

Call for papers vol 3 issue 2 (November 2011): Feminism, women's movements and women in movements

**Issue editors: Cristina Flesher Fominaya, Sara Motta,
Catherine Eschle, Laurence Cox**

Feminist theory is a direct product of women's movements, which in turn have been among the most powerful movements of recent decades and have had dramatic effects across societies. Despite this, much contemporary feminist theory avoids questions of collective agency, and is often disconnected from movement activism. Conversely most scholarship on social movements ignores feminist analysis or at best includes it as an add-on question about gendered participation. Arguably, such scholarship is reliant on restrictive conceptual frames that result in the invisibilisation, de-legitimisation and silencing of contemporary forms of feminism, women's movement and women in movement. Both frameworks are therefore weak on understanding and conceptualising the nature of contemporary feminism-as-movement, engaging with women's agency in the construction of new forms of popular politics and opening up productive questions about political strategy.

This is particularly strange since women's movements, and movements dominated by women (particularly those described as popular movements, movements of the poor or community movements), play a distinctive and characteristic role in local, national and global politics. They often expand the praxis of popular politics and social change in ways that politicise the subjective and the everyday, and include the spiritual, cultural and affective in their practices of resistance. Furthermore, feminist historical accounts in recent decades have highlighted the importance of women's mobilisation, theories, pedagogies and approaches in everything from anti-imperialist movements, struggles around social reproduction and trade union organising to religious activism and top-down mobilisation in support of conservative regimes.

For this issue, we invite contributions on how feminist theory can help us understand the ways in which participation and collective action are gendered within social movements generally. We are equally interested in the ways in which women's movements, feminist activism and movements strongly marked by women's participation but without a feminist identification have distinct approaches to politics – or operate in similar ways to other movements - and the political and strategic implications of their activities. We are looking for contributions from feminist activists and scholars, participants in and students of women's movements and movements marked by a feminisation of resistance, and social movement researchers with an interest in women's agency, or how agency is gendered, in movements of all kinds.

Questions for discussion:

Some of the questions we are interested in exploring in this issue of *Interface* are:

- Is there a distinctively feminist mode of analysing social movements and collective agency?
- Can (should) academic forms of feminism be reclaimed as theory-for-movements?
- In what ways and to what extent are social movement actors using feminist categories to develop new forms of collective action?
- Are there specific types of "women's movement/s" in terms of participation, tactics and strategies?
- Has the feminisation of poverty led to the feminisation of resistance among movements of the poor? If so/if not, what are the implications for such resistance?
- Under what conditions does women's participation in movements which are not explicitly feminist or focussed on specifically gendered issues lead to a change in power relations?
- What are the implications of women's participation for collective identity or movement practice, leadership and strategy?
- What constitutes progressive or emancipatory movement practice in relation to gender, and good practice in alliance-building?
- How can social movement scholarship contribute more to the feminist analysis of activism, and how can feminist scholarship help develop a fuller understanding of collective agency?
- Are there specifically gendered themes to the current global wave of movements? Have feminist perspectives anything distinctive to offer the analysis of such movements?
- What can enquiry into contemporary activism learn from historical feminist writing on women's movements and women's role in other movements?

Contributions on other questions related to the theme of this issue are also very much welcomed.

Special section: feminist strategies for change

We aim to include a special themed section within the issue on feminist strategies for change. This will be open to contributions from feminist groups, whether written collectively or by individuals.

Throughout the 1990s feminist politics became increasingly professionalised and arguably de-politicised. Yet neoliberal globalisation has witnessed a feminisation of poverty and sexualisation of public space. The result is a

paradoxical situation of defeats and de-politicisation combined with new forms of re-politicisation. This special section seeks to engage with attempts to re-articulate feminist politics in the current conjuncture, be they liberal, radical, socialist or anarchist in character or taking new forms. Arguably many of these re-articulations are simultaneously localised and transnationalised, articulating a praxis that is often mis-recognised and mis-represented by social movement scholarship.

The questions we hope will be considered in this section include:

- What does feminist strategy mean today?
- What are the challenges and limitations of feminist strategising in the current moment?
- How do contemporary feminist activists and women's movements draw on the practices and experiences of earlier movements?
- Where do they see themselves in terms of movement achievements to date and the road still to be travelled?
- What barriers and possibilities for feminist struggle has neoliberalism created?
- Does the decline of neo-liberalism create openings for feminists?
- And what movements today could be allies for a transition out of patriarchy?

We also invite feminist groups, communities and movements to frame their own questions and problematics for this section.

General submissions

Finally, as in all issues of *Interface*, we will accept submissions on topics that are not related to the special theme of the issue, but that emerge from or focus on movements around the world and the immense amount of knowledge that they generate. Such general submissions should contribute to the journal's mission as a tool to help our movements learn from each other's struggles, by developing analyses from specific movement processes and experiences that can be translated into a form useful for other movements. In this context, we welcome contributions by movement participants and academics who are developing movement-relevant theory and research. Our goal is to include material that can be used in a range of ways by movements – in terms of its content, its language, its purpose and its form. We thus seek work in a range of different formats, such as conventional articles, review essays, facilitated discussions and interviews, action notes, teaching notes, key documents and analysis, book reviews – and beyond. Both activist and academic peers review research contributions, and other material is sympathetically edited by peers. The editorial process generally is geared towards assisting authors to find ways

of expressing their understanding, so that we all can be heard across geographical, social and political distances.

Deadline and contact details

The deadline for initial submissions to this issue (Issue 6, to be published November 2011) is May 1st 2011.

For details on how to submit to Interface please consult the "Guidelines for contributors" on our website at www.interfacejournal.net, and send manuscripts to the appropriate regional editor, whether on the special theme of "Feminism, women's movements and women in movements" or general articles.

Potential contributors for the special section on "Feminist strategies for change" are invited to contact Sara Motta at <saracatherinem AT gmail.com>.