

Berger, Stefan; Nehring, Holger (Hrsg.): *The History of Social Movements in Global Perspective. A Survey*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2017. ISBN: 978-1-137-30425-4; XVIII, 708 S.

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This survey is momentous, and at over 700 pages, this collection serves an ambitious undertaking and as a provocative challenge. Its editors have positioned this volume as a response, in part, to recent interpretations of social movements as a democratizing path toward global modernity and a utopian expression of public demands. How global, Berger and Nehring ask, is social movement history? They position this collection as an opportunity to address the „unfashionability“ of „the social“ or „society“, seeking instead to connect lived experiences to politics and to the demands presented by social movements (p. 3). The editors hope to „conceptualize the relationship between agency, structure, and political, social, cultural and material contexts more precisely“ (p. 4). In doing so, this collection contributes to the field of social movement history not by regarding „social movements as agents of modernization across the board“ (p. 5), but as phenomena that are best understood by adopting a dialogue between history and the social sciences, studying social movements from a global perspective, and doing so through the approach of global history. That this collection features contributions on large swathes of the globe, including Latin America, North America, the Middle East and North Africa, and Europe, alongside several theoretical and a host of transnational perspectives is a testament to the bold scope of the book's approach. Its aim, then, is to „bring back agency and time back into sociological research on social movements“ (p. 8) and prompt historians, and sociologists, to look more carefully at emotions and culture in social movement research. The collection does go some way toward addressing shortcomings in the field of global social movement history, especially insofar as its contributions aim to bridge the divide between sociology and history, and demonstrate just what

an interdisciplinary approach to the past and present of social movement research might look like.

This is not simply a collection of case studies covering social movements based in particular nations, regions, and continents. It works as a survey of conceptual, spatial, and thematic approaches to social movement history, suggesting ways in which scholars of social movements might think in interdisciplinary ways about how, where, when, and why social movement activity has operated in the past. This is, as the editors note, not a complete survey. There are no contributions on anarchism, revolutions, or religious movements. Instead, readers are offered a provocative opening section of three chapters on theory and method, an eight-chapter middle section comprising overviews of social movements on most continents, and a final section of eleven chapters examining transnational, thematic histories of particular movements.

The opening section, entitled 'Conceptual, Methodological and Theoretical Considerations', is an almost abrupt condensation of ideas that might have filled an entire book. Indeed, Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani's 2015 collection, *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements*, was an immense assemblage of over fifty chapters examining the many components of social movement research. Aside from a single chapter, however, Della Porta and Diani's volume was not concerned with the *historical* study of social movements, and as such, Dieter Rucht's contribution to Berger and Nehring's collection is valuable in introducing the mammoth field of social movement studies, and how its approaches might be useful for *historians* of social movements. The sociological bent of this introductory survey might appear to have limited use for the historian, but Rucht is correct in suggesting that within the discipline of history, „thus far little attention has been paid to the definition, conceptualization and theorization of social movements“ (p. 59). The opening section's other two chapters, from Rochona Majumdar and Seonjoo Park, use subaltern studies and transnational feminism, respectively, as a means to reflect on different ways of approaching and theorizing social movement history. Park, espe-

cially, suggests that social movement history needs to look at the „terrain in which politics is formed and practiced“, the „shifting ways that identity is made and unmade“, and to examine „space/time trajectories that do not mindlessly follow the dominant narrative of the nation-state“ (p. 109). This radical reimagining of the subject of the social movement historian's research, then, fits within the editors' aims of boldly opening up the field, and abandoning old paradigms particular to the individual fields of sociology, history, and the political sciences.

The continental approach of the middle section, a series of surveys of social movements in Latin America, North America, Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, India, South Korea and Australia, does not simply serve as a series of overviews. Rather, they combine to highlight the disparity in social movement research that has examined the Western societies, and the English-speaking world, in depth. Felicia Kornbluh's survey of North American social movements and Marcel van der Linden's overview of European social protest over a thousand years demonstrate just how extensive the research trends and their historiographies have been in these parts of the world. In Andreas Eckert's fascinating chapter on Africa, by contrast, Eckert mentions that „writing an overview about the *history* of social movements in Africa is mainly an exercise in producing whipped cream out of skimmed milk“ (p. 211). The dearth of existing literature in an „under-historicized“ area of scholarship is problematic, but also sheds light on Africans movements which might not appear to Western academic or activist eyes to fit a traditional, narrow concept of social movements (pp. 216–17). As with every region whose history remains under-explored, Eckert advocates for more research on labour associations and trade unions in sub-Saharan Africa in particular, as a means to focus on the so-called „informal sector“ of wage labour and its role in the colonial and post-colonial history of the region, and its „global entanglements“ (p. 222).

There are too many chapters to explore in this review, yet a few themes stand out. Of this book's third section, several contributions

open up transnational social movement history in fascinating, provocative ways. Kevin Passmore and Fabian Virchow's contributions on fascist and post-fascist movements, respectively, are a welcome addition to a field often concerned solely with progressive and left-leaning activism. Chapters from Frank Uekötter and Britta Baumgarten examine histories of environmentalism and the global justice movement, both relatively recent phenomena rooted in modern understandings of civil society and globalization. In a chapter on the Arab Spring, another recent episode in this collection of social movement histories spanning thousands of years, Nora Lafi dispels the notion that Western thought played a key role in the movements for regime change she examines. Lafi's chapter, like many others in this volume, stresses how much Western approaches to social movement history have dominated the field, but also how vital and vibrant their alternatives are to the future of this scholarship, not only in the West, but outside its borders, between the spaces occupied by nation states and global networks, and surrounding the often dominant historical role of empire and the nation-state. The differences between the global North and the global South, too, emerge as a key challenge for future research.

There are omissions to this volume: as the editors note, religion makes few appearances, nor is there a chapter on anarchism, yet this seems beside the point. The incredibly complex array of ideas interrogated within this volume works as a provocation, particularly to Western scholars, to think beyond Western assumptions developed over many decades of social movement research, and look behind the ideas, the approaches, and the themes of social movement history and into the spaces between the global and the local, at causal links and mobilizations that deserve greater attention to historians, social scientists, and political scientists alike.

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