

BOOK REVIEW/ COMPTE RENDU

Memou, Antigoni, *Photography and Social Movements: From the Globalisation of the Movement (1968) to the Movement Against Globalisation (2001)*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013. 172 pp., £65.00 hardcover (9780719087424)

This is a work of historical and comparative sociology, approaching three events from three visual perspectives. It is a succinct book that is also surprisingly reaching. As is always the case a reviewer sees some aspects of the project as stronger than others.

Memou has studied the student-worker movement in Paris in 1968; the Zapatista movement in southern Mexico in 1994, and the anti-capitalist protest in Genoa in 2001. She is interested in how the movements were visually represented in mainstream photojournalism; from the inside of the movements, and, finally, in photo-based art projects. The nine parts of the book can be represented as a table, key to understanding its strengths as well as possible limitations.

Part One	Part Two	Part Three
Paris '68: mainstream press	Paris '68: insider counter narrative	Paris '68: Photo art representation
Zapatista: mainstream press	Zapatista: insider counter narrative	Zapatista: Photo art representation
G8 mainstream press	G8 insider counter narrative	G8: Photo art representation

As is clear from the table, the author chose photographic practices as her organizing theme. She first describes how each of the movements or protests were represented in the mainstream press; then from the inside of each movement, and finally we learn how the how each movement or protest was represented in photographic art. This organizing strategy implies that there is enough similarity between the case studies to make this part-by-part comparison meaningful, and to some degree that is true. Certainly the mainstream press “got it wrong” in representing May '68 and the G8 protests, and the visual counter-narratives produced by all three movements better describe their revolutionary aspects. But Part Three, on art representation, works much less well.

It is also evident from the table above that she could have organized her work case by case; first covering all aspects of the Paris case study, then moving to the Zapatistas, and finally, to G8. In other words, the book could have been organized on horizontal readings of the table, and to this reader, I think this would have been more effective.

The structure of the book is both its strength and the weakness. It is very clear, and it allows the reader to move through the book in any of a number of ways. But the structure implies that each subtopic is equally important: the art photo projects as significant as the studies of photo-journalism; and the insider reports equivalent in their importance to the other modes of photographic representation, and the case studies themselves sufficiently similar as to merit comparison. Yet the subtopics are developed in such varying depth that some arguments seem forced. For this reason the book has a choppy feeling, with the added problem of redundancies from repeated summaries that are necessary to remind the reader where they are in this nine-part project. The book is also brief, and leaves the reader wanting to know more about events in Paris and their visual representation, and less about others, such as an American art photographer Joel Sternfeld's project on the G8. In fact I question whether the author's studies of artistic representation of Zapatista and G8 movements are sufficiently important to justify their inclusion.

During the time period represented by the three studies (1968 to 2001) crucial changes took place in photography and media, influencing how the social movements and protests were represented, perceived and understood by consuming publics and the movements themselves. This subtext is extremely important and will be useful to social movement theorists.

For example, during the Paris '68 movement student-run newspapers distributed hundreds of thousands of copies (and there were several newspapers operating from inside the movement), and this was in an era in which the Gaullist government controlled all newspapers and television (this is, by itself, shocking). But as massive as was the counter narrative produced by the student newspapers, it was primarily local and ephemeral.

The images in these papers communicated the non-hierarchical character of the student-worker meetings, while the mainstream press represented the meetings and events as they had portrayed disciplined labor demonstrations of the past, with leaders highlighted and distinct from faceless masses. The author touches upon the relationship between the clandestine student-produced newspapers and international radio reporting on location, heard on transistor radios across Paris. The radio transmissions were not controlled by the government and they appear to have

effect not unlike the digital broadcasts during the Arab Spring movements. More could have been said about this interesting and important aspect of the events.

Memou notes that it has been largely through Magnum photographs in gallery exhibits that the world subsequently interpreted May '68. Yet the Magnum photographers, working in the documentary style of the time, zeroed in on key figures in dramatic poses, while they overlooked the more visually subtle and sociologically important aspects of the revolutionary moment. The photographers were looking for interesting images rather than seeking to understand a new kind of social movement in visual terms.

Several decades later, the Zapatista movement skillfully controlled its media representation, creating sympathy for the movement in Mexico and throughout the world. Subcommandante Marcos, then maintaining a secret identity, offered "captivating communiqués, combining stories, poetry, philosophy, satire, romanticism and political analysis..." (32) but it was through stylized photos of Marcos (that borrowed heavily from iconic images of Emilio Zapata and Che Guevara) that the Zapatista movement connected itself to the revolutionary consciousness of Latin Americans.

Memou centers much of her discussion of the G8 protests on the tragic death of a protester, Carlo Giuliani, at the hands of the police. His body, prone on the sidewalk, was photographed by several press photographers, and the image was instantly known throughout the world. Memou notes that "Photography's ability to confer on the event immortality, which it would not have had if photographers had not been present at the event, is confirmed in this case. Photography not only documented Giuliani's death but it also transformed it into a symbol of the anti-capitalist protests in Genoa." (50)

Yet the photo simultaneously became a unifying symbol for global anticapitalist protesters as it was also used by the mainstream press to blame the protesters for the police violence. Newspapers typically contextualized the photo with headlines and captions that implied or outright claimed that Giuliani was implicitly responsible for his tragic fate, at the same time that the mainstream press ignored police violence directed at the protesters that took place throughout the protest.

Protesters at the G8 meeting in 2001 used free software, Indymedia, to upload and distribute their reports and images on the web. Their success was so keen that movement adopted the slogan: "Don't hate the media; become the media!" In this way G8 heralded a new moment in social movements; Memou notes that the hegemonic control of the

state over how the protests are portrayed and perceived has been forever broken.

Memou make us aware of how representational practices have evolved and how they create different forms of power and influence. Her work will be useful for sociologists and others interested in social movements, media representation and visual sociology. It would be a suitable text for undergraduate as well as graduate courses. In fact one could adopt her approach as a model for further studies, either by graduates seeking Ph.D. topics or scholars seeking a greater understanding of recent and contemporary social movements. Despite some misgivings I have on the structure of the book, I anticipate that it will be a useful addition to sociological studies of the changing media, especially as related to how protest is portrayed and interpreted visually.

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