The Psychology of Crowd Dynamics

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1. The challenge of crowd psychology

Crowds are the elephant man of the social sciences. They are viewed as something strange, something pathological, something monstrous. At the same time they are viewed with awe and with fascination. However, above all, they are considered to be something apart. We may choose to go and view them occasionally as a distraction from the business of everyday life, but they are separate from that business and tell us little or nothing about normal social and psychological realities . Such an attitude is reflected in the remarkable paucity of psychological research on crowd processes and the fact that it is all but ignored by the dominant paradigms in social psychology. The second edition of The Handbook of Social Cognition (Wyer & Srull, 1994) has no entry in the index under 'crowd'. Indeed, within a discipline that often views literature from a previous decade as hopelessly outdated, the little reference that is made to such research still tends to focus on Gustave Le Bon's work from a previous century (Le Bon, 1895). As we shall shortly see, it is most clearly reflected in the content of Le Bon's research and that of his followers. It was Le Bon, in terms of his theories if not his practices, who divorced crowds from their social context. His theory assumed that crowd participaton extinguishes our normal psychological capacities and reveal a primal nature which is usually well hidden from view. It was he who, with typical Victorian gusto, consigned crowds to the realms of a social scientific theatre of curiosities (cf. Reicher, 1996a; Reicher & Potter, 1985).

The aim of this chapter above all else is to free crowd psychology from being imprisoned at the margins and to restore it to its rightful place at the centre of social scientific enquiry and, more specifically, of social psychological thought. As I have previously argued (Reicher, 1982, 1987) one of the more remarkable features of traditional crowd psychology is that it has tended to constitute a theory without a referent. Rather than starting from a set of phenomena that are in need of explanation, a set of explanations were elaborated in order to underpin certain ideological presuppositions about the crowd - or at least the suppositions of gentleman observers who viewed the masses with alarm from the outside. To them, crowds seemed anonymous, their actions inherently destructive and random, their reasons unfathomable. However, these hostile and external observers never took care to investigate the patterns of crowd action and the conceptions of crowd members to see if their suppositions were warranted. If one did - and there is a growing literature by historians and social scientists that does (e.g. Feagin & Hahn, 1973; Krantz, 1988; Rude, 1964; Williams, 1986) - then two things would become immediately apparent. The first is that crowd action is patterned in such a way as to reflect existing cultures and societies. Perhaps the classic example of this remains E.P. Thompson's study of eighteenth century food riots in England (Thompson, 1971; 1991).

Of all examples of crowd action, one might at first think of food riots as a domain in which social analysis has least to offer. Surely starving people are simply motivated by a biological need to eat, to grab - by force if necessary - whatever food is available, and to make off with it. And yet, as Thompson notes, people are often passive in the face of starvation and protests are comparatively rare. When they do occur, food riots are far from inchoate explosions. In an analysis of several hundred such riots in England around

the turn of the 19th century, Thompson shows how riots had a characteristic pattern both in terms of how they started and how people behaved within them. Moreover, these patterns reflected collective belief systems. Thus the riots occurred in the context of a shift from feudal to market based economies. These were matched by different 'moral economies'. For the one, produce was meant to be sold locally and, for the other, produce was legitimately sold where it fetched the highest price. Riots generally started when grain was being transported to a distant market and the populace attempted to enforce their moral economy against that of the merchants. Events then unfolded in a way that reflected localist beliefs: grain was sold at a popular price and the money - sometimes even the grain sacks - were handed back to the merchants. In short, and in complete contrast to prevalent visions of anarchy, the food riot demonstrates how crowd action is shaped by ideology and social structure.

The second obvious feature of crowd phenomena is that they are not only shaped by society but that they in turn bring about social change. Indeed the changes wrought by crowds exist at three levels. There is change in the ways that crowd members see themselves as social actors. Autobiographies and studies of activists (e.g. Biko, 1988; Burns, 1990; Cluster, 1979; Haley, 1980, Teske, 1997) repeatedly show that people do not enter collective movements with fully fledged movement ideologies but that they develop their understanding of society and who they are within it as a consequence of participation. Crowds and collective action also leads to changes in the collective ideologies themselves. Indeed, as Eyerman and Jamison (1991) argue, the actions of social movements "are bearers of new ideas, and have often been the sources of scientific theories and of whole scientific fields, as well as new political and social identities" (p. 3). To take but one example, the rise of environmental science, of 'green' sensibilities and 'green' identities cannot be understood outside the actions of anti-nuclear activists, roads protestors and other collective acts of opposition. Finally, crowd action can bring about the entire restructuring of society. Just over a decade ago, such a point may have required more justification when the role of the sans-culottes in the French revolution of 1789 (Rude, 1959) or of the July day crowds in the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 were only historical memories. However since the transformations in Eastern Europe - whether through the peaceful mass demonstrations of Czechoslovakia's 'velvet revolution', the confrontational demonstrations in East Germany, or the violent clashes between Romanian crowds and state forces in Timisoara and elsewhere (cf. De Rudder, 1989/90; Garton Ash, 1990), the claim hardly needs to be laboured.

Putting the two features together, it should be clear that, in simultaneously encompassing social determination and social change, crowd action reflects what is possibly the central paradox of human action. Characteristically, even when this paradox constitutes the focus of enquiry, these twin facets of the human condition are studied in relation to different phenomena. However both come together in the crowd. It follows both that the crowd provides a privileged arena in which to study social (psychological) processes and also that any adequate explanation of the crowd must take us a long way towards understanding the general bases of human social behaviour.

As well as delineating the extent of the challenge, even such a brief account as that provided above suggests the nature of the tools which are necessary to meet it. Thompson's analysis suggests that the impact of structural and ideological factors upon action is achieved through actors collective understanding of their position as social subjects. Conversely, the work on social change indicates that it is as social subjects that people act collectively in ways that bring about transformations - including in the way they understand their own position. In other words, the psychological processes which relate society to crowd action are those of identity. If we are to understand the nature of crowd action we therefore need a model of identity which explains both how society structures identity and how identity organises action. Failure to do the former will lead to a desocialised crowd psychology, while failure to do the latter will lead to an abstracted social theory. In either case, it will be impossible to complete the cycle of crowd dynamics whereby social factors affect identity which organises action which then reflects back upon society - and so on.

When one measures the actual performance of traditional crowd psychology against the size of this challenge the results are sorry indeed. The failure has not been to explain either social change or social determination at the expense of the other but to ignore - no, *to deny* - both. The theoretical underpinning of this denial, which has unfortunately been bequeathed to much of social psychology in general, is a theoretical model of the self which writes society out of the picture and which therefore cannot address how it either shapes or is shaped by actors and their actions. This neglect is hardly accidental. It reflects the concerns which led crowds to become a focus of explanation. In order to understand the deficits of classical crowd theory and how to transcend them it is necessary to start by considering the context in which crowd psychology was born.

2. Classic models of the crowd

2.1. Mass society and the birth of crowd theory

The rise of industrialisation and the growth of the cities in Europe and North America during the 19th century posed social as well as technological questions. Most notably, the birth of mass society put the question of social control at the very top of the political and intellectual agenda. How would those who hitherto had been bound into the immediate hierarchies of village life continue to respect the existing social order once they were separated from their overlords as part of the urban masses? Mass society theory (cf. Giner, 1976), which theorised this dilemma, was ideological both its diagnosis and its cure.

The diagnosis centred on the loss of traditional hierarchies - the church, the family, the army. This, it was proposed, led to a level of rootlessness and mindlessness which made the mass prey to anarchic impulses, to passing fads and to unscrupulous agitators. At the core of this argument is an ideological sleight of hand. Opposition to a particular social order from the perspective of alternative forms of social order is rendered as opposition to any social order from the perspective of no social order. Existing social relations are

rendered inviolate by pathologising the alternatives. The cure to those dangers posed by the mass was therefore to reimpose existing hierarchies rather than to acknowledge the problems which nourished alternative visions (Giner, 1976; Nye, 1975).

If the mass was a potential threat to 'society', then the crowd was that potential made actual. The crowd was the instrument through which anarchy would replace order. Nowhere did that threat seem more real than in the French Third Republic, the birthplace of crowd psychology. If the bourgeoisies of other industrialising countries feared for what masses and crowds might bring about, France had seen a brief but bloody victory of mass action against the state in the form of the Paris Commune. The republic which grew on the ashes of the Commune was weak and buffeted by forms of popular opposition on all sides: clericalism, the populism of General Boulanger and, most particularly the rise of syndicalism, anarchism and socialism. When the founders of crowd science wrote about crowds it was primarily such working class action they had in mind. These founders were outsiders to the crowd , their presiding sentiment was that of fear and their principal purpose was less to understand than to repress the crowd. The first debate in crowd psychology was actually between two criminologists, Scipio Sighele and Gabriel Tarde, concerning how to determine criminal responsibility in the crowd and hence who to arrest (Sighele, 1892; Tarde, 1890, 1892, 1901).

Yet it would be one-sided to suggest that crowds incited only fear amongst the scholars who studied them and the class they represented. Crowds were also a figure of fascination. Nye (1995) points out, in the late 19th century the French in particular and Europeans in general were obsessed with the notion that industrialisation and urban life were draining off human energy, were leading to the fatigue of civilization and were thereby threatening the very survival of society. In this fin-de-siecle context the savage energy of crowds appeared as promise as well as threat. The failure of early crowd psychology was that it bemoaned the threat without being able to harness the promise. It was, perhaps, because he dealt with both sides of popular concern that the work of Gustave le Bon stood out from that of his contemporaries and that, of all of them, his work alone continues to have influence.

2.2. Gustave Le Bon and the group mind tradition

Le Bon's book on the crowd was first published in 1895. Moscovici (1981) has argued that it has not simply served as an explanation of crowd phenomena but has served to create the mass politics of the twentieth century. Certainly, Le Bon influenced a plethora of dictators and demagogues, most notoriously, Goebbels, Hitler and Mussolini. This influence was not in spite of but rather an expression of Le Bon's intentions. He repeatedly urged contemporary establishment figures to employ his principles in order to use the power of crowd for, rather than against, the state. His perspective matched the concerns of the age in their entirety: fear and fascination in equal measure; denigration of the collective intellect, harnessing of collective energy. Both are equally represented in the core concept of submergence which, for Le Bon, marked the transition from individual psychology to crowd psychology. Simply by being part of the crowd,

individuals lose all sense of self and all sense of responsibility. Yet, at the same time, they gain a sentiment of invincible power due to their numbers.

Once individual identity, and the capability to control behaviour disappears, crowd members become subject to contagion. That is, they are unable to resist any passing idea or, more particularly and because the intellect is all but obliterated, any passing emotion. This may even lead crowd members to sacrifice their personal interests - a further sign of irrationality. Contagion, however, is but an effect of suggestibility. That is, the ideas and emotions which sweep unhindered through the crowd derive primarily from the 'racial unconscious' - an atavistic substrate which underlies our conscious personality and which is revealed when the conscious personality is swept way. Hence the primitivism of that unconscious is reflected in the character of crowd behaviour. Crowd members, Le Bon asserts, have descended several rungs on the ladder of civilization. They are barbarians. But even here, where he seems at his most negative, the two-sidedness of Le Bon's perspective still comes through. For, as he then clarifies, this barbarian: "possesses the spontaneity, the violence the ferocity and also the enthusiasm of primitive beings" (p. 32). The majority of his crowd text is, in fact, essentially a primer on how to take advantage of the crowd mentality, how to manipulate crowds and how to recruit their enthusiasms to ones own ends. In brief, Le Bon exhorts the would be demagogue to direct the primitive mass by simplifying ideas, substituting affirmation and exaggeration for proof, and by repeating points over and again. It is important to acknowledge this stress on the power and the potential of crowds as a strength in Le Bon's work which has often been overlooked - and this is an issue that will recur several times in this chapter. Nonetheless there are fundamental criticisms that can be made of his ideas on three different levels.

On a descriptive level, Le Bon's work is thoroughly decontextualised. The crowd is lifted both from the distal and the proximal settings in which it arises and acts. If Le Bon's concern was with the working class crowds of late nineteenth century France, no sense is given of the grievances and social conflicts which led angry demonstrators to assemble. Perhaps more strikingly still, Le Bon writes of crowd events as if crowds were acting in isolation, as if the police or army or company guards who they confronted were absent, and as if the violent actions directed from one party to another were the random gyrations of the crowd alone. Such decontextualisation leads to reification, to generalisation and to pathologisation. Behaviours that relate to context are seen as inherent attributes of the crowd, they are therefore assumed to arise everywhere irrespective of setting and, by obscuring the social bases of behaviour, crowd action is rendered mindless and meaningless.

On a theoretical level, this divorce between crowds and social context is mirrored and underpinned by a desocialised conception of identity. That is, the self is conceptualised as a unique and sovereign construct which is the sole basis of controlled and rational action. Social context plays no part in determining the content of identity but merely serves to moderate its operation. Specifically, crowd contexts serve as the ‘off switch’ for identity. Thus Le Bon’s crowd psychology breaks the link both between society and the self and also between the self and behaviour. The former rupture means that no action,

including crowd action, can either shape or be shaped by society. The latter rupture means that crowd action can have no shape at all, either social or otherwise. If the self is sole basis of control, then loss of self in the crowd means loss of control and emergent psychopathology.

On an ideological level, Le Bon's ideas serve several functions. Firstly, it acts as a denial of voice. If crowds articulate grievances and alternative visions of society - if, in Martin Luther King's resonant phrase, crowds are the voice of the oppressed - then Le Bonian psychology silences that voice by suggesting that there is nothing to hear. Crowd action by definition is pathological, it carries no meaning and has no sense. Secondly, this psychology serves as a denial of responsibility. One does not need to ask about the role of social injustices in leading crowds to gather or the role of state forces in creating conflict. Being outside the picture they are not even available for questioning. Violence, after all, lies in the very nature of the crowd. Thirdly, Le Bon's model legitimates repression. Crowds, having no reason, cannot be reasoned with. The mob only responds to harsh words and harsh treatment. Like the mass society perspective from which it sprang, but with more elaboration and hence with more ideological precision, the Le Bonian position defends the status quo by dismissing any protests against it as instances of pathology (cf. Reicher, 1996b; Reicher & Potter, 1985).

McPhail (1991) points to such a political stance as the root of contemporary dissatisfaction with Le Bon. However, even if Le Bon's name has fallen into some disrepute, his intellectual tradition continues to have a strong presence in contemporary psychology where, since the ideology is more implicit, the ideas can still exert their baleful influence. Most directly, the concept of submergence has explicitly been acknowledged as the root of contemporary theories of deindividuation (Cannavale, Scarr & Pepitone, 1970) - although, as will be argued, deindividuation is a partial appropriation of submergence. The first study in this tradition, by Festinger, Pepitone and Newcomb (1952) showed that the more anonymous male subjects felt the more they were prepared to express hostility towards their parents. This led to a number of studies which suggested that anonymity, particularly anonymity within a group, enhanced anti-social behaviour (Cannavale, Scarr & Pepitone, 1970; Singer, Brush & Lublin, 1965). The first comprehensive attempt to theorise this relationship was made by Zimbardo (1969).

If Zimbardo echoes the extravagance of Le Bonian language in the title of his theoretical exposition - individuation reason and order versus deindividuation, impulse and chaos - the exposition itself is rather more prosaic. A series of antecedent variables, notably anonymity, lead to the lowering of self-observation and self-evaluation and hence to the weakening of controls based on guilt, shame, fear and commitment. The result of these mediating processes are lowered thresholds for exhibiting anti-social behaviour. Under conditions of deindividuation, people are liable to act in violent, vandalistic and destructive ways. Quite quickly, however, it became clear that the model has both conceptual and empirical weaknesses. Conceptually, the model remains rather vague about the psychological mediators which lie between antecedents and behavioural outcomes. Certainly, little attempt was made to explore or provide evidence for these mediators. Empirically, it rapidly become clear that, if deindividuation produced

behavioural changes it didn't necessarily lead to anti-social behaviour. Indeed at times people may become more generous and more affectionate to others under deindividuated conditions (Diener, 1979; Gergen, Gergen & Barton, 1973; Johnson & Downing, 1979). These twin issues led Diener (1977, 1980) to revise Zimbardo's model.

Diener employs Duval and Wicklund's notion of 'objective self awareness' (Duval & Wicklund, 1972) as the psychological core of deindividuation. Once again a number of antecedents, most particularly perceptual immersion in a group, provide the first stage of the model. The consequence of these factors is to overload the information processing capacities of the individual and hence to block the possibility of self-directed attention. This equates to a state of lowered objective self-awareness. The consequence of such a state is that individuals, being unable to retrieve internal or internalised standards, become increasingly influenced by environmental stimuli. They show little foresight, they lack inhibitions based on future punishment, their behaviour changes with the stimuli to which they are exposed being alternatively pro-social or anti-social as a function of whether the stimuli are pro- or anti-social.

Prentice-Dunn and Rogers (1989) have added one further twist to the tale of deindividuation theory. They borrow a distinction between public self awareness, which has to do with the individual's concerns about how others evaluate them, and private self-awareness, which approximates to the concept of objective self awareness and has to do with monitoring the extent to which ones behaviour matches ones internal standards (cf. Carver & Scheier, 1981; Fenigstein, Scheier & Buss, 1975). When public self-awareness is blocked people ignore what others think and hence exhibit anti-normative behaviours. When private self-awareness is blocked people lose access to their own internal standards and fall under external control. In effect, then, the model is a hybrid in which loss of public self-awareness approximates to Zimbardo's position and loss of private self-awareness approximates to Diener's. However Prentice-Dunn and Rogers argue that being in a large group strips away both: crowds leave us unrestrained either by social or personal standards.

Despite their differences, these models share three things in common. First of all, they consider that individuals have a single and personal identity or set of standards which are the condition for rational and controlled behaviour. Secondly, they consider that any loss of access to these standards will lead to disinhibited or at least uncontrolled behaviour. Thirdly, they propose that being part of a group - especially large and undifferentiated groups such as crowds - will lead to the occlusion of personal standards and hence to anti-social or asocial behaviour. In these respects, deindividuation theory faithfully replicates the notions of loss of identity and loss of control which contribute to Le Bon's concept of submergence. However, as has been stressed, the concept of submergence is not just about loss of identity but also about the gain of a sense of power. It is by ignoring the latter that deindividuation theory becomes only a partial appropriation of the submergence concept. Indeed it could be argued that deindividuation theory discards the strengths and retains the weaknesses of Le Bon's argument.

By ignoring the issue of power, deindividuation models also ignore the potential of

crowds and their transformatory possibilities. By retaining an individualistic notion of identity and of its loss in the crowd, deindividuation theory perpetuates the notion of collective action as generically incoherent and socially meaningful. This renders the approach incapable of accounting for the social patterning of those collective events for which the studies and the theory supposedly account. However, it also leads to a neglect of the social patterning which occurs within the studies themselves. A recent meta-analysis of the deindividuation literature (Postmes & Spears, 1998) demonstrates that, overall, subjects are more likely to adhere to collective norms when they are supposedly deindividuated. All in all, the continued rupture between society self and action leads deindividuation theory to lack both internal and external validity.

2.2. Floyd Allport and the individualistic tradition

Sometimes influence is better measured by the way one provokes disagreement than through those who express direct agreement. Group mind theory may retain a presence in social psychology, however it is undoubtedly a minority presence. Le Bon's more enduring impact has to do with Floyd Allport's rejection of the idea of a group mind and then through Allport's subsequent influence. If this seems paradoxical, the important thing to bear in mind is that, in being drawn into debate with Le Bon's position, Allport accepted the terms of that debate and hence these terms were allowed to predominate.

Such acceptance is easily obscured by the ferocity with which Allport condemned any notion of a group mind. He considered any reference to a mind that was separate from the psyche of individuals as a meaningless abstraction or even as 'a babble of tongues' (Allport, 1933) and, in his seminal text on social psychology (Allport, 1924) he asserted that: "there is no psychology of groups which is not essentially and entirely a psychology of individuals" (p. 4). When it come to collective action, Allport declared, still more famously: "the individual in the crowd behaves just as he would behave alone only more so" (p. 295). This phrase has launched numerous theories and countless studies in group and crowd psychology. Ironically, however, while it fairly represents Allport's views on group processes in general, it is seriously misleading when it comes to his account of what happens in crowds themselves.

Allport’s approach was based upon a combination of instinct and learning theory. He saw individuals as behaving on the basis of enduring response tendencies deriving from their conditioning histories. Conditioning, in turn, was built upon six fundamental prepotent reflexes - including withdrawing from danger, the need for nutrition and for love. When energy is applied to the system, say through the stimulation provoked by others being present, there is an accentuation of the pre-existing tendencies. This is the concept of social facilitation. In general, then, collective behaviour arises where there is a coming together of individuals who “owing to similarities of constitution, training and common situations, are possessed of a similar character” (1924, p.6). However, excitation is in geometric relation to the number of people present. So, as the group becomes a mass, so there comes a point at which the collective ‘boils over’. At this point, learnt responses simply break down leaving the underlying instinctual apparatus. In particular, masses (or

crowds) are governed by the instinct of struggle - which is the tendency to destroy anything that stands in the way of the satisfaction of other instincts.

When one outlines what Allport actually wrote about crowd psychology as opposed to what has been assumed from a single quotation, the similarities with Le Bon are obvious. Crowd members lose their unique and idiosyncratic identities and behave in terms of a primitive animal substrate - the difference being that Allport's substrate is more biological and less mystical. Like Le Bon, Allport's crowd psychology ruptures both the link between society and identity and that between identity and action. His more general group psychology may restore the latter link, but it still rejects the former. That is to say, groups might accentuate identity but it is an asocial identity. The shape of crowd action is determined by character structures not by culture or by ideology. It therefore remains impossible to understand the social shape of collective action let alone the way it shapes society. Therefore, the tradition which derives from Allport may (unwittingly) break with his (and Le Bon's) ideas of identity loss. However it still retains a desocialised conception of identity which blocks the possibility of understanding the psychological mediation between society and collective action.

In talking of the Allportian tradition one is talking referring to a more diffuse sense of influences than in the case of Le Bon. Rather than a single model with its roots explicitly acknowledged, there are a number of approaches whose lineage from Allport is a matter of explaining collective action in terms of pre-existing individual tendencies. The most obvious application of such an individualistic meta-theory to crowds is to argue that action is explicable in terms of the individual traits and attributes of participants. Crowd members who take part in violent action or action against the social order might be expected to have violent or anti-social personalities - or, at the very least, to be under-socialised or marginal to society. As the official US Riot Commission report of 1968 acknowledged, the most prevalent view was that "rioters were criminal types, overactive social deviants or riff-raff - recent migrants, members of an uneducated underclass - alienated from responsible Negroes and without broad social or political concerns" (pp. 125-6).

The evidence disconfirms such a view. To start with, riots are less likely where populations are more marginal or more transient. Indeed, in total contrast to the fears of mass society theorists, an analysis of European cities during the 19th century shows that greater growth and social disorganisation was related to lower levels of riot (C. Tilly, 1969, R. Tilly, 1970; Tilly, Tilly & Tilly, 1975). Riots tended to happen in towns and in areas that were stable and had well established social networks. Feagin and Hahn (1973) provide similar evidence for the American urban revolts of the 1960's.

Next, there is considerable data that shows migrants were under-represented and long standing residents were over-represented in riot events (Caplan & Paige, 1968; C. Tilly, 1968). This resonates with what, by now, is a copious literature on crowd participants which, whether in the case of Roman mobs (Brunt, 1966), the Sacherevell rioters of 1710 (Holmes, 1976), the Gordon rioters of 1780 (Rude, 1970; Stephenson, 1979), the Wilkite mobs (Rude, 1970), the crowds of the French revolution (Rude, 1959), the Luddites

(Hobsbawn, 1968), the 'Captain Swing' rioters (Hobsbawm & Rude, 1969) and many more besides, including the American rioters of the 1960's (Caplan & Paige, 1968; Marx, 1967) shows that rioters were typically members of cohesive groups from he more 'respectable' strata of society. The 1968 U.S. riot commission draws an explicit portrait of the typical ghetto rioter: "He was born in the state and was a life-long resident of the city in which the riot took place... he was somewhat better educated than the average inner-city Negro... he is substantially better informed about politics than Negroes who were not involved in the riots" (pp. 128-9).

Finally, while there is ample evidence, especially from the American revolts of the 1960's, that participants differed from non-participants in terms of ideology and identification - they associated more in terms of black pride and black power and accepted an ideology of resistance to oppression (Caplan, 1970; Caplan & Paige, 1968; Forward & Williams, 1970; Marx, 1967; Tomlinson, 1970) - there has been precious little success in finding any individual attributes which reliably predict riot participation (Foster & Long, 1970; Stark, 1972; Turner & Killian, 1987). McPhail (1971) surveyed 288 attempts to associate such attributes with measures of participation in riots between 1965 and 1969, and in only two cases was there a strong relationship. The riff-raff view, whatever guise it takes, is manifestly unsupported.

A rather different attempt to explain crowds in individualistic terms can be found in the form of game theory. The classic statement of this approach is to be found in Olson's (1965) text: 'The Logic of Collective Action'. He argued that crowd members act as classic utility maximisers, seeking, as normal, to increase benefits over costs to the individual self but under conditions of altered contingencies. The most consistent champion of this approach has been Richard Berk (1972a,b, 1974a,b). His 'rational calculus' model of crowd action involved five steps. Firstly crowd members seek information, secondly they use this information to predict possible events, thirdly they list their behavioural options, fourthly they establish a preference order for the probable outcomes of alternative actions and fifthly they then decide on a course of action which will minimise costs and maximise rewards. In sum, the probability of an act is a joint function of payoff and perceived probability of support (Berk, 1974b). So, where one perceives mass support, one will be more likely to pursue valued ends which one previously eschewed for fear of resistance or punishment by an outgroup (see also Brown, 1985). The effect of the crowd, therefore, is to transform behaviour while maintaining the individual standards and tendencies on which behaviour is based.

Berk himself recognises that both his causal concepts, anticipated payoff and anticipated support, are fraught with problems. Being almost impossible to specify in advance: "analyses of their impact risk circularity" (1974b, p. 365). As a result of this, game theoretical approaches to crowd behaviour have generated little research and the area has fallen into disuse. While Berk himself did provide some detailed studies of crowd events (1972b, 1974a), as McPhail (1991) notes, their subtlety serves to expose the limitations and not to reveal the power of game theory. These limitations can be traced directly to the concept of self embodied in the core notion of human beings as 'utility maximisers'.

This idea is individualistic in two senses. On the one hand it is presupposed that the subject of utility is the individual actor. The idea that people might seek to accrue benefits for collective units - ones country, one's comrades, even ones family - is not considered. On the other hand the criterion of utility lies in the set priorities of the individual actor - or else it is presupposed that certain things, notably monetary reward, count as utilities for everyone. The possibility that social values and norms might determine utilities, or that the values and norms on which people act, and hence what counts as a utility, might change in collective contexts, is equally ruled out of court. Hence we are back firmly with the problem with which we began. Any model which links behaviour to fixed individual tendencies must suppose a commonality of tendencies amongst crowd members (a proposition which is confounded by the evidence) and must deny the social character of crowd action. These errors of commission and omission are insuperable. More generally still, the view of self which isolates the psychological mechanisms of behavioural control from societal structuration - a view shared by Le Bon and by Allport and by the descendants of both - remains as much of a barrier to the understanding of crowd action as it did a century ago.

3. Models of Crowd Sociality

3.1. Emergent Norm Theory

Given the divorce between individual and society in psychological social psychology it is unsurprising that sociology began to develop its own social psychology and that perhaps the best known approach within this tradition is symbolic interactionism which is concerned with the creation of meaning within social interactions. It is equally unsurprising that the first attempt to explain the social shape of crowd action should involve the application of the approach by sociologists. Emergent norm theory, (Turner & Killian, 1987), is an attempt to combine symbolic interactionism with psychological research on the formation of group norms (Asch, 1952; Sherif, 1936; Sherif & Harvey, 1952) in order to account for the social coherence of collective action. Their approach seeks to reconcile the claim that crowd action is normal rather than pathological or irrational with the observation that it is not guided by traditional norms but rather tends to transcend, bypass or even subvert established institutional patterns. As the name of the theory suggests, this reconciliation is effected through the idea that collective behaviour takes place under the governance of emergent norms. Understanding collective behaviour therefore depends upon explicating the process of norm formation.

For Turner and Killian, collective behaviour often takes place in situations that are unusual such that "redefining the situation, making sense of confusion, is a central activity" (1987, p. 26). They draw on Sherif (Sherif, 1936; Sherif & Harvey, 1952) to argue that uncertainty precipitates a search for norms and upon Asch (1952) to argue that the perception of unanimity is central to the validation of norms. Norms are effective to the extent that they are seen as a property of the group rather than a position taken by particular individuals within the group. However, their distinctive contribution concerns the gap in between: how do new norms emerge and gain assent?

Turner and Killian argue that it is an illusion to suppose that crowds are homogenous. Rather, crowds are characterized: "by differential expression, with some people expressing what they are feeling while others do not" (1987, p. 26). Before crowd action takes place there is characteristically an extended period of 'milling' during which people engage with others, proffering their own accounts of reality and listening to that of others. Certain individuals are more prominent than others in this process. These so-called 'keynoters' help to resolve the ambivalence of the majority by proposing definite action tersely, forcibly and with no uncertainty. As more people resolve or suppress their ambivalence in favour of the stance of given a keynoter so that proposal is expressed more widely to the exclusion of other proposals. In this way the illusion of unanimity grows and the illusion becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

From close to, this provides a compelling picture of crowd action. As is demonstrated by the studies which Turner and Killian cite, and by subsequent studies alike (e.g. Reicher, 1984a; Reicher, 1996b; Stott & Reicher, 1998), the violent and dramatic moments of crowd events may attract all the attention but they almost always occur after a prolonged period of 'hanging around' during which crowd members seek to make sense of what is happening. To remove the final moments from the extended temporal context is as serious an act of decontextualisation as to remove crowd action from the extended inter-group context. Equally, the notion of crowd members debating how to make sense of novel social situations and then acting upon the resultant collective understandings fits with empirical studies of crowd events (Caplan & Paige, 1968; Fogelson, 1971; Oberschall, 1968; Reddy, 1977; Reicher, 1984a; Smith, 1980; Thompson, 1971).

In these regards, Emergent Norm Theory marks a crucial break with classic crowd psychology and an important step towards understanding the sociality of crowd action. It restores the link between the self-understandings of the subject and actions in the crowd. It also emphasizes the inherent sociality of these understandings. However, this sociality relates almost exclusively to the micro-social interactions amongst individual crowd members. It comes at the expense of understanding the links between what goes on between crowd members and broader aspects of social reality. This divorce between micro and macro levels of analysis underlies two important limitations to the theory.

First of all, such is that stress on the deliberative process that it becomes very difficult to explain how crowd unity can be achieved without a prolonged period of milling and therefore how crowds could remain united but still shift rapidly in relation to changing circumstances - a problem acknowledged even by adherents to Emergent Norm Theory (e.g. Wright, 1978). It is as if norms must be constructed from scratch through laborious inter-individual interactions each time a decision is needed. The lack of any scaffolding to the process of norm creation also makes it hard to explain how crowd norms and crowd behaviour reflect broad cultural and ideological understandings - this is the second limitation. When explaining why the suggestions of particular keynoters should prevail over others, Turner and Killian invoke such factors as the status of speakers, their primacy in speaking, their terseness of expression and the existence of latent support for

their position. Without specification, the last suggestion is in danger of slipping into tautology. What is left are a series of factors relating to the attributes of the keynoter. Taken to its extreme, this results in a position whereby crowds act in terms of group norms but these group norms are a function of the individual leaders. Hence Emergent Norm Theory becomes an elitist form of the individualist tradition.

This is certainly not what Turner and Killian intend. However these problems are inevitable unless a way is found to relate the processes of sense-making in the immediate social context to the broader ideological context. To put it otherwise, Emergent Norm Theory extends the analysis of the processes that shape crowd action from an intra-individual to an inter-individual level. However the subject remains isolated from societal definition and hence the relations of determination between larger-scale social factors and the actions which take place within and between groups remain opaque.

3.2. A social identity model of crowd action

For the purposes of explaining crowd action, perhaps the most significant aspect of social identity theory and its development through self-categorisation theory (Tajfel, 1978, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987; Turner, Oakes, Haslam & McGarty, 1994) is the concept of social identity itself. To start with, the social identity tradition assumes identity to be multiple and to constitute a complex system rather than being unitary. Most notably, a distinction has been made between personal identity, which refers to the unique characteristics of the individual, and social identity, which refers to an individual's self understanding as a member of a social category (Tajfel, 1978; Turner & Giles, 1981). However these terms may be misleading and it is important to stress that all identities are social in the sense of defining the person in terms of social relations. It is just that these relations are defined at different levels of abstraction. Personal identity defines how I, as an individual, am unique compared to other individuals while social identity defines how we, as members of one social category are unique compared to members of other social categories (Turner, 1991, 1999;Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987). However, the definition of social categories is inescapably bound up with ideological traditions. What it means to be a Catholic, a socialist, a Scot or whatever cannot be understood outside of such traditions.

It is equally important to stress that all identities are personal in the sense that they define the individual and are deeply important to the individual. Social identities at times may be even more important than individual survival. It is almost a truism to note that people will not only kill but die for their various faiths - national and political as well as religious. They may even glory in so doing: *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*. The most important point, however, is to stress how social identity brings the individual and the societal together. It defines individual category members in ideological terms. It thereby provides a good starting point for understanding how the patterns of collective action may be ideologically coherent. It remains to specify in more detail how socio-ideological factors relate to the micro- processes of influence and interaction in the crowd through the mediation of social identity.

According to Turner (1982, 1991; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987) self-categorization constitutes the psychological basis for group behaviour. On defining ourselves as category members we participate in a process of self stereotyping. That is, we seek to determine the relevance of category identity for action in context and we conform accordingly. We expect fellow group members to do likewise and therefore we also expect to agree with them on matters pertaining to our mutual social identity. How then do we determine what our category implies for how we should act in any given situation? In most of our social lives our actions will be routinised and norms will be clearly specified. Where they are not, there may be mechanisms of debate or else hierarchies of command through which norms may be specified. Such deliberative processes whereby appropriate behaviour is derived from consideration of general category identity corresponds to what has been termed the deductive aspect of categorisation (Turner, 1982). However, crowd situations are typically exceptional rather than routine and they offer little possibility of deliberation. Crowds are usually unstructured groups with no formal lines of command and the practical possibility of sitting down to agree on norms in the midst of a riot is rather limited. In this situation, the inductive aspect of categorisation may take precedence. That is, group norms are inferred from the comments and actions of those seen as typical group members (Reicher, 1982).

In one sense, this account is similar to that of Emergent Norm Theory: crowd members are faced with the task of making sense of ambiguous situations and look to noteworthy others in order to do so. However the key difference is that, from a Social Identity perspective, crowd members approach that task as members of a specific category. Being part of a psychological crowd (as opposed to a set of people who simply happen to be co-present) does not entail a loss of identity but a shift to the relevant social identity. Correspondingly it entails neither a loss of control nor a simple accentuation of pre-potent tendencies, but rather a shift to categorical bases of behavioural control. So, crowd members do not simply ask 'what is appropriate for us in this context?' but 'what is appropriate for us *as members of this category* in this context?'. They won't follow anything but only those suggestions that can be seen as appropriate in terms of category identity. They won't follow anyone but only those seen as category members. More generally, crowd members seek to construe a contextual identity by reference to and within the limits set by the superordinate categorical identity. This relationship, and the fact that identity can be inferred from the acts of ingroup members, explains the rapidity with which consensus can arise. Insofar as social identities are ideologically defined, this (unlike Emergent Norm Theory) also explains how the broad limits of crowd action make sense in terms of societal ideologies (Reicher, 1982, 1987).

Evidence to support the social identity model of crowd action comes from both experimental and from field studies. The experimental studies address the deindividuation paradigm. Reicher (1984a) demonstrated that when individuals are already in a group then anonymity in the sense of loss of individuating cues accentuates the predominance of cues to group membership and hence of category salience. This leads to an accentuation of group normative behaviour. Conversely, where people start off isolated from each other as individuals, then anonymity accentuates that isolation, weakens group salience and weakens normative behaviour. These findings have been

replicated and extended in a number of different settings with a variety of groups and using different manipulations of anonymity (Lea & Spears, 1991; Postmes, Spears & Lea, 1998, 1999; Reicher & Levine, 1994a,b; Reicher, Levine & Gordijn, 1998; Reicher, Spears & Postmes, 1995; Spears & Lea, 1992, 1994; Spears, Lea & Lee, 1990). What is more, as I have already noted, a recent meta-analysis of all the major studies over the last 30 years (Postmes & Spears, 1998) indicates that, when supposedly 'deindividuated', subjects tend to act in terms of the norms that are appropriate to the specific groups that were involved.

The first of the field studies dealt with St. Pauls 'riot' of April 1980 - the precursor to a wave of 'inner city riots' which affected most major British cities during the 1980's. The events stemmed from a police raid on a black owned cafe in the St. Paul's area of Bristol and led to five hours of sustained conflict followed by attacks against property. Despite the dominance of irrationalist accounts by politicians and in the media (Reicher, 1984a; Reicher & Potter, 1985), a systematic analysis of the events revealed three elements that went together to make up a very different picture. First of all, there were clear limits to crowd action. In the earlier phase of conflict, only the police constituted targets of attacks. In the later phase, after the police had left, only financial institutions and shops owned by outsiders were subjected to collective attack and looting. There were also geographical limits to the action. The rioters chased the police to the boundaries and then stayed put, lighting symbolic bonfires at the limits and directing traffic back in.

Secondly, participants described themselves and others in terms of social identities. On the one hand, they stressed their collective identity as members of a St. Paul's community. Likewise, they described their relations to others on a categorical level: whether people were fellow St. Paul's inhabitants, whether they were outsiders or whether they were members of categories specifically seen as antagonistic to St. Pauls. They also stressed that part of the pleasure of the events was that people recognised each other and were recognised as from St. Pauls. That is, they may have been anonymous to the police outgroup but they were certainly not anonymous to fellow ingroup members.

Thirdly, there was a clear match between crowd action and the self-definition of crowd members. While only a minority of crowd members were black, St. Paul's identity was defined in terms of black experience: to be from St. Pauls was to be oppressed by institutions such as the police, to be exploited by financial institutions and to be in poverty within an affluent society. Accordingly, those who people were attacked were predominantly members of the police. It was the financial institutions which were physically attacked and the symbols of luxury which were destroyed. Moreover, the geographical character of the identity is reflected in the geographical limits to all the attacks.

This relationship between identity and collective action was apparent not only in terms of outcome but also in terms of process. That is, the actions of individuals in the crowd were extremely varied, however the importance of social identity was displayed in the ways in which individual actions did or did not generalise. When a stone was thrown at the police it led to a hail of stones. When a stone was thrown at a bus crowd members not only

failed to join in but actively dissuaded the perpetrator. Hence it was through the limits of what became collective that the operation of social identity was apparent. No doubt, under the cover of crowd action, individuals did enter St. Pauls to loot for personal gain. Hence the simple record of damage and theft reveals a muddied pattern. But considering events in progress and looking at how consensus emerges and shifts, then the pattern is much clearer.

Such evidence, and further evidence concerning a number of different crowd events in different contexts (Drury & Reicher, 1999, in press; Reicher, 1996b; Stott, 1996; Stott & Drury, 1999; Stott & Reicher, 1998) serves as powerful support for a social identity perspective and, more particularly, for the notion that crowd members act in terms of social identity (as opposed to losing identity) which then guides influence processes amongst crowd members (as opposed to influence being unguided and unlimited). However, even within the St. Paul's study, the evidence does more than suggest that crowds are simply like other groups in that social identity forms the basis for collective action. Firstly, it indicates that crowds give rise to a sense of power which allows members to express their identity even in the face of outgroup opposition. Indeed it suggests that crowds may be unique in allowing people to give full expression to their identities.

This claim gains further backing from more recent studies in the deindividuation paradigm which show that, when people in groups are anonymous to outgroup members and identifiable to fellow ingroup members (such that they are able to coordinate and to express mutual support) they are more likely to express those aspects of ingroup identity that are punishable by the outgroup (Reicher & Levine, 1994a,b; Reicher, Levine & Gordijn, 1998; Reicher, Spears & Postmes, 1995). Such analyses reintroduce the concept of power to crowd psychology. However, in contrast to the Le Bonian tradition, power is not regarded as a result of identity loss and it not seen as leading to mayhem in crowd events. Rather, power operates in relation to the expression of identity and therefore lends a clearer social form to crowd action.

Thus far, the social identity model fares relatively well in explaining crowd action. It provides a means of linking society to identity and identity to action in such a way as to explain the patterning of crowd events. It acknowledges that people in crowds have the potential to undertake and carry through actions in ways that would normally be impossible. The energy of the crowd invests it with a transformatory potential. However, the evidence points to a second type of transformation with which the model copes less well. That is, in St. Pauls as elsewhere, events did not simply allow crowds to enact repressed aspects of an existing identity. They also led to a change of identity. After the 'riots', those who had been involved expressed a new found confidence in resisting and making claims of the police and of other authorities. They expressed a new sense of pride in themselves and a new sense of their potential. In a model where the emphasis is on the way in which crowd action is a consequence of social identity, how can crowd action lead to social and psychological change? In more general terms, the Social Identity Model may account for the social determination of crowd action, but it is less successful

in explaining social and psychological change. In order to overcome this impasse it is necessary to address the relationship between social categorisation and social reality.

This is a central issue for self-categorisation theorists. In contrast to those who assert that social categorisation and group level perception are a form of functional error by which a human cognitive system of limited processing capacity seeks to simplify an overly complex social world, self-categorisation theorists assert that categorisation and stereotyping reflect the nature of social reality: we see people in terms of group memberships to the extent that people are organised in terms of group memberships in the world (Oakes, Haslam & Turner, 1994) even though this may increase the load on our cognitive systems (Nolan, Haslam, Spears & Oakes, 1999; Spears & Haslam, 1997; Spears, Haslam & Jansen, 1999). However, while self-categorisation theory raises the question of how psychological categories relate to the organisation of the social world, it is important to see this as a two way relationship. To date, the stress has been on the way in which social context defines social categories and hence social action. It is equally important to examine how social categorisation can be used to organise collective action and hence affect social context. This aspect of the relationship is important in itself if we are to understand crowd phenomena - particularly the mobilisation and direction of mass action. However it is also important as a precursor to understanding the interplay between determination and change and hence how crowd events unfold. In the next two sections, these issues will be dealt with in turn.

3.3. Categorisation and mass mobilisation

In technical terms, self-categorisation theory proposes that the way we group people in the world (category salience) is a function of accessibility and perceiver readiness. Perceiver readiness has to do with the extent to which certain categories are available within our cognitive system and the extent to which we are accustomed to using them (Turner, Oakes, Haslam & McGarty, 1994). Most work, however, has focused on ‘fit’, which has to do with the extent to which the categories fit the distribution of stimuli in the real world. On the one hand those categories are chosen which minimise the ratio of intra-group differences to inter-group differences - comparative fit. On the other hand, categories are chosen such that the nature of differences between stimuli match normative expectations about group differences - normative fit (Oakes & Turner, 1986; Oakes, Haslam & Turner, 1994; Oakes, Turner & Haslam, 1991). The fit principle, specifically that of comparative fit, is also used to explain the content of category identities. That is, the prototypical group position towards which group members will converge is that position which minimises intra-group differences compared to inter-group differences. It will therefore vary as a function of which outgroup is present in the specific comparative context (Haslam & Turner, 1992, 1995; Haslam, Turner, Oakes, McGarty & Hayes, 1992).

While the 'fit' principle assures the link between reality and group process, it should not be thought that this means that social perception and action are purely the result of intra-psychic cognitive computations. In recent formulations (Haslam, 1997; Haslam, Turner,

Oakes, McGarty & Reynolds, 1998) it has been stressed that the adoption of a common category membership frames a process of discussion and debate. The importance of categorisation is that it leads group members to expect agreement around the ingroup stereotype and hence to engage in an active search for consensus. Nonetheless, even if a degree of debate is allowed, there is a danger that the emphasis on fit may lead to the impression that in any specific situation, the categories will also be specified and that there will be an irresistable impetus towards a single and consensual definition of the category stereotype. As indicated above, the model may be seen as providing a one-sided relationship between context and self, whereby the context is taken as given and as determining the self - and hence social action. If stasis derives from a rigid notion of context as fixed external reality, balance depends upon problematising this notion.

Reicher and Hopkins (1996a,b) have argued that, while experimenters may be able to impose a particular frame upon subjects, to specify the positions of those within the frame and to do so in advance of any action, these conditions are far from universal outside the laboratory. Frequently in our social worlds, especially those worlds inhabited by crowds and social movements, the nature of context is not clear and may provide a focus of controversy. So, while categories may indeed be linked to context, one cannot always presuppose the context and read off the categories. It is also true that people may contest the nature of context and therefore dispute the nature of categories. Within a specific situation people may differ what categories are relevant, over the content of categorical stereotypes and even over who is prototypical of the groups (Herrera & Reicher, 1998, Reicher & Hopkins, 1996a,b; Reicher & Sani, 1998; Sani & Reicher, 1998, 1999).

Taking the argument a stage further, these arguments about categorisation are not simply attempts to *understand* context, but an attempt to *create* context. That is, if self-categorisation theory is right in suggesting that the character of collective action depends upon the nature of self-categories, then it is through defining these categories that one is able to shape social behaviour at any scale from the small group right up to societal mobilisations. This being the case, then one might expect those concerned with mass mobilisation - such as politicians and social movement activists - to be 'entrepreneurs of identity' (cf. Besson, 1990). A number of studies have supported this supposition, showing that speakers seek, firstly, to define the boundaries of social categories such that all those they seek to mobilise fall within a common category; secondly, to define the content of category stereotypes such that the position advocated by the speaker is consonant with ingroup identity; and, thirdly, to define the category prototype such that they themselves or the organisation they represent exemplifies the category and is therefore able to outline appropriate situational norms (Hopkins & Reicher, 1997a,b; Reicher & Hopkins, 1996a,b; Reicher Hopkins & Condor, 1997a,b).

In more familiar terms, this is a model of mass leadership (or, in the terms of Emergent Norm Theory, of keynoter effectiveness). Successful leaders are those who are able to define themselves in the terms of the category definition and who define their proposals as the enactment of the relevant social identity. In one sense, this is consistent with recent studies which show that, when categories are salient, leadership effectiveness is higher

for those who match the category prototype (Hogg, 1996; Hains, Hogg & Duck, 1997) and that, as comparative context changes and with it the category prototype, so different leaders come to the fore (Haslam, 1999). However, in line with the broader meta-theory, these studies tend to presuppose the definition of identity and leadership is something conferred by objective coincidence between personal and group positions. This portrays the leader as essentially passive and helpless in the face of circumstance. The argument being advanced here rejects the notion of identity as given, it makes the leaders much more active in construing both the nature of group identity and their own natures or else their proposals so as to achieve a consonance between the two. It also demands that we give independent weight to the discursive ploys through which speakers seek to make their constructions seem factual and self-evident (cf. Edwards, 1997; Potter, 1996). All in all, leadership is not simply a reflection of existing social realities, but also a matter of creating future realities through the ways in which self categories are constructed and people are mobilised.

We now have a path from self-categorisation to social context which can be added to that from context to categorisation. However, this statement needs elaboration or else it threatens to be seriously misleading. If self-categorisation is seen as a direct determinant of social reality, then there would be no limits upon the effectiveness of leaders in recreating the world as they wish beyond their ingenuity in offering appropriate constructions (what Billig (1987) terms 'witcraft'). That would be simply to use the one path to supplant the other rather than advancing our understanding of the two way relationship between categorisation and social reality in such a way as to account for the way in which collective action embodies both social determination *and* social change.

However self-categorisation does not create reality directly. Rather it organises collective action which is aimed at creating particular forms of reality. But of course, such actions may not proceed unhindered, particularly in crowd contexts. As was stressed earlier, crowd events are typically intergroup encounters, and the actions of one group may be resisted by the actions of the other. If identity is about the organisation of action, then one might expect that such outgroup resistance to ingroup actions will frame the effectiveness of different identity constructions. Indeed, one can go further and argue that, in the case of crowd events, the outgroup does not just provide resistance to action, but provides the very ground on which it occurs. That is, the physical context within which crowd members act and which they seek to change, is constituted by presence and actions of the other. The relationship between self-categorisation and context is therefore formed out of the intentions for future action by one group and the outcomes of past action by the other group. This relationship, and hence the balance between social determination and social change, is to be understood by analysing the unfolding dynamics between groups. The elaborated social identity model of crowds is designed to enable just such an analysis.

3.4 An Elaborated Social Identity Model of crowds (ESIM).

In order to address the dynamic interplay between groups that constitutes crowd events, ESIM involves a reappraisal of some of the basic terms of the social identity tradition.

The first (as already indicated) is the notion of context, which needs to be understood as constituted for one group by the actions of the other (and vice-versa). The second is the notion of identity itself. Whereas self-categorisation theory, through the concept of comparative fit, proposes that the process of identity definition depends upon the relationship between categories in context, the content of social identity is generally conceptualised (or at least operationalised) in terms of trait lists (e.g. Haslam & Turner, 1992, 1995; Oakes, 1987; Oakes & Turner, 1990).

By contrast ESIM regards social identity as a model of self in social relations, along with the actions that are proper and possible given such a social position. Thus, to be British is to define oneself in a world of nations or to be working class is to define a world in terms of class relations, and class 'characteristics' flow from the possibilities that flow from occupying a disempowered position within this world. Such a conception is buttressed by two types of empirical evidence. The first is that when people talk of their identity they tend to do so in the terms of this definition (Reicher, 1984a; 1987). The second is that use of traits without reference to the relational context in which they gain meaning may be highly misleading (Hopkins & Reicher, 1997a,b). To describe the English as 'freedom loving' has entirely different connotations as a functions of whether it is used in the context of fighting the Nazis or opposing a Pakistani family moving in next door (cf. Schwarz, 1982).

This conception of social identity leads to the question of how we can change identity by acting on identity to be reposed in the following terms: how can action in terms of one understanding of ones social position lead to a change in that social position and hence a change in ones self- understanding? Social psychology in general, and the social identity tradition in particular, often presupposes that outcomes flow directly from intentions and therefore overlooks any disjunction between the two. However, by invoking the intergroup character of crowd events once more, this disjunction becomes not only explicable but even mundane. As Shotter (1989) notes, once action is placed in an interactional context, it is always liable to result in unintended consequences . In crowd events, people may act on the basis of one set of understandings but their acts may be interpreted in very different ways by the outgroup. Where the outgroup has to power to privilege its interpretations this may lead actors into unimagined positions.

In a number of studies involving different types of crowd event, including football matches (Stott & Reicher, 1998) student demonstrations (Reicher, 1996) Tax protests (Drury & Reicher, 1999; Stott & Drury, 2000) and environmental protests (Drury & Reicher, in press), a common dynamic has been found to underlie processes of change. Each of these events has different psychological crowds with different identities and different intentions co-existing within the physical crowd (or aggregate). Such change as occurred was amongst 'moderate' elements of the crowd who understood themselves as 'responsible citizens' acting in socially legitimate ways and who understood those policing them as neutral guarantors of the social order. However, in coming together within a single aggregate, these actors were seen by police as an indistinguishable part of an illegitimate crowd which constituted a danger to the social order. Moreover, given their technological and communicational resources, the police were able to impose this

understanding upon the crowd by stopping all of them from continuing in their activities - whether they be marching to a football match, lobbying parliament about student funding, registering opposition to a new tax or registering opposition to the destruction of green areas in order to construct a road.

As a consequence of being impeded in carrying out such ‘legitimate’ activities and in response to being treated as dangerous and oppositional by the police, ‘moderate’ crowd members in turn came to see the police as an illegitimate opposition. Furthermore, having experienced a common fate at the hands of the police, previously disparate crowd members came to see themselves as part of a common category even with more radical elements from whom they had previously felt distanced. This extension of the ingroup category, along with the solidarity that was both expected and obtained amongst ingroup members, led to a sense of empowerment and a willingness to challenge the police. Such challenges confirmed the initial police perception and, in turn, led them to increase the level of constraint they sought to impose on crowd members. In this way a process of escalation was initiated and sustained.

These interactions led, both during and subsequent to the actual events, to a series of changes: in subjects’ sense of themselves (from ‘moderate’ to ‘oppositional’), to a change in their sense of identification with others (including other oppositional groups within a common identity), to a change in their sense of empowerment and potential (as a function of being part of a larger movement) and even to a change in their very reasons for collective action (from the specific aim of the original protest to the need to challenge illegitimate authority and hence the intrinsic value of sustaining protest).

On a theoretical level, these examples show clearly be seen how categorisation and context inter-relate within inter-group dynamics. The category definitions deployed by the police led to their physical deployment against the crowd and constituted the context in which the crowd acted. This led to recategorisations by the crowd and common action against the police - thus constituting a new context within which the police in their turn reacted. Not only does categorisation for the one group shape the actions which become context for the other, but in the process the very categories and the relations between them are altered. It can also be seen that the process of change results from certain crowd members acting on one understanding of social relations and this leading to them being placed in a new set of social relations as a consequence of the way their presence and their actions were understood and reacted to by an outgroup. Hence, in line with the reconceptualisations offered above, it can be seen how acting on identity leads to a change of identity due to the dynamics that ensue from a mismatch between how certain crowd members saw their social location and how the police (re)located them.

It should be stressed that this model is not meant to suggest that change is a feature of all crowds or even of all within particular crowds. Indeed the particular conditions which initiate the process of change - where there is an assymetry between the understandings of different parties and where one group has the power to enact its understanding over the other - may be relatively rare. Many events may be relatively routinised and the understandings which each has of the other will match. What is more, where change does

occur it needn't always be in the direction of radicalisation and empowerment. It could be that ones view of an outgroup and of ones social position is moderated when they facilitate actions when they were expected to impede them.

Clearly, the particular evidence of change obtained in the studies mentioned above results from the particular configuration of social relations between groups which obtained within them. ESIM is not intended to substitute for such situated social analysis, but rather to provide a psychological model which operates within ideological and structural settings. The aim is to explain what aspects of these settings are crucial and how they articulate with crowd psychology in order to produce different outcomes. The role of crowds in affirming and consolodating a social order due to the symmetry of understandings between the different parties to an event is every bit as important and requires just as much study as the processes of conflict and change that may be initiated by assymetric perspectives.

4. Conclusion

At the outset, the aim of this chapter was defined as seeking to replace crowd psychology at the centre of social scientific and sociological thought. The grounds for doing so were that crowd events encompass both social determination and social change and therefore an adequate crowd psychology must necessarily address the full complexity of human sociality and the inherently two-sided nature of the relationship between the individual and society. Throughout the chapter, attempts both to ignore such questions and also to answer them have been documented - attempts which have revolved around two inter-related themes: the decontextualisation or contextualisation of crowd action; the use of desocialised or socialised conceptions of self and identity.

Having reached the end of the chapter, it would clearly be both presumptious to suggest that we now have a comprehensive understanding of crowd phenomena. Indeed certain key phenomena are all but missing from the contemporary literature. Most obviously, the attempt to combat dominant irrationalist accounts has led to a focus on crowd cognitions and understandings while emotions and the phenomonology of crowd participation has been largely ignored. It is time to revisit these aspects of the crowd, but in doing so, we should not repeat the classic mistake of counterposing intellect and emotion and seeing the latter as usurping the former. Just as it was argued that empowerment operates in relation to identity, so progress depends on investigating how emotion relates to the self understandings of crowd members. There may be joy in being part of a crowd, in being fully recognised as a group member and being able fully to express ones identity; there may be anger at outgroup attempts to impede such expression; however what counts as expression and its denial is a function of the precise definition of identity at any moment in time. While we may not understand the crowd in full, we do at least have a framework within which to address both the well visited and the neglected corners of the field.

This framework involves reconceptualising core concepts such as 'context', 'social identity' and 'intentionality'. Above all, it requires us to look at collective phenomena as

interactive and as developing over time. If such a framework is necessary to the understanding of crowds, it may also have more general applicability to the field of social psychology. Indeed, in the course of analysis, we have encountered many of the central phenomena of social psychology and seen how they develop through the course of events. These include stereotypes, attitudes, social influence, minority influence and polarization to name but a few. The changes that did (or did not) occur would have been inexplicable by restricting the analysis to a cognitive plane alone, without addressing the active construction of social categories and, most crucially, without studying ingroup understanding in relation to unfolding intergroup dynamics.

Crowd psychology points to the necessity of developing a historical and interactive set of methods and of concepts if we are to understand social understanding and social action. A historical and interactive psychology which focuses on the way in which our understandings shape and are shaped in practice, which looks at our cognitions in relation to the constraints on our action and which recognises how constraint in turn derives from the cognitions of others, is the only way of avoiding the bugbear of reification. Because of their transparent historical and interactive nature, crowd events provide an ideal location from which to generate an understanding of our dynamic psychological nature. It is also an ideal location within which to study that nature. There is much to be gained by restoring crowd psychology to the position of prominence it had at the birth of our discipline, but with the ambition of embracing crowd dynamism rather than repressing it.

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