

## **The debate on protest outcomes in social movements studies**

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This session will introduce to research on social movements' outcomes as ways of shaping laws. While social movement studies have been slow to address the effects of contentious politics (concentrating attention rather on its causes and modalities), a growing body of literature has developed more recently on the topic. Assessing the outcomes of movements is not easy: not only several actors contribute to define such outcomes, but even movements themselves as composite actors, endowed with various types of resources and using different strategies of protest, but also persuasion. Outcomes can moreover be planned and unplanned as well as being more or less favorable to the social movement itself. Research on movements' outcomes has indeed considered dimensions both internal and external to the movements. Internally, each wave of protests tends to change the material and symbolic resources available for specific movements and broader movement families. As for external impacts, social movements can achieve acceptance and be recognized as a legitimate counterpart from their opponents, i.e. procedural impacts, and/or they might obtain advantages and concessions according to their claims, i.e. substantial impacts. Movements might also produce structural impacts by affecting the structure of the political system, and sensitizing impacts, by influencing the political debate. From the public-policy point of view, the changes brought about by social movements may be evaluated by looking at the various phases of the decisionmaking process, the emergence of new issues; the writing and applying new legislation; the effects of public policies in alleviating the condition of those mobilized by collective action.