesus Is Female: Moravians and Radical Religion in Early America*, Early American Studies (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). In his article on homosexuality in the Moravian communities, Paul Peucker accuses Fogleman of placing too much emphasis on the female imagery of Jesus. Paul Peucker, "'Inspired by Flames of Love": Homosexuality, Mysticism, and Moravian Brothers around 1750," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 15, no. 1 (2006): 53, n69.

<sup>45</sup> The 'Sifting Time' (Sichtungszeit, Luk 22:31), is a period in the 1740s, characterised by eroticism and fanaticism, especially in connection with the congregation in Herrnhag, but also the other congregations. See Craig Atwood, "Interpreting and Reinterpreting the Sichtungszeit," in *Neue Aspekte Der Zinzendorf-Forschung*, ed. Martin Brecht and Paul Peucker, *Arbeiten Zur Geschichte Des Pietismus* 47 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006).

<sup>46</sup> Otto Uttendörfer, *Wirtschaftsgeist Und Wirtschaftsorganisation Herrnhuts Und Der Brüdergemeine Von 1743 Bis Zum Ende Des Jahrhunderts*. (Herrnhut: Verlag der Missionsbuchhandlung Herrnhut, 1926), 189.

speeches arise. Naturally there had been speeches before, community speeches, sermons, as well as private conversations, but as far as I can see, it is not until 1744 that one may speak of a consolidation of the choirs, with Zinzendorf's background music, and the introduction of anniversaries and celebrations for the individual choirs. The Choir speech thus produces the individual, the individual choir and through these, the entire congregation, all with a significantly Christological hammer.

The side-hole issue is a feature that is connected to married women. The unmarried women are instead presented as the true image of the congregation, because they are the image of the church, which will relate to Christ as a man relates to his wife, according to Ephesians 5. The choir houses of the single sisters are, in Zinzendorf's words:

“Dwellings of peace and blessing, heaven on earth, the courtyards of the lord, which only need the walls to be removed, then the bridal chamber stands there with the Bridegroom within.”

The women thus have several ways of relating to Jesus. One as the side-hole, which generates members of the community, and the other as the most perfect image of his wife.

A second feature, which is common in the speeches from 1751 is the focus on Jesus' corpse as a point of identification.

“Just as all the things, from which Lust is generated, belong to the imperfect and immature decay, so the finite decomposition aims at perfection when the *Hütte* is called a *Leichnam*, and becomes ever more perfect until everything which is to be resolved, is resolved”.

This quote is part of a larger choir speech to the single brothers from 28<sup>th</sup> January, 1751. In it Zinzendorf is examining the relation between *Hütte* (literally tabernacle), which is Zinzendorf's preferred word to designate the human body, and *Leichnam* (corpse), in order to explain what it means to be touched by the corpse of Jesus and thus become the corpse of Jesus. Through the enjoyment of Jesus' corpse, the individual will be transported into corpse-like state, oblivious to nature's movements of the body, as a person under the influence of opiates during surgery. This particular state is also only attainable for men.

All in all, one can, as a boy in the congregation move from boy to corpse through the identification with the *body* of Jesus, while the women relate *to* Jesus as women to men. In this manner, the sexes are divided and influenced at an abstract level of difference and belonging, while a daily interaction, which perhaps could have kept such ideas on the ground, was avoided, as far as possible.

What interests me in this is the role Jesus' body plays in the organisation of the community. What is going on in the speeches is that Zinzendorf is relating the gendered bodies to Jesus, mapping out the genitals of both men and women onto the body of Jesus. Every woman should potentially see her vagina on Jesus' body, as every man should see Jesus' penis in his own penis. In this way, Jesus becomes the unifying feature of men and women *after* they have been differentiated. On the one hand this could be seen as yet another instance of the body of Christ metaphor that has been prevalent through Christianity, beginning with Paul's letters, but there seems to be more going on. The reason is that Zinzendorf switches between talking about the participation in or on Jesus'

body and the management of peoples own bodies.

“It would be better [if] the sisters experience at times what belongs to their tabernacle, in part to preserve their tabernacle, in part to moderate a targeted effort to ensure that the tabernacle does not burn up through a too large dryness, and [is] consumed by the excess of blood. Nature upholds the blood by and of itself, and stirs it so that it does not rot. You all must put everything, even peripheral matters, at the feet of the Saviour, working neither for nor against it, but also not drawing out the *connaissance* of your tabernacles in a dull or a witty consideration, from which a sinful emotion is generated. For the proper Blood and aroused emotions are so different, that if you feel well or woe in some of your female members, without giving it occasion through contemplation, it causes the Saviour and yourselves as little repugnance, as when you have a head or tooth-ache, bleed, sweat, weep, vomit or other expected natural tabernacle-circumstances.”

This quote is from Zinzendorf’s speech to the women who are in charge of the single sisters, and refers to the monitoring of bodily change. This speech is in two parts, and this above section belongs to the section which deals with the sisters themselves. The preceding section deals with the importance of monitoring bodily change in children, and helping them understand what is happening to their bodies, so that they are not unduly distressed.

In this particular excerpt, Zinzendorf is commanding the sisters to ‘confess’ all of their bodily movements, however small and seemingly insignificant, and not dwell on them in private. The private obsessing with bodily change is a common feature in the speeches I have analysed, and is to be avoided. While the attention to the body and its detailed machinations is not particular to the Moravian communities, the combination of individual bodies and the multi-gendered body of Christ is rather unique. So the body is both a site of individualisation and unity, or rather, the human body (Hütte) is a site of individualisation and Jesus’ body (Leichnam) is the site of unity.

In between Jesus’ body and the individual, we then have the choir structure, which provides the organisational framework for the unity. This level, the choir structure, can be seen as a way of abstracting a unity from the individual members, creating a split, as it were, between the individual human being and the choir, and which forces individuals into a split between the individual and the member. What is happening in the choirs is, in other words, what Rousseau noted in *On the social contract* (1762):

“Whoever dares undertake to establish a people’s institutions must feel himself capable of changing, as it were, human nature, of transforming each individual, who by himself is a complete and solitary whole, into a part of a larger whole, from which, in a sense, the individual receives his life and his being, of substituting a limited and mental existence for the physical and independent existence. He has to take from man his own powers, and give him in exchange alien powers, which he cannot employ without the help of other men.”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Karl Marx, Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," in *Volume 3: Marx and Engels 1843-1844, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975 [1843]), 167.

The choir structure is not only a certain kind of subjectification, but also a certain form of management of selves as individuals within a group. And the choir structure is a marked shift in household structure (from the feudal household), which implements a level of administration, to which the individual members owe some sort of allegiance.

### **The choirs as units of labour**

As this article is part of ongoing research, this area is still under development, so here I will mainly gesture towards significant points.

In Western European feudal society and in Greenlandic society, the household had been a unit of labour, which was violently transformed in the shift to capitalist relations.<sup>48</sup> In Eastern Europe the process was, as indicated above, a more insidious one, which held on to the exploitative structure of serfdom, while broadening the framework within which this relation took place.<sup>49</sup> While the feudal household structure thus remained intact in most instances, Herrnhut and some of the other communities of the Brüdergemeine made radical changes, and this also had a significant impact on labour.

Herrnhut was, as indicated, not a farming village. The peasants that settled in the community were forced to learn other means of supporting themselves and their families. Furthermore, labour in Herrnhut was regulated, so that the amount of labour within a certain area, such as bakery or carpentry, was controlled to avoid excessive competition and ensuing poverty. People were thus encouraged to pursue different forms of specialised trade within the community. This approach to labour was regarded as undermining the guilds. By teaching an individual a trade which is convenient or needed within the congregation over a two week period, the specialised labour advocated by the guilds is not recognised. The increasing gender segregation meant that for the Sisters, the cottage industry of weaving was the most obvious and practical choice.<sup>50</sup> During my archival research, I found a document (R.4.C.IV. no 12); is a slightly tattered 3 folio document which lists the spinners in various rooms of the sisterhouse. Not only does it mention 7 sisters, but also 13 child spinners. Being thus 'relieved' of a traditional peasant household structure and its tasks, single sisters were 'free' to work as an end in itself. However also the brothers were occupied in this industry, especially in winter.<sup>51</sup> Thus not only did the household structure differ from the surroundings, it also enabled a more intensified form of labour, and moreover one that was intended to make a profit to sustain the lives of the choir-members. The cottage industry of spinning and

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<sup>48</sup> Marion Gray's study of the household analyses how the new gender roles emerged out of Enlightenment values. It analyses the emergence of the private sphere, but does not engage with alienation. It analyses the influence of mercantilist economics, but does the analysis seems to remain at text level in its dealings with household codes and thus appears to be a fine example of idealist discourse. Marion W. Gray, *Productive Men, Reproductive Women. The Agrarian Household and the Emergence of Separate Spheres During the German Enlightenment* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000).

<sup>49</sup> Also here Herrnhut proves to be a good example. In 1755 a Lutheran pastor in the Oberlausitz, Johann Gottlob Seidel published several of Zinzendorf's speeches in 'Haupt-Schlüssel zum Herrnhutischen Ehe-Sacrament'. The introduction to this text is particularly interesting, because Seidel is raging away at Zinzendorf and accusing him of undermining community, the guilds and the family; of ruining domestic and local producers by dealing with overseas traders, such as the English and the Dutch; and impoverishing the region by establishing ventures under other 'Sovereigns'. Johann Gottlob Seidel "Haupt-Schlüssel Zum Herrnhutischen Ehe-Sacrament," in *Herrnhut Im 18. Und 19. Jahrhundert, Vol. 2* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2000 [1755]).

<sup>50</sup> Otto Uttendörfer, *Alt-Herrnhut. Wirtschaftsgeschichte Und Religionssoziologie Herrnhuts Während Seiner Ersten Zwanzig Jahre (1722-1742)* (Herrnhut: Verlag Missionsbuchhandlung, 1925), pp. 94-95.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* 72.

weaving was seen as meeting the needs of religious/ideological as well as the economic.

Another significant way in which the Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine differed from the feudal household structure was in their itinerancy. The whole nature of feudalism (whether it was old-school or Gutsherrschaft) was to be locked into serfdom and thus inevitably leading a settled life on the lands of the lord.<sup>52</sup> With emphasis on artisan labour, the Brüdergemeine were able to move around, not only within Europe to the various congregations, but also to the colonies, as missionaries. This mobility was ensured by the fact that they were not directly part of the peasant/feudal lord relation and settling on the lands of Zinzendorf did not draw them into such a relation, because Zinzendorf granted settlers in Herrnhut the status as free subjects.

### Conclusion

One of the aims of this article was to place the changes in household within wider socio-economic shifts. This was examined in three different contexts: Western Europe, a colonial context and then a specific Eastern European context, to bring out the specific nature of the turn to capitalism in Eastern Europe.

Another aim was to trace some of the ideological and political changes that were taking place as precursors to modern state formation and the alienated individual. This is, I believe, quite apparent in the administration of individuals in the congregations of the Brüdergemeine. According to historian Isabel Hull, the modern state targeted what was regarded as primary intermediate authorities: the family, the community and the guilds. In this process, the politics of the Brüdergemeine in regard to household, internal social cohesion, and labour played a significant role. I am not saying that these changes were generated from the Brüdergemeine, but rather finding it worthwhile to see the movements of the Moravian Brethren as contributing to the erosion of the semi-feudal structures of the Oberlausitz. Once again, it is significant to remember that the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Eastern Europe took place within the semi-feudal system of the Gutsherrschaft, and thus was a more clandestine and insidious process than the dramatic processes of primitive accumulation and expulsion of peasants that took place in the west of Europe. So while I don't see the Brüdergemeine as generating the shift in the understanding of the household, I do find it necessary to see their household and choirstructure as a response to larger economic shifts and realignments.

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<sup>52</sup> Indeed, Engel notes that Zinzendorf was exiled from Saxony in 1736, 'technically for encouraging peasants to leave the estates of other nobles, but in reality for being a religious troublemaker'. Engel, *Religion and Profit*, p. 29.

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