

Collective Action—and Then What?

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Two aspects of the social psychology of collective action are of particular interest to social movement organizers and activists: how to motivate people to engage in collective action, and how to use collective action to create social change. The second question remains almost untouched within social psychology. The present article delineates research from political science and sociology concerning variables that moderate the effectiveness of collective action and maps these variables against intergroup research. Within intergroup social psychology, there is a theoretical literature on what needs to be done to achieve change (e.g., changing identification, social norms, or perceptions of legitimacy, stability, permeability). The article considers possible testable hypotheses concerning the outcomes of collective action which can be derived from intergroup research and from the synthesis of the three disciplines. For theoreticians and practitioners alike, a program of research which addresses the social-psychological outcomes of collective action and links these to identities, norms, intentions, and support for social change in bystanders, protagonists, and opponents has a great deal of interest.

Two aspects of the social psychology of collective action are of particular interest to social movement organizers and activists: how to motivate people to engage in collective action, and how to use collective action to create social change.¹ The first has received a great deal of research attention. Empirical data suggest that people can be motivated to engage in collective action by individual instrumental

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¹Many of the terms used in this article are defined differently across disciplines or theoretical approaches. In this article *collective action* is defined as the intentional action of individuals sharing a common group membership to benefit a group. It does not require physical and temporal proximity of members acting (e.g., I include voting and signing petitions), explicit political aims (although I focus on the political domain in this article), or prior planning (e.g., I include rioting). By *social change* I denote both formal policy change to benefit a group, and informal changes in their social value, status or power. *Outcomes of collective action* include social change but also variables such as identities, norms, sociostructural beliefs, and intergroup attitudes.

incentives and social rewards (e.g., Klandermans, 1997); social identities, or one's sense of oneself as part of a group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; also, Deaux, Reid, Martin, & Bikmen, 2006; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004); collective effectiveness, or success in achieving group goals (e.g., Klandermans, 1997; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987); and collective emotions such as anger (e.g., Iyer, Shmader, & Lickel, 2007; van Zomeren et al., 2004).

The second question, how to use collective action to create social change, remains almost untouched within social psychology. In fact, the outcomes of collective action have rarely been addressed—in producing policy change or provoking a backlash, at the social level; at the individual level, in consolidating or eroding identification, the sense of oneself as part of the group. The present article attempts to delineate research from political science and sociology concerning variables that moderate the effectiveness of collective action and to map these variables against intergroup research. Within intergroup social psychology, there is a theoretical literature on what needs to be done to achieve change (e.g., changing identification, social norms, or perceptions of legitimacy, stability, permeability). Little research has addressed the effectiveness of collective action in achieving these ends, the factors that moderate that effectiveness, or indeed the psychological effects of any kind of collective action on protagonists, opponents or third parties. For activists and organizers, in short, there is a gap in the literature.

The goal of this article is to describe the hypotheses that social psychologists adopting a social identity approach could make concerning the effectiveness of collective action in motivating political opponents, bystanders, and participants in collective action to change. The contributions of a model of agentic normative influence are outlined, in drawing attention to the role of out-group norms and strategic responses to achieve group goals (Louis & Taylor, 2002; Louis, Taylor, & Neil, 2004; Louis, Taylor, & Douglas, 2005). In this section of the article, a broad scope is adopted, with the aim of sketching out some of the studies needed to fill the gap in the study of collective action and social change from a social-psychological perspective. The empirical literature from sociology and political science concerning the effectiveness of collective action is then reviewed, and its implications for social psychology are addressed. Finally, I reconsider in depth a subset of untested, theoretically interesting hypotheses for intergroup psychology and the sociology/political science of collective action research which can be derived from an integration of these research streams.

An Analysis of Intergroup Approaches to Effective Collective Action

This first section of the article discusses the implications of an important theoretical framework in intergroup psychology, social identity theory, in understanding the outcomes of collective action. The model is described elsewhere in

the special issue (van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009) and the literature (e.g., Bettencourt, Dorr, Charlton, & Hume, 2001; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987). In the present article, accordingly, readers' understanding of what social identities are will be taken for granted. I will also assume readers' familiarity with the propositions that salient identities motivate conformity to group norms, and that sociostructural beliefs about permeability, instability, and illegitimacy define threat for social identities and motivate status competition.

For the purposes of this article I stress that, in the social identity approach, individuals will engage in collective action to increase the status of the group under threat, but the model also proposes that collective action will emerge naturally at other times. Activism frequently persists in the face of pessimism regarding the action's ostensible goals (e.g., Cocking & Drury, 2004; Oegema & Klandermans, 1994). As noted above, collective action can be psychologically motivating when it expresses group emotions such as anger, moral outrage, or guilt (e.g., Iyer et al., 2007; van Zomeren et al., 2004), affirms the group's distinctiveness (e.g., Jetten, Spears, & Postmes, 2004), directly expresses the group identity (e.g., Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Stürmer & Simon, 2005), or affirms the illegitimacy of an intergroup relationship (e.g., Wright & Tropp, 2002). From the point of view of social psychology more broadly, research regarding the antecedents of collective action is associated with testable hypotheses concerning the outcomes of collective action, yet few if any studies have examined the hypotheses which naturally flow from the research.² Does engaging in collective action assuage the degree or the aversiveness of anger, moral outrage, or guilt? Does collective action convey to bystanders, protagonists, or opponents the distinctiveness of a group, or the illegitimacy, impermeability, and instability of an intergroup relationship? From a theoretical perspective, the hypotheses are interesting because they address the feedback from behavior to cognitions and emotion, which is rarely studied in intergroup psychology.

Under a learning model, for example, collective action would be reinforced if the action reduced aversive outcomes (such as guilt), and enhanced subjectively positive outcomes (emotions such as pride, or tangible successes such as effectiveness in creating social change). Yet both at the individual and the group level, research exists to support the hypothesis that individuals' emotions and beliefs might be changed by collective action to rationalize the behavior in the absence of positive outcomes. At the individual level, self-perception theory suggests that action can lead to identification as an actor, facilitating future action in the absence of any external rewards (e.g., Libby, Shaeffer, Eibach, & Slemmer, 2007). Research on commitment processes suggests that collective action could reinforce

²Many of these hypotheses are revisited in the discussion below—the reader may find it helpful to flip ahead and review Tables 1 and 2, which list a sampling of the untested hypotheses concerning outcomes of collective action which can be derived from social-psychological research.

and polarize identification and group norms (e.g., Freedman & Fraser, 1966), while dissonance research suggests that polarization could occur not despite but because of negative outcomes of the action (e.g., Cooper, 2007). Both theory and research exist to extend these processes to the group level (e.g., Bliuc, McGarty, Reynolds, & Muntele, 2007; Festinger, Riecken, & Schachter, 1956; Haslam et al., 2006). Drury and colleagues, who have initiated the social-psychological study of the outcomes of collective action (Drury & Reicher, 2009; see also, Drury & Reicher, 2000, 2005; Drury, Cocking, Beale, Hanson, & Rapley, 2005), have specifically documented increases in identification, collective empowerment, and collective self-objectification as a result of collective action, suggesting a virtuous circle of action and motivation reinforcement even in the absence of movement “success.”

There are thus competing hypotheses concerning the psychological outcomes of collective action. Simple learning theory suggests that the motivating beliefs, identities, and norms will persist and strengthen if they are reinforced by the desired outcomes of the behavior. However, self-perception research suggests that behavior itself can reinforce its motivation, independent of outcomes. Dissonance research suggests that aversive outcomes can be most likely to reinforce the underlying motivational (or rationalizing) cluster of beliefs, emotions, and identities. All of these models imply a growing spiral of committed action—yet social movements rise and fall, and wax and wane. Identifying the underlying processes, moderators, and contingencies which govern when these relationships apply is an exciting theoretical challenge.

Concerning the specific outcome of social change, little or no research has addressed the means by which group collective action might successfully change a status system, yet a number of key variables are clearly identified in intergroup theory and in many cases have been identified as triggers for collective action. A useful starting point from a social identity perspective is the proposition that collective action will create a change in the status system only to the extent it changes socio-structural beliefs or group identities.

What ought to work: Collective action to achieve social change. To start, four practices of effective social change may be derived from social identity theory. First, members of disadvantaged groups may create or increase the salience of an inclusive superordinate identity, so that advantaged group members perceive disadvantaged group members as part of a larger social identity, or “we” (e.g., Hornsey, Blackwood, & O’Brien, 2005; Wohl & Branscombe, 2005; Wohl, Branscombe, & Klar, 2006). By creating a salient superordinate identity, the collective action could change advantaged group members’ legitimacy perceptions concerning intergroup inequalities, and foster emotions such as moral outrage that could induce reparatory action (e.g., Iyer et al., 2007; Nickerson & Louis, 2008). For example, in the “I have a dream” rally, Martin Luther King electrified White and Black Americans by presenting thousands of cheering rally participants united

in support of a vision of a common national (American) identity. In the model advocated here, identification with a multiracial American identity would be associated with lowered perceptions of the status quo as legitimate and increased moral outrage and support for reparatory action.

Second, disruptive social action could create a sense of instability for advantaged group members, which would motivate change away from the status quo. Instability is threatening, as mentioned above, and should motivate defensive or conciliatory action to reduce the perceived threat (Louis et al., 2004, 2005; see also, e.g., Ng, 1982). Thus, for example, a wave of riots by members of disadvantaged groups could increase support for conciliatory action because they increase the perception that the status quo is unstable and threatened.

Third, challenging the permeability beliefs of advantaged group members could have the dual benefit of attenuating their sense of threat (reducing collective support for discrimination) and presenting a possible conflict between group values of egalitarianism and discriminatory practices (e.g., Wright & Taylor, 1998). If demonstrations occur to publicize examples of discriminatory behavior that hinders social mobility for disadvantaged group members, advantaged group members' intentions to discriminate further could be reduced both because of perceived security and because the discriminatory behavior itself is seen as contrary to the values of the group.

Fourth, if the challenge evokes an injunctive norm where discrimination is seen as inappropriate and widely disapproved of, the action could lead advantaged group members to change (Smith & Louis, 2008). Along similar lines as above, if demonstrations occur to publicize examples of discriminatory behavior that is seen as contrary to the values of the advantaged group itself, and particularly if advantaged group members are seen as participating in the demonstrations and condemning the behavior, the discrimination of nonparticipating advantaged group members could be reduced because they conform to the visible members of their group who have rejected the behavior.

What might backfire: Collective action that fails to achieve social change.

One interesting prediction which can be derived from social influence research is that if the collective action highlights a descriptive norm that discrimination is common and widely practiced, the action could create a backlash of increased discrimination! An example would be an antiracist campaign with a slogan such as "Ours is the most racist country in the world!" While designed to alert people to a problem, the slogan also provides a normative message that racism is common which could actually increase willingness to endorse racist action (Smith & Louis, 2008). Similarly, discrimination could be increased if collective action increases identification with the advantaged group. This rebound could occur by heightening the salience of differences between the groups, increasing cognitions of rejection (Barlow, Louis, & Hewstone, 2009), or perceived discrimination (Branscombe,

Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999), or by creating defensive resistance to an attempted imposition of a superordinate identity (e.g., Hornsey & Hogg, 2000).

An interesting trade-off is also created by the fact that action designed to highlight the commonalities among advantaged groups and disadvantaged groups and create a new superordinate “we” may achieve more positive intergroup attitudes (Wohl & Branscombe, 2005; Wohl et al., 2006). At the same time, however, it may lower disadvantaged groups’ identification and collective action intentions (Greenaway, Quinn, & Louis, 2008, 2009) and further lower the salience of intergroup inequalities, and advantaged groups’ intentions to take remedial action (Greenaway et al., 2009). That is, an action that is effective in mobilizing other disadvantaged group members would be one which emphasized the similarity among disadvantaged group members and their difference from the advantaged group, yet this depiction of the threatening intergroup context could fuel advantaged group identification, hostility, and discrimination.

It is certainly within the purview of social psychologists to study the effects of in-group and out-groups’ collective action in changing perceptions of the intergroup relationship, identification, and norms and via these mediating factors changing willingness to redress or confront a status inequality. As well as being theoretically interesting, in elaborating the reciprocal role of behavior to identity and threat perceptions, the research would have important implications for social movement organizers.

The Role of Group Norms: An Agentic Normative Influence Model

To consider conscious decision making about options in response to intergroup conflict, I have proposed a model of agentic normative influence which focuses on norms concerning how to take action to benefit the group—the appropriateness of demonstrating versus grumbling versus rioting, for example (Louis et al., 2004, 2005). I propose that group norms shape which costs and benefits people pay attention to, how likely the consequences are seen to be, and how much they are seen to be worth. When people identify with a group in conflict, they link the costs and benefits for themselves to the group level of analysis, so that a self-sacrificing action may be seen as subjectively beneficial because it benefits the group, even though the action leads to objectively harmful consequences on an individual level. The perception of suicide bombing as personally valued martyrdom is an extreme but obvious example of willingness to consider progroup action personally beneficial despite severe personal costs of the behavior. In addition, those who identify strongly with a group may be directly motivated by perceptions of the benefits of action for the group, as when someone who does not believe in heaven is nevertheless willing to die for a cause (Louis et al., 2004). These beliefs about the benefit or cost to the group of actions such as voting or soldiering are learned, in the agentic normative influence model, from group norms (Louis et al., 2005).

An important consequence of this approach is to draw attention to exposure to group norms as an outcome of collective action, and to collective action as a vehicle for the contestation of norms and identities (see also, e.g., Drury & Reicher, 2000, 2005, 2009; Simon & Klandermans, 2001). When participants engage in collective action, they are psychologically as well as physically positioned so that others' views of the social reality are communicated and reflected to them. Through participation in collective action, actors may learn to value the dimensions of success which advantage their group. Put differently, participating in collective action teaches group members, through social creativity, not only whether the group is effective on one dimension (such as policy change) but how the group is effective: which dimensions of the social world do change in response to action. By learning to value the achievements of the group's collective action and to evaluate the effectiveness of collective action along dimensions of success, motivation for future collective action is sustained and enhanced.

An alternative model can be derived from many theories of action, however, in which identification operates in parallel to rational-choice decision making (e.g., Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Stürmer & Simon, 2005), for example through self-stereotyping processes. Again, the social as well as the theoretical implications of the competing models are worth exploring, and the nature of the effect—the impact of collective action upon beliefs, norm perceptions, and identities—are appropriate to social-psychological research.

Empirical Studies: Does Collective Action Create Social Change?

Ineffectiveness research. We take a step back now from the social psychology of perception, intention, action, and identity and turn to the sociology and political science of policy change. Dispiritingly, some sociological research suggests that democratic collective action is globally ineffective. For example, Giugni (2004) analyzed social movement organizing in three areas (environmental, anti-nuclear, and peace) in three countries (the United States, Switzerland, and Italy) in the late 20th century, concluding that social movements had no impact on national policy (see also, e.g., McAdam & Su, 2002; Soule & Olzak, 2004). This research is associated with the contention that public policy is linked virtually isomorphically to public opinion polls, particularly on the “salient” issues that are seen as important by at least 1% of the public (see Manza, Cook, & Page, 2002, for a review).

In the most structured line of this research, Burstein (Burstein, 2006; Burstein, Bauldry, & Froese, 2005) sampled 60 bills proposed in an American sitting of congress. Overall, 66% failed and 33% passed (a strong bias against change, which would of course be orders of magnitude larger if failed proposals for social change were broadened to include issues that never made it to the stage of proposed legislation). For bills about “off-the-radar” nonsalient issues, 77% failed versus

23% succeeding, so that inertia was stronger unless the spotlight of public opinion was fixed on the target. Where the public opposed change the success rate was lower still (86% failed and 14% succeeded). In contrast, on issues where the public supported change, the success rate was higher (41% succeeded). Where an issue remained salient over time, policy change in the direction of public opinion occurred 79% of the time. Burstein's own conclusion is thus that social movement action generally has little causal role in policy change, as both are shaped by the third factor of public opinion.

Research asserting the responsiveness of government to public opinion is starkly at odds with public perceptions of how government works. Pharr, Putnam, and Dalton (2000, pp. 9–10) note that from the 1960s to 1998, the proportion of Americans agreeing that “Most elected officials don't care what people like me think” rose from a third to nearly two thirds. In Europe and Japan, according to the authors, more variability is apparent up until the 1980s, but a general downward trend in perceived responsiveness of politicians to public opinions may be discerned over the last 20 years.

Effectiveness research: Opportunity structures. Other researchers present a more intuitive analysis of the value of collective action. Focusing on Southern businesses' responses to civil rights activism, Luders (2006) notes several instances of rapid capitulation to collective action. Luders' theoretical model can be simplified as relating effectiveness to three factors. The first two are higher vulnerability of the target to disruption costs (e.g., lost profits from disruptive collective action, or from the effects of negative publicity upon social movement supporters' consumer decisions) and lower vulnerability to concession costs (e.g., lost profits from countermobilization by opponents). Both of these relationships in turn are moderated by the target's ability to take unilateral action and/or to mobilize a like-minded coalition of businesses to meet the social movement's demands. If the target cannot meet the movement's demands, the collective action is doomed to be ineffective. Relative success in persuading businesses to desegregate is attributed by Luders to civil rights actors' targeting vulnerable sectors, for example with consumer-oriented and local/immobile sectors offering more success than businesses which did not deal directly with consumers and/or were more mobile and able to escape disruption costs.

Similar analyses of successful collective action campaigns through economic leverage on businesses have been identified in environmental areas (e.g., Seel & Plows, 2000) and labor rights activism (e.g., Spar, 1998). Within political research, collective action has been associated with increases in government welfare spending (e.g., Fording, 1997), as well as policy change (e.g., Skocpol, Abend-Wein, Howard, & Lehmann, 1993). More broadly, researchers such as Foley (2003) have argued that campaign effectiveness varies significantly as a function of favorable political opportunity structures. In these models, mobilized interest groups

are necessary for policy change, but not sufficient (see also, Tarrow, 1994). Effective social change is achieved when collective actors pick a target that can change and that is responsive to the costs or benefits offered by the collective action and less responsive to the costs or benefits of countermobilization by political opponents.

Moderators: Type of movement, resources, and relationships with authority. Collective action by social movement organizations, interest groups, and political parties are not theoretically distinguished in social psychology, but important differences in outcomes can be observed and await social-psychological theorizing. For example, Burstein and Linton's (2002) review of existing research suggests that substantive effects on policy change were found 15% of the time for party organizations, and 31% of the time for nonparty organizations. Because the effects of collective action are nonsignificant or of little substantive impact in most published studies, Burstein and Linton argue that the impact of both types of organization is weak. Even a 15% success rate in inducing policy change might be welcome news to most social movement organizers, however!

Many political scientists would explain the lower success of parties relative to other groups by focusing on the proportion of swing voters mobilized as a key determinant of the effectiveness of collective action. Organizations' routine activities are thought to have less effect than novel, disruptive attention-getting techniques, since the former are already "factored in" to public opinion and thus to policy. Party organizations' collective action rarely impacts on policy, in this model, because the action does not change electoral alignment. Effectiveness may also increase in times of change, when the social movement organizations can deliver new information about trends in public opinion to politicians (e.g., Lohman, 1993).

Expanding on this point, Burstein and Linton (2002) note that measures of organizational resources, such as frequency of collective action, or membership, or budget (as proposed by resource mobilization theory), are the wrong organizational independent variables to relate to policy. To the extent that creating swing voters is the key process by which collective action creates policy change, novel collective action needs to be distinguished from routine collective action. New issues, newly formed organizations, new increases in the frequency or magnitude of collective action events: all these are expected to lead to policy change by changing electoral alignment, whereas "routine" actions maintain the status quo. Somewhat consistent with this argument, collective actions were linked by Burstein and Linton to policy outcomes 20% of the time for activities not directed at electoral politics (e.g., strikes), 60% for "routine" electoral activities, and 100% of the time (!) for "novel" electorally oriented activities.

Piven and Cloward (e.g., 1977, pp. 28–32; 1991) have elaborated the argument that routine collective action ("normative") should be distinguished from

disruptive (“nonnormative”) collective action in many papers.³ That is, “protest” collective action (rule-breaking) is seen as distinct from collective action that is legitimized within a system (rule-conforming). The argument is that models which neglect this distinction fail to see the extent to which ritualized, normative conflict acknowledges and procedurally reinforces the power of advantaged groups, whereas nonnormative conflict challenges and undermines it (see also, e.g., Fording, 1997). As such, quite different predictors and outcomes may be associated with the two types of collective action. For example, normative collective action is thought to be facilitated, and nonnormative action constrained, by the presence of “vertical bonds” which link powerful and disadvantaged groups. Social psychologists might think of “bonds” in terms of shared goals and/or cross-cutting or superordinate identities; in other words, superordinate goals or identities promote normative collective action and inhibit antinormative disruptive collective action. Piven and Cloward note that aggregate measures of collective action in political science and sociology are dominated by normative actions, which are more common, and thus the distinct predictors and outcomes of antinormative action are obscured. Moreover, the normative/nonnormative distinction should not be made categorically but depends on the historical and social context: “Norms change over time, in part as the result of successive challenges which produce new balances of power, reflected in new structures of rules,” (Piven & Cloward, 1991, p. 440).

In terms of the outcomes of social change, an additional argument is that disruptive protest is generally more effective for disadvantaged group members because normative actions require disadvantaged groups to organize bureaucratically, and to overcome the influence of powerful groups who are likely to have more skills, money and time. In this sense, disadvantaged groups are better positioned to exert leverage with disruptive tactics. According to this theoretical framework, disruption is ineffective if the elite remains coherent and represses the protest, whereas action is effective if it contributes to fragmentation and (in democracies) electoral realignment. Piven and Cloward and other “dissensus” theorists argue that effective disruptive collective action first breaks the existing advantaged group alignment by polarizing the advantaged group on their responses to the action. A “moderate” advantaged group faction is first disempowered by protest because of defections to more conservative factions. The weakened remaining moderates are then lured/coerced to fall back on alliance with the disadvantaged group, with

³It is an important proposition of the agentic normative influence that any discussion of normative and antinormative collective action needs to consider the advantaged group’s norms in interaction with the norms of the disadvantaged group, although space does not permit a full elaboration of this theoretical debate in the present article. Here, Piven and Cloward implicitly refer to *collective action* in relation to the norms of the advantaged group only, and this is the usage which I continue in the article below.

moderates motivated by their need for the alliance to make concessions to the disadvantaged group.

In this theoretical model, it is emphasized that the relationship between normative and nonnormative collective actors is not necessarily one of cooperation. The two movements are potential competitors for the same constituency. Disruptive protestors can be targeted by normative social movements who fear the alienation of their moderate allies, and/or fear extremists gaining legitimacy as representatives of the disadvantaged group and control over its resources. Similarly, disruptive protestors may attempt to wean normative social movements' supporters away to them via vigorous accusations of insufficient distinctiveness from the political opponents. This line of theorizing is associated with the contention that collective action can become less effective when it is institutionalized, because institutionalization decreases the likelihood of disruptive protest.

Implications for Social Psychology

Social psychologists have repeatedly grappled with the distinction between normative and nonnormative collective action (e.g., Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). Because past research focuses on collective action as an outcome, however, the focus has been on the difference in baselines (normative collective actions are more common) and the different antecedents (antinormative action is a function of more threatening sociostructural beliefs). Very little research has addressed the outcomes of antinormative versus normative collective action in changing the perceptions or political beliefs of members of activist, bystander, and targeted groups.

Institutionalization is also a moderator unaddressed by social psychology, and the subtleties of organizational resources do not clearly map onto to our research on status and power, although variables such as distinctiveness threat and sociostructural beliefs seem implicated. Whether it is novelty per se that leads to effectiveness, versus triggered perceptions of instability, impermeability, or illegitimacy; violation of social norms versus of advantaged group norms versus in-group norms; degree of inconvenience to the advantaged group versus demonstrated commitment and risk taking—all of these could be explored in relation to social-psychological variables such as subsequent salience of the issue, acceptance of the actors' position, and group identities and norms. In addition to the theoretical benefits, moreover, the research would be informative for social movement organizers, who could tailor new actions to achieve targeted psychological outcomes, rather than pursuing change purely to break "routines."

Concerning the bigger question of whether collective action is effective in creating social change, the data from which Burstein and Linton (2002) conclude that the effects of collective action are weak may be interpreted as showing the opposite: this review of top sociological and political science research finds that

nonparty organizations impact significantly on policy change in 44% of studies and exerted a substantive impact 31% of the time. While the effects may be small (effect sizes are not reported), the frequently observed significant effects are both surprising and heartening, to a long-time activist. Moreover, in the political science/sociology of effectiveness, indices of social movement action are entered alongside public opinion in regression analyses predicting policy change, and public opinion typically emerges as the strongest unique predictor. The distal role of collective action in shaping public opinion, and the secondary role of public opinion as a mediator of these effects, is not typically examined.

This point bears repeating. The typical analysis in the sociological studies enters variables such as frequency or novelty of collective action in standard multiple regression alongside variables such as public opinion and considers each variable's unique effect in predicting policy change. Typically, the beta for public opinion is the largest and the others are weaker or nonsignificant. This approach is seen as supporting the argument that when a majority of public opinion supports or opposes a policy, policy makers conform to public opinion independent of social movement action. Nevertheless the failure to test a model in which public opinion mediates an indirect effect of collective action on policy change seems unwarranted. To many behavioral science statisticians, modest degree of intercorrelation among independent variables in multiple regression can be dismissed as the product of common method variance (e.g., if $r < .3$; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). However, replicated intercorrelations among independent variables violate the assumptions of multiple regression and invite a discussion of either mediation or third-factor causality. Within research on collective action and social conflict, I have argued that the neglect of mediation will result in systematic exaggeration of the role of proximal variables relative to the distal variables that may have shaped them (Louis, Mavor, & Terry, 2003). For example, frequency and novelty of collective action could change public opinion, which in turn changes public policy. This indirect effect would not be apparent from a standard multiple regression, which would only show the unique (direct) effect of public opinion. The indirect effect would be revealed in hierarchical multiple regression and mediation analyses, however.

Similarly, the salience of an issue in the public eye has been shown in much political science research to moderate the role of public opinion in policy change, with governments more responsive to public opinion for issues of high salience (e.g., Burstein, 2006). The distal role of social movements in shaping issue salience and thus public opinion via mediated moderation has not been addressed quantitatively, perhaps because studies of public opinion typically neglect social movement action, and vice versa. Nevertheless, if the impact of public opinion is stronger in data sets where social movement organization activities are also entered as predictors (and vice versa, as reported by Burstein & Linton, 2002), this finding is consistent with a mediated moderation model in which collective action improves

the responsiveness of governments to public opinion by heightening the salience of the issue.⁴

From these considerations, I argue that an analysis of the predictors of policy change could benefit the wider collective action literature by including hitherto neglected analyses of mediation, suppression, and moderation. By integrating the salience of particular issues and the acceptance of policy as additional dependent measures linked to collective action, however, social psychologists in particular could both extend their own models of identification, norms, emotions, and sociostructural beliefs, and possibly elaborate some of the underlying processes alluded to in the sociology and political science of policy change. Although longitudinal data collection with activists is difficult and time consuming, most of the social-psychological hypotheses outlined above and discussed below could be tested with longitudinal or panel studies during an ongoing campaign, or indeed with experimental scenario studies. If, as political scientists assert, it is change in swing voters which is the more valuable driver of policy change in the longer term, studies of undergraduate students and other bystanders' reactions to collective action reports may be more socially important, as well as theoretically justifiable and of course methodologically convenient. For example, participants' identities, norms, beliefs, and willingness to redress or perpetuate conflict could be assessed after reading "news" accounts of collective action. Experimental research would also allow for more systematic manipulation of "routine" and "normative" collective action compared to "disruptive" and "antinormative" actions, in order to identify the attributes and processes that trigger or mediate the relationship between particular forms of collective action and outcomes from social change to identity and norm change.

Addressing the Social-Psychological Outcomes of Collective Action

Tables 1 and 2 summarize a subset of the theoretically interesting, largely untested, hypotheses for social-psychological and sociological/political variables. As elaborated below, a great deal of relevant social-psychological theory with clear, testable hypotheses concerning the outcomes of collective action remains to be addressed.

An analysis of intergroup approaches to effective collective action. As a starting point, I argue that the social identity approach justifies the hypothesis that a critical mediator of the effects of collective action would be changing

⁴"Stronger" rests on interpretation of discrete codes for the significant and magnitude of effects: Burstein and Linton (2002) assert in footnote 4 that the studies are too disparate and the methodologies too diverse for quantitative meta-analysis to make much sense.

Table 1. A Research Agenda Testing the Outcomes of Collective Action

Plausible Outcomes	Theoretically Plausible but Untested Hypotheses
Action might directly increase identification with collective actors among onlookers	More likely with normative collective action (H1) More likely if shared superordinate identity asserted (H2)
Action that increases identification with actors among onlookers indirectly may cause:	More acceptance of actors' views (H3). More individualized perceptions of the disadvantaged group (H4) and reduced group identification for members of advantaged groups (H5). Via these further two mediators, action may reduce discrimination (H6) but also motives for reparation and compensation (H7).
Action that increases superordinate identification indirectly may cause:	Reduced group identification for disadvantaged groups (H8), and via this further mediation reduced disadvantaged group collective action intentions (H9).
Action may directly decrease the perceived legitimacy of the status quo.	More likely with identification with actors (H10). More likely with perceived instability (H11) and impermeability (H12); with more salient superordinate identity (H13) and with injunctive and descriptive norms which do not support the status quo (H14).
Action may increase instability	More likely with action that violates out-group norms (H15).
Action may increase impermeability/perceived discrimination	Less likely with superordinate identity claim (H16) Could reduce advantaged group identification (H17), reducing motivation for discrimination (H18) and also for reparation (H19).

Table 2. Implications of Critique Regarding the Effects of Collective Action for Sociological Research

Existing Finding	Five Theoretically Plausible but Untested Hypotheses
Public opinion is the strongest proximal predictor of policy change	The unique effect of public opinion is the product of significant indirect effects of collective action (H1; public opinion is a mediator). The indirect effect of collective action via public opinion is stronger for normative collective action (H2); Antinormative action can lead to a backlash in public opinion (H3a) mediated via decreased identification with the collective actors (H3b)
Public opinion is a stronger predictor of policy change for high salience issues	Collective action increases the salience of an issue (H4a) and therefore the effect of salience in strengthening the impact of public opinion upon policy change is the product of significant indirect effects of collective action (H4b; collective action indirectly moderates the public opinion—policy link via its indirect effects on salience) Antinormative collective action has a stronger effect on salience (H5a) and therefore a stronger moderated mediation effect on policy change (H5b)

identification in participants (e.g., Bliuc et al., 2007), as well as bystanders and advantaged group members. Onlookers may be more likely to accept collective actors' criticisms of the status quo if the onlookers come to identify with the actors, which could be encouraged by collective actors' rhetorical claims to a common identity, as in the antiracist group *Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation*, which positions itself by its name as representing the larger national superordinate group (see also, e.g., Hornsey et al., 2005). Superordinate identity claims might also be invoked through behavioral conformity to superordinate group norms, as when human rights campaigners wave national flags or sign the national anthem at a rally which seeks to improve minority group rights (see also, Louis & Taylor, 2002).

As noted above, if advantaged group members identify with the collective actors, however, they may disidentify with their own advantaged group, which would have the positive effect of creating positive intergroup attitudes (Wohl & Branscombe, 2005; Wohl et al., 2006), but also may reduce motives to acknowledge status inequalities and to offer reparation (Greenaway et al., 2009). Bystanders from a disadvantaged group could also be motivated by assertions of a shared superordinate identity to disidentify and to reduce their collective action intentions (Greenaway et al., 2009). Finally, if advantaged group members reject the claims posed by a collective action such as a rally with flag waving to a superordinate identity such as a nation (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000), or if advantaged group members position the disadvantaged group as inferior, deviant members of the shared identity (Mummendey & Wenzel, 1999), increased advantaged group identification could ensue with consequent increases in discrimination or rejection of the collective actors' position.

If the identity dynamics were not shaped directly by the behavior and rhetoric of the collective actors, they might be indirectly driven by changes to socio-structural beliefs that shape actions and attitudes (e.g., Louis, Duck, Terry, Schuller, & Lalonde, 2007; Wright & Tropp, 2002). Challenging the legitimacy of the status quo is a common goal of collective action; for example, the "fair trade" movement directly calls into question the fairness of existing trade relations between developed and developing countries. Changes in perceived legitimacy should be more likely to the extent that bystanders identify with the collective actors. If bystanders are not members of the collective actors' constituency (e.g., a disadvantaged group), illegitimacy perceptions could also be facilitated by the assertion of a shared superordinate identity, particularly if that higher group has norms that do not support discrimination or subgroup inequality. Moreover, to the extent that the three dimensions of threat mutually reinforce each other, impermeability and instability perceptions should facilitate the acceptance of claimed illegitimacy (and vice versa).

Perceived instability, or perceptions of change in intergroup relations, promotes identification and action in both groups, as noted above. Arguably, perceived

instability would be increased by antinormative action, with its disruptive and unexpected challenge to the status quo (Piven & Cloward, 1991; Wright et al., 1990). Impermeability beliefs are also vital targets of collective action, as Wright's research shows that perceived permeability reduces disadvantaged militance almost entirely. Demonstrating the existence of enduring inequalities between groups, or situations in which disadvantaged group members were denied the opportunity for social mobility solely because of their group membership, could itself increase disadvantaged group members' mobilization for challenging discrimination and reduce advantaged group members' motivation for discrimination by changes to permeability and legitimacy beliefs. However, impermeability beliefs may be more difficult to assert in the context of a claimed superordinate identity as this latter would direct attention away from subgroup differences, potentially reducing both advantaged and disadvantaged group members' identification. All of these theoretically derived predictions await empirical testing in relation to collective action.

I want to note, however, that in outlining a research plan described in terms of quantitative analyses and experimentation, in which variables at the individual and group levels form feedback loops of mutual influence, I do not dismiss the valuable work of Reicher, Drury and colleagues in intergroup psychology or others (particularly those working in positioning theory; Louis, 2008) who have used discursive methods to analyze the psychology of political action and political aspects of psychology. In my own model, group-level variables are seen as influencing action directly (as in Drury's approach), but also indirectly via individual-level variables (mediation) and by cueing the relevance of individual-level variables for collective action (moderation). In turn, interacting individual-level variables such as level of identification and intentions to act predict group-level variables, such as frequency and efficacy of collective action—and neither direction of relationship should be assumed to be linear or well modeled by multiple regression (see Louis, 2008; Louis et al., 2003). However, the fundamentals of any intergroup social-psychological approach, I argue, emphasize the role of group identity, the importance of the group level of analysis, and the value of looking at collective action participation as an independent variable with interesting flow on effects, rather than solely as a dependent measure.

Implications for Activists and Organizers

The present article argues is that there is a wide gap in the literature around the effectiveness of collective action in achieving social change which means that there is no definitive advice allowing practitioners to choose among the many contradictory theoretical models. Burstein and colleagues' work suggests that collective action is globally ineffective in triggering policy change, though it might magnify the impact of sympathetic public opinion by increasing the salience of an

issue. Many other theorists have argued that effectiveness depends on a favorable opportunity structure, which can be crudely summarized as a target with the power to change, vulnerability to collective actors' rewards/punishments, and relatively less vulnerability to countermobilization from opponents. Identifying these targets is easier retrospectively than prospectively, however!

Some researchers, particularly dissensus researchers such as Piven and Cloward, would emphasize the value of novel or disruptive or nonnormative collective action over routine, institutionalized action. This point is contested, and the mechanism for effective versus marginalizing disruptive action is not well known. Social-psychological theories could be used to hypothesize that collective action that increases disadvantaged group members' identification by focusing on threatening sociostructural beliefs would create a virtuous cycle of growing protest and action. At the same time, such models would suggest that more salient threat perceptions could also strengthen advantaged group members' identification and motivation to discriminate and countermobilize.

Other social-psychological models would emphasize trying to focus on superordinate shared identities (e.g., "American" instead of Black vs. White, or North vs. South). The logic is that this salient shared identity would erode advantaged group identification and promote perceptions of a shared "we" that would lead advantaged group members to be nice to those from disadvantaged groups since they are all in the superordinate group together. But then again, such models would predict that salient superordinate identities would lower the salience of intergroup inequality, which would lower advantaged group motivation to take responsibility for their past action and make amends, as well as disadvantaged group motivation for militance.

My own intuition is for the dissensus model proposed by Piven and Cloward and others, although I emphasize the mediating role of identities and norm perceptions. I also believe that many of the contradictions above concerning strategy and theoretical predictions reflect real suppression effects, in which triggers such as antinormative action or superordinate "we" claims have both inhibitory and facilitatory effects on social change (they increase it and decrease it at the same time). Suppression effects mean real dilemmas for organizers. For example, disruptive collective action which most strongly boosts the identification and commitment of a disadvantaged group also creates a backlash of increased identification from advantaged group opponents. Similarly, collective action which successfully creates a shared superordinate identity with opponents and fosters a norm of cooperation will *also*, I believe, foster advantaged group members' motivation for denial of past wrongs and inhibit disadvantaged group members' militance (Greenaway et al., 2009).

It is because collective action triggers opposing forces at the same time, I believe, that social movements with moderate and militant wings are advantaged in creating leverage for social change. The militant wing is needed to create

salience for the issue through disruptive/antinormative action which also increases the salience of threatening sociostructural perceptions for the constituency and thus increases identification. The moderate wing capitalizes on the mobilized constituency members but complies with the target group's rules or norms and offers the possibility of compromise by emphasizing shared goals or fate. In that sense, the implications of the approach for organizers would be to do what is not being done already. Organizers could focus on disruptive, militant action if the other actors for the goal are moderate, or if existing militant groups are not coordinating their actions strategically with moderates. Militant factions which primarily attack the moderates are quite likely counterproductive in achieving social change; this too awaits empirical testing in social psychology, but activist experience would certainly provide anecdotal evidence! Strategic militants might profitably attack their political opponents through assertions of illegitimacy and impermeability, as well as behaviors that create perceived instability and raise the salience of these normative and identity claims. Their assertion of extreme demands offers the opportunity for moderates to capitalize on disadvantaged group mobilization and advantaged group insecurity with an offer of a less extreme concession.

In contrast, organizers could work to develop moderate "mainstream" approaches if the other collective actors on the issue are militant. Moderates' reward of advantaged groups' concessions creates the possibility for incremental change towards the disadvantaged group's goals; without this validation and reward, the possibility for polarization and increased discrimination is arguably enhanced. As an extension of this point, a context of public sympathy with the cause but little policy action would call for two separate groups, with strategic disruptive/novel/nonnormative action by one faction while a group of more mainstream activists deplores the militants' behavior and uses the spotlight for leverage.

This general approach is not necessarily novel in activist circles, and it must also be acknowledged that both ethical and pragmatic concerns constrain the use of disruption and antinormative action in some contexts. Moreover, the same social-psychological models that may inform and guide the tactical choices of activists and organizers will equally profitably be applied by advantaged group countermobilization; indeed I have discussed these theoretical models at length in the context of recommendations for counter- or antiterrorism policy (Louis, 2009; Louis & Taylor, 2002). A major purpose of this article, however, is to propose that the effects of these forms of collective action should be studied empirically. Through research and field experimentation, the questions of which strategies work when, if at all, and by which means, could be addressed.

Conclusions

Concerning the specific outcome of social change, little or no research has addressed the means by which group collective action might successfully change a

status system. A number of key variables are clearly identified in intergroup theory, however, and in many cases have been identified as triggers for collective action. As noted above, a useful starting point from a social-psychological perspective is the proposition that collective action will create a change in the status system only to the extent it changes sociostructural beliefs and group identities and norms. But without being required to engage the social psychology of decision making, sociological and political science research on policy change could benefit from considering the indirect roles of collective action to policy change via changing public opinion (mediation) and via increased salience (mediated moderation).

While no one study can address the research questions described above, a program of research that would address the social-psychological outcomes of collective action and link these to identities, norms, and future action intentions, has a great deal of interest for theoreticians and practitioners alike. With the help of data concerning the impact of collective action on protagonists, opponents, and bystanders, the theory of collective action and conflict and the effectiveness of social movement organizing may both benefit.

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