

A CATALYTIC MODEL OF COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR

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A THESIS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the field of collective behavior received a great deal of attention because of the unrest that was exhibited in the riots in the ghettos and the student demonstrations against the war in Viet Nam. The study of these events falls under the purview of collective behavior. The literature regarding this subject area comes from many areas of study, including business, psychology, and sociology, which makes the collection of past research extremely difficult.<sup>1</sup> One of the major reasons for this problem is the lack of a firm conception of what the field of collective behavior is. Many writers, including LeBon, Martin, McDougall, Asch, Turner and Killian, Festinger, and Smelser, have approached this topic. Each of the above has presented a rather specialized point of view. The purpose of this introduction is to acquaint the reader with the major trends in the field as well as to foster an appreciation for the historical perspective for the area of collective behavior.

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<sup>1</sup>Ralph Turner and Lewis M. Killian, Collective Behavior (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), p. v.

If anyone can claim the distinction of being the father of collective behavior, the title should go to Gustave LeBon. In the late 1890s, he wrote a book extolling the harmful nature of the crowd, which, according to LeBon, occurs when a collection of individuals in a highly suggestible state come under the influence of each other. According to LeBon, in this state, the participants lose control of their minds and can no longer make their own decisions.<sup>1</sup> With this conception of collective behavior, it is very difficult to place various episodes of action into a single category. It is difficult to understand exactly what LeBon was referring to in his description of crowd behavior.

With this as a beginning, the field of collective behavior was off to an uncertain start. The general approach to sociology had become a study of the structure of society. This approach had little difficulty explaining the consistencies in society, but had a great deal of trouble dealing with the episodes of action that did not fit into the structure of the system. In other words, if one conceives of society as consisting of several systems that provide for the needs of the individuals of that society under normal circumstances, any behavior that does not fit that scheme is

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<sup>1</sup>Gustave LeBon, Group Mind (Dunwoody, Georgia: Norman T. Berg Publisher [1972]), p. 11.

inexplicable. As a result of this problem, the field of collective behavior became the depository of the actions that did not fit into the conceptual schemes of the theorists. The field became the catchall for the phenomena of riots, mobs, social movements, responses to disaster, and any other action that did not fit into the other systems.

One of the next approaches that was made to the field of collective behavior was based in the field of psychology, and have been characterized as being pathological by Lang and Lang.<sup>1</sup> Representatives of this approach are William McDougall and Joost A. M. Meerloo. They were interested in the individual involved in the collective behavior episode. According to their conceptualization, which is examined in greater length in the following chapters, each individual in the collectivity descends on the ladder of intelligence when active in collective behavior. They disagree on whether or not the tendency to descend is based on instinctual behavior<sup>2</sup> or the product of social involvement.<sup>3</sup> It is clear that these approaches concentrate on the individual as a unit of analysis. Given the state of

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<sup>1</sup>Kurt Lang and Gladys Engle Lang, Collective Dynamics (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1961), pp. 31-36.

<sup>2</sup>Joost A. M. Meerloo, Patterns of Panic (New York: International Press, 1950), p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>William McDougall, The Group Mind, 2d ed. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1920), pp. 7-8.

knowledge of collective behavior at the time of origination of these approaches, the early 1900s, these were reasonable attempts to explain the behavior of individuals in the situations of collective behavior.

Much of the literature written during the 1930s and 1940s deals with the use of mass persuasion. Specifically, the subject area most frequently dealt with is the use of symbols and the rise of Hitler in Germany. A prime example of this can be found in Wilhelm Reich's book, The Mass Psychology of Fascism. In this book, Reich demonstrates how the population of Germany was manipulated through the use of familiar symbols which were adapted to the needs of the Nazi regime. Admittedly, there is an extensive effort by the author to find sexual overtones in the symbolism, but the object of mass persuasion that the symbols brought about can be seen throughout this work.<sup>1</sup>

As alluded to earlier, the field of collective behavior has been receiving a great deal of attention in recent literature. Efforts by Turner and Killian, Neil Smelser, Lang and Lang, and many others in the field of sociology have addressed the field. The recent authors have concentrated on the areas of the structure of social

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<sup>1</sup>Wilhelm Reich, The Mass Psychology of Fascism, translated by Vincent R. Carrfagno (New York: Tarrar, Straus and Girous) 1970.

movements. This is a part of collective behavior as conceived by the field of sociology, although this area may be discernible as a field unto itself. Smelser is most notable in this area. In the early 1960s, he wrote Theory of Collective Behavior in which he tries to demonstrate the structure of collective behavior. He states that collective behavior is the uninstitutionalized mobilization of behavior for social change. Within this definition, he tries to handle all types of collective behavior including riots, religious meetings, and social movements.<sup>1</sup>

From the foregoing discussion, it can be seen that the field of collective behavior has been the depository of many forms of behavior. These have ranged from the actions of social movements to the actions of mobs and riots. Each writer presents one view of the phenomena of collective behavior. By defining the phenomena in such a way that is inclusive of all the heretofore mentioned behavior of groups of people, a comprehensive model of collective behavior can be formulated.

The model that will be presented in the following pages will represent such a comprehensive model of collective behavior. Collective behavior will be said to exist when the following conditions exist:

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<sup>1</sup>Neil Smelser, Theory of Collective Behavior (New York: Free Press, 1962), p. 71.



- A. A unified collection of individuals, not just an aggregate, must be present.
- B. The persons that participate in the behavior notice an emotional response to the behavior.
- C. The incident being labeled collective behavior will not occur under ordinary circumstances.
- D. The incident will not necessarily override the exercise of free will by the individuals involved.

This new approach will follow an analogy based in chemistry. As with all analogies, it will have some points that will not parallel exactly the discipline from which it is drawn, but it will provide some very helpful insights into the way the collectivity behaves. This analogy is founded upon the action of a catalyst in the collective situation. A catalyst is a substance that when added to a situation is not substantially changed itself but speeds up the interaction of the other elements. A catalyst can be either homogeneus or heterogeneous.<sup>1</sup> This means that it can be similar to the make-up of the other elements or it can be an element that is inconsistent with the construction of the other elements in the group. It is the action of the catalyst that is important. Chemists are not sure of the way that this process occurs, but some are of the opinion that it acts as an intermediary of some sort preparing the

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<sup>1</sup>William L. Masterton and Emil J. Slowinsky, Chemical Principles (Philadelphia: W. B. Sanders Company, 1969), pp. 362-363.

elements in order that they might interact with one another in a more efficient manner.<sup>1</sup>

At this point, the question is, how can this concept be applied to the area of collective behavior? If one considered a group of individuals to be a collection of various chemical elements, then one could analyze the interaction of these individuals in a manner similar to that of the chemists when they analyze chemical interaction. According to the chemists, the elements will join into a new element with the passage of time, usually several thousands of years, but the effect of the catalyst is to speed up the action. The catalyst in the group situation can be identified as something that speeds up an interaction that might take place without the catalyst, but with the catalyst, the change takes place in a shorter time frame.

It needs to be noted at this point in time that the use of analogies often presents its own problems. These include the need to be somewhat liberal in the interpretation of the original concept. It is impossible to bring a concept from one area of the natural sciences into the field of the social sciences and have an exact one-to-one correspondence in terms of the action of the elements of the concepts. The use of the catalyst concept can present such problems, one

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<sup>1</sup>Linus Pauling, General Chemistry, (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1956), p. 409.

of which is whether it accounts for individuality of action. This can be accounted for by realizing that the different elements of a chemical reaction can only be included under certain circumstances. If for some reason, the element cannot combine with the other elements, it can usually be traced to the arrangement of the atomic structure of the chemical. The individual brings with him into a situation a certain collection of internalized rules and expectations. These would be analogous to the atomic structure of the chemical. This socially produced set of behaviors and attitudes would effect the course of action that the individual would take in the situation. When an individual enters a situation in which the possibility of collective behavior exists, the socially constructed background including the ability to recognize and use symbols will affect the way that s/he will act in the situation.

As can be seen from the above, the analogy of the catalyst offers a new conceptual framework with which to view collective behavior. It can provide an explanation of the intense, speeded up nature of collective behavior written about by many authors including McDougall, LeBon, Martin, Turner and Killian, and Smelser and which sets it apart from other fields of study within sociology. The goal of this thesis will be to present a comprehensive theory of collective behavior. The three areas that will be extensively explored

will be the free will of the individuals involved in the interaction, leadership, and the use of symbols by the participants. The promise that this analogy holds has just been skimmed in this presentation. The thesis will lead to clear statements about the nature of collective behavior that can be tested in order to support or refute this new theory.

## CHAPTER II

### DEFINITION OF COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR

One of the primary problems in the study of collective behavior centers around the definition of what the phenomenon really is. The lack of consistency in the definition of the phenomenon is one of the problems in gathering data concerning the subject of collective behavior. The question is then: How can the field be evaluated effectively without a clear definition of the phenomenon? The variance in the definition is extremely broad. One extreme is represented by LaPiere, who simply states that collective behavior is the interaction of two or more socialized human beings.<sup>1</sup> The other extreme is represented by Smelser, who states that collective behavior is the uninstitutionalized mobilization for change in the strain felt in a social situation.<sup>2</sup> The divergence that has been described above gives rise to the need for authors to create a definition that will be used in the context of their writings in order that the reader

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<sup>1</sup>Richard T. LaPiere, Collective Behavior (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1938), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Neil J. Smelser, Theory of Collective Behavior (New York: Free Press, 1962), p. 71.

will understand fully the subject area that the author is covering in the work. Each writer in the field of collective behavior gives, at least, a brief outline of the field of collective behavior as it is understood by the writer. The following is an examination of several different definitions of collective behavior and a presentation of a definition of collective behavior that will give the reader a basis for understanding the remainder of this work.

Herbert Blumer, one of the most respected sociologists to come out of the University of Chicago, has written many articles on the topic of collective behavior. In two of his articles, he has defined collective behavior in two distinct ways. In 1951, he defined it as follows:

Definition of Collective Behavior. Stated in the most general form, these remarks suggest that the student of collective behavior seeks to understand the way in which a new social order arises, for the appearance of such a new social order is equivalent to the emergence of new forms of collective behavior.<sup>1</sup>

In the preceding quotation, Blumer seems to be saying that any action which results in a change in the status quo of the situation implies that some sort of collective behavior would then exist. This would seem to include such actions as riots and political activities. Persons may agree that

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert Blumer, "Collective Behavior," in New Outline of the Principles of Collective Behavior, ed. Alfred McClung Lee, (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1951, pp. 168-169.

something needs to be done with the current social situation and may thus set out to make a radical change in the current circumstances through a violent means. Political activists may desire to change the political system through the peaceful means of the ballot box or through the violent means of the revolution.

In a later writing, Blumer gives the following as a definition of collective behavior:

In my judgment, the easiest way of setting the field apart is to distinguish collective behavior from (a) small group behavior and (b) established or culturally defined behavior.

The groups which we have in mind in speaking of collective behavior are sizeable, as in the case of crowds, riots, panics, revolutionary movements, mass audiences, and national publics. Similarly, the kinds of activity with which we are concerned involve the participation of relatively large numbers of people, as in crazes, manias, collective enthusiasm and excitement, fashion, public opinion, revivals, and mass communication.<sup>1</sup>

In this definition, he includes some other parameters that narrow down the category of collective behavior somewhat. He eliminates the possibility of two people deciding to get married as an episode of collective behavior. The kinds of behaviors that are mentioned in the passage indicate that the time span in which collective behavior occurs is short in duration and involves a large number of participants.

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert Blumer, "Collective Behavior," in In Review of Sociology: Analysis of a Decade. ed. J. B. Gitter (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1957), p. 128.

La Piere gives the broadest definition of collective behavior. It is as follows:

Collective behavior may tentatively be defined as the interaction which occurs between two or more socialized human beings for the duration of the particular situation in which that interaction occurs.<sup>1</sup>

This definition suggests that any activity that two or more persons engage in can be considered collective behavior.

This definition leaves open many activities that Blumer, in his definition, excludes. It also places no time limit on the interaction by saying that as long as it occurs, it can be called collective behavior. With this definition, one has no limit as to the possibilities that can be included in the subject area. No reference is made as to the size of the group, duration of existence, specific goal of the interaction, or whether or not the behavior can be repeated at different times in a routine manner and still be considered as part of the basic category of collective behavior.

One of the most well known writers in the field of collective behavior is Gustave LeBon. His book, The Crowd, is one of the first works to deal with the subject area. He defined what he called the mental unity of the crowd.<sup>2</sup> This definition stated that the crowd became a unity by each

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<sup>1</sup>La Piere, 1938, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Gustave LeBon, The Crowd, 2d ed. (Dunwoody, Georgia: Norman Berg, Publisher, [1972]), p. 2.



individual's mind being paralyzed by the effect of the crowd on the person.<sup>1</sup> The crowd, a collectivity of individuals that have come together in order to have an effect on a situation, has power over the individual because of the following: its size and the anonymity that the size brings; social contagion, which has an effect similar to hypnosis; and the loss of consciousness due to the increase in the suggestibility of the group. Strength is increased through the process of reciprocity by which the expectations of each individual are met by the actions of others.<sup>2</sup>

This concept is also voiced by William McDougall in his book, The Group Mind:

My contention is that the most highly organized groups display collective mental life in a way which justifies the conception of the group mind and that we shall be helped to understand collective life in these most difficult and complex forms by studying it in the simpler less elaborated groups where the conception of the group mind is less clearly applicable.<sup>3</sup>

The essence of collective volition is, then, not merely the direction of the wills of all to the same end, but the motivation of the wills of all members of a group by impulses awakened by the sentiment for the whole of which they are all parts.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-12.

<sup>3</sup>William McDougall, The Group Mind, 2d ed., (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1920), p. 15.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 77-78.

In the rest of his book, McDougall tries to justify this hypothesis. He denies the idea of a collective consciousness, but still holds to the idea of a collective mind based on the definition of a mind being an ". . . organized system of interacting mental or physical forces."<sup>1</sup> With this definition of a mind, one can attribute to the computer a mind since the computer is an organized system of physical forces. This definition stretches the point of the group mind somewhat. The mind is not just an organized system of physical forces, but is that which directs the activity of of the human in his physical movements as well as conscious changes. McDougall and LeBon might have been well off to read and understand what Ferdinand Tönnies had to say about the group will.

In the same way that a person can be linked with another person, he can be united with many persons, and, these again can be connected with one another; thus the will of each single person who belongs to a group is a part of and at the same time conditioned by the group's collective will, which is to say he is dependent on it.<sup>2</sup>

The less human beings who remain or come in contact with each other are bound together in relation to the same Gemeinschaft, the more they will stand opposite each other as free agents of their wills and abilities.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Ferdinand Tönnies, Fundamental Concepts of Sociology, trans. Charles P. Loomis (New York: American Book Company, 1940), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

The emphasis on the willingness of the individual to participate in the interaction is balanced by Tönnies' statement regarding the element of amount of contact. This statement implies that the longer one allows one's self to be involved in the situation, the more difficult it will be for the individual to exercise the free will that would be able to give the individual the choice of continued participation. In other words, the longer one stays in the situation, the less likely it is that the individual will discontinue participation.

The next definition that will be explored is that of Robert Park. He understands collective behavior as follows:

Collective behavior, then, is the behavior of individuals under the influence of an impulse that is common and collective, an impulse, in other words, that is the result of social interaction.<sup>1</sup>

It is a collective in so far as each individual acts under the influence of a mood or a state of mind in which each shares, and in accordance with conventions which are quite unconsciously accepted, and which the presence of each enforces upon the other.<sup>2</sup>

This interactionist point of view reinforces the earlier views that some reciprocity is evident in a collective behavior situation. The notion that each actor feeds on the

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<sup>1</sup>Robert E. Park, On Social Control and Collective Behavior (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 226.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 225.

actions of the other is repeated throughout the literature on the subject of collective behavior.

Neil Smelser presents a very narrow definition of collective behavior. It excludes many of the behaviors that the above definitions do not and is stated as follows:

Thus our formal characterization of collective behavior is this: an uninstitutionalized mobilization for action in order to modify one or more kinds of strain on the basis of a generalized reconstitution of a component of action.<sup>1</sup>

The strain referred to in the above passage consists of dissonance among the roles that are expected from the individuals in the situation being discussed. This definition is very limiting in the type of behavior that can be considered collective behavior. In this definition, the mention of the noninstitutionalized nature of the behavior eliminates such instances as homecoming rallies and patriotic holidays. These, according to Smelser, are institutionalized in form and context and cannot be included in the concept of collective behavior.<sup>2</sup> By ignoring these meetings, many of the possibilities under which collective behavior might occur are missed.

Perhaps the most frequently cited work on collective behavior is Collective Behavior by Ralph H. Turner and

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<sup>1</sup>Smelser, 1962, p. 71.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 72-73.

Lewis M. Killian. In the first edition of this work, they define collective behavior as follows:

. . . the term "collective behavior" . . . is somewhat arbitrary, for all human social life is "collective" in that it involves shared understandings. But by agreement, the term "collectivity" can be used to refer to that kind of group characterized by the spontaneous development of norms and organization which contradict or reinterpret the norms and organization of the society. Collective behavior is the study of the behavior of collectivities.<sup>1</sup>

This definition is similar to the definition that is presented by Smelser. Both of the definitions examine the situation in which the collective behavior occurs in order to ascertain whether or not the behavior being observed can be placed in the category.

The syntheses of a definition of collective behavior is at the least a difficult one. Authors of introduction to sociology text books are called upon by the nature of their work to synthesize many definitions. Reece McGee, in his latest edition, defines collective behavior as follows:

The study of collective behavior involves such subjects as crowds, fads, mass behavior, and rumor. These topics have three characteristics in common. They deal with behavior which is relatively (1) spontaneous, (2) transitory, and (3) loosely structured.

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<sup>1</sup>Ralph H. Turner and Lewis M. Killian, Collective Behavior (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952), p. 4.

Collective behavior differs from these other "conventional" forms of behavior in being an adaptation to situations that are out of the ordinary.<sup>1</sup>

In this definition, McGee offers another approach to the field of collective behavior. This approach includes the fact that collective behavior is an event that is unusual. This implies that collective behavior does not occur in the routine of everyday life, but occurs in extraordinary situations.

The foregoing has been an examination of several of the leading definitions of collective behavior. Each definition has been criticized for being incomplete. Blumer's first definition is extremely broad while his second one is constructed in generalities. The limitations that LaPiere sets on the field of collective behavior are so non-specific that they can apply to the entire field of sociology. LeBon and McDougall analyze collective behavior as if it were a person. Tönnies and Park account for the participation of each individual, but are somewhat ambiguous when trying to justify the behavior of the collectivity. Smelser and Turner and Killian concentrate on the circumstances surrounding the activity. McGee's definition, being a synthesis, attempts to combine several of these definitions, but as can be expected due to the purpose of his definition,

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<sup>1</sup>Reece McGee, Sociology: An Introduction, 2d ed., (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1980), p. 486.

lacks an integrating focus of an in-depth examination of collective behavior.

Weller and Quarantelli support definitions of collective behavior that enumerate the qualities of the phenomenon.

While it is standard to contrast collective behavior with institutionalized behavior, almost always definitions of collective behavior are made in negative terms. This is, definitions of collective behavior tell us merely what it is not. This negative assertion is insufficient.<sup>1</sup>

The four part definition that will be presented qualifies as a positive definition of collective behavior. By stating conditions which must be met before an activity can be included as collective behavior, a positive definition opens the possibilities for episodes of collective behavior to a wide range of activities. The following definition will be used throughout the remainder of the thesis. Collective behavior will be said to exist when the following conditions are met:

- A. A unified collection of individuals, not just an aggregate, must be present.
- B. The persons that participate in the behavior will notice an emotional response to the behavior.
- C. The incident being labeled collective behavior will not occur under ordinary circumstances.
- D. The incident will not necessarily override the exercise of freewill by the individuals involved.

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<sup>1</sup>Jack M. Weller and E. L. Quarantelli, "Neglected Characteristics of Collective Behavior," American Journal of Sociology, 79 (November 1973):675.

The first part of the definition originates in the writings of Robert Park, Ferdinand Tönnies, and William McDougall. Each of these writers makes reference to the fact that the participants in collective behavior have a relationship to each other, other than just proximity. McDougall refers to ". . . motivation of all the wills of all members of a group by impulses awakened by the sentiment for the whole of which they are all parts."<sup>1</sup> This definitely indicates that he views the group involved in a collective behavior episode as being more than a collection of individuals, but existing through the unification of the wills of the individuals. Tönnies states that persons can be linked to one another by the willingness of the persons involved in the behavior.<sup>2</sup> This linkage is one of the unique aspects of collective behavior. Park states that each individual acts under the influence of a state of feeling that is shared and is unconsciously accepted.<sup>3</sup> These three authors substantiate the notion that collective behavior indeed involves more than just a collection of persons, but involves a unifying aspect that draws the participants together in such a way that they share a unique experience as a group.

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<sup>1</sup>McDougall, 1920, pp. 77-78.

<sup>2</sup>Tönnies, 1940, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>Park, 1967, pp. 225-226.



The second section of the definition, concerning an emotional response in the individual participant in the behavior, is a very important part of the definition because from it the third part can be derived. Herbert Blumer supports this segment of the definition when he lists his typifications of collective behavior as follows:

. . . crowds, riots, panics, revolutionary movements, mass audiences, and national publics . . . . [and] . . . crazes, manias, collective enthusiasm and excitement, fashion, public opinion, revivals, and mass communication.<sup>1</sup>

All of the above typifications call forth the concept of emotional groups of individuals with the possible exceptions of fashion, public opinion, and national publics. Robert Park mentions this aspect of collective behavior in his writings. As has already been mentioned, he describes a mood that influences each individual who participates in what he labels collective behavior. This mood is self-reinforcing and helps to perpetuate the group experience and thus allows one to place the label of collective behavior on the situation.

It is the above described emotional component of collective behavior that leads to the conclusion that collective behavior is not an everyday occurrence, the third part of the proposed definition. Individuals meet on a

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<sup>1</sup>Blumer, 1957, p. 128.

daily basis in order to accomplish the tasks before them. They meet at prearranged times and in prearranged places to produce expected effects, but in each of these circumstances, the possibility exists for their particular instance to become an episode that could be labeled collective behavior. The possibility lies in the capability of the event to elicit the above mentioned emotional response. This type of response is not a daily occurrence. The emotional response described above occurs in relatively few instances when compared to the number of instances that persons get together at prearranged times and places. An example of the phenomenon is the religious gathering. In many religious gatherings, the level of emotion is very low. People are more or less just performing the motions of religion; however, in other instances the atmosphere is quite different. The emotional climate is very strong and is noticed by everyone in attendance. Turner and Killian refer to this type of situation in reference to a weekend retreat. The reporter of the incident gives the impression that the meeting changed drastically from similar occurrences in the past. The reporter mentions that the different emotional atmosphere was shared by himself and several of his companions with whom he discussed the matter of the occurrence.<sup>1</sup> This episode

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<sup>1</sup>Ralph H. Turner and Lewis M. Killian, Collective Behavior, 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), pp. 16-18.

will be examined at length in chapter VI. This is just one example of the type of behavior being referred to in this third section of the definition.

Since the time of LeBon, the topic of freedom of participation in a collective behavior situation has been controversial. The fourth part of the above definition deals with this area. LeBon approaches the area through the convention of the paralyzed mind. He states his beliefs as follows:

We see, then, that the disappearance of the conscious personality, the predominance of the unconscious personality, the turning by means of suggestion and contagion of feelings and ideas in an identical direction, the tendency to immediately transform the suggested ideas into acts; these, we see, are the principal characteristics of the individual forming part of the crowd. He is no longer himself, but has become<sup>1</sup> an automation who has ceased to be guided by his will.

It is precisely these views that have caused a great debate among the social theorists that specialize in the area of collective behavior. From the above quotation, it appears that the individual has no choice in the matter of participation in collective behavior. This description also concentrates on the individual as a unit of analysis instead of the group. Turner and Killian, Smelser, and Sorokin all take issue with this stance. Turner and Killian state that the concept of the group mind is not an accurate way to describe the processes that occur in the collective behavior

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<sup>1</sup>LeBon, [1972], p. 12.

situation.<sup>1</sup> Smelser states that the psychological explanations of LeBon, McDougall, and E. D. Martin are important, but the sociological explanations must be interjected because the psychological explanations are but an extension of the sociological ones, and that by only accounting for the psychological explanations it is difficult to account for their manifestation on different occasions.<sup>2</sup>

Sorokin describes a conceptualization of what he calls the organized group. He focuses on the process of meaningful interaction that occurs in the group process. This concept opposes the idea of the group mind. In this regard, his approach is congruent with part four of the definition presented above.

The organized group is not the reality of a concrete organism, as the partisans of organismic theories claim, nor that of a concrete mechanism, as the partisans of mechanistic theories contend, nor that of an individual "mind" just enlarged and called the "group mind", as sociologists and psychologists often state. . . . It is the reality of a casual-functional interaction with their properties and actions, of the meanings-norms-values they have and interchange, and of the material vehicles they use for objectification and socialization of the meanings-norms-values.<sup>3</sup>

It can be concluded from the above passage that Sorokin conceptualizes the collective behavior situation as an

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<sup>1</sup>Turner and Killian, 1972, pp. 6-9.

<sup>2</sup>Smelser, 1962, pp. 20-21.

<sup>3</sup>Pitirim A. Sorokin, Society, Culture, and Personality: Their Structure and Dynamics, (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1962), pp. 150-151.

extention of the meaning systems that provide the normal functions of socialization. These meanings-norms-values are the source of the purpose of the group; however, Sorokin's overall approach is less distinctly defined than the one presented here. He used the group as a synonym for collective behavior and includes Durkheim's approach to the field of religion in this category.

Thus far it can be seen that the collectivity is viewed by the theorists presented as the result of the actions of various persons involved in the behavior. This involvement creates the norms and meanings that are important to the group. The transition needed at this point comes from the writings of Tönnies.

The less human beings who remain or come in contact with each other are bound together in relation to the same Gemeinschaft, the more they will stand opposite each other as free agents of their wills and abilities. The less this freedom is dependent upon a preconditioned will of the individual himself, which is to say the less this will is dependent upon or influenced by a common will, the greater is the freedom.<sup>1</sup>

It is this concept that indicates that the time element is the essential factor in the analysis of collective behavior's effect on the individual. Up to a certain point in time, the individual has the ability to exercise his free will to participate in the collective behavior or refrain from

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<sup>1</sup>Tönnies, 1940, p. 53.

participation. Past this point, which is very difficult to define in concrete terms, the likelihood that the individual will break away from the episode decreases as the length of time of participation increases. This point is different for each person according to the characteristics that he brings into the situation. This set of characteristics is often called the personality of socialized being. The socialization process involves the accumulation of certain characteristics that are assimilated by the person. The different institutions that are responsible for the socialization give the individual a unique perspective on the activities around him allowing him to act in new ways when confronted with previously unknown situations. The amount of time that a participant is involved in the situation indicates that amount of socialization that can occur to him with regard to the meanings of the episode of collective behavior. Basically, the longer that an individual is in a collective behavior situation, the more likely he is to remain in that situation, according to Tönnies. This will of course vary according to the various background characteristics that the person brings with him to the situation.

A four part definition that has been presented; that collective behavior exists when these following conditions are met:

- A. A unified collection of individuals, not just an aggregate, must be present.
- B. The persons that participate in the behavior will notice an emotional response to the behavior.
- C. The incident being labeled collective behavior will not occur under ordinary circumstances.
- D. The incident will not necessarily override the exercise of freewill by the individuals involved.

The definition has been elaborated by references to the literature in the field. Recognizing that the authors represent different theoretical backgrounds, the above presentation was made in order to show the diverse meanings that persons attribute to the field of collective behavior. Most of these approaches are not opposed to each other, but compliment each other. Each of the authors discussed above sees different aspects of the subject area but does not adequately cover the entire area. Each, with the exception of LaPiere, understates the entire area of collective behavior.

In order to synthesize the field, a critical review of some of the prevalent theories of collective behavior is needed. This review is necessary in order to explore some of the conceptualizations that have preceded this effort in collective behavior. The task of presenting a new conceptual scheme in this area is enormous because of the amount of work that has been done in the large variety of fields that can be associated with collective behavior.<sup>1</sup> The presentation of

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<sup>1</sup>Turner and Killian, 1972, p. v.

the alternative views is undertaken in order to demonstrate the manner in which others have approached the subject and the shortcomings that they exhibit.

Four major approaches to collective behavior will be presented in the following chapters. They can be classified as follows:

1. the contagion approach,
2. the convergent approach,
3. the value added approach, and
4. the emergent norm approach.

Each of the approaches will be examined extensively in the following chapters. It should be reemphasized that each of the major approaches to collective behavior that will be discussed is based on what has been heretofore described as a faulty definition of collective behavior. The reasons for presenting these in the following manner is to help the reader further understand the background of collective behavior and to gain an appreciation for the present effort of creating a new approach for the field of study. The remainder of the thesis will be used to examine an alternative approach which will be called the catalytic model.



### CHAPTER III

#### THE CONVERGENT AND CONTAGION THEORIES OF COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR

Two of the oldest approaches to collective behavior are the contagion and convergence approaches. These approaches tend to conceive the phenomenon of collective behavior as being exterior to the participants in the episode. In other words, the essence of the behavior consists of something outside the control of the individuals. The fact that both of these approaches cannot account for the actions of individuals who are in close proximity of the collective behavior but who do not participate in it provides evidence that they should be rejected as explanations for the phenomenon. However, these perspectives also make some contributions to the catalytic approach. These contributions are the sharing of symbols among the participants and the idea that the sum of the parts of the episode is less than the episode as a whole. Each of the approaches will be examined in detail in this section.

The contagion theory of collective behavior originated in a book written by Gustave LeBon entitled The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind. It is in this volume,

first published in 1896,<sup>1</sup> that the topic of collective behavior was popularized among the social theorists of the time. The theory of contagion assumes that each individual is a social being only in a thin layer on the top of his/her personality. This thin layer of civilization can be easily stripped away by the action of the crowd around him/her.<sup>2</sup> The major mechanism that accomplishes this task is that of suggestibility. The mechanism relies on the proposition that the crowd exerts pressure on the individual to act in a manner that is in congruence with that of the crowd. This would indicate that the crowd becomes a separate entity in and of itself and can influence the individuals in and around it. To summarize, the theory of contagion, as it is related to collective behavior, recognizes that: 1) man is a social being, but only to a limited extent; 2) the mechanism of suggestion aids in the creation of the collective behavior episode; and, 3) the crowd that influences the individual participants is an entity separate from the individuals.

Another author who has written about collective behavior in a manner that can be interpreted as a contagion theory is McDougall. He has discussed the phenomenon from

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<sup>1</sup>Ralph Turner and Lewis M. Killian, Collective Behavior, 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

the point of view that the individual can be overpowered by the force of the group and can be rendered unaware of the social controls that s/he has been following since his/her birth. McDougall describes the development of the individual in the context of the environment in which the individual exists. This discussion takes place in the context of a discussion of the contributions of Darwin to the thoughts of the modern scientists.

. . . [Darwin influenced] the genesis of the human mind--the problem of its evolution in the race and its development in the individual. Then it at once became apparent that both these processes are essentially social; that they involve, and at every step are determined by, interactions between the individual and his social environment; . . . we can only understand the life of individuals and the life of societies, if we consider them always in relation to one another.<sup>1</sup>

It is abundantly evident that the psychologist McDougall was aware of the significance of the role of the society in the development of the individual. However, the fact that individuals and society are both shaped by and shape each other is sometimes overshadowed by ". . . the collective intensification of the instinctive excitement, with its emotion of fear and its impulse to flight." McDougall continues as follows:

The principle is that, in man and in gregarious animals generally, each instinct, with its characteristic primary emotion and specific impulse, is capable of

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<sup>1</sup>William McDougall, The Group Mind, 2d ed. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1920), pp. 7-8.

being excited in one another, in virtue of a special congenital adaptation of the instinct on its cognitive or perceptual side.<sup>1</sup>

The passage cited above demonstrates that although McDougall thinks that human beings are of a social origin, the basic nature of the being is the same as for any other animal that travels in a herd. The emotional excitement that the individuals feel when placed in a fearful situation somehow overrides the ability they have to act as if the situation were normal. In other words, they lose sight of the internalized social controls.

LeBon seems to share the same general conceptualization of the human being. Although he never specifically mentions the basic nature of humans, he does write about the individual in several places. In one such instance, he compares the difficulty of describing the unity of the crowd with the psychological unity of the individual.

It is only in novels that individuals are found to traverse their whole life with an unvarying character. It is only the uniformity of the environment that creates the apparent uniformity of characters. I have shown elsewhere that all mental constitutions contain possibilities of character which may be manifested in consequence of a sudden change of environment.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>Gustave LeBon, Group Mind, 2d ed. (Dunwoody, Georgia: Norman T. Berg Publisher [1972]), p. 4.

LeBon also addresses the issue of the individual's losing the ability to control him/herself in the crowd situation.

The activity of the brain being paralyzed in the case of the hypnotised subject, the latter becomes a slave of all the unconscious activities of his spinal cord, which the hypnotiser directs at will. The conscious personality has entirely vanished; will and discernment are lost. All feelings and thoughts are bent in the direction determined by the hypnotiser.

Such also is approximately the state of the individual forming part of a psychological crowd. He is no longer conscious of his acts.<sup>1</sup>

In this passage, LeBon describes the way that he hypothesizes that the crowd affects the individual. It is the hypnotist. The crowd acts in such a manner that paralyzes the mind and the will of the individual participant as related to the norm of conduct that s/he has been acquainted with since birth.

Up to this point, it has been demonstrated that LeBon and McDougall have conceptualized the individual in a similar manner. Each perceives the individual as a social being that can be overwhelmed by the power exerted on the person by the crowd. Each author, as has been shown, takes a slightly different approach in the explanation of the phenomenon, but arrives at a very similar conclusion. Each also employs the mechanism of suggestion in his theory.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

As suggested above, suggestion is the major component in the approach of LeBon to collective behavior.<sup>1</sup> In the following passage, he makes the point about the difficulty of resisting suggestion and the power of suggestion over the individual.

Under the influence of a suggestion, he [the participant] will undertake the accomplishment of certain acts with irresistible impetuosity. This impetuosity is the more irresistible in the case of crowds than in that of the hypnotised subject, from the fact that, the suggestion being the same for all the individuals in the crowd, it gains in strength by reciprocity. . . .

We see, then, that the disappearance of the conscious personality, the predominance of the unconscious personality, the turning by means of suggestion . . . are the principal characteristics of the individual forming a part of a crowd.<sup>2</sup>

Suggestion is the way that the individual is convinced to forget the social controls that s/he has learned and to act in accordance with the crowd.

McDougall makes suggestion an important part of his approach to collective behavior. He ties the notion of suggestion in with the emotionality of the group. In order for suggestion to have its full impact on the group of persons involved, the presence of a vague emotion that has no appropriate expression in action is necessary.<sup>3</sup> Another

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<sup>1</sup>LeBon does not use the term collective behavior in his work, but the concept of crowd is equated as such by most authors.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 11-12.

<sup>3</sup>McDougall, 1928, p. 59.

important factor in the effectiveness of suggestion is the size of the group that is present in the collective behavior episode.

Mere numbers are capable of exerting this effect upon most of us; but the effect of numbers is greatly increased if all display a common emotion and speak with one voice; the crowd has then, if we are in its presence, a well-nigh irresistible prestige. Hence even the highly intelligent and self-reliant member of a crowd is apt to find his critical reserve broken down; . . . but as a proposition which voices the mind of the crowd, which comes from a mass of men he sees around him and so comes with the power of a mass-suggestion.<sup>1</sup>

This power of suggestion is extremely powerful. According to McDougall it can lower the intellectual functioning of the group members, and remove the sense of personal responsibility for the actions that the group members take.<sup>2</sup>

But the low sense of responsibility of the crowd is not due to the division of responsibility alone. In the case of the simple crowd, it is due also in large part to the fact that such a crowd has but a very low grade of self-consciousness and no self-regarding sentiment; that is to say, the members of the crowd have but a dim consciousness of the crowd as a whole, but very little knowledge of its tendencies and capacities. . . .<sup>3</sup>

A contemporary author whose theory includes uncritical response in the explanation of the unanimity of the group is Herbert Blumer. Blumer's mechanism is called circular

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 58-59.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

reaction which refers to a stimulus that calls for the same action in another individual which in turn stimulates other individuals to act in a similar manner. The individuals do not take the time to appraise the action critically as in interpretive reaction, but just act in accordance to a stimulus-response model. Circular reaction denotes what can be called a self-reinforcing model since the actions call forth the same action in other individuals.<sup>1</sup> It is similar to LeBon's unthinging contagion concept as has already been noted.<sup>2</sup> However, Blumer goes beyond LeBon and McDougall in his discussion of interpretive reaction. This occurs when individuals respond to each other through the meaning that they attribute to the actions of each other. This interpretive process of symbolic interaction will be discussed in further detail later as part of the catalytic model.

The last major component of the contagion approach to the field of collective behavior centers around the nature of the collectivity. Does the collectivity have some existence outside the individuals that are members of it? The answer from both LeBon and McDougall is yes.

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<sup>1</sup>Turner and Killian, 1972, pp. 14-15.

<sup>2</sup>LeBon, [1972], pp. 11-12.



LeBon states that the crowd is formed out of the individuals that are gathered in a certain place and whose sentiments and ideas become one and take the same direction. This is what he calls the law of the mental unity of crowds.<sup>1</sup> It is this characteristic of the crowd that exists outside the individuals in the crowd.

Contrary to an opinion which one is astonished to find coming from the pen of so acute a philosopher as Herbert Spencer, in the aggregate which constitutes a crowd there is no sort of summing-up of or an average struck between its elements. What really takes place is a combination followed by the creation of new characteristics, just as in chemistry certain elements when brought into contact--bases and acids, for example--combine to form a new body possessing properties quite different from those of the bodies that have served to form it.<sup>2</sup>

The crowd situation causes the participant to lower him/herself down on the ladder of intelligence. Even though the individuals making up the crowd are heterogeneous in their attitudes toward the object of attention, the power of the crowd will create a homogeneous gathering of the persons at least as far as their attitudes toward the results of their actions.<sup>3</sup> LeBon mentions the power of the size of the crowd as reducing the responsibility of the individual participants since they act anonymously.<sup>4</sup> Another critical

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

element in the theory of LeBon is that of time. Time, the point of time in which the crowd comes together, helps determine what ideas will be taken as the decision of the crowd and which will be forgotten.

It is time in particular that prepares the opinions and beliefs of the crowd, or at least the soil on which they will germinate. This is why certain ideas are realizable at one epoch and not at another. It is time that accumulates that immense detritus of beliefs and thoughts on which the ideas of a given period spring up.<sup>1</sup>

McDougall also perceives the group as being something that exists outside the individuals that make up the group.

Since, then, the social aggregate has a collective mental life, which is not merely the sum of the mental lives of its units it may be contended that a society not only enjoys a collective mental life but also has a collective mind or, as some prefer to say, a collective soul.<sup>2</sup>

The collective mind does not occur in every gathering.

According to McDougall:

The essential conditions of collective mental action are, then, a common object of mental activity, a common mode of feeling in regard to it, and some degree of reciprocal influence between the members of the group.<sup>3</sup>

The power that the group holds over the individual is very strong. The participant in the collective behavior episode will act against his/her best knowledge because s/he loses

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>McDougall, 1928, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

some degree of his/her awareness of being an individual and his/her sense of personal responsibility. These aspects of the crowd diminish the participant's ability to maintain a critical point of view regarding the action of the crowd. Therefore, the individual becomes involved in activities that s/he would not under normal circumstances become involved in.<sup>1</sup>

LeBon and McDougall have perspectives on the phenomenon of collective behavior that are at the least very similar. Their ideas parallel each other on several major points of their theories, whether it be called the law of the mental unity of crowds or the collective mental life. According to Turner and Killian, both of these theories fall in the category of the contagion theory.<sup>2</sup> As has been demonstrated, this approach has three major components. The first is that man is a social being, but this aspect is limited in a collective behavior episode. Secondly, the mechanism of suggestion plays a major part in the formation of the collective behavior group as well as in the behavior of the participants in the collective behavior. This aspect accounts for the unity of the crowd. Lastly, the crowd is a separate entity that exists outside the individuals that

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>2</sup>Turner and Killian, 1972, p. 13.

make up the crowd. This approach to collective behavior has received criticism from different sources.

One of the major components of the theory rests on the assumption that the participants in the behavior are somehow overtaken by the power of the group through the mechanism of suggestion. This indicates that the individuals abandon their allegiance to socially prescribed behavior that comes about through the agreement of the members of the society; however, this may not be true. Turner and Killian suggest that the group just goes through a process of redefinition of the socially acceptable behavior.<sup>1</sup> They imply that this notion is in opposition to the theory of collective behavior as proposed by LeBon and McDougall. However, the latter two theorists would probably agree to the proposition that Turner and Killian have made. The fact that a redefinition process takes place does not contradict the propositions of LeBon and McDougall. They indicate that the group arrives at a new understanding of the situation through sharing similar attitudes about the subject; however, they maintain that the redefinition process subjugates the individual to the crowd. It is at the point of the power of the crowd that the difference between the approaches comes. It has been demonstrated in the preceding that both LeBon and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

McDougall view the process of the group as a self-supporting interaction process. On this point, the criticism of Turner and Killian seems to be erroneous.

Lang and Lang place contagion theory in a section that they label the pathological view of collective behavior. The major criticism that they present of the view is that it represents a lowering of the participants' intellectual functioning.<sup>1</sup> It does not necessarily follow that the participant automatically lowers his/her intellectual ability to function just because s/he is involved in an episode of collective behavior. This is one of the most valid criticisms of the contagion theories. The evidence used by both LeBon and McDougall is not sufficient to support their cases.

Another interesting criticism of the contagion approach can be found in the writings of LaPiere. This criticism centers around the personification of the phenomenon.

The danger in such personification is that it may not be recognized as such and that the personalized representations of the collective pattern may become in time personalized representations of the causes for those patterns. The result is a hazardous type of loose thinking rather than a higher form of abstraction. . . . when the personification of complex forces is carried into adult thinking about abstract

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<sup>1</sup>Kurt Lang and Gladys Engle Lang, Collective Dynamics (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1961), pp. 31-36.

patterns of collective behavior and is made an explanation for them, the result is mysticism, rather than science.<sup>1</sup>

The notion of personification in the contagion theory does indeed leave out the aspect of individual participation in the collective behavior episode. The realization that the participants in the episode are individual human beings with different backgrounds and different social understandings should indicate that they will behave differently from one another under the same circumstance. The inability to account for this condition in the contagion theory is one of its major deficiencies.

It is due to the preceding failings of the contagion approach to collective behavior that it should be rejected as an explanation for the phenomenon. An alternative approach will be presented that will account for each of the insufficiencies that have been enumerated.

The next approach to collective behavior that will be considered here is that of convergence. Convergence is said to occur when persons with similar predispositions toward a certain type of behavior converge into a collectivity. According to Turner and Killian:

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<sup>1</sup>Richard T. LaPiere, Collective Behavior, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1961), pp. 31-36.

Convergence theories focus on the characteristics and predispositions which individuals bring to the situation, suggestion that the simultaneous presence of people who are already similar in some way explains the emergence and the course of action of the collectivity.<sup>1</sup>

This theory rests, then, on the assumption that all human beings have common predispositions that emerge in a collective behavior episode. The social controls that humans place upon themselves keep them from displaying the type of behavior that is exhibited in the collective behavior episode.

Two authors that have written a great deal about this approach to collective behavior are Meerloo and Martin. Both of these authors approach the problem of explaining collective behavior from the point of view that in the course of daily life, the human acts in a way that represses his primitive tendencies. These tendencies only exhibit themselves under conditions that make the individual aware of his/her defenselessness, according to Meerloo.<sup>2</sup> In his monograph, entitled Delusion and Mass-Delusion, he develops a theory based on the above propositions. He follows the development of man through the processes of socialization and the development of the norms and values of society; however, throughout the discussion, he constantly refers to

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<sup>1</sup>Turner and Killian, 1972, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>A. M. Meerloo, Delusion and Mass-Delusion (New York: Nervous and Mental Disease Monographs, 1949), pp. 66-67.

the closeness of the human race with the primitive beginning of the species. One of the examples of this occurs in his discussion of scapegoating.

Scapegoating grows out of normal attitudes, normal biases and ordinary prejudices. Its most famous example is found in the rituals of the Hebrews and is depicted in the Book of Leviticus. On the Day of Atonement, a live goat was chosen. The high priest, attired in linen garments, laid both hands on the goat's head and confessed over it the iniquities of the children of Israel. The sins of the people having thus been symbolically transferred onto the beast, it was taken out into the wilderness and let loose. The people felt purged, and for the time being, guiltless.

The tendency to revert to this primitive level of thinking has persisted. People are forever seeking scapegoats, most often in human form, whom they can saddle with their misfortunes and misdeeds. "Civilized people" remain primitive in their thinking.

Such events have always occurred throughout history. The victims have always been small minority groups who, because of conspicuousness and tradition became the bearers of the burden of blame.<sup>1</sup>

These primitive thoughts, according to Meerloo, are the repressed ideas that a collective behavior episode will bring out in the participants.

In a collectivity, the participants find others that hold the same thoughts and attitudes toward the subject that is the focus of the gathering. This focus can be an individual, such as in a lynching; a group of individuals, such as the witch hunts in the early American history; an event, such as the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941; or an ideology, such as the one that Hitler presented during

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 41-42.



his rise to power. This focusing element is the factor in the collective behavior episode that concentrates the action of the collectivity toward the element. The power of numbers affects the individual participant in a manner similar to that in the contagion approach.<sup>1</sup> The persons that are involved in the collective behavior feel a sense of anonymity because of the size of the collectivity.

One of the major concerns that Meerloo has about collective behavior is that of its manipulation by the mass media. He expresses the attitude that the group can be affected by the government in power simply by the use of the popular press as well as the radio.<sup>2</sup> The use of these media enables the orchestrator of the collective behavior to reinforce the attitude that s/he desires through the process of self-reinforcement. The human species likes to conform.<sup>3</sup>

Everette Dean Martin published The Behavior of Crowds in 1920. The book centers around the social climate of the day. The specific instances of collective behavior that are cited in the book concern such episodes as town hall meetings, the Russian revolution, and the labor movement. Martin defines the crowd as follows:

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 55 ff.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

In this discussion the word "crowd" must be understood to mean the peculiar mental condition which sometimes occurs when people think and act together, either immediately where the members of the group are present and in close contact, or remotely, as when they affect one another in a certain way through the medium of an organization, a party or sect, the press, etc.<sup>1</sup>

It can be said that Martin interprets the crowd as an collection of persons who act with a similar mental condition.

Since the crowd indicates a certain mental condition, it can be considered to be in a state of health or a state of illness. The latter is the conclusion of Martin. In the following passage, he states his opinion of what the phenomenon is.

My thesis is that the crowd mind is a phenomenon which should best be classed with dreams, delusions, and the various forms of automatic behavior. The controlling ideas of the crowd are the result neither of reflection nor of "suggestion," but are akin to what, as we shall see later, the psychoanalytic term "complexes." The crowd-self--if I may speak of it in this way--is analogous in respects to "compulsive neurosis," "somnambulism," or "paranoic episode."<sup>2</sup>

The psychoanalysis of the group continues as follows:

In the crowd the primitive ego achieves its wish by actually gaining the assent and support of a section of society. The intermediate social environment is all pulled in the same direction as the unconscious desire.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Everett Dean Martin, The Behavior of Crowds: A Psychological Study (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1920), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 19-20.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

The use of psychoanalysis as a way to view the behavior of the crowd leads one to believe that Martin conceptualizes the collective behavior episode as a collective mind, but the opposite is the fact. Martin summarizes his own arguments in eight parts. First, he states that the crowd is not the same as a gathering, but it is a mental condition which occurs simultaneously to people in the gathering. Secondly, he states that it is not a collective mind, but a release of repressed impulses made possible by the breakdown in controlling ideas in that social environment. The modification of the social environment is accomplished through unconscious agreement on the conditions that should exist and makes up the third point of Martin's approach. Next, Martin states that the unconscious agreement has a form similar to the form of mental pathology in that it disguises the real objective from the apparent objective allowing the individual to divert attention from his/her own desires. The fifth point that he makes involves the symbol system that the group uses. Martin states that the collectivity forms a closed symbol system that is like the obsessions of a paranoiac in that it is a closed system. In other words, the outsiders are not aware of the meanings of the symbol that the collectivity uses because the collectivity agrees on different meanings

than are attributed to the symbol by the outsiders. The sixth point made by Martin is the source of the unconsciousness which he says comes from the repressed nature of the human being which is caused by the social controls placed on it by society. Next, Martin states that the crowd is not a collection of persons that have abandoned their reason, but it is a crowd who acts in a pathological manner with elements that are similar to the behavior of the neurotic or psychotic individual. The last point made by the author deals with the time element. He states that the crowd can be permanent or temporary.<sup>1</sup> As there is with all medical maladies, there is a cure that can be taken for the above illness. According to Martin that cure is education. In order for the individual to be aware of the collective behavior's influence on him/her, s/he must be aware of his/her self-worth. For it is only by educating the individual that the society can loosen the grip of the crowd on the society.<sup>2</sup>

Both Martin and Meerloo perceive the collective behavior episode in a similar manner. Both conceptualize the collectivity as somehow stripping away the repressing

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 48-50.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 282-283.

social controls that keep the individual in check. There is an agreement on the action of the collectivity by some unconscious agreement among the participants. This view of collective behavior presents some problems in the explanation of behavior. These include the problem of accounting for the lack of participation by some of the persons present at the time the collectivity is formed, the tendency of collective behavior experts to consider the episode as if it were an example of psychosis, and the over-estimation of the power of the crowd over the individual.

Turner and Killian pose the question of: How can the convergence approach account for the divergence of the psychological makeup of the participants?<sup>1</sup> If the individuals who are involved in the episode of collective behavior are indeed individuals controlled by social rules and influences, then in order for the individuals to have some basic inherited nature that allows them to behave in unison, they must all be the same. This approach is definitely opposed to the basic position of sociology, that people are social beings.

Smelser comments briefly on the psychological explanations of collective behavior. In his criticism, he states that Martin, as well as others who use this type of

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<sup>1</sup>Turner and Killian, 1972, p. 21.

explanation, is using basically sociological determinants for collective behavior, but does not include what Smelser considers to be the important sociological elements.

Like episodes of collective behavior itself psychological variables, such as suggestion, projection, displacement and fetishism, are products in part of social determinants. In using the sociological approach, we shall be asking: Under what social conditions do these psychological variables come into play as parts of collective behavior?<sup>1</sup>

The crowd has the ability to overcome the individual's own ability to make his/her own decision as to whether or not to participate in the episode of collective behavior. There is general agreement that the participants in collective behavior have some desire to participate in the behavior. Turner and Killian make the point that businessmen will probably not participate in a labor dispute.<sup>2</sup> The mere fact that some sort of shared symbol system must exist, according to Martin, implies that there must be some sort of understanding of the situation in order for the collective behavior to occur. This is accounted for by Martin's use of instincts. The power of the crowd to strip the human of the power to make judgements on his own is somewhat overstated. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that

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<sup>1</sup>Neil J. Smelser, Theory of Collective Behavior, (New York: Free Press, 1962), p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>Turner and Killian, 1972, p. 21.

the sharing of a set of symbols aids in the realization of each individual of the situation that exists and makes him/her aware of a possible solution of the situation at hand. Blumer was mentioned earlier as a proponent of this position.

In this section, the theories of contagion and convergence have been reviewed. Each has been criticized and has fallen short of the goal of providing an accurate explanation of collective behavior. These theories are the oldest accepted approaches to the phenomenon of collective behavior. They make some positive contributions to the understanding of the subject area. An example of this was given with the mention of Blumer's use of what he calls circular reaction. The effect of persons' sharing the same information does indeed lead to similar conclusions regarding the matter that the information is being shared about. Two examples of this in recent history are the Bay of Pigs and Watergate. In both instances, the principals in the situation were not made aware of dissenting opinions and made decisions that led to actions that were either illegal or unsuccessful; however, if the dissenting opinions had been known, the wrong courses of action might have been avoided.

A second contribution to the field is the view that the episode of collective behavior is something greater than the sum of the parts. This contribution enables the students of collective behavior to account for the behavior of the

group rather than trying to account for the behavior of many individuals in a group, which is extremely difficult if not impossible. The use of group analysis is fundamental to the field because without this concept, the study of collective behavior would be limited to the explanation of individual behavior.

It has been demonstrated that these approaches have made contributions to the field of collective behavior as well as added to the confusion concerning the phenomenon. It is because of the foregoing explanations and examples that these approaches must be rejected as incomplete explanations of collective behavior. The catalytic model that is presented in the later chapters will address the same issues that have been addressed by the contagion and convergent approaches and will resolve them in such a manner as to present a complete explanation of collective behavior.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE EMERGENT NORM THEORY OF COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR

The emergent norm approach is one of the more recent approaches in the field. Some say that the approach originated in 1957 with the publication of Turner and Killian's first edition of Collective Behavior.<sup>1</sup> The emergent norm approach employs an extension of the research that has been done with small groups.<sup>2</sup> According to this approach, a standard, or norm, for the behavior by the group, or collectivity, in a given situation is set and limits the behavior of the group. Pressure is exerted from the group on the individual who is the prospective participant. The individual must choose between the pressure to conform and his/her personal assessment of the situation.

Emergent norm theory holds that the much heralded homogeneity of crowd action, assumed by both contagion and convergence theorists, is false. . . . The conspicuous actions of relatively few active individuals come to be attributed to the entire crowd. The problem,

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<sup>1</sup>Stanley Milgram and Hans Toch, "Collective Behavior: Crowds and Social Movements," in The Handbook of Social Psychology, eds. Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson, 2d ed., 5 vols. (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1969), vol. 4, p. 553.

<sup>2</sup>Solomon E. Asch, Social Psychology (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1952), p. 451 passim.

therefore, is not to explain homogeneity, but rather to explain why the illusion of homogeneity arises.<sup>1</sup>

In other words, the participant in the collective behavior episode acts in accordance with what s/he perceives is the norm of the collectivity, not because of some overriding influence on him/her as in the approaches of contagion and convergence.

The emergent norm approach accounts for the boundaries that the collective behavior episode stays within during its duration. It also attempts to explain the individual behavior of the participants in the episode, but does so inadequately, as is demonstrated below. Another point that this approach does not sufficiently explain is the emotional reaction of the individual in the collective behavior situation. These as well as some other areas of the emergent norm approach will be discussed below; however, to understand fully the background of the approach, a brief description of the experiments upon which the approach is founded will be given.

The social psychological experiments that this approach is based on come from the work of S. E. Asch, Kurt Lewin, and Muzafer Sherif. Each of these authors experimented with the effects of the group on the individual. They

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<sup>1</sup>Milgram and Toch, 1969, p. 553.

examined the phenomenon from different points of reference, but each reaches the conclusion that the effect of the group on the individual is an important factor in the decision that is reached with regard to whether or not the individual will agree with, or follow, the perception of the group.

In his experiments on the effect of the group on the individual, Asch tested the perception of individuals under the influence of a group of individuals.<sup>1</sup> The preliminary experiment involved a series of trials in which a subject was asked to render a decision concerning the comparative length of a set of lines. The process consisted of presenting a line that was to be compared with three other lines. In the set of three lines, one line was the same length, a second was shorter, and a third was longer. It was the task of the subject to state which line in the set of lines matched the line given first. The subject was presented with eighteen trials. Of these, six were neutral trials which means that the group of confederates chose the line that was the matching line. In the remainder of the trials, the subject was forced to choose between his perception of the correct choice or to agree with the group on an incorrect choice. The results, according to Asch are clear.

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<sup>1</sup>S. E. Asch, "Effects of Group Pressure upon the Modification and Distortion of Judgements," in Readings in Social Psychology, eds. Eleanor E. Macoby, Theodore M. Newcomb, and Eugene L. Hartley, 3d ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1958), pp. 174-183.

The first result to be mentioned by Asch is that one third of the individuals moved in the direction of the majority when asked to choose an appropriate line. When compared with a control group, whose errors were negligible, the results of the experiment gain significance. However, it should be noted that the influence of the group is far from complete. Sixty-eight percent of the estimates were correct even in the face of group pressure. Perhaps the most significant finding is the conclusion that the disparity of the responses is based on individual differences. Asch isolated two distinct types of subjects, one labeled independent and the other labeled yielding, based on how they reacted to the group pressure.

Not satisfied with this preliminary study, Asch examined the effect of the environment and individual differences on the results of the study. Under a variety of conditions, Asch used sets of matched subjects to gain the information. The circumstances differed in the unanimity of the group, the size of the majority, and the consistence of the assessment of a "partner" that would agree with the perception of the subject. In this series, it was found that when the subject was joined by a partner whose judgements agreed with his/her own, then s/he was more likely to maintain his/her position regarding the choice of a correct line. When the effect of the number of participants opposing the subject

was made, the findings indicate that an opposition consisting of three or more individuals has a definite effect on the perception of the subject.

Asch summarizes the findings as follows:

Independence and yielding are a joint function of the following major factors: (1) The character of the stimulus situation. Variations in the structural clarity have a decisive effect: with diminishing clarity of the stimulus-conditions the majority effect increases. (2) The character of the group forces. Individuals are highly sensitive to the structural qualities of group opposition. In particular, we demonstrated the importance of the factor of unanimity. Also, the majority effect is a function of the size of group opposition. (3) The character of the individual. There were wide and, indeed, striking differences among individuals within the same experimental situation.<sup>1</sup>

Kurt Lewin has also examined the effect of the group versus the effect of an individual on the decision making process of a participant.<sup>2</sup> In this study, the effectiveness of a change of use pattern regarding food was measured. The researchers wanted to see how long the new behavior pattern would be sustained when the change was brought about through the methods of group discussion or lecture. The results indicate that participation in a group process resulted in a more complete adoption of the nutritional habits that were sought by the researchers than did the lecture. The results

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<sup>1</sup>Asch, 1958, pp. 182-183.

<sup>2</sup>Kurt Lewin, "Group Decision and Social Change," in Readings in Social Psychology, eds. Eleanor E. Maccoby, Theodore M. Newcomb, and Eugene L. Hartley, 3d ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1958), pp. 197-211.

also indicate that the readiness of individuals to accept new modes of behavior is increased by the acceptance of the same behavior by other individuals at the same time. The influence of the group is significant.<sup>1</sup>

Muzafer Sherif closely examined the formation of norms in the small group setting.<sup>2</sup> The focus of the experiments is the judgement of the phenomenon known as the autokinetic effect. When a small source of light is present in a dark room, it appears to move erratically and when presented repeatedly to the same subject, it appears to originate from different places in the room. This effect can be easily reproduced with the same results present at each series of trials. Even when the subject knows that the light is stationary, the light seems to move. As long as there is no reference point to associate with the light, a condition which has been assured by the use of a darkened room, the results of the stimulus perception will be the same.

The purpose of the experiments was to investigate the effect of group perceptions on the individual perceptions of the subject. The first experiment involved the judgements of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 206.

<sup>2</sup>Muzafer Sherif, "Group Influences upon the Formation of Norms and Attitudes," in Readings in Social Psychology, eds. Eleanor E. Maccoby, Theodore M. Newcomb, and Eugene L. Hartley, 3d ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1958), pp. 219-232.

the individual when presented with the stimulus without any other subjects being present. The findings are described below.

. . . the [the subjects] subjectively established a range of extent and a point (a standard or norm) within that range which is peculiar to the individual, that may differ from the range and point (standard or norm) established by other individuals.<sup>1</sup>

Other conclusions that were reached in the experiment are that when individuals whose standards were set in the group situation were presented with the stimulus on an individual basis, their judgements tended to approximate the norm of the group. A variation of the experiment was done without a specific structure. An assistant to Sherif went through a series of trials with a friend with whom he claimed to have some influence. During this particular series of stimulations, the subject changed her estimations of the movement of the light in accordance with the change in the estimations of the assistant. She had no prior knowledge of the manipulation by the assistant.<sup>2</sup>

A general conclusion that can be drawn from the experiments of Asch, Lewin, and Sherif is that the interaction of the group has a definite influence on the individual that participates in it. According to each experimenter, the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 222.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 230.

individual adopts the rule of the group when it is the result of a group decision not just one that is imposed on the participants. In fact, if the leader does not agree with the decision of the group, he will cease to be followed.<sup>1</sup> It is from these experiments that Milgram and Toch state the origin of the emergent norm theory of collective behavior can be found. Collective behavior, then, consists mainly of the search for rules of behavior in an ambiguous situation.<sup>2</sup>

This approach falls into a category of the progressive approach according to Lang and Lang. The type of behavior that falls into this classification includes the behaviors which involve the growth of an accepted way of handling an unusual situation.

The unorganized collective pattern constitutes a spontaneous effort at organization in an area where there has not been any. Under other conditions it represents an effort at reorganization where patterned ways of the past have proven inadequate. Accordingly, the least organized and most transient forms of collective behavior are elementary efforts, at first groping, from which ultimately a new structure will emerge. They are viewed as the early phases in which collectivities confronted with disruptive forces seek to mobilize their resources to find new and better basis for rational co-operation.<sup>3</sup>

It is on this basis that the group tries to find a new way to cope with a new and difficult situation. The group, so

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 225.

<sup>2</sup>Milgram and Toch, 1969, p. 553.

<sup>3</sup>Kurt Lang and Gladys Engle Lang, Collective Dynamics (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1961), p. 22.



to speak, forms a new norm which will govern the behavior of the participants in similar situations in the future.

According to Milgram and Toch, Turner is one of the major proponents of this approach to collective behavior.<sup>1</sup> In the second edition of the book that he coauthored with Killian, the emergent norm approach is outlined. One of the key aspects in this presentation is the aspect of the approach that accounts for the nonunanimity of the collectivity. Turner and Killian state that the solidarity of the collectivity is a perceived quality, but not necessarily a real one. The approaches of contagion and conversion account for the inclusion of the various participants in the collective behavior episode, but do not account for the lack of participation by bystanders. The strong point for the emergent norm approach is that it can account for the heterogeneity of participation in the collective behavior episode.

The concept of the development of a norm, a common understanding as to what sort of behavior is expected in the situation, seems to provide an explanation of a pattern of differential expression. Such a shared understanding encourages behavior consistent with the norm, inhibits behavior contrary to it, and justifies restraining action against individuals who dissent. Since the norm is to some degree specific to the

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<sup>1</sup>Milgram and Toch, 1969, p. 553.

situation, differing in degree or in kind from the norms governing noncrowd situations, it is an emerging norm.<sup>1</sup>

This process does not necessarily induce an emotional response to the situation. The participant in the situation adopts the behavior because s/he is uncomfortable in the situation in going against the majority of the other participants. To illustrate this point, Turner and Killian present an example of two classes in a university after a slight earth tremor. One class became quite upset about the tremor and reportedly heard a great deal of noise in the hall. Interpreting this as escape behavior, they left the classroom building. The second class looked out the windows and discovered noticeable inactivity in reaction to the abnormal occurrence of the earth tremor. Interpreting this as a sign that there was nothing to be concerned about, the class returned to normal after a brief discussion of the incident.

At this point in the discussion, a comment regarding unity is in order. Although none of the writers, that have been reviewed in this section, specifically mention the use of a shared symbol system in the collectivity, the possibility of the existence of one should be explored. In the work of Lewin, it was mentioned that those individuals who

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<sup>1</sup>Ralph Turner and Lewis M. Killian, Collective Behavior, 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), pp. 21-22.

participated in discussion groups were more apt to adopt the desired behavior than those who were simply lectured to. This would seem to indicate that some sort of communication takes place in the discussion group that does not occur in the lecture group. If this is the case, and all indications seem to point in this direction, then a system of shared symbols might be the mechanism that can account for the strength of the discussion group. The fact that in a discussion group the participants have a chance to use the language that describes the topic might lead to the conclusion that the symbols, language, help to reinforce the understanding of the topic. If this can be assumed to be true, then the understanding and hearing of information regarding the situation is critical to the development of the emergent norm. If this is not true, then the development of the norm must rely on some heretofore unsuggested mechanism.

Turner and Killian present two hypotheses that stem from this view of collective behavior. The first centers around the limits of the behavior of collectivities during active episodes. The emergent norm approach seems to indicate that the norms that regulate the behavior of the group will also set limits that the collectivity will not exceed. The second implies a need to reexamine the area of anonymity

in the collectivity. If the behavior is regulated by some sort of social control under the emergent norm, then it would be important to recognize each participant in order to identify the persons that are responsible for violating the norm.<sup>1</sup>

Since this is a relatively recent approach to collective behavior, criticisms of it are not abundant. One criticism, that Milgram and Toch present, is the inability of the approach to account for the development of one norm rather than another in the same situation.<sup>2</sup> It is apparent, from the incident cited by Turner and Killian, that different norms can be established in the same situation, and Milgram and Toch are correct in saying that the reason for the differential norms cannot be accounted for in the theory.

Another point that can be challenged is the differentiation that is made between the norm approach and the contagion approach. In the experiments that have been cited, the element of pressure from the group has been examined. The feeling of discomfort that is experienced by the individuals in a group situation is not assessed by the researchers as an emotion, but: What is a feeling of discomfort if not an emotional response? Milgram and Toch state

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Milgram and Toch, 1969, p. 555.

that the lack of consideration of emotional response to the group process is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the emergent norm approach.<sup>1</sup> From the information that has been presented here, this issue cannot be absolutely resolved.

The issue of anonymity can also be contested. If, as the emergent norm approach suggests, the individuals who participate in the group action can be identified in order to maintain the social norm that is emerging, then what will account for the extreme actions, the breaking of the norms by commission or omission, that are taken under some collective behavior episodes? The emergent norm approach does not adequately address the question of extreme behavior.

As has been presented here, the emergent norm approach does not account adequately for the emotionality of the individual that participates in the collective behavior episode, does not adequately explain the use of communication in the collectivity, and does not deal with the anonymity or lack of it of the participants in a way that is applicable in all the situations of collective behavior. The resolution of these issues is necessary in order to be able to describe accurately the phenomenon of collective behavior. The approach that will be presented in the following chapters will account for the deficiencies that have been mentioned.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 554.

## CHAPTER V

### THE VALUE ADDED THEORY OF COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR

In 1962, Neil J. Smelser published one of the most definitive works in the field of collective behavior.<sup>1</sup> This volume entitled Theory of Collective Behavior (which shall be referred to as TCB hereafter) is his presentation of a theory of collective behavior which has become known as the "value added" theory.<sup>2</sup> This approach is the first attempt to systematize the field of collective behavior into a theory that will allow an empirical evaluation of collective behavior episodes in such a manner as to allow for comparison of the episode to a standard.<sup>3</sup> In order to evaluate this approach, the theory will be presented in its entirety and then criticisms will be presented. The reader will find it helpful to note the definitions that will be examined first since these will aid in the later explanation.

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<sup>1</sup>Neil J. Smelser, Theory of Collective Behavior (New York: Free Press, 1962).

<sup>2</sup>Joseph B. Perry, Jr. and M. D. Pugh, Collective Behavior: Response to Social Stress (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Company, 1978), p. 39.

<sup>3</sup>Jerry M. Lewis, "A Study of the Kent State Incident Using Smelser's Theory of Collective Behavior," Sociological Inquiry 42 (1972):87.

As has already been noted, Smelser defines collective behavior as the uninstitutionalized mobilization for action in order to modify the strain on a social situation.<sup>1</sup> Based on the work of Talcot Parsons, Smelser isolates four basic components of social action. They are values, norms, motivation, and situational facilities.<sup>2</sup>

Values are the most general component. Values reflect the general goals toward which humans endeavor. They do not specify the structures through which the ends should be gained, but state the ends that the participants wish to attain.<sup>3</sup> An example of this would be the value of "freedom." Freedom can be held by individuals as an end toward which they will work, but the definition of freedom under which they operate will dictate different ways to attain the goal. The extremes of this example are found in the ideologies of the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>4</sup> In the former, the value of freedom implies the freedom to pursue personal goals without interference from the government. These goals can be defined by the individual involved, but the government outlines some limits by which the individual must abide, i.e.,

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<sup>1</sup>Smelser, 1962, p. 71.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>4</sup>These two countries are chosen as polar extremes. Some liberties will be taken in reference to the policies of the governments. It should also be noted that these are

one must not violate the freedom of others. In the Soviet Union, however, the value of freedom implies the freedom from want. Individuals under that system are free from the worry of where their next meal will come from, or where they will sleep, but in order to guarantee this freedom, the government must dictate how this goal will be attained. It can be seen, from this brief discussion, that the same value can be held by two different groups of people without the same outcome in terms of the way that the value is obtained.

The second basic component is that of norms. Norms are the rules under which the values are implemented. They are the means by which the culture insures the adherence to the values.<sup>2</sup> The extension of the preceeding example can be made in order to demonstrate how norms are defined. In the United States, the government provides formal guidelines under which the citizens of the society operate. These guidelines specify the ways that individuals must act under circumstances in order to insure that each individual has the freedom guaranteed him under the system of values held in common. These formal guidelines elaborate the penalties that can be imposed when a violation occurs. The Soviet Union also

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stereotypical conceptions of these cultures based on a Western point of view.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 26.



has a similar set of rules under which the citizens of that country operate. In a congruent manner, that government also provides formal sanctions under which the citizens live that substantiates their value system. In both examples, people who operate under the various value systems have created norms by which the values are supported.

The third component of social action, according to Smelser is mobilization. This component gives form to the values and norms. This form comes in the shape of the institutions through which the action takes place.<sup>1</sup> These would include, referring back to the examples, the different government agencies such as the FBI and the KGB, which are extensions of the institutions of government and responsible for the enforcement of the various rules that support the various values.<sup>2</sup>

The last component of action is that of situational facilities. These refer to the actual means of attainment or obstacles which constitute hindrances in the path of goal attainment.<sup>3</sup> These can be illustrated by the third component in order to support the values in question.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>2</sup>The comparability of these two entities can be questioned; however, in this context the comparison is valid.

<sup>3</sup>Smelser, 1962, p. 28.

The entirety of Smelser's analysis lies in the resolution of the questions concerning the above four components of action. If these components can be identified, then the aforementioned strain on the situation can be located and solutions to the problem can be advanced. These components are arranged in a hierarchy in which the top is represented by values and the bottom by situational facilities.<sup>1</sup>

As one moves down the hierarchy, the concrete details of action become more defined. Another dimension of the hierarchy becomes evident as one moves from top to bottom. The second dimension of this part of Smelser's model is that the lower components in the model are representations of less centralization than those on the top of the hierarchy. Smelser states that a change in the values of a system will necessitate a change in the norms, mobilization, and situational facilities, while a change in the latter does not necessarily imply a change in the values of the system. In other words, a change in a component means that the components below it will change, but the components above it may or may not change.<sup>2</sup> Each of the components has seven levels of specificity which help define the component itself. The first degree of specification occurs in the differentiation

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

of the components from each other. The second type of specification occurs within the components themselves in order to have a better understanding of the components themselves and their relationship to concrete action.<sup>1</sup> Each component can be much more easily understood if presented in tableau form. Tables 1 through 5 show the different components of action and their relationship to one another. The major emphasis that should be noticed from these tables is the way that Smelser has differentiated each of the levels of each component. Each level within each component increases the specification of each component with respect to the concreteness of action. As one descends the hierarchy, the relationship with the level and concrete action becomes greater. The inverse also holds true. The major purpose of each table is to help explain the concepts as presented. This reification enables an individual to gain valuable insight to the elements of collective behavior. The seven levels of each component of action can be grouped into three sections which will aid the user of the theory. Levels 1-3 are designated as resource generators, actions which prepare the participants for concrete action. Level 4 marks the transition between preparation and action. Levels 5-7 utilize the resources and create action with them.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

Concept	Definition	Operationalization
1. Values	Concepts or principles that guide behavior	Measurement of values for individuals and organizations
2. Legitimation of rewards	Definition of rewards in terms of their social value	Measurement of rewards in terms of their social value
3. Legitimation of individual commitment	Definition of commitment in terms of the individual's belief in the organization's goals	Measurement of commitment in terms of the individual's belief in the organization's goals
4. Legitimation of competing values	Definition of competing values in terms of their social value	Measurement of competing values in terms of their social value
5. Legitimation of values for realizing organizational goals	Definition of values for realizing organizational goals in terms of their social value	Measurement of values for realizing organizational goals in terms of their social value
6. Legitimation of expenditure of effort	Definition of expenditure of effort in terms of the individual's belief in the organization's goals	Measurement of expenditure of effort in terms of the individual's belief in the organization's goals

Source: Neil J. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior* (New York: The Free Press, 1962), p. 34.

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Table

General character of specification

General authority

General authority  
General authority  
General authority

Specification of norms according to institutional actors

General authority  
General authority  
General authority

Specification of norms with a central reference to types of roles and organizations

General authority  
General authority  
General authority

Specification of requirements for individual observation of norms

General authority  
General authority  
General authority

Specification of norms of competing institutional actors

General authority  
General authority  
General authority

Specification of rules of cooperation and coordination within organization

General authority  
General authority  
General authority

Specification of schedules and programs to regulate activity

General authority  
General authority  
General authority

Source: Neil J. Smelser, Theory of Institutionalization (New York: The Free Press, 1962, p. 3).

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### Table 1. Specificity of Publications

	1960	1970	1980
1	General	Specialized	Generalized
2	Generalized	Specialized	Generalized
3	Generalized	Specialized	Generalized
4	Generalized	Specialized	Generalized
5	Generalized	Specialized	Generalized
6	Generalized	Specialized	Generalized
7	Generalized	Specialized	Generalized
8	Generalized	Specialized	Generalized
9	Generalized	Specialized	Generalized
10	Generalized	Specialized	Generalized

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Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis.

	General nature of specification	Concrete example
1	Preconceptions concerning causality	Atomistic view of world
2	Identification of knowledge	Grasp of business principles
3	Technology, or specification of knowledge in situational terms	Know-how
4	Procurement of wealth, power or prestige to activate level 3	Financing
5	Allocation of effective technology to sector of society	Investing
6	Allocation of effective technology to roles and organizations	Procurement of funds for firm
7	Allocation of facilities within organization to attain concrete goals	Operative utilization of funds

Source: Will C. Cullen, Theory of Collective Behavior (New York: The Free Press, 1968), pp. 11-12.



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TABLE 1

Levels of Specificity of the Components of Social Action

Level of specificity	Components of Social Action			
	Goal	Form	Allocation of resources to the various activities	Co-ordination of activities
1	General goals	General conformity	Generalized conformity	Understanding and commonality
2	Specification of goals for institutionalized sectors	Specification of terms according to institutional sectors	Generalized conformity	Classification of knowledge
3	Specification of goals	Specification of terms according to types of roles and organizations	Generalized conformity	Technology, or specification of knowledge in situational terms
4	Specification of individual commitment	Specification of requirements for individual observation of terms	Transition to multi-role assumption	Procurement of wealth, power, or prestige to activate Level 3
5	Specification of objectives	Specification of terms in cooperative institutional sectors	Allocation to sector of society	Allocation of effective technology to sector of society
6	Specification of goals for individual commitment within roles	Specification of rules of cooperation within organizations	Allocation to specific roles in organizations	Allocation of effective technology to roles or organizations
7	Specification of goals for individual commitment	Specification of terms within specific activity	Allocation to specific roles within organizations	Allocation of effective technology within organizations to attain concrete goals

More specific

Source: Neil J. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior* (New York: The Free Press, 1963), p. 43.

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printed texts may not be readable.**

One of the major parts of Smelser's definition of collective behavior refers to structural strain. Strain is defined ". . . as an impairment of the relations among and consequently inadequate functioning of the components of action."<sup>1</sup> This strain usually shows up in levels 5-7 first since it is on these levels that the different components take the form of concrete action. For example, at level 7, the strain takes the form of ambiguity of the means to achieve the goal.<sup>2</sup>

By examining table 5, it can be seen that changes in the lower right hand side will effect only themselves, but changes in the upper left hand side of the table will effect the variables to the right and below the changing variable. In other words, a change in level 1 of the values will effect the entire table while, a change in level 6 of the motivation column will effect only levels 6 and 7 of situational facilities and level 7 of the motivation column. This occurs because of the increase in specificity as one moves down the table and to the right. Changes in the components higher in the hierarchy will effect those below them. This implies that the higher up on the hierarchy the strain occurs, the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

greater the change in the means to meet with the dictates of the change.

The above model fits into a scheme that is called "value added."<sup>1</sup> This is a way to organize the determinants of collective behavior. Smelser borrows this term from the field of economics. In economics, the term refers to the process by which the manufacturers of products calculate the cost of an item. An automobile is a combination of metal, paint, fabric, and glass. If these are put together in the proper manner and in the proper sequence, then the auto can be used as a finished product, but if the paint is applied before the metal is tooled into a body, then the product is not useful to the average buyer.<sup>2</sup> As Smelser sees it, each stage of the process limits the outcome of the final product.<sup>3</sup> Smelser sees six important determinants of collective behavior. They are as follows:

1. Structural conduciveness,
2. Structural strain,
3. Growth of a generalized belief,
4. Precipitating factors,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Richard C. Lipsey and Peter O. Steiner, Economics, 5th ed. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978), p. 461.

<sup>3</sup>Smelser, 1962, p. 14.

5. Mobilization of action, and
6. Operation of social control.<sup>1</sup>

These combine in certain patterns in order for an episode of collective behavior to take place. An example of the application of these determinants will be examined later in reference to the events at Kent State University in 1970.

Structural conduciveness refers to the set of circumstances in which the participants of a possible episode of collective behavior find themselves. The circumstances themselves do not imply that the incident will occur, but they must be there in order to facilitate the action. Structural strain implies that something within the set of circumstances is not in accordance with accepted practice. Within the presence of the first two determinants, the spread of a generalized belief concerning the set of circumstances and the strain must occur in order for the collective behavior to exist. Often a generalized belief exists without the first two determinants, but no collective behavior will exist. The precipitating factor gives the generalized belief substance. It is the element which brings the belief into a form which makes it factual. Next, the participants mobilize for the action to take place. This is the step which is the collective behavior that can be identified by the observer.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 15-17.

The last determinant is social control. It is the factor which can inhibit the action, or any of the other determinants, in the situation. It can effect the situation at any stage in the development. By studying the way that these determinants combine, different forms of collective behavior can be discovered. It should be emphasized that a combination of the above needs to be present in order for collective behavior to occur. A single element alone cannot be considered collective behavior under this system.

The most important determinant, according to Smelser, is the generalized belief. It is this determinant that provides the reason for the mobilization for action.

"Generalized beliefs constitute one stage in the total value-added process by which we account for the occurrence of episodes of collective behavior."<sup>1</sup> Most generalized beliefs originate in the ambiguity that can occur in the facilities component of the four components of social action; however, it should be noted that it can occur in any of the components of social action. Generalized beliefs permit the restructuring of an ambiguous situation in such a way that short circuits the routine model by jumping over several levels

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

from high on the hierarchy to the more concrete lower levels.<sup>1</sup> Figure 1 gives an example of this process. Notice how at each step in the process, the opportunity exists for the collective behavior episode to change course.

To summarize Smelser's theory, it should be noted first that he sees collective behavior as an example of the society on a small scale and in a somewhat shorter time frame. He attributes the formation of collective behavior to the action of six determinants. These determinants can be analysed in his model of social action. This model provides for four components which are arranged in a hierarchy with the value system at the top followed by norms, motivation, and situational facilities. Each of the components have seven levels within them. These seven levels are also arranged in a hierarchy with the more general, less specific at the top and the more concrete at the bottom. When these components are set up in a table (see table 5), the changes that occur in the upper left hand corner affect the lower right hand corner. In other words, changes in the table affect the elements below and to the right of them. In terms of collective behavior, Smelser uses the table to demonstrate how strain at any level will affect the remainder of the components and their various levels. With this firmly in mind,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 82.





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some of the criticisms that have been leveled at Smelser will now be examined.

The most frequently cited critical article of Smelser was published by Currie and Skolnick in 1970.<sup>1</sup> Their stated objective in the article is as follows:

We will argue in this paper that Smelser's theory suffers from an excessive emphasis on systematization; that, although superficially plausible, it does not move our understanding much beyond earlier approaches to collective behavior; that it is held together largely through undemonstrated assertions about the "exaggerated" character of "uninstitutionalized" beliefs and behavior; and that it seems to adopt an administrative or managerial perspective on collective behavior, in which unacknowledged evaluations take the place of forthright assertions of social values underlying the study of collective action.<sup>2</sup>

The writers of the above article first attack Smelser's definition of collective behavior, especially the insertion of "uninstitutionalized" behavior as the only acceptable form of collective action. They demonstrate the lack of clear definition of what the term really implies.<sup>3</sup> This attack on Smelser's definition goes unanswered in the response from Smelser that follows the Currie and Skolnick

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<sup>1</sup>Elliot Currie and Jerome Skolnick, "A Critical Note on Conceptions of Collective Behavior," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences 391 (September 1970):34-45.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

article.<sup>1</sup> The second criticism that they level at Smelser is that of over systemization. This, they say, is the problem with all theories that fall into the "structural functional" type of theory.<sup>2</sup> The theory rests on the functioning of a "generalized belief." The specificity of the concept leaves much to be desired. The concept also does not find support in the empirical literature, according to Currie and Skolnick.

The last and major criticism made by Currie and Skolnick is that Smelser analyzes collective behavior from what they call the "managerial perspective." This perspective, according to the authors, supports the status quo by looking at ways that the controlling power can maintain control over the episodes of collective behavior in order to maintain law and order. Smelser tends to view the outburst as in need of a firm hand so that the episode does not lead to an inordinant amount of destruction. In TCB, Smelser emphasizes the role that social control plays in the amount of action that occurs in an episode of collective behavior.<sup>3</sup> This criticism seems

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<sup>1</sup>Neil J. Smelser, "Two critics in Search of a Bias: A Response to Currie and Skolnick," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences 391 (September 1970):46-55.

<sup>2</sup>Currie and Skolnick, 1970, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup>Smelser, 1962, pp. 261-269.

to originate from the basic incongruencies that are evident in the nature of a differing philosophical orientation on the part of Smelser and his critics. Smelser demonstrates that the system as a whole will react to the action of the collective action before change can be affected. This shows that his basic foundation rests in the functional school of thought. Currie and Skolnick imply, by their criticism, that the appropriate point of view for a sociologist to take is not that of supporting the status quo, but that of observing the social order with a critical eye so that the observer can be aware of the possible changes that can occur within the system. It is this latter criticism that Smelser refutes most diligently in his response to Currie and Skolnick. In that article, Smelser maintains that the reason behind writing TCB was to present a systematic presentation of the field of collective behavior and not to present a theory that would maintain, or not maintain, the elements of social control.<sup>1</sup>

In 1972, Jerry M. Lewis used Smelser's approach to collective behavior to analyze the events on the Kent State University campus on May 4, 1970.<sup>2</sup> Lewis was able to account for all of the elements that Smelser states would be present in a collective behavior episode. Lewis found the structure

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<sup>1</sup>Smelser, 1970, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup>Lewis, 1972.

of the theory to be adequate in all areas of his analysis. In Smelser's response to the Lewis article, Smelser states that he ". . . definitely underplayed the importance of the psychological mechanisms in the dynamics of episodes of collective behavior."<sup>1</sup> Smelser also states that the value added model is basically an analytic model and not a dynamic representation of the episode of collective behavior.<sup>2</sup>

From the two examples given regarding the use of Smelser's approach to collective behavior the conclusion can be drawn that a variety of opinions exist regarding the viability of the model. The most valid criticism of Smelser recognizes the lack of applicability of the theory to the real world. Currie and Skolnick stated that the theory was too systemized and that it suffered from the lack of support from the emperical data that exists in the literature. Smelser's theory contains the elements that are evident in the collective behavior episode, but it has a great deal of difficulty handling the dynamics of the situation. He confirmed this himself in the article written in response to Lewis.

A second major flaw in the approach is the definition of "uninstitutionalized." In the criticism written by

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<sup>1</sup>Smelser, "Some Additional Thoughts on Collective Behavior," Sociological Inquiry, 42(1972):98.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

Currie and Skolnick, the concept of uninstitutionalization was challenged. They state that Smelser refers to this concept in three distinct ways. The incongruence of the three approaches to that concept puts the real nature of it in question. Does it mean non-conventional,<sup>1</sup> non-established,<sup>2</sup> or behavior directed at social change.<sup>3</sup> If this concept cannot be clearly defined, then the viability of Smelser's theory remains in question.

The last criticism that will be noted at this time concerns the complexity of the model. In the analysis of the behavior on the Kent State University Campus on May 4, 1970, Lewis had a great deal of difficulty understanding the notions that Smelser had in mind when he discussed the various factors that were involved in the analysis of the action. Smelser states that the use of situational strain by Lewis was done at an inappropriate time sequence when taken in relation to the activity being analyzed.<sup>4</sup> He also takes issue with Lewis and his views on social control. Smelser admits that he treated the subject of control from within the collectivity very lightly, but justifies this by stating

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<sup>1</sup>Smelser, 1962, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>4</sup>Smelser, 1972, p. 98.

that the forces of social control must originate from the exterior of the collectivity.<sup>1</sup> With this kind of misunderstanding possible in a relatively simple episode of collective behavior, the usefulness of the model for a large scale episode of collective behavior must remain in doubt.

In terms of the definition that was presented in chapter II, Smelser's theory complies with, in some cases, and runs counter to, in other cases, the definition being used for this thesis. Smelser agrees that a unified collection of individuals must be classified as collective behavior. He also agrees that the behavior does not occur under ordinary circumstances. However, he does not account for the variable of the individual in collective behavior. He also does not account for the dynamics of collective behavior. These insufficiencies are important and have been noted by Smelser<sup>2</sup> and Lewis.<sup>3</sup> In order for collective behavior to be fully understood, some explanation must be originated that will allow the observer to account for the actions of the individual while not discounting the influence of the group on the individual.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>3</sup>Lewis, 1972.



## CHAPTER VI

### CATALYTIC MODEL OF COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR

The subject of collective behavior has undergone a number of transformations since it was first examined in the writings of LeBon. The approaches that have been brought forth to explain the phenomenon are many and varied. They range from the structural approach of Smelser to the psychological approach of Meerloo. Each of these approaches has made a positive contribution to the field of collective behavior. It is on these contributions that the new model tendered here concentrates.

The contributions include the view that collective behavior is more than a collection of persons; that collective behavior does not happen under ordinary circumstances; that information has an effect on the collective behavior episode; and that there is a way to set a limit on the collective behavior episode. Each of these contributions comes from a different theoretical perspective. As was stated earlier, each approach highlights a different aspect of collective behavior, but none covers the field adequately. The purpose of the catalytic approach is to account for the deficiencies that have been noted and to provide a complete explanation of collective behavior.

The idea of a catalyst is not new to the area of collective behavior. Sometimes in the popular literature a certain element is recognized as the catalyst in a particular incident. An example of this occurs in the autobiography of José Greco. In the book he describes an incident that occurred in Copenhagen. He refers to the dance troupe as a catalyst and the effect that they had on the city. He describes the action of the troupe as triggering ". . . some kind of release unlike anything I'd ever seen or heard of."<sup>1</sup> This incident occurred after World War II and, according to the author, was a way to ease the memories of the war. The concept is often used in a similar manner. It refers to a non-understood occurrence that can be easily conveyed to others through the use of the concept of the catalyst.

One of the authors in the professional literature in the field of collective behavior and social movements, Hans Toch, also uses the term in one of his books on social movements. He makes reference to the factors that mobilize the latent motivation of individuals. According to the author, some individuals who participate in collective behavior do not do so without a great deal of apprehension regarding the outcome of the behavior. The events that

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<sup>1</sup>José Greco and Harvey Ardman, The Gypsy in My Soul (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1977), p. 120.

ultimately lead to the participation of these individuals is labeled as the catalyst.<sup>1</sup> He does not, however, develop a model of collective behavior based on this concept.

The basis of this approach relies on the principle of catalysis found in chemistry. The parallel that will be drawn between the chemical occurrence and the social occurrence is not a one-to-one correspondence, but will serve to give a new conceptual framework from which to approach research in the field of collective behavior. This alternative approach will account for the actions of individuals in collective behavior episodes, provide an explanation of the function of the environment in the creation of a collective behavior episode, account for the role of leadership, and provide a way to assess the reason that a particular type of collective behavior occurs in a given circumstance.

The use of such an analogy does have precedence in the history of sociological thought. Although Spencer did not use the field of chemistry to draw his analogy from, he used the parallel between the systems of physical organisms and the social structure to aid in understanding the

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<sup>1</sup>Hans Toch, The Social Psychology of Social Movements (Indianapolis, Indiana: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965), p. 173.

processes of society.<sup>1</sup> The fact that the model does not directly emulate the real social world is not important. The important issue is whether or not the model aids the understanding of the subject area. This point is expanded upon by von Bertalanffy.

We come, then, to a conception which in contrast to reductionism, we may call perspectivism. We cannot reduce the biological, behavioral, and social levels to the lowest level, that of the constructs and laws of physics. We can, however, find constructs and possibly laws within individual levels. The world is, as Aldous Huxley once put it, like a Neapolitan ice cream cake where the levels--the physical, the biological, the social and the moral universe--represent the chocolate, strawberry, and vanilla layers. We cannot reduce strawberry to chocolate--the most we can say is that possibly in the last resort, all is vanilla, all mind or spirit. The unifying principle is that we find organization at all levels.<sup>2</sup>

In his book on theory building, Robert Dubin mentions two ways that the concept of the catalyst has been used in the social sciences. The first is represented by a set of three dimensional axes which represent the situation in which the reaction occurs. The x and y axes represent the agents that can be involved in the reaction while the z axis represents the catalytic agent. In this representation, the values of the agents may be both positive and negative. In

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan H. Turner, The Structure of Sociological Theory, rev. ed. (Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1978), p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Ludwig von Bertalanffy, General Systems Theory (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1968), p. 49.

the second representation, the agents only interact when specific values are present. He summarizes the use of the approach as follows:

We can now conclude that the catalyst unit has special significance for social analysis. This significance lies not in the character of the unit but in the character of the law by which the unit relates to the analytical system in which it is employed.<sup>1</sup>

The approach that will be used in this model will not conform to either of the preceeding examples.

Catalysis, the process of using a catalyst, occurs when an element is placed into an already active combining set of elements and the addition of the catalyst speeds up the action of the elements. During this process, the interaction of the elements produces a release of energy. This release of energy occurs simultaneously with the interaction of the elements. Pauling describes the action as follows:

It is that catalysts speed up reaction by bringing the reacting molecules together and holding them in configurations favorable to reaction. Unfortunately so little is known about the fundamental nature of catalytic activity that the search for suitable catalysts is largely empirical. The test of a catalytic reaction, as of any proposed chemical process, is made by trying it to see if it works.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Dubin, Theory Building (New York: The Free Press, 1969), p. 120.

<sup>2</sup>Linus Pauling, General Chemistry, 2d ed. (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1956), p. 409.

As stated above, the process of catalysis is not fully understood.<sup>1</sup> The knowledge that exists is based on experimentation and not on some general principle that applies to a wide range of possibilities. The principle that reactions can be speeded up by the addition of another element is accepted widely. The application of the principle is limited to case by case analysis. This is significant in the use of the concept in collective behavior because it will allow the application of a general conceptual scheme to a group of phenomena without having to provide specific explanation for each.

The term catalyst refers to the specific substance that alters the rate of interaction of the elements. In other words, ". . . certain substances can drastically alter reaction rates. Such substances, called catalysts, are not consumed in the reaction, but participate in such a way to increase the rate."<sup>2</sup> These substances can be homogeneous or heterogeneous in nature. This means that they can be similar to the elements that are interacting, such as oxides of nitrogen in the action between sulfur dioxide and oxygen, or

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<sup>1</sup>The explanation given in current literature is substantially the same as that given by Pauling.

<sup>2</sup>William L. Masterton and Emil J. Slowinsky, Chemical Principles, 2d ed. (Philadelphia: W. B. Sanders Company, 1969), p. 362.

different than the substances, such as using platinum in the reaction of sulfur dioxide and oxygen.<sup>1</sup> From these examples, the same interaction process can be facilitated by different catalysts. The form of the catalyst is not important as long as it is compatible with the action that is desired. A third interesting property of catalysts is that they are not significantly changed by the process that they speed up.

Although the manganese dioxide increases the rate of evolution of oxygen from the potassium chlorate, itself is not changed. A substance with this property of accelerating a chemical reaction without itself undergoing a significant change is called a catalyst.<sup>2</sup>

The concept of the catalyst is that of an outside element speeding up the interaction of two or more interacting elements. The catalyst is substantially unchanged by the process.

A fourth interesting aspect of the catalytic process is that of equilibrium. According to Pauling, a system that is in equilibrium cannot be changed by a catalyst.<sup>3</sup>

A system is considered to have reached equilibrium with respect to a certain reaction when the same final state is reached by approach by the reverse reaction as by the forward reaction.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 363.

<sup>2</sup>Pauling, 1956, p. 115.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 423.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 424.

A conclusion that can be drawn from this statement is that only systems that are in a state of disequilibrium can be affected by the action of a catalyst.

The application of this concept to the field of collective behavior can provide insight into the processes that are at work in an episode of collective behavior. The question at this point could be phrased: How can this concept be adapted to the field of collective behavior? As has already been noted, the correspondence between this approach and the field of collective behavior will not be exact. With this in mind, the following paragraphs will enumerate the components of the catalytic approach to collective behavior.

Atoms which make up elements consist of three particles; protons, neutrons, and electrons. The nucleus of the atom is a combination of protons and neutrons. The electrons orbit around the nucleus in a manner similar to the way the planets orbit the sun. The orbits of the electrons are predetermined by the structure of the nucleus. Each atom has the capacity to attract another atom of the same or another type. In order for an atom to be in a state of equilibrium, the number of electrons that are in orbit must agree in number with the particles in the nucleus. Usually the electron orbits that are lacking electrons are the outer most orbits. In order to achieve a balanced status, an atom will attract electrons from other atoms. Atoms of the same



element often share electrons and form molecules, groups of atoms, in order to maintain equilibrium of the element.

Comparing the structure of an individual to that of an atom is, as far as some are concerned, a travesty, but it can be helpful in gaining a general understanding of collective behavior. The general orientation of the model is symbolic interaction. It is generally accepted in this approach that the individual develops through a process of interaction with others and the environment by the interpretation of symbols. The greater capacity an individual has for interpreting new symbols, the easier it will be for him/her to adapt to new environments. If the human is analogous to an atom, and that is the assumption made in this model, then the biological being can be considered the nucleus. This would imply that the biological being would affect the cultural aspects of the person which are analogous to the electron orbits. In other words, the fact that an individual is born with a mental defect would effect his/her ability to function and adapt to new situations. Physical attributes can also effect the way that an individual interprets symbols. For example, if one is unable because of certain physical problems to be at certain places at certain times, s/he might not have the same experiences that another person without similar difficulties will have. The barriers that the physically handicapped people face is a graphic example of this problem.

Working under the assumptions of the symbolic interaction school of thought, the person without handicap and the person with the handicap would develop differently because of the differences of experiences. The outermost rings, or orbits, represent the symbol system of the individual because it is through the symbol system that individuals can become part of groups. It is only by sharing interpretations of symbol systems that persons communicate with and understand each other as well as adapt to the environment.

Changes regarding the number of electrons within a given orbit can occur within the limits given by the structure of the nucleus. The changes that occur within these orbits are evidence of changes due to the interaction with other atoms. When atoms are compared to individuals, as in this model, the different configurations that the electrons can assume can be taken as evidence of changes within the individual which are the result of his/her actions.

The catalytic process speeds up already reacting elements. The pace of the reaction may be so extremely slow that it would take thousands of years for the elements to reach equilibrium under natural circumstances. With the introduction of the catalyst, the reaction can be speeded up. It might be able to collapse the above mentioned reaction into a few minutes. In terms of collective behavior, the catalyst has the capacity to unite a group of persons to form a new

and unique collectivity. The catalyst is the component of the process that creates the awareness in the individuals of a common understanding of the circumstances and the environment that consists of physically and culturally related factors. Within a suitable environment persons are reacting among themselves. When a catalyst is introduced into the situation involving the collection of persons and a certain environment, an episode of collective behavior will most likely occur. It is essential that the environments, the catalyst, and the individuals be amenable to each other or the reaction will not occur.

Just as in the chemical process, a catalyst may be homogeneous or heterogeneous. A homogeneous catalyst is another individual. This type of catalyst is commonly referred to as a leader. A leader has the capacity to recognize symbols that bring people together in order that they might facilitate each other in interaction. A heterogeneous catalyst is an event. An event, as far as this model is concerned, is an incident that occurs within the framework of the prospective participants and in an environment that is conducive to the reaction. The presence of either type of catalyst will result in a collective behavior episode as long as the other components, the participants and conducive environment, are present.

The mechanism that the catalytic agent employs to create collective behavior is the symbol system. By using the capacities of each individual to adapt to unique situations through symbols, the catalyst draws the participants into the situation. If the individuals have the capacity to recognize the situation, but interpret the symbols differently, then they will not participate in the catalysis, collective behavior. Just as in the chemical reaction, the capacities of the individuals to be drawn to one another is crucial to the process. The capacity of the individuals to interact with the catalyst is in part determined by the biological and cultural aspects of the individual. The nucleus of the person has allowed the individual to formulate the cultural aspects that will allow him/her to participate in the interaction. The participation is dependent on the ability of the individual to use and evaluate the symbol system in use for the situation. The individual at this point in time must evaluate the situation within the collection of experiences that s/he has accumulated.

Catalysis will stop under two circumstances. First, when reacting elements reach a condition of homeostasis, the process will stop. The catalyst is substantially unchanged. A newly created element, the collective behavior episode will be evident. The participants which have been changed by the episode will also remain. The second condition under which

the catalysis will end is that of the removal of the catalyst causing the reaction of the participants to cease. An example of this occurring would be the removal of a leader from the situation.

When the process ends, by either of the above mentioned methods, four elements will remain after the interaction. The first element consists of the individuals who participated in the interaction. They have been changed by the episode of collective behavior just as they have been changed through the processes of socialization. The second element is the episode collective behavior. It does not physically remain, but exists in the reality of the memories of the participants, others who were onlookers, and those who have been told of the episode as well as the documents that participants or observers produce. The third remaining element is the catalyst. The representation of this element may vary because of the different forms that it can take. If the catalyst was homogeneous, then the remaining element would be that of the leader. If the catalyst is heterogeneous, then the remaining element would take on the properties of the collective behavior episode, i.e., it would exist only in reference to it through language. The last element that remains after the collective episode is that of the non-participants. These represent the individuals

who were in close proximity to the episode, but because of their past experiences, chose not to participate.

To summarize the process, three components must be present in order for collective behavior to occur. First, the environment must be such that it is conducive to the reaction. Secondly, the participants must have a symbol system that is amenable to the reaction. Lastly, a catalyst which is appropriate must be introduced. Each of these components is unique to each occurrence of collective behavior. These three components must be copresent because each is mutually interdependent in the collective behavior episode.

For the purposes of this paper, an episode of collective behavior is said to exist when the following conditions are present.

- A. A unified collection of individuals, not just an aggregate, must be present.
- B. The persons that participate in the behavior notice an emotional response to the behavior.
- C. The incident being labeled collective behavior will not occur under ordinary circumstances.
- D. The incident will not necessarily override the exercise of free will by the individuals involved.

These four points are covered in the catalytic model as it has been presented.

During catalysis, the group of individuals is interacting in such a manner as to represent more than just an aggregate of persons. They are involved in a specific

episode of interaction that can only take place because of the particular environment, individuals, and catalyst are present. This unified collection of individuals follows the tradition of the notion of a gestalt. In other words, in this process, the whole is taken to be greater than the sum of the parts. The catalysis is not merely the result of a group of individuals acting on their own, but a unified action brought about through the consequences of the addition of catalyst.

As in any other chemical action, a certain amount of energy is released by the interaction. In the case of catalysis, the energy is often represented as heat. In the social catalysis, the energy that is evident in the process is recognized as emotions by the participants. Each participant in the interaction feels some effect of the catalyst on them. This effect is evidence of the energy that the participants have invested in the interaction.

It is obvious that the episode of collective behavior cannot occur under ordinary circumstances. If it could occur under ordinary circumstances, then the analysis that has been presented would not be a valid one. Since an extremely unusual set of circumstances must be present for collective behavior to occur, it is evident that the setting of everyday life does not provide the proper atmosphere for

the action of the catalyst and the production of collective behavior.

The last part of the definition refers to the fact that the action of the collectivity does not necessarily override the exercise of free will by the individuals involved. This point in the model centers around the nature of the individual's experience before the situation in which the catalytic action occurs. The factor of free will within an individual is difficult to pinpoint; however, within the framework of symbolic interaction the decision making process rests on the interpretation of the symbols present in the situation. The action of the individual depends on the ability of the individual to interpret the symbols. Blumer states his position on the issue as follows:

If a place is given to "interpretation," the interpretation is regarded as merely an expression of other factors (such as motives) which precede the act, and accordingly disappears as a factor in its own right. Hence, the social action of people is treated as acts which are built up by people through their interpretation of the situation in which they are placed. . . . Under the perspective of symbolic interaction, social action is lodged in acting individuals who fit their respective lines of action to one another through a process of interpretation; group action is the collective action of such individuals.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Herbert Blumer, Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), p. 84.



From the foregoing discussion, it can be deduced that the action of individuals is based on their decisions, the exercise of free will, and founded on their background of experience. If an individual cannot relate to the situation in which the collective behavior episode occurs, then that individual will probably choose not to participate in the interaction. Those who can relate to the situation will probably join in the action.

The above does not imply that the experiences of the individuals must be the same. Different persons can relate to the same episode of collective behavior and participate in it within the framework of different experiences. This notion is supported by Devereux. He has examined the different participants in the Hungarian Freedom movement during the 1950s. He concludes that if one assumed that all the freedom fighters participated for the same reason, then one would have to explain how they all came to understand the same thing; however, if one assumes that each came from a different background, then one has to recognize that the resulting action takes place because each participant finds the collective behavior episode an adequate expression for his/her actions.<sup>1</sup> Although this does not take into account

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<sup>1</sup>George Devereux, Ethnopschoanalysis (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 127-128.

the effect of the catalyst, it does support the notion that individuals can participate in a collective action without having identical sets of experiences or responding to identical sets of symbols.

The catalytic model of collective behavior presents a conceptualization of collective behavior that has been alluded to in many of the previous approaches to the subject area. As was reviewed earlier, these previous approaches to collective behavior include the contagion approach, the conversion approach, the value added theory of collective behavior, and the emergent norm approach. Each of these has been discussed at length in previous chapters. The purpose of returning to them at this time is to examine the features of the various approaches that have contributed to the catalytic model.

The contagion approach as represented by LeBon and McDougall, rests on three major assumptions. The first is that man is a social being whose thin layer of social understanding can be stripped away and easily expose the inherent primitive nature of the species. Secondly, the crowd exists outside the individual participants and acts as the agent that strips away the thin layer of socialization. Lastly, they state that the mechanism that accomplishes this stripping away is suggestion. Suggestion acts in such a way as to lower the intellectual functioning of the individual

and allow him/her to participate in the collective behavior episode.

The contribution that this approach gives to this model of collective behavior is that the collective behavior episode exists outside the individuals. It is an action that can only occur within the context of a collection of individuals and only under specific circumstances. This does not mean that it is an entity that floats around in some unseeable form until the collectivity comes together. It means that the action of the collectivity is different in nature than the action of a collection of individuals. This point is extremely important because it is this property that makes the study of collective behavior the important study that it is.

The convergent model also makes an important contribution to the catalytic model. The convergion model is represented by the writings of Martin and Meerloo. The base of this approach is in three parts. The first is that the collectivity is founded by individuals who have come together with existing predispositions to participate in collective behavior. In other words, the individuals have some common reason for participating in the collective action. Secondly, the participants in the collective behavior have some degree of anonymity, they are unidentifiable as the specific person

who might have done something outside the normal socially acceptable behavior. Lastly, there is an object around which the participants center their behavior. In conjunction with this last element is the sharing of a common symbol system among the participants. The contribution made by the convergent approach is the last one mentioned, the focus and the shared symbol system.

The value added theory of collective behavior as represented by Smelser supports two of the preceding components. In his scheme of determinants, two substantiate the ideas of shared symbol system and focusing element. The former is discussed in terms of the generalized belief. According to Smelser the generalized belief permits the restructuring of an ambiguous situation. This is accomplished in such a way that the use of symbols cannot be avoided. With, at the very minimum, a new meaning given to an old symbol, the new meaning must be shared by those involved in the collective behavior in order for the collective behavior episode to occur. The process of sharing the new meaning is the process of developing a generalized belief. The focusing element of Smelser's approach is the precipitation factor as discussed in the previous chapter.

The most significant contribution that the emergent norm approach makes to the catalytic model is that of boundary setting. In this approach the boundaries are set

by the development of a norm of behavior that is established within the group. The theory cannot account for the establishment of one norm over another, but it does provide a precedent for such an idea. The catalytic model accounts for the boundary by limiting the collective behavior episode to those individuals who have the ability to interpret the symbols that are used during the episode. Without the ability to interpret the symbols being used in the episode, the individuals will not be able to participate in the collective behavior.

The contributions of the various approaches to the catalytic model of collective behavior are important because the previous approaches do not include all of the above features in any one of them. The combination as has been displayed in the catalytic model provides an interesting approach to collective behavior and one that can be used to analyze collective behavior episodes.

A brief example of the model at this point might assist in the understanding of the catalytic model. During the summer of 1967, a great deal of civil disturbance occurred. In order to gain an understanding of the process of the disorder, the President created an Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. In the report that the commission made to the President, several points are brought out that substantiate this model of collective behavior. A section from

the second chapter dealing with the patterns of disorder will be quoted at length, then comments about it will be made.

In virtually every case a single "triggering" or "precipitating" incident can be identified as having immediately preceded--within a few hours and generally the same location--the outbreak of disorder. But this incident was relatively minor, even trivial, by itself substantially disproportionate to the scale of violence that followed. Often it was an incident of a type which had occurred frequently in the same community in the past without provoking violence.

We found that violence was generated by increasingly disturbed social atmosphere, in which typically not one, but a series of incidents occurred over a period of weeks or months prior to the outbreak of disorders. Most cities had three or more such incidents; Houston had 10 over a five-month period. These earlier or prior incidents were linked in the minds of many Negroes to the pre-existing reservoir of underlying grievances. With each such incident, frustration and tension grew until at some point a final incident, often similar to the incidents preceding it, occurred and was followed almost immediately by violence.

As we see it, the prior incidents and the reservoir of underlying grievances contributed to a cumulative process of mounting tensions that spilled over into violence when the final incident occurred. In this sense the entire chain--the grievances, the series of prior tension-heightening incidents, and the final incident--was the "precipitant" of disorder.

This chain describes the central trend in the disorders we surveyed, and not necessarily all aspects of the riots or all of the rioters. For example, incidents have not always increased tensions; and tension has not always resulted in violence. We conclude that both processes did occur in the disorders that we examined.

Similarly, we do not suggest that all rioters shared the conditions or the grievances of their Negro neighbors: some deliberately have exploited the chaos created out of the frustration of others; some may have been drawn into the melee merely because they identified with, or wished to emulate others. Some who shared the adverse conditions and grievances did not riot.

We found that the majority of the rioters did share the adverse conditions and grievances. Although they did not necessarily articulate in their minds the connection between that background and their actions.<sup>1</sup>

Several important points are made in this section of the Commission's report. The first is the fact that they recognized that a precipitating event can be identified. It is recognized that the event is very similar to others that have occurred in the same area, but for some reason, this event triggered the civil disorder. Secondly, the report mentions a disturbed social atmosphere which consisted of a pre-existing reservoir of underlying grievances. It is suggested that these influenced the nature of the civil disturbance. Lastly, the report recognizes that all the participants did not share the same conditions. In fact some of the participants exploited the situation for their own reasons, whether they were articulated or not. These aspects of the riots that the Commission examined support fully the model of collective behavior that is presented in this paper.

The precipitating event is the catalyst that set the action into motion. In the case of the riots, a large number of the catalytic agents were events or heterogeneous catalysts.

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<sup>1</sup>National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), pp. 117-118.

The most significant factor mentioned in the Commission's report is the fact that the event that set the riot in motion, if that metaphor can be used, was very similar to other events in that community. As was previously stated, similar events occurred as many as ten times before the riot was triggered by the identified event. This fact leads the Commission to state that the process warrants further investigation. Furthermore, it is recognized that the incidents and tensions always occur in the episodes that were examined.

The tensions refer to the reservoir of underlying grievances. These grievances were the result of a protracted period of multiple incidents. Each of the incidents contributed to the tensions in the area. This component can easily be recognized as the environmental component in the catalytic model. The incidents combined to create an environment in which the collective behavior episode could take place. They also produced the system of symbols that could be easily understood by the participants. In other words, the symbols that stood for the incidents became recognizable by the potential participants.

The last element to be examined here is that of the background of the participants. It is recognized in the report that all the participants did not share the same



experiences, but nonetheless the various individuals participated in the behavior. This agrees with the general notion that participants join in the episode as a result of different backgrounds and for different reasons.

The catalytic model is clearly applicable in this type of collective behavior episode. The three components the environment, shared symbol systems of the participants, and the introduction of the catalyst were present in the episodes that were examined by the commission. It was specified by the Commission that two of the components were evident in the disorders. The applicability of this model is not limited to this type of collective behavior, but can be used to provide an explanation for all types of collective behavior.

In summary, the catalytic model of collective behavior has borrowed from many of the previously discussed approaches to collective behavior. The concepts that have contributed to the model include the idea of a focus to the collective behavior episode; the sharing of symbols regarding the collective behavior episode; the notion of collective behavior's consisting of more than the actions of individuals in the same location, but a combination of the actions in such a manner as to constitute collective behavior; and the limiting of the collective behavior to the ability of the individuals to participate in it. The catalytic model of

collective behavior has been shown to depend on three components, the environment, the participants with an amenable symbol system, and the catalyst. Each of these components was shown to be mutually interdependent in order for the collective behavior episode to occur. Lastly, a brief application of the model was made to the Commission Report on Civil Disorder. By this process, the catalytic model has been demonstrated to be a viable alternative to the other approaches to collective behavior and does deserve to be used in the analysis of such phenomenon.

## CHAPTER VII

### EXAMPLE, HYPOTHESES, AND CONCLUSIONS

The catalytic model of collective behavior provides an alternative method by which one can analyze episodes of collective behavior. To exemplify the utility of this model, two exercises will be performed using the model. First, an example of a specific episode of collective behavior will be examined and the various components of the model will be identified within the context of the example. Secondly, a list of definitions along with propositions and theorems derived from them will be presented in order to demonstrate the utility of the model. Lastly, recommendations for future research will be made.

The model of collective behavior as presented in the previous chapter rests on the interrelationship of three components. The most well-defined component is the catalyst which can be homogeneous or heterogenous. The second component is that of the participants, who have, as an integral part, symbol systems and the ability to use them. The last component, and the most difficult to differentiate, is the environment. In order to clarify these components, an example of collective behavior needs to be examined. The following example is presented for this purpose.

The occasion was a weekend religious retreat up in the mountains of Southern California near Big Bear Lake. It was a conference composed largely of about forty university students and a few working people, most of whom were of college age. The retreat was under the direction of the Presbyterian Church and the participants were mainly of the denomination although there was a scattered representation from other churches as well.

Throughout Friday and during the day on Saturday, things progressed smoothly and according to plan. There was recreation, group Bible study, short sermons, singing, etc. On Saturday night, however, there occurred a phenomenon known as the "fellowship of the burning heart." This procedure is a fairly well-established practice within the Presbyterian Church for Sunday evening gatherings of youth groups and Christian Endeavor societies. It is a fairly routinized affair, with the same people arising to speak and to give testimonies regarding answers to prayer for some relative or friend, the benefits that one has obtained from studying a particular portion of scripture, etc. It is a very business-like arrangement with relatively little emotion involved. It was against this background that the activities of this Saturday night took place.

At first everything proceeded along the familiar pattern. The church extrovert led a chorus of songs just as he had for years. An assistant pastor spoke briefly on the difficulties of keeping the faith and leading a Christian life in modern times, particularly in the University environment. The only variation from the established Sunday evening pattern at the church was the physical surroundings. Logs had been laid out in a semi-circle amid a clearing in the trees on a hillside, in a type of amphetheatre arrangement. Down where the speaker stood was a small bonfire.

The assistant pastor closed his message with a prayer and asked if "anyone felt led to give a brief testimony." The first few testimonies were of the orthodox variety. One girl, a perennial testimony-giver since her high school days, said how much the retreat had benefitted her and advocated that they become regular monthly affairs. There were several others in a similar vein. Then there arose a girl who had long been a member of the church, who was considered one of the most attractive and popular girls, and who very rarely said anything at any of these meetings. She asserted that during her individual meditation period down by the stream that afternoon, and again while she

had been sitting in the meeting praying that night, the Lord had spoken to her "in a very real way," and that she trusted that God would give her the strength to say what was upon her heart. She then went on to relate, amidst sobs, that although she had been a member of the Church for a long time and had always considered herself a Christian, she never really knew Christ, and that through her own selfish will and because of the hardness of her heart, she had prevented Christ from actually coming into her life. She then said that now, in front of her friends, she would like to "confess Christ as my personal savior for I know now for the first time in my life what it really means to be born again." The atmosphere of the meeting changed sharply, from one of mere token reverence to absolute silence. When this girl had arisen to speak, everyone had turned his head to look at her, but as she spoke and sobbed people either stared at the ground or buried their heads in their hands. The silence was broken only by the words of the assistant pastor who at the conclusion of the testimony commented, "The Lord bless you." Another girl then got up and said that she had been violating all of the principles of Christian love--that she had been envious of two other girls present because of their popularity with the group and because of their fine clothes. Another arose and said that she had been guilty of spreading false rumors about another girl's behavior, called her by name, and asked forgiveness of the Lord and of the girl she had offended. All of these confessions were accompanied by tears. A fellow (a long-time personal friend of mine) stood up and said that what he was about to do was the hardest thing in his life. He then proceeded to relate that when he was in the army overseas he had been living in sin with a German girl. (The girl to whom he was presently engaged was also present that night.) One girl arose and claimed that her mind had been deteriorating for some time and that she didn't think, she knew that she was going insane, but felt that the Lord was still with her. The testimonies then reverted to the confessional pattern again. One after another individuals would arise, confessing everything from cheating on exams to fornication, each apparently outdoing the preceding in describing the intensity of his sinfulness.

While all this was taking place, individuals at different intervals would slip to their knees, turn around and place their heads on the logs in prayer. This procedure was eventually followed by about three-quarters of those present. It should be mentioned here that, unlike Roman Catholics and Episcopalians,

Presbyterians and other evangelical Protestants never kneel when they pray, but merely bow their heads while sitting or even standing. Presbyterians like to think that in this manner they are placing a more proper emphasis on attitude and spirit than upon form and ritual, so that this kneeling represented a considerable deviation from the usual Calvinistic simplicity. The testimonies continued on for about an hour and a half although they usually last no more than ten or fifteen minutes.

Finally, one young man whom I know, who was studying for the ministry, arose and made the following statement: "I have been examining my heart to determine whether there was something wrong in my life which was preventing me from obtaining the same sort of spiritual blessings which others have evidently been receiving here tonight. Rather I believe the nature of these activities here tonight are in conflict with our Protestant heritage and hinder rather than encourage our Christian development. One of the primary benefits of the reformation was the recognition of an individual's right to immediate access to God without the necessary mediation of a priest or anyone else. I think that many of the things which have been said here tonight might better have been said in private prayer to our Lord rather than through public confession." After this there was a long period of silence as no one seemed inclined to speak, and all remained absolutely stationary. Finally the assistant pastor said, "Let us pray." In his prayer he spoke the varieties of religious experience in Protestantism and how "the Lord speaks to his children in diverse ways." Following his prayer, the meeting began to break up. Slowly the individuals would arise, dust themselves off, and make their way down the hill back to their quarters. In the main individuals walked alone and even among those who were in pairs or groups, there was no conversation. I heard only one comment which was, "Well, the Lord's presence was certainly felt tonight."

During the confessions there were not any conversations, but the sobbing, choked voices giving testimonies, and the bowing of heads, with individuals kneeling all about, could not help but convey attitudes and sentiments throughout the group and develop a common mood. As one person after the other got up to confess the most personal of sins, individuals began to examine their own consciences, and felt compelled to "get it off their chest." As a member of the crowd, I know that I myself experienced similar feelings. At first I felt extremely

uncomfortable in that environment and eagerly awaited the end of these proceedings. I had enjoyed the activities of the weekend, and was happy to have had the opportunity to renew old friendships, but this mass unburdening of the soul was more than I had bargained for. But as I saw many of my friends who I had thought had long since abandoned the outmoded theology of a personal, anthropomorphic type of deity, and whom I considered as intelligent and sophisticated as I liked to think I was-- as I saw them arise to confess their errant ways, I could not help but feel some pangs of guilt myself, for there they were, engaged in sincere repentance, exposing their intimate past, while I remained stolid, with a superior attitude, looking on disdainfully at the entire affair.<sup>1</sup>

From the foregoing example, many observations can be made. First, the episode itself must be identified as an episode of collective behavior. It fits the four part definition that is being used to identify collective behavior in this thesis. There is a unified collection of individuals. There is an emotional response among the participants. The writer admits that the circumstances under which the episode takes place is out of the ordinary. Lastly, the episode does not override the exercise of free will of the individuals in the proximity as demonstrated by the writer. It does fit the four criteria that need to be met in order for an episode to be called collective behavior.

The catalyst in this episode is the girl who has been in the group for a long time and was well thought of. She,

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<sup>1</sup>Ralph Turner and Lewis M. Killian, Collective Behavior, 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), pp. 16-18.

in giving her testimony, acted as a homogeneous catalyst that changed the normal course of events that were usually evident at similar gatherings. In other words, she was the catalyst that speeded up the already interacting elements of the gathering. The participants in the episode were all young adults with similar backgrounds. Most of them had a Presbyterian view of the way that religious services were run under these circumstances; however, it is also evident that at least one of the participants chose not to participate in the episode because his particular cultural and religious structure did not lend itself to the understanding of the episode that was occurring. In his best judgement, he was unable to participate in the activity; although, many with what he perceived as similar backgrounds did participate.

The environment is the most difficult aspect to isolate. The obvious things such as location, time of day, and seating arrangement are quite clear in the narration. The items such as the relative proximity of other groups, the nature of the prior meetings, and the relationships of the individuals are not as clear even though many of these were mentioned by the writer. Others have found that the isolation of this component in other theories has also been difficult



to accomplish.<sup>1</sup> The process of catalysis is evident in the non-ordinary behaviors that the participants were observed doing such as kneeling.

From this example, it is evident that this model can be employed in a descriptive manner. It can correctly identify different aspects of collective behavior that are present in the episode and that have an influence on it. It can account for the lack of participation of certain individuals based on their backgrounds. The model provides insight into different aspects of collective behavior. The model also suggests research questions that can aid in the discovery of new knowledge in the area.

One way that one can arrive at these necessary points is through a system of definitions, propositions and theorems. The following is a list of definitions, propositions, and theorems that are derived from the catalytic model of collective behavior. This listing is not meant to be exhaustive, but it is a starting point from which more research may be initiated.

ASSUMPTION: Collective behavior is analogous to the chemical process of catalysis.

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Watzlawick, Janet Helmick Beavin, and Don D. Jackson, Pragmatics of Human Communication (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1967), p. 121.

- DEFINITION 1: Chemical elements represent individual prospective participants.
- DEFINITION 2: The atomic structure of the individual consists of a nucleus, the biological being, and electrons and their orbits, the cultural aspects, including language, of the individual.
- DEFINITION 3: A homogeneous catalyst is a leader.
- DEFINITION 4: A heterogeneous catalyst is an event, an occurrence that is within the awareness of prospective participants.
- DEFINITION 5: Environment is any part of the situation which cannot be identified as catalyst, participant, or catalysis.
- DEFINITION 6: Homeostasis exists when the reaction of elements can no longer be identified with the catalyst.
- PROPOSITION 1: Elements will interact if the atomic structure is appropriately constructed.
- PROPOSITION 2: A catalyst will accelerate the interaction of the elements.
- PROPOSITION 3: Catalysis will continue until one of two conditions are reached:  
A) homeostasis, or  
B) removal of catalyst.
- PROPOSITION 4: A catalyst may be homogeneous or heterogeneous.
- PROPOSITION 5: A heterogeneous catalyst cannot be removed.
- PROPOSITION 6: Catalysis requires a suitable environment.
- PROPOSITION 7: A catalyst is not changed significantly by the process.

- THEOREM 1: Homogeneous catalysis will continue until the removal of the catalyst or homeostasis is reached. (P3 + P4)
- THEOREM 2: Heterogeneous catalysis will continue until homeostasis. (P3 + P5)
- THEOREM 3: Catalysis will not occur in a hostile environment. (P6)
- THEOREM 4: The catalyst can be easily identified after the catalysis. (P7)
- THEOREM 5: Prospective participants can be identified by background and symbol system adaptability. (P1)
- THEOREM 6: Suitable environments can be identified by occurrences of collective behavior. (P6)

These propositions and theorems are based on the description of the catalytic model as it was presented in the prior chapter. That explanation was based on the information given regarding the process of catalysis in chemistry and the assumption stated at the beginning of the above list. As was stated at the beginning of the list, it is not an exhaustive listing, but from this list some indications of the areas of future research can be identified.

Using theorems 1 and 2 as a basis, a researcher could create a research design that concentrates on the two qualities that the catalyst can have. One could observe various episodes of collective behavior and record the type of catalyst that is present and from that make conclusions regarding the nature of the collective behavior. If the agent causing the episode can be isolated as an event, then

the episode would, according to the theorem, continue until it reached a point of homeostasis. On the other hand, if the agent involved is homogeneous in nature, then catalysis could end by either removing the agent or when a point of homeostasis is reached. The observations that would need to be made in this case would be the type of catalyst and the way in which the episode ends. A point of homeostasis would exist when the process of catalysis stops which would be indicated by a termination of identifiable action related to the catalyst. At some point in time, the effect of the catalyst would no longer be evident to the participants. It is at this point that homeostasis would exist in reference to the original catalyst. This does not imply that another catalyst cannot become evident and another episode of collective behavior occur.

The isolation and identification of environments would be a much more difficult task. This area of study would involve extensive research into the nature of the events that surround the occurrence of many episodes of collective behavior. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the commission that researched the civil disorders was able to isolate several qualities that tend to create an environment conducive to the action of catalysis, or collective behavior.

Another area that researchers could concentrate in is that pertaining to the nature of the participants. As stated in Theorem 5, Proposition 1, and Definition 2, the individuals who participate in collective behavior have some characteristics in common. They have the ability to recognize the various symbols that are being called forth by the catalyst and will act upon them by relying on their own experience. Specific areas that could be explored regarding this topic include the individuals' ability to use appropriately unknown symbols when presented with them in a laboratory setting. The individuals that are studied could be followed up over time in order to ascertain whether or not they participate in collective behavior. This could also be done retroactively by studying participants in collective behavior and collecting data on the symbols that they responded to during the episode.

This thesis has reviewed the approaches that have been taken by various writers in the field of collective behavior. Each has been criticized for the parts of the phenomenon that were not fully explained by the theorist. The catalytic model was presented with all of its components and was used both to explain and to describe various episodes of collective behavior. The model opens areas for exploration that have not been examined previously. The most prominent is the effect that the different types of catalysts

can have on collective behavior. Another unique aspect of this model is the effect that collective behavior can have on the individual. In other words, the experience of the collective behavior will make some change on the background of the individual.

The catalytic model has been used to describe as well as to create theorems about collective behavior. Its usefulness has been demonstrated by examining collective behavior episodes as diverse as riots and religious meetings. The possibilities for future uses of the model are limited only by the constraints of measurement techniques and the ability of the researcher to use them.

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## ABSTRACT

### A CATALYTIC MODEL OF COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR

Jeffrey LaMar Deneen

The purpose of this thesis was to develop a model of collective behavior based on the process of catalysis that would be descriptive as well as yield testable hypotheses. A review of the past theories in the field revealed that each presented a unique view of collective behavior, but none adequately described the phenomenon in a comprehensive manner. The catalytic model was tendered, based on the symbolic interaction school of thought in sociology. The model was used to describe the events in a religious gathering as well as the generalizations made about riots by the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. Finally, the model was used to create a series of hypotheses dealing with collective behavior that can be tested. The viability of the model was said to rest on the researcher's ability to test it.

## VITA

Jeffrey LaMar Deneen was born in Hagerstown, Maryland on July 17, 1954, the fourth child of Clarence and Evelyn Deneen. After graduating in August, 1971 from Castleberry High School in Fort Worth, Texas, he entered Pasadena College in Pasadena, California. In January, 1973, he transferred to Texas Tech University where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology in May, 1975. He was married on May 19, 1975, and moved with his wife, Rebecca, to Sacramento, California where he went to work in an acute care facility for the mentally ill.

In September, 1976, he returned to school at California State University, Sacramento on a part time basis taking courses in business. In February of the following year, he started employment with a psychiatrist as his office manager with the responsibilities for the development of a multidisciplinary treatment center for mentally ill persons. Due to intervening circumstances, the reality of the treatment center never came to be. In May, 1978, he took an opportunity to become the bookkeeper and escrow coordinator for a newly established real estate company. After six months, the business went bankrupt.

In January, 1979, he entered the Graduate School at Texas Woman's University. In the summer of the same year, he received an internship at the Federal Correctional Institution at Seagoville, Texas. The following fall he received a Graduate Teaching Assistantship at Texas Woman's University in the Department of Sociology where he has had the opportunity to teach Introduction to Sociology, General Sociology, and Introduction to Sociological Research.

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