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## **"Travel Log" The "Arts" of Protest: The Interlocking of Social Movements and Artistic Currents**

"Protest and Progress: Understanding Movements for Social and Political Change" is a PGT Sociology course that seeks to expose students to various theories and approaches to the study of social movements and to explore possibilities for social and political transformation. With this in mind, for the final session of the course, we organised a session focused on the intersection of arts, politics and social transformation. For this, we convened a talk that sought to illustrate how art can be mobilised for the sake of politics, but also how protests can become "events of art". Our goal was to spark students' curiosity by engaging with disciplines such as the philosophy of art and aesthetics, as well as by examining cases from diverse contexts and artistic traditions. The idea was not only to show how these ideas can cross spatial and temporal boundaries, travelling, for instance, from the Global South to the Global North or vice versa, but also to deepen the understanding of social movements and their entanglement with various cultural forms.

Having this in mind, we took as our starting point the artistic expressions employed in the 2019 Chilean Social Uprising, exploring how some of these have "travelled" around the world, being re-appropriated, re-interpreted, but also challenged. In the first part of the session, we introduced students to various scholarly debates that have sought to understand the intersection of arts and politics, researching how these two fields, each operating under its own principles of legitimacy, can sometimes intersect –which raises questions on the autonomy and political efficacy of art or whether art has a "responsibility" to drive transformation. This discussion also prompted us to reflect on how artistic currents reflect the dynamics of social movements, and how social movements can be affected by the "art world". Ultimately, exploring the politicisation of art, but also the aestheticisation of protest. On this regard, a student commented: "I really enjoyed the first video. I had never seen that protest before and the use of music to communicate a powerful message was really interesting to see. I also liked the question [about] if all art can be considered progressive or if right-wing movements also use art to protest. Can art then be considered art if it becomes propaganda?" (Student, Feedback 8/12/2025).

In the second part of the session, we organised a workshop with the goal of collaboratively creating a sort of "travel log" with the students. The purpose of this activity was to encourage them to imagine travelling through various geographical contexts and historical periods, reflecting on social movements that, inspired by a wide range of causes (including the defence of democracy, indigenous and anti-colonial movements, Palestine solidarity movement, animal rights, feminist issues and the defence of migrant rights in the context of rising the far-right ) have resorted to art to mobilise themselves. As it was the final session of the course, the idea was also that the students could apply the concepts they had learned throughout the semester (these included but were not limited to frame/framing, political and cultural opportunity structures, tactics, strategies and repertoires) to the study of these various forms of protests. To facilitate this, we created a Padlet to record these reflections

The workshop received positive feedback from the students, who expressed their interest in active involvement in similar initiatives. They suggested bringing examples from their own geographical contexts or activist experiences, while others mentioned that they would like to write their final assessment inspired by the workshop content: "[the session] definitely diversifies academic content and provides a space for a discussion that incorporates non-Western knowledge. Maybe next time it can include asking students to bring in examples of art/artforms they know of or from contexts where they come from, and present to the class briefly" (Student, Feedback 8/12/2025). They also highlighted the benefits of exposure to diverse experiences and how that nurtures their curiosity and critical thinking. In fact, another student mentioned: "This activity challenged my critical thinking of social movements and the true efficacy of their methods and actions, even down to the small details. I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to discuss with other classmates and share opinions on the presentation on the correlations between art and political movements, as this is a personal interest. Overall, I believe this has diversified the academic content" (Student, Feedback 8/12/2025). Hence, we believe that this was an excellent opportunity to diversify the content, showcase interdisciplinary dialogue, encourage the study of cases from various contexts, and incentivise co-creation with students.