

8th InASEA Congress in Sofia, Sept. 15–18, 2016

***Balkan Life Courses: Family, Childhood, Youth,
And Old Age in Southeast Europe***

Call for Papers

The big historical events of the 20th century and the radical political and social changes in Southeast Europe in the new millennium caused deep transformations of people's lives and life trajectories. After the life course standardization in the period of industrialization and the institutionalized individualism of the period of reflexive modernity the current situation is marked by a huge variety of life trajectories, life styles, and life choices which are a sign of the new global order. Some social theorists claim that globalization is entering the intimate space of personal lives, affecting family and emotional life, commercializing and commoditizing it. But despite the common social patterns of life courses in Europe and beyond, there are of course differences in the individual life trajectories, e.g. in the meanings of childhood and youth, of age and ageing, of family life and work life in different societies and points of history.

In order to understand people's lives from birth to death anthropologists conceptualize and conduct research on human's life courses. The concept of life course enables the understanding of human lives within socio-cultural and political contexts, stressing agency and people's everyday experience. With regard to Southeast Europe we need to understand how historical events, which produce deep structural changes, have influenced the construction of individual life courses; how age based social identities are experienced along the life course; what new life course identities and representations of life periods are produced; and also how the experience of ageing changes during contemporary life courses, in order to outline the complexities and varieties of life courses in the context of the radical social transformations which this European region has experienced in the eras of socialism and globalization.

The primary goal of the conference will thus not be to focus on the demographic, political, or economic causes of these changes in individual life courses and the family but on their socio-cultural consequences for everyday life, i.e., on people's strategies of coping and adaptation, on their concepts and attitudes towards these changes as well as on the concomitant cultural expressions such as changes in family rituals or traditions.

We seek papers based on empirical ethnographic, folkloric, or anthropological research that analyse the changes in Balkan life courses, in families, childhoods, work-life, and old age resulting from the historical processes of socialism and post-socialism, modernisation and globalization. The papers should – in some way or other – relate to the following dimensions of the life course:

1. *Family and kinship*: traditional and modern roles and relations, (neo)patriarchy; generations and generation units, communication and relations between generations; familism, family and kinship networks vs. friend networks, loyalty and trust; kinship and family as metaphor, their symbolic, emotional, ideological and political uses.
2. *Parenthood*: traditional and new models; roles and relations of family members, 'postmodern' transformations of gender roles (unisex), images of women and men, (neo)patriarchal roles; patchwork families; homosexuality and family, sexual minorities.
3. *Childhood and youth*: care of children, family care, children's culture, games, songs etc.; youth, coming of age, schooling / education, youth culture, games, songs, narratives, social media; life-cycle rituals / rites of passage (birth, birthday, graduation, wedding, etc.)
4. *Grown-up life and family*: work-life and leisure; establishing a family, having a job, an apartment or house; leisure activities for families, children, youths; "normal biographies"; family enterprises: cooperation, loyalties, rituals; forms of leadership, gender roles; family and

- (work) -migration, torn-up families, children left behind, grand-parents as parents; roles of media and communication technologies.
5. *Ageing and old age*: traditional, modern, and 'postmodern' concepts of ageing and old age; age and gender; old-age pensioners; rituals (retirement, funeral etc.); care of the elderly: in the family or in homes for seniors; relations to younger generations in the family;
 6. *'Passing on'*: family traditions and rituals; family histories, chronicles, memories, pictures, narratives, songs, secrets; inheritance and the transmission of property, land, valued objects; inheritance and gender; inheritance and migration/emigration.
 7. *Demographic change*: consequences for everyday life and culture, differences between (social, ethnic, religious) groups.

Please submit a proposal that contains your full name, institutional and disciplinary affiliation with an academic CV of max. 5 lines, the title of your paper and an abstract of 200 words with specific information about research methods and sources. The organizers give preference to submissions based on fieldwork and/or the use of ethnographic, folkloric, or closely related archive materials. The paper proposal must be in English, while the papers presented at the conference can be in English, French or German.

The **deadline** for the submission of **panel** proposals is **30 November 2015**, for the submission of **paper** proposals is **31 January 2016**.

Please send your proposal to:

Prof. Evgenija Krăsteva-Blagoeva, New Bulgarian University evgenia_blagoeva@hotmail.com
and to Prof. Klaus Roth, Munich University k.roth@lrz.uni-muenchen.de

Participants will be notified before the end of **April 2016** about the acceptance of their paper.

Conference Site, Organization

The congress will be held at New Bulgarian University, Sofia. Local Organization Committee: Evgenija Krăsteva-Blagoeva, Milena Benovska, Magdalena Elčinova, and Ana Luleva.

Funding, Travel and Accommodation

Depending on availability of funding, the conference organizers will cover at least part of the travel and accommodation costs for participants from Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Turkey. Accommodation for participants who qualify for financial support will be pre-arranged. Other participants will also be assisted in making hotel reservations. More information about accommodation will be published on the conference website (http://inasea.net/?page_id=14) in due time.

Registration Fee

InASEA members who have paid their dues for the last two years are exempt from the registration fee. Non-InASEA members and non-paying members will be asked to pay an on-site registration fee equivalent to 25 € (for participants from the above-mentioned SEE countries) or 50 € (for participants from all other countries).

Publication of Papers

A selection of conference papers will be published (after peer review) in vols. 20 and 21 of InASEA's journal *Ethnologia Balkanica*.