

Call for Papers: Capitalism, Social Science and the Platform University | Culture, Politics and Global Justice

By Cambridge University

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In recent discussions of capitalism, the notion of the 'platform' has come to play a prominent role in conceptualising our present circumstances and imagining our potential futures. There are criticisms which can be raised of the platform-as-metaphor, however we believe it provides a useful hook through which to make sense of how socio-technical innovations may be leading to a new phase of capitalist accumulation. To talk of 'platform capitalism' in this sense does not exclude consideration of parallel notions such as digital capitalism, data capitalism and surveillance capitalism but rather seeks to frame these considerations through a focus upon the platform as a novel assemblage.

While research into social media and the sharing economy is relatively advanced, the increasing centrality of platforms to the operation of the university remains understudied and undertheorised. Our conference seeks to rectify this, raising the possibility of the 'platform university' as a provocation to stimulate discussion concerning platforms, the commercial and academic science they depend upon and contribute to reshaping, as well as their implications for the future of the university. We see the university as a case study for inquiry into platforms, but also as a horizon of change within which the social sciences seek to address these processes.

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