

# T03P06 / Social Movements and their Influence on the Public Policy Agenda

**Topic :** T03 / POLICY, POLITICS AND POLITICAL REGIME

**Chair :** Vasil Navumau (Center for Advanced Internet Studies)

**Second Chair :** Olga Matveieva (Dnipropetrovsk Regional Institute of Public Administration)

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Both social movements and political parties play a crucial role in the social and political life of contemporary democracies. While they do not pretend to take part in the decision-making processes directly, they tend to influence the political processes by changing the society on a grassroots level via direct action, the transformation of discursive structures, creating new values, etc. The existence of social movements, struggling for their own interests is widely considered as an indicator of a strong civil society and healthy democracy. They also remain the main driving force behind changing public policy agenda, putting forward democratic values and principles of more effective public administration in authoritarian regimes. Understandably, the latter treat social movements as an existential threat, and try to repress and co-opt them: for example, the recent response of the regimes in Russian and Belarus to the actions of peaceful movements remain to show that the authoritarian leaders are very much aware of the potential dangers brought about social movements.

The conventional response to this threat has been to suppress self-organization in the society by blocking communication channels, cracking down on independent organizations and networks, and promoting loyalist movements. However, advances in technology, including the proliferation of social media and other online communication platforms, and modern social and demographic trends diminish the efficacy of such 'traditional' strategies. Economic development, education, and urbanization raise awareness of public issues and accumulate the capacity for collective action, which is increasingly difficult to keep under the lid.

We hypothesize, that in such new realities, instead of suppressing collective action per se, authoritarian regimes opt to manage and control it, trying to re-direct the energy of a fledgling civil society away from political activities towards more innocuous apolitical undertakings. Those, while absorbing and defusing the collective action potential, are not politically destabilizing and in fact, could be playing into the regime's hands. This approach is gaining popularity among autocracies and hybrid regimes, but its efficacy has limits, as demonstrated by the cases of some modern states, such as mentioned before.

At the same time, such countries witnessed a boom of apolitical civil society activities dealing with various issues, including social welfare; community development; environmental protection; preservation and promotion of the culture, language, and heritage; and, more recently, mitigating the COVID-19 pandemic. Acceptance depended on whether collective actions were "constructive" and "apolitical," addressing specific problems, instead of demanding systemic change.

This panel provides a platform for discussing various approaches to the analysis of the phenomenon of social movements as the driving force for political change. The main objectives of the panel are as follows:

- to study the narratives of social movements in different countries and regions;
- to analyze the processes of institutionalization of social movements in authoritarianisms and democracies;
- to compare approaches and existing models of social movements' analysis;
- to share different visions on strategies and instruments of putting forward democratic changes in authoritarian and democratic states;
- to provide policy advice for the decision-makers cooperating with social movements.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

In a sense, the changes taking place within civil societies are the reflection of challenges that governments cannot manage rapidly. Society as a flexible organism reacts faster than a bureaucratic system, especially if that system is characterized by rigidity of regulatory mechanisms and inertia. The people's thirst for quick qualitative transformations being significantly intensified via globalization spurs the state to move faster towards public demand and growing social needs. And the managerial unwillingness to accelerate under

these impulses leads to the emergence of protest moods. This raises the need to reconcile the interests and needs of society with the political will.

This panel provides a platform for discussing various kinds of interaction between social movements and policy-makers, reflecting the tendency of the former to aspire both to express their voice in democracies and to retreat to apolitical initiatives in a repressive political environment. We welcome the papers including, but not limited to the following topics:

- Narratives of social movements in different countries;
- The political, economic, and social reasons of the protests;
- The role of social movements in the democratization of public relations and public administration;
- Differences in strategies, repertoires of collective action in authoritarian and democratic states,
- Transnational social movements and global issues of protest;
- The gender aspect of social movements;
- The role of social movements in the development and strengthening of the foundations of democracy, reforms of decentralization/centralization in public administration;
- The ways social movements pursue their goals in countries with underdeveloped institutes of civil society;
- Information-communicative technologies and innovations used by social movements to influence public policy.

In a nutshell, this panel is opened for the theoretical analysis of SM and case studies of countries that experienced transformations in public policy under the influence of social movements. We would like to accept papers observing the transformations, taking place because of social movements' involvement, be it in cultural, political, or economic spheres, as well as submissions, discussing strategies of social movements in varying contexts and the corresponding response from the side of political regimes. We especially welcome papers that are explicitly interdisciplinary and that foster discussion of public administration styles and strategies to struggle against the authoritarian regime.

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## Session 1 Session 1 (Afternoon)

Thursday, July 8th 14:00 to 16:00 (004)

### **Social Movements Strategies to Influence Public Policies: an interdisciplinary overview of the literature**

Diego Galego (School of Public Affairs and Administration, Rutgers University-Newark)

**Background:** Public policies are often made behind closed doors. Social movements have been deploying several strategies to trespass the barriers excluding them from policy formulation. In the last decade, research on the relationship between social movements and public policymaking has increased, and particularly interdisciplinary approaches to unveiling the political influence of movements have gained momentum.

**Question and Objective:** Questioning how social movements seek to influence policymaking and which are the most common strategies deployed by them, the purpose of this paper is to provide an overview on the richness of an interdisciplinary understanding of the movement-policy relationship.

**Methodology:** By performing a scoping review (Tricco et al. 2018) of the academic literature on this relationship, 98 peer-reviewed papers were analyzed. It was possible to build a broad repertoire of 99 strategies influencing the policy development, identified from 36 social movements, presenting cases from 30 countries and five regional locations. The analysis of the repertoire of strategies covers autocratic and democratic regimes.

**Results:** Findings from a large and growing body of interdisciplinary perspective on social movements and public policies offer useful insights for a deeper understanding of the connection between the core concepts. The repertoire of 99 strategies was clustered under ten common themes, related to a) collective actions, b) political process, c) street activities, d) participation, e) activism, f) mobilization, g) public policies process, h) institutional process, i) framing discourse and j) multimedia-technology usage. Inspired by Giugni's (2007) and Amenta, Caren, and Olasky's (2005), this paper builds an analytical model based on the three pathways commonly taken by social movements to influence policies:

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#### **Direct Influence**

Social movement => Public Policy Process

#### **Indirect Influence**

Social movement => "Intermediator" => Public Policy Process

#### **Joint Influence**

Social movement => "two or more Intermediators" => Public Policy Process

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While some literature indicates that social movements tend to take the most direct path to influence, the results of this review indicate that indirect paths to influence are more often deployed. Although the review of the social movements has provided a substantial set of theoretical and empirical generalizations about their strategies influencing public policies reform or development, the relationship between the core concepts involves a process that is far from fully comprehensible, often generates unexpected outcomes, and can have varying impacts on multiple levels. This research will do provide insights into the mechanisms enabling or constraining social movements to participate in the policy process, accounting for strategies deployed to influence policies in different political regimes.

#### **References**

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## **(Virtual) Urban mobilizations and public policies for a radical right to housing: The case of Barcelona.**

Gabriele D'Adda (Università degli Studi di Catania)

In Barcelona, 84.4% of the 19,347 evictions executed between 2013 and 2019 were related to rent payment problems. Rent increases are just the latest symptom of a broader housing crisis that has affected the city, as well as Spain, since 2008. Its social consequences in terms of evictions, mortgage repossessions, and decreased access to affordable housing overlap with the long-term effects of urban transformations, increased tourism, and gentrification related to the so-called Spanish and Barcelona models. Legal reforms and public policies, far from being neutral, have been used to foster the financialization and commodification of housing and to promote homeownership through indebtedness. After the housing bubble burst, the Spanish Governments prioritized the bailout and reorganization of the financial sector, thus paving the way for a new phase of the housing crisis. By making rent contracts more flexible and providing fiscal advantages to international real estate companies, legal reforms contributed to the financialization of the rental market and the creation of a rent bubble. However, Barcelona can also be considered the epicentre of a grassroots response to urban and housing precarity. This paper analyses how PAH – the Platform of People Affected by Mortgages – a grassroots social movement established in 2009 in Barcelona, has supported people affected by housing precarity through a double strategy of 'challenging' and 'changing' the law. Through campaigns of civil disobedience, PAH stops thousands of evictions, promotes direct negotiations between affected people, banks, and public administration, and rehuses evicted people in occupied empty dwellings. Through campaigns to change the law and promoting new public policies at the municipal, regional and national level, PAH contributes to creating long-term structural solutions that apply to everyone. By sharing a right to housing discourse, these strategies reinforce one another, and they contribute to reframing the housing crisis in Spain by creating an effective counternarrative on its causes but also on its possible solutions. Moreover, PAH's mobilizations and demands strongly influenced the electoral programs and the public policies elaborated since 2015 by the Barcelona municipal government led by Barcelona en Comú - BeC ('Barcelona in Common'). By considering the main public policies adopted to face housing and gentrification-related problems, their impact and limits, I will argue that thanks to the strategies, counternarratives, mobilizations, and policies developed by social movements, and later by the municipal government, in Barcelona, a new and radically different housing model is being elaborated. Through a rights-based approach, the focus is moving from the needs of markets, profit, and economic growth to the needs of those affected by housing precarity and gentrification.

## **Mobilisation and agenda denial: the case of the Paris 2024 anti-bid protest**

Alexandre Morteau (Université Paris-Dauphine (Paris IX))

For the last decade, Olympic bids have been widely contested in Europe and in the US. Local activists are mobilized to protest against the cost of the Games (increase of local taxes and public deficit), the environmental impact, the lack of democracy when it comes to sport institutions and competitions, the misconducts in sports (doping, corruption) and the influence of transnational corporations in this industry. More and more often, these mobilizations result in the withdrawal of the bid, either because of the negative outcome of a referendum or because of a lack of political support (Dennis Coates & Pamela Wicker, 2015; Kassens-Noor, 2019; Kassens-Noor & Lauermann, 2018; Könecke et al., 2016; Streicher et al., 2019).

Despite this hostile context towards the Olympic Games, Paris 2024 suffered little criticism and showed a solid political consensus (Bourbillères & Koebel, 2020). Unlike most of its competitors, Paris did not go through much turbulence and made it to the IOC's vote. The question we ask is rather simple: how come the Paris bid was not set on the agenda as a public problem, whereas in countries facing similar issues the Olympics were rejected by the population.

We believe that the explanation lies within the local political configuration which provides (or not) an

opportunity to politicize the Olympic bid as a public problem. In most countries, the bid is linked to pre-existing issues and mobilized groups who seek alliances with opposition parties. We will demonstrate that in France the political situation made it difficult for anti-bid activists to gain support within the political field, which resulted in an agenda denial (Cobb & Ross, 1997) on this issue. Several elements will be explored to support this hypothesis: the electoral context of 2017; the diagnosis of previous failed bids and the anticipation of the Paris 2024 bid committee; the potential legacies of the Games oriented towards territories held by political parties most likely to be opposed to the event ; the fragmentation of mobilized groups opposed to urban projects in the Parisian area.

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Cobb, R. W., & Ross, M. H. (Éds.). (1997). *Cultural strategies of agenda denial : Avoidance, attack, and redefinition*. University Press of Kansas.

Dennis Coates & Pamela Wicker. (2015). Why Were Voters Against the 2022 Munich Winter Olympics in a Referendum ? *International Journal of Sport Finance*, 10, 267-283.

Kassens-Noor, E. (2019). "Failure to adjust" : Boston's bid for the 2024 Olympics and the difficulties of learning Olympic wisdom. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 51(8), 1684-1702.

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Streicher, T., Schmidt, S. L., & Schreyer, D. (2019). Referenda on Hosting the Olympics : What Drives Voter Turnout? *Journal of Sports Economics*, 20(5), 627-653.

## **(Virtual) How the 2020 Belarusian Protest Changes the Public Policy Agenda on an International Level**

Vasil Navumau (Center for Advanced Internet Studies)

Olga Matveieva (Dnipropetrovsk Regional Institute of Public Administration)

The massive pro-democracy movement in Belarus, launched in August 2020, is noticeable for its scope, the emergence of new narratives, extensive usage of various innovations both in technical terms and in terms of practices of protest. Various art-performances, chains of solidarity, blockage of roads, symbolic appropriation of urban space, etc. became efficient tools of strengthening the voice of people who demand fair elections and resignation of the authoritarian incumbent Lukashenka.

Some of those methods were adopted by the protesters from the Ukrainian demonstrators and adopted for the national context.

The authorities continue using increasingly brutal force to stop the collective actions, while the freezing temperatures at the streets contributed to the decrease of the mass character of the protest actions. Although largely the world keeps admiring the determination and pronouncedly peaceful character of the Belarusian protest (or the Revolution of Consistency as we term it), certain observers have been calling to a forceful resolution of the situation, referring to the Ukrainian EuroMaidan as a blueprint. Currently, the confrontation rather ended up in a stalemate: the political elite seems to be still loyal to Lukashenka, while the protests did not stop - the demonstrators regularly arrange collective actions in the urban areas.

The agenda of the protesters is being actively supported and promoted by the opposition activists, based abroad, who gathered around the symbolical leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya (she was forced to flee from the country). She meets the political leaders at the highest level to put forward the political demands and set agenda on an international level. This article is devoted to the analysis of the agenda-setting process in Tsikhanouskaya's public policy activities, and comparison with the techniques, used by the protesters in Ukraine. Methodologically it relies on the mixture of qualitative methods (content analysis, in-depth interviews) in a comparative research design.

This article raises the following research questions: can the differences in the techniques of protest in both countries be explained proceeding purely from the peculiarities of local context? What was the specificity of

the agenda-setting processes in both countries? Can the leaders or the activists on the grassroots level more effectively put forward their demands?

The paper contributes to the analysis of the instruments, social movements use to influence public policy agenda in Eastern European countries, and Ukraine and Belarus in particular.

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## Session 2 (Afternoon)

Thursday, July 8th 16:30 to 18:30 (004)

### **(Virtual) The transformative role of road space contestation : reenacting historical action repertoires to strengthen urban governance in Lisbon and Budapest.**

Charlotte Halpern (Sciences Po Paris - Centre d'Etudes Européennes (CEE))

Nathalia Capellini (Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po))

Jenny McArthur (University College London)

Road space contestation constitutes a major phenomenon across cities worldwide. It is a highly contentious approach, which takes several forms: events and communication to inform or/and mobilise the general public, discussions with public bodies and the government, legal tools, tactical alliances and illegal or nonviolent radical direct action (Halpern & McArthur, 2020). Moreover, it is not strictly speaking a new idea, with a large body of scholarly work in urban and transport history highlighting the role of social claims and epic battles between different users' groups seeking to influence decision-making processes in shaping urban road futures (Longhurst, 2015, Reid, 2015, Shelton 2017). What is new, however, is the growing use of the action repertoires formerly developed by contentious groups (Barnes 1979; Tilly 1986) by urban authorities and experts to challenge national regulatory frameworks and enhance urban governance. This is particularly relevant in highly centralized political systems and to foster decentralization reforms.

This paper contributes to the panel's objective by examining how evolving relationships between contentious politics and public policy processes contribute to the restructuring of political regulation in different urban governance contexts (Dupuy & Halpern, 2009). It draws on the work done on contentious activities focusing on policy outcomes (Della Porta, Diani, 2020), to highlight the way action repertoires unfold over time and shape (enable, constrain) policy dynamics. By contrast to the work done on how social movements impact specific policy sequences, such as agenda-setting, or how to assess for their impact on policy processes by focusing on the adoption of a new regulation or budget (Giugni, 2004), this paper takes a broader view to examine how evolving relations between public policy processes and their challengers impact forms of governance in a given context. In order to do so, it argues that diachronic approaches offer a fruitful way to make sense of how contestant's action repertoires unfold over time and contribute to the emergence of new forms of governance.

It draws on an original dataset (MORE project, EU funded under H2020) to analyse how road space contestation constitutes, historically, a defining factor for framing urban roads as public spaces and contributes to the restructuring of political regulation in Budapest (Hungary) and Lisbon (Portugal). This is first achieved by comparing relationships between road-space contestation and policy developments over time, starting in the 1920s, when road space reallocation to accommodate cycling paved the way towards motorization and the dismantling of pre-WWI transport modes such as tramways and carriages ( Barata Salgueiro, 1987; Flonneau, 2006; 2007), until the 2000s, when claims associated with cycling contest the dominant role of cars. Secondly, the comparison between two different urban contexts frames our understanding of how road space contestation and traditional action repertoires are now used by urban authorities to challenge national governments and political elites to strengthen urban forms of governance.

### **Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE): political and legal circumstances in Portugal, Spain and Brazil**

Cristina Parente (Universidade do Porto)

Social and Solidarity Economy appears to make an appearance, with more or less vitality all around Europe,

USA and Latin America. It emerges as an alternative practice to the established economic system, and as a motor to transform classical views of the market rationale against other spheres of human life. In some countries, this proposal stems from grassroots movements, which gained particular strength since the 2008 financial crisis; in other countries, its implementation is also the result of organised political action from above.

The objective of this talk is to understand how this movement is gaining strength, taking into account its legal setting, political structures, types of development, and the logic behind the actors who impersonate it. The founding ecosystems of the SSE, its institutionalisation, both from a legal and public policy view, and relevant measures taken to develop a collective and unifying entrepreneurship are amongst the aspects analysed here. The proposed approach has an institutionalist backdrop as we look at “interpreting the role of institutions in shaping political and social outputs” (Hall; Taylor, 2002: 194), from the hypothesis that institutions influence behaviours.

Our qualitative analysis focuses on collective actors from political and governmental institutions, from which depends the creation (or not) of a structure (favourable or not), that works in one hand as a facilitator (or not) of actions that constitute the SSE, and on the other as a self-structuring mechanism. There is a similar approach to alternative actions, both practical and symbolic, which offer meaning to its relationship and interdependency. The analysis of these practices points to “how” individuals operate within the created legal and political state of affairs, and “how” institutions affect their behaviours in three geographically separate territories, namely, Porto in Portugal, Minas Gerais in Brazil and Barcelona in Spain. We have followed the movement in the 3 territories during the last decade, with an ethnographic approach, making use of documentary sources, reports of observation and informal conversations.

Conclusions point at the importance of grassroots initiatives for the consolidation of the social movement, which gains strength from the legal setting and development policies. Despite representing a key element in the consolidation and validity of both legal and development policies, these structures appear as a direct response to the structuring role of grassroots movements. However, these represent economically fragile alternatives against the ruling economic model and are very dependent of the political will in reconciling the interests with the needs of the society. As a movement on the rise against the dominant capitalist system, charitable causes like the international food sovereignty movement gains strength, so we do not believe there will be significant drawbacks, even with the withdrawal of development policies, as it is clear in the Brazil of Bolsonaro.

### **(Virtual) Queer Liberation: A Movement in Transition**

Cameron McKenzie (Wilfrid Laurier University)

This research examines the evolution of the gay/queer movement. The author argues that the AIDS epidemic constituted a defining moment for the Canadian gay rights movement. By examining relations between the community and government and their confrontation with the medical profession, this research illuminates the development of a community identity within the largely structural analysis of the movement. Furthermore, this movement spawned a number of community organizations. Currently, what do these organizations tell us about how the movement has evolved? The history of the movement is viewed through a content analysis of The Body Politic's coverage of the HIV/AIDS crisis from 1981 to 1987, supplemented by semi-structured interviews with people who were active with the publication during that period. In the current context, semi-structured interviews reveal the perceptions and experiences of selected community-based LGBTQ+ health organizations in southern Ontario, Canada, as they navigate the current neoliberal policy environment. How these organizations understand and implement the social determinants of health (SDH) framework in their communities is used as a measure of the movement's ongoing commitment to a structural analysis and approach. As such, the SDH's structural approach to health equity, augmented by an emergent queer liberation theory, forms the theoretical foundation of this analysis. Findings indicate that LGBTQ+ organizations have a good understanding of equity issues and the SDH approach but must operate in “survival mode”. The theoretical contribution of this work is to point out the inadequacy of the SDH framework's understanding of LGBTQ+ health equity and to articulate three pillars in the development of Queer Liberation Theory (anti-assimilationism, solidarity across movements, and political economy) in the hope of improving the SDH framework and moving forward on equitable approaches to LGBTQ+ health in a challenging political environment.

### **(Virtual) Climate Political Activism: Recognizing the new actors in the political arena.**

Laura Monteiro (University of Brasília)

Mauro Guilherme Cappellaro (Center for Sustainable Development / University of Brasilia)

Climate change has major impacts on ecosystems and the environmental balance of the entire planet. The

longer the actions to prevent and mitigate the warming of the Earth take, the greater will be the impacts of these changes on society and the economy, putting at risk the current way of life. With this understanding, the young generation of several countries has embraced the climate cause in search for a better perspective of their future and the future of future generations. Through political and social manifestations, the youth movement focused on the climate grew abruptly and embodies the history of political engagement of people of different cultures, beliefs and ages, united in a single purpose: save the remaining biomes and ecosystems of the planet and their own quality and way of life. Aware of this, the following research is carried out in order to analyze the socioeconomic, motivational and political profile of young climate activists in Brazil. We seek to answer the following question: who are the young climate activists in Brazil and how do they act politically? The methodology consisted of a qualitative approach with an exploratory and descriptive profile. Data collection was carried out through 19 semi-structured interviews, applied by means of video calls in 2020, to young people aged 16 to 29 years, living in several Brazilian states. We used the snowball and exhaustion techniques. Results were divided into three categories. The first, which characterized activists socially and economically, demonstrated that activists are mostly present in indigenous communities, have an average age of 24, engage in social and environmental issues, aiming to reduce social inequalities. They adhere to the leftist agendas and have extensive knowledge of the political-climatic scenario and are familiar with different social and political movements linked to the cause. In general, they have university-level education and speak more than one language. The second category is motivational. We find that their members have environmental awareness as the strongest influence of their activism and seek to recruit more people to enter the climate struggle. They learned about the climate movement through lectures and / or were influenced by friends and family involve themselves deeper in the topic. Their goals are to reduce polluting gases, demarcate indigenous territories, raise awareness among populations about climate change by simplifying political discourses related to the cause, and implement efficient public policies. The third category includes young activists who use advocacy, lobbying and social networks as a tool for political action. Information campaigns about climate change are carried out through informal language provided by social networks. Lobbying and advocacy tools are used in direct contact with political leaders in an attempt to influence public environmental policies that are consistent with the movement's objectives. The research contributes to a more detailed knowledge of the activists' profile and of the ways in which they act politically.

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## Session 3 Session 3 (Afternoon)

Friday, July 9th 14:00 to 16:00 (004)

### **Negotiating Administrative Burdens in Citizen-State Interactions: The Case of the Social Movement Against India's CAA-NRC-NPR Reforms**

Srinivas Yerramsetti (KIMEP University, Kazakhstan)

Do public protests and social movements lead to reduced administrative burdens in citizen-state interactions? This article answers this research question by using the analytical frameworks of self-undermining policy feedbacks, government resistance to social movements, and the transformation of governing norms through social movement litigation and activism. It explicates the role of collective action in holding in abeyance and negotiating down the administrative burden levels in citizen-state interactions using the case example of India's Anti-NRC/CAA/NPR movement. The research uses narrative historical analysis and social movements online research methods for its case analysis. The article shows that by facilitating an extra-constitutional dialectic concerning procedural democracy, social movements lessen the imbalance of power between citizens and the state. This research makes a valuable contribution by elaborating on the role that government – social movement interactions can play in the democratization of public administration in a Low- and Middle-Income Country (LMIC) context.

### **(Virtual) Grassroots social activity of Russian citizens in response to the deepening pandemic-related state crisis**

Anna Jach (Jagiellonian university in Krakow)

Before the outbreak of the pandemic, Russian society was beleaguered by numerous problems the citizens faced as individuals or as social or professional groups. Finding solutions to problems in this sphere was for years the task of the non-governmental, non-commercial sector, particularly the organizations with the status of socially oriented non-profit organizations (????????? ?????????????????? ?????????????????? ??????????????, SO NKO). The spectrum of their activities encompassed all the spheres of Russian citizens' lives. Thus they received state support in different forms – financial and non-financial, regarding management or personnel training. However, the essential condition was to avoid contesting state policies, which meant that the organizations were involved only in activities that could not be interpreted as political or undesirable (extremist). Another sine qua non condition was that such formations were fully cut off from external financing, which in practice meant that they would not be classified as “foreign influence organizations”, the so-called inagents.

With the start of the 2020 pandemic caused by the quickly spreading SARS-CoV-2 virus, the situation of the citizens of the Russian Federation took a clear turn for the worse. Combined with the problems noted earlier, such as the continuously worsening standard of living, this paints quite a grim portrait of today's Russia. Like their foreign counterparts, the Russian authorities were surprised by the scale of the pandemic; however, the policy initiated by the RF government did not focus on the most efficient ways of dealing with the progressing spread of the virus. Trying to save their skins, the policy-makers denied that any such situation was occurring. At this point a number of questions arises as to the nature of social relations between the state structures and the citizens or residents of contemporary Russia. What is particularly important in this case are social movements, which in the past already played quite a significant role in solving social problems.

What were the reactions of the RF citizens to this situation? What is the current shape of the state's policies on the pandemic-related problems? What actions are taken by the citizens? Do the citizens organize themselves at all to solve these problems together? How do the social organizations function, considering

that they comprise the non-governmental, non-commercial sector that for many years have been shouldering the functions and tasks transferred to them by the state structures? Do we observe the return of the policy of “mutual help”, characteristic of the pre-revolutionary communal life of the Russian state’s subjects? In

the conditions of the pandemic-related crisis, can we speak about the renaissance of the concept of Russian society’s self-organization?

The aim of this analysis is a diagnosis of grassroots social (individual and group) participation in the conditions of the state in deepening crisis – the state which not for the first time turned out to be not only unprepared but also unable and uninterested in undertaking effective actions preventing and mitigating the results of the pandemic. The accompanying question concerns the endurance of the civil society emerging in an authoritarian state the RF undoubtedly is – the society which, having once tasted self-organization and independence, will not be interested in giving up their constitutional civil freedoms or political, cultural and social rights. What invariably remains an important tool used in the analyzed process is the Internet, which still is beyond the control of Russian state structures.

### **Whistleblowing from below: digital media and the influence of civil society actors over the implementation phase of anti-corruption policies.**

Alice Fubini (Università di Bologna)

Alessandra Lo Piccolo (Scuola Normale Superiore)

Social movement studies have dedicated a large share of their efforts in assessing the influence of collective action over processes of policy-making and political change. Similarly, anti-corruption studies have investigated the role of civil society initiatives in obtaining anti-corruption policy results. These perspectives have recently crossed their paths to investigate grassroots anti-corruption initiatives, through the concept of societal accountability. However, despite the attention devoted to the political consequences of this form of activism, contributions in these fields have seldom extended their analysis to the mediating role that civil society actors play over the implementation of these new policies, a role increasingly fostered by the strategic use of digital media. The ubiquitous presence of digital media that affected contemporary societies also has an impact on activists’ repertoire of practices. For this reason, this article aims at adding the media perspective to this literature. To fill these gaps, this study focuses on the whistleblowing process, framed as an anti-corruption practice that exposes institutional wrongdoing from below. Drawing on an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that bridges corruption and movement studies with media studies, the present contribution aims at exploring the influence of civil society actors over the implementation phase of anti-corruption policies through the analysis of their use of digital media.

Building on the Italian case, this work draws on a qualitative research design that combines interview material and documents analysis. Nowadays, within the Italian context, major whistleblowing initiatives from below are coordinated by civil society organizations, among which we have selected two case studies that use different media in their anti-corruption practices: 1) Whistleblowing PA, a digital whistleblowing platform for public administrations provided by Transparency International in collaboration with Hermes Center for Transparency and Digital Human Rights. 2) Linea Libera, a telephone service and a mailbox dedicated to potential whistleblowers and victims or witnesses of corruption, conceived by LIBERA Associations Names and Numbers Against Mafias. These actors were already involved in the campaign Vocidigiustizia, the grassroots initiative that led to the approval of the whistleblowers’ protection act in 2016. Following the positive but partly unsatisfactory result of the campaign, civil society actors kept on mobilizing on the issue and obtained relevant refinements of the legislation at the administrative level, also taking advantage of the window of opportunity offered by the 2019 European legislation. This article suggests that initiatives based on the strategic use of digital whistleblowing platforms have indeed granted grassroots organizations a role of intermediaries in the accountability field.

Keywords: Social Movements, Influence, Anti-corruption, Whistleblowing, Digital Media

### **Unintended but Consequential? The NoG20 Protests in Hamburg and the Introduction of Police Identification**

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Scholars interested in the political consequences of collective action have mainly analyzed political effects of social movements in terms of “success” or “failure” (Duyvendak and Jasper, 2015; Gamson, 1990; Giugni, 2004; Luders, 2016). This conceptualization of movement influence not only fails to consider many other effects that collective actors may have, but also contributes to the misleading impression that

movements produce political outcomes in a somewhat linear fashion. This paper seeks to offer an alternative approach by analyzing a change in legislation that can be considered an unintended consequence of collective action. It examines the decision to introduce police identification after the violent NoG20 protests in Hamburg, asking not whether the protests triggered policy change, but how the protest event could become consequential for a policy domain that collective actors had not initially addressed, nor intended to change. The paper assesses what role the NoG20 protests had in the decision to introduce police identification by reconstructing the decision-making process related to police identification in a temporal manner. Adopting a “processual” perspective, the paper pays particular attention to temporal sequence and the temporal dynamics underlying the decision-making process (Mayntz, 2004; Falletti and Mahoney, 2015; Aljets and Hoebel, 2017). The empirical analysis is based on qualitative interviews with activists, policy makers, police, and journalists carried out in 2020. The interviews are supported with an analysis of policy documents and press articles. The findings suggest that the decision to introduce police identification is the outcome of a multitude of contingent processes concurring after the protest event. The conjuncture of these processes works as a mechanism that can be described as backfiring. The case study shows that collective action had created an important scope for action not primarily for activists, but for parliamentarians. Drawing on Kingdon’s “multiple streams framework”, it is argued that the NoG20 protests created a “window of opportunity” for parliamentary actors to push for a proposal they had advocated well before the protest event.