

Call for Papers

Nothing Stays as It Is?

Political Economy Transformations in Hard Times

Conference of the DVPW Section Political Economy

September 18 and 19, 2025

Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz

Our societies are undergoing multiple transformation processes that will fundamentally change economies and social structures. Rapid developments in digitalization and artificial intelligence are transforming labor markets, established business models, and political communication. The climate crisis necessitates profound ecological transformations of the economy as well as adaptation measures to mitigate global warming. Meanwhile, new geopolitical conflicts are driving increased investment in security, while geoeconomic changes foster protectionism and intensify the rivalry between the USA, China, and the EU.

As diverse as these changes are, they all generate distributive conflicts for which policymakers lack “well-rehearsed” solutions. At the same time, these transformations intersect with political systems that are undergoing radical shifts themselves. Increasingly fragmented party systems, the rise of the radical right, and the declining influence of trade unions are reshaping the conditions under which political representation takes place and these new challenges are addressed.

Political economy provides critical insights into the causes and consequences of these multifaceted transformations. The upheavals—reshaping the relationships between state and market, democracy and capitalism—impact the core areas of our discipline. We therefore invite proposals in the fields of international and comparative political economy that engage with these contemporary challenges.

Submissions may, for example, explore one of the following questions: Where do the (financial, political, or social) resources to manage these transformations come from? What distributive effects and conflicts arise from these transformations, for example in digitalization, social security, labor markets, or geoeconomics? At which political levels—local, national, or supranational—can the effects of these upheavals be most effectively addressed? What are the consequences of (long-term) intensified distributive conflicts for political representation processes, and how do they influence the rise of authoritarianism and populism? What role do increasing political inequality and unequal participation play in the (successful) management of transformations? Who has access to decision-making about the upheavals of our time, and who is excluded?

In addition to the deliberately broad overarching theme, submissions on other topics are also explicitly welcome. The conference aims to bring together and represent the discipline in its full breadth and plurality.

Proposals are possible in two formats:

- (a) Individual papers: Paper abstract with a maximum of 250 words
- (b) Panels: Panel abstract with a maximum of 100 words plus 3-4 abstracts with a maximum of 250 words for thematically related papers

Please send your topic proposals in German or English to polecon@dvpw.de by February 15, 2025. The decision on acceptance will be made by March 10, 2025.

Logistical details:

The conference will take place at Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz. A small participation fee will be charged to cover catering costs during the conference. We are trying to raise funds to support travel and accommodation costs for early-career researchers without their own funding.