CREST Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats

Individual-Level Perspectives on Mobilisation, Protest and Radicalisation:

A Rapid Evidence Assessment

FULL REPORT

JULY 2025

ANNE PETERSCHECK | UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

DR SARAH MARSDEN | UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

DR NADINE SALMAN | UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

JULY 2025

Individual-Level Perspectives on Mobilisation, Protest and Radicalisation:

A Rapid Evidence Assessment

FULL REPORT

Anne Peterscheck, Sarah Marsden, Nadine Salman

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 focuses on individual-level perspectives that examine 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.

AIMS

The review seeks to address the following primary research questions:

1. What individual-level mechanisms are linked to violence, radicalisation, and terrorism in social movements?
2. What individual-level factors constrain the potential for violence, radicalisation, and terrorism in social movements?
3. How do group identities and intergroup relations influence the potential for violence, radicalisation, and terrorism in social movements?
4. What contextual factors influence the individual towards violence, radicalisation, and terrorism within social movements?

METHODOLOGY

This research uses 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

The REA identified several potential individual-level drivers for violent and extremist escalations within social movements including emotional, cognitive, psychological, group, and institutional factors.

Key findings identified in this review are summarised in separate tables 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; 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.[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.

These tables therefore highlight the factors identified in the review process, their overall effects on violence and/or extremism, any identified mechanisms and/or moderators, and the strength of the evidence from the literature base. These represent general trends in the research rather than firm indicators of individual-level processes and their impact on protests.

INDIVIDUAL PROCESSES

Research on individual processes examines the literature that informs how and why people engage in protest which are, or become violent. It addresses emotional, cognitive, and psychological processes. While individual-level processes provide valuable insights into the psychological drivers of protests and radicalisation, societal, structural, and contextual factors can play a critical role in shaping collective action. These are covered in two accompanying reports that foreground the processes at work in social movements and transnational influences on protest and political violence.

EMOTIONAL PROCESSES

Research on emotional processes shows how different emotional appraisals shape collective action. It also shows how emotional reactivity and emotional regulation play a role in driving or inhibiting extreme political action.

Table 1 summarises the key factors identified in relation to emotional appraisals and their effect on violence. Overall, anger appears to be a strong motivator for collective action but its link to violence yields mixed results and seems to be context dependent. Some studies found that it motivates violence, while other studies argue that anger fosters constructive engagement. Disgust and contempt are more consistently associated with an increase in violence, through exclusionary mechanisms and psychological distancing, although this is based on research on specific contexts and does not offer more comparative insights into the role of contempt across settings. In contrast, fear and sadness tend to decrease violence, although fear can sometimes lead to violent action when fuelled by solidarity and humanitarian concerns. Emotional reactivity increases, while emotional regulation decreases support for violent actions.

Factor	Effect on violence/extremism	Mechanisms/Moderators	Strength of evidence
Anger	Mixed	Motivates/legitimises violence; fosters constructive engagement	Moderate overall; stronger for decrease of violence
Disgust	Mixed	Social exclusion/dehumanisation; withdrawal	Moderate overall; stronger for increase of violence
Contempt	Increase	Psychological distancing; historical grievances	Strong
Fear	Mixed	Compliance; solidarity; humanitarian concerns	Moderate
Sadness	Decrease/Neutral	Withdrawal; passivity	Moderate
Emotional reactivity	Increase	Impulsivity; sensation-seeking; intensity and duration of emotion; personality	Moderate
Emotional regulation	Decrease	Reappraisal	Moderate

Table 1. Summary of the factors related to emotional processes and their impact.

COGNITIVE PROCESSES

Research shows that cognitive processes such as information gathering, exposure to misinformation, cognitive rigidity, decision-making styles, and power distance, can influence support for political violence.

Table 2 summarises the key factors identified in relation to cognitive processes and their effect on violence. Overall, the research indicates that individuals with low political knowledge, and who are exposed to misinformation and conspiracy theories are more likely to support violent actions. Similarly, cognitive rigidity is associated with greater endorsement of violent actions; so is higher acceptance of power distance as these individuals tend to avoid lawful protests, potentially due to the suppression of open dissent. Conversely, systematic decision-making processes, characterised by engagement with a problem, the evaluation of risks, and the analysis of costs and benefits can act as a protective factor, decreasing the propensity for violence.

Factor	Effect on violence/extremism	Mechanisms/Moderators	Strength of evidence
Information gathering	Increase	Low political knowledge; type of source (e.g. WhatsApp)	Strong
Exposure to misinformation and conspiracy theories	Increase	Grievance; distrust; repres-sion; movement participation; social media	Strong
Cognitive rigidity	Increase	Level of ideological identification	Strong
Systematic decision-making	Decrease	Engagement with problem; evaluating risks; analysis of costs and benefits	Moderate
Higher power distance	Increase	Suppression of open dissent; underlying tensions	Strong

Table 2. Summary of the factors related to cognitive processes and their impact.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES

Psychological processes, covering emotional and cognitive elements, which are often closely linked, can contribute to support for violent action.

Table 3 summarises the key psychological factors and their effect on violence. Overall, research shows that certain personality traits such as those associated with the Dark Tetrad (Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy, and sadism) are linked to increased support for violent action. Low trust in institutions and negative attitudes towards authority are also related to increased support for violent action. Depression can increase the support for violent action because of the cognitive distortions associated with depression. Additionally, significance loss triggered by feelings of anomia, personal deprivation, economic hardship and social exclusion is associated with increased support for violence.

Factor	Effect on violence/extremism	Mechanisms/Moderators	Strength of evidence
Personality traits	Increase	Dark tetrad; obsessive passion; grudges	Very Strong
Low trust in institutions	Increase	Institutional unresponsiveness; crisis-driven behaviour	Strong
Negative attitude towards authority	Increase	Political interest; goal orientation	Moderate
Depression	Increase	Cognitive distortions; sense of alienation	Moderate
Significance loss	Increase	Anomia; personal deprivation; economic hardship; social exclusion; obsessive passion; ideological commitment	Strong
Moral conviction	Increase	Moralisation; moral convergence; feelings of unity	Strong

Table 3. Summary of the factors related to psychological processes and their impact.

INTERGROUP RELATIONS AND IDENTITIES

Research on intergroup relations and their impact on individuals highlights how they shape the reasons behind individuals' engagement in protests which are or become violent. It addresses two broad categories of intergroup relations. The first is collective identities, an overarching term encompassing group identification, identity fusion, and related concepts. The second category is state responses and their impact on identities.

COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES

Collective identities have the potential to drive violent and nonviolent collective actions. Group dynamics not only underpin political mobilisation but also shape the nature of protest.

Table 4 summarises the key factors identified in relation to collective identities and their effect on violence. Overall, group identification increases participation in both non-violent and violent collective action. Fringe groups are associated with increased support for violent actions, including violent protest; a greater willingness to wish harm upon members of opposing political parties; and interpersonal violence against political adversaries. Identity fusion, shared grievances, shared norms, and group emotions increase the potential for violence, whereas politicised collective identity, discrimination, and perceived strength of the group have mixed effects on violence.

Factor	Effect on violence/extremism	Mechanisms/Moderators	Strength of evidence
Group identification	Increase	Social media; politicised identity; collective experience	Strong
Fringe groups	Increase	Social approval of violence; rejection of institutional routes and political norms	Strong
Identity fusion	Increase	Group commitment heightened autonomic arousal; moral acceptability of violence	Very Strong
Politicised collective identities	Mixed	Collective angst; threat perception	Moderate
Discrimination	Mixed	Targeted outgroup; relative deprivation	Moderate
Shared grievances	Increase	Absence of formal leadership; decentralisation	Weak
Shared norms	Increase	Disinhibition; normalisation of violence	Moderate
Perceived effectiveness and strength of group	Increase (except when group seen as weak which leads to fear and withdrawal)	Instrumental success; lack of peaceful alternatives; anger; fear	Strong
Group emotions	Increase	Group identification; group membership; emotion-focused pathway; problem-focused pathway	Strong

Table 4. Summary of the factors related to collective identities and their impact.

STATE RESPONSES AND THEIR IMPACT ON IDENTITIES

State responses such as repression and violence by law enforcement has an impact on identities and can fuel further dissent and violent protest.

Table 5 summarises the key factors identified in relation to state responses and their impact on identities and violence. Overall, the use of violence by law enforcement, repression against movement leaders, and a perceived lack of procedural justice increase the likelihood of violence. Additionally, group identification intensifies the effects of state repression, increasing the potential for violence.

Factor	Effect on violence/extremism	Mechanisms/Moderators	Strength of evidence
Use of violence by law enforcement	Increase	Repression backfire; tyrannical peace; framing; historical antagonism	Strong
Repression against movement leaders	Mixed	Leadership disruption	Strong
Impact of state re-pression on group identification	Increase	Altruistic behaviours; emotional bonds; segregation; identity changes	Strong
Perceived lack of procedural justice	Increase	Resentment; antagonism; perceived lack of proportionality	Strong

Table 5. Summary of factors related to state responses and their impact.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this report highlight a range of considerations relating to individual-level processes, such as emotions and identity, and their relationship to violence. Individual-level processes do not exist in a vacuum however, they are influenced by their cultural and political contexts, including state responses. The findings from the report highlight the importance of thoughtful policy and practice even in charged environments.

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

1. Avoid triggering or intensifying emotional reactions through the use of violence or dismissive rhetoric.
2. Emotion-sensitive communication perspectives can mitigate some of the risk of violence.
3. Avoid policing practices which segregate or isolate groups.
4. Avoid excessive or indiscriminate state repression and police violence.
5. Prioritise procedural justice in protest contexts.
6. Acknowledge protesters' grievances and perspectives.
7. Maximise opportunities for nonviolent and meaningful political participation.
8. Enhance institutional responsiveness and transparency to strengthen trust and reduce the potential for violent forms of protests.

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 individual and group mobilisation and radicalisation, and the processes that inform escalation towards, and de-escalation from violence.

The report offers a rapid evidence assessment for literature focused on individual-level perspectives. It examines the research on 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 individual-level mechanisms as well as group dynamics that have an impact on the individual, including emotional, cognitive, and psychological processes, and intergroup relations and their influence on individuals, such as collective identities and the impact of state reactions on individual identities.

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 counterprotest (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, 2018; Leach et al., 2024)

The adoption of the rapid evidence assessment approach (REA) including insights from social identity theory, the wider literature on individual-level dynamics, and the literature on radicalisation and violent extremism enables the identification and synthesis of insights from these different but increasingly converging fields (Bosi et al., 2016; Malthaner, 2023). Integrating individual-level mechanisms enables us to understand emotional, cognitive, and psychological factors that drive individuals towards mobilisation and radicalisation (Becker & Tausch, 2015; Zmigrod & Goldenberg, 2021). It also allows us to understand the influence of groups on individuals, and how social and political dynamics influence individual mobilisation and radicalisation (Klandermans, 2014). Insights from the literature on radicalisation, violent extremism, and terrorism can provide further insights into existing knowledge on pathways to radicalisation, which are essential for understanding and preventing the escalation from peaceful to violent mobilisation (Bhui et al., 2016).

Bringing the bodies of research on individual-level dynamics in 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). This definition can accommodate violence as one method in a wider repertoire of contention available to movements and groups. By contextualising violence in the structural and relational settings it emerges from, 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.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Primary research questions:

1. What individual-level mechanisms are linked to violence, radicalisation, and terrorism in social movements?

2. What individual-level factors constrain the potential for violence, radicalisation, and terrorism in social movements?

3. How do group identities and intergroup relations influence the potential for violence, radicalisation, and terrorism in social movements?

4. What contextual factors influence the individual towards violence, radicalisation, and terrorism within social movements?

METHODOLOGY

This section provides an overview of the methodology used to undertake the three REAs that make up this project. The research adopts a semi-systematic approach, aiming to synthesise knowledge on specific 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. Forward and backward citation searches of key documents were subsequently conducted to identify further relevant documents. Documents were allocated across the three REAs based on their titles and abstracts.

SEARCH STRATEGY

Development of search terms

The search terms are guided by a) known key papers, and b) the researchers' subject matter knowledge. The search terms are outlined in Table 1. Prior to 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*		Mobilisation
Far right		Activism
Right wing		Collective action
Left wing		
Islamist		
Politic* violen*		

Note: First row indicates Boolean operators used between each search term. Asterisks (*) are used as wildcards to search for words that start with the same letters (e.g., radicalised, radicalised, radicalisation). Exact operators may vary between databases searched.

Table 6. 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.

Forward and Backward Citations

After the initial search and screening, Google Scholar was used to identify additional papers that cited key papers identified by the research team (forward search). The reference lists of key papers were also manually scanned for additional relevant papers (backward search).

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 protesters), 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:

7. **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).

8. **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 both researchers to ensure consistency in inclusion decisions.

9. **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.

10. **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.

RESULT

A total of 90 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, and key findings.

SYNTHESIS AND THEMATIC ANALYSIS

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

The findings discuss two broad sets of influences. The first focuses on individual-level dynamics, including emotional, cognitive, and psychological processes. The second focuses on intergroup relations and their impact on identities. The discussion looks at both collective identities and their impact on violent and nonviolent mobilisation, as well as state repression's impact on identities, which in turn influence the types of violence and contention seen in protest contexts.

INDIVIDUAL PROCESSES

This section examines the literature on individual-level mechanisms or processes that inform how and why people engage in protest which are or become violent. It highlights emotional, psychological and cognitive factors, including emotional appraisals, emotional regulation, decision-making styles, personality traits, and significance loss, and their roles in shaping individual willingness to participate in collective action, including violent activism. While individual-level processes provide valuable insights into the psychological drivers of protest and radicalisation, societal, structural, and contextual factors also play a critical role in shaping collective action and are mentioned where appropriate.

EMOTIONAL PROCESSES

This subsection examines how different emotional appraisals such as anger, disgust, contempt, fear, and sadness shape collective action. This section also explores emotional reactivity and emotional regulation and their potential in driving extreme political action. The research illustrates the complex and context dependent nature of emotions on protest dynamics. This section therefore asks:

- How do emotional appraisals shape individuals' support for, engagement in, and justification for violent and nonviolent collective action?
- How does emotional reactivity contribute to the endorsement of violent political action and support for violence in protest contexts?
- How does emotional regulation influence engagement in violent political action and support for violence in protest contexts?

Key points

1. Different emotions play different roles in the context of protest.
2. Anger is recognised as a motivational factor for protest and collective action, though its role in violent protest remains debated. Some studies suggest it legitimises violence, while other studies argue it drives constructive action.
3. Research on disgust remains mixed. Some studies associate disgust with intensified violence while others associate it with lower levels of aggression.
4. Contempt is often associated with extreme protest actions.
5. While fear often suppresses dissent it can also drive violent protest under certain conditions.
6. Sadness is described as an "emotion of inaction." It appears to inhibit violent behaviour and radicalisation, and seems to weaken commitment to protest.

7. Emotional reactivity traits, such as impulsivity and sensation seeking, shape extreme political attitudes and potential support for violence.

8. The ability of an individual to regulate their emotions hinders political action.

EMOTIONAL APPRAISALS

A prevalent theme throughout the literature is the role of individuals' emotional appraisals. The research shows that emotions play a complex role in shaping collective actions. Emotions like anger, disgust, contempt, fear, and sadness influence decisions to engage in nonviolent or violent protest tactics, but their effects are often context dependent.

Anger. Research has shown that anger can drive collective action (Benski, 2010; Nerb & Spada, 2001). However, the role of anger in inciting violence during protest remains underexplored, and existing findings are inconclusive. Some scholars argue that anger can provoke hostile and aggressive behaviours, such as offending, confronting, or degrading perceived threats (Mackie et al., 2000). In this context, Zlobina and Vazquez (2018) examine the perception and justification of different forms of collective action during protests in Spain between 2011 and 2013. They found that anger played a central role in legitimising all forms of protest, including violent ones. Specifically, they suggest that anger functions as a motivational force, pushing individuals toward more extreme protest tactics. Their study is limited due to their narrow geographical and temporal scope.

However, not all research aligns with this view. Some studies argue that anger is an effective emotion that fosters reconciliation. For instance, Tausch et al. (2011) conducted surveys across diverse contexts such as student protests in Germany, responses of Indian Muslims to group disadvantage, and British Muslims' reactions to foreign policy. Their findings indicate that while anger is a powerful motivator for normative collective actions, such as demonstrations and petitions, it does not correlate with violent behaviour during protests. The authors propose that anger can be seen as a constructive emotion, serving as a catalyst for positive change and motivating individuals to address perceived injustices (Averill, 1983; Tausch et al., 2011; Weber, 2004). Among the studies reviewed, Tausch et al. (2011) offer the more robust empirical contribution due to their comparative, cross-cultural design and use of survey data across diverse protest contexts.

Disgust. Research on disgust and its role in violence presents mixed findings. Theoretically, disgust is often framed as an exclusionary emotion as it involves sentiments that condemn and belittle others (Roseman, 1994, 1996, as cited in Mackie et al., 2000). Unlike anger, disgust targets the moral character of people, not just their actions: "anger impels people to seek changes in “bad” acts, while disgust impels people to seek the elimination of “bad” persons" (Zhu et al., 2022, p. 544, citing Matsumoto et al., 2012). In this way, disgust is more closely tied to dehumanisation of others. There is also an element of revulsion or fear of contamination.

Zhu et al. (2022) provide compelling empirical evidence to support the idea that disgust is a strong predictor of support for violence. Similarly, Tausch et al. (2011) and Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans (2017) report that disgust can be a strong motivator for endorsing violence. Zhu et al. (2022) and Tausch et al. (2011) provide the most convincing evidence to the relationship between disgust and violence.

In contrast, research on more general violent behaviours finds that individuals with a disgust sensitivity exhibit lower levels of aggression (Pond Jr et al., 2012). Here, disgust is associated with avoidance behaviours, meaning that individuals who are more sensitive to disgust are more likely to withdraw from aggressive situations and therefore exhibit less aggressive behaviour

Contempt. Tausch et al. (2011) describe contempt as an emotion that involves psychological distancing and a lack of reconciliatory intentions, unlike anger where reconciliation is desired. Research finds that contempt is positively associated with violence (Cervone et al.,

2024). While anger motivates more constructive and normative actions, contempt is more strongly associated with violent actions, such as property damage and interpersonal violence.

For instance, research on the rise of political activism among a small minority of British Muslim driven by social justice concerns and opposition to British foreign policies such as the 2003 Iraq War and the broader "War on Terror" found that feelings of contempt were positively associated with support for more extreme forms of protest (Tausch et al., 2011). Specifically, British Muslims who felt contempt in response to British foreign policy were more likely to support violence against both military and civilian targets.

Fear. Fear is commonly seen as a key factor encouraging compliance with laws and social norms, lowering the likelihood of violent behaviours (as cited in Ayanian et al., 2021; Klandermans et al., 2008; Mackie et al., 2000; Van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013; as cited in Zhu et al., 2022).

While the research points to fear as a debilitating emotion that supresses opposition and curbs dissent, there is also research that shows that those experiencing fear may be more likely to support violent protest. For instance, Nikolayenko (2022) examines the emotional dynamics that fuelled mass protests in Belarus following the 2020 presidential elections. The research traced a progression of emotions which led to mobilisation: the initial moral shock regarding the electoral fraud evolved into moral indignation, culminating in a collective loss of fear that empowered citizens to overcome apprehension about repression and participate in protests through feelings of unity and solidarity.

Ditrich and Sassenberg (2024) offer a more nuanced view on fear by examining German's emotions and their readiness to protest in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. They show that fear had different effects over time. Days after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, higher fear was linked to greater participation in protests advocating for humanitarian aid for Ukraine, while one year later higher fear was negatively correlated with protests aimed at criticising Western governments, meaning that fearful individuals were less likely to mobilise. Instead, fearful individuals showed higher interest in mobilising for protests aimed for peace and negotiation, and lower interest in mobilising for protests aimed at supporting Ukraine.

Fear therefore seems to have both an enabling and constraining effect on protest mobilisation. Ditrich and Sassenberg (2024) explain this by distinguishing fear as a psychological mechanism to threat as the perception of external danger. For instance, individuals were more likely to support humanitarian efforts if their fear was based on concerns for Ukrainian lives, whereas individuals were more likely to mobilise for peace negotiations if their fear was based on concerns about war escalation to NATO countries.

Sadness. Drawing on experimental findings, Lutz and Krahé (2018) argue that sadness can counteract anger-related impulses and inhibit aggression driven by anger. In the context of the Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement in Hong Kong, Zhu et al. (2022) found that sadness did not have a positive influence on the radicalisation process of protesters. The authors argue that sadness is an "emotion of inaction that does not substantively influence individual opinions about the use of violence."

Box 1: Case study
Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement in Hong Kong

Zhu et al. (2022) examined the role of individual emotions in endorsing violence in the context of the Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement in Hong Kong. This is a particularly interesting case because for the past two decades, protests in Hong Kong have been largely characterised by restraint, reflecting a deeply ingrained culture that values public order and adherence to the rule of law.

The Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement marked a significant shift in public attitudes towards violence (Zhu et al., 2022). The authors found that anger, disgust, contempt, and fear had significant positive influences on the radicalisation process of the protesters. Disgust was the most significant predictor of radicalisation, meaning as an individual's feelings of disgust intensified, so did their support for violence. Sadness was the only emotion that did not have a significantly positive influence on the radicalisation process of the Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill protesters.

Emotional reactivity

Emotional reactivity refers both to the time it takes an individual to settle back to their baseline of arousal after having experienced an emotion, and the intensity of that emotional experience (Nock et al., 2008). Research emphasises the role of emotional reactivity in shaping extreme political attitudes and potential support for violence. For instance, Zmigrod and Goldenberg (2021) found that two personality traits linked to emotional reactivity were associated with extreme pro-group attitudes: sensation-seeking and impulsivity. They found that both could facilitate readiness for extreme political action. Impulsivity involved emotionally driven actions that were poorly planned, risky, or inappropriate. Elevated impulsivity was associated with support for violence, suggesting that an individual's tendency to seek intense stimulation may encourage the pursuit of extreme experiences such as violence. The intensity, as well as the duration of emotional arousals appears to influence individuals' readiness to engage in violent political action.

Emotional regulation

Research on emotional regulation tends to focus on group-level processes (e.g., Goldenberg et al., 2016) and there are few studies that explore how individual-level tendencies around emotional regulation are associated with violent political actions (Zmigrod & Goldenberg, 2021). Research focusing on individual processes shows that the ability to regulate emotions hinders political action (volunteering, protesting, donating, contacting representatives, etc.). Reappraisal, for instance, is a strategy that entails altering one's perspective on a situation by reframing it as less severe or as having unexpected benefits (Ford et al., 2019). Ford et al. (2019) found that during the 2016 US presidential elections, Clinton voters who employed reappraisal to regulate their emotions following Trump's victory were less likely to engage in political action compared to those who did not use reappraisals.

COGNITIVE PROCESSES

This subsection considers the cognitive processes that influence political violence. It focuses on information gathering, exposure to misinformation, cognitive rigidity, decision-making styles, and power distance. More specifically, this section asks:

- How information gathering, whether through platforms like WhatsApp, exposure to misinformation, or counter-messaging affect the likelihood of engaging in violent or reactionary collective actions?

- How do cognitive rigidity, decision-making styles, and acceptance of power distance contribute to the endorsement of violent collective actions?

Key points:

1. Individuals with less-nuanced political views are more likely to support violent protest.
2. Exposure to misinformation is associated with collective action, especially when tied to a specific goal.
3. Adherence to conspiracy beliefs can be a consequence of engagement in a movement as well as a cause of it.
4. Counter messaging can backfire, especially among those with rigid ideological commitments.
5. Cognitive rigidity is linked to ideological extremism and support for violence, regardless of political ideology.
6. Impulsive decision-making increases support for political violence, regardless of political ideology.
7. Acceptance of hierarchical structures can drive political action.

Information gathering and exposure

Information gathering and sharing. Research shows that individuals with less nuanced political views, and who are less knowledgeable about politics are more likely to support violent protest (Vergani et al., 2017). In the online realm, de Zúñiga and Goyanes (2023) found that using WhatsApp for news was linked to lower levels of political knowledge. Political knowledge was assessed using an eight-question survey covering topics such as current events, how the U.S. government works, and key constitutional rules. Politically knowledgeable individuals were less likely to engage in violent collective actions, suggesting that political knowledge stabilises public grievances.

de Zúñiga and Goyanes (2023) also found a correlation between consuming news on WhatsApp and participating in illegal political protests. WhatsApp allows for rapid and widespread sharing of correct and incorrect information, and has the potential to mobilise individuals into illegal and violent protest. Moreover, WhatsApp has the potential to contribute to polarisation as individuals are exposed to misleading narratives and misinformation campaigns, in turn contributing to more extreme forms of protests. These findings highlight the importance of media and digital literacy, as well as encouraging the promotion of critical engagement with news sources.

Research shows that online platforms can also be used to keep the peace. For instance, during the Gezi Park protests in 2013, Twitter became a tool which helped to safeguard the nonviolent nature of the protests. Activists used Twitter to flag individuals who were attempting to provoke violence and undermine the intended peaceful nature of the movement, in turn creating a deterrent effect and encouraging restraint. This real-time online monitoring helped maintain the movement's legitimacy and prevented violent escalation (Demir et al., 2020).

Exposure to misinformation and conspiracy theories. Research shows that individuals who believe in conspiracy theories are more likely to support political violence (Piazza, 2022; Uscinski et al., 2022; Vegetti & Littvay, 2022). For instance, Thomas et al. (2024) explored how misinformation (labelled as misbelief in their study) impact individuals' commitment to reactionary collective action aimed at opposing change and restoring a former status quo. Misinformation was associated with reactionary collective action, such as anti-lockdown protest and anti-election protests. Aligning with research by van Prooijen and Douglas (2018), Thomas et al. (2024) argue that "misbeliefs may not be associated with political engagement in the abstract but are likely to foster support for movements with discrete goals aligned with the specific misbeliefs." Reactionary collective action therefore seems to increase when linked to specific goals tied to the content of the misinformation, rather than driving political engagement more generally.

Wagner-Egger et al. (2022) examined the relationship between economic and social factors, and participation in the Yellow Vests movement, using Structural Equation Modelling to analyse potential causes and consequences of adhesion to the movement. The authors propose that adherence to conspiracy theories is more likely to be a consequence of engagement in the movement, rather than a cause of it. For instance, engagement with the Yellow Vests movement may have amplified conspiracy beliefs due to protesters' reliance on social media which circulated conspiracy theories. Moreover, police repression of the Yellow Vests resulted in casualties among the protesters that may have reinforced the belief that authorities were actively working to supress the movement, giving increased credibility to conspiracy theories within the movement.

Box 2
Anti-lockdown and anti-election protests

Thomas et al. (2024) investigated the within- and between-person effects of misbeliefs on commitment to right-wing, reactionary collective action. To do so, they conducted two studies: Study 1 focused on anti-lockdown protest in Australia and the United States, while Study 2 focused on anti-election protests in New Zealand and the United States.

Misbelief and protest participation: Study 1 found that endorsing COVID-19 misbelief influenced both within and between-person changes. Specifically, endorsing misbelief was associated with a change in perception on authority legitimacy (whether authorities were handling the pandemic well) and an increased commitment to reactionary anti-lockdown protest. Study 2 found that changes in misbeliefs about electoral outcomes were associated with changes in intentions to oppose election results, including through violent actions.

Difference between nations: Study 1 showed that COVID-19 related misbeliefs were positively correlated with the approval of President Trump's handling of the pandemic, as well as greater support for anti-lockdown actions. However, the relationship between perceptions of government legitimacy and protest support varied. While legitimacy was not always directly tied to increased protest participation, the study found that in Australia changes in COVID-19 misbeliefs contributed to a more critical stance of authorities, which was linked to higher intentions to engage in anti-lockdown protests, especially when individuals perceived that the government responses did not align with their view on the pandemic. In practice, it means that the willingness to protest is not just based on whether an individual trusts their government, but also whether the way a government handles a crisis conflicts with their own beliefs. Misinformation not only shapes public opinion, it also influences the likelihood of taking political action.

Study 2 showed that baseline misbelief was associated with greater intention to protest election results in New Zealand, but not in the United States. However, in the United States, changes in misbeliefs over time did matter as people were more likely to express the intention to participate in protest. The findings suggest that while misbeliefs can fuel intentions to oppose election results, the actual willingness to act, especially through violent means, is limited to a smaller subset of individuals.

Information processing

Cognitive rigidity. Cognitive rigidity is an information-processing style that is characterised by an inability to adjust to behaviours in response to changing environments, task demands and changing reward structures (Zmigrod & Goldenberg, 2021). Research shows that levels of cognitive rigidity and flexibility play a role in the formation of political judgement and actions that can increase or decrease an individual's propensity to engage in political activity (Zmigrod, 2020; Zmigrod et al., 2019)

A study by Zmigrod et al. (2020) provided evidence of the ideological extremity hypothesis, which suggests that individuals who harbour ideological, extremist views are more cognitively rigid compared to those who hold moderate views. Moreover, the authors found that how strongly someone identifies with a political position matters more than the direction of their beliefs (left or right). A related study found that higher levels of cognitive rigidity were associated with a greater willingness to endorse violence in defence of an ideological group or a cause, as well as a greater willingness to self-sacrifice for the group (Zmigrod et al., 2019).

Decision-making. How individuals make decisions plays a role in endorsing violence. Becker (2021) examined the relationship between systematic decision-making (i.e., actively engaging with a problem, carefully evaluating the potential risks, costs, and benefits) and support for political violence among a sample of 503 university students. He found that individuals who use systematic decision-making processes are less likely to support political violence, meaning that amongst people who are generally supportive of political activism, those who are more impulsive and less inclined to engage in careful, systematic decision-making are more likely to endorse political violence. This tendency is observed regardless of whether these individuals' political beliefs aligned with the left or the right, highlighting that impulsivity and decision-making styles, rather than political ideology, play a role in shaping attitudes towards violent activism.

Power distance. The concept of power distance refers to the degree to which individuals accept inequality in society (Hofstede, 1985). Societies with higher levels of power distance tend to have more authoritarian forms of government, in which political change is often characterised by violence. Travaglino and Moon (2020) examined how acceptance of a high power distance (hierarchal power structures) can contribute to radicalism, particularly in domestic radical and violent contexts.

The study found that individuals who accept a higher power distance are more likely to engage in violent political actions in both South Korea and the US (Travaglino & Moon, 2020). This aligns with previous literature that suggests that power distance shapes individuals' views of, and interactions with, authorities and the state (Hofstede et al., 2010). Travaglino and Moon (2020) also found that in the South Korean context, high power distance was negatively associated with institutional and noninstitutional actions (e.g., voting and legal protests). The authors argue that, in South Korea, those who believe in higher power distance may avoid deliberate and lawful means of protest and lean towards more extreme, sometimes violent, actions. In sum, those who accept stricter hierarchies may avoid open dissent but resort to more extreme expressions of discontent.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES

This subsection explores research on psychological processes and the way they influence individual participation in protest. For the purposes of this report, research on psychological processes covers work that sees emotional and cognitive elements as being closely linked rather than separate processes. More specifically, it asks:

- How do personality traits, including those associated with the Dark Tetrad (Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy, and sadism) and obsessive passion for ideology, influence individuals' endorsement of violent collective action?
- How do trust in political institutions and attitudes towards authority influence individuals' propensity towards violent activism?
- How does the experience of significance loss contribute to support for violent political behaviours and engagement in radical activism?
- How does moral conviction contribute to the justification of violence in protest contexts?

Key points:

- Traits linked to psychopathy such as disinhibition and meanness are associated with support with violence.
- Obsessive passion for an ideology, especially when paired with sadism, predicts violent activism.
- Low trust in institutions and negative attitudes towards authority are linked to more radical political participation and greater acceptance of violence.
- Depression can be associated with support for violent protest, although the link between depression and radicalisation is complex and debated in the literature.
- Individuals who experience a loss of significance are more likely to support violent extremism.
- Protest is not just about anger or grievances but is also underpinned by strong moral conviction, which is especially salient when individuals feel that others share their moral outlook.

Personality traits. Personality traits can play a role in shaping attitudes towards violent protests. Besta et al. (2021) studied personality characteristics associated non-clinical psychopathy (disinhibition, boldness and meanness) and their relationship with support for radical collective action and the acceptance of group violence. They did so in three contexts: on behalf of the country, for right-wing protests, for left wing protest. The study found that disinhibition (lack of restraint) and meanness (cruelty and low empathy) were associated with support for radical group action. This suggests that people with these dispositional traits may be more likely to engage in violent behaviours, especially within groups that normalise violence. Besta et al. (2021) also found that meanness was consistently associated with a willingness to endorse violent social change. Individuals with high levels of meanness may therefore be more likely to disregard the human cost of violence, engage in exploitative or confrontation behaviours and challenge authority without concern for potential consequences.

Several studies have shown that there is a link between violent militancy and extremism, and the Dark Tetrad of personality traits: Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy, and sadism (Duspara & Greitemeyer, 2017; Međedović & Knežević, 2018; Pavlović & Franc, 2023; Pavlović & Wertag, 2021). The Dark Tetrad is not recognised as a formal diagnostic category, but rather represents a constellation of personality traits existing along a continuum within the general population, which makes it hard to determine clear prevalence estimates. Bélanger et al. (2023) examined the relationship between obsessive passion for an ideology - defined by the authors as "a strong and uncontrollable urge to pursue the ideology and violent activism" - and whether and how that relationship is influenced by the Dark Tetrad. Findings across ideological groups (Democrats, Republicans, and Black Lives Matters protesters) showed that obsessive passion, sadism, and psychopathy

consistently emerged as the strongest predictors of violent activism. Harmonious passion, defined by the authors as a "strong desire to pursue one's ideology, but this desire is under the person's control," was reliably linked to peaceful activism. Additionally, the authors found that higher levels in sadism strengthened the relationship between obsessive passion (but not harmonious passion) and violent activism across all ideological groups.

Research on the psychological components that contribute to extremist attitudes and potential radicalisation identified three key factors that shape what one study labels as a 'Militant Extremist Attitude' (Stankov et al., 2018). These are: (1) Nastiness: a predisposition towards aggression and approval of violence; (2) Grudge: a perception of threats of injustice that fuels resentment; (3) Excuse: a justification for violence based on ideological or religious principles. The study suggests that individuals who hold a strong grudge are more likely to engage in violent actions. Perceived injustice and threat are strong motivators for radical and violent actions.

Trust in institutions. Research indicates that trust in institutions plays a key role in distinguishing between legal and illegal protest. Studies found that low trust in political institutions correlates with more radical political participation, driven by dissatisfaction with the perceived lack of responsiveness from these institutions to protesters' normative actions. Normative actions are defined as politically accepted and lawful ways of engagement in political expression and civic life, such as voting (Šerek et al., 2018, p. 20).

A study examining the relationship between trust in government institutions and gun purchasing behaviour during COVID-19 found that individuals who bought guns during the pandemic exhibited significantly lower levels of trust in government institutions compared to both non-gun owners and pre-existing gun owners (Simonson et al., 2024). This research also found that those who bought guns during the pandemic were more likely to engage in protests, especially in protest that challenged government authority. Pandemic gun-buyers were more likely to endorse and emotionally align with political violence, particularly that which challenged the government.

The data showed that 53.1% of pandemic gun-buyers felt "warmly" toward the Capitol stormers (rating them above 60 on a 0–100 scale), compared to 36.9% of pre-existing owners and 33.1% of non-owners (Simonson et al., 2024). Pre-existing gun owners who did not buy additional guns during the pandemic exhibited similar levels or more opposition to violence than non-owners, further emphasising that crisis-driven behaviours, such as buying guns during a pandemic, was associated with heightened distrust in government, political radicalisation, and support for violence.

Attitudes towards authority. Dahl and Stattin (2016) examined the characteristics of a sample of Swedish adolescents involved in political activities, comparing them to those who engaged in legal political activities and non-politically active adolescents. They found that adolescents involved in illegal activities exhibited higher levels of political interest and goal orientation. Moreover, their negative attitudes towards authority (irrespective of the context such as school or parental authority) correlated with greater acceptance of violent means to achieve political goals.

Depression. Individuals experiencing depressive symptoms may be more likely to express sympathies for violent political actions. Research suggests this may stem from the cognitive and emotional effects of depression which in some circumstances can increase vulnerability to extremism. These effects include, for instance, hopelessness, suicidal thoughts, and negative perceptions of everyday life (Bhui et al., 2016). While the role of psychological distress is debated in the literature, Bhui et al. (2016) highlight how depression and adverse life experiences may distort thinking and increase a sense of alienation in individuals. However, the authors also note that protective factors such as social connectedness (e.g. donating to charity) can reduce the likelihood of sympathising with violent protest and terrorism.

Significance loss. Significance Quest Theory (SQT) suggests that violent extremism stems from an individual's need for significance, i.e. their desire for social worth, respect, or belonging. This need can be triggered through depravation, for example, when someone experiences a loss or a threat to their significance through discrimination, humiliation, personal loss, or intergroup conflict. When significance is lost, SQT suggests that individuals will seek to restore it – a process known as the Significance Quest (Kruglanski et al., 2018).

Research on significance loss overwhelmingly considers how loss of significance contributes to individuals' propensity to support political action, rather than on the specific processes by which such feelings lead to actual mobilisation into violent protest movements. There is growing evidence suggesting that the loss of personal significance stemming from personal deprivation, economic hardship, or social exclusion increases individuals' support for violent political behaviours (Adam-Troian et al., 2019; Bélanger et al., 2019; Schumpe et al., 2020; Webber et al., 2018).

For instance, Bélanger et al. (2022) found that obsessive passion, defined by the authors as "the uncontrollable urge to further one's ideology," was consistently linked to violent activism. Harmonious passion was only associated with peaceful activism. The authors found that the quest for significance moderates this relationship. This means that the link between obsessive passion and violent activism was intensified when an individual experienced a loss of significance, but weakened when they regained a sense of significance. This suggests that restoring a sense of worth can reduce violent intentions.

Similarly, Jasko et al. (2017) examined a sample of 1500 individuals who had committed ideologically motivated crimes in the US. They found that political violence is linked to personal insignificance, which can arise from economic failure, social detachment, and traumatic experiences. Individuals who experience these forms of significance loss may resort to violence to pursue their ideological goals and restore significance. Importantly, the loss of significance alone does not guarantee violent extremism. Instead, the presence of ideologies that legitimise violence play a central role in shaping psychological need into action (Jasko et al., 2017). Violent actions may be especially appealing to those seeking to demonstrate their dedication to a cause.

Examining the psychological mechanisms behind the use of violence in the context of the Yellow Vests movement in France, Mahfud and Adam-Troian (2021) found that individuals who experience economic hardship, social exclusion, or humiliation develop a heightened need to restore their sense of significance, which in turn, makes them more likely to engage in violent action in a protest setting. Anomia, defined as "a psychological state including feelings of meaninglessness, powerlessness, social isolation, normlessness, and self-estrangement" (Mahfud & Adam-Troian, 2021), played a mediating role in driving violent extremism, further reinforcing the propensity towards violence.

Exploring the social and psychological factors that differentiate individuals who justify violent protest from those who condemn it within the context of the centri sociali movement in Italy, Vergani et al. (2017) found that violence-endorsing individuals showed less engagement in professional development and unclear career goals, while non-violent protesters were more professionally involved. This indicates socioeconomic disengagement may be relevant to violent mobilisation. The authors do not conclude that violent protesters are necessarily socially alienated but they do suggest that those who struggle to find personal meaning in conventional ways might be more prone to resort to violent action to fill this void. This suggests that violent protest may in part stem from a desire for meaning and purpose rather than necessarily being guided by structured and clearly defined ideological motivations.

Moral conviction. Violence during protests is not just about anger or feelings of injustice, research highlights the role of moral conviction and its association with a rejection of the rule of law and the potential to justify

violent protest and acts of terrorism (Skitka & Morgan, 2014). Mooijman et al. (2017) argue that protests are more likely to turn violent when two psychological factors come together: moralisation and perceived moral convergence. Moralisation means people see the issue at hand as a moral issue, rather than just a political or practical one. A perceived moral convergence relates to people's belief that others around them share their moral commitments. These beliefs are amplified by social media.

By analysing roughly 18 million tweets posted during the violent protests in 2015 in Baltimore, the study found that social media acts as an echo chamber where people are mostly exposed to opinions they agree with, creating a false sense of consensus (Skitka & Morgan, 2014). Feeling part of a unified and morally justified group can make individuals more willing to justify the use of violent means during protests. Importantly, the authors emphasise that moralisation and moral convergence are not the only factors at play. Levels of hostility, who instigates the violence, and the goals of the protest, play a part in whether protests become violent.

INTERGROUP RELATIONS AND IDENTITIES

This section delves into intergroup relations, their impact on individuals, and the way they shape how and why people engage in protests which are or become violent. It first examines how individuals set aside their personal identity to embrace a shared identity which can pave the way for both nonviolent and violent mobilisation. The discussion also looks at how collective action emerges from group identity but also reinforces it, with social media platforms acting as catalysts. Additionally, this section explores how state repression and police violence can exacerbate intergroup dynamics and shape and intensify collective identity and unity, and in doing so, influence the decision to engage in violent resistance.

COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES[2]

This subsection examines the role of collective identities in driving violent and nonviolent collective actions. The discussion shows that group dynamics not only underpin political mobilisation but also shape the nature of protest through factors including online interactions, fringe group dynamics, shared grievances, emotions, norms, and experiences of discrimination. More specifically, it asks:

- How does group identification influence participation in both nonviolent and violent collective action?
- How does social media facilitate and reinforce collective identities, and how does that influence both nonviolent and violent collective action?
- How do perceived threats, perceived discrimination, and collective angst influence the decision to adopt violent means of protest?

Key points:

1. Research on group identification shows that individuals can set aside their personal identity in favour of a group identity to align their behaviours with the group.
2. Group identity can be a more potent predictor of participation in nonviolent and violent collective action than political ideology.
3. Mobilisation stems from group identification which in turn deepens that shared identity.
4. Digital platforms help forge collective identities, provide a space for individuals to share experiences, coordinate actions, and foster a shared sense of purpose, which in turn shapes online conversations into offline mobilisation.

'Collective identities' is an overarching term encompassing group identification, identity fusion, and related constructs. This is distinct from the next section on state responses and identities. This classification does not fully align with theoretical constructs from, for example, social identity theory, but serves an organising function to structure the discussion.

5. Increased online activity may serve as an early indicator of politically motivated crimes.

6. Fringe political movements are associated with increased acceptance of political violence.

7. Identity fusion has the potential to interpret how personal and group identity merge to intensify commitment to a cause. When a group is under threat, highly fused people are more willing to engage in extreme behaviours such as self-sacrifice and violence, especially when they believe their actions are morally justified.

8. Perceptions of existential threats, discrimination, collective angst, and shared grievances can further intensify group identity and in turn influence whether an individual engages in peaceful or violent forms of protests.

9. When a group's shared norms normalise violent behaviour, members can more easily become violent.

10. Perceived effectiveness and strength of the group play a role in driving collective action. When individuals view their group as effective and strong they are more likely to justify violent behaviour.

11. Group identification amplifies emotional reactions to perceived injustices, translating into a stronger willingness to engage in collective action, and at times violent collective action.

Group identification. Group identification is a key element of Social Identity Theory, which suggests that when people act in pro-group ways, they do so by fully adopting the group identity while downplaying their personal identity. Individuals align themselves and their behaviours with their social group rather than acting based on their unique personal traits. In doing so, group identity takes precedence, and individual differences become less relevant in group-based actions (Varmann et al., 2024; see also Schubert & Otten, 2002).

For instance, Adam-Troian et al. (2021) examined how social identity influenced participation in the Yellow Vests movement in France. They found that social identification with the Yellow Vests was a significant predictor of both nonviolent and violent collective action. In fact, identification with the Yellow Vests was more important for mobilisation than political ideology or demographic factors. Here, a shared group identity was the main driver of action. Moreover, the study found that social media use facilitated the formation of a shared identity, which in turn, motivated participation in collective action.

Collective action can also reinforce group identity. Klandermans (2014), for instance, found group identification was a self-reinforcing mechanism by which group identification fosters participation, which in turn reinforces group identification. However, group identification was only reinforced when action preparedness turned into action participation. The readiness to act was not enough to strengthen group identification alone. When collective identity is politicised, it strengthens group cohesion, which has the potential to increase participation in collective action. Whereas Adam-Troian et al. (2021) highlight that group identity can override ideology in predicting action, Klandermans (2014) argues that action is what cements and deepens group identity.

Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter facilitate the creation of collective identities within social movements. In their 2018 study, Khazraee and Novak examined the Iranian women's rights campaign "My Stealthy freedom," where women posted photos of themselves without their headscarves as a form of resistance against mandatory hijab laws. The affordances of social media allowed these women to express their personal experiences and grievances, building mutual understanding and a unified, collective experience of these individual struggles. By engaging in visible, symbolic actions, these women contributed to the formation of a collective identity in digitally mediated protests.

Social media helps support participation in political protests by providing information, motivation, and social networks to foster connection and collective identity, which in turn can encourage a shared sense of purpose (Jost et al., 2018). For instance, Uwalaka's (2024) study looked at the role of social media in mobilising and coordinating the #EndSARS protest aimed at ending police brutality in Nigeria. The study showed that individuals who relied on Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter for protest-related information and planning were more likely to participate. Participation was positively associated with how easy these platforms were to use. Moreover, social media played a crucial role in fostering a collective identity among protesters, allowing them to exchange information, voice concerns, and organise their activities effectively.

In a follow-up study, Jost et al. (2024) adopted a more cautious perspective, highlighting that social media-driven protest mobilisation can contribute to violent actions. This study explored the relationship between online protest activity on Telegram and politically motivated crimes in Germany during the COVID-19 pandemic. By analysing two extensive datasets comprised of over 100,000 mobilisation messages from 1,315 Telegram channels linked to extremist networks, and approximately 23,000 protest-related criminal incidents recorded by Germany's Federal Criminal Police Office between 2020 and 2022, the study identified temporal and spatial correlations between online activism and offline criminal activity. These findings indicate that higher volumes of online calls for protest mobilisation preceded increases in politically motivated crimes with a one-week lag.

This research suggests that online mobilisation may serve as an early indicator of offline criminal activity, especially in rural areas, where digital platforms play a more important role in mobilising for protests. However, the authors argue that due to the lack of systematic data on protest turnout, they are unable to establish causality. Moreover, the research did not account for psychological and social factors such as the emotional charge of the messages, or how peer influence shaped mobilisation (Jost et al., 2024).

While Jost et al. (2018) and Jost et al. (2024) focused on how social media can facilitate political protest mobilisation and how online mobilisation relates to politically motivates crimes, Brown et al. (2024) examined the specific online behaviours that precede extremist actions. This research found that online discussions of violent actions, operational planning, and logistics are more indicative of mobilisation to extremist action, than merely expressing ideological or hateful content.

Besta et al. (2021) found a relationship between group identification and disinhibition (lack of restraint) in the willingness to engage in radical collective action, especially within right-wing groups. They argue that shared norms are important: if a group normalises uninhibited behaviours, its members are more likely to act in a way that aligns with these behaviours. In the context of radical collective action, individuals who lack restraint and have hostile tendencies may go along with violence when their group justifies these violent behaviours. The authors also put forward the possibility that engaging in radical collective action could be a means for individuals to express a lack of restraint or disregard for others, suggesting that violent action is not purely ideological but also serves as an outlet for personal impulses (see also Gajda et al., 2024).

The specific outgroup needs to be considered when examining perceived group deprivation. Pavlovic et al. (2024) examined how group relative deprivation, or group-based disadvantage, influenced individuals' support for both violent and nonviolent political action. They looked at young adults from Germany (N=1056), Norway (N=376), and the United Kingdom (N=1053) to assess their perception of group relative deprivation and their intention to engage in collective action.

The study specifically looked at their responses towards two outgroups: Muslims and senior citizens. Group relative deprivation was consistently associated with increased intentions to engage in nonviolent political action across all three countries. However, the association between relative deprivation and intentions to engage in violent political action was more nuanced: the association was only significant when Muslims were

the target outgroup. This suggests that simply feeling disadvantaged may lead individuals to protest, but it doesn't necessarily lead to violent protest. Instead, the research shows that the nature of the outgroup and the way they're perceived influences the type of political action people are willing to support. It also draws attention to the role of hate speech and propaganda in framing outgroups negatively and how that might justify violence.

Beyer (2014) examined how online groups like Anonymous and The Pirate Bay formed strong collective identities that allowed for political activism, including digital forms of aggression, when certain conditions are met such as high anonymity, low regulation, and minimal small-group interaction. These communities often united around ideas such as information freedom, which helped cement their group identity and legitimised actions like Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks. These confrontational political actions illustrate how online group identities can drive mobilisation.

Fringe groups. Fringe political movements, irrespective of their position on the political spectrum, are associated with a heightened acceptance of political violence (Becker, 2021; Schulze et al., 2022). Sandlin and Garland (2024) define fringe groups as "those that (1) hold political or social views that are far outside the mainstream and (2) that reject established institutional routes and political norms as a means of pursuing political goals." In research on Antifa and QAnon (as examples of left-wing and right-wing fringe groups), supporters of both groupings were more likely to express violent attitudes and endorse forms of political violence compared to those aligned with more mainstream political ideologies. This included a greater willingness to wish harm upon members of opposing political parties, support violent protest, and condone interpersonal violence against political adversaries (Sandlin & Garland, 2024).

These tendencies remained after accounting for factors such as ideological extremity, personality traits, and affective partisanship, suggesting that affiliation with fringe groups was independently correlated with increased support for political violence. The authors also point out that social support for violence extends beyond the individuals directly involved in the violence (Sandlin & Garland, 2024). Fringe group members can thus carry out violence without facing widespread backlash or disapproval from their social circle. This tacit approval makes fringe groups potentially more dangerous because violence may be tolerated among the group.

Identity fusion. Identity Fusion Theory emphasises a synergetic relationship between personal and group identity. Instead of seeing them as separate, Identity Fusion Theory argues that both personal and group identity interact dynamically to enhance pro-group behaviours. This means that when individuals feel deeply connected to a group, their personal identity remains intact and amplifies their commitment to collective action (Lobato et al., 2020; Varmann et al., 2024; see also Swann et al., 2012). Research on identity fusion and self-sacrifice suggests that heightened autonomic arousal can amplify willingness to engage in extreme pro-group behaviours, particularly when there is already a strong sense of belonging to the group (Swann Jr et al., 2010). The study does not provide a formal definition but conceptualises autonomic arousal as a physiological activation as a result of physical exercise, e.g., elevated heart rates.

In their meta-analysis, Varmann et al. (2024) explored whether the effect of identity fusion - defined as "a visceral feeling of oneness with a group," - predicts extreme pro-group outcomes, or behaviours and attitudes reflecting extreme commitment to the group such as self-sacrifice. The relationship between identity fusion and pro-group orientation is strong: the meta-analysis encompassed 90 studies with a total of 36,880 participants. It found a robust positive relationship between identity fusion and extreme pro-group behaviours, including willingness to fight or die for the group, self-sacrifice, and hostility towards the outgroup.

Chinchilla et al. (2022) conducted two correlational studies to investigate whether moral belief about the acceptability of violence influenced the relationship between identity fusion and willingness to engage in both violent and nonviolent action in support of their group. Their findings show that highly fused individuals were more likely to resort to violence compared to weakly fused individuals, but only when they strongly believed that violence was morally justified. However, willingness to engage in nonviolent actions remained unaffected by their moral stance on violence.

Politicised collective identities. Studies suggest that while strongly identifying with one's group can motivate political action, the nature of that action and whether it is peaceful or violent, is influenced by levels of collective angst, or perceived existential threat by the group (Halperin et al., 2013; Jaśkiewicz et al., 2022; Wohl et al., 2014). Wohl et al. (2014) examined politicised collective identity and its role in the choice of protest supported by Tamil and Somali diaspora groups in Canada. Here, politicised collective identity (PCI) was defined as strong identification with one's ethnic or national group, coupled with a desire to engage in political action in their homeland to support that group. Politicised identity was found to lead to support for violent organisations when group members felt their identity was under existential threat; something described as collective angst. In the case of Somali Canadians, high PCI and high collective angst about Islam led to increased support for violence, specifically referencing support for al-Shabaab in Somalia. In the case of Tamil Canadians, high PCI predicted support for peaceful protest when collective angst was low, but when concerns for the group's future was high, PCI led to support for violent means.

In sum, when members of diaspora communities experience collective angst with PCI, they are more likely to support violent rather than peaceful protest in their homelands to advance their group's interests. This highlights the role of collective identities and intergroup emotions in shaping political mobilisation and suggests that diaspora communities can seek to influence ethno-political conflicts.

Discrimination. Experiences of discrimination can have lasting emotional effects that motivate mobilisation. Schmuck and Tribastone (2020) conducted a longitudinal experiment with 143 Austrian Muslims aged 18 – 37. Participants were exposed to anti-Islamic social media videos from the Austrian right-wing populist party FPÖ, simulating real-world exposure to such content. The study found that exposure to anti-Islamic messages significantly increased participants' feelings of discrimination, which persisted for up to three weeks after a single exposure. This increased sense of discrimination led to greater support for non-violent collective action such as advocacy and community engagement, aimed at improving the status of Muslims in Austria. The study showed no significant link between perceived discrimination and support for violent collective action. Instead, the findings suggest that the young Muslims in this study responded to discrimination by working within legal and social norms to improve their group's status, reinforcing democratic engagement rather than rejecting the system and turning to violence.

Shared grievances. Shared grievances can bring groups together in protest contexts. Koca (2024) aimed to understand how supporters of the radical right and self-identified Muslims found common ground in the Yellow Vests movement in France despite being ideologically opposed. The study found that shared economic concerns such as opposition to pension reforms resonated with both groups. Moreover, the lack of formal structure or clear leadership allowed for a more inclusive movement where individuals with differing political stances could engage without comprising their individual identities. Adam-Troian et al. (2021) argue that a shared identity centred on opposition to perceived governmental injustices can unify individuals across traditional political divides.

Perceived effectiveness and strength of the group. Zlobina and Vazquez (2018) explain that effectiveness differs from collective efficacy. The former focuses on tactics and the extent to which they make sense and work, whereas collective efficacy expresses the

collective ability to reach a goal using certain tactics. The authors explain that this is the difference between "yes, it works" and "yes, we can." Zlobina and Vazquez (2018) examined how different forms of collective actions, including violent and nonviolent ones, are perceived, justified, and linked to mobilisation. Their study focused on Spain between 2011-2013. They found that violent protest tactics were perceived as more useful than legitimate, indicating that the ends can justify the means. By implication, if individuals assess protest tactics not solely based on their moral grounds but also on whether they think they will be successful, they may be more likely to use violent protest tactics if they believe they are the only viable path to achieving their goals. This stresses the need to nurture or generate peaceful alternatives to addressing grievances such as open dialogue between conflicting parties and other nonviolent tactics.

Individual's perception of their in-group as strong and united encourages offensive actions within intergroup conflict. Mackie et al. (2000) show that levels of identification with the in-group are linked to emotional appraisals such as anger, fear, or contempt. They argue that:

1. Individuals who perceive their in-group as strong were more likely to experience anger towards the outgroup, increasing offensive action tendencies against it, while individuals who perceive their in-group as weak were more likely to experience fear and to move away from the out-group;

2. Identification with the group amplifies emotional and behavioural responses toward out-groups, showing the psychological basis for collective emotions; and

3. Distinct emotions like anger and exclusion drive specific behaviours: anger pushes toward offensive actions, while exclusion prompts withdrawal.

Group emotions. People can experience emotions on behalf of the groups they belong to. According to intergroup emotion theory, individuals integrate their group identity into their sense of self. The stronger one's identification with a group, the more likely one is to experience emotions tied to that collective identity. For instance, Yzerbyt et al. (2003) found that the extent to which people perceive themselves as having a common group membership with the victims of harmful behaviour can influence both their emotions and their action tendencies. Individuals who shared a group membership with the victims felt significantly more anger compared to those who did not. Moreover, individuals with a common group membership displayed more offensive action tendencies and were less likely to back down in comparison to those with a distinct group identity.

Van Zomeren et al. (2012) present the dynamic dual pathway model of approach coping to explain how people respond to collective disadvantage through protest. They frame protest as a form of approach coping, where individuals actively confront injustice. The model outlines two key pathways to collective action: an emotion-focused pathway, driven by group-based anger, and a problem-focused pathway, based on perceived efficacy to create change. These pathways interact and reinforce each other: successful protest can strengthen group identity and future participation in collective action. The authors describe protesters as "passionate economists" to highlight how protest involves both emotional engagement (passionate) and rational evaluation (economists). Group efficacy was found to be a stronger motivator for action when group identity was less central to the individual.

Box 3: Case Study
Cologne Pride 2019

Radke et al. (2022) examined the psychological mechanisms driving collective actions among advantaged and disadvantaged group members by applying the Dynamic Dual Pathway Model of Approach Coping (Van Zomeren et al., 2012).

The authors conducted a survey of 189 participants which comprised both LGBTIQ+ and heterosexual allies protesting as part of the 2019 Christopher Street Day Parade in Cologne, Germany. They found that group efficacy beliefs strongly predicted future collective action intention among LGBTIQ+ but not among heterosexual participants. Conversely, group-based anger was found to be a significant motivator for both groups.

This research suggests that disadvantaged individuals are more driven by their belief in the effectiveness of collective action, whereas the advantaged group seemed to respond more to their emotional reactions of injustices. This indicates that coping strategies may function differently depending on group status.

STATE RESPONSE AND IDENTITIES

This subsection examines how state responses and violence by state and law enforcement agencies can fuel further dissent and violent protest. It looks at how targeted versus broad repression, online discourse, group identity, and perceptions of legitimacy interact, strengthen group ties, and fuel protest mobilisation. Specifically, it asks:

- How does the use of violence by law enforcement escalate protest?
- What is the relationship between online discourse and offline protest actions?
- How do negative experiences of procedural justice and perceptions of the legitimacy of law enforcement influence the acceptability of violent actions?

Key points:

1. Excessive and generalised use of force by law enforcement tends to reinforce grievances over the long-term and mobilise protest.
2. There is a reciprocal relationship between online communication and offline confrontation: supportive online discourse can ease protest intensity, while violent offline events can fuel further online mobilisation.
3. While targeted repression can temporarily dampen protest activities, indiscriminate repression tends to increase and escalate protest actions.
4. Group identity enhances the impact of state repression, making protesters more likely to view the use of violence by law enforcement as personal threats thereby justifying the use of violence in response.
5. Experiencing or witnessing police violence can alter views on the legitimacy of violent protest, turning state repression into a catalyst for the justification of violent actions as resistance.
6. Procedural justice plays a role in determining protest outcomes. When protesters perceive that state actions are unjust, it increases support for violence.

Use of violence by law enforcement. The use of violence by law enforcement has the potential to increase dissident mobilisation. Anisin (2016) examines how state repression, especially the use of lethal force, can

escalate protests into violent confrontations, rather than supressing them. This is known as 'repression backfire.' Excessive force by law enforcement fuels further resistance, which in turn reinforces grievances and mobilises additional protesters. State repression can in some instances temporarily suppress opposition, but this often leads to increased resistance and mobilisation in the long term.

Davenport (2007) introduces the concept of "tyrannical peace" to describe a situation in which the government may manage dissent through force, but this peace is fragile as it does not eliminate underlying grievances, instead leading to further instability. The concept of "tyrannical peace" applies to both democratic and non-democratic contexts where peace is achieved through repression rather than conflict resolution.

Being exposed to police violence increases the sense that protesters' actions are legitimate, including the use of violence (Gibson, 2024; Royall, 2020). For instance, studying the 2011 London riot, Stott et al. (2018) found that 63% of their sampled participants described the violent actions of protesters against the police in positive terms. Protesters argued that violence against the police was "a collective reaction to their historical antagonisms with the police, defining a sense of 'us' among people in the borough" (Stott et al., 2018). Violence was seen as a "reversal of day-to-day disempowerment" participants felt in relation to the police.

Focusing on the Black Lives Matter (BML) protests following George Floyd's death in 2020, Yan et al. (2024) examined the relationship between social media discourse and offline confrontations, defined as non-peaceful protests, including incidents where protesters clash with police. The study analysed more than 100,000 Facebook posts and 1,406 offline BLM protests and found a reciprocal relationship between online activism and offline confrontations. Online support for BLM was associated with less property damage and confrontations in the days that followed. Equally, offline confrontations increased the support and attention online.

In sum, the authors point to a two-way relationship: online support influenced how peaceful the offline protests were, and at the same time, the nature of the offline protests influenced the online support for protesters (Yan et al., 2024). The study suggests that online framing is a key mechanism, distinguishing between consonance (alignment) and dissonance (misalignment) with the issue at hand. In this case, the findings suggest that when online discourse aligns with protesters' views, it is associated with less property damage, meaning that when protesters felt validated it reduced the likelihood of violent tactics.

Yan et al. (2024) discuss de-escalation strategies in protests and argue that when protesters feel like their grievances are dismissed or ignored, they are more likely to adopt confrontational strategies. Moreover, if authorities only focus on protesters' confrontational actions, rather than their underlying concerns, tensions between police and protest groups are more likely to escalate. The authors suggest that public recognition and support for reasonable grievances are likely to help de-escalate or prevent escalation of protest.

Repression against movement leaders. Distinguishing the effects of different types of repression, such as selective and indiscriminate approaches, is important because they can produce different effects on protest dynamics (Demirel-Pegg & Rasler, 2021). Selective repression occurs when state actors directly target leaders and key activists, while indiscriminate repression is broader, affecting not only opponents but also supporters, sympathisers, and even bystanders (see also Hafez, 2003; Kalyvas, 2006).

For instance, on selective repression, Simmons (2012) as cited in Demirel-Pegg and Rasler (2021) analysed leadership removals across 21 social movements in the United States between 1960 and 1995 and found that assassinations and arrests led to declines in both nonviolent and violent collective action. On targeted repression, Sullivan (2016) found that between 1975 and 1985 repression in Guatemala focused on mobilisation

activities. This involved cracking down on meetings, recruitment, and training sessions, weakening collective dissent such as strikes, protests, and attacks. Sullivan argued that targeting the preparation phase of resistance movements was effective at preventing public uprisings and that repression of the clandestine planning of dissent reduced the visible aspects of collective action, such as protests.

Box 4: Case Study
State repression on the 2013 Gezi Park Resistance Campaign

This study examines how the effects of indiscriminate and selective repression influenced the frequency of Gezi protest actions. Demirel-Pegg and Rasler (2021) found that indiscriminate repression, such as the use of lethal and nonlethal force used against crowds, such as tear gas or police violence at protest sites, was associated with an increase of protest activity. Their models showed a positive and statistically significant relationship supporting their hypothesis that using force against everyone tends to provoke more protest rather than acting as a deterrent.

Selective repression, that is when authorities specifically targeted protest organisers or activists, often away from protest sites, such as arresting individuals at their homes or workplace, was effective at reducing protest activity. Their findings show a negative and statistically significant relationship that suggests selective repression decreases protest action.

The authors verified their finding against control variables. The first control variable was concessions where the government offers a compromise to calm the situation. The findings suggest that these had no significant effects, likely because the Erdoğan government didn't offer any meaningful concessions during the protest campaigns.

Second, the research considered the role of foreign support for protesters and found that international backing had a negative but insignificant effect. Even though there was a lot of foreign attention and support, this didn't have a measurable effect on protest rates, potentially because the support was mostly symbolic and no real pressure was brought to bear on the Turkish government.

In sum, evidence from this study on the Gezi Park Protest found that selective repression decreased protests, while indiscriminate repression had the opposite effect. Considered alongside the research discussed above, this suggests that although selective short-term repression may be effective under some circumstances, the peace that results may be both fragile (Davenport, 2007), and short-lived (Anisin, 2016).

Impact of state repression on group identification. The interaction between group identification and state repression helps interpret violent protest dynamics. Zhu et al. (2022) found that group identification amplifies the backfire effect of state repression. Identifying with a group fosters altruistic behaviours and strengthens emotional bonds amongst members. This heightened connection makes individuals more responsive to repression, increasing the likelihood that they may turn to violence when facing opposition. They explain "group identification is like a spark, and violent repression is the gasoline whose interactions drive the Anti-ELAB protests into a more radical direction." This suggests that repression is salient, but people's group identification greatly matters in their decision to use violence.

Ferris et al. (2019) examined how policing strategies during the 2014 Brisbane G20 Summit influenced protesters' perceptions and behaviours. They found that police-imposed segregation of protesters into specific groups led to a perceived heightened threat from authorities. Individuals who identified more strongly with the broader G20 protesters, rather than just their immediate group, were more likely to view the police as threatening, which in turn made them more likely to see the use of violence as morally justified.

These findings suggest that policing tactics that segregating and targeting specific protest groups can unintentionally escalate tensions. These practices reinforce group identities and perceptions of injustice, potentially leading to increased justification for violence. This process is summarised by Drury and Reicher (2009) in their Elaborated Social Identity Model. This model suggests that during crowd events, individuals' perceptions of their social identity changes based on how an external group, such as the police, views and treats them (as threats or opponents, for instance). This change in protester's sense of identity can influence their behaviour and may lead to new behaviours including violence.

Perceived lack of procedural justice. Research shows that perception of fairness during protests matters. Stott et al. (2018) show that 66% of their sample described an intergroup context prior to the shooting of Mark Duggan whereby they or others like them were often subjected to illegitimate police stop and search, leading to a sense of resentment and antagonism towards the police. Moreover, the riots escalated when protesters perceived the indiscriminate use of force by police against a young girl. This event escalated sporadic attacks into a unified confrontation, that pushed the police back.

Drawing on a sample of male ethnic minority youth in London, Jackson et al. (2013) found that negative interactions with police are associated with a diminished perception of legitimacy, which was linked to positive attitudes about protest violence. Similarly, using survey data on the Occupy Wall Street movement, Maguire et al. (2018) revealed that people who perceive police use of force as unjust are more likely to endorse protest violence. Research examining the Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement in Hong Kong found that limited repression by law enforcement deterred the endorsement of violence but that excessive repression increased protesters' endorsement of violence (Zhu et al., 2022). For this to happen, the repression needed to cross the threshold of what protesters considered to be proportionate.

Box 5
Three-Phase Model of Escalation by Ng and Platow (2024)

This study investigates how peaceful collective actions, such as protests, can escalate into violent confrontations. The authors propose an integrated theoretical framework bringing in perspectives from intergroup social psychology and micro-sociology to interpret escalatory processes. The analysis considers perceptions of legitimacy, group identity, emotional reactions, and social norms to argue that a "violent turn" is the result of interactions between protesters, authorities, and the broader social context in which these take place. Ng and Platow (2024) break down the "violent turn" into a series of psychological and social phases, drawing from the I3 model (Finkel, 2014) and the general aggression model (Anderson & Bushman, 2002).

In a nutshell, the model suggests that violence isn't a first choice. Instead, Ng and Platow (2024) synthesise prior research to argue that police incursions into protest crowds that are perceived as unjust and indiscriminate create a shared identity among protesters and a common in-group. The crowd feels empowered, and shifts from defensive to offensive actions. Group excitement turns into anger, fuelling direct opposition to the police.

Their analysis includes additional triggers such as spatial violation, mismanagement by the police, property damage, and communication failures that further escalate tensions. They add that confrontational tensions and fear lead to emotional dominance and violence in the later phases of protest mobilisations. Empirical testing of this model remains limited. The table below is a direct reproduction of Ng and Platow (2024)'s model.

	Early phase		Middle phase	Late phase	
	Instigation	Impellance	Proclivity to aggression	Disinhibition	Violence
Intergroup social psychological perspective					
Drury and Reicher (1999, 2009), Drury, Ball, et al. (2020), Drury, Stott, et al. (2020), Mackie and Smith (2018), Reicher (1984, 1996), Stott and Drury (2000), Tajfel (1974, 1982), and Turner et al. (1987)	Representational and power asymmetries between police and demonstrators that allow the police to move into the crowd to enforce its definition of unlawful behaviour	Demonstrators experience police intrusions as unjustified and indiscriminate attacks that enclose them in a common fate or predicament	Demonstrators recategorise themselves as members of an inclusive common ingroup that merges previous factions and forms context-relevant and context-salient group norms to legitimise opposition against the police	Demonstrators experience collective empowerment, feel excited, reappraise their own power as more and police power as less dominant than before, and shift from avoidance/ defensive action to approach/ offensive action	Group excitement changes to group anger as demonstrators actively oppose the police as a common outgroup. This confirms police fear of rioting and justifies their escalation of riot-control responses
Micro-sociological perspective					
Bramsen (2017, 2018), Collins (2008, 2013b, 2019), and Nassauer (2016, 2018, 2019, 2021)	Spatial incursions by either police or demonstrators that dishonour prior agreement and upset the current state of power equilibrium	Mismanagement by police, escalation signs, communication problems, and property damage	Confrontational tension/fear	Emotional dominance over victims, formed one to three hours after start of demonstration	Violent attacks of varying duration depending on how overwhelming is the emotional dominance and onlookers' response

CONCLUSIONS

This REA has identified a range of potential individual-level drivers for violent and extremist escalations within social movements. The research illustrates that protests are shaped by a combination of emotional, cognitive, psychological, group, and institutional factors, and interactions between the range of actors involved in instigating and responding to protests.

Emotional appraisals such as anger, disgust, contempt, fear, and sadness shape collective action in different ways. Anger is recognised as a motivational factor for protest and collective action, though its role in violent protest remains debated. Some studies associate disgust with intensified violence while others associate it with lower levels of aggression. Contempt is often associated with extreme protest actions. While fear often suppresses dissent, it can also drive violent protest under certain conditions.

Cognitive processes influence political violence. For instance, exposure to misinformation is associated with collective action, so is cognitive rigidity and impulsive decision making. Moreover, psychological processes, such as certain personality traits, low trust institutions, and experiences of significance loss are also associated with increased support for violence.

The REA has also shown that intergroup relations and identities have an impact on how and why people engage in protests which are or become violent. Research on group identification shows that individuals can set aside their personal identities in favour of a group identity, and that this group identity may be a more potent predictor of participation in nonviolent and violent collective action than ideology. Moreover, perceptions of existential threats, discrimination, collective angst, and shared grievances can further intensify group identity and influence whether an individual engages in peaceful or violent forms of protests. Discrimination and shared grievances also play a role.

Additionally, the ways in which state agencies respond to protest can further fuel dissent and violent protest. For instance, excessive and generalised used of force by law enforcement reinforces grievances. Moreover, procedural justice plays a role in determining protest outcomes. When protesters perceive that state actions are unjust, it increases support for violence.

Aligning with the previous report, the findings highlight that individual factors alone do not escalate or de-escalate violence. Instead, dynamic and relational interactions between factors across micro, meso and macro levels shape escalatory and de-escalatory processes over time.

The research mostly focuses on the drivers of violence, and few studies directly explore protective factors. However, some findings do point to elements that can help prevent the scalation of protest violence. For instance, online consonance, when online discourse acknowledges protesters' grievances, can reduce offline confrontation and property damage, which suggests that online validation can buffer against offline escalation (Yan et al., 2024). Procedural justice and fair treatment by law enforcement also play a role in de-escalation of violence. Drury and Reicher's (2009) Elaborated Social Identity Model shows that fair policing reduces adversarial identity formation and fosters a shared social identity between responders and members of the public, which in turn promotes greater cooperation and willingness to follow procedures. Political engagement and social connectedness can reduce the propensity towards violence (Bhui et al., 2016). This is in line with research that highlights the importance of maintaining peaceful alternatives (Zlobina and González Vázquez, 2017). Finally, policing strategies that avoid forced segregation of protest groups fosters inclusive identification and decreases intergroup tensions, and, in doing so, lowers the moral justification for violent resistance (Ferris et al., 2019).

Research mostly focuses on the drivers of violence, and few studies directly explore protective factors. However, some findings do point to elements that can help interrupt or prevent the escalation of protest violence. For instance, online consonance, when online discourse acknowledges protesters' grievances, can reduce offline confrontation and property damage, which suggests that online validation can buffer against offline escalation (Yan et al., 2024). Procedural justice and fair treatment by law enforcement also play a role in de-escalation of violence. Drury and Reicher's (2009) Elaborated Social Identity Model shows that fair policing reduces adversarial identity formation and fosters a shared social identity between responders and members of the public, which in turn promotes greater cooperation and willingness to follow procedures. Political engagement and social connectedness can reduce the propensity towards violence (Bhui et al., 2016). This is in line with research that highlights the importance of maintaining peaceful alternatives (Zlobina and González Vázquez, 2017). Finally, policing strategies that avoid forced segregation of protest groups fosters inclusive identification and decreases intergroup tensions, and, in doing so, lowers the moral justification for violent resistance (Ferris et al., 2019).

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The research has identified several key findings in the literature pertaining to individual-level mechanisms and their relationship to violence in social movements. However, there are some limitations, both in terms of methodology as well as in terms of the existing research, that limit the wider applicability of these findings.

In terms of methodology, 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.

In terms of the research, this REA has included a range of different contexts in which these protest dynamics play out. However, the research has often examined specific contexts, such as Black Lives Matter in the Unites States, the Anti-ELAB protests in Hong Kong, the London riots, and the G20 protests in Australia. These studies shed light on local dynamics, but the findings do not always translate across different settings that might be shaped by unique historical, cultural and political influences.

For instance, the impact of repression may differ between authoritarian and democratic systems, in which the concept of "tyrannical peace" (Davenport, 2007) might manifest differently. Moreover, and in contrast to the first REA in this series (Salman & Marsden, 2025), most of the studies included in this review are focused on the Global North (e.g., Koca, 2024; Stott et al., 2018; Yzerbyt et al., 2003; Zlobina & Vazquez, 2018). The Global South is therefore under-represented (e.g., Sullivan, 2016; Zhu et al., 2022). Future research would benefit from focusing on understudied regions and groups, as well as adopting an intersectional lens to better understand how experiences of race, class, gender, and religion interact to shape protest motivations and dynamics.

Often, studies relied on observational or correlational methodologies that make it hard to ascertain a clear causal link between variables (e.g., Chinchilla et al., 2022; Jackson et al., 2013). The relationship between emotions and violence, and between state repression and violence are examples. State repression can lead to violence, but equally, violence can lead to further state repression. Additionally, and as was noted by Salman and Marsden (2025), violence is often not disaggregated in studies; some refer to physical violence, while others mean property damage (e.g., Yan et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2022). This is also the case for other frequently used concepts used in this report such

as repression, group identity, and perceived legitimacy that are defined differently across various studies. This is further complicated by the fact that emotional factors such as anger, fear, collective angst, etc. are often self-reported, which needs to be taken in mind when drawing conclusions from these studies (e.g., Besta et al., 2021; Pavlovic et al., 2024; Schmuck & Tribastone, 2020).

Finally, studies focusing on online dynamics rely on social media data and platforms such as Facebook and Telegram. Algorithms drive content selection and prioritisation, and tend to amplify more emotionally charged or sensational content. As a result, the relationship between online content and offline protest may be a result of algorithm amplification rather than being a true reflection of public sentiment (e.g., Yan et al., 2024). More research is needed to understand how different platforms shape protests, and to interpret the role of algorithms in amplifying or decreasing grievances.

IMPLICATION FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

The findings of this report highlight a range of considerations relevant to policymakers concerned with understanding the role of individual-level processes, such as emotions and identity, in violent protest mobilisations. Importantly, individual-level processes do not exist in a vacuum, but are instead influenced by their cultural and political contexts, including the responses of state actors. The report has highlighted the importance of measured policy responses even in charged environments.

Emotional appraisals like contempt, and possibly anger and disgust can drive confrontational protest actions (Tausch et al., 2011; Zhu et al., 2022; Zlobina & Vazquez, 2018). Authorities are likely to benefit from avoiding intensifying emotional reactions through violence or dismissive rhetoric, and adopting emotion-sensitive communication, whilst acknowledging protesters' grievances and perspectives. Moreover, Ferris et al. (2019) have shown that when people feel excluded, they may be more likely to see the use of violence as morally justified. This illustrates the benefits of avoiding policing practices that segregate or isolate groups.

Excessive or indiscriminate state repression, such as through police violence, can escalate rather than de-escalate contention (Anisin, 2016; Zhu et al., 2022). By contrast, proportionate and accountable policing can avoid escalating protests or radicalising protesters, and maintain legitimacy with the public.

Procedural justice and fair treatment of protesters plays an important role in protest dynamics as perceptions of illegitimacy and discrimination have the potential to increase support for violence (Jackson et al., 2013; Stott et al., 2018). Individuals who view authorities as fair are less likely to condone violence (Jackson et al., 2013; Maguire et al., 2018). Embedding procedural justice protocols in protest handling and demonstrating fairness during periods of unrest can therefore help maintain legitimacy with the protesters and the wider public. Drury and Reicher (2009) show that when protesters are treated as a threat, it increases the salience of protester group identity exacerbating the potential for contention. Avoiding aggressive and indiscriminate treatment of protesters, and 'us vs. them' approaches to policing, whilst differentiating between peaceful and violent actors (Besta et al., 2021) has the potential to mitigate the risk of violent escalation.

There is evidence that when protesters feel like their grievances are acknowledged, they are less likely to adopt violent means (Royall, 2020; Yan et al., 2024). By contrast, people who see no viable nonviolent path to address their grievances, may be more likely to resort to violence (Zlobina & Vazquez, 2018). Engaging in inclusive dialogue that recognises protesters' perspectives, and providing opportunities for nonviolent and meaningful political participation, have the potential to mitigate the risk of escalation to violence.

Finally, although more research is needed, the evidence so far suggests that online discourse has the potential to shape offline protest dynamics. This indicates that the recommendations above may also be relevant to the online space. This includes avoiding dismissive rhetoric about protesters online; ensuring that online communications are aligned with the issue at hand; acknowledging protesters' grievances; and creating opportunities for open dialogue and nonviolent alternatives to addressing grievances.

REFERENCES

Adam-Troian, J., Baidada, O., Arciszewski, T., Apostolidis, T., Celebi, E., & Yurtbakan, T. (2019). Evidence for indirect loss of significance effects on violent extremism: The potential mediating role of anomia. *Aggressive Behavior*, 45(6), 691-703.

Adam-Troian, J., Mahfud, Y., Urbanska, K., & Guimond, S. (2021). The role of social identity in the explanation of collective action: An intergroup perspective on the Yellow Vests movement. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 51*(6), 560-576. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1111/jasp.12757*

Anderson, C. A., & Bushman, B. J. (2002). Human aggression. *Annual review of psychology, 53*(1), 27-51.

Anisin, A. (2016). Violence begets violence: Why states should not lethally repress popular protest. *The International Journal of Human Rights, 20*(7), 893-913. *https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2016.1192536*

Averill, J. R. (1983). Studies on anger and aggression: Implications for theories of emotion. *American psychologist, 38*(11), 1145.

Ayanian, A. H., Tausch, N., Acar, Y. G., Chayinska, M., Cheung, W.-Y., & Lukyanova, Y. (2021). Resistance in repressive contexts: A comprehensive test of psychological predictors. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 120*(4), 912.

Becker, J. C., & Tausch, N. (2015). A dynamic model of engagement in normative and non-normative collective action: Psychological antecedents, consequences, and barriers. *European Review of Social Psychology, 26*(1), 43-92. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1080/10463283.2015.1094265*

Becker, M. H. (2021). Deciding to support violence: An empirical examination of systematic decision-making, activism, and support for political violence. *Criminology & Criminal Justice, 21*(5), 669-686. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/1748895820914385*

Bélanger, J. J., Adam-Troian, J., Nisa, C. F., & Schumpe, B. M. (2022). Ideological passion and violent activism: The moderating role of the significance quest. *British Journal of Psychology, 113*(4), 917-937. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1111/bjop.12576*

Bélanger, J. J., Adam-Troian, J., Quimpo, N., AlKindi, Y., Gajic, M., & Nisa, C. F. (2023). The Dark Tetrad Personality Traits Moderate the Relationship Between Ideological Passion and Violent Activism. *Psychology of Violence, 13*(1), 43-52. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1037/vio0000414*

Bélanger, J. J., Schumpe, B. M., Nociti, N., Moyano, M., Dandeneau, S., Chamberland, P. E., & Vallerand, R. J. (2019). Passion and moral disengagement: Different pathways to political activism. *Journal of Personality, 87*(6), 1234-1249. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1111/jopy.12470*

Benski, T. (2010). Emotion maps of participation in protest: The case of women in black against the occupation in Israel. In *Research in social movements, conflicts and change* (pp. 3-34). Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Besta, T., Pastwa-Wojciechowska, B., Jaskiewicz, M., Piotrowski, A., & Szulc, M. (2021). Radicalisation and individual differences: Disinhibition, boldness and meanness as predictors of support for radical collective action. *Personality and Individual Differences, 168*, 4. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1016/j.paid.2020.110354*

Bhui, K., Silva, M. J., Topciu, R. A., & Jones, E. (2016). Pathways to sympathies for violent protest and terrorism. *The British Journal of Psychiatry, 209*(6), 483-490. *https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.bp.116.185173*

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

Brouillette-Alarie, S., Hassan, G., Varela, W., Ousman, S., Kilinc, D., Savard, É. L., Madriaza, P., Harris-Hogan, S., McCoy, J., & Rousseau, C. (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., Smith, L. G. E., Davidson, B. I., Racek, D., & Joinson, A. (2024). Online Signals of Extremist Mobilization. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 20. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/01461672241266866*

Cervone, C., Suitner, C., Carraro, L., & Maass, A. (2024). An Impartial Measure of Collective Action Development and Validation of the Belief-Aligned Collective Action Scale. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment, 40*(3), 258-268. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1027/1015-5759/a000762*

Chinchilla, J., Vazquez, A., & Gómez, Á. (2022). Identity fusion predicts violent pro-group behavior when it is morally justifiable. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 162*(6), 701-715.

Dahl, V., & Stattin, H. (2016). Beyond the limits: involvement in illegal political activities. *European Political Science Review, 8*(1), 125-145. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1017/s1755773914000435*

Davenport, C. (2007). State repression and the tyrannical peace. *Journal of Peace Research, 44*(4), 485-504.

de Zúñiga, H. G., & Goyanes, M. (2023). Fueling civil disobedience in democracy: WhatsApp news use, political knowledge, and illegal political protest. *New Media & Society, 25*(12), 3500-3520. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/14614448211047850*

della Porta, D. (2018). Radicalization: A relational perspective. *Annual Review of Political Science, 21*(1), 461-474. *https://doi.org/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.

Demir, F., Bastug, M. F., & Douai, A. (2020). Keeping it peaceful: Twitter and the Gezi Park movement. *Communication and the Public, 5*(3-4), 149-163. *https://doi.org/10.1177/2057047320959852*

Demirel-Pegg, T., & Rasler, K. (2021). The effects of selective and indiscriminate repression on the 2013 Gezi Park nonviolent resistance campaign. *Sociological Perspectives, 64*(1), 58-81.

Ditrich, L., & Sassenberg, K. (2024). # Stand with Ukraine: Analyzing the links between Germans' emotions and their readiness to protest in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 54*(12), 731-743.

Drury, J., & Reicher, S. (2009). Collective psychological empowerment as a model of social change: Researching crowds and power. *Journal of Social Issues, 65*(4), 707-725.

Duspara, B., & Greitemeyer, T. (2017). The impact of Dark Tetrad traits on political orientation and extremism: An analysis in the course of a presidential election. *Heliyon, 3*(10).

Ferris, L. J., Radke, H. R. M., Walter, Z. C., & Crimston, C. R. (2019). Divide and conquer? Identity, threat, and moral justification of violence at the G20. *Australian Journal of Psychology, 71*(3), 312-321. *https://doi.org/10.1111/ajpy.12249*

Finkel, E. J. (2014). The I3 model: Metatheory, theory, and evidence. In *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 49, pp. 1-104). Elsevier.

Ford, B. Q., Feinberg, M., Lam, P., Mauss, I. B., & John, O. P. (2019). Using reappraisal to regulate negative emotion after the 2016 US Presidential election: Does emotion regulation trump political action? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 117*(5), 998.

Gajda, A. N., Jaskiewicz, M., Cupta, A., Nitek, M., Nobis, A., & Besta, T. (2024). Individual differences and anti-vaccine radical collective action intention: The moderating role of group norms. *Personality and Individual Differences, 220,* 11. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1016/j.paid.2023.112522*

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/doi:10.1177/10659129241293028*

Goldenberg, A., Halperin, E., Van Zomeren, M., & Gross, J. J. (2016). The process model of group-based emotion: Integrating intergroup emotion and emotion regulation perspectives. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 20*(2), 118-141.

Hafez, M. M. (2003). *Why Muslims rebel: Repression and resistance in the Islamic world.* Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Halperin, E., Porat, R., & Wohl, M. J. (2013). Extinction threat and reciprocal threat reduction: Collective angst predicts willingness to compromise in intractable intergroup conflicts. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 16*(6), 797-813.

Hofstede, G. (1985). The interaction between national and organizational value systems [1]. *Journal of Management Studies, 22*(4), 347-357.

Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). Culture and organizations: software of the mind, intercultural cooperation and its importance for survival. *International Studies of Management & Organization, 10,* 11656300.

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/doi:10.1037/a0033852*

Jaśkiewicz, M., Besta, T., & Borchet, J. (2022). Collective angst and group continuity as predictors of collective action for progressive city policies. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 25*(2), 540-561.

Jasko, K., LaFree, G., & Kruglanski, A. (2017). Quest for significance and violent extremism: The case of domestic radicalization. *Political Psychology, 38*(5), 815-831. *https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12376*

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,* 459-473. *https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-015-9238-7*

Jost, J. T., Barberá, P., Bonneau, R., Langer, M., Metzger, M., Nagler, J., Sterling, J., & Tucker, J. A. (2018). How social media facilitates political protest: Information, motivation, and social networks. *Political Psychology, 39,* 85-118.

Jost, P., Allwinn, M., Bitzmann, H., Bretschi, D., Greipl, S., Hohner, J., Schulze, H., Sick, H., & Rieger, D. (2024). Virtual torches-real fires? Online protest mobilization as a forward indicator of politically motivated crimes.

Kalyvas, S. N. (2006). *The logic of violence in civil war.* Cambridge University Press.

Khazraee, E., & Novak, A. N. (2018). Digitally mediated protest: Social media affordances for collective identity construction. *Social Media+ Society, 4*(1), 2056305118765740.

Klandermans, B., Van der Toorn, J., & Van Stekelenburg, J. (2008). Embeddedness and identity: How immigrants turn grievances into action. *American Sociological Review, 73*(6), 992-1012.

Klandermans, P. G. (2014). Identity Politics and Politicized Identities: Identity Processes and the Dynamics of Protest. *Political Psychology, 35*(1), 1-22. *https://doi.org/10.1111/pops.12167*

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/doi:10.1080/14782804.2023.2177839*

Kruglanski, A., Jasko, K., Webber, D., Chernikova, M., & Molinario, E. (2018). The making of violent extremists. *Review of General Psychology, 22*(1), 107-120.

Kundnani, A., & Hayes, B. (2018). The globalisation of countering violent extremism policies. *Undermining Human Rights, Instrumentalising Civil Society. Amsterdam: Transnational Institute,* 32-34.

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/https://doi.org/10.1177/13684302241245660*

Lobato, R. M., Moya, M., & Trujillo, H. M. (2020). Minority- versus Majority-Status Group Intentions to Transgress the Law When Oppression Is Perceived. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy, 20*(1), 397-416. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1111/asap.12207*

Lutz, J., & Krahé, B. (2018). Inducing sadness reduces anger-driven aggressive behavior: A situational approach to aggression control. *Psychology of Violence, 8*(3), 358.

Mackie, D. M., Devos, T., & Smith, E. R. (2000). Intergroup emotions: Explaining offensive action tendencies in an intergroup context. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 79*(4), 602.

Maguire, E. R., Barak, M., Cross, K., & Lugo, K. (2018). Attitudes among Occupy DC participants about the use of violence against police. *Policing & Society, 28*(5), 526-540. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1080/10439463.2016.1202247*

Mahfud, Y., & Adam-Troian, J. (2021). "Macron demission!": Loss of significance generates violent extremism for the Yellow Vests through feelings of anomia. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 24*(1), 108-124. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/1368430219880954*

Malthaner, S. (2023). Social movement theory and research on radicalisation. In J. Busher, L. Malkki, & S. Marsden (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook on Radicalisation and Countering Radicalisation* (pp. 99-112). Routledge.

Međedović, J., & Knežević, G. (2018). Dark and peculiar. *Journal of Individual Differences.*

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

Mooijman, M., Hoover, J., Lin, Y., Ji, H., & Dehghani, M. (2017). When protests turn violent: The roles of moralization and moral convergence.

Nerb, J., & Spada, H. (2001). Evaluation of environmental problems: A coherence model of cognition and emotion. *Cognition & Emotion, 15*(4), 521-551.

Ng, S. H., & Platow, M. J. (2024). The violent turn in non-violent collective action: What happens? *Asian Journal of Social Psychology, 27*(3), 303-317. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1111/ajsp.12596*

Nikolayenko, O. (2022). 'I am tired of being afraid': Emotions and protest participation in Belarus. *International Sociology, 37*(1), 78-96.

Nock, M. K., Wedig, M. M., Holmberg, E. B., & Hooley, J. M. (2008). The emotion reactivity scale: development, evaluation, and relation to self-injurious thoughts and behaviors. *Behavior Therapy, 3*9(2), 107-116.

Ouzzani, M., Hammady, H., Fedorowicz, Z., & Elmagarmid, A. (2016). Rayyan—a web and mobile app for systematic reviews. *Systematic Reviews, 5,* 1-10.

Pavlović, T., & Franc, R. (2023). Antiheroes fueled by injustice: dark personality traits and perceived group relative deprivation in the prediction of violent extremism. *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression, 15*(3), 277-302.

Pavlovic, T., Storm, I., & Franc, R. (2024). Group relative deprivation and different forms of political actions: The role of the target outgroup. *European Journal of Political Research,* 22. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1111/1475-6765.12731*

Pavlović, T., & Wertag, A. (2021). Proviolence as a mediator in the relationship between the dark personality traits and support for extremism. *Personality and Individual Differences, 168,* 110374.

Piazza, J. A. (2022). Fake news: the effects of social media disinformation on domestic terrorism. *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict, 15*(1), 55-77.

Pond Jr, R. S., DeWall, C. N., Lambert, N. M., Deckman, T., Bonser, I. M., & Fincham, F. D. (2012). Repulsed by violence: disgust sensitivity buffers trait, behavioral, and daily aggression. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 102*(1), 175.

Radke, H. R., Kutlaca, M., & Becker, J. C. (2022). Applying the dynamic dual pathway model of approach coping to collective action among advantaged group allies and disadvantaged group members. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13,* 875848.

Roseman, I. J. (1994). Emotions and emotion families in the emotion system. Proceedings of the 8th International Conference of the International Society for Research on Emotions.

Roseman, I. J. (1996). Appraisal determinants of emotions: Constructing a more accurate and comprehensive theory. *Cognition & Emotion, 10*(3), 241-278.

Royall, F. (2020). The Gilets Jaunes protests: mobilisation without third-party support. *Modern & Contemporary France, 28*(1), 99-118. *https://doi.org/10.1080/09639489.2019.1676217*

Salman, N., & Marsden, S. (2025). *Social Movement Theory Perspectives on Group Mobilisation, Radicalisation, and Violent Extremism: A Rapid Evidence Assessment.*

Sandlin, E. W., & Garland, M. (2024). Support for Partisan Violence among the Political Fringe: The Case of Antifa and QAnon Supporters. *Terrorism and Political Violence,* 20. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1080/09546553.2024.2365764*

Schmuck, D., & Tribastone, M. (2020). Muslims Take Action. How Exposure to Anti-Islamic Populist Political Messages Affects Young Muslims' Support for Collective Action: A Longitudinal Experiment. *Political Communication, 37*(5), 635-655. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1080/10584609.2020.1736700*

Schubert, T. W., & Otten, S. (2002). Overlap of self, ingroup, and outgroup: Pictorial measures of self-categorization. *Self and identity, 1*(4), 353-376.

Schulze, H., Hohner, J., Greipl, S., Girgnhuber, M., Desta, I., & Rieger, D. (2022). Far-right conspiracy groups on fringe platforms: A longitudinal analysis of radicalization dynamics on Telegram. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies, 28*(4), 1103-1126.

Schumpe, B. M., Bélanger, J. J., Moyano, M., & Nisa, C. F. (2020). The Role of Sensation Seeking in Political Violence: An Extension of the Significance Quest Theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 118*(4), 743-761. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1037/pspp0000223*

Šerek, J., Machackova, H., & Macek, P. (2018). Who crosses the norms? Predictors of the readiness for non-normative political participation among adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence, 62,* 18-26.

Simmons, N. N. (2012). *Effects of Leadership Decapitation on Social Movements, 1960-1995 Pennsylvania State University*.

Simonson, M. D., Lacombe, M. J., Green, J., & Druckman, J. N. (2024). Guns and Democracy: Anti-System Attitudes, Protest, and Support for Violence Among Pandemic Gun-Buyers. *Political Research Quarterly, 77*(3), 962-977. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/10659129241249662*

Skitka, L. J., & Morgan, G. S. (2014). The Social and Political Implications of Moral Conviction. *Political Psychology, 35,* 95-110. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1111/pops.12166*

Stankov, L., Knezevic, G., Saucier, G., Radovic, B., & Milovanovic, B. (2018). Militant Extremist Mindset and the Assessment of Radicalization in the General Population. *Journal of Individual Differences, 39*(2), 88-98. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1027/1614-0001/a000253*

Stott, C., Ball, R., Drury, J., Neville, F., Reicher, S., Boardman, A., & Choudhury, S. (2018). The evolving normative dimensions of 'riot': Towards an elaborated social identity explanation. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 48*(6), 834-849. *https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2376*

Sullivan, C. M. (2016). Undermining Resistance:Mobilization, Repression, and the Enforcement of Political Order. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 60*(7), 1163-1190. *https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002714567951*

Swann Jr, W. B., Gómez, A., Huici, C., Morales, J., & Hixon, J. G. (2010). Identity fusion and self-sacrifice: arousal as a catalyst of pro-group fighting, dying, and helping behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 99*(5), 824.

Swann Jr, W. B., Jetten, J., Gómez, Á., Whitehouse, H., & Bastian, B. (2012). When group membership gets personal: a theory of identity fusion. *Psychological review, 119*(3), 441.

Tausch, N., Becker, J. C., Spears, R., Christ, O., Saab, R., Singh, P., & Siddiqui, R. N. (2011). Explaining Radical Group Behavior: Developing Emotion and Efficacy Routes to Normative and Nonnormative Collective Action. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 101*(1), 129-148. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1037/a0022728*

Thomas, E. F., Bird, L., O'Donnell, A., Osborne, D., Buonaiuto, E., Yip, L., Lizzio-Wilson, M., Wenzel, M., & Skitka, L. (2024). Do conspiracy beliefs fuel support for reactionary social movements? Effects of misbeliefs on actions to oppose lockdown and to "stop the steal". *British Journal of Social Psychology, 63*(3), 1297-1317. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1111/bjso.12727*

Travaglino, G. A., & Moon, C. (2020). Power distance orientation as an antecedent of individuals' intentions to engage in radical political action. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 23*(8), 1283-1308. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/1368430220921940*

Uscinski, J., Enders, A., Diekman, A., Funchion, J., Klofstad, C., Kuebler, S., Murthi, M., Premaratne, K., Seelig, M., Verdear, D., & Wuchty, S. (2022). The psychological and political correlates of conspiracy theory beliefs. *Scientific Reports, 12*(1), 21672. *https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-25617-0*

Uwalaka, T. (2024). Social media as solidarity vehicle during the 2020#EndSARS Protests in Nigeria. *Journal of Asian and African Studies, 59*(2), 338-353.

van Prooijen, J.-W., & Douglas, K. M. (2018). Belief in conspiracy theories: Basic principles of an emerging research domain. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 48*(7), 897-908. *https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2530*

Van Stekelenburg, J., & Klandermans, B. (2013). The social psychology of protest. *Current Sociology, 61*(5-6), 886-905.

Van Stekelenburg, J., & Klandermans, B. (2017). Individuals in movements: A social psychology of contention. *Handbook of social movements across disciplines,* 103-139.

Van Zomeren, M., Leach, C. W., & Spears, R. (2012). Protesters as "passionate economists" a dynamic dual pathway model of approach coping with collective disadvantage. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 16*(2), 180-199.

Varmann, A. H., Kruse, L., Bierwiaczonek, K., Gómez, A., Vázquez, A., & Kunst, J. R. (2024). How identity fusion predicts extreme pro-group orientations: A meta-analysis. *European Review of Social Psychology, 35*(1), 162-197. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1080/10463283.2023.2190267*

Vegetti, F., & Littvay, L. (2022). Belief in conspiracy theories and attitudes toward political violence. *Italian Political Science Review/Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica, 52*(1), 18-32.

Vergani, M., Barton, G., & Iqbal, M. (2017). Beyond social relationships: Investigating positive and negative attitudes towards violent protest within the same social movement. *Journal of Sociology, 53*(2), 445-460. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/1440783316688344*

Wagner-Egger, P., Adam-Troian, J., Cordonier, L., Cafiero, F., & Bronner, G. (2022). The Yellow Vests in France: Psychosocial Determinants and Consequences of the Adherence to a Social Movement in a Representative Sample of the Population. *International Review of Social Psychology, 35*(1), 14. *https://doi.org/doi:10.5334/irsp.556*

Webber, D., Babush, M., Schori-Eyal, N., Vazeou-Nieuwenhuis, A., Hettiarachchi, M., Bélanger, J. J., Moyano, M., Trujillo, H. M., Gunaratna, R., & Kruglanski, A. W. (2018). The road to extremism: Field and experimental evidence that significance loss-induced need for closure fosters radicalization. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 114*(2), 270.

Weber, H. (2004). Explorations in the social construction of anger. *Motivation and emotion, 28,* 197-219.

Wohl, M. J. A., King, M., & Taylor, D. M. (2014). Expressions of political practice: Collective angst moderates politicized collective identity to predict support for political protest (peaceful or violent) among diaspora group members. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 43,* 114-125. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1016/j.ijintrel.2014.08.020*

Yan, M., Chiang, A. Y., & Lin, Y.-R. (2024). From Posts to Pavement, or Vice Versa? The Dynamic Interplay between Online Activism and Offline Confrontations. Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media,

Yzerbyt, V., Dumont, M., Wigboldus, D., & Gordijn, E. (2003). I feel for us: The impact of categorization and identification on emotions and action tendencies. *British Journal of Social Psychology, 42*(4), 533-549.

Zhu, Y., Cheng, E. W., Shen, F., & Walker, R. M. (2022). An Eye for an Eye? An Integrated Model of Attitude Change Toward Protest Violence. *Political communication., 39*(4), 539-563. *https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2022.2053915*

Zlobina, A., & Vazquez, A. G. (2018). What is the right way to protest? On the process of justification of protest, and its relationship to the propensity to participate in different types of protest. *Social Movement Studies, 17*(2), 234-250. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1080/14742837.2017.1393408*

Zmigrod, L. (2020). The role of cognitive rigidity in political ideologies: Theory, evidence, and future directions. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences, 34,* 34-39.

Zmigrod, L., & Goldenberg, A. (2021). Cognition and Emotion in Extreme Political Action: Individual Differences and Dynamic Interactions. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 30*(3), 218-227. *https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/0963721421993820*

Zmigrod, L., Rentfrow, P. J., & Robbins, T. W. (2019). Cognitive inflexibility predicts extremist attitudes. *Frontiers in Psychology, 10,* 989.

Zmigrod, L., Rentfrow, P. J., & Robbins, T. W. (2020). The partisan mind: Is extreme political partisanship related to cognitive inflexibility? *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 149*(3), 407.

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

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND
EVIDENCE ON SECURITY THREATS

25-012-01