

Cosmopolitanism and Global Protests

Cosmopolitanism can arise out of philosophical reflection, as in well-known Stoic or Kantian versions of cosmopolitanism, out of assessments of practical and basic human needs, as in current theories of global justice, and out of a less explored resource: the social movements that are engaged in transforming the world each in their own ways. During the last years, waves of protests have been taking place around the world, we finding ourselves in a 'time of riots' (Badiou): the so-called 'Arab Spring' targeting authoritarian regimes in the Arab world, the 'indignados' in Spain, Greece and other EU countries protesting against austerity, unemployment and corrupt governments; the Occupy movement, in the USA and Europe, emerged as a response to the financial crisis, targeting financial elites and developing a different mode of protest – the occupation. The previous most visible acts of protests were those against the G8/G20, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization, and against corporations and trade agreements, known by such names as Madrid 94, J 18, Seattle/N30, Washington A 16, Genoa 2001, Quebec City 2001, Porto Alegre 2002 and others.

These protests can be approached as local events in which information technologies and social media played an important role in the mediation of protests. On the other hand, it can be argued that we are witnessing the emergence of a new global type of politics as all these events are interrelated and reflect the rise of a new type of action and subjectivity. Does this new type of politics, action and subjectivity have a clear name in the accepted language of political theory or in the language of science of politics in general? Academics from all around the world try to answer this question from different perspectives, global protests generating significant scholarly approaches of resistance, protest and disobedience. In this context, we aim to explore in a collective volume if, how and when this new type of politics is cosmopolitan and to map the aspects of radical cosmopolitics these protests display. As well, the purpose of the envisaged volume is to analyze how global protests challenge the political theory in general, 'cosmopolitanizing' the science of politics, and the theoretical tools of conceptualizing dissent in particular. Moreover, the global protests pose again, in a cosmopolitan vein, the old question of the relation between theory and practice: is there a relation between recent and classical theories and the occurrence of such protests? Which theories are relevant to describe/explain the nature and the causes of the protest movements?

QUESTIONS:

Here are several clusters of questions to be addressed and analyzed in the envisaged volume:

- i. Can we find a common framework of analysis of the recent protests in various countries – are they “global” in some meaningful way, or rather disparate locally relevant forms of dissent? What risks to be missed in searching such an encompassing framework?
- ii. Are global protests a cosmopolitan practice and action? What are the points of intersection between global protests and cosmopolitanism? Are acts of protests and resistance cosmopolitan in all their demands or only in certain parts/claims/moments? When does an act of resistance/protest become cosmopolitan? What are the

- conditions for the cosmopolitan potential of resistance/protests to emerge? Is the internally eclectic nature of many protests a cosmopolitan feature?
- iii. How to differentiate cosmopolitan aspects of a global protest from non-cosmopolitan ones? How to differentiate a cosmopolitan protest from a counter-cosmopolitan form of protest, given the fact that both kinds take place seemingly as part of global and transnational phenomena?
 - iv. Are global protests a political avant-garde, in terms of identifying new possibilities for politics? Is this avant-garde a cosmopolitan one? Are the protests “a living laboratory for world citizenship”(World Social Forum)? What are the new and emancipatory cosmopolitan elements of this avant-garde?
 - v. Is the critique and rejection of state and international institutions by protests (automatically) cosmopolitan or these should be complemented by the universality of new claims in order to ‘qualify’ as cosmopolitan? What is more cosmopolitan: the form of protest (their morphology, e.g. occupation, direct democracy, consensus-based decision-making, use of social networks, etc.) or the content of the claims? Can there be a cosmopolitan form of action - the protest/resistance as rejecting a nation-state or international structure – without a cosmopolitan content of the claims? Is the (oft-mentioned) absence of claims against the state a cosmopolitan choice?
 - vi. How do global protests shape cosmopolitan democracy? Does the participatory style of protests around the world have a cosmopolitan potential? Is there a ‘participatory cosmopolitanism’ in the local manifestations (in Occupy movements for example)? How inclusive and representative is the participatory style of global protests/resistance? Does “We are the 99%” mean “We represent the 99%”? Is there a cosmopolitan representativeness in global protests? Do global protests participate to the overall crisis of modern frameworks of (state-centered) political representation? Can this crisis of representation prefigure a wider redefinition of the nature of the polis in cosmopolitan terms?
 - vii. How is the subject of the global protests constituted? Is there a cosmopolitan subjectivity of protesters? Does protest suppose a dis-identification and dis-affiliation from the local and particular or, on the contrary, a strong endorsement of some particular claim? Do protesters/activists from different milieus come together and forge relations and shared understandings expressing solidarity? Is this solidarity partial, of certain intentions, temporary? Is solidarity of global protests necessary?
 - viii. Are global protests the “cosmopolitan constituent power” of a new cosmopolitan institutional order or only a “destituent power”? Does protest/resistance display cosmopolitan features only when it is a successful one, or a glorious but defeated mass mobilization can be as well cosmopolitan?
 - ix. What is the cosmopolitan spatiality of global protests? Is the dominant metaphor of network the dimension that makes the protests cosmopolitan or there are other elements making the cosmopolitan space of protests? How can the gesture/the strategy of occupying a place generate a cosmopolitan event?
 - x. What exactly is “radical” in these protests, and do cosmopolitan references serve as vectors for radicalization? Is “revolution” still a relevant concept for this analysis? Is there a revolutionary dimension in the global protests? Is cosmopolitanism itself revolutionary? Do these protests signal the emergence of a fundamentally different normative horizon, one in which anarchism and cosmopolitanism might become

mainstream references characteristic for a globalized world of governance and dissent?

We invite interested scholars worldwide to explore these questions and to contribute with texts written in English language to a book with the working title *Cosmopolitanism and Global Protests* that will be published by an internationally renowned and academically authoritative publishing house.

METHODOLOGY

We assume that possible answers to these questions might come from the analysis of concrete cases of protests/resistance and from a close reading of manifestos, declarations and other texts explaining the necessity of protest. However, the papers are not expected to be primarily a case study of an episode of protest; rather we expect the papers to focus on the concept of cosmopolitanism as it emerges from different episodes of global protests and resistance, for example: cosmopolitan avant-garde of global protests; cosmopolitan representation/representativity in the global protests; cosmopolitan destituent and constituent power of global protests; cosmopolitan agonistic and radical democracy of global protests; new forms of universality emerging in global protests; cosmopolitanism and space of protests and resistance; cosmopolitan 'event' of global protests; cosmopolitan forms of solidarity and others.

TIMETABLE

The deadline for proposals submission of 500 words abstracts and contact details is June 15, 2014. The deadline for the chapter is October 1, 2014.

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<http://www.nec.ro/fundatia/proiecte/p98.htm>

http://www.nec.ro/fundatia/proiecte/p98_call_for_papers.htm

Proposals should be sent to: tcaraus@nec.ro or/and tamara_caraus@yahoo.com

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