

Palgrave Studies in European Political Sociology

Bourdieu and Social Movements

Ideological Struggles in the
British Anti-Capitalist Movement



Joseph Ibrahim



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Ideological Struggles in the British Anti-capitalist Movement

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For Max, my sunshine!

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	viii
<i>Series Preface</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xiv
1 Introduction: A New Era of Movement Understanding: A Bourdieusian Approach	1
2 Anti-neoliberalism and British Anti-capitalism	18
3 Towards a New Theory of Social Movement Practice	42
4 Political Distinction and the Reflexive Anti-capitalist Habitus	64
5 Fields of Struggle: Ideological Competition and Conflict	86
6 A Very British Coup: Transforming Fields through Superior Capital	107
7 The Occupy Movement: A Crisis of Doxa	127
8 Conclusion	147
<i>Notes</i>	152
<i>References</i>	154
<i>Index</i>	161

Figures

3.1	Doxa, heterodoxy, orthodoxy	58
6.1	Make Poverty History banner in front of Edinburgh Castle	116

Series Preface

Palgrave Studies in European Political Sociology addresses contemporary themes in the field of Political Sociology. Over recent years, attention has turned increasingly to processes of Europeanization and globalization and the social and political spaces that are opened by them. These processes comprise both institutional-constitutional change and new dynamics of social transnationalism. Europeanization and globalization are also about changing power relations as they affect people's lives, social networks and forms of mobility.

The *Palgrave Studies in European Political Sociology* series addresses linkages between regulation, institution building and the full range of societal repercussions at local, regional, national, European and global level, and will sharpen understanding of changing patterns of attitudes and behaviours of individuals and groups, the political use of new rights and opportunities by citizens, new conflict lines and coalitions, societal interactions and networking, and shifting loyalties and solidarity within and across the European space. We welcome proposals from across the spectrum of Political Sociology, including on dimensions of citizenship; political attitudes and values; political communication and public spheres; states, communities, governance structure and political institutions; forms of political participation; populism and the radical right; and democracy and democratization.

Preface

How can groups of people be against capitalism? Isn't that like being against ageing or gravity? Isn't capitalism the best economic system there can be? For as long as there has been capitalism there has always been anti-capitalism. Maybe Hegel's dialectical materialism is correct? Or maybe Marx's historical materialism is? Or maybe political contention is more complicated than this? It is certainly the case that the world has seen numerous mass mobilizations against supranational political institutions and multinational corporations that are driving neoliberal globalization. The most recent has been the Occupy movement, which is in large measure a reaction against the banking system and the inability of western democratic systems to deal with the financial crisis caused by casino capitalism.

There have been many publications on these waves of protests against neoliberalism during the 21st century. There has been much less on the role that British anti-capitalist groups have played, and next to nothing on the internal conflict between anti-capitalist groups during this wave. More than this, the major social movement theories are not really equipped to deal with conflict between movements; they tend to focus on movements versus elites. This book provides a new theoretical lens with which to view ideological competition and conflict between movements that have the same political objectives.

This book charts some of the major events in which British anti-capitalist groups have taken part. This includes European Social Forums, anti-G8 mobilizations, and the Occupy movement in the UK. At the same time, it provides a sustained theoretical analysis of the complex and often conflictual relationships that British anti-capitalist groups have with each other. The main focus of the book is how British anti-capitalist groups subscribing to the ideologies of anarchism and socialism negotiate their politics with each other and with the wider social and political forces arguing against neoliberalism. In order to grasp the complexity of how groups subscribing to these ideologies interact, I have drawn on Bourdieu's

theoretical technologies, including habitus, capital, field and doxa. These concepts are under-utilized in social movement analysis. Yet they provide the necessary power with which to understand the political biography of activists, their ideological intentions, the nature of the political landscape where intra-movement contention takes place, and how movements such as Occupy emerge out of crises. To this end, the book offers a fresh theoretical perspective.

Joseph Ibrahim

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Abbreviations

ACM	Anti-capitalist movement
AGM	Alternative globalization movement
ATTAC	Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens
BACMF	British Anti-capitalist Movement Field
EDA	Environmental direct action
ESF	European Social Forum
GA	General Assembly
G8	Group of 8 nations
G20	Group of 20 nations
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MPH	Make Poverty History
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NSM	New social movement
SWP	Socialist Workers Party
WB	World Bank
WEF	World Economic Forum
WSF	World Social Forum
WTO	World Trade Organization