Survey research continues to be a frequently employed methodology in social movement research. According to Crist and McCarthy (1996), one-fifth of the studies published in the 1980s and early 1990s used surveys as one of their data sources. In this chapter, we discuss the uses and limitations of survey research for the study of social movements, including the less common but potentially rich method of the organizational survey. There are many excellent source books for researchers who want to apply survey methodology (see, for example, Babbie 1990; Fink 1995; and Robson 1993), and we refer readers to these textbooks for more guidelines about survey methodologies. We attempt to aid the researcher in considering the potentials and pitfalls of survey methods by taking into account the specific characteristics of the social movement domain.

In social movement research, survey techniques are employed both with individuals and organizations as the unit of analysis. In the prototypical individual survey a sample of individuals fill in a questionnaire encompassing questions about knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, behavior, demographics, and other personal characteristics. Examples are Walsh's study of people living in the Three Mile Island area following a nuclear accident (1988), Opp's studies of participants in legal and illegal protest (1988, 1989), and Klandermans's studies of participation in collective action staged by various movements (Klandermans 1984, 1993, 1997; Klandermans and Oegema 1987; Oegema and Klandermans 1994). An additional way that individual-level surveys can be used by analysts of social movements is demonstrated by the work of Rochon (1998) and Harris (1999). These scholars used pre-existing, publicly
available surveys of public opinion and social behavior, which also included measures of organizational and church participation, to evaluate relationships between social movement mobilizations and broader social factors such as public opinion and social and political engagement.

In an organizational survey, spokespersons of social movement organizations are questioned about their organization’s structure, resource acquisition and allocation, tactics, collective action, and policy. Such studies are much rarer, but a few good examples exist, including Knoke’s study of voluntary associations (1989), which involved extensive interviews with 459 informants who provided information on bureaucratization, centralization, and resource use and mobilization. Colwell and Bond (1994) conducted a panel survey of peace movement organizations during the height of antinuclear mobilization and again after the movement subsided in the early 1990s. Dalton employed survey techniques in his study of environmental organizations in Western Europe (1994), and Minkoff (this volume) discusses in depth the organizational surveys of anti-drunk driving organizations by McCarthy. Extending the method further, Smith used survey methods to analyze transnational human rights organizations (Smith, Pagnucco, and Lopez 1998) and coalition affiliates of a transnational environmental and social justice organization (Smith 1999).

This chapter attempts to improve survey techniques as they are employed in social movement research, particularly by stressing the use of comparative designs. Survey research can use cross-sectional or more sophisticated longitudinal or comparative designs. Too much survey research on social movements takes the first, simpler approach. Although intellectually more demanding and more costly, survey designs that draw comparisons across movements, space, or time provide immense empirical leverage that can help advance theories of social movements. The intelligent use of such designs turns surveys into a powerful tool for the study of social movements. In the following pages we discuss a variety of techniques of data collection, sampling techniques, and research designs, with an emphasis on how they can be employed in comparative settings.

**The Use of Survey Research in the Study of Social Movements**

The most frequent use of surveys is for description: the description of members, of participants, of potential participants, of different types of participants (male/female, black/white, young/old, etc.), and of their opponents. Some key questions of this type of research revolve around motivations of different categories of participants. Examples of such studies include Oliver (1984) and Ennis and Schreuer (1987). Sometimes these studies are simple descriptions, and sometimes they are rooted in theories that are operationalized in the questionnaire and tested against survey responses. One example of such research is Opp’s work within the rational choice theoretical framework on the antinuclear power movement in Germany (1989), and on the democratization movement in former East Germany (Opp and Gern 1993). The problem with such studies is that often they lack a valid standard of comparison. To understand the dynamics of participation, one needs to compare participants with nonparticipants. In addition, one needs to know whether specific characteristics are typical for all participants or not.

Addressing this problem, McAdam (1986) emphasizes that nonparticipants do not necessarily provide appropriate standards for comparison. This is especially true of attitudinal comparisons. Typically, two groups are compared, and the involvement of the participants is attributed to any attitudinal differences observed between the two groups. But McAdam cautions that the attitudinal differences between participants and nonparticipants might result from rather than constitute an underlying motivation for activism. McAdam’s and other studies show that participants’ beliefs and consciousness are transformed in the course of their participation in a movement. Yet it is also likely that individuals participate in a particular social movement because they share some of the beliefs of the movement. Unless we obtain measurements that both precede and follow participation or exposure to movement activities, we will not be able to determine the extent to which individuals participate because of their beliefs and the extent to which their beliefs are shaped by their participation.

Moreover, comparisons of participation are problematic, since participants may be more or less intensively involved in a movement and since participation itself affects later possibilities for action. Participation is therefore a process that can be conceived in four steps where each step represents a decision point where people move toward or away from participation. For instance, an individual becomes a sympathizer or not, becomes a target of a mobilization attempt or not, is motivated to participate or not, and overcomes barriers to participation or not. Comparisons must be made between people at the same point in this process. If we do not separate these comparisons, we miss the point that at each decision point different mechanisms are at work to shape individuals’ decisions. As a consequence, our comparison of participants with nonparticipants encompasses each of the four types of nonparticipation and thus is blurred. The strength of McAdam’s study of participants in Freedom Summer was that he made the right comparison. It is reasonable to assume that all student applicants were motivated to participate in Freedom Summer. They all completed the application forms and
were accepted into the project. Yet one quarter of the applicants did not participate. McAdam used the information available on the application forms to identify characteristics of those who participated and those who withdrew. The data were longitudinal since the application procedure took place earlier in the year.

In summary, the study of movement participants requires proper comparisons so that we are able to make sense of our findings. But there is more to comparison than distinguishing participants from nonparticipants. We will argue that it is far more useful to survey several smaller samples in a comparative design than one large sample noncomparatively. For instance, fifty interviews each of two different groups of informants at three points in time will tell us considerably more about movement participation than three hundred interviews with one group at a single point in time. Similarly, a cross-sectional study that distinguishes respondents according to how they fit among the four steps of the process of movement participation will tell us more than a study that does not allow for such comparisons. It is such comparisons that help us to understand movement participation. After all, movement participation is a process, and we cannot investigate a process with a single-shot measure. Thus, much of this chapter is devoted to discussion of comparative designs.

**Comparison**

Comparative designs may incorporate comparisons of movements, or comparisons of events or other features of social movements across space or time (or some combination of these comparisons). Such comparisons are rare. Yet, comparative research of movement participation is important. It tells us that what holds for a participant in one movement, or at one point in time, or at one place is not necessarily true for a participant in another movement, or at a different time or place. Comparisons across different social movements are uncommon. One example is Klandermans's (1993) comparison of participants in the labor movement, the peace movement, and the women's movement. This comparison used similar measurements and concepts within a unified theoretical framework and found that a different mix of motives spurred participation in each of these movements.

Comparisons across space are the most common. Maguire's surveys of the peace movement in Italy and Great Britain (1995), and Opp and colleagues' surveys in Germany, Israel, and Peru (1995) are examples. The latter investigated participation in legal and illegal protest in these three countries. These researchers found that the traditional pattern of protest being more common on the left wing of the political spectrum, and lowest on the right held only in Germany. In the other countries rightists and extreme rightists were more active than centrists, and in some locations people from the right were as active or even more active than those on the nonextreme left. The results suggest that the association between ideology and protest behavior can vary widely according to country context. Findings like this demonstrate the crucial importance of comparison of space. Indeed, such comparative studies gave rise to the so-called social geographic approach to social movements (Miller 2000), which made comparisons of space and place its basic paradigm. Miller demonstrated how social geographic differences such as differences in class composition, educational levels, economic history, and history of activism between regions (in the Cambridge, Massachusetts, area) could explain the differences between the Freeze Campaigns in these regions.

Comparisons involving time are equally important, as levels of participation tend to vary cyclically over time. Klandermans's research on the peace movement provides a dramatic example. In June 1985, he and his colleagues interviewed samples of the population of four Dutch communities. Sixty-nine percent said that they would sign a petition against the deployment of cruise missiles in the Netherlands. The interviews were repeated again in November, when just two-thirds of those who had said that they would sign reported that they actually signed. Of the initial petition supporters remaining, two-fifths indicated that in fact they wanted to sign but failed to do so, but three-fifths said that they had never wanted to sign. Had the researchers only interviewed the sample in November after the petition drive took place, they would not have found this significant group of people who changed their positions completely (Oegema and Klandermans 1994).

Another important area of research involves studies of biographical consequences of movement participation (Marwell, Aiken, and Demerath 1987; Marwell, Demerath, and Aiken 1993; McAdam 1989; Stewart, Settles, and Winter 1998). By surveying movement participants many years after their active participation in social movements, these studies have convincingly demonstrated that movement participation has long-lasting biographical consequences.

**How Is Survey Research Done?**

Designs, sampling techniques, questionnaires, and statistical analyses are the building blocks of survey research. The study of social movements has some peculiarities that necessitate specific modifications of these methodological tools. Before discussing the basic "nuts and bolts" of survey research, we review varieties of comparative designs that are applicable to the study of social movements.
Comparative Designs

Designs are meant to structure the research environment so that the questions guiding the research can indeed be answered. Designs specify the comparisons that are necessary for an answer to be extracted from the data. The three main types of comparison are of movements, of space, and of time. Ideally, we should conceive of studies that combine these three comparisons, for example, a study of the changing characteristics of the participants in the women's movement and the peace movement in the Netherlands and Germany between 1975 and 1980. Such a design would help us account for the context of movement participation. Yet, to our knowledge nobody has ever tried such a design, most likely because such a design is extremely demanding: comparable questions must be asked of participants of both movements, in both countries at the two points in time. Indeed, most comparative studies keep one or two of the three dimensions constant. Klandermans and colleagues' (2001) study of farmers' protest in the Netherlands and Spain is an example of a study that kept one dimension (the movement dimension) constant. During three subsequent years, these scholars investigated farmers' responses to agricultural policies of the European Union. More common, however, are studies that keep two dimensions of comparison constant by comparing, for instance, two or more movements within the same country at a single point in time, the same movement in two or more different countries at a single point in time, or the same movement in a single country at two or more different points in time. These are the three designs that will be discussed and illustrated in the next few pages.

Comparison of Movements

The most common question in a comparison of movements concerns the similarities and differences between participants in different movements. These differences may concern demographic characteristics, motivational dynamics, identity, attitudes, and ideology. An example is Klandermans's (1993) comparison of participants in the labor, peace, and women's movements in the Netherlands. Drawing on Turner and Killian's (1987) distinction of action orientations, the study tests the hypothesis that each movement appealed to different action orientations: a power orientation in the case of the labor movement, a value orientation in the case of the peace movement, and a participation orientation in the case of the women's movement. But the study also illustrated an important challenge for this kind of comparison, namely the development of operational definitions of participation and comparable measurements of action orientations in very different movements. This is not a trivial matter. After all, the definition of participation and the measures of action orientation define the comparison.

In this study Klandermans contrasted preparedness to participate and actual participation in activities staged by the movements: industrial action for the labor movement, a demonstration for the peace movement, and participation in some women's groups in the community for the women's movement. Common categories of motivation were used to assess the action orientation of participants in these different movements. Value and power orientations were defined in terms of the collective incentives for participation, and the participation orientation was defined in terms of selective incentives. A value orientation was thus defined as an emphasis on the motivation to participate on the value of the collective goal, a power orientation as an emphasis on the expectation that the goal can be achieved, and a participation orientation as an emphasis on participation as a goal in itself. These definitions to some extent determine the outcome of the comparison.

Comparison of Space

Comparisons of space examine the same movement in different locations. A prominent example is Walsh's study of citizens and activists in Middletown, Newberry, Harrisburg, and Lancaster, four communities in the neighborhood of Three Mile Island (1988). Other examples are Miller's study of the Freeze Campaign in Cambridge, Lexington, and Waltham (2000), and Oegema and Klandermans's study of participants and nonparticipants in a petition against cruise missiles in four Dutch communities (1994). Each study demonstrates that the dynamics of participation are shaped by characteristics of the local communities in which movements are embedded. Had these authors neglected to make these comparisons (either by restricting themselves to a single community or by simply analyzing aggregated, national-level data), we would have erroneously believed that the dynamics of participation in each community were the same. Such comparisons are important because they may reveal diverging political, economic, or social psychological dynamics of movement participation. The reason behind comparison of space may be a need for careful description, or investigation into the impact of contextual variation, or to test some theory about the differences between the groups being studied.

Methodologically, two key issues are to ensure that both the sampling frames for the different populations and the questionnaires are comparable. These are issues in any comparison, but in the context of comparisons of space they require special attention. Making sampling and questionnaires
comparable is easier said than done. It is crucial, for instance, to have consistently defined samples in each locale. After all, we want to be able to attribute the differences we find between two or more samples to real contextual differences rather than to sampling biases. But it may not always be easy to draw comparable samples, because one cannot always identify comparable sampling frames. A sampling frame is a list of units (i.e., individuals or organizations) that comprise the population from which the sample is to be drawn. If available lists are not identical samples from the populations being studied, these samples will not be comparable. But in different countries, regions, or locales, records are often kept according to different procedures and with varying levels of accuracy. Movement organizations in country A may have reliable membership lists, but their counterparts in country B may have less formal registration procedures. Differences in regulations may have the same effect. The bylaws of organization X may make it impossible to use its membership list for sampling, while organization Z may have no qualms about releasing its list. Comparing organizational populations across countries is immensely difficult. One can find a wealth of fairly comparable organizational registries for groups in North America and Europe but must rely on a range of sources of variable quality and consistency in order to move beyond these regions. Many more examples of sampling pitfalls can be identified, but the message is clear: in order to draw equivalent samples, one needs comparable sampling frames of the groups one wants to compare.

In addition to equivalent samples, we need comparable questionnaires. That is, questions must not only have comparable wording, but they must also have the same meaning for each group in a study. It is difficult enough to find wordings that have the same meaning to respondents from the same cultural background, let alone to respondents from different cultures. Pre-testing questions and exploring their meaning in qualitative pilot studies with both social science colleagues and with people who make up the sample population are of crucial importance. Where possible, pretests should include interviews with at least two representatives of the sample population (and key variations within this population) where the informant can help the researcher identify wording or formatting that may pose problems of clarity or construct validity for those asked to complete the survey.

If we are conducting our research in more than one country, we must solve both problems of translation and problems of cultural differences. Problems of translation can be solved by careful procedures such as translation and back-translation to guarantee that the questions are indeed the same. But such procedures do not necessarily solve the problem of cultural differences. For example, being a member of a farmers’ organization has a totally different meaning in the Netherlands (where farmers’ organizations are part of neocorporatist structures dating back to the era of pillarization) than in Spain (where the main political groupings in the country have their associated farmers’ organizations). But even within the same culture, the same word can have a different meaning. For example, in Klandermans’s study the word action had a meaning among the elderly that associated much more with unruliness than it did among the younger generations in other studies. The same was true in comparisons of black and white South Africans. While the former had a long history of sometimes very militant collective action, the latter had no experience whatsoever. As a consequence, taking part in moderate action had a very different meaning for whites than for blacks. Given these realities, careful translation of questionnaires requires both language skills and appreciation of the cultural differences between and within countries.

Comparison of Time

Movement participation and mobilization are processes that evolve over time. Movements expand and contract in phases of mobilization and demobilization. These waves of expansion and contraction can be analyzed in comparisons of time. In fact, movement participation is not as spontaneous as is sometimes assumed, and it is often possible to foresee fluctuations in participation. Movement participation can be conceived of as a response to mobilization attempts. On quite a few occasions we can predict that a movement organization will mobilize its constituency. If we are on good terms with an organization, the organization might be willing to inform us about impending campaigns and might even take an interest in our research. Such a collaborative relationship may not even be necessary because organizations often publicize their intentions to mobilize mass action.

As long as we know beforehand that a movement organization is setting out to mobilize, we can design our research accordingly. But what if we do not know? How can we predict the courses of mobilization campaigns in order to design appropriate ways to study them? We can find at least a partial solution to our problem in the fact that movements evolve cyclically. No single movement is able to keep its constituency continuously mobilized. At the very least, movements experience seasonal cycles: even movement activists go on vacation, and every year, when the summer (in their part of the world) is over, the movements’ programs and activities must be revived. Any researcher planning to investigate participation in a specific movement must first consider the kind of cycles the movement and its participants might go through. Survey research designs in particular must be sensitive to the time
frames affecting potential respondents or informants. Below we review some of the ways cyclical patterns affect movements.

Seasonal Cycles

Nearly every movement experiences seasonal cycles. In the fall a movement begins new activities, creates new opportunities for participation, and re-invigorates already existing plans and programs. Consequently, it tries anew to persuade individuals to take part in the activities of the movement. Most university campuses, for instance, have fixed days at the start of the academic year during which voluntary organizations can try to recruit new participants, and academic calendars can have important effects on movements involving large numbers of students. Also, cross-national surveys involving groups or individuals in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres must account for two summer seasons in the timing of the survey. The work of Briet, Klandermans, and Kroon (1987) provides an example of how this seasonal rhythm can be incorporated into a study of a movement, in this case, the Dutch women's movement.

Cycles Generated by Recurrent Instances of Collective Action

Some movement organizations go through institutional cycles. Labor unions have their yearly contract negotiations, which are frequently accompanied by mobilization campaigns. The gay and lesbian movement has annual parades. Election periods tend to stimulate collective action by many different groups. Other movements may have similar institutionally anchored days, periods, or events for which they try to mobilize and broaden their constituency. It is not always easy to foresee whether these events will create any excitement at all, but occasionally they do, and sometimes we can predict this outcome.

Action Mobilization Cycles

It is not unusual for a movement organization to announce in advance that it will organize a demonstration, rally, or some other kind of mass action. Because such activities require much preparation, they are typically planned well in advance. Accordingly, they provide excellent opportunities for longitudinal research. Before the event, one can ask individuals whether they are aware of the imminent event and whether they intend to participate; after the event, a researcher can go back to these same individuals and ask whether they did in fact participate. Klandermans's study of the 1983 peace demonstration in The Hague (Klandermans and Oegema 1987) is an example of how research on movement participation can take advantage of an action mobilization cycle.

Cycles Generated by Events

Sometimes observers and researchers can anticipate that political events will generate mass mobilization. Klandermans's study of the Dutch peace movement exploited the fact that the Dutch government had openly committed itself to decide on the deployment of cruise missiles before 1 November 1985. It was easy to predict that, given this commitment, the movement would try to mobilize its constituency. More recently, meetings of such institutions as the World Bank and the IMF have attracted a diverse set of movement organizations that have mobilized their constituencies to demonstrate. Knowing that such events are coming up, one can make arrangements to collect data. When organizations, rather than individuals, are to be surveyed at such events, researchers must be sensitive to the ways that such mobilizations and events affect the likelihood that knowledgeable organizational leaders will take the time to participate in a survey. One must balance the need to collect information near key moments or events with the risk of low response rates due to the fact that the most important informants are often working overtime to make such events happen. In some cases, events have to be avoided. For example, Smith's survey of international human rights organizations had to be timed so that it would not coincide with the annual United Nations Human Rights Commission meeting, which lasts for six weeks every March-April (Smith, Pagnucco, and Lopez 1998).

Growth and Decline Cycles

Movements grow and decline, a process that implies an initial increase but an eventual falling off in participation. Such cycles are inherent in the life of a movement. We have witnessed such cyclical patterns in the movements against cruise missiles all over Europe. Every time a government decided to deploy the missiles, the movement declined (Klandermans 1991; Rochon 1988). In fact, one could have predicted that whatever decision a government made would set the movement back: a decision to deploy would imply a major failure for the movement; a decision not to deploy—although a major success—would eliminate the movement's foremost grievance. In the literature both eventualities are cited as causes of movement decline. If we can anticipate such cycles, we can design our research in accordance with them.

Survey Research Designs

The first decision a researcher must make when considering a survey research design is what unit of analysis is most appropriate to the questions being asked. A first choice is whether one is principally concerned with answering questions about individuals or organizations. But once that choice is
Sampling movement participants can be even more problematic, as many movements do not maintain reliable lists of participants. Sampling potential participants to find actual participants is not efficient. Usually, actual participants account for only a small proportion of the mobilization potential. One may easily end up approaching ten to twenty potential participants to find one active participant. Another option is to sample participants at events: the people who attend a meeting, take part in a demonstration, or sign a petition. In this case some smart thinking about sampling technique is needed. Petitions are easy: one can sample from the list of signatures, provided that names and addresses are made available. But how might one sample in mass meetings or at demonstrations? One possibility is to divide a meeting space into cells and to sample cells by approaching every person who occupies a sampled place (see Drury Reicher, and Scott 1999 for an example of this approach to sampling during collective action). Apart from the technical problems of sampling participants at events, it is obvious that the kind of activity influences who participates. The people who attend a meeting are not necessarily the same as the people who participate in the demonstration or who sign the petition. Yet, all three groups of people are and probably see themselves as participants in the same movement.

Although ideally the researcher would like his or her principal questions to determine the research design, limitations on the availability of and access to information often demand that the researcher adapt the design to fit available data sources. As we have noted, survey designs demand at least some credible measure of the population of individuals or organizations one seeks to understand. In other words, we need to identify an unbiased and appropriate sampling frame from which we will choose potential informants. At times we may be able to combine what we know to be biased lists of organizations or individuals within our population with efforts to compensate for this known bias. If one is interested in surveying local, national, or international movement organizations from different countries, one might seek to compile as comprehensive a sampling frame as possible by drawing from multiple organizational directories published independently by private or government agencies (see also Minkoff, this volume).

When surveying organizational leaders, consultations with activists in the movement or with other analysts of that particular movement can yield a "snowball" sample of those individuals who are seen as leaders in a given movement. The United Nations and other international bodies compile lists of organizations registered to attend special international conferences, and
these lists may also be of use for particular research questions. The lesson one can draw from this discussion is that good researchers must often find creative ways to overcome the limitations of readily available data sources. If an unbiased sampling frame simply cannot be found, a study may still be worth doing as long as the biases inherent in the sampling frame are considered in the interpretation of survey results. Obviously, generalization is possible only to the population as defined by the sampling frame that is used. Thus, the researcher should always provide a careful description of the sampling frame.

The handbooks on survey methods cited earlier provide a variety of sampling strategies. In addition to the considerations raised there, however, researchers of social movements may face problems that are particular to this area of research. In the first place they may choose designs that weight samples in order to expand the number of cases representing a relatively understudied group. For instance, Smith's survey of affiliates of a transnational social movement organization oversampled affiliates based in developing country regions for two reasons: (1) to overcome anticipated problems of nonresponse caused by less reliable postal systems in these regions, and (2) to ensure that a sufficient number of cases from these regions would be generated in the study to enable generalizations about that relatively underexamined subset of organizations. Stratified samples are also useful when the researcher has reason to believe that a subset of the population in question has a particularly important impact on conflict dynamics. This was the case in the peace movement survey initiated by Colwell and her colleagues (Colwell and Bond 1994), where groups with relatively large budgets, which were assumed to have a greater impact on peace movement mobilizations, were oversampled. Finally, as many movement organizations are structured in branches, we have often no choice but to draw samples of branches first and then individuals within the sampled branches. Such samples require multilevel data analysis during data processing. We will return to that matter in the section on data processing. The important methodological matter to keep in mind here is that generalizations can be made about the entire population only if results are based on probability samples of that population. Where other types of samples are employed, conclusions are limited by the sampling biases in the study's design.

Choosing the Type of Survey
Survey questionnaires can be mailed to respondents, completed in face-to-face or telephone interviews (often computer assisted), or—the newest development—transmitted via the Internet. Each of these techniques has its advantages and disadvantages, which the researcher should consider early in the research process.

Costs
Face-to-face interviews are the most expensive form of data collection, and the Internet is the cheapest option. Mailing questionnaires is cheaper than telephone interviews, but the difference between the two is much smaller than one would be inclined to believe, especially if the interviewers are inputting responses directly into a computer database.

Response Rates
Each survey method influences response rates differently: face-to-face interviews tend to have the highest response rates, and mailed questionnaires the lowest. Telephone interviews occupy a position in between, but nearer to face-to-face interviews than to mailed questionnaires. Moreover, some researchers employ incentives to encourage participation, although care must be taken to assure that incentives do not introduce new biases into the study. As the Internet is a recent development in this area, no systematic information on response rates is available yet. However, the number of individuals and organizations connected to the Internet is growing so rapidly that this route will become more and more attractive, and thus it will not be long before this information becomes available. Smith's (1999) work suggests, however, that this avenue may have its limitations. She experimented with Internet-based responses by allowing organizations that were contacted by mail the option of completing their surveys via the Internet. Only one of the more than five hundred groups in the sample chose this route (although a number of groups did request e-mail versions of the survey). This might reflect relatively low access to the Internet, although half the respondents reported having access to this technology. What is more likely is that the exercise of completing the survey involves a number of staff members or even deliberation among organizational participants, making a hard-copy questionnaire the preferred option.

Mailed questionnaires seldom generate response rates higher than 30 percent for individual surveys, and 50 percent for organizational ones. Face-to-face interviews easily reach response rates of 60 percent to 70 percent, and telephone interviews finish somewhat lower, at 50 percent to 60 percent. Indeed, telephone interviews are often the most cost-effective approach (that is, the costs per completed interview). In general, organizational surveys have also been associated with lower response rates than those of individual surveys (Tomaskovic-Devey, Leiter, and Thompson 1994: 439).
Timing

Surveys take time. Telephone and Internet surveys, however, can be organized on much shorter notice than mail and face-to-face surveys. Someone who has access to the appropriate facilities can organize a telephone or Internet survey almost overnight. The Internet is by far the speediest form of data collection. If the sample is set up in advance—as is usually the case—the questionnaire can be mailed in a few seconds, and one can have the answers returned within a few days. Telephone interviews take more time for the simple reason that reaching informants by phone and conducting interviews takes time. They also may be less appropriate for some types of organization-al surveys, since it is often difficult to reach large numbers of busy organizational leaders by phone, and since some movements with small and geographically dispersed organizations that cross many time zones may not lend themselves to such designs. Smith (1999) has sought to employ telephone surveys in her work on affiliates of transnational associations and has found tremendous costs associated with difficulties in reaching targeted informants and with language and other communication difficulties. Nevertheless, assuming that telephone surveying is more localized and computer assisted, one can have the first results within a few hours after the last interview is conducted. Mail and face-to-face surveying are more complicated and labor-intensive. Sampling, mailing, and returning the questionnaires, or training the interviewers can easily take several weeks or longer, if one seeks to maximize response rates. Interviews take time but can often be computer assisted.

Substance

Not every kind of question can be asked via each approach. For example, knowledge cannot be assessed in mailed questionnaires or via the Internet, unless one does not mind if the respondent looks up the correct answer. But organizational studies often require some searching on the part of the respondent for accurate information about, for instance, the founding date of an organization. Open-ended questions fare better in face-to-face interviews, where the researcher can ask probing questions to explore themes that arise in the course of a response. In heterogeneous samples one will typically find people who are not used to verbalizing let alone to writing about their beliefs, attitudes, or behavior. Interviews leave the respondent the possibility of talking rather than writing. Mailed questionnaires and questionnaires on the Internet have the advantage that people can take their time and work on their response when it suits them. They can reread what they filled in, reconsider their answers, and correct answers if they want. All this is more difficult in interview settings, especially in telephone interviews. Telephone interviews need to be limited in length. Thirty minutes is the typical time limit for an effective survey, but if the subject is of much concern to the respondent, this time can be extended to three-quarters of an hour. Mailed questionnaires and questionnaires on the Internet can be longer. However, long questionnaires lower the response rate and may make people less serious in their responses.

Time Frame

A final, more general design question regards the time frame of the survey. Is the study designed to provide a picture of some aspect of a movement at a single point in time, or does the researcher intend to engage in a longitudinal study involving pre- and post-event surveys or surveys at various points in a movement cycle? Since multiple-time surveys enhance our analytical leverage by providing comparison points, designs that incorporate them are important. Even if one began a study assuming a one-shot survey of movement participants or organizations, an opportunity may arise to go back and resurvey the same groups or individuals. This was the case in the Colwell survey of the peace movement mentioned earlier. Thus, it is wise for a researcher to conceptualize the survey with the idea that he or she or some other researcher may repeat a survey of the same population at a later time.

There are several possible designs to move beyond one-time surveys. In an appendix on research methods, Klandermans (1997) discusses three core designs for social movement research: (1) panel studies, (2) separate sample designs, and (3) separate sample pretest-posttest designs. We will discuss only the main characteristics and refer to this appendix for details.

Panel Studies

Panel studies can be conceived of as within-subject designs and can be described as follows:

\[ R_0 X_1 O_2 X_2 O_3 \ldots X_n O_n \]

where X stands for event; O stands for observation; subscripts 1 through n refer to the sequential order of events \( (X_1 \ldots X_n) \) or of observations \( (O_1 \ldots O_n) \); and \( R_1 \ldots R_n \) stands for groups that are randomly formed.

A random sample of individuals is interviewed before and after events of interest. This design may provide us with data on fluctuations in participation and relevant beliefs. It allows us to apply sophisticated correlational analyses, such as cross-lagged correlations, and to test complicated over-time models with techniques such as LISREL. With more than two measurements...
in time, this design can help us make causal inferences. An example of such research is Taylor's study of the Boston school segregation conflict (1986), in which Taylor tried to investigate how leaders, events, and circumstances caused people to engage in an active fight against desegregation. Over a twenty-two-month period, Taylor surveyed a sample of residents of the Boston area five times to determine their beliefs about race relations and desegregation, and the relation of these beliefs to the anti-busing protest.

Panel studies have a number of weaknesses. First, they do not control for history; that is, after we have assessed a change in belief, attitude, or behavior, we still have the difficulty of attributing the change to specific events. Any event—not only the event we were interested in—that occurs in between two observations may be responsible for the observed changes. The longer the period between two observations, the greater the number and variety of events that could provide rival explanations. Second, panel studies may create testing problems; that is, an individual’s responses to a particular question may change over time because he or she has been asked the same question a number of times. Moreover, individuals may become irritated, bored, and frustrated when they have to fill out the same questionnaire on more than one occasion. In contrast to the effects of history, testing effects are stronger if the time interval in between two measurements shortens. A third weakness of panel studies is subject mortality; a study can lose its respondents for all kinds of reasons (it may be impossible to trace or contact them again, they may be unwilling or unable to cooperate again, or they may have died). The longer the study lasts, the more serious a problem mortality can become. One advantage, of course, is that we know a lot about the dropouts from the previous interviews. We can therefore estimate the degree of bias in the data.

Separate Sample Designs

As the name indicates, separate sample designs, unlike panel studies, are based on several separate samples employed to collect data over time in the following way:

\[
\begin{align*}
R_1 & X_1 \quad O_1 \\
R_2 & X_1 \quad O_2 \quad X_2 \\
R_3 & X_1 \quad O_3 \quad X_3 \\
\vdots & \vdots \\
R_n & X_1 \quad O_n \\
\end{align*}
\]

If the study involves a large population, samples can be drawn independently of each other at various times. Klandermans, Roefs, and Olivier (2001) employed this design in their study of social movements in South Africa. From 1994 until 2000, these authors interviewed random samples of the South African population, asking questions about grievances, relative deprivation, trust in government, participation in grassroots organizations, and protest participation.

The major advantage of this type of design is that testing is no longer a problem. Because respondents are interviewed only once, none of the problems related to repeated measurement arises. Subject mortality will not become a problem either when groups are sampled independently at the appropriate time. Equivalence of the various groups (because of sampling biases or nonresponse) is a problem that always needs attention, especially when groups are small. We are, of course, able to assess to what extent two groups are equivalent. If needed, statistical controls (analysis of covariance with the differences between groups as covariates) may help to correct for the observed nonequivalence.

Separate sample designs also have disadvantages. As in panel designs, history is not controlled for as an alternative explanation of the assessed changes. In fact, all comparisons of time in field research struggle with this problem.

Separate Sample Pretest-Posttest Designs

We can obtain within-subject analyses of changes by adding a posttest to the separate sample design. This addition leads to the following arrangement:

\[
\begin{align*}
R_1 & O_1 \quad X_1 \quad O_2 \quad X_2 \\
R_2 & X_1 \quad O_2 \quad X_2 \quad O_2 \\
R_3 & X_1 \quad O_3 \quad X_3 \quad O_3 \\
\vdots & \vdots \\
R_n & X_1 \quad O_n \quad X_n \quad O_n \\
\end{align*}
\]

The separate sample pretest-posttest design combines the merits of the two preceding designs. It enables us to perform all the analyses that can be done with the separate sample design, when comparing \(O_1, O_2, O_3\), and so on. In addition, this design allows us to make within-subject analyses of changes over time (comparing \(O_1\) with \(O_2, O_3\) with \(O_4\), etc.) without the problems inherent in panel studies. Subjects are never interviewed more than two times. If it is possible to interview each separate sample three times, a powerful
The reliability and validity of survey findings depend on high survey response rates, which reduce the possibility that the sample of respondents is systematically different from the population the study investigates. Non-random differences between survey respondents and nonrespondents, or nonresponse bias, are often difficult to avoid. For instance, one would expect that people who are less interested in the goals of a movement or who are overworked leaders of small and resource-poor organizations would not take the time to complete a survey. Because a biased pool of respondents limit one's ability to generalize from survey results, the researcher must take every possible step both to limit nonresponse bias and, if possible, to understand its dimensions.

Nonresponse threatens the reliability and validity of our findings more than sample size. Therefore, researchers' efforts should emphasize achieving high response rates rather than large samples. Indeed, it is better to draw a smaller sample and aim at as high a response rate as possible than to draw a larger sample to compensate for a low response rate. Scholars using survey methodologies have developed a variety of strategies for maximizing response rates (for a detailed discussion, see Spaeth and O’Rourke 1994). McCarthy and his collaborators (McCarthy, Shields, and Hall, 1997; McCarthy and Wolfson 1996) mailed an abbreviated version of the questionnaire to nonresponders, including only questions researchers deemed most central to their principal analyses. With this method, data on key variables were collected from an additional 22 percent of the nonrespondents in a survey of groups working to combat drunk driving. McCarthy and his collaborators have also used, with considerable success, follow-up telephone calls to organizations, reminding them to return their survey. Smith’s (1999) work on organizational surveys employed these multiple types of efforts to encourage nonrespondents to complete the surveys, and each contact effort generated some added level of response. When designing a study, researchers should define an appropriate targeted response rate and time frame within which surveys will be collected. Probably no more than a 50 percent response rate can be expected for organizational surveys. The design should include multiple and varied follow-up communications to nonrespondents until that target response rate is reached and/or the time frame has expired.

In some cases, particularly in organizational studies, researchers may have access to data on the population of interest prior to beginning a survey. For instance, organizational directories provide details about a group's goals, location, founding date, and membership (see Minkoff, this volume). Lists of individuals or organizations provide details about where a target informant is located. Such information can be used to compare respondents with the entire sample (or population) of individuals or organizations to identify potential nonresponse biases (for an example of such a study, see Smith 1997). While these tests are limited to the few variables for which data are available, the researcher can at a minimum determine whether the pool of respondents overrepresents particular geographic areas, types of organizations, economic groups, or other categories. This knowledge can improve the validity of one’s conclusions from an imperfect sample by allowing a more accurate interpretation of survey results.

Questionnaire Design

The typical survey questionnaire in the social movement domain encompasses a mixture of questions regarding knowledge, opinions, and attitudes about the movement and its goals; reported participation in movement activities in the past and intended participation in the future; perceived costs and benefits of participation; ideology and identity; affective components such as commitment to the movement; and demographic characteristics such as gender, age, profession, income and education, position in social networks, and political affiliation. Organizational surveys might ask about an organization’s goals, structure and procedures, strategies and activities, involvement with members or volunteers, and resources.

Questionnaire design must be sensitive to informants’ situations and sentiments. Of crucial importance is the appearance of the survey instrument, which should have an appealing and clear layout. The researcher must also pay close attention to whether the questions address controversial issues appropriately, whether they reflect comparable levels of specificity, and whether they are ordered in such a way as to avoid undue influence on a respondent’s answers. Survey respondents may be reluctant to answer questions on matters such as involvement in illegal activities, personal income, or political views. To ensure that respondents complete such questions, the design
must seek to reduce any suspicions the informant might have by, for instance, selecting wording and placement of questions that increase the likelihood that informants will provide honest answers. Pretesting of the questionnaire can help identify sensitive questions. Also, the researcher can take steps to cultivate the trust of respondents by, for instance, guaranteeing informant confidentiality, securing endorsements of the study by respected movement leaders or organizations, and providing certain incentives, such as promising to make the survey results available to respondents.

On the matter of question specificity, Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) stressed the need to pay close attention to the level of specificity in each survey question. General attitudinal questions are unlikely to correlate strongly with specific behavioral questions, but they do correlate with composite behavioral measures, such as a list of possible activities people could participate in, or the general question whether people are prepared to participate in any kind of collective action organized by a movement. If one wants to understand why people participate in a specific movement activity, it is best to assess the attitude toward that specific activity rather than a general attitude toward collective action or the movement's goals in general.

Surveys in the movement domain usually encompass attitudinal and behavioral questions (intentions or reported behavior), creating possibilities for problems with order effects. Asking a list of attitudinal questions may prime the informant to answer subsequent behavioral questions in particular ways. Someone who has expressed supportive attitudes toward the movement's goals and actions may have difficulties saying that he or she will not participate in movement activities. On the other hand, someone who has indicated repeatedly that he or she will participate in movement activities may find it necessary to justify this expressed intention if attitudinal questions follow behavioral ones. Either scenario produces artificially high correlations between attitudes and behavior. The common preventive measure in such circumstances is to vary the order in which questions are presented to the interviewee and/or to include multiple questions that ask for the same information. If the answers to the two sets of questions do not vary depending on the order in the questionnaire, order effects can be ruled out as an alternative explanation.

Standardization is crucial to effective questionnaire design. If only we could agree on identical or at least comparable measures for key concepts, we would make comparisons much easier. Indeed, one could then compare results of studies of different places and movements even where these studies were conducted by different researchers. Standardized questions measuring core concepts in the study of social movements should seek to replicate others' work or at least to consider possibilities for future replication. Communication among researchers is necessary to encourage such standardization, and a first step could be the inclusion of exact versions of questionnaires in appendices to publications (see Knoke and Wood 1981; Opp 1989; and Walsh 1988 for examples).

Data Analysis

Survey research on social movements uses all of the common statistical techniques. We refer the reader to the relevant handbooks for the technical details. In line with our emphasis on comparison, we suggest that it is important to disaggregate the impact of movement, time, and space on the individuals' behavior. Moreover, as most of our variables are correlated among themselves, it is necessary to conduct multivariate analyses and not to stick with zero-order relations and univariate analyses.

Of special importance is the issue of multilevel analysis. If we sample participants from different branches, or citizens in different communities, we may need to conduct multilevel analysis to separate the effects of variation between branches/communities and variation between individuals within the same branch or community. Indeed, organizational surveys reveal important variations caused by differences in organizational structure, size, scope, or location, and these kinds of differences should be considered in any research design. Such statistical designs are especially useful in the case of stratified sampling. For instance, one may expect the sample of individuals within a branch or community to be more homogeneous than a random sample of citizens. Multilevel analysis is designed to separate the two sources of variance. The following example from Klandermans's (1994) peace movement study illustrates the point.

Between November 1985 (when the Dutch government decided to deploy cruise missiles) and June 1987, a quarter of the peace activists left their peace group. Interestingly, two-thirds of those who had left the group by 1987 had already considered leaving before the summer of 1985, as compared to only one-third of those who were still involved in 1987. This finding suggests that it was the less committed and less active members who left first after the government decision. To the researchers' surprise, they did not find any difference in the hours per month spent in 1985 in activities for the peace movement between those who left and those who stayed. However, comparisons of the group averages yielded telling differences. Those who left typically spent less time on movement activities than their group's average. Indeed, it was the less active members who withdrew from the movement, but they were less active relative to their local group rather than to the overall sample.
Conclusions: Limitations and Advantages of Survey Research

Surveys are certainly not appropriate tools for addressing all research questions in social movements, and there are important limitations to survey research. Research that takes the individual as its unit of analysis necessarily restricts itself to the explanation of individual opinions, attitudes, and behaviors. It can help us to understand why individuals participate in social movements once they have emerged but is not able to tell us much about the emergence of social movements. It may tell us how many citizens are dissatisfied with some governmental policy and why, and it may tell us how many of those who are dissatisfied are prepared to take part in protest, had there been some, but it can tell us little about the organizations and actors that stage movement events. Social movements require both people who are motivated to participate in collective action and actors that supply opportunities to protest. Appropriately designed surveys can tell us how ideology, capacity, and opportunities are brought together. Surveys with good comparative designs—especially comparisons of time—may be able to tell us how and why demand for protest developed. The supply side of protest, however, is a different matter that cannot be assessed at the individual level with the individual as the unit of analysis. Surveys of movement organizations may tell us some part of the story, but we need information about dynamics at the macro level as well. In short, surveys can help us answer some questions if they are designed and implemented carefully, but the answers they provide are often constrained by the practical limitations to obtaining preferred sampling frames and implementing effective surveys. When analyzed along with other sources of evidence about broader contexts, however, surveys can provide rich insights into movement dynamics.

A second limitation is the costs. Properly designed surveys are generally quite time-consuming, and they can be expensive. As most survey costs cover telephone, mail, and personnel to interview and enter the data in the computer, anything that can cut down on those items reduces costs. Of course, some surveys of committed members of movement organizations can be conducted without many costs if the questionnaires can be distributed and collected through organizational networks. But one cannot always count on such organizational networks, and one’s research questions may demand a different set of subjects from this readily reached group.

A third limitation concerns the logistics of surveying. Organizing a survey cannot be done overnight. Designing and printing questionnaires, making questionnaires ready for computer-assisted interviewing or for use on the Internet, drawing samples, organizing a mailing, and hiring interviewers are time-consuming matters. To be sure, much time can be saved if one has the appropriate facilities in place, and standardized measures speed questionnaire design considerably. But not everything can be standardized, and not everybody has professional facilities available. As a method of data collection, surveys are generally more complicated than other, more qualitative forms of data collection, such as participant observation or in-depth interviews. And surveys are less effective in documenting what may be crucial details about social movement action. The best way a researcher can overcome these limitations to survey methods is to devote ample time and attention to pretesting survey instruments and consulting with other experts before conducting a survey.

A fourth limitation relates to the survey questionnaire as a device to acquire information. We are dependent on what informants are prepared to tell us. The answers to our questions can be socially desirable answers or rationalizations. There is no guarantee that people are telling us the truth. Although sometimes informants may provide false or made-up responses, attempts by survey researchers to assess this potential problem have revealed no indications that it takes place on a large scale. Occasionally, one is in the position to compare reported behavior with actual behavior: as a rule the differences are small. Similarly, checks for social desirability seldom reveal major problems. And surveys completed by different organizational leaders or staff revealed similar responses (Smith, Pagrucco, and Lopez 1998; Weed 1987). Even when efforts are taken to overcome this limitation, we may nevertheless assume that answers to questions on sensitive matters will be subject to significant nonresponse and will likely be biased in some ways.

Surveys in the social movement domain share the limitations of surveys in any domain. Basically, these limitations are related to the use of quantitative methods. The measures used in surveys are generally abstract and superficial. Feelings and emotions, people’s uncertainties, doubts, and fears, all the inconsistencies and the complexities of social interactions and belief systems are matters that are not easily tapped with survey questionnaires. In-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and similar qualitative techniques may be more useful in that regard, perhaps in combination with surveys.

If used in proper ways, survey research is a powerful tool for the study of social movements. It is especially valuable if employed in comparative designs. Rather than conducting large-scale, one-time surveys, researchers might put their time and resources to more productive use by comparing smaller samples drawn from different movements or places or at different points in time. After all, social movement participation is to a large extent context dependent. Comparative designs do justice to context dependency.


