

Department of History, Faculty of Arts, Pavol Jozef Šafárik
University in Košice in partnership with the State Archive in
Košice, the Slovak Historical Society and the Institute of History
of the Slovak Academy of Sciences



**THE 13TH ANNUAL MEETING OF
YOUNG HISTORIANS**

POWER IN THE HISTORY OF HUMAN SOCIETY

**Košice (Slovakia)
24 October 2023**



Power in the history of human society

Power as an instance has been present in human society since its beginning and is still an inherent part of human existence today. The two variables, society and power, undoubtedly coexist and influence each other. The basic theoretical starting point and the classic sociological definition of power is Max Weber's statement that power is "any chance to impose one's will within a social relationship, even against resistance, no matter what the chance consists of". The perception and contemporary understanding of power has undergone fundamental changes in the history of society. Each historical epoch has brought a different perspective in relation to the concept of power, which has ultimately created a coherent heterogeneous concept. Power relations permeate the depth of the entire social organism and interfere with all social relations. In the ancient period, Aristotle and Plato associated power and its exercise primarily with the formation of hierarchical relations in the context of the administration and organization of the urban grouping. In the medieval period, characterized by a strong Catholic dogmatics, a fundamental premise, the relationship between divine power and the secular organization of power, was established. Against the backdrop of the transformations of modern society, the term power resonated primarily in relation to economics, commerce and the economy. The totalitarian and authoritarian political systems and political regimes of the twentieth century marked the perception of power, which influenced contemporary theories of social science disciplines. The current perception of power is a combination of all of the above-mentioned transformations, institutionalized in the political and legal system, which are built on consensus and respect for norms, laws based on the values of civil society in a democratic political regime. In recent decades, studies dealing with power in human society form one complex and wide-ranging issue across the social and social sciences with a strong interdisciplinary overlap.



Different definitions, theories and methods are emerging within different disciplines to analyse power. Given the wide spectrum, a universal definition is not possible. Thus, it is necessary to adopt a contextual approach, which is based on the examination of practices related to power and the specifics of its application to selected social spheres in different historical epochs. Terminologically speaking, power cooperates with labels such as authority, elite, general will, individual will, influence, freedom and others. Since power and the desire for power are present even today, perhaps more than at any other time in the history of human society, it is appropriate to try to find an adequate answer to the questions: Where is power born and from what does it spring? How do social science disciplines view those social groups that do not wield power? For this reason, the conference organisers welcome original contributions with interdisciplinary overlap.

Thematic issues:

- Power and its legitimacy**
- Power as a technique of government and governance**
- Individual freedom vs. general will**
- Power in the context of debate and in the media reporting on the "other"**
- Stereotypes in the perception of power vs. modern conceptions of power**
- Power from the perspective of women's emancipation and gender relations**
- Power in interdisciplinary discourse**
- Manifestations of the exercise of power in education and schooling**
- Power from the perspective of the persecuted**



**Application deadline:
30 June 2023**

**Paper submission
deadline:
15 September 2023**

**Conference fee:
25 €**

**Conference languages:
Slovak,
Czech,
English**

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We welcome proposals from PhD. students at all stages of their research. A recommendation from the supervisor is needed. Peer-reviewed articles will be published in the conference proceeding.

**Application available
via QR.**

