INTERGROUP CONFLICT IN SOCCER STADIUMS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present research is to investigate three factors, namely perceptions of fairness in intergroup situations, ingroup identification and spatial dimensions that are assumed to contribute to why individuals participate in violence against the police in soccer stadiums. In Study 1 perceptions of fairness, identification and spatial perspective were manipulated and the results indicated a significant interaction effect between identification and spatial perspective. This interaction effect had a significant influence on negative behavioural tendencies towards police. In Study 2, identification and spatial perspective were manipulated and once again the interaction effect between identification and spatial perspective was found. A main effect of identification was found in that participants who identified lower with fans showed significantly more positive attitudes towards police. The results of the two studies highlight the importance of looking beyond the inherent nature of the crowd itself when analysing situations of police/fan conflict, and also the need to further investigate the spatial dimension and how it influences social judgment and decision making.
INTRODUCTION

The Soccer World Cup that will be hosted by South Africa in 2010 is an event that will draw large crowds into stadiums, and therefore create contexts of mass situations. The interest in crowds or mass situations from the perspective of the present research is in how individuals shift from their own personal identity to a collective identity and thus engage in behaviours that they would otherwise not engage in. Crowds carry the potential for violence, and violence in stadiums commonly occurs either between fans and rival fans or between fans and police. The aim of the present study is to investigate experimentally three factors that might contribute to why individuals choose to participate in violence against the police in situations of police/fan interactions. The three factors that will be investigated experimentally are the perceptions of the intergroup situation as fair/unfair, ingroup identification and spatial dimensions.

The Crowd in Psychology

Social scientists have developed different theories for explaining crowd behaviour and the ways in which the psychology of the crowd differs significantly from the psychology of the individual. Most of these theories, especially the early ones, hold a pathological view of crowds, meaning that crowds are seen as “frivolous, irrational and representing the darkest desires of the human condition” (Sethi, 2002, p. 1). The classic theory of Sigmund Freud states that people who are in a crowd act differently towards others, as compared to those who are thinking individually (see Ammar, 2007). According to this theory the minds of people in a group merge together to form a way of thinking, each member’s enthusiasm is increased as a result, and one becomes less aware
of the true nature of one’s actions. According to Ammar (2007) it is this assertion that a person may follow other’s behaviours and become less aware about the true nature of their actions, that creates a negative picture of crowds in general.

Gustave Le Bon is considered the founder of crowd psychology and his ideas have influenced other theorists as well as many political figures such as Goebbels, Hitler and Mussolini (see Reicher, 2002; Postmes, 2005). According to Moscovici (as cited by Reicher, 2002), Le Bon’s book on the crowd, which was first published in 1895, has not only served as an explanation of crowd phenomena but also has served to create the mass politics of the twentieth century. Le Bon urged contemporary establishment figures to employ his principles in order to use the power of the crowd for the state, rather than against the state (see Reicher, 2002).

Le Bon did not completely agree with Freud, as he did not consider crowds completely irrational. Le Bon’s theory indicated that individuals in crowds can remain anonymous and that crowds sometimes generate emotions (see Ammar, 2007). Further it was not only that by being part of a crowd individuals lose all sense of self and all sense of responsibility, but also at the same time, they gain a sense of invincible power due to their numbers (see Reicher, 2002). Anonymity, suggestibility and contagion – that is, the inability to resist any passing idea – turn a gathering of individuals into a psychological crowd or a collective mind that results in an individual to submerge in the crowd to become a mindless puppet capable of performing any act, however atrocious or outside of their normal individual behaviour (Postmes, 2005). In the same way as Freud, Le Bon held a threatening and negative view of the crowd.
Arguing from a social identity perspective Reicher (2002) criticises Le Bon’s ideas on three different levels. On a descriptive level, Le Bon’s work is thoroughly decontextualised. According to Reicher (2002, p. 283) Le Bon writes of crowd events as if crowds were acting in isolation, as if ”the police or army or company guards who they confronted were absent, and as if the violent actions directed from one party to another were the random gyrations of the crowd alone”. On a theoretical level Le Bon’s crowd psychology is underpinned by a desocialised conception of identity, which means that the link between society and the self and also between the self and behaviour is broken (Reicher, 2002, p. 283). On an ideological level, Le Bon’s ideas serve several functions: first, by definition crowd psychology is pathological; secondly, this psychology serves as denial of responsibility; and thirdly, Le Bon’s model legitimates repression by supporting the status quo (Reicher, 2002, p.283).

Even though many of Le bon’s ideas have been criticised they remain highly influential to other crowd psychology theorists. For instance, the various models of deindividuation theory are based to a large extent on the crowd theory of Le Bon (see Postmes & Spears, 1998). Deindividuation theory was developed to explain the violence and irrationality of the crowd. According to deindividuation theory, the anonymity and excitement of the crowd makes individuals lose a sense of individual identity (Postmes, 2005). As a result crowd members cease to evaluate themselves, “they become irrational and irresponsible, making the crowd fickle and explosive, and prone to anti-normative and disinhibited behaviour” (Postmes, 2005, p. 1).
Festinger was the first theorist to take the ideas of Le Bon’s theory and reintroduce them as deindividuation theory (Postmes & Spears, 1998). Zimbardo extended and developed deindividuation theory by presenting a theoretical framework specifying the input variables leading to deindividuation and the resulting output behaviour (see Postmes & Spears, 1998). According to Zimbardo (as cited by Postmes & Spears, 1998) a variety of circumstances can lead to a deindividuation state, and the most important of these are: anonymity, loss of individual responsibility, arousal, sensory overload, novel or unstructured situations, and consciousness – altering substances like drugs and alcohol.

Diener (as cited by Postmes & Spears, 1998) refined Zimbardo’s theory by being more specific about the psychological mechanism causing deindividuation, and thus elaborated on how deindividuation comes about through decreased self-awareness. According to Diener there should be more of a focus on the internal, psychological changes that constitute deindividuation, in order to further validate the construct (Postmes & Spears, 1998). Prentice-Dunn and Rogers (as cited by Postmes & Spears, 1998) developed a further extension, the differential self awareness theory, by applying the private-public distinction in self-awareness. Their main contribution to deindividuation theory was bridging what they saw as “a disappointing correspondence between reduced self-awareness and anti-normative behaviour” (Postmes & Spears, 1998, p. 240).
According to Reicher (2002, p. 286) even though these three models of deindividuation theory differ slightly they have three things in common:

“Firstly, they consider that individuals have a single and personal identity or set of standards which are the condition for rational and controlled behaviour. Secondly, they consider that any loss of access to these standards will lead to disinhibited or at least uncontrolled behaviour. Thirdly, they propose that being part of a group – especially large and undifferentiated groups such as crowds – will lead to the occlusion of personal standards and hence to antisocial behaviour.”

In regards to the above, deindividuation theory then replicates the notions of loss of identity and loss of control that come from the ideas of Le Bon, but unlike the classic ideas of Le Bon the idea of the crowd giving individuals a sense of power is not regarded (Reicher, 2002). Deindividuation theory also takes a negative view of human character: very generally, people are prevented from becoming self-aware during group involvement, losing their self-identity in the group and therefore acting in largely antisocial ways (Sethi, 2002, p. 6).

Another prominent theorist in the field of crowd psychology is Floyd Allport who condemned any notion of a group mind and rejected much of Le Bon’s ideas and deindividuation theory (see Reicher, 2002). Allport considered any reference to a mind that was separate from the psyche of the individual as a meaningless abstraction (see Reicher, 2002). In terms of collective action Allport (1933, as cited by Reicher, 2002) argued that individuals in crowds acted more like
themselves than they did when they were alone. According to Allport (as cited by Reicher, 2002, p. 288), “collective behaviour arises where there is a coming together of individuals who due to similarities in their constitution, training, and common situations are possessed of a similar character.” For Allport the size of the crowd and thus the number of people is directly related to the excitement of the crowd and the type of collective behaviour possible (Reicher, 2002).

In the face of the increasingly rejected deindividuation theory arose the emergent norm theory developed by Turner and Killian (as cited by Sethi, 2002). They stated that people in crowds make their own rules as they go along and crowd behaviour is never entirely predictable (see also Ammar, 2007). Coming from a sociological point of view, emergent norm theory is an attempt to combine symbolic interactionism with psychological research on the formation of group norms in order to account for the social understanding of collective action (Reicher, 2002). Turner and Killian’s approach seeks to reconcile the claim that crowd action is normal rather than pathological or irrational, with the observation that it is not guided by traditional norms but rather tends to transcend established institutional patterns (Reicher, 2002). This reconciliation is effected through the idea that collective behaviour takes place under the governance of emergent norms (Reicher, 2002). Understanding collective behaviour therefore depends on clarifying and understanding the process of norm formation (Sethi, 2002).

According to Reicher (2002, p. 288), “emergent norm theory marks a crucial break with classic crowd psychology and an important step towards understanding the sociality of crowd action. It restores the link between self-understandings of the subject and actions in the crowd. It also emphasizes the inherent sociality of these understandings.” Emergent norm theory clearly shows
that people in a crowd take on different roles, some as leaders, others as followers, and some as
inactive bystanders or opponents. According to this theory everyone plays a significant role in
determining the crowd behaviours (Ammar, 2007).

In more modern and recent times social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and its further
development through self-categorisation theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherall,
1987) have come to be accepted as the most developed and comprehensive modern theories in
the field of crowd psychology (Sethi, 2002). In contrast to other theories – deindividuation and
its loss of identity; emergent norm theory and its normative influence – social identity theory
explains crowd behaviour in terms of reference informational influence. Following the traditional
mechanisms of reference, an individual (1) categorizes her/himself as part of a social group from
which s/he gains her/his social identity, (2) creates or discovers the norms of that group, and (3)
assigns those norms to her/himself, providing a framework for future behaviour (Sethi, 2002, p.
6).

According to Turner (1991, p. 50) self-categorization theory states that:

   “Group behaviour is assumed to express a change in the level of abstraction of self-
categorization in the direction which represents a depersonalization of self-perception, a
shift towards the perception of self as an interchangeable exemplar of some social category
and away from the perception of self as a unique person defined by individual differences
from others.”
It is important to note that depersonalisation, however, is not a loss of individual identity, nor a loss or submergence of the self in the group (as in the concept of deindividuation), and nor any kind of regression to a more primitive or unconscious form of identity (Turner, 1991). Depersonalisation is best understood as the change from the personal to the social level of identity, a change in the nature and content of the self-concept depending on what level the individual is acting on (Turner, 1991; Turner et al, 1987). According to Turner (1991, p. 51) “in many respects, depersonalisation may be seen as a gain in identity, since it represents a mechanism whereby individuals may act in terms of the social similarities or differences produced by the historical development of human society and culture.”

**Crowd Violence and Soccer**

Most research done on crowd violence, specifically dealing with soccer crowds focuses on *hooliganism* as an explanation for the violence. Hooliganism is an umbrella term used to define various forms of violence between fans and rival fans, and fans and police. A distinction can be drawn between spontaneous incidents of spectator violence and the behaviour of socially organised fan groups that engage in competitive violence, principally with fan groups of opposing soccer teams (Spaaij, 2006). In the ‘hooligan model’ soccer crowd violence is attributed to the violent predispositions of a subsection of fans. This means that in this model only one aspect of crowd violence is looked at, at the expense of other contextual factors that might play a role in the crowd violence (Stott & Reicher, 1998a).
Even though the ‘hooligan model’ is the most widely accepted explanation for soccer related crowd violence, a number of descriptive studies have outlined important limitations of this approach (Stott & Reicher, 1998a; Stott & Reicher, 1998b; Stott, Hutchison & Drury, 2001; Stott, 2003; Stott & Adang, 2004). It is argued in these studies that while the violent dispositions of certain participants may be a necessary component in the overall explanation of soccer violence, they do not constitute a sufficient explanation. The studies by Stott and Reicher suggest that it is necessary to include contextual and interactive dimensions (how the actions of each group frame the actions of the other) in the determination of soccer crowd violence.

In these descriptive studies (Stott & Reicher, 1998a; Stott & Reicher, 1998b; Stott, Hutchison & Drury, 2001; Stott, 2003; Stott & Adang, 2004), the problems of explaining collective conflict in terms of the ‘hooligan model’ are highlighted. Firstly, these authors argue that with the limited understanding of the ‘hooligan model’ it is hard to determine when and why crowd violence starts, how it spreads, and how it is terminated. Secondly, and as a result, it is difficult to differentiate between events and explain why violence occurs in some cases and not in others and why it sometimes takes one form and sometimes another (the point is made that there have been many incidences of soccer related crowd violence where no known hooligans were present and there have also been instances where known hooligans were present but no soccer related crowd violence took place). The third problem highlighted in these studies is the fact that the ‘hooligan model’ seeks to explain crowd violence by reference to the crowd in isolation.
These three above mentioned problems of the ‘hooligan model’ do not only limit the understanding of crowd violence, by placing sole responsibility on the crowd, but also have ideological implications. According to Stott and Reicher (1998a, p. 358):

“If the state and its agencies are removed from the explanatory field, then they cannot be implicated in the production of violence. Moreover, if the crowd alone is responsible for violence, then the only solution lies in developing more sophisticated methods of repression.”

In these descriptive studies major incidents of soccer related crowd violence are approached “not as hooliganism per se, but as crowd events in which collective disorder is made possible through the shared psychological salience of a common social identity among crowd participants” (Stott, 2003, p. 641). These authors suggest that “incidents of disorder should be seen as crowd events and therefore as an outcome of complex inter-group interactions between supporters and those who make up the social contexts in which they act” (Stott, 2003, p. 641). This research demonstrates that public order policing, as well as the media, consistently play a major role in shaping these contexts. Therefore in order to provide a proper intergroup account of crowd conflict one should not only focus on the behaviour and psychology of fans, but also include an analysis of the police and the factors governing their behaviour (Stott & Reicher, 1998b; Stott, 2003).
In a series of studies (Stott & Reicher 1998a; Stott et al, 2001), these researchers followed England soccer supporters and the major incidences of disorder that they have been involved in. In one of these studies, where England was involved in the 1990 World Cup finals in Italy, they followed England supporters and used participant observation and interviews to collect data (Stott & Reicher, 1998a). What they found was that many England supporters recognized the presence of hooligans, but distinctly differentiated themselves from hooligans and hooligan activity. According to Stott (2003, p. 641), these supporters also understood the tournament as “a platform where they could participate in boisterous but non-violent behaviour that was seen as normative (and hence legitimate) for their social group.”

Even though many of these fans saw themselves as acting within their normative behaviour, they reported being confronted by what they saw as unfair and discriminately hostile police action towards England supporters in general. In the study these England fans attending the World Cup finals in Italy reported that they were unhappy with being portrayed as unruly and violent by the media, and also felt aggrieved by the fact that at all England soccer matches there was generally a greater police presence. The unfair treatment that they felt was based on the perceptions carried by the media, police and the locals, which were then translated into action by the police and their harsher treatment of the England fans (Stott & Reicher, 1998a).

From this study Stott and Reicher (1998a) further identified that this form of interaction between fans and police led many England fans to redefine their social identity such that it was conflict against police that came to be seen as normative. Conflict in this sense came to be seen “not as
hooliganism but as a reassertion of rights” (Stott, 2003, p. 641). What England supporters perceived to be unwarranted and indiscriminating police action (whether it was perceived or actual) “created an inclusive social identity that incorporated rather than rejected hooligan fans (i.e. those prepared to initiate conflict)” (Stott, 2003, p. 641). So in the end this coming together or incorporation of ‘normal’ England supporters, gave hooligan fans the support that empowered them to act aggressively towards police (Stott, 2003).

Stott et al. (2001) conducted another study where they once again followed England supporters to the 1998 World Cup Finals in France, where the England fans were again involved in a major incident of collective disorder. As in the Italy 1990 study, the explanations for the disorder in France 1998 that were featured in the media centered on the presence and absence of hooligans. Stott et al. (2001) in this study included an analysis of Scottish supporters who attended the same tournament in order to contrast them against England supporters, and also to contrast incidences of disorder against incidences where disorder was absent.

What was found in this study was that both England and Scottish fans understood the tournament as a platform where they could participate in boisterous but non-violent behaviour. The main difference was that Scottish fans perceived “a tolerant, permissive and often explicitly friendly response from other fans, locals and the police” (Stott et al, 2001, p. 375). The England fans, on the other hand, perceived a hostile and discriminating response that led them to react aggressively in an assertion of their rights. What Stott et al. (2001) concluded therefore was that the perceptions that the fans held about themselves, and the perceptions held about them by the
media, police and locals constructed the contexts which determined whether they participated in violent or non-violent behaviour.

In further trying to understand this context in which incidences of disorder involving England fans occurred in, these researchers also investigated the police perspective (Stott & Reicher, 1998b; Stott, 2003). The researchers argued that public order policing invariably plays a major role in shaping these contexts that England fans act in. Therefore according to Stott (2003, p. 641) in order to provide a proper intergroup account of crowd conflict “one should not only focus on the behaviour and psychology of fans, but also include an analysis of the police and the factors governing their behaviour.”

Stott and Reicher (1998b) investigated the so-called ‘Poll Tax Riot’ of 31 March 1990, where large-scale conflict broke out between police and crowd members. The event arose out of a large-scale national demonstration against the widely unpopular ‘Poll Tax’ or ‘Community Charge’ – a flat rate local tax that had just been introduced. It was one of the largest instances of public disorder in central London for several decades and it began after police were called in to intervene to disperse a sit down protest. Subsequently the conflict spread and escalated, leading to several hours of sustained fighting between police and crowd members (Stott & Reicher, 1998b).
Stott and Reicher (1998b) analysed the character and extent of these events, as well as the accounts of crowd participants, but the main aim was to interview participating police officers as well. From this study Stott and Reicher (1998b) identified that police officers found crowds to be generally heterogeneous and representative of society, but in times of conflict they treated them homogenously not distinguishing between individual crowd members. What Stott and Reicher (1998b) also identified was that even though it is a rowdy minority that has the potential for violence (and hence influence the majority), most police officers stressed that people can change within the crowd situation.

Therefore what is important is that the perceptions and fears of police officers have implications for public order policing and how they act towards crowds. They further found that policing crowds and all members of a crowd as if they were dangerous might sometimes become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The police perceptions of a uniformly dangerous crowd combined with public order tactics leads to particular forms of concern at the ‘threat’ inherent in the crowd and attempts to undermine such threat can actually create the very hostility the police were seeking to avoid (Stott, 2003, p. 643).

These findings were replicated in another study on police perspectives in the UK, where field based research was conducted on riots (Stott & Drury, 2000). In this study, as well as the previous studies, three distinctive problems that arise in the policing of mass events were identified. The first is the difficulty that police face in making out who amongst the crowd did what. The second problem arises once the police decide to act against the crowd. According to
the central Planning Unit (as cited by Stott & Reicher, 1998b, p. 521), “when trouble occurs and the police intervene, their tactics are generally aimed at getting rid of the threat entirely: dispersing the crowd, driving it in a particular direction, dividing it and containing it”. The third problem that police face is once these general tactics are employed, officers do not have time to make accurate decisions as to how they should treat individual crowd members even if they wanted to.

The social psychological consequences of the three above mentioned problems are that public order policing plays a crucial role in the polarizing of the crowd. By treating the crowd as homogenous and holding specific perceptions about crowds in general, police officers influence the way crowd members see themselves, and to what extent they will participate in violent behaviour (Stott & Reicher, 1998b; Stott, 2003). If crowd members perceive fans as being unfairly treated by police, as in the case of England supporters, they are more likely to participate in violent behaviour towards police in a reassertion of their rights (Stott & Reicher, 1998a; Stott et al, 2001). Hence, the perceptions that both police and crowd members hold about one another play an important role in intergroup conflict.

The researchers in these descriptive studies (Stott & Reicher, 1998a; Stott & Reicher, 1998b; Stott, Hutchison & Drury, 2001; Stott, 2003; Stott & Adang, 2004), base their analysis of intergroup conflict between England fans and police on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and self-categorization theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). Based on Tajfel and Turner’s (1986) approach, Reicher (2002) explains that the social identity tradition
assumes identity to be multiple and to constitute a complex system rather than a unitary one. According to Tajfel and Turner (1986), within social identity theory a distinction is made between personal identity, which refers to the unique characteristics of the individual, and social identity, which refers to an individual’s self understanding as a member of a social category.

All identities available to individuals are social in the sense of defining individuals in terms of social relations, but these relations are defined at different levels of abstraction (Reicher, 2002). According to Stott and Reicher (1998a) what is important also is that when people act in terms of any given social identity their behaviour is determined by the meanings, beliefs and values associated with the group rather than their personal beliefs and values. In other words when an individual identifies as a man, an Englishman or a soccer fan (social identities), their behaviour is governed by the meaning associated with masculinity, English culture or being a soccer fan.

According to Turner et al. (1987, as cited by Reicher, 2002, p. 298):

“Self-categorisation constitutes the psychological basis for group behaviour. On defining ourselves as category members we participate in a process of self-stereotyping. That is, we seek to determine the relevance of category identity for action in context and we conform accordingly. We expect fellow group members to do likewise and therefore we also expect to agree with them on matters pertaining to our mutual social identity.”
In the above definition there is the assertion that group norms or behaviour will be determined by those individuals regarded as typical group members (Reicher, 2002). In the crowd context this suggests that people in crowds are likely to act like other members of the group especially if they identify highly with the group. Social identity theory also suggests that the more an individual identifies with a group the more likely they are to conform to the norms and behaviours of that group. So for example, in the context of conflict between fans and police, an individual in the crowd is more likely to take action against the police (outgroup) if they identify highly with fans (ingroup).

These above-mentioned descriptive studies (Stott & Reicher, 1998a; Stott & Reicher, 1998b; Stott, Hutchison & Drury, 2001; Stott, 2003; Stott & Adang, 2004) highlight the important role that perceptions between different groups (e.g. fair versus unfair treatment) and identification with groups play in soccer related conflicts. Another aspect that needs to be considered in intergroup conflict between fans and police is the spatial dimension. This spatial dimension has to be considered as recent studies (Fujita, Henderson, Eng, Trope & Liberman, 2006; Maass, Pagani and Berta, 2007) have highlighted how spatial distance can have an important effect on how we perceive events and how we act.

Fujita et al. (2006) conducted a study where they attempted to investigate whether information about the spatial distance of social events influence how individuals understand the events. In two experiments these researchers manipulated information about the spatial distance of an event and assessed the level at which participants construed the event. Participants were asked to read
a scenario (there were two scenarios: spatially near condition and spatially distant condition) and were asked to perform a number of behaviours related to the scenario. The results of these experiments indicated that participants preferred to identify actions as ends rather than as means to a greater extent when these actions occurred at a spatially distant, as opposed to a near location, and that they used more abstract language to recall spatially distant events compared to near events.

The findings of the study led Fujita et al. (2006) to conclude that increasing the reported spatial distance of social events enhances the activation of high level construals and has implications for individuals’ judgement and decision making. According to Fujita et al. (2006) social distance, which is mediated through construals, has been shown to have an effect on a wide range of psychological phenomena, from person perception to self-regulation to interpersonal interactions. Bringing this understanding to the context of police/fan conflict suggests that individuals witnessing the conflict from a spatially distant position are more likely to perceive the conflict more abstractly and see their actions as ends as compared to those that witness the conflict from a spatially near position.

Maass, Pagani and Berta (2007) conducted a series of studies where they attempted to investigate the role of spatial bias in the interpretation of human behaviour although from a different angle. These authors argue that the direction in which language is written in a given culture produces a subtle bias in the interpretation of human action. The same action (e.g. athletic performance or aggression) is perceived as more forceful when the spatial trajectory corresponds to the habitual
writing direction (left to right as in western cultures, or right to left as in Arabic culture). In one of these studies Maass et al (2007) focused on the performance of soccer players. They presented the same goals to participants but varied the trajectory (left/right vs right/left) with which the ball went into the net. What they aimed to investigate was whether observers would judge the strength, speed and quality of the goal differently, depending on the observer’s perspective. The results of their study confirmed their hypothesis that the scoring of a soccer goal from a left to right trajectory was perceived as stronger, faster and more beautiful than the exact same goal shown from the opposite trajectory under the condition (Maas et al., 2007).

In the second part of their study Maass et al. (2007) extended the same reasoning to the social domain, investigating the perceptions of aggressive acts. In this study they showed brief film clips to their participants and had them rate the degree of violence, the harmfulness to the victim, and the degree of responsibility of the aggressor. Once again just as in the soccer study their hypothesis was supported by the data. The data suggested that the same scene was perceived as more violent when the action was viewed from a left to right trajectory rather than a right to left trajectory, even though the effect was considerably lower than in the soccer study (Maass et al, 2007). The findings of these studies confirmed the assumption that spatial features of events may not only affect the processing of physical stimuli, but also exert a subtle effect on the interpretation and evaluation of human behaviours (Maass et al, 2007).

These studies on spatial bias, as well as those on spatial distance, introduce an important aspect, which could be crucial in determining when and why individuals participate in crowd disorder in the context of police/crowd conflict. These studies indicate that there could be other factors other
than the nature of the crowd itself that are responsible for how a crowd will behave. These studies draw attention to some of the factors that determine and have an effect on the thinking of individuals within crowds.

Based on the descriptive studies of Stott and colleagues (Stott & Reicher, 1998a; Stott & Reicher, 1998b; Stott, Hutchison & Drury, 2001; Stott, 2003; Stott & Adang, 2004) and the outlined research on spatial dimensions (Fujita et al, 2006; Maass et al, 2007), the aim of the present study is to investigate experimentally the effects of the perceptions of fairness, ingroup identification and spatial dimensions on why fans participate in violence against the police in situations of police/crowd interaction. In Study 1 the main effects and interaction effects of perceived fairness, ingroup identification and spatial dimensions were investigated. Study 2 focused on the main effects and interaction effects of ingroup identification and spatial dimensions.
STUDY 1

The hypotheses tested in Study 1 were: 1) individuals who strongly identify with other fans (ingroup) are more likely to engage in conflict against police than individuals who have low ingroup identification (fans); 2) individuals who perceive other fans (ingroup) as being unfairly treated by police (outgroup) are more likely to engage in conflict against police than individuals who perceived police action as fair; and 3) individuals who witness the police/fan conflict from an outside perspective (spatially distant) are more likely to engage in conflict against police than fans that witness the police/fan conflict from an inside perspective (spatially near). The aim of Study 1 was to investigate the main effects as well as the interaction effects of the three independent variables (identity, fairness and spatial perspective) on attitudes and behavioral tendencies to engage in violent behaviour towards police.

Method

Sample and Procedure

The sample consisted of 199 University of Fort Hare students. The experiment was based on a 2 (fairness versus unfairness) x 2 (high identification versus low identification) x 2 (inside perspective versus outside perspective) factorial design. The conditions were manipulated by means of scenarios that involved a cover story in which the participant was asked to place him/herself. They were exposed to scenarios that involved either high or low identification, fair or unfair treatment or inside or outside perspective. The experiment was conducted via the
internet. All students had access to the server and participated in the study by registering with their student numbers. This prevented students from participating more than once.

**Manipulation of identification**

High identification was manipulated using the following information: “You are a passionate soccer fan of the ‘Allstar United’ soccer team. You have supported the Allstars for many years and have since collected many fan items such as t-shirts, scarves and team flags. You are such a diehard fan that you never miss a single match, in fact, you have a season ticket for all home games and will do almost anything to get tickets for the away matches, no matter where they may be”. Low identification was manipulated using the following information: “You very much enjoy soccer, and consider yourself a good fan of the Red Ranger soccer team. You entered into a competition at the University of Fort Hare (E.L) which offers a number of prizes to be won in a raffle. One of the prizes is a trip to see a soccer team called ‘Allstar United’. You have never heard of this team, but your name has been pulled out of the jar and thus you are the winner for the trip which includes a free ticket to the game, including one night’s accommodation and return transport. You decide to go purely because you feel like a short holiday to see a neighbouring country and watch some soccer rather than supporting this specific ‘Allstar United’ soccer team.”

**Manipulation of fairness**

Unfair treatment was manipulated using the following information: “On the train, you watch the match build up on a small television hearing statements from the organisers of the event; you hear them talk about how making sure the fans of the Allstar United soccer team are kept under strict security watch. On the front cover of a newspaper next to you, a headline reads *Police say they are ready to keep the hooligan Allstar United fans under control*”. Fair treatment was
Manipulated using the following information: “On the train, you watch the match build up on a small television hearing statements from the organisers of the event; you hear them talk about how the event looks to be a huge success and that they are looking forward to welcoming the visiting Allstar United fans into the city. A newspaper next to you reads *Police say a good day of soccer ahead.*”

*Manipulation of spatial distance*

Outside perspective was manipulated using the following information: “One of the Allstar United fans catches your attention because he is singing the team song to lift the spirits of the other fans. You are watching from a distance but recognise the song straight away. A policeman grabs hold of the Allstar United fan and shouts at him in an aggressive tone, telling him to behave. The fan seems confused and shrugs away from the policeman saying that he has done nothing wrong, to which a number of policeman begin beating him with batons and arrest him on the spot”. Inside perspective was manipulated using the following information: “One of the Allstar United fans catches your attention because he is singing the team song to lift the spirits of the other fans. You put your arm around him and decide to join in the fun. A policeman grabs hold of the person next to you and shouts at him in an aggressive manner, telling him to behave. The Allstar United fan seems confused and shrugs away from the policeman saying that he has done nothing wrong, to which a number of policeman begin beating him with batons and arrest him on the spot literally right next to you”. 

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In order to increase the salience of the spatial perspective photographs of police/fan conflict were used which either showed both fans and police from a distance (outside perspective) or which showed police close up arresting one fan (inside perspective) (see appendix A).

**Measurements**

**Identification**

Three items were used to check the manipulation of identification: I feel committed to the Allstar United soccer team; I am glad to be an Allstar United soccer fan; and the fact that I am an Allstar United fan is an important part of my identity. The scale used a 6 point Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree) and revealed a Cronbach’s Alpha of .88.

**Attitudes**

Participants were asked to respond to items assessing positive and negative attitudes towards police. Participants were asked to respond to the question “Being in the situation, I perceive the police as ________” (eleven attitude items). Participants responded to a 6 point Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree).

Negative attitudes were measured by the following items: rude, disrespect, arrogant, and condescending. Results showed an alpha coefficient of .80. Positive attitudes were summarized as the following: polite, calm, gentle, kind, peaceful, helpful, and cheerful. Results showed an alpha coefficient of .89.
**Behavioural tendencies**

Participants were asked to respond to items assessing positive and negative behaviours towards police. Participants were asked to respond to the question “Being in the situation, I would engage in ________ because of the police” (nine behaviour items). Participants responded to a 6 point Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree).

Negative behaviours were summarized as the following: punching, throwing, kicking, shouting, stabbing, and running. Results showed an alpha coefficient of .78. Positive behaviours were summarized as the following: singing, cheering, and hugging. Results showed an alpha coefficient of .82.

The scales for negative attitudes and negative behavioural tendencies correlated significantly which each other ($r = .29$, $n = 179$, $p < .001$), and the positive attitudes and positive behavioural tendencies correlated significantly with each other ($r = .31$, $n = 179$, $p < .001$).

**Results**

**Preliminary Analysis**

The successlessness of the manipulation of high or low identification with the soccer team was tested via an analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results showed that participants in the high-identity condition identified stronger ($M = 4.77$, $SD = 1.21$) with the Allstar United fans than participants in the low identity condition ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.48$), $F(1,197) = 42.27$, $p < .001$). These results indicate that the manipulation of identity was successful.
Main Analysis

The hypotheses stated that: 1) individuals who identify higher with other fans (ingroup) are more likely to engage in conflict against police than individuals who that identify lower; 2) individuals who perceive fans (ingroup) as being unfairly treated by police (outgroup) are more likely to engage in conflict against police than individuals who perceived police action as fair; and 3) individuals who witnessed the police/fan conflict from an outside perspective (spatially distant) are more likely to engage in conflict against police than individuals who witnessed the police/fan conflict from an inside perspective (spatially near).

Three-ways ANOVAs (GLMs) were conducted for each dependent variable: positive and negative behaviours toward police; and positive and negative attitudes toward police. Only with respect to the negative behavioural variable were significant effects found. Negative behavioural tendencies towards the police were significantly predicted by the interaction between the independent variables identification and spatial perspective. Participants in the condition of high identification and inside perspective (M = 2.31, SD = 1.05) and participants in the conditions of low identification and outside perspective (M = 2.19, SD = 1.07) showed stronger tendencies for negative behaviour towards the police than participants in the conditions of low identification and inside perspective (M = 1.92, SD = 0.86) and participants in the condition of high identification and outside perspective (M = 1.92, SD = 0.87), $F(4, 158) = 4.59, p < .05$ (see Figure 1).
Figure 1. Interactional effect between Identification and Spatial Perspective (Study 1).

Discussion

The aim of the first study was to test three hypotheses. The first hypothesis stated that individuals who identify higher with other fans (ingroup) are more likely to engage in conflict against police than individuals who identify lower. This hypothesis was not supported by the results since no main effect of identification on attitude or behavioural tendencies was found.

The second hypothesis stated that individuals who perceive police treatment of fans as unfair are more likely to engage in conflict against police than fans that perceived police action as fair. This means that individuals who perceived police action as unfair were more likely to hold negative attitudes towards the police (rude, disrespectful, arrogant, and condescending) and were more likely to engage in negative behaviour (punching, throwing, kicking, shouting, stabbing, and running) towards the police. The results of the experiment did not support this hypothesis as
fairness did not appear to play a significant role in whether participants chose to hold negative attitudes towards police or engage in negative behaviour towards police or not.

The third hypothesis stated that individuals who witness police/fans conflict from the outside perspective (distant) were more likely to engage in negative behaviour towards the police than fans that witness the conflict from the inside perspective (near). Again, since no main affect for spatial perspectives was found, the hypothesis could not be confirmed.

However, the results of the experiment revealed interaction effects between the independent variables identification and spatial perspective, that is, participants in the condition of high identification and inside perspective and participants in the condition of low identification and outside perspective showed stronger tendencies for negative behaviour towards the outgroup (police) relative to participants in the condition of low identification and inside perspective and participants in the condition of high identification and outside perspective.

From the results it can be speculated that perhaps identification mediates the relationship between spatial perspective and conflict. From the first and the third hypotheses of the experiment it was expected that the participants in the condition of high identification and outside perspective would hold the most negative attitudes towards police and thus engage in negative behaviours. However the results indicate that the participants in the condition of high identification and inside perspective showed more negative behaviour tendencies. This could be due to the fact that when people identify highly with the ingroup and they witness police/fan
conflict from a spatially near position, it seems more real to them, and they thus engage in the conflict due to their proximity to it in relation to how they feel about the ingroup.

This reasoning does not seem to apply to participants in the condition of low identification and inside perspective as the results indicate. Even though those fans who identify lower with the ingroup witness police/fan conflict from the inside perspective, their close proximity to it does not compel them to engage in the conflict. This could be due to the fact that low identifiers with the ingroup might be compelled by a need to take care of their own individual safety rather than represent the group. The results also indicate that it is the participants in the condition of low identification and outside perspective that show negative behaviour tendencies. This result could perhaps be explained by the fact that distance may lead individuals to perceive the event as end, namely as a conflict. This perception can be assumed to activate negative stereotypical beliefs about the police which could explain the participant’s reactions.

This interaction between identification and spatial perspective, and the overall influence of spatial perspective created the need for the second experiment. The aim in the second experiment was to try replicating the findings of the first experiment while at the same time controlling for fairness.

**STUDY 2**
The hypotheses in Study 2 are: 1) individuals who identify higher with other fans (ingroup) are more likely to engage in conflict against police than individuals who identify lower; and 2) individuals who witness the police/fan conflict from an outside perspective (spatially distant) are more likely to engage in conflict against police than individuals who witness the police/fan conflict from an inside perspective (spatially near).

**Method**

*Sample and procedure*

The sample consisted of 114 University of Fort Hare East London Campus Psychology first year students. Eighty-five of these participants were female while 23 were male and six did not indicate their gender. The average age of the participants was 26 ranging from 14 years old to 43 years old.

The study used a 2 (high identification vs low identification) x 2 (inside perspective vs outside perspective) factorial design. There were four conditions (high identification outside perspective, high identification inside perspective, low identification outside perspective, low identification inside perspective) and these were manipulated using the same scenarios as in Study 1. The only difference was that different names were used for the soccer teams in Study 2. Identification and perspective were manipulated in the same way as in Study 1, with the addition of sketches of each scenario included to increase the salience of the perspective (see Appendix B). Unlike in Study 1, in Study 2 fairness was not included as an independent variable and thus had to be controlled.
Measurements

Identification

In this experiment identification was assessed with the same items used as in Study 1. The three items revealed a Cronbach’s alpha of .92. Since fairness was controlled in the second experiment we asked participants to assess the police’s action on four items on a six point Likert scale (from 1 strongly disagree to 6 strongly agree). The items were as follows:”Being in the situation described I would describe the police actions as being fair, as being justified, as being reasonable, or as being level-headed”. The four items showed a very good inter-item consistency with a Cronbach’s alpha of .80.

Dependent variables

Positive and negative attitudes (alpha=.74 and alpha=.66, respectively) as well as positive and negative behavioural tendencies (alpha=.70 and alpha=.71, respectively) were assessed in the same way as in Study 1.

Results
**Preliminary Analysis**

In order to test the manipulation for identification an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, which indicated significant differences, $F(1, 111) = 21.27$, $p < .001$. Participants in the high-identity condition ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 1.69$) identified significantly stronger with the Silver Rovers fans than participants in the low identity condition ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.37$). This means that the manipulation of identity was successful. Since fairness was not included as an independent variable in the second experiment, it was necessary to control whether participants in all four conditions perceived the situation as equally fair/unfair. In order to test the control for fairness an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted which indicated no significant differences among the four experimental conditions, $F(3,109) = 0.21$, $p = .889$. That means that the participants in the different experimental conditions perceived the situation as equally fair/unfair.

**Main analysis**

The hypotheses of Study 2 stated that: 1) individuals who identify higher with other fans (ingroup) are more likely to engage in conflict against police than individuals who identify lower; and 2) individuals who witness the police/fan conflict from an outside perspective (spatially distant) are more likely to engage in conflict against police than individuals who witness the police/fan conflict from an inside perspective (spatially near).

Three-ways ANOVAs (GLMs) were conducted for each dependent variable: positive and negative behavioural tendencies toward police and positive and negative attitudes toward police.
In the second study (although marginal) significant effects were found for positive attitudes and for positive and negative behavioural tendencies. Positive attitude was significantly predicted by identification (main effect) with the soccer fans, $F(1,110) = 4.48, p < .05$, in that participants in the low-identity condition showed significantly more positive attitudes towards police ($M = 2.87, \text{SD} = 2.0$) than participants in the high-identity condition ($M = 2.25, \text{SD} = 0.93$), which is in line with hypothesis 1. Positive behavioural tendencies (see Figure 2) were also predicted by identification (although marginal), $F(1, 104) = 3.16, p = .08$, in that participants in the high-identity condition ($M = 2.39, \text{SD} = 1.31$) indicated more positive behavioural tendencies than participants in the low-identity condition ($M = 2.03, \text{SD} = 0.79$), which contradicts hypothesis 1.

No empirical support was found for hypothesis 2, which stated a main effect of spatial perspective on attitudes and behaviour. However, negative behavioural tendencies were predicted (although marginal) by the interaction between identification and spatial perspective, $F(1,104) = 3.14, \ p = .07$, in that participants in the condition of high identification and inside perspective ($M = 3.40, \text{SD} = 1.53$) showed stronger tendencies for negative behaviour towards the police than participants in the conditions of low identification and inside perspective ($M = 2.60, \text{SD} = .91$). This result replicates our result from Study 1. Contrary to Study 1, the effect of the interaction between low identification and outside perspective did not play a role in the second study (Figure 3).
Figure 2. High identification showing positive behavioural tendencies (Study 2).

Figure 3. Influence of the interaction between identification and spatial perspective (Study 2).

Discussion
Unlike in Study 1, in Study 2 significant effects were found for positive attitudes. The results indicate that positive attitudes were significantly predicted by identification (main effect) with the soccer fans in that participants in the low-identity condition showed significantly more positive attitudes towards police. This result supports the first hypothesis which stated that fans that identify higher with other fans (ingroup) are more likely to engage in conflict against police than fans that identify lower (inversely stated this means that fans who identified lower are more likely to show positive behavioural tendencies towards police). Positive behavioural tendencies were also predicted by identification (although marginal), in that participants in the high-identity condition indicated more positive behavioural tendencies than participants in the low-identity condition. This last result is in contradiction to hypothesis 1.

The second hypothesis of Study 2 stated that fans that witnessed the police/fan conflict from an outside perspective (spatially distant) are more likely to engage in conflict against police than fans that witnessed the police/fan conflict from an inside perspective (spatially near). As in Study 1, in Study 2, there was no empirical support for this result as spatial perspective had no main effect on the variables of attitude and behaviour of fans.

However, just as in Study 1, in Study 2, negative behavioural tendencies were predicted (although marginally) by the interaction between identification and spatial perspective. Participants in the condition of high identification and inside perspective showed stronger tendencies for negative behaviour towards the police than participants in the conditions of low identification and inside perspective. But unlike Study 1, the effect of the interaction between low identification and outside perspective did not play a role in Study 2.
GENERAL DISCUSSION

Two experimental studies were reported that aimed to contribute to the understanding of the effects of intergroup perceptions of fairness, ingroup identification and spatial dimensions on individuals’ intentions to participate in violence against the police in situations of police/fan context. The results of the two studies suggest the following general conclusions: first, direct effects were less found than interaction effects, second, interaction effects were found between ingroup identification and spatial dimension and finally, the factor of perception of fairness seems to be less important relative to the factors of ingroup identification (e.g. identification with fans) and spatial perspective.

The interaction between identification and spatial perspective was probably the most significant finding of the research project. In Study 1 the results indicated that participants in the condition of high ingroup identification and inside perspective and participants in the condition of low ingroup identification and outside perspective showed stronger tendencies for negative behavioural tendencies towards the outgroup (police) relative to participants in the condition of low ingroup identification and inside perspective and participants in the condition of high ingroup identification and outside perspective. In Study 2 this finding was replicated in regards to the participants in the condition of high ingroup identification and inside perspective but not in the condition of low ingroup identification and outside perspective.
It was somewhat expected that high identification would have an impact on participants’ decision to engage in negative behaviour and hold negative attitudes towards police. The influence of ingroup identification can be understood from a social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and self-categorization perspective (Turner et al, 1987). According to social identity theory, participants in the condition of high identification and inside perspective engaged in conflict against police because their group membership (social identity) was more salient than their personal identity. When participants identify with soccer fans of a particular soccer team their ingroup identification increases and exposure to an outgroup (police) in a close space leads to social comparison, which also increases ingroup identification. This therefore suggests that individuals who identify with fans will see police as a direct threat in the context of police/fan conflict. This finding was in line with social identity theory as well as the descriptive studies that this research followed from Stott and colleagues (Stott & Reicher, 1998a; Stott & Reicher, 1998b; Stott, Hutchison & Drury, 2001; Stott, 2003; Stott & Adang, 2004).

An important part of self-categorization theory that relates to the analysis of interpersonal similarities and differences of the people involved, is the group prototype, which is a mental image of the kind of person who embodies whatever qualities make members of the ingroup distinctive (in positive ways) from outgroup members (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; 2004; Moreland, 2006). This prototype, which can be found in the mind of every group member, plays a role in all group phenomena (Moreland, 2006). According to Hogg (1992, as cited by Moreland, 2006), group cohesion reflects warm feelings among group members that depend not on their personal qualities, but on their resemblance to the group prototype. The emergence and effectiveness of leaders also depends on their similarity to the group’s prototype (Hogg, as cited...
by Moreland, 2004). This means that the behavior of an individual considered as being the
typical fan of a particular soccer team is likely to influence the behavior of other fans, as well as
of the group as a whole. The behavior of the typical fan can be seen as the normative behavior
for that specific social category, and has implications for when and why fans engage in negative
behavior towards police (Moreland, 2006). If a typical fan engages in negative behavior against
police it could lead to other fans identifying higher with the ingroup and thus increasing the
likelihood of them engaging in conflict against police (Moreland, 2006).

It was surprising then to find that participants classified as low identifiers showed significant
negative behavioural tendencies towards police – albeit in relation to the outside perspective
(Study 1). The role of the outside perspective itself was not surprising as in the research of Fujita
et al. (2006) it was found that participants preferred to identify actions as ends rather than as
means to a greater extent when these actions occurred at a spatially distant, as opposed to a near
location. This suggests that individuals witnessing police/fan conflict from a spatially distant
position (outside perspective) are more likely to see it as a classic conflict involving two distinct
groups.

These participants could have chosen to engage in conflict against the police due to the fact that
like fans (high identifiers) they are there to watch a soccer match which increases their identity to
fans, or they may have negative stereotypes about police which may be activated by their outside
perspective which makes them see two distinct groups and then identify with one of them.
In the present studies the role of perceptions of fairness did not play as significant role as assumed. It was assumed (Study 1) that fans that perceived police actions against fans as unfair were more likely to hold negative attitudes and engage in negative behavior towards police, but this was not confirmed by the results. In the descriptive studies (Stott & Reicher, 1998a; Stott & Reicher, 1998b; Stott, Hutchison & Drury, 2001; Stott, 2003; Stott & Adang, 2004) that this research followed from it was argued that the defining dimensions of social identity allow us to understand and explain collective action and the extent of participation of individuals during a crowd event. The defining dimensions of social identity were not just based on how fans see themselves but also on how they perceive to be treated by the other groups, such as police, media or rival fans, which make up the contexts they act in.

It is very possible that in the above mentioned descriptive studies perceptions of un/fair treatment were used as post hoc explanations. Participants’ explanations about how they were treated by police, media and locals in host towns during major soccer events almost always came after an event involving police/fan conflict had occurred. One wonders how these same fans would have perceived their treatment had these police/fan events not occurred. However, since Study 1 did not control for the effectiveness of the fairness manipulation the given explanation also represents a post-hoc explanation.

Another limitation of the present research refers to the fact that Study 1 was conducted via the Internet, while Study 2 was conducted as a paper-pencil experiment. The Internet research
limited the randomness of the experiment. The nature of Internet research (Study 1) therefore has implications for the validity of the results and also limits the generalization of the results.

Nevertheless, the results of the present studies provide practical implication in terms of the 2010 Soccer World Cup, in that they highlight some important factors that event organisers need to consider in their plans to regulate and control crowd behaviour and in their policing strategies. Firstly, organisers need to be aware of the dangers of police in stadiums assuming crowds to be inherently dangerous and also treating all members of a crowd homogenously. Police need to be aware of how their own presence, the perceptions they hold about the crowd and their subsequent actions they engage in all influence how the crowd will behave, and especially how individual crowd members will behave in relation to the outgroup.

Secondly, police need to be aware that their presence as a distinct social group separate from the fans or spectators can have the effect of increasing how much individuals identify with other fans. The way the police arrange themselves around the stadiums, for example whether it is in small spread groups or one visible continuous line, will make their social group distinct and have the impact of polarising fans or spectators into another distinct group. Maximising the similarities and minimising the differences within the police social category and also minimising the similarities and maximising the differences between the police social group and the fan social group can have the impact of increasing ingroup identification.
Thirdly, police at stadiums during the 2010 Soccer World Cup need to be aware of the group prototype or typical fan, whose behaviour is seen as normative. The behaviour of the typical fan can increase ingroup identification in the context of a crowd. Police need to be able to identify those individuals who could be described as the typical fan, so that they can know how to handle them in a way that will not lead to conflict or an escalation of violence. Basically the findings of the present research help to highlight the important role of police themselves in preventing the escalation of violence.
REFERENCES


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Appendix A

Outside Perspective

Inside Perspective
Appendix B

○ FANS
× YOU
○ POLICE

INSIDE PERSPECTIVE
OUTSIDE PERSPECTIVE