

Call for papers

Digital Platforms and Socio-spatial Justice in the (Post-)Pandemic City

Special issue of *Digital Geography and Society*

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Digital platforms are radically changing the way cities are shaped, inhabited, practised, imagined and governed. Urban areas are in fact ideal laboratories for experimenting platform-based approaches in a variety of domains: mobility (Uber, Waze), housing (Idealista, Zillow), tourism (Tripadvisor, Airbnb), food services (Yelp, Deliveroo), work (Upwork, MTurk), finance (Robinhood, Kabbage), education (remote learning platforms), urban planning and administration (IdeaScale, FixMyStreet, SafeLane), etc.; not to mention other biggest and more pervasive platforms, such as Amazon, Google, Facebook and social media. Despite their diversity, platforms often adopt similar logics based on a combination of crowdsourcing, datafication, algorithmic management, digital reputation, the exploitation of free or affective labour, network effects and surveillance (Srnicsek, 2017; Van Dijck et al., 2018; Zuboff, 2019): a predatory and disruptive business model that extracts value from users (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2017) and their online/offline interactions, distributing such value unevenly among individuals, social groups, cities and different parts of a single city (Celata, Capineri and Romano, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic has temporarily paused some of those processes, e.g. in the domains of mobility and tourism, but it is heightening our addiction to digital services and shifting the threshold between what can be done online and offline in favour of the former, with consequences that scholars, observers and cities have only begun to explore (Certomà, 2020).

The Special Issue wishes to contribute to the burgeoning literature on the new urban geographies produced through and by the digital (Ash et al., 2018), focusing on how platforms reproduce or alter socio-spatial hierarchies and inequalities, and entangle categories of identity, race, gender, class, and location, particularly in light of the consequences of the Covid-19 and the changing organization of cities and urban life in the (post-)pandemic scenario. The aim is to explore how the ownership, management and use of digital (hard and soft) infrastructures interact with the physical, economic, and social life of the city, and what the outcomes are in terms of distributive and spatial justice.

We encourage the submission of research articles that critically engage with the 'platformization' of cities and its socio-spatial implications from a variety of perspectives: from the urban political economy of platform capitalism to cultural and critical enquiries of internet-mediated imaginaries and identities.

We seek papers that address (but are not limited) to the following themes:

- How digital platforms affect intra-urban inequalities, the social stratification of cities and inter-urban disparities (Richardson, 2020);
- How platforms disrupt traditional businesses and their unequal effects across cities and industries;
- How (competing) urban visions and ideologies are mobilized within and behind platforms (Graham et al., 2019);
- How the 'platformization' of urban life is entangled with issues of intersectionality and social positionality (Dy et al., 2017).
- How individuals adapt to and resist digital governmentality (Törnberg and Uitermark, 2020) and the biopolitics of platforms (Coleman, 2016);
- How platforms challenge urban politics and sociopolitical practices in the city (Rossi, 2019);

- How the conditions (and struggles) for social and spatial justice change within the platform city (Shaw and Graham, 2017);
- What the actually existing (ethical, cooperative, state-led, etc.) alternatives are to corporate platforms (McLean, 2020);
- How public values are, or should be, imbued within the platforms to guarantee conditions of fairness, democratic control and accountability in the digital economy.

Interested authors can follow this procedure:

- send an abstract (max 300 words) to Filippo Celata (filippo.celata@uniroma1.it) and Chiara Certomà (chiara.certoma@unito.it) by December 12th, 2020;
- wait for approval (via email) and then submit all of the following: (1) the abstract + (2) cover letter + (3) title page in the Digital Geography and Society portal (<https://www.editorialmanager.com/diggeo/default.aspx>) by December 31st, 2020. To ensure that all manuscripts are correctly identified for inclusion into the special issue, it is important that you select "**VSI: Platforms and Justice**" when you reach the "Article Type" step in the submission process.;
- submit the full paper by March 15th, 2021.

Please note:

- Digital Geography and Society is an open-access journal, however Article Processing Charge (APC) will be waived for all the contributors whose abstract+title page+cover letter is submitted before the 31st December 2020 (even if the full paper is submitted by the March deadline). It is also possible to submit a complete paper by the 31st December 2020 and have the APC waived.
- Accepted format include: research papers, commentaries and debate – see Guide for authors <https://www.elsevier.com/journals/digital-geography-and-society/2666-3783/guide-for-authors>

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