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978-0-521-77829-9 - Popular Dissent, Human Agency and Global Politics

Roland Bleiker

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Popular dissent, such as street demonstrations and civil disobedience, has become increasingly transnational in nature and scope. As a result, a local act of resistance can acquire almost immediately a much larger, cross-territorial dimension. This book draws upon a broad and innovative range of sources to scrutinise this central but often neglected aspect of global politics. Through case studies that span from Renaissance perceptions of human agency to the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the author examines how the theory and practice of popular dissent has emerged and evolved during the modern period. Dissent, he argues, is more than just transnational. It has become an important 'transversal' phenomenon: an array of diverse political practices which not only cross national boundaries, but also challenge the spatial logic through which these boundaries frame international relations.

Roland Bleiker is Senior Lecturer and Coordinator of the Peace and Conflict Studies Program at the University of Queensland. He has also taught at the Australian National University, Pusan National University, and the University of Tampere. He is the author of a number of articles in scholarly journals.

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The contours of this book have emerged gradually, during what seems today like a dozen, belatedly started Wanderjahre. In some ways these nomadic years were as transversal as the book's theoretical themes, for the journey has led from Zürich to Brisbane, via Paris, Panmunjom, Seoul, Toronto, Vancouver, Boston, Canberra, Flagstaff, Tampere and Pusan, to mention only the long-term resting places. During the early stages of the journey I was fortunate to receive intellectual stimulation from Nibaldo Galleguillos, Kal Holsti, Julia Schtivelman, Guy Willy Schmeltz and Richard Stubbs. A pre-doctoral fellowship with the Program on Nonviolent Sanctions at Harvard University's Center for International Affairs first gave me the opportunity to explore issues of dissent and global politics in a systematic way. The genealogical chapters of this book are in some sense a conversation with my colleagues and friends in Cambridge: Doug Bond, Joe Bond, Chris Krugler, Lee Myung Soo, Gene Sharp, Beth Kier, Paul Routledge and Bill Voegelé.

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