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AN EXAMINATION OF GENDER
ROLES IN CROWDS

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Introduction

In this paper, we examine gender roles in three crowd events, focusing on the continuity of conventional gender roles. This focus allows us to address the relationship between institutionalized and collective behavior, suggesting limitations of the "extra-institutional" model of collective behavior. Social contagion approaches to collective behavior, focusing on its extra-institutional quality, suggest that these forms of behavior represent distinct departures from institutionalized behavior. In contrast, more recent collective behavior scholarship, for example the emergent norm and emergent social structure approaches, characterize collective and institutionalized behavior as continuous.

In the first part of the paper, we review these two lines of collective behavior literature, emphasizing the transition toward a conceptualization of collective behavior as continuous with institutionalized behavior. Following these theoretical reviews, we review other empirical studies that have documented the continuity of conventional gender roles in social movement organizations (SMOs) and some crowd settings. We then turn to a discussion of the crowd events that we observed, focusing on gender roles within them.

Collective Behavior as "Extra-institutional"

Several researchers characterize collective behavior as "extra-institutional." For example, Smelser (1962) defines

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collective behavior as "an uninstitutionalized mobilization for action in order to modify one or more kinds of strain on the basis of a generalized reconstitution of a component of action" (p. 71), and Lofland (1981) defines it as "emergent and extrainstitutional social forms and behavior" (p. 411).

The focus on the extra-institutional quality of crowd and collective behavior is rooted in early attempts to define the field. These "social contagion" perspectives suggested that collective behavior represents a distinct departure from institutionalized behavior. LeBon (1895), portraying institutionalized and collective behavior as dramatically different, created several myths regarding the homogeneous, irrational, anonymous and suggestible nature of crowds (McPhail, 1991). LeBon also implied the homogeneity of gender behavior, asserting that crowd members assume characteristics common to women and children. He wrote:

> ...impulsiveness, irritability, incapacity to reason, the absence of judgments and of the critical spirit, the exaggeration of the sentiments, and others besides-which are almost always observed in beings belonging to inferior forms of evolution- in women, savages and in children for instance. (1895: 36)

Influenced to some extent by LeBon, Park (1904) and Blumer (1939) maintained the distinction between institutionalized and collective behavior. Park argued that crowd participants lose the rational problem solving abilities that characterize decision making within the public. Blumer (1939) continued this line of thinking, arguing that crowd behavior, unlike institutionalized behavior, involves a process of circular reaction. Lacking the

capacity for self-conscious reflection, Blumer argued, crowd participants respond directly, in uncritical, nonreflective fashion, to the interstimulation within the crowd. This process involuntarily transforms individuals within the crowd who would otherwise behave in culturally prescribed ways.

These contagion approaches, focusing on the supposed anonymity, irrationality and homogeneity characteristic of crowds, highlight the extra-institutional features of collective behavior. More recent scholarship in the field, in contrast, highlights continuities and similarities between institutionalized and collective behavior. In the next section, we review these approaches.

Collective and Institutionalized Behavior as Continuous

In contrast to contagion approaches, a more recent trend in collective behavior research highlights similarities and continuities with institutionalized behavior. For example, Turner (1964) suggested that "search will ultimately undermine all of the traditional dynamic distinctions between collective behavior and organizational behavior and suggest that no special set of principles is required to deal with this subject matter" (p. 304). Dynes and Quarantelli (1968) also questioned the dichotomization of organizational and collective behavior perspectives and noted the required convergence of the two, arguing that institutionalized and collective behavior are highly intermixed in given situations.

Additionally, several empirical studies, challenging the notion that collective and institutionalized behavior are

discontinuous, highlight similarities between the two. For example, research has dispelled the assumptions of homogeneity (Turner and Killian, 1957; Fritz and Mathewson, 1957; Neal and Phillips, 1988), anonymity (Aveni, 1977; Neal, 1993) and irrationality (Couch, 1968; Berk, 1974; McPhail, 1991) that characterized earlier work.

Emergent norm theory (Turner and Killian, 1957; Turner, 1964) was the first to address the relationship between institutionalized and collective behavior. According to Turner and Killian, collective behavior refers to, "those forms of social behavior in which usual conventions cease to guide social action and people collectively transcend, bypass or subvert established institutional patterns and structures" (1987: 3). While social norms guide both institutionalized and collective behavior, the latter involves the emergence of new norms. Thus, although they emphasized the relationship between collective and institutionalized behavior, Turner and Killian maintained the extra-institutional characterization.

Other collective behavior scholars have modified emergent norm theory in important ways, further emphasizing continuities with institutionalized behavior. For example, Weller and Quarantelli (1973) argue that restricting the study of collective behavior to instances of emergent norms neglects a significant proportion of collective episodes that involve enduring cultural norms but new or emergent social relationships. According to their "emergent social structure" approach, collective behavior can involve behavior based

on conventional norms, but carried out by newly-formed collectivities. This position implies that at least some forms of collective behavior represent no departure at all from the conventional social normative order. Actions taken by participants conform to cultural expectations, even though these actions may be undertaken by newly-formed groups.

Additionally, other researchers from the emergent social structure approach, highlighting the importance of social roles in collective behavior (Perry and Pugh, 1978; Dynes, 1986; Johnson, 1987; Johnston and Johnson, 1988), have documented the continuity of institutionalized roles. For example, in their study of the Beverly Hills Supper Club fire, Johnston and Johnson (1988) found that:

> ...disaster roles assumed by individuals within directly affected organizations are extensions in regularized ways of the ordinary roles performed by the individuals. (p.39)

Emergent norm and emergent social structure perspectives highlight the similarities between institutionalized and collective behavior, generally conceptualizing the two along a continuum of emergence and institutionalization. Marx and McAdam (1994) provide a recent example of such a conceptualization, suggesting that institutionalized behavior is guided by very specific cultural guidelines, while collective behavior occurs "within settings where traditional cultural explanations are not applicable or not very useful guides for understanding behavior." They do add, however, that collective behavior is, to some extent, "limited and shaped by the cultural expectations and social characteristics that persons

bring to it" (1994, p. 4).

Such a continuum provides a good starting point for empirical studies assessing the degree to which conventional cultural definitions guide behavior within various settings. Some studies, for example, have documented the continuity of conventional gender roles in SMOs and some crowd settings. These are reviewed below.

Gender Roles in SMOs and Crowds

A few studies have looked at gender roles in crowds, documenting the continuity of conventional gender roles in these settings. For example, Johnson (1987) found that conventional gender expectations guided behavior in a crowd crush when crowd members rushed forward to enter a building in which a popular rock group was playing. Actions in the crowd reflected traditional expectations; for example, more women received help than men and more men than women offered help. Johnston and Johnson (1988), studying the Beverly Hills supper club fire, also found that gender roles reflected traditional expectations. Men engaged in fire fighting activities, while women offered emotional support to other victims. According to the authors, "Gender roles endure and occupational roles expand to guide behavior" (Johnston and Johnson, 1988: 39).

Several studies also suggest that conventional gender roles are maintained in SMOs. For example, Lawson and Barton (1980) found that women were essential in organizing local protest groups in New York City's tenant movement, but men dominated leadership positions. Two studies, one focusing on the Brookside Coal Strike

(Maggard, 1990) and the other looking at emergent citizen groups in disaster threat situations (Neal and Phillips, 1990), explain women's active participation as an extension of their perceived traditional role in the domestic realm.

These studies document the maintenance of conventional gender roles, supporting the emergent norm and emergent social structure perspectives that view institutionalized and collective behavior as continuous. Further documenting the continuity of collective and institutionalized behavior, we observed a range of crowd settings, assessing the degree to which conventional gender roles are maintained. In the next sections, we discuss the methods we used, and describe the three crowd events we observed.

Methods

To determine the degree to which conventional gender roles are maintained in crowds, we systematically observed three crowd events that took place between September 1993 and March 1994.[1] The crowd events are discussed in greater detail in the next section. Triangulation, the use of multiple sources of data, drove the data gathering process (Jick, 1979), with crowd data consisting of visual data (e.g., observations and photographs), interviews with police and documents.

The systematic crowd observations constitute the primary source of data. We took an observation checklist into the field that contained information about group size, gender ratio of groups

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[1]Data were collected for completion of a master's thesis (see Webb, 1994).

and male/female behavior within groups. While general crowd interactions reflected gender differences, keynoting incidents provided better indicators of conventional gender roles. When we observed keynoting incidents, we coded the behavior in terms of its aggressivity, and we noted general crowd reactions to it. To the extent that male crowd members generally engaged in more aggressive behavior than females, gender roles reflected conventional expectations.

We supplemented the crowd observations with visual methods (i.e., photographs) (Curry & Clarke, 1978). Efforts were made to systematize the use of photography at the crowd events (Neal & Phillips, 1988). For example, at the concert we observed, photographs were taken at various locations around the building approximately every 15-20 minutes. The photographs were generally useful in terms of providing data regarding crowd size and gender ratios, but they also captured important keynoting events.

We also conducted semi-structured interviews with local police officials involved in planning for and managing the crowd events. From the interviews, we were able to obtain general information about the crowd events, as well as various police documents. Documentary materials (e.g., internal documents, newspapers, etc.) constitute the final source of data. Newspaper accounts were found particularly useful in terms of locating crowd settings and for general descriptive information about the events (Wright, 1978; Gaskell & Benewick, 1987). The next section describes the crowd events that we observed.

Crowd Settings

Pre-Game Celebration

We observed crowds assembled at a pre-game college football celebration in Dallas, Texas in October of 1993 for the annual rivalry between the Universities of Texas and Oklahoma. Traditionally, crowds assemble on the streets of downtown Dallas the night before the game to celebrate the rivalry. Because of violence at the 1992 gathering, city officials tried a new approach in 1993. The police barricaded streets and sidewalks, preventing traffic from stopping along them. The city also passed an ordinance prohibiting public consumption of alcohol, which has traditionally been a major feature of the celebration. Thus, the celebration we observed differed dramatically from past years.

The new city regulations facilitated crowd observations. Because crowds were prohibited from assembling on the sidewalks and streets, the police designated areas for crowd assembly. We were thus able to observe the most highly attended area.

Revelers began assembling in this downtown area early in the evening, converging in small groups. Significantly fewer people attended the event than in previous years, suggesting that the new regulations and the previous year's violence deterred people from attending this year's celebration. Furthermore, the threat of severe weather conditions contributed to an early dispersal of crowds. According to one police official, the bad weather accomplished for the police what they hoped their strong presence (in excess of 900 officers in the downtown area) would accomplish

(i.e., an early dispersal).

While fewer people attended and the celebration was relatively uneventful, a few thousand revelers still managed to show up. Early in the evening, a Hare Krishna band paraded down the street, stopping occasionally to perform a dance. During these performances, small crowds would assemble to watch. During one such performance, a male keynoter mocked the band, dancing along side them. The keynoter's behaviors received some crowd approval as a group of females assembled around him, watching his performance and cheering him on.

Further down the street, the band stopped for another performance, this time attracting a larger crowd. As the band performed its song and dance, a group of female keynoters began mocking the band, just as a male crowd member had earlier. This time, however, two of the female keynoters actually entered the band's circle, dancing with them. The women received little attention from the rest of the crowd. Some crowd members seemed to disapprove of the women's behavior, muttering, "They must be drunk."

After the band left the area, crowd attention focused on a group of young male revelers seated on the patio of one of the local outdoor bars. Since city officials prohibited drinking on the streets, the group of young males did the next best thing. They drank at an outside bar, cheering as other crowd members walked past them. A section of sidewalk provided the males at the bar and passerby the opportunity to exchange words, hand gestures

and predictions about the upcoming game. Groups would walk by wearing UT and OU clothing, sometimes gesturing UT or OU with their fingers. These actions stimulated yelling battles between the men at the outdoor bar and passerby. From the outdoor bar table, they yelled at passerby, "OU's gonna kick ass!." They received a great deal of attention from other crowd members, particularly other males.

Pre-Rock Concert Crowds

We also observed crowds that assembled prior to a rock concert featuring Pearl Jam, which the University of North Texas hosted in November, 1993. We began observing crowds as they assembled a couple of hours prior to the concert. Because, as is typically the case at such events, entrance into the building was delayed by about an hour, we were able to observe gender behaviors as people awaited entry.

While they awaited entry into the concert, male and female crowd members engaged in distinct forms of behavior. For example, at one of the entrances, several crowd members, predominately female, sat on the concrete, making themselves comfortable as they waited. On the other hand, a couple of male keynoters at another entrance urged other crowd members to break through the police barricade, yelling "OK the joke is over, let us in," "push the door and it will open," and, "Fuck these guys, let's go in."

Never having hosted a similar act, University police officials were concerned about the type of crowd that the concert would attract. They were concerned that the concert would attract a

distinct "grunge" subculture. More specifically, police officials voiced concern about the anti-police messages conveyed by the opening band, The Butthole Surfers.

Out of this concern, the University staffed the concert with officers from four local agencies and a private security firm. The various agencies seemed to lack coordination which created ambiguity in the queues. For example, as crowd members arrived at the Coliseum, police officers provided minimal direction and no signs were posted directing people to appropriate building entrances.

Lack of coordination among the various police agencies also became apparent when security staff at one entrance prematurely began processing crowd members through metal detectors and allowed them to enter the building. Several concert-goers were admitted into the building, resulting in yells and a forward surge from other people awaiting entry. This forward surge created problems when those who were allowed to enter the building were subsequently pulled back out of the building by security staff. With the area immediately in front of the doors becoming congested, some male crowd members again urged others to continue on past the security barricades. Ultimately, security officers relieved the congestion by directing crowd members to form several lines to facilitate metal-detector processing and entry.

Ku Klux Klan Rally

Finally, we observed crowds gathered for a rally staged by a chapter of the Ku Klux Klan. The rally received a great deal of

attention in the media and attracted a crowd of approximately 300 spectators. The rally was staged in response to local events that highlighted racial tension in the area. A local black high school student was acquitted of charges of shooting and injuring a white high school student. The shooting victim had been a member of a large group of white students who converged on the black student's house. The group allegedly verbally harassed and threatened the black student, who reportedly out of fear, fired a shotgun blast into the crowd, injuring the white student. Following the acquittal, the KKK deemed the area ripe for a recruitment rally.

Protest activities at the rally suggested gender differences. A row of about 10 police officers separated angry protestors from the Klan members. As the Klan speakers espoused racist messages, male anti-Klan protestors grew agitated, some of them attempting to cross the police barricade. For example, a black male crowd member on the front row, noticeably agitated, threatened KKK members, yelling, "Come on across that rope and I'll kick your ass." An officer calmed the man and asked him to leave.

Also in response to racist comments, a juvenile black male spectator spit on one of the Klan speakers. Apparently, the protestor was chewing some kind of candy as the spit left a huge red stain on the speaker's neatly pressed white Klan shirt. An officer on the front row responded to the young male saying in a friendly but firm manner, "You don't wanna play into their hands do you? They would love nothing more than to see someone get arrested." Another male crowd member brought a megaphone to the

rally, hoping to muddle the speeches made by Klan representatives.

Female protest at the rally assumed a different form. As the rally began, a group of female protestors arrived with signs in hand. Two of the women, dressed in clothing reminiscent of the 1960's, stood near the center of the crowd and sang peace songs. All but two or three of the many people holding signs were female.

Gender differences were particularly apparent at the rally's conclusion as Klan members tried to leave. Members of the Klan had parked their cars in a parking lot adjacent to the speech area. Following the final speech, the Klan packed up their equipment, got in their cars and attempted to leave. Their efforts to leave were thwarted by angry protestors, predominately males, who surrounded the cars of the departing KKK members. At one point, a group of young males surrounded the car of a female KKK member, shaking the car and spitting on the windshield. As he attempted to drive away, one KKK member was punched by a male protestor through his open car window. The driver stopped the car, and police officers hurried over and handled the situation, allowing the Klan members to depart.

Analysis

Clearly distinguishable gender differences characterized all of the crowd events described in the previous section, particularly in terms of keynoting. Regarding keynoting behavior, the data highlight two important differences. First, male and female keynoting in the crowds differed in both form and content. Second, crowd members responded differently to male and female keynoters.

Keynoting varied by gender in the crowd events we observed, generally reflecting institutionalized gender differences. Specifically, male keynoting assumed more aggressive forms than female keynoting. At the rock concert, for example, the delayed opening of the coliseum doors caused crowd members to grow restless. Expressing their frustration, some male crowd members urged other crowd members to break through police barricades, yelling, "OK the joke is over, let us in," "push the door and it will open," and, "Fuck these guys, let's go in." On the other hand, several female crowd members sat on the ground when they became bored. Males responded aggressively to the long wait, while females did not.

The KKK rally data further highlight gender differences within the crowd settings. While both men and women showed up to protest the Klan's presence, only males made efforts to cross the police line separating spectators and KKK members. During the rally, a young male spit on the director of Klan security, staining the KKK member's starched white shirt. One protestor grew so agitated and visibly hostile that he was asked to leave by police. Following the rally, predominately male protestors harassed the departing KKK members. One male crowd member punched a driver, while a small group of males spit on the windshield of another KKK vehicle. Female protestors, on the other hand, engaged in more peaceful forms of protest, singing and holding signs bearing various peace slogans. These gender differences reflected institutionalized cultural prescriptions.

The examples from the data discussed so far illustrate gender differences in the form and content of keynoting. Data from the football game celebration highlight differential crowd reactions to male and female keynoting. Male keynoters received significantly more attention, and apparently more positive sanctioning, than female keynoters from other crowd members. For example, the group of males seated at an outside bar, yelling at groups as they walked by, received a great deal of attention. Most importantly, only male passerby yelled back at the group. Female keynoting, on the other hand, received less attention from the crowd. In fact, female keynoting appeared to be informally negatively sanctioned by other crowd members. For example, the two female crowd members who joined the ranks of the dancing Hare Krishna band, were perceived, according to the mumbling of some crowd members, to be drunk. A young male who also mocked the band received positive feedback, attracting a small audience who cheered him on, urging him to continue.

Discussion

We found that clearly distinguishable gender differences, generally reflecting conventional gender roles, characterized all of the crowd events. In all of the cases, men engaged in more aggressive forms of behavior than women. Furthermore, as the football game celebration data suggest, male keynoters received more attention and more positive sanctioning from other crowd members than female keynoters. These findings have two important implications regarding the relationship between institutionalized

and collective behavior.

First, our findings suggest limitations of the extra-institutional model of collective behavior. While several collective behavior researchers have called attention to the continuity of institutionalized behavior, arguing that no new or unique concepts are needed to explain collective behavior (Turner and Killian, 1957; Turner, 1964; Dynes and Quarantelli, 1968), most of their definitions contain some element of extra-institutionalism. Since researchers have not been specific about what this means, these definitions are problematic. Although collective behavior episodes may be extra-institutional at the aggregate level, behaviors within the episode are guided by culturally specified norms, suggesting continuity with institutionalized behavior. For example, we found, as have others, that institutionalized gender roles are maintained across a range of settings (Lawson and Barton, 1980; Maggard, 1990; Neal and Phillips, 1990; Johnson, 1987; Johnston and Johnson, 1988). In light of these findings, definitions of collective behavior should specify more clearly what is meant by extra-institutional.

Continuity of conventional gender roles across these various settings highlights the structural embeddedness of gender roles, pointing to a second important implication of this study. Some researchers characterize such collective behavior situations as responses to social stress (Perry and Pugh, 1978), and some would suggest that under such stressful conditions, the social structure becomes more permeable to change, specifically allowing for greater

gender equity (Lipman-Blumen, 1973, 1984). Our data and those of others that document the continuity of conventional gender roles do not support that claim. Instead, these data highlight the endurance of gender roles, and suggest that people rely on institutionalized cultural expectations when confronted with ambiguous situations.

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