

29 OCT 2026
5:00 PM CET
ONLINE

YOUTH IN REVOLT: PROTEST, REPRESSION AND ALTERNATIVE FUTURES



SPEAKERS

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MODERATOR

Antonio Alvarez-Benavides - UNED



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Social Classes and
Social Movements

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In autumn 2026, school and student protests in France drew Europe's attention: blockades of hundreds of schools, mass marches against underfunded education and rising living costs, and violent clashes between young people and the police. The protests quickly spread to Belgium, Italy, Greece, Albania and Germany. Yet the current wave of youth protest did not begin in Europe. Since 2024, young people have mobilized in Kenya and Bangladesh, and in 2025 in Indonesia, Nepal, Madagascar, Morocco and Peru, often under the label "Gen Z", against corruption, authoritarian rule, austerity and the lack of future prospects. Activists increasingly refer to one another, share symbols and repertoires, and organize through digital platforms, although their grievances, political contexts and outcomes differ widely.

This symposium brings together comparative, transnational and global perspectives on this new wave of youth protest. It asks why and how young people mobilize, under what conditions protests escalate into confrontation or riots, and how states, parties and media interpret, delegitimize or instrumentalize them. It examines the role of policing and repression. It also asks whether these protests amount to a global movement, a transnational protest cycle, or parallel responses to similar structural pressures, and what "generation" adds as an analytical category beyond class, region and political context.

A further aim is to take young people's own visions seriously: which alternative futures do they articulate in education, democracy, care, climate, peace and social justice, and how are these visions enacted in protest practices?



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