

Voices of Change: Presents, Pasts and Futures of Activism and Protest in Europe

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In recent years, Europe has witnessed the rise of various protest movements: Extinction Rebellion, the Yellow Vests in France, “Stop the Coup” protest in the UK, to name but a few. These protests were fuelled by the deterioration of the social, political and environmental situation in Europe and the rest of the world, as well as by citizens’ increasing demands for social, political and environmental justice.

Throughout history, various acts of civil disobedience, revolutions and uprisings have taken place in Europe and its surroundings. Yet the recent increase of protests coincides with the development of new technologies, as well as social media and artistic movements, which have led to the emergence of innovative forms of activism. They have allowed voices from a broader spectrum of society to be heard. Protests have become more accessible to segments of society, which have been traditionally excluded from socio-political debates, such as minorities, undocumented migrants, LGBTQIA, women, young people or vegans. These groups also bring new demands to the table: in addition to the more traditional claims of protest movements, such as better working conditions, there are now calls for other considerations including gender equality, transgender rights, decolonising measures and environmental protection. This is complemented by a growing awareness of how various mechanisms of exclusion and disenfranchisement may intersect, followed by a call for new types of alliances and forms of solidarity.

What are the impacts of protests on European politics? How do the developments of new technologies affect protest movements? How does the inclusion of diverse social categories influence demands for change? How do contemporary protest movements reimagine solidarity between various groups? How does artistic creativity contribute to activism? To what extent does the history of protest movements in Europe shape the new generation of activists? What is the relationship between past, present and future protests? The conference wishes to address these and other related questions in response to the changing voices of activism and protest across Europe.

Further information (Link)
