

Regional Science Dialogues for Peace
and Sustainable Development

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Special Session Proposal

The Technological Turmoil of the XXI Century: spatial dynamics and the “no person and no place behind” approaches

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Abstract

Technology has been booming in recent years, generating a deep economic and social transformations determined by an accelerated digitization in all areas and the 4.0 Industrial Revolution. Business models, economic and governance systems, social relations, models of democracy, or people's lives are changing in ways unimaginable until a few years ago. Although know authors like Richard Florida, Edward Glaeser, or Saskia Sassen had anticipated these transformations, initial scenarios are “become more real” and disturbed by major pandemics and wars that precipitate changes, different from what they were initially anticipated. Neither the theoretical developments nor the public policies manage to surprise the entire complexity of these dynamics, to become more anticipatory and to generate contexts, tools and approaches for building a more resilient world, able to optimally exploit the huge potential of development and social progress of these technological developments.

Important risks are associated with social and ethical aspects, and with the perspective of spatial and individual inequalities. In recent decades, at the global level (for example, the SDGs), in all countries over the world, including in EU, different dimensions of inequalities have increased, especially in periods of crisis, despite a constant interest and, in some cases, of systematic policies focused on convergence. For this reason, even in the most

developed and liberal economies, public policies have become more and more social, more and more focused on inclusion and targeted on peripheral

areas. In the new context of the technological turmoil of the XXI Century, complex dynamics between people and between places, institutions and technologies can amplify already existing disparities. Thus, winning areas and people will move together with losing areas and people, in a more unequal society and economy at individual, local, regional, national, and international level. Institutions and policies have to anticipate these dynamics and is expected to become more responsive, more focused on “levelling up” and “left behind places and people”.

The aim of this special session is to report from a regional science perspective what is happening not only in central developed places but also in more remote and detached communities around Europe, on the spatial effects of the technological turmoil, with a special interest on inequalities trends and policy responses.

Potential topics, but not limited to, could be: digital transformation/new technologies (DT&NT) and inequalities; peripheral areas challenges; how the DT&NT will reshape the markets, the business environment, the specialization and competitiveness patterns, the work landscape in a core- periphery perspective?; crisis and digital divide trends; institutions, growth and digital transition; disadvantages groups and people and integrative approaches; resilience-based policies; catching/levelling up and “left behind places and people” strategies and policies; citizen science and citizen-based policy making approaches.