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Taking back the streets : women, youth, and direct democracy

Kaplan, Temma

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Abstrak

Toward the end of the twentieth century in places ranging from Latin America and the Caribbean to Europe, the United States, South Africa, Nigeria, Iran, Japan, China, and South Asia, women and young people took to the streets to fight injustices they believed they could not confront in any other way. In the hope of changing the way politics is done, they called officials to account for atrocities they had committed and unjust laws they had upheld. They attempted to drive authoritarian governments from power by publicizing the activities these officials tried to hide. This powerful book takes us into the midst of these movements to give us a close-up look at how a new generation bore witness to human rights violations, resisted the efforts of regimes to shame and silence young idealists, and created a vibrant public life that remains a vital part of ongoing struggles for democracy and justice today. Through personal interviews, newspaper accounts, family letters, and research in the archives of human rights groups, this book portrays women and young people from Argentina, Chile, and Spain as emblematic of others around the world in their public appeals for direct democracy. An activist herself, author Temma Kaplan gives readers a deep and immediate sense of the sacrifices and accomplishments, the suffering and the power of these uncommon common people. By showing that mobilizations, sometimes accompanied by shaming rituals, were more than episodic--more than ways for societies to protect themselves against government abuses and even state terrorism--her book envisions a creative political sphere, a fifth estate in which ordinary citizens can reorient the political practices of democracy in our time.