

## INTERACTIONAL RADICALISATION

### Summary of Key Findings

- ✦ Frequently referred to as 'cumulative extremism' (Eatwell, 2006), interactional radicalisation is often perceived as a binary process, involving two opposing groups. In contrast, we find multiple actors, including the state and media agencies, are involved and identify other influential factors such as the context within which groups are operating.
- ✦ Violent contestation between opposing groups does not necessarily lead to more violence. De-escalation and non-escalation, leading away from violence, also occur. Such multidirectionality challenges the 'spiral' narrative of cumulative radicalisation. Visualising this process as 'spikes' captures these various outcomes.
- ✦ Internal group culture is key to understanding the likelihood of a group escalating to violence or responding in a non-violent manner. This is exemplified by non-equivalent interaction; where one actor is concerned with the other but this concern is not reciprocated. Our findings confirm that 'right-wing extremism' (RWE) actors are more concerned with Islamist extremism (ISE), than ISE actors are with RWE.
- ✦ The 'state' can be an active actor in the radicalisation process. This confirms the need to expand analyses beyond particular oppositional groups under study.
- ✦ The DARE research findings show that the notion of cumulative extremism has limited applicability to these complex interactions. Provocations such as physical attacks or intense hate speech rarely result in the escalation of violence and can also lead to de-escalation or non-escalation.

### The DARE Research

This research briefing is based on qualitative data collected and analysed as part of the DARE (Dialogue About Radicalisation and Equality) project. The project focuses on young people (loosely defined as those aged 15 to 30 years) and on two strands of extremism, which we refer to as 'Islamist' extremism (ISE) and 'right-wing' extremism (RWE).

The DARE project uses a mixed-methods approach and has multiple research strands. In this research briefing, data are drawn from:

- 5 case studies of interactional radicalisation conducted in France, Greece, Germany, Turkey and the UK;
- 19 milieu-based ethnographic case studies (10 of ISE milieus, 9 of RWE milieus) in 12 countries including just under 400 semi-structured interviews;

We cannot do justice to the complexity and contentious nature of many terms used in this briefing. For brief conceptual definitions, see:

<http://www.dare-h2020.org/concepts.html>. For critical discussion and contextualisation of these terms, please consult the individual research reports: <http://www.dare-h2020.org/research-reports.html>

Further information on the project and participating institutions can be found at the end of this briefing.



## What is interactional radicalisation?

There are multiple academic terms used to describe interactional radicalisation processes. Eatwell's notion of 'cumulative extremism', and the various subsequent attempts to refine the term, indicates the importance of recognising that extremism does not emerge in a vacuum but develops as an outcome of a process – radicalisation – in which both context and other actors are crucial.

A recurring criticism of conceptualisations of this process, and of *cumulative extremism* in particular, is the implication that radicalisation is a one-directional, binary process that only involves movement-counter-movement interactions. By excluding the full range of associated influences, actors and outcomes, such conceptualisations fail to capture the complexity of most interactions.

This briefing utilises the term *interactional radicalisation* as it best describes our finding that interactions between rival political groups do not only move towards violence (as *cumulative radicalisation* suggests), but can also include de-escalation and non-escalation (Malthaner,

2017; Farina, 2020; Lee et al, 2021). Moreover, it also captures the range of interactional, relational and situational drivers as well as the multi-directionality of interactions and multiplicity of actors in our understanding of radicalisation.

This Research Briefing highlights three key findings of the DARE project's examination of *interactional radicalisation* in five recent historical case studies (France, Germany, Greece, Turkey and the UK):

- Violence escalation occurs in spikes not spirals;
- Internal group cultures are important for understanding escalation and non-escalation;
- The state is a key actor in radicalisation processes.

These findings are illustrated further drawing on relevant findings from the ethnographic case studies of radical(ising) milieus undertaken within the framework of the DARE project.

### Cumulative extremism

(Eatwell, 2006; Bartlett & Birdwell, 2013)

Action of one group provokes a reaction from another leading to escalation. Describes the way 'in which one form of extremism can feed off and magnify other forms [of extremism]' (Eatwell, 2006:205).

Perceived threat posed by militant, religiously inspired groups is generalised to all followers of the religion producing an excessive response. Mutual antipathy and exclusion results.

### Reactive co-radicalisation

(Pratt, 2015)

### Reciprocal radicalisation

(Bailey & Edwards, 2017; Knott, Lee & Copeland, 2018; Lee & Knott, 2020)

Individuals/groups move towards conflict in response to the movement of others. They fuel one another's rhetoric and/or actions.

Antagonistic features found within the ideologies and actions of two opposing radicalised perspectives contribute to an escalation of radicalisation.

### 'Tit-for-tat' radicalisation

(Jackson, 2011)

### Interactional radicalisation

(Farina, 2020; Lee, Cheng, Liang, Tang & Yuen, 2021)

Influence of emotional states, contexts and dynamics of situations in explaining engagement in violence. Individual can simultaneously take positions of non-violence and violence depending on situation, interactions and relationship of these to political opinions.

## Spikes not spirals

*Cumulative extremism* (Figure 1) is often depicted as a sustained ‘spiral’ of violence that results from two rival groups’ interactions with each other. Where the lines of the spiral cross (Point A), this represents points of conflict between the groups. As the spiral descends, the points of conflict become more frequent, closer together and overlapping. Eventually culminating in the final point of violence (Point B), this implies that violent interactions between opposing groups necessarily leads to more violence.

However, our findings demonstrate that perceiving group interactions as a ‘spiral’ is to misunderstand the radicalisation process. Visualising rival groups’ interactions as ‘spikes’ better reflects the phenomenon studied, accounting for a multidirectional group trajectory. Figure 2 represents one group’s threshold and trajectory for violence. Where instances of violence occur, for example around and after key symbolic events, these may be relatively short-lived rather than being sustained over a long period of time (Macklin & Busher, 2015:11). Understanding the radicalisation process as ‘spikes’ enables other influencing contextual factors to be considered, including the role of the state and media as actors.

Understanding radicalisation as an interactive process, represented by ‘spikes’ rather than ‘spirals’ is most clearly visible within our case studies through contestations between groups regarding public spaces and the perception of perceived grievances or injustices as providing a justification for violence.

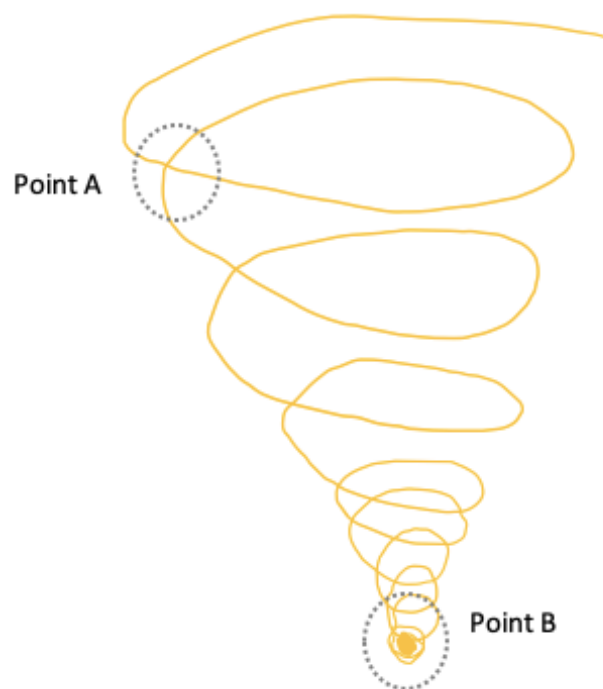


Figure 1: The ‘spiral’ model

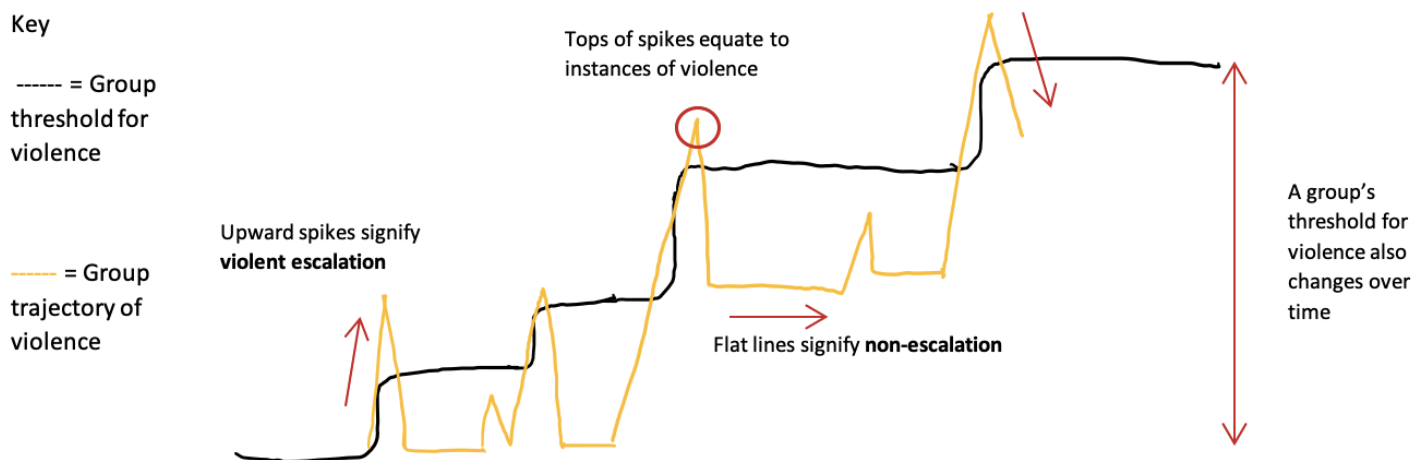


Figure 2: The ‘spikes’ model

## Contestation of space

‘Space’ was found to be important - physically and symbolically. All three examples discussed in this section demonstrate that escalation can occur when a group responds to direct provocations initiated by their rivals. However, responses tended to be situational and short term as opposed to being sustained over a period of time; this supports the conceptualisation of radicalisation as ‘spikes’ rather than ‘spirals’.

The first two case studies presented - from the Greek and German case studies of interactional radicalisation - offer the clearest examples of symbolic struggles between rival groups concerned with access to, or ownership of, certain spaces, although similar patterns were found in the other case studies. In the Greek and German cases, struggle over ownership and access to public space

emerged as right-wing political parties objected to the proposed locations and building of mosques. A comparison of how this struggle played out in each case demonstrates the situational nature and range of factors that contribute to escalation. In Greece, these objections were met with a non-violent response from the wider Muslim population while the very different response from a German Salafi-Jihadist group resulted in an escalation to violence. These outcomes are illustrated in Figure 5.

The third case – drawn from the UK ethnographic case of RWE – illustrates how confrontations between rival groups were most likely to occur in public spaces. Public demonstrations in particular provide an arena for demonstrators and counter-demonstrators to physically encounter and engage with each other.

### Right-wing extremist activism against the Muslim population: non-escalation in Greece

An extreme right-wing political party, Golden Dawn (GD) has led the battle over ‘space’ within Greece. It supports biological and cultural racism, including the National Socialist belief that the white race is superior. For GD, Greek civilisation specifically must be preserved and protected from perceived threats posed by immigration.

GD has been the most visible force in pushing back against the presence of Islam in public spaces, emphasising the need to ‘claim back’ these spaces from ‘Islamification’. While GD mobilised and sustained hostility towards the public visibility of Islam more broadly, the clearest manifestation of this was their objection to the building of a mosque in Athens.

#### Provocation

RWE violence can be categorised into three main attack types (see Figure 3). Such attacks ranged in severity from graffitied walls and throwing paint and/or pigs heads, to the verbal and physical assault of individuals and occasional arson attacks.

Arson targeting a mosque in Komotini, Western Thrace, April 2015

Pig heads thrown at a refugee camp site in Veroia, March 2016



Attack against the offices of the Afghan Migrant and Refugee Community of Greece, March 2018

Figure 3: Images showing attacks against mosques or prayer houses, attacks on houses and individuals assumed to be Muslim and physical assaults against immigrants and refugees

All three types are reactions to perceptions of public manifestations of a Muslim identity, contributing to the visibility of Islam within Greece.

### Response

Despite recurring narratives of hostility and violence perpetrated by RWE, there has been no retaliatory, violent response from Muslim communities. Although a diverse religious group, there appears general agreement that responses to provocations should remain peaceful and within the parameters of the law.

This is captured in the reflections of research participants in the ethnographic case study. Vagelis comments that this non-violence reflects the broader historical trend of how Muslims have reacted to ‘...all other provocation and disturbances that we have faced till now’ and he declares that, even in relation to GD’s provocations, ‘We will never use any other means [of reaction].’ This is echoed by Vassilis’ statement that any reactions to GD took the form of dialogue and communication, never violent clashes.

Collective mobilisation of Greece’s Muslim communities is rare. There have only been three notable instances (Figure 4) where social activism has been used as a means to claim their rights; these took the form of legal and peaceful demonstrations and public prayers. Two of the three instances (May, 2009 and December, 2019) were in response to particularly provocative acts, neither of which was directly attributed to Golden Dawn. All three instances took place in public spaces, increasing the visibility of Muslims in public for the duration of the demonstrations. The third instance in November, 2010, related to a symbolic contestation of space and the assertion of a right to a dedicated space to pray.

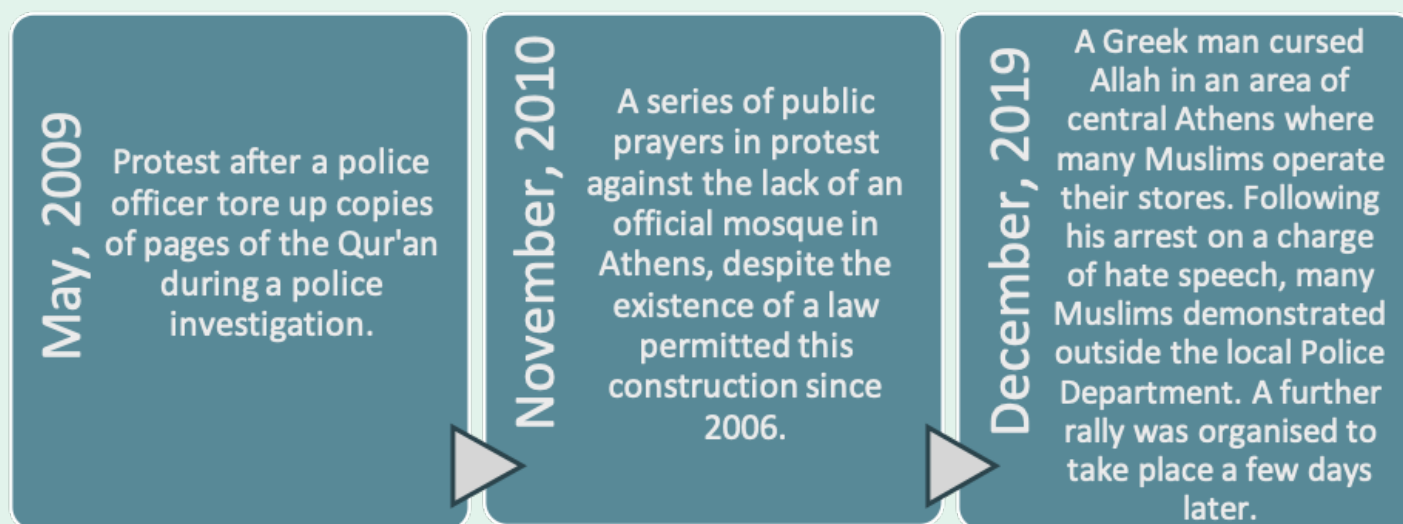


Figure 4: Instances of non-violent responses by Muslim communities

The notion of *cumulative extremism* as a ‘spiral’ clearly does not capture interactions between rival groups in this case. As responses from the Muslim population were short-lived, non-violent and did not provoke a retaliatory reaction from GD, a ‘spiral’ towards violent escalation was absent. Rather, this case emphasises a non-escalation to violence. *Interactional radicalisation*, visualised as ‘spikes’, is better able to capture the multiplicity of actors and multidirectionality of influencing factors.



### Case study: Bürgerbewegung Pro NRW versus Millatu Ibrahim: violent escalation in Germany

In contrast, the interactions between the *Bürgerbewegung Pro NRW* (Citizens' Movement Pro North-Rhine Westphalia; BPNRW) and *Millatu Ibrahim* (MI) in Germany resulted in a rare, situational, escalation to violence by MI (see Figure 5). The occurrence of rallies in public spaces provided an arena for physical engagement between members of both groups.

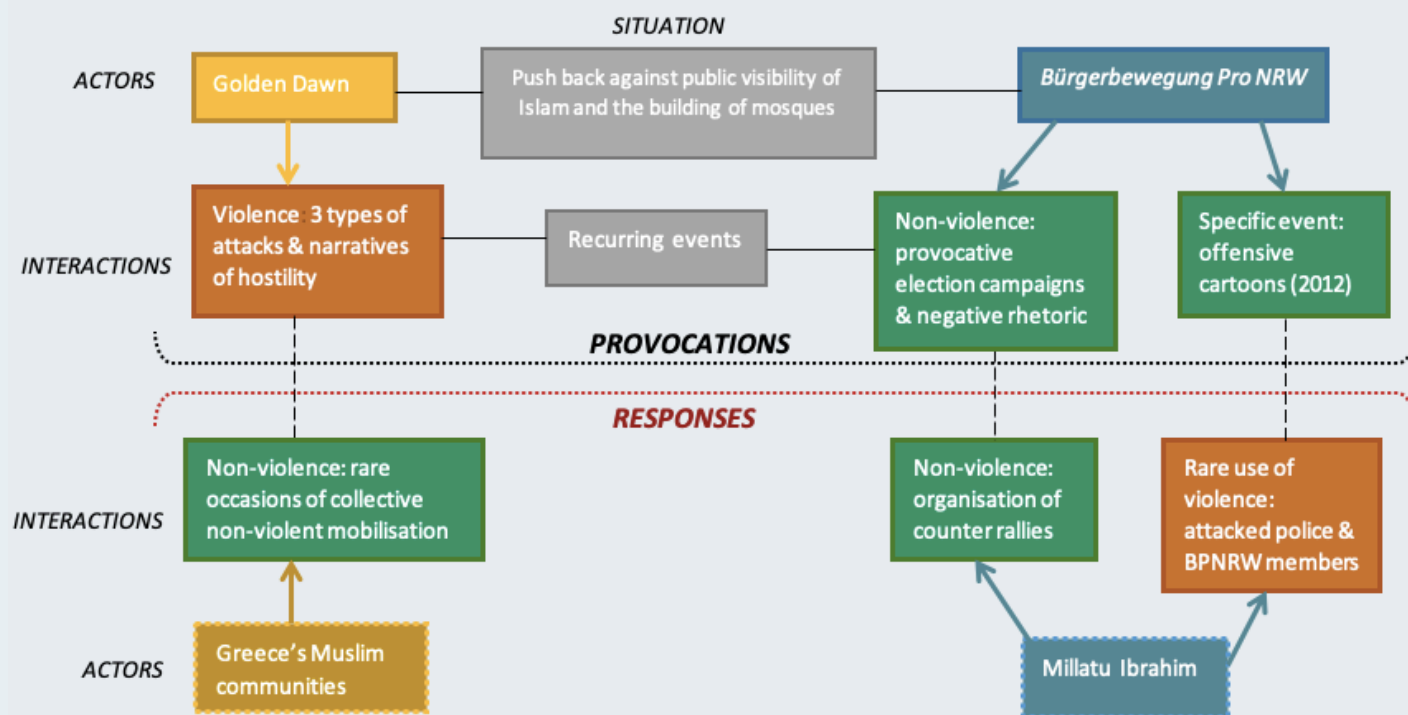


Figure 5: Comparison of processes of escalation and non-escalation as occurred in the Greek and German case studies

Whilst ostensibly this is a classic case of *cumulative radicalisation*, the potential for a sustained 'spiral' of violence was disrupted by external factors. A single instance of violence was followed by a period of non-escalation.

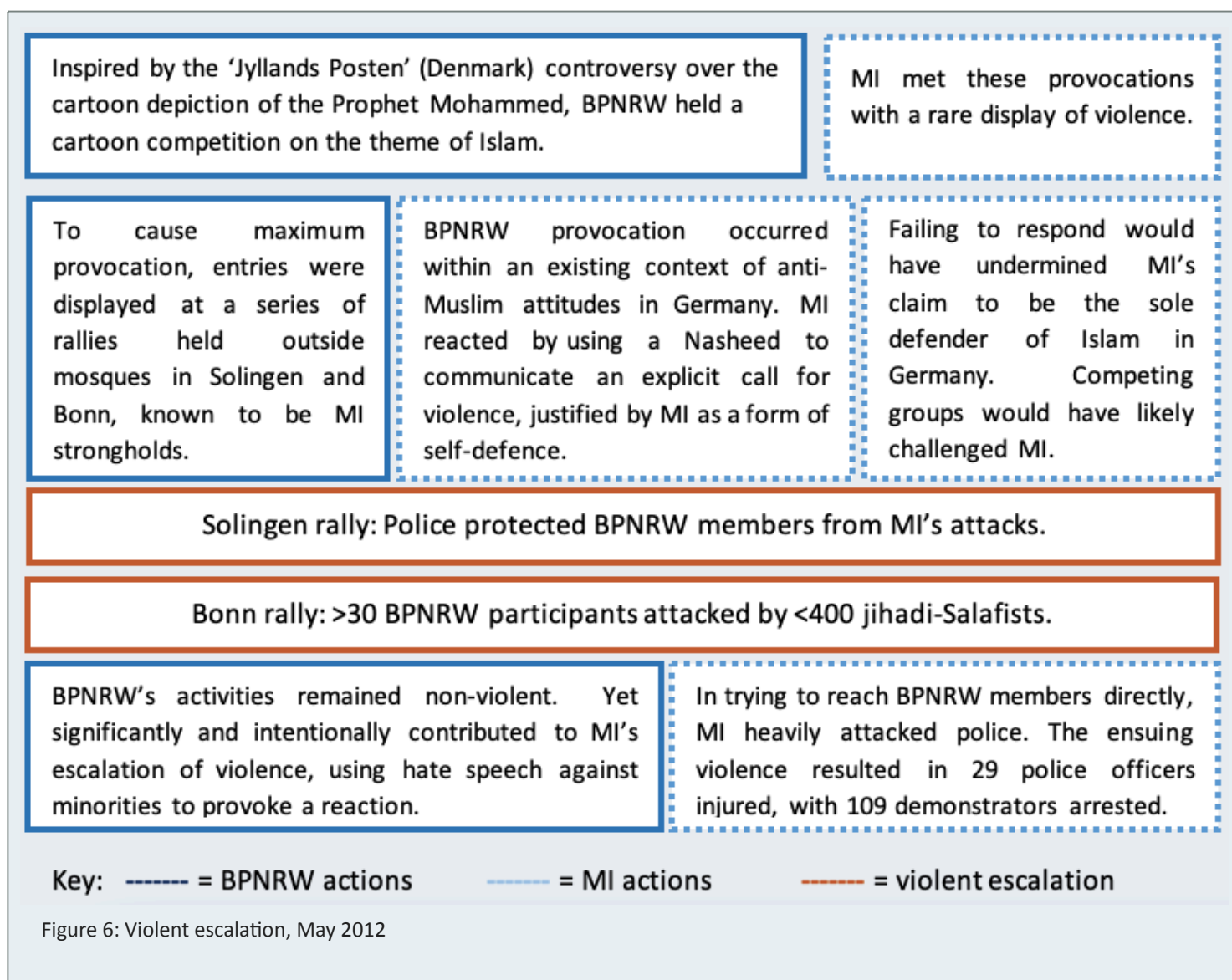
#### Actors

Founded in 2007, but dissolved in 2019, *Bürgerbewegung Pro NRW* was an extreme right-wing party established across the state of North-Rhine Westphalia. It stood candidates for election to the state Parliament. As a fairly small group, it gained media attention and publicity through intentional provocation. Similar to Greece's GD, BPNRW campaigned against the visibility of Islam in Germany. In addition to sharing negative rhetoric about minarets and women who wore the veil, the party was against the building of mosques.

The main organiser against BPNRW rallies was MI, a jihadi-Salafist group. Consisting of about 50 members, MI used their non-violent counter-protests to present themselves as Germany's true defenders of Muslims, and as the German wing of the global jihad.

#### Provocation

BPNRW's election campaign of May 2012 proved a watershed point, as outlined in Figure 6. Arguably, the possibility of other, competing German radical jihadi-Salafist groups challenging MI contributed to MI's escalation towards violence, indicating the impact of rivalries between groups within the same milieu.



### Case study: RWE milieu versus 'Antifa': intra-milieu responses within the UK

Public spaces also provide an arena for confrontations between the UK's RWE milieu and rival groups, usually referred to by milieu actors generically as 'Antifa'.

As Macklin (2020:10) notes, 'Britain has a "vibrant" far right demonstration "scene" which has been an ingrained facet of political mobilisation for decades'. Although the acts of marches and demonstrations themselves are non-violent, they are 'frequently the site of violence' (ibid). Our ethnographic study of the contemporary right-wing milieu in the UK confirmed that physical proximity encountered at public events proved key to influencing escalation towards engagement between demonstrators and counterdemonstrators (Pilkington, 2020:63). This routinely manifested as chanting or taunting, but sometimes resulted in violence.

Within the RWE milieu counterdemonstrators are usually held solely responsible for instigating violent inter-group clashes. For example, after he was attacked in the street by Antifa members, one milieu actor, Dan, stated '*That's the Antifa way you see. They don't care about debate they just want to attack you in numbers*' (ibid.: 64). However,

Lee recounts how he and his group had conducted a sustained campaign of agitation and violence against left-wing oppositional groups during which they actively sought to enter rival groups' spaces and initiate confrontation: *'We used to find out where they were having Socialist Worker Party meetings and that, and we'd go in and we'd run in with balaclava on and smash the tables up and that... [...]'* (ibid.: 116).

Responses to provocations encountered during demonstrator-counterdemonstrator interactions vary, however, and cases of escalation into violence were the exception rather than the rule. This suggests that decision-making around responses is informed by personal and group 'norms' and perceptions of the acceptability of violence. At the individual level, research participants talked about actively employing strategies to de-escalate their personal response to counterdemonstrators' provocations such as removing themselves by walking away when they got angry or resisting instincts to retaliate (ibid.: 63).

The DFLA (UK, RWE) seeks to avoid engaging in violence at demonstrations. This is reflected in requests by movement leaders that demonstrators do not seek to antagonise others and individual members' expression of pride in their non-response to provocation. However, observation revealed that situational factors such as the simple physical proximity between demonstrators and counterdemonstrators can lead to the escalation of mutual antagonism or even violence. If such violence erupts, moreover, DFLA members concede that they would defend themselves – as Robbie (UK, RWE) puts it, *'you can't just lay there and take it'*.

#### DEMOCRATIC FOOTBALL LADS ALLIANCE (DFLA) [UK, RWE]

Formed in March 2018 as a splinter group from the Football Lads Alliance (FLA), the DFLA unites supporters from rival football clubs to fight against 'all extremisms'.

To avoid escalation, the DFLA introduced a rule about marching in silence. However, it was observed that this rule tended to be broken when demonstrators came into close contact with counterdemonstrators.

#### ROBBIE, DFLA (UK, RWE)

An active member who attends marches, Robbie, notes that prior to demonstrations he frequently receives threatening messages from Antifa. Whilst at events, he has had coins and bottles thrown at him.

Reflecting on his experiences of responding to provocations, Robbie stated that: *'Even when there's a counter protest from like Antifa or Stand Up To Racism, they goad us and they goad us, but no-one ever bites. And that's the good thing.'*

Given the largely non-pre-meditated and situational escalation of violence at public events, the notion of 'spikes' rather than 'spirals' appears to best reflect how and why such escalation occurs.

## Perceived grievances as providing justification for violence

The case studies outlined above involved definable moments that led to escalation (or which had the potential to result in escalation). However, escalation is not always associated with particular events or situations; the persistence of grievances and injustices (real or perceived) may also prompt escalation.

The significance of perceived grievances are identifiable in historical cases of interactional radicalisation in Greece and Turkey. While exhibited by opposing ideological positions and different actors, both examples share concern about increased immigration, understood to be

changing population demographics. 'Failure' of the immigrant population to integrate is interpreted as 'threatening' the native cultures' ways of life.

Conspiracy theories significantly contribute to Greek Orthodox anti-Muslim radicalism, by communicating perceived grievances and injustices. Most conspiracy theories relate to crises that impacted Greece: the longstanding economic crises and the late 2010s migrant crisis. Zionists are held responsible for instigating these crises in an attempt to destroy Greece. Three common theories are shown in figure 7.



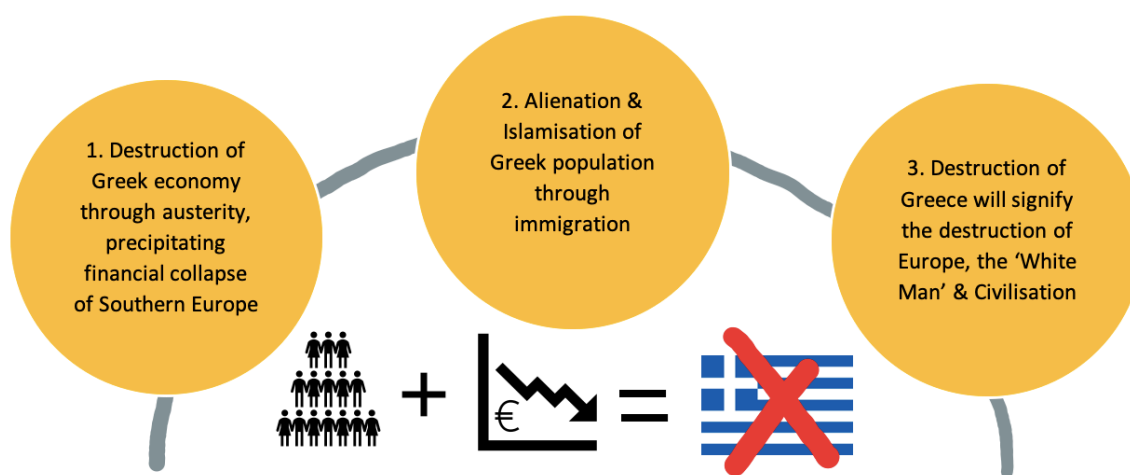


Figure 7: Conspiracy theories among Greek Orthodox right-wing radicals

Such conspiracies ideologically and behaviourally justify violence against Greece's Muslim population who are constructed as the 'threatening Other'.

A perception of difference is further reinforced in Turkey, with anti-Syrian discourse generated at both the local and political level. Entrenched political polarisation is exhibited on almost all topics, with one exception. Opposition to the permanent settlement in Turkey of Syrians, forced to flee Syria by the civil war, unites people across the political spectrum at the local grassroots.

Violence against the Syrian community in Turkey, sometimes manifesting as lynching and the storming of homes and businesses, has been legitimised through xenophobic narratives which scapegoat Syrians as the source of all problems in Turkey. Proximity is key – grievances tend to be strongest in lower socio-economic neighbourhoods where Turkish and Syrian communities live in close proximity.

At the political level, attitudes towards Syrian migrants form a binary 'us' versus 'them' narrative (Figure 8). Owing to a shared Muslim identity with many of the Syrian immigrants, Erdoğan's Islamist authoritarian government frame the Alevi and Kurdish secular opposition groups as the 'Other', posing the 'real' threat to Turkish unity. This apparently positive stance towards Syrians is actually an expression of hatred towards opposition groups. The government, under the Justice and Development Party (JDP), introduced policies to respond to and manage increased Syrian immigration caused by the Syrian Civil War. The secular opposition criticises these policies as prioritising 'immigrant' communities over the native population, providing 'unfair' access to scant resources. This has further contributed to a sense of injustice and firmly positions Syrian migrants as the demonised 'Other'.

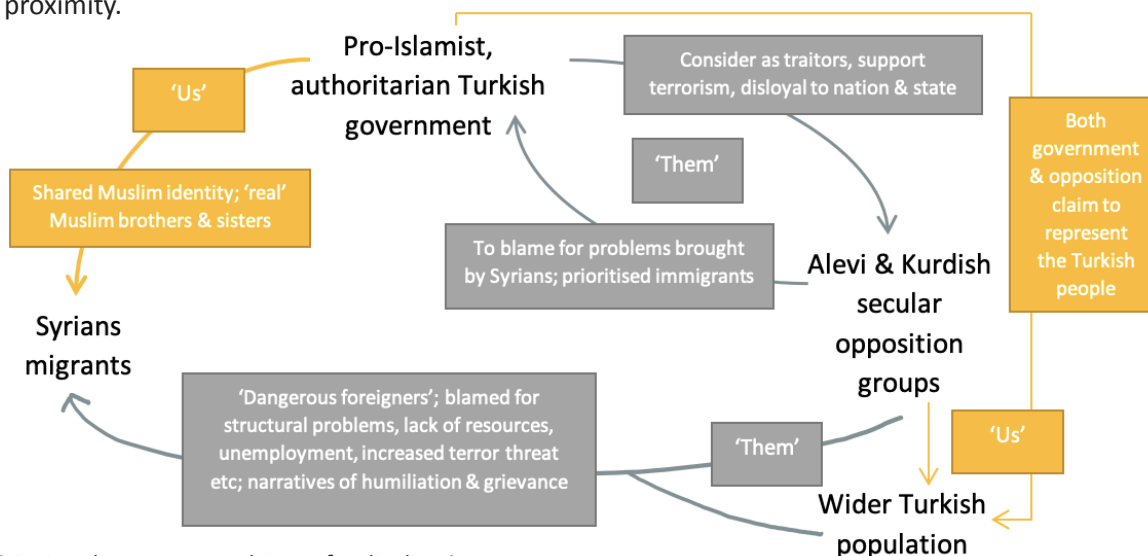


Figure 8: Anti-Syrian discourse as a driver of radicalisation

Both the Greek and Turkish examples demonstrate how processes of radicalisation are *interactional* rather than *cumulative* linear or binary processes. Visualising these processes as ‘spikes’ accounts for the multiplicity of actors and their varied interactions, which a ‘spiral’ does not account for. External factors beyond the groups involved include the state, the media and other populations. Grievances may be persistent in nature, but they may not result in one specific instance of violence. They fuel particular narratives about a target population which contribute to a sustained climate of hostility. This captures the persistent nature of broader factors which influence these processes.

### Importance of understanding internal group cultures

The second theme identified was the importance of understanding internal group cultures as influencing whether a group escalates to violence or whether de- or non-escalation occurs. Many of the case studies demonstrate that violence does not necessarily result in more violence. Our studies indicate that access to legitimate forms of expression of views can provide an alternative to violence and result in de- or non-escalation.

#### DAN AND CRAIG (UK, RWE)

Marches and social media are viewed by respondents as legitimate forms of expression which provide an alternative to violence and which can contribute to de- or non-escalation. Such spaces enable individuals to express their thoughts and opinions. Excluding people from these spaces is dangerous and is more likely to result in violent escalation.

*‘...taking them off social media, you're just fuelling the fire, to be fair [...] What would you rather do, someone go on and have a little rant on Facebook, or someone go out and blow a mosque up? [...] I think social media and marches do help people get their anger out, yeah, I do...’* (Dan)

*‘...But if a political voice and a political analysis is not allowed, because it's deemed to be too extreme or whatever, where do those people go and what do they do if they're not allowed a political voice?’* (Craig)

Whether a group escalates to violence or reacts in a non-violent way is informed by situational and contextual factors. This includes the specific provocation to which a group responds, as well as its ‘internal restraints’ or ‘brakes’. Such ‘restraints’ reflect a group’s internal logics, consisting of strategic and moral group norms.

#### VASSILIS (GREECE, ISE)

Vassilis explains how the wider Muslim community in Greece never responded to violent provocations from the RWE milieu with violence because they did not want to play into the stereotypes Golden Dawn constructed around ‘violent immigrants’. Responding with violence would have furthered Golden Dawn’s goals, causing greater harm to Muslims in Greece:

*‘...but we tried to control our own people too. [...] This is what we tried to control, through dialogue, using other tricks. [...] we did that so as not to give any excuse from our side, because it would be us who paid for this afterwards...not them [the extremists]. Unfortunately, everyone would say ‘look immigrants did that’.* (Vassilis)

The use of violence tends to be context dependent and may manifest as performative violent talk rather than as an escalation to physical violence. Groups, or specific individuals within a group, might talk about being willing to use more extreme violence, but this tends to be context specific. For example, the use of violence to fight abroad might be legitimised while the use of violence in domestic contexts may be considered disproportionate. The importance of recognising the contextual circumstances of supportive judgments of radical beliefs by actors in ISE milieus is found also by Kühle and Lindekilde (2012: 1613).

This is illustrated in the case of Millatu Ibrahim (Germany, ISE, see case study above). Global factors influenced the response of MI at the domestic level. MI did not meet BPNRW’s provocations with a sustained campaign of violence partly because Islamic State declared its Caliphate in 2014. Emigrating to a theatre of conflict with a higher level of violence, which was directly linked to fighting the global jihad had a deescalating impact on the conflict with BPNRW.

Internal regulation is also exhibited through individual group members ‘calling-out’ messages or narratives that are beyond the ‘norms’ of the group. Within the UK’s RWE milieu, escalation occurs primarily in relation to narratives rather than violence. Violent talk within a group is ‘performative’ but can have a role in fomenting actual violence.

Several groups, or individuals within groups, engage in moderating behaviours and narratives shared in both online and offline contexts. Mikey refers to the consequences of behaviour that is considered to be too extreme: *‘after [an online] comment is removed from the DFLA page, if the behaviour continues, the person is*

*blocked from the site. If known agitators attend demos, they are asked to leave.’* Such responses to untenable content or behaviour dissipated rather than precipitated radicalisation, resulting in de- or non-escalation towards violence (Pilkington, 2020:63).

It is necessary to expand the research parameters beyond the immediate antagonists to account for the influence the range of actors, contexts, motivations and understandings as well as local, national and global factors have on informing a group’s potential propensity for violence. Understanding situational and contextual factors is critical because these also mould how groups perceive, and thus respond to, one another. A group’s internal culture often shapes whether a group responds with an escalation towards violence, de-escalation or non-escalation.

### Role of ‘the state’

The final theme emphasises the role of ‘the state’ in contributing to the radicalisation process in a way often underplayed when a *cumulative extremism* approach is adopted. In our research, we found that the state manifests as an active actor, albeit in different ways, in the case studies of interactional radicalisation in France and Greece.

#### JASON, UKIP (UK, RWE)

*‘When they [...] threaten everyone for different views, that's what causes...it causes an opposite reaction. It's like a spring—you push it so far, but then eventually it's going to be going back and come flying at you. That's what happens—they push political correctness and spamming these things against people like me, calling us wrong and racist and threatening us, that causes the opposite reaction.’*

### Case study: France and the Muslim prison population

#### ***‘Collective imagination and French institutions consider prison to be one of the prominent places of Islamist radicalisation’ (Conti, 2020: 7)***

State institutions, exemplified by prisons, can be active actors in France’s radicalisation process. France’s model of countering radicalisation centres on prevention. However, this approach can also stigmatise targeted populations, such as Muslims and youth in marginalised suburbs, who are considered ‘at risk’. Public discourse, in this way, may reinforce the production of discriminatory narratives and practices that construct a culture of suspicion and mistrust towards Muslims. These narratives have become rooted in public anxiety and policies surrounding visible expressions of religious practices within wider society, increasing feelings of stigmatisation and injustice in the Muslim population. *Cumulative radicalisation* occurs between the state and individuals from ‘at risk’ populations, rather than between two specific violent groups.

***‘Being a Muslim - devout or not - is the common denominator for becoming monitored’***  
(Conti, 2020:7)

While in prison, many Muslim men are wary of displaying any form of religious adherence for fear of being placed on ‘Fichier S’. Once placed on this French national security watchlist, it is difficult to be removed. Such labelling reinforces stigmatisation and reduces any possibility of rehabilitation, making it even more difficult to disassociate from jihadist ideology. The criteria for identifying radicalisation are conflated with public displays of religion - even prayer within one’s cell may be considered as evidence of radicalisation.

For many Muslim prisoners Islam is a source of comfort and repentance, a means of redemption and a resource in coping with life in prison. Yet simultaneously, many were wary of expressing their religion as it had become securitised and conflated with extremism. This restricted Muslim prisoners from engaging with the one positive coping mechanism they had. In this way, the practising of faith becomes a site of tension as detainees’ positive association with their religion and the important role it plays in their daily life rubs up against institutional discourse and practices, which perceive Islam to be a threat and render its practice an object of surveillance.

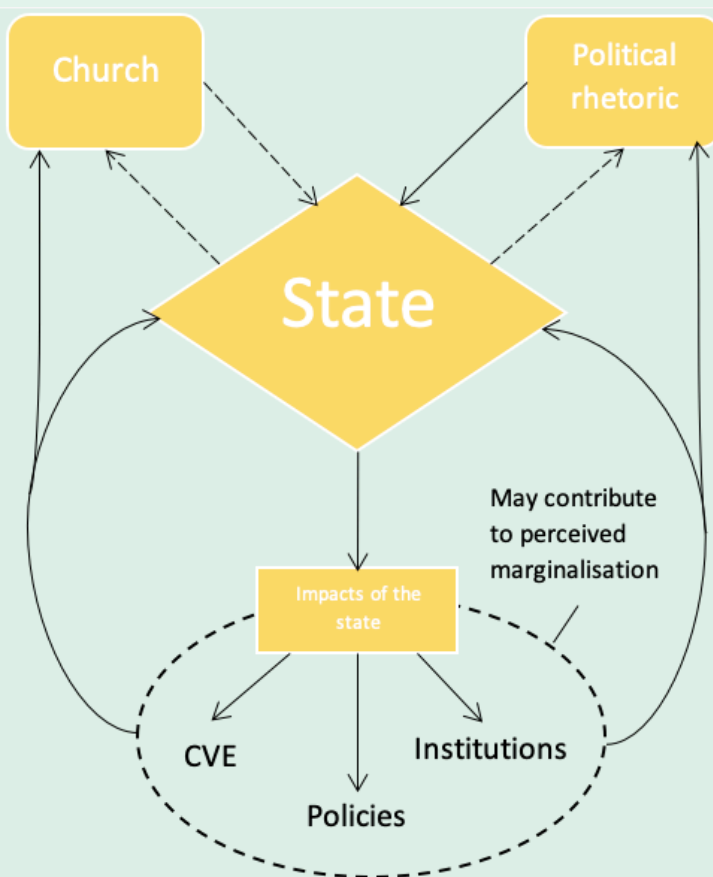


Figure 9: state contribution to the radicalisation process

**Case study: Greece and the Greek Orthodox church**

The symbiotic relationship between the mainstream Greek Orthodox Church and the Greek state is key to historical memory and state-building. Nationalism became a form of politicised religion, with the relationship between church and state encapsulated by the traditional triptych of ‘Fatherland-Religion-Family’ (Figure 10). This triptych further indicates Orthodoxy’s ties with right-wing ideology.

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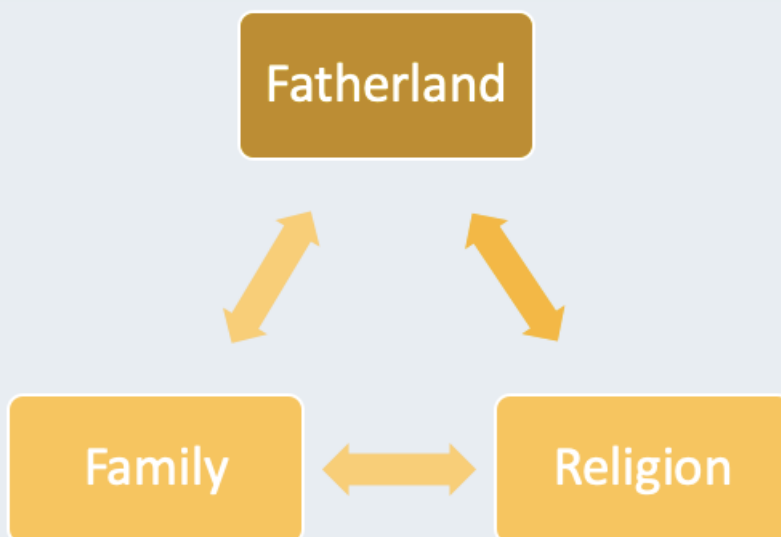


Figure 10: Fatherland-Religion-Family triptych

politicised religion, with the relationship between church and state encapsulated by the traditional triptych of 'Fatherland-Religion-Family' (Figure 10). This triptych further indicates Orthodoxy's ties with right-wing ideology.

As found in the ethnographic study, the nationalisation and politicisation of Greek Orthodoxy integrated the Orthodox Church into state institutions. Many consider the Church of Greece (CoG) as a vital source, institutional guardian and significant influencer of Greece's national identity and culture. The CoG shapes public policy and exercises political influence over other state institutions.

Placing Orthodox Christianity as central to Greek national identity helps construct a narrative which is consistently anti-Muslim and anti-Turk, embedding historical enmities between Greece and Turkey. Regardless of their actual nationality, Muslims in Greece are widely perceived to be the Turkish 'Other'. Coupled with the relatively low level of knowledge about Islam held by the broader Greek population, this results in widely-held anti-Muslim attitudes.

The perceived diversification of Greece's population, resulting from increased immigration, globalisation and Greece's status as an EU member, pose threats to national Orthodox Christian Greek identity and culture for the CoG and traditional, conservative political parties. As a reaction to these challenges, the CoG developed and maintained relationships with various right-wing and radical social and political forces including New Democracy, Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS) and Golden Dawn (GD). The CoG has recently distanced itself from GD, following GD's shift towards a more militant Orthodoxy.

Overall, our analysis of both historical cases of interactional radicalisation and ethnographic case studies demonstrate that the notion of cumulative extremism has limited applicability to these complex interactions. Rather, interactional radicalisation is more appropriate, as this captures a broader range of actors, relationships and factors.

Cumulative extremism suggests that interactions between two opposing groups result in a spiral towards violence. However, as we have found, this does not account for instances of de-escalation or non-escalation which occur more frequently than escalation to violence. Visualising this process as 'spikes' rather than 'spirals' captures these various outcomes.

Key to understanding the likelihood of a group's trajectory towards violent escalation, de-escalation or non-escalation is a group's internal culture. This sets the parameters of what is considered to be an acceptable response to provocations. However, such norms do change over time and may differ between individual members.

Finally, we found that the 'state' can be an active actor in the radicalisation process. This manifests differently according to the case study under examination, but overall emphasises that analysis should be expanded to consider other actors and contextual factors beyond the two opposition groups and their relationship with each other.

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## Participating Institutions

- The University of Manchester, UNITED KINGDOM
- Oslo Metropolitan University, NORWAY
- École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), FRANCE
- Anadolu University, TURKEY
- German Institute for Radicalization and Deradicalization Studies, GERMANY
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