

## Call for Papers

### Biographical research *quo vadis*? New and recurring challenges in the study of life (hi)stories and social change

Budapest, 4-6 September 2024

In this conference we will approach the question of the current state of biographical research in relation to one of its central focal areas: researching social change. The issue of social change has always had special importance in biographical research and is especially visible in such diverse areas as migration, gender, work, violence and political transformation. Theoretical and methodological discussions in these fields have contributed fundamentally to the development of biographical research, for example regarding the relation between individual and society, the position of experiences, memories and self-presentations, issues of generalization, the relation between micro and macro levels of investigation, and the combination of different methods.

We will take up the central theme of “social change” in a broad way in this conference, with the aim of engaging in a discussion about future directions in biographical research. We mean this not only with reference to the above-mentioned “classic” areas of investigation, but also in the sense of tackling new thematic areas focused on social change, thus fostering a discussion forum that cross-cuts different interests. By creating a platform for biographical researchers to come together and jointly reflect on their craft, this conference seeks to identify and address current and re-emerging challenges to social analysis from the perspective of sociological biographical research.

Taking processes of social change as an overarching theme serves as a reminder that one of the quintessential features of sociological biographical research is its inherent processual nature, which enables us to capture societal transformations from the perspective of everyday actors. This processual approach also allows for a socio-historical orientation, a characteristic which distinguishes biographical research from other qualitative methods in the social sciences.

We invite papers which connect new, ongoing or reoccurring facets of social change with theoretical or methodological aspects of biographical research – ideally based on original empirical research. Contributions might also focus on the combination of different methods (such as visual or digital methods, observations, discourse analyses, etc.), issues of generalization on different levels, or questions of interdisciplinarity.

We suggest that the following areas are connected to the theme of this conference, but we also encourage interested participants to present papers from other fields.

- Authoritarianism, populism and democracy
- Changing life stories after political transition
- Violence, conflict and reconciliation
- Figurations of perpetrators, bystanders and helpers
- Global migration and flight
- Climate change and disasters
- Social movements and activism
- Transformations of labor under the “new spirit of capitalism”
- Gender
- Sexuality and health
- Care and aging in new capitalism
- (Collective) Memory
- Digitalization

The conference will take place at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) Budapest, Hungary, 4-6 September 2024. It is organized by Júlia Vajda and Juli Székely (ELTE University), the RC 38 “Biography and Society” of the International Sociological Association (ISA) and the CEU-Democracy Institute in cooperation with the Section for Biographical Research in the German Sociological Association (DGS).

**Abstracts for papers (maximum 300 words)** should be sent to [biography-and-society@gmx.de](mailto:biography-and-society@gmx.de) by **1st March 2024**. We intend to publish the conference proceedings as a book. Travel and accommodation must be covered by the conference participants themselves. We will be able to provide small travel grants to a limited number of presenters.