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*Worker Resistance and Media: Challenging Global Corporate Power in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.*

Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015, £25 pbk, (ISBN: 978-1-4331-2498-3 pb), 260 pp.

This book makes timely contributions in two areas of interest to WES readers. Firstly, a unique up-to-date labour movement history based around the tension between authoritarianism and libertarianism - which the authors argue to be a fundamental axis in the organisation of social life. Secondly, an empirical account and analysis of the potential of four recent high profile labour mobilisations to further libertarianism. Of particular interest is the role of social media in aiding these mobilisations. Four case studies of labour mobilisations are covered: Justice for Janitors (JFJ) in the United States (US), Justice for Cleaners (JFC) in the United Kingdom (UK), Fast Food Forward (FFF) in the US and domestic workers in Hong Kong and Singapore.

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 provide a history of labour movements from 1870 up to the digital age, with Chapter 3 focusing specifically upon labour engagement with the internet and digital media. This history is presented within a world-systems framework and analysed through the authors' authoritarian-libertarian axis. This approach provides an interesting and original account which, due to its clear normative basis, is highly engaging and makes for a stimulating read. However, a major question is the degree to which authoritarianism and libertarianism actually represent 'fundamental' concepts for understanding labour movements, rather than simply a reflection of the authors' normative values. These same issues can also be raised with regards to the book's other main organising concepts: 'Globalisation from Above,' 'Globalisation from Below,' 'Good Nationalism' and 'Bad Nationalism.' In addition, there is little engagement with industrial relations (IR) scholarship. For example, Hyman's 'geometry' of unionism could provide a more enlightening

framework. A further odd omission is Kelly's mobilisation theory; given that the authors argue that unions should adopt globally orientated community and social movement unionism. The upside of this, however, is that it enables a lucid presentation of labour history which does not get bogged-down in IR theory.

Unfortunately, the methods are only covered by four lines of text in the introduction and a further four lines in Chapter 5. From what can be gleaned from these spares lines, the book is based upon slightly 'over 40 interviews with labour activists, trade union members, members of related social movements, members of Global Union Federations and academics and journalists' (p.6) along with one day's participant observation of FFF.

Chapter 4 presents the JFJ and JFC cases and provides an insightful overview of the JFJ campaign and how it has influenced labour movements globally. It also provides a useful discussion of the differing ways in which the lessons of JFJ have been applied in the UK. Of particular use is a discussion around community unionism vs. social movement unionism along with some important criticisms of Citizens UK's interaction with workers and unions. However, perhaps due to their limited data, the authors only note, rather than analyse splits within JFC. Chapter 5 provides an interesting account of how the Service Employee's International Union went about organising and building the FFF campaign. The authors present a critique of the mainstream representation of the movement as spontaneous, grassroots and social media facilitated. Again, probably due to their limited data, the authors are unable to evaluate a fascinating but highly contentious claim – backed up by just one quote (p.160) – that the mobilisation's aim was not to improve labour standards for fast food workers but rather to raise the minimum wage for federal contract workers. Chapter 6 turns to domestic workers and argues that social media has not overcome the barriers to unionisation.

The authors conclude that though social and traditional media strategies are important, industrial action remains the central means by which workers can exercise power.

Moreover, union focus upon social media often undermines the potential for workers to wield industrial power and is detrimental to worker organisation and empowerment. A fact which can be obscured by illusions of social media-facilitated grassroots spontaneity - a point further hammered home by Chapter 7 which provides a forceful critique of 'cyber optimists.' Yet one might question the assumption that the small-scale strikes by janitors and cleaners really leveraged economic, rather than symbolic, power. Furthermore, the realism of the authors' alternative 'utopian realism' (p.214) approach can be questioned. For it is far from certain that structurally weak workers, such as those covered in the book, have the required power to further their interests through traditional strikes.

The book thus provides an important counter-narrative to some of the hyperbole surrounding social media. It also provides an interesting account of labour movement history and a useful overview of some significant recent mobilisations. However, there are some methodological and theoretical weaknesses. I would, therefore, recommend the book to students as an engaging way of introducing them to labour studies, and to academics looking for an overview of the four cases covered.