

COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOUR

DEFINED

COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOUR

- The term "**collective behavior**" was first used by Robert E. Park, and employed definitively by Herbert Blumer, to refer to social processes and events which do not reflect existing social structure (laws, conventions, and institutions), but which emerge in a "spontaneous" way.

Collective Behaviour defined

- **Collective behaviour** is a meaning-creating social process in which new norms of behaviour that challenges conventional social action emerges.

Examples of Collective Behaviour

- **Some examples** of this type of behaviour include panics, crazes, hostile outbursts and social movements
- **Fads** like hula hoop; crazes like Beatlemania; hostile outbursts like anti-war demonstrations; and Social Movements.
- Some argue **social movements** are more sophisticated forms of collective behaviour

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

- **Social movements** are a type of group action. They are large informal groupings of individuals and/or organizations focused on **specific political or social issues**, in other words, on **carrying out**, resisting or undoing a **social change**.

CBs and SMs 19th C. ROOTS

- Modern Western **social movements** became possible through education and the increased mobility of labour due to the **industrialisation and urbanisation** of 19th century societies

Tilly's DEFINITION SM

- **Charles Tilly** defines social movements as a series of contentious performances, displays and **campaigns by** which ordinary people **made collective** claims on others [Tilly, 2004].]:

Three major elements of SMs

- For Tilly, **social movements are a major vehicle for ordinary people's participation in public politics** [Tilly, 2004:3].
- He argues that there are **three major elements** to a social movement [Tilly, 2004

THREE ELEMENTS OF SMs

1. **Campaigns**: a sustained, organized public effort making collective claims on target authorities;
2. **Political action**: creation of special-purpose associations and coalitions, public meetings, solemn processions, vigils, rallies, demonstrations, petition drives, statements to and in public media, and pamphleteering; and
3. **Public displays Democracy**: participants' concerted public representation of **worthiness**, **unity**, **numbers**, and **commitments** on the part of themselves and/or their constituencies.

Three Theories of Collective Behaviour

- 1. **CONTAGION**-LE BONN
- 2. **CONVERGENCE**-symbolic interaction
- 3. **Emergent Norms**-functional interaction

TWO CRITIQUES

- 1. GAME THEORY-Berk
- 2. ROLE THEORY-McPhail

- **Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory**
 - **John D. McCarthy and**
 - **Mayer N. Zald**

CROWD PSYCHOLOGY

1. **Crowd psychology**-leads to CB and SM studies...
2. **Crowd psychology** is a branch of **social psychology**.
3. How ordinary people can typically gain direct power by **acting collectively**.

Crowds in History

- Historically, because large **groups of people** have been able to effect **dramatic and sudden social change** in a manner that bypasses established due process they have also provoked controversy.
- See American Revolution 1776
- French Revolution 1789

LeBon

- **The Crowd**
- Crowd and group mind
- The whole is greater than the sum of its parts
- **Crowds** take on a life of their own
- Collective consciousness (Durkheim)

Symbolic Interaction critique

LeBonn

- Human Interaction is not only caused by social interaction but also **results from interaction** within the individual...
- SI -(on-going though processes of how we **define the situation.**)

SI vs SF Structure vs Agency.

- The Temporal-Present
- The focus is on **the present, not the past**...human are influenced by **what's happening now**...
- Yes, we have values and belief learned through socialization, but at ease preconceived notions can break down...ie. Breaches.

Collective behaviour, symbolic interaction and the social act

- **The social act** is a "dynamic whole," a "complex organic process," within which the individual is **situated**, and it is within this situation that individual acts are possible and have **meaning** "

Symbolic Interactionism: Four Central Ideas

1. Instead of focusing on the individual and his or her **personality characteristics** (psychology)
2. How the **social structures** cause behaviour, (**Functionalism**)
3. Focus on **social interaction**. -dynamic, fluid activities within social settings
4. Collective behaviour involve groups of individual in **social settings**

Social Settings for Collective Behaviours

1. Rock concerts
2. Student rallies
3. Strikes
4. Protests
5. Mobs and lootings
6. Anywhere in which collectivities gather

LeBon

- **The Crowd (a functionalist theory)**
- Crowd and group mind
- The whole is greater than the sum of its parts
- Crowds take on a life of their own
- (see **Durkheim**)
- Collective consciousness

Comparison on CBs and SMs

1. **Structural functionalist** focus upon predictable roles, statuses, values
1. **Symbolic interactionists** describe human beings as **unpredictable**...free will, choices, assess **situations**...we are not automatons

Le Bon: Group Mind

- Le Bon's idea that **crowds foster anonymity** and sometimes generate emotion has become somewhat of a cliché. Yet, it has been contested by some critics, such as Clark McPhail who points out that some studies show that "the **madding crowd**" does not take on a life of its own, apart from the thoughts and intentions of members.

Who concert

- Norris Johnson, after investigating a panic at a 1979 Who concert concluded that the crowd was composed of many small groups of people mostly trying to help each other.

- SEE SOCIAL PROBLEMS (1987)
- The Who Concert Stampede: An empirical Assessment....

IRRATIONAL CROWD?

- However, it must be noted that if Le Bon often referred to **the cliché of the irrational crowd**, which was current in the **19th century and before** (in particular in the **field of criminology**, which tended to describe crowds as irrational and criminal groups), he considered himself the founder of "**crowd psychology**"

Le Bon Aristocrat afraid of `the herd'?

- Herd behavior describes how individuals in a **group can act together without planned direction**. The term pertains human conduct during activities such as stock market bubbles and crashes, street **demonstrations, sporting events, episodes of mob violence** and even everyday decision making, judgement and opinion forming.

19th century Le Bon

- Le Bon was a pioneer in propaganda, which he considered a suitable and rational technique for managing groups, using for example **communal reinforcement** of beliefs, etc.

Nazi impact

- Le Bon's 1895 ***The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*** influenced many 20th century figures, including Adolf Hitler, whose *Mein Kampf* insisted on **Le Bon's** work.

Symbolic Interactionism: Four Central Ideas

1. Instead of focusing on the individual and his or her **personality characteristics** (psychology)
2. OR How the social structures cause behaviour, (**Functionalism**)
3. Focus on **social interaction**. -dynamic, fluid activities within social settings
4. Collective behaviour involve groups of individual in **social settings**

Social Settings for Collective Behaviours

1. Rock concerts
2. Student rallies
3. Strikes
4. Protests
5. Mobs and lootings
6. Anywhere in which collectivities gather

Convergence Theory

- **Convergence theory** holds that crowd behavior is not a product of the crowd itself, but is carried into the crowd by **particular** individuals.
- Thus, crowds amount to a **convergence of like-minded individuals.**

Irrational Crowds?

- Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian developed the **emergent-norm theory of crowd dynamics**. These researchers concede that social behavior is never entirely predictable, but neither are **crowds irrational**. If similar interests may **draw people together**, distinctive patterns of behavior may emerge in the crowd itself.

Crowds as Emergent

- **Crowds begin as collectivities**, acting, and protest crowds – norms may be vague and changing as when, say, one person at a rock concert holds up **a lit cigarette** lighter to signal **praise** for the performers, followed by others. In short, people in **crowds make their own rules as they go along.**

Emergent Norm Theory

- **Decision-making**, then, plays a major role in crowd behavior, although casual observers of a crowd may not realize it.
- **Emergent-norm theory** points out that people in a crowd take on different roles.
- Some step forward as **leaders**; others become **lieutenants**, rank-and-file **followers**, inactive **bystanders** or even opponents.

Criticisms and Evidence

- Berk has used game theory to suggest that even during a panic in a burning theater actors may conduct themselves **rationally**.
- This is a striking suggestion, given that panics have been described as the purest form of **collective behaviour**.

Berk

- **Berk** contends that if the members of the audience decide that it is more rational to run to the exits than to walk, the result may look like an animal-like stampede without in actuality being irrational.

Clark McPhail

- **Clark McPhail**, mentioned above, has examined many actual human gatherings. In , he concludes that such assemblies can be seen as **lying along a number of dimensions**, and that traditional stereotypes of emotionality and unanimity often do not describe what happens

Summary

- The study of **CBs and SMs** began with LeBonn
- Moved to Chicago School
- Now sophisticated theories-convergence, emergent norms..
- **Key issue**: to what extent does the social environment influence the individual..