

## **Call for Papers: Critical Perspectives on Urban Political Economy Conference, 26-27 May 2025, Turku, Finland**

In the wake of intensified global crises—economic, ecological, social, and political—recent critical urban political economy literature has sought to dissect the evolving dynamics of urbanization under neoliberal capitalism and uncertainties of futures. The intersection of urbanization, financialization, ecological transformations, displacement and migration, and urban movements has emerged as a focal point in understanding the complexities of contemporary urban governance and development. We invite submissions for a conference dedicated to critical explorations of *Urban Political Economy*, with a special focus on housing, financialization, new forms of urban entrepreneurialism, urban social resilience and urban movements in the context of climate and economic crises. The conference welcomes papers that scrutinize the contemporary dynamics of financialized forms of neoliberal urban transformations within the cities from critical perspectives looking into new risks, new forms of self-organisations, such as commons, grassroots logics of urban development.

We welcome theoretical, empirical, and methodological contributions that engage with the following themes:

### **Conceptual Dimensions of Urban Political Economy**

This theme seeks to advance innovative approaches to theorizing the political economy of cities and urbanised regions and territories. What are the new or refined concepts and conceptual tools needed to analyze the relationships between cities and capitalism? Contributions might explore the interplay between global and local processes, the role of the state in urban transformations, or the intersections of financialization, ecological imperatives, and spatial justice. Contributions might explore the interplay between the different *scales* of urban development (global, regional, local), the *roles* of state and capital and invisible actors in urban transformations, or the intersections of socio-spatial and economic *processes* in the cities, such as neoliberal and capitalist developments, crises-driven urban transformations, and community tactical appropriation of urban space. Papers should either revisit classical urban political economy theories to critically evaluate their relevance in addressing contemporary challenges, or propose innovative theoretical frameworks that address novel urban complexities in an interdisciplinary and holistic manner.

### **Urban Entrepreneurialism**

Urban entrepreneurialism, marked by city branding, place-making, and competition for global capital, continues to reshape cities worldwide. This theme invites papers that analyze the practices, policies, and discourses underpinning urban competitiveness. How do cities navigate the pressures of global markets while addressing local needs? What are the alternatives for the capitalist mode of urban economy and urban entrepreneurialism, e.g. sharing and network economy, community-based entrepreneurialism? Contributions might examine specific strategies such as public-private partnerships, mega-events, and large-scale urban development projects, such as waterfront redevelopment, infrastructure investments; and emerging alternatives to capitalist-based entrepreneurialism. We also welcome proposals that critically interrogate the consequences of entrepreneurial governance, including the deepening of socio-economic inequalities and the transformation of urban spaces into commodities for speculation.

## **Political Economy of Housing: Housing Crisis**

The political economy of housing and its profound impact on affordability and accessibility are pressing global concerns. This theme calls for papers that critically examine how housing is shaped by the flows of global capital and state policies under financialization including the main drivers of this process and also the alternative economic modes of housing production by different social groups pursuing a variety of political values. Topics might include the role of new actors, such as real estate investment trusts, the privatization of public housing, financialization of rental and student housing, role of the state, green gentrification, speculative developments housing cooperatives, self-built experimental housing, temporary uses of housing, and sustainable housing.

## **Urban Climate Politics and Green Finance**

As cities grapple with the mounting challenges of climate change, urban responses have increasingly centered on the adoption of green financial instruments such as green bonds, carbon credits, sustainable infrastructure funds, as well as circular transition policy incentives, and as well as circular transition policy incentives. This theme invites critical perspectives on whether these tools effectively mitigate environmental crises or primarily serve to expand capitalist accumulation by commodifying environmental concerns and creating new markets for investment. Contributions could explore how these mechanisms reshape urban governance, deepen socio-spatial inequalities, and disproportionately impact marginalized communities. We also welcome papers that propose alternative, equitable, and democratic models for addressing urban climate challenges, and explore emergent place-based circular practices, explore emergent place-based circular practices, highlighting the intersections between ecological imperatives, social justice, and critical urban political economy.

## **Urban Movements and Justice**

Amid rising urban inequalities and displacement, grassroots movements have emerged as powerful actors challenging neoliberal urban projects and advocating for spatial justice. From housing activism to climate justice campaigns, scholarship explores how collective resistance not only challenges financialized urban processes but also generates new forms of knowledge, solidarity, and visions for just urban futures. This theme welcomes papers that analyze the strategies, successes, and challenges of urban movements. How do these movements resist financialization and privatization, what kinds of democratic, inclusive, horizontal formats of urban action they invent, and how do they articulate alternative visions of the city? Contributions might explore the dynamics of coalition-building, the role of activist research, urban commoning practices, and the influence of global justice movements on local urban struggles. Papers that investigate the intersections of urban movements with issues of race, gender, and ecology are particularly welcome.

## **Conference Features**

### **Keynote Speakers**

[Prof. Dr. Yuri Albert Kyrill Kazepov](#), International Urban Sociology and Compared Welfare Systems at the Department of Sociology

[Prof. Dr. Päivi Kymäläinen](#), Unit of Social Research and [STUE](#) (Sustainable Transformation of Urban Environments), Tampere University

## **Collaborative Breakout Groups**

A dedicated slot for participants to engage in smaller groups to exchange ideas, discuss common research interests, and explore potential collaborations.

## **City Excursions**

Organized tours showcasing local urban dynamics, providing participants with an opportunity to experience the conference themes in situ.

## **Abstract Submission**

The abstract submission deadline is **15 March 2025**. Please submit an abstract of no more than 300 words, along with a brief bio, to <https://shorturl.at/mU0ha>

We look forward to bringing together scholars, practitioners, and activists for an engaging dialogue on the pressing issues of urban political economy.

For further inquiries, please contact us:

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## **Conference Organizers**

Dr. Özlem Celik, TIAS & Department of Social Research, University of Turku, Co-Director of NUPE

Prof. Dr. Martin Cloonan, Director of TIAS, University of Turku

Prof. Dr. Panu Lehtovuori, Architecture Department & Director of TURNS, Tampere University

Dr. Xin Liu, TIAS & Art History, Musicology and Media Studies, University of Turku

Dr. Oleksandro Nenko, TIAS & Degree Programme in Digital Culture, Landscape and Cultural Heritage, University of Turku

[Turku Institute for Advanced Studies](#) (TIAS)

[Tampere Urban Research Network for Sustainability](#) (TURNS)

[Nordic Urban Political Economy Network](#) (NUPE)