Doctoral Day

2025

University of Antwerp
Faculty of Business and Economics

Antwerp Management School

FBE DOCTORAL DAY

Faculty of Business and Economics & Antwerp Management School
21 October 2025
Cloister of the Grauwzusters, Lange Sint-Annastraat 7, Antwerp

Table of contents

PROGRAMME

9:15-9:40	Registration
9:40-10:00	Word of welcome by Prof. Dr. Annouk Lievens Vice-Dean Research & Chair of the Research Committee Word of welcome by Prof. Dr. Marc Deloof Chair of the Faculty Doctoral Committee **Patio**
10:00-12:00	Parallel sessions In each session, 3 to 4 PhD students present their paper, afterwards the paper is discussed by a PhD colleague
12:00-13:00	Lunch **Patio**
13:00-14:30	Parallel sessions In each session, 3 PhD students present their paper, afterwards the paper is discussed by a PhD colleague
14:30-15:15	Presentations nominees Best Paper Award 1. *Beyond wages: The child penalty in retirement savings* Inés Guillemyn 2. *Housing market responses to mandatory flood risk disclosure* Xianglin Sun 3. *Evaluation of Parental Reports as a Proxy for Their Children's Food Preferences* Natalia Torres Velderráin **Promotion room**
15:15-15:45	Coffee break **Patio**
15:45-16:45	Parallel workshops (upfront registration) 1. *Publishing and reviewing* Patrick De Pelsmacker **Promotion room** 2. *Staying Sane: Stress and Work-Life Balance as a PhD Researcher* Brecht Polspoel **Chapel** 3. *How do Large Language Models (LLMs) really work, and what do they mean for academic research?* Luna De Bruyne **S.004**
16:45-17:00	Best Paper Award ceremony **Patio**
17:00-18:00	Reception **Patio**

SESSION SCHEDULE – MORNING SESSIONS

(A=paper in advanced stage / P=paper in preliminary stage)

SESSION 1 – S.107

CHAIR: JAN ANNAERT

10:00	Presenter: Agostinho Cussomba Discussant: Anand Radhakrishnan	Informal Financing for new business venture as a Response to Formal Credit Barriers: Empirical evidence from Angolan street vendor's Perceptions (A)
10:30	Presenter: Anand Radhakrishnan Discussant: Bart Depaemelaere	Policy-on-Grid Optimization (PGO) – A new composite optimization framework for determining an optimal asset allocation in Goals-based wealth management (A)
11:00	Presenter: Bart Depaemelaere Discussant: Xianglin Sun	Signal Confusion or Clarity – Fund Behaviour and ESG Alignment in the Wake of SFDR (P)
11:30	Presenter: Xianglin Sun Discussant: Agostinho Cussomba	Housing market responses to mandatory flood risk disclosure (A)

SESSION 2 – S. 106.1

CHAIR: ANN JORISSEN

10:00	Presenter: Celine Goetzelmann Discussant: Jasper Daans	Sustaining Success: the Vital Dimensions of Performance Management Systems for Sustainable Transformation in Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (P)
10:30	Presenter: Chonreutai Tawitaranond Discussant: Lisa Martinez Sanchez	Mapping the Stakeholders of Digital Marketing Ecosystem for Strong Sustainability: A Multi-Level Perspective Incorporating Non-Human Actors (P)
11:00	Presenter: Jasper Daans Discussant: Chonreutai Tawitaranond	Green Identity, Green Values, and Revealed Preferences (A)
11:30	Presenter: Lisa Martinez Sanchez Discussant: Celine Goetzelmann	Organizational capabilities for sustainability-oriented innovation in multi-stakeholder networks: An integrative framework and future research agenda (A)

SESSION 3 – S.004

CHAIR: JOOST HINTJENS

10:00	Presenter: Emilia O'Neill Discussant: Denise Beil	Bridging the gap: exploring international technology transfer opportunities in inland navigation (P)
10:30	Presenter: Fares Abu Dayyeh Discussant: Lorenzo Franchi	Simulation of Intermodal Freight Transport Enhancements at Aqaba Port: Evaluating Operational, Economic, and Environmental Impacts (P)
11:00	Presenter: Katelyn Tahaney Discussant: Yulinda Tarigan	Methods and Models for Freight Mode Choice in Port-Hinterland Connections: A Review (P)
11:30	Presenter: Marie Cryns Discussant: Pieter Deleye	Market uptake and innovation adoption of inland waterway transport technologies: integrating TAM, TRL, and MRL frameworks (P)

SESSION 4 – S.106.2		CHAIR: CHRISTA SYS
10:00	Presenter: Ahmed AlSalfiti Discussant: Carlos Granada	Evaluating Customer Satisfaction with Clearing and Forwarding Agents: A SERVQUAL Approach with Application to Kuwait Shuwaikh Port (A)
10:30	Presenter: Athos Carlos Silva Discussant: Ahmed AlSalfiti	Anticipating the Future of Infrastructure: Applying the Future-Based View to Strategic Planning in the Brazilian Federal Government (A)
11:00	Presenter: Stijn Michielsen Discussant: Irine Putri Pratiwi	Mapping Power Shifts in the Global Postal-Parcel Ecosystem: An Industry-Architecture Analysis of Posts, Integrators, and E-commerce Platforms (A)
11:30	Presenter: Carlos Granada Discussant: Thi Minh Nguyet Nguyen	Spatial and transportation dynamics of Dark Kitchens: Disruptive On-demand Food Service Establishments (A)

SESSION 5 – CHAPEL		CHAIR: KIM DE MEULENAERE
10:00	Presenter: Arne Cobben Discussant: Nina Marien	Legitimacy in Crises (A)
10:30	Presenter: Evert Van Look Discussant: Arne Cobben	External certification and financial reporting quality in the nonprofit sector (P)
11:00	Presenter: Marie Van Hauwaert Discussant: Evert Van Look	The Global Diffusion of B Corp Certifications: An Institutional Dissent Perspective (A)
11:30	Presenter: Nina Marien Discussant: Justin Young	From Crowds to Boards: the Impact of Equity Crowdfunding on Board Size (A)

SESSION 6 – CORRIDORS		CHAIR: JEROEN CANT
10:00	Presenter: James Hinns Discussant: Maria Cristina Hinojosa Lee	Aggregating Local Saliency Maps for Semi-Global Explainable Image Classification (A)
10:30	Presenter: Manfred Meyering Discussant: James Hinns	The Application of Artificial Intelligence in Manufacturing Value Stream Analysis: A Case Study of an AI-Assistant at a German Automotive Supplier (P)
11:00	Presenter: Maria Cristina Hinojosa Lee Discussant: Mateusz Cedro	The Glassbox: BERT in equations (P)
11:30	Presenter: Mateusz Cedro Discussant: Ernesto Anguita Roldán	Cash or Comfort? How LLMs Value Your Inconvenience (A)

SESSION 7 – PROMOTION ROOM		CHAIR: STEFFI WEIL
10:00	Presenter: Inés Guillemyn Discussant: Daniel Tögl	Beyond wages: The child penalty in retirement savings (P)
10:30	Presenter: Natalia Torres Velderráin Discussant: Syed-Mujtaba Masroor	Evaluation of Parental Reports as a Proxy for Their Children’s Food Preferences (A)
11:00	Presenter: Joseph Puthenpurackal Chakko Discussant: Yifan He	Design Principles to Empirical Validation: Operationalizing Portfolio Agility Design Principles (P)

SESSION SCHEDULE – AFTERNOON SESSIONS

(A=paper in advanced stage / P=paper in preliminary stage)

SESSION 8 – S.004		CHAIR: JULIA AMARAL
13:00	Presenter: Oguzhan Erdogan Discussant: Serhat Yüksel	The Cost of Compliance: How NTBs Reshape Global Value Chains (P)
13:30	Presenter: Serhat Yüksel Discussant: Georgios Vasilakis	Industry review of the global integrators' market (P)
14:00	Presenter: Dorinela Munteanu Discussant: Laura De Boom	Export expectations in SMEs: A Configurational Analysis (A)

SESSION 9 – 106.1		CHAIR: TATIANA ZABARA
13:00	Presenter: Chonreutai Tawitaranond Discussant: Ngwa Collins Ngwa	Toward Strong Sustainability in Digital Marketing: A Review of Practices, Ecosystems, and Theoretical Foundations (P)
13:30	Presenter: Giselle Villegas Bourgoing Discussant: Pieter Boghe	Mapping the Landscape of Sustainable Procurement: A Systematic and Scoping Literature Review (P)
14:00	Presenter: Syed-Mujtaba Masroor Discussant: Giselle Villegas Bourgoing	Game Theoretical Analysis of Geological Resources and Subsurface Management: A Systematic Literature Review (A)

SESSION 10 – 106.2		CHAIR: BART CAMBRÉ
13:00	Presenter: Daniel Tögl Discussant: Ronald Kerckhoffs	Inter-team retrospectives in scaled agile programs: An in-depth qualitative analysis at Ascent (P)
13:30	Presenter: Ronald Kerckhoffs Discussant: Thomas Dilger	Equifinality in achieving effectiveness in purpose-oriented municipal networks (A)
14:00	Presenter: Thomas Dilger Discussant: Anna-Lena Müller	Assessing Healthcare Governance: Scoping Systematic Literature Review (P)

SESSION 11 – CORRIDORS		CHAIR: SVEN BUYLE
13:00	Presenter: Danilo Coelho Discussant: Muna Khoury	A Cut Above the Rest: What Sets Top Performers Apart from Others at Work (P)
13:30	Presenter: Muna Khoury Discussant: Riyaad Ismail	Commitment at Risk: Unpacking the Ethical Consequences of Chronic Job Insecurity in Turbulent Contexts (A)
14:00	Presenter: Nathalie Verboven Discussant: Lisa Janssens	How does organizational history influence de facto autonomy? — The Case of Flemish Museums (P)

SESSION 12 – PROMOTION ROOM		CHAIR: KENNETH SÖRENSEN
13:00	Presenter: Omar Elsherif Discussant: Freek Van Doninck	A Systematic Review of Vehicle Routing Problem for Grocery Delivery Domain (P)
13:30	Presenter: Vincent Van Bockstaele Discussant: Omar Elsherif	Matching supply and demand in air cargo routing: A novel optimisation approach (A)
14:00	Presenter: Yubing Lei Discussant: Monisha Punith	The role of logistics factors in consumers' shopping channel choices (P)

SESSION 13 – CHAPEL		CHAIR: TOM VAN CANEGHEM
13:00	Presenter: Adriana Oliveres Mallol Discussant: Pierre Nkou Mananga	Village banks, rural livelihoods and gender inequalities in Malawi (P)
13:30	Presenter: Elias Maombi Ndatabaye Discussant: Goran Milivojevic	Public Lighting and Crime: Evidence from Goma, Eastern DRC (P)
14:00	Presenter: Pierre Nkou Mananga Discussant: Oberon De Deurwaerder	Tail-Risk Transmission in Financial Networks: A Cross-Quantilogram Analysis of the South African Financial Ecosystem (P)

PARALLEL WORKSHOPS

Publishing and reviewing

Patrick De Pelsmacker, University of Antwerp, Faculty of Business and Economics

The purpose of the workshop is to provide guidelines, tips and tricks, do's and don'ts when preparing a paper for submission to an academic journal and when performing a peer review of a paper that was submitted for publication.

Attention will be devoted to demonstrating relevance and fleshing out the contribution of an article, developing a conceptual framework, research questions and hypotheses, developing and describing a research method and the results of empirical work, and writing a compelling discussion section. The purpose of peer reviewing will be explained, and the duties and tasks of an academic peer reviewer will be discussed. All these principles and guidelines will be illustrated by means of real-life examples.

Participants are expected to actively contribute to the discussion and are invited to share their own publishing and reviewing issues with the other participants.

Staying Sane: Stress and Work-Life Balance as a PhD Researcher

Brecht Polspoel, University of Antwerp, Study Advice and Student Counselling Service

Doing a PhD can be exciting, but also mentally exhausting. Long periods of uncertainty, isolation, performance pressure and blurry work-life boundaries can wear down even the most passionate researcher. In this session we explore how you can take care of your mental health while navigating the ups and downs of academia. Through examples and practical tools, we'll discuss how to recognize and manage stress, build healthier boundaries, and maintain a more balanced relationship with your work. This session is not about "doing more" or "fixing yourself", but about finding ways to stay grounded and connected, even in the messiness of academic life.

Dr. Brecht Polspoel is student counselor at UAntwerp. Students can contact him for both study guidance, study choice guidance, and psychological guidance (e.g., stress, anxiety, self-confidence). Brecht Polspoel has a degree in clinical orthopedagogue (KULeuven, 2015) and is doctor of pedagogical sciences (KULeuven, 2019).

How do Large Language Models (LLMs) really work, and what do they mean for academic research?

Luna De Bruyne, Faculty of Arts, Department of Linguistics

How do Large Language Models (LLMs) really work, and what do they mean for academic research? This talk highlights their potential to simplify literature review, support writing, enable content analysis, and automate routine tasks, while also exposing the risks of unreliability, bias, and ethical challenges. Attendees will leave with a clear-eyed view of both the promise and the pitfalls of using generative AI in academic research.

LIST OF ABSTRACTS

Simulation of Intermodal Freight Transport Enhancements at Aqaba Port: Evaluating Operational, Economic, and Environmental Impacts

Fares Abu Dayyeh

This study aims to develop and apply an integrated Discrete-Event Simulation–Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (DES–MCDA) framework to systematically evaluate the operational, economic, and environmental impacts of targeted technological and process improvements at Aqaba Port.

The research will be conducted through the following specific objectives:

1. Identify and quantitatively assess the principal operational inefficiencies affecting Aqaba Port's intermodal freight handling system.
2. Construct and validate a high-fidelity DES model that accurately represents current port operations and workflows.
3. Simulate and evaluate three strategic modernization scenarios:

· Electrification of quay crane operations

· Replacement of diesel-powered rubber-tired gantry (RTG) cranes with battery-electric alternatives

· Implementation of an integrated digital single-window customs clearance system

4. Conduct comparative analysis of baseline and intervention scenarios using multidimensional KPIs, including vessel and cargo lead times, cost per TEU, equipment utilization efficiency, CO_2 emissions reduction, and stakeholder-centric evaluation through MCDA.
5. Synthesize findings to propose an optimized, evidence-based modernization pathway that balances operational feasibility with maximal impact. (back to session overview)

Evaluating Customer Satisfaction with Clearing and Forwarding Agents: A SERVQUAL Approach with Application to Kuwait Shuwaikh Port

Ahmed Alsalfiti, *Theo Notteboom*

This study investigated the influence of service quality on customer satisfaction with clearing and forwarding C&F agents using the SERVQUAL model. C&F agents play a crucial role in facilitating the clearance and delivery of goods for businesses, and their service quality is heavily dependent on port operations. This research employs a quantitative approach, using survey data from 397 customers of C&F agents in Kuwait to examine the relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. This study analyses the five SERVQUAL dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Although the correlation analysis shows that all dimensions were statistically significant for customer satisfaction, the regression results reveal that assurance was not significant. Tangibles emerged as the most influential factor, followed by empathy, reliability, and responsiveness. This research contributes to the academic literature and practical industry knowledge by addressing the gap in understanding service quality dynamics in Kuwait's C&F sector. The findings provide valuable insights for industry professionals seeking to enhance service quality and improve customer satisfaction. This study focused on Shuwaikh Port, but it establishes a foundation for future research across other ports and suggests the adoption of mixed-method approaches for a more comprehensive analysis. The results offer practical recommendations for improving C&F services and maintaining competitiveness in this vital sector. (back to session overview)

Cash or Comfort? How LLMs Value Your Inconvenience

Mateusz Cedro*, Sofie Goethals, Yifan He, James Hinns, Timour Ichmoukhamedov, David Martens*

Large Language Models (LLMs) are increasingly proposed as near-autonomous artificial intelligence (AI) agents capable of making everyday decisions on behalf of humans. Although LLMs perform well on many technical tasks, their behaviour in personal decision-making remains less understood. Previous studies have assessed their rationality and moral alignment with human decisions. However, the behaviour of AI assistants in scenarios where financial rewards are at odds with user comfort has not yet been thoroughly explored. In this paper, we tackle this problem by quantifying the prices assigned by multiple LLMs to a series of user discomforts: additional walking, waiting, hunger and pain. We uncover several key concerns that strongly question the prospect of using current LLMs as decision-making assistants: (1) a large variance in responses between LLMs, (2) within a single LLM, responses show fragility to minor variations in prompt phrasing (e.g., reformulating the question in the first person can considerably alter the decision), (3) LLMs can accept unreasonably low rewards for major inconveniences (e.g., 1 Euro to wait 10 hours), and (4) LLMs can reject monetary gains where no discomfort is imposed (e.g., 1,000 Euro to wait 0 minutes). These findings emphasize the need for scrutiny of how LLMs value human inconvenience, particularly as we move toward applications where such cash-versus-comfort trade-offs are made on users' behalf. (back to session overview)

Legitimacy in Crises

*Sascha Albers, **Arne Cobben**, Hugo Marynissen*

This paper asks what happens to organizations when their institutional frameworks seize to be reliable indicators of legitimate behaviour, and uses the example of rare crises as situations where that may be the case: events that are so confounding to the ability to make sense of the current environment (cf. Weick, 1993), that they render the reference framework as an unreliable representation of what the field considers appropriate behaviour. Our aim is to better understand how and why these situations affect and distort our shared understanding on what can be considered appropriate, and how such a situation would affect an organization's ability to act legitimate. This conceptual article introduces and develops the concept of 'institutional suspension' to reflect a state in which actors suspend the use of their usual guiding frameworks. Using this concept, we theorize on how such a state would affect the legitimacy assessment cycle (Siraz et al. 2023) and the formation of legitimacy judgements. We conclude by outlining that, while such a state can create severe challenges for maintaining organizational legitimacy, it temporarily offers novel opportunities for organizations to influence the standards by which legitimacy is judged. Our work contributes to a better understanding of how rare crises can challenge shared understandings on appropriateness within a field and the effects that has on organizational legitimacy. (back to session overview)

A Cut Above the Rest: What Sets Top Performers Apart from Others at Work

Danilo Coelho

While many individuals contribute meaningfully at work, a small subset delivers exceptional results and stands out from the rest. Despite growing recognition of these "top performers", research has offered limited insight into the mechanisms that drive and sustain their exceptional contributions. Drawing on in-depth interviews with 30 senior leaders across industries and geographies, we theorize top performance as a dynamic system in which three enabling conditions — broad strategic cognition, a proactive growth orientation, and contextual leverage — give rise to a distinctive behavioural repertoire: driving impactful change, elevating others, and acting with values-driven conduct. These behaviours, in turn, reinforce the very conditions that support them, creating recursive feedback loops that amplify their impact over time. Our findings advance theory by (1) conceptualizing top performance as a self-reinforcing system, (2) explaining how individual behaviours scale to shape team and organizational performance, and (3) positioning top performers as self-authoring agents who actively construct the conditions for enduring contribution. These insights offer practical guidance for organizations to identify, support, and leverage top talent to elevate system-level performance. (back to session overview)

Market uptake and innovation adoption of inland waterway transport technologies: integrating TAM, TRL, and MRL frameworks

***Marie Cryns**, Edwin van Hassel, Thierry Vanelslander*

The inland waterway transport (IWT) sector plays a crucial role in Europe's logistics system, offering a sustainable alternative to road and rail freight. However, the adoption of innovative technologies in the sector remains limited, despite substantial investments through European Union-funded research and development projects. This study investigates the adoption potential of Digital Twin (DT) technologies in the IWT sector by integrating the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) with

Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) and Market Readiness Levels (MRLs). This integrated framework allows for a comprehensive understanding of both user-level acceptance and system-level readiness.
A structured survey was created to assess stakeholder perceptions of DTs based on TAM constructs: Perceived Usefulness (PU), Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), Behavioural Intention (BI), and Actual Use (AU), alongside variables for trust, social influence, facilitating conditions, and perceived TRL and MRL. The survey targets stakeholders across government, industry, academia, and civil society in France, Italy, and Poland. Preliminary results suggest high perceived usefulness of DTs but identify concerns around ease of use and implementation. Additionally, low engagement levels indicate broader adoption challenges related to awareness, relevance, and readiness.
The survey data will be analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and multi-group comparisons. The findings will offer insights into adoption drivers and barriers and provide practical recommendations for improving innovation uptake in the IWT sector. By bridging the gap between technological development and real-world application, this research contributes to more effective deployment of EU-funded innovations. (back to session overview)

Informal Financing for new business venture as a Response to Formal Credit Barriers: Empirical evidence from Angolan street vendor's Perceptions

***Agostinho Cussomba**, Marc Deloof, Niels Hermes*

This study examines how perceived barriers to formal credit and the perceived benefits of informal loans shape financing choices among street vendors in Luanda, Angola. Using logistic regression on survey data from 444 vendors, we find that street vendors who perceive formal financing as inaccessible are 4.65 times more likely to use informal loans, while those valuing informal loans' flexibility show 2.15 times higher odds. These results underscore the dual role of push (exclusion) and pull (utility) factors in driving informal finance reliance, which is critical for understanding financial inclusion and access to credit in Luanda, Angola. We, therefore, propose policy interventions to bridge formal financial gaps while leveraging informal systems' strengths. (back to session overview)

Green Identity, Green Values, and Revealed Preferences

Jasper Daans

This paper develops a non-parametric revealed-preference methodology to link survey data on stated identity and values to structural consumption preferences. Using panel data from the UK Understanding Society Survey, which combines information on environmental attitudes and household consumption, I test whether changes in stated greenness map onto fundamental preference shifts. The analysis shows that two beliefs — whether the crisis is exaggerated and whether individuals believe their own actions matter — are systematically associated with preferences. More broadly, the paper demonstrates how revealed-preference methods can provide a robust framework for connecting stated identity and values to revealed economic behaviour. (back to session overview)

Signal Confusion or Clarity – Fund Behaviour and ESG Alignment in the Wake of SFDR

Bart Depaemelaere

The EU Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR 2021) aims to enhance transparency and limit greenwashing in sustainable investing. Yet, the degree to which it has improved the consistency of sustainability signals remains empirically underexplored (Cremasco & Boni, 2022; Ramos et al., 2023). This study will examine the alignment between SFDR classifications (Articles 6, 8, 9) and external ESG signals, particularly Morningstar's Sustainability Rating, using a panel of UCITS mutual funds available to Belgian investors between 2018 and 2025. Belgium represents a relevant microcosm for this investigation, given its established "Towards Sustainability" label and recent wave of reclassifications – Article 9 funds declined by 31% and Article 8 rose by 11% in 2023-2024 (Ethibel, 2024).
Using a multi-stage empirical design, the study will evaluate signal consistency over time, reclassification patterns, and the influence of asset class and fund characteristics. The methodology includes correlation analysis, ordinal logistic regression, and robustness checks using alternative ESG metrics (Berg et al., 2022).

Grounded in signalling theory and behavioural finance, the research will explore whether SFDR has reduced information asymmetries and encouraged meaningful ESG integration (Busch & Friede, 2018; Horan et al., 2022). We expect stronger alignment in equity funds due to higher ESG data coverage and investor visibility (Bektic et al., 2016).

By identifying gaps between regulatory and market-based signals, the study aims to inform investor decision-making, enhance regulatory understanding, and contribute to the debate on ESG signal reliability and policy design. (back to session overview)

Assessing Healthcare Governance: Scoping Systematic Literature Review

*Bart Cambré, **Thomas Dilger**, Markus Kittler*

Despite its significance, the current state of healthcare governance requires a comprehensive overview. A scoping review can provide an extensive overview of the conceptualization, implementation, and assessment of healthcare governance.

The objective of this review was to map the breadth, scope, and nature of existing literature on healthcare governance, to identify essential concepts, domains, and indicators, and to illuminate distinct research platforms. We undertook a scoping review employing the Extension for Scoping Reviews to ensure a structured methodology Tricco et al. (2018). Electronic databases such as EBSCO, Scopus, and Web of Science were searched. Additionally, Google Scholar and Elicit were utilized to provide an exhaustive overview. Studies of any methodological design that examined healthcare governance at the organizational, national, or system levels were deemed eligible. Data were extracted concerning study characteristics, definitions of governance, domains, and methodologies. A total of 105 studies satisfied the inclusion criteria. The definitions of governance were diverse, frequently highlighting accountability, participation, and regulatory oversight. Common domains were addressed, whereas measurement methodologies varied. Healthcare governance is a complex yet inconsistently defined construct. Existing frameworks underscore certain domains; however, rigorous evaluation methodologies are still not entirely empirical tested. Further research is necessary to develop indicators, assess the governance function, and explore its relationship with health system performance. (back to session overview)

A Systematic Review of Vehicle Routing Problem for Grocery Delivery Domain

***Omar Elsherif**, Kenneth Sörensen, An Caris*

The Vehicle Routing Problem for Grocery Delivery (VRPGD) integrates classical vehicle-routing decisions with the logistical challenges of perishable goods, multi-temperature transport and stringent customer service requirements. This systematic review synthesis insights from 98 peer-reviewed studies (2015–2025). We provide a taxonomy of modelling features, optimization approaches and emerging data-driven techniques, highlighting the shift from static capacitated models to dynamic, sustainability-oriented frameworks. Key research gaps are identified in stochastic demand modelling, collaborative logistics and reinforcement-learning-enhanced metaheuristics. A structured research agenda is proposed to guide future work towards scalable, environmentally responsible grocery-delivery solutions. (back to session overview)

The Cost of Compliance: How NTBs Reshape Global Value Chains

Oguzhan Erdogan

This paper examines how the introduction of non-tariff barriers (NTBs), particularly in the form of regulations and standards, influences firms' task allocation along global value chains (GVCs). Building on a Melitz-style heterogeneous firm framework, I analyse the impact of fixed NTB costs on the GVC integration of exporting firms, as well as the resulting adjustments along the extensive margin. To empirically test the model's predictions, I employ Specific Trade Concerns (STCs) raised at the World Trade Organization as a proxy for stringent measures perceived as potential obstacles to trade. The results indicate that NTB impositions reorient the composition of exports toward downstream goods, raise the unit value of exports, reduce the variety of products available, and increase market concentration in foreign destinations. The effects, however, exhibit substantial heterogeneity across sectors and depend critically on industries' initial positions within the value chain. From a policy perspective, these findings highlight the importance of designing strategies to enhance resilience in critical input sectors and mitigate the heightened risk of supply chain disruptions. (back to session overview)

Sustaining Success: the Vital Dimensions of Performance Management Systems for Sustainable Transformation in Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises

Celine Goetzelmann

The imperative to sustainably transform existing business models is increasingly apparent, driven by the state of the planet and the necessity to align with the United Nations sustainability goals (WWF, 2016). However, a substantial percentage of business model transformations fails (Carlborg et al., 2021; Geissdoerfer et al., 2018; Long et al., 2018). To navigate this process effectively, the implementation of a suitable Performance Management System (PMS) is crucial for monitoring progress and giving clear indicators on what needs to be focused on (Ferreira & Otley, 2009). Small and Medium-size Enterprises, which represent a significant portion of most countries' economies, have a pivotal role in advancing sustainable business models (Takacs et al., 2022). Nevertheless, there is little understanding on how to design and implement a sustainable Performance Management System to support the transformation to a sustainable business model, especially in SMEs where frameworks designed for larger corporations are difficult to apply (Johnson & Schaltegger, 2016). A scoping literature review has identified three variables which play a pivotal role in the success of the transformation to a sustainable business model. Their impact on the sustainable management of performance is still unknown. Therefore a quantitative survey of SMEs which sustainably transformed is conducted to measure this impact. (back to session overview)

Spatial and transportation dynamics of Dark Kitchens: Disruptive On-demand Food Service Establishments

***Carlos Granada**, Carlos A. Gonzalez-Calderon, Ivan Sanchez-Diaz, Ivan Cardenas, Joris Beckers*

Dark kitchens (DKs) act as delivery-only locations that impact last-mile transport demand. This study investigates how DK spatial distribution influences trip lengths, modal splits, and CO2 emissions in on-demand meal delivery (ODMD). The research addresses three sub questions: (RQ1) identification of socioeconomic factors affecting DK distribution across cities, (RQ2) influence of DK dispersion on delivery distances and variance in elasticities due to spatial indicators, and (RQ3) how trip lengths affect courier mode choice and emissions per order. Analysing 2.27 million orders from 2019-2023 in Colombia and Mexico reveals patterns through a spatial match index (SMI) combined with bivariate multifractals and network exposure. Using linear mixed-effects models, the study measures the elasticities of the delivery distance in relation to SMI and applies a discrete choice model to determine the modal splits and emissions. The results are being reviewed, hypothesizing that better DK-population matching will shorten delivery distances and encourage non-motorized transport, reducing emissions per order. The variability in elasticities reflects local inequality and infrastructure. This comprehensive framework offers insight into urban logistics and zoning, crucial for decarbonizing ODMD in urban areas. (back to session overview)

Beyond wages: The child penalty in retirement savings

Inés Guillemyn

In most OECD countries, women have acquired significantly less occupational pension wealth than men. Using administrative data on occupational pension savings in Belgium, this paper estimates the effect of first childbirth and family size on occupational pension participation and savings for the current population at working age. Does the child penalty in wages extend to employer provided pensions? One year after childbirth, mothers experience a loss in pension contributions of 7%. Women's earnings, labour market participation and working hours drop sharply after first childbirth and contribute to the gender gap in occupational pension savings. As these savings are cumulative, a long-term child penalty is inevitable. While there is a clear effect of first childbirth on accumulated pension savings, the marginal effect of having an additional child later in life is small for women.

However, for men, having a third child negatively affects their accumulated pension savings. As their separation rate to the firm increases with the number of children, this decreases their opportunity to contribute to an employer provided pension plan. (back to session overview)

Aggregating Local Saliency Maps for Semi-Global Explainable Image Classification

James Hinns, David Martens

Deep learning dominates image classification tasks, yet understanding how models arrive at predictions remains a challenge. Much research focuses on local explanations of individual predictions, such as saliency maps, which visualise the influence of specific pixels on a model's prediction. However, reviewing many of these explanations to identify recurring patterns is infeasible, while global methods often oversimplify and miss important local behaviours. To address this, we propose Segment Attribution Tables (SATs), a method for summarising local saliency explanations into (semi-)global insights. SATs take image segments (such as "eyes" in Chihuahuas) and leverage saliency maps to quantify their influence. These segments highlight concepts the model relies on across instances and reveal spurious correlations, such as reliance on backgrounds or watermarks, even when out-of-distribution test performance sees little change. SATs can explain any classifier for which a form of saliency map can be produced, using segmentation maps that provide named segments. SATs bridge the gap between oversimplified global summaries and overly detailed local explanations, offering a practical tool for analysing and debugging image classifiers. (back to session overview)

The Glassbox: BERT in equations

Maria Cristina Hinojosa Lee, Johan Springael, Johan Braet

Since its publication in 2018, BERT has become a cornerstone of natural-language processing, but its inner workings remain opaque to many users. This paper aims to open the "black box" by walking through every equation used during the fine-tuning of a BERT-Base model, from the input embeddings to the final AdamW update, while checking each step against real PyTorch outputs. A single worked example follows one sentence through the forward pass (multi-head attention, feed-forward layers) and the backward pass, exposing practical details such as layer-normalization and weight-reshaping rules that the original paper leaves implicit. By aligning theory with tensor-level practice, we turn BERT into a transparent glass box and give researchers the tools to adapt the model with confidence, advancing reproducible science in large-language-model research. (back to session overview)

Equifinality in achieving effectiveness in purpose-oriented municipal networks

Bart Cambré, Niels Karsten, Ronald Kerckhoffs, Joerg Raab

This exploratory study inductively examines configurations of conditions leading to effectiveness in Dutch inter-municipal cooperation networks (WGR). Despite these networks managing up to 50% of municipal spending, empirical understanding of what makes them effective remains limited. We employ a mixed-method approach combining fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) of 44 networks with six in-depth interviews to uncover patterns of effectiveness without imposing predetermined hypotheses.

Our findings reveal strong evidence of equifinality, identifying five distinct configurational paths to network effectiveness (consistency >0.89, solution coverage 0.803). Two primary patterns emerge: (1) Large public entities (>14 members) achieve effectiveness through combinations of formalized strategic decision-making, clear goals, and adequate resources; (2) Smaller voluntary networks succeed through strong resource-goal alignment without extensive formalization. Critically, we find asymmetric causality. While multiple diverse paths lead to effectiveness, only two limited configurations consistently produce ineffectiveness (coverage 0.338), primarily characterized by misalignment between network size and governance capacity.

The study advances network theory in three ways: First, it demonstrates empirically how effectiveness emerges from specific configurations of conditions rather than individual factors. Second, it extends purpose-oriented network theory by revealing how mandatory versus voluntary participation interacts with other conditions rather than directly determining outcomes. Third, it provides practical evidence that network design should prioritize coherent configurations over optimizing isolated elements. These insights offer actionable guidance for the increasingly critical domain of inter-municipal collaboration, where one-size-fits-all approaches prove inadequate. (back to session overview)

Commitment at Risk: Unpacking the Ethical Consequences of Chronic Job Insecurity in Turbulent Contexts

__Muna Khoury__, Ans De Vos, Sofie Jacobs

In regions experiencing chronic socio-political instability, such as the Occupied Palestinian Territory, job insecurity (JI) affects daily work life and threatens ethical norms. This study examines how chronic JI influences counterproductive work behaviours (CWBs), specifically towards organisations (CWB-O) and peers (CWB-I), through psychological and moral mechanisms. Using a two-wave time-lagged dataset from 219 employees in the pharmaceutical sector, we explore the pathways linking JI to CWB-O and CWB-I by testing the mediating roles of affective organisational commitment (AOC) and moral disengagement (MD), and the moderating effects of psychological detachment (PD) and moral reasoning (MR). The results indicate that JI does not directly predict CWBs but significantly reduces AOC, which in turn increases organisational deviance. This indirect relationship is stronger among employees with high PD, suggesting that mental disengagement from work weakens relational bonds. Contrary to expectations, MD did not mediate the JI–CWB link, likely because contextual factors inhibit moral justification. Notably, MR buffered the effects of JI on both forms of CWBs, suggesting that higher levels of ethical reasoning can serve as safeguards under adverse conditions. These findings highlight how JI, emotional ties, and moral judgement shape ethical behaviour under chronic stress, informing HRM in conflict-affected contexts. (back to session overview)

The role of logistics factors in consumers' shopping channel choices

Joris Beckers, __Yubing Lei__

The online retailing market has been growing rapidly, transforming consumers' shopping behaviour and extending their involvement in logistics activities. Although research has shown that last-mile delivery experiences influence consumer satisfaction with online shopping, there is limited understanding of how delivery preferences influence channel choices and the mechanism behind this influence. This study investigates the role of logistics factors in consumers' shopping channel choices, with a focus on delivery preferences across different product categories. Using data from an online survey of 1500 respondents in Belgium, we examined consumers' shopping behaviours and delivery preferences for six product categories. We applied partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) to explore the relationship between delivery preferences, purchasing attitudes, and channel choices. Our findings reveal that delivery preferences significantly influence shopping channel choices, but primarily through an indirect pathway by first shaping consumers' general purchasing attitudes toward online shopping. Delivery cost emerged as the most important delivery factor, followed by environmental awareness, return convenience, and delivery time. These findings contribute to a better understanding of consumer decision-making in omni-channel environments and provide practical implications for retailers and logistics service providers in developing strategies that align with consumer preferences. (back to session overview)

Public Lighting and Crime: Evidence from Goma, Eastern DRC

__Elias Maombi__, Marijke Verpoorten, Nik Stoop

This study examines the impact of public street lighting on crime rates and security perceptions in Goma, Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a city often referred to as the "capital of the war" due to its history of conflict and violence. Using 2017–2023 administrative crime data and leveraging the phased implementation of public lighting by Virunga Energies across neighbourhoods, we employ a difference-in-differences approach combined with dynamic treatment effect estimators to measure causal impacts. The results reveal a significant reduction in total crimes, primarily driven by decreases in robberies and assaults, with no substantial impact observed for killings. Complementary household survey data highlight improvements in security perceptions, including increased nighttime safety and reduced vulnerability to robberies. Mechanisms explored include enhanced nighttime activity and economic opportunities associated with electrification. The findings suggest that public lighting deters petty crimes and fosters community security, although the potential displacement of crime to unlit areas warrants further attention. (back to session overview)

From Crowds to Boards: The Impact of Equity Crowdfunding on Board Size

*Marc Deloof, **Nina Marien**, Ine Paeleman, Armin Schwienbacher*

This study examines how equity crowdfunding (ECF) influences the board size of entrepreneurial firms. Using data on 626 ECF firms and a matched sample of 626 non-ECF firms, we find that ECF is associated with a significant increase in board size after the ECF campaign. This effect is particularly pronounced in firms without venture capital or private equity backing. Shareholder structure further moderates this relationship: nominee structures are linked to larger board increases in the campaign year, while direct structures show delayed increases in subsequent years. These findings contribute to entrepreneurial finance research by revealing how ECF affects governance design over time and how platform structures and professional investors moderate this process. For practitioners, our results underscore the need to anticipate governance changes — particularly board expansion — when engaging with a dispersed investor base. Entrepreneurs and policymakers should consider how different ECF models and institutional investors shape post-funding governance outcomes. (back to session overview)

Organizational capabilities for sustainability-oriented innovation in multi-stakeholder networks: An integrative framework and future research agenda

***Lisa Martinez Sanchez**, Annouk Lievens, Nathalie Dens*

Organizational capabilities have become imperative for stakeholders to realize sustainability-oriented innovations in multi-stakeholder networks, where diverse stakeholders collaborate to address complex sustainability challenges. Yet, the literature is fragmented, lacking a clear, integrative understanding of which capabilities are required. To address this, we conduct a systematic literature review of 48 articles and develop a multilevel framework that integrates insights from the dynamic capabilities and ecosystem perspectives. The framework categorizes organizational capabilities across three network levels (macro, meso, micro) and draws on the sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring categories from the dynamic capabilities perspective to organize them according to their relevance across innovation stages. Our analysis identifies a broad set of organizational capabilities, with particular emphasis on network capabilities at the macro-level, collaboration capabilities at the meso-level, and knowledge management capabilities at the micro-level. Each of these domains includes specific capabilities that vary in importance across the innovation process, structured around the sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring categories. Based on these findings, we propose a future research agenda structured around two priority areas: (1) advancing micro foundational insights of specific organizational capabilities, and (2) investigating how capabilities interact and co-evolve across network levels and innovation stages. (back to session overview)

Game Theoretical Analysis of Geological Resources and Subsurface Management: A Systematic Literature Review

***Syed-Mujtaba Masroor**, Kris Welkenhuysen, Jacco Thijssen, Tine Compernolle*

The growing challenges posed by climate change on ecosystems and ongoing energy transition call for further exploration and understanding of climate-aware solutions. Despite its hidden nature, the subsurface is increasingly recognised as a vital natural capital, offering geosystem services such as geothermal energy, groundwater and storage options for CO2, nuclear waste, natural gas and hydrogen. Although generally regarded but not yet universally acknowledged as a common-pool resource (CPR), the subsurface holds substantial environmental and economic benefits deriving from its multitude of potential activities.

Addressing a scarcity in academic discourse, we conduct a PRISMA-guided systematic literature review of game-theoretical applications for geological resource governance. Forty peer-reviewed articles were selected and examined for their methodological choices (game model, objective function, treatment of uncertainty), governance insights (identifying key players, regulatory settings, institutional mechanisms) and environmental focus. From a resource perspective, technology-diffusion (particularly CCS/BECCS and geothermal) and groundwater studies dominate the corpus, while from the game-theory angle, net present value maximisation and economic gains consistently dominated, even in models that include explicit regulatory players intended to steer strategic behaviour. This means environmental concerns are typically relegated to secondary or compensatory offsets. The study reveals this could be because of the subsurface's atypical CPR nature, where capital-intensive, quasi-private governing regimes, shaped by evolving use, challenge the traditional definition of Ostrom's commons. We conclude that durable subsurface governance hinges on hybrid modelling frameworks, benefiting from being viewed through an institutional regime lens, and integrating game-theoretical approaches with techniques such as real option analysis and multi-criteria decision-making. (back to session overview)

The Application of Artificial Intelligence in Manufacturing Value Stream Analysis: A Case Study of an AI-Assistant at a German Automotive Supplier

Manfred Meyering

This work in progress paper details the application and observed impacts of an AI-Assistant on value stream analysis and continuous improvement processes (CIP) within a manufacturing environment, specifically at a German Automotive Supplier Group. Facing challenges associated with complex production workflows, voluminous data, and the inherent difficulties in systematic problem identification and resolution, the Automotive Supplier implemented an AI-Assistant to enhance transparency, streamline analytical efforts, and drive targeted improvements. The project demonstrated that an AI-driven approach significantly improves the efficiency and effectiveness of value stream analysis, leading to quantifiable performance gains and establishing a more robust CIP framework. (back to session overview)

Mapping Power Shifts in the Global Postal-Parcel Ecosystem: An Industry-Architecture Analysis of Posts, Integrators, and E-commerce Platforms

*Albers Sascha, Anson José, Dewulf Wouter, Gevaers Roel, **Michielsen Stijn**, Yüksel Serhat*

Strong e-commerce growth, digitised communication, tighter regulation, and recent strategic logistical decisions have significantly reconfigured the cross-border postal-parcel sector. To explain where power resides, this study applies the industry-architecture lens to the three actor groups that move most small parcels: designated postal operators, integrators, and e-commerce platforms. A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design links ten years of Universal Postal Union (UPU) transaction records (2014-2024; 192 postal operators) with twenty-six semi-structured expert interviews.

The study first constructs the first sector-wide industry-architecture maps, positioning every major actor within a single contractual frame and along the end-to-end physical journey of an international shipment. Interpreted alongside the quantitative and qualitative evidence, they show that contemporary power is dispersed across several, often overlapping, bottlenecks: postal operators still gate-keep hard-to-serve destinations and letter traffic, a narrowing but resilient chokepoint. Integrators dominate time-definite, security-sensitive flows, preserving express-delivery rents even as volume growth shifts elsewhere. E-commerce platforms have forged new, data-centric and logistic chokepoints; they set the most recent industry standards by steering consumer traffic, transaction data, and proprietary service and logistics standards. The resulting postal and parcel landscape is increasingly contested: actors that fail to refresh their capabilities risk ceding crucial gateways, and the kingpin status they confer, to faster-moving entrants and actors.

By answering recent calls for holistic mapping of the postal-parcel landscape, the study demonstrates how large operational datasets and expert insights can be combined and offers researchers and regulators a framework for better understanding a rapidly changing sector, the underlying causes, and impacts. (back to session overview)

Export expectations in SMEs: A Configurational Analysis

*Bart Cambré, Wim Coreynen, **Dorinela Munteanu**, Joeri van Hugten, Johanna Vanderstraeten, Arjen van Witteloostuijn*

This study presents a configurational analysis of export expectations of 30 Belgian small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the pre-export phase. We explore the combinations of different possible drivers of export expectations, namely the decision maker's growth aspirations, the SME's current strategic orientation (i.e., exploration and exploitation) and the presence of environmental turbulence (i.e., market and competitor turbulence). We apply qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) to contribute to the international entrepreneurship (IE) domain with of a configurational model of export expectations. Our results show four alternative types of emerging exporters, which can be used as a typology to offer tailored advice and support. (back to session overview)

Tail-Risk Transmission in Financial Networks: A Cross-Quantilogram Analysis of the South African Financial Ecosystem

***Pierre Nkou Mananga**, Shiqiang Lin, Hairui Zhang*

We investigate tail risk transmission among 26 South African financial assets, including banks, insurance companies, asset managers, and market indices. We extend the Cross-Quantilogram approach of Baumöhl et al. (2022) outside banking networks. We develop directional networks that exhibit sparse yet strong tail dependencies, utilising proven static quantile hit processes at the 5th and 10th percentiles, with densities of 2.8% and 3.7%, respectively, during the period from 2015 to 2025.

Our research shows that South African banks are the main sources of tail risk, utilising distinct pathways to disseminate this risk to asset managers and insurance companies. The examination of the crisis period reveals considerable heterogeneity: domestic incidents, such as NeneGate, had more localised banking repercussions, while COVID-19 established robust cross-sector interdependencies. The network topologies of intermediate tail events differ from those of extreme occurrences, as evidenced by the quantile gradient analysis, indicating that regulatory stress testing should consider this detailed structure.

This represents the first comprehensive Cross-Quantilogram analysis of an emerging market financial ecosystem, providing macroprudential insights for system-wide tail risk monitoring beyond traditional banking sector analysis. (back to session overview)

Village banks, rural livelihoods and gender inequalities in Malawi

Adriana Oliveres-Mallol

Rural households in Malawi remain heavily dependent on agriculture, making them especially vulnerable to land pressures and climate change. Formal social protection programs provide some support but face persistent challenges of coverage, fragmentation, and financial sustainability. Informal networks such as village banks may therefore function as complementary social policies, helping households to adopt more sustainable livelihoods. This article uses two waves of panel survey data and applies fixed effects and correlated random effects models to examine the relationship between access to village bank loans and rural livelihoods in Malawi. The analysis focuses on the preventive and promotive functions of village bank loans, understood as their role in reducing reliance on farming and facilitating participation in potentially more profitable non-farm activities. Results indicate that loans from village banks significantly increase participation and hours worked in non-farm household enterprises, without affecting overall labour supply or own-farm activity. By fostering off-farm businesses, village bank loans contribute to livelihood diversification, which can buffer rural individuals against agricultural and climate-related shocks. However, the benefits are uneven: despite women being the primary recipients of village bank loans and the most vulnerable to climate shocks, men appear to be more likely to experience this shift. These findings highlight both the potential and the limitations of informal institutions, like village banks, as a form of social protection. Village banks can complement formal systems by promoting sustainable livelihoods, yet they may also reproduce existing gender inequalities in rural economies. (back to session overview)

Bridging the gap: exploring international technology transfer opportunities in inland navigation

***Emilia O'Neill**, Thierry Vanelslander, Edwin van Hassel*

Inland navigation holds immense potential as a sustainable and efficient mode of transport. However, significant differences exist between countries with strong, well-established sectors and those where the sector faces challenges or remains underdeveloped. International technology transfer (ITT) offers a practical and cost-efficient way to bridge these gaps, providing opportunities to strengthen inland navigation in high-potential regions.

This research compares advanced inland navigation sectors, such as those in Belgium and the Netherlands, with high-potential sectors in Poland, Italy, and Romania. By using key performance indicators (KPIs) from the Platina4Action framework, such as infrastructure, workforce, fleet, digitalization, funding, and modal share, the study identifies critical gaps and highlights technologies that could help address them. By focusing on these promising technologies, the research aims to promote growth in underperforming regions while driving innovation and collaboration within the inland navigation sector.

In the future, the outcomes of this research will be applied to an ITT guide tailored specifically for inland navigation. The ultimate goal is to encourage the adoption of ITT as a strategy for greener and more efficient transport solutions via inland navigation across Europe and beyond. (back to session overview)

Design Principles to Empirical Validation: Operationalizing Portfolio Agility Design Principles

Joseph Puthenpurackal Chakko

This paper describes the operationalization of a design theory for portfolio-level agility using two complementary empirical approaches. This work builds on the nine design principles previously identified through a Delphi study, based on dynamic capabilities theory, complex systems thinking, and lean principles. First, a survey instrument is designed to facilitate Fuzzy-Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) to identify the necessary and sufficient configurational conditions for portfolio agility. Unlike regression methods, fsQCA can reveal complex interactions between the conditions (organizational context and the flows inherent in IS portfolios) leading to the outcome (portfolio agility). Second, theoretically grounded propositions are formulated to support a comparative case study examining the effects of instantiating these principles. The survey instrument helps identify the configurational patterns that lead to portfolio agility, while the propositions enable a deeper contextual investigation of how design principles influence outcomes. Together, these strategies provide a path to validate our proposed design theory. This operationalization lays the groundwork for empirical studies that identify conditions that foster portfolio agility and provide practical guidance for organizations navigating dynamic environments. (back to session overview)

Policy-on-Grid Optimization (PGO) – A new composite optimization framework for determining an optimal asset allocation in Goals-based wealth management

***Anand Radhakrishnan**, Sukrit Mittal*

Goals-based wealth management (GBWM) designs portfolios around explicit investor objectives — sustaining living standards, meeting liabilities, securing lifetime income — requiring decision policies that are optimal, tractable, and explainable. Traditional approaches like Monte Carlo simulation estimate success probabilities but don’t produce state-contingent, goal-aware policies adapting to investor-specific features such as fundedness or goal priority.

Dynamic programming (DP) offers a rigorous alternative, yielding provably optimal policies through backward induction on discretized state grids and supporting DP on-grid evaluation of goal-attainment probabilities. However, adding stochastic variables (inflation, annuity coverage, tax regimes) triggers the curse of dimensionality, limiting real-time application.

Reinforcement learning (RL) scales to higher dimensions via simulation and function approximation, showing strong GBWM performance. Yet RL policies are black-box approximators lacking native path wise probabilities or counterfactuals, complicating fiduciary auditability.

We introduce Policy-on-Grid Optimization (PGO), coupling RL's scalability with DP’s transparency. Phase I (offline): an RL agent trains on a dimensionless grid (fundedness, time, advisory control), creating a deterministic action map under fixed assumptions. Phase II (online): client states encode to this grid, enabling DP-exact computation of solvency probabilities, state-path distributions, and counterfactuals before decoding to client units.

On multi-goal retirement scenarios, PGO achieves outcomes within 1-4% of DP-optimal while maintaining sub-five-second evaluation where backward DP is impractical. This defines a composite optimization class combining optimality, tractability, and explainability for both research and production deployment in GBWM. (back to session overview)

Anticipating the Future of Infrastructure: Applying the Future-Based View to Strategic Planning in the Brazilian Federal Government

__Athos Carlos Silva__, Wim Vanhaverbeke, Moacir de Miranda Oliveira Junior

In the face of growing uncertainty and increasing demands on public infrastructure, strategic foresight becomes an essential tool for governments. This article applies the Future-Based View (FBV) — a conceptual model originally developed to guide corporate strategy under uncertainty — to the Brazilian government's long-term infrastructure planning process. Drawing on qualitative data from over 40 interviews with key stakeholders in logistics and transportation, including leaders of the largest companies in critical sectors such as agribusiness, energy, mining, manufacturing, and retail, this study offers empirical insights into how future-oriented thinking can be institutionalized in public planning.

The FBV model distinguishes four temporal zones (A_0, A, B, C, D) and links them to specific strategic behaviours: historical grounding, operational execution, structured exploration, and unstructured sensing. Using this framework, we analysed how federal institutions and industry actors interpret forecasts, scenario projections, and environmental uncertainties when co-constructing national logistics strategies.

Our findings show that applying FBV enables decision-makers to better classify and respond to infrastructural challenges across different uncertainty levels. It also supports coordination across sectors and improves alignment between short-term interventions and long-term visions. The study highlights how public foresight capabilities can be enhanced through embedded participatory approaches and structured frameworks such as FBV, offering a replicable method for other governments facing similar complexity. (back to session overview)

Housing market responses to mandatory flood risk disclosure

Sven Damen, __Xianglin Sun__

We study the causal effect of the introduction of mandatory flood risk disclosure in real estate listings in 2013 in Flanders (Belgium). Using the universe of transactions and Difference-in-Differences (DiD) and Difference-in-Discontinuity (Diff-in-Disc) methods, we find that flood risk disclosure decreased prices in medium-risk zones by 4%. In high-risk zones, the disclosure only decreases prices at the boundary, which likely reflects the increased salience in these locations. In medium flood risk areas, the effects are larger in lower socioeconomic neighbourhoods and buyers are less likely to come from lower socioeconomic neighbourhoods after disclosure, suggesting that information asymmetries were more pronounced among vulnerable populations. (back to session overview)

Methods and Models for Freight Mode Choice in Port-Hinterland Connections: A Review

Christa Sys, __Katelyn Tahaney__, Thierry Vanelslander

In recent years, modal shift targets intending to decarbonize transport have been set at varying levels of governance. Shifting cargo from road transport to more sustainable modes with fewer negative externalities, such as rail, inland navigation, and short sea shipping, has become a central policy objective throughout Europe and beyond. Meeting these targets requires a deeper understanding of mode choice factors in port-hinterland transportation, as this enables better policy support for the modal shift.

Mode choice in port-hinterland connections is examined in the context of the modal shift. This study aims to address two questions: 1) which methods and models are used in research regarding freight mode choice in port-hinterland connections? and 2) how do these methods affect research outcomes and policy implications? A literature review is conducted and the methods and models used in freight mode choice studies are comparatively assessed. Results show that choice-based experiments, interviews, and literature reviews are commonly used. Discrete choice analysis is applied in the majority of studies sampled, and the associated models each have strengths and limitations that guide the practical applications. Models continue to evolve, better capturing the complexity of decision-making.

Application of appropriate methodologies supports documentation of how freight mode choice decisions are made in reality. Methodological advancements can be applied in real-world research settings. Targeted policy advice and proposed actions for industry stakeholders can then be generated with the objective of influencing freight mode choice towards intermodality. (back to session overview)

Mapping the Stakeholders of Digital Marketing Ecosystem for Strong Sustainability: A Multi-Level Perspective Incorporating Non-Human Actors

Chonreutai Tawitaranond

With the technological advancements, digital marketing has emerged as a powerful force in competitive business practices. However, this rapid progression has raised concerns about its environmental impact, particularly the energy-intensive operations within the ICT sector. While the competitive advantages of digital marketing are widely acknowledged, a growing debate exists regarding its sustainability implications, particularly in the context of corporate environmental accountability. The systemic nature of digital marketing, when viewed as a set of marketing tools rather than a holistic, interconnected ecosystem, has led to the neglect of its sustainability challenges. As part of the research design, stakeholder mapping is employed to conceptualize digital marketing as a socio-technical ecosystem at the industrial level within broader social and ecological systems. This process involves constructing a multi-level stakeholder mapping network across three levels: micro (individual firms), meso (industry players and interfirm networks), and macro (societal, regulatory, and planetary stakeholders). By adopting a network analysis approach in the digital marketing ecosystem, stakeholder theory is broadened beyond human actors to include non-human entities as active participants. This comprehensive approach is derived from an integrative literature review and is triangulated with sustainability industry reports, ensuring a robust research methodology.

The stakeholder mapping illustrates the intricate interdependencies and power dynamics within the digital marketing ecosystem while also equipping scholars, practitioners, and policymakers to address and navigate sustainability challenges at a systemic level. It supports the digital marketing's transition from a tool-centered to a sustainability-centered approach by giving a broad, ecosystem-based view toward the strong sustainability principle. (back to session overview)

Toward Strong Sustainability in Digital Marketing: A Review of Practices, Ecosystems, and Theoretical Foundations

Chonreutai Tawitaranond

Digital marketing activities are a core driver for business value creation in the connected world, however their environmental and social impacts remain critically underexplored. While the sustainable marketing domain has progressively advanced, the specific dynamics of digital marketing ecosystems have received limited attention. This review addresses this gap by examining how sustainable digital marketing is conceptualized, studied, and theorized in recent literature.

Using an integrative literature review (ILR) methodology (Torraco, 2016; Snyder, 2019), the study synthesizes insights from marketing, sustainability, and information systems to develop a distinctive conceptual perspective. A hybrid sampling strategy was employed, consisting of a systematic database search, journal-led screening of FT50 and ABS 4/4* outlets, and snowballing techniques to capture both mainstream and emerging contributions. (back to session overview)

Inter-team retrospectives in scaled agile programs: An in-depth qualitative analysis at Ascent

***Daniel Tögl**, *Tim Huygh, Steven De Haes**

Despite the current popularity of agile project management and the scaling of such frameworks, there is little academic research exploring how to scale agile practices successfully at the program level.

Retrospectives are understood to play an important role in adjusting scaled-up project frameworks. This research investigates the specific impact of retrospectives as a tool to scale a known success factor from agile projects, addressing gaps identified in recent program management literature. To better understand this impact, a qualitative in-depth analysis was conducted, focusing on how program value is achieved through inter-team retrospectives. The proposed research design enabled the development of a nuanced understanding of how inter-team retrospectives are perceived by teams in real-world settings, building on prior quantitative findings that identified their prevalence. Data were collected through interviews and thematic analysis to capture team members' experiences, challenges, and perceived benefits. First results indicate that inter-team retrospectives foster cross-team learning, enhance alignment of shared goals, and contribute to improved problem-solving at the program level. However, the study also highlights barriers and challenges in scaling insights across distributed teams. These findings provide practical guidance for organizations seeking to leverage retrospectives at scale and contribute to the theoretical understanding of agile practices in program management. (back to session overview)

Evaluation of Parental Reports as a Proxy for Their Children's Food Preferences

*Barbara Briers, Mario Pandelaere, **Natalia Torres Velderráin***

As childhood obesity rates rise, research on children's food preferences gains importance. However, studies on these preferences have predominantly relied on parental reports. Re-search assumes that parents are accurate informants, given their role as food providers. How-ever, excluding children introduces limitations, as parents may misinterpret or overestimate their children's food preferences. Conversely, children's self-reports are hampered by cognitive and language challenges.

This study examines whether children's reports of their food preferences align with those reported by their parents. We examined agreement in 510 parent-child dyads and found strong correlations across food-related constructs that indicate robust consensus. Multitrait-Multimethod analyses also demonstrated strong convergent and discriminant validity. Furthermore, both parental and child reports on these preferences showed good and comparable predictive validity of children's eating behaviour. The findings reported in this paper suggest that children's responses align well with parental assessments. In consequence, whether to prioritise children's or parents' reports may depend on the research aim and logistical or ethical considerations, seemingly without compromising data quality. (back to session overview)

Matching supply and demand in air cargo routing: A novel optimisation approach

***Vincent Van Bockstaele**, Alessandro Bombelli, Sven Buyle, Wouter Dewulf*

This paper presents a novel model for estimating how air cargo demand between Origin-Destination (OD) pairs is routed across potential itineraries, considering both road and air connections. The model integrates actual flown demand data with supply-side factors, including airline network structures, flight schedules, and aircraft capacities. By leveraging these inputs, it captures the complexities of real-world routing decisions, such as the role of hub airports, carrier strategies, transshipment constraints, and road-feeding services. The model first identifies feasible itineraries for each OD pair based on maximum travel times, airport locations, and hub versus non-hub sequences. It then formulates a non-linear optimization problem to minimize discrepancies between historical and computed

cargo flows across flight legs while incorporating operational constraints such as capacity limitations and transit complexities. The results offer insights into key drivers of air cargo routing, including the influence of hub airports, competitive carrier actions, catchment area dynamics, and network structures. As air cargo routing remains largely a "black box", this study bridges the gap between demand and supply, contributing to a deeper understanding of air cargo flows in evolving logistics landscapes. Potential applications include capacity and demand forecasting, network optimization, and impact assessments of disruptions or policy changes on global air cargo movements. (back to session overview)

The Global Diffusion of B Corp Certifications: An Institutional Dissent Perspective

*Miguel Meuleman, Ine Paeleman, Tom Vanacker, **Marie Van Hauwaert***

Past research on the cross-country diffusion of certifications emphasizes firms' efforts to conform to institutional pressures. However, such explanations cannot account for the cross-country diffusion of "oppositional" certifications, like the B Corp certification, by which firms oppose a shareholder-driven economy and embrace a stakeholder-driven economy. Taking an institutional dissent perspective, we argue that in countries with stronger financial logics, where profit-maximization dominates, firms are more likely to adopt B Corp certification for identity-based and/or instrumental motivations. Using a longitudinal dataset of Certified B Corporations across 82 countries and 14 years, we show that in countries with stronger financial logics, B Corp certification adoption is greater. This positive relationship weakens as the B Corp movement grows, suggesting that certifiers are primarily identity-driven rather than instrumentally-driven. Overall, we contribute to research on hybrid firms, certifications, and institutional theory by introducing a dissent-based view of how oppositional certifications expand globally in response to, and in tension with, dominant institutional logics at the country-level. (back to session overview)

External certification and financial reporting quality in the nonprofit sector

Evert Van Look

This paper investigates whether external certification is associated with financial reporting quality (FRQ) using a sample of Belgian donation-reliant nonprofit organizations (NPOs). By promoting transparency and accountability, certification programs in the nonprofit (NP) sector ultimately aim to restore public trust. While existing research focuses on this ultimate aim by examining the impact of certification on stakeholder reactions, it neglects questioning whether the promoted transparency manifests in mandatory financial reporting, the primary NPO monitoring tool. Hence, this study extends the literature, using a panel dataset of 4,136 NPO-year observations from 2018–2022. FRQ is measured through two indicators: financial reporting timeliness and conformance to Benford's Law. Descriptive statistics show that certified NPOs file financial statements more promptly than non-certified peers, with shorter reporting lags and fewer late filings. Moreover, pooled OLS and logit model estimations indicate a positive association between certification and timeliness. However, when accounting for NPO fixed effects, the association weakens or reverses, suggesting that underlying organizational characteristics may drive both certification and timeliness. No significant results are found for the association between certification and Benford conformity. The findings challenge the assumption that certification is positively associated with transparency beyond the imposed certification requirements and address a potential gap between perceived and actual trustworthiness of certified versus noncertified NPOs. (back to session overview)

How does organizational history influence de facto autonomy? — The Case of Flemish Museums

Nathalie Verboven

Autonomy is a key topic in public management (e.g., Bach et al., 2022). While public organizations may have formal (de jure) autonomy through legal frameworks and management agreements, their practical (de facto) autonomy can diverge significantly (Yesilkagit & van Thiel, 2012). This mismatch can lead to either underutilization or overreach, affecting their societal goals.

The organizational history perspective explains this divergence by highlighting path dependency and institutional memory (Christensen & Lægreid, 2021), but empirical studies remain limited. Common proxies like organizational age fail to capture the complexity of past structural reforms (Verhoest et al., 2010). This study therefore investigates how structural reform histories affect current de facto autonomy, drawing on work by Wynen and Verhoest (e.g., Kleizen et al., 2018).

The research focuses on 25 urban museums in Flanders that transitioned to an AGB (autonomous municipal company) structure. Since the 1980s, museums have faced increasing political pressures while striving to maintain professional autonomy (Schramme, 2020). Flanders' cultural sector is highly dependent on government funding, yet also has alternative sources, making it ideal for exploring autonomy dynamics.

Using desk research, we construct reform histories based on statutes and council reports, coding "maintenance events" per Rolland & Roness's (2011) typology. De facto autonomy is assessed through a COBRA-based survey and director interviews, adding a dimension on artistic autonomy. Data will be analyzed via fsQCA to identify patterns and configurations that shape museum autonomy, followed by interviews for deeper context. (back to session overview)

Mapping the Landscape of Sustainable Procurement: A Systematic and Scoping Literature Review

__Giselle Villegas Bourgoing__, Koen Vandenbempt, Wouter Verheyen

Sustainable procurement has become a recurrent topic within public and private sectors for the acquisition of goods and services. However, its definition and application remain fragmented across disciplines. Therefore, this study conducts a combined scoping and systematic literature review to map how sustainable procurement is conceptualized, defined, and regulated across academic fields. The review addresses the ambiguity surrounding related terms such as green procurement, responsible procurement, and sustainable supply chain management, and looks into how these are used interchangeably or distinctly in the literature. Through a structured search and analysis of peer-reviewed articles published in the last 14 years, the study identifies key disciplinary perspectives, knowledge gaps, and definitional trends. The findings reveal a lack of conceptual clarity and disciplinary integration, highlighting the need for a more unified understanding of sustainable procurement. This review contributes to the development of a conceptual foundation for future interdisciplinary research and provides insights for policymakers and practitioners aiming to implement sustainable practices into procurement strategies. (back to session overview)

Industry review of the global integrators' market

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This paper examines the role, evolution, and strategic positioning of air freight integrators within the global cargo industry. While air freight represents less than 1% of global trade by volume, its disproportionately high value, approximately 35% of total trade value, underscores its importance for time-sensitive, high-value supply chains. Integrators such as DHL Express, FedEx, UPS, SF Express, and YTO occupy a distinctive niche, offering time-definite, door-to-door services through fully integrated air-ground networks under unified operational control. Drawing on industry data, company reports, and academic literature, the paper traces the historical development of integrators, contrasts their business models with those of non-integrated carriers, and analyses their competitive and cooperative dynamics with freight forwarders, combination carriers and e-commerce platforms' logistics arms.

Practically, the paper provides observations that may be useful for industry stakeholders, including policymakers, airport authorities, and logistics managers, in understanding how integrators interact with wider trade flows, develop hub operations, and adapt to shifts in demand such as the rise of e-commerce. The findings suggest that the integrator model has shown relative resilience to recent macroeconomic shocks and has adapted its service offering to capture volumes in e-commerce segments, although it faces competition from both traditional carriers and new entrants in last-mile delivery. (back to session overview)

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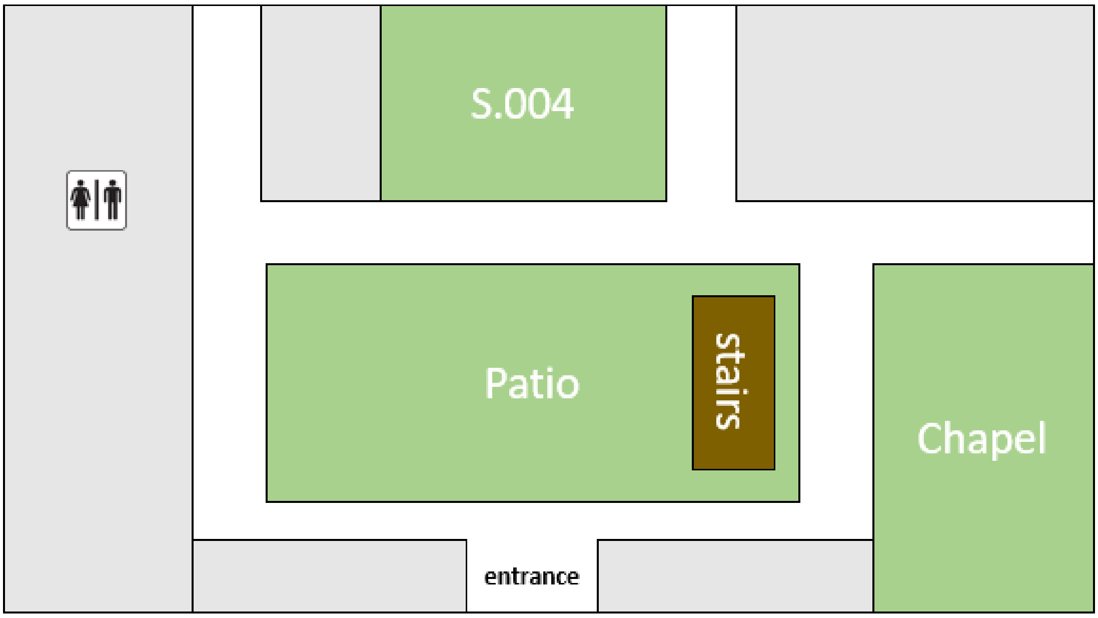

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