

Families Managing Health and Wellbeing in Times of Crisis

Workshop at the German Anthropological Association's (DGSKA e.V.) biennial conference "Contested Knowledge: Perspectives in Social and Cultural Anthropology", Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, 25-28 July 2023

Convenors: PD Dr. Astrid Bochow (Georg-August-Universität Göttingen), Dr. Dominik Mattes (Freie Universität Berlin)

Keynote address: Prof. Sjaak van der Geest (Emeritus Professor of Medical Anthropology, University of Amsterdam)

Postcolonial theory criticizes that knowledge about the body, health, and wellbeing is deeply connected to varying forms of governmentality and submission. Postcolonial ethnography, for instance, documents contests over health epistemologies and authority in contexts of medical pluralism and shows that families are crucial in the sense of "therapy managing groups" that help mediate different health epistemologies reconciling, for instance, social-spiritual with physical aspects of healing. Families also partake in the negotiations around diverging conceptualizations of health and well-being between individual patients and biomedical institutions. Finally, families may mediate particular forms of subjectivation pursued by state institutions, while themselves subduing individuals to local forms of gender and age-related hierarchies.

Meanwhile, recent social phenomena such as long-term lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic, dramatically rising daily living expenses, growing numbers of people being forced to leave their home countries, as well as environmental catastrophes reinforce public and scholarly interests in families as resources of social and material care and support for vulnerable people including children and elderly people. We invite papers that reflect on how families shape health management in these (and other) contexts of crisis where multiple forms of knowledge and institutional expectations collide. Among others, they may address the following questions:

How do family members mediate (competing) institutional knowledge, e.g. related to nutrition, sports, medication but also loss and trauma?

Which sources and bodies of knowledge are deemed legitimate for what reasons, and how are they negotiated?

Do daily health-related decisions reflect gender and age-related hierarchies?

How do family members deal with governmental and other institutional expectations concerning their role as central sites of caregiving?

Please send your abstract of max. 200 words to a.bochow1@gmail.com and dominik.mattes@fu-berlin.de by **15 December 2022**.