

**BEFORE THE REVOLUTION: IDENTITY LEADERSHIP,
MOBILISATION, AND STATE REPRESSION DURING AND BEFORE
THE VELVET REVOLUTION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA**

by

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To women in academia

“Courage is the root of change – and change is what we're chemically designed to do. So when you wake up tomorrow, make this pledge. No more holding yourself back. No more subscribing to others' opinions of what you can and cannot achieve. And no more allowing anyone to pigeonhole you into useless categories of sex, race, economic status, and religion. Do not allow your talents to lie dormant, ladies. Design your own future. When you go home today, ask yourself what YOU will change. And then get started.”

Bonnie Garmus, *Lessons in Chemistry*

Abstract

Previous leadership theories represented leaders as unique individuals who gain influence by manipulating the masses. This perspective has been challenged by the social identity approach to leadership (Haslam et al., 2011/2020). However, past studies on identity leadership have primarily focused on how leaders use rhetoric to create a shared social identity with their followers (*identity entrepreneurship*), neglecting the performative means through which leaders also create a shared social identity (*identity impresarioship*). Additionally, the role of leadership in mobilising and organising collective action has been insufficiently explored, particularly in repressive regimes.

This thesis employs a social psychological analysis to understand how leaders used the performative aspects of leadership, and how were these strategies linked to mobilisation and organisation of collective action in a repressive setting - 'communist' Czechoslovakia. Through thematic analysis of interviews with opposition leaders (Studies 2, 3), I found that leaders creatively designed the performative aspects of collective events (*identity impresarioship*), part of which they also used to overcome the constraints of the repressive regime. These leaders designed collective action to be meaningful for participants and co-created the movement with their followers, fostering conditions for *engaged followership* to emerge.

Part of this research involved examining how the dominant group (Czechoslovak Communist Party) demobilised leaders' efforts. Discourse analysis of archival documents (Study 1) showed that, besides visible preventative measures, the Party employed social-psychological tools to legitimise repression in their rhetoric. The rhetorical/ideological aspects of their talk and the institutional accountability management for potential accusations of acting repressively served as additional, subtle demobilisation strategies.

This thesis offers a deeper understanding of *identity impresarioship*, for instance, the leaders' roles in creating and attributing meaning to shared social identity via performative means, symbols, and collective rituals. These findings also enhance our understanding of leadership in repressive contexts – both the opposition and dominant group.

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Declaration

I declare that:

- The work presented in this thesis is my own and embodies the results of my research during my period of registration.
- I have read and followed the University's Academic Integrity Policy and that the thesis does not breach copyright or other intellectual property rights of a third party. Where necessary I have gained permission to reproduce copyright materials.
- Any material which has been previously presented and accepted for the award of an academic qualification at this University or elsewhere is clearly identified in the thesis.
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Declaration of collaborative work:

The data presented in Chapter 4 have partially appeared in a previously published work in the British Journal of Social Psychology as *Impresarios of identity: How the leaders of Czechoslovakia's 'Candlelight Demonstration' enabled effective collective action in a context of repression* by Klara Jurstakova, Evangelos Ntontis, & Stephen Reicher. I am the lead author on this paper, which represents the fact that I carried out data collection, analysis, and writing. I received feedback from Evangelos Ntontis and Stephen Reicher, who are the co-authors of this publication.

The data presented in Chapter 5 have partially appeared in a manuscript in-press, as part of a book titled 'Resistance to Repression and Violence: Global Psychological Perspectives' edited by Fouad Bou Zeinedinne & Johanna Ray Vollhardt, in a chapter *The Dynamics of leadership and resistance in repressive regimes: The cases of Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and Polish People's Republic* by Klara Jurstakova, Evangelos Ntontis, & Dennis Nigbur. I am the lead author of this chapter, which represents the fact that I carried out data collection, analysis, and writing. I received feedback from Evangelos Ntontis and Dennis Nigbur, who are the co-authors of this publication.

Chapter 1 –

Overview of Research

“We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it ‘excludes’, it ‘represses’, it ‘censors’, it ‘abstracts’, it ‘masks’, it ‘conceals’. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production.”

Michel Foucault (1979/2020, p. 194)

1.1 Introduction

In 1989 a series of non-violent revolutions happened in Eastern Europe, bringing the end of the Cold War, the Soviet Union, and the repressive ‘communist’ regime¹ in Czechoslovakia (Kershaw, 2018; Wheaton & Kavan, 2019). The year 1989 is often presented as a “year of miracles”, but the enormous social, political, economic, and cultural change did not happen overnight (Kenney, 2003). Indeed, revolutions can suddenly start to escalate. However, this does not mean that resistance or revolutions appear out of nowhere. Often, they are long in the making, even if not intentionally planned by the activists. Despite that, the literature on radical social change refers to these starting points of revolutions as “sudden ruptures” (Wagoner et al., 2018, p.7). Not surprisingly then, much social-psychological research treats “sudden ruptures” as the starting point of revolutions, resulting in analyses that often do not account for the antecedents that led to these ruptures, such as the preceding resistance activities and the role of individuals (e.g., opposition leaders, activists) (Moss & Elgizouli, in press). However, past research shows that collective events are dynamic (Reicher, 1984; 1996), they may spread to different locations (Drury et al., 2022), and it is

¹ To differentiate between the broader political ideology and the specific historical context being discussed, I use the term “communist” regime, to refer to the regime of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (1948–1989). The use of quotation marks is intentional and implies that the ideology of Communism or Socialism is not used interchangeably with the reference to the specific Czechoslovak regime (also see 1.4).

usually a chain of events that results in a revolution (Drury & Reicher, 2018). While people's efforts to mobilise and create a movement are often met with repression from the state authorities, these resistance efforts also occur before revolutions (Kurkov, 2014). Arguably, we need a more dynamic perspective to understand revolutions and the role of leadership in mobilising collective action, especially in repressive contexts.

Apart from these limitations in the approaches to revolutions, there are also several limitations concerning the academic investigation of the role of leadership in mobilising collective action and sustaining social movements (Ganz & McKenna, 2019; Jasper, 2017; Morris & Staggenborg, 2004; for recent exceptions see Selvanathan et al., 2020; Selvanathan & Jetten, 2020), as well as the role of leadership in general (Haslam et al., 2024). This is one of the reasons several myths about leadership persist, often mistakenly treating leadership in a very individualistic and reductionistic way (see Haslam et al., 2024, for an overview). Such approaches (see 1.2.7; for a review) tend to disregard the role of the wider context in which leaders operate *together* with their followers (Haslam et al., 2023), transform bystanders into movement participants (Reicher et al., 2018), and also respond to the actions of their opponents (Maskor et al., 2021). Recently, the *new psychology of leadership* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020) has offered a novel framework to understand the role of leadership as a function of the mutual relationship between leaders and their followers. The unique feature of the *identity leadership* approach is that effective leadership depends on the leaders' ability to create a shared social identity with their followers, in each respective context. However, this framework requires more data to support its respective elements. Arguably, much of the previous research in the *identity leadership* tradition has analysed the strategic use of rhetoric to construct specific, contextually relevant social identities (also known as *identity entrepreneurship*) (e.g., Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Reicher et al., 2005a; Selvanathan et al., 2020), often omitting how leaders allow the performative and material expression of identity

(also known as *identity impresarioship*; see Reicher & Haslam, 2017b; for an exception). How *identity leadership* works in repressive contexts is explored even less (Jurstakova et al., 2024). This thesis is concerned with addressing the above-mentioned limitations. To address them, I focused on understanding the role of leaders in mobilising people for collective action in a repressive regime, using the *identity leadership* framework (Haslam et al., 2011/2020), rooted in the social identity tradition in social psychology (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987; also see 1.2.5, 1.2.6).

Because *identity leadership* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020) suggests that the extent to which leaders are effective is a function of the specific context, and whether the followers view the leader as belonging to and representing the group, we need to explore the psychological processes of leadership within the particular contexts they appear. For this reason, the studies in this thesis are set in the context of ‘communist’ Czechoslovakia and the Velvet Revolution of 1989. This context includes understanding how state repression demobilised oppositional activities and targeted opposition leaders before the Velvet Revolution (e.g., delegitimised them, and ridiculed them). Importantly, when considering the context of ‘communist’ Czechoslovakia (1948-1989), not all repression was ‘harsh’, and not all opposition activities were completely prevented by the state’s security apparatus before the Revolution (Blažek & Schovánek, 2018; Kenney, 2003; Šimulčík, 2018). The Czechoslovak ‘communist’ regime, like other repressive regimes, also relied on various forms of ‘softer’ repression (Prins, 1990; Zittoun, 2018). However, past research often focused on identifying ‘harsh’ forms of repression as demobilisation tactics (e.g., imprisonment, interrogation, surveillance; see Moss, 2019). Arguably, demobilisation and repression are not always harsh and violent (Earl, 2006), but they can also operate in more subtle forms throughout the course of everyday life (Jämte & Ellefsen, 2020). In order to find them, we need to attend to instances whereby the regime’s representatives appear in contexts

where they can be held accountable, both to the regime itself and towards the audience. Therefore, we need to explore the micro-dynamics of their interactions, hence the need for a discursive approach that takes into account the regime's ideology (also see 1.4; for a discussion of 'communist' ideology). This can be observed in the more subtle ways of repression (e.g., preventing a demonstration through letters, or changing the topic of a public speech), which have not been studied before. This thesis takes these instances into account. This is also why the collective events² preceding the Velvet Revolution are included in this thesis (Chapters 3 and 4), alongside the Velvet Revolution itself (Chapter 5).

Using 'communist' Czechoslovakia as a case study of a specific repressive regime, I aimed to explore how the rare instances of collective resistance were mobilised by opposition leaders, ultimately leading to the 1989 Velvet Revolution and subsequent social change in Czechoslovakia. The regime's fall is often attributed to the mass protests of the Velvet Revolution, the broad social changes in Eastern Europe in 1989, and the gradual dissolution of the Soviet Union under Gorbachev's leadership (Čornej & Pokorný, 2004; Kenney, 2003; Krapfl, 2013). Instead of focusing on the sociological macro-perspective (i.e., the broader fall of 'communism' in the Soviet Union), I was interested in the social psychological processes related to identity leadership and state demobilisation in Czechoslovakia. This thesis is structured around two primary research questions (RQs; also see 1.3):

RQ1: What was the role of (identity) leadership in mobilising people for collective action?

RQ2: How did the Czechoslovak state authorities demobilise resistance, and what were the subtle social psychological dimensions of demobilisation?

² The specific collective events selected for the context of the empirical studies are discussed in 2.5.1.

These questions are explored in three empirical studies (Chapters 3, 4, and 5). Before presenting these empirical studies, in the following section (Chapter 1), I first discuss why it is important to study resistance in repressive contexts (1.2.1). I then discuss how resistance is defined in past research, advocating for a broader scope of resistance activities in the study of social-psychological processes within repressive contexts (1.2.2). Since much of the past research focused on studying collective action as the most common type of resistance, I review two main perspectives: the sociological macro-perspective (1.2.3) and the social-psychological micro-perspective (1.2.4). This is followed by an overview of the key social-psychological theories that incorporate power in their analyses – a concept inherently linked to repressive contexts, collective action, and leadership (1.2.5). I then turn to arguing for a social psychological approach to studying leadership, utilising the social identity approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987) in social psychology (1.2.6). I finalise the literature review with an overview of past research on leadership (1.2.7). The following section (1.3) outlines the research questions explored in this thesis, followed by a brief history of Czechoslovakia (1.4). Finally, the three empirical studies are outlined (1.5). Following this, Chapter 2 outlines the methodological approach that guided this thesis (2.1-2.4.), and the methods used in each empirical chapter (2.5), concluding with personal reflexivity (2.6). Chapters 3, 4, and 5 present the empirical studies, and Chapter 6 provides a discussion of the overall findings.

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Why Is Studying Repression and Resistance Relevant in Today's Context?

In the past few years, the world has been struck by a global pandemic (Kekatos, 2024), the Black Lives Matter movement has surged worldwide in response to police brutality and racism (Maqbool, 2020), supporters of Donald Trump have stormed the Capitol building (BBC, 2023), there is an ongoing war in Ukraine (Rosenberg, 2024), and we are

currently witnessing a genocide unfolding in Gaza (Amnesty International, 2024). Recent times have seen a surge in intergroup conflict, heightened hate speech, and instances of collective violence, alongside reactionary movements targeting women and minority groups (Bergsten & Lee, 2023; Goodier, 2023; Hoerst, 2023). This has been often exacerbated by the widespread dissemination of news highlighting global conflicts and violence, but it has also often mobilised people to express solidarity with the victims (Körberer, 2019).

Even in democratic contexts, where people's rights are supposedly protected by the law, tensions between police and protesters are on the rise (e.g., Davis, 2023; Kleiderman & Catt, 2023; Montgomery, 2024). There is a general sense of dissatisfaction in many democratic systems. Pew Research Center (2019) states that only 45% of people in democratic countries are satisfied with how democracy operates in their country, while 32% of people are dissatisfied with how their rights are protected. This is not surprising, considering that the police are continuously given more resources to act against protesters (Davis, 2023), and some leaders of democratic countries are using autocratic-like rhetoric (Yousef & Ordoñez, 2023). What is also alarming is that several democratic countries are turning towards populism (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017), with many people rallying around autocratic-like leaders (e.g., Orbán in Hungary, Erdogan in Turkey, Trump in the USA) (see Acar & Reicher, 2019; Crimston et al., 2022; Selvanathan et al., 2022). The suppression of free speech and a rise in authoritarianism are oftentimes rooted in populist discourses and narratives of dominant group victimhood (Reicher & Uluşahin, 2020). These narratives often construe the dominant group as being under 'threat' and thus, 'responding' to this threat becomes framed as a 'virtuous' act (Reicher et al., 2008). This mobilisation and legitimisation of hate can have severe implications for the targeted groups, sometimes resulting in the delegitimisation of victims, and an increase in hate crimes (e.g., Hoerst, 2023;

Ntontis et al., 2024; Uysal et al., 2022) and even genocides (Cook, 2024; Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017).

Not only are people less satisfied with democratic systems, but according to the Democracy Index, the percentage of the world's population living in democratic contexts is decreasing (Amoros, 2022; also see Adra & Li, in press). Simultaneously, approximately 37.1% of the world's population lives in authoritarian³ regimes (e.g., China, Russia), and an additional 17.2% of the world's population lives in hybrid regimes (Amoros, 2022). People living in such contexts face various constraints in their daily lives, but previous research showed that they often engage in different forms of resistance (Cornish et al., 2016; Orazani & Teymoori, in press; Westfall, 2022). Thus, the interplay between repression and resistance is reported across the world, irrespective of whether the regime is authoritarian or democratic. Over time, and thanks to continuous resistance efforts, we also witnessed the change of many systems (e.g., the Arab Spring in 2011, and the 'Velvet' revolutions in Eastern Europe in 1989). While not every action results in immediate social change, and many resistance attempts are repressed, resistance has not been reduced (Uluğ et al., 2022). This is in line with Foucault's (1990/2020) argument that "where there is power there is also resistance" (p.95).

In this section, I highlighted several reasons for studying resistance to repression: the global escalation of conflicts, threats to democracy, the rise of populism and autocracy and subsequent 'moralisation' of hate, increased policing powers to suppress protests, and pervasive repression (e.g., Russia, China). Why is it the case that social psychology has not been paying attention to studying resistance to repression in enough detail?

³ The definition of whether these regimes are 'authoritarian' or 'hybrid' is based on the Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index. Unlike democratic countries where basic freedoms and liberties are respected, depending on how many issues there are with protection of basic rights, a 'hybrid' regime is where some rights are protected (e.g., freedom to vote), and 'authoritarian' regimes are regimes where very few rights are protected, or their protection is very questionable. More detail is available [here](#).

1.2.2 Defining Resistance to Repression: Resistance Exists, We Just Have Not Been Looking for It

To answer the question posed at the end of the previous section, it is important to consider the wider context of how social psychology evolved as a discipline, particularly as a reaction to the horrors of World War 2 (see McGarty & Haslam, 1997; Reicher & Haslam, 2017a). The widespread impact of social psychological studies like Milgram's (1974) Obedience to Authority Experiments and Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment (SPE) (Haney et al., 1973) may have influenced the popular perception that individuals are inclined to obey authority figures (Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017; Haslam & Reicher, 2012; Reicher & Haslam, 2017a). Indeed, the very title of Milgram's (1974) studies - "obedience to authority" may have contributed to the popular perception that obedience is a prevalent and unchangeable aspect of human behaviour in the face of authority (also see Zimbardo, 2011). Accordingly, Milgram's interpretation of his findings that people obey authorities by entering the 'agentic state', often attributed to originate in the 'banality of evil' (Arendt, 1963/1994, p.287) explanation was challenged by various researchers who revisited Milgram's archives (e.g., Burger et al., 2011; Gibson, 2014; Rochat & Modigliani, 1995).

In this context, Rochat and Modigliani (1995) sought to show instances where people *did not* obey the authorities, instead focusing on *what forms* disobedience takes. In a historical case study of resistance in the French village of Le Chambon during World War 2, Rochat and Modigliani (1995) analysed how the villagers collectively stood up to the Vichy authorities in France. They reported a wide range of strategies: the villagers protected refugees in their houses, provided them with food, and in turn, saved many lives. In Le Chambon, resistance was built upon pre-existing community norms, such as taking care of those who were in need. Such norms existed in the region because they experienced contact with refugees in the past (Rochat & Modigliani, 1995; also see Reicher et al., 2006, for

additional evidence about the role of ingroup norms in mobilising solidarity), highlighting the need to engage with the particular context where resistance occurs. This study also showed that resistance in this context was not pre-planned. Rather, it relied on situational and gradual day-to-day small activities undertaken by various villagers (Rochat & Modigliani, 1995). In line with these findings, sociologists Hollander and Einwohner (2004) argued that resistance has various forms in terms of how covert it is, and how active (or passive) it is, depending on people's circumstances, living under different repressive systems. Therefore, studies on resistance taking into account the wider sociohistorical context are crucial because the nature of repression can influence how resistance manifests itself (Rosales & Langhout, 2020). Such an approach also illustrates that resistance and repression are often intertwined, and thus, should be studied together (e.g. Acar et al., in press).

Defining Resistance. Instances of a wide range of resistance activities are reported throughout history (e.g., slave ship rebellions; Thomas, 1990), in novels (e.g., resistance in Gulags; Solzhenitsyn, 1979), and in newspaper reports (e.g., resistance of passengers in United 94 in 9/11; Longman, 2002). To systematically define resistance, Hollander and Einwohner (2004) reviewed a corpus of books and articles about resistance, searching for the common patterns of how past research conceptualised resistance. This review showed that past literature has differing and sometimes contrasting definitions of resistance (Rosales & Langhout, 2020). Based on the corpus of data, Hollander and Einwohner (2004) introduced a typology of resistance based on whether resistance is recognised by various groups (e.g., the target group and the observer group), and whether it is an intentional activity or not (see Table 1).

Accordingly, resistance can be defined as “action and opposition” (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004, p.538). Further, Hollander and Einwohner (2004) see resistance as being intertwined with power in a “cyclical relationship”. This is because resistance to repression

usually triggers further exercises of power and domination over those resisting, creating an ongoing cycle (also see Foucault 1990/2020). Consequently, any analysis of resistance should incorporate an understanding of power dynamics, particularly the presence of destructive power through domination, to assess whether an oppositional act qualifies as an act of resistance against such power structure (also see 1.2.5).

Table 1.

Types of Resistance (Adapted From Hollander & Einwohner, 2004)

Types of Resistance	Is the act intended by the actor?		Is the act recognised as resistance by the target? observer? ⁴	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Overt resistance	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Covert resistance	Yes	No	No	Yes
Unwitting resistance	No	No	Yes	Yes
Target-defined resistance	No	No	Yes	No
Externally-defined resistance	No	No	No	Yes
Missed resistance	Yes	No	Yes	No
Attempted resistance	Yes	No	No	No
Not resistance	No	No	No	No

Apart from this typology of resistance (see Table 1) that focuses on levels of intention, and the recognition of resistance by others, resistance can also be thought of in terms of the forms it adopts. For instance, sometimes people might resist individually (Vollhardt et al., 2020), due to the constraints of the conditions where they live. Sometimes, collective forms of resistance can occur, but even these forms might not necessarily be political – instead, they can take on cultural forms such as use of symbols, songs, or cutting one’s hair in a public space (see Orazani & Teymoori; in press). In the following sections, I

⁴ In Hollander and Einwohner’s (2004) definition of resistance, the observer (or ‘*in situ* observer’) has parallels to the term ‘non-participant’ in social psychology literature (e.g., see Saavedra-Morales, 2019). However, in Hollander and Einwohner’s (2004) terms, it can also imply that the resistance is observed from the perspective of the Researcher. According to Hollander and Einwohner (2004) the Researcher might sometimes misrecognise resistance if they lack relevant cultural knowledge and fail to identify intention behind a certain type of action (also see 2.6; for a discussion about researcher positionality).

discuss these forms of less often studied resistance (i.e., everyday individual resistance and cultural resistance). This is followed by an overview of a different perspective on resistance, which treating it as an intergroup process – a perspective crucial for the present social psychological project.

Everyday Individual Resistance. Disadvantaged groups often engage in more strategic, multifaceted forms of resistance, which can serve as a basis for a more organised form of protest over time, when the conditions to protest are conducive. This is why resistance might manifest in individual forms of resistance. For example, Vollhardt and Bilewicz (in press) showed that many Jews in extermination camps engaged in resistance, but not on a collective level, leading to underreporting of such acts. Vollhardt and Bilewicz (in press) reported acts such as smuggling food, engaging in forbidden religious or cultural practices, and even work slowdowns. These can be conceptualized as “missed resistance” or “attempted resistance” (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004; see Table 1), providing evidence that resistance occurred even in such a repressive environment. It is essential to recognize that engaging in resistance itself can become a source of empowerment (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004; Prilleltensky, 2003), and past research showed that common experiences of repression can spark a continuous commitment to a social movement (Selvanathan & Jetten, 2020). Gramsci (1971) also suggested that in contexts of severe repression, which often involves experiences of violence, societal devaluation, humiliation, and trauma, it is the people’s psychological meaning of their position, over which they have the most control.

However, the relationship between resistance and identity can be more complex than this. For instance, Kellezi et al. (2021) showed that during the Albanian dictatorship (1945-1991), an identity based on family resistance, which could be considered a source of support and well-being in conflict settings, could simultaneously lead to experiences of intergenerational injustice, potentially harming people. While these everyday forms of

individual resistance continue to be untangled in a more systematic way (Vollhardt & Bilewicz, in press; Vollhardt et al., 2020), research has paid less attention to how these individual forms of resistance eventually transform into organised forms of collective action (Maher, 2010; Selvanathan & Jetten, 2020). Arguably, by analysing the role of oppositional leaders in mobilising and organising collective action, we can better understand these transformative processes (see Chapters 4 and 5).

Cultural Resistance. When political forms of resistance are not accessible (e.g., because they would be met by severe repression), people might engage in cultural resistance. This can include using one's own body as a protest space, for example, Iranian women cutting their hair in public (Orazani & Teymoori, in press), but also painting murals (Awad & Wagoner, 2020), laying flowers in memorial places (Kubik, 1994), or using inoffensive protest symbols such as blank sheets of paper in public (Westfall, 2022). For example, the space of Gate 2 in Gdansk Shipyard became a space for cultural resistance in 'communist' Poland where people came to lay flowers (Kubik, 1994). Similarly, Acar et al. (2022) reported how the Saturday Mothers group in Turkey engages in weekly sit-ins in Turkish squares to bring attention to the people who have disappeared due to the ongoing Turkish-Kurdish conflict. I would also argue that in highly repressive settings such as Russia, people who attended the funeral of Alexei Navalny and faced arrests, also engaged in a form of resistance simply by bringing flowers, expressing grief, and queuing in a public space during the funeral (Sauer, 2024).

These resistance strategies are different from the typical forms of resistance in Western contexts, in which people tend to protest in organised forms, create trade unions (e.g. Speare-Cole, 2024), and engage in more institutionalised forms of protest. However, cultural resistance should also be considered a valuable form of resistance that brings people from aggrieved groups together in a meaningful way (Orazani & Teymoori, in press). The aim of

this thesis is not to focus on identifying resistance strategies per se but to remain alert regarding the forms resistance can take. Accordingly, I aim to address the question of organised collective action by considering the role of *identity leadership* in mobilising such action, as well as the role of state authorities in demobilising resistance.

Resistance Is an Intergroup Process. As discussed in the previous sections, while resistance tends to be understudied (for an exception, see Moscovici's (1980) work on minority influence), the topics of oppression, compliance, and conformity have been widely studied within social psychology (e.g., Asch, 1955; Haney et al., 1973; Milgram, 1974; Zimbardo, 2011). These enquiries are important and valuable. However, by shaping the social-psychological discipline around variables such as conformity and obedience to authority, the topics of resistance and dissent, and the social-psychological impact of oppression on repressed groups often remain under-explored (Fine et al., 2013) and whether intentionally or not, disregarded (Haslam & Reicher, 2012; Tuck, 2009). Nonetheless, Prilleltensky (2003) asserts that oppression is closely linked with resistance, emphasizing the importance of examining these two processes together: "*Oppression can be defined as a state of asymmetric power relations characterized by domination, subordination and resistance, whereby the controlling person or group exercise its power by processes of political exclusion and violence and by psychological dynamics of deprecation*" (p.195).

In line with this argument, Loveman's (1998), analysis of high-risk activism in Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina, suggests that people may often "mobilise in response to, not despite, severe repression" (p.485). Also, Acar et al. (in press) reported that resistance strategies in Turkey changed as a result of the increased repressive tactics used on protesters over time, pointing to the need to study these processes alongside each other. Further, Penić et al. (2024) highlighted that structural factors such as the geographical location of communities within a repressive regime play a key role in whether the communities engage in resistance. For

example, living closer to surveillance sites was associated with decreased resistance. There are various means through which dominant groups prevent people from challenging them, whether it is via physical constraints (e.g., building a surveillance site; M. Moss, 2019; Penić et al. 2024) or through performatively asserting public support through rallies (Acar & Reicher, 2019). Therefore, to study resistance should also involve studying repression and vice versa (Haslam & Reicher, 2012).

So far, three key points have been established that should be considered when studying resistance: (1) adopting an inclusive view of resistance encompassing diverse acts, thus allowing for a broader examination of resistance strategies; (2) recognising the significance of identifying how resistance is done within a given context; (3) understanding that resistance strategies are frequently shaped by the constraints imposed on individuals by dominant groups (e.g., state authorities, police, army, and even geographical factors). Much of the previous research on the interplay between repression and resistance comes from sociology (e.g., D. Moss, 2014; McCarthy & Zald, 1977, Schock, 2013; Wagoner et al., 2018), however, this perspective mainly considers structural factors (e.g., how trade unions change over long timeframes), instead of what happens between groups in specific events (e.g., what specific leaders do). The social-psychological perspective on resistance (e.g., the role of *identity leadership* in mobilising collective action), which includes the intergroup perspective (e.g., the role of opposition leaders, opposition groups, dominant leaders, dominant groups) should be considered. However, to my knowledge, there are few studies that engage in this (see Haslam & Reicher, 2012, for an exception).

As I already mentioned, there are several limitations to studying resistance simply through the Western perspective on social movements, as much of this work focuses solely on collective action research, conducted in democratic settings. However, this perspective also holds significant potential for comprehending the social psychology of resistance. In the

following section, I introduce two levels of analysis to studying collective action and social change: the sociological macro-perspective (1.2.3) and the social-psychological micro-perspective (1.2.4).

1.2.3 Insights From Sociology: The Importance of Context, Structure, and Organisations

In the previous section, I established the key definitions of resistance, including the need to consider the wider context that influences the forms that resistance takes. The key aspect of studying social movements from a sociological perspective is that protests do not happen in a vacuum (Tilly, 2008). Instead, they take place in a wider context – social, political, and economic, as well as the context of a wider social movement reaching beyond a one-off protest. While social psychology pays attention to micro-processes concerning individual motivations to protest (see 1.2.4), sociology focuses on how social movements form and operate as organisations (McAdam & Tarrow, 2019; McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Snow et al. (2019) define social movements as spaces where collectivities voice their grievances, and many scholars see the tensions between the authorities and the aggrieved groups as triggers for social movements (e.g., Black Lives Matter) (Bell, 2016). In other instances, it can be the society's relative economic deprivation (Tilly, 1978), the growth of trade unions, and labour movements that impact the increased occurrence of protests (El-Shazli, 2019; Power, 2018). This perspective provides valuable information about how different movement actors (e.g., opposition, dominant groups) strategically interact, and what resources movement actors (e.g., leaders) can use to mobilise participants (e.g., framing, symbols, rituals, material resources), hence the need to discuss them. In the following subsections, I outline the role of resources, rituals, symbols, and framing in social movements.

Resource Mobilisation. Resource Mobilisation Theory (McAdam et al., 1996; McCarthy & Zald, 1977), emphasises the importance of a wide range of resources needed for mobilising and sustaining a movement. This includes material resources (e.g., offices,

equipment, supplies, money), human resources (e.g., labour, experience, leadership), social-organizational resources (e.g., social ties, networks, affinity groups), cultural (e.g., symbols, values, norms, beliefs) and moral resources (e.g., solidarity, support, legitimacy) (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). These resources can be produced by the movements themselves, accessed through pre-existing organisations, or patronage (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004). Access to resources is viewed as the basis for achieving social change (McCarthy & Zald, 2001). However, this approach has also been criticised for treating protesters as rational decision-makers whose motivations to protest are purely instrumental (e.g., resources, opportunities; Klandermans, 1997). For instance, this perspective does not explain why some people engage in resistance even without resources (e.g., Jewish resistance in Nazi camps; Einwohner, 2007) and why they continuously resist in contexts where they are met with repression (Acar et al., in press).

Still, this focus on structural resources in different political contexts has provided some key insights into the interplay of the choice of resistance strategies in more and less repressive systems (Almeida, 2019). For example, Maher (2010) suggested that movements in democratic contexts have more control over how they can mobilise and act as a response to shared grievances. Accordingly, different contexts will give rise to different strategies towards social movements. This is because authoritarian states often see protests as threatening the status quo, while liberal democratic states tend to tolerate peaceful protest (Chen & Moss, 2019). Within authoritarian regimes, the research focus has been mainly on identifying the trajectories of nonviolent movements that switch to more radical actions, given the level of repression that the authorities impose on such movements (Alimi et al., 2015). For example, Fu (2016) identified that the Chinese government has a tactic of absorbing protests before they can form into organised social movements, which influenced the Chinese activists' choice of strategies towards adopting more disguised forms of

collective action (i.e., using blank sheets of paper instead of explicit protests signs with text).

D. Moss (2014) also showed that in Jordan where the repression is more subtle social movements tend to be less radicalised. In turn, the lack of radical behaviour allows the authoritarian regimes to maintain control more effectively.

Thus, this approach sheds light on many of the macro-processes in social movements (e.g., movement's scope, frequency of resistance), but does not address the question of how these tactics are developed, for example by opposition leaders, and the 'toolkit' they use. Apart from the mobilisation of resources, political action is rooted in the cultural system and should be understood within a broader cultural context, encompassing the role of symbols, rituals, collective events, meaningful spaces, and memorials (Holy, 1996). This will be discussed in the following sections.

Rituals and Symbols. Social movements are also shaped by cultural and ritualistic aspects (e.g., collective events, ceremonies, assemblies) of the context in which they operate (Alexander, 2011; Bellah, 2005). Durkheim's (1912/2001) work on rituals provided a theoretical framework for understanding the role of collective events, protests, and cultural forms of resistance in shaping social order, solidarity, and cultural dynamics within societies (also see Shils & Young, 1953). Durkheim (1912/2001) viewed rituals as "dramatic performances" (p.379) that embed and reproduce cultural systems⁵ (also see Marková, 2017). He argued that rituals create and maintain social cohesion, allow people to express collective identity, and challenge existing norms. Geertz (1973) also emphasised the dramatic aspect of culture – expressed through murals (e.g., Awad & Wagoner, 2020), public spaces, funeral processions, and coronations, as spaces that embody meaning for social action. While these cultural practices are not directly political, the key advantage is that their power lies in their

⁵ Durkheim (1912/2001) studied ceremonial rituals in Australian aboriginal clans, however much of his theorising about rituals can be applied to a wide range of collective assemblies, including protests (Rimé & Páez, 2023), in which similar powerful emotional experiences have been documented (see Hopkins et al., 2016).

institutional autonomy from the state. This makes them powerful resources in the hands of the opposition (Alexander, 2011). Activists can use these performative symbolic practices to mobilise support and become visible (explored in Chapters 4 and 5). For instance, former Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny⁶ acknowledged the likelihood of electoral manipulation by the Russian authorities (Papachristou & Trevelyan, 2024). Despite this, he urged people to participate in a “powerful demonstration of the country’s mood”. He encouraged people to flood the polling stations at noon and perform the act of ‘voting’ but leave the voting ballots empty. These people briefly crowded voting stations, forming a visible opposition group. In Russia, where voting is encouraged by the authorities, Navalny viewed this strategy as a form of resistance that many people could engage in, thus increasing the visibility of opposition (Papachristou & Trevelyan, 2024).

Sociology recognises symbols as crucial to a movement’s repertoire (Abrams & Gardner, 2023). This can include flowers, blank sheets of paper, or empty voting ballots, as discussed in the above sections. Symbols are powerful because they condense the meaning of the movement and serve as a vehicle through which people communicate their worldview (Abrams & Gardner, 2023; Geertz, 1973; Schneider, 1976). Rather than being communicated verbally, they are communicated visually (Snow & Benford, 1992; also see Rath, 2016). Activists engage in creating strategic cultural work such as producing murals, poems, music festivals, and artefacts (Awad & Wagoner, 2020). The choice of symbolic objects by activists is also accompanied by several dilemmas, including whether these objects will be efficient, easy to store, and re-usable, while also considering their level of authenticity and aesthetics (Abrams & Gardner, 2023).

⁶ Navalny was poisoned by Novichok in 2020 and died in captivity near Arctic Circle in February 2024 (Baker, 2024).

Importantly, the audio-visual nature of cultural products created as part of a movement can spark awareness and mobilisation of additional participants (e.g., Meyer & Rohlinger, 2012; Vasi et al., 2015). Therefore, symbols and material objects can be used strategically to achieve visibility of social movements. Symbols, such as banners and flags, visually enhance movements and can also be focal points for collective action, as seen in the destruction of the Colston statue in Bristol (Mohdin, 2023). Events can also become symbolic (e.g., the killing of George Floyd in the USA, or Sarah Everard in the UK) and spark mobilisation (Awad & Wagoner, 2020). This is because symbolic incidents can become emotionally and cognitively transformative, empower individuals, and trigger collective action (Shultziner, 2018; also see Drury & Reicher, 2005, for a similar argument). Sometimes, objects not pre-planned to become symbolic can also become symbolic as an outcome of a situation. For example, umbrellas were used in Hong Kong protests to shield protesters from pepper spray and later became symbolic of the pro-democracy movement. However, this was not the case in Scotland, where protesters who carried umbrellas in the Scottish Independence protest used them as shields against the rain due to wet weather conditions (Abrams & Gardner, 2023).

Sociologists have also suggested that before political mobilisation happens, non-political organisations can form “free spaces” or “critical communities” in which new norms and values are developed and from which political protest eventually sparks (Evans & Boyte, 1986; Gamson, 2004; Rochon, 1998). For example, Kubik (1994) argued that while Catholicism had generally avoided direct conflict with the Polish ‘communist’ regime, due to its established and recognised position in society, the Catholic Church became a central component of Solidarity’s⁷ identity, both organizationally and symbolically (e.g., The Black Madonna of Częstochowa). These “spaces” (e.g., Church communities) can serve as non-

⁷ Solidarity was the opposition group in ‘communist’ Poland (Kubik, 1994).

political spheres where the opposition can formulate, gather resources, and mobilise moral schemas to political issues (Kaya et al., 2024). Symbols and collective practices are an integral part of this process (Gahr & Young, 2014; Polletta & Kretschmer, 2013; also explored in Chapters 4 and 5).

Simultaneously, the role of culture and symbols is not one-sided. These cultural and symbolic resources are part of the dominant group's repertoire to assert power through organising experiential events for their supporters (Alexander, 2011; Kubik, 1995; Roubal, 2020). For instance, Shils and Young (1953) studied Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation, arguing that this collective ritual provided a space for people to reaffirm their national values and brought the entire society together. Collective activities such as flag waving can also bind people together⁸ and motivate collective action (Alexander, 2011; Wagoner et al., 2018). How do opposition leaders use this 'toolkit' of collective practices and symbols to build meaning for a movement? How is this done in repressive settings? These questions have not been systematically explored by past research (Reicher & Haslam, 2017b), apart from the anecdotal evidence from media articles (e.g., Saturday Mothers in Turkey, and Navalny's voting strategy in Russia; also see Acar et al., 2022; Kaya et al., 2024).

Moreover, the creative elements (e.g., symbols, rituals) in collective events can generate intense emotions among participants, also known as *collective effervescence* (Durkheim, 1912/2001). This is a crucial aspect that allows for the understanding of participants' emotional experiences in crowds. While the emotional aspect of participation in collective events from the participants' perspective is not the main focus of the present thesis (see Hopkins et al., 2016), the leaders' role in designing meaningful collective events will be discussed in section 1.2.7. (also see Chapters 4 and 5). Such a perspective can provide

⁸ However, Billig (1992) argued that the image of a nation unified in togetherness was an oversimplification of the state in which British society was at the time of the 1953 Coronation. For a more balanced debate, also see Pehrson et al.'s (2014) study and O'Donnell et al.'s (2016) study on St Patrick's Day parades and the (limits of) national identity enactment.

insights into how movement leaders structure meaning for the group, especially in repressive contexts, where people are often denied visibility in public spaces (Papachristou & Trevelyan, 2024).

Framing ‘Problems’. Mobilisation usually depends, and it is centred around a specific social ‘problem’, which does not exist until it is actively constructed as such rhetorically (Blumer, 1971). Thus, grievances, or ‘problems’ that can spark protest are not inherently existent but must actively be framed as such. Someone has to frame and interpret them as grievances. Therefore, social movement organisers must present and construct something as a ‘grievance’ and the audience (e.g., supporters, followers) must understand them as such. Consequently, studies of collective events emphasised the need to analyse what is communicated through language (e.g., through slogans, speeches, posters).

Sociologists have addressed this topic by introducing the notion of framing in social movement studies (Snow, 2008). Accordingly, frames simplify and condense the ‘world out there’ (Benford & Snow, 2000) such that social movements (i.e., movement leaders) strategically “mobilise potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilise antagonists” (Snow & Benford, 1988, p.198; also Benford & Snow, 2000). However, what happens if a movement representative frames something as a ‘problem’ but the audience does not interpret it this way? What is the role of framing in the dominant group’s toolkit to demobilise resistance and at the same time, maintain public support? In turn, these framing strategies of the dominant groups need to be addressed by the opposition leaders, if they want to convince the public to engage in resistance. If we consider repression to be an intergroup process, as I argued in the previous section (see 1.2.2), we would expect both groups to present alternative framings (e.g., Reicher & Hopkins, 1996b).

While the sociological approach offers insights into how frames develop, social psychology has paid more attention to the role of language in mobilising people for action

(e.g., Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Social psychology, unlike sociology, has tools to explore these strategic aspects of (de)mobilisation rhetoric, which has been the main focus within the *identity leadership* literature through *identity entrepreneurship* (see 1.2.7). For example, discursive approaches within social psychology (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) have argued that the way people speak about political issues (i.e., injustice) is not always explicitly political but often framed as ‘common sense’ (Edelman, 1977; Hopkins et al., 1996). Social actors, such as politicians, strategically construct narratives to position their perspectives against those of their opponents (Hopkins, 2023). For instance, speakers frame their audience’s social identity in a way that aligns their political vision and project with the audience’s values, suggesting it should be embraced while framing their opponents’ projects as misaligned and as to be rejected (Hopkins, 2023; Maskor et al., 2012). While this work is beneficial to understanding how such rhetoric occurs in democratic contexts with the freedom of speech, where alternative narratives can be presented, past research has not paid attention to (de)mobilisation rhetoric in repressive contexts (more about this approach will be discussed in Chapter 3; see 3.2). This is one of the reasons why a social-psychological approach to studying the demobilisation rhetoric of the dominant groups, and how opposition leaders counteract this to mobilise resistance, is needed.

The Macro Versus Micro Perspective. In the previous section, I outlined the sociological perspective towards social movements. I discussed the resource mobilisation approach, and the role of rituals, symbols, and framing, as these can be the key aspects of the ‘toolkit’ of (1) the dominant group that tries to prevent people from mobilising, and (2) the opposition group that tries to mobilise resistance. Sociology adopts a macro-perspective approach, focusing on the structural and institutional factors that shape social movements and collective action. However, this approach risks homogenising social movements by analysing them through a broad lens, overlooking the unique historical, cultural, and contextual factors

that shape each movement's goals, tactics, and challenges (Jasper, 2017). Finally, the macro-perspective often portrays social movements as responses to structural conditions or systemic inequalities but this is not always the case. By emphasising structural determinants, this approach tends to undermine the significance of grassroots activism, collective mobilisation, and individual agency in challenging and transforming social systems (Jasper, 2017).

Therefore, to better understand the role of leadership in mobilising collective action, a micro perspective, which social psychology employs, can be useful.

1.2.4 Insights From Social Psychology: What Mobilises People for Collective Action?

Early analyses of protest behaviour trace back to crowd psychology, which has been heavily influenced by Gustave Le Bon's (1895/2002) *The Crowd* (see Barrows, 1981; Borch, 2019; McClelland, 2010; McGarty & Haslam, 1997; for reviews). Le Bon (1895/2002) depicted crowds as irrational, influenced by suggestion, contagion, and emotionalism. The 'crowd mind' approach often absolved individuals of responsibility and viewed leaders as manipulators of crowds (Barrows, 1981; McClelland, 2010). Subsequent research has challenged these views, mainly focusing on (1) motivations for collective action (Klandermans, 1997; van Zomeren et al., 2008), and (2) explaining dynamic intergroup behaviour (Drury & Reicher, 2005; Reicher, 1984). The classic definition of collective action states that an individual engages in collective action "*any time that he or she is acting as a representative of a group and the action is directed at improving the conditions of the entire group*" (Wright et al., 1990, p.995), which is often a response to the relative perception of social inequality (Wright, 2009).

Social psychology has extensively explored the factors that motivate individuals to participate in collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2008; van Zomeren, 2013). A meta-analysis by van Zomeren et al. (2008) involving over 180 publications identified three primary predictors: (subjective) perceptions of injustice, sense of efficacy, and levels of

social identification. Here it is important to note that a sense of injustice does not have to stand for an objective disadvantage of a group (e.g., lack of resources), but the group's perception of being disadvantaged in relation to a relevant outgroup (Runciman, 1996). Further, past research indicates that people are more likely to engage in collective action when they believe they can achieve their goals, in other words, when they have efficacy (Hornsey et al., 2006). For instance, recent studies have highlighted participative efficacy - the belief that one's actions contribute to the collective goals - as a significant predictor of participation (Bamberg et al., 2015; van Zomeren, 2013). Another key predictor of engagement in collective action is social identity⁹ - "the part of a person's self-concept that derives from their group membership" (McGarty & Haslam, 1997, p.18; also see Drury & Reicher, 2005; Simon et al., 1998).

These three factors (i.e., injustice, efficacy, identity) have contributed to the Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA; van Zomeren et al., 2008). More recent research also links perceptions of injustice to group-based emotions such as anger, which heightens willingness to engage in collective action (Mackie et al., 2000; Smith et al., 2008; van Zomeren et al., 2004). Morality has also been added to the SIMCA model because it has been argued that it is linked with identity (Agostini & van Zomeren, 2021; van Zomeren et al., 2018). However, focusing solely on individual-level factors such as individuals' perceptions of efficacy or injustice may not provide a complete understanding of collective action. Additionally, studies in the SIMCA (van Zomeren et al., 2008) tradition often rely on quantitative surveys that assess imagined willingness to participate¹⁰ rather than actual participation (Li et al., 2023).

⁹ In social movements and collective action literature, the terms 'collective identity' and 'social identity' tend to be used interchangeably (Jasper, 2017). However, most social movement scholars do not treat the concept of collective identity in the same way as it was conceptualised by Henri Tajfel (1981) (Polletta & Jasper, 2001), which is how the term 'social identity' is used in this thesis (see 1.2.5, 1.2.6).

¹⁰ Although, Backwood and Louis (2012) suggested that willingness to engage in collective action is a good predictor of actual participation in collective action.

Furthermore, much of this research is based on samples from Western, Educated, Rich, Industrialised, and Democratic (WEIRD) populations, limiting the generalizability of findings to other contexts (Henrich, 2010a; 2010b; Li et al., 2023; also see 2.2, 2.3). As a result, there may be gaps in the understanding of the motivations behind collective action, particularly in non-Western, non-democratic settings (Acar & Uluğ, 2022; Rosales & Langhout, 2020). However, researching collective action in non-democratic contexts poses significant challenges, particularly for collective action researchers, who tend to focus on identifying group-based motivations for collective action, however, these are still based on responses of unique individuals from these contexts (e.g., see Acar et al., 2020; Moss et al., 2019). Ayanian et al. (in press) highlighted these challenges, including restrictions on academic freedom within repressive countries (Saliba, 2018) and the inherent distrust between activists, who face severe repression, and researchers, who may be viewed as intruders or threats to activists' safety (Acar et al., 2020; Hawi et al., 2022). These obstacles underscore the complexities and limitations of studying collective action in such environments (see 2.3), also apparent in the limited evidence about the motivation to participate in collective action in repressive regimes. In the following section, I summarise the most recent findings in this newly developing area of research.

Current Social-Psychological Approaches to Collective Action Under Repression.

Recently, there has been an increased focus on studying collective action under repression, with researchers exploring how factors such as fear and moral obligation influence people's willingness to engage in protests (Ayanian, 2017; Ayanian et al., 2021; Bou Zeineddine & Vollhardt, in press). For example, Ayanian and Tausch (2016) conducted a study focusing on the 2013 uprising in Egypt, pointing to the fact that the SIMCA model (van Zomeren et al., 2008) did not directly predict people's willingness to participate in protests while identifying the role of fear as playing a role in the process. Since then, Ayanian et al. (2021) further

tested the SIMCA predictors, utilising samples of participants from Russia, Ukraine, Hong Kong, and Turkey, as model contexts for studying collective action under repression. They showed that political efficacy, a strongly established predictor of collective action intention in Western contexts, does not seem to play such an important role in repressive contexts. Instead, the role of moral obligation (Moreira et al., 2018; Sabucedo et al., 2018; Vilas & Sabucedo, 2012), together with one's identity consolidation (e.g., conflict between groups can consolidate one's belief that they are a member of a group and this group distinct and recognised by other groups; Saab et al., 2015) and participative efficacy (e.g., the belief that one's act will make a difference), contributed to people's willingness to engage in collective action. Similarly, Uysal et al. (2022) reported that people's sense of moral obligation contributed to their willingness to participate in collective action, this time utilising a student sample from Turkish universities.

Focusing on Filipina domestic workers in Lebanon, Adra et al. (2020) demonstrated that fear can suppress engagement in collective action. Additional emotions that have been recently investigated included hope (Honari & Muis, 2021) and despair (Al-Anani, 2019), which both seemed to predict collective action intention. In addition, Acar et al. (in press) also suggest that building a strong movement over time plays a key role in sustaining resistance in repressive contexts, while efficacy was not identified as a strong factor for motivating participation in resistance in such contexts. This is because the perception of 'success' in repressive settings may be unrealistic due to ongoing repression, leading activists to rely less on efficacy for motivation (a similar argument in a non-repressive context has been made by Drury et al., 2003; also see Vestergren et al., 2018). Therefore, if activists were to rely on efficacy as motivating them to protest on a long-term basis, they would most likely stop engaging in resistance. However, as Uluğ et al. (2022) pointed out, there is a global rise of social movements in non-democratic contexts.

Resistance, therefore, should also not be reduced to the ‘nothing-to-lose’ hypothesis (Spears et al., 2015), which proposed that in repressive contexts people resist because they simply have nothing to lose. Recent evidence from contexts with high levels of state repression (i.e., Hong Kong, Chile) did not find support for this hypothesis (Li et al., 2023). In Hong Kong and Chilean contexts, Li et al. (2023) showed that the motivation to engage in (non-normative¹¹) protests was not due to people’s feelings of desperation or lack of hope, as the ‘nothing to lose hypothesis’ suggests but it was a strategic response to achieve their goals (i.e., strategic choice hypothesis; Tausch et al., 2011), which they also viewed as a moral act (i.e., moralisation hypothesis; Giner-Sorrola et al., 2011). Similarly, Acar et al. (in press) emphasised the need to examine how resistance (i.e., through collective action) interacts with repressive tactics (also discussed in 1.2.2) and consider the choice of various strategies as activists’ rational choice (Tausch et al., 2011; Vollhardt et al., 2020).

1.2.5 The Debate About Power in Social Psychology

When I defined resistance (see 1.2.2), I agreed with Hollander and Einwohner’s (2004) argument, that power should be incorporated in analyses of resistance (also see Foucault, 1990/2020; for a similar argument). Broadly speaking, three theories have tried to explain dominance and power in the context of intergroup relations: system justification theory (SJT; Jost & Banaji, 1994), social dominance theory (SDT; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), and social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In this section, I outline the three theories, explain their strengths and limitations, and argue for the decision to adopt the social identity approach (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987) as a theoretical framework to understand the role of leadership in repressive contexts. This overview is followed by outlining the extension of the social identity theory –the self-categorization theory (SCT),

¹¹ Collective action research also tends to distinguish between *normative* and *non-normative* action. However, a systematic review by Uysal et al. (2024) suggested significant overlaps between the predictors of collective action, irrespective of whether it is *normative* or *non-normative*. Hence the use of brackets here.

and the application of these theories (SIT and SCT) to understanding a wide range of group phenomena, including crowds and crowd events as dynamic episodes, which has influenced how this theory conceptualised leadership.

System Justification Theory. System Justification Theory (SJT) (Jost & Banaji, 1994; also see Jost & van der Toorn, 2012; for a review) proposes that people are motivated to defend and justify the status quo of the system they live in. This theory highlights that many people live in systems that might be disadvantaging them, yet they do not challenge these systems. According to Jost and Hunyady (2002), there might be various reasons for this, including people's psychological need for security and stability, which motivates them to support and rationalise existing social, political, and economic systems. The key point raised by SJT is that members of disadvantaged groups want to believe that the system they live in is fair and legitimate (Jost & Banaji, 1994). This belief can be driven by several motivational factors, including the need for a secure environment, and the desire to maintain positive relationships with others, especially those in positions of authority. SJT can be conceptualised as a micro-level perspective that understands power as sustained through individual psychological needs for legitimacy and fairness. For instance, many people in the Czechoslovak society did not resist during the 'communism' period. This was often based on an unspoken rule that if people in public spaces acted as if they respected and supported the Party, the Party would tolerate (to an extent) their freedom in private spaces (e.g., weekend cottages) (Prins, 1990), and continue to provide housing and employment. Even today, there are nostalgic voices in post-communist countries whose memories of 'communism' contribute to legitimising and idealising these repressive regimes (Sharafutdinova, 2020; Velikonja, 2009). While it is unclear whether this nostalgia occurs due to system justification, and there might be other reasons for it, Putin's use of this nostalgic narrative of 'great'

Stalin's rule of the Soviet Union helps him to justify his autocratic position in today's Russia (Sharafutdinova, 2020).

Thus, SJT theory might be useful to explain why people sometimes do not challenge unequal systems, and why social change might be difficult to achieve, Rubin and Hewstone (2004) criticised the theory for not being able to explain when people strategically engage in resistance and achieving social change/social stability. Further, Elcheroth and Reicher (2017) criticised the theory for over-emphasising the focus on powerful systems and people's rationalising of these systems, rather than opening up space for explaining instances when people challenge such systems. For this thesis, which examines the role of opposition leadership in mobilising resistance and the role of dominant group leadership in demobilising it, SJT's predominant focus on stability and individual motivations to legitimise this stability does not fully capture how power operates within both dominant and disadvantaged groups.

Social Dominance Theory. Social Dominance Theory (SDT; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) is a theory that tries to explain why in societies with excessive resources, some groups have more power than others (e.g., powerful groups have better housing and better health). Sidanius and Pratto (1999) explain this by outlining three characteristics of social systems – (1) they all have group-based hierarchies (e.g., based on race, ethnicity, and gender), (2) most forms of group conflict originate from the fundamental human inclination to create group-based hierarchies, and (3) efforts to mitigate hierarchies are often weaker than the efforts to preserve these hierarchies. While there has been a recent reconceptualization of the theory (Pratto et al., 2013), the authors themselves admitted that the key characteristic of the theory is that group-based dominance is the most enduring form in society. Therefore, SDT is a theory of power concerned with the macro-level perspective, focusing on social systems and institutions, instead of individual agency.

Like SJT, SDT also underestimates active resistance and social change because its core argument posits that all societies will inevitably revert to group-based dominance hierarchies, leaving little room to focus on resistance within these systems (Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017; Rubin & Hewson, 2004; Turner & Reynolds, 2003). Nonetheless, even in the Velvet Revolution (1989) a form of group-based hierarchy persisted in terms of gender inequality, where the dominant positions within the social movement organisations were predominantly held by men, while women, despite being equally active in the movement, did not get a chance to become visible representatives of the movement (Maďarová, 2016; 2019). Thus, SDT provides valuable insights into which aspects of society, even during processes of social change (e.g., Velvet Revolution), get less power than others. While it is important to acknowledge that in several instances people often do not challenge systems (e.g., women's rights movement was not part of the Velvet Revolution in 1989), the main question for this thesis revolves around the dynamic nature of intergroup relations—specifically, the mobilisation and demobilisation of resistance—and the role of oppositional/dominant group leadership in it.

Social Identity Theory and the Social Identity Approach. Social identity, as Tajfel (1974) initially defined it is “*that part of an individual's self-concept, which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group(s) together with emotional significance attached to that membership*” (p.69). Accordingly, social identity theory (SIT) is formed by four key aspects (see Haslam & Reynolds, 2012; for a review; also see Brown, 2019): (1) people see themselves as individuals and at other times as group members through a process of *social categorization* (i.e., the *interpersonal-intergroup continuum*; Tajfel, 1978a); (2) social identities have cognitive and affective qualities (Tajfel, 1974, 1978a, 1978b); (3) people make *social comparisons* between their in-group and relevant out-groups (Tajfel, 1978b, 1978c); and (4) they generally search for feelings of *positive distinctiveness* (Tajfel,

1978c). The search for *positive distinctiveness*¹² may take different forms in specific contexts (i.e., coping strategies, different behaviours), and this is a function of the permeability of group boundaries, stability of a social system, and perceived legitimacy of status relations (Tajfel, 1978c; also see Haslam & Reynolds, 2012; for a review).

SIT (Tajfel, 1978a, 1978b, 1978c; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) outlines different reactions related to people's coping with a dissatisfying social identity (also see Tajfel, 1975; where Tajfel introduced the *cognitive alternatives* to the status quo). This is influenced by (1) the permeability of group boundaries and (2) strategies of social creativity. Accordingly, when group boundaries are seen as *permeable*, people may decide to leave the group, adopting a strategy of *individual mobility*. When group boundaries are seen as *impermeable*, and the relations between groups are secure and legitimate, people choose strategies of *social creativity* (e.g., they re-interpret the situation). Only when group boundaries are *impermeable* and the system is insecure, people may decide to undermine the dominant group's authority and employ the strategy of *social competition*.

Therefore, compared to SDT and SJT, SIT is the only theory of the three theories that allows for the explanation of both: social change and social stability (Rubin & Hewstone, 2004). Instead of trying to answer the question of *why* and *how* is power held by certain groups, which is the focus of SJT and SDT, this thesis needs a theory that allows for understanding social change. For SIT, dominance relations are seen both as a *product* and a *condition* of social action (Reicher, 2004). Dominance itself determines whether people act collectively (Reicher, 2004). Further, Turner (1999) argued that "*process theories such as social identity and self-categorization*¹³ require the incorporation of specific content into

¹² The results supporting the self-esteem hypothesis are mixed (Rubin & Hewstone, 1998) and it is unclear whether self-esteem is the only mechanism that drives intergroup bias. Consequently, this concept, although initially part of the SIT, eventually became less important in the further developments of SIT (Spears & Otten, 2017). This is also why it is not further discussed in this thesis.

¹³ Self-Categorization Theory is introduced below.

their analyses before they can make predictions either in the laboratory or in the field and are designed to require such an incorporation” (p.34). Thus, in this thesis, I utilise the social identity approach in social psychology precisely because it allows for a deeply contextualised analysis of social change, which, as I argued before, is crucial when exploring the mobilisation of resistance to repression.

Limitations of SIT and the Development of SCT. As with the criticism of STJ and SDT, several limitations of SIT have been raised. For instance, Brown (2019) criticised the vagueness of SIT, noting that there are situations where not all people choose to leave a group, even when the boundaries are permeable. Also, when people engage in social creativity, SIT is unclear about *what* strategy is chosen and *when*. Additionally, SIT tends to be overly focused on describing when disadvantaged groups might engage in social change while being less specific about the strategies employed by the dominant groups (Brown, 2019). SIT also neglects the role of emotions in these processes (Brown, 2019), although past research shows that people attach strong emotions¹⁴ to their actions (e.g. when they come together to challenge inequality; Becker et al., 2011; Rath, 2016; Tausch et al., 2011). Finally, SIT as a standalone theory did not address which social identity emerges in a given context.

This was addressed by the development of Self-Categorisation Theory (SCT ; Turner et al., 1987). Turner (1982) argued that people have a personal identity and a social identity. The process through which a person’s behaviour becomes influenced by a particular group occurs through *depersonalization* (Turner, 1982). It is *“the cognitive redefinition of the self – from unique attributes and individual differences to shared social category memberships and associated stereotypes – that mediates group behaviour”* (Turner, 1984, p.528).

¹⁴ The role of emotions was extended in Intergroup Emotion Theory (Mackie et al., 2000; Smith, 1993), however, I do not discuss this theory here in more detail, because my focus is on the role of how SIT has informed our understanding of leadership.

Depersonalization not only produces group behaviour but also gives rise to emergent group processes, such as social influence, cooperation, and group cohesion (Turner & Reynolds, 2012), which was further explored by Turner et al. (1987; see Brown, 2019; for more information; see Turner & Reynolds, 2012; for an overview of the development of SCT).

Levels of self-categorization have different levels of abstraction: (1) *interpersonal level*, where people define themselves as individuals; (2) *intergroup level*, where people see themselves as members of particular social categories and compare themselves to other categories; and (3) *superordinate level*, where people see themselves as a human race in comparison to other species. The *intergroup level*, which is of interest to SCT, determines our behaviour, values, and norms. Different social identities can be salient at different times and in different places (Turner & Reynolds, 2012). The salience of social identity is influenced by the interaction of *perceiver readiness* (Oakes et al., 1994) and *fit*, further divided into *normative fit* (Oakes, 1987; Oakes et al., 1991) and *comparative fit* (Wetherell, 1987). The meaning of a situation (and the self) is an outcome of comparative processes that people make, and self-categories are therefore variable, contextual, and relative (Turner & Reynolds, 2012). *Perceiver readiness* (also referred to as *accessibility* in Reicher & Hopkins, 1996a), is related to people's past experiences (e.g., personal history, collective history, ideology), current expectations, goals, and values, emphasising that categorization is psychologically meaningful to people.

Importantly, SCT impacted our understanding of leadership and power (Haslam, et al., 2011/2020; Turner, 2005; discussed in greater detail in 1.2.7). This is because SCT addresses the question of who is more influential than others in a group – it is a function of the dynamic categorization process (Haslam & Turner, 1992). One of the advantages of SCT, and the subsequent work within the social identity tradition (e.g., Drury & Reicher, 2005; Reicher, 1984, 1996) is that this offers a novel approach to psychological functions that

encompasses intergroup relations to individual functioning, precisely the level of analysis which allows to study the role of leadership in a repressive regime.

In the next section, I explain how the social identity approach (combining SIT and SCT) has been applied to various domains in social psychology (e.g., crowds, leadership), because these findings provide a useful way of thinking about the nature of leadership as an interactive, dynamic intergroup process, in which the opposition leaders have to respond to the dominant group's demobilisation strategies and vice versa.

1.2.6 Applications of the Social Identity Approach

As outlined in the section above, SIT and SCT are not standalone theories. Instead, they have influenced a wide range of research areas (e.g., C. Haslam et al., 2018; Jetten et al., 2012; S.A. Haslam et al., 2020) under the umbrella of the term 'social identity approach', including our understanding of crowds events (Drury & Reicher, 2005), escalation of conflict (Drury et al., 2003), resistance dynamics (Haslam & Reicher, 2012), and leadership (Haslam et al., 2011/2020; see 1.2.7).

While the classic approaches to crowds viewed crowds as an inherently negative phenomenon that turns individuals into an irrational destructive mass (Le Bon, 1895/2002), Reicher's (1984) Social Identity Model (SIM) of crowd behaviour criticised these decontextualised approaches to crowds. Instead of individuals losing their sense of self, and becoming *deindividuated*, as Le Bon's (1895/2002) theory of crowds would suggest, Reicher (1984) explained crowd behaviour and its limits, using data from a crowd event – St Pauls riot in Bristol. Examining this event, Reicher (1984) found that people's actions were meaningful to them and their actions were expressions of past grievances and structural problems, in a community that has been historically targeted by the police. People in the St Pauls riot referred to themselves in terms of shared group membership and their identification with the community in St Pauls determined the limits of their behaviours in the riot. For

example, people threw stones at police cars, and this became a normative behaviour in the riot, but they restrained themselves from throwing stones at public transportation (e.g., buses) (Reicher, 1984). The key finding of this work was that self-categorisation is the psychological basis of crowd behaviour, and that personal identity is not lost in groups but people's shared social identity becomes dominant, which allows them to coordinate actions and to feel empowered (Reicher, 1984).

Accordingly, understanding any crowd events should also be a matter of studying the interactions between groups (i.e., protesters and the police). The Elaborated Social Identity Model (ESIM) (Drury & Reicher, 2000, 2005, 2009), based on a range of ethnographic studies of crowds, suggested that in crowd events: (1) there is a heterogeneous crowd of people, (2) an initially powerful group (e.g., the police) sees the crowd as homogenous, resulting in imposing the same control over all people within the crowd, (3) which binds people who were previously part of a heterogeneous crowd to come to feel as a homogenous group, who now feels empowered to challenge the police, which (4) confirms to the police that their actions were legitimate and (5) this escalates the conflict. Simultaneously, ESIM also proposes when conflict does not develop – for example, if the police treat protesters as a heterogeneous group and do not apply the same control over all people in a crowd event.

These insights have been useful in informing policing strategies to de-escalate conflict (e.g., Stott et al., 2020), but they are also important for this thesis, because this way of thinking in social psychology, even though not directly linked to repressive regimes or leadership, remains a useful theoretical framework for understanding the dynamics of how leaders respond to repressive tactics (e.g., police violence). However, this question has not been explored by past research, nor the question of whether leaders pay attention to these repressive tactics. Especially in repressive regimes, where it is expected that very restrictive settings to organise protests occur, it is important to explore the role of leadership in this

interactive way. In this thesis, I aim to study leadership as a dynamic process in a similar ethnographic-like tradition (e.g., Reicher, 1984; 1996; Drury & Reicher, 2000) established in the 40 years of research in the social identity tradition. Instead of providing a typology of leaders' actions (e.g., Ganz & McKenna, 2019), I was more interested in adopting this interactive and dynamic aspect towards understanding the role of leadership in mobilising people for collective action (also see 1.2.7).

Importantly, Haslam and Reicher (2012) also discussed resistance dynamics in the Social Identity Model of Resistance Dynamics (SIMRD). They argued that the development of shared social identity in a repressive setting is crucial for resistance to occur:

“Where members of low-status groups are bound together by a sense of shared social identity, this can be the basis for effective leadership and organization that allows them to counteract stress, secure support, challenge authority, and promote social change in even the most extreme of situations.” (p. 154).

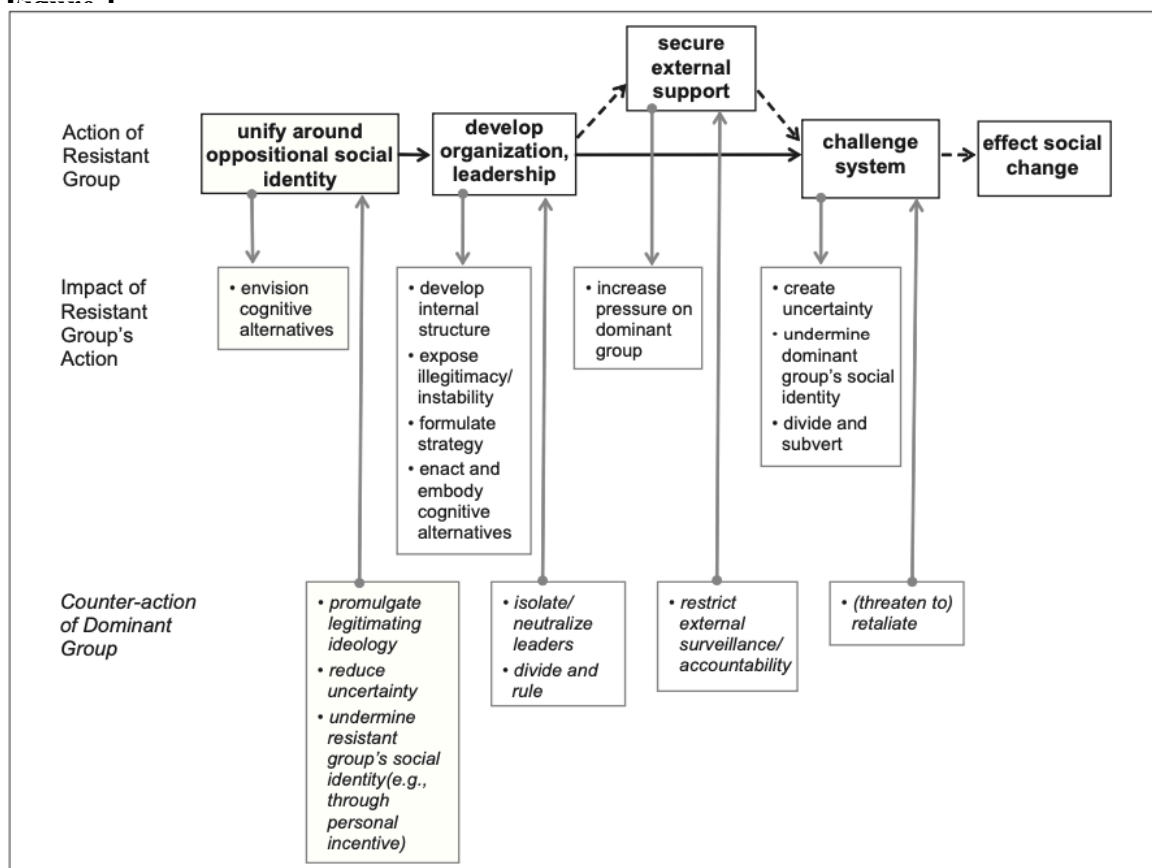
Accordingly, SIMRD (Haslam & Reicher, 2012) is based on three elements: (1) the development of oppositional identities, (2) specific conditions in which groups choose to engage in overt resistance, and (3) practical and organizational factors that create effective resistance. In addition, Haslam and Reicher (2012) argue that these three factors have to be considered from both perspectives – of the disadvantaged, or subordinate groups who promote resistance, and the dominant groups that try to undermine this resistance (see Figure 1).

The SIMRD model further identifies three factors that determine whether shared social identity develops – these involve (1) common experiences of subordination, (2) the time people are able to spend together, and (3) permeability (e.g., whether people perceive the group boundaries as impermeable). While the development of shared social identity is necessary for resistance to occur, Haslam and Reicher (2012) also argue that people need to

see the system they live in as unequal, and they need to be able to envisage ways of changing inequality. This argument also links with previous research on social movements, where McAdam et al. (1996) argued that people have to have “opportunity structures” and resources to form social movements. Finally, a critical aspect of effective resistance, according to Haslam and Reicher (2012), is leadership.

I utilise the concepts introduced in the SIMRD model (see Figure 1) by considering the action of the dominant groups in the context of oppositional mobilisation (Chapter 3), and by investigating the role of oppositional leadership in this process (Chapters 4 and 5) in a series of case studies of specific resistance events in ‘communist’ Czechoslovakia. The aim of the empirical studies in this thesis is not to strictly follow the SIMRD model or to provide evidence for each aspect of the model. However, the insights from this model will be used to treat resistance and repression as a dynamic intergroup process, in which the opposition leaders and the state authorities respond to each other’s actions.

Figure 1



Importantly, leadership plays a crucial role in these processes by shaping collective identities and fostering a sense of unity (Turner et al., 2008). However, within the social identity approach, leadership is not necessarily understood as a process of getting people to do what the leader wants (i.e., using coercive power). Arguably, coercion is the weakest form of power, because once coercion disappears, so does the followers' support of the leader. Rather than relying on coercive power, *identity leadership* explains leadership as the ability to create shared social identity to inspire followers towards achieving shared goals (Haslam et al., 2011/2020; Turner, 2005). In Turner's (2005) words, effective leaders aim to attain power *through* followers rather than power *over* them. In the following section, I outline the past literature on leadership and explain why the social identity approach to leadership is a useful framework for studying leadership in mobilising collective action.

1.2.7 Leadership: What Makes a Good Leader?

Leadership isn't just a subject of research. It is also a popular topic in self-help books, newspaper articles, and podcasts (Maskor et al., 2022). Unfortunately, many of these approaches tend to create a "cult" of leadership (Jasper, 2017). This often creates an impression that there is something "secret" about what makes a great leader and therefore, impossible to study. For example, common misconceptions about leadership include that these "secret" skills are due to leaders' special qualities and that leadership is a skill only limited to a few special people (Haslam et al., 2024). There is also a tendency to romanticise leaders and overemphasise their role as the ultimate reason for an organisation's success (Maskor et al., 2022; Meindl et al., 1985). It is not surprising that such a one-sided and elitist view towards leadership has not been a popular feature of the systematic typology-based approach in social movements research (Jasper, 2017). Ganz and McKenna (2019) recently called for the need to focus on leadership in social movements, which the previous studies

lacked (also see Morris and Staggenborg, 2004). Thus, leaders are important figures in social movements, mobilisation, and social change (Subašić et al., 2011), but the approaches to this topic have often been misleading, resulting in the mystification of this role (Haslam et al., 2024). In the following sections, I will briefly summarise how leadership was studied in the past, which has resulted in some common misconceptions about leaders, followed by an overview of the social identity approach to leadership.

Past Approaches to Leadership. The ‘great man theory’ of leadership described leaders as exceptional individuals with specific personal characteristics, making them suitable for influencing others (Carlyle, 1840). However, the empirical evidence for this argument is weak (Judge et al., 2002). Despite lacking evidence, such approaches to a leader as a unique, often manipulative (male) individual persist nowadays (Haslam et al., 2024). This ‘great man’ thinking about leaders has been influenced by Le Bon’s (1895/2002) seminal work on crowds. Le Bon described crowds as an inherently negative phenomenon where violence gets transmitted through submergence, contagion, and suggestion. Le Bon (1895/2002) also argued that these processes do not happen spontaneously, instead, they are a function of crowd leaders who themselves got captivated by the ideas they propagate. Le Bon (1881, p.369, as quoted in Barrows, 1981, p.166) also proposed that crowd leaders manipulate the unconscious crowd mind - through hypnosis¹⁵: *“Individuals with eloquence, personal appearance, and reputation have this power to a high degree, lead crowds to their liking, soon become idols and engender collective hallucinations”* (Le Bon, 1881, p.369; as quoted in Barrows, 1981, p.166). These ideas have heavily influenced subsequent thinking about crowd leaders by a range of influential thinkers at the time, including Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud. For instance, Freud (1921/2011) suggested that crowd leaders embodied the crowd’s collective desires and impulses and he employed this perspective to analyse Hitler’s

¹⁵ This was in the era when hypnotism was popular in French medicine and psychiatry (Barrows, 1981).

leadership, explaining that Hitler appealed to the masses by tapping into their irrational fears and desires. Similarly, Nietzsche (1885/1961) viewed the crowd leader as a chosen ‘superman’ (German: Übermensch). Unsurprisingly, Hitler himself being influenced by these writings claimed to have built a myth of his own leadership based on Le Bon’s ideas. Historian Andrew Roberts (2003) said that “*Hitler acquired charisma through his own efforts to create a cult of his own personality. [He] deliberately nurtured this status as infallible superman...*” (p.15). While it is undoubtedly the case that leaders tend to invest energy to cultivate a particular public image of themselves, it remains to be answered¹⁶ whether this is a matter of creating a cult of personality.

In addition to Le Bon and Freud, sociologists have also treated leadership as a matter of the leader’s ‘charisma’ (Weber, 1921/1946), instead of paying attention to the contextual features of leadership. For example, Weber (1921/1946; 1922/1978) wrote extensively about charisma, not only as an attribute of a leader (i.e., a leader is a charismatic person) but also something that connects the leaders with the collective through emotions (i.e., charisma). Weber (1921/1946) also highlighted the “collective excitement produced by extraordinary events” (p. 262), which resembles Freud’s and Le Bon’s mystification of crowds. However, ‘charisma’ as a construct that can be used to understand what makes a great leader can result in a decontextualised and problematic approach to leadership. Haslam et al. (2011/2020) criticised these approaches to leadership, because charisma, other than being described as the “secret” ingredient that makes a great leader, was interchangeably used by Webber as an attribution as well as an attribute of a great leader. In addition, Steffens et al. (2017; 2018) have shown that leaders’ charisma is fluid, and people often rate leaders as more charismatic when they pass away. Thus, there is no universal agreement on what ‘charisma’ is and

¹⁶ Historians Spotts (2003), Kershaw (2001), and Mosse (1975) argued that Hitler’s leadership was built around his ability to represent German national identity at that particular time, which was further emphasised in how Hitler staged himself and the German nation during the Nuremberg rallies. I discuss this further in the following section on the social identity approach to leadership.

whether leaders have to *be* charismatic, or whether they have to *do* charismatic things to be successful (Haslam et al., 2011/2020). Therefore, while charisma can be a part of a leader's 'toolkit' (Weber, 1912/1946), especially because leaders can view themselves and be viewed by others as charismatic individuals (Joosse & Zelinsky, 2022), it might not be the most consistent approach to study what makes someone a good leader.

Personality Models. Post-World War 2, after the legacy of Hitler and Mussolini's destructive actions, and also because they claimed to base their leadership on charisma (Kershaw, 2001), there was a shift towards approaching leadership more systematically. This involved the use of personality models. This was especially the case in organisational psychology, where the traditional hierarchical system of an organisation is built around leaders of teams and various divisions (Eysenck, 1967, 1980). This approach focused on identifying leaders' attributes (e.g., intelligence, behavioural styles, personality traits; see Haslam et al., 2011/2020, for a review). However, Mann (1959) conducted a meta-analysis of over 500 personality measures used in research on leadership, unable to find support for any specific personality type that would predict effective leadership. More recent research suggests that leaders tend to have high levels of conscientiousness, agreeableness, and stability (Bono & Judge, 2004; Fransen et al., 2020). Yet, Antonakis and Day (2018) have argued higher levels of a particular personality trait do not necessarily equal being a more capable leader. For example, being more intelligent does not imply more influence, and it might be a combination of multiple personality factors that contribute to effective leadership (Judge et al., 2002). While the insights about the leaders' personality traits can be useful, this approach does not answer how these traits give rise to effective leadership and what are the effective leaders' traits in different situations (e.g., a leader in a public health crisis versus a coach in a football match).

Leadership as a Transaction. Moving away from these individualistic approaches to leadership, the transactional leadership models have emphasised that leadership can be understood as a process of economic exchange between leaders and their supporters (van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013). Melucci (1996) conceptualised leadership as a process of exchanges between leaders and followers, however, the focus was solely on a set of costs and benefits. In other words, it has been argued that leaders must do something for their followers if they want the followers to support them (Ahlquist & Levi, 2013; Hollander, 1995). Such an approach does not explain instances where people go to war, or when they choose to resist despite facing severe consequences. If leadership is a transaction, according to this perspective, if the leader does not pay the followers to go to war, why would they go?

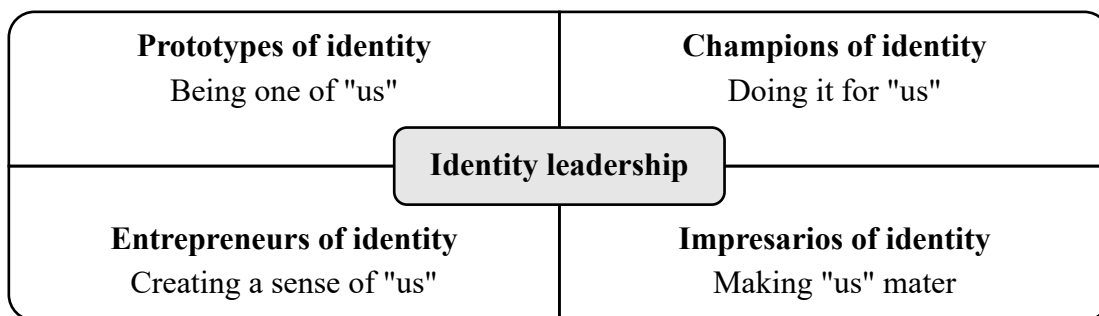
Precisely because these questions remain unanswered neither by the personality trait models nor the transactional models of leadership, it is not surprising that there are still various myths surrounding leadership (see Haslam et al., 2024). These include the ideas that (1) people are not capable of taking care of themselves, and they need a hierarchical system with strong leaders at the top (Brown, 2014), (2) leaders are exceptional (often male) individuals (Hoyt, 2010), and (3) there is an overemphasis on leaders' achievements when a group succeeds (Maskor, 2021). The limitation of these leader-centred approaches is their tendency to reinforce hierarchical systems rather than empower individuals to challenge them. This may result in a similar outcome that I reported in cases of the SJT and SDT, where the possibility of resistance is omitted (see 1.2.5). Arguably, leadership relies on the relationships and connections between leaders and followers taking place in a specific context (Hollander, 1985; 1995; 2008). This is where the social identity approach to leadership becomes useful because it considers these three key elements, which other approaches seem to lack – leaders, followers, and context.

The Social Identity Approach to Leadership. As I have already mentioned (in 1.2.5 and 1.2.6), leadership can be also studied from a social identity perspective (Haslam et al., 2011/2020). While the social identity approach has been previously discussed concerning protests and resistance dynamics (see 1.2.6), it is important to note that the key concept from this approach relevant to leadership is that social identity serves as the basis of social influence (Haslam et al., 2011/2020; Turner, 2005; Turner et al., 2008).

Identity leadership emphasises that leadership should not be treated as an individual phenomenon but instead, it should be understood as a group process, dependent on (1) the context, (2) the relationship with followers, and (3) the leaders' ability to transform people's social reality (Haslam et al., 2011/2020). Accordingly, leadership is a function of the leader's ability to motivate others to achieve group goals by virtue of their ability to *represent, advance, create, and embed* a sense of social identity that is shared with potential followers¹⁷ (Haslam et al., 2011/2020; 2023; Steffens et al., 2014). This framework is based on four elements (see Figure 2).

Figure 2.

Identity Leadership Framework (Adapted From Haslam et al., 2011/2020)



Prototypes of Identity. The first element is *identity prototypicality*, implying that leaders need to be seen as one of "us". Prototypical members of the group, who best represent the group's values and interests can assert more influence over others (Hogg, 2001; Steffens

¹⁷ The ability to motivate, rather than force people to do things with coercive measures is an important element of *identity leadership* (Turner et al., 2008).

et al., 2020). Notably, prototypicality does not imply sameness with other group members, instead, it implies uniqueness - being an exemplar representative of the group. For example, Reicher and Haslam (2017b) described that Donald Trump's ability to be seen as a prototypical group member was effective because, with his particular presentation of his life story and his image to his supporters, he was able to exemplify the success story of the American Dream, allowing him to be perceived as a fellow American (e.g., wearing the red cap, talking informally, presenting himself as a 'self-made man'). Despite this, he could have hardly been described as an 'ordinary' American, which illustrates the difference between an ordinary group member versus a leader who best represents the group.

Champions of Identity. The second aspect, which builds upon how leaders' actions are viewed by the ingroup members, is *identity championship*. This means that leaders need to place personal interests below the group's interests, and they need to be seen as acting for the group's interests (acting for "us"; Grace & Platow, 2015). The actions of the leaders will be seen as advancing the group interests if they are seen as appropriate actions taken in a given situation by the group members, regardless of whether these actions are objectively fair or not (Jetten et al., 2002). When leaders are seen to sacrifice their personal interests (e.g., personal financial profit) they are seen to act as *identity champions*, and they are also seen as more prototypical (van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005). A recent illustration of acting for group interests is Volodymyr Zelensky's response to the USA's offer to evacuate him from Ukraine when the war started: "I need ammunition, not a ride" (Braithwaite, 2022). Similarly, when Donald Trump presented himself not as a 'typical' politician, but instead, as a successful businessman who does not go to politics for personal profit, this narrative strengthened his position of a leader who acts for 'the people', a strategy commonly used by populist leaders (Reicher & Haslam, 2017b; see Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2017, for populism).

The third and fourth aspects focus on the leader's capacity to build and promote shared social identity, which can be achieved rhetorically and practically.

Entrepreneurs of Identity. Rhetorically, effective leaders tend to speak on behalf of their group, and more importantly, construct the group identity. This is referred to as *identity entrepreneurship* (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001; Reicher et al., 2005a; 2005b) in the *identity leadership* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020) framework. A very simple finding from this research area shows that effective leaders tend to use more collective pronouns in their rhetoric. For example, Steffens and Haslam (2013) showed that successful prime ministerial candidates in Australia used the greatest number of collective pronouns in their speeches, whereas their use of personal pronouns did not affect the election outcome. Recently, Molenberghs et al. (2017) showed that participants who listened to a political speech delivered by an ingroup member, who used collective pronouns, showed more brain activity in areas associated with semantic processing. This suggests that participants found the experience meaningful, compared to listening to speeches by an outgroup member and to conditions where speakers used personal pronouns.

This strand of research often analyses leaders' speeches, focusing on how they define categories of "us" versus "them" while claiming to be representative of the group they are trying to mobilise (Reicher & Hopkins, 1996a; 2001). This approach is based on the fact that people often describe themselves in terms of their social categories (Turner et al., 1987), and speakers build shared social identity by constructing identity through rhetoric (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). This is important because defining the ingroup (and the outgroup) in a certain way has consequences for group action concerning what is seen as a legitimate act (Ntontis et al., 2024; Reicher et al., 2008; Wetherell & Potter, 1992). Apart from legitimacy, constructing shared social identity through rhetoric is also a basis of social influence, and it can mobilise people to act in solidarity (Reicher et al., 2006) or even mobilise collective hate

(Reicher et al., 2005b; 2008). For example, Reicher et al. (2006) explored the arguments used by Bulgarians in the context of protecting their Jewish citizens from being transported to Nazi concentration camps. They showed that Bulgarians based their arguments on (1) treating Jews as part of the same category (e.g., ‘us’ Bulgarians), (2) using norms of the category (e.g., we help those under attack), and (3) seeing the harm done on the Jewish population in Bulgaria as being of concern of ‘us’ Bulgarians.

Further, Portice and Reicher (2018) analysed how political speakers mobilise antagonism towards immigration, arguing that often, such antagonism is not directly constructed through explicitly anti-immigrant rhetoric, but instead, by presenting immigration as a ‘threat’ to the ingroup (e.g., spatial, economic, security, and diversity threats), which the speakers claim to represent based on a common national category (e.g., ‘we are Great Britain’). Apart from constructing commonality with the audience, speakers also tend to rhetorically attack opponents by devaluing them and presenting them as destroying the shared social identity (Hopkins, 2023; Maskor et al., 2021).

However, what it means to be “us” and “them” is often debated, constructed, and posited through discourse (Billig, 1995; see Hopkins, 2023, for an overview). Apart from the social identity tradition in social psychology (e.g., Hopkins & Reicher, 2001), which treats social identities as ‘cognitive’ elements that exist in people’s minds, and therefore, can be contested, construed, and mobilised through rhetoric (Reicher et al., 2005b), another approach to studying (mobilisation) rhetoric in social psychology is through rhetorical or discursive approaches (Billig, 1987; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). For example, Ntontis et al. (2023) used this approach to study the mobilisation of risky behaviours by Greek priests during the COVID-19 pandemic. This analysis focused on how Greek priests managed their accountability during the pandemic when they continued the ritual of giving communion which involved spoon-sharing between many people (i.e., mobilisation of risky behaviour).

The priests never attributed the spread of COVID-19 to the communion itself. Most of them managed their accountability for their followers becoming ill with COVID-19 by saying that the Church adhered to the protection measures by the state, demonstrating that the Church was civic-minded and that if people get ill it is because of the congregation of closed spaces and not because of spoon sharing, or because people were not spiritually ready to receive the communion, thus, God did not protect them. They rhetorically protected the 'holiness' of the communion ritual and remained accountable for telling people to participate. Such an approach to exploring accountability management processes (Edwards & Potter, 1992) can be useful in exploring how dominant groups justify their repressive actions (see Chapter 3). How dominant groups demobilise resistance, and how is this managed in their rhetoric, as well as how is this demobilisation rhetoric received by the audience (e.g., the public, opposition leaders) has, to my knowledge, not been explored in previous research (see Hopkins, 2003; for a review).

Impresarios of Identity. Apart from rhetorical strategies that leaders use to mobilise support and achieve influence, they also use events, such as rallies, commemorations, rituals, and monuments to allow their followers to experience the shared social identity in a physical space. This is referred to as *identity impresarioship* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020). For example, Billig (1995) notes that although some symbols and objects can be seen as something mundane (e.g., national flags on public buildings, street names), they often contribute to normalising national identity without having an explicit political overtone. These are examples of 'banal nationalism' and unlike instances of 'hot nationalism' such as flag waving and slogan chanting at various national events, despite their subtleness, it is important to recognise them as building blocks for the construction of national identity (Billig, 1995). Gramsci (1971) argued that dominant groups maintain control over society not only through force but also through the dissemination and control of ideas, cultural practices, education,

and media. Therefore, collective events, objects, and symbols can serve to reaffirm and transform identity and assert power (Acar & Reicher, 2019; Alexander, 2011). They can be a useful resource for the authorities and the opposition leaders.

A powerful example of the performative elements of leadership are Nuremberg rallies, which Hitler supposedly used to embody and convey a particular notion of shared social identity – German national identity (Kershaw, 2001; Spotts, 2002). In these rallies, the people who formed the audience were in regimented geometrical blocks. This embodied an ordered, unanimous mass of people. Only Hitler was allowed individuality when he emerged from the masses to the podium. He would be the only person to speak on the podium above the masses. These rallies created a choreography of how Germany should be (e.g., orderly, unanimous) and served to affirm German identity. In Spotts' (2002) words: "*In the party rallies the German people symbolically enacted their willingness to be used by Hitler at his will*" (p.69). Similarly, Reicher and Haslam (2017b) described Trump's rallies in the context of the 2016 US presidential elections as choreographed events, serving to convey a particular vision of the world – the vision of how *America should be*, and how it *would be* when Trump is elected.

Despite these valuable insights, the role of leadership remains under-theorized and understudied (Haslam et al., 2024). Apart from analysing what leaders say, less attention has been paid to what leaders do, and how they respond to repressive strategies of the dominant groups, as well as whether and how they use practical and performative means to build shared social identity and allow for successful mobilisation of collective action. While Haslam and Reicher (2012; also see Subašić et al., 2011) argue that leadership is critical for developing shared social identity under repression, evidence on how this is achieved by leaders is lacking.

So far, the present Chapter reviewed the relevant literature on social movements and leadership. I outlined the key terms used in this thesis: resistance, power, social identity, and leadership. I first argued that resistance should be understood within the sociocultural context in which it occurs, a perspective often missing in past studies. Although this thesis is rooted in social psychology, social movements have also been studied extensively in other disciplines. Therefore, I outlined sociological approaches that consider the broader context of social movements, including the role of resources, symbols, and framing. I then examined social psychological research on collective action, which highlights factors such as identity, efficacy, and injustice as key factors for collective action mobilisation. However, a review of recent research on collective action in repressive contexts suggested that these factors might play out differently in situations with higher risks and additional costs associated with participation (i.e., imprisonment, and police violence). This underscores the first aim of this thesis, established through the literature review – the need to appreciate and incorporate the role of context in studying social movements and leadership.

Next, I argued that the context in which mobilization occurs is strongly intertwined with power dynamics. I outlined key theories in social psychology that incorporate power in their analyses and explained the rationale for employing the social identity approach in this thesis, as it allows for studying both social change and social stability. Building on this foundation, I then discussed leadership, which is of central concern in this thesis. I first reviewed the past literature on leadership, before focusing on the social identity approach to leadership. In the following section, I briefly restate the limitations of past research and explain how these limitations informed the research questions explored in this thesis.

1.3 Limitations and Research Questions

As noted in the previous section (1.2.7), there has been limited research into the role of leadership in social movements. Past research on social movements outlined the role of

framing, symbols, and resources (see 1.2.3); however, this research has not incorporated leaders as active decision-makers. Within the social identity tradition, research has treated leaders as active agents, focusing primarily on their use of rhetorical tools to build a shared social identity (see 1.2.7). However, there remains an absence of work on leaders' use of performative means to transform collective events into meaningful experiences for their followers (Reicher & Haslam, 2017b), as well as a lack of research on the organisational and practical elements of leadership. Additionally, the role of leadership in repressive settings has been understudied. Despite that, Turner (2005) argued that in such settings, leadership is less dependent on resources and more on leaders' ability to organise and coordinate actions. However, past research has not adequately addressed this.

This limited understanding of leadership in repressive contexts includes (1) the lack of research on how opposition leaders mobilise collective action, and (2) how dominant group leaders demobilise these efforts. While past sociological literature has mapped out the typology of 'harsh' repression (e.g., Moss, 2014; also see 3.1), there are also more subtle forms of 'softer' repression, which can be observed in the dominant group's rhetoric¹⁸. Social psychology provides tools for exploring these more subtle demobilisation processes, such as how dominant groups legitimise their repressive actions and simultaneously manage their public profile to maintain support. Previous social psychological research has analysed mobilisation rhetoric (e.g., Reicher & Hopkins, 2001) and how leaders use attack rhetoric to destabilise opponents (Maskor et al. 2021), but this has been limited to democratic contexts, where opponent leaders usually have the same rights (e.g., freedom of speech, freedom of opinion). These limitations have informed the research questions in this thesis.

¹⁸ This issue became apparent from Study 2 (in Chapter 4), which was the first research study in this project.

1.3.1 RQ1: What Was the Role of Identity Leadership in Mobilising Collective Action Under Repression?

My first research question is about the role of *identity leadership* in collective action under a repressive regime. In studies 2 and 3, I explore the question of (identity) leadership in two events – the first public demonstration in Czechoslovakia (1988), and the subsequent large-scale mobilisation in the Velvet Revolution (1989). Apart from exploring the leaders' practical strategies to mobilise people while overcoming the regime's demobilisation strategies, the repressive context created an opportunity to explore the performative means of *identity leadership*, enabling the followers to experience shared social identity in their lived reality (Haslam et al., 2011/2020; Reicher & Haslam, 2017b). Arguably, these studies (Study 2, 3) contribute to the literature on *identity leadership*, serving as one of the few studies considering the practical and performative aspects of leadership. They also contribute to the literature on resistance, showing how leaders adapt their strategies in repressive regimes, and how this can lead to mobilising people and making them visible in otherwise restricted spaces. Apart from this, these studies offer potential insights for leaders and activists in repressive contexts, who often navigate very restrictive environments, and have to find creative ways in which they can make their demands visible and heard in contexts, where the dominant groups try to make them invisible and illegitimate (see Chapter 6; for practical implications).

1.3.2 RQ2: How Did the Czechoslovak State Authorities Demobilise Collective Action and What Were the Subtle Social Psychological Dimensions of Demobilisation?

My second research question is about the role of dominant group leaders in demobilising collective action. In Study 1 (Chapter 3), I explore how the dominant group (i.e., the Czechoslovak Communist Party) tried to demobilise resistance both practically and rhetorically when the opposition groups tried to mobilise for various resistance activities.

Study 1 consists of three case studies of events in which the opposition tried to mobilise and the state authorities intervened with the mobilisation. However, when investigating the demobilisation strategies, my aim was not to simply provide a typology of repressive strategies, as these have already been explored in previous sociological and social psychological studies (e.g., D. Moss, 2014; M. Moss, 2019). Apart from practical demobilisation strategies, it became clear that despite having the dominant position in Czechoslovakia, the Czechoslovak Communist Party also engaged in justifying their repressive actions, rhetorically managing their public profile, and trying to maintain legitimacy as a regime that was ‘pro-people’.

Therefore, I aimed to explore how the regime managed its accountability (Edwards & Potter, 1992) and legitimised its repressive actions in their public discourse (e.g., public speeches, and newspaper articles). I analysed what was said by the regime’s representatives, how it was said, how it functioned, and how the audiences received it, utilising the discourse analytical tradition in social psychology. In this study, I show that apart from considering the visible forms of violence, repression operates through everyday, more subtle forms that can be observed in the regime’s rhetoric (see Jämte & Ellefsen, 2020; for a similar argument). Apart from contributing to the social psychological literature on demobilisation rhetoric, I also show that social psychology can pay more attention to these more subtle repressive strategies that can be identified in currently repressive regimes, whose accountability management rhetoric is often based on similar argumentative lines (e.g., Putin’s justification of the military invasion in Ukraine as “special military operation”) (see 3.6 and 6.6).

Because this thesis focuses on specific events within the ‘communist’ period (1948-1989) in Czechoslovakia (discussed in detail in respective empirical chapters (Chapters 3-5)), using them as case studies to explore (1) the role of (identity) leadership in mobilising people to participate in overt collective action in Czechoslovakia, and (2) the demobilisation of

resistance by the Czechoslovak state authorities, I will briefly outline the historical context (1.4), before providing an overview of the studies (see 1.5).

1.4 A Brief History of Czechoslovakia

Czechoslovakia, located in the middle of Europe, surrounded by Austria, Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Ukraine was founded as an independent state in 1918, after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which previously ruled this region (see Figure 3). Czechoslovakia was made up of geographical regions: Bohemia, Czech Silesia, and Moravia which were predominantly occupied by Czechs and Slovakia by Slovaks (Heimann, 2011). The German minority resided primarily in Sudetenland, while Rusyns and Romani communities were concentrated in the Eastern part of Slovakia, and the Jewish population was dispersed throughout Czechoslovakia (Heimann, 2011).

The First Republic, founded after World War 1(1918) was a liberal democratic state with a well-developed industrial production (e.g., weapons, shoes), good public transport, education, and culture (Zittoun, 2018). In 1939, the Sudetenland was annexed by Germany.

Czechoslovakia did not engage in military resistance, hoping that this would maintain the sovereignty of the remaining land (Zittoun, 2018). Later that year (1939), Czechoslovakia became a protectorate of Germany. As a reaction to this, on October 28 (1939) which happened to be celebrated in the past as the ‘Czechoslovak Independence Day’, Czech students went to the streets to protest against the Nazi occupation (Kenney, 2003). The protest was suppressed by the Nazis and one university student leader died, due to the injuries from the protest. During his funeral, there was an upheaval again and Hitler ordered the execution of nine Czech students on November 17, 1939. As a warning sign against further resistance, thousands of Czechoslovak students were sent to Nazi camps (Kenney, 2003).

Exactly fifty years later (November 17, 1989), Czech students marched in the city centre of Prague to commemorate this day. Their march was violently suppressed, this time

by the Czechoslovak police. Many people saw a resemblance between the Nazi's repressive activities during World War 2, and later by the Czech police. Yet, while many people saw the Nazis as 'enemies' in 1939, the Czech police in the 1980s were mostly seen as an ingroup (because they were Czech), but after their violent reaction to the peaceful student march in 1989, they very soon became treated as an outgroup (Kenney, 2003; Wheaton & Kavan, 2019). This day is often seen as the 'trigger point' of the Czechoslovak Velvet Revolution (1989).

Figure 3.
Map of Czechoslovakia After the First World War¹⁹



Before I briefly discuss the nature of the Czechoslovak 'communist' regime, it is important to distinguish that the ideology of Communism was different from how it was implemented in 'communist' Czechoslovakia.

Communism Versus 'Communism'. Communism is an ideology developed as a response to the social and economic inequality the Capitalist societies faced during the 19th century in Europe. The original ideas came from Marx and Engels who wrote the 'Communist Manifesto' (Marx & Engels, 1848/2004). They argued that Capitalism was marked by inherent contradictions and exploitative relationships between the bourgeoisie

¹⁹ Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Czechoslovakia>

(capitalist class) and the proletariat (working class). Marx and Engels also argued that Capitalism's pursuit of profit resulted in the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few. As a consequence, the working class experienced alienation, exploitation, and economic instability. Communism, as conceived by Marx and Engels (1848), aimed to overcome these issues by establishing a classless society based on principles of cooperation and equality. While Marx and Engels (1848/2004) provided the theoretical groundwork for Communism, their utopian ideas have been interpreted and implemented very differently by various political bodies and governments (Priestland, 2002).

Unfortunately, the practical application of Communism has often deviated from the original vision of the intellectual ideology of Marx and Engels (1848/2004), leading to diverse outcomes and interpretations, and more importantly, leading to the establishment of several authoritarian regimes in the 20th century (Priestland, 2002). One such example is the Soviet Union and its satellite states (including Czechoslovakia), which failed to implement the Communist ideology of creating an equal and classless society. Instead, under the name of 'communism' and 'socialism' they practised authoritarianism, where a single-party government, elected in pro-forma elections, with an autocratic leader on top (e.g., Stalin in Russia, Gottwald in Czechoslovakia), maintained their dominant position with various repressive strategies. These included political imprisonment, the re-introduction of labour camps, and crimes against humanity (Naimark, 2011; Persak & Kaminski, 2005).

1.4.1 Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (1948-1989)

In 1945, when World War II was gradually ending, the Czechoslovak region was 'liberated' by the American Third Army from the West and by the First Ukrainian Front from the North and East (Heimann, 2011). After the Yalta agreement (1945), Czechoslovakia fell under the Iron Curtain (see Figure 4), and under the zone of Soviet influence as part of their satellite zone (Čornej & Pokorný, 2004). Czechoslovakia became an important satellite zone

of the Soviet Union because of its wealth and pre-war industrialisation efforts (Shepherd, 2000; Zittoun, 2018). Under the new rule, the economy became centralised in the hands of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, the media was censored and actively used to project the ‘communist’ ideology onto people. The police and jurisdiction were also under the rule of the Party. In other words, the power over all domains in the country was centralised under the rule of the Party (Shepherd, 2000). The Czechoslovak ‘communist’ government employed severe persecution against those who opposed it (Šimulčík, 2018; Shepherd, 2000). Most of the terror happened in the 1950s, during Stalin’s rule in Soviet Russia (Naimark, 2011), and Klement Gottwald’s rule in Czechoslovakia. It was an era of death penalties, long prison sentences, political imprisonment, and shootings on the borders of the Iron Curtain, which divided Europe between the Eastern ‘communist’ Bloc and the Western democratic block (see Figure 4). People’s compliance with the regime was maintained using state security police, interrogations, humiliation, and degrading of educated people to work in manual labour (Wheaton & Kavan, 2019). This gave people a strong message that dissent will not be tolerated.

The nature of the repression involved imprisonment, the use of police force, and the spread of constant fear and mistrust among people (Persak & Kaminski, 2005). For example, many people who owned businesses and properties were stripped of private ownership for the benefit of the dominant group representatives rather than the actual ‘benefit of society’ (Kuklík, 2010). This meant that before the single-party government gained power in 1948, a family might have owned a house but after the Czechoslovak Communist Party gained the dominant position, this family would have been forced to vacate the house, move into a smaller apartment, and a Communist Party representative would move into their house (Kuklík, 2010). People who were non-compliant with the regime (e.g., would not want to vacate their house) were stripped of their work positions, their children were not allowed to

obtain higher education²⁰, and they would often be relocated to work in manual labour in various factories, or even sent to work in uranium mines²¹ (Bauer, 2019).

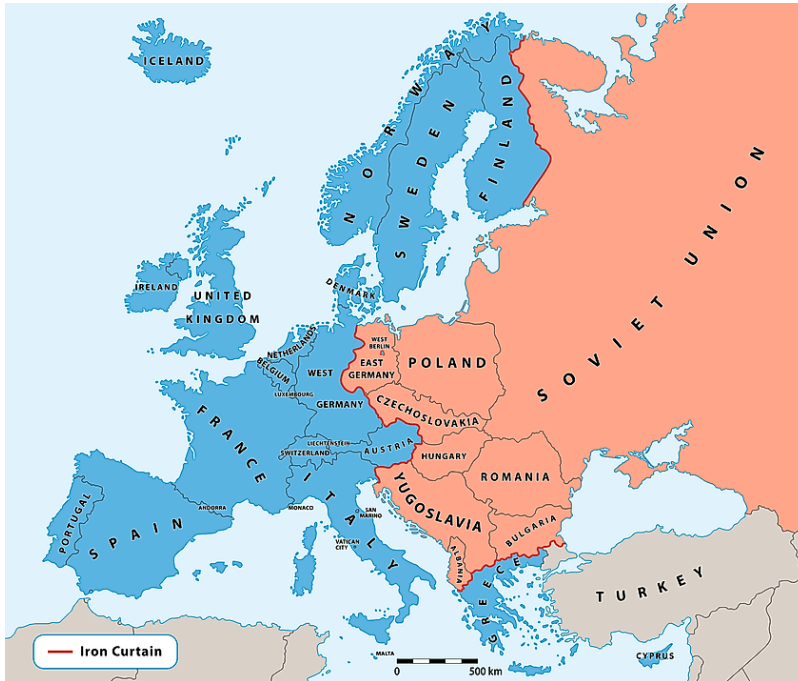
After Stalin died in 1956, a period of liberalisation came to Czechoslovakia, known as the Prague Spring (1968), led by Alexander Dubcek (this name will be relevant in Chapter 5) (Prins 1990). This ‘liberalisation’ had profound political consequences, resulting in an invasion of the armies of the Warsaw Pact to Czechoslovakia in August 1968. The 1970s were marked by a ‘normalisation’ period, aiming to restore the ‘communist’ regime, this time the Party moved away from physical violence. Instead, the Party applied more psychological pressure on citizens (e.g., humiliation, surveillance, house searches, restricted access to education, threats; Prins, 1990). Apart from these repressive strategies targeted at individuals or individual families, the Czechoslovak Communists also repressed all oppositional activities. When the regime repressed overt collective action, it simultaneously engaged in the justification and legitimisation of its actions (see Chapter 3).

Finally, in the 1980s, Mikhail Gorbachev initiated the policies of “Glasnost” (transparency, accountability) and “Perestroika” (restructuring), leading to the liberalisation of the USSR and its satellite states (Sharafutdinova, 2020). In 1989, a series of ‘velvet’ revolutions occurred in these countries, including Czechoslovakia, resulting in the end of Communist rule and the transition to democratic systems (discussed in detail in Chapter 5; Kershaw, 2018). The fall of the ‘communist’ regime in Czechoslovakia was influenced by external economic pressures, Gorbachev’s leadership, the broader revolutionary movements in the Soviet satellite zone, and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Ultimately, Czechoslovakia peacefully divided into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in January 1993 (Kershaw, 2018).

²⁰ Similar repressive strategies have been observed in the context of Albanian dictatorship. Social psychology has explored this relation to family identity and its protective as well as traumatic effects (Kellezi et al., 2018; 2021).

²¹ Uranium mines were unhealthy and unsafe working environments and the Czechoslovak regime purposefully sent ‘unwanted’ citizens there (Bauer, 2019).

Figure 4.
Map of Europe Divided by the Iron Curtain



Note. The countries in orange colour were under the influence of the Soviet Union²²

1.5 Overview of Studies

Study 1 (Chapter 3) presents a qualitative analysis of archival documents. To answer my research question (RQ2) about how the Czechoslovak state authorities demobilised people from engaging in resistance, I used a social constructionist approach, building upon the discourse analytical tradition in social psychology (Billig et al., 1988; Wetherell, 1998). This approach allowed me to answer the question about the subtle demobilisation processes that the Party employed to prevent the opposition activities and reframe their meaning if they took place. The aim of Study 1 was to better understand how dominant groups try to prevent the opposition from mobilising. However, the aim was to go beyond identifying the practical demobilisation (e.g., the use of the army, and police violence) (Moss, 2019). In Study 1, by using critical discursive psychology (Wetherell, 1998) when analysing archival documents, I was able to analyse how the repressive ‘communist’ regime constructed its rhetoric to claim

²² Retrieved from: <https://www.worldatlas.com/geography/iron-curtain.html>

that its actions were not repressive. I was also interested in how the regime engaged in accountability management processes (Edwards & Potter, 1992) to present the regime's public profile as acting in the interest of the 'nation' and 'the people', despite openly repressing their citizens. Study 1 shows that dominant groups have visible as well as more subtle demobilisation strategies to minimise the opposition from resisting and to simultaneously present the Party's image in a positive and legitimate way.

Studies 2 and 3 focus on exploring *identity leadership* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020). These studies are based on semi-structured interviews with five leaders of the 'Candlelight Demonstration' (Study 2) and 14 leaders of the Public Against Violence movement organisation during the Velvet Revolution (Study 3). These studies focus on answering my main research question (RQ1) about how the opposition leaders mobilised collective action, and what roles the performative aspect of *identity leadership* has in these efforts. The aim of Study 2 was to explore the role of leadership from the leaders' own perspective, as opposed to analysing leaders' speeches (e.g., Portice & Reicher, 2018; Reicher & Hopkins, 1996a) or how leadership affects followers (e.g., Fransen et al., 2015). The analysis of a small-scale one-day event – the Candlelight Demonstration – served as an exploratory study of whether and how leaders used the performative elements of identity leadership (*identity impresarioship*), and how leaders respond to the repressive context in which they sought to mobilise collective action. In my analysis of the interviews, I show that in a repressive context, the performative aspects of identity leadership were intertwined with how the leaders strategically responded to the regime's repressive strategies.

Study 3 extends the findings from Study 2 by further addressing *identity impresarioship*. The interview study with the leaders of the Velvet Revolution allowed me to explore how leaders mobilised collective action but also how they built a social movement – Public Against Violence. Because repressive measures were decreasing in the Velvet

Revolution, as opposed to the repression observed in Studies 1 and 2, here, opposition leaders organised a wide range of collective events where they used the performative means of *identity leadership* to make the group visible, legitimate, and to deliver powerful emotional experiences for their supporters. The analysis showed that while leaders focused on designing the collective events, they also encouraged their followers to co-create the movement's identity with them, thus enabling *engaged followership* to emerge (Haslam et al., 2023). Finally, leaders were also strategic about their actions to be effective in negotiating the movement's demands with the Party, to bring social change in Czechoslovakia.

Chapter 2 – Methodology and Methods

“There is no substitute for nuanced and contextually rich characterizations of how particular political actors felt, thought, and acted in particular situations at particular junctures in history.”

Philip Tetlock (1994; p. 520)

2.1 Overview of Chapter 2

In this chapter, I briefly discuss some of the current challenges in social psychology, and the implications this had on the methodology of this thesis. I then discuss the methodological challenges of studying repressive regimes and outline the methodological approach of this research project, arguing for a multi-method approach, based on a pragmatist framework. I then describe the research methods that I used in each empirical study. Finally, I reflect upon my positionality as a researcher, the impact this project had on my further development as a researcher, and the strategies for giving back to the participants with whom I conducted my research.

2.2 Social Psychology and Its Criticisms

Social psychology, mainly its quantitative and experimental strands, has been recently criticised on two grounds: the replication crisis and excessive reliance on WEIRD samples (Henrich et al., 2010a; 2010b; Reicher, 2019). These overarching limitations in psychological research are also evident in resistance and collective action research, which are some of the key areas of the literature relevant to this thesis (see Chapter 1, for a literature review). Particularly, the positivist strands of social psychology (e.g., experimental, surveys) have not escaped the scrutiny prompted by the replication crisis, which spotlighted the “decontextualized and ahistorical analysis of social psychological phenomena” (Power et al.,

2023, p.379). For instance, a substantial proportion of our understanding of repression has been shaped by findings from experimental research (Turner, 2006). The most famous examples of influential social psychological research include Milgram's (1974) Obedience Studies and Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment²³ (Haney et al., 1973). In popular culture, these experiments are remembered for depicting ordinary individuals as highly susceptible to conformity, compliance, and even tyranny and abuse of others (e.g., Haslam et al., 2019; Zimbardo, 2011). Such interpretations tend to oversimplify our grasp of repression, leaving little room for contemplation of dissent and resistance (Fine et al., 2013; Gibson, 2014; Leach & Livingstone, 2015). However, Vollhardt et al. (2020) and other scholars (e.g., Haslam & Reicher, 2012; Rosales & Langhout, 2020) argue that while these methods (e.g., experiments, quantitative surveys) can be useful in simulating certain extreme situations (e.g., such as the prison setting in the BBC Prison Study (Haslam & Reicher, 2007; Reicher & Haslam, 2006) or the Stanford Prison Experiment (Haney et al., 1973)) they cannot furnish a complete portrait in understanding how people are mobilised to resist repression in the real world. The present research project is a step towards understanding the role of leadership in mobilising collective action and contributing to social change in a real (rather than simulated) repressive context, relying on interview data from the leaders.

Another notable limitation in psychological research lies in the excessive dependence on WEIRD samples for studies intending to yield findings generalizable to a broader population (Henrich et al., 2010a, 2010b). Even if one considers the use of research samples from other countries than the United States, as the US samples capture only 5% of the world's population, most of the psychological research is still produced in English-speaking and Western European nations (Arnett, 2009). This provides findings representing a mere

²³ These experiments were undoubtedly inventive in their design and sought to be authentic in trying to simulate real-life experiences for the participants (Vestergren et al., in press), especially, in comparison to the mainstream experimental research. However, the (mis)interpretation of their findings and the popular misconceptions about these famous social psychological studies are problematic.

12% of the world's population (Arnett, 2009). The WEIRD research limitation also underscores a broader issue concerning how 'science' is conducted (Adams et al., 2017; Maldonado-Torres, 2007). Not only do most of the participants in these studies consist of psychology undergraduate students, regardless of the context under study (i.e., the USA and Northern Europe), but also, the research design (e.g., standardised large-scale surveys) frequently fails to accommodate the richness and diversity of specific cultural contexts (Webster et al., 2009). In other words, this debate highlights the issues of using the same measures, and the same methods in diverse contexts, without accounting for the uniqueness of the contexts being studied (Adams et al., 2017). At the same time, it is important to note that the much greater availability of research funding in WEIRD contexts and access to sufficient training contributes to this situation, raising yet another debate on how research should be done in the ideal world (see Bou Zeineddine et al., 2022; Uskul et al., 2023; for more discussion).

However, these problems have real implications. For instance, because collective action research predominantly employs the use of quantitative methodologies (e.g., surveys), our understanding of mobilisation for collective action under repression tends to be restricted (Ayanian, 2017; Ayanian et al., 2021). Another issue with this approach is that the Western conceptualisation of resistance tends to be limited to collective action research (see 1.2.4), whereas scholars tend to report other forms of resistance that are often disregarded or missed (Rosales & Langhout, 2020). This limited understanding stems partly from the fact that much of this research is based in predominantly democratic countries where protests occur often, simply because people have the right to protest (Vollhardt et al., 2020). For example, Acar et al. (in press) argued that the concept of 'efficacy', often a crucial predictor of participation in collective action (e.g., van Zomeren et al., 2008, 2018), is not consistently supported as a measure for engagement in collective action amidst repressive circumstances (Acar & Uluğ,

2022). Other factors, such as moral obligation, seem to play a role (Kaya et al., 2024; Villas & Sabucedo, 2012) (see 1.2.4). Thus, I argue that it is important to not only explore other than mainstream contexts but also to use a wide range of methods beyond quantitative methods. This less restricted approach can give us a better understanding of mobilisation processes while being sensitive to the specific characteristics of a given context.

Hence, many scholars, not only within the domain of resistance and collective action research, but across social psychology, advocate for social psychology to evolve into a discipline that is "*contextually engaged, historically situated, methodologically pluralistic, and culturally embedded*" (Power et al., 2023, p.2). Such an approach to social psychology allows for the examination of world-making events (e.g., social change) and contributes to the evolution of the discipline itself (Power et al., 2023). My approach to investigating leadership in a repressive regime has been informed by these debates (Power et al., 2023; Reicher, 2019).

In line with these arguments, my objective is to address existing gaps in the literature, both by exploring the theme of resistance to repression, which in itself is an underexplored topic within social psychology, and by selecting research methods that effectively engage with the specific context under study. In this chapter, I explain the use of specific research methods in this research project, while in the following chapters, I turn to exploring the specific repressive context of 'communist' Czechoslovakia.

2.3 Methodological Challenges of Studying Repressive Contexts

Studying the social psychological processes happening in repressive contexts can be a challenging task. It is therefore not surprising that in social psychology, research in risk or conflict settings tends to be rare²⁴. One of the challenges of studying mobilisation of

²⁴ Note that sociologists and anthropologists study such contexts more often (Höglund & Öberg, 2011; Thomson et al., 2013), thus, it would be inaccurate to say that repressive contexts have not been studied in the past. What has not been studied are the social psychological processes (e.g., leadership) in repressive contexts.

collective action in repressive regimes, in general, is that studying a currently repressive regime can put research participants at personal risk, which limits the richness and accuracy of data that can be collected on research sites (e.g., Acar et al., 2020; 2022). This arises from the characteristics of a repressive regime which often limits free speech, and engages in censorship of information, thus, often restricting the extent to which people can freely participate in scientific research (Acar et al., 2020; M. Moss et al., 2019). Another issue is the researcher's safety, as accessing currently repressive regimes can also put the researcher themselves at risk (Bellin et al., 2019).

Given the restrictions in currently repressive regimes, studying repressive regimes that existed in the past can offer a nuanced and rich understanding of how social psychological processes operate in repressive contexts. For example, using this approach allowed me to access data about the activities of the dominant group for Study 1 (see Chapter 3), which would be most likely inaccessible in a currently repressive regime. My strategy to study resistance to repression was to look at a regime that was previously repressive but no longer is, and in which it was safe to speak openly with my participants. In the Czech/Slovak setting, I could act as an 'insider' researcher (due to speaking the same language), as well as an 'outsider' researcher²⁵ (due to not having directly experienced the repressive regime myself; also see 2.6). In the following section, I discuss the specific research strategy that I employed in this thesis, along with a brief discussion about the arising methodological challenges regarding the ontological and epistemological basis of this project.

2.4 Research Strategy: A Multi-method Approach

This thesis aims to address the broad question of how leaders (de)mobilise resistance in a repressive regime. As Reicher (2004) points out, "tyranny is always balanced by revolt, even in the most extreme circumstances" (p. 941). In line with this argument, it soon became

²⁵ Bilewicz (2020) discusses a range of these 'outsider' positions of being a researcher in post-conflict Poland.

clear to me that to understand the mobilisation of resistance, one must also address the demobilisation of resistance. Therefore, in addition to studying *identity leadership* from the perspective of the opposition leaders (Haslam et al., 2011/2020), my research strategy was to engage with a wide range of available data that would allow me to address these two sides of my research question – mobilisation as well as demobilisation. In this process, I conducted interviews with opposition leaders, to investigate how mobilised people for collective action, and how they created meaningful collective events. In addition, I also collected archival documents that showcased the repressive regime’s demobilisation discourse. Other studies of resistance to repression have also analysed data from historical events (e.g., Holocaust, prison uprisings (Haslam & Reicher, 2012)) and used secondary data from archival documents, accounts from oral history archives, and history books (e.g. Vollhardt & Bilewicz, in press; Reicher et al., 2006), showcasing the benefits of such an approach in exploring group processes as they occurred in a given context.

Considering the type of data that I was able to collect, and the different research questions I aimed to address with this data, I decided that using a single methodological approach would not be sufficient. Instead, I adopted the perspective of prioritising the use of methods that best analysed my data, over and above the strict use of a single methodological approach (Frost, 2011; Reicher, 2000; Willig & Rogers, 2017). This approach is based on the pragmatist paradigm, treating the selection of appropriate methods as a toolkit to fit the research question with the research design (Brooks & King, 2017). Using different methods created challenges regarding the underlying epistemological and ontological positions of this research project. However, researchers that become strictly tied to using one particular method can encounter the problem of *methodolatry*²⁶ – the idea of worshipping a method

²⁶ The idea of worshipping a method was originally created as a critique to scientific method as a process of ‘true’ and ‘objective’ discovery (Curt, 1994).

(Curt, 1994, p. 106), instead of focusing on answering the specific research questions. On the following issue, Moscovici (1972; as quoted in Reicher, 2000, p.1) noted that “*no discipline can remain in good health if it prioritises the way in which questions are investigated over how questions are asked*”. In line with following the framework of good research practice (Brooks & King, 2017; Willig & Rogers, 2017), irrespective of the position one adopts, I attempted to be explicit about my research process, while not being constrained by a single epistemological position. Utilising different methodological principles involved the analysis of different types of qualitative data²⁷ (i.e., archival documents, interviews), with the qualitative analyses differing in their overarching epistemological backgrounds. I argue that this flexibility in the use of different methods allowed me to best address my research questions.

The social constructionist approach used in Study 1, which used discourse analysis, specifically, critical discursive psychology (Wetherell, 1998), allowed me to see how the regime constructed its demobilisation arguments while claiming to be acting in people’s interest. Arguably, there is a wide range of approaches to analysing discourse. Some approaches, such as conversation analysis place more emphasis on the extremely subtle forms of properties observed in a text (e.g., intonation, and grammatical utterances (Silverman, 1998)). Other approaches, like discursive psychology, look at accountability concerns (Edwards & Potter, 1992) and how these manifest in psychological phenomena (e.g., arguing about one’s attitudes or making attributions through talk). I decided to use critical discursive psychology (Wetherell, 1998) because it combines the elements of discursive psychology developed by Edwards and Potter (1992), together with the underlying social and historical elements that manifest in the speakers’ use of interpretative repertoires (Wetherell, 1998),

²⁷ Similar strategies have been used by Reicher (1984) to study the St. Pauls’ riot, or in the case of studying the 2011 London Riots (Drury et al., 2022).

which people use to deal with the underlying ideological dilemmas (Billig et al., 1988; see Chapter 3, for a detailed discussion).

In this way, I was able to explore the subtle, everyday micro-processes of demobilisation concerning how events and identities are constructed in the regime's official discourse, and also consider how are the wider ideological issues reproduced and established influencing said discourses (Billig et al., 1988; Wetherell, 1998). If I were to solely use discursive psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1992), I would not be able to go beyond analysing the text, however, in the context of the repressive 'communist' regime, it was exactly the going *beyond* the text (Wetherell, 1998), which allowed me to understand how the regime, based on the ideology of Communism, engaged in repression, while presenting their activities as 'non-repressive'. This approach allowed me to explore the wide range of the more subtle demobilisation processes that enable authorities to remain in their dominant position, apart from the visible practical demobilisation strategies.

The realist approach used in Studies 2 and 3, which both used thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews (Boyatzis, 1998), allowed me to identify common patterns in leaders' actions that allowed them to effectively mobilise people under repression, and to understand the practical, organisational, and performative aspects of the role of leadership. Since I was interested in identifying leaders' actions, but also understanding their role in creating a sense of togetherness, treating leaders' accounts as reflecting reality (i.e., understanding the data within the realist framework), I consider this methodological approach effective. Thematic analysis allows for this flexibility when analysing qualitative data particularly because it is an approach that does not depend on any given epistemology (Willig & Rogers, 2017). It is not a stand-alone methodology (Joffe & Yardley, 2003), and while sometimes it is referred to as a method (Braun & Clarke, 2006), others also see it simply as an analytical skill (Boyatzis, 1998).

Arguably, there are alternative methods of analysing interview data, for example, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), or narrative analysis. While IPA is an analytical framework particularly useful for analysing people's unique individual experiences (Smith et al., 2009; Willig & Rogers, 2017), in my interview studies with leaders, I was more interested in their specific actions and mobilisation strategies, rather than their subjective experiences of being a leader or experiencing a social movement. Because Studies 2 and 3 are concerned with studying historical events, another analytical method I could have used would be narrative analysis. This method focuses on people's subjective retelling of stories that happened to them in the past (Crawford, 1992). Following the same reasoning as above when discussing IPA, I was not interested in the phenomenological or autobiographical²⁸ dimensions of leadership but rather in the leaders' practical and organisational steps in mobilising people to resist in a repressive context, and in their ways of creating meaningful experiences for their followers (Haslam et al., 2011/2020). To account for the limitation of conducting retrospective interviews about past events, I checked for the accuracy of the leaders' accounts in historical documents and in past interviews with the leaders, that were publicly available (e.g., Antalová, 1998; for more details see 2.5; for limitations see 6.6).

Following a pragmatist approach (Brooks & King, 2017), the combination of the selected approaches (i.e., discourse analysis and thematic analysis) allowed me to explore resistance to repression from different angles, using different research questions (i.e., about the mobilisation of resistance, and the demobilisation of dissent). The qualitative nature of this project ensured that resistance to repression was not simplified into certain pre-existing quantifiable variables. Instead, I sought to explore contextually embedded resistance to repression (e.g., in 'communist' Czechoslovakia) and address the limitations of the current

²⁸ One could, of course, argue that the semi-structured interviews with leaders were retrospective, and the leaders were describing events that happened to them in the past. In that sense, the same dataset could be re-analysed using a narrative analysis method. However, such analysis would answer a different research question than I was interested in.

social-psychological research of collective action under repression, particularly the role of leadership in it, and the performative aspects of *identity leadership*. Simultaneously, it is worth noting that this thesis, particularly the leadership chapters (Chapters 4, 5) are guided by a pre-existing theoretical framework rooted in the social identity approach in social psychology (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987; see 1.2.5, 1.2.6. and 1.2.7).

Finally, despite critically discussing the current limitations in social psychological research earlier in this chapter, my argument is not against conducting quantitative research, which is based on positivist frameworks. Instead, I argue for being open to a variety of methods that allow us to enrich our understanding of repressive regimes, and the social-psychological processes of leadership and mobilisation in these ‘non-mainstream’ contexts. In the following section, I describe the specific methods used in each empirical study in more detail.

2.5 Methods

2.5.1 Study 1 –The Subtle Social Psychological Dimensions of Demobilisation: An Analysis of Three Case Studies in ‘Communist’ Czechoslovakia

Overview of Study 1. Study 1 (see Chapter 3) presents a qualitative analysis of the demobilisation strategies of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. These strategies are observed across different resistance mobilisation events (discussed in the following subsection). The Czechoslovak ‘communist’ regime was repressive. Despite that, it presented itself to the people as a ‘non-repressive’ regime, striving to construct an image of legitimacy and representing the nation's interests rather than the Party's personal agenda. This created a dilemma for the single-party government: how to justify and account for its repressive actions while managing its public profile when those two were contradictory. To investigate how the regime legitimised repression when demobilising opposition groups, Study 1 uses a selection of archival documents (e.g., newspaper articles and transcripts of public speeches). The

analysis of the regime's accountability management processes was informed by discourse analytical tradition in social psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

Arguably, using archival documents that were 'naturally' created during the regime's existence, can be advantageous when conducting critical discourse analysis, because unlike other types of qualitative data (i.e., interviews), archival documents do not include the unavoidable presence of the interviewer (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). However, unlike quantitative research, qualitative research does not work with representative samples. One of the tools to overcome this issue is using accumulative techniques (Willig, 2008/2013), for instance, conducting multiple case studies. For this reason, I used three different oppositional mobilisation events as case studies to understand the wide range of the regime's demobilisation strategies. I discuss the reason for selecting them below.

Selection of Case Studies for Study 1. The three events in Study 1 were selected because (1) they illustrate instances in which different resistance groups in Czechoslovakia challenged the status quo of the 'communist' regime, and (2) the regime tried to demobilise and prevent people from participating in these events. The cases were: (1) Charter '77 (Case Study 1; see 3.3) - a petition for human rights organised by a Czech arts and culture resistance group; (2) the Pilgrimage to Velehrad (Case Study 2; see 3.4) - a national and religious commemorative event where religious opposition groups gathered in the first pilgrimage since the establishment of 'communism'; and (3) the Candlelight Demonstration (Case Study 3; see 3.5) - the first public demonstration in Czechoslovakia.

There are reasons for selecting these three events. First, these events were pioneering in their nature: the petition, the pilgrimage, and the demonstration were unprecedented instances of collective resistance in Czechoslovakia. Because these events were the first of their kind, they supposedly required well-crafted strategies from the resistance groups,

enabling them to carry out these activities despite demobilisation efforts. Second, these events illustrate a wide range of demobilisation strategies, strategically used by the regime in response to these events and toward different resistance groups.

Arguably, there are other events that I could have selected in Study 1. However, there are reasons for not including them. For instance, instead of the Charter '77 (1977) petition, another significant petition was the Moravian Catholics' petition in 1987 (Šimulčík, 2017). However, since I already selected a case study focusing on religious resistance (Velehrad Pilgrimage – Case Study 2), I aimed to cover a broader spectrum of resistance groups. Therefore, I chose the first petition organised by the Prague opposition in 1977 instead of the 1987 Moravian Catholics' petition.

Regarding religious resistance groups, the Pilgrimage to Velehrad (1985) was not just a pilgrimage. It was also a major national commemoration event, which made it even more dilemmatic for the repressive regime to prevent. In contrast, other pilgrimages, which took place only after the Velehrad pilgrimage, were predominantly religious, lacking the 'national event' tension in Velehrad (also see 3.4). Additionally, I did not find sufficient data on the regime's demobilisation strategies towards other pilgrimages that would differ significantly from those identified in the Velehrad case, which would make these events worth further exploration (e.g., Brocka & Brocková, 2009; Šimulčík, 2021b).

Finally, public demonstrations had been rare in Czechoslovakia for decades, except for the Candlelight Demonstration in 1988, making it a unique event for selection. An alternative demonstration took place in January 1989. This was a series of police-suppressed demonstrations in Prague, known as 'Palach's Week.' However, I chose not to analyse these events because their main characteristic was the clash between police and protesters, a phenomenon already extensively studied in social psychology (e.g., Drury, 2020; Reicher, 1984, 1996; see 1.2.6).

It could also be argued that other available resistance events in 1968 – during the ‘Prague Spring’. However, the Prague Spring was an unsuccessful liberalisation attempt of the ‘communist’ regime that happened *within* the Czechoslovak Communist Party, therefore, it was not an ideal event for studying how the repressive regime justified its repressive actions, as these were not present in Prague Spring (Prins, 1990). Another question that might arise is why I did not use the events of the Velvet Revolution (1989) for this study. Arguably, the Velvet Revolution (1989) began with a student demonstration, in which the students were beaten by the police. The police violence mobilised wider opposition to stand up for the students and organise a social movement, finally resulting in the collapse of the regime (Kenney, 2003; Wheaton & Kavan, 2019). Subsequent events in the Velvet Revolution led by the opposition did not happen in such a repressive setting, because the state’s authorities resigned from their official roles in December 1989, and the only repressive element used was the beating of the students on November 17, 1989.

Therefore, to investigate how the regime demobilised people, I had to select events from the ‘communist’ era itself. Arguably, the richness of the Velvet Revolution events (featured in Study 3, Chapter 5) lies in the content of these events, rather than in the demobilisation processes. At the same time, the mobilisation of people for the Velvet Revolution was a consequence of the interaction between the police and the protesters (see Drury & Reicher, 2005), which mobilised the wider public to engage in collective action as a response to the harsh treatment of the protesters by the state police. These instances, unlike demobilisation in repressive settings, have been widely researched by social psychologists (e.g., Stott & Radburn, 2020).

By analysing the three selected events, I considered situations in which the regime’s institutional accountability management was observable. The regime interfered with the preparation of these events and also within the events. However, their repressive actions had

to be negotiated in front of the public (e.g., television, newspapers, public events). Not all resistance events that took place in Czechoslovakia's communism had a sufficient number of archival resources that holding information about the Party's demobilisation strategies. For these reasons, I selected three well-documented events. Arguably, the selected events are a sufficient illustration of demobilisation processes targeted at the religious and cultural opposition groups and they can provide us with contextually rich materials to analyse.

In addition to the demobilisation rhetoric observed in the archival documents, to better understand the complex layers of demobilisation, the analysis in Study 1 is also accompanied by the triangulated information about the practical demobilisation strategies of the Party, which I obtained from the archival documents themselves, and history books²⁹. I outline these approaches in the following sections.

Two Methodological Approaches to Studying Demobilisation. When investigating rhetorical demobilisation strategies, the discursive method of qualitative data analysis is used (see Reicher, 2000; for an argument about the choice of 'experiential' versus 'discursive' qualitative methods). I used this method of data analysis, which builds upon the discourse analytical tradition in social psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987), to account for the constitutive and action-oriented nature of language. Appreciating that language has the capacity to construct various versions social reality, discourse analysis has the ability to capture this productive nature of language. This allowed me to study how the social actors of the repressive regime employed language to convince, manipulate, and manage accountability (Edwards & Potter, 1992) while suppressing citizens under the guise of 'national safety and security' and 'democratic principles'.

Within this perspective, language is not accepted at face value as a mere reflection of reality and of participants' underlying psychological states. For example, if a representative

²⁹ The specific resources are cited in respective Case Studies (see 3.3, 3.4., and 3.5).

of a repressive regime claims that protests ‘disrupt public health’, rather than treating this as an account of the speaker’s ‘true beliefs and attitudes’, from a discursive point of view this statement is handled as a rhetorical construction of protests in a negative light and as a potential attempt to delegitimise them. The regime might assert this way of communication to preserve its unchallenged authority. Hence, the discursive method is useful since it helps us understand how repressive regimes rhetorically construct resistance events in order to justify their repression, as well as how they manage their institutional profile.

Discursive psychology allows the analysis of two perspectives. The micro-level analysis (Edwards & Potter, 1992) considers how the state authorities managed their accountability, and how different versions of identities and events are presented as factual. The macro-level analysis allows for the analysis of the broader cultural and ideological resources that shape the ways of talking in society and guide the ideological establishment of specific practices (Billig et al., 1988; Wetherell, 1998). The variability of the different constructions of legitimising repression, which aid demobilisation, are treated as points of interest because they enable a broader understanding of how repression operates through language. In the local context of the archival documents, I investigate how repression is constructed as ‘legitimate’, and how are these constructions linked to the broader ways of talking about repression, which the regime employs to manage its ‘liberal’ profile.

Conversely, to address the question of how the Czechoslovak ‘communist’ regime practically demobilised resistance (e.g., blocking roads) I adopted a realist perspective (Willig & Rogers, 2017), assuming that the obtained data about the events reflects objective reality without hidden meanings. For instance, if historical accounts describe a strategy such as police roadblocks for demobilisation, this is taken as a reflection of reality – in this case, literal roadblocks. The decision to employ both a realist and a discursive approach in the

study of demobilisation aligns with a multi-method approach to data analysis (Frost & Shaw, 2015), where the research questions guide methodological approaches and not vice versa (see Reicher, 2000; for a similar argument).

Analysis of Practical Demobilisation Strategies: Triangulation. I sought to gather as much data as possible to construct a triangulated account of the three events since these events are not mapped out with the same detail in the previous historical accounts that I consulted (e.g., Blažek & Schovánek, 2018; Kenney, 2003). This triangulation approach was informed by the research strategies used by social psychologists studying riots, for example, by Ball et al. (2019) ‘micro-historical case study’ of the spread of the 2011 London riots. Because the available data also consisted of visual elements (e.g., newspaper articles, and photos), in the triangulation, I was also informed by the ‘radical’ qualitative approach (Parker, 2005) used by Rath (2016) when studying the mobilisation of collective hate in India, using posters. Specifically, Rath (2016) utilised an open-minded process of ‘discoveries’, and combined the methods of visual anthropology (Katz, 2004) and communication studies (Werner, 2004) to analyse visual data (e.g., posters), along with studying the hate discourses in political speeches. Using these strategies of working with available data about historical events, I was not limited to a restricted data set. Instead, I immersed myself in, simply put, all the data that I could get access to. This allowed me to consult not only texts but also the visual elements such as photos, to accompany the triangulated narrative.

To ensure that the events are not only portrayed by the ‘outsiders’ (e.g., Western historians such as Kenney, 2003), I also consulted the historical accounts by Czech and Slovak historians (Blažek & Schovánek, 2018; Jašek et al., 2015; Šimulčík, 1998/2018; 2017), and the information provided in Czech and Slovak oral history archives (e.g., Post Bellum, Nations Memory Institute). These materials served to complement the critical

discursive analysis of archival documents, providing the reader with a more immersive experience of the context, which might otherwise be unfamiliar.

Analysis of Rhetorical Demobilisation Strategies: Discourse Analysis of Archival Documents. The main analysis of Study 1 (in Chapter 3) is based on a specific dataset consisting of archival documents, which I gathered during the process of triangulation (described in the section above). One of the advantages of using archival data when studying historical events is that this data is not re-constructed through memory, therefore, it is not influenced by people's post hoc interpretations of events (unlike the retrospective interviews used in Chapters 4 and 5). The type of data – archival documents - used in this study has been inspired by Reicher's et al. (2006) study of the arguments used by Bulgarians to mobilise solidarity with the Jewish population during World War 2. Reicher's et al. (2006) study also used archival documents. These documents were pre-selected by Todorov (2001), a historian, to analyse how Bulgarians constructed the Jewish population in their official documents. Reicher's et al. (2006) analysis showed that Bulgarian Jews were constructed as 'fellow Bulgarians', and this inclusive framing contributed to the saving of Bulgarian Jews from being deported to Nazi concentration camps.

Data. To analyse the demobilisation rhetoric, I searched for relevant archival documents that were created at the time of the three selected collective resistance events (described in Chapter 3), specifically in the years 1977, 1985, and 1988. The selection of the documents was based on careful research of the available data from the historical institutions, specifically:

1. Nation's Memory Institute (<https://www.upn.gov.sk/>)
2. Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes (<https://www.ustrcr.cz/en/typ-projektu/research-and-documentation-projects-en/>)
3. Post Bellum (<https://www.postbellum.cz/english/>)

While searching for information through these historical institutions served as a starting point, the archival documents I used in Study 1 were publicly available in respective online databases sponsored by these institutions. Specifically, I consulted these online archives:

1. Archive of the Rudé Právo³⁰ newspapers
(<https://archiv.ucl.cas.cz/index.php?path=RudePravo>)
2. Archive of the Candlelight Demonstration
(<http://www.svieckovamanifestacia.sk/sk/multimedia>)
3. Archive of the Institute for Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences (<http://www.disent.usd.cas.cz/texty/>)

The consulted materials from the online archives were initially used for the triangulation process. After constructing a specific picture of each event, I then focused on selecting key archival documents that would allow me to analyse the demobilisation discourse of the three selected events. I aimed to choose documents that were publicly available at the time of the events (e.g., newspapers, television speeches) as well as reports from closed meetings when available (e.g., D9-D11 in Table 2). The selected documents were clear in terms of their intended audience (e.g., 'the public,' 'the Party,' and 'the opposition leaders') and their intended outcome of demobilisation, which was crucial for my analysis (see Table 2).

Table 2.

Overview of archival documents used in Study 1, including information about the author of each document, indented audience, and the mode of communication

Doc. No.	Document Name & Date	Author	Audience	Mode of Communication
1	Whose interest is this?, 7.1.1977	State Authorities	Public/ Opposition	Newspaper article
2	Failures and Usurpers, 12.1.1977	State Authorities	Public/ Opposition	Newspaper article

³⁰ Trans. as *Red Law*

3	The Calling of the Czechoslovak Artistic Union, 28.1.1977	State Authorities	Public/ Opposition/ Supporters	Newspaper article & Public Event
4	Speech of the Ministry for Culture at the Velehrad pilgrimage, 5.7.1985 ³¹	State Authorities	Public	Newspaper Article & Speech in the Event
5	Announcement of the demonstration to the City Council, 10.3.1988	Opposition	State Authorities	Letter sent by post
6	Prohibition, 17.3.1988	State Authorities	Opposition	Letter sent by post
7	Appeal, 21.3.1988	Opposition	State Authorities	Letter sent by post
8	Speech of Stefan Zarecky, head of Pacem in Terris (date unknown)	State Authorities	Public	Speech in State Television
9	The request of the special security action for 25/03/1988 from the Home Secretary of CSSR, 14.3.1988	State Authorities	State Authorities, Police	State Security Document
10	Plan of the Safety Precautions for 25.3.1988	State Authorities	State Authorities, Police	State Security Document
11	Precautions for the prepared demonstration, 16.3.1988	State Authorities	State Authorities, Police	State Security Document

There are reasons to accept these documents as relevant for analysing the demobilisation processes concerning the Charter '77 petition (D1-3). First, I selected all of the newspaper articles which discuss the state's reaction towards the Charter initiative to understand how the decision to repress the initiative was framed and legitimised towards the public. These newspaper articles were published in the mainstream newspapers, hence accessible to anyone and widely read in Czechoslovakia. Second, these documents were all created in the beginning stages of the Charter demobilisation, when the petition was published in Western newspapers on January 7, 1977, which allowed me to understand the initial framing of the regime's demobilisation strategies. Third, these documents are

³¹ The transcript of the speech was published in Rudé Právo/Red Law on 7.7.1985 but the speech was given on 5.7.1985.

mentioned as documents of significance in Bolton (2012), Blažek and Schovánek (2018); and Císařovská and Prečan (2007), which are important historical analyses of the Charter '77 initiative. Finally, the remaining available documents concerning Charter '77 were produced at later stages and consisted of a long exchange of letters between the Charter and the state authorities. The continuous publication of these texts had a simple task – to discredit the Charter leaders. Therefore, further available documents did not bring any new arguments, nor had a significant impact on the already-established arguments analysed in section 3.3 (Blažek & Schovánek, 2018; Císařovská & Prečan, 2007).

Similarly, the reason for accepting the selected document for the Pilgrimage to Velehrad (D4) was that it was the only speech given at the Pilgrimage and later published in the news after the pilgrimage. This speech was reproduced in Red Law newspapers, which allowed the regime to present a unified picture of the event (Jašek et al., 2015). Further text from Red Law Newspapers³² was initially consulted. However, the text was not used because the communication pattern was similar, and the already-conducted analysis of D4 would be duplicated (see Appendix 4; Document A).

For the case study of the Candlelight Demonstration (1988), I used archival documents from a publicly available online archive specifically dedicated to Candlelight Demonstration. Arguably, the selected documents (D5-D11) provide a sufficient resource to cover the argumentation between the state authorities and the resistance leaders for the following reasons: (1) they involve the entire communication between the leaders and the City Council (D5-D7); (2) and they also include a selection of the documents from the private correspondence of the authorities (D9-D11), which informs us about their practical actions. In total, there were 35 archival documents³³ available from the online archive, however, only

³² Available at: <https://archiv.ucl.cas.cz/index.php?path=RudePravo/1985/7/8/1.png>

³³ All 35 documents are available from www.svieckovamanifestacia.sk

seven of them were relevant to our research on demobilisation rhetoric. The remaining documents were reports from post-demonstration interrogation of attendees, arrest documents, and post-demonstration newspaper articles from Western journalists. I decided not to use them in the analysis, but I consulted these for triangulation of the event.

Due to the secondary nature of the data used in this study, and its public availability, ethical approval was not needed. All documents selected for this analysis were written originally in Czech or Slovak, and I translated them into English before the analysis (the dataset of translated documents is 10,202 words long). The selected translated documents for all three case studies can be found in Appendix 1 and the original documents can be found in respective online archives.

I am aware that analysing texts after translation can create problems (Eco, 2004; Fairclough, 1992). Since the documents were translated by me, and I am both (a) a native speaker of Slovak and Czech and, (b) familiar with the social psychological literature, I paid special attention to maintaining the same tone in the translated documents that were used in the original documents. In situations where the meaning could be lost due to translation, I provide further explanation in the footnotes (see Appendix 1). During the analysis procedure, I constantly cross-checked the tone of the original and the translated documents.

To analyse the archival documents, I used critical discursive psychology (Wetherell, 1998), enabling the analysis of both local conversational practices and the broader cultural, historical, and societal implications of the discourse. The analysis focuses on exploring how the repressive regime managed its accountability in its public discourse when claiming that they were not repressive, while actively repressing its citizens. In addition to exploring how the dominant group oriented to the local dilemmas of stake (Edwards & Potter, 1992) – issues arising from personal and institutional accountability management - I also focused on linking

these local dilemmas to the wider ideological dilemmas rooted in the wider ideological issues (Billig et al., 1988; see Chapter 3; for more details).

2.5.2 Study 2 – Czechoslovakia’s Candlelight Demonstration: Understanding the Role of (Identity) Leadership in Mobilising Collective Action Under Repression

Study 2 in Chapter 4 utilises qualitative, semi-structured interviews with five leaders of the ‘Candlelight Demonstration’ (1988). Using semi-structured interviews (Cohen et al., 2011) to collect data allowed me to speak directly with the leaders. The qualitative approach that analyses the content of the talk (different from the discursive approach used in Study 1), rather than *how* the content was talked about, was a beneficial strategy for learning about leadership from a leader’s perspective. I used thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Joffe, 2011) to identify the practical and organisational strategies the leaders used to make the demonstration possible in a repressive setting. I also analysed the performative aspects of leadership, in other words, whether and how leaders sought to build a sense of shared social identity among the participants (Haslam et al., 2011/2020; see 1.2.7; for a review).

Participant Recruitment. Recruitment of the participants for this study was conducted with the help of the Nation’s Memory Institute in Bratislava, Slovakia. The historians from this institute already conducted interviews and historical research with the participants of the Candlelight Demonstration (i.e., Jašek et al., 2015; Šimulčík, 1998/2018). From these publications (Jašek et al., 2015; Šimulčík, 1998/2018), and through discussions with historians, I identified those leaders of this demonstration, who were still alive in 2019, when this data collection took place. The reason for not using already-available interviews with the participants and some leaders of the Demonstration (conducted by historians such as Jašek et al., 2015; Kenney, 2003; Šimulčík, 1998/2018), and instead conducting new interviews was that the social-psychological aspect was missing from the previous interview data. I was interested in the different aspects of *identity leadership*, mobilisation processes

under a repressive context, and the organisational aspect of the demonstration, which was not thoroughly explored before. The available interviews were primarily historical testimonies of the demonstration – what happened, where, when – and missed the psychological aspect of the participants' and leaders' activities (e.g., why candles were used).

Participants. I conducted semi-structured interviews with five main leaders of the 'Candlelight Demonstration'. Participants' names were anonymised and coded with abbreviations (see Table 3). Two leaders were 'formal' leaders of the demonstration, responsible for planning and organising the demonstration (these leaders are coded as L1 and L2). It is important to note here as Haslam and Reicher (2012) point out that the dominant groups in authoritarian settings have very well-functioning strategies for targeting leadership figures of the disadvantaged (opposition) groups (this also becomes clear from Chapter 3). Being an opposition leader under a repressive regime meant that these people risked constant imprisonment and their houses were often monitored. Putting one's name on an official document and announcing a public demonstration was a matter of extreme personal risk (also see 3.5). Therefore, being an 'official' and visible opposition leader in this context was a challenging task. That is why I extended the sampling of leaders of this demonstration beyond interviewing L1 and L2. Since L1 and L2 were arrested on the day of the demonstration, I interviewed three more members of the Underground Church (coded as L3-L5 in this study), who took leading roles in the demonstration. These leaders were not known to the police before the demonstration. Thus, they were able to physically attend the demonstration and report what happened in the demonstration.

I am aware of the potential limitations of conducting retrospective interviews about an event that took place more than 30 years ago. Issues with participants' memory (Brescò & Wagoner, 2015) and their subsequent political careers might have influenced their accounts (see 6.6; for a discussion about limitations). To ensure factual correctness, I cross-checked

leaders' accounts with other published resources about the demonstration (Jašek et al., 2015; Kenney, 2003; Šimulčík, 1998/2018). In addition to cross-checking the information myself, the participants were also very open about situations when they did not remember certain details or specific dates and names of people. In such situations, they recommended cross-checking that information in history books. Generally, participants were motivated to share their memories with someone from a younger generation.

Table 3.

Overview of the Interviewees in Study 2

Participant code	Sex	Age at the Demonstration	Age at the Interview	Position in Candlelight Demonstration
Leader 1	Male	42	73	Organiser ³⁴ the Candlelight Demonstration
Leader 2	Male	44	75	Official 'announcer' of the Candlelight Demonstration
Leader 3	Male	Early 30s	Late 60s	Leader of Underground Church
Leader 4	Male	31	62	Leader of Underground Church
Leader 5	Female	Early 30s	Late 60s	Leader of Underground Church

Interviews. I conducted in-person, semi-structured interviews in public places (e.g., cafes and restaurants) in January 2019 in Bratislava, Slovakia. Each interview was conducted in Slovak – native language for all participants³⁵. I recorded the interviews and then transcribed and translated them into English. The transcribed interviews were approximately 18,908 words long. In total, I conducted four interviews because two participants requested to answer the questions together (L4 and L5).

I first developed the interview schedule in English and subsequently translated it into Slovak.

The interview schedule consisted of topics instead of specific questions. This ensured that

³⁴ This person was already active in opposition and was known to the police. In the interview he told me that was not able to become the official announcer of the demonstration because he would risk immediate imprisonment. He was very involved in organising the demonstration but his name is not on official announcement of the Demonstration (Kenney, 2003; Šimulčík 1998/2018).

³⁵ These participants all lived in the former Czechoslovakia, thus speak and understand both Czech and Slovak languages.

participants could give more elaborated answers and when new topics emerged, they could be discussed further during the interviews. The interview topics concerned (1) leaders' backgrounds, (2) their decision to organise the demonstration, (3), the steps taken to mobilise people for the demonstration (if any), (4) their experience of the demonstration (if any), and (5) the perceived impact of the event on themselves and the future opposition events. The complete interview schedule can be found in Appendix 2³⁶.

Ethical Considerations. The primary data collection took place in 2019 in public places in Bratislava, Slovakia. This data collection was approved by the University of St Andrews's Teaching and Research Ethics Committee (UTREC; Approval code: PS14006; see Appendix 2), where I was based at the time of the primary data collection for Study 2. The subsequent use of a selection of interviews from this dataset in Study 2 (Chapter 4) – a secondary dataset - was not used as part of any previous analysis.

Analysis. I used realist thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Joffe, 2011) to analyse the data. Thematic analysis was selected as an appropriate method because it allowed me to code patterns in the data. However, no thematic analysis can be purely detached from existing theories. As a social psychologist and a social identity researcher (see 1.2.5; for a review), my analysis was informed by the theoretical framework of *identity leadership* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020). Thus, I was interested not only in identifying novel findings about leadership but also in linking some of the findings from the interviews to pre-existing theory. This analysis is referred to as deductive, or top-down analysis, because it is more heavily based on a specific theory, meaning that the coding and designing of themes is done through the lens of a particular theory. Such analysis is also referred to as a “hybrid” approach (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Swain, 2018) to thematic analysis, in which the deductive codes about *identity leadership* were guided by a theoretical framework (Haslam et al., 2011/2020), and

³⁶ The full interview transcripts are confidential due to the nature of the data.

integrated with inductive codes, created from novel features in the data (i.e., the specifics of a repressive context). Thematic analysis is often criticised (but also praised) for how flexibly it can be used, which can result in its poor execution (see Braun & Clarke, 2021). One way to tackle this issue is to remain explicit in explaining the systematic steps taken as part of this analysis (Swain, 2018). In line with this recommendation, I outline the specific steps below.

I first carefully read through the transcribed interviews and selectively coded the relevant parts of the transcripts. This included coding for topics of relevance, which was informed by my research questions – how did leaders act in the repressive context, and how did leaders design the collective event such that it was possible to happen in a repressive setting? Did they act as *identity impresarios*? If so, how? I then generated codes (e.g., “timing”, “location”, “symbols”) that were relevant to the different decisions that the leaders made, and grouped them into potential categories, that were linked to my research question. For example: leaders’ performative strategies (e.g., use of symbols, location), and leaders’ strategies in a repressive regime (e.g., timing of the demonstration). Throughout the coding process, which was initially centred around the leaders’ role in mobilising people for collective action, it became clear to me that leaders paid attention to making the event meaningful to the participants. At the same time, the leaders were limited in using the traditional elements of a demonstration, such as having speeches. Therefore, the analysis was a process of iteration, revisiting the data, going back to it multiple times, and making sense of it. The two main categories that I created from this process included “strategies to overcome repression”, and “creating shared social identity”. The latter category was directly informed by the *identity leadership* framework (Haslam et al., 2011/2020), but to the extent that this framework lacks empirical evidence for *identity impresarioship*. This process was not linear, instead, there were sometimes instances, when it became hard to decide which of the decisions that leaders made were more of a response to the repressive regime, and which

were decisions that considered how the participants could have a good experience in the demonstration. For instance, the use of a candle as a symbol was both a practical decision to use an inoffensive symbol, but also a decision to give some element of visibility to the crowd of people on a square. After this process was repeated multiple times, I created the main themes, revised them multiple times before the final write-up, named the themes, and finally, wrote the analysis.

2.5.3 Study 3 – Czechoslovakia’s Velvet Revolution: Understanding the Role of (Identity) Leadership in Building a Social Movement and Creating Collective Experiences

Like Study 2, Study 3 in Chapter 5 also utilises qualitative, semi-structured interviews. In this case, the interviews were conducted with 14 leaders of the Velvet Revolution (1989) in Czechoslovakia. This data collection provided a deeper understanding of leadership roles beyond merely mobilising people for a small, one-day protest (as reported in Study 2). The interviews allowed me to gain insights into how these specific leaders organized a large-scale social movement, encompassing a wide range of collective events known as the Velvet Revolution. By speaking directly with the movement leaders and analysing their actions, I could better comprehend the strategies and efforts involved in organising the social movement organisation. This study also used realist thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Joffe, 2011). Despite the similarity of the overall methodological framework of Studies 2 and 3, I outline the specifics of the present study below.

Identifying and Recruiting Participants. The recruitment of participants from this specific sample of the population – movement leaders - was initially based on a thorough review of publicly available information about the movement organizations involved in the Velvet Revolution (1989) in Czechoslovakia. I identified two key movement organisations – *Občanské Fórum* (Czech; translated as Civic Forum or Citizen Forum [CF]) and *Verejnost’ Proti Násiliu* (Slovak; translated as Public Against Violence [PAV]). This was based on

history books and interview books (Antalová, 1998; Kenney, 2003; Kershaw, 2018; Krapfl, 2013). I first aimed to recruit leaders from both organisations.

However, due to a limited sample of leaders from the Civic Forum organisation, especially because the leading member and former president of Czechoslovakia Václav Havel, as well as many of its key members, had already passed away, I decided to focus on interviewing the leaders from the ‘Public Against Violence’ movement organisation. This was mainly because I was able to recruit all of the key leaders of the coordination group³⁷ of the PAV who were alive. There were three exceptions since three people passed away before these interviews were conducted.

It is important to say that there is a high similarity between the types of events that CF and PAV movement organisations engaged in (Krapfl, 2013). These movement organisations also communicated and shared information throughout the revolutionary days (presumably to maintain similar agendas across Czechoslovakia), while some members of PAV were also members of CF and vice versa. I believe that the participant sample I obtained provided me with a rich dataset to explore the range of leaders’ strategies, which was the main aim of this study.

I am aware of the debate between some political scientists who argue that the rise of PAV and CF was also the first step towards the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1993 (e.g., discussed in Krapfl, 2013). In my interviews, the establishment of PAV and CF as separate organizations in November 1989, was referred to as a matter of practical issues and the lack of quick and efficient communication between Prague and Bratislava at the time of the Velvet Revolution, which gave rise to two organisations at the same time (i.e., both were founded on 19th of November). In this study, my focus was neither on the political activities of the Civic

³⁷ This is the term leaders used when referring to the main leadership group in the PAV movement which was not just a movement organisation but eventually a community of people.

Forum and Public Against Violence, nor on the post-November 1989 transition of power and the re-structuring of Czechoslovakia as a democratic state (Krapfl, 2013). Therefore, the later political differences between CF and PAV post-revolution, and the conflicts between some of the representatives (e.g. Václav Havel and Václav Klaus in CF; Krapfl, 2013) are not as relevant for this study, as they might be for political science and other disciplines considering the transition of power post-revolution and the development of these movement organisations into political parties, and the trajectory of this movement. Instead, the present study focuses on the role of leadership during the Velvet Revolution.

Due to the unique population sample, I already approached some of the participants for this study when I was collecting data for Study 2 (in Chapter 4 about the Candlelight Demonstration) in January 2019. Specifically, I possessed the contact information of three leaders of the Candlelight Demonstration (coded as L6, L8, and L11 in Study 3) whom I asked (in 2019) if they would be interested in an additional interview regarding their role in the Velvet Revolution, which they all agreed to. In addition, I began approaching the representatives of PAV in September 2020 with the plan to interview them later in 2021. I was aware of some participants' busy schedules, but later, the issues with interviewing participants were mainly associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

I approached all 15 participants (1 female, 14 males), all of whom agreed to participate in the interviews. However, one participant had to cancel the interview due to hospitalisation at the time when the interviews were being conducted and I was not able to interview them because the hospitalisation was long-lasting and this participant was not feeling well. I ended with a sample of 14 participants (1 female³⁸, 13 males).

³⁸ The limited number of female leaders in my sample is due to various barriers women were facing at the time. Recently, a book of interviews with the female activists in the Velvet Revolution was published, where women discuss their specific roles in the revolution. Accordingly, many women remained 'invisible' in the public spaces, which were dominated by men (see Maďarová, 2019, for an abstract in English), despite being engaged in supportive roles (e.g., the logistics of events, helping with the preparation of the protests). I believe that this is the reason why I failed to recruit more female leaders in this study.

Interviews. From January 2021 to April 2021, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 14 leaders (see Table 4). In the interviews, I particularly focused on discussing the leaders' role in the key mass events that happened from 16 November 1989 – to 10 December 1989 (a timeline of events is discussed in Chapter 5). In total, 14 individual interviews were conducted, lasting between 60-150 minutes. Thirteen interviews were conducted using video calls (either Skype or MS Teams, based on participants' own preferences). One participant (coded as L10) was not able to participate in the interview via video call due to a medical condition and instead delivered his responses in a written format (nonetheless, the interview schedule was the same for every participant; see Appendix 3). I conducted all interviews in Slovak. I recorded the interviews using either MS Teams (for the MS Teams interviews) or a recorder (for the Skype interviews). I then transcribed and fully translated the transcripts of the interviews into English. The transcribed interviews were approximately 102,854 words long.

Table 4.
Overview of the Interviewees in Study 3

Participant code	Sex	Age at the time of the Interview	Position
Leader 1	Male	74	PAV*
Leader 2	Female	74	PAV
Leader 3	Male	76	PAV
Leader 4	Male	76	PAV
Leader 5	Male	71	PAV
Leader 6	Male	63	PAV, MCF
Leader 7	Male	84	PAV
Leader 8	Male	74	PAV, CD
Leader 9	Male	76	PAV, CF
Leader 10	Male	78 ⁷	PAV
Leader 11	Male	77	PAV, CD
Leader 12	Male	79	PAV
Leader 13	Male	75	PAV
Leader 14	Male	69	PAV

**Abbreviations: Public Against Violence – PAV, Movement for Civic Freedom – MCF, Candlelight Demonstration – CD, Civic Forum - CF*

The interview schedule consisted of open-ended questions, which focused on exploring (1) the leaders' roles in the Velvet Revolution events, (2) their role in the foundation of the 'Public Against Violence' movement organisation, (3) the leaders' role in preparing the mass demonstrations and other events, and finally, (4) the long-term impact of these events on themselves and the society. For example, I asked them: *What was life like for you during the time of the Velvet Revolution?, Were you a leader? How would you define your role?* I then followed up with questions about the protest events, e.g. *What did you want to convey at the mass meetings?* The complete interview schedule is included in Appendix 3. With these questions, I aimed to identify the key strategies and activities that the leaders were responsible for, such as organising the protest events, participating in live-broadcast TV discussions, and engaging in negotiations about the resignation of the Communist Party. I was also interested in identifying what the protest events consisted of, particularly what role leaders played in creating and participating in them. My theoretical aims consisted of identifying (1) the role of leaders as strategic decision-makers, which is the core argument of social movement studies when it comes to leadership, but has limited evidence, and (2) the role of leaders in building a sense of shared social identity with various practical steps, to extend the social-psychological understanding of *identity leadership* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020).

Ethical Considerations. This study was approved by Canterbury Christ Church University's Institutional Review Board Committee in January 2020 (Ref: 19/SAS/11C; see Appendix 3). All participants gave informed consent to participate in the interviews and they were aware that the interviews were being recorded, and their responses would be publicly quoted. Participants' responses were anonymised to protect their privacy.

Analysis. I used realist thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Joffe, 2011) to identify patterns in the data. My analytic process was informed by *identity leadership* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020) and also by the previous analysis in Study 2. For this reason, I coded the data using both inductive and deductive codes, relying on the ‘hybrid’ thematic analysis framework (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Swain, 2018).

The analytic process was similar to the approach in Study 2 and consisted of (1) familiarising myself with the data set, (2) continuous re-reading of the interviews, (3) identifying codes in the data, (4) generating themes from the codes, (5) evaluating and re-evaluating the generated themes, and (6) writing the analysis section. The process of coding the data and generating relevant codes was based on my research question about the role of leadership in general (e.g., how did the leaders build the movement and respond to the regime’s constraints), and the aspect of *identity leadership* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020), especially *identity impresarioship*, that was apparent from the interview data.

This process was open-ended, meaning that I was open to identifying new emerging aspects of the role of leadership, rather than rigidly focusing only on the aspects that previous literature outlined. For example, the codes that I created were: ‘symbols’, ‘sense of community’, ‘dramaturgy’, and ‘non-violent norms’, which referred to the performative tools used to design the protest events. I also identified these codes across different mass events that the leaders mentioned (see Chapter 5; for an overview of the events). Therefore, another set of codes that I used grouped the practical and strategic aspects of leadership based on different events that took place as part of the Velvet Revolution, such as the ‘general strike’, ‘march to Hainburg’ or ‘organising meetings’ which allowed me to see the codes across different events. With this approach, I also tried to account for the dynamic aspect of the role of leadership and the adaptive changes in leaders’ strategies at different time points throughout the revolution. This longitudinal aspect was particularly inspired by the works of

Drury and Reicher (2005) and Vestergren et al. (2018), as these studies have demonstrated the long-lasting impact of collective action (e.g., empowerment, psychological changes).

Because the dataset was so rich, I decided to split the analysis into two sections – (1) organisational issues and (2) social identity-related issues. First, I focused on the analysis of leaders' strategies to mobilise people for the movement, and I grouped these codes (e.g., 'use of non-violence', or 'achieving visibility') into themes. Second, I focused on the analysis of leaders' role in creating a sense of shared identity in collective events that happened throughout the movement. I grouped the codes such as 'symbols' or 'collaborative workshops' into themes. Since leaders referred to multiple events throughout the interviews, strategies and from multiple events are discussed throughout the analysis (see Chapter 5; for more details).

In the next sections, I reflect on my experiences when conducting this research project.

2.6 Personal Reflexivity

2.6.1 Positionality Statement

Personal reflexivity refers to the researcher's critical self-awareness of their involvement in the research process and how it shapes the way it unfolds. For any qualitative research, personal reflexivity is linked with attempts to ensure the quality of the presented work (King & Brooks, 2017). This is particularly important given that the researcher's own identity and position can influence the participants' response to the research (Uluğ et al., 2021). Studying resistance to repression in the context of 'communist' Czechoslovakia was influenced by personal motivation. I grew up in post-communist Slovakia, listening to stories of my great-grandparents who grew up during World War 2, my grandparents, who were teenagers during the Prague Spring (1968), and finally, my parents, who were students at the time when the Velvet Revolution (1989) took place. I am a native speaker of both Slovak and

Czech, which allowed me to access a variety of resources, get access to my participants, and create rapport with them.

I have not personally experienced any of the events that I discussed with my participants. I had no personal connection to the participants I sampled for my studies. I also never lived in Bratislava, where the main revolutionary events discussed in this thesis took place (i.e., Chapters 4 and 5). Throughout this research project, I immersed myself in available resources about the 'communist' regime in Czechoslovakia and engaged with its history. This involved visiting exhibitions in galleries and museums and reading history books that were available on this topic in Czech, Slovak, and English. For example, in 2019, I attended the 30th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution in Prague and visited the spaces that were of relevance to the Velvet Revolution and the Candlelight Demonstration in Bratislava. Each year when the revolutionary events of 1989 are commemorated, many interviews with people who participated in the revolution are published (e.g., Palán et al., 2019; Sudor, 2022), I made use of these materials. Similarly, many books and interesting panel discussions were published when I was carrying out this project in the news, which I kept a record of and read throughout the course of this project. These activities were not purposefully conducted to be used as empirical data, but I hope that they helped me present a contextually rich account of the historical context of the specific resistance events. Thus, this strategy was mainly used to address the limitation of doing research that involves studying events that happened in the past. These additional resources helped me to reconstruct specific events and to better understand the repressive context in which people lived extensive periods of their lives since my own experience did not involve living under repression.

2.6.2 Reflecting Upon Recruitment of Leaders and Conducting Research With Leaders of Important Historical and Political Events

During this research, I employed various strategies to gain access to the leaders of the Candlelight Demonstration and the Velvet Revolution. Originally, when I started my research in 2019, I planned to meet with my participants in public events such as after panel discussions, and festivals they were invited to. However, especially in the case of Study 3, this was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that my participants were from a very high-risk age group (being in their 60s, 70s, or even 80s). Thus, initially, I could not meet with them in person.

Since I was prevented from recruiting my participants in public events, during the pandemic, I became a freelance writer for Denník N³⁹ newspaper in Slovakia, where I published several articles, popularizing social psychology. This was partly a strategic decision, as I was aware that since I was aiming to interview the leaders of the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, I needed to have some public platform, where I wrote about my research area in Slovak. I started writing articles for Denník N in March 2020, and I used this as a platform to contact the leaders of the Velvet Revolution. By describing to my potential participants what social psychology research was, I aimed to let them understand the work I do (as many of my participants were not fluent in English⁴⁰ to read about my work in English). I knew that my potential participants also contributed to Denník N newspaper so it would be a familiar online space for them. I was aware that many of the former leaders of the revolution became politicians and public figures since 1989 and it was not easy to reach them, as they are still active in the public sphere. When I tried to contact them initially, I was

³⁹ <https://dennikn.sk/autor/klara-jurstakova/>

⁴⁰ This lack of English language proficiency is characteristic of post-communist countries, where it was enforced to study Russian in schools and other institutions (Bruen & Sheridan, 2016). As Europe was divided between East and West, and people from East could not travel West, there was a general lack of motivation to study English or other Western languages (Breuer, 2022).

already extensively familiar with the historical context and the books that these leaders published during their life course. I was aware that to convince the leaders to be interviewed by me, I needed to be familiar with the information that they already provided in already-published resources (e.g., their biographies, and interview books). This turned out to be true, and once my potential participants understood that I had made an effort to research detailed information before contacting them, I was able to create a better connection with them.

One of the challenges I faced was that since social psychology is not a well-known research area in Slovakia, and because I was not a well-established researcher in Slovakia (and a young woman), I had to show that I was motivated in my work and that I was not going to ask the leaders broad questions, but instead, specific ones, which I would not find answers to in their previous interviews. This was one of the barriers I needed to cross, to gain their interest in being interviewed for this research project. I explained to the leaders that my point of interest was to look at their role as leaders and how they designed the events of the Velvet Revolution, rather than focusing on their political careers or on the historical facts, which was information that was already accessible in the previously published literature, and they did not have the motivation to speak about these issues repetitively. The position I created as a 'legitimate researcher', as well as being a native speaker and Slovak citizen, helped me to recruit my participants (also see Chapter 6; for more discussion about conducting research in non-Western contexts).

2.6.3 Giving Back to the Community: The Impact of This Research in Slovakia

Working with different historical institutions and with the participants of my research (e.g., movement leaders) allowed me to engage in many activities in Slovakia after the COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. To give something back to the community that I was able to access and obtain my data from, I stayed in contact with the participants of my studies after data collection took place. Since much of my data collection process (apart from Study 2

conducted in January 2019), was taking place online, I was motivated to meet my participants in person when it became possible. This happened later in May 2022, when my participants met in Bratislava, and I was able to meet them and informally discuss my research with them, in which they became interested, after participating in my interviews.

I also became close to one of the participants after data collection, with whom I collaborated on multiple projects since then. This participant was born in a concentration camp Terezín during World War 2, and he later became a sociologist and a political activist. Since we shared common interests, in 2021, we recorded a series of podcasts (Gál et al., 2021a) that were published in a Slovak socio-political weekly magazine *.týždeň*⁴¹. Afterwards, we also published a book together (Gál et al., 2021b), which is an extended version of our transcribed conversations from the podcast series. This collaboration, which took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, was conceptualised as a discussion between people from different generations, with different life experiences, focusing on topics such as trauma, loss, collective violence, and national identity.

Thanks to my involvement with the former leaders of the Velvet Revolution, I also collaborated with other academics from Slovakia, creating a documentary platform *Post-Pravda*⁴² (English translation: Post-truth) about the rise of right-wing extremism in Central Europe. I wrote several articles using the social-psychological perspective to explain violence in crowds and other topics such as prejudice, discrimination, and populist leadership. This also allowed me to connect with Slovak social psychologists working at the Slovak Academy of Sciences.

I also participated together with the leaders of the Velvet Revolution in a panel discussion in 2022 at the Pohoda Festival. This is the largest music festival in Slovakia,

⁴¹ <https://www.tyzden.sk/>

⁴² <https://www.postpravda.sk/author/klara-jurstakova/>

typically accompanied by political discussions. The festival's 'atmosphere' often reminds people of the positive atmosphere during the Velvet Revolution events. This festival is organised by Michal Kaščák, who had an underground band since 1985 (during 'communism') that was considered to be a platform for open political criticism of the 'communist' regime, and even described as a band that contributed to the fall of the 'communist' regime by The New York Times (Rother, 2009). The Pohoda festival tries to maintain the optimistic outlook that the atmosphere in the Velvet Revolution 'squares' had⁴³ (see Chapter 5).

Thus, despite that I started this research as a 'naïve' researcher, who had no previous connection to this topic, apart from being Slovak and speaking Slovak and Czech, I leave this project with many new connections and personal investment in the development of post-communist Slovakia and I continue to engage with Slovak social psychologists, political activists, and with different media platforms in Slovakia, which turned out to be an unexpected outcome of this research project.

⁴³ I would argue, that we can observe the long-term effects of collective action (previously explored by Vestergren et al., 2018), in this case, the effects of the Velvet Revolution, in the Pohoda music festival. However, this remains a question for future research (also see 6.6).

Chapter 3 –

Study 1: The Subtle Social Psychological Dimensions of Demobilisation: An Analysis of Three Case Studies in ‘Communist’ Czechoslovakia

“The post-totalitarian system touches people at every step, but it does so with its ideological gloves on.[...]Because the regime is captive to its own lies, it must falsify everything. It falsifies the past. It falsifies the present, and it falsifies the future. It falsifies statistics. It pretends not to possess an omnipotent and unprincipled police apparatus. It pretends to respect human rights. It pretends to persecute no one. It pretends to fear nothing. It pretends to pretend nothing.”

Václav Havel (1987/2018, p.31)

3.1 The Argument for Studying Demobilisation From a Social-Psychological Perspective

The field of social movement studies has long acknowledged that the extent and willingness of a dominant group to employ repression plays an important role in influencing people’s perceptions of the risks of mobilising and the perceived costs associated with mobilisation (i.e., imprisonment, restricted access to education, jobs). As a result, this shapes the reactions of those who try to challenge the status quo (McAdam et al., 2001; Tilly, 1978). Typologies of repression, such as those outlined by Marx (1979) and Earl (2003), focused on describing forms of repression, in other words, demobilisation strategies that significantly influence and attempt to restrain and limit the mobilisation of resistance. This includes surveillance, selectively not paying attention to activists (e.g., acting as if they are invisible or non-existent to deny their position), censorship of information, resource deprivation, slander and legal persecution of activists, threats, mobilisation of counter-groups, and finally, physical confinement and harm (D. Moss, 2014; M.S. Moss, 2019). Such strategies

demonstrate that demobilisation does not necessarily involve brute force. Instead activists can be prevented from mobilising resistance through softer, and thus more subtle means.

Research delving into these relatively subtler demobilisation techniques like silencing⁴⁴, and surveillance argues that these methods render “collective action difficult to undertake in the first place” (Walder, 1986, p.18). This body of literature suggests that these softer forms of social control are highly effective in diminishing activism because they enable governments to undermine opposition while upholding a facade of liberalism (Barkan 2006, Boykoff, 2007; della Porta & Fillieule, 2004).

As a result, activists often strategically adapt to conditions of repression with the aim of making the state's repressive actions visible, and therefore, making the regime accountable to the public. This visibility can lead to embarrassment for image-conscious regimes, particularly those striving to be perceived as liberal (Earl & Soule, 2010). Hence, if a repressive regime decides to use coercion to suppress resistance, their use of force or other repressive strategies must maintain an air of ‘reasonableness’ (della Porta, 1997). Otherwise, there is a risk that the authorities will be seen as lacking legitimacy, potentially leading to additional upheaval and backlash, thereby posing a challenge to their prevailing authority and the maintenance of the status quo (Earl & Soule, 2010; Opp & Roehl, 1990; Soule & Davenport, 2009).

These interactive processes between the activists’ efforts to mobilise and the state authorities’ repression of this mobilisation can be described as ‘chess-like’ interactions (McAdam, 1982). For example, the regimes in China and Jordan engage in face-to-face interactions and negotiations with activists, to maintain legitimacy and survival, while preserving social stability (Chen 2012; Lee & Zhang, 2013; Su & He, 2010). Past research

⁴⁴ Silencing has various meanings. In social movements literature, it is a practical repressive strategy (e.g., Boykoff, 2006). In rhetorical psychology, rhetorical or oratorical ‘silences’ are meaningful patterns observed in the audience’s reactions towards a particular speech (Billig & Marinho, 2017).

appreciates these more intricate ways in which repressive regimes demobilise activists and legitimise their repressive actions. However, the macro-perspectives that sociology and social movement studies employ to understand demobilisation and its trajectories (Lichbach & Gurr, 1981) do not provide the full picture. This is because, as I mentioned earlier, repressive regimes often want to appear as liberal enough to be perceived as acceptable to their citizens and to the outside world.

When people speak, they do not simply state their inner mental state but their opinion is situated within a conversation, and within the wider ideological context (Billig, 1997). Social psychology, especially its more critical strands, has provided insights into how we can understand the social-psychological phenomena (e.g., attitudes, opinions) not through abstract ‘cognitive schemas’ but more directly through analysing how people use language (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Haré & Secord, 1972; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). By looking at interactions between people, we can directly observe how people construct their arguments to be persuasive and at the same time, manage their accountability (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Ntontis et al., 2023). For example, speakers might not talk about certain issues, by deploying meaningful rhetorical absences to indirectly express what cannot be said directly (Billig & Marinho, 2017). Simultaneously, an audience in a rally can choose to stay silent when they are expected to clap, and their silence can imply disagreement with the statements made in the rally. Billig (2005) also observed that an audience can express resistance by withholding laughter when it is socially expected to laugh.

Therefore, in addition to creating typologies of repressive actions, and describing what repressive regimes do to prevent mobilisation, we also need insights into how repression is interactionally and socially managed by those in power (see Foucault, 1990/2020; for a similar argument). This is because (1) language plays a role in mobilisation (e.g., Reicher & Hopkins, 2001), and thus, also in demobilisation, and (2) accountability is a key concern for

social actors (e.g., Ntontis et al., 2023) including those who exist in repressive regimes. These social actors are accountable both internally (e.g., regime leaders managing their personal accountability) and externally (e.g., regime leaders are accountable to their societies, as well as other countries).

To investigate these day-to-day negotiations between activists and repressive regimes, a social-psychological perspective can offer insights into how various social actors discursively manage their public profile in the face of potential backlash. Past research has shown that social actors frequently employ persuasive language to legitimise their actions, assign blame, and handle accountability concerns (e.g., Ntontis et al., 2023; Potter & Reicher, 1987; Portice & Reicher, 2018; Tekin & Drury, 2022). This approach can offer insights into how in everyday interactions, the representatives of a repressive regime manage tensions between their citizens, while also trying to maintain a position of a 'legitimate' regime. However, none of this research, to my knowledge, has addressed these rhetorical processes in the context of a repressive regime.

To gain these insights into how repressive regimes maintain their dominant position, we need to examine cases where the regime operated publicly and was exposed to the people it claimed to represent, as opposed to its actions behind closed doors. This examination is crucial due to the ideological foundation of the 'communist' regime, which purportedly focused on protecting the people, acting on their behalf and that of the workers, and ensuring economic progress. Therefore, this chapter provides a social-psychological perspective on the interactional dynamics of repression and the management of resistance. It specifically explores how the repressive regime publicly managed instances of resistance and potential dissidence.

One potential explanation for this oversight in mainstream social-psychological literature is that these day-to-day negotiations between activists and repressive regimes are

often disregarded because they fall outside the scope of traditionally studied, more visible forms of collective action (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004). The term ‘visible’ collective action refers to instances that can be easily defined as successful suppression of mobilisation or successful protest of the opposition (D. Moss, 2014). However, Vollhardt and Bilewicz (in press) showed that Jewish resistance during World War 2 also took other forms such as ‘missed⁴⁵ resistance’ or ‘attempted⁴⁶ resistance’ took place instead (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004) (see Table 1 in Chapter 1; for details). Hence, resistance occurred, but it would not be adequately recognised through the conventional Western-centric models of collective action (Rosales & Langhout, 2020).

Therefore, this chapter aims to move beyond these limitations and study various forms of resistance were demobilised in ‘communist’ Czechoslovakia. The demobilisation strategies of the repressive regimes will be conceptualised as involving (1) practical strategies, such as the use of force (e.g., M. Moss, 2019), and (2) rhetorical strategies, such as the regime’s discourses, aiming to maintain legitimacy and a positive liberal-like profile while repressing citizens.

In the following three case studies (see 3.3., 3.4, and 3.5), I consider these instances, exploring the more subtle, everyday interactions wherein repressive regimes sought to secure public backing, ensuring the preservation of their unchallenged authority. More broadly speaking, this chapter contributes to the understanding of how repressive regimes demobilise collective action, and in turn, how they maintain hegemony and power.

3.2 Overview of the Case Studies

The first case study (3.3) looks at a petition for human rights created by the opposition. In this study, I analyse excerpts from the media campaign that the regime

⁴⁵ Resistance is intended by the actor and recognised by the target (e.g., oppressor), but not by the observer (e.g., wider public).

⁴⁶ Resistance is intended by the actor and neither recognised by the target, nor the observer.

engaged in to demobilise people from signing the petition, while maintaining its ‘pro-people’ profile, hoping to appear as ‘non-repressive’. This allowed me to analyse how the regime communicated via public outlets towards its citizens, and towards the arts and culture sphere, where the regime tried to appear as ‘legitimate’, while repressing a petition organised by the artists. In the second case study (3.4), I consider a religious pilgrimage (an event not consonant with the regime’s ideology) which was attended by a representative of the regime who attempted to re-frame the event to be consonant with the regime’s ideology. This allowed me to analyse how accountability concerns were managed when audience was involved that expressed contradictory attitudes. In the third case study (3.5), I focus on the exchange of arguments between the City Council and the opposition leaders, in which the regime attempted to delegitimise and prevent the first public demonstration in Czechoslovakia. This allowed me to analyse how accountability concerns were managed in the interactions between the Party and the opposition leaders in their correspondence before the demonstration took place. Simultaneously, I analysed how the regime approached the demonstration in their private communication, to investigate the regime could express their attitudes without having to attend to accountability concerns.

To ease the readability of this chapter, each case study is presented as a separate sub-chapter (i.e., 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5), where the analysis is preceded by the overview of the specific historical context of the event studied in the case study (also see 1.4; for broad historical context). Chapter 3 concludes with a brief discussion of the findings (3.6; see Chapter 6; for a general discussion).

3.3 Case Study 1:

Demobilising the Charter '77 Petition

"We have problems with some human rights, you have problems with others."

Jan Kubik (1994, p.62)

3.3.1 Overview of Case Study 1

This case study delves into the regime's response to the Charter '77 petition. This petition was initiated by Czechoslovak artists and writers, criticising the lack of protection for human rights in Czechoslovakia⁴⁷. During the 1970s, the regime transitioned from physical violence to psychological repression under the name of 'normalisation' (Zittoun, 2018). As part of the 'communist' regime's long-term repressive strategies, the Party attempted to control artistic expression, recognising the latter's potential to undermine or ridicule the regime and potentially reduce people's compliance. The regime also acknowledged the significance of culture and art in shaping national identity, leading them to engage in practices that ensured the regime's cultural hegemony⁴⁸ (Kubik, 1994) to align artistic expression with the Party's political objectives. This approach generated ongoing tension within the Czechoslovak arts and culture sphere, whose representatives desired to produce art freely (Bolton, 2012).

The Charter '77 initiative presented a complex situation for the Communist Party. Czechoslovakia's commitment to an international human rights treaty, signed in 1975, placed the regime under potential scrutiny from Western countries for human rights violations. However, this treaty also provided the regime with some protection by allowing it to handle internal affairs domestically (Bolton, 2012). Therefore, Case Study 1 explores the following questions: (1) How did the regime perform the dual task of appearing as supporting human

⁴⁷ The full text of the petition, translated to English, can be accessed here: <https://www.rferl.org/a/1083022.html>

⁴⁸ Cultural hegemony is a way of gaining legitimacy through the environment we live in. It is the aspect of power relations that is not produced by coercion but by acceptance of the ruler's definition of reality (e.g., through customs, habits, public rituals, and ceremonies) (Kubik, 1994; Mosse, 1975).

rights and rhetorically manage a ‘pro-rights’ profile while repressing the human rights petition?; and (2) How was the regime’s ‘legitimacy’ achieved within the arts and culture sphere, which the regime wanted to have on their side, but also, rejected the artists associated with the Charter initiative?

The regime's response to the Charter '77 petition involved a dual task. Firstly, the Party initiated a media campaign to discredit the Charter organizers, depicting them as ‘traitors’, ‘outcasts of society’, and ‘not artists’. Simultaneously, the regime positioned itself as acting in the interest of the people, managing a ‘pro-human rights’ profile. The first part of the analysis explores how the regime rhetorically claimed support for human rights while repressive measures were in place, such as surveillance and legal prosecution of the Charter '77 initiators, the petition’s signatories, and even potential future signatories (e.g., university students, artists, writers) (Císařovská & Prečan, 2007). Secondly, the Party attempted to showcase influential Czechoslovak artists siding with them by publicly rejecting the Charter initiative. They organised a cultural-political event where the ‘true’ artists signed the ‘Anti-Charter’ document, which framed the Charter initiators as ‘not-true artists’ and ‘failed artists’ and rejected the Charter '77. The final section of this case study explores the practical demobilisation strategies employed by the regime to prevent Charter '77 from spreading through Czechoslovakia. Before delving into the analysis, I discuss the historical context in which the Charter '77 petition was initiated.

3.3.2 Historical Context

The historical context of the Prague Spring (1968) and subsequent invasion leading to the ‘normalisation’ period is crucial for understanding the demobilisation strategies employed by the Czechoslovak regime in response to the Charter '77 petition (Prins, 1990). The Prague Spring represented a period of liberalisation characterized by creativity in arts and culture, supported by progressive members within the Czechoslovak Communist Party. Unlike in the

surrounding Soviet satellites (i.e., Poland, Hungary), where the periods of liberalisation in the 1960s came from the opposition (Kubik, 1994), in Czechoslovakia, this process was supported by the Czechoslovak Communist Party's progressive members. However, this period was short-lived due to the invasion by the Warsaw Pact army in August 1968, leading to the 'normalisation' process under Gustav Husák's Moscow-loyal government. This new phase aimed to consolidate the 'communist' state, this time replacing overt physical violence (characteristic of the 1950s) with psychological repression, such as surveillance, interrogations, and legal persecution (Zittoun, 2018). This shift from the use of brute force allows for an examination of how the regime managed its profile (Edwards & Potter, 1992) during a period marked by repressive measures that were less overtly violent but still aimed at suppressing resistance through more subtle psychological constraints.

Helsinki Final Act (1975): A Space for Resistance. Czechoslovakia's signing of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975 played a crucial role in creating a space for resistance in Czechoslovakia during the 'normalisation' period (Bolton, 2012). This international human rights treaty involved multiple nations, including European countries, the USA, Canada, and Soviet satellite states. While the treaty pledged non-interference in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union, it was considered a success by the Czechoslovak government, validating Soviet dominance over the Iron Curtain nations (Bolton, 2012). The Communist Party internally recognised the regular violations of human rights but hoped that the non-intervention principle of the treaty would outweigh criticisms of these violations.

However, the treaty, primarily signed by democratic nations, unintentionally provided a legitimate basis for criticising the regime, rooted in universal principles of justice recognised by the Western world (Blažek & Schovánek, 2018; Bolton, 2012). Although not legally binding for the states to protect human rights in a specific way, the unintentional consequence of the treaty was that it provided a legitimate basis for criticising the regime's

repressive actions (Bolton, 2012). This became evident in resistance activities such as the Charter '77 petition (the present Case Study) and the Candlelight Demonstration (see 3.5; for Case Study 3), both rooted in criticising the regime for repressing human rights.

Czech Cultural Opposition. The significance of arts and culture in Czech nationalism has deep historical roots, providing the country with a sense of pride and national identity, especially in the Austro-Hungarian Empire's dominance (1867-1918) (Holy, 1996). However, during the period of 'normalisation' (1968-1989), the cultural scene in Czechoslovakia faced severe limitations due to censorship imposed by the 'communist' regime. In this era, authors struggled to publish their works, musicians faced restrictions on producing music, artists were constrained in holding exhibitions, and actors needed state approval for their performances in theatres. The regime aimed to exert complete control over artistic production, allowing only those forms of art that did not challenge their dominant position in the country (Bolton, 2012). Consequently, a significant portion of the resistance against the regime emerged from individuals working in the cultural sphere, expressing opposition to the continuous repression through various forms of cultural resistance. This cultural resistance will be further explored in Chapter 5, where the role of leadership in the Velvet Revolution (1989) is discussed.

In 1976, Václav Havel, a renowned Czech playwright who later became the first democratic president of Czechoslovakia, attended the political trial of the music band 'The Plastic People of the Universe' (Bolton, 2012). This trial, resulting in the imprisonment of the musicians, aimed to showcase the 'communist' regime's response to those who deviated from official propaganda rules or criticised the regime. In response to this trial, Havel, along with other artists, established the 'Committee for the Unjustly Prosecuted'. While this initiative initially faced isolation, it engaged in various forms of 'individual resistance' (see Hollander

& Einwohner, 2004; for an overview) from 1976 onwards (Bolton, 2012). In January 1977, these artists and writers, based in Prague, the capital of Czechoslovakia, authored a manifesto titled 'Charter '77'. The manifesto openly criticised the Czechoslovak 'communist' government for failing to protect the human rights of its citizens. The following extract taken from the text of Charter '77⁴⁹ (Císařovská & Prečan, 2007) illustrates the arguments of the petition:

Charter 77 is a loose, informal and open association of people of various shades of opinion, faiths and professions united by the will to strive individually and collectively for the respect of civic and human rights in our own country and throughout the world -- rights accorded to all men by the two mentioned international covenants, by the Final Act of the Helsinki conference and by numerous other international documents opposing war, violence and social or spiritual oppression, and which are comprehensively laid down in the U.N. Universal Charter of Human Rights.

Charter 77 springs from a background of friendship and solidarity among people who share our concern for those ideals that have inspired, and continue to inspire, their lives and their work. Charter 77 is not an organization; it has no rules, permanent bodies or formal membership. It embraces everyone who agrees with its ideas and participates in its work. It does not form the basis for any oppositional political activity. Like many similar citizen initiatives in various countries, West and East, it seeks to promote the general public interest.

⁴⁹ I translated this text to English. The full translation of the Charter can be viewed in footnote no. 46.

Charter 77 does not aim, then, to set out its own platform of political or social reform or change, but within its own field of impact to conduct a constructive dialogue with the political and state authorities, particularly by drawing attention to individual cases where human and civil rights are violated, to document such grievances and suggest remedies, to make proposals of a more general character calculated to reinforce such rights and machinery for protecting them, to act as an intermediary in situations of conflict which may lead to violations of rights, and so forth.

The petition, along with the first 242 signatures primarily from the arts and culture sphere, was successfully delivered to the federal government and the Czechoslovak Press Office on January 6, 1977 (Blažek & Schovánek, 2018). Despite attempts by the secret police to hinder the delivery—such as puncturing the tyres of the Charter initiators’ cars, monitoring the houses, and preventing the initiators from leaving their houses, the Charter initiative managed to overcome these obstacles (Blažek & Schovánek, 2018; for a detailed overview of practical demobilisation strategies see 3.3). While the text of the Charter was not officially published in Czechoslovakia, various Western media outlets, including the British Times, French Le Monde, and Italian Corriere, published the text of the Charter on the same day (Císařovská & Prečan, 2007). The analysis of the regime’s demobilisation strategies targeting the Charter ‘77 petition follows.

3.3.3 Analysis

In this section, I explore the rhetorical and practical demobilisation strategies employed by the ‘communist’ regime as a reaction to the Charter ‘77 petition. To analyse the regime’s rhetorical handling of the repression of the Charter petition, I used the discourse analytical tradition in social psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell, 1998). In the discursive part of the analysis, I explore how the regime legitimised

repressive actions towards the Charter's organisers and their citizens while claiming to be 'respectful' of human rights. The practical demobilisation strategies have been triangulated from history books by Blažek and Schovánek (2018) and Bolton (2012), to provide a complex picture of the repressive measures.

The analysis begins with the rhetorical demobilisation strategies, as the media campaign targeting the Charter initiators began before the 'Anti-Charter' event, which will be mainly explored in the practical demobilisation section. The 'Anti-Charter' event targeted popular artists and sought to performatively demonstrate to the public that 'true' artists were united with the Party. This event positioned the opposition as 'failed' artists who merely wanted to attract 'selfish' attention through the Charter initiative. A combination of these demobilisation strategies undermined the Charter initiative - via media discourse (rhetorical demobilisation) and a performative event (practical demobilisation).

Rhetorical Demobilisation Strategies. On January 7th, 1977, legal action⁵⁰ was initiated against the Charter, treating it as an illegal subversive activity (Císařovská & Prečan, 2007; Blažek & Schovánek, 2018). Simultaneously, a media campaign was launched, which is of interest in this analysis. In the media campaign, the regime presented two streams of arguments. The first line of arguments constructed the regime as acting in the interest of the Czechoslovak people. The second line of arguments constructed the opposition as acting against people's interests and discredited the opposition by ascribing them to a wide range of illegitimate identities. To ease the readability of the analysis section, full texts are not presented due to their length. Instead, extracts are used to illustrate the re-appearing argumentative lines (Billig, 1991) in the media campaign (see Appendix 1; for full texts).

⁵⁰ The legal action mentioned here can be considered as a practical demobilisation strategy, but the focus of this analysis will be on the arguments used in the texts written by the dominant group leadership (e.g., media articles in state-controlled newspapers).

Two argumentative lines (Billig, 1991) were identified in terms of how the Party attempted to present itself in a positive light. Firstly, the Party was portrayed as a source of economic stability in the country, positioning itself as the guardian of people's interests. This narrative emphasized the Party's role in ensuring economic prosperity for the nation, suggesting that the Party's continued protection was crucial for a prosperous future. The economic focus served to enhance the Party's image as a force for stability and progress.

Secondly, the Party was framed as tolerant toward “all honest” people, even those who may have been considered as ‘traitors’ in the past (this is an indirect reference to the Prague Spring when some progressive Party members were dismissed after the Warsaw Pact Army invasion in Czechoslovakia). This narrative of tolerance depicted the Party as liberal and accommodating, downplaying any repressive actions against the Charter as something “inevitable”, distancing themselves from behaving as a repressive regime in general. The responsibility for being labelled as traitors was shifted onto the individuals who chose to sign the petition (e.g., individual citizens who signed the Charter were blamed for this decision and targeted in workplaces and universities), moderating the Party's responsibility for any potential adverse treatment of such individuals (e.g., by asking them to leave their jobs, or not allowing them to continue with university studies). This strategy of giving individuals ‘free choice’ of signing the petition aimed to legitimise the regime’s repressive actions towards the signatories while mitigating any criticism or accountability for these actions.

Table 5.

Overview of arguments and respective argumentative lines in Case Study 1

Type of Argument	Argumentative line
The Party as Acting in the Interest of ‘the People’	The Party as the Protector of Economic Stability The Party as Being Tolerant of All ‘Honest’ People
The Oppositional Activities and Identities as Illegitimate	The Opposition as Conspirators Acting for Western Interests The Opposition as Acting Against People’s Interests The Opposition as Having Illegitimate Identities The Opposition as Immoral

By presenting the Party as inclusive and accepting, the exclusion and repression of those who did not conform to this category – the opposition – was justified. The inclusive and ‘tolerant’ rhetoric also provided a moral justification for categorising individuals as either ‘honest workers⁵¹’ or ‘dishonest opposition’. Moreover, this rhetoric opened up space for toxic leadership rhetoric by excluding certain groups from the national category (Ntontis et al., 2024; also see 3.3.4; for a discussion). This rhetoric positioned the Party as the entity that could be considered part of the nation⁵² and its representative and champion (e.g., Reicher & Hopkins, 1996a), fostering a divisive narrative. To ease the readability of the analysis, the argumentative lines are summarised below (see Table 5).

Argument 1. The Party As Acting in the Interest of ‘The People’

The Party As the Protector of Economic Stability. The initial media response to the Charter petition emerged on January 7, 1977, with an article published in Red Law newspapers, just a day after Charter initiators managed to submit the petition to the Czechoslovak Federal government and the Czechoslovak Press Office (Blažek & Schovánek, 2018):

Extract 1/Document 1

That the past year has been another successful year for our people, and that the accomplishment of the planned and very demanding tasks of our national economy, has allowed to fulfil the growing of material and spiritual needs of our people, and has allowed to maintain and develop its high living standards, as well as to strengthen our social security.

⁵¹ Note that by referring to the acceptable citizens as ‘honest workers’, there is an implication that the opposition members are not working for the system enough. Such argument was used to ridicule and degrade people in Czechoslovakia who did not work manually, therefore ‘visibly’ were not contributing to the system (e.g., culture sphere, writers).

⁵² While nation could seem as an irrelevant category to the Communist ideology, which promotes the idea to have transnational solidarity of workers, the Czechoslovak ‘communism’ also used national category in its rhetoric.

Yes, it was a good year, despite not being very easy, despite that our agricultural workers were not blessed with good weather, and despite that we were caught up by the growth of the prices of imported goods, despite that we had to overcome many hardships. Every one of us could have also been assured that decent work brings also very good results, and that the saying is being fulfilled: how we will be working, that's how we will be living.

This first news article reacting to the Charter petition sets the tone for the overall campaign by employing a rhetorical omission strategy (Billig & Marinho, 2017). The article avoids direct mention of the Charter petition. Instead, the focus is placed on emphasising the accomplishments of ‘the people’. These initial paragraphs of the text (D1; see Appendix 1) convey the narrative that the Party, encompassing all workers, is steering the country away from issues like inflation and unemployment (also see Extract 2). This positioning aligns the Party with the genuine, practical interests of the people, such as job security and improved living standards. The use of collective pronouns (e.g., we, every one of us, our) fosters a sense of inclusivity within the national category (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001).

Further, the expression *‘how we will be working, that's how we will be living’* imparts a sense of agency, suggesting that people can actively shape their future and the future of their country (e.g., living conditions). However, this agency is contingent on engaging in ‘decent’ work, elevating the moral standing of workers’ activities. Furthermore, the text portrays the Czechoslovak regime as the safeguard of economic prosperity in Czechoslovakia, even in the face of challenges like rising prices of imported goods. It is worth noting that the harsh conditions are linked to something from outside of the country –

imported goods and the weather⁵³. Even these subtle comments contribute towards the overall narrative characteristic of the Cold War ‘competition’ between East and West (Pietz, 1988).

This undoubtedly positive image of Czechoslovakia is then immediately compared with the image of the Western Capitalist world:

Extract 2/Document 1

We, however, can look forward to the New Year with hope and trust. Our workers can live with no fear of unemployment and inflation. Especially when compared with the Capitalist world, the advantages of pure socialist creation are so apparent, which assure social security to the workers, for today and for tomorrow. This is a fact, that cannot be doubted.

The first line of this extract outlines a positive future for Czechoslovakia, in line with the optimistic claims made in Extract 1. In contrast to that, the West is framed as unable to ensure the equivalent of the economic stability that is available in Czechoslovakia, and the people there are suffering from unemployment. This statement functions as a warning that while people’s future in the East is positive and hopeful, the West is struggling, which is contextually based on the Cold War narrative of constant competition between East and West, characteristic of the era (Pietz, 1988).

Crucially, the emphasis in Extracts 1 and 2 is on the East’s effectiveness in ensuring economic rights, even positioned as a fact, which cannot be doubted (see the last sentence in Extract 2). This argument invites a direct comparison with what remains unaddressed (Billig & Marinho, 2017). While this news article (D1), as revealed in subsequent excerpts, touches upon the Charter petition, it does so implicitly. There is no debate about the petition, which

⁵³ The bad weather was often blamed on the West, and Czechoslovakia constructed a large media campaign in the 1950s where the Colorado potato beetle bug which is a pest of potato crops was described as being purposefully spread in Czechoslovakia from the USA through clouds and winds. Examples of propaganda posters can be found here: <https://manipulatori.cz/propaganda-v-boji-proti-americkemu-brouku/>

advocates human rights in Czechoslovakia, such as freedom of speech. Instead, the focus is on the regime's efficacy in safeguarding the economic rights of its citizens. This narrative of economic stability allowed the regime, later in the text, to reframe human rights as economic rights rather than individual freedoms. The omission of individual freedom from the conceptualisation of human rights enabled the regime to present itself as 'pro-rights' based on its actions to ensure economic stability.

The Party As Being Tolerant of All 'Honest' People. The following extract exemplifies another argument posited in the media articles, portraying the Party not only as a representative of the people's economic interests but also as tolerant of 'all people':

Extract 3/Document 1

Nowadays, our citizens are more aware of these malicious strategies. And also those who once took the wrong pathway.

The actual politics of our Party allowed most of those, who once were not able to orient themselves properly, to understand their failures. They also demonstrated this with their honest work, with which they contribute to the development of our society. That's also the reason why at the XV. Meeting of Czechoslovak Communist Party, a decision was made, to allow those, who were not active representatives of right-wing opportunism, and with their work and their actions they demonstrate that they are standing firmly and honestly on the position of socialism, that after individual assessments of their cases, they could be again accepted as the members of the Party.

The first sentence constructs a narrative of a conspiracy depicting an enduring threat in Czechoslovakia. However, there is also a suggestion that people are aware of such conspiracies and are not easily deceived ('our citizens are aware of these malicious strategies'). By acknowledging people and highlighting their agency in discerning right from

wrong, they are not positioned as victims. It is a way of showcasing trust towards the people. In this way, the Party's responsibility is moderated, placing the responsibility on individuals for engaging in these conspiracies. In this context, the Party is portrayed as open enough to acknowledge that people may err, and despite these mistakes, the Party still accepts them as members. This presents the Party as tolerant, even of those who made errors in the past but are now deemed 'honest' and 'stand firmly' to support the Party.

Aligned with this argument, the subsequent section of the article continues to emphasise the narrative of 'past failures' and the lessons to be learned from them. This further diminishes the Party's responsibility for potential repression directed at Charter initiators:

Extract 4/ Document 1

These people paid for their political blindness, later very bitterly regretted that they fell for their [1968 politicians] sweet honey words. Some of them were accusing the party that from their top positions they fell back down, from where the Party once raised them. Can, however, one who lays down on the railroad to stop the train from going, accuse the train from cutting his legs?

In Extract 4, the reframing of a historical event is used to portray the Party in a 'tolerant' way. The people who did not support the Party in the past are framed here as 'bitterly regretting' their actions because they were misled by the Prague Spring. The Party addresses an internal dilemma within its ranks by labelling the Prague Spring as a 'subversion' of the republic, distancing itself from the communist politicians associated with that period. This narrative allows the Party to present itself in a positive way ('the Party once raised them'), even if sacrifices are sometimes necessary. The rhetorical question in the last sentence functions as a trope, suggesting that people can use common sense (Billig, 1987; Gibson, 2014) and agency to prevent themselves from falling for mistakes. It implies that if

people continuously fall for the same mistakes ('one who lays down on the railroad'), the Party (metaphorically presented here as 'train') cannot be accused of acting repressively ('can one [...] accuse the train from cutting his legs?'), framing repression as sometimes 'unavoidable' for the greater good of society. This reduces the Party's direct responsibility for its repressive measures and locates the agency on the individuals. Through the use of ambiguous language, specifically this metaphor of inevitability, rather than discussing specific repressive actions, a local dilemma of stake (Edwards & Potter, 1992) – of acting repressively but not being held accountable for the repression, is resolved. Also, the invocation of knowledge ('one who lays down on the railroad' should be aware of the consequences of this action) used in this extract seems to be pointing to the ways in which the regime recognises and deals with the ideological dilemma between rationality and freedom versus irrationality and intolerance (Billig et al., 1988).

Importantly, this narrative of the Party being tolerant to all decent people eventually, at the end of Document 2 (published on January 12, 1977) gradually escalates to create an 'exclusive' category of people who will (and will not) be protected by the regime:

Extract 5/Document 2

It is a good, honest path that will reliably lead us to communist goals. Everyone who works honestly and tries to contribute to the common good finds his life security on it. No false pamphlet can deny the historical truth.

This extract presents the Party as being acceptable of 'everyone who works honestly and tries to contribute to the common good'. By including everyone honest in the bright future promised by the Party, the Party also implicitly excludes those who do not fit this definition of 'honest' workers. The passage concludes with an attack on the Charter (still not explicitly referred to as the 'Charter'), characterised as a 'false pamphlet'. This depiction

diminishes the quality and relevance of the petition, positioning the information presented by the Party as factual, undeniable, and even hopeful ('honest path that will reliably lead us to communist goals'). Only one 'correct' narrative is imposed with this phrase, contributing to a toxic and dangerous narrative because it undermines any other narratives such as the one where the opposition's efforts in voicing alternatives could be seen as something legitimate and relevant (see Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017; Reicher et al., 2008; Ntontis et al., 2024, for similar arguments).

Argument 2. The Oppositional Activities and Identities As Illegitimate

Certain aspects of the media campaign focused on celebrating the 'communist' regime, and these arguments were explicitly contrasted with verbal attacks on the opposition representatives. This contrast was achieved in at least two ways (Billig, 1991). Firstly, oppositional activities were framed as conspiracies originating in the Western world, portraying the opposition as acting against socialism and the people. By constructing oppositional activists as foreign agents rather than addressing internal issues, the regime can maintain an image of unity and legitimacy. This avoids potential fragmentation and loss of the regime's legitimate image and eventual control of the narrative of the regime as preserving national interests (e.g., 'protecting' Czechoslovakia from Western agents, and opposition that wants to 'subvert' the republic). Secondly, the opposition was subjected to attacks that assigned its members various illegitimate identities. Over time, as the media campaign was progressing, these identities portrayed the opposition not only as illegitimate but also as immoral. This was also achieved through the use of dehumanising language. Consequently, the opposition and their activities, including the Charter petition (still rhetorically omitted from the media articles), were delegitimised and ridiculed (Blažek & Schovánek, 2018). These arguments played a role in the regime's efforts to delegitimise the

Charter while presenting itself as the saviour from this Western and allegedly harmful initiative.

The Opposition As Conspirators Acting for Western Interests. The headline of the initial article (D1) starts with a rhetorical question, "In Whose Interest is it?" This title immediately suggests the presence of a conspiracy, establishing the tone for the media campaign in which the Charter is portrayed as the work of 'Western agents' and as conspirators against the Czechoslovak regime. This is also connected to the negative portrayal of the West framed as incapable of protecting economic rights:

Extract 6/Document 1

Such that the focus would be brought away from those, who are impacted by the economic crisis, from what pressures them, the bourgeoisie Propaganda Centres are increasing their attacks towards the socialist countries, which thoroughly assure all human rights. Those who are not able to ensure the absolutely basic human rights for their citizens - the right to work, the right to education, are shouting into the world that supposedly, human rights are being trampled in socialist lands and as their witnesses of this, they cherry-pick some individuals from one or another socialist country. Here, in our country, they select those who were persistently working on anti-socialist positions, and those who cannot reconcile with the fact that in our land, things are not falling apart, and because our successful development of our economy is a thorn in the eye for them, and those, who similar to the pre-February era, operate with a saying: to the worst, to the best.

This argumentative pattern is characteristic much material in the data. In this extract, the media warns the public that the 'conspiracy', representing the Charter initiative, is a tactic to divert attention from the ongoing economic problems in the West. The opposition initiative

is framed as ‘bourgeoisie Propaganda Centres’, placing the opposition outside the realm of ordinary people, particularly the workers. The opposition is portrayed as exceptional individuals from a privileged social class, motivated by personal envy and in contrast to the Party's ‘pro-people’ profile presented in the Party’s argumentative stream. The opposition is depicted as Western ‘agitators’ seeking to disrupt the country out of envy, illustrated by the metaphorical use of the trope ‘thorn in the eye’. The West is portrayed as incapable of ensuring people’s ‘absolutely basic human rights’. This portrayal is contrasted with a disclaimer asserting that the Communist regime *‘thoroughly ensures all human rights for their citizens’*, addressing the Charter initiative's focus on human rights in this media campaign. Here, human rights are framed as specific rights—such as the right to education and work—allowing the regime to shift the narrative of human rights towards economic rights instead of framing them as individual liberties.

Additionally, there is a suggestion that the ‘conspiracy’ is based on a collaboration between the opposition and emigrants, who are consistently labelled as ‘traitors’ to the country. For example, later in the text (D1), it was expressed as such: *‘Many of those Birds who flew behind the borders, now rise as open enemies’*.

By characterising the opposition's activities as the work of ‘agitators’ persistently pursuing anti-socialist positions, the text diminishes the uniqueness and importance of the initiative. Further, in another media article (D2), there is a suggestion that the public should not pay attention to this initiative, since it’s not unique in any way: *‘fabrication of all sorts of pamphlets, letters, protests, and other dozen slanders, which are uttered as the voices of one or another “opposition” individual or group’*.

Another argument used to frame the opposition as acting for Western interests was based on the framing that the Charter initiative is a ‘foreign’ activity:

Extract 7/Document 2

According to a well-agreed scenario, the pamphlet was simultaneously published in various parts of the capitalist world. Anti-communist headquarters played a decisive role. After all, is it not clear, who can be behind this event? Those who pretend to be the authors of the pamphlet certainly do not have such an influence. They pretend to be fighters for progress, but so far they have been stuck in the service of the blackest imperialist reaction⁵⁴.

The publishing of the Charter in Western media, facilitated by the lack of free publishing in Czechoslovak media due to state control (Blažek & Schovánek, 2018), is portrayed as a suspicious activity in this excerpt. The Charter initiative is presented as lacking the capacity to publish independently in Western media, thereby downplaying their influence ('certainly do not have such an influence'). The implication is that the oppositional actions do not originate in themselves but are orchestrated by the West, casting them as being controlled by external forces ('they have been stuck in the service of the blackest imperialist reaction'). Thus, the regime has the right to defend itself in preserving its national interests. This portrayal aims to delegitimise the Charter by framing the initiative as of foreign origin (outgroup, enemy) rather than emerging organically from within Czechoslovakia (ingroup).

The Opposition As Acting Against People's Interests. Another argument identified in the media articles was the regime's construction of the opposition not only as acting in the interest of the West but also as acting against the interest of the Czechoslovak people:

Extract 8/Document 1

No matter what are the reasons of their activities, they know whose purpose they are serving.

Definitely not socialism.

⁵⁴ Reaction is a synonym for 'agitators' or 'trouble-makers' in Czech.

And definitely not to those, who very honestly work in mines, melt steel, construct apartments, deal with the struggles of transport, produce food, those who since the first day of the New Year in all different positions show that they wish continuous progress of our socialist society continues this year even more than in was in the previous year.

Anyone who would want to prevent our people from this, and to break the laws of our socialist state, has to account for consequences.

This extract frames the opposition as acting against the interests of socialism and the people. The people are placed on a moral pedestal ('work very honestly'), securing basic needs for the good of the society ('construct apartments', 'produce food') and for the future of the society ('wishing for continuous progress'). The opposition is framed here as hindering this progress. In the last sentence of this extract, a warning is articulated, suggesting legal consequences for the activities of the 'agitators', who will be held accountable. These arguments serve to reduce the mobilisation potential of the petition, warning the audience that those who engage with it will be legally prosecuted. The statement 'they know whose purpose they are serving,' implicitly answers the rhetorical question 'In Whose Interest is it?' posed in the article's headline (D1). Notably, the answer to the same question is reiterated in the subsequent media article (D2), which contributes to a sense of continuity in the media campaign: *'According to the legal question "to whom it serves", the legal answer also follows: it serves imperialism, it is a new campaign against world socialism'.*

The Opposition As Having Illegitimate Identities. Apart from attacking the oppositional activities as being 'anti-people' and 'serving foreign interests', the media campaign consisted of a wide range of attacks on the opposition by ascribing them to

illegitimate identities. One of these attack strategies targeted specific individuals in the opposition:

Extract 9/Document 1

What kind of “human rights”, however, is Mr Havel trying to fight for, since he grew up as a millionaire’s son and till now, he never forgot that the worker’s class prevented their family clan from their various “business activities”.

Note that this extract uses quotation marks to downgrade some of the terms used by the opposition. For example, human rights are written with quotation marks, suggesting that the way human rights are framed by the opposition versus ‘true’ human rights (defined by the Party) differs. In this extract, Václav Havel, one of the Charter spokespersons (Bolton, 2012), is framed as a ‘millionaire’s son’. This serves to present him as a representative of the privileged social class and thus undermines the legitimacy of his leadership in attempting to challenge the regime. Havel’s oppositional activities are then framed as inspired by personal angst towards the regime (*‘the worker’s class prevented their family clan from various “business activities”*) and these arguments serve to present him as being alienated from ‘the people’, and their ‘honest work’, essentially presenting him as not being one of ‘us’ (see Maskor et al., 2021). It also serves to construct the initiators as ‘agitators’ wanting to cause trouble rather than having a real concern for people’s human rights, which rhetorically degrades their activity. Both articles (D1 and D2) continued to attack specific initiators of the petition with similar derogatory rhetoric (e.g., in D1: ‘sadly-known author’, ‘renegade’, ‘bankrupt politician’). The opposition was also accused of initiating the petition for personal profit (e.g., in D1: *‘Give me a good wage and I will be supporting this regime. So now, he probably supports those who pay him well’*). These arguments served to delegitimise the opposition.

In the article with the headline ‘Failures and Usurpers’ (D2), published on January 12, 1977, the opposition was framed as ‘failures’ and ‘criminals’, further downgrading their activities and them as individuals:

Extract 10/Document 2

They often try to do the impossible - to revive political corpses, both in the ranks of emigrants from socialist countries and in the ranks of the remnants of class enemies in these countries, the renegades, to various criminal and antisocial elements.

Also:

Extract 11/ Document 2

It is, in a political sense, a diverse mix of human and political losers.

Also:

Extract 12/Document 2

A kind of peculiar political panopticon, whose actors have ceased to be known and interesting to domestic audiences.

These extracts (10, 11, 12) illustrate the variability of attacks on the opposition, framing them as ‘outcasts’ of society, and using dehumanizing language to achieve this. For example, the trope ‘political panopticon’ is intended here as constructing the opposition as a freak show or, biological rarities. Later, one of the initiators of the petition is referred to with the trope ‘dummy stick figure’ (also in D2), implying that the opposition is not made of humans who should be treated seriously. Based on these arguments, the media articles also construct the opposition activities as a source of ridicule (e.g., D1: ‘*they glue together and*

write up various letters’ or, D2: *‘the bourgeoisie is beating its head around’*). These tropes, such as referring to the petition as ‘the latest pamphlet’ downplay the value of the petition.

In the Anti-Charter petition, an integral component of the Anti-Charter event, detailed further in the subsequent section on practical demobilisation strategies, the initiators of the Charter were implicitly depicted as not embodying the characteristics of ‘true’ artists. This portrayal was accomplished through elaborate descriptions delineating the qualities of a genuine artist:

Extract 13/Document 3

The artist is not a chosen superman, a representative of a kind of superior elite, but he is part of a broad working group with an important irreplaceable mission, which is to enrich man with new ideas, new beauty, cultivate advanced social consciousness and workers' solidarity, even emotionally, he refined his receptivity, refined him in his human relationships, brought him pleasure and joy, a sense of fullness in life, to spread the ideas of brotherhood and peaceful cooperation among nations.

In line with the argument that the opposition is made up of a ‘privileged class’, here the identity of an artist is constructed in collectivistic terms, consistent with the ‘communist’ ideology based on the values of collectivism (‘he is part of a broad working group’). The Party is constructed here as respecting and even endorsing cultural activities (‘important irreplaceable mission’), however, these cultural activities are designed with a political agenda (‘spread the ideas of brotherhood and peaceful cooperation among nations’). These arguments serve to moderate the Party’s intervention into cultural activities, by presenting them as working towards the national interest.

The Opposition As Immoral. Apart from the illegitimate identities, the media campaign also ascribed the opposition as ‘corrupted’ and ‘immoral’. This was achieved by

presenting the opposition as ‘Nazi collaborators’ (e.g., D1: *became a direct promoter of fascist contra-revolution and as a fascist commander of Hitler’s army, he fell in the fight against the Soviet army.*). Further, this argument of immorality was intertwined with the element of the ‘corrupted’ West:

Extract 14/ Document 2

It [the Charter initiative] recruits emigrants, but also various losers living in socialist countries, those who, for whatever reason, their class interests, reactionary interests, reasons of vanity or megalomaniacs, renegade and notorious characterlessness, are allowed to lend their names to hell.

This extract frames the opposition as acting for ill interests (‘lend their names to hell’). Further in the article, the opposition is framed as: ‘*so far they have been stuck in the service of the blackest imperialist reaction*’(D2). This argument is also emphasized in the ‘Anti-Charter’ petition (D3):

Extract 15/Document 3

That is why we also despise those who, in the unbridled pride of vain superiority, selfish interest or even for shameful money anywhere in the world - and a group of such apostates and traitors - have been found in our country - break away and isolate themselves from their own people, their lives and real interests. through relentless logic, they become an instrument of the anti-humanistic forces of imperialism and, in their service, heralds of subversion and strife between nations.

In this extract, the ‘true’ artists supposedly express their explicit disagreement with the opposition. Notably, the focus is on discrediting the opposition group rather than directly attacking the Charter petition. This line of argumentation frames all opposition activities as

inherently immoral, driven by individuals acting in 'selfish interests'. The opposition is consistently depicted as an external force, disconnected from the nation ('isolate themselves from their own people'). Ultimately, the actions of the opposition are framed not only as agitators but also as disruptors of international peace, further emphasising their negative and detached nature ('unbridled pride', 'traitors'). These arguments collectively present the opposition as a distinct and alien group with nefarious intentions.

While Document 3 illustrated rhetorical demobilisation strategies in the 'Anti-Charter' event, the subsequent section will delve into practical demobilisation strategies in the regime's response to the Charter petition, focusing on the multiple 'Anti Charter' events in February 1977.

Practical Demobilisation Strategies. The regime swiftly responded to the Charter '77 petition, implementing demobilisation strategies both via the media campaign (explored in the analysis section above) and through practical measures. Criminal proceedings were initiated on January 7, accompanied by house searches and interrogations, showcasing the regime's determination to quell the petition's momentum (Císařovská & Prečan, 2007). The secret police played a key role in suppressing signatories through surveillance, home monitoring, and street harassment. Tragically, Jan Patočka, one of the initiators of the petition passed away after being interrogated by the police. This situation highlights the severe consequences faced by those involved in the Charter initiative, although the regime was gradually moving away from physical violence towards more 'psychological' forms of repression (Blažek & Schovánek, 2018; Zittoun, 2018).

The intentional non-publication of the text of the Charter in the Czechoslovak media served multiple purposes. It prevented widespread support by keeping the text inaccessible to the public, and it allowed state authorities to make ambiguous claims about the document's content. This lack of visibility not only hindered potential signatories but also enabled the

regime to manipulate information and employ ambiguity as a demobilisation strategy (Holy, 1996). However, such repressive measures have been discussed in previous research (e.g., Moss, 2019). In this section, I mainly focus on the Anti-Charter event, which is a unique illustration of how the Party performatively undermined the Charter initiative, thus acting as *identity impresarios* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020).

As part of its campaign to discredit the Charter initiators, the Party organised collective events aimed at mobilising support for the Anti-Charter petition. These events specifically targeted actors, artists, and musicians who were potential signatories of the Charter petition, given the repression they faced in freely creating art (Blažek & Schovánek, 2018).

Recognising the influence of well-known actors, the regime invited them to participate in the Anti-Charter events. During these events, participants were encouraged to openly express their disagreement with the Charter and discuss its perceived illegitimacy. The main 'Anti-Charter' events took place in Prague at the National Theatre on January 28, 1977, and in the Music Theatre on February 4, 1977. These events were televised to allow the public to witness them, despite not being directly involved (Blažek & Schovánek, 2018). This strategic use of persuading wider audiences (or creating perceptions of unity and further suppressing mobilisation efficacy in wider audiences) is another element of *identity impresarioship*.

While past research considered how social actors address ingroup audiences in a performative way (e.g., Reicher & Haslam, 2017b), it is important to pay attention to how dominant groups try to target (and demobilise) potential outgroup⁵⁵ audiences.

The regime sought to illustrate unity between the arts and politics, with the Minister for Culture attending the National Theatre event. Television cameras captured both the stage and the illuminated audience, emphasising the widespread attendance at these events. By

⁵⁵ This analysis does not, unfortunately, allow for the analysis of the actual audience, and what effect these televised events had on them. See Case Study 2 (3.4), for such analysis.

strategically excluding representatives of the Charter movement from official media coverage, the regime executed a powerful demobilisation strategy—attacking and discrediting an invisible and non-represented group. The event was broadcast on the main television channel and replayed in the evening of the following day. Subsequently, newspapers prominently featured reports about the Anti-Charter event, including photos of the large audience, on their front pages (see Figure 5) (Blažek & Schovánek, 2018).

The central activity during these 'anti-Charter' events involved individuals signing the Anti-Charter petition to publicly express their disagreement with the Charter initiative. Initially driven by artists who were openly supporting the regime, participation expanded to include people from various communities, particularly workers in different factories. The growing number of signatures was regularly published in official newspapers, serving as a performative display of the regime's influence and control. Closed-door meetings of the Communist Party and other Communist associations discussed strategies to disseminate the anti-Charter campaign among the public. Regional events, primarily targeting factory workers as representatives of 'the people', occurred throughout February 1977 (Blažek & Schovánek, 2018).

Publicly signing the Anti-Charter petition was a performative act, with individuals recorded while expressing their disagreement with the Charter (and agreement with Anti-Charter). This ritualistic act served as more than a mere signature against the Charter; it became an affirming act of loyalty toward the regime and framed it as an event endorsed by figures widely accepted by the public (e.g., the in-person audience, TV audiences). Further, the public endorsement was also then emphasised in a series of news articles about people endorsing the Anti-Charter (e.g., published name lists of specific factory workers and sports groups rejecting the Charter; Blažek & Schovánek, 2018). Thus, the 'Anti-Charter' event served to undermine perceptions of internal conflict and fragmentation in Czechoslovakia.

The deliberate organisation of 'anti-Charter events'⁵⁶ showcased the regime's power over its citizens (Blažek & Schovánek, 2018; Drda, 2020) emphasising loyalty and compliance in a performative way, thus acting as *impresarios of identity* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020).

Figure 5.
Front Pages of Newspapers



Note. Left: Title page of the Young Front newspaper from January 29, 1977. Photo of the audience in the 'Anti-Charter' event in the red rectangle⁵⁷. Title page of the Red Law newspaper from January 29, 1977. Right: Photo of the audience in the 'Anti-Charter' event in the red rectangle⁵⁸)

The act of publicly signing the anti-Charter petition involved individuals being recorded on video, transforming the signature into a performative action that affirmed one's identity (see Figure 6). Comparable to instances of pledging allegiance to a country or a new president swearing an oath in the USA, this ritualized act extended beyond mere words (e.g., see Billig, 1995). The performance in front of an audience elevated the significance of the signature into an affirming act. The organisation of 'Anti-Charter' events was a visible manifestation of the regime's power over its citizens (Blažek & Schovánek, 2018).

⁵⁶ The term 'Anti-Charter' campaign is how the campaign is discussed in the public discourse nowadays. The communist regime never discussed their activities as 'Anti-Charter', presumably, because that would imply that the regime had to demobilise Charter initiatives actively (which the regime did not claim).

⁵⁷ Retrieved from <https://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/charta77/panel14.pdf>

⁵⁸ Retrieved from: <https://archiv.ucl.cas.cz/index.php?path=RudePravo/1977/1/29/1.png>

Figure 6.

Famous Singer (Karel Gott) Signed the 'Anti-charter' Petition During the 'Anti-charter' Event⁵⁹



3.3.4 Summary of the Analysis

This case study focused on the ‘communist’ regime’s demobilisation strategies preventing people from signing the Charter ’77 petition. The repressive regime used legal machinery to construe the Charter as an illegal activity, however, the regime also had to justify its oppression towards the public. In the rhetorical part of the analysis, I focused on how the regime tried to justify the repression of the Charter while presenting itself as ‘pro-people’ and ‘pro-human rights’. The analysis also showed that the media campaign involved rhetorical absences (Billig & Marinho, 2017). For example, although the media campaign targeted the Charter, the focus was not paid specifically on the Charter petition. Instead, one of the strategies was the focus was on the Charter organisers, portraying them as an illegitimate group, thus silencing the purpose of the Charter petition and downplaying the relevance of the content of the petition. I also showed other strategies where the oppositional activity was generally attributed to enemy interference without mentioning the Charter or its organisers directly. Further, by undermining the leadership of the Charter, they attempted to

⁵⁹ Retrieved from: <https://cnn.iprima.cz/karel-gott-anticharta-ho-strasila-az-do-smrti-proc-ji-podepsal-31437>

undermine the entire movement, while not appearing to act against the people in a visibly repressive manner. As part of this demobilisation rhetoric, the Party also had to address the artists, a group closely linked to the Charter initiative, thus, creating a dilemma for the Party of having to repress artists without appearing as intolerant of art (and by extent of freedom of speech and expression) itself. This was resolved by framing the Charter initiators as ‘not-true’ artists and by ridiculing them in the rhetoric as ‘failures’ and ‘renegades’ (see Billig, 2005, for a discussion of ridicule as a rhetorical tool). The second strategy was the performative demonstration of ‘unity’ between artists and politicians in the ‘Anti-Charter’ events, where the artists signed a letter despising the Charter initiative.

Toxic Leadership: Attacking the Opposition Leaders. This case study shows that opposition leaders were a clear target of the regime’s demobilisation strategies, which supports but also extends previous research findings (Haslam & Reicher, 2012). For example, the Czechoslovak regime strategically utilised compliant members of oppositional groups, such as priests and artists, to dissuade participation in resistance events through public appearances and endorsement statements in the state-controlled media. The repressive regime constructed itself as ‘inclusive’ and ‘accepting’, which served to justify the exclusion and repression of those who did not conform to this category – the opposition. This rhetoric categorised individuals as either ‘honest workers’ or ‘dishonest opposition’, aligning with the processes described in the Social Identity Model of Collective Hate (Reicher et al., 2008). Rath (2016) suggested that the mobilisation of hate (or solidarity) is a function of *identity entrepreneurs* (e.g., leaders and influential group members), and their construction of specific group ideologies rooted in discussions of threat and virtue. These ideologies can create conditions that warrant hate (Ntontis et al., 2024), and those who produce such rhetoric should be held accountable. Precisely because speakers can be held accountable for their

actions, the ‘communist’ regime often attempted to manage accountability and allocate blame to others.

For example, the regime utilised official media channels to rhetorically attack the opposition leaders, portraying them as ‘traitors’ and ‘social outcasts’, while also undermining their identities as representatives of the various opposition groups they belonged to (e.g., artists, Catholics). They also undermined their identities as leaders, by labelling them as ‘illegitimate’ and ‘unworthy’ of opposition activities, and as lacking skills that a leader should have. Similar strategies have been observed in other non-repressive contexts, such as the delegitimisation of victims in the Grenfell Tower fire (Tekin & Drury, 2022) and also in Donald Trump's rhetorical attacks towards various outgroups (e.g., media, Democrats), and his political opponents (Maskor et al., 2021; Ntontis et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the regime depicted the opposition as being supported by the West, particularly the United States and its allies, as a contrast to the ‘friendly’ Soviet Union, reinforcing the narrative of Western interference to the internal affairs of the Soviet Union and its satellites – which was the overarching narrative of East versus West hostility during Cold War. While these findings from a historical case study of a no-longer existing regime might seem irrelevant in today’s world, a recent analysis of present-day Russia’s rhetoric showed that there seems to be a return towards this narrative of the ‘corrupt West’ in Putin’s rhetoric (Sharafutdinova, 2020). This narrative is also present in the central European populist and nationalist rhetoric (Madlovics & Magyar, 2023).

Moreover, such rhetoric often creates a space for toxic discourse – (1) by excluding certain groups from the national category, and (2) by positioning the dominant group as the arbiter of who could (and could not) be considered part of the nation (e.g., Ntontis et al., 2024; also see Reicher et al., 2005b; Reicher et al., 2008). In repressive regimes, where opposition groups often struggle to gain legitimacy, toxic rhetoric can have severe

implications for hate crimes and intergroup violence. Therefore, it is crucial to be vigilant towards rhetoric that creates a sense of exclusion and moralises this exclusion (also see 6.5).

The Impact of the Charter on Subsequent Mobilisation in Czechoslovakia. The regime's demobilisation strategies were successful in curtailing the immediate impact of the Charter initiative. The Charter '77 petition, despite being an unprecedented act of overt resistance at the time, faced effective repression from the regime, preventing it from becoming a nationwide event (Shepherd, 2000). Nonetheless, the manifesto continued to gather support, with more than 1800 people signing it over the following decade (Blažek & Schovánek, 2018). It is noteworthy that the resistance activity of Charter '77 served as an inspiration for subsequent acts of resistance. Many of the individuals involved in this initiative played crucial roles in the 1989 Velvet Revolution, contributing significantly to the eventual collapse of the repressive regime (Wheaton & Kavan, 2019).

3.4 Case Study 2:

Demobilising the Pilgrimage to Velehrad

“They can take many things from us, they can take away our literature, samizdat and so on, but they can’t take away our small communities from us, where mainly young people get together. We can’t let them cross this line!”

Ján Chryzostom Korec, quoted in Šimulčík (2021, p.12)

3.4.1 Overview of Case Study 2

In this Case Study, I investigate how the representatives of the ‘communist’ regime attempted to undermine the Pilgrimage to Velehrad (1985). The Czechoslovak regime had a long history of repressing Catholics. They banned pilgrimages and other religious gatherings for decades (Šimulčík, 2021b). However, Velehrad was also a significant national history landmark connected to the story of Saint Cyril and Methodius, who, according to the myth, brought Christianity to Slavs and developed their first written language in the 9th century (Holy, 1996). The year 1985 was the 1100th anniversary of Saint Cyril and Methodius Day, annually celebrated with a bank holiday. Czechoslovak Catholics, with the support of the Vatican, pressured the Party to approve the pilgrimage for this celebratory year. However, the Czechoslovak regime was aware that this would be an unprecedented public event inconsistent with the regime’s atheist agenda (Kubik, 1994). This put the ‘communist’ authorities in a dilemmatic position. On the one hand, the Party did not want to be perceived as ignorant of national history and as preventing national commemorations from taking place. This created pressure for letting the event take place. On the other hand, this national event was in parallel a religious event, and by commemorating national history, the regime was indirectly allowing a religious event to occur, which was at odds with their secular ideology. If the Party did not want to be perceived as ‘ignorant’ of national history, the state authorities

faced the dilemma of a public event (i.e., national commemoration) that had a religious meaning for many pilgrims (i.e., national pilgrimage).

This event which can be framed both as a national commemoration and as a religious pilgrimage, allows for an exploration of how the regime's representatives positioned themselves within the scope of the event, and how they tailored their profiles, arguments, and framings of the event in a manner that aligns with their agenda. I investigate how the regime's representative discursively managed the image-conscious profile in front of an audience with a history of being consistently repressed and humiliated by the state authorities (Nation's Memory Institute, 2024a; also see 3.4.2). Before I turn to the analysis, I provide an overview of the historical context relevant to Pilgrimage to Velehrad (1985), focusing (1) on the narrative of Cyril and Methodius Day, and (2) the complex relationship between the Catholic Church and the Czechoslovak Communist Party, leading up to this Pilgrimage.

3.4.2 Historical Context

Saint Cyril and Methodius Day. Several nations, including present-day Bulgaria, North Macedonia, and Russia, on May 24th celebrate Saint Cyril and Methodius Day. In today's Czechia and Slovakia, then-Czechoslovakia, it is a national holiday celebrated on July 5th. Saint Cyril and Methodius Day holds historical significance related to Great Moravia, the earliest major Slavic state in the Central European region, dating back to the 9th century (Pinterová & Kičková, 2020). The commemorated figures, brothers Cyril and Methodius supposedly arrived in Great Moravia in 863 from Thessaloniki, a city situated within the Byzantine Empire. In addition to spreading Christianity in the region, Cyril and Methodius introduced literacy and the foundation of a legal system (Škvarna & Hudek, 2013). They are renowned for developing the first Slavonic alphabet and for serving the Mass in Slavonic language⁶⁰. Annually, on July 5th, the Pilgrimage to Velehrad takes place in

⁶⁰ Although from 873, Latin was used in mass in the region (Holy, 1996).

present-day Czechia (formerly Czechoslovakia), climaxing with a celebration in the Basilica of Saint Cyril and Methodius in Velehrad Hill.

Historically, the Byzantine influence in Central Europe waned when Great Moravia dissolved and there is no historical evidence to suggest the celebration of the legacy of the Slavic myth during the period between the 10th and 14th centuries (Škvarna & Hudek, 2013). However, the cult of Cyril and Methodius experienced a revival by the Catholic Church in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in which Slovaks (and Czechs) lived, in the 17th century (Škvarna & Hudek, 2013). This revival of Cyril and Methodius myth served as a deliberate effort by the Catholic Church to counter the spread of Protestantism in the region (Škvarna & Hudek, 2013).

The promotion of this construct, particularly among Slovaks, gained prominence again during the 19th and 20th centuries (Holy, 1996). This era marked the rise of nationalist movements in the Slovak region within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Cyril-Methodius myth represented an endeavour to revive a form of national heritage that was inherently Slavic and distinct enough from Austrian and Hungarian influence (Holy, 1996). Notably, the Byzantine double cross has consistently symbolised Slovakia in the national symbols since the establishment of the first Czechoslovak Republic in 1918 (see Figure 7). In the history of independent Slovakia (post-1993), the symbolism of Saints Cyril and Methodius continued to be embedded in the national flag (See Figure 8), although it was never part of Czechia's flag or national symbols (see Figure 8).

In alignment with this symbolism, Cyril and Methodius have become integral to the national identity and they were even featured in Slovak currency⁶¹ (see Figure 9). These instances can be seen as exemplifying banal nationalism (Billig, 1995), where the symbolism of the Cyril and Methodius myth, originally part of Czechoslovak national history, appears to

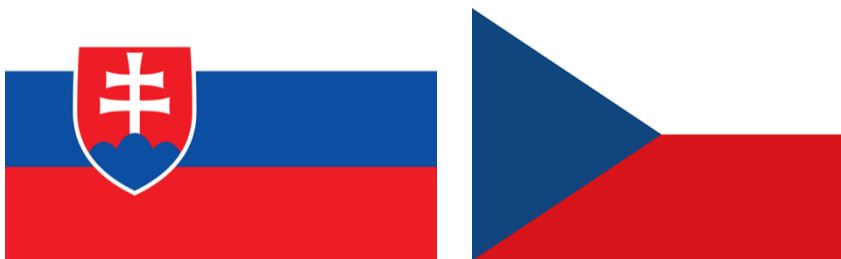
⁶¹ This was until Slovakia started using Euro as their currency in 2009.

be woven into everyday language and symbols, including flags, currency, national emblems, statues, and significant places such as the Velehrad Basilica (located in today's Czechia⁶²).

Figure 7.
Coat of Arms of the First Czechoslovak Republic⁶³



Figure 8.
Slovak Flag (Since 1993) on the Left; Czechoslovak Flag in 1920-1992 and Czech Flag Since 1993



Since Catholicism is an integral part of Moravia and Slovakia regions, Catholic pilgrimages were not only religious events in Czechoslovakia but also events linked to national commemorations (Šimulčík, 2021b). For example, the Velehrad Pilgrimage is not the only pilgrimage that has a tradition in the region. Similarly, Šaštín Pilgrimage is

⁶² It is common for both Czechs and Slovaks to attend the Velehrad pilgrimage in the aftermath of the splitting of Czechoslovakia.

⁶³ The motto says: "Truth wins" (in Czech), and the Czech symbol of golden lions. The Slovak Coat of Arms with the Byzantine double cross is in the red circle. Retrieved from: <https://ceskaaslovenskahistorie.estranky.cz/clanky/ceska-republika--statni-symboly--statni-svatky/statni-symboly-ceske-republiky.html>

associated with Slovakia's patron saint - Our Lady of Sorrows⁶⁴, whose Basilica is located on the Šaštín Hill and this patron saint is also celebrated as a national holiday in present-day Slovakia (Baumann, 2023). Therefore, these specific pilgrimages have a specific place in the history of Czechoslovakia⁶⁵, long preceding the existence of the 'communist' regime in the 20th century and even continuing to the present day, with politicians attending them to endorse the Catholicism tradition of the nation. This is what put the 'communist' regime in a dilemmatic position in handling the Velehrad pilgrimage in 1985 and what will be of interest in the analysis.

Figure 9.

Cyril and Methodius (Left: Saint Cyril and Methodius Portrayed on the Bank Note used in 1993-2009 in Slovakia.)⁶⁶



Before that, I will also outline the relationship between Catholics and the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia which was unique in terms of its repressive character, even compared to the surrounding Soviet satellite states in which Catholicism was more or less respected as being part of the nation states (Corley, 1993; Kubik, 1994).

Catholicism in 'Communist' Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia had a prolonged history of ongoing religious conflict between the Catholic community and the Czechoslovak Communist Party (Šimulčík, 2021b). The 'communist' regime, which came to power in 1948,

⁶⁴ The combination of national and religious identity was not uncommon in Eastern European states. For example, in Poland, the Virgin Mary (Black Madonna) became one of the key symbols of Solidarność, the Polish resistance group during 'communism' in Poland (Kubik, 1994).

⁶⁵ Note that the Czech region has a tradition of Protestantism (Holy, 1996).

⁶⁶ Adapted from: <https://nbs.sk/bankovky-a-mince/slovenska-mena/bankovky/bankovka-50-sk/> ; Right: Saint Cyril and Methodius holding the double cross (in red circle). Adapted from: <https://dennikn.sk/972027/cyril-a-metod-nam-nepriniesli-jazyk-ani-vieru/>

aimed to eradicate religion, viewing non-state organizations, such as the Catholic Church, as a threat to its authority (Corley, 1993; Nation's Memory Institute, 2024a). To achieve this, the 'communist' regime employed various strategies to diminish the Catholic presence in the country. These strategies included harassment, humiliation, and the marginalization of lay Catholic citizens, with the hope that this treatment would prevent people from maintaining their Catholic faith (Minarik, 2019). This approach aimed to dissuade the younger generation from adopting Catholicism in the first place, with the regime's ultimate hope being that the Catholic community would gradually diminish over time (Corley, 1993).

The size and scope of resistance amongst the Czechoslovak Catholics were impacted by two main events. The first event was the problematic legacy of the Slovak Catholic Church's involvement with fascism during World War 2. In this period, Slovakia briefly existed as an independent Slovak State (1939-1945) recognised and supported by the Nazi Germany (Sokolovič, 2010). The leader of this satellite Nazi state was a Catholic priest Jozef Tiso who openly endorsed fascism, turned towards an authoritarian regime that actively promoted racism and built three concentration camps on Slovakia's land (Fiamová et al., 2014). The Catholic Church's involvement with fascism is thought to be the reason that prevented many Catholics from becoming politically active because they were afraid to be accused of being 'fascists' during 'communism' (I will return to this point in Case Study 3).

The second reason was the legacy of the persecution of Catholic clergy in the 1950s, which left many people in fear (Šimulčík, 2021b). This is particularly relevant for the present case study, as the pilgrimage to Velehrad in 1985 was the first time Catholics became a publicly visible group since the 'dark' period of the 1950s in Czechoslovakia. The year 1950 was marked by two events targeting Catholic clergy – Operation K⁶⁷ (13-14th of April 1950)

⁶⁷ 'Operation K' where K stands for cloister (Slovak: kláštor).

and Operation R⁶⁸ (7 different operations during August 1950) (Nations Memory Institute, 2024a). These were secret police operations that took place across male and female cloisters in Czechoslovakia. During those nights, monks and nuns, not knowing what was going to happen to them, were violently transported into ‘integration cloisters’ (NMI, 2024b). They lived there under the supervision of prison guards, while their cloisters were transformed into various state administrative offices and orphanages. Altogether, 76 male and 200 female cloisters were disposed of, targeting more than 1180 monks and more than 3000 nuns (NMI, 2024b). The lifestyle in integration cloisters was close to a prison (NMI, 2024b).

The reason for establishing these integration cloisters was to isolate the community of nuns and monks in rural areas of Czechoslovakia (NMI, 2024b). The integration cloisters were often located close to state borders, where there was limited infrastructure due to natural mountain borders, especially in north Czechoslovakia. The strategy was to make these groups invisible and isolated from the society. Recently, Penić et al. (2024) analysed how geographical location impacts resistance strategies, showing that the closer the communities are to surveillance infrastructure (e.g., border zone checkpoints), the lower their willingness to engage in resistance.

Despite this repression, monks and nuns engaged in various forms of individual resistance (Šimulčík, 2002; also see Vollhardt et al., 2020, for a discussion about individual resistance). For example, they did not comply with the guards, wore a necklace with a cross, referred to themselves with their monk names, or attempted to wear religious robes (NMI, 2024b). They refused to work on Sundays and religious holidays and often secretly helped local priests (NMI, 2024b). These forms of resistance can be defined as ‘missed⁶⁹ resistance’ or ‘attempted resistance’ (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004). In many instances, such forms of

⁶⁸ ‘Operation R’ where R stands for monk (Slovak: rehoľník).

⁶⁹ Resistance is intended by the actor and recognised by the target (e.g., oppressor), but not by the observer (e.g., wider public).

resistance led to imprisonment. Monks and nuns often became political prisoners, being tortured and sometimes murdered in prisons. Similar repressive treatment applied to ‘problematic’ priests. These murders often happened even in priests’ own homes and their bodies were found in brutal conditions (NMI, 2024b). Such tactics were used to spread fear amongst priests and generally, to demobilise people from participating in Catholicism.

The information about this treatment of Catholics was silenced due to state censorship and most ordinary citizens were unaware of this situation unless they lived in a proximate distance to the cloisters (Šimulčík, 2021b). Despite this, Catholic citizens, including young people continued to be interested in Catholicism and they secretly gathered in their local branches of the ‘Underground Church’, which was formed as a response to the ‘official’ Church being restricted. While the ‘communist’ regime monitored the Underground Church, the Party was never fully aware of the size and the education the Underground Church secretly provided, especially to men who wanted to become priests (NMI, 2024b). This community, bringing together lay Catholics and religious clergy, engaged in many ‘missed resistance’ activities (see 1.2.2; Hollander & Einwohner, 2004). For example, Catholics were often smuggling religious literature from the West, publishing and distributing religious books, which they knew was illegal and the Party was aware of their oppositional activities, but the wider public often did not know about this (Šimulčík, 2021a). Similar resistance strategies have been documented in the context of Jewish resistance during the Second World War (e.g., Einwohner, 2003; Vollhardt & Bilewicz, in press).

Given the above discussion about the role of religion in Czechoslovakia, the ‘communist’ regime was clearly not in a position to endorse a public gathering of Catholics of any kind. On the contrary, the ‘communist’ regime was actively suppressing all religious activities and banned all pilgrimages since 1948 (Kubert, 2024). However, in the 1980s, the Czechoslovak communist regime started to face various external and internal pressures,

which made it significantly harder to keep suppressing Catholics. On the occasion of the 1100th anniversary of Cyril and Methodius, the Pope gave a special token of affection to the Velehrad basilica – a Golden Rose (Klubert, 2024). In addition to that, Pope John Paul II. was a very important figure at the time, because he came from a ‘communist’ state and was seen as an ally to Czechoslovak Catholics, not just Poles (Kubik, 1994; Šimulčík, 2018).

In addition, since 1975, the regime was also bound by the Helsinki Agreement (see 3.3.2), which resulted in the West paying close attention to the regime’s repressive activities. Practically, this meant that Western journalists were increasingly present in Czechoslovakia, monitoring collective events and other instances when Czechoslovak citizens clashed with the Party (Klubert, 2024). For instance, during the Velehrad pilgrimage, West German and Austrian television reporters were present (Jašek et al., 2015). Presumably, the combination of external pressures from international media scrutiny and the internal pressure of facing the 1100th anniversary of significant Czechoslovak national figures forced the Communist Party representatives to approve the pilgrimage in 1985. This illustrates how the Helsinki Agreement became a double-edged sword (also discussed in 3.3.2). As I mentioned at the beginning of this Case Study, this created a dilemma for the regime. On the one hand, they had to show support for the pilgrimage, while at the same time not directly supporting the reasons for which the event was taking place. How did the regime handle this complex situation of approving an unwanted event to take place while preventing Catholics from gaining recognition and visibility as a collective, but also managing the regime’s ‘pro-people’ profile?

3.4.3 Analysis

In the following sections, I turn to investigate the practical and rhetorical demobilisation strategies that the ‘communist’ regime employed at the Pilgrimage to Velehrad in 1985. First, I discuss the regime’s practical demobilisation strategies. Second,

using tools from the discursive tradition in social psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell, 1998), I analyse the more subtle ways in which the representative of the repressive ‘communist’ regime negotiated his presence at an ‘unwanted’ religious pilgrimage while presenting the regime as ‘endorsing’ the event. Above and beyond looking closely at the text, I also focus on locating this discourse within the wider historical and ideological framework (Billig et al., 1988) in which the Czechoslovak ‘communist’ regime was operating.

Practical Demobilisation Strategies. The first strategy that the regime employed was to take control of the preparation of the pilgrimage (Šimulčík, 2019). This allowed the regime to control who would be able to attend it and who would (and would not) be allowed to speak at the event. In other words, the authorities had control over the choreography of the pilgrimage, acting as *identity impresarios* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020). In this process, the state authorities sought to limit the number of attendees from the West by using administrative obstructions (Klubert, 2024). For example, entry visas were not granted to Vienna’s Archbishop Franz König and other foreign bishops who were invited to attend the pilgrimage by Czechoslovak Catholics (Klubert, 2024). Instead of simply banning Western visitors from attending the event, the authorities’ choice to use administrative obstructions can be seen as a practical demobilisation strategy that contributed to the regime’s ‘non-repressive’ image. In this way, the regime could claim that the attendees didn’t arrive on the pilgrimage simply because they had issues with their paperwork, not because the regime banned them from coming (Klubert, 2024).

The Czechoslovak ‘communists’ were strongly opposed to the visit of the Pope. Instead, a lower-rank representative of the Vatican attended the pilgrimage on behalf of the Pope (Klubert, 2024). Arguably, having a lower-ranked Vatican representative attending the pilgrimage instead of the Pope ensured that the tension of needing to have a Vatican

representative attend the pilgrimage was resolved but in a way that was acceptable to the Party, but not necessarily to the Catholic pilgrims. Presumably, the visit of the Pope to Czechoslovakia could be seen as a powerful third-party support for local Catholics (discussed by Kubik, 1994), which the regime tried to avoid. In addition, since the regime had full control over the event, during the pilgrimage, the state authorities prevented Prague's archbishop František Tomášek from meeting with the Vatican representative (Klubert, 2024).

Apart from restricting the presence of specific Church representatives, and the interactions between Czechoslovak and Western clergy, the regime organised an International Peace Conference at the time of the pilgrimage (Klubert, 2024). For this conference, various foreign representatives were invited. In contrast to the Velehrad pilgrimage, these guests were not from the West but from fellow 'communist' countries (e.g., Cuba, and Belarus), thus, they all managed to attend the conference, not experiencing issues with their visas. The Czechoslovak media presented information about the Peace Conference while remaining silent about the planned pilgrimage (Šimulčík, 2021b), thus, shifting the public attention from the Velehrad event to a state-endorsed Peace Conference.

In the week before the pilgrimage was planned, the police monitored roads and train routes that led to Velehrad, focusing on groups of people who looked like pilgrims (Klubert, 2024). The authorities limited local public transport to the venue and harassed people with technical inspections of personal vehicles. This demobilisation strategy will be further discussed in Case Study 3, where the archival data from private police documents allows for a more detailed analysis. The state authorities also forced the villages and cities near Velehrad to organize social events during the Pilgrimage. This included dancing events, village festivals, and official city council gatherings during the time of the pilgrimage so that local people would attend these events instead of the pilgrimage (Klubert, 2024).

Apart from road closures, when people arrived in Velehrad, the Basilica was closed. It was expected that these groups of pilgrims, who mainly commuted via trains and walked certain parts of the journey, would camp and sleep over in the location of the Basilica in Velehrad before the main programme (Klubert, 2024). This meant that several groups of elderly people were not able to shelter there overnight as they planned. They either had to sleep outside or leave the location. Further, people were asked by the village radio broadcasting to move from the Velehrad area to a camp located four kilometres away (Klubert, 2024). The regime used these strategies to discourage the pilgrims from staying overnight, aiming to reduce the number of attendees.

Despite that the basilica in Velehrad was closed, many youth groups arrived in Velehrad and spent the night camping out, praying together and singing religious songs, supported by the leadership of the Slovak priest Anton Srholec (Klubert, 2024). These acts can be considered as forms of ‘missed resistance’ (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004), in which people outside of the location of the pilgrimage would not consider these activities of staying at the location as resistance, however in the location of the pilgrimage, even staying there overnight and expressing religious identity was a form of resistance (see Vollhardt et al., 2020, for a similar argument).

The authorities also sought to disrupt the atmosphere, which the religious pilgrims were expecting to find in the area of the basilica. The surrounding area of the Velehrad Basilica was set up as an amusement park, with carousels, a Ferris wheel and loud music. These disruptions can be explained as the regime purposefully creating constraints of identity enactment at the pilgrimage. Many pilgrims employed creative strategies to overcome these constraints. For example, for the first time since the 1950s, the officially banned members of religious orders wore their religious robes to express their religious identity (Klubert, 2024). Apart from clothing, pilgrims engaged in the collective singing of religious songs. Making

religious identity visible was an act of resistance not often seen in previous years, especially within religious groups (Šimulčík, 2018).

Finally, during the Pilgrimage, the State Security police were asking the pilgrims arriving at the Velehrad Basilica to provide their national ID cards and legitimise themselves (Klubert, 2024). Apart from this being a practical demobilisation strategy, psychologically, this was a strategy that spread fear. Legitimation of citizens was also a form of humiliation, since they were legal citizens of Czechoslovakia, moving freely within their country, however, the police ‘legitimised’ them to check whether they were legal citizens. Such acts of ‘stop and search’ can lead to mistrust between police and the public. Notably, the start of many riots is marked by the mistrust between the police and the local community, which can escalate the conflict, and a sense of “us” versus “them” division (e.g., Reicher, 1984; 1996).

Although no conflict occurred during the event and the pilgrims were not violently suppressed (unlike the Candlelight Demonstration; see 3.5), large numbers of police officers were present, as well as special riot units. Nearby the basilica, street cleaning cars with water cannons were parked, (Klubert, 2024). The presence of police and machinery that could be used to disperse crowds acted as a visual memento of what could happen to the pilgrims if they acted in an undesirable way.

In the next section, I turn to discuss how the regime representatives managed their presence in the Pilgrimage in their rhetoric.

Rhetorical Demobilisation Strategies. The ‘communist’ regime engaged in a complex task in the pilgrimage. Originally, the regime’s representatives attempted to speak at the ‘national’ event. However, the main audience, despite it being a national event, was made up of Catholics, whom the Party was in conflict with. Simultaneously, the regime was also accountable to the Soviets, who were carefully watching the activities of Czechoslovak politicians and who would act if the activities were threatening the USSR’s control over

Czechoslovakia (Prins, 1990). Finally, the event was watched by the Western media, who were present at the event, and so the speakers had to somehow maintain a friendly atmosphere towards Catholics because otherwise, the regime's openly repressive activities (e.g., arresting the pilgrims) would be reported by the Western media. Particularly because the Party was in this complicated situation – of being exposed in public, and thus having to manage accountability in front of multiple audiences, this event provides an opportunity for a social-psychological analysis of their rhetoric. If the Communist Party representatives failed, this event would undermine the Party's dominant position in Czechoslovakia (which eventually turned out to be the case). The following analysis focuses on the speech given during the Pilgrimage by the Minister for Culture. The remaining speeches were not delivered because the pilgrims continuously disrupted the first speaker and then a decision was made that the Pilgrimage would continue with the religious part of the program, which the pilgrims actively endorsed (Klubert, 2024).

Analysing the speech given by the Minister for Culture, I identified three argumentative lines (Billig, 1991), in which he attempted to legitimise his presence in the pilgrimage. The first argumentative line involved the speaker re-framing the narrative of the commemorated event as *nationally* important, moderating the Party's presence at a religious event. The speaker silenced the religious meaning of the event by using secular language and re-framed the narrative of Cyril-Methodius' myth as an exemplar of a successful attempt to achieve the nation's independence. Then, the Party was framed as the representative of the 'nation' and as securing national independence (as also seen in 3.3.3), whereas Catholics were undermined for not always acting for national interests. The second argumentative line involved the speaker constructing an overarching national identity (i.e., Slavic identity) to legitimise the USSR's occupation of Czechoslovakia, reframing it as a partnership between the Slavic nations. Third, the speaker, positioning himself as the representative of the nation,

constructed the communist regime as a ‘protector of peace’, to further legitimise the Party’s inherently positive and therefore dominant position in Czechoslovakia (see Table 6, for an overview of arguments). In the following sections, I focus on mapping out these arguments in the speech.

Table 6.

Overview of argumentative lines in Case Study 2

Argumentative line
The Pilgrimage as an Event of National Importance
Czechoslovakia as a Nation Struggling for Independence throughout History
The Party as the Nation and the Protector of Peace

The Pilgrimage as an Event of National Importance. The speech (D4) was given on the 7th of July 1985 as part of the official programme of the Pilgrimage. The Minister for Culture delivered it in front of the Velehrad Basilica (see Figure 10) as the official opening of the celebrations:

Extract 1/ Document 4

Traditional Constantin-Methodius day has a very special characteristic this year, thanks to the 1100th anniversary of Methodius’s death, which is commemorated not only by the nations in Europe but also in other parts of the world, especially the Slavic nations. Also, we commemorate the historical legacy of these personalities and the versatile pieces of work of Methodius and of course his brother Constantin.

Immediately in the first line of the speech, the event celebrated in Velehrad is framed as a ‘traditional Constantin-Methodius day’, instead of Saint Cyril and Methodius Day. This framing serves a specific function (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) of constructing the event as *nationally* relevant. Historically, the day was celebrated as the day of patron saints (Holy, 1996; Nosková, 1988). However, in the Minister’s speech (D4; see Appendix 1), Cyril and Methodius are not referred to as ‘patron saints’. They are also never described as national

figures who Christianised Slavs, which tends to be the central narrative of their story. Instead, the vague term ‘versatile piece of work’ (line 5) is used to construct this story in a more generic way, and thus more acceptable as a nationally relevant story, while omitting its religious aspects.

By omitting Constantin’s name that he adopted as a monk – Saint Cyril, the religious connotation of his name is absent (see Billig & Marinho, 2017; for a similar argument about rhetorical absences). This is not surprising, given that the regime actively suppressed monks and nuns, and therefore the fact that Constantin became a monk is in contradiction to the Communist regime’s repressive treatment of monks in the past. It is worth noting that among the two brothers, the emphasis is placed on Methodius instead of Cyril, such that Cyril’s religious name does not have to be articulated. For example, instead of saying ‘Cyril and Methodius’, the speaker says ‘Methodius and of course his brother Constantin’ (line 5).

In the next section of the speech, the speaker uses the often taken-for-granted story of Cyril and Methodius, which Czechoslovaks are commonly taught about in school (Pinterová & Kičková, 2020). The story is framed such that the national aspect of it is emphasised and the religious aspect is omitted:

Extract 2/ Document 4

We, Czechs and Slovaks commemorate these historical figures, and especially those parts of their rich and uneasy lives, that they lived in Great Moravia, and that piece of their work, especially during their development and building of this empire, its spiritual culture, but also of the statehood they left as a legacy. The role of the Thessaloniki brothers in establishing the language and its written form not only in the area of Great Moravia but also for all Slavic nations is undoubtedly priceless.

In a similar manner to Extract 1, in the present extract, various vague statements are used to describe the story of Cyril and Methodius (e.g., D4: ‘piece of their work’ and ‘they left a legacy’) such that the speaker acknowledges their importance in the Czechoslovak history but does not articulate their religious activities⁷⁰ (e.g., translating the Bible) in greater detail. In the Ministry’s ‘version’ of the story, the story of Cyril and Methodius is described as beneficial to the development of statehood, highlighting their role in building the ‘nation’. The reframed story allows the speaker to frame the religious pilgrimage as a national event. In line with the speaker’s use of secular language in the speech, in this extract, Cyril and Methodius are instead referred to as ‘Thessaloniki Brothers’ (line 5), and their work as ‘statehood they left as a legacy’ (line 4). These tropes help to shift the focus of the story of national heroes celebrated as part of the ‘communist’ regime in Czechoslovakia, whose atheist values were inconsistent with the ‘original’ story. Especially for these reasons of national history being full of taken-for-granted societally accepted ways of talking about national heroes, these narratives tend to be often used as a resource for constructing various ‘national projects’ (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Arguably, this is precisely how the story of Cyril and Methodius is used in the present speech – to reframe national history narrative and shape it to serve the ‘communist’ narrative.

Using such narrative, the speaker faced the dilemma of having to present a story associated with Catholicism in a secular way. What makes the story of Cyril and Methodius complicated to re-tell is that the widely accepted part of the story includes religion (Holy, 1996). This placed the speaker in a dilemmatic position of having to use the story of the day being celebrated without framing it as a ‘Catholic’ celebration. In line 4, there is a reference to ‘spiritual culture’. While the ‘spiritual’ connotes religion, but instead of talking about

⁷⁰ Historically speaking, much of this mythical narrative about Cyril and Methodius is factually incorrect. According to archaeological discoveries, it seems that Christianity already existed in Great Moravia thanks to Irish-Scottish missionaries before Cyril and Methodius came to Great Moravia (Škvarna & Hudek, 2013).

religious beliefs, believing in God or religious freedom, the speaker uses the word ‘culture’. In essence, this implies that the speaker accepts that religion exist, which is not surprising since the Velehrad event is based on this historical narrative. However, he reduces religion to one form of cultural expression. Such framing contributes to a more accepted way of talking about religion such that the radical and subversive potential of the event is dismissed. This allows the speaker (1) to stay in line with mentioning religion and thus in line with the wider narrative of the event, (2) to not appear as discriminatory and thus exposed to accusations, and (3) to manage this dilemma of stake (i.e., how to stay in line with the national narrative while not officially accepting religion as part of ‘communist’ Czechoslovakia). Evident from the speaker’s management of a local dilemma of stake, this is associated with a wider ideological dilemma of oppression versus exercising one’s freedom (Billig et al., 1988; also see 3.5.3; for the re-appearance of this dilemma).

The reframed national event is described as being important to a wider community of Slavic nations in line 6 (also line 4 of Extract 1). Presumably, the Slavic element of the Cyril-Methodius myth here serves to construct a superordinate Slavic identity, drawing a connection between Czechoslovakia and other Slavic nations, such as the USSR. Since nations can be construed as ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson, 1983), the use of a wider national identity that connects Russians with Czechoslovaks serves the function of emphasising a sense of unity and commonality of nations within Eastern Europe. In the case of this speech, it is not surprising to see the speaker drawing this connection, since Czechoslovak Communists were held accountable to the USSR (Prins, 1990).

Czechoslovakia as a Nation Struggling for Independence Throughout History.

From discussing Cyril and Methodius and their legacy in building the nation, the speaker then moves away from the story, delivering a highly politicised section of the speech. In contrast to the undoubtedly positive story of Cyril and Methodius, he lists instances in which different

groups tried to undermine national independence outside of Czechoslovakia (i.e., Baltic Slavs) and within Czechoslovakia (i.e., German Fascists):

Extract 3/ Document 4

After all, there were a lot of circulators of Christianity. Even in our part of the world. But their agendas varied. Spreading also the power over these nations, forcing different cultures upon nations, different languages and in many cases sometimes even suppressing entire nations and tribes. The tragic history of the genocide of the Baltic Slavs is evidence of that.

This part of the speech starts with a disclaimer that ‘*there were a lot of circulators of Christianity [...] But their agendas varied*’, which is an indirect way of saying that Cyril and Methodius spread Christianity. However, here, the ‘spreading of Christianity’ is immediately constructed as having a negative impact on the countries (e.g., by saying ‘their agendas varied’). This can be interpreted as a call for vigilance when it comes to Christians because they are construed as those with hidden, possibly manipulative agendas. In line 4, a specific historical example of Baltic Slavs who were subjected to ‘genocide’ by Christians is given to illustrate the implicit claim that Christians can be dangerous. Baltic Slavs were a community living outside of Great Moravia and while this example is vague enough for most laypeople to argue against, the word ‘genocide’ is worth noting. Instead of saying ‘oppression’ the word genocide implies a truly violent destruction of a nation and serves here as a warning against Catholicism.

Note that while the term ‘Christianity’, has not been used in any of the previous positively-framed sections of the speech celebrating the national heroes, in this section, when the spread of Christianity is associated with negative connotations, suddenly, the word is

⁷¹ The [...] is used to shorten the extract in the analysis.

used. Using the argument of ‘Christians as responsible for a past genocide’ positions the spreaders of Christianity (and potentially any Christians) as dangerous suppressors of national independence.

The speaker then moves away to another example of ‘genocide’, in this case using fascism as an example of a struggle for Czechoslovakia’s independence during World War 2, in which Germany dominated Czechoslovakia:

Extract4/ Document 4

The moral power of the legacy of the progressive manner of our national history we felt in the years of the Second World War, when the fascists of the para-German imperialism rose their traditional sword towards us – from suppressing our language and culture to rude persecutions and murders, all the way to the program of absolute genocide of the nation.

By warning the audience against dangerous groups that undermined national independence, the speaker opens up a possibility to give examples of how national heritage is flourishing in the present time when the Communist Party rules Czechoslovakia:

Extract 5/ Document 4

Especially this year, when we fulfilled already the fourth decade of our free and peaceful life, we are more than ever aware of what a truly revolutionary milestone in our history was the freeing of our homeland by the Soviet army and how deep our gratitude and respect towards all the sons and daughters of the brotherly nations of the Soviet union is, who gave their lives in this fight, and towards all Czech and Slovak anti-fascist fighters, who defended the pride of our nations and with their blood they paid for our freedom.

The 40 years of the Communist Party's rule in Czechoslovakia are celebrated as 'peaceful' and 'progressive' years. This is based on a taken-for-granted narrative in which the rule of the single-party government accountable to the USSR is justified by framing the USSR as the saviours of Czechoslovakia at the end of World War 2 when Europe spread between the East and the West. This was a commonly used narrative of Eastern European countries during the Cold War. By using the term 'we are more than aware' (line 2), the speaker establishes a sense of shared knowledge (Gibson, 2014; Potter, 1996) amongst everyone in attendance. The claim of 'freeing our homeland' then constructs the political coup of 1948 when the Communist Party took power in Czechoslovakia backed by the Soviets as a positive and incontestable fact. While fascist Germans were framed negatively and as oppressors of Czechoslovakia's national independence (Extract 4), the Soviets were framed as a 'brotherly nation' (line 4, Extract 5). Such rhetoric fits well with the already-established Slavic connection between the nations, discussed in the previous section of the analysis. Further, this argument of justifying USSR's occupation of Czechoslovakia even tends to be used by pro-Russian politicians in present-day Slovakia. For example, the current PM of Slovakia said that "*war always comes from the West and peace from the East*" (iDnes, 2023). Similar narratives, where history is framed in a certain way to benefit the dominant group and legitimise repression can be also seen in the rhetoric that justifies the Russian invasion and the ongoing war in Ukraine in which the Russian soldiers are supposedly 'de-nazifying' Ukraine (Rice-Oxley, 2022).

Although the data does not allow for identifying the extent to which the speech was strategic, invoking the superordinate Slavic national identity would most likely resonate with the Moscow officials, who carefully monitored the activities of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, and whom the Czechoslovak Party was a faithful ally (Macháček, 2016).

The Party As the Nation and the Protector of Peace. Finally, the speech ends with an emphasis on the need to ‘protect peace’ in Czechoslovakia. This is in line with the re-framed meaning of the event from a religious pilgrimage to a ‘peace festival’ which the Party tried to establish in the event, while rhetorically omitting the term ‘pilgrimage’ (Klubert, 2024):

Extract 6/ Document 4

When he [Minister of Culture] was talking about the peace effort of our country, he emphasised, that Czechoslovakia demonstrates their peace politics with everyday acts. We want, as it is the will of our people, to continuously enforce and strengthen the trust and peaceful relations in international relations and to get rid of everything that is blocking such healthy progress. The wish of every peaceful human on this planet is that the threat of war is eliminated, and so that peace is maintained, said in the end Milan Kusak.

Note that instead of saying that the Party promotes peace in Czechoslovakia, the speaker uses the national category (i.e., ‘*Czechoslovakia demonstrates their peace politics with everyday acts*’), which together with his position of the Czechoslovak Minister for Culture allows to position himself as a representative of the government, and of the nation. By saying ‘*we will, as it is the will of our people*’, the speaker positions himself as a representative of the people’s interests, not his own. The trope ‘our people’ also implies that Czechoslovakia accepts all people, but not those who are not protecting peace – the disruptors, the agitators (see 3.5.3; for a similar argument). By positioning the speaker himself as the ‘nation’, and by defining who can and cannot be part of the ‘nation’, this rhetoric illustrates how toxic leadership unfolds (Ntontis et al.,2024). Here the speaker claims that the regime will ‘*get rid of everything that is blocking such healthy progress*’. This claim spreads the message that the regime will not tolerate any disruptions to the ‘peace’ that is

currently established in Czechoslovakia, and which the Party ‘protects’. This rhetoric is also consistent with the practical demobilisation strategies in Velehrad Pilgrimage, in which the police were physically present at the Pilgrimage as a visible warning to the attendees that any disruption of the event would not be tolerated (Klubert, 2024). Indeed, such arguments can be seen across all three case studies, in which the regime tries to justify its oppressive actions towards various resistance groups that are purposefully constructed as the ‘disruptors’. This, in turn, legitimises the regime’s repressive strategies in its discourse.

The Pilgrims’ Reactions to the Speech. While the analysis above illustrates how the regime’s representative legitimised the regime’s presence in the Pilgrimage, the event itself unfolded differently. In this section, I provide an insight into a less-researched area within political discourse, which usually tends to focus on one-sided rhetoric, but lacks analyses of how rhetoric is received by audiences (Hopkins, 2023). A samizdat⁷² article in *Náboženstvo a Súčasnost’/ Religion and the Present* (1985)⁷³ reported that during the pilgrimage the audience recognised the absence of the word “saint” in the speech and chanted “saint” every time the Minister failed to address Cyril and Methodius as saints (Klubert, 2024; Šimulčík, 2019). People also shouted ‘we want religious freedom’ or ‘viva Papa’ (*Náboženstvo a Súčasnost’*, 1985, p.17-19; see Appendix 4; Document B). Therefore, the audience readily responded to the rhetorical absences, recognising that the speaker tried to silence the religious meaning of the event and even chanted slogans that can be conceptualised as a form of open resistance. The ability to compare what was said in the speech with how the audience reacted highlights the intergroup element that many rhetorical analyses lack (see Billig & Marinho, 2017; for a similar argument).

⁷² Samizdat is a term used to refer to a self-published form of communication that the dissidents used in Czechoslovakia and within the wider Soviet Union and its satellites.

⁷³ English: *Religion & the Present Times*

In addition, historical documents suggest that originally, the official program of the pilgrimage was supposed to consist of two parts (Náboženstvo a Súčasnost', 1985, p.17-19). First, the Communist politicians wanted to open the Pilgrimage by giving speeches, and this would be followed by a religious service. However, the original program failed because when the Ministry of Culture attempted to give this speech (analysed above), he was constantly interrupted by the pilgrims who were sensitive to the speaker's use of a purely secular language and they were whistling and chanting slogans such as "We want religious freedom!", "We want the Holy Father!" and "Long live the church!" (Klubert, 2024; also see Figure 10). These reactions of the pilgrims were responses to what was said and what was not said in the Minister's speech (see similar discussion in Billig & Marinho, 2017).

After the interrupted Kusak's speech, no more Communist representatives attempted to speak. Catholic representatives, whom the audience endorsed with clapping and cheering were not allowed to give speeches (Klubert, 2024). The priests were only allowed to serve a mass which had a predefined order of procedures and could not be freely changed. The audience continued to endorse the religious part of the program and actively participated in the mass celebrated by the Vatican representative Cassaroli (Náboženstvo a Súčasnost', 1985, p.17-19; Šimulčík, 2019).

Demobilisation Strategies After the Pilgrimage. Despite the repressive measures, the pilgrimage was attended by 150,000 to 200,000 pilgrims and it was peaceful (Klubert, 2024). While the regime did not act against the participants in the pilgrimage, the police increased house searches afterwards. Many Catholic activists were harassed by the police and were interrogated in police stations. Notably, the aim of many of these interrogations was to create a general atmosphere of fear among Catholics (Šimulčík, 2019). In addition, the leader of the youth groups in Velehrad - Anton Srholec⁷⁴ was stripped of legally practising

⁷⁴ Anton Srholec experienced imprisonment and spent ten years working in uranium mines (Klubert, 2024).

priesthood and was forced to work as a labourer until his retirement (Klubert, 2024). The strategies presented above illustrate the regime's various demobilisation strategies, which can be classified as the 'softer' repressive techniques that tend to work effectively in making collective resistance difficult (e.g., Bokyoff, 2007).

Figure 10.
Pilgrimage in Velehrad (1985)



Note. Pilgrims making noise in the Pilgrimage in Velehrad, 1985 (left). Communist Party official representatives and the Catholic clergy in the Pilgrimage in Velehrad, 1985 (right).⁷⁵

The 'communist' regime did not end its demobilisation strategies here and continued to shape how the event was framed after it happened. All state-controlled media published a unified message about the pilgrimage titled 'Gathering for the 1100th anniversary of Methodius's death' (Rudé Právo, 1985⁷⁶). While the photos taken at the Pilgrimage demonstrate that the event was well-attended and the pilgrims were enthusiastically cheering (see Figure 10), the state propaganda only published a text informing that the pilgrimage took place, without including any photos from the event and without including the number of attendees (see Figure 11).

Instead, the newspapers surrounded the information about the Pilgrimage with photos from state-endorsed activities such as a local cultural event for children, and a photo of people working in the fields (see Figure 11, blue rectangles). This strategy is consistent with

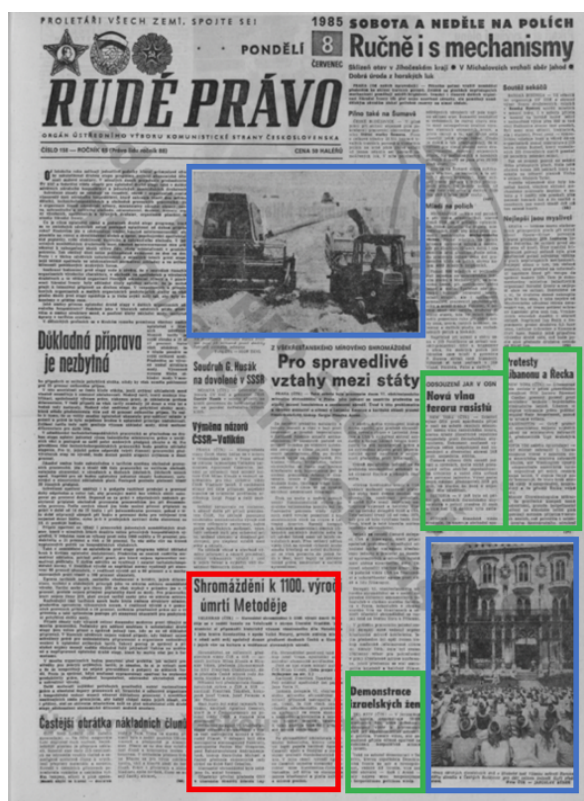
⁷⁵ Photos retrieved from: <https://www.pametnaroda.cz/cs/magazin/stalo-se/poutnici-na-velehrade-vypiskali-komunisticke-funkcionare>

⁷⁶ This document was not included in the analysis because no new arguments were identified, beyond the arguments already analysed in the Case Study 2. The translated document is in Appendix 4, Document A.

the regime's propaganda about 'communism' being beneficial to the state's economic growth, and presenting the regime as 'pro-people'. Figure 11 also shows the contrast between the short information about the Pilgrimage surrounded by various headlines about protests taking place in non-communist countries. For example: 'Women protest in Israel', 'Protests in Lebanon and Greece', and 'The New Wave of the Terror of Racists' (see Figure 11) headlines illustrate the narrative of outside threat and disorder outside of the Soviet Union. Presenting information about these protests is also a way of de-emphasising the importance of the Pilgrimage, and simultaneously 'warning' the readers about the 'disorderly West'.

Figure 11.

Front Page of the Red Law Newspaper, July 8, 1985



Note. Photos of the state-endorsed events are in blue rectangles, and the text about the Pilgrimage is in red rectangles. Notable articles are in green rectangles.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Retrieved from: <https://archiv.ucl.cas.cz/index.php?path=RudePravo/1985/7/8/1.png>

3.4.4 Summary of the Analysis

There are multiple viewpoints from which it is possible to study collective events such as national commemorations or pilgrimages. In the Velehrad pilgrimage, the organisers of the event (dominant group) and the participants (Catholics) were in tension because even though the organizers were the state, the event belonged to Catholics, who participated in it. The dominant group had a different agenda for the event than the participants. The state wanted to reaffirm their position within the event, while the participants used the event for identity enactment that was constrained for decades, and for which many people suffered, or even lost their lives. Thus, in this case study, I considered an event that brings together the dominant group in the setting of a national commemoration, which is primarily relevant for the religious group that attended it. Since this situation gave rise to many dilemmas, especially in the case of the regime's imposition of their presence in a religious pilgrimage, a discursive perspective allowed for the exploration of these processes in the rhetoric of the dominant group (e.g., Edwards & Potter, 1992; Ntontis et al., 2023; Wetherell, 1998).

One of the reasons why this event was an important case to analyse is that it serves also as a deviant case analysis of a situation, in which the regime tried to claim the event as 'national' and re-construct the religious pilgrimage into an event of cultural and historical importance, but it was not effective (Klubert, 2024). The participants failed to identify with the version of the national identity presented to them, and they continuously interrupted the state officials and prevented them from speaking.

Thus, this case provided an initial understanding of the 'communist' regime's failures in adapting certain events for their version of presenting 'national heritage' as part of the Party's national project, because it is one thing to claim 'nationhood', and a different one to successfully claim it such that the audience accepts it. Secondly, it is also important to mention that the analysis of the Party's representative speech had its limits. While the

analysed speech provided an insightful understanding of the rhetoric of the dominant group, the additional archival resources supplied information about what happened at the event (e.g., the audience expressed disagreement, recognised the rhetorical absences, etc.). Therefore, the analysis of what was said and was done was accompanied by what was *not said* and *not done* and how this affected the regime's demobilisation strategies that were recognised by the pilgrims vocalised in a public space.

3.5 Case Study 3: Demobilising the ‘Candlelight Demonstration’

“I’ve never flown on a plane (since there was nowhere to fly to), but this is how I imagine it [referring to the Candlelight Demonstration]: I blink, and I see another world. That’s how it was on the other side [of the police cordon]. A colourful roof of umbrellas and a crowd of people where there was supposed to be no one.”

Martin M. Šimečka, quoted in Kenney (2003, p.216)

3.5.1 Overview of Case Study 3

This Case Study explores the response of the 'communist' regime to the first public demonstration in Czechoslovakia, which the regime failed to prevent. Despite the Bratislava City Council's prohibition of the demonstration, the Candlelight Demonstration drew thousands to Hviezdoslavovo Square on March 25, 1988 (Kenney, 2003). Protesters, amidst street-sweeping cars dispersing water and the police attempting to disperse the crowd, lit candles, sang the national anthem, and prayed (Šimulčík, 2018). This case study allows for the analysis of the regime’s practical and rhetorical demobilisation strategies in the context of the first public demonstration, also referred to as ‘Bratislava’s Good Friday’ (Náboženstvo a Súčasnosc’, 1988, pp.8-12).

Three layers of the regime’s demobilisation rhetoric attempting to prevent the demonstration are analysed in Case Study 3. First, during the preparation phase, the opposition leaders sought to obtain official approval for the demonstration from the City Council, exploiting a constitutional ambiguity regarding public gatherings (Šimulčík, 2018). This placed the regime in a precarious position. Prohibiting the demonstration without providing any explanation risked accusations of repressive actions, thereby undermining the regime's leadership position and their ideology. This situation led to an exchange of letters

wherein the City Council explained the impossibility of the demonstration to take place, and opposition leaders appealed this decision. Examining the regime's handling of this situation allowed me to investigate how it rhetorically justified prohibiting the demonstration while asserting a 'democratic' decision.

Second, in addition to engaging in argumentative exchanges with opposition leaders, the regime communicated with the public about the planned demonstration. By analysing a televised speech delivered by a state-approved priest, I examined how the regime sought to diminish the mobilisation potential of the event while positioning itself as a 'protector' of public interests.

Third, using additional archival data (i.e., D9-1; see Appendix 1), I also analysed the Party's private documents consisting of their communication strategy and practical demobilisation strategies. Crucially, this communication was private, shielding the regime from public scrutiny, and facilitating open discussions on communication strategies to diminish mobilisation. This also allowed me to compare and contrast the different modes of operation of the regime (public communication vs. private discussion) and to identify discrepancies between the two. Before the analysis, I provide a brief discussion of the contextual factors that contributed to the Candlelight Demonstration.

3.5.2 Historical Context

Pacem in Terris: How Did the 'Communist' Regime Use the 'Patriotic Priests' for State Propaganda? The 'communist' regime perceived that the power of the Church community resided in its clergy rather than lay Catholics (Šimulčík, 1998/2018, 2021a, 2021b). For this reason, the regime focused on gaining the support of priests, hoping to influence the Catholic Church with the aid of these 'insiders'. Since 1948, when the Party assumed power in Czechoslovakia, various attempts were made to establish state-sanctioned Church organisations, including the Peace Movement of the Catholic Clergy (1961- 1968),

followed by *Pacem in Terris* (PIT) in 1971. These organisations were presented by the Party as associations for 'progressive priests' or 'patriotic priests' (Vantová, 2013). However, PIT consisted of priests who found themselves in a precarious position due to their previous activities - either during the Nazi Slovak State period in World War 2 or being openly anti-communist in the 1950s when the communist regime was solidifying (Vantová, 2013). These individuals were susceptible to blackmail, facilitating their inclusion in PIT (Šimulčík, 2002). Despite the Vatican's strong opposition, issuing a document in 1982 prohibiting priests from joining such organisations (Balík & Hanuš, 2007), some members of the clergy still joined PIT. Therefore, even abstaining from joining PIT can be viewed as a form of 'individual resistance' (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004; see Table 1 in 1.2.2).

Although most lay Catholics were not deceived by PIT's agenda⁷⁸ (Šimulčík, 2018), the PIT organisation still wielded influence on the role of religion in Czechoslovakia. For example, PIT actively portrayed every activity of the Underground Church as illegal, morally reprehensible, and perilous (Zbranek, 2007). This will become evident in the subsequent analysis, in which I analysed a television speech given by a PIT priest before the Demonstration.

The Catholic Church and Activism: A Dilemmatic Situation. Since the 1985 Pilgrimage to Velehrad, the Catholic community had been gaining momentum (Brocka & Brocková, 2009; Šimulčík, 1998/2018). Concurrently, Mikhail Gorbachev assumed leadership of the USSR's Communist Party, initiating transformative changes within the Soviet Union and its satellites (Šimulčík, 2018). In the restrictive environment of Czechoslovakia, the Velehrad Pilgrimage became a focal point for various resistance strategies, ranging from 'attempted resistance' and 'missed resistance' to 'covert resistance' (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004). While the disruptions in Velehrad may not have been

⁷⁸ This was also thanks to Catholics' uncensored publications through samizdat (Šimulčík, 2021).

readily apparent to the general public, information circulated among Catholics, especially thanks to the Underground Church and samizdat, whose members grew less hesitant to express their religious identity openly (Brocka & Brocková, 2009; Šimulčík, 2017). Velehrad not only paved the way for subsequent pilgrimages but also constrained the regime from prohibiting pilgrimages after already allowing the Velehrad event (see 3.4). Furthermore, in 1987, Moravian Catholics organised a petition, secretly collecting over five hundred thousand signatures advocating for religious freedom in Czechoslovakia. Notably, Cardinal Tomášek of Prague officially led the petition, granting the Moravian Catholics official recognition from the Church (Šimulčík, 2017).

While the Underground Church supported various resistance activities, these initiatives primarily revolved around Catholicism and did not extend to broader issues within Czechoslovakia. Notably, the Slovak clergy, in particular, remained focused on religious concerns, such as pilgrimages, congregational gatherings, open expression of Catholicism, priest education, distribution of religious literature, and the publication of religious magazines. Organizing politically-oriented events (e.g., protests), posed a challenge for the Slovak Underground Church due to contradictions with its *modus operandi* (Šimulčík, 1998/2018). The hesitancy stemmed from the Communist Party's regular accusations of priests as engaging in 'clerical fascism', with memories of the Nazi-endorsing Slovak State during World War 2 still resonating with many people (Magušin & Vydra, 2019). Amongst the Underground Church leaders was a palpable fear of potential accusations by both the Communist regime and the non-Catholic public, alleging an attempt to exploit public events for personal political agendas (Šimulčík, 1998/2018).

In this context, when a Catholic activist from Slovakia received a letter urging Czechoslovaks to participate in a series of protests for human rights near Czechoslovak Embassies in the Western world, the Catholic activists initially hesitated. The reluctance

stemmed from their preference to concentrate on religious matters rather than engage in broader political actions. Given these concerns, and recognising the Church as an institution conscious of its image, discussions among the underground clergy, the primary leadership of the Underground Church, ensued. They reached a consensus that while the demonstration should take place in Czechoslovakia, its organisation should be managed by lay Catholics. This decision allowed the Clergy to distance themselves from a politically charged event, while not blocking the lay Catholics from engaging in it (Šimulčík, 1998/2018). Hence, it was not solely the Communist Party that endeavoured to regulate institutional accountability. When the Catholic Church found itself involved in a form of political activism, its engagement was limited to an extent that did not conflict with the Church's predominantly religious and non-offensive institutional profile.

What remains evident is that unlike neighbouring Poland where the Catholic Church's resistance tradition was unequivocal (Kubik, 1994), in Czechoslovakia, during 'communism', certain Church members collaborated with the repressive regime through institutions such as PIT (Magušin & Vydra, 2019; Vantová, 2013). In comparison, the Church's relationship with the opposition in Poland was ambiguous and unofficial, while in Czechoslovakia, the Underground Church emerged as the most organized and cohesive opposition group in the 1970s and 1980s, influencing not only religious but also the public sphere (Kenney, 2003). The fact that mainly the Slovak branch of the Underground Church was becoming politically active was dilemmatic for the wider Catholic Church and while during the 1980s the Underground Church was active in pilgrimages, petitions, and even the first public demonstration, their activism was less visible during the Velvet Revolution in 1989 and slowly downgraded as the activities became more politically oriented and less focused on religious rights (Magušin & Vydra, 2019). After the fall of the 'communist' regime, the Underground Church's activities ended. The dilemmatic legacy of some of the Catholic

Church members collaborating with the regime and with PIT (and with fascism in WW2) left marks on the Church until the present times (Magušin & Vydra, 2019). This often led to deemphasising the Underground Church's oppositional activities, which nonetheless played an important role in the process of gradual development of oppositional voices in Czechoslovakia (Kenney, 2003).

The Idea to Organise a Demonstration: Candlelight Demonstration (1988). On March 25, 1988, the 'Candlelight Demonstration' (1988) took place in Bratislava, *Czechoslovakia*. The demonstration was a peaceful gathering of approximately 5,000 people. People expressed support for the demands for respecting human and religious rights by holding lit candles, singing the national anthem and the Pope's anthem, and praying the rosary (Šimulčík, 1998/2018).

Despite the government's use of force to suppress the demonstration with riot police units and street cleaning cars spraying water on the protesters (see Figure 13), the event was seen as a success in the eyes of Czechoslovak dissent and amongst people in general, because it was brought to the attention of the Western media, who expressed concerns for the peaceful protesters who were suppressed by force (Šimulčík, 1998/2018). It was particularly powerful because the peaceful resistance in contrast with the use of brutal force was seen as a moral victory of the dissent. Although the Candlelight Demonstration was primarily being organised by the Underground Church, it became an event that started to unify the scattered dissent organisations, as people in this demonstration were fighting for all human rights, not only religious rights (Kenney, 2003). In a year, the Velvet Revolution (1989) started with a similar event in which a peaceful student march met with the violence of the riot police in Prague (see 5.2; for more details).

3.5.3 Analysis

I begin with the analysis of the demobilisation rhetoric, followed by an overview of the practical demobilisation strategies in the Candlelight Demonstration (1988). This follows the chronology of events, aiming to present demobilisation strategies as they happened over time. The demobilisation rhetoric (i.e., exchange of letters) preceded the practical demobilisation in this case study, however, in this case, both sides of the argument are presented (e.g., opposition leaders and dominant group leaders).

To analyse the more subtle ways in which the regime handled the prohibition of the demonstration, the discourse analytical tradition in social psychology (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell, 1998) is used. The discursive section delves into how the regime portrayed itself as ‘democratic’, tempering its decision to repress the demonstration before it happened. The analysis also establishes connections between the regime's discourses of avoiding the labels of 'repressive' and 'intolerant' regimes, discussing these within the broader historical and ideological framework (Billig et al., 1988). This is followed by an investigation into the practical preventative measures implemented during the demonstration since the regime was not able to prevent the demonstration from taking place.

Rhetorical Demobilisation Strategies. Analysing the Party's demobilisation discourse towards the opposition leaders, the opposition leader's responses, and the public address by the Pacem in Terris representative, I identified four argumentative lines (Billig, 1991; also see Table 7).

Table 7.
Overview of Arguments in Case Study 3

Argument source	Argumentative line
Opposition (D5)	The Demonstration as an Inoffensive Event (D5, D7)
City Council (D6)	The Demonstration as a Public Order Issue (D6)
	The Prohibition of the Demonstration as an Issue that Can Be Legally Challenged (D6)
Pacem in Terris	Catholics as Subjects of Manipulation by the Agitators (D8)

The City Council framed the demonstration as a ‘public order issue’, allowing the Council to legitimise the prohibition of the demonstration. The organisers of the demonstration were framed as incapable of handling the demonstration safely and as ‘unskilled individuals’. This framing undermined the oppositional leadership role and the organisers’ capacity to manage the event. Thus the Council legitimised its prohibition of the demonstration by framing it as an act of protecting the people from a dangerous and disruptive event. Such demobilisation rhetoric was an attempt to manage the regime’s accountability for repressing the demonstration, without being portrayed as ‘repressive’. By silencing the opposition’s framing of the demonstration for human rights, the regime re-framed the citizen demonstration as a ‘Catholic-only’ and ‘Slovak-only’ event, undermining the wider-reaching mobilisation potential. This framing of the event as irrelevant to the wider national context allowed the regime to rhetorically limit the political implications of the demonstration, even though in 1987, a petition for human rights was initiated by Moravians, not Slovak Catholics (Šimulčík, 2017), residing in the Czech region.

Towards the public, the seemingly ingroup-Catholic representative (PIT) further attacked the organizers of the demonstration using multiple arguments. First, the organizers were constructed as ‘individuals’ instead of members of a wider organization, questioning their leadership role. They were further constructed as ‘agitators’, ‘manipulators’ and ‘not true Catholics’, attacking the organisers as misusing Catholics for hidden political agendas. This managed the regime’s profile as being ‘pro-people’, implicitly framing the opposition as ‘anti-people’, thereby legitimising their suppression of the opposition. The analysis follows.

Opposition: The Demonstration as an Inoffensive Event. The first document is the official announcement of the demonstration from March 10, 1988, sent by the opposition to the City Council:

Document 5⁷⁹

Based upon the appeal of many religious citizens, I would like to announce that, according to § 10 of the announcement of the Home Office no. 348/1951, a peaceful public gathering of the citizens will take place on 25.3.1988 from 6:00-6:30pm at the Hviezdoslavovo Square in front of the Opera House.

The program of the public gathering will be a quiet demonstration of the citizens for the re-announcement of Catholic bishops in the bishoprics that have no bishops at the moment according to the decision of the Pope, for complete religious freedom in Czechoslovakia, and the complete adherence of the human rights in Czechoslovakia.

It is assumed that the participants of this gathering will show their agreement with the program of the gathering by holding lit candles.

The pursuit of this public gathering is based upon Article 20 of the Constitution and of the § 6 Act no. 68/1951 about public organizations and gatherings.

*I would like to ask you to take this announcement into account.
With regards XXXX⁸⁰*

The demonstration is constructed as a manifestation of the desires of religious individuals, rather than a motivation driven solely by the organisers themselves (i.e., '*based upon the appeal of many religious citizens*'). This framing aligns the organisers as representatives of a broader group, legitimising their decision to organise the demonstration on behalf of an entire group. It is noteworthy that the group is characterised as both a collective of 'religious [people]' and as 'citizens'. This dual description serves to convey that being religious can be associated with civic matters, legitimising the political activism of Catholics. Given the historical context, Slovak Catholics were often accused of being a 'dangerous' group, a perception rooted in the 'clerical fascism' argument often used by the Communist party to demobilise Catholics. This argument connected the Slovak Catholics to the former Slovak leader Jozef Tiso who was a Catholic priest to active collaboration with

⁷⁹ Instead of an extract from this document, the full letter is presented here.

⁸⁰ The name of the announcer is anonymised.

Nazis during the Holocaust (Terenzani, 2009). It often served as a demobilisation argument of the Communist Party (also see 3.3.3; 3.3.4; for similar arguments).

Importantly, the demonstration is framed as a ‘protest’. Instead, the letter employs tropes such as ‘peaceful public gathering’ and ‘quiet demonstration’. At the end of the letter, the protest's non-threatening nature is underscored by specifying that the program of the demonstration will involve ‘holding lit candles’. These arguments contribute to the framing of the demonstration as an ‘inoffensive event’.

Then, the letter lists three explicit reasons for the planned event. The first demand addresses a visible and undisputed issue in Czechoslovakia— the reduction in the number of Bishops with no new appointments being made. According to Billig et al. (1988), even inactivity is considered a choice when an alternative activity is feasible. Therefore, the regime's failure to appoint new Bishops after they passed away can be interpreted as a repressive strategy aimed at depleting the Catholic Church clergy (Šimulčík, 2007; also see 3.4.3). By explicitly listing the demand for the appointment of new Bishops, the text brings attention to this unspoken repressive strategy, making it explicit that the regime is to be held accountable for this. To invoke third-party support, and an additional leadership figure to which the regime is accountable, the letter emphasizes that this demand is also endorsed by the Pope (line 8), a powerful entity independent from Czechoslovakia and the USSR (also discussed in 3.4.3). The subsequent two demands in the letter pertain to ‘complete religious freedom’ and ‘full compliance with human rights’, implying that these rights are not being respected by the government, as indicated by the term ‘full compliance’. These statements implicitly call on the regime to be held accountable for these violations, putting the regime in a position to answer these accusations.

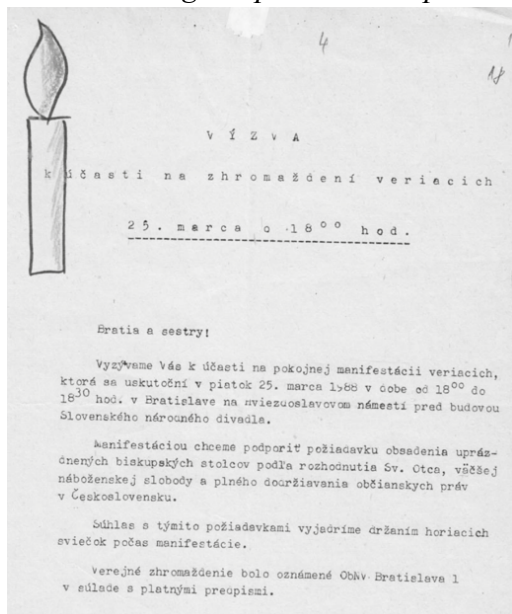
Similarly worded announcements were disseminated among Catholic groups through the use of a poster featuring a hand-drawn symbol of the candle (see Figure 12; see Appendix

4, Document C; for English translation) and through word of mouth (Šimulčík, 1998/2018).

As no new arguments were identified in the poster, beyond those analysed in Document 5, the poster was not subjected to an in-depth analysis.

Figure 12.

*Poster Inviting People to Participate in the Candlelight Demonstration*⁸¹



City Council: The Demonstration as a Public Order Issue. The next document is the prohibition of the demonstration, issued by the Bratislava City Council on March 17, 1988, as a response to the announcement of the Demonstration sent by the opposition:

Document 6

The Home Issues Department of the City Council Bratislava I. evaluated the announcement of XXXX living XXXX, about the gathering of Catholics for the support of the re-announcement of Catholic bishops in the bishoprics in Slovakia, that should take place on 25.3.1988 at 6:00pm in Hviezdoslavovo square in Bratislava and the Council issues this

D e c i s i o n

The gathering of the Catholics for the support of the re-announcement of Catholic bishops in the bishoprics in Slovakia on 25.3.1988 is, according to section 1 of act no. 126/1968, prohibited.

⁸¹ Reproduced from Jasek et al. (2015) with the author's permission

According to the section 55 of the act no. 71/67 the potential appeal against this decision is withdrawn.

V a l i d a t i o n

On 11.3.1988 XXXX announced the City Council Bratislava I. According to the section 6 of the act no. 68/1951 the intention to organise a gathering of the Catholics on 25.3.1988 for the support of the re-announcement of Catholic bishops in the bishoprics in Slovakia, taking place in Hviezdoslavovo square in Bratislava.

The enactment of the right to assemble, based upon the Czechoslovak Law according to section 6 of the act no. 68/1951, is only acceptable under the condition that the gathering does not violate public order and peace. Since the convenor is not a member of any volunteer organization or an association based upon act no. 68/1951, this person cannot ensure public order during the gathering according to section 7 of the above-mentioned act.

In this case, the condition mentioned in section 6 of the act no. 68/1951 is not fulfilled. Therefore, the council of the Home Office of the City Council Bratislava I has made a decision that is mentioned in the verdict section of this decision.

With regards to the possibility of the violation of the common good, the Home Office of the City Council Bratislava I simultaneously decided that the possible future appeal to this decision will not be taken into account. In this case, the effectiveness of this decision is valid from the day of its delivery to the recipient.

Note: It is possible to appeal against this decision on the Home Office of the City Council Bratislava by sending the appeal to the Department of the Home Office of the City Council Bratislava I within 15 days from its delivery to the recipient.

This document (D6) begins with several rhetorical absences (Billig & Marinho, 2017) that redefine the meaning and scope of the planned demonstration. Firstly, the event is portrayed as a ‘gathering of Catholics’, omitting the civic society-oriented aspect of the demonstration centred on human rights, and thus not acknowledging the political connotations of the event. This is achieved by explicitly mentioning only the first demand regarding the reappointment of Bishops as the reason for the protest while omitting the civic-oriented demands for human and religious rights (i.e., outlined in D8). The regime

strategically manages its non-repressive profile by partially acknowledging the demands of the demonstration, portraying itself as ‘respectful’ of certain undisputable demands (i.e., the lack of bishops), while strategically omitting those demands that place the regime in an uncomfortable position, such as human rights and religious rights. In this way, the political significance of the planned event is diminished by the City Council, while they manage to keep their non-repressing profile.

Moreover, not only is the demonstration reframed as a ‘Catholic-only’ gathering but the announcer of the demonstration is characterised as an individual agent rather than a representative of Catholics or any wider community. This construction enables the City Council to undermine the legitimacy of the announcer, labelling his demand for organising a demonstration as ‘problematic’ due to his lack of affiliation with volunteer organisations. In contrast to the opposition being reduced to a single individual, the use of passive voice in this document assigns responsibility to the City Council on a collective level, downplaying the responsibility of particular individuals.

Furthermore, the City Council characterises the planned event as a public order issue, citing the ‘possibility of the violation of the common good’, thus tempering the Party's repressive approach to public gatherings. This framing of the demonstration as a public order issue serves a specific function (Edwards & Potter, 1992). By providing reasons for why the demonstration cannot proceed (i.e., ‘*right to assemble is only acceptable under the condition that the gathering does not violate public order*’), the City Council manages its image-conscious profile (Potter, 1996), in this case a profile of a ‘tolerant’ and ‘non-repressive’ institution. This allows the Council to present the decision to prevent the demonstration as ‘reasonable’ rather than one rooted in the repressive authoritarian nature of the regime.

This argument of a ‘public order issue’ is further reinforced by several omissions. Firstly, the document excludes the end time of the demonstration which is stated by the

opposition leaders as being 30 minutes after the start of the demonstration (as outlined in D5), indicating its 'less-structured' and 'disruptive' nature. Secondly, the term 'peaceful' is omitted when describing the planned event, contributing to the construction of the event as 'dangerous'. Thus, despite the regime's authoritarian nature, it presents itself as democratic in its rhetoric, invoking egalitarian values rooted in the Enlightenment. This reflects a broader ideological dilemma of egalitarianism versus authoritarianism (Billig et al., 1988).

The letter notably frames the event as a 'Slovak issue' by highlighting the demand for the re-appointment of 'bishops in Slovakia' instead of 'bishops in Czechoslovakia'. While the historical context reveals that the issues between the state and Catholics extended beyond Slovakia, with the latest successful religious petition initiated by Moravian Catholics (Šimulčík, 2017), the letter strategically narrows the focus to present the matter as a localized concern. This framing could be an attempt to disregard the event to 'regional' instead of 'national', in addition to trying to prevent the event from happening at all.

In contrast to strategic communication towards Catholics, private documents reveal that the regime perceived the Demonstration as a national-level threat, as evident in communication with the State Secretary (Šimulčík, 1998/2018). While the communication between opposition leaders and the City Council framed the event as 'Catholic-only', behind closed doors, the regime anticipated the participation of citizens from the entire CSSR (Czechoslovak Socialist Republic) in the demonstration (i.e., D11: '*The attendance of citizens from the entire CSSR is not ruled out*'). Privately, it was acknowledged that the demonstration sought '*greater freedom of the Church life in the CSSR*' (D9, D10), extending beyond the re-appointment of Bishops to vacant Bishoprics, which the regime acknowledged in the official communication to the opposition.

The Prohibition of the Demonstration as an Issue That Can Be Legally Challenged.

The next document is an Appeal against the prohibition sent to the City Council on March 21, 1988, by the opposition leader:

Document 7

With the letter from 10.3.1988, according to the appropriate law regulations, I announced the pursuit of a peaceful public gathering of the citizens in Bratislava in Hviezdoslavovo square on March 25th 1988 from 6:00 to 6:30pm for the support of the re-announcement of the bishops to the empty bishoprics according to the decision made by the Pope, for complete religious freedom, and the complete adherence of the human rights in Czechoslovakia.

The local council prohibited this gathering since I as a person cannot ensure the maintenance of public order during the gathering.

I do not agree with this argument.

As I have announced in the letter from 10.3.1988, I am not organizing this gathering alone, but it is organised by multiple Catholic citizens and together we are capable of maintaining public order during the gathering. As Catholic citizens, we have participated in dozens of Marian pilgrimages in Slovakia with a hundred thousand people participating, and all of them were calm and peaceful. Additionally, the act no. 68/1951 about public organizations and gatherings do not require that the organiser of the gathering was a member of an official organisation. The prohibition of this gathering violates Article 28 of the Constitution, which guarantees the freedom of public gatherings and demonstrations. The violation of this Constitutional law would be a reason for the Constitutional Court which would guarantee the enacting of our rights. Because the Federal Government has not yet appointed the Constitutional Judges, we cannot approach the Court and we would like to announce that the public gathering of the citizens will take place on the previously announced date of 25th March from 6:00pm.

We would like to stress again that the public gathering is planned to be peaceful and in adherence to the law.

*With regards,
XXXX*

This Appeal (D7) addresses various rhetorical omissions from the Prohibition letter (D6), countering the portrayal of the event as a public order issue, instead emphasising that it will be a ‘peaceful public gathering’. The letter again articulates all three demands of the

demonstration and employs the term 'gathering of citizens' to highlight the civic society character of the planned event, contrary to the City Council's portrayal of it as 'Catholic-only'. To highlight the collective nature of the event, collective pronouns are used throughout the text ('we would like to stress', 'enacting our rights').

The letter further enumerates previously well-organized collective events, leveraging this argument to justify the leaders' capacity to organize successful 'inoffensive' and, therefore, 'safe' collective events. This serves as a rebuttal to the government's claim that public order cannot be ensured by this individual (see D6), thereby legitimising the planned demonstration as a viable event.

The announcer goes to the extent of cautioning the City Council that the opposition will file additional complaints if the Demonstration is indeed prohibited, treating it as a 'violation of the Constitutional Law'. The letter criticizes the regime for being 'non-democratic' (a claim the regime asserts) by arguing that the regime lacks a functioning legal system accessible by the opposition to make a formal complaint. This represents a gradual escalation of arguments grounded in Czechoslovak law, which the regime overtly disregards while maintaining its legitimacy, and which the opposition is using to legitimise their steps of continuously organizing the demonstration. By referencing the Constitution in its communication with the City Council, the letter holds the regime accountable to its own established legal framework. This serves to highlight the undemocratic activities of the regime and implicitly questions the regime's legitimacy.

While the City Council never officially responded to this Appeal, the demobilisation strategies moved from open communication to less visible forms of physical repression (Šimulčík, 1998/2018). For example, the announcer of the demonstration was interrogated by the police on March 22, and taken to custody on March 25, where he was threatened to call off the demonstration behind closed doors (Šimulčík, 1998/2018). Nonetheless, the

opposition leaders continued with the preparation of the Demonstration (see Chapter 4; for the analysis of the opposition leaders' activities), which took place on the 25th of March, 1988, as originally announced. The analysis will now follow the regime's attempt to address the public audience, aiming to reduce the mobilisation of the general public.

Catholics As Subjects of Manipulation by the Agitators. While the preparation for the Demonstration was ongoing, a representative of the state-approved PIT organisation, Štefan Zárceky, gave a speech on Slovak Television on March 23, 1988, warning the public about this 'dangerous' event:

Document 8

In the name of whom [pause], where [pause], and who wants to distract the Catholics away from Christ [pause] and disrupt the peaceful worshipping by a street demonstration? [longer pause]

Activities of this kind only focus on political goals! And their organisers are hiding behind religion, misusing honest religious feelings and opinions of brave small Catholic people.

[longer pause]

Some self-proclaimed organisers want to raise the psychosis of distrust¹⁹ and with a very pressuring manner, they want to create unwanted confrontation.

[longer pause]

Isn't it suspicious [pause], that by getting around legal Church hierarchy and by using suspicious political speculations, they [the leaders] are raising mayhem inside the group of brave Catholic citizens? And by giving rise to passions instead of Christ's teaching, they want to gain personal popularity?

The speech commences with a rhetorical question, where the priest ambiguously refers to the organizers of the Demonstration ('in the name of who, where, and who') as disruptors of 'true' Catholic activities. Subsequently, 'true' Catholic activities are defined as 'peaceful worshipping', contrasting them with the 'disruptive' demonstration in which organizers allegedly attempt to manipulate Catholics into participation. While the speaker portrays the organizers as fraudulent, Catholics are depicted as 'small brave people' with

‘honest religious feelings’. This resolves a local dilemma of stake (Edwards & Potter, 1992)—how the speaker can avoid sounding prejudiced while expressing intolerance towards the organizers. The resolution lies in asserting that Catholics can have their ‘honest religious feelings’, implying that the Communist regime allows individuals to hold personal beliefs (i.e., ‘peaceful worshipping’) and tolerates them, showcasing the regime's purported openness to personal beliefs. However, what the regime does not tolerate is the expression of these beliefs through a 'street demonstration', deemed an inappropriate space for Catholics. This line of argumentation (presenting themselves as ‘tolerant’ of Catholics) connects to a broader ideological dilemma of prejudice versus tolerance (Billig et al., 1988).

The organisers are othered and delegitimised ('hiding behind religion'), accused of dishonesty ('raising mayhem'), and labelled as illegitimate ('self-proclaimed organisers', 'want to create an unwanted confrontation'). Furthermore, in this speech, the organizers are portrayed as engaging in illegal activities ('getting around legal Church hierarchy'). These arguments serve to discredit them. In addition to accusing the leaders of not being true Catholics and distancing the demonstration from 'authentic' religious practices, the speaker also alleges that the organizers are responsible for generating negative emotions ('giving rise to passions', 'raising mayhem', 'raising psychosis of distrust'). This is a process of psychologization as a means of undermining the event (see Ntontis, 2020; for a similar argument of 'psychological trauma' in anti-abortion rhetoric; also see Stott & Reicher, 2011). Notably, strong language is used to describe the emotional response of crowds, associating them with mental illness through the term 'psychosis', which is the speaker's selective choice of how he presents reality to the audience (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). These negative connotations regarding the emotional nature of crowds may be traced back to the historically negative framing of crowds as irrational, emotional, and disruptive (Le Bon, 1895/2002). This framing is a deeply ingrained argument that allows those in power to pathologize crowds

(Reicher & Potter, 1985). Furthermore, this line of argumentation reinforces the claim that the demonstration is a ‘public order’ issue (also raised in D6).

The Demonstration in the Regime’s Private Communication. While it is often challenging to definitively interpret the extent of strategic communication being ‘strategic’ (see Ntontis et al., 2023; for limitations of conducting a one-sided discourse analysis), in this instance, I had the opportunity to compare this speech (D8) with private communication of the state authorities (D9-D11). Arguably, in private documents, the regime was not publicly accountable to any audience other than themselves. Behind closed doors, the dilemmas of stake that speakers face when addressing the public do not need to be addressed (e.g., see Billig, 1978; for a similar argument). In private documents, the regime openly discussed the necessity for strategic communication, suggesting that it should be managed by priests cooperating with the Party:

Extract 1/Document 9⁸²

via the Church secretaries KNV and ONV, we are also preventively affecting the Roman-Catholic clergy to distance themselves from the action and for them to affect Catholics in a likewise manner.

Also:

Extract 2/Document 10

By the means of the regional clergy secretary ensure that the services in selected churches in Bratislava from 23.3.1988 will incorporate an appeal of the priests that people should not participate in the demonstration and to ensure that the official Church will distance themselves from this protest action organised by the laics. The purpose of the distancing of the Church should be the fact that the action [the demonstration] disrupts the relationship between the state and the Vatican and also the upcoming positive agreement between CSSR and the Vatican.

⁸² For purpose of space, I did not include the full text of Documents 9-11 here, unlike D5-8. They can be found in Appendix 1.

From the extracts above, it is apparent that behind closed doors, the regime developed a series of arguments to be presented to Catholic citizens in churches and through television (analysed above). These strategies aimed to influence Catholics and reduce their mobilisation for the demonstration by emphasizing (1) its lack of approval from the 'official' Church, (2) the absence of 'official' priests in support, and (3) framing the demonstration as a disruptive event that jeopardizes the 'positive' relationship between Czechoslovakia and the Vatican. By involving the 'cooperative clergy', the regime sought to strategically create a perception that a Church's representative discourages people from attending the demonstration. The public, presumably unaware of the complexities of PIT's role in the Church might be let to believe that this was the 'true' leadership position of the Church.

In private communication of the Party, the opposition leaders were seen as a clear target for the secret police in terms of preventative measures (i.e., *'immediately pass on brief and eloquent information, especially about the leaders of these groups to the closest watch of State Security'*; D14; see Haslam & Reicher, 2012; for a similar argument). This aligns with the regime's discourse towards the public and the demonstration organizers, as the regime continuously argued that one of the key reasons for which the demonstration should not be allowed is the 'incapability' of the leaders to ensure public order, and their hidden agendas to manipulate Catholics, while not being 'true' Catholics themselves. It is therefore not surprising to find that behind closed doors, the regime was afraid of the opposition leaders and tried to target them to stop the demonstration from happening.

Finally, the key strategies outlined across these private documents (D9, D10, D11; see Appendix 1) indicate that the regime focused on deploying special security riot police at the event, providing clear guidance that the demonstration should be prevented or dispersed if it proceeded. The practical demobilisation strategies are outlined in the following section, as

these are treated as actual physical actions, rather than discursive elements of texts that would necessarily require a deeper rhetorical analysis.

Practical Demobilisation Strategies. The information in this section is based on a synthesis of information presented in a publicly available online archive about the Candlelight Demonstration⁸³ where I accessed primary archival documents, photos, and audio recordings related to the Demonstration; an oral history book with participants of the Demonstration (Jašek et al., 2015) and a triangulated historical account of the event by Šimulčík (1998/2018) and Kenney (2003).

The initial demobilisation activities of the state authorities were focused on the known leaders of the Underground Church. The police monitored their houses and interrogated them at local police stations, to threaten them and prevent them from engaging in the demonstration. The announcer of the demonstration was sent a letter from the Prosecution, warning him that if the demonstration goes forward, the announcer will be criminally prosecuted⁸⁴. These strategies were used to spread fear and prevent the demonstration from happening. During the time of the demonstration, all known leaders were taken to the local police stations, preventing them from attending the demonstration.

In the week when the demonstration was supposed to happen, some individuals reported being prevented from buying large amounts of candles and they were interrogated by the police in shops about their reasons for purchasing candles. Finally, a popular film was scheduled for the evening of the demonstration, hoping that people would be keen on staying at home, watching the film instead of attending the demonstration. On March 24th, a day before the planned demonstration, university students were sent home from Bratislava, and their university accommodations were closed for the weekend, which prevented this group of

⁸³ www.svieckovamanifestacia.sk

⁸⁴ This letter did not include any new arguments, thus was not analysed in the discourse analysis section of this chapter.

people from staying in the capital city during the time of the Demonstration. A special one-off bank holiday was arranged on the day of the demonstration, which was planned to happen on Friday. The Party was aware that for most Czechoslovaks a traditional weekend activity was to leave cities and spend the weekends in weekend cottages in rural parts of the country. By announcing the bank holiday on a Friday, most people could have used this long weekend to be outside of Bratislava.

Figure 13.

*The Candlelight Demonstration (1988)*⁸⁵



On the day of the demonstration, the City Council organized a special security event and monitored roads to prevent cars from entering Bratislava. Individuals who were driving toward Bratislava were subjected to ID checks by the police, a strategy commonly used to instil fear (as discussed 3.4.3). Those without residency in Bratislava were asked to turn back, prohibiting them from entering the city. Train stations were also monitored by the police, paying attention, especially to groups of people gathering at the stations. The space of the demonstration was disrupted by street-cleaning cars that circulated Hviezdoslavovo Square, and the streets leading to the Square were closed off by the police blocking many protesters from arriving at the Demonstration. The chronological reconstruction of the demonstration

⁸⁵ Retrieved from: <http://www.svieckovamanifestacia.sk/sk/multimedia/photos>

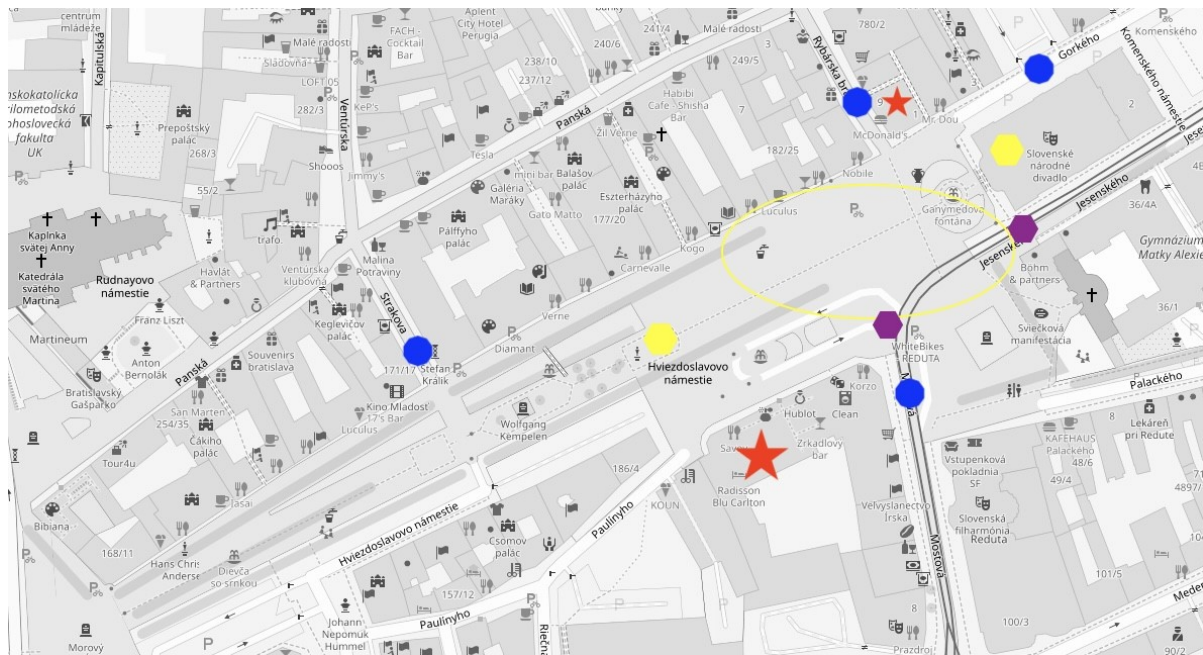
along with the practical demobilisation strategies is summarised in Table 8. For the map of the demonstration, including significant landmarks see Figure 14⁸⁶.

Table 8.
Order of Events in the Candlelight Demonstration (1988)

Date (1988)	Time	Action
March 25	Early morning	Police patrols and members of the secret police are present in Hviezdoslavovo Square, Bratislava.
March 25	2:00 pm	Members of the state operational crew and the police arrive at Hotel Carlton. Shops on the Hviezdoslavovo Square are forced to be closed for the afternoon.
March 25	4:00 pm	Street cleaning cars begin to arrive in Hviezdoslavovo Square, supposedly to clean the roads and sidewalks even though it is heavily raining.
March 25	5:00 pm	Approximately 2000-3000 people are already in Hviezdoslavovo Square.
March 25	5:16 pm	The director of the operation staff gives the order to close off the streets from which other people could gain access to the square.
March 25	6:00 pm	Protesters gather around the Opera House and light their candles, they sing the Czechoslovak national anthem, and then they pray together. At the same time (6:00 pm), the secret police read an appeal to leave: <i>“Citizens! This gathering is not approved by the state. We ask you to leave peacefully. In case of disobeying the state will use power and resources to restore public order!”</i> This appeal was read twice but people did not begin to leave.
March 25	6:10 pm	The government officials decided to begin the first phase of police action, where police cars turned on their sirens and they started to crush into the crowd.
March 25	6:26 pm	The officials decided to use water cannons on people because they were still not leaving. At the same time, police started to arrest some protesters, for which they were prepared in advance and had several police trucks parked in the surrounding streets of Hviezdoslavovo Square.
March 25	6:30 pm	Protesters began to leave the square, however, the riot police who were hidden in surrounding buildings started attacking people while they were leaving.
March 25	Post-Demonstration	One hundred and forty-one (141) protesters were arrested by the police.
March 25	8:00 pm	BBC Radio reports about police violence during the demonstration.
March 25	9:00 pm	Voice of America broadcasts a detailed report about the demonstration.

⁸⁶ Additional video footage from the demonstration (taken in the demonstration by the secret police) can be accessed [here](#).

Figure 14.
Map 1 of Hviezdoslavovo Square in Bratislava



Note. Blue circles illustrate the location of the police vans. The yellow circle indicates the location of the participants of the Candlelight Demonstration. Yellow shapes indicate the Statue of Hviezdoslav (left) and the National Opera House (right). The large red star indicates Hotel Savoy, where government officials were monitoring the demonstration. The small red star indicates the shop where riot police were hidden before the start of the demonstration. Purple shapes indicate the position of street cleaning cars that were spreading water on the participants. (Map was adapted from Open Street Maps⁸⁷).

3.5.4 Summary of the Analysis

This Case Study focused on the regime's demobilisation strategies trying to prevent the first public demonstration of the opposition. Due to the availability of data, this case study provided a unique opportunity to gain a greater insight into the regime's demobilisation strategies outlined in the private documents, illustrating practical measures and strategic communication, and showing the extent to which these activities were 'strategic' plans. The analysis of the regime's discourses showed that while in the Party's private communication, the government clearly outlined what needed to be done (e.g., what police should do, what the cooperative priests should do). Publicly, the government distanced itself from openly

⁸⁷ Open Street Maps is licensed under the Open Data Commons Database License (ODBL). It allows users to share and modify the resource. All annotations on the maps in this thesis were created by me.

repressive strategies, framing the necessity to prevent the demonstration as a 'public order issue'.

Various rhetorical absences were used by the regime, to diminish the scope of the demonstration as a 'Catholic-only' event toward the public. Contrastingly, in the private documents, the Party was fully aware of the national character of the demonstration, which challenged the regime's profile as the representative of the national category. It is not surprising, therefore, that the regime tried to diminish the impact of the event in its demobilisation rhetoric. Simultaneously, towards the public audience, the organizers of the demonstration were attacked as not being 'true' Catholics and not even 'true' representatives of any wider group, utilising this seemingly 'disruptive' event for personal profit. In private communication, the leaders were defined as figures that the regime treated as threats to their dominant position, ordering them to be held in police stations during the demonstration. This analysis illustrated the variability in how the same groups address their ingroup members and how they address other groups (e.g., Hopkins & Reicher, 1996a), and the different instances where dominant groups (do not) engage in accountability management (Billig, 1978; Edwards & Potter, 1992).

This case study further illustrated how the dominant groups legitimise their repressive actions and simultaneously engage in accountability management. However, discourse analysis does not allow the exploration of the extent to which this action-oriented language plays a strategic role in the regime's decisions about specific demobilisation measures. Accompanying the discourse analysis with a systematic examination of the practical demobilisation strategies defined in the Party's private documents, and the examination of the communication strategies, this study highlights the need to consider both practical and rhetorical lenses when analysing demobilisation.

This case study examined the initial overt resistance, seen as a precursor to the eventual downfall of the repressive regime in 1989 (Kenney, 2003). In the following chapter (Chapter 4), I continue exploring this question, focusing on the role of oppositional leaders in effectively mobilising people for this demonstration. Before that, I provide a brief discussion of the findings from the three case studies analysed in Study 1.

3.6 Brief Discussion of Study 1

Resistance as a ‘Problem’: The Interplay Between the Practical and Rhetorical Demobilisation Strategies. The main contribution of Study 1 is highlighting a distinct facet of demobilisation beyond the use of raw power, which I referred to as the subtle forms of demobilisation. I showed that the ‘communist’ regime, despite being repressive, sought to maintain a façade of non-repression. For example, the regime avoided outright prevention of the opposition events, likely out of fear of being perceived as overly repressive, especially by the Western world and by the public. This was evident in the more subtle practical demobilisation strategies (e.g., monitoring trains and roads in Case Study 2 and 3, or use of street cleaning vehicles to disrupt gatherings in Case Study 3), but also from the regime’s rhetoric towards the public (e.g., re-framing events, silences). The regime problematised resistance by framing it as a ‘disruptive’ and ‘dangerous’ form of behaviour that ‘undermined the security’ and ‘economic prosperity’ of the country, which, in turn, helped them to manage their pro-people personal profile. The findings from Study 1 suggest that understanding how repression operates requires a closer examination of a range of demobilisation tactics, as apart from brute force, they may involve redirecting people's participation to alternative events, re-framing the narrative of opposition events, or disrupting gatherings through indirect means (e.g., generating noise, closing venues).

Invoking ‘Rationality’ and ‘Tolerance’ to Justify Repression. Despite the regime's ‘communist’ stance and its pro-people rhetoric rooted in the ideology of Communism (see

section 1.4), I also demonstrated that the regime's response to local dilemmas of stake (e.g., how to prohibit an oppositional activity without sounding repressive) was connected to broader ideological dilemmas that can be traced back to Enlightenment principles (Billig et al., 1988). Therefore, even in a repressive 'communist' regime where the Czechoslovak Communist Party had power over the key institutions and repressed opposition groups to maintain the dominant position in Czechoslovakia, the regime still did not want to be accused of not respecting the broader "democratic" values (e.g., tolerance, egalitarianism, rationality). For instance, in both Case Studies 2 and 3 (see 3.4. and 3.5), instead of saying that the regime was intolerant of Catholics, the regime framed the events as 'inconsistent' with Catholic practices (e.g., that should consist only of praying, which is calm and peaceful). In a similar manner, the artists who participated in the Charter initiative were framed as 'not true artists', such that the regime could present its profile as 'tolerant' of artists who produce 'good art'.

Implications beyond 'communist' Czechoslovakia. Finally, the findings from Study 1 demonstrated that beyond visible forms of resistance and violence, repression also operates through everyday, more subtle forms observable in the regime's discourse. This contributes to the social psychological literature on demobilisation rhetoric and highlights the need for social psychology to focus more on these subtle repressive strategies. Such strategies can be identified in current repressive regimes, where accountability management rhetoric often follows similar argumentative lines. For example, Putin's justification of the war in Ukraine as a "special military operation" instead of a "war", reframes the conflict not as hostility towards Ukrainians but as a 'denazification' of Ukraine (Rice-Oxley, 2022) This rhetoric reflects the wider ideological dilemma of prejudice versus tolerance, portraying Russia as a 'saviour' of Ukraine, tolerant of all people, and 'protecting' Ukrainians from the Nazi regime in Kyiv, instead of openly claiming that Russia is intolerant of Ukrainian independence. While traditional approaches to understanding power often focus on persuasion, authority,

and coercion (e.g., see Turner, 2005; also see 6.4; for a further discussion about power), the findings from Study 1 underscore the broad nature of power dynamics and a greater variety of strategies in a particular social, ideological, and historical context which can be explored when analysing the regime's demobilisation rhetoric.

Chapter 4 –

Study 2: Czechoslovakia’s Candlelight Demonstration: Understanding the Role of (Identity) Leadership in Mobilising Collective Action Under Repression⁸⁸

“Several days before the Candlelight Demonstration, a journalist from Voice of America visited [name anonymised] asking: Who will speak on Hviezdoslavovo Square? He answered: We aren’t expecting anyone. The journalist asked: How is it possible to organise a demonstration if no one is speaking to the protesters? After the demonstration, the journalist J. Naegele visited [name anonymised] again saying: There was really no need to give speeches, it was a dramatic series of events even without a speech.”

Interview with Leader 2⁸⁹, quoted in Šimulčík, (1998/2018, p. 33)

4.1 Overview of Chapter 4

This chapter explores the role of leadership in mobilising people for collective action in ‘communist’ Czechoslovakia. Given that resistance groups had not executed a successful public demonstration before this, the simple achievement of gathering people on a square in Bratislava was seen as a major achievement in itself (see Leach & Livingstone, 2015; Rosales & Langhout, 2020, for a similar argument), and it further empowered the opposition groups (Kenney, 2003; Šimulčík, 1998/2018). The previous chapter addressed the nature of repression, showing that the practical demobilisation strategies (e.g., use of brute force) were also accompanied by the more subtle forms of demobilisation – apparent from the regime’s rhetoric. Such rhetoric served the regime as an attempt to legitimise repression while

⁸⁸ I designed this study, collected the data, analysed the data, and wrote this chapter. Subsequently, a section of the data analysis became part of a manuscript where I am the first author. It is cited as Jurstakova, K., Ntontis, E., & Reicher, S.D. (2023). Impresarios of identity: How the leaders of Czechoslovakia’s ‘Candlelight Demonstration’ enabled effective collective action in a context of repression. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 63(1), 153-169. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12671>

⁸⁹ The original interview with Leader 2 (as coded in Study 2, Chapter 4), paraphrased in Šimulčík (1998/2018), took place on December 2, 1997.

presenting the regime as ‘non-repressive’ and ‘pro-people’. Amongst the three case studies analysed in the previous chapter (Chapter 3) was the case study of the demobilisation processes in the ‘Candlelight Demonstration’ (see 3.5). After decades of repression, this was the first public demonstration that occurred in Czechoslovakia (Kenney, 2003). For this reason, this event was not only useful in studying the demobilisation strategies of the state authorities (in 3.5), but it also lends itself to the analysis of the role of oppositional leadership in mobilising people for this Demonstration.

The main questions that this chapter tries to answer are: (1) How did opposition leaders manage to mobilise people for collective action in a repressive context? (2) Did social identity play a role? If so, how did opposition leaders build shared social identity in a context where alternative identities to the ‘communist’ identity were repressed? In the analysis of interviews with all main leaders of the Demonstration ($N=5$), I show that leaders (1) acted as *identity leaders* by paying attention to building shared social identity in the demonstration, and (2) leaders strategically planned the practical aspects of the Demonstration, making it possible under repression.

Previous research on leadership has focused on analyses of mobilisation rhetoric, arguing that effective leaders act as *entrepreneurs* of identity (e.g., Reicher & Hopkins, 1996a; 2001; Reicher et al., 2005a; also see 1.2.7). However, past research suggests that under repression, people have limited means of communication through language – the so-called articulated practices such as giving speeches, and hosting public discussions, are simply not possible (Alexander, 2011; Orazani & Teymoori, in press). Therefore, by exploring the performative and practical aspects of leadership, this chapter addresses both a theoretical limitation (i.e., that most existing social-psychological literature lacks the analysis of practical and performative aspects of leadership), as well as an actual limitation of the

repressive context (i.e., the limited articulated practices as useful resources for engaging in resistance). This chapter provides a space for the analysis of the practical and performative aspects of identity leadership – *identity impresarioship* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020). This is because the ‘communist’ regime was a context which made it difficult for the resistance groups to create a sense of shared identity and concretize it in a public space (also apparent from Chapter 3).

Although this demonstration was a one-day, small-scale event, that was partially suppressed by the police, it became recognised by the Western world as an illegitimate action of the Czechoslovak regime, and reported about in the Western media (Kenney, 2003). The opposition considered it to be a success because people managed to gather in a public space in an event not endorsed by the Party for the first time, which provided them with a sense of moral victory and empowerment (Šimulčík, 1998/2018), continuing the perceived successes of the 1985 Velehrad pilgrimage and the 1987 Moravian Catholics Petition (Šimulčík, 2017). This demonstration is also considered to be an event that contributed to further activities of the resistance groups in Czechoslovakia, and the subsequent social change during the Velvet Revolution a year later (Kenney, 2003). Finally, this Chapter allows for the exploration of the role of leadership under repression but also creates a strong foundation for understanding the complexity of *identity leadership* in the following empirical chapter (see Chapter 5) where the role of leadership in the Velvet Revolution is analysed.

4.2. Method and Brief Context

This study uses primary interview data ($N=5$) with leaders of the Candlelight Demonstration. Thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Joffe, 2011) was used to code the data, and the reoccurring patterns in the data were then grouped into themes (see 2.5.2; for details). This study is rooted in a particular context, which is discussed in Case Study 3 (see 3.5).

Before the analysis, it is important to note that the context of the Demonstration influenced the way it was executed, and how it was perceived by the leaders. They knew that the situation was difficult, and they did not take any of their achievements for granted. Leaders explicitly said that they did not know when they were arrested whether they would be released or not⁹⁰ (Šimulčík, 1998/2018). They were ready to be imprisoned, and they were willing to risk it (Šimulčík, 1998/2018). The extent to which the regime would act repressively towards them was completely unknown to the resistance leaders. The same was true about whether the demonstration would be effective, or whether it would become one of many resistance activities that were ignored by the regime (i.e., L2: *“Well, we didn’t know what will happen. The night before the demonstration my friend stopped in my house because me and L1 and others weren’t allowed to leave our apartments anymore because we were watched by the police. I asked her: Do you think anyone will come tomorrow? And she said: Don’t worry, some people will come. When we asked X [member of Underground Church] about what will happen he said: Well, there will be like 30 of us, we will light our candles and they will arrest us as in the 1950s and that will be all.”*).

4.3 Analysis

The analysis is structured around two themes. The first theme considers the role of leaders as *identity leaders* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020) – that is whether leaders attempted to build a sense of shared social identity in the demonstration, and how they achieved this through practical means. The second theme addresses the role of leadership in a repressive context – that is, what contextual factors related to the repressive regime the leaders had to consider and overcome.

⁹⁰ A critical reader might argue that it is impossible to judge whether these claims are ‘true’ as the interviews were conducted retrospectively. However, by conducting individual interviews with multiple leaders, and consulting additional materials, I assumed that leaders’ responses were as close to reality as possible.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Strategies and Practical Considerations in Building Shared Social Identity

After the Underground Church supported the idea of organising a demonstration in Bratislava, the leaders of the Demonstration engaged in planning the event. They created an inclusive framing of the event through a manifesto which they created (this was also apparent from the discourse analysis in Chapter 3, see 3.5.3). While it was not possible to analyse to what extent the leaders were strategic about this framing (see 3.5.3), in the interviews analysed in the present chapter (Chapter 4), this is supported by the leader's own accounts. Leaders were aware of the socio-historical context of Czechoslovakia, particularly the Slovak region, in which the Demonstration took place. They acknowledged the importance of religious events in Slovakia and how these events resonated with the local population and could (and could not) be a mobilisation trigger for them:

Extract 1. L1: *What unifies people the most is either a national anniversary or something connected to religion. In Slovakia, there was a problem that the national anniversaries weren't exactly Slovak...and let's be honest, for Slovakia even up until nowadays, the anniversaries associated with the First Czechoslovak Republic simply aren't as big of a deal here. For Czechs, it [national anniversary] could work but for us [Slovaks] simply not. However, there [in the Slovak region] was the power of religion and that is why Secret Church was able to mobilise people.*

Accordingly, one of the strategies for achieving successful mobilisation was to use the religious identity which was already resonant with many religious communities in the Slovak region. However, leaders also aimed to target various groups, not only the pre-existing members of their Underground Church community. Instead, they paid attention to unifying people under a common, inclusive identity. For this reason, they created a manifesto with

demands that would be resonant amongst the Slovak Catholics, but also amongst wider groups who felt repressed by the regime.

The inclusive framing was not the only action of the leaders. They also tried to spread this information through various channels. The text of the manifesto (discursively analysed in 3.5.3) was reproduced as a poster (see Figure 12 in Chapter 3). These posters were then brought to Churches and exchanged between people from the Church that could be trusted (Šimulčík, 1998/2018). The same text was also read on Western radio stations (such as Free Europe, Voice of America, and Radio Vatican), which broadcast in Czechoslovakia but listening to these stations was banned by the regime:

Extract 2. L1: *So, the three points of the manifesto came out of the discussion [with L2] were. Firstly, free appointment of new bishops in Slovakia by the Pope because at that time there has not been appointed a single bishop in Slovakia...we didn't have any official bishops and there were just the so-called administrators who were appointed by the state and not the Vatican. You know, this situation was widely known even amongst the grannies who lived in rural villages. And our goal was that the manifesto shouldn't appeal just to intellectuals but also to ordinary people who lived in the villages. So, this point of the manifesto was easily understandable to all people and everybody understood exactly what it was about. So, this first point could appeal to many many people...We wanted to include something to the manifesto that would make the demonstration accessible to a wider public, not just Catholics so that the demonstration would be for all people who perceived the regime as suppressing. So, the third point of the manifesto was to restore the protection of human and citizen rights...and this was for all people. For Catholics and for atheists.*

The leaders were aware that their main mobilisation potential came from the Underground Church and Catholics who were aware of the issues with the Church, such as the empty Bishoprics. But the leaders did not want to limit the demonstration only to Catholics. For example, when Leader 1 talks about how the “*manifesto shouldn’t appeal only to intellectuals*”(Extract 2), he refers to the issues with other mobilisation events, such as the Charter ‘77 petition (who considered themselves to be intellectuals. The Charter ‘77 petition was hardly accessible to people who were not involved in the arts and culture sphere, and who lived outside Prague or outside the Czech region (Bolton, 2012). By making the event appealing to wider societal issues, such as human rights (similar to arguments made in 3.3), but also acknowledging the more concrete issues of Catholics (religious rights, empty Bishoprics), they were hoping to create an event that would be appealing to many people. Extract 2 shows that leaders acted to create a ‘sense of us’, one of the key aspects of *identity leadership* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020). For these leaders, creating a wide and inclusive identity was really important. These two Extracts (1, 2) are some of the few instances, where we can see that leaders paid attention to rhetoric and they strategically designed the manifesto, thus, acting as *identity entrepreneurs* (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). Further evidence for this point also comes from Case Study 3, where I have demonstrated that opposition leaders engaged in an exchange of letters with the City Council, where they argued that the demonstration will be an inoffensive event (see 3.5).

Although leaders did not discuss many rhetorical strategies in the interviews, they described many instances in which they paid attention to the practical strategies. They explained that these strategies ensured that the demonstration took place and that people were able to assemble in a meaningful way. In other words, they paid attention to planning the choreography of the demonstration, thus, acting as *identity impresarios*. To facilitate shared social identity in the demonstration, leaders planned to use the public space of

Hviezdoslavovo Square. On the one hand, they used it for practical reasons (see Extract 4), and on the other, they used it for symbolic reasons (see Extract 3), hoping that the protest space would be meaningful to the participants:

Extract 3. L1: *We picked Hviezdoslav's [Square] instead [of SNP Square]. You know there were benches and trees and there was also the statue of Hviezdoslav which could be inspiring for the people as well as the Opera House on the other side of it, and the little church behind the Opera...*

This extract illustrates two lines of thinking, that the leaders seemed to have in mind when planning this event. First was the particular meaning of the space, which in this case, Hviezdoslavovo Square had. The Opera House symbolises a sense of Slovak pride. This is because having a theatre where Slovaks could perform in their native language was associated with a sense of agency and partial independence from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which Slovakia had been part of (see 1.4; for historical context). The name of the square (after P.O. Hviezdoslav) has similar connotations. Hviezdoslav was a poet who lived in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and fought for Slovak independence, both in his politicised texts and by writing in the Slovak language (instead of Hungarian or German). In addition, the name “Hviezdoslav” is a pseudonym name consists of the words ‘Star’ (Slovak: Hviezda) and ‘Slav’, implying the Slavic association (contrasting to either Austrian or Hungarian). Apart from these symbols of national independence, there was also a Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, which added a religious and cultural meaning to this space⁹¹ (see Figure 15).

⁹¹ Some participants of the Demonstration were planning to attend a mass in this Church, but the state authorities locked the Church on the day of the demonstration (Šimulčík, 1998/2018), which was one of their many demobilisation strategies.

Second, leaders emphasised that they specifically selected the space of Hviezdoslavovo Square for the demonstration, instead of a different main square in Bratislava – SNP Square – because it was a good place for public assemblies:

Extract 4. L1: *Firstly, we decided that the demonstration will take place in Hviezdoslav's square because that is the most suitable square for these kinds of events in Bratislava.*

Q: *Why? Is it because of its size or what makes it so special?*

L1: *Yes, it is big enough but also it is just for pedestrians and no cars have access to it. For example, in the SNP square [...] there is a tram that cuts through it. So, we thought that that would be a problem and we picked Hviezdoslav's [square] instead.*

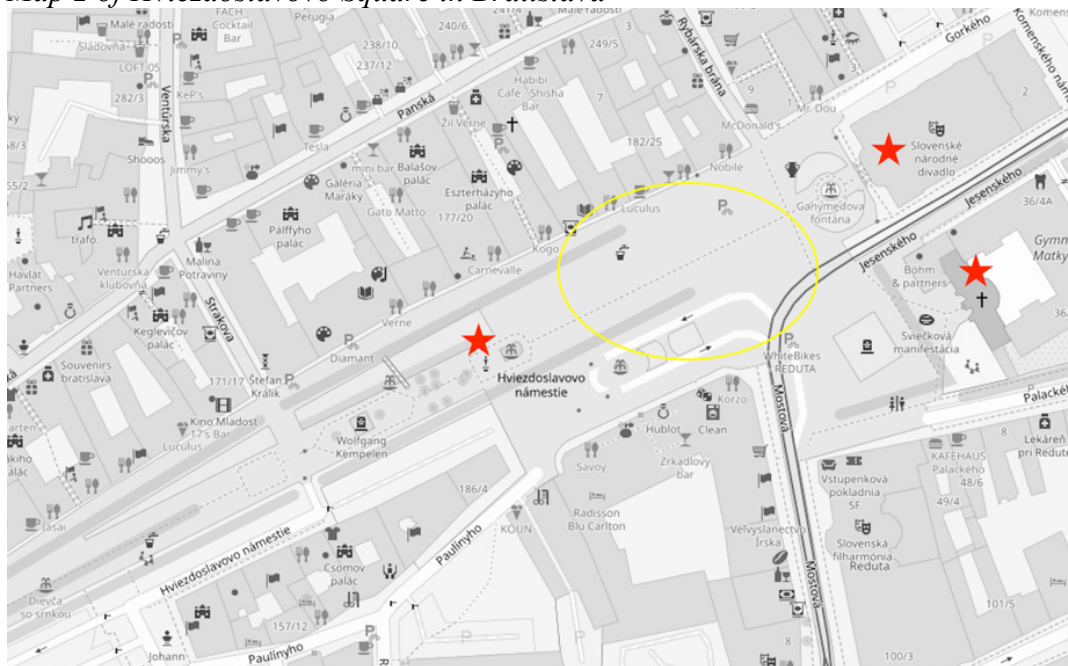
Q: *And did you pick the time in any specific way?*

L1: *Yes, we picked it in the way that most people will be able to come. We decided it will begin at 6:00 pm and end at 6:30 pm. We decided it will only last 30 minutes because we felt that 30 minutes would probably be enough because of the current state of things. And you know, at 6:00 pm people are already done with work and also those that needed to travel to Bratislava had enough time to arrive.*

The space of Hviezdoslavovo Square was a good place for assembling a crowd for several reasons. It has a central location, it is pedestrianised, but it is big enough for a crowd to gather. At the same time, there are public transport stops nearby, meaning that people who would travel to the demonstration would have ways to access it (as it was a common strategy that cars would be stopped from entering “protest” locations – as seen in Chapter 3, in sections 3.4, and 3.5). Leaders wanted to ensure that protesters would arrive at the event on time even if there were some travel restrictions imposed by the state, which turned out to be the case (Šimulčík, 1998/2018). Setting the demonstration later during the day was a strategic

element of leadership which accounted for restrictions imposed by the state that actually prevented many people from arriving at the event on time. Leader 1 also described the decision to organise an event of short duration because they expected that the police would try to stop it, and if this would be the case, the duration of the assembly was less meaningful. What would be more meaningful is that as many people as possible managed to assemble in the location, at the same time. So the leaders were not only managing the mobilisation of protesters, but they were also trying to control the impact of the regime's demobilisation strategies.

Figure 15.
Map 2 of Hviezdoslavovo Square in Bratislava



Note. The yellow circle marks the position of the participants of the demonstration in the square. The red stars indicate the location of the Statue, the National Opera and the nearby Church. It is also apparent from the map that this square was a pedestrian area with no major roads crossing it (as explained in Extract 4) (the map was adapted from Open Street Maps)

However, the planning of the demonstration was not just a matter of making the event happen. Leaders were equally invested in creating an event that would allow people to recognise each other as members of a common group - as protesters. Since this demonstration

did not happen in a vacuum, but it was preceded by various instances when resistance groups tried to mobilise (see Chapter 3), leaders tried to account for previously unsuccessful strategies of assembling protesters. For example, Leader 1 mentioned a demonstration organised by Czechs, which failed to achieve recognition of fellow protesters in the Prague city centre:

Extract 5. L1: *Now that I think of it, on the 10th of December 1987, Charter 77 tried to organize a protest in Prague but it totally didn't work out...even their organizers said it was unsuccessful. There was a mixture of people in the Old Town Square along with the secret police but there wasn't a crowd of people who would be standing in the middle or something like that. People just walked around the square as ordinary passers-by and it actually wasn't even a demonstration. I have to say that we knew about this and we tried to overcome the problems that appeared in Prague. We, therefore, decided that we will use candles so that everyone knows who the protesters are and who are not.*

The issue of misrecognised or unrecognised protesters was exactly what the leaders wanted to avoid in the planned Demonstration, and they came up with various practices that would allow the protesters to see each other as members of a unified group. These practices were (1) singing of the Czechoslovak National Anthem and the Pope's hymn; (2) praying the rosary; and (3) the use of candles:

Extract 6. L1: *Also, the question was how will the protesters distinguish themselves from the passers-by who coincidentally cross the square [...] OK, so no speaker will be present but [the question was about] how will the protesters identify themselves? We thought that for Catholics, but not just for Catholics, the candle is probably a good symbol. Also, anything else than a candle would be alarming for the police and*

they would arrest people. But anyone could have a candle hidden in their pocket and light it at 6:00 pm. You know...for Catholics, but not just for them...the candle is a very intimate symbol.

Also:

Extract 7. L4: *Before the demonstration we planned that we will not speak publicly because we would be taken by the police immediately. Instead, we came up with the idea that we will sing the national anthem...you know, because everyone knows how to sing it, and once we start singing it, people will join. After that, we planned that we will pray for half an hour.*

These two extracts illustrate the connection between leaders' strategic use of rhetoric to invoke national and religious categories (see Extracts 1 and 2), and their strategic use of the performative (singing, praying) and symbolic (candles) aspects to invoke similar categories. For example, candles are typical objects used in Catholic churches, to symbolise sacrifice and they are used by people to commemorate those who passed away (Sedáková, 2015). Praying is a common practice for Catholics, and the words of the rosary would be widely familiar to the people in the crowd. Praying together could unify people. Also, praying the rosary, which is a prayer devoted to the Virgin Mary, and singing the Pope's anthem could be symbolic to many people. The symbolism of the Virgin Mary and the Pope was at that time associated with the figure of John Paul II, who was a Pope that came from a 'communist' country – Poland (Kubik, 1994). The connotations of the Virgin Mary most likely not only had a specific religious meaning to people (as both Polish and Slovak Catholics associate Catholicism with the Virgin Mary) but also a meaning of resistance. This is because Polish resistance groups, such as Solidarity were clearly using the symbols of the

Virgin Mary, and ascribed certain empowerment to the fact that the Pope was elected from Poland (Kubik, 1994). Similar feelings were among Slovak and Moravian Catholics (i.e.,

L2: “Both Hungarians an Poles were letting in a little more freedom. But Czechs and Slovaks, we were still under a huge repression. But, we in the Fatima organisation [sub-group of the Underground Church] lived in a visionary environment [in relation to Pope’s election]. Obviously, the name of our organisation comes from the Fatima Virgin Mary and the Marian apparition in Fatima.”

Finally, singing the national anthem had a clear connotation of expressing shared national identity⁹². Not only everyone in the crowd most likely knew the words of the anthem (even the non-Catholic participants), but the collective singing of it gave people a clear and easily-executed activity during the protest. Interestingly, the anthem was chosen by the leaders as an expression of nationhood in the demonstration, whereas in Extract 1, leader 1 contrastingly spoke about the ineffectiveness of national anniversaries as having mobilisation potential for Slovakia. It is important to note, that in Extract 7, Leader 4 not only discusses what they decided to do in the demonstration but also what they chose *not to do* (i.e., the choice of not having speakers, not having banners). I will return to this point in Theme 2.

Above and beyond these symbolic meanings, choosing to sing, pray, and use candles were also effective decisions that allowed people to recognise each other as fellow group members. These collective practices did not require any people to be put under the spotlight (further discussed in Theme 2, as a strategy chosen in a repressive context). The candles had many advantages, such as that they are easily accessible objects, and many people could hide

⁹² The Czechoslovak National anthem was composed of two separate anthems – first the Czech “Where my Homeland is” was sung, followed by “Thunders strike above the Tatra mountains”. After the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, each nation sings one of these songs as their respective anthems. In the Candlelight Demonstration, the Czechoslovak anthem was sung.

in their coats and bring them to the Square, unnoticed by the secret police. Lighting candles collectively also made the crowd visible. This was especially advantageous for people who were prevented from getting to the Square and were stopped by the police, yet with lit candles, they were able to clearly express their group membership even in the surrounding streets:

Extract 8. L2: *We gave it [the demonstration] the characteristics of a candle...the candle was an ingenious idea. So, the one who had the candle was the one who is with us. This was amazing, especially because even if many people weren't able to get to the square, they were standing with candles in the side alleys.*

Leaders' decision to use a candle was effective because it was inoffensive but also a visible symbol of solidarity with the protesters that allowed them to recognize each other as a member of the common ingroup category in a context where the Party continuously denied and ridiculed the existence of opposition (as seen in Chapter 3; particularly case 3.3). The candle was, therefore, a) symbol of peace, b) a practical element of identity expression because everyone could bring it and light it in the demonstration, c) a marker of shared social identity as people could identify and relate to fellow ingroup members, and d) a tool for identifying outgroups and potential danger (e.g., secret police who did not have candles; also see Extract 14).

Further, to express solidarity with the protesters, and spread the demonstration among people who did not participate, the leaders also asked people from all regions of Czechoslovakia to put candles in their window fronts and light them during the time of the Demonstration in Bratislava (Šimulčík, 1998/2018):

Extract 9. L2: *My brother also told me later that on that day [of the demonstration] when he travelled by bus and saw a nun there praying he asked what she was praying for and she said: for the people in the Candlelight Demonstration. [pause] The vision of the demonstration was very powerful...on the night before the demonstration, they said on Voice of America- tomorrow at 6:00 pm wherever you people will be, please stop for a moment and think of those in the demonstration.*

The demonstration, although it was of short duration and was attended by several thousands of people, became an important achievement for the resistance groups. One of the key characteristics of the demonstration was its inoffensiveness – as singing, praying, and lighting candles were the only activities that the protesters engaged in. These non-violent protest strategies were in contrast with the severe demobilisation campaign that the state authorities engaged in, and also in contrast with how the police and the water cannons on street cleaning cars dispersed people after the Demonstration. There was a clear contrast between a “legitimate peaceful protest” (which was the message that the opposition leaders tried to convey) and an “illegitimate police suppression of the protest”, which the public heard about in the Voice of America report, and which many Western media wrote about (e.g., in German ‘Die Welt’, or British ‘Times’; Šimulčík, 1998/2018). Such an event, despite being “successfully dispersed” after 30 minutes, and described in Rudé Právo⁹³ (1988) as a “*failed attempt to manipulate the religious feelings of Catholics*” (p.2) challenged the legitimacy of the regime.

Leader 1 described that the main achievement of this demonstration was that they managed to gather a crowd for the first time:

⁹³ Available at: <https://archiv.ucl.cas.cz/index.php?path=RudePravo/1988/3/26/2.png>

Extract 10. L1: *not even Charter 77 was able to organize a successful demonstration.*

Yes, there was samizdat, there were petitions but getting people to the square first happened here in Bratislava.

In this extract (along with Extracts 1 and 5), it is clear that Leader 1 considered the successful execution of a public protest with a sense of pride. It also shows that the demonstration did not happen in a vacuum, but that the different resistance groups were aware of each other's activities, successes, and failures, and that they utilised this information when planning further resistance activities, such as this demonstration, and also the Velvet Revolution a year later:

Extract 11. L2: *The main message of the demonstration is that the winners were the people who remained there, and this caught the interest of the whole world. The police with all their technique fought against people who held candles and prayed. This was a very powerful Gandhi-like statement of peaceful resistance, and this is what influenced the Velvet Revolution and why it was peaceful as well.*

Also:

Extract 12. L4: *So, the Candlelight Demonstration wasn't just a one-day event...but it was a starting point of a series of revolutions that had the same key features of non-violent resistance.*

The nonviolent form of protesting became a key resource for the resistance leaders. Leaders saw this as a "legitimate" way of protesting, which contrasted with the regime's suppression of such protests, and delegitimised the regime. The recognition of these protests by the Western media, and the way the regime reacted to the Demonstration, seemed to have shifted power relations at the time:

Extract 13. L2: *I'm sure that if the government didn't act in this manner, none of the people would even notice something was happening. But because of their reaction, on the day after the demonstration, the whole world was talking about the demonstration in Bratislava.*

Leaders were aware, that if the state authorities acted in every possible way to prevent the demonstration from taking place, its taking place would create a sense of hope and empowerment for them. From the long-term perspective, leaders reflected upon the choreography of the Candlelight Demonstration as a framework for the collective events during the Velvet Revolution in 1989. It is therefore not surprising that Hviezdoslavovo Square was the first space in which people spontaneously gathered during the Velvet Revolution (also see 5.2.3).

Brief Summary of Theme 1. This theme concerned leaders' strategies that can be explained in terms of identity leadership (Haslam et al., 2011/2020). The analysis has shown various instances in which leaders acted as identity entrepreneurs and as identity impresarios. Leaders paid attention to strategically communicate about the demonstration, with the utmost purpose to create shared social identity, with the aim to widen the mobilisation, thus acting as *identity entrepreneurs* (also see Selvanathan et al., 2020, for a similar argument). Leaders also paid attention to creating the choreography of the Demonstration that would be meaningful to the participants and would allow them to express their identity. In more practical terms, they paid attention to making it a successful gathering in a public space that allowed the protesters to become visible in a context where the existence of alternative voices to the Communist Party was severely repressed. These instances illustrate their role as identity impresarios. Together with the non-violent character of the event, these strategies allowed for a successful crowd gathering for the first time in Czechoslovakia. However, it

was not just *identity leadership* that allowed for this demonstration to happen. Therefore, additional strategies will be discussed in the subsequent theme.

4.3.2 Theme 2: How the Repressive Context Impacted Mobilisation Strategies

This theme concerns inherent challenges that leaders faced when designing the Demonstration under repression. The focus of this theme is on how the leaders strategically overcame the issues of a repressive context and achieved widespread mobilisation. It was already mentioned in the previous theme, that non-violence was a key strategy in the Demonstration. However, although Leaders 1 and 2 had created a plan, they were arrested on the day of the demonstration (Šimulčík, 1998/2018). It was then the responsibility of those leaders who managed to participate in the demonstration (i.e., L3, L4, L5), to maintain non-violence in the event. It was expected that the regime would try to disrupt this event or provoke violence, but the leaders knew that any escalation of conflict would be the trigger for the regime to repress the protesters, and to present this repression as legitimate:

Extract 14. L4: *Obviously during the demonstration, there were some policemen that acted as if they were part of the demonstrators and they were pushing people on the ground, they were trying to provoke us into fighting...but we immediately understood that these aren't the real demonstrators. They had angry faces and they were attacking even old people... this is how they started out, but after a couple of minutes, some people started kicking the police cars and so on. We knew that these weren't our people but their people. We knew we must have remained calm no matter what and that we couldn't be provoked into these kinds of behaviours.*

Not only non-violence but also the leaders' decision not to have speakers was deliberate. Initially they did consider having a speaker but they later decided against having

one (e.g., L4: “*Before the demonstration we planned that we will not speak publicly because we would be taken by the police immediately*”, as quoted in Extract 7):

Extract 15. L1: *In terms of the speaker, we made a decision not to have one because we were sure that the police will be present there and they would immediately arrest the speaker after saying one sentence. So, this important point of having a speaker which is a really important part of a demonstration couldn't be there. We thought that this interruption could ruin the whole demonstration. Also, you know, in any demonstration there are these more passionate and more active types of people and also the quieter ones. We were afraid that the more passionate ones could start to be violent if the speaker would be taken away by the police and we didn't want that. The people who would be in the crowd could be in danger and anyone who was in the demonstration could be put into prison which we didn't want. And others who would be there and saw this would probably leave, so the speaker wouldn't work.*

The decision to not have a speaker, which the *typical* demonstration usually has, was not a lack of leadership skills, but precisely the opposite. Leaders realised that having a visible speaker would not serve as an asset but as a disadvantage because that person would risk an arrest. In this case, leaders' insights in terms of not having central speakers and leading figures visible in the demonstration played an important role in making the demonstration possible. This strategy allowed at least the leaders who were not already known to the police to remain anonymous.

In line with the peaceful norms, leaders made a decision to not use confrontational symbols such as banners. This means that they generally appreciated that banners are important aspects of a demonstration but they deliberately chose not to use them (their alternative strategies to create meaningful group events with symbols and collective singing

and praying discussed in Theme 1). In this case, the decision to not use banners in the demonstration was a strategic step because the leaders knew this could provide a ‘legitimate reason’ for the regime to intervene by targeting specific people from the otherwise anonymous crowd of protesters:

Extract 16. L2: *He [refers to a dissident who emigrated to the USA] wanted to use a banner where a Russian boot would be stepping on [the map of] Slovakia...we knew we couldn't use banners or speeches because it would be too risky.*

Despite considering the traditional elements of a demonstration (e.g., speakers, banners) during the planning process, leaders primarily made decisions that were going to be effective in their specific context, as well as safe for the participants.

While some strategies such as not having speakers or banners were pre-planned, some unfolded while the Demonstration was taking place. So, both situational leadership and strategic leadership were in place. For example, the situational leaders tried to spread the information about singing the anthem with people in a church in the city centre, where some of the participants gathered before the Demonstration:

Extract 17. L4: *We tried to spread through the crowd in the church that the demonstration will begin with the singing of the national anthem. It was an advantage that we could spread this information beforehand [in the church].*

This is not surprising, as we know that people often do not attend crowd events alone, but gather with friends, family, or other fellow ingroup members (e.g., Reicher, 1984). Precisely this sense of collectivity that happened before the demonstration began helped the leaders to spread the information about the singing:

Extract 18. Q: *How did you get to the square?*

L5: *Well at 4:00 pm we went to a nearby church for a holy mass and we met a lot of our friends from different parts of Slovakia there [...] After the mass we left the church and walked to the square. We already saw policemen by the Milk Bar and in a short while after we got on the square we saw that they closed it off and didn't let more people in.*

Spreading information was generally a challenge in a repressive context, since those who engaged in resistance were monitored by the police, and their houses were often bugged (Prins, 1990). Yet, over the years, resistance leaders came up with a system of spreading information that would be off the radar of the police – both in their inner communities and by creating friendships with the journalists in Western radio stations:

Extract 19. L3: *...we had our system for informing people about the demonstration. We had this system called 'parties' which was a cover name for meetings with the members of the Secret Church throughout Slovakia. For example, I was in charge of these meetings in Prievidza and Martin [cities in Slovakia] where I would go approximately five times a year for a weekend. Me and others would meet with our people, and we shared some information with them. [...] We told the people that there will be a demonstration and we had some basic ideas such as that it will be in Bratislava in Hviezdoslavovo square and that we will go there with lit candles for half an hour.*

Also:

Extract 20. Q: *What were the ways you promoted the demonstration?*

L1: *It was promoted on the Voice of America and Radio Vatican. You know, nowadays the Voice of America isn't popular anymore because they present the same*

news you can find elsewhere but at that time when all local media was censored, Voice of America and the Vatican were our only sources of truthful information. This radio signal couldn't be disrupted because of the Helsinki Declaration [...] In terms of communicating with radio editors in Voice of America and the Vatican, I probably⁹⁴ called them and informed them about what was going to happen in Bratislava. The editor of Voice of America which I was in contact with was Anton Hlinka for couple years on a weekly basis. Every information that I gave him he talked about in his evening show. Because we were used to this way of sharing information Hlinka managed to announce the demonstration in the radio approximately two weeks before it was supposed to take place.

These two extracts show that to organize the demonstration, many ongoing partnerships were established a long time before the demonstration, such as the wide Underground Church membership base (as seen in Extract 13) and the ongoing communication with reporters from Western radio stations (Extract 14). Thus, it was also leaders' previous experience with resistance activities that helped them to achieve mobilisation. One key advantage of information spreading was through Western radio stations that broadcast to many different locations in Europe. Even though they were banned within Soviet satellites, people could secretly listen to them (Šimulčík, 1998/2018). Thus, the structural factors, together with leaders' experience with the repressive regime were their assets in planning the Demonstration.

However, when reflecting upon these mobilisation strategies, there was also disagreement about which strategy was the most effective:

⁹⁴ L1 mentioned that this was a common routine for him throughout 'communism'- to inform Voice of America about the situation in Czechoslovakia. In this particular instance, he could not remember if it was him calling Voice of America or whether it was L2.

Extract 21. L2: *It wasn't about us distributing posters around Slovakia, yeah it's true that we put some posters in some churches in Bratislava but it was mostly about people listening to Voice of America where our planned demonstration was announced.*

The extract above can be treated as a deviant case. It shows that the mobilisation for the event was a complex process, and the psychological explanations discussed in this analysis are a part of it, but not the only part of it. For example, Leader 2 mentioned that it would be impossible to say that all leaders were unified in their choice of strategies and that every strategy worked well. Certainly, the leaders themselves had different opinions about their effectiveness. Yet it can be argued that a combination of various strategies ensured the success of this event. Some of them were executed on the spot (e.g., singing), while others relied on long-term processes (e.g., spreading information).

In addition, leaders' previous experience with the regime's demobilisation strategies served as an asset. For example, many members of the Underground Church were ready to act spontaneously and take on leading roles in the Demonstration, when the official organisers (L1, L2) were not able to attend it:

Extract 22. L4: *We were anticipating here in Trnava [city] that the organizers will probably not be allowed to go to the demonstration and so we started thinking about what we will do once we find ourselves on the square without our leaders. We had some experiences of mass events from the pilgrimages because people would arrive the night before the pilgrimage and the evening program that was there was always organized by us [L4 and L5]. So, we had some experience with talking in front of*

people. However, in the church or a basilica, you are secure because communists wouldn't act in these spaces. However, that's completely different from a public space in the city. So, a couple of days before the demonstration we were discussing with our friends in our apartment what are we going to do there.

Brief Summary of Theme 2. This theme discussed the logistical challenges of planning a demonstration in a repressive regime. The repressive context proposed several challenges that leaders tried to overcome when mobilising people for the demonstration. Their strategies ranged from discrete yet wide-ranging communication about the planned demonstration, and considerations of what strategies would be ineffective (e.g., having speakers and banners). Finally, the repressive context changed leaders' expectations of whether the demonstration would make a difference or not (often discussed as 'efficacy' in the collective action literature; van Zomeren et al., 2008). As mentioned in Theme 1, leaders considered the successful public gathering as an achievement in itself, despite limited communication of their specific demands. This is further reinforced in Theme 2, where leaders discussed their sense of efficacy (and the lack of it) when planning the demonstration. This theme shows that in a repressive context, leaders need to consider these factors. Feelings of fear, a sense of efficacy, the understanding of what means to organise a successful protest, and acting despite the demobilisation strategies of the regime, were ever-present issues in the repressive context.

Finally, their definition of a successful protest changed in the repressive context. They realised that less was in this case more because it allowed for the first public demonstration with visible protesters to take place. This analysis is, to my knowledge, amongst the first to explore the role of leadership in repressive contexts, and also the first to explore this through focusing on the practical aspects of leadership and identity impresarioship (Haslam et al.,

2011/2020; Reicher & Haslam, 2017b; also see 6.3.). In the next chapter, I further explore the role of leadership, especially its performative means.

Chapter 5 –

Study 3: Czechoslovakia’s Velvet Revolution: Understanding the Role of (Identity) Leadership in Building a Social Movement and Creating Collective Experiences⁹⁵

“You do not become a dissident just because you decide one day to take up this most unusual career. You are thrown into it by your personal sense of responsibility, combined with a complex set of external circumstances. You are cast out of the existing structures and placed in a position of conflict with them. It begins as an attempt to do your work well and ends with being branded an enemy of society.”

Václav Havel (1985/2018, p.44)

5.1 Overview of Chapter 5

This chapter argues for the importance of exploring the practical, organisational, and performative aspects of leadership in greater detail. In Chapter 4, I already discussed how leaders designed the Candlelight Demonstration and achieved the mobilisation of people in a repressive context. However, the Candlelight Demonstration was a small-scale event, allowing only for a limited exploration of such strategies. The present study utilises the richness of the various collective events in the Velvet Revolution to explore the role of leadership in designing these events, as well as mobilising people for protests, which soon became a social movement. This is important to analyse because the deliberate organisation of collective events can assert power in the hands of those who execute such events (e.g., Spartakiads in Czechoslovakia - Roubal, 2020; Coronation in the UK - Shils & Young, 1953; Nuremberg rallies – Spotts, 2003). The choreography of these public events, as well as the

⁹⁵ I designed this study, collected the data, analysed the data, and wrote this chapter. Subsequently, some parts of the data analysis have been used in a manuscript where I am the first author. It is cited as Jurstakova, K., Ntontis, E., & Nigbur, D. (in press). The Dynamics of Leadership and Resistance in Repressive Regimes: The Cases of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and Polish People’s Republic. In F. Bou Zeineddine & J. R. Vollhardt (Eds.) *Resistance to repression and violence: global psychological perspectives*. Oxford University Press.

symbols associated with them, are at the core of *identity impresarioship* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020), which this chapter aims to explore in detail. The Velvet Revolution is characterised by its ‘carnavalesque’ atmosphere (Kenney, 2003), meaning that it is a perfect series of events that allows for the exploration of how these performative events were designed, and how they contributed to the shift in power relations in ‘communist’ Czechoslovakia and eventually helped to achieve social change.

In this chapter, I explore the extent to which the leaders of the Velvet Revolution acted as choreographers of the collective events, how they mobilised people for these events, and how they used this mobilisation as a platform to build and sustain a social movement (also see Selvanathan & Jetten, 2020), eventually achieving social change.

This chapter aims to answer these questions:

1. How did leaders build a movement? How did they mobilise people for large-scale collective action?
2. If collective events can assert power, how did the leaders use these events to achieve social change?
3. What steps did they take to organise successful events? Did they act as *identity leaders*? And if yes, how?

In the analysis of interviews with the leaders of the Public Against Violence movement organisation, I show that leaders sought to (1) achieve visibility and create a legitimate movement, (2) acted as *identity leaders* creating the movement’s identity, designing the choreography of the collective events, and giving agency to the followers to help co-create the movement, and (3) used these aspects to establish a powerful movement which demanded social change – to end ‘communism’ in Czechoslovakia.

This study uses primary interview data from leaders of the Public Against Violence (PAV) movement organisation ($N=14$). These leaders were selected because they organised

the mass protests in Bratislava during the Velvet Revolution (1989) in Czechoslovakia, led the negotiations with the Party officials, and coordinated collective events in the Slovak region throughout the revolution. Thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Joffe, 2011) was used to analyse the data (see 2.5.3; for full details). In the interviews, the leaders talked specifically about the period between November 17 – December 10, 1989, which is what they identified as a period in which the collective events they organised took place. Notably, I interviewed leaders from the PAV who resided in Bratislava, therefore the analysis is set in the Slovak region. Before the analysis, I discuss the historical context.

5.2 Historical Context

5.2.1 Before the Revolution: January 1989 – November 16, 1989

Although the surrounding countries in the Soviet occupation zone had already witnessed a change of the system (i.e., the victory of the Solidarity in partially free elections in Poland on June 4th, 1989), in Czechoslovakia, the regime was still severely repressing its people and nothing seemed to be pointing towards a change that would take place in autumn 1989. Two attempts to protest against the regime were suppressed in 1989, prior to the Velvet Revolution. In January (1989), a week-long series of protests were violently suppressed. The so-called ‘Palach’s Week’ was a protest to commemorate the death of Jan Palach, whom the public viewed as a martyr of the Prague Spring of 1968 (Holy, 1996; Prins, 1990).

Another instance of repression against the opposition happened in the summer of 1989 when a group of activists called the ‘Bratislava Five’ attempted to commemorate victims of the Warsaw Pact invasion in 1968 (NMI, 2024c). As a consequence of this protest attempt, the Bratislava Five activists were incarcerated and put on trial in October 1989. They were imprisoned and only released on the 22nd of November 1989, when the pressure of the opposition was rising, and the Velvet Revolution was already escalating across Czechoslovakia from November 17, 1989 (NMI, 2024c).

Nonetheless, the year 1989 was a year marked by revolutions across the Soviet Union and its occupation zones, and there was a general dissatisfaction of people with the regimes of the respective Communist Parties. Simultaneously, the student body in Bratislava was more and more dissatisfied with the imposed censorship on their curriculum which had to be compliant with the Czechoslovak Communist Party's ideology which resulted in many restrictions on who could teach at universities. Also, the students who showed non-compliance with the 'communist' ideology were restricted from graduating. In Bratislava, they organised a protest march on the 16th of November, in which university students marched towards the Ministry of Education building. It was a protest which was not suppressed by the regime and is widely considered the first spark of hope for change (Jašek, 2017), together with the Candlelight Demonstration of 1988, and Jan Palach's Week in January 1989 (Kenney, 2003).

5.2.2 The Revolution Begins: November 17, 1989

On November 17th Prague university students aimed to march through the capital city and commemorate the killing of students during the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939 (also see section 1.2.3). The commemoration event on November 17, 1989, started at 4:00 pm in Albertov in Prague, where around 15.000 people gathered, carrying banners such as "Freedom for Christmas" or "Stop beating students". The official gathering ended after several speeches and the singing of the Czechoslovak national anthem and the unofficial student hymn ("Gaudeamus Igitur") around 4:40 p.m.

Around 10,000 protesters then marched towards Vyšehrad Hill in Prague to lay flowers and light candles on the tombstone of national poet Karel Hynek Macha. At 6:15 pm, the official program on Vyšehrad Hill ended and people started to return to the city centre towards Wenceslaus' Square, however, the journey towards the square was closed off by the riot police. Confusion arose in the crowd as they meet with the riot police around 6:30 pm

and the crowd members started to sit down on the ground, raising their hands above their heads and saying “We have empty hands”. At this point, there were around 5,000 – 10,000 protesters, trying to march through National Avenue (Palán et al., 2019⁹⁶). At 7:20 pm the riot police received an order to prevent the crowds from reaching Wenceslaus’ Square. At 7:30 pm the crowd on National Avenue is blocked off from every direction (see Figure 17). The front of the crowd sat down to express that they were not willing to engage in violence, some people lit candles on the ground to express peacefulness, and some people gave policemen flowers behind their shields (see Figure 16). People shouted: “We have empty hands!” and “We don’t want violence”.

Some policemen started beating protesters, protesters tried to escape and hide in nearby housing. At 9:10 pm the police dispersed the crowd. Ambulances started to arrive in the streets and later, the independent health report claimed that around 568 people were injured on this day including women, elderly people and children (Palán et al., 2019).

Figure 16.

The Protesters and the Police on November 17, 1989, Prague⁹⁷



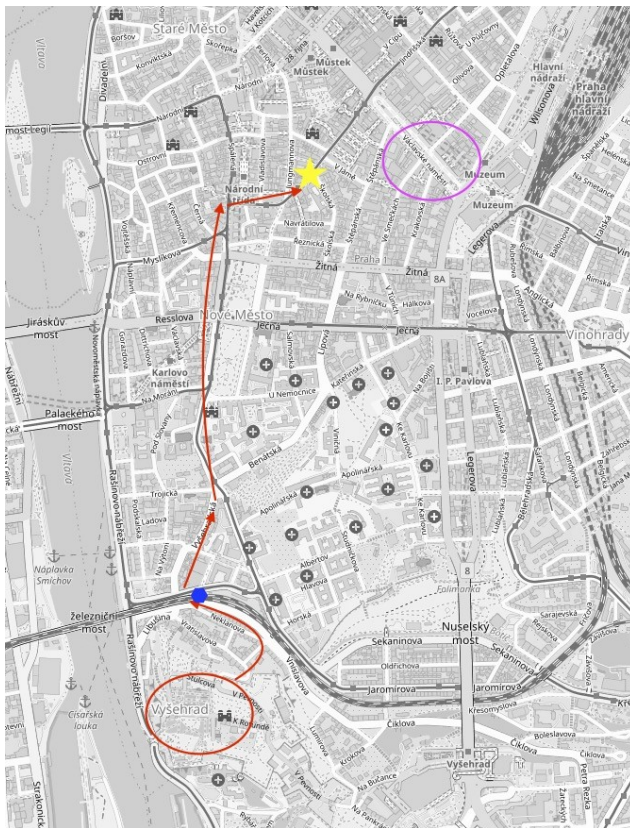
The news of this incident quickly spread throughout Czechoslovakia, prompting immediate reactions from theatres in Prague and Bratislava. Communication between these cities was swift, facilitated by the close-knit community of actors who frequently

⁹⁶ This book consists of primary interviews with participants of the November 17th (1989) protest in Prague with the aim to reconstruct the event.

⁹⁷ Photos retrieved from: <https://www.rferl.org/a/czechoslovakia-prague-velvet-revolution-communism/30217717.html>

collaborated across venues. In Czechoslovakia, being an artist was inherently tied to politics and resistance, as cultural spaces like theatres and music concerts provided opportunities for creating communities and conveying hidden messages through artistic expression. Many theatre productions served as metaphors for the communist regime and incorporated political satire, often resulting in censorship or bans (Bolton, 2012). Due to extensive restrictions on daily life imposed by the regime, theatres emerged as vital hubs of community and avenues for everyday psychological resistance (Vollhardt et al., 2020; Zittoun, 2018), offering a means for individuals to cope with and challenge their marginalised status within the repressive system (as seen in 3.3).

Figure 17.
Map of Central Prague



Note. The red circle illustrates where the students gathered in Albertov. The red arrows show the direction in which the protesters intended to arrive at Wenceslaus Square (purple circle). The blue shape illustrates where the police tried to stop the protesters but were unsuccessful. The yellow star shows where the police blocked off the protesters and where the violent collision took place. (Map reproduced from Open Maps)

Following the violent suppression of peaceful student protests, theatres in Czechoslovakia took the lead in response. They initiated a strike by halting their programs and closing their doors the following day to show solidarity with the students. Theatres in Prague reached out to counterparts nationwide, urging them to join in protest "*against the brutality and ruthlessness of the police and military organs*"⁹⁸ The movement's message emphasized non-violence as the path forward, stating, "*We are convinced that violence is not the solution to the current crisis which our society is in.*"⁹⁹

This sentiment was encapsulated in the popular slogan: "Actors have to do politics because politicians are acting out."¹⁰⁰ The momentum continued to grow as university students and staff joined the strike, with theatres and university auditoriums were "*closed for business*"¹⁰¹ but serving as hubs for discussions and informal gatherings to address the ongoing police violence. A potential shift in people's thinking and the motivation to attend the protests tend to be attributed to the fact that all previous repressive events in Czechoslovakia were presented as being caused by the *outside enemy* which the government had to stop, while this time, it was the Czech police beating Czech people and this is what resonated with ordinary people who decided to take their disagreement to the open streets (Kenney, 2003).

The Communist government framed the riot police's attack as a *protection of the public against anti-socialist protesters* (Rudé Právo, 1989, 18 November, p.1¹⁰²), the message that a student was killed by the riot police spread across Czechoslovakia. Later this turned out to be a false alarm. Nonetheless, this point is seen as a trigger to the subsequent revolutionary events such as the establishment of leadership movement organisations (Civic Forum (CF) in

⁹⁸ www.1989.sng.sk/divadla-revolucie (quote translated from Slovak to English; published in the archive of banners and posters of the Slovak National Gallery)

⁹⁹ www.1989.sng.sk/divadla-revolucie (quote translated from Slovak to English)

¹⁰⁰ www.1989.sng.sk/divadla-revolucie (quote translated from Slovak to English)

¹⁰¹ www.1989.sng.sk/divadla-revolucie (quote translated from Slovak to English)

¹⁰² <https://archiv.ucl.cas.cz/index.php?path=RudePravo/1989/11/18/1.png>

Prague and Public Against Violence (PAV) in Bratislava) and the multiple-weeks-long protests where several hundreds of thousands of people demonstrated (100,000-300,000 people in Bratislava, 300,000-800,000 people in Prague), and the subsequent resignation of the Czechoslovak Communist Party government (Krapfl, 2013; Wheaton & Kavan, 2019). This happened after the General Strike (November 27, 1989) where around 75% of the Czechoslovak population joined the strike and demanded the end of a one-party government. These events led to the peaceful transition of power, the presidential election in December 1989, where the leader of Prague's CF – Václav Havel became the new Czechoslovak president, and the first democratic parliamentary elections on June 8-9th, 1990, in which the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia lost its position in the parliament (Krapfl, 2013; Wheaton & Kavan, 2019). A detailed discussion of these revolutionary days, in the context of the PAV leadership organisation follows, since this movement organisation is of primary concern for the analysis presented in this chapter.

5.2.3 Revolutionary Events in Bratislava¹⁰³

This triangulated section is based on a set of interviews published by Antalová (1998) with the PAV leaders interviewed in the present study and with wider PAV members. I also accompany this historical context section with information that PAV leaders provided during our interviews in 2021 but are not necessarily part of the analysis of *identity leadership* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020), which follows after this contextual section.

The pre-existing, yet dispersed groups of dissidents who lived in the Slovak region of Czechoslovakia, primarily in Bratislava learned about the police's violent suppression of protesters in Prague on 18th November. This included people who were already friends and co-workers in different areas of resistance activities – e.g. they were (1) smuggling literature

¹⁰³ This section, although mainly providing historical context for Study 3 already uses some extracts from the data collected as part of Study 3. It aims to provide information about the events the leaders referred to in the Analysis section, which follows. These extracts are not included in the Analysis section as they mainly serve to illustrate the order of events.

and music from the West, (2) they were part of the ecology movement and published a samizdat magazine *Bratislava Aloud*, (3) they were part of the religious groups who engaged in pilgrimages and youth group meetings, (4) artists and writers who organised cultural events and exhibitions, (5) the ‘grey zone’ of dissidents who lost their jobs and worked in manual labour during the weekdays and retreated to their private cottages over the weekends where they engaged in some form of writing or art production. These groups of people who were not yet very unified or well-organised were referred to as “*islands of positive deviation*” according to sociologists in Czechoslovakia. They noticed this wide range of activities happening under the surface of the official propaganda throughout the 1980s. The *islands* in the name stand for the not-yet-connected groups, and the *deviant* is associated with the communist propaganda trying to frame the people in dissent as being a form of deviation from normality. Whereas we tend to associate the term deviant with negative connotations, the local sociologists who lived in Czechoslovakia at the time (e.g., Gális, 2014) called these opposition group members “*positive deviants*” in which being “different” did not necessarily mean something “negative”, instead, it meant a positive change from the unified and centralised ideology of the single-Party Government (Gális, 2016).

To the activists, the violence used on peaceful protesters in Prague seemed unacceptable. This was especially because the state authorities tried to ignore people’s upheaval and ignored the situation of hundreds of severely injured participants in the 17th November student march. The state authorities were silent about the police’s violent suppression. However, the people who attended the protests in Prague, as well as the people who lived in the National Avenue area in Prague witnessed the injured protesters who were trying to hide in nearby apartments and other buildings and saw the police brutality in open streets (Palán et al., 2019). This information was also broadcast on Western radio stations such as Voice of America and Free Europe, which most people listened to due to the

Czechoslovak media's constant propaganda and silencing of issues. The quick spread of the information about how violently the police dealt with protesters forced the government to react to the issue. In the official media, they described the event as such:

“In the evening the crowd continued marching towards the National Theatre and through the National Avenue. To maintain public order in the city centre, members of public security were mobilised. They checked people's identification and around 100 people were asked to present themselves to the local branch of public security. At 10:00 pm the order was renewed in the city centre.” (Rudé Právo¹⁰⁴, 1989, November 18, p.1).

In the subsequent days after November 17, 1989, the key movement organisations began to form – Public Against Violence in Bratislava and Civic Forum in Prague (both were established independently of one another on November 19, 1989). Because the student march in Prague happened on a Friday evening and most people in Czechoslovakia spent their weekends in cottages outside of the cities, usually with limited access to the television and radio, they learned about the incident on Saturday and Sunday through word of mouth. Leaders explained to me that because the student march in Prague happened on a Friday (November 17, 1989), most previously active opposition members were not in Bratislava, primarily because there was a tradition of spending weekends in cottage houses rather than staying in Bratislava. It was on Saturday 18th of November when most of the opposition activists returned to Bratislava and started to call friends to meet for a discussion on the 19th of November in the Arts Union building in Bratislava.

These people met for a first open discussion about how to react to the violent incident that happened in Prague. This first event (November 19th) in Arts Union in Bratislava was based on snowballing, and it consisted of mobilising people from already-existing

¹⁰⁴Available at: <https://archiv.ucl.cas.cz/index.php?path=RudePravo/1989/11/18>

communities who previously engaged in some anti-state activity and were loosely connected through mutual friends, although in no way coordinated for unified action. In that case, any activity which involved freedom of thought was seen as being against the regime, so these groups naturally consisted of those from the creative sphere, religious sphere, and the ecology movement. These people later became the core leadership organisation called 'Public Against Violence' (PAV; founded on the 19th and 20th of November; Antalová, 1998). The meeting in the Arts Union building was possible because the artists had organised an exhibition in the Arts Union in the previous days and had access to keys from the building, which proved to be a perfect location for the initial discussions and initial mobilisation of people (interviews with Leader 12 and 3). A group of painters offered this space and called their friends to come to the first meeting of like-minded people who started the revolutionary events in Bratislava.

The initial steps of the opposition groups who met in the Arts Union were informed by how the opposition would previously react to the government's repressive activities (e.g., see Study 1 and 2). It was common for the resistance groups to engage in writing manifestos, signing petitions, and meeting in a smaller inner circle of friends, usually in people's private properties, rather than going to protest openly on the street, due to the risk of repression. The first meeting of people in the Arts Union, therefore, built upon these pre-existing forms of resistance. However, the key aspect of this meeting was that for the first time, people from a wide range of previously-separated groups met together in one space, and the numbers were quite high – around 500 people attended the first meeting (see Figure 18). In the previous years, the groups of dissidents had consisted of tens rather than hundreds. It was during these first two meetings in Arts Union, that the loosely interconnected opposition groups realised that it was important to maintain the momentum and engage in further action.

Figure 18.

Meeting in the Arts Union, 19th November 1989¹⁰⁵



The initial mobilisation of society was becoming more and more visible, but the spontaneous crowds were not coordinated. People were meeting in various places, but there was no unified space where they would all meet and mobilise for a specific purpose. Around this time, the PAV movement was created by a group of people who met in the Arts Union building. Several conversations were taking place among the key opposition activists, especially to define what would be the purpose of the newly formed initiative and what it would stand for.

Also, for the first time, people started gathering spontaneously on the streets, in theatres, and in universities and there was a general feeling of ‘let’s do something about this’ all around Czechoslovakia. One such mass gathering of people who felt anger towards the government’s reaction to the incident happened in Bratislava on Hviezdoslavovo Square on Tuesday, November 21st, where the members of the newly formed Public Against Violence organisation spoke about their establishment and presented their demand that the violence used on protesters has to be objectively investigated and that the Czechoslovak Communist Party has to openly explain what happened on 17th November.

¹⁰⁵ Left: Photo by Jan Lorincz, Retrieved from: <https://1989.sng.sk/verejnost-proti-nasiliu>

Right: Photo by Peter Pochyly, Retrieved from: <https://www.tyzden.sk/spolocnost/78549/bratislavska-umelecka-beseda-den-prvy/>

This first spontaneous gathering happened in Hviezdoslavovo Square, where a year previously the Candlelight Demonstration had taken place. This naturally called for replication of the gathering, but now the situation was different. The representatives of PAV used the pedestal of the statue of the national poet Hviezdoslav as a stage (see Figure 20) from which they invited people to attend their first official meeting on November 22nd in SNP Square¹⁰⁶. In the present study, I focus on the leaders' role in organizing these meetings which happened from 22nd November onwards.

Figure 19.

Spontaneous Gatherings in Hviezdoslavovo Square, 19th November 1989¹⁰⁷



In the meantime, at the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia headquarters, the government representatives also met and while they considered PAV to be a risky organisation, their main aim was to focus on spreading the information that people from the industries and people from villages have no connection to this small, reactionary group of anti-socialist individuals who are engaging in protests in Bratislava. In the news, from Monday, 20th of November, the main focus was on articles about people from the factories

¹⁰⁶ SNP is an acronym for 'Slovenske Narodne Povstanie' or in English the 'Slovak National Uprising' of 1944, which was an uprising of Slovaks against the Nazi occupation of Slovakia during World War 2, as well as the uprising against the Nazi leaders from Slovakia – the Hlinka's Slovak People's Party led by Jozef Tiso, and towards the re-establishment of Czechoslovakia (which was split into Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and the Slovak state). During the 30th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution, this square was re-named as 'Freedom Square' (TASR, 2019) and now goes with both names - SNP and Freedom Square.

¹⁰⁷ Photos by Jan Lorincz, Retrieved from: <https://1989.sng.sk/verejnost-proti-nasiliu>

and the industries who disregarded and criticised the protest of the 17th of November. Some of the headlines said: *‘The call to sensibility and civic responsibility’*; *‘Firmly Against Provocations’*; *‘An attempt to create public unrest’*; *‘Dialogue yes – Confrontation no’*; *‘What did workers tell us in Prague’s Locomotive factory’* (examples of the headings of articles published in Rudé Právo on 20¹⁰⁸ and 21¹⁰⁹, November 1989). All of these articles aimed to shift the focus from the societal unrest towards saying that people who protested in Prague were dangerous and that the public should be discouraged from engaging in protest activities (similar to the arguments made by the authorities in 3.5).

The false alarm information about a killed student in Prague (refer to 5.2.2) resulted in many spontaneous gatherings and smaller protests of university students and actors in the initial days. The information about these gatherings was spreading across many opposition-minded smaller circles, who wanted to express solidarity. Leader 9 was in Prague when the violent suppression happened witnessed some of this and left for Bratislava to spread the news:

“So, I read them [the people in Arts Union] what Prague Universities, DAMU¹¹⁰ and JAMU¹¹¹, who entered the strikes, together with the Artist’s Club...that we wrote down that we demand that the massacre will be investigated and that the people responsible for it will be persecuted according to the law.”

Leaders told me that they first met in smaller groups and planned to engage in previous forms of resistance such as signing a petition and lighting candles in front of the Polish embassy. In the first days, they relied on pre-existing networks, and they were thinking about organising pre-existing forms of mobilisation (e.g., petitions, candle demonstrations).

¹⁰⁸ <https://archiv.ucl.cas.cz/index.php?path=RudePravo/1989/11/20>

¹⁰⁹ <https://archiv.ucl.cas.cz/index.php?path=RudePravo/1989/11/21>

¹¹⁰ DAMU – Divadelna Fakulta Akademie Muzických Umění, translated to English as Academy of Performing Arts in Prague

¹¹¹ JAMU – Janackova Akademie Muzických Umění, translated to English as Janacek’s Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Brno

However, they felt that they needed to take further steps and there was a collective feeling that more had to happen. Leader 1, for example, said: *“It was mostly a meeting of people from culture, from art, from literature, music, theatre and from different areas, who felt strongly about what was happening in the society”*. Throughout the whole process of organising resistance, there was an overarching feeling of fear and not knowing what to expect. Leaders explained that this is what made them first think about organising small-scale solidarity expression events such as lighting candles and signing petitions, rather than a full-on, open protest.

It was a process of collective decision-making, they explained, which led them to organise the mass protests from 21st November onwards, as they soon realised that doing just small solidarity events was not enough action taken to express their disagreement with the police reaction. It is important to mention that mobilisations of students, theatres and other groups were happening independently from one another, they were organic and spontaneous.

Previous experience with organising resistance was an advantage of this group of leaders, as they mentioned. There was also the narrative of the previously successful organisation of the Candlelight Demonstration, which the leaders saw as an advantageous position for them, as the organisers of the Candlelight Demonstration were also among their representatives, Leader 4 said: *“There were some people from theatre amongst us, and so on, so we all understood this. And on top of that, the ecologists already had some experience with organising meetings. And there was also the legacy of the Candlelight Demonstration.”*

According to Leader 8, knowing people and having connections played a key role in initiating the movement:

“I think that I spent 20 years meeting with people, travelling across Slovakia, getting to know them, and also, you know I had the experience with organising events, not just the Candlelight Demonstration, but also the mass pilgrimages, we would also

attend court hearings, and so on. I believe that I was bringing some of that Slovak feelings and views into the group, how Slovaks think and so on.”

Yet, leaders also mentioned that there was this tension that the Church representatives were familiar with the religious groups, but it was also the group which was the most hesitant to participate in the revolution, especially their representatives, not the lay Catholics.

Building on something that previously worked, such as L8’s experiences of organising mass pilgrimages or the Candlelight demonstration was crucial because it was clear to the leaders that people were able to mobilise themselves in the past and that people’s presence on the streets is a powerful manifestation of disagreement with the regime, which didn’t need much management from the leader’s side, Leader 14 explained: *“They [protesters of the Candlelight Demonstration] didn’t need to shout anything, no one needed to carry a banner. Just the body was enough.”*

Thus, the Candlelight Demonstration was a source of encouragement that leaders had on their side when organising the Velvet Revolution. The issue of how to coordinate many protest activities became a central issue for the newly-formed group of leaders who called themselves ‘Public Against Violence’. In the first days since 17th November, it became clear that this time, when large parts of the public were mobilising (e.g., students, theatres) the protests would be of a larger scope. The PAV leaders decided that they would engage in maintaining the momentum of these crowds of people by organising a unified group which would coordinate public events, Leader 9:

“Well, and, ehm, on that evening someone said there that several thousands of students are already on Hviezdoslavovo Square, and so I went [...] and, ehm, I told them what happened in Prague, what are we [referring to the PAV] doing, and ehm, what are we planning to do. Because in the meantime, there was this idea, that some sort of movement organisation is needed, because there were maybe four hundred of

us in the Arts Union and, this organisation would coordinate these types of activities because everyone was convinced that it was necessary to continue with some kind of action.”

A collective agreement for the continuation of the action, as a reaction to the police violence, was the situation in which a leadership group began to form and organise coordinated activities. Past research in social movement studies also argues that discussion is a process through which collective action spreads (Klandermans, 1997), and communication and interaction contribute to the spread of action (Myers, 2000), however, the agents of that spread (e.g., leaders) are very often omitted from the research (Ganz & McKenna, 2019; Morris & Staggenborg, 2004).

On Wednesday, 22nd of November, the first public demonstration on SNP square was organised by PAV, attended by 100,000 people, and more and more people started joining the movement. The PAV then repeated the protest action on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday (see Figure 20).

On Thursday, November 23rd the masses also moved from SNP Square to Gottwald Square¹¹² in front of the National Broadcasting Building and demanded the television representatives that the protests happening in Bratislava should not be disregarded but that they should be live-broadcast and that the censorship and propaganda should end. Upon the pressure from the protesters who stood in front of the TV building, the directors of the TV agreed to broadcast the events.

¹¹² Now called Freedom Square. Many names of streets and squares changed post 1989 in Czechoslovakia.

Figure 20.

*Mass Meetings in SNP Square, Bratislava (Left); Protest Near Justice Palace (Right)*¹¹³



Simultaneously with these protests, there was a trial taking place in the Justice Court building, only 1 kilometre away from the SNP square, with a representative of the opposition, an organiser of the Candlelight Demonstration and a member of Bratislava Five (see Figure 20). This group of five activists previously engaged in multiple small-scale protest events, such as an event in August 1989 to commemorate those who were killed in 1968 when the Warsaw Pact army invaded Czechoslovakia (Jašek, 2017). Consequently, two of the five members were incarcerated in pre-trial detention. Many people who attended PAV meetings at the time of this trial also attended protests in front of the Justice Court, demanding their release. The pressure of events finally resulted in the release of Bratislava Five activists. This was the last political trial in the Czechoslovak ‘communist’ regime (Jašek, 2024).

After the mass meetings from 22nd November onwards, on November 24th, the first live broadcast panel discussion took place. The ‘Dialogue’ was a specific television show because, for the first time, there was a spontaneous discussion that was not based on a pre-approved script. Members of the PAV had a live-broadcast discussion with the representatives of major factories and industry directors, and they announced the General Strike to take place on 27th November in the entire country and asked people to join widely,

¹¹³ Photos by Jan Lorincz, Retrieved from: <https://1989.sng.sk/demonstracie>

as the government was still claiming that the protests were only a matter of a small group of people in Bratislava. Similarly, the pressure from the PAV and the crowds achieved that the demonstrations in Bratislava became also live-broadcast on national television from that day.

Demonstrations continued across the country on November 25th and 26th, and the General Strike on November 27th was successful, as the workers from factories officially joined the movement. As a reaction to that, 28th November marks the beginning of roundtable meetings of PAV representatives and the Communist Party government and the resignation of the leading members of the Party. The demonstrations and discussions between PAV and CP vs. the Communist Party government continued at the local as well as the federal level.

‘Ahoy Europe!’ March. During the Cold War, 930 km of Czechoslovak borders became part of the Iron Curtain that divided Europe into the Western and Eastern Blocs (see Figure 4, Chapter 1). It was called iron because of its double-sided impenetrability. It was supposed to prevent liberal ideas from reaching workers' countries, but at the same time, it restricted the movement of citizens and goods. Eastern countries remained hermetically closed from the West socially, economically, technologically and culturally. In 1949, citizens of Czechoslovakia lost the right to issue a passport, and a period of restricted movement began. However, the border was closed only in 1952-1953. To cross it, residents needed special exit clauses and a foreign exchange agreement, as it was not possible to freely exchange currency when travelling abroad. It took weeks to months to get these documents, which was supposed to prevent ‘inconvenient citizens’ from travelling and control those who decided to travel (Jašek, 2009).

Obtaining the documents required several recommendations and endorsements from the employer and some Party organisations, being part of a very complex bureaucracy. Even when a person received the needed documents, it did not guarantee that this person would be

able to travel. They stopped people and strip-searched them and their cars at the borders despite the valid amendment clause, which was part of the humiliation procedure.

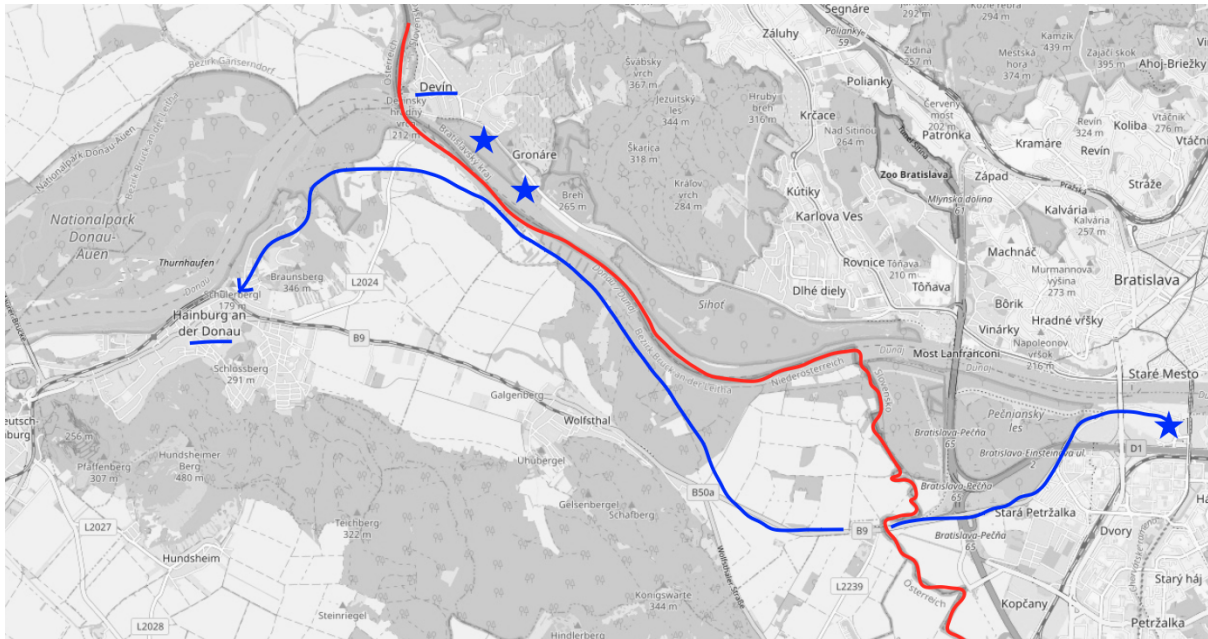
It was also possible to leave Czechoslovakia illegally, but the border was under severe control. Before the entrance to the borders, there was a 1-3-kilometre-wide border zone with barbed wire or high-voltage barricades. This territory was guarded by border guards and extremely aggressive dogs trained to kill. In the 1950s, the area between the roadblocks was mined, but after many accidents with border guards, it was demined after a few years.

Even if some citizens fled to the West, they were accused of committing the crime of "abandoning the republic" and could be killed at the border. People who were caught on the border were treated brutally and either killed or tortured and then transferred to psychiatric wards or prisons. However, it wasn't just people crossing the border who were prosecuted. For any information helping to escape someone, the person helping would be accused of treason and could receive several years in prison, or in the Jáchymov uranium mines or other labour camps, which were specifically designated for political prisoners, infamous for their harsh inhumane treatment. Around 65,000 people were placed in these mines, and slang, they were called 'mukli' which was an abbreviation of the phrase 'muž určen k likvidaci' (Czech) or 'men to be disposed of' (Bauer, 2019).

During the Velvet Revolution, towards the end of the revolutionary days, when the PAV was slowly transforming into a political party, and when some of the representatives were now part of the federal government, the PAV resistance leaders were still engaged in organising celebratory activities for their followers. Specifically, on December 10th, leaders negotiated with the Austrian government, that the border between Austria and Czechoslovakia would be free to cross and people would be allowed to enter the part of the world which was previously inaccessible to them, despite seeing it from their windows. As a celebration of these achievements, a march called 'Ahoy Europe!' was organised by PAV to

walk from Bratislava to an Austrian town located near the borders – Hainburg (see Figure 21).

Figure 21.
The March to Hainburg from Central Bratislava

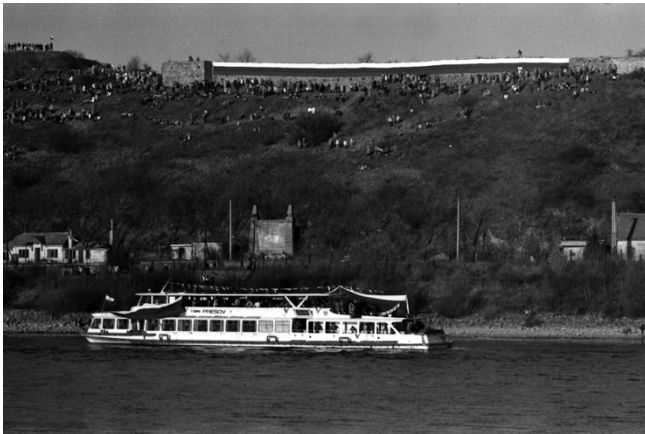


Note. The red line indicates part of the ‘Iron Curtain’ border located on the outskirts of Bratislava. The blue arrow indicates the walking journey from central Bratislava (bottom right corner) to Hainburg (underlined) through the ‘Berg’ border crossing. The blue stars (top left corner) indicate where people gathered, as not all people were walking the entire journey. (Map adapted from Open Street Maps).

Between 50,000 to 150,000 people participated in this event by either crossing the border and walking to Hainburg or gathering on the other side of the Danube River, where they hung tricolour flags and listened to a music concert by Karel Kryl who was now able to perform in Czechoslovakia after living in exile for many years. Kryl was singing from a boat on the Danube river (see Figure 22), which was supposed to symbolise the connection between Austria and Czechoslovakia. The concert was streamed through walkie-talkies on both sides of the river and microphones and loudspeakers placed on the boat. This way people from both sides of the river could communicate and listen to the concert.

Figure 22.

*Karel Kryl's Boat Concert on the Danube River*¹¹⁴



Apart from the river, another symbol was installed at the location by artists, who created a heart-shaped symbol using iron wire. The heart was supposed to symbolise love which was a central word to the revolution (e.g., one of the memorable quotes by Havel was “*love and truth have to win over lies and hatred*”; or the song by Hoffman: ‘We promised ourselves love’). Similarly, because of the geographical position of Czechoslovakia at the centre of Europe, the popular saying goes that ‘Czechoslovakia is at the heart of Europe’, there was a double meaning of the artwork – both a literal and a metaphorical heart (see Figure 23).

On December 10th Czechoslovak President Gustav Husák resigned. As an outcome of the negotiations, the government was restructured into 11 representatives from the Communist party and 9 representatives from the opposition groups (i.e., PAV and CF representatives). Because of Husák’s resignation, and himself being the symbol of the Normalisation period (1968-1989), characterised by strong repressions and the move away from liberalism and towards Moscow, this day is seen as the end of the ‘communism’ in Czechoslovakia. The timeline of key events that happened in this timeframe is summarised in Table 9.

¹¹⁴ Photo by Jan Lorincz. Retrieved from: <https://1989.sng.sk/ahoj-europa>

Figure 23.
*Heart Made From Iron Wire*¹¹⁵



Table 9.
Timeline of Events in Bratislava, November-December, 1989

Date	Event	Action of the resistance groups	Actions of the dominant group
16 th November, Thursday	Student march in Bratislava	Students protested against the censorship and unsatisfying situation in universities	No police suppression
17 th November, Friday	Student march in Prague	Commemorative event of the 1938 killing of students in Prague	Violent police suppression
18 th November, Saturday	Public learns about the violent police intervention	Theatres go on strike in Prague and in Bratislava; Western radio stations broadcast the news about a killed student	No police suppression
19 th November, Sunday	Opposition meeting in Arts Union, Bratislava, 5:00 pm	Artists meet in apartments and snowball 500 people to meet in the Arts Union building A resolution is created and people sign it, agree to meet again at 5:00 Theatres officially announce strike	No police suppression
20 th November, Monday	Public Against Violence is founded in Mala Scena	Students meetings in Universities (after the weekend) 12:00 meeting of the most active members who call themselves Public Against Violence	No police suppression

¹¹⁵ Photo by Jan Lorincz. Retrieved from: <https://1989.sng.sk/ahoj-europa>

	theatre, Bratislava	1:00 pm students go on strike similar to theatres PAV go to speak to different sub-groups (writers, activists, etc.) 5:00 meeting in Arts Union, the manifesto is created and read (program manifesto of PAV) Theatres turn into discussion spaces	
21 st November, Tuesday	Universities across country go on strike; 3 rd meeting in Arts Union, Bratislava	Hungarian minority joins the movement In the evening the group does not fit in the Arts Union so they walk outside, then they walk to Gottwald square and then they move to Hviezdoslav's square where people use a pedestal of Hviezdoslav's statue to announce that theatres turned into discussion platforms and that next day people meet again	No police suppression
22 nd November, Wednesday	Protest against the imprisonment 'Bratislava Five'; First official 'PAV meeting'	9:00 am; Alexander Dubcek (PM of the Party during Prague Spring) as a witness to the trial 4:00pm, SNP square, 100.000 people attend	No police suppression
23 rd November, Thursday	Protest against imprisonment of Bratislava Five; PAV Meeting in SNP square	9:00 am 4:00 pm – demand to enter TV and press Alexander Dubcek joins the initiative	No police suppression
24 th November, Friday	PAV Meeting First 'Dialogue' in TV	General strike announced, if government does not take action Dialogue in TV	UV KSC closed-door meeting – announcement that they are restructuring the party but at the end, only 3 people resigned
25 th November, Saturday	PAV Meeting Second 'Dialogue' in TV	"Party needs to resign immediately" – was said in live TV	N/A
26 th November, Sunday	PAV Meeting	Demands: cancelation of the party and free election	No police suppression

27 th November, Monday	General Strike PAV Meeting	Main demand is the end of one-party government; the party members resign as a reaction to the General Strike and the ongoing protests	The Party members resign as a reaction to the General Strike and the ongoing protests
28 th – 29 th November, Tuesday, Wednesday		Meetings continue across Czechoslovakia	Communist Party representatives continue to announce their resignations
30 th November, Thursday		Meetings continue	Citizens of Czechoslovakia are now able to travel abroad with their passports
2 nd December, Saturday		Meetings continue	Czechoslovaks living abroad in exile are now able to obtain visa to travel to Czechoslovakia
3 rd December, Sunday		Meetings continue	Temporary Federal government is announced
6 th December, Wednesday	Velvet Revolution train	Velvet Revolution train; meeting in Košice	N/A
10 th December	‘Ahoy Europe’ march	March from Bratislava to Hainburg	Gustáv Husák resigns as the President of Czechoslovakia

Note. The timeline summarises the key revolutionary days, types of events, types of action organised by the PAV, and responses of the dominant group.

5.3. Analysis

This analysis is structured around two different (but complementary) sections (see Table 10). This decision was made because the data reflected theoretically distinct concepts. Section 1 focuses on answering the research question about how the leaders built the movement, and how they used this new platform for achieving social change. These strategies speak to the practical aspects of the role of leadership, such as the decision about

the physical space of the protests where leaders sought to gather protestors, their creation of the movement organisation, the decision about the location of the headquarters, the negotiations with the Party, and the structural factors associated with the repressive regime.

Section 2 speaks to the research questions about how the leaders acted as *identity leaders* – that is how they built a shared social identity in the movement, and subsequently, how they choreographed the collective events to build shared social identity (*identity impresarioship*). This section expands our understanding of the social-psychological aspects of the role of leadership. Insights about the leaders' collaboration with the followers (i.e., *engaged followership*), as well as the leader's role in designing the performative means of the movement. These aspects are associated with how leaders worked with an understanding of who "we" are as a group, and how the "we" can be translated into people's lived reality (Haslam et al., 2011/2020).

Since the interviews with the leaders focus on leaders' actions throughout a month's timeframe (i.e., November 16 – December 10, see Table 9), the analysis is presented as a narrative that is ordered chronologically. In each theme, I present extracts discussing the early days of the revolution and continuously describe how events progressed over time. For example, when the leaders spoke about a course of events that happened over time, they organised events in a logical order, building upon the achievements of the previous events. This means that for the leaders to be able to organise the General Strike (November 27), they first announced the strike on television (November 24), and for that, they first needed to get access to the media (November 23). Hence the reason for presenting the selected extracts in each section in chronological order.

Table 10.
Overview of Sections and Themes in Study 3

Section	Theme
1. Leaders as creators of the context in which they could act as identity leaders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using visibility in public protests to gain legitimacy and achieve the movement's goals 2. Strategic use of non-violence to create solidarity and achieve progress of the movement 3. Gaining allies to increase mobilisation
2. Leaders as choreographers of the movement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Designing the space and choreography of collective events 2. Co-creating the movement with the followers 3. Leaders strategically creating their public image

5.3.2. Section 1 – Leaders As Creators of the Context in Which They Could Act As Identity Leaders

This section of the analysis focuses on how the leaders strategically built a movement that was visible and legitimate, and thus the Communist Party became fully aware of their existence. As it was seen from Chapters 3 and 4, the issues of visibility were central in a repressive context, where resistance activities were often silenced, ridiculed, or dismissed by the dominant group. This section also shows how the leaders mobilised people to participate in the social movement while accounting for the constraints of the repressive regime.

Together these strategies, such as the use of non-violence, addressing different audiences to build a movement (also see Selvanathan et al., 2020; for a similar finding), and goal-oriented activities (e.g., using the protests to get access to media), helped the leaders to achieve widespread mobilisation but also to sustain the movement over time. While the movement was growing, leaders were able to negotiate with the Party and force the Party to resign. These actions contributed to the wider context of social changes happening in Eastern Europe in 1989.

Theme 1: Using Visibility in Public Protests to Gain Legitimacy and Achieve the Movement's Goals. Since the foundation of the 'Public Against Violence' (PAV) movement

organisation, the importance of gaining visibility was central for the PAV leaders. As discussed earlier (see 5.2), the initial mobilisation of society (e.g., theatres and universities going on strike as a response to the violent suppression of a student march on November 17, 1989) happened spontaneously¹¹⁶, within more or less closed communities. For example, students gathered at their universities, actors in their respective theatres, and some other people gathered in Hviezdoslavovo Square in Bratislava. On the one hand, people who were previously active in opposition already had some resistance identity (e.g., Catholics, Environmentalists), but much of the public did not engage in protests before. The PAV leaders initially focused on strategically gathering all these people together, unifying their activities, and potentially amplifying their voices under one coordinated movement organisation- with representatives on top. The leaders recognised the need to mobilise people under a common movement identity:

Extract 1. L14: *It was not a name [referring to the name of PAV] that would be positively oriented, rather, there was the use of a rather negative term ‘against’, but I think it worked well at that time because we were still only in a stage where we tried to get people who were afraid on our side. The word ‘violence’ was very important. Because people weren’t against the Party yet, they would be too afraid to say that, they weren’t for democracy yet, but being against the use of violence on students, on kids, well...that was collectively agreed. “It was too much [referring to violence used on students on November 17th, 1989], even I am fed up with this”, people would say. “Even I am against it”. This was an emotion that I felt was a really strong one [amongst people]. People didn’t have the courage to say we are an anti-communist*

¹¹⁶ Although from the social-psychological perspective (e.g., Drury & Reicher, 2005; Drury et al., 2003), we could also argue that the ‘spontaneous’ mobilisation was a reaction to the police violence on 17th November.

movement yet, but they had the courage to speak about being against violence.

Beating young powerless students – we are all against it.

The definition of what it meant to be part of the PAV movement and to gain support and acceptance from potential members was intertwined with each other, according to the leaders. The name – Public Against Violence – was based on the idea that after people learned that a student was killed in a peaceful protest in Prague on November 17th (1989), the society was shocked. The leaders recognised this and treated it as a triggering point that would motivate many people to mobilise (e.g., theatres and universities already were on strike). However, leaders were also sensitive to the everyday context in which people lived. They knew that the regime was still repressive and many people’s previous experience with engaging in any non-state-approved activity was associated with severe repression and fear. Leader 14 reflected on the idea that the name of their movement organisation had to account for this dilemma. He described that being openly against the regime was not yet something that most people would resonate with. This extract (Extract 1) illustrates that leaders paid close attention to what it meant to be “us” at the time. It meant that violence against innocent people was something that many people disagreed with and thus could be used in the movement organisation’s name. It shows that the leaders were conscious of the framing of the movement’s agenda and its potential impact in unifying people under a norm that was important to many people, and thereby encouraged them to start identifying with the group. Another advantage of this name of the movement organisation was that being ‘against violence’ meant that people could become supporters of PAV without feeling that they were part of an explicitly anti-state movement. Because the Czechoslovak government tried to deny the illegitimacy of the police’s use of violence on protesters, this was exactly what the leaders focused on and tried to amplify in the movement’s name.

Apart from the movement's name, amongst their first activities was that these leaders organised a unified protest in the main city centre in Bratislava. Here, they stood up in front of the people who attended the protest and obtained legitimacy for the PAV movement organisation from the protesters in this performative way:

Extract 2. L1: *When we decided, during the long discussions which we had from Sunday till Tuesday [19-22nd November], because we knew we had to do some mass protests, as we saw that some smaller ones were happening at Hviezdoslavovo Square and on Freedom Square, there were these spontaneous meetings, and we knew we had to do something like that [...] We agreed that PAV is founded and that it will be a form of a civic initiative, and who will be the core representatives [...] This was also said in front of people on Wednesday, in SNP square [during the first mass meeting], and this was really the only way of legitimising this initiative...in front of the people.*

The extract above shows that the issue of gaining legitimacy was important for the leaders, such that the PAV would become a functioning leadership organisation that represents 'the people', who also endorse and support this organisation. However, the PAV leaders did not have any institutionalised structures in place that would allow them to obtain any official recognition. There were no elections in which the public voted for their leaders, and the revolutionary events were unfolding quickly. Instead, the PAV initiative formed from a group of already active individuals who were members of previous resistance groups. Thus, the legitimacy and the entitativity (e.g., being recognised by others as a group) of the movement was achieved performatively – on the protest stages in Bratislava, where these leaders spoke.

Leaders were also reflective of the tension between the visibility of the society's mobilisation versus people's fear of the police suppression of these protests. This simple, and quite straightforward decision that the protests should be in the open space is something that we would almost implicitly expect from a movement that organises collective action. However, under repression, the discussion on which form the mobilisation should take and where it should happen was an important feature in a setting where the use of violence by the police was still on the table (similar discussions took place in the Candlelight Demonstration; see Chapter 4). Thus, PAV sought to achieve these steps by organising mass protests in an open space. The decision about where and how to organise the protests, and where all these people could safely but also visibly gather, became a central issue that the leaders focused on in the initial days of the revolution:

Extract 3. L1: *The question was where to do the meetings, should it be inside a building, or outside in a closed space, such as a stadium, or should it be in a space which is open and where you can fit 100.000 people? And...till Wednesday (21st November), we decided that it should not be in the interior, not in a stadium but it should be on a square.*

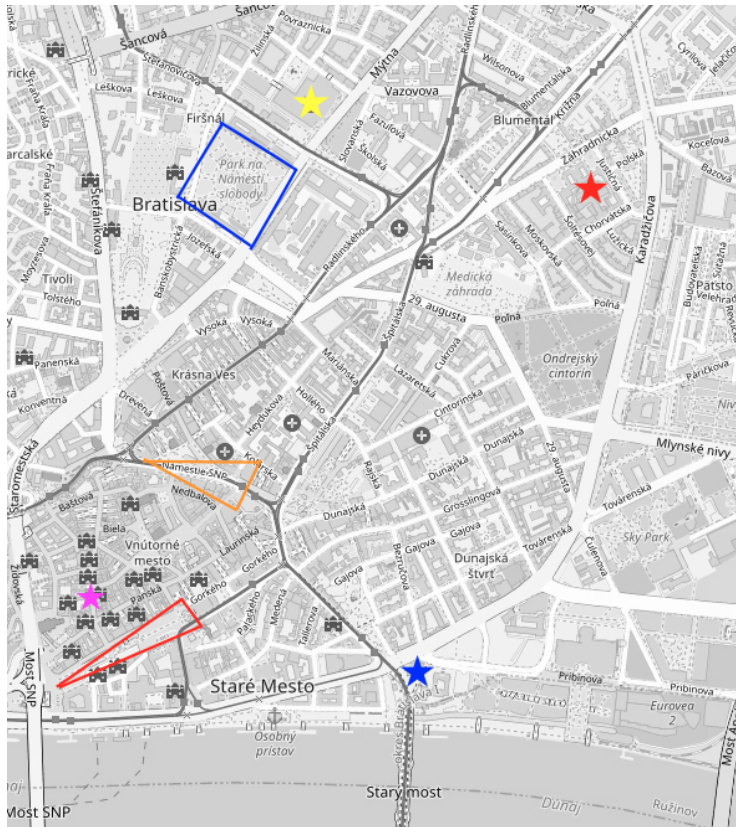
Issues of visibility and the subsequent legitimacy of the movement organisation were also apparent from the leaders' decision to use a widely accessible building in the city centre as their headquarters office¹¹⁷ (for a map of Bratislava, see Figure 24):

¹¹⁷ Access to this building was possible because some of the PAV leaders had exhibited their art in the building a few days before the revolution started, and they still had the keys to the building (Antalová, 1998).

Extract 4. L1: *Unlike Civic Forum [movement organization in Prague], which was residing in Lucerna [building in Prague], in the basement, we [PAV] were sitting in Arts Academy [building in Bratislava], and all of that was on the city level (laughing). And this is really interesting. We, the group of people [PAV], were walking to those meetings [on the squares] and we did this consciously to show that we are not afraid of speaking in public. And this was unthinkable at that time, but at the same time, it was beautiful, because those masses of people were walking there with us towards SNP Square...*

Note that similar to the analysis in Chapter 4, this leader reflects on their decision about the “Slovak” location of the headquarters with a sense of pride. He explains that in contrast to the Czech headquarters, which had their headquarters in the basement, the PAV moved to a public and visible space. He explains that there were benefits of having the location of the PAV headquarters on the street level in the city centre, especially at the initial stages of the movement. For example, by walking to the mass protests together with the followers, leaders felt less afraid. The fact that the movement organisation resided on a street level also ensured visibility and subsequent protection of the movement because people could be witnesses to the potential violent suppression of the movement (which would have to take place on the street, instead of silently, which is how the secret police used to act). Having positioned themselves by name as being against violence, the blame for violence would fall on the authorities.

Figure 24.
Map of Bratislava City Centre



Note. The blue star shows where the Arts Union building was located. The pink star shows the location of the PAV Headquarters, the yellow star shows the location of the Slovak Television Building, and the red star shows the location of the Justice Palace. The red triangle shows the location of Hviezdoslavovo Square, the orange triangle shows the location of SNP Square, and the blue square shows the location of Gottwald Square (now re-named to Freedom Square) (Map was adapted from Open Street Maps).

The collective became a source of emotional support and empowerment for the leaders themselves (e.g., L1: “*we did this consciously to show that we are not afraid*”). When joining the crowd, the leaders were not indifferent to the process of psychological transformations in the crowd (Hopkins et al., 2016). While empowerment might not have been a strategic aspect of the leaders’ own actions, the extract below shows that leaders were able to reflect upon their own emotions, often interchangeably with their strategies (also see Selvanathan & Jetten, 2020). In a repressive context, courage and a sense of empowerment related to the strength in numbers played a key role in making the strategies possible:

Extract 5. L12: *Well, look, when the meetings started, it was still very risky, and we knew that there were snipers on the buildings, and there was still a very real threat that we will get killed and all this will come to a quick end. So, the fear was still there, but once we were part of this crowd's enthusiasm [when walking to the mass protests], we no longer cared!*

Apart from the many successes of the PAV, there were also inherent challenges with coordinating an ever-growing movement. For example, their ongoing activities required more people than just the core leaders, to become active members. These members, although less publicly visible, dealt with many issues. Having a collaborative space and division of roles between leaders was an advantage of the movement organisation, which allowed them to engage in many activities, such as the production of posters and magazines in a press office, but also more mundane, everyday issues:

Extract 6. L3: *I really keep remembering for example the secretaries in the Public Against Violence [headquarters], and they would be working for 24 hours nonstop. Also, the press centre, or the newspapers, L10 was in charge [of the press centre]. Parallel to that, many consulting services started working alongside PAV, for example, psychology consulting, with X [anonymised]...So, without the group of people, who were maybe 30 people at the beginning, it would be impossible to function. There were girls sitting by telephones for 24 hours a day because people from entire Slovakia were calling and they wanted to solve...solve their issues. Well, sometimes the problems were very bizarre, but these people had a feeling that suddenly, a new...organisation of something was established, and if people had some problems, they would go to us. And, and, we had a reception downstairs and*

sometimes it was truly unbelievable, you would go through the reception when you needed to use the restroom, and you would be literally attacked by random visitors, coming from Kosice, Poprad, Spisska Nova Ves, and they wanted to resolve their own local and sometimes personal problems. I repeat again, ehm, the specific political agenda, that we were trying to resolve, was only a fragment...of the overall agenda. The preparation of the meetings was...the execution of the meetings was only a fragment. On top of all of that, there was a permanent pressure of all of the surroundings, which were changing very...very suddenly, and the problems, which we didn't have a clue about, were piling on us each second...

The collaborative nature of the movement also led to a tendency among people to expect the organization to address their individual problems. Consequently, certain issues arising from the revolution, such as conflicts in prisons, were now attributed to the resistance leaders. As a result, there was an increased expectation for the leaders to respond and de-escalate these situations. The leaders were aware of this burden and made efforts to be attentive and considerate to the continuously evolving circumstances and to the demands of their supporters. Extract 6 provides an intriguing deviant case, shedding light on both the benefits and drawbacks of assuming a leadership role within a mass-scale movement organization. This case illustrates how movement leaders faced considerable pressure from their followers and the general public, with high expectations set upon them.

Simultaneously, the leaders oriented themselves to the issues of how to use the initially-gained visibility and legitimacy as a movement organisation to start negotiating their demands that were communicated on the stages in protest events with the state representatives. Alongside condemning police violence, which was central to the movement's cause, they also began to critique the broader state of affairs in the country. This included

addressing media censorship, restrictions on people's rights, problems with censored and inaccessible university education, and the absence of freedom of speech. The scale of the protests in Czechoslovakia was unprecedented, providing the leaders with significant leverage – a strategy often discussed in the civil resistance literature (Schock, 2013). They capitalised on this widespread mobilisation to demand that the protests be broadcast on national television. This was a strategic move to prevent the Party from devaluing the protests and silencing their impact, as had been commonly done in the past.

By utilizing this leverage, the leaders were able to reach a broader audience and amplify their message beyond the confines of protest events. This marked a crucial turning point in their efforts to engage with a wider segment of the population and to bring attention to the pressing issues faced by the country:

Extract 7. L1: *So, we needed to get into the media, such that we would get to the whole of Slovakia, and we managed to do that here in Slovakia very fast, as a form of pressure on the regime, and we also needed to get the regime in such pressure, that it would dismiss the idea of violent intervention. And this was achieved through mass meetings.*

Extract 8. L14: *In this way [getting to media], we were able to get a step-by-step guide to a thousand other demonstration events, and [local PAV] organisations that were established across Slovakia. So, you make some small stage, you call some singer, and you'll be speaking about your vision of freedom and democracy.*

One core aim was to raise public awareness by showing the protests in the media, but the second aim was also about blocking propaganda. In extract 8, we can see that

broadcasting the protest events through television could also give other people across the country the motivation to organise similar protest events in their towns and villages. This could spread the mobilisation without the leaders' direct presence in the regions. Leaders did not impose a single correct way of organising collective events onto the followers. Instead, they created and spread a group culture and identity content (e.g., how protest events could be structured; the choreography of the protests will be discussed in Section 2 of the analysis).

Yet, leaders were also aware that being physically present and building closer personal relationships with the followers was the key to sustaining the movement's activities. Apart from organising protests in Bratislava, leaders also visited their supporters in regions and engaged with them on a more personal level. They were aware that the closeness and the investment in the relationship with followers were crucial for obtaining wide mobilisation and mass support:

Extract 9. L3: *I remember that one of the hardest moments of our lives, the PAV and the students' initiative, was that we would every day travel to different parts of Slovakia, to different industries, in different regions, do you understand? ...to talk to people, to discuss their issues. We would go to meetings...to community centres [...]I was in so many places, where I came to a certain meeting room, a pub, or a street meeting, and there were tons of people, and we had passionate discussions. You know...the face-to-face contact was really the key aspect of that!*

After gaining greater accessibility to the media the leaders also demanded to speak on television to communicate their agenda in an open sphere, instead of in a closed-door meeting. Because of the propaganda and censorship, they wanted to negotiate with the government in a visible space, in which anyone could witness it. This was possible because

the television representatives offered to organise an open discussion between the PAV members and the representatives of the industry (i.e., state representatives). Thanks to the visibility of the protests in public spaces, leaders from the PAV were invited into a newly developed television show called ‘Studio Dialogue’, where everyone could witness an uncensored debate broadcast live:

Extract 10. L4: *What we wanted to achieve...well at first, at the beginning we wanted to protest against the terrible event that happened [17th November, Prague]...protest, and we demanded to persecute those responsible for this. That was the first one, and then, the second theme which immediately arose was dialogue...the need to start having a dialogue...that you [state authorities] need to start having a dialogue with us, about what to do next, how to live after this [after 17th November]. And this very soon developed not only towards the need for dialogue but also the need for certain political changes, free election and the abolishment of article four [in the constitution] about the leading role of the Party.*

Extract 11. L5: *...and thanks to the director of Slovak Television, he started broadcasting live from the demonstrations, even before in Czechia, and he started the studio Dialogue, and that was so special back then! You would not find it anywhere, because it was like the cooking shows now, in live time, people from the entire country learned how does a meeting look like, what are we trying to achieve, and what arguments are being used, they learned it from Dialogue studio show. I wanted to add this, that from this aspect, Velvet Revolution was the first political event that was being live broadcast to people’s homes, in the history of our country [...] it was*

broadcast live, and we were on podiums, and people in their living rooms could see it...And people were shouting in the square: Cancel the party!

In this way, the communication of the PAV's demands was able to spread fast into the space of the protests on the squares and this created an effective multi-channelling of the resistance leader's demands and pressure through different settings – the television one, as well as through the protest squares. Leaders considered this to be an important step, as the visibility on television also ensured that they now became widely recognisable figures and legitimate representatives of the social movement. The visibility of the movement also meant that leaders suddenly paid more attention to their public image, and they tried to visibly distinguish themselves from the Party officials (this issue of public image is further discussed in Section 2 of the analysis):

Extract 12. L14: *Of course, people began to notice us [after the television discussion], we became celebrities, and they began to realise that this peculiar team, wearing sweaters, those are the leaders of the revolution, and, ehm, in this way, the secret police and communists lost their chance to use propaganda to prevent people from knowing about what was happening in Bratislava.*

Summary of Theme 1. This theme focused on leaders' strategies to build a visible and legitimate social movement that would be recognised by the dominant group. I have also shown that the leaders were strategic about this visibility (e.g., through being visible in the media and on the streets), and they used the mass protests as a platform to achieve the movement's goals (i.e., to negotiate with the government, spread the movement). They demonstrated sensitivity to the barriers that could hinder mobilisation, carefully avoiding

framing the movement as ‘anti-state’ to maintain broader public support. Instead, they ingeniously formulated an inclusive protest identity with the name ‘Public Against Violence’, which resonated with the public and helped broaden its appeal. The leaders tactically organized protests and conducted all their activities in the public sphere, including the initial discussions with state representatives. This approach laid the foundation for an inclusive social movement that garnered widespread recognition and ultimately facilitated social change. In summary, the leaders' strategic actions in seeking visibility, building an inclusive identity, and engaging with the public played a pivotal role in the movement's success and its eventual impact on effecting social change.

Theme 2: Strategic Use of Non-violence to Create Solidarity and Achieve

Progress of the Movement The visibility and legitimacy of the movement were also linked to the ongoing tensions arising from the nature of the repressive regime. Leaders knew that they could not rely on the official police officers to ensure safety and security in the mass protests, which would usually be the case in a democratic setting. In a way, they tried to be attuned to crowd safety management (although they did not refer to it in such terms). They recognised that structural issues of public safety were an important part of a successful protest, and they actively embraced this role as part of their understanding of what it meant to be a leader:

Extract 13. L14: *Such a packed square meant that people would end up in a stampede and kill each other if they hear a gunshot. And for the reason of not supporting any potential panic, I was exercising with people, together with my colleagues this technique: we [leaders] all sat down on the stage, and we would call all the rest of the people on the square to do the same...which would work even if they [the state authorities] turned off our microphone.*

The leaders generally promoted a non-violent atmosphere in the events. To achieve this, they tried to emphasise to the crowds that the police members should be treated as friends rather than enemies. In other words, they tried to create feelings of togetherness, such that police are seen as part of the common ingroup (one of “us”). This did not necessarily mean that the leaders thought about the police in this positive way, but they were aware that non-violence was a key norm they wanted to maintain, despite the rather negative opinion they held towards the police:

Extract 14. L6: *We always kept telling people, to be peaceful, ehm, say hello to the police, they are actually here to protect us. And we were saying it in this way so that the police themselves had a feeling that they are part of us, part of the happening around them. Yes, it was a bit unnatural, because the police were definitely our enemies, we knew back then that amongst them, there is a lot of people who will accept it, but we were most afraid of the situation if someone in the crowd started to make a mess. So, the idea of peacefulness was first created because of the fear of violence, which the regime could use to dissolve the crowd. Later, it showed to be a very good model of [social] change, but the origin was in the fear of the regime.... But there is a very basic logic behind this. The idea [of non-violence] didn't really come from Gandhi, but from the knowledge which we had, that not far away, there were military tanks, and they could immediately shoot us all. And we weren't that afraid of risking our own lives, but [we were afraid] because of the people in the squares, for which we felt we had responsibility. And uhm, this means that we knew that we could prevent the bloodshed only if we didn't give the regime a reason to use*

violence. So, the whole idea of dialogue and the positive energy [in the demonstrations] was coming from this. Not to give any reason for violence.

Non-violent norms were consistent with the peaceful atmosphere that the leaders tried to spread in the crowds. While the ‘atmosphere’, which will be discussed in relation to social-psychological processes, such that people experienced an emotional and meaningful collective event (see Section 2 of this analysis), it was also related to the strategic aspects of keeping the protests non-violent. Similar to the non-violent norms promoted by leaders in Chapter 4, these leaders also expected that the peacefulness of the protesters would prevent the police from suppressing the protests (which turned out to be the case in this revolution). While the non-violence remained as an effective strategy, there was also an ever-present fear that the authorities will suppress the protests:

Extract 15. L2: *there was information at first, that the police would act, and that the army is ready, and that there are snipers on top of buildings. But instead, we ended up giving policemen carnation flowers...it was a flower of the regime¹¹⁸*

Also:

Extract 16. L3: *This concept, of hugging the policemen, the fictitious enemy and saying that we are not enemies, we are the citizens of the same country as you are, and we have the same needs and hopes as you do*

The extracts above (15, 16) show that the promotion of non-violence, and the widening of the group boundaries was also achieved with performative acts (e.g., giving

¹¹⁸ It became the ‘flower of the regime’ because red carnations were given to women during the International Women’s Day, one of the typically celebrated events by the Party. For this reason, red carnations (and IWD) are often seen negatively by people in today’s Czechia and Slovakia due to their association with ‘communism’.

police flowers, hugging the policemen). These non-institutionalised forms of protest, which resulted in surprising the police (e.g., by giving them flowers) and served as a potential strategy that de-escalated tensions between police and protesters (note that this strategy was also used in Poland; Kubik, 1994).

Additionally, to tackle this problem of the potential use of violence, leaders also tried to include publicly known figures in the mass protests by asking them to come on the protest stage and express allyship and solidarity with the protesters:

Extract 17. L14: *I was speaking about the three main goals [in the mass demos], well, the third, humble goal was, well sorry, the second goal...actually...was to get the celebrities [on the stage], thanks to which communists would be more hesitant whether to shoot us.*

By inviting publicly-known figures on the stage (e.g., former politicians of the ‘Prague Spring’, actors, and singers), leaders not only tried to decrease the use of state violence but also performatively showed that they have these people on their side. Getting ‘celebrities’ on the leaders’ side helped them to gain more legitimacy and enrich mass protests with more engaging program (which I will discuss in more detail in Section 2).

However, these horizontal leadership strategies (e.g., inviting various speakers) and open microphone tactics also created some situations where it was important for leaders to be reflective upon the mood and the follower’s expectations, and to resolve any tensions. For example, multiple leaders mentioned a situation where this open microphone was not received positively by the crowd:

Extract 18. L7:...*for example when X [playwright, political satirist] said to use a shovel on communists¹¹⁹, people started shouting “we don’t want violence: and X apologised immediately. So of course, it [the use of] had two sides. We were afraid to use violence and to even indirectly encourage anyone to use it because we were afraid that it can then be returned from the other side.*

The extract above is a deviant case, describing a situation in which the leaders had to manage the tension between whether non-violence was a norm that the protesters truly endorsed, or whether they would be approving of violence towards the police, which was seen as the enemy. Therefore, the question of whether the protests should be violent or not, and how different people on the stage responded to these norms, was not as clear-cut. Leaders had to constantly evaluate their decisions and account for potential risks associated with them. As the leaders managed to establish certain norms of expected behaviour arising from the non-violent shared social identity, activities that were antinormative for the protesters did not spread amongst them and were shunned. Theoretically, this is not surprising, as acts of individuals (e.g., person on the stage) are not automatically adopted by the crowds, especially if the people in the crowd do not see the acts as being representative of their understanding of the shared social identity (Reicher, 1984; Turner, 1982).

Finally, leaders also recognised that the wide mobilisation, presumably thanks to the non-violent character of the protests that were not disrupted by the police, eventually outnumbered the police. This then served as a protective factor for them (also see Drury et al., 2003), and shifted the leaders’ perspective about whether the protests could continue (and achieve the movement’s goals) and empowered them to act further:

¹¹⁹ To use a shovel is a saying that comes from an idiom of ‘giving someone a shovel’, which means forcing someone to work manually. It was common to force people to degrade people to work in manual labour as a form of humiliation in ‘communism’. In the revolution, the idiom was twisted towards ‘using a shovel’ – to use the shovel as a form of violence towards the dominant group.

Extract 19. L4: *Are you a policeman? Come to the stage. A worker? Come to the stage. For example, this was already clear when Dubcek gave his performance [representative of Prague Spring] ... it was clear that all aspects of the society stand behind us, and the only way to go around this, for those in power, would be to come with tanks and army and to suppress it all. And even that would be tricky because there were too many of us already...*

[...]

We had a feeling that...the most important thing was not to get couple thousands of people the street...like in Prague or during the Candlelight Demonstration, but to get so many people, to get so many people...that they [the police] couldn't beat them all. That they couldn't beat them up!

Also:

Extract 20. L1: *Well, the main aspect was that every social group had a reason for demanding a huge social change. So, we wanted, for example, that a member of the police would speak there [as part of the protest event]. And he did. Well, we knew that the police was ready to act. And they were. It was not a small thing. We were afraid to go to prison. [...] And for that, the policeman was there. So that he could tell all the policemen and also others, that you don't have to be afraid, the police are in this with you.*

The aim to include policemen ('the enemy') on the stage was not just a strategy aimed at decreasing violence and spreading non-violent norms and potential clashes between protesters and the police. It was also a performative strategy that put the police on the same

stage as the leaders and ‘included’ them performatively in the movement. In this way, leaders tried to widen shared social identity, such that everyone felt like a member of the common ingroup. It was a practical and visible way of expressing these widened ingroup boundaries.

Summary of Theme 2. This theme showed that nonviolent resistance was not a simple and easy decision to make. The leaders actively contributed to creating group norms and considered the followers in the process. They felt the responsibility for such decisions as these could not only ruin the movement’s goals, but also the followers’ safety, and the followers’ own expectations from the protests, which they were also attuned to. At the same time, they focused on the police and controlled for not giving them a reason to suppress the protesters. They sought to achieve this by including the police in the protests performatively (e.g., hugging them, giving them flowers). Leaders managed the safety and security in the protests with sensitivity to the protesters’ self-policing and their shunning of counter-normative behaviours, which is a common behaviour we see in crowds (Reicher, 1984). It could be argued that the normative environment established in the protests was a process of co-production between leaders and followers (Haslam et al., 2023). While these points will be expanded towards the end of the present analysis, it seemed relevant to briefly reflect upon them here, as these steps ensured that the mobilisation was growing, and leaders were able to build upon the success of these protests.

Theme 3: Gaining Allies to Increase Mobilisation. The search for allies in every domain of society, and the active involvement of these allies in the protest events became a key activity for the leaders. This is because leaders recognised that despite gaining initial visibility and legitimacy, they still needed to show the state authorities that a wide range of groups continue to be invested in the protests. They saw this allyship as a main resource for the continuity of the movement:

Extract 21. L14: *We had leaders, we had visibility, we had a structure of leadership, a decision-making body, ways in which we got help from for example students, nature conservationists, and actors, who went to speak in factories Well, in a matter of days, we had a mass membership, followers...*

In this way, leaders were able to show that ‘everyone’ stood with them, which challenged the regime’s powerful position. However, the mass mobilisation itself was not enough for the movement to succeed (see Schock, 2013; for a similar argument). One group that would help the leaders challenge the state authorities were the workers in factories¹²⁰, who were not part of the movement from the start. To get workers involved in the movement, leaders organised a nationwide event - the General strike. Organising a strike as a form of mobilising the workers by asking them to stop working was a powerful way of showing the regime that it had lost its dominant position. This is because the Communist Party took power as the single leading entity in Czechoslovakia with a strike of a similar kind. Thus, taking power from the Party by organising a strike and mobilising workers as part of Public Against Violence was a major achievement. On November 27, the PAV asked all people to join the strike, and in this way, demonstrate that all aspects of society were supporting Public Against Violence and the Civic Forum¹²¹. The strike demanded that the Communist Party resign from its leading position because it had lost support:

Extract 22. L4: *The strike was important because it was really key to express that, what we announced at the beginning, which was to search for allies, allies, allies,*

¹²⁰ This makes sense also from the argumentative point of view. In Chapter 3, I showed that the regime often delegitimised resistance groups by claiming that they were not representative of the ‘nation’, because the factory workers (‘true citizens’) were not part of the resistance movement. Thus, by challenging this notion, and mobilising workers for resistance, the opposition ensured that the regime lost this argument.

¹²¹ This event happened across the entire Czechoslovakia and was coordinated by CF in the Czech region and by PAV in the Slovak region.

allies [...], the question was how to change the parliament, how will we achieve change, in that, in the National Theatre, where the parliament agreed to cancel the fourth article of the Constitution. And for that reason, it was important to show, that it is not only the street [referring to the crowds] that demands change, but it's also the industries, it's the people, and really, in the Marxist sense, these are the masses (laughing). Masses, which joined us [the revolutionary movement].

Note that Leader 4 spoke about the strike with a sense of humour, since the way the mass mobilisation was executed – by striking – was one of the main characteristics of how ‘communism’ began in Czechoslovakia (see 1.4). Leader 4 also very clearly re-defined the “masses” that the regime claimed to represent as people who actually supported the oppositional movement.

However, the strike was still taking place in a repressive context, and despite the successes of the movement, there was still a possibility that the strike would be unsuccessful. For example, the state representatives still argued that the planned strike was impossible to take place because it would disrupt the entire country and would be economically damaging (). Therefore, the movement leaders strategically asked essential workers (e.g., emergency services, medical staff) to join the General Strike with a symbolic protest, rather than stop working:

Extract 23. L1: *we were thinking in a way of how to do it [the strike] such that hospitals would be functioning. So, we said, OK, let doctors and nurses have ribbons, they will be working normally, but they would have PAV ribbons, back then something like this already existed, and in this way, they will express that they are striking.*

Summary of Theme 3. This theme shows that leaders also paid attention to the progress of the movement. They ensured this by gaining allies from groups that were not yet part of the movement (e.g., workers), and for this, they organised a different type of event – the General Strike¹²². This strike demanded the end of the Communist Party’s hegemony in Czechoslovakia. Leaders were strategic about how to overcome the regime’s demobilisation strategies once again, and they achieved (almost) nationwide mobilisation to challenge the regime. They did this by combining a strike in workplaces, where people stopped working for one hour, with a symbolic strike, where essential services kept working, but symbolically protested by wearing tricolour ribbons to work (note that similar strategies of symbolic protest with candles were used in the ‘Candlelight Demonstration’ – see Chapter 4).

Short Discussion of Section 1. This analysis aimed to show how the leaders created the context in which they could act as *identity leaders* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020). In the previous chapter (Chapter 4), I showed that in a repressive context simply assembling people required an immense amount of strategizing from the leaders. Without such strategizing, they would not be able to overcome the regime’s demobilisation strategies (for the reasons discussed in Chapters 3 and 4). The issue of visibility and legitimacy became central issues for the leaders of the Velvet Revolution (1989). Achieving this can help crowd members to feel visible and recognised by other groups, which gives them a sense of empowerment and motivation to act further (e.g., Drury & Reicher, 2005, 2009).

Additionally, leaders created collective events in a repressive setting. This means that they were attuned to people's fear and perceived risk associated with participating in protests (see Ayanian et al., 2021). Leaders were attuned to peoples’ motivation to be part of the

¹²² After the strike, the Communist Party resigned because over 75% of the workers no longer supported the Communist government (Jašek et al., 2015).

collective action, especially those who were afraid of or were restricted from protesting openly, was also something that leaders resolved – by encouraging symbolic protest together with open protest (see Chapter 4 for a similar argument).

Despite their position of being leaders, being part of the movement did not separate them from their position of also experiencing the changes as participants of this large-scale social change process. Leaders also needed to feel motivated, resilient, fearless and legitimated by the public to act further, especially in a repressive setting, where they were aware of the risks and many of them directly experienced the consequences of being a resistance activist (i.e., having previous experience with imprisonment, house searches, loss of employment, etc.). There are limitations to these claims as the data is retrospective, so it's not possible to fully establish what was happening during the specific events, however, the interview data clearly shows that leaders needed to feel these feelings in the same way that the followers did. Further research is needed to explore the psychological elements of enduring empowerment in the context of repression, as well as the exploration of the complex relationship between leaders and followers.

In this analysis section, I extended the *identity leadership* framework. I show that leaders were adaptive with the choice of their strategies, they had a sense of organizational acumen and social insight, acting as *engineers of identity*¹²³ (Haslam et al., 2011/2020). Whereas we implicitly recognise that leaders need to have these skills, the present study is, to my knowledge, among the first ones to address these questions about leaders' strategies by speaking directly to the movement leaders, particularly of people mobilising resistance in repressive regimes. These organizational and strategic aspects of leadership played a role in sustaining the movement and allowing it to progress by capitalising on the support from the

¹²³ This terminology is part of the Haslam et al. (2011/2020) *identity leadership* framework which has suggested that leaders need to engage in strategic steps, on top of building shared social identity. It is discussed as part of the wider scope of *identity impresarioship* in Haslam et al. (2011/2020).

followers. Once leaders created the context where the collective events were able to happen, the performative aspects of leaders as *identity impresarios* could be explored. The subsequent section of the analysis focuses on these steps.

5.3.3 Section 2 – Leaders as Choreographers of the Movement

This section of the analysis focuses on leaders' role in instinctively recognising the importance of creating spaces for identity enactment. This was achieved through protests called 'meetings' and other collective events, in which the leaders designed the space and the choreography – acting as *impresarios of identity*. These performative aspects of creating identity-related experiences were accompanied by leaders' motivation to give agency to the followers and make them active participants in not only experiencing but also in co-creating the movement with them (Haslam et al., 2023). In addition, a sense of choreography was also apparent from the leaders' construction of their self-image as representatives of the movement, which I discuss towards the end of this section, arguing that the leader's image is also a performative aspect that can be considered as part of the elements of *identity impresarioship*.

Theme 1: Designing the Space and Choreography of Collective Events. When asked about how the leaders designed the protests, they openly spoke about their aim to create mass protests as events that would be memorable and emotional for the participants, and about their overall focus on creating a positive atmosphere in these events. When they described the protests, even their use of vocabulary evoked theatre-like, performative events. For instance, they talked about the 'dramaturgy' of the protests (see extract below). These 'meetings', which was the term that the leaders used to refer to the protests, became a platform for communicating their agenda to the ever-growing group of supporters:

Extract 1. L4: *Well, we thought, that the important thing, the really important thing, the absolutely key thing would be that the meetings had dramaturgy, script, yeah? [...] So we knew that, if now, if there will be a stage, and if there will be a lot of people, we have to say who will go to the stage, what will be the message, what will be the goal of that, what are we going to try to achieve.*

This role of leaders as ‘dramaturgists’ involved the selection of topics that would be spoken about, as well as writing the speeches for the selected PAV representatives who spoke on the stage, editing the speeches made by external speakers, and creating an order of performances in each protest day. All these elements contributed to the choreography of the event.

On another level, leaders also recognised that they had to pay attention to *how* the meetings would be managed on the stage and *how* the speeches would be performed – in other words, they paid attention to the performances on the stage. Within the leadership group, they selected specific speakers, the so-called *stage leaders*¹²⁴ who had good speaking skills and thus were considered to be good public representatives of the PAV on the stages:

Extract 2. L3: *There always were the people of the stages, the stage leaders, but the stage leaders would not have anything to say on the stage if there would not be a group of people who prepared the software for them. Yeah? Well, what they will be talking about? How they will be speaking? [...] you could have amazing people preparing the materials for the speakers, the speeches, and the dramaturgy of the speeches if you didn't have someone who would provide the actual audio technology*

¹²⁴ Leaders specifically referred to the protest stage with the word ‘tribune’ and the speakers were called ‘tribunes’ or ‘tribune leaders’ in Slovak.

(laughing) so that you could have everyone on the square listening to the speeches and songs, where there were hundreds of thousands of people.

Leaders also mentioned that they were aware that there was a difference between rhetoric and performance. Accordingly, having a representative who was good at speaking in front of people was important to them, however, they also appreciated that it did not necessarily mean that the same person was able to write the speech themselves. For this reason, different leaders were responsible for writing the speeches (e.g., L4) and editing them before the stage leaders performed them on stage. It was this coordination of skills between different leaders that allowed them to create successful events.

Another really important element in designing protests and other events with a certain atmosphere was leaders' previous experience with organising underground cultural events, which were in essence resistance events since organising an independent concert or an art exhibition was almost impossible during 'communism' (see Chapter 3, for a discussion about demobilisation strategies). For example, Leader 5 organised such events for the youth during 1980s. Leaders built upon this creativity in designing these protests, and they encouraged these multi-dimensional concert-like events where people could bring their children and experience a positive atmosphere with others. These decisions were also consistent with the leaders' encouragement of a non-violent atmosphere as a norm in the protests (discussed in Theme 2, Section 1). Leader 5 in the extract below describes this aim to organise events that bring about a "*good feeling about life*", in other words, attaching positive contents to the movement's identity:

Extract 3. L5: *I was organizing concerts for the youth...exhibitions with bands and artists. Even the ones that were banned. And I was always doing this because of a*

certain atmosphere, which is created in these huge collective events, which are based on music and a good feeling about life. Nowadays I usually claim, that November squares [referring to 1989] were a different version of the Pohoda Festival [the biggest current art/music festival taking place every year in Slovakia]. But back then, there was more speaking and less music. However the people's mentality was set like that, as you have it set up at a U2 concert or a festival like Pohoda.

[...]

There were really tons of moments, both happy ones and sad ones, one of the saddest ones was when we commemorated a student who was shot by Nazis. And [L9], then said, let us not forget, let us not forget about her altogether. And then, everyone, with their voices lowered, whispering, they repeated, 100,000 people, "altogether". It suddenly felt like a prayer somewhere in a huge basilica. And there were really many of these strong moments.

Organising happy events that were absent under the leadership of the regime sent a clear message about the content of the shared social identity (who "we" are and what "we" can do). The atmosphere, as Leader 5 described, created platforms for communication with the audience. However, it wasn't just about the choreography and dramaturgy of the speeches by the leaders and the singer's concerts. Many situations included the participants on a performative level. For example, Leader 9 engaged in collectively whispering the word 'altogether' with the protesters. Many of these small inclusive acts like collective singing and whispering illustrate *identity impresarioship*, or "making people matter" in collective events (Haslam et al., 2011/2020). Note that Leader 5 also discussed how this atmosphere tends to be recreated in current collective events such as the Pohoda music festival (see 2.6.3),

implying the long-term impact of collective events, and the transmission of a particular atmosphere to subsequent collective events.

Organising collective events during the Velvet Revolution involved collaboration between different groups of people, including singers and actors in these protest events. I already discussed this strategic element of gaining allies (refer to Theme 3, Section 1) but the search for allies was also involved in the performative elements that created meaning in the protest events. For example, some of these musicians, who performed on the stages during protest days, composed special songs as a reaction to the political situation in Czechoslovakia and performed them on the stage. The leaders described the importance of the emotional and positive atmosphere that such performances created in the protests:

Extract 4. L6: *When Ivan Hoffman sang the song¹²⁵ there, the crowd reacted very, very, very strong. All those meetings were a bit of a performance, something like a theatre, it had its structure, dramaturgy, truly dramatic...it was a performance*

¹²⁵ ‘The song’ by Hoffman called ‘*We promised ourselves love*’ is referred to as the anthem of the Velvet Revolution. It is a song that was composed by Hoffman who also performed it in the mass meetings in Bratislava as a reaction to the violent police suppression of the student march on the 17th of November.

*“We saw those who showed their hands empty,
they were empty and it was still dark,
ages have passed through our streets ever since,
we woke up from a bad dream.
We promised ourselves love, we promised to tell the truth only,
we promised ourselves to endure, we promised ourselves a new day.
The youngsters showed empty hands for us,
they were beaten for us, for our silence,
ages have passed through our streets ever since
and the last one rang.
Let’s all show our empty hands together with them,
and in them will be our future,
let’s shake hands together in our streets,
there was really enough disbelief and fear.
We promised ourselves love, we promised to tell the truth only,
we promised ourselves to endure, we promised ourselves a new day.”*
The original performance of the song in SNP square is available [here](#).

The climax of the emotional atmosphere created in the ‘meetings’ was also visible in the ‘Ahoy Europe!’ march that the leaders organised in the later stage of the revolution (see Table 9, for a timeline of events). This march was associated with a particularly meaningful space – the border between Eastern and Western Europe. Leaders recognised that the border zone was an extremely traumatic space for most people, especially because of the geographical position of Bratislava, a large city occupied by hundreds of thousands of citizens, that was located within a walking distance from the border. Some people, for example, the citizens of Petržalka neighbourhood, could see the border zone from their houses but could never walk towards it. If they did, they risked severe injury or death (see 5.2.3). It was a visible memento of the division between East and West (i.e., like the Berlin Wall in Germany) and a space that did not belong to the people who lived nearby.

By organising a march through this border zone (see Figure 22), leaders created a psychological concreteness of the situation which materialised their achievements in the revolution – ending the ‘communist’ regime after negotiating the resignation of the Party from its leading position and opening the borders between East and West. Specifically for this event, the leaders ensured that when the ‘Jarovce-Kitsee’ and ‘Berg’ border crossings opened for the first time, people who walked across the border on the day were encouraged to cut the parts of the fence which was built there. The means of reclaiming a space that was inaccessible to people for decades could be seen as a strategy of the leaders creating a possibility of collective psychological ownership (Verkuyten & Martinovic, 2017) of the space in the march to Hainburg:

Extract 5. L4: *But there was border control everywhere, with dogs, and with machine guns. And on the other side of the fence, there was a different world! It was a Moon for us, it was really like somewhere on the Moon, somewhere completely different!*

And we also knew about the occasional shootings on the border, and the people in the village heard the shots. So, this is how we saw it [previously]. And it was at the same time so close to us! And I thought, let's do a trip to Hainburg.

Also:

Extract 6. L3: *For us, the iron fence on the borders, behind the Danube was a symbol. Symbol of the lack of freedom. And the vision that we will throw down this fence, and that we will walk, I was never in my life in the West [...] I was 45 years old in 1989, and I was never in the West before! Yeah? You know, throwing down the fence, and the idea that we will walk towards (laughing) the borderline, and we will walk to Austria! It was simply something unbelievable! And on one beautiful day, it actually happened. That fence was torn down, and people walked towards Hainburg!*

Many leaders became emotional and had to pause the interviews when describing this march. Emotions did not escape them. They were not just external choreographers of the event, but also participants of the event. Similar to the fear that leaders shared with participants in the initial stages of the demonstration (see Theme 1 and 2, Section 1), now they shared positive emotions. For the participants, but also for the leaders themselves this was the first time when they could freely cross the border after 40 years of restricted travel. The freedom of travel was something that could now be celebrated and translated into people's lived reality – both by crossing the border and by physically scraping the boundaries between Eastern and Western Europe.

Another achievement of freedom to travel was the ability of those who lived in exile to return to their homeland after being banned from the country for years, such as singer Karel Kryl (see Figure 22). His presence in the Ahoy Europe march embodied this

achievement of the PAV movement's negotiations with the 'communist' government, and served as a concrete example of this new possibility:

Extract 7. L5: *Well, what could be a better symbol of the new Europe, that the one where in the area of the cruellest and most obvious border, this person [Karel Kryl], who was forbidden to sing was now able to sing.*

Since the structural elements that leaders engaged in to plan these collective events were already illustrated in Section 1 of the analysis, I will not discuss the structural elements of designing the 'Ahoy Europe!' march here further. However, in this event, leaders also considered the structural aspects of designing it. For instance, Kryl was singing from a boat on the nearby Danube River, and the concert stage – the boat – was moving with the marching crowd, while the sound was broadcast through walkie-talkies that people had in the march (see Figure 22, 23).

I will now consider a deviant case. Apart from the instances of a successful 'choreography' of the meetings and other events discussed above, the leaders also reflected on the events that were not positively received by the audience, and thus, later considered as non-effective in establishing the feelings of 'making people matter':

Extract 8. L3: *There were a lot of centres, which were organizing these activities. And in these centres, like Bratislava, Kosice or Prague, everyone always thinks that they know the most. And so in Bratislava, at a certain moment, this initiative of sending a train to eastern Slovakia came up, because we thought that, we thought that, that they don't know much about what's happening [in Bratislava]. And that was of course very stupid of us! The Kosice underground was intensively communicating with*

Prague, I think, and they had their own leadership figures. But the fact is that the train went from Bratislava to Kosice, and the fact is that our motivation was very good and very honest, and the fact is that the people from the East were a bit angry with us [...]

So those guys, both Eastern and Western talked about it, the purpose was good, the execution of this was also good, and it was really important because these people were finally meeting one another, mixing, and getting to know each other better. But, the vision of the division of a more progressive capital city [Bratislava], and less progressive, less developed eastern Slovakia, was unjust.

Extract 8 describes an instance where the ‘Velvet Revolution Train’, which was supposed to create a sense of togetherness between different regions in Slovakia was ineffective because the Eastern regions perceived it as patronising. The PAV movement was supposed to be cohesive, united, and egalitarian. By making these plans to inform and educate the East of the country (without checking whether this was necessary), the leaders had inadvertently created a hierarchical sub-grouping that threatened unity and contravened some essential group values. Thus, reflecting back, Leader 3 describes that the idea of announcing the revolution and spreading the news about it to Eastern Slovakia from the West was not received positively because instead of connecting people, it created divisions. This was particularly because there was no need to announce the revolution in the East, since the people in Eastern parts were already mobilising and protesting¹²⁶. Note that these insights about what worked for people and what did not, as well as the leaders’ ability to sense that in the East they were perceived as ‘other’, was necessary to keep the movement going. Not all

¹²⁶ One of the reason for this division is that the resistance groups in Eastern Slovakia were more connected to Prague’s opposition, especially because they often studied in Prague and returned to Eastern Slovakia cities. Bratislava was less connected to Prague and remained autonomous in their resistance activities.

events where effective, but leaders needed to recognise what “us” means (i.e., particular shared social identity), and what are the limits of it.

Summary of Theme 1. This theme discussed how leaders made participants of the collective events feel that they matter – acting as *identity impresarios* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020). This was achieved through a careful choreography of the events, including the selection of speakers and singers, and the use of meaningful spaces (e.g., border zone), to create events where people experienced a positive and emotional atmosphere. The sensitivity to the participants’ experiences allowed the leaders to create this orchestrated experience while making it seem effortless, and maintaining a happening-like spontaneous atmosphere, where people could express their identity – by creating situations in which participants could engage in collective practices and experience the collective psychological ownership of spaces that were not previously theirs due to the repressive nature of the regime.

Theme 2: Co-creating the Movement With the Followers. The previous theme discussed how the leaders choreographed collective events. In addition to the choreography created by the leaders towards the followers, leaders also sought to engage the followers in the process of co-creating the movement. For example, the leaders collaboratively named the movement organisation (discussed in Theme 1, Section 1), and encouraged the collaborative principle in developing the visual aspect of the movement’s identity – the PAV logo (see Figure 25):

Extract 9. L6: *Well, that [logo of the PAV] was made by Karol Rosmany, the artist. We had a name [the movement organisation], and the artists were very fast in terms of producing the visual aspect. And... well... V as a letter is a very beautiful symbol of victory, that’s a well-known information*

Also:

Extract 10. L12: *You know it was this absolutely overflowing activity of the people who created the movement, it was an enormous boost of creativity of the artists, immediately, they created with a beautiful colourful logo, they immediately printed out posters, they created the badges, people started to wear them immediately.*

Specifically, leaders explained that given that the PAV was a community of mutually interlinked people from the culture and art sphere, and some members were also university professors at The Academy of Fine Arts and Design¹²⁷, the process of creating visual symbols was based on these pre-existing networks. It happened organically, and it was collaborative. The letter V in the logo (in Slovak, ‘Public’ is ‘Verejnost’, starting with the letter “V”) was also associated with victory. However, the victory sign (or “V-sign”) is not unique to this revolution. It was also used by Winston Churchill, to signify the end of World War 2. It was also used under the name of a ‘peace sign’ in the USA during the 1960s in the context of the Vietnam War. What is specific to this revolution is how the “V” of the victory sign was incorporated into the PAV logo (see Figure 25). Apart from the V, note that the logo was created using national colours – blue and red on a white background which invokes the national character of the movement since these are also the colours of the national flag (see Figure 9 in section 3.4; for the national flag).

¹²⁷ Art institutions and theatres were always associated with freedom of expression and thus were part of the opposition since the beginning of the ‘communist’ regime in Czechoslovakia.

Figure 25.

The Public Against Violence logo by Karol Rosmány¹²⁸



Extract 10 illustrates that leaders also focused on creating ways in which the supporters could easily display their group membership even without having the badge (which people could get for free at the PAV headquarters) or a protest banner. One of the key aspects of the PAV logo that made it simple to display was that it could be expressed just by using people's hands. The PAV logo, composed of the V letter allowed people to create a symbol of "V" with their fingers. The "V" then signified their group membership but it was also generally seen as a symbol of victory and hope:

Extract 11. L13: *...the students created this V sign. They created this V as a victory symbol, out of a hand, and this symbol was also used on the stage, during the huge meetings. And in a week's time, the V was used to create a logo with Public Against Violence, and then a student named Fondr created it. So, the V was created by students but this was then upgraded with the name of PAV¹²⁹*

Q: Why it was a V?

¹²⁸ Retrieved from: <https://scd.sk/dielo-smd/verejnost-proti-nasiliu/>

¹²⁹ The word 'Public' translates as 'Verejnost', so the 'V' from the victory sign could be combined with PAV's name in Slovak language. Similarly, the word 'victory' includes a V initial as it is translated as 'vitazstvo'.

A: Well, it's a sign of victory, and you can use your fingers to simply show it as a gesture, so it was a very easy and straightforward sign. Everyone got it and everyone could make that gesture.

[...]

Q: And so what did you do? What was your main role?

Well, my main role...actually...a lot of artists, and students were painting entire walls, fences, we were creating posters, announcing the meetings, these posters were huge, 2-3 meters long, and we were sticking them to the walls, and so on. In Arts Union, we were painting, and we were doing also other events in the building, like auctions, because people were coming to us when they had some problems, or financial difficulties so we were fundraising money for them, and these kinds of activities.

The leaders explained that the PAV headquarters were located nearby university buildings and there was a constant collaboration between the 'Student Movement' organisation and 'Public Against Violence'. These grounds served as open workshops and were used for making banners and creating other symbols – allowing for co-creation of the movement.

This spontaneity and co-creation of the movement is also apparent from certain symbols that people brought to the protests with them. For example, leaders described that some of the typical symbols seen in the crowds, such as keys that people used to make a ringing noise¹³⁰, were not specifically designed by the leaders but people brought them spontaneously:

¹³⁰ Ringing with keys, as well as making noise with alarm clock were activities that followers engaged in during the mass protests. This noise was supposed to signify the change of time, the change of an era. This comes from the idea that the bells also make a ringing noise to signify an ending of something - in this case the noise was supposed to signify the end of the 'communist' era.

Extract 12. L1: *Well, the keys which people used seem to be something spontaneous of the people who came to the squares. They also used clocks to symbolise the change of time. Then there were [tricolour]ribbons¹³¹ and then there were PAV badges.*

Leaders were open to people's own interpretations of the meaning of the movement's identity, and they allowed people to use additional symbols, together with the PAV symbols such as the badges. It was also common that people across the country contributed towards the movement in various ways (we could refer to it as grassroots activism). For example, many people spontaneously created posters for their shop displays, and many created street art¹³², which positively reacted to the demands that leaders communicated to the people in the mass meetings (see Figure 27, left photo):

Extract 13. L7: *We [leaders] demanded the Communist Party to terminate their function. And this was on the 21st [November] evening [...] and overnight, the demand was spread across the entire republic...and in Prague, this manifesto was already available there on the 22nd [November], glued to some street walls.*

Additionally, leaders endorsed the idea of artists using the space of the 'Ahoy Europe!' march as an identity-relevant space, full of meaningful experiences. In this case, it was the celebration of the achievements of the revolution, and people's ability to become part of Europe, that was expressed by an art installation in the space of the march – a heart made of iron wire (see Figure 23):

¹³¹ Tricolour ribbon is a national symbol – the Czechoslovak flag has the colours of a tricolour (white, blue, red; see Figure 9).

¹³² These are available in the archive of the Slovak National Gallery: <https://1989.sng.sk/plagaty>

Extract 14. L5: *The painter Brunovský came and with other artists, they made a heart shape from the iron fence, a huge heart of Europe [Slovakia is in the middle of Europe, so sometimes people metaphorically refer to it as the heart of Europe]. And there were the stones [another artwork], and they did this a day before so that when people arrived, they would already see the heart. So, there was also this element of art.*

Summary of Theme 2. This theme described the leaders' role in enabling the followers to co-create the movement. In other words, the leaders allowed the participants, students, artists, and singers to make the movement 'theirs'. The leaders endorsed the process of mutual collaboration in the collective events, and this allowed them to have contextually rich events. They encouraged artists to develop the movement's visual symbols, and they supported the followers in bringing their own symbols to the protests and accepted them as part of the movement's identity.

Figure 26.

Left: Workers in Rempo Bratislava making the badges for the Public Against Violence. Photo by Ivan Rychlo; Right: Protesters showing the victory sign with their fingers during a demonstration in SNP square in Bratislava, 1989. Photo by Jan Lorincz¹³³



¹³³ Retrieved from: <https://1989.sng.sk/verejnost-proti-nasiliu> <https://1989.sng.sk/demonstracie>

Theme 3: Leaders Strategically Creating Their Public Image. When the leaders started organising the ‘meetings’, many of them focused on the practical issues of designing the events, as well as the overall choreography (discussed in previous themes). However, as the situation unfolded, they also recognised that the choreography of the events would not be complete if they did not consider their own public image. Cultural freedom, freedom of expression, listening to certain types of music, having a longer hairstyle and a beard, being able to travel and being influenced by different cultures or different religions – this all was treated as an offence by the state authorities and even used as a form of discrediting the leaders and ‘othering’ them in the past 40 years of ‘communism’ in Czechoslovakia (see Chapter 3; also see Reicher & Hopkins, 2001, for a similar argument). Not fitting into society was seen as a form of ‘deviation’¹³⁴, or individual everyday forms of resistance (choosing to wear certain clothes, or have a long hairstyle; Vollhardt et al., 2020) and many of these opposition leaders had to pay the price for their free spirit behaviour, for example, by being banned from education or from obtaining highly qualified jobs. Therefore, the clothes that leaders were wearing on the one hand signified the liberalisation era of the 1960s (e.g., converse sneakers), but also the knitted hats and sweaters signified that these people worked in ‘lower-working’ conditions (i.e., working in the exterior instead of an office, working as miners, cleaners, or labourers in central heating services). They disagreed with the regime’s ideology and were not allowed to work in their original professions, instead the regime forced them to work in manual low-level jobs:

Extract 15. L5: *So in Western Europe and US, new waves of hippies movement were created, or in France, the revolution of students in 68, and in here, it was of course*

¹³⁴ Deviation from the norm was considered unacceptable by the regime and had negative connotations. Hence, the leaders defined their activities as forms of ‘positive deviation’ and called themselves as positive deviants to signify that deviation from the norm can be also a positive thing.

the theme of Prague Spring and Dubcek, and we of course, had back then from 17 to 25 years. And this generation, which was formed by big beat, Beatles, Jimmy Hendrix, but also Hippies, that is us. That is us, from the youngest to the oldest [...] If I was to think about what was the Velvet Revolution, whether it was the beginning of a new era, I would like to instead say that even though it started a new era, it was a climax of the era which began in the sixties.

Extract 16. L1: *...we were a rock generation! You couldn't do anything about that. [...] And our cultural symbol was converse shoes, which we had to fight for during communism, for long hair and for the sweaters. These were part of our personality. So this is how we were presenting ourselves. [...] Well we were wearing sweaters! We were wearing sweaters because we wanted to express that we are not the typical politicians in Tesil¹³⁵, communist politicians who were always wearing Tesil suits and dederon¹³⁶ shirts.*

In the extracts above, the leaders described that their public image was influenced by their personal resistance histories (e.g., wearing sweaters), and by the 1960s liberalisation movement. This was the era during which the leaders were growing up. The leaders were aware of wider cultural trends and societal changes (e.g., hippies), upon which they were capitalizing when building their own public image. Such image also symbolised a more Western orientation of the opposition leaders. Apart from using these aspects of the Western culture, in many ways, this free-spirited representation was also a form of performative individual resistance to repression of using one's own body as a protest site (Orazani &

¹³⁵ Type of artificial fibre produced in Czechoslovakia.

¹³⁶ Type of artificial fibre produced in the Soviet states (DDR or 'dederon' - means produced in the German Democratic Republic).

Teymoori, in press). Sweaters and long beards¹³⁷ (see Figure 27, right photo) served as a strong contrast that allowed the resistance leaders visually (and ideologically) distinguish themselves from the state representatives.

In addition to the clothing and hairstyles, leaders also utilised their own personal history as part of their public image. For example, the selection of L9 to become one of the stage leaders was based on this aspect of his previous history of individual resistance against the regime, embodied in his life story:

Extract 17. L2: *L9 was a key figure, a famous one [...]and since L9 was famous before [the revolution] because he gave up the title of national artist¹³⁸ [this would be a title given to the most influential culture representatives by the Communist Party], he signed some petitions like the Several Sentences [resistance petition in 1989]*

Summary of Theme 3. This theme discussed another aspect of the performative aspects of the role of leadership, which was their ability to build public image. Being prototypical members of the group, yet distinct ones was a key aspect of identity leadership that leaders recognised as important for them to become leaders. They engaged in building a distinct identity that would resonate with the group they tried to mobilise and that was in clear contrast to the outgroup (e.g., the Communist Party; see Figure 27).

¹³⁷ Note the absence of women leaders of the opposition movement on the photo (see Figure 27, right photo), as well as the lack of information about the ideal image of a women leader.

¹³⁸ Not accepting a prize from the Communist Party for one's achievements was seen as a resistance activity during 'communism', because not many people were willing to stand up to the regime in any way.

Figure 27.

Left: Posters and manifestos glued to shop fronts in 1989, nearby SNP square in Bratislava. For example, the top left poster says: “Tearing down a poster is not dialogue!” Photo by Jan Lorincz; Right: Negotiation between the Public Against Violence leaders (left side of the table) and the Communist Party representatives (right side of the table)¹³⁹



Short Discussion of Section 2. The aim of this analysis was to explore whether and how leaders acted as the choreographers of collective events, meaning whether they deliberately designed the events as spaces where people could experience what it means to be part of this movement. In other words, this study tried to explore the various aspects of identity *impresarioship* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020), by directly asking the leaders about their strategies. The analysis showed - as we would expect based on previous findings (e.g., Reicher & Haslam, 2017b) - that leaders set up collective events almost as theatre stages – in which they gave speeches, but also hosted singers, and other publicly-known figures such as actors and former Prague Spring politicians, to create a positive, peaceful, and optimistic atmosphere. These events served as a visualisation of the future, of what Czechoslovakia *could be* once ‘communism’ had ended, similar to what prefigurative politics tries to achieve (Moreira Fians, 2022).

¹³⁹ Left photo retrieved from: <https://1989.sng.sk/generalny-strajk> ; Right photo retrieved from: <https://domov.sme.sk/c/22222981/november-1989-nezna-ci-zamatova-obcianske-forum-alebo-vpn.html>

While the analysis focused mainly on the practical means of these events, leaders also acted as *identity entrepreneurs* (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001) – by giving speeches at the events, but also creating an inclusive shared social identity, such that everyone could identify with the movement. The mobilisation for the movement was influenced by the content of the categories of what it means to be ‘us’, which in this case was everyone who was against violence – hence the name “Public Against Violence”. Similarly, note that the protests were framed as “meetings”, instead of calling them “protests” or “demonstrations”, which also implies the strategic communication about the non-violent framing of the protests, consistent with the actual non-violent norms that leaders established (discussed in Analysis Section 1).

One of the key findings of this analysis is *how* the leaders designed collective events. Thanks to the richness of the PAV movement, it provided me with an opportunity to explore the range of activities that leaders did to create such emotional events. It was clear that leaders paid attention to the atmosphere of the events, and they had an understanding that the atmosphere was key. Another important element, which often isn’t discussed in greater detail, is that in many instances while leaders ‘directed’ the choreography of the events, it was actually a process of enabling the followers to co-create the movement with them (see Haslam et al., 2023, for a similar argument). While in this study, I did not analyse the perspective of the followers, it is clear from the analysis of the leaders’ perspective that leaders created ideal conditions for the co-creation of the movement to happen. They allowed for the spontaneity and creativity that people came up with – bringing their own symbols to express a change of time (with ringing bells, alarm clocks, and keys). In the ‘Ahoy Europe!’ march, they deliberately engaged the participants in tearing down the iron fence and used the meaning of the space to create an emotional atmosphere (see Hopkins & Dixon, 2006; for a similar argument). The activity of tearing down the fence was a way of expressing what the future could be like, under the umbrella of the movement’s identity. Alexander (2011) argues

that culture and resistance are often intertwined, so the creativity and rich cultural elements that were used by the leaders of these protests were not unique to the Velvet Revolution, or to Czechoslovakia (e.g., see Kubik, 1994; for a discussion of these strategies in Poland), it was how these leaders used it that created unique experiences for the participants.

Finally, while we are implicitly aware of the fact that influential figures (e.g., politicians, actors, singers, athletes) pay attention to their public image building, in a context of repression, where resistance groups were never allowed to be visible, the question of the public image was something that leaders paid special attention to only when they became more visible. They used their image (e.g., clothing, hairstyles) to make themselves distinct from the outgroup, and at the same time, prototypical, yet not average members of the ingroup. The authenticity of this image was also emphasised by their personal life stories of individual resistance. A similar argument was made by Haslam and Reicher (2017b), in the analysis of Donald Trump's leadership, who created an image of an 'ordinary American' (e.g., wearing the red MAGA cap; Reicher & Haslam, 2017b). However, unlike the case of Trump's leadership which is based on external observations, this particular dataset lent itself to exploring leaders' role in creating their self-image.

In the subsequent and also the final chapter, I turn to summarising and discussing the findings from this thesis.

Chapter 6 – General Discussion

“Let not any one pacify his conscience by the delusion that he can do no harm if he takes no part, and forms no opinion. Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends, than that good men should look on and do nothing. He is not a good man who, without a protest, allows wrong to be committed in his name, and with the means which he helps to supply, because he will not trouble himself to use his mind on the subject.”

John Stuart Mill, 1867

6.1 Overview of Chapter 6

This chapter begins with a summary of the reasons for conducting this project (6.2), followed by a summary of the findings (6.3), their theoretical (6.4) and practical implications (6.5), and their limitations (6.6). I conclude this chapter by outlining suggestions for future research (6.6) and providing a concluding statement for this thesis (6.7).

6.2 Thesis Objectives

In this thesis, I conceptualised leadership using the theoretical framework of the social identity approach in social psychology (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987; see 1.2.6 and 1.2.7). This framework views leadership as a process in which leaders collaborate with their followers to achieve common group goals (Haslam et al., 2011/2020). Compared to the *identity leadership* approach which focuses on the leaders’ ability to create a shared social identity (a sense of “we”-ness) in a particular context, past approaches to leadership, particularly the ‘great man theory’ (Carlyle, 1840), often contributed towards the misperception that leaders are unique individuals who influence masses through manipulation and hypnosis (Freud, 1921/2011; Le Bon, 1895/2002; also see 1.2.7). Arguably, the classic work on crowds and crowd leaders (Freud, 1921/2011; Le Bon, 1895/2002) provided a very

decontextualised, negative, and unsystematic approach to leadership, resulting in various myths that surround leadership until nowadays (Haslam et al., 2024).

However, research conducted in the last 40 years in the social identity tradition (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987) has scrutinised approaches that tend to pathologise crowd behaviour (e.g., Reicher, 1984, 1996; also see 1.2.6) and in turn, also pathologise leadership. This research project was influenced by the number of ethnographic studies conducted within the social identity tradition (see 1.2.6), demonstrating that crowds and crowd events should be studied as contextually rooted, dynamic, and interactive episodes (Drury & Reicher, 2000, 2005, 2009). Research in this tradition showed that people do not lose themselves in crowds (i.e., become *deindividuated*) and behave irrationally, as Le Bon (1895/2002) suggested. Instead, crowd behaviour has limits, and people in crowds shift (self-categorize) towards a shared social identity through a process of depersonalization, influencing their norms and behaviour (e.g., Reicher, 1984). Building on this work, Haslam and colleagues (Haslam et al., 2011/2020; Steffens et al., 2014), conceptualised *identity leadership* as the leader's capacity to *represent, advance, create and embed* a sense of shared identity with their followers (see 1.2.7 for a review). Therefore, instead of manipulating and hypnotising the masses, effective *identity leaders* tend to consider their followers in the process and make them feel they matter (Reicher & Haslam, 2017b).

Past research on *identity leadership* (Haslam et al., 2011/2020) has mainly focused on the question of how leaders build a shared social identity with their followers across three elements: (1) by being seen as a representative of the group (*identity prototypes*); (2) by being seen as acting on behalf of the group (*identity champions*); and (3) by effectively constructing shared social identity through rhetoric (*identity entrepreneurs*; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001). However, leaders also achieve social influence through another element, which is *identity impresarioship* (making 'us' matter) (Haslam et al., 2011/2020). This term stands for the

performative means through which leaders create meaningful experiences for their followers and transform shared social identity from words (i.e., constructed via *identity entrepreneurship*; Reicher & Hopkins, 2001) into people's lived reality (via *identity impresarioship*). For instance, this can be achieved by organising rallies, festivals, and other collective events where followers can have these collective experiences. However, this practical and performative element of *identity leadership* has been underexplored by past research (see Reicher & Haslam, 2017b, for an exception). Therefore, the first objective of this project was to examine the practical and performative elements of identity leadership – *identity impresarioship*.

Besides the above-mentioned limitations, leadership has neither been at the centre of social movement studies, nor of collective action research (see 1.2.3 and 1.2.4; for reviews). Instead, social movement studies have emphasised the macro-aspects of social movements such as framing, resource mobilisation, and the use of symbols and cultural resources (see 1.2.3), often overlooking the role of individuals wielding these tools and how they leverage them in positions of movement leadership (e.g., Ganz & McKenna, 2019; Selvanathan & Jetten, 2020). In addition, most social-psychological research on collective action utilises data from democratic settings, which come to be treated as the 'default' settings in which most collective action occurs (see 2.2 and 2.3). However, this approach omits other contexts (e.g., non-democratic, authoritarian regimes) where people mobilise for collective action surrounded by repressive measures (Ayanian et al., 2021; Li et al., 2023). Unsurprisingly, the role of leadership in mobilising people for collective action in repressive settings has not been thoroughly explored in past research either (see Jurstakova et al., 2024, for an exception). Therefore, the second objective of this research project was to better understand the role of (identity) leadership in mobilising people for collective action in a repressive setting (Study 2; see Chapter 4), and in building a social movement in such a setting (Study 3; see Chapter

5). The repressive context, in turn, allowed me to explore in greater depth how (opposition) leaders practically overcame the constraints of a repressive regime, and how they organised collective action and built shared social identity performatively since they often had limited opportunities to speak in the public sphere (as explored in Study 1; see Chapter 3), and therefore limits in crafting social identity through rhetoric (*identity entrepreneurship*).

Finally, when examining the role of leadership in a repressive context (in Chapters 4 and 5), I observed that the leaders not only sought to build a shared social identity and practically overcome repressive measures, but they also responded to the dominant group's demobilisation strategies. Simultaneously, the dominant group leaders tried to counteract these efforts (also see Haslam & Reicher, 2012; for a similar argument). However, past research on demobilisation has mainly focused on typologies of 'harsh' repressive actions such as imprisonment, surveillance, and media censorship (see 3.1). I argued that apart from these visible repressive strategies, dominant group leaders also seemed to be employing more subtle strategies to prevent oppositional mobilisation (Study 1; see Chapter 3). Accordingly, the access to the regime's discourse allowed me to consider the subtle social psychological dimensions of demobilisation, drawing on the discourse analytical tradition in social psychology (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), which treats language as a tool able to achieve these goals (Edwards & Potter, 1992). This is how the last research objective - exploring the role of dominant group leaders in demobilising resistance, particularly through more 'subtle' forms of demobilisation - emerged. Based on these objectives, the following section summarises my findings.

6.3 Summary of Findings

In this section, I summarise my findings as they relate to the above-mentioned objectives (also see Chapter 1, for a detailed discussion of research gaps).

6.3.1 The Role of (Identity) Leadership in Mobilising Collective Action in a Repressive

Context

The initial empirical study (Study 2; see Chapter 4) conducted at the beginning of this research project explored (1) the role of leadership in mobilising people for collective action under repression, and (2) the performative means of identity leadership – *identity impresarioship*. To address these aims, Study 2 used retrospective interviews with the leaders of the first public demonstration in ‘communist’ Czechoslovakia – the Candlelight Demonstration (1988; see 2.5.2). In this repressive setting, opposition leaders faced significant resource constraints and were limited in their ability to communicate publicly with their followers (see 3.5; for an overview of the repressive measures). While past research has extensively documented the role of leadership in constructing shared social identity through rhetoric (*identity entrepreneurship*), this context required leaders to find practical ways to overcome the repressive barriers. My research demonstrated that leaders were acutely aware of the repressive conditions and adapted their strategies accordingly (Studies 2 and 3). For instance, to reduce repressive police intervention, they avoided having speakers at the demonstration (Study 2). Instead, they sought alternative methods to build a shared social identity through performative means (*identity impresarioship*). This included collective singing, praying, and the use of symbols for protesting (Study 2; Awad & Wagoner, 2020).

Finally, previous research on collective action often focused on political forms such as forming trade unions or protesting against political systems (see 1.2.3 and 1.2.4). However, the findings from Studies 2 and 3 contribute to research on collective action in repressive settings by demonstrating that resistance can take cultural forms as well (Orazani & Teymoori, in press; also see 1.2.2). For example, this can be done using symbols and artistic expression, as evidenced in Studies 2 and 3. These findings contribute to and extend the literature on social movements, which has explored the role of symbols, but not the ways

in which leaders actively select and co-create these symbols in protests (Abrams & Gardner, 2023; Awad & Wagoner, 2020). However, the role of leadership was not only about using symbols and organising small-scale collective action, which I explored in Study 3.

6.3.2. The Role of (Identity) Leadership in Building a Social Movement and Enabling Collective Experiences

In the subsequent empirical study (Study 3, see Chapter 5), I expanded my focus from a single one-day event (explored in Study 2) to a larger series of collective events during the Velvet Revolution (1989). This broader context of the Velvet Revolution allowed for a deeper exploration of *identity impresarioship* across a multitude of collective events. Study 3 utilised retrospective interviews with leaders of the Velvet Revolution, specifically those from the Public Against Violence movement organisation (see 2.5.3 for details). Unlike the higher levels of repression observed in Studies 1 and 2 (see Chapters 3 and 4), the Velvet Revolution occurred as the regime was disintegrating, with the Communist Party eventually resigning from the Czechoslovak government under the pressure of the mass protests in Prague and Bratislava.

In this setting, I examined the role of leadership in building and sustaining the social movement (PAV) and designing the collective events that constituted the Velvet Revolution. Despite the still-repressive environment, leaders took measures to reduce potential repression by ensuring the safety of protesters, reducing tensions with the police, and promoting norms of peacefulness and non-violence. Study 3 showed that leaders acted as *identity impresarios* by making the collective events meaningful for their followers. This involved meticulous planning of protest events, including the order of speakers, the use of spaces, and the sequence of activities (the so-called ‘dramaturgy’ of protests). Leaders also designed and encouraged the use of collective symbols and the performance of collective rituals (e.g., collective whispering, making noise with keys), although not all of these practices were

initially developed by the leaders themselves. The leader's role was therefore not only about actively designing the protest features (e.g., speakers, audio technology) but also in accepting and endorsing the ideas of their followers (e.g., making noise with keys), and to allow followers feel creative, to gain a sense of active contribution to the movement, and to feel seen and heard by movement leaders. A novel finding was that leaders were sensitive to the choice of protest locations, not merely for their appropriateness (e.g., pedestrian zones, spacious locations, as seen in Chapter 4) but also to allow participants to experience a sense of collective psychological ownership of meaningful and previously restricted spaces (e.g., march across the Czechoslovak border, public discussions in regional pubs, 'General strike' in factories).

Study 3 showed that leaders encouraged followers not only to participate in protests but also to co-create the collective rituals and symbols with them (e.g., collective singing, and whispering). Therefore, Study 3 provided initial evidence that leaders sought to create conditions in collective events where *engaged followership* (Haslam et al., 2015, 2023) could emerge. They incorporated elements that allowed their followers to become active co-creators of the movement, producing protest symbols and engaging freely in activities like creating art, protest banners, and composing songs, which contributed to the movement.

Previous research on *identity leadership* often examined the effect of leaders' actions on followers from the followers' perspective (e.g., Birney et al., 2023; Selvanathan et al., 2022; Steffens et al., 2014). However, Study 3 showed that leaders themselves were reflective about enabling *engaged followership*¹⁴⁰. Such a finding was possible only by interviewing leaders¹⁴¹ (see Davidson et al., 2023; Selvanathan et al., 2020; Smith & Templeton, 2024; for recent interview studies with leaders). Unlike past research, which

¹⁴⁰ The leaders did not describe their actions using this social-psychological terminology.

¹⁴¹ This was possible through privileged access to leaders, established via shared cultural and national identity backgrounds. See 2.6 for a further discussion.

primarily studied the effects of *identity leadership* on followers through quantitative surveys (e.g., Selvanathan et al., 2022), Studies 2 and 3 adopted an approach that explored leadership from the leaders' own perspective and in their own words. This allowed for examining leaders' awareness of *identity leadership* processes and their deliberate use of such processes as part of their 'leaders' toolkit'. Therefore, studies 2 and 3 provided empirical evidence for *identity impresarioship*, marking one of the first contributions to extend the *identity leadership* framework (Haslam et al., 2011/2020) by showing how leaders can foster shared social identity among their followers through performative means, and also how this is done in a repressive environment.

6.3.3 Dominant Group Leaders and the Subtle Demobilisation Strategies in a Repressive Context

As previously mentioned (see 6.2), analysing how the opposition leaders act to mobilise people for collective action in a repressive setting also entails examining how the dominant group leaders attempt to suppress these activities (Haslam & Reicher, 2012). The final approach to studying leadership in a repressive regime was to investigate the role of dominant group leaders in demobilising oppositional action (Study 1, see Chapter 3¹⁴²). Using archival documents (see 2.5.1; also see Table 2), I examined a selection of three oppositional events where state authorities attempted to demobilise oppositional activities. Throughout the analysis, it became evident that, in addition to using brute force, the state authorities employed subtle demobilisation tactics such as silencing (Billig & Marinho, 2017), reframing the meaning of oppositional events. While past research has primarily described 'harsh' demobilisation tactics like imprisonment and police repression (Moss,

¹⁴²This study was conducted at the end of the research project; however, it is presented as Study 1 in this thesis to maintain the chronological order of the events. The repressive strategies of the dominant group leaders occurred before the regime collapsed, making these case studies (see 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5) more appropriate for the beginning of the thesis. In contrast, the studies of oppositional leadership during the Candlelight Demonstration (Study 2) and the Velvet Revolution (Study 3) took place later.

2019), Study 1 showed that the Czechoslovak regime also employed social-psychological elements in their rhetoric to justify their repressive actions. Beyond brute force, dominant group leaders also seek to maintain legitimacy, which I showed through analysing their public discourse (e.g., public speeches, newspaper articles, public events). The discourse analysis of archival documents showed that dominant group leaders used rhetorical absences (Billig & Marinho, 2017), and exchanged letters with the opposition leaders, aiming to legitimise their repressive actions and manage their institutional profile (Edwards & Potter, 1992).

Study 1 also showed that suppressing mobilisation with brute force alone can be insufficient, as repressive regimes operate within historical, social, and cultural contexts. To maintain legitimacy, these regimes often present their actions towards the public as consistent with their ideology. For example, the ‘communist’ regime in Czechoslovakia was intertwined with the historical power of the Soviet Union and adhered to a specific ideological framework (see 1.4). This framework shaped the framing of repression in alignment with Communist ideology. Therefore, despite repressive actions (i.e., preventing people from attending a demonstration, preventing petition-signing), the regime portrayed itself as acting in the people’s interests (i.e., acting ‘pro-workers’, acting for the ‘common good’) while delegitimising resistance as a ‘public health issue’. The oppositional activities (i.e., demonstration, petition) were framed as ‘disruptive’ acts, and the opposition leaders were ridiculed and verbally attacked, allowing the regime to frame the opposition as ‘illegitimate’. These findings suggest that to understand how leadership operates in repressive regimes, we can use social psychological tools to analyse dominant group leaders’ rhetoric (i.e., discursive approaches within social psychology; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). This allows a better understanding of how dominant groups legitimise repression, in addition to studying their

practical demobilisation strategies. In the following section, I further discuss the theoretical implications of these findings.

6.4 Theoretical and Methodological Insights

The work presented in this thesis is novel in several ways. Firstly, I studied generally underexplored topics in social psychology – the role of (identity) leadership in mobilising collective action in a repressive context, and the subtle dimension of demobilisation strategies of dominant group leaders observed in rhetoric. By analysing a range of different resistance events set in ‘communist’ Czechoslovakia, I showed that studying the role of both oppositional leaders and dominant group leaders utilising a longer timeline can be particularly useful in understanding the different strategies of resistance/dominance occurring in repressive systems (Acar et al., in press; Orazani & Teymoori, in press). Arguably, these processes cannot be captured in (often decontextualised) studies of single events. My findings illustrated the need to go beyond identifying factors for collective action mobilisation (e.g., van Zomeren et al., 2008), the need to go beyond providing typologies of the visible demobilisation strategies of the dominant groups (e.g. Moss, 2019), and the need to go beyond analysing speeches of influential actors in order to better understand *identity leadership* (Hopkins, 2023).

My findings also contribute towards a better understanding of leadership in repressive regimes. In Studies 2 and 3, I showed that effective (oppositional) leadership was also about leaders’ ability to adjust their tactics and strategy, and leaders had to often operate with limited material resources (see Turner, 2005; for a similar argument). This suggests that while social identity is an important aspect of effective leadership (Haslam et al., 2011; 2020), the establishment of shared social identity is not enough for leaders to be effective in mobilising people for collective action, especially in repressive regimes. Opposition leaders also have to have certain material and personal resources, build trust, and collaborate with

each other, which develops over time and involves multiple (more or less successful) mobilisation activities (Haslam & Reicher, 2012; Selvanathan et al., 2020). These findings also contribute to the evidence of leadership as a group process, which is especially important in repressive settings where individual leaders might be targeted by the state authorities (Bob & Nepstad, 2007). If leadership relied on a single individual, mobilisation would have probably failed. Since leadership is not only about the unique individuals but also about leaders' ability to construct shared social identity, and to be flexible and adaptive to the specifics of the repressive environment.

I also showed that leaders' repertoire of strategies constantly changed and evolved as a reaction to the respective repressive context, which influenced whether and how people choose to resist at a given time (Acar, et al, in press; Li et al., 2023). This also influences the role leaders play in the respective collective events. For instance, leaders in repressive regimes might choose to stay anonymous, in order to allow for the smooth execution of the resistance activities, and they might switch between different protest activities (e.g., cultural versus political resistance; see Acar et al., 2022; Westfall, 2022). These findings connect the elements from social movement studies, which emphasise the importance of having resources in social movements (Ganz & McKenna, 2019), and also provide evidence for *identity leadership* processes (Haslam et al., 2011/2020). Finally, my findings also suggest that the dynamic aspect of the role of leadership as a response to the dominant group's actions should also be incorporated in future studies of leadership (see Haslam & Reicher, 2012; for a similar argument). Beyond highlighting the immediate findings from the studies in this thesis, in this section, I also turn towards discussing the wider implications of this research project on theoretical concepts such as power, as well as the broader methodological insights that were emphasised by this project.

The Debate About Power in Social Psychology

The findings from this thesis also contribute to the debate about power in social psychology (see 1.2.5). Both System Justification Theory (SJT; Jost & Banaji, 1994) and Social Dominance Theory (SDT; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; also see Pratto, 2016) provide useful frameworks for understanding power. For instance, SDT posits that power is centred within persistent social hierarchies, while SJT outlines individual motivations for justifying system-based hierarchies. However, critics argue that these theories tend to emphasise the stability and persistence of social hierarchies, thereby neglecting individual agency and people's capacity to resist and challenge power structures (Reicher, 2016; Turner et al., 2008). Contrary to the view that power is merely repressive, as suggested by SJT (Jost & Banaji, 1994) and SDT (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), the evidence in this thesis corroborates Foucault's (1990/2020) claim that oppressive power inevitably produces resistance. This aligns with Reicher's (2016) argument that every act of mobilisation is also an act of demobilising the alternative, which can be observed in the subtle social psychological dimensions of demobilisation (see Chapters 3,4, 5). For example, in Study 3 I showed that opposition leaders also demobilised the authorities by distributing leadership and thereby making it impossible for the regime to arrest all leaders, or by using non-violence and even ingroup inclusion of the police to offer no reason for the regime intervention. Accordingly, this thesis, rooted in the social identity tradition (see 1.2.6), allowed for the analysis of the social-psychological processes of the dominant group's demobilisation strategies and the opposition leaders' mobilisation strategies. A one-sided view of how power operates would not allow for this exploration (i.e., by only focusing on the dominant group).

I, therefore, agree with Reicher's (2016) argument that the understanding of power requires exploring relations between groups. For example, in Study 1, the dominant group in Czechoslovakia repressed its opponents through various strategies, ranging from visible forms of physical repression to more subtle processes observable in the regime's public

discourse. I showed that the regime employed different strategies to address different sub-groups (e.g., Catholics). For instance, the letter correspondence between the opposition leaders and dominant group leaders involved argument and counterargument (see 3.5), whereas the Party's public appearances silenced the existence of the opposition groups (see 3.4). This conceptualisation shifts the understanding of power from being solely a top-down phenomenon (e.g., power exercised by a dominant group over a disadvantaged group) to viewing power as being embedded in everyday practices and social interactions (i.e., in *identity leadership* processes that achieve social influence; Turner, 2005). The three studies in this thesis demonstrated the productive nature of power. For instance, in the studies of oppositional leadership (Studies 2 and 3), disadvantaged groups tried to mobilise and challenge the existing power structure through performative means—leaders, acting as *identity impresarios* sought to give agency to followers and created meaningful events that empowered the group to act further.

Therefore, power can operate in many different ways and can be explored by examining both intergroup and intragroup interactions in a specific context. The means different groups use to dominate others are often rooted in specific ideologies¹⁴³ and cultures (Turner, 2005). Power can involve oppressing people from a position of authority, but powerful leaders can also achieve influence and gain power by embodying and representing shared beliefs and values (Turner, 2005). For example, Subašić et al. (2011) showed that authoritative leaders perceived by followers as ‘outgroup leaders’ can employ surveillance to influence their subordinates effectively, whereas leaders perceived as ‘ingroup leaders’ have reduced influence if they use repressive measures (e.g., rewards and punishments, surveillance, persuasion). Therefore, I argue that we should also look for instances where

¹⁴³ SDT also acknowledges that cultural ideologies, beliefs, and myths can produce reality and contribute to group-based hierarchies. These are referred to, in SDT, as ‘legitimising myths’ (Pratto et al., 2006).

power manifests through more subtle processes (i.e., in discourse, in performances), which are better understood when rooted in the specific context of intergroup and intragroup relations (as seen in Study 1, Chapter 3).

In the following section, I extend this point by arguing that to incorporate context into the understanding of how power operates, we need to be open-minded towards using a wider range of research methods in social psychology research.

Ideology of the Repressive Regime: What Can(not) Be Captured by Self-Report Data?

Traditionally, social psychological research heavily relied on self-report data gathered through quantitative questionnaires (Malherbe & Dlamini, 2020; also see 2.2). However, given the nature of repressive regimes, it became evident that capturing the ideology of the oppressors through self-report data would be inadequate, as well as practically inaccessible (also see 2.3). For example, it would not be possible to ask the regime's representatives to report their strategies and explicitly share with researchers how they legitimise repression. Therefore, I opted for an alternative approach, utilizing archival data, which allowed me to delve into a broad spectrum of interactions between state authorities and the opposition. The archival data provided invaluable insights into the unfolding events, including the actions of the authorities, responses from the audience, and the discourse within state institutions behind closed doors (see Chapter 3; specifically 3.5). Through this analysis, a deeper understanding of demobilisation strategies and their impact on resistance efforts was possible.

While the methods used in this thesis are not novel in themselves (i.e., thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews, discourse analysis of archival documents), the combination of using various qualitative methods in a research project in social psychology is unusual, given the emphasis on methodological orthodoxy over methodological pluralism in social psychology (Malherbe & Dlamini, 2020; Power et al., 2023), and on quantitative experimental research as the highest form of 'science' (Spears & Smith, 2001). Ellemers

(2013) argued that while there is an over-emphasis on the replication of findings from research studies, an alternative way of checking whether results are valuable and have any broader implications might be through triangulation. I tried to engage in this triangulation process in the present chapter by discussing the findings from this thesis and connecting them with findings from other repressive contexts, as well as by studying different collective events within this thesis.

Therefore, this thesis illustrates that these under-used qualitative methods (e.g., archival research, historical case studies) can be particularly useful when exploring the dynamics of events and intergroup phenomena, where various groups are interacting – for instance, the authorities, protesters, leaders, allies and/or third parties (see Hopkins, 2023; for a similar argument).

Beyond the Use of a Single Methodological Position

Finally, this thesis also raises an important point about methodology. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, this project was rooted in two different epistemological backgrounds – realism and social constructionism – which together contributed to a better understanding of resistance and repression. Arguably, using a single epistemological position would not have allowed me to fully answer my research questions. Specifically, in studies with opposition leaders (Study 2 and 3), and when triangulating data to reconstruct the resistance events studied in this thesis, I employed a realist epistemology, treating the leaders' accounts at face value (i.e., as 'reality'). I also treated the evidence in historical materials as reflections of 'reality' that can be directly accessed via these accounts.

However, when studying the regime's demobilisation rhetoric using archival documents (Study 1) that consisted of written materials by the state authorities, I employed a social constructionist epistemology, allowing me to explore how the different events or strategies presented to the public versus how they were communicated to the opposition, and

amongst the state authorities themselves. This required a social constructionist position, to explore what is being said, but also *how* is it being said, and what the language does. If I treated these documents through a realist epistemology, I would not be able to analyse these more subtle processes of how power operates in repressive regimes and how it permeated the ‘communist’ ideology. Therefore, I argue that future researchers should be open-minded and critically assess whether a single epistemological and methodological position allows them to fully explore the research questions, which are in turn, shaped by the data that can be collected. One should not refrain from collecting certain types of data simply because it would not fit within a single overarching methodological position (Reicher, 2000).

Building upon this argument of the need to be open towards using these less-mainstream qualitative approaches, in the subsequent section, I outline some practical recommendations for conducting research in repressive contexts and engaging in resistance in these contexts.

6.5 Practical Recommendations for Researching Resistance and for Organising Resistance

In this section, I list five practical recommendations for future researchers and for activists who live in repressive settings.

1) Acknowledge the Constraints of Studying Resistance and Be Open-Minded to New Methods

Studying resistance to repression, or repressive regimes in general is a challenging task (see 2.3; also see 2.6), and there are several constraints to consider before starting these projects (Moss et al., 2019). This is because research in repressive settings can involve restrictions to the data collection process (i.e., research-related restrictions, ethical concerns), but also pose great personal risks, such as threats of losing a passport, personal property, and jobs if the researcher is a resident of the repressive country. Recently, Acar et al. (2020) listed

several strategies of how to gain trust with the research population in conflict settings, for instance, (1) working with a local research assistant to gain trust and access to participants, and (2) working in wider research teams. This can contradict the PhD research process, which can be a solitary experience, and where it is encouraged to conduct independent research projects. Therefore, another way of studying repressive regimes, which has been used in this thesis, is through historical case studies (also see Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017; for a discussion on the advantage of historical case studies).

This alternative approach helps to access inaccessible contexts safely, but it also allows for a richer analysis of certain phenomena. For instance, this approach allowed me to access data from the dominant group (i.e., the Czechoslovak Communist Party), and not only the opposition group (i.e., the activists). Another argument for ‘case history studies’¹⁴⁴ is that “they expose our models to the harsh discipline of the real world” (Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017, p.257), which is what social psychological research ultimately strives for – to be able to develop theories that adequately explain real-life situations. However, it is not only research in repressive contexts which benefits from this type of ‘case history study’ approach. For instance, social change is also hard to study when it’s happening, but it is possible to study it in retrospect (Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017). Similarly, if we want to study how rhetoric develops and changes over time, historical case studies provide a valuable source to answer these questions (see Hopkins, 2023, for a similar argument).

2) Be Aware of the Wider Issues of Collecting Data from Non-western Contexts

¹⁴⁴ This thesis is not novel in its use of case history studies or archival data in social psychology. There have been several efforts by other researchers employing similar multi-method approaches. For instance, Rath's (2016) work in India uses posters to analyse hate discourse, and Roger Ball's psycho-social history studies in the context of the 1831 riots in the UK (Poole et al., 2023) demonstrate the value of such research. These projects continue to enrich our understanding of various social psychological processes, including the mobilisation of hate (Reicher et al., 2008), the dynamics of riots (Drury & Reicher, 2000, 2005, 2009), and leadership, as explored in this thesis.

Research systems, like other domains of our everyday life, are inequitable and based on power structures that favour historically dominant groups (Bou Zeinedinne et al., 2022). While it is a fact that an inclusive scientific community is more productive, innovative and impactful (Jimenez et al., 2019), social psychology did not escape the above-mentioned elitism. There is an increasing number of scientific bubbles, which divide researchers between the topics they study, the literature they engage with, and the methods they use (Ellemers, 2013). Academia continues to privilege the English language, discriminates against those who are non-native English speakers, manifests other biases (e.g., seniority, personal connections, institutional affiliation, race, gender), and privileges certain dominant theories in the field and certain research methods (i.e., experiments using measures developed in the Global North; see Bou Zeinedinne et al., 2022).

It is important to note that I was privileged to collect my data in Eastern Europe while being trained in social psychology and based solely at UK higher education institutions throughout this process (see Kabbanji et al., 2019; for a discussion about training abroad). Arguably, this already put me in a privileged position compared to many researchers from the Global South, who cannot rely on such training, nor the UK institutional support, and on English-speaking research networks, that create a sense of ‘belonging’ in academia. Finally, being a non-native English-speaking scholar comes with a dilemma of whether publishing in English and adhering to the norms of mainstream research already reinforces the inequality of the system in which science is produced (Alatas, 2023; Flowerdrew & Li, 2009). To remain optimistic, I believe that this thesis is a very small step towards the direction of reducing the present (sometimes) unintended systemic biases in our discipline.

3) Appreciate the Limits of Resistance and Be Sensitive to the Context

Throughout this project, I also realised that when using the Western lens¹⁴⁵, many resistance activities might not be seen as ‘enough’ of resistance, which is what often limited previous research on resistance to only studying collective action (see Vollhardt et al., 2020; for a similar argument). At first, I was implicitly influenced by this approach, and I tried to initially search for collective events and instances that would qualify as the ‘typical’ form of collective action (e.g., Candlelight Demonstration; see Chapter 4). However, as I argued in Chapter 1, instances of resistance can be wide-ranging and equally powerful in repressive settings (see 1.2.2). For instance, this might include laying flowers, cutting one’s hair, or carrying white pieces of paper in a street because these acts usually require an immense amount of courage, and they might be the only types of acts that the constraints of often severely repressive contexts allow for (Vollhardt & Bilewicz, in press). Similarly, the ability to identify resistance in various repressive contexts might depend on cultural knowledge, because it allows researchers to interpret people’s behaviours in the given context (Bilewicz, 2020; Gergen, 1973; also see Hollander & Einwohner, 2004), and allows them to see the different forms of resistance that an unfamiliar researcher might miss completely, simplify, or misunderstand. This is not true only for the present research project. For example, Kellezi and Reicher (2012) showed that the concept of ‘sexual purity’ was an integral part of Kosovan national identity, therefore resulting in additional psychological harm for women who were already traumatised by being victims of wartime rape. This became an added burden apart from the trauma of the wartime rape specific to this particular context (Kellezi & Reicher, 2012).

Therefore, as researchers, but also as members of various communities, we need to be more open-minded to recognising and valuing the role of context and culture when studying

¹⁴⁵ Social psychology in general, as well as this thesis, is constrained in terms of the language that it is written, which makes the work accessible to a predominantly Anglophone community. I suppose that the readers of this thesis, therefore, already being advantaged to access and read this piece thesis, would come from backgrounds, where they tend to employ the Western lens towards understanding the world.

resistance activities. For instance, an effective way of spotting resistance activities is by paying attention to the reactions of dominant groups towards people's actions in the specific context studied (e.g., what are the dominant groups *not allowing* or *delegitimising* or *ridiculing*). Finally, already by recognising smaller and everyday acts of resistance of disadvantaged groups as forms of resistance, we can become allies, which these communities might benefit from. The role of third-party support is immensely important, and from my participants' accounts, it was clear that even their meta-perceptions of what other people thought about the disadvantaged group's activities, and whether they thought these were viewed as 'valid' forms of resistance in contexts where people are attacked and delegitimised, can provide a sense of empowerment and motivation for people to keep resisting.

4) For Leaders and Activists: Be Attuned to Demobilisation Strategies and Respond to Them Strategically and Creatively

Activists who live in repressive settings are innovative, and they often tactically respond to repressive strategies that change over time (e.g., Acar, in press; Orazani & Teymoori, in press). My results have shown that resistance can have a multitude of forms. However, the role of effective opposition leaders in repressive regimes has to be more than "just" building a sense of shared social identity (e.g., what it means to be "us") within their supporters' base (e.g., fellow activists). Effective leaders also need to strategically respond to the constraints of repressive regimes and be creative in their actions, as well as the forms in which they express resistance. For instance, the use of symbols, symbolic protests (e.g., bringing flowers, physically gathering at a public space) and cultural forms of resistance (e.g., organising a festival, art exhibition, debate) can be a very powerful form of resistance. This is because such activities achieve visibility for the resistant group. Due to their often inoffensive nature, they can promote non-violence during these events. When the event is suppressed, it calls into question the legitimacy of the group that suppressed it.

Simultaneously, being able to experience what it means to be “us” when people see themselves as part of the opposition, is a crucial experience, that leaders can facilitate in collective events or with symbols, if resources are scarce.

Importantly, leaders need to work together with followers and encourage them to develop symbols and co-create the meaning for the identity of the group or a movement. This might be not only important for the followers, to feel that they are an integral part of the movement, but it also implies that practically and organisationally speaking, the creativity and reach of the movement can spread faster. Leaders would be ineffective without followers; therefore, this process is important, and they cannot function without one another.

Also, the role of leadership does not need to be held by a single person or a few people, but instead, it can be more distributed between group members, and therefore harder to repress by the authorities, as it cannot be tracked down to a single person. However, I have also shown that being an opposition leader in a repressive setting is a very challenging and dangerous position to be in, which can result in severe consequences, as the dominant groups pay special attention to leadership figures, and often feel threatened by them.

5) Be Vigilant to Threats to Democracy

Finally, one of the key implications of this thesis is the need to be vigilant to systems that use subtle strategies to shift towards autocracy¹⁴⁶, and towards increasingly repressive or un-democratic systems (e.g., Hungary, Turkey). Contemporary hybrid and authoritarian regimes make use of similar strategies that I have reported in the historical case study of ‘communism’ in Czechoslovakia, which I called subtle ways of demobilisation (see Chapter 3). For example, these strategies include (1) politicising independent institutions, (2) bolstering executive power, (3) stifling dissent, (4) targeting vulnerable communities, (5)

¹⁴⁶ A useful tool to monitor these threats to democracy, is for example, using the World Press Freedom Index (2023), which is annually produced by Reporters Without Borders.

undermining electoral processes, and (5) inciting violence (Dresden et al., 2022). Many of these actions might be presented as ‘needed’ because the country is ‘under threat’, whether it is due to inflation, cost of living crisis, an already polarised world, or other ‘enemies’. This thesis highlights that it is important to stay vigilant to such rhetoric and towards actions that might seem subtle, and thus irrelevant for us to act upon, at first sight (Acar, in press; Snyder, 2017).

6.6 Limitations and Future Directions

Retrospective Interviews With Leaders

While I argued for historical case study research (also see Elcheroth & Reicher, 2017) as an advantageous way of researching leadership in repressive contexts, simultaneously, one of the clear limitations of this thesis is that I conducted retrospective interviews with leaders who organised the resistance events more than 30 years ago. There is a chance that here have been some discrepancies (Brescó & Wagoner, 2015; Yow, 1994), and participants might have wanted to present things in certain light as a means of self-management. However, I guarded against this issue as much as possible by triangulating information.

Apart from using archival materials¹⁴⁷ in Study 1, when I prepared for the interviews with the leaders (in Studies 2 and 3), I consulted a range of publicly available interviews that the leaders had given before I approached them (e.g., in media, and books). This was possible since the leaders have written memories about their lives, therefore, it was not the first time they spoke about these events. However, it is important to note, that many of the interviewees have raised with me that it was the first time they were asked in detail about their strategies and the psychological aspects of the events – for instance, how was the atmosphere in the protests (also see 2.6). A benefit of discussing leaders’ actions in designing the protests was

¹⁴⁷ Archival materials also have some limitations (also see Heng et al., 2018). For example, they might not be rich enough in terms of psychologically relevant information, and they may be redacted or censored to suit the demands of the situation and the regime of the time.

that these activities were not based on historical facts per se (e.g., which time something happened, how many people came to the protests), and so it became less important for the leaders to remember the exact date they did something (as this would be easy to cross-check in history books or sometimes in archival documents). Instead, the focus of the interviews was more on what leaders *did* in response to various repressive strategies of the regime. Arguably, this information was less affected by the retrospective nature of the interviews.

Another limitation of these interviews could be that I treated the leaders' accounts within the realist epistemological framework. However, leaders might have had their agenda when presenting their stories to me, and they could present certain 'versions' of their stories, presenting their roles as more 'agentic' or more 'socially desirable' (Edwards & Potter, 1992). For instance, some of the leaders were former politicians or worked in the public sphere, and over time, they might have developed their own ways of justifying their actions and presenting them in certain ways towards the public. This cannot be ruled out, and therefore, this is a clear limitation of the studies with leaders (i.e., Study 2 and 4; Chapters 4 and 5). One way of trying to reduce this single correct 'version' of the story was to interview all available leaders, which contributed to a range of different accounts, where each leader focused on the same events but from different perspectives. For instance, different leaders went to different locations and had different tasks. I also sought to present deviant cases by not only presenting what was effective but also some decisions that the leaders made and that were ineffective. I also tried to control for these 'biases' by not focusing on the participants' political roles post-revolution, because there were many conflicts between the different opposition leaders¹⁴⁸ that took place in the post-November era, at the time of Czechoslovakia's dissolution (Szomolányi, 1999).

¹⁴⁸ Conflicts were present among both PAV leaders in Slovakia and between CF forum leaders in Czechia (Krapfl, 2013).

Missing Information About Followers, Bystanders, and Non-participants

Apart from the limitations resulting from the type of data that I used, and how I analysed the data, there are also several limitations concerning the additional topics that I have not explored in this thesis. One of the predominant limitations of studying leadership is the inherent underemphasis on the followership aspect, and generally on participants of the collective events. I did not speak to the participants of the collective events, nor the people who were bystanders, non-participants, or pro-Communist Party in the context of these events. My data from the leaders also emphasises that leaders themselves recognised the importance of allies and their followers and that they encouraged followers to creatively engage in the expression and production of various symbols and protest activities. Past research has shown that the role of non-participants (Saavedra, 2019), bystander solidarity (Rocha, 2023), and the role of allies (e.g., Kutlaca, 2020; Selvanathan et al., 2023) in collective action is an important avenue which for instance influences perceptions of the legitimacy of movements. Simultaneously, future research should focus on movements without visible leaders. Many current resistance events (e.g., in Hong Kong, Chile, Iraq, and Lebanon) supposedly do not have visible forms of leadership (Serhan, 2019). However, is it that these movements do not have leadership figures? Or is it part of their strategic choices to be perceived as leaderless, since we know that repressive systems target leaders? These questions remain to be answered.

Issues of Generalisability

The limitation of studying events in a single context, in this case ‘communist’ Czechoslovakia, raises questions about whether the strategies reported in this context can be also seen in different systems. As Ellemers (2013) argued, sometimes, instead of trying to search for generalisability, which qualitative data does not allow for in the ways that quantitative data does, supporting the value of the present findings can be done by

triangulation of information. In line with this argument, Kubik's (1994) in-depth study of 'communist' Poland reported several similarities in how the Polish resistance leaders responded to repression, also using cultural forms of protests, and a rich communication platform through symbols, as well as how the Polish 'communist' regime tried to impose cultural hegemony in Poland. Therefore, dominance and power are not hidden and do not happen simply behind closed doors but they have to be debated and justified in the public sphere. In both Czechoslovakia and Poland, public events endorsed by the state served as demonstrations of the regime's authority and control (Kubik, 1994; Roubal, 2020). Similar processes have been reported in Nuremberg Rallies as expressions of German national identity (Spotts, 2003).

More recently, before the presidential elections in Russia, a leakage of secret documents showed that the Kremlin invested in organising youth festivals, and the spread of patriotic films (Roth, 2024) to boost their electorate power, despite the expectation that the elections would be manipulated in any case. Arguably, the subtlety of these strategies of the groups in power underscores their effectiveness in maintaining dominance and discouraging dissent. Understanding the interplay between demobilisation tactics and performative displays of power (e.g., rallying around the dominant regime) is crucial in comprehending how dominant groups assert and reinforce their authority (also see Acar & Reicher, 2019). Accordingly, future studies exploring demobilisation should not simply ask: What are state authorities preventing people from doing? But also ask: What are state authorities encouraging people to do? How do state authorities talk about their decisions and interventions? What do state authorities emphasise in their public discourse and what do they, in turn, silence?

Missing Information on the Role of Technology: Limits of Transferability of the Present Research to the Current Times

The events that I studied happened when many current technological advancements did not exist (e.g., the internet, mobile phones, computers, drones, etc.). In the present research project, I was unable to explore online activism or the role of social media in activism, whereas nowadays many movements use social media platforms to mobilise support (Greijdanus et al., 2020; Postmes & Brunsting, 2002). Therefore, one of the limitations of this research is the transferability of this research to current examples of resistance. However, while social media tends to be useful for many social movements, in repressive regimes, much of the online space is controlled by the dominant groups, which hinders its use and availability. For example, Facebook and Twitter have been blocked in Nicaragua, access to Facebook has been blocked in China and Iran since 2009, and the Indian government banned TikTok in 2020 (Barry, 2022; Milmo, 2022). While people can access these services via a virtual private network (VPN), it might still be dangerous for people to communicate via trackable devices such as phones and computers. This is because repressive regimes have highly functioning surveillance systems, which monitor resistance activities. For example, using mobile phones in conflict areas, such as Ukraine, has been problematic due to mobile networks being weaponised by the other sides (Devine, 2023).

Another issue with repressive regimes is the wider spread of propaganda and misinformation which ‘infects’ online spaces. For example, in the context of the war in Ukraine, several social media platforms, including discussion spaces on Twitter, and TikTok have been infected by comments from fake social media accounts that were traced to ‘troll factories’ in St Petersburg (Guardian, 2022; UK FCDO, 2022). Manipulation of opinion polls, and spreading hate are common strategies employed to manipulate supposedly ‘free’ spaces on the Internet (Marwick & Lewis, 2024). Therefore, research should pay more attention to mapping out these demobilisation strategies of current repressive regimes. Simultaneously, the increased opportunity to track people through phones can be a dangerous

weapon in the hands of dominant groups, which also raises questions about resistance strategies that can be used to tackle these issues.

Missing Information About Violent Protests

Another limitation of this thesis is that I have not focused on exploring any violent or non-normative forms of collective action and resistance. The ‘Velvet’ revolution is named in this way because it was not violent. Similarly, the characteristics of the various protest events in ‘communist’ Czechoslovakia, not only the ones that were studied in this thesis, were almost entirely non-violent. If violence occurred, it was mainly from the state authorities, and the protesters did not react towards it violently – for example, in Palach Week in January 1989 (Kenney, 2003). In recent social psychological research, however, there has been an increasing focus on studying violent protests and radical forms of collective action, as well as levels of public support towards using violence in certain types of protests as legitimate forms of action (Saab et al., 2016; Saavedra, 2020). However, Uysal et al. (2024) suggested that studying different ‘types’ of collective action (i.e., violent, non-violent) has often been counterproductive because many of the underlying processes in these protests are similar, and often, the quite static and simplistic division between ‘types’ of collective action fails to account for the contexts, in which the use of violence is often a response to a specific context.

Looking Beyond the Velvet Revolution: Post-Communist Dynamics in Politically Unstable Societies

Finally, the atmosphere of optimism that was present in Czechoslovakia during the Velvet Revolution, and which might be seen as the dominant version of the story of the Velvet Revolution as presented in this thesis, has faded since then. Today’s Czechia and Slovakia face several challenges as new democracies. Lášticová and Kende (2024) argue that historical, political and cultural instability, which countries such as Czechia and Slovakia have experienced, can have a profound impact on people’s psychological responses to issues

such as rising populism, conflicts, and instability. For instance, the need for strong leaders (see Selvanathan et al., 2022), and therefore, people's motivation to support authoritarianism might stem from the need to find a sense of control in the world (Hogg & Adelman, 2013), which seems to be the case in Central European contexts. For instance, anti-Gypsism is a societally acceptable form of prejudice in Central European countries, while in Western societies, ethnic prejudice is generally seen as a non-normative act (Cviklova, 2015; Kende & Láštíková, 2024).

Future research should focus on studying the impact of repressive regimes on people's behaviour and their preferences for autocracy. For instance, in today's Russia, many narratives to mobilise support for Putin are based on the resurrection of the cult of Stalin, and the historical legacy of the Soviet Union (Sharafutdinova, 2020). Similarly, conversations about politics and activism within families often facilitate intergenerational transmission of protest (Cornejo et al., 2021). For example, protest culture in present-day Slovakia and Czechia carries certain re-appearing elements such as symbols and strategies of non-violence, that were, arguably, rooted in the tradition of the Velvet Revolution. Future research should explore the forms that protests take in different contexts, which might have been influenced by collective memories of oppression (Prilletensky, 2008).

6.7 Conclusion

If there is one message from this thesis, it is the message about possibilities. To challenge repressive systems, engage in resistance, and achieve social change, is not impossible. Resistance, despite repression, does not stop to exist, although it might be shifted underground. Resistance is also more dynamic than previous models of collective action have proposed. The oppressors sought to maintain the dominant position, legitimacy, and power in the hands of the Party. They tried to suppress creativity, freedom, and therefore resistance. Despite their efforts, the ability to create a sense of meaning through shared social identity,

and the leadership that made these meaningful experiences possible, played an important role in mobilising resistance. Therefore, to understand how people challenge repressive systems, we need to study resistance along with repression, to understand both sides of this interactive process.

Finally, while this thesis was centred around ‘communism’ in Czechoslovakia, the aim was not to promote anti-Communism, or present a very one-sided division between different ideologies of how societies *should* (and should not) operate, but to raise questions about how certain regimes sometimes succeed (and sometimes fail) to establish systems that do not repress basic human rights. Therefore, this thesis is one of the first steps towards a better understanding of the role of leaders in creating meaningful experiences for their followers as *entrepreneurs* and *impresarios* of identity, as well as a better understanding of how both dominant and opposition leadership operate in repressive contexts, opening up space for future research utilising a wide range of methods, and exploring a wide range of (non-Western) contexts.

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Appendix 1 – Study 1: Archival Documents

DOCUMENT 1: In whose interest is it? (7/1/1977)

Every one of us could have been reassured through their own experiences, about what was said in the New Year's speech by the general secretary of the KSC and the President of the republic, comrade Gustav Husak: That the past year has been another successful year for our people, and that the accomplishment of the planned and very demanding tasks of our national economy, has allowed to fulfil the growing of material and spiritual needs of our people, and has allowed to maintain and develop its high living standards, as well as to strengthen our social security.

Yes, it was a good year, despite not being very easy, despite that our agricultural workers were not blessed with good weather, and despite that we were caught up by the growth of the prices of imported goods, despite that we had to overcome many hardships. Every one of us could have also been assured that decent work brings also very good results, and that the saying is being fulfilled: how we will be working, that's how we will be living.

We have entered the New Year with very sober but fully legitimised optimism.

It is not like this in the Capitalist countries. There are thousands and thousands of workers who are afraid of losing their employment, and the unemployed ones live in fear of not finding a job. Bourgeoise Frankfurter Allgemeine confesses: "High unemployment rate will also continue unresolved in 1977 in many industrialised (note of the editor: meaning Capitalist) countries, and in short-term basis it will be an impossible to-be-solved problem. Despite the effort to ease the crisis, there is more than 15 million unemployed people, from which for example in France and England, this number is made by more than a half up of people up to 25 years of age." This unsolvable situation of Capitalist economy is also expressed by the Eastern German social democracy letter Neue Ruhr Zeitung: "Wherever you look, it seems that there are multiple reasons for scepticism and doubts, rather than hope and trust."

We, however, can look forward to the New Year with hope and trust. Our workers can live with no fear of unemployment and of inflation. Especially when compared with the Capitalist world, the advantages of pure specialist creation are so apparent, which assure social security to the workers, for today and for tomorrow. This is a fact, which cannot be doubted.

Such that the focus would be brought away from those, who are impacted by the economic crisis, from what pressures them, the bourgeoise Propaganda Centres are increasing their attacks towards the socialists countries, which thoroughly assured all human rights. Those who are not able to assure the absolutely basic human rights for their citizens - the right for work, right for education, are shouting into the world that supposedly, human rights are being trampled in socialist lands and as their witnesses of this, they cherrypick some individuals from one or another socialist country. Here, in our country, they select those, who were persistently working on anti-socialist positions, and those who cannot reconcile with the fact that in our land, things are not falling apart, and because our successful development of our economy is a thorn in the eye for them, and those, who similar to the pre-February era, operate with a saying: to the worst, to the best.

They were claiming that our economy will lead to crisis, that there will be monetary reform, rise of prices, they hoped for deficits, such that they could live their lives out of dissatisfaction. But the only thing they were left with, was the failure of their malicious wishes.

It also tells us something about what kind of “human rights”, they are claiming to protect?

Now, these individuals, or the groups of those who didn't admit the failure of the big game they were trying to play, in which they hazarded with the state's interests, and their citizens, they would now again want to mislead the trusting people onto the wrong pathway, as they did in year of 1968, with similarly deceiving slogans.

Such that they could present their own personal and ambitious interests as the “interests of the nation”, they tried to motivate many petition campaigns. Unfortunately, many people did fall into their trap. Not one, who gave their signature underneath the different crazy pamphlets and petitions which serve only towards the rise of chaos and towards overthrowing of our country, and these people paid for their political blindness, later very bitterly regretted that they fell for their sweet honey words. Some of them were accusing the party that from their top positions they fell back down, from where the Party once raised them. Can however, one who lays down on the railroad to stop the train from going, accuse the train that it cut his legs?

Nowadays, our citizens are more aware of these malicious strategies. And also those who once took the wrong pathway.

The actual politics of our Party allowed most of those, who once were not able to orient themselves properly, to understand their failures. They also demonstrated this with their honest work, with which they contribute to the development of our society. That's also the reason why at the XV. Meeting of KSC, a decision was made, to allow those, who were not active representatives of right-wing opportunism, and with their work and their actions they demonstrate that they are standing still and honestly on the position of socialism, that after individual assessments of their cases, they could be again accepted as the members of the Party.

Self-proclaimed “protectors of human rights” however see especially in this differentiated approach of the Party towards the people, which became the victims of their adventurous politics, danger for their personally new but not less adventurous plans.

It is not a secret, that after August 1968 there was a meeting in Vienna of some of those, who were helping the contra-revolution in Czechoslovakia. They divided their tasks there. Many of those Birds who flew behind the borders, now rise as open enemies, while a few of those, who stayed home, help import lies through various channels about our situation, to the anti-communist centres in the West. In this way, they create combined containers of anti-communist propaganda. Those and them, isolated from our society, either way, cannot be anything else than that.

Also the West bourgeoisie propaganda knows that it is unreliable, if they present this as the proof of the existence of the “opposition” in Czechoslovakia by still presenting a few names of bankrupt politicians and non-acknowledged writers. That is why these renegades are trying to catch some trusting people for their own purposes. Such that from unknown, they would

again become known, and soothed their ill ambitions, and in that way, they would be able to blow some wind to their seemingly dead sails of the anti-Czechoslovak propaganda in the West. They glue together and write up various letters, as if for the Czechoslovak offices, however in reality, these are made for the anti-Communist and Zionist centres and they are published through the most reactive media sources. They are even trying to gain signatures, which would serve to the West propaganda to ramble about the existence of organised “opposition” in Czechoslovakia.

What kind of “human rights”, however, is Mr Havel trying to fight for, since he grew up as a millionaire’s son and till now, he never forgot that the workers class prevented their family clan from their various “business activities”. And what is the agenda of a sadly known author of contra-revolutionary pamphlet 2000 words, Ludvik Vaculik? What kind of morals agenda has another of these “opponents”, who used to be in a key Party position and now he defends his anti-Party activities with these words: I would of course not plead this regime, which has ruined me in terms of my social position, as well as financial income. Give me good wage and I will be supporting this regime. So now, he probably supports those, who pay him well.

We are aware of many similar cases from the history, for example Vajtauer’s case, which was assisting the birth of KSC, and was one of it’s leading figures, for who the party was not enough oriented towards the left, so he started shaking towards the right, went to Melantrich, who paid him well, and then ended up as the promoter of Hitler’s fascism. Jaques Doriot, who belonged to the uppermost leaders of the French Communist party, became from the renegade of the revolutionary side, became direct promoter of fascist contra-revolution and as a fascist commander of Hitler’s army, he fell in the fight against Soviet army.

We also are aware of not one case from the current era, when the angst towards the communist party brought a renegade up to the camp of the most villain enemies of Communism. In American spy radio station Free Europe and similar broadcasting studios, there is quite a few of them.

Where do those who out of anti-Party angst or not-fulfilled ambitions collaborate with bourgeoisie propaganda want to reach to? This propaganda uses their former party membership, such that they could be presented as somehow members of “socialist opposition”? Doesn’t it already say enough about their true positions, especially the fact that their propaganda is done through the most reactionary media sources such as Springer’s press or American Munich broadcasting service? No matter what are the reasons of their activities, they know, whose purpose their are serving.

Definitely not socialism.

And definitely not to those, who very honestly work in mines, melt steel, construct apartments, deal with the struggles of transport, produce food, those who since the first day of the new year in all different positions who that they are wishing for the continuous progress of our socialist society continues this year even better than in was in the previous year.

Anyone who would want to prevent our people from this, and to break the laws of our socialist state, has to account for consequences.

DOCUMENT 2: “Failures and Usurpers” 12.1.1977 in “Red Law”

Although some representatives of the bourgeois world speak of the need for ideological peace, there is no evidence that imperialism itself ideologically disarmed it, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party Gustav Husak, said at XV. Congress of our party. He emphasized that imperialism, on the other hand, was looking for new forms and methods to develop an anti-communist offensive, to disrupt the unity of socialist countries, and intensify attacks against the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and other socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union.

"It occurs to us, therefore," Comrade G. Husák reminded us, "that we build socialism on Leninist principles, socialism, which in our practice embodies everything noble, progressive and humane. They think of us as realizing the ideals that the best sons and daughters of our nations have fought for, suffered, and died, and that true revolutionaries around the world are fighting for. "

We are being convinced of the truth of these words on a daily basis.

The bourgeoisie hates socialism simply because it shattered the myth of the eternity of capitalist domination, that it ended the exploitation of man by man, that he made available to all people what only a privileged stratum of the rich wants to keep for themselves.

In the desperate instinct of self-preservation, the bourgeoisie is beating its head around, doing everything possible and not protecting anything to stop the revolutionary process. In its attempt to slow down the process of its inevitable end, the bourgeois reaction seeks all sorts of methods by which it would like to reverse or delay its demise. He alternates brutal forms of anti-communism with less transparent ones. One of the new methods is the "improvement" of socialism, by which the bourgeoisie understands the distortions of socialism and its gradual liquidation.

Today, the ruling bourgeois classes are engaging their entire extensive state and propaganda apparatus in the "holy struggle" against the ideas of communism, which has already been spoken of by the authors of the Communist Manifesto. Its hype not only wants to distract attention from the painful wounds and diseases of contemporary capitalism.

The main mission of this modern crusade is to discourage the people of the capitalist countries from trying to demand change, all the more so revolutionary change. Its mission and task is to pacify the popular anti-capitalist movement, to morally subdue and break any left-wing movement, to break it down, to immunize workers against the ideas of scientific socialism, to establish in people's minds that capitalism is the only possible, lasting and eternal social system.

The range of means by which the reaction sanctifies this purpose is very eloquent: from discriminatory laws against left-leaning people, as in the Federal Republic of Germany, to the banning of workers' parties in industrial plants such as France, through the most diverse methods of espionage, and the persecution of progressive-minded people, as the modern history of the United States is famous, to the bloodiest reprisals, which "distinguish" the pro-American puppet Pinochet.

The international response is good by any means and by any allies. He corrupts anyone who

can be corrupt, bribes, buys, and counts on apostates and deserters from the enemy's camp. It recruits emigrants, but also various losers living in socialist countries, those who, for whatever reason, their class interests, reactionary interests, reasons of vanity or Slavomamism, renegade and notorious characterlessness, are allowed to lend their names to hell.

In its entrenched struggle against progress, the international reaction seeks to create the appearance of a broad anti-communist front, into which, in addition to open traitors, it seeks to bring in fluctuating and disoriented individuals or groups, sometimes in the guise of "left" or "communists." They often try to do the impossible - to revive political corpses, both in the ranks of emigrants from socialist countries and in the ranks of the remnants of class enemies in these countries, the renegades, to various criminal and antisocial elements. One form of this "touching" collaboration is the fabrication of all sorts of pamphlets, letters, protests, and other dozen slanders, which are uttered as the voices of one or another "opposition" individual or group and distributed throughout the world with great fuss and in a coordinated manner.

This includes the latest pamphlet, the so-called Charter 77, which a group of people from the bankrupt Czechoslovak reactionary bourgeoisie and also from the bankrupt organizers of the 1968 counter-revolution handed over to certain Western agencies at the request of anti-communist and Zionist headquarters.

It is an anti-state, anti-socialist, anti-people and demagogic shameful piece of text that rudely and falsely slanders the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the revolutionary conveniences of the people. Its authors accuse our society of not organizing life in it according to their bourgeois and elitist ideas.

These self-proclaimed individuals, who despise the people, their interests, their elected bodies, claim the right to represent our people, demand a "dialogue with political and state power," and even want to play the role of a "mediator in potential conflict situations."

The existence of socialism in our country is taken into account by the pamphlet only in one case - in the name of the republic. It emerges from cosmopolitan positions, from the class positions of the defeated reactionary bourgeoisie, and rejects socialism as a social system.

The authors of the pamphlet demagogically invoke, as if were outside the time and space of such "important civilizational values, to which the efforts of many progressive forces have been directed throughout history," such as the freedoms and rights of the people. Yes, our socialist state has declared in international documents and the laws of the country guaranteed and in practice fulfills the widest rights and freedoms - for the working people; farmers of this country.

However, the inspirers of the pamphlet mean something completely different by the same words - they are so passionate for "rights and freedoms" for the remnants of the defeated bourgeois reaction. These are "rights and freedoms" that would allow them to freely re-organize anti-state and anti-party activities, to proclaim anti-Sovietism, and to try again to break up socialist state power.

After the debacle that the reaction suffered in our country in 1948 and twenty years later,

these Don Quixotes simply want to sow the seeds of a new counter-revolutionary adventure, throwing our socialist society into chaos and uncertainty.

The efforts of many progressive forces, led by the Communists, the avant-garde of human progress, have indeed won many important "civilizational values," but not for the bourgeoisie, but on top of bourgeoisie. On imperialism, on colonialism, on fascist regimes, they (communists) won for the people. This has been the case in our history.

Our people, true to their lessons from the years of crisis, do not intend to give or give any right to a new counter-revolutionary chance. As Comrade G. Husák has repeatedly reminded us, the counter-revolution will not bloom in our country.

However, the content of the pamphlet is neither new nor interesting due to its defamatory character. The history of anti-communism witnessed some pamphlets that were even more reactionary. However, their bubbles always burst shortly afterwards, when they had their authors, or they were hoaxes, when their name was associated with an unknown or familiar name.

Everything against socialism is good for them. An example is the hype, which in 1967 launched the bourgeois press with the so-called manifesto of Czechoslovak writers. It was claimed that the pamphlet was signed by several hundred of our writers and artists. The British Sunday Times even wrote that "the original is in safe hands in the West" and that "a list of signatories will not be published at present to prevent repression by the regime." Paris's Le Monde was disgraced when it authoritatively ruled out doubts about individual signatures. The British radio and television station BBC, which organized a half-hour discussion proving the authenticity of the pamphlet, also suffered a disgrace, and the West German renowned writers Grass and Böll also sat on the glue.

Many people and institutions laughed at the time. Years later, a Pfaff modestly signed up for the "manifesto" when he admitted to his fellow emigrants that he had sucked the pamphlet out of his thumb. However, they have already kept quiet about this embarrassment in the Sunday Times, Le Monde and elsewhere. However, the purpose was achieved: to defile the socialist country, to slander socialism. And in this matter the greatest meanness will receive moral satisfaction from the bourgeoisie. Also, the relevant fee.

In the case of the latest pamphlet, it is not a hoax, but there was a clear programmatic connection of ideological authors and a striking coordination of the event. The pamphlet "was handed over to several carefully selected Western papers," admits the British newspaper Guardian. "In the GDR, it was distributed among the representatives of the main Western newspapers," - wrote the Bonn correspondent of the Times, adding that "the source that made it (meaning pamphlet) does not want to be named ..." We understand that, because it would be it is clear that the authors of the pamphlet are agents of anti-communist headquarters. According to a well-agreed scenario, the pamphlet was simultaneously published in various parts of the capitalist world. Anti-communist headquarters played a decisive role. After all, which is not clear, who can be behind this event? Those who pretend to be the authors of the pamphlet certainly do not have such an influence. They pretend to be fighters for progress, but so far they have been stuck in the service of the blackest imperialist reaction. As if to order, the pamphlet fit into the smear campaign against the socialist countries, which the anti-communist headquarters have been intensively fanning for many months. The mere way in which it was published leaves no doubt at all that it was a real order from the outside,

it is even possible to assume from which anti-communist center it was inspired. This time, the bourgeois agencies are indiscreet and invoke the various names with which they associate the reaction pamphlet. It is, in a political sense, a diverse mix of human and political losers.

These include V. Havel, a man from a millionaire family, a hardened anti-socialist, P. Kohout, a loyal servant of imperialism and his proven agent, J. Hájek, a bankrupt politician who wanted to separate our state from the community of socialist countries under the slogan of neutrality, L. Vaculík, author of the counter-revolutionary pamphlet 2000 words, V. Šilhán, stick figure of the block of counter-revolutionary forces, J. Patočka, reactionary professor who entered the service of anti-communism, V. Černý, notorious reactionary, famous for his statement about "lanterns" in the 1980s, supporters of socialism, an anarchist and Trotskyist-type individuals, organizers of the infamous K 231 and KAN, those who would like to abuse religion for reactionary political purposes, and others who had been rightly convicted of specific anti-state activities in recent years.

Some exponents of right-wing revisionism - the international adventurer F. Kriegel and others - also met in one group with the blackest anti-communist reaction. A kind of peculiar political panopticon, whose actors have ceased to be known and interesting to domestic audiences.

However, this panopticon still has its "price" for anti-communist headquarters. In these Cold War "shabs, they know full well that it is no longer possible to fool people with tales about" Bolsheviks eating children. " More than one anti-communist branch has passed away, more than one bourgeois "communist bomber" has gone out of fashion, and so they are hiring new "fighters" from the ranks of emigrants and renegades, from the remnants of the defeated bourgeoisie, various apostates, amoral and declassified elements. the word "dissidents". In its history, the revolutionary movement recognized many of the Lords, who for the Judas groschen became a servant, a informer, and a footman betraying the interests of the people. The international reaction in its historical defense relies on them and the like even today.

There are no new methods of "literary diversion". Years ago, it was sufficiently openly characterized by the former head of American espionage, Allan Dulles. "We must step up the ideological struggle against the Soviets if you want ideological sabotage work," he said. »At one time dr. Goebbels, in my opinion a talented forger and demagogue, claimed that several hundred people could be poisoned in a gas chamber at once, but with a well-done lie of millions ... How is it done? Quite simply: a little ink, a lot of old archives, a group of fearless scrapers and a sum of dollars ... «

And so the world reaction is now to be pulled out of the mess not only by the atomic blackmail with which the imperialists launched the Cold War against socialism, but also by the ideological diversion. They also use "groups of fearless scrapers" and, of course, "certain sums of dollars" for it.

The socialist countries have purposefully sought and are striving for a new climate in the world, new relations between the countries - in spite of all the Cold War. Their constructive efforts successfully resulted in the Helsinki Conference on European Security and Cooperation. The final act adopted at it enshrines the principles of a policy of peaceful coexistence between problems only and only by peaceful means.

The peace offensive of the socialist countries has the general sympathy of many non-communists, socialists and Catholics, because it is a policy that promotes that peace, which has prevailed for the fourth decade, becomes a lasting peace.

However, this policy has obviously met with hostility in the ranks of the most reactionary imperialist circles, which for various reasons would like to turn the wheel of history back. And in this united reactionary conspiracy against the easing of world tensions, our reactionary emigration and the group that remained at home and whose task is to serve imperialism from within our state also have their iron in the fire.

Her time is not favorable. She remained stuck like weathered rocks in a mountain stream, trying in vain to face the flood. Time spills over her and she grows with a moss of oblivion. How she would like to give time to reverse. In this, it unites all those in the world who are passionately concerned about the process of easing international tensions and would like to see Europe and the world again in the abyss of the Cold War. Two years ago, these forces tried to prevent the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe from being held. They didn't march. Now that a new meeting of the signatories to the Final Act is being prepared, according to the Helsinki Conference, which is due to take place in Belgrade later this year, they would like to throw Europe and the world back and make the Belgrade meeting a constructive dialogue on other ways nations, but a kind of propaganda hotbed for attacks on socialist countries.

A pamphlet, surrounded by several infamous names, should also be used for this purpose. As one of the many similar products for which wholesalers borrow the names of all sorts of losers from various socialist countries. And as part of the numerous campaigns now being conducted here with more, here with less intensity against this or that, socialist country. They differ in content, but not in focus.

It is not difficult to guess who their common denominator is, their common inspirer. According to the legal question "to whom it serves", the legal answer also follows: it serves imperialism, it is a new campaign against world socialism. This is not the first campaign and probably not the last. In the three decades of our socialist journey, we have experienced many of them. Reactive propaganda has unleashed streams of lies about us into the world.

It "makes" our republic with special attention after April 1969, after our party and our people have successfully embarked on the path of stabilizing our socialist society and its further development. Domestic as well as foreign prophets, who foretold the plague of the crisis that is now shaking the capitalist world, have been waiting in vain for years to fulfill their foolish predictions. The calm, hard-working, creative atmosphere of our country greatly disturbs losers at home and abroad, leading them to desperate and even risky acts.

The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia overcame a period of chaos and disruption, brought our society and people out of the crisis. He consistently and creatively develops Marxism-Leninism, on his XV. further developed the congress. a. deepened the program of building a developed socialist society, a program that enriches the living standards of the people, their political and social security, and further developed and continues to develop socialist democracy.

At a time when our people, under the leadership of the party, are fulfilling the line and conclusions of the XV. congress, a couple of offended vain losers and self-supporters, but in fact agents of imperialism such as Mlynář, Kriegl, Havel, Hájek, Patočka, Vaculík without a shred of honor and conscience weave plans that have no and can have no other mission than preparing a new counter-revolution. People who wanted to smuggle counter-revolution into our home have already been deserved. After all, they must be aware that any new attempts must fail in their infancy. The year 1968 will not be repeated. Today, the Gottwald family is fully valid: we will not subvert the republic!

Our people are going their own way. The path of social progress, the path of socialism. Through strong friendship with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, as a strong member of the socialist community. We are cooperating and will cooperate with all the progressive and peaceful forces of the world.

It is a good, honest path that will reliably lead us to communist goals. Everyone who works honestly and tries to contribute to the common good finds his life security on it. No false pamphlet can deny the historical truth.

DOCUMENT 3: The calling of Czechoslovak artistic union (28.1.1977)

In the jubilee year of the 30th anniversary of the liberation of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet army, our people, the conscientious landlord of their country, valued the magnificent work of building socialism in their homeland. XV. the Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia highly appreciated the results of the efforts, initiatives and creative work of the workers, peasants and the intelligentsia, and set new program goals. At the end of the election period, the hundreds of thousands of assets of deputies of all levels released the number of successful activities of our citizens and embodied other challenging tasks in the new election programs. The results we have achieved, which have also resulted in a substantial increase in the living standards, living conditions and security of our workers, fill us all with the pride and confidence of the citizens of a country whose socialist development carries out a humanistic program to satisfy the essential needs and interests of our people.

We, the representatives of the art front, are also preparing a review of our creative work. For the spring months, we are convening congresses of our associations of Czech and Slovak writers, visual artists, dramatic artists, composers and concert artists to consider the values created in the past period and to address issues of further flourishing of socialist art. We are pleased that, in the sum of these values, there are many extraordinary works and performances that are a permanent enrichment of the spiritual life of our people and have achieved well-deserved recognition at home and abroad. These values, close to the people, were not created in a vacuum. They arose in connection with the daily work of all our people, which our communist party brought out of the years of disintegration, they arose as part of a joint effort for rich, socialist development of life in our country, they arose in a favorable atmosphere of care, understanding and optimal conditions and creates culture. That is why they are filled with the exciting, inspiring atmosphere of these years, the life and ethos of our society. It is especially gratifying that the masterpieces are joined by many other venerable results of a lively, increasingly demanding creative activity of a wide line of artists of all generations, from the oldest to the largest generation of youngest artists, whose growth is rhythmic with the pulse of contemporary life in our socialist society. Our country, so loving in a thousand forms and so dear to each of us, has been given to us as a cradle and as a home. Its appearance, as well as its history, were shaped by dreams, desires, revolutionary struggles, the daily work of many generations of workers of hands and spirit. All the best forces, hidden in the people and their abilities, in their social endeavors and in the whole national culture, have always been directed towards one goal - to make this country a happy home for man, a home for an ever richer and happier life.

The fiery eruption of the Great October Socialist Revolution showed the possibility of fulfilling this goal. Greater October ushered in a magnificent period of revolutionary social events, when revolutionary efforts, labor, and struggles grew into a new social order in the Soviet Union that liberated the working man and profoundly influenced the history of the world. For six decades now, as we have just remembered this year, Great October has been illuminating the working people and revolutionary forces of the world with the path of progress, the path of a happy future. What was a dream of many generations became a real possibility in our country after the liberation of our country by the Soviet army, gradually fulfilled by the implementation of the program of building socialism.

And just as the workers understood by hand, the workers understood the spirit that a new epoch of human history, material and spiritual history, had come, they understood the need for common human activity to further the life and history of their own country and the world.

This is the source of our certainties, our proud self-confidence, our optimism unblinded by successes, unshaken by any hardships and even temporary failures, this is the source of our purposeful, diligent and joyful activity, as we measure our dreams and programs with satisfaction, because we see how the face of our country and the life of our man have changed in just three decades, how every day, and seemingly and simple/repetitive work bears beautiful fruits, how the shape of the world and the balance of power in it has changed, because we feel the wonderful, unstoppable energy with which the result of joint efforts rolls forward the history of our country and the history of the world. And hence the legitimate fact that from the 1920s to the present day the vast majority of masters of our culture have gone and are going faithfully in their efforts with the working class, with the Communist Party in the sign of the Great October.

The whole world is in motion. Our socialist world strengthens and expands the material and spiritual values intended for human well-being. The world of imperialism is torn by its internal contradictions and crises, and its attacking hawks are looking for a way out of them by trying to shade our sunny work and our relations between countries and nations. However, we will not allow our work, what we have created and continue to create in decades of hard work in our socialist countries, to burn in an atomic storm, a thousand times more severe of all past war disasters. Our socialist world, led by the Soviet Union, with its fascinating example of building a communist society, the creative use of all discoveries in science and technology, and its tireless peace initiative, has enough strength to defend the results of its work. At the same time, it perseveres and will go the way of striving for peace and friendly international relations without wars and the clanking of weapons, for understanding and cooperation between nations, as is in the interest and as it is the wish of the people of all countries.

We are aware that the constant progressive transformation of the world into an ever-improving world also requires our participation. The artist is not a chosen superman, a representative of a kind of superior elite, but he is part of a broad working group with an important irreplaceable mission, which is to enrich man with new ideas, new beauty, cultivate advanced social consciousness and workers' solidarity, even emotionally, he refined his receptivity, refined him in his human relationships, brought him pleasure and joy, a sense of fullness in life, to spread the ideas of brotherhood and peaceful cooperation among nations. In this, we follow up on a higher historical level the best legacy of our artistic and cultural tradition, the legacy of its greatest creators, for whom the service of the people has always been an honor and the highest goal.

And just as years ago the seed of Bezruč's angry anti-pan protest in the souls of miners became a revolutionary force, and today it is embodied in the pride of those who are far-sighted landlords of their mines and masters of their own destiny, just as Smetana's *My Homeland*, which conceived the beauty and receptivity of native horizons, evokes and multiplies in us the love of the native land, as well as from Aleš's paintings, connected by heartfelt and smiling folklore and refined sense of the historical greatness of our own nation, we still draw life joy and self-confident pride in our history, just as we want, so that our contemporary art, nourished by the thousands of today's sources of this earth and the life of its people, may become an equally uplifting and inspiring force of the life of today, the time of the liberated man and liberated labor. Together with the poet, who saw the wheels of the old systems crumbling in the world and how our whole country sounds like the diligent work of the people, today everyone who contributes honestly to the common work, every working person of our country, and therefore the artist, can say: "It is I who will obscure the future, I

am already playing the huge lyre, I will illuminate all corners of the planet's spring green peace.”

We are proud to declare the fraternal belonging of our nations, which has been sung with such fervor in the past by many of our poets led by Hviezdoslav. Liveliness manifested itself in the years of revolutionary struggles of progressive forces, led by the Communist Party, for the social and national liberation of the working man, especially during the Slovak National Uprising.

When the call of the poet Sam Chalupka Morho sounded from the Banská Bystrica radio in the years of fascist darkness, it was also a signal of new times in the life of our country, which resulted in socialist transformations - the greatest historical value in the life of the Czech and Slovak nations.

We are happy that with all our efforts we are integrating into a wider, international family. We are happy to go side by side in this effort with artists from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, with whom we have a common goal in developing socialist life. We find good friends among artists and progressive people from different continents, with whom we are united by the ideas of real humanism, capable of providing work, freedom and security of life, material and spiritual needs not to a select handful, but to millions of people. That is why - in accordance with the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference we shake hands across the borders of countries and continents, aware that real art, real culture should help individual nations and humanity, create understanding between people of different countries, gain them for a humanistic perspective of peace and working together for a happy human life.

That is why we also despise those who, in the unbridled pride of vain superiority, selfish interest or even for shameful money anywhere in the world - and a group of such apostates and traitors - have been found in our country - break away and isolate themselves from their own people, their lives and real interests. Through relentless logic, they become an instrument of the antihumanist forces of imperialism and, in their service, heralds of subversion and strife between nations. Developments convince us that the spirit of peace and cooperation in the world is growing, that real culture is one of the most effective means of communication between people, and that every work of art connected with human life and a bright future is a dove of humanistic message of peace on all continents.

We also want to think about these issues at our conventions too. We will evaluate our work of the past years in terms of the significant, beautiful and binding mission that art has in a socialist society. We will look to the future, because we want to keep up with other workers in our country, with its exciting dynamics, we want to make fruitful use of the full creative freedom that our country provides in the boom of its construction, we want our new works in a wide range of topics and artistic expression best fulfilled the growing and widely differentiated cultural needs and interests of our contemporaries. We are convinced that the mission of the artist in our socialist society, which we are proud of and to whom we want to give our best strengths and program goals, which will set out congresses of art unions for his further work, will be an inspiring force not only for union members but for all our artists, for all the creative forces of our culture.

We are convinced that the words of the program in our conventions will turn into works of art, into new novels and poems, into new symphonies, into new songs and chamber compositions, into new paintings and sculptures, into new dramatic and film works, into new artistic performances.

We are convinced that the coming years will be filled with new creative acts connected with the interests of our workers, with the humanistic goals of our socialist society and with the policy of its leading force - the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

Signatories below

DOCUMENT 4

‘From the speech of Ministry for Culture Milan Kusak’, published in Rudé Právo, July 7, 1985

Ministry of culture gave a speech on Sunday in the celebratory commemoration for the 1100th anniversary of the death of Methodius on Velehrad, in which he said:

Traditional Constantin-Methodius day had a very special characteristics this year, thanks to 1100th anniversary of Methodius’ death, who is commemorated not only by the nations in Europe but also in other parts of the world, but especially the Slavic nations. Also, we commemorated the historical legacy of these personalities and the versatile piece of work of Mehtodius and of course his brother Constantin.

We, Czechs and Slovaks commemorate these historical figures, and especially those parts of their rich and uneasy lives, that they lived in Great Moravia, and that piece of their work, which especially during their development and building of this empire, its spiritual culture, but also of the statehood they left as a legacy. The role of the Thessaloniki brothers in establishing the language and its written form not only in the area of Great Moravia but also for all Slavic nations is undoubtedly priceless. After all, there was a lot of circulators of Christianity. Even in our part of the world. But their agendas varied. Spreading also the power over these nations, forcing different culture upon nations, different language and in many cases sometimes even supress entire nations and tribes. Tragic history of the genocide of Polabian Slavs is the evidence of that.

That why especially today we have to appreciate the wise decision of the count Rastislav to turn towards the Byzantine emperor so that he would send to Great Moravia the teachers of Christianity that were familiar with the Slavic language and who by a versatile, today-called educational, literacy and diplomatic missions, helped to strengthen the independence of the Great Moravian states in Frans lands. And Constantin with Methodius fulfilled this expectation. Old Slavonic language, verbal works, law norms, how they created them, translated them and together with their students and followers these spread to other Slavic lands in the south and in the east, namely to Bulgaria and Russia, where the fruit of their work blossomed in the development of specific national cultures. It is important to emphasise as a historical and cultural act their credit to spread Slavic language which became as a specific literal language along with Greek and Latin another international language of Europe at that time.

Language and cultural development are the treasure and a main characteristic of every nation, the Ministry of Culture Milan Kusak said.

Especially in the Slavic nations, who lived in regions where during the prehistorical epoch of migration of nations, they were forced not for hundreds but for thousands of years to continuously fight for their national existence, for their right to live. In all this context, the main message is the peace-making nature and impact of the work of Thessaloniki Brothers in the Great Moravian empire, the first state form, in which the ancestors of today’s Czechs and Slovaks lived.

Throughout our thousand-year long history, there were definitely many ideological and cultural movements, in which our nations inspired when they were creating their lives, especially during the struggle for their protection. The branching tree of our cultural traditions however always had and has the roots in the life and thinking of our nation, together with its connection to our land and the nations determination to live in truth and social progress, the Ministry Milan Kusak emphasised.

The moral power of the legacy of the progressive manner of our national history we felt in the years of second world war, when the fascists of the para-German imperialism rose their traditional sword towards us – from supressing our language and culture to rude persecutions and murders, all the way to the program of absolute genocide of the nation.

Especially this year, when we fulfilled already the fourth decade of our free and peaceful life, we are more than ever aware what a truly revolutionary milestone in our history was the freeing of our homeland by the Soviet army and how deep our gratitude and respect towards all the sons and daughters of the brotherly nations of the Soviet union is, who gave their lives in this fight, and towards all Czech and Slovak anti-fascist fighters, who defended the pride of our nations and with their blood they paid for our freedom.

We also realize that, said ministry M. Kusak, that in the last 40 years, when our nation finally took over the rule of our own issues, we haven't let this time pass by. We accomplished deep revolutionary changes, we created a new society, socially just, the society of true equality of both our nations, Czechs and Slovaks, and all other nations. We are today, more than ever before aware of the prize and importance of these fulfilled goals, and a common will to continuously strengthen, improve and develop everything that is good and healthy, as we said multiple times in this year of Earth, which is our home, in which the work of all generations lays, and which today's face is the result of our socialist effort of the last 40 years and is our collective heritage. It will rely on us and on our current motivation what the tomorrow will look like, the happy future of our nation.

We live today again in an era of dangerous attempts of world rule that hazards with war, the Ministry emphasised. Our nations however since may 1945 have for the first time after hundreds of years of fight for existence the assurance for the law to live in their homeland, the law of own national interests, by which we do not threaten anyone, law to allyship, which is also for the first time in our history strong and firm enough such that we don't have to be worried as many previous generations were worried about their future.

Ministry Kusak appreciated the participation of the faithful citizens in the building of our homeland. Let's do everything – he said- for the hope of all honest patriots' wish are fulfilled, such that our homeland blossoms for the benefit of your people the Czechoslovak Socialist republic.

When he was talking about the peace effort of our country, he emphasised, that Czechoslovakia demonstrates their peace politics with everyday acts. We want, as it is the will of our people, continuously enforce and strengthen the trust and peaceful relations in the international relations and to get rid of everything that is blocking such healthy progress. The wish of every peaceful human on this planet is that the threat of war is eliminated, and so that peace is maintained, said in the end Milan Kusak.

DOCUMENT 5**Announcement of the Demonstration to the City Council (composed and sent by the leaders, signed by L2): 10 March 1988**

City Council
 Bratislava 1
 Vajanskeho Nabrezie
 B r a t i s l a v a

Bratislava 10.3.1988

Issue: Public gathering in Bratislava at Hviezdoslav square on the 25.3.1988 from 6:00 to 6:30pm – announcement.

Based upon the appeal of many Catholic citizens, I would like to announce that, according to § 10 of the announcement of the Home Office no. 348/1951, a peaceful public gathering of the citizens will take place on 25.3.1988 from 6:00-6:30pm at the Hviezdoslav Square in front of the Opera House.

The program of the public gathering will be quiet demonstration of the citizens for the re-announcement of Catholic bishops in the bishoprics that have no bishops at the moment according to the decision of the Pope, for complete religious freedom in the Czechoslovakia, and for the full compliance with human rights in the Czechoslovakia.

It is assumed that the participants of this gathering will show their agreement with the program of the demonstration with holding lit candles.

The pursuit of this public gathering is based upon the article 20 of the Constitution and of the § 6 act no. 68/1951 about public organizations and gatherings.

I would like to ask you to take this announcement into account.

With regards XXXX¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ Leader 2, as coded in Study 2, Chapter 4

DOCUMENT 6**Prohibition of the Demonstration (sent by the City Council): 17 March 1988**

City Council Bratislava I. – Vajanskeho nabrezie no. 3

Section: Home Issues

The Home Issues Department of the City Council Bratislava I. evaluated the announcement of XXX, living XXXX, about the gathering of Catholics for the support of the re-announcement of Catholic bishops in the bishoprics in Slovakia, that should take place on 25.3.1988 at 6:00pm in Hviezdoslav square in Bratislava and the Council issues this

D e c i s i o n

The gathering of the Catholics for the support of the re-announcement of Catholic bishops in the bishoprics in Slovakia on the 25.3.1988 is, according to the section 1 of the act no. 126/1968, prohibited.

According to the section 55 of the act no. 71/67 the potential appeal against this decision is withdrawn.

V a l i d a t i o n

On 11.3.1988 XXXX announced the City Council Bratislava 1. According to the section 6 of the act no. 68/1951 the intention to organise a gathering of the Catholics on 25.3.1988 for the support of the re-announcement of Catholic bishops in the bishoprics in Slovakia, taking place in Hviezdoslav square in Bratislava.

The enactment of the right to assemble, based upon the Czechoslovak Law according to the section 6 of the act no. 68/1951, is only acceptable under the condition that the gathering does not violate the public order and peace. Due to the fact that the convenor is not a member of any volunteer organization or an association based upon the act no. 68/1951, this person cannot ensure the public order during the gathering according to the section 7 of the above-mentioned act.

In this case, the condition mentioned in section 6 of the act no. 68/1951 is not fulfilled. Therefore, the council of the Home Office of the City Council Bratislava 1 has made a decision that is mentioned in the verdict section of this decision.

With regards to the possibility of the violation of the common good, the Home Office of the City Council Bratislava 1 simultaneously decided that the possible future appeal to this decision will not be taken into account.

In this case, the effectiveness of this decision is valid from the day of its delivery to the recipient.

Note: It is possible to make an appeal against this decision on the Home Office of the City Council Bratislava by sending the appeal to the department of the Home Office of the City Council Bratislava 1 in 1 to 15 days from its delivery to the recipient.

DOCUMENT 7**Appeal (signed by L2): 21 March 1988**

City Council
 Bratislava 1
 Vajanskeho Nabrezie 3
 B r a t i s l a v a

Bratislava 21.3.1988

With the letter from 10.3.1988, according to the appropriate law regulations, I announced the pursuit of a peaceful public gathering of the citizens in Bratislava in Hviezdoslav square on March 25th 1988 from 6:00 to 6:30pm for the support of the re-announcement of the bishops to the empty bishoprics according to the decision made by the Pope, for complete religious freedom, and for the complete adherence of the human rights in the Czechoslovakia.

The local council prohibited this gathering due to the fact that I as a person cannot ensure the maintenance of public order during the gathering.

I do not agree with this argument.

As I have announced in the letter from 10.3.1988, I am not organizing this gathering alone, but it is organised by multiple Catholic citizens and together we are capable of maintaining the public order during the gathering. As Catholic citizens, we have participated in dozens of Marian pilgrimages in Slovakia with hundred thousand people participating, and all of them were calm and peaceful. Additionally, the act no. 68/1951 about public organizations and gatherings does not require that the organiser of the gathering was a member of an official organisation.

The prohibition of this gathering violates article 28 of the Constitution, which guarantees the freedom of public gatherings and demonstrations. The violation of this Constitutional law would be a reason for the Constitutional Court which would guarantee the enacting of our rights. Because the Federal Government did not yet appoint the Constitutional Judges, we cannot approach the Court and we would like to therefore announce that the public gathering of the citizens will take place on the previously announced date of 25th March from 6:00pm.

We would like to stress again that the public gathering is planned to be peaceful and in adherence to the law.

With regards,
 XXXX¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ Leader 2, as coded in Study 2, Chapter 4

DOCUMENT 8**Official speech broadcast before the demonstration via the state-controlled television****(date unknown)**

In the name of whom (pause), where (pause), and who wants to distract the Catholics away from the Christ (pause) and to disrupt the peaceful worshipping by a street demonstration¹⁵¹?
(longer pause)

Activities of this kind only focus on political goals! And their organisers are hiding behind religion, misusing honest religious feelings and opinions of brave small Catholic people.

(longer pause)

Some self-proclaimed organisers want to raise psychosis of distrust and with a very pressuring manner they want to create unwanted confrontation.

(Longer pause)

Isn't it suspicious (pause), that by getting around legal Church hierarchy and by using suspicious political speculations, they [the leaders] are raising mayhem inside the group of brave Catholic citizens? And by giving rise to passions instead of the Christ's teaching, they want to gain personal popularity?

(song follows)

¹⁵¹The word used in the original document is 'manifestacia', not 'demonstracia'

DOCUMENT 9: Request of the special security action for 25 March 1988 (composed by the CSSR home secretary): 14 March 1988

Dear comrade minister,

on 25.3.1988 at 6:00pm in the capital city of SSR¹⁵² - Bratislava at Hviezdoslav square, the members of the illegal Church and the lay apostolate, plan to organise a citizen demonstration for greater freedom of the Church life in the CSSR.

The prepared demonstration will require higher demands to be placed upon the particular units of the National Security Corps to fulfil their duties in the capital city of SSR Bratislava. For necessary action to be taken, it will be required to strengthen the security units with the riot unit of the National Security of the SSR.

For the purpose of prevention of the prepared demonstration in the capital city of SSR Bratislava, with the compliance of section 48, paragraph 1, section B of the MV CSSR from 1.7.1982, I would like to ask you to give your consent to the announcement of the special security action from 10:00am to 12:00am on 25.3.1988.

In this special security action, we require the presence of the National Security Corps of the capital city Bratislava and the corps of Western Slovakian region as well as the resources of the riot unit of the National Security of the SSR.

With comrade regards,

XXXX¹⁵³

¹⁵² Slovak Socialist Republic

¹⁵³ Home secretary

DOCUMENT 10: Plan of the safety precautions for 25 March 1988

CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

Issue: Maintenance of peace and public order - precautions

With regards of the unwarranted citizen gathering for greater freedom of the Church life, which is prepared on 25.3.1988 in Bratislava, based on the R N S ZBM no. 12/88 from 15.3.1988 and R N S ZNB no. 15/88 from 21.3.1988, for the purpose of maintaining public order and peace I

o b l i g e

the chief officers of the National Security¹⁵⁴ and the National Security Corps these requirements:

1/ In every key railway station in the region, monitor the departure of trains towards Bratislava from 8:00am to 6:00pm on 25.3.1988.

2/ For every departure of such train from the railway stations, provide the following information about the situation, with the use of operative watch:

- Gatherings of various groups of citizens before departure for the demonstration (number of people, overall mood, the distribution of Church materials, etc.),
- In case of noticing such groups, immediately forward information via the information centre to operational centre of ZNB towards the operational centre of S ZNB¹⁵⁵.

3/ In trains arriving to railway station Bratislava- Main Station and Bratislava- New City, designate operative watch with the task to gather information in the train on the way to Bratislava, monitoring of the formation of such groups; after the arrival of the train to the above-mentioned stations, immediately pass on brief and eloquent information, especially about the leaders of these groups to the closest watch of State Security, that will be present in greater numbers in these railway stations.

The accomplishment of these tasks should be controlled by the responsible officials of the VB OS ZNB.

¹⁵⁴ Part of VB OS ZNB

¹⁵⁵ Regional units of the National Security Corps

DOCUMENT 11**Precautions for the prepared demonstration: 16 March 1988**

INFORMATION

of the precautions taken for the purpose of preventing the prepared protest demonstration of the illegal Church structures in Hviezdoslav square in Bratislava on 25.3.1988.

Illegal Church structures under the supervision of XXXX¹⁵⁶ and XXXX¹⁵⁷ are organising a citizen demonstration on 25.3.1988 in Hviezdoslav Square from 6:00 to 6:30pm, for the support of the re-appointment of bishops in Catholic dioceses in Slovakia.

The organisers announced this intention in writing to the Ob NV¹⁵⁸ Bratislava I. on 11.3.1988, while the agitation for taking part in this demonstration /"public gathering"/ was broadcast in radio Vatican on 10.3. 1988 and on 13.3.1988 Voice of America.

The attendance of citizens from the entire CSSR is not ruled out, based on the agitation speeches conducted in the above-mentioned radio stations. It is also expected that there will be an increased interest of Western journalists in this event.

To prevent the realization of the prepared demonstration, the units of ZNB of capital city Bratislava and Western Slovakian region are receiving and carrying out preventive, prophylactic¹⁵⁹, and disintegrative steps. The primary task of the ZNB is, with the use of their specific forces and precautions, to prevent the demonstration from happening.

Simultaneously, the actions for resolute action of public order units of VB against the protesters are being approved, in case that the situation will require these actions to re-establish public order.

With the approval of the Home Secretary of the CSSR, a special security action was announced for the units of ZNB of capital city Bratislava on 25.3.1988. From 15.3.1988 the Bratislava operation crew became active, which will direct and organise the performance of security precautions. It is active both in the resort and outside of the resort.

Via the Church secretaries KNV¹⁶⁰ and ONV¹⁶¹ we are also preventively affecting the Roman-Catholic clergy with the purpose to distance themselves from the action and for them to affect Catholics in a likewise manner.

On 16.3.1988, the question of cooperation was also discussed with ObNV Bratislava I. and a procedure for the purpose of the disposal of the demonstration was suggested.

¹⁵⁶ Leader 1 (as coded in Study 2, Chapter 4)

¹⁵⁷ Leader 2 (as coded in Study 2, Chapter 4)

¹⁵⁸¹⁵⁸ City Council

¹⁵⁹ Means 'course of action used to prevent disease'= this shows how the crowd was seen by the state officials

¹⁶⁰ KNV= regional national council

¹⁶¹ ONV= city council

For a successful handling of these prevention steps, I ask the Home Office of KSS¹⁶² for help in ensuring that these steps are completed:

Regional Councils:

- By the means of regional clergy secretary ensure that the services in selected churches in Bratislava from 23.3.1988 will incorporate an appeal of the priests that people should not participate in the demonstration and to ensure that the official Church will distance themselves from this protest action organised by the laics. The purpose of the distancing of the Church should be the fact that the action [the demonstration] disrupts the relationship between the state and the Vatican and also the upcoming positive agreement between CSSR and Vatican.

Municipal prosecutor offices:

- Legally assess the sanctions of the activists and organisers of the demonstration;
- With the accordance to legal norms, design an appropriate form of preventive steps towards the main organisers of the demonstration;
- Mobilize the actions of the regional prosecutors to preventive steps in schools and to explain the harmfulness of the anti-societal actions that could misuse the youth.

Further organizations and authorities:

- Ensure that the DPMB¹⁶³ will realise the closure of public transportation in Hviezdoslav square;
- Ensure that catering services will be closed in the surrounding area of Hviezdoslav square from afternoon hours on 25.3.1988, to ensure that these spaces can be used for the purposes of ZNB;
- Ensure that the City Firefighters will be able to handle potential fire during the period of intervention;
- Ensure on MUNZ Bratislava that the emergency services and hospitals will be ready to act in case this is needed in a wider range;
- Ensure with Western Slovakian Energy that electric energy will be provided without interruptions in Bratislava with special emphasis on the Hviezdoslav square area.

In case that XXXX¹⁶⁴ will not be present at the City Council for the interview, the State Security will deliver the announcement of the prohibition of the demonstration to the above-mentioned.

¹⁶² KSS= Slovak Communist Party (the only ruling party during that time)

¹⁶³ DMP= Dopravný podnik mesta Bratislava (Bratislava City Transport)

¹⁶⁴ Leader 2 (as coded in Study 2, Chapter 4)

Appendix 2 – Study 2: Supplementary Materials



University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee

19 December 2018

Dear Klara

Thank you for submitting your ethical application which was considered at the School of Psychology & Neuroscience Ethics Committee meeting on 29th November 2018; the following documents have been reviewed:

1. Ethical Application Form
2. Advertisement
3. Participant Information Sheet
4. Participant Consent Form
5. Participant Debrief
6. Themes for Semi Structured Interviews
7. Fieldwork Risk Assessment
8. PVG clearance/DBS

The School of Psychology & Neuroscience Ethics Committee has been delegated to act on behalf of the University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee (UTREC) and has granted this application ethical approval. The particulars relating to the approved project are as follows -

Approval Code:	PS14006	Approved on:	18/12/2018	Approval Expiry:	18/12/2023
Project Title:	"The Candlelight Demonstration": Mobilization Experience and Impact				
Researcher:	Klara Jurstakova				
Supervisor:	Professor Stephen Reicher				

Approval is awarded for five years. Projects which have not commenced within two years of approval must be re-submitted for review by your School Ethics Committee. If you are unable to complete your research within the five year approval period, you are required to write to your School Ethics Committee Convener to request a discretionary extension of no greater than 6 months or to re-apply if directed to do so, and you should inform your School Ethics Committee when your project reaches completion.

If you make any changes to the project outlined in your approved ethical application form, you should inform your supervisor and seek advice on the ethical implications of those changes from the School Ethics Convener who may advise you to complete and submit an ethical amendment form for review.

Any adverse incident which occurs during the course of conducting your research must be reported immediately to the School Ethics Committee who will advise you on the appropriate action to be taken.

Approval is given on the understanding that you conduct your research as outlined in your application and in compliance with UTREC Guidelines and Policies (<http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/utrec/guidelinespolicies/>). You are also advised to ensure that you procure and handle your research data within the provisions of the Data Provision Act 1998 and in accordance with any conditions of funding incumbent upon you.

Yours sincerely

PP

Convener of the School Ethics Committee

cc Professor Stephen Reicher (Supervisor)

School of Psychology & Neuroscience, St Mary's Quad, South Street, St Andrews, Fife KY16 9JP
Email: psyethics@st-andrews.ac.uk Tel: 01334 462071

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Consent Form

'The Candlelight Demonstration': Mobilization Experience and Impact

Klara Jurstakova, Prof Stephen Reicher

The University of St Andrews attaches high priority to the ethical conduct of research. We therefore ask you to consider the following points before signing this form. Your signature confirms that you are willing to participate in this study, however, signing this form does not commit you to anything you do not wish to do and you are free to withdraw your participation at any time.

Please initial box

- I understand the contents of the Participant Information Sheet (marked 'PIS_22/11/2018_1_THE CANDLELIGHT DEMONSTRATION: MOBILIZATION EXPERIENCE & IMPACT')
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study and have had them answered satisfactorily.
- I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving an explanation.
- I understand who will have access to my data, how it will be stored, in what form it will be shared, and what will happen to it at the end of the study. I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data before 28/02/2019.
- I agree to being quoted directly against my name in research publications
- I agree to take part in the above study

Photographic images / audio recordings / video images

I understand that part of this research involves taking audio recordings. These recordings will be kept securely and stored separately to any identifiable information, i.e. consent forms and questionnaires.

Audio data can be a valuable resources for future studies and therefore we ask for your additional consent to maintain this data for this purpose.

- I agree to have my being tape recorded
- I agree to my audio material to be published as part of this research.
- I give permission for my audio material to be used in future studies without further consultation.

Signatures			
I confirm that I am willing to take part in this research			
	Print name	Date	Signature
Participant			
Researcher			



Participant Information

'The Candlelight Demonstration': Mobilization Experience and Impact

Klara Jurstakova, Prof Stephen Reicher

What is the study about?

We invite you to participate in a research project that aims to understand the experiences and impact of the Candlelight Demonstration (March, 1988, Bratislava) on the residents of Czechoslovakia. This will involve understanding the impact of this event on non-participants, as well as the impact and the mobilization experience of ordinary participants and leaders of the Candlelight Demonstration.

Do I have to take part?

This information sheet has been written to help you decide if you would like to take part. It is up to you and you alone whether you wish to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be free to withdraw at any time without providing a reason.

What would I be required to do?

You will be asked to complete an individual semi-structured interview with the researcher about your experiences associated with either your participation or non-participation in the Candlelight Demonstration (1988). You will not be asked any specific questions. Instead, a series of themes and sub-themes will be used to help you describe your memories and experiences associated with this event. The interview will be tape recorded and it will last approximately 1 hour. All costs associated with your participation will be refunded to you.

Are there any risks associated with taking part?

Participation in this study is not anticipated to cause any discomfort. To ensure safety, the interview will be conducted in a public space (e.g. café, restaurant) and you will not be required to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer. The potential physical and/or psychological harm or distress will be the same as any experienced in the everyday life.

Informed consent

It is important that you are able to give your informed consent before taking part in my project and you will have the opportunity to ask any questions in relation to the research before you provide your consent (written).

What information about me or recordings of me ('my data') will you be collecting?

Your answers will be tape recorded on an encrypted device. Your responses will be fully identifiable but all material that will not be necessary for the analysis will be reduced. Your name will not be used unless you specifically request so. If you feel that you want to make adjustments to your answers after the interview, you will be sent a transcription of the interview and you will be allowed to change/add/delete any information from your answers that you request.

How will my data be stored, who will have access to it?

Your data will be stored in a **FULLY IDENTIFIABLE** form, which means that your data will be identifiable as yours. Your data will be stored in a password protected computer, and only Klara Jurstakova and Prof. Stephen Reicher will be able to access it.

Audio recordings will be taken on an encrypted device and transcribed at the earliest opportunity before being archived for future use.

How will my data be used, and in what form will it be shared further?

Your research data will be analysed as part of the research study, and may be published and used for future scholarly research without further consultation.

Your data will be shared (published and/or placed in a database accessible by others) in a **FULLY IDENTIFIABLE** form, which means that your data will be identifiable as yours and attributed to you.

It is expected that the project to which this research relates will be finalised by April 2019 and written up as part of my Honours dissertation for the School of Psychology & Neuroscience.

When will my data be destroyed?

Your data will be shared as described above, and then the data held by the researcher will be kept indefinitely.

Will my participation be confidential?

No, your participation will be a matter of public record.

Lawful basis for making use of personal data and data protection rights

The lawful basis that the University will rely on to make use of your personal data during the research and for related research projects in the future, as described to you is public task; where special category personal data are used the lawful basis is archiving purposes in the public interest, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes.

The University of St Andrews is a Data Controller for the information you provide about you. You have a range of rights under the data protection legislation, including the right of complaint. However, some of those rights may not be available where you provide personal data for research purposes. For questions, comments or requests, consult the University website at <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/terms/data-protection/rights/>, or email dataprot@st-andrews.ac.uk.

You will be able to withdraw your data within 28/02/2019.

Ethical Approvals

This research proposal has been scrutinised and subsequently granted ethical approval by the University of St Andrews Teaching and Research Ethics Committee.

What should I do if I have concerns about this study?

In the first instance you are encouraged to raise your concerns with the researcher and if you do not feel comfortable doing so, then you should contact my Supervisor. A full outline of the procedures governed by the University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee is available at www.st-andrews.ac.uk/utrec/guidelinespolicies/complaints/

Contact details

Researcher	Klara Jurstakova	Supervisor	Prof Stephen D. Reicher sdr@st-andrews.ac.uk +44 (0)1334 463057
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Interview Schedule

Background: Age and occupation; previous political involvement & any impact it had on people (surveillance, arrests, etc.); knowledge about other oppositional activities; previous experience of oppositional activities & feelings associated with participation; the impact of these activities (if any) on the people/their families; connections to others involved in oppositional activities; position/role in these activities/organizations (leaders/ordinary participants)

The decision to organize the event: What made people to organize this event; what were the initial reactions to organizing it; connections to other leaders; concerns about organizing this event; bases of the decision to organize the event; motivations associated with resistance; potential involvement with other opposition organizations, ways of promoting the event

Experience of the event: A description of where they were and what they experienced; emotional experience of participation/non-participation due to arrests; a sense of connection to others at the event no matter if personally present or not; a sense of efficacy and empowerment in the event; powerful moments, perceptions of the police intervention, experience of harm/arrests

Impact of the event: How the organization of the event/participation affected them personally/how it affected their family; how participation affected how they were treated by others (especially in their occupation/in public- both pre and post-1989); how participation affected their engagement in further dissent activities and their future political activities (after 1989); how they perceived the publicly available information about the event (news, commentaries); how they believe the event had a broader effect on society and future events.

Appendix 3 – Study 3: Supplementary Materials



3 January 2020

Ref: 19/SAS/11C

Klara Jurstakova
c/o School of Psychology, Politics and Sociology
Faculty of Social & Applied Sciences

Dear Klara,

Confirmation of ethics compliance for your study – Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia: Crowd Mobilisation in a Repressive Regime and its Long-Term Impact

The Faculty Ethics Chair has reviewed your Ethics Review Checklist application and appropriate supporting documentation for the above project. The Chair has confirmed that your application complies fully with the requirements for proportionate ethical review, as set out in this University's Research Ethics and Governance Procedures.

In confirming compliance for your study, you are reminded that it is your responsibility to follow, as appropriate, the policies and procedures set out in the *Research Governance Framework* (<http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/research-and-consultancy/governance-and-ethics/governance-and-ethics.aspx>) and any relevant academic or professional guidelines. This includes providing, if appropriate, information sheets and consent forms, and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data.

Any significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over its course should be notified via email to red.resgov@canterbury.ac.uk and may require a new application for ethics approval.

It is a condition of compliance that you must inform red.resgov@canterbury.ac.uk once your research is complete.

Wishing you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Ellen

Ellen Charman
Research Integrity & Development Officer
Email: red.resgov@canterbury.ac.uk

Cc: Evangelos Ntontis, supervisor

Research & Enterprise Integrity & Development Office

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Professor Rama Thirunamachandran, Vice Chancellor and Principal

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CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia: Crowd Mobilisation in a Repressive Regime and its Long-Term Impact
Name of Researcher: Klara Jurstakova, Evangelos Ntontis

Contact details:

Address: School of Psychology, Politics and Sociology
 Canterbury Christ Church University, North Holmes Road,
 Canterbury, Kent CT1 1QU

Tel: 1919

Email: klara.jurstakova@canterbury.ac.uk

Please initial box

1.	I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	
2.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.	
3.	I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential.	
4.	I agree to have my being audio recorded.	
5.	I give my permission for my anonymised audio material to be used in future studies without further consultation.	
6.	I agree to take part in the above study.	

Name of Participant:	Date:	Signature:
Name of person taking consent (<i>if different from researcher</i>)	Date:	Signature:
Researcher:	Date:	Signature:

Copies: 1 for participant
 1 for researcher



Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia: Crowd Mobilisation in a Repressive Regime and its Long-Term Impact

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Klara Jurstakova and Dr Evangelos Ntontis.

Background

We invite you to participate in a research project that is part of my postgraduate thesis. This project aims to understand the experiences and impact of the events of the Velvet Revolution (1988-1989) on the residents of Czechoslovakia. This will involve understanding the impact of this event on non-participants, as well as the impact and the mobilization experience of ordinary participants and the leaders of these events.

This project is not funded by an external organisation as it is a part of my PhD.

What will you be required to do?

Participants in this study will be required to complete an individual semi-structured interview with the researcher about your experiences associated with either your participation or non-participation in the Velvet Revolution events (1988-1989). You will not be asked any specific questions. Instead, a series of themes and sub-themes will be used to help you describe your memories and experiences associated with these events. The interview will be tape recorded and it will last approximately 1 hour. Your answers will be tape recorded on a secured device. Your responses will be fully anonymized and any material that will not be necessary for the analysis will be deleted. Your name will not be used unless you specifically request so. If you feel that you want to make adjustments to your answers after the interview, you will be sent a transcription of the interview and you will be allowed to change/add/delete any information from your answers that you request.

All costs associated with your participation will be refunded to you.

To participate in this research, you must:

- Have been (be) a resident of former Czechoslovakia
- Have been born before or during the year 1970

Procedures

You will be asked to complete an individual semi-structured interview in the Nation's Memory Institute, Bratislava, which will last approximately 1 hour. Participation in this study is not anticipated to cause any discomfort. To ensure safety, the interview will be conducted in the Nation's Memory Institute and you will not be required to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer. The potential physical and/or psychological harm or distress will be the same as any experienced in the everyday life. Your research data will be analysed as part of the research study, and may be published and used for future scholarly research without further consultation in an anonymised form.

Feedback

You will be given a short summary of the findings of the study after it has been completed. If you have any further questions, please email klara.jurstakova@canterbury.ac.uk

Confidentiality and Data Protection

On the legal basis of a task being performed in the public interest, all data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the University's own data protection policies. No unrelated or unnecessary personal data will be collected or stored. The following categories of personal data will be processed: age, gender, residence, recordings. Personal data will be used only for demographic purposes and participants will be fully anonymized. Data can only be accessed by Klara Jurstakova, Evangelos Ntontis, and the examiners. After completion of the study, all data will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed) and held for a period of 5 years.

Dissemination of results

The results of the study will be published in scientific journals, discussed in international conferences, and the PhD thesis will be published and available in the CCCU library <https://create.canterbury.ac.uk/>

Deciding whether to participate

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to (i) withdraw consent at any time without having to give a reason, (ii) request to see all your personal data held in association with this project, (iii) request that the processing of your personal data is restricted, (iv) request that your personal data is erased and no longer used for processing.

Process for withdrawing consent

You are free to withdraw consent at any time without having to give a reason. To do this you can withdraw by sending an email to klara.jurstakova@canterbury.ac.uk or by saying at any point of the interview that you do not wish to continue and your interview recording will be destroyed and not used for the research project.

Any questions?

Please contact Klara Jurstakova on 1919 or klara.jurstakova@canterbury.ac.uk;
School of Psychology, Politics and Sociology, Canterbury Christ Church University, North
Holmes Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1QU.

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Sociology, Canterbury Christ Church University | North Holmes Road, Canterbury, Kent, UK, CT1 1QU

Interview Schedule

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study on the role of leadership in the Velvet Revolution.

Before we start, I would just like to remind you that this interview will be confidential and your answers will be anonymised. It will be a relaxed conversation about your role and your feelings associated with the Velvet Revolution events. My research project is within the field of psychology, and there will not be any particular focus on politics or history, instead, it will be more about your inner feelings and experiences associated with the Velvet Revolution events.

Let's move on to the questions.

Firstly, could you tell me about the society at the time of the Velvet Revolution? What was life like for you?

Could you describe the Velvet Revolution events (November-December 1989)?

What did it mean for you? – relate it to them

How would you describe this time period/events?

What did you do?

What was your role in these events?

Public Against Violence (the leadership organization of which participants were most likely founders/members of)

How was this group formed? (Discuss the logo- what was it supposed to convey?)

When did you join and why?

What was the purpose of this group?

Feelings? Why did you think you could succeed? Did you have any contact with others?

Did they have a support?

How would you define your position? Were you a leader? How would you define that role?

Mass events/gatherings- impressarioship

Which events did you organize? What locations did you use?

How did you mobilize people for these events?

Who were "the people" who came to these meetings? How would you define them?

What was the purpose of these events? What did you want to convey? (there were different kinds of events- demonstrations, smaller discussion gatherings, the live chain to connect people over East/West border, concerts, happenings, train of Velvet Revolution- what did these mean)

How did you design the meetings? What was effective and what wasn't?

What did you actually "do" in these meetings? (speeches, singing, banners, symbols, clothes)

What was the reaction of the government? (in the previous events such as the candlelight demo the reaction was repressive/ how about now? Was it different? Why?)

Feelings associated with the events- asked throughout the interview

What are your feelings associated with these events?

Did these events empower you to do something? Why yes/no? (not ask this directly, but lead them to this topic and ask them to explain/give an example)

Impact of these events

Did you experience any changes after Velvet Revolution? (your choices, decisions, relationships, job, opinions, involvement in politics, location - does it have any connection to the Velvet Rev?)

Does it last even nowadays?

Yes/No why?

What keeps you together? Do you still talk to other group members? (SOCIAL RELATIONS)

How do you think it affected society in general?

Is there anything that you would like to add, that I missed?

If you changed something now, what would that be?

Appendix 4 –Study 1: Additional Supplementary Materials

Document A: Gathering for the 1100th anniversary of Methodius' death¹⁶⁵

VELEHRAD. The celebratory gathering for the 1100th anniversary of the death of Methodius took place on Sunday in Velehrad in Uherske Hradiste region. The participants commemorated the historical legacy of the versatile work of Methodius and his brother Constantin in the Great Moravia epoch, the first state department in which the ancestors of today's Czechs and Slovak had a home, and in which they influenced the culture and education of the Slavic nations.

The gathering was joined by the representatives of the CSR and SSR government – the ministries for culture Milan Kusak and Miroslav Valek, chairman of the Southmoravian KNV Frantisek Chabicovsky, and also the chairman of the Czech Peace Committee Antonin Stejskal and other representatives.

Amongst the guests there was the state secretary of Vatican – Agostino Casarolli, who is in Czechoslovakia as a guest of the CSSR government, and his accompanies.

The present delegation of the VI. All-Christian peace gathering in Prague was led by the representative from Minsk, Starozagor, bishop Hare-Duke Michael and Cuban Raul Ceballos.

The celebratory gathering was initiated with the Czechoslovak national anthem.

The participants were then welcomed by the chair of ONV (okresny narodny vybor) in Uherske Hradiste Zdenek Lapcik. The participants were also greeted by bishop Josef Vrana¹, apostolic administrator of Olomouc archdiocese.

After that, the Ministry for Culture Milan Kusak spoke (we are publishing his speech on page 2).

Cardinal Frantisek Tomasek read a special apostolic letter from pope John Paul II.

In the name of delegation of the VI. All-Christian Peace gathering, participants were greeted by Church representative from Minsk. He said that the people from all countries and with different religious faith are united in the hope for termination of the pointless arming and they want to prevent the nuclear catastrophe. This is the purpose of the Christian peace conference.

After the gathering, a celebratory holly mass followed, which was celebrated by pope's delegate cardinal Agostino Casaroli together with Czech and Slovak coordinators of the Roman-Catholic church. In this mass, Agostino Casaroli emphasised the Slavic character of the Constantin and Methodius's mission, which spread Christianity in Slavic language and was fulfilling the cultural and peace mission.

¹⁶⁵ Available at: <https://archiv.ucl.cas.cz/index.php?path=RudePravo/1985/7/8/1.png>

Document B: VELEHRAD '85

What we experienced in Velehrad was beyond all our expectations. Cardinal Casaroli after his return to Rome characterised it with three words: humility, religiousness, enthusiasm.

The pilgrimage began already on Saturday July 6th. For this day it was announced to have an informal meeting of youth from the entire Czechoslovakia. In the afternoon, the whole space in front of the basilica was full of young people.

They were sitting together, welcomed each other – because they mostly knew each other already- they played on guitars and sang songs, which were well-known to us all. Part of the bishops from Czechia and Slovakia were present in the afternoon as well. Bishop Otcenasek and Korec were with the youth and they stayed there until the late night.

We were hoping prior to the event that the basilica will be open overnight and that we will be there altogether for the entire night. But after the evening holly mas we had to leave the basilica and so approximately 5000 young people divided into two groups – one that stayed in front of the basilica and other that moved to the lawn underneath the cemetery.

In these two spaces the youth met, and they spent the night in prayers, singing, and rallying for the glory of the pope and the Church. They were far away from all the politics – they didn't even think about it.

They were happy to be together, that they understand each other and that they have something in common that makes them happy. They were living through their youth and they were free inside. The feelings that are so characteristics of youth - the need for truth, love and freedom – that is what these young people were expressing despite growing up in this weird time period. They were expressing that freedom is mostly an inner feeling and they weren't afraid to express that this freedom they have is through the Church. Probably for the rest of their lives these young people will have a memory of this night.

Describing the atmosphere of Sunday is pointless. Even before the mass, a historical moment happened. Some young members of the religious orders (the so-called secret order members) dressed to their monk robes. They overcame “35 years of taboo” and they celebrated once again our Church and its beauty.

When the Church guests arrived, their welcome was so emotional that after approximately 20 minutes someone said in the microphone: Please let us begin. The celebration began but except the holly mass which was celebrated by almost 250.000 people in calm prayer, from the beginning till the end the celebration was accompanied by enthusiastic clapping and rallying. People were shouting: Long live cardinal Tomasek, we want religious freedoms, we want bishops, Casaroli, Viva Papa. People were shouting continuously and with enthusiasm. The people reacted with wisdom towards everything that was happening on the stage, we believe that the only explanation is that the Holy Ghost was there with us.

Cardinal Tomasek said at the end of the celebration to a group of young people: this is not a reality; this is a dream.

We almost forgot to mention one slogan that people were shouting: ‘Long live the church’. Together with celebrating of the Pope it was probably the most beautiful slogan in the

Velehrad. People from Czechia and from Slovakia were suddenly realizing that the Church is our Mother and our Saviour...

Velehrad celebrations have a lively echo especially in the discussion of our citizens and in the media abroad. CSTK published a very limited account of the event on July 17. But that is mostly focused on the political dimension of the mass speeches of people who were on the outskirts of this religious celebration, rather than the religious aspect of this event.

The faithful went to Velehrad because of religion and not for politics. But the government wanted to usurp this celebration and to categorise it towards the typical political rituals of our everyday lives. They called it peace celebration with all associations towards one-sided propaganda. Saint Methodius was supposed to disappear from the event and especially the religious aspect of his mission.

This attempt was addressed by the faithful and they did it very efficiently.

The chair of ONV Uherske Hradiste and the Ministry of Culture Milan Kusak provoked the faithful with expression of disagreement every time when in their speeches they wanted to manipulate the celebration towards politics which was so foreign to the Faithful. The disagreement rose every time when they categorised the event as 'peaceful' (the peace was only one of many dimensions of this religious celebration), when they titled Saint Methodius without the 'Saint' characteristics, when they ignored faith as the primary motivation of our acts. Minister Kusak realized that the concept of the government for the celebration is out of place and he very apparently improvised in his speech and he left out the controversial parts. The daily press published his speech from Velehrad on 8 July, but that speech was very different than the one that he gave in Velehrad.

Our official church representatives that were present in Velehrad should also think about the fact that the spontaneous applause was given only cardinal Tomasek from all of them, whose name people associate with the loyalty to Holy Father (Pope).

Document C:**A P P E A L**

To the participation in a gathering of the faithful citizens
On March 25 at 6:00pm.

(symbol of the candle hand drawn)

Brothers and sisters!

We invite you to participate in a peaceful demonstration of the Catholic citizens, that will take place on Friday 25th March 1988 from 6:00pm to 6:30 pm in Bratislava in Hviezdoslav Square in front of the Opera House.

With this demonstration we want to support the re-announcement of bishops in the empty bishoprics according to the decision made by the Pope, for greater religious freedom and for full compliance of the human rights in Czechoslovakia.

We will show the agreement with these demands by holding lit candles during the demonstration.

This public gathering was announced to the City Council Bratislava 1 with accordance of the valid regulations.