

Lecture Series [Out of the Dark](#)

Autopoietic citizenship: sensory power and its subject

Engin Isin (Queen Mary University of London)

22 October 2025, 18:00-20:00

University of Hamburg, ESA 1 Hauptgebäude, Hörsaal C

Based on my forthcoming book, *The birth of sensory power: doing things with words, numbers, and neurons* (Edinburgh University Press), I will introduce the concept of 'autopoietic citizenship' to describe the kind of subject that sensory power has produced in the twenty-first century. With a history of how datasciences and neurosciences have merged to create a new form of power, polity, and citizenship, I will illustrate how sensory power, driven by artificial intelligence and machine learning, transforms historical forms of power (sovereignty, discipline, and regulative), reconfigures cities, states, and empires, and engenders the autopoietic subject. Drawing from thinkers like Spinoza, Nietzsche, Deleuze, and Foucault, but reworking their theories of power with Austin and Derrida, I will offer a critical perspective on the twenty-first-century subject that is neither autonomous nor autonomic but autopoietic. The question becomes how performative citizenship and autopoietic citizenship combine effects and affects for governing polities.

Commentary: Susanne Krasmann

Moderation: Helge Schwiertz

Concepts of Performative Citizenship – Workshop with Engin Isin

University of Hamburg, 23 October 2025, 9:00-15:30

University of Hamburg, VMP 9 Raum A215

In this workshop, we will discuss the analytical potential of "acts of citizenship" and related concepts and reflect on how to develop a performative approach to citizenship against the backdrop of social transformations over the last two decades.

Please visit our website for the workshop program: <https://europefrombelow.net/events-2/>

To participate in the workshop, please send an email to ecseuro-office.wiso@uni-hamburg.de

Organized by Helge Schwiertz and the research project *Enacting Citizenship and Solidarity in Europe 'From Below': Local Initiatives, Intersectional Strategies, and Transnational Networks* (<https://europefrombelow.net>), funded by VolkswagenStiftung



Workshop Program: *Concepts of Performative Citizenship*

9:00: Arrival

9:15: Intro

9:30 - 10:30: Session 1: Enacting Citizenship Beyond Status and Contention

Helge Schwiertz (University of Hamburg): *Horizontal Citizenship. Rethinking Politics Grounded in the Everyday*

Indi-Carolina Kryg (GIGA / IMIS, University of Osnabrück): *Non-Contentious Activist Citizenship in Mexico. How Normative Expectations towards Migrants Matter*

10:30 - 10:45: Coffee break

10:45 - 11:45: Session 2: The Planetary and New Materialism

Catharina Peeck-Ho (Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg): *Contested Knowledge on Citizenship: Planetary Citizenship and the Struggle for the "Right to Shelter" in Massachusetts*

Salah El-Kahil (Leuphana University Lüneburg): *Protesting Identity Wallets? A science and technology approach to acts of citizenship*

11:45 – 12:00: Coffee break

12:00 - 13:00: Session 3: Citizenship as a Practice of Democracy and Anti-Fascism

Malte Kleinschmidt (Leibniz University Hannover): *What does citizenship mean in 'citizenship education'? Performativity, abolition-democracy and democracy-yet-to-come*

Jonas Euteneuer (University of Tübingen): *Enacting local democratic citizenship against right-wing dominance and excluding normalities*

Lunch break: 13:00 - 14:30

14:30 - 15:30: Round Table: Performing Citizenship in the Current Conjunctures