

**Call for Papers**

***Culture, Media: Protest***

***September 3-5, 2009***

***Organised by the Research Project "Protest as Medium – Media of Protest"***

***Location: University of Lucerne (CH) – Department of Sociology - Pfistergasse 20***

Since the 1970ies and 80ies, new social movement theorists called for the inclusion of a cultural perspective into the analysis of protest movements. Today, the cultural dimension of social movements and their use of media has come to the attention of a younger generation of researchers within various academic disciplines. Questions are asked regarding specific cultural practices and the roles of subjectivity, experience, affect, and the body, and more generally regarding the construction of meaning in and through protest cultures. This of course includes the use of protest media: Video, audio, text and images, both in online and offline formats, are integrated into existing social movements' cultural practices of organising, mobilising, representing, and deliberating. Although alternative media are rarely able to compete with corporate mass media in reaching large audiences, their functions in the process of movement building must not be underestimated.

The conference seeks to bring together social movement analysts with different disciplinary backgrounds, including sociology, cultural studies, political science and political theory. It aims at opening up a space of debate on protest cultures and alternative media. We invite researchers to submit abstracts for presentations on the following topics:

***1. The cultural construction of protest: Protest cultures as subcultures and counter cultures***

Social movements are often assessed with a view on their political impact. In most cases, however, they can also be analysed as subcultures or counter-cultures. Through their practices they seek to intervene into the field of cultural meaning. Presentations might address questions regarding the function of the dissemination of protest-demands through sub- or pop-cultural discourses, the relation between social movements and specific subcultures (youth cultures, alternative cultures, online communities etc.), or the cultural production and re-creation of goals, demands, and movement identity.

***2. The cultural construction of media: Protest media cultures and the everyday***

Media are more than just means of communication, they can be seen as cultural products. How do social movements use, invent, or adapt media? Presentations might address questions regarding practices of recombination / bricolage of old and new media (combination of formats, media ensembles, multi-channel communication), the combination of political online- and offline-communities, or the relation between popular media cultures

and radical media practices.

### **3. *The militant construction of new subjectivities: Protest identities and subjectivities***

In current debates on post-fordism, governmentality, the network society, etc., great importance is placed on processes of subjectivation. Cultural practices and mediated practices of protest are important factors in the construction of new political subjectivities both locally and transnationally. Presentations are invited to discuss changing perceptions of belonging, of proximity and distance in protest cultures, the production and/or subversion of political subjectivities through protest, today and in history, or the function of affect in the process of mobilisation and protest formation.

### **4. *The dispersed body of protest: Performative protest cultures***

Social protest today puts into use many ordinary (cultural) practices in a performative or theatrical way (e.g. circus skills, such as juggling or clowning). In a larger sense, the performativity of protest refers to a cultural dimension appertaining to every form of public protest. Presentations may discuss the body as medium of protest, the function of protest events in a society of spectacle, the performativity of protest and the performance of conflict in public space.

#### ***Keynote speakers include***

Ernesto Laclau, University of Essex (UK)  
Chantal Mouffe, University of Westminster, London (UK)  
John Downing, Southern Illinois University (USA)  
Kevin McDonald, Goldsmith College (UK)  
Jenny Pickerill, University of Leicester (UK)  
Klaus Schönberger, Zurich University of the Arts (CH)  
Oliver Marchart, University of Lucerne (CH)

#### ***Submission of Papers and Registration***

We invite abstracts (max. 500 words) to be submitted by 30. June 2009. Conference fees are 25 Swiss Francs for one day and 50 Swiss Francs for the complete conference. If you would like to attend the conference, please send an e-mail to [contact@protestmedia.net](mailto:contact@protestmedia.net) before 30. July 2009.

#### ***Contact***

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