

Research workshop

Reconstructing and Reimagining the Family:

Health sciences and welfare on families in Southeastern Europe (1945-1989)

Athens, École Française d'Athènes

September 8, 2023

At the end of the Second World War families all over Europe faced harsh realities: missing, killed, and injured members, loss of home and recourses, dislocation and separation. At the same time, “the family” was recognized as “the natural and fundamental group unit of society [...] entitled to protection by society and the State”.¹ It was placed at the foreground of a series of discourses and practices aiming at reconstructing Europe, and at guarantying its economic, political and social stability and progress. In a nutshell, the rebuilding and development of post-war societies went through the rebuilding of families, which was often envisioned as reform or even as “modernization” of the family. Subsequently, over the course of the second half of the twentieth century, political, economic and cultural changes had varied and profound effects on families and the notion of “the family”. These developments can be fruitfully explored from the perspective of health sciences and welfare interventions.

The workshop aspires to help researchers join forces to develop collaboratively their ideas and methods on the history of the family after 1945, in order to enrich and nuance the understanding of post-war visions of and approaches to the family. To do so, it proposes an original geographical and analytical lens. On the one hand, it aims at charting new research on the countries of the post-war Southeastern Europe (Greece, Albania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Romania and Turkey), which are understudied in comparison to Western European countries, and which are rarely examined together, owing to their different political systems and social policies. On the other hand, through the concept of health, a notion that was broadened in the post-war period to encompass not only the physical and mental, but also the social, the workshop embarks on a combined exploration of

¹ *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 16, 1946, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.

medical and social sciences, along with welfare professions, in shaping discourses and undertaking action on families.²

More specifically, we are interested in new research ideas, which will be discussed during the workshop as the core of research project focusing on the family in post-war Southeastern Europe. Thus, participants will not present completed work, but will discuss concepts, sources, problems of research along the following themes:

- Health scientists as family experts: pediatricians, obstetricians-gynecologists, psychiatrists, child psychiatrists, others?
- Cooperation/ conflicts/ interactions of health scientists with welfare agents and workers (experts and volunteers) – the role of social workers and nurses
- Social sciences and family health schemes: the role of sociology, anthropology, others?
- “Psychosocial welfare” – the role of the “psy” in understanding and working with families
- Critiques and resistances to formal and mainstream attempts of family normalization and reshaping – alternative family models, youth cultures, the movements of the late 1960s
- Family health interventions and political developments: political regimes and changes, comparisons among different political models

By investigating new and old understandings, continuities and ruptures in family interventions through the concept of health, the workshop aims at organizing a collaboration among the participants, in order to shape a research project, which will ultimately provide insights into how “the family” has been defined, represented and reinvented in different social and political contexts in Southeastern Europe during the post-war period.

The workshop is organized within the convention between the École Française d’ Athènes (<https://www.efa.gr/en/>) and the École des hautes études en sciences sociales (<https://www.ehess.fr/fr/europe>) and is supported by the COST Action “Who Cares in Europe” (<https://whocaresineurope.eu/>). It aims at fostering the scientific partnership between France,

² The much-quoted definition of the World Health Organization of health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” comes from the 1946 *Constitution of the World Health Organization*, p. 1, <https://apps.who.int/gb/bd/PDF/bd47/EN/constitution-en.pdf?ua=1>.

Greece, and Europe, and at connecting researchers working on different fields and countries that are not usually in dialogue with each other.

Funding opportunities will be provided for a limited number of participants from the EHESS or members of the COST Action “Who Cares in Europe”. In addition, there will be the option of online participation, as the workshop will be hosted in a hybrid format.

Please address your queries and send your proposal (300-word abstract, along with and a one-page cv) to Despo Kritsotaki (despo.kritsotaki@gmail.com) and Nicolas Henckes (nicolas.henckes@cnrs.fr).

Submission of proposals by 18/6/2023.

Notification of acceptance: 25/6/2023.

Organisers: École Française d’Athènes (EFA) //École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) // Centre de Recherche Médecine, Sciences, Santé, Santé Mentale, Société (CERMES3)// COST Action “Who Cares in Europe”// Modern Greek History Research Centre, Academy of Athens// The Greek Network for the History of Health