

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS TODAY

GOHN, MARIA DA GLÓRIA; BRINGEL, BRENO M. (ORG).
MOVIMENTOS SOCIAIS NA ERA GLOBAL. PETRÓPOLIS RJ: VOZES, 2012.

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The book “Movimentos sociais na era global” (Vozes, 2012), by Maria da Glória Gohn and Breno M. Bringel, shows an interesting overview about the contemporary social movements in the globalized era. Although the articles – written by sixteen different authors – are mainly concentrated on the features of the Latin American social movements, other countries’ events are cited and discussed. This fact helps the readers to make a connection with cultures and countries which may be situated far or close to each other. The volume is divided in three different sections: the first one, named “Social movements: theoretical and methodological challenges” explains, in four chapters, the theoretical foundations of social movements and their methods. These articles are very useful for beginners, who are not familiar with the sociological, historical and economic terminologies that surround these kinds of discussions. Commonly and erroneously, some people think that writing about updated subjects like social movements do not need a more specialized opinion. And that, in my point of view, is one of the reasons why this first part of the book is so crucial: knowing something about the history and the theory of these movements make the reading easier and more fruitful for anyone. One interesting issue discussed in chapter four talks about the new challenges that the social movements face to build geographies of power which are alternative to the ones that are only turned to the States and to transnational capital. The second part, called “Collective actions, social movements and reconfiguration of practices”, discusses social characteristics of various countries, such as Venezuela, Bolivia, Equator and Brazil. Chapter eight, for instance, gives a good panorama about the interactions between social movements and migrations in the international scenario. This analysis comes from the definition of transnationalism, but from a different perspective which is not “from above” but “from below”. The goal of the third and last part of the book, “Transnational appeals, nets and anti-globalized movements”, is to show the readers some scopes of the transnational activism. One of the most remarkable chapters of the whole book is in this part. “Internationalization without institutionalization?” gives a good explanation of the term institutionalization and recaptures the history of the World Social Forum – as well as its deficiencies and limitations – since its first edition in Porto Alegre, 2001. The last chapter “Between the national and the transnational” gives a worthy contribution on how and why the civil societies act beyond

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the national borders. One of the problems found in the volume is the lack of an efficient linguistic revision. The editor surely could have given more attention to this matter. Some readers can have difficulty in understanding some extracts or sentences, and this fact could have been solved easily by an attentive text reviser. Last but not least, I would like to say the book is worth reading and valuable for the ones who want to know a little more about this matter so in vogue nowadays.