

Dear colleagues, liebe Kolleg*innen (with apologies for cross-posting),

We are pleased to announce the call for papers for the *RC21 CONFERENCE 2020: Shaping & Sensing the city. Power, people, place, Antwerp 6-8 July 2020*

Call for Papers

Fuzzy boundary making – from social practices to (urban) spatial practices

Session Organizers:

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Many actors as well as research approaches conceptualize urban spaces as clearly demarcated. However, in the wake of state rescaling, globalization, and migration urban spaces increasingly need to be described as porous and interconnected, with blurred social, physical, political, and symbolical boundaries as the result of diversifying and overlapping everyday spatial practices. Planners, politicians, and administrations, for instance, often envision spaces as clearly bounded and concrete, while at the same time contributing to the informalization and fuzziness of spaces through ambiguous (state) practices.

Because of such ambivalence, we look at this fuzzy boundary making with a practice-theory approach. This allows to shift the focus from diverse sets of actors to diverse sets of practices, also revealing insights about the carriers' manifold and eventually conflicting ideas about space and its production, ownership and use, about their ideas of future (public) space (s) – thereby often stimulating imaginaries, sensory experiences and usages that are highly ambiguous. While many sociological studies have already examined practices of urban everyday life through a lens on social practice, architecture and planning studies mostly focus on such practices as producing space and urban life. Moving beyond this disciplinary and analytical differentiation, we like to discuss how we can conceive of social practices as spatial practices, combining (social) practice theory with spatial theories and thereby contributing to earlier debates in geography and critical urban studies that address the spatialization of practice theory. One challenge therein lies in conceptualizing social practices and social boundaries as spatial and material practices, while on the other hand keeping their blurriness and fuzziness in focus.

Thus, we seek to discuss modes of spatial production that result in porous, indeterminable and 'grey' spaces – spatialities produced and enacted by informal and ambiguous practices, navigating hazy legal frameworks, fuzzy regulations, or unanticipated state actions.

In this session we aim to consider these interstitial and grey spaces as results of spatial practices rather than simply in the context of territorialities. At the same time, we are interested in the demarcation of social, symbolic, physical, and material boundaries that shape hierarchical configurations of class, ethnicity, and gender and their intersections in the city. This boundary work can, for example, take place in urban public spaces, in urban commercial practices or in policy areas that affect recent migrants' access to housing, social rights, participation, and urban social life.

We invite papers from all contexts of the globe that theoretically advance and/or empirically investigate one or more of the following issues:

- socio-spatial practices that result in more or less blurry boundary making related to categories of class, ethnicity, gender, and their intersections.
- power relations involved in urban spatial practices and (new) modes of in- and exclusion that fuzzy boundaries produce: top-down practices of instrumentalization, exploitation, sanctioning; as well as practices from the bottom up such as practices of empowerment, encroachment, and resistance.
- the ways in which different actors interpret and use their room to maneuver in order to shape urban space.
- challenges and/or opportunities that practices of grey spacing and blurring of boundaries present for planning, governing, as well as co-producing urban spaces, including their transformational potential for shaping the city towards more sustainability and inclusion.

If interested, please upload your 250-word abstract onto the RC21 website (<https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/conferences/rc21-sensing-the-city/call-for-papers/submit-your-abstract/>) by March 15, 2020.

Please make sure to select Session 25: Fuzzy boundary making – from social practices to (urban) spatial practices.

Abstracts that were not submitted via the conference website cannot be selected for presentation at the conference.

Best wishes,
Anna, Nihad & Christian.