

Stylianou Kampani: Protest Movements in Europe¹

Protest movements have been surging throughout Europe and the world as a whole. Brazil, Egypt, Greece, Portugal, Spain and Turkey are some of the recent and well-known examples. In most countries political protest has become the modal repertoire citizens employ to demand political changes or to express indignation, while governments are confronted with citizens in the act of protest.

At the same time, societies have changed dramatically during the last few decades. In our globalising world, transnational and supranational political institutions impact on people's daily lives and have transformed the supply of politics.

Networks rather than formal organisations have become the prime mode of organising in our society, while new technologies such as the Internet, e-mail and cell phones have dramatically changed our means of communication. Yet, how people mobilise for protest in these 'new' societal arrangements remains poorly understood.

The project's principal goal is to create an international inter-university network of research teams interested in collective action and protest surveying.

It also aims to:

- Expand our knowledge on protest dynamics by conducting a comparative study of protest demonstrations in 7 European countries (Belgium, Czech Republic, Italy, Mexico, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, United Kingdom).
- employ a common theoretical framework, a standardized research design, and standardized measures in the individual projects
- construct a dataset to be made available to the individual teams for analyses, which will produce new insights that only systematic comparison of the kind we plan can generate
- organise workshops and to publish articles in order to disseminate the results of the project; to help societal actors understand and deal with the changing dynamics of protest
- archive and make the data available to the wider scientific community

Questions

1. Is internet an effective tool to mobilise demos or rather a tie instrument par excellence?

¹ The presentation was made as an introduction to the **Protest-Survey-Project** www.protestsurvey.eu presented by Ruud Wouters and fellow-researchers on the field trip to Antwerp on 2 October 2013. The researchers' focus lay on the results concerning the attitudes of the protesters and comparing them to the attitudes of the general population in various European countries.

2. Are the internet and the social media capable of creating a sustainable network of protestors?
3. Occupy and Indignados. Do such movements have the potential of becoming a 'habit' of activism for the protestors or is it a trend that will fade away?
4. Do Occupy and Indignados have a collective identity similar to the anti-war demonstrations?
5. Which is the difference between old issue protests and new emotional issue demos?
6. Do the above mentioned have the same unraveling process?
7. Which is the ultimate ingredient in order to participate in a protest?
8. Why do some people, even though motivated by protest, prefer not to follow it?
9. Is there any major variation among the countries covered by the project in terms of protest culture?
10. Has the normalisation of protest developed to produce a normalisation of the protester?
11. To what extent can we say that a protest reflects the public opinion?
12. Are the profiles of demonstrators different to those of the average man or woman in the street?
13. How critical is the matter of age, education and family in order to participate in a protest?
14. How do you assess the representative composition of every protest?
15. Are the protest of today more socially inclusive than those of 1960s-80s?

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