The Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at the Central European University in Budapest is proudly hosting its yearly graduate conference, on June 12-13th 2015. This year’s conference title is Hope and (Im)mobility in the Pursuit of Change.

People continuously contemplate motion – physical, social, spiritual or imaginary – even when they do not move, or all the more so if they feel stuck. What role does hope play in the pursuit of a better life? How do motion, emotion, and immobility enable or disable each other? Hope can be understood as a form of “cruel optimism” and a “cluster of promise”, but also as an antidote to cynicism and resignation in the face of the various contemporary instances of suffering and disenfranchisement. Whether as an aspiration to a better life, justice, and happiness, or as explanatory vocabulary generated by the belief in change, hope and the repertoire of alternative imaginaries that it summons, are often part and parcel of mobility and immobility alike. At this conference, we endeavor to tease out the implications of this juncture, its historical and cultural genealogy, and the consequences that it has for the reproduction of social inequalities and difference, and how it is addressed by their actors and by researchers alike. To this end, we propose to inquire beyond the structural conditions that prompt or limit people’s attempts to overcome geographic, social, or imaginary boundaries, and to explore the moral and affective processes that motivate and in turn are shaped by these pursuits of change. Rather than tackling these approaches separately, either favoring emic or phenomenological accounts of what sets people into motion, or accounting for the systemic causations endured by neoliberal subjects, at this conference, we encourage contributions that seek to overcome this analytical separation, and to pursue a relational analysis of hope and (im)mobilities.

We welcome abstracts for proposed presentations from advanced MA and PhD students in the social sciences that employ hope as a core conceptual instrument in an ethnographically-informed exploration of (im)mobility, whether this refers to a sense of existential immobility or to its apparent opposite, i.e. various forms of migration and its associated repertoires of mobility, attempts at social mobility, social movements, or a more widely-understood motion away from current circumstances, whether by means of imagination, morality, or visions of
the afterlife. All of these, we contend, share an element of hope, and this is what we’d like to focus on, in relation to what prompts, inspires or defies it.

Some of the questions we would like to consider, though not exclusively, include:
- What shapes hope beyond late capitalist contingencies and how does hope relate to the desire for social and political change?
- What kind of practices, aspirations, and investments does hope inspire?
- How do people experience migration and social mobility in terms of hope and disillusionment?
- What kind of commonalities between people in different world regions and classes do shared or antagonistic hopes illuminate?
- How do landscapes or networks of hope function to (im)mobilize social movements?
- How do memories and hope relate to each other in the context of nostalgia or trauma?
- How can social scientists make sense of their interlocutors’ expressed or ascribed hopes, in analytically and/or ideologically meaningful ways?

Keynote speakers:

**Dr. Stef Jansen, The University of Manchester**

**Dr. Frances Pine, Goldsmiths University of London**

Submissions should include a title, an abstract of **no more than 300 words**, your name, institution and email contact.

We can provide accommodation to participants in our university dormitory. Please let us know if you would need to be considered for this when sending the abstract.

**Please send your proposals to ceuantro.gradconf15@gmail.com, by Friday, the 1st of May, 2015. We will send the notifications of acceptance by the 10th of May, 2015.**

We look forward to hearing from you,

The Organizers.