

## Democratic Transformations: Towards Political and Social Change

Aalborg University

Venue Kroghstræde 3, room 4.112

Days 23rd -24th of January

### General description:

The Arab spring in 2011 initiated a new cycle of social struggles that expanded to other places in the world: Spain, Greece, USA, Mexico, Turkey and Brazil. Despite all their particularities, two main characteristics can easily be identified: a new vigorous civil society that claims its right to be heard and the questioning of democracy as a mere system of representativeness, which relies exclusively on political parties.

In this seminar we want to address this dual challenge: what is the role of civil society and how does it contribute to social and political change? And how can political parties be more receptive to civil society and increase the mechanism of participation for citizens?

There are no simple answers to these relevant issues. Therefore we propose a dialogue between representatives from civil society organizations, scholars and politicians in order to share knowledge and practices and to try to find possible ways of thinking about a more inclusive and participatory democracy.

Questions such as the following will be used as a starting point to initiate the discussion:

- How can we conceptualize the civil society reactions to the economic and political-cultural crisis?
- Which social experiments are already taking place in Europe and how do they challenge the system in crisis and its politics of austerity?
- What can the political parties do, from a Danish perspective, to expand the limits of democracy and open up politics towards citizens?
- Which social experiments are taking place in Denmark and how do they contribute to social change and rethinking the political agenda?

### Aims:

As mentioned, the seminar is an attempt to strengthen the connections between academia, civil society and political parties and to establish a common framework of discussion, based on dialogue and mutual learning, which is not only Danish but also European.

This event should be the beginning of common thinking and the creation of a network to explore possible ways of cooperation and activities in the future.

A more concrete and immediate aim is to promote spaces of reflection with a European perspective, since the coming European elections remind us of the importance of thinking about and developing a Europe by and for the citizens.

#### Participants:

Anyone (activists, students, scholars, citizens...) who is interested in the topic is very welcome to participate in the seminar and contribute with his/her opinions, experiences and points of view.

**The participation is completely free of charge but prior registration is recommended.**

<http://www.en.cgs.aau.dk/democratictransformations/Registration/>

## **Program**

### First day: Conceptualizing political and social change

**13.00-15.30 (including break) Room Ks 3/4.112**

**Global Justice Movements and the Precariat**, Carl-Ulrik Schierup (Linköping University, Sweden)

**The right to the city**, Aleksandra Ålund (Linköping University, Sweden)

**The Europe of the commons**, Gigi Roggero (Bologna University, Italy)

*Moderator/discussant:* Birte Siim

**15.30-16.45 Room Ks 3/4.112**

**Roundtable: Rethinking Europe: possibilities of change**

Birte Siim, Aleksandra Ålund, Carl-Ulrik Schierup, Gigi Roggero

**Reception at K3 – a bit of music and something to drink**

## Second day: Political and social change in practice

**10.30-12.00 Room Ks 3/4.112**

### **Roundtable 1: European alternatives from below**

*This session departs from three presentations by academics/activists. The aim with the session is firstly to present different European experiences of civil society engagement in social struggles and secondly to discuss if such experiences and practices can be transferred across countries. What alternative is being formulated, who are engaged in these alternatives, how is engagement facilitated, and what implications could they have for political and social practice?*

Martina Tazzioli (Italy/England): Migration struggles

Gavan Titley (Ireland/Finland): Media, technology and political participation

Ramón Espinar Merino (Spain): Youth against precarization

*Moderator: Martin Bak Jørgensen*

**13.00-14.30 Room Ks 3/4.112**

### **Roundtable 2: Politiske partier i dialog med civilsamfundet** *(this session will be held in Danish only)*

*Denne session vil diskutere de etablerede politiske partiers rolle i at skabe politisk og social forandring. Sessionen indledes med præsentationer fra tre repræsentanter fra partier traditionelt engageret i spørgsmål vedrørende inklusion. Sessionen vil forsøge at give svar på den mistillid og utilfredshed med det politiske system som mødes rundt omkring i Europa, om end ikke i samme grad i Danmark, og vil diskutere hvordan politiske partier kan styrke engagement og deltagelse og dialogen med civilsamfundet.*

Lisbeth Poulsen (Socialistisk Folkeparti)

Rasmus Prehn (Socialdemokratiet)

Per Clausen (Enhedslisten)

*Moderator: Anders Lundkvist*

**14.45-17.00 Room Ks 3/4.112**

**Roundtable 3: Sociale forandringer – civilsamfundsinitiativer** (*this session will be held in Danish only*)

*Denne session tager udgangspunkt i fem præsentationer fra forskellige civilsamfundsaktører. Den vil diskutere relationer mellem etablerede og institutionelle kanaler for indflydelse og forandring og ikke-institutionelle aktører og initiativer. Sessionen vil diskutere fagforeningernes rolle, spørgsmål om repræsentation, civilsamfundsinitiativer for retfærdighed og inklusion af folk med og uden statsborgerskab samt nødvendighederne af alternative løsninger som middel til social forandring.*

Jan Hoby (LFS, Landsforeningen for Socialpædagoger)

Morten Goll (Trampolinhuset)

Said Pavin (Asylret)

Leif Lahn Jensen (Arbejdernetværket)

Pil Berner Strandgaard (CEVEA)

*Moderator:* Ivan Lind Christensen

**Further information:**

Website: [www.democratictransformations.aau.dk](http://www.democratictransformations.aau.dk)

Facebook: [www.facebook/groups/618883074839459](https://www.facebook/groups/618883074839459)

**Organisers:**

Óscar García Agustín & Martin Bak Jørgensen are associate professors at the Department of Culture and Global Studies, Aalborg University