Review of *Technology, Activism, and Social Justice in a Digital Age* by John G. McNutt

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mensions of this task are daunting: in the 2020 election, 58 percent of white voters supported Trump. How to change this is not clear, but we must.

Reading *Caste* is an unforgettable experience, not least for the author's literary skills and moral depth. However, it is not without flaws. The emphasis on caste obscures the realities of how class interacts with race. The personal experiences she describes do not, by and large, reflect the daily struggles of poor and blue-collar Black and Brown people in the U.S. The vastly disparate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color results from longstanding inequities in housing, education, employment, and health care, all of which receive little attention. Although caste has limits as an analytical framework for understanding racism, Wilkerson finds creative ways to deploy it to reveal deep structures of oppression. A more conventional book might have focused on the political and economic structures that maintain racial inequality in the United States, but that would probably have been a less imaginative, less intimate, and less original work. Highly recommended for students, faculty, and all human beings.

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John G. McNutt, *Technology, Activism, and Social Justice in a Digital Age*. Oxford University Press (2018). 240 pages, $34.95 (paperback).

To say globalization and the Information and Communications Technology (ICTs) revolution have profoundly impacted the world would be an understatement. Locally and globally, people are wired between friends, families, groups, and communities. Interconnectedness facilitated by ICTs has had a number of positive outcomes for people around the world, such as the sharing of knowledge, culture, art, music, and creativity, as well as affordable and immediate widespread communication. ICTs have also fostered myriad challenges and negative effects regarding human health and well-being, digital inequality, information poverty, mass surveillance,

censorship, and the proprietization of information, technological tools, and everyday life. Such opportunities and challenges present a classic Catch-22: the very tools that can guide empowerment and liberation may also foster disempowerment and exploitation. Despite these internal contradictions and complexities inherent to technology and human behavior, many seize the potential of ICTs to work toward social good.

In *Technology, Activism, and Social Justice in a Digital Age*, John G. McNutt presents an edited volume that seeks to guide novices in social activism and social practices within the complexities of our Digital Age. From case studies to guides, the book draws mostly from academics and "pracademics" in the fields of social work, social welfare, public policy, public administration, public affairs, community planning, and urban planning. The volume is organized into five sections: (1) Advocacy, Social Change, and Activism; (2) Advocacy, Social Change, Activism, and Technology: Community Level; (3) Advocacy, Social Change, and Activism: Policy Level; (4) Global and International Social Change; and (5) The Future.

Seasoned activists will likely find this book underwhelming, but the volume may be useful to inexperienced individuals interested in learning how to use various digital tools to accomplish social justice goals. Despite being broadly aimed at "anyone who is concerned about social justice and social betterment in today's world," the work is Americentric, and moreover tends to speak more to seasoned social workers and other professional disciplines than beginners. This may be confusing and alienating to those looking to jump into technologically-assisted activism, which seriously detracts from the volume's effectiveness and potential reach to broader audiences. Organized into a number of enticing and well-described sections, chapters within each theme seem topically uneven, inconsistent, and even unrelated. While this may be ordinary for edited volumes that contain different works by different authors, some chapters in this volume seem off-topic and not entirely relevant to ICTs, such as those that discuss the morality of advocacy, the basics of lobbying, and other nuanced technicalities. The book reads as if contributors were not entirely clear on the aim, scope, and intended audience of the book.

In the Global North, globalization has shifted many organizing practices from top-down, public sphere community organizing to bottom-up organizing of community (Stall & Stoecker, 1998).

Chapters within this volume curiously focus on masculinist public sphere "battles" and "wins," overlooking the resurgence of feminist perspectives that focus on cooperation, communication, and direct action. This appears as an almost ironic oversight given the strong links between ICTs, globalization, and these revived forms of organizing, which owe their strength and revitalization—in large part—to the Digital Age. It is understandable that the work focuses on proprietary software and platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, as this is where the majority of the public sphere now exists, but the work would be stronger if it included more than casual discussion of free/libre (open source) networks and software, as these tools are not dependent on surveillance capitalism and corporations. A discussion of these alternatives and their limitations would be more consistent with the core values of much social activism, such as direct democracy, autonomy, ownership, and cooperation.

Nonetheless, the work has a number of strengths which will certainly be useful to those interested in harnessing the power of ICTs for social justice and social change. While confusing and seemingly irrelevant, some may value chapters that discuss lobbying laws and other legal avenues for nonprofits and other third sector organizations. The strongest contributions in the volume are those that provide case studies with their imperfections and points of action, as well as those that re-iterate that communities have moved toward a digital sphere, and that, while this can facilitate organizing and social action, it does not replace face-to-face interaction. In an age where many sit behind screens "alone together," a consistent reminder on the importance of face-to-face interaction in organizing, activism, and advocacy is all the more important and relevant. The challenge of writing any work on technology and social science is the rate with which these topics change and evolve. This work may become technologically obsolete within a short time, but the lessons from the numerous contributions within it will still be useful, and are those that remind us to augment age-old practices to be in-step with the new.

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