



## Editorial Introduction to the Volume: Social Dis/Order

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“Protest beyond the law is not a departure from democracy; it is absolutely essential to it.”

~ Howard Zinn

*Disobedience and Democracy* 2002: 85

A survey of the contemporary world provides no shortage of ways in which social order appears to teeter on the brink of collapse. The global rise of anti-democratic movements, cascading global climate crises, and the persistence of gender and racial inequities are but a few examples of social chaos in recent years. In response, counter-movements attempt to address these issues, but their ability to meaningfully restructure social conditions remains unclear. For the 37<sup>th</sup> volume of *Social Thought and Research*, graduate students and early career scholars have identified and analyzed areas of persistence and change within established social and institutional orders globally within the United States, Jamaica, and China.

The volume begins with Blu Buchanan’s and Amara Miller’s exploration of counter-protests on college campuses in response to white supremacist movements in university spaces. The authors point to the *Unite the Right* movement at the University of Virginia’s campus that resulted in the vehicular manslaughter of activist Heather Heyer in August 2017. The authors argue that binary conceptualizations (violence vs non-violence) of collective action do not fully capture the nuance involved in such encounters. Buchanan and Miller outline a relational and ecological model of violence that identifies three interrelated types of violence: offensive violence of instigating protestors, passive institutional violence, and active defensive violence of counter-protesters.

Moving from the United States to the Caribbean, Alana Smith investigates how journalists in Jamaica report HIV-related news and stories within a prominent newspaper. Through content analysis, Smith identifies the use of stereotypical and biased language in media reports despite the region’s official training efforts to reduce journalism bias in HIV reporting. The author argues that the continued use of stereotypical and biased language reduces accurate HIV reporting by ostracizing people with HIV. Smith posits that researchers and experts should explore structural procedures and established newsroom dynamics to better address language bias in HIV reporting.

Nan Zhou offers a historical review and analysis of a unique type of urban village in China to analyze one result of the country’s rapid urbanization. These urban villages are known as *chengzhongcuns* which operate as a type of rural slum within the city. The author provides the historical context of these spaces’ legal and geographic development while exploring the cultural and socioeconomic aspects of its residents. The author argues that *chengzhongcuns*’ unique geographic and legal nature maintains broad patterns of social and economic inequality in the country.

While these studies highlight opportunities for meaningful change in established social orders, fighting for long-term change is a lengthy process. The authors highlight the need for more in-depth conceptualizations of the ecology of social movements and the need for institutions to

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hold themselves accountable to establish lasting social change. Social change requires a concerted effort by activists and institutions alike to reduce hate, inequality, and discrimination. The editors at *STAR* hope this volume provides guidance and sparks intellectual curiosity and activism moving forward.