

## REVIEW ESSAY

# Atlas Stirs: The Promises and Complexities of a Global History of Social Movements

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The History of Social Movements in Global Perspective. A Survey. Ed. by Stefan Berger and Holger Nehring. [Palgrave Studies in the History of Social Movements.] Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2017. xvii, 720 pp. \$179.00. (Paper \$44.99.)

This is a substantial volume, and with equally substantial ambitions. Its 700 pages of text physically announce its efforts at intellectual heft. The book is divided into sections on theory and method (three chapters), an overview of most continents (eight chapters), and one offering transhistorical perspectives on specific movements (eleven chapters). Each chapter has a copious end section on further readings. The editors do not attempt to offer a comprehensive panorama of territories and movements, but they do, nonetheless, provide a very wide range of offerings. Readers will likely welcome two chapters on Africa (one general and one dedicated to North Africa and the Middle East) as well as topical chapters, such as those on both fascist and post-fascist right-wing movements and terrorism, which often receive less scrutiny. There are no comprehensive chapters on regions in Asia (though there are chapters on India and Korea) and no separate essays on topics such as LGBTQ or indigenous movements (though these topics are embedded in other chapters). As the editors have learned, organizing globally for a global survey has unfortunate constraints.

Nonetheless, the geographical and issue territory covered is vast. There has been no previous compendium on social movements that does this work. At the same time, this is not an encyclopedic volume, and I mean that in a positive sense. There is an overarching conceptual purpose, with a strong emphasis on comparative understanding of movements, the conceptual frameworks we use to analyze them, and a promotion of

dialogue between history and the social sciences. A productive way of approaching this collection is as an incitement to a capacious dialogue both to move beyond what has been a stable roster of questions and perspectives in the study of social movements and to focus on neglected regions. The volume succeeds as both a productive unsettling of current social movement scholarship and as a basis for expanding to new areas.

#### SOME HIGHLIGHTS IN THE VOLUME

Berger and Nehring set out their aims early on in the introduction. Broadly, they seek to provide three principal contributions: to increase dialogue between history and the social sciences, to offer conceptualizations of social movements from a global perspective, and perhaps most generally to contribute empirically to global history. Significantly, they do not seek to provide a singular framework to this global history, but instead “wish to highlight the ‘multiplicity of the world’s past’” to gain a perspective on the shifting and complex forces, spaces, and temporalities in the unfolding dynamics between power and its discontents (pp. 4–5). Berger and Nehring are keen to explore the numerous paths along which power has been contested, moving beyond, but by no means eclipsing, the state-centric focus of much of the social movements scholarship. Industrialization and democratization still figure significantly in the histories of movements in the West, but imperialism and postcolonial trajectories are elevated to much greater prominence. The editors identify six distinct diachronic waves of contention from the mid-eighteenth century onward, encompassing the rise of the Western bourgeoisie, colonialism and imperialism, and industrial capitalist expansion. They argue that international connections are vital in understanding all of them. Overall, their global emphasis is exploratory rather than programmatic; theirs is an agenda of investigating plural histories of change entangled in complex international ways.

The editors are, of course, dependent on their long list of contributors to carry the torch, and inevitably some hew more closely to the agenda than others. I cannot review all twenty-three chapters in the collection, but let me note a few highlights in each of the sections. The first, on conceptualizations, offers essays by Rochona Majumdar on subaltern studies and social movements, and Seonjoo Park on transpacific feminism. In the former, Majumdar offers a critical overview of what is now a canonical literature, with an emphasis of how subaltern studies complicate categorical distinctions concerning popular contention. As she observes, “the domain of subaltern politics could not be completely subsumed into erstwhile histories of nationalism or colonialism. Nor do they directly fit conceptions of civil society [...]” (p. 66). Rather, this corpus focuses on the developing agency of “mass political subjects”, anchored in a contentious community

consciousness, who incorporate the “archaic” and the “modern” in popular struggles. Majumdar explores how this research cuts transversally through standard categories of social movement research, such as the political and social.

In the latter, Park proffers a radical destabilization of the dominant vision of “global feminism”. This feminism has operated in concert with biopolitical regimes of truth to construct “woman” as a victimized and helpless body subject to state discipline in the name of equality. Park constructs a historicized “transpacific feminism” both to surmount a liberal-pluralist politics based in a universal telos and to undermine the Western reading of Asia (itself a Euro-American invention) as the feminine. Through these shifts, an alternative vision of women’s struggles in the Pacific rim is reimagined through transnational networks based in migration, ethnic diasporas, and dynamic cross-cultural interactions.

In the section on continental histories, highlights include Andreas Eckert’s short chapter on Africa and Jung Han Kim’s and Jeong-Mi Park’s essay on postcolonial Korea. Eckert observes that there is a paucity of research on postcolonial social movements, and the chapter is an open invitation for many studies on the “African” characteristics of social movements. A global perspective on movements necessitates this work. This incitement comes with cautionary observations. The author warns against an unreflective application of the idea of civil society onto African cases. Eckert suggests that: “Many scholars of Africa avoid a straightforward definition of social movements and opt instead for a list of different organizations and activities” (p. 217). Here is a terrain on which to rethink dominant perspectives on contention; how the hybridity of Western domination and indigenous politics creates unique forms of activism.

Kim and Park offer a provocative upending on standard working assumptions in social movement theories (particularly resource mobilization and political process). They argue that the history of Korean postcolonial movements demonstrates how mass spontaneous insurrections led to the formation of collective identities and, in turn, to organized social movements. Tracing movements from the post-World War II period, they highlight how mobilizations were shaped by the political contexts of authoritarian rule, emphasizing modernization and ethno-nationalism, and the Cold War context of the peninsula. One focus of their argument concerns subjectivization. In its attempts to mobilize the nation and produce subjective unity, the government created a dialectical interplay with forces from below. The heavy hand of limited democratization from above stimulated its counterpart from below. At various times since the 1970s, intellectuals, religious leaders, and students endeavored to identify the *minjung*, a signifier through which they sought to unify the dominated and dispossessed as an organic neglected people. Until 1991, movements alternated between attempts at *minjung* mobilization, anti-capitalist radicalism,

unionization, and student-labor alliances, and were ultimately replaced with the rise of the “civil movement” of “ordinary citizens”. Kim and Park argue that a New Left, focused on cultural struggles, discursive constructions of subjectivity, and micropower in everyday life, has assumed increasing importance in the “post-democratic era” as the Old Left was eclipsed. For the authors, the feminist movement is signal in this regard.

Finally, the third section on specific movements in transhistorical perspective includes Alexandra Przyrembel’s essay on moral movements in the modern age, Stefan Berger’s chapter on transnational perspectives on labor movements, and Nora Lafi’s contribution on the Arab Spring. Przyrembel constructs a category of Western bourgeois movements, starting in the nineteenth century, which have lasting narratives and practices of “humanitarianism”. These movements – including anti-slavery, working-class improvement, and victims of war – shared a “civilizing” mission often pursued through mass communications and transnational networks. She concentrates on discursive constructions of the “‘innocent’ object of intervention”, the sense of urgency they created, and the “cult of action” they inspired (p. 378). Women figured prominently as a moral force, allowing entry into a new public space. Przyrembel’s chapter represents a burgeoning interest among historical social scientists in how transnational networks spread the shared understandings of moral purpose, leading to today’s institutionalized Western-dominated humanitarian infrastructure.<sup>1</sup>

Berger reviews the rise of labor movements in the West, but this chapter’s particular contribution is on such movements around the rest of the globe. He emphasizes that scholars need to shift their sites from industrial wage labor central to the Western narrative and to engage with subaltern workers such as landless laborers: “The Western concept of the labor movement failed to grasp that labor regimes in the non-Western world often followed different logics than the logic of wage-earning industrial labor in the West and hence produced different labor movements” (p. 398).<sup>2</sup> Above the

1. See, for example, Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY, 1998), and *idem*, “Historical Precursors to Modern Transnational Social Movements and Networks”, in John A. Guidry, Michael D. Kennedy, and Mayer Zald (eds), *Globalizations and Social Movements: Culture, Power, and the Transnational Public Sphere* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2000), pp. 35–53; Peter Stamatov, “Activist Religion, Empire, and the Emergence of Modern Long-Distance Advocacy Networks”, *American Sociological Review*, 75:4 (2010), pp. 607–628; *idem*, *The Origins of Global Humanitarianism: Religion, Empires, and Advocacy* (Cambridge, 2013); and Cecelia Walsh-Russo, “‘The World is My Country and My Countrymen Are All Mankind’: Transnational Diffusion of Anglo-American Abolitionism, 1824–1839” (Ph.D., Columbia University, 2008).

2. For discussions of unfree labor regimes in the Global South, see Tom Brass, *Towards a Comparative Political Economy of Unfree Labour* (London, 1999); *idem*, *Labor Regime Change in the Twenty-First Century: Unfreedom, Capitalism and Primitive Accumulation* (Leiden, 2011); and Tom Brass and Marcel van der Linden (eds), *Free and Unfree Labour: The Debate Continues*

contextual, Berger layers on the increasingly transnational nature of labor activist networks because of the increasing connectedness of global capitalism. He leaves readers with questions on how to identify these North–South connections in history and, just as importantly, how these revisions shape our understanding of the current and future constituency of labor movements.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, Lafi seeks to dispel Western misperceptions of the Arab Spring movements. Key here is to excavate the neglected historical roots of civic mobilizations in their cultural contexts and how they were entangled with geopolitics: “There is no common explanation for the unrests [...]; any attempt to reduce interpretations of events to one simple narrative would be in vain” (p. 680). In proffering explanations, Lafi also interrogates the utility of the Western concept of social movement in these contexts. She quickly dispenses with the clichéd argument that the unrest had its roots in Western thought and practice (including ICT). Lafi carefully collates the historical and immediate factors and networks involved in each country. This panoramic assessment includes complicating the narrative of a clear causal line from social movements to regime change or state transformation. A conjuncture of contextual factors produced distinct outcomes in each case, though Lafi suggests that they share the birthing of new understandings of civic liberty and engagement. She also urges further scholarship to understand why other Arab states with robust social movements did not experience uprisings.

#### HOW WE CONCEPTUALIZE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

As I hope these highlights indicate, two key elements of the volume are its illumination of possible Western biases in much writing on social movements and alternative contextualized histories of movements. The analytic frameworks generally deployed in the US and Europe derive from an abductive engagement with movements in these states. The master narrative developed from this research is of social movements’ emergence and persistence as a result of a path to modernity centered on the rise of the nation state and democratization and a shared trajectory of

(Bern, 1997). For the impact and legacy of British master and servant law on coerced contractual labor, see Douglas Hay and Paul Craven (eds), *Masters, Servants, and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562–1955* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004). For a comparative perspective on contemporary informal sectors and worker mobilizations, see Adrienne E. Eaton, Susan J. Schurman, and Martha A. Chen (eds), *Informal Workers and Collective Action: A Global Perspective* (Ithaca, NY, 2017).

3. In their signal history of maritime workers and the dispossessed of the Atlantic, Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker demonstrate how the first such transnational labor and political radicalism traveled with seafarers: *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, MA, 2000).

industrialization.<sup>4</sup> As the editors rightly argue in their introduction, not all social movements fit neatly into this overarching scheme. Indeed, many contributors astutely flag this master narrative as detrimental to research in other regions.

A complementary point raised by the editors as well as many contributors is that many of the differences in the regional histories of social movements in the volume are steeped in the legacy of empire. This spotlights fertile ground for a series of comparative analyses: comparative across imperial powers and within their colonial possessions. The varied regional histories of social movements suggest a research agenda through which we can understand how social movement repertoires were born of the interaction between indigenous social and political organization and colonial domination. This should include what Julian Go terms “postcolonial relationalism”, i.e. an analysis of the recursive and contrapuntal influences between the global North and South.<sup>5</sup>

The volume also (perhaps inadvertently) affirms a sense that I have long held, namely that it is difficult to produce a definition of social movements that fits all coordinated, sustained efforts for (or against) change partly based in non-institutionalized collective action. In his chapter on 1968, Horn observes that “The concept of ‘social movement’ is notoriously difficult to define” (p. 515). Perhaps it is best considered as forms and processes of collective action that have valance with most of a set of characteristics discussed by scholars, but do not encompass them all. Let me turn to Dieter Rucht’s theory chapter to explain, and then to other chapters to advance this proposition. Rucht is a leading figure in the study of social movements, and what he says has gravitas. However, I think his attempt is representative of the shortcomings of many others. He defines a social movement as “a network of individuals, groups and organizations that, based on a sense of collective identity, seek to bring about social change (or resist social change) primarily by means of public protest” (p. 45). Earlier in his chapter, Rucht adds that this change is “fundamental”, and that “an attempt to change society almost

4. For classics see, for example, Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics* (Cambridge, 1994); Charles Tilly, *Popular Contention in Great Britain, 1758–1834* (Cambridge, MA, 1995).

5. Julian Go, *Postcolonial Thought and Social Theory* (Oxford, 2016). A similar point is made by Janet M. Conway, “Modernity and the Study of Social Movements: Do We Need a Paradigm Shift?”, in Jackie Smith *et al.* (eds), *Social Movements and World-System Transformation* (New York, 2017), p. 30. For an example, see Sean Chabot and Jan Willem Duyvendak, “Globalization and Transnational Diffusion between Social Movements: Reconceptualizing the Dissemination of the Gandhian Repertoire and the ‘Coming Out’ Routine”, *Theory and Society*, 31:6 (2002), pp. 697–740; and Sean Chabot, “Framing, Transnational Diffusion, and African-American Intellectuals in the Land of Gandhi”, *International Review of Social History*, 49 (2004), SI 12, pp. 19–40.

inevitably requires engagement in the political sphere and confronting political actors” (p. 43).<sup>6</sup>

We need to question whether social movements necessarily orbit institutional politics and are primarily based in public protest. On the first let me reference the work of Michael Young on the origins of American social movements. Young claims to find their origins in the evangelical revivals focused on temperance and abolition. As he argues, “the driving force behind these movements was the coming together of religious schemas that alloyed self-scrutiny to national piety”.<sup>7</sup> In Young’s telling, social movements were born in the revivalist meetings that were at the heart of the Second Great Awakening. This roiling revivification of Protestantism, which stretched from New England, across Northern New York, and into father regions, was based on the identification and expiation of sin. Among those highlighted by preachers were drink and slavery. The consequential collective action at these revivals was confession. As Young argues, “The combination of cultural schemas – public confession and special sins – generated a highly transposable and modular form of collective action. [...] The combination of schemas generated special purposes that united and focused this form of collective action across the length of the nation against specific social problems”.<sup>8</sup> Part of Young’s point is that the origin of these movements was not primarily political. I would add (in the spirit of this collection) that this modular form of collective action, the mass confessional, at the very least complicates the term “public protest”.

Let me add another example, namely alternative communities. Certainly in the nineteenth century, in the UK and US such communities, both religious and secular, Owenite, or with some other cooperative framework, were important sustained collective efforts at making some “fundamental” social change.<sup>9</sup> And such alternative communities were not just a practice

6. He further separates “comprehensive social movements from political, religious and cultural movements that predominantly act in a particular realm or subsystem of society”. Dieter Rucht, “Studying Social Movements: Some Conceptual Challenges”, p. 43. I think we walk on uncertain ground when we try to demarcate some movements as “comprehensive”. It implies sweeping social transformation across groups and places that is generally associated with revolutions. Indeed, the dividing line between the two is often drawn in just these terms. Rucht’s definition comports with those that are widely similar in the contentious politics and political process perspectives on social movements. For example, Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow define social movements as “a sustained campaign of claim making, using repeated performances that advertise the claim, based on organizations, networks, traditions and solidarities that sustain these activities”. Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, *Contentious Politics* (Boulder, CO, 2007), p. 8.

7. Michael Young, *Bearing Witness against Sin: The Evangelical Birth of the American Social Movement* (Chicago, IL, 2006), p. 28.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 203.

9. Andrej Grubačić and Denis O’Hearn, *Living at the Edges of Capitalism: Adventures in Exile and Mutual Aid* (Oakland, CA, 2016); Ellen Furlough and Carl Strikwerda (eds), *Consumers against Capitalism? Consumer Cooperation in Europe, North America, and Japan, 1840–1990*

of nineteenth-century bygone utopians. This form of action is also noted by Uekötter in his chapter on environmentalism. More generally, other authors in this volume point to quite heterogeneous forms of collective action as fitting within the analysis of social movements. As Lenz argues in her survey of women's movements, "public protest should not be considered as a main criterion for the existence or vitality of a social movement, as it usually has to rely on preceding mobilization and on networks which first have to be created by the movement" (p. 461). It is best, then, to offer a suite of characteristics, not all of which will be applicable in any one case, by which most sustained collective action can be identified as a social movement.

#### POSING FURTHER QUESTIONS: THE PLACE OF RELIGION AND THE MEANING OF "GLOBAL"

Let me finish with a couple of points by way of more specific critique. First, following on from the above, it is a bit of a disappointment that this volume does not address religious movements and the influence of religion in movements more directly.<sup>10</sup> Religious movements and motives provide an opportunity to consider the deontological bases of collective action.<sup>11</sup>

(Lanham, MD, 1999); J.F.C. Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America: The Quest for the New Moral World* (New York, 1969); Rosabeth M. Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 1972). As Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani observe: "Analysts have become similarly aware of the fact that collective action does not always imply the formulation of political demands (through confrontational as well as conventional repertoires). It may also take the form of the direct production of collective goods, through a broad range of actions that stretch from communitarian enactment of alternative lifestyles to various forms of mutual help and service delivery": "Introduction: The Field of Social Movement Studies", in Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements* (Oxford, 2015), p. 3.

10. The editors attempted to offer a chapter on religious movements but were unable to do so.

11. For a discussion see Christian Smith, *Resisting Reagan: The US Central American Peace Movement* (Chicago, IL, 1996), pp. 193–198. See also *idem*, *Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social Movement Activism* (New York, 1996); Rogers Brubaker, "Religious Dimensions of Political Conflict and Violence", *Sociological Theory*, 33:1 (2015), pp. 1–19; Sharon Erickson Nepstad, *Religion and War Resistance in the Plowshares Movement* (Cambridge, 2008); Stamatov, *The Origins of Global Humanitarianism*; Grace Yukich, *One Family Under God: Immigration Politics and Progressive Religion in America* (Oxford, 2013); and Rhys H. Williams, "From the 'Beloved Community' to 'Family Values': Religious Language, Symbolic Repertoires, and Democratic Culture", in David S. Meyer, Nancy Whittier and Belinda Robnett (eds), *Social Movements: Identity, Culture, and the State* (New York, 2002), pp. 247–265. With regard to the idea of withdrawal (mentioned above) as a social movement strategy, Lasse Lindekilde and Lene Kühle suggest that religious revivalist separatism "inherits important, indirect political challenges of established authorities through prefigurative organization and transformation. [...] Prefigurative movements can be powerful carriers of change and sites of mobilization, especially when they manage to fulfil central community needs internally and provide followers with identity, meaning, affective bonds, and a sense of being the 'chosen ones'". Lasse Lindekilde and



Shared moral visions inform the development of collective action identities and repertoires and the definitions of efficacy, injustice, purpose, and success, much as we saw above in Michael Young's research. Numerous chapters in this collection – including those by Majumdar, Przyrembel, and Lafi, as well as Chalcraft on the Middle East and North Africa, Elangovan on India, Nehring on peace movements, and Virchow on post-fascist right-wing movements – all speak to its saliency. The “imaginary futures” proffered by social movements often have their foundations in some moral logic.<sup>12</sup> As importantly, we need more comparative studies of religious movements in a literature that has been state-centric and concentrated on the secular.<sup>13</sup>

Second, my unease with the term “global” is piqued by this volume. My discomfort here stems partly from the multiple ways the word is used as a descriptor, and how multiple meanings of the term can combine without specific explication. If by “global” the authors in this collection mean “trans-”, “multi-”, or “international”, then the term accurately depicts the volume's contents. However, if by “global” they mean spatially interconnected and mutually constitutive in form and process, then I feel the need to pause. Social movements – even in the twenty-first century and in the virtual reality in which many of us spend far too much time – are rarely if ever global in this sense. Nor does the argument that movements are a response to globalization constitute any real causal analysis of contentious action.<sup>14</sup>

Lene Kühle, “Religious Revivalism and Social Movements”, in Della Porta and Diani, *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements*, pp. 179–180.

12. For Catholic examples, see Gene Burns, *The Frontiers of Catholicism: The Politics of Ideology in a Liberal World* (Berkeley, CA, 1992), and Joseph M. Palacios, *The Catholic Social Imagination: Activism and the Just Society in Mexico and the United States* (Chicago, IL, 2007). For Islam, see David Snow and Scott Byrd, “Ideology, Framing Processes, and Islamic Terrorist Movements”, *Mobilization*, 12:2 (2007), pp. 119–136, and Ziad Munson, “Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood”, *Sociological Quarterly*, 42:4 (2001), pp. 487–510.

13. Ron Aminzade and Elizabeth J. Perry suggest some blurring in the secular-religious boundary, but maintain that the latter is distinctive because of the “unusual institutional legitimacy of religious-based organizations, which creates distinctive threat and opportunity structures, and the ability of religious movements to appeal to an other-worldly, transcendental ontology, which has implications for commitment processes, challenges to authority and logics of action”. Ron Aminzade and Elizabeth J. Perry, “The Sacred, Religious, and Secular in Contentious Politics: Blurring Boundaries”, in Ronald Aminzade et al. (eds), *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 158. For a more definitive conceptualization of religion as cultural agency, see David Smilde, *Reason to Believe: Cultural Agency in Latin American Evangelism* (Berkeley, CA, 2007).

14. “[G]lobalization ‘explains’ so much and has been given so many meanings that it fails as an explanation for any single form of transnational contention.” Sidney Tarrow and Donatella della Porta “Conclusion: ‘Globalization’, Complex Internationalism, and Transnational Contention”,

One way to define global social movements (and one I believe used by some of the authors) is Cristina Flesher Fominaya's description:

movements that are heterogeneous, diverse and global in scope; that explicitly link their activism to a recognition of the interconnectedness of issues that are a result of globalization processes, and are therefore antisystemic, rather than single issue; and that self-identify as belonging to a global movement that is committed to collective action and protest ultimately to transform the whole world, rather than just parts of it.<sup>15</sup>

In this sense, discursive constructions and collective cognitions play a central role. Social movements are characterized as global because of shared cultural understandings of often heterogeneous campaigns and actors.

Alternatively, the designation *global* is deployed when social movements around the world are seen as homologous because of their systemic ties to the world capitalist system. These are defined as anti-systemic movements and part of a process of global social change which,

is seen as a function of the operation of capital on a global scale, which generates patterns that change in predictable ways over long periods of time [...]. Conflicts within states are thus understood in relation to this world-systemic context, in that they are not independent from the larger structures and competitive dynamics of globalized capitalism.<sup>16</sup>

In this instance, social movements are seen as connected through the deep structural conditions which give rise to them, and there is a systemic impetus for increasing integration.<sup>17</sup>

Both the cultural and deep structural can be useful dimensions for analyzing international contention, but they are not sufficient, for several reasons. As Thomas Olesen argues, "global" can errantly suggest the movements are unmoored from local and national contexts, and set as their target for redress a global political authority. Rather, "much of what passes as global civil society activities is in fact rooted in local and national

in Donatella della Porta and Sidney Tarrow (eds), *Transnational Protest and Global Activism* (Lanham, MD, 2005), p. 230.

15. Cristina Flesher Fominaya, *Social Movements and Globalization: How Protests, Occupations, and Uprisings are Changing the World* (Houndsmills, 2014), p. 41. Flesher Fominaya makes the argument that globalization is stimulating the increasing density of transnational networks, transcending national politics.

16. Jackie Smith and Dawn Wiest, *Social Movements in the World-System: The Politics of Crisis and Transformation* (New York, 2012), pp. 19–20. William G. Martin offers a similar position in "Conclusion: World Movement Waves and World Transformations", in William G. Martin (ed.), *Making Waves: Worldwide Social Movements, 1750–2005* (Boulder, CO, 2008), pp. 168–180.

17. "Regardless of whether they are antisystemic in their collective vision, it is clear that this population of organizations is expanding globally and converging into more coherent and integrated networks". Smith and Wiest, *Social Movements in the World-System*, p. 44.

contexts”.<sup>18</sup> States still remain the central incubators and targets for what are identified as social movements.<sup>19</sup> Britta Baumgarten (who has a chapter on the global justice movement in the reviewed volume) offers five reasons. National political structures remain the principal political spheres within which mobilization occurs and the state is still the principal target of action.<sup>20</sup> In addition, mobilizations still rely on country-specific media systems, cultural models of politics and contention are still heavily intertwined with national civil societies, the state still retains substantial impact on collective identities, and there is a legacy of past contention that shapes opportunity structures within the nation state. In addition, we might add that states clearly remain the principal forces of social control and repression.<sup>21</sup>

Instead, I think we are better served if we concentrate on the specific processes by which place-bound collective actors structure relations and networks to shift the scale of their efforts. As Horn argues in his contribution to this volume: “What characterizes transnational movements of change is a rare and virtuous creative confluence of an intense mobilization cycle of more than one social movement operating continuously and

18. Thomas Olesen, “Transnational Publics: New Spaces of Social Movement Activism and the Problem of Global Long-Sightedness”, *Current Sociology*, 53:3 (2005), p. 442. Amrita Basu also clearly differentiates between women’s movements and the transnational linkages between them. She maintains that the former are primarily located within civil societies and predominantly direct their challenges toward states. Amrita Basu, “Introduction”, in *idem* (ed.), *Women’s Movements in a Global Era: The Power of Local Feminisms* (Boulder, CO, 2010), pp. 1–28.

19. As Uekötter notes in his contribution on environmentalism: “Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as global environmentalism: we merely have a huge number of environmentalisms around the globe”. Frank Uekötter, “Myths, Big Myths and Global Environmentalism”, p. 442.

20. Britta Baumgarten, “Culture and Activism Across Borders”, in Britta Baumgarten, Priska Daphi, and Peter Ulrich (eds), *Conceptualizing Culture in Social Movement Research* (Houndmills, 2014), pp. 91–112. This is echoed by Donatella della Porta and Sidney Tarrow, who maintain that “recent forms of transnational contention are far from exclusively organized around transnational social movement organizations. Instead, they are rooted at the local and national level, turning simultaneously to various governmental levels”. See Donatella della Porta and Sidney Tarrow, “Transnational Processes and Social Activism: An Introduction”, in Della Porta and Tarrow, *Transnational Protest and Global Activism*, p. 11. Similarly, in his book on transnational unionism the sociologist Jamie McCallum notes that in transnational labor struggles “local context determines local strategy”. Jamie McCallum, *Global Unions, Local Power: The New Spirit of Transnational Labor Organizing* (Ithaca, NY, 2013), p. 2. Sarah Stoup makes a parallel argument for the rootedness of INGOs in the nation state. See her “National Origin and Transnational Activism”, in Thomas Olesen (ed.), *Power and Transnational Activism* (London, 2011), pp. 151–169. See also Thomas Olesen, “The Uses and Misuses of Globalization in the Study of Social Movements”, *Mobilization*, 4:1 (2005), pp. 49–63.

21. Donatella della Porta, Abby Peterson, and Herbert Reiter (eds), *The Policing of Transnational Protest* (Aldershot, 2006); Jennifer Earl, “Political Repression: Iron Fists, Velvet Gloves, and Diffuse Control”, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 37 (2011), pp. 261–284; Amory Starr, Luis Fernandez, and Christian Scholl, *Shutting Down the Streets: Political Violence and Social Control in the Global Era* (New York, 2011).

(at least temporarily) successfully at roughly the same time” (p. 536). Such an alternative focused on *transnational* activism is provided by Donatella della Porta, Sidney Tarrow, and their colleagues. Tarrow characterizes contemporary transnational activists as rooted cosmopolitans, “people and groups who are rooted in specific national contexts, but who engage in contentious political activities that involve them in transnational networks of contacts and conflicts”.<sup>22</sup> And Della Porta and Tarrow argue that such activists engage in multilevel networks they term “complex internationalism”:

[...] a triangular set of relationships among states, international institutions, and nonstate actors. We see this as an emerging opportunity structure in which multilevel opportunities appear for nonstate actors. And we see the latter embedded in domestic political contexts, multiple memberships, and flexible identities. Rather than citizens in a not-yet-visible “global civil society”, these “rooted cosmopolitans” are sustained by their domestic rooting, reaching out across borders to respond to threats using opportunities of complex internationalism.<sup>23</sup>

The larger points are that truly transnational mobilizing structures remain significantly underdeveloped, that such structures are ephemeral (and often deliberately so), that they are often dominated by activists in the global North who have far greater capacities and resources, and that they depend on a complex confluence of factors that provide opportunities for supranational diffusion.<sup>24</sup>

Even once transnational connections have been created, there persists considerable work to construct a recognizable and functional collective actor. Nicole Doerr’s research on political translation in social forums aptly illustrates this point.<sup>25</sup> She demonstrates that the production of a collective imaginary involves considerable effort by political translators who not only facilitate discursive and cultural interaction, but also create reflexivity on power differences among participants. Such social forums truly become “transnational” only with specific and concerted efforts to surmount the context of place that people carry with them. Similarly, our concern with the “global” should concentrate on attempts to envision and enact a

22. Sydney Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 29.

23. Della Porta and Tarrow, “Conclusion: ‘Globalization’, Complex Internationalism, and Transnational Contention”, p. 231.

24. In his ethnographic study of global justice campaigns in the 2000s, Jeffrey Juris emphasizes that affinity groups and activists in each campaign deliberately structured their efforts through temporary horizontal coalitions so as to prevent ossification into bureaucracy and hierarchy. See Jeffrey Juris, *Networking Futures: The Movements Against Corporate Globalization* (Durham, NC, 2008).

25. Nicole Doerr, “Deliberative Discussion, Language, and Efficiency in the World Social Forum Process”, *Mobilization*, 13:4 (2008), pp. 395–410; *idem*, “The Disciplining of Dissent and the Role of Empathetic Listeners in Deliberative Publics: A Ritual Perspective”, *Globalizations*, 8:4 (2011), pp. 519–534.

“global imaginary” in specific times and spaces and on how activists can create and produce networks and discourses by which this imaginary endures.

Finally, let me turn to the question of the permanency and trajectory of “global” movements. As Tarrow astutely observes, “transnational activism does not resemble a swelling tide of history but is more likely a series of waves that lap on an international beach, retreating repeatedly into domestic seas but leaving incremental changes on the shore”.<sup>26</sup> What some see as systemically determined might just be, in terms of political process theory, another cycle of protest bounded by historically contingent opportunities, affording temporary coalitions based on shifting identities, subject to a series of factors leading to decline. Indeed, a reading of Paolo Gerbaudo’s *The Mask and the Flag: Populism, Citizenism and Global Protest* offers suggestive support for this line of thinking. Gerbaudo centers his analysis on what he calls the “movements of squares”, “estranged stepchildren” of the global justice movements (GJMs), encompassing such mobilizations as the “occupy” campaigns and the Arab Spring. Through ethnographic case studies he finds a homologous collective consciousness he labels citizenism, “an emerging ideology of the indignant citizen, that pits self-organized citizenry against economic and political oligarchies and pursues the reclamation and expansion of citizenship, seen as the necessary foundation for a true democracy”.<sup>27</sup>

There are several critical points in Gerbaudo’s argument. First, the discourse and collective identities for these movements are produced through conceptions of popular sovereignty, radical democracy, and citizens’ rights. While all acknowledge transnational links and shared circumstances based in global capitalism, their grievances and proposed solutions are anchored in the nation state. “This return of the national [...] reflected the influence of left-wing populism, an ideological orientation that sees the nation as the necessary source of identity for the People, and so pursues a democratic and progressive patriotism, profoundly different from xenophobic nationalism”.<sup>28</sup> Second, and following on from the first point, the key targets of condemnation are national oligarchies. Third, while social media is widely deployed, much of this networking and communication is carried out through large corporate platforms (such as Facebook and Twitter) rather than the attempts by activists in the GJM to create alternative media.

For Gerbaudo these movements of squares seek advantage in national political opportunity structures and cast their struggles as attempts to radically reform the state, rather than the GJM vision of “society against

26. Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism*, p. 217.

27. Paolo Gerbaudo, *The Mask and the Flag: Populism, Citizenism and Global Protest* (Oxford, 2017), p. 3.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

the state”.<sup>29</sup> What he may have captured in this analysis is the most recent cycle of protest, to be eclipsed by another modular form. However, importantly, he carefully demonstrates how that which was deemed “global” only a few years earlier is now socially cognized and practiced as principally national in discourse, structure, and practice.

There is no conclusion to this collection, and perhaps that is all for the better. *The History of Social Movements in Global Perspective* offers not a program, but provides an invitation and a number of provocations. In all, this volume depicts a widely varied landscape on which we can rethink a number of our basic working assumptions about the origins and dynamics of social movements. These include conceptual foundations in both history and social sciences and the connections between them. It maps out a comparative and historical terrain where we find the multiple and complex origins of sustained contention, critically challenges Western biases, and focuses our attention on the diversity of what we encompass with the shorthand term “social movement”. This collection urges us to examine the multifarious processes of network-building and diffusion behind the construction of a global imaginary for social movements and encourages us to home in on specific transnational links between this imaginary and the national and local bases of social movements. It is a welcome resource and potent stimulant for scholars in the field of social movements, both historians and social scientists.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 23.