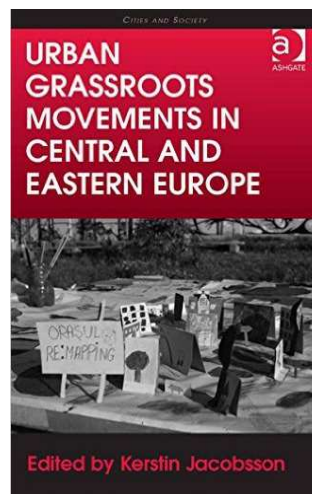


Protest and the Future of Democracy.
Urban grassroots movements in Central and Eastern Europe:
Lessons for Civil Society research

18.02.2016, 11:00-13:00
Heinrich Böll Foundation
Żurawia 45, Warsaw

We cordially invite you to a special expert seminar with Prof. Kerstin Jacobsson who will present key lessons for civil society research drawn from case studies of urban grassroots movements in Central and Eastern Europe. Decades of neoliberal restructuring of cities, and the free reign of private investors and developers in shaping urban space in central and eastern Europe (as in many other parts of the world) have resulted in eroded service-provision and life-quality for large parts of the populations. Unsurprisingly, this development has spurred numerous protests across the region and among residents demanding changes to urban policy with safe living conditions and affordable housing, and it has generated a mobilization against the privatization and commodification of public space. Mobilizations against illegal exploitation of city space or to protect green areas and defend other interests in the local living environment, take place all over the region, including Russia. Mobilizations in protection of cultural heritage as well as architects or artist-led urban activism are also common.



Social movements are shaped by the context in which they appear. The post-socialist framework illustrates well the limitations of focusing in the study of social movements only on protest, mass or street. With such a narrow perspective, researchers and other observers run the risk of missing other relevant forms of protest action; thus, they may underestimate or misunderstand the collective action actually taking place on the ground. Moreover, in expecting social movements in the post-socialist countries to follow the same repertoire of action as, for instance, in Western Europe or North America, we may lose sight of important forms of collective action.

Kerstin Jacobsson is Professor of Sociology at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. She works within the field of political sociology and leads several research projects on social movements in Central and Eastern Europe. She is the editor of *Urban Grassroots Movements in Central and Eastern Europe* (Ashgate, 2015) and co-editor (with Steven Saxonberg) of *Beyond NGO-ization. The Development of Social Movements in Central and Eastern Europe* (Ashgate, 2013). Currently, together with Elżbieta Korolczuk she works on an edited volume *The Challenge of Collective Action. New Perspectives on Civil Society and Social Activism in Contemporary Poland*, Berghahn Books (forthcoming).

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