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Comments

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activists, facing the stereotype of youth of color as dangerous, needed the legitimacy provided by adult allies, while the white, middle-class activists of SRU cultivated youth autonomy (and a slogan “actyourage”). Both strategies evolved from the social location of youth movements within the larger society.

Social movement scholars will find *We Fight to Win* a must-read not only because we have few studies of youth activists, but also because of Gordon’s insights into key issues in the field, such as how strategic alliances are forged between movements and of the effects of police repression on political activism. Feminist scholars interested in the intersectionality of gender, race, class, and sexuality will find Gordon’s analysis a strong demonstration of the power of this theoretical framework. Just as we now know that privilege is unequally distributed in society more generally, Gordon’s findings show that youth resistance and youth agency are complexly situated within race, class, and gender systems of power. Sociologists interested in the sociology of adolescence will appreciate Gordon’s meticulous examination of the activists in YP and SRU. Her analysis shows the power of the construction of students as citizens-in-the-making and identifies the ways that this construction oppresses youth. Additionally, her sympathy for these activists and her careful assessments make this study accessible to students in both graduate and undergraduate courses in social movements and/or the sociology of adolescence.

Jodie Michelle Lawston. *Sisters Outside: Radical Activists Working for Women Prisoners*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2009. \$45.00 (hardcover), \$23.95(paper).

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A pattern of inadequate prison healthcare, including approximately 65 preventable deaths per year, led U.S. federal courts to place the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation into receivership. A separate court order that California drastically reduce its prison population is under review by the U.S. Supreme Court. Although California’s prison problems are extreme, they are also a microcosm for the prison industrial complex in the United States. Approximately one percent of the U.S. population is incarcerated, a rate that far exceeds the rates of other industrial nations, and nationally prisons

continue to be privatized, positioning corporate profits against prisoners’ human rights. Within this context, Jodie Lawston’s book *Sisters Outside: Radical Activists Working for Women Prisoners* offers a succinct ethnography of one prison reform organization in California—Network for Prisoners (a pseudonym).

Using data from nearly three years of observations and interviews, Lawston paints a nuanced picture of Network for Prisoners, an organization of mostly white, middle-class women who seek to raise public consciousness about the abusive conditions that women face in California’s prisons. In so doing she demonstrates the importance of organizational frames that address movement activists as well as external audiences. One of Lawston’s major contributions is the analysis of internal framing not as a task of oppositional consciousness building, as others have argued, but rather as emotion work. In Lawston’s case study this emotion work was necessary to mobilize participants and build solidarity between activists and those for whom they claim to speak. Because the constituents of the movement live outside prison walls and are generally in privileged positions vis-à-vis prisoners in terms of class, race, and education, activists are plagued by feelings of illegitimacy within the movement. To overcome these emotions, constituents frame their work as guided by the movement’s beneficiaries, the women prisoners, and as an important act of antiracism, which suggests that this type of activism is whites’ responsibility. Activists outside the prison also use frames of advocacy and sisterhood to connect to the prisoners and obtain their support for the movement. Lawston highlights how activists build bridges to prisoners by sharing their own gendered experiences, particularly of abuse, and offering various forms of tangible support, including petition drives for parole hearings and various necessary supplies.

Although Network for Prisoners is a radical organization that seeks a complete revolution in contemporary incarceration practices, Lawston describes how the organization frequently finds itself working for prison reform and offering charity rather than striving for systemic changes. This misalignment between goals and tactics results from the organization’s recognition that such a radical position would be unpopular with most audiences at present. As such, *Sisters Outside* contributes to developing literature on the strategic use of frames to address multiple audiences and how organizations adapt to a particular discursive moment. Lawston outlines a typology of three frames used by Network for

Prisoners to influence different audiences. For example, when addressing conservative groups, Network for Prisoners uses a frame of charity to encourage individuals to feel sorry for prisoners who have “made mistakes.” Similarly Lawston argues that activists use a prison reform frame for the vast majority of audiences; this frame centers on the racial and class inequalities of the U.S. police, court, and prison systems and suggests that changes to the system are necessary. The most radical frame which sees prison problems as stemming from capitalism and calls for abolition of the system is used exclusively with coalitions of other radical organizations. Lawston also calls attention to how movements draw upon and respond to the legacies of past movements by demonstrating how each of these frames draws on distinct past discourses of reform in women’s prisons.

The book’s greatest strength comes from the words of movement beneficiaries about the organization. Although many organizations claim to operate for the benefit of others, the voices of people in extremely vulnerable positions are all too rare in research. Lawston’s interviews with fifteen prisoners who work with Network for Prisoners demonstrate that prisoners do not share many of the activists’ political and organizational frames. For example, prisoners see the outside activists as the leaders of the movement and rely on their expertise and experiences, which are, of course, tied to constituents’ privileges. Lawston also alludes to the fact that prisoners do not share the revolutionary goals of Network for Prisoners or the perception that inequalities of race, class, and gender contributed to their incarceration. Rather most buy into dominant discourse that constructs incarceration as an individual rather than societal failing. Subsequently, prisoners are more interested in the charity work of Network for Prisoners and tactics aimed at improving California prison healthcare. Because Lawston relies heavily on the words of the outside activists to characterize incarcerated women in *Sisters Outside*, she sometimes minimizes differences between constituents’ and beneficiaries’ goals, strategies, tactics, and understanding of the problem. This disconnect between prisoners and prisoner advocates warrants further research into whether the women prisoners are indeed equal participants in the organization, as the activists and Lawston claim, despite the fact that activists refuse to discuss the organization’s radical goals with the prisoners. While the prison regulations no doubt constrained Lawston’s interactions with the incarcerated women, *Sisters Outside* would have been greatly improved by additional insight

into the views of the “sisters inside.”

As the book is short and not theoretically dense, it will be a good addition to undergraduate classes on inequality, crime/prisons, and social movements. The book’s contributions to the literatures on framing and emotion in social movements may not be groundbreaking, but the topic is certainly timely, and Lawston demonstrates the need to further interrogate the relationship between movements and those they allege to support. Also, while most recent work on prison activism focuses on men’s incarceration, Lawston gives voice to the growing population of women prisoners and their advocates.

Jason Annetts, Alex Law, Wallace McNeish, and Gerry Mooney. *Understanding Social Welfare Movements*. Bristol: Policy Press, 2009. \$85.00 (cloth), \$32.95 (paper).

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After a little bit of time with the study of social protest movements—a diverse, fractured field at the intersection of several diverse, fractured disciplines—one develops a great deal of respect for ignorance, both others’ and one’s own. Researchers analyze different movements and different policy areas using different theories, different approaches to knowledge, even asking different questions. Synthesizing multiple theoretical and substantive areas requires touring a Cyclopean city of literature; appealing to multiple theoretical and substantive audiences requires constant mindfulness of what each audience will, and will not, already know.

Teaching about social protest movements similarly necessitates a great deal of respect for students’ ignorance. Novices will simply be unqualified to appreciate most of the reasons for theoretical disagreements among professionals, let alone be able to intelligently decide who is more correct and when. Educators reluctant to expand the scope of their academic conflict by appealing to a captive gallery must be sure their students distinguish the teaching from the professing, and, when expert consensus is absent, will often find themselves obligated to compare the theories and teach the controversy.

The authors of *Understanding Social Welfare Movements* have taken on a substantial challenge in these two respects. Not only do they review analyses of several disparate segments of the British welfare state with a mixture of