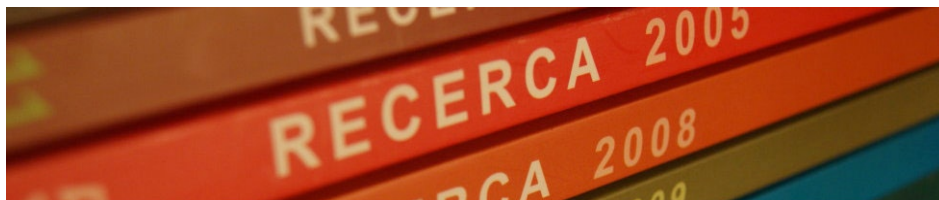


CALL FOR PAPERS

RECERCA. REVISTA DE PENSAMENT I ANÀLISI



Título: Special issue: Crisis and New Social Movements across Europe: the Birth of a Critical European Civil Society?

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Call for papers. In recent years, Europe has witnessed an emergence of political activism through the irruption of new social movements –15M or Occupy–, the birth of new political platforms –5 Stelle, Pirate Party, Zyrisa, X Party– and the emergence of new direct action groups such as Anonymous, anti-eviction movements and cooperatives, to name just a few (Castells, 2012; Mason 2012; Della Porta, 2013; Micó & Casero-Ripollés, 2013). In some countries, this activism has not just led to substantial pressure upon the traditional actors of representative democracy and governments, but also seemed to open opportunities for structural changes in context and procedures of policy making. One scenario is the recognition of citizen claims and initiatives to have a bigger say in governance, or a greater deal of political participation in relevant decision-making processes (Keane, 2009; Rosanvallon, 2008; Saward, 2010, Tormey, 2014). Another scenario is the development of alternative means of access to collective services and mutual help outside the sphere of the state – possibly in the tradition of older social economy experiences (Graeber, 2013). Both scenarios may be combined in some cases. How do we interpret the rise of NGOs, social networking, mass protests, diy politics and other forms of *sub-politics* in terms of the scenarios and perspectives of a diverse civil society and its social movements?

Much of the debate around these issues focuses on ‘crisis countries’ in Southern Europe, however countries in the North are witnessing popular uprisings as well. Sometimes in electoral form –populist parties (mainly right wing) opposing European government policies (Mudde, 2013)– and sometimes in a more activist (mainly left wing) form, similar to the ones in the Southern countries; for instance, the German citizen platform *Zwangsräumung verhindern*. What are the dominant organisations and the specific dynamics in various countries? Are general trends recognizable in the South and in the North of Europe? How do old and new issues, material deprivation and moral outrage mix in these countries (Klandermans et al. 2009; Walter et al. 2013)? And most importantly, are there any links among activist groups in different countries of the Eurozone that would allow us to envision a birth of a critical *European civil society*?

The debates and research on European civil society carried out to date concentrate on inter-relationships between vested interests and big social organisations in EU countries, as well as their representation in umbrella organisations and advisory bodies in Brussels. Brussels has an interest in this kind of civil society to connect to European citizens (despite the weak electoral ties of the European Parliament to the ambiguous intermediation in national policies) and develop a ‘European identity’. This artificial construction of a ‘civil society from above’ (Smismans 2003; Koch-Kohler, 2009, Heilbreder, 2012), might now get intertwined with/defined by a new wave of developments ‘from below’ (following transnational protest phenomena such as the Brent Spar Shell boycott).

Recerca invites proposals related to these issues from different perspectives. Theoretical and comparative proposals are welcomed. Authors are asked not just to present native examples of activism, but to pay attention to their transnational links and compare them with cases elsewhere. What is their potential as European civil society developments from below?

Dr. Paul Dekker and Dr. Ramón Feenstra