
BUCHBESPRECHUNGEN

**Stefan Berger / Holger Nehring (eds.):
The History of Social Movements
in Global Perspective. A Survey (=**
Palgrave Studies in the History of
Social Movements, vol. 14), London:
Palgrave Macmillan 2017, 737 p.

Reviewed by
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This is a substantial volume that offers a survey on a vast variety of cases and topics aiming at combining the insights of historical and sociological research. Each chapter is supplemented with a substantial section on further readings, which renders the book a very useful resource for students and researchers who wish to delve into one of the topics. The purpose of the book is “to revive the dialogue between history and the social sciences” (p. 5) and to cross-fertilize the conceptual toolbox of historians and sociologists. The editors argue in favor of a global historical perspective, because it allows to address “the complexity of multiple modernities” (p. 10). Furthermore, it helps to diversify social movement research, which has been mostly developed in the context of West-

ern modernization accounts and Western social movements. The global perspective is chosen, first, to “make visible [...] the ways in which we might conceptualize [the] relationship between agency, structure, and political, social, cultural and material contexts more precisely [...]” (p. 4) and, second, to draw “attention to the different meanings of ‘equality’, ‘freedom’, ‘peace’ and so on, while nonetheless bringing them together within a common frame of reference that help to create connections across the globe” (p. 12).

Part I offers an overview of concepts and methods of studying social movements and provides two cases with a regional focus outside of Europe that outline challenges in writing about social movements from a global perspective (three chapters). Those readers, who are not familiar with the research paradigms in social movement studies, will find in Dieter Rucht’s contribution an excellent introduction into the field by one of its acclaimed researchers. Rucht 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 collective public protest” (p. 45). Rucht’s chapter tacitly represents the “Western” approach to social movement studies, and the editors – while acknowl-

edging his approach as crucial for theory building and the historiography in the field – seek to critically engage with its rootedness in the history of the “West”.

Rochona Majumdar discusses the usefulness of subaltern studies for writing a history of social movements in India. Subaltern studies focused initially on peasant movements and the difficulties to apply Marxist analyses of the transition towards an industrialized society to the Indian context. Later, subaltern studies departed to some extent from the European traditions of political thought in order to provide a better account of Indian mass insurgencies. Majumdar explains that subaltern studies’ interest in mass mobilizations and the collective, insurgent subjectivity showed that subaltern politics neither completely fit the dominant history of nationalism and colonialism nor can it be subsumed under the conception of civil society (p. 66). Over all her contribution shows how the approach constitutes a very useful resource to overcome methodological nationalism.

Seonjoo Park’s chapter problematizes the Western centrist view on the history of the Women’s movement, which is a globalized movement par excellence. Exploring ‘transpacific feminism,’ she aims at demonstrating the movement’s diversity. According to her, neither global nor national classifications of women’s movements are helpful because “[t]he recognition of the multiple and shifting ways that identity is made and unmade with and/or against ideological power within international dynamics may help us to formulate feminist politics in a non-totalizing manner” (p. 109). Rucht, Majumdar and Park’s articles taken together stand for a debate between the predominant Euro-/Westerncentrism

in history and (social movement) theory making and the attempts to overcome it in non-Western contexts.

Part II offers continental perspectives on the history of social movements (eight chapters). Readers will likely welcome that the main focus of the geographical section is located outside Europe and the United States, which are not seldom overrepresented in volumes on social movements. It starts with Claudia Wasserman’s overview on the development of social movements in Latin America, which are characterized by a similar colonial and socio-economic structure. Felicia Kornbluh’s assessment of North America focuses on the US because in her view a continental perspective does not yet exist apart from the analyses of the protests against the North American Free Trade Agreement. Marcel van der Linden’s broad account of European social protest is a fruitful combination of historiography with a social movement perspective. Andreas Eckert’s chapter and John Chalcraft’s contribution deal with social movements in Africa, which are still under-explored. There is no overview on Asia but some of its movements are represented by Arvind Elangovan’s chapter on India as well as Jung Han Kim and Park’s one on Korea. The Middle East is treated together with the North African movements. Given the diversity of Asia, splitting the analysis of the region into several chapters is reasonably. However, China and South East Asia remain blind spots. Readers, who wish to learn more about Asia, can turn to Hoering et al.¹ Part II closes with Sean Scalmer’s historical overview on Australian social movements. Australia is characterized as a colonial settler society, which sets it apart from other continents with a colonial past.

The possibility of comparing the different trajectories of social movements in Latin America, Africa, and Australia constitutes the strength of Part II, which can indeed yield a better understanding of the global history of social movements.

It is impossible to comment on all chapters of Part III, which offers eleven chapters on specific social movements. Depending on the reader's own background – historian or social scientist – he or she will find different chapters of interest. I will discuss Stefan Berger's chapter on the labor movements in more detail because it is a paradigmatic example of the volume's research agenda.

Berger clearly shows the possibilities and challenges of writing the history of social movements from a global perspective. He discusses the conceptual Eurocentrism and its problems for analyzing the labor movement. Berger carves out the local differences of "regimes of labour and of associated social protest movements organizing labour" (p. 386) across five continents. In addition, he identifies four transnational moments, which he admits suffer from a Western bias (p. 405 f.): "first, the caesura of the First World War; secondly, the impact of the Russian Revolution; thirdly, the struggle against fascism and right-wing authoritarianism in the inter-war period and beyond; and, finally, the Cold War with its accompanying histories of decolonialization." This list, as he acknowledges, needs diversification in future research. Nevertheless, he seems to be convinced that, due to the development of capitalism, the history of labor movements will continue having "a distinctly Western outlook" (p. 411). Berger's position reflects a dilemma of the attempts to de-center

the global history of social movements. A radical break with the European / Western contexts seems to be impossible, thus the region remains to be an unavoidable point of reference, either as a historical starting point, as an intellectual tradition to (dis-)engage with or as an adversary of a particular movement.

Among the many contributions, Part III includes chapters on fascism and right wing movements, which are timely considering the contemporary rise of right wing populism. Missing are explicit chapters on religious or indigenous movements, which might have helped to de-center the research on social movements further. A discussion of non-Western belief systems or world views such as the Latin American 'buen vivir' or the Muslim traditions in India as sources of popular dissent and struggles for or against social change might have yielded interesting insights on the history of social movements beyond the history of modernity and enlightenment. Nonetheless, the topical and geographical scope of the volume is immense and the identified gaps are a wish list for further publications in the same series (Palgrave Studies in the History of Social Movements).

Considering that the editors aimed at a survey without an overarching single theoretical framework, it is understandably that the volume has no conclusion. However, a commentary and outlook on future research by another historian and/or social movement researcher would have been a welcome complement of the volume. The editors have set out an ambitious research agenda by calling for a combination of global history and social movement research. Their introduction and the sum of the contributions convincingly show the

advantages of a global perspective on the subject. Hence, the volume is highly recommended to researchers and students of social movements in past and present.

Notes

- 1 U. Hoering, O. Pye, W. Schaffar, Ch. Wichterich (eds.), *Globalisierung bringt Bewegung. Lokale Kämpfe und transnationale Vernetzungen in Asien*, Münster 2009.

Margrit Pernau / Dominic Sachsenmaier (eds.): *Global Conceptual History. A Reader*. London: Bloomsbury 2016, 376 p.

Rezensiert von
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Margrit Pernau wirbt seit einiger Zeit für eine neue Begriffsgeschichte. Diese soll, wie könnte es anders sein, global, was zugleich heißt: verflochten sein. Für eine Autorin, die den Begriff des Bürgertums bei Muslimen in Delhi erprobt und erweitert hat, ist das fast schon selbstverständlich. Dominic Sachsenmaier hat einige Beiträge zu chinesischen Adaptionen europäischer Begriffe vorgelegt und repräsentiert mit diesem weitgespannten Bogen ebenfalls eine begriffsgeschichtliche Entwicklungsstufe jungen Datums. Denn seit Globalisierung und Poststrukturalismus in den 1990er Jahren in den Kultur- und Geisteswissenschaften wirklich angekommen sind und letzterer dort namentlich den *linguistic turn* ausgelöst hat, steht die Begriffsgeschichte vor neuen Herausforderungen.

Dieser Aufgabe stellt sich der bereits 2016 erschienene, dem Rezensenten aber erst zwei Jahre später zugeleitete Sammelband. Auf den ersten Blick fällt auf, dass er keine Originalbeiträge enthält, sondern aus dem Deutschen übersetzte oder auf Englisch erschienene Aufsätze älteren und jüngeren Datums. Auf den zweiten dann, dass es nur einen Aufsatz zur im Titel angekündigten globalen Begriffsgeschichte gibt. Das ist kein Wunder, denn eine solche setzt, wie die Herausgeber einleitend einräumen, eine große Forschergruppe und hohen Zeitaufwand voraus. Tatsächlich bieten etliche Beiträge transnational verflochtene Begriffsgeschichten geradezu exotischen Zuschnitts. In ihrer knappen Einleitung skizzieren die Herausgeber nach einem Rückblick auf die (deutschen) Anfänge – dass sie dabei Richard Koebner übersehen, ist angesichts des Forschungsstandes verzeihlich – die Anforderungen an die Begriffsgeschichte nach dem *linguistic turn*, der Sprache, Sprecher und Übersetzer gegenüber Begriff und Bedeutung enorm aufgewertet hat. Dabei fällt auf, dass der von Margrit Pernau 2012 aufgestellte enorme theoretische, womöglich überdehnte Anspruch¹ hier stillschweigend ein Stück zurückgenommen worden ist.

Die ersten drei Beiträge stammen von Reinhart Koselleck und Rolf Reichardt; zwei davon sind die Einleitungen zu den großen, von ihnen verantworteten lexikalischen Unternehmungen. Während Koselleck sich beiläufig von der damals das Feld beherrschenden, inzwischen vergessenen französischen Lexikometrie absetzte und mit Hilfe klassischer historischer Methoden die Entstehung der Moderne im Medium ihrer Begrifflichkeit aufdecken wollte, konnte sein Schüler, darauf aufbauend,