

COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOUR AND INTERGROUP AGGRESSION

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Crowd phenomena has challenged social psychology for about a century, even early development of social psychology has been inspired by the crowd phenomena. LeBon's (cited in Moscovici, 1986 ; Reicher, 1996) book, *The Crowds A Study of the Popular Mind*, has been described by social psychologists as the most popular book of all time. His theory asserts that individuals in the crowd lose their conscious personality and that will lead to impulsive actions. The other characteristics of the crowds are mobile, and irritable, suggestible and credulous, exaggeration and ingenuousness. After LeBon, McDougall (in Farr, 1986) developed a concept of crowd, called group mind theory. Generally speaking, group mind theory has many similarities to LeBon's theory and their successor such as Milgram and Toch (1969).

The individualistic concept of Allport, in contrast, argues that the individual in the crowd is the same as the individual alone 'only more so' (Allport, 1924, p. 295). Furthermore, Allport insisted that similarities of crowd behavior reflect not a collective consciousness but the dissimilarities in mental constitution of its members. In the recent crowd-related research, the individualistic approach can be seen in the social facilitation theory (Sanders, 1981). Group mind theory, on the other hand, has been expanded into deindividuation researches as has been done by Mann et al. (1982).

This article will discuss crowd phenomena based on social identity theory (Brewer & Miller, 1996; Hogg and Abrams, 1988; Reicher, 1982, 1984, 1987, Wetherell, 1996). The social identity theory of crowd criticizes group mind and individualistic concepts because they fail to clarify several aspects of crowds. According to Reicher and Potter (1985) previous theories have exaggerated irrational action, external characteristics and other negative characteristics of crowds. These errors are caused by "structural" and perspective biases. The first bias accrued since earlier crowd psychology was committed to a defense of the social order against the mob threat. The second emerged due to psychologists surveying the crowd scene as outsiders.

SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY OF CROWD

The explanation of collective behavior to be outlined in this article is based on Turner's (1987) hypothesis that social identification refers to the process of locating a person within a system of social categorization or to any social categorization used by a person to define himself or others. The total of the social identifications used by a person to define him or

herself will be described as his/her social identity. Social categorization describes a person by systematically including him/her within some and excluding him/her from other related categories.

Social identity theory defines a group as consisting of those individuals who identify themselves as members of the group. In other words, a social group is two or more people who share an identity (Reicher, 1987). The crowd should also be treated as well as other social groups. This treatment is based on the argument that the psychological processes of crowds are the same as other social groups. However, its 'physical' and behavioral aspects are different from other social groups. In the psychological term, the crowd differs only as a matter of degree. Two differences between crowd and established groups are the uncertainty of the situations of a crowd and its structures to deal with the problems of adapting to novel situations that are not as flexible as long-standing groups. Therefore, a crowd is "that set of individuals who share a common social identification of themselves in terms of that crowd" (Reicher, 1982, p. 68)

A remarkable characteristic of the crowd is its homogeneity of behavior. The behavioral homogeneity of individuals in a crowd can occur because stimuli and the cognitive structure of stimuli are identical. The basis of cognitive similarity is the act of identifying with the group. The homogeneity may appear only for a period. After a given situation, which could be a short period, members of the crowd can exhibit very different behavior patterns. When wearing the "Laskar Mataram" uniform, for instance, people tend to support the PSIM, but they may not support them anymore after they are out the uniform.

The following description is an explanation of the creation of social identity for the members of the crowd. There are two processes of categorizing activities. The first is deduction that refers to the process by which "the assignment of attributes of the category as a whole to individuals is based on their membership in the category" (Reicher, 1987, p. 182). The other is induction as the means by which "the criterial attributes are inferred from one or more individual members" (Reicher, 1982, p. 70). Being a member of the group means having its attributes (deductive law). Consequently, the behavior of any member will display those attributes. The action of members of crowds can be inferred from these criterial attributes.

According to social identity theory, collective behavior is also characterized by the quick spread of ideas and emotions, called contagion, among the members of a crowd. The process, in terms of social identity theory, can simply be described by referent informational influence, which is a process in which "group members seek out the stereotypic norms which define category membership and conform their behavior to them" (Reicher, 1984, p. 4). It seems to be a self-stereotyping process.

Group salience in a crowd is extremely high. Selfstereotyping processes and high salience lead to a quick assimilation of ideas, emotions or behavior among crowd members. If there is more than one group, the effect of contagion will be limited to people who have identified with the other crowd.

The behavior of crowd members will not be random but will involve adaptation to an unprecedented situation. Their behaviors are based on confidence which is affected by

information the crowd members get and communicator who gives the information. The information would increase their confidence if it is seen to accord with those prior attributes by which the category is defined. The communicator will effectively expose the information if he or she is seen as a member of the same group. As far as individuals in the crowd behave in terms of their identity, the emotions among crowd members, which to some extent become extreme, can be a part of social identity and will be accepted by every member.

CROWD AND AGGRESSION

In the earlier theory of collective behavior (see Graumann and Moscovici, 1986), a crowd was described as impulsive and irritable. It seems, the crowd also creates violence and crime from members who act aggressively. The study of collective behavior has been important since the social consequences of the action are more likely to be negative rather than positive.

The social identity theory has been used to account for the St. Paul's riot by Reicher (1984, 1987) and Reicher and Potter (1985). Using the theory leads Reicher to conclude that crowd behavior is more sophisticated and creative rather than impulsive. Singing and yelling together or creating uniforms are examples of how the crowd is sophisticated and creative. In Reicher's opinion, St. Paul's Riot was a protest of the community against authority. Targets of attack in the riot were the police and other symbols of authority such as the bank and the post office.

It seems that crowd members acting in the terms of their own social identity will treat others in terms of others' social identity. Thus, in the St. Paul's riot there was not an individual nor a private property that was intentionally attacked. The statement of crowd members "we were just getting the police out of St. Paul's or as long as you weren't in uniform you were OK" (Reicher and Potter, 1985, p 182) reflect that their behaviors were not random. More importantly, the action of the crowd can be interpreted as a reflection of a social identity that is St. Paul's identity. They participated not as individuals but as part of a social group. Statements such as "it was everybody, the hole community", "it was St. Paul's, you know this was just St. Paul's" (Reicher, 1984, p 14) strengthen the opinion above.

Reicher (1984) confesses that crowd behavior is spontaneous. In other words, it is difficult to predict when the actions will occur. The closest concept of social identity theory may be useful to predict the phenomena of crowd action is ingroup favoritism (Mummendy and Schreiber, 1984). The concept asserts that member of a group show bias in favour of the ingroup. This is caused by the maintenance of positive social identity amongst members which lead to prejudice against outgroups. Perdue et al. (1980) argues that in group and outgroup-referent can shape responses towards others. As a result, ingroup bias or favoritism operates openly in intergroup relations.

Is ingroup favoritism strong enough to power a crowd into actions?

Crocker and Luhtanen (1990) criticize the social identity theory which only refers to social identity, personal identity and personal self-esteem. They assume that individuals in a group should have collective self-esteem as well as personal self-esteem parallel with personal

and social identity. Moreover, Crocker and Luhtanen (1990, p. 61) propose that "level of trait collective self-esteem may moderate the extent to which individuals attempt to protect or enhance their social identity when it is threatened". High collective self-esteem implies ingroup bias when the crowd is faced with a danger to their collective identity. When the police came to the Black and White Café, the only public establishment owned by a St. Paul resident, and arrested Wilkes, the owner, members of the community symbol. Hence, ingroup bias and high collective self-esteem combined together. Thus, people of St. Paul thought to protect themselves from the danger.

Ingroup bias can also be explained by using the belief congruence theory (Rokeach, 1980) which concerns the degree of dissimilarity in beliefs, attitudes and values perceived to exist between individuals. In addition, the negative orientation toward others increases because of the dissimilarity. Struch and Schwartz (1990) extend this analysis to understand the different beliefs between the ingroup and outgroup. They found that, especially among individuals who identified highly within their ingroup, aggression highly correlated with perceived value dissimilarity. Unfortunately, ingroup favoritism and aggression were not significantly correlated as predicted above. Perceived ingroup-outgroup conflict, on the other hand, was strongly related to aggression. Relationship among these variables were mediated by perceived value dissimilarity. Because the perceived dissimilarities of values lead to discrimination, the theory can be applied to analyze aggression in intergroup relations such as St. Paul's riot.

Another variable that moderates ingroup-outgroup conflict and aggression found by Struch and Schwartz (1990) is perceived permeability of the ingroup-outgroup boundary. The assumption is that the sharper the separation one feels from others, the less one is likely to empathize with them. In addition, perceived ingroup-outgroup conflict creates the perception that the boundaries between groups are less permeable. Thus, individuals are less likely to stop harming members of other groups because the greater the perceived conflict is and less permeable the boundaries perceived are, the less likely individuals are to empathize with those in other group.

Even though ingroup favoritism cannot explain group aggression such as in a crowd as proposed by social identity theory, the main idea of the theory has been employed. Social identity creates ingroup and outgroup feelings among group members. To locate oneself in a social categorization creates a boundary between individuals. Only people with similarities such as beliefs and values can categorize themselves into a group. In short, the social identity theory is mostly successful explaining crowd behavior which tends to be aggressive and violent.

Since the most important factors that determine collective behavior are perceived factors such as perceived ingroup-outgroup conflict, perceived permeability boundaries and perceived dissimilarity of values rather than objective factors, there could be different perceptions between two groups. A group may perceive that there is a conflict but the other doesn't. Consequently, a group offends the other which is just defensive. If both groups perceived in the same ways the actions will be confrontations.

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