

Knowing Capitalism: Reconciling Markets, Organisation and Community

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The paper looks at why a new discourse of organisation by community has emerged in thought and practice on knowledge capitalism. It begins by explaining why capitalism and community are not necessarily in conflict with each other. It then examines how the discursive power of 'community' is actually moulding corporate practice, serving to guide action and organisation in specific ways, but also to conceal the many anti-societal outcomes of capitalism. The paper then goes on to critically examine contemporary claims regarding the centrality of communities of practice in unlocking exploratory and exploitative knowledge, based on the mobilisation of collaborative and tacit learning. Different types of situated practice are identified, not all reducible to practices of community. The paper concludes with a set of generalisations on the organisational features of the capitalism to come; one that is heterarchical, based on the competition of evaluative principles, and profoundly anticipatory in its modalities. The approach, thus, to community is both supportive and critical.