

Crowds: sociology and social identity assignment

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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 termed ; 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 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 comply 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 Teasdale & Turner, 1979. 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 they see 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 , the 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 losing their own sense of themselves as morally accountable and responsible . Instead , Dixon & Mandrake , 2012, argue ,

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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 .