



CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

GCfE 15th Annual Conference (Online)

Communities in Europe: Between Continuity and Transition

13-14 May 2021

In the midst of the global Covid-19 pandemic, the notion of community has taken on a powerful meaning of solidarity and support: ‘Mutual Aid’ communities have burgeoned everywhere in the world, delivering foods and medication to the elderly and vulnerable; technology provided unprecedented levels of connectivity through which communities could be formed; new and creative forms of activism have emerged in the shape of crowdfunding campaigns to salvage independent shops as well as theatres and other cultural institutions.

On the other hand, in the face of environmental, social, and economic challenges, neoliberal discourses worldwide have encouraged people to think in terms of individual responsibility instead of collective causes and solution-finding. The European far right has put emphasis on the idea of a homogenous, sometimes labelled ‘racially’ pure national community – an idea which is restrictive to the individual’s identity/ies and to the plurality and diversity in society. Technological developments and the rise of social media have reinforced political polarisation and the compartmentalisation of society.

These parallel developments show how communities have the profoundly impactful capacity to exclude as well as to include. Because commonality forms the basis of most communities, it only allows for a certain degree of deviation from its norms, uniting principles or rules. In response to the ways in which communities are (re)created, preserved, and challenged, the conference wishes to address questions such as:

- **Conceptualising community/ies:** How are communities (trans)formed, changed, and dissolved? To what extent are communities defined by categories like space, time, and accessibility? To what extent can we speak of communities as ‘real’ or ‘imagined’?
- **Community/ies and identity/ies:** What are the different relations between community/ies and identity/ies? What determines the recognition or dismissal of marginalised communities? How do marginalised communities inform us about the development or shaping of national identity?
- **Governing community/ies:** How do communities organise, structure, and govern themselves? How are migrants and other marginalised communities shaped by humanitarian, international, national and European regulations?
- **Articulating community/ies:** How is the notion of community/ies approached and negotiated within literature, the arts and culture? To what extent are artistic and performing communities guaranteeing and participating in the life and transformation of our cultural communities?

We invite contributions from academic as well as non-academic backgrounds. These may include but are not restricted to: Political Sciences; Sociology; Anthropology and Ethnology; Geography; Law; Economics; History; Education; European Studies; Languages, Literatures, Arts, and Cultures; Postcolonial Studies; Gender and Sexuality Studies; Disability Studies; Media Studies. Notions of communities may include but are not limited to: national and diasporic communities, racial and cultural communities, political and activist communities, LGBTQIA+ communities, religious and spiritual communities, academic and occupational communities, artistic and creative communities, online and digital communities.

As a centre run by a steering committee of postgraduates, we particularly encourage postgraduates and early career researchers to apply. Moreover, in light of this year’s conference theme, we also encourage community leaders, organisers, activists, social workers, etc. to apply, so as to feature academic, occupational and activist perspectives. Contributions are not limited to the presentation of traditional academic papers and we very much welcome other kinds of participation.

Due to the unpredictability of the current global situation, the conference will be held online. Do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any query about accessibility or any other aspect of the event. If you would like to present at the conference, please submit an abstract or a description of your proposed contribution of no more than **300 words**, along with your contact details and a brief biographical note of no more than **50 words** to gcfec@contacts.bham.ac.uk by **Friday, 18 December 2020**. More information can be found on our social media: Twitter: @gcfec_bham. Facebook @graduatecentreforeurope. You can find our blog at: <https://gcfecbham.wordpress.com/>.