

Cambridge Elements

Elements in Contentious Politics

edited by

David S. Meyer

University of California, Irvine

Suzanne Staggenborg

University of Pittsburgh

THE CONTENTIOUS POLITICS OF GLOBAL HEALTH MOVEMENTS

*Contesting Patents in Pandemic
Times*

Donatella della Porta

Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence

Stella Christou

Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-65862-1 — The Contentious Politics of Global Health Movements
Donatella della Porta, Stella Christou
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)



Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment,
a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of
education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009658607

DOI: 10.1017/9781009658591

© Donatella della Porta and Stella Christou 2025

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions
of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take
place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI 10.1017/9781009658591

First published 2025

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-009-65860-7 Hardback
ISBN 978-1-009-65862-1 Paperback
ISSN 2633-3570 (online)
ISSN 2633-3562 (print)

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence
or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this
publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain,
accurate or appropriate.

For EU product safety concerns, contact us at Calle de José Abascal, 56, 1º, 28003
Madrid, Spain, or email eugpsr@cambridge.org

The Contentious Politics of Global Health Movements

Contesting Patents in Pandemic Times

Elements in Contentious Politics

DOI: 10.1017/9781009658591
First published online: November 2025

Donatella della Porta
Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence

Stella Christou
Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence

Author for correspondence: Donatella della Porta,
Donatella.dellaporta@sns.it

Abstract: While much research has addressed the regressive anti-vax protests, this Element focuses on campaigns by progressive social movements to promote the development of vaccines for Covid-19 and ensure their equal access on a global level. Over the course of the pandemic, health and care have become central claims, mobilising health workers and patients as well as citizens in general. Together with various local and national social movement organisations which converged on health rights, through the use of care and cure as bridging frames, transnational campaigns addressing patents on vaccines also unfolded. This Element analyses these transnational campaigns, with particular attention to their organisational models, repertoires of action and collective framing. It assesses their outcomes by considering the complex sets of opportunities and constraints that the Covid-19 pandemic presented for progressive social movements that fight for access to medicines and cures at a global level.

Keywords: transnational movements, health social movements, Covid-19, vaccines, public health

© Donatella della Porta and Stella Christou 2025

ISBNs: 9781009658607 (HB), 9781009658621 (PB), 9781009658591 (OC)
ISSNs: 2633-3570 (online), 2633-3562 (print)

Contents

1 Health Rights and Social Movements: An Introduction	1
2 The Patent System and the Fight for Access to Medicines	11
3 The 'No Profit on Pandemic' Initiative in the EU	25
4 Mobilising for Universal Access to Covid-19 Vaccines: The Campaign in Support of India and South Africa's Patent Waiver Proposal	40
5 Transnational Protests for Access to Medicines: Some Conclusions	56
List of Abbreviations	62
List of Interviews Cited	63
References	64