

Class Transformation in the Household: An Opportunity and a Threat

HARRIET FRAAD

ABSTRACT

The intimate relationships of contemporary life – household, marriage, family – have rarely been examined in terms of the class processes (in surplus labor terms) that they include. This essay explores the class processes that shape household relationships today. It examines the interactions between class and non-class processes – especially the gender processes that likewise constitute those intimate relationships. A major goal is to specify how the interactions of class and non-class processes contribute to the contemporary “crisis” of the family. A second goal is to consider what combination of class and non-class transformations might resolve that crisis.

A specter haunts US households: they are in crisis. This is now widely recognized. Inside of American homes, alienation, tension, divorce, and physical, sexual, and psychological abuse are now acknowledged as core realities. Traditional notions of sexual, parental, and gender identities are contested and in flux. Intense social conflicts over intimate family life swirl across the political landscape. Abortion, “family values,” homosexual marriage, public childcare, healthcare, and sexual mores are hot-button political issues. These issues have crucial class ramifications.

While many recognize that households and the US family are fully “in crisis” no one has understood that there is a class crisis in the household. My goals here are to identify the class relationships in the household and show how they shape that crisis. This is important because the class dimensions of the situation have social consequences which are

not understood if the class dimensions are missed. I will argue, that a household class struggle is now well under way: a struggle over which class structures will characterize US households from now on. My conclusions will stress the impact of this class struggle on US society generally.

Households are Sites of Class Processes

In order to understand the class aspects of this crisis, one must see the ways that class processes operate within households. Marxian class theory was formerly unable to enter the home. Postmodern Marxism with its specific definition of class is flexible enough to cross the threshold, enter the home, and apply its tools to issues as diverse as housework and emotion.¹ Class as it is used in this collection applies to the production, appropriation and distribution of surplus. It applies to the production of goods and services whether they are produced in industry or at home. Our definition of class may apply to all surplus goods and services whether they are goods produced in factories, such as cars or foods prepared at home. It also applies to services such as cleaning clothes whether the services are performed by a professional laundry business or by a person washing clothes at home.

Postmodern Marxism can apply its class definition to the production of goods and services whenever and wherever they are produced appropriated and distributed. Class processes can be performed by people in all sorts of relationships whether they are employees of a capitalist business, commune members working as a collective or partners in an intimate relationship.

Labor in the household has usually been women's labor. It has therefore not been defined as labor. The duties performed are poorly elaborated and generally devalued whether they involve the production of physical goods or physical and or emotional services. Formerly, US women's household labor legally belonged to their husbands (Drake Mcfeely 2000: 24). That labor has been both legally required and assumed by husbands. It has also been disguised through an ideology of women's household labor as "nest making," a genetic mission from God or a spontaneous expression of love. However, in this chapter we will relate to household labor as a class process; as work that creates a surplus. Some of household labor is the physical production of tangible goods such as cooked meals. Other household labor is the production of services such as transforming dirt and disorder into order and cleanliness.

¹ The theory that informs this definition of class and its categories was developed by Stephen Resnick and Richard Wolff in a large volume of books and articles. See particularly *Knowledge and Class* (1987). Their class theory was extended into the household by Fraad, Resnick and Wolff (1994). It was extended into emotional life by Fraad (2000).

The few Marxists who have recently extended their class analytics into the terrain of family and household focused on physical household labor and produced important new insights.² However, their analysis has thus far been limited to considering only the usual kinds of “labor” – manual and mental work to produce goods and services. There is an altogether different kind of emotional labor that needs to be considered as well. It is especially important within families (although not at all constrained to that social site). Moreover, it also lends itself to a Marxian class analysis that is, I believe, long overdue. Such an analysis enables still more insights into the crisis of families in the US today (and elsewhere too). Now, I would like to briefly sketch a class analysis of this different kind of labor and apply it to the US family today to show how it too contributes to the crisis in the household.

Emotional Labor

Emotional labor may be initially defined as the expenditure of brains and muscle to sustain or elevate emotional well-being: those senses of security, hopefulness, belonging, self esteem and feelings of being valued or loved as a person. These certainly qualify in Marx’s terms as “use-values.” Trying to provide such well-being to oneself and others-via empathy, encouragement, support, respect, and admiration – involve the exertions of mind and body that may be called emotional labor. Families are sites in society where there is often strong emphasis on the performances of such emotional labor by family members both for themselves and for one another. In other words families are sites of emotional labor and hence opportunities for a Marxist analysis to ask whether some family members produce surplus emotional labor and, if so, who appropriates that surplus and how may that surplus be distributed by such an appropriator or appropriators?

Emotional labor is a kind of labor unexplored by Marxists, or practically anyone else.³ Formerly, Marxists did not have a means to explore the class aspects of emotional relationships. Post Modern Marxism gives us the opportunity to include emotional labor in our Marxian analysis and extend Marxist analyses inside of the personal spaces where emotional labor is produced appropriated and distributed.

Emotional labor describes a wide array of psychological services. These services fulfill the Marxian definition of human labor as the expenditure

² For a review of Marxist literature on domestic labor see Fraad, Resnick and Wolff (1994).

³ The concept of emotional labor was introduced by Hochschild (1983) in her discussion of the work of flight attendants. It is developed in a Marxian context by Fraad (2000) and Van der Veen (2000).

of brain and muscle power over time. Trying to empathize with, and understand another's psychological needs and satisfy those needs requires full awareness involving the bodily strain of addressing one's senses, intellect, and musculature toward another. Everyone has at some time experienced the physical exhaustion following a session in which a person or a group needed one's mobilized psychic attention, and affection, i.e. one's emotional labor. Emotional services are, in short, a production that involves emotional labor. Emotional labor power is expended as part of such human labors as nursing, teaching young children, and caring for other people whether they are professional clients, patients or family members. Perhaps emotional labor has been overlooked because it has been part of women's traditional labor in caring for others.⁴

Emotional labor is a component of most service work. What people acquire when they purchase a service, whether it is the enjoyment of a restaurant meal or nursing care, includes a component of emotional value. Service personnel are often depleted physically, mentally and emotionally. They are "burned out" after a day spent in trying to please the customer. Those they serve consume not only a service but also their emotional labor. Service personnel may deny their customers the satisfaction of consuming their emotional labor along with the services they perform. They may wait on customers with emotional indifference and boredom bordering on hostility. In such circumstances the customer experiences the denial of that emotional labor power that s/he counted on consuming.⁵

Emotional labor is an explicit, recognized component of some female fields like nursing and social work. In service industries such as retail sales or food service work, the emotional service component, although crucial, is less acknowledged. People will pay for food they could better and less

⁴ Although the emotional and physical work of mothering is not described as labor it is explored in a series of three unique explorations of mother infant interaction which appeared in 1977 (Stern, Dunn and Schaffer). The labors involved in caring for people have recently been explored by feminists (Heymann 2000; Folbre 2001) in the context of women's role as family care givers. In the year 2000 the work of caring for children with disabilities was explored in three books (Kittay, Berube and Williams). None of these works explored caring labor in a Marxian context.

⁵ The practice of tipping, called a "service charge" is a kind of recognition of the special solicitousness we would call emotional labor. Supervisors oversee all kinds of workers in order to command their emotional labor, i.e. the attention and care which is a component of all service work well done. The amount of emotional labor one gets is usually related to the amount of money one spends. The expensive boutique often delivers service and solicitousness, i.e. emotional labor, along with its apparel whereas the discount chain does not. Restaurants that cater to the wealthy usually deliver more service and emotional labor than does McDonalds. However, even at McDonalds, servers must be polite and appear friendly to retain their jobs.

expensively prepare at home. Part of what they purchase with their meal is the emotional service of being catered to and waited on.

Some of the biggest US industries directly utilize emotional services. Advertising is a huge industry which directly exploits people's needs for emotional services through techniques of psychological manipulation. The therapy industry is burgeoning. It is an industry which is built upon providing emotional services, i.e. emotional labor in exchange for money. The publishing industry's huge output of explicit and subtle literature on self-care and the care of others, produces books, tapes, films and videos to help perform every emotional service from reducing stress to curbing destructive tendencies and replacing them with emotional nurturance. The entertainment industries provide people with emotional services from diversion to catharsis. Religions acquire millions of adherents as well as millions of dollars for organizing means of giving and receiving emotional care in ways that range from support groups to absolution. Emotional services are a crucial component of human survival from infancy on.⁶ In all of its manifestations from waitressing to advertising to psychotherapy, emotional services seek to positively affect the emotions of their clients, their customers, their families and so forth. Emotional services can be produced within different class processes both outside and within the household. The class processes describing the performance of emotional labor inside the household may be the same or different from the class processes that describe the production of other household goods or services.

The Traditional US Class Structure is Feudal

The kind of class processes employed in the traditional US household of the wage-earning male and dependent wife and children was primarily a feudal class process. Here, the term "feudal" does not refer to anything historically medieval. The term "feudal" refers to a type of class structure that may occur among members of a family in the twenty-first century. A family's "class structure" refers to how the production, appropriation and distribution of surplus is organized in the family. Household production of goods and services was and still is a regular feature in the internal life of most US families. The particularly Marxist questions asked about household production of all kinds are: First is a surplus produced here

⁶ From the early studies of Spitz in the 1940s, research has documented that infants fail to develop basic developmental skills without a minimum of emotional care (Spitz 1945: 53-74; 1946a: 113-117; 1946b: 313-342). There is a vast literature on a set of severe symptoms labeled "Failure to Thrive." These include severe developmental lags and social deficits. They are a result of an inadequate, inconsistent quality and quantity of emotional labor provided for infants and young children.

and secondly, who produces a surplus, who appropriates that surplus and distributes it, and finally to whom are those distributions directed and for what purposes? In the case of the traditional US family, its typical organization of surplus – its “class structure” in Marx’s specific definition of the class term – has been feudal (Fraad, Resnick and Wolff 1994). In class structure and class structure alone, it resembles the dominant agricultural class structure of medieval Europe.

The medieval serf produced mostly agricultural goods. These were use-values, meaning that they were usually produced for direct use rather than for sale. One portion of the goods that the serf produced s/he⁷ retained for his/her own survival (or the Lord appropriated it all and returned a portion to the serf). This portion served, more or less, to reproduce the serf (and perhaps his family) according to the socially designated living standards of that time and place. Marx referred to this portion as the fruits of “necessary labor” – necessary for the reproduction of the serf. The serf’s output beyond this portion was the “surplus” (the fruit of surplus labor for Marx). It was appropriated by the lord of the feudal manor on whose lands the serfs worked.

Having appropriated the serf’s surplus, the lord then distributed that surplus (to himself and to others) so as to secure the reproduction of the feudal class structure. Portions of the surplus flowed to the Catholic Church to maintain its institutions that preached and then enforced the ideology that convinced the serfs that their toil was the inevitable and beneficent will of God. Other portions of the surplus went to sustain the lord’s armed retainers so that they might secure feudalism in the event that religious ideology did not suffice.

The class structure of the traditional US family continues to display quite a similar class structure, although, of course, its non class dimensions are quite different from those of European, medieval, agrarian society. The traditional housewife performs labor (cooking cleaning, shopping, providing healthcare, nurturing and so on). Like the feudal serf, her labor produces use values (goods and services for use rather than for sale). One portion of that labor product, her prepared food, cleanliness, kindness, etc. she retains in order to survive according to a socially designated standard. That is her necessary labor. The rest, the surplus, her husband appropriates as his due. Just as the medieval feudal lord provided the serf with land and appropriate tools, the traditional husband often provides his wife with a

⁷ In medieval times men of all social stations were confirmed as the masters of their wives. It was they who dealt with their masters, the lords of the manor, unless for some reason they could not be present, i.e. they were dead or sent elsewhere by the lord. Only then did women deal directly with lords of the manor (Yalom 2001: 44-47).

home and such tools as a stove, vacuum cleaner, and perhaps even a dishwasher or a washer dryer.⁸ With these tools and her physical, mental and emotional labor, the wife provides products and services which help to sustain herself, her husband, his heirs, etc. She toils to produce some of these products and services to sustain herself – her necessary labor – and she labors beyond that with surplus labor to produce meals, clean clothes, clean rooms, repairing, and nurturing to sustain others. A modern feudal wife makes both sides of the marital bed. The side she makes for herself is part of her necessary labor, what she needs for herself. The part she makes for her husband is her surplus which her husband appropriates. In similar fashion, she shops prepares food and cleans messes. One portion of the meals she prepares is for herself; it is her necessary labor. The rest, her surplus cooking and cleaning labor is appropriated and consumed by her husband.⁹ Both the volume and the kind of cooking and cleaning labor performed by the feudal wife differs from the kind and the amount of labor the wife would perform if she were merely cooking and cleaning for herself.

A wife who performs household physical labor within a feudal relationship of creating household surplus may or may not perform her emotional labor within a feudal class process. Emotional class processes are different from as well as influenced by class processes in which other household labors are performed. Within a feudal class relationship of producing emotional labor, a wife or partner may soothe, comfort, and listen to her mate without receiving and possibly without even expecting similar services from him. It may seem “natural” for her to ask about the struggles in her husband’s day. She may work to listen with sympathy and try to bolster his courage and comfort his disappointments. She may conceptualize the emotional labor that she provides for him as an outgrowth of her “natural” gender role, a genetically determined behavior or an outgrowth of female romantic love. In this way she may rationalize her feudal emotional labor

⁸ Here men’s capitalist wage helps to secure conditions of existence for the feudal household. This happens when monetary payments are required to sustain the feudal household in which the wife labors. The feudal means of production such as fuel, food, taxes to the state on the feudal home, or interest on the mortgage for that home require wage income as payment. These payments help to secure the production of feudal surplus which the husband/lord appropriates. However they may also undermine the reproduction of the male’s labor power if needed wage goods may not be purchased in the requisite amounts. If capitalist wages and needed wage contributions to sustain the feudal household are not sufficiently provided, one of the tensions in the feudal household may become severe and even help to produce a crisis as is argued later on in this paper.

⁹ Children provide further complexity which is not discussed here for reasons of limited space. See Fraad (2000) for an initial discussion of the way that children fit into this kind of class analysis of the family.

for her mate in the same ways that she rationalizes her household labor as natural, God given or romance driven. Within her feudal emotional relationship, the wife provides her own necessary emotional labor. She may soothe, comfort, and nurture herself or look to her friends for these emotional services. In her feudal emotional labor this feudal wife may manage to provide enough emotional labor to meet her own basic psychological needs, i.e. her emotional necessary labor and a surplus which her husband appropriates. Of course neither feudal emotional labor nor feudal physical labor needs to be performed by a woman or a wife. Feudal roles may be filled by men or women.

The feudal husband may distribute his wife's surplus to other individuals some of whom help to create the conditions of existence for reproducing the feudal household. He may, like the feudal lords of the medieval period, donate some of his wife's surplus to a church whose ideology creates a justification for the wife's feudal service to him and therefore reproduces the a condition if existence for the reproduction of household feudalism.¹⁰ Within the traditional Catholic Church and many fundamentalist churches and temples it is the wife's job to provide comfort in hearth and home. That comfort includes physical, emotional, and sexual labor. A feudal husband may encourage his wife to clean the church alter and donate her emotional labor for church visits to the sick. He may encourage and endorse his wife's activities and release her obligation to spend time in service for him by encouraging her to participate in any aspect of the Religious Right's feudal household boosting political agenda whether it is anti-abortion work or advocacy of public funds for parochial schools. He may invite his or her aging parents to live in their home where she provides her surplus labor to meet their physical needs as well as their needs for the emotional labors of affection and attention. Both kinds of labor may prove exhausting. The parents may well provide the husband with the service of endorsing feudal ideology.¹¹ If they do not support his feudal position, their tenure in the home may be short. The husband may also use a portion of

¹⁰ In a notorious case of this kind, Andrea Yates, who is known for drowning her 5 children, had a husband who contributed his and Andrea's time to a fundamentalist church which preached, among other things, that women were to serve men, have many children, and restrict themselves to work in the home (Thomas 2001).

¹¹ In the best selling novel, *Vinegar Hill*, Manette Ansay, describes a contemporary feudal marriage in which the husband moves his family in with his aging parents for whom the wife performs both household and emotional labor within the feudal class process. The wife in question works within feudal class processes for producing household services and emotional labor at home and a different class process outside of the home where she is a school teacher. The novel describes the feudal wife's rebellion against the conditions of her feudal labor.

his own wage to help support feudal conditions. He may donate money or his own time to political or religious organizations that support legal and cultural conditions for household feudalism. He may support a Republican platform of ending support to independent women and children in the form of welfare or battered women's shelters. He may support a church that reaffirms as God's will women's role providing physical, mental and emotional services to men, and so on.

Just as the feudal medieval lord was to protect the serf from other marauding lords, the feudal husband is supposed to protect his wife from other men. Just as the serf had little protection from his ostensible protector, the lord himself, neither has the feudal wife.¹² Both the serf and his lord, and the husband and his wife in parallel fashion, pledge fealty (fidelity) and love to one another for life.

Neither the medieval serf nor the lord recognized the serf's labor as exploitation. They conceptualized the serf's toil for his lord within Christian ideology where it was consecrated as the fulfillment of the different destinies that God designed for each of them. Similarly, the feudal husband and wife do not see the wife's unpaid physical or emotional labor for her husband as exploitation. The ideologies of love, biological determinism and religious orthodoxy transform the wife's labor into a genetic nest-making mission, a "natural" outgrowth of romantic love, or a destiny from God determined by her birth as a female. Those same ideologies transform the husband's labor outside of the home into a provider instinct, an outgrowth of love, or a God driven sex role. Each gender role is considered part of the inevitable design of God's master plan or an inevitable genetic code of biological destiny or a fulfillment in natural love. The US Religious Right still upholds the household exploitation of women's physical and emotional labor as a mission from God (Ruether 2000: 156-180; Smith 2000: 7-8; Brown and Bohn 1989).

In the nineteenth century, US law permitted the father to exercise authority over a wife and child as he would over his other property or as did a lord over his serfs. What happened in the family was considered a private matter under paternal jurisdiction, not a concern of the state. Feudalism outside of the family was abolished as an institution at the very

¹² In spite of Religious Right opposition this has changed. Feminists have demanded and achieved some legislative protections for battered women as well as providing some battered women's shelters. Domestic violence and wife battering are still rampant (Downs 1997). Studies agree that more women are killed by husbands and boyfriends than by other crimes. In a particularly thorough study of all the murders of New York City women for five years, Wilt found that more women were murdered by domestic partners than were killed in robberies, disputes, sexual attacks, drug violence, random attacks or any other crime where a motive for murder can be found (Belluck 1997).

founding of the US as a nation. However, feudalism within the family flourished. As late as 1928 the fruits of an American married woman's labor both inside and outside of the household belonged to her husband.¹³ It was not until after the US Feminist movement of the late 1960s that a husband could be convicted of rape. Previous to that time, women's sexuality belonged to their husbands. The family is the only place in the US where one's destiny and job as domestic laborer may still be determined by birth as the serf's labor for the lord was determined by birth. (It is important to remember that in feudal households, in factories and everywhere else, class processes exist alongside of non-class processes where they interact continuously.)

The feudal household in the US is, of course, completely different from the feudal farm or household of medieval Europe. The social context in which today's households exist radically differs. The technology is a world apart. Nonetheless, many US households are unfortunately similar to medieval ones in the class dimensions of the domestic and emotional labor that many women perform. Birth determines that one group of human beings, women, perform physical, labor to produce goods and services and emotional and sexual labor to produce emotional and sexual services which are appropriated by another group, men. Emotional labor was appropriated by feudal lords as well. Feudal serfs produced emotional labor for their lords which extended from nursing care to emotional understanding and comfort. In today's feudal households, likewise, feudal wives produce emotional services such as sympathetic listening, comfort and kindness and sexual services of catering to their husbands desires which may be appropriated by men without being reciprocated.

The Feudal Household is now in Crisis

The feudal class structure in the US is now in crisis. Many of its necessary conditions of existence have been attacked, undermined, or even destroyed. For a brief time from World War Two to the end of the 1970s the family wage, which was its economic base, existed for the mass of white Americans. Even then, family wages did not exist for minorities. Minority men rarely received a wage on which they could support dependent wives and children. Now the social and economic foundation on which that former white majority family stood is crumbling for the US population en masse. White male wages have fallen while consumer definitions of what is necessary have risen (Mishel, Bernstein and Schmitt 2000-01: 75). The US has replaced well-paid, male, production jobs with lower paid, non-union

¹³ The one exception was the money that rural women earned from selling butter and eggs (Drake Mcfeely 2000: 24).

service jobs (Mishel, Bernstein and Schmitt 2000-01: 192-194). Men can no longer afford to support women working for them full time as feudal household serfs. Most women are now in the labor force. They cannot produce the same amount of domestic surplus once their household labor is a second job.¹⁴ No one else can be induced to perform domestic labor with no salary. At the same time, the playboy mentality with its insistence on sex without marriage and family, Feminism, the media presentation of attractive alternatives to feudal family life, the wide availability of safe birth control and abortion, gay rights and countless other forces undermine the ideological conditions of existence for the feudal household.

In order for a class structure to be endangered, either the ideological and social or the economic conditions for its existence or both must be undermined. In the case of the feudal household, all are undermined. Most white males increasingly face severe difficulties earning sufficient income to support the conditions of existence for a feudal home. They cannot afford their dependent serf-wives' increasingly extensive and expensive means of production, dishwashers, microwaves, washers, dryers, high rental or mortgage payments, taxes on homes in which their wives work, and so on. Neither can they pay sufficient payments to fundamentalist religious organizations and right wing political groups which sustain the ideological conditions for the feudal household. In addition, media surround all with sex and gender liberated ideological messages. There are two major consequences of the crisis in and erosion of feudal class structured, traditional households. One consequence is that conservatives are terrified. They seek to halt the changes in their familiar world by identifying the evil causes thereof outside of the capitalist establishment's erosion of wages, exportation of jobs and exhortations to consume. They assign as culprits: feminism, abortion rights, sex education, available birth control and abortion, homosexuality, weakening religious orthodoxy, etc. They organize Birth Right to combat abortion and the Religious Right to oppose all of the culprits above. They give money and support to Right Wing Republicans, anti gay initiatives, movements to curtail women's and children's rights, wage equity, public childcare and health care and anything else that shifts support away from the sex role of woman as sole provider of domestic labor and child rearing within a private feudal setting. The only condition of existence for the feudal family which the right opposes is a family wage for primary breadearners.

¹⁴ Hochschild (1989) clearly and dramatically describes this situation.

Different Household Class Structures emerge

A second change occurring as a consequence of the breakdown of feudal households is that many households are making a quiet class revolution. They are changing to different class structures. Marx's ancient and communist class structures emerge. In addition, a very different kind of household emerges in which emotional labor is the only produced at home. Here, all other kinds of domestic labor excepting emotional labor are purchased.¹⁵ This household is a phenomenon of the wealthy and is primarily a place of emotional labor and consumption. At the same time, a different and ominous feudal class structure is emerging which I call a fascist feudal household class structure because it is similar to the feudal household class structure enforced by the Third Reich. Each of these will be briefly explained below.

Marx's ancient class structure is one in which a single adult produces appropriates and distributes her/his own domestic and emotional surplus labor in the same way that an individual craftsperson produces, allocates and distributes his/her own domestic surplus. An increasing number of US households consist of a single adult producing appropriating and distributing all aspects of domestic surplus alone. Numerous individuals choose to live without partners. They produce their own domestic labor. They work to meet their own emotional needs alone or with the help of their friends. Many more Americans live alone or alone with children after divorce. These people may live with children who are too small or unwilling to produce any domestic surplus outside of emotional surplus. Older people, particularly women, now usually live alone after the death of a spouse. These people are practicing Marx's ancient class process because they produce appropriate and distribute their own domestic and emotional surplus.

Another form of household to emerge is what we shall call communist or communal households. Communist households are domestic partnerships in which partners and sometimes children produce, appropriate and distribute domestic surplus together. In these households, partners and often children together produce, allocate, and distribute their emotional surplus as well. They discuss and try to meet their emotional needs as much as possible. In these households adult partners usually work both outside of the home and within it. Decisions about allocating the fruits

¹⁵ Ironically many of the services for which these households pay are parts of cost saving, communal household demands that were advocated by socialist and communist feminists from the mid 19th Century until the early twentieth century. These include restaurants (i.e. communal kitchens), laundries, child care centers, and cleaning services (Hayden 1985; Nordoff 1966; Pitzer 1997; Taylor 1983).

of their extra household labor are usually collective. Without being at all class conscious, these households strive to share all aspects of domestic production within a philosophy and practice of what are in fact, communist class relationships. Communal class relationships may exist in households of roommates or couples (gay or straight), parents of older children or countless other possibilities.

Naturally every interaction within a feudal, ancient or communal household is part of a class process. In every case whether at a capitalist factory or a household commune, non-class processes and class processes develop and coexist alongside of each other helping to shape one another. To add to the complexity, class processes for performing emotional labor within a household may differ from the class processes for performing other kinds of household labor.

It is important to remember that with typical human complexity, all household class processes within a household are not completely consistent. In fact, it is safe to say that all households will include some class processes uncharacteristic of the dominant class process. Just as all human activities are hybrids of different elements, all households are to some extent hybrids (Cameron 1996-97). In a feudal household, a man may at some point be attentive to and care for his wife's emotional needs. In a communal household, a husband or wife may proceed without joint consultation. Analytic categories help to clarify a reality. However, human life never proceeds according to strictly delineated categories.

There is an ominous and growing form of feudal household. I refer to it above as the fascist feudal class structure, because it is reminiscent of the feudal household class structure of the Third Reich. Nazis rigidly enforced women's biologically designated position as unpaid laborers in the home at the same time as they required women to work outside the home. They denied women the benefits and protections accorded men in the German marketplace. Their stated logic was that women did not need protections because labor outside of the household was not women's true vocation. In spite of Fascist rhetoric and regulations on the books that protected womanhood, protections were not enforced. German women were compelled to and often worked up to 60 hours a week under unsafe conditions (Koonz 1987: 185-192). Inside the house wives were to refer to their husbands as "der Fuhrer," their ruler/leader, quite parallel to how the entire populace referred to Hitler as their Fuhrer. A husband had all rights to dispose of his wife's earnings. Women suffered extreme wage discrimination. They were not allowed to own property in their own

names. Birth Control and abortion were prohibited¹⁶ (Koonz 1987: 179-192; Troger 1984: 237-269). The Third Reich created a particular variety of the feudal family in which women were super exploited both at home and at work. Their definition as biologically designated, subservient, feudal household laborers justified their capitalist exploitation.

The household agenda of the US Religious Right is similar to that of the Third Reich. The Religious Right insists that women are destined by birth to bear children, do household labor, and defer to men. Although current US economic conditions force women into the labor force, the Right fights comparable worth for women as well as maternity and health benefits. Its non-union, low wage policies force women into the labor force where the Right fights to keep all wages low and deny women equal wages, benefits and maternal protections. At the same time, the Religious Right endorses a feudal hierarchy of emotional labor in which women give care and nurturing which men and children appropriate as their due. Yet, women's emotional needs for nurturing by men are not acknowledged.

It is acknowledged that women have to work in order to survive while women's labor is paid with only \$75 on the dollar for full time work (Mishel, Bernstein and Schmitt, 2000-01: 129). Women earn far less at the lower paid part time jobs which they often take to enable them to spend more time on child care and domestic labor.

There are indications that the fascist feudal family may be strengthening as women pour into the labor force, while they simultaneously do the lion's share of domestic and child care labor. Although 60% of women with children under one and fully 78% of women with children six to thirteen are in the labor force (Fraad 2001), women still perform between 70% and 80% of domestic labor (Maushart 2001: 100-115). Women also perform 80% of child care labor (Maushart 2001: 128). Hopefully, this phenomenon of women's double labor may be a transitional one. The evidence leading to such a conclusion is that many couples who espouse an ideology of gender equality and shared domestic labor are still allocating the overwhelming share of domestic labor to women (Steil 1997; Maushart 2001: 88-155) as if they want to do otherwise but have not found a way. If they wish to change exploitative relationships in the household, they will have to struggle politically to create the social conditions of existence for equality that would help them convert their stated ideology into practice. They will need to organize against a powerful religious right movement fighting for conditions of female exploitation in the home and at work.

¹⁶ Women's lives were so difficult that in spite of the prohibitions on birth control and abortion, the birth rate did not increase because exhausted women suffered accidents and miscarried (Koonz 1989: 188).

Struggles between Feudal and Other Class structured Households

Intense social and political struggles occur between supporters of the feudal and fascist feudal households versus supporters of the ancient and communal class structured households. Battles rage over issues from abortion, to comparable worth, to homosexuality. Each of these struggles has a strong class component. Each is an, as yet, unacknowledged site of class war. Each household class structure battles for the conditions of its own existence.

A basic condition of existence for feudal and fascist feudal households is the ideology of biology as destiny. Immutable gender roles are declared ordained by God or nature. Part of the ideology of God or biologically driven sex gender roles is that all people are designated by God as heterosexual. Females are destined for childbearing and dependence on males. Female destiny is to provide emotional support as well as domestic products and services and sexual and child rearing services for men. Males are destined to provide financial support and direction for women and children. When they cannot provide sufficient support, they are still to retain their authority and provide direction to the “weaker” sex.

For this ideology to flourish one must abolish homosexuality where genitals do not match biologically immutable fates. Thus the Religious Right enters the battle against homosexual rights to create a condition of its existence, i.e. biologically inevitable sexual divisions of household and emotional labor.

Ancient and communal households have conditions for their existence that are diametrically opposed to the conditions of existence for feudal and fascist feudal households. Ancient households of individuals or single parents need gender roles to be flexible so that they may perform all the household roles and escape the current stigma of single parenting. Communal households need sex roles to be adaptable so that men and women can labor together or assign domestic work according to principles of rotation, preference and convenience. Thus, ancient and communal ideology can readily accept homosexuality as an acceptable choice independent of biology.

Abortion, birth control and sex education are vehicles for freeing women from lives controlled by child birth, child rearing and home bound labor. They are based upon the premise that women have the wisdom and the authority to choose their destiny vis-à-vis childbearing. They are therefore conditions of existence for communal and ancient class households. These households need men and women to share housework and emotional labor in a spirit of flexibility very difficult to maintain if one partner is bound to the home caring for unwanted children while the

other partner is outside of the home living a very different life, struggling to support a large, dependent family. Ancient and communal domestic class processes and emotional class processes permit women to be free to raise children alone as they see fit.

Removing the rights to abortion, birth control and sex education support feudal and fascist feudal homes. The Nazi's forbid abortion and denied access to birth control. Within feudal and fascist feudal ideology, women are not allowed to reject childbearing. It is part and parcel of their biological or God given fate.

In the same spirit, Right Republicans and Religions oppose public childcare. Within fascist feudal ideology women must follow their divine or genetic mandate to care for their children themselves, regardless of their aptitude for child care.

Ancient or communal households need quality public childcare. They need women to be free to share the proceeds of their work outside the home as well as within it. They need conditions that permit men and women to choose combinations of domestic labor and work outside of the home on the basis of personal preferences, shared lives and emotional communality. The class struggle over conditions of existence for ancient and communal versus feudal and fascist feudal household class structures is also apparent in the Religious Right's campaigns for public funds for parochial schools and school prayer. Parochial education and praying are important ideological weapons for indoctrinating the next generation into a feudal ideology of God driven biological destiny.

Proponents of ancient and communal family class structures advocate quality, religion-free, public education to liberate future generations from the ideological message of male lordship and female serfdom. These issues are passionately contested without awareness of the elements of class struggle that they represent.

The Impact of Domestic Class Analysis on Left Agenda

If the Left were to organize around domestic class issues, we might well have a huge, impassioned constituency. Ending exploitative class structures within the home, particularly if parents can be conscious of fighting household and emotional exploitation, may influence adults as well as the next generation to recognize, oppose, and resist exploitative class structures everywhere; both within the home and outside it in capitalist enterprises. This is a matter of importance for the survival or the replacement of global capitalism. Class organizing in the domestic arena is obviously of significance for the left, particularly the class conscious left. It suggests making household class structures explicit objects of organizing against exploitation. It raises issues such as class oriented household unions helping

people to explain, in class terms, the class conflicts that help to destroy their marriages and render family life unbearably difficult. In effect, the left needs to organize an alliance between anti-exploitative forces outside the household and those inside . . . something never before understood in this way nor pursued on these grounds.

Knowledge of and change in society will be newly and differently understood if class structures and struggles can be recognized within the personal realm. The concept of domestic class structures permits the left to bridge the gap between the personal, emotional, political, and industrial realms. Domestic class organizing may well capture the imaginations of women and men compelled by the personal. The US is a place where millions are organized around their personal family pain as alcoholics, abused children, anorexics, bulimics, compulsive gamblers, sufferers of abusive and inadequate relationships and so on. These people constitute an audience towards whom the left is irrelevant. By linking class struggles within and outside of the home, we can forge new and crucial alliances in knowledge and in struggle for an America without exploitation. We can mobilize Americans, quite literally, where they live.

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