Dear Colleagues,

Please find below a Call for Papers for the forthcoming RC21 Conference: "The transgressive city", Mexico City, 21-23 July 2016 (<http://rc21-mexico16.colmex.mx/index.php>). Thank you for circulating this call to your members and networks.

With best wishes,

Alicia and Rosalina

**Stream title: Spaces of transgressive maternal practices in the city**

**Stream organizers**: Rosalina Babourkova, Bartlett Development Planning Unit, UCL and Alicia Yon, University of Melbourne

Despite certain advances in gender equality and new formulations and performances of femininities and masculinities, the experience of urban motherhood remains a highly gendered and spatialised position. In most of the urban world, women are mothering under conditions of great material deprivation and political uncertainty. And, space is found to articulate the interplay between motherhood as a social and cultural construct and motherhood as a lived experience (Hardy and Wiemer, 2005). Notwithstanding considerable changes to norms and practices of urban motherhood over the past century and the complex set of relations between the city, space and motherhood, the socio-spatial dimensions of motherhood – as one of the most challenging and perplexing of all social institutions, have not received sufficient attention in the study of the reproduction of the global city.

Despite profound transformations in household and family structures driven by the forces of urbanisation, the spectre of the nuclear, two-parent family remains one of the hegemonic (but neglected in urban research) non-state forms of authority in the city, determining public norms and social values. Certain urban processes, such as suburbanisation and the privatisation of residential areas, have even been found to reinforce a return to a discursive patriarchalism that favours a nuclear family norm (Aitken, 2000). Additionally, the practice of mothering is bound up in powerful moral geographies that construct the meaning of what it means to be a good mother. Analyses of the intersections of race, class, marital status, immigrant status and sexuality illuminate women’s experiences and practices of motherhood through the continuation of patriarchy (Fenster, 2005). These experiences challenge the notion of the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1991). Also, gendered transgressive acts, such as open defecation in public spaces, baring oneself in public - for example scandalous breastfeeding (Young, 1990), and self-harm, are intricately tied to the intimate and the legal geographies of the city (Gandolfo, 2009; Datta, 2012). From the point of view of urban governance, such acts are transgressive as they challenge traditional conceptions about housing, welfare and childcare needs in the city and hence may shape the ‘ungovernability’ of the emerging global city.

This panel attempts to understand the depth and range of the lived experiences of urban motherhood in the emerging global city. The main aim is to examine the ways in which urban spatial inequalities, produced by variegated forms of capitalism and cultural ideologies, reverberate in women’s maternal life practices, forcing women to engage in transgressive maternities in order to sustain themselves and their families. The panel invites contributions analysing the various socio-spatially transgressive manifestations of contemporary urban motherhood and its psychological, material, infrastructural, legal, racialised and other discriminatory dimensions. Contributions are invited to capture the urban-political as well as intimate-emotional dimensions of urban maternities, and in particular those that intersect to look at the relationships between different dimensions of transgressive urban motherhood and their cumulative effects, by addressing these questions:

What kind of urban transgressions does the specific social position of motherhood produce? In what ways do issues of abuse, disability and other discriminatory factors within the family produce transgressive urban spatial practices of mothering? What are the socio-spatial implications of existing state support to materially deprived mothers across different urban contexts? How do right to the city violations socio-spatially affect maternal safety and safe mothering? How do deprived and marginalised mothers subvert technologies of government in order to sustain themselves? How can urban maternal struggles become a space for protest and enfranchisement? How are mothering practices affected by distinctly urban processes, such as renewal, gentrification or its antithesis, informalisation, illegalisation, marginalisation, or migration? What spaces of the city present particularly contested spaces of motherhood? What constitutes the 21st-century politics of motherhood (and fatherhood) in the emerging global city? How and to what extent are transgressive urban practices of motherhood oriented towards forms of ‘informal justice’?

You are warmly invited to submit an **abstrac**t for consideration, of no more than **400 words**, to both **Alicia Yon** ([alicia.yon@gmail.com](mailto:alicia.yon@gmail.com)) and **Rosalina Babourkova** ([rosalina.babourkova@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:rosalina.babourkova@ucl.ac.uk)) by **31 January 2016**. For more information on submissions, please go to [http://rc21-mexico16.colmex.mx/index.php/call-for-individual-paper-](http://rc21-mexico16.colmex.mx/index.php/call-for-individual-paper-proposals)