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How social movements matter: past research, present problems, future developments

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Introduction

How Social Movements Matter:
Past Research, Present Problems, Future Developments

Marco Giugni

On August 28, 1963, between 200,000 and 500,000 people (depending on who made the estimate of the crowd size) marched on Washington, D.C., to lobby for the civil rights bill that President John F. Kennedy had sent to Congress on June 19. It was the largest political demonstration in the United States to date. Although this massive protest was dubbed the "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom"—thus combining civil rights and economic demands—the recent civil rights mobilizations in Birmingham gave demands for freedom much more emphasis than those for jobs. The march had been organized at a meeting held on July 2 at New York's Roosevelt Hotel, attended by the leaders of the six major civil rights organizations. After two months of intense preparation, everything was ready for the march. Tens of thousands of participants, most of whom came on buses charted by local branches of the movement, gathered at the Washington Monument and assisted at a morning entertainment featuring several singers sympathetic to the movement, among them Bob Dylan and Joan Baez. Then, before noon, demonstrators began to march, heading to the Lincoln Memorial, the stage of the main rally and a highly symbolic site for the organizers on the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation. Despite the authorities' fear of a riot—among other precautions, 15,000 paratroopers were put on alert—the event went on peacefully through speeches and songs heard by the huge audience. Finally, Martin Luther King Jr., the leading figure of the movement at that time, stepped up to the podium to deliver his closing address. His speech began with the following words: "I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation" (qtd. in Kasher 1996: 120). By the end, what should have been an

ordinary closing speech had become one of the most salient moments in the his-
tory of the American civil rights movement when, in response to the crowd, King
began his final passage with "I have a dream."[1]

The March on Washington is only one among a series of events that the civil
rights movement staged during the peak of its activities, between 1954 and
1968. Through bus boycotts, sit-ins, freedom rides, marches, demonstra-
tions, and many other protests and acts of civil disobedience, thousands of
people attempted to reinstate a sense of justice in the country. Were all these
efforts successful in the end? The Civil Rights Act was passed by Congress
on July 2, 1964, exactly one year after the March on Washington was orga-
nized by the six major civil rights leaders. But was this act, which banned
racial discrimination in public facilities and in voting rights, a direct effect of
the march (or of the whole range of activities of the civil rights movement,
for that matter)? If so, which actions by the movement were most effective
in producing this outcome? Was the act a result of mass demonstrations like
the one in Washington, gathering peaceful and diverse masses, or of more
disruptive tactics such as sit-ins and civil disobedience? And what about
other actors at the time? Perhaps the movement was not responsible for the
elimination of (formal) racial discrimination; perhaps this was a result of the
open-mindedness, or of a strategic stance, of mainstream politicians within
Congress; or perhaps it was a combination of external pressures and internal
reformist orientation. Furthermore, the Civil Rights Act was only one step
forward, though a fundamental one, toward the broader goal of achieving
(informal) freedom and equality. Did the movement reach some gains in
this respect? Finally, what other, unintended effects did the mobilization of
the civil rights movement produce? For example, one could argue that, if the
passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a result of the movement's mobi-
lization, then mobilization could have helped other minorities in their strug-
gles for more freedom and equality. But the movement's mobilization also
provoked strong repression by the authorities and violence by segregationists
in the South, which in turn enhanced a positive image of the movement in
the public opinion (Garrow 1978).
    These kinds of questions concerning the impact of the civil rights
movement have a series of conceptual, theoretical, and empirical implica-
tions for the study of social movements in general. Although the impact of
the civil rights movement has received greater attention than that of other
movements, much more work is needed on this topic.[2] As several scholars
have pointed out at different times (Berkowitz 1974; Gurr 1980; McAdam,
McCarthy, and Zald 1988; Tarrow 1993), the study of the consequences of

social movements is one of the most neglected topics in the literature. We need more systematic studies that can shed light on various aspects of movement impact, in particular on the potential consequences, on the conditions and circumstances that favor certain consequences as well as the processes leading movements to have an impact, and on the actual effects obtained by past as well as contemporary movements. The lack of scholarly work on this topic is all the more unfortunate if we consider that one of the raisons d'être of social movements is to bring about changes in some aspects of society, a fundamental goal of movements which is often acknowledged but only rarely addressed explicitly. Furthermore, a better understanding of the impact of social movements on different aspects of society concerns both specialists and nonspecialists, for movements are a basic component of contemporary societies and, in particular, a major vector for the articulation of underrepresented political interests.

In an attempt to contribute to filling this important gap, this volume brings the consequences of social movements to center stage. It does so by addressing two general questions: on the theoretical level, which aspects of society can social movements modify and how? And on the empirical level, what impact have contemporary social movements had in different countries? In the end, we hope, the essays presented here will inform us about how movements relate to more general processes of social change and will put us in a better position to see how social movements matter, the fundamental question that guides all the essays. Thus, the volume is divided into two parts, each one devoted to one of the aforementioned questions. In the remainder of this introduction, I will first provide a brief survey of what has been done so far on the nature, scope, and conditions of the consequences of social movements. Second, I will address the two main questions by discussing some problems and shortcomings that have made research difficult and that need to be met if we are to go any further in the study of this crucial aspect of movements. Finally, I will conclude with some general remarks about two important issues with which this volume deals only in part: the durability and the direction of the changes brought about by social movements.

What Has Been Done So Far

While the study of consequences is still underdeveloped within the social movement literature, the field is not as empty as many observers have claimed.[3] However, work on the outcomes of social movements has rarely been pulled together and systematically surveyed and theorized. Although it is difficult to classify all these works, most of them deal with one or both of two related but distinct issues: the disruption/moderation debate and the

internal/external debate. Both issues are addressed by William Gamson's *Strategy of Social Protest* (1990), a book that, almost a quarter of a century after its first edition came out, can still be regarded as the most ambitious and most systematic effort yet to analyze the impact of social movements. The book is basically a critique of the pluralist perspective on American society.[4] Gamson, through an analysis of the careers of fifty-three American challenging groups active between 1800 and 1945, questions the permeability and openness of the American political system. Specifically, the author aims to answer several related questions: "How can we account for the different experiences of a representative collection of American challenging groups? What is the characteristic response to groups of different types and what determines this response? What strategies work under what circumstances? What organizational characteristics influence the success of the challenge?" (5). In fact, the latter question turns out to be the focus of the analysis, and the question of the circumstances under which specific strategies work is secondary.

Gamson's study prompted a number of critiques, most of them raising methodological issues (e.g., Goldstone 1980; Gurr 1980; Snyder and Kelly 1979; Webb et al. 1983; Zelditch 1978). However, apart from its intrinsic achievements and specific shortcomings, one of the book's contributions is that it set in motion a fruitful discussion among movement scholars. In particular, it provoked a sometimes harsh debate on the two issues that have dominated the literature on movement outcomes. Let me provide a brief overview of each of these issues.

Disruption versus Moderation

One of the prevailing themes in the research on the consequences of social movements is whether disruptive tactics are more likely to have an impact or, on the contrary, whether moderate actions are more effective. In its simplest form, this debate has been framed by the following question: Are disruptive (or even violent) movements more successful than moderate ones? Perhaps not surprisingly, the answers to this question are far from consensual.

Gamson's study directly provoked a series of reactions, particularly to his finding that the use of violence and, more generally, disruptive tactics are associated with success. Several reactions have come from reanalyses of Gamson's original data, which he included in the book's appendix. For example, Steedly and Foley (1979) repeated Gamson's analysis using more sophisticated statistical tools, such as factor analysis, multidimensional scaling, multiple regression, and discriminant functional analysis. Their results support Gamson's findings about the positive impact of challengers' willingness to use sanctions. Similarly, Mirowsky and Ross (1981), in an attempt to de-

termine the locus of control over movement success (an issue I shall discuss in more detail), have also elaborated on Gamson's findings concerning the effect of violence, and have basically agreed with him.[5]

Other authors have found that, in contrast to the pluralists' claim that moderation in politics is more effective than disruption, the use of force or disruptive tactics by social movements improves their chances of reaching their goals (McAdam 1983; Tarrow 1998; Tilly, Tilly, and Tilly 1975). Much of the existing research on the effects of violence or other constraints used by challengers has dealt with strike activity. It is here, perhaps, that results are the most contradictory. Taft and Ross, for instance, on the basis of a study of violent labor conflicts in the United States through 1968, concluded that "the effect of labor violence was almost always harmful to the union" and that "there is little evidence that violence succeeded in gaining advantages for strikers" (1969: 361–62). Similar results have been obtained by Snyder and Kelly (1976) in their study of strikes in Italy between 1878 and 1903. They found that violent strikes were less successful than peaceful ones. These results were contradicted by, among others, Shorter and Tilly (1971) in their study of strikes in France. They suggested that there is a positive relationship between the use of violence and strike outcomes.[6]

The impact of disruption has been analyzed extensively through the example of the urban riots of the 1960s in the United States.[7] A great number of these studies are related to Piven and Cloward's influential thesis about the impact of disruptive protest on the welfare state (1993).[8] In fact, Piven and Cloward (1979, 1993) are among the scholars most firmly convinced of the effectiveness of disruptive tactics by social movements.[9] According to them, disruption is the most powerful resource that movements have at their disposal to reach their goals, since they lack the institutional resources possessed by other actors, such as political parties and interest groups. At the opposite end of the violence/moderation continuum, authors such as Schumaker (1975) have argued that militancy is generally not conducive to success. In a more nuanced attempt to specify the conditions and circumstances under which violence or, more generally, the use of constraints leads to success, the same author has stressed two conditions for the effective use of constraints: when there are direct confrontations between protesters and their targets; and when there are confrontations between protesters and a hostile public, a situation which is likely when challengers have zero-sum demands (Schumaker 1978). Yet he also found that the use of constraints and zero-sum demands triggers public hostility and, consequently, is less effective than moderation.

Thus, if considered in absolute terms, the disruption/moderation debate

might be more apparent than real. The effectiveness of disruptive tactics and violence is likely to vary according to the circumstance under which they are adopted by social movements. In particular, the movements' political context plays a decisive role, as available political opportunities, various institutional features of the political system, and the propensity of rulers to repress protest activities either facilitate or constrain the movements' impact. It is likely that when regimes are vulnerable or receptive to challenges, disruption works, whereas when they are not, disruption invites repression. Furthermore, the cultural climate may make disruption either more or less effective. Finally, it has been shown that the capacity of movements to achieve their goals depends on their ability to create innovative and disruptive tactics (McAdam 1983), the use of which varies according to the moment in a protest wave (Koopmans 1993).

Internal versus External Explanations

Related to the disruption/moderation issue is the question of whether movement-controlled variables or some aspects of a movement's environment better account for its success. In other words, here we have a debate between internal and external explanations of social movement outcomes. This second debate is evident in Gamson's study (1990). By testing a series of organizational variables on the success or failure of a sample of challenging groups, he pointed to the crucial role of organizational, group-controlled variables. His conclusions were supported in reanalyses conducted by several authors (e.g., Frey, Dietz, and Kalof 1992; Mirowsky and Ross 1981; Steedly and Foley 1979). A similar stress on internal factors has been shown in the case of various movements and protests, such as rent strikes (Brill 1971), the women's movement (Clemens 1993), and the pro-choice movement (Staggenborg 1988) in the United States.

The internal/external debate has been framed within the broader pluralist/elitist controversy. While pluralists view protest groups as effective and the political system as responsive to external demands to the extent that these groups do not stray too far from proper channels (Dahl 1961), elitists see protest groups as seldom effective and the political system as unresponsive (Parenti 1970; Bellush and David 1971). Generally, the pluralist assumption of the permeability of the political system—especially the American political system—has been challenged theoretically as well as empirically (Bachrach and Baratz 1970; Edelman 1964, 1977; Gamson 1990; Lowi 1969, 1971; McAdam 1982; Schattschneider 1960; Shorter and Tilly 1974).

Within the narrower field of social movements and collective action, this controversy has been translated into a perspective that stresses the im-

portance of bargaining for the success of challenging groups (Burstein, Einwohner, and Hollander 1995; Lipsky 1968, 1970; Wilson 1961). The most elaborated theoretical statement in this regard was probably made by Lipsky (1968), who concluded that the acquisition of stable political resources that do not rely upon third parties is an essential condition for challengers to be successful in the long run. Thus, on this level, the controversy is between authors who think of social movements as being capable of obtaining certain results independent of external support and those who see the latter as a necessary condition. These two viewpoints grossly reflect the different perspectives of resource mobilization theory and the political process model. The former conceives of social movements as being weak and lacking the indigenous resources to be successful on their own, while the latter suggests, on the contrary, that social movements have enough resources and disruptive potential to induce social change, when confronted with a favorable political opportunity structure.

In contrast to the works underscoring the importance of organizational variables necessary for social movements to have an impact, a series of studies stress the importance of the political environment and the context of social support (e.g., Barkan 1984; Goldstone 1980; Kitschelt 1986; Jenkins and Perrow 1977; Lipsky 1968, 1970; McAdam 1982; Schumaker 1975). Kitschelt, for example, in his comparison of the antinuclear movement in four Western democracies, has made a strong case for the structural determinants of social movement success, arguing that success strongly depends on political opportunity structures. Similarly, Tarrow (1998) makes a case for the crucial role of political opportunities in shaping the long-term effects of movements on the individual, institutional, and cultural levels. Albeit in a more provocative manner, the importance of movements' larger environment for their outcomes is also acknowledged by Piven and Cloward (1979). They show, through research on the unemployed workers' movement, the industrial workers' movement, the civil rights movement, and the welfare rights movement, that the impact of protest movements, as well as their emergence and the forms of their mobilization, is delimited by social structure, in particular by the features of institutional life that shape a movement's opportunities for action, model its forms, and limit its impact. According to these authors, social movements can succeed only insofar as they act disruptively and as political circumstances lead the rulers to make concessions.

In the end, however, even more than the disruption/moderation debate, the internal/external debate might be more apparent than real. Much as the effectiveness of disruptive tactics varies according to the situation in which

they are adopted, the impact of movement-controlled variables may depend on the very context of protest. This, at least, is what works by Kowalewski and Schumaker (1981) and, more recently, Amenta, Carruthers, and Zylan (1992) suggest. Future research, as has been suggested, should therefore look for a synthesis that incorporates both strategy and structural constraints (Frey, Dietz, and Kalof 1992). Our volume builds on this search for a bridge between internal and external accounts of the consequences of social movements.

Defining and Determining the Consequences of Social Movements

Although this brief overview is a far cry from exhausting the extant literature on the consequences of social movements, it does point to some problems that have hindered research on this topic as well as to several shortcomings that call for further research. Three issues are worth mentioning in this context: the definition of movement outcomes (mostly in terms of success or failure); the focus on policy outcomes; and the problem of causality.

Looking at Success or Failure

A first limitation of existing studies on the consequences of social movements and collective action relates to the notion of success. Much previous work has attempted to determine to what extent and under what conditions protest succeeds or fails. From Gamson's *Strategy of Social Protest* to the plethora of studies concerned with the impact of the urban riots of the 1960s, the fundamental question guiding research was, when do movements succeed? The very subtitle of a book by two leading scholars testifies to this focus on the success or failure of movements: *Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (Piven and Cloward 1979). In other words, scholars have mostly been interested in relating observed changes to movement demands.

To be sure, to determine whether social movements succeed or fail with respect to their stated goals is certainly a legitimate way to approach the subject matter. Several contributions in this volume follow this avenue of research. Yet this perspective has its dangers. First, it assumes that social movements are homogeneous entities. Thus, success or failure tends to be attributed to an entire movement. This may hold true in some cases, but often there is little agreement within a movement as to what goals must be pursued. Social movements are complex sets of groups, organizations, and actions that may have different goals as well as different strategies for reaching their aims. Hence, a given change is not necessarily perceived as a success by all sectors of a movement. Second, to concentrate on success raises the problem of subjectivity. Briefly put, success is often not assessed in a single manner by everyone. While social movement success has an objective side, it is in

large part subjectively assessed. Movement participants and external observers may have different perceptions of the success of a given action. Moreover, the same action may be perceived as successful by some participants but judged as a failure by others. Third, to talk about success is problematic because it overemphasizes the intention of movement participants in producing certain changes. While it is certainly true that social movements are rational efforts aiming at social change, their consequences are often unintended and are not always related to their demands.[10] Furthermore, such unintentional consequences may be positive as well as negative for a given movement.

The essays gathered in this volume, we hope, reflect the fundamental distinction between purposive and unintended consequences of social movements. If the former can be considered successes of at least a part of the movement, the latter are out of its reach and can even be counterproductive. Some unintended outcomes consist of only minor and short-term changes, but, more interestingly, sometimes movements modify certain fundamental features of social life. To identify the range of potential changes that movements can provoke unintentionally is a major task of research in this field. The contribution by Doug McAdam in this book, for instance, shows how social movements can produce changes in the demographic patterns of society independent of their stated, more contingent goals. Another illustration of unintended consequences of movement actions is provided by Donatella della Porta's essay. To some extent, the transformation of the public discourse about the right to protest and the related broadening of the space for political action in Germany and Italy were effects hardly anticipated by either movement participants or external observers. Social movements often produce consequences that are much broader than their contingent goals and that are often not foreseen. Charles Tilly's conclusion extends such discussion by examining the relations between explanations of social movement processes and analyses of their outcomes, arguing that students of the consequences of social movements need to take into account both aspects.

Focusing on Policy Outcomes

Related to the focus on success and failure is the prevailing attention scholars have paid to policy changes as a potential outcome of protest. The preceding review of the literature clearly shows to what extent research has focused on policy outcomes. This is partly a result of the dominant role played by resource mobilization and political process theories during the last few decades. These approaches conceive of social movements as *"collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with*

elites, opponents, and authorities" (Tarrow 1998: 4; emphasis in original).[11] Thus, following this perspective, movements aim primarily at changing some aspects of their political environment. This prevailing definition of movements as political phenomena, together with the difficulty of empirically studying certain types of effects, has led scholars to focus on policy outcomes. In effect, policy changes are easier to measure than changes in social and cultural arenas. Therefore, much research has focused on the policy impact of movements by relating their action to changes in legislation or in some other indicator of policy change (e.g., Amenta, Carruthers, and Zylan 1992; Banaszak 1996; Burstein 1985, 1979; Burstein and Freudenburg 1978; Costain and Majstorovic 1994; Gelb and Palley 1987; Huberts 1989; Tarrow 1993). This is also the reason we have several empirical assessments of the impact of antinuclear movements, an impact which has been measured through a decrease in nuclear energy production or a delay in plant construction allegedly provoked by the movements, although results are quite discordant (e.g., Kitschelt 1986; Jasper 1990; Joppke 1993; Midttun and Rucht 1994; Nichols 1987).

Again, it should be clear that to study policy or, more broadly, political consequences of movements is a legitimate task in itself. Since we in this volume share the foregoing definition of social movements as sustained challenges to authorities, we shall devote much space to this type of consequence. The contribution by Paul Burstein, in particular, looks at policy outcomes of social movements. In addition, all the chapters in part 2 pay particular attention to this aspect of movements. However, if we restrict our analysis to political effects, we fall short of giving a complete picture of the consequences of social movements in at least three respects. First, for movements to be successful, it is not enough to produce policy change. What really matters, in this context, is that such change be translated into new collective benefits for beneficiary groups. Thus, several authors have looked at the extent to which movement mobilization brings about collective benefits (or fails to do so), such as improved economic conditions or more equal opportunities for minority groups (e.g., Amenta, Carruthers, and Zylan 1992; Burstein 1985; Piven and Cloward 1979, 1993). The contribution to this volume by Edwin Amenta and Michael Young addresses precisely this issue, making a case for the need for inquiry into this type of impact.

Second, even political outcomes of social movements are not limited to obtaining policy gains. Other types of effects are located in the realm of politics. Kitschelt (1986) has stressed three types of outcomes: procedural, substantial, and structural.[12] Policy outcomes correspond to what he called substantial impact. There seems to be a certain agreement about this threefold

distinction (e.g., Gurr 1980; Kriesi 1995; Rochon and Mazmanian 1993). We also agree that protest can produce political changes in three ways: by altering the power relations between challengers and authorities; by forcing policy change; and by provoking broader and usually more durable sysremic changes, both on the structural and cultural levels.[13] The chapters in part 1 are, to some extent, distributed according to this typology. Other researchers have offered more subtle typologies of possible outcomes. One of the best known is provided by Schumaker (1975), who defines social movement outcomes in terms of the responsiveness of the political system. Specifically, he distinguishes five criteria of responsiveness: access responsiveness, agenda responsiveness, policy responsiveness, output responsiveness, and impact responsiveness (see also Burstein, Einwohner, and Hollander 1995; Rüdig 1990). This typology avoids the problems deriving from a perspective that looks at movement success or failure. Nevertheless, the focus remains on the political effects of social movements.

Third, collective action is hardly limited to its political aspects. Social movements also have a cultural dimension, and scholars are increasingly acknowledging the need to study this aspect of movements more deeply (e.g., Morris and Mueller 1992; Johnston and Klandermans 1995). Accordingly, movements also have a range of potential effects in the social and cultural realm. As it has been recently pointed out, "Collective efforts for social change occur in the realms of culture, identity, and everyday life as well as in direct engagement with the state" (Taylor and Whittier 1995: 166). This is all the more true when we are dealing with new social movements, which, as students of these movements have pointed out on several occasions, have a strong cultural orientation (Brand 1982; Melucci 1982, 1989, 1996). Mobilization, for example, may result in a strengthening of internal solidarity and identities, the creation of countercultures, shifts in public attitudes toward a given issue, and so forth. While cultural effects of movements are more problematic to study empirically than their political effects insofar as it is more difficult to measure them, it is nevertheless possible to do empirical research on cultural outcomes of movements. Although the main focus of this volume is on the political impact of social movements, several contributions also pay attention to their cultural effects, attesting to the feasibility of studying them empirically. The most explicit attempts to address this aspect are perhaps made by Donatella della Porta, who shows how the transformation of public discourse on the right to protest in Italy and Germany can be seen as a result of a symbolic struggle between protesters and authorities; and by Doug McAdam, who deals with cultural changes brought about by social movements particularly on the individual, microsociological level.

The Problem of Causality

As several authors have acknowledged, scholars who have conducted empiri-
cal research on the consequences of social movements have frequently found
themselves on shaky ground.[14] Several methodological difficulties have hin-
dered research. I have already hinted at the difficulty of measuring the
potential impact of movements. However, the problem of causality, that is,
how to establish a causal link between a given movement and an observed
change, is probably the main difficulty scholars have encountered. Simply
put, how can we be sure that an observed change is the result of a social
movement's mobilization? How can we eliminate the possibility that such
change would not have taken place anyway, as a product of other social
forces or as the result of a broader protest cycle involving several movements
and actions? How can we determine whether the observed change is the
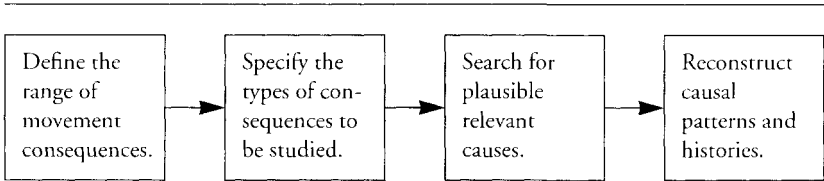product of movement activities or the result of a reformist move by political
authorities?

This problem can be partly overcome by making certain methodological
choices. First, we should aim to gather data not only about a given movement
and its alleged outcomes but also about the actions of other actors. Five such
actors seem to be particularly relevant in this respect: rulers, political parties,
interest groups, the media, and countermovements when they exist. By gath-
ering data widely, we can control for the role of other actors and, hence, make
a better assessment of the movement's actual impact on the observed change.
A second choice consists of looking not only at potential movement-related
explanatory factors, such as levels of mobilization, strategies, or organization-
al strength, but also at other broad social-change variables, such as political
opportunity structures or sociodemographic factors. Third, we need to set up
a comparative research design. By comparing similar movements in different
contexts or different movements in similar contexts, we can improve our
chances of finding a relationship between movement activities and out-
comes. Fourth, we have much to gain from a perspective that focuses on the
processes through which outcomes are produced. In other words, by analyz-
ing the link between a given movement and some of its alleged outcomes in a
dynamic manner (i.e., over time), we will have a greater chance of singling
out the mechanisms through which movements bring about change. A final
methodological option that may improve our knowledge of the link between
social movements and their consequences consists of looking not only at
cases in which a given movement's action has led to a change, but also at
situations in which no outcome can be observed. In terms of movement
goals, this means studying failure as well as success.

However, these and related methodological options will at best only mitigate the problem of causality if research, as has frequently been the case in the past, seeks invariant models of collective action.[15] As Tilly has pointed out, "The employment of invariant models . . . assumes a political world in which whole structures and sequences repeat themselves time after time in essentially the same form. That would be a convenient world for theorists, but it does not exist" (1995: 1596). Tilly's caution applies to the specific sub-field of research on the consequences of social movements where research-ers have often indulged in searching for general laws and universally valid propositions and models. They have looked for the determinants of success-ful movement action or for the factors that facilitate movement impact in general.

Looking for general causes and invariant models is doomed to failure, for there are no such invariant patterns in social life. In fact, this may be all the more true when we are dealing with the consequences of social move-ments, as we are confronted with variation in the characteristics of move-ments, in the contexts in which they operate, and in the outcomes of their activities. Instead of searching for general explanations, we would do a better job by taking into account the historically contingent combinations of fac-tors that shape the possibilities for movements to contribute to social change. This would lead us to accomplish four tasks: to define the range of potential consequences of movements; to specify the types of impacts on which we want to focus; to search for the plausible relevant factors of such observed change; and to reconstruct the causal patterns or histories that have followed from the movement's action to the observed change. The latter point in-cludes an explicit or implicit parallel with counterfactual accounts, that is, other possible explanations, on the basis of the relevant factors. The task be-comes, then, to eliminate the other accounts on the basis of the available in-formation. Figure 1 illustrates this approach. It is an approach that we have tried to adopt in this book, to the extent that following a common frame-work is possible in a collective volume. In spite of the difficulty arising from the assembling of authors who sometimes follow different perspectives, we think that the essays gathered here show how research on the consequences of social movements will provide better results by following this simple yet necessary methodological approach and by abandoning the search for in-variant models.

The methodological agenda I have just sketched does not imply that we should abandon the search for broad correlations between certain vari-ables and the particular movement effects on which we focus. However, this is only a first step, to be followed by a second step through which we

Figure 1. Methodological agenda for the study of the consequences of social movements

Define the range of movement consequences.	Specify the types of con- sequences to be studied.	Search for plausible relevant causes.	Reconstruct causal patterns and histories.

reconstruct meaningful causal explanations that link observed changes to movement action. In both steps, research has a lot to gain from a comparative perspective.

The Comparative Agenda

Much recent research on social movements is informed by a comparative perspective. An increasing number of works follow a comparative design to explain the emergence and development of movements (e.g., della Porta 1995; Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi et al. 1995; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Rucht 1994; Tilly, Tilly, and Tilly 1975). This is, in part, a result of the hegemonic place that the political process model has come to hold in the field. In particular, scholars have compared movements cross-nationally to explain variation in their mobilization, forms of action, and, more rarely, outcomes. By acknowledging the richness of comparative analyses for the understanding of collective action, this volume takes the comparative agenda seriously and tries to show its usefulness for the study of the consequences of social movements. It does so in two ways: first, in an implicit manner, by gathering essays that discuss different movements; second, by presenting a number of chapters that explicitly compare a given movement cross-nationally.

Taken as a whole, this book provides us with a way to compare the processes leading different movements in different places to bring about different types of effects. For example, we can see whether the factors that help movements obtain policy outcomes are the same ones responsible for changes in the public discourse or for bringing about institutional change. Similarly, we can determine whether the processes that lead to the impact of, say, the women's movement resemble those involved in the outcomes of the peace and ecology movements. As it appears, the impact of social movements depends more on historical and contingent combinations and sequences of events than on general, invariant sets of factors. This kind of implicit comparison, however, does little more than provide an impressionistic picture of the variation in movement outcomes. To fully take advantage of

the richness of a comparative perspective, we need to set up a more systematic comparative agenda. To be sure, this is not possible to do here, but we have tried to come closer to a truly comparative design by asking each of our contributors in part 2 to write a chapter devoted to a particular movement and to compare its impact cross-nationally. Moreover, to render the comparison more plausible, we asked the contributors to pay special attention to a specific type of outcome, namely, political outcomes.

Thus, the four chapters in the second part of this volume attempt to assess the impact of several major contemporary movements in comparative perspective. Of course, the aim here is not to provide a definitive assessment of all types of effects of all the movements dealt with. The goal is, rather, to show how different conditions and historical circumstances are conducive to varying movement outcomes. Furthermore, since there are movements in all parts of the world, we had to make choices. Although the availability of scholars working or having worked on the four movements discussed posed some objective constraints on our choice, we deliberately commissioned essays so as to concentrate on movements that have strongly mobilized in the Western world during recent decades, particularly in Western Europe and the United States. By thus adopting an implicit "most similar systems design," we hope to highlight the characteristics of the political system that facilitate movements to produce, or prevent them from producing, certain outcomes. Three of the four chapters in this part are devoted to the new social movements, which, as some have pointed out (Kriesi et al. 1995), have been the protagonists of the last few decades. Joyce Gelb and Vivien Hart compare the role of women's movements in Great Britain, Sweden, and the United States and highlight their varying effects due to country-specific factors. David Meyer compares peace movements in Germany, the United States, and New Zealand, focusing on their impact on foreign policy matters and showing how the interplay of domestic and international factors conditions such impact. Dieter Rucht looks at the consequences of ecology movements in a cross-national as well as a cross-issue perspective, comparing France, Germany, and the United States. Finally, since new social movements are typically movements of the left, we thought it useful to include a chapter on a contemporary movement of the right. Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham hence address the impact of mobilization by movements of the extreme right in relation to the politics of immigration in Germany and Italy. While the definition of the extreme right as a social movement is open to discussion, to study its impact comparatively appears nevertheless to be a crucial task in light of the recent rise of this kind of protest in several Western countries.

We are confident that this broad comparative perspective will yield many insightful findings about the political consequences of social movements and the role of national contexts in accounting for the varying impact of different movements. However, this partly purposive and partly constrained selection forced us to exclude several major contemporary movements from our discussion, such as labor, antinuclear energy, and student movements, as well as the civil rights movement. For the reason mentioned earlier, we also decided not to discuss movements outside the Western world. Notwithstanding these limitations, we think that the range of movements discussed in part 2 highlights the richness of a comparative perspective for the study of the consequences of social movements. To be sure, case studies also provide insightful results, especially in that they can advance our theoretical knowledge of how social movement outcomes occur. The value of case studies rests above all on their allowing us to examine in detail the processes through which social movements contribute to bringing about certain changes. This kind of approach is most useful when we are interested in showing the consequences of a particular movement more than in determining what characteristics of movements lead to certain outcomes and what factors ultimately account for such outcomes. However, a comparative approach is a more viable solution when we want to test an explanation about movement outcomes and to generalize the results obtained from case studies. A sound comparative design allows us to test specific hypotheses in different contexts and, hence, to assess the role of different variables. In the end, only comparisons can yield generalizable results about the consequences of social movements.

To adopt a comparative perspective means to shift from the study of the determinants and causes of social movement outcomes—a perspective that clashes against the problem of causality—to the conditions and circumstances of their occurrence, that is, the specific conditions under which a given type of impact is possible when protest arises. If social movements are conceived of as rational, political efforts aimed at social change, the political conditions of the occurrence of certain changes become central to the analysis of social movement outcomes. The crucial, yet not exclusive, role of political factors appears in many of the essays gathered in this volume. By comparing different movements in different countries, the volume as a whole attempts to single out the political conditions that facilitate movements in bringing about social change.

The Durability and Direction of Change

I will conclude this introductory chapter by spending some time on two issues that will only be grazed in this volume but that deserve much attention

by analysts of social movements. If we are to understand how movements contribute to social change, we need to provide answers to questions of the durability and direction of change. How durable are the changes brought about by social movements? Are these effects mostly positive or mostly negative for both the society and the movements themselves? These two questions have often been framed in terms of the institutional impact of movements and in terms of the contributions of movements to democracy.

As far as the first question is concerned, several authors have underscored the indirect and long-term effects of social movements and protest, as opposed to their direct and short-term effects (e.g., Tarrow 1998). Generally speaking, we may draw a parallel between policy outcomes and short-term effects, on the one hand, and between institutional outcomes and long-term effects, on the other hand. After all, institutions change more slowly than policies. Therefore, if we want to inquire into the consequences of movements in the long run, we need to study how they can alter political institutions as well as those durable aspects of social organization that we may call social institutions.

In their aim of changing the status quo, social movements face a fundamental dilemma. If they ask for short-term policy changes, they have a greater chance that such changes will occur, but they will not alter, in a fundamental way, existing structures and practices. If, instead, movements demand long-term institutional changes, they will encounter more difficulties in realizing such changes, but when they do so, they have a more durable impact. Hanspeter Kriesi and Dominique Wisler, in their contribution to this volume, maintain precisely that social movements rarely alter political institutions and only under very restrictive conditions located on the economic, cultural, and political levels. The extreme version of this dilemma is that, while reformist movements may obtain numerous gains of minor scope, revolutionary movements are only rarely successful, but when they do succeed, the changes they bring about are fundamental and often longlasting reversals of the existing social and political structures. Seen from the point of view of the movements, this is a strategic dilemma. From a scholarly perspective, however, research on movement outcomes must first distinguish between the conditions that give rise to reformist social movements and those that provoke revolutionary situations, and then must analyze the ways by which policy change and revolutionary outcomes occur.

In addition to affecting state or political institutions—no matter how broadly defined—social movements may also produce institutional change on the social and cultural level. This means that research, following a more sociological perspective, should look at social and cultural institutions as

well. Movements not only challenge state structures but also aim at redefin-
ing the sets of social relations that presuppose such structures and the sym-
bolic elements that justify them. More importantly, movements can have an
institutional impact both on the political level and on the social and cultural
level. In this volume, the chapter by Kriesi and Wisler looks at the impact
on political institutions, while Kelly Moore's contribution focuses on the
broader effects on institutions on the societal level. Investigating the mecha-
nisms that allow movements to bring about such long-term changes is a fun-
damental task of research if we want to understand better how collective ac-
tion relates to social change. This impact, I should add, can occur regardless
of whether change is a result of a purposive challenge or an unintended con-
sequence of action. Similarly, Doug McAdam's study of the biographical
impact of activism sensitizes us toward long-term transforming patterns
brought about by participation in protest activities. This should make us
aware of the potential impact of social movements on social and cultural
institutions.

As for the question of the direction of the changes produced by social
movements, various authors have maintained that movements are a source
of democracy, that is, a vector for the democratization of society. While this
is usually a rather implicit assumption, several authors have stated this rela-
tionship explicitly and show it empirically (e.g., della Porta 1995; Koop-
mans 1995; Tarrow 1989). Donatella della Porta, for example, accomplishes
precisely this task in her essay. By analyzing in detail the interaction between
protesters and the state around public discourse about the right to demon-
strate, she points to a democratization of the Italian and German societies
insofar as movements have contributed to enlarging the space for political
action. However, nothing assures us that movements *always* make society
more democratic, and this is true also for the so-called left-libertarian move-
ments that have dominated the unconventional political arena during the
last few decades. It would be wrong to proceed from a normative point of
view that assumes that the contributions of social movements are "positive"
in all circumstances. Such a point of view would mean mistaking reality for
our desires and taking for granted something that must be demonstrated
empirically.

Even assuming that social movements always go in the direction of a de-
mocratization of society, their impact in this regard depends very much on
how we define democracy, for example, whether we adopt a legalistic or a
participatory definition of democracy (Held 1987), following the American
or the French tradition, respectively.[16] If, on the one hand, we conceive of
democracy as a set of formal norms and rules that grant the aggregation of

individual interests, then the democratizing role of social movements will consist of an enlargement of formal rights and freedoms. The introduction and expansion of channels of access due to movements' actions can thus be considered an impact on democracy. For example, the public hearing procedure in the United States expanded following, and very likely was caused by, continuing pressure from the social movement sector, in particular from peace and antinuclear movements. If, on the other hand, we follow the tradition started by Jacques Rousseau and, accordingly, think of democracy not as formal rules but, rather, as the actual participation of citizens in the public sphere, then social movements will have a democratizing impact simply by "showing up" in the public space. This holds regardless of whether we look only at the number of collective actors—that is, movements—that participate in the political game or, in a more sophisticated manner, at the quality of the relations between collective actors in the democratic process (Habermas 1984). In either case, such participatory politics will create the foundations for strong democracy (Barber 1984).

It should be clear, however, that if an assessment of the effects of social movements on democracy depends on our definition of the latter notion, such impacts are also likely to vary according to the context within which movements operate. For example, while I certainly do not want to say that all Western societies are more democratic than non-Western societies, the characteristics of democracy and the democratization process are certainly very different in these two contexts. In addition, the context within which movements can have an impact on democracy not only varies across space but has changed over time as well. The concept of democracy is not the same today as it was, say, in the 1930s. If we fail to acknowledge the shifting meaning of those aspects of society which social movements can affect, we will hardly be able to explain how such impact occurs.

What Is Next?

In this introduction I have tried to do two things. On the one hand, I have provided an overview of the extant literature on the consequences of social movements, which is the main focus of this volume. To be sure, I have provided not an exhaustive list of theoretical and empirical works on this topic but rather a selection of the aspects that researchers have tended to emphasize in their attempt to assess the impact of movements. Specifically, we have seen that previous work has revolved around two issues: the disruption/moderation debate and the internal/external debate. Existing studies present a number of problems and limitations. Here I have stressed three such shortcomings: the tendency to look at the determinants of success or failure of

social movements, a narrower focus on policy outcomes, and the problem of causality. In the final analysis, these shortcomings stem largely from the tendency to look for convenient yet nonexistent invariant models of collective action.

On the other hand, I have prepared the terrain for the essays included in this volume by briefly discussing what I think are two major issue areas that research on the consequences of social movements should address. First, there is a need for theoretical and empirical work on different types of movement impact. On the basis of the shortcomings of previous work, I have suggested that, if we are to reach a better understanding of the consequences of social movements, we should go beyond the notion of the movements' success to include the unintended outcomes of their actions, to expand the range of potential consequences to include broader social and cultural effects, and, finally, to avoid the search for invariant models in favor of an approach aimed at reconstructing the causal paths that link observed changes to the role of social movements in producing such changes. The essays in part 1 of this volume reflect such a need to look at different types of outcomes. Second, I have stressed the need to adopt a comparative perspective in the study of movement outcomes. Specifically, research should take seriously the idea of making comparisons across countries, across movements, and across time in order to highlight the social and political conditions under which movements are more likely to have an impact. The contributions in part 2 are thus devoted to an assessment of several contemporary movements, focusing on their political outcomes but also hinting at other types of consequences.

The field of social movement outcomes, while full of valuable empirical work on various movements in different places at different times, still lacks a coherent theoretical framework that will set the pace for future research on the topic. While this volume does not provide such a framework, we hope it will at least encourage scholars to make the study of the consequences of social movements a central and durable concern in social movement research, an endeavor that should help us in reflecting on the complex connections between social movements and the durability and direction of the changes they produce on the political, social, and cultural levels.

Notes

1. The description of the March on Washington is based on information from Kasher (1996).

2. On the impact of the civil rights movement, see, in particular, the excellent work of Button (1989).

3. For a review of the literature on the outcomes of social movements and protests, see Amenta, Carruthers, and Zylan (1992), Burstein, Einwohner, and Hollander (1995), Gurr (1980), Jenkins (1981), McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (1988), Mirowsky and Ross (1981), and Schumaker (1978). For a more recent overview, see Giugni (1998).

4. See, in particular, Dahl (1967), who particularly represents the pluralist perspective on American society.

5. Other reanalyses of Gamson's data or related works include Frey, Dietz, and Kalof (1992), Goldstone (1980), and Webb et al. (1983).

6. For recent work on the effectiveness of strikes, see Cohn (1993) and Franzosi (1994).

7. See, among others, Berkowitz (1974), Betz (1974), Button (1978), Colby (1982), Feagin and Hahn (1973), Hahn (1970), Hicks and Swank (1983, 1992), Isaac and Kelly (1981), Kelly and Snyder (1980), Jennings (1979, 1983), Mueller (1978), and Welch (1975). Useful reviews of the literature on the racial riots of the 1960s can be found in Gurr (1980) and Isaac and Kelly (1981).

8. See Piven and Cloward (1993) and Trattner (1983) for an overview of the works related to Piven and Cloward's thesis. See the authors listed in note 7 for the part of their thesis dealing with the urban riots during the 1960s. On the part concerned with relief expansion in the 1930s, see, among others, Jenkins and Brents (1989), Kerbo and Shaffer (1992), and Valocchi (1990).

9. Piven and Cloward have strongly emphasized disruption as a winner and organization as a loser, an approach which has provoked a debate in the literature (Gamson and Schmeidler 1984; Roach and Roach 1978, 1980; see also the rejoinders by Cloward and Piven 1984, as well as Piven and Cloward 1978, 1980; and see further Piven and Cloward 1992).

10. On the unintended consequences of social action, see Tilly (1996).

11. The most famous version of this state-oriented definition has been given by Charles Tilly (1984: 304).

12. The first two types of effects resemble the twofold typology in Gamson's study (1990).

13. Tarrow (1998) has proposed a slightly different typology by distinguishing effects of protest cycles on the political socialization of participants, on political institutions and practices, and on political culture. However, these types of outcomes point to changes at the individual, political, and institutional levels.

14. An overview of methodological problems and some suggestions for further research can be found in Gurr (1980) and Rucht (1992).

15. Several methodological suggestions for the study of social movement outcomes have been made by Gurr (1980) and Snyder and Kelly (1979), among others.

16. Gould (1988) has called these two definitions of democracy, respectively, pluralist and socialist.