

# [Crowds: sociology and social identity assignment](https://assignbuster.com/crowds-sociology-and-social-identity-assignment/)

[Philosophy](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/philosophy/)

This assignment , however , will argue power relations are present in the use of these explanations . Also it will show , De – individuation theory research and its focus on establishing a relationship between anonymity and aggression , fails to address peoples own perceptions of being in a group or the wider context , due to its outside perspective . Here , it’s argued the inside perspective from a social identity approach shows there is no anonymity within the crowd , and behavior is very much constrained by group expectations , relevant to the context .

Lee Boon’s work , cited in Dixon & Mandrake (2012) , and his idea off ‘ group mind , where people succumb to a ‘ hypnotic influence’ through a process armed ; contagion ‘ , has influenced subsequent research in crowd psychology . Arguing individuals behave in ways they would not normally do when in large numbers , he considered crowds to be dangerous , unpredictable and needing to be controlled , going on to note how when in groups individuals become easily manipulated .

However , to Dixon & Mandrake (2012) his research was based on distant observation of crowds of the lower classes , of which he was not a member . Taking forward the idea of a group mind , Festering et al , cited in Dixon & Mandrake (2012) propose instead a concept of De-individuation . Arguing , when members of a crowd feel anonymous from being one amongst many they can also feel less accountable as an ‘ individual identity’ .

In addition to this , Denier 1 980 & Prentice -Dunn & Rorer’s , as cited in Dixon & Mandrake , 2012 conjectured to highlight the contribution of some contextual features of being in a crowd , such as : a state of emotional arousal ; the awareness of being part of a group ; and a joint group fixation which they claim can contribute to deflecting attention away from feeling like an individual identity.

When anonymity leads to De – individuation people people are more unconscious of the group than themselves , mad to Zanzibar , cited in Dixon & Mandrake ( 2012 ) this leads to a ‘ diffusion Of responsibility’, which increases aggression and anti -normative behavior .

Moreover it is argued by Denier& Prentice ; Dunn & Rorer’s , as cited in Dixon & Mandrake , (2012) as behavioral and moral boundaries become more fluid they are transgressed more easily ; in this irrational state people respond to cues in the immediate environment , the process that Lee Bon called ‘ contagion ‘ There has been much research into the effect’s of De-individuation on behavior , which a review of 60 studies by Postmen & Spears , cited in Dixon & Mandrake (2012 ) criticized for being mainly experiments involving the measurement of aggression or deviance , yet the role of context in the anonymous conditions seems quite apparent .

Most notably , Zanzibar 1969 cited in Dixon & Mandrake (2012) , researched De -individuation affects on aggressive behavior using conditions of anonymity and identified subjects who administered electric shocks as punishment in a learning experiment in which the anonymous group wore hoods and gowns . The unidentifiable data showed the anonymous group delivered sign officially higher shocks , so the conclusion reached was anonymity lead to an increase in aggression .

However , Johnson & Downing cited in Dixon & Mandrake (2012) extended samizdat’s experiment , subjects were made anonymous or identifiable , wearing UK-Klux -Klan or nurses uniforms with or without name badges . They found a higher intensity of aggression in the anonymous Klan condition , but found a significantly higher level of compassion in the anonymous nurses condition , suggesting anonymity increased the desire to employ with the perceived norms for the social identity being adopted , relevant to the particular social context .

Research into the relationship between individuals’ social identities and crowd behavior has developed into an approach which explains crowd behavior based on the Social Identity theory developed by Teasel & Turner , 1 979 . When Richer & Stout cited in Dixon & Mandrake (2012) observed commentators and the media , from their outside perspective , focusing on De-individuation explanations for the London riots in 2011 , they sought to challenge these accounts using a social identity framework .

By conducting interviews with people involved in the rioting , and a qualitative analysis of the processes leading to the main events , they sought to gain an insider perspective and understand the meaning of the crowds actions in relation to social identity and the wider social context .

They found a genuine grievance which people wished to address with the police was met with hostility outside a local police station , causing a group perception of them against us , in perceiving their community and social identity to be under attack others from the community foreground their social identity and acted in the way hey seen their social group acting , and which they believed to be a valid response in that context . A noticeable difference between the above explanations is the value given to crowd behavior .

Lee Bon and De ; individuation take away any validity for crowd actions . A group mind or loss of self allows peoples actions to be explained as criminal or irrational . Foregrounding a social identity represents the feelings and motivations of a collective , which can be viewed from those on the outside of the group as a danger or challenge to their social order To Dixon & Mandrake , 2012 , a social Identity explanation challenges the recesses of contagion and claims of irrational behavior within crowds , forwarded by De -individuation theorists and Lee Bon .

Instead arguing crowd behavior is shaped by a process of’ inductive categorization ‘ . Where , a desire for their own social identity to be accepted by the crowd causes people to join in with behavior they see as appropriate in that social context . As a result crowd behavior is regulated from within , because any behavior by an individual which is not perceived as typical of the group’s social identity in that context would place the individual outside of the group , he rest of the group not finding it acceptable .

Finally , whilst this approach also recognizes that individual psychology can be altered when people become immersed in the crowd , according to Dixon & Mandrake , 2012, it is not viewed as a total loss of self , and in contrast to a De-individuation account , neither does it recognize members of the crowd as feeling anonymous or loosing their own sense of themselves as morally accountable and responsible . Instead , Dixon & Mandrake , 2012, argue , seeking recognition from others in the crowd makes people feel very much accountable for their behavior based on a different part of their identity – their social identity .

This is foreground when part of a persons’ own social self identifies with others in the group , through sharing the same social category and their values and beliefs about certain social issues such as those that started the London riots . Understood this way , anonymity from being in a crowd only extends to the loss of of the self as an individual identity , and people in a crowd are only anonymous to those outside the group . To conclude , it has been shown under certain social conditions being in a rood does alter individual psychology .

The work of Lee Bon , from its outsider perspective, influenced later crowd psychology research , so later De – individuation theorists’ maintained the view of crowds as producing anti normative and aggressive behavior , occurring due to a feeling of anonymity and a loss of self awareness . However , social identity theory presents a potent challenge to what had become an established way for collective actions to be invalidated by those who felt threatened by crowd actions . It maintains , only peoples individual identities are lost in crowds , and this is to taken from people .