The classical sociological concept of organizations as autonomous actors with clear delineated boundaries as pictured by Max Weber is getting increasingly challenged. On the one hand, established organizational forms break up. Single organizations are often embedded in networks which make their boundaries more permeable (Ahrne/Brunsson 2010). We also witness the rise of hybrid organizations that combine diverse societal logics (like for example the hybridization of religious and for-profit organizations). On the other hand, organizations face increasing demands for transparency (Hood 2006). They are urged to make information – for example on their decision-making-processes – accessible for external audiences. Our session aims to discuss these trends and their implications for organization theory focusing on developments in three parts of society: industry, higher education and public administration.

To increase their performance, firms have been advised to open up their innovation and strategy processes (Chesbrough 2003; von Hippel 2005; Whittington/Yakis-Douglas 2011). These changes have resulted in the involvement of external groups such as customers and communities that used to be ‘on the other side’ of organizational boundaries and thus were not considered a part of organizational life. Universities and colleges engage in international
projects, promote ‘open access’ publications and offer web-based degree programs. In addition, the transparency of their structures and outputs is being drastically advanced by rankings that put them under pressure to change internal structures in order to improve their position (Espeland/Sauder 2007). Public organizations expand their boundaries more and more by entering public-private-partnerships and by making it possible for citizens to participate in decision-making-processes. Furthermore, the recent introduction of freedom of information laws has stipulated the publication of unprecedented amounts of files.

To advance our understanding of (supposedly) boundaryless organizations in these three sectors, we open the session to theoretical and empirical contributions that address, among others, the following questions:

- How do firms / universities and colleges / public organizations deal with the expansion of their boundaries? How are they structured?

- Are there differences with respect to organizational forms and practices between firms / universities and colleges / public organizations across countries?

- How do informal organizational aspects such as culture or social relationships influence the way firms / universities and colleges / public organizations navigate the expansion of their boundaries?

- What are the unintended or even dysfunctional side-effects that those developments yield at the organizational or societal level?

**Deadline** for the submission of abstracts is September 30, 2015. Individual abstracts should be 300 words long. Please upload your abstract here:

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