



Technological Sovereignty and the Crisis of Capitalism. BITS Symposium

Event Details

Date: 8-9 December 2016

Schedule: 10:00am – 8:00pm

Event: Symposium (invitation only) and open community events

Place: Auditori Fundació Tàpies

Carrer d'Aragó, 255, 08007 Barcelona, Spain

Welcome

Welcome to the symposium of the Barcelona Initiative for Technological Sovereignty (BITS), a multidisciplinary effort to analyze and shape a technological agenda rooted in the ideals of democracy, solidarity, and autonomy.

Hosted by the City of Barcelona and bringing together leading thinkers about technology, cities, and geopolitics, BITS is a strategic partnership between Hans Crescent Symposium London, the Internet Interdisciplinary Institute (IN3/UOC), the Institute of Government and Public Policy (IGOP/UAB), and a network of social movement activists and academics. It originates from the partners' shared interest in developing a strategic vision of using advanced information technologies to benefit an alternative political, social, and economic agenda.

Purpose

BITS will stimulate a global debate about the changing meanings of sovereignty and explore the ways in which various types of sovereignty – of citizens, cities, nation states, and regions – can still be maintained in today's highly technological global conditions. With a strong focus on the political effects of technological change, BITS will explore how the rise of Technology platforms and the data extractivism they enable is transforming governments, labor, ownership, and access to the basics of life such as water, food, housing, and energy. This task is particularly important as the current political and economic regime reformulates itself around the rhetorical and practical kernel of digital technology, with a new mighty alliance between technology firms, global finance, and the military-industrial complex.

Activities

BITS' initiatives include workshops, Symposiums, a series of monthly lectures and workshops linking researchers, grassroots, and public officials starting in 2017, and a Summer School in July 2017. Regular content will be produced and shared, including research briefings and news digests pertaining to the questions addressed by the initiative.

BITS seminars, work streams, and research lines are geared towards "what's to be done?" sort of questions. Its members and audience include prominent academics, journalists, researchers, social movement activists, campaigners, entrepreneurs, and public officials from municipal and national governments in attendance. Thus, while BITS raises awareness and stimulates robust theoretical discussions, it also brings in and encourages concrete examples and suggestions for specific policy interventions in the political context.

Agenda

DAY ONE

- 10:00 **Welcome**
Francesca Bria, Chief Technology and Innovation Officer, Barcelona
Evgeny Morozov, author
Roy Singham, Chairman ThoughtWorks
- 10:30-12:00 **Keynote: Power, Economics and Crisis in the Era of Authoritarian Capitalism**
Kees van der Pijl, Professor Emeritus, School of Global Studies, University of Sussex
- Respondent:**
Julian Assange, Founder and Editor Wikileaks
- 12:15-14:15 **Session 1: The Geopolitics of Technology**
Keynote: Dan Schiller, Emeritus Professor and Historian of Information and Communications, University of Illinois
- Respondents:**
Evgeny Morozov, author
Carlos Figueira, former Vice Minister of Technology, Venezuela
- Open debate**
Facilitator: Francesca Bria, CTIO Barcelona City Hall
Note taker: Renata Avila, lawyer and activist
- Lunch break**

15:15-17:15 **Session 2: The New Global Financial Architecture**
Keynote: Andres Arauz, Minister of Talent and Knowledge, Ecuador

Respondents:

Brett Scott, journalist and researcher

Ekaitz Cancela, journalist and author

Open debate

Facilitator: Jaromil, Dyne.org

Note taker: Anthony Arnove, ThoughtWorks

Coffee Break

18:00-20:00 **Session 3: Automation, Labour Struggles and the Future of Work**

Panelists:

Valery Alzaga, UNISON, London

Annette Muehlberg, Ver.di

Philipp Staab, Institute for the history and future of work

Open debate

Facilitator: Juha Leppänen, Demos Helsinki

Note taker: Federico Primosig, BITS

21:00-23:00 **Dinner with guests at Café Salambó (public event with Barcelona en comú and BITS communities)**

DAY TWO

10:00 **Opening remarks**
Gerardo Pisarello, First Deputy Mayor, Barcelona

10:15-12:15 **Session 4: Transcending the State, Transcending Capitalism?**

Keynote: Leslie Sklair, Emeritus Professor of Sociology, LSE

Keynote: Temir Porras, SciencesPo, Paris School of International Affairs

Open debate

Facilitator: Evgeny Morozov, author

Note taker: Arnau Monterde, UOC

12:30-14:30 **Session 5: Elites and Power brokers**

Keynote: Inderjeet Parmar, City University

Respondent: Kees van der Pijl, Professor Emeritus, School of Global Studies,
University of Sussex

Open debate

Facilitator: Anthony Arnove, ThoughtWorks

Note taker: Olga Coscodan, BITS

Lunch break

15:30-17:30 **Session 6: Data Sovereignty and New forms of Democracy**

Panelists

Alex Hache, Donestech

Jonathan Gray, Institute for Policy Research, University of Bath

Tamar Sharon, University of Maastricht

Paolo Gerbaudo, King's College London

Open debate

Facilitator: Joan Subirats, IGOP Barcelona

Note taker: Renata Avila, lawyer and activist

Closing Session and General Reflections