Rise of the right from the streets: The theoretical understanding behind the emergence of the English Defence League.

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International Relations and Organisations

Bachelor Project: Social Movements and Political Violence

Bachelor's Thesis

Rise of the right from the streets: The theoretical understanding behind the emergence of the English Defence League.

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Word Count: 7992

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1. Introduction

The English Defence League (EDL) is considered to be a far-right, islamophobic group, established in June 2009 from a protest in Luton in retaliation to an earlier demonstration against the British soldier battalion returning from Iraq (Kassimeris & Jackson, 2014, p. 173). EDL is built on a common vision of high patriotism, a strong critique of the political structures and a strong anti-Muslim agenda (Pilkington, 2016, p. 4). Since it has no formal joining procedure, the full inner make-up of the EDL remains a mystery despite the strong media attention the group has received since the beginnings of the movement. EDL has been subject to various opinions from the public regarding the true motivations for its establishment, hence it is important to evaluate several social movement theories to gain a better perspective on the mechanisms that contributed to the rise of the EDL. Furthermore, understanding the theoretical basis of a movement based on a common dislike towards a certain group due to their differing origins or religious beliefs is central to this research. It is imperative to understand the reasons for the emergence of the EDL since there is limited research investigating the theoretical basis for this steady rise during the 2010s. Studies show that the rapid rise in right-wing movements does not match the relatively lower study of right or far-right movements (Castelli, Gattinara & Pirro, 2018, p. 454). Hence it can be noted that there is a significant research gap regarding the reasons behind this significant rise in right-wing parties and movements. Researching the EDL through a theoretical lens can provide insight into the sociopolitical conditions and grievances that have caused the growth of right-wing social movements. The results of this research can potentially provide information to aid in addressing and mitigating effects of anti-Islamic movements within the UK and beyond.

The research question will be focused on *whether social movement theories reflect the rise of the English Defence League (EDL)?* This research focuses on theories of resource mobilisation perspective (RMP) and collective identity. These theories look at social movements from a variety of perspectives, facilitating the analysis of different aspects of the EDL as an atypical right-wing party due to its distance from traditional fascist or neo-fascist sentiments however, this does not necessarily make the EDL any less right-wing (Pilkington, 2016, p. 4).

2. *Literature review*

The next section will lay out an overview of relevant literature, providing background information in order to answer the research question. The review explores right-wing discourse as well as a deeper understanding of the EDL as an organised movement.

2.1. The right-wing

According to Halikiopoulou and Vlandas (2022, Figure 1) between 2000 and 2010 the percentage share of European citizen votes for right-wing populist parties rose from about 7 to 16 percent. More importantly, Gattinara and Pirro (2018) identify the use of online platforms as a necessary resource for right-wing movements to mobilise and grow also from a social perspective (p. 449). The importance of social media for groups such as the EDL is also identified by other scholars, therefore this research will place a focus on the use of media such as Facebook through the lens of the RMP.

It is imperative to understand the rise of right-wing movements and their general ideology in context with the research. Research surrounding right and far-right politics analyses the situation of political parties rather than social movements. A significant amount of research on right-wing social movements is done in the form of case study analysis rather than exploring the general patterns of right-wing social movement emergence. However, authors analysing right-wing movements have found different reasons for the general rise in right-wing social movements in recent years. Worth (2019) argues that the global economic crisis of 2008, combined with neoliberal economic policies are the main contributors to the rise of right-wing movements (p. 51). Those in support of far-right ideologies seek to critique and change the social consequences that have come from the economic order reliant on globalisation (p. 5). Caiani (2018) claims that crises such as the economic and migrant issues that Europe has experienced within the last fifteen years have created conditions favourable for mobilisation (p. 919). She describes the social, economic and political aspects behind the rise of right-wing social movements at the macro-level and the individual and group reasons at the micro-level (p. 919). The author recognises that the issue cannot be understood if one only looks at the rise of the right from the perspective of a crisis, with the assumption that without said crisis such a phenomenon would not take place (p. 927). Overall, a significant research gap remains in understanding the reasons behind the rise of right-wing movements, despite their increasing popularity in society.

While some studies have recognised the role of online platforms and macro-level factors like economic crises and migration challenges, a comprehensive understanding of the general patterns and underlying factors driving the emergence of these movements is lacking.

2.2. The English Defence League

Much of the literature surrounding the EDL analyses individual motivations for joining the movement and the general importance of individual pull effects in joining social movements. Often authors place human emotions such as anger, victimisation and discontent at the forefront, where these emotions are seen both as a resource and a constructor of identity.

Pilkington (2016) provides a deeper analysis of the EDL as a movement from an outsider as well as an insider perspective. Her research acknowledges the crucial role of Islamophobia in people's emotions which is not a connection that is often explored when discussing the EDL (p. 4-5). The author explores general motivations and underpinnings for the existence of the EDL, analysing the idea of social movements as emotional movements and transforming emotions into action (p. 9). Furthermore, Treadwell and Garland (2011) explore the effect of masculinity and violence on individuals who are part of the EDL (p. 621). Authors argue that masculinity and violence stem from feelings of marginalisation that are translated into anger and disillusionment (p. 621). Like-minded individuals within local communities such as the British football firms[1] share these common negative feelings and the leaders of the EDL make use of this to encourage individuals to join (p. 626). Research makes use of interviews as a primary source to explain the construction of violence and masculinity as the dominant inter-group features between members of the EDL. Use of interviews provides an additional layer of understanding into the group psyche of the EDL thus explaining the rise as well as maintenance of the EDL as a social movement. However, only three EDL members were interviewed for the study, therefore it is difficult to apply the opinions expressed to the rest of the movement. Treadwell and Garland (2011, p. 623) recognise violence to be a resource which is in line with arguments posed by Pilkington (2016) who argues that emotions can be made into concrete actions and this idea has been harnessed by members of the EDL to a rather large extent (p. 197). Scholars argue that the standpoint of EDL members is

[1] Football firm is a term to describe groups of supporters for a certain team, who engage in violent behaviour associated with or motivated by his or her support of a football team (Oxford University Press, 2023)

largely constructed by feelings of victimisation and victimhood. As previously discussed by Treadwell and Garland (2011), victimhood within the EDL stems from personal experiences regarding economic, social and political realms of civic life e.g. receiving benefits, social housing and political agendas (p. 630). These factors lead to young, white, working-class British citizens wanting to escape feeling marginalised and ashamed, thus translating it into pride which creates a sense of needing to fight (p. 632). The sense of victimhood is highly pronounced within the EDL, hence it becomes one of the main building blocks of collective identity among its members. Oaten (2014) describes the birth of EDL's "collective victimhood" through the previously mentioned marginalisation, yet stresses the importance of group-identity created between its members (p. 333). Group identity cannot be equated to collective identity, since group identity constitutes the more general idea of collective identity. The author reveals that much of the research surrounding the EDL recognises the strength of its collective identity, yet makes no effort to analyse the reasoning and construction of it (p. 338).

The EDL is thus a compelling case study through its exemplification of common factors within social movements. An additional perspective of the right-wing is explored through social movement theories that address the research puzzle of the EDL's rise as a right-wing movement.

3. *Theoretical framework*

Social movement theories have two main approaches, the American approach focuses on mechanisms by which movements recruit participation, while the European approach focuses on social problems that transform into social movements (Peterson, 1989, p. 419). The chosen theories of collective identity and RMP effectively combine the two approaches of social movement theory. Furthermore, they best reflect the ideas and participation behind the EDL by focusing on individual motivations of members and the role of available political or personal resources that explain how the EDL emerged as a social movement. Their widespread application across numerous studies lends them significant credibility and robustness as theoretical lenses for understanding the emergence of movements such as the EDL.

3.1. Collective identity theory

Collective identity is defined as "an individual's cognitive, moral and emotional connection with a broader community, practice, or institution" (Fominaya, 2010, p. 394). It plays a defining part in almost all social movements, especially ones that have a prevalent discourse of the collective against "the others" (p. 395). Fominaya (2010) argues emotional aspects of collective identity have strong effects on the sense of social belonging through shared features such as a common leader, certain organisational structures, ideological direction and traditions (p. 396). According to social movement theories, this is one of the key features in forming a meaningful connection between members, as well as maintaining unity when faced with a number of challenges such as backlash or inner disagreements. Emotions are a crucial part of creating a sense of belonging and shared values within social movements, as they foster common understanding, bringing people to act together in pursuit of a common goal. Formation of a meaningful connection between individuals is achieved through the synthesis of individual beliefs, meanings and collective action and the product then becomes the collective identity of a movement (p. 394). Collective identity also reinforces an "us versus them" thinking, allowing individuals to distinguish a collective self from the self-proclaimed "other" (p. 395). This separatist thinking combined with emotional, affective ties can create an environment whereby collective identity is strong enough that members of a social movement can withstand a poor political environment.

Opp (2009, p. 204), on the other hand, analyses collective identity under a different lens that is developed by Melucci (1996, as cited in Opp) and takes a more empirical approach to understanding the concept. Here three factors are deemed as fundamental: formulating cognitive frameworks, activating relationships between actors and making emotional investments (Opp, 2009, p. 209). While also providing the same conceptualisation of the term "collective identity" as Fominaya (2010, p. 394), Opp (2009) dissects the differences between collective identity, by comparing property of individual actors as opposed to collective actors and developing two hypotheses (p. 217). Firstly, "stronger collective identity of individuals leads to higher likelihood of protest behaviour" and secondly, "stronger collective identity of a group leads to higher likelihood of collective protest" (Opp, 2009, p. 218). Therefore, while the common features are not clearly defined, they can be deduced as shared goals and beliefs. These hypotheses also confirm the above-discussed combination of individual belief, meaning and collective action to

be the main step towards achieving a collective identity. Collective identity and its formation based on common characteristics is only relevant when said characteristics or homogeneity fall into a certain category depending on the movement (Opp, 2009, p. 219). For instance, a British individual who used to be part of the *'Stop The War'* movement is not more likely to join the EDL than a British individual who is not part of any movement. Studies show however, that an individual who used to be part of the British National Party (BNP) is far more likely to be a part of the EDL, revealing a pattern (Opp, 2009, p. 218). It is important to note that the idea of "emotional bonds" is a necessary factor in successful formation of collective identity to act as a basis for social movements (Opp, 2009, p. 209). Therefore, both personal and collective persuasions within a social movement are of high importance when discussing the theory of collective identity within social movements.

3.2. Resource Mobilisation Perspective

RMP emphasises resources in the success or failure of social movements, with 'resources' implying both material and immaterial goods such as money, labour or intelligence (Angelopoulos et al., 2023, p. 2458). Resources are also defined as goods that can be controlled by individual or collective actors, including goods such as intelligence or skills, although not mentioned in some of the definitions in the field (Opp, 2009, p. 139). The focus of RMP is to understand what conditions are necessary to stipulate the eventual emergence of a social movement from accumulation of said resources. RMP regards social movements as political actors that use unconventional means in order to achieve their goals. RMP is regarded as " partial theory" by its original authors McCarthy & Zald (1977, as cited in Opp, 2009) since some of the conditions are taken as a given. It is also understood to be a "partial theory" due to its ability to hold up and explain the emergence or activity of a movement only if certain conditions are fulfilled (p. 127). RMP proposes a set of twelve contributing factors that may affect the emergence of a social movement; the factors cover organisational, social and political conditions that contribute to the growth of a movement (p. 128). However, Opp (2009) states that factors do not all have to be fulfilled in order for a social movement to qualify and run as a social

movement, therefore it can be debated which conditions are more imperative, if any (p. 129). Four of the twelve factors will be relevant to the case of the EDL.

Whether a community has a preference or a grievance towards a condition can further enhance the likelihood of the emergence of a social movement, since it represents a certain dissatisfaction with an existing factor (Opp, 2009, p. 136). The effect is highly dependent on the other factors mentioned above, hence the preference or grievance factor can be regarded as an interaction effect or as a pre-condition before the movement has fully emerged. Finally, Opp (2009) further provides an analysis of the theoretical development by McCarthy and Zald (1977, as cited in Opp) who suggest that when looking at RMP, micro and macro versions of the theory have to be taken into account (p. 142). The macro versions differentiate between availability of organisational resources such as organising facilities and political resources such as political structures and opportunities (Opp, 2009, p.135). Meanwhile, the micro-level model of RMP refers to the social networks between individuals who are involved in social movements and protest culture, which act as a resource for mobilisation. Both macro and micro-level versions of RMP contribute to the emergence of social movements but are intricately interwoven and understood via the lens of rational choice theory (p. 142).

4. Research design and methods

This section outlines the design and methods that will be used to answer the main research question: *To what extent do social movement theories explain the emergence of the English Defence League?*

Qualitative research is best suited for this research since it evaluates how opinions, views and beliefs shape a movement. Furthermore, it is best suited for research where the answer lies within the wider context and "between the lines" of the text (Halperin & Heath, 2020, p. 376), since the method allows for inferencing based on context. Qualitative analysis looks beyond the dependent and independent variables and recognises other variables that might be influential to the dependent variable. Figure 1 illustrates the steps for the chosen testing as the main medium for the research, specifically the system-driven (SCM) research path. Here the EDL becomes instrumental and is understood as a phenomenon within research. Furthermore, collective

identity theory and RMP will serve as the main tools in triangulation in order to test the explanatory power of these theories. The research question entails the analysis of a certain social movement through the use of theory. Therefore, it is best to use observational testing with a case study in the form of the EDL. This method of testing allows one to observe whether a certain assumption/s fits the predicted narrative, in this case, whether collective identity theory or resource mobilisation theory is better fitted to explain the emergence of the EDL (Evera, 2016, p. 29).

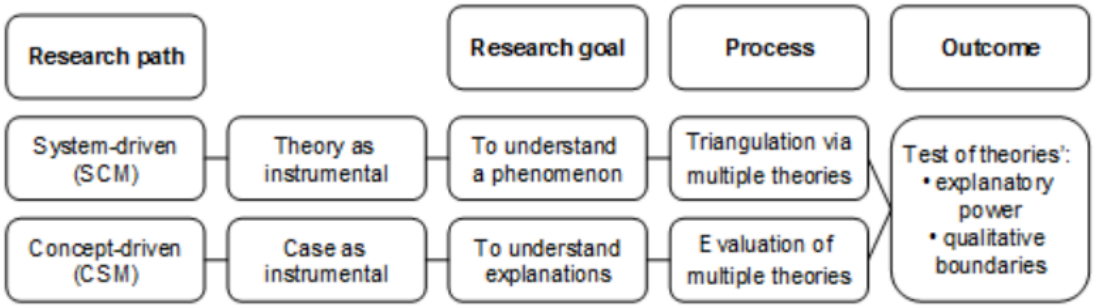

Fig. 1 (Løkke & Dissing Sørensen, 2014, p. 67)

4.1. Case and theories

The English Defence League (EDL) is the chosen case study since it has received limited recognition in the academic field from the theoretical perspective. The EDL has gained a significant amount of attention from the media and consequently the public, likely due to its methods of protest that attract media attention, later translating into increased interest in the reasons and people behind the EDL. Despite the interest, theoretical understandings of the EDL remain limited to certain theories or aspects of the movement. Collective identity theory and RMP were chosen as the best fit for understanding the emergence of EDL as a social movement group. RMP is well-fitted to explain the development and success of social movements in terms of resource use and acquisition (Angelopoulos et al., 2023, p. 2458). Meanwhile, collective identity theory is based on the action and interaction of phenomena that can be observed within groups of people, thus explaining social movement emergence from a different perspective (Fominaya, 2010, p. 394). While both theories assess relatively different aspects of social movement emergence, it can be determined which of these aspects is best fit to explain the

emergence of the EDL. Collective identity theory will be assessed via factors of social belonging which looks at common leadership, clear ideological direction, common identity, traditions and finally the role of emotions. RMP on the other hand, will be assessed via factors regarding social media, personal resources, analysis of the 12 enabling factors of social movements, and macro and micro perspectives.

4.2. Data selection

In order to effectively answer the research question, content analysis of secondary sources mainly consisting of journal articles, book chapters, and interviews were analysed in order to understand the emergence of the EDL in a theoretical context. This method provides a well-rounded plethora of data, which might be more difficult to obtain otherwise since the research involves analysing a large population (Halperin and Heath, 2020, p. 374). The use of academic literature is beneficial for understanding the theoretical mechanisms of social movements, yet non-academic sources such as interviews, provide an alternative viewpoint by understanding personal narratives and motivations of individuals involved in social movements. The acquisition of keywords within the sources about the EDL that relate to the collective identity theory or RMP was the main tool in the analysis. When looking at evidence of collective identity theory, any language that relates to human emotions or events may cause heightened reactions, thus bringing members of the EDL closer to one another. Moreover, when identifying information that relates to RMP, it is important to look for phrasing that is connected to any material goods such as the acquisition of money or immaterial goods such as skills that fit the methods that the EDL deploys during their protests. However, this scope is not conclusive and other analytical points of data collection can be acquired at a later point, if any additional data is necessary for the research.

Data analysis in such a manner is relatively systematic and direct, as it ensures there are certain points of reference to create a framework that prevents the collection and analysis of information that is not relevant to the research. However, this can also cause valuable data to be missed in a case where the lexicon is not directly linked but instead, it is inferred. This is more likely to be the case in a source such as an interview or when a direct quotation is used.

5. Analysis

The emergence of the EDL is an important point to research, as it not only highlights defining characteristics of a movement but exemplifies how a movement is likely to develop or explain why it already has. The dependent variable (DV), characterised by the emergence of EDL is determined by multiple factors on micro, meso and macro levels. These characteristics include personal values, organisational ideologies and societal factors that affect mobilisation and will be further discussed (Caiani, 2019, p. 920). Results of the research do not show a clear direction towards either of the studies presented. Yet both collective identity theory and resource mobilisation theory as the independent variables (IV) are well applicable to the rise of EDL as the DV. In addition, the outcome reveals unexpected overlaps where one theory can be used to explain another.

Arguments described in the theoretical framework make a case for the importance of emotions, as well as types of available resources. These arguments create a structure based on which the rise of the EDL can be assessed from the two theoretical perspectives. When applying evidence to the case of the EDL, views of its members and tools that the organisation uses to gain members and media attention are the main points of analysis.

The analysis focuses on the two theories separately by applying theory and discussing the findings from each of the main concepts that contribute to the rise of social movements. Firstly, the discussion will focus on identifying how key elements of collective identity theory contribute to the emergence of the EDL, which consists of social belonging, emotional bonds, role of collective vs individual identities and finally how these factors caused the eventual decline of the EDL. Next, the discussion will shift to discussing the contribution RMP had towards the rise of EDL through the focus on macro and micro approaches as well as the discussion on the 12 main factors identified within RMP theory.

5.1. Historical background

The EDL was formed in 2009 as a response to the protests by an Islamist group against the British troops returning from Afghanistan (Braouezec, 2016, p. 368). The United Peoples of Luton (UPL) organised this counter-demonstration in March of 2009, which was later followed by a number of other protests, all related to anti-Islam sentiments (Allen, 2011, p. 283). By

summer of 2009, the name *English Defence League* first appeared in the press. The EDL emerged as an organisation in Luton, a town north of London with a relatively large Asian and Islamic population. Treadwell and Garland (2011) identify a pattern of the EDL being more prominent in areas where the Islamic population is more significant such as that of Luton and Birmingham (p. 626). In Luton, the Muslim population in 2021 was 32.9 percent and in Birmingham, this percentage reached 29.9 percent whereas in most areas in the rest of the UK, the number is between 0.3 and 7.4 percent (Office for National Statistics, 2021).

The BNP is seen by some as the main predecessor of the EDL, yet this cannot be confirmed since the two have significant differences, with the BNP working as a political party and the EDL working as a social movement as the main one. Despite there being very little concrete evidence for this, the EDL has previously echoed the sentiments of the BNP leader Nick Griffin, regarding government's lack of action against extremist Islamists (Allen, 2011, p. 284).

As mentioned previously, the EDL is considered to be a far-right, islamophobic social movement, yet discussion concerning the classification of the group remains contentious. Islamophobia fits into the overall ideology of the EDL as it is defined as patterns of meaning and ideas, expressed through symbols that affect the way one views society (Allen, 2011, p. 290). According to Pilkington (2016) it is more fitting to describe EDL as a 'populist radical right' (p. 4) movement, since it is significantly more focused on the concerns of working-class people against the elites. Meanwhile, EDL has previously referred to itself as a 'new far-right movement' (Kassimeris & Jackson, 2014, p. 175). Similarly, Braouezec (2016) also refers to EDL as a far-right movement, therefore conceptualisation of EDL within the right-wing movement category is difficult (p. 639).

5.3. Collective identity theory

5.3.1. Social belonging

Many of the concepts discussed within theories of collective identity and resource mobilisation are reflected in the rise of the EDL. Both are highly important in shaping the emergence of the EDL through emotional bonds, a sense of belonging, as well as availability of resources such as strong involvement and social media presence.

A sense of social belonging is built from certain building blocks and within the EDL this belonging is mainly built from having a common leader and a clear ideological direction. Tommy Robinson became the leader and face of the EDL in August 2009, after a rally in Birmingham where he was noticed by the public and media (Meleagrou-Hitchens & Brun, 2013, p. 13). From the outside perspective, Robinson's role as a leader was important in his display of victimisation, which was shown to be a crucial point within the EDL (Oaten, 2014, p. 343). The public show of Robinson as a victim of political discourse within the UK created a strong sense of belonging among members of the EDL, since collective victimhood is one of the strongest elements of collective identity within EDL. Therefore, deploying the idea of a self-constructed victim creates a sense of commonality among members, since their emotions are shared and the leader stands together with his people rather than above them.

It is clear that having a strong, common leader with whom members share a cause and vision is a highly important factor in facilitating an environment for the growth of a social movement. Members of the EDL report feeling an emotional attachment to Robinson, some of which feel a sense of respect while others feel significantly stronger and would "march into hell for Tommy" (Pilkington, 2016, p. 45). Such statements affirm the theory that having a common leader establishes and maintains commitment to the cause within a social movement. In addition to a clear commitment to Robinson as a leader, members of the EDL also show signs of pride for their leader by claiming that there is no one "bigger or better" (p. 45). Thus, despite seeing Robinson as a leader who shares their struggles, EDL members believe that he possesses qualities such as passion or drive that make him fit to stand and speak in the name of hundreds of members. Shared understanding of common values or "reciprocal identification" allows for a further strengthened sense of commitment within a group (Fominaya, 2010, p. 395). Thus, Robinson possesses factors that foster the creation and maintenance of a collective identity within the first few months of the existence of the EDL.

The ideology of a social movement also plays a crucial role in forming a sense of social belonging (Fominaya 2010, p. 398). It is evident that ideological similarities are crucial for a movement such as the EDL since it involves itself in highly political matters. The EDL is a right-wing social movement therefore it is highly concerned with the threat that other ethnic minorities may pose to the British national identity (Pilkington, 2016, p. 3). Common ideology uniting the individuals is a subconscious act within the community since ordinary members of

the EDL are normally less concerned with the overall political leaning of their fellow peers. A united ideology is rather expressed through different aspects that constitute a right-wing ideology such as nationalism which stands at the forefront of all right-wing denominations (Castelli Gattinara & Pirro, 2018, p. 447). In addition, the EDL are difficult to place into a more specific ideological box than that of the right-wing since scholarly opinions differ, likely due to the EDL not conforming to certain right-wing values. For example, the EDL does not reject the LGBTQ+ community which has a specific division within the EDL however, the group conforms to ideas of preservation of national identity, yet does not go to the full extent of absolute nativism[2]. Consequently, Islamophobia is a crucial aspect of the right-wing ideology that is arguably the most important aspect of the overall ideology of the EDL. Islamophobia also unites members of the group mostly on a conscious level since among the common ideals shared by members of the EDL is a strong dislike towards members of the Muslim community. To an extent, Fominaya's emphasis on common ideologies is reflected in the EDL since members joined for the specific reason of wanting to do something about Muslim communities due to this dislike (Treadwell & Garland, 2011, p. 631).

The ideological direction of a social movement plays a significant role in its organisational structures, since movements such as the EDL, which operated as a street movement, tend to not have advanced organisational structures, especially while a movement is not developed, but still on the rise (Kriesi, 2012, p. 153). The EDL is certainly a right-wing activist group, based on not only the ideas that the group promotes but also on its members' own attitudes and ideologies. While the leaders of EDL have followed the recent pattern among right-wing groups and attempted to steer away from its image as a far-right, Islamophobic movement, its members and affiliates provide a different idea (Kassimeris & Jackson, 2014, p. 175). Evidence shows highly nationalistic elements are widely present in many EDL protests, with many members having matching hoodies that mirror symbols of the Crusaders and England flags, also known as St. George's cross can also be commonly seen during EDL protests. Thus bringing together the past with the present, possibly to symbolically legitimise their cause. Such symbolism not only provides a sign of identification as well as a sense of belonging, as the right-wing, nationalistic

[2]Nativism - political policy of promoting the interests of native inhabitants against those of immigrants, including by supporting immigration-restriction measures

symbolism becomes a point of appreciation or admiration. Facilitation of such interactions or emotions provide an object to unite under since it acts as a non-structural unifying mechanism. Another such point of unification is the common identification of being anti-Islamic. Members of the EDL have identified the Islamic community, namely those of Pakistani descent, as the main culprits who wish to apply their traditions to the British people and therefore, must be opposed. The imminent threat of Islam is the main cause for members of the EDL to be a part of the movement however, it also is one of the main ideological concepts under which the EDL was created. Therefore, the emergence of the EDL boils down almost exactly to Islamophobic ideas.

Finally, when looking at the importance of traditions in a social movement, the EDL does not have many traditions that are directly linked to the movement at the time of its emergence. However, the EDL itself emerged from traditions of football hooliganism, as members of the EDL are largely linked to these groups (Treadwell & Garland, 2011, p. 621). The tradition has been connected to football fan communities who form firms to perform violent acts against other supporters. Therefore, connections within firms are maintained and common traditions are kept as another unifying essence to reinforce collective identity. Furthermore, traditions of football hooliganism allow members of the EDL to acknowledge and combat feelings of marginalisation and victimhood, through violent means, reinforcing the masculine ideals of many members (p. 622). Tradition of violence is entrenched in the individual identities of many EDL members, hence it becomes part of collective identity when brought into a movement where most peers have similar identities.

5.3.2 Role of emotions

Social movement theorists place great importance on the emotions of individuals that foster inner relations and bring people together for a common goal. In the case of the EDL, emotions that members portray on the outside are largely negative, mainly that of anger and violence, and are known as shared emotions. These emotions stem from a sense of disappointment and are channelled into protesting and deploying violent methods in order to bring attention to the issue of marginalisation. These emotions are then directed at the "Islamic other", through protest and violent behaviours towards individuals (Treadwell & Garland, 2011, p. 621). The transformation of these negative shared emotions into action is known as "emotional transformation" and it

proposes that an initial negative emotion is amplified and becomes emotional energy (Pilkington, 2016, p. 179). Such frameworks provide further understanding of the rise of EDL as a social movement. For example, members of the EDL interviewed by Treadwell & Garland (2011) all share feelings of shame and anger which were harnessed by leaders of the EDL to gain momentum in size and actions (p. 626). Furthermore, the central theme of collective victimhood is present in both the individual as well as collective identities of the EDL members. However, members of the EDL share other common values such as anti-Islam sentiments and nationalism, reinforcing a strong common identity. Mellucci's hypothesis stating that strong individual collective identity results in protest behaviour and strong collective group identity results in collective protest stands to be accurate in the case of the EDL. With the knowledge that the EDL formed out of another protest group, such theory effectively explains the emergence of the EDL not only as a protest group but also as a group with a stringent collective identity. In essence, it can be argued that one reinforces the other. From the very beginnings of the movement EDL has appealed for collective action, not only through their ideology but also through calls for action such as: "we will not tolerate this" (Oaten, 2014, p. 343). Therefore, placing emotions of anger and determination at the forefront of the movement.

5.4. Resource Mobilisation Perspective (RMP)

Resource mobilisation perspective (RMP) places focus on a different aspect of studying social movements by emphasising on structure, thus creating a more rational approach than collective action theory (Fominaya, 2010, p. 343). The idea of "resources" is understood through both material and immaterial goods. The EDL does not possess a great deal of material resources due to a lack of official membership system, hence members are not charged for a membership (Pilkington, 2016, p. 39). Instead, the EDL is highly reliant on its members as its main resource, which manifests itself in multiple ways.

5.4.1. Social media

Purposeful use of social media, as well as commitment from members, are the main resources that facilitated the emergence of the EDL (Allen, 2011, p. 285). Social media, especially Facebook, has arguably played the most important role in the rise of the EDL. On a national level, Facebook groups attracted and mobilised members generally however, groups run by local divisions were relatively more important in member recruitment and organisation of action. Within the groups, members shared mainly news, protest information and pieces of knowledge. Provision of access to materials and resources to "educate" members of the EDL about Islam, were materials to further solidify its members' belief in the cause and justify their actions (Kassimeris & Jackson, 2014, p. 176). The mobilisation of different kinds of materials within these Facebook groups is considered to be resources that strengthen the EDL as a group and consequently, as a movement. The use of social media attracted a large number of the EDL member base, which can be seen as a significant resource mobiliser in itself. Members of the EDL are the most important vessels of the movement in regard to the relay of information as well as the general message to the public. Between 2009 and 2011, the EDL's official Facebook page gained support of around 85,000 people, indicating that their use of social media platforms to attract and educate members was highly effective given the already existing sentiment against Islamic communities (Allen, 2011, p. 286).

In addition to social media exposure, from the very beginnings of the movement in 2009, the EDL received high media coverage, with interviews from its leaders and reports of latest protests and riots. Such coverage significantly increased the number of people exposed to ideas of the EDL (Bartlett & Littler, 2011, p. 10). In turn, it increased interest in joining the movement, acting as an indirect resource and further establishing it as a well-known right-wing movement with clear ideas.

5.4.2. Personal resources

An integral part in resource mobilisation for the EDL is the use of its members' time, labour and connections to bring in more people or cultivate their identity. Highly involved members went beyond simply investing time to attend protests or rallies and helped to participate in organising or running Facebook pages locally. One of the members responsible for running one of the local

Facebook groups could spend an entire day ensuring that information on the page reflects the identity of the EDL by filtering and removing any inadequate posts (Busher, 2017, p. 329). Dedication from existing members to do more than attend rallies not only ensures that the movement stays active and clear activity but dedication from existing members encourages other people to join, which is crucial for a social movement when it is just beginning to emerge. Therefore, the effort of members becomes EDLs biggest resource since it performs the same actions that financial resources would in terms of human resources.

RMP is further broken down into twelve enabling factors that affect the emergence of social movements. The proposed factors do not require to be completed for a movement to be recognised as a successful social movement, yet the factors contribute to the overall rise of the movement. The EDL directly displays four of the twelve factors: linkages of social movements to other groups, minimal form of organisation, infrastructure such as communication media and expenses, levels of affluence, degree of access to institutional centres, pre-existing networks, and occupational structure and growth, and political freedom (Opp, 2009, p. 128).

Firstly, prior to the founding of EDL, many individuals were in a different right-wing social movement such as the BNP or UPL who shared large parts of their ideological vision. In addition, many of the individuals were also previously part of a football firm which in itself is a social group with common social values. Therefore, a transfer of members could be observed, contributing to the existence of resources as well as, maintenance of ideological values, thus ensuring a stronger emergence of the EDL. Second, the EDL did not have a rigid structure since the beginning of the movement, likely due to its existence as a street movement, as its main function is to protest and rally. The larger EDL community was divided into local divisions, with members organising local protests. These divisions were based on geographical distributions, with some overlap in terms of activity in certain areas, which likely stems from a rapid rise in members early on (Pilkington, 2016, p. 43). Such organisation does not create difficulty to follow hierarchies and structures which could deter members from joining a new movement. Therefore, especially while the EDL was emerging, it was favourable for minimal structure to enable new memberships and activity first, without hierarchical constraints. In addition, an average EDL member is highly critical of the government and its seemingly unlimited powers while in office due to feelings of marginalisation. Therefore, it is unlikely that members of the

EDL would be in favour of rigid hierarchies of control, meaning further diminishing the movement and harming its rise. Third, from the very beginnings of the movement in 2009, the EDL received high media coverage, with interviews from its leaders and reports of latest protests and riots. Such coverage significantly increased the number of people exposed to ideas of the EDL in turn, increasing interest in joining the movement (Bartlett & Littler, 2011, p. 10). Such media exposure further acted as a catalyst for the emergence of the EDL as a more affluent right-wing movement, as it also replaced other well-known movements with similar ideas such as the BNP. Lastly, the UK is considered to be a politically free country according to the Freedom House Index (Freedom House, 2023). Therefore, the EDL had the ability to express their concerns and demands largely without interference from the authorities, except when evidence of violence was involved. In addition, in 2011 the Metropolitan Police's National Coordinator for Domestic Extremism denied claims of the EDL as an extremist movement and encouraged open dialogue (Kassimeris & Jackson, 2014, p. 184). Political freedom within the UK provided the EDL with political resources to emerge as a strong social movement that is free to follow its ideology. In addition, the authorities were still criticised for their approach to the EDL, claiming that turning to brutality is not violence but simple "banter" (Pilkington, 2016, p. 168). The social background of football violence and social marginalisation for many members also indicates a dislike for the authorities, thus running into problems with the authorities acts as an additional resource for group cohesion within the EDL.

Macro and micro perspectives view social movements from separate scopes of resource availability. The macro perspective analyses the availability of organisational and political resources, while micro perspective analyses the social networks between individuals within social movements and protest culture, which act as a resource for mobilisation (Opp, 2009, p.135). This perspective ties together aspects of collective identity theory under the RMP umbrella, providing an alternative outlook on social movement emergence. The EDL displayed weak aspects of the macro perspective through its minimal organisational structures and political resources. The concept of political resources includes authority and political participation that affect the influence a movement has on the government. The EDL emerged as a street movement and was concerned with expressing opinions and changing the social discourse among local communities, rather than influencing national policy. The chair of the EDL wished for the movement to remain focused on street demonstrations rather than government-targeted activities

(Pilkington, 2016, p. 212). Thus, the political resources in possession of the EDL were limited to social change on a citizen level, hence their emergence could also be seen as representing the voice of the people, ensuring exposure to the public. The micro perspective is more representative of the EDL with its focus on individual connections and networks. As previously discussed, the EDL emerged from a mix of other social movements with similar ideologies, therefore its rise can be explained through connections with other social movements as well as personal networks. Individual networks partially account for the reasons behind the rapid growth of the EDL within the first year of its emergence.

5.5. Discussion

Many of the criteria within collective identity theory are well-matched to the inner composition of the EDL. Strong notions of social belonging were present within the EDL and the effect of a unifying identity that arises from traditions and common socioeconomic and political background was distinguished throughout the research. The overall role of emotions proves to be crucial in the reasoning behind emergence of the EDL as it is the root cause behind many of the previously discussed factors. Emotional transformation is the main mechanism through which the mainly negative emotions fuel the rise of the EDL, while positive emotions reinforce group identity, strengthening the EDL from the inside. Importance of emotions in both social actions and inner cohesion of the movement indicates that the role of emotions play is the most crucial within collective identity theory as it is the core building block and a connecting element for the emergence of the EDL.

Within RMP however, many of the factors have weaker explanatory power regarding the rise of the EDL. The analysis leads to the conclusion that RMP provides an explanation for the basic processes of social movements. Furthermore, while it is overall well-fitted to explain many of the mechanisms in which social movements sustain themselves, it only partially explains the emergence of a street movement such as the EDL. However, the personal resource aspect of RMP best explains how the EDL could emerge as a social movement from a more rational perspective. In addition, micro and macro perspectives of RMP best illustrate the difference between organisational versus social/personal resources with the EDL mainly possessing the latter. The discussed social movement theories do not work separately and overlap with one

another, meaning that it is difficult to apply separate theories to a case study and assess their fit almost independently.

To conclude, both collective identity theory as well as RMP are well fitted to the case of the EDL. However, in some aspects the collective identity theory is better suited to explain the rise of the EDL, due to its origin as a street movement. The main trump of the EDL was not its funds or skill resources since their recruitment, mobilisation and maintenance were highly dependent on the involvement of its members. Facebook groups and other media resources were the main resources of the EDL, hence the rapid rise and success of the movement can be mostly explained through the reasons of the individual. Collective identity theory is better fitted to EDL when assessing the overall fit for each category however, RMP provides useful linkages to collective identity theory within its framework. This leads to the conclusion that social movement theories are well-fitted to explain the emergence of the EDL to an extent. A single social movement theory is less suitable to provide explanations however, considering different theories such as RMP and collective identity theory are effective in providing a basis for understanding the rise of the EDL.

6. Conclusion

The EDL is a street movement, therefore most of its power lies within the people who came together and established the movement and others who joined soon after. For movements such as the EDL, its emergence is largely explained by its members, their motivations and beliefs. However, effects of the existing environment heavily affect these individuals and in turn, the movement. On the other hand, all movements must have resources in order to not only emerge but rise to have an impact in the manner that the EDL did within the first two years of its emergence. Here, RMP explains the reasons for why EDL could emerge and capture the attention of the nation soon after its formation in 2009.

The study focuses on the rise of the EDL rather than its whole lifespan, thus the research can be seen as partically reductive since it is possible that the chosen social movement theories would provide a rather different outcome. While there is some available literature that uses interviews or any other direct sources from members of the EDL, more expansive literature could provide a

better insight into formation of identity and resources that occurred within the movement. It is noted by scholars who have studied the EDL that its members are rather cautious of outsiders who attempt to gain information, therefore it is likely that the available information is not rich enough. Thus additional research from past members could close the existing research gap. Next, most of the research regarding the EDL had been conducted during its peak years 2010-2013 which means that understanding of the movement was not extensive due to the EDL still working as an active movement. Conducting additional research on the EDL after more than 10 years of its original creation can provide information about the general impact the organisation has had on its members as well as the general British public. Finally, this research has led to the conclusion that it is difficult to use a single distinct theory to explain the rise of a movement, thus there is a need for development within the field, creating a hybrid theory that considers all scopes of a street social movement.

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