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Article in *Mobilization* · December 2009

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## INTRODUCTION: THE OUTCOMES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS\*

*Lorenzo Bosi and Katrin Uba*<sup>†</sup>

Over the last decade there has been an increased focus on social movement outcomes.<sup>1</sup> This increased attention has led to calls for the improvement of our theoretical and conceptual arguments, the more effective implementation of methodological tools, and more empirical examples based on broader comparisons of issues and contexts (Giugni 1998; Earl 2000; Burstein and Linton 2002; Meyer 2005; Giugni 2008). With this special issue of *Mobilization*, our aim is to take some steps toward meeting these calls. Each of the contributors in this issue adds an important aspect to the current literature and introduces themes that we hope will be developed further in future research. We have included articles emphasizing several issues, including incremental outcomes, novel empirical factors for studying the contextual dependence of the outcomes of mobilization, different methods for strengthening and testing the robustness of our theoretical arguments, and new ways of thinking about the role of public opinion.

Our introduction develops a foundation for the contributions contained in this special issue by stressing the connection between the five articles and laying out a few important achievements and problems in studying the outcomes of social movements. Finally, we briefly sketch several directions for future research.

### ACHIEVEMENTS, PROBLEMS, AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS ISSUE

Thanks to the numerous reviews of the studies of social movement outcomes, there is no need for us to make another (Giugni 1998; Earl 2000; Burstein and Linton 2002; Meyer 2005; Giugni 2008). Rather, we point to some important theoretical, methodological, and empirical achievements and shortcomings, as well as show how the articles in this special issue have taken steps to tackle some of these problems.

First, there seems to be a general agreement that social movements can have a wide range of consequences that should not be reduced to the simple terms of “success” and “failure” (Amenta and Young 1999; Giugni 1998; Jenkins and Form 2006). Rather, the outcomes of social movement activities, whether short-term or long-term, refer to a modification of the political, cultural, and biographical domain, which are either intended or unintended goals for the social movement itself (Bosi 2007).<sup>2</sup> The political domain is the most frequently studied and refers to changes in policies, legislation, political institutions, and regimes, or the actions taken by political parties (Amenta, Caren, Chiarello, and Su [forthcoming]). The cultural domain of social movement outcomes is less frequently studied. It relates to changes in the values and ideas of the public, the development of new cultural products and practices (for example, popular culture and language), and the formation of collective identity and

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\* As editors of this special issue, we are deeply indebted to the contributors who have generously given their time and energy to this project. Our heartfelt thanks also go to Marco Giugni and Rory McVeigh for giving us this platform, their trust, and their advice. Finally, we are grateful for the numerous reviewers who kindly agreed to read and comment on the articles included in this issue.

<sup>†</sup> Dr. Lorenzo Bosi is Marie Curie Fellow in the Political and Social Science Department at the European University Institute. Dr. Katrin Uba is post-doctoral researcher in the Department of Government at Uppsala University. Please direct all correspondence to the authors at [lorenzo.bosi@eui.eu](mailto:lorenzo.bosi@eui.eu) and [Katrin.Uba@statsvet.uu.se](mailto:Katrin.Uba@statsvet.uu.se).

subcultures (Earl 2004). Finally, both the biographical and cultural domains are studied less frequently than the political domain. The biographical domain relates to the impact of mobilization on the lives of sympathizers and participants in social movements (Giugni 2004b). Biographical dynamics may pattern social movements' target selection.<sup>3</sup> Distinguishing between different domains of outcomes has, in our opinion, made the study of social movements more explicit, and this should be seen as an important achievement.

However, social movement outcomes are not static in time.<sup>4</sup> Social change may move with, or against, the movement objectives, and effect the movement in unexpected ways. Devashree Gupta, in this special issue, shows how a social movement's initial outcomes (victory or defeat) impact the movement itself. Her argument is based on the in-depth study of the U.S. antideath penalty movement between 1997 and 2007. Both successes and failures of the movement are shown to influence social movement behavior through three possible broad patterns of interaction: (1) the bandwagoning model, (2) the satiety model, and (3) the friend-in-need model. Small victories and defeats seem to have a substantial impact on the U.S. anti-death penalty movement itself, even though these are not definitive for the movement trajectories. The work on aggregate-level change in life-course patterns (biographical outcomes) goes in the same direction of trying to understand broader processes of social change (see McAdam 1999; Goldstone and McAdam 2001).

The second achievement is a methodological one. Many reviews have noted the problems of operationalization and of the measurement of outcomes, as well as of making robust causal claims about the impact of movements (Giugni 1998; Jenkins and Form 2006). However, we have also noted some positive development in this field. It has been acknowledged that numerous factors other than social movement activity could influence the changes in policies, culture, or life-course, and therefore recent studies distinguish carefully between direct (independent or net), indirect (mediated), and conditional (interaction) effects of mobilization (Burstein and Linton 2002; Giugni 2004a; Amenta, Caren, and Olasky 2005, King, Bentele, and Soule 2007). The direct effect of social movement means that the impact of a movement is determined by controlling for other factors that could lead to the outcome of interest. The second effect suggests that social movements first affect some factor that later appears as crucial for a political, cultural, or biographical change. Finally, the conditional effect refers to the situation where mobilization leads to an outcome of interest only in some specific conditions, e.g., if the ruling party is progressive (see also Burstein and Linton 2002; McAdam and Su 2002; Amenta et al. 2005). This conceptual distinction has also improved the empirical demonstrations of social movement outcomes.

Another sign of methodological developments is the more careful use of causal claims about social movement impact. Few would argue today that a simple correlation between protest and government expenditures shows the causal impact of mobilization on policy change. The covariation of the number of protests and policy change shows the presence of some relationship, but without a good theoretical argument of underlying mechanisms and an analysis that controls for the impact of other possible factors that can also lead to the change, we cannot say much about causality (see also Earl 2000). Thus, it is not surprising that the use of a multivariate analysis that accounts for socioeconomic and political context, and that pays attention to the time dynamics of the process, has become more frequent (see, for example, the use of event history analysis in McCammon, Campbell, Granberg, and Mowery 2001; Soule 2004; Uba 2005). This tendency should be seen as an achievement of the field.

However, there is a strong theoretical argument for the contingency of social movement outcomes, as well as the suggestion that there are different causal pathways to one outcome (Amenta et al. 2005). Although a carefully applied multivariate analysis with interaction effects is useful for examining such statements (Mahoney 2008), the alternative option is to apply the case-oriented method of qualitative comparative analysis (QCA). While the first is well suited for calculating the net effect of mobilization, the second is useful for finding the right variables and their combinations that lead to the specific outcome. A few studies

combine the two methods (but see, for example, Amenta et al. 2005; McVeigh, Neblett, and Shafiq 2006), and more are necessary for fully understanding the complexity of the causal relationship between mobilization and its outcomes.

In this special issue, Giugni and Yamasaki contribute to this discussion of methods and causality by replicating an earlier time-series analysis with the help of QCA. They test the robustness of the “joint effect” model proposed in Giugni (2004a) and thus illuminate the benefits and limitations of both methods of analysis. The model hypothesizes that (1) the policy impact of social movements is affected by the presence of powerful allies or favorable public opinion, or (even better) both factors at the same time; and (2) the policy impact of social movements is more likely when the movement addresses issues and policy domains with a low degree of saliency. The empirical analysis is based on the data from changes in environmental, nuclear energy, and peace policies in Italy, Switzerland, and the United States between 1975 and 1995. Giugni and Yamasaki’s results provide support for the joint effect model of social movement outcomes.

Another novel way to use QCA in social movement outcome research is presented by Sakura Yamasaki’s article in this issue. In the context of imprecise theories that provide a “laundry list” of factors that could be important for policy change and that affect the impact of social movement mobilization, she makes use of QCA for explorative purposes. Her analysis of nuclear energy policies of ten Western European countries during a time span of more than 30 years shows that in some conditions the mobilization of a movement can have a most unexpected effect—the dampening of the probability of policy change. This is an important result, as most scholars are mainly concerned with mobilization’s null or positive impacts.

The third achievement in the literature is the excellent empirical coverage of the consequences of social movement mobilization in the United States. Before these numerous analyses of the impact of civil rights movements, women’s movements, gay and lesbian movements, or the old-age movements, there had been little theoretical or methodological development in the field. Still, the consequences of mobilization in Western Europe have been examined less frequently, and even less is known about the outcomes of social movements in other regions (see reviews in Burstein and Linton 2002, and in Uba in this issue). Testing the theory in a novel context is not just a test of robustness of the argument, but such analysis helps to bring forward some new nuances and even generates new theories (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001). This special issue provides two examples that could lead towards such a direction.

First, Yulia Zemlinskaya illustrates how the cultural context contributes to the outcomes of protest through shaping movement dynamics in the case of two Israeli social movement organizations: *Courage to Refuse* and *New Profile*. These organizations supported conscientious objectors and draft resisters during the recent Palestinian Intifada, and the author shows how their different tactics had a differential impact on Israeli public opinion and politics. Zemlinskaya finds that *Courage to Refuse*, in the cultural and institutional conditions of Israeli militarism, was mostly successful because its members emphasized appropriate and valued elements of masculinity (strength, patriotism, Zionism, etc.), while *New Profile* was unsuccessful because their feminine antiwar framings (associated with motherhood) simply failed to resonate and thus had a detrimental effect on the ability to gain access to a wider public sphere and to influence decision makers.

Second, Katrin Uba systematically reviews previous work on the impact of social movement organizations (SMOs) and interest groups on policy making, finding their impact is dependent on public opinion and the political system. The use of articles published in eleven major sociology and political science journals from 1990 to 2007 allows her to set up the study in the context of varying degrees of public support and different political regimes. The results show that taking account of public opinion does not make any difference to the finding of direct political effects of social movement mobilization, although the role of public opinion varies across the organizational resources and activity of the movement. Uba also finds that a

democratic regime is not a necessary precondition for the impact of SMOs and interest groups on public policy, as is sometimes argued. Still, the net effect of SMOs is smaller in the models that account for political regime.

### FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

Thus far we have described some theoretical, empirical, and methodological contributions made by this special issue. Let us now turn to four specific directions for future research. First, like others before us, we point to the need for further theoretical developments. The interest in demonstrating the net causal effect of social movements has sometimes resulted in a long “shopping list” of possible important factors, whose actual importance for the process of interest is not always theoretically motivated. No one is surprised that the outcomes of protest depend on its context, as mobilization does not take place in a vacuum. The question to ask is rather *why* and *how* a certain contextual factor should be particularly important for social movement outcomes. There are already some interesting suggestions of mechanisms that explain how social movements influence public policies (for example, Andrews 2004; Kolb 2007), but these are also worth developing further for other domains of outcomes.

Burstein and Hirsh (2007) have suggested that the main reason why mobilization could have a direct effect on policy change is decision makers’ need for information. However, one can expect that such a need varies across political and electoral systems, and depends on the salience of the issue. It is important to know how these dynamics affect social movement outcomes. Uba, in this issue, argues that the need for information about the legitimacy and stability of the regime explains why mobilization could be influential even in nondemocratic regimes. Still, we need to learn much more about the intervening steps between mobilization and policy, cultural, and biographical change in different political and socioeconomic contexts. One option for theory development is to make use of accumulated knowledge in other fields, such as the numerous studies of policy change and advocacy networks coalitions (Weible, Sabatier, and McQueen 2009) or individual level political participation (Van Deth, Montero, and Westholm 2008). Empirically, in order to extend research findings beyond the specific cases at hand, the analysis certainly demands more comparisons across countries, across movements, and across time.

Second, there is a need for better operationalization and measurement of mobilization and its impact. With the use of distant proxies (such as the number of publications) for measuring a challenge to policy change, we might miss an important part of the causal process from mobilization to its effects. Even the traditional protest accounts might not be enough, as these are often combined with lobbying activities (for example, environmental movements). Thus, we welcome more detailed data on mobilization. This effort would combine different methods of data collection and make better use of existing knowledge of movement mobilization and outcomes. For instance, studies on political and biographical outcomes would benefit from combining protest event data with more qualitative approaches like linguistic and literary methods, interviews with activists, and surveys made during the demonstrations (see Walgrave and Vliegthart 2009; Einwohner 2001; Staggenborg and Lecomte 2009).

Third, there are several important empirical examples of mobilization that have been overlooked by social movement scholars interested in outcomes. For example, little is known about the impact of “awkward” movements like right-wing radicals, fundamentalist religious groups, and armed (guerrilla) organizations. Knowledge on the outcomes of such mobilization is important, although the research itself poses some ethical challenges (Polletta 2006). Moreover, states and state agents are the most common targets of social movement protest, and the majority of studies have focused on these since the hegemony of the political opportunity approach. But there are also other recipients of demands from collective action,

and sometimes movements target one institution with the intention of affecting another—that is, they have “a proxy target” (Walker, Martin, and McCarthy 2008). Elites, pressure groups, political parties, countermovements, other nonstate institutions (prisons, universities, corporations, churches, etc.), and supranational institutions (the European Union, the United Nations, NATO, etc.) in contemporary globalized contexts can confront protest similarly to state institutions. They can opt for concessions, repression, cooptation or a combination of these (Goldstone 2003: 20-24).

For example, can we be sure that the outcomes of protests without a specific geographical location (such as cyber protest against the Estonian government in 2007) will be well explained within the existing theoretical framework? Considering the increasing attention to antiglobalization protests, it is also worth noting that we have little systematic research on the ways international organizations like the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund respond to these actions (Walker et al. 2008). In the context of growing research focus on the role of interest groups in the European Union politics (Dür 2008), future studies should also pay more attention to how the EU responds to different social movements.

Fourth, the literature on social movement outcomes tends to focus its attention, quite narrowly, on single-outcome analysis, predominantly preferring to focus on political outcomes. The discussions have left aside the fact that the domains of different outcomes (political, cultural, and biographical) can mutually influence one another. Social movement impacts in one domain may affect another domain, and a consequence occurring at one stage can give a significant boost to future broader outcomes, sometimes even well past the end of the cycle of contention that generated protest in the first place (Bosi 2007). Social movements that seem to miss their explicitly stated goals at the policy level in the short term, for example, have gained cultural effects or biographical impacts that may be fundamental to subsequent political victories in the long term. Furthermore, immediate achievements may well vanish or erode in view of long-range developments. Far more research is needed in this area, especially scholarly reviews of the existing work on incremental outcomes.

In sum, we would like to use this special issue to remind social movement scholars that there is a notable amount of research on social movement outcomes available, but there are also very interesting challenges ahead. Hence, we encourage scholars to respond to these challenges. More specifically, we call for combining the studies of social movement outcomes with other fields of research—culture and value change, interest groups, political elites and political parties, public opinion and political participation—and in novel contexts.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In this special issue, the terms “outcomes,” “effects,” “impacts,” and “consequences” are used interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> The unintended effects refer to movement consequences that are not among their outlined goals (Deng 1997). It is not infrequently the case that the major effects of social movements have little or nothing to do with their stated goals. Looking exclusively at a social movement’s agenda, therefore, limits the analysis, excluding the broader consequences of movements, which are ultimately essential to understanding the dynamic development of the struggle (Tilly 1999).

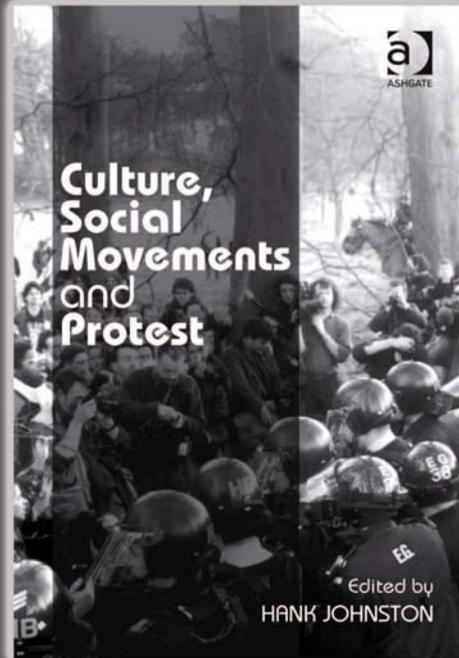
<sup>3</sup> With the life-course patterns of movements’ targets, we might look, for example, at how right-wing activism in a particular society impacts the biographies of Jewish people or ethnic minorities living in that society. The literature on victims of violence can be particularly helpful for this “new” strand of research, especially in instances where it looks at how victims of hate crimes suffer trauma as a result of their victimization (Herek, Cogan, Gillis, and Glunt 1998).

<sup>4</sup> The dimension of time should be taken into consideration much more in relation to works on social movement outcomes, as it poses important problems. As movements transform in time, they adapt their goals accordingly. So, the aims of social movements are not immutable, but change over time. Furthermore, the impact of movements might be delayed or temporary, since the time-lag between collective action mobilization and the manifestation of its impacts can be substantial, ranging from a few days to years or even decades. Thus, the challenge is to determine when an observed change can still be considered the result of protest activities (Giugni and Bosi [forthcoming]).

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