

Resistance or Resilience?: new avenues of activist citizenship in Southeast Europe

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In the period since the global financial crisis, there has been a marked upsurge in citizen-led activism across the globe, including the Occupy movements and the 'Arab Spring'. Such events also spanned across Southeast Europe (SEE), from the *aganaktismenoi* in Greece to the formation of citizen plenums in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although there are several possible ways to demarcate the boundaries of SEE, for the purposes of the workshop, the region comprises: Greece, Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania, and Serbia.

In many parts of SEE, the scale of the dissent was unprecedented in their respective post-authoritarian histories. As in more high-profile protests further afield, such as the protests in Gezi Park in Istanbul and in the Maidan in Kiev, these mobilisations often seem to crystallise around the right to use of urban public spaces, particularly as sites of general dissent.

These mobilisations can be conceptualised as having four stages, with interlinking paths of research for each: catalysts; objectives; methods; and outcomes. The *catalysts* are the events that escalate into mass citizen-led mobilisation. *Objectives* are the self-understandings of the goals of the actions by participants (both leaders and non-leaders). The *methods* used can be violent, can involve the establishment of ad hoc institutions, and patterns of conflict or co-operation with opposition political elites, professional NGOs, or other actors. The *outcome* may adhere to the objectives of activists, and may also have strong symbolic meaning (irrespective of success) for future mobilisation.

The workshop welcomes contributions examining one or more of the following questions about the life cycles of new citizen mobilisation in SEE:

- Is it possible to distinguish the *objectives* of citizen-led mobilisation in SEE by differentiating between: dissent that aims for the political elite to adhere to their responsibilities ('critique'); mobilisation that seeks to trigger a fundamental reconstitution of the political system for all citizens ('emancipation'); and action that only strives to tear down the current political status quo ('anti-politics')?
- To what extent were gender, class, and urban / rural divides incorporated into the objectives of these mobilisations?
- Were participants in these mobilisations involved in previous mobilisations?
- To what extent were mobilisations inspired by events elsewhere in SEE and further afield?
- Is there direct contact amongst activists across SEE?
- Did these mobilisations seek to co-operate with professional NGOs, opposition political elites, or international organisations?
- Did participants in these actions justify the use of violence to meet their goals? If so, is violence at odds with progressive or emancipatory objectives?
- Which issues have consolidated support as catalysts for general disaffection with the political status quo?

Although the workshop will focus on SEE, contributions that compare events in the region with other parts of the world are also welcomed.

The workshop is being organised by the [School of Politics and International Relations, Queen Mary University of London](#) and [LSEE - Research on South Eastern Europe](#), and will be run as a closed roundtable event. The aim of the workshop is to publish a selection of the papers from the event in a peer-reviewed journal special issue or edited book.

To propose a paper, please send an abstract (200-300 words) and a biographical note (100-200 words) to Indraneel Sircar <fringe.politics@qmul.ac.uk> **by 18 December 2014**. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by 15 January 2015. Accommodation will be covered, and there will be a limited fund for travel expenses for participants without alternative sources of funding. Draft workshop papers (5000-8000 words) for accepted proposals must be sent to the event organisers by 25 April 2015.

