

that work by itself will not lead to decreases in crime.

I do not believe that Crutchfield would disagree with a perspective that includes the importance of individual agency—just with one that ignores the importance of social context in framing those choices. He closes the book with an excerpt from a speech by Robby Wideman, quoted in *Brothers and Keepers* (Wideman 1984), upon his graduation, in prison, from a community college. Robby starts with the point of Crutchfield's book—that the social context a person lives in shapes the person in important ways and can lead directly to increased crime. But Robby does not stop there. He points out the need for individuals to reshape the world. Ultimately, that reshaping of behavior is a choice—a choice that individuals can and do make. The crucial interplay between individuals' options and their choices needs further attention in any work that wants to help academics or policy-makers determine viable solutions for individuals who live in poor, urban environments like those described in Crutchfield's important text.

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*Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*, edited by **Donatella della Porta**. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. 496 pp. \$40.00 paper. ISBN: 9780198719588.

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In *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*, Donatella della Porta brings together the work of a cohesive group of scholars affiliated with the Centre on Social Movement Studies at the European University Institute in Florence. This edited volume covers a range of familiar topics in research methods for social movement studies—such as participant observation, interviewing, focus groups, and social network analysis—but also explores less-well-trodden issues such as conducting fieldwork in violent contexts, surveying protesters at rallies, online research, and analysis of images. Each chapter is organized around the theme of the *practice* of research; that is, how research is actually conducted by scholars in contemporary settings. The authors address not only the formal requirements of research (e.g., how to select respondents), but also its practicalities (e.g., how to improve rapport with respondents).

All of the authors are experienced with research using the methods they discuss, with chapters including detailed examples from recent, high-quality, published research. The volume's thematic focus on the practice of research and the fact that all of the authors are affiliated with the same research group, as well as Della Porta's guiding hand throughout the work (she is author or co-author of 5 of 18 chapters), help to give the volume a seamless quality that is not typical of edited volumes. It would make an excellent text for undergraduate, graduate, or post-doctoral groups seeking

to improve their conduct of social movement research.

The volume presents a coherent vision of social movement research for a field that della Porta argues is grounded in methodological pluralism. She explains that social movement studies have not allowed theoretical disputes to degenerate into "methodological wars" (p. 3). Consequently, this research area has attracted scholars from numerous disciplines, such as sociology, political science, history, anthropology, computer science, business, organization science, and public health. Institutional mechanisms, such as a genuinely interdisciplinary field journal in *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, have fostered coexistence among sister disciplines and, thus, an embrace of varied research methods.

With the acceptance of multiple legitimate research approaches, the social movements field is, perhaps, more ready than others to recognize that all methods have their strengths and limitations. A single question might be answered from any of several perspectives. In light of this view, social movement studies (and this volume) embrace *triangulation*, a research strategy in which several research methods are combined within a single project to answer one (or a few related) question(s). Ideally, the different methods would be selected to complement one another by compensating for one another's weaknesses. This view is articulated throughout the volume, with multiple examples of how it has been applied in published research.

Along these lines, the chapter on "Triangulation in Social Movement Research" (by Philip Ayoub, Sophia Wallace, and Chris Zepeda-Millán) might be considered the heart of the volume. Here the authors outline three distinct designs for implementing triangulation. First, in the *convergent parallel design*, diverse types of data are collected and analyzed separately so that they can be juxtaposed in the final analysis for their consistencies and contradictions. Second, in the *explanatory sequential design*, quantitative data collection proceeds first, followed by a qualitative phase intended to fill in the blanks. Third, in the *exploratory sequential design*, qualitative exploration proceeds first and then serves to guide subsequent

quantitative analysis. While it is easy to imagine variants on these designs, the exposition of these ideal types serves to guide scholars to think more systematically about *how* to triangulate designs, rather than simply asserting *that* designs should be triangulated. The chapter champions the benefits of triangulation, notably that it provides deeper insight into social mechanisms than is possible through a single approach. At the same time, it evaluates seriously the complications of triangulation, notably that it pushes projects toward being more complex and less manageable. The research examples in this chapter of the European LGBT movement and U.S. immigrant-rights activism are especially well detailed and illustrative of key points of these research strategies.

Beyond the chapter on triangulation, a number of chapters are especially noteworthy. The chapter on "Surveying Protesters: Why and How" (by Massimiliano Andretta and Dontatella della Porta) provides a systematic review of relatively new methods that are specific to social movement research. Protests are among the most visible manifestations of social movement activity, yet until recently scholars had an aversion to gathering data from their participants. This lacuna was unfortunate for the field because protesters constitute a diverse and usually willing source of information about movements. To exploit this data source, scholars developed methods for quasi-random selection of survey respondents at protests. These involve envisioning protests as grids, distributing surveyors throughout the crowd, and using pointers to guide surveyors in approximating randomization—all of which is detailed in the chapter. The authors offer sage advice on how to select, train, and supervise surveyors, what to ask in the surveys, and what to expect in terms of response. In short, it presents all of the relevant considerations on how to field a survey.

Lorenzo Mosca's chapter ("Methodological Practices in Social Movement Online Research") overviews how to collect data from one of the newest and most promising sources, the Internet. The chapter reviews data-selection methods that are based on vertical selection (i.e., search engines) or horizontal selection (i.e., hyperlinks) and

discusses strategies that may be purposive or random in orientation. While the chapter focuses on survey-style approaches, it considers the possibility of conducting ethnography online as well. The chapter might have also benefited adding a discussion of the opportunities and challenges created by rapidly evolving platforms for internet communication (e.g., MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Reddit).

The volume appropriately concludes with a chapter on "The Ethics of Social Movement Research" (by Stefania Milan). This chapter takes seriously the notion that knowledge is power, asking what kind of knowledge social movement scholars should produce about social movements. If activists are to contribute labor to social movement research (e.g., by participating in interviews, taking surveys, providing documents), then perhaps social movement research should be helpful (or at least not harmful) to the movement. While this possibility is intriguing, it is potentially problematic to suggest a norm in which scholars have an obligation to affirmatively help the subjects of their study. What is to be done, for example, in cases where the movement is morally reprehensible to society? If scholars study neo-Nazi or climate-change-denial movements, are they also obligated to help them? Should scholars be placed in the position of making a judgement call about the deservingness of a movement during their research design?

Although ending the volume with a chapter on ethics is indeed a reasonable move, it might have been interesting to have a more general and forward-looking conclusion. What are the likely directions for methodological advances for social movement studies over the next decade? Which areas are ripe for development? In short, the volume left me wanting to know more. That is a testament to the extraordinarily high quality of the collection, which ought to have a place on the shelf of any serious movements scholar.

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*The Twilight of Social Conservatism: American Culture Wars in the Obama Era*, by **John Dombink**. New York: New York University Press, 2015. 249 pp. \$27.00 paper. ISBN: 9780814738122.

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Culture war issues such as abortion and gay rights have played a prominent role in U.S. politics for decades. Associated political discord has resulted in the common use of labels such as "two Americas" or "red and blue America" to describe an electorate said to be divided into opposing tribes with distinct worldviews. Yet the central argument of John Dombink's *The Twilight of Social Conservatism* is that the political potency of some contentious culture war issues is waning. His primary aim is to chronicle some of the major Obama-era political contours that he argues are emblematic of such a historical departure. Key themes include growing acceptance of gay rights and marriage equality; the moderation of American religiosity; growing ethnic diversity; and, of course, the idea of a diminishing role for some socially conservative issues in conventional politics.

Dombink's approach is relatively distinct from traditional political sociological treatments of politics and social change. While the chapters are thematically arranged, the text is not explicitly grounded in any particular methodological or theoretical framework, and this makes for a disjointed read. Each chapter uses an eclectic range of material that attempts to make palpable the era's cultural context. Dombink frequently draws from events and dialogues that involve popular cultural icons and various notable figures to craft his social history. While this technique may help convey the broader zeitgeist, readers may be less interested in what Bill Maher or Rush Limbaugh said than what empirical research reveals about trends in aspects of social conservatism and what might be motivating such patterns.

With respect to gay rights, public sentiment regarding gay marriage is one of the most rapidly shifting trends in recent times.