

COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR: FROM STATIC PSYCHOLOGY TO STATIC SOCIOLOGY?

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INTRODUCTION

Allport 1968, recognized five simple, sovereign explanations for social behavior, as determined by the psychological mechanisms of: hedonism, egoism, sympathy, imitation, and suggestion. Hedonism was the drive to experience pleasure and avoid pain. Egoism was the pursuit of power and control. Sympathy was the drive for gregariousness, affiliation, empathy or altruism. Imitation was the proclivity to copy the behavior of others. Suggestion was the tendency to shape one's behavior according to the intended influence of others.

Early explanations for collective behavior also were simple and sovereign, and were much the same as those represented in social psychological theory, with emphasis on imitation and suggestion. Many of the "parents" of social psychology are also considered "parents" of collective behavior: Freud (1922), LeBon (1895), Tarde (1901), Bagehot (1869), Trotter (1916), McDougall (1920).

In 1908 McDougall and Ross independently published the first two social psychology textbooks, the former psychologically oriented, the latter sociologically oriented. The young discipline was alive with intense debate concerning the bases of social behavior: nature vs. nurture; instinct vs. social influence; mind vs. body; subject vs. object; rationality vs. irrationality; past vs. present experience; conscious vs. unconscious processes; activity vs. passivity; cognitive content vs. cognitive process; figure vs. ground; individuality vs. group-centrality or group mind; ideographic vs. nomothetic views of people; 2nd needs of the person vs. needs of society.

Amidst this debate and in part because of it, collective behavior emerged as a discrete topic - first represented in Park and Burgess' sociology textbook (1924). Blumer gave collective behavior a symbolic interaction interpretation and significantly expanded and refined the categories of collective behavior (1939). How have collective behavior theory and research changed since the 1920's? What have been the conceptual modifications in: the forms of collective behavior; the stages of collective behavior; the participatory networks of

collective behavior; and the attributed motives for participating in collective behavior?

FORMS OF COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR

Marx and Wood (1975), observed that the taxonomic tradition in collective behavior is diminishing. Researchers are looking beyond categories of crowds or social movements, to develop propositions about the processes of collective behavior.

However, we still use the original categories of collective behavior such as panic, crowds, fads, fashion, mass, publics and social movements.

Some no longer consider publics and social movements as forms of collective behavior, but argue that they should be better understood as categories of formal voluntary associations or complex organizations. This is exemplified by the "resource mobilization" interpretation of social movements (McCarthy and Zald, 1977, 1973). Considering publics and social movements as organizational rather than collective behavior would link more closely what was previously assessed to be "strange" with "accepted" behavior. But would the phenomena remaining defined as collective behavior, namely panic, crowd, fad, fashion and mass, still be considered "strange"?

There is also an inclination to drop the rubric *collective behavior* completely from sociology (Brissett, 1968). The actions previously identified as collective behavior can best be understood, the argument goes, with concepts drawn from general sociological theories (Zald and Ash, 1966; Wilson, 1973). There is no need to distinguish between collective behavior and institutional behavior (Weller and Quarantelli, 1973; Couch, 1970). This argument is plausible, but the usefulness of a common analytical framework depends upon its capacity to explain a sizable range of behaviors, and its facility for merging psychological with sociological variables. Does that framework yet exist? It does, and it is symbolic interaction. But *symbolic interaction* needs the rubric *collective behavior*.

We still classify crowds much the same as we always have: casual, conventionalized,

acting, aggressive, escape, acquisitive, individualistic/solidaristic, and focused/volatile (Brown 1954; Milgram & Toch 1969, Turner & Killian 1972. Because of events in the 1960's aggressive rioting crowds have been intensely studied (Morgan & Clark, 1973; Spilerman, 1970; Wanderer, 1968; Lieberman & Silverman, 1965; Bloombaum, 1968; Downes, 1968; Warren, 1969; Firestone, 1972; Oberschall, 1968). The close look at riots generated some additional typologies - e.g. Mattick's (1968) identification of rational, expressive, reified, irrational and interracial riots and Marx's (1970) identification of issueless riots. Those studies advanced the comparative approach for examining collective behavior and helped link a basic form of collective behavior, the crowd, to broad societal factors. Those studies also raised anew the problem of ecological fallacy, and warned us not to stop our attempts to understand collective behavior with data gathered from individuals as they act.

There has been a de-mystification of collective behavior forms during the past 50 years. Systematic studies of disaster show panic not usually to be blind, raw, mindless terror. For the most part it is purposeful behavior (Quarantelli & Dynes, 1970a, 1970b; Taylor, et al., 1970). Crowds do not appear magically or even spontaneously, they follow an assembling process (McPhail & Miller, 1973), and can be seen to spiral in intensity within a series of critical events (Heirich, 1971). Even by-stander crowds (Latane & Darley, 1970), queues (Mann, 1970) and baiting-crowds (Canetti, 1962) are seen to be mini-organizations. Consensus is a primary factor in crowd behavior, as is the distinction between primary and secondary participation (Quarantelli, 1973). Crowds are really so systematic that they can be analyzed by gaming theory and other probability models, Bailey, 1957; James, 1951, 1953; Coleman & James, 1961; White, 1962; Berk, 1974. The application of aerial photography, infra-red photography and other electronic monitoring devices (Seidler, et al, 1974) lead to such conclusions as "nature abhors a square crowd". Crowds demonstrate a "distillation effect," can be "laminated", and can be traced systematically in such apparently rigid organizational settings as total institutions (Milgram & Toch 1969, Denzin, 1968). The

evolution of fashion and fad is so predictable it can be plotted by sophisticated trend analysis. The mass is revealed to be set of multi-organization and multi-associational fields and inter-personal networks, more stable than shifting. Publics are defined by extremely accurate polls. Social movements are complex exchange systems, populated by persons rationally negotiating maximum gains for minimum costs (McCarthy & Zald, 1977).

The de-mystification of collective behavior forms is welcome, but the push for mathematical understanding and least common conceptual denominators in collective behavior may, if pursued to the exclusion of other forms of analysis, cause us to embrace again the "oversocialized" view of humans emotion.

COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR STAGES

There have been several influential conceptualizations of collective behavior *stages of development* during the past 50 years. Park and Burgess (1924): social unrest: circular reaction: collective behavior. Blumer (1939): social unrest: milling (circular reaction): social contagion: collective behavior. Lang and Lang (1961): collective redefinition: demoralization: collective defense: mass conversion: crystallization. Smelser (1962): structural conduciveness: structural strain: growth and spread of a generalized belief: precipitating factors: mobilization for action: operation of social control.

Today, these stages primarily are used for organizing qualitative collective behavior data. The "social unrest" and "demoralization" notions have come under attack as vague. "Circular reaction," "collective defense," and "mass conversion" have been said to smack of sovereign explanations. "Generalized belief," especially the idea of "short-circuiting" among the components of action, has been labelled as stereotyping, and has been reported lacking in the evolution of collective behavior (Currie and Skolnick, 1970; Quarantelli and Hundley, 1969; Brown and Goldin, 1973;).

Other current evolutionary notions are represented by "non-stage" processes, such as Turner and Killian's (1972) emergent norm development and Heirich's (1971) spiraling of events. But those non-stage descriptions have been criticized as assuming unconscious processes, or some other dynamic, which ener-

gize collective behavior (Berk, 1974).

PARTICIPATORY NETWORKS

Some important assumptions about the participatory networks of collective behavior have changed. It is no longer assumed that people who participate in collective behavior are homogeneous or isolated from the formalized institutions in society. Nor are they divorced from the culture of that society. They do not interact in a societal vacuum. Collective behavior is now seen as tied to "mainstream" society and culture, by complex organizational and interpersonal networks (Snow & et al. 1980). Lewin's (1951) social-psychological explanation of the "powerfield" influence on individual life space and group behavior is pertinent.

ATTRIBUTED MOTIVES

Are the motives attributed to participants in collective behavior still simple and sovereign? Status inconsistency? Status Protest? Rising Expectations? Absolute Deprivation? Relative Deprivation? Frustration/aggression? Alienation? Imbalance between political efficacy and political trust? Cognitive Inconsistency? Anomie? Rational Calculus? Exchange? Are not those all really continuations of simple and sovereign, convergence theory explanations? (See Orum, 1974, for a critique of some of the explanations listed). There has been a tendency to examine isolated bits of the explanation for people's participation in collective behavior, and then to caution dutifully against over generalizing. Have we abstracted so distantly from individual behavior that we assume simple and sovereign motivations - e.g., an affiliation motive implicit in the organizational view of collective behavior? A cognitive consistency motive implicit in generalized beliefs? A hedonistic motive implicit in the game theory approach or the stimulus-response view (Weiss, 1963)?

Perhaps the most promising perspectives of collective behavior assume, that people act. "For the sociologist motivation is a function of direction, not *origination* of action" (Stone & Farberman 1970: 467). A second important assumption is that people attempt to interpret their world, and to make sense of it (Cantril 1941:). A third important assumption is that the action is socially situated (Cicourel, 1970;

Goffman, 1961, 1963, 1967; Lofland, 1976; Schutz, 1967; Scott and Lyman, 1968; Stone, 1977).

If people's situated actions are challenged by other people as being unexpected, inappropriate or deviant, they will pronounce explanatory vocabularies of motive (Mills 1940:). The great diversity of the vocabularies of motive can be generated from the experiences we call collective behavior. The terms of analysis used in the study of collective behavior may be items in a vocabulary of motive which attempt to explain unexpected, inappropriate, or deviant behavior (Zurcher, 1979). People panic, get caught up in a fad, or follow the crowd. We may adopt simple and sovereign explanations for collective behavior because we want to refine and regularize, to make parsimonious and neat, the vocabularies of motive - to an extreme.

The emergent norm view of collective behavior flows well from the notions of situated action, search for meaning, and vocabularies of motive. The symbolic interactionist and especially the dramaturgical view (Brissett & Edgley, 1975; Snow, 1979) of collective behavior can include all those notions *and* can provide a consideration of the phenomenon of *emotion* as well.

Emotion, a "messy" variable, would be eliminated. Emotion at least had a conceptual home, no matter how tenuous, in early collective behavior theory. Theorists then did not shy away from considerations of joy, hate, ecstasy, anger, or fear.

The symbolic interactionist model can incorporate Schacter's cognitive theory of emotional arousal (1962). Schacter's view of emotion is just as open-ended as Dewey's view of motivation. As summarized by Perry and Pugh (1978: 60), Schacter's theory "does not assume a simple one-to-one relationship between specific physiological reactions and discrete emotional experiences such as anger and euphoria. If the physiological symptoms are the same, the only distinctive aspect of an emotion can be the situation in which it occurs. Whether we interpret our feelings of love, hate, or joy should depend on situational factors, such as what we are doing, what others say to us, and what they are doing."

The labelling of emotion in collective behavior can be considered an emergent norm or

vocabulary of motive process. We do not lose its reality. The symbolic interactionist or the dramaturgical modes can explain the development of social behavior, both collective and institutional, and can soften the conceptual boundaries between the two categories. Symbolic interaction and dramaturgical analysis do not abstract emotion away from everyday life. And those theoretical orientations may provide a new look at social contagion as a phenomenon of shared emotions. (Kerckhoff & Back 1968).

NEED FOR THE CONCEPT

Symbolic interactionism still needs collective behavior in order to resolve theoretical and empirical shortcomings. The list in the literature is lengthy. Meltzer, Petras and Reynolds (1977), summarized some of the problems with contemporary symbolic interaction theory. In Figure 1 the, I draw upon their summary and provide responses showing how the further study of collective behavior within a symbolic interaction framework might correct some of the problems.

The concept of collective behavior, and an increase in the lively studies of collective behavior, can help sharpen symbolic interactionism conceptually, just as symbolic interactionism can clarify the individual and institutional processes of collective behavior.

One of the reasons why some scholars are ready to junk the rubric "collective behavior" is because it has ceased to be a "sensitizing concept," in Blumer's (1969) terms, and has become a reified variable. We have neutralized collective behavior's usefulness for explanation. If we revive it as a sensitizing concept, it can facilitate our pursuit of difficult and yet unanswered symbolic interaction questions, such as:

1. The relation between "I" and "me," and between "play," and "game."
2. The relation between impulse and structure.
3. The relation between process and content in social relations.
4. The relation between relatively stable social organization and the dynamics of change.
5. The relation between social innovation and social control.

Those are not easy social-psychology problems. They are problems which can be obfus-

cated further if we prematurely end a dialectic interchange about collective behavior dilemmas. We should continue bouncing collective behavior stereotypes against institutional behavior stereotypes. If we do not, we will have created another relatively meaningless continuum, this time between "less structured" and "more structured" social organization. Sociology already has too many neutralized continua.

EVOLUTION OF THEORY

In Figure 2 are summarized the direction of collective behavior theory evolution in the past 50 years, and where it is tending. It is safe to say that collective behavior began with *static psychology*, with the simple and sovereign theories centered on individual traits such as the "herd instinct" or the need for sublimation. Conceptual holdovers from that period primarily represented Couch's (1968) collective behavior stereotypes of: suggestibility, destructiveness, irrationality, emotionality, mental disturbance, lower class participation, spontaneity, creativeness, lack of self-control and anti-social behavior.

Subsequently, the process of *social interaction* became prominent in the analysis of collective behavior, occasionally housing an *explicit* simple psychologism to explain motivation, occasionally showing an *implicit* assumption of that kind. The explanatory thrust nonetheless attempted a *dynamic social psychology*.

Then *static social psychology* became the mode. Its explanations for collective behavior centered on reified combinations of individual and societal traits, such as alienation or status inconsistency.

Now there appears to be a trifurcation of collective behavior theory. The first branch grows toward *static sociology*, as I think is represented in exchange theory, cost-benefit analysis, game theory, some aspects of resource mobilization theory, and some of the organizational approaches to collective behavior.

The second branch grows toward *dynamic social psychology*, or moves toward fulfillment of the earlier interactional representation of it. It can be characterized by the dramaturgical revision of symbolic interaction. The greatest strength of symbolic interactionism is that it assumes the development of diverse vocabu-

larities of motive in a context of situated action. Other views of collective behavior start with items in already developed vocabularies of motive, and tend to make those items simple, sovereign explanations.

The third branch is the invasion, of collective behavior theory by sociobiologists. In the hands of some of them this would represent *dynamic biology*, in the hands of others, *static biology*.

We have observed that early social psychological theory and early collective behavior theory were nearly indistinguishable. Many of the social psychological formulations were based on collective behavior observations. Psychological social psychology and sociological social psychology both moved off in different directions, both tending to trivialize their pursuits. But collective behavior theory can help to rejuvenate social psychology by merging the psychological with the sociological approaches, especially if the symbolic interactionist approach thrives and finds more ways to link collective with institutional behavior.

This is not to say that other theoretical attempts to understand collective behavior - psychological, biological, economic or historical - ought stop. Nor is it to say that the rubric collective behavior ought to be kept for its own sake. Symbolic interactionism still is a good bet, and it is too early to discard the collective behavior concept, however ragged it seems.

OTHER IMPORTANT TOPICS

We should learn more about the decision-making involved in the interface between institutional authority and subsequent collective behavior. Marx's work on agent provocateur is an example of productive approaches to that problem (1974).

The relation of change in societal values to subsequent collective behavior needs more study. The 1950's were known as the apathetic generation. Can it be characterized by panty raid and hula hoop collective behavior? The 1960's were known as the alienated generation. Did that relate to the of collective protest? The 1970's have been called the narcissistic generation. Do streaking, encounter groups and collective suicide characterize that era? Turner (1976) has observed a shift in the focus of self-concept from institution to impulse, and I have noted shifts toward the Muta-

ble Self (Zurcher, 1977a). Does that change in Back (1971) has seen collective behavior as a natural process in the evolutionary change of social systems. Is it? Is it also a natural process in the evolutionary change of personality systems?

The role of symbols in collective behavior demands more investigation. This should include not only slogans, keynotes, acronyms, or visual representations, but symbols of self as collective behavior actor and symbols as generators of vocabularies of motive (Turner and Surace, 1956).

Park and Burgess (1924) noted the growing economic interdependencies and the shortening distances among societies on the world. What about the influence of one society upon another in the generation of control of collective behavior? Is there a multi-societal field just as there is a multi-organizational field in which collective behavior operates (Zurcher and Kirkpatrick, 1976; Curtis and Zurcher, 1973; Gusfield, 1963)?

Another topic for research is the manner in which the enactment of collective behavior roles might fit into what Sieber (1974) called the process of role accumulation - the assembling of a role set which gives maximum satisfaction to the person. To what extent is collective behavior participation a gratifying ephemeral role (Zurcher, 1968, 1970, 1977b)?

The process of recruitment into collective behavior participation is a particularly important area for further investigation. Recruitment, and the subsequent phenomenon of conversion, link psychological and sociological variables - e.g. belief systems and roles - and also bridge "rational" decision-making and the emotional influences on decision-making.

The phenomena of applied collective behavior begs further study. I do not mean only the control of panic and riots (Shellow and Roemer, 1966; Shellow, 1965; Smith, 1968), or the response to disaster, Quarantelli and Dynes, 1970b; Drabek and Quarantelli 1967. Those episodes are important, but they are steadily examined. I refer to the collective behavior *industry*.

The Whammo Corporation is an example of companies which make millions of dollars a year generating fads - e.g. Hula hoops, Frisbies, yo-yo's. The executives of those companies know more about fad than we do, at

FIGURE 1: UTILITY OF COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR RESEARCH FOR SYMBOLIC INTERACTION THEORY

Criticism of Symbolic Interactionism

1. notion of *self* is confusing.
2. Symbolic interactionism does not deal adequately with emotion.
3. Not adequate with unconscious processes and non-verbal cues.
4. It is ahistorical, apolitical, & non-economic
5. Limited view of social power.
6. It is ideologically biased.
7. Ignores social structure & few leaders manipulating millions.
8. It is naive about false-consciousness.
9. It assumes too much voluntarism; people are not free.
10. It ignores the broader organization of society; too microcosmic.
11. It is too consensus-oriented.
12. It is obsessed with odd, exotic aspects of life.
13. It neglects social change. It sees people as adaptive and reactive, not as proactors.

least in the practical sense. In the same manner, dozens of consulting outfits were willing to help anyone who can pay the price generate "spontaneous" crowds. Political parties have their own staffs of collective behavior specialists. The movie, record, TV, and some parts of the newspaper industries do what they can to generate mass hysteria, and then to satisfy it. Mass hysteria, is an area of collective behavior that deserves much more attention than it has received. See: Tumin and Feldman, 1955; Schuler and Parenton, 1943; Medalia and Larsen, 1958. The manipulation of public opinion is common-place, as are the agencies that attempt the manipulation. Tarded (1901) warned that "opinion has become omnipotent not only against tradition (which is serious

Collective Behavior Research Utility

The flux of collective behavior is ideal for study of self-concept as challenged, evolved & modified by intense interaction. It provides an ideal setting to examine emotion as an interaction process. Non-verbal cues are crucial in collective behavior, and processes where such cues abound. Crowds, publics, and social movements do involve historic, political & economic settings. It exists in a context of social power. Collective behavior stresses ideological bias. Deals with charisma & small highly vocal groups' influence on massive large groups. False consciousness can be studied as a strategy in some forms of collective behavior. The dialectic between freedom and constraint is inherent in collective behavior theory. Collective behavior is micro or macrocosmic, & always part of social institution network. It deals directly with conflicts among persons, groups, and organizations. Odd & exotic should be investigated, as change process often begins with idiosyncratic acts. It operates directly with social change. It deals mostly with proactive persons who try modify or sustain the social structure.

enough) but also against reason - judicial reason, scientific reason, legislative or political reason, as the opportunity occurs." Tarde was startled by the influence of the press upon collective behavior.

The TV commercial shows an energetic, professional looking woman, serious and intent, striding across a darkened parking lot toward a supermarket. She gestures toward the store, and says urgently:

"Tonight there is a change taking place in this store that can effect the lives of every person in America. They are taking *Tide* off the shelves.

Taking boxes of one brand of detergent from a supermarket is supposed to affect the lives of all Americans. Fortunately, lest we panic it is

old Tide being replaced with new Tide.

Advertisers still hold fast to assumptions that people are driven by the simple and sovereign motives of old: hedonism, egoism, sympathy, imitation or suggestion. They pitch their ads to one of those motives, or combination of them, depending upon the product. If people are so defined by ads, do they come to perceive themselves in those terms? Do they remain guided by simple, sovereign and superficial motives, externally manipulated? Are they influenced to behave in a manner that would cause LeBon, Tarde and Freud to say, "see, we weren't far wrong after all." The business of collective behavior deserves more of our attention.

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Solutions to these problems include defining roles and goals more clearly. The league team should write out the responsibilities of each person and what is expected from him. The reasons for the establishing of the league team should be determined and the goals based upon those reasons. The goals for league play need to be well defined to all participants and agreed on by all. If a coach, parent, or player has other motives for participating he should redirect his goal or find a more suitable organization.

This approach has been tried in a baseball league sponsored by a parks and recreation center. The board members and director of the program specified the rules and goals of the league to each person participating in or volunteering services to the league. The main goal of this league was to provide learning experiences for the children in an atmosphere of fun.

DISCIPLINE

This system also encountered problems with deviations from the goal structure. Any social system will encounter problems of this sort since its parts are made up of people and people tend to be very human. However, the parks and recreation league had a system of dealing with deviations from the goal structure which led to problems.

One coach strayed from letting the children have a good time to pressuring them to win the game. He started pushing the boys, and would get angry and yell at them for bad plays. When the director of the league observed his behavior, he pulled him aside after the game and talked to him. The next time the coach lost control and severely belittled his team for their performance in a game, the director suspended him from coaching duties. This was embarrassing for the coach, but, it made him realize he was blowing the winning factor out of proportion for little league-aged players. Later, the coach was allowed to return to participate but only after reevaluating his reasons for wanting to be there.

By defining the rules and goals more specifically, participants knew what the purpose of the league was and what their own role entailed. Suspending the coach was an example of enforcement of a common goal. In this case, the league rules were enforced like other official rules. A system can have a well defined

structure without being rigid. Flexibility must be allowed in any social system since people make up these systems. People change continuously. It is important to review the roles and goals of the system to assure the changing needs of the people are met within the structure.

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ZURCHER

From p 9

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