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# When Do Radical Flanks Use Violence? Conditions for Violent Protest in Radical Left-Libertarian Activism in Sweden, 1997–2016

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## ABSTRACT

Descriptions of social movement factionalism are often based on the dichotomous conception of lawful moderates and violent radicals. In this article, we nuance this distinction by illustrating the complexity of radical flanks through an empirically grounded analysis of protest tactics, in which we ask under what conditions radical flanks are likely to use violent protest tactics. Exploring dominant explanations of political violence, the article shows the necessity of understanding the use of violent protest tactics as part of cognitive and relational processes. The use of violent tactics varies greatly across frames and protest issues, pointing to how different logics of protest are tied to different frames. Also, the use of violence is affected by the presence or absence of moderate allies; the likelihood of violence clearly decreases when radicals and moderates form coalitions when organising protests. The analysis is based on a protest event data set covering over 3,900 nonviolent and violent events by the Radical Left-Libertarian Movement in Sweden, 1997–2016. Notably, the results hold over this entire twenty-year period, suggesting that they are robust and provide a better explanation than historically contingent causes.

## KEYWORDS



Political violence; social movement dynamics; radical flank effects; radical left; coalition work; framing

## Introduction

For decades, scholars have highlighted the internal heterogeneity of social movements.<sup>1</sup> Although bound by a shared collective identity, activists and organisations within a movement often have different ways of understanding the problematic conditions or situations that they deem in need of change, differ in how far-reaching their claims are, and prefer different strategies and tactics to bring about these changes.<sup>2</sup> A common way of describing how such differences within a movement manifest themselves in factions is to speak of radicals and moderates, or radical and moderate flanks.<sup>3</sup> In this article, we ask under what circumstances radical flanks are more likely to use political violence.

## Radical flanks, radicalism, and violence

What constitutes the main difference between radical and moderate flanks has been conceptualised in different ways in different fields of research. In social movement research, this division has mainly been understood as *relational* and *environmental*—that is, as shaped by interactions between different actors and the political environment in which they operate.<sup>4</sup> Primarily, the division has concerned how radicals and moderates relate to, on the one hand, the political mainstream and, on the other, the use of conflict-oriented tactics such as political violence. Thus, radicals have often been distinguished

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from moderates by their more far-reaching claims and a more conflict-oriented protest repertoire (which can sometimes include the use of political violence), while moderates have often been seen as characterised by claims closer to the political mainstream, more conventional forms of protest, and a greater willingness to collaborate or negotiate with representatives of institutionalised politics.<sup>5</sup> Based on such a relational and environmental understanding, what distinguishes radicals from moderates has mainly been about how intra-movement relations are structured by different strategic orientations,<sup>6</sup> or the extent to which each flank's objectives, tactics and rhetoric are perceived as legitimate by relevant external audiences.<sup>7</sup>

Also in political party research, radicalism has been understood in more relational and environmental terms, emphasising that although radical actors' ideas by definition deviate from the political mainstream, they are not antithetical to it. From such a perspective, radicals are seen as actors who radicalise specific ideas that are already widely embraced by broad segments of society, albeit usually in more moderate forms.<sup>8</sup> Radicalism can thus be seen as an "ideological and practical orientation" towards more far-reaching systemic change within a specific political system.<sup>9</sup> In this article, we mainly rely on such an overall understanding of what it means to be a radical actor—both in relation to the political mainstream and to other actors within the same movement.

An analytical strength of a relational and environmental understanding is that it does not automatically equate radical flanks with political violence and moderate flanks with conventional (and non-violent) forms of protest. This makes it easier to make sense of the often complex relationship between social movements, their different flanks and the use of political violence. In reality, both moderate and radical social movement organisations use a variety of tactics and also interact to reach common goals.<sup>10</sup> Radical actors use conventional and transgressive as well as violent protest tactics, and the tendency to use one type over another may differ across time and context.<sup>11</sup> Historically, both radical and moderate political actors have used violence to achieve their political goals.<sup>12</sup> There are also many examples of radical groups that have considered non-violent action to be both more effective and legitimate than political violence.<sup>13</sup> In our understanding, violent protest tactics are one of several tools that social movement organisations use to further their cause, and the choice to do so depends on a variety of factors.

Such an approach contrasts sharply with how the relationship between radical actors and the use of political violence tends to be understood in other fields of research, or in more practice-oriented knowledge production. Not infrequently, radical movement actors are then considered to be closely linked to the use of political violence.<sup>14</sup> This risks creating a simplistic and dichotomous division between different actors within a movement, where some are seen as deviant and "extreme," while others are seen as "normal" and tolerable. This dichotomous way of understanding social movement activism is also reflected in policy and practice, particularly in policies aimed at preventing radicalization and violent extremism (PRVE). Within PRVE policies, concepts such as radicalism, extremism and terrorism are often closely interrelated, and different radical movement milieus are lumped together with terrorists under uniform labels such as "violent extremists."<sup>15</sup> This approach has been criticised by scholars for risking to associate entire movements with the use of political violence, while it also does not increase our knowledge of the circumstances under which political violence occurs.<sup>16</sup>

Although we share the basic assumptions of previous relational and environmental literature on the dynamics between radical and moderate flanks, very little of this research has focused on the radical flank itself and how its actions are influenced by the moderate flank. The literature on so-called radical flank effects has mainly looked at the effects of the radicals' actions, on the moderate flank or for the movement as a whole, without looking at how the moderates' actions affect the radicals.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, even in this literature there is a certain tendency to see radical movement actors as per se oriented towards confrontational and violent strategies.<sup>18</sup>

In this article, we empirically investigate the extent to which different factors make the use of violent tactics within a radical flank more likely. By doing so, we scrutinise the dichotomous definition of radical and moderate flanks and go beyond the assumption of a necessary link between radicalism and the use of violence. Drawing on a framework of environmental, relational and cognitive factors,

we ask how the radical activists' political environment (political opportunities), the radical flank's interaction with moderates (coalitions), and cognitive factors (collective action frames) impact the likelihood of two outcomes: (1) that protesters will choose a violent form of protest and (2) that initial nonviolent protest will turn violent. Our analysis is based on a data set of over 3,900 protest events organised by the Radical Left-Libertarian Movement (RLLM) in Sweden and undertaken during the period 1997–2016. However, the conclusions are meant to inform discussions about radical and moderate protests more broadly.

The RLLM comprises organisations, informal groups, and networks that base their activism on libertarian socialist thought. Anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists, autonomists, council communists, and libertarian Marxists are all found within this movement. Historically, the RLLM has constructed its identity, frames, and strategic repertoires partly in opposition to moderate actors both within the broader Swedish left and within other progressive movements, such as environmental, anti-racist, global justice, animal rights, and feminist movements. Although RLLM is a movement in its own right, RLLM activists have often self-identified and acted as a radical flank to these movements.<sup>19</sup> Since the 1980s, the RLLM has engaged in multiple protest issues using multiple tactics, from peaceful protests and information campaigns to violent attacks against property and individuals.<sup>20</sup> The data set on RLLM protests in Sweden, therefore, provides the opportunity to study how the same radical flank uses (or refrains from using) violent protest tactics over a longer period of time: in changing political environments, in changing relationships vis-à-vis their moderate allies, and across shifting issues and frames. This said, the significance and extent of the use of violence within the RLLM in Sweden, which is more limited compared to RLLM protests in many other Western countries, should be understood in relation to the broader left in Sweden and the overall intensity of the protest dynamics in the country.

Our results shed new light on radical flanks' use of violent and nonviolent protest tactics. In particular, the results challenge the common tendency to think about radical and moderate flanks in dichotomous terms, where the former is associated with violent tactics and the latter with non-violent forms of protest. The article shows that a radical flank's use of violence does vary considerably over time and in relation to different political issues. For the most part, radicals make use of conventional and transgressive protest tactics. The radical flank is more likely to use political violence during protests where their opponents are framed as concrete, physical, and delimited targets that can be affected immediately through material or personal damage (as opposed to political institutions or structural phenomena that would be affected more indirectly) and when their protests are organised without the participation of elite allies. Political opportunities (measured as the presence of elite allies in government) play a limited role in the likelihood of violence. The article thus shows, all other things being equal, that the likelihood of violence is linked above all to the radical flank's relations with its allies, and how radicals frame their opponents. Looking more closely at the data, we find that the majority of violent events, with or without elite allies, target the far right. This suggests that the relevant mechanisms are also tied to relational processes between the movement, its countermovement, and the police, in relation to specific protest issues.

The article proceeds through five sections. The following section presents six guiding hypotheses based in a discussion of environmental, relational, and cognitive explanations of political violence. The article then proceeds into a description of the protest event analysis methodology and a subsequent description of the RLLM in Sweden, drawing on the authors' previous work. The final two sections present and discuss the results, stressing the need for a relational understanding of the behaviour of radical flanks.

## Radical flanks and violence

The social movement literature provides a systematic framework for analysing the conditions that make the use of violence during protest events more likely. In a broad sense, these can be divided into *environmental*, *cognitive*, and *relational* explanations.<sup>21</sup> *Environmental* explanations focus on the

impact of factors external to the movement such as political opportunities. *Relational* explanations stress how the relations between a movement actor and others in its immediate interactive context affect the emergence of violence. *Cognitive* explanations highlight the impact of ideational factors internal to the movement such as collective action frames. Whereas much current research has developed these explanations through a *processual* approach, tracing the emergence of violence through causal mechanisms during individual episodes of protest, this article looks at the same three dimensions from the point of view of variable-based explanation.<sup>22</sup> As such, what the current study loses in detail, it makes up for in empirical scope. Further, the “static” view offered here is more applicable to explaining patterns in the long-term relationship between radical flanks in the RLLM and the moderate flanks on its outside. As we return to in the article’s concluding discussion, however, processual and variable-based explanations should be read as complementary rather than competing approaches.

Environmental explanations focus on the relationship between movement tactics and external opportunities and constraints. In the literature, the concept of opportunities has expanded from a relatively narrow focus on elements of the *political* opportunity structure, to also involve opportunities related to the legal,<sup>23</sup> economic<sup>24</sup> and discursive context.<sup>25</sup> Among the four, this article focuses only on the impact of (some elements of) the political opportunity structure. Whereas the legal conditions for violent protest were roughly similar over the course of the studied period, economic opportunity structures are primarily relevant for movements that engage directly with corporations.<sup>26</sup> The hypotheses that have developed in the literature on discursive opportunities either focus on the micro-level mechanisms that embolden single actors to use violence,<sup>27</sup> or on how elite debates justify violence against third parties.<sup>28</sup>

The political opportunity literature offers multiple approaches to explaining political violence, two of which are especially relevant to the tension between moderate and radical flanks of a movement. The first hypothesis suggests that as political opportunities narrow, competition for visibility and support increases, and the lack of results makes it less likely that activists will perceive conventional tactics as effective, radical flanks will use violence to maintain visibility and attract new supporters.<sup>29</sup> This hypothesis, however, is useful primarily for explaining how non-violent patterns of protest slowly escalate into violence in contexts of widespread and highly competitive mobilisation.

The other approach highlights the relationship between actors within and outside political institutions. The presence of potential movement allies in government will signal a wider capacity for the polity to absorb and implement policies closer to the movement’s values and demands. Inversely, the absence or weakness of potential allies in government will signal the closure of the political system, and thus raise demand for more disruptive tactics. For left-wing movements, including its radical flanks, these real or potential allies are generally found among radical left, green, and centre-left parties.<sup>30</sup> Because this approach is more general, and because it is more applicable to situations outside of long-term protest waves, we prefer it to the first approach.

This article draws on, and innovates on, the “channelling” approach to the political opportunities–violence nexus. On a general level, we expect the presence of potential movement allies in government to open political opportunities for the radical flank, as it signals a wider capacity for the polity to absorb and implement policies closer to the movement’s values and demands. In the analysis, governments that comprised or were actively supported by the Social Democrats, the Green Party, or the Left Party are seen as facilitating open political opportunities for RLLM, while governments led by the Conservative Party signal closed opportunities.

We hypothesise that allies are especially likely to channel movement demands during electoral periods. As existing research shows, election campaigns are “exceptional events,” in which political parties will be especially vulnerable to counterclaims, and where party representatives will attempt to maintain positive relations with their surrounding movements. In this situation, the movement is more likely to have its demands heard regardless of tactics, and it is plausible that the activists will abstain from tactics that harm their relations with potential allies in a future government. While this should be particularly true for reformist

actors, ethnographic research shows that even those groups that are committed to remaining outside of the political system, often get caught up in the new opportunities offered during election campaigns.<sup>31</sup> Although the RLLM in Sweden is anti-statist in principle, qualitative research does show that activists and organisations often maintain relations with political parties and seek to influence politicians on particular issues.<sup>32</sup> We therefore consider the political opportunities to be particularly open during electoral campaigns and when left-leaning governments are in power. These considerations lead to the following hypotheses:

**H1a:** Protest is more likely to be violent under right-wing governments.

**H1b:** Protest is more likely to be violent outside of electoral campaigns.

The political opportunity approach suggests that the radical flank's behaviour is only indirectly affected by its relationship to other actors. *Relational* approaches to social movements, on the other hand, argue that an actor's choices must be explained with reference to the interactive contexts where movements act. These studies typically focus on the relationship between movements, counter-movements, and the police. Particularly from a processual approach, authors have shown how relational dynamics between these types of actors drive escalation processes through spirals of repression and counter-violence. While these explanations are useful for explaining how violence emerges in particular episodes of protest, or on particular issues, they are of limited use for providing more general explanations, and for directly addressing the problem of the tension between radical and moderate flanks. As we will show in our commentary on the results, however, the broader relational dynamics that have emerged in the context of particular issues (particularly anti-fascism) are obviously relevant for understanding how facilitative conditions lead to the emergence of violence.

Starting from the observation that radicals and moderates often collaborate, we hypothesize that the choice to use violence represents part of a movement's *coalition work*.<sup>33</sup> In making coalitions with other actors, representatives of radical flanks negotiate between their strategic preferences and others. In doing so, they will make compromises to maintain positive relations and gain access to resources. Further, collaborating with more mainstream actors can serve as a shield from state repression, and will help the movement make its claims more visible for a wider audience. While collaboration between radicals and moderates can take many forms, this article limits its scope to what Levi and Murphy call "event coalitions."<sup>34</sup> These are coalitions that form in preparation for single protest events, in which the participating organisations negotiate and agree on common tactics. We choose to focus on event coalitions because they should have the most immediate and observable effect on the likelihood of violence during specific protest events.

Like radical flanks, moderate flanks are internally diverse. Among the participants of moderate flanks, we expect elite allies (such as political parties or their subsidiary organisations) to be particularly likely to limit the use of violence. First, elite allies may be more sensitive to reputational damages than their non-elite counterparts. Second, elite allies have more resources to bring to negotiations, giving them more weight in the planning of events. The visibility and resources that elite actors control should also serve as shields from repression and some forms of protest policing, making events less likely to escalate into violence. Third, the presence of elite allies in an event coalition could signal an opportunity that the protest event will be more visible and impactful without the use of confrontational strategies. In full, the relational explanation leads us to propose two hypotheses:

**H2a:** Protest is less likely to be violent when organised by coalitions with moderate organisations.

**H2b:** The likelihood of violence is at its lowest when protests are organised by coalitions with elite actors.

Cognitive explanations suggest that the decision to use violence is linked to activists' ideas about what constitutes necessary, effective, and legitimate tactics.<sup>35</sup> In the literature, these ideas are often taken for granted as part of the definition of the radical flank. Therefore, the ideational basis for the decision to use or not use violence is seldom explored fully and, instead, tends to be assumed.<sup>36</sup>

This article uses elements of frame analysis to examine how a movement's understanding of various social problems affects its likelihood to use violent protest tactics. The analysis thus focuses on the connection between two types of framing; diagnostic framing (i.e. the definition of grievances, causes, consequences and responsible targets) and prognostic framing (i.e. the definition of proposed solutions, agency and goals).<sup>37</sup> In this article, we do not undertake a full-fledged analysis of the movements' diagnostic frames or how they translate into action. Rather, the diagnostic framing of the RLLM is operationalized to cover two aspects.<sup>38</sup> First, based on our previous research on the movement's frames and ideational developments, we assume that different protest issues (e.g. anti-fascism, animal rights, housing, etc.) are framed somewhat differently, building on issue-specific combinations of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational elements that are often fairly consistent over time.<sup>39</sup> Consequently, the likelihood that a protest event will be or will become violent should vary between protest issues. Second, at the level of targets, the analysis looks at how differences in the diagnostic framing of opponents impacts the likelihood of violence.<sup>40</sup> Where protesters frame state bodies, particularly political institutions, or structural phenomena they consider responsible for a given grievance, it is more likely that they will aim for change using "the logic of numbers," attempting to impact policy indirectly through public displays and mass mobilisation. In such circumstances, the protest aims to influence political decisions and policies. Using violence against the institutions that can make these decisions is likely to drastically reduce the chances of the protesters' message being heard. In contrast, when protesters frame specific companies, political opponents' organisations, or individuals as responsible, they are more likely to act according to a "logic of damage," in which the rationale is to increase the opponents' costs. In this way, political demands are not mediated through institutionalised politics. Instead, political action is aimed at directly pushing certain actors to cease the activities against which the activists are protesting through direct harm or the threat of harm.<sup>41</sup>

**H3a:** The likelihood of violence will differ across political issues.

**H3b:** The likelihood of violence is lower when the opponents are framed as structural phenomena or state bodies.

Across these three types of explanations, the study of political violence has witnessed a growing polemic between proponents of processual and correlational explanatory approaches.<sup>42</sup> Unlike the explanations sketched above, processual approaches regard violence as the outcome of historically contingent processes, as radical flanks develop within specific episodes of protest and in relation to other actors.<sup>43</sup> While processual explanations have contributed greatly to the study of political violence overall, they are not applicable to the empirical case and scale of analysis we use. Despite this, we also want to consider the fact that the RLLM in Sweden, and the frames, relations and political opportunities that surround it, have undergone changes during the long period covered by our data. We therefore include a periodisation variable as a control. The periodisation variable is based on our previous research on the RLLM, which has shown that the period 1997–2016 can be divided into three phases (1997–2001, 2002–2009, and 2010–2016). This periodization corresponds to overall changes in the movement's collective action frames and mobilisation patterns.<sup>44</sup>

### **Protest event analysis: background, sources, and coding**

Our analysis is based on a manually coded protest event data set covering 3,947 public protest events in Sweden, 1997–2016.<sup>45</sup> To be included in the data set, RLLM organizations needed to be involved as sole organizers or as organizers alongside moderate allies. It was not sufficient

that individual RLLM activists participated in the events or that the events were shared through RLLM media. Of the 3,947 protests, 1,100 contained acts of violence, either by virtue of the tactic chosen or because violence occurred during an event organised on the basis of a nonviolent tactic.

The data were collected in two separate ways.<sup>46</sup> First, we coded 4,700 protest events on the basis of reports in the movement's own media. Of these, 3,812 protest events were organised or co-organised by RLLM groups. The main source used for most of the period was Motkraft.net (N = 2,063), a website and online newsletter active between 1997 and 2014 that published reports by RLLM groups from across Sweden. However, the data also include a substantial number of cases (N = 2,215) coded from other leftist and RLLM media, both printed and web-based (including public Facebook groups and YouTube videos), and these complementary cases were mainly found on RLLM groups' websites. For a list of all major movement media sources, see the appendix. The movement sources are complemented with data on 339 protest events from *Aftonbladet*, Sweden's largest daily newspaper. Of these protest events, 327 were organised or co-organised by RLLM groups. For the newspaper data, we identified events through a keyword search in the news media database *Retriever*.<sup>47</sup> By combining the two types of sources, we created an exhaustive dataset.<sup>48</sup> For the combined dataset of 3,947 protest events, 214 protests were mentioned in both types of sources. The protests that appeared in both datasets were reviewed to ensure that they were coded uniformly.

For our analysis, the relevant variables were *protest type* (tactics), *protest issue*, *target*, and the *presence or absence of event coalitions with moderate actors*.

The variable *protest type* captures the main tactic used at a given event, for example, a demonstration, property damage, or a house occupation. At the overall level, the analysis distinguishes between violent and nonviolent protest in which the former involves "actions oriented at inflicting physical [. . .] damage to individuals and/or property with the intention of influencing various audiences for affecting or resisting political, social, and/or cultural change."<sup>49</sup> The category includes acts of violence against persons as well as against property. The nonviolent category includes demonstrations, rallies, and leafleting as well as confrontational tactics such as squatting and blockades.

To better capture the nuances within the categories, we made further distinctions. In the nonviolent category we distinguished between conventional and transgressive nonviolent tactics, where conventional protest tactics were actions that were confined to established institutional routines and norms (peaceful demonstrations and rallies, handing out leaflets, picketing, street performances, workplace strikes, etc.), while transgressive tactics challenged established routines and balanced on the borders of legitimacy/illegitimacy and legality/illegality (blockades, squatting, counter-demonstrations, nonviolent confrontations, etc.).<sup>50</sup> Regarding violent protest tactics, we first made a distinction between violent tactics that entailed property damage and attacks on individuals. Furthermore, we distinguished between violent tactics that were premeditated and protests that were organised as nonviolent events but which escalated into violent situations (e.g., through physical confrontations with the police). Because the causal logic is likely to differ between the two forms,<sup>51</sup> the subsequent analyses report the results separately for the two types. The bivariate analysis reports overall protest tactics (conventional and transgressive), the two different violent protest tactics (property damage and attacks on individuals), and the occurrence of violence (confrontations or property damage) during protests organised as nonviolent. The binary logistic regression analyses are based on two different dependent variables: the use of violent protest tactics and the occurrence of violence during protests organised as nonviolent.

Table 1 shows the distribution of conventional, transgressive, and violent protest types, the protest tactics that make up these protest types, and the occurrence of violence during the protests. Among conventional protest types, the most common tactics were demonstrations and rallies, making up 37 percent of all protests. Among transgressive protest types, blockades and occupations were most common. For violent protest types, property damage was the most common tactic followed by attacks on individuals or groups. Of all the protests where violence occurred, 22 percent were in protests organised as nonviolent.

The variable *protest issue* captures the general diagnostic framing of the event and was derived from a predefined list of thirty-one options. The list is based on the authors' knowledge of the RLLM in

**Table 1.** The use of violence and violent tactics during protest events organised or co-organised by the RLLM in Sweden, 1997–2016

	No occurrences of violence	Occurrences of violence	Total (N)	Total % of all protests
<b>Conventional protest types</b>				
Information dissemination event (leaflets, posters, banners, etc.)	568	11	<b>579</b>	<b>15</b>
Street performance (street theatre, die-in, etc.)	47	2	<b>49</b>	<b>1</b>
Rally	491	13	<b>504</b>	<b>13</b>
Demonstration/march	885	57	<b>942</b>	<b>24</b>
Picketing	187	16	<b>203</b>	<b>5</b>
Strike (workplace)	112	4	<b>116</b>	<b>3</b>
Other conventional protests	5	0	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
<i>Total conventional protests</i>	<i>2,295</i>	<i>103</i>	<i>2,398</i>	<i>61</i>
<b>Transgressive protest types</b>				
Disobedience/civil disobedience	36	1	<b>37</b>	<b>1</b>
Counter demonstration	113	72	<b>185</b>	<b>5</b>
Blocking or claiming public space (blockade, square occupation, sit-in)	337	56	<b>393</b>	<b>10</b>
Occupying or squatting in building	64	6	<b>70</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>Total transgressive protests</i>	<i>550</i>	<i>135</i>	<i>685</i>	<i>17</i>
<b>Violent protest types</b>				
Attack on property	0	618	<b>618</b>	<b>16</b>
Attack on individual/group	0	244	<b>244</b>	<b>6</b>
<i>Total violent protests</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>862</i>	<i>862</i>	<i>22</i>
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total (N)</b>	<b>2,845</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>3,945</b>	<b>3,945</b>

Sweden and should therefore be considered to be specific to the empirical case.<sup>52</sup> Given that many protest events are linked to multiple issues, the coding procedure allowed for the simultaneous coding of up to three issues per event. However, of the 448 events where we coded more than one protest issue, we used in this analysis only the protest issue that was considered most central.

The variable *target of protest* captures the main actor or structure identified as responsible for the grievance in the framing of a given protest event. The analysis aggregated targets into six groups: state bodies (local/regional, national, foreign, and international/supranational governmental bodies, and the police/judicial system), racist or far-right parties and organisations, other political parties and organisations (mainly mainstream right-wing political parties), industry (private companies), structural phenomena (e.g., capitalism, patriarchy, and racism), and other targets. By focusing on the main target for each event, the analysis bracketed the fact that a particular frame could encompass multiple targets (actors, organisations, and structures) as the causes of a given grievance. As an example, while the RLLM considers capitalism as one of the causes of racism and racist mobilisation, the coding focused only on the actors that were framed as the immediate targets of a given protest event.

The variable *organiser* denotes whether the RLLM organised an event on its own or in collaboration with a moderate ally. Like radicalism, what constitutes a moderate actor is often difficult to establish in relation to a given empirical case. With the exception of some small radical left parties (e.g., communist, Trotskyist, and Marxist-Leninist parties), the RLLM groups we focussed on in this analysis generally had a more radical framing, a more frequent use of disruptive (if mostly nonviolent) tactics, and perceived themselves as more radical than other organisations in the dataset.<sup>53</sup> In comparison with the small radical left parties, the RLLM groups do not participate in electoral politics and have consistently adopted a confrontational style in their public communication. If at least one of the non-RLLM co-organisers was a political party with representation in the national parliament or was such a party's youth, student, women's, or other official subsidiary organisation, the event was coded as containing an elite ally.

The most common non-RLLM coalition partners were left parties (including both parties elected to the national parliament and small movement parties) and their youth organisations, but also the youth organisations of centre-left parties. Among common protest coalition partners were also various movement organisations engaged in anti-racist, global justice, and anti-war issues.<sup>54</sup>

## The RLLM in Sweden

Our analysis focuses on the RLLM in Sweden between 1997 and 2016. Actors within the RLLM are connected through an ideological commitment to anti-authoritarianism, anti-capitalism, and anti-statism, and the vision of a society based on voluntary forms of cooperation. Throughout its history, RLLM actors have also criticised power relations not necessarily connected to capitalism or the state, for instance racism, sexism, homophobia, and speciesism. While the RLLM primarily seeks social and political change outside of institutional politics, the movement encompasses groups with highly divergent tactical preferences.

Figure 1 shows the total number of RLLM protests in Sweden between 1997 and 2016. The figure also shows the number of conventional, transgressive, and violent protest events per year. Violent protests were divided according to whether they involved property damage or attacks on individuals. In addition, the figure separates out those protests that were organized as nonviolent but where violence was reported.

As stated above, our previous research show that the period 1997–2016 can be divided into three phases: 1997–2001, 2002–2009, and 2010–2016, following the development of the movement's frames and collective identity.<sup>55</sup> During the first period, which peaked in 1998, the movement engaged in multiple protest issues, where anti-racism, women's rights/feminism, and animal rights were the most prominent (making up 23 percent, 16 percent, and 12 percent, respectively). The broad range of issues corresponds with the dominance of a collective action frame that emphasises the interconnectedness of different forms of structural oppression, based on class, gender, race, sexuality, speciesism, and more. As a result, the RLLM came to act as a radical flank to several movements. The movement emphasised direct action against its opponents, which led to a relatively high proportion of violent protests, such as sabotage against the fur industry, local porn shops, and neo-Nazi groups' premises.

During the second period (2002–2009), with a peak in 2006, the movement was primarily oriented towards anti-racist and labour-related protests (27 percent and 24 percent, respectively). The focus signals a shift in frames towards class-related and local conflicts, emphasising interventions in the activists' workplaces, schools, and neighbourhoods. The period is also characterised by intensified conflicts with neo-Nazi groups, which to a large extent explains the relatively high share of violent protest against groups and individuals in this period.

During the third period (2010–2016), the number of protest events was lower than in previous periods. Workers' rights and anti-racism continued to be salient issues (18 percent and 17 percent, respectively), although to a lesser extent than in the previous period. Relatedly, there was increased involvement in protests over housing and city planning (12 percent), but also in protests against migration policies and public welfare (10 percent and 8 percent, respectively). This reflects a shift in

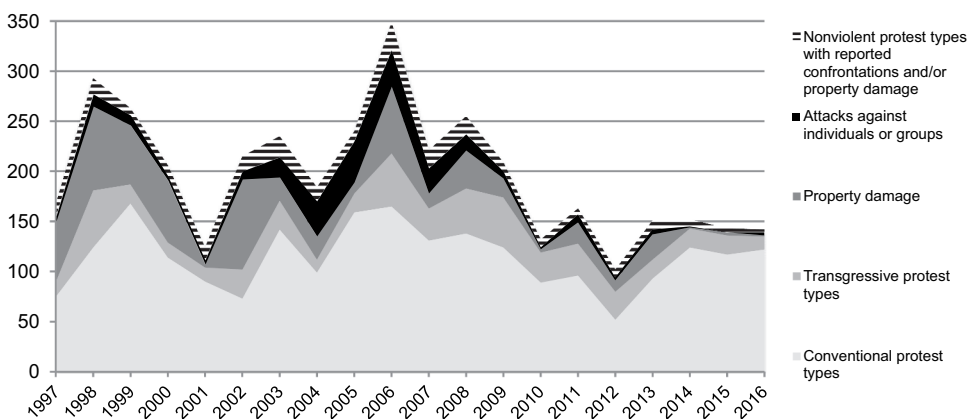


Figure 1. Number of RLLM protests per year in Sweden, 1997–2016, type of protest tactics, and occurrence of violence.

the movement's frames toward a universalist conceptualisation of the effects of capitalist relations on local society and an emphasis on the need to engage with the local community.

When comparing the first (1997–2001), second (2002–2009), and third (2010–2016) phases of the studied period, the share of conventional protest tactics remained at 57 percent for the first two periods but then increased to 72 percent. During the same three phases of the overall period, the percentage of violent protest tactics decreased from 29 percent to 25 percent to 9 percent. The occurrence of violence during protests organised as nonviolent events fluctuated from 6 percent to 7 percent to 5 percent.

The RLLM's broad range of frames and tactics, coupled with its historical continuity, makes it a suitable case for studying the factors that increase the likelihood of radical flanks' use of violence. The RLLM's broad tactical repertoire provides sufficient variance to observe meaningful empirical relationships. Its engagement with numerous protest issues (and frames) and its existence across a long period of time makes it possible to discuss the movement's tactical diversity across a variety of contextual conditions. To better establish *how* different issues matter, however, it would be necessary to conduct more focused comparisons of the most intense issues.

## Results

This section presents the main results of our analysis. The section begins with the presentation of bivariate descriptive data on the relationship between environmental, relational, and cognitive factors and the occurrence of violence. The second part of the section presents two logistic regression analyses that tested the separate and combined impact of the key independent variables on the probability that a violent protest tactic was chosen or that violence occurred during an event that was organised as nonviolent.

### *Bivariate analysis*

First, we turn to environmental factors and the political opportunity approach. [Figure 2](#) shows the types of protest tactics that occurred during governments of different stripes and whether protest tactics during election campaigns differed from those occurring during periods when there was no election campaign.

Regarding the importance of the political composition of the government, the bivariate analysis contradicts **Hypothesis 1a**. Contrary to our expectations, a higher proportion of protests were violent (in particular, property damage) under left or centre-left governments. However, the proportion of violence reported in nonviolent protest types did not differ. **Hypothesis 1b**, on the importance of election campaigns, is also contradicted by our bivariate analysis. In fact, protests during election campaigns were more likely to be violent. However, this mainly concerns property damage. We further note that a larger proportion of protests during election campaigns were nonviolently transgressive.

Turning to relational factors, [Figure 2](#) also shows protest types in relation to whether the organisers of the protest were solely RLLM groups or whether they organised the protest in a coalition together with moderate organisations. Our results confirm both **H2a** and **H2b**. Violent protest tactics were very rarely chosen or used in coalitions but were more common when RLLM groups organised the protests on their own. This said, violence occurred in some coalition protests that were organised as nonviolent events but escalated into violent situations, that is, property damage or confrontation between protesters and the police or other groups. However, this type of situational violence was as common in protests organised solely by RLLM groups as in protests co-organised with elite allies, but most common in protests co-organised with coalition partners who were not elite allies.

Finally, we turn to the cognitive explanatory model, where the occurrence of violence during protests is related to the collective action frames used by activists. In this analysis, this model relates to protesters' overall views on various protest issues, as well as the actors they considered responsible for

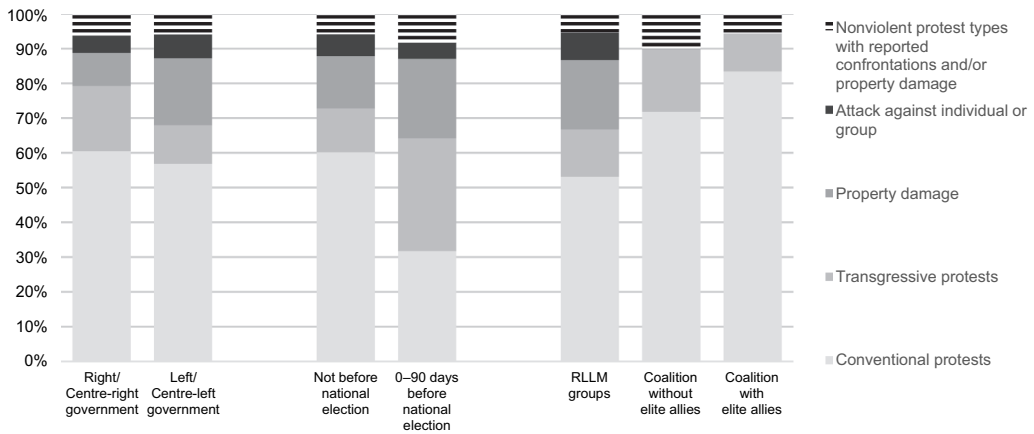


Figure 2. Environmental and relational factors versus protest tactic and occurrence of violence.

the social problems against which they were protesting. Figure 3 shows the types of protest tactics used in relation to different political issues. There is a large variation between protest issues regarding the likelihood of violence being used during protests, as well as what type of violence was perpetrated in such cases. Animal rights protests consisted mainly of property damage (e.g., against fur farms or companies that sold fur), but this tactic was also used to some extent in protests about women's rights (e.g., attacks against sexist advertisement or local porn shops), public welfare (e.g., vandalism of political opponents' premises and vehicles) and racism/fascism (e.g., damaging property of neo-Nazi groups). Physical attacks on individuals or groups occurred mainly during protests against racism or fascism and were rare during other protests. The same high proportion of reported violence at protests that were of a nonviolent type was also found at protests against racism or fascism, followed by protests against state repression, war, and inadequate housing.

Figure 4 shows how protest tactics varied with the type of actor identified as being responsible for the injustice that prompted the protest. For this aspect of the activists' collective action frames, our hypothesis was that the use of violence was more likely when the targets were not political institutions or abstract societal structures, but actors who would suffer direct harm (economic or physical) from violent protests that would cause them to cease the activities that the activists were protesting against.

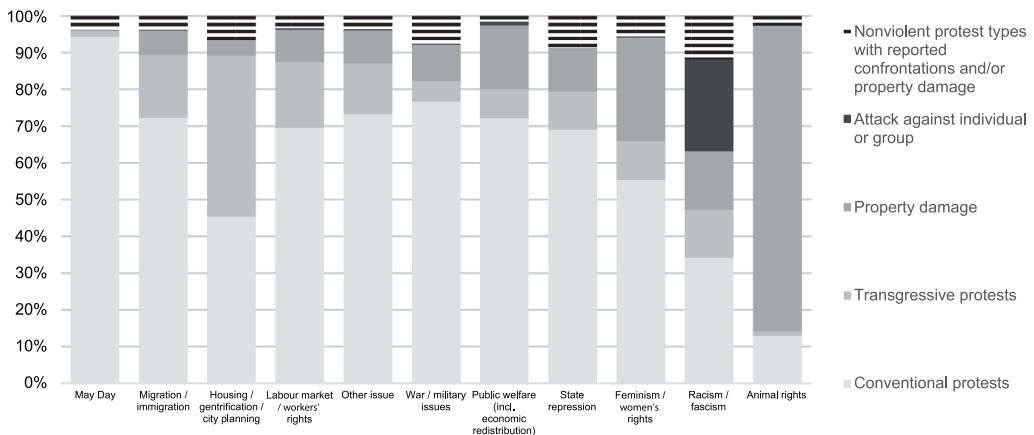
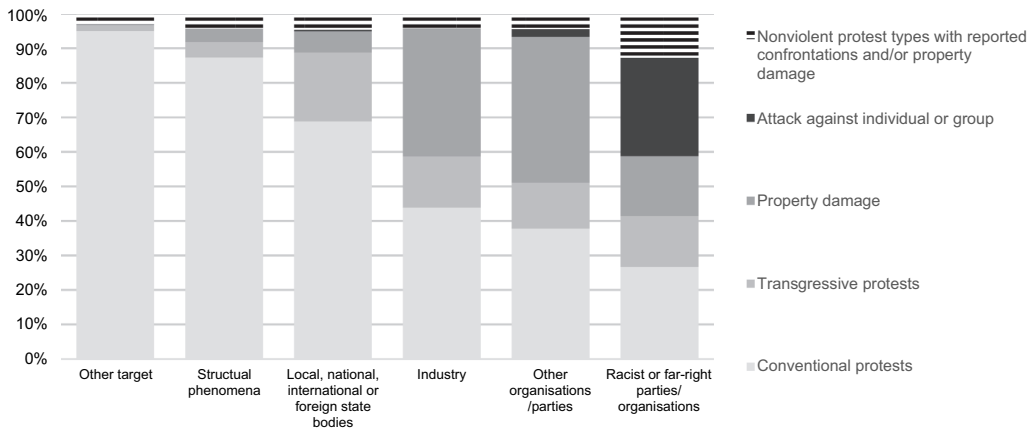


Figure 3. Protest issue versus protest tactic and occurrence of violence.



**Figure 4.** Protest target versus protest tactic and occurrence of violence.

This hypothesis is confirmed by our bivariate analysis. Violent tactics were much less likely to be used when state bodies or structural phenomena were framed as responsible for the problem that prompted the protests, in comparison to protests where corporate actors and specific political organisations were seen as responsible. The use of violence was most likely in protests against far-right organisations or parties, and the vast majority of physical attacks occurred against such organisations. This clearly reflects the long-standing counter-movement dynamic between RLLM groups and far-right political groups.<sup>56</sup> The form of violence most used in protests against corporate actors and political organisations other than those belonging to the far right (e.g., mainstream right-wing parties) was property damage.

### Regression analysis

The bivariate analysis presented in Figures 2, 3, and 4 show that the cognitive and relational models explain a large part of the variation in the examined data, while factors related to the political environment are less significant. At the same time, the patterns of what made violence during protests more likely differed depending on whether violent protest tactics had been chosen or whether violence (in the form of confrontation or vandalism) occurred during a protest of a nonviolent type. In order to more systematically analyse the explanatory power of the different hypotheses using our data, we conducted binary logistic regression analyses. We use Nagelkerke's  $R^2$  to compare the models' relative explanatory power. Even though Nagelkerke's  $R^2$  is not very straightforward to interpret, it addresses the increase in the log-likelihood value in the model at hand compared with the null-model (the intercept-only model). Hence, it can be used as an overall performance measure of models that all have the same null-model as reference. This analysis was done first for the probability of violent-type protests to occur, then for the probability of violence to occur during protests of a nonviolent type. The latter analysis included only nonviolent type protests. In each analysis, four separate regressions were run with respect to environmental factors (stripe of government and election cycle), relational factors (organiser of the protest), and two models for cognitive factors (protest issue and target of the protest). Next, a regression with a simultaneous analysis of all variables was introduced to see how different correlations were affected by a combined analysis. Finally, time-period variables were added to the combined model to determine whether the likelihood of violent RLLM protests changed over time.

Table 2 shows the six models of the factors that made violent protests more likely. Nagelkerke's  $R^2$  is indeed higher for the model focusing on *coalitions* (Model 2) than for the model including *environmental factors* only (Model 1). However, the improvement compared to the null-model is

largest for both *protest issue* (Model 3) and *protest target* (Model 4). Looking at the difference between the variables of the different models for cognitive factors, it can be noted that protests were much more likely to be violent when they were about animal rights and racism/fascism or when far-right organisations were the protest target. Combined Model 5 shows that some protest issues were strongly correlated with certain targets of protest, making some correlations somewhat less strong. At the same time, the effect of left-wing government was slightly smaller (showing that some protest issues were more common during left-wing governments), as was the effect of election campaigns (showing that some protest issues have predominated during election campaigns). The inclusion of the time variable in Model 6 shows that the likelihood of protests being violent became less during the period 2010–2016, but at the same time the Nagelkerke's  $R^2$  did not improve much in comparison to Model 5. Protests were, however, less likely to be violent during the last period (2010–2016) irrespective of protest issue, target, organiser, or electoral politics.

Table 3 shows the six models of the factors that made the occurrence of violence (in the form of confrontation or property damage) during nonviolent protests more likely. For these models, the Nagelkerke's  $R^2$  values are generally lower than in the corresponding models in Table 2. This can be interpreted as if the factors we analysed had more to contribute to the understanding of whether violent protest tactics were chosen than to the understanding of why violence occurred during protests that were initially organised as nonviolent protests. This is to be expected, given the impact of situation-specific dynamics in the emergence of violence during nonviolent protests.<sup>57</sup> At the same time, we can see that this form of violence is also most strongly correlated with the protest issue and the target of the protest, not unlike Table 2. For both protest issue (Model 3) and protest target (Model 4), the value of Nagelkerke's  $R^2$  is around 0.107. And this type of violence was most likely if the protest was about racism or fascism or if the target of the protest was far-right organisations, and to some extent if it was about state repression or animal rights. Hence, the dynamics that have developed between protesters and their opponents clearly mediates between cognitive, relational and environmental factors and their subsequent outcomes. However, in comparison to Models 3 and 4, the Nagelkerke's  $R^2$  value is much lower in the models for environmental factors (Model 1) and relational factors (Model 2). Like Table 2, the inclusion of the time variable in Model 6 shows that the likelihood of violence occurring during nonviolent protests decreased during the period 2010–2016.

## Discussion

In this article we have analysed how environmental, relational, and cognitive factors impact the likelihood that radical flanks use violent protest tactics or engage in violent actions during protests. Against the background of a critique of dichotomous and monolithic conceptions of radicals and moderates, the article argued that radical flanks should be seen as internally diverse in terms of ideas and practices, and that this diversity requires a more nuanced understanding of how radical actors come to use violence, whether premeditated or spontaneous. Following from six hypotheses and applied to the case of the RLLM in Sweden, the article concludes that the use of violence was most likely in contexts where radical flank actors did not form coalitions with moderate allies and where they framed their targets as concrete, physical, and delimited actors that could be affected immediately through material or personal damage. Violence was also significantly more common when protests concerned specific protest issues, suggesting the impact of particular combinations of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames. On the other hand, the openness of political opportunities (measured as the presence of left-wing parties in power and the occurrence of election campaigns) had a relatively small effect on the likelihood of violence. It is worth noting that the results held for both premeditated violence and the situational violence that developed during protests that were originally organised as nonviolent events.

The article contributes to the development of theories on radical flanks. Most directly it challenges the sharp dichotomy between moderates and radicals. Instead, as our empirical case shows, a radical flank may span wide tactical diversity, and its choice of tactics cannot simply be linked to any inherent



**Table 2.** Factors making violent protest types more likely: Binary logistic regression

	Model 1: Political opportunities			Model 2: Organiser			Model 3: Protest issues			Model 4: Protest targets			Model 5: Combined model			Model 6: Combined model plus period		
	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
<b>Political opportunities</b>																		
Government: Left (ref. Right)	0.8	***	2.12															
Upcoming election (0–90 days before election)	0.2		1.20															
<b>Organiser</b> (ref. RLLM groups only)																		
Coalition without elite allies				-5.3	***	0.01												
Coalition with elite allies				-20.2		0.00												
<b>Protest issue</b> (ref. = Migration/immigration)																		
Racism/fascism				2.3	***	9.79												
Housing/city planning				-0.5		0.63												
Labour market/workers' rights				0.4		1.42												
May Day				-18.6		0.00												
Feminism/women's rights				1.7	***	5.62												
Public welfare and redistribution				1.2	***	3.19												
State repression				0.6	†	1.91												
War/military issues				0.5		1.57												
Animal rights				4.2	***	69.55												
Other issues				0.4		1.46												
<b>Protest target</b> (ref. = Government bodies)																		
Industry							2.1	***	8.44									
Racist or far-right parties/organisations							2.5	***	12.08									
Other organisations/parties							2.4	***	11.43									
Structural phenomena							-0.5	*	0.58									
Other targets							-3.2	**	0.04									
<b>Period</b> (ref. = 1997–2001)																		
2002–2009																		
2010–2016																		
Constant	-1.8	***	0.16	-1.0	***	0.39	-2.6	***	0.07	-2.7	***	0.07	-2.1	***	0.13	-0.8	***	0.46
<b>Cases</b>	<b>3,939</b>			<b>3,945</b>			<b>3,943</b>			<b>3,945</b>			<b>3,937</b>			<b>3,937</b>		
Nagelkerke's R <sup>2</sup>	.032			.172			.342			.309			.550			.556		

**Table 3.** Factors making violence during nonviolent protest types more likely: Binary logistic regression

	Model 1: Political opportunities			Model 2: Organiser			Model 3: Protest issues			Model 4: Protest targets			Model 5: Combined model			Model 6: Combined model plus period		
	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
<b>Political opportunities</b>																		
Government: Left (ref. Right)	0.1		1.08															
Upcoming election (0–90 days before election)	0.5	*	1.62															
<b>Organiser</b> (ref. RLLM groups only)				0.3	†	1.37												
Coalition without elite allies				-0.3		0.73												
Coalition with elite allies																		
<b>Protest issue</b> (ref. = Migration/immigration)							1.7	***	5.66									
Racism/fascism							0.5		1.67									
Housing/city planning							-0.1		0.87									
Labour market/workers' rights							-0.1		0.91									
May Day							0.7		1.92									
Feminism/women's rights							-0.8		0.45									
Public welfare and redistribution							0.9	†	2.48									
State repression							0.8		2.13									
War/military issues							1.4	*	4.23									
Animal rights							-0.1		0.94									
Other issues																		
<b>Protest target</b> (ref. = Government bodies)																		
Industry							0.3		1.36									
Racist or far-right parties/organisations							1.8	***	5.87									
Other organisations/parties							0.5		1.66									
Structural phenomena							-0.1		0.89									
Other targets							-0.5		0.58									
<b>Period</b> (ref. = 1997–2001)																		
2002–2009																		
2010–2016																		
Constant	-2.6	***	0.08	-2.5	***	0.08	-3.1	***	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.05	-3.1	***	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.05
<b>Cases</b>	<b>3,083</b>			<b>3,083</b>			<b>3,083</b>			<b>3,083</b>			<b>3,083</b>			<b>3,083</b>		
Nagelkerke's R <sup>2</sup>	.003			.005			.106			.108			.145			.157		

group-specific preferences. Our results show that tactical choices vary across protest issues, frames, inter-movement relations, and over time. The analysis of our case also shows that moderate actors sometimes participate in violent protest events—but only during nonviolent protests where situational violence emerges. These empirical findings suggest the limitations of an approach to radicals and moderates that is premised on the presence or absence of violence and point to a more nuanced engagement with the complex causal links that exist between politics, relations, ideas, and behaviour. The results urge researchers and policy makers alike to reconsider common conceptualizations of radical and moderate flanks, where the former is often defined by its use of violent tactics and the latter by its use of non-violent forms of protests. This article has only begun that exploration. Future research is needed to take that observation beyond the single case and make its observations systematic enough for theory development.

Our analysis shows that ideological radicalism per se does not necessarily lead to the use of violent acts of protest but that the use of violence depends mainly on relational and cognitive factors, which vary in relation to specific issues. In terms of cognitive factors, our analysis has shown that a radical flank may be united by an overarching collective identity but that the different protest issues raised in relation to this identity are linked to different tactical choices. These, in turn, are rooted in the fact that what the protesting group identifies as the cause of the social issue being protested, who/what it sees as its target, what it sees as effective ways to bring about change, and how it legitimises its choice of tactics to outsiders and allies, differ for different protest issues. This points to the need to further scrutinise and compare elements of frames related to protest issues where tactics vary, which could provide deeper insights into when, why, and how radical groups choose violent protest tactics.

While focused on explaining the *behaviour* of radical flanks, the article's conclusions also speak to the development of studies on radical flank effects. Commonly, the study of radical flank effects rests on the assumption that it is possible to clearly distinguish between radical and moderate flanks. However, as this article shows, radical *and* moderate flanks act in a variety of ways, and their behaviour differs prominently across relational settings and depending on the presence of different frames. Furthermore, it shows that although radicals are more likely to use violence during protests that are not co-organised with moderate allies, co-organised nonviolent protests sometimes escalate into situations where violence occurs. This raises interesting questions about moderates and the effects that can arise from situations where moderates use violence but radicals do not. It also allows us to ask what happens when radicals and moderates both use violence, even if it occurs through different combinations of causes. These and other questions point out potentially fruitful areas for further research.

Through our choice of empirical case, the article allows for a broadening of studies of radical flanks. Whereas most research on the subject refers to contexts where factionalisation occurs in the midst of specific protest waves and within a single movement, the case of the RLLM in Sweden provides an example of a radical flank that exists across movements and time, relatively independent of wider protest dynamics. Whereas factionalisation during specific protest waves must be studied through process-oriented approaches, this does not seem to hold true for the case in this article. Hence, a broader question that can be drawn from this study concerns the difference between radical flank effects that develop within certain movements and protest waves as opposed to those that happen routinely and consistently even in less intense times. On the other hand, it is possible that our analysis of statistical correlations can complement, rather than challenge, processual analytical approaches. But this is best determined by comparative research.

Finally, the results of this article also has implications for current policies that seek to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism. As pointed to in the introduction, these policies often rest on the simplified and dichotomous distinction of lawful and desirable moderates, and violent and deviant radicals, or “extremists.” Recent studies show that measures that seek to prevent radicalisation and violent extremism, such as the bundling, labelling, and stigmatisation of particular organisations as “violent extremists,” can affect intra-movement dynamics by creating splintering and other obstacles for interplay.<sup>58</sup> In relation to this, the results of this article point to the risks of unintended back-fire effects from these policies. As coalitions with moderate allies have a clear moderating effect on the

likelihood of violence, the severance of such ties and contexts might in practice lead to increased use of violent protest tactics, contrary to the intentions of law and policy makers.

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31. K. Blee and A. Currier, "How Local Social Movement Groups Handle a Presidential Election," *Qualitative Sociology* 29, no. 3 (2006): 261–80.
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33. S. Staggenborg, "Coalition Work in the Pro-Choice Movement: Organisational and Environmental Opportunities and Obstacles," *Social Problems* 33, no. 5 (1986): 374–90; J. Hadden, *Networks in contention: The divisive politics of climate change* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
34. M. Levi and G. H. Murphy, "Coalitions of Contention: The Case of the WTO Protests in Seattle," *Political Studies* 54, no. 4 (2006): 651–70.
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36. T. Bjorgo and J. A. Ravndal, "Why the Nordic Resistance Movement Restrains its Use of Violence," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 14, no. 6 (2020): 37–48; J. Busher, D. Holbrook, and G. Macklin, "How the 'Internal Brakes' on Violent Escalation Work and Fail: Toward a Conceptual Framework for Understanding Intra-Group Processes of Restraint in Militant Groups," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2021.1872156>.
37. D. A. Snow and R. D. Benford, "Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization," *International Social Movement Research* 1, (1988): 197–217.
38. The operationalization of diagnostic frames into the variables protest issues and protest targets is a simplification that does not fully capture how different diagnostic frames impact the use of violence. We also acknowledge that the connection between protest issues/targets and the use of violence might be affected by a range of interrelated aspects, such as shifting political opportunities, protest sites, or the continual interplay with countermovements or other relevant actors. This reflects the impossibility of isolating cognitive factors from relational and environmental factors, something that has been noted in much previous work on framing (F. Polletta and K. M. Ho, "Frames and Their Consequences," in *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, ed. R. E. Goodin and C. Tilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 187–209, 197; H. Johnston, "Verification and Proof in Frame and Discourse Analysis," in *Methods of Social Movement Research*, ed. B. Klandermans and S. Staggenborg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 62–91:63). Still, we argue that the variables capture important aspects of the diagnostic frames, and can serve as an indicator of how they affect the likelihood of using violence.
39. Jämte, Lundstedt, and Wennerhag, "From Radical Counterculture to Pragmatic Radicalism?"; J. Jämte, "Radical Anti-Fascism in Scandinavia: Shifting Frames in Relation to the Transformation of the Far Right," in *Radical Left Movements in Europe*, ed. M. Wennerhag, C. Fröhlich, and G. Piotrowski (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 248–67; Jämte, *Antirasismens många ansikten*.
40. D. J. Wang and A. Piazza, "Use of Disruptive Tactics in Protest as a Trade-Off: The Role of Social Movement Claims," *Social Forces* 94, no. 4 (2016): 1675–710.
41. della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements*; Ellefsen, *Transgressive Protest and the Plural Policing of Protest*; Piotrowski and Wennerhag, "Always Against the State?"
42. Bosi, "A Processual Approach to Political Violence."
43. della Porta and Tarrow, "Unwanted Children."
44. Jämte, Lundstedt, and Wennerhag, "From Radical Counterculture to Pragmatic Radicalism?"
45. S. Hutter, "Protest Event Analysis and its Offspring," in *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*, ed. D. della Porta (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 335–67.
46. The original coding was conducted between 2014 and 2018 by Måns Lundstedt, at the time a research assistant. The coding was done on the basis of a codebook jointly prepared by all three authors. Ambiguous and unclear cases were continuously discussed between Lundstedt and the project leader (Wennerhag). In a second step, a research assistant, Kalle Eriksson, reviewed all coded material to ensure that all protest events had been coded according to the codebook, leading to a small number of changes.
47. The full string of keywords was: Autonoma OR "svart\* block\*" OR Anarkis\* OR SUF OR Syndikalis\* OR SAC OR Antifasci\* OR "direkt aktion" OR Anarkafemini\* OR AFA OR "Osynliga partiet" OR "Allt åt alla" OR upplopp OR militant\* OR vänsterextr\* OR extremvänste\* OR aktion OR "frihetli\*" OR "attentat" OR "aktivis\*" OR demonstra\* OR sabotage OR skadegörelse OR motdemonstra\* OR planka.nu OR "revolutionära fronten."
48. While movement media, in comparison to mass media, are often more likely to report on small and non-violent protests, which contributes to a more comprehensive picture of protest activities, movement sources might suffer from other forms of bias. In some movements and in some contexts, public announcements of attacks against property or individuals might serve the purpose of creating fear among adversaries, creating a picture of the movement as having "destructive capacity" (R. Ellefsen, *Transgressive Protest and the Plural Policing of Protest*). In other cases, there might be a tendency to downplay violent forms of contention to decrease the likelihood of negative attention and repression towards the movement. This means that there is a risk that data on violent protest are less reliable than data for other types of protest. The fact that the newspapers reported on violent protests that were neglected by the movement sources, increases the reliability of our data.
49. L. Bosi and S. Malthaner, "Political Violence," in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements*, ed. D. della Porta and M. Diani (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 439.
50. C. Tilly and S. Tarrow, *Contentious Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
51. A. Nassauer, "From Peaceful Marches to Violent Clashes: A Micro-Situational Analysis," *Social Movement Studies* 15, no. 5 (2016): 515–30.

52. Jämte, *Antirasismens många ansikten*; Jämte, “Radical Anti-Fascism in Scandinavia”; Jämte, Lundstedt, and Wennerhag, “From Radical Counterculture to Pragmatic Radicalism?”; Jämte and Wennerhag, *Brottsförebyggande åtgärder mot radikala vänsterrörelser*; Piotrowski and Wennerhag, “Always Against the State?”
53. See note 44 above.
54. The ten most common protest coalition partners for RLLM groups in Sweden were the parliamentary radical left party, the Left Party\* (5 percent), its youth organisation\* (6 percent), and its student’s organisation\* (2 percent); a minor Marxist-Leninist party (2 percent) and its youth organisation (4 percent); two minor Trotskyite parties (5 percent and 4 percent) and the student organisation of one of these (3 percent); the youth organisations of the Green party\* (3 percent) and of the Social Democratic party\* (3 percent); and Attac (2 percent). NB: The percentage of co-staged protests is in brackets; \*=coded as an elite ally.
55. See note 44 above.
56. The movement and countermovement dynamic at play illustrates the impossibility of isolating cognitive factors from relational and environmental factors. The RLLM always acts within a context and is deeply embedded in interplay with actors in surrounding society, which can also affect the likelihood of using violence. In this case, the level of violence can be the result of changing tactics within the far right or the type and level of anti-racist engagement from actors within institutionalised politics. However, against the background of our previous research, we still argue that the differences in frames between issues are important in itself to understand variations in protest tactics.
57. Nassauer, “From Peaceful Marches to Violent Clashes.”
58. Jämte and Ellefsen, “The Consequences of Soft Repression.”

## Appendix: Sources

The following sources (from the Internet and printed media) were used as the basis for obtaining information about the protest events analysed in this article. The figures in parentheses show the number of protest events that each source provided information for.

- Motkraft.net (2,063)
- Syndikalisten (397)
- Syndikalistiska ungdomsförbundet (348)
- AFA (254)
- Revolutionära Fronten (218)
- Arbetaren (215)
- Direkt Aktion (209)
- Allt åt Alla (177)
- SAC (163)
- Planka.nu (102)
- Ingen Människa är Illegal (54)
- Subversiv Info (53)
- Yelah.net (50)
- Indymedia (46)
- Plus forty-one other sources with fewer than twenty-five events each.