



ETHNOLOGIA POLONA

Call for papers

Ethnographies of Protests

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Guest editor: Jan Kubik

From activism for and against environmental regulations and damage all over the world, through “Black Lives Matters” in the USA and “Women in White” protests in Belarus, “pro-choice” and “pro-life” demonstrations, to anti-vaccine movements, demonstrations against lockdown, or *Pegida* marches in Germany - protests are at the center of political debates across the globe. Apart from questions of their cultural content and political efficacy, organization and scope, there is a need to look at attempts at their control, de-legalization and surveillance. The ideology of these protests is socially liberal or, on the contrary, express nationalist and populist ideas. They are also widespread; while the attention is often focused on big cities, they take place also in provincial towns and villages, where questions of ideology, control, and efficacy can have a very different character.

The multiplicity of protests has encouraged observers to inquire whether, despite their diversity, they can be seen as a response to a particular socio-economic moment – the contradictions of “late capitalism” and the exhaustion of democracy manifested in a series of socio-economic, cultural, health and environmental crises. Despite the multiplicity of these movements’ goals, observers point out the similarity of their tools, rhetoric and organizational aspects, as well as of the methods of subjugation and control used against them. These include, for instance: an increased emphasis on the use of emotions; importance of digital tools and social media both in organization and in control; transnational networking; “horizontal” leadership; and frustration with traditional parliamentary representation and politics in general, to name but some. While the intensification of protest activity is beyond any doubt, the question of what all this means or where it is heading is open.

Central and Eastern Europe has an important history of protest – contentious mobilizations were an important part of social and political life under the socialist regimes, had a decisive role in the transformations of the 1980s and 1990s, and have been prominent, if often peculiar, part of social and political life ever since. How can we locate them within a broader field of international or global protest activity? How do they relate to the social and political changes of recent decades? Can we situate them with respect to the practices, discourses, and ideals of modernization, political transformation, and democratic backsliding?

Despite anthropology's potential to address such queries, anthropologists are still not vocal enough in the discussions on social movements and protests. This special issue aims to foreground the importance of ethnographic investigations of social and political activism. We strongly encourage contributions, which, while investigating current phenomena, draw on anthropological theories of social change and rebellion. Potential inspirations include, but are not limited to, Max Gluckman's work on "rituals of rebellion," Victor Turner's work on "anti-structure," Jean and John Comaroffs' work on revolution, or Jan Kubik's adaptation of Gramscian theory of hegemony and counter-hegemony and, more recently, Karl Polanyi's theory of counter-movement influence on anthropological analyses.

We are particularly interested in ethnographically investigating the following themes:

- 1) How do anthropology/ethnography contribute to the understanding of contemporary protests?
- 2) How can we productively approach contemporary protest movements, in ways that challenge a conventional focus on "progressive" movements of protests against "conservative" or "right-wing" discourses?
- 3) How can we research e.g. "pro-life" movements or radical right activism and how does such research affect an approach of the anthropologist-activist and engaged anthropology?
- 4) What kind of interdisciplinary encounters seem most productive for the investigation of protests?
- 5) How can we combine field research based on participation in events, with new tools, such as digital ethnography?
- 6) Is there any Eastern and Central European specificity in protests and research concerning them?
- 7) Could we see any special kind of feminist anthropological approach to study of protests? What is its contribution?
- 8) Can we talk about non-human protest (or is a protest a part of human culture)?

Information for Contributors:

Ethnologia Polona is a peer-reviewed English-language journal focused on cultural/social anthropology and ethnology, but open to other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. It is published by the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

The journal's aim and scope is to serve as a platform for discussions concerning critical issues emerging in anthropology/ethnology in Central and Eastern Europe and beyond. The journal stays close to the empirical, while at the same time being attentive to current theoretical debates in the humanities and social sciences.

We ask for expressions of interest (300 words abstracts) to be sent by email ethnologia.polona@iaepan.edu.pl as soon as possible.

Full articles (6000 to 7000 words long) should be submitted through *Ethnologia Polona* [submission system](#) and follow our [Author's Guidelines](#). The deadline for submission of full articles is **31.01.2022**. For informal inquiries and questions concerning potential contributions please contact us at ethnologia.polona@iaepan.edu.pl