

# **Ethical Concerns in Activist Ethnography: The Case of Ukrainian Protest Activism in London and a Russian Female Researcher**

Darya Malyutina

***Abstract:** This paper aims to discuss some of the ethical quandaries that arise in the process of qualitative research on social protest, and explores the challenges posed by negotiating the engaged researcher's national/ethnic origin and gender in the course of fieldwork. It focuses on an ethnographic study of Ukrainian protest activism in London during the Euromaidan and Russia's intervention in East Ukraine, conducted by a female Russian researcher in 2013–2014.*

*While fieldwork created challenges for the ethnographer, both as a Russian national participating in Ukrainian protests against Russia's military aggression, and as a female subject to some sexist treatment from male activists, it reflected the multifaceted nature of the researcher's positionality and shifting power relations in the field. These experiences linked to broader questions, such as the complicated relationship between Russian and Ukrainian identities that has been existing in Ukraine's history and has become tenser in the current conflict, and problematic gender issues connected with women's participation in Ukrainian activism. "Taking sides" as a researcher provided insights into and personal experience of the problems and tensions associated with the movement. Provided that some distance is kept from the participants in the course of political protest ethnography, and critical reflection is employed at all stages, engaged research is a valid and valuable approach to accessing rich ethnographic material.*