

Call for papers
Awareness, Consciousness and “Ourness” of Spaces

International Conference
17th – 19th September 2026

In-Person Conference

University of Palermo, Italy
Department of Psychology, Educational Science and Human Movement (SPPEFF)

Deadline for abstracts: 30th August 2026

From Lefebvre’s work on the production of space and, subsequently, in post-structuralist scholarship, particularly that of Foucault, space has been understood as something culturally and socially produced, shaping and shaped by human practice. This also applies to the way in which, today and within the process of glocalisation, concepts such as ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’ have taken on new, often shifting connotations. Whether referring to urban or non-urban contexts, symbolically or materially, spaces of glocalisation suggest a new grammar for understanding and redefining how we consider and perceive places, interact with them, move in and through them, represent them and, in a word, experience them – or, conversely, how we avoid and marginalise them. From many perspectives, acting within space (or deliberately abstaining from action) amounts to putting into practice epistemic and political visions that cannot be ignored. However, before space can be inhabited, traversed or re-signified, it must first be perceived. In both a logical and chronological sense, our engagements with space depend on the awareness of our surroundings, not only as physical environments but also as symbolic and socio-culturally constituted worlds. Building on these premises, the conference ‘Awareness, Consciousness and “Ourness” of Spaces’ aims to explore key issues concerning spatialities through the neologism of “ourness” that highlights an essential characteristic: the ambivalent nature of a ‘We’ that is both inclusive and exclusive. Can spatialities be experienced ‘consciously’ without first being recognised and without acknowledging the various forms of individual and collective belonging through which they acquire meaning? How is the ‘consciousness’ of places formed? What determines the way in which we (re)produce a sense of belonging and/or alienation from a place? How do we give meaning to and/or redefine the meaning of spaces? What role does memory – both collective and individual – play in these processes? For communities, what does it mean and what does it entail to build a collective sense of awareness of shared spaces? Does having a greater awareness of the spaces around us lead to actions aimed at change? What actions, policies or forms of agency should be implemented to ensure the recognisability of certain spaces? In the Anthropocene, do human–non-human spatial dynamics shape new forms of awareness? The conference aims to initiate a debate involving multiple

disciplinary approaches in order to collectively develop an epistemological reflection on spatial awareness and unawareness, taking into account the limitations, critical issues and full potential of interdisciplinarity as applied to this field of research.

Contributions of various kinds are welcome: both wide-ranging critical reflections and the examination of individual, significant case studies. Scholars from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, such as geographers, sociologists, architects, anthropologists, historians, art historians, semioticians, epistemologists, literary scholars and others, are therefore invited to submit contributions. Potential topics include but are not limited to:

- Awareness and consciousness of places
- Belonging, identity and otherness in space
- 'Ourness' and the otherness of places
- Absences and presences in places
- Liminality and place/space
- Glocalisation and spatial awareness
- Centre/periphery dynamics
- Memory and consciousness of places
- Spaces, belonging and community
- Marginality and alienation in places
- Inclusion, exclusion and spaces
- Public policies and spatial awareness
- Human/non-human dynamics and spatial awareness
- Literature and spatial awareness/unawareness
- Interdisciplinary approaches to space
- Tourism and awareness/unawareness of places
- Urban change and critical spatial awareness
- (Inter)cultural dynamics and awareness of places
- Art, space and a sense of belonging/alienation from places
- Digital technology, belonging/alienation and spatiality

Submission of abstracts, deadlines and info on participation:

Please send abstracts by 30th August 2026 to Gaetano Sabato (email: gaetano.sabato@unipa.it). Abstracts should be no longer than 300 words, and they should include title of the paper, 3-5 keywords and a short biography of the author(s) including their affiliation (max 5 lines, not included in the 300-word limit). Notification of acceptance will be sent as soon as possible on a rolling basis, and no later than 2nd September 2026. The conference will be held in-person at the University of Palermo campus in Palermo, Italy on 17th and 18th September. Participants are welcome to attend for the entire duration of the conference. On 19th September, depending on the number of

participants, a cultural walking tour is planned through the historic centre of Palermo. The conference language is English. Individual presentations should be 15-20 minutes in length. Registration to the conference is free of charge. Unfortunately, no travel grants or scholarships are available. Participants are responsible for covering their own travel, accommodation and food expenses.

Scientific board:

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