Empowering Non-Violence: The Role of Collective Identity in the emergence of Non-Violent Resistance Movements.

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1. Introduction

On the 7th of May 1981, the body of Bobby Sands, former member of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (also known as IRA) laid cold inside of a coffin, waiting to be paraded through the city of Belfast for one of its biggest funerals ever commemorated (Feehan, 1985, p. 16). After eight years of imprisonment that were concluded with a sixty-six-day long hunger strike, Sands died in Maze Prison in Belfast, leaving behind the *Diary of Bobby Sands*, an important personal recollection where he reminisced his opposition for the British rule in Northern Ireland through written prose, articulated on illegally smuggled pens and papers (Gasaway Hill, 2018, p. 242). Bobby Sands was only 27 years old when he died for a united Northern Ireland, and was part of the ten Republicans who performed this non-violent act of self-immolation as an act of challenge and rebellion against British rule in their country (Sweeney, 1993, p. 425). Hunger striking is only one of the non-violent resistance methods employed during the Northern Irish conflict, dictated by the dispute between a Unionist and Protestant majority, that sought to have Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom, and a Nationalist and Catholic minority, who instead wanted Northern Ireland to be part of an all-Irish republic (McEvoy & Morison, 2003, pp. 971-972). Non-violent political action is an important technique for bringing about political and social change, especially when conventional or violent methods have failed already (Atack, 2012, p. 6). The topic of non-violent resistance and its emergence has not been largely explored in political science, and to clarify this knowledge gap, this thesis will focus on the topic of the emergence of Non-Violent Resistance Movements (from now on referred to as NVRM), and the role that collective identity plays in it. Consequently, the research question is "Why and how does collective identity influence the emergence of non-violent resistance movements?". Collective identity refers to the shared identity of a group, whether political, social, or religious, and can play an important role in social transformation and in achieving political change (Todd, 2005, p. 429). Political conduct is impacted by identity as the latter can influence changes in power relations, exclusivity of the political movement and its connections with other groups (Todd, 2005, pp. 430, 439). The focus on collective identity stems from the understanding that this approach can better asses why NVRM occur from a behavioral and social perspective related to the individual, and later the collective. Since collective identity affects political shifts, it can in turn be assumed that when those political shifts are represented by non-violent resistance movements, collective identity can have an impact on its emergence and development. This topic is worth exploring as improving previous literature and providing scholarship with new insights can help better understand how ethnic, political, and religious cleavages impact collective identity and group formation nowadays, and how this in turn affects the emergence of non-violent resistance movements in other instances as well, looking for

example at secessionist or separatist movements. To improve conceptual research on the topic, I will analyze literature regarding the topics of collective identity and NVRM, scrutinizing the single case study of Northern Ireland.

2. Literature Review

Existing scholarship has partly focused on explaining the topics of non-violent resistance and collective identity. In this literature review, I will analyze relevant existing research regarding these topics, and subsequently I will explain why these are important notions for political change, and why their improvement and expansion in current scholarship is necessary.

2.1 Non-Violent Resistance Movements

Non-violent resistance is defined as the use of non-violent techniques from civilians engaging in political action, which can include peaceful protests, strikes and demonstrations, but holds the lack of violence as the common denominator (Chenoweth & Cunningham, 2014, p. 271; Atack, 2012, p. 6). It is therefore a technique which employs the use of non-conventional, non-violent methods to strive for a political goal. Whether it is employed for mere strategic reasons or moral reasons depends largely on the group identity and considerations (Atack, 2012, p. 7). This topic has been partly analyzed by existing scholarship, but that has proven to be challenging for various reasons, hence the lack of amount of extensive research involved as compared to violent resistance (Chenoweth & Cunningham, 2012, p. 272; Chenoweth, Perkoski & Kang, 2017, p. 1950). Firstly, non-violent resistance (NVR) is characterized by its difficulty in being measured empirically due to the lack of precise and cohesive definitions. (Chenoweth & Cunningham, 2012, p. 272; Chenoweth, Perkoski & Kang, 2017, p. 1950). Secondly, it is mostly ignored by scholars as violent conflicts are generally seen as a more relevant issue, with a bigger impact on existing political structures. (Chenoweth & Cunningham, 2012, p. 272; Chenoweth, Perkoski & Kang, 2017, p. 1950; Christoyannopoulos, 2023, p. 1). Thirdly, analyzing NVR is difficult in terms of the level of analysis applied, as it can range from techniques employed at the individual level, or NVR employed by broader organizations (Chenoweth, Perkoski & Kang, 2017, p. 1954). Lastly, the boundaries of violent and non-violent resistance can prove to be difficult to identify and separate, as some violent movements may occasionally employ non-violent techniques at times, and vice versa (Chenoweth, Perkoski & Kang, 2017, p. 1954).

Conducting research on the emergence of non-violent resistance movements has proved to be useful in various ways. Gene Sharp, recognized as the forefather and most relevant author on NVR, provides scholarship with firsthand experiences on the importance of non-violent conflict. Having met with different groups of struggling people from war-ridden nations, such as Burmese

people on the Thai-Burma border and students from Beijing in 1989, he developed a framework to showcase the usefulness of non-violence applied to politically intense situations, aiding local populations in overthrowing, or opposing existing power structures (Sharp, 2005, p. 5). Studies on NVR can therefore have real, impacting results on political conflicts, both directly and indirectly. Firstly, from a state point-of-view, it can help make predictions about future emerging movements engaging in non-violence, and how to either support or de-escalate certain situations. From an individual perspective, research on the topic can be useful in organizing and engaging in similar resistance (Sharp, 2005, pp. 5-6). Lastly, scholars can benefit from this type of research to make comparisons with other related case studies, with similar political backgrounds and identities.

2.2 Collective identity

Collective identity is defined as "an individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution." (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 285). More specifically, it relates to an individual's interrelatedness with other people due to common characteristics, that creates a sense of identity and belonging (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 285; Simon & Klandermans, 2001, p. 320; Taylor & Whittier, 1992, p. 105). A shared identity can be based on innate characteristics, such as ethnicity or gender, or on achieved ones, such as political ideology and beliefs (Ashmore, Deaux & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004, p. 81). Additionally, when it comes to the process of constructing collective identities, identity in a group setting is not something that is pre-constructed, but rather something that evolves and transforms through repeated interactions between individuals (Mellucci, 1989, p. 793). Existing scholarship has found that the individual participates, whether out of their own will or subconsciously, in a continuous process of collective identity formation when engaging with different people in varied contexts (Jaspal & Breakwell, 2014, p. 118).

Collective identity is a complex and multifaceted topic, which has real-life implications. It can be used to better understand a variety of political and social structures, especially in terms of what happens outside the role of the state, but more on the grassroot, individual level (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 285; Stekelenburg, 2013, p. 219). This topic has been partly investigated to explain protest participation and movement emergence, as scholars state that the bigger the group of people with the shared beliefs, the more likely it is to protest for their benefits and needs (Stekelenburg, 2013, p. 219, Taylor & Whittier, 1992, p. 110). Collective identity is therefore an important topic to investigate to understand individual and collective actions. The purpose of this research is to find out how and why collective identity impacts the emergence of NVRM. In the next section, a look into how these two topics connect in existing literature is put forward.

2.3 Linking collective identity and NVRM

Linking the existing literature together on the aforementioned topics is important to have a clearer understanding of what answers have been already given and what questions are yet to be answered.

Collective identity is relevant to movement emergence, as it can be recognised as one of the reasons why people mobilize through collective action (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 283; Tilly, 1978, p. 7). It helps provide an understanding about an individual and a group's participation incentives, and a way to explain why social movements emerge (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 283). Practically, this can happen in a four-stages way. Firstly, claims of collective identities are made, where people identify shared interests and beliefs (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 285; Tilly, 1978, p. 56). Subsequently, recruitment into a movement and commitment into joining forces happens, with activists engaging in motivated participation due to the social norms of obligation and reciprocity to fellow group members (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, pp. 289-290). Furthermore, strategies and tactics are decided, and decision-making resolutions are employed (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 292; Tilly, 1978, p. 56). Lastly, movement success often leads to a retaliation from the countermovement, therefore people who might feel threatened or disagree with the movement's success (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 297).

Collective identity is relevant to movement emergence, as when individuals see themselves as belonging to a group, their shared characteristics become increasingly salient and important, and can be used as a strategy for political change (Taylor & Whittier, 1992, p. 110). Political change can happen in a variety of ways, but existing literature does not provide extensive information on if and how collective identity can impact non-violent movements specifically, hence why this thesis will try to answer this knowledge gap.

3. Theoretical Framework

The aim of this theoretical framework is to dive deeper into the key concepts of this thesis through theories in existing scholarship.

3.1 Theory and Hypothesis 1: Identity Theory

The Identity Theory by Davis, Love & Fares (2019) sees identity as the different meanings that a person acquires in a specific setting, whether personal (occupying a specific role) or group/social (as a member of a larger group) (p. 256). Collective identity can be divided into group identity and social identity, with the former relating to being part of a community such as a political movement, and the latter as being referred to as a category which identifies a person's role in a broader social structure, such as gender or race (Davis, Love & Fares, 2019, p. 256). Personal, role-based, and collective identities are interrelated with one another, and are further strengthened through social

interaction (Davis, Love & Fares, 2019, p. 256). Collective identity is central to group emergence and development as it provides shared categories that people can identify with, and later interlace one another through connections and networks. (Davis, Love & Fares, 2019, p. 257). To further delve into this theory, the authors mention how collective group identity refers to being active in shared organizations, while collective social identity is still tied to the topic of activism without being attached to the notion of a particular network (Davis, Love & Fares, 2019, p. 257). Proving that collective identity is a type of group and social identity, and that people seek to support and verify their identity through group interaction covers the basis for answering the research question (Davis, Love & Fares, 2019, p. 256). While this does not look specifically at non-violence, it is an important argument in the sense that it proves that collective identity can play a role in the emergence of group movements, which is the broader category of a NVRM.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Collective identity is central to group emergence and development.

3.2 Theory and Hypothesis 2: Dominant Technique Approach

As far as theories of NVR are concerned, Vinthagen (2015, p. 39) looks at Gene Sharp's theory of the Dominant Technique Approach as one of the principal theories of non-violence. According to the author, non-violence can be seen as a legitimate and conscious option of resistance if that approach is understood for its superior effectiveness and strength as opposed to less successful violent methods of resistance (Vinthagen, 2015, p. 39; Sharp, 1973, pp. 109-111). In this view, non-violence is a matter of strategic resistance, it is the logical dominant technique, and not engaged in simply for moral, anti-violence beliefs (Vinthagen, 2015, p. 39; Sharp, 1973, pp. 109-111). Furthermore, the Dominant Technique Approach states that it is the relationship between obedience and disobedience, and consent and dissent that play a relevant role in political struggles, as it enforces a relationship of dominance and submission between the people in power and the citizens (Vinthagen, 2015, pp. 39-40; Sharp, 1973, pp. 110-111). Therefore, successful political power is about balancing obedience and consent, and balance is then acquired when a group willingly agrees (whether directly or indirectly) to be subordinate to the leaders (Vinthagen, 2015, p. 40; Sharp, 1973, pp. 110-111). Following this claim, for a group to engage in resistance against the people in power, the obedience relationship must be changed, and while violence may seem like to obvious choice, Sharp argues for it to not be the most successful mean of achieving political goals (Vinthagen, 2015, p. 41; Sharp, 1973, pp. 110-111). Instead, he argues for people power and the authority they can convey in changing power dynamics through non-violent means (Sharp, 1973, pp. 110-111). Since power is dependent on the subordinates who agree to obey, and if this simple

power relation is changed, not necessarily through violent means, the whole power dynamics can change, leading to different political outcomes (Vinthagen, 2015, p. 42; Sharp, 1973, pp. 110-111).

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Engaging in NVR can successfully alter the power relationships in a conflict, bringing the subordinates to power and provoking political change.

3.3 Alternative explanations for NVRM emergence

In this section, two alternative explanations for NVRM emergence are provided.

Political cleavages represent a division among people based on characteristics such as ethnicity or religion (Powell, 1976, p. 2). Cleavages can be cumulative, if the demographic group identity follows the same (political) ideology, such as Protestants being Unionists, and Catholics being Nationalist (Powell, 1976, p. 2). Alternatively, cleavages can be cross-cutting if the cleavage overlaps with groups of another cleavage or identity. A first alternative explanation to the emergence of NVRM follows the idea that cross-cutting cleavages groups are more efficient at cooperation and mass mobilization, because they had to overcome collective action problems and free riding incentives too cooperate (Butcher & Svensson, 2016, p. 314; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2008, p. 39). In the case of unhappiness with the regime and current political status, the shared feelings of dissent can aid in bringing people together and solving the collective action problem, resulting in mass mobilization. This is thought to be a better explanation for movement emergence than shared, collective identities.

Alternative Hypothesis 1 (AH1): Social and political cross-cutting cleavages among people enable the emergence of NVRM more than collective identity does.

Other scholars are skeptical on whether shared identities are strong enough to mobilize people to sustain a resistance movement. Olson (1965) argues that taking for granted that groups with the same beliefs and objectives will act upon accordingly is not an accurate explanation for collective action (p. 1). If individuals act upon their shared interests is an idea based on the self-interested individual notion, disregarding the fact that in a group setting, collective action problems and free riding issues might hinder the applicability of a movement emergence theory due to collective identity (Olson, 1965, pp.1-2). Therefore, following this alternative hypothesis, we cannot assume that collective identity is enough for a non-violent movement to emerge, as individuals they will not act to achieve group interests, but merely their individual ones (Olson, 1965, pp.1-2).

Alternative Hypothesis 2 (AH2): Collective identity is not enough to successfully mobilize people for a non-violent group interest, as individuals are self-interested.

4. Methodology

This thesis will investigate the single case study of Northern Ireland in a qualitative way, using congruence analysis to make inferences between the Social Identity Theory and the Dominant Technique Approach and the existing secondary data.

4.1 Conceptualization

For the purpose of this research, the definition of NVR as provided in the Literature Review is taken into account, therefore referring to the use of non-violent, unarmed techniques employed against an opponent (Chenoweth & Cunningham, 2013, p. 271). It is defined as a series of tactics focused on employing non-conventional, non-violent methods to achieve a political goal (Chenoweth & Cunningham, 2013, p. 271; Atack, 2012, p. 6). NVR can be employed either as purely strategic technique which sees non-violence as a more successful option than violence, or as a collection of ideology and beliefs which are based on the rejection of violence (Atack, 2012, p. 7). Non-violence can be divided into principled and revolutionary non-violence (Smithey, 2017, pp. 210-211). Principled non-violence is both based on beliefs and strategy, therefore engaging in non-violent tactics due to a moral background and the belief that violence does more damage than good. Revolutionary non-violence is concerned with providing a non-violent framework strictly for transformation and mass mobilization, uniting people in the strategic employment of non-violent techniques to bring about political change (Smithey, 2017, pp. 210-211).

The idea of collective identity stems from the concept of identity, which can further be divided into the notions of personal identity and social identity (Stekelenburg, 2013, p. 1). A person can have multiple social identities based on the contexts they find themselves in, but only a singular, personal identity. (Stekelenburg, 2013, p. 1; Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 285). The latter refers to a person's individual characteristics, beliefs and thoughts, while the former is related to their relations to other people and their environments (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 285). Collective identity is therefore herby conceptualised as the common, interrelated ideas and beliefs which are shared between individuals, forming a collective identity in a group setting (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 285; Simon & Klandermans, 2001, p. 320; Taylor & Whittier, 1992, p. 105)

4.2. Research method

Qualitative research is focused on "the quality or nature of human experiences and what these phenomena mean to individuals." (Draper, 2004, p. 642). This type of research focuses on investigating human experiences and phenomena, and the way they impact different individuals (Draper, 2004, p. 642). For the purpose of this paper, thus explaining why and how collective identity impacts the emergence of NVRM, qualitative research proves to be an effective tool as it

looks at individual's meanings, explanations, and beliefs to shed light on political phenomena (Draper, 2004, p. 642). Additionally, while there are different methods of case selection involving one or more cases, this paper will focus on a Single Case Study structure. A single case study is a type of research design that focuses on intensively analysing a single case or unit, to draw conclusions on that case and possible generalizations on the topic (Gustafsson, 2017, p. 2). This case study has a variety of benefits, especially with regards to successfully scrutinizing a specific topic that is though to be illustrative of other cases, and confirmable through an analysis that will confirm or reject the hypothesis presented in the theoretical framework (Gustafsson, 2017, p. 11). Despite this, generalizing conclusions drawn from a single example poses concrete limitations related to whether that is a plausible explanation for something. Limitations and further research will be discussed in the conclusion. In the next section, an explanation of why Northern Ireland has been decided as the case study and how that is relevant to the topics of collective identity and NVRM will be provided.

4.3 Method of analysis

The method of analysis used to verify the theories and hypothesis is congruence analysis, which focuses on comparing existing theories to evidence found in scholarship (Blatter & Blume, 2008, p. 319). To successfully make inferences about a topic, congruence analysis requires some pre-conditions. Firstly, there needs to be a variety of coherent theories from which hypothesis and expectations can be reasoned; secondly, a multiplicity of different observations needs to be available (Blatter & Blume, 2008, p. 319). The theories relating to this thesis have already been put forward in the Theoretical Framework. Once the theories and their derived hypotheses are established, research based on congruence analysis consists on trying to compare and successfully match findings from the analysed data with the hypothesis deduced from the theories (Blatter & Blume, 2008, p. 319). The strength of the affinity between the two can help verify the extent of the finding's internal and external validity to the selected case. In the case of this research, the analysis will be focused on analysing existing literature, thus secondary data, to try and answer the research question.

4.4 Case selection: Internal and External Validity

Northern Ireland as a single case study can prove to have both internal and external validity, with internal validity referring to the extent to which the observed phenomena can confidently answer the research question through a cause-and-effect connection, and external validity referring to its applicability in other cases (Quintão, Andrade, & Almeida, 2021, pp. 269-270).

Northern Ireland's deep identity divisions are an important reason why conflict broke out in

the first place, with a Unionist/Protestant majority that sought to keep Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom as opposed to Ireland; and a Nationalist/Catholic minority within, who were discriminated against politically and who sought for Northern Ireland to be part of an all-Irish republic (McEvoy & Morison, 2003, pp. 971-972). Identity is thus this a crucial part of this case study, and its connection to the emergence and rising of NVRM is what makes Northern Ireland a fit example of a unit that is closely related and can help answer the research question. Northern Irish people used a combination of violent and non-violent means to express their nationalist feelings, but NVRM have been an important and regular occurrence in this conflict, hence its relevance to the case study (Smithey & Kurts, 2002, p. 326-327; Smithey, 2017, p. 204).

When it comes to external validity, the selection of Northern Ireland as a case study is relevant in terms of its applicability to other relevant cases. This can be investigated from both the topics of collective identity and non-violent resistance. Firstly, having a case that deals with social, political and religious collective identity ensures that a broad overview of the subtypes of collective identity is provided, and can be applied to other cases where the identity is suspected to have an impact on the emergence of political movements. Similarly, looking at the topic of non-violent resistance can help investigate other instances in which non-violent methods are used, their success and their implications.

4.5 Data Collection and Operationalization

Operationalization refers to the process of converting concepts (in this case NVRM and collective identity as described in section 4.1) into measurable variables (Toshkov, 2016, p. 100). Variables can be defined as "single operationalized dimensions of concepts" and are usually constituted by a dependent variable and an independent variable (Toshkov, 2016, pp. 112-115). The independent variable (IV) represents the main causal factor that is though to explain the outcome, and in this case the IV is collective identity (Toshkov, 2016, p. 115). The dependent variable (DV), also called the outcome variable, represents the outcome that the researcher tries to explain or predict, in this case NVRM emergence (Toshkov, 2016, p. 115). Concepts can be more or less direct in their ability of being translatable in a classifiable variable: a direct concept indicator can be precisely translated into a variable (such as frequency or amount); while more indirect concepts, which are not characterised by a precise measurement but instead by its presence and accountability in research, are harder to measure (Toshkov, 2016, p. 101). In this thesis, NVRM will be measured by analysing three representative non-violent movements active during the years of The Troubles, namely the Peace People, the Hunger Strikers and the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland. These are considered representative cases of non-violent movements as per their presence and relevance in secondary data focusing on NVRM. As per collective identity, I will analyse it by looking at data

sources and studying the presence in existing literature of mentions of people that grouped due to shared political, religious and ethnical beliefs and distinctions.

5. Analysis

5.1 Historical Background

The history of Northern Ireland is intricated and multifaceted, characterised by a variety of political, social and religious conflicts which deeply affected the lives of the people in the late twentieth century and still do so nowadays (Campbell & Ni Aolain, 2003, p. 871). While Northern Ireland's history and politics are deeply affected by disputes, the people always put an effort into evolving from the stagnant situation towards an institutional reform which could benefit their diverse needs (Campbell & Ni Aolain, 2003, p. 889). On one hand, there was a Unionist and Protestant majority in the country, who sought for Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom, and on the other hand there was a Nationalist and Catholic minority, who was often discriminated against and excluded from politics for wanting a unified Ireland with Northern Ireland included (McEvoy & Morison, 2003, pp. 971-972; Bosi, 2006, p. 82). The Northern Irish conflict (also defined as "The Troubles" was defined as irreconcilable, as the religious and political differences between the population deeply divided society, with opposite ideologies who could not be seen as compatible from either party (Murphy, Denyer & Pettigrew, 2021, p. 328; Bosi, 2006, p. 82). This parallel political and religious cleavages contributed to the eruption of conflict in 1969, which later continued until the cease-fires were announced in 1994 (McEvoy and Morison, 2003, pp. 971,972; Murphy, Denyer & Pettigrew, 2021, p. 328; Bosi, 2006, p. 82). During that time, there was a high amount of violence involved, from paramilitary to street violence, which resulted in 3,700 deaths and more than 40,000 injured (Murphy, Denyer & Pettigrew, 2021, p. 328). Despite the level of violence involved, a few non-violent resistance movements emerged, and in this paper I will take three of them into account: the Peace People of 1976, the Hunger Strikers 1980-1981 and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, referring to them in Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of the Peace People, Hunger Strikers and Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland.

NVRM	*Time period*	*Origins and motive*
Peace People	1976 - Present	Emerged in response to the increased, intense violent conflicts since 1969.

		Movement based on non-violent tactics and ideology employed to achieve a united Northern Ireland identity.
Hunger Strikers at Maze Prison	1978 - 1981	The British Government criminalized prisoners from The Troubles by denying them the status of war prisoners, and considered them ordinary criminals instead.
Civil Rights Movement (CRM)	1967-1972	The CRM started with a focus on political change and experienced numerous realignment of beliefs, from including different political identities to later presenting the traditional political divides. During its emergence, it focused on reformism, civil rights, social justice and non-violence.

Note: Smithey, 2017, p. 203 (Peace People); Baumann, 2009, p. 175 (Hunger Strikers); Bosi, 2006, p. 82, 90, 93 (CRM).

5.2 Analysis of Theory and Hypothesis 1

H1: Collective identity is central to group emergence and development.

The identity and ideology shared by the members of the Peace People is deeply rooted in the protest of violence due to the violent trauma they faced, a divided political system and lack of discourses engaging in making new, legitimate policies to unite the country (Smithey, 2017, pp. 206, 209). This analysis of the Peace People movement is mostly based on a study conducted by Smithey (2017, p. 205), expert on The Troubles conflict and author of works such as "Unionists, Loyalists, and Conflict Transformation in Northern Ireland", who provided an analysis of the Peace People to highlight the dynamics of collective action based on scrutinizing the ideas put forward by the leaders of the Peace People movement. On the 11th of August 1976, three children and 50 women died in the hands of the Irish Republican Army due to a fatal car chase and incidental shootings (Smithey, 2017, p. 206). To protest paramilitary and republican violence, women took this to the streets, rallying against the unjust violence and uniting people in their collective concerns regarding the boundaries of legitimate political action (Smithey, 2017, p. 207). While the Peace People had both characteristics relating to principled and revolutionary non-violence, this movement focused mostly on the former (Smithey, 2017, pp. 209- 211). The individuals felt strongly about the concept

of non-violence as seen in Christian religion, in its morally right attributes, and in the belief that a non-violent lifestyle is superior to a violent one (Smithey, 2017, pp. 212-213). In terms of identity, the Peace People were mostly concerned citizens who felt strongly about violent political change, and the movement managed to bring people from the divided society, including both Catholics and Protestants (Smithey, 2017, p. 203). It can be argued that in case of the Peace People, collective identity in terms of religious and political belief was not central in group emergence. On the other hand, the notion non-violence can be viewed as the common belief and ideology which brought people together and that stemmed into a collective identity, regardless of political cleavages.

When it comes to the Hunger Strikers, their collective political identity is more unified, sharing the belief for the Republican cause (Baumann, 2009, p. 177). Baumann (2009) provides insights on the events of the hunger strikes by reviewing existing literature on the topic and providing insights over non-violent resistance (p. 172). Additionally, Sweeney (1993, p. 421-422) looks into the topic of self-immolation as occurred throughout history as an expression of non-violent technique based on religious and ideological reasons, and Finn (2016, pp. 181-182) examines secondary sources regarding the effect of republican ideas on resistance. Seven out of the ten people that died due to self-immolation for the political cause were members of the IRA (Irish Republican Army), while the other three were members of the INLA (Irish National Liberation Army) (Baumann, 2009, p. 176). Similar in their Republican ideas, the IRA focused on challenging British authority in Northern Ireland; while the INLA emerged as a sub-group of the IRA, viewed unionists as reactionary, and had stricter views on an Irish unity (Finn, 2016, pp. 189,193). While the political ideology managed to bring the strikers together in their protest, their non-violence was embedded in a religious context (Baumann, 2009, p. 176). Specifically, some of the timings of the deaths were planned in accordance with the Christian calendar, to rise in salience at Christmas and Easter times (Baumann, 2009, p. 176). Their political and religious unity, and need for political transformation brought increased support for the Republican cause, and saliency to the issue of criminalization (Baumann, 2009, p. 178). This proved to be extremely relevant for political conciliation, as the impact that the deaths had pushed the British Government into mobilizing the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 (Baumann, 2009, p. 178). Because of the saliency and political conciliation that the movement brought, it can be said that their shared republican and religious belief successfully encouraged group development and emergence, corroborating the hypothesis.

The Civil Rights Movement (CRM) presented a variety of identity realignments which make it an interest example of how collective identity impacts group emergence. Bosi (2006, pp. 81-82) examines the emergence and development of the CRM trough a qualitative longitudinal analysis of the movement through the 1960s, to draw inferences on its salience, demise, and consequences.

From its emergence in the 1960s, the political alignment of the members of this movement included a variety of views, including "Nationalist reformers, socialist-republicans, leftist members of the NILP, progressive Unionists, liberals, trade unionists and Communist activists who engaged in cooperative activities in different intensities and scope" (Bosi, 2006, p. 88). The claims for civil rights, political justice and reforms to put an end to the violent conflict of The Troubles aided in creating an inclusive identity which encompassed people through feelings of solidarity and belonging, committing to non-violent principles for a civil rights cause (Bosi, 2006, p. 88). This is an analogous situation to the Peace People, as both groups saw a successful political transformation as more relevant than only including people from a specific political or religious cleavage (Bosi, 2006, p. 88; Smithey, 2017, p. 203). In 1968, the CRM gathered increasing support in the community, pushing both the British and the Irish government for political transformation which includes reforms and justice, while focusing on non-violent tactics (Bosi, 2006, p. 89). Only a year later, the ideological contradictions of the movement started to affect its members, and the differences in ideas and changing political situation affected the credibility of the movement (Bosi, 2006, p. 92). The discrepancies in the movement led civil resistance to turn into mobilization, and the non-violent tactics later got replaced by violent ones, due to the growing dissent and counter-mobilization (Bosi, 2006, p. 94). Despite this, the reformist political identity is what brought activists together in the first place, aiding in the group emergence and development. The reformist identity encompassed both political sides of the conflict, resulting in a shared identity related to political change rather than purely focused on Unionist or Nationalist views.

5.3 Analysis of Theory and Hypothesis 2

H2: Engaging in NVR can successfully alter the power relationships in a conflict, bringing the subordinates to power and provoking political change.

In order to investigate whether this hypothesis can be corroborated or not, I will look into how collective identity was used to change power relations in a non-violent way. When it comes to the Peace People, this grass-root movement engaged in the creation of a new political discourse which could bring people from different cleavages together, uniting them against non-violence (Smithey, 2017, p. 208). They established a non-profit company with trust funds to fund programs and businesses which led to the improvement of the socio-economic condition of its members, also aiding people who wanted to defect from the paramilitary rule (Smithey, 2017, p. 208). Despite this, the movement did not manage to successfully impact the existing relationships (therefore the violent conflict between Unionists and Nationalists) enough to be considered a successful change in power relations. Hardships in the leadership sector, financial problems and the resignation of

prominent figures led to the movement losing importance in the late 70s. The shared belief in non-violence was strong enough to bring people together, but not strong enough to alter the power relations. This might be because the movement was not based on uniting people from a specific religious or political cleavage, but rather a non-violent ideology.

Following with the Hunger Strikers, they can be used as an example of altering an obedience relationship firstly on a lower, individual way. The initial reason for the emergence of the hunger strikes was not related to The Troubles per se, but was rather due to the status of political prisoners, and whether they should be considered as such or as simply ordinary criminals instead (Baumann, 2009, p. 175). When the United Kingdom refused to consider them as war prisoners, the strikers rebelled against their authority by employing different material techniques, the most relevant of which was refusal to eat, that resulted in the death of 10 prisoners (Baumann, 2009, pp. 175-176). The hunger strikes were successful because the beliefs and demands were religious before they were political, uniting prisoners in their shared Catholic and later on Nationalist identity (Baumann, 2009, p. 176). Because of this, their religious and later political shared identity prompted them to alter the pre-established relationship in a non-violent way. After the deaths of 10 hunger strikers, there was an increased support for the Republican movement, and The Troubles became increasingly politicized (Baumann, 2009, p. 177).

With regards to the Civil Rights Movement, the reformist belief concerned with civil rights and social justice is the leading ideology which aided group emergence and development (Bosi, 2006, p. 88). When it comes to altering the existing power relationship in the conflict, the CRM engaged in non-violent techniques such as sending letters to both the Irish and British government, conducting petitions and leaflets campaigns, and establishing group meetings within the community (Bosi, 2006, p. 88). Despite this, the governments did not give in the political demands of the CRM, which also heightened in-group discrepancies and conflicts, and led them to wonder whether non-violent practices were the right answer in the first place (Bosi, 2006, p. 89). In the case of the CRM, collective identity in terms of pure reformist values was not enough to alter existing power relations, and CRM activists were fuelled by their traditional ideological divisions into engaging in more violent resistance (Bosi, 2006, p. 92). This might be because encompassing people with distinctive political ideologies into one common one was not enough to ensure that a prominent collective identity could be established.

5.4 Analysis of Alternative Explanations

AH1: Social and political cross-cut cleavages among groups enable the emergence of NVRM more than collective identity does.

The Peace People provide useful insights into this alternative hypothesis. As mentioned beforehand, this movement united people from different religious and political background into one concerned group of citizens against non-violence (Smithey, 2017, p. 203). The movement developed non-violent discourses which could resonate with as many people as possible, transcending the political boundaries (Smithey, 2017, p. 203). People united due to their strong belief in non-violence from a ethical, moral and religious point of view, which enabled the creation of a collective non-violent ideology related to The Troubles.

In terms of the Hunger Strikers, cross-cut cleavages did not play a role in their group formation and emergence. They shared the republican and nationalist belief of a united Ireland without British rule, which also stemmed from their religious context (Baumann, 2009, pp. 174-176; Bosi, 2006, p. 82; McEvoy & Morison, pp. 971-972). Because of this, the alternative hypothesis does not corroborate in the case of this movement, as it was the collective identities who encouraged the participation and success of non-violent resistance.

The CRM network was distinctive in its encompassing different political divisions for the sake of civil rights protection and social justice (Bosi, 2006, p. 88). Their inclusion of cross-cut cleavages among activists is what enabled the group emergence in the first place, thus making the claim of the AH1 partly correct. Despite this, as per the Peace People, the strong belief in reformist values can also be seen as a political cleavage and collective identity which aided the interrelatedness of the community. Additionally, the presence of people from different political network is what ultimately led to the demise of the movement, resulting in cross-cleavages affecting its success and development.

AH2: Collective identity is not enough to successfully mobilize people for a group interest, as individuals are self-interested.

The reasons for the demise of the Peace People are varied, and include the downfall of the leadership, economic difficulties, loss of interest by the people and lack of trust in the decision-making of the people in charge (Smithey, 2017, pp. 209-210). In the case of the Peace People, it was not simply the controversies of the funds that led to the increased disinterest by the people, but it also stemmed from a general shift due to decreased popularity and salience (Smithey, 2017, p. 209). The self-interest of the movement leaders cannot be taken as the main reason why successful mobilization decreased, also because the collective belief in non-violence is what brought people together in the first place, leading to successful rallies and protests (Smithey, 2017, p. 208).

In the case of self-immolation such as death due to starvation, it is hard to believe that the

deaths were due to self-interest. Hunger striking proved to be an efficient method for political transformation due to the selflessness and invulnerability of the act, pursuing sacrifice for an objective which would not affect the hunger strikers directly (Sweeney, 1993, p. 432). Engaging in self-immolation is a selfless act due to the fact that the people engaging in it are not assured the success in their act, and engage in it for strong beliefs.

With regards to the CRM, collective identity in terms of reformist beliefs was indeed enough to establish a non-violent movement, but ultimately did not aid in its success and establishment in the years afterwards. Despite this, the divergent beliefs of the Unionist and the Nationalist community cannot be regarded as purely based on self-interest, as both parties did initially engage in non-violent techniques, and later more violent ones, to pursue their own political claims. If seen as a purely group-based self-interest, then the political partition did affect the solidarity of the group, but it cannot be said that individual self-interest is what ultimately led to its demise, as activists still had strong ideas of political change for the benefit of the Northern Irish community (Bosi, 2006, pp. 92-93).

6. Discussion

This discussion section will delve into the corroboration of the hypotheses and the research question.

The analysis showed that non-violence can be as seen from a mere personalistic, moral point of view or as a strategical technique. When it comes to the Peace People, members of the group were united on their view against non-violence due to the horrific consequences that they saw happening in everyday life, and on its relation to the Christian religion (Smithey, 2017, pp. 212-213). Non-violence as seen from a ethical and moral perspective is what constituted their collective identity, and led to the group emergence and development, making the H1 true. As per the second hypothesis, they successfully managed to establish a community with a hierarchy, organization and funds, but the movement quickly lost momentum due to its lack of salience (Smithey, 2017, p. 208). Non-violence as operated by the Peace People was then not a successful means of achieving political change in terms of changing power relations.

The Hunger Strikers' identity, both political and religious, aided in the group emergence and development, also corroborating the first hypothesis. Additionally, they successfully managed to bring about political change, with non-violence as a means of achieving that, further corroborating the second hypothesis. Lastly, the CRM activists were divided into their political views initially, but their strong assertion of social justice established a collective identity of its own, leading to group emergence and corroborating the first hypothesis. However, their collective identity based on

reformist views was not enough to alter existing power relations in the conflict, thus non-violence on its own was not enough to achieve political change. Finally, the alternative hypothesis relating to cross-cut cleavages proved to be partly true: in the case of the Peace People and the CRM, uniting activists with different political cleavages did enable the emergence of NVRM, but whether it was simply due to their differences or their collective identity is debatable. Thinking of collective identity as presented in conceptualization, therefore as shared ideas and beliefs common to individuals and resulting in a collective group identity, can also include identity as a more general view, such as a reformist one, and not only related to a political denomination such as Unionist or Nationalist. Therefore, a collective identity based on a political view, and not a denomination, can still be a successful means of achieving group emergence. In the case of the NVRM presented, shared beliefs and ideas aided in group emergence, while not always leading to successful political change. Overall, when non-violence is engaged in for its strategic terms, it has a higher chance of successfully impacting the political situation and provoking change, as while the Peace Movement did not contribute to a change in power relations due to its moral stance, its strategic application by the Hunger Strikers did successfully bring about the development of the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985.

In terms of the CRM, non-violence was engaged in for both moral and strategic reasons, but the diversity of cross-cutting cleavages in members did not aid in its development, similarly to the Peace People. Nevertheless, as the research question is "Why and how does collective identity influence the emergence of non-violent resistance movements?", the analysis provided by these three movements show that uniting people with similar beliefs, whether religious or political, does manage to successfully impact NVRM emergence. The Peace People united in their non-violent ideology, the Hunger Strikers sharing republican and religious beliefs, and the CRM uniting people from different political backgrounds for the purpose of social justice can all be seen as groups being led by a collective ideology, which led to NVRM emergence. Whether the movement managed to be successful over time or subsequently subsided, does not impact the validity of the research question, as identity did ultimately matter in developing non-violent movements which united activists in their beliefs.

7. Conclusion

When it comes to movement emergence as presented in this thesis, uniting people with similar beliefs did prove successful in the establishment of NVRM. Collective identity is therefore relevant and necessary into the establishment of a NVRM, whether the concept of non-violence is seen as a moral justification, or a strategic matter, as it supported into uniting people with the same beliefs in

a group setting.

Nevertheless, this study presents some limitations. Firstly, engaging in a single case study research proves to be challenging when it comes to establishing external validity, as applicability to other cases is a contented topic when only one case is considered. Furthermore, only three representative cases of NVRM in Northern Ireland were considered, which is a limited number, and adding other cases might influence the answer to the research question. Lastly, the alternative hypotheses presented were scrutinized from a Northern Irish point of view solely, and therefore can have different implications if applied to a larger variety of cases.

Further research can assess these limitations in different ways. Firstly, the topic of the influence of collective identity on NVRM can be analyzed in other cases where non-violent resistance was employed, such as in Latin America, where citizens in Bolivia, Brazil and Uruguay employed such techniques in the 1980s, in the Middle East, where activists engaged in some non-violent techniques in Egypt in 2011, or Eastern European non-violent resistance in the 1980s (Empowering Nonviolence, paragraph 4). Broadening the research to encompass a variety of case studies can aid into making stronger inferences on the topic. Additionally, further research can investigate the case of NVRM in Northern Ireland by analyzing a broader variety of NVRM, and seeing whether collective identity impacts violent movement formation in a different or similar way. Finally, looking at the alternative hypotheses put forward in this thesis from a broader scope, encompassing different conflicts in other countries, can help draw broader conclusions on their applicability and relevance.

Non-violent resistance is still broadly used nowadays to evoke political change, it has proved successful in the past and will continue to be relevant in the future (Empowering Nonviolence, paragraph 4). In a world where conflicts are more often than not resolved through violent means, non-violent resistance is a beacon of hope into changing power relations and battling oppression without further exacerbating conflicts. Continuing the legacy established by Gene Sharp (2003, p. 14) can be crucial for ensuring the demise of violent conflicts today, and as the author proclaimed:

"It is our contention, to be explored later in more detail, that political defiance, or non-violent struggle, is the most powerful means available to those struggling for freedom."

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