

INSTITUT D'ÉTUDES
AVANCÉES DE PARIS

Conference

Collective Emotions

Thursday, 14 and Friday, 15 April 2016
from 9AM to 6PM

Organized by **Guillaume Dezacache** (Universities of Neuchâtel and Portsmouth), **Julie Grèzes** (Ecole Normale Supérieure of Paris), and **Gretty Mirdal**, director of the Paris IAS, with the support of the Department of Cognitive studies (ENS) and the École des Neurosciences de Paris Île-de-France.



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Presentation

Since the writings of the first social psychologists and sociologists of the 20th century, collective behavior has continuously been perceived as a fundamental threat to social and political order. When immersed in large groups, individuals are thought to lose any capacity of self-evaluation and to show anti-social behavior. In crowds, the increased sensitivity to others' emotions – whose power of contagion was long thought to be as intense as that of infectious diseases – is supposed to turn a reunion of perfectly rational humans into a group of violent rioters. Furthermore, the primordial role of mass movements during the era of totalitarianisms has, without any doubt, reinforced the idea that collective emotions are essentially harmful, for both individuals and communities.

Recent collective movements, such as Occupy Wall Street or the Arab Springs, have however shed light on a different aspect of collective behavior. Rather than being deleterious in essence, emotional collective movements are above all sources and mechanisms of social changes. They may also constitute a fundamental step in the process of community resilience, as seen in the spontaneous mass demonstrations organized in Paris following the attacks in Paris in 2015. The idea that the collective is a source of both individual and collective achievement is at the heart of the modern social psychology of crowd behavior.

This essential tension at the heart of collective behavior – a source of both individual and collective achievements but also a factor of potential escalation of violence and conflict, in particular towards the out-group – is still persistent in contemporary debates. Mass movements are once again becoming major political actors, and the development of new information technologies (such as the online social networks) has largely increased the communities' reactivity and ability to mobilize. It thus appears urgent to call for a scientific meeting on the topic of collective emotions, their causes and consequences for both individuals and communities, and their very dynamics, in the past as well as nowadays, in the digital era.

Seven fundamental themes will be explored: (1) what does it mean for emotions to be collective rather than individual?; (2) how has collective behavior classically been perceived since the nineteenth century?; (3) what role do emotions play in the emergence and consolidation of mass political movements?; (4) how is group behavior structured and sustained?; (5) what are the individual and collective psychological consequences of the participation to emotional collective movements?; (6) how can political institutions react to and cope with mass movements (collective and individual responsibility)?; (7) finally, what role do online social networks play in the mobilization of the masses?

Program

Thursday, 14 April

09h00 Participants welcome

09h30 Introduction

Gretty Mirdal (IEA Paris) & **Guillaume Dezeache** (Universities of Neuchâtel and Portsmouth)

Session 1: When emotions become collective

Chair: Elisabeth Pacherie (IJN - Paris)

9h45 **Mikko Salmela** (University of Helsinki)
What are collective emotions? Philosophical perspectives

10h30 **Bernard Rimé** (University of Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium)
Psychosocial Effects of Collective Emotional Gatherings

11h15 Coffee break

Session 2: Collective behavior: social and historical representations

Chair: Laura Spinney (Paris)

11h30 **Robert Tombs** (University of Cambridge)
Imagining the Worst: the black legend of collective revolt in the 19th century France, c.1840 - 1895

12h15 **Simon Wessely** (Psychiatrist, King's College London)
TBA

13h00 Lunch break

Session 3: Mass gatherings: emergence, dynamics and social control

Chair: Gloria Origgi (IJN - Paris)

14h00 **Laurence Kaufmann** (University of Lausanne / Institute Marcel Mauss, EHESS)
From Social Emotions to Collective Emotions: Public Events as Emotional Tests

14h45 **Paolo Gerbaudo** (King's College London)
Digital enthusiasm and the formation of online crowds

15h30 Coffee break

15h45 **Steve Reicher** (University of St Andrews)
A social identity model of cognition, emotion and action in crowds

16h30 **Clifford Stott** (University of Leeds), **John Drury** (University of Sussex) & **Steve Reicher** (University of St Andrews)
On the role of a social identity analysis in articulating structure and collective action: the 2011 riots in Tottenham and Hackney

Friday, 15 April

Session 4: The social psychology of social emotions

Chair: Gavin Brent Sullivan (Coventry University)

9h00 **John Drury** (University of Sussex) & **L. Verlander, S. Reicher, C. Stott**
Beyond «contagion»? Social identification as boundary condition and mechanism in involuntary influence of aggression

9h45 **Christian von Scheve** (Freie Universität Berlin)
Understanding Collective Emotions: Theory and Related Evidence

10h30 **Guillaume Dezacache** (Universities of Neuchâtel and Portsmouth)
Individual and collective reactions to threat during the attacks in Paris (13-11-2015)

11h15 Coffee break

Session 5: The cognitive neuroscience of social emotions: pleasure, fear and anxiety

Chair: Etienne Koechlin (LNC - Paris)

11h30 **Morten Kringelbach** (Universities of Oxford and Århus / Paris IAS)
Empathy in music and dance: the role of pleasure and emotion

12h15 **Julie Grèzes** (INSERM U960 - Ecole Normale Supérieure of Paris), **Marwa El Zein** (LNC, ENS), **Emma Vilarem** (LNC, ENS) and **Guillaume Dezacache** (Universities of Neuchâtel and Portsmouth)

The social function of emotional displays of fear and anger

13h00 Lunch break

Session 6: Modelling collective behavior

Chair: Guillaume Dezacache (Universities of Neuchâtel and Portsmouth)

14h00 **Daniel C. Richardson & Jorina von Zimmerman** (Department of Experimental Psychology, University College London)
The Hive: Experimenting with the Group Mind

15h00 **Gavin Brent Sullivan** (Coventry University)
Collective emotions: conceptual and empirical issues exemplified by collective pride research

15h45 Coffee break

Session 7: Far from the madding crowd: the psychology and neuroscience of exclusion and social pain

Chair: Julie Grèzes (INSERM U960 - Ecole Normale Supérieure of Paris)

16h00 **Philippe Fossati & Anna Fall** (ICM Paris)
Behavioral and emotional consequences of social exclusion in Human and rats

17h00 Concluding remarks and final discussion

Abstracts

Session 1: When emotions become collective

Mikko Salmela (University of Helsinki)

What are collective emotions? Philosophical perspectives

While empirical researchers are interested in the processes and mechanisms that contribute to the collectivization of emotions, philosophers have focused on the question of what makes emotions collective in the first place. In this presentation, I first discuss analytic, phenomenological, and computational accounts of collective emotions. Then I suggest that we should not understand the collectivity of emotions as an on/off question but rather as a continuum that allows for weaker and stronger forms of collective emotions in terms of their two main dimensions, evaluative content and affective experience. Finally, I argue that collective emotions of different kinds have importantly dissimilar functions in social groups.

Bernard Rimé (University of Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium)

Psychosocial Effects of Collective Emotional Gatherings

In a classic theory, Durkheim (1912) predicted that due to the social sharing of emotion they generate, collective gatherings bring participants to a stage of collective effervescence in which they experience a sense of union with others and a feeling of empowerment accompanied by positive affect. This would lead them to leave the collective situation with a renewed sense of confidence in life and in social

institutions. A century after Durkheim's predictions of these effects, though, they remained untested as a whole. This presentation will discuss the results of several recent studies we conducted on positively valenced as well as negatively valenced collective situations. They confirmed that collective gatherings consistently strengthened collective identity, identity fusion with the group and social integration, as well as enhancing personal and collective self-esteem and efficacy, positive affect, and positive social beliefs among participants. In line with a central tenet of the theory, emotional communion or perceived emotional synchrony with others mediated these effects.

Session 2: Collective behavior: social and historical representations

Robert Tombs (University of Cambridge)

Imagining the Worst: the black legend of collective revolt in the 19th century France, c.1840 - 1895

Across the whole of the long nineteenth century, from the French Revolution until the *fin de siècle* and beyond, a range of observers - sociologists, psychologists, politicians, journalists, policemen, novelists - were fascinated and usually frightened by collective violence. Their visions were based on real, sometimes personal, experiences of unpredictable, spontaneous, and leaderless collective violence. An examination of the evidence might show that the typical collective act was politically motivated, rational, usually a response to actions by the authorities, and mostly carried out by settled and

respectable men with jobs and families. But contemporaries - especially but not only conservatives - could not or would not see this: so they ascribed collective action to irrational impulse. If they approved of it, it was a glorious action by 'the People'; if they disapproved, it was 'the Mob' - bestial, vicious, degenerate, drunken, criminal, destructive and pathological. Bloody repression followed by mass transportation was repeatedly used. But what finally tamed 'the mob' - or 'the people' - was not massacre, but schools, regular wages, democracy, trade unions, cheaper goods, and perhaps even spectator sport.

Session 3: Mass gatherings: emergence, dynamics and social control

Laurence Kaufmann (University of Lausanne / Institute Marcel Mauss, EHESS)
From Social Emotions to Collective Emotions: Public Events as Emotional Tests

From an analytical point of view, the social shaping of emotions intervenes on several levels. It intervenes on a phenomenological level, that of the self-labeling that helps identifying the vague flow of sensations and feelings as the normal, typical exemplar of a « registered » state of mind (e.g. anger, indignation, disgust, shame, etc.). Those proximal and phenomenal properties, which refer to « what it is like » to feel such or such emotion, are linked to the semantic, distal properties of emotional concepts. Whereas some emotional concepts are culturally « hypercognized », such as shame in Japanese culture, others emotions, such as regret in American culture, are « hypocognized » and virtually ignored to the point of disappearing from the collective mindscape. But the social

shaping of emotions also intervenes on the « dramaturgical » level of their public expression: social actors adjust their public behavior and their emotional experience to the emotions expected within a given situation (sadness at a funeral, joy at a party, etc.). Last but not least, the social shaping of emotions intervenes on a pragmatic level in two main ways. First, the expression of a given emotion in an on-going sequence of interactions shapes subsequent actions and modifies the discursive status of their addressees. Second, the public expression of emotions responds to felicity conditions that establish which event or behavior counts as a justified object of emotion (an adult who claims to suffer because he cannot have candies will be considered as a misfit) and which individual has the right to feel which emotion (a journalist is not supposed to get emotional when he presents news reports). After unfolding the different ways in which emotions can be said to be social, this presentation will pinpoint in which ways and at which level those social emotions can be deemed collective. Collective emotions have a self-referential component: they involve the feeling, the knowledge or the belief of their sharedness, actual or potential. This feeling of sharedness is particularly important in situations where a group of individuals face a public event, whether it be unexpected (earthquake, terrorist attack, flashmob) or ritual (religious, political or cultural). With respect to the different levels mentioned earlier, we will argue that emotions elicited by those public events are collective from a phenomenological and pragmatic standpoint but not from a semantic or dramaturgical point of view. Collective emotions, indeed, suppose and call for the existence of a collective « subject » - a

subject whose features differ, however, in function of the kind of emotions at stake. As will be argued in guise of conclusion, collectives called for by emotions of indignation, for instance, are not the same as those called for by disgust, fear or resentment.

Paolo Gerbaudo (King's College London)

Digital enthusiasm and the formation of online crowds

Social media have often been described as the space of operation of online 'crowds', human gatherings that differently from the physical crowds forming in public space, have their space of crowding in the digital spaces of online communication. These crowds signalled by spikes in user engagement have been the protagonists of recent protest movements, from the indignados in Spain, to the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street. In this paper I will discuss the different processes involved in the formation and maintenance of online crowds. I will argue that they are the product of moments of collective enthusiasm in which the attention of thousands of people gets focused on specific events, and issues, sometimes leading to the formation of critical masses that are then in turn able to attract more participants. Online crowds have been extremely powerful in fuelling protest mobilisations, however, they have also suffered from a common tendency towards evanescence that raises important questions of political sustainability.

Steve Reicher (University of St Andrews)

A social identity model of cognition, emotion and action in crowds

In this talk I shall first criticise classic crowd psychology based on the notion that identity is lost in the crowd. Instead I shall argue that psychological crowds involve a shift from personal to social identity. Next, I shall examine three psychological transformations that occur when crowd members have shared social identities. The first is a cognitive transformation whereby people begin to perceive, evaluate and act in the world on the basis of collective norms, beliefs and interests. The second is a relational transformation, whereby people shift towards greater intimacy, trust and support towards fellow members and are thereby better able to act together effectively. Together, a shared set of perceptions and objectives combined with a greater ability to act together in pursuit of those goals empowers crowd members and makes them better able to enact their norms/beliefs/interests. Such 'collective self realisation' is the basis of the third transformation: an emotional transformation. Drawing on a range of evidence, I shall show how the passions of crowds derive from their ability to enact their identities and that therefore collective emotion is complementary (rather than contradictory) to collective rationality.

Clifford Stott (University of Leeds), **John Drury** (University of Sussex) & **Steve Reicher** (University of St Andrews)

On the role of a social identity analysis in articulating structure and collective action: the 2011 riots in Tottenham and Hackney

In August 2011 'riots' swept across England to a scale and intensity not witnessed for over thirty years. These riots were characterised by the collective expression of anger, aggression and violence. Sociological

explanations of these events give primacy to ideological or structural factors but such perspectives are limited by their inability to articulate how such determinants articulate into specific incidents of collective action or how such emotions and actions spread within and between events. This paper addresses this limitation by demonstrating the explanatory power of a social identity perspective, through providing a detailed empirical analysis of two of the riots that took place in England during August 2011. The first of these is the first of the riots, which took place in Tottenham north London, the second in the neighbouring Borough of Hackney some two days later. We discuss the nature of these events and explore the perspectives of participants based upon data drawn from contemporaneous footage and accounts, official reports and media coverage. On this basis we assert that the origins and spread of these riots cannot be adequately understood merely in terms pre-existing social understandings and political realities and that social identity based interactional dynamics were critically important. The paper demonstrates the explanatory power of a social identity perspective for providing a richer and deeper perspective on these complex social phenomena.

Session 4: The social psychology of social emotions

John Drury (University of Sussex) &
L. Verlander, S. Reicher, C. Stott

Beyond «contagion»? Social identification as boundary condition and mechanism in involuntary influence of aggression

An apparent feature of riots is that aggression

can spread relatively easily between people. A dominant explanation for such involuntary influence is contagion theory, which would predict that exposure alone is sufficient for uncritical and indiscriminate influence to occur. By contrast, research on both crowd behaviour and on emotional transmission suggests group boundaries to influence, since social identity is the mechanism of influence. We tested these competing hypotheses in an experiment in which participants (n = 75) were exposed to an aggressive crowd noise in three conditions: ingroup in relation to the crowd, outgroup in relation to the crowd, or no groups. On both explicit and reaction-time (IAT) measures, those in the outgroup condition were most likely to reject aggression. Further in line with the social identity hypothesis, and against the contagion hypothesis, self-relevance of source was found to mediate this effect, and identity strength was found to moderate it.

Christian von Scheve (Freie Universität Berlin)

Understanding Collective Emotions: Theory and Related Evidence

Collective emotions are essential to social groups and societies and become obvious in mass gatherings, riots, and responses to widely salient events. However, they remain poorly understood and conceptualized in scientific terms, both regarding their elicitation and their individual and social consequences. This talk aims at contributing to a better understanding of the elicitation of collective emotions. To this end, I suggest a working definition of collective emotions as the synchronous convergence in affective responding across potentially many individuals towards a

specific event or object. Based on accounts of the social and cultural constitution of emotion from different disciplines, I seek to provide first steps towards a theory of the elicitation of collective emotions from three main perspectives: face-to-face interaction, knowledge and culture, and social identity. In discussing strengths and shortcomings of these perspectives and by highlighting areas of mutual overlap, I aim at translating these views into a number of bottom-up mechanisms that may explain collective emotion elicitation on the levels of social cognition, expressive behavior, and social practices.

Guillaume Dezecache (Universities of Neuchâtel and Portsmouth)

Individual and collective reactions to threat during the attacks in Paris (13-11-2015)

Individual and collective reactions to threat are largely conceived as individualistic and anti-social: when exposed to threat, humans would revert to self-preservative motives, trying to flee as fast as possible, sometimes at the expense of others' life. However, work based on interviews with survivors from a diversity of disasters has consistently reported that humans do not display self-preservative behaviour when exposed to threat but show a high degree of pro-sociality even when their life is directly at risk. Such results need to be extended: it is not clear how the type of danger people are exposed to can modulate their individual and collective responses to it. Another important issue is the methodology being used in previous studies, which does not allow comparing between different moments of the event. Indeed, it is possible that immediate reactions to threat are self-preservative, with prosocial responses

overcoming individualistic ones later on. In this talk, I would like to present a study we plan to conduct with victims from the recent attacks in Paris (13-11-2015). We will ask them to describe with precision their own actions and others' at different moments of the attacks. We hope this will help clarify the interplay between individualistic and prosocial motives and their temporality during collective exposure to threat.

Session 5: The cognitive neuroscience of social emotions: pleasure, fear and anxiety

Morten Kringelbach (Universities of Oxford and Århus / Paris IAS)

Empathy in music and dance: the role of pleasure and emotion

While pleasure is often thought of as being primarily egoistic, the evidence from neuroscience suggests that the social pleasures are by far the most important. While fundamental pleasures such as food and sex are important for survival, they are enhanced often beyond recognition by the presence of others. Even more striking examples can be found in music and dance, where the collective is a central part of the pleasure experience. I will discuss new insights from the neuroscience of pleasure systems for understanding the importance of the synergy of the collective in emotion and pleasure.

Julie Grèzes (INSERM U960 - Ecole Normale Supérieure of Paris), **Marwa El Zein** (LNC, ENS), **Emma Vilarem** (LNC, ENS) and **Guillaume Dezecache**

(Universities of Neuchâtel and Portsmouth)
The social function of emotional displays of fear and anger

Evolutionary theoretical accounts suggest that emotional displays serve a communicative function, implying that 1) emotional signals have co-evolved with recipient's behavioral responses, 2) the recipient's response should reflect the social function of the perceived expression and 3) the emitted emotional signal should vary as a function of the relevance of the information to the audience. We experimentally address these assumptions in 3 experiments and revealed 1) that threat-signaling emotions are not only encoded in ventral face-selective cortices, but also in action preparation motor cortices at 200 ms following face presentation (El zein et al. 2015); 2) that there is a selective impact of emotional displays on action selection processes: anger elicits avoidance behaviors while fear prompts affiliative approach tendencies (Vilarem et al. in prep); and 3) that, in the presence of a threat, the emitter's facial expression depends on the recipient's access to the threatening information (Dezecache et al. in prep). Altogether, these results indicate that emotional displays promote elaboration of adapted decisions and specific motor actions in oneself and others.

Session 6: Modelling collective behavior

Daniel C. Richardson & Jorina von Zimmermann (Department of Experimental Psychology, University College London)
The Hive: Experimenting with the Group Mind

We will present emerging results and allow

audience members to take part in a new research paradigm: mass participation experiments. Our newly developed tool, called the Hive, allows us to test and study hundreds of people simultaneously using their smart phones or tablets. Each individual moves a dot on their touch screen and everyone's dot is visible on a large central screen. All dot movements are recorded. This way, we can collect responses from a lecture hall full of people with the precision of a laboratory cubicle. Audience members will explore the behaviour and decision making of groups. Together they will have to make difficult choices, report their opinions, or decide to cooperate or compete with each other in public goods games. Our goal is to address a range of theoretical questions with experimental manipulations and computer modelling. Do participants behave as if they were alone, or as a group? If so, do they represent the group as a single entity, or a collection of other agents? What are the dynamics of these behaviours, with learning across many trials? Lastly, what does it feel like to act in concert, or in competition, with a room full of people?

Gavin Brent Sullivan (Coventry University)
Collective emotions: conceptual and empirical issues exemplified by collective pride research

The study of collective emotions raises serious conceptual questions about how to model the causes, consequences and functions of collective emotions such as collective pride. In this presentation, I use theoretical, quantitative and qualitative research on collective pride (drawn from research on megasporting events, social protests, nationalism studies and crowd

behaviour) to explore challenges in modelling connections with collective memory and action. Conceptual issues with collective pride include the need for clarity about top-down and bottom-up mechanisms, contrasting theoretical terms (e.g., collective self-esteem, collective empowerment), similarities and differences between “we-mode” versus “I-mode” and social identity analyses, the meaning of “shared” feelings and role of broad and immediate contexts (e.g., how and when positive or collectively resilient emotions occur in celebrations, competitions, and conflicts along as well as specific features of groups such as policing strategies, crowd management and density). Features of group narrative, ritual practices, collective memory evocation, individual anticipation and social sharing of emotion, shared attention, collective interests and normative commitment are important precursors of collective emotion relative to group goals, social structures and context. The time-course, spreading (online, face-to-face) and coordination with group-based, individual emotions are underexamined features of collective pride and happiness which may depend also on whether the group itself or a subgroup is the primary group agent responsible for a given group action or outcome. In addition, modelling needs to address boundaries and relations between collective emotions such as how collective pride is connected with prejudice against outgroups or competitors and collective arrogance. A further challenge for modelling collective emotions is to understand dynamic occurrences of collective mixed emotions (e.g., quiet pride and defiance, solidarity during memorials) as well as the dynamic consequences of failure in the pursuit of shared goals. Foci

for future research include how to model group agency and emotional «performance», understand the flexibility of group sentiment (e.g., strategic shifts in collective emotion), explore embodied features of crowd behaviour and include coordinated linguistic group acts in a way that addresses genuine issues raised by affect theorists such as how affects “circulate” and “coalesce” on people, places, and objects.

Session 7: Far from the madding crowd: the psychology and neuroscience of exclusion and social pain

Philippe Fossati & Anna Fall (ICM Paris)

Behavioral and emotional consequences of social exclusion in Human and rats

Social exclusion and threat to social acceptance are common life experience and the most environmental risk factors of Major depression in large epidemiological studies. We will describe how social acceptance is an homeostatic state that calls for monitoring and regulation in healthy subjects. According to this proposition, we then suggest that Major depression could result from a global impairment in the set of biological, cognitive, emotional and behavioral responses that regulate and maintain the homeostasis of social acceptance.



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