

AESOP PhD Workshop 2026, 22-25 September @Drosendorf, Austria

Workshop theme: Spatial planning at the fringes

Multi-layered socio-ecological crises and increasing geopolitical instability are not only putting established societal values and development paths into question.¹ They require profound societal and spatial transformations and thus call for innovative, potentially unconventional approaches to spatial planning.² In times of crisis, however, unconventional practices, perspectives or lifestyles are often sidelined or even marginalized – they are pushed to the fringe. Entitled “**Spatial planning at the fringes**”, the AESOP PhD Workshop 2026 aims to place these fringes at the centre of spatial planning debate. This encompasses the very spatial as well as metaphorical fringes – from marginalized areas to socio-ecological limits, from innovative niches to uncharted methodologies and practices in planning research and praxis. Applications for the PhD Workshop may thus entail (but are not limited to) the following thematic areas:

Territorial fringes: Urban agglomerations still dominate discourses of development and planning. Yet, peri-urban, rural, remote or border regions deserve just as much attention when it comes to addressing development challenges in polycrisis contexts. Applications addressing these or similar spatial contexts are hence very welcome, implying also the often-neglected perspective on second-tier cities, the peri-urban fringes of metropolitan regions, places “in transition”, as well as cities and regions in the Global South.

Temporal fringes: While temporalities are key, time planning has not received comparable attention in planning discourse.³ Yet, the procedural perspective is inherent in phenomena such as shocks and crises and in key concepts such as transformation and transition. We welcome applications that deal with these (and other) temporalities and procedural perspectives on space and planning, e.g., historical analyses of spatial development and planning, long-term future perspectives and approaches to future-making such as scenarios, back-casting and visioning, or similar approaches addressing time and change.

Socio-political fringes: In times of crisis, marginalized voices and places require particular attention, as they can be under particular pressure, although they are essential for promoting more equitable and inclusive environments.⁴ We therefore welcome research that sheds light on social exclusion and social justice at different scales and in different spatial contexts and thereby contributes to tackling socio-political fringes in spatial planning and planning research.

Socio-ecological fringes: Socio-ecological crises demand structural change, and spatial planning is critical for ensuring minimum societal standards for well-being within planetary boundaries.⁵ Applications addressing socio-ecological transformations of all kinds are thus encouraged. This may cover just and sustainable spatial transformations and transitions in sectors like housing, mobility, energy, agriculture and food-systems, climate adaptation planning and planning for green-blue infrastructures, nature conservation and biodiversity.

Methodological fringes: While the spectrum of methods in planning research and praxis is broad, on-going societal change calls for constant reflection and innovation of concepts and methodologies in the field: new approaches to knowledge production and learning, new quantitative, qualitative or interventionist research methods, new forms of governance, participation and empowerment. We hence welcome submissions from PhDs whose work in one way or another addresses innovative methods and practices in planning research and practice, thus entering “uncharted terrain” of knowledge production in planning.

¹ O'Brien, K. (2011). Global environmental change II. *Progress in Human Geography*, 36(5), 667–676. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132511425767>.

² Rauws, W. (2017). Embracing uncertainty without abandoning planning. *disP - the Planning Review*, 53(1), 32–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02513625.2017.1316539>.

³ Chang, R. A. (2021). How Do Scholars Communicate the 'Temporary Turn' in Urban Studies? A Socio-Semiotic Framework. *Urban Planning*, 6(1), 133–145.

⁴ Tulumello, S. (2015). Reconsidering neoliberal urban planning in times of crisis: urban regeneration policy in a “dense” space in Lisbon. *Urban Geography*, 37(1), 117–140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2015.1056605>.

⁵ Hofmeister, S., Warner, B., & Ott, Z. (2021). Nachhaltige Raumentwicklung für die große Transformation. Herausforderungen, Barrieren und Perspektiven für Raumwissenschaften und Raumplanung. *Forschungsberichte der ARL*, 15.

Workshop location: Drosendorf castle

The municipality of Drosendorf will be the PhD workshop's homebase. It is located in the picturesque rural region of Waldviertel, northwest of Vienna. Drosendorf is a historically significant place: Once a vacation destination for the summer retreat of the imperial court and aristocratic elites, its role turned into a negligible border town at the Iron Curtain. With European integration and the foundation of the Thayatal national park, the whole border region has recently turned into a tourism destination again, reviving the area's built and cultural heritage. Yet, the rural border region is only located at the edge of the catchment areas of the two agglomerations Wien and Brno. Its role and development perspective thus constitute somewhat uncharted terrain – a perfect location for reflecting “Spatial planning at the fringes”.

We will be located in **Drosendorf Castle**. The baroque castle was built in its current form in the 17th century and was gently renovated in 2021, making it accessible to guests as a hotel and seminar location. Today, Schloss Drosendorf is a hotel and location of the “landuni” project, a cooperation between TU Wien and the province of Lower Austria to foster exchange between the university and the municipality to revive the region with constant teaching, research and scholarly events at the intersection of planning research and regional development “on site”.



The program foresees a day trip to neighboring Znojmo, where Loucký klášter, a former Premonstratensian monastery south of Znojmo, will serve as workshop location for one day. The day-trip is completely organized by the PhD Workshop organizers in advance and is included in the overall costs of the AESOP PhD Workshop.

Preliminary travel information

The location offers ideal conditions for working in a peaceful atmosphere. With a total of 21 rooms and 60 beds, multiple seminar rooms, various indoor and outdoor work areas and a kitchenette, Drosendorf Castle has all necessary facilities to host the Workshop. There are also several catering facilities, a café and a restaurant in walking distance.

Drosendorf can be reached by public transport in 2,5h from Vienna Central Station and 3h from Vienna Airport. During the week there are 9 connections per day from Vienna Central Station and 6 connections per day from Vienna Airport. However, the LoC will organize bus transfers between Vienna Main Train Station and Drosendorf Castle on Monday, 21 September, in the afternoon and on Tuesday, 22 September, in the morning (depending on the actual composition and needs of the workshop participants).

Draft Programme

Tuesday, 22 September 2026

13:00-14:00	Kick-Off at Drosendorf castle: Welcome from LoC & AESOP YA
14:00-15:00	Interactive round of introductions
15:00-15:30	Coffee break
15:30-17:00	Keynote 1
17:00-19:00	Social event + drinks
19:00	Dinner

Wednesday, 23 September 2026

09:00-10:45	PhD presentations 1 (2 parallel sessions, 5 presentations each)
10:45-11:15	Coffee break
11:15-13:00	PhD presentations 2 (2 parallel sessions, 5 presentations each)
13:00-14:00	Lunch break
14:00-15:30	Keynote 2
16:00-18:00	Walking tour Drosendorf
19:00	Social cooking

Thursday, 24 September 2026

09:00-10:00	Trip to Znojmo and Znojmo monastery
10:00-11:00	Guided tour through Znojmo monastery
11:00-12:30	Keynote 2
12:30-14:00	Lunch
14:00-15:45	PhD presentations 3 (2 parallel sessions, 5 presentations each)
16:00-17:00	Trip back to Drosendorf castle
19:00	Go out for dinner in Drosendorf

Friday, 25 September 2026

09:00-10:30	Paper development studio 1: Individual paper feedback and informal talks
10:30-11:00	Coffee break
11:00-12:30	Paper development studio 1: Individual paper feedback and informal talks
12:30-13:00	Closing session
13:00	Lunch + farewell