

The 4th Forum on Capital as Power
CAPITAL AS POWER: BROADENING THE VISTA
TENTATIVE CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

York University, Toronto
September 28-30, 2016

The conference is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Additional financial assistance is offered by York University's Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Office of the Vice President, Academic and Provost, Department of Political Science and Institute for Social Research.

LOCATION AND DETAILS

The conference will be held at York Lanes, Room 280N, on York University's Keele Campus ([map](#)). There is no registration fee and all are welcome to attend.

ORIGINAL CALL FOR PAPERS

The theory of capital as power (CasP) offers a radical alternative to mainstream and Marxist theories of capitalism. It argues that capital symbolizes and quantifies not utility or labour, but organized power writ large, and that capitalism is best understood and challenged not as a mode of consumption and production, but as a mode of power.

Growing interest in CasP, especially from young researchers, has contributed to a widening body of work dealing with different countries, regions, sectors, processes, methodologies and debates:

1. *Countries and regions*: The United States, Canada, Israel, Egypt, Pakistan, the Middle East, South Africa, South Korea.
2. *Sectors*: commodities, food and biofuel, petroleum, diamonds, armament, high-technology, pharmaceuticals, retailing, the art market, Hollywood, freelance creative work.
3. *Processes*: the emergence of the capitalist mode of power, ruling-class formation, protest and resistance, finance as operational symbolism, the rise and demise of distributional coalitions, the changing ownership of public debt, conspicuous consumption, speculation, crime and punishment, differential taxation, Middle East energy conflicts, mergers and acquisitions, the globalization of ownership, political regime shifts, inflation and stagflation, systemic fear and systemic crises, the asymptotes of power, the link between social hierarchies and energy use, histories of sabotage, the resurgence of the Top 1%.
4. *Methodologies*: disaggregate accounting, measures of redistribution and power, stagflation indices, energy use as an alternative to 'real' GDP, differential yardsticks for activists, the capitalist 'conversion' of quality to quantity.
5. *Debates*: the capital/state dichotomy, real vs. nominal, imperialism and financialism, the transition from feudalism to capitalism, ethical investing, the impact of trade policies, the limits of macroeconomic policy.

Most of these works, along with interviews, reviews, course material, conference proceedings and lecture videos, are available from three Creative Commons websites: [Capital as Power](#), [Review of Capital as Power \(RECASP\)](#) and [The Bichler and Nitzan Archives](#). Readers and writers are invited to engage with, contribute to and debate on the CasP [Forum](#) and [Blog](#).

Over the past decade, the Forum on Capital as Power has organized many lectures, speaker series and conferences. Our most recent international gatherings include [Capitalizing Power: The Qualities and Quantities of Accumulation](#) (2012), [The Capitalist Mode of Power: Past, Present and Future](#) (2011) and [Crisis of Capital, Crisis of Theory](#) (2010).

The 2016 conference seeks to broaden the vista. We are looking for papers that extend and deepen CasP research, compare CasP with other approaches and critique CasP's methods and findings. Articles can be general or specific, theoretical or empirical, analytical or historical. Below we list some suggestions, though other topics would be equally welcome.

1. *Expanding and deepening CasP research.* Areas of interest include: (i) the concept of power in science and society: its evolution from antiquity to the present; (ii) the origins and spread of the capitalist mode of power: from feudal Europe to the world; (iii) from 'state and capital' to the 'state of capital': CasP perspectives on state theory and international relations; (iv) the emergence and spread of finance as the key architecture of the capitalist *creorder*; (v) the role of labour, production and waste in the capitalist mode of power; (vi) capitalist power and the environment: from planetary ecology, to energy, to the genome; (vii) capitalizing the social fabric: culture, religion, ethnicity, race, gender, literature and the academy; (viii) micro-CasP: the everyday manifestations of capital as power; (ix) the asymptotes of capitalist power: what are the limits of accumulation and how approaching those limits might undermine or transform capitalism; (x) from capitalist accounting to democratic *creordering*: creating a new language for an autonomous society.
2. *CasP vs. other approaches.* Mainstream economics and heterodox political economy conceive of capital as an 'economic' entity and therefore tend to treat power as affecting accumulation from the 'outside'. According to CasP, though, power is internal to accumulation: it defines what constitutes capital in the first place and determines how quickly it grows. How important is this conceptual difference? Does it lead to alternative questions and yield different answers? To what extent does the logic of capital absorb, subsume and internalize other forms of power, such as patriarchy, race, bureaucracy and international relations? Can CasP offer new insights into these forms of power?
3. *Critiques of CasP.* What are the key shortcomings of CasP? Do these shortcomings reflect the birth pangs of a new approach, or are they inherent in its very logic? What areas of CasP need to be strengthened and developed? Where has CasP research gone astray? Are there aspects of capitalism that CasP might be conceptually unable to deal with?

The conference is open to everyone, with submissions vetted entirely on merit. We accept applications from established and new researchers, in and outside academia. However, we are particularly interested in submissions from *young* researchers of all ages, including MA and PhD students, private and public employees and free spirits. If you have an interest in the subject and something important – or potentially important – to say, please apply.