



# Male allies of women's movements: Women's organizing within the Catholic Church in Franco's Spain

Celia Valiente

Department of Social Sciences, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Calle Madrid 135, 28903 Getafe-Madrid, Spain



## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 12 July 2016

Received in revised form 21 December 2016

Accepted 27 March 2017

Available online xxxx

### Keywords:

Women's movements

Men

Allies

Catholic Church

Spain

Franco

## ABSTRACT

Scholarship proposes that allies of social movements are usually collective actors, and movements frequently pay a price for their reliance on allies: moderation. This article investigates the impact of allies on social movements by analyzing the feminist protest within the Catholic Church in Franco's Spain and its male allies. Drawing on published documents and twenty-four interviews, I find that individuals can function as allies for movements. In addition, allies may predispose activists towards moderation in some domains but not necessarily in others. Moreover, allies may themselves be more radical than activists in some regards and thus have the potential to radicalize protests.

© 2017 Published by Elsevier Ltd.

## Introduction

Gender inequality means that women (as a group) have less access than men (as a group) to economic resources, political power and prestige. All over the world, feminist protests have developed to define gender inequality as unjust and improve women's status through collective efforts. At times, feminist activists have relied on men to bring about social change. In finding and interacting with male allies, feminist movements are not different from other social movements that look for and interrelate with allies. This article investigates the impact of male allies on feminist movements: the benefits gained through this alliance and changes in women's organizing due to the relation with male allies.

Social movement literature usually makes two assumptions: allies are collective actors (rather than individuals), and movements (or parts of them) moderate their demands and strategies while engaging with allies. Analyzing women's organizing within the Catholic Church in Franco's Spain, I question both assumptions. Based on published documents and twenty-four in-depth interviews, I document that activists can gain important benefits while interacting with allies who are not collective actors but individual men. I also find that activists do not necessarily abandon radical goals and confrontational strategies when interacting with allies. Rather, the continuous interrelation between activists and their allies at times render some pre-existing moderate features of the protest more salient. Moreover, some allies maintain more

radical positions on certain issues than activists, and thus might influence activists to take a more radical stand on these issues.

In this article, I proceed in four steps. In the first section, I review the literature on allies of social movements. In the second section, I present the empirical case and specify the sources used in this research. Subsequently, this article studies the feminist protest within the Catholic Church in Franco's Spain. In what follows, members, activists and leaders of this protest are called "Catholic feminists" (see below for a brief discussion of this terminology). In the third section, I analyze the benefits gained by Catholic feminists while relying on male allies. In the fourth section, I assess the long-lasting impact of male allies on Catholic feminists' mobilization. This article does not analyze male allies of the feminist protest within the Spanish Catholic Church in and of themselves but rather focuses only on the impact of male allies on the aforementioned protest.<sup>1</sup>

## Theory

Social movement scholarship usually mentions allies among the features of the political opportunity structure that social movements face. By relying on allies, movements obtain tangible resources such as facilities and financial aid (Klandermans, 1990, 126; Zald & Ash, 1966, 335). Allies provide movements with intangible resources such as "organizational experience, leadership, strategic and tactical know-how, [and] ideological justification" (Klandermans, 1990, 126). Allies help movements achieve goals in general (Jenkins & Perrow, 1977, 263; Zald & Ash, 1966, 335) and policy goals in particular (McCammon & Campbell, 2002; Olzak, Soule, Coddou, & Muñoz, 2016). However,

E-mail address: [celia.valiente@uc3m.es](mailto:celia.valiente@uc3m.es).

movements may find important allies in the polity but still do not achieve policy goals (Amenta and Zylan, 1991, 335) or obtain only symbolic rewards (Lipsky, 1968).

Social movement literature often studies allies of social movements which are collective actors, such as political parties, labor unions, civic associations and other social movements (Amenta and Zylan, 1991; Jenkins & Perrow, 1977; Klandermans, 1990; McCammon & Campbell, 2002). This emphasis on collective actors is understandable, given the centrality of them as allies of many social movements, such as left-wing parties as allies of gay and lesbian movements in numerous countries.

Admittedly, works on political opportunity refer to political elites which in principle can include both groups and individuals. But this scholarship tends to mention individual polity members only at specific or processed in the/or processed in the policy-making arena (Jenkins & Perrow, 1977, 260–62; Olzak et al., 2016). Analyses of social movements as networks highlight the ties among actors within movements and around them (Diani & McAdam, 2003) and in theory, these networks may comprise both organizations and individuals. Social movement scholarship at times makes passing reference to individuals who support social movements, for instance, financial backers of the civil rights movement (Zald & Ash, 1966, 329, 332). But generally speaking, individual allies of social movements have received till now minimal attention (in comparison with allies which are collective actors).

The interaction between allies and social movements has an impact on the latter. Although various types of impact are described in the literature, an impact that is frequently mentioned is the moderation of part of the movement, and/or the division between this moderate part of the movement and the more radical part which does not rely on allies (Flesher Fominaya, 2010, 388–89).

Before reviewing studies on women's and feminist movements, a conceptual clarification is necessary. Women's movements are "all organizing of women explicitly as women to make any sort of social change." Women's organizing as women is usually termed "feminist" when it makes "efforts to challenge and change gender relations that subordinate women to men" (Ferree & Mueller, 2004, 577). Thus, feminist movements are a subset of women's movements. Some scholars only resort to the word "feminist" when activists under study self-identify as such. As shown below, some (but not all) Spanish Catholic activists utilize the word "feminist" in self-presentation. Nonetheless, I name all of them "feminist" regardless of self-identification because all of them tried to challenge at least some aspects of gender inequality. In this decision, I follow the renowned study of the feminist protest within the Catholic Church and the military in the United States (Katzenstein, 1998, 20–1, 86–7).

Feminist theories and feminist movements often consider that men as a group benefit from women's underprivileged status, and that men are responsible for women's subordination. But some men supported feminist campaigns and movements, for instance, in Western societies at least since the eighteenth century (Kimmel, 1992; Messner, Greenberg, and Peretz, 2015; Offen, 1988, 134, 151). Studies on the suffrage movement era in Western countries identify male allies as crucial agents in the approval of laws that enfranchised women (Banaszak, 1996; John & Eustance, 1997). Scholarship in more contemporary times, from the era of state feminism, shows that male politicians have at times functioned as key backers to women's movement activists' (inside and outside the state) policy gains (Banaszak, 2010; Stetson & Mazur, 1995). Nevertheless, these studies also categorize other men (and women) as major opponents of gender equality policy making.

Surprisingly, the literature on women's and feminist movements has not extensively researched male allies. Major syntheses of women's movements around the world do not mention male allies or mention them only in passing (Ferree & Mueller, 2004). This is also the case of the aforementioned study on the feminist protest within the United States Catholic Church since the 1970s (Katzenstein, 1998, 136, 147–48, 168–69). Probably, the effort of this literature to unravel women's

agency, autonomy and voice to improve women's status puts the focus of attention on women and discourages the analysis of men (as allies). But male allies of feminist movements existed and exist. Of course, not all feminist movements invest energy in finding male allies. Feminist movements are more likely to search for male allies if driven by gender theories that do not conceptualize men as women's enemies or men as impervious to change.

In this article, I use the term "male ally" to refer to any man (or men's group) who at any time supports a feminist protest in the public realm. Support may happen once or more often. Support may take many forms because feminist movements are extraordinarily diverse. For a feminist group focused on the production and dissemination of feminist theory, an example of support may be the publication of a feminist book by a male editor. For a feminist group publicizing its demands in a petition, an example of support may be the signature of this petition by a male ally. Because this definition of male allies leaves open the type of support given, it serves to analyze allies and movements in various locations and historical periods. This conceptualization of support does not require that male allies: make feminism one of their priorities; behave in their private lives according to feminist principles; or agree with all the claims advanced by a feminist group either.

I propose that men as allies in women's organizing raise at least two sets of important questions, which are related to individuals as allies and the moderation impact on movements by allies. First, as previously described, social movement literature usually portrays movement allies as collective actors. But could it not be possible that in some circumstances individuals (rather than organizations) act as influential allies of social movements? It could be argued that individual allies may be especially useful for social movements that do not have a mass membership. These movements cannot use tactics that require a large following, such as economic boycotts and strikes (Lipsky, 1968, 1146). Individual allies may be particularly helpful for movements that, for any reason, do not use disruptive tactics. The lack of a mass base or disruptive behavior means that movements do not usually capture the attention of key collective actors such as parties, unions or civic associations. Therefore, the leaders of these movements may be particularly inclined to search for individual allies among the people they know. It could also be hypothesized that individual allies may be particularly decisive for social movements in non-democratic contexts where the range of collective actors is certainly restricted. In non-democratic political regimes, political authorities usually ban collective actors such as political parties, trade unions or associations of civil society other than the single party and auxiliary organizations. Alternatively, in all types of political regimes, social movements may also develop (and increasingly do so) within organizations and institutions such as companies, churches or schools (or outside them but with the purpose of transforming them) (Katzenstein, 1998). An important proportion of organizations and institutions are not internally democratic and individuals occupy single positions within them (although collective organs also exist).

Second, is moderation the inevitable price to be paid by activists for engaging with allies? If so, what does "moderation" mean exactly? According to the literature, as a result of their interaction with allies, activists abandon radical aims and/or confrontational strategies. But some activists may never claim radical demands or use confrontational strategies. Still, do allies have a moderating effect on these activists? Furthermore, social movement scholarship often presumes that allies are more moderate than activists. Could not the opposite be possible, that is, that allies are on some grounds more radical than activists and thus have the potential to radicalize a protest (rather than moderating or coopting it)? I now turn to the task of answering these questions with the help of an empirical case study.

### Empirical case and sources

In this article, I study male allies of the feminist protest within the Catholic Church in Franco's Spain. This protest comprises individuals

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/4941995>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/4941995>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)