

## European Protest Movements (Halle/Zuerich, Nov 06/Mar 07)

Joachim Scharloth

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CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: Training Workshops/Travel Grants

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"European Protest Movements since the Cold War:  
The Rise of a (Trans-)national Civil Society  
and the Transformation of the Public Sphere"

Marie Curie Conferences and Training Courses, Series of Events (SCF)

Organisers:

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Joachim Scharloth (University of Zurich, Switzerland)

Kathrin Fahlenbrach (University Halle, Germany)

The Research Group "EUROPEAN PROTEST MOVEMENTS" invites applications from postgraduate students, early stage researchers (PhD-students) and postdocs who are working in the field of European protest movements for the participation of two training workshops within a series of Marie Curie Conferences and Training Courses on "European Protest Movements since the Cold War: The Rise of a (Trans-)national Civil Society and the Transformation of the Public Sphere."

Workshop I: "Tracing Protest Movements: Perspectives from Sociology, Political Sciences, and Media Studies"

Date: November 22-25, 2006

Location: Martin-Luther-Universität Halle, Germany

Workshop II: "Designing a New Life: Aesthetics and Lifestyles of Political and Social Protest"

Date: March 7-10, 2007

Location: German Department, University of Zurich, Switzerland

The aim of the workshops is to provide the trainees with an overall view of the scientific approaches to protest movements and enable them to apply

proper conceptual, theoretical and methodological frameworks to their own research. The teaching will be performed by the leading scholars of all relevant fields. All travel costs within reasonable boundaries will be covered by the European Union.

The dominant target group includes:

- (1) Early stage researchers with no more than 4 years of experience in their research activities (e.g. PhD-students)
- (2) Experienced researchers with up to 10 years of research experience since their graduation (e.g. Postdocs).
- (3) Experienced researchers with more than 10 years of experience, who are nationals of Member States or Associated States of the EU and active outside these states at the time of the event. (See also [www.protest-research.org](http://www.protest-research.org) for more detailed definitions)

The organizers aim at a balanced representation of disciplines involved in the research of various forms of protest phenomena in Europe since 1945. Applications from female researchers and scholars from Eastern Europe are particularly encouraged.

Applications should contain the applicants' CV (incl. list of relevant publications) and an abstract of 1-2 pages of their research project (all in English). An application for participation at both workshops is recommended. Please use the online application forms available at [www.protest-research.org](http://www.protest-research.org).

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: June 15, 2006

Selections will be made by: July 15, 2006

EMAIL APPLICATIONS TO: [mail@protest-research.org](mailto:mail@protest-research.org)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: [www.protest-research.org](http://www.protest-research.org)

General Scope:

Due to the rise of grassroots movements critical of globalization and the worldwide public outpouring of protest against the war in Iraq in 2003, the transnational dimension of protest movements has, in recent years, received attention from a broad audience outside as well as within academic circles. However, the diverse historical roots of many of today's transnational activist networks or NGOs are still surprisingly unexplored by the research community. Although the turbulent social movements of the 1960/70s are increasingly viewed as social and cultural responses to emerging patterns of an economic, technological, and political globalization, their European dimension has only been analyzed marginally.

To overcome this research deficit, the two workshops, which are part of a

larger series of conferences and training courses, want to examine the impact various forms of social, political and cultural protest had, not only in paving the way for a substantial change of the domestic systems, but also on the emergence of a (trans-)national civil society and a fundamental transformation of the public sphere. By critically confronting their countries' official policies, protest movements and domestic dissent in Eastern and Western Europe questioned so-called geopolitical realities of a bipolar world they sought to transform. The various forms of democratic participation they introduced are constantly being transformed by today's transnational actors and organizations and thus continue to have an impact on European policy at a time of the community's enlargement and the ratification of its common constitution.

For this reason, the training workshops aim both to provide a comprehensive interdisciplinary training for early stage researchers on European protest movements since 1945 and to foster the academic exchange and discussion surrounding innovative research projects and methods in this area. The goal of these workshops will be twofold: on the one hand, they will assemble interested young academics from various disciplines to give them the opportunity to offer their work to peers and open it up for critical debate. On the other hand, the meetings will allow leading experts to address specific themes and provide high-level instruction for young scholars on a European level. In close cooperation with archival institutions, young scholars will also be acquainted with new sites and forms of historical sources and techniques for their scientific utilization.

#### Workshop I:

In recent years, various disciplines have made the protest movements after the Second World War the object of their study. In the field of sociology, an analysis with methodological tools and theorems from the field of social movement research has prevailed. Furthermore, the focus in political science as well as in communication and media studies is shifting towards a closer examination of the legacies of protest movements in terms of their impact on institutions and long-term processes of social change. Especially with respect to the transnational level, studies are increasingly emphasizing the role protest movements played in the rise of contemporary networks of NGOs and the emergence of a "global community." Examinations of their impact on the transformation of the public sphere, the evolution of political systems as well as comparative views on the roots of political violence in various countries, are illustrative of this trend. This workshop will critically discuss the heuristic potential of all these approaches by looking at European protest movements after 1945.

Since the 1960s, protest movements in Europe have increasingly acted within a transnational public sphere. On the one hand, their political, social, and cultural goals reflect international political developments

(e.g. in their opposition to military intervention or protest against global economic developments). On the other hand, national protest movements have strategically used transnational mass media to effectively mobilize and address both a domestic and an international public, which they additionally tried to influence by creating alternative media networks.

Although the social and political sciences, as well as media studies, have begun to analyze these various aspects, there seems to be a lack of international comparison that could not only systematically describe the similarities and differences between the single national movements but also evaluate how they contributed to the evolution of a (trans-)national civil society in Europe. Especially during the Cold War, the (albeit difficult) diffusion of Western media, cultural items and practices into Eastern Europe was an important interface across the ideological divide. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw bloc system, the various political, social, and cultural developments provided vastly new possibilities for the evolution of a European public sphere. The systematic research of these developments can only be realized within an international and interdisciplinary dialogue that we wish to reinforce with this workshop.

Among others, the following questions will form the focus of our discussions:

>From the field of political science:

- o What are the specific political conditions of the communication of protest and social dissent? How representative are they with regard to social groups in a given country and how effective can they be in initiating broader social and political transformations?
- o What political events and developments have been important transnational influences in protest movements during and after the Cold War? How important has the idea of an idealised "Europe" been within the political goals of Western and Eastern European movements?
- o Are the latest European protest movements a reaction to the lack of democratic participation in the European Union?

>From the field of sociology:

- o What was the impact of protest movements on the cultural and political developments in Western and Eastern Europe?
- o Is it justified to speak of the evolution of a European cultural identity or transnational civil society, considering the vastly diverse goals and interests of protest movements in various countries?

>From the field of media studies:

- o What are the similarities and differences between Western and Eastern movements concerning their use of mass media? How far have the Eastern movements been inspired by the "West" or their Western counterparts?
- o What are the similarities and differences between Western and Eastern

movements concerning the evolution of symbolic forms of protest and their respective media strategies? How important is the use of internationally comprehensive visual codes of protest that could mobilise the national and European public politically, culturally, and emotionally?

#### Workshop II:

The field of cultural studies has equally introduced a new dimension to the research on protest movements in recent years. Instead of focusing on the instrumental aspects of protest actions, cultural anthropology, gender studies and linguistics have emphasized the importance of their symbolic and performative dimensions. Protest actions are being viewed as signs or symbols, as bearers of meanings rather than instruments for the pursuit of political goals. This change of perspectives has been caused by the performative turn in cultural studies, which shifted the so far dominant interpretation of culture as a synchronic sign system to the production and dynamics of culture through performative acts.

In this view, protest actions do not only signify social dissent, they rather embody new social identities and new social values in rituals and theatrical performances. Moreover, discourse analysis in its various forms has revealed the importance of narratives for building coherent ideologies which serve to legitimize protest. Finally, linguistic discourse analysis traced the methods of creating and occupying concepts in the public sphere. This workshop will test the potentials and limits of these approaches when analyzing European protest movements after 1945.

Since the 1960s, new forms of domestic dissent have fundamentally linked political with cultural protest which was merged with a comprehensive critique of cultural values, habits and lifestyle. In opposition to actual and/or perceived hierarchical and authoritarian societies in Europe, they developed a whole set of counter-cultural codes to articulate their protest. Thus, lifestyle and habitus were discovered as increasingly powerful resources for the emotional mobilization of movement participants and sympathizers. Even when not aiming at these emotional implications, these new social movements have focused on various aspects of identity politics, race, gender and sexuality. Looking at the eminent role of aesthetics, lifestyle and habitus in cultural, social and political phenomena of dissent, the workshop will offer the opportunity of an interdisciplinary and international dialogue and exchange.

The following perspectives will form the focus of our discussions:

>From the field of cultural anthropology:

- o Which techniques do protest movements use to disturb the ritualised social order? How do new ritualizations develop within protest movements and what are their functions?

- o What are specific forms of performative protest and what is their historical development? What roles do emotional and symbolic representations of protest play in its collective performance and what are their functions with regard to the public sphere?

>From the field of cultural sociology:

- o What are the expressive topics and goals of protest movements both in Western and Eastern Europe with regard to lifestyle and habitus and how important are those for the internal and external mobilization of the protest movements?

- o What are the similarities and differences between Eastern and Western subcultures and countercultures in terms of initiating broader socio-cultural transformations, and what was/is their mutual relationship?

>From the field of the arts and avantgarde:

- o What role did historical avantgardes play for the development of the various protest cultures?

- o Why and in what way do performances and the symbolic forms of protest influence the languages of arts? What are the roles of artists / critical intellectuals in relation to protest movements?

>From the field of linguistics:

- o What are the common characteristics of various languages of protest and what is their function for the identity and mobilization of the movements? Do protest movements influence the social order by changing the forms of communication?

- o To what extent can social protest be described as a semantic struggle among dissenting groups? Can the dynamics of protest possibly be explained as a reaction to the linguistically produced reduction of possible actions?

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION /

ONLINE APPLICATIONS: [www.protest-research.org](http://www.protest-research.org)

or send an email to: [mail@protest-research.org](mailto:mail@protest-research.org)

You can also contact the organizers at:

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Reference:

CFP: European Protest Movements (Halle/Zuerich, Nov 06/Mar 07). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 24, 2006  
(accessed Dec 21, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/27991>>.