# Interpreting "cumulative extremism": six proposals for enhancing conceptual clarity

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# Interpreting 'Cumulative Extremism': Six proposals for enhancing conceptual clarity

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In 2006, the political scientist Roger Eatwell urged that further attention be paid to 'the way in which one form of extremism can feed off and magnify other forms [of extremism]', a process he called 'cumulative extremism'[1]. Four years later, Eatwell and Goodwin went so far as to claim that processes of cumulative extremism (CE) could be 'more threatening to the liberal democratic order than attacks from lone wolf extreme right-wingers or even al-Qaida-inspired spectacular bombings'[2]. Now, a further three years later, there is evidence that policy makers, practitioners and other academics working in fields such as counter-terrorism, counter-radicalisation and community cohesion are paying heed to these arguments, with the concept of CE, or variations on it – 'tit-for-tat radicalisation'[3], 'cumulative radicalisation'[4] or 'connectivity between extremisms'[5] – gaining considerable traction. Particularly in the UK, the term has become an increasingly common component of debates about 'extremism', usually being deployed to refer to the dynamic between extreme Islamist groups (those with their roots in the now-banned organisation Al-Muhajiroun) and the most vociferous anti-Muslim and extreme right-wing groups such as the English Defence League (EDL), the British National Party (BNP) and the National Front (NF).[6] The concept is a regular feature of government-hosted workshops and planning meetings[7], and appears in recent iterations of the UK government's counter-terrorism strategy.[8]

Interest in 'cumulative extremism' has intensified in the wake of recent events: the EDL and BNP demonstrations, as well as a series of attacks on mosques, that took place after Drummer Lee Rigby, of The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, was hacked to death by two Islamist extremists outside the Royal Artillery Barracks in Woolwich, Southeast London in May 2013; and an attempt in June 2012 by six Islamist extremists to carry out a lethal attack on an EDL demonstration in Dewsbury, Yorkshire. In the aftermath of these events the spectre of CE has been raised front and centre by academics, media commentators,[9] and policy makers. It has also appeared in legal argumentation: during the trial of the Islamists who had planned to bomb the Dewsbury EDL demonstration, the prosecutor pointedly claimed that their actions, if successful, would have been 'bound to draw a response in revenge from its target and those who sympathise with the EDL' and 'would most likely [have] led to a tit-for-tat spiral of violence and terror.'[10]

In a broad sense, we support the main thrust of Eatwell's initial argument that the interactional dynamics between opposing groups require greater and more detailed attention if we are to better understand the ebb and flow of 'extremist'[11] mobilisations both in the UK and elsewhere. The incorporation of 'CE'[12] into contemporary policy and academic debates about extremism can, and has, helped direct attention to the empirically well-grounded idea that community polarisation and emergent 'spirals of violent episodes'[13] are often associated with escalating hostilities between opposing movements. At least in the UK, the concept of CE has also been effectively used to encourage a welcome adjustment to the overwhelming focus on Islamist terrorism in the immediate post-9/11 context. Yet we would argue that more work is needed on this concept – and that in some cases greater care is required in its application[14] – if it is to provide a *useful* addition to the vocabulary of scholarly and policy debates about extremism, radicalisation and political violence.[15]

Two issues require particularly urgent attention. First, more precise conceptual definition is needed. In spite of the increased usage of 'CE' and cognate terms, there has been surprisingly little attempt to interrogate this raft of concepts, what they mean, what their parameters are and how they are used. The

current lack of clear conceptual definition greatly increases the chances of academics from different disciplines, policy makers and practitioners talking at cross-purposes with one another. It also undermines efforts to form a detailed analysis of when and to what degree processes of CE do actually take place. As Bartlett and Birdwell illustrate in their provocative essay on the popularity of the term in the immediate post-Woolwich context, even in the paradigmatic case of the interactions between extreme Islamist groups and anti-Muslim/extreme right-wing groups, it is far from clear that these interactions are producing a spiral of violence, or are accelerating community polarization.[16] Although there was a sharp rise in anti-Muslim incidents following the Woolwich murder, this spike soon declined, as also happened following the attack on London on 7 July 2005.[17] Rather than escalating their tactics after the killing of Lee Rigby, leaders of the EDL actually soon sought to publicly distance their movement from, and discourage their activists from involvement in, forms of violent retaliation (and within five months the senior leadership of the EDL had left the group altogether). Furthermore, surveys undertaken in the immediate aftermath of the killing of Lee Rigby not only indicated that support for the EDL actually fell rather than rose,[18] but also that public attitudes towards Muslims appeared to be becoming marginally more positive.[19]

The second issue concerns the absence of any concerted effort to explain why movement – countermovement interactions between opposing 'extremist' groups can have quite different trajectories.[20] Whilst in some cases the tactical 'innovations' and 'adaptations'[21] of opposing movements might escalate towards violence, in others they might lead to the adoption of alternate but non-violent tactics. Similarly, whereas some movement – countermovement interactions might draw in multiple actors, thus expanding the contest and fuelling wider processes of communal polarisation, in other cases the main protagonists might become increasingly isolated from, and irrelevant to, wider political contests. Even within movement – countermovement contests, their interactions might generate different outcomes at different points in time – sometimes fueling processes of escalation, at other times leading to de-escalation. For example, in the 1990s, an intense and violent conflict raged on Britain's streets between groups of anti-fascist and fascist activists[22], arguably far more violent than that between Islamists and the EDL today. However, in the late 1990s this conflict eventually de-escalated, with a tactical innovation *away* from further violence on the part of the extreme right and *towards* 'community' engagement, an innovation soon adopted by anti-fascists.[23]

If the concepts and theories we use to explain social phenomena are to be reliable and useful, they ought to help us understand not only when and why these phenomena do occur, but also when they do not occur.[24] If we do not analyse and theorise why these interactions *sometimes do not* escalate towards violence and *sometimes do not* lead to greater societal polarization, it is likely that CE will become a rather blunt analytical instrument that renders too many false positives – i.e. it will make spirals of violence and community polarization seem almost inevitable. Such a tendency towards risk amplification should be taken seriously. Apart from the fact that it may distort our understanding of the threat posed by political extremism at any given time[25], inflated risk estimates are likely to prove financially, strategically and psychologically costly. As the independent reviewer of UK terrorism legislation warned in his 2013 annual report: 'If perception becomes detached from reality, the consequence will be unnecessary fears, unnecessary powers and the allocation of excessive resources to the counter-terrorism machine.'[26] Furthermore, and somewhat ironically, in the case of the contest between Islamist extremist – anti-Muslim/extreme right wing groups in particular, there may actually be a kind of perverse symbiosis between discussions of CE that reproduce and amplify discourses about seemingly inevitable 'spiral[s] of violence and terror' and the narratives of the 'extremist' groups themselves that cohere around and depend upon apocalyptic warnings of inevitable ethnic and religious violence.[27]

In this article we start to address these two issues. We do this by setting out six proposals for how talk of CE might be made more conceptually and analytically robust, thereby also laying a foundation for future research into how, and under what conditions, interactions between opposing 'extremist' movements may escalate towards violence, or may exacerbate community polarisation. Like several

other academics[28], we believe that social movement theories in particular can contribute a great deal to strengthen the theoretical and conceptual apparatus used to analyze terrorism and political violence. Indeed, CE might be read as one form of what della Porta refers to more broadly as processes of 'competitive escalation'.[29] As such, we ground our six proposals both in the already extensive literature on social movement mobilization, in particular on analyses of movement – countermovement interactions, and in historical case studies related, for the most part, to the mobilization and escalation of extreme right wing and anti-Muslim protest groups, our own primary areas of empirical research to date. The first three proposals relate to the description and conceptualisation of *patterns* of CE. Proposals four to six relate to the *processes* conceived of as being at the core of CE, i.e. the interactions between opposing movements. Our intention throughout this article is not to be prescriptive about what CE *is*, or *ought to be conceived as*. Rather our aim is to enable those who do invoke CE or a similar term to do so with a greater degree of precision, and to empower those who are reading or hearing about CE to be able to do so from a more critical perspective.

**Proposal One: Make clearer where reference is being made to 'extreme' narratives and where reference being made to 'extreme' forms of action**

When people make use of the term 'CE', are they referring to processes of ideological radicalisation– what in McCauley and Moskalenko's[30] terminology would be an ascent towards the top of the 'narrative pyramid' – or are they talking about an escalation of protest methods towards extra-legal and violent strategies – an ascent towards the higher reaches of the 'action pyramid'?

Of course, in most instances the answer is likely to be to some extent both. After all, protest narratives and protest actions interact with one another: the tactical choices made by social movement activists are shaped by the protest narratives that they and their supporters construct, and these tactical choices are in turn likely to shape how activists feel about their opponents and how they narrate their struggle. Yet, as extant research and debate on the concept of radicalisation makes quite clear, it is worth teasing the two apart because, while the journey of individuals or groups up or down the narrative and action pyramids might at times be closely inter-related, they are nonetheless distinct and discernible phenomena whose correlation with one another (let alone their causal relationship) is far from straightforward. '[R]adicalisation of opinion' as McCauley and Moskalenko observe, 'is certainly not always a good predictor of radicalisation of action'.[31] And according to John Horgan, the idea that the adoption of radical ideas *causes* terrorism is 'perhaps the greatest myth alive today in terrorism research' because '[First], the overwhelming majority of people who hold radical beliefs do not engage in violence. And second, there is increasing evidence that people who engage in terrorism don't necessarily hold radical beliefs'.[32]

Drawing on these critiques of 'radicalisation' debates, we urge that, in discussions about CE greater differentiation be made between on the one hand, processes of affirmation and validation of opposing world views in the face of their political opponents, and, on the other, mutual escalation of protests tactics towards violent action. The question this raises is how one might achieve this. We make two suggestions. First, and most simply, greater differentiation might be achieved through more explicit description of what are being treated as the indicators of CE in any given case. Second, and related to this, indicators should be sought that leave as little interpretive space as possible i.e. indicators ought not only comprise of some of the complex and on occasion rather vague terms – such as 'increased community tensions' or even 'hate crime' – that often populate these discussions at present, but are notoriously prone to challenge and contestation.[33] We might, for example, start with responding to some straightforward questions such as: Are incidents on-line or off-line? If they are on-line, do they comprise generalised abuse towards a group of people (e.g. 'Muslims', 'Pakis' or 'kuffars'), or are they directed at individuals? If they threaten some form of action, do these threats take the form of a broadly menacing statement (e.g. 'let's throw all Muslims out of the country') or are they a directed threat of violence (e.g. 'we are coming to burn down your mosque'). If incidents are off-line, are they

verbal or physical attacks? Were they carried out by individuals associated with an organised group? What was the degree of the verbal or physical attack – how far did it exceed established norms of public behaviour?

Our intention is not to belittle the significance of incidents that fall short of physical violence. Abusive and threatening language can be deeply damaging, particularly for those at whom it is targeted, and may of course provoke a response that could itself contribute to some kind of CE dynamic.[34] The point we make is simply that a clearer description of the evidence used to make claims about CE better enables us to interpret the prospects of contest escalation and how these change over time. Hard talk is not the same as action, nor is it the same as intent to cause physical harm. Whilst it is clear that the warning, issued by the leader of the EDL, to 'every single Muslim watching' that the 'Islamic community' would face 'the full force of the English Defence League' if any British citizen was hurt or killed,[35] may serve to intimidate and provoke Britain's Muslim communities, is it evidence of actual intent to commit violence? Similarly, whilst it may derive from deeply felt hostilities towards Muslims, when EDL activists mime shooting at a group of passing women who are wearing niqabs, few if any of these activists are expressing a serious intent to carry out an armed attack. Instead, it is in large part an act of bravado, a twisted joke between friends (although of course the victim of such abuse might still feel deeply intimidated). In a similar vein, we would contend that there are substantial differences between a social media 'flame war' such as when EDL activists and al-Shabaab, the Somali Islamist group aligned with al-Qaida, abuse each other through Twitter,[36] and face-to-face confrontations between EDL and Islamist activists on the streets of London. Whilst both might be used to reinforce a worldview in which each group represents for the other the supposed barbarism that they claim to deplore, social media agitation requires a lower threshold of participation, as well as lower levels of planning and organisation. It would also seem to have a less direct relationship with the development of any 'spiral of violence'.

**Proposal Two: Interrogate the relationship between the 'spirals of violence' posited at the core of CE, and wider processes of 'community polarization'**

To date, 'CE' or cognate concepts have been applied to describe social and political processes of varying breadth. Particularly where the terminology used has been that of 'tit-for-tat radicalisation'[37] or of 'connectivity between extremisms'[38], the processes have in practice been narrowly defined, and 'CE' is discussed primarily as a process undergone by the activists, supporters or sympathisers of the relevant 'extremist' groups. Yet elsewhere, 'CE' is used to refer to a far broader phenomenon that includes a more generalised deterioration of community relations. Eatwell, for example, describes both the increasingly tense and eventually violent interactions between extremist groups *and* how these interactions contributed to the erosion of community cohesion and ultimately to the riots that affected Bradford in 2001. A similar interpretation is offered by Eatwell and Goodwin who talk about both a 'spiral of violence' and about processes of 'communal polarization' within the rubric of 'CE'.[39] Under this definition, we might conceive of CE as comprising two sets of processes that, whilst often closely related, can nonetheless be distinguished from one another. Firstly, there are the core processes of CE: the intensification and escalation of the contest between the opposing movements. Secondly, there are the processes through which these movement – countermovement contests play upon and emphasise extant social and political divisions.

Building on Eatwell and Goodwin's analysis, we would argue that there is considerable merit in examining how core CE processes intersect with wider social and political processes of inclusion and exclusion, and of in-group and out-group formation. Yet this raises three salient questions. First, what is the correlation between these 'spirals of violence' and 'community polarization'? As Eatwell's account[40] of the disturbances in northern English towns and cities in the summer of 2001 makes clear, spirals of inter-group violence and processes of community polarization can on some occasions fit neatly and dangerously together. Sometimes, however, these processes may not be so well aligned.

When this is the case, whilst we might see an intensification of the contest between the opposing groups, we might also see a withering of wider public support for, or interest in, these groups – with intensifying inter-group hostilities actually bucking broader societal trends. It might even be argued that this is the case in relation to the current contests between anti-Muslim protest groups and extreme Islamist groups in the UK, where the intensification of hostilities between groups like the EDL and Al-Muhajiroun (and its subsequent incarnations) has occurred at a time when the popularity of extreme Islamist positions within Britain's Muslim communities was beginning to wane[41] and where there is also evidence of declining public anxieties about the perceived threat of Islam and Muslims to Britain or to a 'British' way of life.[42]

The second question concerns whether movement – countermovement interactions are actually facilitating the recruitment of new activists or are only really serving to sustain the commitment of extant activists. In other words, are these confrontations actually serving to *expand* the pool of support for the groups involved, or is their main effect to *sustain or intensify* the commitment and action of those already involved? For example, when right-wing extremists demonstrated outside Finsbury Park Mosque to 'stop' extreme Islamist cleric Abu Hamza in 2002, did these actions attract many new recruits for either of these opposing groups, or were those activists who took part in this series of protests already 'radicalised'? Asking such questions enables us to disaggregate analyses of the outcomes of CE by activists' prior involvement in similar activities, giving us a more detailed picture of the impacts of these contests. There is undoubtedly a difference between interactions that only attract the same old long-term activists, and those that draw in people who have no prior engagement in such groups or activities.

The third question is perhaps the most fundamental: whose actions represent the core processes of CE? Social movements are very rarely homogeneous organizations. They tend to comprise multiple groups, sub-groups, factions or cliques, each of which may differ in terms of their interests, anxieties, sub-cultures and tactical tastes.[43] Taking the UK's anti-Muslim protest movement as an example, whilst this movement has been dominated by the EDL since its emergence in 2009, other groups such as Casuals United, North-West Infidels, or March for England sometimes collaborate and sometimes compete with the EDL. Each of these groups has carved out its own identity within this scene: March for England activists have tended to be more reluctant to adopt broader anti-Muslim rhetoric instead of focusing their attentions only on 'Muslim extremists', activists from the North-West Infidels have tended to advocate more radical protest tactics than the EDL leadership, and so forth. Even within the EDL itself, during demonstrations it has tended to be groups of younger activists who are more inclined to seek out opportunities for physical confrontations with opposition activists.[44] As such, the fact that some of any given movement's adherents might advocate or take part in violent actions does not mean that the movement as a whole will necessarily adopt a similar direction. Indeed, there are several historic examples, such as the Weather Underground, the Red Brigades, or the Red Army Faction, that suggest that when there is a move towards the adoption of more violent tactics, this process is usually undertaken by only a very small, and often marginal, group of activists that condense out of a much wider movement.

This raises a number of challenges for analyses of CE. First, there is an obvious need to be sensitive to the differences and possible tensions between whole group and sub-group processes.[45] Second, how do those who use the concept of CE situate different organisations within their accounts of CE? In particular, are groups generally designated 'non-violent' but ideologically 'radical' or 'illiberal', such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, conceived of as part of the core or part of the periphery? Third, how do analyses of CE deal with the actions of 'solo actors'[46] or breakaway groups who might claim to be affiliated with or inspired by known groups, but who actually have relatively little, if any, contact with that group, and certainly cannot claim to represent it? Even though such actors may be clearly influenced by the groups and milieux with which they identify, what do their actions really signify in terms of the unfolding of a movement – countermovement contest? For example, whilst some individual EDL members might

sympathise with the actions of Norwegian terrorist Anders Behring Breivik, many more found his actions abhorrent. Similarly, those responsible for an arson attack on the Muswell Hill mosque in north London, daubing 'EDL' on its walls, may not have had anything to do with the group *per se*,[47] but clearly its 'brand' served as an inspiration, rationalisation or justification for the perpetrators. And how do the actions of Pavlo Lapshyn sit within discussions of CE? A Ukrainian student on a work placement in England, Lapshyn murdered an 82 year-old Muslim pensioner in April 2013 *before* Lee Rigby's murder, and then, in its aftermath, detonated a series of minor explosions outside three West Midlands mosques in order to 'increase racial conflict'[48] There was no evidence to suggest that Lapshyn's racist terrorist campaign was incited by the killing in Woolwich.[49] However, because it ran in parallel with its aftermath it was widely presumed contemporaneously that they were related phenomenon, feeding perceptions that a violent backlash was taking place.

**Proposal Three: Describe in detail the ebb and flow of interactions between the opposing 'extremist' groups**

The patterns of mobilisation and counter-mobilisation between opposing 'extremist' groups are far more likely to be uneven and sporadic than they are to take the form of a steady escalation and intensification of hostility.[50] At a meso-level, we might expect to see a clustering of interaction around key events. For example, the interactions between anti-Muslim groups and extreme Islamist groups in the UK have tended to follow in the wake of key symbolic events: the killing of Lee Rigby by two extremist Islamists in May 2013; the burning of a remembrance poppy at the Armistice Day ceremonies in 2010; the widely reported verbal abuse of British soldiers by Islamists in Luton in March 2009 or the protracted media-storm around the activities of Abu Hamza at Finsbury Park Mosque in 2002-5. But with the exception of the events in Luton in March 2009, which provided the 'initialising event'[51] for the forming of the EDL and therefore did generate a sustained shift in the protest dynamics, the intensity of the movement – countermovement contest has soon fallen back to similar levels to those that preceded the incident. Similar patterns have been described in the wake of the attack of 9/11 and other major terrorist events, where individuals or groups have sought 'vicarious retribution'[52] against communities deemed responsible for the attacks, but retaliatory action has soon subsided.[53] And to take a historic example, following the 'battle of Cable Street' in 1936, approximately 2,000 people joined the British Union of Fascists, only for this support to quickly fade away.[54] Similarly, at a more micro-level, within specific movement – countermovement encounters there are often only a limited number of flash points. For example, much of the public disorder and violence that has occurred during EDL demonstrations has centred either on the emotionally charged interactions between EDL activists and their opponents during demonstrations, or has taken place afterwards, when, as activists disperse and it becomes increasingly difficult for police to ensure that opposing activists are kept apart from one another.[55]

Our third proposal is that accounts of CE should detail these meso- and micro-level patterns within contests between 'extremist' groups, paying attention both to the peaks and to the troughs of activity. This would sharpen our analyses of CE in two important ways. Firstly, it would provide a more precise picture of the trajectory of the contest than that which emerges when the focus is primarily on the spikes of action. We should not only be asking why the intensity of these contests increases and how quickly, but also how quickly these spikes drop away, and whether activity falls back to previous levels.

Secondly, detailing these meso- and micro-level patterns also encourages closer scrutiny of what we refer to as the different wavelengths of CE. Following McCauley and Moskalenko's analysis of the processes of radicalisation,[56] CE, we propose, operates both through shorter-wave and longer-wave social and psychological processes. On the one hand, movement – countermovement interactions are shaped by the longer-term formation of in-group and out-group boundaries, the production and reproduction of interpretive frames, the nurturing of resentments, grievances and hatred, and the strategic positioning of groups in relation to political opportunity structures. Yet these contests are also

shaped by shorter-wave processes. They might be fashioned, for example, by a series of tactical exchanges between opposing groups – e.g. after having their demonstration curtailed by counter-demonstrators one week, the following week activists decide that they will disrupt a rally being held by their opponents. They will also be shaped by activists' cognitive and emotional responses to the actions of their fellow activists or opponents, such as outrage when the core symbols of their in-group are desecrated, the desire to show solidarity with their fellow activists, or even the thrill of confrontation.[57]

Of course, these shorter-wave and longer-wave processes intersect with one another. In-group and out-group identities are often forged through action (the arguments on Facebook, the response of one activist to the banner of an opponent, etc.).[58] Conversely, action gains impetus from, and is given meaning by, these longer-wave processes. However, being sensitive to the differences between longer and shorter-wave processes enables a more nuanced interpretation of events. We might, for example, want to reflect on the differences between those actions carried out on the 'day of anger' – that relatively brief period of time when feelings of outrage can seem almost to compel people to action – and those carried out on the 'day of revenge' – when those initial feelings of outrage will first have subsided and then have been transformed into something such as a more elaborate justification or rationale for action.[59] It also informs what ought to be one of the key questions for analysing CE: what is the relationship between the shorter-wave social and psychological processes associated with the occasional flaring up of movement – countermovement interactions and the longer-wave construction of oppositional identities, resentment and mutual loathing? How do the shorter-wave arguments, confrontations, and emotional reflexes contribute to and fuel the longer-wave construction of oppositional identities and animosities (and what can be done to interrupt these pathways)? One of the principle drawbacks in conceiving of CE as a process of 'tit-for-tat' radicalisation is that it would seem to do little to encourage this kind of reflection on the interactions between multiple wavelengths of CE.

**Proposal Four: Attend to the multiple pathways of movement – countermovement influence**

In their discussion of patterns of social movement mobilisation, Oliver and Myers observe that whilst you have to draw boundaries around a problem in order to study it, 'if you draw the boundaries too narrowly, you can mis-specify the problem and generate seriously erroneous conclusions about cause-effect relationships'.[60] We would argue that, to date, accounts of CE, and especially accounts that frame CE as a 'tit-for-tat' process, have tended to draw their boundaries too narrowly by focusing their attention primarily on just one form of movement – countermovement influence: namely, where opposing movements provoke a response by antagonising one another.

Analyses of social movement interactions actually suggest a wide spectrum of interactional effects and pathways between opposing movements. Some of these comprise other forms of *direct* impacts.[61] Movements might, for example, encourage countermovement mobilisation through a 'demonstration effect', by indicating to rivals 'that collective action can effect (or resist) change in particular aspects of society'[62]. Opposing movements may also have a direct impact on one another through the cycles of tactical and symbolic innovation and adaptation in which the engage.[63] As opposing movements seek to outmanoeuvre one another, they might emulate, imitate, learn from, subvert and invert one another's strategies, images and symbols, generating a cultural and political syncretism that feeds a co-production of collective action frames and may fuel the diffusion of similar protest tactics across multiple social movements.[64] This has been the case, for example, with the 'autonomous nationalists' in Europe, who have self-consciously adopted the style and strategies of the anarchist 'black bloc' whilst retaining a very different ideological core.[65]

Furthermore, opposing movements might also influence each other through *indirect* effects – by altering the cultural, political or legal environment in which each side operates.[66] When one group develops new modes of action or new interpretive frames they elicit responses not only from opposition groups, but also from other actors such as the state, the media, or sections of the general public, whose actions may

alter political or media agendas and even the linguistic terrain used to define the terms of debate. One recent example of this in the UK is how the political narratives and policy frameworks dealing with 'radicalisation' that emerged initially as a response to Islamist extremism have also come to form the basis of the response to the threat of the right-wing extremism.[67] Similarly, legislation and police powers brought in to deal with one protest group may also be used to respond to others – a case in point being the 1936 Public Order Act which entered the statute books to counter British fascism but was regularly used thereafter to inhibit left-wing protests. These environmental changes in turn require tactical or ideological innovation by other protest groups (opposing or otherwise) operating within that environment, producing what della Porta and Tarrow call an 'interactive diffusion' of tactics.[68]

If we are to develop accurate understandings and interpretations of how and why patterns of CE develop, or do not develop as the case may be, due attention must be paid to these multiple pathways of influence. One way to achieve this would be to shift away from treating CE as a binary process involving two (or perhaps three) extremist groups, and instead conceive of CE as a broader process of 'coevolution' involving multiple actors.[69] The social movements literature suggests four broad categories of actors whose actions are likely to be of particular significance to analyses of CE. The first are other social movement groups. In practice, movement – countermovement contests rarely involve only two movements, with most groups having more than one opponent. For example, closer inspection of the contest between extreme right wing, anti-Muslim and extreme Islamist groups in Britain, reveals a multiplicity of social movement actors with different aims, motivations and ideological alignments.[70] As well as clashing with extreme Islamist groups, EDL activists also often clash with an assortment of left-wing, anti-fascist and Muslim groups as well as with groups of local youths (usually from black and minority ethnic groups) who might not be aligned with any particular social movement.[71] And although there have been some efforts to forge coalitions between anti-fascist and Muslim groups[72], these various opponents of the EDL could scarcely be portrayed as a coherent opposition. Some parts of the anti-fascist and Islamist movements in particular are highly critical of one another, opposing each other on issues such as the human rights of homosexuals and the diffusion of sharia law.[73] Indeed, even within anti-fascist movements there have been bitter arguments about how to respond to groups like the EDL; a fact which links to the related point that it is often competition between groups from *within the same* social movement as much as reactions against groups from opposing social movements that shapes the evolution of activists' collective action frames and tactical choices.[74]

A second group comprises the various state actors (national and local government as well as law enforcement agencies) whose actions or inaction can influence the dynamics of movement – countermovement contests. The state might, for example, impose outright bans on some groups; new legislation, increased police powers, heavier sentencing or more restrictive bail conditions may be used to deter certain forms of protest action (although, as we discuss below, sometimes these measures may have unintended consequences); and state actors may also seek to manipulate the direction of protest groups through 'covert' or undercover operations.[75] And even beyond these more high profile interventions, there are a host of other actors – youth workers, neighbourhood police officers, local schools etc – whose actions alter the terrain of extant movement - countermovement conflicts through initiatives such as school partnering programmes, police campaigns to inform young people about the possible consequences of participation in demonstrations, or strategically arranged 'away days' to take young people out of the area when demonstrations are planned.[76] Of course, in some contexts state actors might also be a direct target of or might even collude with one of the opposing groups.[77]

A third group of actors are the media and, increasingly, those who set social media agendas. By shaping the 'discursive opportunities' for political violence, these actors mediate between political opportunity structures and political action.[78] Most simply, media agendas might coincide with and therefore fuel activist narratives and grievances. This has arguably been the case where EDL activists have seized upon media representations of Muslims in parts of the British press to justify their cause.[79] There are

also more direct forms of interaction between media actors and movement activists. Most modern protest groups deliberately court the media, and at least to some extent script their demonstrations to gain maximum media attention. Yet the media has also deliberately sought out 'controversial' guests such as extreme Islamist preacher Anjem Choudary who appeared on several news programmes in the wake of Lee Rigby's murder (leading to an investigation by the broadcasting regulator Ofcom following viewer complaints and condemnation from other media outlets). On other occasions media outlets have engaged in directly provocative behaviour. *The Sun* newspaper, for instance, 'in an attempt to galvanise the kind of confrontation that would make good copy', sent a 'battle bus' complete with Page 3 models to North London where extreme Islamists were protesting after being locked out of the Finsbury Park mosque, and where extreme right-wing activists had gathered to demonstrate against them.[80] Media actors have even been the focus of collective action, such as where the stories they have printed about groups like the EDL have sparked protests outside newspaper offices, veiled threats and even direct assaults on journalists – including an instance of one photojournalist being set alight.[81]

The fourth group are those individuals or groups who hold special symbolic value for the activist groups. These may include the victims of an outrage around which one of the competing groups seeks to mobilise, for instance, the family or the regiment of Lee Rigby in the wake of his killing. Decisive action by these individuals can do much to shape the course of movement – countermovement contests, at least in the short term. For example, in all probability the strongly worded condemnation by Lee Rigby's regiment and family denouncing any retaliatory protests curtailed the backlash to his killing (particularly from those activists whose self-professed patriotism and desire to protest had to be squared with a desire to be seen to be respecting the wishes of Lee Rigby's family and colleagues). Other actors who might fall within this group are those whose social or professional position affords them particularly high status within the worldview of one or other of the activist groups such as, in the case of groups like the EDL or the BNP, those who are members of the British armed forces.

**Proposal Five: Examine how the wider cultural, social and political environment might shape the movement – countermovement contest**

What research on social movements also makes clear is that there are a number of environmental variables that are likely to either intensify or dampen movement - countermovement contests.[82] Our analyses of CE, and in particular the assessments made of the risk of contest escalation, can therefore also be enriched if they situate these contests in relation to their wider cultural, social and political environment. Whilst a full review of such environmental variables goes beyond the scope of this paper, some of the most salient of these variables might include:

*The 'cultural resonance'[83] of movement – countermovement framing contests*

To what extent do the opposing groups' narratives coincide with popular perceptions of the challenges facing or of tensions within society? And to what extent do they coincide with 'media attention cycle[s]'[84]? Where their competing narratives – the 'framing contest'[85] between the groups – have greater cultural resonance, it is more likely that the groups will attract attention and generate active and/or latent support, in turn making it more likely that the movement-countermovement contest translates into a wider process of community polarization. Where these framing contests don't have such cultural resonance, whilst two extremist groups might find themselves locked into an increasingly antagonistic relationship with one another, we might expect the process of CE to remain relatively contained. In the case of the interactions between the anti-Muslim protest groups and Islamic extremist groups in the UK, both groups have gained energy from the way that their collective action frames have coincided with public discourses about the 'clash of civilisations' – the idea that contemporary conflicts will centre not so much on competition between states for control of economic or political resources as on supranational and supposedly intractable cultural differences[86]. Indeed, they have sufficient resonance with public and media discourses that, even though the individual groups are to a

large extent positioned by mainstream political and media actors as pariahs, they are able to attract substantial attention and persuade a minority of the public that theirs is a cause that warrants support.

*'Open' versus 'closed' policy issues*

Movements are most likely to mobilise both proactively and reactively around such 'open' rather than around more 'closed' issues - around issues where there is extant policy and public debate.[87] Thus one factor that might alter the CE dynamic is the extent to which either the state or one of the competing movements is able to close the issue. In this regard, it might be argued that issues relating to race, religion or national identity would seem particularly amenable to prolonged movement – countermovement contests (which may or may not escalate depending on other relevant variables) since they are almost impossible to 'close'.

*The extent and nature of opportunities for contact between opposing activists*

The arguments and confrontations that take place when activists come into contact with one another not only become an integral part of activists' mythologies and collective action frames, but also provide social movement activists and groups with an important and lasting source of what Randall Collins calls 'emotional energy'[88]. Thus, another key question ought to be about the extent and nature of the opportunities for contact between opposing activists and whether these contacts are more or less conducive to contest escalation or de-escalation. Of particular interest to the analysis of contemporary cases is how new opportunities for contact generated by digital technologies affect the picture. For example, whilst opposing groups of activists are in some respects likely to have greater access to one another through social media and web-forums, is the emotional energy that these encounters generate comparable with that generated when activists come face-to-face on the street? What differences are there between online and offline encounters in terms of the way that they contribute to solidifying, polarising and radicalising group identities?

*Legislative and policing environment*

Another important environmental factor, and one that relates to the previous discussion about the multiple actors that shape CE processes, concerns the legislation and policing tactics used to control collective action by social movement groups. More 'repressive' legal and policing contexts may reduce overall levels of protest and limit opportunities to deploy certain protest tactics. Yet more repressive measures can also have unintended consequences, particularly if they create the kind of crisis situations that enable social and political movements to achieve greater leverage. There is also evidence that while repressive action by governments and elites might reduce protest, it may increase militancy.[89] The experience of 'suffered violence'[90] as a result of repressive action can provoke anger, resentment and narratives of 'victimhood' and 'persecution' amongst activists, leading to sub-group radicalisation towards violence. In Germany, for example, whilst outright bans have made certain modes of mobilisation more difficult, they have also forced militants from banned organisations to engage in creative 'learning processes', such as fostering 'fragmentation' as a 'tactical ploy'. This, arguably, has made policing such groups harder by displacing activism into other arenas rather than eradicating it.[91]

*Extant protest repertoires*

Finally, whilst there is always scope for tactical innovation, activists' choices about how they make their claims are shaped by what Charles Tilly famously called protest repertoires[92] – extant recognised forms of collective action and claims making. It would seem incumbent on those analysing processes of CE, and in particular those with an interest in assessing the risk of tactical escalation, to look closely at which repertoires of protest the opposing groups appear to draw on, and how these repertoires change

over time (and it might also be the case that the competing groups do not draw entirely from the same repertoire, especially where groups are situated within radically different political or social cultures).

**Proposal Six: Examine how the relevant movements and countermovements are coupled**

Even where there is a spiral of hostile and violent interactions between movements and countermovements, groups' reactions to one another will rarely, if ever, comprise of a crude series of 'dog-whistle' responses. This is because a social movement's reactions to other actors – be they other social movements, state agencies etc – are also shaped by a number of other factors that include the movement's position in relation to political opportunity structures[93], the capabilities of the movement to carry out certain forms of action[94], the movement's organizational structure[95], movement identities[96], and extant protest repertoires[97]. The final proposal we make is that greater attention be given to the subtleties of how the opposing groups respond to one another or are 'coupled'.[98]

There are two coupling issues that are especially salient to discussions of CE. The first of these concerns what we refer to as the possible *asymmetries* of movement coupling. As has been observed elsewhere, opposing movements might be more or less 'tightly coupled' or 'loosely coupled' (and these patterns of coupling may to change over time).[99] Where movements are tightly coupled we would expect to see frequent, direct counter-demonstrations; the regular borrowing and inverting of one another's language and symbols; or rapid cycles of tactical innovation and adaptation.[100] Where movements are more loosely coupled, whilst they might broadly oppose what one another stands for, their campaigns would be less likely to be organised in direct opposition to one another; there might be a slower and less obviously demarcated tactical innovation – adaptation cycle; and there might be fewer direct counters to or subversions of one another's symbols and claims. Yet it is possible, if not likely, that within movement – countermovement pairings there is one movement that is in effect more tightly coupled to its opponent than vice versa i.e. movement A is more focused on, and reactive to, movement B than movement B is to movement A. This might happen because movement B perceives there to be less value in, or need to respond to, movement A, perhaps because they are more focused on other opponents (either other social movements or the state)[101], or because they don't assess movement A as a particularly significant challenger and therefore judge that they 'do not require [the] movement's full attention'.[102] This kind of asymmetric coupling can be seen in the case of the contest between parts of the extreme Islamist milieu and groups like the EDL. Whilst the EDL and other 'counter-jihad' activists owe much of their ideological development and collective action frame to the activities of, and their encounters with, extreme Islamist groups, generally speaking the goals, beliefs, tactics and propensity towards violence of the latter, have not evolved substantially in response to the activities of extreme right-wing and anti-Muslim groups, and do not provide the main focus for the construction either of their protest narratives or actions.[103] In this particular case, the coupling pattern at least in part reflects asymmetrical ideological alignment – while for groups like the EDL, 'Islam' is a political concern *sin qua non*, for extreme Islamist groups their primary concern is with challenging the secular authority of Western states.

The second issue relates back to our first proposal about the need to distinguish between 'extreme' narratives and 'extreme' actions. Even where a movement's protest narrative might be shaped by and focused on the actions of an opposition movement, it does not necessarily follow that they will also imitate, emulate or seek to 'outbid' that opponent's protest tactics.[104] In other words, it is quite conceivable that opposing or rival movements might be tightly coupled in terms of their rhetoric and interpretive frames, but are more loosely coupled with regard to their protest tactics. For example, whilst there is some tactical and symbolic imitation and borrowing between EDL and extreme Islamist activists, lending a certain symmetry to this contest (for example, Islamist extremists burning poppies and right-wing extremists burning the Koran), there are also notable points of divergence. Within this particular contest, extreme Islamist activists have shown a far greater propensity towards the use of lethal force than their anti-Muslim opponents, and whereas EDL leaders have publicly criticised violent

actions such as Anders Breivik's killing spree and attacks carried out on mosques, Anjem Choudary made a point of not 'abhoring' the killing of Lee Rigby when asked about the on the BBC's *Newsnight* programme.[105]

Extant theories about protest cycles and the development of protest repertoires again offer several explanations for these kinds of coupling patterns. Opposing movements will almost inevitably be situated differently within political opportunity structures since each group 'has its own allies and its own relationship to authorities, and each is a component in the political opportunity structure the other confronts'.[106] At least in mature democracies, we might expect groups that perceive themselves to have a greater stake in the mainstream political system to pursue their demands through more institutionalised modes of protest.[107] Opposing movements are also likely to have different tactical capabilities depending on the different economic, social and human capital that they have at their disposal. The football terrace and an Afghan training camp provide quite different skill sets, capabilities and ambitions.

There are also explanations associated with movement symbols and identities. Social movement activists are relatively unlikely to adopt tactics from other groups if such tactics would seriously diverge from the established movement symbols and undermine movement identities[108] - organisations that do so are more likely to collapse or disband.[109] We might therefore expect transference of tactics between opposing movements to be particularly limited where the movements in question draw on quite different repertoires of action and where their movement identities are grounded in substantially different structures of legitimation. For example, in spite of their bluster, the range of protest actions available to the EDL has to date been constrained by the fact that most EDL demonstrations are predicated on the performance of respect for the secular authority of the state, and it has in fact been the frequent failure of the EDL to observe generally accepted parameters of lawful protest that has been one of the main sources of tension within the movement.[110] Activists in the most extreme Islamist groups, for whom it is precisely these structures of authority and legitimacy that they are seeking to undermine, do not necessarily face the same symbolic constraints.

Finally, disposition towards the adoption of extreme tactics may also be affected by the position of the groups within their own organizational life cycles. Crudely put, most social movement groups experience an initial period of growth followed by a period of stagnation after which they either evolve or decline, perhaps with intermittent periods of revival during the decline.[111] Extant research indicates that tactical radicalisation is more likely during the latter stages of this cycle – a pattern for which there may be numerous explanations: a sense among activists that they have failed to meet initial aims using the established tactical repertoire;[112] increased organizational density;[113] competition over diminishing resources;[114] a fragmentation of power that undermines movement discipline;[115] or attempts by struggling leaders to reanimate their supporters or re-establish authority.[116] Where opposing movements are at different points of their own movement cycles, this might also increase the probability that they are differentially inclined towards radical or violent action.

The variability of coupling patterns demand that researchers and policy makers take account, not just of whether two or more opposing groups respond to one another, but *how* they respond to one another and the *differential impacts* that these movements have on one another. It also raises one of the most challenging and delicate questions for researchers, policy makers and law enforcement agencies working in this area: to what extent should or can the opposing movements engaged in any given CE dynamic be treated as functional equivalents of one another? There are multiple incentives to conceiving of both parties as two sides of the 'same coin of hate'[117] or as a 'mirror image'[118] of one another. Besides the rhetorical allure of such metaphors, they can also be effective campaign tools - the campaigns by groups like the Hope Not Hate and the opprobrium expressed by the main political parties have done much to undermine public support for groups like the EDL and BNP. Furthermore, this kind of language can also help those in the political mainstream (or aspiring to be in the political mainstream)

to distance themselves from any accusations of being in some way 'soft' on extremists, and can be used to reinforce claims to even-handedness: the 'you're both as bad as each other' strategy well practiced by school teachers or those seeking to referee between squabbling children. Yet opposing groups might not always be as imminently dangerous as one another. This might not be because their protest narratives are any less extreme or noxious, but due to the fact that they are embedded within different protest cultures, have different organisational capabilities, or are engaged in quite different series of strategic interactions with other actors.

**Conclusions**

Championed by prominent political scientists such as Roger Eatwell, Matthew Goodwin and Magnus Ranstorp, CE and other cognate terms have become part of the conceptual apparatus of contemporary debates about extremism, terrorism and political violence. This has particularly been the case in relation to extant contests between extreme Islamist and anti-Muslim/extreme right-wing groups. Our aim in this article has been both pragmatic and relatively modest: to make a series of proposals about how to tighten up the concept of CE so that it might provide a useful contribution to these debates, rather than ending up as another example of what John Horgan might call an 'explanatory fiction'[119] – an idea that appears to enable us to explain a great deal, but whose explanatory value is largely lost due to insufficient scrutiny of how the concept is operationalized. Our six proposals have been as follows:

1. Make clearer where reference is being made to distinction between 'extreme' narratives and where reference being made to 'extreme' forms of action;

2. Interrogate the relationship between the 'spirals of violence' posited at the core of CE, and wider processes of 'community polarization';

3. Describe in detail the ebb and flow of interactions between the opposing 'extremist' groups;

4. Attend to the multiple pathways of movement – countermovement influence;

5. Examine how the wider cultural, social and political environment might shape the movement – countermovement contest;

6. Examine how the relevant movements and countermovements are coupled.

As these proposals are intended to provide a more solid platform for further research on processes of CE, we conclude with three brief suggestions about possible directions for such future research. First, and as we indicated in the introduction to this article, there is a need for cross-case comparative analyses of the diverse trajectories of movement – countermovement contests between 'extremist' groups. Second, as McCauley and Moskalenko observe, the emotional intensification of conflict at a micro-level and the narratives that this provides individual activists is often missing from the debate on violent radicalisation.[120] As such, while this article has been largely concerned with group processes, future research on CE would benefit from approaches that combine group level analysis with analysis of individual participation in and experiences of political extremism and violent action. Finally, if we are to take seriously the idea that CE is a process of coevolution that *involves multiple actors and not just the two opposing 'extremist' groups*, another valuable avenue for research would be to undertake a more reflexive analysis of how the debates about and efforts to countermand CE are shaping our societies' interpretations of and responses to the threat of terrorism and political violence.

footnote

[1] Roger Eatwell, "Community Cohesion and Cumulative Extremism in Contemporary Britain," *The Political Quarterly* 77, 2 (2006), 204-216.

[2] Roger Eatwell and Matthew Goodwin, "Conclusion", in Roger Eatwell and Matthew Goodwin (eds.), *The New Extremism in 21st Century Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 243.

[3] Paul Jackson, *The EDL: Britain's new 'far-right' social movement* (Northampton: RNM Publications, 2011).

[4] Jamie Bartlett and Jonathan Birdwell, *Cumulative Radicalisation between the Far-Right and Islamist Groups in the UK: A Review of Evidence* (London: Demos, 2013) available at http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Demos%20-%20Cumulative%20Radicalisation%20-%205%20Nov%202013.pdf [Accessed 5 Nov. 2013].

[5] Magnus Ranstorp, "Introduction" in Magnus Ranstorp (ed.), *Understanding Violent Radicalisation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 1-18.

[6] Eatwell and Goodwin (see note 2 above); Jackson (see note 3 above); Matthew Goodwin, "Woolwich Attack and the Far Right: Three points to consider when the dust settles," *The Guardian*, 23 May 2013 available at http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/may/23/woolwich-attack-far-right-three-points [Accessed 27 Aug. 2013]; Matthew Feldman, *From Radical-Right Islamophobia to 'Cumulative Extemism'* (London: Faith Matters, 2012).

[7] Authors' own observations during such events.

[8] HM Government, *Prevent Strategy* (London: TSO, 2013), 21; HM Government, *Contest: The United Kingdom Government's Strategy for Countering Terrorism: Annual Report* (London: TSO, 2013), 22 and Home Affairs Select Committee, *The Roots of Violent Radicalisation* (London: TSO, 2012), 20-21.

[9] Matthew Goodwin (see note 6 above).

[10] "Anti-EDL bomb could have sparked 'spiral of terror,'" *BBC News*, 6 June 2013 available at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-22795887 [Accessed 27 Aug. 2013].

[11] HM Government, *Prevent Strategy* (London: TSO, 2011), 107, defines as 'extremist' groups that exhibit 'vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs [including]... calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas' or in a narrower definition as groups that deploy extra-legal and/or violent protest tactics.

[12] Throughout the article, CE is placed within inverted commas where reference is made to talk of CE rather than about the processes of CE.

[13] Manuela Caiani, Donatella della Porta and Claudius Wagemann, *Mobilising on the Extreme Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 94.

[14] For example Mark Townsend and Homa Khaleell, "Michael Abebolajo has been 'repeatedly targeted' in jail," *The Guardian*, 21 July 2013 distorts the chronology by conflating disparate events and processes into one.

[15] A position shared by Bartlett and Birdwell (see note 4 above).

[16] Bartlett and Birdwell, *op cit.*, note 4 for discussion of the difficulty of applying the CE concept to specific cases.

[17] http://www.met.police.uk/crimefigures/textonly_month.htm#c41 [Accessed 19 Sept. 2013], although the authors are aware that problems of non-reporting and under-reporting has led to concerns about deficiencies in police statistics. Similar patterns of 'retaliatory' violence are observable following the murder of two British soldiers in Palestine by Jewish terrorists in 1947 and again following IRA killings of British soldiers in the 1970s.

[18] Daniel Boffey, "Poll reveals rising fears of clashing in wake of Woolwich killing," *The Guardian*, 25 May 2013 available at http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/may/25/woolwich-attack-islam [Accessed 27 Aug. 2013].

[19] Matthew Goodwin, "London attack: generations divided on feelings about Muslims after killing," *The Guardian*, 26 May 2013 available at http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/may/26/public-attitude-muslims-complex-positive [Accessed 27 Aug. 2013] and Joel Rogers, "Beyond Woolwich: British attitudes to integration," available at http://yougov.co.uk/news/2013/06/04/beyond-woolwich-british-attitudes-integration/[Accessed 1 Aug. 2013].

[20] Jamie Bartlett and Carl Miller, "The Edge of Violence: Towards Telling the Difference Between Violent and Non-Violent Radicalization," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 24, no. 1 (2012), 1-21.

[21] Douglas McAdam "Tactical Innovation and the Pace of Insurgency," *American Sociological Review* (1983), 735-754.

[22] Sean Birchall, *Beating the Fascists: The Untold Story of Anti-Fascist Action* (London: Freedom Press, 2010).

[23] Nigel Copsey, "From direct action to community action: The changing dynamics of anti-fascist opposition," in Nigel Copsey and Graham Macklin (eds.), *British National Party: Contemporary Perspectives* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 123-142.

[24] Pamela E. Oliver and Daniel J. Myers, "The Coevolution of Social Movements," *Mobilization* 8, no. 1 (2002), 1-24.

[25] Gavin Bailey, "Hype/Whitewash: Dilemmas of Researching and Writing about Political Extremism and Community Cohesion in a Culture of Fear," Huddersfield University seminar, 17 Oct. 2012.

[26] David Anderson QC, *The Terrorism Acts in 2012: Report of the Independent Reviewer on the Operation of the Terrorism Act 2000 and Part 1 of the Terrorism Act 2006* (London: TSO, 2013), 42.

[27] For example, after Woolwich BNP leader Nick Griffin warned 'we are just one incident away from a spiral of confrontation that will finally prove that Enoch Powell was really right.' "Britain poised to explode – Video" available at http://www.bnp.org.uk/news/national/britain-poised-explode-–-video-0 [Accessed 27 Aug. 2013].

[28] Colin J. Beck, "The contribution of social movement theory to understanding terrorism," *Sociology Compass*, 2, no.5 (2008), 1565-1581; Jeff Goodwin, "Review Essay: What must we explain to explain terrorism," *Social Movement Studies*, 3, no. 2 (2004), 259-265; Charles Tilly, "European Violence and Collective Action Since 1700," *Social Research* 53, no. 1 (1986), 159-184.

[29] Donatella della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2013).

[30] Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways toward Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20, no. 3 (2008), 415-433.

[31] Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, *Friction: How Radicalisation Happens to Them and Us* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 105. Jamie Bartlett, Jonathan Birdwell and Michael King, *The Edge of Violence* (London: Demos, 2010) highlights distinctions between violent and non-violent extremisms.

[32] John Knefel, "Everything you've been told about radicalisation is wrong," *Rolling Stone*, 6 May 2013 available at http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/everything-youve-been-told-about-radicalization-is-wrong-20130506

[33] See for instance: Andrew Gilligan, "The truth about the 'wave of attacks on Muslims' after Woolwich murder," *The Telegraph*, 1 June 2013; Tell Mama, "Gilligan at it Again – Attack the Vehicle Not the Data is Now the Strategy!" available at http://tellmamauk.org/gilligan-at-it-again-attack-the-vehicle-not-the-data-is-now-the-strategy/ [Accessed 11 Sept. 2013].

[34] Tahir Abbas, *Islamic Radicalism and Multicultural Politics: The British Experience* (London: Routledge, 2011) and Quintan Wiktorowicz *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), both observe that experience of anti-Muslim sentiment and racism can provide a cognitive opening to Islamist extremism for some young Muslims.

[35] Owen Jones, "The best way to fight the EDL's anti-Muslim bigotry is by showing solidarity on the streets," *Independent*, 16 June 2013 available at http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/the-best-way-to-fight-the-edls-antimuslim-bigotry-is-by-showing-solidarity-on-the-streets-8660797.html [Accessed 27 Aug. 2013].

[36] Hannah Taylor, "EDL and Al Shabab Twitter flame war" available at http://storify.com/hannah658/edl-and-al-shabab-twitter-flame-war [Accessed 27 Aug. 2013].

[37] Jackson (see note 3 above) and Feldman (see note 6 above).

[38] Ranstorp (see note 5 above).

[39] Eatwell and Goodwin (see note 2 above), 7.

[40] Eatwell (see note 1 above).

[41] Bartlett and Birdwell (see note 4 above).

**[42]** Matthew Goodwin (see note 19 above).

[43] James M. Jasper, *The Art of Moral Protest: Culture, biography, and creativity in social movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 229.

[44] Donatella della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A comparative analysis of Italy and Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) notes a generational cleavage in groups prone to violent action with younger activists far more willing to use violence than older activists. Jeff Gruenewald, "A Comparative Examination of Homicides Perpetrated by Far-Right Extremists," *Homicide Studies* 15, no. 2 (2011), 177-203 also reflects this in patterns of extreme right-wing violence.

[45] The dynamics of fragmentation and how these relate to an escalation of violence goes beyond the scope of this article but are discussed in Clark and Moskalenko (see note 33 above), 109-144.

[46] A term preferable to 'lone wolves' as it does not feed into the glamorisation and mystique that these milieux seek to perpetuate.

[47] The case is under active police investigation. The group itself has disavowed responsibility.

[48] 'The Queen – v – Pavlo Lapshyn: Sentencing remarks of Mr. Justice Sweeney,' 25 October 2013 available at http://www.judiciary.gov.uk/Resources/JCO/Documents/Judgments/pavlo-lapshyn-sentencing-remarks-25102013.pdf [Accessed 25 Oct. 2013]. Such incidences complicate the notion that those at the forefront of *actual* confrontations between extremist groups are necessarily those most likely to commit acts of violence. 'Solo actors' further problematise the analytical picture. Jeff Gruenewald, Steven Chermak and Joshua D. Freilich, "Distinguishing 'Loner' Attacks from Other Domestic Extremist Violence: A Comparison of Far-Right Homicide Incident and Offender Characteristics," *Criminology and Public Policy*, 12, no. 1, (2013), 65-91 highlight determinants that can distinguish lone offenders from other extreme right-wing actors who engage in violence.

[49] Vikram Dodd, "Student pleads guilty to attacks on Midlands mosques," available at http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/oct/21/ukrainian-pleads-guilty-attacks-midland-mosques [Accessed 13 Nov. 2013].

[50] On the patterns of movement – countermovement interactions see McAdam (see note 21 above); Oliver and Myers (see note 24 above).

[51] Neil J. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963).

[52] Brian Lickel, Norman Miller, Douglas M. Stenstrom and Thomas F. Denson, "Vicarious Retribution: The Role of Collective Blame in Intergroup Aggression," *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 10, no. 4, (2006), 372-390.

[53] "Assessing the likelihood of Hate Crime in the wake of the Boston Attacks," available at http://www.start.umd.edu/start/publications/START_AnalysisofFactorsRelatedtoHateCrimeandTerrorism.pdf [Accessed 27 Aug. 2013].

[54] Richard Thurlow, *Fascism in Britain* (London: IB Tauris, 1998), 81.

[55] Joel Busher, "Grassroots activism in the English Defence League: Discourse and public (dis)order," in Max Taylor, P. M. Currie and Donald Holbrook, *Extreme Right-wing Political Violence and Terrorism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 65-84.

[56] McCauley and Moskalenko (see note 31 above).

[57] Joel Busher, *The Making of Anti-Muslim Protest: Grassroots activism in the English Defence League* (Abingdon: Routledge, forthcoming).

[58] Della Porta (see note 29 above).

[59] McCauley and Moskalenko (see note 31 above), 32.

[60] Oliver and Myers (see note 24 above), 4.

[61] David S. Meyer and Suzanne Staggenborg, "Movements, Countermovements, and the Structure of Political Opportunity," *American Journal of Sociology* 101, no. 6, (1996), 1628-1660.

[62] Mayer N. Zald and Bert Useem, "Movement and Countermovement Interaction: Mobilization, tactics, and state involvement," in Mayer N. Zald and John David McCarthy *Social Movements in an Organizational Society* (New Brunswick: Transaction 1987), 248.

[63] McAdam (see note 21 above).

[64] Nancy Whittier, "The Consequences of Social Movements for Each Other" in D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule and H. Kriesi (eds.), *Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 531-51.

[65] Jan Schedler and Alexander Häusler (eds.), *Autonome Nationalisten: Neonazismus in Bewegung* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 2011).

[66] Meyer and Staggenborg (see note 61 above), 1633 and Nancy Whittier (see note 64 above).

[67] Jonathan Githens-Mazer, "The Rhetoric and reality: radicalisation and political discourse,' *International Political Science Review*, 33, no. 5, (2012), 556-567 also makes this point.

[68] Donatella della Porta and Sidney Tarrow, "Interactive Diffusion: The co-evolution of Police and Protest Behaviour with an Application to Transnational Contention", *Comparative Political Studies*, 45, no. 1, (2012), 119-152.

[69] Oliver and Myers (see note 24 above).

[70] Eatwell (see note 1 above), 213. George Michael, *The Enemy of My Enemy: The Alarming Convergence of Militant Islam and the Extreme Right* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2006) and Emmanuel Karagiannis and Clark McCauley, 'The Emerging Red-Green Alliance: Where Political Islam meets the Radical Left', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 25 no. 2 (2013), 167-182 details the complexity of such alignments.

[71] Busher (see note 55 above).

[72] Robert Lambert, "Anti-Muslim Violence in the UK: Extremist nationalist involvement and influence," in Max Taylor, Mark Currie & Donald Holbrook (eds.*) Extreme Right-Wing Political Violence and Terrorism* (London: Bloomsbury 2013), 31-64.

[73] For one articulation see John Miller, *Siding with the Oppressor: The Pro-Islamist Left* (London: One Law for All, 2013)

[74] For example, there has been considerable discussion of how competing terrorist groups might seek to 'outbid' each other either ideologically or tactically in order to garner support at the expense of their rivals. See Stephen Nemeth, "The Effect of Competition on Terrorist Group Operations," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (forthcoming), published online 20 January 2013 and Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, "The Strategies of Terrorism", *International Security*, 31, no. 1, (Summer 2006), 49-80.

[75] Paul Lewis and Rob Evans, *Undercover: The True Story of Britain's Secret Police* (London: Guardian/Faber and Faber, 2013).

[76] For the range of policing tactics deployed to manage one EDL demonstration see "Blackburn protests: '£1million bill' for policing operation," available at http://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/archive/2011/04/04/8951387.Blackburn_protests_____1million_bill__for_policing_operation/ [Accessed 12 Nov. 2013].

[77] Anne Cadwallader, *Lethal Allies: British collusion in Ireland* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2013).

[78] Ruud Koopmans and Susan Olzak, 'Discursive Opportunities and the Evolution of Right-Wing Violence in Germany,' *American Journal of Sociology*, 110, no. 1, (July 2004), 198-230.

[79] Busher (see note 57 above).

[80] Robert Lambert, *Countering al-Qaida in London: Police and Muslims in Partnership* (London: Hurst, 2011), 97.

[81] Andrew Pugh, "EDL 'violently attacked' journalists, claims NUJ," available at http://www.pressgazette.co.uk/node/47811 [Accessed 13 Nov. 2013].

[82] Donatalla della Porta, "Research on Social Movements and Political Violence," *Qualitative Sociology* 31, no. 3 (2008), 224.

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[97] Charles Tilly (see note 91 above).

[98] Mayer N. Zald and Bert Useem, "Movement and Countermovement: Loosely coupled conflict" in *CRSO Working Paper No. 276* (Ann Arbor: Centre for Research on Social Organization, 1982).

[99] *Ibid.*

[100] See for example David S. Meyer and Suzanne Staggenborg, "Opposing Movement Strategies in U.S. Abortion Politics," *Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change*, 28 (2008), 207-238.

[101] For example, the mutual framing of the conflict between state and 'patriot' militia groups in the United States during the 1990s as 'warfare' led to an escalation of perceived mutual threat culminating in the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 by Timothy McVeigh on which see Stuart A. Wright, *Patriots, Politics and the Oklahoma City Bombing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007).

[102] Meyer and Staggenborg (see note 61 above), 1652.

[103] Bartlett and Birdwell 2013 (see note 4 above).

[104] Clark and Moskalenko (see note 31 above), 125.

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[106] Meyer and Staggenborg (see note 61 above), 1635.

[107] In non-democratic states and nascent democracies the relationship between violence and political opportunity structures is different and may not be so much about the stake a group perceives it has in the state but about the latitude it is allowed by the authorities, which can shape its propensity to violence. For example, in Italy and Germany in the inter-war period the forces of 'law and order' often did little or nothing to prevent the rising tide of violence emanating from the extreme right (or to bring its perpetrators to justice afterwards) whilst denying their political opponents the same license and legitimacy.

[108] Megan Meyer (see note 95 above).

[109] Debra C. Minkoff, "Bending with the Wind: Strategic change and adaptation by women's and racial minority organizations," *American Journal of Sociology* 104, no. 6 (1999),1666-1703.

[110] Busher (see note 55 above).

[111] Mayer N. Zald and Roberta Ash, "Social Movement Organisations, Growth, Decay, and Change," in Mayer N. Zald and John David McCarthy *Social Movements in an Organizational Society* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1987), 121-160.

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[115] Joel Busher, "Anti-Muslim Populism in the UK: The development of the English Defence League" in Hedi Giusto, Stefano Rizzo and David Kitching (eds.), *The Changing Faces of Populism: Systemic Challengers in Europe & the US* (Brussels: Foundation for European Progressive Studies, 2013), 165-179.

[116] This could explain Nick Griffin's more recent return to street politics as the BNP has collapsed as a political party.

[117] Nick Lowles, "A plague on both their houses," 11 Nov. 2010 available at http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/blog/article/1018/a-plague-on-both-their-houses [Accessed 27 Aug. 2013].

[118] David Cameron, "Bringing down the barriers to cohesion," available at http://conservativehome.blogs.com/torydiary/files/bringing_down_the_barriers_to_cohesion.pdf [Accessed 27 Aug. 2013].

[119] John Horgan, "No Direction Home?" 13 May 2013 available at http://sites.psu.edu/icst/2013/05/13/no-direction-home/ [Accessed 27 Aug. 2013].

[120] Clark and Moskalenko (see note 31 above), 221-222.