

Value Struggles in Contemporary Capitalism

Wednesday 3 June 2026 15:00 (1h 30m)

The question of how value is created, appropriated and distributed is at the centre of current international political economy discussions. What is the 'value' of things, services and experiences? Who decides what value they have? How is value imbricated with moral, ethical and political 'values'? What valuation processes are employed to assess value? What are the struggles around value creation and appropriation, and how do they change in time? How do we account for the material, immaterial and experiential elements of value? These are all key questions that inform the way power is exercised in the pursuit of economic activity, including in global value chains. In other words, struggles around 'value' are key for understanding key dynamics in contemporary capitalism, including their distributional consequences for producers, workers and nature – both in the global South and the global North.

The roundtable brings together scholars who have engaged with various forms of analysis on value creation, capture, and redistribution from a range of perspectives and in different locations. The panellists are invited to reflect on how these processes have informed their work and the IPE field more broadly – and to reflect on what insights the concept of 'value struggles' could bring to thinking about current economic transformations and challenges. The panel coincides with the 2025 publication of Stefano Ponte's book 'Value struggles: Looking at capitalism through the wine glass' (Bloomsbury Academic), which this panel also seeks to celebrate. Stefano's book examines three sites of struggle: place, nature and people (class, race and gender) and how different 'worlds of valuation' are leveraged by specific groups of actors to maintain existing power imbalances or to attempt to challenge them.

Track Classification: International Political Economy Working Group