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Articles

A Neglected Mechanism of Social Movement Political Influence: The Role of Anticorporate and Anti-Institutional Protest in Changing Government Policy
Kevin Young and Michael Schwartz ........................................... 239

Repression, Response, and Contained Escalation under “Liberalized” Authoritarianism in Jordan
Diana M. Moss .............................................................................. 261

Differential Participation in Professional Activism: The Case of the Guantánamo Habeas Lawyers
Chan S. Suh .................................................................................. 287

From the Streets to the Mountains: The Dynamics of Transition from a Protest Wave to an Insurgency in Kashmir
Tijen Demirel-Pegg ................................................................. 309

The Transnational Flow of Tactical Dispositions: The Chinese Democracy Movement and Falun Gong
Andrew Junker ........................................................................... 329

Book Reviews

Maurice Pinard
Motivational Dimensions in Social Movements and Contentious Collective Action.
Reviewed by James M. Jasper .................................................. 351

Robert Ogman.
Against the Nation: Anti-National Politics in Germany.
Reviewed by Andrew I. Yeo ...................................................... 352

Reviewed by Randolph Huza-DeLay ........................................ 353
Wendy H. Wong
*Internal Affairs: How the Structure of NGOs Transforms Human Rights.*
Reviewed by Lyndi Hewitt ................................. 354

Soma Chaudhuri
*Tempest in a Teapot: Witches, Tea Plantations, and Lives of Migrant Laborers in India.*
Reviewed by Andre Nickow ................................. 355

Jackie Smith and Ernesto Verdeja, eds.
*Globalization, Social Movements, and Peacebuilding.*
Reviewed by Christopher Todd Beer ....................... 357

Joshua Hendrick
Reviewed by Taylan Acar ................................. 358

Shana Redmond
*Anthem: Social Movements and the Sound of Solidarity in the African Diaspora.*
Reviewed by William Roy ................................. 359

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**CALL FOR PAPERS**

*From Contention to Social Change: Rethinking the Outcomes and Protest Cycles*
19-20 February 2015
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*Please submit proposals by 30 September 2014 to both organizers. Decisions will be sent by 31 October. Accepted papers will be due 9 January 2015.*

The conference will be at Complutense University's TRANSOC Institute on Social Transformations, Escuela de Relaciones Laborales, in the city centre (San Bernardo 49, Madrid).

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Eduardo Romanos, Universidad Complutense de Madrid (eromanos@ucm.es)
Katrin Uba, Uppsala University (katrin.uba@statsvet.uu.se)
executing the advocacy). In short, it behooves human rights NGOs to distribute these dimensions of power across different stakeholders in a specific way. Agenda setting and enforcement are most efficiently and effectively performed by a core group of leaders, while the work of moving the agenda forward requires broad-based participation in order for NGOs to navigate what Wong calls the “transnational dilemma.” Human rights claims and goals must be stated clearly, but also perceived as legitimate and worthy of effort by participants across diverse locales. “Too much centralization leads to stasis; too little of it leads to lack of leadership. Similarly, too much decentralization can lead to an inability to hold parts of a transnational NGO accountable; too little can result in fading support or political irrelevance” (p. 57).

The book’s early chapters are theoretically rich and complex, while the later chapters bring the key concepts to life, illustrating precisely why and how organizational structure is so central in shaping successful human rights advocacy. Drawing on extensive qualitative data (primary and secondary textual sources; semi-structured interviews) covering both historical and contemporary periods in organizations such as Amnesty International, Oxfam International, Anti-Slavery International, and the International Committee of the Red Cross, Wong elucidates the substantive cases and their theoretical significance with care and rigor, if a slight unevenness. It is worth noting that both successful and unsuccessful campaigns are included, which helps illuminate the pitfalls of deviating from the seemingly ideal set of structural choices. While the organizational cases occupy different kinds of positions and serve multiple functions in the landscape of global civil society, Wong convincingly argues that casting the net widely enables her to capture important variation in organizational structure and political salience outcomes.

Despite Wong’s strong assertions about the importance of organizational structure, some readers may find themselves wondering whether this particular configuration of structural features would achieve similarly favorable results across multiple types of organizations, issues, and conditions. Further investigation is needed on this point. Other readers may also wish for more discussion on the possible disadvantages of structuring NGOs in this way. Scholars sympathetic to more structural perspectives on social movement success may find the study especially useful, but others—including those primarily interested in the cultural dimensions of movements—will undoubtedly appreciate Wong’s integration of constructivist concerns.

While Wong does not explicitly situate her argument within the rapidly growing literature on social movement strategy, researchers working on questions of strategy would do well to consider the many relevant insights she offers. In fact, one of the greatest strengths of the book is its emphasis on how NGOs organize and divide their labor, and the role of that agency in the efficacy of advocacy. Furthermore, the explicit documentation of intramovement differences on this point constitutes a particularly meaningful addition to the study of transnational social movements.

Wong’s prose is clear and well organized, her evidence carefully presented, and her argument compelling. Researchers in political science, international relations, sociology, anthropology, and public policy, as well as those engaged in human rights activism will welcome the theoretical and substantive contributions of Internal Affairs. Moreover, the empirical chapters—especially chapter 3 that examines Amnesty International—will likely prove effective as stand-alone assignments for undergraduate courses in human rights, international relations, social movements, and organizational behavior.


Andre Nickow
Northwestern University

“So what makes hardworking ordinary individuals turn into killers overnight?” (p. 72). In her new book, Soma Chaudhuri offers a wealth of fresh insights in response to this age-old question through an in-depth study of witch-hunts among migrant *adivasi* tea plantation laborers in the Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal. The book paints an empirically rich, analytically nuanced, and deeply unsettling portrait of the horrifying social pathologies that may result from the confluence of exploitation, marginalization, and a lack of opportunities for mobilization. It also highlights the challenges and opportunities faced by activists struggling against violence perpetrated by oppressed populations.

The study is based on a prodigious body of qualitative data, including interviews, participant observation, and police and newspaper archives. Interweaving these sources, Chaudhuri advances
a series of arguments surrounding the claim that witchcraft accusations emerge from conflicts over power, resources, and agency within the plantation, the household, and the economy at large. While Chaudhuri’s broad conclusion that plantation witch-hunts in Jalpaiguri are not a result of . . . superstitious primitive thinking . . . but a result of . . . the alienation experienced as wage laborers within the plantation economy” (p. 115) is a familiar one in critiques of modernization theory from many disciplines, the specific mechanisms, categories, and trends she uncovers will make the book a more than worthwhile read for scholars of collective behavior, inequitable development, and social movements.

Chaudhuri sketches her general perspective, reviews the witch hunt literature, and provides an overview of the case context and methods in the first three chapters. She then outlines the book’s core theoretical arguments in chapter 4. Here, she divides witch-hunts into “calculated attacks,” involving public “trials” and time lapses between accusation and attack, and “surprise attacks,” which are rapid and appear relatively spontaneous. While Chaudhuri sees both types of attack as emerging from material exploitation, she finds that calculated attacks are more evidently linked to particular disputes between laborers. Estimating that 75 percent of attacks are calculated, she concludes that “most cases of witch-hunts are oriented towards fulfilling goals beyond the killing of the witch and getting rid of her evil spell . . . pursuit of wealth . . . and power” (p. 71).

Escalating a witchcraft accusation made by a few plantation workers into a witch-hunt backed by a critical mass requires the presence of “moral panic,” an explosion of social stress stemming from severe livelihood insecurity. The sparkplug of social stress are, in turn, rooted in the horrendous material conditions of the plantations, including the high vulnerability that comes from abysmally low or unpaid wages and, especially, the rampant disease resulting from a near complete lack of modern healthcare. Chaudhuri argues that plantation management and the broader capitalist economy are implicated in the persistence of witch-hunts, because they are responsible for these underlying material conditions.

In chapters 5 and 6, Chaudhuri expands on these arguments. Chapter 5 provides an analysis of whisper campaigns and ostracizing as necessary precursors to witch-hunts. Anger, frustration, fear, and alcohol-induced intoxication fuse into a powder keg at risk of being set off by conflicts over land, money, and/or reputation. Here, Chaudhuri is at her most interpretive: “violence against the accused women is symbolic: it gets rid of the plague that is responsible for the misery . . . the adivasi worker sees the dain [witch] as an image of his misery . . . that can be shamed and destroyed, thereby restoring . . . his honor” (p. 103). Chapter 6 ties these themes to the relations of production between migrant laborers and plantation management. Blocked from any sort of grassroots mobilization by the authoritarian plantation system, and forced to strive for incorporation into the plantation’s clientelistic system to survive, adivasi laborers externalize the Marxist alienation they suffer into the symbol of the witch, and repeatedly destroy it symbolically through the rituals of witch-hunts.

Among the book’s most valuable contributions is its juxtaposition of the ways in which different forms of mobilization play multiple and often contradictory roles in constituting power relationships. Chaudhuri writes, for example, that “witch-hunts are both a form of protest against and representations of oppression in the lives of the adivasi workers” (p. 63). Turning villagers en masse against their own requires extensive mobilization efforts, and can even be interpreted as a declaration of subaltern agency. Conversely, witch-hunts can be seen as a manifestation of false consciousness, as frustrated victims of exploitation misdirect hostility toward those who are even more marginalized. While I am less convinced by Chaudhuri’s claim that witch hunts themselves can be seen as protest when they attract external attention to laborers’ economic plight (p. 130), her broad conceptualization of mobilization will no doubt be fodder for productive debates.

Most social movement researchers will likely gravitate toward chapter 7, in which Chaudhuri explores the activities of the North Bengal People’s Development Center (NBPDC), the only NGO in the region working against witch-hunts. NBPDC is locally based but staffed predominantly by non-adivasi activists from outside the plantations. Chaudhuri elaborates its efforts to mobilize workers against witch-hunts through extensive framing work, especially relying on superstition, development, and justice frames.

Interestingly, NBPDC uses women’s microfinance cooperatives funded by the government to mobilize female workers against witch-hunts, raising awareness about the hunts during meetings ostensibly intended to discuss microloans. Among the book’s most fascinating anecdotes is a story in which a cooperative member accused of witchcraft was saved by fellow SHG members and their families, who even managed to convince the accuser to renounce the witch-hunt and publicly apologize (pp. 148-149). Chaudhuri is far from sanguine about NBPDC’s potential for success on its own, but ends on a
note of hope that livelihood improvement, and especially the recent rise to prominence of advisory-led advocacy groups, can address the root cause of witch-hunts—extreme economic exploitation.

Interspersed with heartrending stories, vivid descriptions, and photographs, Chaudhuri's book transports her readers to the study's field site at a level that few sociologists have managed. The book contributes to existing debates and will no doubt spark further ones on determinants of collective behavior, strategies of framing, and the material roots of ritualized violence.


**Christopher Todd Beer**  
*Lake Forest College*

A patient finally sees an insightful doctor who identifies the underlying cause of an illness. The same patient had spent years going to doctors who simply treated symptoms and never mentioned that many others experienced the same illness. This story is a good metaphor for Smith and Verdeja's edited volume in that peace cannot be explained or brought about by simply by addressing localized, ahistorical, and specific cases, particularly in today's globally integrated world. Rather, peacebuilding will only succeed, and conflicts avoided, if the influence of the capitalist world economy—whether seen in neoliberal or world-systemic terms—is recognized as the primary cause of conflict.

In the midst of thriving social science literatures exploring economic and cultural globalization, there has been insufficient investigation of the influence of global forces on peacebuilding efforts. *Globalization, Social Movements, and Peacebuilding* addresses this gap and examines how the global neoliberal economic project structures peacebuilding efforts as well as the ability of social movements to challenge the global system and develop alternatives models. This engaging and diverse edited volume contributes to research on social movements, globalization, peace and conflict studies, global civil society, and counterhegemonic alternatives. Smith and Verdeja's collection successfully elucidates the peacebuilding forest from the trees.

Dominant global discourses and economic paradigms have structured the responses of peacekeeping efforts from arms control to humanitarian aid. The chapters in the first section explore how systematic discourse determines what actors get a seat at the table and the issues that get deliberated. Additionally, within the context of the particular cases, each author argues for greater reflexivity by social movement actors themselves in order to fully challenge neoliberal structures. What are social movements missing when they do not analyze the larger global economic structure and their own role within it?

The chapters in the first section investigate three pathways that social movements follow to foster peace: disarmament, humanitarian aid, and grass-roots theater. Regarding disarmament, the politics of regulating the arms trade has always been shaped by the dominant economic ideology, from limiting exports to prevent anticolonial insurgencies to privatizing and expanding arms sales under trade-liberalization agendas. Author Neil Cooper explores how the structure of the global capitalist system has legitimized Western states' extensive arms trade. With the help of some civil society actors, it has delegitimized several states in the global South and limited sales of only certain "inhumane" munitions. The proclaimed victories of arms-control advocates—such as a landmine ban and limitations on cluster munitions—ignore the post-Cold War rise in military expenditures among those at the top of the global capitalist hierarchy. Regarding humanitarian aid, the next chapter by Cecilia Lynch observes that many INGOs are similarly limited by neoliberal ideological discourse: privatization, entrepreneurship, microloans, short-term gains, and quantitative assessments. Even domestic NGOs at the forefront of peacebuilding efforts are confronted by demands from powerful donors to submit proposals that reflect neoliberal-infused assumptions and language. The final chapter by Dina DaCosta explores an Indian theater troop that writes and performs plays in an effort to show communities that communal violence between Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus is not due to fundamental cultural differences but neoliberal policies and the interests of state elites. The authors call for increased reflexivity of civil society actors to further awareness and critique of global neoliberal capitalism and work towards the emancipation of populations.

In the book's second section, three chapters examine peacebuilding efforts in particular conflict zones. Valentine Moghadam's contribution argues that the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq reveal systems of masculine domination. The wars were driven by the U.S. desire to reassert their position in the world-systems hierarchy, but also reflect hegemonic masculinities within the state, military, and capitalist economic market.