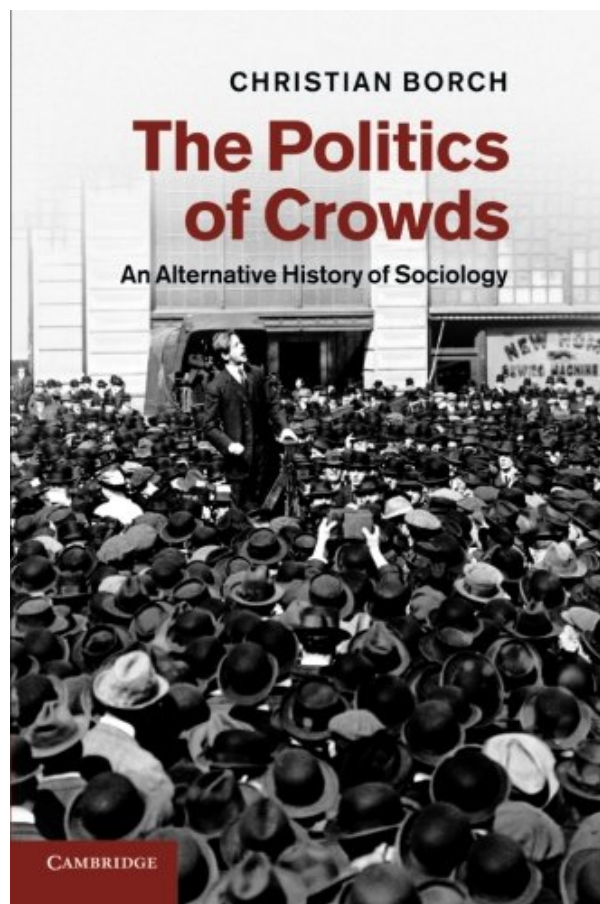
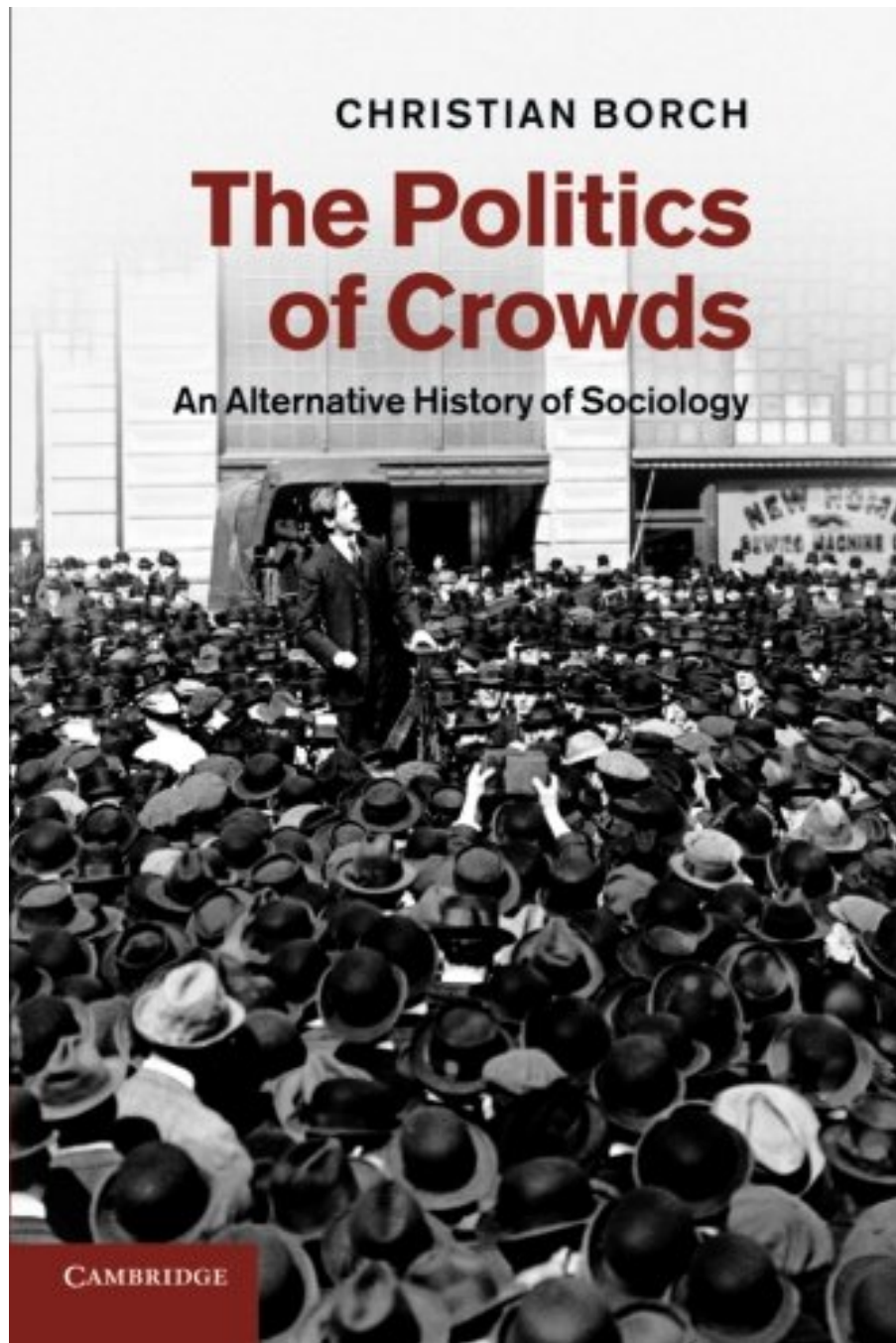


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## Review

"There are over seven billion people on the planet, many of them crammed into cities. The result is that a politics of crowds is not a curio. It is a pivotal means of understanding how we are moved by the world. Christian Borch's book is the clearest and best guide you could possibly have to the opportunities as well as the risks."

Nigel Thrift, University of Warwick

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"The book traces a series of modifications of 'crowd semantics': disciplinary frontiers, intradisciplinary struggles and historical conditions are brought together to account for the rise and decline of crowds as analytical objects of predilection for sociological research."

Claudia Aradau, Radical Philosophy

"As *The Politics of Crowds* usefully reveals the persistent and hidden presence of crowd in social theory and the tensions that are intrinsic in such uncomfortable presence, one cannot but concur with its author in his final call: 'let the spectre of crowds once again haunt sociological thought!' In short, this almost amounts to a renewal of sociology's own program."

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"We have here a study that indeed provides novel insights for both the history of sociological thought as well as for the sociology of modernity, given that the book covers major experiences of late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century European and North American socio-political life and their interpretations by concerned, scholarly informed and often politically motivated actors. The book delivers a narrative that may defy some concerns of methodology or intra-disciplinary positioning, as the author is well aware, but that increases our understanding of both the sociological enterprise and the world we live in. As such, it is without doubt a remarkable achievement."

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When sociology emerged as a discipline in the late nineteenth century, the problem of crowds constituted one of its key concerns. It was argued that crowds shook the foundations of society and led individuals into all sorts of irrational behaviour. Yet crowds were not just something to be fought in the street, they also formed a battleground over how sociology should be demarcated from related disciplines, most notably psychology. In *The Politics of Crowds*, Christian Borch traces sociological debates on crowds and masses from the birth of sociology until today, with a particular focus on the developments in France, Germany and the USA. The book is a refreshing alternative history of sociology and modern society, observed through society's other, the crowd. Borch shows that the problem of crowds is not just of historical interest: even today the politics of sociology is intertwined with the politics of crowds.

- Sales Rank: #2691796 in Books
- Published on: 2013-09-19
- Released on: 2013-09-19
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.02" h x .79" w x 5.98" l, 1.12 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 348 pages

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