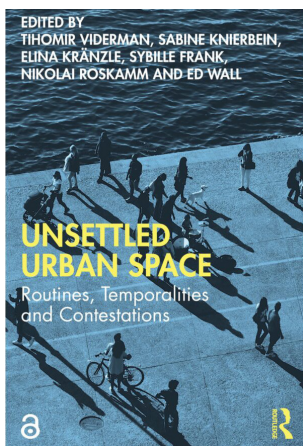


**Unsettled Urban Space:
Routines, Temporalities and Contestations.
Edited by Tihomir Viderman, Sabine Knierbein, Elina
Kränzle, Sybille Frank, Nikolai Roskamm and Ed Wall.
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Unsettled Urban Space is a compelling and timely contribution to contemporary urban studies. Edited by Tihomir Viderman, Sabine Knierbein, Elina Kränzle, Sybille Frank, Nikolai Roskamm, and Ed Wall, the volume proposes a radical reconceptualization of urban space as inherently unsettled, dynamic, and relational. From the opening pages, the editors articulate a clear objective: to rejoin the social, cultural, and political dimensions of urban everyday life (p. 4), emphasizing the

interdependence between collective modes of life and individual bodies (p. 5).

The notion of «unsettlement» serves not merely as a descriptive category but as an analytical lens to investigate the continuous processes through which urban space is shaped, challenged, and reimaged. The editors advocate for a renewed perspective that recognizes how urban environments are co-produced by overlapping layers of routines, temporalities, and contestations. This vision restores the intricate links between daily life experiences, socio-political structures, and cultural meanings, offering a holistic framework that captures the richness and complexity of urban existence.

The distinction between a synchronic or diachronic analysis of the relationships between humans and their environment is particularly interesting, as it highlights the fact that the particular relationship between land, physical-spatial layout and inhabitants reflects the multidimensional values that people assumes as

guide to orient their actions in the space and in the time, thus determining different modes of transformation and development of urban contexts (Fusco Girard, Trillo and Bosone 2019).

Grounded in a relational understanding of the city, the volume draws inspiration from critical urban theories (Roy 2016; Brenner 2009; Lefebvre 1946) and affective approaches (Curley 1985; Reckwitz 2002; Hardt 2007). The editors conceptualize urban space as a fluctuating and affective field rather than a fixed structure (p. 9). This approach underlines that individual actions, emotions, and routines are deeply embedded within broader collective patterns (Garfinkel 1967; de Certeau 1984; Butler 1990), reinforcing the inseparability of personal and societal dimensions in urban life (p. 5).

The book is structured into three interconnected sections: *Urban Routines*, *Urban Temporalities*, and *Urban Contestations*, each providing rich empirical illustrations and theoretical insights.

The first part, *Urban Routines*, highlights how everyday practices produce and transform urban spaces: the power of bodily routines can disrupt and reframe collective urban experiences (pp. 19-25), even unsettling normative gender dynamics (pp. 26-39). A politicized management of public space impacts social interactions (pp. 40-51) and, conversely, these interactions, in their freedom of expression and intent, are carriers of collective values that embrace multidimensional issues of the public space (freedom of use, right to public space, economic availability, social relations). The multidimensionality and complexity of the issues involved in the dynamics of people's use and transformation of space necessarily require consideration of the different needs and visions expressed by different categories of stakeholders operating in urban contexts. In this context, research plays a fundamental role in reconnecting theoretical and cognitive investigations to dynamics that occur thanks to and beyond concrete projects, both at the physical and social levels, thus attributing to researchers the dual role of active makers and academics (pp. 52-66). The organization and the management of urban routines (both from institutional and community perspective) have a central role in determining mechanisms of inclusion/exclusion linked both to socio-cultural dimension (the reinforcement or to the instability of collective memory) (pp. 67-77) and to socio-physical dynamics (tensions between different

groups, job insecurity and housing exclusion) (pp. 78-90 and pp. 91-107).

All the abovementioned issues cannot be separated from a reflection about the role of time in understanding urban transformations. In the same way of urban routines, in the volume a very topical aspects emerges regarding the multiple perspective by which the time has to be considered: it is not only a perceptual question (how different social groups experience and perceive urban time), but also a social question that regards the relation between the needs linked to a specific age and the capacity of a space to satisfy them (pp. 129-139). Furthermore, it influences also the way through which the temporality of strategies of control and social ordering influences personal biographies (pp. 114-128) and community actions (pp. 140-152), thus determining the rhythms of settlement and unsettlement (pp. 153-165) with related impacts at social, cultural, environmental and economic level. So, temporality is interpreted as the cyclicity of urban change, determined and influenced by capitalist dynamics, compared to which transformations in the sense of belonging to a place and the collective memory occurred (pp. 153-165). However, temporality is also interpreted as a historical time in which the action assumes specific ideological and political connotations (pp. 166-178 and pp. 179-182).

In the final section, the authors introduce the urban contestations as practices that questioning power relations prevailing in the urban space, highlighting the importance of embrace dissent and difference as constitutive elements of public space (chapter. 22). The contestation is considered as generative practice that, through a positioning and placement act, «Setzung», (pp. 214-223), can transform the affective and political landscape of cities (pp. 202-213), assuming also a cultural mission in articulating alternative urban imaginaries and challenging dominant narratives of development (pp. 224-235). Of course, also in this case insitutions and citizens play a fundamental role in the evolution of urban contestations both in terms of impact scale (Brenner and Schmid 2015) and of coherence between goals and the effects of real actions: local disputes can become wider political crisis (pp. 236-247) and caring for the poor and providing services may betray their aim reproducing instead esclusion and social control.

Across all chapters, the theme of interdependence between individual agency and collective structures is consistently emphasized. Urban space is a living field where personal emotions, social routines, political struggles, and cultural practices continuously interact. The book shows that unsettlement is not a marginal phenomenon but a fundamental characteristic of urban life, opening opportunities for rethinking belonging, participation, and spatial justice.

Moreover, *Unsettled Urban Space* enriches the understanding of cities as spaces where affective, social, and political dimensions co-exist.

In conclusion, *Unsettled Urban Space* offers a powerful and inspiring contribution to urban studies. By reconnecting the social, cultural, and political aspects of urban life and emphasizing the deep interdependence between individuals and collective formations, the volume provides an essential framework for critically engaging with contemporary urban realities, highlighting the need to interpret them in an evolutionary perspective. It is a vital resource for scholars, practitioners, and activists committed to understanding and shaping more inclusive, dynamic, and equitable urban spaces.

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