



RESEARCH CENTRE FOR MODERN HISTORY (KENI)
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND HISTORY
PANTEION UNIVERSITY OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCES



CALL FOR PAPERS

International Conference

**“Temporary” Labor Migration, Difference, and
Inequality in Cold War Western Europe**

**September Friday 10th - Saturday 11th, 2027
Athens, Greece**

**Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences
Andrea Siggrou Avenue, 136**

Sakis Karagiorgas II Amphitheatre



HELLENIC FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION

The Conference is organized by the research project "Greek Guest Workers in Postwar Germany: a History of Diversity, Complexity and Change" implemented within the framework of the action "3rd Call for H.F.R.I. Research Projects for Faculty Members and Researchers," H.F.R.I. Project Number: 23674.

Perceiving migration as a process through which social categories and relations are continuously renegotiated, this Conference seeks to foreground the relational, intersectional, and changing character of “temporary” labor migrants’ experiences in Western Europe during the Cold War. Rather than treating immigrant populations as homogeneous and unchanging national or social entities, it approaches migration as a field of differentiation, negotiation, and contestation in which multiple axes of power and inequality intersect and acquire new meanings over time. The Conference therefore asks how categories of belonging and difference were constructed and reconstructed through migration; how they contributed to reproducing or generating inequalities; and how these processes were shaped by changing economic, political, social, and cultural conditions in both countries of origin and settlement. It also considers the ways in which migration reshaped pre-existing hierarchies, solidarities, and conflicts while simultaneously giving rise to new forms of differentiation, belonging, and inequality. A further question concerns how migrants themselves negotiated, appropriated, contested, or transformed the categories through which states, institutions, and societies sought to classify them. As the designation of labor migrants as “temporary” was not simply a description of their mobility, but also one of the political, institutional, and social categories that shaped expectations, rights, family arrangements, labor relations, and practices of belonging, this Conference also questions the analytical usefulness of the distinction between temporary and permanent migration and instead pays particular attention to the temporal dimension of migration processes.

The Conference, aiming to illuminate both the interconnectedness and interdependence of social categories and relations, mainly within migrant communities but also in their relations with the wider societies in which they lived, focuses on four axes of difference and power relations: gender and family relations; class and social mobility; local, regional, and subnational identities and networks; and political identities, activism, and state power. By exploring gendered, class-based, ethnocultural, and political differences among migrants in Western Europe during the Cold War, it seeks to recover the heterogeneity of migrant trajectories, experiences, identities, and strategies as well as how labor migrants’ identities, social positions, relationships, and aspirations changed over the course of their migration trajectories.

More specifically:

Gender and family relations

Gendered divisions of labor and labor markets, together with historically and culturally specific constructions of masculinity and femininity, shaped both decisions to migrate and the ways in which migration was experienced. They influenced whether men and women migrated together, separately, or not at all, and whether one family member migrated while another remained behind. Approaching migration as movement through both geographical and social space, and as a process encompassing conditions in the homeland as well as in the country of settlement, the Conference draws attention to movers and stayers as mutually constitutive actors within migration processes and transnational family relations.

Class and social mobility

The category of the “temporary labor migrant” often obscures significant differences in social origin, education, occupation, and access to resources as well as the transformations in class identities and relations. Many migrants came from rural backgrounds and entered the working class as unskilled industrial workers. Yet migrant populations were internally differentiated along lines of rural and urban origin, education, generation, and social capital. At the same time, labor migrants often inhabited the same social spaces as students and professionals, merchants, teachers, interpreters, social workers, journalists, and clerics of the same nationality, and some of them experienced social mobility through migration.

Local, regional, and subnational identities and networks

Labor migration is often facilitated by networks organized around regional, linguistic, religious, or communal affiliations that operate within broader national identifications. These overlapping identities were themselves reconfigured through the migration experience, which could sharpen national identification but could also transform, intensify, and sometimes fracture existing identities.

Political identities, activism, and state power

Migrants did not leave the political conflicts of their homelands behind, and many migrant communities became sites of acute political conflict in response to political developments in their countries of origin. Yet political and ideological commitments were also reconfigured within migrant communities, reshaped by experiences of work,

discrimination, and everyday life in countries of settlement; by trade unionism and new social movements; and by broader transformations in the countries they settled and in European societies.

The Conference seeks to complicate nationally bounded accounts of post-war “temporary” labor migration and to explore the ways in which migration itself contributed to reshaping the social, cultural, economic, and political landscapes of Cold War Western Europe. It welcomes contributions that engage with these questions from historical, sociological, anthropological, political, and interdisciplinary perspectives.

- **Submission guidelines:** Researchers interested in participating in the conference are invited to submit a proposal of 400–500 words (please include name, affiliation, title of the paper and contact details) together with a short biographical note of approximately 150 words, to guestworkershist@gmail.com. All application materials must be compiled into a SINGLE file in doc, docx, or pdf format.
- **Deadline for submissions:** 15/01/2027.
- Notifications of acceptance will be sent by the end of February 2027.

The Conference will be held IN-PERSON.

If selected, entry to and participation in the conference is free of charge.

Scientific Committee:

Chair: Lina Venturas, Professor, Panteion University

Sara Bernard, Lecturer, University of Glasgow

Yannis Papadopoulos, Postdoctoral researcher, Panteion University

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