**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

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

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**ABSTRACT:** Scholars examining the effects of collective action on public policy have predominantly analyzed policy outcomes with respect to the stated goals of collective actors. This approach to the political influence of collective action not only limits our analytical scope, but also makes the field vulnerable to the criticism that outcome research may be overly deterministic in attributing observed changes to collective action, especially if it utilizes an atemporal logic. This article offers 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 a police identification statute after the violent NoG20 protests in Hamburg in 2017 and asks how the protests were consequential for a policy that collective actors had neither initially addressed, nor intended to change. Policy making is conceptualized as a contingent, non-linear process that is best understood from a "processual" perspective. Based on parliamentary documents and semi-structured interviews, the article temporally reconstructs a policy process that had its beginning well before the NoG20 protests. The long-term analysis shows that instead of initiating policy change, the protests created a "window of opportunity" for the members of parliament to push for a proposal they had previously introduced. Police identification was raised after multiple, contingent processes converged after the protests that enabled the members of parliament to point to a factual necessity for policy change. Activists only had a passive role in this change as they had lost credibility during the violent protests. This study emphasizes the centrality of temporality for understanding policy effects of collective action and argues that a processual perspective allows for contextualizing the influence of collective actors both in time and in concert with other actors.

**KEYWORDS:** G20; Processual Approach; Protest Policing; Social Movements; Unintended Effects

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## 1. Introduction

From July 7th-8th, 2017, the heads of government or state of the Group of Twenty (G20) met in Hamburg, Germany. The summit mobilized tens of thousands of activists, seeking to take their political dissent to the streets. The mobilized activists were diverse and protests encompassed a broad array of actions ranging from discussion forums, marches, art performances, street blockades, and even militant actions. Despite this diversity, various incidents of violence quickly became focal points of public attention (Malthaner, Teune, Ullrich, Arneth, Brendel, Cramer, Frenzel, Gebhardt, de Hair, Harsch, Hartmann, Haunss, Heise, Hoebel, Hörath, Knopp, Lang, Matthies, Plöse, and Thurn, 2018, p. 66). These included a clash between protesters and police at the "Welcome to Hell" demonstration on July 6th, the evening before the official summit opening. Violence escalated when the police attempted to separate a 'black bloc', formed at the front of the march, from the rest of the participants. Many people were injured, some seriously.[1] While an incident on July 7th, in the "Sternschanzen" Quarter gained prominence. People gathered peacefully first, but eventually started building barricades. The scenery increasingly attracted protesters, spectators, and bystanders (Malthaner, 2019). Since the police worried about danger for their units, the situation, which was characterized by burning barricades, looted shops, property damages, and arson in a residential area, evolved over hours without intervention. To regain control, the police deployed an anti-terrorist unit (Malthaner *et al.*, 2018, pp. 62–66). By the end of the week, several hundred police officers and activists were injured and property damages totaled several million Euros. A city was in shock. Still under the vivid impression of the occurrences, the *Bürgerschaft* (the city-state parliament of Hamburg) decided to convene a "Special Committee" to review the occurrences. Almost one year later, on June 22nd, 2018, Hamburg´s Senator of the Interior announced that the city would introduce a police identification statute as a "lesson learned" from the NoG20 protests (Zand-Vakili and Heinemann, 2018).

Scholars interested in policy effects[2] of collective action have mostly analyzed policy outcomes with respect to the stated goals of collective actors. This narrow conceptualization of influence not only fails to consider many other effects that collective actors may have, but also is overly deterministic, especially if it ignores the fact that policy outcomes are most often the result of long-term processes. This article offers an alternative approach to the analysis of political influence of collective action by analyzing a change in legislation that can be considered an *unintended* effect. It examines the decision to introduce a police identification statute after the violent NoG20 protests in Hamburg in 2017 and asks how collective action can be consequential for a policy that collective actors had neither initially addressed, nor intended to change. Police identification statutes ("Kennzeichnungspflicht") are policies that require riot police to be identifiable to the public during operations. This is done by giving an individually assigned code to police officers that allows identifying a specific officer in case of alleged misbehavior. Even though this outcome can generally be understood as having been in the interest of collective actors, a police identification requirement was not part of the demands initially raised by the NoG20 activists. The activists were challenging the G20 and as such mainly addressed international leaders and policy issues of global range—not local police policies (Haunss, Daphi, Gauditz, Knopp, Micus, Scharf, Schmidt, Sommer, Teune, Thurn, Ullrich, and Zajak, 2017, p. 12).

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[1] In the aftermath, it was unclear whether police or protesters instigated the violence (Malthaner *et al.*, 2018, p. 55).

[2] The terms "effect", "consequence", and "outcome" are used interchangeably here. These terms are not understood as something stable, but rather as snapshots in time. Moreover, it is important to note that the definition of an instance as the "outcome" of a process depends upon the observer. Hence, it is necessary to define and delineate an outcome. The outcome of interest here is defined as the adoption of new police legislation that introduces codes assigned to riot police that requires individual identification of police.

Analyzing an outcome that was unintended by collective actors requires us to determine if and how collective action was consequential. It forces us to rethink the link between collective action and observed change as well as the methodological toolkit that we apply to assess this link. This article reconstructs the decision-making process related to the introduction of the police identification statute in Hamburg from a "processual" perspective. It argues that a processual approach is particularly well suited to qualitatively assess the influence of collective action because it allows contextualizing its effects both in time and in concert with other actors.

The empirical analysis uses data from semi-structured interviews with activists, policy makers, police, and journalists carried out in 2020. Analyses of interviews are supported with an analysis of policy documents and press articles. The analysis pays particular attention to temporal sequence and the interactive dynamics underlying the decision-making process. The results show how the introduction of a police identification requirement after the NoG20 protests was the outcome of the convergence of multiple, contingent processes, namely a long-term policy process and various post-event processes. This article argues that the scope for raising the issue of police identification was not created immediately after the protests, but only after criminal investigations progressed. The revelation of eleven cases in which criminal investigations against police had to be dropped due to the inability to identify the police officers involved is discussed as a "turning point" (Abbott, 2001) in the policy process as it enabled supporters of a police identification statute to point to a factual necessity for policy change. However, given the heavy escalations of violence that were attributed in large part to the activists, the NoG20 protests created a "window of opportunity" (Kingdon, 2011) not primarily for activists, but for legislators to push for this proposal which they had previously advocated. The article closes with some more general reflections on the field that demonstrate how research on policy effects of collective action can benefit both from adopting a time-sensitive, processual perspective and from moving beyond the focus on intended policy change. It invites readers to reassess some of the existing premises that have underpinned outcome research.

## 2. Beyond Policy Success or Failure: A "Processual" Perspective on Unintended Policy Effects

In the last five years, there has been a resurgent interest in the effects of collective action. In particular, their impact on public policy has received extensive scholarly attention (for an overview see Bosi, Giugni and Uba, 2016; Amenta, Andrews and Caren, 2018). Broadly speaking, political effects can be defined as "those effects of movement activities that alter in some way the movements´ political environment" (Giugni, 2008, p. 1583). Policy effects are a sub-category of political effects and usually involve changes in legislation. Even though scholars have advanced the systematic analysis of such effects quite remarkably, they are still struggling to resolve a long-standing criticism: establishing an empirical link between collective action and an observed change (Diani, 1997; Giugni, 1999; Tilly, 1999). The ubiquity of this problem reflects two major weaknesses in the field: first, a lack of processual perspectives, and second, a focus on *intended* outcomes in policy-related research.

With respect to the first problem, outcome scholars have acknowledged that the effects of collective action may only be observable years or decades after mobilization (e.g., McAdam, 1999; Bosi, 2016). As Bosi and Uba (2009) argue, "the challenge is to determine when an observed change can still be considered the result of protest activities" (p. 413). Hence, scholars have called for more time-sensitive analyses in order to better substantiate causal claims about the consequences of collective action (Giugni, 1999; Uba and Romanos, 2016). In fact, outcome scholars have increasingly made use of methods that account for the impact of

collective action over time, such as time series or event history analysis.[3] These studies analyze time periods ranging from a couple of years to several decades. However, even if these more dynamic, quantitative approaches take time into consideration, they do not necessarily weave temporal aspects into their explanations. In particular theorizations about the impact of time seem to be more exception than the rule. As Gillan and Edwards (2020) have observed, "the issue of time has rarely been foregrounded in movement scholarship" (p. 501). Moreover, most scholars examine the effects of collective action starting from the protest itself. Thereby, they fail to recognize existing long-term historical processes which collective actors stand and influence. In order to contextualize movement influence and examine how collective action affects change over time, there seems to be a need for more process-oriented studies. While processual perspectives have gained prominence in fields, such as political violence (Bosi, Demetriou and Malthaner, 2014; Malthaner, 2017; Bosi, 2021), outcome research still often lacks this perspective (with the exception of a few process-tracing studies, such as, Bosi, 2016; Bosi and Davis, 2017). The central assumption behind processual approaches is that timing (the temporal order of specific events and occurrences[4] within processes) is crucially important for understanding the outcomes of these processes (Pierson, 2000, p. 72). As Tilly (1984) argued: "*when* things happen affects *how* they happen" (p. 14). Processual approaches aim to "gain a temporal understanding of how social processes gradually unfold over time" (Bosi, 2021, p. 110). They pay particular attention to dynamic interactions and the sequences of interactions, by reconstructing "when and how the choice of action emerges gradually and diachronically, based on the interaction among actors" (Bosi, 2021, p. 109). Examinations of the effects of time sequences inherent in these interactive processes can improve our understanding of the ways in which collective actors affect political change.

Turning to the second problem, it is important to note that the critical discussion of early, "success/failure" outcome research[5] (e.g., Giugni, 1998; Amenta and Young, 1999; Amenta, Caren, Chiarello, and Su, 2010) has led social movement scholars to argue for more than a decade that there is "general agreement that social movements can have a wide range of consequences that should not be reduced to the simple terms of 'success' or 'failure'" (Bosi and Uba, 2009, p. 409). In the last two decades, outcome research has moved well beyond this narrow understanding of collective actors´ influence. This is well illustrated by the variety of domains studied under the key phrase "social movement outcomes". Namely research on cultural and biographical outcomes has shown that the effects of collective action cannot be meaningfully studied in these binary categories; consider, for example, the literature on changes in cultural habits or effects on the life courses of activists (for an overview see e.g., Giugni, 2008; Van Dyke and Taylor, 2018). Against this background, it is surprising to find that most outcome research that analyzes policy change still implicitly relies on this understanding. A review of recent publications reveals that scholars examine changes in legislation usually according to the stated, intended goals of collective actors (for example, Duyvendak and Jasper, 2015; Giugni, 2004; Luders, 2016). Arguably, one of the main motivations for studying collective actors is to understand if their actions affect change in the desired direction. However, the conceptual confinement to "policy success" or "policy failure" ignores many other possible effects that collective actors—or their interaction with others— may have. As Tilly (1999) points out, collective actors may have their largest effect not through the

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[3] In her meta-analysis of peer-reviewed articles on the impact of social movements and interest groups on policy making, Uba (2009) finds that 40% of the analyzed articles published between 1990 and 2007 use time series or event history analysis.

[4] Scholars generally distinguish between an "event" and an "occurrence". According to Falleti and Mahoney (2015), "occurrences" are happenings "distinctive to a single case" (p. 213), such as the single act of assassinating Martin Luther King Jr., the Great Depression in the United States, or World War I. By contrast, events share certain characteristics specified by the investigator and are, thus, "instances of more general phenomena" (ibid.). Hence, "when (…) occurrences are given analytic weight in explanation, they are treated as events" (ibid.).

[5] Namely, the seminal work of Gamson (1990).

advancement of their *articulated* goals, but through *unintended* effects.[6] Finally, asking whether collective actors were successful or not in furthering policy change reinforces the—faulty—impression that outcome research tries to directly and deterministically attribute specific outcomes to collective action, thereby ignoring the historical contexts and interactive influences of collective actors.[7] Scholars point out that collective actors act along with a range of other political and non-political actors (Amenta *et al.*, 2010). They emphasize that collective actors often affect political decisions indirectly, for example, through media reporting (Walgrave and Vliegenthart, 2012), and that their effects need to be studied in the context of other factors, such as public opinion (Burstein and Linton, 2002; Uba, 2009; Banaszak and Ondercin, 2016), vested interests (Burstein and Linton, 2002; Luders, 2010, 2016), allies in government (e.g., Giugni and Yamasaki, 2009), or personal beliefs of policy makers (e.g., Uba, 2016). The binary understanding of collective action, being either intentional and successful or intentional and unsuccessful, impedes these careful efforts to contextualize the impact of collective actors.

Against this background, it is useful to move beyond a focus on intended policy change that is still implicitly based on the narrow understanding of policy influence in terms of "success" or "failure". By analyzing an unintended policy effect, this article broadens the analytical scope of research on the political effects of collective action. This article understands unintended policy effects as the impact of collective action (including the various interactions of collective actors with other actors, such as police) on policy domains, which collective actors had not initially addressed in their demands. The analysis of an unintended effect requires us to more carefully scrutinize the link between collective action and observed changes. If we analyze outcomes that are unintended by collective actors, we need to clarify whether and how collective action becomes consequential. Instead of taking the NoG20 protests as a point of departure, this analysis starts with the first appearance of a policy proposal on police identification. By adopting a processual approach that analyzes the effects of the NoG20 protests as *embedded* in an ongoing, contingent policy process, the study avoids reconstructing the decision to introduce a police identification statute as a direct, linear consequence of the protests. Rather, this approach disentangles the impact of the NoG20 protests related to the policy change, by examining how the dynamic interactions of both collective and state actors contributed to producing the outcome of interest.

[6] The idea that collective action can produce outcomes that were not anticipated is not new. Social movement scholars have shown how the various interactions between protesters and police can produce "unintended consequences", understood either as outcomes that contradict the intentions of actors controlling protest, such as increased radicalization (Lindekilde, 2014; Jämte and Ellefsen, 2020; Ellefsen, 2021); or as outcomes that contradict the intentions of collective actors because they restrict collective action, such as increased repression (Davenport, 1995, 2000; Earl, Soule and McCarthy, 2003; Earl and Soule, 2006). What is interesting about this case is that a police identification requirement can be generally considered as being in the interest of collective actors since it makes police more accountable. Yet, activists participating in the NoG20 protests did not demand the introduction of police identification requirements. Hence, collective actors contributed to producing an outcome that does not contradict their intentions, but is still considered unintended. This kind of outcome does not seem to fit the types of outcomes that social movement scholars usually address. Hence, this case study illustrates that the set of phenomena that can be included under the category "unintended effects" is much broader than what has been researched so far.

[7] This is not to say that the studies that analyze policy change according to the stated goals of collective actors necessarily ignore historical context or temporal sequence. Scholars, such as Jasper and Duyvendak (2015) or Jabola-Carolus *et al.* (2020), indeed pay attention to temporality. Rather, this focus on intentional policy change creates the impression of direct, linear causation. Moreover, this perspective is criticized for over-emphasizing the degree to which collective action is aimed at the strategic realization of specific goals, while neglecting that collective action might have other unintended effects.

## 3. Methodological Framework

This study identifies distinct sequences in the policy process that resulted in the decision to introduce a police identification statute in Hamburg and assesses how these sequences are connected in order to understand how police identification requirements were implemented after the NoG20 protests. With reference to political-process models (Kingdon, 2011), it conceptualizes political decisions as the outcomes of policy processes that are characterized by high levels of contingency and ambiguity due to the complex interactions of actors inside and outside of government. It understands policy processes as unfolding over time and non-linear. The methodological approach chosen is not a 'classical' process-tracing approach, rather this article uses what scholars have called "causal reconstruction" (Mayntz, 2002), "processual explanation" (Aljets and Hoebel, 2017), or the "comparative sequential method" (Falleti and Mahoney, 2015).

The empirical analysis is based on the triangulation of different types of empirical sources: First, to reconstruct the formal parliamentary process, the online archive[8] of the *Bürgerschaft* was used to search for policy proposals, parliamentary procedures, and the respective voting results. Based on this data, a time matrix of the policy process on police identification was built, using the coding software "MaxQDA". Second, 22 semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of parliament, government, representatives of Hamburg´s police and police unions, journalists, scientific experts, lawyers, and activists involved in the NoG20 protests (see figure A in the appendix for a list of interviewees). The interviews were a relevant supplement to the reconstruction of the formal legislative process because they provided insights into informal processes, such as political bargaining processes, and because they revealed interpretations and perceptions that informed political actions. Third, since interviewees were often not able to recall exact dates or exact temporal order, press articles were used to search for or verify dates.[9] The empirical data was coded with the software "NVivo" according to two main dimensions: a temporal dimension, differentiating into seven inductively generated temporal sequences; and a dimension with respect to the various actors involved in the policy process.

## 4. Case Analysis: Police Identification Requirements in Hamburg[10]

In the German federal system, the *Länder* (federal states) are responsible for legislating police law, including police identification requirements that allow for the individual recognition of specific officers (Frevel and Groß, 2016, pp. 81–82). In Germany, different systems of police identification exist. This study is interested in police identification requirements for riot police—usually an alphanumeric code, individually assigned. This provision is particularly relevant for riot police who are usually deployed for the policing of protests and might be wearing helmets and visors. In cases of alleged misbehavior, legal prosecution of specific officers is impossible, if the individual officer is unable to be identified. Human rights organizations, social movement activists, and several political parties have repeatedly called for the introduction of police identification statutes, while especially police unions oppose its introduction (Neuwald, 2018, pp. 43–62). Hamburg was the

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[8] Link to the archive: https://www.buergerschaft-hh.de/ParlDok/.

[9] Clearly, temporal reconstructions have their limitations even if sources are triangulated. For specific processes, such as informal consultation or negotiation processes, exact dates could not be reconstructed by the researcher, but had to be estimated in terms of time ranges.

[10] All interview statements quoted here are the author´s translations. For a description of interviewees see figure A in the appendix.

latest German state to announce the introduction of a police identification statute. The case is particularly interesting as Hamburg´s government long opposed its introduction. Prior to the NoG20 protests, a stable coalition of actors *in favor of* and *against* police identification requirements kept the issue deadlocked in Hamburg's Parliament (see below). However, it seems as if the NoG20 protests broke that deadlock. Thus, the policy process related to police identification requirements in Hamburg is highly suitable for examining how protest events can become consequential for specific policy processes. Moreover, the case allows assessing to what extent policy change, that is unintended by activists, can be considered an "outcome" of collective action. The following analysis is divided into two main sections: the first analyzes the long-term legislative process as of 2008, when the first bill proposing a police identification statute was introduced in Hamburg´s parliament; the second focuses on the post-G20 developments and analyzes distinct temporal sequences succeeding the NoG20 protests.

## 4.1 Analysis of the Long-Term Legislative Process

Debates on police identification requirements began in the *Bürgerschaft* (the city-state parliament of Hamburg) as early as 2008. *Die Linke* (Left Party—ideologically communist/socialist) was the first party to present a bill on the issue in parliament (Fraktion DIE LINKE, 2008). Since then, more than a dozen policy proposals on the issue have been introduced by three parties: *Die Linke, Bündnis90/Die Grünen* (Green Party— ideologically centrist environmentalist), and the *FDP* (Liberal Party—ideologically free market liberalist). Between 2011 and 2015, they established a coalition in support of police identification requirements, even allying on this issue despite wider ideological differences (see figure B in the appendix). However, their efforts failed because they never gained a majority in parliament. The *CDU* (Christian Democratic Party— ideologically right-of-center) rejected their proposals. Likewise, the *SPD* (Social Democratic Party— ideologically left-of-center) was unwilling to change existing policies on police identification. In plenary debates, both the *CDU* and the *SPD* argued that there was no need for police identification requirements since there were no cases where courts were unable to identify officers accused of misbehavior (Hamburgische Bürgerschaft, 2014, p. 6711). A member of the government explained:

> We, as the Ministry, always said: 'Guys, if you look at it, we actually identify those persons against whom there are accusations.' (…) Against this background, we always said: 'We do not see any reason for police identification requirements because we can manage that in any case.' (Reg03)

This view reflected the arguments of the police unions, as these quotes illustrate:

> About how many cases, that make necessary police identification requirements, do we actually speak here? And that was the big zero. There were really no… no need for that. (GPol01)

> And that is what we had always argued: The colleagues are recognizable, the colleagues wear name tags, the colleagues are partially coded, and there are no reasons that justify that [a police identification statute]. (GPol02)

Still, after the elections in 2015, a coalition government between the *SPD* and *Bündnis90/Die Grünen* agreed to "enter into talks with the police unions as to evaluate whether and how police identification requirements could be introduced for Hamburg´s riot police" (author´s translation, SPD and Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 2015, p. 100). Even though the agreement might appear like a change of direction, on closer examination, it turned out to be a loose declaration of intent. Interviewees largely shared the understanding that there was no

imperative necessity for police identification requirements to be introduced based on this agreement (e.g., HB03, MA01). It was well known that the police unions openly rejected the proposal and were not likely to change their position, as this statement by a member of the government demonstrates:

> The police unions in Hamburg had a very firm position [on police identification requirements] that was hardly possible to undermine in any conversation. (Reg03)

The internal discussions with the police unions were described as "wild" and "emotional" (e.g., GPol02, HB07, Reg03). Neither police leaders, nor the governing *SPD* were inclined to pick a quarrel with the unions, who were described as having strong media presence and influence (e.g., HB01, HB02). Furthermore, the government feared risking a low acceptance of police identification requirements within the police organization (Reg03). Thus, before the NoG20 protests, the status quo that was resistant to police identification requirements was maintained due to a relatively stable coalition of actors in parliament opposing policy change (namely, the *SPD* and *CDU*).

## 4.2 Police Identification Requirements in the Context of the NoG20 Protests

To understand how police identification requirements (re-)appeared on the parliamentary agenda after the NoG20 protests and how policy change was related to these protests, the following analysis temporally reconstructs the context in which the political decision was made.

### Violent Protests: Activists "Vanish" from the Scene

The violent escalations around the G20 summit were described as a "traumatic" experience (e.g., Act01, HB04, P02, Pol01). Activists, police, residents, and policy makers alike were deeply shocked by the occurrences. Even though the city had seen numerous violent protests before, the intensity of violence was perceived as "unprecedented" (e.g., HB02, HB03). Over the course of the NoG20 protests, the heavy escalations of violence became a focal point of attention. Activists interviewed described that particularly the riots in the "Sternschanzen" Quarter drew public attention almost singularly to violence, while other actions received little or no attention at all (Act01, Act02). While media reporting was perceived as also critically discussing state action, including the police´s intervention during the "Welcome to Hell" demonstration, the riots were understood as shifting the interpretation of the occurrences (e.g., P02, HB03, Act02, RA01). An activist described: "Within 36 hours, media reporting changed completely" (Act02).

Both activists and state authorities tried to convey their understandings of the NoG20 protests using various public communication channels. While the police had set up a large communications unit, local activists organized an alternative media centre (e.g., P02, RA01). Asked about the success of their communication strategy, a member of a civil rights organization described that during the first days of summit protest the organization was still perceived as a "credible institution" (RA01). However, as of the riots in the "Sternschanzen" Quarter, voices supporting the activists were ignored (Act01, RA01). Moreover, the NoG20 protests were perceived as having a demobilizing effect. Local activists were described as "frustrated" and "paralyzed" (Act01, Act02, P01). Except for occasional solidarity actions for detained activists, there was "absolute passiveness" (Act01) among local activists. "They [the activists] vanished from the scene" (GPol01).

By contrast, Hamburg´s police were quick and effective in advancing their views on the occurrences. One day after the G20 summit, the local government and the police explained in a press conference how they evaluated the occurrences. While they argued that violence emanated from small groups of protesters, they were perceived as not admitting any mistakes by themselves (e.g., HB02, HB03, HB04, P02, W01). This view

was largely reinforced by the local media (P01, P02). Journalists interviewed described how reports that conflicted with the police´s portrayal of the occurrences or that criticized the harsh police intervention were given little credibility or were discounted, as if to say: "they brought it on themselves" (P02).

## Political Conflict: a "Special Committee" Reviews the Occurrences

Only four days after the G20 summit, on July 12ᵗʰ, 2017 (see figure 1), the *Bürgerschaft* decided to establish a "Special Committee" to formally review the occurrences (SPD-Fraktion and GRÜNE-Fraktion, 2017). The committee opened the floor for controversial parliamentary debate. However, it was perceived as a public "stage" for the opposition parties to criticize state action, or for the government and the police to justify their behavior than as a body that allowed for an actual public inquiry (e.g., HB03, HB08, P01, W01). Meetings were characterized as "lengthy" statements of the state authorities (e.g., HB04, P02) and "soapbox speeches" (HB07) by the committee members. Interview statements give reason to assume that this was largely connected to a high level of public attention:

> The topic was very emotional. It had a huge media presence. (…) And that naturally results in you knowing—already beforehand—that a particular statement, that you are about to make, has a high probability of ending up in the newspaper tomorrow, and that other statements or questions will probably never get printed, even if they are actually interesting. That changes the character of a consultation. (HB07)

Moreover, due to the high number of invited guests, state officials, journalists, and a public audience, the committee meetings were held in a large hall. This exceptional setting was perceived as further hindering the consultation process (e.g., HB07, P02) as this statement illustrates:

> It was clear that we were going to have a lot more representatives of the Senate and other guests there. (…) So we decided to hold our meetings in the town hall´s "Großer Saal" [big hall]. In this hall, you have an ambience and—above all—acoustics that differ completely from a usual consultation, expert consultation [setting] in the committees. (…) I think no one could actually free oneself from that—neither the Senate, nor the members of parliament. (…) Everything echoes; everything you say is big. (HB07)

The Special Committee was largely perceived as an institution governed by the political interests of its participants. The political parties represented in the committee evaluated the occurrences differently. The police, the government, and the conservative parties assumed blame for the escalation of violence to the protesters who were said to have "laid the city in ashes" (HB06, P01, P02). Left parties, in particular *Die Linke*, blamed the police for the infringement of civil liberties and the excessive use of violence that was said to have provoked an escalation of violence (e.g., HB03). From this context, proposals of the members of parliament, how to react to the occurrences, ranged from the eviction of the "Rote Flora", a highly symbolic space occupied by the local autonomous Left (CDU-Fraktion, 2017) to the establishment of an independent complaints department for reporting alleged offenses by police officers (Hamburgische Bürgerschaft, 2018b, p. 28).

The role of the protesters in the escalation of violence during the NoG20 protests was a recurrent matter of discussion. Nevertheless, local activists were not invited to speak in any of the committee meetings or engage in any kind of political bargaining (e.g., Act01, HB02, MA01, Reg03). Although civil rights organizations had written an open letter, demanding an "independent inquiry" (Humanistische Union, 2017) prior to the inaugural meeting of the Special Committee, they did not have an active role in the legislative process that reviewed the

occurrences. Asked about the reasons, an activist argued that it would have been "completely futile" (Act01) to try to influence the parliamentary process or to make any political demands after the NoG20 protests.

## Figure 1: Timeline policy process
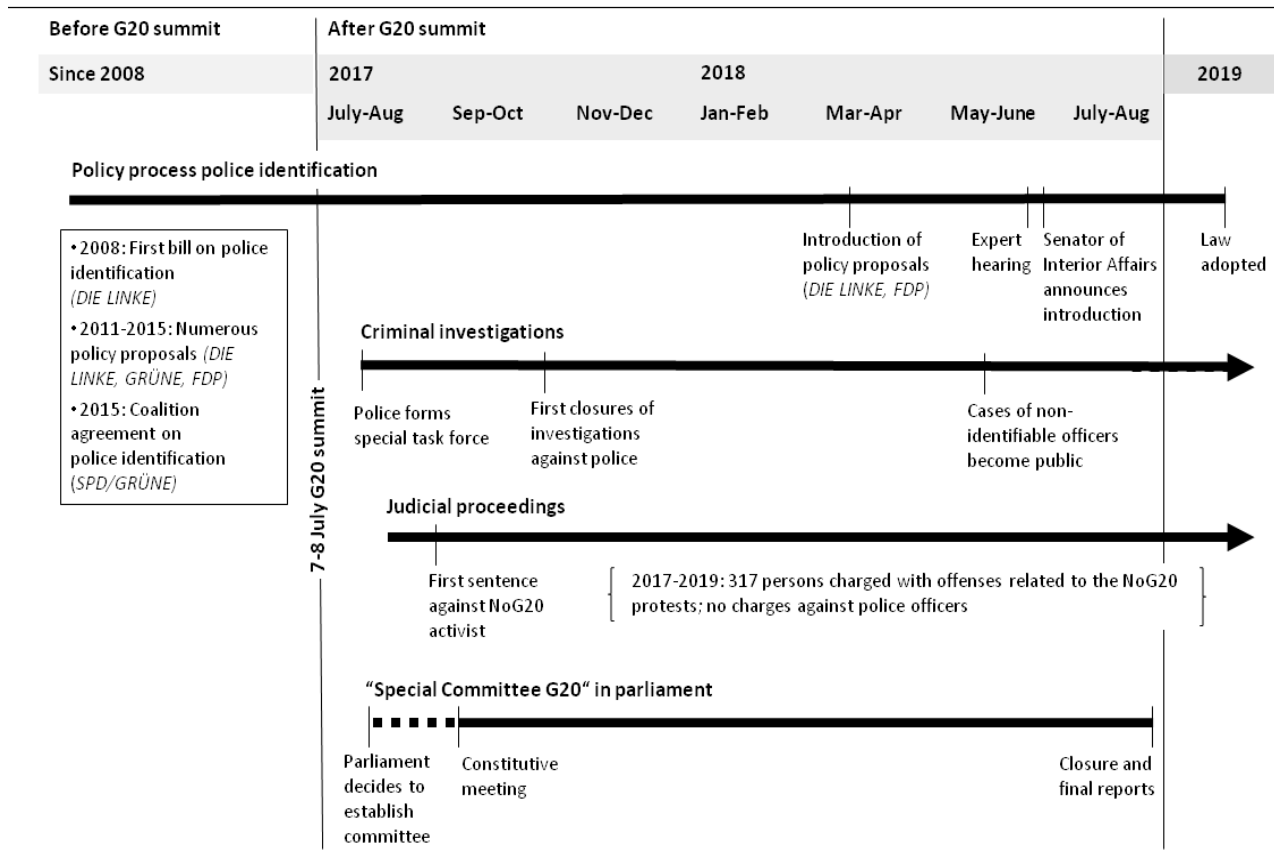


## Judicial Proceedings: the Absence of Trials against Police Officers

Parallel to the political process and the inquiry into the occurrences in parliament, police and courts started investigating criminal offenses related to the NoG20 protests (see figure 1). For the identification of perpetrators, Hamburg´s police had formed a special task force ("SOKO Black Bloc") already shortly after the occurrences. It analyzed terabytes of picture and video evidence (e.g., Pol01, W01). At the same time, the police´s internal investigation department ("Dezernat Interne Ermittlungen") investigated cases of alleged illegal behavior by police officers, while the courts started criminal prosecution. In August 2017, the first judicial trials related to the NoG20 protests began. The prosecutions were viewed as an important tool to reestablish justice and "societal peace" (P02, HB08). However, only cases against NoG20 activists were opened, while there were no trials against police officers. The investigations soon became perceived as "imbalanced" (e.g., MA01, HB03), as one journalist outlined:

> There is a huge gap between the fast proceedings against violent G20 criminals and [those] against police. In fact, not a single judicial procedure [against a police officer] has been opened, yet. (P02)

The absence of trials against police officers conflicted with the pictures, videos, and media reports that documented violent behavior by officers policing the protests.[11] As of mid-August, media had started reporting, for example, about a clash of police and protesters at "Rondenbarg", during which numerous protesters fell from a scaffold and were seriously injured. According to the police, officers had stopped the march after protesters "massively" threw stones and pyrotechnics at police (Buchen, Hennig and Reisin, 2017). The media began to question these reports, as video material became public which challenged the accounts of the police (ibid.). Interviewees described that this case opened a public debate about the appropriateness of this specific intervention (e.g., HB03).

Investigations by the media went hand in hand with parliamentary inquiry. Since the announcement of the G20 summit in Hamburg, opposition parties inquired about issues related to the summit by writing official parliamentary interpellations.[12] This practice was intensified after the protests. A total of 134 minor and major interpellations were introduced by opposition parties after the NoG20 protests. While the parties inquired about various issues, *Die Linke* was described as particularly interested in scrutinizing the behavior of the police (e.g., GPol01, HB04, P02). As of mid-August, *Die Linke* started a series of minor interpellations, asking the government about the state of the criminal investigations and judicial proceedings (Schneider, 2017b). In October 2017, it became public that Hamburg´s public prosecutor closed first investigations against police officers accused of illegal behavior during the NoG20 protests (see figure 1). Further parliamentary inquiry revealed that the number of closed investigations was rising, whereas more and more cases against G20 activists were opened (Schneider, 2017a). This obvious imbalance contributed to creating a critical debate about the prosecution of police accused of misbehavior that was increasingly perceived as harmful to the reputation of the police and the government:

> It is just like that: There were no judicial procedures [against police officers] opened and that clearly triggered a debate in the public. It [the debate] reinforced the impression that the police were concealing something and that the state under the rule of law is not quite… is not coping with that. (Pol01)

### *Starting a Legislative Procedure: Police Identification Requirements Reappear in Parliament*

In March 2018—amidst the parliamentary and the judicial inquiries into the NoG20 protests—, *Die Linke* and the *FDP* introduced two new bills on police identification (FDP-Fraktion, 2018; Fraktion DIE LINKE, 2018a). Interviewees emphasized that police identification requirements were neither the only nor the central problem discussed with respect to the NoG20 protests (e.g., HB02, Pol01). Instead, interviewees stressed that the post-G20 process opened an opportunity to re-raise a well-known topic:

> I think it was not a matter of: 'Oh, the issue of police identification requirements is *the* problem and we solve that now'. Rather, a long-cherished topic was simply brought up again. (Pol01)

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[11] Next to the media, civil right organizations and academics had started collecting data about the occurrences. First reports based on protest observations were published mid-August 2017 (Komitee für Grundrechte und Demokratie e.V., 2017); three months later, the first academic reports followed (Haunss *et al.*, 2017). Filmed documentations were published in 2018 (e.g., Heinig and Maurer, 2018).

[12] Minor and major interpellations are an instrument of scrutiny in the political system of Germany. They are used mainly by the opposition to question the government.

In fact, *Die Linke* pushed the issue of violence by police, by repeatedly inquiring about the state of criminal investigations against police officers accused of misbehavior. However, until then, the party had not been able to disclose on what grounds these investigations had been thrown out. In May 2018, *Die Linke* introduced a major interpellation on the issue. It revealed that in eleven cases, criminal investigations were thrown out because prosecutors were unable to identify the individual police officer (Fraktion DIE LINKE, 2018b). *Die Linke* introduced the interpellation on the agenda of the next plenary meeting. In the short debate, speakers of *Die Linke* and the *FDP* argued that the interpellation proved that there was a factual need for the introduction of police identification requirements (Hamburgische Bürgerschaft, 2018c, pp. 5956–5960).

### "Getting ahead": the Senator Announces the Introduction of a Police Identification Statute

The policy proposals introduced by *Die Linke* and the *FDP* reopened a legislative procedure on police identification (see figure 1). The governing parties decided to refer the bills to the Committee of Interior Affairs and to carry out an expert hearing on the issue (Hamburgische Bürgerschaft, 2018a). Although the legislative procedure was still ongoing, on June 22nd, 2018, Hamburg´s Senator of the Interior announced at a press conference that Hamburg would introduce a police identification statute (Zand-Vakili and Heinemann, 2018). The timing of the decision came as a surprise to many policy makers since the expert hearing had not been evaluated (e.g., HB04, HB05). From this context, the decision was largely interpreted as strategically motivated and as a reaction to public pressure:

> He [the Senator] wanted to get ahead of things. That means demonstrating agency in a situation in which the Senate´s action during the G20 was indeed scrutinized very critically. So, demonstrating agency, as to say: 'I am anticipating that and I am taking a stand. (HB05)

Moreover, interviewees stressed the high symbolic nature of the decision to introduce a police identification statute, by calling it, for example, "a symbolic concession to the critics" (Reg02). Statements by a police leader and a representative of the government further indicate that they perceived the decision as somehow unavoidable:

> You have two options: Either you sit and wait until a decision is taken. (…) You let someone, so to speak, drag you through the [political] arena. Or (…) you proactively handle it yourself. (Pol01)

> For parts of society this [police identification requirements] is a topic of such symbolic relevance. You could have done whatever—you would not have gotten rid of this topic. (Reg03)

In the end, interviewees largely shared the view that if it had not been for the NoG20 protests, police identification requirements would not have been introduced at this moment in time (e.g., GPol01, HB02, HB03), indicating that the protests had a crucial role in the political decision and its timing.

## 5. Discussion of Results

From the analysis, it becomes evident that the *temporal unfolding* of various processes, of which some were related to the NoG20 protests, played a major role for policy change. The following two sections discuss the results with respect to the underlying temporal dimensions and the inherent contingency of the policy process.

### 5.1 Temporal Dimensions: Seizing an Opportunity

The long-term temporal analysis of the policy process related to the police identification statute shows that *Die Linke*, the *FDP*, and *Bündnis90/Die Grünen* made repeated attempts to change the provisions since 2008. Therefore, the post-G20 process was yet another opportunity to demand policy change. Scholars have advanced the idea of "policy windows" or "windows of opportunity" (Kingdon, 2011; Birkland, 2016) to describe opportunities "for pushing one's proposals" (Kingdon, 2011, p. 88). According to Kingdon, policy windows open when attention to a particular issue rises, for example, due to a "focusing event".[13] What is interesting about this case is that the NoG20 protests focused attention to all kinds of issues. A variety of proposals were discussed after the NoG20 protests. Why did police identification requirements become a focal point of political attention after the NoG20 protests?

The explanation has a temporal dimension: Policy change did not occur directly after the protests. The analysis demonstrated that *Die Linke* and the *FDP* introduced their bills eight months after the NoG20 protests. Even if the protests functioned as a focusing event, the actual "turning point"[14] was not the protests themselves. Turning points "give rise to changes in overall direction or regime, and do so in a determining fashion" (Abbott, 2001, p. 249). Although they are defined as "short, consequential shifts" (Abbott, 2001, p. 258), Abbott emphasizes that turning points are themselves processes and have a duration in time (Abbott, 2001, p. 251). If we understand turning points in this sense, the shift observable for this case started with the first criminal investigations against police officers. It manifested as media and parliamentary investigations revealed that judicial proceedings against a number of police officers were dropped. As soon as parliamentary inquiry revealed that some of these procedures had to be dropped due to the inability to identify specific police officers, supporters of police identification requirements were able to point to a factual necessity for policy change. Hence, temporal sequence clearly mattered for the case examined.

Kingdon also argues that policy windows "do not stay open long" (Kingdon, 2011, p. 166). In fact, they may close without policy change occurring. This might be the case, if no viable policy proposal has been developed so far, or if no relevant problem framing can be attached to the policy proposal (Kingdon, 2011, p. 170). Moreover, a problem may remain unheard of because no one advocates for it. According to Kingdon, it needs "policy entrepreneurs" (Kingdon, 2011, p. 122) who actively push for policy change during an open window.[15] In this case, *Die Linke* acted most visibly as such an entrepreneur for policy change since the party was most actively seeking to find a new problem framing with respect to the (non-)identification of police.[16] The analysis showed that the party was indeed successful in pushing this problem framing. Not only was it taken over by the interviewed policy makers, police leadership, and police unions, the Senator of the Interior

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[13] According to Kingdon, "focusing events" are instances that call attention to a problem, such as crises or disasters (Kingdon, 2011, pp. 94–95). Various scholars have advanced similar concepts, such as the idea of "transformative" (McAdam and Sewell, 2001) or "eventful" (Della Porta, 2008) events.

[14] Kingdon uses the term "critical juncture" (2011, p. 19) to describe critical moments in time during which policy change is more likely. However, he does not specify the concept any further. Therefore, this article draws on Abbott´s concept of "turning points" (2001).

[15] Kingdon developed the idea of multiple "streams" that have to be joined by policy entrepreneurs for policy change to become likely, namely a "problem", "policy", and "political stream". Kingdon´s framework served as heuristic for this analysis. However, due to space constraints, the framework is not presented in further detail here.

[16] The role of other supporters of police identification, namely the *FDP* and *Bündnis90/Die Grünen*, was more complex. Due to space limitations it is not discussed here.

also justified the introduction of police identification requirements with respect to cases of non-identification (Hamburgische Bürgerschaft, 2018d, p. 6021).

Ultimately, it was not the two policy proposals by the opposition parties that guaranteed the passing of the police identification statute. Rather, the decision was made and announced by the government in accordance with the police. This agreement reached and the announcement of the decision demonstrate a temporal dimension. The decision to introduce a police identification statute was announced in the middle of an *ongoing* legislative procedure. The analysis of the interviews gives reason to assume that the government was interested in claiming credit for the decision, a phenomenon that has been observed in political science (Pierson, 2001; Bonoli, 2012). Kingdon highlights that credit claiming can decisively speed up decision-making processes, in particular if actors are competing for turf: "In the rush to beat each other to the punch, a subject may become prominent much more quickly" (Kingdon, 2011, p. 157). In the political debate following the NoG20 protests, public opinion was perceived as increasingly critical towards the behavior of the government and the police during and after the protests. State authorities had an interest in getting the glory for any lessons learned from the protests instead of leaving credit for the changes to opposition parties in parliament. However, the government knew that the decision was unpopular among police institutions. In particular, the police unions were seemingly the central "veto players" (Tsebelis, 1995, 2002)[17] that resisted, potentially even prevented, policy change. The absence of a factual necessity for police identification requirements seems to have been a key obstacle to credibly negotiating policy change with the police. A member of the government argued that because of the NoG20 protests, "there was a different basis to discuss again the question: Do we actually need that [police identification requirements]?" (Reg03). Another member of government argued that it needed an "externally given occasion" (Reg02) to introduce a police identification statute "without causing too much collateral damage" (ibid.). The revelation of cases of non-identification was not only of key importance for the opposition parties to demand the introduction of a police identification statute, but also for the government to reach an agreement with the police leadership and most importantly the police unions over this policy.[18]

In sum, in the case examined, a window for policy change was opened mainly due to the convergence of two processes: first, a long-term policy process in which a viable policy proposal was developed over time; and second, various processes that can be traced to the NoG20 protests themselves. After the protests, a new framing for the problem of police identification became available due to the criminal investigations against police officers deployed in the police operations. With a viable policy proposal, members of parliament were able to seize this opportunity to push for their pet proposal: police identification.

### 5.2 Contingent Dynamics of Violent Protests: Producing an Unintended Outcome

What role did collective actors have in the policy process examined? Previous research has shown that if collective actors had a political impact at all,[19] they were most influential at early stages of the political decision-making process and often function as agenda setters (King, Cornwall and Dahlin, 2005; Soule and

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[17] Readers interested in a more in-depth theoretical and methodological discussion of veto player approaches should consult Ganghof (2003).

[18] Moreover, interviewees pointed to previous introductions of police identification statutes in other German states. Positive experiences with police identification statutes in these states were perceived as central for the internal justification of policy change, but not for the decision itself (e.g., P01, Reg01, Reg03). Discussing the relevance of "policy diffusion" is beyond the scope of this article. Interested readers should consult, for example, Bandau and Bothner (2020).

[19] Scholars have emphasized that in most cases collective action does not have any political effect at all (e.g., Luders, 2016, p. 185).

King, 2006).[20] Scholars have found that violent or "watershed" protest events focus public attention in particular to issues related to the control of protest (King and Brearley, 1996; King, 2006; Wahlström, 2016). This case study supports this insight, but adds that collective actors may focus attention to specific topics *regardless* of their demands and intentions.

Moreover, the findings point to the inherent contingency of the effects of violent protest. The introduction of a police identification statute was neither a 'natural', nor a foreseeable consequence of the NoG20 protests. The contingent nature of the effects of political violence is well reflected in literature. While some scholars have shown that political violence may help gain concessions from policy makers (e.g., Piven and Cloward, 1979; McAdam and Su, 2002), others have argued that the use of disruptive techniques may "undercut the willingness of authorities or mass public to listen to the voices of discontent" (Fishman and Everson, 2016, p. 8). Giugni (2008) argues that studies on the effects of political violence have failed to provide "a clear-cut answer to the question whether disruption can produce policy changes and, if yes, what this means for the movements" (p. 1586).

In their various interactions with police, the NoG20 activists produced images that provided evidence of violence by police. However, they did not use this evidence to make any demands for police identification requirements. Instead, local activists were perceived as having "vanished" from scene after the NoG20 protests. More specifically, activists´ voices were perceived as extremely marginalized after the occurrences in the "Sternschanzen" Quarter that were characterized by heavy property damages, arson, and looting. This result corresponds well with the findings of a study by Sommer, Teune, and Harsch (2018) who demonstrate in an analysis of media discourses how the use of political violence during the NoG20 protests coincided with a radical change in media reporting. While the media had first reported in nuanced ways about the protests, after the riots in the "Sternschanzen" Quarter, media reporting became highly critical towards the protests, placing much of the blame for the escalation of violence on the activists (Sommer, Teune and Harsch, 2018, pp. 5–6). The findings suggest that local activists did not actively intervene in the post-G20 legislative process because they massively lost credibility during the NoG20 protests. The use of political violence seems to have significantly limited their opportunities to impact institutional politics after the NoG20 protests. Members of parliament needed to advocate for the introduction of a police identification statute. However, it was not only the protesters who lost legitimacy. The analysis demonstrates how the post-G20 public discourse was perceived as increasingly critical towards the behavior of the local police and government. Scholars have argued that pressure from public opinion has a strong potential to catalyze reforms, in particular if public opinion is perceived as a challenge to the police´s organizational legitimacy (Ashworth, Boyne and Delbridge, 2009; Wahlström, 2016). Similarly, many empirical studies in political science have shown how the perception of public opinion informs the behavior of political decision makers (for a summary see Wlezien and Soroka, 2007). In this case, the government´s decision to introduce a police identification statute was largely interpreted as a reaction to public pressure and an attempt to regain lost legitimacy. This case study demonstrates how the public interpretation of the NoG20 protests and the behavior of the actors involved decisively determined and limited the scope for political action both for local activists and state authorities.

Finally, this case study demonstrates how collective actors often fail to control what issues gain prominence after (violent) protest events. The findings emphasize that collective actors are not the only "players in the field" (Duyvendak and Jasper, 2015; Jasper and Duyvendak, 2015), but interact with a broad range of actors. In this case, the opportunity to raise the issue of police identification was seized, as discussed before, not by

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[20] Exerting influence on political decision making at later stages, seems to be rather difficult for collective actors. In fact, Amenta et al. (2010) argue that the conditions that produce mobilization "sometimes make it difficult to achieve influence at stages in the policy process beyond agenda setting" (p. 296).

the NoG20 activists, but by institutional actors in parliament. Social movement scholars have increasingly challenged "methodological narcissism" (McGarry, Davidson, Accornero, Jasper, and Duyvendak, 2016, p. 635) that is said to inform much of social movement research and "that positions the movement itself (any movement) front and centre of the analysis" (ibid.). This study reinforces this criticism and demonstrates that we need to account for these various interactions if we aim to understand the effects that collective action may produce.

# 6. Conclusions

Studies analyzing the impact of collective action on public policy often seem overly deterministic when attributing policy changes to collective action. This article has argued that this criticism reflects two major weaknesses of policy-related outcome research: first, a lack of processual perspectives, and second, an excessive focus on intended policy outcomes. This article offers an alternative approach for understanding policy influence of collective action. It has analyzed a change in legislation as an unintended consequence of collective action and has studied this phenomenon from a processual perspective.

## 6.1 Main Findings

In an empirical case study, this article has examined the decision to introduce a police identification statute after the violent NoG20 protests in Hamburg and has asked how were the protests consequential for a policy that collective actors had not initially addressed nor intended to change. It has reconstructed the policy process on police identification by adopting a processual perspective that has paid particular attention to temporal sequence and the dynamic interactions of various actors involved in the policy change.

The analysis has shown that the decision to introduce a police identification statute was the outcome of the convergence of a long-term policy process related to police identification requirements and various processes that can be traced to the NoG20 protests themselves. Drawing on Kingdon´s "multiple streams" framework (Kingdon, 2011), this article has argued that the NoG20 protests created a "window of opportunity" to push for a policy proposal that members of parliament started advocating a decade before. Activists only played a passive role in the decision to introduce a police identification statute. They did not actively demand its introduction. Instead, they served to make a case for police identification requirements as they had created images of violent state behavior in the interaction with the police. However, since activists lost credibility during the NoG20 protests, the issue could only be credibly raised by institutional actors. This finding might not be a surprise to the reader, considering the privileged position of actors in parliament. Yet, it needs emphasis, first, because it highlights the marginalized position of collective actors after the NoG20 protests, which was related to the use of violent repertoires of action; second, because it relativizes the scholarly focus on policy success. As Luders (2016) argues, the abundance of studies on "movement triumph encourages a faulty impression of how movements achieve political change" (p. 185). Furthermore, the temporal analysis has demonstrated that the protests did not create a sense of urgency for immediate action, instead that urgency developed after criminal investigations progressed. As soon as parliamentary inquiries revealed that a small number of police officers accused of illegal behavior could not be prosecuted because they could not be positively identified, members of parliament were able to point to a factual necessity for policy change. As this shift substantially changed the political debates and negotiations about police identification requirements, it has been identified as a "turning point" (Abbott, 2001) in the policy process. This supports the article's argument that the introduction of a police identification statute followed an inherently temporal logic.

Ultimately, was the introduction of a police identification statute a "consequence" of the NoG20 protests? The answer is yes and no. The NoG20 protests were an opportunity to raise this issue once again as it changed an important factual parameter that had previously been considered an obstacle or at least an important argument against policy change. Therefore, the NoG20 protests were indeed somewhat consequential for the policy process related to police identification requirements. However, we would have only poorly understood this outcome, if we had not considered the policy process preceding the NoG20 protests. The long-term perspective has revealed that police identification requirements had long been part of political negotiations. The NoG20 protests did not initiate political debate on the issue, but they intervened in an *ongoing* policy process. Furthermore, it seems only due to the intense previous debates on the issue between various stakeholder groups, from policy makers, the police, and with other states that had already introduced police identification statutes, that by the time Hamburg´s government came to consider how to react to the NoG20 protests, police identification was a fairly well known and diffused policy proposal, and thus, a viable option.

## 6.2 Implications for the Field: Analyzing (Unintended) Outcomes in Time

A critical reflection of the literature on the policy effects of collective action requires a reassessment of some of the existing premises that have underpinned this research. This article has argued that adopting a time-sensitive, processual perspective and moving beyond the implicit "success" or "failure" understanding of policy-related outcome research may help overcome some shortcomings. There are five implications that can be drawn from this case study. First, asking not only whether collective actors were successful or not in realizing their articulated goals but asking more generally what policy effects their actions may have had, independent of their claims, can broaden our analytical scope. It draws our attention to potentially new phenomena, including the unintended effects of collective action, which have received little scholarly attention. As Wahlström (2016) points out, there is much research that is not framed as, but could be considered as analyzing unintended outcomes of collective action. This includes studies that analyze transformations in protest policing which trace back to various interactions between activists and police (e.g., Della Porta and Tarrow, 2012; Ellefsen, 2018). However, these studies have mostly examined how collective action affects *organizational* change, instead of analyzing how collective action affects changes as a result of *political* decision making. So far, we know little about the conditions, under which unintended policy change occurs, what role collective actors have in these policy processes, in how far that differs to policy processes that they intend to change, etc. The focus on intended policy outcomes has left the field with many blind spots. This article did not aim to answer all these questions, but it fills an important gap by connecting two streams of research within social movement scholarship that have so far barely understood themselves as belonging to the same field. To fully understand the policy impacts of collective action, we also need to account for the unintended consequences.

Second, analyzing unintended policy effects forces us to rethink the link between collective action and observed policy change. If we analyze unintended outcomes of collective action, we need to determine whether and how collective action is consequential to those outcomes. The valid question, how to establish the link between a given movement and an observed change (Diani, 1997; Giugni, 1999; Tilly, 1999), pointed to a weakness of the field. The analysis of an unintended outcome requires us to reassess our methodological tools and our approach to the study of outcomes. The processual perspective serves as a useful framework. It allows scholars to qualitatively assess and better justify this link to contextualize and trace the effects of collective action.

Third, this case study has demonstrated that it is important to start the analysis of policy effects not with the protests themselves, but with historical developments that occurred *prior to* the protests. The long-term

analysis of the policy process on police identification has shown that parliamentary debate on the issue dated back to 2008. With the NoG20 protests, negotiations about police identification requirements in Hamburg were indeed resumed, but the issue was nothing new. Scholars researching the political effects of collective action could make their arguments about movement influence stronger and more resistant against criticism, if collective action were not understood primarily as initiating political change, but rather, as intervening in ongoing change processes. Following this perspective, collective action can be consequential for political processes, but the outcomes from these processes, such as the appearance of issues on the agenda of decision makers, parliamentary negotiation, or the adoption of legislation, are neither understood as singularly attributed to, nor as triggered solely by the activity of collective actors.

Fourth, adopting a processual perspective means not only reflecting on our methodological toolkit, but also on our ontological assumptions. With reference to political-process models (Kingdon, 2011), this study has conceptualized political decision making as a contingent and dynamic process. This conceptualization resonates well with the growing sensitivity within outcome research that closer attention needs to be paid to the political processes on which collective actors may impact (Andrews and Edwards, 2004, pp. 491–492). Moreover, the processual approach invites us to reflect more critically on the term "outcome" which is arguably at the heart of the field. As Abbott (2016, p. Ch. 6) argues, the notion "outcome" seems to indicate something lasting, final, and stable. In his processual ontology, entities are understood as constantly undergoing change (Abbott 2016: xi). Our understanding of the effects of collective action would benefit from viewing outcomes as "snapshots", intermediate results of a process that might still change underway.

Fifth, studying unintended consequences requires us to supplement our focus on collective actors (and their claims) with a focus on those entities or actors interacting with and reacting to collective actors as well as to the context in which they are (re)acting. This case study has shown that collective action can create an important impetus for action not primarily for activists, but for the members of parliament, who seized the opportunity to push for and justify (the need for) for a specific policy change. This finding reflects a more general trend within research on the political outcomes of collective action. Scholars are increasingly emphasizing that collective actors are not the only 'players in the field', but act in concert with a broad range of other actors (Duyvendak and Jasper, 2015; Jasper and Duyvendak, 2015; Jabola-Carolus, Elliott-Negri, Jasper, Mahlbacher, Weisskircher, and Zhelnina, 2020). Nevertheless, the literature is still often misunderstood as trying to attribute political outcomes singularly to the activity of collective actors. As this study has shown, the processual approach allows not only analyzing the temporal dynamics informing policy change, but also disentangling how these dynamics relate to collective action. More process-oriented analyses are needed to better understand what influences the intended or unintended effects of collective action, and how the temporal unfolding of political decision-making processes, in which collective action intervene, affects political outcomes.

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# Appendix

**Figure A: List of interviewees**

| Participant ID | Description | Category |
|---|---|---|
| **Act01, Act02** | **Local activists** | **Protest** |
| **GPol01, GPol02, GPol03** | **Local representatives of police unions** | **Police** |
| **HB01, HB02, HB06, HB07** | **(Former) members of the Interior Affairs Committee and/or the "Special Committee G20"; governing party** | **Parliament** |
| **HB03, HB04, HB05, HB08** | **(Former) members of the Interior Affairs Committee and/or the "Special Committee G20"; opposition party** | **Parliament** |
| **MA01** | **Policy officer for Interior Affairs and the "Special Committee G20"; governing party** | **Parliament** |
| **P01, P02** | **Journalists** | **Press** |
| **Pol01** | **Member of the police command in Hamburg** | **Police** |
| **RA01** | **Criminal attorney, member of a civil rights organization** | **Protest** |
| **Reg01, Reg02, Reg03** | **(Former) members of the executive** | **Government** |
| **W01** | **Scientific expert (Hamburg´s Police Academy)** | **Police** |

**Figure B: Votes on police identification statutes proposed in the *Bürgerschaft* (by party group and legislative period)**

| Period | Date | AfD | CDU | SPD | GRÜNE | FDP | DIE LINKE |
|--------|------|-----|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----------|
| 19th | 09.10.2008 | n.a. | ✗* | ⏭✗ | ✗* | n.a. | 📄✓ |
| 20th | 25.05.2011 | n.a. | ✗ | ✗* | 📄✓ | ✗ | ✓ |
| 20th | 07.06.2011 | n.a. | ✗ | ✗* | ✗ | 📄✓ | ✗ |
| 20th | 08.02.2012 | n.a. | ✗ | ⏭✗* | ✓ | ⏭○ | 📄✓ |
| 20th | 17.04.2012 | n.a. | ✗ | ✗* | 📄✓ | ○ | ✓ |
| 20th | 22.05.2012 | n.a. | ✗ | ✗* | ✗ | 📄✓ | ✓ |
| 20th | 04.06.2014 | n.a. | ✗ | ✗* | ✓ | ○ | 📄✓ |
| 20th | 17.06.2014 | n.a. | ✗ | ✗* | ✓ | 📄✓ | ○ |
| 21st | 14.03.2018 | ✗ | ✗ | ⏭✗* | ⏭✗* | ○ | 📄✓ |
| 21st | 14.03.2018 | ✗ | ✗ | ⏭✗* | ⏭✗* | 📄✓ | ✓ |
| 21st | 04.09.2018 | ✗ | ✗ | 📄✓* | 📄✓* | ○ | ○ |

Legend/

📄 Policy proposal introduced    ⏭ Referral of policy proposal to committee    * Party in government

**Voting behavior:**   ✓ Approval   ✗ Rejection   ○ Abstention   **n.a.** not applicable

**Comments:**

This table summarizes the voting behavior of the party groups represented in the *Bürgerschaft* with respect to a police identification requirement, starting with the first policy proposals introduced on the issue in 2008 (19th legislative period). The policy proposals listed above did not necessarily deal singularly with police identification requirements, but might also include other provisions. This applies in particular to policy proposals introduced in the 20th legislative period, in which a large-scale police reform was decided on in the *Bürgerschaft*. In those cases, the policy proposals were voted on item by item, and for this table, only the votes on police identification requirements were taken into account. It is common practice in parliaments that party groups do not support the policy proposals of ideologically different party groups or that the governing parties do not support policy proposals introduced by the opposition and vice versa—even if they substantially agree on the content. Instead of supporting another party group´s proposal, party groups often decide to introduce a policy proposal on their own. These phenomena can also be observed in this case (e.g., the *SPD*´s and *Grüne*´s rejection of the policy proposals introduced by the *FDP* and *Die Linke* in the 21st legislative period and the subsequent introduction of their own policy proposal six months later). Moreover, when in a coalition government, governing parties may not be able to vote in favor of a policy proposal they would have else supported due to the obligation to vote in accordance with to the coalition party (e.g., while in government with the *CDU*, the *Grüne* rejected the policy proposal introduced by *Die Linke* in the 19th legislative period, but supported *Die Linke* ´s proposals in the 20th period when in opposition). For the

20th legislative period, it can be observed that the *Grüne* and *Die Linke* largely supported each other´s policy proposals, indicating their substantial and ideological agreement. The (ideologically rather distant) *FDP* decided to abstain from the majority of votes casted on policy proposals of *Die Linke* or the *Grüne*. *Die Linke*, in turn, increasingly supported those policy proposals introduced by the *FDP*, indicating its strong support of police identification requirements that transcended ideological disagreement. The *SPD* that was for most of the time analyzed in government rejected all policy proposals on police identification (except for their own proposal introduced together with the *Grüne* in 2018). However, in some cases, the *SPD* decided to refer those proposals to the Committee of Interior Affairs, indicating its openness to further parliamentary discussion of police identification requirements notwithstanding its opposition.

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