

## **Proposal for a special session for the 5<sup>th</sup> Geography of Innovation conference, 2019**

### **Title:**

Geography and Intangibles

### **Organizers:**

Carolina Castaldi (Eindhoven University of Technology, NL)

Valentina Meliciani (University LUISS, Roma, IT)

### **Topic:**

Economists and geographers alike are stressing that the fate of cities, regions and countries are increasingly tight to their intangible capital and to the extent that they can leverage intangible rather than tangible assets (Haskel and Westlake, 2018). Intangibles include a whole range of different elements, from R&D and software to design, branding and organizational capital. Hence they cover both technological and non-technological elements.

There are different ways in which the geography of intangibles matters. In the first place, intangibles and their specific properties are the very reason why urban environments thrive. The shift towards intangible investment by companies has also been linked to rising inequalities across firms and across space. Relatedly, firms and countries with higher intangible investment manage to occupy a stronger position in global value chains (Chen et al., 2018; Milberg and Winkler, 2013).

This session welcomes contributions that aim at further discussing, defining and problematizing the geography of intangibles, with the possibility of defining an emerging theme for further development in the community.

We welcome contributions on (but not limited to) the following issues:

- Conceptualizing the role of intangibles at different geographical levels
- Measuring intangible assets of regions and countries using novel data sources
- Linking intangibles to debates on spatial inequalities
- Analyzing the role of intangible assets in value appropriation along global value chains at different geographical levels
- Bridging the discourse on intangibles and key discourses within geography, e.g. the one on the role of creative industries or service sectors.

### **References**

Chen, W., Los, B., & Timmer, M. P. (2018). *Factor incomes in global value chains: The role of intangibles* (No. w25242). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Haskel, J., & Westlake, S. (2018). *Capitalism without capital: the rise of the intangible economy* (p. 278). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Milberg, W., Winkler, D. (2013) *Outsourcing economics. Global value chains in capitalist development*. Cambridge University Press, New York.