

**The Crowd
and the Public,
and Other
Essays**

Robert Ezra Park

新闻学与传播学经典丛书·英文原版系列

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(美) 罗伯特·E·帕克 著
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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

群众与公众 = The Crowd and the Public, and Other Essays: 英文/(美) 罗伯特·E·帕克 (Robert Ezra Park) 著.

—北京: 中国传媒大学出版社, 2016. 11

(新闻学与传播学经典丛书·英文原版系列)

ISBN 978-7-5657-1832-8

I. ①人… II. ①罗… III. ①传播学—英文 IV. ①G206

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2016)第 230824 号

新闻学与传播学经典丛书·英文原版系列

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群众与公众

QUNZHONG YU GONGZHONG

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策划编辑 姜颖跌 司马兰

责任编辑 姜颖跌 司马兰

封面制作 博采文案

责任印制 曹 辉

出版发行 中国传媒大学出版社

社 址 北京市朝阳区定福庄东街1号 邮编: 100024

电 话 010-65450532 或 65450528 传真: 010-65779405

网 址 <http://www.cucp.com.cn>

经 销 全国新华书店

印 刷 北京艺堂印刷有限公司

开 本 880mm×1230mm 1/32

印 张 5.75

字 数 166千字

版 次 2016年11月第1版 2016年11月第1次印刷

书 号 ISBN 978-7-5657-1832-8/G·1832 定 价 35.00 元

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随着中国高等教育的教学改革，广大师生已不满足于仅仅阅读国外图书的翻译版，他们迫切希望能读到原汁原味的原版图书，希望能采用国外英文原版图书进行教学，从而保证所讲授的知识体系的完整性、系统性、科学性和文字描绘的准确性。此套丛书的出版便是满足了这种需求。亦可使学生在专业方面尽快掌握本学科相应的外语词汇和了解先进国家的学术发展的方向。

本系列在原汁原味地引进英文原版图书的同时，将目录译为中文，作为对原版的一种导读，供读者阅读时参考。

从事经典著作的出版，需要出版人付出不懈的努力，我们自知本套丛书也许会有很多缺陷，我们也将虚心接受读者提出的批评和建议。

中国传媒大学出版社

Introduction

ROBERT E. PARK's doctoral dissertation, *Masse und Publikum* (*The Crowd and the Public*), was published in 1904.¹ A perfect copy, recently encountered in a large university library, was yellowed and brittle but apparently undisturbed by any reader for sixty-five years. This may be symbolic of the attention paid, explicitly at least, by American sociology to the earliest work of one of its most influential pioneers. Seldom cited, the dissertation is sometimes even omitted from Park bibliographies. But as Everett C. Hughes has remarked, "The results of Park's work in those four years of study in Germany are diffused throughout American and even world sociology, even unto today."² To read *The Crowd and the Public* today is to experience the excitement of uncovering a seminal work—of discovering links between several intellectual traditions, both European and American; of seeing the initial formulation of concepts and interests found in later writing; and of sharing in the labors of a mind at work during the initial stages of a developing field. In addition, there are glimpses of figures who have long since dropped from view, such as Pasquale Rossi.³

¹ Bern: Lack and Grunau.

² Personal communication, November 2, 1970.

³ Rossi is an example of forgotten writers who may deserve to be rediscovered. Barnes and Becker assert that Rossi "brought out the best treatise on the psycho-sociology of the crowd and related social structures yet to appear in any language, *Sociologica e psicologia collettiva* (1904). It contains an excellent history of the theories of the field, and Rossi's own analysis gives evidence of great acumen." See Harry Elmer Barnes and

As a synthesizing effort, *The Crowd and the Public* cites and explicates the ideas of many, but it is perhaps the influence of Simmel and Le Bon which, in different ways, appears to be most dominant. On the conceptual and substantive levels, many of Park's later concerns emerge in this first work: competition, self-awareness, reciprocal interaction, process and change, characteristics of the sect, significance of strikes, focusing of social attention, social epidemics, and many more.

As Park relates it, he was led to the writing of *The Crowd and the Public* by a chain of circumstances beginning with his work as a newspaperman after college graduation. "The newspaper and news became my problem"—a problem that led him back to school at Harvard to study philosophy and then to Europe in search of "a fundamental point of view from which I could describe the behavior of society, under the influence of news, in the precise and universal language of science." While in Berlin for Simmel's lectures, Park encountered a treatise by Kistiakowski which seemed the first direct approach to the problem interesting him. Since Kistiakowski had studied under Wilhelm Windelband, Park sought out Windelband and wrote *Masse und Publikum* under his direction.⁴

In its totality, *The Crowd and the Public* might be considered most relevant for two areas of sociology: collective behavior and basic theory, that is, the nature of sociology and the social bond.

Quite beyond the particular elements named in the title, there can already be seen developing in Park's first work a conception of sociology and its units of analysis. As with the specific topics of crowd and public, Park's later conception of the field is well under way. By analogy with the physical sciences, he seeks to identify the smallest meaningful particle for social analysis. Because of the role phenomenon, this particle cannot be the individual—in an important sense the individual is not the same in all

Howard Becker, *Social Thought from Lore to Science*, 2d ed. (Washington: Harren Press, 1952), 2:1008.

⁴ "An Autobiographical Note," in *The Collected Papers of Robert Ezra Park*, Vol. 1, *Race and Culture, 1913-1944* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1950), pp. v-vi.

his group memberships. Thus, the basic units must be the types of relationships existing between individuals. The perspective is strongly reminiscent of Simmel, with whom Park had studied, and would today be seen as social-psychological.⁵ Although subordinate to the conceptualizing of crowd, public, and other groups, an inquiry into the nature of social bonds runs throughout *The Crowd and the Public*. Each of the three chapters can be seen as analyzing a type of social unity: one derived from similarities; one from differences; and one from common norms, traditions, and culture. Unity based on similarities and differences immediately brings Durkheim to mind, but the use of the two principles of unity is very different for each writer. They are culturally structured for Durkheim, but seen as emergent interaction by Park.⁶ These two elements of social unity are referred to again in the famous Park and Burgess *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*.⁷

Of interest is the question why the third theme, that of the General Will, was introduced. On one level, it emphasizes the traditional, stable, and normative element in all the other groups to which crowd and public are conceptually opposed. On another level, its use seems implicitly to admit the weakness of a strictly interactionist approach to social life. There is something in operation here which is more than simply the crystallization of past interactions. An example is Park's idea that public opinion, the product of the public, cannot create the fundamental norms under which the public operates. These norms are socially prior, existing at another level of reality. Nor do similarities in individual values

⁵ Ralph H. Turner, ed., *Robert E. Park on Social Control and Collective Behavior* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. xiv–xv.

⁶ One can only speculate as to whether Park had read *The Division of Labor* before writing *The Crowd and the Public*; there are footnote references to several items by Durkheim, but not to the *Division of Labor*. On the basis of extensive personal as well as formal academic contact with Park, the author of a recent survey of sociology argues that Park's "knowledge of Durkheim—and Weber for that matter—was slight or indifferent." See Edward Shils, "Tradition, Ecology, and Institution in the History of Sociology," *Daedalus* 99 (Fall 1970): 789, also n. 27.

⁷ See Turner's discussion in *Park on Social Control*, Introduction.

imply common norms; the norm must be acceptable by all as applicable to all—Park's derivation from Rousseau is reminiscent of Angell's distinction between "common" and "like" values, a recent expression of a theme of long standing in social analysis.⁸ From another viewpoint, the General Will chapter introduces a more strictly sociological perspective, which is all the more interesting because it is laboriously derived from nonsociological sources, in contrast to the essentially social-psychological framework of the first two chapters. Park's subsequent evaluation of cultural and interactionist approaches has been ably summarized elsewhere.⁹ *The Crowd and the Public* demonstrates an early recognition of the deficiencies of each perspective used alone.

Park and Collective Behavior

"Crowd" and "public" will be recognized immediately as two of the traditional units treated by collective behavior, a field which Park himself named and launched as a distinct specialty within American sociology. *The Crowd and the Public* was not intended to do this, however, but to investigate the properties of two kinds of collectivities. Nevertheless the common features which distinguish them from other kinds of groups provide an implicit definition of the area encompassing both, for crowd and public represent "the processes through which new groups are formed" serving "to bring individuals out of old ties and into new ones."¹⁰ Crowd and public do not have traditions and customs, but lead to their generation. Indeed, this all seems less ambiguous than the initial definition in the well-known chapter 13 of the *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*: "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."¹¹ Here, all social behavior would seem to be "collective behavior."

⁸ Robert C. Angell, *Free Society and Moral Crisis* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1958), chap. 2 and notes.

⁹ Turner, Introduction to *Park on Social Control*.

¹⁰ *The Crowd and the Public*, p. 78.

¹¹ Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1921), p. 865.

The thrust of *The Crowd and the Public* clearly anticipates the actual use of the collective behavior concept in the *Introduction*, including a redefinition later in chapter 13 where it is described as "the processes by which societies are disintegrated into their constituent elements and the processes by which these elements are brought together again into new relations to form new organizations and new societies."¹² The idea of collective behavior resulting in social and cultural change has remained central to the concept through the present.

The other fundamental elements or connotations of collective behavior may also be derived from Park's earlier ideas. Spontaneous, short-lived, ephemeral are adjectives often applied to collective behavior groupings. Park saw crowd and public as groups without a past or a future; once formed, they either disperse or are transformed into stable groups subject to a normative order. And if such groups are seen as "without tradition" and as acting to change the institutional order, it may be possible to deduce them as existing apart from, outside of, or in "gaps" in that order. Today, tentative agreement on what constitutes collective behavior would focus on the idea of extra-institutional behavior. Some kinds of this behavior, panic, for example—do not necessarily lead to changes in the institutional order.

Park's emphasis in *The Crowd and the Public* on the concept of the General Will heightens the contrast between the stable normative order and collective behavior existing apart from it. In his later work, Park used Sumner's conception of the mores to represent the stability to which collective behavior is conceptually and empirically opposed. Written before *Folkways* appeared, *The Crowd and the Public* ingeniously uses concepts from political philosophy to emphasize supra-individual tradition, custom, and norm.

Crowd and public, then, are for Park the two basic categories of change-inducing, extra-institutional behavior. That they remained central to his thinking is reflected in their prominence in chapters 12 and 13 of the *Introduction* and in his "Collective Behavior" entry in the 1935 *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. Park also frequently taught a course under the title "Crowd and

¹² Ibid., p. 924-25.

Public.”¹³ Other kinds of collective behavior—the sect, the mass movement, revolution—are mentioned in passing in *The Crowd and the Public*. Park’s later development of these other forms can be seen fundamentally as extensions of the two basic concepts. “The sect, religious or political, may be regarded as a perpetuation and permanent form of the orgiastic (ecstatic) or expressive crowd.”¹⁴ “All great mass movements tend to display, to a greater or less extent, the characteristics that Le Bon attributes to crowds.”¹⁵ “A revolution is a mass movement which seeks to change the mores by destroying the existing social order.”¹⁶ Social movements share the characteristics of both the crowd and the public. In addition to the above quote citing Le Bon, Park wrote, “When these changes [in public opinion] take a definite direction and have or seem to have a definite goal, we call the phenomenon a social movement.”¹⁷

After a theory of collective behavior has defined its units, some explanation of their behavior is called for. Explanations may be categorized as emphasizing internal or external factors. For example, is a riot explained by looking at processes of interaction, communication, leadership, etc., within the acting collectivity, or should the focus rest on the discontents, political structure, etc., objective or perceived, in the social setting?

Following Simmel’s overall emphasis on types of interpersonal interaction and Le Bon’s specific assertions about crowd dynamics, Park in *The Crowd and the Public* clearly concentrates on “internal” factors. Certainly the setting is not ignored: “Precisely because the crowd proves to be a social power whose effect is always more or less disruptive and revolutionary, it seldom arises where there is social stability and where customs have deep roots. In contrast, where social bonds are removed and old institutions

¹³ Robert E. L. Faris, *Chicago Sociology: 1920–1932* (San Francisco: Chandler, 1967), p. 106.

¹⁴ Park and Burgess, *Introduction*, p. 872.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 871.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 934.

¹⁷ Park and Burgess, *Introduction*, chap. 12, reprinted in Turner, *Park on Social Control*, p. 216.

weakened, great crowd movements develop more easily and forcefully."¹⁸ Crowd and public appear "wherever a new interest asserts itself"; conflict of interests produces a public.¹⁹ Like Le Bon in *The Crowd*, however, Park does not expand these remarks on the setting, and they are not an integrated or major part of the analysis. Later, in the *Introduction*, "social unrest" does of course become a key concept, although it is presented ambiguously as both a characteristic of the setting and a form of collective behavior.²⁰ In *The Crowd and the Public* the two kinds of collectivities are differentiated entirely in terms of internal dynamics; individual psychological differences alone lead to participation in crowd or public.²¹ There is no explicit statement as to what, if anything, in the social setting would tend to produce one or the other kind of collectivity. A clue may be offered however, by the argument in chapter 3 that a minimal normative framework must be present if the public is to operate. Is Park suggesting that normative ambiguity, inadequacy, and breakdown extending beyond a certain point will produce a crowd rather than a public?

Park's specific explanatory mechanisms for the characteristics of crowd behavior seem to derive from two sources: (1) the similar assertions of Sighele and Le Bon with regard to suggestibility, unanimity, intolerance, emotionality, etc., and (2) a synthesis of various psychological approaches seen by Park as dealing with kinds of imitation. Clearly present in the second category are ideas of crowd milling and circular reaction which subsequently were given increasing prominence in the *Introduction* and in Herbert Blumer's landmark discussion of this whole approach in the *Outline of the Principles of Sociology*, a book initially edited by Park himself.²²

Park's description of the public in *The Crowd and the Public* is more difficult to follow, but like his discussion of the crowd, it includes all the basic elements of "public" later to appear in the

18 *The Crowd and the Public*, p. 47.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 79.

20 Park and Burgess, *Introduction*, p. 866.

21 *The Crowd and the Public*, p. 80.

22 New York: Barnes & Noble, 1939.

Introduction: reasoned discussion of issues, based on opposed interests, but carried out within a framework understood by all—a “universe of discourse,” to use Park’s later phrase.²³

In *The Crowd and the Public*, the fundamental distinctions between the two types are simply stated: the crowd suppresses the differences among its members and uncritically, emotionally, unanimously fixes its attention upon some object; the public is the polar opposite in its recognition of individual differences in value and interest, in its engaging in rational discussion and debate, and in arriving at a consensus which does not impose unanimity on its members. Suggestibility is “precisely the characteristic trait of the crowd”; it results in the crowd finally becoming “the plastic instrument of its leader, whose suggestion is followed without any resistance.”²⁴ Park implies that this does not happen in the more critical and rational public, although he does mention the manipulation of what is commonly called “public opinion.”²⁵

Park’s distinction between crowd and public directly raises another important continuing issue in collective behavior theory: rationality, or the lack of it. Without here defining rational or irrational, the characteristics imputed to crowd behavior by Sighele and Le Bon would usually be seen as irrational: suggestibility, emotionality, intolerance, rapid reversals of attention, lack of critical ability, expression of base instincts, etc. Furthermore, within the Western intellectual tradition such attributes are negatively judged. Looking at popular riots and revolutionary movements, the early European writers did not like what they saw and condemned such outbursts for the irrational features perceived in them. While Park is explicitly aware of the danger of political bias in these interpretations, he seems to accept Le Bon’s analysis as a “scientific” attempt and does not alter it in any significant way. Generally uncritical references to Le Bon, except for objection to the lack of precision, continue in the *Introduction*; and Blumer’s

²³ Park and Burgess, *Introduction*, chap. 12, as reprinted in Turner, *Park on Social Control*, p. 216.

²⁴ *The Crowd and the Public*, p. 47.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

account²⁶ heightens, if anything, the portrayal of the maddened and irrational mob. In *The Crowd and the Public* Park is careful to state that his analysis of the difference between the two kinds of collectivity does not imply a judgment,²⁷ but this can only be taken as a formal disclaimer.

Despite his acceptance of the Le Bon-Sighele portrayal of crowd behavior, however, Park's inclusion of the public within the category of change-inducing groups radically altered the thrust of their tradition, for an irrational mechanism of change is now balanced by a mechanism that is rational and reasonable, even if the conditions giving rise to one or the other are not made clear. As already remarked, Park incorporates elements of both the crowd and the public in his later discussion of social movements, and if a reading-between-the-lines guess may be ventured, there is somewhat more emphasis on the relative rationality of movements.

Finally, any perspective on collective behavior must handle the problem of relating such behavioral mechanisms to everyday, institutionalized behavior. This poses no logical difficulties for Park in *The Crowd and the Public*—the whole point of the central section is to relate concepts from contemporary individual psychology, emerging social psychology, imitation theory, and the interactionist orientation of Simmel so that crowd, public, and all other forms of social behavior can be explained in the same terms. While much of the specific material is now dated, there remains a theoretical unity often lacking in subsequent collective behavior theory.

In *The Crowd and the Public*, then, Park dealt with four fundamental, continuing issues in collective behavior: (1) conception and definition of the field and its units; (2) specific explanations of those units, explanations tending to stress either factors internal to the units, or external to them, in the social setting; (3) the rationality issue; and (4) the relationship between collective behavior and other kinds of social behavior.

²⁶ Alfred M. Lee, ed., *New Outline of the Principles of Sociology* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1951), pp. 180–81.

²⁷ *The Crowd and the Public*, p. 81.

Collective Behavior Theory After Park

Recent work in collective behavior, in dealing with the issues discussed above, has departed from Park's founding contributions, but it has also returned to them, sometimes in surprising ways. For perhaps thirty years, Park's conception of the field, its units, and its explanatory principles held unchallenged dominance among sociologists. These principles are still those most frequently relied upon both in general introductory course treatments and in texts for the field of collective behavior itself. The 1957 Turner and Killian *Collective Behavior* acknowledged that "the ideas in the book reflect most directly the tradition established by Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, and subsequently extended by Herbert Blumer."²⁸ Although Kurt and Gladys Engel Langs's *Collective Dynamics* (1961) discusses various traditions of analysis, it seems essentially to represent a combination of Le Bon via Park with a Freudian orientation.²⁹ The first radical attempt to reorient collective behavior theory became apparent with the appearance of Smelser's book in 1963,³⁰ which according to one opinion "should prove to be the contribution most relevant to research in the seventies."³¹ Turner has recently directed important criticisms at traditional approaches, particularly those derived from Le Bon and Freud; he has tried to bring together the explanations of collective behavior and those used elsewhere in sociology, as well as to account more realistically for observed crowd behavior.³² Somewhat earlier, collective behavior was viewed by Swanson as activity directed toward problem-solving. Although he wrote from within the Park tradition, Swanson al-

²⁸ Ralph H. Turner and Lewis M. Killian, *Collective Behavior* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1957), p. vi.

²⁹ New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.

³⁰ Neil J. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963).

³¹ Robert R. Evans, ed., *Readings in Collective Behavior* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1969), p. 13.

³² Ralph H. Turner, "Collective Behavior," in Robert E. L. Faris, ed., *Handbook of Modern Sociology* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964).

tered the focus of concern by stressing that differing group perceptions of the problem situation led to different kinds of collective behavior.³³

Conception of the Field and Its Units

Among the challenges to the Park tradition posed by these varied approaches, there is little agreement in regard to the focal issues previously suggested. Perhaps all theorists would agree on some scale of complexity and stability in collective behavior, with crowds, panics, and fads at one end and organized social movements at the other. Some theorists indeed argue that social movements are too patterned and enduring to be included within the general topic.³⁴ Turner suggests instead of a typology, a continuum of increasingly complex responses to increasingly severe breakdowns or inadequacies in the normative order.³⁵ Smelser's units include panic, craze, hostile outburst, norm- and value-oriented movements. Perhaps one source of enduring confusion is the fact that some of the units suggested appear to be behavioral processes (e.g., panic), while others (e.g., the crowd) are collectivities. If some commonly treated units are sorted out according to these categories, a tentative agreement might be established as follows:

PROCESSES	Panic	Craze	Hostile	Intended
		or	Outburst	Social Change
		Fad	or Riot	(Reform—Revolution)
COLLECTIVITIES	Mass/Crowd	Mass	Crowd	Social Movement

The concept of the public is missing from this array. Such an exclusion can be justified on two grounds. By the accident of

³³ G. E. Swanson, "A Preliminary Laboratory Study of the Acting Crowd," *American Sociological Review* 18 (October 1953): 522-33; idem, "Social Change in the Urban Society," in Ronald Freedman et al., *Principles of Sociology*, 1st ed., (New York: Henry Holt, 1952), chap. 14.

³⁴ Evans, *Readings*, p. viii; Roger Brown, *Social Psychology* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1965), p. 728.

³⁵ Turner, "Collective Behavior," p. 394.

scholarly jurisdiction, the study of public opinion and communication has become since Park's day a separate field with its own body of concepts, theory, and research. More important, if collective behavior refers to extra-institutional behavior, the public-opinion process would not be included, since in democratic, and perhaps in all modern societies, it is a vital part of the institutional order.

Explanatory Orientations

The most dramatic changes to occur since Park's work have been concerned with explanations of collective behavior, both in regard to the external-internal focus and to explanatory mechanisms. A general tendency has been to increase attention paid to the settings producing collective behavior, and to try to differentiate their features. Thus Swanson argued that differential perceptions, along several dimensions, of problems in the social environment would produce the different responses of panic, dynamic crowd, social movement, public, and mass behavior.³⁶ Smelser has a standard set of six "determinants" operative in producing any kind of collective behavior.³⁷ Four of these determinants refer to the setting: structural conduciveness, structural strain, precipitating factors, and social control. (These are formal categories whose contents differ for various kinds of collective behavior.) In Turner's current formulation, the significant feature of the setting appears to be increasing severity of normative inadequacy ranging from situations in which norms are lacking or ambiguous through those in which prior organization is disrupted to those where satisfaction of needs dictates that the normative order be set aside.³⁸

Park's emphasis was on the internal mechanisms active in both crowd and public; this approach, ultimately deriving from Le Bon, long remained dominant. Smelser has been the most vocal revisionist here. Two of his six determinants, the spread of a gen-

³⁶ Swanson, "Social Change in the Urban Society," p. 564.

³⁷ Smelser, *Theory*, pp. 15-17.

³⁸ Turner, "Collective Behavior," pp. 394-97.

eralized belief and mobilization for action, call attention to internal processes, but Smelser insists that, for the theory, it is not important what kind of internal processes fulfill these conditions.³⁹ It is only necessary that some sort of interaction, communication, and leadership appear. Turner's "emergent norm" label for his approach directs attention to an internal process: inherent in any instance of collective behavior are formation of a new collective definition of the situation, development of new norms appropriate to it, legitimation or justification of these norms, and attempts to enforce conformity.⁴⁰ This approach is congruent to Swanson's earlier and less fully developed ideas; it also awakens interesting echoes of Park. Although part of Turner's theory is a rejection of the Le Bon-derived explanation of crowd which Turner finds both theoretically and empirically untenable,⁴¹ his emergent norm process in its most general terms might be seen as roughly parallel to Park's concept of the public with its lack of unanimity, more rational approach, and development of new norms.

The Rationality Issue

Explicitly at least, the most important change in recent years on the issue of rationality has been rejection of the European insistence on viewing collective behavior as intrinsically irrational. Recognition of political and social bias in this viewpoint, more exact observation of episodes of behavior, and the lingering but final demise of the "suggestion" doctrine at the hands of psychologists all played their part.⁴² Few theorists today would attempt simply to reverse the long-standing bias and posit a rational collective behavior acting against the irrational institutional order, but modern emphasis on such processes as attempted problem-

³⁹ Smelser, *Theory*, pp. 10-11.

⁴⁰ Turner, "Collective Behavior," p. 397.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 384-92.

⁴² On bias see Leon Bramson, *The Political Context of Sociology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), chap. 3; on observation see Turner, "Collective Behavior," p. 390; on the suggestion doctrine see Solomon E. Asch, *Social Psychology* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1952), chap. 14.