



SqEK – Squatting Everywhere Kollektive

By **SqEK**

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Abstract

The activist-research network SqEK (Squatting Everywhere Kollektive) is presented through their activities, forms of organisation and publications.

Keywords

squatting, activist research, collaborative network

We were founded in 2009 following a meeting of different scholars and/or activists who had some relationship with squatting struggles. During our second encounter, we managed to write a manifesto and research program (SqEK, 2010), and named ourselves Squatting Europe Kollektive. ‘Europe’ was replaced by ‘Everywhere’ in 2017.

First of all, we see ourselves as a ‘network,’ which implies very flexible structures and commitments. To be a member is easy once there is interest in working together and after an affiliate introduces the newcomer. Currently, there are members involved in the network from most European countries (more from the Western, Northern and Southern Europe than from the Central and Eastern Europe). Some are also based in Turkey, Australia, the United States, Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, and Canada.

There is no membership fee. The maintenance of the online services and some of the expenses incurred during the meetings are paid with the royalties from the books that we publish. We also rely on member donations to support travel expenses of those in need who wish to participate in our regular conferences. These are usually held once a year, at least, and are self-managed as much as possible, in cooperation with local activist groups. Occasionally, we have enjoyed grants from foundations, universities, and research projects that individual affiliates applied for. The cities where we have gathered as SqEK may offer a glimpse of the different and rich activist environments that we interacted with: Madrid (2009), Milan (2009), London (2010), Amsterdam (2011), Copenhagen (2011), Berlin (2011),



New York (2012), Paris (2013), Rome (2014), Barcelona (2015), Rotterdam (2016), Prague (2017), Stockholm (2018), and Catania (2018).

Obviously, the main concern of our network is the practice of squatting in all its manifestations (land and buildings, urban and rural, for housing and social centres, etc.). Our members have different backgrounds, knowledge, and activist experience with squatting. The majority of us are involved in academic careers, but there are also some full-time and many part-time activists. These internal differences are sometimes a source of conflict and are not so easy to manage, but we do our best and try to face them overtly. The discussion on what ‘activist-research’ means busies us on a regular basis. Despite certain inertia towards ‘academicization,’ we define our aim as the production of reliable and fine-grained knowledge about squatting movements as a public resource, especially for squatters and activists.

In our initial manifesto, we promoted ‘critical engagement, transdisciplinarity, and comparative approaches’ as the basis of our project. This is certainly well manifested in the wide range of contributors we had in our collective books. Gender and ethnic concerns are also quite important in the organizational decisions we have made in the meetings, workshops, and publications.

In addition to the yearly meetings, our regular means of communication is an email list. We also keep alive a webpage (<https://sqek.squat.net/>) with some news and documents accessible. But perhaps it was our ‘maps project’ (<https://maps.squat.net/en/cities>) that raised more public attention. In social media, we are not particularly active as a network, but some members post and circulate information about squatting often.

Over the past ten years, many of the SqEK members finished their Master and PhD theses, published a significant number of academic articles and books, and also promoted various activists-oriented works, art exhibitions, fanzines, public debates, new journals, etc. Panels in academic conferences and special issues about squatting have also been promoted by some SqEK affiliates.

To conclude, a chronological list of our collective books follows (pdf files are always available online):

SqEK (Squatting Europe Kollektive) (Ed) (2013) *Squatting in Europe. Radical Spaces, Urban Struggles* (Wivenhoe: Minor Compositions) The journal *Partecipazione e Conflitto* translated some of the chapters into Italian. Available at: <http://www.minorcompositions.info/?p=504> and <http://www.minorcompositions.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/squattingineurope-web.pdf>

Cattaneo, C. & Martínez, M. A. (Eds) (2014) *The Squatters' Movement in Europe: Commons and Autonomy as Alternatives to Capitalism* (London: Pluto Press). There is an available translation into Turkish: *Avrupa'da İğgal Hareketleri. Kapitalizme Karşı Alternatifler Olarak Gündelik Müsterekler ve Otonomi* (Istanbul: Tekin Yayınevi). Available at: <https://www.plutobooks.com/9780745333953/the-squatters-movement-in-europe/> <https://en.squat.net/wp-content/uploads/en/2011/09/sqek-the-squatters-movement-in-europe-commons-and-autonomy-as-alternatives-to-capitalism.pdf>

- Moore, A. & Smart, A. (Eds) (2015) *Making Room. Cultural Production in Occupied Spaces* (Barcelona: Other Forms & Journal of Aesthetics and Protest). Available at: <http://joaap.org/press/makingroom.htm> and <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0By2K4L5oXXDEWE5ZZ21yOF9GTG8/view>
- Mudu, P. & Chattopadhyay, S. (Eds) (2017) *Migration, Squatting and Radical Autonomy* (Abingdon: Routledge). Available at: <https://www.routledge.com/Migration-Squatting-and-Radical-Autonomy/Mudu-Chattopadhyay/p/book/9781138942127> <http://booksdescr.org/item/index.php?md5=F92EB4F394E73EFCFED607E7B09DF6A9>
- Martínez, M. A. (Ed) (2018) *The Urban Politics of Squatters' Movements* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan). <http://www.springer.com/gp/book/9781349953134> https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322182783_The_Urban_Politics_of_Squatters'_Movements
- SqEK (Squatting Everywhere Kollektive) (Ed) (2018) *Fighting for spaces, Fighting for our lives: Squatting Movements today* (Berlin: Assemblage). Available at: <https://www.edition-assemblage.de/buecher/fighting-for-spaces-fighting-for-our-lives-squatting-movements-today/> and <https://sqek.squat.net/wp-content/uploads/sqek/2018/10/sqek-fighting-nocover.pdf>
- A special issue in the journal *Baltic Worlds* about “Squatting in the East” [<http://balticworlds.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/BW-1-2-2016-open-access.pdf>] was also translated into Polish and published as a book:
- Polanska, D. V., Piotrowski, G., & Martínez, M. A. (Eds) (2018) *Skłoting w Europie Środkowej i Rosji [Squatting in Eastern and Central Europe]* (Gdansk: Europejskie Centrum Solidarności). Available at: http://www.ecs.gda.pl/title,Skłoting_w_Europie_Srodkowej_i_Rosji,pid,1713.html

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