

ESSHC 2023

Members of the ERC-funded project Taming the European Leviathan: The Legacy of Post-War Medicine and the Common Good participated in the biennial European Social Science History Conference held in Gothenburg, Sweden, from 12 to 15 April, 2023. Organized every two years by the [International Institute of Social History \(IISH\)](#), the ESSHC and its meetings are venues for in-depth scholarly discussions on a variety of historical topics, bringing together scholars from different countries around the world, using different methods of social science.

The Leviathan project team initiated and organized three panels in three different thematic networks of the conference, reflecting the wide range of topics covered by the Leviathan project. The debates in these panels, as well as in the other panels in which the principal investigators and the researchers of the project participated, expanded the scholarly networks of team members and opened up further perspectives.



Panel: "[Family, Childhood and Care. Changing Concepts of Normality and Deviance](#)"

Network: [Family and Demography](#)

Thursday, 13 April 2023, 11.00–13.00

Panel:
["Family, Childhood and Care. Changing Concepts of Normality and Deviance"](#)

The objective of the panel is to contribute to recent debates in different states on the broad topics Family, Childhood and Care, underlining the need for historical research. The geographical focus is on Europe, the chronological focus is on the second half of the 20th century.

The examples are balanced between the so called "Eastern Bloc" and Western Europe, the specific case studies raise a wide range of issues:

- Social, academic and legal perceptions of kinship, family and sexuality;
- Family planning and handling of pregnancies in an institutional context;
- Institutional care/education of children;
- Expert debates and discourses on biosocial concepts, e.g. of normal and abnormal, norm and deviance;
- Biopolitics, including eugenics concepts and (hidden) eugenic politics;
- Concepts of the cultural value of the individual, of vulnerable groups.



Panel:

**"Family, Childhood
and Care. Changing
Concepts of
Normality and
Deviance"**

The aim of the panel is to challenge the dichotomies East vs. West and the research 'isolationism' through comparison, study of the differences and commonalities, forms of interaction and mutual influences across post-war Europe.

Organizer: Anelia Kassabova

Chair: Volker Hess

Participants and Their Papers:

Laura Hottenrott: *"Every Pregnancy, Even the First, Should not Be Left to Chance": Pregnancy between Individual Decision and State Control Using the Example of the GDR*

Anelia Kassabova: *(In-)Visibility of Institutions for "At-risk" Children in Socialist Bulgaria*

Julia Reus: *Morally Depraved? Insights into Institutionalized Childcare Following Incestuous acts in Westphalia/West Germany (1950s–1960s)*



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Panel:
**"Family, Childhood
and Care. Changing
Concepts of
Normality and
Deviance"**



Photo: Family, Childhood, and Care panel participants



Panel: "[Family, Sex, and Reproduction: Legacy of the Cold War](#)"

Networks: [Sexuality](#), [Women and Gender](#)

Friday, 14 April 2023, 08.30–10.30

Panel: "[Family, Sex, and Reproduction: Legacy of the Cold War](#)"

This multidisciplinary panel examines the European legacies of various aspects of family, sex and reproduction during the cold war era. After the Second World War population policy emerged as an important concern in many countries. Social rights, including health care, were an essential element of the socialist system. Health care services became accessible to all citizens and during state socialism health, social, and welfare rights were prioritized over civil liberties. To illustrate this, while introducing maternity care were undoubtedly great achievements, sexual education was neglected and the privacy of female patients were ignored. And while sexuality was regarded as part of the intimate, private sphere, population politics focused on reproduction, thus making the biological social. Furthermore, the distinction between private and public has been shifted several times and has become an indicator how the state treats its citizens and recognizes their private sphere in reproduction. Our panel reflects on these contradictions in presentations from different disciplinary perspectives.



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Photo: Family, Sex, and Reproduction panel participants

Panel: "Family, Sex, and Reproduction: Legacy of the Cold War"

Organizer: Judit Sándor

Chairs: Agata Ignaciuk and Judit Sándor

Discussant: Agata Ignaciuk

Participants and Their Papers:

Kate Docking: *Sexology and the Management of Bodies in Post-War Europe*

Andrea Espinoza Carvajal: *Family, Sex, and Reproduction. Transnational Conversations between the Andes and the Socialist World*

Mária Éva Földes and Judit Sándor: *Reproduction and Privacy in the Post-War Netherlands and Hungary*

Yanara Schmacks: *West German Feminist Activism against Reproductive Technologies and the German Past*



Panel: [Therapy Crossing Borders](#)

Network: [Health and Environment](#)

Friday, 14 April 2023, 14.00–16.00

Panel: [Therapy
Crossing Borders](#)

The panel sets out to apply a transnational approach to the history of medicine in Europe after WWII. We focus on the consequences of the post-war division of the continent into two 'camps' seeking to answer questions such as: How did the Iron Curtain change the development of certain branches of medicine in the East and the West? Was the Iron Curtain permeable? If yes, in what ways and in which directions? Can we describe transnational networks on individual or institutional levels as a result of cross-border activities? How were therapies transformed in the process? How did bloc and national politics play out? Bringing together case studies from a range of medical fields, the panel is intended to grasp both diversity within a medico-political system and the ties between different ones.



Photo: Therapy Crossing Borders panel participants

Panel: [Therapy Crossing Borders](#)

Organizer: Daniela Koleva

Chairs: Ian Miller

Participants and Their Papers:

Alexa Geisthövel: *Match-Making across Borders. European Organ Exchange in Kidney Transplantation, 1970–1990*

Daniela Koleva: *'We cannot Travel Abroad, but at Least our Body Organs can': Pituitary Gland Export from Communist Bulgaria*

Kristina Popova: *Luminal. The 'Pavlovian' Session in 1950 and the Campaign to Treat Hypertension and Rheumatism with Sleep Therapy*

Dora Vargha: *Making Political and Medical Subjects: Treatment in the Hungarian Hospital in North Korea 1950–1957*

Markus Wahl: *Treating Addiction that Could not Exist: Addiction, East German Doctors, and Western Methods in the German Democratic Republic*