



Call for Papers

Annual Conference of the Biographical Research Section in the DGS
**The Biographical Paradigm in Migration Research.
Current Theoretical and Methodological Challenges and
Perspectives**

March 12-14, 2026

Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences

Since its beginnings in the sociology of the Chicago School, the biographical approach has established itself as an interdisciplinary field of research. Biographical approaches have been widely used in the social sciences, especially in recent decades. With its process-oriented and innovative approaches, biographical migration research has made an important contribution to the theoretical conceptualization of transnational migration processes from a subject- and action-oriented as well as from a historical perspective. Empirical studies have combined various theoretical perspectives with multimethodological designs to research migratory processes, transnationality, boundary drawing and belongings. This has led to a very lively theoretical discussion in the field of biographical migration research, which has significantly shaped the discourse on migration studies by incorporating perspectives from the sociology of knowledge and figurational sociology, transnationalism, feminism, and postcolonialism. With its process-oriented and innovative approaches, biographical migration research has made an important contribution to the theoretical conceptualization of transnational migration processes from a subject-based, action-oriented and historical perspective.

Global developments have raised new epistemological questions for the field, both theoretically and empirically, which challenge the theories and methods of biographical migration research. While criticism of methodological nationalism and Eurocentrism has been formulated within biographical migration research, it has also led to critical questioning and reflection of biographical migration research itself and its theoretical and methodological premises.

The insights gained from the biographical theory perspective clearly enable us to examine the complexity and processual nature of transnational migration and to focus on interactions with global, regional, and local interdependencies. In view of current social challenges, it is nevertheless important to explore the possibilities and limitations of the biographical approach for researching migration processes and to further develop biographical approaches conceptually.

As part of the annual conference of the Biography Research Section, which also marks our 40th anniversary, we would like to address current theoretical and methodological challenges in biographical migration research and explore the question of how this

perspective can contribute to reflexive and critical social research. We welcome submissions that address the following questions:

- What insights do biographical theory and biographical analysis offer for research into migration processes?
- How does research into the interplay between migration and biography contribute to reflexive and critical social research?
- How can transnational, postcolonial, post-migrant, and anti-racist perspectives on migration-related processes and constellations be appropriately taken into account in social-scientific biographical research?
- How is migration negotiated socially in local, regional, and global contexts, and how have these negotiations changed historically?
- To what extent are migration-related topics and discourses also addressed in biographical research projects whose primary focus is not on migration? What opportunities do biographical approaches offer for linking migration-related topics with other aspects such as violence, collective memory and cultures of remembrance, social mobility, political participation, etc.?
- What opportunities for further development are offered by participatory and creative approaches to biographical research methods, and what methodological and practical research challenges need to be taken into account?
- How can research ethics principles, data archiving issues, and the secondary use of empirical data be conceptualized and implemented in the context of migration-related research?

Please send proposals for individual presentations or panels that address these questions (max. 2400 characters) to the following email address by October 15, 2025:

KomSI@fb4.fra-uas.de

The event is organized by the Spokesperson Group of the Biography Research Section in cooperation with the Institute for Migration Research (IMiK) and the Competence Center for Social Intervention Research (KomSI) at Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences.

Organisation: Irini Siouti, Michaela Köttig, Minna Kristiina Ruokonen-Engler, Quentin Reeb, Anna Schnitzer, Arne Worm.