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Deconstructing rural protest: the emergence of a new social movement

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Abstract

In recent years rural issues have forced themselves to the forefront of the political agenda in countries across the developed world. Agricultural reform and income levels, the legality of hunting and field sports, housing and road developments and the future of rural services among other issues have been represented as debates in which traditional elements of rural lifestyle and culture have come under threat, and have consequently provoked the mobilisation of a new wave of rural protests and campaigns. This paper examines the background to the emergence of what is labelled as a new 'politics of the rural' and considers how protests are organised and operationalised. In particular, it explores the potential of drawing on social movement theory to provide an interpretative framework for research on the new politics, and as such investigates whether the range of protests, campaigns and demonstrations can be collectively identified as an emergent rural movement.



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Keywords

Rural protest; Social movement

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