

Call for papers: Contemporary forms of protest in the Euro-Asian space: challenges for social science, psychology and humanities research

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A wave of various protest movements has swept over the Euro-Asian space, raising many questions about the reasons for their emergence, their character, impact and prospects in the local and wider regional perspectives. The most recent large-scale violent protests in Ukraine at the end of 2013 and beginning of 2014 shocked the international community, who failed to either predict or fully explain them, did not know how to act in this situation and miscalculated their long-term strategic consequences. The events in Ukraine are only the most recent manifestations of what has become a fundamentally new generation of protest movements which have taken shape in the last fifteen years, have increased in visibility and heavily influence national and international politics. The most visible of these new types of protest movements is the Salafi-jihadi movement, which has only been recently acknowledged as ‘movement’, rather than isolated terrorist cells, and which has emerged not only in Western European states, but also in Central Asia and the Caucasus. A second one is the new generation of right-wing extremism. In Western Europe, right-wing groups have shown increased activity, innovation and modernization with respect to repertoires of action, communication and recruitment strategies, internal organization and agendas, as well as increased influence on mainstream politics, as shown by the recent debates on the EU elections, but also increasing support at the national level. Right-wing extremism has also emerged in Eastern European countries, such as Serbia or Russia, and has also played a major role in the recent events in the Ukraine. Finally, social protest has occurred on a larger scale in the form of the so-called “color revolutions” in the Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, but also to a smaller extent in other Central Asian countries, Russia and Belarus. These were triggered either by electoral fraud, price increase or unfair labor conditions. All these types of protests, which have become very relevant in the past few years, remain under-studied, especially in a comparative perspective. All these developments could fundamentally contribute to the long-term challenging of the existing internal power relations, instability and insecurity in the local and wider regional context.

This conference aims to focus the efforts of young researchers (PhD students and Post-Docs) in Hamburg, Germany and Europe working on social movements, protest and political violence from **different disciplinary perspectives** on the handling of empirical and theoretical challenges in this field. Furthermore, the conference aims to identify synergies and interdisciplinary approaches for future cooperation. The best contributions will be selected for a special issue.

We welcome papers in the following issue areas:

- ❖ **First the similarities and differences between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ protest movements.** Included here can be comparisons between ‘classical’ protest movements such as the left-wing and the right-wing vs. the newer Salafi-jihadi movement, between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ right-wing extremism in Western Europe, or between right-wing and Islamist movements in Western Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Aspects to be tackled here can include root causes, discourse and agendas, organizational types, recruitment strategies and repertoires of action, the use of communication technologies, etc.
- ❖ **Second, the motivation of individual actors to engage in protest movements in general and violence in particular.** A focus on the individual appears necessary from several points of view: the emergence of new types of organization in networks, lone-wolf and small cell terrorism; the puzzle of individual participation in such high-cost/low-gain activities; the apparent relevance of psychological variables in spite of the lack of existence of a ‘terrorist personality’. Included here can be contributions dealing with individual motivation, cognitive processes in particular with regard to learning and socialization effects, as well as the psychological conditions for the emergence of radicalization processes, or other aspects related to individual motivation.
- ❖ **Third, the impact of the socio-cultural and political context on the shape and manifestations of protest movements.** Are particular regime types conducive to particular types of protest, or to a lack thereof? Are certain political cultures conducive to, or inhibitors of protest, and if so in which ways? What is the impact of the geopolitical location and power constellations on the causes and forms of protest? What is the role of international factors and actors on protest movements? This section will explore the effects of regional, national and transnational socio-cultural and political characteristics, including regime types, on the nature, timing, emergence or indeed absence of protest movements, as well as the socio-political consequences of protest campaigns.

The geographical focus should spread from Western and Southern European countries, in particular Germany, Greece and Spain, to Eastern Europe, in particular Ukraine, Russia and Serbia, and Central Asian countries such as Kirgizstan and Tajikistan.

Thanks to financial support provided by the *Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Hamburg*, accommodation (one night), food and travel expenses (within reasonable limits) for all selected paper givers will be covered by the organizers.

The conference will start at **14:00** on the **23rd of October**, and end at **14:00** on the **24th of October**.

Interested contributors should **send an abstract of up to 500 words and a short profile** to Daniela PISOIU (pisoiu@ifsh.de).

The deadline for the **submission of abstracts** is **31 August 2014**. Selected paper givers will be notified by the 5th of September.