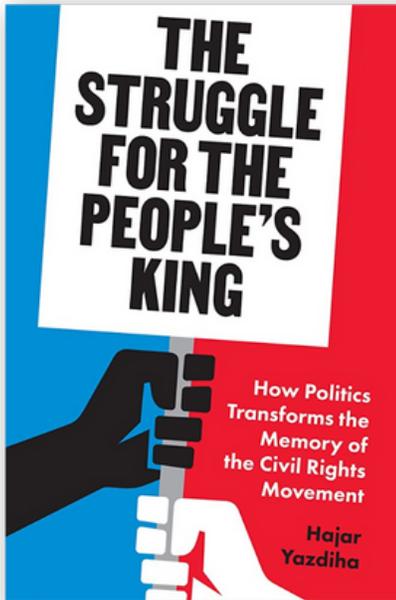


THE STRUGGLE FOR THE PEOPLE'S KING: How Politics Transforms the Memory of the Civil Rights Movement



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. *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.

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.

"This beautifully written, theoretically sophisticated book analyzes forty years of public contestation over the memory of civil rights... An instant classic."—Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, author of *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*

"Brilliantly written... *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*



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*.

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