Basic Crowd Psychology

DEFINE A CROWD

- Spend 5 minutes defining a crowd
- One or two sentences
- No more than 25 words

OFFICIAL EXPLANATIONS

- Chambers: ‘A large group of people gathered together’.
- Oxford English Dictionary: ‘A large group of people gathered together in a disorganised or unruly way’.
- Oxford: Assembly: a group of persons who are gathered together for a common purpose.
26/02/2018

WHAT IS A CROWD?

PHYSICAL CROWDS

- Gathered by chance, coincidence or fate
- No common purpose
- No social identity
- I = me and mine

PHYSICAL CROWDS

- Streets
- Shopping Centres
- Railway Stations
- Trains
- Buses
- Queue (for anything)
- Beach
- Highways
- Places of entertainment
- Festivals
- Concerts
- Theatre
- Aircraft
- Airports
- Bars
PSYCHOLOGICAL CROWDS

‘Collective resilience’ refers to the way a shared identification allows groups (and crowds) of survivors to express solidarity and cohesion, and thereby to coordinate and draw upon collective sources of support and other practical resources, to deal with adversity.
Drury, Cocking, Reicher 2009

‘Communities of Circumstance’...communities ... created when groups of people are affected by the same incident, such as a train crash.

Flood, fire, air crash, bombing, Mass Evacuation???

PSYCHOLOGICAL CROWDS

- Normally a common purpose or goal and :
- Me now associates with Us!
- Its me and us not me and them
- Acting together, shared emotions
- Social identity: I am English, I am a crowd manager, I am a Spurs fan, I am male, I have children, I am married, I’ve just been blown up!!
PSYCHOLOGICAL CROWDS

- People share my views and I share theirs
- In it together
- If the crowd is ‘us’ then who are the others?
- It feels good to be part of a crowd
- I don’t mind losing my personal space
- A shared social identity
- Crowd Norms are now my Norms

NORMAL BEHAVIOUR

- What is normal (appropriate) behaviour
- Is it the same for an individual or the crowd (De-individuation theory)
- Different in different contexts, lecture room v Rogers Arena
- Riots………Letter carriers/lawyers/accountants … Police!!
- Sober or drunk
- The emergent norm theory (queue jumping and clapping).

BEWARE OF:

- Queuing and Queue Jumping
- Short Cuts
- Puddle Avoidance
GUSTAV LE BON –
THE CROWD: A STUDY OF THE POPULAR MIND, 1895

The concept of the ‘Psychological Crowd’

3 Key processes
- Anonymity
- Contagion
- Suggestibility

Keen readers include: Hitler, Mussolini, and Lenin

THEORIES:
- Contagion – Follow the leader(s)
- Deindividuation – The Stanford Prison experiment (Zimbardo)
- Convergence – The crowd is a product of like-minded people
- Emergent Norm – The new normality through ‘milling’
- Social Identity Theory – Membership or none membership

OPPONENTS:
- Stott, Drury, Cocking, Reicher

All dismiss ‘Contagion’ in Le Bon’s context
Police, government and/or system are to blame! (anyone but the crowd)
CONTAGION?: VANCOUVER 2011!

- Many of those who participated in the riot were not these types of people at all. They were, in many instances, the sons and daughters of good, upstanding citizens who today must still be in shock over what they’ve learned.
- The picture of a young man attempting to set a police cruiser on fire by lighting a rag stuffed in its gas tank has received widespread Internet attention. He’s been identified as an academic all-star who was supposed to be heading to the U.S. in fall on a water polo scholarship.
- Water Polo Canada announced Friday, that the 17-year-old has been suspended as a member of the junior men’s national team. He has apparently turned himself into police, although the Vancouver Police Department refused to confirm this.
- The parents of another 17-year-old high school student from Burnaby, B.C., forced their son to give himself up after a photo surfaced that showed him looting a high-end fashion store. A teacher at an area high school told me Friday that students were abuzz over shots posted on Facebook of classmates riding home on the Canada Line holding items obtained during the looting.

CONTAGION: THE TRUTH?

Stott
Drury
Reicher
Cocking

CROWD TYPES - BERLONGHI (1965)

Some broad behavioural groupings to assist with
Analysis and Prediction (APR)
COMMON CROWD BEHAVIOUR TYPES
- Ambulatory
  - Entering/exiting a venue, walking to/from car parks etc
- Disability or limited movement
  - Limited in ability to walk, speak, hear etc
- Cohesive or Spectator
  - Typically watching an event
- Excessive or Revellous
  - Engaged in some form of emotional release such as singing, cheering, chanting etc

COMMON CROWD BEHAVIOUR TYPES
- Participatory
  - Participating in activities/events such as performers and competitors
- Aggressive or hostile
  - Becoming abusive, threatening, boisterous, potentially unlawful and likely to disregard officials
- Demonstrator
  - Often with recognised leader, organised for specific reason or event, to picket, march or chant

EVALUATION OF THE CROWD

In order to evaluate the crowd we need to identify some or all of the following:

- Organisation and Leadership
- Cohesiveness
- Unity of Purpose
- Common Motive
- Psychological Unity
- Emotional Intensity
- Volatility.
BERLONGHI (1995)

Behaviour of groups can escalate due to a stimulus, resulting in:

- Escaping, crushing or trampling
- Rushing or looting
- Violence.

POPPLEWELL: BRADFORD FIRE 1985

- All wooden stadium
- Small rubbish fire under stand
- Failure to accept reality (Normalcy Bias)
- 85 seconds
POPPLEWELL: BRADFORD FIRE
1985
- All wooden stadium
- Small rubbish fire under the viewing stand
- Failure to accept reality (Normalcy Bias)
- ‘Return Route’ syndrome
- 85 seconds
- 56 dead and 265 injured
POPPLEWELL 4 CATEGORIES

Group I
Violent types who, for their own gratification, find violence attractive

Group II
Imitators of Group I but not instigators of violence

Group III
Reactionaries – who react violently in response to a situation

Group IV
The vast majority of people who abhor violence

LORD JUSTICE POPPLEWELL – A GOOD ‘JUDGE’?

- Born and raised in Northwood
- Went to school at Charterhouse
- Once asked exactly what was meant by ‘Linford Christie’s Lunchbox’
DANGERS OF ‘IN AND OUT GROUPS’

THE PEOPLE VERSUS........

- Psychology of Oppression
- Perception is stronger than reality
- The face of ‘the powerful’ are the ‘out’ group
- Police, Security, Stewards, Organisers......

INGROUPS AND OUTGROUPS - EXPERIMENTS

- The Chairs - Novelli et al., 2010
- The Two Groups study – Sussex University
- The Smelly Sweat Shirt - Brighton University
DOES IT MATTER?

- Ingroup or Outgroup?
- What are you to your crowd?
- Where does the crowd manager sit?
- Where do your staff sit?
- Where does the ‘voice of god’ sit?