



Universität
Basel

Research Project

Doing House and Family. Material Culture, Social Space, and Knowledge in Transition (1700-1850)

Third-party funded project

Project title Doing House and Family. Material Culture, Social Space, and Knowledge in Transition (1700-1850)

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Organisation / Research unit

Departement Geschichte / Geschichte der frühen Neuzeit (Opitz-Belakhal)

Department

Project Website https://www.hist.unibe.ch/forschung/forschungsprojekte/doing_house_and_family/index_ger.html

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Status Completed

In the international scientific community, the history of household and family has become a widely acknowledged field of research. However, under the influence of the ongoing 'cultural turn' and the new interest in 'space' in the social sciences, the socio-cultural micro-space of the house and domestic relations in a wider sense need to be revisited with fresh perspectives. Hence, the objective of the proposed sinergia-project is to rethink and reshape the categories of 'house' and 'family' which are commonly used in a successive order for traditional and modern societies in Europe. Accordingly, well-known concepts and topoi – if not myths – such as the clear-cut dichotomy of public vs. private, the emergence of separate spheres of men and women and the transformation from an early modern open, socially heterogeneous 'household-family' to a modern closed, homogeneous 'nuclear family' will be revised in the light of new evidence and with new historical approaches, namely: material culture, social space, knowledge, as well as communication and emotion. The main focus of the entire project lies on continuities and changes in gendered domestic practices in the period of transition ca. 1700–1850 ('Sattelzeit', R. Koselleck) with the emphasis on Switzerland. To come up with an appropriate understanding of the socio-cultural micro-space of house and family, it is not enough to concentrate on the domestic sphere alone. It is essential to consider the interactions between the members of the households and families and their changing social and cultural environments, as has been recently underlined in the concept of 'the open house' (J. Eibach). The related issues will be analysed in three closely connected subprojects: A: Material culture and consumption; B: Social space and conflict; C: Knowledge production and communication. Each subproject will encompass three individual projects.

To create a synergetic surplus of applied methods, the proposed project will foster a set of classical and new methods, especially quantitative analysis of medium-term developments and qualitative thick description, thus combining the investigation of serial records and ego-documents. With regard to the social environments of house and family, network and correspondence analysis will also be helpful, as will discourse analysis in some individual projects. Overarching questions on macro developments will have to be tackled with micro perspectives. Due to the location of Switzerland in central Europe, and because it is a country with several languages and strong regional traditions, Swiss history is very appropriate for the application of comparative perspectives. On the basis of extraordinary source material, so far mostly never used for research, the project team wishes to make a comprehensive contribution to

the history of house, family and privacy in Switzerland during a decisive phase of transformation, thereby transcending rural/urban and regional/cantonal borderlines.

The cooperative sinergia project between the universities of Basel, Bern, Lausanne and Luzern will enable junior researchers (eight doctoral students and one postdoc) to write a dissertation or habilitation.

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Add publication

Add documents

Specify cooperation partners

ID	Kreditinhaber	Kooperationspartner	Institution	Laufzeit - von	Laufzeit - bis
3341216	Opitz Belakhal, Claudia	Eibach, Joachim	Universität Bern	01.01.2014	31.07.2018
3341218	Opitz Belakhal, Claudia	Guzzi-Heeb, Sandro	Universität Lausanne	01.01.2014	31.07.2018
3341219	Opitz Belakhal, Claudia	Mathieu, Jon	Universität Luzern	01.01.2014	31.07.2018