in question. The EU experience made evident the existence of a sort of ratification’s interdependence among member states. Ratification events across member states have thus been a crucial factor in the success or failure of the ratification’s process in a single member state. This is a finding of crucial analytical importance. It raises the analytical challenge of how to deal with collective action. Because the Treaty comes out from an agreement between governments, each government should have an interest to structure the process of domestic ratification in a way that might help all the other governments to reach the common good of successful ratification.

However, although all governments have the same interest, domestic conditions might differ consistently. At this regard, the choice of the right timing and the definition of the appropriate framing are the crucial decisions to make for a national government. This collective action problem has been magnified by the unanimity’s criteria necessary for approving a new Treaty in the EU. Treaties have become more and more detailed for anticipating negative reactions at the national level, but of course unanimity offers large opportunities to those domestic actors opposing the Treaty. In an EU of 28 member states, unanimity has thus become the recipe for an highly uncertain ratification’s process. Indeed, the new intergovernmental treaties approved during the euro crisis (as the European Stability Mechanism and the Fiscal Compact) challenged the rigidity of the previous approval procedure, introducing for the first time in the EU history the ratification through qualified majority.

A new era, in the ratification story, has probably started. This book by Carlos Closa constitutes the powerful demonstration that such new approach to ratification has become inevitable, if the purpose is the formation of a more ‘genuine economic and monetary union’.

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From revolutions in the Arab world to anti-austerity mobilizations in Europe and the US, 2011 was certainly a year rife with protests. In a climate of public frustration and crisis, protests quickly spread against economic breakdown and political systems no longer able to deliver the results people expected. If, by the end of the nineties, the world’s discontent with free market-oriented globalization was symbolized by events that happened in Seattle, Genoa and Porto Alegre, today’s world grievances have new names. The Arab Spring, the Occupy Wall Street Movement, and the Indignados have paved the way for the “next” generation of social movements and for a new cycle of international contention. While not all
countries have been equally affected, in most cases mobilizations in streets and squares have quickly crossed national borders. The feeling of discontent resonated from Tahrir Square in Cairo to Syntagma Square in Athens, Puerta del Sol in Madrid and Zuccotti Park in New York. But what factors link the clamor of the crowded squares? Do the current mobilizations have a transnational dimension? Why did protests spread in some countries and not in others?

By adopting a comparative perspective, the book edited by Donatella della Porta and Alice Mattoni is a timely contribution which provides theoretical and empirical reflections about these questions. Its purpose is to understand the transnational dimension and the meaning of diffusion in current mobilizations by focusing on both temporal diffusion (the relationship between current movements and those of the past) and spatial diffusion (the links between activists from different countries). In this sense, as stated in its introductory chapter, the book is the first attempt of its kind to understand the many features of the so-called “movements of crisis” beyond their most obvious and immediate similarities.

The book is organized into twelve chapters tackling the what, how and why of current diffusion processes. It aims to shed light on the multiple theoretical and empirical aspects of these processes. The first section illustrates what spread in terms of discourses, practices and symbols that have become the object of diffusion across national borders and cycles of contention. The second part analyzes how the diffusion of practices and discourses occurred by focusing on the mechanisms of diffusion. Finally, the last section tackles the geography of diffusion in order to explain why protests hit certain countries and not others.

The common thread running through the chapters is the complex and multifaceted nature of diffusion, one that challenges traditional conceptual frameworks. Diffusion is not merely across space. While overlooked by traditional literature, this book illustrates the fact that diffusion does not only occur between countries. Diffusion also occurs as a process through which ideas spread from one moment in history to another. This is the case of the escrache that traveled from the Argentina of the mid-nineties to the recent Spanish anti-austerity protests (Flesher, Fominaya and Montanes, chapter two); or the case of the current acampadas, inherited and readapted from the organizational practices of the Global Justice movement (della Porta, chapter three). In this sense, memory becomes a non-relational channel that provides activists with interpretative packages linking the past to the present (Zamponi and Daphni, chapter nine). From a theoretical point of view, these chapters compellingly show the implications and conditions of cross-time diffusion, adding a layer of complexity to conventional theories.

Diffusion is not linear. The book’s empirical findings reveal that the usual conceptualization of diffusion as a linear relationship between a transmitter and an adopter does not seem to hold in current mobilizations. Today’s diffusion is a dynamic process which blurs the distinction between imitators and adopters. It is one in which squares and movements mutually influence each other. As illustrated by Roos and Oikonomakis (chapter six), diffusion occurs by patterns of resonance in which each national movement is at once an adopter and a transmitter. In this sense, the book
problemsatises the very notion of diffusion as conceived by traditional models and suggests promising new lines of research.

Diffusion is not just about positive cases. While the prevailing literature focuses on countries where protests have spread, some parts of the book explore cases in which diffusion failed to occur. This includes the case of Italy (Zamponi and Daphi, chapter nine) and the Czech Republic (Navratil and Cisar, chapter ten) where the peculiarities of the local context were not conducive for diffusion. Sotirakopoulos and Rootes (chapter eight) compellingly illustrate that structural conditions, resilient culture and the reduced impact of the economic crisis hindered the spread of protests in the UK, while Kousis (chapter seven) shows that massive Greek activism was moved by transnational opportunities and threats posed by transnational economic power holders. Methodologically, these chapters show that the “method of difference” and the systematic comparison of positive and negative cases shed light on conditions of diffusion.

Finally, diffusion is a multi-actor process that involves not only activists but also politicians, political parties, transnational institutions and the media. As Olesen (chapter four) and Atak (chapter eleven) explain, the media are the real actors of diffusion, disseminating injustice-symbols in the global public sphere and spreading practices across borders and communities that are not necessarily structurally equivalent. Similarly, supranational institutions are other actors contributing to diffusion dynamics, by developing interpretative frames vis-à-vis external protest events. This is the case of the European Union, which reacted to the Arab Spring by building protest frames that could legitimate the EU image and downplay commonalities with protests in Europe (Hyvoen, chapter five). Theoretically, this paves the way for new theoretical reflections on diffusion dynamics outside the pure sphere of social movements.

Overall, the book is a great illustration of how research tails reality. As phenomena evolve and mobilizations change their patterns of diffusion, along with their transnational nature, existing theories need to be updated accordingly. With its empirical reach and theoretically thought-provoking chapters, the book accomplishes this task and lays the groundwork for further debates on the crucial relationship between continuity and change in theories of diffusion and transnational activism.

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In the last ten years, democratization studies have gained relevance among Italian political scientists. The volume by Roberto Di Quirico on the failure of democratization in a group of former USSR European coun-