

the need and opportunities to globalise China's multifarious responsibilities, in particular with regard to contributing to an international consensus over the conditions for business-led growth. The end result is a very useful volume for scholars, policy-makers and activists engaging with Chinese–African relations and with questions of China's geopolitical and developmental responsibilities towards Africa.

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Beyond Zuccotti Park: freedom of assembly and the occupation of public space edited by *Ron Shiffman, Rick Bell, Lance Jay Brown and Lynne Elizabeth*

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Beyond Zuccotti Park is a welcome addition to the ever-expanding catalogue of books on the Occupy movement that first came to life in New York on 17 September 2011. With nearly 40 contributors from multiple disciplines, and packed with photographs and diagrams, it is a fantastic resource that combines empirical research, political interventions and interviews, broadly focused on exploring the role that public space can have in enhancing democracy in light of the Occupations that spread from downtown Manhattan to hundreds of cities worldwide. Shiffman *et al.*'s collection introduces the reader to Occupy, principally Occupy Wall Street, through a series of opening texts, many of which are ethnographic, and provides a thorough account of the ways in which public space has been produced by a range of agents, from policymakers, urban practitioners, activists, artists and citizens, in the context of Occupy and various historical precedents. Particular attention is given to New York's 'Privately Owned Public Spaces', which provided a legal loophole for occupying Zuccotti Park. The final section brings together the diverse discussions on public space and democracy into a normative exploration of how both the public sector and those who design urban space could respond to the successes and challenges of Occupy.

What makes this book stand out is the effort throughout to appreciate 'the political power of physical places', as Michael Kimmelman (p. xiii) puts it. Over the last few years there has been an increasing tendency of both academics and activists to emphasise the contemporary significance of online space, often evoked in phrases such as the 'twitter revolution' in popular media. In both discourse and practice, however, Occupy has been centred on taking physical space, and very material struggles over the production of the urban. In this context even Manuel Castells (2012), a key theorist of the deterritorialised 'network society', has acknowledged that contemporary social movements, from Tahir Square to Zuccotti Park, present a new spatial form in which the physical 'space of places' is as important as the online 'space of flows'. This book is one of the first attempts to seriously engage with this physicality in the context of the Occupy movement.

The importance of a physical, public space (these terms are often conflated) for enhancing democracy is given numerous

explanations by the different contributors: it provides visibility for movements and allows for discussion (Franck and Huang); it inspires and helps build mutual aid and solidarity (Shepard); it opens up a space of negotiation for greater rights (Smithsimon); it gives an 'office space for everyday people' (Golan); it presents a critique of spatial exclusion (Wiley); it creates places for new political subjectivities (Rios); and it encourages an embodied sense of community (Rose). This multiplicity of possibilities of physical space leads to a discussion on how best to produce urban space in order to foster these ideals. A key strength of this book is its inclusion of numerous urban practitioners, from artists to architects and planners to policymakers. By sharing their experiences with us, this book presents a hopeful intervention on the potentials of urban space post-Occupy, and allows us to re-imagine the agency of diverse actors in creating different kinds of democracies. At the same time, however, these interventions have tensions underlying them, two of which most struck me.

Firstly, the challenge of improving public space often leads to a discussion on better design and avoiding 'failed spaces' (p. 361). Some contributors, however, suggest that such an approach hints at a spatial fetishism that underemphasises public praxis. Hou, for example, distinguishes between 'institutional public space', such as parks, squares and streets, which are abstractly produced for an imagined public, and 'insurgent public space', produced through the messy practices of those who constantly 'appropriate, reclaim, or occupy' space (p. 92). Advocating the latter, he argues that it is the constant (re)making of the *public* through their practices of occupying that should be the focus of our attention. Secondly, there is often an underlying assumption that influencing state power is the best means to achieve improved public space and democracy, and the collection ends with a call to 'occupy the voting booth'. At the same time, there is a celebration of Occupy's emancipatory politics that was embedded in physical space. Indeed many see Occupy as part of a longstanding tradition of anarchist democracy, changing society outside the voting booth (Graeber 2013). Shiffman *et al.* have helped shift our attention towards the spatial politics that lie at the heart of Occupy, and this is essential, but they risk playing down its radical roots that animate its re-imaginings of democracy beyond the state.

This leads me to my final comment, on the excellent but at times unfulfilled discussions of Occupy *beyond* Zuccotti Park. While the book plays close attention to the responses of policymakers and urban practitioners in the post-camp period of Occupy, it overlooks many of the spatial practices that have been central to the movement since being evicted from the squares (e.g. the re-territorialisation of activists in projects such as Occupy Sandy in New York). The book provides hints that Occupy represents a new spatiality of the 'global street' (Sassen) or is embedding its values in our everyday lives post-Zuccotti (Atlas), yet there is little substance to these claims. More concretely, Segal argues that a key element of post-Zuccotti Occupy could be the mapping out and production of urban communal spaces (such as community gardens), while Lander and Freedman-Schnapp argue for extending democratic engagement beyond camps and into local spaces such as libraries or theatres. Little else is said on the many ways that Occupy is re-imagining itself beyond Zuccotti Park.

Finishing this collection of very engaging texts, I was left feeling that an important discussion was marginalised. It may be enlightening to look towards Latin America where the occupation of public space has been a core tactic of contemporary social movements for many years. Researchers are claiming that we are seeing the production of 'new territorialities' in which values and social relations are being created beyond the traditional spaces of economic production and state democracy (Porto-Gonçalves 2001; Zibechi 2012). Is something similar happening with Occupy? If so, what might the implications be for the policymakers and practitioners who contributed to this book? Is it possible that beyond Zuccotti Park also takes us beyond a public space that is tied to institutionalised democracy and towards a more insurgent public, as Hou suggests? In conclusion, I welcome this well-written and well-researched book, which provides significant food for thought for both academics

and activists in the post-camp phase of the global Occupy movement.

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References

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