

General issue

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A few thoughts about this issue

After the success of the last general issue (5/2) of *Interface*, we have once again invited movement scholars and practitioners (and everybody in between) to reflect on the histories, strategies and discourses of the movements that they are currently focusing on without a need for their pieces to become part of a themed issue. It is worth emphasising, however, that each issue of *Interface* has an un-themed section so authors do not have to wait for a particular theme to publish their work.

The last general issue of the journal also marked the celebration of five years of *Interface* and featured an editorial where some of the more “established” as well as newer members of the team reflected on their experiences with the journal. That was already almost three years ago but many of the hopes and concerns that were voiced then have remained a topic of conversation and reflection within *Interface* since. It was clear at that point in 2013 that collectively, we considered diversity, sustainability of practice as well as critical reflection on what we were doing (as members of the team as well as our respective movements) to be central to develop the journal further. Partly as a result of that discussion, today we are presenting a *general* issue of the journal with more un-themed issues to come. This is also the first issue that we (Anna and Kasim) are editing, which testifies to a conscious effort that we are making at *Interface* to diversify and allow younger members of the group to take responsibility and work autonomously although with fantastic assistance from the other editors.

At *Interface*, we make many of our reflections on the work that we are doing with the journal open and often write about them on our website and in various editorials. Like all other issues, this one is a result of a collective learning process, immense amounts of voluntary work and an amazing cooperation across countries and perspectives. In this way, we can say that our work for the journal mirrors a lot of the (best) ways in which we organise and debate in our movements. It also seems that this model is attracting an equally diverse and rich readership as well as generating a constant stream of informed and complex analyses and reflections that we receive. The diversity and richness of movements and perspectives in this general issue is yet again not only a testimony to our collective efforts as journal editors but also (and more importantly) to the experience of people all over the world who are learning in struggle.

Future directions for social movement studies

Given that the previous general issue in 2013 was a time of celebration of the previous five years of *Interface*, it might at juncture be worth reflecting upon the past and future of social movement studies. Tomás MacSheoin's article in this issue provides a quantitative analysis of social movement journals. There are obvious limits in the capacity for a statistical analysis of thematics and geographies of articles published in social movement journals. These limits are mentioned by MacSheoin as well. Nonetheless, it opens important questions to think about. MacSheoin highlights how there is a geographic concentration on studies in core countries over those in the non-core, periphery, or former colonies. While his study cannot explain the reasons behind this uneven scholarly development, it poses important an question about how *Interface* contributes to this phenomenon.

We would like to propose some possible reasons for *Interface's* eurocentrism. First, *Interface* grew out of a network of activist-scholars based out of Western Europe. While the journal's editorial team has expanded to cover many parts of the world, Europeanists are over-represented in the journal and there are many regions we still lack adequate coverage of: Middle East and Central Asia. Building relationships beyond North America and Western Europe is on-going work for the journal. Second, the call for papers might reflect a narrow range of debates that over represent concerns emerging from core countries. The journal has had an impressive range of call for papers that included concerns that reflected issues outside of the core (e.g. post/socialism, the Arab Spring, and on anti-colonial and post-colonial social movements). We would encourage to continue a trend within *Interface* for papers to take on regional debates that concern the Global South.

An area that is significantly under-represented is also the study of right-wing movements, as highlighted by MacSheoin. This is particularly concerning given the urgency for social justice activists to understand the rise of the hard right in recent years, from the dominance of Hindu fascism in India, the right wing populism of Donald Trump in the United States, the consolidation of far right parties in several countries in Europe, to the strengthening of the religious right in Israel. Several articles in this issue have shown that social movements have emerged to critically resist neoliberalism and austerity, however, none have addressed the simultaneous emergence of right-wing movements and populisms. This lack in scholarship has begun to be addressed by other journals, see for example the recent volume of *Socialist Register* (Panitch and Albo, 2015). However, the contemporary balance of political forces compels us to study right-wing movements as a means to provide opportunities of reflection for opposing them.

In this issue

This issue begins with four articles that examine movements in contexts of neoliberalization. The first two papers deal with resistance in the face of the

neoliberal university. Bjarke Skærlund Risager and Mikkel Thorup's paper looks at the movement "A Different University", where students occupied several universities across Denmark in 2014-15. Risager and Thorup argue that the movement was not just resisting specific neoliberal reforms of the university, but was a broader movement that named the problem as rooted in the emergence of the neoliberal university. Further, the increasing penetration of capitalist spatio-temporalities in the university were resisted through the pre-figuring of "a different university". Anastasia Christou situates forms of resistance to the neoliberal university given how restructuring is gendered. Christou suggests forming alternative forms of affectivity, such as collectives, that provide support against neoliberalization.

Shelley K. White and Amy Finnegan assess how the U.S. single-payer health care movement is re-evaluating the terrain of struggle given a new context with the enactment of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which further entrenched the private health sector. White and Finnegan account for how the movement is searching for the contemporary opportunity structure that the new context provides, while recognizing their previous approaches are no longer relevant and risk demobilization.

Karen Tejada studies the organizing practises of Salvadorians in the D.C. metro area in the United States. In doing so, she extends Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus within a transnational field of homeland and hostland. The everyday life of Salvadorian activists and philanthropic volunteers is grounded through contexts of homeland and hostland.

Carlo Fanelli and Bryan Adams situate the contemporary emergence of the living wage movement in Canada in a context of neoliberalization. Their findings indicate that living wage campaigns have taken an approach of policy bargaining with the government and employers. Such movements have also kept their scale of politics upon the local. Fanelli and Adams find the roots of the movement's failure in their taking a lobbying approach rather than social mobilization and protest, and a local rather than a national scale of organizing.

Two articles in this issue look into how environmental groups build and implement strategies and discourses for their campaigns. Laurence L. Delina and Mark Diesendorf take up the question of what constitutes an effective strategy for the climate change movement. Their international survey shows that environmental campaigns and movements are more likely to be considered effective if they emphasise a strong moral message, offer an alternative, incorporate diversity and use innovative means of communication. Suresh Babu discusses the discursive and power dynamics that were played out during the people's protest in the Narmada Valley in India. A wide range of actors were mobilised, which led to a complex process of creation, reworking, co-optation and deradicalisation of discourses.

Amanda Machin's article explores the meaning of the hunger strike by drawing on examples of the Suffragette, Irish republican and anti-apartheid movements. She argues that the ways in which the hunger strike makes the body to

interiorise and invert the violence of the opponent upon itself serves as a powerful weapon that can communicate, foster collective identities and disrupt the dominant order. Importantly, the hunger strike in her account is both strategic and rational as well as highly affective. As Machin demonstrates, it also makes the body into a potent political instrument as well as a political actor.

Finally, we end with Tomás MacSheoin – also discussed above – who offers us a fresh look at the “world according to social movement journals,” including *Interface* itself (!) He notes that one of the worrying tendencies in journals dealing with movement scholarship is the prevailing under-representation of research and perspectives from the non-core countries (although *Interface* performs better in this area than other journals). MacSheoin argues that this is not solely caused by the fact that scholars tend to study movements that they know most about. The situation is also hardly specific to social movement journals and according to MacSheoin, it reflects a structural problem across the social sciences and an unequal distribution of power globally.

Book reviews:

This issue includes reviews of: Ana Cecilia Dinerstein’s book – *The Politics of Autonomy in Latin America: The Art of Organizing Hope* – that is reviewed by Ryan A. Knight; Colin Barker, Laurence Cox, John Krinsky, and Alf Gunvald Nilsen’s edited collection – *Marxism and Social Movements* – reviewed by Christina Heatherton; Anne Alexander and Mostafa Bassiouny’s *Bread, Freedom, Social Justice: Workers and the Egyptian Revolution* (Stephen M. Strenge); James S. Ormrod’s *Fantasy and Social Movements* (Andrew Kettler); Michelle D. Bonner’s *Policing protest in Argentina and Chile* (Tomás MacSheoin); Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald M. Derrickson’s *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-Up Call* (Maja Curcic); and Óscar García Agustín’s *Sociology of Discourse: From institutions to social change* (Alexandra Ana).

Goodbyes and welcome back!

We also wanted to take this opportunity to thank two of our editors: Cal Andrews from the Australia-and-New Zealand editorial team and Aziz Choudry from the North-America group for all their amazing work that they have done for *Interface* over the years. It has been an absolute pleasure to work with you and although we are sad to see you go, we are also reassured that you are both leaving so that you can continue the struggle wherever you are!

We would also like to warmly welcome back Elizabeth Humphrys who has returned after a sabbatical. Elizabeth is doing fantastic work behind the scenes at *Interface*. Great to have you back! Lastly, we would like to welcome Irina Ceric to our editorial team as a regional co-editor for North America and Heike Schaumberg as a regional co-editor for Spanish-speaking Central and South America.

About the authors:

Kasim Tirmizey is currently writing his doctoral dissertation at York University, Toronto. His work examines anti-colonial movements in Punjab, British India, from the 1910s to 1940s.

Anna Szolucha currently works on the [Repower Democracy](#) project about anti-fracking mobilisations and community-led renewable energy in the UK and Poland and is a post-doc and Marie Curie Fellow at the Department of Social Anthropology, University of Bergen, Norway. She has been involved in a number of different movements in several countries. Her book based on militant ethnographic and participatory research will be out soon and is entitled *Real Democracy in the Occupy Movement: No stable ground*.

Contacts for all editors can be found at the journal's website:
<http://www.interfacejournal.net/submissions/editorial-contact/>

References

Panitch, Leo, and Greg Albo. *The Politics of the Right: Socialist Register 2016*. Merlin Press, 2015.