

The Capitalist Mode of Power: Past, Present, Future

The Second Annual Forum on Capital as Power

20-21 October 2011, York University, Toronto

Call for Papers

Extended Abstract Submission Deadline: July 31st, 2011

Keynote Speakers

Bob Jessop, Lancaster University

Michael Perelman, California State University

L. Randall Wray, University of Missouri

The annual conference series organized by the Forum on Capital as Power brings together a diverse range of radically minded people interested in exploring the concept of power as a basis for re-thinking and re-searching value, capital and accumulation. As the name of our forum suggests, we think that the Capital as Power framework offers a promising new, but by no means the only, alternative for pursuing radical and innovative research in political economy. By conceptualizing capital as the symbolic quantification of power, and capitalism as a mode of power, this framework challenges the foundational bifurcations between politics/economics, 'real'/'nominal' and state/capital upon which conventional theories of capitalism rest. And by re-casting accumulation as a process of differential capitalization, this framework also offers research tools for empirically exploring capitalism; something that liberal and Marxist theories, anchored respectively in problematic units of 'utility' and 'abstract labour', have difficulty providing. This combined focus on theoretical-empirical research is, for us, of paramount importance. It points the way to a more democratic form of knowledge production. And it corresponds with what we believe should be a guiding maxim of radical praxis: that in order to change the world, we first have to adequately interpret and explain it.

As with all new frameworks, the Capital as Power approach is still very much open to elaboration and refinement, as well as contestation. [Our inaugural conference in 2010](#) marked a positive step in this regard. It generated enthusiastic discussion and debate, it produced exciting new insights and new research related to the Capital as Power approach, and it yielded original material for forthcoming publications. But there is still ample scope for further inquiry: is a focus on Capital as Power able to account for the historical origins and spread of capitalism? Is it amenable to contemporary comparative research in different geographical and social contexts? What can a focus on Capital as Power tell us about the possible future trajectories of the global capitalist order? What kind of democratic and humane alternatives to the existing order does it envision? And in what ways does Capital as Power intersect and overlap with other power-centered approaches to political economy?

With these questions in mind, our second annual conference invites contributions from those who critically engage with, extend or operationalize the Capital as Power approach in their own research. We also welcome contributions by those who present other power-centered alternatives to existing theories of capitalism. Contributions might address, but are not necessarily restricted to, the following areas:

- Capitalist power and the labour process;
- The emergence of the modern state as a locus of capitalization;
- The role of capitalist power in contemporary crises of real estate, sovereign debt or natural resources;
- The intersection of the capitalist mode of power with other modes of power;
- Capital as Power from regional and comparative perspectives;
- The role of entertainment, leisure and consumption from a capitalist perspective;
- Capitalist power over the biosphere;
- Alternative visions for the future, including alternative, democratic accounting systems.

Please send abstracts of 250 words to the following address by July 31, 2011: capitalaspower2011@gmail.com

Organizing Committee: Joseph Baines (York University), Sandy Brian Hager (York University) and Mladen Ostojic (York University)