

ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR SOZIALREFORM

JOURNAL OF SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH



Call for Papers

“Social policies as life course policies – between protecting discontinuity and re-establishing continuity”

Guest editors:

Prof. Dr. Simone Scherger | Dr. Thurid Eggers, SOCIUM, Universität Bremen

We invite abstracts for articles in a special issue of the *Journal of Social Policy Research (Zeitschrift für Sozialreform)* which will deal with the relationship between social policy and individual life courses, and examine ‘life course policies’, i.e. policies which relate to or aim to shape individual life courses in their long-term dynamics. The articles should investigate specific life course policies more closely by analysing the normative ideas underlying these policies and/or their effects on individual life courses.

Historically, the diffusion of social policies such as education, health insurance and pensions has contributed to constituting the modern life course regime in its institutionalised form. By means of rules around the individual passage of life, such policies established age boundaries, made life course risks and uncertainties more manageable, and strengthened individual actors as social unit to be held accountable for their own fortune (Kohli 1985, Leisering 2004).¹ As both the dynamics of individual life courses and social policy institutions have changed in the last decades, the role of welfare state policies as ‘life course policies’ has become ever more relevant – and also more explicitly debated than ever before, with more ‘life course orientation’ a frequent demand in policy debates and taken up by many relevant political actors. Since employment trajectories and family forms diversify, gender role attitudes become more egalitarian even in conservative welfare states, and the number of older people in need of long-term care rises, the demand for policies facilitating coordination between paid employment and care work within the family increases. Regarding institutional regulation, numerous social policy reforms have changed the rules, levels and the distribution of social protection – with privatization, social investment and flexibilization only being three exemplary trends applying in different policy areas.

These changes in the realm of social policy regulation on the one hand, and concerning individual life courses, on the other hand, raise the the question of which challenges life course policies con-

¹ Kohli, M. (1985): Die Institutionalisierung des Lebenslaufs. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, 37(1), 1-29.
Leisering, L. (2004): Government and the Life Course. In: Jeylan T. Mortimer & Michael J. Shanahan (Hrsg.): *Handbook of the Life Course*. New York: Kluwer, 205-225

sequently face. How can life course policies be (further) modernized so that discontinuities are cushioned, the difficult reconciliation between family and employment trajectories is facilitated and inequalities (between genders, e.g.) are reduced from an early age on? Connected to that, the normative contents of policies and policy suggestions need to be explored – as they often reveal very fundamental underlying normative disputes. One essential tension is, e.g., between the policy aim to socially protect employment interruptions, and the competing aim to (re-)establish employment continuity. The planned special issue will include papers that deal with specific, already existing or proposed life course-related policies. Papers comparing policies in several countries are as welcome as papers focusing on one country. Regarding the examined policies, the papers should tackle at least one of the following tasks:

- *describe these policies or policy suggestions and their life course orientation in detail, analyse the underlying normative ideas and expectations (e.g., attributions of responsibility and agency, forms of justice, legitimation) and the related normative debates, potentially including the differing points of view of different actors*
- *analyse the outcomes of concrete policies with regard to individual life courses in the long term, and related inequalities – and compare these outcomes with the normative contents and intended effects of the policies; this might relate to the material or the temporal dimension, and potentially consider the intersecting categories of class, gender, disability/illness and/or migration background*

All methodological perspectives may be relevant, with (quantitative or qualitative) longitudinal examinations being of particular interest. The realm of potentially relevant policies is not fixed, and papers might study one policy (area) or several ones. Policies or policy areas that deal with the tension between securing discontinuous life trajectories and re-establishing (employment) continuity, and whose life course orientation and effects require (further) research, are especially pertinent to the special issue:

- coverage and effects of long-term oriented social policies among transnationally mobile workers or in the context of work-related international migration over the life course
- policies aimed at protecting employment interruptions due to chronic illness/disability and facilitating labour market return of chronically ill/disabled persons
- policies facilitating mobility between occupations by supporting employment interruptions for the purpose of retraining, policies supporting lifelong learning
- policies aimed at protecting phases of care work (childcare as well as long-term care) and facilitating the compatibility of unpaid care work and paid employment
- policies directed at securing interrupted, atypical, and hybrid employment careers (which, e.g., combine dependent employment and self-employment, or phases of unemployment and employment)
- policies based on social services (as opposed to financial transfers) in one or several of the mentioned areas, for example aimed at re-establishing life course continuity and individual agency
- overarching policy concepts covering several (or all) of the mentioned areas, e.g. concepts of ‘preventive’ social policies or of universal basic income

Schedule for Submissions

Abstract:

To publish an article in the special issue, please submit an extended abstract (including the names and affiliations of all authors) **of around 300 words** to the guest editors no later than **July 15th, 2022**. Authors of extended abstracts who are invited to submit a full paper in English (max. 8,000 words) will be notified later in August 2022.

The **abstracts** should outline the contents of the planned contribution and mention the following points:

- objective of the planned paper (research question) and relevance,
- conceptual perspective,
- data and methods (if applicable),
- (potential) results and further implications.

Please send your abstract to simone.scherger@uni-bremen.de **and** thurid.eggert@uni-bremen.de

Full Paper:

The full paper (of a length of around 8,000 words including space), and adhering to all standards of the journal are due no later than **the end of January 2023**.

All articles will undergo double-blind peer review. For more details see the instructions for authors here:

https://www.degruyter.com/publication/journal_key/ZSR/downloadAsset/ZSR_Instructions_for_authors.pdf

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with the guest editors in case of questions:

Prof. Dr. Simone Scherger (simone.scherger@uni-bremen.de) and

Dr. Thurid Eggert (thurid.eggert@uni-bremen.de)

Recent Articles (ZSR 1/2022):

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment and social benefit receipt in Finland
(Merita Mesiäislehto, Signe Jauhiainen, Tuija Korpela, Sami Tuori)

Basic income support (BIS) recipients in Germany: Unemployment dynamics during the COVID-19 pandemic
(Katrin Hohmeyer, Katharina Dengler, Veronika Knize, Tamara Pongratz)

Social services in times of pandemic – Analysing the German welfare state's measures to safeguard its basic social infrastructure
(Petra Kaps, Renate Reiter, Frank Oschmiansky, Sandra Popp, Julia Berthold)

ZSR – Redaktion
Prof. Dr. Werner Eichhorst / Dr. Pia Jaeger
Universität Bremen · SOCIUM
Mary-Somerville-Str. 5 · 28359 Bremen
E-Mail: zsr@uni-bremen.de