

Putting the university to work: technology-mediated extraction of land and labour from UK universities, 1 December 2020



00:17:05 Janja Komljenovic: Hi everyone.

00:28:56 Nicholas Hillman: So far, the assumption seems to be that the managers want tech, the workers don't. But in the current crisis, we keep being told the managers are forcing face to face teaching over the heads of the unions (UCU and NUS). Which is it, I wonder.

00:34:03 Gordon Asher: Nicholas - Perhaps its not that kind of binary or dichotomy: it's not tech or no tech? – its what tech, when and how, for what - for whose reasons/purposes/benefit?

00:35:40 Gordon Asher: And the reasons, purposes, benefits then also applies to the who and why of demands for face to face teaching etc.?

00:37:36 Nicholas Hillman: I agree. But I'm don't sense our two speakers are saying that.

00:45:04 Zachery Spire: Drawing on Gordon's point, and what Mariya has noted, the substitution effects of public for private funding are dynamic and very contested. As Mariya notes, the importance of who 'owns' the capital of public funded HE and its activities. As someone who studies the physical estate (student accommodation, learning environments, HEI estates), the monetisation-commercialising of the physical/social/personal materialises in teaching/research is how metrics are created/rewarded and valorised. So, how would you balance this quantitative centric framework? What's the value of creativity, non-HE labour, other 'compartments' of human being that doesn't have to justify everything, always and in all ways as a balance to the quantifying/quantifiable metrics of HEIs? HE is not all labour preparation...surely, we are humans, being, first (A Will to Learn, R. Barnett, 2007).

00:54:43 Simon Marginson: Your questions are very welcome colleagues! Questions are the heart of our method! The unexamined life is not worth living, etc!

00:55:22 Jenny Lennox: UCU has provided guidance on performance rights - https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/11173/Guidance-on-GDPR-moral--performance-rights-and-accessibility-in-recorded-lectureslessons/pdf/ucu_lecturecapture_guidance_oct20.pdf

00:57:31 Morten Hansen: Great presentation: If we accept the thesis that traditional academic labour is subject to real subsumption, where do we find the faultlines between the new 'capitalists class' and the new 'working class' within the academy? Do we risk pitting university executives' against its own staff and vice versa?

00:57:46 Neil Stewart: Can you list the new freedoms and flexibility that some academics have experiences.

01:00:43 David Law: When I was a student, decades ago, I found that my first objective was to carry on learning and, to my surprise, I found that a university was prepared to pay me to do that. During the last fifty years I have worked long hours but have not felt exploited. I understand that the speakers may say that it is not my feelings that matter. The relationship was objectively exploitative. But so far as I am concerned, technology only helps me to do what I want to do in a more effective way. This morning I could participate in an online seminar with speakers across the whole world. I find it impossible to see my VC as a capitalist exploiter. I like working long hours because this is, for me, self-realisation. Is this false consciousness?

01:05:23 Filip Vostal: I have a question, too.

01:06:16 Linh Nguyen: @David Law: thanks for your great sharing. Your experience makes me think about the 'moral truth' and the 'scientific truth' in existentialism. Perhaps to you the moral truth matters more? I'm personally willing to work long hours even though it could be exploitive, yet it just feels right to me.

01:11:03 Gordon Asher: 'new capitalists' - to large extent same as the old capitalists? Though new neoliberal subjectivities being created/imposed on all workers. Yes, class recomposition is central here - but that primarily the proletarianization of academic workers (academics, support staff AND students)?

01:13:34 Jenny Lennox: David - The privilege of holding a role you love doesn't give an employer the right to exploit and abuse that. Also many people are denied the security of having a proper role in universities, and there is a significant link between gender and race for those people.

01:14:21 Janja Komljenovic: Interesting fact: Zoom is now valued at \$140B

01:14:44 Janja Komljenovic: Started the year at \$19B

01:15:11 Sophia Woodman: Re: public funding, let's remember that (according to the FT) the UK has the lowest rate of public funding of HE of countries in the OECD.

01:16:25 Simon Marginson: Good points arising in Chat - we'll wind up soon so be quick with any more!

01:20:01 Zachery Spire: Thanks colleagues for a great discussion!

01:20:03 CGHE Webinars: Our next webinar will be on Thursday. 'Higher education and the hopes of the world: The next three years of CGHE research'. Register: <https://www.researchcghe.org/events/cghe-seminar/higher-education-and-the-hopes-of-the-world-the-next-three-years-of-cghe-research/>

01:20:42 CGHE Webinars: A recording of this webinar will be on the CGHE website tomorrow morning: <https://www.researchcghe.org/events/cghe-seminar/putting-the->

[university-to-work-technology-mediated-extraction-of-land-and-labour-from-uk-universities/](#)

01:20:52 Gordon Asher: Thanks Mariya, Brian, Janja, Simon and all others organising and contributing for the thought provoking webinar

01:20:55 JB Meyer: thank you all for this active discussion with very debated issues

01:21:03 Victorița Trif: Thank you!

01:21:04 Sophia Woodman: And what about the work of students in the online environment as producers of value via datification??

01:21:08 Amardeep kumar: Interesting session on academic labour. Thank you CGHE and Simon.

01:21:13 Brian Garvey: Thanks everyone

01:21:24 Gordon Asher: Sophia - yep, role of students as academic labour vital

01:21:36 Gordon Asher: Richard hall really good on that

01:21:38 Linh Nguyen: Thank you so much Mariya, Brian, Simon and every one for this discussion and insights

01:21:39 Mirena Nalbantova: Thank you Maria and Brian for a very insightful and thought-provoking presentation and Simon for a very professionally-led webinar.