

## **Book reviews: *Interface* volume 7(1)**

**Reviews editor: Mandisi Majavu**

**Assistance with editing: Bjarke Skærlund Risager**

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Cristina Flesher Fominaya and Laurence Cox, eds. (2013). *Understanding European Movements: New Social Movements, Global Justice Struggles, Anti-Austerity Protest*. London & New York: Routledge. (263 pp., £24.95 paperback, £80 hardback). Reviewed by Ana Cecilia Dinerstein

J.P. Clark (2013). *The Impossible Community: Realizing Communitarian Anarchism*. London: Bloomsbury (272 pp., \$45 paperback). Reviewed by Gerard Gill

Peter Dauvergne and Genevieve Lebaron (2014). *Protest Inc.: The Corporatization of Activism*. Cambridge: Polity Press (206 pp., £15.99 paperback). Reviewed by Lika Rodin

Alexandros Kioupkiolis and Giorgios Katsambekis, eds. (2014). *Radical Democracy and Collective Movements Today: The Biopolitics of the Multitude versus the Hegemony of the People*. Farnham: Ashgate (247 pp., £58.50 hardback). Reviewed by Jamie Matthews

Stefania Milan (2013). *Social Movements and Their Technologies: Wiring Social Change*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan (233 pp., \$90 hardcover). Reviewed by A.T. Kingsmith

Anna Schober (2013). *The Cinema Makers: Public Life and the Exhibition of Difference in South-Eastern and Central Europe since the 1960s*. Bristol: Intellect (241 pp., £25 paperback). Reviewed by Niamh Mongey

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Marina Sitrin and Dario Azzellini (2014). *They Can't Represent Us! Reinventing Democracy From Greece to Occupy*. London & New York: Verso (250 pp., £9.99 paperback). Reviewed by Nils C. Kumkar

**Cristina Flesher Fominaya and Laurence Cox, eds. (2013). *Understanding European Movements: New Social Movements, Global Justice Struggles, Anti-Austerity Protest*. London & New York: Routledge. (263 pp., £24.95 paperback, £80.00 hardback)**

Reviewed by **Ana Cecilia Dinerstein**

In recent years, social movement scholars and activists have become interested in new European mobilisations such as the 15M/*Indignados* movement in Spain, the *Aganaktismenoi* of Syntagma Square in Greece or the ‘saucepan revolution’ in Iceland. These mobilisations are part of the wave of protests that have inundated the streets of European cities since 2010 and belong to a process of resistance to global capitalism and its recurrent crises.

“European Social Movements” (ESM), argue Cox and Flesher Fominaya in their introduction to this superb collection “have been central to European history, societies and culture” (p. 1). Yet, the English language literature has misrepresented or even ignored and neglected such significance. The latter is lost in generalisations and or schematic presentations and comparisons that do not do justice to ESM’s rich traces, strong influences and vibrant history. The editors of the book – who are founders of the European Social Movements Research Network (Council for European Studies, Columbia University), contend that this is unfortunate, for ESM are not only the main shapers of the alter-globalisation movements or the global justice movement (GJM), but its *precursors*. Their aim is then to recover European-critical- Social Theory, for it was crucial for the development of European Social movements, in order to produce a “richer narrative” (p.8) of European Social Movements towards the creation of an European Social Movement Theory

With this opening, Cox and Flesher Fominaya engage the reader in what promises to be an outstanding contribution to the field. The book offers, for the first time, a systematic account of the richness of ESM, within different contexts and embracing different ideas and forms of mobilising. All authors discuss different aspects of multidimensional ESM, and their theoretical arguments are empirically informed. They possess a good inside knowledge of these mobilisations: they not only know *about* the movements’ context of emergence, past trajectories and recent developments but they know *with* the movements, i.e. they are activists or work very closely with the movements in question.

The layout of the collection is not random but matches the research priorities carefully given by the editors to specific topics. While chapters can be read independently, they are also connected by an excellent editorial work that organised the book in four parts that articulate the specificities of the case studies with more general substantial issues. These are the role of history and the significance of the movements’ trajectories to understand the present, the role of ESM as precursors of the alter-globalisation, the construction of

collective identity in transnational settings, and the importance of ‘situating’ the movements in geographical and historical context.

In the only chapter of Part I, Cox and Flesher Fominaya refuse to provide another typical account of social movement theory (SMT). They offer, instead, a critique of mainstream SMT that points to the inadequacies of the latter in understanding the trajectories, development and the future of the movements. Their critique is aimed at what they call ‘the origin myths’ in SMT. What does this mean? In the Anglo-Saxon world, they argue, we live under the spell of a foundational myth that has been and is systematically reproduced by both new scholars, who need to get grasp of the subject, and established scholars, who cannot be troubled to abandon the myth that they have constructed themselves. The ‘origin myth’ does not simply presents a partial view of ESM but it is simply a misleading account, which confuses a history of transition, reception, and interpretation within a US sub-discipline for actual European debates. Cox and Flesher Fominaya contend that theory has never been purely ‘theoretical’ but is the result of a broad mutual engagement between scholars and movements. There are macro-questions, claim Cox and Flesher Fominaya, that belong to specific European developments and, consequently, they cannot be grasped with the conceptual tools of US movement research. The present form of ESM is nourished by a tradition of European social theory. Cox and Fominaya argue that European social movements and European social movement scholarship theory have been rendered invisible by the lack of an articulated European social movement theory. The essential role of public intellectuals and critical theorists such as Herbert Marcuse, Simon de Beauvoir and Michel Foucault among others has been forgotten. At this point, the editors’ argument gets sharper as they censure what they call the “New Social Movement episode of the myth” (p. 16). This episode, they argue, has three ideological effects: the distinction of the study of social movement from Marxism (on this see also Barker et al. 2013); the production of a synthesis between “the ‘American’ and the ‘European’, the ‘strategic’ and the ‘identitarian’, the ‘political’ and the ‘cultural’” (p. 12); and finally, the academisation of the theory and its detachment from the movement activists’ own theorising.

But is there a European approach to ESM that contest these ideological functions of new social movements in SMT? Can the editors’ critique of the foundational myth begin to enunciate a different understanding of ESM based on critical theory? The answers to these questions are explored - in each of the chapters of the book, which is ultimately devoted to render visible both the significance ESM as precursors of alter/anti-/global movements and the importance of European scholarship, which live in the shadow of US dominated SMT.

Part II explores empirically the European precursors of the GJM. These chapters make the connection between past and present and point to the notable differences among different national expressions of the GJM. In Chapter 2, Osterweil shows the legacy of the ‘Italian anomaly’ and ‘the desire for another kind of politics’ (p. 41) that characterises the Italian ‘Movement of

Movements' (MoM), the *autonomy* of which is echoed in new movements such as the GJM and mirrors Zapatismo. In Chapter 3, Sommier and Fillieule offer a genealogy of the French anti-globalisation movements and activism in France prior to the events in Seattle in 1999. These are precursors of the GJM but the authors contend that there is not only one transnational movement but rather “a mosaic, an amorphous collection of various mobilised groups characterized by history and special nature of their roots, which come together temporarily under the polysemic label of ‘the fight against neoliberal globalization’ and/or for the battle for ‘global justice’” (p. 58). Chapter 4 explores how the anti-nuclear movement have motivated the GJM and points at the continuities between the former and the latter rather than arguing for ‘radical ruptures’ between them. In Chapter 5, Membretti and Mudu also investigate how previous movements have inspired present ones, in this case, how Italian Social Centers (*Centri Sociali*) inspired the alter-globalisation movement. The authors point to a mutual learning between the alter-globalization movement and the *Centri Sociali*. One of the legacies of the *Centri Sociali* consists of pushing for the “deconstruction of the North-South divide in Europe in relation to movements” (p. 91). The *Centri Sociali* represent “the main catalysts of the alter-globalisation movement in terms of spatialization” (p. 91). The French Confédération Paysanne (CP) as anti-capitalist ‘peasant movement’ is discussed by Morena in Chapter 6. Morena explores the peasant concept and peasants’ mobilisations and establishes links between both the CP and the alter-globalisation movement. The author shows that peasantry and globalisation are in opposition to one another, which means that peasantry appears as the site for the mobilisation against globalisation. In the last chapter of part II (Chapter 7), Flesher Fominaya portrays the British 1990s anti-roads movement as precursor of the GJM. Based on ethnographic research, she points to five features of the movement that show this continuity: its ideology; the linking of separate issues to a broader anti-capitalist framework; the tension between vertical/reformist and horizontal/radical actors; the centrality of innovative repertoires of direct action; and the anti-identitarian stance. There is, contends Fleyer Fominaya, a “strong resemblance between key features of the British anti-roads movements and later developments of the anti-capitalist movement” (p. 120). In other words, “what is clear is that movement culture, strategies, frames and tactics developed in the fertile and creative ground of the anti-roads movement, evolved and flourished in the GJM” (p. 120). Her analysis works against any rushed assessment of the GJM as “spontaneous, new and unprecedented” (p. 121).

Part III explores the cultural process and identity in the construction of the European MoM. The topics are the cross national diffusion, autonomy in West and East Europe, space and mobility, and collective memory and identity. In Chapter 8, by addressing the process of ‘cross-national diffusion’, Scholl claims that Europe is a ‘contagious space’ where counter-globalization networks are formed. His case studies, the EuroMayDay parades/movement and the climate justice movement, illuminate how movements disseminate their ideas and tactics rapidly through networks. But diffusion, argues Scholl, ultimately

depends “upon the linkages of local and trans-local activists networks” (p. 128). In the next chapter (Chapter 9), Gagyí explores the meaning of autonomy in the process of diffusion of the alter-globalisation movement in Eastern Europe. By looking at the Hungarian and Romanian experiences, she demonstrates that autonomy is not a universal idea with a fixed meaning but as a “relational social fact” (p. 143). By “treating autonomy as an idea shaped by its context” (p. 154), Gagyí produces a critique of the notion of autonomy that is used by the alter-globalisation movements in these countries, for it is too close to the liberal notion of civil society, and has important political implications for the movements. Chapter 10 and 11 tackle the construction of a transnational collective identity. In Chapter 10, Daphi highlights the role of memory in the process of forming a collective identity across borders, which problematises the idea of ‘transnational’. By using a narrative approach to explore the construction of collective identity in transnational social movements “in relation to collective memory and the spaces to which it is bound” (p. 158), Daphi argues that collective memory is constitutive of collective identity. While memories of Italian and German activists differ in relation to content and structure, “central narrative elements coincide and allow a partial collective identity to be sustained” (p. 168). In Chapter 11, Owens, Katzeff, Lorenzi and Colin also investigate the construction of collective identity but, in this case, ‘oppositional identity’. They focus on ‘activist mobility’ in the case of a movement that, as they write, seems to mobilise for ‘immobility’: the European squatters’ movement (p. 172). Their argument is that “mobility strengthened and expanded their movement, building a robust network connecting different squatting cities and opened flows of ideas and activists within it” (p. 172). The fact that squatters are cosmopolitan and local, place and displaced, structured the movements in a way that provided the foundation for the European squatters’ movement and the contribution of the latter to the alter-globalisation movements.

Part IV features the ‘new’ European Spring. In Chapter 12, Júlíusson and Helgason discuss the roots of the ‘saucepan’ Icelandic Revolution of 2008. Drawing on Gramsci’s notion of organic crisis, they argue that the riots broke with the conservative period in Iceland and this resulted in a victory for the counter-hegemonic forces. One of the successes of the Iceland revolution, argue the authors, has been “in establishing a new and effective tradition of protest and democratic activism by the common people” (p. 201). Following Badiou, the authors suggest that the protest was not a ‘revolution’ but it ended the period of conservatism that preceded it and produced a collapse of divisive identities to become the multitude. In Chapter 13, Romanos looks at the collective learning process brought about by the emergence of the Spanish 15M/*Indignados* movement. Although the social media was an important tool for organising and coordinating protest, the author suggests that the persistence of the movement and its further developments relied on the internal dynamics of the movements connected to local experiences in the process of framing of collective action, the improvement of “deliberative organizational culture” (p. 216) and the consolidation of political identity. In the next Chapter (Chapter 14), Sergi and Vogiatzoglou compare the symbolic memory and global

repertoires by looking at the Tunisian uprising and the Greek anti-austerity mobilizations, which developed in the Mediterranean region during 2010-2011. They discuss how these two dissimilar movements linked the 'global' and the 'local' and how they used the notion of 'universal citizenship' during their mobilisations. In Chapter 15, Calvo brings the 15M/*Indignados* back to the debate. By using empirical data on protesters in Salamanca collected in 2011, he argues that the 15M is a novel movement that has managed to disrupt some negative features of Spanish political culture. By reflecting on the gender, age and educational backgrounds of the interviewees, the author highlights their role in the development of new forms of collective action brought about by the 15M.

This edited collection offers, like no other, a theoretical critique of SMT empirically informed by several case studies of ESM written by critical scholars and scholar activists, and an attempt (successful in my view) to articulate an European Social Movement approach. The book tackles two of the many problems faced by social movement theory, because of which it has arguably become 'irrelevant' (Flacks 2004). First, the theory propagates a disjuncture between scholarly produced theory and the activist produced knowledge, particularly when it uses concepts and ideas that the movements want to challenge. SMT, argue Bevington and Dixon (2005), is not being read by the movements that the theory seeks to elucidate, partly because SMT have systematically ignored the theorisations that are generated by the movements themselves, outside academia (Cox and Nielsen 2008). This is particularly striking at the present conjuncture when there is an interesting process of 'activist theorising' (Cox and Nilsen 2007, 434) and publications available. Second, as mentioned in the book's introduction, led by its American variant, SMT has subordinated the study of European Movements to a foundational myth that has been reproduced by established and young scholars alike, and which not merely presents a partial view of ESM but constitutes a misleading account of them.

The book reveals how movements mobilise the invisible traces of history thus contesting simplistic narratives about European people protesting in the streets since 2010 and offers instead a 'richer narrative' in which the historical trajectory of the movements is treated in relation to the present. In this collection, the past becomes an element of the present while the present is enriched with an understanding of the trajectory of the movements. The speeded paperback release of the book only six months after the hardback edition was out surely indicates that the book is filling a gap in the study and practice of social movements and activism in Europe. It contains essential material for those who are interested in the trajectories and landscapes of ESM as well as those who are interested in present developments empirical and theoretical. The "myth" has been exposed and the richness and complexities of European social movements began to see the light.

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## About the review author

Ana C. Dinerstein is Associate Professor in the Department of Social and Policy Sciences at the University of Bath, UK. She has published extensively on Argentine and Latin American politics, autonomy, subjectivity, labour, social and indigenous movements, emancipatory struggles and the politics of policy. Her main publications include *The Labour Debate* (2002), *La Ruta de los Piqueteros* (2010) and *The politics of Autonomy in Latin America. The art of organising hope* (Palgrave, 2014). She can be contacted at A.C.Dinerstein AT bath.ac.uk

**J.P. Clark (2013). *The Impossible Community: Realizing Communitarian Anarchism*. London: Bloomsbury (272 pp., \$45 paperback)**

Reviewed by **Gerard Gill**

Anarchism and anarchistic practices have achieved renewed currency in recent times. In light of this, books like *The Impossible Community* by John P. Clark hold particular relevance for modern social movement scholars. The book suffers in places from an inaccessibility which is admittedly hard to avoid when discussing topics such as Hegelian dialectics. Such topics are, however, relevant in terms of their influence on Clark’s views as well as on the thought of classical anarchists such as Bakunin (McLaughlin 2002). These parts of the book will

likely only be of interest to relatively few, while discussions on topics such as competing utopias, different conceptions of the common good, and various oppositional communities (both current and historical) are by far the more compelling sections for the general reader.

The introductory chapter states that the book “is in large part the elaboration of a libertarian communitarianism” (p. 1) which Clark argues exists as a long intellectual tradition as well as in community and movement practices. A few strands of thought are evident in the book from the beginning – a criticism of post-anarchism as beginning with valid critique but ending with a problematic rejection of material realities, evidence of innate human cooperation contra Hobbes, and an advocacy of dialectics as an anti-essentialist mode of analysis. As a microcosm of the book as a whole, this chapter begins with a theoretical discussion that borders on obscurantism (for instance at several points it includes quotes in foreign languages with no translation, assuming the reader will be familiar with the material) before moving towards content that might be more interesting or useful to an activist or activist-intellectual. While some of the theory is necessary for the argument of the book, much of it is rather inaccessible and it is possible that those pages might have been better spent on the more practical and case-orientated work which is the strongest part of the book. However, Clark does note the importance of reconciling theory and practice, and the second chapter contains some interesting real-world examples such as the Spanish Mondragon cooperatives.

Clark characterises the time we live in as the era of “there is no alternative”, and noting that even many Leftist claims fall within some kind of concession of this statement. In contrast, Clark’s argument essentially seems to be for a pre-figurative, or at least creative and expressive, politics. He notes that the Right is actually better at this, and the Left is left trying to work on the Right’s creations – for instance he notes that the religious Right’s successes owe much to their community-building and grassroots emphasis. Clark also cites Žižek quite regularly which might be seen as problematic to some given that author’s arguably authoritarian streak and hostility to anarchism (Henwood 2002; Wolters 2013).

The third chapter is called ‘The Third Concept of Liberty’. The first two concepts relate to Isaiah Berlin’s negative and positive conceptions of liberty, with the positive being self-determination and the realization of capacities, beyond simple non-coercion, i.e. negative freedom. Clark proposes a third, which is a dialectical synthesis of the two. He explains how, for Hegel, the state is the reconciliation of the universal and the particular. However, Clark argues that this is an unfounded claim that was simply Hegel’s way of defending the state. In opposition to this, Clark advocates a “search for truth in which essential dimensions of what one seeks can be discovered only through a creative process in which the idea finds concrete, determinate fulfilment in the act” (p. 91). This argument would seem like a natural segue into discussions about practice and action, however this does not get explored further for another two chapters, and

the next is largely concerned with classical anarchist theory, in particular Elisée Reclus, and the critical-dialectical tradition that emerged from Hegel.

One of the more interesting theoretical discussions in the book is the one on utopia, considered as the highest aspirations or ideal in some schools of thought. In this way, both the dominant utopia of neoliberalism and alternative utopias can be articulated. Clark describes utopian thought as divergent from its very origins, with exemplars of the two paths being found in Plato's *Republic* and Laozi's *Daodejing*. Plato's utopia is one of statism, unity or totality, and totalitarianism. In contrast, Laozi's is one of stateless freedom. Utopia as domination, totality, and hegemony, with dissenting elements suppressed can be seen in powerful common examples including consumerism and religious fundamentalism but also in less obvious places. For instance, Clark mentions the elitism and vanguardism evident in Bakunin's thought, seen in the authoritarian and consequentialist tactics he espoused. The chapter on utopia concludes with mention of some intentional communities and the utopian thought preceding and existing in them, which is largely neglected in most accounts.

From chapter six onwards, the book moves into more case-based discussion. Clark argues that people have forgotten or don't notice the potential of 'oppositional communities'. He argues that while there were real gains for the left in the 1960s in the US, these have since been beaten back again, and now the Right largely holds the grassroots while the Left is resigned to 'permanent struggle' with nothing beyond it. Clark looks to these oppositional communities for something more. He considers the global justice movement as one of the most important developments in this, in particular its affinity groups, as well as 'base communities' in Latin America. There is also some mentioning of Occupy and recent mass anti-austerity movements. These examples show that such communities are effective and potentially transformative, though this potential has gone largely unexplored and the question remains as to whether these groups can expand their scope into broader social change.

The chapter called 'disaster anarchism' is comprised of two pieces written during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. It explores how the social and political conditions created by disasters create opportunities for different political actors and ideologies. He notes that the US government's response to the disaster was woeful, and that the state actually even worked against grassroots efforts to provide aid. Of these efforts, he notes that "Seldom have I felt such a sense of the goodness of people, of their ability to show love and compassion for one another, and of their capacity to create spontaneous community" (p. 202). This is a powerful example of the kind of human potential that makes communitarian anarchism seem possible.

In a similar manner to the discussion on utopia, Clark discusses the concept of the 'common good' through two contrasting conceptions of it, epitomised by Nehru and the exclusionary development that took place under his government, and the Gandhian movement, *Sarvodaya*, which is described as libertarian, communitarian, and anarchist. However, he details the problems of the

transition to this particular utopia, such as misplaced trust in elites to act as willing allies in the project. Still, a legacy of the Gandhian movement can be seen in the *Sarvodaya Shramadan* movement in Sri Lanka. Clark argues that as a grassroots development movement it has surpassed the achievements of Gandhi's original efforts.

The final chapter is a critique of Bookchin – in particular his political program of libertarian municipalism. Clark argues that despite its merits, this program remains stuck in 'abstract moralism' (p. 248) and neglects class (Clark notes that Bookchin has this in common with various 'post'-thinkers which he otherwise has little in common with). He concludes that the work has inspired many projects, but is also narrow and sectarian. While not without its appeal, this seems like a strange choice for a final chapter and does little to sum up or conclude the main body of the work. This is likely because it is one of the majority of chapters where portions have been previously published elsewhere, then repurposed for inclusion in the book. This sometimes works well, but this last chapter is probably the starkest indicator of this process, and makes the book feel quite disjointed as it draws to a close.

Clark wears his philosophical sympathies on his sleeve throughout the book, which is not a bad thing as it allows the reader to understand where he is coming from with his arguments. He is a strong advocate of the dialectical process, and appreciates but is also critical of postmodernism. In the book, he displays both an affinity for traditional, Marxist-influenced anarchism and an engagement with more recent developments. Particularly compelling is his argument that events and practices in the global South can and should be a vital source of inspiration for movements in the North. While by no means perfect, this book is a worthwhile contribution to contemporary anarchist scholarship.

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## About the review author

Gerard Gill is a PhD candidate in the Centre for Human Rights Education at Curtin University, Perth, Australia. He can be contacted at [gerard\\_gill AT hotmail.com](mailto:gerard_gill@hotmail.com).

**Peter Dauvergne and Genevieve Lebaron (2014). *Protest Inc.: The Corporatization of Activism*. Cambridge: Polity Press (206 pp., £15.99 paperback)**

Reviewed by **Lika Rodin**

In this monograph, '*Protest Inc.: The Corporatization of Activism*', Peter Dauvergne and Genevieve Lebaron, explore the changing nature and future of social activism. The book comprises six chapters with three central parts devoted to the major factors behind the ongoing transformation of social mobilization – the endangering of political protest, individualization and fragmentation of social life, and formalization of activism – which are integrated into a general analytical conversation unfolding in the introductory and concluding sections. The engaging style and unique data provided in the edition have a good chance to attract the attention of both the general public and academic audiences.

The first chapter problematizes the increasing collaboration between pro-profit institutions and NGOs, and the rise of *career activism*. This process, which is grounded in mutual interest, entails a perspective for many activist organizations to be incorporated into the order of globalizing capitalism. Simultaneously, more challenging and militant groups find themselves in political isolation, excluded in terms of economic support, endangered and labeled as anti-social. The authors “are sounding a loud alarm (...) about the consequences of the corporatization of activism for the possibilities of transformative change in world politics” (p. 5).

The first chapter differentiates *protest*, an impulsive mass or individual revolt driven by the “moral economy” (p. 5) of disadvantaged groups, from *activism*, an organized struggle over social and political objectives, projected in time. The authors are primarily interested in activism, and even more specifically in leftist activism, separating the discussion from the analysis of fundamentalist and right wing organizations. Leftist activism is said to employ a multiplicity of tactics – from peaceful performances to “hacking” and direct action – addressing political and economic institutions as its main opponents. Activism is, however, shown as increasingly affected by capitalist structures and ideologies. In this respect, an important distinction is made between *activist managers*, NGO leaders who have adopted morals and methods developed by the state and business organizations, and *radical activists*, “those who challenge political and corporate authority and call for structural change to alter the outcomes of markets and politics” (p. 26).

In the second chapter, Dauvergne and Lebaron argue that non-governmental organizations mirror corporate standards and approaches. According to the authors, the corporatization of activism involves the use of celebrities in the promotion of social issues and the inclusion of business people in activist decision-making structures. In the context of expanding capitalism and shrinking role of the state from the provision of social services, partnership with

pro-profit actors appears critical for NGOs to cope with economic challenges, and for the state to manage social obligations. It is stimulated and supported both on a national and international level. A related innovative socio-economic mode – *philanthrocapitalism* – is discussed as being driven by the idea of entrepreneurship and a desire to enhance the consumer capacities of typically excluded social groups, thus elevating profits. Celebrities, as “role models” or individuals who demonstrate a “will to care” (in terms of Hamington 2008), frequently represent and occasionally engage in governing of NGOs, such as Leonardo DiCaprio associated with WWF, or Angelina Jolie actively promoting UN’s projects. Involvement of celebrities morally reaffirms the position of those who have privileged access to economic resources. An expression borrowed by the authors from a contemporary philanthropist illustrates this claim: “being super-rich is fine (...) as long as you support a good cause or two” (p. 44).

Additionally, entrepreneurial spirit among NGOs leads to the appropriation of social problems for business promotion. Goods which are ethically certified or “branded with ‘causes’” offer “self-indulgence” for buyers rationalizing and defending their consumerist drive: “The more one buys, the more good one will do, turning capitalism into a dynamic solution for social ill” (p. 52). This trend is linked to the proliferation of liberal ideology, the individualization of social problems and reconceptualization of citizenship in terms of consumer entitlements. The authors warn that framing consumer practices as enactments of activism may undermine foundations of sociopolitical mobilization. Activists’ engagement with consumerism supports the general order of market relationships abandoning the very idea of alternative(s).

Chapter 3 opens a discussion on the causes of corporatization of non-profit organizational actors with a reflection on the phenomenon of *securitization* of social political activism that hits different types of activist groups. In the framework of antiterrorist politics, states across the globe have dramatically increased surveillance and coercion of sociopolitical resistance. Activists are frequently defined in terms of security threat; the related innovations in controlling and counteracting disobedience are observed, including the adaption by police units of military equipment and advanced combat technologies. The figure of USD 3 billion – the value of a recent donation of weapons and other military facilities made by the US Department of Defense to the police force – helps imagining the scale of the development. When a local police department can use an army tank against protesters, one will have to think twice before engaging in a demonstration or a blockade. Surveillance of activists, including the infiltration of police agents into activist organizations is another tactic used. The authors are concerned with the negative impact of police espionage on activists’ camaraderie and on recruitment of new members into activist groups. In addition, national legislation systems in many countries have transformed to integrate antiterrorist measures, which informed treatment of social movements as well, “criminalizing” (p. 65) civil protest in some parts of the world. Apart from coercion, economic means are increasingly employed. For instance, to discourage politically motivated individuals from engaging in

collective actions, governments issue direct and indirect payments for participation in grassroots events.

Chapter 4 is devoted to another macro factor of corporatization of activism, namely *privatization of social life*, which has come about with the promotion of the idea of self-efficiency, expansion of entrepreneurial ethos and consumerist practices, restructuring of urban organization and the related fragmentation of local communities. In this context, “[n]ot only are people living more private and insulated lives, but increasingly the values and choices about what to do with one’s time and energy reflect a life of ever rising consumerism” (p. 84). Self-referencing and consumerist ideology profoundly shape one’s subjectivity and related modes of action. Moreover, the transformation of the urban environment and expansion of new technologies alter coherence of everyday life and, eventually, “the infrastructures of dissent” (p. 83). Rising social stratification and social competition further contribute to the decline of social ties and solidarity.

*Institutionalization of activism* – the third factor behind the change in the nature of social political mobilization – is presented in the next chapter. Institutionalization is supposed to establish activist organizations as legitimate players within the realm of politics. However, Dauvergne and Lebaron argue that this unavoidably leads to hierarchization, bureaucratization, adoption of business style in management, and re-orientation of activists towards minor liable and rather non-critical towards the current system projects. Institutionalization of NGOs is crucial for the rise of the *non-profit industrial complex* celebrating “symbiotic relationships” between civil and non-civil domains marked by hegemony of “those with money and power” (p. 117).

There are two main themes running through the book: a somewhat idealized image of civil society and nostalgia for a radical class-based collective struggle. Those reflect a long-term theoretical discussion on the essence of political mobilization and its multifaceted effects. Recently, focus of the theorizing has shifted towards cultural dimension of social activism, as represented, for example, in elaborations by Jeffrey Alexander.

In his book *The Civil Society* published in 2006, Alexander emphasized that through recent centuries the civil sector – a “plethora of institutions outside of the state” (p. 24) – was at times praised, and at times blamed for its close association with the “capitalist market”. Interpretations of capitalism varied from liberating and enhancing an individual self, to the association of market order with the domain of “antisocial” forces, although in major early social conceptions civil society appeared as essentially “bourgeois”. It was seen as being capable of “fixing” the social troubles generated by the state and market, but not overturning their power. As Alexander further highlights, an intellectual ground of revolutionary activism – Marxism – certainly did not count on civil society to be the engine of social change, trusting instead the logic of economic processes.

The values, norms, and institutions of civil society were opposed to the interest of the mass humanity, even if they did provide a space for contesting their own legitimacy in a public, counter-hegemonic way. Civil society was inherently capitalist. It was a sphere that could be entered but not redefined. Its discourse could not be broadened and redirected. It was a sphere that would have to be overthrown. (Gramsci cited in Alexander 2006, 29)

More recent theoretical trends grant the civil sphere a separate status from political and economic domains, though the boundaries between them are rather fluid and mutual infiltrations are relatively common. This dynamic shapes civil society in a specific way: “The contradictions of civil society make it restless. Its relative autonomy promises more than it provides. Its commitments of universalizing solidarity are never fulfilled” (Alexander 2006, pp. 213-214). The overlap of civil and non-civil realms manifests itself in the phenomenon of *double membership*, exemplified among others by the experiences of women who have got access to paid work and through this to the sphere of public life, transgressing but not entirely leaving their household responsibilities, roles and identities. The idea of double membership appears in the description of consumer activism provided by Peter Dauvergne and Genevieve Lebaron. It helps to explain the success of “appropriation” of activist symbolism by business organizations: the phenomenon of Che Guevara T-shirts. Capitalism manages “to commodify dissent and sell it back to dissenters” (Manites cited in Dauvergne and Lebaron, 103), namely due to boundary confusion (Alexander 2006) and the complex structure of individual identity mirroring the general complexity of the advanced modernity (Giddens 1991).

To counter individualization and consumerization of protest, Dauvergne and Lebaron advocate for the anti-authoritarian movements based on structurally grounded solidarity and the collective struggle over shared goals. However, new social movement studies show that the “revolutionary model” of activism is giving way to more culturally sensitive types of social mobilization capable of addressing a shift from material- to symbolic-based hegemony. In this new and rather discursive battle – the battle over representations – individual identity is placed at the epicenter as “the property which is now being claimed and defended” (Melucci cited in Alexander 2006, 225). Thus, to answer the initial question of the book – “Where are the radicals?” – it would be important to (re)define radicalism in the current context.

With the increased complexity of the power order, when diverse state, security and economic agents strengthen their command and control, various forms of social resistance have emerged. We can clearly identify the existing “will to believe” (Hamington 2010) in opportunities to make a substantial shift towards a more just and inclusive world. However, there is no consensus, neither among activists nor among commentators, on what this change will be and how it can come about. In this context, the Marxian idea of an “automatic” resolution of the social conflict (Alexander 2004) appears pleasurable as never before (see also Schouten 2008). *Protest Inc.: The Corporatization of Activism* does not

only trigger a discussion on the contemporary transformation of social activism but also provokes the reader's reflection on more fundamental aspects of sociopolitical and economic order.

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## About the review author

Lika Rodin, PhD, is a lecturer in social psychology at the University of Skövde, Sweden. Her current research interests include: precarity in the age of cognitive capitalism and labor-based social movements; mass-media and social problems; gender aspects of the social movements; new technologies, body politics and cultural representations; gender, nationalism and globalization in the popular culture. Her email address is: lika.rodin AT his.se

**Alexandros Kioupkiolis and Giorgios Katsambekis, eds. (2014). *Radical Democracy and Collective Movements Today: The Biopolitics of the Multitude versus the Hegemony of the People*. Farnham: Ashgate (247 pp., £58.50 hardback).**

Reviewed by **Jamie Matthews**

The wave of occupation protests and square-taking movements of 2011 presented academics and activists with the need to return to a variety of questions and problems inherent to the projects of the radical left. A particularly salient concern, proposed most explicitly by the Occupy slogan 'We Are The 99 per cent', has been the contested conceptions of the subject of emancipatory change. It is clear to most that the traditional proletariat, the industrial working

class, has been long displaced as this subject, but there is sharp debate as to what replaces it, and how a revolutionary project might be constituted. The alter-globalisation movement of the early 2000s saw the rise in popularity and relevance of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's idea of the 'multitude', a dispersed and horizontally-organised subject fitting to the challenges of biopolitical Empire (Hardt and Negri 2000). While the 2011 movements have frequently reflected similar tendencies, they have also witnessed the 'revenge of the hierarchy' (Mason 2013), as groups willing to organise in counter-hegemonic blocs and wield hierarchical power have ascended in places like Egypt and Greece. This in turn seems to bear out the claims of theorists of hegemony – most prominently Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) – that the multitude is ultimately insufficient for the challenge of necessarily antagonistic politics. *Radical Democracy and Collective Movements Today* seeks to intervene in this debate, and the current political moment, presenting a series of chapters from scholars positioning themselves across the axes of this particular tension.

The editors usefully outline the key debates and theoretical positions regarding the 'people' at the centre of radical social change, as an important introduction to the chapters of the book. This naturally includes Hardt and Negri's claim that hierarchical centralisation of social movements is no longer desirable in the context of Empire's decentralised, biopolitical domination through enclosure and the production of our very selves. Instead, resistance must come from the autonomous networks of the multitude that resist identity and crystallisation. Other voices speaking from related positions are those of fellow autonomists such as Paolo Virno (2004), as well as Giorgio Agamben's (1998) works on bare life and the 'coming community' (1993) that does not rely on identity and representation. Against these positions the key voices have included Laclau and Mouffe (1985), who have maintained that the concept of multitude – which includes essentially everyone – does not allow for the antagonism that is necessary to politics, and is guilty of a spontaneism that incorrently misses the need to construct a revolutionary project from conflicting groups and demands. Another key theoretical contribution has been that of Jacques Rancière (2010) for whom the essence of politics is the struggle between conflicting versions of the concept of 'the people'.

These are weighty theoretical questions that draw on a veritable library of radical political philosophy and concepts. However, it is evidently the ambition of the editors that readers newer to the debates at the heart of this volume be provided with some points of orientation with which to navigate the book's chapters. In this regard, Kioupkiolis's and Katsambekis's laying out of the conceptual terrain in their introduction to the book is very welcome. Similarly, it is made clear from the start that this apparently theoretical conflict is central to contemporary activist practice. The organisational tension between 'horizontals' and 'verticals' – itself often reflecting that between anarchists and autonomists on the one hands and political parties of various stripes on the other – was perhaps *the* tension of the previous wave of anti-capitalist protest, and in many

ways represents a dramatisation of the two tendencies at the centre of this book: are we to organise in disaggregated networks or (imperfectly) united blocs?

On the side of the (not unrevised) multitude are the chapters by Benjamin Arditi and Saul Newman. Arditi's 'Post-hegemony: Politics Outside the Usual Post-Marxist Paradigm' is rooted in the empirical example of Argentina's anti-government protests in 2001. Drawing on Virno's *Grammar of the Multitude* (2004), he offers a convincing account of a coalition so loose it barely justifies the name, seemingly truer to an amassing social multiplicity. His conclusion that this suggests the need not for a counter-power but an anti-power is taken further by Newman's 'Occupy and Autonomous Political Life', which uses Occupy Wall Street to assert a new paradigm of 'anti-politics'. This is a label that would surely be agreed upon by its critics who see the political as inherently hegemonic and antagonistic, though Newman reclaims this in the context of Occupy's claim that the conventional terrain of politics is in fact no longer anything of the sort, but instead a series of mechanisms of de-politicisation and securitisation.

While sympathetic to aspects of the multitude thesis, Richard J.F. Day and Nick Montgomery's 'Letter to a Greek Anarchist' contributes a much needed indigenist and feminist critique of the totalising and oppressive knowledge-power claims of both multitude and hegemony. They reiterate some of Day's previous (2005) critique of hegemony, and reject Hardt and Negri's suspicion of all identities, pointing out that in the context of neo-colonialism, indigenous identities provide a vehicle for radical exodus from the current dispensation. Their espousal of the indigenist acceptance of plurality leads them to claim that 'everyone is right', thereby offering an interesting uprooting of the assumptions of the debate around which the book is framed.

Jodi Dean's 'Sovereignty of the People' recognises the fact that the proletariat is no longer the appropriate subject of communist revolution, though firmly maintains that the multitude falls short as a substitute. Dean's main objection, which is echoed again and again across the book, is that the multitude is too inclusive, including basically everyone, and thereby missing out the need for the antagonism of an 'us' and a 'them'. She refers to Rancière's (2011) concept of 'the people as the rest of us' as a useful way of envisaging a political subject that is necessarily representative ('the people' for Rancière always involves a particular group representing its demands as universal) while remaining true to the idea of a minority 1 per cent's domination of everyone else. Yannis Stavrakakis's 'Hegemony or Post-Hegemony' reinforces the argument for hegemony by directly addressing through deconstruction the work of its principle critics, including Day, and outlining the several ways in which Laclau has already responded to his critics. This is a useful contribution to undermining the caricature that can surround the concepts at the centre of this debate.

It is in the chapters by the book's editors that the project of the volume becomes clear. They are both committed to an increased entangling of the multitude and the people, such that the 2011 movements are shown to reveal successful

moments of both. Read from the vantage point of these chapters, the whole book feels somewhat like a vehicle for the complementary theses of these two colleagues. Frequently rooted in the concrete example of Greece, these are very useful contributions that help us to think past the often excessively limiting categories of multitude and hegemony.

Kioupkiolis's chapter 'A Hegemony of the Multitude' proposes that hegemony be 'recast beyond recognition' but retained as useful, and affirms the need to look at concrete empirical examples of collective autonomy to trouble the stability of our concepts. His account stays true to the horizontal, anti-representation ethos of Athens' *aganaktismenoi*, but asserts that the constituent processes of the movement was a project of 'becoming multitude'. He maintains though that even in distributed networks, hubs of concentrated power will emerge, such that hegemony remains a constant possibility in the multitude's project.

Katsembekis's 'The Multitudinous Moment(s) of the People' hones in on the fact that even the resolutely leaderless Greek protesters were necessarily drawn into hegemonic representation whenever the movement spoke; chants, banners and media representations, he convincingly claims, reflect the ineradicable possibility of a dominant 'people' emerging from multiplicity. Marina Prentoulis and Lasse Thomassen's 'Autonomy and Hegemony in the Squares' functions something like an epilogue to the editors' claims, particularly in its account of the mutual contaminations of horizontality and verticality, autonomy and hegemony. The authors reiterate Katsembekis's claim that media representation imposed moments of hegemony from without, and importantly add that the very act of occupation that characterised many of these movements created camps-as-centres that undermined the multitudinous network ethic from within. The relationship between space and representation is developed further in Andy Knott's chapter on Occupy and UK Uncut.

Taken as a whole, *Radical Democracy and Collective Movements Today* is a valuable intervention which this recent wave of mobilisations has necessitated. If the alter-globalisation movement was a moment of the multitude – distributed horizontal networks that converged swarm-like on the summits of the WTO or G8 only to disperse again – it is right that this current period of empirical struggle be used to approach this problem again. While elements of the multitude remain, it is clear from this book (the arguments of its editors, the framing of the introduction, and the organisation of chapters) that Kioupkiolis and Katsembekis see this recent wave as the return to salience of a hegemonic politics of the people. Indeed, this makes some sense given the experience of their native Greece, where the rise of a unifying political party – Syriza – has captured much of the anarchic energy of the Syntagma Square demonstrators. These events would seem to bear out the Laclauian claim that from the chaotic multiplicity of social life, politics emerges when an equivalence of demands is articulated by a necessarily representative force; or at the very least that the hierarchical organisation of something like a political party can quickly undermine the structures of horizontal autonomy, at least once the explosive early moment of insurrection has passed. Their proximity to this example

perhaps excessively determines their theoretical claims, but these are useful precisely as contextually situated, rather than universal, knowledge.

The volume is particularly useful in helping readers to overcome the sometimes overly simplistic presentation of the concepts of hegemony and the multitude that are relied on by their respective critics. Readings of key theorists are frequently nuanced and reflect how positions have shifted over the years in dialogue with one another and in response to empirical events. What emerges is a messier and more useful series of concepts for considering the subject of struggle today.

Sociologists and anthropologists of social movements will likely be frustrated by the level of abstraction that is characteristic of the kind of theorising that is the tendency of radical political philosophy; the use of empirical examples from actual movements is frequently instrumentalised to illustrate and support grander points, rather than to confound or trouble them. This reflects differences in disciplinary priorities rather than fundamental flaws. One should hope that the theoretical claims of this book be furthered by research more explicitly rooted in activist practice. For activists and movement participants themselves, this volume is an encouragement to consider the deep ideological underpinnings of tactics and practices, and to locate these in the particular historical moment to which they must respond.

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### **About the review author**

Jamie Matthews is a PhD candidate in Sociology at the University of Manchester. His research focuses on the Occupy movement in London. His work makes use of post-structuralist and post-Marxist approaches to consider the problem of identity at the heart of contemporary movements. He is a member of the University of Manchester's Social Movements Research Group (Movements@Manchester). He can be contacted at james.matthews AT manchester.ac.uk

### **Stefania Milan (2013). *Social Movements and Their Technologies: Wiring Social Change*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan (233 pp., \$90 hardcover)**

Reviewed by **A.T. Kingsmith**

While somewhat neglectful of the politics embedded within the development of new communicative technologies, *Social Movements and Their Technologies* opens up new conversations regarding the socio-cultural embeddedness of contemporary social movements by providing a useful overview of the relationship between social movements and 'liberating technologies' that demystifies the communications infrastructures that have made possible some of the major protest events of the past 15 years. To do so, author Stefania Milan centres her analyses around what she terms 'emancipatory communication practices' (ECPs), repertoires of collective action and social organisation that seek to create alternatives by challenging existing media and communications infrastructures.

Drawing from the work of Hackett and Carroll (2004), Milan distinguishes between two approaches to emancipatory communication practices: reformist (or offensive) and counterhegemonic (or defensive). Reformist tactics challenge existing hegemonic structures and powers in the communication field by influencing the contents of mainstream media and advocating media policy reform. Counterhegemonic tactics seek to create independent media outside state and corporate control, and to change the relationship between citizens and media by empowering audiences to be aware of the overwhelming influence of mainstream media.

Building on this methodological divide, Milan frames her exploration of ECPs around two distinct communication mediums: low-power community radio (reformist) and high-power Internet activism (counterhegemonic). For Milan, the two approaches share a focus on praxis as their main strategy of promoting change, a culture of emancipation, and empowerment insofar as they provide alternatives to commercial and state-owned communication infrastructure, and core features such as non-profit status, an orientation towards social change and

social justice, and the prevalence of volunteerism. Despite these similarities however, it is their differences that provide the focal point for much of the book.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to a historical analysis of the emergence of mobilisations on media and technology issues and an exploration of the context in which current mobilisations occur. For analytical purposes, Milan defines three decades, each characterised by distinct political, technological, and cultural developments. 1975-1985 is referred to as the 'institutional period,' a time when communication and information issues enter the development discourse. 1985-1995 is 'civil society engagement,' where the first media reform campaigns and national computer networks emerge. 1995-2005 is the 'renaissance of media activism', where emancipatory communication practices proliferate thanks to the diffusion of the Internet and cheap, user-friendly technologies. As Milan works through over thirty years of communicative history, she explores each period by focusing on three elements: the prevailing political opportunities, the evolution of technological innovation, and the socio-cultural environments that influenced activists. Further, Milan concludes with a section dedicated to the latest developments in media activism, including the spread of hacktivism and the role of social media in recent popular protest movements such as the Arab Spring, Spain's Indignados and 15-M mobilisations, and Occupy Wall Street.

After situating the different tactical methodologies within their preferred communication mediums and laying the historical foundations for contemporary techno-activist engagements, the remainder of the book is divided into four chapters which employ Milan's notion of ECPs to develop what she refers to as the four fundamental foundations of collective action: identity building and movement formation; organisational forms; action repertoires and interactions with authorities, norms, and policy arenas; and networking strategies.

In the chapter on movement formation and identity building, Milan focuses on how identities are produced and movements formed among reformist community broadcasters and counterhegemonic radical techies. She argues that collective identity emerges in both reformist and counterhegemonic organisations because activists believe that injustice pertaining to the media sector contributes to the reproduction of other forms of inequality, and thus fighting existing forms of media-related injustice has a positive impact on society as a whole. However, while radio practitioners emphasise the consequences of structural injustice, for radical techies it is the structural nature of injustice itself that matters. Community radio practitioners identify with human rights activism, the freedom of expression discourse, and people-centred approaches to a collective notion of development, while DIY culture, punk subculture, cyberlibertarianism, hacker and free software movements, as well as anarchism and autonomism are what tend to inform the identities of radical techies. Hence the two sectors have little in common in terms of identity apart from an emphasis on the appropriation of enclosed spaces.

Milan points out that organisations are a source of identity reproduction and at the same time, identity works as an organising principle. Community practitioners and radical techies share an emphasis on participation,

horizontality, trust, independence, and a deep value of social relationships as organising principles. However, they stress different organisational elements of their collective identity, as well as different constructions of the 'other.' The communitarian orientation of radio practitioners emphasises openness towards the enlarged 'we' as their main organising principle. As such, community radio stations are characterised by an ontology of inclusivity that keeps barriers to access low. In contrast, the antagonistic orientation of radical techies focuses on radical opposition to the predominant social and economic sphere as its key organising principle, thereby stressing the 'I' or the individual within the larger group. Thus radical tech activism is characterised by self-managed collectives of purported equals.

When choosing an action repertoire, Milan contends that activists are influenced by five factors: the objective of the protest, the meaning and symbolic value associated with collective action, emotions, material constraints, and the presence of potential allies. When looking at collective actors engaged in the political process, Milan argues that social movement scholars have traditionally distinguished between 'insiders' (reformist) pushing a cooperative strategy or active engagement in institutional processes, and 'outsiders' (counterhegemonic) adopting confrontational forms of protest against institutions. Noting that some actors do not fit into this binary model, Milan adds 'beyond-ers' to the continuum: groups whose actions are prefigurative, operate regardless of institutions and norms, and aim to redefine social structures from scratch. Occasionally there are other configurations beyond this ideal-type activist spectrum, including coalitions of different groups working on a division of labour model, but for Milan, the cultural differences between insiders and beyond-ers in particular form a fundamental dividing line that hampers collaboration and the acknowledgment of being part of the same struggle.

In the final chapter, Milan explores how groups and individuals engaged in ECPs give rise to networks with their peers, and with activists engaged in other areas of media and technology activism. Community broadcasters generally form national and transnational networks of non-confrontational membership associations, which are instrumental in creating and reproducing connections across borders, as well as promoting a common belief system. Conversely, networks of radical techies are much more informal and submerged. Locally, techies tend to mingle with other activists on the basis of common frameworks (for example municipal political engagement), which foster the emergence of shared agendas. However, Milan distinguishes between three distinct types of tech networks: instrumental, exchange-based, and self-defense networks. As such, there are only sporadic connections between community broadcasters and radical techies, and thus Milan makes it clear that we cannot speak of a larger social movement dynamic. There can be movement dynamics at play when interests between the sectors occasionally align (for example the anti-SOPA/PIPA protests), but such a movement dynamic has never been sustained over time, and this impedes the emergence of shared collective identity and long-term collaborative mobilisations.

It is important to note that despite its comprehensive methodology, Milan's tendency to employ apolitical framing techniques and to oversimplify mobilisation dynamics present modest gaps in the study that, if closed, would tighten the organisational resonance of the book's conclusions. A key part of Milan's method is an emphasis on the microsociological processes behind the creation of liberated infrastructures as opposed to the content that such infrastructures broadcast. This conscious refusal to engage with the political content of social movements, and instead focus entirely on the supposedly apolitical ways such movements utilise various technologies, makes visible a lack of political reflexivity in the book. The political content of technology cannot be so easily separated from the technologies themselves because it is political acts that created and continue to develop many of these technologies in the first place (the US military's establishment of the Internet as an secure internal communication medium is one glaring example that comes to mind). From the NSA revelations in the Global North to the social media blackouts under repressive regimes in the Global South, political rationalities play a key role in the operation and accessibility of 'liberating technologies', and thus to focus specifically on the actor, while ignoring the context of the act, leaves out a key part of the larger socio-political picture. Moreover, drawing upon Gerbaudo's (2012) work on liquid organising and choreographic leadership, when addressing internal power dynamics, Milan could make more explicit the fact that hierarchies of power continue to be observed even within radical techie ECPs because the manifestation of a core leadership structure has so far proven to be inevitable during any sort of communicative mobilisation process.

Overall, Milan should be applauded for an ambitious attempt to bring together two disciplines that rarely speak to one another: on the one hand, social movement studies (and political sociology more broadly), and on the other, media and Internet studies. While over the past decade more and more scholars have made attempts to analyse alternative media, few have made use of sociological theories to understand grassroots participation in media production or the dynamics of cyberculture. Situated at the nexus of sociological processes and communicative activity, Milan's concept of ECPs represents a useful attempt to fill these gaps, and the in-depth examination of the cultural systems of community broadcasters and radical techies offers new insights into activists' motivations, emotions, demographics, identity-building processes, and the action repertoires of collective actors who employ both 'old' and 'new' media. Moreover, Milan's expansion of Hackett and Carroll's (2004) binary of counterhegemonic-versus-reformist tactical methodologies to include 'beyond-ers' in the continuum opens up a space for fresh conversations regarding the socio-cultural ontologies of contemporary social movements. Finally, Milan's conclusions that radical techies and community radio practitioners establish only episodic connections, and thus remain two distinct universes with two separate cultural systems of action, makes visible a deep divide in social movement praxis that must be more than merely acknowledged if there is to be any chance of bridging such a gap.

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## About the review author

**A.T. Kingsmith** is a writer, PhD candidate in political science at York University, Toronto, and a graduate associate at the York Institute for Science and Technology Studies. His work explores the nexuses of social movement studies, process philosophy, and technology as sites of subject formation. He can be contacted at: atking AT yorku.ca

**Anna Schober (2013). *The Cinema Makers: Public Life and the Exhibition of Difference in South-Eastern and Central Europe since the 1960s*. Bristol: Intellect (241 pp., £25.00 paperback)**

Reviewed by **Niamh Mongey**

The 1960s brought about political unrest on a global scale and with it a physical desire to revolt. This spurred a sense of creativity where citizens became active agents of their own environment. Anna Schober has documented the stories of the Cinema Makers in East and Western Europe during this period in order to situate us "in the middle of things" (Schober 2013, 5). Schober is thorough in her investigations. She displays an understanding and appreciation of these creative movements, she has captured a period where there was a shift in the way people consumed and recreated film.

Through reading these scenarios, the author places us in a world of upheaval. The stories show the transformation of the role of the cinemagoers began to shape the discourses of society through forming collective in urban spaces. She uses the concept of 'the other' as the feeling that provoked mass response in cinema goers. Through interviews with some of the main film makers of the time, she captures the sense of agency associated with cinema making at the time and reveals how a strict control enforced by socialist governments in one-party systems led these new authors to create their own form of cinema making and identifies the similarities between socialist led governments and pluralist democratic societies.

The main body of this book revolves around cinema as a physical movement. Schober identifies the movement of people across boundaries. She recounts the stories of those who transferred their positions as mere spectators. These cinema makers were provoked to create spaces for a new kind of cinema making

through their exposure to the unknown and foreign, to a world depicted as “the other” (Schober 2013, 3). Through Schober’s depiction of this world, we too become engaged spectators.

She retells the cinema makers’ stories of how they were exposed to “The other” as a world from which they were far removed, “a rapport of observation and identification” somewhere exotic, foreign and unfamiliar (p. 3). Despite its unfamiliarity, this “otherness” spurred a reaction from the artists of the time. These movies created a desire for change and action and provoked another level of thinking for the spectator.

It is from this renewal of ideas and a change in the way that people thought about cinema that the “Expanded cinema” emerged and non-traditional, ambivalent Black Wave cinema making became prevalent (p. 56). These films were a foray into what became an outright rejection of the status quo. They highlighted the darker side of the human psyche and were subtly challenging cinema making.

With her story telling, Schober shares an insight into the human suffering and oppression in these societies at the time. She explores innate human urge film making provoked in spectators to create something in order to understand their world better. “In ‘their’ cinema they all find everything that everyday life denies them” (p. 32). Conversely, the concept of a safe space where cinema activism began to emerge was precisely the mode of containment used by state power. The rulers used cinema as a spectacle and a tool of propaganda. In both Tito-ruled Yugoslavia and multi-party states in Western Europe, the cinema space was used as a place of comfort and seclusion with the aim of controlling people. “The fantasy of an egocrat, representing and incorporating the love of the ‘people as one’” (p. 105).

It is unfortunate for those in control used cinema as a form of control and oppression, produced the catalyst for consumers to transform themselves from consumers into artistic actors. Cinema was more than a safe, solitary space and a place to seek refuge or escape reality; it was now creating its own reality. Gradually, this form of cinema activism began to expand into a movement; the physical space became a shared community amongst transnational networks. Helping to emancipate the individual and create a sense of unity and alliance on a broader scale.

The book describes how a sense of liberation provoked more politicised film making but as a result, government responded to with more rigid controls. “After the first student protests in Belgrade in 1968, the considerable latitude for creating provocative image-worlds and discussions around film that characterized Yugoslavia in the 1960’s was sharply withdrawn” (p. 90). As a result of their success film makers were required to withdraw from the initially bold and fearless film-making that they had begun with and instead had to reflect on the impact and consequences of their film making. Schober highlights that film makers had made a strong enough impact as to threaten those in power.

The last point that Schober explores is cinema's transitioning into a contemporary context as a newer, imaginative form of direct action. The production of cheap or 'lo-fi' film making emerged, compromising aesthetics and rejecting the traditional, grandiose forms of cinema, taking the mystery or the prestige out of cinema making and instead producing satirical inexpensive and provocative films.

This book raises some very interesting conversations for activists about how we mobilise in order to communicate and how we stage visual forms of protests. It displays the power and potential of the creative medium. A critique of this is how cinema making is represented here as an entirely urban phenomenon. The impact of cinema on rural spaces is non-existent. All movement seems to have occurred solely within the urban sphere. The interviews cover only the potential to create great films in a new, urban environment. Interviews appear to credit leaving behind a rural landscape with experiencing a rebirth and an opportunity to experience true creativity. The whole process is discussed on an international scale, with cinema's impact on city dwellers alone. Schober discusses the idea of the 'Urban Stage' (p. 58). This isolates the urban sphere and raises the question of the rural/urban divide and the idea that cinema making exists in the city purely because of its capacity to be commodified.

Another issue worth noting is the gender divide that Schober neglects to discuss in great detail. She quotes film maker Birgit Hein "Interviews with activists indicate how it was an enormous problem to be acknowledged as a woman" (p. 74). Despite this acknowledgement, Schober makes no real attempt to rectify the issue by ensuring a stronger female voice throughout. Relying instead on a predominately male narrative, she seems to concede to the fact that there was a severe absence of a female presence. She writes that by the 1970's this was beginning to change but that most female contributions or acknowledgements seemed to be rather tokenistic and it seems to play out the same way in this book.

Schober has carried out a tremendous amount of work, with over thirty interviews the book has displayed a sense of being packed very tightly with an abundance of ideas and stories. Despite this, Schober sheds light on how cinema making created film makers, activists. Not just through the creation of the films themselves but the human experience of mobilising in opposition to a repressive regime. What is most striking about Schober's portrayal of the cinema makers is the immense capacity of the individual to become active in their own environment. We see how a wealth of work can be made out of human reaction and interaction.

### **About the review author**

**Niamh Mongey** graduated from Dublin City University with a B.A. in Journalism in 2010 and went on to complete the M.A. in Community Education, Equality and Social Activism in the National University of Ireland, Maynooth in

2014. She has a special interest in alternative media as a mode of communication. She can be contacted at niamh.mongey2 AT gmail.com

**Donatella Della Porta and Alice Mattoni, eds. (2014).**  
***Spreading Protest: Social Movements in Times of Crisis.***  
**Colchester: ECPR Press (305 pp., 65£ hardback)**

**Marina Sitrin and Dario Azzellini (2014).** ***They Can't Represent Us! Reinventing Democracy From Greece to Occupy.*** London & New York: Verso (250 pp., £9.99 paperback)

Reviewed by **Nils C. Kumkar**

The eruption of mass protests after the so called 'Arab Spring' came as a surprise for many. While some had wondered why the Great Recession that shook most of the worlds' largest economies did not lead to mass-protests in the years before, it now all went really fast: The 'Arab Spring' was followed by mass protests in Greece and Spain, and in September 17<sup>th</sup> 2011 Zuccotti Park in New York City was occupied by a group that was later commonly referred to as "Occupy Wall Street" (OWS). On October 15<sup>th</sup> 2011, discontent articulated itself in mass demonstrations and occupied public spaces all throughout the US and Europe but also in many other countries. This culmination of protest with partially overlapping agendas and/or repertoires was, by participants and onlookers alike, perceived as one wave sweeping the globe.

However, this wave is neither easily captured empirically nor theoretically. The first publications on the movements usually remained at the level of rather abstract and general commentary, such as Castell's *Networks of Outrage and Hope* (2012), Harvey's *Rebel Cities* (2012) or Mason's *Why It's (still) Kicking off Everywhere* (2013). Some activists and journalists published rather ideographic but detailed descriptions of their own experiences in the respective movement (e.g., Blumenkranz et al. 2011, Schneider 2013). An early attempt to further contextualize and theorize the experiences made in one mobilization, OWS, was published by David Graeber (2012), but it empirically barely leaves the realm of the anecdotal. Empirically saturated case studies like Milkman et al.'s 'Changing the Subject' on OWS (2013) and special issues in sociological journals (e.g., Benski et al. 2013) can be seen as a starting point in the still only fragmentary process of reconstructing and defining what this culmination of protests actually was and is about. Both books that are reviewed here can be seen as engaging in this debate, even though from very different perspectives that one could heuristically define as the social movement studies' and the activist-scholars' perspective. Both are empirically rich comparisons of movements from a broad geographical range and will be of great value for everyone interested in understanding the commonalities of these movements. Despite their different approaches, however, the reader of both books is left with a number of

desiderata and potential misconceptions that future debates on the reasons for, the stakes in, and the overall scope of this wave of protests should address.

*Spreading Protest – Social Movements in Times of Crisis (SP)* is a collected volume mainly of papers presented at a workshop on ‘The Transnational Dimension of Protest’ at the ECPR-Conference in Bordeaux 2012. The geographical and temporal scopes of the protests discussed reach from the ‘green revolution’ in Iran 2009 to OWS in 2011 and the Gezi Park protests in Turkey in 2013.

The majority of chapters analyze the events through the lens of protest-diffusion – in the words of the editors, they ask “what” spread, “how”, and “why”. Some follow a rather classical social movement studies approach in checking for different concepts of protest diffusion and adaption and argue for a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. Flesher Fominaya and Montaña Jimenéz’ chapter on the spread of the repertoire of the “Escrache” might serve as an example illustrating this: originally the practice of publicly shaming the perpetrators of Argentina’s “Dirty War” in front of their own homes, Spanish activists of the PAH (“Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca”, Platform for People Affected by Mortgages) took it up to put pressure on politicians of the governing party that voted against a law proposed by the PAH. Another example is della Porta’s chapter on cross-time adaption of organizational repertoires between the Global Justice Movement (GJM) and the recent protests. Other authors experiment with innovative combinations of social movement studies and other disciplines. An example of this is Hyvönens’ chapter on the EU’s discursive processing of the ‘Arab Spring’, which he conceptualizes as transforming an eruptive event that was also related to policies of economic liberalization and austerity advocated by the EU into a normalized struggle for democracy that put it in one line with the ‘color revolutions’ of the early 2000’s.

All of the authors push the very specificities of the movements somewhat into the background. They also barely discuss the impact of the crisis, to which the title explicitly refers. It is briefly taken up in the introduction, when the editors state that the protests had spread with the “rhythms and twists of the crisis” (p. 9) and ask if they have to be understood as “a convergence of reactions to the global crisis” or “as a common struggle” (p. 4)? Unfortunately, these questions are not really taken up again. Accordingly, the conclusion by editors Mattoni and della Porta highlights the innovative impulses that the book gives to the discussion on concepts of diffusion in general (especially with regards to questions of failing diffusion, cross-time diffusion and the role of social media in protest-diffusion), rather than on any specificities of the spread of protests “in times of crisis”.

This abstraction from the specificities of the movements in the general framework of the book might be a result of the empirical diversity of the individual contributions. But it is without doubt typical for most of the current social movement studies, which often forgo a thorough analysis of general social developments and social strains in explaining the development of their social movements. Considering the limitations that edited volumes impose on the

editors this is understandable, but it is, nevertheless, regrettable. The isolation of the protests as case studies for social movement studies from their specific socio-political background changes the very nature of the thus constructed object (Bourdieu 1991, 33–68), in that it de-couples the protests from the very concrete social developments of the crisis that they responded to. This thwarts the interest in the (relative) importance of this very context the editors stated in the introduction.

In the conclusion, the editors insist that the advantage of this book as compared to other comparative volumes on diffusion is its reliance on a “quite homogenous set of case studies” (p. 277), but how this homogeneity is conceptualized is not completely clear. In the introduction, the editors seem to define this homogeneity through the movements’ supposedly shared trait of the “elaboration of radical imaginaries related to democracy (...) and experimentation with participatory democratic practices” (p. 10). At other points they seem to feel the necessity of broadening the scope through the use of the label “anti-austerity and pro-democracy protests” (p. 277). In other words, the question, if the movements are “a common struggle” or ‘merely’ a “convergence of reactions” to the crisis (p. 4), is still open for debate – one could even ask if some of the movements discussed are not even reactions to the same crisis but rather accidentally fell into the same sequence of time, as, for example, the “green Revolution” in Iran, but also the Gezi Park protests, as Atak seems to suggest in his chapter.

Without question, the high number of empirically grounded case studies that the book presents is unprecedented amongst other books that also attempt to cover the same wave of protests. The book will, therefore, be of interest not only for social movement studies scholars working on protest-diffusion, but for all those that aim for a clearer understanding of the wave of protests.

*They Can't Represent Us! Reinventing Democracy from Greece to Occupy (TCRU)* is a book by two activist-scholars, Marina Sitrin and Dario Azzelini, who have been active in the GJM, Leftist movements in Argentina and Venezuela, and OWS. Sitrin has been involved in OWS from the very beginning. Her book, *Horizontalism. Voices of Popular Power in Argentina* (2006) and articles in several movement-publications (e.g., Sitrin 2012, Sitrin and Azzelini 2012) have contributed to the popularization of the term ‘Horizontalism’ (or “Horizontality”), originally emerging from Latin American movements, for designating the non-hierarchical social relations that OWS tried to develop (for the historical and political lineage of this praxis in US-American left, see Taylor (2013)). This term gained such prominence that some researchers even started to use the term to define the whole wave of protests after 2011 (for example Jeff Goodwin - *SP*, back matter). Their book is a hybrid between manifesto for-, glossary on- and panorama of the movements they are writing about.

A short foreword by David Harvey connects the book’s arguments with the ones he put forward in *Rebel Cities* (2012) – a fact that shows how the recent developments have brought activist scholars from a rather classical Marxist perspective closer to those from the anarchist Left. Following this, in the

introduction, the authors explain their interpretation of the crisis and the movements. For them, the economic crisis after 2007 was just the triggering event that brought societies and movements all over the world to break with their accustomed way of doing things. In their eyes, the moment of crisis foremost signifies the recognition that representative democracy in fact is not democratic at all. They claim that the very core of the movements discussed is their new ways of practicing democracy as a break with the past.

The book is separated into three sections. It opens with a glossary which is very similar to Sitrin and Azzellini's earlier project *Occupy Language* (2012). Through anecdotes and comparisons they outline the meaning and importance of concepts such as 'Rupture', 'Horizontalism', 'Assembly', 'Protagonism' and the 'Politics of Walking' not so much for a theory of the movements but rather for the movements themselves. The second part discusses in depth the historical and theoretical context through which the new democratic movements and their break with the past should be understood. It emphasizes the gap or even antagonism between the concept of 'direct democracy' and classical liberal understandings of representative democracy, the latter of which, in their eyes, was an undemocratic endeavor from the outset. Instead the authors understand the practices of democracy employed in the movements as connected to the consensus-based decision making in the Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee (SNCC) and ancient Greece.

The third and largest part of the book is dedicated to the specific movements in Greece, Spain, the US, Argentina and Venezuela. These chapters open with a short overview of the national economic and political development in the lead-up to the protests and a timeline of the movements' development and goals. The chapters then continue with "Voices", thematically ordered, uncommented sequences of interviews the authors have conducted with activists in the respective movements.

The topics differ slightly between the national cases depending on their relevance for the respective movement (the question of fighting fascist movements, for example, is only discussed in the Greek case) but most of them are common across the cases: even the form in which, for example, the experience of crisis, new forms of political deliberation and decision-making or experimenting with different forms of social reproduction are discussed is surprisingly similar in many regards. This supports the claim made by Sitrin and Azzellini that these movements do indeed have enough in common to be summed up under a common label. Even if from a clearly interested and involved standpoint they thereby answer the question left open by *SP*, if the movements are to be seen as one common struggle or as a reaction to a shared experience of crisis, in a double way: yes, the interviewees experience their struggles as reactions to a common crisis of the legitimacy of representative models of democracy and of escalating inequalities, and yes, they express themselves in forms that, to the authors, indicate that they are indeed part of a common 'social movement'. Not so much in the (positivist) sense that they are held together by identifiable "dense informal networks" or "clearly identified

opponents” (Della Porta and Diani 2006, 20), but in the sense that they in tendency represent a common shift towards new forms of living together. Probably due to the book’s design as taking part in a common dialogue ‘in’ rather than ‘about’ the movements, *TCRU* does not close with remarks by the authors but ends rather abruptly after the last interview-sequence with a worker-activist from Venezuela summing up how the workers imagine the way to a socialist self-management of their factories. This might be a fitting document of the “politics of walking” as an open process, but leaves the reader with slight disappointment. The big historical questions, which were posed in both Harvey’s foreword and the authors’ introduction, seem to call for a deepening of strategic debates, which I am sure the authors can contribute to given their publication record. And even if one would agree with the skepticism towards academic expertise that was articulated in large parts of the movements discussed, the book would have benefitted from explicating some of the authors expertise. As it is, they restrict their contribution mainly to facilitating a dialogue among movements. I at least would also have liked to learn what the authors might find critical about the movements, such as an assessment of where wrong decisions might have been made or the right ones avoided. Be that as it may, the short introductions into the movements’ history and the rich material of the activists’ accounts on different topics make *TCRU* an interesting read for all those seeking an overview of the movements’ cultures and developments. The thoughtful compilation of interviews and texts into an eye-levelled discussion amongst each other is itself a fascinating documentation and example of the movement culture discussed and commented on. As such, it is also a highly recommended read for those who are, as activists, researchers, or both, already critically engaged with them.

Drawing a genealogical line in a way that includes the development of the Venezuelan and Argentinian movements of the last 20 years into the conception of the latest protest wave also sheds light on connections of diffusion that are barely discussed in the research on this wave of protests, including *SP*, with the exception of the mentioned chapter by Flesher Fominaya and Montaña Jimenéz.

This points towards criticism that could be raised towards both books: the lack of sustained engagement with the ‘Arab Spring’ movements in the literature on this wave of protests. Although these movements are explicitly counted amongst the same ‘wave’ as the ‘Occupy’ movements of the Global North in both books, they are completely absent from the case studies in *TCRU*. They do appear in *SP*, but only appear in a passivized manner in *SP* – the main focus of Hyvönen is not the ‘Arab Spring’ but how the EU institutions discursively processed it. This might obscure conceptual weaknesses that, at least potentially, challenge the neat construction of a global “pro-democracy” movement: some commentators highlighted the fact that the word “Democracy” was absent from the slogans on Tahrir Square (e.g., Badiou 2012, 55) and also from the circulating list of demands (NN 2010). Moreover, there existed no central “General Assembly” or “Assamblea” as a decision making body of the protestors. Of course, the vocabulary and repertoire could still be conceptualized as being democratic in

praxis and aim. However, this would require a conceptualization of what designates this as “democratic” that explicitly abstracts from the movements’ own language. And this problem is not limited to the Egyptian case: the same might be said about Sitrin and Azzellini’s observation that, for example, many Greek activists hesitated to use the term “Democracy” in an affirmative sense (*TCRU*, 103) – maybe it being discredited through liberal democracy is not a sufficient explanation, and the clear emphasis on democracy as the defining feature of form and content is rather the result of the authors’ rootedness in the Hispanophone and Anglo-Saxon branches of the movement discourse (the same could be applied, *mutadis mutandis*, to della Porta’s and Mattoni’s conception of the “anti-austerity and pro-democracy movements”).

It could be argued that the two books avoid the thorny issue of what constitutes the unity of the movements they discuss through the way they position themselves vis-à-vis the movements. By taking the objectivist stance towards the movements and by abstracting from their concrete social contexts, *SP* does not really render visible the problematic, but implicitly presupposes the common sense notion that all these movements are connected. *TCRU* on the other hand, in its reluctance to speak about the movements as an object of inquiry, presupposes the unity of the movements by identifying with them. In that sense, *SP* suffers from a lack of reflexivity with regards to the objectivation of the movements, while *TCRU* would have profited from a bolder objectivation of the common threads documented in the multiplicity of subjective perspectives.

Another criticism is more sociological in nature. When the economic and social context of the movements is discussed, it is mostly by referring to very general macro-economic indicators – but crises do not affect the various parts of societies equally and protests are not (usually) carried out by “the people”, but by specific demographics. Della Porta’s and Mattoni claim that “the Global Justice Movement represented a warning that the worst was still to come for vulnerable social groups (...) while the present wave of protest was sustained by citizens who experienced the worst becoming reality” (p. 5). As convincing as this claim is rhetorically, it does not stand the test empirically, at least not regarding the US case: for example, a study of the geographic patterns of Occupy events in California even found these events to be negatively correlated with the rate of unemployment in the respective areas (Curran et al. 2013), and the study by Milkman et al. (2013) showed that the participants in OWS actually fared better than NYC’s population on average with regards to unemployment and available income. It therefore seems plausible to assume that indicators such as overall poverty or unemployment rates are not fine-grained enough to allow for understanding the experiences and perspectives of the social groups shaping the protests.

Maybe homologies in these experiences can provide a better understanding of the conditions of the possibility of the “thin” but also incredibly fast diffusion of repertoires between heterogeneous contexts that is only very insufficiently explained by referring to “the social media” as “actors in diffusion processes”

(*SP*, 282) as Sitrin and Azzellini rightfully note (*TCRU*, 6f). It might also shed some light on the question of how to explain the parallel rise of right-wing and openly fascist movements in many of the respective societies, a question that *SP* does not bring up, and *TCRU* only very lightly touches upon. But these criticisms do not diminish the value of these books for the still ongoing and fascinating debate on the nature and future of these movements but might rather be understood as desiderata for future research for social movement scholars as well as activist-scholars.

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### **About the review author**

Nils C. Kumkar studied sociology and economics at the Georg-August University in Göttingen and at the University of California, Los Angeles. Since 2012 he has been a PhD candidate and junior-researcher in the DFG graduate program "Critical Junctures of Globalization" at the University of Leipzig. His research interests are, amongst other things, the relationship of crisis and critique, the sociology of inequalities and structural-hermeneutic methods in social research. He can be contacted at: Nc.Kumkar AT uni-leipzig.de