

Summaries

Hans-Jürgen Urban: Preliminaries for a HKWM Article on the ›Mosaic-Left‹

The concept of the ›mosaic-left‹ has become a popular anchor point for scientific as well as political debates about the current state of the political left. The concept is designed to capture the process by which a diverse range of progressive political actors coordinate their actions in order to form a political alliance, but without giving up their own individual identities. It is based on the idea that the constitution of political coalitions critical of capitalism, can only be explained by drawing on the particular dynamics of the capitalist system itself. The ›mosaic-left‹ is thus presently conceptualized as a countervailing power against the current form of financial capitalism. While it consists of a reformist as well as a more radical political wing, the ›mosaic-left‹ overcomes fragmentation by focusing on the shared critique of the prevailing economic and social conditions. Future work on the concept should be grounded in the real-world struggles of existing social movements and their efforts for progressive coalition building.

Norbert Schneider: The Metaphor of the Mosaic

This article provides a brief reconstruction of the metaphorical use of the term ›mosaic‹, in social and political science of the last thirty years, as well as in the literature and philosophy of the 19th and early 20th century. By analyzing the functions of real mosaics from both a systematic and a historical angle, Schneider delivers an assessment of the semiotic adequacy of the metaphor.

Klaus Dörre: The Mosaic-Left and Democratic Class Politics – a Matter of (In)Compatibility?

The article surveys the new debate on class that is currently taking place, examining in particular its claim to render a »connective antagonism« visible. Dörre shows that the current revival of class politics has led to an initial polarization within the left. This, he argues, is due to the lack of viable class analyses in the current debate. Under the conditions of an economic-ecological pincer crisis, the old industrial class conflict becomes a socio-ecological transformation conflict. Transforming class politics requires its own projects and voices, otherwise what is urgently needed will not emerge: a mosaic-left capable of radiating.

Bernd Roettger: Countervailing power? Counter-Hegemony? The ›Mosaic-Left‹ between Phrase and ›Antagonistic Logic‹. – Preliminaries on the Structural Restrictions of Socialist Politics

There has always been resistance to the ruling organization of bourgeois society. The practical critique of capitalism never lacked counter-movements. But these social movements lacked the power to assert themselves against the »concentrated social power« of capital. – The article provides an assessment of the possibilities of counter-power in »societies in which capitalist mode of production prevails« (Karl Marx). It does so by way of examining the power of capital, which is founded on the economic logic of this mode of production. Roettger argues that the power of capital forces counter-movements to develop an »antagonistic logic« (Lelio Basso). What is predominant in counter-movements (including that of the ›mosaic-left‹), are ›counter-hegemonic‹ phrases – rather than forms of practice that could break the continuing rule of capital.

Brigitte Aulenbacher: There is no Alternative ... On the Frame and the Colors of the Left Mosaic

The article provides an assessment of Hans-Jürgen Urban's ideal type of the ›mosaic-left‹ as a broad left-wing alliance countervailing the destructive forces of finance capitalism. Aulenbacher discusses this idea with regard to the current political situation, focusing on what she calls the ›frame‹ of the mosaic, i.e. the anti-capitalist movement. The article thus addresses the following issues: What is the key concept at stake? How inclusive is the idea of a ›mosaic-left‹? What are further challenges it will have to face? In view of growing social inequalities and polarizations as well as the rise of right-wing populism, there is no alternative for progressive forces but to build up a broad and pluralistic collaboration, although this might not be easy. The question Aulenbacher wants to raise is whether the anti-capitalist frame of the ›mosaic-left‹ and its focus on class are appropriate.

Nora Räthzel: The Mosaic-Left, Hegemony, and the Question of Work and Nature

Räthzel takes as her point of departure the everyday practices of progressive trade unionists, members of worker-owned cooperatives, and academics developing degrowth perspectives. She argues that in the nitty gritty of everyday life these progressive collectives tend to concentrate on just one dimension of the deep societal transformation that is necessary to confront the crisis of human survival on earth arising from the globalising destruction of workers and nature through the capitalist system of production. Given this unprecedented crisis, it does not suffice to bring together civil society and political organisations. What is necessary is practical cooperation on the level of the everyday, where different collectives can learn from each other and thereby broaden not only their knowledge of the way in which globalising Capital functions today, but also their abilities to create practices that integrate the transformation of working relations, technologies and production systems, with the transformation of the nature-work relationship as a whole. What is needed is not adding up different perspectives to create a mosaic, but integrating them to create complex, multifaceted alternatives.

Jan Rehmann: Multitude, ›Mosaic-Left‹, and the Task of a Political Concentration

The article starts out with a discussion of Hardt/Negri's concept of ›multitude‹, which is criticized on two accounts: first, for eliminating the actual contradictions among the subaltern classes, and second, for neglecting the specific task of translating the goals of social movements into the political domain. In contrast to Post-Operatism, which is premised on illusory presuppositions, Urban's concept of a ›mosaic-left‹ accounts for the defeats and fragmentations of the left. It further highlights the specific tasks of organic intellectuals. The weakness of the metaphor is that it misses the dynamic character of construing a hegemony from below and of bringing about an effective political concentration. On the other hand, it articulates the relevant and difficult problem of how to transform multiplicity into a coherent unity while also respecting the diversity of the former.

Peter Jehle: What the ›Mosaic-Left‹ Can Learn from the ›People's University‹ and the Concept of Structural Hegemony

With its claim to bring about a unity of action without eliminating the multiplicity of its components, the concept of the ›mosaic-left‹ coincides with the project of ›structural hegemony‹, as a form of hegemony that is based on the plurality of subjects. The theoretical concept was coined by W.F. Haug in the early 1980s, within the context of the Berlin ›Volksuni‹ (People's University). For 15 years, the People's University brought together thousands of people, who together enacted the dream of a plural Leftist Union in the domain of an alternative culture. It was organized by individual trade unionists and scholars, not by organizations. Similar to the

People's University, the ›mosaic-left‹ must learn to develop agency in the midst of confusing fragmentations. Without developing a perspective that is common to all, the different social movements will not be able to coalesce into a counter-hegemonic bloc.

Richard Gebhardt: The AfD, the Social Question and the Concept of the ›Mosaic-Right‹

Controversies among the left on topics such as migration are closely followed by the intellectual New Right, and right-wing authors like Benedikt Kaiser attempt to appropriate and rebrand political categories of the left. Hans-Jürgen Urban's call for a ›mosaic-left‹ for example inspired Kaiser to develop the term ›mosaic-right‹, with which he refers to the ›movement‹ that will also influence the politics of the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), the leading right-wing party in Germany. Gebhardt shows how the New Right uses left-wing theories to establish right-wing answers to the social question. He moreover analyses the specific character of a regressive form of ›anti-capitalism‹ that purports to be in strong opposition to neoliberalism.

Étienne Balibar: The Revolt of the Yellow Vests

So far, Macron's tactical maneuvers have not helped him to get out of the impasse created by his harsh austerity politics. As the income gap is continually widening, those at the bottom no longer want to be governed as before. The Yellow Vests constitute a representative sample of the French population, but not in a static sense. Much rather, they attest to what is becoming under the condition of a generalized precariousness. They propose a contemporary alternative to the decline of politics, one that is based on the self-representation of citizens. The movement can endure under three conditions: that it is able to converge with other movements, that it resists the spiral of mimetic violence in relation to the state, and that it succeeds in giving the collective ›speaking out‹ an institutional grounding, e.g. by re-establishing the ›États Généraux‹, a notion that refers to the great historical moment when a ›political people‹ constituted itself in opposition to privileged strata. If the municipalities opened their doors to the local organization of the movement, it would be possible to create a communal counter-power.

Félix Boggio Éwanjé-Épée: The Yellow Vest as an Empty Signifier

The Yellow Vest Movement shows both the delegitimation of the ruling power bloc and the crisis of the traditional organizations of the labor movement. Since mass unemployment is marginalizing the workplace as a site for mobilization, it is no surprise that the movement was not kicked off by the issue of salaries but by that of a tax imposed by a neoliberal government. The yellow vest is a perfect example for Laclau's ›empty signifier‹: it needs to be filled and defined by hegemonic actors. It is clear in the meantime that the demands of the movement are directed against racism, sexism, and homophobia. But being ›French‹ and ›white‹ is a crucial identity marker for classes that feel threatened by the popular multiculturalism of the big cities, because it confronts them with the risk of their own social demise. The movement thus remains ambiguous.

Jean Quétier: The Significance of the Yellow Vest for the Crisis of the Political

The article analyses the relation between the Yellow Vest Movement and the crisis of the political. Quétier focuses on three points: first, the Yellow Vest Movement provides an opportunity to reconsider how people get involved in politics when they refuse politics outright. Second, to a certain extent, the achievements of the movement call the notion of the ›crisis of the political‹ into question. Third, the relationship between the left-wing parties and the Yellow Vests can be conceived of as an indicator of the current state of the crisis.

Buchhandlungen, die das Argument-Verlagsprogramm führen

Augsburg	Probuch, Gögginger Straße 34 (0821/579173)
Berlin	Argument-Buchladen, Reichenberger Straße 150 (030/611 39 83) Motzbuch, Motzstraße 32 (030/2115958) Schleichers Buchladen, Königin-Luise-Straße 40/41 (030/841902-0) Schwarze Risse, Mehringhof - Gneisenaustraße 2a (030/6928779)
Bielefeld	Eulenspiegel Buchladen, Hagenbruchstraße 7 (0521/175049)
Bremen	Buchladen im Osterort, Fehrfeld 60 (0421/785 28)
Düsseldorf	BiBaBuZe, Aachener Straße 1 (0211/34 00 60)
Erfurt	Buchhandlung Contineo, Magdeburger Allee 90 (0361/7314536)
Essen	Heinrich-Heine-Buchhandlung, Viehofer Platz 8 (0201/820700)
Frankfurt/M	Unibuch, Jügelstraße 1 (069/775082) Karl Marx Buchhandlung, Jordanstraße 11 (069/778807) Herbert Bärsch Nachf. GmbH, Hostatostr./Albanusstr. 29 (069/314032-0)
Freiburg	Jos Fritz, Wilhelmstraße 15 (0761/26877)
Göttingen	Buchladen Rote Straße, Nikolaikirchhof 7 (0551/42128)
Hamburg	Buchhandlung im Schanzenviertel, Schulterblatt 55 (040/4300808) Buchladen in der Osterstraße, Osterstraße 171 (040/4919560) Heinrich Heine Buchhandlung, Grindelallee 26 (040/441133-0)
Hannover	Annabee, Stephanusstraße 12-14 (0511/1318139)
Heidelberg	Buchhandlung Schöbel & Kube, Plöck 65 (06221/26036)
Hildesheim	Amei's Buhecke, Goschenstraße 31 (05121/34441)
Kassel	ABC Buchladen GmbH, Goethestraße 77 (0561/777704)
Kiel	Zapata Buchladen GmbH, Wilhelmplatz 6 (0431/93639)
Köln	Der Andere Buchladen, Weyertal 32 (0221/416325)
Konstanz	Buchladen zur Schwarzen Geiß, Am Obermarkt 12 (07531/15433)
Mainz	Cardabela, Frauenlobstraße 40 (06131/614174)
Marburg	Roter Stern GmbH, Am Grün 28 (0542/24787)
München	Basis-Buchhandlung, Adalbertstraße 41b-43 (089/2723828)
Münster	Buchhandlung Rosta, Aegidiistraße 12 (0251/449026)
Nürnberg	Buchhandlung Libresso, Bauerngasse 14 (0911/225036)
Reutlingen	Jakob Fetzer Buchladen GmbH, Georgenstraße 26 (07121/239080)
Schweiz	Bern Münsterergass Buchhandlung, Münsterergasse 33 (031/3102323)
Österreich	Wien Lhotzkys Literaturbuffet, Taborstraße 28 (0043/1 276 47 36)
Niederlande	Utrecht De Rooie Rat, Oudegracht 65 (031-30-2317189)

Frauenbuchläden, die das Argument-Frauenprogramm führen

Augsburg	Frauenbuchhandlung Elisara, Schmiedgasse 11 (0821/154303)
Düsseldorf	Buch am Dreieck, Blücherstraße 3 (0211/4644050)
Göttingen	Laura GmbH, Burgstraße 21 (0551/47317)
Idstein	Hexenbuchladen, Obergasse 11 (06126/6437)
Leipzig	Frauenbuchladen Tian, Könnerritzstraße 92 (0341/4797475)
Mannheim	Frauenbuchladen Xanthippe, T3, 4 (0621/21663)
München	Lillemor's Frauenbuchladen, Barerstraße 70 (089/2721205)
Tübingen	Frauenbuchladen Thalestris, Bursagasse 2 (07071/26590)