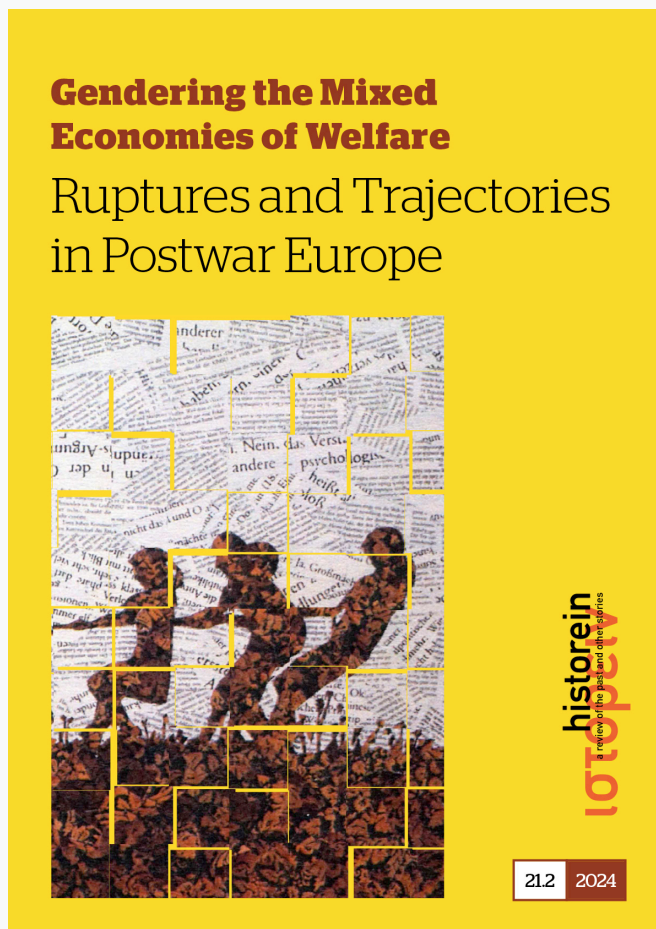


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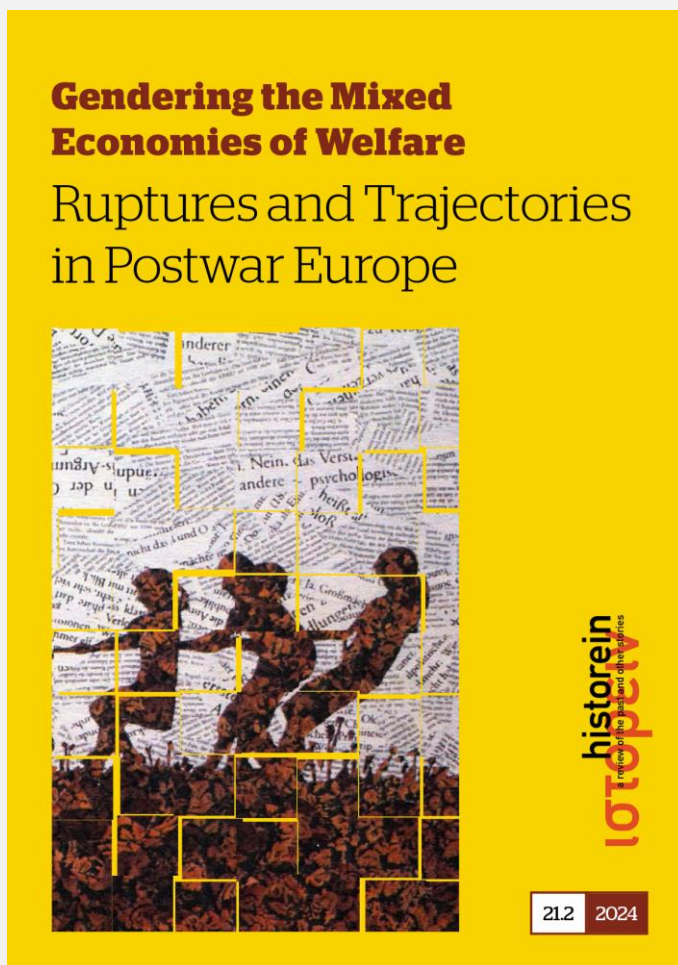
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Gendering the Mixed Economies of Welfare: Ruptures and Trajectories in Postwar Europe. Introduction*

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This special issue brings together an unusual combination of European national case studies in order to explore the reconstruction of the mixed economies of welfare in postwar Europe, and the role of gender in that process.

The concept of the “mixed economy of welfare” was developed in the 1980s to explain the growing withdrawal of the neoliberal state from welfare provision, resulting in the increasing role and responsibility of the private sector in that arena, which characterised that period.¹ Until then, the common understanding was that the establishment of the welfare state in postwar Europe, with Britain as a model, represented the culmination of a long process marked by the growing intervention of the state in the field of social protection, and the consequent restriction of the philanthropic sector and volunteerism.² In the early 1990s, several influential studies by sociologists and political scientists proposed typologies of welfare states – or welfare regimes – according to a variety of criteria, centred on state policies.³ However, by the end of that decade, scholars from several fields of study, in particular history, began questioning the idea of the establishment of the welfare state as a linear project. They demonstrated that social provision was in fact always characterised by a dynamic mix, “in which the state, the voluntary sector, the family and the market have played different parts at different points in time”.⁴ Since then, numerous studies have explored how and why, since the mid-nineteenth century, countries, regions and municipalities have balanced different forms and levels of welfare, that is, state, charitable or private, official or informal.⁵ This research has highlighted the complex, and often ideological and politicised, nature of this welfare mix over time and place, as well as the role of individuals who navigated the different levels and intersections of social provision. Recent research on the mixed economy of welfare has emphasised the importance of approaches “from below” and the need to decentre the usual Western paradigms. This historiography has demonstrated how exploring the European “periphery” can enrich our understanding of the dynamic relationship between the public and the private spheres in the field of social protection, and its “productive entanglements”.⁶ In short, the scholarship has moved from a tendency to focus on state and charitable provision and the supersession of one by the other in different historical periods, to an investigation of the interactions

between the various actors involved in the mixed economies of welfare. At the heart of these inquiries are the practices, negotiations and relationships which underpinned the provision and receipt of welfare in specific historical, cultural and political contexts.

Research has also highlighted early on that gendered assumptions and practices have structured all aspects of the mixed economies of welfare and of social provision at all levels – the family, the state and the voluntary sector. Historians have been exploring the relationship between welfare policies and gender since the early 1990s. Studies from this period criticised the typologies of welfare regimes as gender blind, offering instead a nuanced analysis of the role of gender in the development of European welfare states.⁷ While these studies demonstrated the persistent gender inequalities embedded in welfare provisions, they remained mainly state-centred. However, Gisela Bock and Pat Thane's 1991 edited volume *Maternity & Gender Policies* was groundbreaking in this regard, with its centring of the role of the feminist movement in the shaping of European welfare states.⁸

In the subsequent period, several studies expanded the reach of gender analysis, highlighting that in many European regions concepts of gender underlay the ideological framing of state and voluntary provision, the structure and hierarchies of the relationship between various providers, and the negotiations and performances integral to the receipt of welfare and/or care. It is clear, for example, that men and women neither benefitted from nor participated equally in the various forms of redistribution carried out by philanthropic organisations or social security systems. The category of gender is equally important in respect to the management of the public and private sector, for example, in terms of membership, leadership, paid work or volunteering.⁹ Research has also shown that the establishment of postwar welfare states in Western Europe reinforced existing sexual divisions of labour in the welfare sector, albeit in different forms and degrees in the various European countries.¹⁰

The following special issue examines a rich and relatively unusual range of European national cases studies including Germany, Greece, Ireland, Spain and Switzerland. Based on original archival research and focused on both large- and small-scale interventions, these articles historicise the sexual division of welfare and the gendering of welfare policies and interventions, exploring how they have been produced, embedded, challenged, furthered or rejected by social practices and interactions in the mixed economy of welfare during the long postwar period. In order to do so, the contributions focus on moments of “rupture” in postwar Europe, when the mode of care or welfare provision appeared to be fundamentally challenged, shifted or changed. However, they all also consider elements of the mixed economy of welfare that appear stable and continuous. Collectively, the articles raise new questions regarding periodisation in relation to the welfare mix and its gendering process. What is the meaning of “postwar” for countries which did not participate in the Second World War, such as Spain, Switzerland and Ireland?

How do specific welfare issues correspond to different chronologies of change? What is the relationship between the welfare mix, gender and political regimes in different historical contexts?

Together, the six articles allow us to investigate the diverse factors shaping mixed economies of welfare and their gendered formation. They concern parts of Europe often overlooked and, thus, rarely integrated into the analysis of the history, development and meaning of European welfare states. Broadening the scope of case studies and shedding light on large- and small-scale initiatives, this special issue seeks to reveal different chronologies of change in various parts of Europe. In this way it contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between ruptures and continuities in welfare history, and the importance of gender in framing these processes in specific historical and cultural contexts.

The six articles investigate a variety of welfare issues in different moments of the “long postwar” period: the protection of children (Matter, Cenarro, Avdela and Lampropoulou), single mothers (Matter, Earner-Byrne), education of women as mothers (Cenarro), old age care (Kramer), mental care (Kritsotaki) and their particular gender dynamic. The articles focus mainly on care givers/providers of one type or another (Cenarro, Kramer, Earner-Byrne, Avdela and Lampropoulou, Kritsotaki), official providers (Matter, Cenarro), but also on recipients and the relationship between both (Matter, Earner-Byrne). They all highlight different forms of mixed economies of welfare, the centrality of gender and enduring assumptions about womanhood, motherhood and legitimacy.

Sonja Matter examines how poor single mothers in the city of Bern between 1930 and 1950 faced the possibility of having their children placed in out-of-home foster care without their consent, if they were dependent on public social assistance. The Swiss case study represents a paradox in respect to the mixed economy of welfare: single mothers who received public welfare assistance were excluded from aid by private charities or even family members. Therefore, the state officially prohibited the functioning of a mixed economy of welfare in respect to single mothers. Similar to many states, the Swiss authorities made moral distinctions between categories of single mothers: widows, who were considered “worthy” of assistance, and divorced and unmarried mothers, who were both, to varying degrees, held responsible for their situation. In spite of Switzerland’s neutrality during the Second World War, social security provisions were reorganised in the postwar period, and new social security schemes were introduced, among which family allowances were of particular relevance to single mothers. However, the full introduction of family allowances was extremely slow and informed by moral criteria, meaning that in reality many divorced and unmarried mothers were still forced to place their children in out-of-home placement in lieu of financial assistance. Matter argues that even after 1945 Swiss welfare authorities continued to refuse to consider unmarried mothers and their children as “normal” families entitled to equal social protection. While the abolition of the legal status of illegitimacy in 1976 removed the legal basis for discrimination, these families continued to

experience the effects of long-standing structural discrimination and inequality. While Matter explores the effects of social provisions on single mothers, she also highlights the efforts made by these women to keep their children with them by trying to maintain familial webs of support or by extracting what assistance they could out of the restrictive welfare on offer.

Ángela Cenarro investigates the changing status of the Female Section of the Spanish Falange, from the civil war (1936–1939) to the end of the Franco dictatorship in Spain in 1975. During this period, it was transformed from a voluntary wartime organisation to a parastatal organisation dedicated to the protection of children and the education of women as mothers. Not involved in the Second World War, Spain was marked by a violent civil war and the consolidation of Franco's dictatorship for several decades. Thus, the Spanish case enables an exploration of the interactions between state and nonstate actors in the field of social action in a nonliberal political context. Cenarro reveals that the Female Section of the Spanish Falange, a hierarchical and bureaucratic organisation sustained by voluntary work, mediated between the state and society, undertaking projects commissioned by the state. During Franco's regime, the Falangist women were mobilised and mandated to restore a conservative maternalistic ethos. They communicated their agenda through voluntary nurses and "Rural Health Disseminators". The latter were women recruited by the Falange to carry out tasks such as family data collection, vaccinations, communication of social legislation, outside the cities and well into the Spanish provinces. Cenarro demonstrates the complex relations of the Female Section with the Francoist state and its failed attempts to professionalise its militants.

Efi Avdela and Dimitra Lampropoulou's article centres on child protection and the mixed economy of welfare in postwar Greece. They focus on the two royal foundations, created during the violent civil war of the late 1940s, and their interventions on behalf of children and youth. The article covers the period from their creation in 1947 to the death of King Paul in 1965, which resulted in terminating the powerful Queen Frederica's involvement in public life. Avdela and Lampropoulou argue that the royal foundations were part of the Greek welfare state of this period, which was specifically designed as a mixed economy of welfare. Overtly conservative, patriarchal and anticommunist, this welfare mix was based on political, class and gender exclusions and hierarchies, and was reliant on the voluntary or low-paid work of substantial numbers of women. Operating as an intermediate actor between the state and the private sector, the royal foundations, and especially the Queen's Fund, promoted a maternalist ideology and the role of the queen as "mother of the nation".

The Swiss and Spanish case studies indicate the relative meaning of "postwar". In the case of Switzerland, the horrors of the Second World War gave rise to a large-scale reconstruction of social provision, although the country had not participated in the war. The same was true of Spain, where the civil war preceded this reconstruction under a dictatorial

regime. Finally, in the Greek case, where the country was severely affected by the war and occupation and suffered the devastating effects of the subsequent civil war, the afterwar reconstruction was undertaken by a parliamentary authoritarian regime which adapted it to its politics and ideology. Thus, despite significant differences in terms of political regimes, the Greek royal foundations share common features with the Female Section of the Spanish Falange.

Therefore, irrespective of the political regimes, the postwar years were characterised by the reconsolidation of a conception of motherhood based on the purportedly “natural” attributes of femininity, while the welfare of children became a central national concern. In fact, child and youth welfare is critical for understanding the whole restructuring of the postwar mixed economy of welfare. As Tara Zahra has demonstrated, postwar humanitarian workers and child welfare experts spread across European liberated territories aiming to “reestablish the unity of broken families as much as the sovereignty of occupied nations”.¹¹ Humanitarian workers and volunteers, mainly Americans and British, tested new ideas about child development in refugee camps and children’s homes in continental Europe, stressing the importance of psychological rehabilitation to postwar reconstruction.

In addressing the second period of rupture during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, the last three contributions confirm Tony Judt’s contention of a long postwar period.¹² Focusing on long-term care for the elderly in (West) Germany, Nicole Kramer highlights the domestication of care as a crucial dimension of postwar mixed economies of welfare. From late 1970s, home care for older people was significantly privatised largely due to a pool of trained female geriatric nurses, who believed self-employment would offer them greater job opportunities. However, it was the emergence in the 1990s of a new source of female labour in the form of migrant women, mainly from Eastern Europe, that transformed the care landscape by boosting the informal labour market and consolidating the domestication of care work. Kramer’s methodology is informed by histories of domestic servants which situate their work in both financial and emotional strategies of nineteenth-century families, especially bourgeois ones. The author argues that the more recent shift to the informal care market in Germany and other Western European countries cannot be fully explained as merely the replacement of welfare public services by market care products. Instead, we need to look more deeply at the attitudes of people in need of care and their families. Managing an informal carer has become a part of family work for many, which involves overseeing and coordinating care activities, while also satisfying the familial desire for familiarity and privacy. In Kramer’s analysis, the agency of families emerges as an influential component in the formation of the contemporary mixed economy of welfare. With regard to the care of older people, the latter is based on a largely informal sector within which families make use of gender, class and ethnic inequalities in order to plan and carry out the long-term care of their elder members.

Lindsey Earner-Byrne’s contribution draws our attention to the Irish Republic –

another country not involved directly in the Second World War – which, dominated by Catholicism, prohibited birth control and abortion and operated a punitive regime in relation to unmarried mothers. Until the mid-1970s, Irish unmarried mothers had few options other than to enter a religious institution and surrender their children to adoption or emigrate in search of other alternatives in Britain. However, profound demographic changes and the emergence of second-wave feminism in the 1970s resulted in a rupture with the past. In 1972, enabled by the newly established Irish Women’s Liberation Movement, a group of unmarried mothers organised Cherish, the first client-led voluntary organisation which focused on enabling unmarried mothers to keep and raise their children. Cherish aimed to contact as many unmarried mothers as possible, provide them and their children with support and pressure the government to change restrictive legislation. It represented an existential threat to the mixed economy of welfare for unmarried mothers in Ireland, by rejecting the stigma attached to single motherhood and insisting that these units represented valuable families with a right to state support. Although the status of illegitimacy was not abolished in Ireland until 1987, Earner-Byrne foregrounds how instrumental Cherish was in reshaping the rights of one-parent families in Ireland, contributing to one of the most profound changes in Irish family structure since the mid-nineteenth century.

The Irish case study highlights the changing cultural and social conditions in 1970s and 1980s Europe, which often resulted in the transformation of the mixed economy of welfare. In this period, recipients became key players in the framing and delivery of welfare and the idea of mutual assistance reshaped the landscape of social protection. However, although this period represents a second rupture in the long postwar years, it undermined but did not remove entirely the longstanding assumptions of the welfare mix in relation to mothers and children, which remained underpinned by particular social and gendered hierarchies.

Despo Kritsotaki’s contribution on the mixed economy of mental health welfare in 1980s Greece also demonstrates the dynamic interaction of old and new ideas and assumptions regarding social and gender hierarchies. Kritsotaki focuses on the Society for Social Psychiatry and Mental Health which, in the context of the postdictatorship reformative impetus of the late 1970s, initiated interventions in psychiatric care in rural central Greece during the 1980s. The society’s initiatives were in accordance with international trends and enhanced by the reformation of the National Health System by the socialist Pasok government in 1983, which abolished the dictatorship’s psychiatric legislation and instituted mental health centres to bring psychiatry to the community. A nonprofit voluntary association, funded by the state – and later the EU – to implement experimental reformative projects of mental health care in rural areas, the society was a good example of this period’s mental welfare mix. Kritsotaki explores the relations in

practice between expert and nonexpert members of the society, namely psychiatrists and “uneducated” local women who operated as “moms of the home” in decentralised facilities occupied by mental health patients. She demonstrates that, although egalitarian in theory, in practice these therapeutic teams often reproduced gender and class hierarchies, especially when the presence of “moms of the home” seemed to challenge the boundaries between the “scientific expert” and the “naturally emotionally talented”. While exploring different political and cultural contexts, the contributions of Earner-Byrne, Kritsotaki, Cenarro, Avdela and Lampropoulou address the issue of the kind of work that may support the mixed economy of welfare. They highlight the ways in which women connected volunteerism with expertise and more often than not tried to enter the sphere of professionalisation. This is also a long-lasting feature of mixed economies of welfare, that highlights how a gendered approach may destabilise conventional chronologies of political history.

Speaking more generally, the concept of a long postwar period helps us consider the dynamic relationship between ruptures and continuities in the decades after the Second World War. Of course there are some major turning points which indicate two main periods of postwar rupture with the past. The first is the immediate postwar period, when in the aftermath of the war voluntary associations and organisations, under the auspices of the UN and later the Marshall Plan, worked to assist and rehabilitate the shattered populations of Europe. These efforts quickly became part of a wider postwar reconstruction.¹³ Even for countries that were excluded from the Marshall Plan, such as Switzerland and Spain, the term “reconstruction” became part and parcel of their economic and social policies. The second period of rupture comprises the 1970s and 1980s, when the postwar economic and societal consensus appeared to fracture in the face of various pressures and was questioned and finally dissolved. In a longer historical perspective, the changes of sex, gender and family relations, which appeared during these decades across Europe, represented some of the most significant historical changes in the twentieth century, fundamentally redrawing “the terrain” on which politics and, thus, social change would henceforth be negotiated.¹⁴

Collectively, the essays in this special issue provide insights into how the mixed economies of welfare were altered and inscribed in key moments of rupture during the long postwar period. Central to these explorations are the role of gender and the influence of social action and actors in the field of welfare and social protection. It is our hope that this volume will prompt a reinvigoration of the concept of the mixed economy of welfare as a central prism through which to understand the history of welfare development.

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COST Action. Its contents were discussed during three online and in person meetings between 2020 and 2022, in Florence, Lisbon and Bern. We want to thank all participants, but especially Sonja Matter, who had the idea for this project initially and hosted the meeting in Bern, and Laura Lee Downs, for following its development and enriching it with her comments. We also want to thank *Historein* for its support in publishing this issue.

¹ Sheila B. Kamerman, “The New Mixed Economy of Welfare: Public and Private,” *Social Work* 28, no. 1 (1983): 5–10, <https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/28.1.5>; Martin Powell, ed., *Understanding the Mixed Economy of Welfare* (2007; Bristol: Policy Press, 2019).

² For critical approaches of this view, see Geoffrey Finlayson, “A Moving Frontier: Voluntarism and the State in British Social Welfare, 1911–1949,” *Twentieth Century British History* 1, no. 2 (1992): 183–206, <https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/1.2.183>; Jane Lewis, “The Voluntary Sector in the Mixed Economy of Welfare,” in *Before Beveridge: Welfare Before the Welfare State*, ed. David Gladstone (London: Institute of Economic Affairs, 1999), 10.

³ Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Murizio Ferrera, “The ‘Southern’ Model of Welfare in Social Europe,” *Journal of European Social Policy* 6, no. 1 (1996): 17–37, <https://doi.org/10.1177/095892879600600102>.

⁴ Lewis, “The Voluntary Sector,” 10. See also Bernard Harris and Paul Bridgen, “Introduction: The ‘Mixed Economy of Welfare’ and the Historiography of Welfare Provision,” in *Charity and Mutual Aid in Europe and North America since 1800*, ed. Bernard Harris and Paul Bridgen (London: Routledge, 2007), 1–18.

⁵ The bibliography on the issue is considerable and it is impossible to be exhaustive here. Focusing on the work of historians, see for example: Harris and Bridgen, “Introduction”; Alan Kidd, “Civil Society or the State? Recent Approaches to the History of Voluntary Welfare,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 15, no. 3 (2002): 328–42, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6443.00181>; Powell, *Understanding the Mixed Economy of Welfare*; Pat Thane, “The Ben Pimlott Memorial Lecture 2011. The ‘Big Society’ and the ‘Big State’: Creative Tension or Crowding Out?,” *Twentieth Century British History* 23, no. 3 (2012): 408–29, <https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/hws009>. For other cases, see Sonja Matter, Matthias Ruoss and Brigitte Studer, “Introduction. Philanthropy and the Welfare State,” special issue, *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften/Austrian Journal of Historical Studies* 26, no. 3 (2015): 179–83; Axelle Brodriez-Dolino, “La lutte contre la pauvreté-précarité: Vers une histoire occidentale,” in *La protection sociale en Europe au XXe siècle*, ed. Axelle Brodriez-Dolino and Bruno Dumons (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2019), 165–82; Fabio Gioni, Célia Keren and Morgane Labbé, eds., *Public and Private Welfare in Modern Europe: Productive Entanglements* (London: Routledge, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003275459>.

⁶ Gioni, Keren and Labbé, *Public and Private Welfare in Modern Europe*; Morgane Labbé, “De la philanthropie à la protection sociale en Europe centrale et du Sud-Est (fin du XIXe siècle-entre-deux-guerres),” *Revue d’histoire de la protection sociale* 11, no. 1 (2018): 13–22; Fabio Gioni and Stefano Petrunaro, “Voluntary Associations, State and Gender in Interwar Yugoslavia: An Introduction,” *European Review of History: Revue européenne d’histoire* 26, no. 1 (2019): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13507486.2018.1471043>; Antoine Perrier and Lola Zappi, “Introduction. De la ville à l’empire colonial: Nouvelles échelles de l’économie mixte du welfare (XIXe–XXe siècles),” *Revue d’histoire de la protection sociale* 15, no. 1 (2022): 10–25, <https://doi.org/10.3917/rhps.015.0010>.

⁷ Jane Lewis, “Gender and the Development of Welfare Regimes,” *Journal of European Social Policy* 2, no. 3 (1992): 159–73, <https://doi.org/10.1177/095892879200200301>; Gisela Bock and Pat Thane, eds., *Maternity & Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of the European Welfare States, 1880s–1950s* (London: Routledge, 1991); Susan Pedersen, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State: Britain and France, 1914–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Alisa Del Re, *Les femmes et l’État-providence: Les politiques sociales en France dans les années trente* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1994); Jane Lewis, “Gender and Welfare Regimes: Further Thoughts,” *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 4, no. 2 (1997): 160–77, <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/4.2.160>; Jane Jenson, “Who Cares? Gender And Welfare Regimes,” *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 4, no. 2 (1997): 182–87, <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/4.2.182>.

⁸ Bock and Thane, *Maternity & Gender Policies*.

⁹ Of particular interest is recent historical research on the role of associations and voluntarism in gendering the field of social protection. For example: Giomi and Petrunaro, "Voluntary Associations, State and Gender in Interwar Yugoslavia"; and many articles in Giomi, Keren and Labbé, *Public and Private Welfare*. There are also relevant studies in different European languages, which cannot be listed here.

¹⁰ Pedersen, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State*; Bock and Thane, *Maternity & Gender Policies*.

¹¹ Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe's Families after World War II* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2011): 88–117.

¹² Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (London: Penguin, 2005).

¹³ Silvia Salvatici, *A History of Humanitarianism, 1755–1989: In the Name of Others* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019).

¹⁴ Göran Therborn, Geoff Eley, Hartmut Kaelble, Philippe Chassaing and Andreas Wirsching, "The 1970s and 1980s as a Turning Point in European History?," in "Space, Borders, Maps," special issue, *Journal of Modern European History/Zeitschrift für moderne europäische Geschichte/Revue d'histoire européenne contemporaine* 9, no. 1 (2011): 8–26.