



# **News and Civil Society: The Contested Space of Civil Society in UK Media. by Jen Birks**

*Jen Birks*

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Civil Society has not been more relevant as a concept and a practice since the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. Global events from Tahir Square to Wall St have brought a new relevance and urgency to questions about the boundaries of legitimate dissent and public order policing, the meaning of tolerance in the context of conflicting rights claims, and how we can agree on the shared values of the 'good society'. This timely book examines the representation of civil society in news media, exploring the popular understanding of this contested space in relation to conflicting legitimating frames: as the neo-liberal Big Society, activist political participation, or postmodern apolitical tolerance. With close reference to prominent news stories, including the UK state visit of Pope Benedict XVI, anti-austerity protests and industrial action, police infiltration of the environmental movement, and the Occupy camp at St Paul's Cathedral in London, *News and Civil Society* scrutinises different facets of contemporary civil society, civility and civic virtue. A cross-disciplinary engagement with questions of national identity and pluralism, civil liberties and dissent, power and accountability, this book will appeal to those with interests in media, journalism, sociology, citizenship and political studies.

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