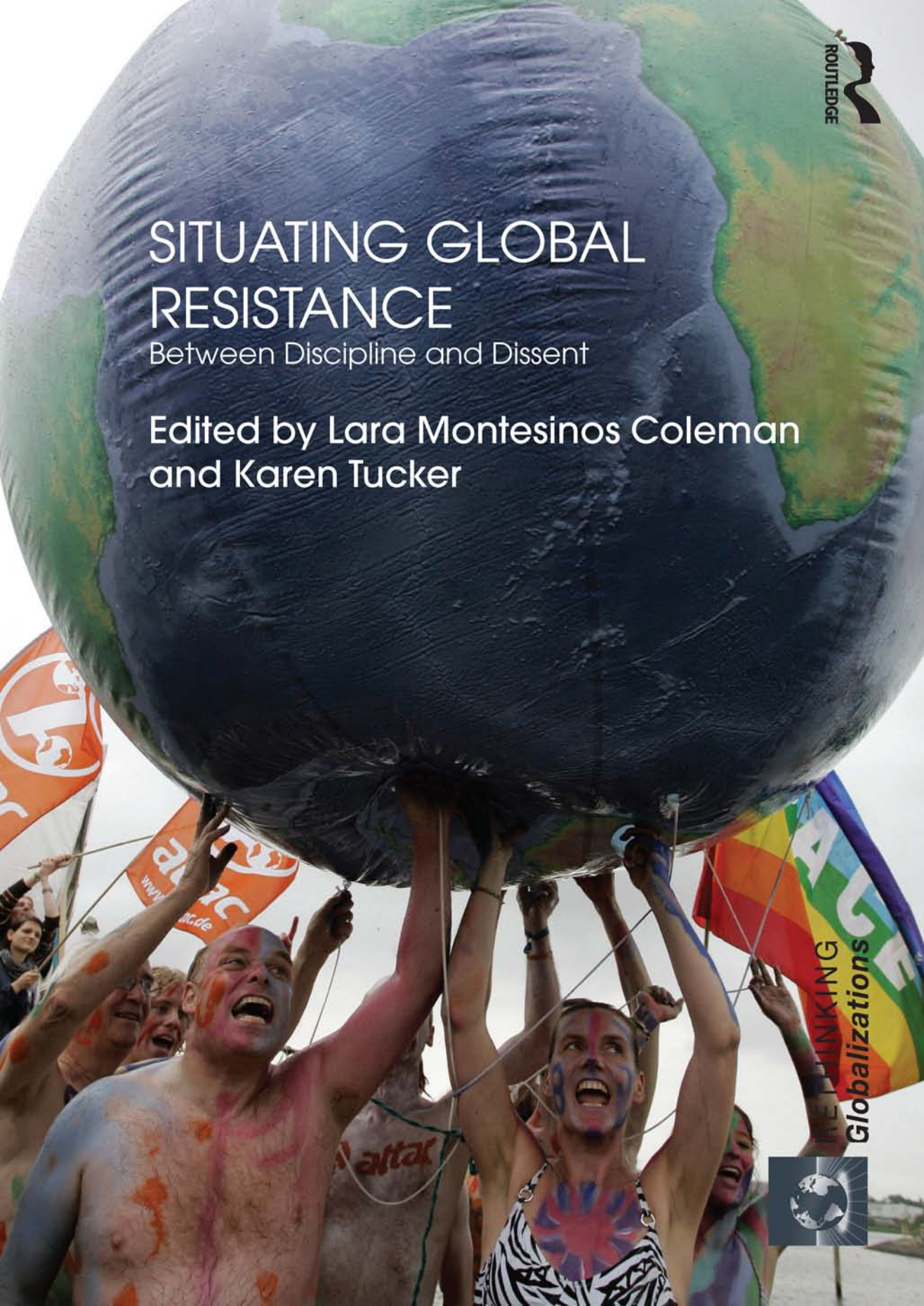




# SITUATING GLOBAL RESISTANCE

Between Discipline and Dissent

Edited by Lara Montesinos Coleman  
and Karen Tucker



# Situating Global Resistance

The book examines some of the ways in which contemporary forms of political dissent are situated within processes of global ordering. Grounded in analysis of concrete practices of discipline and dissent in specific contexts, it explores the ways in which resistance can be shaped by dominant ways of thinking, seeing or enacting politics and by the multiform relations of power at play in the making of global order.

The contributions, written from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, address themes such as the processes through which particular sorts of resisting subjects are produced; the politics of knowledge in which resisting practices are embedded; the ways in which visual technologies are deployed within and towards oppositional practices; and the politics of gender, race and class within spaces of contestation. The volume thus opens up space for critical reflection and inter-disciplinary dialogue on the interplay between power and counter-power in global order.

This book was published as a special issue of *Globalizations*.

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# **Situating Global Resistance**

## **Between Discipline and Dissent**

*Edited by*

**Lara Montesinos Coleman and Karen Tucker**

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# Foreword

RONNIE D. LIPSCHUTZ

‘Discipline’ and ‘dissent’ go together like a ‘horse and carriage’ (I eschew the other association in that song). Those who defend status quo relationships of power, or see them as natural and normal, tend to treat any opposition or critique as tantamount to treason or terrorism. That ‘another world is possible’, to invoke a popular refrain, is nothing less than an ontological challenge to the world that is today. Yet, as notional ‘liberals’, we continue to believe, in our heart of hearts, that a healthy politics rests on divergent views and values, even if some of them appear to challenge the dominant paradigm. What the last decade has suggested, however, is that this belief is far too optimistic, especially when that status quo is shaky or has lost confidence in itself. Whether liberal politics was ever sufficiently resilient to live with dissent is debatable; that it has become less and less tolerant of dissent in the twenty-first century is not.

We might ask how has this happened? It is the penetration of market norms and practices into the deepest recesses of social and political life that is the cause (if causes can be specified). The dominant form of really-existing politics, whether in democracy or autocracy, is based on negotiation and bargaining: I want this, you have that, I will give you this and you give me that. Politics today is ‘trucking and bartering’, complete with preferences, desires, supply, demand, and even price. What, then, does dissent look like in the market? Refuse to shop, refuse to buy, refuse to consume? Power remains indifferent. As soon as someone throws a computer monitor through a window, however, a heresy has been committed: nihilistic and anarchistic destruction of private property! Dissent is acceptable so long as it respects the sacrosanct; after that, it must be suppressed. This, then, is the conundrum facing ‘dissenters’: they can negotiate, bargain and buy, but no more.<sup>1</sup> One can walk away from deals too good to refuse but, so long as this is not done by vast numbers, the consequences are fairly minor. Or one can trash the place, thereby risking injury, imprisonment, and expulsion, with indeterminate political impacts. Discipline, all the way down.

Neither of these alternatives seems quite to fit that for which we are searching: other possible world(s). This binary also calls into question not only what is meant by ‘dissent’ but also what, precisely, is the goal of dissension? The essays and articles in this collection assay various events, practices and theorizations of dissent in the effort not only to define but also to point toward action—beyond dissent and discipline, we might say. Whether they succeed in this endeavor or are convincing in their arguments, I leave to the reader to decide. What is thought-provoking about the articles here is that they illustrate that we—by whom I mean those who study and seek a more just and sustainable world—have virtually no idea about how to get from here (market totalitarianism) to there (wherever that might be). We are literally

## FOREWORD

trapped by a form of mental colonization that insists the only alternative to a market order is anarchic chaos (and hell). Another world is impossible, we are told repeatedly; only versions of the current one will be considered.

From both a philosophical and practical perspective, the roots of the binary dilemma are to be found prior to the early formulations of Christian theology by St Augustine and others. In those days, ‘dissent’ was heresy, for it denied the omnipotence and omniscience of God and, by extension, those who conveyed Truth to the members of the Christian community. It was the individual who must acknowledge and gratefully accept God’s grace in order to be saved. As the Cathars, Jansenists, and others discovered, *collective* dissent was too dangerous to be permitted, for it offered ‘another possible world’ that must not be allowed to infect the body penitent. The rapid fragmentation of Protestantism and the Thirty Years War seems to have given a similar warning. Little has changed: today, individuals may dissent or recant, but collective ‘heresies’ are to be stamped out ruthlessly.

Yet therein, perhaps, is to be found a tactic, if not a strategy. The ideology of the state, as well as the market, is *divide et impera*: pick your opponents off one by one, and they will be too occupied in protecting themselves to be concerned about the rest. The individual has the ‘choice’ of good or evil, salvation or damnation; the group does not—it is not permitted to decide lest it decide on collective opposition. Thus is ‘freedom’ defined, for and by us. But what if to be an individual is not to be free but enslaved, to be the object of a form of totalitarianism so pervasive yet so invisible that we are hardly aware of it?<sup>2</sup> What if freedom is, instead, to be found in the collective right of a group to determine the conditions of its social being? What if making another world possible requires not only dissent but also *autonomism*, a heresy whose very practice gives lie to the myth, and terror, of individualism and its disciplining ontology?

Verily, such freedom requires collective action, but not that which we associated with ‘global civil society’ or the ‘new social movements’. The history of such efforts is not a bright one; those who, by their very modes of social being, stand as alternatives are also regarded as a threat to hegemony and the social order. Their very existence seems to call into question the ontology of society at large and the rules that rule it. Such groups are marginalized, persecuted, even destroyed. Yet, only through such dissent can discipline be resisted.

I do not propose here Utopias on Earth or imaginary communities off of it; there is no *telos* or *teleology* here. This is not about the End of History or a Return to Paradise. We cannot eliminate Power or Discipline or even Order; we can only offer other ways of practicing and experiencing justice and freedom. If the pieces in this issue offer some pointers toward this goal, so much the better.

## Notes

- 1 The fate of ‘dissenters’ in England following the Glorious Revolution of 1688—essentially, exclusion from politics—illustrates this proposition. Quakers were banned from public life and, as a result, prospered in business. When they did engage in politics from the outside, as in the abolition movement, they moved mountains.
- 2 If this smacks of *The Matrix*, it is no coincidence; see Lipschutz, R. D. (2010) *Political Economy, Capitalism and Popular Culture* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield).

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# Between Discipline and Dissent: Situated Resistance and Global Order

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**ABSTRACT** *In this article we contextualise the Disciplining Dissent project through a series of observations about the ways in which the papers collected here contribute to existing perspectives on global resistance, and make a broader argument in favour of situated approaches to studying the interplay between global discipline and dissent. After outlining the concerns that led us initially to formulate the project, we offer a series of reflections about the contribution of this special issue to existing debates about (i) the place of resistance in global order and (ii) the ways in which global discipline and dissent can be known. We suggest that the papers collected in this special issue, through their attention to concrete and specific practices of discipline and dissent, prompt reflection on the particular forms of visibility associated with different methodologies, and on the politically charged knowledges these methodologies engender. Attention to the interplay between context-specific practices of discipline and dissent opens up space, we argue, to examine whose and what knowledges count in the theory and practice of global ordering and resistance. It also invites consideration of the ways in which self-consciously situated approaches to researching and theorising might help open up and decolonise this terrain of enquiry. We conclude with some reflections on the interplay of discipline and dissent at work in our own immediate context of the British university.*

## Introduction

This collection of articles is the product of a project called *Disciplining Dissent*, which has involved a series of workshops exploring ways in which resistance might be shaped by dominant ways of thinking or enacting politics, and by the multiform relations of power at play in the making and remaking of global order. The inspiration for the project came to us in a hostel in San Francisco, after a frustrating and slightly perplexing couple of days at the International Studies Association Annual Convention 2008. We were both mid-way through PhDs that dealt, in different ways, with issues of power, resistance, and global ordering, and had been sharing impressions and experiences of some of the panels we had attended and participated in. We realised that the frustration stemmed from a sense that many of the issues that we considered significant and worthy of exploration in our own research were not being discussed in these spaces, and, more importantly, were difficult to talk about using the vocabularies, frameworks, and approaches most commonly employed by scholars of ‘anti-’/‘alter-globalisation’, ‘transnational advocacy’ or ‘global civil society’. It seemed to us that a number of distinct communities of practice had emerged amongst scholars interested in global processes and practices of dissent broadly conceived. Each of these communities had developed their own set of vocabularies, accepted approaches, and priorities: their own, to borrow from Michel Foucault (2008 [1979], p. 3), ‘grids of intelligibility’ into which practices of discipline and dissent tended to be inserted. The dominant interpretative frameworks, vocabularies, and general politics of truth associated with studies of ‘transnational advocacy’, ‘(global) civil society’, and ‘global resistance’ and the traditions of analysis that have developed around them, made it difficult to raise and even speak of issues we found important in our own research, such as the complex interplay between power and counter-power, the multidimensional relations between situated, context-specific practices of resistance and global order, and the processes of ordering and silencing at work within dissenting communities and networks.

At that time, Karen was examining the logics and practices through which certain kinds of dissenting subjects come to be understood as legitimate and appropriate representatives of ‘global civil society’, focusing on transnational mobilisation prompted by concerns about the treatment of ‘traditional knowledge’ and ‘biodiversity’ in the World Trade Organisation’s Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement. She was making preparations for ‘multi-sited’ ethnographic fieldwork (Marcus, 1995) in Switzerland and Peru, which would allow her to investigate the forms of rationality, visibility, and subjectivity which lead to the erasure of indigenous perspectives and knowledges within transnational processes of contestation. Lara, meanwhile, had begun a multi-sited ethnography of peasant and worker struggles against the dispossession wrought on them in the context of investment by multinational corporations in Colombia. She was tracing the trajectory of these mobilisations, from their origins in a heavily militarised and heavily marketised biopolitics to their emergence as international campaigns, and developing an account of an extensive and multi-levelled neo-liberal security assemblage geared toward the incorporation of a terrain of ‘docile dissent’ through the elimination or erasure of potentially disruptive dissidents. She was also pursuing a separate project, with Serena Bassi, exploring how spaces of radical ‘anti-globalisation’ politics might reiterate forms of knowledge and practice at work in global ordering, as a result of the structuring of these spaces around particular masculine performances (Coleman and Bassi, 2011a, 2011b). We were both asking questions, in short, about the types of dissenting subject that might contest—or be contained within—order, about the forms of silencing and exclusion that can operate within and through dissenting communities and practices, and about the constitutive links between resistance and global ordering.

From these reflections—upon the common themes in our own research and upon the differences between our enquiries and some of the more dominant regimes of truth about global ordering and resistance—grew a desire to generate a space in which to explore some of these issues further, and to seek out scholars working within diverse academic traditions who shared similar concerns. After playing around with different ways of referring to and conceptualising our project, we decided on the title ‘Disciplining Dissent’. This formulation appealed not only because of the alliteration (although we admit this was one of the reasons we chose this particular combination of terms), but because it captures a number of interconnected elements that are central to our overall endeavour. We chose the term *dissent* in order to cast the object of our analysis in as broad a manner as possible, to open up space for dialogue between scholars studying different kinds of contestation in the context of global ordering, and also to overcome some of the conceptual baggage associated with existing vocabularies and frameworks. Dissent is intended to encompass practices that might otherwise be labelled protest, resistance, advocacy, campaigning or social movement activity, as well as less programmatic forms of contestation and counter-conduct that focus on constructing and enacting alternative ways of being and knowing. Thus, alongside more conventionally recognised forms of dissent, such as protest (Policante, this issue), articles in this collection also consider attempts to inculcate different habits of listening as a form of resistance to silencing and exclusion (Doerr, this issue), feminist popular education and knowledge production as resistance to dominant rationalities (Maiguashca, this issue), and the use of art as a mechanism to promote alternative forms of visibility (Robertson, this issue).

The notion of *disciplining* dissent is intended to invite exploration and appreciation of the ways in which the dominant frameworks and vocabularies that are used to conceptualise, study, and perform dissent might structure and constrain scholarly and political praxis. It is also intended to draw attention to the types of issues—still relatively under-examined and under-theorised—that we had been exploring in our own research, such as the multiple exclusions operating within and towards resisting communities and networks, and the processes through which resisting subjects are both produced and reabsorbed into processes of ordering. Our use of the term disciplining thus evokes Foucault’s understanding of discipline as a modality of power that produces particular kinds of subjects through positing and enforcing optimal modes of individual conduct (e.g. 1991, p. 170), but, crucially, extends beyond this specific conceptualisation to incorporate multiform ways in which power is implicated in practices of contestation. Discipline, for us and many of the contributors to this special issue, also takes place through the subtle workings of the types of techniques and rationalities that Foucault began to discuss in his work on governmentality (see, Death, Drainville, Gabay, Odysseos, this issue) or what, to borrow from Jacques Rancière (1995), we might call a ‘distribution of the sensible’ in which certain narratives and visual regimes instil possible modes of perception and thus circumscribe what dissent is visible, ‘sayable’, audible and thinkable. This might involve a masculinised narrative of dissent-as-protest which obscures from view other spheres of more feminised and feminist dissent (Maiguashca, this issue), the deployment of visual technologies which enable a particular narrative of violence (as exceptional police violence at a moment when protestors have disturbed the peace) whilst making invisible the systemic violence to which protestors seek to bear witness (Policante, this issue), or the incorporation of dissent into an institutional art world as an inert and depoliticised copy of itself (Robertson, this issue).

From this discussion it should be clear that we understand neither ‘discipline’ nor ‘dissent’ in a narrow, restrictive or indeed disciplinary sense. We see these terms more as invitations to reconsider how we conceptualise ‘global resistance’, ‘global social movements’ and ‘global civil society’, and to think through how dominant vocabularies and frameworks lead us to see

certain processes and blind us to others. Rather than seeking to offer a new regime of truth through which to channel understanding of contemporary practices of contestation, what we hope to do with this collection of articles is open up space for critical reflection and inter-disciplinary dialogue on what it means to be a resisting subject in the context of global order, on the ways in which resisting practices are situated within and intrinsically connected to processes of ordering, and on how dominant frameworks, vocabularies, and analytical approaches can limit or discipline our understanding of global resistance.

### **Situating Resistance in Global Order**

The articles in this collection contribute to a set of ongoing debates about the nature of the relationship between global order and resistance. Since recent forms of transnationally networked contestation first attracted scholars' attention, there has been a diversity of academic opinion on how best to conceptualise these practices and their relation to the structures, institutions, and rationalities of global governance or global ordering. Many of the accounts of dissent that emerged in the 1990s, for instance, approached global power and global resistance as discrete and separate objects of analysis. Transnational social movement scholars, often working within a tradition of analysis that had been developed through the study of social movements in national contexts, tended to treat transnational social movement activity as analytically distinct from structures of power and authority. Scholars working in this tradition sought to assess the impact of activity in one of these discrete spheres (i.e. resistance/protest/contestation) on the other (international institutions and other instantiations of global order) (e.g. Brown and Fox, 2001; Keck and Sikkink, 1998; O'Brien et al., 2000), and to develop models and theories which explained how such impact could be generated (e.g. Florini and Simmons, 2000; Joachim, 2003; Olesen, 2006; Sikkink, 2005). Attention was also given to analysing the impact of structures of power and authority on transnational social movement activity (e.g. Klotz, 2002; Reimann, 2006), a move which began to open up analysis of the ways in which power and resistance can impact on each other, but was still driven by an instinct to divide resistance from power and global order, and treat them as analytically separate.

Many scholars of international relations writing about the emergence of a 'global civil society' from the 1990s onwards mirrored this tendency to construct their object of analysis as a counterpoint to global power. Scholars have tended to identify an increase in cross-border non-governmental organisation (NGO) and social movement activity as evidence of an emerging globally focused, civic collective agency with the potential to democratise and civilise global order (see, for example, Falk, 1998; Kaldor, 2000; Kaldor et al., 2004; Lipschutz, 1992). This nascent global civil society appears in this literature as distinct from the forces structuring the international system. Richard Falk (1998, p. 100), for example, advocated 'drawing a basic dividing-line between global market forces identified as "globalisation-from-above" and a set of oppositional responses . . . that is identified as "globalisation-from-below"'. Elsewhere, global civil society was heralded as challenging the nation-state system 'from below' (Lipschutz, 1992, p. 391), as holding states responsible to 'global standards' for human rights and democracy (Shaw, 1992, p. 391) or 'civilising globalisation' (Kaldor, 2000). Although scholars differed in terms of where they drew the exact boundaries—some writers included commercial organisations and lobby groups (e.g. Keane, 2003, p. 8) while others insisted on global civil society's separateness from both state and market (e.g. Falk, 1998, p. 125; Kaldor et al., 2004, p. 2)—global civil society was largely conceptualised as a civic realm of free negotiation of interests, a 'space of uncoerced human association' (Walzer, 1995, p. 7), or of 'non-coercive collective



action around shared interests and values that operates beyond the values of national states' (Anheier et al., 2004, p. v).

At the same time, a series of debates and counter-narratives emerged which challenged the assumption that transnational social movements, global civil society, the 'anti-/alter-globalisation' movement or any other form of resistance can be understood as entirely distinct, or indeed ontologically separate, from global ordering. These debates questioned the assumption that dissent must be somehow outside of—or run counter to—global ordering, and drew attention to the possibility that practices of contestation might also bolster or be imbued by the power relations or processes of ordering that they seek to oppose. One approach to this issue involved distinguishing between different tendencies and different potentialities within the broad spectrum of resisting practices and forms of contestation, and drawing a distinction between practices of dissent that might shore up the status quo—such as those associated with international NGOs—and those that truly contest the existing order. Neo-Gramscian scholars, for example, approached global civil society as a realm of contested ideas with a dual potentiality (Cox, 1999; Gill, 2000): it may either be influenced by states and corporations or it may form a locus of counter-hegemonic struggle. Robert Cox's distinction between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' global civil society is a good example of this kind of thinking. 'In a "bottom-up" sense', for Cox (1999, pp. 10–11),

civil society is the realm in which those who are disadvantaged by globalization of the world economy can mount their protests and seek alternatives ... In a "top-down" sense, however, states and corporate interests influence the development of this current vision of civil society towards making it an agency for stabilizing the social and political *status quo*.

Alejandro Colás (2002), writing from a historical, sociological Marxist perspective, developed similar arguments and identified a dual potentiality in the arena he terms 'international civil society': international civil society is, for him, an arena of class struggle which is characterised by competition between social forces that are themselves embedded in social relations in national contexts.

The discussions that led us to develop the *Disciplining Dissent* project were driven, in part, by a desire to join and add to these ongoing conversations about the complex relationships between global power and counter-power, ordering and resistance. We wanted to create a forum in which to bring together work that brought out some of the interconnections between power, resistance and global ordering, work that was sensitive to both situated, context-specific practices and to the broader logics and processes of ordering that such practices might contest, sustain or permit. Whilst recognising the value of accounts that are sensitive to some of the ways in which apparently contestational practices may also be implicated in (re)producing global order, approaches which distinguish between 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' struggles, and locate the workings of global power only in those interventions which are imposed 'from above', provide limited tools, in our view, with which to theorise how apparently 'bottom-up' struggles might also be invested by or incorporated into processes of ordering. Power, for writers who draw a neat distinction between what is imposed from above and what emerges from below, is a bounded power, something that can be possessed and wielded by corporations, states, and governance institutions (albeit in complex and differentiated ways) but is not diffused within practices of resistance. Power, in this type of account, is something apart from resistance, something outside of and in need of being dismantled by truly 'bottom-up' or 'counter-hegemonic struggles'. Such an approach obscures, in our view, the way in which governmental power may be exercised and the status quo stabilised in and through even the most grassroots or subaltern practices of contestation.



Alternative approaches to the question of how precisely power and ordering are intertwined with contestation and resistance have been developed by scholars drawing on Foucauldian understandings of power, government and order, as well as by feminist scholars interested in the connections between everyday gendered relations and the constitutive practices of global order. Governmentality scholars, for example, approached and theorised ‘global civil society’ as an integral element in global systems of power and rule, ‘a site of government’, as Louise Amoore and Paul Langley (2004, p. 100) put it, ‘where the global political economy is shaped, regulated or deregulated, disciplined or sustained’. So too, Ronnie Lipschutz has argued more recently that global civil society

ought not to be seen as a realm of autonomous actors outside of the state, whose members are engaged in efforts to reform, re-regulate, and repoliticise economic activities. Rather, [it] is complicit in the reproduction of those very structures and relations that generate their activities in the first place. (Lipschutz, in Lipschutz & Rowe, 2005, p. 55; see also Jaeger, 2007; Sending & Neumann, 2006)

The practices seen to constitute global civil society—indeed the very category of global civil society—are thus seen as part of the assemblages of tactics, techniques, and knowledges through which global affairs and economic relations are governed, and are produced and reproduced through the same logics and disciplinary norms that constitute global order. Feminist scholars, meanwhile, have approached the interconnections between global power, order, and resistance through attention to the types of gendered and racialised dissenting subjects and performances that are produced and enabled in global order. These scholars highlight themes such as the mutually constitutive relationships between capitalism, imperialism, and gendered, racialised social relations and argue—in different ways—that by reproducing gendered and racialised subjects and performances, practices of resistance reproduce as well as contest global relations of power (see, for example, Coleman and Bassi, 2011a, 2011b; Eschle, 2005; Koopman, 2007, 2008; Sullivan, 2005).

The articles collected together in this special issue contribute to these ongoing conversations in a number of important ways. The articles—and the broader projects of which many of them are part—are theoretically diverse, mobilising concepts and frameworks from traditions such as actor-network theory (Gabay, this issue), governmentality theory (Death, Odysseos, this issue), feminist social theory (Maiguascha, this issue), and theories of social learning (Choudry and Shragge, this issue). One of the things that connects them, however, is an awareness of and a determination to investigate the ways in which context-specific practices of dissent—be it habits of listening (Doerr, this issue), specific ways of framing struggles and demands (Odysseos, this issue), or professionalised, bureaucratic routines (Choudry and Shragge, this issue)—connect to and potentially reinforce, reproduce or indeed challenge broader ordering processes and logics. The articles thus have much in common with existing work that challenges the idea of ‘global civil society’ or an ‘anti-globalisation’ or ‘global justice’ movement as an oppositional force to processes of global ordering. But they also, more importantly, through their detailed attention to concrete practices and to the broader ordering processes and logics these practices support or subvert, open up theoretically and politically significant lines of analysis and reasoning. Tracing the interplay between discipline and dissent through attention to situated practices, processes, and struggles opens up space for analysis of the *different ways* in which contestational practices may transmit, bolster, or subvert global order, and the *different degrees* to which such practices support or challenge ordering processes and logics. This, in turn, invites reflection on two important sets of issues. On the one hand, attention to the complex relations