

Futures, Frontiers, and New Directions in Economic Geography

Economic geography is entering a period of unusual intellectual and political urgency. Climate disruption, artificial intelligence, platformization, geopolitical rivalry, renewed industrial policy, supply-chain reorganization, financial instability, and widening spatial inequalities are reshaping where and how economic life is organized. At the same time, the field itself is evolving (Barnes and Sheppard 2024, Chebna et al. 2024, Kogler et al. 2023, Martin 2021). Its conceptual landscape is increasingly plural, spanning evolutionary, institutional, relational, political-economic, feminist, decolonial, financial, environmental, and alternative-economy approaches. Recent work suggests that this plurality need not produce fragmentation; rather, it can support an "engaged pluralism" organized around shared problems and bridging concepts (Chu et al. 2024). Realizing that potential, however, requires deliberate and sustained conversation across theoretical, methodological, and geographical boundaries.

We invite economic geographers to take stock of the field's present condition and help articulate its possible futures. We are interested not only in what economic geography studies, but also in how it constructs its objects of inquiry, whose knowledge it values, what futures it makes imaginable, and what forms of public and policy engagement it should pursue. Gong (2024) argues that the field must treat futures as a serious object of inquiry rather than relying primarily on explanations derived from the past. Naylor and Thayer (2022), meanwhile, challenge economic geographers to confront colonial power in knowledge production and to take marginalized ways of knowing seriously in both research and practice.

This session is sponsored by the **International Geographical Union (IGU) Commission on the Dynamics of Economic Spaces (CDES)**, which promotes international research collaboration and theoretical, methodological, and empirical innovation in economic geography. Consistent with the Commission's mission, the session seeks to foster dialogue across diverse geographical contexts, intellectual traditions, and research approaches while advancing a more internationally connected and inclusive research agenda.

To encourage exchange rather than a sequence of conventional conference papers, the session will use a rapid-fire format. Each invited participant will deliver a five-minute presentation using no more than five slides, centered on a single proposition about the present or future of economic geography. Speakers might identify a concept that no longer travels well, present an empirical signal of a major transformation, propose a methodological experiment, challenge an established scale or category, or identify an institutional change the field should pursue. We suggest the following slide structure:

- (1) Proposition,
- (2) Evidence or example,
- (3) Concept or assumption under strain,
- (4) Future research question or method
- (5) One action for the field.

The short presentations will be followed by an extended moderated panel and audience discussion. The aim is not to establish a single definition or agenda but rather to identify points of convergence, productive disagreement, and opportunities for collaboration. A discussant will synthesize recurring themes and tensions before opening the floor, with particular attention to how competing explanations can inform common research questions, comparative projects, teaching practices, and interventions beyond the university in diverse settings. The discussion will seek to identify concrete priorities for a shared international research agenda and network.

Submission Information

Please submit:

- A proposed title
- A 150-200 word description of your intervention
- A one-sentence takeaway
- Your name, affiliation, career stage, and contact information

to Prof. C. Patrick Heidkamp (heidkampc1@southernct.edu) and Dr. Marcello Graziano (mgraziano3@binghamton.edu) by October 10th, 2026.

Proposals will be selected to create a diverse panel across topics, approaches, career stages, and geographical perspectives. Accepted participants must commit to the five-slide, five-minute presentation format and to participating in the full discussion.

Barnes, T.J. and Sheppard, E. (2024). Economic Geography. In International Encyclopedia of Geography (eds D. Richardson, N. Castree, M.F. Goodchild, A. Kobayashi, W. Liu and R.A. Marston). doi:10.1002/9781118786352.wbieg0844.

Chebna, C., Evenhuis, E., & Morales, D. (2024). Economic geography and planetary boundaries: Embracing the planet's uncompromising call to action. *Progress in Economic Geography*, 2(2), 100021. doi:10.1016/j.peg.2024.100021.

Chu, H., Hassink, R., and Yilmaz, S. (2024). "Fragmented or engaged pluralism in economic geography?" *Progress in Human Geography*, 48(3), 247–274. doi:10.1177/03091325231219697.

Gong, H. (2024). "Futures should matter (more): Toward a forward-looking perspective in economic geography." *Progress in Human Geography*, 48(3), 292–315. doi:10.1177/03091325231224434.

Kogler, D. F., Evenhuis, E., Giuliani, E., Martin, R., Uyarra, E., and Boschma, R. (2023). "Re-imagining evolutionary economic geography." *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 16(3), 373–390. doi:10.1093/cjres/rsad029.

Martin, R. (2021). Putting the case for a pluralistic economic geography. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 21(1), 1–28. doi:10.1093/jeg/lbaa025.

Naylor, L., and Thayer, N. (2022). "Between paranoia and possibility: Diverse economies and the decolonial imperative." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 47(3), 791–805. doi:10.1111/tran.12534