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<b>Title of the project:</b>	New municipalism, democratic public ownership, and the politics of the common
<b>Contact:</b>	Bertie Russell (PI)
<b>Web page:</b>	<a href="https://igop.uab.cat/2023/10/16/nou-municipalisme-propietat-publica-democratica-i-politica-del-comu/">https://igop.uab.cat/2023/10/16/nou-municipalisme-propietat-publica-democratica-i-politica-del-comu/</a>
<b>Area:</b>	New municipalism; commons; democratic public ownership

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## What?

New municipalism, democratic public ownership, and the politics of the common seminar series aims to contribute to the emergent debate in the urban studies literature (e.g. Bianchi 2022; Cumbers & Paul 2022a, 2022b; Russell, Milburn & Heron 2022; Becker, Naumann & Moss, 2017; Ferreri & Vidal, 2022) on the possibilities offered and challenges posed by the application of common-based approaches to the struggle for the democratic public ownership and management of public goods and services in and beyond the urban and the local dimension.

These events are designed to produce four key research outputs that will have enduring societal and academic impact: the publication of an edited academic book (proposal in review with Bristol University Press, eds. Bianchi & Russell), the online publication of a collaborative authored report, early-career chapter contributions to a TNI-edited civil society collection, and the establishment of an 'action-research alliance' that will guarantee the development of the research beyond the duration of the seminar series.

## Who?

**IP: Bertie Russell (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona).** Marie Skłodowska-Curie research fellow at the IGOP, 2022-2025. His research project (MIDPO) is focused on the role of hybrid models of public ownership in contributing to systemic change. He was previously a research associate on projects focused on the Foundational Economy (University of Cardiff) and Co-Producing Urban Governance (University of Sheffield).

**Iolanda Bianchi (University of Barcelona).** Urban scholar. She works in the field of urban governance, urban policies and collective action. Her research focuses on the interplay between public and collective action at the urban scale, and examines how this interplay can produce governance, policy and social change, to achieve more just, equal and democratic cities. To push knowledge forward in this debate, she works at the crossroad of commons and new municipalism theory.

**Lavinia Steinfort (Transnational Institute).** Political geographer and activist. As a researcher at the Transnational Institute (TNI) she is working on public alternatives such as (re)municipalisation of public services, a just transition towards energy democracy and transforming finance for the 99%. Lavinia is co-implementing the mPOWER project that facilitates peer learning among European cities for a fair, clean and democratic

energy and is the coordinator of the energy democracy alliance, which includes a mailing list, the website [www.energy-democracy.net](http://www.energy-democracy.net) and regular conference calls.

## Why?

Over recent years, new municipalist movements have made their way into the governments of several cities. Most visible in Europe and Latin America, hybrid political organisations binding urban movements and existing progressive political parties have approached the local scale as an entry point for a radical change in urban politics (Russell, 2019). These initiatives can be situated as part of a wider radical municipalist hypothesis that emphasises the central importance of place-based interventions in underpinning wider systemic transformations. A characterising feature of these initiatives is the call for a renewed centrality of the democratic public ownership and management of local goods and services as a way to counter neoliberal urban governance regimes that led to their privatisation and/or outsourcing (Cumbers 2012).

This interpretation of democratisation leads us to an intersection with the emerging paradigm of the common (Laval and Dardot, 2019). This paradigm has become a tool for democratically rethinking the contours and forms of the local state through the principle of self-government (Bianchi, 2022). Building a common-inspired approach to local public goods and services means allowing citizens to self-produce and self-distribute them with ample financial and/or infrastructural support from the local state, such as when public housing is delivered through cooperative housing projects.

Elsewhere, innovative forms of co-ownership between public and civic partners demonstrate the potential for hybridity in the provision of services, such as when energy infrastructure is co-owned by citizen cooperatives and municipalities. When these are not possible, commons-inspired approaches involve letting the local state produce and distribute public services in-house, but through shared decision-making with civil society, as in public utility companies with participatory governing structures.

## How?

This event series will bring together early-career and established researchers in a series of hybrid events that will be hosted by the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (ES), the University of Antwerp (BE) and the Transnational Institute (NL).

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Call: USF Seminar Series Awards 2022.

## When?

*Barcelona Residential  
Workshop*

04/09/20203 -  
08/09/2023

*Research Alliance Development &  
Collaborative Writing Laboratory*

*Urban Studies Institute. University  
of Antwerp*

*24/01/2024 - 26-01-2024*

*Dissemination*

*Transnational*

*Institute*

*14/09/2024*