The Legacy of the Past

Social psychology has evolved through two branches, one in psychology and the other in sociology, with the larger of the two being the psychological branch (Farr, 1996). The two branches clearly differ in terms of the level of analysis, basic assumptions, method, and areas of research in studying collective action (Oishi et al., 2009). The roots of the *sociological* branch are European, contextual, comparative, and nonpositivistic. The roots of the *psychological* branch find their origin in the United States, where the behavioral and experimental approach became dominant (Schruijer, 2012). The social psychology of protest has been approached from both branches. They developed almost independently. While, for instance, the psychological branch was practically nonexistent in the 1950s, the sociological branch was booming (Schruijer, 2012).

This disciplinary watershed is of course not without consequences for methodological approaches. Sociological social psychologists use shared social knowledge from a macro- or meso-level culture to explain relatively enduring patterns of symbolic social interaction. They typically – though not always – investigate these matters with qualitative methods, such as discourse analysis, event analysis, interviewing, participant observation, case study, and network analysis. Psychological social psychologists, on the other hand, typically deal with the factors that lead us to behave in each way in the (imagined) presence of others and look at the conditions under which certain behavior/actions and feelings occur. In general, they prefer laboratory-based, empirical findings. However, social psychologists have come out of their laboratories and more and more protest is studied in the field, where the action takes place. Moreover, next to the quantitative methods, social psychologists employ more and more mixed methods, including qualitative methods. Each method has its own strengths, weaknesses, and challenges.

17

In this chapter we will first provide a historical overview of the developments of the two branches. For ease of reading, we will use the terms *sociological branch* and *psychological branch* to refer to, respectively, the sociological social psychology of protest and the social psychological social psychology of protest. To substantiate our claims, we provide meta-analytical evidence (both in terms of the changing independent variables over the years as well as the changing methods). Thereafter we will give a short overview of the most employed methods. We will discuss studies conducted with the method, present illustrative findings from such studies, and indicate the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges of the method. This should give us a good impression of the roots of the *what* (i.e., antecedents of collective action) and the *how* (i.e., the methods employed) of the social psychology of protest.

2.1   The Sociological Branch: From Collective Behavior to Collective Action

Although collective action and collective behavior are now understood as synonyms, the terms *collective behavior* and *collective action* were associated with different theoretical traditions and sometimes understood as referring to different empirical phenomena, especially from 1939 to the early 1970s (Oliver, 2013). *Collective behavior* was associated with theories that stressed the emergence of behavior in spontaneous crowds, especially violent crowds, and was studied as a topic within the sociological branch of social psychology. The term "collective behavior" came to be defined as referring to the kind of behavior that happens in crowds or other spontaneous face-to-face gatherings which, in turn, was defined as being nonroutine, nonnormative, and emergent. *Collective action*, on the other hand, was associated with theories emphasizing purposive or goal-oriented behavior in protests and social movements and was used in economics, political science, and political sociology. It referred to specific actions like strikes or protests, to labor unions generally, and to the general matter of social versus individual solutions to social problems. Especially after the 1965 publication of Mancur Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action*, which had a major impact on the thinking of political scientists and political sociologists, the term "collective action" often came to be understood as referring specifically to actions that led to the provision of public or collective goods, that is, goods that are inherently shared and cannot be restricted to only those who paid for them (Oliver, 2013).

2.2 Collective Behavior Approaches: Strain and Breakdown Theories

Gustave le Bon (1896/2002) and Gabriel Tarde (1898/1969) can be seen as the founding fathers of collective behavior studies, and their ideas are reflected in several subsequent theories. Crowds were thought to create intense and volatile emotions that drove collective behavior. They did not conceive of contentious politics in a very positive manner, perceiving crowds as primitive and irrational. They believed that individual members of a crowd submerge in the masses; they assume a sense of anonymity and lose their sense of responsibility. Today we feel that they exaggerated the violent and irrational character of crowds. In the early twentieth century, Robert Park imported these European ideas into US sociology and laid the foundation for the collective behavior tradition (Oliver, 2013). Collective behavior approaches directly linked social breakdown to collective behavior which explains why they are referred to as strain or breakdown theories. They essentially viewed discontent as the origin of protest and depicted protesters as "people who do not accept the normal political techniques of a society [and therefore] must be dangerous and irrational" (Rogin, 1967, pp. 272–273). They shared a core assumption that the object of study was behavior that was spontaneous, emergent, disconnected from "ordinary" routines and life, more characterized by emotion or simplistic thinking than by reasoned discussion. The various theorists of collective behavior agree upon a causal sequence moving from some form of structural strain (be it industrialization, urbanization, unemployment) that produces subjective tension and therefore the psychological disposition to engage in extreme behaviors such as panics and mobs to escape from these tensions (McAdam, 1982). Although they agreed upon this basic causal sequence, they differed in their conceptualization. Blumer (1951) and Turner and Killian (1987), associated with symbolic interactionism, describe social movements as phenomena emerging through interaction among dissatisfied people. Smelser (1963), on the other hand, is associated with structural functionalism, an approach that defines social movements as a process to restore equilibrium in a society. Davies (1962) and Gurr (1970), finally, brought the concept of relative deprivation to the field. To appreciate the similarities and differences underlying these various approaches, we will briefly review these approaches from a general sociological point of departure, followed by examples of collective behavior theorists who studied their topic through the lens of these approaches.

2.2.1 *Symbolic Interactionism: Interacting Disgruntled People*

The sociologists who developed the symbolic interaction perspective include Goffman, Hochschild, and Blumer. Its concern tends to be the interactions in daily life and experiences, rather than the structures associated with large-scale and relatively fixed social forces and laws. Hence, symbolic interactionism is closely tied to social practice and the study of how people interact with each other. Park, an early social interactionist, aimed to "study the structure of the social world by using the 'moving camera' of the naturalistic approach to catch life as it was happening" (cited by Wallace & Wolf, 1999, p. 195). This perspective addresses issues of socialization, interpretations of meaning and symbols, social action and interaction, and emotions. As such, it positions itself opposite macro-theoretical approaches that attempted to explain social relationships by concentrating on systems and society as a whole (e.g., Parsons, Habermas). While these macro-theoretical approaches include some discussion of individual action (Parsons) and social interaction among individuals in small groups (Habermas), they primarily focus on the structures and institutions in society as a whole and on historical change and development.

These macro approaches recognize that social relationships, institutions, structures, and society are a result of individual social action and interaction, but they concentrate their analyses primarily on the patterns and structures that emerge from these actions and interactions. Social interactionism is primarily concerned "with the joint acts through which lives are organized and societies assembled" (Plummer, 2000, p. 195), rather than focusing merely on the individual and his or her choices and actions. That is, social action is more than summing up individual decision-making and action, as may be the case in rational choice models. Rather, from the interactionist perspective, actions are always joint, with the mutual response and adjustment of the actor and others as a necessary aspect to consider. A final point of departure of social interactionists is that people interpret or "define" each other's actions instead of merely reacting to these actions. Hence, "response" is not a simple action–reaction chain but instead is based on *meaning* attached to such actions, meaning created in social interaction. This echoes the famous Thomas Theorem: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas & Thomas, 1928, p. 572).

Blumer and Turner and Killian examined collective behavior through a social interactionist lens. For Blumer (1951), collective behavior is largely

spontaneous, unregulated, and unstructured. It is triggered by some disruption in standard routines of everyday life that promotes contagion, randomness, excitability, and suggestibility. It is this social unrest that facilitates collective behavior in the form of crowds, masses, publics, and social movements. With an emphasis on terms emerging in social interaction, Blumer clearly takes an interactionist perspective to collective action. To Blumer, motivating forces for collective action are, next to dissatisfaction and subsequent agitation, "wishes" and "hope" for a new scheme or system of living. Thereby he dissociates himself from the notion that contentious politics are irrational acts rooted solely in agitation and frustration. Implicitly – in emotional terms – he depicts a rational, efficacious side to contentious politics. This perceived political opportunity of being able to make a difference was later described as "cognitive liberation" (McAdam, 1982) and "political efficacy" (e.g., Bandura, 1997).

Turner and Killian's (1987) emergent norm theory also roots in the social interactionist tradition. Emergent norm theory suggests that crowds come together because a crisis occurs that forces people to abandon prior conceptions of appropriate behavior and find new ways of acting (see Lemonik & Mikaila, 2013 for an encyclopedia entry on emergent norm theory). When a crowd forms, there is no particular norm governing crowd behavior, and no leader exists. But the crowd focuses on those who act in a distinctive manner, and this distinction is taken on as the new norm for crowd behavior (Turner & Killian, 1987). As this new norm begins to be institutionalized within the crowd, pressures for conformity and against deviance within the crowd develop and discontent is silenced. This silencing of alternative views contributes to the illusion of unanimity within the crowd. The norms that develop within crowds are like schemas for behavior that set limits on what is appropriate (Turner & Killian, 1987, pp. 9–11). These norms develop through either emergent or pre-existing social relationships. In fact, anything which facilitates communication among crowd participants facilitates the emergence of norms, a process Turner and Killian call "milling." The elements of contagion, excitability, spontaneity, and emotionality sharply set their approach in the social interactionist tradition.

2.2.2 Structural Functionalism: Conflict Shapes Stability

Structural functionalism, or simply functionalism, sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. Sociologists who developed structural functionalism include Spencer,

Durkheim, and Parsons. Functionalism addresses society in terms of the *function* of its constituent elements; namely norms, customs, traditions, and institutions. It looks at society through a macro-level orientation, which is a broad focus on the social *structures* that shape society. A common analogy, popularized by Spencer, presents these parts of society as "organs" that work toward the proper functioning of the "body" as a whole. In the most basic terms, it simply emphasizes "the effort to impute, as rigorously as possible, to each feature, custom, or practice, its effect on the functioning of a supposedly stable, cohesive system" (Structural functionalism, Wikipedia). An important critique directed at functionalism, particularly in the context of protest, is the fact that structural functionalism, premised on value consensus, solidarity, and the internalization of norms, could not account for social change or conflict. A further critique directed at functionalism is that it contains no sense of agency, that is, individuals are seen as puppets, acting as their role requires (Wikipedia). Hence, although Parsons took as his starting point individuals and their actions, his theory did not articulate how these actors exercise their agency in opposition to the socialization and inculcation of accepted norms. Merton (1938), an early structural functionalist emphasizing social structure and anomie, addressed this limitation through his concept of deviance. Yet, although functionalism allows for agency, it cannot explain why individuals choose to accept or reject accepted norms, and why and in what circumstances they choose to exercise their agency.

Kornhauser and Smelser investigated collective behavior through a structural functionalist lens. Both hold that political protest has its inception in strain and societal transition, as a result of industrialization, urbanization, unemployment, and so on, and derives its motivational power from dissatisfaction with the current form of life. Kornhauser applied mass society theory to the phenomenon of collective behavior. *The Politics of Mass Society* (Kornhauser, 1959) remains one of the most explicit statements of the alleged links between mass society and social movements. Mass society theory is a complex, multifaceted perspective. For this perspective, modernity promotes massive social structures and erodes intermediate groups that provide social anchors for individuals (see Buechler, 2013a for an encyclopedia entry on Mass Society Theory). Without such groups, isolation, depersonalization, and alienation prevail. As such, it revives Durkheim's concerns with anomie and egoism. As applied to social movements, the basic idea is that people who are socially isolated are especially vulnerable to the appeals of extremist movements. Kornhauser popularized the notion that people are vulnerable to the

appeals of dictatorship because of a lack of restraining social networks. He argued that Nazism erupted in Germany because Hitler had been able to appeal directly to the people due to alienation and anomie. In his own words:

> Mass movements mobilize people who are alienated from the going system, who do not believe in the legitimacy of the established order, and who therefore are ready to engage in efforts to destroy it. The greatest number of people available to mass movements will be found in those sections of society that have the fewest ties to the social order. (Kornhauser, 1959, p. 212)

This eludes to Putnam's (1993) more recent discussions of the alleged decline of social capital, but stands in sharp contrast to social movement studies that consistently show that it is people who are firmly embedded, rather than alienated, who are politically active. Indeed, "very little participation [is found] in either ordinary political activity or revolutionary outbursts by misfits, outcasts, nomads, the truly marginal, the desperate poor" (Tilly, 1986). Despite its largely discredited status among academics, "literary and journalistic proponents of this perspective enjoy a much wider and perhaps more credulous audience. As a result, mass society theory proves well-nigh indestructible despite its logical flaws and empirical shortcomings" (Buechler, 2013a).

Smelser's (1963) value-added theory (also known as social strain theory) provided a structural–functional analysis of collective behavior. It is based on the assumption that certain conditions are needed for the development of a social movement (Kendall, 2007). The concept of "value-added" was used earlier in economics, where it refers to the increasing value of product in progressing stages of production. Smelser saw social movements as side-effects of rapid social change (Della Porta & Diani, 2006). Episodes of collective action, he argues, often constitute an early stage of social change, occurring when conditions of social change have arisen but before social resources have been mobilized to rebalance the sources of strain and bring back solidarity and stability. Social movements were in his view, therefore, "the action of the impatient." Smelser argued that six factors were necessary and sufficient for collective behavior to emerge and that social movements evolve through those relevant stages: structural conduciveness, structural strain, generalized belief of a solution, precipating factors, mobilization, and lack of social control. Structural conduciveness is the first factor, meaning that the social structure permits some form of collective behavior to emerge; people must be aware of the problem and have the opportunity to act. Structural strain, the second

factor, refers to ambiguities, deprivations, conflicts, and discrepancies in the current social structure, such as inequality or injustice, and existing power holders who are unable (or unwilling) to address the problem. Hence, an inadequately functioning social structure generates widespread dissatisfaction. The third factor is generalized beliefs, the dissatisfaction should be clearly defined, agreed upon, and understood by participants in group action. The fourth factor constitutes precipitating events – events that become the proverbial spark, igniting the flame, and provide an immediate catalyst. Mobilization for action, the fifth factor, is the culmination of these background processes; people need to be embedded in networks and organizations allowing them to undertake collective action. The final and sixth factor is effective social controls that are in place – that is, how authorities react (or don't) – hence, the breakdown of such controls is a final determinant of political protest. With these six factors, Smelser thus weaves strain and breakdown into a macro structural theory of collective behavior.

2.2.3   Relative Deprivation

Another version of breakdown and strain theories involves relative deprivation (e.g. Gurr, 1970; Major, 1994; Martin, 1986; Runciman, 1966). Here, strain takes a social psychological form, as feelings of relative deprivation result from comparison of one's situation with a standard – which can be one's past, someone else's situation, or a cognitive standard such as equity or justice (Runciman, 1966). If people assess their personal situation this is referred to as egoistic or individual deprivation; if they assess the situation of their group, it is called fraternalistic or group deprivation. It was assumed that fraternalistic relative deprivation is especially relevant in the context of movement participation (ibid). When changing social conditions cause people to experience "relative deprivation" the likelihood of protest and rebellion significantly increases (Gurr, 1970).

Consequently, relative deprivation has been an important concept for the sociological and psychological branch of protest. Through cognitive dissonance or frustration–aggression mechanisms, such psychological strain provokes collective behavior, be it via increased or decreased efficacy. Regarding increased efficacy, Opp and Hartmann (1989), for instance, suggested that committed activists revise their efficacy perceptions upward because of cognitive dissonance when they realize that others may abstain from collective action if they think their contributions will have little

impact. Frustration stemming from a lack of efficacy, on the other hand, may lead to aggression when the situation is seen as hopeless, this may invoke a *nothing-to-lose* strategy leading to violent protest (Kamans et al., 2011). The frustration–aggression mechanism may well be the psychological mechanism at work in Davies (1962) famous J-curve theory of political revolutions. He seeks to explain the rise of revolutionary movements in terms of rising individual expectations and falling levels of perceived well-being. Davies asserts that revolutions are a subjective response to a sudden reversal in fortunes after a long period of economic growth. According to Davies, revolutions are most likely to occur when a prolonged period of objective economic and social development is followed by a short period of reversal (see also Chapter 3 on the Davies J-curve).

Although the theory of relative deprivation still holds some relevance, Walker and Smith (2002) conclude in their review of fifty years relative deprivation research that, by the 1980s, the construct relative deprivation fell into disfavor and disrepute, partly because of devastating reviews by McPhail (1971) and Gurney and Tierney (1982). Gurney and Tierney (1982) reached the conclusion in their review that "while the relative deprivation perspective was an advance over earlier approaches which viewed social movements as resulting from the expression of irrational impulses, the relative deprivation perspective itself was affected by too many serious conceptual, theoretical, and empirical weaknesses to be useful in accounting for the emergence and development of social movements" (p. 33). The 1990s, though, saw the rediscovery of relative deprivation and its integration into theories of collective behavior. The ways in which people interpret grievances – central to relative deprivation – are now recognized as essential to a full understanding of protest participation (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Klandermans, 1997; Simon et al., 1998; Tyler & Smith, 1998; Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2014). Moreover, facing an economic crisis in 2008, the likes of which had not been seen since the 1930s, revived an interest in sociological studies departing from relative deprivation again (e.g., Grover, 2011; Ragnarsdóttir et al., 2013)

In sum, heavily influenced by Le Bon and Tarde, these theories of collective behavior centered on the idea that individuals lose their sense of self and responsibility when they engage in collective behavior such as protest. Independent of whether they root in social interactionism, structural functionalism, or relative deprivation, all regard disruption of the social system as the trigger to collective behavior. Social interactionism is a micro-theoretical approach that deals with individuals and relations among individuals in small groups and in organizations, and focuses on

emergent norms, emergent meaning, and contagiousness. Structural functionalism, on the other hand, is a macro-theoretical approach which addresses the function of the constituting elements of society, norms, customs, traditions, and institutions with a broad focus on the social structures that shape society. It either describes why protests emerge as social structures erode (e.g., anomie and egoism in Kornheiser's theory) or when impatient people cannot await the rebalancing of society after initial social change (Smelser's value-added theory).

2.3   Collective Action Approaches: Resources and Opportunities

Collective behavior and collective action approaches came into conflict in the wake of the civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s. A new generation of scholars identified positively with the 1960s movements and saw them as fundamentally rational attempts to pursue clear-cut policy goals and objected to portrayals of protests and even riots as "irrational" collective behavior, arguing that protesters and rioters were no less rational than the people studying them. Moreover, in the 1960s, Western democracies were enjoying the high-water mark of the post-World War II economic growth and personal security. This contrasted with the poverty and suffering that much of the Western world saw in the 1930s and 1940s. Still, the late 1960s were marked by an enormous growth of social movement activity, where students, civil rights, peace, women, and environmental movements all flourished and protested the ruling elite and order. The collective behavior approaches developed in the 1950s were not able to account for this proliferation of social movement activity since they held that the main causal source of protest was *declining* as opposed to *growing* welfare. And finally, during this period important developments internal to the social sciences were also under way, with systematic attempts at tackling sociological problems in terms of the economic paradigm. Grappling with theoretical and empirical puzzles of a new kind, sociologists and political scientists were thus induced to take a fresh approach to social movements (Oliver, 2013).

Collective Action Theory: Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965) was a milestone. Olson conceived of people as rational decision-makers faced with a social dilemma: if the collective good is produced people will reap the benefits anyway, while the production of the collective good is not contingent on their own behavior but on the joint efforts of the collective. Collective action theory predicts that under those circumstances rational actors will choose to take a free ride, unless selective incentives (i.e., those

incentives that depend upon participation) motivate them to participate. As the decision to participate must be taken without knowing in advance the actual behavior of others, individuals must rely on expectations about that behavior (Klandermans, 1984). Yet, Oliver (2013) aptly remarks: "Actually, Olson's theoretical importance lies less in 'selective incentives' [. . .], than in his skill in throwing light on the social dilemma of movement participation itself: mobilization never is to be taken for granted." Thus, she continues "the true significance of Olson's book rested in its setting a theoretical puzzle to a new generation of scholars: how and when are social actors able to overcome the dilemma of movement participation? These attempts at solving the dilemma resulted in what is now known as 'resource mobilization' theory."

Resource Mobilization Theory: Resource mobilization scholars argued that grievances are ubiquitous, while protest is not. Consequently, in order to understand the ebb and flow of protests, they argue that the question to be answered is not so much why people are aggrieved but why aggrieved people mobilize and how they overcome the above formulated dilemma of movement participation. Oliver (2013) differentiates three distinctive ways of overcoming the dilemma of movement participation, all of which ascribe weight to "organization." The first one, which may be regarded as classic, has been elaborated by Oberschall in his book *Social Conflict and Social Movements* (1973). As Oberschall stresses in his "sociological theory of mobilization," collective protest is more likely to be present in a collectivity which has a strong organizational base (see also Fennema & Tillie, 2008; Klandermans et al., 2008), whether it is of a communal or of an associational kind (e.g. Van der Meer & Van Ingen, 2009; Van Stekelenburg et al., 2016; Wollebæk & Selle, 2002). A second way of getting over the dilemma was put forward by McCarthy and Zald (1977), who coined the label "resource mobilization." They assert that particular attention must be paid to outside support, funding, and leadership. Consequently, they dwell on the prominent part of "conscience constituents" and "adherents" on the one hand, and "political entrepreneurs" on the other. The third way of solving the dilemma perhaps is not so closely connected with resource mobilization theory; but more so to the political context in which the issue is fought out.

Political Opportunity Structure: Tilly (1978) puts as much emphasis as Oberschall or Zald and McCarthy on organization and interests, yet he also stresses the political context in which mobilizations take place. Tilly argues that changes in or differences by which political systems enable or constrain the collective expression of grievances in a given historical

context are the main explanation for the rise and decline of social movements (Tilly, 1986). The degree to which political opportunities – defined as "those dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure" (Tarrow, 1995, p. 85) – are open or vulnerable to political change varies across time and space. Opportunities emerge when the established order becomes vulnerable to the actions of contenders and when their costs of acting are reduced (Oliver, 2013). People need to know about such options for collective action and need to see it as an opportunity to acquire social change (Koopmans, 1999).

While both breakdown and political opportunities refer to external, variable processes that increase the likelihood of collective action, resource mobilization mainly focuses on internal social movement processes. As Buechler (2013b) aptly notes:

> The terms "strain" and "breakdown" inherently connote negative, problematic conditions to be prevented, avoided or repaired. They conveyed negative value judgments about the appropriateness of collective behavior. It was not just the notion of breakdown as a neutral causal mechanism that provoked the ire of resource mobilization and political process theorists; it was also the halo of negative value judgments surrounding the concept that drew their fire. The concept of opportunity was tailor-made for this debate. (p. 61)

On the one hand, the concept of "opportunities" provided the transvaluation sought by resource mobilization and political process proponents that allowed them to paint collective action in a positive light. Particularly in the US context, the concept of "opportunity" inherently signifies something to be sought, desired, seized, enjoyed, valued, and maximized. On the other hand, it preserved a way of talking about changes in structural conditions and cultural contexts that facilitate collective action.

2.4   The Psychological Branch: Motives and Emotions

In the 1970s, a burgeoning European social psychology got interested in large-scale group phenomena like intergroup conflict, spurred by theories on social identity like social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and the social identity model of crowd behavior (Reicher, 1996a). Three decades later, followed by another surge of collective action, research spurred by group-based emotion theory (e.g., Mackie et al., 2000; Smith & Kessler, 2004). Both identity and emotion perspectives brought the psychological branch back to prominence in the social psychology of

protest. It was argued that the by then dominant American social cognition paradigm was overly individualistic, reductionist, and asocial (e.g., Billig, 1976; Taylor & Brown, 1979; Turner & Oakes, 1986). This made it difficult to properly theorize about large-scale group phenomena like intergroup conflict, social protest, social change, and crowd events (Hogg & Williams, 2000). The emerging European social psychology – at the heart of which was social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) – wanted to reintroduce the collective self to the mainstream of social psychology by specifying individual cognitive processes and wider social (intergroup) processes and, most important, the way they inter-relate. This perspective helped to bring the psychological branch back to prominence in the social psychology of protest.

The dominance of the "cold" cognitive approach in the 1980s was followed by a "warm" affective turn. Concerns were raised about the relative lack of focus on emotions and motives in explaining social behavior (Franzoi, 2009). In the early 1990s, a number of social psychologists sought to establish a more balanced view by blending the traditional "hot" and "cold" perspectives into what some have termed the "Warm Look" (e.g., Evans, 2008; Franzoi, 2009). This Warm Look appears to be important in the context of protest. In fact, the cognitive component of injustice (as reflected in the observation that one receives less than the standard of comparison) has been found to have less influence on protest participation than the affective component (as expressed by such feelings as dissatisfaction, indignation, and discontent about these outcomes; Van Zomeren et al., 2008).

From the 1970s on, social psychologists have begun to investigate individual participation in episodes of collective action and political protest. Classical theories proposed that people participate in protest to express their grievances, stemming from relative deprivation, frustration, or perceived injustice (Berkowitz, 1972; Gurr, 1970; Lind & Tyler, 1988). As we have seen in the legacy of the sociological branch, social movement scholars began to question the effects of grievances on movement participation and proposed that the question to be answered is not so much whether people who engage in protest are aggrieved but whether aggrieved people engage in protest.

Gradually, social psychologists have explored more and more motives that stimulate people to engage in collective action and help them to overcome the dilemma of collective action. In fact, the previously described shifts from "asocial" to "social" and from "cold" to "warm" can also be observed in the paradigmatic development of the psychological

branch. Initially the focus was on the perceived costs and benefits of participation; participation was seen as an opportunity to change a state of affairs at affordable costs. It also became clear, however, that instrumental reasoning is not a sufficient reason to participate in collective action. Meanwhile, scholars such as Reicher (1984), Simon et al. (1998), and Klandermans and de Weerd (2000), began to explore the role of collective identity in protest behavior. And more recently we see a growing interest in how emotions fuel protest participation (e.g. Goodwin et al., 2001; Jasper, 1997, 1998; Van Zomeren et al., 2008). Goodwin et al. (2001, p. 1) were wondering how "academics have managed to ignore the swirl of passions all around them in political life." As we previously discussed in the sociological branch, in the first half of the previous century, emotions were at the center of protest studies. As a reaction to these irrational and emotional explanations, the dominating academic political analyses on protest participation then shifted to rationalistic, structural, and organizational explanations. But, by reducing protest participation to a structural and rational process, researchers appear to have swung the pendulum too far in the opposite direction. As a result, emotions as explanations of protest were neglected altogether. Recently, it has been acknowledged that, with the shift from irrational to rational, the baby was thrown out with the bathwater. Indeed, the rational trend has now been reversed and we see emotions back on the research agenda of social movement scholars. Finally, a fifth element was added to the equation. In our work on migrants' protest participation we introduced social embeddedness (Klandermans et al., 2008). We argued that discussions about politics within networks increases efficacy and transforms individual grievances into shared grievances and group-based anger, which translates in protest participation. This fifth element brought the relational aspect into social psychological studies of collective action (see also Van Zomeren, 2015).

In our Social Psychology of Protest paper in *Current Sociology* (Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013) we describe these approaches in terms of the five core concepts affecting protest participation: grievances, efficacy, identity, emotions, and embeddedness. Each approach gives a different answer to the question of why people participate in protest campaigns, namely, people participate: (a) because they see it as an opportunity to change, at affordable costs, a state of affairs with which they are unhappy; (b) because they identify with the others involved; (c) because they want to express their anger and indignation toward a target that has violated their values, and (d) because people are embedded in

social circles where individual grievances are translated into political claims. For this moment, we will leave it at that, as these approaches will extensively be discussed in Chapter 4, where we deal with the dynamics of demand.

2.5 Meta-analytical Proof

The downturn of the sociological branch and the upturn of the psychological branch is confirmed by a reanalysis of the meta-analysis of Van Zomeren et al. (2008). These authors meta-analyzed over sixty articles on collective action published between 1974 and 2009, incorporating over 200 studies[1]. Our reanalysis of their data shows that 69 percent of the collective action studies between 1974 and 1989 were conducted by the sociological branch, while this figure decreased to only 17 percent between 1989 and 1999. Importantly, it was not that the social psychology of protest declined in popularity overall; rather that the psychological branch increased markedly (see Table 2.1). The emerging European social psychology – at the heart of which was social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) – contributed to this increase in collective action studies. This is also confirmed by the reanalysis of Van Zomeren's data: 35 percent of the studies between 1990 and 1999 had identity as their main independent variable, against only 6 percent from 1974 to 1989 (see Table 2.1). The reanalysis also reveals that, although grievances as predictors of protest disappeared from sociological and political scientific approaches, they remain in the domain of the social psychology of protest. In fact, a stable 40 percent of the studies conducted between 1974 and 2009 adopted injustice (grievances) as their primary independent variable.

The period since 2000 saw an explosive growth of the psychological branch. Table 2.1 indicates that 173 studies (against 32 and 40 in, respectively, 1974–1989 and 1990–1999) were conducted in this period, of which 78 percent were conducted by social psychologists. In addition to an increase *and* normalization of collective action participation (Dalton et al., 2010; Meyer & Tarrow, 1998), the role of intergroup emotions theory (Smith, 1993) cannot be neglected. Mackie et al. (2000) developed intergroup emotions theory to show that intergroup relations can best be understood in terms of motivating forces elicited by emotions that group members feel about their own and other groups. After intergroup emotions

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[1] We would like to thank Martijn van Zomeren and his colleagues for generously making the data available to us.

Table 2.1 *Paradigmatic development of the social psychology of protest from 1974–2009: Predictors*

Period	Discipline: Sociology vs. Social Psychology		Predictors: Most Important IV		
	No. of Studies	% Sociology	Injustice (%)	Efficacy (%)	Identity (%)
1974–1989	32	69% Soc	44	50	6
1990–1999	40	17% Soc	40	25	35
2000–2009	173	22% Soc	39	22	39

theory appeared in the social psychological protest literature, 63 percent of the studies conducted between 2004 and 2009 departed from intergroup emotions theory (based on our reanalysis of the meta-analysis of Van Zomeren et al., 2008). Hence, first social identity theory and later intergroup emotions theory helped to place collective action firmly on the research agendas of social psychologists.

2.6   Methodological Approaches to the Social Psychology of Protest

The legacy of the past has so far documented how the psychological branch gained prominence over the sociological branch in the field of the social psychology of protest. This disciplinary shift is of course not without consequences for methodological approaches, both in terms of methods employed and sampling respondents. Sociological social psychologists use shared social knowledge from a macro- or meso-level culture to explain relatively enduring patterns of social interaction, and use psychology at the micro-level, typically – though not always – investigating these matters with qualitative methods. Psychological social psychologists, on the other hand, typically deal with the factors that lead us to behave in each way in the (imagined) presence of others and look at the conditions under which certain behavior/actions and feelings occur. In general, they prefer laboratory-based, empirical findings. The volume *Methods of Social Movement Research*, edited by Klandermans and Staggenborg (2002), provides an interesting overview of the methods employed by sociological social psychologists of protest, ranging from survey research, discourse analysis, event analysis, interviewing, participant observation, case study, and network analysis. Remarkably, experiments and scenario studies are not discussed in this volume. Psychological social psychologists, on the

other hand, consider experimentation to be the way to reach causal inferences and often rely on student samples in order to assess causal claims (Greenwood, 2003). In her historical overview of the social psychology, Schruijer (2012, p. 9) describes how laboratory experiments became the norm:

> A new meaning of "experimentation" came with Lewin, for whom the experimental situation constituted a situation in which group properties and not individual properties were to be studied. Under the influence of Festinger a new meaning of experimentation emerged yet again. For him an experiment was a tool to demonstrate causal relationships between independent and dependent variables under "pure" circumstances, unconfounded by other variables. From studying real groups, social psychology shifted to studying statistical groups where individuals were randomly allocated to ad hoc groups … By the mid-1970s laboratory experimentation had become programmatic and normative.

Following the disciplinary shift in the social psychology of protest, we would expect a decrease of survey research and an increase in experimental methods with student samples over the last four decades. Again a reanalysis of Van Zomeren et al.'s (2008) meta-analytical overview provides insightful information on this historical development. Van Zomeren and colleagues categorized the 245 studies into experimental studies (involving *laboratory experiments* defined by random assignment to experimental conditions) and nonexperimental studies (not involving random assignment to conditions). Nonexperimental studies involve *scenario studies* (defined by the absence of random assignment and by the "imagined" reality of collective disadvantage), *survey studies* (defined by the absence of random assignment and by the reality of collective disadvantage), and *field studies* (defined by the absence of random assignment and by the collection of data in the context of a real protest event).

In the 1970s–1980s – when the sociological branch was dominant – 78 percent of the studies employed survey methods, while experiments were completely absent. After 2000 – when the psychological branch became dominant – 35 percent of the studies employed experimental methods (Table 2.2).

While the sheer number of all types of studies went up, the considerable increase in the share of experimental method studies is at the expense of survey and scenario studies. Field studies remain a minority throughout the four decades (perhaps biased by the somewhat stringent definition of field study as *Collection of data during protest events*). A similar shift also occurred in relation to who participated in studies of protest. Studies

Table 2.2 *Paradigmatic development of the social psychology of protest from 1974–2009: Methods*

Period	Discipline		Sample		Method			
	No. of studies Nonstudents		% Sociology	%	Experiment (%)	Scenario (%)	Survey (%)	Field (%)
1974–1989	32		69% Soc	87	0	9	78	13
1990–1999	40		17% Soc	65	28	10	62	0
2000–2009	173		22% Soc	54	35	2	54	9

conducted in the 1970s–1980s reported samples where approximately 90 percent were nonstudents, while in studies conducted after 2000 nearly half of all participants were students. Hence, the increase in the number of social psychologists in the field of collective action was associated with an increase in student samples and laboratory experiments. It should be noted, however, that while student samples and laboratory experiments are employed in 45 percent of the psychological studies of protest (60/134), this figure is still considerably lower than that for social psychology as a whole, where 80–90 percent of papers concern student samples and laboratory experiments (Henry, 2008).

This overview of methodological trends shows that, over time, experiments and survey research became the dominant approaches in the social psychology of protest. Each method has its strengths, weaknesses, and challenges. In what follows we will provide a short overview of each method, describe studies conducted with the method, present illustrative findings from such studies, and indicate the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges of the method.

2.6.1　Experiments

An experiment involves randomly assigning participants to groups (e.g., experimental and control) and the direct manipulation of one or more independent variables to determine the effect(s) on some outcome (the dependent variable) while controlling other relevant factors. Most social psychology experiments have excellent control over extraneous and confounding variables and they typically have mediating and moderating variables incorporated in the design. Consequently, most social psychology experiments are convincingly able to demonstrate sophisticated causal

patterns of relationships. An example is Simon and colleagues' experimental study on identity-affirming functions of social movement support. In two laboratory experiments they manipulated possession of identity (certain as opposed to uncertain). They found that people who strongly identified with the peace movement showed more movement support (i.e., made more monetary donations to the peace movement) under conditions of uncertain as opposed to certain possession of identity as a movement supporter. They concluded that movement support serves an identity affirming function under such conditions (Simon et al., 2008). Another example of an experimental approach comes from Van Zomeren et al. (2004). They conducted three experiments that showed that disadvantaged group members' feelings of group-based anger and group efficacy beliefs independently predicted their collective action tendencies. Experimental manipulations of procedural unfairness and emotional support predicted group-based anger, whereas an experimental manipulation of instrumental support predicted group efficacy. Based on these experiments, they concluded that emotion-focused versus problem-focused coping processes are context-dependent, and that their activation depends on the emotional and contextual resources people have available and put to use (Van Zomeren et al., 2004).

Experiments thus enable us to test causal relations that determine (intended) collective action behavior with a degree of control that is most often not feasible outside the laboratory. This strength, however, comes with the drawback of generalizability. As researchers must find a way to reduce the process or mechanism of interest to something that can be studied in a laboratory over a short period of time, phenomena are often studied within an empirical vacuum with respect to the original events of interest (Greenwood, 2003). This context-stripping may limit ecological validity, generalizability, and, consequently, the societal relevance of laboratory results (Berkowitz & Donnerstein, 1982). Experiments come with yet another weakness, as social psychologists tend to restrict their experimental methodology to that of student samples (Henry, 2008). The external validity at question here is not about the artificiality of the laboratory setting, but to what extent research findings from student samples are an accurate description of how individuals in the broader world typically think, feel, and behave (Henry, 2008; Sears, 1986). The challenge that is to a degree inherent to experiments is thus to enhance mundane experimental realism. The second challenge, not inherent to the experimental method per se but certainly associated with it through common practice, is moving beyond student samples.

2.6.2   Scenario Studies

Scenario studies are defined by Van Zomeren et al. (2008) as the imagined reality of collective disadvantage and by the absence of random assignment and are often used in social psychological experimentation. The word "scenario" is rooted in theater. It refers to a script-like characterization of an imagined sequence of future events and needs to be plausible and internally consistent to be accepted and useful (see Kirsch, 2004 for a review of scenario planning literature).

Scenario studies are much rarer than experiments, but we found an interesting example of an experiment involving scenarios carried out by Shepherd et al. (2013). In 2002, the President of the United States (George W. Bush) and the Prime Minister of Great Britain (Tony Blair) announced that American and British troops were going to be deployed in Iraq to search for weapons of mass destruction and to free the Iraqi people. It was in reference to this context that Shepherd et al. (2013) developed their scenario. They used a scenario of an aversive event that seemed plausible but had not yet taken place. Participants were informed that the study concerned their thoughts about the current situation in Iran. They read a brief report summarizing Iran's alleged nuclear missile program. This outlined the allegation that Iran was developing nuclear weapons, and described the sanctions imposed on Iran by the United Nations, together with Britain's stance on this issue. The report said that the British Foreign Secretary stated that he would not rule out the use of military force against Iran. To make this more concrete, participants were told that British forces might bomb Iran's nuclear facilities if Iran did not start to comply with the United Nations. Shepherd et al. (2013) investigated the motivations and the role of (anticipated) group emotions that people can have to act collectively. They found that illegitimacy significantly predicted the anticipation of group-based guilt, shame and anger. Additionally, anticipated group-based shame and anger positively predicted collective action against a proposed ingroup transgression, such as the use of military force against Iran's alleged nuclear weapons program. Moreover, the relation between illegitimacy and collective action was mediated by anticipated group-based anger and partially mediated by anticipated group-based shame.

Mundane realism scenario studies are, compared to experiments, a step in the right direction (given that the scenarios often frame "real" issues, are pretested, and are judged to be plausible and internally consistent). However, scenario studies still often involve placing participants in an

unfamiliar (laboratory) context where factors that normally affect behavior, such as social norms, attitudes, and social motives, have relatively little impact. Therefore, one must remain cautious in generalizing from this artificial environment to natural settings. An advantage of scenario studies – this time compared to field studies – is that the use of scenarios allows researchers to force the pace of the research, because they do not have to wait for natural or social events to reproduce the appropriate scenario needed to investigate a particular issue. Also, scenarios allow the researcher to select when and possibly where a study will take place. Finally, they provide an opportunity to study behavior that rarely occurs or that cannot easily be studied in another way, collective action participation being an example.

A weakness of this method, or at least of how it has been practiced, is the reduced ability of inferring causality, as most scenario studies are correlational, and no random assignment of respondents takes place. However, this weakness is in some scenario studies inventively and elegantly resolved by installing experimental conditions into the scenario. In fact, this is precisely what Shepherd et al. (2013) did in Study 3, where they manipulated both the salience and valence of anticipated group-based emotions. Another important question is whether "imagined" scenarios evoke real-life feelings and thoughts that can translate into "real" rather than intended behavior. We do not know whether imagined grievances and indignation are like "real" intergroup disadvantages. Moreover, overall levels of group-based guilt are actually generally very low in studies of it (Leach et al., 2013). Survey research attempts to tackle this issue of ecological validity.

2.6.3   Survey Studies

Van Zomeren et al. (2008) defined survey studies by the reality of collective disadvantage – in contrast to the imagined reality of scenario studies – and again with the absence of random assignment. Survey research is widely applied in the social sciences. The broad area of survey research encompasses any measurement procedures that involve asking questions of respondents (Oppenheim, 1992). A "survey" can be anything from a short paper-and-pencil questionnaire to an intensive one-on-one indepth interview. Survey research has changed dramatically in the last ten years. Paper–pencil surveys have partly been superseded by Internet or cell phone surveys, and a whole new variation of group interview has evolved as focus group methodology.

Both questionnaires and interviews are widely used in collective action studies. Take, for example, survey studies by Simon and colleagues (Simon et al., 1998; Stürmer et al., 2003). In these studies, members of the fat acceptance, the elderly, and the gay movements were surveyed about their motives to participate in the respective movements. Another example is a study by Smith et al. (2008) wherein, as part of a mail survey about their work experiences, university faculty members reported their emotional reactions to group inequities in faculty pay and benefits. Their results indicate that sadness, fear, and anger are distinct emotional responses to a collective disadvantage. Hence, rather than laboratory-created disadvantages, or imagined disadvantages in scenario studies, these faculty members experienced "real" collective disadvantages which evoked emotions with a correspondingly "real" intensity. Group-based anger mediated the relationship between collective disadvantage and willingness to protest, whereas group-based sadness mediated the relationship between collective disadvantage and organizational loyalty (Smith et al., 2008). The study by Linden and Klandermans (2007) on extreme right-wing activist careers provides an example of interview research. Life-history interviews conducted with thirty-six extreme right activists in the Netherlands revealed that becoming an extreme right activist was a matter of continuity, conversion, or compliance. It was this method – skillfully employed by Annette Linden – which enabled her to get access to this "inaccessible" group. The life-history interviews, which could take up to three hours, created a trustful atmosphere in which even the most suspicious activist was willing to share information[2].

The recently developed opinion-based group method (e.g., Bliuc et al., 2007) adds to the toolkit of social psychological research. The method involves bringing groups of people together who are at least sympathizers of a cause and asking them to engage in a planning session where they are to agree on strategies that can be used to further that cause. Their intentions to act in line with that cause are then measured and compared to people who did not engage in a group planning session (Bliuc et al., 2007). Through group-based interaction, processes of consensus and dissensus can be observed which are likely to resemble "talking politics" in everyday settings. This method is designed to observe and monitor how shared grievances, shared identity, and shared norms of action are created in social interaction

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[2] Note that because of the quantitative focus of Van Zomeren et al.'s (2008) meta-analysis, their analysis only comprises survey studies based on questionnaires; survey studies based on interviews are not considered.

rather than by surveying isolated individuals. Obviously, this is of great importance in the context of collective action, which is by definition a collective process (cf. Gamson, 1992b for more on focus groups and for a more recent approach see Saunders & Klandermans, 2019).

As surveys are about "real" collective disadvantages, mundane realism is often higher than experiments or scenario studies. However, this strength comes again with a weakness. Compared to experiments, survey research might have less control over extraneous and confounding variables. Moreover, no conclusions can be drawn on causal direction, because all measures incorporated in the design – dependent and independent variables, but also mediating and moderating variables – are often collected at one moment in time. In other words, most survey research is correlational in nature. However, some collective action studies show that clever research designs may enhance causal interpretations of the findings (e.g., the aforementioned opinion-based group method). Clever designs are characterized by the virtue of comparison (Klandermans, 2015b), such as comparison over time or between movements, demonstrations, or cross-national. Comparative research enables the examination of similarities and differences across contexts, and as such furthers our theorizing on collective action. A panel study conducted by Stürmer and Simon (2004b) on the effect of identification with the German gay movement on collective action participation provides an interesting example. These authors designed a panel study with a one-year interval and an additional follow-up telephone survey three years after the initial measurement. During the second measurement gay marriage was high on the political and public agenda, which, according to the authors, would politicize gay identity. They found that identification with the gay movement predicted participation; however, when the political conflict flared up, identification with the broader disadvantaged group (i.e., gays in general) also predicted identification. Thus, the challenge of survey research is to map out the causal sequences that determine collective action behavior of "real" people in real life situations.

2.6.4 Field Studies

Van Zomeren et al. (2008) defined field studies by the collection of data during a protest event and by the absence of random assignment. According to this definition, respondents are only those who participate in these protests. Accordingly, the motivational and emotional constellation of protesters versus nonprotesters cannot be compared. We therefore

slightly extend this definition of field research by defining it as research that takes place in a natural setting outside of a laboratory. In a field study, participants do not know that they are in a study or an experiment and naturally undertake the treatment or experimental conditions. Tunnell (1977) defines three theoretically independent dimensions commonly used in field designs: natural behavior, natural setting, and natural treatment. Although each of these dimensions injects a bit of the real world into psychological research, each reflects a separate aspect of reality. The natural behavior dimension concerns the dependent variable in the research design (e.g., participation vs. nonparticipation). Natural behavior is not established or maintained for the sole purpose of conducting research but is part of the person's existing response repertoire. Natural setting refers to almost any setting outside the lab, in which people "naturally" find themselves. The third dimension, natural treatment, refers to a naturally occurring discrete event to which the subject is exposed. The event (which serves as a "treatment" in design vocabulary) is natural in that the subject would have experienced it with or without the presence of a researcher. Natural treatments are temporally bounded processes and do not include variables such as gender, ethnicity, or educational level. Examples of natural treatments are mobilization campaigns, moral shocks, and suddenly imposed grievances. In correlational designs, all participants receive the same treatment, while in experimental designs using natural treatments, only a selected subset of participants receive the treatment; for example, some are reached by a mobilization campaign, while others are not (see, among others, Klandermans & Oegema, 1987).

Studies on "real" collective action behavior in natural settings are relatively rare in the social psychology of protest. A good example is Klandermans' (1984) longitudinal field study on action intentions in a labor union campaign during collective negotiations. From the end of November 1978 through July 1979 he interviewed union members about once a month, always shortly before or after an important event. The advantage of this design is that it illustrates the course of the campaign by comparing the outcomes of the successive interviews, while the effect of a single event can also be examined by comparing the outcomes of the interviews before and after that event (Klandermans, 1984). Another example is Tausch and Becker's (2013) study on student protests. These authors designed a two-wave longitudinal study in the context of student protests tuition fees in Germany, which was conducted before and after collective action had resulted in both a success and a failure. They examined how emotional responses to success and failure of collective

action relate to willingness to engage in future collective action. They found that both pride (in response to success) and anger (in response to failure) motivate future collective action. Tausch and Becker seized the opportunity of successful and failed student protests to design a quasi-experimental "before" and "after" treatment field study. This design enabled them to examine how psychological reactions to the outcomes of collective action shape motivations to engage in such action in the future, which is a blind spot in the literature. Ironically, they did use student samples *but* in field research with "real" collective disadvantages and "real" collective action.

A final example of field studies shows that the Internet can also figure as "a natural setting," where "natural behavior" is exhibited. Van Stekelenburg et al. (2010) examined polarizing public debates as they developed on the Internet over time. They employed automated content analysis to analyze posts of two opposing web forums used by native Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch youngsters between 2003 and 2005. This period encompassed several devastating intergroup incidents: the murder of Theo van Gogh and bomb attacks in Madrid and London, which functioned as "natural treatments." Their content analysis showed how the debates on the two web forums were shaped by the incidents and polarized over time. Collective identities politicized and radicalized, social judgments polarized, and emotions intensified, with hate and fear prominent. These three examples show how social psychologists of protest seize the opportunity of "real life" events to turn them into quasi-experimental study designs on "real" collective disadvantages leading to "real" collective action. As such, these studies attempt to move from correlation to causation, while securing high mundane realism.

We hasten to say, however, that the advantage of mundane realism also comes with drawbacks. First, random assignment of subjects to experimental conditions is usually not possible. Moreover, it may be hard to find a selection of comparable dependent measures across studies. Likewise, researchers need to be creative and inventive in finding appropriate comparison and control groups to ensure that the research effect is due to the natural-process treatment and not to extraneous factors. The use of standardized procedures – as in laboratory experiments – is thus of utmost importance. Therefore, although field studies are an improvement in terms of mundane realism, one should still be cautious when generalizing findings that emerge from one setting to other settings. Take, for instance, the online identification processes on populist right-wing and Moroccan-Dutch web forums: we cannot assume that these findings generalize

straightforwardly to identity processes in the offline world. Field research also tends to be more expensive and involves more resources compared to social psychological laboratory research.

The collective action literature in social psychology has been built over the past several decades on a foundation of evidence gathered largely from student samples. As rich, detailed, logical, and comprehensive as this body of literature is, what does it tell us about the reality of this form of political behavior? For example, both developmental issues (Dalton et al., 2010) as well as the liberal culture of the university (Dalton et al., 2010) may be influencing the pattern of results for these student samples. The question as to what laboratory-based studies tell us about the reality of collective action behavior is therefore still relevant. Nevertheless, this is not meant to be a call to stop using student samples in collective action research. Instead, it is a call to consider the many, varied, creative approaches that we may turn to for converging evidence that what we study goes beyond the context of students in university settings.

Possible sources beyond laboratory settings and college student responding include general population surveys (e.g., World Values Survey, Eurobarometer, etc.), archival research, and adult convenience samples (both online, like Mturk, and offline). In addition, the Internet is proving to be a valuable resource for data collection on general adult samples (e.g., Nosek et al., 2005; Van Stekelenburg et al., 2010). Although many of these populations are also convenience samples with their own idiosyncratic generalizability problems, they provide converging evidence to accompany our student samples in giving us greater confidence in the theoretical ideas we test. Whether the methodology involves college students in a lab, adults surveyed or "observed" over the Internet or at a demonstration, general population data sets and their idiosyncratic operationalizations of political behavior, or nonexperimental Internet data, each methodology by itself is flawed in its own way and cannot definitively reveal the nature of any social psychological phenomenon by itself. However, each methodology also carries certain strengths and, when those strengths converge to tell a coherent story, we can make more confident claims about the *who*, the *why*, and the *when* of collective action participation.

Ultimately, the social psychology of protest seeks to understand natural political behavior following natural treatments, taking place in natural settings. This makes observing political behavior in its natural context not only an irreplaceable method for this endeavor, but one that comes with many challenges. The biggest challenge will perhaps be to integrate

both the level of control usually found in the laboratory and the natural dimensions associated with the field. We need a keen eye to recognize naturalistic dimensions and learn to exploit them. In doing so, we can also take inspiration from other disciplines, for example political scientists who conduct so-called field experimentation, a methodology that involves experimental interventions in real-world settings (e.g., Druckman et al., 2006). Experiments or quasi-experiments may also be embedded into survey and/or scenario methodology that can be more easily distributed to nonstudent samples. And finally, nonexperimental methods can rely on other techniques for making causal inferences, such as longitudinal analyses (e.g., Tausch & Becker, 2013). There is a great deal of flexibility and creativity available to those seeking to branch out beyond student sample use, also for experimentation.

2.7   To Conclude

Classic sociological theories of collective behavior describe contentious politics as spontaneous, irrational, expressive, often violent outbursts of collective action as a reaction to felt grievances, discontent, and anomie. The protesters, according to the classical approaches, were stressed, alienated, frustrated, deprived, disintegrated, and marginalized individuals affected by economic crises, unfair distribution of welfare, social rights, and normative breakdown. Right or wrong, the negative image of collective action played a major role in the subsequent decline of theories of collective behavior. Over the last decades there has been a movement back toward some of the kinds of emphases that Smelser and colleagues chose – dubbed Smelser's revenge (Chazel, 2001). More recent research has been much more about the emotional and ideational links between actions and identity, emotions and structural factors.

Perhaps it is time for an active reconsideration of the role of strain and breakdown. According to Buechler (2013b), any successful effort in this direction would require three levels of specification. Most obviously, we need greater specificity about what it is that undergoes strain or breakdown. Second, we need greater specificity about the mechanisms by which any type of strain or breakdown is translated into collective action. Third, we need greater specificity about what types of grievances and collective action are most likely to emerge from specific types of breakdown and strain. The classical collective behavior approach presumed an extremely broad spectrum of collective action, from panics, crazes, and fads to riots, rebellions, and revolutions. Recent social movement theory has fractured the spectrum

and claimed movements as its domain while paying less attention to other forms of collective action. This is precisely where a revised breakdown theory may have its greatest relevance. For example, the distinction between routine forms of collective action deriving from resource availability and nonroutine forms responding to strain and breakdown needs to be further explored if we are to specify which types of collective action are most likely to be associated with social strain and breakdown.

Olson's *The Logic of Collective Action* (1965) is viewed as an impulse for a truly paradigmatic watershed. The term "collective action" often came to be understood as referring specifically to actions that led to the provision of public or collective goods. New assumptions about agency, rationality, politics, and organization led to different questions and answers than the classical collective behavior tradition. Movements were seen as enduring, patterned, and even institutionalized expressions of political struggles over conflicting interests and scarce resources (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Oberschall, 1973), rather than short-lived riots, crazes, panics, or fads. These new approaches equated collective action not with deviance or social disorganization but with political or organizational conflict. The presumably rational, political nature of such actors and their interests displaced explanations emphasizing marginality, deprivation, frustration, tension, and strain. In all these ways, strain and breakdown imagery was eclipsed by new concerns with the mobilization of resources and political opportunities. From the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, strain and breakdown theories all but disappeared. The new generation of social movement scholars drew boundaries and distanced themselves from the term collective behavior and all it signified (McCarthy & Zald, 1977).

This new theoretical focus emphasized the *structural* rather than *psychological* aspects of protest. In his *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency*, Doug McAdam (1982) even asserts that social movements must now be regarded as political phenomena, no longer as psychosocial ones. As a result, empirical and theoretical approaches favored resources and opportunities over breakdown and strain as *the* explanation for protest participation. In this scientific climate, the sociological branch of the social psychology of protest was pushed to the margins, while sociological and political scientific approaches became – and still are – the major paradigms in the social movement literature.

This is not to say that the sociological branch was abandoned all together: there were some isolated but influential voices. Take Bert Klandermans (1984), who argued that efficacy is the social psychological reflection of resources and political opportunities. Interestingly, but

understandable in that paradigmatic era, sociologists "accused" his work of being too psychological (Schrager, 1985). Klandermans responded that social psychological approaches are a necessity as long as people differ in their reactions despite living under similar structural circumstances. This reasoning became *the* fundamental rationale for the social psychological study of protest. Or, to give yet another example, Piven and Cloward (1977) show that people depleted from resources are roused to indignation and defiance. Occasionally "poor people" *are* politically active. In times of crisis, *declining* resources and political opportunities can go together with *increasing* protest participation. Dworkin's "capability" and "agitation" mechanisms may clarify this (Dworkin, 1981a, 1981b). The capability mechanism builds on resources and opportunities people have at their disposal, and protest participation is seen as a problem-solving strategy. The agitation mechanism builds on motivations and emotions triggered by dissatisfaction and may create a nothing-to-lose-strategy (Kamans et al., 2011). As such, the capability and agitation mechanisms focus, respectively, on the question of why people *can* and *want* to participate (Verba et al., 1995). Knowledge on the respective "working" of the capability and agitation mechanism is scarce. As social psychologists focus on motivations and emotions driving protest participation, they are well-prepared to take up this challenge. Grievances, efficacy, identification, instrumental and/or expressive motivations, anger, and embeddedness collaborate in reinforcing protest participation, but how they work together in cases of capability or in cases of agitation is a question still to be answered.

Today, theoretical approaches to protest are often categorized as based on structural and social constructivist paradigms. Examples of structural paradigms are resource mobilization and political process theory. As discussed, resource mobilization approaches analyze the meso level and put an emphasis on organizational resources, while the political process approach analyzes the macro level and emphasizes the political context of protest. The social-constructivist perspective takes the micro level as its point of departure and concentrates on questions of how individuals perceive and interpret these conditions and focuses on the role of cognitive, affective, and ideational roots of contention. Yet, the decision to protest is not taken in a social vacuum. To the contrary, we firmly believe that the political power play is – by definition – fought out in the sociopolitical intergroup context, and thus that contestation is contextualized. In Chapter 3 we will elaborate our ideas on what we mean by contextualized contestation and will, step-by-step, build our model of contextualized contestation along the lines of Coleman's boat.