

Geography of Innovation Conference, Jan 29-31 2020, Stavanger, Norway

Special Session Title: Digital Platform Geographies

This session brings together scholarship on the spatial implications and economic geography of the increasingly pervasive digital platform economy. The term digital platform economy refers to economic activity enabled through digitization in which the production of a good or service is not dependent on ownership of the means of production, but rather on the development of a digital network that provides a matching service. The platform economy is made possible through digitization, the widespread adoption / saturation of smartphones, and the ubiquity of the internet. In the platform economy, firms profit through the monetization of underused resources, such as property and vehicles. As a result of digitization, platform economy firms can scale rapidly, make minimal local investment and cause significant local disruption. The digital platform economy and the associated geographies arising as a result of its proliferation present opportunities and challenges for cities, places and people. Over a relatively short period of time, the platform economy has demonstrated that it has the potential to: support both outsized and micro-scale entrepreneurship; to raise significant structural challenges related to the future of work; alter the ways in which governments respond to new industries and innovation through policy and regulatory tools; and to impact the quality of life and economic opportunity in cities and communities – both those that form central places of investment in the platform economy and those left behind. The papers presented in this session represent a range of perspectives on the platform economy, assess its uneven spatial impacts and the role of policy in addressing its influence on cities, firms, space and people. Research presented in this session is funded through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Sumitomo Foundation and the Urban Studies Foundation.

Papers:

Shauna Brail (University of Toronto) & Betsy Donald (Queen's University), Global Geographies of Ride-Hailing's Unicorns

Shiri Breznitz (University of Toronto), Should I stay or should I go? Analyzing the mobility of crowdfunding entrepreneurs

Betsy Donald (Queen's University) & Shauna Brail (University of Toronto), Platform Urbanism: Shifting Values, Disrupting Communities?

Katie Wells (Georgetown University), From Entrepreneurialism to Uberization: Urban Governance in the Age of Apps

Masaru Yarime (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, University College London, and The University of Tokyo), Smart Cities as Platforms for Cyber-Physical Systems