

Individual to rioter: A theoretical analysis of collective behaviour

How can we understand the influence of collective behaviour on the individual during the Capitol riots?

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Abstract

This study analyses the factors that contributed to the collective behaviour of the mob at the January 6th Capitol riot and which factors were most influential. Previous studies have primarily relied on motive and justification in explaining prevention means and in part the actions of crowds during riots. However, have been unable to provide an in-depth understanding of a crowd's collective behaviour and the process that occurs when individuals are placed in a crowd setting. Data was collected through reports and articles to accumulate information on the event, those involved and relevant theories, these were placed in a coding agenda through deductive content analysis that was followed, throughout the study. The results found that baiting, milling, norms and SIDE were crucial influential factors that contributed to the mob's collective behaviour. Furthermore, the collective behaviour can be deemed as normative for the situation and that in turn collective behaviour contributes to the violence at the Capitol riots.

Keywords: Capitol riots, emergent norm theory, social identity theory, riots, violence, milling, baiting, political violence.

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1. Introduction

On January 6th, 2021 a rally was organised in protest of the vote-counting ceremony after the 2020 U.S. presidential election (Duignan, 2021). The rally amassed to a crowd of thousands including far-right extremists who made their way to the Capitol building having been encouraged to “fight like hell”, though not explicitly to enact violence (Duignan, 2021). The crowd within a matter of moments forcefully pushed through the barricades and entered the Capitol building starting at the western perimeter, not long after another crowd began to break through the eastern perimeter leading to the entire building being surrounded (Duignan, 2021). Once inside the crowd began destroying, vandalising and looting the interior (Duignan, 2021). The police made numerous attempts to try to stop the crowd but were met with violence (Duignan, 2021). Four hours after the crowd entered the building, the building was cleared (Duignan, 2021). The aftermath of January 6th consisted of over 140 injuries to officers and 5 fatalities either as a direct result of their injuries or by suicide (Duignan, 2021). Reports made by the press after the events called the crowd a mob¹ and deemed the event to be a politically charged riot plagued with violence and destruction.

For many years the individual has held a certain level of fascination within sociological studies, in particular the ways in which a person becomes a part of society and builds their individuality. However, the desire to become a part of something has only gained more and more momentum, known also as a need to belong, Roy Baumeister and Mark Leary have described this as “a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and impactful interpersonal relationships” (Forsyth, 2019, pg. 64). The events of January 6th, 2021 were driven by a violent crowd, described as “a crowd attacking, terrorising, or rioting with no consideration for the law or the rights of other people.” (Challenger et.al. 2010, pg. 44). In order to understand collective behaviour, one must understand the type of crowd one is dealing with in regard to the Capitol riots. First, aggressive or hostile crowd (a crowd that becomes threatening and disregards instructions made by officials) (Challenger et.al. 2010, pg. 44). Second, demonstrator crowd and rushing or looting crowd (a crowd in which the main objective is to obtain or steal often with consequences such as property damage, injuries and even fatalities) (Challenger et.al. 2010, pg. 44). Though the latter is a far stretch though this happened one cannot argue that this is the motive that drove the crowd.

Crowds aren't always plagued with violence however once they become emotionally charged, the collective transforms into a mob (Forsyth, 2019, pg. 554). Once these factors become involved the

¹ The crowd at the Capitol riots will therefore be called a mob throughout this study.

individual changes and becomes unable to control their emotions (Forsyth, 2019, pg. 554). This in turn becomes a captivating and influential part of life, the strong desire to be part of a group brings one to venture into territories that as an individual they would frown upon. The general consensus revolves around the idea that the individual transforms when they join a group (Forsyth, 2019, pg. 32). Furthermore, it is argued that even the slightest immersion of individuals into a crowd causes a sufficient amount of change to their moral standings and overall powers of reason (Moran & Waddington, 2016, pg. 2).

From the outside looking in one may deem the journey of individual to group member to be one that is rapid, however on closer inspection one is exposed to a much more complex process. These processes can be both positive and negative. The sense of community and belonging can provide a positive outlook on crowds. However, strong and forceful crowds that enter into violence and destruction cause a more harmful negative attitude towards crowds. With sociologists describing crowds as irrational and without clear motives, leads to these crowds being categorized as criminals and delinquents, and the riots themselves as acts of criminality (Moran & Waddington, 2016, pg. 4). Violence and destruction are often characteristically associated with riots. Riots are however also seen as complex phenomena in which the outbreak of such are undeniably as a result of much deeper issues within societal problems (Moran & Waddington, 2016, pg. 6).

Typically studies of collective behaviour bring forth classical theories of the likes of Gustave Le Bon (1895) and Gabriel Tarde (1892), the latter brings forth the perspective that the crowd being a theory of societal imitation (Borch, 2006, pg. 86). Le Bon's theories are based on the idea that crowd behaviours are pathological and abnormal, the effect on the individual's consciousness disappears and instead is replaced by "savage animal instincts" (Challenger, et.al. 2008). However, while their revolutionary and significant studies do provide an explanation as to what collective behaviour is and what happens to the individuals within a riot, one must question whether there is more than meets the eye. Asking whether more nuanced and modern theories are more beneficial in explaining riots and the process from individual to rioter?

Through dissecting emergent norm theory and social identity theory this thesis aims to understand the events that took place in Washington D.C. at the Capitol building on January 6th, 2021. The aim is further, to analyse how the individuals became involved, therefore the question at hand is: *How can we understand the influence of collective behaviour on the individual during the Capitol riots?*

The research question can be further developed through the specification of mitigating factors that contributed to the Capitol riots and subsequent understanding of the influence on the individuals involved. Violence is characteristically a part of the violent crowd type () and turns a collective into a mob (). Baiting is a concept within emergent norm theory and can be deemed a tactic used to promote violence and anger, therefore violence and baiting are complementing factors that can lead to a better understanding collective behaviour. Milling is also a concept within emergent norm theory, in short it is understood as the defining of the situation, the Capitol riots were unpredictable and unexpected despite the planning and organisation, it is for that matter that milling is being used to explain the process of collective behaviour. Norms is a concept within both emergent norm theory and social identity theory; therefore, one must ask what the significance of norms and the creation of norms is during the Capitol riots and in turn, the significance in relation to collective behaviour. The mitigating factors can be specified through these research questions:

- *What role does violence and baiting play on collective behaviour?*
- *What is the importance of milling within the process of collective behaviour?*
- *How are norms significant?*

2. Previous studies

Throughout the years a number of studies have been carried out in which riots are the subject of interest. In particular studies that have focused on behaviour presented by the individuals within a crowd and to further understand the process in which the individuals form a collective, emotionally and through actions. In this section I will present previous studies that highlight different analyses based on three different types of motives towards riots, first is other studies on the Capitol riots. Secondly, studies that focuses on police brutality, described as one of the key factors behind many riots this being police brutality (Moran & Waddington, 2016, pg. 8). Lastly, a section on earlier studies on political uprisings will be described.

2.1 Capitol riots

The unprecedented events of January 6th, 2021 will be forever documented as a historical moment in political history, the Capitol riots also known as the storming of the Capitol brought forth a level of violence that was unpredictable and chaotic. After the events numerous studies were carried out in which the actions of those involved in both the riots themselves and those accused of antagonising the mob namely Donald Trump has been analysed and dissected. These studies have focused on these

actions in order to understand how a long-standing peaceful transition of presidential power became plagued with violence, destruction and fear.

Researchers analysing the Capitol riots found that the relationship between the leaders and followers was the common denominator when discussing the actions of those that took part in the riots. The leader's role is to instigate actions, influence the crowd and motivate in particular hostile crowds (Paulus & Kenworthy, 2022, pg. 21). The violent and unlawful actions of the crowd was a clear response to Trump's instructions that their actions are in part intended and endorsed by him (Haslam et.al., 2023, pg. 2). The actions of those who took part in the Capitol riots were believed to have been promoted through milling and keynoting. Keynoting is used as a way to reduce any uncertainty about what the appropriate action is in addressing the crisis or problem that the crowd is facing (Samuelsson, 2022, pg.184). Crowd members were just as involved in keynoting and milling as the others through vocalising their participation by chanting (Saumelsson, 2022, pg. 187). Similarly, it is found that the Capitol riots represent a collective action that is a result of co-production of leaders and followers (Haslam et.al. 2023, pg. 2). Leaders seek to build a sense of group membership with a shared identification of goals, and to outline actions necessary for achieving these goals (Haslam et.al. 2023, pg. 2). In turn this leads to the followers understanding and consequently gaining the ability to execute the goals set (Haslam et.al. 2023, pg. 2). The social identity perspective in relation to leadership and crowd behaviour follows the idea, that the leader's effectiveness is dependent on the level to which the leader supports, exemplifies and coordinates in regard to norms, values and goals of the already existing identity that defines the crowd (Paulus & Kenworthy, 2022).

Justification was a mitigating factor that was used to validate the actions taken by the crowd. The crowd invoked the assumption that Trump's wishes were means of justification for their actions (Haslam et.al. 2023, pg. 8). Furthermore, group interaction and communication through keynoting and milling were hypnotic to the crowd members (Samuelsson, 2022, pg.188). The crowd's judgements are formed based on the feasibility and timeliness of taking action towards the Capitol further justified through emergent norm theory (Samuelson, 2022, pg.188). Similarly, *suggestion* is seen as the hypnotic element of a collective mind, meaning that there were a number of outsider influences that caused the crowd to develop a collective mind, influenced by the speakers at the rally and the actions of other members (Paulus & Kenworthy, 2022, pg. 11). In order to move the crowd, the "orator" must abuse the use of violent affirmations in which the 'stop the steal' rally was noted to have been plagued with the use of 'fighting words' (Paulus & Kenworthy, 2022, pg. 23). Another typed of justification is that of moral justification emulated through vocalising the actions to be

taken (Samuelson, 2022, pg. 189). “Stop” was a mantra used numerous times in which it provides direct compelling means towards that type of action (Samuelson, 2022, pg. 189).

Status has been brought forth as a factor that interests many researchers. Two key points within focus theory allowed for a better understanding of the crowd’s actions towards the police (Samuelsson, 2022, pg.192). Firstly, the emergent norm of “stop the steal” caused a change to the expected descriptive norm, when people observed other crowd members using physical violence to surpass the barricades and attack the police (Samuelsson, 2022, pg.192). Secondly, the emergent norm caused the suppression of the proscriptive injunctive norm that attacking police is in the eyes of society is wrong (Samuelson, 2022, pg. 192). Normative social influence is possible in ambiguous situations, whereby actions that are not typical for the crowd become temporarily normative, in the case of the Capitol riots breaking into the Capitol and attacking the police became a normative behaviour (Paulus & Kenworthy, 2022, pg. 12)

2.2 Police Brutality

Riots that have amassed after incidents involving police brutality are unfortunately not new nor is it an isolated incident that is only found in certain countries but rather something that has occurred throughout the years and on many different continents. Police brutality in this context is more of an umbrella term for a much larger concept, police brutality can occur in many different forms including for example brutality aimed at race, gender and sexuality. From the 1980 St Pauls riots in Bristol to the 2020 riots in Minneapolis, riots based on racial police brutality have become more common over the years.

John Drury (2019) a psychologist who specialised in collective behaviour along with other researchers provided a study into the 2011 London riots focusing solely on identifying patterns of collective behaviour within that particular crowd (Drury et.al., 2019, pg. 1-2). The 2011 London riots are also a topic of discussion for Professor Matthew Moran and Professor David Waddington (2016) in particular its relation to the flashpoint framework model of public disorder. The 1980 St Pauls riots are said to have been based on the racial discrimination, in which Stephen David Reicher (1984) professor for the school of psychology and neuroscience specialising in issues involving group behaviour and individual-social relationships discusses in their study the limitations that emerge in the participation in the event and further the limits of crowd action (pg. 1). Senior researcher Ove Sernhede et.al. (2016) discusses collective action in relation to the 2013 Stockholm riots which amassed in protest for the investigation of the police killing of a Portuguese man whereby race became the centre of the argument (pg.149). Further analysis of the Stockholm riots was carried out by associate professor/senior lecturer of political science Markus Holdo and Professor Bo Bengtsson (2019)

in which collective action continues to be a topic of discussion however Holdo and Bengtsson also go in to discussing individual motive for the participation in the riots (pg. 163). These studies were chosen as they give insight into the escalation of violence during riots. However, in particular provided further insight into the way in which shared beliefs and collective behaviour are proven to be defining factors in understanding the motive and reasoning behind an individual's involvement in such events.

Social identity model/approach is at focal point for studies on individuals involved in riots based on police brutality, using it as the main tool in explaining how crowd behaviour can become internalised. The 1980 St Pauls riot is stated to have been moulded by social identity through spontaneous behaviour, the uniformity of this behaviour and social ideology (Reicher, 1984, pg. 18). Social identity model does not reduce social identities but is an interpretation, the crowd then becomes a crucial part of the development of subsequent social ideas (Reicher, 1984, pg. 19). The social identity approach is also used in research on the 2011 London riots finding that it can account for the sequence of events that lead to a shared social identity (cognitive pathway) (Drury et.al., 2019, pg. 10). However, this research also found that social identity model does not always mean a shared social identity but rather can also attest to a perceived vulnerability by a shared 'out-group' (strategic pathway) (Drury et.al., 2019, pg. 10).

Researchers analysing riots which amassed due to police brutality found commonality in regard to the sense of a collective, which was enabled through collective action. The crowd at the London riots in 2011 through the definition of common targets were able to provide the feeling of a collective or "we-ness" through collective action (Drury et.al. 2019, pg. 26). Collective action was also found to be prevalent within the crowd during the 2013 Stockholm riots, in particular the articulation of collective identities separating 'us' from 'others' (Sernhede et.al., 2016, pg. 150). Researchers found that classic crowd theories would not be useful in understanding the behaviour of those during the St. Pauls riot (Reicher, 1984, pg. 17). Instead, the collected concerns provided correspondence in the limits of behaviour and the definition of 'community' from the participants description of themselves (Reicher, 1984, pg. 17).

Injustice is the mitigating factor in regard to motive for riots in retaliation to police brutality. Those who took part in the 2013 Stockholm riots have accounted that their participation was fuelled by injustice, a sense of neglect towards a marginalised community and simply displays of racism from the police (Holdo & Bengtsson, 2019, pg. 172). Similarly, the crowd at the 2011 London riots admitted that their involvement was also due to anger and injustice, for the police killing of Mark

Duggan (cognitive pathway) (Drury et.al., 2019, pg. 26). Further research on the 2011 London riots found that the crowd's sense of injustice and means to venture into violence can be explained through the analysis of the political/ideological level within the framework model of public disorder (Moran & Waddington, 2016, pg. 20). Described as the process of vilification, it is highly influential on the attitudes towards for example the police and governmental agencies (Moran & Waddington, 2016, pg. 20). However, the studies differ in some retrospect as it is found that not all participants during the 2011 London riots used injustice as the only reason for taking part but was due to the feeling of empowerment that riots bring when based on the vulnerability of a common enemy (police) (strategic pathway) (Drury et.al., 2019, pg. 27).

2.3 political uprisings

Political uprisings occur to varying degrees, from small scale strikes to almost weeklong demonstrations. Movements based on politics is not something that is unheard of however the fascination of politically charged uprisings, increase once they become violent. The following study focuses on primarily the use of violence in retaliation to politics, in particular the use of social movements as a gateway to understanding the level of violence as well as the likelihood that violence will become part of the movement. The study does not contain empirical research in terms of interviews with individuals involved in social movements however still provides a perspective in which violence is the focal point. Furthermore, the study highlights perspectives on groups that are plagued with extreme views and their willingness to become involved even with the violent nature of certain social movements, and the impact that it can have on outsiders.

Within social movement research there is a division between relational and environmental, shaped by interactions between different actors and political environments (Jämte et.al., 2023, pg. 1). The difference in these two concerns in simple terms how radicals and moderates relate to political mainstream and the use of conflict-orientated tactics for example political violence (Jämte et.al., 2023, pg. 1). Moreover, one can understand relational as the relation between an actor and others which can affect the emergence of violence (Jämte et.al. 2023, pg. 4). While environmental is understood as the impact of external factors to the movement (Jämte et.al. 2023, pg. 4). It is also found that radicals are distinguished from the moderates by their willingness for a more conflict-orientated protest which at times includes violence and their far-reaching claims (Jämte et.al., 2023, pg. 2). Violence is often linked to radical flank's relation to allies and how the opponents are framed (Jämte et.al., 2023, pg. 3). Finding that the majority of violent events regardless of the involvement of allies target the far-right,

this ties in with relational process between the movement and countermovement and the police in regard to protest issues (Jämte et.al., 2023, pg. 3).

Furthermore, social movements provided a framework to categorise the likelihood of violence during protests into environment, cognitive and relational (Jämte et.al., 2023, pg. 3). The use of violence was for the most part dependent on relational and cognitive factors (Jämte et.al., 2023, pg. 16). Cognitive was found to highlight how impactful aspects such as collective action can be (Jämte et.al., 2023, pg. 4). Collective identity is to some extent a unifying aspect however the use of different tactical choices is dependent on the different protest issues in relation to identity (cognitive) (Jämte et.al., 2023, pg. 16). Moreover, it is dependent on what the group believes to be the social issue that cause the protest (the target, how to bring change, legitimacy of the tactics used) (Jämte et.al., 2023, pg. 16). Violence in protests were more common when the protest concerned specific issues (Jämte et.al., 2023, pg. 16).

2.4 Application of previous studies

Other studies on the Capitol riots have highlighted three reoccurring aspects: the relationship between leaders and followers, the importance of justification of actions and the emergence of norms. The collective action of the Capitol crowd is as a result of co-production between leader and follower, rather than as a result of the relationship between crowd members. Moreover, the leader is viewed as the means of justification for the crowd's actions along with the development of the crowd's norms. Studies on riots that amassed due to police brutality in particular in relation to race, has become a factor that has been the topic of numerous discussions over the recent years. These studies provide insight into the crowd's motives behind partaking in the riots, the factors that become part of the crowd in terms of social identity and how riots based on police brutality give the crowd a sense of collective. Overall, there is a lack of studies on political uprisings. Those that have presented politics in relation to violence have found that social movements are prevailing factors that determine a crowd's willingness to turn to violence. Despite the other studies having some relation to political issues for example in relation to the politics of police, there is still a lack of understanding of political violence and riots that have amassed due to democratic politics. Therefore, this study will provide insight into an individual's behaviour not only when placed in a crowd but also when motive is based on democratic politics and whether a politically charged riot differs from other types of riots.

3. Theories

The theory section will describe in detail the theories that will be used in the analysis of the Capitol riots. The theories were chosen on the basis that they allow for the possibility for a nuanced and different approach to the study of collective behaviour. Furthermore, the theories chosen, go against the traditional theories of collective behaviour which I believe are more suited to the modern-day approach on riots. Emergent norm theory and social identity theory highlight a newer perspective going against the idea that an individual loses themselves through deindividuation when involved in a collective but rather provides the perspective that the individual changes their definition of themselves viewing themselves as part of the group. In order to understand this different approach, one must first understand what is meant by collective behaviour which will be presented first. Norms will be presented second as they are crucial in the main theories used in this study. Then emergent norm theory will be presented in detail followed by social identity theory. Finally, I will present emotional contagion which has a level of importance in understanding the individual.

3.1 Collective behaviour

Episodes of collective behaviour often occur spontaneously and as a result of a shared belief and identity, the spontaneous nature of collective behaviour leads to individuals becoming more volatile and their actions to become unpredictable (Smelser et.al., 2020). Collective behaviour is according to Robert E. Park “the behaviour of individuals under the influence of an impulse that is common and collective, an impulse, in other words, that is the result of social interaction.” (Smelser et.al., 2020, para 3). Park emphasised that the participants share an attitude and behave in similar manners however not as a result of rules or authoritative figures nor is it due to them as individuals having the same attitude but rather because of a distinctive group process (Smelser et.al., 2020, para 3). The volatility of collective behaviour has much to do with the lack of formal rules that establish a distinction between members and outsiders, the identification of leaders and the aims and what is acceptable within the collectivity (Smelser et.al., 2020, para 4). The overall consensus is that collective behaviour does not adhere to everyday rules, in which the emergence of rules and patterns within collectivity is in relation to the surrounding social structure (Smelser et.al., 2020, para 5). According to Ralph H. Turner and Lewis M. Killian collective behaviour is defined through the spontaneous development of norms and organisation which contradict or reinterprets norms and organisation within society, similarly Smelser defines collective behaviour as “mobilization on the basis of a belief which redefines social action” (Smelser et.al., 2020, para 5). Interestingly Smelser draws attention to the unique manner to which members perceives reality, believing that without such a view a group of people would not engage in collective behaviour (Smelser et.al., 2020, para 5).

3.2 Norms

Norms as a concept is often associated with the sociological discipline. Norms are often described as unspoken rules or expectations in regard to behaviour, norms are furthermore viewed as offering social standards that dictate behaviour that is both appropriate and inappropriate, while governing what is and isn't acceptable when interacting with others (WHO, 2009, pg. 4). Norms can be viewed as social and cultural; the perception is that social norms adhere to a given group or community while cultural adheres more so to the cultural influences towards a group (UNICEF, 2021, pg. 1; WHO, 2009). The persistence of both social and cultural norms within a society is often as a result of individuals' preference to conform, due to the fact that others will conform (WHO, 2009, pg. 4). Moreover, there are varying degrees of external and internal pressures to maintain cultural and social norms, namely the threatening nature of being disapproved, punished or simply the feeling of guilt and shame if one was to go against norms (WHO, 2009, pg. 4). Norms are highly influential in nature however any changes in an individuals' attitudes or beliefs can only happen if the norms that surround them become internalised (WHO, 2009, pg. 4). It is important to note that norms can vary, in other words what may be deemed as acceptable for one social group or culture may not be viewed as acceptable to another (WHO, 2009, pg. 4).

3.3 Emergent norm theory

Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian conceptualise emergent norm theory in which the fundamental assumptions of crowd behaviour is that individuals within the crowd may lose self-control. In their understanding it is concluded that the members of such collectives act in ways that are consistent with norms that are conspicuous to the situation at hand (Forsyth, 2019, pg. 570). The crowd forms as a response to the unprecedented events that occur outside of the conforms of any ordinary societal norms (Macchia & Louis, 2016, pg. 91). The crowd in question is not acting in any erratic manner in response to the situation, the crowd is instead following suit set by others in the group. This aspect of emergent norm theory is considered a more unique perspective contrary to the general societal standards, the impact is nonetheless powerful in regard to behaviour (Forsyth, 2019, pg. 570). Furthermore, emergent norm theory goes against the belief that collectives are not uncontrollable or reckless but rather are socially structured groups that go against more traditional social standards, and follow are more temporary or more so group-specific norms (Forsyth, 2019, pg. 571).

Theorists within emergent norm theory discuss such matters or processes in the context of milling. The concept of Milling is understood as the process that leads to impactful crowd behaviour, forming as a response to an event which is outside of the ordinary societal norms (Macchia & Louis, 2016, pg. 91). In other words, milling is the period of time in which the way people move is based on agitation but to some degree aimless (Smelser et.al., 2020). The belief is that leaders or prominent members of the crowd establishes the fundamentals of the crowd's basic formation and consequent actions (Macchia & Louis, 2016, pg. 91). The basis of such presents the idea that certain members behave in such a manner that is expressive/purposeful that only attract attention from others (Macchia & Louis, 2016, pg. 91). One must not discount that there is a contradictory aspect within emergent norm theory in particular the concept of milling, the basis of such is that the escalation and behavioural influence are gradual however there are evidentiary means that prove that this can happen rather rapidly at times (Macchia & Louis, 2016, pg. 91). Moreover, there are evidentiary means that provide proof that even the violent and destructive crowds are to some extent usually based upon group-logic and have some type of purpose (Macchia & Louis, 2016, pg. 91).

Another aspect within emergent norm theory is known as the baiting crowd which is described as a gathering of people in a public setting in which the members torment, tease or goad others (Forsyth, 2019, pg. 570). A notable aspect is that as the crowd begins to increase there is a larger likelihood that baiting will become a normative component in that crowd (Forsyth, 2019, pg. 571). The actions within these crowds, from an outside perspective is seemingly out of control and spontaneous. However, from the crowd members perspective the crowd's behaviour is the norm (Forsyth, 2019, pg. 571). There is more recognition in that crowd behaviour is governed by rules (Macchia & Louis, 2016, pg. 91). The overall understanding in emergent norm theory is that crowd behaviour becomes implicitly normative and furthermore becomes the collective behaviour of the crowd (Macchia & Louis, 2016, pg. 91).

3.4 Social identity theory

The conception of social identity theory was brought forth by Henri Tajfel (1970s) the aim was to gain an understanding of intergroup relations that assumes that the group members in particular their self-concepts and self-esteem is influenced by the group (Hogg, 2016, pg. 6-7). Regardless of group size such group dynamics provide their members with a sense of shared identity that dictates and gauges who they are, what their beliefs should be and the ways in which they should behave (Hogg, 2016, pg. 6). Critically these highlight the self-distinction of 'in-groups' and 'out-groups' (Hogg, 2016, pg. 6).

The idea further follows the perspective which is adamant in the argument that group behaviour is as rational and reasonable as individual behaviour (Drury & Stott, 2015, pg. 66). It is with this approach that one does not lose their individuality but rather goes from identifying themselves through self-categorisation from an individual ('I') to identifying as a member of the group ('we') (Drury & Stott, 2015, pg. 66). The consequences of such processes are that the behaviour of the group members is guided by the norms created by the group. With this understanding there is also a higher level of importance to reach the goals set forth by the group while any individual goal is disregarded (Drury & Stott, 2015, pg. 66). Drury and Stott (2015) discuss that violence in crowds is another possible outcome of collective action however solidarity and prosocial behaviour become less likely (Drury & Stott, 2015, pg. 66).

Social identity model of deindividuation effects (SIDE) is a complementary concept when discussing social identity theory, the idea is the physical presence of other group members causes a level of encouragement to become participatory in the collective action of the group as there is an underlying sense of support on an emotional level (Drury & Stott, 2015, pg. 67). This further acknowledges the shift from the self as being viewed as individual to a group level (Drury & Stott, 2015, pg. 67). Additionally, the argument only gives insight into the amplification of the persons social identity when becoming a member of a group (Forsyth, 2019, pg. 571). Consequentially, such views mean that one adheres to the groups norms and further facilitates to the collective action as normative (Drury & Stott, 2015, pg. 67). Thus, social identity theory does not adhere to the classical theories of deindividuation but rather argues that such transformation leads more so to a depersonalised sense of self that instead is a reflection of group level qualities and norms rather than any individual ones (Forsyth, 2019, pg. 571). Depersonalisation, in accordance with SIDE produces antisocial and aggressive behaviour however this is only possible if the group imposes such behaviour (Hogg, 2016, pg. 11).

3.5 Emotional contagion

Emotional contagion is a concept used for describing how emotions and behaviours are spread between people. It consists of a plethora of components; psychophysical, behavioural and social phenomena, which in turn account to the production of stimuli, in a number of different forms, features, acquired features, mental and/or emotional imagery, this aspect is known as multiply determined (Hatfield, 1993, pg. 4). Emotional contagion is also described as a multilevel phenomenon which is acknowledged as a stimulus arising from one individual, acted upon in the form of perceiving

and interpreting by one or more individuals and in turn leads to corresponding emotion (Hatfield, 1993, pg. 5). In other words, emotional contagion is the process whereby a person or group have influential impact in regard to emotions or the behaviour of another person or group both consciously and subconsciously which consequently affects emotional state and behavioural attitudes (Barsade, 2001, pg. 6).

The subconscious level also called as primitive emotional contagion is described as a rapid, automatic and unintentional. Primitive emotional contagion is further defined as automatically, uncontrollably mimicking or synchronizing facial expressions, body language and actions with those of another or other persons (Hatfield, 1993, pg. 5). The other part of the subconscious a far more complex aspect is what is known as 'self-feedback'. The idea is that there is certain form of feedback on receives when mimicking others' nonverbal behaviours and facial expression. This entails that once an individual or group has mimicked another, there will be a sense of experiencing that emotion itself by thinking one is feeling that emotion based, a sensation solely based on for example muscular responses (Barsade, 2001, pg. 7-8). The conscious level occurs through process within social comparison, individuals and groups watch and compare their affective responses and expression to the others in their environment and will then subsequently respond accordingly (Barsade, 2001, pg. 8).

3.6 Theories in practice

Emergent norm theory suggests that crowds come together as a result of a crisis which forces the individuals to completely abandon any prior knowledge of behaviour that is deemed appropriate for the situation and instead develops new ways of acting, often influenced by other crowd members. There are also discussions on milling and baiting as primary aspects within emergent norm theory that contributes to the development of new norms and the overall collective behaviour of the crowd. Social identity theory provides the members of a crowd with the feeling of having a shared identity, which dictates who they are, their beliefs and the behaviour that is expected. Social identity does not mean that one loses themselves but rather begins to identify themselves as a member of a group rather than an individual. Emergent norm theory and social identity theory can be discussed as separate theories however together can attribute to a better understanding as to what contributes to the collective behaviour of the crowd at the Capitol riots. Both theories will also aid in understanding what influenced the individuals to take part in the riots but in particular violence that made the event so prolific.

Emotional contagion is crucial in studies on social movements as it is applicable to many different situations and crowds, providing a more insightful and detailed account that will in turn lead to a better understanding of the causes of certain situations and overall behaviour of the crowd in particular the behaviour of the individuals involved. Emotional contagion is also a theory that can be used as a complementary aspect when discussing other theories therefore for this study. Emotional contagion will not be used as a separate theory but rather will be used as an additional source in this study to gain a better knowledge and understanding of the individuals involved in the Capitol riots.

4 Method

The method section will provide insight into the formation of this study, looking into the main method used and how this study can be defined. Furthermore, there will be a diagram showcasing the step-by-step procedure of collecting information and categorisation also known as coding of important aspects throughout this study. There will also be information as to the approach of collecting information and data that will aid in answering the research question; *“How can we understand the influence of collective behaviour on the individual during the Capitol riots?”*

4.1 Choice of case

The 2021 Capitol riots were chosen for this case study for numerous reasons. Firstly, the Capitol riots brought forth a new kind of demonstration one which unlike many had violence as the plan from the start, therefore cannot be compared to other riots as violence was planned from the beginning while other riots and demonstrations have escalated to violence throughout the event rather than being planned from the beginning. Secondly, previous riots have been based on social issues or in retaliation, but the Capitol riots was based on a lie, based on a conspiracy theory that the vote was stolen, based on hearsay, whereas other riots that have occurred, have occurred because of a social issue one which is backed by evidentiary means. For example, the Black Lives Matter march happened in retaliation to racial injustice and the death of George Floyd at the hands of the police. Finally, the Capitol riots attacked the heart of the federal government, there wasn't just one target but multiple. Due to the nature of the Capitol riots differing from traditional definitions of riots one can view this particular case as being a case of a politically motivated attack however more so one can argue that this is a case of an attempted coup. A coup can be defined as “the sudden, violent overthrow of an existing government by a small group” (Britannica, 1998).

4.2 Collection of data

Data collection is the most crucial aspect within any study and can be carried out in different ways and at different stages. A total of nine articles were used to collect data on previous studies, the articles were found through google scholar, once an article had been found I read the abstract to get an idea as to the contents and selected those that could provide insight into the Capitol riots from varying perspectives. It was important to not solely rely on online data but rather add variation (Kohlbacher, 2006, pg. 8) therefore, data on theories in terms of definitions and context was collected with the use of four books. As this study is based on a case study a number of sources were needed to compile a sufficient amount of data depicting the event itself and the individuals involved. Using two domains, google and retriever 13 articles, interviews and reports on the Capitol riots were used, they were chosen based on credibility and level of objectiveness. The articles were also chosen based on simply the context and the specificity of certain aspects throughout the events. Furthermore, online encyclopaedia Britannica and newspaper articles for example the Washington post were also used in order to gain more information, including information on events leading up to the Capitol riots and the main groups involved.

When collecting data, it is important to be selective and meticulous in order to make sure that the data is credible, it is also something at times that made the collection of data difficult. Due to the nature of the Capitol riots being political and involving groups with extremist views it was important to overlook any articles involving biased opinions and focus on those that were objective. Objective in this context is defined as not having any involvement of specific political views or general opinions from the authors, meaning that the articles and reports are unbiased. To further make sure that the data is credible it was important to only use articles and reports that came from sources that were of high quality and from well-known databases. The empirical data was not collected through my own qualitative or quantitative means, meaning that I did not carry out my own interviews or surveys to gain information on the groups and other crowd members nor on the Capitol riots themselves. However, that did not mean that I did not have to account for any ethical considerations when collecting data. Anonymity and confidentiality were not aspects that I had to be cautious about as the articles and reports used the names of those involved, names like Donald Trump does not need to be anonymised either for the simple reason that it's a well-known name. Another ethical consideration is that one must not either include personal opinions, therefore one needed to be objective when analysing the data, this was made easier by making sure the sources themselves were also objective.

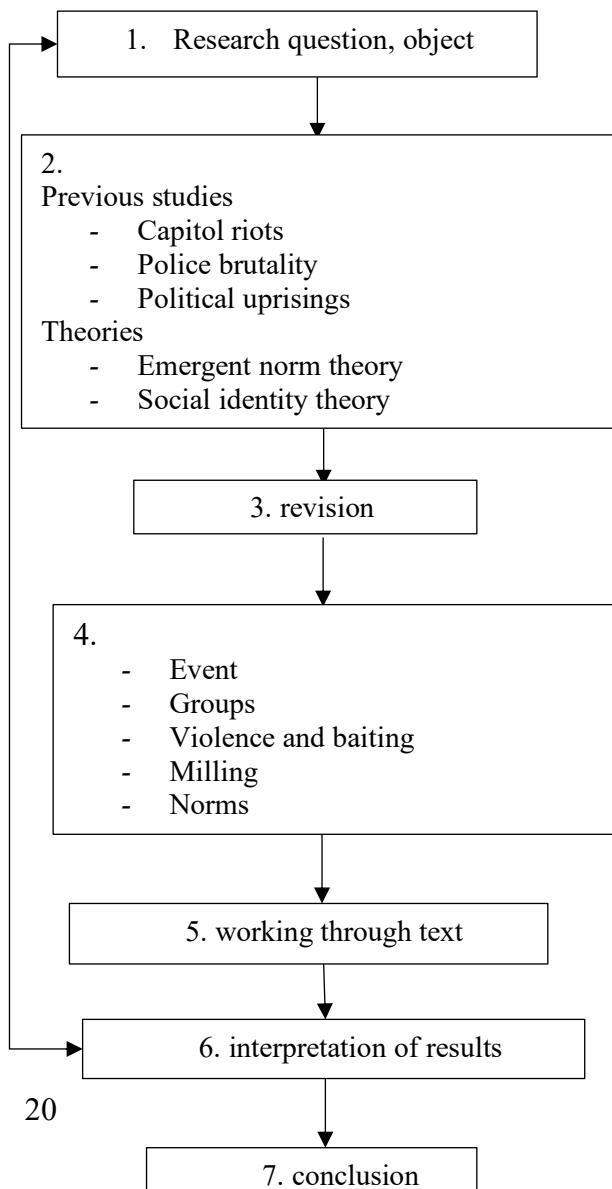
4.3 Case study research and content analysis

In order to analyse the events of January 6th it was important to select a method that would allow for a theoretical analysis, it is therefore that the research design for this study was to be a case study focusing on a case that can be defined as an attempted coup. A case study in its basic form is comprised of a detailed and in-depth study of a case, furthermore it touches upon the complexity and particular nature of that specific case (Bryman, 2018, pg. 96). There is also an importance when conducting a case study to define the type of case study at hand, in terms of what the aim of the study is (Bryman, 2018, pg. 98). The representative or typical case also known as the exemplified case focuses on describing the circumstances and terms that are everyday or normal situation exhibits (Bryman, 2018, pg. 99). This type of case is often selected as means to exemplify a more general category that it is a part of, moreover it represents a broader category of cases or constitutes a suitable context in which the research question can be answered (Bryman, 2018, pg. 99). When carrying out a case study, it is the case in question that brings forth areas of interest, in turn allows for the researcher to make the goal of the case study to highlight the case itself (Bryman, 2018, pg. 97). What makes a case study different from other research design is that the researcher is often interested in bringing insight into the unique aspects within the case, this is also known as the idiographic perspective (Bryman, 2018, pg. 98). The basis of the idiographic approach is that one can gain a better understanding of the social world through first-hand knowledge of the subject matter that is under investigation (Luthans & Davis, 1982, pg. 381). The idiographic approach is representative for the subjective approach to methodology (Luthans & Davis, 1982, pg. 381). Furthermore, it is dependent on data gathering through qualitative means (Luthans & Davis, 1982, pg. 381).

A qualitative content analysis is deemed to be the most appropriate type of method for the analysis and interpretation for case study research (Kohlbacher, 2006, pg. 24). The particular type of content analysis used in this study is what is known as the deductive category application, which is a that is theory testing, in practise, when coding material one explicitly gives definitions, examples and coding rules for each deductive category (Kohlbacher, 2007, pg. 24). Step 1. Research question and objective (Kohlbacher, 2006, pg. 20), it is at this step the objective of the study was chosen, and a preliminary research question was developed. Step 2. Theoretical based definition of the aspects of analysis, main categories, sub-categories (Kohlbacher, 2006, pg. 20), this step involves the collection of data and division of previous studies and theories. During this step I for example used the previous studies to help highlight theories that are not commonly discussed in which the theories for my study were

chosen based on intrigue and the desire to collect a nuanced perspective on collective behaviour. Step 3. Revision of categories and coding agenda (Kohlbacher, 2006, pg. 20). During this step for example the coding agenda was revised and changed numerous times in accordance with changes. Step 4. Theoretical based formulation of definitions, examples and coding rules for the categories (collecting them in a coding agenda) (Kohlbacher, 2006, pg. 20). This is the main part of the deductive category application and most crucial to the study. The coding agenda was based on key themes within the two main theories chosen for this study. The coding agenda was also revised numerous times before being divided into six categories in which the results section will be based on. For example, emergent norm theory discusses baiting and milling therefore both were made into categories within the results. Steps 5, 6 and 7. final working through the texts, interpretation of results and conclusion (Kohlbacher, 2006, pg. 20). These steps were carried out after the revision of the coding agenda, for example step 6. The interpretation of the results was divided into the codes created during step 4. The categories in turn allows one to determine under which circumstances a text can be coded. Each category is then defined and put into a coding agenda (Kohlbacher, 2006, pg. 20) (figure 1)

Figure 1: Source: Kohlbacher, 2006, pg. 20



5. Results

The following section will show the results of the content analysis in particular it will dissect the chosen theories and follow the contents shown in table 1. Furthermore, each article on the Capitol riots will be analysed in detail and used as examples that can be used to explain and understand the theories. One can also through content analysis use previous studies to firstly see how this study differs from other studies on the Capitol riots but also how they are similar and can be used to understand collective behaviour. content analysis overall will be an analysis of the Capitol riots and those involved in relation to theoretical concepts in particular emergent norm theory and social identity theory. The first half of the results will give a more detailed account of the event itself, then continue to give a detailed description of the proud boys and oath keepers who were central to the organisation and subsequent violence that ensued within the Capitol building and finally, a description of the others involved in the Capitol riots. The second half of the results will contain analytical analysis in accordance with the coding agenda; violence and baiting, milling and lastly, norms. The second half aims to answer the sub-questions; *What role does violence and baiting play on collective behaviour? What is the importance of milling within the process of collective behaviour?* and *How are norms significant?* Which will in turn subsequently aid in answering the research question; *How can we understand the influence of collective behaviour on the individual during the Capitol riots?*

5.1 January 6th events

Prior to the events that took place on January 6th, specifically on December 19th former president Donald Trump on numerous occasions on social media encouraged his supporters to attend a rally that would be held on January 6th in protest of the vote-counting ceremony (Duignan, 2021). After Trump's social media presence, a number of websites were created containing information about the rally that would be held on January 6th, as a result 'save America'/'march to save America' and 'stop the steal' began circulating on social media and among far-right extremists (Bump, 2021). The national park service issued a couple of permits however the final one was issued for the rally at freedom plaza in which it was duly noted that no march was authorised, the permit was given to women for America first who were involved in the planning of the rally (Bump, 2021).

A crowd of thousands including right-wing extremists (the proud boys, the oath keepers, the three percenters and QAnon) and paramilitary organisations descended to the freedom plaza to hear speeches made by Trumps personal attorney Rudy Giuliani, Trumps sons and 12 others including, Mo

Brooks, Katrina Pierson and Vernon Jones. Trump himself made a speech reiterating the argumentation of falsehoods and conspiracy theories that the presidential vote was stolen (Duignan, 2021). Around 1pm the crowd made their way to the Capitol building where the joint session involving congress had just convened, the crowd began pushing their way through the fences on the western perimeter of the Capitol grounds, Capitol police were forced to retreat towards the barricades that stood closer to the building (Duignan, 2021). An overwhelming number of people joined the crowd at the Capitol building, violence broke out early on as many of the Capitol police and metropolitan police were beaten with deadly weapons, crushed and trampled by the surging crowd, there were also incidents where some were sprayed with chemical irritants (Duignan, 2021). The crowd had at around 2pm breached the last barrier on the western side and broken through the barricades on the eastern side (Duignan, 2021). Once all barricades were breached the crowd entered the Capitol building, it was at this point around 2.14pm that a messenger screamed “Capitol has been breached. Protesters are now inside the Capitol”, the crowd began shattering windows and for the next few hours vandalized, destroyed and ransacked the building, focusing on the offices of those they deemed to be enemies (Bump, 2021). The crowd set their sights on Mike Pence whom they perceived as a traitor; a claim made also by Trump himself (Duignan, 2021). Some members of congress including house and senate barricade themselves in offices while others managed to evacuate the building, Pence who found himself in the building was evacuated to a secure location (Duignan, 2021). Finally, at around 6pm the Capitol was cleared of rioters (Duignan, 2021). The aftermath of the Capitol riots resulted in 140 injuries to Capitol and metropolitan police officers, one of which succumbed to their injuries while two others committed suicide (Duignan, 2021). As for the crowd there were three deaths, one was shot by police, another was crushed by the stampeding crowd and one died of a heart attack. The Capitol riots caused around \$1.5 million in damage. (Duignan, 2021)

5.2 Groups involved in the Capitol riots

5.2.1. The Proud boys

The proud boys an organisation that pride themselves on their strong ‘western chauvinist’ attitudes and support for then presidential candidate Donald Trump, made their first appearance in an article announcing their creation by former cofounder of VICE media (formally Voice of Montreal), Gavin McInnes in 2016 (Britannica, 2022). McInnes had a strong influence on the magazine’s vulgarity in regard to its humour, its biting tone and continuous rejection of political correctness (Britannica, 2022). In 2008 McInnes’ ties to vice were severed and was now viewed overtly far-right spokesperson (Britannica, 2022). The actual number of members has over the years become less clear however it is

stated that in 2017 there were around 6,000 official members. Data bases have collected information involving the crimes of the proud boys, acts of spontaneous violence are most common within the organisation. Before the Capitol riots the most common type of crime committed was assault (16 members convicted) followed by rioting (10 members convicted) (Jensen & Kane, 2022, pg. 1).

Along with their violent nature the proud boys were often depicted as a neofascist white nationalist organisation, that were plagued with misogynistic and anti-Semitic views and their beliefs in relation to QAnon (Britannica, 2022). The latter in short revolves around a conspiracy theory in which it was believed that Donald Trump was waging a secret war against ‘cabal of satanic cannibalistic paedophiles within Hollywood, the democratic party and the “deep state” within the U.S. government’ (Holoyda, 2023). The proud boys as of today are a designated hate group by the southern poverty law Center and a designated terrorist organisation by the government in Canada and New Zealand (Britannica, 2022).

The election of Trump as president in 2016 caused the proud boys to become encouraged to show their support, organising marches, appeared at rallies, held counterprotests for COVID-19 and the killing of George Floyd (Britannica, 2022). This increased after Trump lost the presidential election in 2020 in which they become co-conspirators of the ‘stop the steal’ rally and were heavily involved in the violence and destruction during the Capitol riots, in which around 100 members were involved (Britannica, 2022; Wendling, 2023).

5.2.2. The Oath Keepers

The oath keepers are described as a far-right American militia group, in which many of its members are police officers/former police officers or have served in the armed forces (Britannica, 2022). The founder himself Stewart Rhodes was a former U.S. Army paratrooper and Yale law graduate with strong views on the second amendment (the right to keep and bear arms) (Britannica, 2022). The group which was founded in 2009 follows a strong worldview which is heavily conspiracy-focused and antigovernmental, the members of the oath keepers view themselves as defenders of the U.S. constitution (Britannica, 2022).

The first major sign of the groups views in relation to conspiracy was after the election of Barack Obama in which many promoted the false notion the Obama was not a natural-born U.S. citizen therefore had no right to be president (Britannica, 2022). Despite their anti-government world view

Rhodes was an extremely vocal supporter of Donald Trump during his candidacy in the presidential election, to which the oath keepers became one of the most prominent ‘patriotic’ groups, acting as security at numerous rallies (Britannica, 2022). The oath keepers believed that statements made by Trump on social media were calls to action, which only intensified when Trump lost the 2020 presidential election (Britannica, 2022). The intentions of the oath keepers at the January 6th rally were made clear in which Rhodes made a statement claiming that armed men were stationed outside of D.C. waiting for orders (Britannica, 2022). The oath keepers became one of the most prominent actors during the Capitol riots, it is believed that around 30-40 members were involved (Wendling, 2022).

5.2.3. The rest

It is estimated that around 10,000 people gathered at the freedom plaza for the ‘stop the steal’ rally, of those 2,000 of those are said to have entered the Capitol building (Lucas, 2022). Less than 10% of those involved were members of the proud boys and the oath keepers, there were also members of other groups such as QAnon that joined in on the Capitol riots. The majority of the suspects had no connection to any existing far-right militias, white nationalist or any other established violent groups (Pape & Ruby, 2021). Court documents have noted in relation to the 300 people charged with crimes in connection to the Capitol riots that 142 had gone there on their own accord and had no ties to any of the groups nor did they have a connection to one another (Williams, 2021). It has been noted that conspiracy theories, personal motivations and varying degrees of extremist narratives is what inspired them to partake (Williams, 2021). The mob was heavily male dominated (women were outnumbered 6 to 1) and ranged from 18-70 years of age, it was also found that a number of those involved had military backgrounds (Williams, 2021). Furthermore, it was found that many were business owners or held white collar jobs such as CEOs, doctors and even lawyers, (Williams, 2021). Though the proud boys and the oath keepers were central players in the Capitol riots many of so called “normal” Trump supports have been deemed just as involved in the riots and subsequent violence.

5.3 Violence and Baiting during the Capitol riots

“The attack on the Capitol was unmistakably an act of political violence, not merely an exercise in vandalism or trespassing amid a disorderly protest that had spiraled out of control.” (Pape & Ruby, 2021)

The Capitol riots were plagued with violence and this violence was by no means discriminatory in regard to violence towards the Capitol building itself but those who have a duty to protect not only the Capitol but the public, numerous officers were injured and beaten with weapons. Violence was already planned from the beginning, *“many of the rioters came with weapons and had openly planned for violence online before they overwhelmed underprepared law enforcement”* (Jalonick et.al. 2022) the report continues to state, *“The failure to sufficiently share and act upon that intelligence jeopardized the lives of the police officers defending the Capitol and everyone in it,”* (Jalonick et.al. 2022). The attitude towards violence and in particular law enforcement at the Capitol riots brings forth an interesting perspective to power relationships. Power according to Max Weber (1947) relates to the ability for an individual or group to get what they want even when facing opposition. Authority is viewed as a key element within power, members of society have been socialised to obey and respect law enforcement (Spencer, 1970). However, the roles were reversed during the Capitol riots when the police lost their power and authority was passed to the mob. Furthermore, in relation to social power theory there are aspects during the Capitol riots that play into rational legal authority though not in the traditional sense. Rational legal authority refers to respect of power due to the acceptance of particular rules and laws, it also occurs within societal hierarchy which we have been socialised to accept and follow (Guzmán, 20007). From the definition one can argue that the relationship between the crowd, the central groups and the key speakers for example Trump depicts a societal hierarchy within the Capitol riots in which the crowd has accepted the rules that were set forth, in terms of Capitol riots, violence for that matter could be deemed a rule due to its pre-meditated nature.

Baiting is a tactic used to instil negative emotions in others, often through teasing, taunting and most importantly goading (Forsyth, 2019, pg. 570). The latter has proven to be a topic of numerous discussions in relation to the Capitol riots, with articles placing the blame on former president Donald Trump *“rioters goaded by the soon-to-be-former president staged an insurrection at the Capitol yesterday...”* (Elliot, 2021). Trumps ability to captivate a crowd shows clear signs of what is known as a charismatic leader. Charisma in this context adheres to a certain quality that an individual possesses, often associated with supernatural, superhuman or some form of exceptional powers or quality that are unattainable by ‘ordinary’ people therefore those that poses this quality are treated as leaders (Tucker, 1968, pg.731). The use of power by a charismatic leader is considered as legitimate or socially approved, it is with legitimate power that one person or even a group can hold and exert over others. Furthermore, legitimacy is crucial in regard to authority and the acceptance of which and the distinction of different types of power, power has the ability to be exerted through force and violence (Spencer, 1970). The Capitol crowd were already supporters of Donald Trump and already recognised

him as their leader, therefore the crowd will feel inclined but also for that matter will subconsciously follow the leader's instructions whether direct or not. It can also be argued that despite the fact that a charismatic leader will be aware of their power, there is still a desire to hold on to that power and develop it further, therefore a leader will actively exert their power over their followers, in the case of the Capitol riots, Trump exerted his power through the act of goading.

From analysing the material, I found evidentiary means that could prove that baiting was not explicitly a tactic used by Trump but one that was instilled in the other speakers at the 'Stop the Steal' rally. The other 12 speakers are said to be just as much to blame and caused the crowd to become riled up, while it can be claimed that not one of the speakers or Trump specifically directed the crowd to the Capitol building the use of language and fighting words are arguably still contributory to the actions of the crowd. Representative Mo Brooks' speech revolved around violence stating, "*start taking down names and kicking ass.*" (Choi, 2021). The use of violence as means of action re-emerged in speeches by Katrina Pierson Trumps former campaign advisor and Amy Kremer chairwoman of women for America first made, "*Americans will stand up for themselves and protect their rights, and they will demand that the politicians that we elect will uphold those rights, or we will go after them. (Pierson)*", "*punch back from Donald Trump. (Kremer)*" (Choi, 2021). Aspects during the Capitol riots depict a high level of authority, however there are elements that can be explained through coercive power. Coercive power exists when an individual or group has to use force to get what they want (French & Raven, 1959). While granted there was no physical force asserted by the speakers there was still forceful use of language which led to the crowd to subsequently also use a level of force. Furthermore, coercive power also uses threats as means to exert power and stimulate an outcome (French & Raven, 1959). The speakers during the 'stop the steal' rally for that matter can be said to have both used threats towards the opposition (for example, congress) but also threats to the crowd in the by saying that the crowd must fight in order to not lose.

Baiting is not about being direct but rather using tactical language that will cause a reaction. Good baiting for lack of better words is most impactful when those of status bring forth arguments that further validate the crowd's beliefs. The act of goading may have started with Trump himself and the other speakers however quickly became part of the crowd. In a video investigation the New York times found evidence that show the proud boys aiding in formatting anger among the members of the crowd (Reneau et.al. 2022). Further, evidence came from the report by congress after the Capitol riots stating, "*As this Court knows, a riot cannot occur without rioters, and each rioter's actions – from the most mundane to the most violent – contributed, directly and indirectly, to the violence and*

destruction of that day.” (Congress Report, 2022). The fact that the crowd also began using baiting as a tactic and also all took part in the violence one could argue that this is an example of charismatic succession, in particular the idea of hereditary charisma (Tucker, 1968). While charismatic succession is often associated with the death of one leader and the need for a new, the Capitol riots bring forth a new perspective, the speakers along with the central groups (the proud boys and oath keepers) have also displayed characteristics associated with a charismatic leader, therefore one can argue that hereditary charisma has occurred and there are a number of charismatic leaders rather than just one.

5.4 Milling

Milling is viewed as an elementary form of collective behaviour, in which prior to most events there is an instance whereby people move about in an agitated but aimless way, and in most situations milling can also mean that one looks for clues to others’ feelings analysing behavioural and emotional changes (Smelser et.al. 2020). Milling is in the simplest terms used in defining the situation. The ‘stop the steal’ rally prior to the siege of the Capitol building is exemplifying the milling process, which can be understood on the basis of the four importance effects of human milling: sensitisation, production, development/interpretation and redefinition.

Firstly, human milling causes the individuals to become sensitised to one another, attention becomes focused on the collectivity and the subject matter or problem at hand (Smelser et.al. 2020). In the case of the Capitol riots reports from those who witnessed the events that unfolded and those who spoke to members of the crowd found that many could not state as to why they were there *“They didn’t know what they were doing. A lot of them didn’t even know where they were going. But they had a message, and the message was, the pitchfork people will show up again, and you need to be afraid of us.”* (Weiner et.al. 2021). Those who were unaware of their actions became blinded by the others in the crowd, the collectivity per say and became enthralled in the message that was being relayed by those who spoke at the rally and the other crowd members. Many shifted their focus from attending the rally as supporters and became actors in the riots focusing solely on the ‘problem’ in this case the resounding belief became that the vote was stolen from Trump.

Secondly, milling has a tendency to produce a common mood among the individuals within the crowd (Smelser et.al. 2020). While seemingly simplistic there is a level of complexity that can be explained through emotional contagion. The process of emotional contagion starts with a stimulus arising from one individual which in turn leads to perception and interpretation by others which subsequently leads to corresponding emotions (Hatfield et.al. 1993). This can be through direct and indirect displays of a

particular emotion, facial expressions and body language of those around have influential means just as much as vocalising the emotions that are felt (Hatfield et.al. 1993). This can be understood further through imitative suggestion, in which by simply witnessing collective emotions, there is a level of encouragement to ‘imitate’ similar if not the same emotions (Baker, 2012). The fact that Donald Trump along with other 12 speakers have admittedly used language that exhibits anger, has led to the Capitol crowd to act in the same manner. Moreover, there is a higher risk of this when involving criminal behaviour, when in a crowd there is a larger likelihood and level of encouragement to become involved in criminal acts that would normal be refrained from when acting as an individual. Crowds are said to be a group of “deviant criminals” who are symptomatic of emotional contagion (Baker, 2012).

Thirdly, milling leads to the development of a common image or interpretation of the situation (Smelser et.al. 2020). This aspect within milling can be related to the use of symbols to convey a message but to also provide concrete representations of the situation. The use of symbol is about association, a crowd wants particular imagery to put associated with a particular organisation or belief. The development of an image or symbol that represents the event and/or the action is developed as means to create a shared definition/idea of the situation. During the Capitol riots every crowd member wore or carried imagery either directly associated with Trump such as flags with “Trump 2020: keep America great”, or directly associated with militia groups such as the roman numeral III or the phrase “don’t tread on me”. Aside from symbols that had direct links to certain organisations there were also imagery that had been derived from other movements in which the Nazi symbol has been re-interpreted (Rosenberg & Tiefenthäler, 2021). Symbols do not necessarily have to be through material means there are also symbols that can be done through hand gestures in which the far-right group proud boys wielded the “OK” gesture that had been adopted due to the fact that it was seen to mimic the letter “W” and “P” for “white power” (Rosenberg & Tiefenthäler, 2021).

Finally, through milling one is setting in motion the process that redefines the rules that govern the behaviour of the crowd (Smelser et.al. 2020). One can argue that this effect of milling is in line with the formation of emergent norms that consequently defines the situation and provides the crowd members with means of justification for collective action (Samuelson, 2022, pg. 182). The use of symbols, the speeches at the rally and the witnessing of other members behaviour have contributed to the development of the rules that determine the “appropriate” action in accordance with the situation.

5.5 The significant role of Norms

Emergent norm theory and social identity theory both bring forth perspectives on norms as crucial characteristics. In the case of these riots emergent norm could draw attention towards how norms are formed by the situation at hand, in this context the situation would be to discuss norms that are associated with a riot and in some retrospect norms that are associated with events that are politically charged. By using social identity theory on the other hand, the analyses of the norms in riots are seen as formed by the particular group, contextually this would be the crowd as a whole but also particular sub-groups; the proud boys and oath keepers that were at the centre of the Capitol riots.

Emergent norms are based on the belief that non-traditional behaviour that which is often associated with collective action (see 5.6) is as a result of crowds exhibiting new behavioural norms in response to a precipitating crisis. The interesting part to the Capitol riots is that the actions of the crowds are normative behaviours for riots however there are still elements that highlight behaviours that are viewed as socially unacceptable and prove the emergence of new behavioural norms. Therefore, the discussion on traditional norm theories in regard to the type of norm is put into question. However, one can argue that if one was so solely analysing the act of riots the behaviour of the crowd is in line with descriptive norms which describe *“how people typically act, feel and think in a given situation”* (Forsyth, 2019, pg. 158). Norms are highly formative in regard to individual behaviour even in regard to the use of violence, it has been noted that while norms can be used as protection against any form of violence, norms can also encourage and support the use of violence (WHO, 2009, pg. 3). The Capitol riots were nothing short of violent, in particular it has been noted that the group the proud boys are known for their use of violence *“violence was intrinsic to their mission.”* (Congress Report, 2022). Violence is undeniably a normative behaviour for the proud boys *“We will kill you. That’s the Proud Boys in a nutshell, (Gavin McInnes founder)”* (Congress report, 2022).

There is also discussion within traditional norm theory presents the notion if one was to go against what is known as injunctive norms, (“describes how people should act, feel, and think in a given situation rather than how people do act, feel and think in that situation”) (Forsyth, 2019, pg. 158). Firstly, it is already accounted that violating descriptive norms may cause the violators to be viewed negatively, however, to go against injunctive norms are further negatively evaluated and in turn become vulnerable to sanctioning by others (Forsyth, 2019, pg. 158-159). A norm is most influential once the norm has become internalised, members of a crowd will comply with the groups norms

because they want to, and to go against the norms of the group can instil fear that one can be ostracized from others (Forsyth, 2019, pg. 158-159). The Capitol riots can for that matter show that the actions of the crowd are in violation of injunctive norms. Moreover, the development of norms in particular the process of social tuning which is the tendency for individuals' actions to become similar to the actions of those around them, "good people who never got into trouble with the law" on Jan. 6 had "morphed into terrorists"?(Weiner et.al. 2021).

The social identity model of deindividuation effects (SIDE) is another aspect within social identity theory that can be contributory to understanding of norms that are formed by the group and the overall collective action in the case of the Capitol riots. The propensity to adhere to group norms is, through SIDE, explained to occur when the level of encouragement from other group members is powerful enough that it encourages people to become participatory in the collective action (Drury & Stott, 2015). This consequently firstly causes the shift from the self as an individual to becoming viewed on a group level and secondly, it means that the collective action of the crowd become normative for that group (Drury & Stott, 2015).

6. Conclusion

This case study of the Capitol riots poses the question: *How can we understand the influence of collective behaviour on the individual during the Capitol riots?* the aim is to gain a better understanding of the overall process that occurs when seemingly normal people are placed in a group setting and how they are influenced to act in the same way. This study has highlight that the four key aspects contributes to collective behaviour: baiting, milling, norms and SIDE.

The previous studies on the Capitol riots, police brutality and political uprising show that there is a gap on studies that use theories that are connected to collective behaviour to explain the process that occurs during the formation of the crowd rather these studies focus on explaining how these events can be prevented in the future. This study on the other hand differs as it goes straight to the source and looks into aspects that contribute to the overall collective behaviour of the Capitol crowd, which in turn highlights the factors needed in order to influence individuals to not only become part of the crowd but to act in a similar manner.

Baiting is not an aspect discussed in previous studies, which is interesting because I view it as an important factor in understanding how violence becomes part of the collective behaviour of the crowd.

Violence is often deemed to be spontaneous, a type of behaviour that evolves during the demonstration however the violence during the Capitol riots were unusual because it was premeditated and planned months in advance. By understanding baiting, it is easier to understand why the level of violence was so extreme and why so many became inclined to also become violent. Previous studies on the Capitol riots have proven to have similar conclusions to the findings within this study, milling is a clearly a prevailing theme however there is some absence of a in depth discussion on milling within previous studies, due to the fact that they were carried out soon after the Capitol riots therefore one can argue that there wasn't a enough evidence to depict the event in its entirety which turn means that any discussion on milling is based on early evidence and for that matter speculation. Therefore, this study has proven with evidentiary means that milling did occur during the 'stop the steal' rally and throughout the riot. Furthermore, milling defines the situation by concluding what the common goal is and what the appropriate actions that should be taken, this consequently leads to the establishment of the collective behaviour within a riot.

Norms are important in any theoretical study however norms in this context revolves around the emergence of norms by means of the situation and the groups involved. The actions of the Capitol crowd though not justifiable are in accordance with the new behavioral norms that emerged in response to the situation. The crowd is acting in response to not only the arguments put forth by Donald Trump but also the crowd is responding and acting in a way that is normative for that particular group. The emergence of group norms further establishes the importance of how norms can explain the overall collective behaviour of the capital crowd. It became clear that in order for collective behaviour to occur at the Capitol riots the crowd needed to become depersonalized in accordance to SIDE and that due to the fact that the expected behaviour of the crowd was established and, in some ways, pre-planned that it only contributed to the production of anti-social and violent behaviour.

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