Economic geography, technology and financial spaces

5 sessions:

1. Temporalities of Finance: Disruptions, Relocations, and Strategic Delay

Session organiser: Tom Hashimoto, Vilnius University, Lithuania, **E-mail**: tomoyuki.hashimoto@evaf.vu.lt

This session investigates how finance is shaped by—and in turn reshapes—the temporal structures of economic and political life. While financial systems are often associated with speed, immediacy, and volatility, they also rely on strategic delay, speculative futures, and asynchronous forms of regulation and response. Temporal disruption has become a defining feature of contemporary financial landscapes: the 2008 Global Financial Crisis revealed the long shadows of debt-fuelled growth; the COVID-19 pandemic compressed financial timeframes while delaying structural reforms; and the war in Ukraine, coupled with inflationary shocks, has unsettled expectations about the timing and coordination of monetary, fiscal, and regulatory responses.

These developments point to an urgent need to explore the *temporalities of finance* beyond simple chronologies. How is financial time produced, stretched, or fragmented across sectors, geographies, and institutions? What role do relocation strategies—such as the movement of financial centres, regulatory arbitrage, or FinTech dispersal—play in managing or deferring temporal risk? How do climate finance, green investment, or transition planning embed long-term uncertainty within short-term market logics? And how are legal, political, and infrastructural actors complicit in creating systems that accelerate capital mobility while delaying accountability?

We invite papers that interrogate the temporal logics underpinning financial systems, broadly defined. Topics may include (but are not limited to):

The regulatory lag and anticipatory governance of financial innovation

Delayed justice in financial misconduct and enforcement regimes

Temporal mismatches in ESG, sustainable finance, and climate transition

Relocations of financial infrastructure or expertise as temporal tactics

Crisis temporality and the shifting pace of policy response

Financial futures, speculation, and the politics of preemption

Contributions from financial geography, political economy, economic sociology, law, STS, and related fields are welcome. The session seeks to foster interdisciplinary dialogue around how finance both governs and is governed through time, contributing to broader debates about the restlessness of contemporary geographies—not only in space, but also in tempo, delay, and rupture.

2. AI, geopolitical competition and macro-geographic inequality

Session organiser: Dirk Dohse, Kiel Institute for the World Economy, Germany, **E-mail**: dirk.dohse@ifw-kiel.de

Artificial intelligence (AI) is often hailed as a transformative force capable of reshaping economies and societies. As a frontier technology is has become a centerpiece of geopolitical competition, most prominently between the

US and China. Strategic competition over AI is marked by tremendous public and private investment, rising trade barriers and a scramble to secure control over data and infrastructure. At the same time the deployment of AI can be expected to have a profound impact on the interregional and international division of labor, although the exact mechanisms at work are largely unexplored as yet.

Currently, AI development and industry are spatially highly concentrated in major cities or high-tech clusters like Silicon Valley or the San Francisco Bay area. A recent study by the Brookings Institutions shows that US regions differ substantially with respect to their 'AI readiness' in terms of AI-capable workforce, innovation and industry-uptake. Hence, while AI is likely to boost productivity, it could widen income disparities within countries, benefiting regions abundant in highly-skilled workers and research and data infrastructure, concentrating wealth among those who control the technology.

AI deployment could also amplify inequality across nations, widening the global technology gap and eroding developing countries' competitive advantage of low-cost labor. Wealthier countries hold a distinct advantage in capturing economic value from AI thanks to superior digital infrastructure, abundant AI development resources, and advanced data systems. Automation in manufacturing and logistics would enable wealthier nations to produce goods more efficiently, reducing the need for low-wage foreign workers.

The global South may miss out on many economic benefits due to significant capital costs. Advanced AI depends on compute clusters, energy grids, and network connectivity—assets rooted in specific geographies that determine where value is created and risks accumulate. Lacking such infrastructure prevents countries from building their own models or processing their data domestically. AI is also extremely energy-intensive – a burden fragile power grids in most developing countries cannot support. Moreover, as AI supports the automation of labor it induces work reshoring, depriving digital sectors in global South countries of foreign capital and income. This can already be observed in global South countries' IT sectors.

In sum, the AI-economy raises serious concerns about rising regional inequalities within and across countries which are not well-understood as yet. The proposed panel session will bring together leading international scientists to discuss these challenges as well as appropriate policy measures and implications for future research.

3. Geographies of knowledge and innovations in the restless era of emerging technologies

Session organiser: Johanna Hautala, University of Turku, Finland, **E-mail**: johanna.hautala@utu.fi

This session explores how emerging technologies, such as virtual and augmented reality, AI, robots and digital platforms, are reshaping the geographies of knowledge, innovations, and labor in varying industries and fields of societies. By geographies we mean mobilities, locations, spatialities, relation to place and regional development that offer interesting lenses to analyze knowledge, innovations, and labor.

Emerging technologies are portrayed as a cause and a solution to the uncertainty and restlessness of our era. These technologies emerge in complex institutional, political, and social environments, raising critical questions about power, data sovereignty, and privacy across regions and sectors. They also challenge established practices as they transform work, skill requirements, and regulatory or governance structures. At the same time, technological development holds promises for sustainability by enabling new forms of communication, collaboration, and learning across distances. However, it is necessary to examine who benefits from these technologies and what dependencies their use might create.

We welcome contributions within and beyond human and economic geography to address the following or related questions:

How do these technologies reproduce and transform uneven geographies of work and innovation?How are these technologies applied in innovation and knowledge creation processes? Or across different industries, regions, and sectors of society?What is the impact of these technologies in innovation and knowledge creation processes? Which perspectives and practices do they reinforce or challenge? How are geographies of innovation, knowledge, labor or industries affected by the technologies?What kind of uncertainties do these technologies introduce to the geographies of knowledge and innovations?

4. Capital, Labor, and Supply Chains in Agro-industrial Crises

Session organiser: Trym Daniel Rødvik, University of Oslo, Norway, **E-mail**: t.d.rodvik@globe.uio.no

This panel calls for contributions that explore the transformations within agro-industry amidst various crises – economic, war-related, climatic, zoonotic, and biodiversity-driven. Acknowledging the prevailing scholarly efforts to capture the current conjuncture of interconnected crises and redefine agrarian questions, our focus is rather on providing analyses that delve into concrete situations, shedding light on agro-industry's interfaces with crises and interruptions to accumulation. We encourage submissions that examine agro-industrial reorganization, including the turn to the study of agro-industrial supply chains and their role in changing agrarian relations. We underscore the importance of approaching these industry changes with granularity to better understand specific drivers and reactions to crises. Specifically, we aim to illuminate different classes of capital and labour within agro-industry and the corresponding circuits they navigate. We seek analyses that explore intercapitalist interactions involving both rivalry and collaboration, as well as relations between public authorities and private capital, alongside evolving capital-labor relations in the face of cascading crises. In short, our goal is to facilitate dialogue between research on supply-chain capitalism, global value chains, and agrarian studies amidst an increasing array of globally constituted challenges.

5. „Critical Geographies for an Inclusive Digital Transition“

Session organiser: Bianka Plüschke-Altof, University of Tartu, Estonia, **E-mail**: pluschke@ut.ee

Alongside the green transition, the digital transformation of society stands as one of the defining challenges of our time. Critical studies in the fields of smart rurality, critical digital geographies, and socio-technical exclusions have revealed how current trajectories often reproduce or intensify existing spatial inequalities. Despite growing recognition of the need for a socio-spatially just digital transition, bottom-up and community-driven alternatives remain underdeveloped and understudied. This session responds to this gap by inviting research that interrogates, reimagines, and advances more inclusive pathways toward digital futures. We seek contributions that critically examine how digital systems, platforms, policies, and infrastructures shape everyday life, and how more equitable and participatory forms of digital transformation might be designed and enacted. By foregrounding participatory, community-engaged, and transformative approaches, the session aims to highlight possibilities for reshaping digital transitions in ways that empower marginalized groups, support social innovation, and produce geographies of digital inclusion rather than exclusion. This session invites conceptual, methodological, and empirical work that advances understanding of how to foster a more inclusive, bottom-up, and socio-spatially just digital transition. We welcome insights that challenge dominant narratives of “smartness,” explore alternative models of digital development, or illuminate grounded practices that already offer more just and sustainable digital futures.

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Methodological reflections and case studies on co-producing knowledge for just digital transitions, including participatory action research, community-based approaches, citizen science, and co-design processes.

- Research on system transformation and transformative change toward sustainable, democratic, and inclusive digital transitions (such as e.g. MLP studies or participatory system mappings).

- Alternative conceptions of smart development, smart rurality, and digital transitions grounded in empirical research, especially those that center local knowledge and socio-spatial justice.

- Empirical accounts of digital social innovation, “quiet smartness,” and everyday forms of socio-technical improvisation, including what lessons they offer for reshaping digital trajectories.

- Analyses of power, governance, and inequality in digital transitions, and how these can be reconfigured toward more equitable futures.