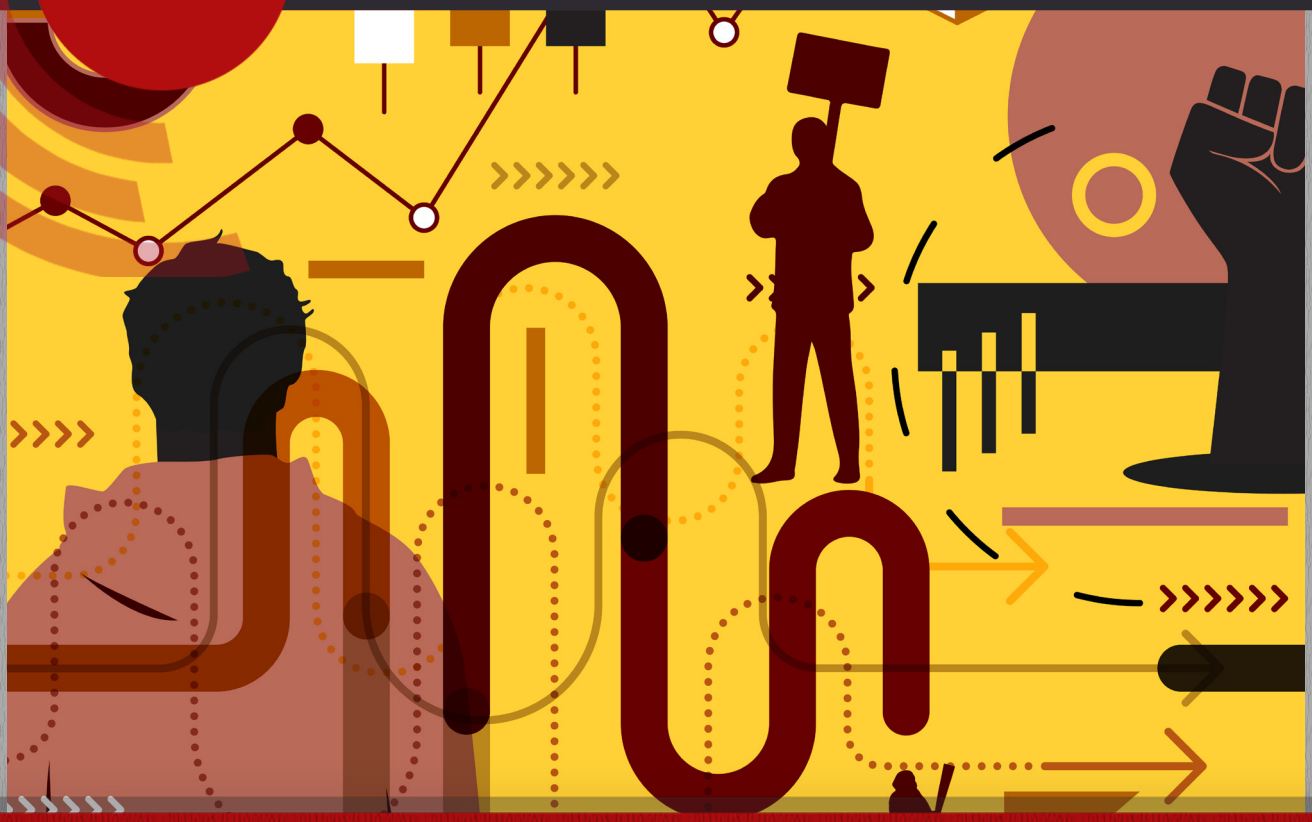
CREST Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats



Social Movement Theory Perspectives on Group Mobilisation, Radicalisation, and Violent Extremism

A Rapid Evidence Assessment

FULL REPORT

MAY 2025

DR NADINE SALMAN
DR SARAH MARSDEN
DR JAMES LEWIS

MAY 2025

Social Movement Theory Perspectives on Group Mobilisation, Radicalisation, and Violent Extremism

A Rapid Evidence Assessment

FULL REPORT

Dr Nadine Salman | University of St Andrews
Dr Sarah Marsden | University of St Andrews
Dr James Lewis | University of St Andrews

This CREST report was produced from the Radical Contention project. This project looks at whether and how political contention and protest relate to radicalisation and terrorism.. You can find all the outputs from this project at: https://crestresearch.ac.uk/projects/radical-contention

ABOUT CREST

The Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST) is funded by the UK's Home Office to identify and produce social science that enhances their understanding of security threats and capacity to counter them. Its funding is administered by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC Award ES/V002775/1).

The design of the research, data analysis and interpretation are completed independently by the research team and should not be taken as representative of views held by those who fund CREST.

www.crestresearch.ac.uk

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

This report synthesises and critically analyses the existing research that has considered whether and how political contention and protest relate to radicalisation and terrorism. It draws on social movement theory perspectives to provide insights into what informs group and mass radicalisation and what constrains them, and what impact state responses have.

AIMS

This review seeks to address the following primary research questions:

1. What factors, features, or events are linked to violence, radicalisation, and terrorism in social movements?
2. What factors, features, or events constrain the potential for violence, radicalisation, and terrorism in social movements?
3. What are the mechanisms that help explain what facilitates or constrains opportunities for violence in social movements?
4. How do different state and policing responses affect the potential for violence and extremism in social movements?

METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a rapid evidence assessment (REA) approach, synthesising knowledge on specific topics in line with the research questions from published journal articles, book chapters, reports, and dissertations, including both academic and "grey" literature (e.g., government and think tank reports). The REA adopted a streamlined methodology using keyword searches of major social science databases, after which identified documents were screened for inclusion based on pre-determined eligibility criteria.

KEY FINDINGS

This REA identifies several potential drivers for violent and extremist escalation within social movements, as well as potential factors for de-escalation. The literature reviewed highlights the complex and interacting nature of movement characteristics, mobilisation contexts, and the influence of external actors, namely counter-movements and state responses.

Key findings identified in this review are summarised in a table for each major section, loosely based on the EMMIE framework for evidence relating to crime prevention interventions (Johnson et al., 2015). The EMMIE framework summarises the overall *effect*, direction, and *strength* of the evidence;[1] the *mechanisms* or *mediators* it activates; relevant *moderators* or contexts, including unintended effects; *implementation* considerations; and *economic* costs/benefits (Johnson et al., 2015). Since the findings of this review are not solely concerned with interventions, the latter two considerations are not summarised here.

These tables therefore highlight the factors identified, their overall effects on violence and/or extremism, any identified mechanisms and/or moderators, and the strength of the evidence from the literature base.

1–The scope of this Rapid Evidence Assessment does not allow for a formal assessment of the strength of evidence in line with the full EMMIE framework. Here, strength of evidence is based on a qualitative assessment of the scope of evidence linked to a particular factor, and the quality of the methodology used in the research which speaks to each theme.

Movements are informed by their socio-historical contexts and internal dynamics, the factors set out in the tables therefore represent general trends in the research rather than firm indicators of movement behaviour. The effects identified below should not, therefore, be interpreted as suggesting a direct causal relationship between a given factor and the likelihood of violence/ extremism, but instead as evidence of how these factors have impacted the dynamics within certain contexts and mobilisations.

MOVEMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Different movement characteristics, including factors relating to movement structure, resources, and composition, as well as ideological factors, may contribute to an increased potential for engaging in or rejecting violence. Understanding the characteristics of a given movement is therefore an important first step when understanding how and why violence is produced.

Table 1 summarises the key findings identified in the literature. Overall, fragmented and decentralised movements, accompanied by spontaneous events, are more likely to lead to bouts of violence, while "radical flanks" – factions that advocate for more disruptive and violent tactics – are both a symptom of fragmentation and are more likely to be violent. Conversely, hierarchical structures and co-operation with moderate organisations or factions may support the de-escalation of violence. While evidence relating to the effects of group ideology is scarce, ideological narratives within groups may become associated with violence. The majority of the research over the past 20 years has primarily focused on far-right mobilisations, which may reflect their increasing prevalence.

Factor	Effect on violence/ extremism	Mechanisms/Moderators	Strength of evidence
Movement fragmentation	Increase	Competition for resources; state repression	Very strong
Radical flanks	Increase	Lack of progress; rapid increase in movement; state responses; incentives for violence	Very strong
Co-operation between moderate and radical groups	Decrease	Movement convergence; resource limitations; movement structure	Moderate
Class structure	Middle-class activists associated with decreases	Specific grievances; mobilisation context	Weak
Ethnicity	Mixed	State repression; ethnonationalist ideology	Weak
Ideology	Mixed	Gender narratives; country-specific contexts	Weak

Table 1. Summary of the factors related to movement characteristics and their impact.

MOBILISATION CONTEXTS

Factors embedded in the wider context around the social movement may contribute to the potential for engaging in or rejecting violence include political and discursive opportunity structures; external factors such as geopolitical, national, or local events; and temporal, geographic, and situational factors that may affect when violence emerges or escalates.

Table 2 summarises the key findings identified in the literature. Overall, different kinds of opportunities (or a lack thereof), as well as relationships with political parties, can be seen as either accelerators or brakes for violence. Local political events and grievances (e.g., migration, national political issues, and equality) are more likely to precipitate violence than international issues. Protest events linked to elections appear to be particularly associated with violence. Spatially, violent disorder tends to concentrate in large urban areas, and violent protests may diffuse on both a national and international level. Social inequalities and segregation are also strongly associated with political violence.

Overall, social movements are dynamic and relational; levels of violence, as well as opportunities and constraints and their effects change over time. While violence tends to increase with the duration of the movement, violence itself may ultimately lead to demobilisation.

Factor	Effect on violence/ extremism	Mechanisms/Moderators	Strength of evidence
Political opportunities	Decrease	Individual political self-efficacy; discursive opportunities	Very Strong
Discursive opportunities for violence/ extremism	Increase	Mainstream media; social media; mainstream political narratives	Moderate
Political allies	Mixed	Party co-operation	Weak
Local political events and grievances	Increase	Migration; national political issues	Strong
Elections	Increase	Before/after election; rejection of results/ perceived illegitimacy	Very Strong
Other protest events	Increase	National; international; media influence	Moderate
Urbanisation	Increase	Population size	Strong
Inequality	Increase	Income inequality; ethnic inequality; gender inequality; violent state repression	Very strong
Duration	Increase	Opportunities and constraints; state responses; counter-mobilisations	Strong

Table 2. Summary of the factors related to mobilisation contexts and their impact.

COUNTER-MOVEMENTS AND STATE RESPONSES

Two key external actors and influences that may contribute to the potential for engaging in or rejecting violence identified in the literature are counter-movements and state responses. This includes interactions with both types of actors, their impact, and potential unintended consequences.

Table 3 summarises the key factors identified regarding counter-movements and state responses, and their effect on violence. Overall, both counter-movements and repressive state responses have been found to increase violence, while also raising human rights concerns. Legislative and criminal justice approaches yield mixed results, with targeted arrests sometimes effective in demobilising violent movements. De-escalatory or conciliatory approaches may reduce violence, particularly focusing on facilitating safe protest. 'Soft' and non-coercive tactics, including the involvement of non-state actors, have mixed effects; stigmatisation of extremist groups may reduce violence, but counter-messaging can provoke backlash. Findings from the general literature on 'target hardening' may also be applicable to reduce the risks to specific targets.

In addition, state responses can lead to unintended consequences, including reducing opportunities for lawful non-violent protest, mental health impacts, and impacts on public and international support. The literature therefore highlights the importance of avoiding the stigmatisation and securitisation of legitimate forms of protest, particularly given the disproportionate impact that repressive measures can have on minoritised communities.

Factor	Effect on violence/ extremism	Mechanisms/Moderators	Strength of evidence
Counter-movements	Increase	Movement characteristics; state responses	Strong
Repressive policing/militarised tactics	Increase	Injustice grievances; movement fragmentation; incapacitation; deterrence; other state control measures	Very Strong
Covert repression (e.g., surveillance, infiltration, harassment)	Increase	Repressive policing/militarised tactics; threat perception; movement fragmentation	Weak
Legislative and criminal justice approaches	Mixed	Injustice grievances; fragmentation; arrests; proscribing groups; incapacitation; deterrence	Moderate
De-escalatory approaches	Decrease	State concessions; de-escalatory imagery; facilitating safe protest; reducing injustice grievances	Weak
Soft/non-coercive tactics	Mixed	Stigmatisation; civil society actors; resource depletion; intimidation	Weak
Stigmatisation	Decrease	Movement self-policing; employment opportunities	Moderate
Target hardening	Decrease	Protecting specific targets of movement's activities	Moderate
Counter-messaging	Increase	Psychological reactance	Weak

Table 3. Summary of the factors related to counter-movements and state responses and their impact.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings from this review raise some important considerations relating to movement characteristics, mobilisation contexts, and the relational impact of counter-movements and state responses. Importantly, the findings highlight that specific factors alone do not escalate or de-escalate violence, but rather, a combination of these dynamic and relational factors can influence escalation and de-escalation over time.

Based on this review, recommendations for policy and practice include:

1. Considering the factors that may indicate increased risk of violence within social movements and their contexts to facilitate planning of preventative measures.
2. Identifying "risky" events (e.g., elections) to plan preventative measures.
3. Facilitating non-violent political opportunities and reducing injustice grievances to mitigate potential violence.
4. Avoiding repressive policing and militarised tactics associated with escalating violence.
5. Adopting de-escalatory approaches that facilitate safe protests.
6. Considering involving civil society actors, appealing to moderate voices, and supporting "target hardening" of at-risk locations.
7. Evaluating the impact of de-escalatory and ‘soft’ or non-coercive approaches.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of increasing concerns over interactions between protest movements and extremist actors, this project draws on different areas of research that provide insights into group mobilisation and radicalisation, and the processes that inform escalation towards, and de-escalation from violence, principally drawn from the literature on social movement studies. It focuses on the potential for violence against property and persons.

The report offers a rapid evidence assessment of literature drawn from social movement studies that examines what shapes the potential for violence and radicalisation, and what constrains it in social movement mobilisations and protest, and how state responses influence these processes. Specifically, this report focuses on group-level dynamics discussed in the social movement studies literature, including movement characteristics, mobilisation contexts, and the impact of counter-movements and state responses. Although relevant, individual-level factors, and transnational dynamics (including social media facilitated dynamics) are beyond the scope of this report and are covered in two subsequent reports from this project.

BACKGROUND

Contemporary mobilisations are increasingly heterogeneous and decentralised, with multiple actors involved in mobilising different constituencies, including those who support political violence (Leach et al., 2024). This has been accompanied by increasing concern around political violence, backlash, and counter-protest (Leach et al., 2024). Examining interactions between extremist actors, wider protest mobilisations, and state responses is therefore important to understand the potential for violence, what constrains violence, the effect of state responses, and the implications for civil liberties and the fundamental right to protest (della Porta, 2018b; Leach et al., 2024).

The adoption of the rapid evidence assessment approach (REA) including insights from both social movement theory and the literature on radicalisation and violent extremism enables the identification and synthesis of insights from these different, but increasingly converging fields that are relevant to this problem space (Bosi et al., 2016; Malthaner, 2023). Integrating insights from social movement studies enables a greater understanding of contextual, relational, and processual factors that shape social mobilisations and the adoption of violence, as well as an understanding of how state responses may shape movement responses (Bosi et al., 2016; della Porta, 2008, 2018; Malthaner, 2023). Insights from the literature on radicalisation, violent extremism, and terrorism can provide further insights into existing knowledge on group and mass radicalisation processes, as well as recruitment strategies, and how extremist movements may capitalise on broader non-violent mobilisations (Marsden et al., 2023; Moskalenko, 2023).

Bringing the bodies of research on social movements and radicalisation into dialogue with one another should be done with an awareness of the sensitivities of the sociopolitical and human rights context within which they play out (Kundnani & Hayes, 2018). Recognising the normative and conceptual issues that are at work around what constitutes legitimate protest tactics and causes, and the potential for lawful protest to be labelled as 'extremism', this project adopts the following definitions:

- Protest is understood as "political challenges raised by organised collective actors who respond rationally to opportunities and constraints in their environment" (Malthaner, 2023, p. 100).

This definition can accommodate violence as one method in a wider repertoire of contention available to movements and groups. By recognising that the emergence of violence (or lack thereof) is shaped by structural and relational processes within specific contexts, this perspective acknowledges the range of actors implicated in contention, including the state and its agents, most notably the police, those within movements, and counter-movements. The interactions between these actors are part of broader protest cycles which are understood as being part of "'normal' politics ... this [refuses] to exceptionalise political violence" (Malthaner, 2023, p. 101) making it possible to understand radicalisation and violence as part of cycles of contention between movements and their opponents.

- Radicalisation from a social movement perspective is understood as a growing commitment to using violence to pursue political objectives, through a contextualised "process of interaction between violent groups and their environment, or an effect of interactions between mutually hostile actors" (della Porta & LaFree, 2012, pp. 6–7). This goes beyond seeing radicalisation as an individual-level phenomenon, instead recognising the role of micro, meso, and macro level processes that are shaped by, and influence one another.
- Social movement studies is a body of research concerned with explaining and understanding collective action. Social movements are commonly defined as "an excluded collectivity in sustained inter-action with economic and political elites seeking social change" (Tarrow 2011, p.6).

Social movement theory incorporates several elements focused on different aspects of collective action. Work on resource mobilisation examines how movements secure resources including people, money, and support to pursue their claims. Political process perspectives focus on the influence of the wider political opportunity structure facing movements. Framing theory looks at how movements construct shared meanings and narratives that resonate with potential participants and the broader public. Social movement studies also considers the tactics and strategies movements employ, the identities they forge, the role of emotions, and the cultural dynamics that work within and on movements.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This rapid evidence assessment seeks to address the following primary research questions:

1. What factors, features, or events are linked to violence, radicalisation, and terrorism in social movements?
2. What factors, features, or events constrain the potential for violence, radicalisation, and terrorism in social movements?
3. What are the mechanisms that help explain what facilitates or constrains opportunities for violence in social movements?
4. How do different state and policing responses affect the potential for violence and extremism in social movements?

METHODOLOGY

The research adopts a semi-systematic approach, aiming to synthesise knowledge on relevant topics from published journal articles, book chapters, reports, and dissertations, including both academic and "grey" literature (e.g., government and think tank reports). Documents were identified through a keyword search of relevant electronic databases, after which they were screened for inclusion based on pre-determined eligibility criteria. Backward citation searches of key documents were subsequently conducted to identify further relevant documents.

SEARCH STRATEGY

DEVELOPMENT OF SEARCH TERMS

The search terms were guided by a) known key papers, and b) the researchers' subject matter knowledge. The search terms are outlined in Table 4. Before finalising these terms, test searches were conducted to ensure their relevance and specificity. These were subsequently refined to narrow the focus of included papers.

Terrorism (OR)	AND	Social movement theory (OR)
Radicali*		Social movement
Terroris*		Protest*
Extremis*		Mobili?ation
Far right		Activism
Right wing		Collective action
Left wing		
Islamist		
Political violence*		

Note: Asterisks and question marks are used as wildcards to represent unknown characters in or at the end of words e.g. mobilisation/ mobilization; radicalised; radicalization.

Table 4. List of search terms.

KEYWORD SEARCH OF RELEVANT INFORMATION SOURCES

Documents were searched by their title, abstract, and keyword fields using the Social Sciences Citation Index (via Web of Science Core Collection) database, based on availability from 2000 – November 2024. Additionally, the researchers' prior knowledge of the field yielded additional documents for manual inclusion.

BACKWARD CITATIONS

After the initial search and screening, the reference lists of key papers were manually scanned for additional relevant papers.

ELIGIBILITY AND INCLUSION CRITERIA

Documents that met the inclusion criteria in line with the research questions and scope were included for review. Specifically, eligibility was determined based on the following criteria:

1. **English language:** Documents were only included if they were written in English.

2. **Empirical (unless a review paper):** Empirical research-based documents or review papers such as systematic reviews, rapid evidence assessments, meta-analyses, and other syntheses of literature were eligible. Purely theoretical pieces were not included.

3. **Publication type:** The review included a broad range of types of publications and documents, incorporating journal articles, book chapters, high quality government body and think tank reports, dissertations, and theses. This excludes book/article reviews, newspaper articles, blogs, letters, and oral presentations (with no written article).

4. **Date range:** Documents published from 2000-2024 were eligible. This timeframe was selected to limit the scope to only the most relevant recent publications.

5. **Focus:** The review was primarily concerned with documents that focus on mobilisations in broadly defined liberal democratic contexts, or documents that identify cross-country and cross-cultural trends. Additionally, the focus is on violence within protests and social movements, rather than violence perpetrated against such movements (e.g., attacks on protestors), or media/public responses to protest violence, unless directly implicated in violent escalation/de-escalation.

6. **Quality:** Only documents that met methodological quality assessment criteria were included. These were adapted from Brouillette-Alarie et al.'s (2022) Quality of Study Assessment Tool, specifically whether the sample is adequately described, and enough methodological details are provided.

SCREENING PROCESS

The selection process involved the four broad stages outlined below:

1. **Identification and deduplication:** To identify relevant documents, the terms outlined in the search strategy were used to search the selected database. The results of these searches (records containing the title, abstract, and metadata of each document) were deduplicated and uploaded to a screening manager (Rayyan; Ouzzani et al., 2016).

2. **Screening on title and abstract:** Deduplicated records were screened for eligibility based on their titles and abstracts via the screening manager. Those that met the inclusion criteria were included for the next stage. Due to time constraints, a stopping limit of 1,000 papers was set, where they were ranked by relevance by the screening manager. A sample of 150 papers were screened by two researchers to ensure consistency in inclusion decisions.

3. **Screening on full text:** Full documents were obtained for each record retained based on screening of the title and abstract. Where possible, these full texts were obtained via university library searches and requests, or Google Scholar/search. The full documents were then screened for inclusion using the same criteria. Microsoft Copilot was used to facilitate the extraction of key information to assist decision-making (e.g., methodological details; (Microsoft, 2024)). Documents retained at this stage were used for analysis. At this point, any additional papers from the researchers' prior knowledge were also added manually to the dataset for analysis.

4. **Backward citations:** The research team identified key papers (e.g., systematic reviews) from those included. The reference lists of key documents were scanned for additional relevant documents, which were screened and added to the dataset for analysis.

Overall, a total of 1,080 abstracts were screened, of which 246 were identified based on the abstract alone.

RESULTS

A total of 206 documents (including peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and reports) were included in this review. Key data was extracted from each document that met the inclusion criteria, including publication details, key themes and subthemes, methodological details, key findings, and notable limitations.[2]

SYNTHESIS AND THEMATIC ANALYSIS

This review summarises findings using a qualitative synthesis of key findings related to the research questions. Although this review does not include a quantitative synthesis, where relevant, supporting statistics from included publications are mentioned. Where relevant, additional background articles are also included to develop and explain findings.

These are summarised according to three sets of influences on social movement mobilisations and their role in facilitating or constraining violence: characteristics of the movement; the mobilisation context; and external influences acting on the movement (particularly counter-mobilisation and state responses).

MOVEMENT CHARACTERISTICS

This section considers how and which characteristics of movements contribute to the potential for engaging in or rejecting violence. These comprise:

- Movement structure, resources, and composition
- Ideological factors

Key points

1. Fragmented and decentralised movements, accompanied by spontaneous events, are more likely to lead to bouts of political violence.
2. The presence of "radical flanks" – factions that advocate for more disruptive and violent tactics – are both a symptom of fragmentation and are more likely to be violent.
3. Hierarchical structures and cooperation with moderate organisations/factions may support the de-escalation of violence.
4. Evidence relating to the effects of group ideology is scarce.
5. Ideological narratives within groups may become associated with violence.

Movement structure, resources, and composition

A prevalent theme throughout the literature is the role of the structure and composition of the movement, as well as organisations and groups within that movement. This includes factors such as organisational structures, heterogeneity in the movement's goals and tactical repertoires, the presence of radical flanks, and the composition of group membership.

Fragmentation and decentralisation. Starting at the macro-level of the movement, there is a consensus in the literature that fragmented, decentralised movements, composed of multiple organisations and actors, are more likely to transition from nonviolent action to adopting violent tactics (Belgioioso, 2018; Caiani et al., 2012; Chenoweth, 2023; K. G. Cunningham et al., 2019; della Porta, 2008). Meanwhile, those with tighter, more hierarchical structures and centralised leadership appear to be better able to control and prevent violence within the movement (Belgioioso et al., 2019).

2—Data extraction table held in a supplementary document available on request.

This also appears to hold at the event-level. For example, Ives & Lewis' (2020) analysis of events across Africa over a 25-year period found that unorganised, spontaneous events were more likely to escalate to violence than organised protests, particularly in response to state repression. Similarly, in Caiani et al.'s (2012) analysis of nearly 1,200 far-right protest events in Germany, Italy, and the US, fragmented and decentralised "subcultures" and single activists were more likely to engage in spontaneous events linked to greater violence.

Unorganised groups and spontaneous events may also occur at different times than more structured protests. For example, in their analysis of event data for over 100 global cities spanning 1960-2014, Thomson et al. (2021) found that "organised groups are more likely to mobilise before elections to influence their outcome... mobilisation by unorganised individuals occurs at and directly after elections" (p.1525).

However, there are some limited cases where the opposite trend has been observed. For example, through interviews with activists in the Catalan independence movement, della Porta et al. (2019) explain how networks of "grassroots" actors displaced larger, more centralised groups to organise more direct nonviolent activities, ultimately leading to movement convergence and preventing violent escalation. Meanwhile, Cunningham et al. (2019) find contrasting trends when analysing the correlation between fragmentation and the use of violence by movements, and by individual organisations that make up wider movements. Their analysis of 1,124 global organisations finds that although on the movement level, fragmentation was associated with adopting violent tactics, at the organisation level, fragmentation was associated with a shift to nonviolence. These studies highlight that contextual and movement-specific factors, as well as the organisational context, may moderate the effect of decentralisation and fragmentation.

Some possible explanations of how fragmentation can lead to violent escalation have been proposed. One explanation is that competition between organisations for human and material resources, particularly under situations of constraint or repression, sees group leaders adopt violent or terrorist tactics to "establish themselves at the forefront of their movements" (Belgioioso, 2018, p. 641; Chenoweth, 2023). Conversely, a high availability of resources (supportive organisations, networks, material/financial, and human) are predictive of nonviolence (Edwards, 2021). Caiani et al. (2012) also suggest that more violent spontaneous events from fragmented groups may be the result of legal constraints and repressive strategies. These limit opportunities for larger organised groups and events to mobilise leading to a more strategic form of 'leaderless resistance' better able to circumvent state responses.

Box 1: Case study – Decentralisation and Yellow Vests

The Yellow Vests movement, which has received some research attention, is a prominent example of a movement operating with a decentralised structure. Koca (2024) conceptualises this movement as a Networked Social Movement – a "decentralised, flexible, and electronically based network" (p. 643) – which brought together diverse groups, organisations and ideologies, including those from the "radical right" as well as Muslim supporters. Koca's (2024) interviews with 77 Yellow Vest supporters from these two groups demonstrates that the movement thereby comprised both ideological and methodological diversity, which ultimately led to disagreements on the use of violence and appropriate targets for such violence. According to Koca, this fragmentation also ultimately led to the failure of the movement.

Radical flanks. Both a symptom and an explanation of movement fragmentation is the presence of 'radical flanks', 'radical factions' or 'violent flanks' – "when violence occurs alongside an otherwise unarmed or nonviolent episode but remains exceptional within the broader repertoire of contention" (Chenoweth, 2023, p. 58). Radical flanks can originate both within the movement "intramovement" or externally "intermovement" (Chenoweth, 2023).

As with broader movement fragmentation, radical flanks can represent distinct violence-wielding groups that lead to ideological and tactical disagreements within the wider movement (Ryckman, 2019). They can also splinter from wider movements as a response to a lack of progress, or to state reactions (Chenoweth, 2023; Ryckman, 2019). Finally, they may emerge as "a response to structural factors that alter the incentives to adopt violent flanks alongside nonviolent campaigns" (Chenoweth, 2023, p. 59). These dynamics will be explored further in the next section.

Beyond overarching fragmentation, another movement-level factor linked to the emergence of radical flanks is the rapid and indiscriminate expansion of the movement. Through the analysis of two large datasets on demonstrations and mass violence events (one global, spanning 1945-2013, and one focused on the former USSR between 1987-1992), RezaeeDaryakenari (2021) found that radical flanks are more likely to emerge when the movement's numbers rapidly expand:

> **"Moderate expansion in the size of a movement decreases violence risk because of increases in popular support. However, a large expansion of the movement overburdens its monitoring, sanctioning, and training capacities, raising the risk of violent dissent."**
>
> ***RezaeeDaryakenari (2021, p. 18)***

Morrow & Meadowcroft (2019) exemplify this through ethnographic observation and interviews with former members of the English Defence League (EDL), whereby its weak self-governance and indiscriminate mass recruitment led to the inclusion of "football hooligans". These "marginal members" were more violent, less ideologically driven, and created more group in-fighting, ultimately deserting the movement "once EDL activism ceased to be enjoyable" (Morrow & Meadowcroft, 2019, p. 549).

Conversely, cooperation with moderate actors can reduce the impact of radical flanks. Based on an analysis of 3,900 nonviolent and violent events by the Radical Left-Libertarian Movement in Sweden between 1997–2016, Jämte et al. (2024) conclude that "the likelihood of violence clearly decreases when radicals and moderates form coalitions when organising protests" (p. 679). Similarly, Zwerman & Steinhoff (2012) examine the impact of Legal Support Networks ("made up of movement activists who provided political, social, and emotional support to defendants", p. 70) in facilitating disengagement from political violence among former violent activists. They find that support from these legal/prosocial counterparts facilitates disengagement from violence while retaining "movement identity". An important implication of this is that moderate, legal, non-violent protest may therefore act as a 'safe offshoot' for violent activists.

Chenoweth (2023) highlights that there may be several incentives for radical flanks to emerge and engage in violent action. In a review of a broad base of literature, Chenoweth identifies both positive and negative flank effects, disaggregated by armed or unarmed collective violence. Positive movement effects include avoiding arrest, assault, or death; heightening awareness of the movement; generating wider support; and increasing vote share for "sympathetic" politicians (Chenoweth, 2023, pp. 63–64). Similarly, Belgioioso et al.'s (2019) analysis of 109 primarily non-violent campaigns found that those accompanied by terrorist fringe activities were more likely to see gains – particularly where the movement had a hierarchical structure and centralised leadership. Such actions by violent flanks, however, can also have negative consequences (Chenoweth, 2023), and lead to a reduction in support for associated political parties (Eady et al., 2023; Farrer & Klein, 2022).

Box 2: Case study – Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC)

A high-profile case study of a movement exhibiting radical flank effects is that of the animal liberation organisation, Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC). SHAC originated in the UK, but spread to become a transnational movement, specifically mobilising against the Huntingdon Life Sciences animal testing laboratory (Ellefsen, 2018). Its activism repertoire included peaceful demonstrations and marches, disruptive protests, sabotage, and violence – including associations with letter bombs and arson, consequently earning it the label as the "top domestic terrorism threat" by the FBI (Ellefsen, 2018). Notably, it was characterised by its different factions that operated above ground (largely lawful) and underground (frequently unlawful).

Through interviews with activists, defence solicitors, police representatives and countermovement representatives, as well as trial and event observations, Ellefsen (2018) highlights that the violent tactics of the underground factions were incentivised by their effectiveness in disrupting and coercing target businesses, with the underground factions acting as "muscle", while simultaneously drawing media coverage which amplified their threat. This, in combination with the more moderate tactics of above-ground factions, led to the short-term success of the campaign. However, the radical tactics invited greater state repression (particularly the arrests of organisers), negative public perceptions and lower levels of public support, and greater securitisation of targets, ultimately leading to the disruption and demobilisation of the group.

Group composition. Finally, an emergent but less prevalent theme within the literature on the structure of movements relates to the composition and relevance of demographic characteristics within the movement. This includes class structure and minority ethnicities within the movement. The themes reported here focus more on broader composition factors, rather than individual-level factors.

- **Class structure:** this factor appears to be relatively understudied, however, may warrant further attention. Notably, Koca (2024) highlights that the Yellow Vest movement opened up "class-based" radicalisation possibilities, that transcend far-right and Islamist ideologies. Through their interviews with Yellow Vest supporters, they highlight that working-class grievances became a common feature of these often violent protests. Similarly, through survey data across 20 Arab countries, Desai et al. (2023) found that class structure was associated with support for nonviolent or violent action, concluding that "for those with higher incomes, nonviolent actions are a sufficiently powerful signal of discontent, but they are a much weaker signal for those with lower incomes. For these groups, discontent encourages dissenting actions that carry a high private cost" (p. 696).
- **Minority ethnicity:** the relevance of ethnicity in violent protest and radicalisation is a contentious and sensitive issue, with a mixed evidence base. Although Chenoweth (2023) suggests that "if a movement constituency represents an ethnic, religious, or racial minority in the country, nonviolent resistance may seem as risky as, and perhaps more futile than, violent resistance" (Chenoweth, 2023, p. 61; Thurber, 2019), there is little specific evidence to support this within Western liberal democratic contexts. Indeed, despite ethnic minority movements being perceived as more violent, achieving less success than non-ethnic minority movements, and being more heavily policed (Maher et al., 2024), the majority of research where ethnicity is a factor relates to ethnonationalist/white supremacist movements, and anti-minority ideologies. Thus,

the evidence from the literature, particularly within Western liberal democratic contexts, suggests that ethnic minorities may be more likely to be victims, rather than perpetrators of political violence linked to protest.

Ideology

As with research relating to the ethnicity of groups that make up movements, findings relating to ideology also receive mixed support in the literature. In della Porta's (2008) review of the literature, the majority of research up to that point had been conducted on left-wing movements, leading to a call for more research on far-right and religious fundamentalist movements. Since then, where an ideology was mentioned (particularly in Western contexts), a majority of the research identified in this review appears to refer to far-right protests, with comparatively very few referencing Islamist extremism. This could reflect the relative frequency of far-right protest in recent years, which has attracted increasing research interest (Simi et al., 2024).

Few studies specifically compared different ideological groups in their analyses. In one which did, Lamprianou & Ellinas (2017) examined factors predicting engagement in conventional (lawful) and radical (unlawful) political actions among a sample of 5,025 survey respondents in Greece. The strongest predictor of both types of political action was left-wing ideologies, as compared with right-wing or moderate ideologies. Additionally, lower trust in political institutions, organisational membership, unemployment, and younger age groups were more strongly associated with radical actions. These findings suggest that ideology effects are highly context-dependent, with Greece experiencing particularly violent waves of left-wing protest.

One emergent theme is the role of gendered ideologies. For example, in a study examining 104 ethno-political organisations across the Middle East, Asal et al. (2013) conclude that "gender-inclusive ideology makes an organisation more likely to engage in protest and less likely to choose a violent or mixed strategy" (p. 305). Meanwhile, in a comparative ethnographic study examining al-Muhajiroun and anti-Islam(ist) groups (including the EDL and Britain First), Pearson (2023) found that although both movements used gendered narratives, these were more uniform within al-Muhajiroun, while they were a source of tension and fragmentation within far-right anti-Islamist groups. The way in which masculinity is represented may also be linked to violent narratives; while the EDL conceptualised this as "a nationalist, working-class muscular masculinity" (p.495), al-Muhajiroun conceptualised this in line with "warrior" (mujahid) masculinity.

On a more granular level, some studies have examined the relevance of specific grievances that transcend ideologies. This is exemplified in the example of the Yellow Vests, where "class-based" grievances were the primary driver (Koca, 2024). Similarly, Ives & Lewis' (2020) analysis of protest events across Africa found that the grievance or motivation behind the movement, particularly electoral protests, and those centred around human rights (usually after state repression), were more likely to escalate to violence. This highlights that beyond ideologies, mobilisation contexts, and their associated grievances, appear to be more directly linked to political violence.

Box 3: "Gateway organisations" and gendered pathways to violence

One study describes how gendered processes can shape mobilisation pathways via "gateway organisations". Through interviews with three former jihadists who had returned from Syria and one recruiter in Sweden, Nilsson (2022) explains how ideological "priming" in non-violent "gateway organisations" (e.g., Muslim Brotherhood), in combination with individual susceptibility factors, may make some individuals more susceptible to recruitment.

Through priming perceptions of polarisation and conflict, the need to defend the in-group, and gender roles such as masculine bravery and "brotherhood" or "sisterhood", Nilsson's (2022) findings suggest that it may be easier for recruiters to "activate" these primes and portray violence as a more effective way of achieving goals – summarised through the phrase "aren't you tired of talking?"

MOBILISATION CONTEXTS

This section considers the wider context around the social movement, and how this may contribute to the potential for engaging in or rejecting violence. The key contextual factors considered include:

- Political and discursive opportunity structures.
- External factors (e.g., geopolitical, national, or local events).
- Temporal, geographic, and situational factors that may affect when violence emerges or escalates.

Key points:

1. Different kinds of opportunities (or a lack thereof) can be seen as either accelerators or brakes for violence: more political opportunities and political representation may decrease the potential for violence, while discursive opportunities operationalised through mainstream media, social media, and political narratives, may enable radical movements.
2. Relationships between political parties and radical movements can act as both opportunities and constraints.
3. Local events and grievances (e.g., migration, national political issues, and equality) are more likely to precipitate violent mobilisations than international/supranational issues.
4. Elections are particularly associated with violent protest events.
5. Violent protests may diffuse on both a national and international level. This may be enabled by media reporting and national/transnational networks.
6. Violent disorder concentrates in larger urban areas.
7. Societal inequalities and segregation are linked to increases in violent mobilisation.
8. Social movements are dynamic and relational; levels of violence, as well as opportunities and constraints and their effects change over time. Violence tends to increase with duration, but also leads to demobilisation.

Political and discursive opportunity structures

A prevalent theme in the literature is the role of opportunity structures, and their impact on movements' strategic choices (della Porta, 2018b, p. 461). Broadly, two primary types of opportunities are conceptualised – political/institutional, and discursive. Political opportunities include institutional allies, instability of political elites, and trust and confidence in democratic institutions (Caiani, 2019, p. 921). Meanwhile, "discursive opportunities" describe the extent to which certain ideas are accepted as legitimate in public discourse (Caiani, 2019). According to Caiani (2019), "while 'open' opportunities imply easy access for new challengers in the political system, the lack (or the closing) of these opportunities often results in scarce mobilisation or even the escalation of radicalisation" (Caiani, 2019, p. 921). Different kinds of opportunities (or a lack thereof) can therefore be seen as either accelerators or brakes for violence.

Political opportunities. A general theme in the literature is that limited political opportunities are linked to more violence, and that conversely, more opportunities are linked to decreases in violence (Caiani et al., 2012; della Porta, 2018). For example, in a study examining instances of anti-migrant violent protest in Germany between 1990-1995, Braun & Koopmans (2010) found that in counties where right-wing parties had greater electoral strength, there was an inhibitory effect on violent mobilisation. They found that "in a Kreis [county] with 1 per cent more votes for extreme right parties the intensity of extreme right violence is more than 30 per cent lower" (Braun & Koopmans, 2010, p. 119).

Similarly, on an individual-level, through survey data in Guatemala, Nepal, and Northern Ireland, Dyrstad & Hillesund (2020) found that low perceived political efficacy (i.e., an individual's belief that they can engage in and affect political processes) significantly predicted support for political violence. Similar narratives are seen in individual pathways, such as those mentioned previously by Nilsson (2022), where violence becomes portrayed as a more effective way of achieving goals when non-violent means are seen as ineffective. A similar pathway was noted for recruitment from non-violent movements into the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA; (Bosi, 2012).

However, this lack of political opportunity or efficacy may not directly cause violence in isolation. In an analysis of arson attacks on asylum housing in Sweden, Törnberg et al. (2023) found that grievances or a lack of political opportunities alone were not significant predictors of attacks. Instead, "a combination of general anti-refugee protests, far-right mobilisation, and electoral support for the far-right Sweden Democrats (SD) party" (p. 1353) predicted these attacks.

Discursive opportunities. Discursive opportunities, including narratives that justify violence, appear to increase the potential for violence (della Porta, 2008). These can be operationalised by the mainstream media, social media, or through political discourse. For example, Braun & Koopmans, p. (2010, p. 119) found that greater exposure through media reporting of anti-migrant violence led to faster diffusion of violence, while "the weekly number of negative statements about immigrants appearing in the media strongly increases the rate of violence. Every negative statement increases the violence hazard with more than 5 per cent" (p. 119).

Political allies. Research findings suggest that "having 'allies' in power can be either an opportunity for radical right mobilisation (reinforced by institutional support) or a constraint, since radical right parties can compete with radical right movements" (Caiani, 2019, p. 921). For example, through a protest event analysis and interviews with radical right and anti-vax activists and leaders in Italy and Hungary, Caiani et al. (2024) found that different patterns emerged between the two countries. In Italy, there was a "division of labour" or "conflict" between radical right movements and political parties, whereby radical right movements led (often violent) street protests, while political parties remained more "institutional". Meanwhile, in Hungary,

there was a co-operative relationship between radical right parties and movements, and a lesser degree of violence (Caiani et al., 2024).

In the UK context, a study examining the relationship between the UK Independence Party (UKIP) and Britain First found a similar pattern to the Italian context; there appeared to be a division of labour, where although separate, Britain First was able to gather more support for and attempt to influence UKIP's policies (Davidson & Berezin, 2018). Similar findings of extremist political influence have been found in the US (Van Dyke et al., 2024). However, as previously noted, having "allies" in power may have the inverse effect. In Jämte et al.'s (2024) study of the radical left in Sweden, they found that more violent left-wing protests took place under left or centre-left governments.

External factors: geopolitical, national, or local events

The literature identifies specific types of events that may precipitate violent protest. When examining broader trends, the research suggests that most cases of violent protest relate to local events. For example, based on a protest event analysis of 1,040 radical right street mobilisations in Central/Eastern Europe, Caiani (2022) found that "mobilisations spurred by supranational politics or institutions (e.g., the EU) were very rare, suggesting that radical right mobilisation mainly depends on local conflicts and grievances" (p. 342). In this study, prominent local conflicts and grievances included migration issues, national political issues, and conservative values (i.e., anti-LGBT and gender equality issues).

Elections. A recurring theme in the literature is that violent protest often concentrates around elections (Chen et al., 2023; Chernykh, 2014; Enos et al., 2019; Jämte et al., 2024; Piazza, 2022; Saxton & Benson, 2008; Thomson et al., 2021; Wagoner et al., 2021). Elections provide new opportunities for political influence (Jämte et al., 2024), while election losses exacerbate grievances (Piazza, 2022). As previously summarised, Thomson et al. (2021) found that mobilisations led by organised groups are more likely to occur before an election in an attempt to influence the outcome, while unorganised protests tend to occur at and immediately after elections.

In the 90 days leading up to elections, Jämte et al.'s (2024) analysis of radical left activism in Sweden indicates that protests were more likely to be "violent" than protests outside of this time period, however, this mainly referred to property damage. Similarly, a greater proportion of protests were "nonviolently transgressive" (e.g., blockades, nonviolent confrontations). After elections, Piazza's (2022) analysis of 105 democracies between 1970-2018 finds that when an election loser rejects the results, there are significantly more domestic terrorist casualties. Similarly, based on data from democracies in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union between 1990-2009, Chernykh (2014) found that electoral outcomes are more likely to be rejected using extra-legal means (including political entities instigating illegal mass protest) when there was a change to election-related institutions before the election.

Box 4: Case study: US Capitol riot and #StopTheSteal

The US Capitol riot is a prominent example of an election-related protest that included mass political violence. On January 6th, 2021, over 10,000 protestors gathered in Washington DC to protest the results of the US election, the results of which were strongly contested by the incumbent president, Donald Trump, and Republican politicians (Chen et al., 2023; Piazza, 2022; Wagoner et al., 2021). Of these, a radical flank of approximately 800 individuals stormed the US Capitol building, resulting in at least four deaths and over 100 injuries (Piazza, 2022; Wagoner et al., 2021).

In line with the broader discursive opportunities created through narratives from Trump and Republican politicians that the elections were illegitimate (Piazza, 2022), two studies by Wagoner et al. (2021) surveyed Republican supporters before and after January 6th, to examine links between perceptions of illegitimacy and engagement in collective action. These studies found that perceptions that the election was illegitimate predicted feelings of anger and contempt, which in turn predicted both normative (activism) and non-normative (radicalism) collective action intentions.

The role of online platforms in mobilisation has also been implicated in this event. In studies examining images and discourse on online platforms preceding and following the events of January 6th, Kasimov et al. (2023) found that the discourse on Twitter aimed to mobilise users leading up to January 6th, while Chen et al. (2023) found that posts on Parler used more violence cues (e.g., "combat") than mainstream platforms, "suggesting a greater call to action". These findings suggest that both mainstream and fringe platforms had a mobilising influence, and that fringe platforms are particularly implicated in violent mobilisation.

Other events. In addition to elections, other events discussed in the literature that may increase support for violent protest include economic crises (Caren et al., 2017; Karampampas et al., 2020; Lamprianou & Ellinas, 2017); police violence, such as the murder of George Floyd in 2020 (Gibson, 2024; Setter & Nepstad, 2022); and migration crises (Caiani et al., 2012).

There is some evidence of diffusion of violent protest (i.e., violent protests inspiring subsequent protests in other areas). This can occur on a national level (Braun & Koopmans, 2010; Saxton & Benson, 2008), and an international level (Bonneuil & Auriat, 2000). As outlined earlier, national diffusion can occur through media reporting (Braun & Koopmans, 2010). Similarly, Bonneuil & Auriat's (2000) analysis of 163 global ethnic minority movements finds that ethnic conflicts can spread between countries through inspiring similar actions, media reporting, and transnational networks. Given the timeframes of these studies, it is likely that beyond mainstream media reporting, social media will have a similar, if not greater influence. These transnational dynamics will be considered in further detail in a subsequent report from this project.

Spatial, societal, and temporal factors

Studies identify various spatial, societal, and temporal factors that may increase or decrease the risk of social movement violence. These are each explored in turn in this subsection.

Spatial factors. Beyond potential diffusion effects, research on geographic factors is sparse. However, there are some emerging themes relating to regional features. Starting at the country-level, there is some evidence for the effects of urbanisation and population size. Examining a dataset of protests (including demonstrations, riots, and strikes) across Africa in

1990-2013, Fox & Bell (2016) found that the number of large cities in a country, and the population size within those cities, are associated with higher protest incidence. Similarly, in an analysis of 186 national capitals and major urban centres between 1960-2014, Thomson et al. (2023) found that larger city populations are associated with a higher frequency of lethal disorder events. Unsurprisingly, these findings imply that violent disorder tends to concentrate in larger cities.

At a regional level, as previously noted, Braun & Koopmans (2010) found that German counties with more support for right-wing parties experienced less ethnic violence. Meanwhile, areas that had higher immigrant and asylum seeker populations saw increased violence. In addition, areas with lower life expectancy, an indicator of socioeconomic problems, saw increased violence.

At a more granular level, residential segregation by race/ethnicity (between White and Black or Hispanic populations) seems to be associated with increases in far-right protests (Gibbons, 2024). Similar findings were noted in a study examining ethno-political polarisation in 47 low- and middle-income countries, where district-level polarisation between ethnic groups was associated with a risk of riots and protests (Müller-Crepon & Hunziker, 2018).

Societal factors. Related to racial segregation and ethno-political polarisation, a prevalent theme in the literature is the role of inequalities, particularly "horizontal inequalities", that is, inequality between ethnic groups (Hillesund, 2022). In a systematic review of the literature examining these inequalities, Hillesund & Østby (2023) found "robust evidence on the relationship between [horizontal inequalities] and violent mobilisation" (p.1589), including civil wars, coups, and riots. In particular, the two primary drivers for this were political exclusion and economic inequalities. Meanwhile, this review found that the evidence for the impact of horizontal inequalities on non-violent conflict was inconsistent.

More specifically, across multiple large global studies, economic inequalities specifically appear to relate to violence (Hillesund, 2022, 2023; Wong, 2022). According to Hillesund (2022), this is because "economic disadvantages restrict economic leverage, making non-violent tactics less likely to succeed" (p. 166). This closely relates to findings around political opportunity structures; disadvantaged groups have fewer political opportunities. For example, in a study examining survey data across Asia, Wong (2022) found that not only does income inequality increase the risk for violence, it also decreases institutional political participation e.g., voting.

Beyond income inequalities, there is some evidence that wider ethnic inequality and exclusion is also linked to violent campaigns. A global study for the period 1950-2006 found that high levels of ethnic exclusion predicted greater violence in civil resistance campaigns, which was mediated by the "latent level of violent repression" in the country (Rørbæk, 2019).

Other inequalities have been implicated. For example, one study found that while far left protests are more likely when there is societal polarisation over income inequality, far right protests are more likely when there is increased polarisation regarding homosexuality (Kleiner, 2018). Another study highlighted that gender inequality is also linked to violent political protest (Svensson et al., 2022). Societal inequalities of various forms therefore appear to be associated with violence.

Temporal factors. Protest cycles are frequently discussed in the literature and encompass the changing repertoire of social movements over time, particularly in response to interactions with the state and counter-mobilisations (della Porta, 2008). This highlights the dynamic and responsive nature of movements and the factors that lead to violent escalation and de-escalation. The factors considered throughout this review should therefore be seen as dynamic, rather than static; their relevance will be both contextual and temporal and should be considered regarding the stage in a movement's lifecycle (see Box 5)

Box 5: The lifecycle of social movements

Christiansen (2009) identifies four distinct stages of social movements:

- Emergence: Emergence of social discontent or grievance related to specific issue(s) that, at this stage, is largely uncoordinated.
- Coalescence: More coordinated movement begins to emerge, with a more clearly-defined focus and emergent strategy.
- Bureaucratization: Development of more formalised, structured and professional movement.
- Decline: Movement declines over time due to repression; co-optation; success; or failure.

In addition, some papers note other non-political temporal factors. An analysis of over 7,000 social movement events in Washington, D.C., and New York City, found that warmer weather is associated with higher rates of violence (Zhang, 2016). The influence of this effect varies across time periods associated with different political opportunity and resource contexts. This aligns with the existing body of literature indicating that higher temperatures are associated with violent crime in general (Corcoran & Zahnow, 2022).

Protest cycles are characterised by clusters of activities that peak and then decline, often including "innovation and adaptation" in response to changing opportunities and constraints over time (della Porta, 2008), This has already been noted in the context of opportunities and constraints around elections (Jämte et al., 2024; Thomson et al., 2021). An analysis of social movements in Western Europe between 1975-1989 examined some of these changing influences throughout protest cycles (Jung, 2010). This study found that political opportunities affect movements and the frequency of protests during the initial mobilisation phase, but not throughout the movement's lifespan, and that institutionalisation (the integration of a movement into existing political structures) and growing violence are related to demobilisation – a pattern which was noted in earlier case studies (e.g., SHAC; Ellefsen, 2018). This study also found that broader political changes and electoral competition can increase protest frequency during mobilisation, for example, right-wing governments and the growth of green parties (Jung, 2010).

Protest cycles can also contextualise the development of radical flanks. For example, as noted earlier, they can arise as a response to a lack of progress or to state responses (Chenoweth, 2023; Ryckman, 2019). Similarly, in an analysis of 189 mass dissident campaigns between 1948-2006, Belgioioso (2018) found that longer campaign duration was linked to increasing fragmentation, and an increased likelihood of adopting terrorist tactics.

However, the primary driver of protest cycles noted in the literature is that of interaction events – that is, interactions between the movement and state responses or counter-movements. These are considered in the next section.

COUNTER-MOVEMENTS AND STATE RESPONSES

This section considers two key external actors and influences that may contribute to the potential for engaging in or rejecting violence: counter-movements and state responses. Key considerations include:

- Interactions with counter-movements and their impact.
- The repertoire of state responses.
- State-movement interactions and potential unintended consequences.

Key points

1. Counter-movements often escalate violence.
2. The escalatory effect of counter-movements depends on contextual and movement-specific factors, including state responses.
3. Counter-movements may ultimately trigger demobilisation by inviting greater state repression.
4. Repressive policing and militarised state tactics escalate violence. These may be moderated through other forms of state control (e.g., surveillance, restricting movement support, restricting free speech). These tactics also bear important human rights considerations.
5. Covert repression tactics such as surveillance, infiltration, and harassment may escalate violence.
6. Legislative and criminal justice approaches produce mixed results. Targeted arrests of movement organisers may be effective in demobilising violent movements.
7. De-escalatory or conciliatory approaches may be effective in reducing violence.
8. Soft and non-coercive tactics, including those that involve non-state actors, have mixed effects. Increasing stigmatisation of groups labelled as "extremist" may reduce violence, while counter-messaging may create a backlash effect.
9. State responses can lead to unintended consequences, including reducing opportunities for lawful non-violent protest, mental health impacts, and impacts on public and international support.

Counter-movements

The literature on protest cycles discusses the role of counter-movements in both escalating and de-escalating violence. Clashes with counter-movements increase violence (della Porta, 2008), in what has been termed 'cumulative extremism': "the way in which one form of extremism can feed off and magnify other forms" (Eatwell, 2006, p. 205). Perhaps counterintuitively, this suggests that rather than preventing or reducing support for violent protest, counter-movements instead may increase violence and extremism.

For example, a study examining far-right Pegida protests in Germany between 2014-2018 found that counter protests did not prevent the onset of protests, and instead, "larger counter-demonstrations [we]re associated with larger subsequent Pegida protests" (Vüllers & Hellmeier, 2022, p. 21). This study also found that violence against Pegida supporters meant they were then more likely to continue protesting. Similar dynamics are reflected in the IRA; interview and archival data found that violent Loyalist counter-movements triggered further escalation and radicalisation (Bosi, 2012; De Fazio, 2013). These examples demonstrate how counter-movements can create a cumulative violent effect.

Box 6: Case study: Relational dynamics of escalation

Busher et al.'s (2022) analysis of far-right and anti-minority protests highlights how relational dynamics within and between movements can contribute to the escalation or inhibition of violence. This analysis informs a framework which identifies 21 violence enabling and 17 violence inhibiting mechanisms, organised around five 'relational arenas' following the work of Alimi, Demetriou and Bosi (2015). The violence enabling mechanisms and their associated arenas are:

- **Within-movement:** Intensification of threat narrative; foregrounding of revolutionary goals; declining influence of moderates; valorisation of violence; identification of violence as a viable or necessary strategy; fear of missing out; preparation for violence
- **Movement-countermovement:** Increasingly hostile emotional entrainment between activists and opponents; increased mutual expectation of violence; increased availability of 'legitimate' targets; sudden power imbalance between opposing groups
- **Movement-political environment:** Diminishing political opportunities; growing identification of 'corrupt elites' as 'the enemy'; radical flank actors become the focus of political and/or media attention; endorsement of polarising issue frame by members of political or cultural elites; legitimation of violence by members of political or cultural elites
- **Movement-security forces:** Communication breakdown between activists and security forces; loss of control by state security actors
- **Movement-public arena:** Decoupling of the movement from the general public; endorsement of polarising issue frame by members of the public; legitimation of violence by members of the public

Although emphasising that it should not be viewed as a predictive model, Busher et al. (2022) discuss how this framework might be used to assess the potential threat of violence associated with specific events and movements by helping to "train the attention of analysts and policymakers on aspects of these protest dynamics that the evidence suggests are particularly relevant to escalation and inhibition of violence" (p. 8).

However, the evidence suggests that the potential for violent escalatory dynamics is moderated by contextual factors. In Caiani et al.'s (2012) analysis of far-right mobilisations in the US, Italy, and Germany, the presence of counter-movements had mixed effects; in Germany and the US, but not Italy, they appeared to increase violence. Another study analysing counter-movement effects in the UK and Norway found that while violent intergroup clashes took place between EDL and al-Muhajiroun mobilisations in the UK, similar dynamics were not found in Norway (Lygren & Ravndal, 2023). The authors instead suggest that these effects should instead be conceptualised as "reciprocal intergroup radicalisation", which depends on other contextual factors, such as the movements' characteristics and resources; perceptions of other groups as "the enemy"; and perceptions of "unjust" state repression. The conceptualisation as "reciprocal intergroup radicalisation" emphasises the intergroup relational processes, thereby capturing "spikes of interactions, regardless of whether the violence eventually recedes" (Lygren & Ravndal, 2023, p. 392).

Group dynamics influence unilateral processes of violent escalation. In a study analysing pro- and anti-Black Lives Matter online discourse, the counter-movement posted more content including conspiracy theories, extremism, and violence in response to perceived outgroup threat, which served to further justify violence (Brown et al., 2022). Similarly, in an analysis of nearly 4,000 protest events in New York between 1960-1995, counterprotesting, although relatively uncommon, was found to be most common at conservative protests (Reynolds-Stenson & Earl, 2018). This analysis also suggests that the strength of the initial movement, and its perceived threat, explain the probability of counterprotests. In addition, counter-movements were linked to police responses; greater police repression increased counterprotests; and increased counter-movement activity was associated with greater police presence (Reynolds-Stenson & Earl, 2018).

The association between counter-movements and greater police repression is a potential mechanism by which counter-movements can trigger demobilisation, in what Zeller (2022) terms a "kamikaze" effect. In an analysis of 32 far-right demonstration campaigns in Germany, England, and Austria, Zeller (2021) identifies four patterns of demobilisation, of which two are directly linked to counter-movements: closing opportunities, coercive state repression, civil counter-mobilisation ("nonstate actions that restrict the operation of the demonstration campaign, but without resorting to coercive measures"; p.273), and militant anti-far right action (e.g., Antifa). Importantly, even if state action was the decisive factor, Zeller notes that usually other non-state actors acted first. Taken together, these findings suggest that although counter-movements may escalate violence in the short term, they may ultimately lead to demobilisation, depending on the state's response.

Box 7: Case study: Reciprocal intergroup radicalisation between the English Defence League and al-Muhajiroun

Between 2009-2015, the EDL and al-Muhajiroun frequently engaged in street protests and counter-protests, resulting in clashes (Lygren & Ravndal, 2023). These ranged from "light symbolic violence" (e.g., burning the Quran, flags, and poppies) to lethal violence, including a bomb plot targeting an EDL rally by Islamist extremists inspired by al-Muhajiroun (Lygren & Ravndal, 2023). Specific group-linked actions inspired greater counter-movement activity. For example, Lee Rigby's murder in 2013 by two former al-Muhajiroun members sparked a spike in large-scale EDL demonstrations (Lygren & Ravndal, 2023).

Lygren & Ravndal (2023) suggest that there were three key factors that led to this escalation in the UK context (in contrast with the Norwegian context):

1. Both the EDL and al-Muhajiroun had "competent leadership" that encouraged the recruitment of violent activists ("violent capacity building"), and did not "constrain violent escalatory behaviour among its activists" (p. 399).

2. From the founding of the EDL, their "most central adversary" was al-Muhajiroun. While this was not reciprocated to the same extent by al-Muhajiroun, this led to the EDL's intentionally provocative behaviour.

3. Interventionist state responses led to greater injustice grievances, in turn leading to greater militarisation. In particular, government bans of al-Muhajiroun led to the emergence of new fragmented groups and a change in structure to an underground decentralised network, further isolating it from other moderating influences. Meanwhile, coercive policing tactics during EDL protests, arrests of activists, and labelling their protests as "illegal" fuelled injustice grievances. Later more conciliatory state responses, particularly focusing on keeping the two groups apart, led to de-escalation.

State responses

As exemplified in the case study in Box 5 and the findings in previous sections, state responses can both escalate and de-escalate violent mobilisation. This section synthesises the research that has examined the potential for state actions to provoke or constrain violence, as well as any other unintended consequences from these responses.

The literature discusses a range of different state responses, from 'hard' repressive tactics to 'soft' and 'non-coercive' measures, including both targeted and broader approaches (Earl & Braithwaite, 2022; Ellefsen & Jämte, 2023; Jämte & Ellefsen, 2020; Leach et al., 2024; Lygren & Ravndal, 2023; Ortiz et al., 2022). As well as the impact of these responses on mobilisations, this section also emphasises key considerations in democratic contexts, including legally protected rights to protest, the political context, and social movement repertoires and tactics. State responses identified through the literature include:

- Repressive policing and militarised tactics: use or threat of physical force and arrests against protestors.
- Covert repression: intelligence, surveillance, and infiltration.
- Legislative and criminal justice approaches: proscribing groups, restricting protest, arresting movement leaders.
- De-escalatory approaches: focusing on protestor safety rather than repression, providing concessions.

- Soft and non-coercive measures: involving civil society organisations, specified authorities, and the general public, including as part of broader preventing/countering violent extremism (P/CVE) measures.

The impacts and evidence for each of these are discussed in turn.

Repressive policing and militarised tactics. By far, the largest body of evidence relating to state responses focuses on the use of repressive policing and militarised tactics. While there are some cases where repression can act as a deterrent by increasing the risks of activism, there is a general consensus in the literature that such tactics are a key component of escalatory dynamics influencing protest cycles (della Porta, 2008, 2014, 2018; Earl, 2011).

Examining data relating to broad trends lends support to this claim. For example, as noted previously, in Ives & Lewis' (2020) analysis of protest events across Africa, recent repression was a significant predictor of escalation to violence. Considering the spectrum of state repressive action, a meta-analysis of sub-national conflict dynamics in 71 countries found that low and moderate levels of state repression increased oppositional actions (e.g., actions by dissidents, rioters), while government violence above a certain threshold, overall, suppressed violent opposition (Zhukov, 2023).

However, there were also cases where increased state violence was strictly inflammatory, perpetuating spirals of violence, and others where the level of violence required to suppress mobilisations was comparatively lower. Zhukov (2023) argues that, given the constraints on state violence imposed by human rights treaties and legislation, the level of state violence needed to suppress mobilisations may be moderated through a combination of other repressive tactics, including surveillance, restrictions on external support for movements, and restrictions on free speech. Such additional tactics also infringe on human rights and civil liberties and are therefore primarily seen in autocratic regimes.

The overall implication of these studies is that repressive policing tactics tend to increase violent mobilisation. There are two primary ways in which this seems to trigger further violence: firstly, by increasing grievances and anti-state sentiment, and secondly, by constraining movement resources and opportunities, thereby increasing fragmentation and the mobilisation of radical flanks.

The first mechanism is demonstrated in the earlier case study examining EDL and al-Muhajiroun reciprocal intergroup radicalisation; repression through coercive policing tactics increased injustice grievance and, in turn, violence (Lygren & Ravndal, 2023). A more extreme example of this is demonstrated through the Bloody Sunday massacre in 1972, when British soldiers killed 14 unarmed protestors, which led to an increase in PIRA recruitment and violence (Bosi, 2012). This pathway to escalation is exemplified through Bosi's interviews with former PIRA volunteers:

> **…whatever notion people have that the civil rights movement can bring about reforms or change in British policy, Bloody Sunday ended that. The British state would not yield to the demands of civil rights [protesters] by purely passive resistance. Many people then felt that that was the end of passive resistance and that the only argument that the British had ever listened to in the past was the argument of force, and then many people decided, that's what we are going to employ. I was one of those people, and one month after Bloody Sunday I then took the decision to join the Provisional IRA.**
>
> **Bosi (2012, p. 363)**

Experimental findings suggest that even visual representations of repressive policing tactics can activate injustice grievances and violent intent (Becker et al., 2024). Becker et al.'s study employed a virtual reality design in which participants took part in a demonstration and were stopped by police officers either dressed in riot gear or regular police uniform.

The study found that police in riot gear were perceived as more illegitimate and provoked increased feelings of anger and anxiety. In turn, protestors were more likely to engage in direct resistance against the police. This implies that even imagery evocative of repressive tactics may escalate violence. This also highlights the delicate balance between reducing the risk of violence through de-escalatory approaches and ensuring officer safety through protective equipment (particularly at events that are already violent).

The second mechanism relates to movement fragmentation and the development of radical flanks, which in turn increase the potential for violence. Belgioioso's (2018) analysis of 189 mass dissident campaigns indicates that state repression is significantly associated with terrorism onset. Belgioioso explains that this is because extreme physical repression can increase organisational pressures and competition, as well as driving groups underground – thereby increasing fragmentation and the formation of radical flanks.

The fragmenting effect of repression is exemplified through Zwerman et al.'s (2000) study of 16 New Left clandestine groups in Germany, Italy, Japan, and the US. Zwerman et al. found that activists move underground due to increased repression at the protest cycle's peak, ideological commitment, and personal ties. In particular, the research identified the role of emergency laws or procedures for policing mass protests, the implementation of these laws (arresting and criminalising segments of the movement), covert intelligence techniques (harassment, disinformation, infiltration, and surveillance), and severe conditions for imprisoned militants (pp. 89-90). These measures led to a sense of "personal threat" among activists. Activists subsequently moved underground, adopting clandestine tactics to evade arrest and continue their activities, often leading to the emergence of more isolated and violent factions (i.e., radical flanks).

Furthermore, Zwerman et al. (2000) highlight some notable examples where moving underground in response to repression led to establishing connections with other (sometimes international) groups for training in clandestine and more violent means. For example, Zwerman et al. describe three radical left groups in Germany in the 1970s (Red Army Faction, the Movement of the Second of June, and the Revolutionary Cells), whose activities included training in a Palestine Liberation Organisation camp, learning bomb-making in Jordan, and forming international branches through external contacts with Palestinian guerrilla organisations.

Covert repression. As noted in the preceding subsection, covert repression tactics, such as intelligence gathering, surveillance, and infiltration, are often used in combination with more physical repression tactics and may therefore contribute to similar outcomes (Zhukov, 2023; Zwerman et al., 2000).

The effects of covert repression are under-researched, and mostly focus on the state's decision-making in adopting these tactics, rather than their impacts (Earl, 2011). For example, an analysis of the FBI's counterintelligence programme (COINTELPRO) that focused on New Left protest groups between 1968-1971 identified several covert tactics including surveillance, infiltration, disinformation, and harassment (D. Cunningham, 2003). Counterintuitively, decisions to adopt these tactics were not directly impacted by the group's size or propensity for violence, but rather, were shaped by internal organisational processes within the FBI – particularly its organisational structure and leadership (D. Cunningham, 2003).

The evidence for the effectiveness of these tactics is mixed (Earl, 2011). While Zhukov (2023) suggests that covert repressive tactics can decrease the amount of violence required for repression, Zwerman et al.'s (2000) findings suggest that these tactics contribute to the sense of threat, contributing to movement fragmentation and the development of clandestine violent factions. Such measures (particularly surveillance) can also have far-reaching negative impacts on the public (Earl, 2011), and cause significant public and media backlash when exposed (D. Cunningham, 2003).

Legislative and criminal justice approaches. There is significant overlap between repressive policing measures and legislative approaches, particularly through police enforcement. For example, Zwerman et al. (2000) notes that legislative change restricting protest is one of the drivers for the formation of more violent clandestine factions. Similarly, as demonstrated in the case study of the EDL and al-Muhajiroun, legislative approaches, including proscribing groups, can contribute to injustice grievances and fragmentation, resulting in more violence (Lygren & Ravndal, 2023).

In a review of the literature on state repression, Earl & Braithwaite (2022) note that mass arrests may be effective at dismantling movements and delegitimising legal protest. In the process state actors can 'use the unique sanding of legal systems to label and publicly construct the lawfulness and morality of protesters and movements' (Earl & Braithwaite 2022, p.238) with the potential to disproportionately target and control minoritised groups. Such approaches also bear a higher risk of backlash effects. For example, a text analysis examining a North American Radical Animal Liberation Movement magazine found that increased attention to prisoner support was associated with an increase in direct action (including violent action) events (Almquist & Bagozzi, 2020).

Some studies point to the greater effectiveness of more targeted arrests, focusing on organisers and leaders rather than individual activists. For example, Ellefsen (2018) suggests that switching attention to moderate organisers of SHAC disrupted the campaign, as these were the individuals who guided the overall movement. Similarly, according to Lygren & Ravndal, p. (2023, p. 398), "al-Muhajiroun was severely diminished after key leadership figures were arrested and several activists travelled to Syria and Iraq as foreign fighters." However, Lygren & Ravndal also note that by changing their organisational structure to become more decentralised, al-Muhajiroun became less vulnerable to arrests.

Legislative approaches can be used in ways beyond specifically targeting groups and protests, however, the literature on this is sparse, and does not show clear effects. One study was identified, which examined the impact of protective legislation on crimes and violent protest against abortion clinics in the US (Pridemore & Freilich, 2007). This study found that legislation neither acted as a deterrence, nor created a backlash effect, suggesting that "while such laws serve important symbolic values they may have little practical effect" (Pridemore & Freilich, 2007, pp. 622–623).

De-escalatory approaches. Findings relating to de-escalatory or conciliatory state approaches are also sparse and mixed. However, there are some findings examining both the effects of providing concessions and adopting de-escalatory policing tactics.

Although several studies highlight that a lack of progress is associated with violent escalation (Chenoweth, 2023; Ryckman, 2019), there is limited evidence relating to the specific impact of concessions. While Belgioioso et al. (2019) suggest that states are more likely to provide concessions to hierarchical, centralised movements that may be better able to subsequently control and prevent violence within the movement, Chenoweth (2023) notes that radical flanks can sometimes emerge in response to concessions, distinguishing themselves from "moderates" who are more willing to accept concessions.

Overall, the impact of de-escalatory policing approaches is the inverse of the escalatory repressive approaches discussed. The preotential reduction in violence in the face of de-escalatory approaches has been highlighted in Becker et al.'s (2024) study examining the effect of different police uniforms: appearing less threatening can decrease perceptions of illegitimacy, protestor anger, and violence. While Lygren & Ravndal (2023) credit the lack of escalation between counter-movements in the Norwegian context to the conciliatory and cooperative relationship between law enforcement and the groups: "the NDL had a cooperative relationship with law enforcement, and the activists frequently relied on the police to escort them away from the protests to avoid violent

confrontations with anti-racist activists. This mitigated injustice grievances among the NDL activists" (p. 403). Similarly, Lygren & Ravndal (2023) note that EDL violence decreased once police responses shifted towards separating adversarial groups and ensuring safety, thereby decreasing injustice grievances.

Soft and non-coercive measures. Soft and non-coercive measures often involve engaging with other actors within and beyond the state. Ellefsen & Jämte (2023) discuss examples of the use of more general P/CVE measures, including interactions with specified authorities, multi-agency approaches, and the adoption of "soft and non-coercive measures", however, these have received comparatively little empirical attention.

One mechanism by which these measures may operate is through creating a labelling effect, which affects the perceived morality of movement engagement (Earl & Braithwaite, 2022; Ellefsen & Jämte, 2023). Through interviews with members of the radical left-libertarian movement in Sweden, Jämte & Ellefsen (2020) found that labelling the movement as "violent extremist" led to stigmatisation of the group, self-policing, and demobilisation. However, they note that this does not appear to be successful in demobilising highly militant groups within the movement. Similarly, in Almquist & Bagozzi's (2020) study of radical animal liberation movement magazines, the designation of SHAC as a terrorist group instigated further discussions of group identity and non-violent tactics, which was associated with less direct action.

Relatedly, some studies have examined the impact of counter-messaging or counternarratives – the dissemination of messaging to discredit or discourage extremist messaging and support for violent political activism (Bélanger et al., 2021). Four studies testing the impact of counter-messages on groups of environmentalists, Black Lives Matter activists, Republicans, and Pro-Life activists found that participants who demonstrated "obsessive" passion for the cause experienced greater psychological reactance (feeling that their freedom of choice was under threat), and greater willingness to engage in violent political behaviours (Bélanger et al., 2021). This indicates that like other repressive tactics, counter-messaging can backfire.

Non-coercive measures can also be broader and indirect and focus on the potential targets of violence, rather than just potential perpetrators. For example, Ellefsen (2018) notes how police and government assistance and guidance for businesses targeted by SHAC had helped to reduce their vulnerability and 'strengthen their ability to deal with protest', suggesting that this support was one of the factors that helped to deter and obstruct more militant action by SHAC. This type of approach aligns with the concept of "target hardening" that is considered an effective strategy for reducing crime and terrorism risk more generally (Clarke & Newman, 2006).

Box 8: Case study: Soft repression, civil society, and Hizb ut-Tahrir

McNeil-Willson (2022) examined the way in which counter-terrorism measures, particularly those involving civil society actors, affect legally operating activist groups (at the time) labelled as "extremist". Through interviews with current and former members of Hizb ut-Tahrir Britain (HTB) and Hizb ut-Tahrir Scandinavia (HTS), as well as counter-terrorism practitioners, McNeil-Willson found that counter-terrorism measures affected these groups differently in Britain and Denmark, leading to different group response strategies. Furthermore, HTB experienced a more significant decline than HTS due to the hostile environment created by civil society actors in the UK. Specifically, McNeil-Willson identified five soft repression mechanisms that may have impacted these groups' activities:

1. Resource depletion: discouraging sites from hosting HTB/HTS events limited access to venues and public buildings, which in turn reduced opportunities for gatherings. However, this led to the use of online spaces instead.

2. Stigmatisation: through becoming associated with extremism in governmental and media discourse, members of these groups experienced greater stigmatisation, and therefore experienced barriers to employment, particularly in Denmark.

3. Divisive disruption: strategies that aimed to fragment organisations through surveillance, propaganda and infiltration increased the cost of activism and disrupted community and activist networks. However, the most significant disruption tactic involved arresting targeted individuals for minor non-terror offences, termed 'Al Capone' style arrests.

4. Intimidation: limited reports from both groups indicate that police and security services' intimidation of new recruits (e.g., alerting family members) may have contributed to a hostile environment for these groups.

5. Emulation: this mechanism, primarily seen in the UK, interacts with other mechanisms, amplifying their effects by altering social relations through the proliferation of counter-extremism NGOs. These NGOs diffuse and amplify governmental counter-terrorism narratives and approaches, which created an overall hostile environment for HTB. However, the roles of these NGOs, their input from "former radicals", and their impact on wider Islamophobic narratives remains controversial.

Unintended consequences. This section has so far noted the unintended escalation in violence linked to state responses. However, additional unintended consequences and secondary impacts were also identified in the literature. These include wider impacts on activists (including those who are non-violent), the general public, and the international community.

Ellefsen (2021) identified some potential unintended consequences as a result of legal, physical, economic, and social repression, using SHAC as a case study. Firstly, in line with other research discussed in this section, Ellefsen highlights that the range of state responses can exacerbate conditions for activists, further increasing their grievances and sense of injustice – and reducing prosocial opportunities. As discussed, this can subsequently increase radicalisation, and in turn, violence. In addition, this repression can result in what Ellefsen terms a "chilling effect": through increasing the risks of protests and demonstrations, and criminalising previously lawful activities, there are fewer safe opportunities for nonviolent protest. This both erodes civil liberties and freedom of expression, as well as driving movements underground, with the potential to increase the risk of radicalisation and violent action.

Some studies also note the mental health impact of violent repressive tactics on activists, as well as the general public. For example, a survey with 523 Yellow Vest protestors found that nearly half exhibited severe symptoms of depression, while over 15% exhibited symptoms meeting the criteria for a post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) diagnosis (Çelebi et al., 2022). Furthermore, there was a significant association between exposure to police violence and both depression and PTSD symptoms. Çelebi et al. therefore call for preventive actions to reduce police violence, promote de-escalation, and improve access to mental health care for protestors.

Considering the broader impacts of repression and counter-terrorism measures, Earl (2011) calls for greater integration of findings from research on repression in the counter-terrorism field, particularly existing evidence on its harmful consequences. In particular, Earl notes that "research on repression has examined subjective threats and shown how wasteful (in terms of efficiency of control) and harmful (to human rights and civil liberties) states can be when they miscalculate who or what is threatening" (p. 274).

Furthermore, Earl warns that "the conflation of radicalism and terrorism may actually create terrorism, not help control it" (p. 274), citing researchers who focus on repression who argue that "radical beliefs can be nonviolent but that repression can move peaceful but radical groups toward terrorism". This observation aligns with more recent research emphasising the importance of not conflating terrorism and opposition in the context of responses to a recent international wave of anti-authority protest (Morgan et al., 2024). This research notes that it is important to "provide opportunities for people to express dissent and opposition to government authority without labelling anti-authority protesters as extremists, so as not to push more moderate protesters towards the extremes" (Morgan et al., 2024).

In this context, Earl (2011) highlights that repressive measures can disproportionately affect and discriminate against Muslims, while Earl & Braithwaite (2022) further emphasise that repression of social movements more broadly disproportionately impacts minority and marginalised groups. Contemporary events have drawn such concerns into focus, most notably by researchers examining state responses to pro-Palestinian activism in the wake of the Hamas attacks of 7 October 2023, and the ongoing conflict in Gaza (e.g., Browne et al., 2025). Taken together, researchers examining different types of activism emphasise the importance of avoiding the unnecessary criminalisation and securitisation of legitimate protest by drawing attention to the potential negative impacts that repression can have on human rights. Finally, several articles highlight that the state's response to protests, particularly violent responses, can negatively impact public, media, and international support (Baranauskas, 2022; Jackson et al., 2013; Sutton et al., 2014).

CONCLUSIONS

This rapid evidence assessment has identified several potential drivers for violent and extremist escalation within social movements, as well as potential factors for de-escalation. The literature reviewed highlights the complex and interacting nature of movement characteristics, mobilisation contexts, and the influence of external actors, namely counter-movements and state responses.

The most important movement characteristics identified were the role of movement fragmentation and radical flanks in escalating violence, and conversely, the role of centralised, hierarchical structures and moderate actors in constraining violence. Ideology was generally not identified as a specific risk factor, however, the majority of recent research has focused on far-right mobilisations, suggesting that these are currently the most prevalent movements featuring violence or extremism.

Specific mobilisation contexts are also important, particularly the presence or absence of political opportunities. The availability and accessibility of legal political opportunities reduces grievances and the need for violence. Meanwhile, specific events, particularly elections, can exacerbate grievances and violence.

External actors, particularly counter-movements and state responses, can also create contexts that escalate or de-escalate violence. In particular, violent counter-movements and violent repression increase the potential for violence. Meanwhile, de-escalatory approaches can reduce violence, while targeted arrests and increased stigmatisation may facilitate de-mobilisation.

Overall, it is important to note that the individual factors identified do not cause violence or extremism alone. Instead, a combination of different factors coalesce to create risky contexts and movements. Social movements are dynamic and relational; levels of violence, as well as opportunities and constraints and their effects change over time.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Although this review has identified several key findings in the literature, there are some limitations in both the review methodology and the extant literature.

Firstly, when interpreting the overall findings from this review, it is important to acknowledge that the rapid evidence assessment process does not include an exhaustive search of the literature. It is therefore likely that there is additional relevant literature and evidence that has not been considered. In addition, while key quality markers for empirical studies formed part of the inclusion criteria, a full quality assessment was not conducted for this review. Thus, findings extrapolated from this review should be interpreted with an appropriate degree of caution.

The focus of this review (as well as the majority of the identified literature) primarily examined the factors that relate to political violence, radicalisation, and terrorism specifically, and not the drivers for non-violent movements. This means that factors that lead to primarily non-violent movements may not have been captured, or there may be overlap in the factors that lead to both violent and non-violent movements. Indeed, as noted by K. G. Cunningham et al. (2019), more movements transition from violence to non-violence than the reverse. As with the relative lack of research on protective factors for individual extremism risk, the social movement literature suffers from similar biases (Lösel et al., 2018).

The research base itself, although wide, has some notable gaps. Importantly, the field of social movement studies has largely operated separately to that of

security and terrorism studies (Earl, 2011; Ellefsen & Jämte, 2023). This means that links with current conceptualisations of radicalisation, violent extremism, and terrorism, are generally underdeveloped. Similarly, there are some concepts in the literature that appear to be conflated, poorly defined, or not disaggregated – particularly the overlap between protest violence, terrorism, armed rebellion, insurgency, and conflict more generally (Earl, 2011). Similarly, the concept of "violence" is often not disaggregated, referring to both property violence and interpersonal violence.

Although many of the studies identified rely on "global" cross-country datasets, many of these appear to focus on countries in the Global South, and movements that develop into large-scale insurgencies. For example, the NAVCO dataset used in several studies only includes movements which at some point featured "maximalist" goals (e.g., to overthrow a regime) which are uncommon in democratic contexts (Belgioioso et al., 2019). This means that the findings from these studies, although demonstrating cross-country validity, may not be fully generalisable to current liberal democratic contexts, particularly in the Global North.

Finally, this review maintained a group or meso-level approach, specifically examining the research relating to country-level social movements. Future research within the same project will examine the micro-level factors relating to individuals, and macro-level transnational influences.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

The findings of this review suggest factors that may be considered indicative of increased risk of violence within social movements and their contexts. Through considering the factors that may make a movement more "risky", practitioners may be able to identify specific movements that may be at greater risk of engaging in political violence.

Similarly, this review suggests some specific contexts and events that may affect violence. Facilitating non-violent political opportunities and reducing injustice grievances may reduce the potential for violence, while identifying specific "risky" events (e.g., elections) may facilitate the planning of preventative measures.

While there is limited and conflicting evidence to suggest what works to prevent and disrupt violence and extremism within protest and social movements, the literature is clear about what does not work, specifically, the use of repressive policing and militarised tactics. An abundance of research highlights that such tactics tend to further escalate violence.

Instead, a potentially promising avenue includes the adoption of de-escalation approaches focusing on facilitating, rather than restricting, safe protests. Some wider 'soft' and non-coercive tactics, such as involving civil society actors, appealing to moderate voices within movements, and supporting "target hardening" of specific at-risk locations/targets may be additional promising avenues. However, further research is needed to establish the effectiveness of de-escalatory and 'soft' approaches.

Overall, this review highlights some important considerations relating to movement characteristics, mobilisation contexts, and the relational impact of counter-movements and state responses. Importantly, this review also highlights the need for more evidence, particularly to establish the effectiveness of de-escalatory and non-coercive state responses.

REFERENCES

Alimi, E. Y., Demetriou, C. & Bosi, L. (2015). The dynamics of radicalization. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Almquist, Z. W., & Bagozzi, B. E. (2020). Automated text analysis for understanding radical activism: The topical agenda of the North American animal liberation movement. *Research and Politics, 7*(2), 8. *https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168020921742*

Asal, V., Legault, R., Szekely, O., & Wilkenfeld, J. (2013). Gender ideologies and forms of contentious mobilization in the Middle East. *Journal of Peace Research, 50*(3), 305–318. *https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343313476528*

Baranauskas, A. J. (2022). News media and public attitudes toward the protests of 2020: An examination of the mediating role of perceived protester violence. *Criminology and Public Policy, 21*(1), 107–123. *https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9133.12569*

Becker, J. C., Hartwich, L., & Radke, H. R. M. (2024). The effect of apparent Police power at demonstrations against right-wing populism on Protestors' resistance using a virtual reality experiment. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 18. *https://doi.org/10.1111/BJSO.12809*

Bélanger, J. J., Schumpe, B. M., Nisa, C. F., & Moyano, M. (2021). When countermessaging backfires: The role of obsessive passion in psychological reactance. *Motivation Science, 7*(1), 83–95. *https://doi.org/10.1037/mot0000206*

Belgioioso, M. (2018). Going underground: Resort to terrorism in mass mobilization dissident campaigns. *Journal of Peace Research, 55*(5), 641–655. *https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343318764795*

Belgioioso, M., Costalli, S., & Gleditsch, K. S. (2019). Better the Devil You Know? How Fringe Terrorism Can Induce an Advantage for Moderate Nonviolent Campaigns. *Terrorism and Political Violence, 33*(3), 1–20. *https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2018.1559836*

Bonneuil, N., & Auriat, N. (2000). Fifty Years of Ethnic Conflict and Cohesion: 1945-94. *Journal of Peace Research, 37*(5), 563–581. *https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343300037005002*

Bosi, L. (2012). Explaining Pathways to Armed Activism in the Provisional Irish Republican Army, 1969-1972. *Social Science History, 36*(3), 347–390. *https://doi.org/10.1215/01455532-1595390*

Bosi, Lorenzo., Demetriou, Chares., & Malthaner, Stefan. (2016). Dynamics of political violence: A process-oriented perspective on radicalization and the escalation of political conflict. In *Dynamics of Political Violence: A Process-Oriented Perspective on Radicalization and the Escalation of Political Conflict*. Routledge. *https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315578323*

Braun, R., & Koopmans, R. (2010). The diffusion of ethnic violence in Germany: The role of social similarity. *European Sociological Review, 26*(1), 111–123. *https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcp056*

Brouillette-Alarie, S., Hassan, G., Varela, W., Ousman, S., Kilinc, D., Savard, É. L., Madriaza, P., Harris-Hogan, S., McCoy, J., Rousseau, C., King, M., Venkatesh, V., Borokhovski, E., & Pickup, D. (2022). Systematic Review on the Outcomes of Primary and Secondary Prevention Programs in the Field of Violent Radicalization. *Journal for Deradicalization, 30*, 117–168.

Brown, O., Lowery, C., & Smith, L. G. E. (2022). How opposing ideological groups use online interactions to justify and mobilise collective action. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 52*(7), 1082–1110. *https://doi.org/10.1002/EJSP.2886*

Browne, B. C., Weizman, E., & Matchain, J. (2025). Unpacking the crackdown on Palestine solidarity activism in the UK in a post-7 October reality. Third World Quarterly, 1-18.

Busher, J., Harris, G., Ebner, J., Hacsek, Z., & Macklin, G. (2022). The Dynamics of Violence Escalation and Inhibition During 'Hot Periods' of Anti-Minority and Far-Right Activism. Lancaster: Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (CREST).

Caiani, M. (2019). The rise and endurance of radical right movements. *Current Sociology, 67*(6), 918–935. *https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392119868000*

Caiani, M. (2022). Between real and virtual: strategies of mobilisation of the radical right in Eastern Europe. *East European Politics, 38*(3), 331–357. *https://doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2021.1955676*

Caiani, M., della Porta, D., & Wagemann, C. (2012). *Mobilizing on the Extreme Right: Germany, Italy, and the United States*. Oxford University Press. *https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof*:oso/9780199641260.001.0001

Caiani, M., Susanszky, P., & Saridakis, N. (2024). Radical right and anti-vax protests between movements and parties: a comparative study. *Acta Politica*, 28. *https://doi.org/10.1057/s41269-024-00339-5*

Caren, N., Gaby, S., & Herrold, C. (2017). Economic breakdown and collective action. *Social Problems, 64*(1), 133–155. *https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spw030*

Çelebi, E., Adam-Troian, J., & Mahfud, Y. (2022). Positive Links Between Exposure to Police Violence, PTSD, and Depression Symptoms Among Yellow Vests Protesters in France. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 37*(5–6), 2267–2288. *https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520935863*

Chen, B., Lukito, J., & Koo, G. H. (2023). Comparing the #StopTheSteal Movement across Multiple Platforms: Differentiating Discourse on Facebook, Twitter, and Parler. *Social Media and Society, 9*(3), 13. *https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051231196879*

Chenoweth, E. (2023). The Role of Violence in Nonviolent Resistance. *Annual Review of Political Science, 26*, 55–77. *https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051421-124128*

Chernykh, S. (2014). When Do Political Parties Protest Election Results? *Comparative Political Studies, 47*(10), 1359–1383. *https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414013512597*

Christiansen, J. (2009). Christiansen, J. (2009). Four Stages of Social Movements. Birmingham, AL: EBSCO

Clarke, R. V., & Newman, G. R. (2006). *Outsmarting the terrorists*. Praeger Security International.

Corcoran, J., & Zahnow, R. (2022). Weather and crime: a systematic review of the empirical literature. *Crime Science, 11*(1), 16. *https://doi.org/10.1186/s40163-022-00179-8*

Cunningham, D. (2003). The Patterning of Repression: FBI Counterintelligence and the New Left. *Social Forces, 82*(1), 209–240. *https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2003.0079*

Cunningham, K. G., Dahl, M., & Frugé, A. (2019). Introducing the Strategies of Resistance Data Project. *Journal of Peace Research, 57*(3), 482–491. *https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343319880246*

Davidson, T., & Berezin, M. (2018). BRITAIN FIRST AND THE UK INDEPENDENCE PARTY: SOCIAL MEDIA AND MOVEMENT-PARTY DYNAMICS*. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 23*(4), 485–510. *https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-23-4-485*

De Fazio, G. (2013). The radicalization of contention in Northern Ireland, 1968-1972: A relational perspective. *Mobilization, 18*(4), 475–496. *https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.18.4.6x637u18012v4138*

della Porta, D. (2008). Research on social movements and political violence. *Qualitative Sociology, 31*(3), 221–230. *https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-008-9109-x*

della Porta, D. (2014). On violence and repression: A relational approach (The government and opposition/leonard schapiro memorial lecture, 2013). *Government and Opposition, 49*(2), 159–187. *https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2013.47*

della Porta, D. (2018). Radicalization: A Relational Perspective. *Annual Review of Political Science, 21*(Volume 21, 2018), 461–474. *https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-042716-102314*

della Porta, D., & LaFree, G. (2012). Guest Editorial: Processes of Radicalization and De-Radicalization. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence (IJCV), 6*(1), 4–10. *https://doi.org/10.4119/IJCV-2926*

della Porta, D., O'Connor, F., & Portos, M. (2019). Protest cycles and referendums for independence. closed opportunities and the path of radicalization in catalonia. *Revista Internacional de Sociologia, 77*(4), 14. *https://doi.org/10.3989/ris.2019.77.4.19.005*

Desai, R. M., Olofsgård, A., & Yousef, T. M. (2023). The middle class and the modalities of political protest: evidence from the Arab world. *Social Science Quarterly, 104*(4), 684–701. *https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.13290*

Dyrstad, K., & Hillesund, S. (2020). Explaining Support for Political Violence: Grievance and Perceived Opportunity. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 64*(9), 1724–1753. *https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002720909886*

Eady, G., Hjorth, F. K., & Dinesen, P. T. (2023). Do Violent Protests Affect Expressions of Party Identity? Evidence from the Capitol Insurrection. *American Political Science Review, 117*(3), 1151–1157. *https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055422001058*

Earl, J. (2011). Political repression: Iron fists, velvet gloves, and diffuse control. In *Annual Review of Sociology* (Vol. 37, pp. 261–284). Annual Reviews. *https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.012809.102609*

Earl, J., & Braithwaite, J. M. (2022). Layers of Political Repression: Integrating Research on Social Movement Repression. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science, 18*(Volume 18, 2022), 227–248. *https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-lawsocsci-050520-092713*

Eatwell, R. (2006). Community Cohesion and Cumulative Extremism in Contemporary Britain. *The Political Quarterly, 77*(2), 204–216. *https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-923X.2006.00763.x*

Edwards, P. (2021). The politics of nonviolent mobilization: Campaigns, competition, and social movement resources. *Journal of Peace Research, 58*(5), 945–961. *https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343320958456*

Ellefsen, R. (2018). Deepening the Explanation of Radical Flank Effects: Tracing Contingent Outcomes of Destructive Capacity. *Qualitative Sociology, 41*(1), 111–133. *https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-018-9373-3*

Ellefsen, R. (2021). The Unintended Consequences of Escalated Repression. *Mobilization, 26*(1), 87–108. *https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-26-1-87*

Ellefsen, R., & Jämte, J. (2023). The causes, content and consequences of repression: A framework for analyzing protest control in the counter-extremism era. *Social Movement Studies, 22*(4), 567–582. *https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2022.2067140*

Enos, R. D., Kaufman, A. R., & Sands, M. L. (2019). Can Violent Protest Change Local Policy Support? Evidence from the Aftermath of the 1992 Los Angeles Riot. *American Political Science Review, 113*(4), 1012–1028. *https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055419000340*

Farrer, B., & Klein, G. R. (2022). How Radical Environmental Sabotage Impacts US Elections. *Terrorism and Political Violence, 34*(2), 218–239. *https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2019.1678468*

Fox, S., & Bell, A. (2016). Urban geography and protest mobilization in Africa. *Political Geography, 53*, 54–64. *https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2016.02.004*

Gibbons, J. (2024). The Divided House: Does Racial Segregation Predict Far-Right Protest in United States Metropolitan Areas? *Race and Social Problems*, 12. *https://doi.org/10.1007/s12552-024-09424-y*

Gibson, J. L. (2024). Justifying Political Violence: African American Attitudes Toward Protests Against Police Attacks on Black People. *Political Research Quarterly*, 17. *https://doi.org/10.1177/10659129241293028*

Hillesund, S. (2022). To fight or demonstrate? Micro foundations of inequality and conflict. *Conflict Management and Peace Science, 39*(2), 166–190. *https://doi.org/10.1177/07388942211017881*

Hillesund, S. (2023). Choosing tactics: Horizontal inequalities and the risk of violent and nonviolent conflict. *Journal of Peace Research, 60*(6), 906–920. *https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433221111825*

Hillesund, S., & Østby, G. (2023). Horizontal inequalities, political violence, and nonviolent conflict mobilization: A review of the literature. *Journal of Economic Surveys, 37*(5), 1589–1635. *https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12539*

Ives, B., & Lewis, J. S. (2020). From Rallies to Riots: Why Some Protests Become Violent. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 64*(5), 958–986. *https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002719887491*

Jackson, J., Huq, A. Z., Bradford, B., & Tyler, T. R. (2013). Monopolizing force? Police legitimacy and public attitudes toward the acceptability of violence. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, 19*(4), 479–497. *https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033852*

Jämte, J., & Ellefsen, R. (2020). The consequences of soft repression. *Mobilization, 25*(3), 383–404. *https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-25-3-383*

Jämte, J., Lundstedt, M., & Wennerhag, M. (2024). When Do Radical Flanks Use Violence? Conditions for Violent Protest in Radical Left-Libertarian Activism in Sweden, 1997–2016. *Terrorism and Political Violence, 36*(5), 679–698. *https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2023.2189966*

Johnson, S. D., Tilley, N., & Bowers, K. J. (2015). Introducing EMMIE: an evidence rating scale to encourage mixed-method crime prevention synthesis reviews. *Journal of Experimental Criminology, 11*(3), 459–473. *https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-015-9238-7*

Jung, J. K. (2010). Disentangling protest cycles: An event-history analysis of new social movements in Western Europe. *Mobilization, 15*(1), 25–44. *https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.15.1.86260543m3110705*

Karampampas, S., Temple, L., & Grasso, M. (2020). Violent political action during the European economic crisis: an empirical investigation of four theoretical paradigms from social movement research. *Comparative European Politics, 18*(3), 420–436. *https://doi.org/10.1057/s41295-019-00191-4*

Kasimov, A., Johnston, R., & Heer, T. (2023). "Pepe the frog, the greedy merchant and #stopthesteal": A comparative study of discursive and memetic communication on Twitter and 4chan/pol during the insurrection on the US Capitol. *New Media & Society*, 14614448231172964. *https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448231172963*

Kleiner, T. M. (2018). Public opinion polarisation and protest behaviour. *European Journal of Political Research, 57*(4), 941–962. *https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12260*

Koca, M. (2024). Networked social movements and radicalisation: yellow vests' cross-ideological horizon for underrepresented groups. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies, 32*(3), 643–657. *https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2023.2177839*

Kundnani, A., & Hayes, B. (2018). The globalisation of Countering Violent Extremism policies: Undermining human rights, instrumentalising civil society. In *Transnational Institute*.

Lamprianou, I., & Ellinas, A. A. (2017). Why Greeks rebel: Re-examining conventional and radical political action. *Acta Politica, 52*(1), 85–109. *https://doi.org/10.1057/s41269-016-0003-3*

Leach, C. W., Ferguson, S. T., & Teixeira, C. P. (2024). Protest now: A systems view of 21st century movements. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 27*(5), 1188–1206. *https://doi.org/10.1177/13684302241245660*

Lösel, F., King, S., Bender, D., & Jugl, I. (2018). Protective Factors Against Extremism and Violent Radicalization: A Systematic Review of Research. *International Journal of Developmental Sciences, 12*(1–2), 89–102. *https://doi.org/10.3233/DEV-170241*

Lygren, S., & Ravndal, J. A. (2023). Why Reciprocal Intergroup Radicalisation Happened between Islamists and Anti-Islamists in Britain but Not in Norway. *Terrorism and Political Violence, 35*(2), 390–408. *https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2021.1933957*

Maher, T. V., Seguin, C., & Zhang, Y. (2024). The Racial Limits of Disruption: How Race and Tactics Influence Social Movement Organization Testimony before Congress, 1960–1995. *Social Forces, 103*(1), 202–222. *https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soae073*

Malthaner, S. (2023). Social movement theory and research on radicalisation. In *The Routledge Handbook on Radicalisation and Countering Radicalisation* (pp. 99–112). Routledge.

Marsden, S., Malkki, L., & Busher, J. (2023). Introduction. In J. Busher, L. Malkki, & S. Marsden (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook on Radicalisation and Countering Radicalisation* (pp. 1–16). Routledge. *https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003035848-1*

McNeil-Willson, R. (2022). Counter-terrorism and the repression of Islamic activism: Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain and Denmark. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies, 30*(2), 220–235. *https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2021.1989387*

Microsoft. (2024). *Copilot (March 2023 Version) [Large Language Model].*

Morgan, A., Cubitt, T., & Voce, I. (2024). *Participation in Anti-authority Protests and Vulnerability to Radicalisation.* Australian Institute of Criminology.

Morrow, E. A., & Meadowcroft, J. (2019). The Rise and Fall of the English Defence League: Self-Governance, Marginal Members and the Far Right. *Political Studies, 67*(3), 539–556. *https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321718777907*

Moskalenko, S. (2023). The Evolution of Hybrid Radicalization: From Small Group to Mass Phenomenon. In *Routledge Handbook of Transnational Terrorism* (pp. 132–142). Taylor and Francis. *https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003326373-14*

Müller-Crepon, C., & Hunziker, P. (2018). New spatial data on ethnicity: Introducing SIDE. *Journal of Peace Research, 55*(5), 687–698. *https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343318764254*

Nilsson, M. (2022). "Aren't You Tired of Talking?"–Priming Men and Women into Violence through Gateway Organizations. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 22. *https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2022.2123217*

Ortiz, I., Burke, S., Berrada, M., & Saenz Cortés, H. (2022). An Analysis of World Protests 2006–2020. *World Protests*, 13–81. *https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-88513-7_2*

Ouzzani, M., Hammady, H., Fedorowicz, Z., & Elmagarmid, A. (2016). Rayyan—a web and mobile app for systematic reviews. *Systematic Reviews, 5*(1), 210. *https://doi.org/10.1186/s13643-016-0384-4*

Pearson, E. (2023). Gendered Reflections? Extremism in the UK's Radical Right and al-Muhajiroun Networks. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 46*(4), 489–512. *https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2020.1759270*

Piazza, J. A. (2022). Sore Losers: Does Terrorism and Approval of Terrorism Increase in Democracies When Election Losers Refuse to Accept Election Results? *Political Research Quarterly, 75*(4), 1201–1215. *https://doi.org/10.1177/10659129211054451*

Pridemore, W. A., & Freilich, J. D. (2007). The impact of state laws protecting abortion clinics and reproductive rights on crimes against abortion providers: Deterrence, backlash, or neither? *Law and Human Behavior, 31*(6), 611–627. *https://doi.org/10.1007/s10979-006-9078-0*

Reynolds-Stenson, H., & Earl, J. (2018). Clashes of Conscience: Explaining Counterdemonstration at Protests. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 23*(3), 263–284. *https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-23-3-263*

RezaeeDaryakenari, B. (2021). The dilemma of violence. *Political Research Exchange, 3*(1). *https://doi.org/10.1080/2474736X.2021.1910048*

Rørbæk, L. L. (2019). Ethnic exclusion and civil resistance campaigns: Opting for nonviolent or violent tactics? *Terrorism and Political Violence, 31*(3), 475–493. *https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2016.1233872*

Ryckman, K. C. (2019). A Turn to Violence: The Escalation of Nonviolent Movements. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 64*(2–3), 318–343. *https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002719861707*Saxton, G., & Benson, M. (2008). Means, motives and opportunities in ethno-nationalist mobilization. *International Interactions, 34*(1), 53–83. *https://doi.org/10.1080/03050620701883546*

Setter, D., & Nepstad, S. E. (2022). How Social Movements Influence Public Opinion on Political Violence: Attitude Shifts in the Wake of the George Floyd Protests. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 27*(4), 429–444. *https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671x-27-4-429*

Simi, P., Futrell, R., & Burston, A. (2024). How Threat Mobilizes the Resurgence and Persistence of US White Supremacist Activism: The 1980s to the Present. *Annual Review of Sociology, 50*(1), 297–317. *https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-031021-112151*

Sutton, J., Butcher, C. R., & Svensson, I. (2014). Explaining political jiu-jitsu: Institution-building and the outcomes of regime violence against unarmed protests. *Journal of Peace Research, 51*(5), 559–573. *https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343314531004*

Svensson, I., Schaftenaar, S., & Allansson, M. (2022). Violent Political Protest: Introducing a New Uppsala Conflict Data Program Data Set on Organized Violence, 1989-2019. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 66*(9), 1703–1730. *https://doi.org/10.1177/00220027221109791*

Tarrow, S. (2011). *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 3rd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Thomson, H., Bahgat, K., Urdal, H., & Buhaug, H. (2023). Urban Social Disorder 3.0: A global, city-level event dataset of political mobilization and disorder. *Journal of Peace Research, 60*(3), 521–531. *https://doi.org/10.1177/00223433221082991*

Thomson, H., Buhaug, H., Urdal, H., & Rosvold, E. (2021). Group organization, elections and urban political mobilization in the developing world. *Democratization, 28*(8), 1525–1544. *https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2021.1944117*

Thurber, C. (2019). Social Ties and the Strategy of Civil Resistance. *International Studies Quarterly*, *63*(4), 974–986. *https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqz049*

Törnberg, A., Wahlström, M., Lundstedt, M., & Ekbrand, H. (2023). Local Conditions for Anti-immigrant Violence: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) of Asylum Housing Attacks in Sweden. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *35*(6), 1353–1372. *https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2022.2042268*

Van Dyke, N., Dodson, K., Almeida, P., & Novoa, J. (2024). Social Movement Partyism and Congressional Opposition to Certifying the 2020 Presidential Election Results in the United States. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 21. *https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642241267933*

Vüllers, J., & Hellmeier, S. (2022). Does counter-mobilization contain right-wing populist movements? Evidence from Germany. *European Journal of Political Research*, *61*(1), 21–45. *https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12439*

Wagoner, J. A., Rinella, M. J., & Barreto, N. B. (2021). "It was rigged": Different types of identification predict activism and radicalism in the U.S. 2020 election. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, *21*(1), 189–209. *https://doi.org/10.1111/asap.12270*

Wong, M. Y. H. (2022). Income Inequality and Political Participation in Asia. *Asian Survey*, *62*(4), 558–599. *https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2022.1629072*

Zeller, M. C. (2021). Patterns of Demobilization: A Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) of Far-Right Demonstration Campaigns. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, *26*(3), 267–284. *https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-26-3-267*

Zeller, M. C. (2022). Demobilising far-right demonstration campaigns: Coercive counter-mobilisation, state social control, and the demobilisation of the Hess Gedenkmarsch campaign. *Social Movement Studies*, *21*(3), 372–390. *https://doi.org/10.1080/14742837.2021.1889493*

Zhang, T. H. (2016). Weather effects on social movements: Evidence from Washington, D.C., and New York City, 1960-95. *Weather, Climate, and Society*, *8*(3), 299–311. *https://doi.org/10.1175/WCAS-D-15-0072.1*

Zhukov, Y. M. (2023). Repression Works (Just Not in Moderation). *Comparative Political Studies*, *56*(11), 1663–1694. *https://doi.org/10.1177/00104140231152778*

Zwerman, G., & Steinhoff, P. (2012). The remains of the movement: The role of legal support networks in leaving violence while sustaining movement identity. *Mobilization*, *17*(1), 67–84. *https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.17.1.b56l107q2n175778*

Zwerman, G., Steinhoff, P., & della Porta, D. (2000). Disappearing Social Movements: Clandestinity in The Cycle of new Left Protest in The U.S., Japan, Germany, and Italy. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, *5*(1), 85–104. *https://doi.org/10.17813/maiq.5.1.0w068105721660n0*

For more information on CREST
and other CREST resources, visit
www.crestresearch.ac.uk

CREST
CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND
EVIDENCE ON SECURITY THREATS

25-006-02