

# FINANCE AND SOCIETY



Call for papers

## **Special issue: 'When finance becomes tech'**

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The editors of *Finance and Society* invite submissions for a special issue on how financial services are fusing with digital technology and what the broader implications of this are in social, political, and economic terms.

The seamless incorporation of financial capabilities such as payments, lending, insurance, banking, and investment into various sectors, including e-commerce, healthcare, and education, is posited as the next frontier for fintech. By embedding financial services into the fabric of everyday life, (non-financial) businesses aim to enhance customer experiences, create new revenue streams, and foster financial inclusion. But this process also raises broader questions about the role of finance in contemporary societies and the shifting politics of financial society. We seek contributions that go beyond the hype surrounding financial innovation to critically examine how the 'disappearance of finance into technical infrastructures' – as Paul Langley has recently described it – is reshaping social relations, power dynamics, and the very meaning of money itself.

'Embedded finance', as it is known in the industry, represents a departure from the decentralized finance (DeFi) narrative that has dominated recent discourse. While DeFi promised to democratize finance by disintermediating traditional gatekeepers, embedded finance leverages the power of centralized platforms to deliver financial services in a more accessible, context-specific manner. This tension between decentralization and embedding presents a rich avenue for social scientific inquiry, as it speaks to broader questions of trust, control, and the role of technology and institutions in mediating financial interactions. Central to the embedded finance trend are the technological infrastructures that enable financial services across diverse platforms and industries. Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) and Banking-as-a-Service (BaaS) models play a crucial role in this process, affording financial products and services without the need to build and maintain complex financial infrastructures themselves.

Meanwhile, several of the most central actors in finance continue to experiment with technologies that were originally intended to provide an alternative to centralized finance. More than 130 central banks around the globe are exploring the creation of their own digital currencies for wholesale and retail purposes with varying motivations and aims, ranging from financial inclusion to monetary sovereignty and new forms of cross-border

payments. This tension between new technologies and established financial actors presents a promising opportunity for researchers interested in the co-evolution of economy and technology.

This special issue aims to foster a vibrant interdisciplinary dialogue that situates new trends in digital finance within a broader landscape of financial innovation and social change. Moving beyond the initial wave of fintech studies, we invite scholars from various disciplines to interrogate the social, cultural, political, and economic dimensions of emerging financial infrastructures across a range of settings.

Potential topics may include, but are not limited to:

- How technologies are changing financial services and business models, e.g., the rising importance of data and new profit-seeking strategies amongst tech firms in the financial domain.
- The historical context of financial technologies and their relationship to earlier forms of financial innovation and social change (e.g., electronic markets, Fintech, corporate financialization).
- Tensions between decentralization and the embedding of finance into centralized platforms.
- The implications of embedding finance into everyday life, especially in terms of social relations and power dynamics.
- From the FinTech Revolution to “Techified” Finance. How have relations between incumbents and challengers developed over time?
- Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs). How are these redefining public-private monetary relations and what are the potential consequences of this in socio-economic terms?
- Perspectives on the cultural meanings and practices associated with embedded finance, CBDCs, and other new infrastructural developments in digital finance.
- Comparative studies of embedded finance across different cultural, institutional, and regulatory contexts.
- The sociological significance of APIs as boundary objects that mediate interactions between financial and non-financial actors.
- How regulatory frameworks are navigating the integration of financial services into new digital technologies. What are the aims and concerns motivating these policy changes?
- Critical analyses of the discourses and ideologies surrounding new digital-financial infrastructures and their implications for financial subjectivity.
- How geopolitical tensions affect the intersections between finance, technology, and the proliferation of financial services.

We welcome submissions that employ diverse theoretical and methodological approaches. By bringing together a range of perspectives and empirical insights, this special issue seeks to advance our understanding of financial infrastructures as socio-technical phenomena with far-reaching implications for individuals, communities, and societies.

### *Author guidelines*

Submissions are invited in the full range of formats listed below, though the editors are especially seeking original articles and essays:

- Articles; 9-11,000 words
- Essays; 4-6,000 words
- Policy focus; 4-6,000 words
- Review articles; 3-4,000 words

Interested authors should get in contact with the journal editors listed below and share with them a title page including all the usual material relating to their proposed submission (title, abstract, keywords, author names and affiliations).

Selected authors will be invited to participate. Full papers should then be submitted through our online submission system, Manuscript Central, following the journal's standard formatting and style guidelines. When doing so you will be able to indicate that your submission pertains to this Special Issue. All submissions will go through the journal's peer review process.

### *Key dates*

- Abstracts by email to Adam Hayes and Carola Westermeier: **October 1, 2024**
- Full papers submitted via Manuscript Central: **April 1, 2025**

### *Further details*

Please consult our author instructions here:

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/finance-and-society/information/author-instructions>

Information on preparing your manuscript can be found here:

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/finance-and-society/information/author-instructions/preparing-your-materials>

More information about the journal and the submission process can be found via the following link: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/finance-and-society>

Any queries should be directed to: [Adam Hayes](#) and [Carola Westermeier](#).