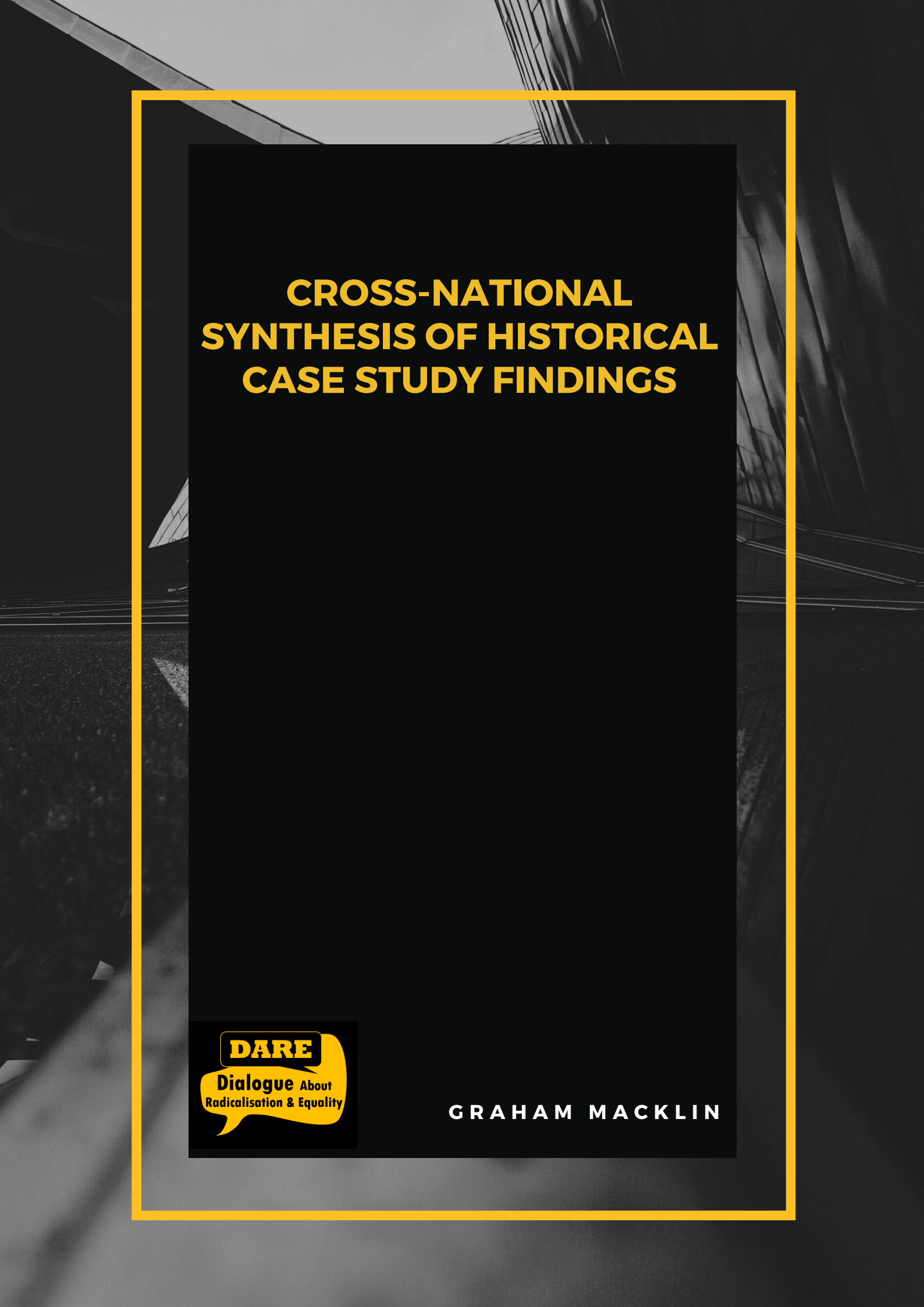

CROSS-NATIONAL SYNTHESIS OF HISTORICAL CASE STUDY FINDINGS

DARE
Dialogue About Radicalisation & Equality

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Dialogue About Radicalisation and Equality (DARE)

Cross-national synthesis of historical case study findings

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August 2020

This project has received funding from the European Union's H2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no. 725349.

Contents

Executive Summary 3

1. Introduction 3

2. Cross-national synthesis of key findings of the country reports on historical case studies of radicalising contexts and milieus 3

2.1 Short descriptive overview of Historical case studies 3

2.2 Key findings 4

2.2.1 The role of historical 'counter memory' in radical milieus: narratives of 'grievance' and 'humiliation' 4

2.2.2 The role of conspiracy theories in radicalisation 'waves' 6

2.2.3 Radical milieus and the escalation of violence 7

2.2.4 Radical milieus, violent political groups and the broader social and political, (including gender), environment: exploring the relationship 8

2.3 Conclusion 9

3. Cross-national synthesis of key findings of the country reports on historical case studies of interactive radicalisation 9

3.1 Overview 9

3.2 Key findings 10

3.2.1 Violence at demonstrations is characterised by 'spikes' not 'spirals' 10

3.2.2 The importance of accounting for a group's internal culture 11

3.2.3 Violence does not necessarily beget greater violence 12

3.2.4 Highlighting the importance of wider communal polarisation 12

3.2.5 State actors and institutions play a pivotal role 13

3.3 Conclusion 13

3.4 References 14

Executive Summary

This report provides a general introduction to the series of country-level reports that explore the concept of "radical milieus" and the historically important role that they have played in lives of young people. The five-country level reports utilise a range of historically situated case studies drawn from different geographical, temporal, and ideological contexts as a means of broadening our collective understanding of the key role that radical milieus have played in radicalisation processes. This synthesis report provides an overview of the theoretical framework used by each of the country-level cases but is designed to be read in conjunction with the full individual case study reports. It outlines the case study rationale and offers a short description of each of the country reports as well as the research questions and key findings. Further details of the selected methodologies, sources and data collection used for the analysis can be found in the relevant sections of each individual case study.

1. Introduction

This report is a short synthesis of the key findings from the work stream in the DARE project addressing 'Contemporary radicalisation in historic and spatial context.' This had three overarching objectives:

- To understand the role that historical memory and narratives of 'grievance' and 'humiliation' play within radical environments;
- To understand the development, nature and legacy of radical milieus and the role they play in the radicalisation process through historical comparison;
- To analyse and explain the historical context of current patterns of 'cumulative extremism' over time and through comparative case studies.

The results of this research can be found in the five country level reports on historical case studies of radicalising contexts (https://www.dare-h2020.org/radical-milieus-in-historical-context.html) and milieus and also the five country level reports on historical case studies of interactive radicalisation (https://www.dare-h2020.org/historical-case-studies-of-interactive-radicalisation.html). In total, they provide ten historical case studies compiled by researchers in three West European counties (United Kingdom, France, and Germany), one Mediterranean country (Greece) and one non-European Union country (Turkey).

These historically focussed country reports were, structurally speaking with regards the wider DARE project, intended to provide the project's ethnographic research (as well as those parts that focussed on digital ethnography and online analysis) with a wider depth of historical analysis in which to root findings, if not empirically, then certainly in terms of theory building. The following two sections of this report provide a cross-national synthesis of the key findings of the ten country reports that comprised DARE's research on 'Contemporary radicalisation in historic and spatial context.'

2. Cross-national synthesis of key findings of the country reports on historical case studies of radicalising contexts and milieus

2.1 Short descriptive overview of Historical case studies

This section draws out the key findings of the five historical case study reports relating to radicalising contexts and milieus. These five reports examined the concept of the 'radical milieu' through a series of historically situated case studies, each reflecting a broad range of different geographical, temporal and ideological contexts. By way of brief explanation, since full details can be found in the introduction

to the country reports on historical case studies of radicalising contexts and milieus, the aim of these reports was to deepen collective understanding of the broader context that envelopes individuals and the radical and extreme political organisations to which they may, or may not, belong. These social and cultural formations, from which political groupings materialise, are seldom the direct object of empirical study and thus form a 'missing link' in radicalisation research (Malthaner and Waldmann, 2014). To understand more clearly the nature of this 'missing link' these reports used historical case studies which focussed upon illuminating some of these cultural and political spaces in order to highlight more clearly the importance of taking into account the 'radical milieu' when considering how social formations through which collective identities and solidarities are constructed.

The original five country reports addressed research questions through historical case studies based upon the following subjects:

- United Kingdom – The evolution of a transnational right-wing extremist milieu (the so-called 'New Right') since the late 1970s;
- Germany – The Neo-Nazi milieu in Thuringia in the 1990s from which the National Socialist Underground terrorist group emerged;
- Turkey – The '28th February Process' (1997);
- Greece – The evolution of radical-right milieus in Greece, including the formation of Golden Dawn, in the aftermath of the military dictatorship (1980s);
- France – Patterns of radicalisation within the French Islamist youth milieu since the 1980s

Each of these five research reports focussed largely, though not always exclusively, on four main interconnected and interrelated research questions, the findings from which form the crux of this section of the cross-national synthesis.

2.2 Key findings

2.2.1 The role of historical 'counter memory' in radical milieus: narratives of 'grievance' and 'humiliation'

The role of historical memory – or as the UK report termed it, the construction of a 'counter-memory' – was of pivotal importance for understanding the construction of the ideological prism through which individuals within the milieu, or those attracted to it, were invited to think about the past, present and future. The Greek country report, found similar evidence with regards the importance of the role of historical memory in the radical milieu. Whilst much of the English case study centred upon a historical elegy for a lost Anglo-Teutonic romanticism, the historic lineage of Hellenism infused the Greek case, highlighting the national specificity through which radical milieus understood and invoked 'history' in support of their worldview. In comparison to the British case in which anti-Semitism played a less overt though still detectable role in the construction of its 'counter-memory,' for Greece's Golden Dawn, conspiratorial anti-Semitism was a 'central' theme. It was the prism through which it interpreted the history of the authoritarian Metaxas regime of the 1930s; their nation's role during the Second World War; and the overthrow of the military regime that had ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974 too, which ushered in the current period of democracy which they so reviled.

The German case study found less direct evidence of the use of history to frame narratives of grievance and humiliation within the Thuringian neo-Nazi milieu, a radical milieu that spawned the National Socialist Underground (NSU) terrorist group. Although the NSU were largely silent on historical issues, indeed they did not produce any ideological statements that offered any insight into their thinking on such themes. The case study did illuminate the wider importance of historical issues within the milieu; however, noting that the core NSU group had spent their formative years active within a broader movement that regularly undertook activities inflected by their interpretation of history. These included demonstrating against an exhibition regarding the crimes of the Wehrmacht (the German

army during the Second World War) or on behalf of Rudolf Hess from which one can certainly infer an interpretation of history that was profoundly at odds with that of democratic society.

The Greek neo-Nazi milieu, due in part to the political proclivities of Golden Dawn leader Nikoloas Michaliakos, was similarly steeped in such historical attitudes and assumptions (the report highlights the 'undeniable connection') highlighting the transnational nature of such modes of thinking about the past and its meaning for the present and future for those within such milieus. As already noted, the British case study highlighted a far right radical milieu that was seeking to expunge much of the overt historical baggage that these milieus were promoting, demonstrating again, the ideologically heterogeneous nature of far right and extreme right milieus across different national contexts and activist 'scenes'. It remains essential to understand such variegation. In one way or another, all three of these cases involved milieu that framed their grievances in relation to the military defeat of the Axis powers in 1945. Their responses to this event, both implicit and explicit, highlight the longevity of such radical milieus and their opposition to liberal democracy. The Turkish case is rather different since it relates more to the ongoing formation of oppositional attitudes vis-à-vis Syrian refugees than it does to pre-existing milieu, though it offers important observations for the contemporary genesis of such ideas and, moreover, in a non-European context.

History loomed large in the French case, which studied the role that it played within radicalisation models vis-à-vis radical Islam. Here the feelings of humiliation, alienation and resentment, particularly amongst second and third generation Muslim communities in France, appeared with varying degrees of centrality with regards to understanding the phenomenon. In initial models of radicalisation they were foregrounded as such. Indeed radicalisation models often interpreted 'victimhood' as a fundamental part of radical religious identities, instrumentalised by recruiters and other gatekeepers. The French case study highlighted that these feelings of injustice and humiliation had lost their centrality in more recent models of radicalisation, replaced by ideological and religious interpretations as the key factors in radicalisation processes. However, by downplaying the power of memory, and the feelings of injustice and humiliation (particularly with regards the experience of colonialism and racism for those who settled in France from Algeria) that can accrue from it, current models of radicalisation risk understanding Islamist identity formation in 'anomic terms'. Characterising this simply as a product of social exclusion and distance from the cultural norms of their parents fails to capture more diffuse processes of intergenerational historical memory which, when combined with political and ideological dimension, 'would appear to constitute the cornerstone of the drift towards radical Islamic movements'.

The Turkish case, the only non-European country report, focussed on the impact of a top-down State-driven policy upon the narratives of grievance and humiliation for Islamists and Conservative Muslims who were its target. This policy, known as the '28 February Process', began in 1997 when the secular Turkish military issued a memorandum to the then governing coalition, aimed at curbing the rising influence of the Islamist Welfare Party in government and thereby precipitating that party's collapse. Thereafter, those managing this process enacted against religiously conservative Muslims, which continued until 2002 (after which the polarity was reversed). The effects of this repressive policy were not so very different in their outcome, *vis-à-vis* generating a collective identity that was constructed as "victimised" or "oppressed", to the European case studies despite the differences in ideological and religious affiliations of the milieu. Utilising political discourse analysis, which addresses questions of how the social world is presented to the public through particular modes of expression, the Turkish case study focussed upon the role of Islamist writers and intellectuals in articulating their opposition to the 'period of authoritarian secular oppression.' These writers have linked this narrative of injustice to other issues 'prominent in the cognitive map of Islamic circles' as a means of reinforcing the legitimacy of such tropes beyond their immediate milieu.

However, whereas the cultures of grievance and humiliation in the three European cases had largely arisen as a response to a culture of defeat, long incubated within these milieus, in Turkey the mechanism for the development of such emotions was direct State repression and the recent memory

of it. In the European case studies, the mechanism for propagating and prolonging such feeling was collective memory of the milieu itself since, in the case of Germany for instance, Nazism's military defeat was not a matter of direct personal experience for the overwhelming majority of participants.

Although the incubation and transmission of such ideas and emotions was not one of the research questions addressed by DARE, nonetheless most of the reports alluded to processes of inter-generational learning within the milieu as a means of perpetuating a collective memory, even if the events referenced in their narratives were, personally speaking only experienced vicariously. This is not to say that such beliefs were not 'real', only that they were in a broader sense socially constructed within the milieu. This emphasises again the important role that 'history' plays within such cliques as a means of forging radical identities.

In several of the case studies, particularly the German one, one of the key modes of ideological transmission was through personal contact; younger activists mixed socially with older militants, many of whom had a long history of violence. This highlights that 'history' and 'historical interpretation' were also part-and-parcel of a process of social acculturation within the radical milieu, rather than the result of scholarly intellectual contemplation for instance.

In the UK case, the generation dynamic was slightly different. Here the radical milieu under scrutiny actually emerged, at least in part, because younger militants rejected what they perceived to be the stifling affinity to orthodox National Socialism by the older generation of activists who led the NF. The Greek case also alighted upon some of these themes, noting the inter-generational consequences of right-wing extremism within families, many of whom had direct links to either the authoritarian regimes of the 1970s or with those who had collaborated during the Nazi occupation from 1941 to 1944. The generational and familial dynamics of radical milieus clearly merit further attention than they have previously received from scholars.

2.2.2 The role of conspiracy theories in radicalisation 'waves'

The country reports on historical case studies of radicalising contexts and milieus did not present any clear data on the role that conspiracy theories play within radicalisation 'waves', since the picture of their impact is actually further complicated by cross-national comparison. The UK case for instance, presented a radical milieu which had begun to critique anti-Semitic interpretations of history and politics as part and parcel of an effort to distance itself from the overt conspiratorial anti-Semitism of the movement as a whole, though this was only partly successful. Conspiratorial thinking, particularly about 'revisionist' interpretations of history, which resonated with the milieu's wider grievance narratives, was never entirely banished from movement publications, through which a more subtle shift was enacted that involved the trivialisation and minimisation of the Holocaust, rather than an outright denial of it. In this instance, however, it went hand in hand with a wider process of ideological 'radicalisation' *and* tactical de-escalation, insofar as many of those involved in the milieu, ended up withdrawing from 'political' activity altogether to focus upon culturally based meta-political activities.

Both the German and Greek case studies, which focussed on more ideologically and tactically militant milieus, found, perhaps unsurprisingly, that the role of conspiratorial anti-Semitism is more prevalent in such counter-cultures. For Golden Dawn, conspiratorial anti-Semitism was a 'central' component of its rise, of its revisionist 'counter-memory' of the country's role during the Second World War and the threats it currently faces; in particular its response to immigration and reproduction as a form of 'Great Replacement' – a narrative frame of especial contemporary salience. Furthermore, the Greek country case study also highlighted the role of anti-Islam conspiracy theories as a means of framing their anti-Muslim activities (which their publications also fused with conspiracy theories about Jews, which have enjoyed a longer lineage). These anti-Muslim conspiracy theories also provided a readymade ideological prism through which to explain how the country's neighbour Turkey was supposedly seeking to diminish the greatness of Greek civilisation and history by exporting migrants to its shores.

In the French case eschatological narratives, whilst still the subject of much debate, stood out more than conspiracy theories in models of radicalisation. The latter were of course omnipresent too; anti-Semitic conspiracy theories having come to the fore in the aftermath of the jihadist terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001, thereby cementing the link between conspiracy theories, violent radicalisation, and radical Islam, that has since occupied a central place in radicalisation models. This has since shifted, however, to prioritise Islamist views of the 'moral depravity' of the West. The French case highlighted the overly reductionist nature of such a fixation, since it downplayed other equally salient explanatory factors. Eschatological narratives, in the context of French radical Islamist youth, emphasise a singular relationship to death and the centrality of the discourse on the afterlife, but also symbolise a rupture with the temporal world and with modernity itself. Coupled with a romanticised vision of the East, they supplant jihadism's ideological dimension. These destructive and narcissistic eschatological narratives fuel self-delusions of a redeeming 'glorious death' amongst radical Islamist youth, the French study found.

The Turkish report did not explicitly highlight the role and impact of conspiracy theories within the radical milieu though its general grievance narrative appears suffused with them in terms of how it articulated 'the West' as being responsible for all manner of ills relating to the stigmatisation of Muslims and Islam. The Turkish report on historical case studies of interactive radicalisation, though examining the phenomenon of cumulative extremism, did address the range of myth-making and disinformation, similar in its nature to the anti-refugee and anti-migrant campaigns in Europe, used to foster hostility towards Syrian refugees in Turkey. Such myth-making and disinformation was common more broadly in the stigmatisation of such refugees and migrant communities, with conspiracy theories about those 'behind' the influx being a prominent component of extreme right discourse, though evidence of this was not presented in the Turkish report.

2.2.3 Radical milieus and the escalation of violence

In line with the findings of the broader scholarly literature on the subject of 'radicalisation,' in its investigations of the 'radical milieu', DARE did not find a clear correlation between radical thought and radical action. The UK case study, for instance, examined the emergence of an 'intellectual' radical milieu, grouped around a series of 'New Right' periodicals. These were established in reaction to the collapse of the National Front (NF), then Europe's largest anti-immigration movement, which was beginning to implode following its disappointing performance in the 1979 general election. This milieu consisted of principally those interested in subjecting the party's failure to a more thoroughgoing critique and self-analysis than its leaders were perhaps capable. The principle publications of the milieu reflected a broader reaction within the 'movement' to the electoral failure of the NF and sought to introduce new ideas about how they might gain political power. These new ideas, which included imbibing the radical thinking of Italian fascist ideologues like Julius Evola, were also part of an ongoing process of ideological revision within the wider movement. This had begun during the mid- 1970s, as young racial nationalist militants aligned with the NF's 'populist' wing began to challenge the authoritarian National Socialist clique which led the party.

Whilst other parts of the movement began to reject party politics altogether and advocate violence, this particular milieu, despite its ideological effervescence, led those involved with it, not towards violence, but away from it. This was likely a consequence of a certain level of ennui with regards street activity following the nullification of the NF's 'march and grow' strategy and the violent clashes with political opponents that this engendered, to the detriment of the party. Insofar as the milieu was interested in 'strategy', it collectively embraced a 'Gramscianism of the Right' – a form of meta-politics originating amongst French far right thinkers. These ideologues had argued that in order to win the political struggle one had first to win the cultural struggle, which was something that groups like the NF had conspicuously failed to do during the 1970s. In distancing itself from the electoral strategy of the NF, the milieu also distanced itself, not entirely successfully, from some of the principal pillars of far right thinking, conspiratorial anti-Semitism and biological racism.

There was plenty of violence within the British extreme right during this period but it was a variegated movement, ideologically and organisationally, and this particular milieu appears to have moved further away from such politics during the course of the 1980s. In this respect the milieu played little observable role – based on an analysis of its publications – in the 'wave' of radicalisation that took part within other extreme right milieus, though there was a dialogue between them, as well as an effort to police the boundaries.

These 'non-findings' about the role that radical milieus played in relation to waves of violent escalation stand in stark contrast to the findings of both the German and Greek reports which also examined the nature of emerging extreme right milieus during broadly the same time frame. The Greek country report, which concentrated upon the emergence of a radical milieu around the Greek neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn from the 1970s onwards, highlighted the crucial role of historical memory (see 2.2.1 above).

The French case explored a milieu noted for the transnational aspect of violence, which has become an integral part of how scholars, policy makers and the public perceive radical Islam. In this interpretation, the milieu provides substantial ideological support and personal and political legitimacy for violence through a 'horizon of meaning' that has overtaken earlier forms of anti-imperialist interpretation. Such radicalisation models overplay ideological factors, often fused with debates about urban violence and delinquency in the *banlieues*, however, at the expense of other factors such as the biographical availability of some Muslim youth for whom ideology is 'relatively light.' Whilst the fundamental motivation for resorting to violence remains to be determined (which throws into question the salience of the 'ideological-political dimension'), the 'revolutionary' nature of such violence retains a seductive quality for some youths from which it derives its legitimacy.

2.2.4 Radical milieus, violent political groups and the broader social and political, (including gender), environment: exploring the relationship

Evidence of the relationship between radical milieus, violent political groups and the broader social and political, (including gender), environment, was mixed. The German and Greece cases both examined radical milieus in which the relationship with violent groups appeared most clear-cut. The German case study presented the clearest evidence for this. The three activists who founded the NSU had all been involved in the Thuringian neo-Nazi milieu, which continued to sustain them once they went 'underground' to embark upon their decade long terrorist campaign. The Greek case also highlighted the 'central role' that violence has played for the radical milieu in and around Golden Dawn, from its inception in the early 1970s, to the infamous murder of a left-wing opponent in 2013 which led ultimately to the trial and imprisonment of several party leaders in 2020.

The UK case study saw the radical milieu travelling along the opposite trajectory, divorcing itself from the violent street politics and National Socialism of the NF leadership, as part of its broader efforts to provide an ideological makeover for the far right as a means of re-engaging in a fight for cultural hegemony against their 'left-wing' and 'liberal' opponents. The Turkish case served more as a timely warning about how the fuelling of hostile attitudes against Syrian refugees, on social media platforms in particular, serves as a threat to their wellbeing.

Moving to the question of gender, the UK case study addressed the issue through its exploration of how the 'New Right' milieu, which the available evidence suggests was largely male in terms of its writers, depicted masculinity, heroism and romanticism, and considered liberalism and egalitarianism to have deracinated 'manly' virtue. Feminism, whilst predictably equated with beauty, particularly in a romantic and classical context, also served as an ideological cipher for weakness when projected onto a nation (for instance the United States) to which it was otherwise opposed. One might infer the existence of similar ideas from the Greek case study through its immersion in Hellenism. This also influenced Germanic thinking in the eighteenth and ninetieth centuries and *ergo* the Third Reich from whence those involved in the radical milieu in Germany subsequently drew succour.

The Turkish report also highlighted how Islamist circles in Turkey invoked Muslim women in their arguments against a secular Turkey following the 28 February Process, arguing that they were doubly oppressed: by secular regulations and by the 'evil Islamophobic West' (particularly in relation to contemporary controversies over the rights of women to wear the Burqa in Europe). The account of female writers highlighted a third form of gender oppression. That whilst using the headscarf as a political tool with which to attack the secular authorities and the 'West', many of these male conservative writers were simultaneously using the issue to reinforce patriarchal norms through which women were denied the possibility of economic independence.

2.3 Conclusion

The findings of these five country reports tend to confirm wider analysis of radical milieus, that there is not a simple or uniform relationship between radical thought and radical action. One does not have to be present for the other to occur, which more broadly highlights that the role of ideology within radical milieus requires further scrutiny. In some instances – for instance in the German case – the relationship is more obvious whilst in others it is not. Historically contextualising the radical milieu is clearly important if one is to understand its trajectory towards or away from violence. There were limits to what the research in this part of DARE was capable of delivering but the findings on the relationship between radical milieus, violent political groups and the broader social and political, (including gender), environment, though mixed in these case studies, points to future research pathways. This is particularly true with regards the role that radical milieus might have, both as an accelerant and as a potential inhibitor, upon radical action. The latter point in particular is worthy of further investigation since the mechanisms for *internally* regulating violence is an emerging field of study within Terrorism Studies research more generally.

Each of the reports highlighted the important though rarely commented upon role of history as the frame through which grievance and ideological claims are often articulated. Understanding how 'counter-memory' is constructed within the radical milieu and under what conditions, can arguably help inform our understanding what 'matters' to those engaged in such 'scenes'. Conspiracy theories emerge as a key component of how those within the radical milieu conceptualise and understand the past, though, as these case studies collectively highlight, we know less about why certain types of conspiracy theory appeal to certain types of radical milieus whilst failing to gain traction in others. In other words, 'conspiracy theories' are not uniform, either in content or indeed degree, and the relationship between them and the context from which they emerged requires further comparative research. The role that conspiracy theories and eschatological narratives play in radicalisation 'waves' is also mixed since they appear dependent upon the type of radical milieu under the microscope. Whilst conspiratorial thinking can go hand-in-hand with clandestine political organisation, as the German country report highlighted, it can also develop so that, as the UK case study found, the ideological prism of conspiratorial thinking might persist, albeit de-coupled from any desire for radical action.

3. Cross-national synthesis of key findings of the country reports on historical case studies of interactive radicalisation

3.1 Overview

This section of the report draws out the key findings of five historical case study reports relating to interactive radicalisation. The overarching aim of these five historical case studies was to test some of the assumptions often made by scholars and indeed policy makers when they discuss the phenomenon of what is often called 'cumulative extremism'. This phrase entered common parlance in 2006 following an influential and oft cited article by British political scientist Roger Eatwell, who

defined 'cumulative extremism' as 'the way in which one form of extremism can feed off and magnify other forms [of extremism].' To confuse matters 'cumulative extremism' has also been described using and array of other nomenclatures too: 'cumulative radicalisation', 'reciprocal radicalisation,' 'connectivity between extremisms', 'tit-for-tat radicalisation', and 'reactive co-radicalisation' to name just a few. Scholarship exploring the phenomenon of violent contestation between opposing political activists, principally between extreme right, anti-fascist and Islamist activists, has rarely sought to critically test assumptions about the nature of 'cumulative extremism' and even less so through the use of historical case studies, albeit with several notable exceptions.

These five country reports examined particular instances of violent escalation, de-escalation and non-escalation across a range of different geographical areas and across several different scales of contestation: from the street to the institutional level. As well as exploring these dynamics at both the micro and macro level, these five reports also examined the phenomenon according to several differing the time-frames. Some reports investigated the dynamics of violent contestation across longitudinal time-spans whilst others focused on comparatively shorter bursts of militant activity as a means of comparing and contrasting the dynamics of such contests at work across these case studies. The overarching intention of this section was to further test both our conceptual and empirical assumptions about the nature of violent escalation involving opposing political actors when the phrase 'cumulative extremism' or one of its many iterations was invoked to describe such clashes.

The original five country reports addressed the following subjects:

- United Kingdom - Empirical testing of theories of 'cumulative extremism' through a study of violent interaction at political demonstrations between extreme right, anti-fascist and latterly Islamist activists (from late 1960s);
- Germany – The radicalisation impact of clashes between right-wing militants and Salafists in Germany (2012-13);
- Turkey – The Syrian movement in Turkey in the context of the Syrian civil war;
- Greece – The polarised reactions to proposed mosque construction in Athens (2000);
- France – The impact of policies of counter-radicalisation in prison: a cumulative production?

Each of the five research reports in this work stream focussed largely, though not always exclusively, on the question of how the historic comparison between and within these national contexts enhances our understanding of the dynamics by which contests between opposing movements and the state escalate, deescalate or fail to escalate? There was, however, a certain amount of crossover with some of the research questions addressed in the reports on historical case studies of radicalising contexts and milieus namely, how radical milieus or particular 'scenes' contributed to the escalation of violence, and the wider question of the relationship between radical milieus, violent political groups and the broader social and political environment.

3.2 Key findings

3.2.1 Violence at demonstrations is characterised by 'spikes' not 'spirals'.

The UK country report examined the ebb and flow of street contests between far right and anti-fascist groups, and latterly Islamist groups. This case study sought to understand patterns of cumulative extremism through an exploration of demonstrations and counter-demonstrations in the UK between 1967 and 2019. The principal finding of the study, in line with previous research, was that violence stayed within broader pre-defined tactical repertoires. Even when there was tactical escalation, it was short-lived and often took place outside the demonstration arena, making it harder to link the two. Extending the time to encompass decades rather than years gave greater clarity to the emerging picture of the 'demonstration scene' as being fundamentally characterised by 'spikes' in violence between two opposing sides rather than 'spirals' of violence, which much media and scholarly

commentary often assumes to be the end game *vis-à-vis* cumulative extremism/interactive radicalisation.

The case study highlighted that interactive radicalisation, when seen through the lens of far right demonstrations, also required the researcher to take a more holistic view of such events to take into account the actions of local law enforcement and legislative context, for instance. Police were not 'neutral' actors at demonstrations in the sense that their actions had no impact upon the outcome of the demonstration. Quite the opposite. The report also highlighted that, contrary to much commentary, clashes between ideologically opposed groups did not necessary lead to a 'spiral' of violence since the groups in question had a range of 'internal restraints' or 'brakes' on violence at their disposal as much as they had the capacity to 'do' violence.

The UK report examined far right demonstrations in national perspective and over a longer time frame to present more clearly the overarching pattern of escalation, de-escalation and non-escalation across several waves of mobilisation, and to offer some hypothesis for why 'cumulative extremism' in the British context was not marked by 'spirals' of violence. In contrast, German country report took a micro-level approach. It examined clashes between the anti-Muslim organisation Bürgerbewegung Pro NRW and the response from a Salafist group, which took place in the cities of Solingen and Bonn during May 2012.

3.2.2 The importance of accounting for a group's internal culture

Despite the difference in scale, the German case mirrored some of the findings of the UK country report insofar as violent escalation between hostile groups was not automatic, even if both parties accepted the use of violent provocation in the public sphere. The idea of 'brakes' or 'restraints' on violence, which are imposed *internally* by the groups themselves rather than *externally* by police, local authorities or the country's legal apparatus for instance (though it is often hard to entirely disentangle the two) is a burgeoning area for further research, one that is also beginning to emerge for researchers within 'Terrorism Studies'. Both the UK and German country reports indicate this hitherto missing dimension in the study of cumulative extremism could provide at least one explanatory factor for understanding why the 'action repertoires' at demonstrations have remained broadly unchanged (both in the short term and the long term), resulting in occasional 'spikes' in violence but not 'spirals'.

Another related point, highlighted in both these country reports and important for assessing risk, was that when antagonists endorse or are willing to use more extreme violence in other contexts (for instance by fighting abroad) this did not translate into them using such skills in the context of domestic demonstrations where such violence would be, presumably, understood to be disproportionate. That said, in both case studies there were instances of Salafists seeking to up the ante tactically through plots to murder far right rivals (in the British case by attacking an English Defence League demonstration), so clearly understanding the trajectories of smaller local milieus of activists within a wider national frame remains important. More generally, however, as the French report demonstrated, there is a disparity between the oft-presumed violent outcome of interactive radicalisation and the reality. Whilst the French far right are obsessed with and frequently target Muslims, the violence of radical Islamist groups is not directed at the far right at all; their domestic targets are more often indiscriminate (or else frequently Jews and representatives of the French state). Internationally their targets are those acquired through participation in the transnational jihadist movement i.e. 'apostate' Muslim regimes or the Western military presence etc.

Likewise, the German report also found that understanding the reason for escalation, beyond a fine-grained analysis of events on the day, required expanding the research parameters beyond examining the immediate antagonists to account for a range of local, national and international factors that all play a role in moulding perceptions of one another and outcomes too. This includes the internal cultures of the groups themselves and their potential propensity for violence towards one another, which can develop outside of purely 'local' factors.

3.2.3 Violence does not necessarily beget greater violence…

The Greek case offered an example of 'non-escalation' insofar as interactive radicalisation is concerned, despite the best efforts of groups like Golden Dawn to mobilise opposition towards the proposed construction of a mosque in Athens from 2000 onwards. Although Golden Dawn sought to increase local tensions by campaigning and demonstrating against the supposed 'Islamisation of Greece' and by attacking Muslims, migrants, and communal property, there was no violent counter-reaction from their victims, let alone counter-mobilisations against these racist provocations. Although the report outlines several possible explanations for the non-escalation of any potential conflict, the central reason that it identifies is the important role played by communal organisations in absorbing emotional responses triggered by such treatment and thereby muting other forms of response. In contrast to the UK case study which highlighted that the general pattern of street mobilisation was defined largely by 'spikes' of violence rather than 'spirals,' in the Greek case there was no escalation so to speak of. More broadly, this attests to the findings in other social movement literature that highlight that escalation requires more than simply having a 'catalytic event' to which one reacts to for a 'successful' mobilisation to occur.

3.2.4 Highlighting the importance of wider communal polarisation

Whilst these three country reports explored the concept of interactive radicalisation through case studies that – broadly speaking – entailed examining street level clashes, the Turkish case, switched scales to examine the impact that the brutal civil war in neighbouring Syria had upon Turkish society in terms of radicalised anti-refugee sentiment within such subcultures, and Turkish society. In its investigation of how these external stimuli influenced socio-economic and sectarian divisions within Turkey, this country report took a more macro-level approach than the micro-historical approach adopted by the British, German and Greek cases. And unlike these three case studies the Turkish report explored the extreme nationalist responses to the refugee crisis at Europe's borders rather than within them. Terrorist attacks by IS within Turkey's borders also increased hostility and prejudice against the 'Syrian movement' within Turkey, which was an external factor absent from the three European case studies (whilst jihadist terrorism has had an impact on the contemporary extreme right in Britain and Germany in particular, it was a factor missing from these historical case studies).

Critical discourse analysis of the narratives of grievance and humiliation in the Turkish report often predicated upon scapegoating Syrian refugees for institutional dysfunction *vis-à-vis* resource allocation/competition and antipathy towards the possibility of them enjoying the same level of rights and legal status as Turkish citizens. Such grievances were not new but, as the report highlighted, the civil war in Syria had a catalytic effect in exacerbating pre-existing prejudice and polarisation. This was particularly evident, as the report highlighted, through its study of social media use, with regards views about the 'troublesome' migrants that were expressed by some sections of Turkish society.

Whilst the aforementioned European case studies focussed upon the potentialities of interactive radicalisation between politically opposed actors engaged in street level contest with one another and the state, the Turkish country report was focused on the broader threat of communal polarisation which, according to Eatwell is arguably the more corrosive of the two threats. In particular, the report presented evidence of nationalist politicians seeking to stigmatise refugees and to polarise attitudes towards these communities through social media posts, which, opinion polls highlighted, had at least some resonance with pre-existing popular perceptions of Syrian refugees. Whilst the wider dynamic of communal polarisation appears to be present within the case study, the report itself did not highlight instances of interactive radicalisation as an escalating tactical response from nationalist groups towards refugees in Turkey. However, the report did highlight, that certain minority religious communities, for instance the Alevis community, could find themselves potential targets if sectarian tensions increased within Turkey.

3.2.5 State actors and institutions play a pivotal role

The fifth and final report – the French case study – examined the impact of policies of counter-radicalisation within French prisons and, more specifically, the historical evolution of the fight against radicalisation within prison, thereby highlighting the role of state institutions in shaping patterns of interactive radicalisation. This was something the German and UK case studies had also touched upon *vis-à-vis* policing at demonstrations. The French report examined the role of the prison as an institution as an 'active actor' in the interactive radicalisation process and as a radicalising agent in itself. The prison system itself serves to shape perceptions of 'Islam' as a 'threat,' argues the French report, which was at odds with the views possessed by some detainees who viewed their religion not as a sign of radicalisation but as a source 'of comfort, appeasement and repentance, as a help in confronting prison and a means of redemption.'

The French report argues that through its narratives and policies, the prison regime, made Islam a source of mistrust and suspicion amongst inmates, thereby exacerbating feelings of injustice and discrimination among adherents and reinforcing deleterious views of the French prison system, and French society, as racist and discriminatory. In this case study, the institution itself is presented as radicalising in tandem with its inmates, demonstrating that patterns of tactical radicalisation are co-produced by antagonists and that the radicalisation process takes the form of co-evolution. The French report ultimately argues that the State has contributed to reducing the possibility for exit and rehabilitation, which it had ostensibly sought to promote.

The German report also highlighted the need for further research on a range of issues including the contribution of 'bystanders' and the 'media' in escalating or de-escalating conflict. Foremost, however, was the need to attend to the role of State apparatus within waves of contest escalation, which in the German case includes the role of police and intelligence service agents operating within such groups. The report also suggested examining more closely the impact of blunt legal instruments, such as the proscription of particular groups and parties, and the message that this conveys to militants within the radical milieu about the political avenues open to them as a result.

3.3 Conclusion

Taken collectively these five country reports suggest, in one form or another, our thinking about the concept of interactive radicalisation (whether understood either as a violent escalation involving opposing political actors or for the wider ripple effect of communal polarisation that it is capable for engendering) requires more nuance. In particular, all five reports confirm the important and sometimes central role of the 'State' in framing, controlling or actually provoking violence, whether this is the result of tactics deployed at demonstrations or in institutional responses to manage radicalisation. Policy makers and scholars should be mindful of this role. Surprisingly, the role of the 'State' and state agencies is often omitted from analysis or only referenced cursorily. Islamist and far-right radicals do not exist outside the relationship with the state, which for many remains their main target. The state plays a major role and this notion of interactive radicalisation or 'cumulative radicalisation' cannot be heuristically useful as an analytical frame if one does not take into account its role.

Furthermore, as the reports collectively highlighted, was that a sense of proportion needs to be kept *vis-à-vis* our analysis of the phenomenon. As these five historical case studies indicate, the dynamics of political violence do not follow a linear pattern towards ever-greater violence. A wide range of internal and external restraints act upon individuals and organisations, highlighting that violent rhetoric is not enough to propel violence. The wider context requires understanding. Indeed, as these case studies highlight, violence – particularly at demonstrations – does not generally transgress the self-imposed limits of a group's established repertoire of action. 'Spikes' of violence rather than 'spirals' are the norm. Researchers often select cases based on the dependent variable of violence,

which, whilst understandable, is often misleading, since, as these case studies highlight, increased violence is not necessarily an inevitable outcome of interactive radicalisation.

3.4 References

Malthaner, S. and Waldmann, P. (2014). The Radical Milieu: Conceptualizing the Supportive Social Environment of Terrorist Groups. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism.* 37 (12): 979-998.