



**CA18119 Who cares in Europe**  
**Welfare and the domestic space**  
**Housing and health in the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean**

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, providing housing and inspecting dwellings for health reasons has become a domain of action for both public and private actors of welfare. Despite extensive literature on the history of social housing in Western European and Northern American cities, scholars have rarely observed the impact of welfare on the domestic sphere. Moreover, in the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean, a geographical area marked by clashing imperial formations, with an important ethno-religious diversity, competing nationalisms and political regimes, massive human displacements and rural-to-urban migrations, housing provision appears as a fundamental yet overlooked part of social protection. This workshop will explore why and how the State and associations, as well as international actors, have intervened on housing from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries in this region. We will try to identify the sources that could help address these questions, frame the geographical scope of the issue and highlight the historical moments of reconfiguration, from Ottoman rule to the post-war breakup of Empires and the contemporary era.

Interventions in the domain of housing, including through welfare policies, are shaped by social norms of class and gender as well as by ethno-confessional demarcations. These have led either to the prescription of specific practices within specific households or to the categorization of some residential areas as threatening for the rest of the city. If the moralisation of impoverished areas is a well-known aspect of charitable or welfare initiatives, the interactions between the providers and recipients when it comes to housing have been studied in lesser depth. This workshop will thus explore the collaboration, compliance, resistance, claiming of rights of aid recipients, which could help to bring nuance to a too often top-down narrative on social housing. By varying the scales and tools of analysis in order to integrate space – be it urban or domestic – as a heuristic analytical category, we also hope to better grasp the process and effects of the mixed economy of welfare, within each historical context. Our

first workshop will revolve around three themes which are of key importance to the study of housing, welfare, and health in the region:

### ***Imagining and building social housing***

First, actors involved in welfare applied their visions for housing by developing projects for a specifically addressed population from various social backgrounds. In the Ottoman Empire, charity providers had administered spaces in which ‘transient’ or ‘vagrant’ populations could temporarily stay since the early modern era. Turning to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, did these practices aiming at controlling mobility give way to new projects of social housing? If so, how were they different, and what role could new conceptions of health and hygiene have played in such a process? Additionally, how did housing projects and models of housing circulate transnationally, and to what extent might we challenge a diffusionist conception of transnational circulations by examining local projects that became models for foreign actors? Finally, when did the State start becoming the driving actor of housing projects, and within the state apparatus, how did specific institutions gain prominence thanks to the housing question? We particularly invite contributions from participants who study housing projects at the ground-level, whether they materialized or not.

### ***Scales of danger: housing and the construction of risk***

Second, welfare policies in cities of the region led to specific forms of housing and/or entire neighbourhoods being designated as particularly risk-inducing, both on sanitary and moral grounds and in terms of public order. This labelling was not only operated by public institutions but co-produced with other actors of the mixed economy of welfare, especially the ones engaged in health. How did these various actors interact, ignore, or oppose each other in the field of welfare? What importance did they give to the prevention of diseases compared to morality and public order? In a particularly plural environment, and in the context of the construction of post-imperial or post-colonial nation-states, to what extent did these issues contribute to the stigmatisation or incorporation of certain populations? What were the possibilities for resisting, contesting, or negotiating these labels by the populations inhabiting these areas?

### ***Prescribing and negotiating the domestic space***

Finally, these welfare practices were also characterized by the entrance of different actors, such as visiting nurses or social workers, in the domestic space. What forms of personal

relations between welfare providers and recipients allowed the State or other organizations to penetrate or not into the intimacy of the home? As the Ottoman Empire was a favoured destination for humanitarian aid, and the post-Ottoman space a site of action for various transnational organizations and UN agencies, to what extent were international actors able to intervene on the domestic sphere as well? What prescriptions on habitat and hygiene came with these interventions, and to what extent did they have an impact on domestic practices? Finally, how did these actions shape the definition and boundaries of the domestic sphere of societies of the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean?

Within the COST action program ‘Who Cares in Europe?’, this workshop invites to take a careful look at the local, and even domestic, environment where welfare and health are entangled. To help framing the geographical scope of the issue, this first workshop also welcomes presentations on other areas facing similar questions.

The workshop will take place at the Institut français d’études anatoliennes (IFEA), Istanbul on October 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> 2022.

To participate in this initial workshop, please send an abstract of maximum 300 words, including a short biographical note, **before September 9th** [lea.delmaire@sciencespo.fr](mailto:lea.delmaire@sciencespo.fr).

### **Organizers:**

Lea Delmaire (Centre d’histoire de Sciences Po, IFEA)

Gabriel Doyle (Sciences Po, CETOBaC/EHESS)

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