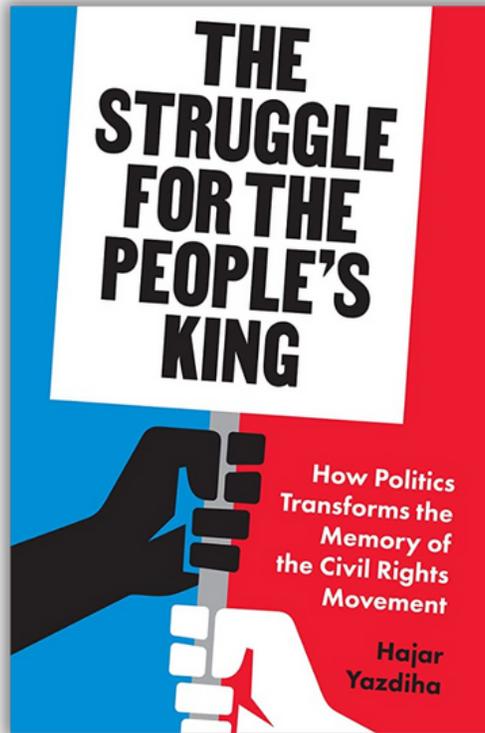




H AJ J A R Y A Z D I H A



MEDIA KIT



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BIO

Dr. Hajar Yazdiha, Assistant Professor of Sociology at USC and an affiliate of the USC Equity Research Institute, specializes in the politics of inclusion and exclusion. Her research, awarded for its insight into societal forces, culminates in her book, "The Struggle for the People's King," which examines how Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy is politically misused to dismantle multicultural democracy. Her work has appeared in major media outlets like The New York Times and ABC News.

What are the social forces that bring us together and keep us apart? What does it take to feel like we belong, to a community and to one another? Hajar Yazdiha's research shows how powerful institutions like law and media categorize groups into an "us" and a "them" and make the boundaries between us feel real and natural. She also shows how these categories matter for everyday people, the communities where we feel like we belong, and how this "groupness" shapes our identity, our politics, and even our imaginations of what type of society may be possible.

Dr. Yazdiha's research examines these questions by analyzing the mechanisms underlying the politics of inclusion and exclusion. This work crosses subfields of race and ethnicity, migration, social movements, culture, and law using mixed methods including interview, survey, historical, and computational text analysis.

Dr. Yazdiha's new book entitled, *The Struggle for the People's King: How Politics Transforms the Memory of the Civil Rights Movement* (Princeton University Press) examines how a wide range of rivaling social movements across the political spectrum deploy competing interpretations of the Civil Rights Movement to make claims around national identity and inclusion. Comparing how rival movements constituted by minority and majority groups with a range of identities – racial, gender, sexuality, religious, moral, political – battle over collective memory, the book documents how the misuses of the racial past erode multicultural democracy.

This research provides new insights into the relationship between macro-level institutional structures, meso-level group processes of collective identity formation and collective behavior, and micro-level perceptions, emotions, and mental health. Through her research, Dr. Yazdiha works to understand how systems of inequality become entrenched and how groups develop strategies to resist, contest, and manifest alternative futures.

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE PEOPLE'S KING

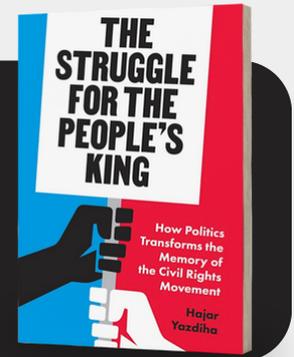
How Politics Transforms the Memory of the Civil Rights Movement

Publisher: Princeton University Press

Publication Date: May 30, 2023

Price: Paperback \$29.05

ISBN-13: 978-0691246475 (286 pages)



"This beautifully written, theoretically sophisticated book analyzes forty years of public contestation over the memory of civil rights. Yazdiha shows how conservatives have sanitized King to advance their political agenda on race, and how progressives have struggled to maintain a realistic depiction of him in their fight for social justice. An instant classic."

—**Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, author of Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America**

"Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement created a powerful liberation legacy. Today, right-wing and progressive movements fight fiercely over its ownership. Will this legacy be perverted to achieve oppressive ends or fulfilled in quests to achieve equality? Hajar Yazdiha addresses this profound issue head-on in this masterful study. This book should be read by everyone concerned about democracy in our troubled world." —**Aldon D. Morris, author of The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement**

"Brilliantly written. Yazdiha provides an excellent theoretical and conceptual lens for understanding the many different ways that white conservative groups have co-opted the images, icons, and ideas of the civil rights movement. The Struggle for the People's King is a critical scholarly contribution." —**Joyce M. Bell, author of The Black Power Movement and American Social Work**

How the misuses of Martin Luther King's legacy divide us and undermine democracy

In the post-civil rights era, wide-ranging groups have made civil rights claims that echo those made by Black civil rights activists of the 1960s, from people with disabilities to women's rights activists and LGBTQ coalitions. Increasingly since the 1980s, white, right-wing social movements, from family values coalitions to the alt-right, now claim the collective memory of civil rights to portray themselves as the newly oppressed minorities. The Struggle for the People's King reveals how, as these powerful groups remake collective memory toward competing political ends, they generate offshoots of remembrance that distort history and threaten the very foundations of multicultural democracy.

In the revisionist memories of white conservatives, gun rights activists are the new Rosa Parks, antiabortion activists are freedom riders, and antigay groups are the defenders of Martin Luther King's Christian vision. Drawing on a wealth of evidence ranging from newspaper articles and organizational documents to television transcripts, press releases, and focus groups, Hajar Yazdiha documents the consequential reimagining of the civil rights movement in American political culture from 1980 to today. She shows how the public memory of King and civil rights has transformed into a vacated, sanitized collective memory that evades social reality and perpetuates racial inequality.

Powerful and persuasive, The Struggle for the People's King demonstrates that these oppositional uses of memory fracture our collective understanding of who we are, how we got here, and where we go next.

www.hajaryazdiha.com