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Social Processes Underlying Movement Influence: Young Adult Feminist Activists’ Interactions with Professionalized Feminist Organizations in Ecuador and Peru

Anna-Britt Coe

Department of Sociology, Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden

Abstract

Despite extensive research on the influence between social movements, knowledge remains limited to the basic social processes by which this occurs. This article locates these social processes in the accounts among young adult feminist activists in Ecuador and Peru. Qualitative interviews were conducted and analyzed among 21 young adult feminist activists from eight groups. The findings show how their feminist mobilizing was influenced by interactions with professionalized feminist organizations that were simultaneously inclusive and exclusionary. Three *in/exclusionary interactions* captured basic social processes whereby young adult feminist activists struggled to define modes of participation, organizational practices, and targets of engagement.

Keywords

Gender justice; generations; Latin America; sites of struggle; spillover

Introduction

Interactions between and within social movements are central means whereby new forms of collective action develop. For over two decades, the concept of spillover has provided a useful lens to examine such interactions and innovations (Meyer and Whittier 1994; Soule 2007). The concept of spillover refers to the influence between social movements on diverse aspects of mobilization, including organizational structures, collective identity, tactics, and frames (Meyer and Whittier 1994; Whittier 2007). Latin American scholarship approaches social movements as sites of struggles through which new practices of inclusion, participation, and citizenship are constructed, especially given persisting limits of institutional politics (Alvarez et al. 1998; Dagnino 2003). Despite similarities, there appears to be little crossover between research on spillover and that on sites of struggle. Furthermore, knowledge remains limited to the generic social processes by which movement influence occurs.

Research on feminist mobilizing in Latin America offers rich empirical examples of the influence between and within social movements. In the 1970s, women in leftist, popular and human rights movements launched new forms of feminist mobilizing in response to the gender-based hierarchies they experienced therein (Jaquette 1989; Sternbach et al. 1992; Vargas 1992). In the subsequent decades, new forms of feminist mobilizing among indigenous, Black, peasant, and Lesbian women emerged in response to their experiences of gendered hierarchies within these respective movements as well as of racialized and social hierarchies within established or existing feminist movements (Caldwell 2010;...
Duarte and Bastian 2012; Richards 2006; Thayer 2010). Even with these rich examples, feminist mobilizing in Latin America has yet to serve as a case for examining the social processes by which movement influence occurs.

Feminist movements in Peru and Ecuador are especially relevant for examining such social processes because their trajectories do not fit neatly into broader narratives of contemporary feminisms in Latin America. Broader narratives highlight the fertile ground that feminists found to mobilize in the 1970s and 1980s precisely because women were not considered a political threat by authoritarian regimes (Franceschet 2004; Jaquette 1989; Sternbach et al. 1992). In turn, feminist movements became the central protagonist in opposing military rule and returning to democratic rule (Jaquette 1989; Vargas 1992). They faced subsequent challenges of maintaining this political role after the transition, as governments saw them as providers of technical know-how rather than as representatives of civil society regarding gender issues (Alvarez et al. 2002; Phillips and Cole 2009; Rios Tobar 2003; Schild 1998).

In contrast, military regimes in Peru and Ecuador during the 1970s were nationalist and anti-imperialist, distinct from both conservative dictatorships and revolutionary governments elsewhere in the region (e.g. Burt and Mauceri 2004). Their focus on internal development encouraged widespread grassroots participation and created the bases for mass mobilizations that sought to break down century-old barriers to democratic participation, not merely recent military rule (Barrig 1989; Burt and Mauceri 2004). In 1979, both countries lifted restrictions on party organizing and voting rights (i.e. literacy requirements) that had long excluded most citizens from enfranchisement. In these young democracies, emergent feminism was sidelined by mass mobilizations (Barrig 1989; Vargas 1989). It was not until the 1990s, a decade or more into democratic rule, that feminist movements in Ecuador and Peru became a central protagonist in political processes. They accomplished this by professionalizing their organizational structures in the form of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), issue networks and gender studies programs as well as adopting advocacy strategies targeting state institutions (Barrig 2002; Lind 2003, 2004; see Markowitz and Tice 2002 on the professionalization of feminist organizations).

This article examines the interactions between these professionalized feminist organizations, led by an older generation of activists (over 40 years old), and one sector of young adult feminist activists. The focus is on how the latter interpreted and responded to these interactions with the former, following the Thomas theorem, which states “If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences” (Thomas and Thomas 1928). Nonetheless, the starting point of my study was not these interactions. The study aimed to explore how and why young adult feminist activists understood and practiced feminist mobilizing. Young adults were defined as between ages 18 and early thirties at the time of data collection in 2012 (Dennison 2016). Feminist activists were defined as being a leader or key activist in an organization that was dedicated to gender justice goals and identified with feminism. I began with a few sensitizing concepts to get the study underway, such as generations and gender hierarchies, but remained open to informants’ own accounts collected through qualitative interviews (Charmaz 2014). Using Grounded Theory method, I generated concepts based on the data about informants’ social action and theorized the relationship between these concepts (Charmaz 2014; Glaser and Strauss 1967). The findings captured how young adult feminist activists interacted with professionalized feminist organizations and how such interactions influenced their forms of feminist mobilizing. I related my findings to existing theory and
found that they closely fit concepts of movement influence, namely spillover and sites of struggles, but also enhanced these by locating the social processes through which movement influence occurs.

**Spillover, Sites of Struggle and Generations**

In North American scholarship, the concept of spillover is used to understand the interactions between and within social movements that in turn result in them influencing one another on diverse aspects of collective action, such as identities, frames, membership, organizational structures, tactical repertoires and targets (Meyer and Whittier 1994; Whittier 2007). Spillover may occur directly or indirectly, contemporaneously or over time, and between different movements or different “waves” of the same movement. Whittier (2007) distinguishes two main types of spillover: a generative type whereby one movement produces a new movement or “spin-off” (McAdam 1995) and a transformative type whereby one movement influences another movement without directly causing it. Both types involve the diffusion of social movement tools and thereby innovation (Soule 2007). Spin-off occurs when an existing movement produces a new movement that in turn splits and distinguishes itself from the existing movement. “Spin-off movements do not simply mirror the form of the progenitors. By definition, they organize in new ways as they depart from the original mobilization” (Whittier 2007:534).

Several studies show how spillover develops through accordance between and within movements. Examples of accordance between movements include the adoption of the “coming out” narrative from the Gay and Lesbian movement by the Fat movement (Saguy and Ward 2011) and the adoption of “ethical activism” from the Chinese May Fourth movement by Chinese Communism (Xu 2013). Examples of accordance within movements include the adoption of cross-border solidarity by the U.S. Nicaraguan solidarity movement as it evolved into the Nicaraguan Labor Rights Campaign (Wimberley 2009) and the adoption of multi-identity work within the U.S. undocumented youth movement as it expanded to incorporate LGBT identities (Terriquez 2015). Studies of global peace and justice movements similarly found that accordance between movements resulted in their influencing one another, even to the point of merging or coalescing with each other (Hadden and Tarrow 2007; Reitan 2012).

Fewer studies show how spillover develops through discord or conflict between and within movements. One exception is Valocchi’s (2001) study of the influence of leftist movements on gay mobilization in two periods in the U.S. Ideological innovation occurred when members sought to enlarge the collective identity of the Left movement to embrace grievances linked to their gay identities (Valocchi 2001:448). Key leaders of the Homophile movement in the 1950s split from the Communist Party because the latter had a rigid organizational structure that inhibited it from expanding its collective identity to include an oppressed gay minority. In contrast, according to Valocchi (2001), such a definitive split was not evident in the Gay Liberation movement as it emerged from the New Left in the 1970s because the latter had a diffuse organizational structure that permitted the inclusion of a Gay collective identity. Spillover through internal conflict within a movement, he concluded, was mediated by organizational structure and the spin-off was more likely to occur when the original movement had a less flexible organizational structure that was unable to modify in response to internal differences.
In place of spillover, scholarship on Latin America conceptualizes social movements as sites of struggles whereby new forms of inclusion, participation, and citizenship develop, especially given persisting shortcomings in state-centered political participation (Alvarez et al. 1998; Dagnino 2003). Studies show how existing mix-gendered movements that do not address gender justice goals become sites of struggle when internal claims for gender justice emerge (often in dialogue with external feminist mobilizing, see Duarte and Bastian 2012). In the 1970s and 80s, contemporary feminist mobilizing emerged from struggles over gender justice claims within three movements: the organized Left, the human rights movement, and the low-income, urban neighborhood movement (Jaquette 1989; Sternbach et al. 1992; Vargas 1992). More recently, Bhattacharjya et al. (2013) found that the Latin-American peasant movement CLOC-Via Campesina responded to internal demands for gender justice by increasing women’s position in leadership, offering training programs and including issues that reflected women’s concerns. Research on the Zapatista movement in Mexico as well as indigenous and lesbian feminism in the region show similar responses to internal feminist mobilizing (Duarte and Bastian 2012; Forbis 2016; Speed, Castillo, and Stephen 2006).

Research further shows how existing feminist movements become sites of struggle over other justice-related goals. In Latin America, prevailing inequalities shape collective actors’ shared definitions of gender justice priorities and access to resources (Jaquette 2009; Maier and Lebon 2010). Class hierarchies are especially salient since a divide emerged in the 1990s between salaried women employed in professionalized feminist organizations and non-remunerated women in informal collectives and community-based associations (Alvarez 1999; Markowitz and Tice 2002; Schild 2002; Thayer 2010). Likewise, existing feminist movements are sites of struggle over social hierarchies based on race, ethnicity, sexuality, and urban-rural divides (Caldwell 2010; Duarte and Bastian 2012; Phillips and Cole 2009; Richards 2006). Richards (2006) found that Mapuche women and working-class urban women in Chile did not perceive that their demands and priorities were reflected in the gains made by existing feminist movements, thereby prompting them to pursue their own feminist mobilizing.

Recent research suggests that professionalized feminist organizations in the region have become a site of struggle over age hierarchies or generational divides. Studies in Honduras, Ecuador, and Mexico found that existing professionalized feminist organizations directly mobilized one sector of young adult feminist activists by recruiting them to participate in trainings, interventions, volunteer work, employment, and university gender studies (Chen 2014; Epelde 2009; Goicolea, Coe, and Öhman 2014). These same studies show how young adult feminist activists were hesitant to embrace the forms of mobilizing adopted by professionalized feminist organizations. This because they were unable to propose new ideas within its bureaucratic structures (Chen 2014), they disagreed with the heavy workloads, curtailed labor rights and limited spaces for reflection that accompanied a reliance on externally funded projects (Epelde 2009), and they did not feel that they belonged given men’s exclusion (Goicolea, Coe, and Öhman 2014). Instead, the young adult feminist activists in previous studies distinguished their own forms of feminist mobilizing through a preference for mixed-gendered groups to facilitate men’s involvement and for low-budget, flexible strategies, such as visual and performance art, popular education, and community-building (Chen 2014; Goicolea, Coe, and Öhman 2014; Gómez-Ramirez and Reyes Cruz 2008; Vega 2012).

In spillover research, generation is considered one of the main routes through which influence between and within movements occurs, including feminist movements.
(Whittier 1997, 2007). As Karl (1952) theorized, young adults who come of age in a specific historical period and location are shaped by similar social and political conditions, and consequently develop shared perspectives and awareness of these events in the form of new subjectivities (see Woodman and Wyn 2014). Latin American scholarship employs this generational lens to understand some of the new forms of political practices found among contemporary young adults, especially the underlying qualities of autonomy and horizontality (Vasquez and Vommaro 2009; Galindo Ramírez and Acosta Sánchez 2010; for a review, see Coe and Vandegrift 2015). Young adults’ notion of autonomy encompasses independence from adults in everyday life by emphasizing personal capacity to develop oneself and decide over one’s body (Calderón 2011; Salazar and Herrera 2008). Notions of autonomy further consist of independence from adult-run state institutions, such as labor unions, political parties, and government agencies, by creating youth-led collectives, associations, and networks (Bonvillani et al. 2008; Taft and Gordon 2013). Notions of autonomy go hand-in-hand with mobilizing horizontally. Internally, young adults show a preference for horizontal rather than hierarchical forms of organization, leadership, and decision-making (Bonvillani et al. 2008; Llanos Erazo and Unda Lara 2013; Taft and Gordon 2013). Externally, young adults tend to pursue horizontal strategies and targets rather than top-down ones (Bonvillani et al. 2008; Calderón 2011; Taft and Gordon 2013).

The concepts of spillover and sites of struggle offer crucial tools for understanding how young adult feminist activists in Ecuador and Peru interact with professionalized feminist organizations and how such interactions influence their forms of feminist mobilizing. At the same time, these concepts can be further enhanced by new knowledge on the generic social processes through which movement influence occurs. One way to link the concepts of spillover and sites of struggle is through a generational lens. Although research on feminist movements has adopted a generational lens to shed light on conflict and continuity (Cullen and Fischer 2014), the social processes through which movement influence occurs remain unaddressed.

**Methods**

The decision to explore young adults’ feminist mobilizing in Peru and Ecuador resulted from two previous studies. The first study, among two feminist-identified reproductive rights coalitions in Peru in 2007, found that most activists were over 40 years old and they were concerned about the absence of young adults in such activism (Coe 2010). This led to a second study in 2010 that examined how youth-led organizations in Ecuador and Peru engaged in activism on sexual health. Colleagues and I found that while participants in youth-led organizations had been mobilized initially by adult-run organizations, including feminist organizations, they subsequently created their own organizations and developed their own strategies (Coe et al. 2015). That study showed how but not why youth-led organizations differentiated their activism from that of adult-run organizations. Moreover, not all youth-led organizations identified as feminist.

The study presented here aimed to understand not only how but also why young adult feminist activists understood and practiced feminist mobilizing. To fulfill this aim, Grounded Theory method was used because it allowed openness to informants’ meanings and action as well as an abstraction to theorize explanations from these (Charmaz 2014). Following
a constructivist approach to Grounded Theory method (Charmaz 2014). I understand the empirical materials as created jointly between the informants and myself, and acknowledge my role in interpreting the data, in contrast to classical Grounded Theory method which approaches data as existing external to the researcher and results as emerging therefrom (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Intensive interviewing, with individuals and small groups (see Table 1), was employed because it permitted exploring young adults’ own perspectives of feminist mobilizing and enabled them to tell their own accounts of this to the greatest extent (Charmaz 2014). Using open-ended questions, I asked informants about which gender inequalities they considered as relevant and requiring feminist mobilizing, how successful gender equality policies were in addressing gender inequalities and what other policy changes were needed, how they appraised current feminist movement(s) in their country, and finally, which terms and definitions they preferred for conveying their gender justice goals. Follow-up questions were developed during each interview to explore informants’ accounts in-depth. Interviews ranged from approximately 60 to 110 min. Purposive sampling was used to select informants who at the time of the study in 2012 had experience with being young adults and feminist activists (Hood 2007). In the context of Peru and Ecuador, informants with this experience initially consisted of leaders or key activists of youth-led associations that were dedicated gender justice goals and identified with feminism. I learned about these associations through the two prior studies as well as my former employment in reproductive rights advocacy in Peru. Although youth-led feminist associations existed in cities and towns across both countries, I concentrated on those located in the two largest cities given limited resources: Quito and Guayaquil in Ecuador, and Lima and Arequipa in Peru. Four youth-led associations in the second study above filled the criteria for this study. I, therefore, re-interviewed their leaders/key activists during fieldwork in 2012 and re-analyzed my earlier interviews with them from 2010 for this new study.

Table 1. Participating association’s name, location, mission, and number of interviews and members interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Mission</th>
<th>Numbers of interviews and members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Political Coordinator for Gender Equity</td>
<td>Quito, Ecuador</td>
<td>Advancing feminism and combatting sexism</td>
<td>1 new interview with 2 members, 1 previous interview with 2 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steps and Footprints</td>
<td>Guayaquil, Ecuador</td>
<td>Advancing sexual and reproductive rights as a feminist issue</td>
<td>1 new interview with 6 members, 1 previous interview with 1 member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Center in Arequipa</td>
<td>Arequipa, Peru</td>
<td>Advancing sexual and reproductive rights as a feminist issue</td>
<td>1 new interview with 1 member, 1 previous interview with 1 member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space for Youth Agenda on Sexual and Reproductive Rights</td>
<td>Lima, Peru</td>
<td>Advancing sexual and reproductive rights as a feminist issue</td>
<td>1 new interview with 3 members, 1 previous interview with 1 member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe Abortion Information Hotline</td>
<td>Lima, Peru</td>
<td>Providing free information about safe abortion as a feminist issue</td>
<td>1 new interview with 2 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Action Collective</td>
<td>Lima, Peru</td>
<td>Advancing feminism and combatting sexism</td>
<td>1 new interview with 2 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flora Tristan Peruvian Women’s Center (adult feminist organization)</td>
<td>Lima, Peru</td>
<td>Advancing feminism and combatting sexism</td>
<td>1 new interview with 1 young adult member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for the Promotion and Defense of Sexual and Reproductive Rights (adult feminist organization)</td>
<td>Lima, Peru</td>
<td>Advancing sexual and reproductive rights as a feminist issue</td>
<td>1 new interview with 1 young adult member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Constant comparison analysis of the interviews began as soon as data became available (Charmaz 2014). Initial categories showed three emergent patterns in the data. First, leaders or key activists in youth-led feminist associations had been mobilized directly by professionalized feminist organizations during the early 2000s. Second, by the time of my study, they understood and practiced their own feminist mobilizing differently than the latter. Third, they identified with working-class/low-income neighborhoods and prioritized feminist actions directed toward these sectors. To saturate my initial conceptual categories (Hood 2007), I sampled two additional types of young adult feminist activists. One type identified as coming from middle-class, professional sectors (leaders of a student-run feminist collective at a private university); and another type was employed in professionalized feminist organizations but participated in youth-led feminist associations in their free time. These two additional types of young adult feminist activists showed a similar pattern to the youth-led associations: they were mobilized by professionalized feminist organizations, yet distinguished their own feminist mobilizing from the latter.

Informants were invited to participate in the study by e-mail and phone. With youth- or student-led associations, one interview was requested where as many members could participate as the group preferred. See Table 1. Informants varied in their chronological age between early 20s and early 30s, but all identified as young adults. Most interviews involve both women and men because all of the youth- or student-led associations were mix-gendered. Women and men informants showed similar understandings of activism but differed in how they perceived their embodied experiences of gender inequalities. Participants consented to the use of their association’s real name and an individual pseudonym in study publications. Further information about informants is not presented in order to protect their identity and given the focus on their social action. I conducted all interviews in Spanish, analyzed the Spanish transcriptions, and translated the quotations used in this paper myself.

Constant comparative analysis continued with the interview transcripts (Charmaz 2014; Hood 2007). Open coding involved studying every line comparatively and labeling each line/segment with a word(s) that reflected ideas identified in the data. Open codes were then sorted into clusters by grouping together those that related to one another, and each group was studied and named. In focused coding, these preliminary categories were used to reexamine all open codes, compare them with one another, and discard irrelevant codes. In theoretical coding, I analyzed the connections between categories and found that while some depicted how the young adult feminist activists understood and practiced feminist mobilizing, other categories clarified why they did so in this way. I first published my findings that showed how the young adult feminist activists pursued a strategy of politicizing the sociocultural in response to blurred gender inequalities as an emergent social condition (Coe 2015). Here, I present the findings that show how they mobilized as an emergent feminist movement in response to a well-developed feminist movement.

In/Exclusionary Interactions – How Movement Influence Occurs

The relationship between these two categories captured how the young adult feminist activists interpreted and responded to the interactions with professionalized feminist organizations, which reflected both inclusive and exclusionary dimensions. With regard to the inclusive dimension, young adult feminist activists highlighted how interactions with professionalized feminist organizations allowed them to develop their own forms of feminist mobilizing that in
turn enhanced the movement. Here, they understood and practiced their feminist mobilizing as complementary and mutually supportive of existing professionalized feminist organizations. With regard to the exclusionary dimension, young adult feminist activists highlighted how interactions with professionalized feminist organizations pushed them to distinguish their own forms of feminist mobilizing that in turn fractured the movement. Here, they understood and practiced their feminist mobilizing as clashing and incompatible with existing professionalized feminist organizations. I developed the concept of in/exclusionary interactions to locate the processes through which young adult feminist activists defined different aspects of feminist mobilizing, including modes of participation, organizational practices, and targets of engagement. See Table 2.

**In/Exclusionary Interaction I: Defining Modes of Participation**

The first in/exclusionary interaction consisted of the young adult feminist activists being mobilized into gender justice activism by professionalized feminist organizations (inclusive) while simultaneously being differentiated by professionalized feminist organizations in such a way that they were unable to join the movement as full-fledged members (exclusionary).

Informants in this study described having been invited during their teenage years to participate in one of the three types of activities developed by professionalized feminist organizations. The first was training programs on gender equality and/or sexual and reproductive rights that targeted young adults in popular, working-class neighborhoods. Some professionalized feminist organizations created programs that were in turn led by young adults. Key activists in Steps and Footprints in Guayaquil (Ecuador) described how they were recruited directly from secondary schools to be trained as promoters, and subsequently, to organize and lead their own collective action, all through a program offered by a professionalized feminist organization, Centro Ecuatoriano para la Promoción y Acción de la Mujer Guayaquil. Paula was one of the oldest members in Steps and Footprints at the time of this study and she was recruited to be a promoter when she was 14 years old in 2000. At the time, she recalled, no other teenagers participated in the program, only young adults, and it was very unusual that an early teen talked openly about issues such as gender equality and sexual and reproductive rights.

Other professionalized feminist organizations developed programs that trained preexisting youth leaders in feminism but without organizing them further. When he was a member of his

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spillover</th>
<th>Modes of participation</th>
<th>Organizational practice</th>
<th>Targets of engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>Formal activities to participate in feminism</td>
<td>Compelling life concepts, training and leadership skills, material resources</td>
<td>Shared commitment to institutional change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasizing state institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusionary</td>
<td>Employing trained experts, mainly women</td>
<td>Investing in bureaucratic organizations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>Volunteer lay capacity, peer-centered, and mixed-gendered</td>
<td>Fostering subjective autonomy and internal horizontality</td>
<td>Focusing on civil society actors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. *In/exclusionary interactions* as generic social processes underlying movement influence.
student government, David was invited to participate in a training program offered by Flora Tristán Peruvian Women’s Center, a professionalized feminist organization in Lima (Peru):

Flora was doing local work in San Juan and Villa El Salvador [popular neighbors in Lima], they worked with us in groups of mixed genders, always putting gender issues on the agenda. Their institutional policy was to cover all aspects of feminism, and they left this very clear to us.

During the training program, David met other young adults who became similarly committed to feminism and with some of them, they formed their own feminist organization, Space for Youth Agenda on Sexual and Reproductive Rights in Lima.

According to informants, university gender studies programs were the second type of activity developed by professionalized feminist organizations to mobilize them into feminism. During the 1990s, professionalized feminist organizations started gender studies courses and programs at a few universities in the capital cities of Lima and Quito. These efforts coincided with the expansion of higher education in both countries, which meant that gender studies programs reached beyond middle-class students. For example, Flora Tristán Peruvian Women’s Center in Lima created a gender studies program at San Marcos University, the oldest public university in the continent. Ximena, a young adult employed at a professionalized feminist organization, the Center for the Promotion and Defense of Sexual and Reproductive Rights in Lima, shared how she came into contact with feminism through a seminar at that university:

One day at San Marcos, I saw a purple sign that said “Seminar on Latin American Feminisms”. I saw it and I was changed. I said, “Latin American feminism, what is that?” I went to it and there I learned about feminism.

Informants described how gender studies programs even offered them an alternative space for political engagement, especially when faced with sexism in other university spaces for politics, such as student unions. At other universities, especially outside capital cities, gender courses, and programs were not yet available, but informants recounted coming into contact with teachers knowledgeable of gender studies, as Sonia, from the Youth Center in Arequipa, depicts:

I met a teacher, Allison, who was working on gender issues and one could say she was a feminist. She lent us books and we read. Through the books and through her, in the little time she could teach us, I learned about the concept of gender. However, I did not learn about it through my regular course work.

The third type of activity mentioned by informants that mobilized them into feminism was internships and even employment at professionalized feminist organizations. Informants conveyed that this was far less accessible than the other two activities above given the small number and size of professionalized feminist organizations in each country.

In response to participating in at least one of these three activities, the young adults in this study came to identify with and develop an ideological commitment to feminism. They felt respect for professionalized feminist organizations, many of whose leaders had initiated the contemporary movement in their respective countries in the face of many hurdles. In addition, they valued the gains professionalized feminist organizations had made through this long-term struggle.
Informants depicted how, while they were invited to participate in the activities developed by professionalized feminist organizations, they were simultaneously differentiated by these according to three categories: organizational role, generation, and gender. Differentiation occurred first as informants were assigned the organizational role of *untrained participant* in program activities, i.e. training programs, university programs, and internship programs. They described how their role contrasted starkly with the role of *highly skilled leader* held by members of professionalized feminist organizations. Differentiation further occurred as informants were labeled according to their generation, either as *youth* or *student*. Informants depicted how this label contrasted with the *mature adult* label assigned to members of professionalized feminist organizations. Lastly, differentiation occurred because training programs and university gender studies, the two activities that reached the greatest amount of young adults, were *mixed-gendered*, which informants depicted as contrasting with the *women-run* (and sometimes women-only) professionalized feminist organizations.

Despite their desires to join the existing feminist movement, the young adult feminist activists in this study found themselves unable to do so by the modes of participation endorsed by professionalized feminist organizations. This is illustrated by Isabel of the Space for Youth Agenda on Sexual and Reproductive Rights in Lima:

> There are many young men and women who are feminists even if they don’t call themselves such, they are already doing it. It is just that the context [in Peru] doesn’t allow them to be a part of the movement, they can’t call themselves as such. They feel it is necessary to get permission when they shouldn’t have to. I never asked permission to call myself a feminist.

This first in/exclusionary interaction captures three different stages of a generic social process through which professionalized feminist organizations influenced the modes of participation among young adult feminist activists. First, professionalized feminist organizations in each country used their funding and expertise to influence state institutions, including schools and universities, and in turn, develop formal activities for the first time that engaged young adult women and men in feminism (Barrig 2002; Lind 2004). These formal activities provided informants in both countries with not only their first contact with feminism but also their first mode of participation in feminist activism, thereby creating spillover of the transformative type (Meyer and Whittier 1994; Whittier 2007). This finding aligns with Chen (2014) who argues that the institutionalization of feminism in Mexico provided crucial resources to mobilize young adults into feminism. Second, a struggle emerged between professionalized feminist organizations and the young adult feminist activists over the definition of modes of participation (Alvarez et al. 1998; Dagnino 2003). During formal activities, young adults were distinguished from members of professionalized feminist organizations in such a way that they were unable to access the modes of participation of the latter. This too aligns with previous studies that highlight the difficulties among indigenous, working-class, Black, rural, and Lesbian feminists to access the modes of participation within existing feminist movements in the region (Caldwell 2010; Duarte and Bastian 2012; Richards 2006; Thayer 2010). Third, rather than ceasing to participate in feminist activism, the young adults in my study developed modes of participation distinct from those of professionalized feminist organizations, thereby producing spillover of the generative type or spin-off (Meyer and Whittier 1994; Whittier 2007). Their own modes of participation emphasized volunteer lay capacity over paid expert knowledge, peer-centered approaches over tiered styles, and mixed-gendered belonging over women-only membership. This too resonates with previous studies on young adult...
feminist activism elsewhere in the region (Chen 2014; Epelde 2009; Goicolea, Coe, and Öhman 2014; Gómez-Ramírez and Reyes Cruz 2008). In sum, whereas professionalized feminist organizations clearly influenced the young adults’ feminist activism by mobilizing them into feminist activities for the first time, i.e. transformative spillover, this social process moved spillover further to a generative type as young adults’ created new forms of activism in response to the interaction with the professionalized feminist organization.

**In/Exclusionary Interaction II: Defining Organizational Practices**

The second in/exclusionary interaction consisted of the young adult feminist activists being equipped with organizing tools offered by professionalized feminist organizations (inclusive) while simultaneously being unable to access the bureaucratic practices developed by professionalized feminist organizations (exclusionary).

Informants conveyed how participation in the three activities above provided by professionalized feminist organizations equipped them with crucial organizing tools such as a compelling set of life concepts, concrete skills in training and leadership, and access to material resources in the form of infrastructure and activity funds. Informants described drawing upon these tools to pursue organizational practices that aligned with their own modes of participation described above.

First, tools enabled informants to reimagine their everyday practices and re-shape their own life paths to reflect their commitment to gender justice. “Everything I learned I brought back to my home” declared David, of the Space for Youth Agenda on Sexual and Reproductive Rights in Lima. Informants depicted how they broke with gender practices that upheld normative masculinities and femininities, such as young men doing housework, young women prioritizing their own needs and self-realization, and both genders socializing in a non-heteronormative manner. Going against norms was not easy, but the tools offered to them by professionalized feminist organizations helped them to create supportive environments for adopting changes, as Sofía, from Steps and Footprint in Guayaquil, conveys:

> We have changed a lot between before and how we are now regarding gender, especially those of us who underwent cultural training because youth who don’t have any training continue with the same life regime, that’s all they know, (...) It’s an arduous struggle each of us is making because we are here to change this life regime.

Re-shaping their life paths involved further seeking an employment or higher education where they could develop their feminism. Erica, from the Space for Youth Agenda on Sexual and Reproductive Rights in Lima, was studying a Master’s degree in Children’s Rights and Public Policy on Adolescents and declared: “I am studying this because I am an activist and I have worked in adolescent sexual and reproductive rights”. Erica even described bringing her activism with her into the university program, though she and the other informants pointed out that employment or higher education did not replace collective action around gender justice.

Second, the tools developed through participating in the activities offered by professional feminist organizations enabled informants to create and lead their own organizations in favor of gender justice. All of the informants, even those employed at professionalized feminist organizations, described involvement in building mixed-gendered associations, collectives, and networks that had horizontal structures, leadership, and decision-making. Horizontal
organizational practices, they argued, permitted internal debate and self-criticism about gender inequalities and feminist priorities, as Ana of Youth Political Coordinator for Gender Equity in Quito depicted:

Gender inequalities are very complex, we have had conversations in the organization precisely on this topic, it is a source of conflict (…) we have asked ourselves: what role are we as an organization is playing in this struggle.

And Linda of Critical Action Collective in Lima conveyed:

This very same debate about how to address gender inequalities is a debate that we ourselves experience, that is, what priorities should we have in our political practice; we have debated this in our own organization.

In addition, their organizational practices embraced an identity that was autonomous from established adult-run institutions. In some associations, this identity was explicit through its name and commitment to renew continually young members, whereas in others, it was tacit through being located on a university campus or only recruiting students. Paula, of Steps and Footprints in Guayaquil, depicted the meaning of this autonomous identity:

We recognize their [adults’] experience, but youth today, we prefer autonomy. It is possible to propose this in the organizational spaces of the collective; among ourselves, we [youth] can question adults, even recognize how roles have been in the past, why as children (…) we were not allowed to speak. However, in this space, we can speak and even debate issues.

While the activities offered by professionalized feminist organizations equipped them with crucial tools to organize around gender justice, informants depicted how they were simultaneously unable to access the existing bureaucratic practices of professionalized feminist organizations. Since the 1990s, especially in large urban centers with greater resources, professionalized feminist organizations had prioritized building bureaucratic organizational structures with hierarchical leadership and decision-making. Informants shared how they felt expected to adjust their organizing practices to these practices. Indeed, they described even trying to do so, but lacked access to these practices, unless employed by one such organization, as Lorena, from Center for the Promotion and Defense of Sexual and Reproductive Rights in Lima, described:

One of the biggest problems in the movement is the difference between NGOs and the movement. For instance, NGOs scheduled meetings during office hours and those who want to participate can’t because they are working, doing other things, they don’t work in feminist NGOs, where one space is articulated. Then, there is the other space for those who are not in the NGOs.

Lorena’s quote captures the existence of two parallel but disconnected sets of organizational practices that required a conscious effort to reconcile. Instead, informants perceived that professionalized feminist organizations were unwilling to accommodate their own organizational practices. They described feeling excluded not only through a form but also in how welcomed they were to use and shape bureaucratic organizational practices.

In smaller urban areas, preexisting feminist organizations developed more diffuse bureaucratic forms given limited resources, but those were still difficult to access according to informants. Sonia, from the Youth Center in Arequipa, was the only young adult to participate in a focus group with a group of feminists in that city. When I interviewed her alone a few days
later, she confided that she had never been invited to participate in a meeting with these feminists before, even though she had met several of them individually:

Yes, I am aware of gender issues and yes, I am working on gender issues. But, this was my first time having a conversation with a group of feminists, which is very different. To have a conversation with one person is very different from a group, a whole group, so this was my first time.

Despite experiencing exclusion from bureaucratic organizational practices, informants depicted participating in events, actions, and campaigns launched and led by professionalized feminist organizations. They also relied on professionalized feminist organizations for support in the form of financial assistance, infrastructure, and/or capacity-building. Thus, they did not see the problem as lying with bureaucratic organizational practices per se, but rather with the notion that these practices were the only viable model for all forms of feminist mobilizing. According to informants, this limited the development of a broader movement, as Susana, of Safe Abortion Information Hotline in Lima, explains:

Feminism is not just gender equality, it’s a political ideology that has to do with social change and therefore with organizing. If these elements are not taken into account, there is no movement. I get so angry when NGOs call themselves the movement: they are organizations working on specific themes and should call themselves organizations, not a movement.

As this quote illustrates, informants contested the claim that professionalized feminist organizations were “the movement” and attempted to re-appropriate this term by applying it to their own organizational practices.

This second in/exclusionary interaction captures three different stages of a generic social process through which professionalized feminist organizations influenced the organizational practices among young adult feminist activists. First, professionalized feminist organizations again used their own formal organizations to engage young adults in feminist activities for the first time and to collaborate thereafter, which in turn offered crucial organizing tools to young adults. Informants described using these tools to develop organizational practices that aligned with their own modes of participation, thereby producing spillover of the transformative type (Meyer and Whittier 1994; Whittier 2007). Specifically, their organizational practices embraced notions of autonomy and internal horizontality found by previous studies on young adults’ political practices in Latin America (Calderón 2011; Llanos Erazo and Unda Lara 2013; Rossi 2009; Taft and Gordon 2013). As Salazar and Herrera (2008) found in Colombia, the young adult feminist activists in my study valued their own subjective capacity and power to produce social change. As Bonvillani et al. (2008) found in Argentina, they preferred flat forms of collective organizing. Second, a struggle emerged between professionalized feminist organizations and the young adult feminist activists over the definition of organizational practices (Alvarez et al. 1998; Dagnino 2003). This is because the bureaucratic organizational structures of professionalized feminist organizations appeared unable to adapt to or incorporate these qualities, as Valocchi (2001) found among the U.S. Communist Party in response to a Gay collective identity. Third, while still cooperating with professionalized feminist organizations, the young adults in my study developed organizational practices that were separate from and parallel to those of professionalized feminist organizations, thereby creating spillover of the generative type or spin-off (Meyer and Whittier 1994; Whittier 2007).
In/Exclusionary Interaction III: Defining Targets of Engagement

In the third in/exclusionary interaction, the young adult feminist activists were furnished with a commitment to institutional engagement fostered by professionalized feminist organizations (inclusive) while simultaneously being unable to widen the emphasis on state institutions of professionalized feminist organizations (exclusionary).

Together with participating in activities and being equipped with organizing tools offered by professionalized feminist organizations, informants depicted acquiring a commitment to changing societal institutions, i.e. institutional engagement. They indicated a strategic decision to target civil society for their institutional engagement. Specifically, they engaged with other collective actors such as youth networks, community organizations, popular (low-income) women’s groups, leftist organizations, and LGBTI groups. Alliances were forged with other collective actors by lending support to their social justice goals and enabling them to internally discuss feminist ideas and goals, as Linda, of Critical Action Collective in Lima, depicted:

Feminism has to go to other organizations, other movements. The Left, labor movements, they need to interact with feminism. Some compañeras say that feminism should just stay amongst us; it doesn’t matter if it is not a mass movement. But, I want feminism to be something that all organizations debate, take a position about and reflect upon.

Informants described carrying out actions to convince these allies to take on feminist issues and integrate these with their own issues. In this way, they developed a strategy of converting their allies into targets of institutional engagement.

Similar to their organizational practices, informants depicted the construction of horizontal relationships within civil society that meant moving across to meet other collective actors rather than approaching them in an upward-downward manner. They even forged mutually supportive relationships with professionalized feminist organizations, especially individual feminists who showed openness to dialogue with them and acknowledged their own forms of feminist mobilizing. Horizontal relationships went hand in hand with preserving organizational autonomy with respect to other collective actors in civil society, especially in order to take feminist stances on issues that other collective actors might not be willing to take, as Ana, from Youth Coordinator on Gender Equity in Quito, explained:

For us it is complicated to join a wide platform, we have been invited but we want to remain outside this because we think that one loses more than one gains. Getting involved in these spaces implies losing your organization position when you are against certain practices in that space.

While informants portrayed being furnished with a commitment to institutional engagement by professionalized feminist organizations, they depicted being unable widen the emphasis on state institutions of professionalized feminist organizations. Since the 1990s, professionalized feminist organizations had engaged primarily with state institutions and government authorities, using advocacy strategies designed to change laws and policies. Informants considered engagement with state institutions as a legitimate strategy to make demands upon the government, as the following quote from as Ximena, from the Center for the Promotion and Defense of Sexual and Reproductive Rights in Lima, explains in the case of making abortion accessible to all women:
We need public policies, even if these are not always put into practice. When I analyze abortion in terms of misoprostol, and the strategy of the hotline, in order to have an abortion with misoprostol, you need about 400 soles. I can pay, I can decide independently; but other women cannot. This other side of the coin has to be covered by the state (...). It is the responsibility of the state to guarantee your life.

In each country, one of the young adult feminist associations in this study ran an abortion hotline provides information directly to the population on safe abortion and misoprostol. As this quote portrays, informants understood that this action needed to be complemented with favorable public policies.

Nonetheless, informants refused to accept an engagement with state institutions as a broader political project. They provided three explanations for why state institutions were not their central site for politics. First, government decision-makers had de-politicized gender inequalities by defining these as technical rather than social problems. Second, government authorities actively demobilized feminist movements by recruiting gender expertise from professionalized feminist organizations while not engaging with them as civil society actors. This, in turn, limited the autonomy and capacity of professionalized feminist organizations and even young adults’ feminist associations to make demands upon the government, as Claudia of the Youth Political Coordinator for Gender Equity in Quito conveyed:

Having compañeras [colleagues/friends] who are in the government occupying important and high-level political positions has led to demobilization because we place our trust in them. We cannot come out in opposition because there are things that are good and it would mean going against our compañera.

Finally, state institutions lacked both political will and financial resources to challenge entrenched gender hierarchies even within government agencies. Carla, of Flora Tristan Peruvian Women’s Center in Lima described:

In the National Plan on Violence against Women, the least progress has been made on socio-cultural changes. (...) Victim services centers are being created and all that, but civil servants’ mentalities are not changing.

According to informants in this study, by prioritizing engagement with state institutions, professionalized feminist organizations pursued narrow goals and strategies, thereby limiting the notion of feminist politics. In this sense, professionalized feminist organizations made internal decisions related to strategy and funding that in turn affected the broader feminist movement but without engaging in an open dialogue with other movement participants. Maria, of the Abortion Hotline Secure Information in Lima, explained:

When you don’t want to consider the political costs, well, then you not building a movement. Because one thing is that everyone has their own “company” and does what they want, and another thing is that you have a shared ideology with other women that you can dialogue and have discrepancies with at the same time.

Ximena, Claudia, and Maria explicitly articulated the shared position found among informants in this study that clearly supported the change strategy among professionalized feminist organizations of engaging with state institutions while recognizing the limits of this strategy for building a broader feminist movement with a clear political agenda. They did not reject engagement with state institutions (as self-denominated “autonomous”
feminism in Latin America do). Instead, they proposed an expanded definition that included change efforts directed toward civil society in addition to political society. This third in/exclusionary interaction captures three different stages of a generic social process through which professionalized feminist organizations influenced the targets of engagement among young adult feminist activists. First, professionalized feminist organizations had used their own capacity to target state institutions to initiate feminist activities for young adults and cooperate with them after these activities ended, which in turn furnished informants with a commitment to institutional engagement. Informants described using this commitment to develop their own targets of institutional engagement that aligned with their own modes of participation and organizational practices, thereby producing spillover of the transformative type (Meyer and Whittier 1994; Whittier 2007). Specifically, they targeted other collective actors with whom they could build alliances, spread feminism, and effect social change. In this sense, they embraced notions of organizational autonomy and external horizontality found by previous studies on young adults’ political practices in Latin America (Calderón 2011; Llanos Erazo and Unda Lara 2013; Rossi 2009; Taft and Gordon 2013). Second, a struggle emerged between professionalized feminist organizations and the young adult feminist activists over the definition of targets of engagement (Alvarez et al. 1998; Dagnino 2003). This because the dedication to changing state policies and laws of professionalized feminist organizations appeared unable to incorporate the qualities espoused by young adults feminist activists in their commitment to institutional engagement. Third, while still considering professionalized feminist organizations as allies, the young adults in my study developed targets of engagement that were distinct from those of professionalized feminist organizations, thereby constructing spillover of the generative type or spin-off (Meyer and Whittier 1994; Whittier 2007).

Conclusion

As shown above, the findings most closely fit concepts of movement influence, namely spillover and sites of struggles. Meanwhile, I propose a new concept, in/exclusionary interactions, to enhance these existing concepts in several ways. First, in/exclusionary interactions specifies how sites of struggle consist of interactions between movements, in this case between young adult feminist activists and professionalized feminist organizations, whereby movement influence occurs. This specification links sites of struggle with the North American concept of spillover. Second, in/exclusionary interactions captures three generic social processes of the interactions between movements, thus providing new knowledge on the concept of spillover. Third, in/exclusionary interactions constitutes original theorizing grounded in data from young adult feminist activists in Ecuador and Peru, which has yet to serve as a case for examining movement influence.

Enhancing the concepts of movement influence is relevant beyond the specific case investigated here. The three generic social processes involve defining modes of participation, organizational practices, and targets of engagement that are interconnected with one another. Previous research on spillover tends to focus on movement influence regarding one aspect of collective action, such as narratives (Saguy and Ward 2011), cross-border solidarity (Wimberley 2009), or multi-identity work (Terriquez 2015) but not on the connections between different aspects. Further, the three social processes consist of both accordance and conflict in the interactions between young adult feminist activists and professionalized feminist organizations. Existing research concentrates on either agreement or conflict, with
an emphasis on the former, except for Valocchi (2001). Simultaneous attention to accordance and conflict in spillover suggests that spin-off does not necessarily mean severed ties. Even after young adult feminist activists spun-off from professionalized feminist organizations, they continued to see the latter as their allies and collaborators, they understood and practiced their feminist mobilizing as part of the same movement as the latter, and they offered new definitions of feminist mobilizing that aimed to include rather than exclude the latter.

Finally, while the three social processes are infused with generational differences, such differences appear to be relational rather than categorical. Having come of age in distinct historical conditions, the young adult feminist activists in Ecuador and Peru in my study developed different subjectivities than members of professionalized feminist organizations (Karl 1952; Woodman and Wyn 2014). Indeed, they understood and practiced politics similar to other young adults in Latin America, such as notions of autonomy and horizonality (Bonvillani et al. 2008; Salazar and Herrera 2008). Yet, they proposed alternative modes of participation, organizational practices, and targets of engagement not as dichotomous from those offered by professionalized feminism, as if to replace previous definitions. Instead, as proposed by Coe and Vandegrift (2015), the young adult feminist activists in Ecuador and Peru in my study constructed expanded definitions that merged multiple meanings to enlarge feminist movements in their countries and the region. This innovation calls upon us as researchers to expand our own lenses when examining the influence between and among social movements in diverse contexts.

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Notes on contributor

Anna-Britt Coe is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Umeå University (Sweden), teaching courses on qualitative methodology, sociology of organization and leadership, and sociological theory. Her research concentrates on two fields: social movements, where she explores how activist groups influence policies, society and one another; and sociology of youth, where she focuses on how young adults practice politics by merging boundaries between the state and society. She is interested in moving theories in both of these fields forward by exploring the tacit processes behind strategic action as well as the (re)creation of gender and other social hierarchies. Her articles have been published in Sociological Inquiry, Sociological Perspectives, Gender & Society, Journal of Youth Studies and Youth & Society, among other journals.

ORCID

Anna-Britt Coe http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1975-9060
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