

Third Edition

Collective Behavior

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Chapter 3

The Emergence of Collective Behavior

When we ask, "What are the conditions under which situations appear unsatisfying, confusing, or unstable?" we are focusing on what have been called external stimulus factors as if internal factors, the individual's psychological state, could be held constant. This is exactly what the sociologist does in describing society and culture as the environment in which individual and group behavior develop. Once again it must be emphasized that it is not necessary to resolve the issue of the ultimate reality of society and culture in order to analyze their influence. It is enough to recognize that human actors, individually and collectively, take them for granted and act as if they were real.

The social reality which people take for granted is composed of a normative order, encompassing values and norms; a social structure; and channels of communication. These ordinarily appear real, supportive, and constraining to the members of a society; however, at times they seem frustrating, weak, or even chaotic. In addition, the physical world which ordinarily seems solid and stable may sometimes present a disordered framework for action.

In seeking to characterize the societal conditions conducive to the emergence of collective behavior we will ask, "What are the influences which may cause people to question the social order?" "What may make the familiar grounds of our existence seem unsatisfactory or uncertain?" Before considering changes in the social order we will look briefly at nonsocial influences which may contribute to the rise of collective behavior.

NONSOCIAL INFLUENCES

People live in a physical world which includes both the natural environment and material culture. Changes in them can affect large numbers of people simultaneously, producing effects which can properly be called "mass distortions of perception." Some of these natural conditions have been known to the people of some societies for centuries, becoming part of their folklore. Although there has been a great deal of mythology connected with them their psycho-physical effects must not be discounted. Human beings sometimes attempt to simulate them with their scientific inventions, such as smoke generators and poison gases.

Climatic conditions are so omnipresent that their significance can easily be overlooked. Yet the people of southern Europe have long associated bad temper and aggressiveness with the coming of the hot wind known as the *sirocco*. In the modern United States the phrase, "the long, hot summers," which used to refer to the period of the ghetto insurrections of the 1960s, connotes not only the intensity of the conflict but also the searing summer heat which brought people into the streets and perhaps contributed to their general malaise. Poor visibility caused by fog changes the world in which automobile drivers must maneuver. Smog, resulting from the interaction of both natural and artificial atmospheric elements, falls on the people of a city like a poison gas, affecting both their individual behavior and their interaction.

When the "dancing mania" spread through the villages of northern Italy during the fif-

teenth century, people ascribed the peculiar behavior to a disease caused by the bite of the tarantula. While this belief is now recognized as mythical, epidemics of diseases such as the Black Death, cholera, and Legionnaire's Disease have been major variables contributing to episodes of collective behavior in societies around the world.¹ Equally obvious have been the physical and psychological effects of famine, as the history of Ireland so well demonstrates.² Less dramatic, but just as real, are the consequences of stress and fatigue for the functioning of individuals and groups—as indicated by military doctors' use of the diagnostic term "combat fatigue."

Cultural artifacts invented by humans can have equally drastic effects on individuals and groups. Widespread use of psychedelic drugs or alcohol by a few score merry-makers at a party or thousands of spectators at a sports contest can have both individual and collective effects. Chemical warfare agents, from tear gas through the latest nerve gases, are designed to alter the physical and psychological states of their victims even when they do not kill them outright.

The Effects of Disaster The type of physical influence which has been most often associated with collective behavior in both popular thought and social science research is the dramatic event called a "disaster." Although disasters may include epidemics, droughts, and famines, the term more often brings to mind natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, and avalanches, and man-made disasters such as explosions, fires, and bombings. The ultimate disaster would be a nuclear holocaust in which the triple weapons of blast, heat, and radiation would be released against a large portion of the world's physical and social environment.

The complexity of the effects of changes in the physical world and their impact on different levels can be envisioned when we examine the consequences of nuclear blasts such as those which devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki.³ First, the physical setting in which human social behavior must be carried on is drastically changed, being rendered both chaotic and dangerous. On the physiological level, the sight, hearing, and other physical capabilities of the survivors are impaired; they may begin to be debilitated by radiation sickness

within a few hours. In the aftermath of a disaster which destroys accustomed physical structures and services and leaves hundreds of people dead and injured, the usual values and norms become obviously inappropriate. For example, the medical procedure known as "triage" demands a cold-blooded sorting of the injured into those who will be given first-aid, those who will be treated, and those who will be set aside to die even though they might be saved if adequate medical resources were available. At the same time the social structure is disrupted by the death of many functionaries so that a new division of labor must emerge if the survivors are to have any chance at all.

But disasters and other nonsocial influences do not necessarily provoke collective behavior. If the normative order and the social structure include effective provisions for dealing with changes in the environment, no collective behavior may develop—the definition, "nothing unusual is happening," will prevail. The purpose of disaster or civil defense plans and early warning systems is to create a standby organization and contingency procedures which, while not normal, will be brought into play without having to be constructed in the midst of crisis. Another way in which the out-of-the-ordinary comes to be treated as "normal" is the conventionalization of collective behavior when unusual circumstances are recurrent. Thus during World War II the people of London developed an air-raid culture which assimilated nightly raids as part of the usual order of events.

THE SOCIAL ORDER

Thus the physical world; no matter how perceived by its human inhabitants, must be taken into consideration as the setting in which all human behavior occurs. Central to the interest of sociologists, however, are those influences which arise from and have their existence in the interaction of members of society—the social order. This order consists of recurrent, patterned actions which members of a group take for granted in their relationships with each other. The social order may be viewed as having three "parts" or "aspects": a normative order, a social structure, and a communication system.

The Normative Order Because of the dependence of the human infant on other members of the species, the typical human being is one who has gone through the process of socialization. In being nurtured and taught by older members of the group, the individual acquires guidelines and directions which structure subsequent encounters with the world. Classifications, names, and defining characteristics of the many objects in the child's world are learned, including other people and the person-as-self. The developing person learns what things should be sought after and cherished—*values*. These include extrinsic rewards, such as material wealth or symbols of prestige, and intrinsic values, such as feelings of righteousness, of being loved, or of having proved one's superiority.

At the same time persons acquire guidelines for socially approved ways of attaining these values, as well as rules for coordinating their everyday behavior with that of other people. These *norms* include formal laws and regulations, and informal customs, some with moral implications and others which might be called "rules of convenience."⁴ Their existence as shared understandings and expectations constitute an important basis for both individual activity and social order. Socialized human beings do not experience life as a constant succession of crises in which they are always compelled to decide what to do next, nor do people interacting with each other have to negotiate a new "social contract" every time they meet. Yet the normative order is not a metaphysical force which exists independent of society and compels compliance by human actors. Even though it provides the "taken-for-granted" basis of everyday life, people are constantly modifying it. Moreover, it always encompasses ambiguities and contradictions along with simple, clear directives.

The Social Structure The social bases of behavior do not consist of values and norms alone but also include social relationships, often referred to as "social structure."⁵ Social structure refers to a division of labor in a group or society—the relating of the tasks or activities of individual members to each other and to the needs of the group. Out of this division arises a structure of interdependent *roles*, consisting of stabilized expectations for the behavior of each member in relation to other members.

Acting on the basis of these expectations, or "role-playing," is something more than mere conformity to internalized prescriptions, however. While roles may sometimes become highly standardized, as in a bureaucratic system, they are typically tentative in character. "The actor is not the occupant of a position for which there is a neat set of rules—a culture or set of norms—but a person who must act in the perspective supplied in part by his relationship to others whose actions reflect roles that he must identify."⁶ The notion that in playing roles people are typically engaged in making these roles, sometimes modifying them, sometimes creating new ones, takes into account both the ever-changing character of social structure and the predictability and guidance which it usually offers.

Communication Channels Although the normative order and the social structure provide guidelines for behavior, people still need messages from other people to confirm what the situation is in which they must act, what norms are appropriate and what roles must be taken into account. These messages come through a system or network of communication channels, some formal and some informal. Tamotsu Shibutani points to the institutionalized nature of all these channels, saying, "Communication channels, then, are much more than mere points of contact; they consist of shared understandings concerning who may address whom, about what subject, under what circumstances, with what degree of confidence."⁷ He emphasizes that the institutional channels which are generally accepted as reliable are not limited to the press, radio, or television:

In modern mass societies most institutional channels rely upon written or printed discourse. Because of the widespread tendency to confuse rumor with oral transmission and to assume that all such reports are unreliable, it must be emphasized that formal channels may be oral. Before the advent of the printed media much communication necessarily involved personal contact; even after the practice of printing had been established it remained for a long time the exclusive possession of men of large affairs, for the illiterate still had no access.⁸

Even though modern technology has increased the importance of the mass media and

widespread literacy reduced dependence on "men of large affairs," the average person still places great reliance on an informal network of people whose judgment and opinions are respected. This has been called "personal influence" in contrast to "mass media influence."⁹ In a review of studies based on what has come to be known as the "two-step flow of communication hypothesis," Elihu Katz summarized what was known about "influentials" in these informal networks:

Broadly, it appears that influence is related (1) to the personification of certain values (who one is); (2) to competence (what one knows); and (3) to strategic location (whom one knows). Social location, in turn, divides into whom one knows within a group; and "outside."¹⁰

As Katz and other students of communication in modern society have emphasized, the development of technology has not reduced people to "a mass of disconnected individuals hooked up to the media but not to each other."¹¹ Group behavior must still be understood as relying upon communication which flows through channels ranging from the formal and far-reaching to the informal and intimate. At all levels, the influence of the communications rests on the trust which people have in the sources. An absence of "news," the availability of new information, or a decline in trust in familiar sources are all likely to lead to efforts to redefine the situation through increased communication, which we will call "rumor."

The Taken-for-Granted Basis of Everyday Life People act much of the time as if there did exist a stable, well-ordered social system with a reality quite independent of their belief in its existence. This is because most of the time most people take for granted the orderliness and predictability of everyday life. They trust their expectations about the influence of the normative order and the social structure on how people will behave toward each other, and they have confidence in familiar communication channels and sources. What is sometimes viewed as simple conformity or acquiescence may be explained better as an expression of trust in the familiar framework of action.

The most profound sort of trust reflects such a thorough internalization of values, norms,

and roles that the individual cannot even imagine questioning them. They represent not only the way things *should* be but also the way they *must* be for the world to make sense. Anyone who questions the taken-for-granted version of reality is seen as immoral, ignorant, or crazy.

Yet, as William Graham Sumner pointed out in his classic distinction between "mores" and "folkways," not all norms which are taken for granted have this sacred, absolute quality. Many of them are, at least on reflection, recognized as merely instrumental and conventional: An important part of growing up in a society is learning how to get along or "play the game." As individuals grow older and reflect on the norms of their groups they may conclude that there is no intrinsic virtue in many of them but that it is easier to follow even these because "that's the way it's done." The Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget, found that as children grow older they come to recognize the conventional nature of rules of games, including the fact that they can be changed by mutual agreement. Thus in some cases the restraints against deviation are weak; all that is necessary to lead to abandonment of the norms is the recognition that people *cannot* or *will not* continue to observe them. At the same time, for a lone individual to violate an instrumental norm can be disastrous, as a driver who insists on driving on the right-hand side of the road in England would soon learn!

Another important source of order and conformity is trust in a stable, predictable system of rewards and punishments. As Dennis Wrong has suggested in his critique of the notion of the internalization of norms as the only source of conformity, some of people's observance is rooted in fear of punishment, not acceptance of the norms as either right or reasonable. The sanctions that people fear might be imposed range from illegal violence, through legally inflicted violence or restraint, to the withdrawal of acceptance by other group members. Obviously reducing the fear that deviations will be punished increases the likelihood that new patterns of behavior will be followed.¹²

Just as important as fear of punishment for deviation is the expectation that conforming—pursuing the right values by methods normatively sanctioned and playing one's role properly and responsibly—will be positively rewarded. This constitutes confidence in a sys-

tem of justice. As we will point out later, the belief that the principles of justice have not been observed can generate a sense of injustice, one of the most important sources of collective behavior.

Finally, people act in an orderly and predictable manner partly because they trust the information they receive through their normal channels of communication. Of course the levels of trust vary. If a merchant advertises his prices in a shopping guide his customers firmly expect to be able to buy at those prices. Their confidence in the predictions of weather forecasters is much less even though the messages come through the same formal channels. Yet despite the numerous jibes at weather forecasts most people still regard them as important items of information and would probably regard their society as somewhat more nearly chaotic if they did not have them. As the following study suggests, the absence of even a tentative or qualified opinion from what is publicly viewed as an authoritative source creates uncertainty and speculation.

A Note on Rumor as a Substitute for Authoritative Interpretation of a Minor Earthquake

Earthquake scientists are often unsure whether they should comment publicly on earthquake events, especially minor ones. Media personnel often wonder whether it is in the public interest to air scientific uncertainty about signs that might indicate whether a severe earthquake is imminent. Efforts by residents of Los Angeles County to interpret the significance of the minor earthquake on New Year's Day, 1979, provide an instructive example of what can happen when scientists and the media provide very little guidance.

[An earthquake of magnitude 5.0 was felt throughout Los Angeles County at 3:14 in the afternoon on New Year's Day, while the annual Rose Bowl football classic was in progress. The tremor was not strong enough to damage structures, but the shock was unmistakable. For nearly

three years County residents had been exposed to discussions of the southern California Uplift on the San Andreas Fault, with constant reminders that a major earthquake could be expected in the area at any time. The New Year's Day quake was the strongest and most widely felt tremor in Los Angeles County, since first reports that the Uplift might be the precursor to a major earthquake. Under the circumstances we wondered how many people would try to interpret the minor earthquake as a sign that a greater earthquake was coming soon, or alternatively as relieving seismic tension and reducing the imminent prospect of a great earthquake.

A random sample of 519 residents were interviewed by telephone in the three weeks following the minor quake. A total of 367 people had felt the quake when it occurred, another 12 had learned about it soon after, and ten people still did not know there had been an earthquake when we interviewed them.

A series of questions was devised to find out whether people had thought about the possible relationship of this earthquake to a more serious quake in the future—whether it meant that there probably wouldn't be a big one for a while, that it didn't make any difference, or that it was a sign that a bigger one was coming soon. About a third (36 percent) had heard the latter interpretation and most of them (76 percent) thought it might be true.

Altogether 41.9 percent of the people who had felt or heard about the earthquake had heard one or more of these interpretations, and 32.0 percent thought that one or more of the interpretations they had heard might be true. Where did people get their ideas and interpretations—from relatively authoritative sources, or from rumor?

In our interviews with comparable samples of Los Angeles County residents during the preceding two years the media—television, radio, and newspaper—were consistently given as the principal sources of information about future earthquake prospects. We asked the people in our New Year's Day earthquake sample whether they had heard of the southern California Uplift and what was their chief source of information about it. True to the pattern in our previous interviews, 88 percent named the media or magazines and books as their chief sources. Only seven and one half percent named friends relatives, or coworkers. But when we asked where

From Ralph H. Turner, Joanne M. Nigg, Denise Paz, and Barbara S. Young (Los Angeles: Institute for Social Science Research), June 22, 1979.

they had heard *interpretations* of the New Year's Day earthquake, the answers were quite different.

On the average, fewer than ten percent named the media, books and magazines, or an authoritative source. Even with a sizable group unable to remember the source, over two thirds named lay people. The most frequent answers were "friends" and "coworkers." The significance of the small quake for the future had been the topic of widespread discussion at work and among friends. Without guidance from authoritative sources, relayed through the media, people turned to friends and coworkers for their interpretations.

CONDITIONS CONDUCTIVE TO COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR

Questioning the Normative Order Most theorists agree that one of the significant conditions giving rise to collective behavior is a real or perceived conflict, ambiguity, or change in the normative order. Those who take an objective view of the social order see these as real, existing independently of the definition which evolves among members of the group.

Neil Smelser identifies *structural strain*, "ambiguities, deprivations, conflicts, and discrepancies," in the components of social action as one of the essential determinants of collective behavior.¹³ Values and norms constitute for Smelser the most general guides for social behavior. A strain in them generates, therefore, a serious dysfunction or problem for a normally healthy society. Another perspective, advocated by some Marxist theorists, defines such strains not as dysfunctions in a normally well-ordered society but as "contradictions," inherent in the structure of capitalist society. Thus class struggle and, eventually, revolution are viewed as both inevitable and desirable consequences. The class consciousness which must precede a revolutionary movement is held to grow out of the strain or contradiction, not to create it.

A contradictory view denies that the social problems that are presumed to become issues giving rise to collective behavior exist as objective conditions which sociologists are able to discern. Thus in an essay entitled, "Social Problems as Collective Behavior," Herbert Blumer stated, "Social problems are not the result

of an intrinsic malfunctioning of a society but are the result of a process of definition in which a given condition is picked out and identified as a social problem."¹⁴ Blumer cites many instances of societal conditions—for example, environmental pollution and ecological destruction—which existed for a long time before being defined as social problems and giving rise to social movements. Furthermore, he notes, "The societal definition gives the social problem its nature, lays out how it is to be approached, and shapes what is to be done about it. Alongside these decisive influences the so-called objective existence or makeup of the social problem is very secondary indeed."¹⁵

In this process of societal definition, contradictory values which do exist in a culture play an important part. They underlie differences in the perception of events by individuals who derive their perspectives from different reference groups. As group formation proceeds, members of developing collectives use existing values as a source of legitimation for their definitions of the meaning of the events and for the action which comes to be justified by the emergent norms.

Thus it is not the existence of what the social scientist may identify as *logically contradictory values or ambiguous norms* which gives rise to collective behavior. It is the revision of the normative order in the face of events that bring its guidance into question which creates the setting for extra-institutional action. As an illustration, the decision of the Supreme Court in 1954 that school segregation was unconstitutional was an event which marked the beginning of a long period of collective behavior in the United States. It might appear that this decision and the ensuing crowd behavior, public debate, social movements, and countermovements were simply inevitable results of the value conflict in the minds of white Americans which the Swedish social scientist Gunnar Myrdal called "an American dilemma." Yet the contradiction between the values symbolized by the phrases "All men are created equal" and "Separate but equal" had existed for nearly a century without producing such a massive social upheaval as occurred during the 1960s and 1970s.

More than just the strain generated by contradictory values must be invoked to explain the collective behavior after the court apparently resolved the dilemma by declaring that separate cannot be equal. Different groups re-

acted to the event by appealing to a variety of traditional values to justify their proposed courses of action. Furthermore, as the collective behavior continued and various solutions to the problems were tried, different issues arose and additional values were brought into the debate. For example, since in 1954 the court decision seemed to suggest simply that children should be allowed to attend the schools nearest their homes without regard to their race, the value of the neighborhood school was not raised as legitimation for opposition to desegregation. Yet ten years later it was an important component of the ideology of the movement to oppose the busing of children to achieve school desegregation. By the mid-1970s defense of the neighborhood school as a "cherished American institution" was widely perceived as an indicator of "racism," just as were arguments in favor of "freedom of choice" a few years earlier. Being in favor of busing was usually seen as a liberal, pro-minority position. Yet in 1964 an official of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People had stated that the organization had "never proposed long distance reassignment of pupils to achieve a rigid percentage of Negro and white pupils in every school."¹⁶

During the same period, 1964 to 1975, the question of the ethnic composition of school populations and the use of busing to deal with the problem of imbalance became a matter of controversy in England. Many of the same values were involved as in the United States—improving the quality of education for minority group students, promoting their integration into the larger society, maintaining academic standards in schools with a changing ethnic mix, and preserving the advantages of neighborhood schools. The following analysis shows that the clash of contradictory values did not produce the same consequences. The process through which divergent perceptions developed illustrates Blumer's assertion:

A social problem is always a focal point for the operation of divergent and conflicting interests, intentions and objectives. It is the interplay of these interests and objectives that constitutes the way in which a society deals with any one of its social problems. The sociological account of the objective makeup of the problem stands far outside of such interplay—indeed, may be inconsequential to it.¹⁷

School Busing in Britain: Policies and Perceptions

Lewis M. Killian

When the United States Supreme Court hands down a decision extending the amount of school busing permitted as a remedy for racial segregation in the public schools, the ruling is usually hailed as a victory for justice and defeat for racism. Although as recently as 1954, Justice John Harlan's principle that the Constitution is "colorblind" formed the basis for a new era of race-relations law in the United States, today the liberal wisdom is that the law must be "color conscious" in the assignment of children to the nation's public schools. In Great Britain, in contrast, the "dispersal," or busing, of school children on the basis of ethnic identity was ruled by the British Race Relations Board in 1975 to be in violation of the Race Relations Act, and West Indian and Asian minorities enthusiastically acclaimed that ruling as a victory over racism.

Although busing is not a precise term in the United States or Britain, the people of both countries who use it are talking about roughly the same thing, and since the British have in recent years adopted the term busing, they clearly think they are talking about the same thing. Yet the different social and political contexts in which busing has been implemented have resulted in completely different attitudes toward it. In the United States busing is a liberal practice, and opposition to it is racist; in Britain it is a racist and anti-immigrant practice, and opposition to it is liberal. By contrasting these two views we will be able to shed some light on the social premises behind this explosive policy and gain some insight into some of its broader meanings.

In the past twenty years Great Britain has been confronted with the problem of racial imbalance in its schools, although on a much smaller scale than in the United States. The concentration of minority children—West Indian, Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi—in certain areas of a few cities has resulted in segregated, or at least racially imbalanced, schools. During the ten-year period from 1965 to 1975, the British government shifted from a policy of encouraging busing to alleviate segregation to an absolutely colorblind

policy that declared the assignment of children to schools on the basis of ethnic or racial identity to be *discriminatory and illegal*. In the years between, the opposition to busing had come primarily from minority-group spokespersons; its advocacy had been identified with the "Establishment"—the local education authorities (LEAs)—and with anti-immigrant or even racist sentiments. The policy reversal in Britain arose from a different definition by whites of what the "race problem" was, and from self-perceptions and group aspirations by the minorities in England, all of which differed from those in the United States.

In England the term originally used for busing, and that is still most often used officially, is "dispersal." Dispersal can also mean the breaking up of minority concentrations by redefining "catchment areas" (redrawing district lines), but it is more frequently synonymous with busing. Busing was first introduced in British school districts because LEAs decided that the heavy concentration of minority children in certain schools constituted a problem that could only be solved by dispersing them. They thought in terms of "immigrant dispersal," however, not the transfer of white or "indigenous" children to create racial balance.

Immigrant dispersal has been practiced in England since 1964 and is probably still being practiced by a few LEAs, even though its legality was brought into question by the Race Relations Board in 1976. In reality, however, it was never the policy in more than about a dozen school districts, and even the identity of all of them is subject to doubt. Some of the more prominent are known, however, and the basis for the policy decisions by their local officials can be ascertained.

The education authorities of the London borough of Ealing, including Southall, and of the city of Bradford were the leaders in the dispersal movement. Both instituted busing programs in 1964 for quite similar reasons, although the Ealing program was ultimately of greater significance, not only because it affected national policy but also because it was so vigorously challenged. Southall was England's South Boston.

Southall is a district in the borough of Ealing next to a large industrial area which began to employ a great many immigrants of Asian origin, mostly Indians, in the early 1960s. Many white residents were soon objecting to the growing number of immigrants in the area and the grow-

ing proportion of Asian children in the local schools. By the beginning of the 1963 school year, one school was 60 percent Indian, and a group of white parents began to agitate for the segregation of immigrant children so that their own children would not be "held back." Some Indian leaders still believe that the headmistress of the school helped the parents by confirming their notion that the high proportion of immigrants was creating an educational problem. The Minister of Education for Britain met with the white parents, the teachers, and the school administrators and made it plain that segregation in public education was unacceptable to the government, but he agreed to a policy that would limit the proportion of immigrant children in any one school to a maximum of 30 percent. The LEA promptly adopted this policy and implemented it both by the manipulation of catchment areas and by busing. The Southall dispersal plan that resulted became the government model for all school districts.

Although the argument that immigrant children would learn the English language and acquire British culture more quickly in balanced schools was used later to justify dispersal, there was no doubt that in Ealing the rationale was simply that too many immigrant pupils in a school lowered general standards. After seven years of dispersal Julia McNeal, a liberal writer on educational matters, remarked, "There was in the rationale of the dispersal policy a stigmatization of the 'immigrant school' and immigrant pupils, which contributed to the fluctuating white hostility to immigrants and which made it hard to present the policy as a measure of goodwill."

The Indian population in Southall continued to grow until there was a substantial Sikh community; the Ealing LEA continued to bus Indian children to other parts of the borough. The 30 percent limit was soon replaced by a 40 percent limit, and some schools eventually had more than 50 percent immigrant children. One reason for the amount of busing from that one neighborhood was that for ten years no new schools had been built in Southall. In dealing with the shortage of space, a special system of registration for new students allowed English children to register at the schools nearest their homes, and expected, but did not require, Asian and West Indian children to go to a central registration office at the town hall. If the quota for these children in neighborhood schools was filled, they would then be bused to a dispersal school. The neighborhood school would still accept new

white pupils, however, for they would be essential in preventing even further racial imbalance. Immigrant organizations in Ealing did not speak out against dispersal when it was first inaugurated, but within ten years most had become violently opposed to the policy.

THE OPPOSITION TO BUSING

Whatever the reasons advanced by local authorities in favor of busing, its opponents, primarily Asians or West Indians, tended to see it as racist and discriminatory simply because with rare exceptions all those bused were children of color. The Communist party of West Middlesex, an area which includes Ealing, charged in 1975 that busing was racist "because it is operated only against children with coloured skin" and "the sight of bus loads of children being transported about the Borough twice a day, going to and from nearly every primary school in the Borough, is a constant suggestion to the entire population that there is a 'problem' of immigrant children."

The most elaborate array of objections to busing developed in Ealing, since it was there that the most extensive, and consequently the most controversial, dispersal program was undertaken. Opposition emerged first in Brent and Haringey because, as an Indian leader in Southall later explained, "At that time immigrant parents couldn't anticipate the consequences of this policy for their children. Some were afraid that if the school were predominantly Indian the Council would neglect it." Another Indian member of the borough council favored dispersal for several years but then also changed his mind:

After the bussing was started, we had a great influx of immigrants. The number of children grew rapidly—many of the immigrants were young married couples. Before long children were being spread all over the borough by bussing. By about 1971 the whole system was disorganized. Small children were having to wait long times for their busses. Children were missing their busses. Parents had to walk a long way to their children's schools. The argument was then joined to the objections that only immigrant children were bused and that bussing destroyed neighborhood schools.

The councillor—like many white opponents of busing in the United States—pointed to hardships imposed on children and parents, an argument that was played up by immigrant leaders

who opposed busing: As reported to the "assessor," an educational expert appointed by the Race Relations Board to investigate dispersal in Ealing in 1974, these hardships can be summed up in four categories: (1) the inconveniences and stress involved in getting to a pick-up point early on dark winter mornings, and from school; (2) the physical danger to secondary-school students: "Asian adolescents are obvious targets for white aggressiveness as they wait, sometimes for far too long, at bus stops to take them on what might be quite a long journey home"; (3) the distance between school and home which makes it difficult for the mother to be readily accessible if the child, particularly the school-starter, needs her, and keeps parents from participating in school activities. One of the Ealing school officials admitted to the assessor that "schools were so far away that some parents did not even know the name of the school their children attended." (4) busing prevented children from participating in extracurricular activities.

A DIFFERENCE OF PERSPECTIVE

School busing in Britain has produced some de-segregation just as it has in the United States. In the small number of LEAs that have undertaken dispersal programs, minority children have indeed been "spread," and have probably been transported to more adequately equipped, better staffed, and less crowded schools. But it is otherwise impossible to make any valid comparison between the consequences of policies on school busing in Britain and in the United States.

A comparison between the two countries surely does show how two sets of actors, each motivated by a concern for racial justice, can come to very different perspectives about essentially the same problem—the provision of equal education for the children of racial or ethnic minorities—in two different contexts. The British Department of Education and Science and the Race Relations Boards are not counterparts either of the southern school boards and the state courts of the 1950s or of the Boston School Committee of the 1970s; yet in ten years the law shifted from encouraging the busing of immigrant children for purposes of social integration to forbidding it, just as, over a twenty-year period, federal courts in the United States moved from the position that the Constitution was co-

lorblind to a position that color must be taken into account in order to overcome the effects of past injustice. In Britain the opponents of busing have not been found in the National Front, but among the ethnic minority organizations, Community Relations Commissions, and a branch of the Communist party. The liberal wisdom in Britain is that busing is at best educationally ineffective and at worst racist.

From the West Indians of Brent and Haringey to the Sikhs of Southall, ethnic minorities have opposed busing and demanded immigrant schools for immigrant neighborhoods with the defiantly phrased question, "Why is it that a school which is all black must be inferior when a school that is all white isn't? Isn't this a racist idea?"

The most important contextual factor in the British perception of busing and, perhaps, even of school desegregation is to be found at the very beginning of the process in the desire of white parents in Southall to "get the immigrants out." In other words, dispersal had a racist taint to it from the very outset, which freed minority leaders and their liberal friends to see deficiencies in the policy which they might not have seen—or admitted to seeing—if they had been defending it against racist criticism. Ironically, many of their criticisms of busing are identical with those advanced by white opponents of busing in the United States, objections which the United States Civil Rights Commission has dismissed as "fears and myths." It is possible that in both cases the hardships are quite real, but that when the practice that gives rise to them becomes the center of political controversy, only those who are opposed to the practice can acknowledge their reality. It is equally plausible that those who are opposed to busing on political or philosophical grounds exaggerate the day-to-day hardships it allegedly creates. To assert that either view is somehow the "right" one is unacceptable from a phenomenological perspective.

Questioning the Social Structure It might appear that changes in the social structure, much of which is formally organized with the positions normally being occupied by flesh-and-blood actors, would not depend on socially constructed definitions for their reality. Yet although a formal structure such as a government may be fully staffed, whether it is able to function effectively is partly determined by

public perceptions of the competence and the trustworthiness of the occupants. William Gamson has shown the importance of this factor in his analysis of "political trust." He views trust as a kind of reservoir of support for an administration. Then he suggests, "When the supply in the reservoir is high, the authorities are able to make new commitments on the basis of it. . . . When it is low and declining, authorities may find it difficult to meet existing commitments and to govern effectively."¹⁸ He also argues that the decline of trust is an important factor contributing to the mobilization of interest groups to make demands on the authorities.

The taken-for-granted nature of the social structure, including trust in it, may rest on reasonable assumptions, such as the belief that the fire department is on duty even though one doesn't check the fire stations daily, or on carefully sustained illusions. The fact that President Woodrow Wilson was too ill to perform his duties for over a year before the end of his last term was carefully concealed from the public by his wife and close aides.

One of the most dramatic sorts of breakdowns of the social structure involves a strike by public employees, such as police officers, whom people normally assume are on the job. But even such a breakdown as this is accompanied by a process of public definition. When the police of Boston went on strike in 1919 the action was so unprecedented in the United States that the citizens of the city found it hard to believe. Under the melodramatic title, "Anarchy in Boston," a journalist described how reactions to the strike developed gradually, as various members of the community tested for themselves the reality of the report that the police were on strike. Such incidents as the following occurred:

At Roxbury Crossing a policeman came out of the station house, his arms filled with personal belongings. There was a crowd on the street, waiting to see if the strike would actually start on schedule. A small boy decided to perform a bit of private research; gathering up a handful of muck from the gutter, he hurled it in the policeman's face, then dodged out of sight. The policeman glumly wiped away the mud and continued homeward without a word.

In front of police stations, crowds grew and crap games were started. The sergeants, lieutenants, and captains, none of whom had walked out with

the patrolmen, ignored the games, realizing there soon would be more serious business at hand.

Meanwhile streams of hoodlums were pouring into Scollay, Adams, and Haymarket Squares, until these crossways of city traffic became so thronged that homeward-bound business men were compelled to make wide detours. But still there was no organization of the criminal elements; the mob, leaderless, was waiting to learn if the Law had actually decamped.¹⁹

When fifty years later, in 1969, the city of Montreal experienced a massive police strike the citizens could no more believe that the guardians of law and order would actually walk off their jobs than had Bostonians in their time of crisis. As "What Happens When Police Strike" shows, it took several hours for people to realize that there was indeed a strike. Even when awareness dawned that the city was without police protection, the majority of people remained calm, at least for a time. They did not rush to give expression to repressed antisocial impulses. It was professional criminals, for whom violating the law was no novelty, who first took advantage of the opportunity to stage robberies with relative impunity. Then groups which did not ordinarily behave in an illegal way but had long-standing grievances began to change their manner of expressing their dissatisfaction and hostility. The state that had limited interaction to a verbal level was broken as the external restraint of law enforcement remained absent. Taxi drivers, French-Canadian separatists, and anti-Americans gave expression to old sentiments in a newly violent fashion. The change in the social structure indicated that a new set of norms, governing economic and political controversy, was possible and acceptable in this situation.

It was not until the violation of the usual norms became widespread that some respectable, middle-class people began to join in the disorder, looting stores that stood open and unprotected. The onset of darkness seems to have contributed to their participation; perhaps curiosity replaced their initial uncertainty and drew more of them to the business district. More important, however, was the development of what Gerald Clark calls "a carnival atmosphere." By the end of the long day the abnormal had become normal. Actions that would have seemed dangerous and immoral the day before appeared commonplace.

At the same time, it should be kept in mind

that the majority of the city's people did not join the mob. They remained in their homes, uncertain and fearful. Some of them participated in the collective behavior, not by breaking the law but by taking unaccustomed precautions to insure their own safety. One of the two deaths that could be charged to the disorders resulted when a psychologist, sleeping with a pistol by his bed, awoke and shot a burglar.

What Happens When the Police Strike ———

Gerald Clark

On the day Montreal became a city without policemen, Gilles Madore unsuspectingly left his home as usual at 9:30 A.M. to drive to work. Madore, a 32-year-old bank inspector, had been filling in for the past few months as manager of the City & District Savings Bank branch at the corner of St. Denis Street and St. Joseph Boulevard, almost entirely a French-speaking residential area with only a splash of English and Italian. It was a perfect October day—clear and crisp—and during the 15-minute drive Madore noted that the trees were at their peak of gold and crimson. He was listening to the car radio, but since it was an FM all-music station, he caught no bulletins. Madore, in fact, did not know the police had walked off the job until he arrived at the bank and a nervous teller greeted him with the news that the city was wide open to criminals. "Don't worry," Madore said reassuringly. "We're a small branch. Holdup men won't come here." Besides, this was a Tuesday, by experience the quietest day in the week for bank robberies.

Madore was not alone in his ignorance of the strike. Most Montrealers were only now beginning to hear of it, for there had been no forewarning, no build-up. The morning newscasts had carried, as a routine item, the report that police were to meet in the Paul Sauvé Arena at 9 A.M. to hear the results of an arbitration board's findings on wages and other issues that had remained unsettled for almost a year. But no one had anticipated a walk-out; it was illegal for policemen and firefighters to strike.

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Thus, on Oct. 7, the largest city in Canada, and one of the most civilized cities in the world, found what it was like to be without police protection during a day and night. Before the ordeal was over, a psychologist would shoot and kill a burglar; another man—a provincial police corporal—would be slain, and 49 persons would be wounded or injured in rioting. Nine bank hold-ups, almost a tenth of the total for the whole of last year, would be committed, along with 17 other robberies at gunpoint. Ordinarily disciplined, peaceful citizens would go wild; smashing 1,000 plate glass windows in the heart of the city and looting shop displays. The losses and damage would exceed \$1-million.

But the gray statistics alone would not be very meaningful. It was on the social and psychological levels that the story held its horror. For the real message was about the "thin blue line"—the phrase used by Sgt. Guy Marciel, president of the Policemen's Brotherhood—that separates civilization from chaos and anarchy.

Essentially, it was not the rise in professional crime—12 times the normal—that counted. It was the way political grievances, and private and group frustrations, shot to the surface when no one was around to enforce the law. These included: an attack by taxi drivers on a company holding an exclusive franchise to provide limousine service at Montreal's International Airport; an attack by French-Canadian separatists on symbols of the "English Establishment"; an attack on the Mayor's property by social agitators who contend that not enough is being done for the poor; an attack on the United States Consulate by anti-Americans, and then, simply, an attack on a code of ethics and behavior by conventional men and women who chose to join a mob.

Most people appeared relaxed, even if some behaved irrationally. Metropolitan Montreal numbers 2.5 million inhabitants, but only half live in the city proper, where the strike was taking place. The others live in separate municipalities—some of them, like Westmount and Outremont, enclaves surrounded by the City of Montreal—with their own police and fire services. None of these was on strike. However, a Westmount resident, arriving home at 7 P.M. from work, found his way barred by the door chain, a device never before used by his wife. "What's the idea?" he asked her. She replied that Saulnier had told people to be on guard. Another man returned from work to find that

every light in his home in Outremont had been switched on; his wife was certain this would ward off intruders.

As it happened, the population, at the start, did heed Saulnier. It kept away from the downtown areas. A visitor driving along Ste. Catherine, the biggest shopping and entertainment street, would have thought it a Sunday rather than Tuesday evening. Theaters, cinemas and restaurants functioned. It was just that the traffic was light and shushed. But not everywhere. Around City Hall, in the old quarter of Montreal, several taxis started hooting their horns before forming a procession and driving west to Barré and Mountain Streets. At that point, approximately 7:30 P.M., began the buildup for a night of havoc.

Other cabs headed downtown to join the cavalcade, and by the time it reached its objective, the garage of Murray Hill Limousine Service Ltd., it numbered 75 vehicles—carrying not only cabbies but political extremists. An alliance had been formed between the Mouvement de Libération du Taxi, which could claim a membership of no more than 100 of Montreal's 10,000 cab drivers, and the Front de Libération Populaire, a small group of Maoists and student radicals who charged that a "fascist Drapeau-Saulnier administration had sold out taxi drivers' interest to the capitalists." In fact, it was a Federal concession that had given Murray Hill the sole right to pick up passengers at Montreal's airport, in return for guaranteed service. But the grievance was an old one among drivers of city taxi associations.

For separatists and terrorists, with no riot squad to restrain them, this was obviously a night to make political gain in the wider goal of removing Quebec from "English domination." Murray Hill, as an example, was owned by an English-speaking Montrealer, Charles Hershorn, whose home had been bombed a year ago.

At 8:03 P.M. a Q.P.P. radio dispatcher sent four cars to Murray Hill. They fumbled through unfamiliar back streets flanked on the north by railway yards and on the south by the waterfront. At 8:08 P.M. another four cars were told to get there in a hurry. By now demonstrators were chanting, "*Québec aux Québécois*," and throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails. The targets of the fire bombs were four Murray Hill buses and four cars in the parking lot, and quickly these were aflame. Demonstrators pushed one of the burning buses down an incline to crash into the

barred garage doors. The tactics were terrifying to the Murray Hill employees inside; they were sitting above underground storage tanks containing 18,000 gallons of gasoline. Firemen, forced back by the rioters, were compelled to set up hoses at a distance. Then a guard on the roof of the two-story building opened fire on the crowd with a 12-gauge shotgun. "How big is the crowd?" a Q.P.P. dispatcher asked over the radio. "Over 200," replied a cruiser, "and impossible to control." A city police striker, using a hijacked car transmitter, cut in—and a Q.P.P. man cursed him.

By now a second guard was shooting from the garage roof, and there was return fire from a tenement roof across the road. It was the first time that street war of this type had ever struck Montreal, and when it was ended, a provincial plainclothesman, Cpl. Robert Dumas, 35, was its chief victim. Dumas, a member of the Q.P.P. anti-subversive squad, had been one of the first police on the site. He entered the Murray Hill garage to phone for reinforcements; then, racing out to try to halt rioters tossing Molotov cocktails, he was fatally wounded by a shotgun blast. Another 19 persons—some cabbies, some youths—were taken to hospitals with buckshot wounds. Thirty more suffered injuries at Murray Hill and in the subsequent bouts that took place as the crowd began moving, around 10:30 P.M., up the hill.

The next destination was the Queen Elizabeth Hotel, chosen because Murray Hill had a concession there; thus it deserved to have its storefront windows smashed. From here it was a short and logical step to the Sheraton-Mount Royal Hotel, for the same reason. But on the way, the demonstrators paused at the Windsor Hotel, where Mayor Drapeau's restaurant was located in the basement level. Drapes were ripped down, glassware smashed and small fires set. By now Drapeau, having landed from St. Louis an hour and a half earlier, was in City Hall receiving reports of the growing violence.

The streets in Drapeau's beloved heart of the city—the complex around Place Ville Marie and the Ste. Catherine Street area—were beginning to fill with more than the original couple of hundred separatists and agitators who had started out with an organized line of attack. Arriving from all directions, looters and vandals were hitting out indiscriminately. A provincial police officer radioed headquarters: "Send help to the corner of Peel and Ste. Catherine. People are

breaking windows at the Bank of Nova Scotia." Minutes later: "We need more help. We are 25 against 500."

For two uninterrupted, chaotic hours the plunderers went to work, barely touched by the undermanned and bewildered Q.P.P. At one point young people surrounded a parked cruiser, rocking it and blocking the doors so the occupants could not escape. All along central Ste. Catherine Street, for a stretch of 21 blocks, the shattering of \$300,000 worth of plate glass windows was hardly heard above the roar of the mob and the incessant ringing of unanswered alarm bells. In the distance sirens sounded. Their screech receded, however, as a new touch was added. Provincial police were receiving more and more calls about other riots in widely scattered parts of the city, only to find them fictitious. Later, Q.P.P. Director Maurice St. Pierre was to suggest the calls came from strikers.

In all, something like 156 shops had windows smashed and display contents hauled away—stereo units, radios, fur coats, dresses, an assortment of goods. The major department stores—Eaton's, Simpson's, Morgan's—were hit, along with lesser ones. Pink Poodle, a medium-priced women's specialty shop, caught it from two directions. While the ordinary looters were content to strip Pink Poodle's window mannequins of \$3,000 worth of garments, professional burglars entered the premises through a back door and made off with 150 fur and cloth coats valued at \$20,000.

There were riffraff out that night and maybe some poor people; but also there were so-called respectable, middle-class people. A well-dressed man, with a fur coat over each arm, scampered down Ste. Catherine Street shouting, "One for my wife, one for my girl friend." There were some orderly people, too. A middle-aged man, seeing a young man reaching for a fur coat, tried to talk him out of it—whereupon he was set upon by two other looters for interfering. At Seltzer drugs, where the window offered transistor sets, hair dryers and other fairly expensive items, a woman reached for a yellow box of Kleenex, ripped away the wrapping and stuffed the tissue into her hand-bag. She laughed aloud, for no one in particular to hear, as though to proclaim that suddenly she had a license to break the rules.

Or maybe she simply needed to blow her nose, and in spirit of gaiety took the Kleenex. For in a sense there was also a carnival atmo-

sphere, a pre-Christmas festivity about the street. There was nothing furtive in the stealing. Many of the people who now descended on Ste. Catherine Street, drawn by radio and television accounts, were content to stand by as spectators; but some, when they saw windows smashed, helped themselves to what was inside. Often they seemed to wait for just the right window to be smashed. But with no bothersome police around—at one stage a busload of Q.P.P., arriving from out of town, drove along Ste. Catherine Street without any pause in the looting—a sense of fear was absent.

At the Paul Sauvé Arena, René St. Martin heard the Brotherhood president, Guy Marcil, announce that the Quebec Legislature had ordered the strikers back to work by one minute past midnight, or they would face severe fines and loss of accreditation as a trade union. Some men hissed. "We must obey," said Marcil. St. Martin was glad that the decision was, at last, made for him. But he felt it was not the Government's threat alone that got the men back on the beat. "It was," he said, "the way the rioters and looters were tearing our city to ribbons."

At 12:57 A.M. Montreal city police calls returned to the air. The 17-hour trial was over, and people cheered the first familiar blue-and-white cruisers that arrived at the corner of Peel and Ste. Catherine Streets. The police grinned back and began the business of chasing off the remaining looters and, along with the Q.P.P., making 104 arrests.

Many angles were left for later examination. Political extremists, after leaving the Sheraton-Mount Royal Hotel, shattered windows at nearby McGill University. But this was predictable, since separatists consider McGill a bastion of the English Establishment. Equally foreseeable was the small routine march on McGregor Avenue, where demonstrators threw stones through the windows of the United States consulate while they left untouched in the same block consulates of Israel, West Germany, Switzerland and Italy. Nor was there any special significance to the other crimes—except, as might be expected, that there were more than usual.

For instance, 456 burglaries were reported for 17 hours, compared with the normal 350 for a whole week. The pattern and timetable suggested that professionals, rather than amateurs, were at work. From 9 A.M. to 11 A.M., before criminals could be assured a police strike was

indeed underway, no major incidents were logged. Then the signals began to come in from banks. After the banks closed, four jewelry stores in succession were held up. When jewelers shut down, at 6 P.M., the drug stores and food stores raised the alarm. The police, in making their analysis, did not believe that a single, massive gang was involved. Rather, several compact groups were thought to be operating, independently but with a common and logical program of attack based on known schedules of business establishments.

It was the behavior of ordinary people at night that caused the most perplexity and anxiety. No special denominator tied together the shops they looted; some were owned by Catholics, some by Protestants, some by Jews; some represented "English" interests, others "French" interests. Men and women of every kind and variety flocked to the Ste. Catherine Street area because it was here that the action, set off initially by organized extremists, was taking place. And then they abandoned inhibitions.

It was only in retrospect that Montrealers sensed how close a grim experience had come to gross tragedy. During the rioting and looting many people, sitting in suburban homes and watching television, thought it must be happening to a city in a foreign country. The awakening the next morning was acute when they traveled to downtown offices and saw the debris and damage. But the awful part was the realization that terrorists had selected relatively few targets, and that by and large the mob that later emerged was a good-natured one rather than vicious. No explosive bombs were thrown, no one cried out in a crusade of personal vendetta or racial or religious war. But if there is a next time with more targets and objectives, the thin blue line might indeed prove thin.

Whereas in Montreal and Boston the absence of police from the streets eventually led to a redefinition of the situation and widespread disorder, in some instances what is perceived as the presence of too many police is a factor in the emergence of collective behavior. Following several days of rioting in Brixton, a part of London, in April, 1981, a group calling themselves "some Brixton anarchists" distributed a leaflet entitled "Brixton: No Apologies." Their account of the factor

precipitating the riots began with the following analysis:

Brixton—No Apologies _____

The week preceding the riots had seen an increase in the already, intense policing of the streets of Brixton. (On Friday 3rd April Railton Road was sealed off in a police raid; all that week Operation Swamp 81 had been going on resulting in 1,000 people—mainly black youth—being stopped and searched.)

After an incident in Railton Road on Friday 10th, an incident which was being dealt with by local people, the police arrived and started making trouble. This resulted in an occupation force of police descending on the Front Line on Saturday, 11th April. The cops sat there all day waiting for trouble. Then at about 5.00 in the afternoon they provoked it.

The response of the local community was immediate and decisive. "These are our streets and we won't take any more police oppression." This response was spontaneous and there were no leaders or outside agitators. The police occupation force was attacked and routed. It was a joyous occasion as people felt that here, for the first time, they were taking part in mass direct action to control the streets of their community and were succeeding.

The attempt by the authorities to call the events of the weekend a 'race riot' fell flat immediately. So then they tried to blame 'outside agitators' and 'white anarchists' for the whole thing. This was a crude attempt to distract attention from the real problems with the implicit assumption that local police community relations are so good that trouble could only be started by outsiders. An obvious lie. It also assumes that the local community are incapable of taking the actions they carried out so well. A double lie.

Let us stress again that the riots were a spontaneous, un-led response of local people—black and white, female and male, young and old—to the militarisation of the streets of Brixton by the Metropolitan Police and also a response against the kind of society in which such everyday oppression is part.

Changes in Communication It has been shown that trust in the normative order and social structure depends upon another factor, the existence of communication channels and confidence in the flow of information through them. The free flow of communication between various levels of the social structure helps sustain the belief that access to the legitimate structure and to the functionaries responsible for sustaining the values and norms does exist. On the other hand, severe restrictions on communication—strict censorship and prohibition of free discussion—may perpetuate a state of pluralistic ignorance. This itself may be a source of social stability since, not knowing what others think, members of the group may not share their dissatisfaction with one another.

Hence changes in the state of communication may give rise to collective behavior. The closing of channels, particularly vertical channels, may lead to an accentuation of value conflicts or to inefficiency of key functionaries. Inadequacy of communication leads to uncertainty and lack of confidence in the predictability of social life. These, in turn, give rise to rumor and the construction of new definitions of reality.

The opening of communication channels, may also give rise to collective behavior. The sudden disclosure of misdeeds in a high government office, as occurred during Watergate, may shake the confidence of people in the legitimacy and effectiveness of the entire political structure. An increase of communication between people who have been afraid of disclosing their individual dissatisfaction to one another may open up a vision of possibilities of change that had previously been unimaginable.

Again it must be emphasized that trust is an important basis for the perception that communication is adequate. In a study of wildcat strikes in the automobile industry during World War II, Jerome F. Scott and George C. Homans concluded that an important explanation was just such a breakdown of confidence in the system of communication between union members and their representatives. They observed:²⁰

In the long run, a number of the strikes seemed to stem from faulty communication. Working-

men would call it the "run around." They use that phrase when they feel that what they consider important is not in fact being treated as such by people in authority. We tend to forget that communication is concerned with action, not with abstract understanding. Action may not be taken, but unless the man at the bottom feels that a responsible individual has given serious consideration to his concerns, communication, for him, has failed. Wartime conditions made communication, in this broad sense, much more difficult, while they made workmen much more ready to insist, in their own way, that communication could be improved. With all its good intentions, the War Labor Board may have hurt communication more than it helped. Here was an organization outside the industry. Disputes referred to it meant still longer delays before responsible action was taken. Rightly or wrongly, workers often felt that companies had used the War Labor Board to stall and to avoid dealing with matters which could perfectly well have been handled on the spot.

INTERACTION AS CENTRAL TO COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR

It has been proposed that collective behavior emerges out of situations in which changes are perceived as occurring in the normative order, the social structure, or the flow of information. Yet value conflicts; normative ambiguities, failures of role performance, and other "breakdowns," "strains," or "dysfunctions" are not themselves sufficient to lead to collective behavior. The latter does not result without the conjuncture of several circumstances, as the model presented in Chapter 1 suggests. There must be group formation related to some event; interaction and exploration in which a sense of feasibility and timeliness develop; and the formation of an emergent norm defining the situation and justifying action. The sort of collective action which will result cannot be predicted except as the process of collective definition unfolds.

Thus the first task in the study of collective behavior is to analyze the process of interaction through which a revised version of reality is constructed when the taken-for-granted basis of living is somehow shaken. When studying particular forms of collective behavior, from varieties of crowd behavior to types of social movements, a second major task is to describe the socially constructed version of reality which

makes what the participants are doing make sense to them.

Earlier we showed how individuals behave in relatively unstructured situations. The roots of collective behavior cannot be found in individual feelings, imagery, or restructuring activity any more than they can be located in strains in the social order, however. Neither one leads quickly and directly to extra-institutional action by a collectivity. It is in the process of communication between individuals who share feelings of uncertainty about reality, whether in their immediate surroundings or in the larger environment of the nation or the world, that the origins of emergent forms of behavior are to be found. This communication involves the transmission and exchange of both a cognitive content, symbols, and an affective content, feelings. We will analyze the communication of both but will stress the symbolic content. An important and characteristic mode of communication in collective behavior is *rumor*.

NOTES

1. For an excellent historical analysis of a disease epidemic see Roderick E. McGrew, *Russia and the Cholera, 1823-1832*. (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1965).
2. See R. Dudley Edwards and T. Desmond Williams, eds., *The Great Famine* (New York: New York University Press, 1957).
3. See Michihiko Hachiya, *Hiroshima Diary* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1955).
4. These correspond to what William Graham Sumner called "mores" and "folkways," to which Howard W. Odum suggested the addition of another type of rule of convenience, "technicways."
5. For a cogent theoretical development of the importance of considering both systems of norms and social relationships, see Jack M. Weller and E. L. Quarantelli, "Neglected Characteristics of Collective Behavior," *American Journal of Sociology*: 79 (November, 1973), 665-685.
6. Ralph H. Turner, "Role-Taking: Process versus Conformity," in Arnold M. Rose, ed., *Human Behavior and Social Process* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1962), p. 23.
7. Tamotsu Shibutani, *Improvised News: A Sociological Study of Rumor* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1966), p. 21.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Elihu Katz, "The Two-Step Flow of Communication: An Up-to-date Report on an Hypothesis,"

- Public Opinion Quarterly*, 21 (Spring, 1957), 61-78.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
 11. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
 12. See Dennis Wrong, "The Oversocialized Conception of Man," *American Sociological Review*, 26 (April, 1961), 183-193, and Ladd Wheeler, "Toward a Theory of Behavioral Contagion," *Psychological Review*, 73 (March, 1966), 179-192.
 13. Neil J. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), p. 16.
 14. Herbert Blumer, "Social Problems as Collective Behavior," *Social Problems*, 18 (Winter, 1971), 301.
 15. *Ibid.*, p. 300. For a similar treatment, see Armand L. Mauss, *Social Movements*. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company), 1975.
 16. June Shagaloff, quoted in "Along the NAACP Battlefront," *The Crisis*, 71 (1964), p. 558.
 17. Blumer, "Social Problems," 301.
 18. William A. Gamson, *Power and Discontent* (Homewood, Ill.: The Dorsey Press, 1968), pp. 45-46.
 19. Randolph Bartlett, "Anarchy in Boston," *The American Mercury*, 36 (1935), 456.
 20. Jerome F. Scott and George C. Homans, "Reflections on the Wildcat Strikes," *American Sociological Review*, 12 (1947), 81.

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