

Call for Abstracts

Crossing Boundaries: Transnational and Transdisciplinary Perspectives on (Re)Configurations of Space in Ageing Societies

26. – 28. May 2025 at Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main

Final Conference of the DFG & ANR-Funded Research Project

“SPAGE: The Social Production of Space and Age.

A French-German Dialogue towards New Theoretical Approaches and Research Pathways”



Space and age intertwine dynamically, driving profound reconfigurations in how societies structure, experience, and understand ageing across diverse environments. The conference “Crossing boundaries: transnational and transdisciplinary perspectives on (re)configurations of space in ageing societies” explores these entwinements, intersections, and the crossing of boundaries between spatial and gerontological knowledges.

‘Space’ and ‘Age’ share a number of meanings, both in terms of their everyday use and their theoretical capacity. First, both notions are all-encompassing: Everyone and everything ‘has’ an age and everyone and everything ‘is’ in space. Second, and consequently, both terms can only be defined in relational terms: ‘Old’ is relational to ‘young’, ‘space’ is relational to ‘time’ or context. Moreover, ‘Space’ and ‘Age’ also relate to one another. On the one hand, places can be ‘age-friendly’ (or not), and policies target ‘ageing in place’ to keep older adults living in their communities as long as possible, so as to reduce welfare costs. On the other hand, while growing older, people accumulate spatial biographies and environmental elements can deposit in human bodies and thereby shape individuals’ health conditions: for example, climate change suggests new directions in biographical, generational and territorial analysis of ageing in terms of environmental justice or in terms of intra/inter-generational in/equity.

Recently, several disciplines such as geography, cultural anthropology, and sociology have pointed their attention to this interplay and the co-constitutive meanings of ‘Space’ and ‘Age’. In doing so, disciplinary boundaries are reconfigured, shifted, crossed, and sometimes dissolved. How do space and age(ing) co-constitute each other? Can age be described as a relational configuration of elements (bodies and objects) that are also constitutive of space? How is thinking about these all-encompassing phenomena shaped by the theoretical traditions of a country or a certain linguistic academic community? And how can we capture this interdependence between ‘Space’ and ‘Age’ in terms of appropriate methodological approaches? Are emerging/rising participatory approaches in ageing research concerned by such topics?

These questions will be addressed at the final conference of the Franco-German SPAGE project, which will take place in Frankfurt from May 26 to 28, 2025. For more details on the SPAGE project see <https://www.uni-frankfurt.de/128738740/SPAGE> and <https://www.pacte-grenoble.fr/fr/recherche-0/projets-recherche/spage>

We invite contributions that critically examine various dimensions of the interdependence of space and ageing, including, but not limited to:

- Theme 1: Theoretical developments around space and age from different disciplinary, linguistic, national and cultural perspectives
- Theme 2: Methodological approaches to space and age, e.g. mapping approaches, participatory approaches, creative methods
- Theme 3: Empirical studies on space and age with different focus points, e.g. materialities or temporalities, spatial justice lens

Deadline for abstracts: November 15, 2024.

Decision on papers: mid-December 2024.

Confirmed keynotes:

Prof. Dr. Martina Löw, Technical University Berlin, CRC Refiguration of Spaces

Dr. Yann Calberac, Reims Champagne-Ardenne University, CRIMEL

Submission requirements:

Length: Maximum of 250 words

Title: Provide a concise and informative title for your contribution

Theme: Indicate the theme your contribution fits into. If the contribution is crosscutting, please mention this as well.

Author Information: Name of the author and Institutional affiliation

For any further questions and abstract submission please contact: an.depner@em.uni-frankfurt.de

ECR may apply for travel funding if not covered by their institutions.