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The Experience of Collective Participation: Shared Identity, Relatedness, and

Emotionality

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Abstract

This paper presents three studies that explore the experience of participating in crowd

events. Analysis of semi-structured interviews with football supporters and student

demonstrators are used to illustrate the role that shared identity plays in transforming

within-crowd social relations (relatedness), and the positive impact this has upon

emotionality of collective experience. Questionnaire data collected at a music festival

is then used to confirm these claims. The paper argues for a conceptual distinction

between shared identity and self-categorisation, and against the contention in classic

crowd psychology that a loss of identity is at the root of collective emotion. The paper

concludes by suggesting avenues for future research, including the potential role for

collective experience in encouraging future co-action

Keywords: Crowds, Shared Identity, Relatedness, Collective Experience, Group Emotion

Classic psychological theories of the crowd (e.g. Le Bon, 1895/2002; McDougall, 1920/1939) accounted for the passionate nature of collective behaviour by juxtaposing emotionality with a loss of identity and reason. A loss of personal identity was claimed to lead to a loss of behavioural constraint, and a consequent dominance of emotion over reason. By divorcing emotion and reason in this way, crowds came to symbolise irrationality. The characterisation of crowds as irrational was echoed in the work of subsequent theorists including Freud (1920/1922), Park (1904/1982) and Blumer (1939).

Reicher's social identity model (SIM; Reicher, 1984, 1987) and elaborated social identity model (ESIM; Drury & Reicher, 2000; Reicher, 1996; Stott & Reicher, 1998) of crowd behaviour have critiqued the irrationalist accounts of classic crowd psychology. Based upon the social identity approach to group behaviour (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), this work has argued that identity is not lost within the crowd, but rather there is a *cognitive transformation* from personal to social level identification. In this way crowd members act meaningfully in terms of the norms of their salient social identity. By stressing the cognitive shift from personal to social identification, the social identity approach has therefore moved away from the classic portrayal of crowds as irrational explosions of emotion. However, there is a risk that the emotionality of crowd action has been consequently underemphasised, preserving the reason-emotion dichotomy but reversing its direction (Reicher, 2001, in press).

In addition to the cognitive shift, recent work from within the social identity tradition has focussed upon relational and emotional transformations within crowds. Firstly, there is evidence for a *relational transformation* (what we term 'relatedness') such that the quality of intragroup social relations improve as co-present others become part of the collective self, rather than 'other' at an individual level (Turner et al., 1987; Tyler & Blader, 2000; Reicher, in press). A number of experimental and interview studies have shown how shared ingroup membership can facilitate intragroup trust, cooperation, a decrease in stress, comfort in close physical proximity, and helping behaviours (Reicher & Haslam, 2006; Haslam & Reicher, 2006; Novelli, Drury, & Reicher, 2010; Levine, Cassidy, Brazier, & Reicher, 2002; The Prayag Magh Mela Research Group [PMMRG], 2007; Drury, Cocking, & Reicher, 2009).

The basis of this relational transformation is not self-categorisation (as was the case for the cognitive shift), but the perception that co-present others *share* one's salient social identity (Reicher, in press). If one identifies with a social category but does not perceive co-present others to share this membership, then one's relations with these others are unlikely to be transformed towards intimacy. The difference between shared identity ('*We* are members of this group') and self-categorisation ('*I* am a member of this group') has remained implicit within the social identity literature. A lack of explicit examination of shared identity has inevitably meant that how people come to appraise shared identity in others has likewise been overlooked.

Recent work within the social identity tradition has suggested that the relational shift within groups of shared identity may in turn lead to an *emotional*

transformation (Reicher, in press). Crowd members can feel empowered to shape their world when those around them successfully act in unison to realise shared goals (collective self-objectification: CSO), an experience characterised by intense positive affect (Drury & Reicher, 1999, 2005, 2009). This is in addition to the emotion generated as identity-relevant events are appraised on behalf of one's salient group membership (Intergroup emotions theory [IET]; Smith, 1993; Smith, Seger, & Mackie, 2007).

This paper shall explore the ways in which shared identity and relatedness can have affective consequences within crowds. In this sense we are examining the *experience* of collective participation. Our definition of 'experience' in this context includes the quality of social relations with co-present others, and how one feels about these relations. We use the term 'collective participation' to broadly refer to taking part in any form of crowd behaviour. This research is intended to compliment IET - which is concerned with the appraisal of specific events giving rise to specific emotions - by exploring the appraisal of social relations i.e. the emotionality of 'groupness'.

A limited number of studies have explored the emotional experience of collective participation. As noted previously, Drury and colleagues have examined the emotional consequences of CSO and empowerment (Drury & Reicher, 1999, 2005, 2009). Furthermore, the PMMRG have investigated the collective experiences of Hindu pilgrims at the Magh Mela festival in India (PMMRG, 2007). Their analysis suggests that crowd members can feel a sense of connectedness with others, recognition of their participation, and validation of group-relevant beliefs. The

experience of these forms of relatedness is then seen to facilitate identity-enactment and group commitment.

The current paper differs from these projects in two ways. Firstly, we explicitly examine the impact of shared identity upon relatedness, and relatedness upon emotionality of experience. Secondly, whilst the PMMRG (2007) research explores a specific type of collective action in a particular setting, we present data collected at a series of diverse and mundane forms of crowd event. Studies 1 and 2 explore the collective experiences of student demonstrators and football supporters using participant interviews. Emergent hypotheses from this work are then examined quantitatively in Study 3 using questionnaire data collected at a music festival.

STUDIES 1 & 2

Studies 1 and 2 use qualitative methods to examine collective experience at two different types of crowd event. The methods and results from both studies are presented concurrently. In both studies the researcher was an 'ingroup member', such that he identified with the participating groups, and would have attended the events irrespective of the research. This functioned to facilitate trust and access to participants, and helped uncover dynamics that might have been hidden to an 'outsider' (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Drury & Stott, 2001; Hammersley, 2000).

Overview of Events

Study 1 examines the collective experiences of football (soccer) fans. In 2007 the first author attended six Dundee United matches (three home and three away) with supporters' groups, and conducted interviews before, during and after games. Dundee

United won two, drew three, and lost one of the matches, and attendances ranged between approximately 4,000 and 17,000. Study 2 explores the experiences of University of St Andrews students who demonstrated against proposed changes to the university's student accommodation in May 2008. The university announced plans to demolish basic but cheap student flats and replace them with more luxurious and expensive apartments. Protestors assembled outside of the Student's Union before marching the short distance through town to St Mary's Quadrangle where they held a rally.[1] Participant turnout at the demonstration was estimated by the protest organisers to be 150, but only 70 by the police. Although the size of the demonstration was relatively small, it was the largest student protest in the town for over a decade, and was thus a unique experience for many of the participants.

Methods

Data Gathering

A variety of data gathering strategies were used to triangulate evidence (for triangulation see Drury & Stott, 2001; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Denzin, 1989). Ethnographic research in both studies included conducting 'onsite' semi-structured interviews, collecting audiovisual data (photographs and videos), and recording research field notes. This data was then used to inform themes for retrospective semi-structured interviews.

Semi-Structured Interview Themes

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[1] This venue was chosen because it was the meeting place for the University Court. Serendipitously, the adjacent building was the School of Psychology allowing us to film the rally from an aerial vantage point.

Interviews in both studies were concerned with (shared) social identity ('To what extent do you share an identity with other people in the crowd? What word or phrase would you use to describe this identity?'), relatedness ('How would you describe your relationship with other people in the crowd?' Can you describe any interactions that you have had with other people in the crowd?'), and collective experience ('Can you describe how it feels to be in the crowd today?'). Participant responses to these broad questions were then probed to yield more detailed answers. Although these themes were the primary focus of the interviews, participants were invited to raise additional topics of relevance. All interviews were recorded using a digital dictaphone with participant consent.

Study 1

Twenty-three Dundee United supporters (all male) were interviewed during match days. Participants were recruited by writing to supporters' clubs and requesting that the researcher spend a match day with them, and also by approaching additional fans at matches on an opportunistic basis. The interviews took place in pubs and supporters' buses before or after games, and inside the football stadiums during matches. Interviews ranged in length from several hours (if the researcher spent the entire match day with one set of participants), to a few minutes. This data was supplemented by three retrospective semi-structured interviews conducted three months after the initial data collection. Four participants took part in these post-event interviews, three of whom had previously been interviewed, and one (the only female participant in the study) who had published accounts of her experiences attending Dundee United matches. The retrospective interviews lasted between 60 and 90

minutes. One participant was retrospectively interviewed on a supporters' bus, another in a bar, and two in a flat that they shared together.

Study 2

Onsite interviews during the protest were conducted with nine participants (four males and five females). This was done by approaching demonstrators on an opportunistic basis at appropriate moments of the protest (e.g. between speakers at the rally). All onsite interviews lasted less than ten minutes, and nobody who was approached refused to participate. Four retrospective semi-structured group interviews were conducted in which video footage of the protest was reviewed in order to facilitate recall and articulation of participant experience (cf. Reicher, 1996; Drury & Reicher, 1999). The discussion themes for the retrospective interviews were the same as for the ethnographic stage of research, but also included additional points that had arisen during previous discussions. In this sense data collection and analysis were not treated as independent moments, but rather were fed back into one another in a reflexive manner. The retrospective interviews took place within three weeks of the demonstration, and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. A total of 14 participants (six males and eight females) were recruited during the protest to take part. One of the protestors interviewed post-event had also been interviewed during the demonstration. Participants in both type of interview were students at the University of St Andrews aged between 18 and 21. All participants were included in a prize draw to win a week's rent.

Data Analysis

Participant accounts of collective experience were analysed using procedures based on Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) in order to disentangle themes as they emerged from the data. The analysis was shaped by dual goals; the first was to accurately represent participant experiences without imposing a priori categories upon their responses, whilst the second was to approach the material in terms of specific research questions. The analysis therefore functioned as a compromise between the bottom-up approach of Grounded Theory and the top-down approach of Content Analysis. The following research questions led the analysis: (1) To what extent did participants perceive other crowd members to share their salient social identity (*shared identity*)? (2) How did participants characterise their social relations with other crowd members, and how/were these experiences shaped by shared identity (*relatedness*)? (3) What were the antecedents, consequences and nature of participants' collective experiences (*collective experience*)? These questions functioned as the basis for analytic decisions with regards the organization or clustering of emergent themes (Drury & Reicher, 2005).

Analysis

Shared Identity

Throughout the Study 1 interviews participants were clear that they self-categorised themselves as Dundee United supporters, and that co-present others shared this same identity. This was in part due to the segregation of Scottish football stadiums into 'home' and 'away' ends. In this sense, fans were aware that crowd members in their section were also supporters of their team:

P27: You're there as a United fan [ ] You're part of what you believe

in and everyone around you is.

[Extract 1: Study 1, Interview conducted on a supporters' bus][2]

In Study 1 the display of ingroup symbols, particularly the wearing of team colours, could also be used as a sign of others' group membership, and thus participants' shared identity with them:

P49: I see somebody wearing tangerine - even if it's not anything to

do with United - I think "Oh that might be a United fan", you know?

[Extract 2: Study 1, Retrospective Interview]

Whilst participants in the football context universally defined themselves as Dundee United supporters, interviewees at the demonstration described their social identities in various ways. For some, political forms of social identity were most salient:

P20: for me it was more as a Socialist. [ ] And for me it was just that

part of my identity that generally…when I have a demonstration that

is the main thing.

[Extract 3: Study 2, Retrospective Interview]

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[2] Transcription conventions are based upon the suggestions given by Parker (1992, p. 124). Where text has been omitted from the transcript it is signalled by a pair of empty square brackets like this [ ]. Pauses in speech lasting longer than three seconds are indicated with three full stops like this … Information provided by the author for clarification, including description of participant actions, is given within square brackets [like this].

However, other participants felt that a student category best captured their social identity during the protest:

> Int: did you feel like you were there as a student?
>
> P23: Yes, definitely.
>
> P24: Yeah.
>
> P23: I think it was very…it was very much defined as kind of student identity.
>
> [Extract 4: Study 2, Retrospective Interview]

Although some demonstrators were able to label their social identity in these ways, a number of participants found this task problematic. This was the case for P15, who recalled difficulty in defining his salient social identity despite reporting a strong identification with the group:

> P15: I identify with the cause completely. I identify with the group a lot […] Going back to the question about how you identified yourself, I struggled with that question because I didn't really see a word that, erm, fitted. I didn't really know how to describe "identify" on my part.
>
> [Extract 5: Study 2, Retrospective Interview]

Furthermore, other participants at the protest explained that whilst they had a strong sense of social identity, they did not feel that they shared this identity with others within the crowd. This was apparent in the following interview extract in which the difference between self-categorisation and shared identity was made explicit:

P10: I didn't quite fit in with that sort of crowd, I wasn't used to it so

much. But I mean that doesn't mean I didn't feel strongly about it [ ]

Int: Do you draw a distinction between your identification with the

group and your identification with the cause?

P10: Yeah, yeah.

P11: Yeah I would, they're two different things certainly.

[Extract 6: Study 2, Retrospective Interview]

Retrospective interviews from Study 2 revealed that appraisals of shared identity

were dynamic, and subject to change throughout the demonstration. During the rally

protestors were invited to speak to the group about their personal experiences

regarding university accommodation. At this point, some participants felt that the

group's identity shifted to exclude those not personally vulnerable to the

accommodation change. For these people, the change in category definition

diminished their feeling of shared identity with others in the crowd:

P11: I think the crowd defined itself in a more specific way when they

got to the Quad and everyone sat down and people began to speak. [ ]

P10: I think you're [Pt11] right in this subgroup type thing in that it

was almost divided into people who were really directly affected and

perhaps people who were more indirectly affected. [ ] Yeah, I would

say I didn't quite feel like I fitted in with everybody else.

[Extract 7: Study 2, Retrospective Interview]

This shift in shared identity was made clear by Pt11. Whilst reviewing video footage of the demonstration he noted that he was at the physical centre of the crowd during the march ("I liked being in the middle, which is where I was"), but that he moved to the periphery of the group when he experienced doubts over his shared identity with others at the rally:

> P11: I think I'm showing physically that I'm not as part of the group here because I'm not sitting down [with the other protestors], I'm standing right over there in the corner [points]. So it's actually a very different situation from when we were actually marching for me I think. And that's partly to do with people speaking about their own personal experiences and the fact that…it's not that I feel I can't be part of the group, it's just that I maybe ought not to pretend that I am.
>
> [Extract 8: Study 2, Retrospective Interview]

Participants in Study 2 appraised their shared identity with others in a number of ways. As noted in the previous two extracts, the realisation that one was not vulnerable to the same fate as others could diminish one's sense of shared identity with them. In addition, P21 noted during a discussion of the chanting at the demonstration that this shared action functioned as an indicator of common group membership:

> P21: If you're all saying the same thing then you're part of the same group.
>
> [Extract 9: Study 2, Retrospective Interview]

Embodied emotion emerged as a further indicator of participants' shared identity. Protestors recalled how embodied expression of emotion could be used to appraise whether co-present others were members (or not) of one's social group:

P16: And just like you can see by their body language and by their facial expression that they are making themselves not part of it.

[Extract 10: Study 2, Retrospective Interview]

As noted previously in the analysis, participants' shared identity with other crowd members had a number of consequences. In physical terms, P11 explained how a shift in shared identity corresponded with a change in his desired physical proximity to other protestors (see Extract 8). In addition to this physical dimension, our data pointed to within-crowd relational changes.

Relatedness

Three forms of relatedness were identified in the data: connectedness, recognition and validation.

Connectedness

In both studies participants reported a positive transformation in social relations within the crowd. In the extract below a football fan in Study 1 explained how relationships with other supporters were characterised by intimacy. Her sense of

familiarity with strangers was so pronounced that she likened her crowd experience to being surrounded by friends:

> P49: Well you were amongst friends first off, even if you didn't know them, you were amongst friends. [ ] you could go and stand anywhere.
> [Extract 11: Study 2, Retrospective Interview]

This theme was developed by P27 who noted that the connectedness he felt with other crowd members at the football would not exist in alternative social contexts:

> P27: Okay you sit with your mates but you could be sitting with anybody. [ ] you make friendships and have conversations with people you'd probably never give a second glance to otherwise.
> [Extract 12: Study 1, Interview conducted on a supporters' bus]

Recognition

In addition to connectedness, participants in both studies described a sense of recognition within the crowd. This operated on two levels. Firstly, some participants recalled being recognised personally within the crowd, for example P31 who unexpectedly met an old school friend at a Dundee United game:

> P31: I can go to a match for the first time in ages, and certainly the first away match in ages, and like meet up with P32. It's like "wow".

[ ] it's like almost going back into like a local bar or something and

you're like "Oh, everyone's around".

[Extract 13: Study 1, Retrospective Interview]

Further to recognition at a personal level, participants in the demonstration described

pleasure in others' recognition of them as valued members of the social group:

P13: even people who I didn't know very well, maybe acquaintances,

maybe hadn't spoken to many times would come up to me and be

like, "Hey, yeah, good to see you. Meet my friend".

Int: Okay. So you were sort of noticed and acknowledged in the

crowd?

P13: Yeah, it was good.

Int: Why is that a positive thing do you think?

P12: It makes you…I don't know. It just made me feel more

comfortable and I guess just accepted, yeah.

P13: You feel more part of the group as opposed to someone who's

just tagging along.

[Extract 14: Study 2, Retrospective Interview]

Validation

A third form of relatedness experienced by participants was the validation of their

identities, beliefs, and emotional experiences within the crowd. At Dundee United

matches P49 recalled a confirmation of her identity as a supporter when she was

surrounded by fellow fans, in contrast to other contexts in which this identity was mocked:

> P49: It's just everyone around you [in the crowd] is singing from the same hymn sheet. [ ] You know when people used to laugh at United and I would think "Well it doesn't matter" because you know I'd people who'd feel the same as me. You didn't feel you were being stupid once you got onto the terracing, although you'd admit to feeling stupid when you were in work and things you know.
>
> [Extract 15: Study 1, Retrospective Interview]

During the demonstration P1 made a similar comparison between the doubt and insecurity he experienced outside the crowd, with the validation of his beliefs within a group of like-minded others:

> P1: [In the crowd] you're not alone in your struggle basically for what you believe in. And the fact that there are other people that believe in what you believe in and which clearly is always a reassuring thing. Because you're like, "Am I doing something stupid here or am I not getting something?", and yet when you've got this number of people out there who also want exactly the same thing then you realise to yourself, "Yes, I probably am actually right!".
>
> [Extract 16: Study 2, Onsite Interview]

Furthermore, as was implicit in the previous extract, P3 noted that the experience of collective participation could strengthen commitment to future group action:

> P3: I think that is an effect that demonstrations have is that when you see other people who feel the same that it does like inspire you to, um, pursue it. Like I don't think I've been inspired enough to organise my own demonstration, but I would take part in anything they did in the future.
>
> [Extract 17: Study 2, Retrospective Interview]

Interview data from both studies also suggested that one's emotional experience could be validated, and subsequently amplified, by co-present others. A reciprocal relationship where one's emotional excitation validated and augmented that of fellow group members, who in turn re-validated and amplified one's own emotional experience, was described by P13 when he recalled his experience at the protest:

> P13: And the sort of enthusiasm caught on I guess.
>
> Int: How do you mean it "caught on"?
>
> P13: I mean it sort of like spread; once you saw other people being enthusiastic it made me want to be more enthusiastic, and then I'm sure every other person then became more enthusiastic. It just increased it I felt like.
>
> [Extract 18: Study 2, Retrospective Interview]

Shared Identity and Relatedness

Analysis from both studies suggested that relatedness with other crowd members was a consequence of shared identity. For example, reflecting upon his experience at the demonstration, the following participant described the ease with which he talked to strangers within the crowd after categorising them as members of his social group:

> P11: I found myself speaking naturally to people I had never met before in my life. [ ] So you did find that it was very easy because everybody was kind of connected by this group identity that you could suddenly speak to people quite easily [ ] It wasn't even as though it registered that I didn't know them at the time. It was just "Oh, yeah, we're in the same group" kind of thing, so the unity kind of made it a lot easier actually for me.
>
> [Extract 19: Study 2, Retrospective Interview]

The impact of shared identity upon relatedness was made particularly clear in Study 2 as participants compared their intragroup interactions at the demonstration, with experiences of anomie and isolation "in the street":

> Pt23: if you just walk up to someone in the street or something it wouldn't go the same way, but like everybody was there [at the demonstration] for the same reason. I think you could have just turned to someone. [ ] this seemed like something where you kind of broke down like social barriers that would ordinarily exist.
>
> [Extract 20: Study 2, Retrospective Interview]

Importantly, when participants experienced a lack of shared identity with other crowd members, they felt unrelated and distant to them. For example, as noted previously in Extract 8, during the rally P11 felt his sense of shared identity with other protestors diminish, leading him to sit alone on the periphery of the crowd. P10 likewise felt that she did not share a social identity with other protestors, resulting in an experience of detachment and isolation:

> P10: I would say I didn't quite feel like I fitted in with everybody else. [ ] I kind of felt like I didn't really know what was going on, that people…a lot of things had happened to people, and there was this group as you [P11] were saying who'd been in contact with the Union, who'd been doing stuff and I didn't really know about that so I felt a bit detached from that I suppose.
>
> [Extract 21: Study 2, Retrospective Interview]

Emotional Experience

Throughout the interviews there were references to participants' emotionally intense and positive collective experiences. One demonstrator (P21) recalled that "there was definitely some positive feeling from the protest itself.", whilst a football supporter (Pt27) described the collective experience of watching his team score as "better than an orgasm". Extracts from other interviews suggested that the nature of participants' social relationships with other crowd members had a role to play in generating such collective passion. For example, P29 noted that her experience of the demonstration was emotionally intense in part due to the togetherness she felt with other protestors:

P49: I think "emotional" would be an appropriate word about it. Especially because of like the noise and the being together with other people.

[Extract 23: Study 2, Retrospective Interview]

P11 was more explicit about his positive emotional experience of the protest. As noted in the following interview extract, he explained that this experience was in part a consequence of the relatedness he felt with fellow group members:

P11: I wasn't just there for fun but the overriding emotion there was just having fun. I felt I was there for a good reason, I felt the group were really connected

[Extract 24: Study 2, Retrospective Interview]

It is important to stress that not all participants experienced their time in the crowds as positive, but that collective experience appeared to operate as a function of intragroup relations. This was particularly clear for P10, who recalled how a lack of shared identity with other crowd members negatively impacted upon her experience of the protest:

P10: I felt when I went there it just seemed to be a lot of extremists in some ways and I was just a bit disappointed [ ] I suppose in some ways I felt less good about it than I did to start with.

[Extract 26: Study 2, Retrospective Interview]

Discussion

Studies 1 and 2 used qualitative methods to explore the nature of collective experience at two different forms of crowd event. For the football supporters in Study 1, self-categorisation and shared identity were empirically equivalent since all participants identified themselves as Dundee United fans, and felt that other crowd members shared this identity. This relationship was more complex for the student demonstrators in Study 2. The protestors could use different social identities to frame their participation, and some experienced difficulty in providing a label for their salient social identity. Nonetheless, participants were clearer about their sense of shared identity with others within the crowd, and it was this which appeared critical in shaping their collective experiences. This analysis suggests that self-categorisation and shared identity should be treated as conceptually distinct. Knowledge of one's shared identity (or lack thereof) with others was interpreted through embodied emotion (e.g. facial expressions), ingroup symbols (e.g. wearing team colours), shared action (e.g. chanting), and shared fate (e.g. vulnerability to rent increases). Furthermore, perception of shared identity was not static, but was subject to change with the dynamics of social context.

When participants did feel that co-present others shared their social identity, they described a breakdown of social barriers with strangers within the crowd; what we term relatedness. This allowed them to feel connected to, and recognised by, other group members. Participants also reported experiencing a validation of their beliefs, identities and emotions, a process which appeared to augment the strength of all three.

Relatedness could be experienced with positive affect by participants, in part due to contrasting the experience with that of 'everyday' society. It is important to stress however that shared identity and relatedness were not experienced by all participants. Without shared identity, the experience of collective participation could instead be characterised by isolation and insecurity. Analyses from these studies therefore suggest a process in which relatedness was dependent upon shared identity. There was also preliminary evidence from Study 2 that the collective experience of participation could encourage future group commitment.

Limitations

Although the studies provide an incipient base from which to explore collective experience, they did have several weaknesses. The studies relied upon a limited number of respondents, running the risk that our samples were not representative of the populations who participated in the crowd events. However, a limited sample size was a necessary sacrifice in order to conduct the in-depth interviews that were required to generate hypotheses for the third study. The methodology could be also criticised for a lack of objectivity because of the dual role of the author as both researcher and actor in the crowd events. However, being an ingroup member has various advantages including gaining trust and access to participants (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Green, 1993). Furthermore, because the research did not focus upon the politics of the demonstration or the quality of the football, there was little opportunity for researcher bias along ideological grounds.

Hypotheses

The interview studies provide prima facie evidence for two hypotheses which were quantitatively tested in a third study. Our analysis suggests that shared identity - and not simply self-categorisation (to be operationalized in Study 3 as strength of social identity) - can transform intragroup social relations to produce a sense of relatedness. It is therefore hypothesised that shared identity will be a greater predictor of relatedness than strength of social identity (H1). Furthermore, data from Studies 1 and 2 indicated that relatedness could be experienced by participants with positivity and emotional intensity. Following from H1, our second hypothesis (H2) therefore predicts that relatedness will mediate the relationship between shared identity and emotionality (positivity and intensity) of experience. Study 3 shall test these hypotheses by examining questionnaire data collected at a third form of crowd event.

STUDY 3

Study 3 was a questionnaire study conducted at a music festival. The author and a research assistant attended the three day Rock Ness festival in 2009, an annual event featuring a mixture of rock and dance acts which was attended by approximately thirty thousand people. In total 98 participants completed questionnaires, 46 of whom were male and 48 female (4 undisclosed), with a mean participant age of 26.6 (ranging between 16 and 47). All participants were included in a prize draw to win music vouchers.

Methods

Questionnaires were disseminated on an opportunistic basis throughout the event. This was primarily done in the campsite during the late mornings before festival-goers entered the main arena.

Questionnaire Items and Scale Reliability

All questionnaire items used nine-point Likert scales. The questionnaires were kept as short as possible to encourage participation. At the start of the questionnaire participants were informed that "The 'crowd' in the following questions refers to the crowd watching the music, not the crowd at the campsite, queue for the bar etc."

     Strength of Social Identity

In order to assess the strength of participants' salient social identity, they were invited to define what this identity was. This was done by firstly giving an example of what we meant by social identity. Participants were told that "If I were to ask someone in a church to describe their identity they might give answers such as 'a religious person' or 'Christian' etc.". They were then asked "How would you describe your identity here at Rock Ness?" Participants were next informed that the questions that followed would refer to the social identity that they had provided. The strength of social identity scale contained the following two items adapted from (Cameron, 2004)[3] (r = .61); "I often think of myself in terms of this identity" (Agree/Disagree), and "I feel good when I think of myself in terms of this identity" (Agree/Disagree).

     Shared Identity

The shared identity scale had two items (*r* = .52). The first asked "To what extent do you think that other people in the crowd at Rock Ness share this identity?" (Very Much So/Not At All). The second item presented participants with a series of two

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[3] The questionnaire originally contained three social identity items, but the ingroup ties item ("I feel strong ties with others who share this identity") was removed prior to analysis due to its similarity to the relatedness measure.

overlapping circles (adapted from Schubert & Otten, 2002) within which "self" and "others" were written, ranging from not overlapping at all (1) to entirely overlapping (9). Participants were then asked "Which circles best represent the extent to which you share this identity with others in the Rock Ness crowd?"

Relatedness

The relatedness scale had the following three items ($\alpha = .81$): "To what extent do you feel a sense of 'connection' with other people in the crowd here at Rock Ness?" (Very Much So/Not At All), "To what extent do you feel that the other people in the crowd are experiencing the festival in the same way as you?" (Very Much So/Not At All), and "To what extent do you feel a sense of 'oneness' with other people in the crowd here at Rock Ness?" (Very Much So/Not At All).

Positivity of Experience

The positivity of experience scale had the following two items ($r = .57$); "I enjoy being a part of the crowd at Rock Ness" (Totally Disagree/Totally Agree), and "My experiences in the crowd at Rock Ness have been negative" (reverse coded) (Totally Disagree/Totally Agree).

Emotional Intensity of Experience

Emotional intensity of experience was measured using one item; "My experiences in the crowd at Rock Ness have been emotionally intense" (Totally Disagree/Totally Agree).[4]

Analysis

Preliminary Analysis

Skewness and kurtosis values for all variables were within recommended ranges (Kline, 2005). Two participants had missing data in their questionnaires. There was less than 5% missing data in each variable, and Little's Missing Completely At Random (MCAR) test (Little, 1988) was non-significant; χ^2 (8) = 3.25, p = .92, indicating that the missing data pattern was not dependent upon the observed data (Rubin, 1976).

Principal components analysis (PCA) was used to check that the shared identity and relatedness scales were tapping into separate concepts. PCA using varimax rotation extracted only one factor with an eigenvalue greater than 1, accounting for 58% of variance. Following examination of the scree plot, which indicated one further factor, a forced two-factor solution accounting for 75% of variance was extracted. The three relatedness items loaded onto the first factor, and the two shared identity items onto the second, allowing us to treat the two scales as distinct measures in accordance with our theoretical argument.

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[4] A second emotional intensity of experience item, "Being in the Rock Ness crowd is a dull experience" (reverse coded) (Totally Disagree/Totally Agree), was removed from the analysis because the term "dull" may have led participants to answer the item in terms of the positivity of their experience.

There were no significant effects of age or on which day of the festival the questionnaire was completed upon any of the variables. There was however a marginal effect of gender upon emotional intensity of experience, with males ($M =$ 6.29, $SD = 2.07$) scoring significantly higher than females ($M = 5.38$, $SD = 2.27$), $t(91) = 2.02$, p = .05. There were no other significant gender effects. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics, scale reliabilities, and zero-order correlations for all of the variables.

[Insert Table 1. here]

Hypothesis 1

H1 stated that shared identity would be a better predictor of relatedness than strength of social identity. Steiger's test confirmed that whilst relatedness correlated positively with both shared identity, $r(93) = .53$, $p < .01$, and strength of social identity, $r(93) =$ .28, $p < .01$, the association with shared identity was significantly stronger, $Z = 2.34$, $p < .01$. Using linear regression, shared identity and strength of social identity were then simultaneously entered as predictors of relatedness. Shared identity significantly predicted relatedness, $\beta = .49$, se $= .09$, $t(94) = 5.34$, $p < .01$, but strength of social identity did not, $\beta = .10$, se $= .07$, $t(94) = 1.38$, $p = .17$.

Hypothesis 2

H2 stated that relatedness would significantly mediate the relationships between shared identity and emotionality (positivity and intensity) of experience. Results based on 10,000 bootstrapped samples indicated that whilst the total effect (TE) of

shared identity and relatedness upon positivity was non-significant (TE = 0.16, se = 0.10, p = .10), and the direct effect (DE) of shared identity on positivity was also non-significant (DE = -0.09, se = 0.10, p = .38), the indirect effect (IE) was significant (IE = .25, se = .07, p < .01) (see Figure 1).[5] Because zero is not in the 99% confidence interval (CI), (lower 99% CI = .11, upper 99% CI = .51) the IE is significantly different from zero at p < .01 (two tailed). Analysis using a Sobel Test yielded an equivalent result, Z = 3.68, p < .01.

[Insert Figure 1. here]

Controlling for gender, results based on 10,000 bootstrapped samples likewise indicated that whilst the total effect of shared identity upon emotional intensity was non-significant (TE = 0.22, se = 0.16, p = .18), and the direct effect of shared identity on emotional intensity was also non-significant (DE = -0.28, se = 0.16, p = .09), the IE was significant (IE = .49, se = .11, p < .01) (see Figure 2). Because zero is not in the 99% CI, (lower 99% CI = .24, upper 99% CI = .82) the IE is significantly different from zero at p < .01 (two tailed). Analysis using a Sobel Test yielded an equivalent result, Z = 4.16, p < .01.

[Insert Figure 2. here]

Discussion

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[5] The total effect of the independent variable and mediator upon the dependent variable does not need to be significant in order to demonstrate mediation (see Hayes, 2009; Zucker, Preacher, Tormala & Petty, 2011; Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010).

The hypotheses generated from the first two qualitative studies were examined using a questionnaire study conducted at a music festival. H1 stated that shared identity, and not simply strength of social identity, would best predict participants' sense of relatedness with one another. Our analysis revealed that whilst relatedness correlated positively with both variables, the strength of association was significantly stronger with shared identity. Furthermore, using linear regression, only shared identity significantly predicted relatedness when both shared identity and strength of social identity were simultaneously entered as predictors. These results provided support for H1. H2 stated that the relationships between shared identity and emotional intensity, and shared identity and positivity of experience, would both be mediated by relatedness. This was confirmed using mediation analysis allowing us to accept the second hypothesis. Our results therefore provided support for the analysis from Studies 1 and 2 which suggested that shared identity can lead to a positive transformation of social relations, which in turn can be experienced with positivity and emotional intensity.

Limitations

The conclusions from Study 3 must be treated as tentative because our data were correlational and not causational. Furthermore, the scales used in the questionnaire were preliminary since they had not been used previously in the research literature (with the exception of social identity scale [Cameron, 2004]). Despite this, all of the multi-item measures were reliable, and PCA confirmed that the shared identity and relatedness items loaded onto different factors, providing prima facie evidence that the two measures were tapping into distinct concepts.

General Discussion

The current paper has presented three studies exploring the under-researched topic of collective experience. The first two studies analysed interview data with student demonstrators and football fans, before hypotheses generated from these studies were subsequently confirmed using questionnaire data collected at a music festival.

Our analysis revealed that when participants appraised co-present others as sharing their social identity (e.g. through shared ingroup symbols, action, or embodied emotion), then social relations between crowd members could be positively transformed in a number of ways. This included a sense of connectedness or intimacy, and recognition such that one's presence in the crowd was noted and valued by others. Relatedness could further extend to the validation of one's beliefs, emotions and behaviours. In contrast to 'everyday' life which may be filled with doubt and insecurity, within the crowd participants described an alleviation of personal uncertainty as their perspective on the world was reflected back at them by fellow group members. These findings were in line with Hindu pilgrims' accounts of collective relatedness at the Magh Mela festival (PRMMRG, 2007).

Interview analysis from Studies 1 and 2 supported our claim that such a relational transformation was determined by participants' perception of shared identity with other crowd members, and not simply the self-categorisation required for the cognitive shift from personal to social identity (Turner et al., 1987). Whilst crowd members with shared identity could experience the crowds as supportive and nurturant, several participants without shared identity reported experiencing isolation and detachment. This claim received further support from Study 3 in which shared

identity, and not strength of social identity, best predicted the experience of relatedness.

Analyses from the studies also provided support for the suggestion that such a relational transformation could contribute to an emotional transformation towards intensity and positivity. The suggestion that collective emotionality could be determined by participants' salient social identities (via shared identity and relatedness) fits with IET (Smith, 1993; Smith et al., 1997) which contends that group-relevant events may be appraised on behalf of one's socially-extended self, leading to specific emotions and action tendencies. Our findings also compliment research conducted by Drury and Reicher (2005, 2009) which demonstrates that intragroup unity can facilitate CSO leading to empowerment and intense positive affect. However, whilst these two areas of work analyse the experience of specific types of group event, our analysis suggests that the quality of within-crowd social relations may themselves be appraised emotionally, leading to general emotional intensity and positivity of experience. For example, analysis of participant interviews at the student demonstration suggested that a reciprocal validation of emotional experience by fellow ingroup members could lead to a mutual amplification of that experience. Our findings, in conjunction with IET and the empowerment literature, suggest that collective emotion is determined ultimately by the social identities of crowd members, contradicting the notion within classic crowd psychology that collective emotionality was rooted in a loss of identity.

Furthermore, in addition to our claim that collective experience was a consequence of crowd action, analysis from Study 2 suggested the intriguing

possibility that this experience could in turn promote participation in future collective behaviour. This relates to work within the collective action literature which explores the roles of specific emotions including anger (Van Zomeren, Spears, Leach, & Fischer, 2004; Livingstone, Spears, Manstead, Bruder, & Shepherd, in press) and contempt (Tausch, Becker, Spears, Christ, Saab, Singh, & Siddiqui, 2011) in encouraging participation in collective action. Our analysis suggests that in addition to emotion generated through specific appraisal of events, there exists a dynamic process whereby experience of collective action may in turn give rise to future participation; i.e. collective experience should be considered as both an input and output of crowd action.

Future Directions

It is acknowledged that the exploratory nature of the qualitative research and the limitations of the questionnaire study necessarily constrain the scope of their conclusions. The analysis presented in the current paper is not intended to provide a conclusive account of crowd experience, but should rather be treated as a starting point for future research. Firstly, the relationship between shared identity and relatedness should be examined experimentally. Whilst correlation and regression analyses from Study 3 provide support for the claim that relatedness operates as a function of shared identity, a study in which shared identity was manipulated and relatedness varied accordingly would significantly strengthen this argument. Such a study would require the further development of scales to interrogate these variables, moving beyond the modest collection of items used in Study 3.

Future work also needs to interrogate the relationship between relatedness and emotional experience, particularly the possibility of emotional amplification through reciprocal validation. The fieldwork methodologies utilised in the current paper could be supplemented with laboratory work. This would allow one to use a variety of methods (including psychophysiological measures) to examine changes in collective emotional experience over time as a function of relatedness. Finally, in order to develop a model that captures the dynamic nature crowd participation, longitudinal methods are required to explore the consequences as well as the antecedents of collective experience.

Conclusion

An analysis of three crowd events presented evidence that perception of shared identity, and not self-categorisation, determined the nature of participants' collective experiences. Within-crowd relatedness was transformed by shared identity to provide a sense of connectedness, recognition and validation. Preliminary evidence then suggested that relatedness contributed to the emotionality of participants' collective experiences. This analysis contradicts the contention from classic crowd psychology that crowd emotion emanates from a loss of identity, and further suggests that the experience of collective participation may have a role to play in encouraging group commitment.

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Table 1 Zero-Order Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliability Statistics

Variables	a)	b)	c)	d)	e)
a) Strength of Social Identity	1.00				
b) Shared Identity	.31**	1.00			
c) Relatedness	.28**	.53**	1.00		
d) Positivity	.15	.17	.47**	1.00	
e) Emotional Intensity	.01	.16	.49**	.24*	1.00
n	96	96	98	98	97
Mean	6.76	6.86	6.89	7.99	5.85
Standard Deviation	1.83	1.42	1.46	1.37	2.25
Reliability	$r = .61$	$r = .52$	$\alpha = .81$	$r = .57$	-

Note. All *p-values* are two-tailed. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Relatedness

0.53*   0.47*

Shared Identity   →   Positivity

0.16
(-0.09)
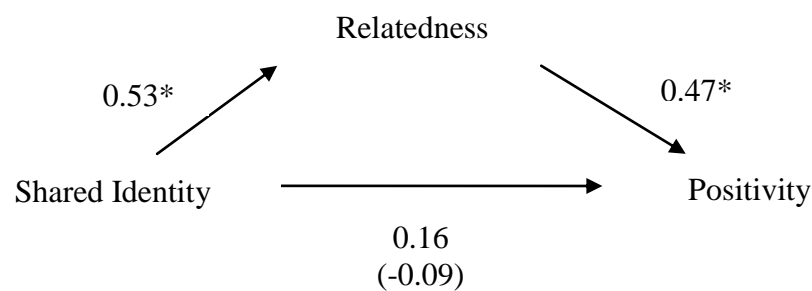
Figure 1 Relatedness as a mediator of the relationship between shared identity and positivity of experience. n = 98. Values represent *β*-weights. * $p < .01$.

Relatedness

0.54*   0.91*

Shared Identity   →   Emotional Intensity

0.22
(-0.28)
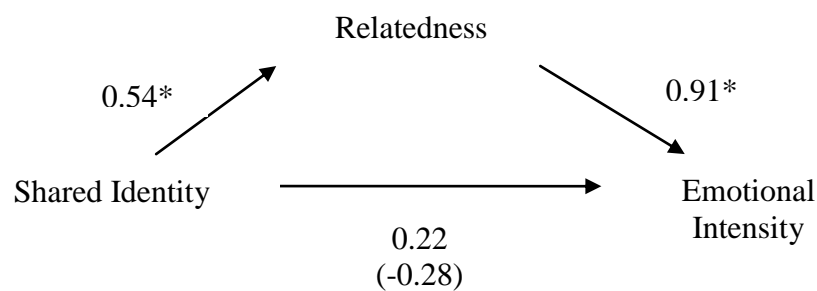
Figure 2 Relatedness as a mediator of the relationship between shared identity and emotional intensity of experience. n = 98. Values represent *β*-weights. * $p < .01$

Acknowledgements

Biographies

Fergus Neville did his Ph.d. on the experience of crowd participation in the School of Psychology at St. Andrews University. He is currently working as a post-doctoral research fellow in the School f Medicine at St. Andrews on a project evaluating public health interventions to collective violence

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