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# SHADOWS OF THE PAST: THE EFFECTS OF MOVEMENTS' PAST STRATEGY ON THIRD-PARTIES' SUPPORT FOR ITS CURRENT STRATEGY

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SHADOWS OF THE PAST:  
THE EFFECTS OF MOVEMENTS' PAST STRATEGY ON THIRD-PARTIES'  
SUPPORT FOR ITS CURRENT STRATEGY

A Dissertation Presented

by

SEYED NIMA ORAZANI

Submitted to the Graduate School of  
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Shadows of The Past: The Effects of Movements' Past Strategy on Third-Parties' Support  
for Its Current Strategy

A Dissertation Presented

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## **ABSTRACT**

SHADOWS OF THE PAST: THE EFFECTS OF MOVEMENTS' PAST STRATEGY  
ON THIRD-PARTIES' SUPPORT FOR ITS CURRENT STRATEGY

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Social movements benefit from third-party support in waging social change. The budding literature on the effects of social movements' strategy (violent vs. nonviolent) on third-parties' willingness to support and join the social movement has mainly regarded social movements' strategy as something fixed and unrelated to its past strategy. Using varied contexts, I investigated how social movements' past strategy may affect, if any, third parties' moral perception of the current strategy of social movements and how this perception translates into third parties' (un)willingness to support and join social movements. In the context of the conflict between hate groups and counter-protestors in a lesser-known country, Bhutan (Studies 1 & 4), and an ally country (Study 2) American participants were more willing to support and join a violent movement that was previously nonviolent as opposed to a historically violent movement. Perceived moral continuity of movements' strategy (Studies 1-5) and perceiving violent strategies as the last resort (Studies 2-4) mediated the relationship between change in movements' strategy and third parties' willingness to support and join the movement. However, using

a conflictual context in which a movement, Liberation of Tamil Ealam, sought to gain independence from a government, Sri Lankan government (Study 3), and a domestic anti-Fascist movement in the United States, Antifa, that aims to combat hate groups led to partial replication of findings of Studies 1-2 & 4. While there was no statistically significant difference between conditions (shifting from nonviolence to violence vs. continuing violence) in third parties' willingness to support and join the movement, perceived moral continuity of movements' strategy (Studies 3 & 5) and perceiving violence as the last resort (Study 3) mediated the relationship between conditions and third parties' willingness to support and join the movement. Theoretical and practical implications for social movements are discussed. Specifically, social movements that have exhausted nonviolent avenues to achieve their goals are likely to find support among third-parties for a shift toward violent strategies—support that may ultimately lead to either desired social change or conflict escalation.

*Keywords:* social movements, collective action, strategy shift, moral continuity, third-party support

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

“In the past, with militant violent Nazi groups, the anti-fascist strategy was obvious. Make sure they don’t march, block them, be ready to fight them physically if necessary, stop them from organizing. Now it is more difficult. With populist movements, it is hard to always justify militant strategies against them as public opinion is shifting, as the violence the far-right advocates is not clear and apparent.”

- Preston, Danish Anti-fascist and filmmaker (as cited in Bray, 2017)

According to Preston, social movements need to adapt to shifts in the social and political arena to survive and achieve their goals. Put differently, it may not be in a social movement’s best interest to cling to previously determined strategies when social realities change. For example, when peaceful protests of injustice have not been successful, members of the social movement may deem violent strategies to be a legitimate and effective way of bringing about justice. Such was the case for Antifa—an anti-Fascism social movement that primarily takes collective action in opposition to fascist movements. Antifa has been historically nonviolent in its methods. Recently, the social movement has become open to allowing members to engage in violence to counter violent fascist groups in the United States (Bary, 2017). Such a decision, however, may be deemed unacceptable by third parties (i.e., groups other than those directly involved in the movement), which could negatively influence the social movement’s ability to achieve its goals (Tausch, Becker, Spears, Christ, Saab, & Singh, 2011; Bruneau, Lane, & Saleem, 2017; Feinberg, Willer, & Kovacheff, 2017; Orazani & Leidner, 2018, Thomas & Louis, 2014).

Indeed, research on collective action shows that, power struggles are embedded in a wider societal context (Simon & Klandermans, 2001, Stürmer & Simon, 2004). As such, struggles between antagonistic groups also involve third parties (e.g., societal authorities or the general public). Importantly, social movements need to control, influence, or enlist third parties for their collective action to be successful (Louis, 2009). This is because public opinion plays a substantial role in policy change (Burstein, 2003; Burstein & Linton, 2002).

Aside from whether a social movement can sway third-parties to adopt their goals, social movements also have to convince third-parties that the methods used to achieve those goals are acceptable (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011). Typically, third parties are more supportive of nonviolent than violent strategies (Becker, Tausch, Spears, & Christ, 2011; Bruneau, Lane, & Saleem, 2017; Feinberg, Willer, & Kovacheff, 2017; Orazani & Leidner, 2018). Indeed, a growing body of research has shown that perceived commitment to the group goal by the majority of third-party observers and perceived lack of solidarity (Becker, Tausch, Spears, & Christ, 2011), perceive morality of the movement's strategy (Orazani & Leidner, 2018), perceived violence of the movement (Bruneau, Lane, & Saleem, 2017), and identification with the movement (Feinberg, Willer, & Kovacheff, 2017) mediate the relationship between movements' strategy (violent vs. nonviolent social movements) and the amount of support third-party observers are willing to offer to the social movement.

In the current research, I tested the idea that although third parties tend to refrain from supporting violent strategies, the use of violence may be more palatable to third parties if the social movement has tried and failed to achieve success through

nonviolence. Surprisingly, although social movements constantly react to ever-changing social realities by adjusting their strategies to the context in which they are fighting against social injustices (Shellman, Levey, & Young, 2013), the collective action literature has been relatively silent on how changes in strategy influence third-party support. Herein, I investigated how third parties perceive a shift in a social movements' strategy from nonviolence to violence. Specifically, I addressed whether shifts to a violent strategy attracts (or diminishes) third-party support as well as how third parties perceive social movements that shift to using violence compared to social movements that have always used violence.

**Gandhi or Che?: The advantages of nonviolent (rather than violent) strategies to wage social change**

Social movements have always been a main avenue for social change. However, the strategies social movements use to achieve their stated goals differ widely. Whilst some social movements use peaceful means to initiate social change, others are willing to use violence for the same purpose. Sociological as well as social psychological literature typically use this dichotomous categorization for the strategy a social movement employs. Scholars, however, use various terminology to describe this dichotomy. Some researchers use the term violent and nonviolent (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011, Orazani & Leidner, 2018), some use normative and non-normative collective action (Tausch, Becker, Spears, Christ, Saab, & Singh, 2011; Zaal, Laar, Stahl, Ellemers, & Derks, 2011), others use radicalism and activism (Moskalenko & McCauley, 2009), or moderate versus militant political action (Barnes & Kaase, 1979; see also Thomas & Louis, 2014). Herein, I use the nonviolence and violence vernacular since it is conceptually the closest

terminology to what I intend to investigate. It also has less evaluative connotations compared to other terminologies such as moderate versus militant action or radicalism versus activism.

Regardless of the terminology used, there is a debate about the utility of a strategy that includes violence. Typically, there is an implicit assumption among scholars and lay people that violence is more effective than nonviolence to wage social change in both domestic and foreign affairs (Stephan & Chenoweth, 2008). History is replete with examples of successful social movements that have used violence. For example, American independence was only achieved when they took up arms against the British. At face value, it seems self-evident that in using violence, as compared to nonviolence, a social movement applies more pressure in the direction of wanted change. Nonetheless, violence is rejected as a means to engage in social change under most circumstances (see Arapura, 1997). Specifically, it is argued that nonviolence is both spiritually untenable and strategically unwise because it rarely brings about the desired change (Stephan & Chenoweth, 2008; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2012).

There are two observations that cast doubt on the efficacy of violence as the only way of bringing about social justice. First, not all violent movements have been able to accomplish what they set out as their goal(s) (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011). For example, it was the Irish Republican Army's nonviolent political wing that achieved some of the goals of those who wanted Irish independence from the United Kingdom. Second, there are various examples of successful nonviolent social movements; Indians with the leadership of Gandhi forced out one of the leading colonist countries out of their country.

Nascent sociological and social psychological research has been trying to solve the violent versus nonviolent strategy puzzle by taking a quantitative approach. For example, Chenoweth and Stephan (2011) analyzed archival data on social movements from 1900 to 2006 and found that nonviolent (rather than violent) movements were six times more likely to fully achieve their stated goals. Lab-based research from the field of social psychology (e.g., Becker, Tausch, Spears, & Christ, 2011; Bruneau, Lane, & Saleem, 2017; Feinberg, Willer, & Kovacheff, 2017; Orazani & Leidner, 2018, Thomas & Louis, 2014) has showed that third-party observers are more willing to support and join nonviolent movements. The tendency to support nonviolence over violence not only emerged with regard to environmental cause/context (Thomas & Louis, 2014), but it also was observed in political context; a context in which people keenly resort to violence (Feinberg, Willer, & Kovacheff, 2017; Orazani & Leidner, 2018). Feinberg and his colleagues (2017) showed that in the context of Black Lives Matter movement and in an Anti-Trump rally participants identified more with nonviolent rather than violent movement which in turn led to more willingness to support the movement. Orazani and Leidner (2018a) demonstrated that in a context in which violence may be perceived as legitimate and even necessary that is, supporting the Green Movement in Iran after a failed political nonviolent demonstration against a corrupt and authoritarian regime, participants saw the members of nonviolent (rather than violent) movements as more capable of experiencing mental states such as pain and suffering. As research in moral psychology has shown the more people believe that an entity (e.g., humans and animals) is capable of experiencing pain and other mental states, the more moral sensitivity and moral responsibility they attribute to the agent (Gray, Young, & Waytz, 2012).



Consequently, third-party observers were more willing to support the nonviolent movement and had more positive attitudes toward joining it. These results were replicated with American participants using a hypothetical foreign movement, a real foreign movement, and a real domestic movement (Orazani and Leidner, 2018b). These studies have revealed that third-party observers, in general, root for nonviolence and favor it over violence.

To my knowledge, however, research has yet to assess how third parties perceive social movements' current strategy in its historical context, especially third parties' moral perception of the movement's current strategy which has significant implications for third party support for the movement. Social movements may go through enormous changes as a result of interaction with complex social realities they are embedded in. Change in strategy is one among many.

In the ever-changing context of social movements, third-parties' moral perception of social movements' current strategy may be a function of their past strategy. In other words, the social movement's past strategy may affect how third parties perceive its current strategy. In this sense, perceived morality of the current strategy is a relative concept. As research on collective action shows (Orazani & Leidner, 2018a, 2018b), the extent of third party support for social movements is partially a function of their moral image of the social movement. Drawing on this literature, we expect that any change in social movements' strategy that signifies social movements' moral decline from third parties' points of view (known as moral discontinuity), should be associated with decreased third parties' willingness to support and join the movement.

It is worth noting that in addition to the relative conception of moral perception I discussed above, there is an overall evaluation of a social movement. This means that although third-party observers may perceive the current strategy of a social movement as less moral compared to its past strategy and this in turn, may be associated with less support, but third party may still want more support for such a movement compared to another social movement due to various reasons. In the context of my dissertation, it may be that third-party observers perceive a historically violent movement even less moral than a historically nonviolent movement that recently changed its strategy to violent. Therefore, even when the former nonviolent social movement is perceived as less moral due to its shift to violence, the overall moral evaluation of such movement may be still better off than a historically violent movement.

**Dynamics of movements' strategy: Shifts in movements' strategy through its life span and its effects on third-parties' perception of its current strategy**

The strategy that social movements use to achieve their goals is not static. Strategy shift and change depends on the current social contexts (i.e., the strategies used are typically dynamic in nature). That is, social movements change their strategies to address context-specific issues raised in various stage of its life span to achieve their goals (Dudouet, 2013; Duhart, 2017; Shellman, Levey, & Young, 2013). For example, Shellman and his colleagues (2013) showed that government repression and third-party observers' attitudes towards the conflict between the government and dissidents are predictors of violent and nonviolent phase change. In the context of political campaigns that seek self-determination, Cunningham (2013) showed that violent campaigns receive more support – to the extent that the conflict may escalate into a civil war – when (a)

dissidents' groups are large and excluded from political power, (b) they suffer from economic discrimination, (c) their goal is to seek independence, (d) they are internally fragmented, (e) and the country in which they operate has low levels of economic development. Grant II and Wallace (1991) examined why strikes turn into violence. They found that situational factors such as the social context in which strikes happen, legal structures that regulate participants' behavior, and countertactics of the opponent play major role in encouraging people to adopt violent strategies. Interestingly, however, theorists and experimentalist in the collective action literature typically examine the strategies social movements use as if they are fixed—categorizing a social movement as one that uses violent or nonviolent strategies (see Orazani & Leidner, 2018; Thomas & Louis, 2014; Bruneau, Lane, & Saleem, 2017). As such, they fail to take into account the dynamic nature of social movements and the historical as well as contemporary social contexts that may yield shifts and changes to the strategy a social movement may employ. I argue that historical and contemporary social context may alter how members of a social movement as well as third parties perceive the use of violence or nonviolence. Specifically, if a social movement has been using a nonviolent strategy for a period of time with limited success, then resorting to violence may be perceived to be (more) legitimate and perhaps necessary to achieve its goals compared to a social movement that has been historically violent.

The current collective action literature also failed to take into consideration how the social movements' opponent can influence the strategy adopted by social movements. This is likely because in research on social movements, the typical opponent (or adversary) of a social movement being assessed is the government or forces affiliated

with the government such as the national guard or the police force (see Feinberg, Willer, & Kovacheff, 2017; Orazani, Leidner, 2018a, 2018b). Since these entities represent law and order, there are strong social norms about respecting and obeying the law and thus using violence against the government is highly likely to be perceived as a move that destabilizes the society, leading to endangering people's safety and security. However, there are times that a social movement's opponent is not the government, but another social movement. How do third-party observers perceive violence in the absence of such strong law-abiding norms? Moreover, how do third-party observers perceive violence or a shift toward violence in the face of an adversary social movement that uses violence?

Such a social context is exemplified by the 2017 events in Charlottesville, VA (Tyranigel, 2017) in which a far-right rally led to violent clash with counter-protestors and the decision by Antifa in the aftermath of that rally to explicitly support the use of violence to combat hate groups such as KKK, neo-Nazis, and White-nationalists. Specifically, Antifa members shifted their belief about using violence—legitimizing it as a needed tool in the fight against hate groups after a long period of using failed nonviolent strategies. Although some research has suggested that such a shift toward violence may lead to some success (see Stephan & Chenoweth, 2008), they may lose the support of third parties who typically do not condone the use of violence (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011)—support that is needed for collective action to be ultimately successful (Louis, 2009). In this research, I examined how third parties judge the use of violence or the shift toward violence by a social movement in such a context.

## **Overview of studies**

Five studies examined how third-party observers perceive violence in the context of movements' history and how this perception translates into third parties' (un)willingness to support and join social movements. I hypothesize that third-party observers support violent strategies when the movement has been historically nonviolent as compared to a historically violent movement that chooses to continue its use of violence. Moreover, I expect movement shift from nonviolent to violence damages its morality in that third-party observers do not perceive the movement as moral as it used to be. Finally, I hypothesize that third-party observers perceive violence as the last resort when the social movement has been historically nonviolent as opposed to a historically violent social movement that its current strategy is still violent.

In a conflictual context between hate groups and counter-protestors in a foreign country, Bhutan, Study 1 investigated how movement shift in its strategy from nonviolence to violence affects third-party observers' support. This study also tested the mediational effect of moral (dis)continuity of the movement on third-party support. Using a similar context as in Study 1 but in a different country, that is, a tense relationship between hate groups and counter-protestors in the United Kingdom, Study 2 managed to replicate the results of Study 1. Study 3 investigated if findings from Studies 1 and 2 hold in a completely different conflict in a foreign country, that is, the conflict between Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam, a separatist minority group that has been seeking independence from Sri Lankan government due to long-lasting social, economic, and political injustices. Returning to the context I used in Study 1 and 2, Study 4 extended my focus to potential mediators through which people want

more support for a currently violent movement that has been historically nonviolent as opposed to a historically violent movement. Since in Studies 1-4 participants (Americans) were considered outgroups in relation to movements' members, Study 5 addressed the issue of replicability in an ingroup context by using a domestic movement as the context of study.

For each study, I conducted an a priori power analysis using G\*Power 3.1.9.2 (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2013). After entering effect size ( $d = 0.3$ ),  $\alpha$  error probability (0.05), power (0.80), allocation ratio (1), and using a two-tailed test, the required sample size was 352. I used a small effect size to avoid type 2 error. Finally, I decided to recruit 100 more participants per study as a buffer in case participants needed to be removed from the sample for, among other reasons, poor data quality.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **STUDY 1**

The main purpose of Study 1 was to examine how third parties' perception of a social movement current strategy (i.e., violent strategies) in the light of its past strategy (i.e., either violent or nonviolent strategies) may affect their willingness to support and join the social movement. I chose Bhutan, a real country in East Asia, as the context of the study. Since it was likely that most American participants were not familiar with this country or the social or political situation it is currently facing, it allowed us to avoid any confounding effect attributable to variables other than our variables of interests such as participants' identification with the country and the like.

#### **Method**

##### **Participants**

Four hundred and sixty-six American participants were recruited via Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). They were compensated with \$.50 cents for their time. Twelve participants reported not being born in the United States, one participant reported not being a native English speaker, one participant spent significantly more time to complete the survey (univariate outlier analysis: 3 SD above the mean; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), 121 did not pay attention to the manipulation materials (as evidenced by incorrect answers to questions that checked core facts of the manipulation materials, such as the initial strategy of the movement or the decision the movement's members made), two participants did not answer the vast majority of questions (as indicated by leaving the slider's bar in the middle of the scale where it initially was), and 13 participants stated that they did not provide high quality responses in the survey.

These participants were removed, leaving 316 participants for data analysis (194 female, two participants did not reveal their sexual identity, age  $M = 40.53$ ,  $SD = 13.43$ , range = 18-86).

### **Procedure**

After granting informed consent, participants completed a measure that assessed their attitudes towards the use of violence as a legitimate and necessary strategy in the context of social movement. Participants then read a fictitious UN Watch report (based on true facts) about the “rise in the number of hate groups operating in Bhutan, a country in South Asia.” Participants were told that “These groups, including extremist nationalists and racist groups, have organized rallies and arrived well-equipped in order to engage in aggressive behaviors”.

In the report, participants also read about a social movement called Buhfa (Bhutan For All) that aims to combat hate groups. For half of participants, Buhfa was depicted as a violent social movement since it was founded in 1920. They were then told: “Recently, however, there was a heated debate about the effectiveness of their strategy.” Nonetheless, members unanimously decided to continue to use violence (no shift condition) to combat hate groups. For the other half of participants, the social movement was depicted as a historically nonviolent movement. But this time, after a heated debate about the effectiveness of their strategy, movement members unanimously voted to adopt a violent strategy to challenge hate groups (shift in strategy condition).

After reading the scenarios, participants completed a battery of questionnaires (described below in the order appeared in the survey) on a scale from 1 to 9. Unless noted otherwise, the scale endpoints were labeled *Strongly Disagree* and *Strongly Agree*.



## **Materials**

### **Attitude towards use of violence**

Five items assessed the extent to which participants perceived violence as a legitimate strategy in the context of social movements (“*There is a time and place for violent strategies in social movements.*”, “*Under some circumstances, social movements need to use violence to be effective.*”, “*Sometimes resorting to violence can protect people that protest against hate groups.*”, “*There are times when it is necessary for social movements to use violence against their opponents.*”, and “*Sometimes violent strategies can guarantee protesters' safety (e.g. when the opposing group is aggressive/violent).*”;  $\alpha = .90, M = 3.67, SD = 2.03$ ).

### **Willingness to support the movement**

Three items measured the extent to which participants were willing to support the movement (“*I would donate money to help Bhufa.*” and “*I would sign a petition to support Bhufa.*”;  $r = .74, M = 4.33, SD = 2.42$ ). One item was dropped due to the factor loading less than .40.

### **Willingness to join the movement**

Three items assessed the extent to which participants were willing to play a role in the movement as a member (“*I would join Bhufa.*” and “*I would play an active part in Bhufa.*”;  $r = .87, M = 3.24, SD = 2.19$ ). One item was dropped due to the factor loading less than .40.

### **Perceived moral continuity of the movement**

Five items assessed to what extent participants believed that the moral essence of the movement was remained intact after the vote. Participants first, read the stem “*Given*

*the recent decision Bhufa made about its strategy, I believe ...*”, and then they indicated their opinion on the following items: “... *Bhufa is no longer as moral as it used to be.*”, “... *the morality of Bhufa today is unchanged.*”, “... *this vote undermined the moral foundation of Bhufa.*”, “... *the morality of Bhufa remains the same.*”, and “*Bhufa has become, if anything, more moral.*”;  $\alpha = .89$ ,  $M = 4.45$ ,  $SD = 1.94$ ).

### **Attention checks**

Two items assessed if participants understand the content pertaining to the manipulation (“*According to the report you just read, when Bhufa was found, the movement purposefully chose a(n) ... strategy to combat hate groups in Bhutan?*”, “*According to the report you just read, what was Bhufa’s recent decision about its original strategy to combat hate group?*”)

### **Results**

Correlations and overall means (standard deviations) can be found in Table 1. As expected, willingness to support and join the movement were positively significantly correlated. Perceived moral continuity was positively significantly associated with both willingness to support and join the movement.

Attitudes towards use of violence was first subjected to an independent t-test. Participants in shifting condition had significantly ( $t(314) = -2.21$ ,  $p = .02$ ) more positive ( $M = 3.87$ ) attitudes toward using violence in the context of social movement as compared to no shift condition ( $M = 3.36$ ). All variables then were subjected to ANCOVA with shift from nonviolence to violence/continuing violence as independent variable and attitudes towards violence as covariate (see Table 2).

As summarized in Table 2, participants were more willing to join and support a historically nonviolent movement that recently has changed its strategy to violence compared to a historically violent movement. However, the effect of strategy on willingness to support was marginal. Moreover, there was a significant effect of condition on perceived moral continuity. When the social movement decided to change its strategy from nonviolence to violence as opposed to continuing violence participants perceived the social movement as less moral as it used to be.

Mediational analysis.

We tested the mediational effect of moral continuity on the relationship between shift in strategy and willingness to support and join the movement. As can be seen in Figures 1 and 2, using 5,000 bootstrap samples and 95% confidence intervals (Hayes, 2013, PROCESS Model 4), moral continuity of the movement partially mediated the relationship between shift in movement strategy and participants' willingness to support (effect =  $-.82$ ,  $SE = .14$ , 95%  $CI [-1.12, -.57]$ ) and join (effect =  $-.71$ ,  $SE = .13$  95%  $CI [-1.00, -.49]$ ) the movement.

## **Discussion**

Study 1 showed that third-party observers had a differential perception of violence as an adopted strategy by social movements depending upon the history of the movement. When the social movement was initially nonviolent, and due to the inefficacy of nonviolence considered violence as its new strategy, participants were more willing to join and support it as opposed to when the movement was violent since its formation. This shift from nonviolence to violence, however, damaged the moral image of the social movement such that the current strategy (i.e., violence) compared to its past strategy (i.e.,

nonviolence) is perceived as less moral. In other words, shifting from nonviolence to violence is perceived as a moral collapse. Such collapse is associated with less willingness to support and join the social movement. It is of great importance to note that a historically violent social movement that decides to continue its use of violence does not elicit such moral decline when third-party observers compare its current strategy with its past strategy. This implies that a violent social movement that continues its violent strategy does not suffer from such a moral decline since there is no change. However, it does not necessarily mean that the overall moral evaluation of a violent movement who has been historically violent is better off compared to a historically nonviolent movement that just recently shifts its strategy to violence. Indeed, third parties' perception of the social movement's morality did not worsen when the movement decided to continue its main strategy which was violent. Shifting from nonviolence to violence, however, did worsen third parties' perception of the social movement's morality. It is important to note that despite such decrease in the social movement's morality, third party observers still were more willing to support the movement.

To my knowledge, Study 1 is the first attempt in the social psychological literature to understand a social movements' strategy by putting it in the historical context from which social movements originate. The results suggested that the current use of violence was construed differently depending whether the movement used to use non-violence (or whether violence was always deemed an acceptable strategy). This indicates that perceptions of a social movements and its strategy are not created in a social vacuum. Rather, perceptions of a social movement's use of violence is embedded in interrelated complex social realities.

Several issues, however, needed to be addressed. First, although Bhutan is a real country, most participants were not familiar with it or the social or political situation it is currently facing, which may affect external validity of the observed findings. Moreover, I had participants evaluate a fictitious social movement (i.e., Bhufa). To increase external and ecological validity and extend the results to a real-world social movement of which most participants will be aware, I used the United Kingdom as the context of choice. Because the United Kingdom is one of the closest allies of the U.S. and falls into the category of the Global North or Western countries/cultures, American participants should be more familiar with it. I also shortened the excerpt used in the manipulation so it would be easier for participants to read it thoroughly. This way, I decreased the likelihood of excluding participants due to a lengthy manipulation. Finally, one might contend that perceived moral continuity is confounded with perceived inconsistency between previous and current strategy of the movement since the latter is a broader concept and encompasses the former. Therefore, in Study 2, I used perceived inconsistency between previous and current strategy of the social movement as a covariate to see if the results would hold with regard to moral continuity.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **STUDY 2**

#### **Method**

##### **Participants**

I recruited 447 American participants via Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). They were compensated with \$.50 cents for their time. After excluding 22 participants who were not born in the United States or were not native English speaker, 118 participants who did not pay attention to the manipulation materials (as evidenced by incorrect answers to questions that checked core facts of the manipulation materials, such as the initial strategy of the movement or the decision the movement's members made), and 22 participants who stated that they did not provide high quality responses in the survey, 285 participants were retained for data analysis (139 female, two participants did not reveal their sexual identity, age  $M = 38.34$ ,  $SD = 13.24$ , range = 19-84).

##### **Procedure**

Participants were exposed to the same procedure as in Study 1. Only the name of the country and social movement was changed. After giving consent, participants were asked about their attitude towards adopting violence in the context of social movement. Then they read a short report about a tense relationship between a real hate group in the United Kingdom, that is, the November 9<sup>th</sup> Society, and counter-protestors. Because I wanted two distinct groups as both sides of the conflict, I used a fictitious name for counter-protestors, that is, No Hate Speech (NHS).

First, participants read about the "rise in hate group activity in the UK" right after the UK decided to leave the European Union. They then read about a social movement

called NHS, which was framed as aiming to combat hate groups. As in Study 1, depending on the condition, participants were led to believe that NHS has been a long-standing (non)violent social movement. In no shift condition, NHS was depicted violent with no shift in their strategy after a heated debate about its efficacy. In other condition (shift in strategy), NHS was depicted as historically nonviolent, but after a heated discussion about the efficacy of their strategy, there was a change in their strategy from nonviolence to violence.

After reading the report, participants completed a battery of questionnaires (described below) on a scale from 1 to 9. Unless noted otherwise, the scale endpoints were labeled *Strongly Disagree* and *Strongly Agree*.

### **Materials**

I adapted the **attitudes towards violence** ( $\alpha = .94$ ,  $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = 2.31$ ), **willingness to support** ( $\alpha = .94$ ,  $M = 3.72$ ,  $SD = 2.50$ ) and **join the movement** ( $\alpha = .97$ ,  $M = 3.12$ ,  $SD = 2.34$ ), and **perceived moral continuity of the movement** ( $\alpha = .88$ ,  $M = 4.34$ ,  $SD = 2.48$ ) measures used in Study 1 for the current context. Two items at the end of the survey assessed participants' understanding of manipulation materials.

#### **Perceived consistency between previous and current movement strategy**

Four items assessed the extent to which participants think that the current strategy of the movement is compatible with its previous strategy (“*The current strategy of NHS is in conflict with its past strategy.*”, “*The current strategy of NHS completes its past strategy.*”, “*The current and the past strategy of NHS is basically the same in nature.*”, and “*There is no consistency between the current and past strategy of NHS.*”;  $\alpha = .90$ ,  $M = 4.59$ ,  $SD = 2.43$ ).

## Results

Correlations and overall means (standard deviations) can be found in Table 3. Similar to Study 1, willingness to support and join the movement were positively significantly associated with each other. Moreover, both willingness to support and join the movement were positively significantly correlated with perceived moral continuity. Perceived consistency between the current and past strategy of the social movement was positively significantly associated with perceived moral continuity.

As in Study 1, participants' attitude towards violence was subjected to an independent t-test ( $t(283) = 1.81, p = .07$ ). Participants in shifting condition ( $M = 4.38$ ) held more positive attitudes, though marginally, toward adopting violence as a potential strategy in the context of social movements compared to no shift condition ( $M = 3.88$ ). All variables then were subjected to ANCOVA where condition was used as independent variable and attitude towards adopting violent strategies as covariate (see Table 4). As indicated in the Table 4, participants were more willing to support and join a violent movement that was previously nonviolent as compared to a historically violent movement. Both perceived moral continuity and perceived consistency between the current and past strategy of the movement were significantly higher where the movement just recently changed its strategy from nonviolence to violence.

To address the confounding effect of perceived consistency between previous and current strategy of the movement on moral continuity, I conducted an ANCOVA entering condition as independent variable, moral continuity as dependent variable and perceived consistency as covariate. After controlling for the effect of perceived consistency, the



effect of condition on moral continuity was still significant  $F(3, 281) = 6.80, p = .01, M_{\text{shifting in strategy}} = 3.81, M_{\text{no shift}} = 4.97$ ).

Mediational analysis. Using 5,000 bootstrap samples and 95% confidence intervals (Hayes, 2013, model 4), I replicated the mediational effect of moral continuity on the relation between shifting in movement strategy and willingness to support (effect =  $-.82, SE = .17, CI\ 95\%[-1.18, -.50]$ ) and join the movement (effect =  $-.72, SE = .15, CI\ 95\%[-1.04, -.43]$ ); see Figures 3 and 4).

Mediational effect of moral continuity remained statistically significant after I controlled for the effect of perceived consistency in the mediational analyses (support: effect =  $.79, SE = .19, CI\ 95\%[.43, 1.17]$ ; Join: effect =  $.73, SE = .18, CI\ 95\%[.40, 1.10]$ ).

## Discussion

Study 2 replicated the results of Study 1 with a more ecologically valid context. As in Study 1, participants believed that shifting from nonviolence to violence as compared to continuing violence makes the movement less moral. This perception, however, did not come at the cost of losing third parties' willingness to support and join the movement. Moral continuity, as in Study 1, mediated the relation between strategy shift and third parties' willingness to support and join the movement. Furthermore, I ruled out the confounding effect of perceived consistency between previous and current movement strategy. Even after controlling for the effect of perceived consistency, the effect of condition on moral continuity was still statistically significant.

Studies 1 and 2 successfully showed an effect of a social movement's history on third parties' perception of the current strategy. A very same strategy, violence, was deemed differently depending upon the past strategy of the social movement. When the

social movement was depicted as historically nonviolent (rather than violent), their shift to violence garnered more support from third-party observers compared to when the members of the social movement decided to continue a violent strategy. This effect was observed despite the damage such a shift caused to a historically nonviolent social movement's moral image.

Both Studies 1 and 2, however, used a somewhat similar conflictual context—a tense relationship between hate groups and counter-protestors. An important question that remains unanswered is whether other conflictual contexts would yield similar findings. Study 3 investigated whether the same results would emerge in a conflict between a government (Sri Lanka) and a movement seeking for independence (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam).

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **STUDY 3**

#### **Method**

##### **Participants**

I recruited 446 Americans via Mechanical Turk (MTurk). After excluding 11 participants who were not born in the U.S., 101 participants who did not pay enough attention to the manipulation materials (as evidenced by incorrect answers to questions that checked core facts of the manipulation materials, such as the initial strategy of the movement or the decision the movement's members made), 19 participants who indicated that they did not provide high quality answers to the questionnaire, and one participants who just clicked through the questionnaire (as evidenced by incorrect answer to an item asking them to "move the slider all the way to the left"), 323 participants were retained for data analysis (179 female, three participants did not reveal their sexual identity, age  $M = 40.58$ ,  $SD = 14.06$ , range = 18-86).

##### **Procedure**

First, participants were asked about their attitude towards adopting violence in the context of social movement. Then a historical background of Liberation of Tamil Ealam (LTE) movement was provided for participants. The social movement was depicted as a minority group that has been experiencing discrimination "against its language and culture" at the hands of Sri Lankan government. As in previous studies, in shifting condition participants were led to believe that since its foundation in 1976, LTE has been a peaceful movement. But recently after examining "the efficacy of their use of peaceful strategies" they "unanimously voted to change their peaceful strategy to aggressive

strategy against the Sri Lankan government, which has led to violent confrontations in the name of Tamil independence.” In no shift condition, the movement was depicted as violent since its foundation, and participants were told that after examining the efficacy of their violent strategy they unanimously decided to continue their use of violence.

After reading the report, participants completed the same battery of questionnaires (described below) on a scale from 1 to 9. Unless noted otherwise, the scale endpoints were labeled *Strongly Disagree* and *Strongly Agree*.

### **Materials**

I adapted the **attitudes towards violence** ( $\alpha = .93, M = 4.03, SD = 2.30$ ), **willingness to support the movement** ( $r = .75, M = 3.66, SD = 2.34$ ; one item were dropped due to factor loading less than .40) and **attitudes towards joining the movement** ( $r = .88, M = 2.66, SD = 2.08$ ; one item were dropped due to factor loading less than .40), **perceived moral continuity of the movement** ( $\alpha = .85, M = 4.88, SD = 1.90$ ), and **perceived consistency between previous and current movement strategy** ( $\alpha = .91, M = 5.23, SD = 2.42$ ) measures used in Studies 1 and 2 for the current context. Two items at the end of the survey assessed participants’ understanding of manipulation materials.

### **Results**

Correlations and overall means (standard deviations) can be found in Table 5. Willingness to support and join the movement were positively significantly correlated with one another. Both of the aforementioned variables were positively significantly were associated with perceived moral continuity as well as perceived consistency. Perceived

moral continuity and perceived consistency were also positively significantly associated with each other.

An independent t-test revealed that participants' attitudes towards using violence in the context of social movement did not significantly differ between the two conditions ( $t(321) = -1.12, p = .26$ ). All variables then were subjected to ANOVA.

All variables then were subjected to ANCOVA where condition was used as independent variable (see Table 6). The effect of condition on willingness to support and join the social movement was not statistically significant. As in previous studies, however, participants perceived higher moral discontinuity when the movement shifted its strategy from nonviolent to violence. The same result emerged with regard to perceived consistency such that participants perceived higher inconsistency when there was a shift from nonviolence to violence as compared to when the movement continued its previous violent strategy.

Using ANCOVA, I tested the effect of condition on moral continuity while controlling for the confounding effect of perceived consistency between previous and current strategy of the movement. The effect of condition on moral continuity held although it was marginal ( $F(2, 320) = 2.97, p = .09$ ).

Mediational analysis. Using 5,000 bootstrap samples and 95% confidence intervals (Hayes, 2013, model 4), I tested the mediational effect of moral continuity on third-parties' willingness to support and join the movement. As shown in Figure 5 and 6, moral continuity significantly mediated the relation between shift/no shift in strategy and willingness to support (effect =  $-.88, SE = .17, CI 95\%[-1.24, -.58]$ ) and join the movement (effect =  $-.67, SE = .14, CI 95\%[-1.00, -.43]$ ). I also tested the mediational

effect of moral continuity while controlling for the effect of perceived consistency (support: effect = .19,  $SE = .11$ ,  $CI\ 95\%[-.02, .43]$ ; Join: effect = .24,  $SE = .14$ ,  $CI\ 95\%[-.03, .52]$ ). As results revealed, after controlling for the effect of perceived consistency, perceived moral continuity no longer mediated the relation between condition and the dependent variables.

### **Discussion**

Study 3 aimed to investigate whether a different conflictual context—a minority group seeking independence— would yield the same results as in Studies 1 and 2. Unfortunately, results did not replicate when the outcome variable was willingness to support and join the movement. The effect of condition on moral continuity, however, was marginally significant even after controlling for the confounding effect of perceived consistency. That said, the mediational effect of moral continuity vanished after controlling for perceived consistency.

It is possible that the lack of effects in Study 3 was due to the fact that a social movement that uses violence against a government may cause societal instability, which may have been aversive for participants. However, instead of pursuing this or other reasons why a shift in a social movement's strategy did not influence support of that social movement within the context assessed in Study 3, I returned to the context of original interest—a tense relationship between hate groups and counter-protestors—for several reasons. First, considering the rise of far-right political views, both in offices and the public sphere, across Europe as well as North America this context is more relevant to the issues various countries are grappling with. Second, in parallel with the rise of the far-right movements, far-left movements such as Antifa resurrected and reconsidered the use

of violence as a new strategy. It is vital to investigate how third-party observers perceive this shift from nonviolence to violence in response to far-right hate groups. Third, because I replicated our results in such context, it would be reasonable to adopt the same context for further investigation. Fourth, results in Studies 1 and 2 indicated that even though third-parties' moral evaluation of the movement decreased when it shifted its strategy from nonviolence to violence, but they still were more willing to support and join such a social movement. In the previous studies, I did not illuminate why despite the negative effect of perceived moral discontinuity on willingness to support and join the movement, third-party observers provided more support for the social movement and had more positive attitudes towards joining it. In Study 4, I sought to assess this gap in knowledge by adding two potential mediators: perceived legitimacy of the movement strategy and perceiving violence as the last strategy of the movement.

## CHAPTER 5

### STUDY 4

To investigate why third-party observers expressed support for a violent social movement that was previously nonviolent, I hypothesized that perceived legitimacy of the current strategy and construing violence as the last resort and the only option available to the movement members should be higher in the shifting condition. If third-party observers believe that nonviolence is still an option, adopting violence then may be perceived as illegitimate. But, when the social movement has been nonviolent and it is no longer efficacious, at least from the third-parties' point of view, violence then may be considered as legitimate and even necessary. It is worth mentioning that the concept of (il)legitimacy has been addressed in collective action literature mostly in relation to the situation the disadvantaged grapples with (see for example, van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008). In this sense, perceived illegitimacy of the situation that the disadvantaged struggling with increases collective action tendencies. In Study 4, however, I tested the idea that as long as third-party observers perceive a social movement's shift in strategy (whether it is violent or nonviolent) to be legitimate, they will be willing to support the social movement or even join it.

#### Method

##### **Participants**

A total of 463 Americans were recruited via MTurk. They were compensated with \$0.50 cents. After excluding fourteen participants who were not born in the U.S., 22 participants who just clicked through the survey (as indicated by a lot of extreme answers to all items throughout the survey), one participants who did not carefully answer to



survey questions (as indicated by a lot of mid-point answer to all questions), nine participants who indicated that they did not provide high quality answers to the questionnaire, 38 who spent significantly more time to read manipulation materials than others (univariate outliers; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), and 164 participants who did not pay enough attention to the manipulation materials (as evidenced by incorrect answers to questions that checked core facts of the manipulation materials, such as the initial strategy of the movement or the decision the movement's members made), 215 participants were retained for data analysis (115 female, two participants did not reveal their sexual identity, age  $M = 36.46$ ,  $SD = 12.07$ , range = 20-84).

### **Procedure**

I used the same context and manipulation as in Study 1—a clash between hate groups and counter-protestors in Bhutan. Participants were asked to indicate their opinion about using violence as a strategy in the context of social movements. Thereafter, half of the participants read about a historically nonviolent social movement that decided to change its strategy to violence due to its lack of efficacy (shifting in strategy condition). The other half read about a historically violent movement that decides to continue violence (no shift in strategy condition). After reading this short report, participants were asked to complete the same battery of questionnaires as in Study 1 on a scale from 1 to 9. Two new measures were added to the questionnaire, that is, perceived legitimacy of the current movement strategy and participants' perception of the current strategy as the last resort. Unless noted otherwise, the scale endpoints were labeled *Strongly Disagree* and *Strongly Agree*.

## **Material.**

The measures that assessed *attitudes towards violence* ( $\alpha = .95$ ,  $M = 4.62$ ,  $SD = 2.27$ ), *willingness to support* ( $\alpha = .94$ ,  $M = 4.63$ ,  $SD = 2.50$ ) and *join the movement* ( $\alpha = .96$ ,  $M = 3.88$ ,  $SD = 2.45$ ), *perceived moral continuity of the movement* ( $\alpha = .84$ ,  $M = 4.39$ ,  $SD = 1.87$ ), and *perceived consistency between previous and current movement strategy* ( $\alpha = .89$ ,  $M = 4.42$ ,  $SD = 2.03$ ) were the same as those used in Study 1. Two items at the end of the survey assessed participants' understanding of manipulation materials.

### **Perceived legitimacy of violent strategy**

After reading the stem “*In the light of the previous strategy of Bhufa ...*”, three items assessed the extent to which participants see the current strategy of the movement acceptable and legitimate (“... *the current strategy of Bhufa seems legitimate to me.*”, “... *the current strategy of Bhufa is acceptable.*”, “... *I cannot approve of the current strategy of Bhufa.*”;  $\alpha = .85$ ,  $M = 4.51$ ,  $SD = 2.16$ ).

### **Perceiving violence as the last resort**

After reading the stem “*I think Bhufa's recent decision about continuing/changing its strategy to violence ...*” three items assessed whether participants see the current strategy of the movement as the only choice they had (“... *was one of last resort.*”, “... *was the only option left at their disposal.*”, “... *was pre-mature.*”;  $\alpha = .71$ ,  $M = 5.02$ ,  $SD = 1.93$ )

## **Results**

Correlations and overall means (standard deviations) can be found in Table 7. Perceiving violence as the last resort and perceived legitimacy of violence both were

positively significantly correlated with willingness to support and join the movement.

Similar to previous studies willingness to support was positively significantly associated with willingness to join the movement. Both willingness to support and join the movement were positively significantly associated with perceived moral continuity.

An independent t-test revealed that participants' attitudes towards using violence in the context of social movement did not significantly differ between the two conditions,  $t(213) = 1.81, p = .072$ . All variables then were subjected to ANCOVA using participants' attitudes towards violence as a covariate (see Table 8). As can be seen in Table 8, participants were significantly more willing to support a violent social movement that was previously nonviolent. There was a marginal effect of condition on willingness to join the movement. Moreover, perceived moral continuity and perceived consistency between the current and past strategy of the social movement were significantly higher when the movement did not make any change to its strategy.

Mediational analysis. Consistent with Studies 1 & 2, moral discontinuity mediated the relationship between shift/no shift in strategy and willingness to support, effect = -0.50,  $SE = 0.15$ , 95%  $CI [-0.84, -0.25]$ , and join the movement, effect = -0.23,  $SE = 0.13$ , 95%  $CI [-0.52, -0.02]$ . In line with our main effect analyses, we entered attitudes towards violence as a covariate in the mediational analyses. I then examined the mediational role of both perceived legitimacy of the movement strategy and perceiving violence as the last resort in the relationship between changing the movement strategy and people's willingness to support and join the movement. Perceived legitimacy of the movement did not mediate the relationship between changing the movement strategy and people's willingness to support, effect = -0.02,  $SE = 0.09$ , 95%  $CI [-0.22, 0.15]$ , and join the

movement, effect = -0.01, *SE* = 0.05, 95% *CI* [-0.11, -0.08]. Perceiving violence as the last resort however, mediated the relationship between changing the movement strategy and participants' willingness to support, effect = 0.16, *SE* = 0.07, 95% *CI* [0.05, 0.35], and join the movement, effect = 0.08, *SE* = 0.05, 95% *CI* [0.01, 0.22].

### **Discussion**

This study replicated and extended the findings observed in Studies 1 and 2. Perceived moral discontinuity negatively mediated the relation between condition (i.e., shift/no shift in movement strategy) and willingness to support and join the movement. Additionally, perceiving violence as the last resort positively mediated the relation between the condition and willingness to support and join the movement. Contrary to predictions, perceived legitimacy of the movement strategy did not mediate the relation between the condition and participants' willingness to support and join the movement. Importantly, Study 4 unpacked psychological mechanism through which people are willing to offer support to a violent movement. When the social movement was historically nonviolent the current violence (as opposed to an inherently violent movement) was perceived to be a strategy of last resort, which in turn was associated with greater willingness to support and join the movement.

These findings expand social psychological literature on collective action by introducing the effects of social movements' history on third-parties' perceptions of their current strategy. To my knowledge, this research, for the very first time in collective action literature, puts social movements' strategy in its historical context. Previous research on collective action has mostly investigated the effects of movements' strategy

in a social vacuum, disregarding dynamics of movements' strategy and its potential effects on how third parties here and now perceive the movement.

Thus far, all studies have been conducted with American participants in the context of foreign movements. It is possible, however, that people are less tolerant of violence that occurs domestically, regardless of the previous strategy used. It is arguably easier to support violence when there is no possibility of being caught in the crossfire, seeing harm done to fellow ingroup members and/or damage being done to ingroup sites as a result of the violence. As such, in Study 5, I examined support for a domestic social movement: Antifa (an anti-Fascist movement that aims to combat hate groups such as KKK, neo-Nazis, and anti-immigrant movements). Antifa has recently attracted attention in mainstream media due to its public use of violence to combat hate groups. Study 5 used the recent clashes between various hate groups and Antifa across the U.S. as its context.

## CHAPTER 6

### STUDY 5

#### Method

#### **Participants**

Four hundred and sixty American participants were recruited via MTurk and were compensated with \$0.50 cents. After excluding 24 participants who were not born in the U.S., two participants whose native language was not English, 139 participants who did not pay enough attention to the manipulation materials (as evidenced by incorrect answers to questions that checked core facts of the manipulation materials, such as the initial strategy of the movement or the decision the movement's members made), four who spent significantly more time to read manipulation materials than others (univariate outliers; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), five who spent significantly more time to complete the survey in its entirety, two who did not carefully answer to survey questions (as indicated by a lot of mid-point answer to all questions), and four who just clicked through the survey (as indicated by a lot of extreme answers to all items throughout the survey), 280 participants were retained for data analysis (172 female, four participants did not reveal their sexual identity, age  $M = 39.95$ ,  $SD = 14.00$ , range = 19-77).

#### **Procedure**

Participants first, were asked to indicate their opinion about using violence as a strategy in the context of social movements. All participants then, read a fictitious report published by Pew Research Center indicating that there has been a rise in hate groups activities such as White supremacists, KKK, and neo-Nazis across the United States. Participants then were told about Antifa as a fifty-year-old social movement that has been

combating hate groups in the United States. In one condition Antifa was depicted as a historically nonviolent movement that in the light of the recent rise of hate groups decided to change its strategy from nonviolence to violence to fight against hate groups. In the other condition, Antifa was depicted as a historically violent movement which aimed to continue the use of violence to combat hate groups.

*Materials. Attitudes towards violence* ( $\alpha = .93, M = 3.77, SD = 2.21$ ), *willingness to support* ( $\alpha = .93, M = 2.84, SD = 2.32$ ) and *join the movement* ( $\alpha = .97, M = 2.24, SD = 1.94$ ), *perceived moral continuity of the movement* ( $\alpha = .88, M = 4.94, SD = 2.48$ ), *perceived consistency between previous and current movement strategy* ( $\alpha = .84, M = 4.86, SD = 2.44$ ), *perceived legitimacy of violent strategy* ( $\alpha = .90, M = 3.71, SD = 2.51$ ), and *perceiving violence as the last resort* ( $\alpha = .76, M = 4.06, SD = 2.20$ ) were measured as in Study 4.

## Results

Correlations and overall means (standard deviations) can be found in Table 9. As in previous studies, willingness to support and join the movement were positively and significantly correlated. These two main dependent variables were positively significantly correlated with perceived moral continuity, perceiving violence as the last resort, and perceived legitimacy of violence.

An independent t-test revealed that participants' attitudes towards using violence in the context of social movement did not significantly differ between the two conditions,  $t(278) = 0.57, p = .567$ . All variables then were subjected to ANOVA (see Table 10). There was no significant effect of condition on willingness to support and join the movement. However, there was a significant effect of condition on perceived moral

continuity and perceived consistency. Both perceived moral continuity and perceived consistency were higher in condition in which the social movement continued its past strategy, that is, violence. There was no significant effect of condition on perceived legitimacy of violence and perceiving the violence as the last resort.

Mediational analysis. As in previous studies, I examined the mediational role of perceived moral continuity of the movement, perceived legitimacy of the movement, and perceiving violence as the last resort in the relationship of condition and participants' willingness to support and join the movement. In line with previous studies perceived moral continuity of the movement negatively mediated the relationship between condition (no shift vs. shift in movement strategy) and willingness to support, effect = -1.18,  $SE = 0.20$ , 95%  $CI [-1.62, -0.84]$ , and join the movement, effect = -0.94,  $SE = 0.18$ , 95%  $CI [-1.33, -0.63]$ . However, perceived legitimacy of the strategy and perceiving the movement strategy as the last resort did not mediate the relation between condition and participants' willingness to support and join the movement (see Table 11).

## **Discussion**

Using a domestic movement in the U.S. (i.e., Antifa), I could only partially replicate results of Studies 1, 2 and 3. Although third parties' willingness to support and join the movement did not significantly differ between two conditions, perceived moral continuity of the movement and perceived consistency between past and present movement were significantly different in two conditions. Similar to Studies 1-4, perceived moral continuity of the social movement mediated the relationship between the condition (shift vs. not shift in strategy) and willingness to support and join the movement. Perceiving the current violence as the last resort however, did not mediate the



relationship between change in strategy and the two main outcome variables (i.e., willingness to support and join the movement).

### **Integrated data analysis**

Removing data from statistical analyses due to various reasons such as not providing good quality data or not paying enough attention to the manipulation materials reduces the probability of rejecting null hypothesis when it is false (known as the power of the study; Ellis, 2010). As a remedy to such effect, I first, collapsed all data across five studies. I then introduced conditions (shifting from nonviolence to violence vs. continuing violence) and study (Studies 1-5) as independent variables. Using integrated data leads to higher power due to increased number of participants (Ellis, 2010). It also allows the researcher to examine whether any study-specific factor has effects on the main dependent variables. Using a GLM model in SAS 9.4, I ran an ANCOVA while participants' attitudes towards using violent in the context of social movement was introduced as covariate. Main effects and interaction effects are shown in Table 12. Means and standard deviations can be found in Table 13.

As indicate in the Table 12, there was a main effect of condition and study on willingness to support the social movement. Participants wanted more support for a historically nonviolent movement that recently decided to change its strategy to violence as opposed to a historically violent movement. All preplanned comparisons between levels of study—an independent variable with five levels which each level represents an individual study—were significantly different,  $t_s(1451) > |3.49|$ ,  $p < .001$ , except there was no significant difference between Study 1 & 4,  $t(1451) = 1.20$ ,  $p = .230$ , and Study 2 & 3,  $t(1451) = -0.44$ ,  $p = .664$ . The interaction effect was not significant (see Figure 7).

The main effect of condition and study on willingness to join the social movement was significant. There was also a significant interaction between the two independent variables, that is, condition and the context of the study (see Figure 8). In a conflictual context between a hate group and a social movement in a foreign country (i.e., Bhutan, Study 1), American participants were more willing to join a violent movement that was previously nonviolent as compared to a historically violent movement,  $t(1451) = -2.14, p = .032$ . The same effect emerged in Study 2, though more pronounced,  $t(1451) = -4.32, p < .001$ , with the same conflictual context (i.e., a conflict between hate groups and a social movement), although this time the conflict had arisen in the United Kingdom; one of the closest allies of the United States. There was no significant difference between the two condition in three other studies,  $ts(1451) < |1.50|, p > .250$  (Studies 3-5).

The main effect of condition and study along with the interaction effect on perceived moral continuity was significant (see Figure 9). Participants in all studies perceived more moral discontinuity when the movement changed its strategy from nonviolence to violence as opposed to continuing its previous violence,  $ts(1451) > 6.25, p < .001$ . This effect however, was more pronounced in some conditions,  $ts(1451) > 8.20, p < .001$ , (Studies 1, 3, & 5) than the others, Study 2,  $t(1451) = 6.35, p < .001$ , and Study 4,  $t(1451) = 6.26, p < .001$ .

## CHAPTER 7

### GENERAL DISCUSSION

I aimed to situate social movements in the historical contexts from which they emerged. In doing so, I examined whether strategies used in the past (violence vs. nonviolence) influence third-party observers' willingness to accept a social movement's current use of violence. I also examined whether a shift in the social movement's strategy affects third-party observers' moral perception of the social movement. Studies 1, 2 and 4 (Bhutan in Studies 1 and 4, UK in Study 2) showed that third-party observers provided more support for a historically nonviolent movement that has recently changed its strategy to violence compared to a historically violent movement. These results indicated that the very same strategy, violence, was judged differently when the past strategy of the movement was taken into account. A shift in strategy from nonviolence to violence, however, led third-party observers to perceive the new movement strategy as less moral compared to its past strategy. This change in third-parties' moral perception of the movement did not come at the cost of less support for the movement though. These results emerged in a conflictual context in which there was a clash between hate groups and counter-protestors. Study 3 did not yield the same results. Unlike Studies 1 and 2, in a conflictual context in which a minority group, Liberation of Tamil Eelam, was seeking independence from Sri Lankan government, third-party observers were not more willing to support a violent movement with a historically nonviolent background compared to a historically violent movement. Perceived moral continuity of the movement however, mediated the relationship between shift in movement strategy and willingness to support and join the movement.

Study 4 replicated and extended results of Studies 1 and 2. Participants were more willing to support and join a social movement that had a history of failed nonviolent strategies and recently changed its strategy to violence, as compared to a historically violent movement. Perceiving the current use of violence as a last resort strategy mediated the relation between change in strategy and third parties' willingness to support and join the social movement. Using a domestic movement in the U.S. (i.e., Antifa) however, led to partial replication of results I found in previous studies. Although there was no significant difference in third parties' willingness to support and join the movement between two conditions, perceived moral continuity of the movement mediated the relation between change in strategy and willingness to support and join the movement.

### **Implications**

#### **History matters**

The current literature on social movements has been silent about the effect of social movements past strategy on its current strategy. Collective action literature mostly examined the effects of a social movement's strategy in a social vacuum (Becker et al., 2011; Bruneau et al., 2017; Feinberg et al., 2017; Orazani & Leidner, 2018; Thomas & Louis, 2014). The current research has introduced a great deal of nuance into the literature by situating social movements in their historical context. Third parties' perception of the current movement strategy is, partly, a function of its past strategy.

Such dynamic approach to understanding social movements (and third-party support) is akin to what Bar-Tal (2013) calls "collective memory" within the context of intractable intergroup conflicts. Research on such conflicts (Bar-Tal, 2003; Keynan,

2014; Nicholson, 2017; Paez & Liu, 2011) has shown that the way in which people perceive the current status of a conflict and its future is affected by how they remember the history of that conflict. Depending on how the history of a conflict is represented in people's minds they make either destructive or constructive approaches toward the future of the conflict. Being able to sympathize with the victims and readiness for reconciliation are some examples of the effects of the understandings of the past on responses in the present (Keynan, 2014). I demonstrated that the same is true in the context of social movements. For example, when the collective memory of a given group in an intractable conflict puts forth a narrative in which the rival has always been untrustworthy, the peace outlook will be bleak. In a similar vein, when third parties believe that a social movement has tried all nonviolent strategies, adopting violence may be perceived as legitimate as the last resort (Bar-Tal, 2013).

### **Perceived morality of the social movement**

Another important implication of the current findings is that leaders of social movements, in addition to the movement strategy efficacy, should take into account past strategies adopted by the movement when they want to decide about the current movement strategy. As findings show, third parties' perception of the current strategy is partly affected by the strategy the movement adopted in the past. Public support is of paramount importance when policy makers decide to change or put in place a new policy. Indeed, public support has a substantial effect on change in public policy (see Burstein et al., 2002). Without enjoying public support social movements may not be able to bring about social change. Nascent research in the study of collective action has shown that the amount of support third-party observers are willing to offer is a function of perceived

morality of the social movement (Orazani & Leidner 2018a; Orazani & Leidner, 2018b). Therefore, any decision regarding the current movement strategy should be treated with caution since it may affect, in the light of its past strategy, third parties' moral perception of the movement.

### **Limitations**

Some caveats of the current research should be noted. First, I focused solely on a shift from the use of nonviolence to the use of violence. Of course, social movements can also shift their strategy from violence to nonviolence. Indeed, there are many historical examples of social movements abandoning the use of violence in favor of nonviolence (Dudouet, 2013; Duhart, 2017). Future research should examine how third-party observers respond to such decisions and whether they may lead to de-escalation of the conflict. It is possible that third-party observers have difficulty accepting that a social movement has truly abandoned the use of violence once such a strategy has been used ("once violent, always violent"). Such perception has its root in essentialist understandings of social movements (Halperin, Russell, Trzesniewski, Gross, & Dwech, 2011).

Second, although three individual studies (Studies 1, 2, and 4) and the integrated data analysis showed that third-party observers are more willing to support a violent social movement that has been historically nonviolent, the results of two individual studies (Studies 3 and 5) and the interaction effect of condition and study on third-parties' willingness to join the social movement in the integrated data analysis showed that the context of studies affected the dependent (i.e., willingness to join) and mediator variables (i.e., perceived moral continuity). Regarding individual studies results did not hold when

I used a conflictual context in which a separatist movement, Liberation of Tamil Eelam (LTE), sought to gain independence from a government, Sri Lankan government. It may be that people perceive a separatist movement differently compared to a protest that aims to combat hate groups. Patriotic feelings may propel people to see any separatist movement in a negative light regardless of the strategy they adopt whereas, combating hate groups is almost always perceived in a positive light.

It is also likely that people perceive violence differently depending on the entity against which the violence is being used. Using violence against a government—an entity who is responsible for citizens' safety and security as well as society's stability—compared to hate groups, is more likely to cause instability in the society. After all, it is a well-established norm, at least among Western participants, that the government's duty is to preserve law and order. Using violence against an entity who is responsible for society's stability (i.e., a government) may not be seen as much legitimate, compared to hate groups. Therefore, people may see violence against the government as an unacceptable strategy regardless of the movements' previous strategy. Future studies should experimentally put these hypotheses to test.

Moreover, when I used a domestic movement in the United States with American participants there was no difference between the two conditions. It may be that American participants see the use of violence as a strategy that destabilizes the society they live in. Therefore, the ingroup-outgroup dynamic may be at work here in the sense that adopting violence by a foreign movement could hardly damage the domestic stability of American participants while using violence by a domestic movement (Antifa) may cause social and economic turmoil. Future studies should also investigate these hypotheses.

Another issue has to do with the WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) sample. All participants came from the Global North (i.e., the United States). So, caution is warranted with regard to generalizability of the results to the Global South. Orazani and Leidner (2018a) conducted a Study with Iranian participants in which participant preferred nonviolence (rather than violence) as a new strategy of a failed nonviolent movement (i.e., the Green Movement).

Finally, the concept of third-party observers is multifaceted. It may apply to those who are neutral

### **Concluding remarks**

I showed that the past strategy of a social movement (violence vs. nonviolence) influences third-parties' perception of its current violent strategy and therefore their willingness to support and joint the movement. Violent strategies attracted more support from third parties when the social movement was historically nonviolent compared to when it was historically violent. These results highlight that a social movement does not operate in a historical vacuum. History matters. Interestingly, third-party observers are more likely to support a social movement that used violence if it is seen as a last resort (i.e., nonviolence has failed to achieve its goals), even while perceiving the social movement as having lost morality. This reputational damage could, however, lead to backlash in the long-term. Most importantly, both researchers and practitioners – social movements themselves most of all – should take the historical context and its cognitive representations into account when examining or making decisions about the present strategy of a social movement.



## APPENDIX A

### TABLES

Table 1. Overall means (standard deviations) and correlations between dependent and mediator variables in Study 1

Variables	Means (SD)	1	2	3	4
1. Willingness to support	4.33 (2.43)	—			
2. Willingness to join	3.24 (2.19)	.78 <sup>***</sup>	—		
3. Perceived moral continuity	4.45 (1.94)	.32 <sup>***</sup>	.29 <sup>***</sup>	—	
4. Attitudes towards violence	3.67 (2.03)	.42 <sup>***</sup>	.50 <sup>***</sup>	.32 <sup>***</sup>	—

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

Table 2. The effect of strategy on variables of interest (Study 1)

Variables	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Shifting condition (n = 189) <i>M (SD)</i>	No shift condition (n = 127) <i>M (SD)</i>
Willingness to support the movement	313	2.72	.10	4.50 (2.48)	4.08 (2.28)
Willingness to join the movement	313	4.37	.03	3.42 (2.34)	2.97 (1.86)
Moral continuity of the movement	313	79.34	< .01	3.77 (1.93)	5.47 (1.57)

Table 3. Overall means (standard deviations) and correlations between dependent and mediator variables in Study 2

Variables	Means (SD)	1	2	3	4	5
1. Willingness to support	3.72 (2.50)	–				
2. Willingness to join	3.12 (2.34)	.87***	–			
3. Perceived moral continuity	4.28 (2.07)	.49***	.43***	–		
4. Perceived consistency	4.59 (2.43)	.10	.00	.61***	–	
5. Attitudes towards violence	4.17 (2.31)	.53***	.55***	.42***	.07	–

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

Table 4. The effect of condition on variables of interest (Study 2)

Variables	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Shifting condition (n = 170) <i>M (SD)</i>	No shift condition (n = 115) <i>M (SD)</i>
Willingness to support the movement	282	5.65	.02	4.08 (2.52)	3.19 (2.39)
Willingness to join the movement	282	17.07	< .01	3.62 (2.39)	2.39 (2.07)
Moral continuity of the movement	282	40.57	< .01	3.81 (2.17)	4.97 (1.69)
Perceived consistency	281	141.37	< .01	3.24 (1.79)	6.60 (1.78)

Table 5. Overall means (standard deviations) and correlations between dependent and mediator variables in Study 3

Variables	Means (SD)	1	2	3	4	5
1. Willingness to support	3.66 (2.34)	–				
2. Willingness to join	2.66 (2.08)	.79 <sup>***</sup>	–			
3. Perceived moral continuity	4.88 (1.90)	.38 <sup>***</sup>	.35 <sup>***</sup>	–		
4. Perceived consistency	5.23 (2.42)	.11 <sup>*</sup>	.13 <sup>*</sup>	.65 <sup>***</sup>	–	
5. Attitudes towards violence	4.03 (2.30)	.53 <sup>***</sup>	.51 <sup>***</sup>	.30 <sup>***</sup>	.02	–

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

Table 6. The effect of strategy on variables on interest (Study 3)

Variables	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Shifting condition (n = 165) <i>M (SD)</i>	No shift condition (n = 158) <i>M (SD)</i>
Willingness to support the movement	321	1.15	.29	3.79 (2.31)	3.51 (2.37)
Willingness to join the movement	321	.07	.79	2.63 (2.01)	2.69 (2.16)
Moral continuity of the movement	321	58.66	< .01	4.15 (1.95)	5.64 (1.51)
Perceived consistency	321	293.53	< .01	3.60 (1.88)	6.94 (1.62)

Table 7. Overall means (standard deviations) and correlations between dependent and mediator variables in Study 4

Variables	Means (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Willingness to support	4.63 (2.50)	–						
2. Willingness to join	3.88 (2.45)	.86 <sup>***</sup>	–					
3. Perceived moral continuity	4.39 (1.87)	.46 <sup>***</sup>	.37 <sup>***</sup>	–				
4. Perceived consistency	4.42 (2.03)	.08	.01	.60 <sup>***</sup>	–			
5. Perceived legitimacy of violence	4.51 (2.16)	.61 <sup>***</sup>	.50 <sup>***</sup>	.63 <sup>***</sup>	.27 <sup>***</sup>	–		
6. Violence as the last resort	5.02 (1.93)	.49 <sup>***</sup>	.40 <sup>***</sup>	.39 <sup>***</sup>	-.00	.67 <sup>***</sup>	–	
7. Attitudes towards violence	4.62 (2.27)	.64 <sup>***</sup>	.64 <sup>***</sup>	.48 <sup>***</sup>	.10	.59 <sup>***</sup>	.50 <sup>***</sup>	–

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

Table 8. The effect of strategy on variables on interest (Study 4)

Variables	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Shifting condition	No shift condition
				(n = 122)	(n = 93)
				<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Willingness to support the movement	212	3.72	.055	0.56 (0.33)	0.53 (0.34)
Willingness to join the movement	212	3.16	.077	0.45 (0.34)	0.44 (0.34)
Moral continuity of the movement	212	40.49	< .001	3.59 (1.88)	5.18 (1.60)
Perceived consistency	212	121.02	< .001	3.24 (1.53)	5.84 (1.87)
Perceived legitimacy	212	0.00	.988	4.31 (2.28)	4.64 (2.19)
Perceiving violence as the last strategy	212	11.36	.001	5.16 (2.09)	4.63 (1.94)



Table 9. Overall means (standard deviations) and correlations between dependent and mediator variables in Study 5

Variables	Means (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Willingness to support	2.84 (2.32)	–						
2. Willingness to join	2.24 (1.94)	.81 <sup>***</sup>	–					
3. Perceived moral continuity	4.94 (2.48)	.33 <sup>***</sup>	.34 <sup>***</sup>	–				
4. Perceived consistency	4.86 (2.44)	.08	.07	.70 <sup>***</sup>	–			
5. Perceived legitimacy of violence	3.71 (2.51)	.69 <sup>***</sup>	.62 <sup>***</sup>	.45 <sup>***</sup>	.23 <sup>***</sup>	–		
6. Violence as the last resort	4.06 (2.20)	.58 <sup>***</sup>	.57 <sup>***</sup>	.36 <sup>***</sup>	.15 <sup>*</sup>	.75 <sup>***</sup>	–	
7. Attitudes towards violence	3.77 (2.21)	.48 <sup>***</sup>	.54 <sup>***</sup>	.27 <sup>***</sup>	.13 <sup>*</sup>	.50 <sup>***</sup>	.34 <sup>***</sup>	–

\* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

Table 10. The effect of strategy on variables on interest (Study 5)

Variables	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Shifting condition	No shift condition
				(n = 158)	(n = 122)
				<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Willingness to support the movement	278	0.90	.343	2.96 (2.38)	2.69 (2.24)
Willingness to join the movement	278	0.01	.916	2.25 (1.97)	2.22 (1.90)
Moral continuity of the movement	278	103.00	< .001	3.81 (2.24)	6.40 (1.96)
Perceived consistency	278	274.83	< .001	3.36 (1.85)	6.82 (1.56)
Perceived legitimacy	278	0.77	.380	3.60 (2.51)	3.86 (2.52)
Perceiving violence as the last strategy	278	0.28	.598	4.00 (2.24)	4.14 (2.15)

Table 11. Mediation role of perceived legitimacy and perceiving violence as the last resort (Study 5)

Mediator	<i>DV</i>	<i>Effect</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Perceived legitimacy	Willingness to support	-0.17	0.19	-0.55	0.20
	Willingness to join	-0.13	0.15	-0.42	0.15
Perceiving violence as the last strategy	Willingness to support	-0.09	0.16	-0.41	0.23
	Willingness to join	-0.07	0.13	-0.33	0.19

Table 12. The main effects of condition and study (integrated data analysis).

DV	DF <sub>within</sub>	Main effect of condition			Main effect of study			Interaction	
		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta_P^2$	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta_P^2$	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Willingness to support	1452	9.51	.002	.01	24.75	< .001	.06	0.59	.673
Willingness to join	1452	8.80	.003	.01	20.06	< .001	.05	4.21	.002
Perceived moral continuity	1451	343.94	< .001	.19	13.73	< .001	.04	5.64	< .001

Table 13. Means (standard deviations) of variables of interest at levels of condition and study as independent variables (integrated data analysis)

DV	Conditions Mean (SD)		Studies Mean (SD)				
	Nonviolence to violence	Continuing violence	1	2	3	4	5
Willingness to support	3.97 (2.51)	3.63 (2.44)	4.52 (2.42)	3.60 (2.50)	3.67 (2.34)	4.30 (2.50)	2.99 (2.32)
Willingness to join	3.13 (2.31)	2.84 (2.18)	3.41 (2.19)	2.97 (2.34)	2.68 (2.08)	3.57 (2.45)	2.39 (1.94)
Perceived moral continuity	3.83 (2.04)	5.53 (1.71)	4.75 (1.94)	4.37 (2.07)	4.90 (1.90)	4.24 (1.87)	5.20 (2.48)

## APPENDIX B

### FIGURES

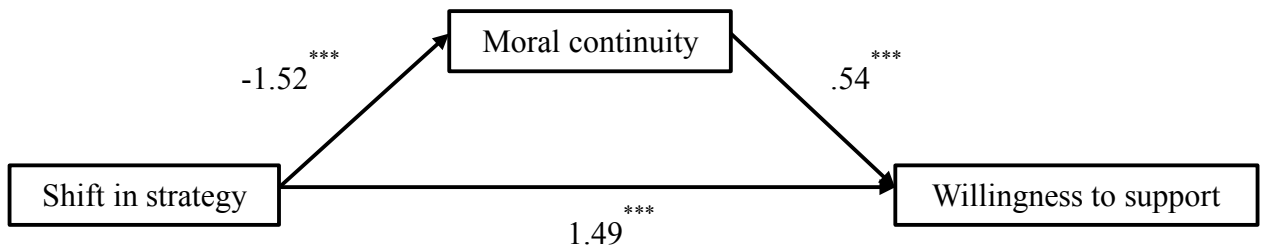


Figure 1. Mediation effect of moral continuity on the relationship between shift in strategy and willingness to support the movement, Study 1. \*\*\*  $p < .001$

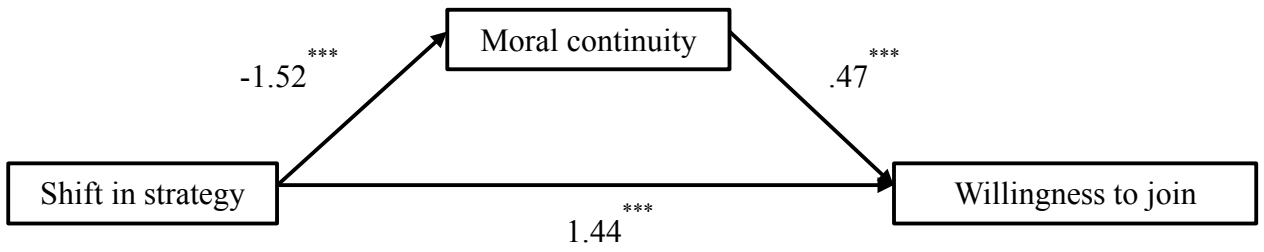


Figure 2. Mediation effect of moral continuity on the relationship between shift in strategy and willingness to join the movement, Study 1. \*\*\*  $p < .001$

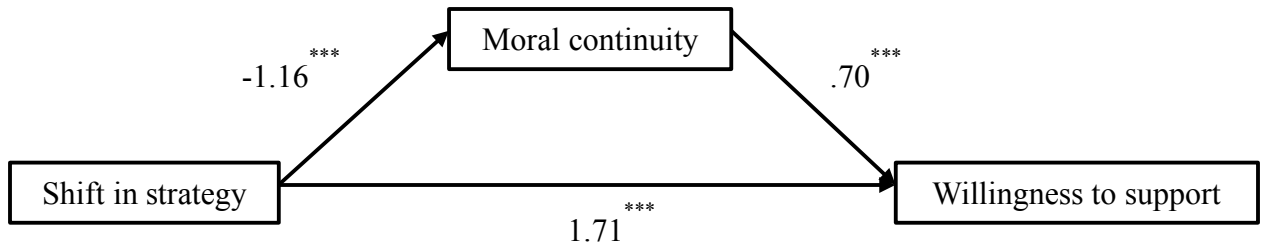


Figure 3. Mediation effect of moral continuity on the relationship between shift in strategy and willingness to support the movement, Study 2. \*\*\*  $p < .001$



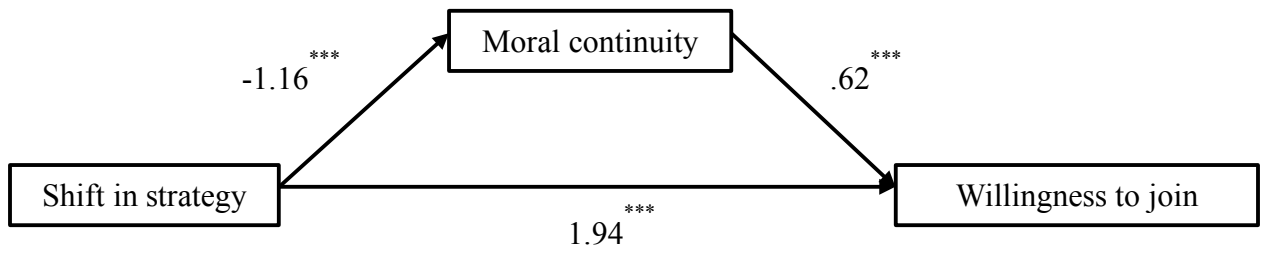


Figure 4. Mediation effect of moral continuity on the relationship between shift in strategy and willingness to join the movement, Study 2. \*\*\*  $p < .001$

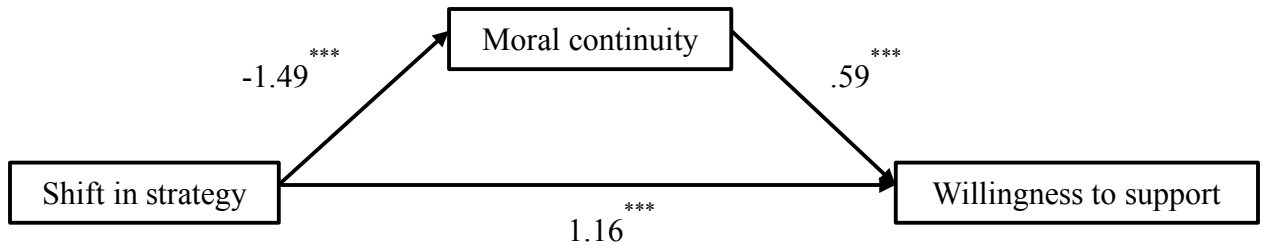


Figure 5. Mediation effect of moral continuity on the relationship between shift in strategy and willingness to support the movement, Study 3. \*\*\*  $p < .001$

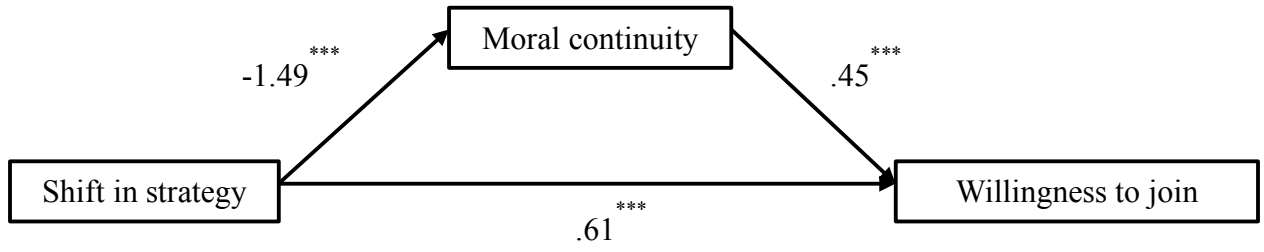


Figure 6. Mediation effect of moral continuity on the relationship between shift in strategy and willingness to join the movement, Study 3. \*\*\*  $p < .001$

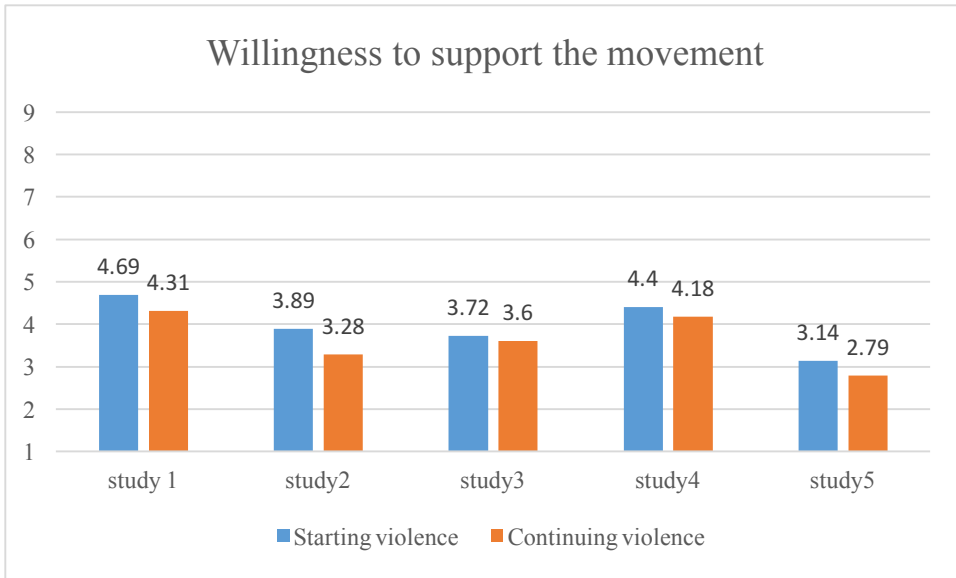


Figure 7. Willingness to support the movement as a function of condition and study context. Error bars represent standard errors (integrated data analysis).

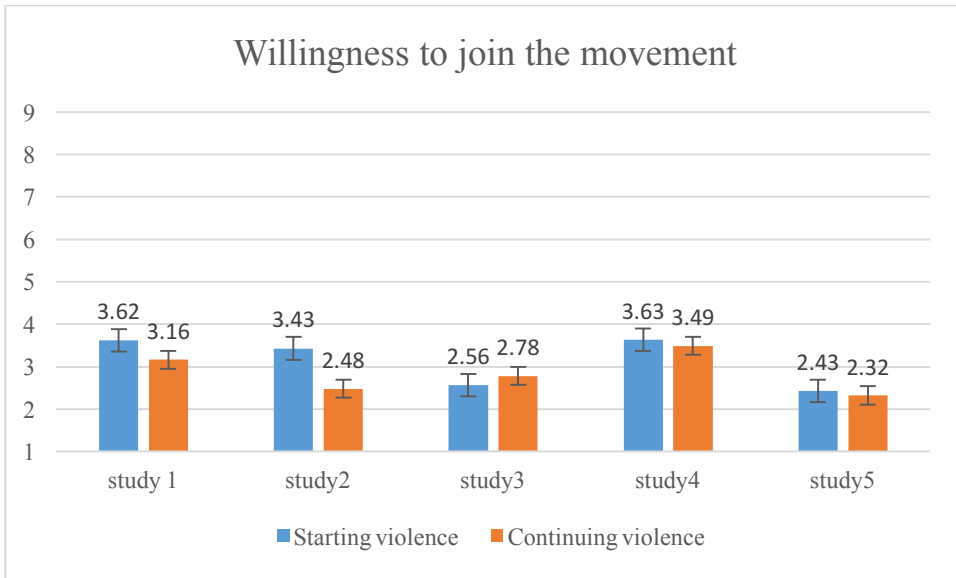


Figure 8. Willingness to join the movement as a function of condition and study context. Error bars represent standard errors (integrated data analysis).

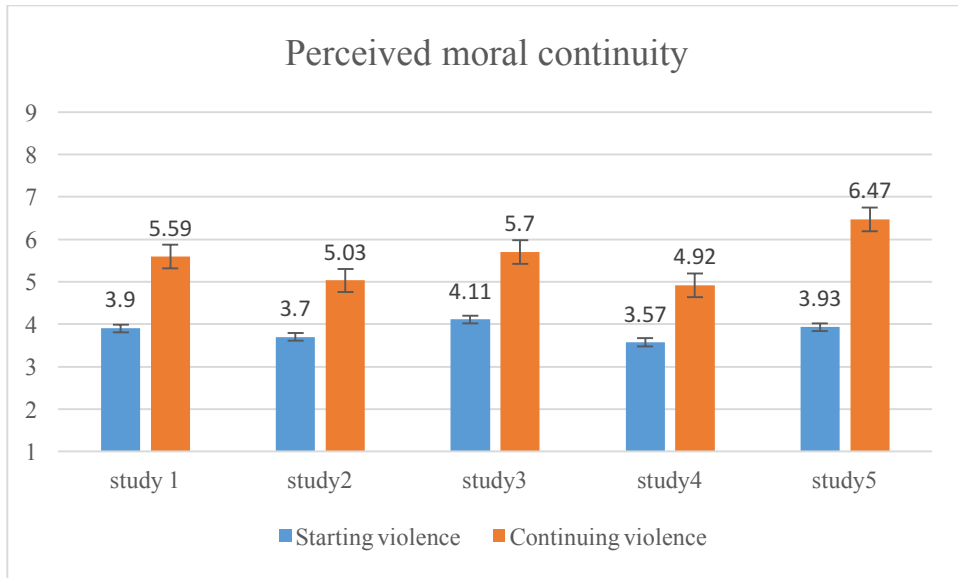


Figure 9. Perceived moral continuity of the movement as a function of condition and study context. Error bars represent standard error (integrated data analysis).

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