Political Legitimacy Reconsidered

(II-)legitimate Civic Pressure and State Measures between Peace and Violence

Keynote Presentation

Chantal Mouffe

A political theorist educated at the universities of Louvain, Paris, and Essex, Chantal Mouffe is Professor of Political Theory at the University of Westminster. She has taught at many universities in Europe, North America and Latin America, and has held research positions at Harvard, Cornell, the University of California, the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, and the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris. Between 1989 and 1995 she was Directrice de Programme at the College International de Philosophie in Paris.

The Theory of Political Legitimacy and Violence

Body, Self-Sacrifice and the De-Legitimation of political Order

Baldassare Scolari

In the last few years, the Arab Spring, the Occupy Movement and other forms of protest have shown a common necessity for performances to express a political message. The act of self-sacrifice and especially martyrdom can be understood as such a performance. In this paper, the figure of the martyr, its function and the act of martyrdom in contemporary political discourse are analysed. Particular attention is paid on the one hand to the process of legitimation through transcendental references in order to establish a new political order. On the other hand, this reading of the martyr and its religious attributes are connected to the question about de-legitimation of the state and the “legal” use of violence through institutions like the police or the army.

Baldassare Scolari is a scholar of study of religion and philosophy of religion. His research area includes theory of religion, political theories, political theology, hermeneutics, history of Christianity, continental philosophy. He’s working on his PhD thesis in a Program of “Co-tutelle de thèse” at the University of Zurich (Switzerland) and the University of Macerata (Italy) with the following title: “Legitimation of Political Order – Monuments, Martyrs and Discursive Practices in the Contemporary Public Space ”.
Civic Uprisings in the European Union

Changing the world without getting shot: how popular power can set limits to state violence
Laurence Cox

Under what circumstances are states able to successfully use violence, particularly lethal force, against social movements? Put another way, to what extent can contemporary European movements achieve goals such as resisting austerity measures, bringing neoliberalism to an end or constructing a more genuinely democratic society without facing tanks and torture chambers?

The paper explores the question of state legitimacy and the internal use of violence from a historical and analytical rather than normative standpoint, distinguishing between the rhetoric of violence and non-violence and actual deaths. It starts from the relative decline in the use of lethal force by states against internal opposition which characterises some parts of Europe since the 1950s by comparison with earlier decades. It does this not in order to write a Euronationalist narrative of progress or to minimise the continuing reality of state violence on many levels, but rather to ask what prevents states from killing when entrenched interests face serious challenges to the status quo – from an activist perspective in which our ability to challenge the structures of power without being shot or tortured is an immediate, practical concern and not something to take for granted.

While social actors whose fundamental interests are threatened are regularly willing to kill in order to prevent social change, their ability successfully to deploy lethal violence is another matter and depends on the willingness of other actors to support them. The successful use of violence is not simply a matter of coercion but involves the successful construction of consent among a hegemonic alliance. Social movements do not hold most of the cards in this respect, but the process of restricting the state’s ability to kill is tied to movements’ other concerns of constructing counter-hegemonic alliances for social change. This is important not only to contemporary movements but to all political actors who value the possibility of engaging in democratic struggles – most particularly in contexts where constraints on state violence are weaker. The paper draws on historical and contemporary examples and a range of European countries to situate its analysis.

Laurence Cox co-directs the MA in Community Education, Equality and Social Activism at the National University of Ireland Maynooth, where he also runs a PhD programme for participatory action research in social movement practice and teaches the sociology of revolutions. He has been involved in social movements for 30 years, with particular emphases on building alliances between movements, developing training, movement media and in dealing with repression. Laurence is a founding editor of Interface: a journal for and about social movements, co-editor of Understanding European movements: new social movements, global justice struggles, anti-austerity protest and Marxism and social movements and has published widely on various aspects of social movements in Europe and Asia: see eprints.nuim.ie for copies.
Slovenian civil uprisings and the first independent NGO monitoring of elections in Slovenia
Elena Begant

Transition to democracy in new EU countries did not go hand in hand with development of citizenship skills and in Slovenia that resulted in systematic corruption, non-transparent policies, deconstruction of social welfare and rule of law within the state. Neo-liberal economical approaches and advertised consumerism from the state level reflected in citizenship passivity until one on the first sight insignificant event, namely introduction of electronic radar traffic control system on Maribor’s streets, changed all that. Observation of the past and ongoing uprising events in Slovenia and comment on struggles of the uprising society to find new socially responsible and sustainable forms of government, economy and community organization as seen from the perspective of human rights educator and activist.

Elena Begant is a human rights educator and activist, founder, program director and trainer of the first HRE/EDC NGO in Slovenia since December 2000 (Center for Citizenship Education), international HRE expert and practitioner cooperating with DARE Network, FRA, Council of Europe, OSCE/ODIHR, EIP International and OHCHR.

Revolt, artistic communization and right wing radicalism: focusing on the greek case
Kostis Stafylakis

Recent debates on artistic activism and aesthetic radicalism have sought to utilize theories of the commons and “communization” in order to infuse radical art with a sense of commitment to a wider social change: the gradual retreat from state politics -or forms of power in general- towards a constituent communal life. Autonomist Marxism offers the political vocabulary for such a shift. A deeper understanding of the specificities of such a well praised project is usually postponed due to the urgency of expressing solidarity towards movements: Occupiers, the indignados, the greek aganaktismenoi, the resisting squares etc. This analysis of immanent transformation -through embedded communal experience- overlooks several social processes that do not fit in the wider enterprise. It usually does so in an old fashioned way: by exoticising local “forces” and purifying them through the vague lenses of “resistance”. Such a case of exoticising local resistance is the worldwide appraisal of the greek indignados.

If we focus on the phenomenon of this participatory social movement that responded to austerity programs in Spain and Greece by occupying central squares and urban spaces, we will encounter patterns of alternative or mainstream artistic-motivations that remained largely unreflective and immediatist. And worse than this, we will detect forms of artistic praxis that empowered popular conspiracy theories circulating in the greek public sphere. The example of mainstream artists joining forces with the indignados, or participating in a sphere of resistance, is a typical form of subjugation to a reactionary right wing populism. Apolitical antiparliamentarism served as a fundamental rhetoric to be adopted by extreme right wing rivals that would soon gain political power in the parliament. Such examples are the party of “Independent Greeks” and, of course, the Golden Dawn neo-Nazi formation.
On the square, beautiful artistic souls co-existed with propagators of immediate democracy (with nostalgic references to a “pure” ancient past), third-positionists and autonomous nationalists, conspiracy theorists, right wing extremists and neo-nazis, left wing patriots with anti-Semitic slogans, various autonomous Marxist preachers, moralistic distributist movements etc. This spectrum of a right-wing radicalization of the middle class raises serious doubts about the commoners’ faith that the explosion of the middle class will result to some kind of democratic multi-communitarianism. In this deadlock, artistic voices are often hailed as humble and heroic.

Kostis Stafylakis is an art theorist and visual artist. He holds a PhD in political science from Panteion University, Athens, Greece.

We the People – The 15M movement: ¿An indignado populism?
Íñigo Errejón

The 15M movement has had a huge and unexpected impact on Spanish political life, generating broad and transversal sympathies, conditioning and introducing new items to the political agenda, and transforming the use and meaning of public space. This paper argues, that a significant part of the 15M political capacity relies on its discourse, characterized by broad, ambivalent and dichotomist interpellations. Using Neogramscian categories and discourse theory, the paper analyzed the indignados discourse in order to reject accusation of populism. The deconstruction of the 15M narrative facilitates an understanding of its main virtues for political mobilization as well as the challenges it faces for its future development. This analysis relates the cycle of collective action which opened on the 15th of May in Spain in a dynamic way with the Andean political process – Venezuelan, Bolivian, Ecuadorian – of institutional collapse and political breakdown.

Íñigo Errejón holds a PhD in Political Sciences from the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM). He has been visiting scholar at different European, American and Latin American universities. His main research interests are the discourse analysis and the theory of hegemony, the political change processes in Latin America and the social movements and protest cycle in southern Europe.

Questioning (Political, Economic and Social) Order – Occupy

Occupy – A unifying political acting body
Johannes Diesing

The Paper postulates, that the diverse social protests which emerged in the year 2011 have to be seen as a political acting in concert (Arendt 2007:220). Thus, despite immediately and publicly articulated doubts, these protests could be interpreted as a comprehensive move towards democratization. Democratization in this case means an urge to the institution or reinstitution of democratic principles in times of economic crisis and increasing use of technocratic and authoritarian solution strategies by governments.
All protests have in common, that they refer to a massive loss of trust and legitimacy of governmental politics, which by many activists are seen as being hold for ransom by multinational corporations. Facing this crisis of the western-liberal model of representative democracy, the diverse movements in general and the occupy-movement in particular rely on direct democracy and as far as possible on participation and inclusion. While articulating critique of governmental politics on the outside, the movement from the inside could also be seen as an laboratory for emancipatory practices – a space for invention of an own idea of democracy. Against the marketing-driven isolation of individualistic consumers from the space of political struggles and subjectivization, the activists back beginning anew. In their forms of actions they develop a political culture of mutual ways to get to know each other, and to connect a variety of diverse people within a horizontal network. Discussions therefore not only serve as a medium to solve a problem but also as opportunities of encountering fellow human beings in the first place.

Collective research and experiments on and of needs and ways to satisfy them are set in the place of instant gratification of the atomized consumer. The occupy movement therefore could be described in the words of Etienne Balibar as a hybrid political acting body which does not represent an empirical or transcendental type, but unifies differences by crossing visible and invisible borders. Furthermore, it permanently tries to overcome its own divisiveness as it attempts to put its enemies to flight at the same time. (Balibar 2012: 71)

Johannes Diesing holds a master degree from Rostock University.

Schließen wir mal keinen Kompromiß, davon hat man große Kümmernis!”: Global Capitalism, the Shifting Sources of (Ii-)Legitimacy and the International Occupy Movement
Ingmar Solty

This paper looks at the question of legitimacy in the context of global capitalism. Based on a brief reconstruction of the critical debate about the (capitalist) state’s legitimacy and its general disappearance from the Marxist and neo-Marxist state debates, it makes the case for a critical re-reading of these debates in the context of the shifting sources of legitimacy resulting from the internationalization of production and the state. The paper then analyzes the (international) Occupy movement in relation to these historical long-term developments and contextualizes it in the crisis of global capitalism arguing that the particular guise of the new protest movements in the advanced capitalist countries needs to be seen as reflections of the generally changing nature of hegemony-construction in global capitalism as well as the _histoire conjunctuelle_ of two “turns”: the “Wende” of 1989 (and as a consequence, the crisis of organized socialist movements) and the global austerity turn of 2010/2011. It concludes with a discussion of the causes of the crisis of Occupy and the prospects of Occupy 2.0.

Ingmar Solty is a PhD candidate at York University in Toronto in Canada and has recently joined the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada-funded research project The European Question in an Era of Economic and Political Crises directed by Stephen Gill. His research focusses on the interrelations of the economic, political and ideological spheres. Solty is author of “Die USA unter Obama: Charismatische Herrschaft, soziale Bewegungen und imperiale Politik in der globalen Krise” (Argument Verlag, Hamburg 2013) and together with Frank Deppe and David Salomon co-author of “Imperialismus” (Papy Rossa, Cologne 2011), an editor at Das Argument: Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Sozialwissenschaften, a Fellow of the Berlin Institute
Contesting (Semi-)Autocratic Regimes

The Revolution of Civil Society: an alternative to neoliberal Deconstruction
Leo Gabriel

Although the term “civil society” has been used quite frequently in the classical leftist literature from Karl Marx to Antonio Gramsci, it was only in the aftermath of the turn (Wende) of 1990, that the expression got its meaning within a broader sector of the part of society, the term civil society actually wants to describe. Substituting the much more precise terminology of class which in orthodox Marxist terms is the political base of a revolution along the parameters of industrial capitalism, “civil society” was taken up as the systemic counterpart of post-modern neoliberal deconstruction.

This was particularly the case in Latin America where thousands of local and dozens of national grass-roots organisations, deeply rooted in colonial and postcolonial history, started to spread out all over the continent as an anti-systemic force. The landless in Brazil, the Cocaleros in Bolivia and above all the Zapatistas in Mexico are only the peaks of a series of earthquakes which shook the political landscape in the urban undergrounds and rural superstructures.

However, the big majority of these organisations who originally opposed the parties of the traditional Left (be they social democrat, communist or Trotzkyist), decided to present themselves either regionally or nationally as an electoral force – not because they did not conceive themselves as revolutionaries and anti-systemic anymore, but because they had renounced from the very beginning on the strategy of armed struggle as a means to get political power.

With the exception of Central America, the popular movements opted for a strategy which very similar to the movements of the European East could be called a “Revolution of Civil Society”. But whereas in Europe these movements soon were taken over by the systemic power structures of the West, in Latin America they developed an organisational structure of their own whose common characteristic was the search of a charismatic leadership.

It was only around the beginning of the new century that this strange political configuration of movement-parties with a string character as its figureheads became politically successful: in Venezuela with Hugo Chavez, in Brazil with “Lula”, in Argentina with Nestor Kirchner, in Ecuador after the betrayal of Lucio Gutierrez with Correa, in Paraguay with Lugo and in Peru with Ollanta. Meanwhile some of the more classical revolutionary leaderships like the Sandinistas with Daniel Ortega and the FMLN with Mauricio Funes also took governmental responsibilities.

Strangely enough, the new paradigm of a “Revolution of civil society” was also taken up by the Islamic cultures and progressive movements in the Arab countries, although with substantial differences: unlike Latin America they lack charismatic leaderships and anti-neoliberal ideas trying to substitute many times anti-systemic analyses by religious belief and, in the case of Syria political strategies by military ones.
However, the last word has not been spoken: the recent events in Turkey and in Brazil, but also in Greece and Spain show that the “Revolution of civil society” has many faces, some which we might like and others not. But all of them have in common a deep mistrust of the system of political representation who has been sold out to the economic powers of the world.

Leo Gabriel (born 1945 in Lower Austria) studied law and political science at the University of Vienna and political anthropology in Paris where he represented the foreign students during the 1968 movement. He has been active as a researcher focusing on civil society in Latin America, as well as he was an activist himself not only in Latin America, but also in Austria. In addition to that, he worked as a documentary filmmaker of social movements in Colombia, Peru, Bolivia and Argentina. In 1986 Dr. Gabriel became the scientific director of the Ludwig-Boltzmann-Institut für zeitgenössische Lateinamerikaforschung (Institute for contemporary studies on Latin America) in Vienna and guest professor at the universities of Zurich, Managua and Mexico. He maintains close links to the Foro de Sao Paulo, a political platform of 140 Latinamerican parties and movements, the international Zapatist movement and Euromarch, a European movement against unemployment and for the integration of transnational trade-unions. Due to his engagement within the anti-globalization movement, he is one of the main organizers of the “Summit of Alternatives” which took place from may, 10th to 13th 2006 in Vienna, simultaneously with the presidential summit between heads of State of Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union.

The endless loop of de-empowering social protests: A case study of the MENA-Region
Lukas Wank & Paul Winter

The term “Arab World” or Middle East is a constructed political category, which tends to homogenise the very differences existing throughout this region. Thus, first of all the authors want to make clear that we do not support such kind of representation. Furthermore the authors do not support terms such as “Arab Spring” or “Arab Winter”, because these categorisation leads to the assumption that social protests have a time frame that is predetermined.

Despite the many regional characteristics one finds an ongoing trend of social discontent - from Tunis to Ryadh. This kind of popular dissatisfaction based on a regional distinctiveness manifested in different political systems, ethnic/sectarian ratios, and the way the respective state is being embedded within the global system. The reactions of states who experienced popular uprisings and civic protests ranges from an acceptance towards non-violent uprisings, to violent repression and tranquillisation throughout (mostly) material concessions.

Despite the different circumstances in each region, the paper at hand is ought to locate similarities within these uprisings, which first of all are to be located in their triggers. We believe that the triggers of the civic uprisings do have one common feature. We propose to call this feature a “systemic crux” which means the accumulation of socio-economic deficits within “Arab” societies as well as a lack of opportunities regarding political participation, ultimately creating a vacuum framed by governmental policies. As one aspect of this “systemic crux” marginalised groups are being forced to act outside their common spaces of representation. The apparent results are political protests which can only be seen in their specific historical, political, economic and social context. Furthermore, there are foreign actors which increasingly (ab)use the civic uprisings to enhance (or maintain) their influence in the respective local contexts. As a result, the civic movements themselves are being altered by external factors, resulting in a transformation of the initial character
of the protests and the “evolutionary” character of social protests is being fundamentally influenced by external players in order to push forward their own interests. (E.g. the leverage of the European Union, the IMF or the Gulf States). Thus the Arab region needs to be considered from an internal and external perspective.

Throughout external influence and specific forms of suppression by the state apparatus itself, social movements are being trapped in an endless loop of powerlessness. This circular mode does not only continuously de-empower social movements but also alters the state’s power and modes of influence. This paper is ought to define the characteristics (e.g. the focal point at which the lack of civic power turns into protest, the loop that enables - or forces - the state to impose mode of accumulation of individual de-empowerment, aso.) of this circle as well as to offer potential options for breaking out of that loop.

**Lukas Wank** studied Development Studies in Vienna. He is working as an editor of “International” - Journal for International Politics and is a founding member of the information project “Shabka”. His research interests are peace and conflict studies, post-colonial and critical theory as well as ethno-nationalism and development studies; regionally he emphasises on the MENA-Region.

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**Reconsidering Information Society Governance**

**Idiotism and the logic of the “third”**
Wolfgang Hofkirchner

Within the perspective of a Global Sustainable Information Society to come (Hofkirchner), it is argued that information society governance, including, but not being exhausted by, internet governance, needs to (1) be global, that is, transcend nation-state level measures; (2) provide sustainability in a very broad sense (culturally, politically, economically, ecologically, and technologically) such that the actors of world society are free to fight anthropogenic dangers of breakdown; (3) assure the availability of information required for that purpose through ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) properly shaped.

Obstacles to the implementation of governance in the above sense are interests that antagonise the interest in “information to be free”: it is self-interest that harnesses information for the purpose of advantaging the self as against the other and as against the social system the self is element of or is on the point of becoming an element of.

Self-interestedness is idiotism (Neal Curtis) – conditions of restriction to the private as against the public. However, information is a public good; it is a commons as is any good produced by actors in common and for common use. Thus the commons follow the logic of the “third”. The “third” is a something that relates the actors ego and alter (“first” and “second”); it is an emergent that comes
into being through the interaction of ego and alter or is reproduced by that interaction; it enables and constrains the further interaction of ego and alter.

Moreover, the enclosure of commons is an antagonistic action that violates the logic of the “third”. Antagonisms arise from the (private) enclosure of any commons (Slavoj Zizek). Hence the possibility of collective action comprising different social movements. The transformation of antagonisms into agonisms (Chantal Mouffe) might be interpreted as a transformation from idiomatism to the logic of the “third”; from a state of actors being exclusively self-interested to a state of them being open to take into account a “third” the relation of which to each of them can be reflected by ego and alter so as to make them change their actions; from the level of dyads as conflicting monads to the metalevel enabling the triad ego—“third”—alter.

Antagonisms bear the stamp of intransigence and thus the seed of violence. They need to be transformed in order to halt violence. States, corporations as well as civil society factions seem to increasingly carry out actions that follow the rule “illegal, but legitimate” (Norman Paech). The fact is these actions aren’t legitimate either. It is stated that legitimation can only be accomplished if the actors abide by the logic of the “third”.

**Wolfgang Hofkirchner** was born in 1953 in Vienna, Austria. Being educated as Political Scientist and Psychologist, he acquired the *venia docendi* in Technology Assessment at the Vienna University of Technology (where he received a tenure position), was University Professor for Internet and Society at the University of Salzburg and Guest Professor in Spain and Brazil. His fields of interest are: Systems; Science of Information; ICTs and Society. Accordingly, he is co-founder of a research center in systems (bcsss.org), a society in information studies (is4is.org), and a network in ICTs and society research (icts-and-society.net). He counts close to 190 publications. He has been appointed an academician of the Leibniz-Society of the Sciences to Berlin and of the International Academy for Systems and Cybernetic Sciences.

**Information hegemony and civic resistance**
Ronald Tuschl

Civil resistance has in fact a long tradition since the existence of interactive media like the Internet. Even at the beginning of the 90ies when the global data network came into being the very first initiatives have covered wide spreading networks of activism demanding democratic participation and information dissemination. Due to the structure of the Internet, which allows a free flow of information on one hand, but also the control of information and censorship on the other hand, the demand for information transparency and democratic “bottom up” participation has been increasing. Furthermore, the civic protests against globalization, neo-liberalism and other forms of exclusion of public opinion have been accompanied by new forms of protest against information hegemony and opinion leadership. These new forms of resistance are covering legal, semi-legal or illegal activisms like hacks, leaks or online petitions promoted by initiatives like “Anonymous”, WikiLeaks” or “Vatileaks”, which have occurred during the civic protest against opinion leadership and authorities on a local, regional and global scale. This article focuses on the past, present and future of information dissemination activisms in our world information society and also deals with different forms of resistance against information omission and censorship mentioned above.
Ronald Tuschl was born in Reutte/Tyrol in 1969 and studied Political Science in combination with International Relations, Development Studies, Contemporary History and Informatics at the University of Innsbruck. He had his first research experience at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) in Germany as a Research Fellow and continued his work at the European Peace University (EPU) in Stadtschlaining/Austria in 1996. He became Secretary General of the EPU in 2006 and is now working as a Senior Lecturer. He also served as a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Innsbruck and Vienna.