

## THE POLICY IMPACT OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: A REPLICATION THROUGH QUALITATIVE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS\*

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*This article reanalyzes the data of a previous study on the policy impact of antinuclear, ecology, and peace movements in three countries with the aim of replicating its findings. Our goal is to see whether using a different analytical technique will yield similar results. The previous study used a regression approach to time-series analysis. Here, we use qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) to analyze the previous study's data. Specifically, we test the two main hypotheses based on the joint-effect model of social movement outcomes: (1) that the policy impact of social movements is conditioned by the presence of powerful allies within the institutional arenas, by the presence of a favorable public opinion, and/or by both factors simultaneously; and (2) that social movements are more likely to have policy impacts when they address issues and policy domains of low saliency. In addition, we compare the policy impact of social movements across countries. Our analysis confirms to a large extent the findings of the earlier time-series analysis, namely, the strong explanatory power of the joint-effect model of social movement outcomes and the varying impact of different movements on public policy.*

Replication is one of the main features of science, and therefore also of social science. Replicating findings based on the same data, but using different methods (that is, triangulation) is one of the principal ways to accumulate and advance knowledge in a given field. Here we would like to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field of social movements by replicating an existing comparative study of the policy impact of movements.

Others before us have made use of replication to study the effects of social movements. The most well-known examples are the reanalyses of the findings of Gamson's (1990[1975]) seminal work on the determinations success among a sample of American protest groups active between 1800 and 1945 (Frey, Dietz, and Kalof 1992; Goldstone 1980; Mirowsky and Ross 1981; Steedly and Foley 1979). Gamson facilitated this reanalysis by including the raw variables of his study in the appendix of his book.<sup>1</sup> However, while the main objective of Gamson's (1990) study and of most reanalyses of his data was to determine the role of the groups' internal characteristics (type of goals, strategies of action, degree of organization, etc.), here we follow scholars who have shown how the policy impact of social movements depends on external conditions (Barkan 1984; Goldstone 1980; Kitschelt 1986; Jenkins and Perrow 1977; Lipsky 1968; McAdam 1999; Schumaker 1975, 1978). More specifically, we focus on the role of political opportunity structures and public opinion as facilitating or preventing the policy impact of social movements.<sup>2</sup>

We reanalyze the data from a recent cross-national study of the policy impact of antinuclear, ecology, and peace movements (Giugni 2004). In line with recent works that

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stress interactive and contingent effects of social movements, political opportunity structures, public opinion, and other contextual factors (Amenta 2005, 2006; Amenta et al. 1992, 1994, 2005; Cress and Snow 2000; Giugni 2001, 2004, 2007; Kane 2003; Soule and Olzak 2004), the author of the original study argued that a model stressing joint effects has more explanatory power than models looking at direct or indirect effects. In particular, he showed the importance of the presence of powerful political allies and a favorable public opinion as crucial external resources that, when they accompany the mobilization of social movements, facilitate the movements' impact on public policy.<sup>3</sup>

The author tested these models by means of a regression approach to time-series analysis and modeled joint effects by introducing a series of interactive terms in the regressions. In this paper we replicate his study using another method to see whether we come to the same conclusions. Specifically, we test the two main hypotheses that can be drawn from what the author has called the joint-effect model of social movement outcomes: (1) the policy impact of social movements is conditioned by the presence of powerful allies within the institutional arenas, the presence of a favorable public opinion, or both factors at the same time; and (2) the policy impact of social movements is more likely when the latter address issues and policy domains with a low degree of saliency.<sup>4</sup> In addition, we consider a further aspect which is present in Giugni's (2004) analysis, but which has not been the object of a clear hypothesis: the comparison of the policy impact of social movements across countries. This allows us to go beyond the original analysis, which was geared towards assessing the role of public opinion, political alliances, and issue salience on the policy impact of social movements.<sup>5</sup>

The method we use is qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), which is particularly suited to model joint (that is, interactive and conditional) effects.<sup>6</sup> A few works have made use of QCA as a technique to study the impact of protest activities and social movements. For example, Amenta and colleagues (1992; see also Amenta et al. 1994, 2005) examine the conditions under which the Townsend movement succeeded or failed at the state level. Similarly, Cress and Snow (2000) utilize QCA to illuminate how framing played a role in social movement outcomes. Here we apply this method to test the findings against those obtained through time-series analysis of the same data. Our aim is to assess whether and to what extent the reliance on different techniques yields similar or contradictory results on the same data. We do not repeat the time-series analysis, but only summarize the main findings.

### THE JOINT-EFFECT MODEL OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT OUTCOMES

Giugni (2004; see also Giugni 2001, 2007) distinguishes between three main explanations of the policy impact of social movements: the direct-effect, indirect-effect, and joint-effect models. The direct-effect model maintains that movements can have a positive impact on policy with their own forces and in the absence of external support. The indirect-effect model sees movements as having an impact following a two-stage process, first by influencing certain aspects of their external environment—specifically, political alliances and public opinion—and then by allowing the latter to influence policy. The joint-effect model states that movement impact is forthcoming when political allies or a favorable public opinion (or both) combine with movement mobilization. Furthermore, he distinguishes between three variants of the joint-effect model, depending on the specific combination of these factors. In this respect, the impact of protest on policy is greatest when both political alliances and public opinion form a favorable environment for policy changes to occur.

Following previous works that underscore the interaction between movement activities and external factors (Amenta 2005, 2006; Amenta et al. 1992, 1994; Cress and Snow 2000; Kane 2003; Schumaker 1978; Soule and Olzak 2004), the author argues that the joint-effect model performs better than both the direct- and the indirect-effect models. Specifically, previous research suggests that the presence of powerful institutional allies (such as parties)

and favorable public opinion interact to produce policy change. This leads to two major hypotheses for the joint-effect model: First, the policy impact of social movements is conditioned by the presence of powerful allies within the institutional arenas (first variant), by the presence of a favorable public opinion (second variant), or by both factors at the same time (third variant). In all three variants, but especially in the third one, the joint-effect model is expected to provide a better explanation of policy change than both the direct-effect or the indirect-effect models. The second hypothesis proposes that influence on public policy also depends on the viability of claims. Some claims are more difficult to meet than others, and certain movements therefore face a more difficult task, according to the kind of issues or policy areas they address. The viability of claims depends basically on two factors. On the one hand, the authorities are less autonomous and have a more limited margin for action with respect to certain issues or policy areas, for example, international factors related to foreign policy. On the other hand, movements that target certain issues or policy areas pose a more serious threat to the authorities in that they strike the core interests of the state. Kriesi et al. (1995) have called these factors, respectively, “low profile” and “high profile.”<sup>7</sup>

Following this argument, among the three movements in the original study, the peace movement targets a policy area which is arguably the most difficult to change, followed by the antinuclear movement, and finally the ecology movement. In other words, the degree of difficulty to produce policy changes should be the following: very difficult for the peace movement, somewhat easier but still rather difficult for the antinuclear movement, and relatively easy for the ecology movement.

Table 1 assesses the social movements’ direct, indirect, and joint effects based on Giugni’s (2004) analysis. It allows us to compare the three models of social movement outcomes as well as to ascertain whether their impacts vary across countries and across movements. Each of the six parts of the table deals with one of the six models of social movement outcomes stressed by the author: the direct-effect model, the two variants of the indirect-model, and the three variants of the joint-effect model. These models are evaluated both by country and by movement. In addition, an overall assessment of the strength of the impact is provided for each country across movements and for each movement across countries.<sup>8</sup>

Let us focus on three points from the overall assessment of the impact strength (last column of bottom row of each section). First and most importantly, all three types of joint effect are stronger than both direct and indirect effects. The indirect-effect model, in particular, was found not to be very powerful. In contrast, some limited direct impacts can be observed, which counter the hypothesis that the presence of political allies and a favorable public opinion improve the chances of social movement success. However, these two factors facilitate movements insofar as they intervene simultaneously with a rise in protest actions. The stronger explanatory power of the joint-effect model clearly supports this hypothesis.

Second, comparing across movements, we observe a clear pattern of increasing influence as we move from one movement to the other. Specifically, the ecology movement is the most successful, followed by the antinuclear movement and finally by the peace movement, which is characterized by a lack of policy impact. The third variant of the joint-effect model of social movement outcomes (last section in the table) illustrates this pattern quite well.

Third, comparing across countries, it is difficult to draw reliable conclusions. We do observe a difference consisting of a strong joint effect of the movements in the United States, an intermediate one in Switzerland, and a weak one in Italy, especially if we look at the third variant of the joint-effect model. In this case, the two federal countries with more open political opportunity structures seem to be more conducive to social movements having an impact than the more centralized country. However, this might simply be a result of the lack of data on public opinion available for the Italian case concerning the ecology and antinuclear movements. In fact, if we look at the first variant (fourth section in the table), we can see that no difference exists among the three countries, whereas Italy has a lower score on both the second and third variants.

**Table 1.** Overall Assessment of Direct, Indirect, and Joint Effects from Time-Series Analysis

	<i>United States</i>	<i>Italy</i>	<i>Switzerland</i>	<i>Overall</i>
<i>Direct effect:</i>				
Ecology movement	No	No	(Yes)	Intermediate
Antinuclear movement	No	Yes	No	Intermediate
Peace movement	No	No	No	Weak
Overall	Weak	Intermediate	Intermediate	
<i>Indirect effect (first variant: political alliances):</i>				
Ecology movement	No	-	-	Weak
Antinuclear movement	No	-	-	Weak
Peace movement	No	-	-	Weak
Overall	Weak	-	-	
<i>Indirect effect (second variant: public opinion):</i>				
Ecology movement	No	-	No	Weak
Antinuclear movement	No	-	No	Weak
Peace movement	No	No	-	Weak
Overall	Weak	Weak	Weak	
<i>Joint effect (first variant: protest and political alliances):</i>				
Ecology movement	Yes	No	(Yes)	Strong
Antinuclear movement	No	Yes	No	Intermediate
Peace movement	No	No	No	Weak
Overall	Intermediate	Intermediate	Intermediate	
<i>Joint effect (second variant: protest and public opinion):</i>				
Ecology movement	No	-	Yes	Intermediate
Antinuclear movement	(Yes)	-	No	Intermediate
Peace movement	No	No	-	Weak
Overall	Intermediate	Weak	Intermediate	
<i>Joint effect (third variant: protest, political alliances, and public opinion):</i>				
Ecology movement	Yes	-	Yes	Strong
Antinuclear movement	(Yes)	-	No	Intermediate
Peace movement	No	No	-	Weak
Overall	Strong	Weak	Intermediate	

Source: Giugni (2004: table II.3)

Note: A significant effect (regression coefficient =  $p < .05$  or  $p < .10$ ) is indicated by (Yes) in parentheses.

In sum, the time-series analysis supports the general hypothesis that social movement policy impacts are facilitated by both the presence of allies within the institutional arenas and by a favorable public opinion. This facilitation, however, occurs only if these two factors are accompanied by sustained movement mobilization. It also shows that some claims are easier to meet than others due to the very nature of the policy areas and issues addressed, hence supporting the hypothesis about the varying viability of claims. Specifically, ecology movements are in a better position than antinuclear movements and, especially, peace movements to bring about policy changes. Finally, the cross-national comparison does not yield consistent results.

## DATA AND OPERATIONALIZATION

QCA is a methodological approach and technique that belongs to the broader family of comparative methods.<sup>9</sup> In many respects, it is the combination of Przeworski and Teune's (1970) most similar system design (MSSD) and most different system design (MDSD). As such, it offers the possibility to perform both within-case comparisons and inter-case

comparisons (Ragin 2003). QCA has been developed as a *via media* between qualitative and quantitative approaches (Ragin 1987; see Rihoux 2003 for a review). Its main aim is to identify regularities among a medium number of cases (ideally between 10 and 50) through a process of Boolean minimization. Ontologically, QCA assumes “multiple and combinatorial causality” (see Ragin 1987; Mill 1967; Mackie 1974; Wunsch 1988). First, it assumes that causality is plural, and that there exist several “paths” which lead to a given outcome. In other words, a phenomenon does not need to have only one cause or set of causes. Second, causality is conjunctural, meaning that factors react in a “chemical” way or “in concert” with other factors (Mill 1967; Becker 1998: 65). Thus, causality is not additive, it is combinatorial. The latter feature is particularly relevant for our present purpose, as it allows us to model joint and interactive effects of social movements.

On the technical side, QCA algorithms rely on Boolean algebra and are therefore based on mathematical logic rather than statistical inference (see Rihoux and Ragin 2009 for a complete account on the approach and the technique of QCA).<sup>10</sup> Three major technical steps structure a QCA. First, all the conditions (or variables) need to be dichotomized into 0 (zero) or 1 (one) values. For example, if social mobilization is a condition that measures its level of activity, the researcher needs to operationalize it and find measures which allow her to attribute a specific value (0 or 1) to this factor for each case. This calls for a very transparent and robust justification of the dichotomization process, as the subsequent analysis is extremely case-sensitive. The truth table summarizes the data thus dichotomized. Second, the data are inputted into QCA software which then runs the Boolean minimization. Depending on the objective of the analysis, the researcher deals with contradictory configurations, logical remainders, or hypothesis testing functions. Third, the equations obtained from the minimization process of both positive cases (where the dependent variable has a 1 value) and negative cases (where the dependent variable has a 0 value) are either further processed through factorization or are interpreted through a return to the cases. One of the major strength of QCA is indeed its capacity to zoom back to the case as a whole after having broken it into variables for analytical purposes.

The data used by Giugni (2004) consist of yearly time series measuring social movement mobilization, the structure of political alliances, trends in public opinion, and changes in public policy in Italy, Switzerland, and the United States, covering the period from 1975 to 1995.<sup>11</sup> We use the same, albeit reoperationalized, dataset to conduct the QCA. However, we performed three separate analyses for each movement in order to assess the factors' impact according to policy type. We then conducted three analyses for each country in order to assess the factors' impact according to the country where the protests took place. We analyzed 30 cases, defined and described below. The number of cases included in our analysis raises a number of issues that deserve to be mentioned. To begin with, we are not aiming at statistical inference. Statistical significance is essential to evaluate any statistical analysis. This is because results from statistical analysis are inferred from estimates that deviate from actual values. Therefore, such an inference should be built on a reasonably high number of cases. QCA, in its basic variant such as the one employed here, does not infer results. The latter are based on actually observed cases. The aim is not to find the average effect of one variable over another, but rather to find patterns among all configurations with equal weight. Had we decided to include logical cases (instances of nonobserved, but plausible cases), we could start talking about inference, but this is still different from the statistical meaning. Based on these features of the method, a reasonable balance between the number of cases and the number of conditions is enough to conduct a robust QCA. In our analysis, only three conditions are analyzed, which does not require a high number of cases. Although we admit that more or less 10 cases are in the low range, they are enough to uncover noteworthy patterns among conditions. Had we included 15 cases, a different picture might have emerged from scenarios with 10, 20, or 30 cases. QCA is indeed extremely sensitive to the cases, whereas they are dissolved into partial aggregates through statistical analysis.<sup>12</sup> Raw values can be found in

**Table 2.** Raw Data for QCA

<i>Cases</i>	<i>Protest</i>	<i>Public Opinion</i>	<i>Parliamentary Seats of Political Allies</i>	<i>Effective Number of Parties</i>	<i>Political Alliances</i>	<i>Policy Change</i>
IT-E (84-88)	1	85	27	4.5	122	1
CH-E (85-86)	1	54	25	5.0	125	1
US-E (75-77)	1	37	66	2.0	132	0
US-E (87-90)	1	58	59	2.0	118	1
IT-P (81-83)	1	52	29	4.0	116	0
IT-P (91-92)	1	36	25	4.5	113	0
CH-P (81-83)	1	25	26	5.5	143	0
CH-P (89-91)	1	55	25	6.0	150	1
US-P (81-83)	1	31	57	2.0	114	0
US-P (90-91)	1	43	60	2.0	120	0
IT-N (86)	1	74	21	4.5	94.5	1
CH-N (77-79)	1	52	27	5.0	135	0
CH-N (86)	1	39	25	5.0	125	0
US-N (77-79)	1	55	65	2.0	130	0
IT-E (80-83)	0	85	30	4.0	120	0
CH-E (76-77)	0	47	27	5.0	135	0
CH-E (91-93)	0	61	25	7.0	175	0
US-E (80-81)	0	49	59	2.0	118	0
US-E (92-93)	0	77	60	2.0	120	0
IT-P (77-78)	0	29	34	3.5	119	0
IT-P (92-93)	0	32	18	6.5	117	0
CH-P (75-78)	0	24	27	5.0	135	1
CH-P (86-88)	0	35	25	6.0	150	1
US-P (75-78)	0	30	66	2.0	132	1
US-P (87-89)	0	45	59	2.0	118	1
US-P (92-93)	0	44	60	2.0	120	1
IT-N (81-84)	0	48	17	4.5	76.5	0
CH-N (82)	0	49	27	5.5	149	0
CH-N (88-89)	0	57	25	6.0	150	1
US-N (80-82)	0	44	51	2.0	102	0

table 2. Here we briefly describe what each condition (or variable) means for QCA and present its operationalization, which is done by dichotomizing conditions into presence/absence or high/low values.

### *Policy Change*

The indicators used to measure policy change are identical to the ones used in Giugni (2004). However, since he included lagged variables for measuring the effect of the selected

factors on policy change, we also include a time lag in QCA. As a result, we code the outcome variable (policy change) as positive (1) when we observe an obvious change in its direction two years after the explanatory conditions had been measured for environmental and military policy, and five years after the explanatory conditions had been measured for nuclear energy policy. The reason why there are two distinct lag periods is because nuclear energy policy entails a longer time span for any change to be observed compared to the other two policy domains. Indeed, nuclear energy production (the indicator for nuclear energy policy change) decreases or increases mainly after a moratorium, a phase-out, or after new nuclear power plants are built and become operational.

### *Social Movement Mobilization*

The operationalization of the social movement condition defines our unit of analysis. In order to operationalize it, we use yearly counts per movement as used in Giugni (2004) and produce distribution graphs.<sup>13</sup> Based on these graphs, we select our cases based on the presence of ebbs and flows in protest activities, with an average of four peaks and nonpeaks by movement and by country. Peaks are phases of strong mobilization during which the number of protest events is clearly above average for that movement in that country. Nonpeaks are phases of weak mobilization during which the number of events is clearly below average for that movement in that country. The peaks (periods of strong mobilization) were coded 1 and the non-peaks (periods of weak mobilization) were coded 0. Since the aim of our analysis is to measure the impact of social movements, these peak and nonpeak periods define our cases. For example, the ecology movement experienced a peak of activity between 1984 and 1988 in Italy. This defines one case and also sets the coding of the condition “protest” for this case.

Since phases of strong and weak mobilization define the cases, some periods are excluded from the analysis. One might legitimately ask what would happen had these periods of “gray” mobilization been included. This would make sense if the aim was to assess the degree of impact of one variable—here the level of mobilization—on policy change, net of the effect of all other variables, as is usually done in statistical analysis. However, QCA, and crisp-set QCA in particular, aims at identifying patterns among several categorical or nominal variables that are associated with policy change. Although, multivalued QCA or fuzzy-set QCA, where conditions can take more than two values, could have been used, both variants are better suited to analyze medium-large datasets, and our dataset is rather small once divided by country and issue.

### *Public Opinion*

The operationalization of the public opinion condition differs depending on whether we are looking at the cross-movement analysis or the cross-national analysis. The reason is that a given value is to be interpreted differently when compared within the same issue across countries or among other issues within the same country. In the cross-movement analysis, we decided on a theoretical basis that the cut-off point should be situated above the median value, as this represents a balance between, for example, the pro and antinuclear public opinion. Empirically, we set the threshold where it does not seem artificial (that is, not between two very close cases) and avoid an unbalanced grouping of cases. Unlike political alliances, public opinion could not be standardized, so its distribution differs substantially across countries. Therefore, there are several threshold values for the public opinion condition: 63 (that is, 63 percent of people are for increasing public spending for the protection of the environment) for environment policy, 51 for nuclear energy policy, and 40 for military policy. In the cross-national analysis, we use empirical standards to set the threshold. In other words, the thresholds were determined based upon observation of the distribution of public opinion in each country, and set where no two close values were observed and so that the most “natural”

grouping of values occurs. As a result, the public opinion threshold was set to 63 for Italy, 53 for Switzerland, and 48 for the United States. By doing so, we take into account the fact that the overall levels of public opinion vary from one country to the other.

### *Political Alliances*

Just as for public opinion, the operationalization of the political alliances condition differs depending on whether we are looking at the cross-movement analysis or at the cross-national analysis. However, this condition is first standardized in order to find a meaningful common threshold within the cross-movement analysis and within the cross-national analysis. To do so, based on the variable used by Giugni (2004), we first identify the percentage of democratic seats in the United States, of communist seats in Italy,<sup>14</sup> and of leftist parties in Switzerland. These are the three parties which are politically and ideologically closest to the new social movements and, more specifically, to the three movements under study. Then we multiplied these percentages by the “effective number of parties” index (ENP) (Laakso and Taagepera 1979) in order to control for the level of fragmentation of parliamentary seats per party.<sup>15</sup> For the cross-movement analysis, the threshold for the political alliance condition is set to 127 in an inductive way by looking at the distribution of the condition. Indeed, this cut-off point seems most justified as it allows a unique value to dichotomize this condition across all three movements without generating any contradictions. Since the condition is standardized in the ENP, a common cut-off point makes sense. For the cross-national analysis, the threshold is set to 121 for Italy and the United States, and 152 for Switzerland. This difference of value despite the standardization procedure is motivated by the reduction of contradictory cases, which are numerous in the case of a single common threshold value of 121 for all countries.<sup>16</sup>

It should be noted that in the analysis done by Giugni (2004) there are several missing values due to a lack of sources at the time of the study. Specifically, no data were available for Italian public opinion on ecology and nuclear energy issues, nor for the Swiss public opinion on the military spending issue. We managed to find these data through the Eurobarometer for Italian public opinion and through an existing publication for Swiss public opinion (Haltiner, Spillmann, and Wenger 1999). With this additional information, we managed to eliminate all missing data for our truth table analysis. Tables 3 to 5 show the truth tables for the cross-movement analysis, while tables 6 to 8 show those for the cross-national analysis.

**Table 3.** Truth Table for the Ecology Movement

<i>Cases</i>	<i>Protests</i>	<i>Public Opinion</i>	<i>Political Alliances</i>	<i>Policy Change</i>
IT-E (84-88)	1	1	0	1
CH-E (85-86), US-E (87-90)	1	0	0	1
US-E (75-77)	1	0	1	0
IT-E (80-83), US-E (92-93)	0	1	0	0
CH-E (76-77), CH-E (91-93)	0	0	1	0
US-E (80-81)	0	0	0	0



**Table 4.** Truth Table for the Antinuclear Movement

<i>Cases</i>	<i>Protests</i>	<i>Public Opinion</i>	<i>Political Alliances</i>	<i>Policy Change</i>
IT-N (86)	1	1	0	1
CH-N(77-79), US-N (77-79)	1	1	1	0
CH-N (86)	1	0	0	0
CH-N (82)	0	0	1	0
CH-N (88-89)	0	1	1	1
IT-N (81-84), US-N (80-82)	0	0	0	0

**Table 5.** Truth Table for the Peace Movement

<i>Cases</i>	<i>Protests</i>	<i>Public Opinion</i>	<i>Political Alliances</i>	<i>Policy Change</i>
IT-P (81-83), US-P (90-91)	1	1	0	0
IT-P (91-92), US-P (81-83)	1	0	0	0
CH-P (81-83)	1	0	1	0
CH-P (89-91)	1	1	1	1
IT-P (77-78), IT-P (92-93)	0	0	0	0
CH-P (75-78), CH-P (86-88) US-P (75-78)	0	0	1	1
US-P (87-89), US-P (92-93)	0	1	0	1

**Table 6.** Truth Table for Italy

<i>Cases</i>	<i>Protests</i>	<i>Public Opinion</i>	<i>Political Alliances</i>	<i>Policy Change</i>
IT-E (84-88), IT-N (86)	1	1	1	1
IT-P (81-83), IT-P (91-92)	1	0	0	0
IT-E (80-83)	0	1	0	0
IT-P (77-78), IT-P (92-93), IT-N (81-84)	0	0	0	0

**Table 7.** Truth Table for Switzerland

<i>Cases</i>	<i>Protests</i>	<i>Public Opinion</i>	<i>Political Alliances</i>	<i>Policy Change</i>
CH-E (85-86), CH-P (89-91)	1	1	0	1
CH-P (81-83), CH-N(77-79), CH-N (86)	1	0	0	0
CH-E (76-77), CH-P (75-78), CH-P (86-88), CH-N (82)	0	0	0	C
CH-E (91-93)	0	1	1	0
CH-N (88-89)	0	1	0	1

**Table 8.** Truth Table for the United States

<i>Cases</i>	<i>Protests</i>	<i>Public Opinion</i>	<i>Political Alliances</i>	<i>Policy Change</i>
US-E (75-77)	1	0	1	0
US-E (87-90)	1	1	0	1
US-P (81-83), US-P (90-91)	1	0	0	0
US-N (77-79)	1	1	1	0
US-E (80-81), US-E (92-93)	0	1	0	0
US-P (75-78)	0	0	1	1
US-P (87-89), US-P (92-93), US-N (80-82)	0	0	0	C

## FINDINGS

### *Cross-Movement Analysis*

Table 9 shows the results of the cross-movement analysis. Following usual practice, in this and the following table we indicate the presence of a condition with upper case and its absence with lower case. The logical operator “or” (+) indicates that the outcome is produced by more than one path (multiple causation), while the logical operator “and” (\*) indicates that a given path is made of a combination of conditions (conjunctural causation). When the exact same combination of conditions is observed for differing outcomes, the case is said to be contradictory (C).

In general, the high mobilization of social movements is only modestly important for explaining policy change, regardless of the policy domain at hand. While a high level of mobilization is a necessary condition for environmental policy change (ecology movement),

this does not hold for nuclear power policy change (antinuclear movement), and a low level of mobilization is necessary for explaining military policy change (peace movement). Furthermore, we observe a growing level of explanatory complexity, from less complex in the case of environmental policy change to much more complex in the case of military policy change. By “complex” we mean both the number of explanatory paths (multiple causality) and the number of conditions in each term (conjunctural causality). For example, while there is one single explanatory path for environmental policy change, there are two explanatory paths for nuclear energy policy change and three for military policy change. Moreover, while there are two conditions (social movement mobilization and political alliances) in the explanatory path for environmental policy, all three conditions are needed to explain the other two policy domains.

One of the main thrusts of QCA is that it allows a return to the cases for an in-depth interpretation of the results. Hence, beyond the general “strength” of a condition, or the relative complexity of the phenomenon to be explained, QCA invites the researcher to search for the causal link between each condition within each case. The equations expose the ingredients behind each causal story that has to be rebuilt by the researcher. Here we do so for nuclear energy policy as a matter of illustration.

**Table 9.** QCA Results by Movement

<i>Ecology</i>	PROTEST * alliances	IT (84-88), CH (85-86), US (87-90)
<i>Antinuclear</i>	OPINION *	PROTEST * alliances + IT (86)
		protest * ALLIANCES CH (88-89)
	PROTEST * OPINION * ALLIANCES +	CH (89-91)
<i>Peace</i>	OPINION * alliances +	IT (87-90), US (87-89), US (92-93)
	protest * opinion * ALLIANCES	CH (75-78), CH (86-88), CH (92-93), US (75-78)

The QCA final equation for nuclear energy policy change yields two explanatory paths (see table 9). The first path suggests that the combined presence of social movement mobilization and antinuclear public opinion, along with the absence of political allies in parliament, led to nuclear energy policy change. This covers the case of Italy for protest events occurring in 1986. The high level of protest can be explained as a reaction immediately after the Chernobyl nuclear reactor meltdown accident in 1986, when public opinion was also strongly against nuclear power plants after the accident (although 60 percent of the population was already against nuclear energy in 1984). As for political allies in parliament, this denotes a quasi-unanimous support for nuclear energy among Italian political parties before Chernobyl, except for the Radical Party, a small opposition party, and some local political bureaus (Diani 1994). Despite such poor political alliances, the antinuclear coalition managed to change the nuclear energy policy. Indeed, right after the Chernobyl accident, all major parties except for the Christian Democrats switched to an antinuclear stance (Diani 1994). Soon thereafter, the last strong pro-nuclear party, the Christian Democrats, also joined the antinuclear coalition, just before the scheduled antinuclear referendum in 1987, with the hope of minimizing the importance of this referendum (Diani 1994). Therefore, despite a weak official political alliance, the antinuclear movement gained much support, albeit politically motivated, from the rest of the political parties after the Chernobyl accident. Thus, although the case of 1986 Italian nuclear energy policy appears to be the direct result of an external shock (Chernobyl), which was well exploited by antinuclear stances and therefore did not need any institutional support to bring about change, it was facilitated by the fragmented institutional network surrounding nuclear energy policy in Italy that allowed the nuclear

referenda to take place and pushed the political parties to secure a popular position vis-à-vis the nuclear issue. The 1987 referendum on nuclear energy policy resulted in a nuclear moratorium which eventually killed the prospects for Italian nuclear energy development.

The second path concerns the case of Switzerland at the end of the 1980s. In 1990 the Swiss voted for a nuclear moratorium of ten years, thus changing the development of nuclear energy policy in Switzerland. The results of the QCA indicate that the combined presence of a strong antinuclear public opinion and of political allies in parliament, along with the absence of antinuclear movements, led to nuclear energy policy change. The heyday of Swiss antinuclear activity began in 1975 and focused on the Kaiseraugst nuclear power plant in northern Switzerland, though interest in the issue dropped sharply after 1983 (see Rüdiger 1990 for an account). Even the Chernobyl accident did not stir a sustained protest movement, and by 1988 the level of protest activities was on a downward trend. As for the configuration of power, leftist parties (mainly the Socialists) had secured about a quarter of parliamentary seats throughout the 1970s, the 1980s, and the first half of the 1990s, which meant a steady ally for the antinuclear movement. Public opinion had been quite opposed to nuclear energy (a little under half of the population was against it) even before Chernobyl, but negative opinion reached a low of in the years following the accident. In a nutshell, Switzerland had a declining and exhausted antinuclear movement, but a steady percentage of allies in parliament and a strong antinuclear public opinion. This, together with the announcement of a national referendum on nuclear energy policy scheduled for 1990, led to its institutionalization at the national level. The main locus of debate was not the occupied nuclear power plant sites, as it had been in the 1970s and early 1980s, but more formal venues, with the final “encounter” (Flam 1994) in the form of a referendum. There was thus no more room left for social movements, nor were they necessary to bring about change.

Thus, we have two rather contrasting cases: one in which there is a strong antinuclear mobilization and poor political alliances, and another one in which there is a weak antinuclear mobilization and the presence of political allies. Yet, both led to a major policy change in the area of nuclear energy. In short, the main difference lies in the level of institutionalization of the conflict in the past. While in Italy the conflict had been poorly institutionalized, a sudden external shock (Chernobyl) boosted public opinion and managed to align all political parties against nuclear power. In Switzerland, the conflict already had a long history and had been gradually institutionalized (through public hearings, referenda, parliamentary debates, party politics, etc.). The support of public opinion to the antinuclear cause is the only common factor, thus supporting the hypothesis that in the field of nuclear energy policy, public opinion plays an important role.

### *Cross-National Analysis*

Table 10 shows the results of the cross-national analysis. Each equation for the cross-national analysis differs substantially from the others. In Italy, the simultaneous presence of all three conditions is required to observe a policy change. In Switzerland, it is the combination of the presence of a favorable public opinion and the absence of political allies in parliament.<sup>17</sup> Protest movements in Switzerland seem to have no effect. In other words, movement mobilization varies between strong and weak, but in both cases we observe an effect. As for the United States, in the first term of the equation, the impact of social movement mobilization is observed in conjunction with a favorable public opinion and the absence of political allies in parliament. In the second term of the equation, the absence of mobilization, combined with the absence of a favorable public opinion and the presence of political allies, leads to policy change.<sup>18</sup>

Italy seems to fit the model best, as it yields no contradictions and gives a minimized equation which perfectly overlaps the model. The two other countries do not fit as well, in that contradictory configurations appear and their minimized equations do not overlap with

**Table 10.** QCA Results by Country

Italy	PROTEST * OPINION * ALLIANCES	Ecology (84-88), Nuclear (86)
Switzerland	OPINION * alliances	Ecology (85-86), Peace (89-91), Nuclear (88-89)
United States	PROTEST * OPINION *alliances +	Ecology (87-90)
	protest * opinion * ALLIANCES	Peace (75-78)

the model. Thus, these results run contrary to the ones obtained by Giugni (2004), whereby the joint-effect model fit best for the case of the United States, then Switzerland, and only minimally for Italy. However, these differences might be due to the additional information we obtained for QCA which replaced the missing data in time-series analysis.

Finally, we note that the appearance of contradictory configurations might indicate that the model fits less well with an analysis based on countries, compared to the previous analysis which was based on movements. We believe that this is due to the fact that the cross-national analysis blurs movements together, neglecting the specificity of each policy domain. As we argued earlier, social movements are expected to impact policy differently according to the type of issue addressed.

## CONCLUSION

Compared with the results Giugni (2004) obtained with time-series analysis, we arrive at similar conclusions for two of the three main research questions. First, based on the results of the QCA, social movements seem to impact policy only when assisted by other factors. In none of the three policy domains and in none of the three countries does mobilization alone trigger policy change. In other words, social movement mobilization is not a sufficient condition for policy change. This supports Giugni's (2004) argument that a joint-effect model of social movement outcomes performs better than a direct-effect or an indirect-effect model.

Second, based on the different level of complexity for explaining policy change across policy issues, the results of the QCA show that environmental policy is the only policy domain for which social movement mobilization is part of the necessary conditions for explaining change. Concerning nuclear energy, only one of the two explanatory paths has a strong antinuclear mobilization affecting policy change. Finally, for military policy, in two out of three explanatory paths the absence of peace movements is a necessary condition for explaining policy change. These findings support Giugni's (2004) conclusion that social movements impact differently according to the policy profile: the higher the profile (military policy is high profile, nuclear energy is medium-high profile, and environmental policy is low profile), the more difficult the impact.

Giugni (2004) also suggests some tentative conclusions about the impact of social movements across countries. The results of time-series analysis suggested that the joint-effect model performs better in the United States than in Switzerland or Italy. However, the QCA results show mitigated conclusions, with contradictory and hardly interpretable findings. Italy is the country which seems to yield the best fit for the protest-by-opinion-by-alliances joint model. The two other countries yield poorer results and are confronted with contradictory configurations which usually point to a model misspecification. By contrast, Italy represents the case where the fit of the joint-effect model through time-series analysis is the poorest. However, we can only be cautious in the latter comparison, as the QCA included data for Italy that were missing from time-series analysis. Furthermore, no hypothesis was advanced in Giugni's (2004) analysis concerning cross-national differences.

Compared to the time-series analysis, the QCA goes one step further than the joint effect insofar as it identifies multiple joint effects (that is, different explanatory paths leading to the same outcome). It does not follow the additive logic of classical statistical technique, as the effect of each variable is not considered to yield a net effect, or an independent effect, but rather a joint and multiple effect. Perhaps even more importantly, it allows going back to the cases, as each causal path is assigned to a set of cases. By contrast, the integrity of cases is lost in statistical techniques, which focus exclusively on variables.

Finally, some causal paths combine the presence of a condition with the absence of another. The nonlinearity of QCA allows the identification of a positive effect on policy change of a combination of conditions which features an internal nonlinear dynamic. The absence of, or a low value on, a variable within a certain combination can yield a positive impact on the outcome.<sup>19</sup> In other words, QCA identifies covariances of qualitative states rather than covariances of linear trends. For example, environmental policy change was identified with a combination of a high level of social protests and an absence of political allies in parliament.

Thus, at least concerning the two main conclusions of Giugni's (2004) study, our results show that the QCA and time-series analyses give substantially similar results, with QCA offering additional methodological possibilities (for example, the identification of several causal paths, the return to the cases, etc.) and substantive results (the impact of non-mobilization). At the same time, however, it is also important to stress the limitations of the method and, as a result, of our analysis (see De Meur, Rihoux, and Yamasaki 2009 for a recent review). One of the major problems with the crisp-set approach to QCA (as opposed, for example, to the fuzzy-set approach) lies in the loss of information in the dichotomization process. This implies that one can get different results with only slight changes in measurement. We explained why we prefer to stick to crisp-set QCA in this analysis and have justified our measurement choices. However, this is a general problem with QCA which one can hardly avoid. Other limitations of QCA include the issue of case sensitivity, the inclusion of logical remainders, the issue of time frame, and the issue of condition sensitivity. Again, we think we have addressed these issues, at least the most important ones, in order to be as transparent as possible in our analysis.

While all these possible criticisms point to crucial methodological dilemmas, none of them provide an alternative "perfect" methodology as an answer. Where QCA falls short on one aspect (such as the loss of information during the dichotomization process), it is strong on another (for example, the transparency in the dichotomization process allowing for a non-trivial reduction of complexity). This perhaps holds true for any two methods, as a method should be chosen according not only to the nature of the data at hand, but also to the maturity of the research field (exploratory stage, model-building stage, hypothesis-testing stage, triangulation stage, etc.). As such, while we acknowledge the limitations of QCA, we believe that there are inherent trade-offs that are required in methodology, and that methodological triangulations provide researchers with loci where such trade-offs can translate into non-zero-sum games.

Surely, our analysis has not avoided these problems and limitations. However, by replicating the findings obtained on the same data with another method, we hope we have at least shown the value of triangulation. At a minimum, our analysis could serve as an invitation to others to join in by engaging in further research aiming at replicating and validating (or invalidating) previous findings using different methods. For example, one could apply other techniques that adopt a different logic (such as event history analysis) or, alternatively, techniques that are more germane to the one used in this study (such as fuzzy-set QCA). The insights that such a triangulation will provide can only improve our knowledge of the conditions under which social movements can have an impact on policy.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> These reanalyses have been included in the book's second edition (Gamson 1990).

<sup>2</sup> For the role of political opportunity structures see: Amenta (2005, 2006); Amenta, Carruthers, and Zylan (1992); Amenta, Dunleavy, and Bernstein (1994); Amenta, Caren, and Olasky (2005); Kitschelt (1986); Kriesi, Koopmans, Duyvendak, and Giugni (1995); McCammon, Campbell, Granberg, and Mowery (2001); Jenkins and Perrow (1977); Soule and Olzak (2004); Tarrow (1993, 1998[0]). For a discussion of public opinion see: Burstein (1998a, 1999); Burstein and Freudenburg (1978); Burstein and Linton (2002); Costain and Majstorovic (1994); Kane (2003); McAdam and Su (2002); Soule and Olzak (2004[0]). And for a discussion of the role of public opinion with respect to the impact of social movements on public policy, see Burstein (1998b).

<sup>3</sup> For literature reviews on the policy impact of social movements, see Giugni (1998) and Amenta and Caren (2004).

<sup>4</sup> In a more recent statement, the author argues that protest has little chance, if any, to be effective in the absence of such external conditions (Giugni 2007). The substantive findings, however, have remained the same.

<sup>5</sup> Of course, there are more comprehensive approaches to policy change theory that take into account factors that could affect public policy other than social movements, public opinion, and political allies, such as Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's (1993) advocacy coalition framework, Kingdon's (1997) policy streams approach, or Baumgartner and Jones' (1991) theory of punctuated equilibrium. However, as it is a reanalysis of a previous study, our aim is not to improve the model, but rather to test its methodological sensitivity. As such, we did not explore further model specification alternatives.

<sup>6</sup> As the original study under comparison uses time-series analysis, one could wonder why temporal QCA, or TQCA (Caren and Panofsky 2005) has not been applied. There are two basic reasons. First, the objectives are different: time-series analysis was used to take into account the lagged effect of independent variables on the dependent variable, whereas TQCA's main objective is to identify some temporal order among the conditions (or independent variables). Second, the use of TQCA would exacerbate the problem of limited diversity in our analysis (Ragin and Strand 2008). Therefore, its usage was not deemed appropriate.

<sup>7</sup> A number of reasons make certain issues or policy areas more threatening than others: the amount of material resources involved, the power at stake, the electoral relevance, and the extent to which the "national interest" is challenged (Duyvendak 1995; Kriesi et al. 1995: chapter 4).

<sup>8</sup> Scores for the overall assessment have been attributed as follows: "weak" if no effect is observed on the three counts (either across countries or across movements), "intermediate" if an effect is observed on one count, "strong" if an effect is observed on at least two counts.

<sup>9</sup> Exposing the technical aspects of QCA goes beyond the scope of this study. People interested in this technique can refer to Ragin (1987, 2000) and Rihoux and Ragin (2009).

<sup>10</sup> Several software packages are available, some offering extensions of the original dichotomous QCA (see the COMPASS Research Group website for information on and downloads of this software).

<sup>11</sup> See Giugni (2004: Appendix A) for more detailed information on the data, measurements, and methods used.

<sup>12</sup> Likewise, we acknowledge that there is limited diversity within each of our analyses. In other words, not all possible configurations have been observed which are included in the analysis. However, the contrary (all possible configurations are observed) is rare. Our cases cover the whole population of instances where there was a peak of mobilization (measured as a high number of protest events) for three issues in three countries. The limited diversity observed in our cases, therefore, does not stem from a lack of data, but from a lack of real-world occurrences.

<sup>13</sup> See Giugni (2004: Appendix A) for a discussion of methodological issues pertaining to the use of protest event data for this study. See Koopmans and Rucht (2002) for a broader discussion of protest event analysis.

<sup>14</sup> Except for the nuclear energy policy, where the PCI (Italian Communist Party) was one of the strongest proponents of nuclear power. The number of PCI seats were thus subtracted from the total left seats in the Italian parliament and then multiplied by the ENP.

<sup>15</sup> For example, the United States is basically a two-party system, and Switzerland a four-party system. Therefore, a party in the United States which has 50 percent of the seats has the same power as a party in Switzerland which has 25 percent of the seats. If we multiply these percentages by the ENP (2 for the United States and 4 for Switzerland), we get the same index of 100.

<sup>16</sup> Admittedly, this way of operationalizing political alliances refers to a favorable configuration of power within the institutional arenas (the parliament, in this case), which is in line with the literature on the role of political opportunity structures for social movements (Kriesi et al. 1995; Tarrow 1998), as there is no necessary relationship or alliance between the movements and the parties. However, since we are replicating a previous study, we stick with the original concept of political alliances. In this sense, an ally here is a party that might, potentially, support the movements' claims and has indeed done so in the countries at hand. It should also be stressed that there might be other political configurations that could facilitate the policy impact of the movements. Again, we only included in our analysis this simple measure in order to remain consistent with the original study.

<sup>17</sup> For Switzerland, we encountered one contradictory configuration, where the combined absences of the three conditions led to an absence of policy change for environment policy in 76-77 and for nuclear energy policy in 82, but led to a policy change for peace policy in 75-78 and in 86-88. We decided to exclude this configuration and, therefore, these four cases from the analysis with the aim of sticking to stable configurations.

<sup>18</sup> In the case of the United States, we encountered the same contradictory configuration as in the Swiss analysis, with once again a presence of change for the peace policy and an absence of change for the nuclear energy policy. We stuck to our conservative strategy of excluding the contradictory configuration.

<sup>19</sup> The negative effect of a variable can also be identified with statistical techniques. However, this effect would not be visible when in interaction with another variable.

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