



Players and arenas: strategic interactionism in social movements studies

Aidan McGarry, Robert J. Davidson, Guya Accornero, James M. Jasper & Jan Willem Duyvendak

To cite this article: Aidan McGarry, Robert J. Davidson, Guya Accornero, James M. Jasper & Jan Willem Duyvendak (2016) Players and arenas: strategic interactionism in social movements studies, *Social Movement Studies*, 15:6, 634-642, DOI: [10.1080/14742837.2016.1199320](https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2016.1199320)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2016.1199320>



Published online: 01 Aug 2016.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 363



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

AUTHORS MEET CRITICS

Players and arenas: strategic interactionism in social movements studies

Aidan McGarry^a, Robert J. Davidson^b, Guya Accornero^c, James M. Jasper^d and Jan Willem Duyvendak^b

^aSchool of Applied Social Science, Falmer campus, University of Brighton, Brighton, UK; ^bDepartment of Sociology, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands; ^cCentre for Research and Studies in Sociology, Lisbon University Institute, Lisbon, Portugal; ^dDepartment of Sociology, City University of New York System, New York, NY, USA

ABSTRACT

This 'Authors Meet Critics' symposium focuses on two books edited by Jan Willem Duyvendak and James M. Jasper, *Players and Arenas: The Interactive Dynamics of Protest* and *Breaking Down the State: Protestors Engaged*. Both books make bold attempts to develop and apply a strategic interactionist perspective in social movement studies by focusing on the interplay of micro and macro processes and decision-making in a range of protest movements. Critical interventions from Aidan McGarry, Robert J. Davidson and Guya Accornero raise a number of questions relating to the core arguments of the books, the key findings and the conceptual advances. Duyvendak and Jasper then address these challenges by drawing attention more acutely to the role of agency in social movements and highlighting significant critiques of the current state of the art in social movement scholarship.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 24 May 2016
Accepted 2 June 2016

KEYWORDS

Strategic interactionism;
protest; player; arena; state

Jan Willem Duyvendak and James M. Jasper (eds.) 2015. *Breaking Down the State: Protestors Engaged*. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press. 250 pp. ISBN: 9789089647597

James M. Jasper and Jan Willem Duyvendak (eds.) 2015. *Players and Arenas: The Interactive Dynamics of Protest*. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press. 320 pp. ISBN: 9789089647085

Aidan McGarry, University of Brighton

Both *Players and Arenas: The Interactive Dynamics of Protest* and *Breaking Down the State: Protestors Engaged* represent ambitious attempts to develop our understanding of how social movements effect change, how protestors engage in context and importantly, they both seek to unpack the decisions which actors make in particular contexts. These books emerge at an interesting moment in social movement studies, as researchers have moved away from grand theories of protest activity as well as micro-level approaches such as rational choice, and one could argue that we are witnessing a perceptible retreat from theory (Rucht, 2015). These books focus on the micro and the macro via strategic interactions in which players engage with one another in arenas, and so they can be read as a direct challenge to overly structural approaches as well as those which privilege the role of individuals and game theory.

In many respects, *Breaking Down the State* is an extension of *Players and Arenas* and could be read as a companion volume. The intention of *Players and Arenas* is to draw attention to how protestors engage with other players and the arenas in which they interact. This interactionist approach explores the strategic action which players engage in and considers what goals these players have in mind. It might appear that players and arenas are taken for granted, their existence assumed a priori, but various contributors demonstrate that players change (in terms of goals, identities, resources) and so do arenas due to the interaction of diverse players. This book is an attempt to move beyond concepts which the authors find unsatisfactory such as Bourdieu's (1996) 'field of conflict', although it reads like a reworked version of Blumer's (1969) 'symbolic interactionism' (made more strategic) and also, more importantly, Giddens (1984) 'theory of structuration', the latter emphasizing the reflexive and transformative potential in the perpetual agency-structure debate. In the introduction, Jasper explains that players and arenas are 'always emerging, changing and recombining' (p. 13) but it is unclear what this adds to Giddens' reflexive theory of structuration. Arenas are conceptualized as offering mediation between different players and are understood as flexible and subject to change, but why are structures conceived of as static while arenas are not? The agency-structure behemoth looms large over this volume and Jasper and Duyvendak simultaneously emphasize and contextualize the strategic interaction and demonstrate the shifting and amorphous rules, norms, and behaviours underlying collective action in a given context.

The volume argues that the concept 'player' is preferable to 'social movement' because the latter is too vague. However, this ambiguity is necessary in order to capture a wide range of actions by a wide range of actors (and 'players' also falls into this trap). To be clear, there is not necessarily anything wrong with this approach as it is a reflection of the complexity of action and interaction which social movement theorists have attempted to grapple with. Certainly, one of the most important interventions of this volume is to challenge the methodological narcissism which informs much of social movement research that positions the movement itself (any movement) front and centre of the analysis. The contributors in *Players and Arenas* consistently show that protestors interact and negotiate with a multitude of players in an ongoing process; Heuman and Duyvendak's analysis of the pro-life movement in Nicaragua demonstrates this interplay cogently.

In the introduction to both *Players and Arenas* and *Breaking Down the State*, Jasper outlines three forms of strategy – persuasion, coercion and payment – and it would have been beneficial to have seen these built into the subsequent chapters. At the moment, the net is cast wide in order to capture almost every type of protest activity and every type of decision made, so perhaps focusing on persuasion, coercion and payment in explicit terms might have provided a clearer narrative. Nevertheless, the authors do well to navigate the tricky waters of rational choice theory and show that actors are actually driven as much by identity as by interests and as much by emotions as by the cool calculation of costs and benefits. They show that preferences are not pre-existing, but are created and renegotiated through strategic interaction in diverse arenas; Polletta and Kretschmer's chapter on the factionalism which underpins many movements captures this. The volume as a whole is less interested in how arenas limit or constrain players and provide opportunities, but some of the chapters slip into well-trodden paths of action repertoires, opportunities and choice. The stronger chapters demonstrate how players and preferences shift, realign and contradict in the process of interaction and negotiate values, norms, discourses, ideas, ideology, resources, arguments, rules, identities and principles. Power is thus dealt with consistently in the volume by showing it to be more than merely absolute, but social and relational.

Balsiger's chapter discusses corporations as players and arenas and he presents the illustrative metaphor of social movement activity as a tennis match; thus social movement activity is not just a player bouncing a ball against a wall, but dealing with an opponent who possesses strengths and weaknesses, different skills all played out in an arena with rules, norms and values. But this is helpful only up to a point. It is worth asking if the players are all playing the same game. A game is always defined by its rules. Now, broadly speaking, a player will win the game if they manage to secure their interests, but movements, corporations, states, political parties, media and markets do not play by the same rules and, therefore, are not necessarily playing the same game. Moreover, the rules of the game will specify

how a player wins. But even relatively ‘successful’ movements (US civil rights, LGBTIQ, women) have not won, they simply recalibrate interests and redefine their goals in the process of interaction. For example, debates and arguments won, and concessions granted in the field of marriage equality for LGBTIQ people do not mean the end of the movement. We don’t speak of movements ‘winning’, and that is not simply because they fail.

In *Breaking Down the State*, the focus is on the state, where most protest activity takes place. The state is conceived as a web of sub-players tied together by a set of rules which govern relationships and Jasper argues that ‘in almost no cases does the state act as a unified player’ (p. 11). This is interesting because if there is one activity where the state is often coherent, it is to eradicate threats that invariably emerge with the mobilization of people/citizens, often in the form of a social movement, and sometimes in the form of a revolutionary movement. The state is invariably consistent and unified in suppressing the voices of dissent and those groups which seek to challenge established norms, laws and traditions; exactly where social movements come in. The volume is right to acknowledge the state’s complexity and overlapping functions which means it is almost impossible to break it down. *Breaking Down the State* picks up on Tilly’s separation of social movements and the state and some of the contributors helpfully blur this boundary and show that states can act with social movements. States are, of course, not unitary actors. Roxborough’s chapter on the struggle of Irish nationalists between 1912 and 1921 clearly captures the various dynamics at play, the strategic decisions made by different actors including the British state, showing that states and social movements are neither unitary nor rational actors. Furthermore, Bob’s chapter on LGBT rights and activism in the UN shows how the UN is both a player and an arena; the game is not to secure rights necessarily but to engage with opponents, the hope being that norms can be created which could result in policy interventions in the future.

Overall, both volumes signify important interventions. As edited volumes, they possess very strong empirical cases which conspire to weave a coherent argument about the strategic action of protestors. The books appear in a new series in the University of Amsterdam Press edited by Duyvendak and Jasper, which will, I am sure, prove to be a vital player in the arena of social movement studies.

Robert J. Davidson, University of Amsterdam

In the edited volumes *Players and Arenas: The Interactive Dynamics of Protest* and *Breaking Down the State*, Jim Jasper and Jan Willem Duyvendak have taken great steps in attempting to move beyond the seeming deadlock between structuralist and culturalist approaches in social movement research. Both volumes provide the reader with a number of new and valuable insights regarding how to conceptualize and research strategic interaction. I will highlight some of the contributions made in the books regarding the conceptualization of the actors and arenas involved in strategic action, address the strategic interaction perspective’s potential theoretical contribution, and, last, question the relevance of social movements within the strategic interaction perspective.

The conceptualization of actors by scholars of the strategic interaction perspective as both simple and compound and as simultaneously actors and arenas of contention is particularly helpful in enabling researchers to tease out the complexity of interaction and focus on the process of interaction itself. Jasper, Duyvendak and many of the authors in the volumes challenge readers to move beyond thinking in terms of constraints to examine how constraints are enacted and put into play. They do so by urging us to ask the seemingly simple question ‘who does what?’, and the editors and authors remind readers that players may conflict with and constrain as well as cooperate with each other. The two volumes can greatly assist in moving beyond the conceptualization of arenas as given sets of rules and regulations to help readers understand the dynamics of interaction. The strategic interaction perspective enables scholars to ask existing questions in new ways: Which positions in which arenas can be occupied to mobilize and/or block which resources? Why do actors who cooperate in one arena compete in another?

Jasper and Duyvendak situate their strategic interactionism as solving a deadlock between structuralists and culturalists. The notion of a deadlock here may be somewhat overplayed, however. There

is certainly much competition for prominence between culturalists and structuralists within social movement studies, but a deadlock indicates that there are two incompatible theoretical approaches to the same problem or question. While the perspectives are competing for attention and space in journals, I am not convinced that structuralist and culturalist approaches are addressing the same questions regarding social movements and strategic interaction. More broadly, Jasper mentions in the introduction to *Breaking Down the State* that within studies of social movements there has generally been a 'retreat from theory altogether' (p. 9), and it is not entirely clear whether the two volumes in question rebuke that trend or are a product of it. These points thus indicate some further thought is required in relation to the theoretical positioning of the symbolic interactionism pursued by Jasper, Duyvendak and their colleagues.

Structural approaches in social movement scholarship are far more concerned with the ways in which movements are able to gain access to particular arenas and powerholders within them, while cultural approaches are often occupied with the ways in which mobilizing affects identity-formations, frames and discourses, and/or shifts in attitudes. They are different approaches that are utilized to answer different questions. Compared with the macro perspectives offered by, for instance, political process theories, the strategic interaction perspective certainly provides scholars with more precise micro-sociological conceptual tools to trace how strategic interaction takes place, but that seems to be a conceptual or even methodological contribution rather than a theoretical one. One potential theoretical contribution of the strategic interaction perspective that is discussed in the books is through cataloguing, such as building catalogues of different types of arenas or different types of actors. To make cataloguing useful as a theoretical tool, however, the purpose of cataloguing could be further developed and specified.

There is a tension here between cataloguing and micro-sociological analysis. One promise of theoretical development may be the ability to make predictions given similar circumstances, but the strategic interaction perspective encourages and enables researchers to tease out the specifics of the various overlapping and interconnected actors and contexts involved in strategic interactions. Such an approach has the potential to generate a wealth of empirical data regarding a number of specific cases. One of the challenges that remains for the strategic interaction perspective is to work through how to then move from that data, from the micro, to a level from which it is possible to theorize for other or future cases. Further questions remain regarding cataloguing. First, to what extent can cataloguing contribute to theorizing strategic action, given that the strategic interaction perspective encourages us to increasingly focus on the specific micro-context of, and the particular players involved in, each interaction? Second, regarding which questions can such catalogues be used to build theory? Can such catalogues contribute to our understanding of how social movements gain access, achieve success and particular outcomes in the policy domain, and/or effect cultural change?

Beyond these theoretical concerns, the final question I will raise regarding these two volumes is the position of social movements within this developing perspective. Strategic interactionism here encourages researchers to look at the various types of actors involved in interactions. If one accounts for all players involved in strategic interaction, to what extent is it necessary to pay any special attention to what might be conceptualized as social movements or social movement organizations? Perhaps those actors can be understood as merely one of the many manifestations of compound players. Jack Goldstone, in the conclusion to *Breaking Down the State*, writes that some of the 'old' distinctions within social movement research are falling away, such as the distinction between states and social movements, but in many ways the field of social movement research was built through the establishment of such conceptual divisions. Broadening the focus to the various actors and arenas involved in strategic interaction, questions the necessity of prioritizing social movements. Why shouldn't we study strategic interaction in and of itself? What does the focus on social movements add to our understanding of strategic interaction? Is there a reason to persist in studying social movements at all? Those questions, raised through reading the two volumes, address the fundamentals of social movement research, which attests to the importance of the volumes for continuing debates within the field of social movement research and beyond.

Guya Accornero, Lisbon University Institute

The books *Players and Arenas* and *Breaking down the State* both deal with the interaction between protest actors and the different players they encounter in various social and political contexts, which the authors call 'arenas'. In *Players and Arenas*, the other players are mainly identified as different entities such as cultural institutions, associations, religious organizations and the mass media. In *Breaking Down the State*, the focus is primarily on the interaction between protest actors and various state bodies, for instance, courts, political parties, local governments, lawmakers, security forces or intelligence services.

I am convinced that the two books are path-breaking in social movement studies, an area in which, at least in recent years, empirical analysis has prevailed over theoretical reflection, which is developed here. Moreover, in both books, I strongly appreciate the advice to recommence studying social movements by paying attention to their environmental conditions. In recent years, the trend in social movement studies has been to focus more on the internal dynamics of protest rather than on the environmental factors conditioning it or with which protest actors enter into interaction. Scholars have paid relatively little attention to the relations between protest actors and other social and political actors, both institutional and otherwise. Specific social movement dynamics have thus mainly been explained by internal reasons while external factors, such as other state or non-state players, have frequently been underestimated. This is the case, for instance, for dynamics such as the emergence of 'factions', analysed in *Players and Arenas* by Francesca Polletta and Kelsy Kretschmer in their chapter focusing on the civil rights movement, in which the authors stress the relevance of external dimensions – for example, governmental actors, media, supporters and allies, police – in influencing the internal dynamics of the movement. Similarly, this is the case for the appearance of factions, analysed in *Players and Arenas* by Ann Mische in her chapter on the failure of a Brazilian student congress.

By considering all the 'players', individual or compound, protestor or not, moved by strategic goals and aims – even if they 'are not always fully conscious of all their goals and projects' (p. 13) – the authors' strategic perspective contributes to going beyond both macro structuralist approaches and cultural theories. Looking, respectively, at the environmental conditions as deterministic factors in shaping social movements, and at the micro aspects related to the protestors and militants – such as their emotions, grievances and choices – both these perspectives tend to increase the boundaries between protest players and other actors. Jasper is right to stress that a strategic perspective helps 'bridge this gap', by focusing simultaneously on, and paying the same attention to, 'protestors and to the others players' and to the 'players and the arenas in which they interact' (p. 10).

This approach thus contributes to overcoming the cleavage between agency and structure. In this sense, the influence of external factors ceases to be deterministic and micro and macro dynamics can be analysed in their reciprocal interaction. This strategic and interactionist perspective is thus analytically powerful, also in understanding the process of identity construction. Nevertheless, I also agree with the recommendation of Fillieule and Duyvendak in their 'Conclusions', and Polletta and Kretschmer in 'Movement Factions: Players and Processes', to not undervalue the specific history and past of the players. In short: identities, strategies and goals do not completely emerge through the interactions among players, they are also the result of the specific background of each of them.

If *Players and Arenas* helps to rethink the relations between protest and non-protest actors, *Breaking Down the State* has, in my opinion, the added value of contributing not only to increase our understanding of social movements dynamics, but also to review the theory of the state, and not only from the point of view of social movements. Hence, the book is not only important for social movement studies, but also for social and political theory in general. If the title *Breaking Down the State* could immediately suggest anti-systemic elements in social movements, actually the state here is 'deconstructed' from the point of view of its theoretical and operational definition. As the different chapters in the book underline, the boundaries between state and protest actors are not always so clear and well-defined. This is another point with which social movement scholars have frequently dealt, facing the difficulty of understanding the complex relation between state and non-state actors while avoiding

deterministic perspectives, such as those deriving from a monolithic view of the state. The different chapters in this book show that these boundaries are not so clear. State and not-state players constantly interact along a continuous line and this interaction contributes to constantly redefining the boundaries of every one. On the other hand, this interaction could also redefine the boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate actions, a point well stressed by Doherty and Hayes in their chapter on 'Courts'. The Durkheimian view of social crime adopted in this study thus contributes to reconsidering the role of protest players in 'forcing' a specific system of law, for instance through 'the legalization of some forms of protest' (p. 30). On the other hand, institutional actors could act as contentious players, as analysed by Verhoeven and Bröer in their excellent chapter on 'Local Governmental Players as Social Movement Actors'.

As Jasper stresses, 'State and movements are necessary fictions in much the same way. They pretend to have more unity than they do, and they claim to speak and act as representatives of a united territory of people' (p. 13). Sometimes, in critical junctures – like revolutionary moments or during a state crisis – this fiction could 'totter' and with it the inter-recognition among the different actors. These moments are thus particularly interesting for highlighting the strong interdependence among different state players and between them and non-state actors. Analysing moments of political crisis, Dobry uses the definition of 'sectors' to identify the different parts of the state and society such as army, police, court or movements. The legitimization of the different parts depends on the recognition from the other parts, called 'collusive transaction'. The 'collapse' of this recognition could occur during a period of political crisis and the legitimization of the different players might 'fail'. In that context, the police could stop being recognized as responsible for public order, armed forces could lose their coercive power, courts their authority, and so on. In this sense, it seems that the identity itself of the different players – 'sectors' to use Dobry's definition – strongly depends on the recognition of the other players. I think that introducing this aspect in the reflection on the interactions among state and non-state players and arenas could help to 'break down the state'.

Reply by Jan Willem Duyvendak and James M. Jasper

We appreciate these thoughtful comments based on careful readings of the two volumes. Even the more critical ones are great opportunities for us to clarify some of our claims and concepts.

Let's begin with players. No one is going to stop using the term 'social movements,' given its ubiquity in our natural languages and media, but for purely explanatory purposes it has a couple drawbacks. One is the difficulty in defining it and distinguishing it from related players such as interest groups, advocacy groups and political parties. The other is its normative baggage: political players claim to be a social movement in order to assert their own scope, power, unity and historical importance. But they are never unified enough to make decisions or face dilemmas as social movements; for this kind of consequential player we must look for organizations, small groups and individuals. Moreover, as Guya Accornero observes, by using the terms players and arenas we hope to contribute to broader theories of strategic interaction, not merely to theories of protest (Jasper, 2006).

Do players have histories? Most do, as they persist over time, build up their own identities, and share histories of interacting with other players. But this is especially true of individuals, or what we call simple players. Each person carries a complex biography, developed through past interactions, strategic and communicative, with other individuals. Compound players, on the other hand, may be created from scratch, in which case they have little common history. (The individuals and groupings who found them always have their own histories, of course.) An emphasis on players, even on individuals, need not suggest that they are somehow pre-social. We cannot even imagine such a thing, individuals as non-social and lacking any history. As Duyvendak & Fillieule elaborate in the Conclusion to *Players and Arenas*, the question is thus not whether these players have a history (or even share one), but in what ways and to what extent these histories are pertinent in the present. They argue that the past is only relevant so far as it is *mobilized* in present interactions, which is still in line with Accornero's claim that 'identities, strategies and goals do not completely *emerge* through the interactions among

players' (italics ours). Duyvendak & Fillieule state that the stability and coherence of players and arenas – both often assumed for 'historical' reasons – is not guaranteed at all, but has to be (re)produced in everyday interactions.

Arenas are the places where strategic decisions and other outcomes occur. (Not all places are arenas: there are also back-stages where players prepare themselves for the arenas.) Aidan McGarry asks how they differ from structures. The very term structure defines the limit of an explanation: a structure is something that does not change for our current theoretical purposes; we can take it as given. We hope that the term arena not only allows us to observe what happens in the arena under its current rules, but also to understand how and when it changes. We try to transcend essentialism in our action-oriented approach, making everything into a (potentially) moving part. Just because an arena does not change does not mean that it cannot. We must explain the lack of change as the result of strategic action, not take it for granted as a 'structure'.

The state is such a complex cluster of players and arenas that we have difficulty agreeing with McGarry's argument that 'the state is invariably consistent and unified in suppressing the voices of dissent'. Courts sometimes protect free speech; politicians sometimes encourage street demonstrations; police and armies sometimes defect to the protestors' side. For example, Accornero cites Michel Dobry concerning how there can be a collapse of the mutual recognition among different state players. But the distinction between a crisis and 'normal' functioning is a traditional structural mode of placing all change and agency in the former and denying it to the latter period. We prefer to allow all the pieces of our explanation the ability to move at all times. Even under normal functioning, the players of the state have a variety of approaches to one another: tolerance, resistance, scepticism, deceit, mockery, obedience and others. 'Recognition' hides much of this. Although the state looms large in social movement studies, it has suffered from under-theorizing. Often, the state has been erroneously conceptualized as coherent and comprehensive. In comparative studies, states have even been stereotyped in terms of 'national models', for instance in immigration and integration studies (Bertossi & Duyvendak, 2012). We claim (and hope) that other fields may profit as well from an approach that breaks down the state.

Philip Balsiger uses the metaphor of a game in order to highlight the interactive nature of our approach. But we agree with McGarry that game metaphors can be misleading, not only because rules can be ignored, changed or broken, but also because games have endpoints that strategic engagements rarely do. For this reason we avoid talking about movement success, failure or even 'outcomes', all of which imply an end result. Instead, we prefer to talk about a series of smaller gains and losses, along a long interactive path. These gains and losses can come in familiar bundles that reflect underlying trade-offs, such as giving up long-run resources and reputation for various short-run gains. (Debates over Piven & Cloward [1979] work are about exactly this.)

We are pleased to accept McGarry's characterization of our work as following from Blumer's, although not all interactions are purely symbolic. They all depend on interpretation, to be sure, but they may also depend primarily on coercion or payment rather than on persuasion. We see our approach as more distinct from structuration and field theories. In our view these both tend to collapse players, arenas, actions and cultural meanings into single, and often circular, systems. (Archer [1995] referred to structuration and similar approaches as suffering from a 'central conflation' of action and meaning.) In that tradition, players have little choice about their fields, whereas we wish to highlight decisions about which arenas to enter.

Robby Davidson does not see a deadlock between scholars in structural and cultural approaches to the study of social movements, since they try to answer different questions. But the intensity of the debates between them suggests that they, at least, see themselves as competing over the same turf (Goodwin & Jasper, 2004; Jasper, 1997). At any rate, we are not trying to reconcile them at some logical level, but rather to synthesize elements of each to advance theories of social movements, strategic interactions and politics (whether or not such theorizing has actually stalled). If we are ignoring some of the big questions that structural theories asked, it is because our descriptive language rejects some of the entities in those theories, such as political opportunities, states, societies and 'social change', in favour

of more precise, observable entities. As a Kantian analytical approach suggests, knowledge progresses when we break down broad statements and correlations into the smaller pieces that comprise them.

Our purpose in calling for catalogues of these entities – and the two volumes are organized through chapters on different players – is merely as a starting point for analysis of their engagements, the settings and dramatis personae of the play to come. Too often, theories of movements are unclear about agency, about who is making decisions, who is acting, what their goals are and so on. Stylistically, this burring of agency appears as the extensive use of the passive voice. Once we catalogue the players, we watch them in motion. Further, we are confident that these micro-level interactions concatenate into macro-level outcomes such as national policies, wars and capitalist markets. When we link back up with those big issues, we will better understand them. If there are roadblocks to following these chains, they are methodological rather than theoretical. In other words, catalogues can potentially do two things. In the first place, they may show that specific players, given their goals, tend to act in a rather ‘characteristic’ way. Insiders and supporters, market players, and experts, intellectuals and media (to stick to some players discussed in *Players and Arenas*), show certain similarities across their strategic (inter)actions. Second, all these interactions together produce macro-level outcomes. These outcomes are contingent, depending on each interaction, but not random, given that players interact according to their specific goals, interests and passions.

Just as our contributors to the volumes gamely tried out this new language in settings and players with which they were familiar, so the contributors to this symposium have tried to assess its value for their own terrains of knowledge. The result has already been some modifications and extensions, a process we hope will continue.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes on contributors

Dr. Aidan McGarry is a principal lecturer in Politics at the School of Applied Social Science, at the University of Brighton, UK. His research focuses on Roma, minorities, political voice and social movements. He is the author of two books: *Who Speaks for Roma? Political Representation of a Transnational Minority Community* (2010: Continuum) and *Romaphobia: The Last Acceptable Racism in Europe* (forthcoming: Zed). He has also co-edited two books: *The Politics and Discourses of Migration in Europe* (2013: Palgrave) and *The Identity Dilemma: Social Movements and Collective Identity* (2015: Temple University Press). In 2016, he was awarded an AHRC research grant of £250,000 for the project ‘The Aesthetics of Protest’ which looks at social media, art and protest movements.

Robert J. Davidson is a PhD candidate at University of Amsterdam (UvA) and researches the changing relationship between the Dutch government and the gay and lesbian social movement. He is the programme manager of the Amsterdam Research Center for Gender and Sexuality (ARC-GS), is an editorial assistant of the journal *Ethnography*, and is on the editorial board of the *Dutch Journal for Gender Studies*. He has previously published on intersex social movement organizations, queer theory, and the Dutch gay and lesbian social movement.

Guya Accornero is an advanced research fellow in political science at the Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL), Centro de Investigação e Estudos de Sociologia (CIES-IUL). Her research mainly focuses on social movements in democratic transitions, radicalization and anti-austerity protests. She has published the monograph *The Revolution before the Revolution. Student Protest and Political Process at the end of the Portuguese Dictatorship* and edited (with Olivier Fillieule) the book *Social Movement Studies in Europe. The State of the Art*, both for the publisher Berghahn Books.

James M. Jasper writes about culture and politics. His recent books include *Protest: A Cultural Introduction to Social Movements*; and *Players and Arenas* (co-edited with Jan Willem Duyvendak).

Jan Willem Duyvendak studies social movements, immigration and issues of belonging. His recent books include *Players and Arenas*, and *Breaking Down the State* (both co-edited with James Jasper).



References

- Archer, M. (1995). *Realist social theory: The morphogenetic approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bertossi, C., & Duyvendak, J. W. (2012). National models of immigrant integration. The costs for comparative research. *Comparative European Politics*, 10, 237–247.
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Bourdieu, P. (1996). *The state nobility: Elite schools in the field of power*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: An outline of the theory of structuration*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Goodwin, J., & Jasper, J. (Eds.). (2004). *Rethinking social movements*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Jasper, J. (1997). *The art of moral protest*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Jasper, J. (2006). *Getting your way: Strategic dilemmas in real life*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Piven, F. F., & Cloward, R. A. (1979). *Poor people's movements: Why they succeed, how they fail*. New York, NY: Random House Inc.
- Rucht, D. (2015). Conclusion. In G. Accornero & O. Fillieule (Eds.), *Social movement studies in Europe: The state of the art* (pp. 456–487). New York, NY: Berghahn Books.