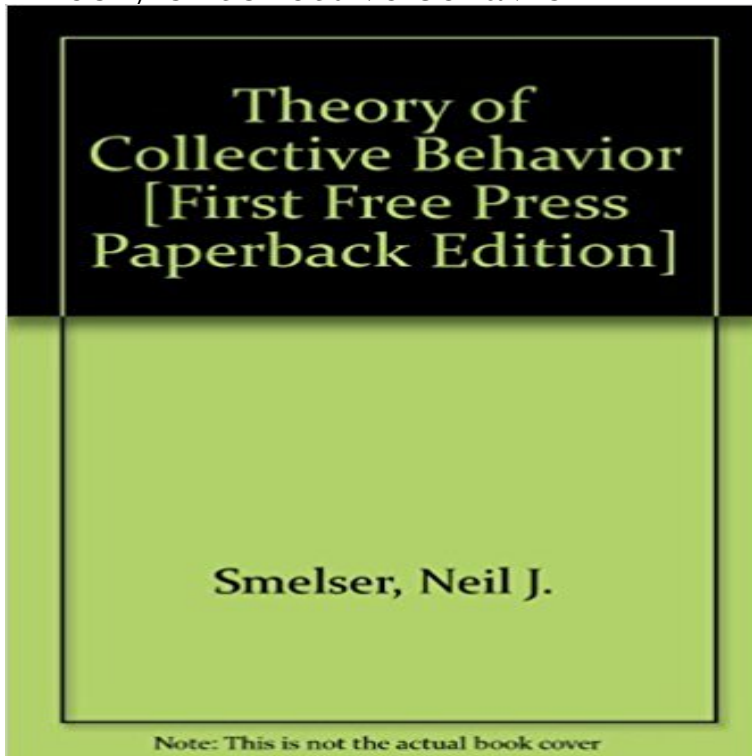


Theory of collective behavior



Excerpt from Theory of Collective Behavior Gordon W. Allport of Harvard first introduced me to the study of collective behavior. When I was a freshman in 1948, his introductory course in Social Relations set my mind working. Later, when I was a graduate student in 1955, he reactivated and deepened these workings. During the years after studying with him his words have returned to haunt me. So far as I know, he is unaware of my intellectual debt; I should like to record it now. In working on my doctoral dissertation I delved into the collective protests of the British working classes in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In trying to decipher the content and timing of these eruptions, I came to be deeply impressed with the explanatory potential of a distinctively sociological approach. The idea of attempting a theoretical synthesis of collective behavior came to me in the summer of 1958. Since then I have worked continually on this volume. Between 1959 and 1961 I was a member of the Center for Integrated Social Science Theory at the University of California, Berkeley. Known familiarly as the Theory Center, this group consisted of six or seven scholars from various departments. Each member was relieved of academic duties for one semester in each of his two years in the Center. At meetings we discussed theoretical issues arising from the work of one or more members. We had no office for meetings; we wandered peripatetically from one member's study to another. We had no secretary, no research assistants, no stationery with letterhead. Simple as it was, the Theory Center had unparalleled value. With the advance of academic specialization in the mid-twentieth century, few things can be more salutary than to have scholars take temporary leave from the confines of their research projects to discover the minds of others in an unhurried atmosphere. In the

Theory Center we read one another's work with great care and did not fear to fire broadsides when the occasion demanded. My work on collective behavior received and gained immensely from merciless criticism. About the Publisher Forgotten Books publishes hundreds of thousands of rare and classic books. Find more at www.forgottenbooks.com This book is a reproduction of an important historical work. Forgotten Books uses state-of-the-art technology to digitally reconstruct the work, preserving the original format whilst repairing imperfections present in the aged copy. In rare cases, an imperfection in the original, such as a blemish or missing page, may be replicated in our edition. We do, however, repair the vast majority of imperfections successfully; any imperfections that remain are intentionally left to preserve the state of such historical works.

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