The notion of the nation-state and its borders has been the key defining criterion for the international political system as they key shaper of individual, social, and political identities. However, with the relatively new phenomenon of globalization, in which various multinational and transnational actors can more easily exert influence on the public and political spheres, the notion of the nation-state and the borders that constitute it have become increasingly invisible. Borders that are defined broadly to include territorial dividing lines as well as sociocultural boundaries have become sites of struggle over social belonging and cultural and material resources. How do contemporary activists navigate and challenge these borders? What meanings do they ascribe to different social, cultural, and political boundaries, and how do these meanings shape the strategies in which they engage? Moreover, how do social movements confront internal borders based on the differences that emerge within initiatives for social change? Social Movements & Globalization: How Protests, Occupations & Uprisings Are Changing the World, written by Cristina Flesher Fominaya, seeks to answer these questions by combining theory with a rich host of empirical examples. The book shows how relatively recent processes of globalization have stimulated these movements. Defining globalization as a complex process in which the movement of capital, peoples, organizations, movements, and ideas takes in an increasingly international form, the author shows how growing physical and electronic mobility has also helped to create dynamic global social movements.
The book consists of eight chapters including an introduction and a conclusion. In the introductory chapter, the author explains her reasoning for writing this book on the effects of social movements on globalization and vice versa, arguing that “globalization itself is a central mobilizing concept that not only shapes issues around which mobilization takes place, but also influences movements structurally and strategically”. The author considers globalization and social movements to be inextricably connected and argues that both the process of globalization itself and social movements within the context of globalization are linked with the erosion of sovereignty. Nevertheless, she points out “the vast majority of protest and mobilization still takes place within national and local boundaries following national/local logics”. As the author explains in the introduction, she draws her arguments from the insights of social movement theory, social theory, sociology, political science, international relations, media studies, history, and cultural and gender studies with various case studies and examples. In this sense, the book provides an excellent understanding about the dynamics of social movements and the challenges they face within the context of globalization through the use of theoretical frameworks.

In the second chapter, Fominaya not only defines various critical concepts regarding both social movements and globalization, but also explains key debates about the theorization of globalization with respect to social movements. One of the critical distinctions she makes in this chapter is the difference between a social movement and a social or political protest. It is very important to understand the difference between the two, Fominaya argues, because protests are just one of the things that social movements do. “Studying social movements by only looking at protests” she says, “is to see only the tip of the iceberg”.

In the third chapter, the author links globalization and social movements together with different theoretical frameworks and empirical examples, while also trying to understand how social movements spread across borders in a globalized world. To understand the inter-relationship between globalization and social movements, Fominaya explores different kinds of globalization processes such as economic neoliberal globalization, institutional globalization, geo-political militarized globalization, environmental globalization, cultural/ideological globalization, and technological globalization. These globalization processes, she argues, are not clearly distinguishable from one another and are in fact inter-related and overlapping. Therefore, when stating the kinds of globalization processes, she does not give us clear-cut criteria that would help
us to understand the difference between them. After this, she looks into social movements’ diffusion processes. According to the author, diffusion can occur in several ways as movements import and export ideas. The types of diffusion can be seen in organizational forms and practices, narratives, frames and slogans, strategies, icons and symbols.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the Global Justice Movement, which can be considered as a perfect example of a global social movement. The Global Justice Movement is actually a network of social movements from different countries that opposes corporate globalization, which it sees as the reason for inequality in the world, and demands equal distribution of wealth. The author mentions the movement’s iconic protests within the context of globalization. The author examines this movement, because it was different from any other social movement for many reasons; most importantly, because it integrated activists, movements, and organizations from across the world into transnational networks while simultaneously creating a global collective identity with which locally and nationally rooted activists identified.

The fifth chapter explains the cultural resistance in the globalized world by employing the concept of dominant ideology. As Alexander Wendt argues, shared ideas, as opposed to material forces, play the dominant role in our lives. Individual and collective identities and interests are the socially constructed products of shared beliefs (1999, p. 1). Following her elucidation on social constructivist explanations of international relations, Fominaya claims that “political discourse relies on a set of shared meanings to be effective and comprehensible” (p. 82). Consequently, politics is cultural and culture communicates with politics in a number of ways. Therefore, it is true to say that all social movements engage in cultural politics. The author explores the ways in which social movements engage in cultural resistance in order to challenge the dominant ideology, shared beliefs, and ideas. For her, cultural resistance plays an important role in social movements as the latter adopts a “culture consciously created for political resistance, and political resistance that actively and consciously draws on culture”. Fominaya, then discusses the strategies and practices of cultural resistance with an emphasis on tactical, symbolic, and praxis-based strategies such as direct action, civil disobedience, humor, satire, and irony. Moreover, she delves into different case studies such as the “Global SlutWalks” movement, which can be conceptualized as a social movement engaged in cultural resistance by challenging dominant cultural codes that have been used to justify the victimization of women.
The sixth chapter explores the effects of information and communication technologies on social life; compares and contrasts the conventional media with “the new media” as they relate to social movements in the context of a globalized world; and lays out the ways in which social movements use both conventional and social media. As the author argues, conventional or mass media, most of the time, does not provide a sufficient platform for social movements to spread their ideas and inform individuals as many social movements challenge the ways in which the mass media operates. Therefore, it is not surprising that social movements have been engaged in alternative media for a long time. With the creation of new media technologies such as Facebook and Twitter, social movements gained a powerful tool to inform and mobilize “ordinary citizens”. The author first discusses the advantages and limitations of information and communication technologies and then turns to the discussion of cyber activism by focusing on arguably the best-known hacktivist or cyber activist group, Anonymous.

In the chapter seven, the author asks if the recent movements of the Arab Spring, Indignados, and Occupy Wall Street were the result of a global wave of protests. Fominaya firstly focuses on Iceland’s Saucepan Revolution, and then continues on to discuss the reasons for and consequences of the Arab Spring. She also examines the role of social media during the Arab Spring. For the author, new media played two crucial roles throughout the Arab Spring: “the facilitation of the generation of political opposition cultures prior to the uprising; and as a tool to foment mobilization as events unfolded” (p. 163). In addition, however, Fominaya reminds us that social media do not cause revolutions but that the structural problems and mass grievances produce the social movements, which might cause revolutions. After the discussion of the Arab Spring, the author uses the Spanish Indignados and Occupy Wall Street movements to provide another lens through which to discern whether or not the recent movements were the result of a global wave of protests. By comparing these movements, in the end, the author argues that the recent movements are in fact the result of a global wave of protests as they all possess a common macro-political economic context.

The conclusion, again, discusses the relationship between social movements and globalization, by pointing out the uneven effects of globalization. In short, Fominaya, by drawing her arguments and insights from a wide range of theoretical approaches, skillfully provides us a comprehensive understanding of social movements within the context of globalization. For most scholars, globalization is now and will continue to be an empirical reality; there-
fore, it is not surprising that globalization would have consequences on both the public and private spheres. Social movements in general and protests in particular are the key areas over which globalization would be expected to have significant effects. The book, in this respect, successfully links social movements with globalization and fills the gap in the study of social movement by engaging cross-disciplinary discussions with myriad empirical examples and case studies.