**A return to prime time activism: social movement theory and the media**

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**Introduction**

There is a hierarchy within social movement theory related to media activism where some methods, objectives and priorities appear to carry more weight and are more passionately pursued than others.

Let us consider this claim in the light of the very comprehensive definition of media activism provided by Hoynes (1) that sees activism as composed of interlocking fields:

Media activists seek to change both the structure and content of mainstream media, and they use a wide variety of tactics to alternately woo and pressure journalists, call public attention to the failures of mainstream media, build public support for policies aimed at promoting diversity in media ownership and content, and support alternative media across the range of media platforms.

How does this relate to the practices of media activists on the ground? Activists are increasingly focused on developing targeted media strategies and thinking about how best to relate to journalists and news routines in order to secure coverage of their activities (2). They are also energetically committed to exposing the limitations of the mainstream media and to pointing out how their own perspectives are largely marginalized by corporate actors – witness the media monitoring work of groups like Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting and Media Lens together with critiques of mainstream media performance, the most famous of which remains Herman and Chomsky’s propaganda model (3). Activists have long been committed to creating their own channels of communication via radical media and distributed technologies to promote their own viewpoints and to mobilize publics (4) in search of social justice. For example, only recently a Greenpeace campaign aimed at persuading Lego to cut its links with energy giant Shell produced a video viewed more than six million times in turn generating substantial media coverage (5).

Activists have been, however, perhaps less successful in mobilizing citizens to tackle existing media institutions and to press for progressive media policies such as those that will challenge existing patterns of media concentration, foster new voices through the creation of more equitable systems of production and distribution, and provide the basis for a more representative media system at all levels (i.e. one staffed by diverse communities and that caters to the whole of the population and not just the most privileged audiences). And even where citizens have organized in support of structural changes to existing communication systems—for example in defence of Net Neutrality or democratic internet governance—it is very rare for campaigners’ objectives to be realized in durable and significant media reforms.

Yet this unevenness is especially exaggerated within social movement *theory* and it is on this latter point -- that there is a hierarchy of interest within the theory of activism in relation to communications -- that I want to focus. This paper reflects on how we might challenge social movement theory to engage more productively in media policy battles and to make sure that policy activism is not an adjunct to but a central part of media activism more broadly. Activists seem to be prepared to apply the spirit of social change to most public institutions with the exception of core constituents of the state such as the police, the army and the security services. Yet there is also a reluctance to apply democratic pressure to mainstream media institutions because they appear -- at least from the perspective of increasing numbers of activists -- to be irreconcilably tied to vested interests and therefore incapable of radical change. Better to sidestep existing institutions or to play them at their own game by providing relevant content and seeking source status than it is fully to confront the dynamics of existing media structures.

Social movement theory has an important role to play in both galvanizing and strengthening media activism and yet it appears to have little to say about how activists should relate to *mainstream* media and how best to engage in projects that are aimed at reforming and democratizing some of our most popular media outlets. How do we explain the reluctance to embrace a media policy focus within social movement theory and why is this element of media activism often absent from the political and intellectual agendas of many left-leaning academics and activists?

**Social movement theory and the media**

Despite contemporary trends concerning mediatization and the centrality of information to contemporary power relations (6), there is still a strong perception that social movement theory has not yet grasped the scale and significance of the role of media and communications in processes of social change. Todd Gitlin may have observed that in a ‘floodlit society, it becomes increasingly difficult, perhaps unimaginable, for an opposition movement to define itself and its world view…outside the dominant culture’ (7), but disciplines like sociology, politics and international relations ‘largely ignore the relationships between activism and media’ (8). In a recent review of the literature on the relationship between social movements and the media, the Italian theorist Lorenzo Mosca argues that ‘only recently have scholars of unconventional collective action begin to consider communication as worthy of analysis in its own right’ (9). Even now, it is still considered to be ‘a dependent variable of limited importance’. In contrast to examinations of organizational structures, targets pursued and strategies adopted, media and communication, therefore, appear to be of secondary importance. As John Downing argues: ‘It is on the edge of being weird that there is so little systematic analysis of communication or media in the social movement literature’ (10).

However, let us not exaggerate the problem nor insist that the media matters *have* to be the first item on the social movement agenda. The fact is that increasing numbers of media theorists are being heard outside of their own discipline and that more social movement theorists are, in turn, reflecting on issues of communication. For example, della Porta and Diani note in their textbook introduction to the topic that social movements ‘depend on the mass media to get their message across’ (11). Social movements need to pose a challenge to the media’s symbolic power, in particular by developing their own autonomous channels of communication via counter public spheres, counter information, alternative and radical media. Many social movement theorists acknowledge the media to be crucial sites of negotiation and transmission with Melucci, as another example, regularly invoking the significance of the ‘power of information’ in the construction of collective action and arguing that movements have shifted from being conceived as ‘organizational or political actors to movements as *media*’ (12). But while he recognises that the ‘“power of the media” is not the power of a monolithic and treacherous Goliath’, his attention is focused more on discursive rather than material battles within the media environment. Movements need to take part in a battle over ‘the power of naming’ in order to ‘expand the intimations of public discourse into an authentic public space’ (13).

Indeed, where it is discussed in the literature, the focus is concerned not so much with democratizing existing structures than with developing appropriate media strategies for resource-poor groups (which is why we are seeing a growth industry in media handbooks for grassroots campaigners to which I referred earlier). So despite some fundamental critiques of the mainstream media as hostile to social movement goals, movements themselves increasingly relate to these institutions as a ‘political opportunity structure’ (14). As the sociologist Harvey Molotch argues in relation to social movements, ‘the mass media represent a potential mechanism for utilizing an establishment institution to fulfil nonestablishment goals: communicating with movement followers, reaching out to potential recruits, neutralizing would-be opponents and confusing or otherwise immobilizing committed opponents’ (15). Gamson, in his pioneering study of *The* *Strategy of Social Protest*, focuses on strategies used by ‘challenger groups’ to secure favourable coverage and the kinds of activities designed to attract media attention in the first place (16). According to Hoynes (2005), the relationship between media and social movements is more about issues of framing and about how to correct the low status of activist groups as desirable sources although, in general, ‘the work of scholars and activists remains largely in separate domains’ (17).

Even one of the very few books that takes seriously both the possibilities and limitations of mainstream media foregrounds media strategies over policy activism. Charlotte Ryan’s wonderful *Prime Time Activism* provides a comprehensive and subtle critique of the media that seeks to avoid both ‘underdetermination’ and ‘overdetermination’, ie ‘overemphasising constraints and underestimating possibilities for action’ and ‘underestimating the constraints and overestimating the possibliities for organizing’ (18). Yet, above all, the book sets out to equip grassroots activists with a detailed knowledge of news routines such as gatekeeping, framing and agenda-setting in order to most effectively win coverage of their struggles. She provides a salutary warning about using the mainstream media as a short-cut for other campaign strategies, arguing that an emphasis on the mainstream media ‘seduces us into thinking in terms of American individualism’ (19) and insists that activists need to recognise media as only one particular channel of mobilization. Yet, the title is effectively a handbook for activists to secure maximum column inches and airtime for social justice campaigns in the light of the very real structural constraints that Ryan painstakingly details.

Of course much has changed in the last 25 years and the participatory possibilities of communication technologies originally identified by Brecht and Enzensberger (20) have been enormously expanded by digital developments such that social movements are increasingly able to take advantage of distributed technologies for their own purposes. Spurred on by the role of social media platforms in the Arab Spring, the Occupy movement and anti-austerity movements, theorists are now highlighting the significance of ‘networked protest’ (21) and ‘emancipatory communication activism’ described by Stefania Milan as ‘ways of social organizing to create alternatives to existing media and communication infrastructure’ (22).

This is, of course, where most of the (practical and theoretical) action is today: in possibilities for meaningful protest inspired, powered or at least organized by digital technologies. As Cammaerts puts it:

Most recent empirical studies on activism within Media and Communication Studies focus foremost on the opportunities and constraints the Internet provides in organizing movements, ‘networking’, mobilizing online, as well as offline, and/or strengthening the public sphere by facilitating discussion and the development of counter-hegemonic discourses (23).

It is a vital area of research and praxis, not least because of some of the exaggerations made about the power of ‘networked protest’ (24). But the one thing that is frequently pushed to the side is what is sometimes seen as the banal and pedantic legislative sphere of ‘media reform’.

It is worth noting straight away that this is *not* the case with all areas of media policy activism. As has been well documented, there is certainly quite a vigorous movement in the sphere of internet governance and communication rights which combines governments, NGOs, academics and social movements in trying to democratize the networks on which our movements increasingly depend (25). Clearly, there are prospects for similar sorts of campaigns in opposition to state surveillance where national security agencies and private companies are complicit in their campaigns to monitor our communications activity. But this is mostly because these are emerging systems and platforms where there is not yet a consensus on how best to construct stable regimes both of oversight and control.

With this obviously very important exception, the idea of media *policy* activism is often absent from much of the literature on media and social movements. It barely features in some of the classic social movement texts to which I have already referred. To be more precise, it is sometimes hinted at but rarely followed up. Della Porta and Diani, for example, argue that the ‘more autonomous and pluralistic the media structure, the greater the possibility of access for challengers’ (26). In other words, it matters to the movements themselves—to their opportunities to speak and be heard—about what kind of media system it is. It makes a difference whether it is a state-controlled authoritarian system, a highly commercial model that presents different forms of controls, a public service system with a mandated yet very elitist system of pluralism, or one with a strong community and non-profit core. So della Porta and Diani are quite right to raise this but it is not something they return to.

Even from within media and communications theory, John Downing’s majestic overview of ‘rebellious communication and social movements’ neglects discussions of policy action in favour of an emphasis on communication forms, aesthetics and politics. Significantly, however, he attempts to correct this in his conclusion: ‘I find it hard to discount the importance of trying to make a dent in media and communication policies that otherwise are the happy hunting ground of corporate leaders who draft legislation for our supposed political representatives’ (27).

Similarly, in a recent, and I think important, collection on the relationship between mediation and ‘contentious politics’ (28), there is also barely a mention of media policy activism. In pa particularly interesting chapter, Dieter Rucht talks about four reactions on the part of protest movements to the mainstream media: the four ‘A’s (29).

* *Abstention* which arises out of the indifference or outright hostility of the media towards protest.
* *Attack* on mainstream media which can be written, verbal or, in some cases, physical.
* *Adaptation*, where campaigners comply with mainstream agendas and routines in order to stand the best chance of securing sympathetic, or perhaps any, coverage.
* *Alternative* media where the movement makes its own media.

This is a very helpful typology of media/movement relations but it is nevertheless very revealing that Rucht chooses *not* to address a further ‘A’ – what I, in the absence of any better word that starts with A, call ‘amelioration’, in other words reform: campaigns to change the failing institutions that make up the media. None of the examples discussed above are accidental or the result of neglect on the part of the authors. Instead, they reflect some fundamental reasons why media policy activism has a relatively low profile within social movement literature.

The first part of the explanation is that an orientation on policy is often perceived to be a compromised political project in that it is reformist in spirit and incomplete (or worse) in practice. Calabrese distinguishes between media reform and media justice where the former intimately tied to ‘liberal’ conceptions of communication rights and where ‘liberal reforms can be viewed as enabling the persistence of fundamental injustices by failing to address, and even naturalizing, their root causes’ (30). This also feeds into Silverstone’s critique of state regulation as being more concerned with procedural questions—about providing enabling structures—than with fundamental questions of justice and the ability to speak freely and respectfully. He argues that ‘regulation is like grammar. It addresses the rules of language, not how that language is spoken or what it said’ (31).

For many social movement activists, this type of media reform–of trying to democratize the media—is seen as potentially counter-productive in that activists are likely either to be incorporated into official channels and to tailor their demands to meet the values and demands of vested interests. De Jong, Shaw and Stammers are right to suggest that many social movements are ‘non-institutionally oriented and largely anti-institutional (32) and therefore likely to doubt the need to engage with formal processes and ‘official’ channels. Thinking in particular of the US media reform group Free Press, Mickey Huff of *Project Censored* warns of the dangers of ‘working through the system’ and of attempting merely to fix, rather than to replace, a social system that has been found to be demonstrably unfair and unequal. This lends itself to reformist illusions both that the system can indeed by repaired and that, even if we do fix media institutions, that they will ever deliver social justice within the existing frame of capitalism. As Huff argues, we need to ‘Be the Media in word and deed…not lobby those in power to reform their own current establishment megaphones for their own power elite agendas, as that will not happen, and indeed, has not, for the most part, in the past’ (33).

Social movement theory’s failure to engage with the policy sphere of media activism isn’t due to absent-mindedness or prevarication. It is more deliberate and purposeful and based on a perception that, because established media structures are unrepresentative, unaccountable and ideologically committed to a neoliberal consensus, why bother to focus on efforts to reform failed institutions? Why waste energy on spending time on something as anodyne and moderate as campaigns for an ethical press, or more democratic media ownership, or for the survival of local news – when these institutions have long been part of the problem in undermining democracy, stifling prospects for social and political equality and indeed in marginalizing social movements themselves?

Of course, this is not a problem solely to do with the limitations of media policy questions but also reflects the highly ambiguous position and politics of civil society groups themselves. Trapped within a Foucauldian nightmare of incorporation and reinforcement, one critic argues that ‘civil society associations and organisations help to stabilise and normalise conditions that are seen as threats or disturbances to the welfare of human populations, *but not to alter the structural conditions responsible for those threats and disturbances*’ (34). The result of this is in that relation to child poverty, environmental disaster or media power, civil society action that is focused on ‘improvement’ simply runs the risk of reproducing the social relations of neoliberalism.

Secondly, media policy is far from a space that social movements control. This reflects a crucial argument about the most efficient use of movement resources and our ability to shape public debate and foster public action. Why prioritize an environment that is fundamentally hostile to our interests when we have the ability to produce our own materials that we can disseminate through our own networks? If you agree with Cammaerts that activism is concerned with ‘the ability to act and make or change history’ (35), in other words with the changeability and ‘makeability’ of society, than why choose a series of institutions that have proved to be so resistant to change? Of course, this is not simply a matter of efficiency but pragmatism as movements are likely to grow in confidence and impact if they are able to express themselves in their own terms and not only to pander to the frames, vocabularies and agendas of others.

In the knowledge, therefore, that we cannot rely on the mainstream media to cover our struggles, indeed to represent our lives as they are lived, we are forced to make our own media. Both the theory and practice of alternative media draws on participatory accounts of democracy to produce media that better reflect the diversity of the population and that more productively fit the needs of our movements. Social movement theory has a particular role to play here in considering the communicative competences, performances and structures that are necessary to publicize, organize and galvanize movements for social justice. We have a whole host of platforms, technologies and practices in place—from ‘hacktivism’ to citizen journalism and from ‘culture jamming’ to community media—that both challenge the agendas and narratives of mainstream media and allows ‘ordinary’ media users to take control of the technologies.

This relates to a third problem with media policy activism: that it lacks the participatory, grassroots structures that populate alternative media environments and that it reflects the hierarchical, exclusive and ‘insider’ character of the administrative processes that account for formal policymaking and regulatory environments. In other words, policy activism too often looks like the structures it aims to contest: depoliticized, top-down and unequal as well as white male and middle class. This takes us in a different direction to the objectives of the media justice movement that seeks to ‘build meaningful participation from communities of color and indigenous communities to take back this important right [to a free media], to take back our airways, networks and cultural spaces’ (36). Traditional approaches to media policy activism therefore are seen not only to marginalize certain groups of people and issues but also—to put it very crudely—to lack the excitement and passion of more grassroots movements. In a nutshell, media policy activism is kind of boring. Is this an accurate representation?

**Features of a radical media policy activism**

Joe Karaganis distinguishes between two ‘geographies of activism’: a more civil and polite ‘consumer-rights-based model of policy advocacy’ encapsulated in media reform strategies and more militant demands for media justice that emerge from ‘predominantly civil-rights-informed concerns with accountability, representation and voice in the media’ (37). To what extent is it possible to imagine the concerns of media justice campaigners applied to the objectives of media reformers committed to transforming the policy environment and is Karaganis right to assert—despite the reservations outlined earlier—that ‘systemic change requires a social movement capable of linking policy agendas with grassroots activism’ (38)?

Media policy activism ought not to be seen as separate to other stands of media activism. It builds on a critique of the limitations of the mainstream media and is buoyed by efforts to communicate movement ideas and actions in our own terms but it focuses on efforts to democratize actually existing media through initiatives like diversifying media ownership, opening up the media policy process, campaigning for new forms of funding for marginalized content, opposing surveillance, challenging existing copyright regimes and pressing for more ethical forms of journalism. This often requires an engagement with official structures – with formal legislative processes, with parliaments and policy makers, with lobbyists and lawyers – in order words with the very constituents of the system that are responsible for a diminished and degraded media culture. As I have just explained, it is hardly surprising that it is this dimension of media activism that is most noticeably absent from social movement theory in relation to the media.

Let us examine these debates—whether we should attempt to ‘work through the system or not—and investigate this particular strand of media activism in relation to a major debate in the UK since 2011: efforts to produce a more responsible and ethical press in the light of the phone hacking crisis and, in particular, the legacy and implications of the Leveson Inquiry into press standards and practices that followed it.

The reaction to the whole Leveson process from many social movement activists, in particular those who are most concerned with the media, was that Leveson was about ‘ruling class recuperation’ in which one faction of the state sought to discipline and humble the ‘unruly elements’ of the Murdoch empire (39). A focus on challenging just one element of private power, it was argued, ran the risk of marginalizing the more essential surveillance and consensus-building roles of the state itself. The celebrated investigative journalist John Pilger accused Leveson of being essentially concerned with ‘the preservation of the system’ and noted that ‘Leveson has asked nothing about how the respectable media complemented the Murdoch press in systematically promoting corrupt, mendacious, often violent political power whose crimes make phone-hacking barely a misdemeanour’. The monitoring site Media Lens argued that the Leveson Inquiry constituted ‘yet another instance of established power investigating itself’ while the academic Richard Keeble insisted that that the inquiry should be understood as ‘spectacular theatre’ that provided ‘the illusion of moral intent by the state and its propaganda institutions - the leading media corporations - when in reality the system is run on ruthless profit-oriented principles’ (40).

These are valuable and legitimate criticisms. The emphasis in the Leveson Inquiry on individual ‘bad apples’ and its reluctance to confront any structural issues meant that, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, corrupt organizations, complicit relationships and corrosive institutions were individualized, decontextualized and stripped of their systemic characters in order to pursue politically pragmatic resolutions (41). Without challenging the underlying conditions that gave rise to phone hacking—a press system wedded either to private profit or public influence—Leveson was, to a certain extent captured by precisely the power relations it sought to investigate and to hold to account.

But there is one problem with these critiques: they ignore the possibility that the exposure of media power during the course of the Inquiry might help to radicalize victims’ groups, other activists and indeed ordinary members of the public to ask more fundamental questions about how best to seek not just a more ethical press but a truly accountable media system, not just to introduce a new code but to press for a completely different form of political culture. It is true that the structuring of the Inquiry fits the propaganda model notion of containing debate within acceptable limits but it also raised fundamental questions about the location and exercise of power in the UK that, if acted upon by activist organizations, could have laid the basis for a more sustained challenge to the hegemony of corporate media.

Media activists have a responsibility in this context to amplify these arguments about the flaws of an entrenched media power as part of a broader argument about the operation of the capitalist state. They do not need to make polite requests to tone down the worst excesses of the tabloid press or engage in subdued parliamentary lobbying to secure minimal changes to press self-regulation. Instead, activists should attempt to broaden the debate and to deepen the crisis by campaigning for specific remedies to, for example, media concentration, press scapegoating and the decline of local news. We should encourage a diversity of approaches that includes everything from academic research that demonstrates the scale of the problems to street protests (as we have seen in Mexico, Istanbul and Athens in recent years) that seek to mobilize publics in support of efforts to democratize media systems. At the same time we need to insist that the failures of mainstream media and existing policymaking processes are indeed systemic and not incidental or peripheral to the core operations of media and political elites. We need, in other words, to introduce more radical questions and techniques to those traditionally posed by reform-minded policy actors.

**Is reform enough?**

This is a debate, after all, about the politics of reform in general. Reform has been hijacked in recent years: education reforms, health reforms, welfare reform – all these have been about the further implantation of market values into public services rather than the democratizing of these institutions. But of course these are not examples of genuine reform so much as attempts to concentrate power and wealth in fewer hands. Just because political reform has been re-branded does not mean that activists should abandon the struggle for democratic reforms. The whole point of the anti-slavery movement, attempts to organize labour in the 19th century, struggles for the vote for women in the early 20th century, the struggle for civil rights later on in the 20th century was that these were reforms that were really fought for by different groups of people using hugely varied tactics from the polite and the parliamentary to the far more risky and revolutionary. That is the nature of reform movements: they combine people who are happy to stick to the immediate demands with those who want to go much further; they consist of fragile coalitions between people who think that the system as it exists can deliver reforms that will satisfy enough people and those who think that there are structural inequalities that cannot be ironed out given the priorities of capitalism.

In these circumstances, the best tactic for those who want to see radical and durable change is not to withdraw from reform-minded movements but to demonstrate that reforms can only be won and protected through systemic critique and radical action such as the boycotts, marches, occupations and direction action that have won the greatest victories in struggles for justice.

But what is odd is that while many of us are happy to engage in anti-racist, environmental, disability, living wage and any number of other campaigns to deal with the injustices meted out every day, we are far more reluctant to place such demands on prospects for media justice. We’re simultaneously fascinated and horrified by the mainstream media: we love complaining about it but we also love for our protests to be covered; we want to produce our own media but have to deal with the fact that millions of people continue to turn to corporate outlets for their information and entertainment and not to movement resources. della Porta actually raises this as an issue when she talks about the difficulties for alternative media ‘to reach beyond those already sympathetic to the cause’ (42) and embraces the need to engage with the mass media in order to disseminate progressive messages more widely.

Media policy activism, as with many other campaigns for social reform and justice, is therefore a way of reaching out to those people who have a healthy and often instinctive critique of the status quo but who maintain some illusions in the status quo. It is a way of working with those who want to see meaningful change but are not yet prepared to junk existing institutions and traditional forms of political campaigning in parliament and civil society.

We can learn a lot from Bob Hackett and Bill Carroll’s great book on democratic media activism which argues that it is both defensive and pro-active -- in other words that it can be both reform-oriented in practice but also revolutionary and autonomist in spirit (43). Media activism for them involves a redefinition of the very idea of democracy to include new rights such as the right to share meaning as well as an increased emphasis on participation and equality through acts of media-making. The objective for democratic media activists is ‘to build coalitions and campaigns to engage with and transform the dominant machinery of representation, in both the media and political fields’ (44). Indeed, it is harder and harder to separate media activism from other social struggles and to insulate media reform from political reform in particular because of the lack of autonomy of the media ‘field’ – precisely as we saw in the Leveson Inquiry where complicit relationships between media and political elites were laid bare.

We need therefore to use an inside/outside perspective that takes me back to the dimensions of media activism that I started this presentation with: efforts to secure positive coverage of activist concerns, radical critique of mainstream media, production of independent and alternative media, and attempts to democratize the mainstream media. This is best characterized in a slogan developed by Canadian media activists behind the annual Media Democracy Day: ‘know the media’, ‘be the media’ AND ‘change the media’. We have to employ all three strategies if we are going to achieve more democratic media systems.

In conclusion, to the extent that activists want to precipitate a fundamental shift in political power and social justice, they need to engage in media reform but not from a reformist perspective. In doing this, we can draw on a pamphlet by the German revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg, *Reform or revolution*, written back in 1899 in which she distinguished between ‘revisionist’ strategies for reform which attempt to administer palliative care to the capitalist system and more radical strategies that seek to win reforms as a fundamental part of a revolutionary strategy to transform the status quo. While the former wants ‘to lessen, to attenuate, the capitalist contradictions’ (45) in order to stabilize society and produce consensus, the latter seeks to struggle for reforms as part of a more widespread challenge to capitalist hegemony. The crucial point for Luxemburg however was that movements for reforms were central to a more profound social struggle: ‘Between social reforms and revolution there exists for the revolutionary an indissoluble tie. The struggle for reforms is its means; the social revolution, its aim’ (46).

Now my point is *not* that Luxemburg would have been active in Free Press or FLOSS movements or the Media Reform Coalition or that she would have spent her time lobbying for better rules for internet governance or more effective codes of conduct for journalists. I simply want to stress that media reform, like all other forms of social reform, is a contradictory and uneven process in which different groups are involved and different strategies are mobilized. There is a world of difference between an activist campaign which calls on a handful of the ‘great and the good’ to plead its case and one which seeks to mobilize greater numbers of people using all the tactics that are available – a difference perhaps between ‘reform from above’ and ‘reform from below’.

Of course, if social movements are to secure durable and significant change, then there is little point in aiming only at amelioration: at applying a band-aid to deep cuts. It is also the case, however, that there is little point in refusing at least to treat the wound if activist movements are to grow and gain influence. We need to delegitimize and pose alternatives to the highly unequal power structures that dominate the media but we also need to take seriously all those who want to find solutions to current problems if we are to secure a full mandate for change. A media activism that is based on pressing for policy change in the here and now while simultaneously developing its own structures that go far beyond the constraints of existing media systems may yet bear out Downing’s prediction that ‘only dual activity by radical media makers and radical policy activists has the prospect of letting the public construct for themselves any kind of zone worth inhabiting’ (47).

**Notes**

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5. Adam Vaughan, “Lego ends Shell partnership following Greenpeace campaign,” *Guardian*, http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/oct/09/lego-ends-shell-partnership-following-greenpeace-campaign, 9 October 2014.

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7. Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 3.

8. Wilma de Jong, Martin Shaw and Neil Stammers, “introduction” in de Jong, Shaw and Stammers (eds), *Global Activism, Global Media* (London: Pluto, 2005), 3.

9. Lorenzo Mosca, “Bringing Communication Back in: Social Movements and Media,” in C. Padovani and A. Calabrese (eds) *Communication Rights and Social Justice* (Houndsditch: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 231, 232.

10. Downing, *Radical Media*, 26.

11. Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social movements: an introduction*, second edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 220.

12. Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 36.

13. Melucci, *Challenging Codes*, 228.

14. Hoynes, “Media Research and Media Activism”, 98.

15. Harvey Molotch, “Media and movements” in M.Zald and J. McCarthy (eds), *The Dynamics of Social Movements* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1988), 71.

16. Wiliam Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest* (Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey,

1975), 166-167.

17. Hoynes, “Media Research and Media Activism”, 99.

18. Charlotte Ryan, *Prime Time Activism* (Boston: South End Press, 1991), 10.

19. Ryan, *Prime Time Activism*, 29.

20. Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on film and radio*, translated and edited by Marc Silberman (London: Methuen, 2000) and Hans Magnus Enzensberger, “Constituents of a Theory of the Media,” *New Left Review* 64, 1970, 13-36.

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22. Stefania Milan, *Social Movements and Their Technologies: Wiring Social Change* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 9.

23. Bart Cammaerts, “Activism and media” in B. Cammaerts and N. Carpentier (eds) *Reclaming the Media: Communication Rights and Democratic Media Roles* (Bristol: Intellect, 270.

24. See Paolo Gerbaudo, *Tweets and the Streets: social media and contemporary activism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) and Evgeny Morozov, *The Net Delusion: How not to liberate the world* (London: Allen Lane, 2011).

25. Milan, *Social Movements* 2013 and Marc Raboy, Norman Landry and Jeremy Shtern, *Digital Solidarities, Communication Policy and Multi-stakeholder Global Governance* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010).

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