

Call **for** Papers

New Forms of Social and Political Mobilization: Reinventing Democracy and Civic Rights?

Second Workshop of Working Group 1: Practices

COST Action CA 16211 RECAST

19–20 September 2019

Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria

The current rise of social and political mobilizations that limit rather than extend the scope and content of civic rights and challenge the inclusive conception of democracy, have prompted critics to look at the deficits of the political left, traditionally promoting both the rights-agenda and inclusive democracy. For some authors the major failure of the left consists in its inability to integrate in its political agenda the aspirations of the 1970s' social movements which multiplied and extended social struggles from the sole focus of the workers' movement to the peace movement, the women's movement, gay rights, the environment and many others. Instead of politically articulating the concerns and empowering the movements that came out of the 1970s and thus guaranteeing the representation of marginalized groups, social democratic politics in most European countries, after the fall of communism, subscribed to the newly emerging consensus that neoliberal social and economic policies are the optimal, one-size-fits-all problem solver. As a result, social democratic parties not only lost many of their traditional voters, but progressive movements found themselves operating outside mainstream party politics, often conceding ground to new populist players with exclusionary, limiting-rights agenda.

In the preceding workshop we focused on analysing the retreat of civic rights and the current crisis of democracy more generally. The current workshop shall, instead, explore innovative forms of social and political practices and look for alternative practical articulations of social and political models to what since the end of the communist era seemed like a system without alternatives: the neoliberal market-driven society.

At the margins of European societies, new challenges to the dominant discourse emerged. These new forms of social and political mobilizations multiplied the issues, venues, strategies and organizational patterns of politicization. Instead of aiming at short-term objectives like seizing political power, they often pursue grander goals – such as transforming communities. This transformation reaches from local political organizations to activities outside the political field, from artistic practices to cooperative living spaces, from self-organized companies to new protest movements, etc. However, some of these forms of politicization, like the Occupy Wall Street movement, fail to institutionalize and soon disintegrate, while others – as some innovative social practices (self-organized occupied companies, cooperative living models, love parades) refrain from making universal claims and thus cannot in principle achieve systemic change.

This second workshop of WG Practices will focus on exploring the potential of social, political and legal, formal and informal, practices to reinvent and reinvigorate the fruitful link between democracy and civic rights at the national and European level.



Invitation

The WG Practices invites publication-aimed contributions to this interdisciplinary workshop from various academic disciplines, artists, civic activists, journalists, politicians, and other stakeholders. We invite submissions of paper or poster presentations and/or academic papers that address the following questions:

- 1 What is new? What is different? What is successful? What fails? ... in these new forms of social and political practices.
- 2 According to some critics, neoliberalism is a major source of the current crisis and at the root of the assault on the nexus democracy-civic rights. Therefore, we invite contributors to reflect on new social and political practices aiming at changing the patterns of our current societies, and offering alternatives to neoliberal market-driven societies.
- 3 What kind of alternative strategies and modes of organization appeared in the new protests and social practices? How do the new practices differ from the social movements of the 1970s and 80s?
- 4 What aspects of these new practices may contribute to the reinvention, and potential reinvigoration of democracy with strong civic rights?

We are looking forward to a broad range of papers that tackle any of the above listed questions. The subsequent and final workshop of this series will look in more detail at policy suggestions and concrete measures to enhance the potential of beneficial practices.

Abstracts should be of maximum 200 words in length with 3-4 keywords and a 50 word bio of the author, along with the contact details.

Due to budgetary restrictions, COST Action RECAST can fund a limited amount of travel expenses. Kindly inform the convenors if funding is required at the time of submission. Self-funded presenters are welcome and stand an equal chance of acceptance.

Key Dates

Final date to submit abstracts: **20 June 2019**

Communication confirmation/rejection and funding (if applicable): **30 June 2019**

Workshop dates: **19–20 September 2019**

All queries should be addressed to: ruzha.smilova@gmail.com & meikesg@gmail.com

Convenors

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Organizers

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<https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA16211> & <https://www.uma.es/costactionrecast>

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