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Abstract

A review of:

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Keywords

Global Justice Movement, Civil action, Activism, International relations

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The contributors to The Global Justice Movement achieve their goal of summarizing the current state of research on the Global Justice Movement. In the process of achieving this goal, the contributors also provide comparative insight into civil action movements in seven countries specifically, as well as at the global level. As a result, this volume contributes to the base of knowledge and understanding about both the Global Justice Movement and national political activism. Although no sweeping arguments are made, each of the contributors summarizes the progress and characteristics of the Global Justice Movement within a particular area, including the organization of the movement, the frame and types of activism employed by the movement, and the national and international influences on the movement.

The Global Justice Movement has two types of chapters. The first and the last chapter define and summarize the scope of the study, define the data included in the study, and review the existing Global Justice Movement literature. Each of the country chapters is tied carefully to the scope and definitions established in the first two chapters. None of the chapters asserts, or tries to provide support for, a theory or hypothesis. However, each chapter does present an explanation for the particular development of the Global Justice Movement within the political, social, and cultural dimensions of the country. Through a straightforward presentation of the history and activity of the Global Justice Movement, the authors also increase the reader's understanding of factors that shape both the national development of civil action movements and the integration of these national movements into transnational movements.

In the first chapter, Donatella Della Porta establishes the parameters that will be used by all other authors in their chapters. Della Porta begins by presenting a brief history of the Global Justice Movement and justifies its importance. Della Porta next carefully defines the movement as "the loose network of organizations . and other actors engaged in collective action of various kinds, on the basis of the shared goal of advancing the cause of justice . among and between people across the globe." As Della Porta explains, this definition ensures both that the movement is measurable and that the shared realities created by organizations are a component of the measurement. The rest of the first chapter explains the impact of this definition on both the research presented in the volume and existing literature on the Global Justice Movement.

Transnational movements within the Global Justice Movement are presented by Mario Pianta and Raffaele Marchetti in the second chapter. They apply Della Porta's definition to the global context by adding the conditions of cross-border mobilization, transnational organization, and a shared "global frame" of the issues. Based upon this extended definition, the authors trace the history of the global aspect of the Global Justice Movement from the 1970s to the present. The authors conclude that international movements against the injustices caused by the lack of political and economic democracy of neoliberal globalization are based on a diverse grassroots organization. Thus, Pianta and Marchetti feel that the transnational organizations involved in the Global Justice Movement are a result of a mobilization from below, and are coalesced around common themes, issues, and priorities.

The next seven chapters review the evolution of activities of organizations associated with the Global Justice Movement in six Western European countries (Italy, Spain, France, Great Britain, Germany and Switzerland) and the United States. The authors of each country chapter trace the development of national participation in the transnational movement, and include the national and international political, economic, and social factors that influenced this development. For each country, the structure of the national organizations, their methods of decision making, identity formation, and activation are also identified. Each of the national chapters concludes with a summarization of the peculiarities of the Global Justice Movement in the country.

Although all of the authors conservatively base their conclusions only on the facts provided in the chapters, the impact of unique national political and social factors are clearly demonstrated by the differences in the structure and development of the Global Justice Movement. In Italy, the political circumstances resulted in organizations that are willing to forge alliances. Disagreements between groups in France are focused on the degree of association with politics, whereas in Great Britain the disagreements are centered on tactics. In both Germany and Switzerland, the Global Justice Movement emerged later than the other countries' movements and thus mobilization was less based on class and labor. The United States is the single example of low mobilization, which the authors attribute to a more positive attitude toward globalization.

In the final chapter Della Porta summarizes the information presented throughout the book by explaining the political, social, and cultural factors responsible for the wave of protests associated with the Global Justice Movement since 2000. She explains that two strains can be identified within the Global Justice Movement; the more dominant strain that favors disruptive protests, and a strain that favors more persuasive tactics such as media campaigns and lobbying. Based on the information presented throughout the book, Della Porta explains the mobilization and political positioning (left versus right) of the current Global Justice Movements.

This volume not only improves the understanding of the organization, composition, activism, and motivation of the elements, both national and transnational, of the Global Justice Movement, it also provides insight into the social, political, and cultural aspects of anti-globalization activism. By comparing the information presented in the country chapters, the reader can also gain insight into the national political influences, positive and negative, on the expression of activism on the transnational issue. The result is a volume that is valuable not only for the information it presents, but also for the research questions it encourages the readers to ask.

Kathie Barrett