Explaining enduring empowerment: A comparative study of collective action and psychological outcomes

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Abstract

An ethnographic study of two crowd events was carried out in order to develop a hypothesis about the experience of empowerment in collective action. Qualitative comparison of an anti-roads occupation and a mass eviction suggests that empowerment as an outcome of collective action is a function of the extent to which one's own action is understood as expressing social identity, a process we term collective self-objectification. *The comparison indicates that empowerment is not reducible to the experience of success. While both events came to be construed by participants as 'victories', their associated emotions (joy versus despair and anger) and rationales for future participation (confidence versus enhanced self-legitimacy) were different. The relation between collective self-objectification and self-efficacy is discussed. Copyright © 2005 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.*

'Empowerment' might be defined as a social-psychological state of confidence in one's ability to challenge existing relations of domination. A number of political, anecdotal, historical, autobiographical and journalistic as well as social-scientific accounts have shown that collective action may engender experiences of empowerment, both for the individual participant and for the collective as a whole, typically accompanied by positive affect (e.g. Barker, 1999; Benford & Hunt, 1995, p. 90; Gallacher, 1936, pp. 43, 199; Gregoire & Perlman, 1969, p. 37; Harford & Hopkins, 1984, pp. 92–93; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996, p. 122; McAdam, 1982, pp. 48–51; Pelton, 1974, p. 134; Piven & Cloward, 1977, pp. 3–4).

If the feeling of empowerment endures beyond the collective action itself, it could affect participants' personal lives and motivate involvement in further collective action. The obvious significance of this is in terms of social change. To the extent that people feel increasingly able to participate in collective actions such as protests, demonstrations and other social movement events, then society may change as a result.

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This paper compares two crowd events in order to examine the process whereby an empowered identity is an experiential outcome of collective action. As such, it is intended to contribute to a growing body of research which has sought to develop a distinctive social identity approach to issues of power (Haslam, 2001; Ng, 1980; Reynolds, Oakes, Haslam, Turner, & Ryan, 2004; Reynolds & Platow, 2003; Sachdev & Bourhis, 1991). More specifically, this paper argues that, as an outcome of collective action, empowerment reflects the extent to which one's own action is understood as actualizing one's social identity. In this account, empowerment can only be properly understood through an integration of macro- and micro-level social processes: social change occurs not only where social movements have power but where their individual members are subjectively empowered; through their identification with the movement of which they are part they bring about change.

EMPOWERMENT IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

In previous research, the issue of empowerment in social movements has commonly been addressed through the concept of efficacy (e.g. Fiske, 1987; Fox-Cardamone, Hinkle, & Hogue, 2000; C. Cocking, unpublished MSc and PhD dissertations, 1995, 1999; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Piven & Cloward, 1977, pp. 3–4). In some of these accounts, efficacy has been analysed principally as a precondition for collective action (e.g. Bandura, 1995, 1997, 2000). However, social movement theory has become increasingly interested in efficacy or empowerment *processes*: i.e. how participants construct definitions of themselves as effective collective actors (e.g. Klandermans, 1997, pp. 41–44; Melucci, 1989, 1995).

For example, Klandermans (1992; Simon & Klandermans, 2001) suggests that collective discussions and conflicts serve to define ingroup-outgroup boundaries, attribute responsibility for grievances, and form the basis of a politicized collective identity: 'in the clashes and confrontations between competing or opposing schemes, meaning is constructed' (Klandermans, 1992, p. 100). Simon and Klandermans (2001, p. 328) suggest that, despite its importance, empowerment[1] is one of the least researched functions of collective identity. The study described in the present paper seeks to address this neglect through developing a hypothesis, based on the Elaborated Social Identity Model, explaining how certain features of participation in collective action can lead to relatively enduring empowerment.

THE ELABORATED SOCIAL IDENTITY MODEL

The Elaborated Social Identity Model (ESIM) of crowd behaviour (Drury & Reicher, 2000; Reicher, 1996a, 1996b, 2001; Stott & Reicher, 1998), like Simon and Klandermans's (2001) and other constructionist accounts of collective action, suggests that newly empowered definitions of self emerge from conflictual interactions between groups. According to the ESIM, one's social identity entails an understanding of one's position within a set of social relations along with definitions of possible and legitimate action flowing from that position. Where one's social position changes in the course of a crowd event, therefore, there will be changes in one's social identity along such dimensions

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[1]Simon and Klandermans (2001) actually use the term 'agency', but it is clear that they are referring to the same feature of subjective power in relation to external forces that is covered by the concept of 'empowerment'.

as identity content ('who we are') identity-boundaries (who counts as 'one of us'), definitions of legitimate behaviour, and empowerment (Drury & Reicher, 2000).

The ESIM is based on self-categorization theory (SCT; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), which suggests that collective action is only possible when participants share (and perceive themselves to share) a common social identity (Veenstra & Haslam, 2000). The ESIM might be considered that part of SCT concerned with crowd behaviour and crowd conflict (Stott & Drury, 2000). It has been argued that the crowd is a uniquely privileged arena within which to study social psychological processes (J. Drury & S. Reicher, submitted, The changing subject of collective action: A contribution towards a model of the dynamic self; Le Bon, 1947; Reicher, 2001). Thus, through a focus on crowd dynamics, the ESIM has been able to make explicit what has perhaps only been implicit in previous statements of SCT: that is, the way social identities and definitions of legitimate conduct are contested and resisted. The ESIM has therefore taken forward the project of examining processes of social change (Reicher, 1996a)—at least at the meso-level of intergroup conflict.

The ESIM suggests that crowd behaviour does not take place in isolation; rather, for reasons of public safety, 'public order'[2] or both, crowds typically interact with the police. Psychological change is suggested to be a function of the dynamic relation between crowd participants and such external forces.

More specifically, the ESIM posits two features of intergroup dynamics which are necessary for a change towards empowerment among participants in collective action: first, asymmetry in the stereotypes held of each other by movement participants and such external forces as the police (cf. della Porta, 1998, 1999; della Porta, & Reiter, 1998; Waddington, 1992); and, second, an (initial) asymmetry of power relations. The latter entails the police outgroup imposing its perspective upon the crowd such that this becomes the context within which crowd participants (re-)define themselves. In such cases, the police not only *see* all crowd members as oppositional and dangerous, they *treat* the whole crowd as such—for example, setting up cordons to prevent them going where they wish, using horses to force them in particular directions, or else dispersing them through a baton charge (see Reicher, 1996b).

Where these two conditions hold, two consequences follow. The first is that the outgroup's perception may become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Groups that are treated by the police as oppositional come to perceive themselves and act in oppositional ways. In particular, where police actions such as containment or dispersal are seen as illegitimate, then active opposition to the police becomes legitimized. The second consequence is that social relationships within the crowd, as well as between the crowd and police outgroup, will be transformed. Notably, where the police treat all crowd members as oppositional, then those within the crowd who advocate confrontation will no longer be seen as 'other'. Prior divisions will be superseded by a single and more inclusive self-categorization.

The ESIM suggests that these consequences of legitimization of opposition and the related formation of a single unitary self-category within a crowd are themselves the conditions for an emergent sense of collective empowerment among participants. This is the case because common self-categorization leads to expectations of mutual goals and hence mutual support in reaching those goals (Drury & Reicher, 1999; Stott & Drury, 1999; see also Andrews, 1991, and Fox-Cardamone et al., 2000, for the role of mutual support in movement participation).

As well as showing the antecedents, experience and immediate consequences of empowerment within episodes of collective action, recent studies also noted examples of participants referring to a feeling of empowerment which endured *after* the immediate experience of the event (Drury & Reicher,

[2]The term 'public order' is problematized here to acknowledge its contested nature; see for example Stott and Drury, 2000, and Stott and Reicher, 1998.

1999; Stott & Drury, 1999). For example, one interviewee explained how the experience of empowerment in an anti poll-tax[3] protest gave her the confidence subsequently not to pay the tax (J. Drury, unpublished PhD dissertation, 1996). Experiences of empowerment may therefore be consequential for the subsequent success of social movements.[4]

However, such psychological after-effects were not the focus of Drury and Reicher's (1999) study, and therefore participants were not directly asked about them. The question arising from the existing research is therefore as follows: what it is about experiences of collective action that leads to an enduring feeling of empowerment which may inspire people to get more involved subsequently? Research needs to address this question in order to do justice to the richness of the anecdotal and biographical examples of the emotional, motivational and political consequences of involvement in collective action. The present paper comprises a qualitative comparison of two crowd events. In these two events, the conditions for empowerment specified by the ESIM were observed and yet outcomes in terms of reported emotions and rationales for future participation differed. This would suggest that the ESIM indicates the necessary but not the sufficient conditions for enduring empowerment. By comparing the two events, we therefore sought to develop a hypothesis about the additional process through which empowerment is an experiential outcome of collective action.

TWO CROWD EVENTS

The two crowd events analysed here were studied as part of a larger project looking at the dynamics of identity change among participants in the campaign against the M11 Link Road in northeast London in 1993–94. The campaign against the M11 Link Road was the focus of a vibrant and UK-wide anti-roads movement that flourished in the mid-1990s. Those involved in the movement included not only the people living on or near the route of the proposed roads, but hundreds of others motivated by ecological principles, many of whom adopted and propagated (with some success) an ideology of 'non-violent direct action'—an ideology that informed the social identity shared by those at the No M11 campaign.

The first event to be analysed here was a 'tree-dressing ceremony' and mass occupation by campaign participants of a green area and chestnut tree on the route of the proposed road. The second event was the mass eviction of the green and tree, by hundreds of police, a month later. Each was studied longitudinally, with data on participants' perceptions and behaviour being gathered before, during and after each event.

The analysis seeks to explain enduring empowerment in two steps, using a comparative approach. Using a qualitative analysis in which we identify key themes in participants' experiences, we first show that the four conditions posited by the ESIM as underpinning empowerment in collective action were met at the two events: i.e. (a) an asymmetry of categorical representations between crowd participants and outgroups (contractors and police); (b) an (initial) asymmetry of power relations between the groups; (c) opposition to the outgroup becoming legitimized; (d) the emergence of a more inclusive ingroup self-categorization. Second, we compare the two events in terms of any differences in experiential (emotional and motivational) outcomes. If the four conditions specified by

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[3]The 'poll tax' was the popular name for the Community Charge, a regressive local taxation system introduced in England and Wales in 1990. A nationwide protest movement against it involved demonstrations outside (and inside) local government buildings, national marches, and coordinated non-payment campaigns organized by federated local support groups. See Burns (1992).

[4]Indeed, the poll tax collapsed when the town-hall protests and riots were followed up by the successful campaigns of mass non-payment (Burns, 1992).

the ESIM obtained at both events, then any such differences in experiential outcomes must be explained by further features of ingroup-outgroup interaction (i.e. what participants did in the two events) that appeared to distinguish the two events in psychologically important ways.

METHOD

Data Gathering

The study was carried out within a participant observation (PO) framework, allowing for a variety of data-gathering techniques in situations of intergroup conflict (see Drury & Stott, 2001; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). For the *tree-dressing ceremony*, the analysis draws upon the following data sources.

Semi-structured Interviews

Tape-recorded interviews with 37 participants were carried out; two were interviewed in the hour before the tree-dressing ceremony; two were interviewed during the act of occupation; 11 were interviewed over the next 48 hours; 22 were interviewed in the following weeks and months.

Interviewees were selected on an opportunity basis; the interviewer sought to speak to as many people as possible involved in the campaign during the time he was present. There were no refusals. Approximately 23 of those interviewed were people who lived in the local area (rather than people who had come to Wanstead to be involved with the campaign). Sixteen were male and 21 female. Eight were children or teenagers; six were in their twenties; the rest were in their thirties or older. Pictures of the event suggest that, apart from the proportion of children or teenagers which was underrepresented in the interview sample, these ratios do not deviate greatly from those during the event.

The length of the interviews ranged from a few minutes to nearly an hour; most were about 30 minutes long. Questions concerned the nature of the campaign ('What is the campaign about? What are the issues?'), the nature of the action ('How would you describe this action? What do you think can be achieved? What do you think the campaign is capable of now?'), and the actors ('How/why did you get involved? What sort of people are involved? Is there a good word or phrase to describe the people involved? How would you describe yourself?'). Thus, since participants were not asked directly about empowerment, any direct references to empowerment came from the participants themselves. All interviews were transcribed verbatim.

Notes and Recordings

The principal researcher was able to make about four hours of soundtrack tape recordings of events. These recordings included discussions, encounters with police, speeches, shouts, chants and comments throughout the event. The tape recorder was also used to record the researcher's own commentary. Written observations were made later in the day. Notes were also taken at a campaign meeting (attended by approximately 30 people) and other subsequent gatherings at which the event was discussed by participants.

There was no systematic attempt to gather data from the same people at different times over the course of the event. While the voices of a large number of people were captured on tape during the event, it was only possible to match two with subsequent interviewees; and only one of those interviewed before or during the event was also interviewed afterwards. Thus the data are mostly cross-sectional in nature.

Witness Statements

Six witness statements from campaign participants were collected (written for defence of other participants or complaints against police, security or contractors). Three were from females, three from males; each was about one side of A4 in length. A copy of a defence barrister's court case minutes was also obtained.

Video and Photographs

A video and eight photographs of the event taken by a campaign participant were obtained. The former comprised around 20 minutes of footage (including excerpts of campaign participants pushing fencing down and replacing earth) and retrospective interviews with two campaign participants.

Newspapers

Articles (including letters) from seven local papers, two national papers and one left-wing paper were collected.

Campaign Material

Two campaign press releases, five leaflets/pamphlets, and articles in four campaign (or campaign-supporting) newsletters were collected.

Other Material

A personal account by a participant, written for a campaign publication, and an unpublished letter to a local newspaper were obtained. We were also given a copy of a tape recording of a formal meeting between campaign participants and police (approximately one hour in length), a tape recorded interview with a chief inspector involved in the event, copies of contractors' record sheets and schedules of incidents which mention the event.

For the *eviction*, the range of material—interviews, soundtrack recordings, documents, newspaper accounts, police accounts—was similar, although the amount of material was larger. This is described in detail in Drury and Reicher (2000).

There are identifiable data for 12 participants who attended both the tree-dressing ceremony and the eviction. (Since names were not recorded for many participants, this is likely to be an underestimate.) For most of these participants, interviews and other data gathered were post hoc. None was asked how the experience of the tree-dressing ceremony affected how they approached the eviction.

Data Analysis

The data were analysed at two levels. First, a narrative sequence of events was constructed through triangulation of data sources (Denzin, 1989). Incidents are reported to the extent that there is agreement between different sources (i.e. campaign participants, police, contractors, newspaper

reports) or, if there are only data from campaign participants, where there is agreement between different types of data source (e.g. interviews, soundtrack recordings).

Second, participants and police accounts of the meaning of events were analysed using techniques based on Thematic Analysis (e.g. Hayes, 1997; Kellehear, 1993, pp. 38–42) and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (e.g. Langdridge, 2004, pp. 285–292; Willig, 2001, pp. 53–69). The core principle taken from these approaches is that of drawing out patterns of meaning in the text. The identification of themes in this type of method lies between the (putatively) entirely bottom-up approach of Grounded Theory and the entirely top-down approach of Content Analysis. The analyst attempts to capture the concepts and categories employed by those she is studying, and hence should not try to impose meaning on the material. At the same time, however, the analyst approaches the enquiry with certain research questions in mind. These research questions, along with the analyst's own ideas about relations between themes initially identified, are the basis for the analytic decisions made to structure these themes into clusters and/or hierarchies.

In the present case, the following questions guided the analysis: (1) How did participants, police and contractors define the protest, the road and each other (*categorical representations*)? (2) What were *power relations* like between the groups across the events? (3) How did participants talk about the legitimacy of their action after the outgroup exercise of power (*legitimization of opposition*)? (4) How did participants then talk about relations both with each other and with the outgroup (i.e. was there a more *inclusive social identity*)? Finally: (5) What were the experiential outcomes? In particular, after the event, (how) did participants talk about empowerment, victory and/or defeat, their emotions, and their rationales for future action?

Procedurally, the analysis first involved reading through each document, underlining and making notes in the right-hand margin of any references (of any length, from a phrase to a paragraph) that seemed to be relevant to the questions specified above. Extracts were copied and grouped in terms of these questions before being analysed individually through a commentary on the relation of each piece of text to its narrative and interactional context.

As a qualitative analysis, the aim was to identify the presence of issues relevant to the pattern specified by the ESIM. However, this is not to say that the exercise was one simply of verification (rather than attempted falsification). In the first place, evidence contradictory to the overall pattern is also noted. Second, we present summary figures for the number of instances classified under particular categories; and in two cases carry out statistical analysis to determine whether differences identified are significant. Finally, since the question of experiential outcomes was open-ended (i.e. no answer was presumed), we sought any and all instances.

The validity of the analysis is argued to be cumulative in that, together, the various pieces of interpretation should form a coherent whole which makes sense of the pattern of data (cf. Habermas, 1971). The presentation of illustrative quotes allows the reader to judge whether this coherence has been achieved.

The reliability of the analysis was assessed through the standard approach of inter-rater reliability (IRR; Graziano & Raulin, 2004, p. 88; Silverman, 1993, p. 148). First, we trained an independent judge with the analytic scheme through presenting examples of coded text and talking him through the nature of the analysis and the rationale for each coding category. The judge was then given a sample of material with which to practise using the scheme until she was comfortable with it (cf. Stock, 1994, pp. 134–135). Our coding scheme comprised the five research questions (above), the last of which was subdivided into 'empowerment' and 'other' (e.g. despair, anger, etc.). Coding scheme categories were mutually exclusive, in that no instance assigned to one coding category could also be assigned to another one. Ten per cent of coded material, presented as given chunks (phrases, sentences, paragraphs), was jumbled up and given to the judge along with the coding categories, and he was asked to place these chunks under the correct headings.

Next, an Agreement Rate (AR)[5] was calculated by presenting the judge with a further 10% of the material, in the form of given chunks (phrases, sentences, paragraphs) of material. Blind to the analyst's own codings, the judge had to assign the material to the given coding categories. For each judge, the total number of observations agreed upon was divided by the number of chunks presented (i.e. both agreements and disagreements; Orwin, 1994). This produced an AR score of 88% with the original analysis, an acceptable level of IRR (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

ANALYSIS

The first two sections of the analysis are organized around the tree-dressing ceremony and then the eviction respectively, with each being subdivided into the five analytic questions (i.e. four empowerment conditions as specified by the ESIM, plus experiential outcomes). In the third section, by directly comparing the actions of protesters against outgroup forces across the two events, we develop a hypothesis about the relation of this action to the experience of enduring empowerment for participants in collective action.

The George Green Tree-Dressing Ceremony

An Asymmetry of Categorical Representations

The M11 Link Road was scheduled to run for 3.5 miles through the London districts of Wanstead, Leytonstone, and Leyton, and would involve the demolition of several hundred houses as well as green spaces. The direct action campaign against the road began in September 1993. It involved occupations of trees, invasions of construction sites, participants clambering onto digging machines, and the squatting of houses on the route.

Part of George Green, Wanstead, on which stood an old chestnut tree, was to be excavated by contractors to make way for the road. In early November 1993, activists sought to mobilize local support for the campaign through a family-oriented 'tree-dressing' ceremony on the Green. On the day advertised, around 200 people gathered to rally against the road and then to 'dress' the tree with ribbons. The crowd included not only the activists but also relatively large numbers of local people (including children) who had not participated in the campaign before.

However, the ceremony could not go ahead as planned because the contractors had erected eight-foot-high fences around the relevant section of the Green, including the chestnut tree. Security guards were posted inside the site to eject anyone attempting to get in. The planned rally went ahead just outside the site, with the speakers standing on a ladder.

In interviews and other material, those present in the crowd commonly made the argument that the land of George Green 'belonged to the people (of Wanstead)' (i.e. not to the Department of Transport or building contractors). In speeches, campaign leaflets and interviews, 17 statements were collected which referred to the Green as 'common land':

1. P1: I think most people were were outraged to find that the Green was panelled in, covered in with this fencing, you know. [ ]
Int: [ ] why was the Green so important to people?

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[5]While superseded by more rigorous reliability statistics, AR, or per cent agreement, remains the most widely used index of IRR, being intuitively interpretable (Orwin, 1994). One of its main disadvantages is its proneness to produce misleadingly high IRR; yet this is less likely when there are a large number of coding categories (as in the present case) when the likelihood of agreement just through guessing is low.

P1: I think it's so obviously in the middle of Wanstead, next to the main road junction and the tube station, it's clearly common land, isn't it.
[Interview, the day following the tree-dressing ceremony][6]

Other comments referred to the Green as part of the 'community' and of the 'threat' posed both to the 'environment' and to the 'village' of Wanstead by the road construction.

For the contractors, on the other hand, the road was lawful, being part of the Government's road-building programme, and hence legitimate. Moreover, for those ensuring that this lawful and legitimate practice went unhindered—i.e. the police—the primary concern was with the orderliness of the protest. From the beginning, the senior liaising police officer was heard to comment that the presence of the crowd of protesters posed a threat to 'public order'—particularly given activists' attempts earlier that day to climb and dislodge contractors' fences:

2. Police officer: Okay you were trying to break the fences down, same as what's happened at Blake Hall [Road]. That is not peaceful protest. You are all gonna get arrested for creating a situation like this. [ ] Okay. You continue with your protest ( ) and make it peaceful, that's all we ask.
Various participants: We are peaceful. He didn't do anything ( )
Police officer: I don't think so. From what I've seen so far it was (hundreds of people) running across the High Street [sic]
[Soundtrack recording, morning of tree-dressing ceremony]

In short, there was some evidence of a conflict between the groups over each other's social location and practice. On the one hand, crowd participants defined the construction site as illegitimate and hence their own 'peaceful protest' to save the 'common land' as legitimate. On the other hand, for the contractors and police, the road construction was 'lawful' and the protests against it were 'disorderly' and hence illegitimate.

An (Initial) Asymmetry of Power Relations

Despite police concerns, there were relatively few officers present when the tree-dressing ceremony was due to begin—possibly because until that point the No M11 Campaign had generally been unable to mobilize large crowds. There was nevertheless an asymmetry of power relations in that the fences erected by the contractors did not simply symbolize but embodied the power of the authorities to determine participants' experience. They were the material reality preventing participants from enacting what they understood as their legitimate rights to move freely about 'their' Green and dress the tree. More than this, the fences and the guards inside the site were the physical means through which the contractors were able to carry out the work of transforming the Green and the chestnut tree into the foundations of the new road, changing the very nature of supposed 'common land' into something else entirely—in fact, denying and destroying such 'common land'. Thus, at the very moment when crowds began to gather on George Green, a JCB (mechanical digger) was behind the fence digging up the earth around the chestnut tree:

3. P2: The sad news is that this tree is being guarded not so that security guards are going to dress the tree this afternoon, [ ] not so that they can keep this tree in good order for generations to come,

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[6]Transcribing conventions are based on those given in Parker (1992, p. 124). Where text has been edited out of quotations, this is indicated with empty square brackets, like so [ ]. Where information has been added for clarification, this is provided in square brackets [like so]. Where material is inaudible, this is indicated with empty round brackets, like so ( ). Where what is being said is unclear and yet a guess can be made, this is indicated in round brackets (like so). References for the quotes indicate the type of data (e.g. interview or witness statement) and when the statement was made.

but so that Norwest Holst, the construction company, can *destroy* this tree.
Crowd: Boo!
P2: And that is an utter tragedy. Not only will this tree be destroyed but this Green is going to be destroyed.
[Soundtrack recording: rally speech, just before crowd entered site]

Therefore, along with the presence of the security guards (and, to a lesser extent, police), by excluding the crowd participants, the fencing served to enact the contractors' definition of legitimate conduct (i.e. building the road).

Opposition Becomes Legitimized

For the activists present, several of whom had already that morning attempted to invade and occupy other construction sites on the route of the road (although with little success), protest in the form of direct action was already a legitimate practice. What is of interest, however, is the way that others present ('non-activists') moved towards such a position that day. For these participants, if the Green was 'common land', then 'the people' had the 'right' to enter it; but given the threat to the Green, entering the land to resist this destruction became not just a 'right' but an imperative:

4. P1: And er ( ) common land, people are bloody annoyed if it gets (covered) in and lost. I think there was a general feeling that there was some local concern and people outside that this should be resisted. [ ] I mean we're going to lose this Green, common land, I think anyone should try and protect their own common land.
[Interview, the day following the tree-dressing ceremony]

Thus, as the rally speeches ended, people pressed against the gates of the site. Their chants expressed the beliefs that 'we', the people who really 'own' the 'common land', and who had the 'planet's interests' at heart, had both a 'right' and a 'duty' to be in the site.

Emergence of a More Inclusive Ingroup Self-categorization

The campaign of direct action against the road was at a relatively early stage at the time of the tree-dressing ceremony, and had been characterized till that point by a division between 'protesters' and 'locals', which critics played up and participants sought to overcome (Drury, Reicher, & Stott, 2003). Through the fencing, however, the crowd who gathered for the tree-dressing ceremony found themselves sharing a common fate; whether 'locals' or 'protesters', none was allowed to approach the tree. '*Everybody*' was excluded, whether their prior aims and intentions were relatively 'confrontational' (direct action) or relatively 'innocent' (dressing the tree):

5. Int: Can you tell me a bit about your experiences yesterday, first of all what was it about?
P3: Well we were just trying to get on to the land that—cos it's our land really (if you think about it), it's everybody's land, and they were fencing it off from everybody. We thought we had the right to come in here
[Interview, the day following the tree-dressing ceremony]

Following the rally, increasing numbers of participants clambered over the fences. The security guards found themselves heavily outnumbered and eventually gave up trying to eject people. The tree-dressing ceremony then went ahead: to the accompaniment of drums, dozens of people marched and danced round the tree, chanting, and strewing it with ribbons.

Shortly after the tree-dressing began, a number of people began pushing at the fencing from inside the site. Others joined them, and soon the security guards and police gave up trying to prevent them.[7] When the first panel came down, the rest of the crowd entered the site. Over the next hour or so, the rest of the fencing panels were then systematically flattened. Perhaps the best evidence of the emergence of a more inclusive self-categorization—and in fact the most prominent feature in participants' accounts of the reclamation of the construction site—was the claim that 'everyone' joined in; i.e. that the initial division between 'locals' and 'protesters' was transcended, not just in perceptual categorizations but in shared collective action. Thus, for example, 13 statements, in the form of interviews, letters to newspapers and campaign leaflets, stressed the inclusiveness of the action:

6. P4: And there was all sorts of Wanstead people here, and it I think that's what made it so powerful, it wasn't just the—I mean I don't know what you call them—the protesters in inverted commas, it was everybody seemed to have heard about it and was actually reclaiming the Green [Retrospective interview]

In a further 10 statements, participants stressed that the campaign had become more inclusive subsequently, or cited the experience as the catalyst for their own involvement:

7. P5: So that was the turning point because I think that was the point at which any kind of division between people from the outside and people, local people, just suddenly dissolved. Everyone knew that they were really fighting for exactly the same thing and a really strong bond developed between everyone that was there on that day. Even though many of us had never met each other or known each other before.
[Retrospective video interview]

There was evidence of mutual support for shared goals in the tree-dressing crowd in at least two senses. First, when the first few people dropping down into the site from the fences were stopped and held by the security guards, there was collective condemnation of and chanting against this by those at the gates and those joining them in the site. Second, people's explanations for how they felt able to act were often expressed in terms of 'popular support', or the fact that 'everyone else' was already taking part in this risky but legitimate action:

8. P4: I decided, well, everyone else was doing it, I'd join in
[Retrospective interview]

Such comments imply that, since the legitimacy of the action was consensual for the crowd, each participant felt they would be backed up if they acted: they would not be condemned and they would not be abandoned if outgroup members (security or police) targeted them.

Experiential Outcomes

During the event, at least some participants spontaneously referred to their own feelings of power, often accompanied by positive emotions:

9. P6: That tremendous feeling when the fences went over and people just felt so powerful, as they rightly should, in that situation.
[Retrospective interview]

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[7]It wasn't until several hours later that the police brought in reinforcements. This may have been due to the fact that it was a Saturday afternoon and most police resources were tied up with the various football matches taking place in London.

Moreover, such feelings didn't simply drive the action on the day but stayed with people afterwards. Thus a number of participants later stated that they felt that the campaign and indeed the anti-roads movement itself could now make a more effective challenge to the building of the M11 link road and other roads:

10. P5: It was almost as if that kind of sent a kind of wave of—a wave of kind of empowerment through a lot of people, including protesters. I think a lot of people [ ] suddenly realized that they could actually—they could actually take some responsibility for what was going on and actually take control. [ ] A lot of people have just powered on since then, they really have.
[Retrospective interview]

11. Int: Finally what is the most you think this er this campaign can achieve?
P21: Stopping the road
Int: You think it can
P21: yeah
[Retrospective interview]

Subsequently, seven people were recorded as explicitly referring to their own empowerment as campaign participants through the experience; eight were recorded as referring to others' power or empowerment through the experience; several more referred to related senses of ability and confidence. In all, out of 33 interviewees, 17 explicitly stated that they had changed towards greater empowerment or confidence in the campaign, and only six stated that they had not changed. A χ^2 test on the numbers of those stating whether or not they had changed found that this difference was significant ($\chi^2(1) = 4.35$, $p < 0.05$). Since participants were not asked directly about 'empowerment', such comments were spontaneous and hence are likely to be an underestimate of change. Behaviourally, the evidence that such feelings fed into future participation would include the fact that numerically more people were involved with campaign activities—including many more of the 'local' people—after the tree-dressing ceremony than before.

The Eviction of George Green

Following the tree-dressing ceremony and demolition of contractors' fences, George Green and the chestnut tree were occupied for a month by campaign participants. When the eviction finally came, a crowd of several hundred gathered to prevent bailiffs and police approaching the tree. After an 11-hour long struggle, the tree was finally demolished and the Green returned to the possession of the contractors. (For more detail on these events, see Drury & Reicher, 2000.)

An Asymmetry of Categorical Representations

The eviction was characterized by the same conflict of categorical representations observed in the case of the tree-dressing ceremony: saving the environment through 'peaceful protest' versus the 'lawful' and legitimate building of the road. In addition, the events of the tree-dressing ceremony had confirmed the police perception that the No M11 Campaign was a potentially 'violent' threat to 'public order'.

12. P14: [megaphone]: (if there's any reporters here) ( ) this is a non-violent action
Crowd: [cheers, whoops]
P14: This is non-violence at its best, yeah, we're gonna make it work tonight, [ ] The aim of our

action is to ensure that the majority of us peacefully blockade their actions around the tree, if they remove you, try and go back in again, yeah, don't force your way, try, don't run, don't shout abuse yeah, [ ] Yeah (just) dignity and humour, yeah. Humour is what's going to do it.
[Soundtrack recording: Speech to crowd under tree, c. 5 a.m.]

13. P15: Were you surprised at the diversity of the crowd ( ) [at the eviction]?
Police chief inspector: No. No no. I mean the crowd ( ) occasion. There was a tree-dressing ceremony I remember before the event, several weeks before the event and it was ( ) the contractors decided that they didn't want people on the site and then they can't go in [and] dress the tree, which is their right, their right to prevent that. That upset the protesters and present that day were a number of ordinary people from Wanstead together with a number of schoolchildren and they proceeded to push the fencing down. The whole all the way round it went. And so ( ) you had an emerging horde of people that had left behind their social responsibilities and just gone ahead and damaged property. And the mixture of crowd was schoolkids, ordinary Mr and Mrs Wanstead and protesters, so I wasn't surprised at all.
[Retrospective interview]

An (Initial) Asymmetry of Power Relations

There is no dispute that the police at the eviction arrived in large numbers and clearly had the power to impose themselves. They did so by physically dragging, pushing and throwing people away from the tree, despite the resistance and protest.

Opposition Becomes Legitimized

Although all at the eviction endorsed 'peaceful protest', one of the striking effects of the experience was the radicalization of many participants (i.e. the delegitimization of the police and authorities). This was evidenced in both contemporaneous and subsequent comments criticizing the police and bailiffs for their behaviour—all 57 legal statements made by campaign participants complained about (illegitimate) police violence, and all 56 interviewed mentioned it without prompting:

14. P11: using unnecessary force to remove 400 peaceable middle class people from standing in the way of the bulldozers. There is positive evidence of unnecessary force even brutality by the police. [ ] I think the size of the police force what was always going to be a difficult situation but it was never ever gonna be the poll tax riot, it was never ever gonna be 50,000 mad football fans on the rampage through the streets of London
[Retrospective interview]

Emergence of a More Inclusive Ingroup Self-categorization

At the eviction, as at the tree-dressing ceremony, there were a number of 'local' people present who had little previous experience of such events and who saw themselves as different from 'the protesters'. However, the hundreds of police who intervened in order to allow the bailiffs to evict the tree were perceived to treat everyone present in exactly the same (illegitimate, 'heavy-handed') way. In the face of this 'indiscriminate' police action, an initial division of labour between 'protesters' (taking part in 'direct action') and 'locals' (engaging in 'symbolic' protest only) broke down. A greater

sense of unity and even 'community' amongst people emerged subsequently in relation to the shared enemy (Drury et al., 2003). Although only seven interviewees provided (spontaneous) comments on enhanced relations of solidarity within the collective, no one offered contradictory accounts (e.g. by saying that existing divisions sharpened):

15. P16: strong bonding thing which certainly is going to be increased strengthened by today [Interview during eviction, c. 9 a.m.]

This feeling of enhanced unity was bound up with expectations of support for ingroup-normative actions, as evidenced in statements referring to people acting together, and helping and encouraging each other.

Experiential Outcomes

Only two subsequent interview statements were recorded that could be described as referring to empowerment, and no-one referred to such feelings during the event itself. On the contrary, eight were explicit in their despair and fear in the face of the lengths that the authorities would go in order to impose the road:

16. P7: It certainly changed my attitude to the whole affair, I realized how serious it was then, I thought they're willing to kill, really, because who knows what could happen with somebody there who wasn't in good health, or somebody who'd just got an unlucky blow, you can't always answer for where people fall, can you, if you throw them.
[Retrospective interview]

The immediate experience of failing in the attempt to save the tree was for many people traumatic and upsetting, since the tree and the Green embodied the campaign's identification with 'community', 'nature' and open green spaces. Thus a campaign participant describes her subsequent feelings of depression and hopelessness in the face of being 'smashed down':

17. P8: But Tuesday left me very depressed. I felt like topping myself. There y'are. Next day next couple of days, I really did, I was going round with so with such a depression, it was like a death. Like a death in the family. Worse than a death, cos you know that you're going to get over it. But this one you don't ever think you're going to get over it because you feel that they're fighting you every way, and every time you try and get up a little bit and you feel that you're getting somewhere, they smash you down again. Wicked, (it's) wicked.
[Retrospective interview]

Developing a Hypothesis about Enduring Empowerment

A more inclusive ingroup self-categorization and hence expectations of mutual support for shared goals developed in both the tree-dressing ceremony and the eviction, and yet only the first of these events was associated with subsequent expressions of collective empowerment. We can therefore conclude that unity and support may be necessary but are not sufficient for enduring empowerment.

The contrast between the two events might suggest that, as an outcome of collective action, empowerment is a simple matter of collective victory rather than defeat. However, examination of further responses to the eviction suggests that the matter is not so simple. The setback of losing the tree and the Green came to be re-construed by participants in the hours and days following the

event. Following the 'violent' eviction, 'protest' meant a new willingness to expose the perceived illegitimacy ('heavy-handed' tactics, 'brutality') of the authorities per se rather than just oppose the road. By redefining the event as not merely about saving the Green but about relations with an illegitimate and 'heavy-handed' authority, participants cast what happened as a 'moral victory':

18. P9: And there was a lot of people afterwards who were still hugging and congratulating each other, even though we'd lost in a sense we'd won the moral victory.
[Retrospective interview]

Indeed, we can see the definition of the event being argued out—and the 'moral victory' definition prevailing—on the very next occasion following the eviction that participants came together collectively:

19. P10: [megaphone] We don't have much to celebrate. We had a defeat the other day. We're gonna have some victories very soon.
P11: [shouting] It was no defeat the other day. We won the moral victory.
[shouts, yips, clapping]
P12: Well said
P11: [shouting] We have the moral high ground.
[Soundtrack recording, Memorial Rally, four days after the eviction]

Table 1 (below) illustrates the number of comments (from interviews, published material and soundtrack recordings) defining the eviction as a defeat or a success, first with reference to the experience of the events itself (t1) and second with hindsight (t2).

As the table shows, while the number of comments defining what happened as a defeat decreased over time, those defining it as a success increased. A χ^2 test found that this pattern approached conventional levels of significance ($\chi^2(1) = 2.63$, $p < 0.1$).

Further, while the emotional experiences of the two events analysed here were very different—joy versus despair and anger—so were their consequences in terms of motivations for subsequent involvement. The social identity tradition distinguishes power and legitimacy as analytically separate dimensions determining collective action in intergroup contexts (Tajfel, 1978; see also J. Drury & S. Reicher, submitted; The changing subject of collective action: A contribution towards a model of the dynamic self). Thus, even where it is possible to challenge an outgroup, such action may not be seen as legitimate; and even where it is seen as right to challenge outgroup dominance, the ingroup may not have the power to do so. The emergent sense of confidence engendered by the reclamation of the Green through the tree-dressing ceremony inspired participants to continue and increase their involvement. In the case of the (immediate) defeat of being evicted from the Green, the very illegitimacy of the police action itself provided many participants with a strong motivation to re-commit themselves to the struggle, since it re-confirmed the legitimacy of their cause:

Table 1. Numbers of participants referring to the eviction as a success or a defeat, at the time of the eviction (t1) and subsequently (t2)

	Success	Defeat
t1	2	5
t2	6	1

20. P13: We're so committed now, we're never gonna give up fighting. I think a lot of us our lives have been changed by this and we're just gonna keep fighting I've never felt so deeply about anything particularly after Tuesday, to see what they did to people, I mean it's convinced me that we're right
[Retrospective interview]

Failure can serve as a form of common fate, enhancing the salience of group boundaries and hence commitment to the group or cause; and the prior commitment of members to the group will mediate the extent that success or failure increases group commitment (Turner, 1981, pp. 90–93). However, in the case of the eviction, such a re-commitment to 'the cause' went hand-in-hand with a redefinition of precisely what 'the cause' was. Now participants talked in terms of exposing the illegitimacy of the authorities (Drury et al., 2003; see above). Twenty-four people stated that that they were now more determined in terms of self-belief in the legitimacy of the cause following the eviction; none said that they were less committed. Such re-construal of the loss as moral victory could perhaps be understood as a case of social creativity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), whereby the dimension of evaluation is changed (from action to moral position) to retain a positive social identity (cf. Klein, Jacobs, Gemoets, Licata, & Lambert, in press, and Stott & Drury, 2004, on the role of communication in collective consensualization of ingroup and outgroup stereotypes).

We can therefore suggest that victory as such is an inadequate explanation for enduring empowerment. While the tree-dressing ceremony and the eviction may have differed in a number of ways, our suggestion is that the key difference between them is not whether participants defined the event as a 'victory' but rather whether or not such a victory entailed participants acting in a way which served to bring the world into line with their social identity.

In the case of the tree-dressing ceremony, the collective flattening of the fences was the physical enactment of participants' identity—defined in terms of concern for the green space of Wanstead—since it rendered the physical space into a 'common', rather than part of a road. This is evidenced in comments in which participants celebrated their action as successful enactment of the principles that motivated them—as an assertion of what they were about:

21. P17: Doing what they believed in
Int: Right
P18: It was really good. (We) stuck up for what we believed in and it's finally getting somewhere.
[Interview during tree-dressing ceremony]

22. [P19:] the children were very pleased to see most of the fence down I think they felt as I did. We had proved a point. We want to dress our tree and by God We had! It was a lovely feeling
[Retrospective personal account]

At the eviction, however, the crowd failed to enact the collective self-definition they brought to the event—i.e. saving the tree and the 'common'. Instead, the actions of the police and bailiffs served to impose 'public order' and the 'rightful' construction of the road, obliterating the vision embodied in the tree-dressing ceremony and campaign occupation of the tree. That participants felt that rather than asserting their identity that identity had been denied is evidenced in statements in which it is clear that participants describe how closely their sense of self was bound up with the tree and how weak they felt when the tree was seized and destroyed:

23. P20: I mean I was crying, I mean some people think that's such an overreaction but I was crying when I saw the tree come down, everyone had put so much into that, so much of themselves and then to see it just go like that, you know, it was just unbelievable, [ ] my friends and I who

Table 2.   Comparison of conditions and outcomes of the two events

	Tree-dressing ceremony	George Green eviction
Conditions for change	Asymmetry of categorical representations of legitimate practice	
	(Initial) asymmetry of power relations	
	A more inclusive ingroup self-categorization	
	Mutual support	
Actualization of identity	Ingroup	Outgroup
Definition of ingroup victory	'Material'	'Moral'
Experiential outcomes	Joy	Despair, anger
	Empowerment	Enhanced self-legitimacy

were involved in the campaign were really crying [ ] and everyone else was crying around us, it was just horrible
[Retrospective interview]

This argument can now be stated as a hypothesis about the process by which empowerment emerges as a (relatively) enduring outcome of collective action:

Empowerment (i.e. confidence in one's ability to challenge existing relations of domination, typically accompanied by positive affect) is an outcome of collective action if and when such action serves to realize participants' social identity (and hence their definition of legitimate practice) over against the power of dominant outgroups.

Table 2 (below) summarizes the key features of the two events analysed.

DISCUSSION

The suggestion here is that empowerment as an experiential outcome of action is a function of that action being seen as an imposition of self or identity. The word 'imposition' seems appropriate here since the context is one of intergroup struggle. This conclusion builds upon and is consistent with the ESIM and the social identity approach more broadly.

In the first place, the present account reflects the basic tenets of SCT (Turner et al., 1987), and hence the ESIM, in suggesting that identity derives from, and varies with, social relational context. Thus, just as a *radicalized* self-concept is a function of involvement in social relations which becomes defined as antagonistic to the collective self (Drury & Reicher, 2000), so an *empowered* self-concept is a function of participation in social relations defined in terms of power transformation—from the outgroup to the ingroup. Put differently, when one's action upon the world serves to reflect one's identity—i.e. to impose one's definition of legitimate practice—the result of such action is evidence that one (i.e. one's particular identity) is indeed active and powerful.

Second, it can be argued that the very reason why the emergence of an inclusive ingroup self-categorization and the expectations of ingroup support that it engenders are empowering (Drury & Reicher, 1999) is because such resources are precisely what is necessary in order to bring the world into line with one's identity (Reicher & Haslam, in press, submitted; Powerless groups and the emergence of tyranny: The BBC prison experiment). That is, the wider group is the means through

which collective self-imposition can occur: the greater the numbers and unity in the ingroup, the greater the potential for self-imposition and hence social change (cf. Drury et al., 2003).

However, the comparison between the two crowd events makes the point that while mutual support is necessary it may be insufficient for the occurrence of enduring empowerment. The present analysis adds to the ESIM by suggesting that empowerment as an enduring outcome of collective action needs to be grasped in relation to factors (such as the tractability of the outgroup) which determine the extent to which crowd participants are able to realize their social identity.

The concept of empowerment has its origins in social movements but has subsequently been taken up more widely. For example, a recent internet search using the Overture search engine identified over 100 items containing the term 'empowerment', most of which were located in management, local and national government and development agency sites. But this diffusion of use has been accompanied by a dilution of meaning, with perhaps the dominant usage being that in organizations where it is defined in terms of inclusion—but where too often it actually means conformity to a given definition of the collective identity within which individual critical initiative is limited (for reviews, see Haslam, Eggins, & Reynolds, 2003; Reynolds & Platow, 2003). By contrast, the present account understands empowerment in terms of social change rather than stability, and emphasizes the subjective sense of enhanced autonomy that needs to develop in the individuals making up the collective if such social change is to occur.

The present account also suggests a possible explanation of some of the limits of empowerment. While the ingroup might successfully impose its definition of legitimate practice at one point in time, the outgroup may be able to re-impose itself subsequently, thereby negating ingroup actions. Power relationships and hence empowerment, because they are part of an interactive and historical relationship (Reicher, in press), are always provisional.

This point about provisionality cuts both ways. Feelings of empowerment among those displaying resistance may fail to endure to the extent that the dominant outgroup subsequently negates ingroup action. But social structures which embody outgroup dominance themselves need to be understood as subject to possible change—even where they appear as given, natural, permanent and 'thing'-like (reified).

Outgroup (re-)imposition is experienced negatively, as *dis*empowerment—as evidenced in accounts of the 'fatalism' following the defeat of the Pilkington glassworkers strike (Lane & Roberts, 1971, p. 197) and the feeling of defeat among some at the Genoa anti-capitalist protests when the police were seen to be able to impose a bloody 'revenge' (Siobhan, 2001, pp. 64–65). The imposition of a practice which denies and negates one's identity serves as evidence for the relative weakness, vulnerability and lack of agency of one's identity. As we have seen from the example of the George Green eviction, in these cases participants need to find other sources of motivation, such as an enhanced sense of self-legitimacy, if they are not to resign themselves to the dominance of an alien world.

Our notion of empowerment through self-imposition is allied to Marx's theory of labour. Hence, following Marx, we shall refer to the process of self-imposition outlined above as one of collective *self-objectification*.[8] If alienated labour is the loss of self (Marx, 1975, pp. 326–327), then to translate one's subjectivity—one's own desires and indeed one's project—into an objective reality is the *affirmation* of self:

> . . . it is only when the objective reality universally becomes for man [sic] in society the reality of man's essential powers, becomes human reality, and thus the reality of his *own* essential powers,

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[8]Moscovici (1981) refers to 'objectification' as the transformation of a newly-encountered idea or concept into a concrete image, as part of the process of creating a social representation; and Miner-Rubino, Twenge, and Fredrickson (2002) use the term 'self-objectification' to refer to women's experience of being an object for another. But our usage is based on a much earlier one; see Arthur (1986).

that all *objects* become for him the *objectification of himself*, objects that confirm and realize his individuality, *his* objects, i.e. *he himself* becomes the object.
(Marx, 1975, pp. 352–353; emphasis in original)

What is implicit in Marx, however, the social identity approach makes explicit: the variability of self or identity—in terms of both form (from personal to collective) and content (different social identities in the same person). The importance of this is in its implications for variations in experiences of (dis)empowerment, both within and across individuals.

Relation of Collective Self-objectification to Efficacy

On the one hand, what we have shown may seem obvious: winning is motivating and encouraging for groups in struggle. On the other hand, the analysis has served to problematize what it means to win.

The notion that successful performance achievement of given intentions leads to greater confidence has been expressed in psychology perhaps most explicitly in self-efficacy theory. Thus Bandura (e.g. 1995) states that performance accomplishments or 'mastery experiences' provide 'the most authentic evidence of whether one can muster whatever it takes to succeed' (p. 3). But while Bandura's account of mastery experiences defines successful achievement in terms of the individual, the present analysis points to the way the collective self was the locus of empowerment when material success was achieved. It was the campaign and the anti-roads movement, and hence the sense of themselves *as* campaign participants, in which participants became more confident, rather than (just) their personal selves.

As discussed in the Introduction, efficacy theory has lately been extended from individual to collective phenomena. 'Collective efficacy', Bandura (2000) argues, is an emergent property rather than the sum of the levels of self-efficacy of the individual members of the collective. But the distinction between self-efficacy and collective efficacy is itself revealing: for Bandura, the self is just the personal self. A difference between self-efficacy and the social identity approach is that the latter, but not self-efficacy theory, suggests that the self or identity can be collective as well as personal (see, in particular, Reicher, 1997; Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1994), each representing a psychologically valid level of self-categorization. As a corollary, the social identity approach also suggests that there are multiple selves or identities corresponding to the multiplicity of our social relations. By contrast, Bandura's account posits a single unitary self.

The significance of this theoretical difference lies in what counts as a successful achievement. Self-efficacy implies that the definition of success is unproblematic; it is given by a unitary and unvarying definition of self. The social identity approach, on the other hand, would suggest that what counts as successful achievement can only be understood with reference to a particular identity; and, since identities can vary (across time and within individuals and groups), definitions of success might vary, along with the emotional and practical implications that follow from such definitions (Cocking & Drury, 2004, pp. 428–430).

In this regard, the social identity approach is in line with recent developments in social movement theory. While the success or failure of social movements has long been a line of enquiry (e.g. Piven & Cloward, 1977), attention has increasingly focused on the way different actors—both within social movements and between social movements and external observers—differ in their perceptions of the success of a given action (Giugni, 1999; Melucci, 1995). The social identity approach developed here and elsewhere (Drury & Reicher, 2000) likewise suggests that research should examine the unintended consequences, including unexpected 'successes', of movement actions (della Porta, 1999; McAdam, 1999).

The Role of Emotion in Collective Empowerment

An additional dimension of difference between collective self-objectification and efficacy theory lies in the importance placed on emotional experience. Bandura (1997) finds the concept of 'empowerment' too vague to be useful. Yet it is used in the present account not only because it is a term that those involved in social movements themselves use, but also because it captures aspects of experience—in particular the concomitant emotional exhilaration, delight and joy—that mere 'efficacy', an account of subjective power as essentially rational calculation, does not.

Collective self-objectification refers to the realization of a definition of self, confirming it as a living *agent*, a locus of possibility, action and change in the world (Reicher & Haslam, in press). For those involved in the tree-dressing ceremony, the suggestion might therefore be that the joy experienced was a function of a highly positive endorsement of the particular collective self-definition. By the same token, however, antagonistic outgroup self-objectification—as in the case of the eviction—is experienced negatively by ingroup participants, because it denies the self not only its values but also its very agency.

In showing the centrality of emotion in the experience of (dis)empowerment, the present analysis in one sense echoes the (irrationalist) account of Le Bon (1947), which at least had the virtue of attempting to capture the exhilaration that arises with crowd participation. Yet in demonstrating that collective definitions of legitimacy were connected with both feelings of empowerment and feelings of despair and/or determination, which in turn provided different rationales for future action, the present analysis is more consistent with recent (socio-cognitive) work linking intergroup relations with emotion quality (e.g. Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000; Smith, 1999). The analysis of the eviction makes the further point, however, that the meaning of the event which gives rise to emotions, and hence motivations, may be contested.

Limits of the Study and Suggestions for Further Work

One limitation of the case-study format is that it cannot show whether the social creativity displayed by the participants following the eviction was in part an order effect. That is, without a series of material victories and defeats, in different sequences so that comparisons can be made, we cannot determine whether the creativity of construing a material defeat as a moral victory depended upon experience of a prior material victory. However, such an order effect explanation has little theoretical basis. Moreover, a number of those participating in the moral victory of the eviction had not been involved in the tree-dressing ceremony so could not be understood as requiring the experience of material victory as a precondition.

A more important limitation of the study is that it is essentially circumstantial with respect to the hypothesis developed in the analysis. Based on people's accounts, we can have some confidence in claiming that people who took part in the tree-dressing ceremony felt empowered subsequently, and that ingroup unification and support occurred, based on the shared identity through which protesters distinguished themselves from police and contractors. But the evidential basis for the hypothesis of collective self-objectification is to a large extent merely observational. Put simply, the problem was that people weren't asked what it was that made them feel empowered.

In a sense, of course, this is an advantage, since statements about empowerment were spontaneous and lacked reactivity. Such a limitation also points to possible opportunities for future empirical work. Most obviously, there is the question of the *phenomenology* of empowerment. We need to examine the extent to which, in explaining their own feelings of empowerment and hence their readiness to take part in future collective actions, participants actually refer to experiences that can be conceptualized as

collective self-objectification. We need to know the subjective importance of the experience of collective self-objectification in comparison to other possible sources of empowerment that have been suggested—not only unity and support, but also, for example, self-sacrifice (e.g. Jasper, 1997, p. 197) and knowledge (e.g. Giddens, 1991, p. 139).

For all the modesty of the present study, it is hoped that the suggestions made here can eventually contribute to something more ambitious. Social psychologists have recently become adept at explaining how unequal power is maintained between groups (e.g. Jost & Banaji, 1994; Sidanious & Pratto, 1999). The danger is that they can explain power maintenance so well that they end up naturalizing and eternalizing domination. By contrast, the present study is part of a project which seeks to foreground social change as part of a social psychology of empowerment and collective resistance (Reicher, in press; Spears, Jetten, & Doosje, 2001). The message we seek to promote is that social change is not external, but rather involves processes of psychological empowerment which exist at least in potential wherever there is illegitimate power.

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