“The threat of spirals of political violence between antagonistic groups has aroused growing concern in recent years. But discussions of ‘cumulative extremism’ in liberal democracies have so far lacked empirical and theoretical depth. Analysing a range of British case studies, this book admirably helps to fill this gap.”

—Roger Eatwell, University of Bath, UK

“This book could hardly be more timely. Combining precise empirical case studies with deft theoretical observations, Carter’s analysis comprises a major step forward in the scholarship on ‘cumulative extremism’ and ‘reciprocal radicalisation’.”

—Joel Busher, Coventry University, UK

“At a time of increasing political polarisation in many Western societies, this book offers a valuable, historically-contextualised and carefully-argued critical analysis of what ‘cumulative extremism’ is and under what conditions it can develop. This book will be helpful to both researchers and to policy-makers and practitioners aiming to prevent extremism.”

—Paul Thomas, University of Huddersfield, UK
This book frames several historical incidents of violent movement-countermovement conflicts within the concept of ‘cumulative extremism’ – the mutually reinforcing dynamic of radicalisation that can develop between two or more antagonistic groups.

Drawing on several in-depth case studies, including the contests between British fascist and anti-fascist groups in the interwar period and from 1967 to 1979 and 1980 to 2000; the Troubles in Northern Ireland from the late 1960s to mid-1970s; and Islamist extremists and the far-right counter-jihad movement in Britain since 2009, this book presents the first in-depth academic analysis of the concept of ‘cumulative extremism’ and constructs a theoretical framework through which to assess its development.

This is a groundbreaking volume which will be of particular relevance to scholars with an interest in the extreme right, social movements, political violence and criminology. It will also be of interest to policy makers and to practitioners dealing with extremism and radicalisation, including youth workers, prevent coordinators, community support officers and police officers.

Alexander J. Carter completed his PhD at Teesside University’s Centre of Fascism, Anti-Fascism and Post-Fascism Studies. He has published research on radicalisation, terrorism and extremism.
This new book series focuses upon fascist, far right and right-wing politics primarily within a historical context but also drawing on insights from other disciplinary perspectives. Its scope also includes radical-right populism, cultural manifestations of the far right and points of convergence and exchange with the mainstream and traditional right.

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*Patrik Hermansson, David Lawrence, Joe Mulhall and Simon Murdoch*

For more information about this series, please visit:
CUMULATIVE EXTREMISM

A Comparative Historical Analysis

Alexander J. Carter
For my wife, Isbelis Carter-Lopez
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I would like to express my gratitude to the following people for their help, comments and suggestions: Nigel Copsey, Matthew Feldman, Craig Fowlie, Roisín Higgins, Graham Macklin, Charlie McGuire, Paul Thomas, and Lewis Young.

I also owe my thanks to the staff at the following archives and libraries: The National Archives, the British Library, the London School of Economics Library, the London Metropolitan Archives, the University of Northampton Searchlight Archive, the Linen Hall Library, and the Wiener Library.

For their support and assistance, I would also like to thank my father, Pat, and my sisters Miranda, Josie and Tess. Special thanks must also go to Liz.
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<td>AFA</td>
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<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>Al-Muhajiroun</td>
</tr>
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<td>ANL</td>
<td>Anti-Nazi League</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARA</td>
<td>Anti-Racist Alliance</td>
</tr>
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<td>AYM</td>
<td>Asian Youth Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BF</td>
<td>Britain First</td>
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<td>BUF</td>
<td>British Union of Fascists</td>
</tr>
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<td>B&amp;H</td>
<td>Blood and Honour</td>
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<td>BM</td>
<td>British Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>BoD</td>
<td>Board of Deputies of British Jews</td>
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<td>C18</td>
<td>Combat 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>CE</td>
<td>Cumulative Extremism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJM</td>
<td>Counter-Jihad Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPGB</td>
<td>Communist Party of Great Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRM</td>
<td>Civil Rights Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSB</td>
<td>Cable Street Beat</td>
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<td>CSJ</td>
<td>Campaign for Social Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCAC</td>
<td>Derry Citizens’ Action Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFLA</td>
<td>Democratic Football Lad’s Alliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLA</td>
<td>Football Lad’s Alliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLAF</td>
<td>Football Lads and Lasses Against Fascism</td>
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<td>HO</td>
<td>Home Office</td>
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<td>IFL</td>
<td>Imperial Fascist League</td>
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<td>ILP</td>
<td>Independent Labour Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMG</td>
<td>International Marxist Group</td>
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<td>INLA</td>
<td>Irish National Liberation Army</td>
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<td>IRA</td>
<td>Irish Republican Army</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>IS</td>
<td>International Socialists (later the Socialist Workers’ Party)</td>
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<td>IWA</td>
<td>Indian Workers’ Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>JLC</td>
<td>Jewish Labour Council</td>
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<td>JPC</td>
<td>Jewish People’s Council Against Fascism and Anti-Semitism</td>
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<tr>
<td>M/CM</td>
<td>Movement-Countermovement</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCB</td>
<td>Muslim Council of Britain</td>
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<tr>
<td>MfE</td>
<td>March for England</td>
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<tr>
<td>MRF</td>
<td>Military Reconnaissance Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCCL</td>
<td>National Council of Civil Liberties (later Liberty)</td>
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<td>NICRA</td>
<td>Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>National Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NF</td>
<td>National Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI</td>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>New Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSDAP</td>
<td>Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers’ Party, or Nazi Party)</td>
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<tr>
<td>OIRA</td>
<td>Official Irish Republican Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIRA</td>
<td>Provisional Irish Republican Army</td>
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<td>POA</td>
<td>Public Order Act</td>
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<td>RAR</td>
<td>Rock Against Racism</td>
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<td>RHC</td>
<td>Red Hand Commando</td>
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<tr>
<td>RUC</td>
<td>Royal Ulster Constabulary</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAS</td>
<td>Special Air Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMO</td>
<td>Social Movement Organisation</td>
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<td>SPG</td>
<td>Special Patrol Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWP</td>
<td>Socialist Workers’ Party</td>
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<td>SYM</td>
<td>Southall Youth Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>TUC</td>
<td>Trades Union Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>UAF</td>
<td>Unite Against Fascism</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCDC</td>
<td>Ulster Constitution Defence Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>UDA</td>
<td>Ulster Defence Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDR</td>
<td>Ulster Defence Regiment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPV</td>
<td>Ulster Protestant Volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UVF</td>
<td>Ulster Volunteer Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YRE</td>
<td>Youth Against Racism in Europe</td>
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The summer of 2001 bore witness to ‘the most serious outbreaks of disorder in
Britain since the widespread inner-city disturbances of the early 1980s.’¹ These epi-
sodes involved clashes between groups of British Pakistani, Bangladeshi and white
youths. The Home Secretary David Blunkett’s response included the setting up
of a Community Cohesion Review Team, led by Ted Cantle, to investigate the
disturbances. Their findings were subsequently published in the Home Office doc-
ument *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team.*² As the name
suggests, the report viewed the incidents through the lens of ‘community cohe-
sion’, and argued that the main issues were the ‘physical segregation’ and communal
‘polarisation’ which result in ‘communities operat[ing] on the basis of a series of
parallel lives’.³ Given these conditions, the report argued, there ‘is little wonder that
the ignorance about each others’ communities can easily grow into fear’.⁴ Many
observers felt that this emphasis on ‘community cohesion’ came at the expense of
a more nuanced analysis of the factors leading to the disturbances, and had down-
played the part that issues such as discriminatory housing policies by the local
councils, poverty and unemployment, racially motivated ‘[h]arassment and aggres-
sion from the police’ and ‘fascist antagonism’ played in provoking the violence that
occurred.⁵

It was the incidence of the latter issue, ‘fascist antagonism’, and the relation-
ship this had with the public disorder in Oldham, that the political scientist
Roger Eatwell first used as an example to illustrate the concept of ‘cumulative
extremism’ (CE), which he described as ‘the way in which one form of extrem-
ism can feed off and magnify other forms’⁶ As Eatwell stated:

Bradford in 2001 serves as a good example of how the extreme right helped
to provoke tensions among ethnic minorities… For some time before the
troubles broke out, both the BNP and NF had been active in the area.
Although a provocative NF march was banned shortly before the riots began, NF activists still gathered with the intention of fomenting trouble.7

Later, Eatwell and Goodwin stated that the ‘2001 riots in northern towns showed the potential for a spiral of violence’, and even went so far as to argue that cumulative extremism ‘is more threatening to the liberal democratic order than attacks from lone wolf extreme right-wingers or even al-Qaeda-inspired spectacular bombings.’8

Since Eatwell coined the concept of CE in 2006, the idea (also referred to as ‘cumulative radicalisation’, ‘tit-for-tat radicalisation’, and ‘reciprocal radicalisation’)9 has gained wider currency amongst both academics and policymakers, with the relationship between far-right groups and Islamic extremists in Britain taking centre stage.10 However, despite the growing acceptance of the idea, there has been surprisingly scant empirical investigation into it. Furthermore, the extant research has produced ambiguous conclusions over the development of processes of CE, with academics urging caution in the application of the concept.11

There are certainly studies amongst the small body of existing work on cumulative extremism that seem to support Eatwell’s theory. Since 2009, many academics have noted that the formation of the English Defence League (EDL) in response to the provocative protests held by Islamist extremists, as well their subsequent interactions with those Islamists, may provide a further example of Eatwell’s dynamic of CE.12 Further, Littler and Feldman have analysed data collected by the anti-Muslim hate monitoring organisation Tell MAMA ‘from the periods immediately before and after jihadi Islamist attacks in Sydney, Paris and Copenhagen’.13 They found that, if ‘of varied magnitude, the data nevertheless registers a spike in the number of reported anti-Muslim cases in the periods immediately following each high-profile jihadi Islamist attack’, which provides ‘further empirical evidence in support of the ‘cumulative extremism’ hypothesis.’14 In broader terms, many academics working in fields such as social psychology15 and social movement theory16 have noted the development of mutually radicalising relationships developing between antagonistic groups. Furthermore, the concept has been adopted by the British Government for their counter-terrorism strategy17 and found wider currency within the mainstream national media.18

However, the most in-depth and focused investigations into CE have been far more critical of the concept. Macklin and Busher have explored the most violent movement–countermovement (M/CM) contests between antagonistic social movements in Britain in the post-war era and demonstrated that, contrary to what proponents of the idea of CE might expect, there have been no real spirals of violence in these cases. They concluded that further ‘research is required on these patterns and processes of interactive escalation… In the meantime, policymakers, practitioners and academics alike might do well to err on the side of caution when making claims about CE and “spirals of violence”’.19 Elsewhere
Bartlett and Birdwell have examined the M/CM interactions between far-right and Islamist Groups in Britain and found that the evidence for the existence of the dynamic of CE developing to be ‘varied’, and warned that ‘care is needed with respect to this new concept. There may even be countervailing trends. Rather than leading to greater levels of support for each group, it could be that an extremist group’s actions only serve to isolate them further.’

Given the dissonance between some of these experts’ conclusions and how seriously CE is being taken by policy makers, other academics, and journalists, there is clearly a pressing need for a much greater understanding of the phenomenon. In the first place, if counter-terrorism strategies are being informed by a threat that ‘is being exaggerated… the consequence will be unnecessary fears, unnecessary powers and the allocation of excessive resources to the counter-terrorism machine.’ Secondly, as Macklin and Busher warn, if the study of cumulative extremism is not conducted in a robust manner, and as such presents spirals of violence as the inevitable outcome of interactions between opposing groups, this may actually exacerbate M/CM hostilities by encouraging and legitimating the narratives propagated by extremist groups ‘themselves that cohere around and depend upon apocalyptic warnings of inevitable ethnic and religious violence.’ Of course, it is also possible that an insufficiently nuanced understanding of the factors which influence the development of cumulative extremism could have the opposite effect and lead to a downplaying of the threat of terrorism and political violence posed by the escalation of M/CM contests. The more accurate the understanding of CE the easier it will be to design context-sensitive and effective policy measures by which to manage the interactions of opposing groups within a society.

**Researching cumulative extremism**

To approach this concept, there needs to be a firm idea of its parameters. Only loosely discussed in his introductory article on the subject, Eatwell nevertheless sketched the contours of how to approach the study of cumulative extremism. In the first instance, Eatwell’s article described the three processes which he seemed to consider to be the core of cumulative extremism: interactive radicalisation (when the actions of one group can provoke a more extreme reaction from an opposing group); the potential mobilisation or involvement of an increasing number of people; and communal polarisation.

However, despite this, there has been a great deal of ambiguity in the literature over exactly what ‘cumulative extremism’ refers to. The first academic reports to include the terminology tended to do so only in passing, and the analysis of the concept often only extended to the observation that the emergence of the English Defence League in response to the activities of Islamist extremists seemed to confirm Eatwell’s thesis. For example, Goodwin argued that ‘[The EDL’s] formation, therefore, is an example of … ‘cumulative extremism’, whereby the activities of one extremist group trigger the formation of another manifestation, and possibly thereafter a spiral of counter-mobilization or even conflict.’
Similarly, Copsey observed that the ‘founding of the EDL represents a type of interaction that political scientist Roger Eatwell has usefully described as ‘cumulative extremism’, that is to say, a process by which one type of extremism (Islamist) can spark off another type of extremism.’ 25 Holbrook and Taylor also warned of ‘the potential danger of reciprocal radicalization, where far-right extremist groups with anti-Islamic agendas emerge in response to Islamist-inspired violent extremism, triggering further radicalization within some Islamic communities.’ 26

Subsequent investigations have managed to drill down further into the concept, and these studies can, broadly speaking, be divided into two groups. The first group of writers have tended to focus more on the narratives, messages and stories of the groups involved. Writing within this vein of CE scholarship, Paul Jackson has defined ‘tit-for-tat radicalisation’ as a ‘reciprocal relationship between two or more extremist groups that actively feed off each other’s messages and ideologies’. 27 Cook and Blanquart warn of ‘the danger of “cumulative extremism” from vehicles such as Twitter through narrative exchanges that focus on fear and retaliation as common themes for discussion.’ 28 Kundnani has similarly described cumulative extremism as ‘the possibility that right-wing extremism and radical Islamism reinforce each other through a dynamic in which each one’s narrative encourages support in the opposing group, in a spiral of fear and mutual demonization.’ 29 More recently, Julia Ebner has argued that because ‘victimisation and demonisation work well together, extremists are in a mutually beneficial relationship. To tell a coherent story, the victim needs a perpetrator as much as the perpetrator needs a victim. In extremism, this leads to an effect called reciprocal radicalisation.’ 30

By contrast, the second group of researchers have focused more on the strategies, actions and behaviour of opposing groups. Of these, Matthew Feldman and Mark Littler have described CE as ‘the cyclical ratcheting up of violent activity between opposing communities, with acts of violence perpetrated by a sub-group (however small) of a given community against members of another community, triggering acts of violent retribution by members of a sub-population of the second community against members of the first community.’ 31 Elsewhere, Macklin and Busher have specifically argued that ‘while the journey of individuals or groups up or down the narrative and action pyramids might at times be closely interrelated, they are nonetheless distinct and discernible phenomena whose correlation with one another (let alone their causal relationship) is far from straightforward’. 32 In subsequent empirical research into CE, Busher and Macklin have stated that they ‘limit our focus to processes of tactical escalation. We do not explicitly examine processes of ideological radicalisation.’ 33

This book follows this second group of writers in primarily focusing on the tactical escalation of the actors involved, rather than ‘ideological radicalisation’ or the mutually beneficial nature of opposing extremist narratives. This is for two reasons: firstly, the main dependent variable here is political violence, not extreme views. As has been noted, while ideological and behavioural
radicalisation are linked, the former is hardly a perfect predictor of the latter. They are separate phenomena. Grasping the relationship between the two is not within the purview of this book, and accordingly the bulk of efforts will be spent on assessing interactive tactical escalation. Where the narrative output for a group directly precedes a tactical escalation on the part of an opponent, and there is strong evidence for a causal link between the two, this shall be included in the analysis. But increasingly extreme narratives alone are not the focus here. Secondly, ideological radicalisation is an extremely difficult thing to assess using documentary research. While evidence for tactical radicalisation is relatively easy to come by – newspapers are often replete with reports of an organisation engaging in violent activity after a particular episode – it would require interviewing subjects to really get to the bottom of processes of ideological radicalisation, and, with one exception, this methodology was not employed in this project due to constraints on time and resources.

Even when it is actors’ actions, rather than their attitudes, which are under the microscope, there is still some ambiguity over precisely who is being affected by processes of cumulative extremism. For some writers, it is the social movements who engage in increasingly radical tactics through interactions with their opponents. As Goodwin and Eatwell warn, then, ‘the potential danger of cumulative extremism is highlighted by the activity of the English Defence League (EDL), an organization with links to the football ‘casuals’ movement and which organizes street-based demonstrations against violent Islamism….’

Similarly, Macklin and Busher examine ‘patterns of escalation during four waves of movement–countermovement contests involving’ specific antagonistic organisations such as the far-right National Front and the far-left Socialist Workers Party in the 1970s. However, in their investigation into CE, Feldman and Littler examine individual acts of violence perpetrated against Muslims: ‘[t]aking the date and time of an Islamist extremist attack as a starting point, we compared the number of reports of anti-Muslim attacks in the 7 days following each attack, as against the number of reports in the preceding 7 days.’ This individual-level data does not necessarily suggest meso-level tactical escalations on the part of opposing organisations at all.

Here, the focus shall be on developments at the meso, or organisational, level. Eatwell himself suggested that CE largely stems from actions and decisions made at the group/organisational level – for example, it was the groups of the ‘extreme right’ such as the ‘the British National Party’ and the ‘the National Front’ who had been ‘active … fomenting trouble’, and ‘extremist “anti-fascists”’, such as the Socialist Workers Party, ‘who not only sought to encourage Muslim resistance but also to attack extreme right activists’. Although they cannot be divorced from micro- and macro-level factors, such as the actions of a solo-actor terrorist or the decision by a government to be unresponsive to a movement’s demands, it is the strategic development of social movement organisations (SMOs) that drives the evolution of M/CM contests: the decision to hold provocative marches or to form a martial body; or, conversely, the commitment to nonviolent means such
as holding music festivals or organising sit-ins. These same actions and decisions also may or may not attract more people to mobilise as part of the movement. Because the SMOs and political parties which constitute social movements are (generally) centralised and consciously adopt or reject different behavioural policies, then, they are the main sites of action and innovation, and thus are the primary movers in terms of the development of CE. The behaviour of broader communities, such as ethnic groups, is much more diffuse, and of course tends to be more reactive than proactive.

Approaching the subject from an entirely different angle, Liz Fekete criticises CE for focusing too much on social movements at the expense of legitimate critiques of the state’s role in contentious episodes:

> The diagnosis that the real threat we face today is from cumulative extremism has different consequences in different European contexts. In the UK, for example, we are told that there is a symbiotic relationship between Islamist extremism and the English Defence League, whose ideologies mirror one another and who feed off each other in a spiral of violence. In fact this viewpoint is merely a reworking of tired frameworks used before in Northern Ireland. Remember all those filmmakers, journalists and academics who sought to present the ‘Troubles’ in Northern Ireland as part of an everlasting cycle of Catholic and Protestant religious fanaticism, thereby denying that British troops, British policies and entrenched discrimination against Catholics were the engine of the conflict. 38

Fekete raises a valid concern here, especially given the interest that policy makers have taken in cumulative extremism. There is a danger that CE could be employed by states to frame conflicts in a way that suits their specific agendas – casting themselves as neutral arbiters amongst feuding groups – thereby damaging the analytic power of the concept or undermining any policy solutions arrived at through use of the concept. Thus, there needs to be an acknowledgement that the state may well play a formative part in the escalation of social movements’ protest repertoires – as well as being susceptible to tactical escalation itself.

The definition of CE employed by this book, accordingly, is as follows:

> the dynamic of escalation that can develop between competing social movement organisations and their (prospective) social bases as they interact with each other, the state, and third party groups. The escalation involves the adoption of increasingly radical and violent repertoires of contention as well as the mobilisation of larger numbers of activists; both of which can provoke, and in turn be fuelled by, communal polarisation.

Given these points, the research questions driving this study are: What variables can help to foster a situation whereby interactive escalation between organisations, on the one hand, and communal polarisation, on the other, reinforce each other?
What are the key factors which are likely to escalate an M/CM contest towards the use of increasingly violent and radical means, or de-escalate towards more moderate tactics? Under what conditions are opposing movements likely to draw in larger numbers of supporters and so further expand the conflict?

To answer these questions this book will conduct a ‘comparative-historical analysis’ of several different case studies. The movement-countermovement contests between British fascist and anti-fascist groups in the inter-war period and from the 1970s to the 1990s shall be considered alongside the Troubles in Northern Ireland from its onset in the 1960s through to its peak as a lethal M/CM contest between 1972 and 1976. Finally, this book will use the exploration of these different case studies as the basis for an analysis of movement-countermovement dynamics between the Islamist extremist and the counter-jihad movements in Britain since 2009. The overarching aim of these analyses shall be to identify the factors which are central to the development of processes of CE and to then construct a theoretical framework through which to assess the likelihood of cumulative extremism emerging between two or more antagonistic groups. This framework shall then be clearly laid out in the book’s conclusion.

The case study of British fascists and anti-fascists was included as it involved mass-mobilisations of opposing groups of people, as well as a degree of violent radicalisation, but never escalated to the point of SMOs adopting lethal violence as part of their protest repertoires; this will highlight the factors that inhibit M/CM contests developing processes of CE. The Troubles in Northern Ireland, however, have been included as a case study precisely because the conflict did intensify to the point of becoming a protracted lethal conflict. Further, the Troubles have been cited by academics such as Matthew Goodwin as representing the possible end result of processes CE. The case of Islamists and the counter-jihad have been included for two reasons: firstly, because it has become the focus of the majority of academic work on CE since the formation of the English Defence League in 2009. Secondly, because at the time of writing this case study is still ongoing, it provides a useful opportunity to apply the framework developed through analysis of the previous case studies so as to test its utility.

An historical cross-case comparison is necessary for this investigation because, as Rueschemeyer argues, ‘only by going beyond the first case does the impact of factors on the outcomes of interest come into view that does not show up in within-case analyses because these factors are – completely or largely – held constant.’ Further, in the literature on cumulative extremism there has not yet been any attempt to compare cases where cumulative extremism has developed with cases where it has not. Thus, this book will attempt to fill this gap in the literature.

To that end, this study will primarily adopt a qualitative analysis of documentary sources such as newspaper articles, minutes, personal correspondences, and other relevant primary and secondary sources. There is also data from an interview with one anti-fascist and former member of Anti-Fascist Action. These will be
analysed closely to assess the motivations, perceptions, and emotional reactions to events of the individuals and groups involved. This should make it possible to gain a deeper understanding of the factors which may be driving or inhibiting CE.

**Literature review**

*Extremism and radicalism*

The first concept that needs to be interrogated, given its central place in the analysis developed through this book, is ‘extremism’, or ‘radicalism’ (in this book these terms shall be used interchangeably, although the term ‘radicalisation’ shall be used to refer to the process of becoming ‘radical’ or ‘extreme’). The term radicalisation has only gained wide usage relatively recently, largely due to the spur in analyses of terrorism and terrorists prompted by the events of 9/11 and the subsequent attacks in London and Madrid. As Kundnani notes, in the aftermath of these developments the ‘concept of ‘radicalisation’ emerged as a vehicle for policy-makers to explore the process by which a terrorist was made and to provide an analytical grounding for preventative strategies that went beyond the threat of violence or detention. However, Kundnani also argues that the context in which this concept was developed led to it being ‘circumscribed by the demands of counter-terrorist policy-makers rather than [used in] an attempt to objectively study how terrorism comes into being.’ In particular, the concept was narrowly applied to Islamist extremists (and their broader communities) rather than terrorists in general.

Similarly, Silva has argued ‘that the circular relationship between government counter-radicalisation research and media reflects a broader preoccupation with problematising radicalisation as a predominantly religious issue, one that affects (mostly) Muslim communities’. Hoskins and O’Loughlin go even further, describing the concept of radicalisation as a ‘myth’, and arguing that there is a ‘mediatized political trend in the UK in conflating disaffection amongst certain groups with an idea of ‘radicalization’. There are some reasonable criticisms made by these analysts, which highlight the importance of not allowing ‘normative assessment to creep into our analysis and not to develop essentializing theories of actors and their behaviour.’ Nevertheless, as Neumann argues, ‘radicalization is not a myth, but its meaning is ambiguous, and all the major controversies and debates that have sprung from it are linked to the same inherent ambiguity. The principal conceptual fault-line is between notions of radicalization that emphasize extremist beliefs (“cognitive radicalization”) and those that focus on extremist behaviour (“behavioural radicalization”).’

Indeed, as with the division of focus in the literature on cumulative extremism, so too is there some disagreement over whether extremism and radicalism refer to behaviour or opinions. As Bartlett, Birdwell and King explain, the ‘journey into terrorism is often described as a process of “radicalisation”. However, to be a radical is to reject the status quo, but not necessarily in a violent
or even problematic manner. The process of radicalisation is obviously a problem when it leads to violence... but the last decade in particular has also seen a growth in many types of nonviolent radicalisation. Distinguishing between the two is important, as while there is certainly a great deal of overlap between people with radical or extreme views and those who use extreme methods to achieve their goals, the former by no means guarantees the latter. As Bartlett and Miller correctly argue, while some 'radicals conduct, support, or encourage terrorism... many others do no such thing, and actively and often effectively agitate against it. Many academics have written about how a lack of a coherent definition of extremism – one which takes into account the difference between attitudes and behaviour – has hindered British policy makers' counter-terrorism efforts. In particular, the 'Prevent' stream of the governments' CONTEST counter-terrorism strategy, which focuses on the prevention of radicalisation, has been criticised for failing to pay sufficient attention to this distinction. For example, Qurashi has criticised Prevent training courses which some people working in 'Higher Education Institutions' have been obliged to take, in which they are ostensibly given 'an understanding of the signs that would indicate a person was vulnerable to terrorism and [so might require] some kind of support and safeguarding', as they 'ignore academic literature which problematises the linear relationships and notions of a conveyor belt to terrorism, and which shows that radicalisation and extremism are not precursors for terrorism'.

This is by no means mere academic hair-splitting; counter-terrorism policy based on an insufficiently nuanced understanding of radicalisation and extremism can not only be ineffective, it can actually be counterproductive. As Kundnani argues, the focus on non-violent extremism in the Prevent agenda, through reference to ill-defined notions of 'Britishness', may actually engender feelings of disaffection among British Muslims: 'Some organisations have withdrawn from the Prevent programme as this cultural aspect has become more prominent... In practice, this approach to preventing violent extremism is counter-productive as it ends up expecting Muslims in general to mobilise around notions of Britishness imposed from above, thereby alienating the very people that need to be won over. Elsewhere, Richards has explicitly argued that the Prevent agenda 'appears to extrematize activity, whatever activity that might be, if it is carried out for an extremist cause (hence a peaceful, public and legal protest in support of extremist views itself becomes an act of extremism), at the same time as excluding the possibility of extremist activity carried out in the cause of a non-extremist doctrine... Thus, if we are to engage with the concept of extremism, and most particularly in a counterterrorism context, a clearer distinction needs to be made between extremism of (non-violent) thought and extremism of method, because it is surely violence and the threat of violence (integral to terrorism) that should be of primary concern to counterterrorism.'
Building on the criticisms raised by these writers, then, this study shall be concerned first and foremost with the behaviour of the actors involved in the case studies, and should therefore avoid blurring ‘the important distinction between “extremism” of thought and “extremism” of method’ which many have argued has led to ‘a loss of focus in UK counterterrorism efforts’. Accordingly, this book borrows the definition of ‘radicalisation’ employed by the social movement theorists Eitan Y. Alimi, Charles Demetriou, and Lorenzo Bosi: ‘We hold radicalization to be the process that leads to and includes political violence. Accordingly, we hold “radical” to be the (organizational) actor who has adopted the use of political violence.’ Similarly, and drawing on the recent work of Busher, Holbrook and Macklin, ‘extremist groups’ ‘refer to those groups in which a significant proportion of members have shown a willingness to deploy or support illegal [and violent] strategies of action’. Thus, an organisation may be dedicated to the advancement of a fascist state or a fundamentalist Caliphate, but if they use only legal and non-violent methods to attempt to bring about this goal then they are not an extremist group, nor have they been radicalized, under the definition employed here.

**Movement-countermovement contests and political violence**

With regard to the study of the radicalisation of social movements, Charles Tilly’s and Sidney Tarrow’s pioneering work on the concept of ‘contentious politics’ is of great use. They define ‘contentious politics’ as those ‘interactions in which actors make claims bearing on someone else’s interests, leading to coordinated efforts on behalf of shared interests or programs, in which governments are involved as targets, initiators of claims, or third parties’. Tilly and Tarrow have observed that different contentious episodes often display striking similarities to other episodes which have occurred in different times and places. These regularities are explored using the conceptual tools which they have dubbed ‘contentious performances’ and ‘contentious repertoires’. ‘Contentious performances’ are established and relatively well known routines which one set of political actors employ to make claims upon a different group, such as delivering a petition or organising a demonstration. In examining many particular instances of collective claim making, Tilly and Tarrow argue that it is clear that ‘particular instances improvise on shared scripts’. Although groups do innovate, often performances are repetitions of extant claim-making forms. Further, and crucially, performances are not always peaceful – actors can innovate their contentious repertoires to involve more violent performances or indeed draw on existing instances of violent claim making.

‘Contentious repertoires’ are the sets of contentious performances which a particular group of political actors are aware of. While repertoires do vary across episodes of contention, generally speaking ‘when people make collective claims, they innovate within limits set by the repertoire already established for their place, time and [claimant-object] pair’; thus, social movements operating in
the West often employ very similar performances such as petitions, mass demonstrations and sit-ins or ‘occupations’, but would be much less likely to consider suicide bombing, assassination, or kidnapping. This of course begs the question as to how and why different tactical innovations occur within relatively stable social settings from peaceful protest repertoires towards increasingly violent and maybe even lethal ones, and more specifically whether the competition between opposing social movements is likely to accelerate these tactical innovations? If this is found to be the case, why does this happen in some cases but not others? In Northern Ireland there was a cascade of tactical innovations as an entirely peaceful civil rights movement engaged with the state and loyalist counter-protestors, and within a few years this had escalated to the level of a civil war between republican and loyalist paramilitary groups. Yet fascist and anti-fascist groups in England more-or-less eschewed lethal violence for the entire twentieth century. What accounts for these differences?

Of those who have specifically examined the relationships between movements and countermovements, Zald and Useem were the first. They argued that the mobilisation of any significant social movement will likely provoke the mobilisation of a countermovement. This is because social movements, by their very nature, exist to challenge some established interests, and so provide ‘organizational entrepreneurs’ with the grievances and opportunities necessary to ‘define countermovement goals and issues’. Further, in successfully mobilising, a social movement demonstrates to the potential constituents of a countermovement that mobilising for collective action is possible. Zald and Useem started to develop a robust idea of ‘movement-countermovement’ (M/CM) interaction by carefully comparing it to other instances of social conflict. M/CM interaction is, they argue, similar to wars in that social movement organisations (SMOs) and countermovements (CMs) each control pools of resources which they expend in various ‘battlefields’ or ‘arenas’ (e.g. courtrooms, streets, news media). Importantly for the study of CE, Zald and Useem argue that violent conflict is most likely to occur when the movement and countermovement encounter each other face-to-face ‘on the streets’ at demonstrations and counter-demonstrations, because in such circumstances the groups have a heightened awareness of each other, and because these public spaces are often not so tightly regulated by the authorities so as to prevent close and personal (and sometimes violent) interactions.

That an M/CM dynamic may begin to exert a mutually radicalising influence on the movements in question is something that Donatella della Porta has also observed. In her book Social Movements, Political Violence and the State, della Porta observes how the regular meeting of hostile opponents can lead to the development of a dynamic which strengthens in-group loyalties while simultaneously ‘creating an “abstract” and “absolute” image of the other side as the “enemy”’. If these encounters continue with regularity there is the possibility that movements will engage in the ‘gradual reciprocal adaptation to increasingly dangerous weapons’ in an interactive manner – that is, one group may feel threatened enough by their opponents to bring low-key weapons to a counter-demo,
thereby provoking their enemies to bring more dangerous weapons themselves to the next encounter in order to protect themselves (or for explicitly offensive purposes). This can cause M/CM conflicts to escalate in a ‘logic of hatred, a logic of death’. Similarly, the work of the social psychologists McCauley and Moskalenko suggests that when a movement engages in ‘conflict with an outgroup’ it can lead to strong emotions such as ‘hate’ for said outgroup developing. This is activated through prolonged conflict and is the deepening of hostile sentiments towards a specified outgroup which, in extreme cases, can be manifested in an attempt to dehumanise them. McCauley and Moskalenko cite theorists who conceptualise it as ‘an extreme form of negative identification’, whereby the ‘enemy’ is seen to have a ‘bad essence’. This view suggests that there is an evocation of positive emotions when bad things happen to the outgroup, making violence much more likely.

These studies that have focused specifically on the radicalisation of opposing social movements provide a useful starting point for the study of CE, and suggest further lines of inquiry to develop the analysis. Zald’s and Useem’s assertion of street-based mobilisations being more conducive to violent confrontations are no doubt correct, but why do some marches and demonstrations generate violence and others not? What other ‘arenas’ of collective action might produce hostility? Similar questions can be asked of della Porta’s, McCauley’s and Moskalenko’s observations. There are many examples throughout history of movements and countermovements who have not experienced the extreme emotional responses to each other as these theorists describe (for example environmentalists and climate change sceptics or the anti-nuclear movement and the pro-nuclear lobby). Clearly the presence of two or more opposing movements who mobilise regularly against each other is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the development of CE.

Broadening the analysis somewhat, but remaining focused on the interactions between social movement organisations, Eitan Y. Alimi, Lorenzo Bosi, and Charles Demetriou draw attention to how the competition between organisations within the same movement can have a radicalising effect: ‘A central mechanism, then, is competition for power among movement actors. Challengers sometimes complement and sometimes undercut each others’ strategies as they struggle over whose strategy and tactics will dominate and as they vie for the support of yet uncommitted adherents and allies... competition for power can also support violence against movement competitors’. Other theorists have made similar observations. Mia Bloom describes a process called ‘outbidding’ whereby groups competing over the same social base may use radicalisation as a tool to win over converts. Donatella della Porta describes a process she terms ‘competitive escalation’, which she defines as the ‘causal mechanism that locates the escalation of protest repertoires within an organisational competition’. This mechanism is in large part rooted in within-movement competition: for instance, as established social movement organisations such as trade unions monopolise moderate and established forms of collective action, other organisations feel the need to employ more radical forms of collective action in order to outflank them to gain support
from their shared social base. This area of within-movement dynamics is an important area to explore with regard to CE, one which Eatwell’s original article did not include. The most relevant questions raised from these observations is that once radicalisation through *within-movement competition* had occurred, is violence between social movements more likely? Will the actors involved become socialised to use violence in general?

The relationship between the social and political structures in which movements act and how they develop is an area which has also been explored by academics. Building on the work of Zald and Useem, David S. Meyer and Suzanne Staggenborg argue that one of the key factors in understanding movement-countermovement relationships is the ‘political opportunity structure’ in which the groups operate. Political opportunity structures are the arrangement of various exogenous factors which influence the ‘development, tactics and impact’ of social movements; these consist of stable and structural elements of political opportunity, such as the openness of political institutions, and more dynamic aspects such as the shifting currents of public opinion and political discourse.

Most pertinently, Meyer and Staggenborg posit that the elements of the political opportunity structure which influence a social movement’s tactical decision to engage in direct action, including the use of political violence, are the efficacy of institutional means of campaigning and the point at which the movement’s protest cycle is at. On the whole, if institutional channels of redress (such as lobbying politicians) are closed to movements, they will likely start to employ tactics of direct action and civil disobedience. The more closed to them these institutional channels are, the more likely adherents of social movements are to engage in political violence.

Similarly, della Porta demonstrates how structural and environmental factors such as the availability of ‘environmental’ and ‘organizational resources’, a movement’s position in its ‘protest cycle’, and the style in which movements are policed all to a greater or lesser extent affect the tactical decisions of social movement organisations. These writers all usefully draw our attention to the role that the structure of political opportunities and other environmental factors play in shaping interactions between movements and countermovements, but more can be said on this point in relation to cumulative extremism. For instance, this study will investigate how the structure of political opportunities may differ for international and domestic movements and countermovements; i.e. how is an M/CM conflict affected when one movement has an international dimension and the opposing movement is very much rooted in domestic affairs, such as the Northern Irish Civil Rights movement and their loyalist opponents?

Interestingly, McCauley and Moskalenko have posited that social movement organisations may in fact use processes of cumulative extremism in an instrumental or strategic way, to shape how a conflict develops; specifically, a strategy that they refer to as ‘Jujitsu Politics’. McCauley and Moskalenko argue that smaller groups, when threatened by an outgroup, tend to increase their group cohesion, as well as their respect for ingroup leaders, their penalties for ingroup deviates, and
‘idealization of ingroup norms’. Larger groups tend to respond in a similar manner, with an increase in ingroup identification such as nationalism or patriotism. McCauley and Moskalenko argue that this response can be strategically used to the advantage of political groups with an aggressive agenda. A terrorist organisation can be fairly sure that in attacking a population they will provoke a counterattack. In turn, this will radicalise members of their own community who were previously not as committed to their aims. McCauley and Moskalenko argue that the perpetrators of 9/11 had just such a dynamic in mind when planning their attack:

Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri enunciated this strategy… If the shrapnel of war reach American homes, he opined, Americans will either give up their aims in Muslim countries or will come out from behind their Muslim stooges to seek revenge. If Americans move into Muslim countries, he predicted, the result will be jihad … the U.S. move into Iraq has indeed been associated with increasing support for radical Islam in Muslim countries.

These observations suggest that a key aspect of how and why CE may develop is the relationship between an SMO and a broader community or population. McCauley and Moskalenko further enforce this point when they describe terrorist groups as occupying the apex of a pyramid of activists and supporters:

The base of the pyramid is composed of all who sympathize with the goals the terrorists say they are fighting for. In Northern Ireland, for instance, the base of the pyramid of support for the IRA was all those who agreed ‘Brits out.’… From base to apex, higher levels of the pyramid are associated with decreased numbers but increased radicalization of beliefs, feelings, and behaviors.

Importantly, McCauley and Moskalenko are perhaps not quite presenting the full picture in their theorising of the ‘pyramid of support’. While the pyramid of supporters of the IRA does of course include all those who agree ‘Brits out’, the pyramid also contained many people who were included by virtue of their ascriptive ethnic identities rather than their ideological commitments. That is, young Catholics who knew very little about republicanism in general or the specific ideologies of the Official or Provisional IRA in specific, joined the paramilitaries out of revenge for the murder of their kin by loyalists or British soldiers. It would seem to be the case, then, that the nature of the conflict cleavage between the opposing movements is an important factor with regard to the potential development of processes of CE.

**Ascriptive and non-ascriptive divisions**

Central to the analysis of CE is an understanding of the nature of the division between the opposing groups involved. For the purposes of this investigation,
the quality which is of most interest is whether the conflict cleavage(s) are of an ascriptive or non-ascriptive nature, as this has a baring over the likelihood of a mutually radicalising relationship developing between oppositional movements. What ‘distinguishes ascriptive identity groups is that they organize around characteristics that are largely beyond people’s ability to choose, such as race, gender, class, physical handicap, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and nationality.’

It should be noted that acknowledging the ascriptive nature of certain groups does not mean that one is uncritically reifying terms such as ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’, nor does it mean accepting them as being biologically-rooted ‘facts’ – indeed, it is widely accepted that all such categories are to a greater or lesser extent socially constructed. Nevertheless, the involuntary nature of these identities brings with them a certain longevity and enduring power. As Gutmann argues:

To say that racial, gender, ethnic, and national identities are social constructions… is not to say that they are any easier to change than our genetic inheritance or physiognomy. Most African Americans, women, and deaf people cannot ‘pass’ for white, men, or hearing individuals; they can reinterpret their ascriptive identities but it is difficult if not impossible to give them up.

Non-ascriptive groups, however, are voluntarist in nature; people decide whether to become members. This is something that Anderson refers to as ‘practical identification’: ‘Practical identification occurs when people see themselves as members of the same collective agency – as participants in a common cooperative enterprise such as a firm or interest group, in a shared practice such as a hobby, sport, or artistic endeavor, or as committed to living and hence reasoning together about what to do, as in a democracy.’ There have been many instances where social movements have mobilised against each other across non-ascriptive conflict cleavages, such as across political divisions as with communists and fascists or over single-issue campaigns such as the pro-choice and pro-life movements with regard to abortion laws.

The reason this distinction is important is that it can influence how a conflict is structured. Two or more social movement organisations or political parties competing over the same community (i.e. two opposing political groups competing over the electorate) may be more reluctant to engage in violent or illegal tactics to achieve their goals than organisations claiming to represent distinct and separate social groups fighting across that cleavage. Indeed, the literature on ethnic conflict has shown that when a society is deeply divided along ethnic lines, competing parties often try to exploit the situation by positioning themselves as the group most dedicated to the interests of their ethnic community and the most hard-line with respect to other ethnic communities – a process that is called ‘outbidding’, and which may end in violent inter-ethnic conflict.

This is an issue that is influenced far more by the nature of the society in which the conflict occurs than by the nature of the organisations involved, though.
Indeed, many organisations have attempted to exacerbate tensions along ascriptive lines between different communities so as to capitalise on resultant feelings of animosity. However, if these cleavages are not particularly salient within a society, these efforts are far less likely to be successful. Many far-right groups in Western Europe have attempted to engender hostility between white and non-white communities with the aim of starting a ‘race war’ and gaining support as the defenders of ‘white’ interests. However, this is not a lens through which sufficient numbers of citizens have viewed these societies, and consequently these endeavours have fallen on stony ground. In societies which are more significantly structured around such ascriptive divisions, it may be easier for organisations or movements to present themselves as representing the ‘material and symbolic interests’ of broader communities (be they based on ethnic, national, or other ascriptive identities). As such, they may find it easier to exploit these divisions or otherwise mobilise broader communities behind them. Indeed, a significant difference between conflicts fought along ascriptive and non-ascriptive lines is that the former may be more likely to have large extant communities to draw support from or to mobilise.

‘White working class’

Throughout some of the chapters in this book the concept of the ‘white working class’ is used and, due to the highly contested nature of the concept, it requires some discussion here. The first and most obvious criticism which can be levelled at the concept is that it is never entirely clear exactly who is included within it. Even the ‘white’ part of the term, which is ostensibly clear in its denotation, is more obscure than it may at first appear. For instance, ‘in the United Kingdom, the arrival of Poles and Lithuanians … often occupying occupational and experiential positions that would align them with the ‘white working class’ has thrown into relief the problems with such forms of categorisation, complicating an already ambiguous terrain populated by the liminal ‘whiteness’ historically ascribed to Jewish, Irish and Gypsy/Traveller populations.’ Perhaps less surprisingly, there is also often a great deal of ambiguity over just who is considered to be ‘working class’. As Thomas et al. warn, many observers writing about the ‘white working class’ focus ‘only on the poorest elements receiving free school meals rather than on a broader understanding of the working class’.

Aside from ambiguities over exactly where the boundaries of the ‘white working class’ lie, another problem with the label is that it is seldom used in a neutral fashion, but rather is often deployed in pursuit of a specific ideological or discursive goal. Rogaly and Taylor argue that elites have often employed evocations of struggling ‘white working class’ communities as part of cynical attempts to evoke feelings of communal competition and thus divide workers. ‘Such representations of white British working-class people, in opposition both to black and minority ethnic British people and foreign nationals of all classes, are usefully
divisive for owners of capital ... Such divisions enable the maintenance of low pay and insecure working conditions.⁹³

Elsewhere, writing from a Critical Race Theory perspective, Gillborn describes the ways in which a system of white supremacy is in part maintained by elites through ‘popular discourses that present the working class as, on one hand, innocent victims of unfair racial competition and, on the other hand, degenerate threats to social and economic order.’⁹⁴ The ‘White poor’, argues Gillborn, have never been unambiguously accepted as white by the group’s gatekeepers, but have rather ‘long existed on the boundaries of Whiteness’.⁹⁵ When it has suited middle class interests, such as when certain tax or welfare policy reforms have been sought, a distinction between the ‘respectable working class’ and the ‘undeserving poor’ or a ‘feral underclass’⁹⁶ has been constructed and repeated through the media. Yet conversely, when middle class interests have been best served by shifting public attention away from economic inequality, then a discourse of a struggling ‘white working class’ which has been ‘left behind’ by multiculturalism and ‘politically correct’ ‘race equality measures’ has been employed.⁹⁷ That the ‘white working class’ can be portrayed so easily by the same parties as being both victims and deviants demonstrates that frequently when the concept is employed, rather than being part of a genuine attempt to understand social actors and processes, it is intentionally warped to fit a specific agenda. As Gillborn notes, for many of those who employ it, the ‘flexibility of the discourse, its lack of precision, is one of its strengths’.⁹⁸

Further, it is not just elites who employ the concept instrumentally. Lawler has averred that ‘whiteness’ is symbolically applied to the ‘working class’ so as to obscure the ‘whiteness of the middle classes’.⁹⁹ Middle-class anxieties over English national identity have grown recently, argues Lawler, due to factors such as increasing demand for regional devolution. Discourses that construct working-class whiteness as an ‘extreme whiteness, or hyper-whiteness, that works as a counterpoint to ‘ordinary’ (and middle-class) whiteness’, and which is ‘framed as an unreflexive, axiomatically racist whiteness’, are an effective way of dealing with these middle-class anxieties.¹⁰⁰

But perhaps the most significant criticism that should be levelled at the concept of the white working class is the way in which it presents a picture of a homogenous group with consistently similar attitudes and aims. As Rhodes points out, this has been demonstrated recently by the ‘academic, journalistic and policy accounts of the relationship between the ‘white working class’ and far-right political parties such as the British National Party (BNP) and the English Defence League (EDL),’ despite membership of the ‘white working class’ being a poor statistical predictor for involvement with such groups.¹⁰¹

Nevertheless, both the material realities and the perceptions of social class and ethnicity do affect certain social processes; and there certainly are trends which develop amongst low-income white communities. For instance, as Thomas et al. observed, there are ‘clear currents of anxiety, even resentment,
within low income White communities across Europe around growing ethnic diversity’. The question arises, then, how to investigate the social processes in question without reifying the concept of the ‘white working class’? Rhodes argues that the answer lies in Brubaker’s distinction between the concepts of ‘groupism’ and ‘groupness’. Rhodes posits that the use of the ‘white working class’ as a label often ‘bear all the traits of what Brubaker terms “groupism”’. That is, the term displays ‘the tendency to take discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups as … fundamental units of social analysis’. In doing this with the ‘white working class’, analysts risk ‘missing the complexity of social relations and practices’ by overlooking ‘the various fragments and fault lines that serve to make it only a rough approximation of lived realities across a spectrum of differences’. This analytical oversimplification can be avoided, however, by considering the ‘white working class’ to be a ‘category’ not ‘a group’; by thinking, ‘not in terms of substantial groups or entities but in terms of practical categories, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, discursive frames, organizational routines, institutional forms, political projects and contingent events’. Doing this ‘means taking as a basic analytical category not the “group” as an entity but groupness as a contextually fluctuating conceptual variable.’ The distinction between ‘groupism’ and ‘groupness’ enables us to separate out the ways in which ‘groupness’ is constructed from the actual labels themselves, to gain an understanding of the ‘organising powers’ of social categorisations such as the ‘white working class’ without presenting them as a homogenous unit or uncritically reifying or reproducing them.

The preceding discussion demonstrates that there is a rich literature on social movements, political violence and radicalisation to draw upon in exploring the dynamic of cumulative extremism. Conceptual tools and the embryo of a theoretical framework through which to proceed are provided, but most importantly many questions are raised. While these studies have done a fine job in laying the groundwork, none of them have specifically put the interactive escalation of M/CM movements and the attendant effect this process can have on extant broader social groups under the microscope.

Conclusion

The concept of cumulative extremism, recently coined by Roger Eatwell, is an important one in many respects. It can shed light on how antagonism between groups with mutually exclusive goals may sharpen to the point of political violence. It asks interesting and significant questions about the nature of the relationship between social movements, social movement organisations, and the wider social groups that they claim to represent and court for support and resources. Further, and most importantly, in-depth investigation into the concept may help to suggest policy solutions that may interrupt pathways to radicalisation, perhaps ultimately saving lives.
Despite these points, and the growing use of the concept, there has been insufficient empirical investigation into it. This book will conduct a comparative investigation across several different case studies using a qualitative methodology to address this gap in the literature. In so doing it will demonstrate some of the key factors which lead to the escalation, non-escalation or de-escalation of movement-countermovement contests; what developments contribute to M/CM contests mobilising increasing numbers of people for either or both opposing movements; and how and why these contests may cause communal polarisation.

The book’s first chapter shall examine the interplay between fascists and anti-fascists in the inter-war period, largely focusing on the development of, and responses to, the British Union of Fascists (BUF) from 1932 to 1939. The next two chapters shall focus on the two cycles of mobilisation that occurred between the far right and far left in Britain between 1967 and 2000. The formation and rise of the National Front from 1967 provoked a concomitant growth in anti-fascism in the form of the Anti-Nazi League and Rock Against Racism, just as the British National Party’s growth from 1982 generated the formation of Anti-Fascist Action and other anti-fascist groups. For the fourth chapter, the book’s focus shifts over to Ulster in the early 1960s and the interactions between the Catholic civil rights movement and the Protestant loyalist movement. Careful attention shall be paid to the factors at play in Northern Ireland between 1960 and 1976 that caused the situation to escalate from peaceful protests to lethal civil war, with paramilitary groups emerging from both communities. Chapter five shall assess the more recent case of the far-right counter-jihad movement in Britain which formed in response to the actions of British Islamist extremists. Finally, the conclusion shall present a framework for assessing the development of cumulative extremism, constructed using the observations and analyses of the preceding chapters.
NOTES


3 Ibid., p. 9.

4 Ibid., p. 9.


7 Ibid., p. 213.


14 Ibid., p. 3.


43 Ibid., p. 5.
44 Ibid., p. 5.
54 Richards, Anthony. ‘From Terrorism to “Radicalization” to “Extremism”: Counterterrorism Imperative or Loss of Focus?’ International Affairs, 91, no. 2 (2015), p. 376.
55 Ibid., p. 371.
59 Ibid., p. 11.
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is based on a combination of MI5 intelligence, BUF sources and educated guess work. However, as Thurlow suggests ‘Although some of the assumptions behind these figures are questionable, the basic pattern is the most plausible that has been suggested.’ Secret State, p. 192. The CPGB figures come from the Party’s own censuses, held at the Russian Centre for the Preservation of Contemporary Historical Documents (formerly the archive of the Institute of Marxism–Leninism) in Moscow and so should be fairly reliable.

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183 For example see London AFA’s ‘Operation Zero Tolerance’: Birchall, *Beating the Fascists*, p. 391.
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2 This study, while referring to Catholics and Protestants, uses the terms to refer to ethnic groups, as is commonly accepted in the literature on Northern Ireland: see McGarry, John and Brendan O’Leary. *Explaining Northern Ireland* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), pp. 185–207; Ó Dochartaigh, Niall. *From Civil Rights to Armalites: Derry and the Birth of the Irish Troubles* (Cork: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 7.
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