Collective Action and Psychological Change:
The emergence of new social identities

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Abstract

The paper comprises an analysis of processes of psychological change among participants at an environmental protest. A participant observation study found evidence of a radicalized self concept among a number of crowd members, and indicates a link between radicalization, an asymmetry of categorical representations between protesters and the police, and the subsequent interaction premised on these divergent representations. The analysis supports an elaborated social identity model of crowd behaviour (Reicher, 1996, 1997a,b; Stott & Reicher, 1998). It is argued that, in order to account for both social determination and social change in collective behaviour it is necessary to analyse crowd events as developing interactions between groups. Where crowd members hold a different understanding of their social position to that held by an outgroup (e.g. the police) and where the outgroup has the power to treat crowd members in terms of its understandings, then those members who act on the basis of one understanding of their social relations find themselves in an unexpected and novel set of social relations. This then provides the basis for a series of changes, including the self-understanding of crowd members.

Introduction

For over a century now, psychological analyses of crowds have stressed their irrationality and their destructiveness (e.g. Le Bon 1896/1947). In recent years, there have been a number of studies which argue by contrast that crowd action is socially meaningful (e.g. Turner & Killian, 1987; Reicher 1984, 1987). In this paper we want to address how crowd action does not only reflect social meanings but can also create and develop new social meanings. In other words, we want to show that crowd events are marked by the simultaneous co-occurrence of social determination and social change and therefore encapsulate what is one of the key paradoxes of the social sciences.

For Le Bon (1896/1947), then, crowds are inherently conservative, showing a "fetish-like respect for traditions" and an "unconscious horror of all novelty" (pp. 55-56). However, empirical studies tell a very different story. Ackerman & Kruegler (1994) argue that 'people power' helps to explain such events as the 'velvet revolutions' in Europe in 1989, the fall of Marcos in the Philippines in 1986, aspects of the Palestinian *Intifada* and South African anti-apartheid struggle, and many other key political events. Historical research on popular actions of the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries also contradicts Le Bon's picture of the ineffective, conservative crowd (Rudé, 1959, 1981; Sharpe, 1984; Thompson, 1991). Moreover, examination of the actions of participants in such crowd events suggests that patterned changes occurred in the identities and social representations of participants. For example, analysts of the waves of collective action in the USA in the 1960s note the enduring 'radicalization' among activists (e.g., McAdam, 1989). Similarly, participants in mass strikes have been seen to develop a more critical attitude towards those in power and a more class-collective self-conception (e.g., Fantasia, 1988; Green, 1990; Lane & Roberts, 1971; Mann, 1973).

The phenomenon of psychological change in collective action is well established, but it remains largely in want of an explanation. This is not to say that forms of psychological change in collective contexts have been entirely ignored . On the one hand social psychology has produced numerous theories of attitude change and persuasion (e.g. Festinger, 1957; Hovland, Lumsdaine & Sheffield, 1949; Petty & Cacioppo, 1981), prejudice and stereotype change (e.g. Allport, 1954; Sherif, 1966; Hewstone & Brown, 1986), conformity (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; Festinger, 1954), minority influence (e.g., Latané, 1981; Moscovici, 1976) and group polarization (e.g., Burnstein & Vinokur, 1977; Lamm & Myers, 1978). Some of these theoretical accounts may contribute something of relevance to the problem of interest here; but this is not at all obvious *a priori*, since they were not proposed to explain the types of psychological change found specifically within crowd and social movement events.

On the other hand, a recent wave of social movement theorists, unified by the rubric 'social constructionist', promise an account of the way in which identity is changed through collective action (e.g., Eyerman & Jamison, 1991; McAdam, 1982; Melucci, 1989, 1995). These theories focus on intragroup processes, such as the role of 'discussion and argument', in bringing about change (e.g., Klandermans, 1992b; Hirsh, 1990). However, while psychological change may be dependent upon argument and discussion, one still needs to explain *why* particular arguments or speakers will be influential, or why they might have an impact at particular times and not others. Case study analyses of collective events characteristically link experiences of change with conflictual interaction between protest groups and those representing the forces of authority (e.g., Adams, 1994; Anderson, 1964; Fantasia, 1988; Green, 1990). However, the precise role of such intergroup dynamics in bringing about psychological consequences for members of the different groups is not examined in these accounts; these are *sociological* accounts which merely note psychological change rather than *psychological* accounts of such change.

Thus we are left with a somewhat unsatisfactory choice. In social psychological theory, we have a range possible explanations which have not been applied to the development of psychological change in collective action, and which for present purposes stand merely as isolated concepts in search of a unifying framework. In social movement accounts, the contribution of intra- and inter group factors to analysis of change is alluded to without the analysis actually being performed. It may be that, through a combinination of intra- and inter-group levels of analysis with a focus on psychological processes, we will be able to address the conditions under which change does, or does not occur.

The social identity approach to crowd behaviour (Reicher, 1984, 1987) has recently been elaborated precisely in order to consider these possibilities. The basic premise of this approach is that, contra Le Bon (1896/1947) and the deindividuation research which has perpetuated his legacy (e.g. Zimbardo, 1970) individuals in crowds do not lose their identity but rather shift from behaving in terms of disparate individual identities to behaving in terms of a contextually specified common social identity; hence, rather than losing control over their behaviour, crowd members judge and act by reference to the understandings which define the relevant social identification. Because the meaning of social identities is a cultural product, this then explains how crowd members can spontaneously produce culturally meaningful patterns of action. However, despite caveats to the contrary, empirical studies have tended to treat social identity as a predefined construct which guides collective action. Without specifying the nature of identity and the nature of crowd action in such a way that the one may be redefined by the other, there is a danger that - by default if not by intent - the social identity model of crowds would account for social determination only at the cost of excluding social and psychological change.

The elaborated social identity model of crowd behaviour (ESIM) (Drury & Reicher, 1999; Reicher, 1996, 1997a,b; Stott & Drury, 1999; Stott & Reicher, 1998) starts by

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placing greater emphasis on the fact that crowd events are characteristically intergroup encounters. They then examine how identity within a group may develop as a function of intergroup dynamics (cf. Di Giacomo, 1980). However in order to do so, it becomes necessary to reconsider some of the core concepts of the social identity tradition in general. In a predominantly speculative piece, Reicher (1997a) suggests that three conceptual areas in particular require attention. The first is the concept of social identity itself. The idea that it should be treated as a list of attributes or else a collection of traits is discarded in favour of a definition that brings the conception of identity content in line with that of identity process. Just as self-categorization theory proposes that group salience and group prototypes are a function of the relations of similarity and difference between contextually available categories (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987; Turner, Oakes, Haslam & McGarty, 1994), so it is suggested that social identity be regarded as a model of one's position in a set of social relations along with the actions that are possible and proper (legitimate) given such a position. Social identity is therefore understood as tied to action in the world. It is therefore amenable to change as actions and the social relations that frame them also change.

Second, the notion of 'context' comes under scrutiny. Rather than context being seen as something external to and determining of identity and action, it is pointed out that the context in which any one group acts is constituted partially if not wholly by other groups. This is particularly transparent in crowd events. The understandings and actions of one group (say, the perception of the police that the crowd as a whole is dangerous and hence the decision to employ riot shields) form the material reality which the other group faces and which frames their own understandings and actions - which then in turn form the context for the first group. Thus the relationship between categorization and context is not between two different orders of phenomena. Rather it is the historically developing interaction between different collective subjects and must be analysed as such.

Third, the relationship between identity, intention and consequence is explicitly addressed. Within the social identity tradition, little is said on this issue and it is seemingly implied that identity processes create intentions that are automatically instantiated (Condor, 1994). By analysing crowd events in terms of intergroup interactions this unbroken chain becomes disrupted. Whatever the intentions of one group, their acts may be reinterpreted by the other group who then react in unanticipated ways and create new contexts within which the original group subsequently exists. Acts may be intentional, but in a differentiated social world, intentions are not always realized. Acts often have unintended consequences.

If social identity is treated as a model of social relations, then the question of how one may change social identity by acting upon it resolves to the question of how one's model of social relations becomes modified by acting in terms of that model. This is possible given the interactive nature of crowd events. Reicher (1996) provides some support for ESIM through an analysis of the development of conflict in a student demonstration. Most students started off with a sense of themselves as respectable subjects exercising the democratic right to protest (and hence distanced themselves from radicals calling for confrontational action). The police, however, saw the student body as a whole as a dangerous threat and acted in order to impede its progress towards the Houses of Parliament. This action was seen as illegitimate by the students as a whole and unified them in opposition to the police. What is more, such unity empowered them to actively confront the police cordon.

The study therefore shows how an understanding of conflict must take account of the developing relationship between students and the police. However, while showing that developments within crowd events occur through interaction, the paper does not explicitly focus on processes of change per se - especially not on enduring psychological changes resulting from participation in events. It is true that many

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participants do claim that they experienced profound shifts in their self-understanding - from citizens within a neutral state to radicals in opposition to a biased state. However the data is very weak, being almost entirely post hoc and, moreover, there is no attempt to address which elements are integral to the process of change. Thus, ESIM remains a model in want of evidence.

The present study is therefore specifically concerned with the issue of identity change - where by change we mean endorsing a self-conception that had not been previously adopted or was even explicitly rejected. We thus distinguish identity change from mere *variability* (cf. Turner et al., 1994) which we see as contextually determined differences amongst an existing repertoire of identities. More specifically, we wish to examine how the self-categorizations of crowd members might change as a function of their interactions with an outgroup.

We see the elaborated social identity model as the most fruitful guide to this question of psychological change within collective action. However, this does not mean that the insights of other accounts of psychological change - from both social psychological theory and social movement studies, as cited above - are to be discarded. On the contrary; we hope that the present study will suggest how at least some of these insights might usefully be integrated in a single framework.

The distinctiveness of the present study relates to methodology as well as theory. Prior studies of crowds in the social identity have been largely retrospective. In order to grasp the process and the type of psychological change in collective action it is necessary to obtain more fine-grained and contemporaneous data (cf. Benford & Hunt, 1995; Breakwell, 1992; Condor, 1994; Klandermans, 1992a). The study described here aims to analyse measures of self-definition among crowd participants taken at different times over the duration of a crowd event and in the context of their developing interactions with an outgroup.

Methodology

Choice of event and data gathering strategy

The analysis provided here is part of a larger study into various forms of psychological change amongst protesters in a campaign against the building of the M11 Link Road in north-east London. This was one of the largest and longest lasting campaigns of anti-road direct action in Britain. From September 1993 to the final eviction of protesters from houses on the path of the planned trunk road in December 1994, campaign actions became national front page news several times. The specific event dealt with here - the eviction of people occupying a chestnut tree on a green on the M11 route (subsequently referred to in the campaign as 'Blue Tuesday') - was one such occasion.

Given the nature of the phenomena being studied and the desire to collect contemporaneous data, it was decided to base the study principally upon participant observation. Since protestors necessarily sought to keep their actions secret from outsiders - especially the police - it was only possible to be present during events by being part of the protest. Moreover, since events were frequently conflictual, it was impractical to use formal data gathering techniques - such as questionnaires. A participant researcher would, however, be able to collect contemporaneous data. Participant observation is supremely opportunistic, being adaptable to possible changes in its research topic and setting, open to the unexpected and allowing the gathering of a wide variety of data (Burgess, 1982; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Green, 1993; Whyte, 1984). In this specific case, flexibility was also the order of the day, particularly in terms of collecting a variety of forms of data which, using triangulation, could allow cross validation (cf. Denzin, 1989). A full list of the data sources is given in Appendix 1

Analytic approach

The analytic approach adopted here was similar to that used in other studies of the social identity model of crowds (e.g. Drury & Reicher, 1999; Reicher, 1984; Reicher, 1996; Stott & Reicher, 1998). First of all, a triangulated account of the event was constructed on the basis of materials deriving from a number of different parties to the event (demonstrators, police and press). Elements are treated as consensual, and hence included in the account, to the extent that there is agreement between the different parties (campaign participants on the one hand and police or press on the other) or between statements by any one of these parties on the one hand and photographs, audio recordings or videos on the other. At points when only campaign participants were present, agreement between different campaign participant accounts is considered as consensual. Finally, where accounts diverge or only one source makes a claim in relation to an event involving both campaign participants and others, the origin of the claim is given in brackets. As with any description of an event, our account is constructed rather than absolute. Yet, being consensual, it represents the reality as understood by the various parties of participants and to which they jointly orientate. Hence, as well as providing a guide to the reader, this account serves to identify the features of the event which will be the focus of explanation.

The analysis proper is in the tradition of thematic analysis (Kellehear, 1993). Thematic analysis is a qualitative approach which seeks patterns in linguistic data (Miles & Huberman, 1994) - patterns which can be interpreted in terms of interpretative themes or ideological features . The approach to be adopted is epistemologically distinct from but uses many of the same techniques as discourse analysis (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987) - systematic reading, interpreting and categorizing pieces of linguistic data and verbal interaction into content-based patterns. This is an iterative process in that an initial 'coding' of a piece

of text may be adjusted in the process of commenting on it and placing it in relation to other pieces; as with discourse analysis, the writing of an analysis is itself an analytic process, involving interpretation and judgment.

As is necessarily the case in this form of analysis, the specific themes for which the data is interrogated relate to the specific conceptual concerns of this study, and therefore differ somewhat from our previous analyses of crowd events. These themes are (i) how campaign participants defined themselves and how this related to their initial protest activity (ii) how the police defined this action and how this related to their response; (iii) how campaign participants regarded the police response and how they, in turn responded; (iv) how campaign participants defined themselves and their relationship with the police and others after the interaction. For each of these questions, all material relevant (whether confirming or disconfirming our hypotheses) was gathered, along with the proportion of respondents giving specific types of response.

An Account of the Event

(a)   Background: The No M11 Link Road Campaign

Planning permission for the current route of the M11 extension - 3.5 miles through the London districts of Wanstead, Leytonstone and Leyton - was granted in 1991, after a number of public enquiries. The direct action campaign against the road began on a small scale in September 1993. In November of that year, a crowd of over two hundred were involved in pushing down contractors' fences on George Green, Wanstead. Campaign participants then occupied a tree house in a chestnut tree on the site. The High Court granted the Department of Transport a possession order for the part of the Green including the chestnut tree on the 12th of November. The eviction itself took place on Tuesday 7th December.

(b)   Awaiting the eviction

The campaign received a tip-off about the eviction of the chestnut tree two days beforehand and publicised it amongst supporters. People began gathering under the tree on George Green throughout the night before the expected eviction. By 5 a.m., there were about 200 people under the tree. Video and photographic evidence suggests that around half or more of the crowd lived in Wanstead; many were middle aged or older; approximately half the crowd was female. Many people present had little experience of previous events in the No M11 campaign. A campaign participant with a megaphone advised the crowd that bailiffs[1] and police would ask people to move, then police would drag away and arrest those that did not. People were urged to remain non-violent, including not swearing gratuitously at the police. This was received with cheers by the crowd.

Insert Figure 1 about here

(c)   The eviction begins

At about 5.30 a.m., when it was still dark, police vans, coaches and ambulances drew up in Cambridge Park opposite the green (see Figure 1, above). This first deployment consisted of approximately 150 officers. Later in the day they were joined by approximately 200 more. A distress flare set off by a campaign participant landed amongst the police as they were getting out of their vehicles. As the police began to surround the crowd, the noise level rose considerably, with people chanting *'Save our tree'*. Police later said an official warning was given by the bailiffs that the police

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[1] The DoT obtained a possession order for the tree from the High Court; the Under Sheriff of Greater London, an officer of the court, employs sheriff's officers to carry out the eviction. Bailiffs employed by a private company also work for the courts along with the sheriff's officers. In practice, there is little difference between sheriff's officers and bailiffs, so all are referred to here as bailiffs.

intended to begin dragging people away; but campaign participants who mentioned the matter said that no warning was given. The dominant chant became *'Police go home'*. Police pushed their way through those who were standing and started to drag away those sitting down closest to the tree. There were many shouts from campaign participants accusing police of punching, kicking and other violence. Many of those removed from the base of the tree were pushed or thrown into the mud. Some tried to push their way back through police lines. No arrests were made at this time.

By around 6 a.m., most of those immediately round the base of the tree had been removed. The police formed a cordon around the tree which they then expanded outwards in order to create an exclusion zone. At first protesters tried to stop them moving and to penetrate their cordon. The police attempted to remove them and were accused by protesters of acting violently. After the initial confrontation there was a three hour period of relative calm, interspersed by minor confrontations. As police reinforcements arrived, the cordon gradually expanded towards the road.

(d)   Arrival of contractors' vehicles

At about 10.50 a.m., a hydraulic platform (or 'cherry picker') approached the green from Eastern Avenue. Dozens of campaign participants laid or sat in front of it and were repeatedly dragged or carried away by police. A small number of arrests were made for 'breach of the peace'. At about 11.40 a.m., a large digger vehicle approached the green along Cambridge Park from the opposite direction. Again dozens of campaign participants sat or laid in front of it with their arms linked. Police attempted to move many of them, and there were further accusations of police violence, including illegitimate use of pressure points.[2] By about midday, the digger had moved onto the green.

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[2] At least one police source pointed out later that use of pressure points is not illegal, but rather is recommended by the Home Office.

(e)   Bailiffs evict the chestnut tree

At about 12.10, the cherry picker platform was extended into the chestnut tree. A campaign participant climbed from the tree onto the cherry picker and attached himself to the machine arm with a pair of handcuffs. The cherry picker arm continued to move up and down amidst complaints from the crowd that this contravened Health and Safety regulations. To reach the other six tree-dwellers, bailiffs began sawing some of the branches. Protesters claimed that this endangered the lives of their fellows. As attempts were made to remove the tree-dwellers, a bucket they used as a toilet fell from the tree onto police; police said campaign participants did this deliberately, while campaign participants said that bailiffs dislodged it.

At about 1.15 p.m., the last campaign participant was taken from the tree, which was then demolished amidst cries and screams from the crowd. Campaign participants, bailiffs, security guards and police then all moved across to the six tall plane trees at the western edge of the green (see Figure 1, above) which were occupied by protesters. Again police surrounded the trees and campaign participants were mostly reduced to standing, watching, cheering their fellows and shouting angrily at particular police and bailiff actions. The cherry picker and ladders again went up into the trees, and branches were removed. This went on for two to three hours until all the trees were felled.

Analysis

The analysis is divided into three major sections: (1) initial perceptions of the context; (2) crowd perceptions of and reactions to the police action; and (3) results of involvement. For the first section, we have distinguished not only between police and campaign participants' perceptions but also between two kinds of expectations held among campaign participants. Likewise, for the third section, we show how campaign

participants responded to the experience of conflict with the police as a function of their different initial expectations.

(1) Initial perceptions of the context

(a)   Ingroup (crowd) perceptions and expectations

Many participants stressed the legitimacy of their proposed actions not only in terms of ends (defence of 'environment' and of 'community') but also in terms of means. The campaign may have constituted 'direct action', but it was based on a principle of non-violence. There was nothing to challenge this principle either in our interviews or in any of the other statements that we collected. As noted above, the importance of non-violence was stressed by a speaker just prior to the police intervention and received collective endorsement. It was also stressed explicitly by a number of interviewees in the crowd who indicated that they were prepared to be arrested if necessary:

> 1. CP1:[3] I've never been to anything like this so I just expect people to sit down. I mean I'm all for non-violence, I don't want to fight just to stay put and only be moved if you're dragged away, and if that involves- well, I mean the thing is to just try and stay put and try and- try not to provoke anything
> [Male. Taped interview; three hours before arrival of police]

Some of the campaign participants we spoke to accepted that a minority of individuals started to become aggressive in the heat of events, but even here they stressed the general collective commitment to the principle of non-violence and its general observance in practice:

> 2. CP3: When people started getting a bit sort of like carried away, they'd pull them out and say 'no, no, it's non-violent', and it calmed down and the- they could see, you know. I thought that was excellent

[3] In the analysis, initials 'CP' = campaign participant, and 'PO' = police officer. Transcription conventions are detailed in Appendix. 2.

[Male. Taped interview; during event, just outside police cordon]

We found no statements claiming that anything other than that a small minority became aggressive.

Under the general rubric of 'non-violence' there were important differences between participants in how far they were willing to take their resistance. In comments recorded before and after the event, some protestors indicated that they intended to move or stand aside when the police threatened them with arrest while others indicated a willingness to show passive resistance. The contrast is encapsulated in the follow two quotations:

> 3. CP4: If I'm asked to leave by a policeman I will walk up & down the pavement.
> [Female. Field notes on conversation under tree; one hour before police arrived.]

> 4. CP5: I went along with others to link arms around the symbolic chestnut tree - expecting to be removed firmly but harmlessly from my place by police
> [Female. Letter to Police Complaints Authority; two weeks after event]

Expectations of rights being upheld by the police Despite differences of intention, the majority of protesters shared a common self-conception as being legitimate actors involved in the exercise of democratic rights. That is, they had a right to be present at the protest without comeback, and even a right to challenge the law as long as they were willing to accept being moved without undue force. Correspondingly, they saw the police as having a responsibility to observe protesters' rights, to respect their actions and to distinguish between individuals according to their actions (only to remove those who showed resistance). Moreover, these participants not only felt that the police should act in this way but also *expected* that they would.

Expectations of rights not being upheld by police A minority of protestors, especially those who had experience of similar campaigns, saw the police as *'agents of state repression'* (Male. Taped interview; four days after event) and expected them to act accordingly. The contrast between majority and minority is captured in the following exchange between an experienced protestor who predicted a 'bloody' eviction and another who reports her scepticism about the claim:

> 5. CP31: one of the protesters came out [ ] and he said 'God he said they'll be here soon' and he said 'it's going to be bloody, I've been here before', and I thought 'Oh yeah.'
> [Female. Taped interview; six days after event]

(b) **Outgroup (police) perceptions and expectations**

For the Chief Superintendent in charge of the police operation, the very fact that protesters had gathered to impede bailiffs from executing their lawful duty meant that they were acting in defiance of the democratic system

> 6. PO1: Police have a duty to ensure that the laws as enacted by Parliament are fairly and effectively implemented. Unfortunately we are often left in the middle of any conflict. The question rests not necessarily with the rights or wrongs of the environmental issue but do the public want the laws of the land to be implemented or anarchy.
> [Male. Letter to MP; one month after event]

Consequently, as stated in interview by a Chief Inspector, when officers first arrived on site, it was self-evident that they were there to enable the bailiffs to do their job, and that any campaign participants who remained clearly intended to resist the police:

> 7. PO2: Perhaps we should stand off and just let them sit there. I mean it was a nonsense, … they [the bailiffs] had a court order which had to be executed and our role was to prevent breaches of the peace to enable them to do that. Now if they had just gone in there without any police (effort) at all, what do you think would have happened to the bailiffs?
> Int: They wouldn't have got through to ( )
> PO2: They wouldn't have got very far would they, no. And they would- and I suspect that if they'd have attempted to use any reasonable force to get to the

tree to they would have been prevented, they would have been pushed, QED
you have a breach of the peace.
[Male. Taped interview; seven months after event]

While this officer acknowledged that participation was diverse, including
schoolchildren and 'ordinary people' as well as 'protesters', he argued that this
mixture was no guarantee that, as a crowd, these people would be law-abiding.
Indeed, given the past history of the campaign, the very reverse was to be expected.
As proof, he pointed to the earlier demolition of the contractors' fences round George
Green by protestors (see An Account of the Event, above):

> 8. PO2: 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.
> [Male. Taped interview; seven months after event]

The notion that crowd participation reduces even the most respectable of citizens to
the irrationality and brutality of the 'horde' was further buttressed by reference to the
incident involving the distress flare during the event under consideration. Such action
was, according to the Chief Inspector, potentially lethal: *'The first person that was
injured there [ ] was a police officer who was hit on the head with a firework [ ]
Somebody got killed in a football match by a firework'* (Male. Tape recording of
meeting between campaign participants and the police; two months after event).

If the flare incident represented an extreme, police officers invoked a whole series of
actions by protestors - including punching, kicking and spitting - to challenge any
idea that the protest was respectable or non-violent:

> 9. PO2: There were a number of protesters there who were quite violent
> themselves on the day. And there were a number of police officers who got,
> I'm not saying that people were seriously injured, police officers that is, but I
> am saying that they were assaulted. I mean I was assaulted. I don't know, how
> how violent does one have to be? I was spat at. I was kicked and punched, not
> violently.

[Male. Taped interview; seven months after event]

The phrase 'a number of protestors' as used in this last extract acknowledges that not all protestors were violent. Most of the comments by police make a similar acknowledgment. This might seem to converge with the claim made by protestors that only a minority amongst them were engaged in any form of violence. Yet there is a crucial difference. For protestors themselves, the violent few violate crowd beliefs, they are challenged by the crowd and represent the exception that proves the non-violent rule. For the police, violent individuals are emblematic of the crowd in general and demonstrate the emergent atavisms which consume all who participate in it. So, whether crowd members consider themselves to be antagonistic to the police or not, they are seen as such and treated as such by the police themselves. As officers moved through the crowd to get to the tree and then expanded their cordon outwards, all those in the way were pushed aside or unceremoniously dumped out of the way, irrespective of whether they were confrontational, whether they offered passive resistance or whether they were willing to move when asked.

(2) Crowd perceptions of and reactions to the police action

While there was little dispute as to what the police did, there were arguments about the legitimacy of their action - in particular, the way it was carried out. As we have seen, most campaign participants interviewed initially saw themselves as respectable 'members of the public' whose rights, including the right to protest, deserved to be upheld. Their complaint was that the police, whose role it is to uphold such rights, were not upholding theirs. It is notable that, as the police initially moved in, many campaigners collectively appealed to them, as public servants, to respect the public (of whom the campaigners were part):

10. CP6: Who pays your wages? Who pays your wages?
CP7: No violence

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CP8: You're supposed to be (responsible)
[Soundtrack recording as police pull people away from tree]

In the view of these protesters, the police failed to act neutrally and respect crowd members' rights in two ways: first through turning a blind eye to dangerous and violent acts perpetrated against campaign participants by the bailiffs and, second, by themselves perpetrating acts of violence against campaign participants.

(a)   Violence ignored by the police

In every instance where campaign participants mentioned the bailiffs, they described their behaviour as 'violent' and/or 'illegal'. Over 60 participants mentioned incidents where the bailiffs endangered the well-being and even the lives of protesters by such actions as cutting branches to which protesters were attached. At the same time, participants complained that the police had failed to stop the bailiffs acting in this way. The police were accused of failing to uphold the rights of the protesters, of failing to uphold the law neutrally and of siding with the outgroup. These accusations were contemporaneous as well as contained in post hoc accounts:

> 11. CP16: Torture doesn't exist in this country, at least not in the eyes of the law
> [more shouts as two bailiffs grab at man in tree]
> …
> [shouts]
> CP17: They just assaulted him. What you [police] doing standing there doing nothing?
> [Video recording of bailiffs evicting tree]

As the following extract shows, such refusals to intervene led at least some of the protesters to become alienated from the police and to question the legitimacy of their position:

> 12. CP5: When the first tree dweller left the tree and openly handcuffed himself to the arm of the "cherry picking" machine, Chief Supt. [PO1] himself had people begging him for 18 minutes to have the machine turned off. The

protester was in danger… The protester was finally removed with the machine still running. He could have been removed far more quickly and safely with the machine lowered and turned off. Again more respect was lost.
[Female. Letter to Police Complaints Authority; two weeks after event]

(b) Violence perpetrated by the police

All 57 legal statements made by campaign participants complained about police violence, and all those interviewed mentioned it without prompting. Again, while most of these complaints are post hoc, with all the problems attendant upon such accounts, they are consistent with what campaign participants were saying at the time. Officers were seen and accused of such things as hair pulling, use of pressure points, punching and kicking. Consider, for instance, the contemporaneous notes taken by one participant:

> 13. 6.40 [CP10] told me that NW189 had pulled people out by their hair and had hit her in the chest.
> 6.47   [CP11] told me that the blonde policewoman hit her in the face and bent her hand
> 7.12 Con[stable] C192 gratuitously hit a man
> [Male. Contemporaneous witness notes taken by CP12]

This last comment is significant. It was not simply that the police were seen to be aggressive but that they were excessively and unnecessarily so. Police action was typically described as 'heavy handed' (a phrase that occurred in seven statements from campaign participants). Officers were accused of meting out harsh treatment even when it wasn't needed in order to secure the compliance of protestors. It is also significant that mentions of violence tended to refer to the police in general terms. It was the category which was violent rather than particular individuals. Specific incidents were mentioned many times by different protesters. They acquired an 'iconic' status, symbolising the indiscriminate violence of the officers. Such iconic incidents stressed both the extremity of police action and the vulnerability of the victim. They included the case of an elderly man who had his glasses broken (cited by

eight campaign participants) and of a woman who was dragged though the embers of the campfire (cited by nine campaign participants).

The objection to such 'violence' was not simply due to the physical consequences but also because of what it seemed to indicate about the identity of campaigners. The police were seen as using *"the same tactics as they would against football hooligans"* (CP14: Male. Taped interview; four days after event) and hence treating campaign participants as if they were members of a socially excluded category. Some explicitly contrasted their own self-conception with the conception that police action seemed to imply:

> 14. CP15: They were treated as if they just weren't human, and that's horrif-
> that's wrong, the police aren't there to do that to any of us. We all deserve
> protection by the police and they were there- they were the destroying body,
> terrible thing.
> [Female. Taped interview; 12 weeks after event]

(3) Results of involvement

The psychological consequences of involvement were radically different, both in terms of how participants conceived of others and of how they viewed themselves, as a function of whether or not they intially expected the police to observe their rights.

(a) Conceptions of the other

Participants who expected that their rights would be upheld by the police: As already indicated, participants tended to describe actions of individual police officers as representative of the police as a whole. Consequently, their experience of the George Green eviction had consequences for the way they saw the police in general. Twenty three of the participants who were interviewed during or after the events explicitly mentioned that their views of the police had changed - and all for the worse. As one interviewee put it *"I think it's just disgraceful the way in which they behaved that*

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morning. [ ] I think a lot of attitudes have changed because of that" (Female. Taped

interview; four days after event). For most of these respondents, the major change was

a loss of trust:

> 15. CP21: They are armed in France, they are very aggressive, and I always assumed that in England things were different, that the police were sort of- I don't know, just the Dixon of Dock Green image, but I always assumed they were mild and nice and would help you find the way. But now I've reached the stage where I really don't trust any of them, I really do not.
> [Female. Taped interview; six months after event]

Moreover, as CP15 put it, even if individual officers might behave in friendly ways,

"I simply don't trust them as a body" (Female. Taped interview; 12 weeks after

event). For 12 of the 23 who spoke of change, such loss of trust was actively reflected

in the ways they behaved towards the police. In some cases it was limited to being

reserved or unfriendly in return. In other cases the rejection was total and dramatic:

> 16. CP20: I think now when I do see the police sometimes, you know, usually you might nod to them but now I'm very dismissive and I think if I got burgled again I don't know whether I would want to phone the police; I think I'd probably just deal with my the burglary in my own way, I wouldn't call upon their help.
> [Female. Taped interview; four days after event]

Such loss of trust was linked to a more profound reconceptualization of the police.

They were no longer trusted because they were no longer seen as neutral. Instead of

being above sectional interest in society, they came to be seen as being a partisan

political force:

> 17. CP19: I stood on the edges at Wapping as a newspaper worker when I was working, I never became involved, I saw it, I heard the stories, I truthfully didn't want to believe it. Now that I've seen the police in action, now that I've seen the police when they are determined to forget the Dixon of Dock Green image, I just don't believe what I've seen. It's profoundly altered my view of the police service as a service. Basically I believe that they're a political army on the streets as opposed to a political army in khaki.
> [Male. Taped interview; four days after event]

Many comments by campaign participants recorded during and after the event accuse the police of deliberately supporting the bailiffs and therefore the government's road-building interests instead of expressing *universal* interests by maintaining campaign participants' individual rights. As CP18 claimed *"their function was to beat us up and enforce the sheriff's edict. [ ] they shouldn't even have been in that position"* (Male. Taped interview; four days after event).

Changed conceptions of the other were not necessarily limited to campaign participants' view of the police. Ten campaign participants we spoke to stressed that their experiences with the police had led them to reconceptualize the nature of wider social forces. (others failed to mention further changes rather than denying that they had occurred). In cases of further change, the police were seen as agents of government. Hence the government were seen as illegitimate in using the police to its own political ends and detracting from their duty to serve the public interest:

> 18. CP19: The Department of Transport has quite obviously decided to use the heaviest of hammers to smash the nut of resistance before that nut grows into tree, which this one they will not be able to smash with a JCB. [ ] They put the heads of Wanstead on a pikestaff, they now want to see whether the rest of the country is (cowed). That's my absolute utterly sincere belief, that's the reason for it… You have your house broken into they might come round in three days time, that's not their fault they just haven't got the men, but they could turn out 300 men and probably many many more on standby in the streets around. To do what? Take a tree away. It's a joke.
> [Male. Taped interview; four days after event]

Others talked of changing their *"attitudes towards the whole system"* (Female. Taped interview; five days after event). Where the police had been seen as guaranteeing the social order and as acting in the general interest, the fact that they came to be seen as supporting partial interests led to a sense that the social order itself was alien and biased. Some argued that 'the system' would stop at nothing in attacking protesters once its interests were challenged:

19. CP15: 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.
[Female. Taped interview; 12 weeks after event]

Participants who expected that their rights would be upheld by the police: The difference between those who held different expectations of the police at the start of events lay not in whether they perceived the police to be biased after the event but rather in whether this represented a change. CP18 was earlier quoted as having previously seen the police as 'agents of state repression'. He was one of seven participants we spoke to, all having experienced previous collective conflict with the police, for whom the events of George Green confirmed rather than challenged their prior perspective on the police:

20. Int: So what is your attitude towards the police now?
CP18: I don't, it hasn't really changed I mean it's reinforced things that I prefer not to have to be aware of
[Male. Taped interview; four days after event]

21. CP33: I don't really see them any different from what I did before because I always expected that of them… because I've seen it before I've just come to expect it, really.
[Male. Taped interview four days after event]

It is, of course, less than surprising that, where police action confirms prior expectations, then protestors views of the police does not change. What it perhaps more interesting is the way in which expectations, actions and conceptions of the police were inter-related through the way in which they reflected upon the social relations between the police and protestors. If identity is defined in social relations this means that changes (or continuities) in the way one views the police should impact on changes (or continuities) in the way one sees oneself. Less obviously, then, this also should be mediated by expectations of police behaviour.

(b) Conceptions of the self

None of those who expected the police to violate their rights stated that their self-conceptions had changed. For those who expected the police to uphold their rights, the picture was very different. CP2 expressed the link between changing views of the other and changing views of the self by stressing how many participants became alienated *"from this whole law and order thing"*. He went on:

> 22. CP2: I think that a lot of protesters would find when treated this way, really is, it's very- you push people so far and you just push them away from you.
> [Male. Taped interview; during event, just outside police cordon]

Twenty five campaign participants stressed that their commitment to the aims and activities of the campaign was transformed as a result of the day's events. None mentioned that it had diminished. Such commitments in terms of action were clearly linked to identity: by acting oppositionally, protesters, sometimes to their own surprise, came to see themselves as oppositional:

> 23. CP30: I went home to make a cup of tea and I was shaking. I mean, you don't expect [the police to be violent] do you? But then you don't expect someone like me to be someone who kicks fences do you? But things change.
> [Female. Field notes of conversation; three months after event]

These claims were made equally in the immediate aftermath of the police intervention and months afterwards. They tended to relate the change to what had been revealed by the police action, but in two ways. On the one hand, radical commitment was a matter of what one now ought to do given the illegitimacy of official actions:

> 24. CP14: 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
> [Male. Taped interview; four days after event]

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On the other hand, radical commitment was the only stance one could take given the nature of the social relations in which campaigners found themselves:

> 25. Int: What in particular has radicalized you do you think?
> CP25: The police. Simple as that. You can't win sticking to the rules; you can't win cos they don't. And you've got to do something like that, there's no other option left, I don't think. The day of the tree… made me realize there's no way you're gonna win by just sort of going quietly, you've got to make as much fuss as you can. Really did change me, I think, that day the day the tree came down.
> [Female. Taped interview; three months after event]

Thus, enhanced determination to the cause of the campaign was not simply a quantitative change in commitment but a *re-definition* of the cause of the campaign and hence of the self in the light of relations with the outgroup - the police and state. Being a campaign participant now meant more than fighting a road; it meant becoming someone in conflict with the forces of the state - forces which were previously defined as neutral if not supportive of the self. Thus, for some, their social world and hence their priorities had been permanently turned upside down:

> 26. CP34: I've got very determined just lately, determined to get on with things, and I don't ever think that I'm going to lead an or ordinary life again. Cos I've said to these people [travelling road protesters], if I didn't have the kids, I'd get up and join them, I'd go with them and I'd follow them. Because I believe that everything they fight for is right. I have changed I think. I've gone erm I won't say I've gone more vicious, but as I said before I want to do as much as I can as much as I feel possible that I can do
> [Female. Taped interview five days after event]

Discussion

This participant observation study of the George Green crowd event provides consistent evidence from multiple sources both to support the claim that protestors acted in terms of a social identity and also that, for a substantial proportion amongst

them, their social identity changed through participation in the events. The claims of participants concerning their own initial perceptions, their experience of the event and their subsequent reactions are the same whether people are applauding speeches, shouting out to the police, discussing with friends or talking to the researcher (known as a fellow participant) at the time, and equally whether they are in the form of post hoc diaries, later interviews, letters to the police complaints authority or articles for publication. Such constancy to different audiences and at different times makes it harder to dismiss the accounts as constructed according to the contingencies of subsequent contexts rather than relevant to the understanding of participants in the events themselves. Moreover, subsequent to this particular event, participants' own statements, video evidence, tape recording and third party accounts each show that people were more willing to act in oppositional ways and to confront the police as the campaign progressed. Overall, the level of confrontation became far greater during subsequent events in the campaign.

In one sense, then, this paper adds to a growing literature that documents the importance of acknowledging the changes that are produced through collective action. However the aim of this paper was not simply to describe but to explain the processes underlying change and, more particularly, to explore the contribution that the elaborated social identity model can make in explaining psychological change (Drury & Reicher, 1999; Reicher, 1996, 1997a,b; Stott & Reicher, 1998).

To start with, this analysis of the George Green event provides evidence that is consistent with the three developments which Reicher (1997a) argues to be the preconditions for a dynamic model of collective processes which can account for social change as well as social determination. These involve reconceptualizing the content of social identity, the nature of context and the relationship between identity, intention and consequence. First, where participants are talking about their identities, rarely, if ever, do they provide characterizations in trait or adjectival terms. Rather,

identity is defined in positional terms and in terms of the moral and practical implications of that position. Initially, for some at least, to be a campaign participant is to be a responsible citizen exercising his or her democratic right to protest, both able to take advantage of those rights and bound by the responsibilities such rights incur. Later, to be a campaign participant is to stand in opposition to police and authorities, and hence both able to protest only through radical action and bound to challenge the illegitimacy of the system.

Second, in the case of 'context', it is clear in this example that the 'external reality' confronted by campaign participants is constituted by the perceptions of the police as translated into their actions. The cordons of police officers keeping all from the tree, the rough treatment of all those standing or sitting in the way of the police - in short, the common fate of campaign participants - derives from the police understanding that the crowd as a whole was irresponsible and the application of tactics and technology which treated everybody as such.

Third, it is equally clear that this interactive constitution of social reality led to a decoupling of intention and consequence. While campaign participants may have intended, as good citizens, to act in responsible and restrained ways, the way their very presence was construed by the police placed them in an unforeseen social location drew them into an unexpected confrontation. Many participants were surprised at the position they found themselves in and surprised themselves with what they subsequently did.

As we have argued, the importance of these three preconditions is that, put together, they suggest that, due to the intergroup dynamics of crowd events, crowd members who act on the basis of one understanding of their social location may find themselves in a new social location and thereby change their identity through acting upon it. Evidence from the events of George Green do not only validate our conceptual

elaborations of identity, context and intention, and they do not only support the notion that a changed set of social relations is the basis for change, they also specify in more detail the nature of the intergroup dynamics which frame the change process.

Change originates in an asymmetry between ingroup and outgroup perspectives: in the present case, where campaign participants constitute themselves as citizens in a neutral relationship with the police, but are constituted as irresponsible by the police themselves and hence in an antagonistic relationship. The obvious corollary of this is that where there is no such asymmetry there is no change - and our evidence tends to support this. Those campaign participants who had previous experience of conflict with the police and who expected to find themselves in an antagonistic relationship reported confirmation rather than change in their perspective and sense of self.

However, the process of change depends not simply on the existence of asymmetry but upon the ability and the inclination of the outgroup to enact its perspective. The police didn't just see the crowd as homogeneously disreputable; they had the personnel, the organization and the resources to treat the crowd as such. Moreover, since crowd members were perceived as liable to act illegitimately, the police could legitimize moves to stop them from acting as they wished. Whatever their intentions, crowd members were treated harshly and without respect. Whatever their perceptions, crowd members found themselves in a relationship of antagonism to the police. Insofar as identity is a function of social position, then this resulted in a change of identity for those who had previously considered themselves in a neutral relationship to the police. Such participants come to see themselves as radical and oppositional where previously they would have rejected such an identity. The link between position and identity is not simply perceptual, however. As we have seen, it also has normative and practical dimensions. Thus, if the authorities are seen to act oppressively and illegitimately then one has a responsibility to oppose them (for protestors as for police, the perception of the other as acting illegitimately legitimates

conflictual reactions) and, equally, one can only protest by opposing them. The relationship between action and identity is therefore a reciprocal one. Just as identity changes as a result of new actions in new relations, so a changed identity results in a new set of possibilities and imperatives for action.

This account of the intergroup dynamics of identity change can be stated rather more formally in terms of four propositions:

1. Crowd members act in terms of social identity, which is to say an understanding of their social location in a set of social relations along with the actions which are proper and possible given such a location.

2. Crowd events are intergroup encounters. Outgroup members may understand the identity and actions of crowd members in ways that are different to crowd members themselves

3. Where (a) there is an asymmetry between the way in which the social location of crowd members is seen by crowd members themselves and by outgroup members, and (b) the outgroup has the power to enact its understanding even against the resistance of crowd members, and, due to the perceived illegitimacy of the crowd, sees it as legitimate to employ that power, then the social location of crowd members will change through crowd action.

4. Since social identity is defined in terms of social location, then it follows that social relocation will entail a change of identity. This will also entail changes in the types of action endorsed and undertaken by crowd members. Hence the nature of the collectivities entering into subsequent phases of interaction will be fundamentally different and analyses of these phases will need to take these differences into account.

Thus far, we have concentrated our discussion on the implications of our analysis for the social identity approach to crowd action and to change in particular. Yet we stressed in the introduction that there are many approaches to the study of change and that our approach may both benefit from them and also contribute a more general perspective to such studies. To start with the former, there is one point in our analysis where further elaboration is obviously necessary. We argue that the specific actions of particular police officers can lead participants to change their perception of the police in general, of society in general, and hence of themselves. Change will therefore be mediated by the perceived representativeness of police actions. Just as the stereotyping literature suggests that the more an individual is representative of the category, the more that information about the individual will impact on one's view of the category (Hewstone, Johnston & Aird, 1992; Johnston & Hewstone, 1992) so we would claim both that the more the actions of individuals are seen as representative of the police and the more that the police are seen as representative of wider social forces, the more profound identity changes will be. Certainly, our evidence suggests that the actions of police officers were used to redefine the police as a whole and that this redefinition underlay changes in identity. We have also provided evidence both that some individuals saw the police as representative of 'the system' and that therefore 'the system' itself became redefined as illegitimate. However, it may be that differences in perceived representativeness underlay differences in the occurrence and degree of change amongst those who initially saw themselves as neutral and expected the police to uphold their rights. Certainly, our evidence is not sufficiently fine to show different levels of radicalization as a function of the degree of representativeness ascribed to the police actions. This is clearly a topic for future investigation.

Let us now turn to the contribution this study might make to the more general understanding of psychological change. With regard to social constructionist

accounts, our findings underline the importance of intra-group discussion and argument during crowd events. The way in which crowd members make sense of their social reality is not conducted alone but through collective debate. Nonetheless, it is equally clear that the conditions under which suggestions are either taken up or ignored cannot be understood by reference to intra-group processes alone but must also take account of the inter-group context. Only when the police were seen to act illegitimately did the majority of crowd members turn from shunning to endorsing calls for confrontation. Our evidence here and elsewhere (Reicher, 1996; Stott, 1996) shows that while the outgroup are not seen to act illegitimately then confrontational arguments or acts by an 'extreme' minority will not become influential.

By discussing the way in which a majority of moderate individuals come to agree with a minority of radicals in confronting the police and by considering how the prototypical crowd position shifts towards a radical pole as a result of participation in the events we are clearly touching on two of the major areas through which social psychology has looked at change: minority influence on the one hand and group polarization on the other. What is more, by arguing that both phenomena are a function of the inter-group relations which frame intra-group processes, our account of both phenomena converges with that of self-categorization theory as opposed to other models which seek to explain behaviour entirely at the intra-group level. In the case of minority influence, SCT proposes that the success of the minority depends upon conditions where, in the face of a common outgroup, they form part of the same psychological category as the minority (David & Turner, 1999, in press). Equally, in the case of polarization, it is argued that group members will converge on an extreme position to the extent that it most clearly differentiates the ingroup from the contextually relevant outgroup (Turner, 1991; Wetherell, 1987). This captures important aspects of the way in which a police presence unifies the crowd, creates the conditions under which 'moderates' listen to 'extremists' and in which the 'moderates' move to the 'extreme' position while 'extremists' stay put. Nonetheless, in the case of

crowd events, there are two important omissions even within these SCT accounts. First of all, it is not the mere presence of the police outgroup that leads to change, nor are the effects of their presence merely to be understood on a cognitive level. Thus, the majority did not radicalize as soon as the police arrived on George Green. Rather, any changes were dependent upon the ways in which the police acted towards crowd members. In short, the 'extreme' position only became influential to the extent that the police acted towards the majority so as to create a new context and new social relations within which 'extreme' actions became both legitimate and possible. Had the police been present but not violated the expectations of the majority, or if they had even acted in ways that violated the negative expectations of the minority, then we would not have expected any radicalization of the majority and we might even have found moderation amongst the minority. Hence, we would argue that the minority influence and polarization phenomena that we have found cannot be understood simply by reference to who is present in context. They demand an analysis of the evolving interactions through which the very nature of those parties is changed.

This takes us to the second area of omission. Work on polarization and on minority influence tends to see change as short lived, as limited to particular contexts and as a matter of shifting along pre-existing attitude dimensions. For us, however, change is much more profound: it is enduring, it frames one's approach to new social settings and it involves a profound restructuring of the ways in which individuals understand the social world and their place within it. Perhaps the best evidence for this is to be found in the various associated changes which came out of the George Green event.

As protestors radicalized and came to see themselves as oppositional, so they came to view anti-authority 'extremists' as part of the common ingroup. Not only that, but they also saw themselves as one with other oppositional groups such as the Nigerian Ogoni tribe then protesting against the Shell oil company and even those who had fought against 'injustice' in the past, such as the British miners during the strike of

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1984-5. In other words, the group boundaries became more inclusive. This extension of the group boundaries led to a sense of empowerment. The protestors now saw themselves as being at one with far more people. What is more, being common group members led in some cases to an expectation of common support. Size and solidarity together increase the ability of protestors to challenge the police and other authorities (cf. Drury & Reicher, 1999; Stott & Drury, 1999). Finally, the change of group boundaries and group relations changed not only what protestors felt able to do but also what they felt inclined to do. Once they came to see themselves as operating in the world where the authorities repress rather than enable protest, then challenging the authorities and the ways in which they are seen to destroy the environment in the interests of the elite and against the interests of ordinary people became an end in itself. Several campaign participants stressed that their aim had become exposing the illegitimacy of the Department of the Transport rather than saving particular pieces of land. In a new world, new actions became necessary. Change encompassed the very aims and purposes of being part of the protest.

All these issues - boundaries, power, aims - are, of course, of considerable importance in their own right and are deserving of their own systematic studies. Moreover, in conducting such studies it will be possible to provide firmer evidence for their inter-connectedness and hence to shed more light on the nature of self as a representational system and its intimate relation to action in the social world. Thus we are back with the broad issues with which we opened this paper: developing an understanding of the relationship between self, action and social reality which eschews conservatism and embraces the possibility of social change.

Questions of change take us beyond the specific remit of crowd psychology to address the relevance of our analysis for social psychology more generally. As we have previously noted (Reicher, 1996, 1997a), what we are dealing with in studies such as these are some of the core constructs of the discipline: social context, social identity,

group norms, attitudes, self- and hetero-stereotypes, and so on. In this study, we have also considered issues of minority influence and of group polarization. Our argument is that we can only understand the determination of these constructs by studying them in the developing interactions between groups. It may be that for most of our social life, understandings are routinized and consensual between groups making it easy to see them as properties of the groups themselves rather than interactive products. However, when understandings become asymmetrical, it becomes apparent that our understandings of ourselves depend upon how others understand and treat us. Perhaps crowds are one of the few phenomena in which asymmetry is more the rule than the exception - for by merely forming part of the mass those who think of themselves as ordinary are seen as extraordinary and dangerous by police and others. The implication is that, not only should we study the phenomena of social psychology as historical and interactive products, but that the crowd provides an especially fertile domain in which to do so.

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Appendix 1: Data Sources

(a) Interviews with campaign participants

Tape-recorded interviews were carried out with 56 campaign participants. Eight interviews were carried out a few hours before the conflict began. Thirteen interviews were carried out during a lull in the event. Forty interviews were carried out afterwards. Five people were interviewed twice; one person was interviewed before, during and after. Most interviews were between fifteen minutes and half an hour long.

There was an attempt to speak to as many people as possible who were present at the event, as well as to interview a sample reflecting the composition of the crowd (see An account of the event). Twenty-eight of those interviewed were people living nearby; four were people who were new to the campaign; the rest were regularly involved in the campaign's direct action and squatting. No one who was approached refused to be interviewed about the events. Overall, the ages of interviewees ranged from about 14 years to the mid-seventies. Most people clustered round the thirties and forties. Twenty-six interviewees were female and 30 were male.

The interview schedule used before the event covered the following issues: (i) expectations (e.g., 'What do you expect will happen?' 'What will people do?'); (ii) participants' values and conceptions of those present (e.g., 'What is this action about? Is there a good word for the people here?'). The schedule used during and after the event covered the following the issues: (i) participants' experience of the event (e.g., 'What happened (to you)?'); (ii) their views on the police action; (iii) their views on the police generally (e.g., 'What is your attitude now towards the police?'); (iv) their self-conceptions (e.g., 'How do you see yourself now? Is there a good word or phrase?'); (v) their future actions (e.g., 'What kind of actions will you now be doing in the campaign ?'). All interviews were taped and transcribed.

(b) Notes and soundtrack recordings

For most of the time from 5.30am to 11am, when the researcher was present, a tape recorder was left running in his pocket. Notes were also taken shortly before the conflict concerning events and conversations. It was not possible to make notes during the event, but extensive notes were made soon after the researcher left the scene. Notes and recordings were also made at a rally which took place four days later when campaign participants were still talking about the event, and on subsequent conversations with campaign participants who had been present. All tape-recorded material was transcribed.

(c) Witness statements

Through the campaign's solicitor, access was provided to all 57 witness statements made by campaign participants for use in a complaint against the police. There were statements from 57 people (29 males, 25 females, 3 of unknown gender). They varied from half a page to eight pages of hand-written A4 in length; most were one or two pages. Two of these statements were recorded contemporaneously, one on a tape recorder, the other in note form. The campaign office log - a contemporaneous record of some of the incidents during the event - was also obtained.

(d)   Video and photographic material

Three video recordings of the event made by campaign participants or supporters were collected. One was three hours long; the others were each around 20 minutes in length. As well as pictures carried in newspapers, nine photographs taken by a campaign participant during the event were also collected.

(e)   Letters and diaries etc.

Seven unpublished letters from campaign participants, mostly to the Police Complaints Authority, were made available to the researcher. Four further written accounts from campaign participants were also collected; two were written at the researcher's request, one was a diary for the participant's own purposes, the fourth was written for a school project. Most of this material was from participants who had not been interviewed.

(f)   Printed materials

Materials relating to the event and either produced by the No M11 Link Road Campaign or else appearing in sympathetic publications were collected. These amounted to six articles, four leaflets, two posters, one circular and four press releases. Articles in eleven local newspapers (including letters pages) and six national newspapers were also collected.

(g) Other material on outgroup perspectives

Campaign participants gave the researcher a tape recording of a formal meeting concerning the event between four campaign participants and four police officers (the Chief Superintendent in charge and three other officers who had been involved). The researcher was also given a tape-recorded interview with a Chief Inspector involved in the event. Finally, the researcher was given access to a letter from the Chief Superintendent involved in the police operation to an MP, and a letter from the Deputy Sheriff of London to a campaign participant.

Appendix 2: Transcribing conventions

For taped material, the following transcription conventions were used, based on those in Parker (1992) and Potter & Wetherell (1987):

When material has been edited out of the transcript, it is signalled with an empty pair of square brackets, thus [ ].

Where information has been supplied to the text, it is put in square brackets [like this].

Where material is unclear or inaudible, empty round brackets are used, like this ( ).

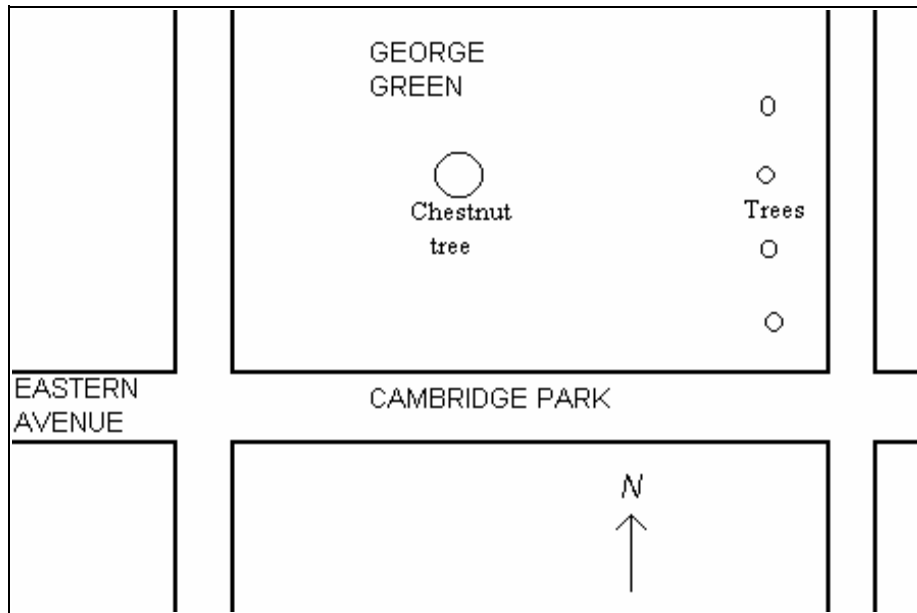Where sound quality leads to doubts about the accuracy of material, it is put in round brackets (like this).

Figure 1. George Green on 7th December 1993