

Sandra Jeppesen, **Transformative Media: Intersectional Technopolitics from Indymedia to #BlackLivesMatter**, Vancouver, Canada: University of British Columbia Press, 2021, 313 pp., \$35.95 (paperback).

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At a time during which critical research activists are grappling with the current moment of rising right-wing populism and the rapid effects of rampant austerity measures on a global scale, there is a strong pull to investigate the potential impact that social movements have on the long-term fight for social justice. Research activists within the field of communication and critical cultural studies specifically may try to examine the role cultural practices play in social-change work, with an emphasis on today's digital world. It has become increasingly essential to understand how technopolitical communications are utilized as a complicated tool within social movements and beyond.

Sandra Jeppesen's ***Transformative Media: Intersectional Technopolitics from Indymedia to #BlackLivesMatter*** poignantly provides a framework for the concept of intersectional technopolitics by tracing the contemporary history of select independent media activism projects and their practices through a global lens. With this focus, technopolitics is defined as encompassing the work that intersectional activists engage in, through the juxtaposition of using both intersectionality and digital technologies to move political strategies forward. One of the main interventions of the book is to provide key examples of grassroots activist movements that have used the praxis-based concept of intersectionality alongside the use of technopolitics. The book specifically focuses on five overarching areas of activism and their linked histories, including global justice, antiausterity, anticolonialism and antiracism, 2LGBTQ+, and transfeminism movements.

Jeppesen further defines technopolitics as, "Media activists . . . rendering the political elements of technologies visible" (p. 17). She offers a unique vantage point for scholars of social movements at the intersection of independent media to engage with, by encouraging audiences to understand the detailed lineages of media activists working within a framework of technopolitics. As an activist scholar, Jeppesen also has thorough insider knowledge about global social movement networks and how they interact with and build on one another. She writes: "I have been an anarchist organizer for more than twenty years . . . Anarchists critique all forms of oppression, exploitation, domination, and hierarchies. We also work to construct alternative liberatory systems and practices in everyday life" (p. ix).

Through this firsthand approach, merged with rigorous communication scholarship methods, it is evident that Jeppesen is both close to the subject material and critical of the contradicting tensions that exist within the broader inconsistencies of neoliberalism, which comes through in her analytic and timely writing. At a time of rapid and widespread social injustice, when the empirical focus of some social movement



work can be on the “local” within and across movement silos, Jeppesen reminds readers of the important nuance in the transnational.

Initially, Jeppesen delineates the framework of intersectional technopolitics in chapter 1 by connecting “key dimensions of media practices that combine intersectionality and technopolitics” (p. 6), which drives the crux of the theoretical argument and analysis presented in the book. This is the core of Jeppesen’s argument:

Thus, my proposal is that intersectional technopolitics has emerged as the predominant set of integrated practices used in social movement media activism today. It offers many nuanced strengths and opportunities to movement and media activists while also being fraught with contradictions and challenges. (p. 6)

Building on this, Jeppesen also notes two important shifts within intersectional technopolitics. The primary shift includes social movements moving away from solely focusing on one issue to developing “integrated metaissue, intersectional movements” (p. 6). The author not only names these shifts but unpacks the contemporary history of how these shifts came about through changing media practices amid rapidly accelerating technologization and globalization.

After delineating the notion of intersectional politics, in chapter 2, this citational lineage begins with an unpacking of the Global Justice Movement (GJM), which took place between the late 1990s and early 2000s. Jeppesen discusses how this particular movement was developed based on a history of disparate movements including “feminist, anti-nuclear, environmental, civil rights, antiracist, 2LGBTQ+, and labour movements” (p. 39). The GJM was able to use the momentum of these individual movements as well as the rise of digital technologies to begin “spearheading a shift toward new interconnected meta-issue movements” (p. 39). Chapter 3 focuses on the antiausterity movement, in which Jeppesen encourages readers to understand the intricacies and contradictions of anticapitalist activist strategies relying on digital technologies. Furthermore, this chapter provides a glimpse into how activists who engage in intersectional media activism bring topics of the intersecting issues to the forefront of organizing “on issues such as labour, poverty, youth and student rights, gender, race, immigration, housing, health care, or anti-Black racism that are intersectional to the meta-issue of austerity” (p. 74). Building on this, chapter 4 emphasizes anticolonialism and antiracism, through specifically analyzing anti-Black racism and Indigenous rights across North America. Chapter 5 highlights the possibilities within the 2LGBTQ+ movement, including the existence of “multiplicities of technologies and space at play, extending technologies of trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming bodies as mediatized gendered resistances” (p. 178). Within chapter 6, the final, overarching case study emphasizes transfeminism, particularly emphasizing the timeframe within this movement that centered public discourse about sexual assault and rape culture through the hashtag #MeToo.

The closing chapter (chapter 7, “Futures”) provides a clear, critical vision and guide for communication scholars of social movements and intersectional activism. Jeppesen subtly urges social movements and research activists alike to interrogate the contradictions of using technocapitalist tools within anticapitalist intersectional movements. Jeppesen inquires, “What are the limits to social media as a space in which to issue challenges to the multiple exploitations and intersectional oppressive structures of communicative capitalism?” (pp. 220–221). This is especially timely, as in 2025 we are seeing in real-time

how capitalist oligarchs who have immense power of social media systems, as in the cases of X and Meta, are intricately tied to top-down, billionaire driven interests, which is in direct contradiction with progressive social movements and their overarching demands.

To reiterate, Jeppesen succinctly offers a comprehensive summary of some of the key social movements within the past 10 years or so and how they are affiliated with intersectional technopolitics. It is also noteworthy that Jeppesen clearly delineates how global social movements are interconnected, as part of the shift in movements now being much more intersectional than before. Yet, Although Jeppesen's questions and prompts within the final "Futures" section are engaging and thought provoking, these visioning questions have been answered from different perspectives by scholars with expertise in critical race and digital technology. I would have liked to see Jeppesen engage more with scholars from these areas of literature within critical communication and cultural studies, particularly emphasizing the work of BIPOC scholars based in the United States who specialize in contemporary social movements, including #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo. For example, when briefly discussing hashtag activism as a concept, it would have been applicable to engage in a discussion with the book *Hashtag Activism* (Jackson, Bailey, & Welles, 2020). Jackson and colleagues (2020) write, "Hashtag activism, a term that first appeared in news coverage in 2011, describes the creation and proliferation of online activism stamped with a hashtag" (p. xxxii). To what extent has hashtag activism further propelled intersectional technopolitics to becoming the main framework within global social movements?

Overall, I recommend research activists, scholars of social movements, and media activism practitioners read *Transformative Media*. Jeppesen provides a timely and necessary delineation of technopolitics and how this concept has developed across contemporary social movements throughout the globe. The book also provides a structure for both unpacking the use of technopolitics and critiquing its very use within social movements.

### Reference

Jackson, S., Bailey, M., & Welles, B. (2020). *#hashtgactivism: Networks of race and gender justice*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.