

Final conference of the international research project
Enacting Citizenship and Solidarity in Europe “From Below”:
Local Initiatives, Intersectional Strategies, and
Transnational Networks [ECSEuro]



October 10/11, 2024, Universität Hamburg

Enacting Citizenship and Solidarity “From Below”

In the last two decades, the multiplication of crises has increased the challenges for European society. While the nation-states dominating the European project have hardly been able to find adequate responses to the turmoil, new forms of practicing solidarity and citizenship have been growing at the local level. They emerge in opposition to the established politics imposed 'from above' by the world order of nation-states, capitalism and the public-private split, and they create alternative forms of political engagement, collaboration and societal organization 'from below'. Starting from the assumption that only research addressing the local scale and its multi-scalar entanglements can provide adequate responses to current challenges, we invite speakers to present their work on urban civil society and social movement organizations.

The conference will focus in particular on the social fields of migrant rights, housing/urban commons and care, which have received increased attention in the wake of the polycrisis, taking into account their specific structures and intersections. In asking what potential local and urban scales offer for enacting more inclusive, transversal solidarities and citizenships, we go beyond a focus on publicly visible practices by examining the often relatively invisible practices of everyday organizing. Here we propose to draw on concepts of care and commoning and to develop them analytically and theoretically in relation to specific sites and notions of solidarity and citizenship. Lastly, focusing on scales entails that we investigate how social relations are forged in the spatial settings of communities, neighborhoods, cities or interurban spaces as well as between actors and authorities in different (governance) structures which can be in conflict with the state level and its 'nationed geographies'.

The conference includes speeches, a roundtable discussion with *Engin Isin*, *Margit Mayer*, and *Harald Bauder* (tbc), an open format session and four panels on the following topics:

Panel 1: Caring for the Commons (with *Haris Malamidis* and *Felipe G. Santos* among others)

In recent times, conceptions of care and commons have been linked to practices of solidarity from below. While carrying a multiplicity of meanings, as they are adapted to different contexts, care and commons have entered the language of progressive social movements to signify the search for overcoming perceived limitations in previous practices of solidarity from below. The aim of this panel is to analyze the innovations introduced by practices of solidarity connecting caring and commoning in self-managed spaces, with particular attention to solidarity in the context of uneven, intersectional power relations.

Panel 2: Local Organizing between Everyday Practices of Mutual Aid and Protest (with *Maribel Casas-Cortes* and *Charalampos Tsavdaroglou* among others)

Building on the debates of the first panel, we continue to shed light on the rather imperceptible care practices and infrastructures “from below” that are often overlooked from a perspective of social movements and macropolitics, while also analyzing how they relate to more visible forms of protest and the transformations of citizenship. We want to highlight how they enable and support everyday life, politicize structural causes of precarity and inequality, and build place-based solidarities in

neighborhoods as a basis for further urban struggles. We see their everyday experimentation with lived alternatives to privatized and conventional forms of social provisioning and to hierarchical and racist structures as insightful and important for broader processes toward radical social change. We therefore want to discuss how the micropolitics of everyday organizing relate to publicly visible practices of protest and contentious politics but also cooperate with, challenge, or confront municipalities, democratic institutions, and welfare regimes.

Panel 3: Between Commoning and Re-Municipalization: Struggles against Profit-Oriented in the Social Fields of Housing and Care (with *Marina Mironica, Laura Roth* and *Lisa Vollmer* among others)

In this panel, we highlight and discuss the implications of one of the main findings of the frame analysis that was part of our broader research project: the importance of 'profit-orientation' as a diagnostic frame, and how current struggles of social movements in the social fields of housing and care work across Europe have all taken place in the context of 'neoliberalization' (Brown 2016), privatization measures and austerity policies enacted by nation-states and private investors alike. This panel therefore looks at the various struggles that have emerged in the social fields of housing and care work activism to resist and challenge these hegemonic processes. We will examine both the political forms of organizing (commoning or remunicipalization) and the concrete practices (building infrastructure or more “everyday” practices of care) through which housing and care work movements are fighting the profit orientation of their subsequent sectors, and how they are offering alternatives against developments towards the “neoliberal city” (Hackworth 2006).

Panel 4: Building Solidarity Cities, Infrastructuring Urban Solidarity (with *Jonathan Darling* and *Veronika Zablotsky* among others)

This panel elaborates on the forms of solidarity and citizenship that (can) emerge in the context of a solidarity/sanctuary city framework. First, we want to broaden the debate on solidarity cities beyond its focus on migration and ask about the experiences and potential of solidarity/sanctuary city mobilizations that provide a connecting/intersectional framework for a multitude of urban social struggles for a good life for all inhabitants (including access for all to housing, care, education, democratic participation). In this context, we also ask how concepts such as “new municipalism” and “urban citizenship” relate to “solidarity city” concepts. Second, we are theoretically and empirically interested in the relationship and dynamics between grassroots transformative practices and municipal politics. We want to discuss their interplay and also cases in which a co-production of urban infrastructures of solidarity could potentially succeed. Finally, we are also interested in the multi-scalar relations inherent in these political practices, reflecting on the role of cities vis-a-vis national and supranational institutions, but also on the relation between city, community, and neighborhood scales.

We will kick off the conference on Wednesday evening with a public event (starting at 6:00 p.m., venue: tba) and end the conference on Friday late afternoon with a harbor tour (approximately 90 minutes, ending at 5:00 p.m.).

Conference venue: *Universität Hamburg, Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1, 20146 Hamburg, Germany*

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