

## Original Research Reports

# How Participation in Collective Action Changes Relationships, Behaviours, and Beliefs: An Interview Study of the Role of Inter- and Intragroup Processes

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## Abstract

Research has shown that numerous psychological changes can occur in and through collective action. Previous research on psychological consequences of participation in collective action has mainly focused on one change at a time and has rarely included a theoretical explanation for the change. The present study therefore investigates the range and possible connections between changes occurring in collective action. We interviewed participants ( $n = 28$ ) involved in an environmental campaign in Sweden which included interaction with the police. Through thematic analysis of the data we found that the participants connected several psychological changes to aspects of their participation. Specifically, participants related these changes to two intertwined processes: intergroup interaction and intragroup interaction. We suggest that intergroup interaction (specifically conflict with the police outgroup) can affect intragroup processes (e.g., support and unity), which in turn can influence psychological change (e.g., empowerment and skills). Through the study, we develop and contribute to previous research by: 1) documenting a range of possible changes occurring through collective action participation, and 2) exploring the different psychological processes related to the changes. The implications of this research and future challenges are discussed in relation to developing the social identity approach.

*Keywords:* collective action, intergroup, intragroup, interaction, identity, psychological change, thematic analysis, environment

## Non-Technical Summary

### Background

We get daily reports through media of people taking collective action against injustice, inequality and oppression. For example, marches to highlight gender inequalities or campaigns to raise awareness of climate change. This study focuses on an environmental campaign in Sweden where campaigners fought a quarry company and the police to save a piece of forest from becoming a limestone-quarry. The campaign, the Ojnare campaign, has been ongoing for about 15 years. However, this study focused on events during the summer of 2012 when campaigners clashed with police for a whole week before the deforestation work was halted. During this week campaigners spent both days and nights hiding in the forest, sitting in trees and blocking routes in and out of the forest to hinder the deforestation machines to reach the area.

### Why was this study done?

Little research has focused on the psychological consequences for the individual that participates in collective action. We therefore set out to find a collective action where we could explore how (and if) participation in collective action changes the participants' ways of seeing themselves and their behaviour. The culmination of the environmental campaign, the Ojnare campaign, in Sweden provided an opportunity to engage in the campaign and explore if and how the participants changed through their participation in the campaign.

### What did the researchers do and find?

We interviewed 28 campaigners, both locals living in the area and people that had travelled to the area to participate. We talked to them about their daily life, their participation in the campaign and their relationships to other people and groups. From these interviews we identified 11 reoccurring psychological changes that were related to the participation in the campaign; (ill)legitimacy of actions, radicalization, empowerment, self-esteem/confidence, well-being, skills, knowledge, personal relationships, career, extended involvement and consumer behaviour. For example, there was a change in consumer behavior and attitudes of consumption towards a more environmentally friendly lifestyle, such as eating less meat, buying less and using cars less.

Furthermore, our results suggested that the changes emerged through two types of experiences; conflictual relationship with the police and supportive relationships within the campaign. The conflict with the police transformed the relationships between the campaigners and created more unity and support within the campaign group. For example, through the strengthened relationships within the campaign group, as a result of the shared conflict with the police, the participants became empowered. They gained agency and became a “new person” with new worldview and behaviours. In other words, the campaigners became “Ojnare fighters” and part of being an Ojnare fighter meant that you stood up for the environment and fought injustice. Hence, by identifying as Ojnare fighters the campaigners changed their views and behaviours to fit the framework for what it meant to be an Ojnare fighter.

### What do these findings mean?

We suggest that the findings from this study extend our understanding of participation in collective action. More specifically, it adds an account of the questions ‘what types of changes’ emerge and ‘how change emerges’ through collective action participation. The understanding of psychological change is of importance, for example, in mobilizing support for social change, and also, in keeping that support. Creating more supporting relationships within the group can facilitate psychological and behavioural change towards the group norm, for example, a more environmentally friendly lifestyle.

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Most of us have some experience of collective action, such as the riots in London 2011, the #MeToo campaign during 2017-2018, the UCU/USS Strikes in British universities during 2018, to name a few. However, little research has focused on the psychological consequences of participation in such events.

Research in a number of disciplines has shown that various psychological changes in participants sometimes occur in and through collective action. In a recent systematic review (Vestergren, Drury, & Hammar Chiriac, 2017), 19 types of psychological changes through participation in collective action were identified. These were categorized as “objective” changes - that is, changes in what people (say that they) do and that can be measured by an observer - or “subjective” changes - that is, changes in how people see themselves, such beliefs and perceptions.

To serve as an illustration for the objective changes, Stuart, Thomas, Donaghue, and Russell (2013) found that some anti-whaling activists changed their *consumer behaviour* by decreasing their consumption of meat. Partici-

pation can also have some effect on activists' *career*, such as choice of work (Braungart & Braungart, 1990; Fendrich, 1974).

Other studies have found subjective changes, such as positive effects on *well-being* (Boehnke & Wong, 2011; Klar & Kasser, 2009); people engaged in activism have been found to have fewer personal worries and experience greater happiness later in life (unless they get arrested etc.). Participants can also change in their "*traits*", such as dominance, self-acceptance, empathy and independence (Agronick & Duncan, 1998). Participation in collective action can increase self-confidence (Shriver, Miller, & Cable, 2003) and self-esteem (Cherniss, 1972).

However, to our knowledge no single piece of research has previously tried to document the range of possible types of psychological changes resulting from participation in collective action in a single campaign. In this interview study we aim to explore all possible changes found to occur in one environmental campaign, as well as the processes behind these changes. Before describing the current research in detail, we review the previous literature on psychological change in collective action and demonstrate the need to develop theory further.

## Psychological Change in Collective Action

The psychological concept of collective action has been defined as any action that seeks to increase the status of the ingroup (Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990). Becker (2012) broadens the definition to include groups/people participating in solidarity with other groups, for example, taking part in an anti-racism march even though they do not experience racism towards themselves. Consequently, collective action can be conducted by a single person acting as a member of a group, such as signing a petition (Becker, 2012; Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008), or by a group, such as a rally.

While there is an extensive research literature concerning motives for and predictors of collective action (e.g., Becker, Tausch, & Wagner, 2011; Klandermans, 1997; Simon et al., 1998; Thomas, Mavor, & McGarty, 2012; Van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009; Van Zomeren et al., 2008), explanations for psychological outcomes of collective action remain neglected (e.g., Louis, 2009; Thomas & Louis, 2013; Vestergren et al., 2017). What is more, many of the studies documenting change offer no theoretical explanation for the phenomenon. Some of the studies that have accounted for the process of emergence of psychological change seem to conceptualise many of the types of change as *identity change* (e.g., Boehnke & Wong, 2011; Braungart & Braungart, 1990; Klandermans, 1997; Klar & Kasser, 2009; McAdam, 1989; Shriver, Miller, & Cable, 2003; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Stuart et al., 2013; Van Dyke & Dixon, 2013). Theories explaining identity change in collective action focus on two kinds of social interaction as crucial in this change: intergroup and intragroup.

### Intergroup Interaction

The first type of interaction associated with psychological change is interaction between groups, in particular a conflictual relationship (e.g., Adamek & Lewis, 1973, 1975). The Kent State sit-in protest can serve as an example. The protesters that had experienced violence from the police (the outgroup) during the sit-in after a student was shot were more radical than a comparison group (Adamek & Lewis, 1973, 1975). Hence experiencing violence from another group was linked to psychological change towards radicalization.

### Intragroup Interaction

The process leading to psychological change through intragroup interaction is often referred to as an interpersonal "discussion" with other members of the same social category (e.g., Hirsch, 1990; Klandermans, 1997; Klar &

Kasser, 2009; McAdam, 1989; Shriver et al., 2003; Van Dyke & Dixon, 2013). By such interpersonal interaction we become aware that others share our world view and get a sense of support for the new beliefs (Shriver et al., 2003). For example, Van Dyke and Dixon (2013) found that acquiring of new knowledge in, for example, labour issues was passed on through interaction, such as workshops and conversations, with other activists involved in the AFL-CIO Union Summer programme.

### Combining Inter- and Intragroup Interaction

Drawing upon self-categorization theory (SCT; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), the elaborated social identity model (ESIM; Drury & Reicher 2000, 2009; Reicher, 1996; Stott & Reicher, 1998) combines the concepts of intergroup and intragroup interaction specifically to examine psychological change in collective action.

Drury and Reicher (2000) explored how participants' self-categorization changed during an anti-road protest as an outcome of interaction with the police. They found a process involving two asymmetries as the basis of change. First, there was an asymmetry in the different groups' perspectives on legitimate behaviour. The protesters saw their action of occupying land as peaceful and lawful. Hence, when the police forcefully evicted them they experienced this as a violation of their rights. The police in turn saw their own behaviour as justified to protect property and uphold the law and, therefore, legitimate in evicting the protesters. Second, there was an asymmetry in power. That is, the police were able to impose their perspective upon the protesters; they had the physical and legal power to act against the protesters. Where police action was seen by protesters as treating everyone in the protest alike, there was evidence of change in the identity boundaries to become more inclusive from initially being a mixed group (Drury et al., 2003); and perceiving the outgroup as an illegitimate force acting on behalf of an oppressive authority was shown to be a source for the process of transforming identity from a respectable citizen to becoming oppositional (Drury & Reicher, 2000; Drury et al., 2003).

The ESIM suggests that within and between group processes interrelate (Drury et al., 2003): intergroup relations, for example, with the police, can condition interaction within the ingroup of protesters. Thus, Drury and colleagues (2003) found that conflict with the police made radical arguments more persuasive within the ingroup of protesters.

However, becoming more "radical" is just one type of change, and the range of possible psychological changes have not been explored in relation to these intersecting inter- and intragroup processes. The present research aims to add to existing research by interviewing collective action participants in one campaign to get an insight in their psychological changes as a consequence of participation. Therefore, the present study aims to contribute to the field of collective action research by addressing the lack of systematic research concerning the process underlying psychological change.

### Current Research

The current study is part of a larger longitudinal project exploring types, processes and endurance of psychological changes through participation in collective action (Vestergren, Drury, & Hammar Chiriac, 2018). The part of the project presented in this paper is a study focusing on *the range of various types* of psychological change, affecting the participants outside the immediate campaign (e.g., in their home and work environment), occurring through participation in collective action, and *the processes* of change. In doing this we studied a campaign by interviewing 28 participants from an environmental campaign in Sweden (the "Ojnare campaign") to access their self-definitions and construals and thereby being able to examine and answer the research questions *what types of change occur through participation in collective action* and *what are some of the processes behind these changes?*

## Context

The following section describes the issues and features of the campaign and is based on participants' accounts of the campaign, other campaigners' accounts of the events, media reports and the first author's experiences during the time in the campaign.

On one of Sweden's largest islands, Gotland, is an area of forest known as the Ojnare forest. In close proximity to the forest is the Bästeträsk Lake that provides drinking water for some of the residents, and which also functions as the water reserve for the entire island. It was in this area that a protest against a planned limestone quarry escalated into the largest police intervention in the island's history.

In mid-July 2012 members from a youth environmental organization decided to set up camp in the Ojnare forest as a way to obstruct the preparation work for the quarry. In early August, deforestation machines approached the Ojnare forest. The protesters spent their days in the forest, placing themselves in front of the machines. During this *first week* the local island police policed the campaign, trying to ensure that the deforestation work could be carried out in a safe way. In the *second week* of August, officers from the special Dialogue unit<sup>i</sup> in Stockholm reinforced the local police. The protesters continued their presence in the forest from early morning to late at night, and there were no clashes between the police and protesters during this week. The *third week* of August continued like the previous weeks except for one addition to the protest: the farmers. Even though it was in the middle of harvest season, a group of farmers joined the campaign. They gathered with their tractors to hinder the deforestation machines from reaching the forest; they parked their tractor trailers, and they dumped large piles of soil on routes the machines would have to take to reach the forest.

In the last week of August 2012, the Ojnare campaign reached its culminating point. This period has come to be referred to as "*the police week*" by the campaigners. The participants referred to this confrontation between the campaigners and the police as the key event that made more people join in the campaign. To guarantee that the preparations for the quarry could be carried out without interruptions, the local police called for further reinforcements and 74 police officers, police vans, all-terrain vehicles, a helicopter, and horses arrived in the Ojnare-forest on the 27<sup>th</sup> August. This in turn resulted in a large inflow of protesters to the forest. Throughout the campaign, the protesters' actions had been characterized by non-violence. During this week more campaigners joined in the direct action by putting themselves in the way of the machines, climbing up and sitting in trees to hinder felling, and hiding all over in the forest to make sure that the safety criteria for working the machines could not be met<sup>ii</sup>. The police evicted the protesters, carried them out of the restricted area, drove them away in their vans and dropped them off several kilometres away from the area. However, every time a protester was removed, they returned as quickly as possible to the forest. There were about 200 protesters in the forest at all times during the "police week". This pattern of events between protesters and police continued for almost a week. The clashes ended when the subcontractor withdrew from the area due to the protest; hence the police intervention was over.

During the months after this intense period, when the interviews took place, the campaign continued with the campaigners staying alert. The camp was still active for three more months after the police week and then moved to a nearby abandoned hospital. Meetings were continuously held, rallies and demonstrations on the island and in other places in Sweden were carried out. Participants stayed in touch with each other, and the struggle in court to get a legal decision against the quarry was still ongoing beyond the timeframe of the interviews. Throughout the time of the study there were interactions between the campaigners both in physical form and online through platforms, such as Facebook.

## Method

### Data Collection

When the “police week” was over, the first author went to the island to make contact with the locals and the protesters still living in the camp. Data was gathered by interviews with participants ( $n = 28$ ), both locals and people that travelled to the island (i.e., self-defined activists), involved in the campaign. The inclusion criteria for participation were to have participated in the Ojnare campaign. Levels of participation ranged from participating in one event to living full time in the camp, and subsequent participation ranged from interaction via social media to participating in further events and interacting with other campaigners several times per week or daily. The participants were approached opportunistically and invited to participate in the study by the researcher during a visit to the campaign. The study was introduced to the campaigners as a study exploring experiences of participation in collective action. During the visit to the camp, the campaigners helped the researcher with contacts to more campaigners not currently living in the camp.

During the invitation process only one person declined participation, and one further withdrew participation after the interview. The demographics for the participants are outlined in [Table 1](#).

Table 1

*Demography: Gender, Age, Residence, Previous Participation and Occupation*

Gender		Age		Residence		Previous participation	Occupation			
Male	Female	Range	Mean	Local	Other	Total	E	S	R	U
11	17	18-78	43.32	14	14	19	12	6	8	2

*Note.* Occupation: E = Employed; S = Student; R = Retired; U = Unemployed.

The interview for each participant was conducted in a face-to-face setting at a place chosen by the participant. The interviews ranged from 60 to 180 minutes in length. All interviews were conducted in Swedish, audio recorded, and transcribed verbatim, with all identifying information removed. The transcripts were then translated to English by the first author, and for the translation of the excerpts a Swedish-speaking British researcher compared the Swedish and the English version.

The interviews aimed at getting access to the participants' accounts of their experiences of participation in the campaign, and more specifically whether or not they had experienced psychological change as a result of participation in collective action. The interviews were guided by an interview schedule that was developed specifically for this project and inspired by previous research (see [Vestergren et al., 2017](#), for a review of types and of changes and processes in previous literature). The interview schedule included mainly open-ended questions related to participants' lives and background, their relations to others, actions and campaign issues. However, the aim was to get the participants to speak freely about their experiences of participation and areas that related to psychological change, without prompting. If the interviewer felt that the initial question, such as “tell me about your experiences of participation in the campaign” did not lead to further discussion related to psychological changes, more detailed follow-up questions, such as “what did your life look like before your involvement in the campaign”, “can you tell me a bit about your life now”, were asked. The schedule included more specific questions, such as “has anything



changed during your time in the struggle?” and “tell me about your everyday life, have you changed?”, as well as closed and specific questions based on previous literature (e.g., [Stuart et al., 2013](#)), such as “what about your consumer behaviour?” and “what about your social relationships?”. The use of these more specific questions, referring to a specific type of change, was very limited during the interviews to avoid prompting. However, they were included in the interview schedule to remind the interviewer to pick up on any mentions by the participants (e.g., how they used their car). To obtain participants’ explanations for change, whenever participants mentioned any relevant theme, such as experiencing increased self-confidence, the interviewer followed up with “why”-questions, such as “why did it change?” and “what’s the link between this change and the campaign?”.

Data for this study was gathered as part of a larger longitudinal project ([Vestergren, 2018](#)), where we also explored the endurance of these changes over time (see [Vestergren et al., 2018](#)).

## Analytic Procedure

Data was analysed by using thematic analysis as outlined by [Attride-Stirling \(2001\)](#) and [Braun and Clarke \(2006\)](#). The analysis started with a preparation of the data, transcribing the recorded interviews verbatim. The transcription phase allowed the authors to get to know the data and make notes and highlight passages of interest (i.e., statements relating to psychological change, for example, participants talking about their new relationships). This first step also included repeated readings of the transcribed data to get a comprehensive sense of the material.

Responses relevant to the participants’ experiences of change connected to the collective action were extracted and gathered as the unit of analysis (i.e., all statements related to psychological change and/or the participants’ explanation of their change). In the second step, the unit of analysis was then divided into preliminary codes of meaning units, words and sentences with common content relevant to the aim of the study (e.g., “unjust treatment”). The core meanings from the meaning units were extracted to create summarized units of meaning (e.g., “unjust treatment” was integrated with other codes related to “police incompetence”). Finally, in preparing and coding the data, the summarized units of meaning were labelled (e.g., “illegitimacy”). Subsequently, data was organized through comparing the generated codes based on their similarities and differences, revisiting the excerpts belonging to the codes, and gathered under themes based on recurring patterns of meaning. The continuous comparison within and between the themes resulted in some initial themes merging and others being divided. These themes were then individually analysed. The inter-rater reliability of the coding scheme was tested by a neutral judge by using Cohen’s Kappa ( $\kappa = .86$ ) on 10% of the data. The test resulted in merging of two codes: self-esteem and self-confidence.

The themes are presented in the result section with representative excerpts from the interviews. The participants are given an identification number (e.g., 1, 19) presented in the beginning of each excerpt. Each extract is numbered in the end of the extract for references in the text.

## Results

The results are presented in two parts. Part one outlines the various types of change reported by the participants as consequences of participation in collective action. In the second part the focus is on the reported processes of these changes.

## Part 1: Types of Change

We found some reoccurring themes of psychological changes related to the participation in the collective action. We organized these changes as changes in how people see themselves (subjective) and changes in what people say they do (objective) (see Vestergren et al., 2017). However, the way participants see themselves can influence what they do. For example, being radical is subjective, but what they do as radical is objective (can be seen by others). Therefore, some of the reported subjective changes, such as radicalization, could have behavioural consequences but are still treated here as subjective aspects of change. The reoccurring subjective changes were: (ill) *legitimacy of actions* (i.e., change in the perception of which actions and behaviours that are right. For example, campaigners perceiving more direct action as right and the police behaviour as wrong), *radicalization* (i.e., a transformation in feelings and beliefs towards becoming more political, acting more in an “activist” way, such as opposing society by participating in civil disobedience), *empowerment* (i.e., the belief that the group can achieve social change, such as the belief that the group’s actions can change the environmental legislation), *self-esteem/confidence* (i.e., change in feelings about oneself, such as gaining the confidence to speak in front of a group of people), *well-being* (i.e., subjective or physical wellness, such as relief in joint pains), *skills* (e.g., transformation in practical skills, such as learning how to organize a meeting), and *knowledge* (e.g., learning about how the judicial system works and how to navigate in the system).

In addition to the subjective changes, our participants also reported changes that can be organized as objective: *personal relationships* (e.g., change in ties with friends or family members, such as creating new friendships or losing contact with family members due to ideological differences), *career* (e.g., change in area of work or study subject, such as taking up a university module in sustainability), *extended involvement* (i.e., getting involved in other campaigns and issues, such as campaigning against deportations), and *consumer behaviour* (i.e., changes in obtaining, use, and disposal of products and services, such as reducing the use of plastics).

Each participant reported between 4 and 11 psychological changes connected to their participation in the campaign. Table 2 shows the types of changes each participant reported. The changes are outlined and addressed below.

Table 2

*Types of Changes per Participant*

Participant ID	Type of change											N changes
	Leg	Rad	Emp	Sel	Wel	Ski	Kno	Rel	Wor	Ext	Con	
1	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	9
2	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	10
3	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	9
4	x	x	x		x		x	x			x	7
5	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	10
6	x		x		x	x		x		x		6
7			x		x		x	x		x		5
8	x	x	x	x	x		x	x			x	8
9	x	x	x	x	x		x	x			x	8
10	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	11
11	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	11
12	x		x		x		x	x				5
13	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	11



Participant ID	Type of change											N changes
	Leg	Rad	Emp	Sel	Wel	Ski	Kno	Rel	Wor	Ext	Con	
14					x		x	x			x	4
15	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x			8
16	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	10
17	x	x	x		x		x	x		x	x	8
18	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	10
19	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	9
20	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	10
21	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	9
22	x		x		x		x	x		x	x	7
23	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	10
24	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	9
25	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	11
26	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	11
27			x		x		x	x	x	x	x	7
28			x					x	x		x	4
Total per change	24	21	27	18	27	10	26	28	11	21	24	

Note. Type of change: Leg = (ill)Legitimacy of action; Rad = Radicalization; Emp = Empowerment; Sel = Self-esteem/confidence; Wel = Well-being; Ski = Skills; Kno = Knowledge; Rel = Personal relationships; Wor = Work-life/career; Ext = Extended involvement; Con = Consumer behaviour.

The relationship between the protesters and the police changed dramatically during the campaign, and this was associated with a new perception of the police behaviour as *illegitimate* which led to perceiving the police as an illegitimate force. This can be seen in the extract below where one participant explains why, after the events during the summer, they would never call the police again:

**2:** *I've been like "this is the police that stands in the middle of the street" [Swedish "chant", positive about the police], that was my, that the police are nice, upright [ ] this changed when they behaved totally inappropriate, one policewoman in particular said that I was un-communicative, and they just did things I never thought they would do, completely the opposite to what I thought (Extract 1)*

This extract shows how the police initially were seen as legitimate and on the "right side"; however, after the "police week" the police as a whole were seen as an illegitimate social category due to their actions and behaviours in the forest against the campaigners. The generalized illegitimacy of the police could, for example, be seen when the same participant talked about future interaction with the police:

**2:** *so yes, I won't call the cops if it's not extremely necessary, I don't think I ever will again*

**1:** *no?*

**2:** *and just this, well I haven't been pulled over by the cops but I would feel really uncomfortable, being stopped by the cops, and this 'now you have to blow and show your licence', and 'no I'm not gonna' I'll be like 'nope', 'what are you gonna do now when I say no, what are you gonna do now' (Extract 2)*

This illegitimacy was further reflected through disrespect of authorities, which could be seen in the participants' accounts of perceived change in becoming more *radical*. After experiencing the "police week", participants reported

psychological changes, such as becoming more willing and active in their opposition, more radical, and that they were ready to take actions they never imagined before:

**17:** *I never imagined doing things like this*

**I:** *what things?*

**17:** *sitting in front of machines, opposing the police, screaming my lungs off at rallies, you know activist things*

**I:** *mm*

**17:** *I would do it again you know, I have no issue with that now (Extract 3)*

Not all participants expressed their radicalization to the level as in the extract above; nonetheless, 21 of the 28 participants were willing to go further in their actions and expressed increased distrust and disrespect for authorities.

Further, participants also referred to a change in the belief that they can achieve something, a change in *empowerment*:

**I:** *so you just left, what were your thoughts on your journey down?*

**11:** *nothing really, I didn't think we could change anything, I was just going to go and check it out eer, but then, you know, we stopped them, we saved the forest, I never thought we could do anything like that but it shows you that if you are many that are engaged you can do something [ ] I wouldn't be involved in anything else if this hadn't happen, I mean, I think that I can make a change, that we can make a change and I still feel like that in everything everyday (Extract 4)*

The quote above also shows how the sense of empowerment endured and affected the participant in other contexts outside of the immediate struggle. Connected to empowerment, some participants reported a positive change in how they feel about themselves, a change in their *self-esteem/confidence*:

**1:** *I'm more like I stand up for myself now and dare to be me and say what I think*

**I:** *In what way?*

**1:** *like in that job-interview, I felt much stronger (Extract 5)*

In addition to a positive increase of how participants felt about themselves and the empowerment, all but one of the participants reported a positive increase in their *well-being* in general:

**I:** *You say that the campaign has been really good for you, what do you mean?*

**15:** *I feel so much stronger both physically and mentally, it's like I'm thirty years younger*

**I:** *can you give me some examples?*

**15:** *I think that it has actually been good for my rheumatism, I'm not in as much pain as I used to be and I can move more freely (Extract 6)*

As feelings about themselves changed, so did other areas of the participants' lives, such as learning new or increasing their *skills* and *knowledge*:

**23:** *I could work like a councillor of law now, I've learnt so much about how the system works, and the judicial system (Extract 7)*

Additionally, along with legal knowledge and how the social system works, participants also connected their involvement in the campaign to learning about the environment, about different materials, about people in general, and about how to practically do things.

In addition to change in intergroup relationship, such as the illegitimate relationship with the police, all participants talked about how their *personal relationships* had changed as an outcome of involvement in the campaign. These relationships changed regardless of the participants physical time in the forest or of the time they had spent in the campaign in general. The participants regarded the change as mainly positive in gaining new friends:

**21:** *Ojnare people are there for each other and support each other, I can call anyone of them at any time and they would be there for me even if it's not about Ojnare, I've never experienced that before*

**I:** *so new friends*

**21:** *yeah a couple of hundreds (Extract 8)*

In the quote above, the friendship is strong and extends beyond the immediate campaign. In other accounts the unlikelihood of friendship was commented on:

**I:** *you mentioned farmers, so I have to ask, you're vegan and against oppression, but was sitting holding hands with meat-farmers on Gotland*

**4:** *ha ha ha, well that was something, it was weird to me, especially [name], he was the one I got a really strong relationship with (Extract 9)*

In another context, the vegan and the meat-farmer might have been on opposite sides fighting each other, but here sharing the same campaign they were holding hands and fighting side by side. However, the change in personal relationships was not always positive; there were accounts from some participants of old friendships ending as a consequence of their participation in the campaign.

Another area reported by some of the participants to have changed through their participation in the campaign was *career*. Some of the participants reported changes, such as becoming a student, changing study subject, changing work area, and postponing studies to spend time in other campaigns:

**I:** *so you're a student, what are you studying?*

**10:** *yes, well I was studying, like, err, I've quit or postponed my last year so I can do this*

**I:** *Ojnare?*

**10:** *yes and well, erm, whatever campaign I come across, I'm going abroad to do some stuff, but I feel like I'm not done, I need to keep fighting, eerm, and then we'll see what I'll do (Extract 10)*

The participation in the campaign not only added new friends and new careers to the participants' lives it also added new campaigns/issues to their lives in the form of *extended involvement*. Most participants came to include other campaigns seen as dealing with the same issues, or construed the Ojnare campaign as part of a global campaign about environment and/or human rights which can be seen in the extract below where one participant talked about the connection between his involvement in Ojnare and his new involvement in other campaigns:

**12:** *it's all about equality, like environment, to get a sustainable environment we need equality in society, and all my involvement comes back to this, to this rights, human rights and well rights of all living actually, it's about stopping people with power from hurting someone else (Extract 11)*

The extension of the campaign into a larger more inclusive cause was also connected to changes in *consumer behaviour*, such as choosing eco-friendly or locally produced products, skipping (collecting wasted food from skips outside shops), reducing their use of plastics, or changing their diets:

**I:** *you told me earlier that you became a vegan during your stay in the Ojnare camp, why is that?*

**10:** *the camp is mainly vegan, and it's about animal cruelty, its ethically and morally right. I don't want to support that industry (Extract 12)*

The extract above shows how participants define the ingroup category as opposing the consumer society as part of the environmental struggle.

All of the changes described above were reported by the participants to be a result of their involvement in the Ojnare-campaign. The next section outlines some possible processes behind these psychological changes through participation in collective action, as reported by our participants.

## Part 2: Process

In our data set, there was evidence of two intertwined processes that explained participants' experiences of psychological change through participation in the campaign: *intergroup interaction* (conflict with the police) and *intra-group interaction* (support from and communication with the ingroup). We suggest that, in this case, the intergroup interaction with the police transformed the intragroup relationships to become more inclusive and supportive, which in turn made ingroup normative arguments (to the campaigners) more persuasive. For example, one could agree with arguments for veganism since they were in line with the group norm of global justice (see above Extract 12).

The processes will first be presented separately and then discussed together to highlight their interrelatedness. The most prevalent connections reported by the participants between each type and process of psychological change are summarized in [Table 3](#). It should be noted that we are not arguing that the types of changes are characteristic of only one process. Rather, as we argue in the subsequent analysis the processes are interrelated. [Table 3](#) contains examples of quotes that relate type of change to type of interaction; the quotes are discussed and reported in full in the subsequent analysis.

Table 3

*Process Linked to Type of Change*

Process, Change	Example
<b>Intergroup</b>	
Legitimacy/ illegitimacy	19: the police were just constantly dragging us away not letting us do what's right
Radicalization/ politicization	1: [ ] have you always been prepared to do that [referring to non-normative behaviour]? 21: no never, but then... it would be... eer a power they [police] force on us
Personal relationships	16: just after the police came, you know before then I was just a "Svensson" [Swedish expression for being an "average Joe"] [ ] everyone like cared about each other
Extended involvement	26: the way they [police] behaved towards us made me aware of the injustice of eeer like how wrong the world is and how the struggle is so much bigger than Ojnare I just had to get involved in other campaigns
Consumer behaviour	10: it was just so obvious in Ojnare, how everything is connected, and after seeing how we were treated by the police it's just...it's not like it's a hard choice
<b>Intragroup</b>	
Empowerment	20: we were all fighting on the same side and really felt supported from each other the power was just like overwhelming
Self-esteem/ confidence	1: in the forest you felt so much support that you could go against the police cause, eeh, you dared to stand up for yourself, and I feel that all the time still
Well-being	22: Honestly, just in general I feel so much healthier, more like, well, like less headaches and more energy [ ] I think I just feel better in general after being with the others [campaigners]
Skills	20: I'm giving guided tours in the forest, and I've been involved in the science of nature at one of the schools here, and been talking like at big rallies in front of loads of people, and organized meetings and seminars, I mean I never thought I could do anything like this
Knowledge	20: it's amazing how much I've learnt since I became involved
Career	5: we were debating and discussing so much that it was impossible to not get affected and I think that is why I finally got to the realization that I need to change job [ ] I would never have dared to do it if it wasn't for everyone else in Ojnare supporting me

**Intergroup Interaction**

Of profound significance to the campaign and the participants' psychological changes was the "police week", a week characterised by clashes between the campaigners and the police. The participants referred to this conflict as the foundation of most of the psychological changes summarized above. At the core of this conflict was a contradiction in the campaigners' perception of the nature of their own actions and those of the police – particularly concerning *legitimacy*. More specifically the understanding the campaigners had of the police and what actions the police would take were contradicted in the actual police behaviour during the "police week". The contradiction in the participants' perception of expected police behaviour and experienced police behaviour made them shift their view of legitimacy of the police. The campaigners saw their own actions as legitimate and just. Most of the participants without prior experience of police encounters in collective action expected the police to have the same view of legitimacy and justice, whereby peaceful protest would be met with a peaceful response:

**19:** *it was so frustrating, the police were just constantly dragging us away not letting us do what's right...eeer it was like we were criminals doing something bad when we were just doing the right...eeer the right, standing up for democracy and human rights to, to eer live in a, have the nature, and they were just*

*stopping us [ ] after all we did the job the police should have done, you know “serve and protect” (Extract 13)*

The police came to be seen as a force suppressing the campaigners' legitimate right to protest rather than, as in the beginning, a force sharing the values and interests of the society and its members. The police were not only seen as illegitimate in their actions, they were also seen as indiscriminate in treating everyone in the group the same:

**3:** *the police treated everyone like terrorists, they even carried away 80-year-old women like they were some really bad threat to society or something, I mean that must have been hard even for them, like who does that (Extract 14)*

This repositioning of the self, towards a more oppositional identity with norms of opposition, was associated with many of the other changes through the categorization of the relationship in terms of injustice, human rights, and democracy. This new categorization of the self also affected their view of their own actions, and served to *radicalize* them:

**21:** *I am more militant, I'll break laws, block roads, lie down in front of machines, destroy machines if they threaten one of us*

**I:** *mm, what is all this coming from, have you always been prepared to do that?*

**21:** *no never, but then... it would be... eer a power they [police] force on us, and the government, they will destroy our chances of living, and if they treat us like that... (Extract 15)*

Through the confrontation with the police, the *relationships* between and within the groups changed and the campaigners came to see themselves more as environmental activists. Hence, the police week made them more ready to categorize the world in an “activist way”:

**16:** *I see myself as an environmentalist now*

**I:** *is that part of being an “Ojnare-fighter” you mentioned earlier?*

**16:** *yes*

**I:** *mmm, well, eer so how did that start, and do you know when?*

**16:** *eeerm I think it was sometime in the forest, must have been just after the police came, you know before then I was just a “Svensson” [Swedish expression for being an “average Joe”] [ ] like I feel that it's made me more open, I'm aware of the footprints we put on the earth when we do stuff, and like, everyone like cared about each other and I think I care more now too, being with everyone has affected me so much...to the better hahaha (Extract 16)*

The change was not only about seeing the world in a new way; it was also about what it meant for relationships with people in other social categories who share the concern with environmental injustice:

**I:** *What does it mean to be an Ojnare-fighter?*

**2:** *Saving the forest obviously, but it is much more now, eeerm you know there were some people here from Latin America and all over the world, and it's like, we're fighting the injustice all over the world, like every day (Extract 17)*



The shift in self to a more oppositional identity meant struggling to oppose unfairness and injustice in all sort of domains, and *extending the involvement*:

**26:** *So basically, eeerm, I mean it's like, I wouldn't have been this aware of things in the world if the police hadn't opened my eyes*

**I:** *Opened your eyes?*

**26:** *Yes, well it's like we've talked about, the way they [police] behaved towards us made me aware of the injustice of eeerm like how wrong the world is and how the struggle is so much bigger than Ojnare. I just had to get involved in other campaigns*

**I:** *such as?*

**26:** *Well, you know I've gotten involved in anti-deportation, and the mining issues in for example Latin America (Extract 18)*

As in the two quotes above, participants used a “justice and fairness” framework when talking about their actions. To the participants, fighting injustice meant not only being in confrontation with the police, it also meant being in confrontation with *consumer* society. Confronting consumer society meant for the participants to change their everyday habits of consumption, for example, changing one's diet. This is demonstrated by one of the participants that changed their diet to vegan after becoming involved in the campaign:

**I:** *what's important about being a vegan*

**18:** *I feel better [ ] and also making a contribution to the cause*

**I:** *cause?*

**18:** *haha, you know, saving the earth, fighting the power, the system*

**I:** *mm*

**18:** *...it was just so obvious in Ojnare, how everything is connected, and after seeing how we were treated by the police it's just...it's not like it's a hard choice (Extract 19)*

In the quote above, the participant connected their change in everyday consumption habits (i.e., diet) explicitly to the intergroup interaction. The intergroup interaction functioned as a catalyst for the changes. It was the main process for some of the psychological changes but not for all. The repositioning of the self resulted in a greater division between the ingroup (campaigners) and the outgroup (police, society); the boundaries of the ingroup category became clearer, more defined, and more inclusive (to include all groups and individuals fighting for the forest). This resulted in experiences of greater ingroup togetherness, enhanced unity, which facilitated and increased perceived ingroup support. These intragroup processes were also a source of psychological change, as we will discuss next.

### Intragroup Interaction

Initially, locals and activists saw themselves as different from each other. However, through the conflict with the police they started defining themselves using the shared concept of “Ojnare-fighters”. Hence the intergroup interaction had changed the way they defined themselves as a group. The intragroup interaction and relationships were transformed and the differences between the locals and the self-defined activists became smaller than the

difference with the outgroups (the police and the mining company), thereby facilitating a shift in categorization to being “the same”:

**13:** *we are all Ojnare-fighters now, all of us that were in the forest, I'm no longer...eerr...I'm an Ojnare-fighter (Extract 20)*

This change in relation between the campaigners such that they were now the ‘same group’ was associated with increased intragroup support:

**20:** *When we like understood that we were all fighting on the same side and really felt supported from each other the power was just like overwhelming, like the support you felt from the whole group was just...just amazing /.../ you just realized how much we can actually change, both as a group and as a person, not everything but some (Extract 21)*

Furthermore, enhanced support within the campaign empowered the participants to take action, and facilitated the endurance of the changes after the “police week”:

**21:** *I think that since I'm still in Ojnare, I mean not actually there every day but we still hang out every day and that's what keeps me going*

**I:** *keeps you going?*

**21:** *yeah, I mean it makes it easier to stay environmentally conscious and politically... eerm you know more active when you're around your people all the time (Extract 22)*

The campaign participants acted together in all the different actions, such as sit-protests in the forest, rallies, and meetings during the campaign, and said they supported each other in expressing their values through their actions. All participants highlighted forms of intragroup interaction, such as conversations around the campfire and supportive within-group relations being of great importance to the psychological changes:

**8:** *Every night we sat around the campfire and talked through the day, and it was during these conversations and everyone's stories that I think I started feeling much better about myself, like just feeling that we all had the same view and had experienced the same things made me feel so much stronger, so much more confident in myself (Extract 23)*

Defending the ingroup's values supported by other ingroup members made the participants feel like they could achieve and carry out actions in ways that would not be possible if they were acting as lone individuals:

**11:** *it was such a “power-rush”, it was just like “we are the forces and the tools in this fight, and our weapon is that we are many and standing strong”*

**I:** *do you still feel like that?*

**11:** *yeah, definitely, I know now that if we fight together we are actually able to get somewhere, maybe not straight to the turning around society and creating world-peace, but yeah, I definitely feel like we can achieve stuff, I didn't think like that before I went there [Ojnare] (Extract 24)*

Being able to express power through acting together in accordance with the values of their shared identity was experienced as empowering. The shift in self through being supported in acting in accordance with the shared identity through standing up to the police was also linked by some participants to an increase in feeling more *confident (self-esteem)* in themselves. For example, some reported that they could stand up for themselves in other domains to greater extent:

**I:** *What does that [self-confidence in the job-interview situation] have to do with Ojnare?*

**1:** *It's like, like, in the forest you felt so much support that you could go against the police cause, eeh, you dared to stand up for yourself, and I feel that all the time still, like you have the support and you are worth...having your say (Extract 25)*

In addition to the increased self-esteem/confidence, some participants also highlighted an increase in their *well-being* in general:

**22:** *Honestly, just in general I feel so much healthier, more like, well, like less headaches and more energy*

**I:** *Why do you think that is, where does it come from?*

**22:** *ha ha the forest air [ ] no but really, I think I just feel better in general after being with the others [campaigners], like spending time with genuine people that you're like one with, you support each other, you share a life (Extract 26)*

These changes in the participants' life-routine, life-style, and changes in their understandings and values can all be seen as expressions of the change in self emerging through acting together and a sense of becoming a community with the camp at its core. The campaign was more than just a place where participants engaged in protest activity. In the campaign, the participants also had to take on (new) organizational tasks for the survival of the cause. Hence, the campaign offered a place where participants were able to discuss roles (e.g., different leadership roles), engage in activities (e.g., writing petitions, planning activities and preparing court documents), and explore responsibilities (e.g., catering for the camp and dealing with the media). These discussions and explorations of new domains resulted in psychological changes concerning *knowledge* and *skills*. Being an environmentalist meant, for example, having some knowledge about the environment and how human footprints affect it:

**20:** *it's amazing how much I've learnt since I became involved, I had no idea how much one thing affected another, and now I know how to grow my own food in an eco-friendly sustainable way, and I know so much about different species and how it will affect all the red-listed species if the quarry becomes a reality, we just can't let that happen (Extract 27)*

The participant continued by highlighting some new *skills* acquired through the participation in the campaign:

**20:** *and I mean I'm giving guided tours in the forest, and I've been involved in the science of nature at one of the schools here, and been talking like at big rallies in front of loads of people, and organized meetings and seminars, I mean I never thought I could do anything like this but once you're given one task to do and you've done it you just keep going (Extract 28)*

A further change linked, by some of our participants, to the intragroup interaction, and to some extent connected to feeling better and more confident in yourself, was change in *career*:

**5:** *You know, we were debating and discussing so much that it was impossible to not get affected and I think that is why I finally got to the realization that I need to change job, I need to stay true to myself and not work for the state, I needed to "walk the talk" all the way home [ ] I would never have dared to do it if it wasn't for everyone else in Ojnare supporting me though (Extract 29)*

Even though some of the psychological changes acquired through the intragroup interaction do not seem to be directly or obviously linked to a shift in self or identity, there seemed to be an indirect link from identity through other changes directly connected to the intragroup interaction, such as improving physical health through sharing an identity and spending time with the other campaigners (see Extract 26). However, we are not ruling out that

there are other intragroup dynamics affecting the participants that may not be identity-related or informing the identity. Following our theorizing from the analysis, the participants became empowered through the support from the ingroup; they realized what not only the group, but also them as individuals could achieve. Changing career or taking up or changing studies, or acquiring new skills and knowledge were linked by participants to the new belief that they were able to act, they were “a new person” because they were empowered. Furthermore, some of the career, skills, and knowledge were bound up with the content of shared identity, such as knowledge about the environment or organizing petitions or meetings. The continued support (supportive relationships, intellectual support) also seemed to enable the shared identity and the actions to express the identity to endure, which needs to be examined specifically in future research.

Through the analysis of the data it became clear that the two processes, intergroup and intragroup interaction, were intertwined. First, the intergroup interaction made the participants both oppositional and united – it created a new shared identity among them. They were fighting on the same side and became one group. Second, this new shared social identity affected the relations not only with outgroups but also within the group, making the participants more supportive of each other (as fellow ingroup members) and more susceptible to arguments in line with ingroup norms (such as standing up for fairness, human rights and defending the environment; see Extracts 11, 16, 18, 19, 27, 29).

## Discussion

All our participants reported psychological changes connected to their involvement in the campaign, both in terms of what they (said they) did (objective changes) and in terms of how they saw themselves (subjective changes). Of the 11 reported types of change, change in relationships was the most prevalent psychological change; this was reported by all 28 participants. Well-being and empowerment were mentioned by 27 participants and new knowledge by 26. The four most prevalent changes can be seen as connected through acting together. However, the least reported changes - work-life/career and skills - are not directly affecting the life within the collective. Even though skills can be useful while participating in the campaign they are changes that are individual and do not necessarily require the collective and the intragroup relations to sustain.

Furthermore, participants linked these changes to two types of experiences: interaction with the police (intergroup interaction) and interaction within the campaign (intragroup interaction). Inter- and intragroup interaction have previously been acknowledged in the research literature (e.g., Adamek & Lewis, 1973, 1975; Drury & Reicher, 2000, 2005; Drury, Reicher, & Stott, 2003; Hirsch, 1990; Klandermans, 1997; Klar & Kasser, 2009; McAdam, 1989; Shriver et al., 2003; Thomas et al., 2012; Van Dyke & Dixon, 2013). However, in most cases inter- and intragroup processes have been separated from each other and treated as isolated factors (Dovidio, 2013). In the present study we presented them separately, but also analysed how the two processes interrelate. Specifically, we demonstrated that a conflictual intergroup relationship can transform relations within the ingroup creating more unity and support. The enhanced intragroup relationships in turn can, in addition to the intergroup conflict, affect the emergence of psychological changes. For example, through the transformed and strengthened intragroup relationships the participants became empowered, they gained agency and became “a new person” with new worldviews and behaviours.

In our data, the participants referred to the actions of the police as the main factor in unifying the campaign group. Furthermore, they referred to the intragroup support, unity, and so forth as something that was preceded by the police action. This is also indicated by the way the participants talked. In references to the police action the participants always used past tense. However, when referencing the intragroup support and so forth, they more often referred to something in the present.

It should be noted though that these two processes are not necessarily always dependent on each other. What we suggest here is that there can be an intertwined relationship between the two affecting the emergence of psychological change through participation in collective action.

We cannot distinguish the psychological changes that could have emerged through only one of these processes solely as all participants made references to both in relation to each other. However, it is important to acknowledge that some of the psychological changes could emerge without the intergroup interaction. In fact, we would argue that not all changes are dependent on intergroup interaction, but dependent on the possibility of defining the self as part of an ingroup. Campaigners gather in events and spend time together without a direct intergroup dynamic, such as the police in this specific study. In such events, without a direct intergroup interaction, for example, an environmental campaign or a feminist movement we would argue that several of the types of changes could emerge as a result of a shared identity. In fact, most collective actions take place without direct intergroup dynamics. However, there is a shared identity which stands in opposition to something else, such as the consumer society or patriarchy, which could be seen as a perceived, but not present, outgroup.

Psychological transformation through shared activities and discussions (Hirsch, 1990; Klandermans, 1997; Klar & Kasser, 2009; McAdam, 1989; Shriver et al., 2003; Van Dyke & Dixon, 2013) has been demonstrated to occur previously. However, our results indicate that the intergroup interaction may enhance these intragroup bonds and make ingroup values and arguments more persuasive. The social identity approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) suggests that through sharing a social identity we value ingroup opinions and beliefs more and regard them as more accurate. Hence, what matters to the group matters to us and the group values become our values. The range of types of changes and different forms of intragroup interaction need to be explored and addressed further, for example, in contexts without an outgroup present.

This analysis suggests a new model of the process of change through participation in collective action, extending the ESIM by accounting for the range of types of changes after the event, examining the processes leading to each change, and highlighting the importance of intragroup processes. In line with ESIM (Drury & Reicher, 2000, 2009; Drury et al., 2003; Reicher, 1996; Stott & Reicher, 1998), firstly, the perceived police illegitimacy led to transforming the identity to becoming more oppositional; and secondly the perceived indiscriminate action by the police led to changes in the group boundaries (creating new friendships within the campaign etc.). These changes in group boundaries changed within-group relations to become more supportive of new values and beliefs. In other words, intergroup dynamics (between participants and police) affected intragroup processes (support, communication etc.) which in turn sustained psychological change. This is a model that could be tested quantitatively in future work.

## Limitations

The research aimed to explore types and processes of psychological change through participation in collective action. The study drew upon a unique sample of participants. All participants were involved in the same collective

action in the same place at the same time. Some changes found in previous literature, such as having children, marital status, religion and home skills (e.g., Fendrich, 1974; McAdam, 1989; Nassi, 1981; Sherkat & Blocker, 1997; Shriver et al., 2003) were not found in the accounts of our participants. This might be due to the historical and cultural context of the specific collective action studied. Previous studies that reported changes concerning marital status (e.g., Fendrich, 1974; McAdam, 1989) and children (e.g., Nassi, 1981; Sherkat & Blocker, 1997) were based on a specific sample of participants from a specific time period, namely the 1960s, when the nuclear family and the women's place in society were different from today. A few studies have previously reported changes that could be culturally context specific, such as learning new home skills (Shriver et al., 2003), learning "male tasks" (paying bills etc.). The present study was conducted in Sweden between the years 2012 and 2014, thus, in a country and an era characterized by gender equality. It was unlikely that we would find similar changes referring to the view of marriage and the nuclear family as in the 1960s. Additionally, even though we might expect the type of changes to be universal, the content of the changes is likely to differ. For example, changes, such as consumer behaviour and knowledge are likely to have different content in different campaigns and cultures. For example, one could expect that right-wing extremists would be less likely to become vegans but might change where what products they use.

Even though there might be limitations in generalizing the present findings to other events/situations, we suggest that the types of changes and the process of change identified here are, to some extent, transferable. This argument is based on the general consensus among our participants concerning types and processes of change, together with indications in previous research outlined in the introduction (e.g., Boehnke & Wong, 2011; Braungart & Braungart, 1990; Drury & Reicher, 2000; Drury et al., 2003; Klar & Kasser, 2009; McAdam, 1989). Not all collective action leads to change; the most routine and predictable protests merely reproduce, rather than challenge, participants' understandings.

The claims made in this study draw upon self-report data only. Thus, it is possible that some participants have overstated their change in order to "help" the researcher. Furthermore, the more focused and specific questions regarding psychological change, which were used in a few cases to motivate our participants to deeper reflection, could have impacted on the types and frequency of the reported psychological changes. Although some psychological changes may have been prompted through questions of a more specific nature, they did arguably still occur in participants' accounts. However, we argue that it is possible to validate our claims about psychological change made here through use of other external data – such as interviews with a family member or close friend to participants, and sales figures from shops selling ethical products (see Vestergren et al., 2018).

Furthermore, as with most studies of collective action and psychological change, this study lacks pre-participation data. This is due to the difficulty of finding participants before they know themselves that they will participate, and through the "unexpected" and dynamic context of collective action. The conclusions are therefore drawn from post-hoc reports. This also limits the possibility of making causal claims based on this set of data.

Additionally, in this paper the sample of participants consist of both activists (that travelled to the island) and locals (living in or close to the area), all with different amount of previous participation. Some previous research has suggested that level of experience (e.g., Barr & Drury, 2009) and level of previous participation (e.g., Drury & Reicher, 2000) might affect psychological changes. Our participants with extensive previous participation reported fewer changes compared to others (see, for example, participant 6, 7, 12, 14, 27 & 28). These participants would be assumed to have changed prior to the event through interaction in previous campaign contexts which could



explain their low number of changes compared to other participants (see [Table 2](#)). Although small, this difference was noticeable between the locals and the activists. We assume that activists with more previous experience of collective actions had already changed before taking part in this campaign (and study). However, the types of changes were the same across our sample and can be found in previous literature (e.g., [Shriver et al., 2003](#); [Van Dyke & Dixon, 2013](#); see [Vestergren et al., 2017](#) for full review). One implication of previous participation could be related to endurance of changes, whether some types of changes are more likely to endure than others. However, this is beyond the scope of this study but should be explored in future studies.

## Conclusion

The present study explored the types and processes of psychological change as an outcome of participation in collective action. Our participants connected up to 11 types of psychological changes in relationships, behaviours and beliefs to their involvement in the campaign.

Furthermore, our results indicate the importance of social categorization as part of the process of emerging psychological change as an outcome of participation in collective action. A new shared social identity that changed the social relations emerged through the police interaction. The dynamic social context, the intertwined relationship between identity and interaction creates a platform where the participants are given an opportunity to express a new categorization of self and the world. They come to see themselves in an activist way and act based on that category.

This is to our knowledge the first study that explores the range of types of psychological changes in one campaign and the processes leading to those changes. Further, the study suggests a model where intragroup processes influence the effects of intergroup dynamics on psychological change. What needs to be done next is to further explore the suggested model and components of the endurance (or discontinuance) of the psychological changes. Furthermore, future studies are needed to explore links between different types of collective actions, different changes, and different processes.

## Notes

- i) The dialogue unit is a special police unit developed to function as a link between groups or people arranging protest demonstrations and the police ([Dialogpolisen, 2016](#)). The dialogue police work on the basis of four conflict-reducing principles: knowledge, facilitation, communication, and differentiation (e.g., [Reicher et al., 2007](#)).
- ii) There is a regulation that no people can be in a certain distance of the machine during work

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## Competing Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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